

How to Create a Blog... and Optimize it for Search Engines

Blogs have been becoming a major part in online marketing for companies both small and large. They were originally created as journals for personal use. But more and more companies are latching on to blogs to communicate with the outside world and, of course, their customers. Companies are finding out that blogs can help build solid relationships with their customers. Before we learn how to create a blog and optimize it for search engines, let's take a look at some important statistics about the "blogosphere."

Blogs are very popular among consumers; they are a place where consumers can go to read reviews, read latest industry information and news, and also read what other products/services are available to them. According to eMarketer, the largest online research and analysis organization, there has been a **300% growth** in monthly blog readership over the last four years! In a survey conducted by eMarketer they found that almost **one-half of the online population reads blogs**. Now when you think about the size of "one-half of the online population," you can imagine how many blogs are read on a daily basis. One blog post can even help make the difference in swaying strangers to use your products and/or services, but actually getting visitors to your blog takes effort.

As you can see, just simply having a blog is just as important as having a blog that's optimized. If your blog isn't optimized how will you market yourself to strangers? Blogs can be an effective tool in driving traffic to your main website. Let's first take a look at how to create a blog. We will use Blogger.com as an example. Blogger is Google's own free blogging service and is highly recommended if you are new to blogging. It's simple, user-friendly, and best of all, belongs to Google! If Google owns it don't you think there's a higher chance of it getting indexed?!

STEP 1 - REGISTER AT BLOGGER.COM

CREATE A BLOG

It's easy, and only takes a minute.

Registering at blogger.com is fast and simple. In your web browser, go to www.blogger.com. There you will see a large icon “**CREATE A BLOG.**” When you click on this button, it will take you to the signup page. Just fill out all your information to get started.

The next page you will be directed to is very important. This is where you name your blog and create your blog address (URL). A blog address that contains keywords relative to your products/services can make all the difference in where it gets indexed in the search engines. A blog address with just a company name won't get recognized as well as a blog with keywords. **Make sure to choose your keywords wisely...**

2 Name your blog

Blog title	<input type="text"/>
	Your blog's title will appear on your published blog, on your dashboard and in your profile.
Blog address (URL)	http:// <input type="text"/> .blogspot.com
	Check Availability
	The URL you select will be used by visitors to access your blog. Learn more

Your blog title should directly explain the objective of your blog and will appear at the top of the blog in the header. For example, if your main service is custom home construction in Miami, FL, you could put “Custom Home Construction by *Company Name*” - we will talk about geographical text later on. Making sure to include keywords in the blog title is a technique that bloggers use. The blog title is basically the blog header. Since this title is in text on the page, it gets scanned

by search engine spiders. When spiders scan the blog title and it contains keywords relative to the blog, they deem it as important...this can help when ranking your blog in the search results page.

A blog address (URL) is another important aspect of your blog. **A well-crafted blog address can make all the difference when someone is doing a general search.** Let's stick with the example of custom home construction in Miami, FL. Here are two blog addresses:

miami-home-construction.blogspot.com **OR** ace-construction.blogspot.com

A company wanting to brand their company name "Ace Construction" might choose the second approach. However, for search engine optimization practices, the first address is best. Since your general service is home construction in Miami, FL, and that's how you want people to find you in the search engines, creating a blog address along the lines of the first choice can make the difference of being ranked 10th to being ranked 100th.

Let's take a look at an actual Google search for blogs relating to home construction.

[Construction Marketing Ideas](#)

Jan 9, 2009 ... Triangle/Triad **Construction News**. We also produce under contract: The Impact! (For the Greater Ottawa **Home Builders' Association**) ...

www.constructionmarketingideas.blogspot.com/ - 152k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Good Home Construction Blog](#)

To see more of **Good Home Construction's** projects, click [HERE](#) to go to the main page and click on the links under the Project Photos section. ...

goodhomeconstruction.blogspot.com/ - 152k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

When searching for "blogspot.com home construction" these were the first two blogs that came up. If you notice, both blog addresses contain the keywords that the company is trying to display. Google could have shown me two blogs that were all about home construction with no keywords in the blog address. But because **domain names are important to search relevancy**, Google decided to show me the two blogs that contained keywords in the blog address.

