

Beyond a Blog: Insider Tips to Creating an *Affordable* Website with WordPress

By Jenny Munn

Email: Jenny@JennyMunn.com

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Intro

“Learn and fail a lot to speak with authority”

What you will learn in this ebook:

- *How much I spent to create my WordPress website*
- *10 of the most important WordPress plugins*
- *The most essential component of a website*
- *The most visited website page*
- *What consists of good copy?*
- *Email marketing tips*
- *Copywriting checklist to effective writing*
- *How to track and measure your website’s performance*

...and more!

Greetings!

The objective of this book is to give you, my reader, the full benefit of my experience building a website using WordPress as a CMS. What’s a CMS? We’ll get to that. I am a non-techie and have filled this report with easy tips and shortcuts I wish I had all in one place. You can now use this when designing, creating, and writing your website.

This free ebook is for entrepreneurs and small to medium-size business owners who either are considering overhauling a stale website or creating a new site from scratch.

Creating a website with WordPress is absolutely doable and was a great experience. But, let me preface that statement with this warning and disclaimer: this report is in no way a full how-to guide. I’ll leave that to the professionals. If you’re not technically savvy, puh-lease don’t attempt to create a website yourself using WordPress as a CMS just based on this report. Putting together this blended website/blog took every ounce of my technical skills and included many frustrated nights (my poor husband bore the brunt of this) trying to fix incorrect HTML coding or extensively researching ways to do something only to find it was simple as adding a little plugin. I had endless communications with various helpdesk people, performed lots of Google searches and did a lot of reading. I was willing to wreak a little havoc on my site and experiment a lot. Please consider yourself warned!

That said, this was a great experience and I truly believe that WordPress is a great website platform that you will love. If you’re ready to give it a try, I welcome you to the WordPress community.

I hope you enjoy this ebook and learn a little something. Happy website creating!

Jenny Munn

3 Things to Know about WordPress (WP):

1. **WordPress.com is different than WordPress.org** (self-hosted).

This is a good article to read about [understanding the difference](#). Wordpress.org is what I had to download and install myself to create my website.

2. **CMS stands for Content Management System.**

Basically, it means that CMS is a platform. What it means in the context of “WordPress as a CMS” means that it is a website publishing platform.

3. **Scalability.** Can WP handle growth and influx? Yes! People Magazine and the New York Times use WP to run their websites.

Introduction to WordPress as a CMS

Widgetizing your dashboard...WordPress 3.0...Content Management System (CMS)...Static page...Backend... Welcome to the world of WordPress as a CMS.

A content management system (CMS) is software that makes it easy for non-techies to organize and manage web content. That’s hugely important, because it allows for easy, *affordable* maintenance and capabilities to update. And not just update – *instantly* update.

According to an iThemes, a top provider of customized WordPress themes, “WordPress as a content management system is not just for blogs anymore. It can be a fully functioning content management system, letting you build and manage your site without breaking the bank. If you can use Microsoft Word or set up a FaceBook account, you can use WordPress for your website.”

Previously, the only option for updating a website meant writing perfect copy and sending it to a website programmer to input. The process was slow and expensive and required a lot of back and forth communication to get things right. Using WordPress as a CMS, you can write, edit and incorporate text, images, videos, and links into blog posts or website pages.



MTV, Ford, WSJ, and Best Buy use WordPress as a CMS, among many others (*You’d be in good company*).

Getting the Website Up

Cost:

-Domain from
GoDaddy: \$10.87
-Web Host from
Hostgator:
\$4.95/month
-WordPress premium
theme through
iThemes: \$59.96 (with
a coupon)

Helpful Tip:

Although there are many free templates available with WordPress, I chose to go with a premium (paid) theme. The cost was well worth the \$60 as I had access to support techs and a user forum that was a valuable resource.

Preparation:

Before I started creating my website, I spent two months doing nothing but research. I made lists of competitors and colleagues' sites cataloging what I liked, what I didn't, which sites had the best portfolio page, what I liked about the homepage, and in general taking note of what was out there (I frequently referenced these lists throughout the web design process). I made sure I knew exactly what my objectives were and what I wanted from the beginning. Of course, my specs changed slightly, but mostly stayed true throughout the process due to my pre-planning.

