

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WORDPRESS PLUGINS





# INTRODUCTION

There are many benefits to using WordPress to power your brand's online presence. From its flexibility to open source nature, notable businesses and brands across the globe choose WordPress to power incredible digital experiences. One area where WordPress really shines though is with its endless amount of integrations, including plugins.

# WordPress is awesome because of its ability to easily extend and expand its functionality through plugins.

WordPress plugins are bits of software that enable you to easily add different functionalities to your websites—from maps to charts, to contact forms, to backup functionality, and more—either automatically through the WordPress dashboard or manually by downloading the zip file directly (this usually requires some familiarity with FTP).

With more than 50,000 free WordPress plugins to choose from, it might seem like a daunting task to know which plugins you need and which you can do without. While it will vary depending on each use case, this guide will equip you with what you need to determine what types of WordPress plugins are out there and which you might consider installing to your site.

# There are more than 50,000 free plugins, which have been downloaded more than a billion times.

Read on to learn about a range of plugins, grouped into categories. Note: to be included in this list, each plugin must have been updated in the last year, as well as have above a three-star rating.



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# **INSTAGRAM PLUGINS**

While Instagram is a popular social media platform for sharing visual experiences and memories, it's also a great outlet for showcasing your brand through visual storytelling. If your brand has an Instagram account, why not share it on your website?

There are a number of awesome Instagram plugins that can help you add your photo feed to a specific page or post on your site. Here are some of our top picks. Just remember...if your profile is set to "private," be sure to change it to "public" or else these won't work!

#### The Instagram Feed



If you're looking for a mobile-friendly and responsive template for sharing your photo feed, then this Instagram plugin might be for you. Instagram Feed can display one or multiple Instagram accounts, giving you the option to choose from thumbnails, medium, and large photo sizes.

The plugin also contains a "follow on Instagram" button, the ability to randomize the order of your images, shortcode options, and complete customization with CSS and JavaScript.

#### Instagram Feed WD - Instagram Gallery for WordPress



Instagram Feed WD provides you with an enormous range of options when it comes to displaying an Instagram feed on your site. Fully responsive, the plugin provides user-friendly management and easy setup. You can easily embed a gallery into any post or page using a shortcode, or by activating the plugin's sidebar widget.

The plugin also gives you the ability to choose from a range of different layouts, as well as filter out any specific photos you don't want to be displayed. You can even redirect your images to open via lightbox.

TORQUE



#### AccessPress Instagram Feed



If looking to display your feed in a mosaic view, look no further than AccessPress' Instagram Feed plugin. The plugin gives you options to choose from three beautifully designed layouts to display on your site. Simply use a widget or shortcode to insert your Instagram feed into any post or page on your site. For a larger range of customization options, AccessPress also offers a pro version of its Instagram plugin.

# SEO PLUGINS

If you want a bigger audience, SEO is imperative. While WordPress is great for SEO out of the box, a plugin can help you with getting your content to rank higher. Here are a couple of WordPress' best plugins to help you achieve better SEO.

#### Yoast SEO



With over a million active installs, Yoast SEO is one of WordPress' most popular plugins (and the most downloaded plugin on the WP Engine platform). Yoast helps you improve SEO, increase reader engagement, and attract more visitors through social media with its settings.

It's main feature includes keyword optimization and content analysis — the plugin will literally tell you want you should change in your content, keyword wise, to rank higher. Other awesome aspects of Yoast include a readability check, ensuring its technical configuration rolls out the red carpet for search engines, enabling canonical URLs, 24/7 support, and more.

#### All in One SEO Pack



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All in One SEO is another tool that allows you to optimize the SEO of your content. While easy enough to use out of the box, there are also advanced options for and an API for developers. The plugin supports many integrations, including Google sitemaps, AMP, Google Analytics, and is even PHP 7 compatible. One of the most useful features is the "Pages" view, which allows you to change SEO title, description, and keyword in bulk.

# SITEMAP PLUGINS

Sitemaps work to put your site's content into an organized model, therefore creating easy navigation of your site for web crawlers. When your WordPress site has an effective sitemap, this makes it easier for search engines to understand what types of content you're offering and can improve search engine rankings.

