

How to Make a Blog Your Website

A guide for the html-challenged

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Not everyone is proficient at html, and not everyone has the money to hire a professional website designer. I hit on a way to make a Blogger blog into your website. That way, you have a nice-looking website that's easy to update, and it's even possible to customize it a little.

Like anything else, this will take a little time to set up, but it doesn't have to all be done in one sitting.

Also, you don't have to do all the fiddling with html that I've suggested below. Those instructions are for those who want to customize their blog a bit to make it look more professional and less like a blog.

The following instructions are for Blogger.com blog templates only.

Get a blog on Blogger.com:

Go to <http://www.blogger.com/>

There's an orange arrow that says "Create your blog now". Click on that.

You have to create an account.

Username: Your username is just the ID for when you log in. It won't show up on your blog anywhere.

Password: Enter your password on both lines.

Display Name: Your Display Name is what will show up on your blog. Put your name, for example, "Camy Tang" or your pen name, "Amy Tan," so that bloggers will know who you are. It's all about name recognition, and you don't want to have a weird Display Name where no one knows who you are.

E-mail address: I use my "public" e-mail address, camy@camytang.com, because I give Blogger permission to share it so that people can get in touch with me easily. Some people don't share their e-mail addresses because it's their private or business e-mail accounts.

Click the Acceptance of Terms box. Click Continue.

Blog title: Pick a title for your website. (This will NOT be your blog url address.) It can be your name, or it can be a cute title. For publicity purposes, it's best to have your name in the title somewhere. For example, "Camy Tang's website."

Blog address (url): This is your Blogspot.com url address. If you buy your domain name (for example, www.camytang.com) and forward it to your Blogspot.com address (camys-loft.blogspot.com), then it won't matter what your Blogspot.com address is. However, I suggest using your name (or pen-name) as your address (<http://camytang.blogspot.com>). That also makes it easier for people to find you when using a search engine.

Word Verification: Type the characters. Don't worry if you make a mistake, it'll give you another set of characters to type.

Skip the Advanced Setup, and instead click the "Continue" arrow.

Choose a template: You can change your template later, so don't worry that your choice is set in stone. Since this will be a website rather than a blog, it's usually best to pick a blog template that looks like a nice website.

Something to think about: There are only so many blog templates on Blogger.com. In order to not look exactly like other blogs, for some templates you can change the picture of the header banner to whatever you want. This is possible with "Rounders4," "Snapshot," or "TicTac" templates. For other templates than these three, you can insert a picture but it requires more knowledge of html.

There are also third-party websites that offer free blog templates, but it also requires more knowledge of html.

Something else to think about: Websites tend to have the sidebar on the LEFT side rather than the right. If the blog template you like has the sidebar on the right, it's not too difficult to switch the sidebar from left to right.

However, if your blog has .jpg background for the body (the part where the text is), it might look strange when it switches over—for example, the "Snapshot" and "Moto" templates look odd when it switches. "Thisaway" looks okay but a little untidy.

My suggestion is to choose your template and then switch the sidebar to see how it looks before you do any other changes to the settings or html code.

You will need to first choose your template, then write a mock post so you have something to view. Then go into your html code to switch the sidebar (instructions below) and see how it looks.

Once you're done choosing your template, click "Continue" and you've just created your blog!

Click on "Start Posting" to start your very first post.

Think about your website's pages:

How many pages do you want your website to be? Since you're using Blogger, you can have as many pages as you'd like.

Map out what pages you want—Homepage, "For Readers," "For Writers," "Links," etc.

Also map out any sub-pages—for example, maybe "Books" will go under "For Readers."

Each page—whether a regular page or a sub-page—will be a blog post.

To post:

Click on the "**Posting**" tab at the top. It should automatically put you under the "Create" sub-heading.

Title your blog post—"Welcome!" Or "For Readers," etc.

Type in your page. (Note: If you use Mozilla Firefox as a browser, there are several buttons to format your post. Not all these formatting buttons appear in Internet Explorer.)

At the bottom of the frame, click on the words "Post Options."

Change the date. Each blog post/website page will be posted ON A DIFFERENT DAY.

Blogs are formatted where the most recent page is shown first. Your homepage or welcome page will always be the most recent date. I set my welcome page to the **most recent date**. That way, the welcome page will always be the first page that comes up on your blog/website.

When you're done, click "Publish Post." It will take a little time for Blogger to publish your post.

To create another page for your website, click the "Create" sub-heading at the top again. Each post will be a page of your website. Make sure you change the date for each post to something earlier than your "Welcome" page, so that your "Welcome" page will be the first page that comes up on your blog/website.

In your "Edit Posts" page, each post will be listed. Here's an example you can download (.pdf format): <http://www.camytang.com/BloggerManagePosts.pdf>

The colors didn't quite turn out, but the format should be what you see on your browser.

I'll talk more about your posts/pages later.

Change your settings in Blogger:

Click on the "**Settings**" tab at the top. There are several sub-headings under it.

Basic:

Title: This will have been the title you picked when you created your blog.

