

WPDJ's Top Five

Essential & Free WordPress Plugins

If you don't use these, your site will catch on fire and burn down the internet.

1 Akismet Anti-Spam

This is the best and easiest anti-spam plugin you can get. It's made by Automattic, the creators of WordPress, so you know it's safe. You might think that you don't need an anti-spam plugin because it's for sites with huge audiences and massive comments. It's nice that you're humble but you're wrong. Even sites with low traffic get spammed. Soon enough, you'll be inundated with spammy comments that you'll need to manage. Akismet does it for you.

Just install it already. There's a setup wizard to guide you through it all.

<https://akismet.com>

2 UpDraftPlus Backup/Restore

Aww, who needs a backup? It's just a simple WordPress website, what could go wrong?

Plenty, my friend. It happens when you least expect it. One minute you're whistling a jaunty tune while updating your theme and then... hey, what's that? Why is my site... wrong? It looks horrible, what happened?

Since you can't un-update your theme (without a lot of technical messing around), you're stuck. How many people like starting all over designing their sites? I don't see any hands raised.

UpDraftPlus is an amazing and free plugin that backs up your site on a regular basis without you lifting a finger. Then, when something goes wonky, you have a handy restore option.

It's fairly simple to set up. You will need a Google Drive account, Dropbox, OneDrive or some other place the backups can be stored. There is a Premium version with lots more options, but the free one does the job really well.

<https://updraftplus.com>

3 WordFence Security

It's funny. You'd think hackers would have more important things to sneak into than your WordPress website. Aren't they trying to hack the NSA or the Kremlin or something? But hack they do and while there are other things you can (and should) do to keep them out, WordFence keeps tabs on your site 24/7. You'll get reports in your email about weaknesses in your site that you should fix. The first time I saw a report that listed 10 instances of someone trying to log in to my site with different usernames and passwords, I knew I did well installing it.

<https://www.wordfence.com>



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4 WP Super Cache

Site speed has been a critical issue since people started building websites. If your site takes too long to load, visitors might not hang around to engage with your content. Hey, no big deal, right? Riiiiight.

Without getting too technical, WP Super Cache generates static html files from your dynamic WordPress blog. After a html file is generated your webserver will serve that file instead of processing the comparatively heavier and more expensive WordPress PHP scripts.

In other words, it makes your site faster.

This is another one served up by Automattic.

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-super-cache>

5 Yoast SEO

If you care at all about having your site indexed by search engines and seen in search results, you need Yoast. Sometimes it's hard to believe so much value comes in a free plugin, but Yoast SEO delivers. There's a premium version, but start out with free and get used to how it works first.

Besides site-wide configuration for SEO friendliness, there are options in each post for making sure your writing and keywords are formatted in the best way for search engines. Yoast analyzes your post and gives you suggestions which you can take or ignore, depending on your needs or level of humility.

<https://yoast.com/wordpress/plugins/seo>

6 WPForms

Okay, I snuck in a sixth plugin. I left this for last because many people don't need or use forms. So overall, it's not essential and your site won't be hacked by pirates without it. But if you do want to use contact forms, surveys, registration or even payment, WPForms is for you. It's all drag & drop and super easy to use. Admittedly, the free version (WPForms Lite) is kind of limited and if you depend on forms I would just take the leap and go Pro. There's a free 14-day moneyback guarantee.

<https://wpforms.com>

That's it, those are my Five Most Essential Plugins. Of course there are many more great plugins that you might want for your site, but I never create a WordPress site without these 5 – er, 6.

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HOW TO INSTALL WORDPRESS PLUGINS

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I create WordPress resources like these for free, because I'm a WordPress Geek and I love helping people get their sites running smoothly without hassles. If this was helpful to you, I would ask that you please share it with others, or at least tell them about my work.

I also have a regular newsletter that's totally free. If you want to hear the latest news about essential WordPress-related updates and get super simple tips for creating and maintaining your WordPress website, sign up below, or your website might burn down the internet: <http://eepurl.com/hl3KlX>

Need WordPress help? I'm your geek.

<https://wp-dj.com>

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