



*I'm a big fan of bullet journaling, if you haven't come across this before, it's simply a way of organising your to-do list. I do it every day. Each item gets a bullet point, when I've completed it, I cross it out. So here, for you, is a bullet list of things you need to do and know when you first start blogging. Some of these things took me years to do, if you get them right, from the start, your blog will grow quicker, you'll make more money and it will look more professional. You can print this if you like, check the points off as you make progress. If you need any further help with any of this, get in touch and I'll do what I can to help, maybe for free, maybe you'd like a Skype call. Here's the list, good luck!*

### **Getting Started and Set Up**

- *Buy your domain name. ( you can do this through your host, which is easier, or from a separate site)*
- *Arrange hosting ( we love Site Ground)*
- *You may need to transfer your name servers if you buy your domain name in one place, host in a different place. This can take a day or so to take effect.*
- *Install Wordpress via your c panel.*
- *Pick a theme, these can be free or premium. We use a premium theme for security, speed and style. Be certain it is responsive ie. Works on mobiles, tablets etc.*
- *Install your chosen theme and familiarise yourself with it.*
- *Pick a secure username and password, never use "Admin". Easy to hack.*
- *Consider adding a "Limit Login Attempts" plugin to further increase security.*
- *Set up your blog's own email address via your host.*
- *Set up Akismet to catch spam comments.*
- *Check your URL structure isn't a string of numbers in should be something like <https://blogname.com/postname>.*
- *Create an "About" page.*
- *Create a "Contact" page*
- *Create your first blog post.*

- *Hook up Google Analytics to your site*
- *Hook up Google Search Console to your site*
- *Figure out what basic plugins you need and don't need, to get started.*
- *Know that lots of plugins slow your site down.*
- *Think about site content and categories, your site should be easily navigable and your posts should be interlinked (this is part of good on-site SEO)*

### ***Branding and Appearance***

- *Decide on your site's message and tone, be consistent. Who are you, what's your message?*
- *Invest in a logo. This need only cost you a few \$ on Fiverr.*
- *Decide on your standard colours and fonts.*
- *Know that you should use your logo, colours and fonts everywhere you appear on the internet.*
- *Set up your Gravatar*
- *Set up your favicon*

### ***Getting Started Social Media Checklist***

- *Set up a business Facebook Page, use spaces between words, I didn't!*
- *Set up a business Twitter account*
- *Set up a business Pinterest account*
- *Set up a business Instagram account*
- *Set up a business G+ account*
- *Set up a business You Tube account*
- *Join Flip Board*
- *Join Reddit*
- *Join Stumble Upon*
- *Join any other social media channels you prefer.*
- *Verify all social media channels that require it, by adding the code they give you to your website.*
- *Know that you need a social media strategy for each platform. This is a big topic and I won't touch on it here.*

### ***Comments***

- *Make sure readers can comment on your posts. You may need a plugin*
- *Know that you should regularly leave comments on other relevant blogs, know that this is good for you and the other blogger.*
- *Having a plugin such as Comment Luv can encourage visiting bloggers to leave comments.*
- *Know that a comment can give you a backlink, not so strong, but it counts.*
- *Know that some big sites give "do-follow" backlinks.*

### **Social Media on Your Website**

- *Add social share buttons to your site.*
- *Add social follow buttons to your site*
- *Check each social media follow button is working properly.*

### **Alexa**

- *Know that Alexa is just another way of ranking websites. Get the free Alexa toolbar for your computer, Alexa measures how many Alexa toolbar users visit your site, that includes you! The more bloggers visit, the lower your Alexa rank will become. It's largely a fake, annoying statistic, but... you may as well install it and watch your rank improve over time.*

### **Get Subscribers, AKA Grow Your List**

- *Know that it is a very good idea to grow your e-mail list.*
- *Put sign up forms ( or other call-to-actions) in prominent places, maybe after every post.*
- *Check your subscribe buttons are working.*
- *Consider a sign-up popup, not too obtrusive or annoying.*
- *Consider an incentive for signing up, something free, such as this!*
- *Set up and enable your RSS feed, some people do use it.*

### **Think About Page Load Speed**

- *Know that in general, the faster your website loads, the better Google and your visitors will like it.*
- *Know that you need to keep photo file sizes small to get decent load speed.*
- *Know that adverts will decrease your page load speed.*
- *Know how to check your page load speed. ( try Pingdom and Google's own page speed checker tool)*
- *Know that caching is important to page load speed. Your host should provide caching, you can also use plugins.*
- *Know that the quality of your hosting affects page load speed.*
- *Delete plugins you don't need or find better, faster ones to improve page load speed. Check the speed of your plugins using a plugin ( ironically!). See which are the worst offenders and cull.*

### **Adding Photographic Images to Your Site**

- *Know not to upload full size, full quality images! Too slow, too big.*
- *Know to upload photos at the size they will be displayed on your site.*
- *Know to optimise images for web use.*
- *Know that there are many different tools, some free, some paid, to do this for you.*

### ***Know What Domain Authority Is***

- *Check your Domain Authority (DA) by Googling for a domain authority checker tool.*
- *Know that DA updates roughly once a month.*
- *Know that it is a value attributed to all websites by MOZ.*
- *Know that the number of incoming links your site has, is a contributor to its strength and DA*
- *Know that Page Authority is a separate value, each page on your site will have its own PA, the site as a whole has a DA.*

