

Create Your Own Blog in 7 Steps

You. Can. Blog.

Blogging is the best way to get your ideas, thoughts, expertise, and personality out into the world. You don't have to be an expert writer, and you certainly don't need to be a computer guru. All you need is passion, drive, and a desire to have fun.

Social media is a great way to communicate on the Internet—if you're into tiny snippets of information, judgement from total strangers, and having your voice buried under millions of others. With a blog, you're in charge. You have a web presence dedicated to *you* and your ideas.

It's your website, with your rules. And the community you build belongs to you.

So you're interested in starting a blog? It's not as hard as you might think. And while this article goes into some detail, there are really just seven steps from novice to newly-minted blogger.

What is a blog? A blog (short for “weblog,” but nobody calls it that) is a website featuring a series of diary-style entries or articles. These articles are most often presented in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Blogs are usually informal, as opposed to a more formal online magazine or newspaper with an editorial staff.

Blogs were the first form of social media, in the days before Facebook and MySpace. And they are still the best way to get your long-form content out where readers can find it. How many people are willing to scroll through a 30-tweet thread on Twitter? Blogging is perfect for thoughts, ideas, expertise, humor, reviews, recipes, or anything else that won't fit in 280 characters.

And the best news is blogs are designed to be easy to create and launch—they're for ordinary people, not computer experts. You can get going quickly with a hosted blog; or if you're more advanced, host it yourself. I'll show you how to do both.

Is blogging right for you? Well, do you have a topic you're passionate about? (I'll get to figuring this out in a moment.) Are you willing and able to write about this topic on a regular or semi-regular basis? Do you want to share your ideas and knowledge with the world? Then yes, blogging is for you.

Want to learn more? Then here are the seven steps to starting your blog.

Seven Steps to Starting Your Blog

Step 1: Decide What Your Blog Is About

Here is where we get back to the big question: What are you passionate about? A blog can cover any topic, or even multiple topics. The well-known and long-running professional blog [Boing Boing](#) is about anything that interests the people who write for it, from tech to science to art to politics.

Or a blog can specialize in one specific topic: Roman history, fantasy anime, ramen shop reviews, growing tulips, finding a job, the best ski slopes, even how to create blogs. Here's one of my favorites, about [badly-decorated cakes](#). If you can think of a topic, there's probably at least one blog about it. (And if there's not, here's your opportunity to blaze the trail.)

You might want to begin by Googling a topic and seeing what's already out there. Don't worry if there's already a blog covering your topic. That person is more likely to befriend you than consider you a competitor.

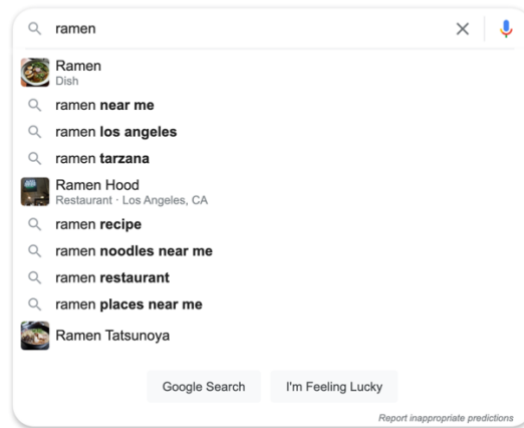
So what are you passionate about? This is important. Blogging is a marathon, not a sprint. You're making a commitment to contribute to your blog. Hobbies and passions will help you stay focused for the long haul.

Use your life experience. In my case, I started [modernbloglife.com](#) because I have many years of experience building websites and blogs for marketers around the world. So I chose to start sharing my knowledge with you. That's my passion.

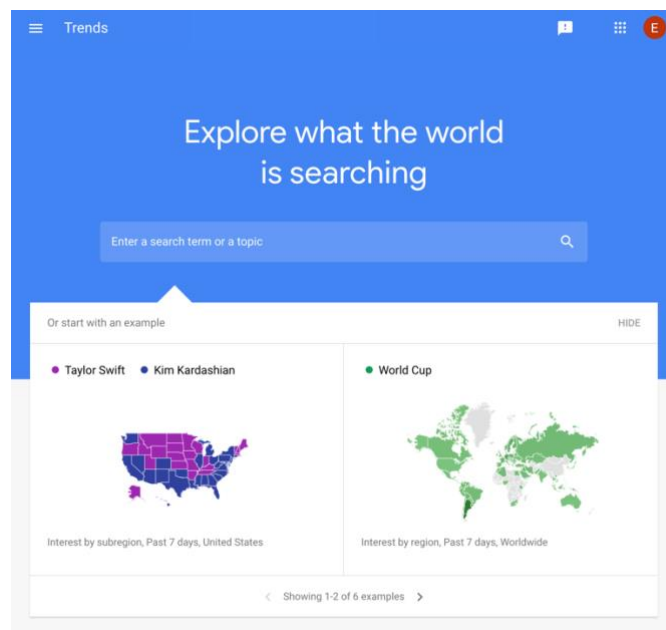
You can also make it personal. Write about your life, treating the blog like an actual diary. Just remember that people are going to read it! Detail your daily activities and share your personal insights. Yes, people will be interested.

