

**BloggingBlueprint** is a creation by Glen Allsopp from [PluginID](#)

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**BloggingBlueprint**

# Welcome

First of all, as is customary, let me thank you for taking the time to download this eBook and seeing what the contents have to offer. Secondly, let me congratulate you for making such a wise and informed decision in relation to whose advice you should trust in an area like this. The reason I say this not to try and make myself look good. Not at all. Instead, I say it because teaching people how to blog, build websites, set-up hosting or anything remotely related is often done by people who don't have a clue what they are doing.

It is well known that one of the best ways to make money online is actually to teach people to make money online. Ironic, isn't it? Because of this 'flaw' in the system, you'll easily find lots of sites teaching you how to build a successful and profitable blog. Most of them, as you may come to find, haven't updated their site in over a month, have little to no comments on their posts and show a massive 13 feed subscribers in their sidebar. Simply put, the majority of people who teach you how to build a successful blog, have no idea how to do it themselves.

This is not one of those guides.

I will refrain from claiming I own one of the biggest blogs in the world or that I have found some secret blogging code that will make you a success. I don't, and I haven't. Instead, this eBook is going to contain everything I have used to:

- Land my dream job through blogging
- Make over \$20,000 from one site
- Build one of the most popular blogs in the Personal Development industry (in 11 months)
- Get on the first page of Google for the keyphrase 'Personal Development'
- ...and much more

Blogs are not the only type of site I run, but PluginID, which is my most popular blog, is definitely the website I enjoy spending most of my time on. In the 11 months that the site has been running, I have had the pleasure to engage with hundreds of passionate and friendly bloggers while helping to improve the lives of

more than 400,000 visitors.

Before we continue, there is just one more thing that I should tell you: this blueprint is not a story. If it was just a 'story' of my own success in this area, then it wouldn't even be right for me to call it a blueprint. Instead, I have spent hours upon hours to put together a guide that you can follow. What I mean is that if, after reading about the benefits of blogging and my own story, you decide you want to build your own, you can.

For that reason, I have split this eBook into three parts. The first part is going to look at my time and experience with building and running blogs. The second part is going to be a very in-depth and detailed guide on how you can build and run your own site. This is *completely beginner-friendly* and I aim to leave no stone unturned and no possible question unanswered. The third part is going to share some of my more personal tips and secrets for blogging success which are a little more advanced.

It is completely up to you how you would like to follow along. If you would like to know more about me and my story with blogging, then just continue reading from the next page. If, on the other hand, you know that you want to start a blog but just need to know how to get started, then feel free to skip to part 2 on page 15.

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# Part One

## My Story

# Part One

**Part One** of this guide looks at my personal story and includes:

- How I Made \$20,000+ With One Blog
- How I Landed My Dream Job
- PluginID & Detailed Statistics About My Blog
- A Summary of the Benefits I've Received Through Blogging

**Part Two** of this guide will be looking at how you can create your own story. If you just want to get started in building your own blog, skip to page 15.

# My Story

It was always my dream to build a popular website where DJ's from around the world could come together in one place and discuss their (our) musical interests. I was at the point where I was fairly competent at setting up websites, having honed my HTML skills trying to make my MySpace profile look different to those of my friends, and decided to give it a shot. After slaving away for a few days and learning the technical side of things, I had my first site up and running. It named it DJScene and it was simply a forum where people could hang out, upload their latest mixes and get feedback from other members. In the first month, I started promoting the site on other DJ related websites I was a part of and it quickly grew to around 50 members. I was happy with the growth.

Then, another month went by but it seemed like I had already hit a plateau in the number of people I could encourage to join.

Luckily, the people who were visiting the site were very active and I had quickly built a forum that had thousands of discussions on a variety of DJ related topics. It was at this time that I met Dean. Dean had joined the site in order to make an interesting proposition. At the time, MySpace was the number one social network in the world and was growing exponentially on a daily basis. His proposition was that we join forces and create a MySpace 'clone' positioned towards the DJ community. I loved the idea, and I was in. He already had a name for the site, and although it lacked a little bit of creativity, MyDJSpace was born.

Hey, at least people knew what to expect.

At 16, while working with a guy I had never met, I spent hours of my time trying to promote our site. To my surprise, we quickly started getting mentioned on hundreds of related sites and even featured in DJ magazines. Everyone loved the idea because they could connect with like-minded people. And, because people wanted their music to be heard, they even helped promote the site outside of the DJ niche.

Because of this unexpected word of mouth traffic source, it wasn't long till we had

grown the site to a fairly impressive 10,000 members. It was this growth which led to us being recognised by John Steventon. John was in the process of writing a book for the popular 'for Dummies' series. His project was aptly titled: "DJ'ing for Dummies" and when the finished copy was published, it turned out that we had been mentioned a few times. At 16 and obsessed with DJ'ing, I was over the moon that my first real project managed to make it into a book.

I still see this as one of my proudest moments, even if it happened 4 years ago and might not mean that much to other people. I believe we managed to build a real resource for DJ's around the world to get their music heard, and now we just wanted to get the word out to even more people. It was at this time that I started studying Search Engine Optimisation (I say optimisation with an *S* because I'm English. I have lost count of the people who want to correct me on that) which is basically the 'art' of getting traffic from the major search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing (formerly MSN / Live search).

At first I successfully managed to get the site to rank 2nd in Google for the keyphrase 'DJ Forums' and then started to look at other terms we could get traffic for. In order to start adding pages to the site easily, we added a blog, and that's pretty much how my adventures started.

Since then I have launched two successful blogs, [PluginHQ](#) (formerly known as ViperChill) which has 1,800 subscribers and [PluginID](#) which has a little over 3,100 as I'm writing this. The former site is where I have made the majority of my blogging income, which I will be covering in this next section.

# \$20,000+ Blog

I launched ViperChill, now known as PluginHQ, at the age of 17. This was just after I realised how blogs made it very easy to add content to a site and I really only built the blog to increase traffic to my other pages. At the time, I was completely fascinated with how search engines worked and how to get more traffic from them. With some of my own testing and a lot of patience, I started having a lot of success in this area. I had so much success, in fact, that I set up my SEO blog in the first place.

ViperChill was to become my home for offering search engine optimisation services. For the first year that I ran the site, I probably wrote less than 20 blog posts. My articles were very personal, my writing was way below-par and to my knowledge I did not have a single blog reader. My sole reason for blogging was to add more pages to my site in the hope I would get more search engine visitors. I quickly realised this wasn't working out too well for me, so I decided to try to build a community around my work.

Over the next year I went from 0 feed subscribers to over 500 and was frequently mentioned on some of the top blogs in the industry. People would email me for interviews, experts agreed to take part in my projects and I just generally succeeded in getting my name out there. It was also during this time that the services I offered started to get a lot more attention.

Most bloggers these days try to make an income selling eBooks, having ads on their site and linking to products created by other people in the hope of earning some affiliate commissions. I do some of these things now, but I certainly didn't do them then. Instead, because people were beginning to see me as an expert in the field – I was getting contacted by large organisations across the globe asking me to help their websites get more traffic.

I ended up with one of the biggest companies in the world (mobile phone manufacturer) as a client due to my status at the time. They even paid me \$4,000 just to write 4 articles for their site and help to promote them. My success continued, and at one point I had clients in The Netherlands, Spain, America and I even helped optimise a site for a US Airport.

**Remember that all of this was happening as a 17 year old working from home in my bedroom.** Some of my clients were aware of this, some of them just didn't care. People knew what I could do, and they wanted to hire me. In the space of around 5 months just working for myself, I had made well over \$20,000 offering services.

A few people might be thinking “Well, you made that from having clients, not from your blog.”

Well, my first response is that your view of how blogs can or should make money is probably very limited. My second answer, and perhaps the most important, is that there is no way I would have been able to attain these clients without having a blog in the first place.

Blogging was simply my medium, not my message. I used blogging as a way to stand out in my industry and get myself known. This worked so well for me in fact, that I landed my...

# Dream Job

After a while, I had to put a lot of my client work on hold because I wanted to focus on college. I knew Internet marketing was the industry that I wanted to be in, but how do you convince others that an unreliable income source is more important than my education?

Instead, I went back into my socially conditioned roles and tried to stick in at college. I say tried, but I barely did. I ended the year with around 50% attendance because, quite simply, I just didn't go. One reason for skipping college was because it was 'easy' and, unlike school, you didn't receive a backlash for not turning up. The other reason was because I would come home early to work hard on my DJ'ing website, which was more important to me at the time. I'm not very close to my family so it was fairly easy to keep this to myself.

My college advisor told me that due to my attendance, I wasn't allowed to go onto my second year. They would, however, give me a chance to start again. I knew I had to sort out my attitude and my attendance, and I decided to give it another shot. This time I wouldn't barely try, I was a lot more serious. I put my blogging and client work aside, and just really got my head down. I picked up a part time job for weekends so that I had some money coming in. Thankfully, my efforts paid off.

I passed the year and even ended up with an A for Law.

In all honesty though, I had absolutely no interest in any of my subjects. I spent the summer after college getting my blog up and running again, and that is when I received an interesting offer. A company in Cape Town wanted to hire me to be their Social Media Manager and work for them in South Africa. They even added free flights and accommodation as an incentive to go.

There I was at 18 years old, sitting in my office room contemplating dropping everything and moving across the world. And, after a massive 24 hours of thinking about it (haha), that's exactly what I did. In the space of two weeks I had quit my job in a clothes store, left college, and said goodbye to all of my family and friends.

The main reason I made this decision is because I **knew it was the right path to take**. I had no interest in college subjects, I certainly didn't care about furthering my career in the clothing / retail industry and I knew Internet marketing was a place I would like to expand both my talents and my experience.

To cut a long story short, I spent 16 months in South Africa and had the absolute time of my life. I was also able to work with huge companies like:

- Nissan
- Land Rover
- ABSA Bank (owned by Barclays)
- A UK Newspaper (sadly, I can't name them)
- UK Lottery
- ...and many more

As of writing this I have been back in the UK for quite a few months but my experience in South Africa was amazing. It was definitely the right choice to make. How many people, at 18 years old, can say they were able to work with so many big clients as an Internet marketer, let alone the social media manager? I believe this in itself shows the types of doors that blogging can open.

Did I just get a lucky break? Some people might see it like that. Yet, these people probably see most positive outcomes as lucky breaks. Just like making \$20,000+ through providing services, I would not have had this opportunity if it weren't for my blog.

Blogging provided me with an awesome job and it easily gave me the best year of my life in Cape Town. One reason that my year was so awesome was that, during my stay, I realised that I had changed so much as a person. I went from shy and quite introverted to going out 5 nights per week, having a huge social circle and I saw (and did) things that completely shattered my own reality.

I honestly have so many stories from my experience that people would just simply not believe if I told them. Many of these stories involve two of my best friends who, coincidentally, [also](#) now [blog](#).

It was because of this, on July the 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008, I decided to launch...

# PluginID

When I first started [PluginID](#) I was working 5 days per week and partying on just as many nights. Therefore, I couldn't dedicate as much time to the site as I would like, but I did manage to experience some great growth.