Aside from the already mentioned SEO plugins (which include sitemap functionality), here are a few other sitemap plugins you might consider:

#### Google XML Sitemaps



Google XML Sitemaps is perhaps the most popular sitemap plugin with over one million installs. You can use the plugin to generate a special XML sitemap that helps the most popular search engines index your site. Even better is that the plugin is easy to use and promises it will not detract from site performance.

#### **Jetpack**



Jetpack for Wordpress comes with a multitude of features, including sitemap capabilities. Upon installing, it automatically creates a sitemap for you, as well as one tailored specifically for Google News. If you decide to use a different sitemap plugin, you can still install Jetpack for its other features and turn the sitemap part off.



# LEAD GENERATION PLUGINS

A business can not survive without adequate lead generation; without lead generation you can not reach out to new customers and discover opportunities. To grow your business, it's essential to have an effective and reliable lead generation plugin. These plugins will help you collect and manage emails, find new clients, and expand your business.

#### PopUps by OptinMonster



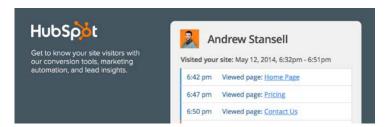
OptinMonster helps you grow your email list and get more subscribers with popup and other types of high converting optin forms. OptinMonster comes with an easy to use form builder that are proven to convert. Additionally, OptinMonster uses exitintent technology, page-level targeting, and behavior automation that has resulted in conversion rates of up to 785 percent!

#### SumoMe



SumoMe works to generate leads by helping your readers to tweet your content and also adds pop up opt-in signup form on your website. Tools like the SumoMe welcome mat, smart bar, scroll box, and more will help you grow your traffic while collecting valuable leads.

#### Contact Forms and Website Analytics by Hubspot



Contact Forms and Website Analytics by Hubspot will help you better understand your website visitors. Hubspot will automatically find information such as location, work history, and company name about each of your contacts and syncs them to an email list of your choice using MailChimp. Hubspot shows you what sources of content are driving the most contacts.

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#### **MailOptin**



MailOptin is the ultimate lead generation, customer acquisition and email marketing/automation plugin to grow and engage your mailing list. It allows you to exponentially grow your mailing list and display targeted messages across your WordPress website with popups (a.k.a lightbox or modal), before/after post optin forms and sidebar/widget subscriber forms as well as send automated/event-triggered newsletters such as automatic new post notification.

# **CONTEST PLUGINS**

What better to attract more visitors to your site then a powerful and enticing contest or giveaway? There are two things that are pretty much universally liked in this world: winning and free stuff. The giveaway item doesn't have to be substantial either. After all, free is free. Not only will visitors feel the urge to participate, most contests involve social sharing which will generate even more traffic to your site. These contest plugins will make it easy to set the rules, establish a time limit, promote the event, and choose a winner.

#### Contests by Rewards Fuel



Contests by Rewards Fuel is the plugin to help your contest go viral. Administrators have the ability to set up specific guidelines that require users to complete tasks on social media to win, such as sharing on Facebook or creating an Instagram hashtag. Currently, there are 16 entry methods for contests including newsletter entry, an Instagram follow and more!

#### InviteBox







Design and launch social referral contests and programs using InviteBox. With this straightforward plugin, you can set up an instant reward referral, referral contest, goal-based, or sweepstakes campaign in only minutes.

#### WP ContestCreator



Perhaps the most customizable contest plugin WP Contest Creator offers flexible software that developers can tinker with using custom code. This premium plugin offers a plethora of cool features including automated contests, mailing list integration, lead management software and much more.

#### KingSumo Giveaways



With KingSumo, you can use giveaways to grow your email list exponentially. KingSumo uses proprietary technology to ensure maximum virality. Users can schedule start and end times of giveaways ahead of time and give away whatever product they'd like.



# CHILD THEME PLUGINS

Creating a child theme for your site can save you a lot of pain down the road. You can make adjustments and try things out without compromising the original code of the parent theme. This allows you to play around with new ideas, giving you the option to fall back on your default code if you don't like what you see. It takes the risk out of trying new features that might affect your live site. While you can create your own child theme from scratch, one of these plugins can also help you out.