Will there be a large audience for your blog topic? Maybe you're just doing it for fun, and it doesn't matter. But if you want to make money, promote a business, or increase your profile in an industry, you'll want to reach people.

Use Google to see what kinds of things people are searching for. If your topic is ramen shops, type "ramen" into the Google search field but don't press enter. A dropdown will appear of common searches starting with "ramen."



Or use Google Trends, another free Google website that shows you what's popular in Google searches right now. You can also search here for a word like “ramen” and see related searches, statistics, and more.



You can use a more advanced, for-pay keyword website to see what people are searching for on particular topics. I have come to like [KWFinder.com](https://kwfinder.com).

Sites like these will help you see what web users are interested in. You may get an idea for a way to differentiate your site from what's already out there. Knowing what people on the web are looking for is a great way to find a niche to fill.

Speaking of those competing sites on similar topics, get to know them. What are other bloggers on your topic talking about? Identify the three most popular blogs, and *read them*. You may get some ideas for your own articles; you can also write articles that respond to theirs. Reach out to other bloggers, and become part of the community.

Community is a big part of blogging. If you love a topic, you're going to want to meet people who share that passion. Blogging is a great way to do that.

Step 2: Find a Home for Your Blog

Unless you happen to have a web server farm in your house, you're going to have to get your blog hosted—that is, up on the Internet. There are two options.

Self-hosting is the more professional way to go. Here you're essentially creating your own website, although this is not as difficult as it sounds. There are plenty of products and services to help you, which I discuss below.

Or you can join a site that offers hosted blogs. These sites are the fastest and easiest way to get started, and they are often free. But they have their disadvantages, as we'll see below.

Self-hosting

Let's start with self-hosting. In this process, you'll find hosting provider whom you will pay to host the blog website. These are the people with the web server farm. Your blog website will live on their servers, and you'll have access to a web application that lets you make changes to your site, post blog articles, moderate comments, etc.

Pros:

- You'll have complete control over how your website looks and what functionality it has.
- Get your own specialized domain name, like www.bobsramenblog.com.
- Create a personalized email address, like bob@bobsramenblog.com.
- You set the content policy; it's up to you what kind of content is appropriate, not someone else.
- You can collect user information, like email addresses.
- Move your blog to another host if you wish.
- Technical support is available.
- Monetize your blog with ads and links

Cons:

- This is the more expensive option; you'll be paying for things like:
 - Periodic web hosting fees
 - Domain name fees
 - Site design templates, a.k.a. themes (many are free, but the good ones cost money)

- Hosting providers don't automatically protect your site from viruses, hackers, and spammers; they often charge extra for these services.
- If you publish something that violates copyright or is illegal in some way, you'll have to take it down to avoid personal liability.

There are many hosting providers that will host your blog site. For instance I use [SiteGround](#), a company based in Bulgaria but with servers here in the US. They host about two million web domains. SiteGround was #2 on CNET's list of [best web hosts for 2021](#).

I also recommend Texas-based [HostGator](#), which offers very low-priced options and a free domain name for a year. There is also [BlueHost](#) out of Utah, which like SiteGround and HostGator is one of the largest hosting providers in the world.

Spend some time selecting a hosting provider. Yes, you can switch providers if you're unhappy, but choosing the best one for you right off the bat will save you the trouble. Examine the provider's website, look them up on Wikipedia, and read online reviews. Choose the provider that's right for you—and your budget.

Once you've made your choice, you'll select a service plan. The provider will tell you what options come with each; you may wish to start out with a simple low-cost plan. You can upgrade as your site grows and gets more visitors.

Then you'll want to install your blogging software (sometimes called a Content Management System, or CMS) on the server. This is the software product that creates the actual blogging website. This isn't difficult at all; your hosting provider will give you several options, and you pick one. Then the provider installs it automatically.

The most popular blogging CMS by far is called [WordPress](#). WordPress is free. It's open-source, which means anyone can use and improve the software. Thousands of developers have created plug-ins for WordPress, many of them free, which expand and enhance its capabilities.

WordPress also supports website themes, which range in price from free to around \$200. These themes determine the look of your site and its functionality, and are great for people who don't know how to program a website.

WordPress is recommended for people who are new to creating websites. Although knowledge of web coding languages like PHP, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript can be helpful here, they're not at all necessary.

Two other options are [Drupal](#) and [Joomla](#), both of which are free. These are intended for more advanced developers, and knowledge of HTML and PHP is helpful. Plug-ins and templates for these products can be less expensive than for WordPress.