My experiences in South Africa became the basis for many of my blog posts and the change I went through in my year there led me to believe it is possible for anybody to do the same. Therefore, this idea of being who you want to be and living the life you want to live became the core fundamental reason behind the site.

As of writing this guide, the current stats of the site are as follows:

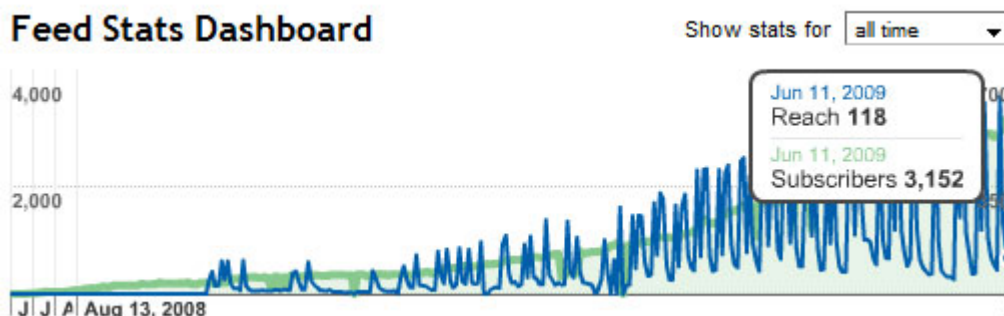
- 94 posts in 9 Categories
- 2,727 Comments
- 12,037 Backlinks (links from other websites)
- Averaging around 85,000 pageviews per month
- Visitors from 138 countries

I have also managed to grow the number of feed subscribers to the site to a nice figure of 3,103. For being less than a year old, and starting out in this niche as a complete nobody, I'm fairly happy with the results I've managed to produce in the last 11 months.

Here is a monthly breakdown of feed subscribers month by month:

- Month 1: 123 Subscribers
- Month 2: 209 Subscribers (+86)
- Month 3: 342 Subscribers (+133)
- Month 4: 363 Subscribers (+21) <sup>1</sup> – *Read below for the reason*
- Month 5: 544 Subscribers (+181)
- Month 6: 798 Subscribers (+254)
- Month 7: 1,084 Subscribers (+286)
- Month 8: 1,697 Subscribers (+613)
- Month 9: 2,287 Subscribers (+590)

- Month 10: 2,870 Subscribers (+583)
- **Month 11: 3,103 (+233)** **Note:** There are still 3 weeks left of the month



As you can see from the feed counts, it tends to be that a blog grows slowly at the beginning, but once it reaches a certain 'mass' then it starts to grow exponentially. I am expecting to beat the 613 subscribers in one month record this month.

<sup>1</sup> – The reason the site only increased by 21 subscribers this month is because I actually sold it. When the site had only 350 subscribers I collected a tidy \$1,500 sum for it. The price was quite good, but I realised that I had made a huge mistake. I had spent hours upon hours pouring value into the site and I didn't want to lose that and have to start again. Therefore I tried to get the site back. I was fortunate to be able to keep the \$1,500 and instead I helped the buyer promote his other websites in return for PluginID.

The site, as stated, currently gets around 50,000 visitors per month and 80,000 pageviews which I'm fairly happy with. It is my most popular site in terms of traffic, but definitely not in terms of income. In fact, I actually managed to quit my dream job in January of 2009 because of the type of income my other sites make.

If you are interested in affiliate marketing and how I expect to make around \$15,000 this month, you can view my guide for that [over here](#).

**PluginID** currently makes around \$300 per month, which, by any standards, is actually a poor income. One thing you must note is that I severely under-monetise the site. I have no products of my own for sale and I have never reviewed another product on the blog. The reason for this decision is first of all, I don't need the money and secondly, I have been waiting until I build up a larger audience who trust what I put out there.

The main reason I would call the blog a success is because of the constant traffic it receives and the size of its audience. There are a large number of blogs out there with more than 3,000 subscribers, but there's also millions of blogs out there with far less.

If you consider that I sold the blog for \$1,500 at 350 subscribers, that would give it a current valuation of \$15,000.

If you consider that another blog I used to read (NetBusinessBlog.com), when it had 1,000 subscribers, sold for \$15,000, then that would give my site a valuation of around \$45,000.

Or finally, if you consider that my friend was offered \$400,000 for his blog with 12,000 subscribers (I'm not making this up) then that would mean the site is worth around \$100,000. – I do not have permission from my friend to reveal the site for obvious reasons, so please don't ask.

Of course, other factors apply to the value of a blog rather than just their feed subscribers. Valuations are usually based on traffic, income, engagement and future potential. I believe that in the next year I can successfully build PluginID to be making *at least* \$6,000 per month which would dramatically increase the value of the site.

I do not have any plans to sell the site though, and actually see it as a lifelong project. Mostly because I love what I do so much and get to connect with awesome, like-minded people on a daily basis.

# In Summary

Don't worry, this isn't the end of the eBook. This summary is simply an end of part one and I'll try my best to stop talking about myself so much. I promise! Some of you may think of the following statement as an exaggeration, but I **have no doubt in my mind that blogging has dramatically helped me to transform my life.**

I mean, just look at what it has helped me to achieve:

- I landed my dream job after showing my expertise on my first blog
- Blogging raised my profile and I was voted the top Social Media Marketer under 21 and I have done countless interviews
- Through blogging I was able to attract clients who made me over \$20,000 in the space of just a few months at 17
- I now have a website that if I was to sell it today, I would be able to receive at least a five-figure sum in return – I won't be selling though, so don't ask ;)
- It has also helped me improve my abilities as a writer, something I was unsure would ever happen

I think the most important thing is that I enjoy what I do. I wouldn't care about any of the above accomplishments if they had been a real nightmare and a chore. Instead, I love coming up with new article ideas and seeing how my audience reacts. Genuinely, I just love helping people.

I have made so many awesome friends and connections through blogging that I would never have made otherwise and nothing can replace that.

If you would like to get a piece of this blogging success pie for yourself, then I have outlined everything you need to know, step-by-step, in part 2 of this eBook.

**Note:** At the end of this guide I reveal a few of my 'secrets,' so stay tuned!

# Part Two

**Part Two** of this guide is all about making *your* story and *your* success. We are going to go into a lot of detail about how you can build your own blog, setup hosting and much more. This whole section includes:

- The Reasons You May Want to Build a Blog
- How to Choose Your Blog Niche
- Deciding on a Domain for Your Blog
- Getting Hosting and How to Set it Up
- How to Install Wordpress (the most popular blogging software)
- Installing a Theme On Your Blog
- Plugins I Recommend and How to Install Them
- Search Engine Optimisation for Your Blog
- How to Drive Traffic to Your Site

There's quite a lot in this section but I wanted to make sure I help as many people as possible. Even if you can only switch on your PC, I believe that you can set-up and start building a successful blog after reading this segment. If you know most of what is here then feel free to skip to parts that might interest you like the sections on SEO and Traffic, for example.

# Why Build a Blog?

Some people just *get* blogging straight away and others completely struggle to understand it. Whichever category you fit into, I'm sure this section will either re-affirm what you already know or open your eyes to the possibilities out there.

There are tons of reasons people might want to build a blog, so I can't cover them all here. After all, there are over 120,000,000 of them and everybody has their own answer to the "Why do you blog?" question.

However, I am going to cover what I think are some of the most common, and let you come to your own conclusions as to whether you think blogging is something you should take up or not.

There are 4 main types of blog out there, and they are:

- **1. Company Blog** – Everyone from Amazon to Nike while passing Google on the way, have company blogs. In fact, Google have a separate blog for each of the services they offer. These types of blogs are generally used to update product owners or service users about what is going on with a certain aspect of business. They can also be used to help people see the 'personal' side of a company and usually created to help instil trust.
- **2. Personal Blog** – The personal blog is pretty much how blogging (web logging) started out. People wanted an easy way to be able to share their writing with the world. Blogging enabled that opportunity for millions of technically un-savvy people. Similar to how the likes of Twitter is being used now, people would share their baby photos, their daily stories and basically use their blog as a diary. Many blogs like this still exist, but they don't tend to make as much money or be as popular as the next option.
- **3. Personal Value** – By personal value I mean that these types of blogs are usually started by a small number of people, often just one, but are there to be personal *and* give value to the reader at the same time. This value may come in different forms such as humour, entertainment or knowledge; but it is there. Blogs of this type include news blogs such as TechCrunch or just informative blogs on a certain subject i.e. my blog PluginID for personal development.

- **4. Splogs / Flogs** – I don't really want to cover these as I'm generally against them (especially Splogs) but there are plenty of them out there so they deserve a mention. Splogs are basically blogs set-up to automate content creation by stealing the content of genuine websites via RSS. The owners generally make hundreds of these sites and even if each one only makes \$10 per month, they can make a tidy profit. Flogs are fake blogs and basically blogs that pretend to be written by someone else for humour, or spammy affiliate blogs that are promoting a product for profits.

Personal Value is highlighted in red because this is basically the type of blog we are going to be covering in this guide. If you want to create some automated spammy blogs that steal content from others then this is not the guide for you and instead you should look for a Blackhat Forum. However, if you want to offer value whether it be in your expertise or even just in keeping people updated, then you'll learn all you need to know here.

These are the 4 main types of blog, and the reasons for creating them include:

## Income

Although it doesn't *sound* great, I can't hide the fact that most bloggers make their site with the sole intention of profiting from them. When I built my blog around Internet marketing, my aim was to build my profile and increase the number of clients who wanted my services. Based on that, you could say my main focus was income, but I certainly don't think it was in an unethical manner.

The "right" path in my opinion is to offer value and receive it in return. As in the example above, I was giving away excellent, free content, and received new clients for doing so. Similarly, many bloggers offer content in the hope that people will click on the ads in between posts, or purchase products that they offer.

Less than 1% of bloggers will ever be able to make a liveable income from their writing, but it is possible. In fact, some blogs have helped turn their authors into millionaires due to their massive success. Some examples of blogging riches include:

- **Timothy Sykes** – Tim was able to make over [\\$80,000 in one month](#) from his blog which he uses to help him sell products and subscriptions to his membership site.
- **John Chow** – John runs a make money online [blog](#) and isn't shy about admitting he makes money telling people how to make money. In fact, he has posted earnings of over \$50,000 from blogging whilst on vacation.
- **Darren Rowse** – Darren has never revealed his exact figures, but once stated he makes at least a six-figure income, annually. My guess is that he makes around \$30,000 per month from his [two blogs](#).

Of course, these are examples of guys who are cream of the crop and have put a few years of effort in to get where they are now. Chris Guillebeau is also a [great example](#), expecting to make a tidy \$48,000 from his first year of blogging.

There are lots of bloggers who have been able to generate over \$5,000 per month from their blogs which is a more realistic target you can hit with some hard work. After that though, the sky really is the limit.

## Having a Voice

Before blogs started to become popular, it was very rare for the “average Joe” on the street to be able to say that they had a personal website. You either had to pay quite a lot of money for someone to build you one or you had to spend a long time learning to code and then put it together yourself.

Since blog software and other content management systems have come into existence, the size of the Internet started to get a lot, lot bigger. Now, because it's so easy to share your thoughts with the world, everyone wants to have a voice.