Description: This is something that search engines will look at, so choose carefully what to put here. Don't be too long, but be creative and succinct.

Add your Blog to our listings? Yes. This will garner more publicity for your blog/website.

Let search engines find your blog? Yes. This will garner more publicity for your blog/website.

Show Quick Editing in your blog? No. It's best to remove the Quick Editing icon from your blog posts, because it makes it look more like a blog and not a website.

Show Email post links? No. For the same reason above.

Adult Content? Self-explanatory

Global Settings:

Show compose mode for all your blogs? Yes. This will make it easier to post and format your posts.

Enable transliteration? Disable unless your blog readers utilize the few languages available.

Hit "Save Settings."

Publishing:

Switch to: • Custom Domain (Point your own registered domain name to your blog)

This is for after you've gotten your domain and want to point it to the blog. Just follow the instructions.

Blog*Spot address: This is your Blogspot.com address that you picked when you created your blog.

Hit "Save Settings."

Formatting:

Show 1 day on the main page. Change this to ONE DAY from whatever the default is. You only want one day shown, so that just the homepage shows when someone first lands on your blog.

Most of the settings on this page don't matter too much. Pick whatever you want, or leave it as the default.

Show Title Field: Yes. This will enable you to title each page of your website—"For Readers," "For Writers," etc.

Show Link Field: No. Don't need it.

Hit "Save Settings."

Comments:

You will be disabling comments in your template, so it doesn't matter what these settings are. However, to be safe, I change them to maximum security to protect from spammers:

Comments: Hide.

Who can comment? Only members of this blog

Comment Form Placement Doesn't matter, use the default

Comments default for posts: New posts do not have comments

Backlinks: Hide.

Backlinks default for posts: New posts do not have backlinks

Comment moderation: Always

Show word verification for comments? Yes.

Comment notification address: Put your email address to notify you just in case.

Hit "Save Settings."

Archiving:

This is important for creating a separate website address for each post, which will enable you to put links on the sidebar to your different pages.

Archive frequency: Daily

Enable Post Pages? YES

Hit "Save Settings."

Site Feed:

All Blog Feeds None. This will remove the "Subscribe" line under your blog posts, which makes your blog look like a blog and not a website.

Everything else is empty.

Hit "Save Settings."

Email and Open ID:

Don't change any of these settings, they don't really matter.

Permissions:

This is in case you have someone else helping you with your blog/website. If you hit the blue button "Add authors," it enables you to input the e-mail address of whoever will be helping you on your blog. Once they've been added, you can click on the box to the right of their name under "Admin" to give them full access and rights to your blog—which includes template, if someone is customizing your blog look/template.

Altering your blog's Layout:

Under the "**Layout**" tab at the top, there's a sub-heading where you can change your template, "Pick new template." It won't affect the settings you've just changed under the "Settings" tab.

However, once you change the *html code* for your template, if you change templates, then those html code changes will disappear. Be sure on your template choice before doing the html code changes below.

Go to the "**Layout**" tab at the top. It should automatically put you in the first sub-heading, "Page Elements."

This will allow you to play around with your header and other elements on the blog. You can add elements (or "gadgets") to the sidebar.

The default gadgets are Followers, Blog Archive, and About Me. You will want to delete Followers and Blog Archive because they automatically tell your visitors that your website is actually a blog, and you'd ideally like the illusion that your website is a website. Click on "edit" under each of those boxes and click the blue "remove" button.

Note: Your Blogger profile (About Me) shows up on every page of your website on the sidebar. Some people don't like the look of the profile. If you'd like, you can remove your Blogger profile from your webpage by deleting the gadget the same way you deleted the Followers and Blog Archive gadget above.

You can reorder your gadgets up and down your sidebar by simply clicking on the box and while holding down the mouse, move the box up or down. Then click the orange “Save” button at the top to save your reordering.

Setting up your sidebar links:

On any website, you’ll always see links on the side or the top, such as “Home” or “For Writers.”

You will add links like that to your sidebar, using the url addresses for your individual blog posts. That way, each blog post will be a page in your website.

Click on the “**Posting**” tab at the top, and then click on “Edit posts.” The page will list all your posts (see this link for a downloadable example (.pdf format): <http://www.camytang.com/BloggerManagePosts.pdf>).

The following is best done with two different windows, so *right-click* on the “**Layout**” tab at the top, and select “Open in New Window” or “Open Link in New Window.” A page will come up with the **Layout** page.

On the **Layout** page, click “Add a Gadget”. A box will **popup**. Scroll down and click the “+” next to Link List. A new screen will popup.

Next to “Title,” keep it blank.

“Number of links to show in list,” leave it blank to show all links.

Sorting: don’t sort

New Site URL:

New Site Name:

You will put the url address of a blog post next to “New Site URL” and then title the link (such as **Home** or **For Readers**) next to “New Site Name”.

Here is how you find the url addresses of your blog posts:

Go to the **Posting** window that has a list of all your posts. On the left of each post is “View.” Right-click on “View” and then select “Copy Shortcut” or “Copy Link Location.”