#### **Child Theme Configurator**



Child Theme Configurator will quickly help you set up a child theme. You can identify the CSS attributes you want to change without having to look for them. The plugin will then automatically create your child theme in a single click. Every stylesheet will be indexed so you can go back at any time to look at the log of what you've done. Try making a variety of child themes and go through and use the best one.

As well as creating a child theme, the plugin will also help you identify potential problems with your theme and address them. You will have the power to truly customize every part of your website.

#### Child Theme Wizard



With the Child Theme Wizard you can easily create a child theme without the need for any additional tools. From the WordPress admin, all you have to do is specify the theme you want to clone and then the new theme will appear under Appearance – Themes — it's that easy!

#### **SLIDER PLUGINS**

If you're interested in adding a slider to your site, WordPress makes it super easy. You can completely customize the slider to fit your needs and get it put together quickly. Here are some of our picks that can help you create a beautiful slider on your site.



#### **Responsive Slider**



The Responsive Slider plugin prides itself in being, well, responsive. The image slider works on multiple devices and can chose from one of seven different transition effects. The plugin also allows you to fit the images appropriately to represent your images how you wish. The customization continues with advanced drag and drop options and custom elements, texts, buttons, and slider arrows.

#### Slider WD



This Slider plugin can be added as a widget, as a plugin, or as be included in your theme using PHP. You can connect images and videos from YouTube and Vimeo with transition effects and layer support. You don't have to worry about a slide limit with this plugin as you can add as many images as you want. Per usual, the plugin provides social share buttons.

# FORM PLUGINS

The form plugin is an essential and necessary plugin for many WordPress sites. With 1500-plus form plugins available on the plugin market, it easy to be overwhelmed by choice. The plugins we have listed are widely used, highly reviewed, and regularly updated.

#### Contact Form 7



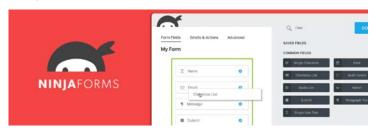
As the title says, Contact Form 7 is a great way to create beautiful contact forms. With over 1 million downloads, the plugin allows you to manage multiple contact forms and customize them to fit your needs. It supports AJAX-powered submitting, CAPTCHA, and Akismet filtering. Contact Form 7 allows your fans and clients to contact you without you having to post your email.

#### **Fast Secure Contact Form**



Fast Secure Contact Form doesn't come with any templates so you can completely customize it. You can make multiple forms, reformat them, add, and delete quickly and easily. Add a CAPTCHA code at the bottom of the form to make sure you and your customers are secure. To make sure everything is completely secure, you can even add a password to the form so only users know how to access it.

#### Ninja Forms



Ninja Forms is easily used by senior developers and beginners alike. An easy-to-use drag and drop platform makes building a form self-explanatory but built in hooks, filters, and customizable fields can also be utilized. In Ninja Forms you can modify and mark existing fields as favorites for later. Users will be redirected to success message or elsewhere upon completion of a form.

# LIGHTBOX PLUGINS

In terms of plugin-extended media management, lightboxes are one of the oldest and most popular functionalities. Whether you're a freelancer trying to make your brand website more visually appealing, or a restaurant owner aiming to entice new customers with scrumptious pictures of your delicacies, here are some various lightbox plugins that can help you out.

#### Responsive Lightbox by dFactory



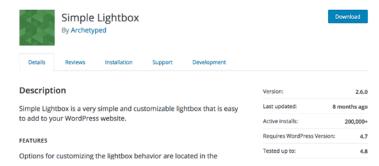
Users are able to view larger, blown up versions of images and galleries (overlay effect) using a lightbox effect optimized for mobile devices. Responsive Lightbox by dFactory's various lightbox scripts including SwipeBox, prettyPhoto, FancyBox, Nivo Lightbox, and Image Lightbox. Users can even apply this feature to YouTube and Vimeo links as well.

#### ARI Fancy Lightbox



ARI Fancy Lightbox provides users with a stylish way to display images and videos with the ability to alter things such as overlay style, button size, button text etc. This plugin can display various types of content in its lightbox including photos, Google Maps, PDF files and more. Like, Response Lightbox, this plugin is mobile-friendly and can be easily integrated with social media sites such as Facebook.