This text you are reading right now, this very sentence, is probably going to be read by thousands of people in the lifetime of this eBook. Although this is a PDF file the principles are the same. You can have a voice, and it's completely up to you how you use it.

The main reason I like having a voice is that I can *help* people. My “voice”, when

written as text, can literally be viewed by anyone in the world. All they need is an Internet connection. If someone has a need and they come across my solution for it, then I have genuinely helped someone – just by tapping my fingers against a keyboard. That's powerful.

## Establish Yourself

If you read my story in the first part of this guide then this won't be new to you, but if you didn't then read on. Being able to establish myself and 'raise' my profile has had multiple benefits for me and it is all thanks to blogging.

First of all, I was able to promote my services in the Internet marketing industry through my detailed and helpful writings on that very topic. This alone has made me tens of thousands of dollars; money that I definitely wouldn't have had without my blog.

Secondly, I was able to land my dream job through blogging. I didn't apply to a newspaper ad or even a job board online. **My employer found me.** Funnily, they even added me on MSN messenger to offer me the job.

I got this opportunity because I had written about the industry for 2 years, been featured on some of the top blogs in the world and was a known expert in what I do. Without blogging, nobody would have a clue who I am and I would be another behind-the-scenes expert just doing my thing. Instead, my writing helped to get me noticed.

Even if you aren't looking for an employer, blogs are a great way to get noticed as a designer, artist, producer or even as a writer. They literally give you a way to establish yourself in your chosen field.

## Ease of Use

When I set-up my first blog on MyDJSpace it wasn't because I wanted to 'blog', per

se. I actually setup the blog so that we had a very easy and search engine friendly way of adding new content to our site. It is this ease of use that has made blogging so popular.

If an average person could *not* work out how to write an article on a blog without needing help, blogging would really not have taken off like it has. Instead, literally anybody who can type into a Word document can post content online. This isn't just text based content either: pictures, videos, slideshows; you name it – they can all be added easily by anyone with very basic computer skills.

Even if you just want to get content online and “out there” then blogging software (even if you don't want to define your site as a *blog*) is probably the easiest way to do just that.

# Niche

If you like what you hear about the benefits of blogging and want to get started then it's time to pick your niche. Your niche will basically be the subject or industry that your blog will cover. There are some 'general' sites out there which cover a little bit of everything, but it is much harder to make money with them and it will take a lot of work to build an established audience. It's far better if you can attract a certain type of visitor who is interested in what you have to offer, rather than a lot of 'random' content.

To give you an idea of the type of industries that do well in blog format, here is a look at the top 10 blogs in the world (according to Technorati) and the niche that they are in:

1. Huffington Post (Politics)
2. TechCrunch (Web & Startup News)
3. Engadget (Gadgets & Technology)
4. BoingBoing (Cultural interests & General)
5. Mashable (Social Media News)
6. Lifehacker (Productivity)
7. Ars Technica (Technology)
8. Gizmodo (Gadgets & Technology)
9. Stuff White People Like (Humour)
10. Smashing Magazine (Design)

As you can see, apart from a couple of gadget blogs in there, the top blogs in the world are a varied bunch. I can also assure you right now that there are bloggers in hundreds of different niches who have been able to make a good income from their websites; there is no 'perfect' niche that will make you money.

**Some of you reading this will instantly know what you want to blog about. If that's you, then I recommend you skip to the next section. If you're a little unsure though, then let's continue.**

On the following page we will be looking at three ideas to help you both decide on a niche and make sure there is an audience for that topic.

# Your Passions

What interests you in life right now? What kind of blogs do you currently read? What is the one area you would say you have more knowledge on than the average person? It's very possible that the answer to any of these questions is what you should be writing about.

When I moved to South Africa and started transforming my lifestyle and my behaviours, I wanted to start writing about all the realisations I was having. I was working hard on self improvement so it just naturally made sense that the next blog I started would cover that topic. Similarly, when I was very passionate about Internet marketing and learning more, that's exactly what I wrote about.

It is much better to choose a niche that you have some knowledge in for multiple reasons:

- You will be able to come up with lots of content ideas
- You can offer new advice and information from a different perspective in the industry
- It won't feel like a chore to write about the topic regularly
- Your passion and interest for the subject will come through in your writing

If you literally have to force yourself to write about something you aren't interested in, that will quickly become clear and your focus will start to drift elsewhere. Anywhere but on your blog.

Look at your current passions to see which one you would most like to blog about or at least the one where you feel like you can offer the most value to your audience. It may be a sport, a gadget obsession or even the fact that you love to save money. If you're passionate about something that isn't too small a market then it's probably the blogging route you should take.

A good idea is to start listing all your passions and interests down on paper. When the right one is written down you'll just *know*. It'll click.

## Don't Start Too Small

It is very possible that your passion is something obscure or not something people would subscribe to a blog about. For example, if you own a Subaru Imprezza and are literally obsessed with that car, you might be inclined to start writing about it. If you do though, you'll soon notice you are severely limiting the size of the audience you can reach and the type of blog posts you can write.

Instead, it would be far better to write about Subaru vehicles in general or even set-up an automotive blog. This same principle could be applied if you're obsessed with something else, your iPhone perhaps. There are a couple of fairly successful iPhone blogs out there, but really, how many do there need to be? Would the world really need another one? Unless you can absolutely dominate a niche because you have something special to offer, it's best to broaden your horizons a little and, in this example, write about mobile phones or just gadgets.

If you limit yourself too much you'll find that you quickly run out of things to say and your audience size is already limited. Speaking of audiences...

## Is There an Audience?

Just because you love saving money and think others will enjoy your advice, it doesn't mean you should just *start* a personal finance blog. There might not actually be anyone interested in it. For the record, personal finance is an absolutely huge industry, but this is something you should be checking for yourself before you start writing.

Unless you are writing purely because you love the subject and love to write about it, don't choose a topic which nobody wants to read about. Otherwise, it's best to pick a niche that interests you, has an audience, and has the potential to make you money.

A lot of bloggers will also tell you the opposite. They will say that if a niche is too

large and too crowded with bloggers then you shouldn't try to enter it. I actually think differently. If there are a lot of successful bloggers in the same niche then you know one thing: there is a huge audience out there. And, if there's a huge audience, there's huge potential to ethically leverage traffic from these sites and grow your own following. A good way to check if there is an audience for your niche idea is to simply search for it. Head over to a major search engine like Google and run queries for things like:

- Niche blog
- Niche blogs
- Niche blog list
- Top Niche blogs

– Substituting niche for the name of your industry i.e. personal development

If you do a search now for 'personal development blog list' you'll come across a number of resources which highlight the top bloggers in the self improvement industry. From there, you can easily open up the top sites in a new browser window and look for the following:

- Do posts get a lot of comments?
- Do they update regularly?
- How many feed subscribers do they have?

If you can find a site in your niche with at least 10,000 feed subscribers (many niches will surpass this rule with multiple blogs) then you know there is a lot of potential to really grow your site and make an income online, through blogging.

If your niche idea passes all the tests, then it is now time to buy a domain name for your site.

# Domain

A domain name is basically the 'home' for your site. For example, my blog on Personal Development is known as PluginID and can be found at [pluginid.com](http://pluginid.com). There are many different extensions that you have available to you when choosing a domain. Some of the most popular and well known include:

- .com
- .net
- .org
- .us
- .co.uk
- .eu

Most countries have their own domain extension, for example .us is supposed to only be used for American residents, as .co.uk is supposed to be used for people / businesses in the United Kingdom.

As you can probably guess, the most common domain extension is .com. I recommend that if your ideal blog name comes in this extension then pick it before any other. As it is the most common, more people are aware of it and they are more likely to type your site name with .com on the end over anything else.

There are popular blogs out there which have .net as the ending such as [Zenhabits.net](http://Zenhabits.net) (120,000 subscribers) and [Probloger.net](http://Probloger.net) (100,000 Subscribers) but if you can get the .com then do so. Zenhabits was unfortunate in that someone else owns the .com version and probably makes a lot of money through ads on the site. As for Probloger, Darren's site rapidly grew in popularity and he ended up paying over \$6,000 for the .com extension.

I certainly don't think a .net extension is *bad*, but I definitely prefer using a .com domain.

# Brandable vs Optimised

In my opinion, it is much better to have a brandable domain rather than one which is overly descriptive in regards to what your site is about. For example, my personal development blog is called PluginID and is formed around the slogan “Plug into your Identity.” PluginID doesn’t mean much on its own, but people remember it and my evidence of this is that a lot of people 'Google' *Pluginid* to find my site.

I would much prefer to have a name like PluginID which I can establish a brand around, rather than something like personal-development-blog.com which clearly shows the content the site covers but is not a brand or something people can identify with. I have noticed that a vast majority of the biggest blogs in the world have gone for brandable, unique names rather than domains to help them get traffic for certain keyphrases. Because of this, and through my own experiences, I recommend you do the same.

If you can pick a brandable name that describes what the site is about then even better. Some examples of this include Zen Habits (productivity), ProBlogger (Professional blogging) and Copyblogger (Copywriting).

Some people like to have a dash in their domain in order to get their preferred combination of words such as make-money-online.com. My personal thoughts are that a domain should never have more than 2 hyphens, and preferably never have any as it makes it rather difficult to remember and hard for people to type.

A lot of bloggers also go down the route of simply using their full name as their blog domain. John Chow, for instance, runs a popular Internet business blog at JohnChow.com. Similarly, Steve Pavlina runs a popular personal development blog at StevePavlina.com. Note that if you do go down this route, make sure your name sounds the way it is spelt; meaning that if you tell someone a name it’s pretty obvious how they would write it down. Secondly, realise that it would be much harder to sell the site in future if it is based around one person and their name.

# Buying Your Domain

Ideally your domain should be something simple to remember and brandable. It is a bonus if you can build an identity around it, and the name hints at what the site is about. For example, I once ran a car website which was named autodub. The name is easy to remember, auto has an obvious meaning and dub is slang for 20" rims.

If you need some help with this I recommend checking out [Nameboy](#) which allows you to mix various words together and see which variations are available, as well as their extensions.

I purchase all of my domain names through [Namecheap](#) (not an affiliate link). A .com will set you back less than \$10 and what I love about [Namecheap](#) is that they offer free WhoisGuard. This basically means that people can't search the Whois database and find out your full name and address which they would be able to do otherwise.

**Important to Note:** The rest of this guide (where relevant) will be using Namecheap in regards to example screenshots for things like setting up your hosting and installing Wordpress. So bear in mind that if you have never setup a blog before, it's best to go with Namecheap so you can easily follow along.

# Hosting

Now that you have a domain, you need to find yourself a hosting company. If you think of your domain as a name for your site then you can think of a host as the home for that domain. A web hosting company gives you space on their servers for a monthly fee, and in return you can upload anything and as much as you want (within their limits). Basically, you can host your forum, eCommerce store, directory, or in this case, blog.

There are literally thousands of hosting companies out there, and there are no right or wrong options. The best hosts, generally, tend to have the most customers. Some people will disagree with that logic, but my own understanding is that people would not continue to pay for the services of a company month after month if they were being let down by the service.

