

# Leveraging WordPress for SEO

## Intro

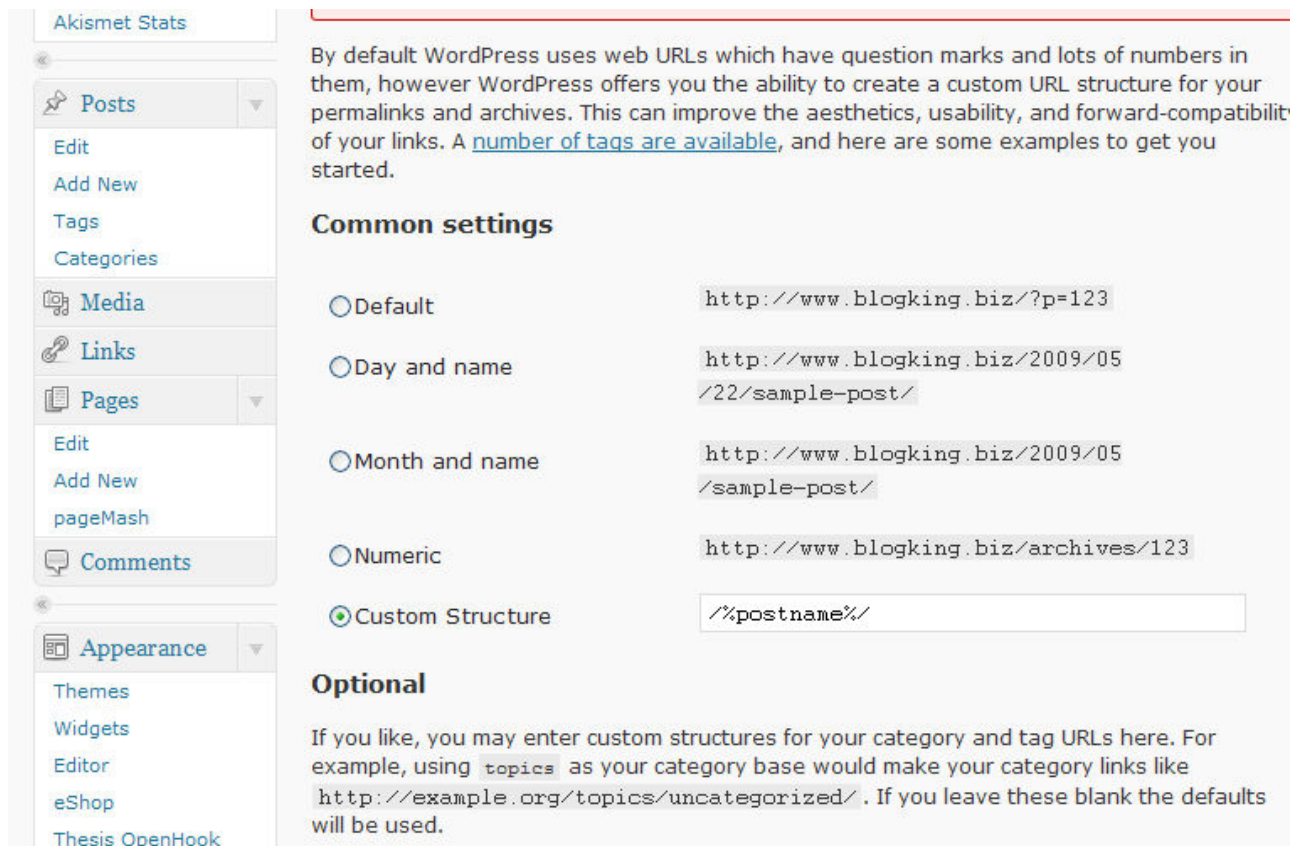
WordPress is a great platform for web development for the non technical user because SEO considerations were integrated in the core design from the beginning. With the abundance of Plugins to extent the functionalities WP can be optimized for SEO to a high degree. This talk will focus on how to do that along with how to optimize WP for speed.

## Basic Setup

### 1. Permalink settings

Never leave in default mode with ?p=number

Dated formats are also bad. Do people search in Google that way. I use the custom field to display just the post title: show Google the important info only. Some advocate for categories/title. The jury is out on that. I like just the title.