#### Simple Lightbox



Appropriately named, Simple Lightbox is an easy to use, customizable lightbox. Simply install and activate the plugin and its effects will immediately be added to existing images and videos. Users can separately add the dark or light theme to different pages such as the homepage, individual posts, widgets and menus.

# TYPOGRAPHY PLUGINS

What's great about WordPress is that it's completely customizable. When it comes to design, you aren't just stuck with your theme's given fonts. There are a number of plugins out there that can expand your options — remember to pick a good font that's easy to read. Here are a few awesome typography plugins that make it easy to punch up your site with an exciting font.

#### **Easy Google Fonts**



Easy Google Fonts allows you to choose from Google's collection of 600-plus fonts — it simply enables that font within your theme. No coding required. Another benefit is it doesn't matter the theme you're using; this plugin is 100 percent compatible with any theme. The plugin integrates with your customizer so you can see a real-time preview of each option as you change colors and fonts. It also auto backs up its list as Google adds new fonts to its collection.

#### wp-Typography



WP-Typography is another option for improving web typography with attractive fonts. With over 50 languages supported, the plugin contains intelligent character replacement that provides smart handling of things like quote marks, dashes, math symbols, and more. You can also use CSS hooks for styling character aspects like ampersands, numbers, uppercase words, initial quotes, and guillemets.

# SHORTCODE PLUGINS

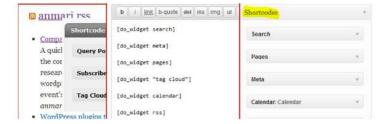
To extend WordPress' functionality you might consider adding a WordPress shortcode plugin to your site. Shortcodes allow you to execute code on posts, pages, etc. without having to directly write code. Instead, you can use these nifty little pieces of code that will execute a larger command out of sight. Here are some shortcode plugins you might consider using.