According to search engine optimization standards, domain names and addresses that contain keywords are more likely to appear closer to the top pages in the search engines. **As a general rule when creating any type of domain name or address, including even one keyword in the address will help your search rankings.**

STEP 2 - CHOOSING A TEMPLATE

2 Choose a template

Choose a custom look for your blog.

You can easily change the template later, or even create your own custom template design once your blog is set up.

CONTINUE

Blogger allows you to choose a template for your blog and customize it any way you like. For now, choose the template that you think looks best. You can always change it later. Once you choose a template and click continue, you can then start blogging. But before we start blogging let's take a look at all the customizable options you can include on your blog.

STEP 3 - CUSTOMIZING YOUR BLOG SETTINGS

Click on the “Settings” tab on the top.



You will now be redirected to a page where you can change the title of your blog and also add a description of your blog.

Title

Description

500 Characters Max.

Since we already established a good title for the blog, let's create a good description that's filled with relevant keywords:

Ace is a custom home construction company in Miami, Florida. We specialize in new home development and remodeling as well as custom kitchens and bathrooms. Call us at (888) 555-5555 for a free quote!

500 Characters Max.

A description of your blog will appear right underneath the title of the blog. This is important because it's visible to the user as well as the search engines. A good description that contains some worthy keywords can bump your blog up a few rankings. In the description example

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above, we added keywords like “custom home construction, construction company in Miami, Florida, new home development, home remodeling, custom kitchens, custom bathrooms, free quote”... whatever services or products you offer, make sure to include them in the description. This gives the visitor a general idea of what your blog entails and what types of things you can offer them. If they are not interested in your description, chances are they won't be interested in your blog posts!

Once your description is created Blogger gives you some options to choose from. On the same page, make sure “Yes” is selected for “Let search engines find your blog?”

Let search engines find your blog?

If you select “Yes” we will include your blog in Google Blog Search and ping Weblogs.com. If you select “No”, everyone can still view your blog but search engines will be instructed not to crawl it.

If this is turned off, then there would be no point in optimizing your blog because search engines would be blocked from crawling it. Blogger sets “Yes” as the default setting. But it's always good to check and make sure.

If you are unhappy with your Blogger address, you can always change it by selecting “Publishing” under the “Settings” tab.



Changing your blog address frequently means that each time you create a new address, your previous search engine rankings get erased and you basically start from scratch. A blog address is unique to each blog. If you build up rankings for one address and 6 months down the road you want to change it, all your rankings for the first address are lost. **Make sure you create a good blog address in the beginning and only change it if you must.**

STEP 4 - ENABLING COMMENTS

Click the “Comments” link in the navigation.



Comments are vital to a blog’s integrity. This is where you, the owner, can communicate with your visitors. Communication with your customers and visitors creates **buzz** on your blog... and search engines notice this. The more people comment and the more replies to comments you post, the more traffic your blog receives. The more traffic your blog receives, the better the search engine rankings. So, it is important that you allow comments. This feature will allow you to enable comments and choose the types of users that are allowed to comment on your blog posts.

Make sure “Show” is selected. You can then choose who can comment on your blog posts. “Anyone” means that the person does not have to be registered with any site. This often poses a problem because you can get a lot of spam comments. It is suggested that you only allow registered users. Registered users can use their Google account, other blogging accounts, AIM account, and any OpenID account. [This keeps nasty spammers out!](#)

Comments

Show Hide

Note: Selecting "Hide" does not delete existing comments - You can show them at any time by re-selecting "Show".

Who Can Comment?

- Anyone - includes Anonymous Users
- Registered Users - includes OpenID
- Users with Google Accounts
- Only members of this blog

You can also show backlinks on your blog posts. Backlinks show you who is linking to your blog posts. Here is Google's definition of backlinks:

“Backlinks enable you to keep track of other pages on the web that link to your posts. For instance, suppose Alice writes a blog entry that Bob finds interesting. Bob then goes to his own blog and writes a post of his own about it, linking back to Alice's original post. Now Alice's post will automatically show that Bob has linked to it, and it will provide a short snippet of his text and a link to his post. What it all works out to is a way of expanding the comment feature such that related discussions on other sites can be included along with the regular comments on a post.”

