



# BLOGGING ESSENTIALS GUIDE

NATALIE DUCEY

FREE DOWNLOAD

# WELCOME

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*Cheers, I'm Natalie. As a content creator, I'm passionate about sharing informative content to help fuel online success. I love connecting with others and sharing design and creativity tips, social media marketing strategies, and blogging tips and resources. On my [website](#) and in this free download, I share resources and tips to help others tap into their creative side and build confidence in the blogging, design, and marketing process. Creativity fuels my soul and paying it forward is my motto. I'm thrilled that you're here, and delighted to join you on this fantastic journey!*

*Natalie*

Let's Connect



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# INTRODUCTION

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*If you're a new blogger or a seasoned one, you know how much work goes into developing and maintaining a website rich in content. The aesthetics of our website, creating a cohesive brand, and consistent marketing via social media can be challenging. BUT it can be energizing if we have the right tools and information to begin and, hopefully, thrive!*

*After seven years of blogging, I thought I'd put together a Resource Guide with a list of essential tools and resources I use in hopes that it may prove helpful to fellow bloggers – newbies and/or not-so-newbies alike. After all, we're always learning in this form of engagement.*

# CONTENTS

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## Web Hosting 01

*What is it?*

*Why do I need it?*

## Hosted vs Self-Hosted 02

*What's the difference?*

*What's right for me?*

## Domain Name 03

*What to consider when choosing  
a domain name.*

## How to Start a Blog 04

*Complete guide to starting a blog.*

*Tips for success and more!*

## Website Themes 05

*Choosing a website theme.*

*What are my options?*





# CONTENTS

---

## eCommerce Options

*Create an online store with WooCommerce.*

*What do I need to know?*

06

## Creativity & Design

*Graphics and Font Resources.*

*Access to Free Resource Library.*

07

## Writing Tools

*Using a Writing Editor.*

*A helpful, free Writing Tool.*

08

## Stock Images

*Resources for beautiful, high-quality stock images.*

09

## Graphic Design & Editing

*Graphic Design Tools and Resources.*

*Photoshop and Canva.*

10



# 01

## WEB HOSTING WHAT IS IT?

*Let's begin with web hosting. In order to have a blog or website, we require web hosting. Essentially, this is where our content 'lives' and is stored. It can get more technical, but that's it in a nutshell.*

*A simple analogy I often use ~ while we think of web hosting as the place where our blog/website content 'lives' in the world wide web, our domain name is the house where we reside in that world, and WordPress (Content Management System) is the tool we use to build our house.*



## *Things to Consider before you begin:*

*WordPress is a Content Management System. Basically, it's the framework we use to design and build our blog/website. While both hosting scenarios use WordPress, there is a difference as to what you'll have access to for website design and functionality.*

*It's important to know that you're pursuing the right path based on your long-term goals.*

*If you're looking to monetize your blog and require access to custom themes and plugins, then I really encourage you to fully compare the **two hosting scenarios**.*



*There are a few things to consider before you begin:*

- 1 Hosting Scenarios and long-term goals.*
- 2 Domain, Themes, and Monetization.*
- 3 Accessing Plugins for Design and Function.*

# 02

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## HOSTED VS SELF-HOSTED



*Like me, you're probably trying to understand the difference between [WordPress.com](#) (hosted) and [WordPress.org](#) (self-hosted). When I started blogging seven years ago, I knew very little. The terminology can be a little confusing. Many new bloggers gravitate towards the [Start a Free Blog](#) articles and choose [WordPress.com](#). While that may work perfectly for you, it's essential to know the pros and cons of choosing that path.*

*There are a few things to consider before you decide which [hosting scenario/plan](#) is best for you.*

*It's important to know that you're pursuing the right path based on your long-term goals.*



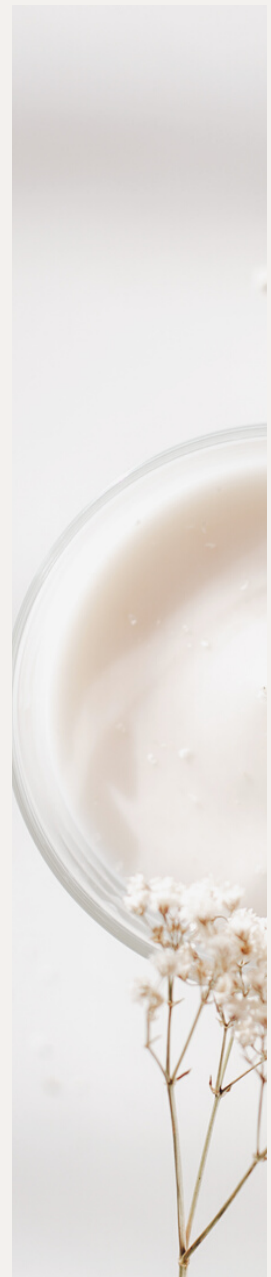
## *WordPress.com (Hosted ~ Free or WordPress Pro)*