#### **Shortcodes Ultimate**

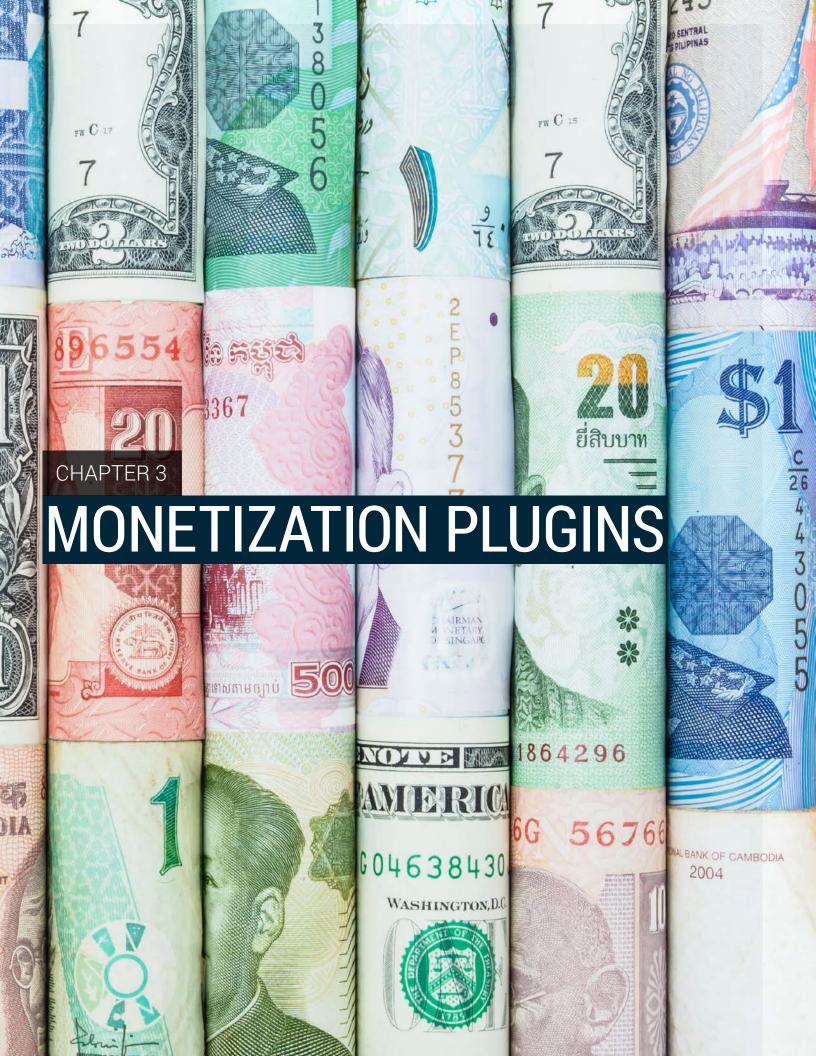


With Shortcodes Ultimate you'll get access to a mega pack of shortcodes. From easily creating tabs, buttons, boxes, and more, you can take your WordPress site to the next level without having to have knowledge of code or exert the extra energy to code these features up. If you're looking for an extra punch, there are premium add-ons for around \$15-\$25. Add-ons you can choose from include extra shortcodes, additional skins, a shortcode creator, and an add-ons bundle.

#### amr shortcode any widget



If looking for a way to add widgets to your site, you might consider installing a shortcode plugin for this task. The amr shortcode any widget plugin was designed specifically to allow you to insert widgets into a page using a shortcode. All you have to do is install the plugin and then go to *Appearance* » *Widgets* and drag and drop the widgets you want to display in your post or page into the shortcodes sidebar. Then, simply go to the post you want to display the widget on and enter that shortcode into your content. Easy peasy!



# MONETIZATION PLUGINS

A good way to monetize off your WordPress site or blog is to use display ads. Through ad management plugins, a banner is typically provided by affiliate networks or display advertising platforms (like Google Adsense). With one of these plugins, you can easily place an ad on your site to start monetizing.

#### **AdRotate**



Instead of uploading your ad to a widget, AdRotate lets you schedule and upload ads through an interface. Scheduling ads is great if you know certain ads perform better at certain times. You can also specify how ads rotate. You can either show one ad at a time or you can have the ads rotate at a predefined time, such as every few seconds.

#### Easy PayPal Buy Now Button



To secure a purchase, adding a PayPal Buy Now Button to your site can up your chances at monetizing. That way, customers who don't have their credit card on hand can make a direct purchase through their PayPal account.

The plugin is super easy to set up — in just minutes anyone from around the world can start buying products or services from your site.

# AFFILIATE PLUGINS

Whether you already run an existing popular WordPress site or your site is on its way there, affiliate plugins can help monetize your site. Adding affiliate links to your pages and posts is a great way to cash in on your efforts. These affiliate plugins will help drive sales on your site.

#### **WP Affiliate Manager**



Looking to drive more sales to your store or site? WP Affiliate Manager might be for you. Offering a solution for ecommerce plugins, WP Affiliate Manager helps you track your referrals and affiliates sent to your site so you can give the correct commissions. The plugin also reports on real-time traffic and sales so you can track earning and payouts. Even better — there's no limit as to how many affiliates you can sign up.

# Easy Affiliate Links



Another solution for managing all of your affiliate links is with Easy Affiliate Links. With this plugin, you can create short links to cloak your affiliate links so they blend in with your content. Links can easily be created using the visual and HTML editor. Add-ons are also possible and include things like analytics and geo-specific links for regional and local sales support.

# **CROWDFUNDING PLUGINS**

By adding crowdfunding links to your site, you can assemble your users behind a product of cause. The purpose of crowdfunding is to raise funds for a cause you believe in and it's easy to build on WordPress. Here are a few plugins that can implement this feature.

#### IgnitionDeck



IgnitionDeck offers a unique crowdfunding framework that enables donation functionality. With the plugin, you can utilize real-time stats with both beautifully designed front end and back end displays. IgnitionDeck works exquisitely with thousands of WordPress themes, and they've also developed a free crowdfunding framework for use, Theme 500.

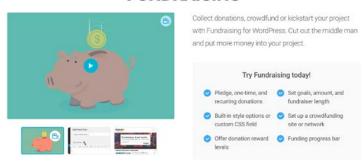
#### Charitable



The Charitable plugin provides a WordPress fundraising toolkit that gives you complete control with your WordPress fundraising efforts. Through the plugin, you can help your users support a common cause. Utilize PayPal and offline payments, or you might consider a premium payment add-on, like Stripe or PayFast, to tailor your crowdfunding needs to existing or new content.