The next step will be to select a name for your blog. But first, let's talk about hosted blogs, which are much easier and cheaper to set up and run than the self-hosted blogs I just discussed.

With a self-hosted blog, you're basically renting space on a server and installing software on it. With a hosted blog, this is all done for you. You just sign up and start blogging. It's as simple as that.

So why wouldn't you just choose this option instead of all the cost and effort of a self-hosted blog. As usual, there are pros and cons:

Pros:

- Free, or very inexpensive.
- Easy to use.
- Some hosted blogs have their own built-in community of users.
- Viruses, hackers, and spammers are handled by the platform.

Cons:

- You have limited control over what your blog looks like, or no control at all.
- Functionality is likewise limited.
- You may not be able to use your own domain name.
- Ability to monetize the site may be limited.
- These tend to be used by amateurs rather than professionals, and readers know this.
- The platform may take down your content, or even shut down your blog, if you post something that violates copyright or is illegal or offensive.
- You cannot easily move your existing content to a new site.

Let's look at three hosted blog options.

WordPress.com (do not confuse it with WordPress.org, the self-hosting option) is the most popular hosted blog site, and the most professional. You just sign up, choose a theme, and start blogging.

Your blog will have a wordpress.com domain name; but for \$13 a year you can have your own URL. A limited number of themes and plug-ins are available, but if you want to use third-party plug-ins or themes, you'll have to upgrade to a business plan for \$299 a year.

Google's [Blogger](https://Blogger.com) has been around since 1999. If you have a Google account, then you already have a Blogger account. Its functionality is very limited, offering only the most basic blogging options. And there is no technical support available.

Google does let you use AdSense on Blogger to monetize your site. You can set up your own domain name, but that will just redirect to Blogger's generic blogspot.com URL.

The last option we'll discuss is [Tumblr](#), which is a different breed of animal. Tumblr is for microblogging (short blog posts emphasizing images), and is more like a social media site like Twitter than it is like WordPress or Blogger.

You have no control over what your blog looks like, and you can't add functionality. The site's algorithm prefers short posts, so not many people will see your blog entries if they're very long.

Tumblr's user base tends to be very young; half of users are under 25.

The upside is that Tumblr has its own community of over 430 million users. It's simple and user-friendly. But it's not really used by professionals and brands, unless those brands are specifically targeting young Tumblr users.

Now, whether you self-host or use one of these hosted options is up to you, and should be based on your specific needs. But if you want my advice, you'll self-host with WordPress, primarily for three reasons:

- You can relocate your site to another hosting provider, in case you outgrow your provider or have problems with service. You won't have to rebuild your site from scratch.
- Your domain name belongs to you, and travels with your site if you move it. All the work you've done marketing your site will still apply.
- WordPress is the best overall CMS—there's a reason 60% of all blogs use it. It has more themes and better support than any other package. And there's a plug-in for almost anything you would want your site to do.

Step 3: Choose a Name for Your Blog

Now that you know what your blog is about, and where it's going to live, let's name it.

Here are some questions to ask when you name your blog:

- Does the name tell the reader what the blog is about?
- Does it reflect the tone of the blog? Professional? Casual? Funny? Serious? Friendly? Hip?
- Does it speak to your target audience? "Bob's Ramen Blog" might speak to ramen fans, but "The Ramen Report" works better if you're targeting readers in the restaurant industry. For hip ramen connoisseurs, you might just go with "Tonkatsu."
- Will the name work in a URL? (More on this below.)
- Is it easy to spell? Easy to say? Easy to remember?
- Do you like it? Your name is going to be your brand, and you should be enthusiastic about it.

Let's say we go with "Tonkatsu" (it's a type of ramen). If you're using a hosted blog like WordPress.com or Blogger, you'll be able to name your own subdomain:

- tonkatsu.tumblr.com
- tonkatsu.blogspot.com
- tonkatsu.wordpress.com

You just have to hope the subdomain "tonkatsu" isn't already taken on the platform you choose. There's a much higher chance that your choice will be available on a hosted site than it will be in the entire world of domain names.

If it is taken, you'll need to rethink. Maybe tonkatsublog.wordpress.com? Or maybe try something other than "Tonkatsu."

Remember that if you leave your hosted blog site, you may need to leave your name behind. Blogger owns tonkatsu.blogspot.com, not you.

If you're self-hosting, you'll want to buy a domain name. I hate to tell you, but tonkatsu.com is already taken (it's for sale by the owner, but pre-owned domain names are very expensive, certainly a lot more expensive than \$13 a year).