I also started comparing themes (templates) and weighed the benefits of purchasing a premium theme vs. going with a free theme. I decided on a premium theme with [iThemes](#) due to the vast amount of video tutorials, articles, white papers, support and forums they had available.

After the pre-planning, **these are the 10 exact steps I took:**

1. Purchased my domain from [Go Daddy](#).
2. Registered for the Hatchling plan from [HostGator](#).
3. Transferred the DNS from Go Daddy to HostGator
4. Uploaded WordPress via the cPanel in HostGator (with one click via the app "Fantastico Deluxe")
5. Purchased the [iThemes](#) template
6. Activated my theme in the WordPress admin site
7. Transferred my blog from Blogger to WordPress via the import function in WordPress (Admin Dashboard -> Tools -> Import)
8. Incorporated my copy, photos, widgets, etc. **
9. Determine future website phases
10. Launch!

**This step by *far* takes the longest

Determining Website Architecture and Objectives

As I previously mentioned, I looked through about 100 of my competitor's sites to get a feel for what I liked and what I didn't. This also helped me determine my USP and differentiate myself.

I determined my **main website objective and purpose:**
To establish myself as a credible, professional copywriter.

As well as jotted down the following...

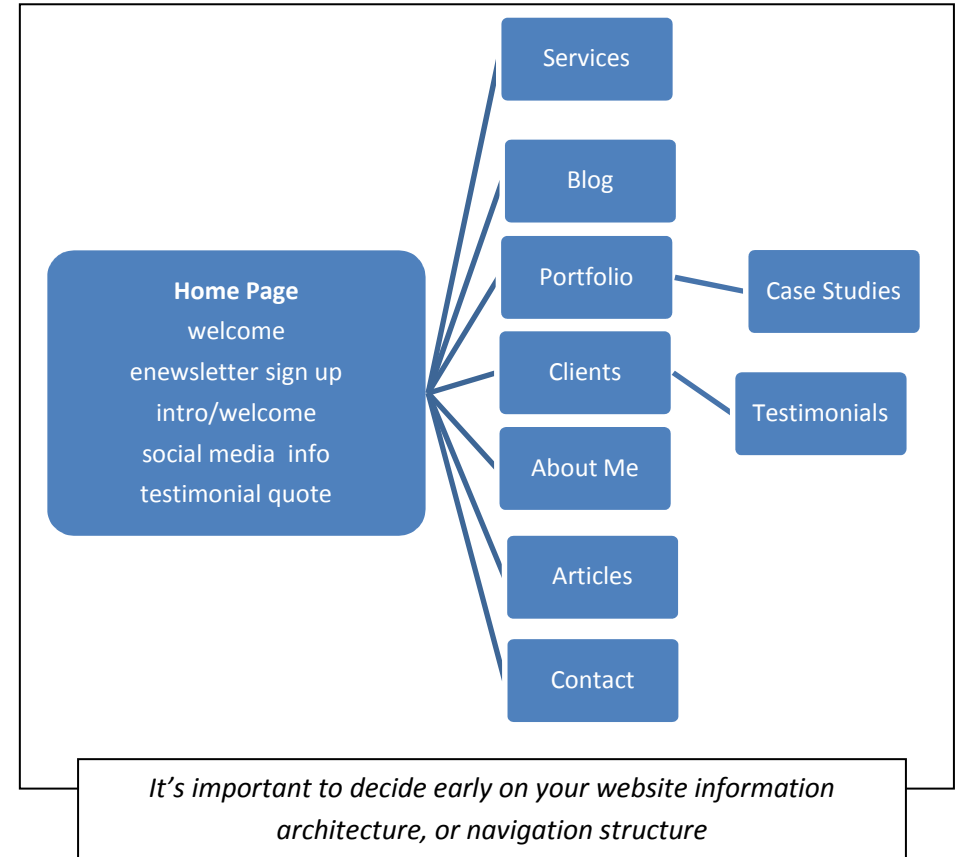
What Purposes Does My Website Serve?