#### **WordPress Fundraising**

#### **FUNDRAISING**





By getting a membership with WPMU DEV, you'll gain access to their fundraising plugin. You can collect donations or crowdfund a project, as well as allow users to pledge a single contribution or elect for recurring donations to continue supporting your cause.

# **ECOMMERCE PLUGINS**

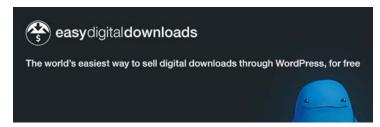
WordPress started as a blogging tool, however since its inception, has evolved into a fully functional platform for creating an ecommerce site. Thanks to plugins and third-party developers, you can easily add ecommerce functionality to your site without even knowing how to code. Here are a few top WordPress plugins to equip your site with ecommerce functionality so that you can sell tangible or digital goods.

#### WooCommerce



WooCommerce is the leading ecommerce plugin (25 million-plus downloads), featuring a complete suite of tools to help you build and run your online vendor business. Out of the box, WooCommerce offers hundreds of integrations including PayPal standard gateway, check and bank transfer, Google Analytics, basic shipping options, the ability to add premium extensions for options such as FedEx, UPS, USPS, inventory management, reporting, compatibility with any WordPress theme, and much more.

#### Easy Digital Downloads



Easy Digital Downloads make it super easy to sell non-tangible goods on your site. Whether your download type be software, documents, photos, ebooks, songs, graphics, or any other type of media file, the Easy Digital Downloads plugin makes your content accessible to purchase worldwide. Even better, the plugin supports 15-plus types of payments and is multilingual.

# Shopify



Although Shopify is a standalone platform, they've developed a WordPress integration so that you can sell items on your blog or WordPress site.

The extension works to create a standalone mini-storefront on your WordPress blog or website, connecting directly to Shopify's secure shopping platform. It's super easy to setup and gives you a ton of customization possibilities so your end user won't even know they're on two separate platforms.



# **AUDIO PLAYER PLUGINS**

Embedding audio files on your WordPress site can be challenging without installing a plugin or knowledge of code. For one reason or another, you might run into a situation where an audio file is required on your site. Here are a few plugins that can enable audio player functionality on your WordPress site.

#### Compact WP Audio Player



Compact WP Audio Player uses HTML5 + Flash hybrid to embed mp3 audio files on your site. Fully responsive and compatible with all web browsers, you can easily add a compact audio player to any page or post on your site with a shortcode. The plugin is compact as stated in its name, with only one customization feature (located in Settings >> SC Audio Player) that determines whether or not front-end users are able to play multiple audio files at once.

#### Html5 Audio Player



Another audio player option is Html5 Audio Player, which offers a bit more functionality than the aforementioned one. With Html5, you can upload or add links to .mp3 or .ogg files. There's also the option to add a rating, artist, and title information, as well as a cover image.

# **GRAPH AND CHART PLUGINS**

Turning extensive amounts of data into a chart will make it more digestible at first glance. While charts can be used for presentations and PowerPoints, how many times do you see one in a blog post? Not nearly enough.

A common misconception is that the lack of charts on the web are due to the fact that charts are difficult to create on a website. But this simply isn't true — there are numerous external plugins that do the job quite nicely. You might even end up finding it easier than chart building in Excel.

#### WordPress Charts and Graphs Lite



Also known as WordPress Visualizer, this plugin makes it quite easy to create, manage and embed interactive charts and tables into your WordPress posts and pages.

Using Google Visualization API to add responsive and animated charts and diagrams, you have the option to choose from nine different chart types including: line graph, area chart, bar graph, column graph, pie chart, geochart, gauge chart, candlestick chart, and scatter chart. The charts are completely customizable so they can be matched with your site.

#### **Gravity Forms Charts Reports**



Gravity Forms Charts Reports enables you to create eye-catching Chartsjs charts from Gravity Forms submission data. All you have to do is use a shortcode and in just a few clicks you can easily visualize your advanced statistics. You can choose from eight different chart types, which are all open source, responsive, and use HTML5 Canvas.