Backlinks

Show Hide

Backlinks enable you to keep track of other pages on the web that link to your posts. [Learn more](#)

Note: Selecting "Hide" does not delete backlinks - You can show them at any time by re-selecting "Show".

If someone takes an idea from your blog post and links to it somewhere in their post, Blogger will display a link underneath **YOUR** blog post that links to the person who **originally** linked to you. This allows cross-linking, or reciprocal linking. Cross linking is an important technique for search engine optimization. The more good-quality, and relevant, links that you exchange with others the more search engines notice you. One-way links aren't as effective as reciprocal links. Blogger's backlink feature automatically does the reciprocal linking for you. Building links for your blog doesn't have to be tedious as long as you write good content where people will want to link and reference to. The same goes for you linking to other blogs. If the blog you want to link to has this feature enabled and you link to their blog post, your link will be displayed underneath their blog. This is a great way to **indirectly** build reciprocal links with other blogs!

Google automatically sets this feature in hide mode. But it's a good thing to turn on, so make sure you select "Show."

STEP 5 - ARCHIVING

Click the “Archiving” link in the navigation.



Blogger gives you the option of giving all blog posts their own unique link, as opposed to your blog posts **only** being viewable on the main blog address.

Enable Post Pages?

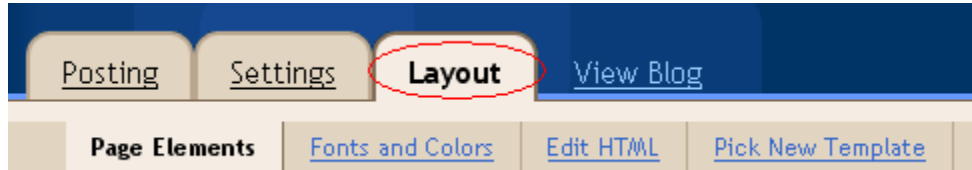
Post Pages give each of your posts their own unique web page, in addition to appearing on your blog's front page.

When you enable post pages, you are giving Blogger the permission to give each blog post its own URL. Giving each blog post its own URL **allows each blog post to get indexed by the search engines**. Since each blog post is basically considered an extension of the “homepage” of your blog, search engines will be able to index each post individually... meaning more exposure for your blog.

Let's look at an example of our mock blog, miami-home-construction.blogspot.com: Suppose we create a new blog post and this feature is turned on. When we submit our new post, our post will be given its own URL - <http://miami-home-construction.blogspot.com/2009/01/test-blog-post.html>. Search engines treat this as a separate page from miami-home-construction.blogspot.com so more pages of your blog could potentially be picked up instead of one. If we had turned this feature off <http://miami-home-construction.blogspot.com/2009/01/test-blog-post.html> would never exist and this post would only be viewable on miami-home-construction.blogspot.com.

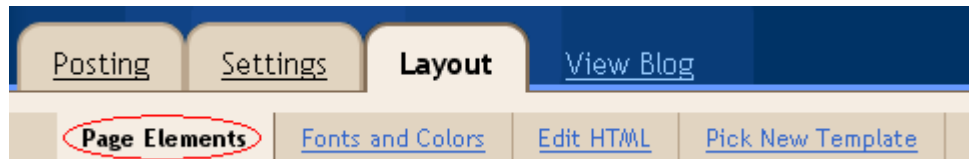
STEP 6 - CUSTOMIZING THE LAYOUT

Click the “Layout” tab in the navigation.



Blogger allows you to change and rearrange page elements like placement of blog posts, headers, images, etc., change fonts and colors, edit the HTML for the blog, or pick a new template.