The company I use for hosting my website is [Hostgator](#). They have over 1 million clients, are very trustworthy and their cheapest hosting option comes in at a measly \$5 per month. In simple terms: if you take two Starbucks' Lattes out of your schedule just once per month, then you've saved more than the price of hosting.

Hostgator are definitely not the only great host out there, but I use them, so that is why I am recommending them. They offer excellent support which you can see for yourself by going to [their site](#) and clicking on 'live support' in the top right hand corner of the page. They always have staff available and you can ask them any questions about their service.

Note that just like with Namecheap, the screenshots included in the rest of this guide will be using Hostgator as an example. If you have never built a site before then I recommend you use them so that you can follow along.

# Hosting Options

There are multiple packages available to choose from when you use Hostgator, they are:

- **Hatchling** – \$4.95/m – only one domain allowed
- **Baby** – \$7.95/m – unlimited domains allowed
- **Business** – \$12.95/m – unlimited domains, dedicated IP and private SSL

I personally don't think the benefits of business are worth the extra 5 dollars per month. I use the Baby option because I host 10 of my own sites and sites for my friends with the company. If you only plan on running one website, your blog, then the hatchling offer is fine. To find the page with all these offers, click on "web hosting" in the navigation bar when you're on the Hostgator website. You will see the following page:



The screenshot shows a comparison table for Linux Web Hosting Packages. At the top, there are two tabs: "Linux Web Hosting" (selected) and "Windows Web Hosting". Below the tabs is a table with the following structure:

Plans	Hatchling	Baby	Business
Disk Space	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED
Bandwidth	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED
Domains Allowed	1	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED
Your Own Toll-Free Number	X	X	FREE
Free Dedicated IP	X	X	✓
Free Private SSL	X	X	✓
Pricing	\$4.95	\$7.95	\$12.95
Proceed to Checkout	Order Now	Order Now	Order Now

Make sure that you choose a Linux option and not a Windows option. Linux does not mean that your personal computer needs to be running it (somebody did ask me this), it is simply the operating system that your server will be running.

You can get your first month with [Hostgator](#) for only \$0.01 by using the coupon

code "Wordpress" (without the quotes).

## Setting Up Your Hosting

Once you have decided which package you want to take, simply click on order now and you will begin the checkout process. On the first option, select "I will use my existing domain" and then enter your domain like so:

### Order Wizard

#### Select a domain option:

- Register New Domain
- I will use My Existing Domain and update My Nameservers only.

Existing Domain:

[Go Back](#)

Click next and then continue to go through the following steps. Don't forget to enter the coupon code 'Wordpress' so that your first month is only \$0.01. In about two minutes, you will be the proud owner of a new hosting account.

Once you've successfully gone through all the steps, you'll receive a welcome email from Hostgator which looks like this (proof that I only recommend services I use):

### Your HostGator Account Information Inbox | X

★ [sales@hostgator.com](mailto:sales@hostgator.com) to me

Thank you for your order and welcome to the HostGator Family!

Your Domain:

Your Username:

Your Password:

Your sites IP address:

Your name servers:

[ns1343.hostgator.com](http://ns1343.hostgator.com)

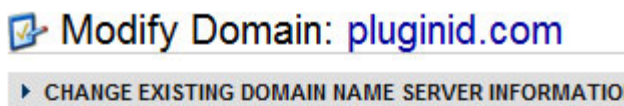
[ns1344.hostgator.com](http://ns1344.hostgator.com)



The welcome email will include your username and password which we'll use later, and it will also include your nameservers. We are going to use these so that we can *link* your domain account (Namecheap) to your hosting company (Hostgator).

Now what you need to do is head back over to Namecheap and login. If you didn't use Namecheap to purchase your domain, you'll have to find the nameservers section of whichever domain registrar you've used.

Once you've logged into Namecheap, head on over to the 'Manage Domains' section which you can find [here](#). Then, select the domain in your account which you would like to use for your blog by clicking on it. Once the new page has loaded, simply choose "Transfer DNS to Webhost" on the left hand side of the page.



You can change the existing domain name server information. This option is typically used when you change your web host. Note that it will take up to 24 hours for the changes to take effect.

1.	<input type="text" value="ns1343.hostgator.com"/>	*
2.	<input type="text" value="ns1344.hostgator.com"/>	*
3.	<input type="text"/>	
4.	<input type="text"/>	
5.	<input type="text"/>	

[Add More Nameservers](#)

Then you simply add the nameservers from your welcome email and select 'save changes.' Once that is done, you have successfully linked your domain registrar to your hosting account. **Congratulations!**

# Wordpress

There are over 120,000,000 (yes, that's 120 million) blogs online and while many are hosted on free sites such as Blogger and Wordpress, many are also self-installed on the users' own server. This guide is not going to be about getting a free domain from the likes of blogger i.e. yourblogname.blogspot.com – instead, your blog is going to be found at yourdomain.com

For this **BloggingBlueprint** we are going to be using Wordpress as our example. A vast majority of blogs in the world run this software, and it has also found a home on the majority of the top blogs in the world. Put simply: Wordpress is the best blogging solution available. And, even better – it's free!

I could really go on, and on, and on about Wordpress. I use it on most of my own websites and my two main blogs run the software. It is used by the New York Times, Nike, Cola, Puma, Yahoo and other large companies. I'm even pretty sure that Google would use it if they didn't own Blogger.

Wordpress and the surrounding community really do offer everything you could need from blogging software. For those of you who aren't aware of what blogging software entails, let me include some of the most important items:

- **Comments** – On any blog post that you write, people can leave their feedback to your work by leaving a comment at the bottom of the post. These are completely under your control, meaning you can edit or delete any comment or even mark it as spam.
- **RSS** – When we talked about 'feed subscribers' earlier, it was in relation to people opting for updates of your site content via RSS. Wordpress comes with an RSS feed built in. This means that anyone can subscribe to your site and get almost instant updates. You can also use additional services like Feedburner to count how many people have subscribed, which we'll cover later.
- **Pages** – Not only does Wordpress allow you to write blog posts, you can also create pages on your site. This, actually, is one of the reasons I use Wordpress on sites that aren't even designed to be blogs. Added to the fact that it is so easy and quick to use. For instance, you might want to create an

About page that tells people more about you or even a Sitemap with links to all areas of your site. These new pages won't show up in the RSS feed but will be visible to site visitors.

- **Plugins** – Because of the nature of Wordpress, it's very easy for anyone to tweak it and add new features. Wordpress has a plugin engine which means that developers from around the world can create 'addons' which allow you to customise it as much as you like. One example plugin I have installed is one that sends all new commenters will receive a thank you email as soon as their comment improved. This helps them feel welcome and like they are a part of the community.
- **Themes** – Not only does the Wordpress community have great developers offering free plugins, it also includes great designers offering free themes. If you don't know anything about HTML or CSS then don't worry, you can have your site looking just how you want it to with relative ease.

I could literally write pages of content as to why Wordpress is the best solution out there but that might be a bit of an overkill. If you're convinced that Wordpress is the right option for you, then we are ready to move on.

# Installing Wordpress

The most common and typical way that people install Wordpress is to first download an FTP program, create a database, manually configure the configuration file and then upload it onto their server. It is a fairly easy process and shouldn't take more than 15 minutes, but we're not going to go down that route here.

Remember how I said that I recommend [Hostgator](#) not only because I use them, but because we are going to be using them as an example throughout the guide? Well, there's a reason for that. **Hostgator allows you to install Wordpress in just a few clicks of your mouse.** You don't have to worry about FTP software or creating a database and editing PHP files. Instead, you just need to move your index finger a couple of times.

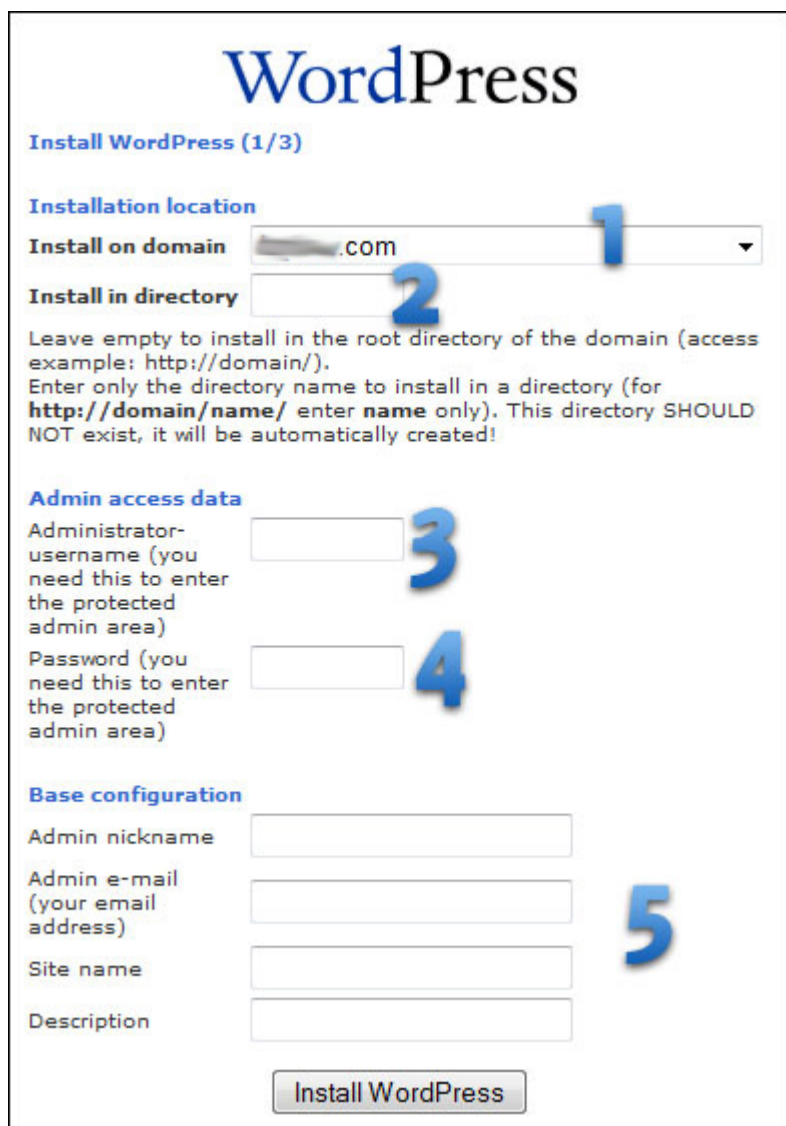
The first thing you need to do is log into your Hostgator control panel. You can access it by going to the following address, substituting 'your domain' for your actual domain name: <http://www.yourdomain.com/cpanel>

The first time you visit this address, you will be prompted for your username and password. You can find these in your Hostgator welcome email or you can contact support and they will let you know your login details.