#### **VIDEO PLUGINS**

Images are a great way to supplement your content, but videos can be even more dynamic. An engaging video can not only pull in more viewers but keep them on your site. That said, the native media hub in WordPress may not format your videos the way you want. That's where plugins come in.

We have compiled a few of the most popular from the WordPress Plugin Repository. With these, you will be able to display your own videos or pull them in from somewhere else.

#### Youtube Embed Plugin



One of the easiest ways to upload and view videos online is through YouTube. Once you upload your content, use the YouTube Embed Plugin to put it into your site. The plugin allows you to add an entire YouTube playlist right onto your site, or opt for a video gallery. You can choose to enable automatic play or let users scroll through the playlist. YouTube Embed creates custom thumbnails so you don't have to.

Upon downloading the plugin, you'll get a special button for YouTube right next to Add Media. That makes it incredibly easy to pull in any videos you want. If the channel is your own, add a Subscribe button below the video gallery and boost your numbers.

#### WP Video Lightbox

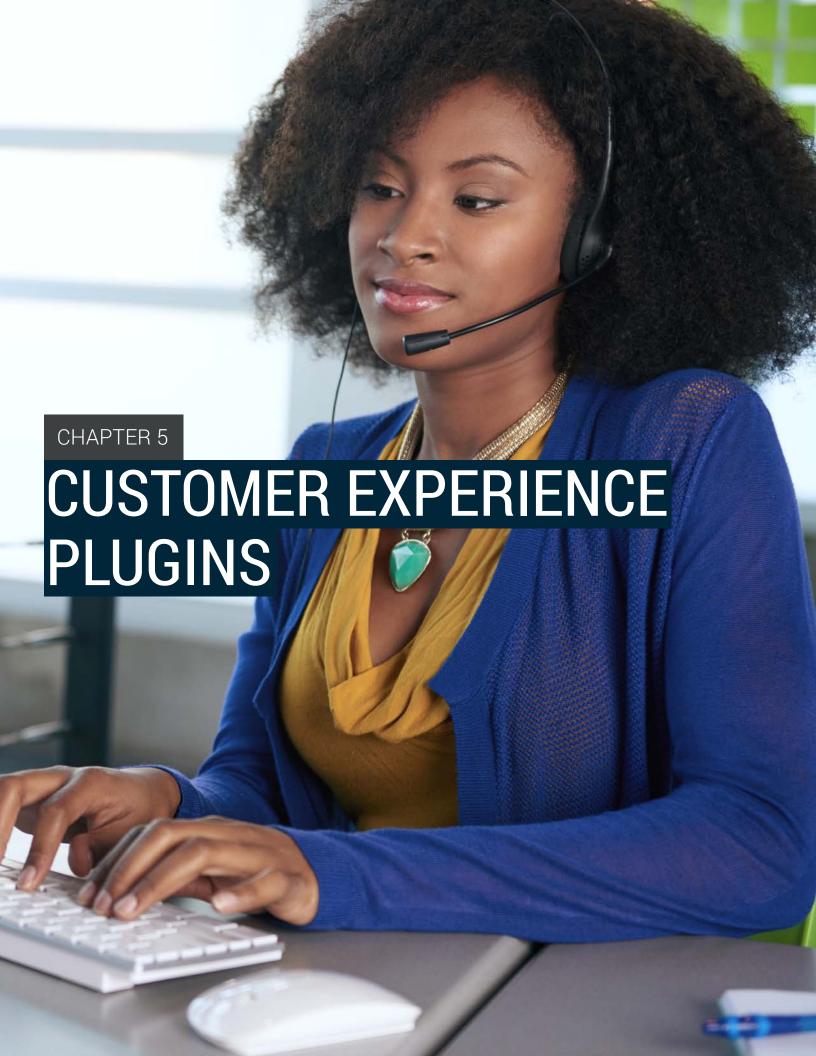


WP Video Lightbox allows you to display videos in a different way. When a user starts to play a video, it will pop out and make the screen behind the player dark. This makes it easier to view the video without the distractions of the post and ads behind it. The plugin works with YouTube or Vimeo and it's a very easy embed process. Some sites begin playing the video in the form it appears on the site, which makes it hard to properly view. WP Video Lightbox puts special attention on it.

If you don't have a lot of video content, the plugin can also be used to create a lightbox for photographs and other images. It's also a great idea for infographics and diagrams.