I searched for tonkatsu.com in BlueHost's domain search engine, and discovered that (as of this writing) all of these were available:

- tonkatsublog.com
- tonkatsu.blog
- tonkatsu.org
- tonkatsu.website
- tonkatsu.recipes

So there are plenty of options for our ramen blog. Adding words to your name (tonkatsublog.com, mytonkatsu.com) is a good way to create a URL.

For instance, my site name is ModernBlogLife.com. The subject is blogging, but names like blogging.com were already taken. My blog is about blogging in the modern world, and making it part of your life. So I chose that name, and it was available. Now I own it, and can make this my brand.

One more note about domain names: avoid using hyphens. If ModernBlogLife.com had been taken, I guess I could have gone with Modern-Blog-Life.com. But there are problems. For one thing, it means there's already a site called "Modern Blog Life," which can lead to confusion; people looking for my site might go to theirs.

There are other issues too. There's a widespread belief that hyphens in a domain name make it rank poorly on Google. That's probably not true. But there can be confusion when saying the

name aloud (modern dash blog dash life dot com). Also, sites with hyphens in the name tend to look “spammy”—sites that are up to no good tend to have extra characters like hyphens in their names.

Once you’ve found your blog’s name, register it. As I mentioned, a hosting service like BlueHost has a domain search and registration tool already built in. Or you can register the domain name with a different service like [GoDaddy](#). Then follow your hosting provider’s instructions for transferring the domain to your site.

Step 4: Set Up Your Website’s Software

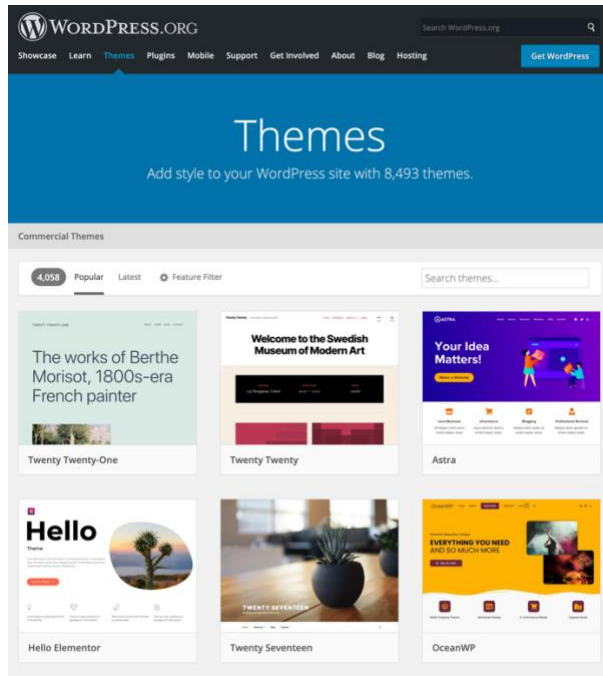
This step assumes you’re self-hosting using WordPress, although the same general steps apply if you’re using another CMS. Hosted sites like WordPress.com and Blogger also use themes and plug-ins, so some of the same ideas apply.

Many tools are available for designing your blog site. There are themes, which determine how the site looks and what functionality it has. And there are plug-ins, which add additional functionality. Some themes require certain plug-ins to work; the theme will come with instructions to tell you which ones.

As I mentioned before, installing WordPress will be a snap. Your hosting provider should offer a simple mechanism that lets you choose to install WordPress. They take care of it on their end.

Now your blog exists, and you’ll be able to see it at your URL. You might not like how it looks, though, because it was installed with a basic default theme. Now you’ll want to find a theme that works for you.

There are countless WordPress themes available across the Internet. You can search for them from within the WordPress interface; or you can Google “WordPress themes” or “free WordPress themes” to find them that way. The [wordpress.org](#) site also has a database of themes.



Many themes are free. But the best ones with the best functionality usually cost money, up to around \$200, although some are much cheaper. Lots of themes come with a free version you can use; then you can upgrade to the paid version if you want more features. Often these free versions are all you really need.

There are two things to think about when looking for a theme. First, make sure it is *responsive*. This just means it will look good and work well both on a desktop computer and on a phone or tablet. The majority of visitors to your site will probably be on their phone.



A theme will mention if it is responsive; most themes today are.

Second, a theme should be well-coded so that it loads and responds quickly. If your site takes too long to load, site visitors will become impatient and click away.

Site responsiveness can be improved with certain plug-ins, like WP Rocket and SG Optimizer. We'll get to plug-ins in a moment.

I use a theme called Divi from a site called [Elegant Themes](#). It's the most popular WordPress theme in the world, and gives you a great deal of control over what your site looks like and how it works.

Divi might have a hefty learning curve for some people, however. But it is flexible, and powerful.

Your theme will come with installation instructions. If you find your theme inside the WordPress user interface for your site, installing it will be as easy as clicking. You can install multiple themes on your WordPress blog, but only one will work at a time.