Cpanel is the control panel which is set-up on your server so that you can control things in a user-friendly environment. Don't worry if you've never used it before, it is very simply to navigate. Once you're in Cpanel, what you need to do is scroll all the way down the page and look for something called 'Fantastico' which should look like this:



Once you click on that link, you will see a whole host of software that you can install. On the left hand side look for the option that says **WordPress**, open that page and then click on **New Installation**. Once you have done this, you will see the following screen:



The screenshot shows the WordPress installation interface. At the top, the WordPress logo is displayed. Below it, the text "Install WordPress (1/3)" is shown. The "Installation location" section includes a dropdown menu for "Install on domain" (labeled 1) and a text input field for "Install in directory" (labeled 2). Below these fields, there is explanatory text: "Leave empty to install in the root directory of the domain (access example: http://domain/). Enter only the directory name to install in a directory (for http://domain/name/ enter name only). This directory SHOULD NOT exist, it will be automatically created!". The "Admin access data" section contains two input fields: "Administrator-username (you need this to enter the protected admin area)" (labeled 3) and "Password (you need this to enter the protected admin area)" (labeled 4). The "Base configuration" section has four input fields: "Admin nickname", "Admin e-mail (your email address)" (labeled 5), "Site name", and "Description". At the bottom of the form is a button labeled "Install WordPress".

1. In this drop-down you must select the domain you wish to use for your blog. Make sure to select the correct one, otherwise it could overwrite the work you have on another domain.

2. If you want to install a blog 'flush' with your domain i.e. just pluginid.com then leave this box blank. A lot of people like to put their blog under a sub-folder such as /blog. If you want to do that then just enter the word blog in the box. I don't recommend this unless you have other plans for the homepage.

3. This, quite simply, is the username you'll use to login to the Admin side of your Wordpress installation.

4. This is the password you'll use. Make sure you pick something hard to crack but also something that you'll remember.

5. These are fairly self explanatory. Don't worry too much about what you put in here as you can still change it later on.

**Now you just need to click 'Install Wordpress' and the job is done!  
Congratulations, you should now have Wordpress successfully installed on your domain.**

There is no reason there would be problems at this stage as this is a fairly simple process. If you think something has gone wrong, make sure you contact Hostgator so they can check it out for you.

If all has gone to plan, you're new blog should be installed and ready for you to test it out. To access your blog admin, simply go to <http://www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin/> – obviously substituting 'yourdomain' for your domain.

Login with the details you entered on the installation page and start looking around your new writing headquarters.

# Wordpress Theme

Now that Wordpress is installed, it's time to make it look *pretty* or at least unique. The default theme that comes with your installation is boring and very bland. It also doesn't give the reader much confidence that you care about your site when it looks so generic.

On all of the blogs I run, I try to make them look unique, and relevant to the niche I'm writing about if possible. Here is my current homepage for PluginID compared to the look of a default Wordpress theme:



Maybe I'm biased, but I think it is clear which one looks better.

There are two options you have when choosing a theme for your blog: free or premium.

**Free Themes** are of course, cost effective. Their only downside is that the creator rarely offers support and it's likely you'll have a site that looks like tons of others. If you know HTML and/or CSS then you can however, tweak your site to your needs. For PluginID I used a free theme that I **very, very heavily** tweaked for around 8 hours to get my desired outcome.

**Premium Themes** tend to come with lifetime upgrades for new versions of Wordpress and will make your site stand out from the crowd. Their downside, of

course, is that they cost money.

If you are interested in a **free theme** you can find a whole gallery of them [here](#).

If on the other hand you're interested in a **premium theme** that is both user friendly (no CSS / HTML knowledge required) and looks awesome then I recommend [Thesis](#).

Thesis is the result when Brian Clark, a top 100 Blogger and Chris Pearson, one of the most sought after Wordpress Designers, come together. Thesis has grown massively in popularity for two main reasons. It is very easy to tweak and change so that your site looks unique and it is also highly optimised for Search Engine's right out of the box.

It includes great features such as:

- An **extra** admin page in your Wordpress Dashboard
- A one-click option to change between a 1,2 and 3 column layout
- Easily change the header of your site via the Admin panel
- It is already highly optimised for search engines to help you get maximum traffic

Just check out the [video on their homepage](#) to see what I mean.

And just before you go away thinking that Thesis is just for beginner bloggers, think again. It is actually used by some of the biggest blogs in the world. Some examples of this include:

- Copyblogger – 65,000 Subscribers
- Matt Cutts – 40,000 Subscribers
- Chris Brogan – 22,000 Subscribers
- QuickSprout – 15,000 Subscribers
- Twitip – 10,000 Subscribers

These are all blogs that could easily generate a full-time income if their owners wanted to go down that route.

# Website Traffic

You can write the best blog content in the world, but it's a waste of time if nobody is going to find it. The “build it and they will come” theory does not apply to blogging. Instead, you need to actively work to increase the number of visitors your site receives.

On that same note, without visitors, you can't make money. There will be nobody to click on your ads, buy your products, or purchase anything through your referral link. If you're simply blogging because you like writing, then you might not care for any of the tips mentioned here. On the other hand, if you're part of the majority who does care about getting their content in front of people, read on.

There are literally tons of different sources that can drive visitors to your website. Some of the most common include:

- **Search Engines** – People actively searching for what you've written about
- **Other Blogs** – Being mentioned by other writers or leaving comments on their site
- **Referring Sites** – Getting listed on popular social media sites like Facebook, StumbleUpon or Digg
- **Direct Visitors** – People who have bookmarked your site or remember the name and come back regularly
- **Feed Subscribers** – People who have opted in for your updates and click through to your site whenever you write a new post

Building traffic is perhaps the most important aspect of running a blog. Your content does have to be top-notch, but if there is nobody to view it then what difference does it make?

This section is going to be fairly lengthy and will cover the most common ways to get traffic from a blog, looking at each idea in turn. Try not to get too overwhelmed by all the options out there, it is completely up to you how many or how few of these you want to implement into your traffic building plan.

# On-Site SEO

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation (I'm English) and is the 'art' of getting more traffic to your website via search engines. There are two main aspects to SEO; on-site and off-site. On site refers to the changes you can make to your own pages to make them more friendly. Off-site refers to building links from other sites, which we'll discuss shortly.

In this section we are going to be looking at the tactics you can deploy *on-site* in order to stand a greater chance of getting more search engine traffic.

## Permalinks

Permalinks are basically the formatting you use for the URL's of your posts. When you first install Wordpress your URL's will not be very descriptive and they will probably contain numbers. Instead, there is a tweak you can make so that they contain the words of your post. For instance, if I wrote about the launch of this eBook on my blog, I could make the URL:

<http://www.pluginid.com/blogging-blueprint/>

To achieve the same effect, you need to first log into your Wordpress Dashboard. Once there, select '*Settings*' on the left hand side, and then click on '*Permalinks.*' It is completely up to you which format you want to go for, but I prefer to use the 'custom' setting and just use the postname, as shown below.

## Customize Permalink Structure

By default WordPress uses web URLs which have question marks and lots of numbers in the URL structure for your permalinks and archives. This can improve the aesthetics, is [available](#), and here are some examples to get you started.

### Common settings

<input type="radio"/> Default	<code>http://www.pluginid.com/?p=123</code>
<input type="radio"/> Day and name	<code>http://www.pluginid.com/2009/06/10/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Month and name	<code>http://www.pluginid.com/2009/06/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Numeric	<code>http://www.pluginid.com/archives/123</code>
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Custom Structure	<input type="text" value="/%postname%/"/>

The look of this page will vary depending on which version of Wordpress you use. The custom structure will always be the same though. In the example above I have used `/%postname%/`

When writing a post I also edit the permalink. By default, your URL will include all the words of your title, but sometimes these can get very long and messy.

## Create a Sitemap

Sitemaps are useful for both search engine spiders who visit your site and human visitors. Search engines can only find other pages on your site if you link to them; they don't have special access or tricks to just guess the locations of your pages. A sitemap, which is basically a link to your main pages, will help them to include all of your pages in their database and effectively navigate your site.

Humans will also benefit from your blog having a sitemap. You can list all of your categories, your most popular posts, and pages they can use to find more about you or the products/services you offer (if any). To create a sitemap, all you have to do is add a new page to your site via the Wordpress Admin.

## Archives or Categories

Most blog themes will have links to a sites' archives and its categories in the

sidebar. This means that search engines can easily find your posts from last month, or even easily find all your posts about a certain category i.e. Blogging. Categories are also beneficial for your human visitors who want to easily access all of the posts you have written about a specific topic.

You will have to speak to your theme author about how to do this step specifically (I would show you, but it will change dramatically between each site) and simply choose one of them to show. I say to only choose one because I believe having both gives away too much 'link juice' and one page that has links to your older articles is enough. I also prefer to show blog categories rather than archives.

## Site & Post Titles

By default, the post titles for Wordpress are a little bit ugly. They include your site name, some funny looking arrows (>>) and then the title of your posts. This certainly isn't ideal. I firmly believe, and most experts will agree, that site / post titles are the most important aspect of your Wordpress on-site optimisation.

In other words, if you only follow one step in this guide, follow this one. Again, log into your Wordpress Dashboard and, this time, find the '*Appearance*' option on the left hand side. Under that you will see an option for '*Editor*' which you should choose. Next, locate the header.php file and you should see something like:

```
<title>lotsofrandomstuffhere</title>
```

Now what you want to do is change the content inside the title tag with some optimised PHP code, like so:

```
<title><?php if(is_home()) { echo 'Homepage title here'; } else { wp_title(""); } ?></title>
```

Basically this code is saying "if you are on my homepage, show the text in bold"

but if you are on any other page then just show the title of that post. Of course, you should change the part in bold to reflect whatever you would like your homepage title to be – people usually include their site name and slogan here. The titles of your individual blog posts will now only reflect the title of your actual post.

## Interlinking

Interlinking is basically linking internally to other posts on your site where relevant. As an example, if this eBook were a blog post, I might link you to the sitemap page to show you the similarities between creating a sitemap and interlinking. Interlinking is a nice and simple way to both increase your pageviews and give your site pages a little bit of link–love.

There are plugins that help out with this, but I'm not really a fan of automating processes like this. Quite simply: link to your other posts whenever necessary.

## No-Follow Sculpting

This is a slightly more advanced tactic so use it at your own will. Recently Google have come out and said that they don't approve of this method. I think the only reason they would say this is because they can't accurately check for it algorithmically.

No–follow sculpting is basically the process of keeping the link–juice of your site going to only your most important pages. Think of your site like a funnel. If your homepage has 1,000 links from other, relevant websites then it will be thought of as a strong page. If you link to other pages from your homepage, these pages will get a little bit of that 'strength,' that 'authority.' Figuratively speaking, of course.

I hard code a lot of the links in my blog theme, and by that I mean I write the HTML myself and don't let some PHP code automate the process. Because of this, I can add the no–follow attribute to any links I want. This attribute was created so

that search engines can detect spam or pages which don't deserve a flow of pagerank, and you'll find that it is applied to blog comments on the majority of sites.

The types of pages I no-follow include most sidebar links, my about page and my contact page. These pages are purely there for on-site visitors and I don't need them to rank highly in search engines.

## Non-WWW to WWW Redirect

For those of you thinking "What?," let me explain. Basically, it's a good idea to make sure that either the non-www version of your site (<http://pluginid.com>) is redirecting to the www version of your site (<http://www.pluginid.com>) or vice versa. The reason for this is that whenever somebody links to your site you want all that *link juice* to go to the same place.