*WordPress.com does the hosting for you. If you're just getting started and want to try a free blog you can certainly go with **WordPress.com**. You can begin with a free account and upgrade to WordPress Pro if you choose.*

## *WordPress.org (Self-hosted with Bluehost)*

*Hosting **packages** are as low as \$2.95 a month and include a free domain name for one year. Every account features a one-click WordPress installation. Their in-house experts are there to help 24/7.*

*Also, their help center includes guides, video tutorials, and more. Every website hosted at Bluehost is given a free SSL certificate. And they offer a 30-day money-back guarantee!*



*WordPress.com (hosted) or WordPress.org (self-hosted)?*

*What's right for me?*

*CLICK HERE!*

# 03

## DOMAINS

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*Your website will require a domain name. [Bluehost](#) includes a free domain name for one year with their hosting plans. You can create a new domain or use a domain you already own.*

*You can also create a domain name with [WordPress.com](#). Your choice of a domain name is an important decision and will depend on many factors. If you're opening a business then maybe your business name will work for you.*

*You may have noticed my website is my personal name. As an author, designer, and blogger, I branded my services under my name. This corresponds to all my social media profiles. As a sole proprietor, this is ideal for my situation and corresponds to my personal and professional goals.*

*Ultimately, the decision is yours. It's an important decision and an invigorating one!*

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# 04

# HOW TO START A BLOG

## *HOW TO START A BLOG*

*In a series of tutorials, it's my pleasure to take you through the steps of starting a blog/website.*

*I designed this free series to help website owners master WordPress and thrive as a blogger/website owner. It's my way to pay it forward as a blogger.*

*A Complete Step-by-Step Guide to Build a Website!*

*FREE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE*

*How to Start a Website*

*CLICK HERE!*

# BLOGGING TO SUCCESS

*Complete Blogging to Success in WordPress Series:*

*Parts 1 – 5 are designed to guide you through the entire setup process:*

- *Part One ~ A Blogger's Guide: Blogging to Success with Dashboard Settings in WordPress*
- *Part Two ~ A Blogger's Guide: How to create a user profile, manage comments, view stats, and add widgets in WordPress*
- *Part Three ~ A Blogger's Guide: How to Customize a WordPress Theme*
- *Part Four ~ A Blogger's Guide: How to create a Blog Post and maximize engagement in WordPress!*
- *Part Five ~ A Blogger's Guide: How to add Pages in WordPress*

*A Blogging 15 Point Pre-Publish Checklist:*

*A Blogger's Checklist: 15 Blogging Tips every Blogger Should Know before they Publish!*





# 05

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## WEBSITE THEMES

*Having a website to be proud of is essential for longevity in business and blogging. Our website is the portal to our content and creations. We want visitors to feel welcome, enjoy their visit, and, hopefully, return.*

*Having a beautiful, intuitive website isn't necessarily expensive. Nope. In this digital age, there are so many resources at our fingertips. There are free themes via [WordPress](#), but you can be limited with customization, features, and options available. Or you may need coding experience. It's doable, yes, but if you're not happy with your website aesthetically and have limited features, you have options elsewhere.*

## WEBSITE DESIGN & THEMES

*NOTE: To import/upload themes for WordPress, you'll need to be self-hosted with WordPress.org or upgrade to the [WordPress Pro](#), if you're using WordPress.com.*

### RESTORED 316 DESIGNS

*Restored 316 Designs is a fantastic source for beautifully styled feminine WordPress themes for female entrepreneurs. You can visit their website and browse the numerous themes. Their support team is fabulous!*

*I designed my website using the [Refined Theme](#).*

### CREATIVE MARKET

*Creative Market has over 7600 ready-to-use themes for business and personal websites, landing pages, and blogs. Their modern, professional themes can power eCommerce sites, portfolios, and blogging platforms. You can spend hours browsing and you're sure to find exactly what you're looking for!*