To display my copywriting knowledge (through portfolio, free articles, etc)

To have people connect with me via social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube)

To be my main website presence (in addition to elements like my blog, social media, articles)

To provide further information for potential clients



Tips for Writing a Killer Website:

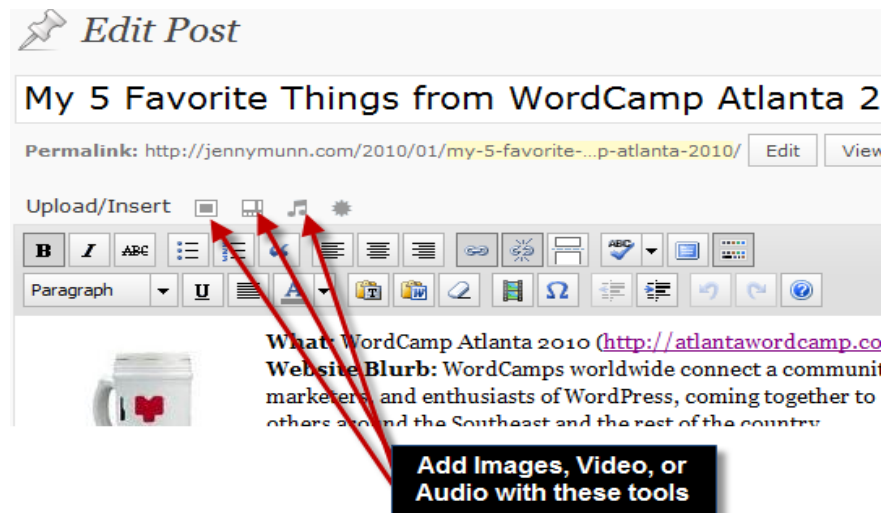
- *Have a call to action on each page*
- *Provide “answers” all over your website. Put yourself in a customer’s shoes and think what questions he or she would be asking*
- *Incorporate a few keywords on each page*
- *Don’t talk about you; talk about what the clients want*
- *Verdana or Arial is best with a minimum of a 11-point body font size and dark grey font color*
- *Encourage newsletter signups on every page of the site*
- *Use clear, concise headlines and titles*
- *Put your most important information at the top of the page and support it*

Writing the Copy

Even for a copywriter, the writing was the portion that took the longest; I did a *lot* of research, then began writing, then pared down, down, down. Readers will not follow long bodies of text on websites, so brevity is important. Following the rules of copywriting, I included calls to action on each page and I used 2-3 keywords per page. For the overall website creation, I’d say I spent 40% of the time researching, 50% writing and rewriting, 10% proofreading. I also:

- created my own style sheet to make sure my writing was consistent. Example, “Internet” not “internet” and “FaceBook” not “Facebook.”
- broke down each individual page to have its own goals, keywords, calls to action, etc.

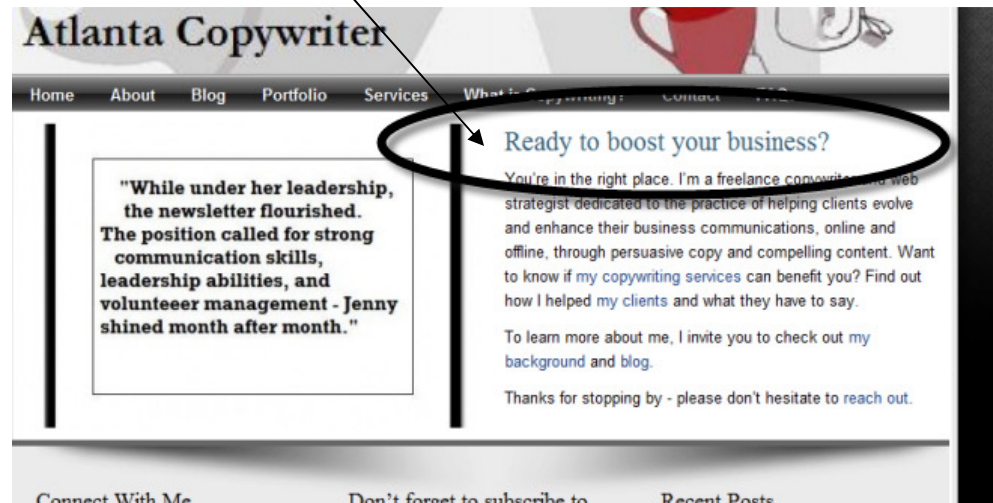
One note about using WordPress as a CMS – it’s so easy to incorporate Web 2.0 (and even Web 3.0) best practices into the platform. WordPress offers media tools and opportunities for engagement vs. just using the static, dry content that defined Web 1.0.