The best way to do this is by using a 301 redirect, which tells the search engines that the link is permanent. You can learn how to do this over [here](#). As an extra measure, you can also sign your site up for [Google Webmaster Tools](#) and there's a section to tell them which version of your site to show in the search results.

## What Not To Do

I had spent 3 years writing about Internet marketing and SEO before even reading a personal development blog, so didn't know much about the industry. What really surprised me was the amount of bloggers I see that sell links on their site. Even stranger, is that I would see them asking why their Google Pagerank went down when they have links to 20 pharmacy sites in their sidebar. If you want to stay on the safe side of the fence then I wouldn't sell links in your blog. I do this on a few sites but only on sites where I don't care about Google or other search related traffic.

I also recommend that you don't write solely for search engines; your blog should

be all about the readers. If you are creative you'll find some way to include the keywords you are targeting into a post title without it looking spammy. If you simply want to include your keywords all over the place and make your text unreadable then you probably aren't in blogging to build up a readerbase. Or, at least, you shouldn't expect to build one.

# Spreading Your Brand

You found this eBook somehow. Somewhere out there in the World Wide Web you came across this guide. Whether it was from StumbleUpon, Twitter, a friend or you just already knew about my site (which you also found, 'somehow'). I've worked very hard at spreading the PluginID brand and I'm going to go through exactly how you can do the same thing.

## Get an Avatar

I strongly recommend that you pick an avatar (a small image) that is going to be used to represent your site on the various platforms I mention below. Your avatar should be something that stands out, is catchy and most importantly... memorable. If you sign-up on social sites and don't fill in your details or upload an image then you are going to look like every other lazy member of that community.

It can be something that represents your niche but it certainly doesn't have to. Here are some popular examples from around the web:



ID



---

The second one is mine

In order to get your avatar in comments like you see on a lot of blogs, including

my own, simply join [Gravatar](#) and upload the image you want to use. It works based on your email address so whatever email you insert in your comments, the corresponding image will show (if any).

## Join MyBlogLog

Although I don't use any of the services provided in MyBlogLog, there's one cool benefit to being a member. Whenever you view a blog that has their 'recent visitors' widget installed, which many of them do, your avatar will show on the side of the website.

Just through browsing the web I already had 4 friend requests on my profile and my page had been viewed over 160 times. When you factor in that your profile clearly displays your website URL then there's the potential to get quite a few visitors for no extra work on your part. You can check out MyBlogLog [here](#).

## Register on Social Sites

Whether you are a fan of these or not, there's a lot of traffic potential in all of them. I recommend only signing up on the ones that interest you and you will use but some of the biggest ones are:

- [Digg](#)
- [Mixx](#)
- [StumbleUpon](#) (Toolbar)
- [Reddit](#)

You should also check if there are any niche social voting sites in your industry. Squareoak has a [huge list](#) which might help in your search.

For all of the sites you join, upload your avatar from earlier and fill out your profile details. Whether or not you use a site name as your username is up to you. Some people prefer to remain anonymous so that they can become 'power users' and drive more traffic to their sites. For me, I make it clear who I am on StumbleUpon and Mixx but use a more anonymous profile on Digg where it is

frowned upon to vote or submit your own content.

## Join Twitter

Twitter is a 'micro-blogging' service which allows you to share 140 character updates with the world. My favourite aspect of Twitter is definitely the community interaction and seeing what other people are up to. Once again, I recommend you use the same avatar as on other sites, or at least show a picture of yourself.

I've been using Twitter as PluginID for over 8 months now and it is consistently in the top 5 referring sites in terms of traffic to the blog. What I love is that you can 'follow' users (add them as a friend) and keep up to date with like-minded people that have similar interests. When you fill out your profile you get to put your URL in the site field so definitely do this, and then start following people in your niche.

Following is not something that you can just do by itself and expect to get traffic from the site. Instead, the aim is to get more people to follow you. Some quick tips to get more followers include:

- Link to your twitter profile from your website
- Establish relationships with friends who are already connections on the likes of StumbleUpon & Mixx
- Ask interesting questions that people will reply to, then their followers will find your profile
- Offer great tips and advice in your industry so that people would be missing out if they didn't follow you

Finally, you can also use [TwitterFeed](#) to automatically update your followers of all new posts to your blog. I tend to click on the blog updates of others so this definitely sends traffic.

## Make Content Easy to Share

I'm amazed at how difficult some blogs make it just in order to Digg one of their stories or give it a save on Delicious. If you want to grow and want people to

share your content then you have to make it easy for them. If you look at the bottom of every post on my site then you will see there are quick links to:

- Email posts
- Stumble Posts
- Save to Delicious
- Digg
- Twitter

If you are using [Feedburner](#) then you can set this up very easily, I also have the links showing in my RSS feed for people who prefer to read content that way. People aren't going to share your content if you make it difficult for them, why would they go through the hassle?

# Niche Engagement

Niche engagement, as the name suggests, means immersing yourself in all aspects of your niche in order to get targeted traffic back to your blog. I'm going to run through some ideas of what I mean by this now.

## Blog Comments

I regularly comment on blogs in this niche for a number of reasons. The first is that the author is likely to come back to your site to see who is commenting. The second is that there's potential for visitors of the site you are commenting on to click your name (link) and arrive at your website. I found one blog comment to drive me over 100 visitors recently and when it is in the niche you blog in, you can't complain at the effort it takes to comment when you can get that many visitors.

Thirdly, blog comments are a good way to become 'closer' to the author of a blog, in which they might link back to one of your blog posts or simply add you as a friend on other social platforms. I tend to find that the authors of small to medium size blogs will comment back on your site as well when they get the time,

making yours look a bit more lively.

I have noticed, in the personal development industry specifically, that people will pretty much rely on this tactic solely in order to get visitors. It is far more effective in my opinion to do one of the following item (guest posts), rather than leave 25 comments on different blogs. Each, I believe, should be done in moderation though.

## Guest Posting

I have written a large number of guest posts for other sites since starting PluginID, and credit this tactic to greatly increasing my number of feed subscribers. Guest posts are a great way to get both backlinks and traffic to your website which can help with direct visitors and search engine referrals. It's best to do a guest post on a blog in your niche because that way the people that come across your site are much more likely to subscribe to your feed.

I have also written a few guest posts for blogs that aren't very related but are still large. My main reason for this is that I find it very easy to write on a range of subjects and prefer relevant posts to personal development niche to be written solely for PluginID.

However, you should try things out and see what works best for you. If you do give guest posting a try then don't value quantity over quality. You want to showcase your best work for others so that they:

- Are likely to post the content on their site
- Have a chance of receiving some good traffic to the article
- Bring in visitors from that site who want to see more of your work
- Are likely to invite you back to guest post again

## Forum Activity

If you didn't pick too small a niche when you started your blog, it's likely there will be a few large forums where your target audience hang out. In the personal development industry the biggest forum is definitely the one ran by [Steve Pavlina](#).

In the past I've spent quite a bit of time on the site, mostly because I enjoy the content and discussions there. If you don't enjoy the content of the biggest forums in your niche then you should question whether you really love your industry.

The reason I state that is because forum posting is something that can seem like quite a lot of work for relatively small results, even if the results mean targeted traffic. On most forums, you can place a signature link so that whenever you make a post there is a link back to your website at the bottom. I've found that this works well not only for website visitors but also in terms of making relationships with other bloggers on that website.

## Be Active on StumbleUpon

StumbleUpon is one of my favourite websites because time and time again it is able to show me amazing content from my niche at the click of a button. Not only that, but [StumbleUpon](#) is known to have the ability to drive *massive amounts of traffic* to your website.

When you first sign-up to the site you will be given some options to share your interests so make sure you actually care about topics that you select. Now, whenever you hit the 'Stumble' button in the toolbar, you will be directed to a new and interesting article in your niche (providing that some spam hasn't gotten through their filters). I tend to Stumble a lot of related content, especially that of my friends on [Twitter \(Add me\)](#) and the blogs that I comment on. If you are nice to others and vote for their content, then you'll find that they are likely to vote for yours in return.

Of course, don't only stumble the content of certain people as StumbleUpon might pick up on this and it will look as if you are gaming the system. Vote for whatever you find interesting and if it is something of someone you've 'connected' with in the past then even better. In terms of traffic potential I can say that StumbleUpon has sent me over 30,000 visitors in one day before and for another site sent over 150,000 in one month. So in terms of potential, there's absolutely loads.

If you want to know more about the service and how you can benefit from it, I have written this massive, [in-depth guide](#) on one of my other blogs.

## Be Real

The ideas I mentioned above are not ‘tricks’ so that you can start receiving traffic from other blogs, they are all utilising the power of networking, helping others, and being real. By being real I mean let people know who you are. There are multiple ways you can do this:

- Leave your full name in blog comments
- Have a picture of yourself on your about page
- Leave your full name in your blog posts
- Write from the heart, connect with people on a personal level
- Tell stories and try to link them to what you are writing about

I do all of those things on my site and I don’t think this site would have had such a quick growth if I was robotic and anonymous. Consider whether there are ways that you could come across in a more personal manner.

## Quality Content

Content is the main area that you need to focus on with your blog. Even if you don’t spend time tweaking your site for search benefits and don’t care that much about branding specifically on each social site, excellent content will still give your site a chance to succeed.

Of course, the definition of ‘quality’ really depends on which niche you are writing in. If you are writing on a golf blog then *quality* might be a new swing technique that nobody has thought of. If you are writing on a humour blog it may be about finding a funny image or a new joke that people just have to pass around. For my case in terms of the personal development niche, quality content tends to be content which is personal, original and fills a need.

The types of content that tends to do well include:

- List Content – ‘11 Ways to’, ‘21 Reasons why’, ‘101 things that’ – you find these a lot on blogs
- Unique content i.e. research into something that hasn’t been done or a personal challenge people are thinking of trying which you report on
- Viral Content – something that is *easy* for people to share and something that they are *likely* to share. Humorous content tends to do well
- Resource posts – links to products, services or items in one place that can help people's lives ([example](#))

Although you might have success with a post on the ‘11 Biggest Fashion Mistakes of 2009’, it’s not really going to go down well with your general audience on your soccer (football) blog. Remember that although social media sites have the potential to drive you a large amount of visitors, many of them will simply disappear so don’t push away your regular genuine readers with unrelated content.

If your content is just the same as what everybody in your niche is used to then you aren’t going to stand out. If most people write short newsy posts then try writing longer posts that are informative. If people tend to write list posts that offer little substance, can you do something different and still attract visitors in your niche?

Following is a look at some of my top articles with their titles and how many views they received:

Title: [21 Rules to Live Your Life](#)

Views: 44,541

Reason: The title of this post definitely attracted a social media audience. List type posts like this tend to do well on StumbleUpon and that is where most of the traffic to this article came from. Additionally, the content is fairly general so it really can appeal to anyone. After all, everyone is 'living a life.'

Title: [Personal Development Blogs](#)

Views: 27,522

Reason: The reason this page did so well is because I ranked the top sites in the personal development niche based on a number of public metrics. Everyone who is involved did their best to share the list with their fellow stumblers, tweeters or website visitors. If you can create a page that people benefit from sharing then definitely do it.