# 06

## ECOMMERCE OPTIONS

*If you're using WordPress.org or WordPress.com (requires the WordPress Pro plan) you can easily create an online store with WooCommerce (plugin). **WooCommerce** is an open-source, completely customizable eCommerce platform for entrepreneurs. WooCommerce is built on WordPress, the software that runs 26% of the web. It offers much flexibility via hundreds of free and paid **WooCommerce** extensions.*

*You can customize your eCommerce website whether you are selling physical products, digital downloads, and/or services. I use WooCommerce on my website for **digital products**!*

*You can visit their website and view their **extensive features** as well as find inspiration and tips for your entrepreneurial endeavours.*

# CREATIVITY & DESIGN



*We live in a visual world. Many followers of my blog are writers, authors, and/or bloggers, and readers. We share and market our work, and the work of others, through visuals. What grabs our attention? For me, it's images, but a big source of inspiration comes from typography and graphics. We can create beautiful marketing designs using unique fonts and graphics.*

*\*\* In addition to below, if you're looking for tips and free resources, please feel free to drop by my [Library of Free Resources](#). I share design tutorials, graphics, and more.*

*You can view [here](#) and download as many items as you wish.*



## DESIGN GRAPHICS & FONTS

*There are so many fabulous resources to access. I wanted to share my go-to sites for beautiful fonts and graphics (free and paid):*

### FONTBUNDLES.NET

*FontBundles.net* is well known for saving customers bundles of cash, but they have gone one step further with their FREE fonts section, which includes a brand new free font every week. Yup, FREE!

### DESIGNBUNDLES.NET

*Design Bundles* offer amazing graphics at fantastic prices. They have thousands of graphics, templates for business cards, brochures, and websites, logo design templates, etc. They generously offer free fonts every week via Font Bundles. All of their free fonts are available to download instantly, as soon as you sign up for an account. It's quick, easy, and FREE!

## DESIGN GRAPHICS & FONTS

### CREATIVE MARKET

*I love Creative Market! The talent and creativity are inspiring. They offer FREE products, but their paid products are worth every penny. I often purchase a Bundle and feel like a kid at Christmas. So many AMAZING products at an affordable price!*

### DEAL JUMBO

*Deal Jumbo is known for its amazing discounted design bundles with extended license! From fonts, graphics, mockups, photos and textures, there is something for everyone.*

*The bundles are huge and can be priced as low as \$3.00. They have awesome freebies too. You can view and download their free designs and graphics [here](#).*



# 08

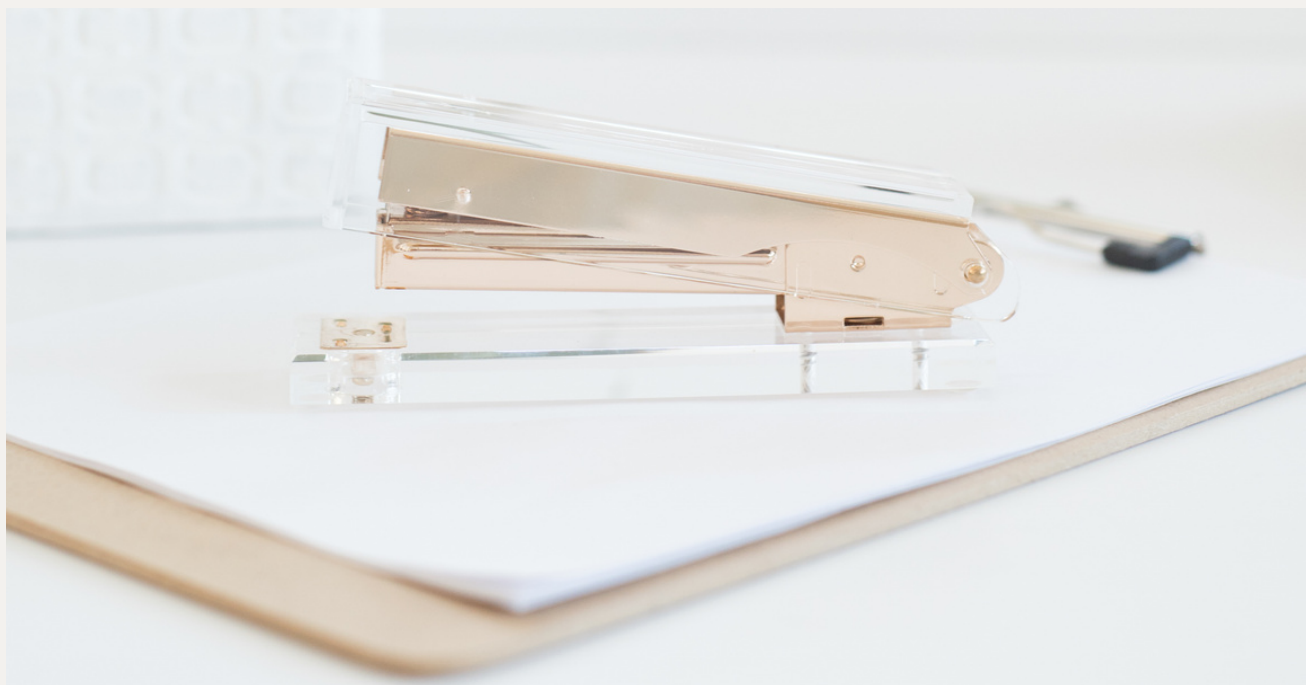
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## WRITING TOOLS