3 Core Pages: Homepage, About Me, and Blog

The Home page

Your home page is like a storefront window. It gives people an idea of what they'll encounter if they venture inside. For my website, I knew I wanted to have a short welcome message on my home page. The opening title was giving me trouble though because I had so much to say and couldn't decide on one idea. Initially, I started with this...



...but it didn't quite fit with who I thought might be visiting my site. This title was targeted more towards people who stumbled upon my site via search results, and it seemed to target exclusively SMB's (Small-medium size businesses) and entrepreneurs. I felt like I was excluding the agencies, third parties and graphic designers who make up a large demographic of my clients.

So I thought back to what my goals for the site were (this is why it's crucial to set up website goals and objectives). My goal was to be viewed as *a credible, knowledgeable professional*.

Beyond a Blog: Insider Tips to Creating an Affordable Website with WordPress

So this is what I came up with...



...I know, clever, huh?

Homepage Title

Type the title that you would like to use in the feature section beside the

Looking for a credible, professional copywriter? (leave blank for

Homepage Text

Type the text that you would like to use in the feature section beside the

You're in the right place. I'm a freelance copywriter and web strategist dedicated to the practice of helping clients evolve and enhance their business

Tracking Code

If you use a tracking service like [Google Analytics](#), paste the tracking code (leave blank for none)

<script type="text/javascript">
var gaJsHost = (("https:" ==

Homepage title goes here

Other titles I considered and discarded were:

- Ready to elevate your business
- Want to make your website work for you?
- Is your website your best salesperson
- Ready to evolve your web presence
- Thinking about improving and enhancing your business communications?
- Do you think it's time for a change?
- Think it's time to make some improvements?
- Think it's time to take your business to the next level?

Helpful Tip: It's important to come up with several titles and headlines before deciding on just one.

Tips for what to write in the About page

(brought to you by ProBlogger.net)

There are four main questions that readers want answered on your About Me page:

- who you are...
- your expertise and how it addresses...
- their problem or goal, and how they can...
- contact you

“About Me” Page

The About Me page is where you can really show a little personality and let clients know you are, what you stand for, and what they get by working with you. It’s geeky and outdated to be too corporate.

Writing the About page is also one of the most difficult pages to write. Most people hate talking about themselves and don’t know the art of self-promotion. So they end up talking about their pets, odd personal stuff, or their background which has nothing to do with the business.

Don’t fall into the trap of over-informing with irrelevant information (such as people do with their FaceBook status updates). This is a resume and your business side, so treat it like one. Be professional, yet have fun as well.

As with the rest of your site, it’s about incorporating your strategy and what deciding what message you want to communicate.



Blogging Tips **(from e-Riches 2.0 by** **Scot Fox)**

- *The magic formula for blogging success = if you have something to say that will grow your business, then start a blog. Otherwise shut up.*
- *Attract readers with a soft sell approach that provides useful information and gradually leads them toward purchases.*
- *Search engines love blogs*
- *A blogging sin that people commit is either under-publishing or over publishing.*
- *Blogging requires a commitment – don't blog for a month and then complain it doesn't work.*
- *Comment on other relevant blog posts.*

Blog

Website with a side helping of blog? Yes, please!

I am a huge advocate for the blended blog and website. It's a lethal combination. It's not only ideal for SEO purposes, it also gives clients and colleagues a chance to get to know you a little better. Although having a blog is not *required*, it's one of the main reasons users choose WordPress as a CMS. WordPress is first and foremost a blogging software that has evolved to include more functionality.

What this means is that WordPress is perfect for managing and consistently adding content.

Blogging is also a very cost-effect method of spreading your marketing message, becoming a resource for customers, and engaging readers.

The average blog post should be about 350 words along, include a relevant photo, a few external links and at least one internal link. Also, having a blog does not mean coming up with original, Pulitzer Prize winning content for every post. You can find content from other sources such as online article directories or secure guest bloggers to offer their expertise.