The screenshot shows the WordPress Admin Panel's Permalink settings page. On the left is a sidebar menu with categories like Posts, Media, Links, Pages, Comments, and Appearance. The main content area has a heading 'Common settings' and five radio button options: Default, Day and name, Month and name, Numeric, and Custom Structure. The 'Custom Structure' option is selected. Below this is an 'Optional' section with explanatory text and a text input field containing the custom structure code: `/%postname%/`.

By default WordPress uses web URLs which have question marks and lots of numbers in them, however WordPress offers you the ability to create a custom URL structure for your permalinks and archives. This can improve the aesthetics, usability, and forward-compatibility of your links. A [number of tags are available](#), and here are some examples to get you started.

### Common settings

<input type="radio"/> Default	<code>http://www.blogking.biz/?p=123</code>
<input type="radio"/> Day and name	<code>http://www.blogking.biz/2009/05/22/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Month and name	<code>http://www.blogking.biz/2009/05/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Numeric	<code>http://www.blogking.biz/archives/123</code>
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Custom Structure	<input type="text" value="/%postname%/"/>

### Optional

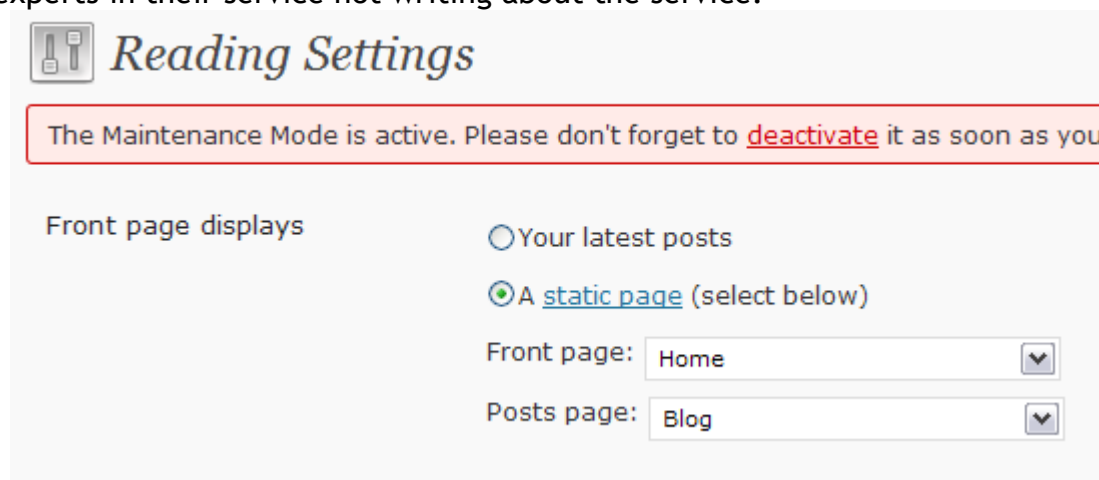
If you like, you may enter custom structures for your category and tag URLs here. For example, using `topics` as your category base would make your category links like `http://example.org/topics/uncategorized/`. If you leave these blank the defaults will be used.

### 2. Reading setting

Make you home page a **static page**, NOT the default posts reverse date listing. My philosophy has changed in last year or so to one that deemphasizes posts in favor of

pages. Think about this from Google's viewpoint. Posts are dated. Do you read newspapers from last week let alone months ago? Google is weighting posts more and more as news items with a shelf life.

To build your SEO strategy around posts is saying you are willing to be on the posting treadmill. That's fine if you have a site like TechCrunch with multiple authors. But most small business owners are not prolific writers, nor should they be. They are experts in their service not writing about the service.



3. **Create categories with keywords for your target audience.** Each post in WP is a separate html page. So the category acts like an anchor text for that page. Do traffic research first. You can use the free services at <http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-tools/seobook/>

My first blog featured people in different fields who had adopted blogging. One category was professors. Later I did the keyword research and found teachers had 10x the traffic as professors. Hey, professors are teachers so I changed the category. Nowadays tags are more important, but you still want a base of 7-12 categories.