Title: [Dream Lifestyle? Think Again!](#)

Views: 21,751

Reason: The reason that this post did so well is that I took a popular myth and showed people a behind the scenes look. If you can change people's assumptions then you are onto a winner.

Title: [How to Get Someone or Something, Off Your Mind](#)

Views: 21,004

Reason: This post did very well on Care2 and StumbleUpon and was posted quite recently. This is a resolution to a common problem that people have, but I'm also putting my own spin on it. I didn't answer it in a way that you would normally expect and actually shared something I think would work better. I've noticed that a lot of search engine referrals are also coming in from this post so it's view count will constantly increase whether I get social media traffic or not.

# Wordpress Plugins

We've just looked over a huge section on traffic to help you get more visitors, and now we're going to look at Wordpress plugins to help you make the most of them. Wordpress plugins are one of the main reasons that millions of people use Wordpress: they give you the ability to tweak your site to get the functionality you want.

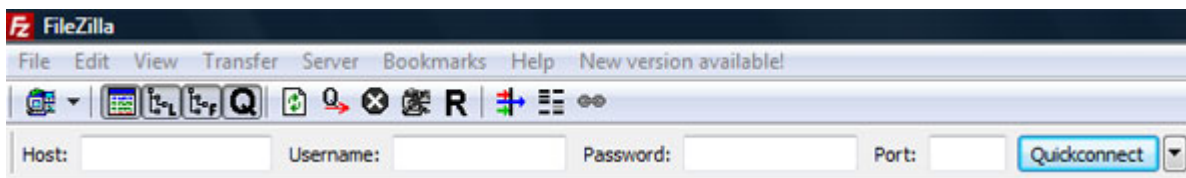
I have ran Wordpress blogs for around 4 years now and have probably tested close to 50 plugins in my time. I'm not going to be going through such an exhaustive list here today though; instead, I'm going to cover what I use now and why.

## How to Install Plugins

Before I get on to which plugins I think you should use for your site, you need to know exactly how you can install them. After-all, it's no use having the files on your computer if you can't enjoy the functionality they have to offer. To install plugins on your Wordpress site, you need to download some FTP software.

FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol and this software basically allows you to connect to your server and upload files, which, in this case, will be your Wordpress plugins. I personally use [Filezilla](#) and it works on all versions of Windows. If you have a Mac, simply look for an FTP program that works on your system and it should function very much the same.

When you load up Filezilla you should see a bar at the top that looks like this:



In here you need to enter the details of your hosting account. Your hostname is

usually the first domain you registered with your host, and you should know the username and password. You don't need to worry about the port setting. If you are unsure of the details for your hosting account then ask your host for your 'FTP details' and they will gladly give them to you.

If you use [Hostgator](#) who I recommended at the start of this guide, then your details should be available in your welcome email, but just ask them if necessary and you'll receive a prompt reply.

Once you are connected to your server via FTP, you need to navigate to public\_html >> wp-content >> plugins. This is the folder you will be using to install your plugins. **To install them, all you need to do is drag the files you save into this folder in the FTP program, and they will be uploaded to your site.** Then, you log into your Wordpress Dashboard and activate them on the left hand side at the page which says 'plugins.'

This might sound a bit complicated, but it is very, very simple. Just try it out and you'll see.

## My Recommended Plugins

I have used tons of plugins, but the following are the ones I use now:

- [Brian's Threaded Comments](#) – You can view Brian's Threaded Comments by going to any post on PluginID and checking out the comments. This plugin basically allows you to respond, inline, to individual comments. Try leaving a comment then replying to an individual comment on my site if you would like to try it out. I think that this keeps the conversation flowing in a much nicer format and encourages more discussion from your visitors.
- [Comment Relish](#) – Comment relish is one of my favourite plugins and I firmly believe it helps you increase the number of feed subscribers to your site. Note that there are a few negative reviews of this on the web, but the plugin has recently been updated to fix all previous concerns out there. This plugin emails people who have commented on your site for the first time and sends them a message of your choice. I usually thank people for

stopping by (genuinely) and show them how they can subscribe to get free updates in the future.

- [Feed Footer](#) – The majority of readers to my site (as will probably be the case with yours) find updated content via feed readers like Google Reader, or get updates in their email inbox. That means they rarely see all the content of your site and any other extra information you might have. The feed footer plugin allows you to add anything you want to the bottom of your posts and this won't show on your site but they will show to feed subscribers. This could be a free eBook that people get for signing up, or it could simply be links to some social bookmarking sites to encourage people to help share your content.
- [Enhanced Contact Form](#) – This plugin does exactly what you probably think it does, it allows your readers to easily contact you via a form on your site. The plugin means that you simply put a small piece of code into one of your pages and it is ready to go. What I *really* love about this plugin is that it shows you which pages a person came from (even on another website) before they send you an email. If someone came from a list of the top 100 blogs in your industry and offered you something, you can probably guess they emailed everyone in your list and they're sending out nothing short of spam.
- [My Top Commentators](#) – I believe blogging is all about the community, and the more focused and genuine audience you can build, the better your chances of success are in this area. Because of this, I like to personally thank the people who are active on my site. This plugin adds a new page to your Wordpress Dashboard and allows you to see the people who have left the most comments on your site over a period of time. Just don't forget to actually do something with the list rather than simply look at it.
- [Feedburner](#) – Note that Feedburner is technically *not* a plugin but it is an awesome service that was actually acquired by Google for \$100million. Feedburner allows you to rename your RSS feed so that you can track how many subscribers you have, and also offers easy implementation of ads so that you can earn more money. You'll see a lot of bloggers who include a 'chicklet' in their sidebar and this is provided by Feedburner.

There are literally thousands of plugins out there but these are some of my favourite. This pretty much sums up my blogging guide, but I would like to end this document by sharing a few of my secrets.

## Part Three

**Part Three** of this guide is all about taking things just a little bit further. Although I'm most proud about the fact that I'm giving this away for free, I still don't want it to be just *another* blogging eBook. Instead, I want to give away some handy tips you probably won't see very often elsewhere.

This section includes:

- Staying Consistent
- Dominating Search
- Ranking for 'Personal Development'
- Tracking Conversions in Analytics
- Providing Insane Value

As you will soon read, I was a little worried about giving *too* much away, but then I realised that in order to help people as much as possible, that is exactly what I have to risk doing. I hope you enjoy reading about some of my 'secrets.'

# My Secrets

Throughout the hard slog and creation of this guide, I kept thinking about the things that I *shouldn't* include. After all, I have managed to establish myself as one of the biggest blogs in my niche, why would I want to go and blow that? After thinking about this for a while, I realised that I really shouldn't hold anything back. My real mission in life is to just provide as much value as I can and make it as accessible for people as possible. That's pretty much the exact reason I have written over 70 pages in an eBook that I'm just going to give away.

I also realised that I wanted to give something a little more. I wanted to be just a little more transparent than anyone else. This is possibly because of my Internet marketing background, but some of my favourite posts on the blogs of others tend to be where they share personal information like traffic stats, updates on their travels or even income reports.

I also didn't just want this to be *another* blogging eBook. I wanted to share some personal insights as well as solid advice for being successful in this area. I think I have managed to do that with Part One of this guide, but I can probably take things a little further.

**Some of the following advice probably isn't new, so I won't claim it is. However, it is going to be personal.** I believe that total honesty makes it much easier for people to relate to my situation, and just see that I'm a normal person. I don't claim to be a guru or have all the answers, but I know what has worked for me and what will probably work for others.

Without further ado...

## Stay Consistent

You hear this all the time, right? I know I do. Whether it's trying to accomplish our goals or just growing a blog, staying consistent is one of the most common bits

of advice you'll hear.

In part one I mentioned how I actually sold my blog, PluginID when it had 350 subscribers. My real reason for this wasn't because I was sick of the topic or just wanted a change. It was actually because I thought of myself as a bit of a failure. Because of my Internet marketing background and the rather large status I had been able to build, I thought that I should have built over 1,000 subscribers in a month or two. Of course I was being unrealistic, but I had set a harsh goal for myself which I failed to reach. I became a quitter.

Thankfully, I woke up. Within about two weeks I realised what a huge mistake I had made, and managed to get the site back. It was actually a tiring process as I was on holiday at the time and so was the person who purchased my site. It was nice to have an extra \$1,500 for my efforts, but my original aim was to never sell the site and use it to try to give something back to the world. My lack of patience in regards to growth meant that I gave up and settled for meaningless cash.

Thanks to this lesson, I won't make the same mistake again. **One thing I have noticed about blogging is that you won't grow very, very quickly without big connections or multiple Digg homepages.** This sounds really negative but I'm serious. I look at sites like Zen Habits (30,000 subscribers in a year) and Digital Photography School (200,000 subscribers) and know for a fact that they would not be the size they were without these factors.

Of course, they've put in hard work, written excellent content and deserve their success. Leo and Darren are big inspirations in my life and I hope they continue to do well. The fact is though, it's very unrealistic to expect huge growth quickly without either of these factors. Some people will disagree, and I encourage them to send me an email with some examples and I'll happily update the eBook – [plugin@pluginid.com](mailto:plugin@pluginid.com)

In the 11 months my site has been live I have written 94 posts (most posts are around 1,500 words), hundreds of blog comments and around 30 guest posts. All to the result of a little over 3,100 subscribers. That isn't a small feat by any means, but it has taken a heck of a lot of work and I won't kid anyone about becoming a blogging success overnight.

If you can just stick at it though, the results will come. I'm no longer chasing a certain number of subscribers; I'm only measuring myself to the value I can put out on my site on a regular basis.

## Dominate Search

Most bloggers, if ceasing to write for a month, would lose over 50% of their traffic. The majority of them would pick it up again when began writing again, but the fact remains that a lack of writing means traffic disappears.

My plan this year (and hopefully for the rest of my life) is to begin travelling the world. I have been to 11 countries by the age of 20 and want to go to a heck of a lot more. Because of this, I can't be blogging on a daily basis and need to keep generating as much traffic as possible when I'm not around.

To do this, I'm relying on search.

A few months ago I wrote an eBook on 'How to Make Friends.' I did this partly because I have experience in this area after moving to a country where I didn't know one single person, and partly for traffic reasons.

What am I talking about? Look at this...

Keywords	Advertiser Competition	Local Search Volume: April
Keywords related to term(s) entered - <a href="#">sort by relevance</a>		
[how to make friends]		18,100

What you are looking at are results from the [Google Keyword Research Tool](#). The tool is basically saying that for this month, there will be 18,100 people going to Google and searching for 'How to make friends.' Let's say you can get the No.1 result in Google for this and 80% of searchers (that's about right) click on your result. **That would be an extra 14,408 visitors coming to your site in one month without you needing to do anything.**

I currently rank on the first page, 5<sup>th</sup> to be precise, and I'm increasing my rankings all the time. I do have a few more examples of this tactic, but I know some people

reading this eBook will not take the time to do their own research and just copy the keyphrases that I'm going for.

My tip is for you to use the tool and see what people in your industry are searching for and then give it to them.

Steve Pavlina (70,000 Subscribers), Darren Rowse (100,000 Subscribers) and other bloggers all admit to doing this in order to get more site traffic. It makes perfect sense and it will help you to not only increase traffic now, but in the long-term as well.