Then go to your **popup** window. Click the box next to “New Site URL” and click control+V to paste the url you just copied.

In the box next to “New Site Name”, type the title of the blog post, such as **Home** or **For Readers**, etc. Click Add Link

You can order the links as you like by clicking on the tiny up and down arrows next to the links.

The box will already have three links: Google News, Edit-Me and Edit-Me. Click “delete” next to each of those to remove them.

When you’re done adding links, click Save.

Customizing your header banner picture:

You will need to upload the picture you want to someplace like Photobucket so you have a url of the picture OR you can have it on your computer and upload it directly to Blogger.

While still in the **Layout** tab, under Page Elements, click on “edit” in the box that says “(Header)”
A Popup box will appear.

(You can add/change your blog description in this box if you like.)

Under “Image,” you can either click “browse” to find your header picture file on your computer, or in the box below that, insert the url of the picture. Play around with Placement so you can figure out how you want your header to look.

Click “Save.”

You can click on “View Blog” and if you don’t like how your header looks, just click “edit” in the “Header” box again.

Using your own photo program, you might need to play around with the size of your header picture to make it fit.

Remove the posting information:

This is just to remove the “bloggy”ness of your blog.

While still in the **Layout** tab, under Page Elements, click on “edit” in the big box that says “Blog Posts”

Number of posts on main page: 1 days with posts or 1 post

Uncheck ALL the boxes.

Click “Save.”

Customize fonts and colors:

Under the **Layout** tab, click on “Fonts and Colors”. This will take you to a page where you can customize your blog’s fonts and colors.

Try not to make your blog difficult to read, like having a black or dark background and white font. Also, be sure the font is large enough for most people to read. If possible, use a sans-serif font like Ariel or Verdana rather than a serif font like Times, Courier, Trebuchet, or Georgia, since sans-serif fonts tend to be easier to read on a computer screen.

Editing HTML code:

Go to the “**Edit HTML**” tab at the top.

There will be a frame in your page with your blog’s html code in it. Don’t freak out, it’s not bad at all, and I’ll give you precise instructions on how to edit it.

Before you begin, click inside the frame, then hit Control+A (select all) and Control+C (copy). Paste the code in a Word document. That way you have all your code in case you make a mistake.

You can also hit the “Clear Edits” button on the bottom to undo any changes you make, but once you hit “Save Template Changes” button, you cannot undo any changes.

As you work and change the html code, I highly suggest periodically copying and pasting the code into a Word document so you always have a version of the template as you make changes. Make sure you keep

the *original* version of your template in a special file just in case you delete something you want to restore.

When you're done making changes, or if you'd like to save your changes, hit "Save Template Changes."

To switch your sidebar from right to left:

Click the box next to Expand Widgets Template.

Scroll down the frame that holds your blog html code.

A little ways down, you'll see:

```
#main-wrapper {  
  width: 410px;  
  float: $startSide;
```

and

```
#sidebar-wrapper {  
  width: 220px;  
  float: $endSide;
```

#main and #sidebar may not be right under each other, and the width will probably not be the same px size.

Under main wrapper, switch "\$startSide;" to "right" and under sidebar wrapper, switch "\$startSide;" to "left". It will look like this:

```
#main-wrapper {  
  width: 410px;  
  float: right;
```

and

```
#sidebar-wrapper {  
  width: 220px;  
  float: left;
```

Hit "Preview" at the bottom to see if it worked.

If it doesn't work, then simply choose another template—click on "Pick new template" at the top under the "Template" tab.

About Me:

Your profile (About Me) gives your picture and information about you. I highly suggest that you edit your profile so that it gives your name and a short blurb about who you are.

To edit your profile, click on "Dashboard" at the very top right of your blog settings page.

When you are back at your dashboard, on the left side you'll see a link "Edit Profile."

You can also remove your profile entirely from your sidebar (delete the About Me gadget), or you can move it further down your sidebar by simply clicking on the box and while holding down the mouse, move the box up or down.

Removing the Blogger bar:

The Blogger bar at the top advertises that your website is a blog. However, one of the good things about the Blogger bar is the option to "Search This Blog," which allows users to search through the pages of your blog/website.

The choice to keep or remove that Blogger bar is yours.

Here is a good article to show you how to remove it:

<http://www.karlonia.com/2008/11/19/remove-blogger-bar/>

Removing the "older posts" and "newer posts" link at the bottom of the page:

<http://bloggers-university.blogspot.com/2009/01/remove-older-post-and-newer-post-link.html>

What if I want a blog as well as a website?

Not a problem. I suggest getting another blog for your blog, so that you can have different settings for your blog and your blog-website. For example, you'll probably want to enable the comments on your blog, whereas they're most likely disabled for your blog-website, to give it a more professional look.

Follow the instructions above on how to get another blog. Your blog url should be similar to your blog-website url. If your blog-website is your name, such as <http://camytang.blogspot.com/>, then your blog could be something like <http://camytangblog.blogspot.com/>.

You're done!

If any of these instructions are wrong or incomplete, feel free to e-mail me at camy@camytang.com.

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