Plugins

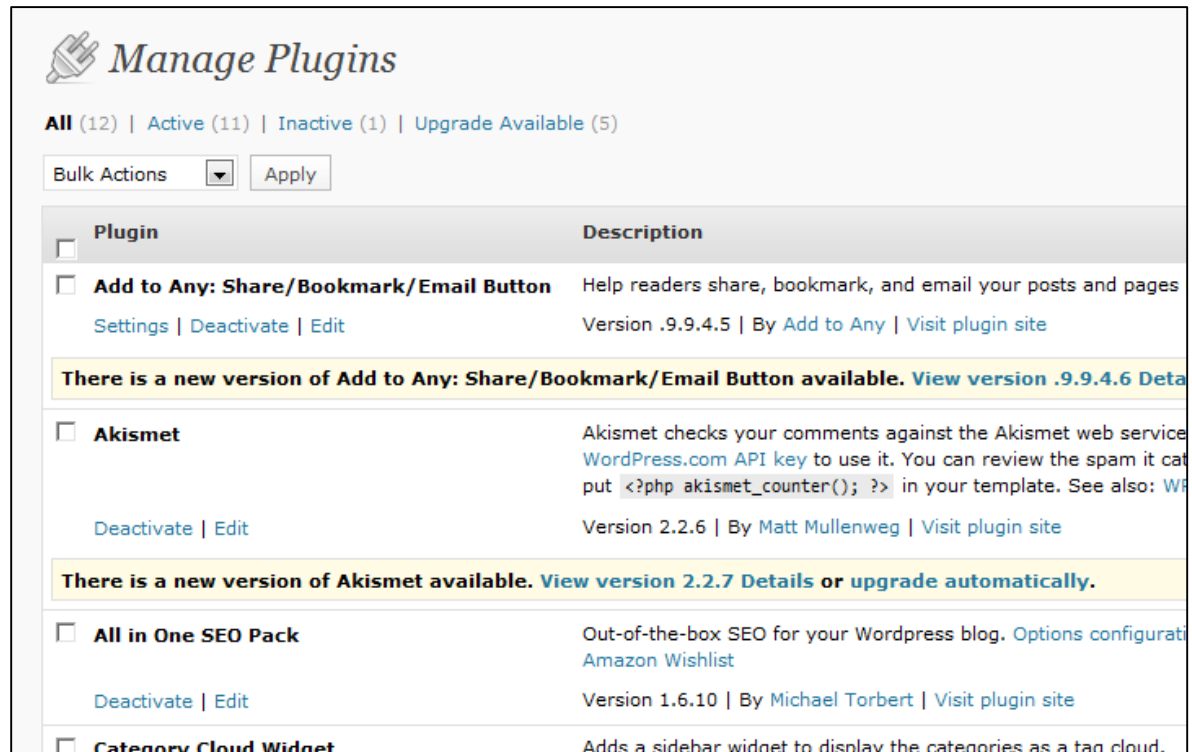
WordPress defines a plugin as:

"a program, or a set of one or more functions, written in the PHP scripting language, that adds a specific set of features or services to the WordPress weblog, which can be seamlessly integrated with the weblog using access points and methods provided by the WordPress Plugin Application Program Interface (API)."

That sounds scary, but it's really not. Plugins are really cool and are going to be your website/blog lifesaver. Really, a plugin allows for easy modification, customization, and enhancement to a WordPress blog or website.

Here are 10 cool plugins you're going to want:

1. All in One SEO Pack by Michael Torbert
2. Add/Share/Bookmark/email button
3. Google XML Sitemaps
4. WP-DB-Backup
5. WP-Cache
6. WP-Spamfree
7. Related Posts (YARPP)
8. Akismet
9. Image Widget
10. WP-Polls



The screenshot shows the 'Manage Plugins' page in WordPress. At the top, there's a title 'Manage Plugins' with a plug icon. Below it, there are filters: 'All (12) | Active (11) | Inactive (1) | Upgrade Available (5)'. There's a 'Bulk Actions' dropdown menu and an 'Apply' button. The main content is a table with two columns: 'Plugin' and 'Description'. The table lists several plugins, including 'Add to Any: Share/Bookmark/Email Button', 'Akismet', 'All in One SEO Pack', and 'Category Cloud Widget'. Each plugin entry has a checkbox, a title, a description, and links for 'Settings', 'Deactivate', and 'Edit'. There are also yellow notification banners for updates on 'Add to Any' and 'Akismet'.