4. Have a philosophy of creating “**evergreen**” content. You want other sites to link to your articles? Make them link worthy by creating content that has long lived appeal. How? Make a page on the topic and update it periodically. At the bottom link to your relevant posts that are more extemporaneous. Refer readers in those posts back to your evergreen article. This technique is also good internal linking strategy. A great example of blog with an “evergreen” approach is **DoshDosh.com** ; he doesn't post every day, preferring to write longer form meaty articles which attract lots of page views and links even years later.
5. Use plugin **WP-DB Manager**  
This is a must. First schedule database backups at least once a week. You can have it email zip file or save on server. That way all your pages and posts are secured. Second run the optimize tables once a month to keep things ship shape.
6. Use plugin **WordPress Backup**.  
Backups the upload directory (images), current theme directory, and plugins directory to a zip file.

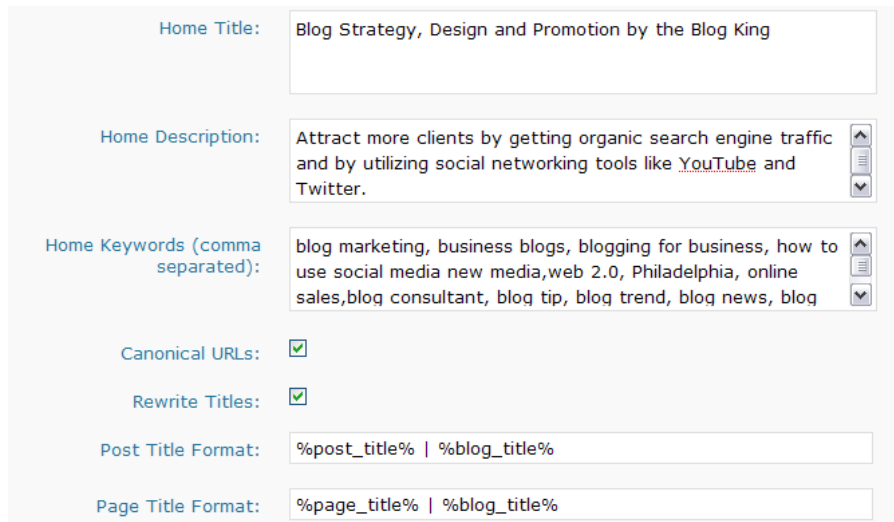
## Speed Optimization Tips

1. Once your site is all done, use **WP Super Cache** plugin to speed up. This creates static html pages that are served fast rather than database calls each time a page is requested. Obviously turn this off if you are in creation mode. If you use Firefox I would install ySlow to see where your site is prior to installation and your load time once you have gzip compression and page caching in place. To make this plugin even more effective check out [Askapache's Hacking WP Super Cache For Speed](#). His re-writing of the .htaccess file has proven to be quite effective.
2. **WP Tuner** plugin Discover why your blog or plugin is slow or cranky. It's a comprehensive time and database access analyzer. Good discussion here about **removing even deactivated plugins** for speed increase:  
<http://blogs.icta.net/plugins/2008/11/20/the-1-easiest-way-to-speed-up-your-wordpress-blog/>  
I wonder if that applies to deactivated themes also?
3. **WP Turbo setting**  
This enable Google Gears which makes a live local copy of you site. This will speed up your editing but does nothing for your site visitor.

## SEO Tweaks

### 1. #1 use All in One SEO Pack

This does the 20% of effort needed by you to achieve 80% of results with on-page factors. And default setting are good to go.



The screenshot shows the configuration interface for the All in One SEO Pack plugin. It includes the following settings:

- Home Title:** Blog Strategy, Design and Promotion by the Blog King
- Home Description:** Attract more clients by getting organic search engine traffic and by utilizing social networking tools like [YouTube](#) and Twitter.
- Home Keywords (comma separated):** blog marketing, business blogs, blogging for business, how to use social media new media,web 2.0, Philadelphia, online sales,blog consultant, blog tip, blog trend, blog news, blog
- Canonical URLs:**
- Rewrite Titles:**
- Post Title Format:** %post\_title% | %blog\_title%
- Page Title Format:** %page\_title% | %blog\_title%

Here is a list of the most important on-page ranking factors and how they are addressed by this WordPress SEO plugin.