If you have no idea how to rank for a term in Google then don't worry, this next section will be covering just that.

## Ranking for Personal Development

A few days before putting the finishing touches on this guide, I noticed that I ranked on the first page of Google for 'Personal Development.' This is my big fish. The catch I've always wanted to make. I won't lie, it has taken a lot of work to be able to get this result, but I'm receiving tons of targeted traffic for doing so.

Let's go back to the Google Keyword tool for a second and see how many people actually search for 'Personal Development.' Note that if you are using the tool yourself, make sure you select 'All Countries and Territories' on the top left of the page, and select 'Exact match' on the right hand side.

Keywords	Advertiser Competition <sup>?</sup>	Local Search Volume: May <sup>?</sup>	Global Monthly Search Volume <sup>?</sup>
Keywords related to term(s) entered - <a href="#">sort by relevance</a> <sup>?</sup>			
[personal development]		33,100	33,100
[personality development]		33,100	27,100
[personal development courses]		1,600	1,000
[personal development plans]		1,600	1,600

According to the tool, the phrase *Personal Development* gets around 33,000 exact searches every month. Personal Development content is basically what my site covers, so I knew if I could rank for this keyphrase in Google then the people who find my site would probably like what I have to say and possibly subscribe to my

feed.

Let's just say there are 1,000 people searching for this term every day, and I rank in the top 3 spots. The top 3 spots generally get over 90% of the clicks for a term, so that's at least a few hundred visitors **every single day** who are highly targeted who may be coming across my website.

Of course, because a term is so popular, there is going to be a lot of competition. And trust me, for this term, the competition is tough. Thankfully I've been doing SEO for over three years so I was confident I could rank highly, and that's exactly what I did.

Depending on which datacenter you hit or when you search for this, you should see me hovering around the first or second page for this phrase. I'm really happy with that and will continue to try and improve my rankings. I'm also getting a lot of targeted traffic already so I can't wait to see what it's like when my position improves.

### **How did I do it?**

I would love to say it's easy, but it's not. If you have no idea how search engines work or why they rank certain sites then let me explain.

Every single day, millions of people go to one of their favourite search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing) and type in what they are looking for. Some people want free information, some people want a quick link to their favourite websites and some want to buy products.

**Have you ever wondered why some sites rank above another?** Why when I search for 'dog training' in Google, does one site get to rank 1st and one not even show on the first page, even if they both have excellent content?

The answer is simple: **backlinks**.

Backlinks are links from one website to another, and they help search engines to understand what is a quality site and what isn't. A link is basically a 'vote' saying

“Hey I trust this site, it has good content.” Google constantly ‘spiders’ the web and finds these links, and then ranks sites accordingly. A lot of results pages fluctuate on a daily basis because of this.

Thankfully, good sites do tend to rise to the top of search results, because people link to them. Therefore, because I want PluginID to rank highly for the keyphrase ‘Personal Development,’ then I need to get as many links to my site as possible that look like this: [Personal Development](#).

This is why, time and time again, you will see sites like Wikipedia, Amazon and other trusted sites rank highly in the search results. They just have millions of links. A good example of the power of backlinks is the Google results page for [click here](#). You will notice that some of the sites **don’t even have the text ‘click here’ on their pages**. They are simply ranking highly because they have a lot of links to their site with that text. Adobe rank highly because a lot of people probably link to their site saying ‘click here to download abode software.’

Backlinks are also how us pesky marketers were able to rank the Whitehouse website and a page about George Bush no.1 in Google for the phrase ‘miserable failure’ even though the words weren’t present on the page.

## How to Build Links

There are two ways to build links to your site, both the manual option and a tool that helps you automate the process. You can build links to your site manually in a number of ways, some are simple and don’t take long, others will require a bit more work. Some ideas for this include:

- **Changing Your Forum Signature** – If you are a member on any forums, it’s usually possible to add a link in your signature that will show on the bottom of any of your posts.
- **Write Articles** – If you write articles related to your subject then you can add them to article directories and get a link on the end of the piece. You can find hundreds of article directories [here](#).
- **Submit to Directories** – Just as there are directories for articles, there are also directories for links. These aren’t high quality links at all but they will

help somewhat. You can find thousands of directories [here](#).

- **Leave Blog Comments** – There are blogs out there which allow ‘dofollow’ comments which basically means that any comments you leave on their websites with a link will help towards your search engine rankings. You can find a list of do follow blogs [here](#), just make sure you do not spam the sites.
- **Write Guest Posts** – There will be blogs in your niche that allow you write articles for their site, and in return you can put a link to it on the end of your post. Search around for top blogs that are relevant to your niche

Building links by using some of these methods is free, but certainly not the only method you can use. I personally use a tool called [Bookmarking Demon](#) to build links to my site. If, after a week or 2, I notice that I need to improve my rankings (or longer if the phrase is competitive) then I will use some of the methods above.

[Bookmarking Demon](#) is a social bookmarking tool which can get you links on hundreds of sites, automatically. Basically the software:

- Allows you to auto–create accounts on hundreds of websites
- Submits your link to all of these sites at once
- Has an option for you to use proxies when submitting sites
- Is updated constantly (I’ve had it for 2 years)
- Allows you to save your accounts and load them whenever

I only ever really use this tool on my affiliate sites, and sometimes **this is all I use to get links which result in search engine traffic**. For some sites that have a lot of competition then I might do blog guest posts, submit to article directories and that kind of thing, but if you’ve picked a fairly uncompetitive keyword then you’ll find that this is usually enough.

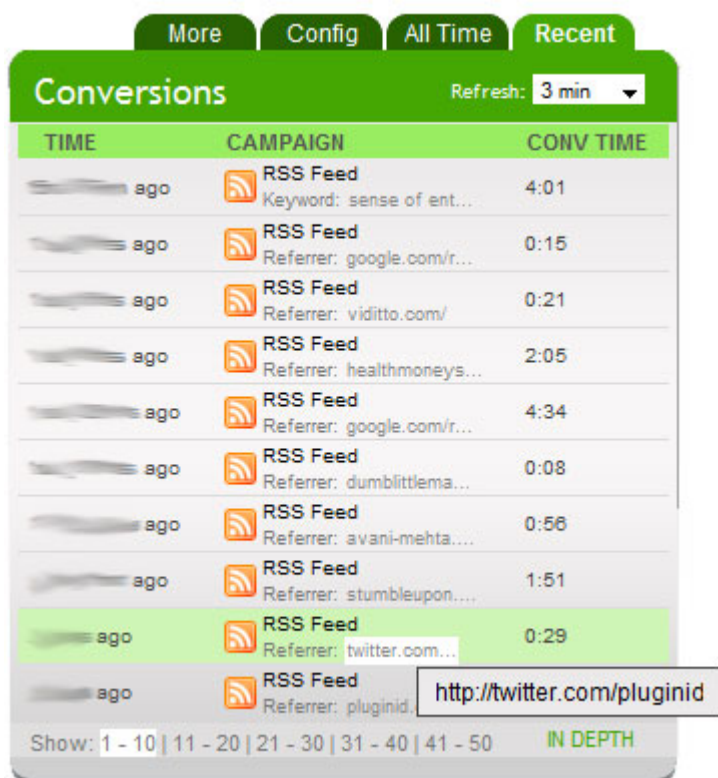
There is a 60–day money back guarantee that comes with the tool so if you have any problems or it doesn’t work out for you then you can get a full refund. I recommend that you check out the [free videos on their site](#).

# Track Conversions in Analytics

This is relatively simple, but a lot of people forget this advice or simply just dismiss the idea. To track website traffic, I use both Google Analytics and BLVDStatus. Google Analytics takes quite a few hours to update, so if you wanted to know *today's* traffic stats, your best bet would be to login to Google Analytics *tomorrow*.

Not with [BLVD Status](#) though. BLVD Status is a real-time traffic tool, meaning that you can see how many people are on your site *right now* and which pages they are visiting. My favourite feature is their conversion tracking, meaning that I tell it what I want it to look for, and it will tell me where that visitor came from.

As an example, I track who clicks on my RSS feed to subscribe to my updates. Thanks to BLVD, I can see exactly where that person came from in order to become a subscriber. Then, if there are a lot of people from one source, I can try to maximize that traffic source. This may be search traffic, guest post traffic or something else. **Whatever it is, use it to your advantage by increasing it as much as possible.**



The screenshot shows the 'Conversions' section of the BLVD Status tool. It features a green header with tabs for 'More', 'Config', 'All Time', and 'Recent'. Below the header is a table with three columns: 'TIME', 'CAMPAIGN', and 'CONV TIME'. The table lists several conversions from RSS feeds, each with a timestamp, a campaign name, and a conversion time. A tooltip is visible over one of the rows, showing the URL 'http://twitter.com/pluginid'. At the bottom, there is a pagination control showing 'Show: 1 - 10 | 11 - 20 | 21 - 30 | 31 - 40 | 41 - 50' and an 'IN DEPTH' link.

TIME	CAMPAIGN	CONV TIME
ago	RSS Feed Keyword: sense of ent...	4:01
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: google.com/r...	0:15
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: viditto.com/	0:21
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: healthmoneys...	2:05
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: google.com/r...	4:34
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: dumblittlema...	0:08
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: avani-mehta....	0:56
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: stumbleupon....	1:51
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: twitter.com...	0:29
ago	RSS Feed Referrer: pluginid: <a href="http://twitter.com/pluginid">http://twitter.com/pluginid</a>	

# Provide Insane Value

I hope that this guide will lead to hundreds or even thousands of new blogs sprouting up all over the Internet. Because of this, I want my final message to be one I'm proud to have shared and one that I believe is 'right.'

Never ever forget: the reader comes first. There are lot of big bloggers out there, who I won't name, who are successful in terms of money and subscribers, but just don't give a shit about their audience. For some reason, they have managed to forget that their visitors are what makes a blog popular and by cutting them out of your personal communication, you're just shooting yourself in the foot.

Instead of worrying about how to get more visitors, or how to make more money, ask yourself: "How can I provide more value?" I asked myself that exact question before I set about creating a 70+ page guide and deciding to give it away completely free.

This guide won't appeal to everyone and I'm sure 90% of people who do take the time to download it won't even get to this page. But you know what? Let me tell you my final secret....

The 10% of people who really take your advice in, really appreciate what you say and appreciate your honesty. Well, those are the people who are going to help your site more than you can ever imagine.

Consistent value will take you far.

Thank you.

# Thank You

I just want to thank you for reading this guide and taking the time to give me a chance. Blogging advice is a sector which includes a lot of scam artists so I hope you have benefited from some real advice which comes at no cost.

If you have any questions about **any** part of this guide then feel free to shoot me an email - [plugin@pluginid.com](mailto:plugin@pluginid.com). I get between 50 and 150 emails per day but I try my best to respond to every single one.

**BloggingBlueprint** is my way of giving back to all the people who have helped me on my own journey, and I sincerely hope it helps people to further theirs or even just start it.

If you like what I have to say, make sure you check out my blog on Personal Development. There's lots more insane value on the way.

I promise...

<http://www.PluginID.com>

**BloggingBlueprint**