| Plugin | Description |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add to Any: Share/Bookmark/Email Button | Help readers share, bookmark, and email your posts and pages
Settings Deactivate Edit
Version .9.9.4.5 By Add to Any Visit plugin site |
| There is a new version of Add to Any: Share/Bookmark/Email Button available. View version .9.9.4.6 Details | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akismet | Akismet checks your comments against the Akismet web service
WordPress.com API key to use it. You can review the spam it catches
put <code><?php akismet_counter(); ?></code> in your template. See also: WP
Deactivate Edit
Version 2.2.6 By Matt Mullenweg Visit plugin site |
| There is a new version of Akismet available. View version 2.2.7 Details or upgrade automatically. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All in One SEO Pack | Out-of-the-box SEO for your Wordpress blog. Options configurati
Amazon Wishlist
Deactivate Edit
Version 1.6.10 By Michael Torbert Visit plugin site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Category Cloud Widget | Adds a sidebar widget to display the categories as a tag cloud. |

Tracking, Tracking, Tracking

Incorporating and consistently using Google Analytics with WordPress is critical. Google Analytics is a very robust, *free* tool that's easy to use with only a little background education. The most important analytic you need to know concerns where your traffic is coming from, also known as the traffic sources (search engines, blogs, advertising, other websites, etc.).

A few other terms you'll want to know:

Bounce rate = when people only look at one page (the page they land on), and then they "bounce" off and leave your site. AKA: not good. Do you have a high bounce rate? If so, revisit your copy. Do you have a call to action? Is it clear what you want your readers to do? If not, revise.

A Goal = is more or less a URL. For example, if you want to know how many people visit your "About me" page, plug in that URL to track it.

Direct Traffic = people typing in your address or going straight to it from their bookmarks.

Referring sites = what you get when people follow a link to your website. This lets you see what kind of links send traffic.

Keywords = lets you see a list of all the words and phrases people used to search when they landed on your sight.

Google Analytics

Analytics Settings | View Reports: www.jennymunn.com/

Tracking Code

If you use a tracking service like [Google Analytics](#), paste the tracking code in the box below:
(leave blank for none)

```
<script type="text/javascript">
var gaJsHost = (("https:" ==
document.location.protocol) ? "https://ssl." : "http://
```

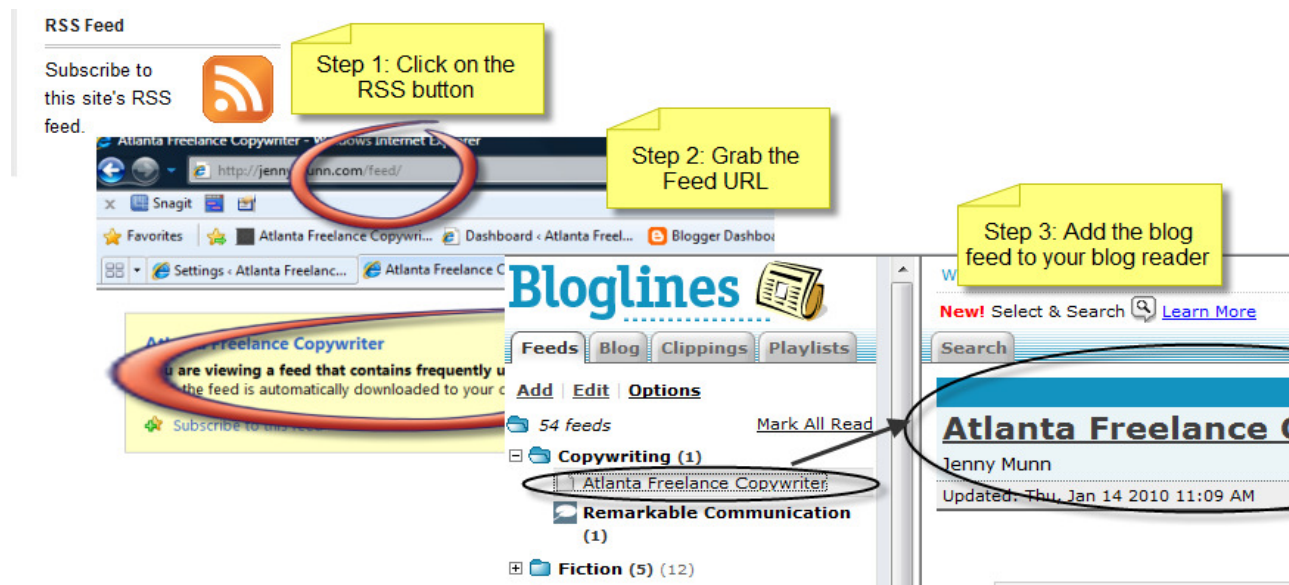
Does your tracking service go in the header or footer of the code?