Your WordPress user interface will also let you search for and install plug-ins. As I said, these add functionality to your site that the theme may not provide. Many are free, but some cost money. Your theme may also require certain plug-ins to work properly.

Here are some plug-ins I recommend:

- [Bloom](#): From Elegant Themes, this plug-in lets you collect reader email addresses using pop-up windows. Then you can contact your site visitors directly via email blasts, through a service such as [MailChimp](#).
- [Monarch](#): Also from Elegant Themes, it creates buttons that let readers share your content on social media. It's a great way to let your readers promote your blog posts.
- [Yet Another Related Posts Plugin](#): Provides links to other posts on your blog that are related to the one the site visitor is reading. This keeps the visitor on your site, and helps them find more of your content that they are interested in.
- [Rank Math](#): Optimizes your site for search engines like Google, so you'll rank higher. That means when someone searches for sites like yours on a search engine, yours will tend to appear higher on the list.
- [SG Optimizer](#): This only works on SiteGround-hosted sites; it speeds up loading times so users don't get bored or frustrated and click away.
- [WP Rocket](#): Speeds up site responsiveness on hosts other than SiteGround.

Spend some time researching and getting to know the WordPress themes and plug-ins that are available. Remember that you can always add new plug-ins later, or remove ones that aren't working for you.

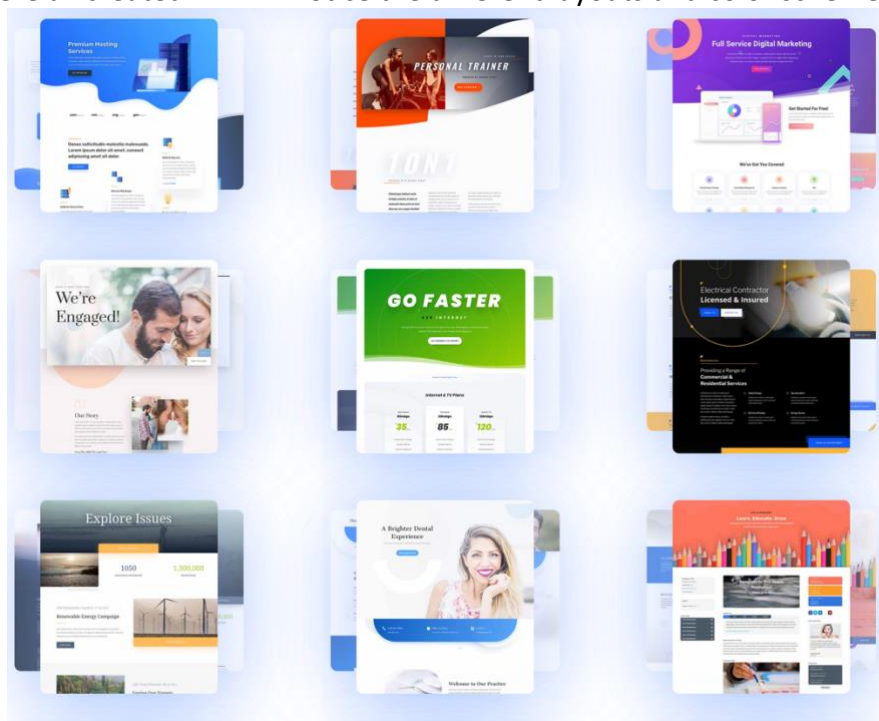
And you can change your theme at any time. The great thing about a blog is that you can change the look, colors, and functionality of your site at will, without losing or affecting any of your actual content. Your blog posts will still be there unchanged, displayed in your new theme.

Step 5: Design Your Website

Your chosen theme may already default to certain page layouts and color schemes. Many themes allow you to select from various options. Some, like Divi, are highly customizable.

Do some research online to see what layouts and what colors will work best for you. Check what other blogs on your topic are doing. Keep in mind what kind of mood or tone you're trying to set: Professional? Fun? Wacky? Exciting?

These sites were all created in Divi. Notice the different layouts and color schemes.



Not all layouts work well for blogs. See what other blog sites are using, and choose something similar. Old-fashioned blogs have a two-column layout, with one main column for blog posts and a sidebar for additional information and links.

This layout is fine, but modern blogs tend to have a more dynamic layout, specifically designed for responsiveness. They feature large, colorful images. But the style you choose is up to you.

You can get ideas for color palettes from sites like [Colormind](#); there are many other color palette generators online, like [this one](#). Find one you like.

Your site will also need a logo. You can use a quick and easy logo generator like [Cool Text](#). Or, for a reasonable amount of money, you can hire an actual graphic design professional to design your logo via a site like [Fiverr](#).

As mentioned above, your site's design will be limited by the options available in your theme. In your WordPress user interface (or "back end"), choose Appearance > Customize. Here, you will be able to:

- Change your site colors and other theme options.
- Set up your site menus.
- Place customizable widgets on your posts.
- Experiment with various theme settings.

