

Module 00

Getting Started

Some essential notes to read before you start.

By Russell Jamieson

Introduction

Welcome to the Power Blog Service!

This module is about giving you an overview of our services, where to find them, how to contact us, and more about taking your web site live.

What We Do

Site Setup: We do the initial set-up so your site looks the way you want and has all the features it needs. We also set up the tools so you can monitor the success of your site. The set up happens in two stages; a) the Prep Zone and b) Going Live. There is more on this later.

Reliable Hosting: We host your site on our servers at Liquidweb which provide a reliable platform for your site. Liquidweb has a 100% network availability guarantee.

Regular Maintenance: We perform all the technical maintenance facilities on your site such as software upgrades and backups (and any recoveries) so you do not need to be concerned with any technical aspects of Wordpress, Thesis or any Wordpress plug-ins.

Wordpress and SEO Training: With the Gold and Platinum packages, we provide regular training to help you get the most from Wordpress, what to write about, how to construct an article and apply meta tags in order to optimise your search engine rankings. Later we will teach more sophisticated topics such as how do you do internal linking, how to obtain external links, article marketing, email marketing, pay per click campaigns etc: all techniques that increase the effectiveness of your website.

Technical Support: We offer a support ticketing service where you can get individual help on anything related to your site whether it is a technical Wordpress issue or a general internet marketing question. Support requests regarding our training are free of charge. Support questions specifically related specifically to your blog are charged using Support Credits which can be purchased as and when you need them.

What You Do

Follow The Training: In order to make your site effective we also ask that you follow the methods described in our training. This will help you create content (articles, videos, podcasts) that your potential customers are looking for, and structure that content in such a way as to optimize its position in the search engine rankings. We want Google to like your site as much as its human visitors do!

Create Content Regularly: You do need to provide regular relevant content in various forms such as articles, photos, videos and podcasts (sound files) for your site. We believe a consistent sustained approach is necessary for a successful website.

Contact Details

Telephone

Telephone Freephone USA - 888 588 5957

Telephone USA - 941 312 7673

Telephone UK - 020 8144 9880

The telephone is not manned 24/7 but you can always leave a message. We are emailed with your message and will endeavour to get back to you the same working day or at least the next working day.

Skype

Skype : russelljamieson

I will answer on Skype if I am on the computer and not on a call with another client. If I do not answer then please email instead

Email

You can email us with general enquiries at support@powerblogservice.com.

We will endeavour to get back to you the same working day or at least the next working day.

Support: Questions about the Training

If you have any questions about the training, please email us tutorials@powerblogservice.com

Support: Questions Specific to Your Site

Support is chargeable using support credits. You need to buy a Support Credit on the website which entitles you for up to 30 minutes support. This time could be used to solve a number of minor issues or a medium sized issue. For larger requests, such as helping you to set up a shop then we would spend the first credit working with you to identify your requirements and then come up with an estimate of what it would take to complete the work. It is clearly a different exercise to set up 100 products than it is to set up a single product.

Please visit <http://www.powerblogservice.com/extras/> to buy support credits.

To create a support ticket, please go to <http://support.powerblogservice.com> and fill out the form. Alternatively, if you cannot get to the website for any reason you can email ticket@support.powerblogservice.com. Both approaches result in a ticket appearing in our ticketing system (called eTicket). This allows us to track your issue until it is resolved.

Terms and Conditions

Contract

For our standard services there is no contract. However we do ask you to sign a contract for any custom development work that varies from the standard offerings on our website.

No Quibble Guarantee

There is a 30 day, no quibble, money back guarantee on the initial site set up and first month's subscription. See <http://www.powerblogservice.com/guarantee>. No quibble means that you can invoke the guarantee just because you have changed your mind.

Exclusions

Of course, on invoking the money back guarantee you will not own the out of the box simple site design, nor any licences that the setup fee is designed to cover. That's because when we give you back your money - you won't have paid for them. We're sure you understand but we thought it best to be clear on that.

Furthermore, if you order any customized designs for your site, or any items from the extras price menu, these are not covered by the 30 day money-back guarantee. This is because you can invoke the guarantee simply by changing your mind. An extra work we do at your request is covered by normal business terms - if we do what you ask to the required quality then the work is chargeable. If the work is not to your satisfaction we will seek to remedy the situation.

Payment Terms

Payment for the set up is in advance. Payment for the subscription service is monthly in advance.

Termination and Notice Period

There is no minimum length of contract so you are not tied in to the service for any longer that your business requires.

If you decide to cancel after the 30 day period is up, you can. We only ask that you provide us with an email at least three days notice of the date when you wish to quit. Your need to give us this notice period so we can cancel payment before the next recurring billing date and make the necessary DNS changes to minimize any disruption should you move the site to another server .

We will reply to your email to confirm receipt.

We will not refund partial monthly subscription charges though. However we will provide you with the following:

- ❖ A zipped up file containing your Wordpress Database SQL dump (you can use this to re-build your site elsewhere and it will contain all your articles, pages and comments)
- ❖ Any design customisations for Thesis (your custom folder)
- ❖ Details of your Thesis License so that you can continue to use it
- ❖ Details of any design license we may have set up for you
- ❖ Details of any accounts we set up on 3rd party services for your site.

Setting up Your Site: Stage 1: The Prep Zone

When you sign up for the service we configure an environment for you to start on your site. We call this the Prep Zone. It is an area where you prepare your site prior to launch. Typically a site will be in the Prep Zone between two days and a month depending on our client's needs and depending on whether they have articles to move and search engine rankings to preserve from an existing web site.