*As a writer and blogger, I love **Grammarly**! I use it for all my blog posts and writing needs. Its ease of use is amazing. It's my go-to editor. Grammarly automatically detects grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, and style mistakes in your writing.*

*You simply copy and paste any English text into Grammarly's Editor, or install Grammarly's free browser extension for Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Edge. I'm using the Chrome extension as I prepare this document!*

*The **FREE version** is available or you can upgrade to Grammarly Premium which offers over 400 types of checks and features.*



# 09

## STOCK IMAGES (FREE)

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*As a content creator and blogger, I love beautiful,  
high-quality stock imagery.*



*If you use Canva, you'll see hundreds of  
Stock Images via Photos.*

*With a **Canva Pro** account (trial free for 30  
days!), you'll see so many more.*

*It's important to know and understand the  
License Agreements – Personal vs  
Commercial use when using Stock Images.  
This information is typically included in the  
details/summary.*

*Here are a few sources for beautiful images.*

## STYLED STOCK IMAGES

### UNSPLASH

*Unsplash* has thousands of free images available for commercial use. It's easy to spend hours browsing through their content. You can also narrow your search using the filters. I've curated images for blogging, such as flat lays, and you're most welcome to have a look and download any and all images. You can see my curated content [here](#).

### PIXABAY

*Pixabay* also has thousands of free images available for commercial use. Again, it's so easy to spend hours browsing through their content. Like Unsplash, you can also narrow your search using the filters.

### PEXELS

*Pexels* also has thousands of free images available for commercial use. You can also narrow your search using the filters. I've curated images for blogging, such as flat lays, and you're most welcome to have a look and download any and all images. You can see my curated content [here](#).

## STYLED STOCK IMAGES

### PIKWIZARD

*Pikwizard offers high-quality, free stock photos. Visit their stunning library of over 1 million stock images and videos. Royalty-free and safe for commercial use, with no attribution required.*

### CANVA

*If you use Canva, you'll see hundreds of Stock Images via Photos. With a *Canva Pro* account (trial free for 30 days!), you'll see so many more.*



# 10

## IMAGE EDITING GRAPHIC DESIGN

### PHOTOSHOP

*Photoshop* is a fantastic image/design editor. Graphics, logos, templates, photo editing, and so much more, Photoshop will do it. It's part of Adobe Creative Cloud and you can try it for *free*.

Many people shy away from Photoshop because of its scope. But that's what makes it awesome. With their numerous Tutorials and User Guide, you'll be amazed at what you can design. I made the leap years ago and can say it's one of the best design decisions I've made!

I share design tutorials via my *YouTube channel*. Feel free to drop by!



# IMAGE EDITING GRAPHIC DESIGN

CANVA

*Canva's online graphics creator/editor has all the tools and templates to design amazing, branded, social media graphics, videos, and so much more. It's easy to use and it's FREE! You can also trial **Canva Pro** free for 30 days (cancel anytime).*

*I also share Canva design tips and tutorials via my **YouTube channel**. Feel free to drop!*







# CHEERING FOR YOU!

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*I hope this guide proves helpful in your blogging and business endeavours. If you have any tips or suggestions that you'd like to share, feel free to contact me via my website [here](#).*

*I love sharing awesome tools and resources!*

*FOR MORE TIPS, LET'S CONNECT:*

*Kindest regards. Natalie*

Let's Connect



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