Most of the pages on your blog, the actual blog posts themselves, are *dynamic* pages. You design what a post page looks like. Then WordPress takes the words and images for a particular blog post and dynamically generates the blog page.

This is why it's possible to change your blog's theme any time you want. Basically, the website *design* is separate from the website *content*. Changing or adding the website's content doesn't affect its look and feel; and changing the look and feel doesn't change the content.

But some pages on your site are *static* pages. These are special, singular pages that perform a specific purpose. These may include:

- Homepage: This is often the first page a visitor will see, the page at the main URL. Some blog sites just have the latest posts on the homepage. Others will promote specific posts, not just the latest ones—the most popular ones, for example. Entire posts may be shown here; or just titles, descriptions, and thumbnail images that link to the posts.
- About Me: This page contains information about the blog, and who writes for it and maintains it.
- Contact Us: Tell site visitors how to contact you. Rather than giving an email address and making it available to spammers, you'll want to use a Contact Form. There are many plug-ins that do this.
- Privacy Policy & Disclaimer: You're going to want to have some basic legal copy on your site to protect your content. You also need to let people know if you intend to use or sell their personal information (Privacy Policy). Some image services and monetization services may require some legalese as well. There are plenty of sites online with sample text you can use or modify.

Step 6: Create Your Content!

Your blog site is up. It looks great, and has all the functionality you want.

Now it's time to *write*.

I can't tell you what to write, or how to write. But I can give you some advice for great blog content.

- Define your content. Know your topic, and stick to it. You can digress occasionally (“Hey ramen readers! I had a baby!”), but try to stay on topic. Know why your readers come to you, and give them what they expect.
- Be original. You may get ideas from other blogs, but remember your readers read those blogs too! Use your own experiences, your own knowledge, your own personality, and your own voice to create content from your unique perspective. Differentiate yourself from the rest of your subject matter community.
- Be useful to readers. Ask yourself what your readers need to know. Heck, ask *them*! Sure they like your ramen shop reviews, but do they also want recipes? Ramen industry news? Ramen humor? Provide content that both entertains and informs.
- Engage with your reader. Blogs are personal. You're not writing an academic treatise, or an actual diary that's only meant to be read by you. You're talking *to* people. Keep your audience in mind when you write.
- Longer content ranks better on search engines. Try to write longer posts; 500 words, 1000 words. But don't ramble or pad a post just for length. Be concise. Bored readers click away. A solid, short post is better than a rambling long one.
- Use original photos. This is a great way to give site visitors something they can't get anywhere else. Take photos yourself—there's plenty of excellent photography advice online, and most of today's smartphones have pro-level cameras. Or partner with a photographer. You can also purchase great professional stock photography from sites like [Shutterstock](#). Don't steal images from other websites or from Google Image Search.
- Proofread. Proofread. Proofread. Sloppy, typo-ridden text is hard to read. Remember, your reader is looking for any excuse to click away. Also, typos and grammatical errors make it seem like you don't know what you're talking about. Spell Check is your friend!
- Keep SEO (Search Engine Optimization) in mind. You want to rank well on Google and other search sites. There are plug-ins to help with this.
 - The number one thing you can do to rank well, and I cannot stress this enough, is *have quality content*.
 - Optimize your keywords. Remember that research you did on what readers are searching for on Google? *Use those search terms in your blog posts*.
 - There are SEO plug-ins that will let you edit your metatags. In short, these are the post titles and descriptions that appear when your site lists on search engines.
 - SEO Title: 50-60 characters
 - Is Daikokuya the Best in Little Tokyo? | Ramen Shop Reviews
 - SEO Description: 50-160 characters
 - Bob visits the storied Daikokuya ramen shop in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district. Is it really the best ramen LA has to offer?

Step 7: Promote Your Blog

You can't just put your blog on the Internet, sit back, and assume people are going to find it. If you want people to know about your blog, you need to *promote it*.

But, before you start—is your blog ready for primetime?

- Have some content up and ready to go. Starting with more than one completed post is a good idea.
- Proofread *everything*. You did? Good. Proofread *again*.
- Test your site on different devices (phone, desktop/laptop, tablet) and with different browsers (Chrome, Safari, MS Edge, Firefox, Opera). There are several websites that will let you see how your site renders on various browsers, although these usually charge a fee.
- Test your contact form; make sure it works.
- Test your email collection pop-up window or sidebar widget. I recommend the Bloom plug-in, and Mailchimp as an email provider.
- Your site will rank better and be more useful if you create links between pages, and to other sites. If you mention another website, article, or blog post—your own or someone else's—in a blog post, *link to it*. Don't let anyone tell you it's bad to link to other sites.
- Remember to use the Yet Another Related Posts plug-in to create links to other blog content at the bottom of each post.