- **Titles**

The text that you see in your browser's window bar is the most important thing *\*on\** your page. Make sure your titles are getting **rewritten** and the important stuff (**your post titles**) **always come before anything else**. You can leave a few words from your blog title to do some branding but don't overdo. If your post titles don't contain your most precious phrases you want to rank for then tweak them. Leave the post titles as it is but change the meta title.

- **Descriptions**

Once your pages rank in search engines your description (aside of course from your title) makes a potential visitor want to click through, or not. It's meta descriptions, believed dead by many people, that decide over your site's fate. If you don't want to invest the time and write a description for every post at least let them be auto-generated. This vastly better than the usual "Share This ... Posted on ... under ..." description that is often used. **The preferred source for your post description is your post excerpt.** Use this when you want to tweak your description.

- **Keywords**

All in One SEO Pack can generate them from your categories (this was the old way of tagging your posts in wordpress) or, starting with Wordpress 2.3, the built-in tagging system. Using your categories is optional, the rest is auto-detected and used if there. **WP 2.3.x tags are the preferred keyword source.** Tags are like micro-categories or index keywords for your posts. Your site should probably only have 7-12 categories, but you can have hundreds of tags.

- **Duplicate Content**

You can have "noindex" and the like generated for archive-, category- and tag pages if you seem to have trouble with duplicate content.

- Canonical URLs. Stick to one pattern everywhere. use www or don't but not both. or Google will see as separate site and dilute your score. Check box here to have either version point to what you specified in General Settings:

WordPress address (URL)

Blog address (URL)  Enter the address here if you want your blog homepage to be different from the directory you installed WordPress.

- You can also override and optimize each post or page in the editor:

**All in One SEO Pack**  
[Click here for Support](#)

**Title:**

**Description:**   
 0 characters. Most search engines use a maximum of 160 chars for the description.

**Keywords (comma separated):**

Disable on this page/post:

## 2. SEO smart links

SEO Smart Links can automatically link keywords and phrases in your posts and comments with corresponding posts, pages, categories and tags on your blog. Further SEO Smart links allows you to set up your own keywords and set of matching URLs. Finally SEO Smart links allows you to set nofollow attribute and open links in new window. Everything happens completely transparent, and you can edit the options from the administration settings panel.

## 3. RSS feeds run thru FeedBurner

**FeedBurner FeedSmith** plugin Paste you Feedburner address in and all feed links will now pull automatically from FeedBurner not native WP feed. Not only is this another source of traffic and analytics but who owns FeedBurner ->Google. Do you think they are indexing them. Yes, since you can attach AdSense Ads in you feed.

## 4. SEO Friendly Images is a WordPress optimization plugin which automatically updates all images with proper ALT and TITLE attributes. If your images do not have ALT and TITLE already set, SEO Friendly Images will add them according the options you set. Additionally this makes the post W3C/xHTML valid as well. ALT attribute is important part of search engine optimization. It describes your image to search engine and when a user searches for a certain image this is a key determining factor for a match.

## 5. Google XML SiteMap

Will generate a sitemaps.org compatible sitemap of your WordPress blog which is supported by Ask.com, Google, MSN Search and YAHOO

**Redirection** is a WordPress plugin to manage 301 redirections, keep track of 404 errors, and generally tidy up any loose ends your site may have. This is particularly useful if you are migrating pages from an old website, or are changing the directory of your WordPress installation.

### **Breadcrumbs**

Breadcrumbs are the links, usually above the title post, that look like "Home > Blog > Video Tutorials>Latest Social Media mix turns to dust" They allow search engines to determine the structure of your site more easily and your users also.

### **PageRank Sculpting**

One way of page rank sculpting on a WordPress blog is having important content as pages instead of posts as I mentioned with evergreen content. Another technique is called **SEO siloing**. It is called this way because you are 'stuffing' one page with links coming from a lot of other pages. Best example is naming a category after keywords you want to rank for, and then create a static category landing page that contains an article and also acts like a mini sitemap for all posts in that category. With all posts linking back to this page it gets a lot of Page Rank. **SEO Siloing** is a plugin that automates some of that process.