We install your site's content management system software (the software that allows you to update the site yourself) . The installation includes Wordpress and the Thesis theme plus around twenty Wordpress plugins that perform useful functions on your site (e.g spam blocking, database backups, traffic statistics, contact forms) and set it up properly so that it's ready to be search engine optimised.

Your website (with minimal styling) is set up so you can use it straight away. Please note that your new site is not hosted in the first instance at your domain name (e.g. www.mydomain.com), but is initially located at a sub-domain of our site. So for example your site might be located somewhere like <http://pbs0599.powerblogservice.com> and in this case pbs0599 would also be your customer number at the Power Blog Service.

Whilst in the Prep Zone, your new site is not visible to anyone who doesn't know its address. In other words, as you work on it at the very beginning adding pages and images, you can show it to friends and family, but no-one else is going to find it unless you want them to. In that case, you'll simply give them the site's address.

While your site is in the Prep Zone we will typically get you up to speed on a number of topics:

- how to organize files on your PC to make updating your site easier
- how to log in to your site editor (known as wp-admin)
- how to edit a page
- how to create an article (also known as a post)
- how to upload an image to Amazon S3
- how to create and format articles with images
- how to set up the title tags and description to help the search engines find your articles
- how you plan to use categories and tags on your site
- how to buy a domain name for your site

Then before leaving the Prep Zone you will

- choose a domain name for your site
- decide what 'skin' you want to go live with - the skin is something you can safely leave to later if you are going for a soft launch however if you have launch involving external publicity you will usually want to do something to customize the look of the site.
- decide how many pages and articles you want to have before you go live
- move any content from any existing site to the new site.

Setting up Your Site: Stage 2: Going Live

This stage is about making your new site appear at your chosen domain name. For example, you used to access it at <http://pbs0599.powerblogservice.com>, now it will be at <http://www.yoursite.com>, where [yoursite.com](http://www.yoursite.com) is your chosen domain name.

Email Setup

We then set up any email addresses or email forwarding you require for your domain e.g. info@yoursite.com forwards to yourname@gmail.com

DNS Changes

We make the DNS (domain name services) changes so your new site appears at <http://www.yoursite.com>. This last step can take up to 48 hours before every computer on the internet will recognize the new location of your web site.

Webmaster Tools and Traffic Monitoring

As well as moving the site we verify it with Google Webmaster Tools and Bing Webmaster Tools, set up the robots.txt and sitemap.xml files which are used by the search engines to scan your site and set up traffic monitoring at Wordpress.com and at Google Analytics.

These tools are used to monitor the health of your site and track the number of visitors.

Your new site will then appear in the search engines such as Google. This has taken between ten minutes and a week. We cannot make guarantees on this as it is beyond our control.

Preserving Your Search Engine Ranking Positions

If we are moving an existing site on to our servers it is very important that we maintain any ranking you have in the search engines. We do this by using a technique called URL redirects. For simple sites with a few pages your standard set up charge covers this but if the migration of articles and pages from a previous site is complex then we would recommend you consider our Migration Pack. With this will create some automation scripts to move the content (articles, pages, images, videos, etc) from the existing site to the new. See <http://www.powerblogservice.com/extras/>

Get your Site Noticed

There are a few actions you may want to take once your site is live on your domain:

- add an article or two
- comment on someone's blog who is an authority in your business area
- bookmark it on delicious, digg, reddit, etc
- tweet about it
- mention the launch on your wall on Facebook

How Your Site Looks

This is something that most people focus too much on. Certainly it is important that your site is not offensive to the eye, but what a site does for its customers is ten times more important than how it looks. If your site solves their problem or meets their desire easily with minimum effort, then they are happy. I would go as far as saying that the only person who *really* cares about how your site looks is you.

That said, human vanity being what it is, you are completely forgiven for wanting to give your site a distinctive look. Our suggestion is to do this after going live, once you know more and have more content you want to organize on the site, but you can do this really at any time.

You have four options here:

- you do it yourself by following our training on this
- you buy our Simple Styling package - it is a standard layout but with your logo and choice of colours
- you buy our Medium Styling package - here we can make a few customizations to the layout of one standard templates and then incorporate your logo and choice of colours
- you buy our Full Styling package - here you have full flexibility in the layout and colours

Our recommendation is to go for one of the first two options unless your line of business is particularly fashion conscious where uniqueness and and high production values really do matter.

Start with a Simple Style

If we think of your site as a person, the site content as the person's personality, then the site's styling is like the person's clothing. When you first receive your site it is very plainly dressed. You could say (if we are to continue this analogy) that it's wearing a simple white dress. The dress is beautifully made and is good enough to be seen out in public, but it won't reflect the site's personality nor will the site be wearing colours that suit it best.

Style the Site Once You Understand Your Site's Purpose and Content

As you start to add content, it will inform decisions you make about how your site should eventually look and operate. You will want to style the site to enhance your visitors' experience of finding the stuff they want, solving their problem and taking the action you want them to take.

Seasonal Styles for Seasonal Business

The other point to make is that we separate the styling of a site from its content. So at some future point when you want to make changes to your site's styling, say at Christmas, it is a simple matter of creating a Christmas design, wearing it during December and then reverting to the original design in January.

You can do the same for Valentines, Easter or any other period that has significance to your business. You only pay for the designs when we create them, and you can swap them in and out at the click of a button yourself thereafter. The designs really are like clothing that you can take off the site or place on the site when you decide.