Now it's time to promote your site. There are some very easy things you can do right off the bat.

- Tell everyone you know about your new website! Friends, family, coworkers, the stranger sitting next to you at the lunch counter. Email friends or hit them up on social media. The more people who see your site, the more people who might recommend it to someone else.
- Add your site's URL to your email signature and your social media profiles.
- Get involved in the online community for your topic. Comment on other blogs. Join discussion forums and Facebook groups. Follow experts on your topic on Twitter.
- Guest blog on other sites. Remember what I said about befriending bloggers on your topic? They often let their friends post guest posts on their blog. Of course, you'll want to return the favor.

Now let's get into some of the more advanced things you can do to promote your blog.

First, create social media accounts specifically for your blog—[Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#). Create a subreddit for your blog on [Reddit](#). If you're not a user of these platforms, join them and familiarize yourself. You'll probably find people there who are interested in your topic, and will want to read your blog.

Use these platforms to let people know when your blog has been updated, to communicate with fans of your blog and your topic, and to promote your site in general. *Make these feeds informative* so people will pay attention to them.

Engaging with your followers is key. Participate in the comments on your blog. Check your social media accounts regularly, and respond to people's questions and comments. Blogging is social. The more you interact with readers, the more likely they are to return—and to recommend your site to others.

Next, submit your blog to bookmarking sites and directories. Search engines will index your site on their own; but make sure your site is listed every place it can be. Google "List of Blogs" and see which websites exist to promote your topic of blog. Non-blog websites that discuss your topic may want to link to you, or even write about you.

A quick Google search revealed that a site called [Japan Blog Directory](#) maintains a short list of ramen blogs. I could write to them and ask them to include Tonkatsu on their list. Getting other sites to link to your blog not only helps people find you, but it increases your search engine rank as well.

Another tactic that will promote your blog is republishing your content. There's no reason your blog site should be the only place people can read your posts. Publish your articles on other platforms like Facebook, Reddit, and [LinkedIn](#)—but be sure to link from these back to your blog. After all, that's where you want people to end up.

Be sure that, before you republish an article, it has been indexed on Google. (Search for your post on Google to see if it comes up.) This can take a few days from the time you first post it. But you want Google to point to the original article on your blog, not the republished one.

Most likely, the majority of the content on your blog is going to be written text (with some images). But you can repurpose this same content to other media. Use your content to:

- Create infographics [like these](#).
- Shoot and edit your own videos (yes, you can use your smartphone for this). Post them on your blog, and on sites like [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#).
- Start a podcast! It's another great way to get your ideas and expertise out to the world, and it will tie in well with your blog. And there's plenty of advice online on how to get started.
- Write an eBook. You can offer it free to site visitors; make it a download for people who join your site or submit their email address; or you can sell it.
- Make t-shirts and stickers your readers will enjoy, and sell them on your site. People wearing your shirts or carrying laptops with your sticker on them are paying *you* to promote your site.

The last and most useful way you can promote your new blog site is through online advertising.

This costs money. But if you're planning on getting an income from your blog, you'll need to make the investment.

Here are some great places to advertise your blog. This list is not complete, but it's a place to start.

- Google, the granddaddy of all search engines. [Google Ads](#) will promote your blog on related search engine results. Basically, you're paying money to be featured on Google, rather than just trying to improve your rank through SEO.
- [Microsoft Bing](#) is another search engine that will let you promote your blog, for a price.
- Promote your tweets on [Twitter](#). Remember that when you post something to social media, not everyone who follows you will see it—unless you pay to promote it.
- Likewise, you can promote your posts on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
- [Outbrain](#) and [Taboola](#) are services that will promote your blog posts on other blog and news sites. You know when you read something online, and at the bottom are suggestions for stories on other sites? You can be one of the suggestions.

Those are the seven steps to creating and launching your blog. I know I've been pretty detailed here, and that's not intended to scare you off. Launching a blog is not hard. I just want you to know everything you need to be successful at it.

But wait. Haven't I forgot something? How do you make money off your blog?

Monetizing Your Blog

This article is about starting a blog. And if your blog is brand new, it is not time to start monetizing. Not yet.

It takes time and hard work before a blog can start generating income. In fact, trying to make money at the very beginning could be damaging to your blog and its reputation. You want to come across as knowledgeable, entertaining, friendly, and enthusiastic—not greedy. Spend some time building up the content on your blog. Don't do it for the money, which will come later. Do it to share, to teach, to learn, to build community.

Develop a following. Cultivate regular, enthusiastic readers. And I can't stress this enough, *create community*. Get to know other bloggers and content creators. Interact with enthusiasts.

As your content grows and develops and your community expands, your site will change. Your perspective on your site and your topic will change. Your blog will mature. And it won't be too long before you'll be comfortable adding advertising and other revenue streams. At that point your readers, who have come to genuinely appreciate you and your blog, won't mind.