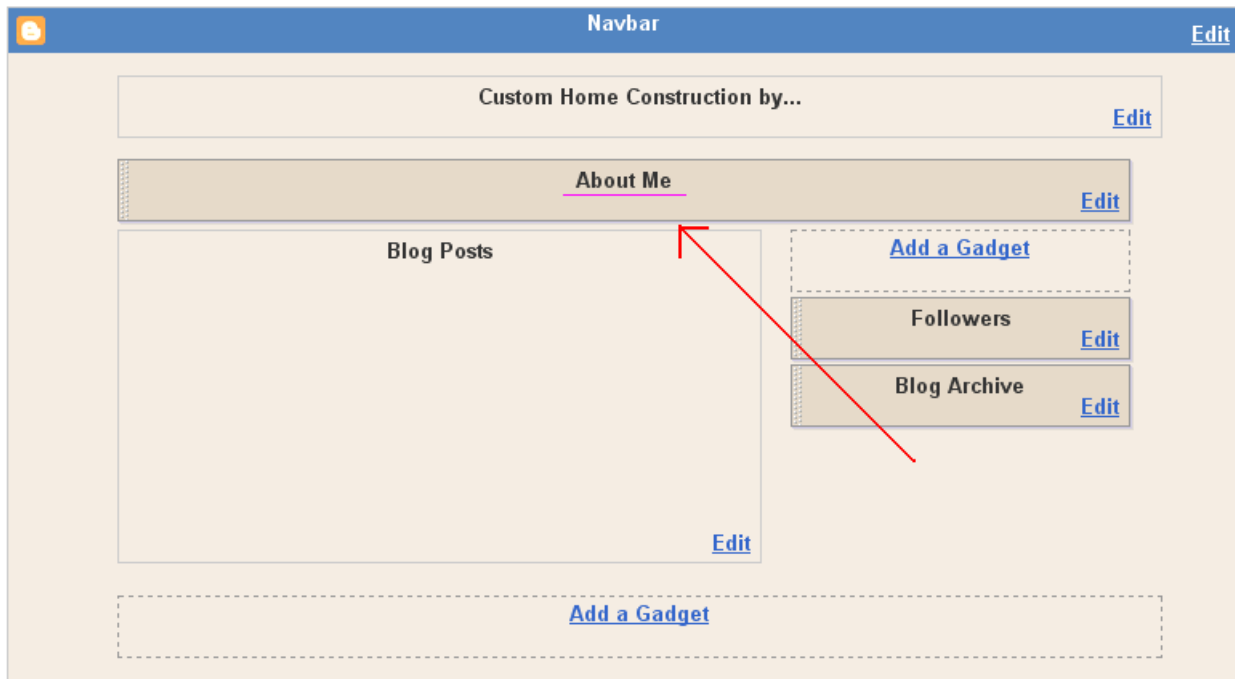
Let's go through page elements.



Here you can add little tools to your blog and rearrange your blog's layout.



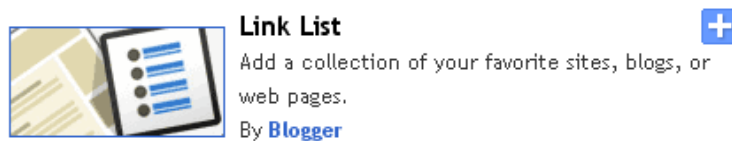
By default, your blog will always have a header that contains the title and description of your blog and your blog posts (underlined in red). These items are fixed and cannot be rearranged. The items that are underlined in magenta are moveable and can be rearranged in any order. Just click and drag one of the shaded boxes to place anywhere you like. I moved the “about me” box to the top underneath the header. To edit any of the content within these boxes just click edit on the bottom right side of each box.



The most important gadget you can add to any blog is a **link list** of websites you want to link to. For SEO purposes this would usually be your main company’s website or affiliate site you want to draw traffic to. Click on “Add a Gadget” to get started.



When the new window appears scroll down to “Link List” and click on the little blue icon to the right of it. This will take you to a new window.