Footer (default)

Subscriptions

There are two subscriptions I use and recommend: FeedBurner email and RSS.

1. FeedBurner: according to Google (its parent company), FeedBurner email is a service that allows publishers (bloggers) to deliver their content and blog posts to subscribers via email. Bloggers may want their subscribers to have an alternative method for receiving their content to the familiar setting of their email inbox.
2. RSS: there really is NO simple way to explain RSS. People much smarter than me have tried and tried...and tried. So I'll just show screenshots instead. If the experts can't explain it well, I probably can't either. What I *did* tell a colleague who seemed to at least pretend like she understood me, was that RSS is the vehicle that transports a blog into a blog reader like Google Reader or Bloglines (which I use). This means that instead of visiting your 10 favorite blogs all in different locations, you can go to one place to view them all.



Email marketing tips to build your email list: (brought to you by E-mail Marketing for Dummies by John Arnold)

1. Place sign-up links in your website and email signature
2. Offer an incentive – such as a discount – to join your email list
3. Place a guest book on your business counter or desk
4. Ask people to forward your sign up link to friends and colleagues
5. Collect email addresses at trade shows and events
6. Include a sign-up URL (such as in print advertising)
7. Ask people who you meet face-to-face if they want to join your list.

List Building

Stop. If you're not collecting emails on your website, you're losing out on *a lot* of potential business.

List building is your most important website activity. You should gather all of your customers' email addresses into an official mailing list. This includes everyone who has ever bought your products or services, has asked for information, or contacted you regarding your business.

It's very important to market your goods and services without being a spammer. Providing helpful, valuable information that will help people in the buying process is a sure way to keep subscribers. Remember, your goal is to be a *resource* to your subscribers and not a nuisance.

Done properly, email marketing is highly effective.

Excellent resources can be found at [Constant Contact](#), [MailChimp](#), and [AWeber](#).



Coding in HTML...“Gulp”

The beauty about WordPress is that the coding requirements are pretty minimal. I only needed to modify the HTML a few times, and it was mostly to tweak plugins or add a few hyperlinks. I know just enough HTML to be dangerous. Helpful HTML websites are www.w3schools.com, www.bignosebird.com, and www.webmonkey.com. HTML is a little confusing at first, but not as scary as it seems.

Here’s one example in which I modified the HTML code to alter the verbiage displayed in my FeedBurner Email plug in. I wanted to remove the text, “Delivered by Feedburner.”

I went from this to this by identifying and deleting this snippet of HTML code

```
<form style="border:1px solid #ccc;padding:3px;text-align:center;" action="http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify" method="post" target="popupwindow" onsubmit="window.open('http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=AtlantaFreelanceCopywriter','popupwindow','scrollbars=yes,width=550,height=520');return true"><p>Enter your email address:</p><p><input type="text" style="width:140px" name="email"/></p><p><input type="hidden" value="AtlantaFreelanceCopywriter" name="uri"/><input type="hidden" name="loc" value="en_US"/><input type="submit" value="Subscribe" /><p>Delivered by <a href="http://feedburner.google.com" target="_blank">FeedBurner</a></p></form>
```

Things to consider as you're creating your site:

-don't get sucked into spending hours and hours looking for cool photos. It's not that important.