Briefly, here are some ways to monetize your blog, which you can explore when the time comes:

- Affiliate programs let you link to or host ads for ecommerce sites. If site visitors click through and purchase the promoted product, you get a small cut.
- You can sell products. There are the aforementioned t-shirts, stickers, and other promotional products. Or maybe you can sell the type of products and services you discuss on the blog; for instance, your ramen shop review site can sell instant ramen.
- eBooks, online courses, and other ancillary media. You're an expert? Write a book! Teach an online class!
- Use sites like [Patreon](#) and [Kickstarter](#) that let you collect subscription fees or donations from readers.

There are plenty of ways to make money off your blog, which I will discuss in more detail in the future. For right now, get your blog started, and concentrate on making it grow.

Blogging FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Blogging has been around a long time. Is it still relevant?

Some people have suggested that blogging has been supplanted or replaced by social media platforms like Twitter. This just isn't true—blogging is as relevant and popular as it ever was.

Blogs are a great way to introduce new and compelling ideas, promote products, share opinions and information, and build communities.

People might spend a lot of their time on Twitter scrolling through their timeline, but they forget what they've read almost instantly.

Readers *value* the content on blogs. They value the time and energy invested, and appreciate getting to know you, the blogger. It's a different, richer experience compared to social media.

Also, Google primarily indexes text. Even if you have a vlog (a blog focused on short videos) or a podcast, Google can't "see" inside those video or audio files. Google looks for words—high quality, long-form text. By having plentiful, quality text content, you'll rank higher, and you'll be better able to promote your videos, podcasts, and products.

Blogging may be a lot more work than just tossing off 280 characters on Twitter—but the payoff is higher, for you and for your readers.

Why should I start a blog?

Blogs are an excellent creative outlet, one that instantly shares your passions with the world. Blogging is a great way to both gain and share knowledge and experience, and to establish yourself as a subject matter expert.

Blogging is also a way “in” to the community of like-minded people who are as passionate about your topic as you are. And you’re not just a member of that community. You’re a *leader*.

Can I start a blog for free?

Absolutely. Many bloggers start on free, hosted platforms before graduating to a self-hosted platform. It’s definitely the easiest way to get started. Your blog can be up and running literally in minutes.

As detailed above, some hosted blog platforms to consider include WordPress.com, Blogger, and Tumblr; see the article for more information. Different platforms have different functionality and audiences, so check out several before deciding.

However there are a few downsides to a hosted blog:

- It’s very difficult to move your blog to another platform or self-hosted site if you outgrow your host. “Moving” your blog would basically be the same as starting over.
- Typically, you’ll end up with a subdomain for a URL: tonkatsu.blogspot.com instead of www.tonkatsublog.com.
- Free blogs have rules and restrictions about content. You may find your content taken down without your say-so if a hosting platform thinks it’s a copyright violation, illegal, or offensive.

I recommend that anyone starting a blog take the plunge and get a self-hosted website using WordPress (see the article above for details). But everyone is different, with different needs.

Feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

How much should I expect to pay for a self-hosted blog?

Launching and maintaining a self-hosted blog is the best way to produce a professional-looking, high-functionality site that’s easy to read and use. It’s also completely under your control.

But it will cost money. At a bare minimum, you’ll need:

- A domain name, which runs approximately \$11.99 a year.
- A web host, which will charge roughly \$10.95 per month if you pay monthly. If you pay for 12 months in advance, you might pay \$53.39 a year, which is only \$3.95 per month.

This may be all you have to pay, assuming you use a free theme and free plug-ins. If you want to purchase a quality, customizable, responsive theme, that will cost some money. And there might be some functionality you want that requires for-pay plug-ins.

You may also want to pay for a service that protects your site from viruses and attackers, and another that protects your personal information when people look up your domain name. The hosting provider will offer these services.

But overall, a self-hosted blog is not very expensive. In fact, it's cheaper than you might think.

What is a good topic for a blog? How do I find my niche?

Almost anything can be a great topic for a blog. It all depends on what you're passionate about.

Some standard blog topics include:

- Computers and technology
- Food & cooking
- Do It Yourself
- Finance/money management
- Travel
- Pop culture/celebrities
- Music/art

Maintaining a blog can be a lot of work, depending on how much time you want to put into it. Yours should be about something you genuinely care about, and either are an expert in, or want to become an expert in.

Conclusion

Well, that's it. You should be ready to start your own blog. Follow these seven steps, and you're sure to have success.

Let me know what you think in the comments below. As I said, feel free to reach out to me if you have questions that weren't answered in the FAQ.

And read my other articles as we dig deeper into running a successful blog.

I wish you the best of luck, and like the rest of the world I'm looking forward to seeing what you have to say!