### ***Know What Trust Flow and Citation Flow Are***

- *Know that Trust Flow and Citation Flow are 2 more metrics, handed out by Majestic, to indicate the strength of a site.*
- *Citation flow is basically a measure of total backlinks.*
- *Trust flow is basically a measure of high quality backlinks*
- *Know that what you need, are high quality, relevant backlinks in your niche.*
- *Know to keep the ratio of Citation Flow to Trust Flow as low as you can.*
- *Know to avoid spammy backlinks to your site.*

### ***Network, Learn and Cooperate***

- *Join Facebook groups for bloggers.*
- *Comment on other blogs*
- *Tweet other people's stuff*
- *Sign up for free email courses, we recommend Neil Patel for all things marketing.*
- *Get known, be nice!*

### ***Get Backlinks***

- *Know that the number on incoming backlinks your site has, is an indicator of its strength and authority, ie. How much Google likes you and how highly it will rank you. You need incoming backlinks*
- *Know to get as many "free" quality backlinks as you can around the internet.*
- *Know to get backlinks by guest posting on good quality, related sites.*
- *Know to get backlinks naturally by creating awesome content people want to link to.*
- *Know to ask your blogger friends nicely for a backlink.*
- *Know about private blog networks. A big topic.*

### ***Give Backlinks***

- *Every post you publish should have a few outgoing links to authoritative, non-commercial, sites.*

- *Links should be in context and relevant, always. Don't publish lists of websites, it looks spammy and Google don't like it.*

### ***Know About "follow" and "no-follow" Links***

- *Every link is either "follow" or "no-follow". Know that a follow link is of more value to the receiving site, than a "no-follow".*
- *Know when to use them and how to add the piece of code to your HTML to make your links "no-follow" as necessary.*
- *Know that most people wanting " sponsored posts" or "advertising links" are simply after a "follow" ( also called do-follow sometimes) link to improve their own rankings in search engines.*
- *If you decide to give people "follow" links in a commercial setting, in a sponsored post or advertising link, know that it is against Google's guidelines. And you're risking de-indexing Also know to charge them a lot!*

### ***Improve Your Rankings With Google***

- *Start to learn about SEO before you start creating content.*
- *Familiarise yourself with Key Word Research and why you need it.*
- *Familiarise yourself with Google Search Console and Analytics, these are golden indicators in improving the SEO and number of clicks on your old posts.*
- *Get the Yoast SEO Plugin for Wordpress to walk you through SEO for each post.*
- *For each post, think about how and why search traffic will find it.*
- *Submit site maps (you'll find one in Yoast SEO, submit it to Google Search Console)*

### ***Monetize Your Site***

- *Set up a Google AdSense Account*
- *Find the Affiliate Schemes you want to use, join. List them below, scratch them off as you join. We belong to over 50. Each helps us create our income.*
- *Agoda*
- *Amazon*
- *Booking.com*
- *Hotels Combined*
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- *Know that EVERY post should have at least one way of making money in it, right from day 1. As you create more content, start producing posts that solely exist to make money, such*

*as Amazon sales pages, don't spam your email subscribers with these, they are there to attract search traffic and interested social media viewers.*

- *Know that you have to write the post to fit the affiliate link. Sticking a link in your side bar and hoping somebody clicks it, rarely works.*
- *Know that you have to sell your affiliate products, attract people ready to buy, get them to click. Making affiliate sales is not passive.*
- *Think about taking sponsored posts. You either need "contacts" that you email to get sponsored posts or you wait for people to contact you (this is what I've always done after little success with a lengthy "contact list" I was given. Contacts expire quickly) or you join agencies that handle sponsored posts. Selling do-follow links like this is against Google policies.*
- *Know to avoid sponsored posts for gambling sites unless your site is about gambling, you will get a lot of dubious enquiries, say no or charge them A LOT.*
- *Know that as you site improves in ranking (DA is a good indicator) you will be of more use in the sponsored post market. Charge more.*
- *Know that I wouldn't even think of taking a sponsored post for under \$100. If you have to write it yourself, double that. But it's up to you!*

### ***Getting Free Stuff***

- *Know that bloggers get "free" stuff but that it is never truly free; you have to work for it.*
- *Know that I have been offered free stuff from cereal bars to cruise holidays*
- *Know that you have to provide value to the company and do a good job for them. If you don't it lets all bloggers down and I'll be cross.*
- *Know that sometimes they will come to you (this is mostly what we do) sometimes you have to send a "pitch" outlining what you can do for them and giving an example of a previous promotional posts. Maybe review a hotel you have paid to stay in, do a fantastic job, get lots of social shares, use amazing photos, then use that as the example in your pitch.*
- *Know that admissions to theme parks are super easy to get. They often don't even need you to write anything.*
- *Know that this is too big a topic. More later.*

*Thanks for subscribing and thanks for downloading our checklist. There is far more like this to come, check for availability via the private Facebook group, Living Differently.*

*Some of the above topics will be covered in more detail over coming weeks, either on the World Travel Family websites, or as pdf s such as these. We also offer one on one support at an hourly rate if you'd like to chat. Good luck!*

*Already on the website in our **BLOGGING SECTION** you will find posts such as:*

*Steps to Starting Your Own Blog and Making Money*

*Handy Tools and Plugins*

*Improving Your Affiliate Sales*

*Changing Themes*