BACK CANCEL SAVE

Title

Number of links to show in list *Leave blank to show all links*

Sorting Don't Sort

New Site URL

New Site Name

ADD LINK

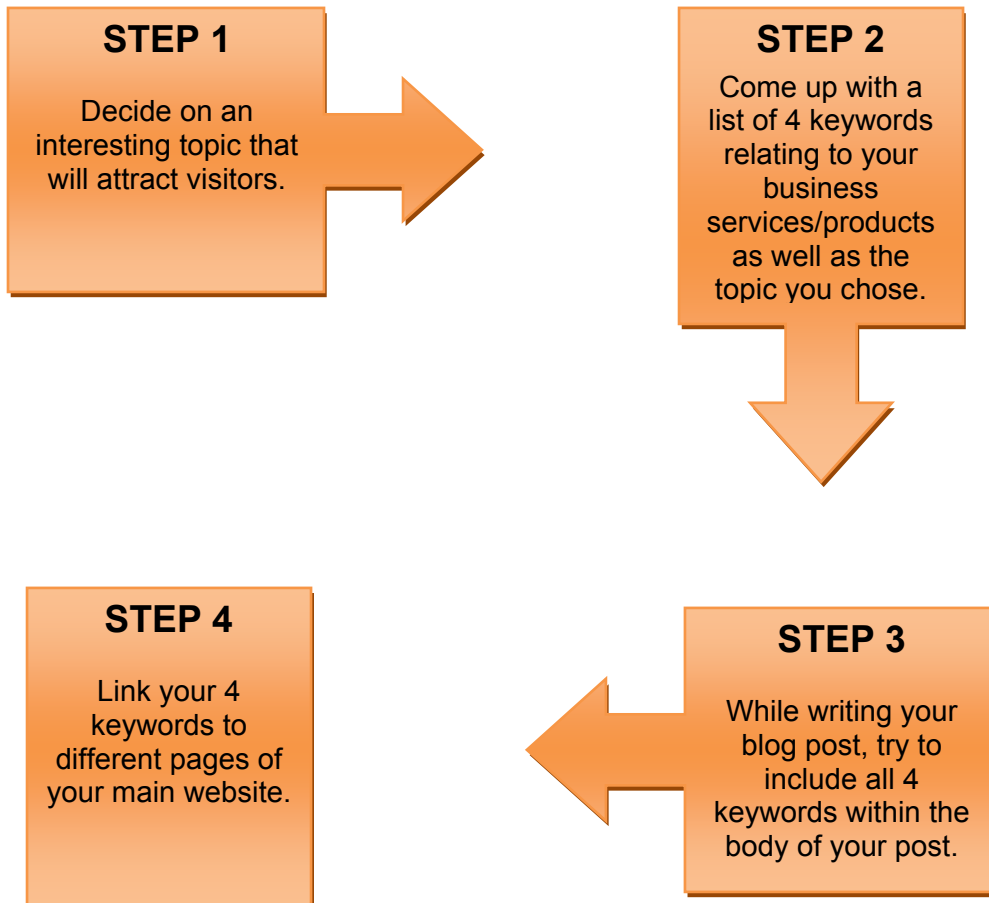
BACK CANCEL SAVE

Adding a link list onto your blog is another form of cross-linking. **The more links a website has the more search engines notice it.** To boost your main website's rankings, you should always add your company websites to your link list. Under the "New Site Name" field is where you would put the textual part of the link. The text that is used for the link is the most important part of linking. Make sure the name of your link contains the keywords relevant to the site you want to link to....this is called the "anchor text." Just linking to a website isn't all you need to do to boost rankings. Coming up with good anchor text is important. If the search engines scan a website and notice 5 links that are anchored with the company name, it just counts it as a simple link. But if the search engines scan a website and notice 5 links that are anchored with keywords RELEVANT to the website you're linking to, it counts the link as better quality than the link with just the company name. **So choosing the right anchor text is important.**

For this example, we will create our first link as "Miami Custom Home Construction" – our main service – and link it to our main website. When the search engines scan this link, it will give our main website more credibility. You can add as many links as you want, but make sure they are relevant to your blog!

furniture, high-technology appliances, etc. If you read something interesting in the news about your industry, launched a new service, or partnered with a new manufacturer feel free to share with your visitors.

The key to writing an effective search engine friendly blog post is including keywords, links, and anchor text within your post. Here are 4 steps to help you create an effective blog post.



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Following these 4 steps will ensure that you write an effective, optimized blog post. Blog posts are the foundation to your blog. Without the new, fresh content your blog is nothing. Blogs that are updated more frequent than others tend to get scanned more frequent by the search engines. When the search engines scan your optimized blog posts they will see the anchored keywords you used in your post and give the site you're linking to more credibility. This is why it's important that we enabled "post pages" on page 9. Since each blog post is given its own URL, your main website shows more pages linking to it, rather than just your blog's "homepage."

Although a blog's main purpose is for consumer reading and interaction, they are used by many companies as an online marketing tool to help build links and credibility to their main company website. We always say, if you aren't doing it...chances are, your competitors are!

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