-don't get sucked into doing anything too fancy or applying a lot of bells and whistles.

-Think back to the main objective you're trying to achieve and make sure everything you do meets that. For example, I know clients go to my site mostly to check out my portfolio. So I'd reign myself in when I started to stress over small details.

-walk away. Know when to shut down your computer for the night. Burnout is synonymous with creating a website.

"What the Hells"

This last section I call my "What the Hells." As in:

- What the hell do I do with the cPanel on my web hosting site? *I haven't touched it since the first day I bought my web hosting plan.*
- What the hell is an FTP client? *I keep reading about it, have never used it, and am now afraid my site is going to malfunction and explode.*
- What the hell am I supposed to do to make sure my website is browser compatible? *"Huh?"*
- And finally, what the hell am I to do with this annoying code that has appeared at the bottom of each of my 75+ blog posts:

Re:FOCUS on Careers and Daniel Silva

August 6, 2009



The second event I attended was with Ri in a packed room listening to expert sto to brand yourself and to literally, tell our networking. Whew – I have A LOT of folk only half the battle. The majority of what

<SBlogFeedsVertical\$>

What's IN What's OU'y

October 6, 2009

I love lists that tell consumers wha nit and dramatic but I actually rather I, ta are a few things from it (I particular tor

In: Competitive Workouts (Biggest Lo Sports Bars (cheap beer – a sign

Out: Wireless Ear Pieces (this is "a reli Trashing Electronics (recycle them

<SBlogFeedsVertical\$>

2 Minute Video Book Review: Search Engine O

November 6, 2009



I hope you enjoy my first video review! I really enjoyed this book, Search . Your visual blueprint for effective internet marketing. Highly recommend more about SEO.

<SBlogFeedsVertical\$>

Future Planning (Phase 1, 2, and 3)

Just as I got within sight of my website launch finish line, I kept adding items to my website to-do list. Afraid I would NEVER go live, I decided to divide my website planning into phases, which is an activity I highly recommend. Just because you launch does not mean you're done with your website. Here's how I divided my future planning and website phases:

Phase 1:

Usability testing (aka, get my smart friends to look at the site and test it)
Upload eBook
Turn off privacy settings
Launch website

1

Phase 2:

Upgrade WordPress and plugins
Write and distribute a press release
Incorporate video
Familiarize myself with Google Analytics
Analyze and evolve keywords
Send out monthly newsletter
Develop "Resources" page and add content
Conduct testing of headlines, offers, etc.
Update Portfolio

2

Phase 3:

Drive traffic to site with article marketing
Develop and sell info products
Create a PPC campaign
Create a press room
Monetize blog

3

Resources:

<http://www.wpbeginner.com/>

http://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page

<http://wordpresscms.itthemes.com/basics/5-benefits-of-using-wordpress-as-a-cms/>

For more advanced readers, this blog post (and especially the comments) are very valuable:

<http://www.devlounge.net/publishing/things-to-consider-when-using-wordpress-as-a-cms>

Remember: One of the best things about attempting to design your own site is the ability to hire a programmer or designer to tweak (or fix) the site based on your existing efforts. I'm happy to recommend a few techies.

Conclusion

Of course, there may have been a *few* other steps along the way that I didn't write about, such as how to upload PDF links, use Google Alerts throughout the process, or how to incorporate cool graphics. But I have a website to go launch!

I enjoyed my adventures with WordPress and hope you learned a little something along the way. As I continue to build my online presence and create new websites, I am now well prepared to do so much faster, smarter, and cheaper.

The first time you do anything it always takes the longest. So if you plan to create a few websites or do an existing site overhaul, using WordPress as a CMS is a great option to consider.

Thanks for reading! Feel free to contact me at [jenny\(at\)jennymunn\(dot\)com](mailto:jenny(at)jennymunn(dot)com) with any questions or comments.



As a freelance copywriter, blogger, and web strategist, I use my digital marketing knowledge and sales background to help clients evolve and enhance their business, online and offline. From SEO to social networking, article writing to e-newsletter editing, ghost blogging to writing persuasive web content, I am carrying out my goal to be the go-to copywriter for agencies, entrepreneurs, and small business owners.

Thank you!
Jenny