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Working with Plugins on WordPress

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www.JustTheFAQs.net

Just the FAQs—How-To Series
Working with Plugins on WordPress
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Working with Plugins



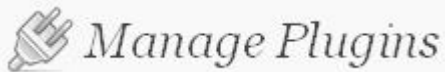
The Plugins link is located in the third table of links found in the left sidebar of your Dashboard page, which is the main page you land on after logging in to your WordPress site.

Before we get into the details of installing a new plugin, let's have a look at the different admin pages on WordPress that deal with plugins and all of the actions you can take.

If you're in a hurry and just want to know more about installing a new plugin that you've already found, you can skip to the [Easily Install Plugins](#) section of the tutorial.

Clicking the **Plugins** link results in two actions. First, you are redirected to the **Manage Plugins** page and a drop-down menu box expands that contains the following sublinks: **Installed**, **Add New**, and **Editor**.

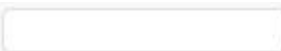
Manage Plugins Page



Clicking the **Installed** sublink redirects you to the **Manage Plugins** page that displays a list of all the plugins installed on your site. By default, WordPress already has two plugins installed for you, which are **Akismet** and **Hello Dolly**.

Akismet is a very helpful plugin that checks all comments left on your blog against the Akismet site to see if they are spam. It is recommended that you leave this plugin active on your site.

The **Hello Dolly** plugin displays a random lyric from the song in the sidebar of your site. You are welcome to keep or delete it.



Search Plugins

On the right side of the page is an input box for you to search for a particular Plugin in the list. Input the Plugin title or keyword you seek and click the **Search Plugins** button.

All (2) | **Inactive** (2) The links above the Plugins list allow you to filter the information that appears in the list. The first link is **All** and the second link is **Inactive**. The numbers in parenthesis to the right of each link display how many plugins are in each category.

Install Plugins Page



Clicking this sublink redirects you to the **Install Plugins** page where you can search for and upload new plugins from the WordPress.org site. Of course, there are hundreds of WordPress plugin creators and you can search for more plugins on the Internet at large. We'll cover searching and uploading plugins from WordPress.org in this section.

Search | [Upload](#) | [Featured](#) | [Popular](#) | [Newest](#) | [Recently Updated](#) At the top of the page is a series of links to help you search for plugins and upload them to your site. Each will be covered in detail here.

Search – Displays a page with a search box where you can find plugins based on **Term**, **Author**, or **Tag**. The bottom half of the page features a list of links of popular plugins. Searching and installing plugins with this feature is covered in the next section.

Upload – If you find a plugin on a site other than WordPress.org, you will likely need to download the file to your computer. Once you have downloaded a .zip file of a new plugin, clicking this link will redirect you to a page where you can unzip and upload the new plugin to the proper folders for WordPress. The page features a **Browse** button to help locate the .zip file of the new plugin on your computer as well as an **Install** button that will automatically unzip and install the plugin. You will see the new plugin listed **Manage Plugins** page, which you can quickly access using the **Manage Plugins** button located on the left side of the top navigation bar.

Featured, Popular, and Newest – Display full pages of plugins that are listed in those categories on the WordPress.org site.

Recently Updated - Displays a full page of plugins that have recently been updated to comply with changes to the WordPress.org software.

Search for Plugins

Search for plugins by keyword, author, or tag.

Term Search Plugins

To use the search box, in the drop-down menu, select either **Term** (keyword), **Author**, or **Tag**.

Type the item you seek into the input box then click the **Search** button. This is very handy if you want to search for plugins from a particular author or for plugins based on a keyword.

To find plugins listed in the **Popular** section, simply click the link that interests you. You will be redirected to a page with a list of available plugins with that tag.

Let's have a look at the list elements.



1 – Search Box

Allows you to search for more plugins.

2 – Pages

Displays links to pages of plugin lists.

3 – Name

Displays the name of the plugin.

4 – Version

Displays the version of the plugin.

5 – Rating

Displays the popularity of the plugin.

6 – Description

Displays a brief description of the plugin.

7 – Actions

Displays the action you can take on the plugin. Usually this is **Install**.

When you click the **Install** link under Actions, a pop-up window will appear with additional information about the plugin and a series of linked tabs across the top. You will be viewing the information on the **Description** tab.



The **Installation** tab gives instructions for installing the plugin; however, these are usually instructions for manually downloading and installing the plugin. The [Easily Install Plugins](#) section below describes the automated installation feature for WordPress sites that are rev. 2.0 and higher.

The **Screenshots** tab displays what the plugin will look like on your screen.

The **Faq** tab gives additional information about using the plugin.

The **Other Notes** tab provides additional information from the creator. Often it contains news or special features.

Easily Install Plugins

A screenshot of a plugin sidebar. At the top is a red button with white text that says 'Install Now'. Below it is a light blue box containing the following text: 'FYI', 'Version: 1.7.5', 'Author: Automattic, Inc.', 'Last Updated: 15 days ago', 'Requires WordPress Version: 2.6 or higher', 'Compatible up to: 2.8.6', 'Downloaded: 56,194 times', and a link 'WordPress.org Plugin Page »'.

Once you have found a plugin that you want to install, click the Install link, located on the far right side of the plugin description. (See #7 in Search for Plugins section above.)

A pop up window will be displayed with a full description of the plugin. The right sidebar contains a red **Install Now** link followed by specifications for the plugin. Be sure that the version of WordPress you are using matches the requirements for the plugin.

Click the red **Install Now** link to begin the installation process.

Downloading install package from
Unpacking the package.
Installing the plugin.
Successfully installed the plugin

You will be redirected back to your site showing the status of the installation process. Usually it is instantaneous. If the installation was successful, the status information will appear like the text shown to the left.

Actions: [Activate Plugin](#) | [Return to Plugin Installer](#)

Below the status information you will see a link to **Activate Plugin**. Click the link to make the plugin active.

You will be redirected to your **Manage Plugin** page and the new plugin will now appear in the list. If the plugin requires additional configuration, either a red warning box will appear at the top of the page with instructions or a **Settings** or **Configure** link will appear in the plugin listing.

Plugin Alerts



Any time there is an update, upgrade, or critical information about a plugin installed on your site, an alert will appear as a red dot next to the main Plugin link on your Dashboard page. The number inside the dot indicates how many alerts are available to view.

Simply click the link to be redirected to the **Manage Plugins** page where you can read the alert and take action. Most of the time these alerts are to tell you that an upgraded version is available for one of your plugins.

That's it!

The right plugins can help you manage your site and create valuable resources for your readers.

Plugins

The **Plugins** module on the Dashboard page displays information on the plugins that are available for your site. They are categorized as **Most Popular**, **Newest Plugins**, and **Recently Updated**. This is a good source of information to alert you to new plugins, or let you know when a plugin you use has been updated to comply with upgrades to WordPress software.

About the Author



MaAnna Stephenson is degreed in electronics and is the author of multiple technical manuals. With over two decades of experience as a Web site director, she has helped many non-profit agencies and small businesses achieve their online goals.

MaAnna's [Just the FAQs](#) series of e-books teaches the technical aspects of creating an online presence to non-geeks. The series includes e-books on Blogger, WordPress, and RSS Feeds plus multiple step-by-step tutorials.

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