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# KNOWLEDGE BASE PLUGINS

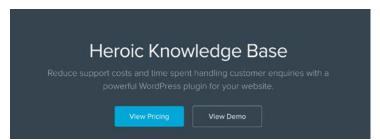
To reduce support inquiries, you might consider creating or adding a knowledge base to your site. A knowledge base (sometimes referred to as a "support portal" or "support garage") will help users find quick answers and resources for their questions. Here are just a few WordPress knowledge base solutions.

#### WP Knowledgebase



Create an attractive and professional knowledge base with WP Knowledgebase. The fully responsive plugin allows visitors to navigate their way to articles featuring answers using predictive text search engines to simplify the search process. For developers, it's super easy to adjust the look of the knowledge base to match your website.

#### Heroic Knowledge Base



The Heroic Knowledge Base by HeroThemes is a premium plugin that helps you reduce support costs and support tickets by making it super easy to add an aesthetically pleasing knowledge base to your site. Some of the plugin's features include the ability to add article attachments, content re-ordering, instant answers, and built-in analytics.

#### TRANSLATION PLUGINS

WordPress powers more than a quarter of the total internet. Therefore, it's super important to make it globally accessible to users who might not speak your native language. To bring in more readers, followers, and users, you might consider installing a translation plugin.

Here are a few of the most popular translation plugins to help broaden your global reach.



#### Google Website Translator by Prisna.net



Using Google's automatic translation service, with the Prisna plugin you can translate your site in 90-plus different languages. Even better is that the plugin can be used as a widget or shortcode, making it super easy to setup.

The plugin also boasts to be the fastest out there because it doesn't load any external files to your site.

#### Loco Translate



Loco Translate is another great plugin for built-in translation. Some of the features the plugin contains include extraction of translatable strings from your source code, built-in WordPress locale codes, support for PO features like comments, and a protection of the language directory for saving custom translations.

The plugin has has a few new features that are coming soon, including integration with Google for automatic translation, integration with Loco API for coll.

#### Translate WordPress with GTranslate



Using Google's translation services, Translate WordPress with GTranslate comes with 103 languages to translate your site to, meaning your site will be accessible to more than 99 percent of internet users.

If you opt for the pro version, your site will be fully SEO compatible, meaning your site will have international reach.



# LIVE CHAT PLUGINS

Healthy business growth not only depends on acquiring new customers, but also maintaining happiness with your current customers. While customer support comes in all shapes and sizes, live chat is one area that allows you to resolve customer concerns in a timely manner.

It's super easy to enable live chat functionality within your WordPress website. Here are a few of our top picks:

#### **WP Live Chat Support**



WP Live Chat Support is aimed at small businesses looking for a cost-effective chat solution. It is one of the most popular WordPress chat plugins for a reason. The plugin comes with a long list of awesome features, including six predefined live chat box themes, the ability to drag and drop the chat anywhere on your page, Google Analytics integration, translation capabilities, and much much more.

#### Tawk.to Live Chat



Tawk.to live chat gives you the ability to monitor and chat with site visitors — something not only great for live chat, but for generating new sales and leads. The plugin is compatible with all web browsers and has even developed free apps for iOS, Android, Windows and Mac OSX.

#### **Tidio Live Chat**



Tidio Live Chat was designed with the WordPress community in mind. The plugin allows you to chat with and contact any visitor on your site — it even supports 140 different languages to help you with global reach.

With Tidio Live Chat, you can customize with three templated designs and a completely customizable color scheme. It evens allows for integration with Zendesk, GetResponse, SalesForce, MailChimp, and much more.

# **RATINGS PLUGINS**

Whether you're selling a product or service online, reviews can immensely impact the buyer's decision. In fact, when browsing online 70 percent of buyers are looking for product reviews prior to making a purchase and 72 percent of consumers will take action after reading a positive review.

Adding a review feature to your website is not only a great way to incentivize a purchase, but it also allows for user-generated content. If you're looking to add this functionality to your WordPress site, read below for some notable review plugins to encourage user feedback on your content, products, and business.

#### Multi Rating



Multi Rating provides a sleek way to add ratings to your site. While you can download the lite version in the WordPress Plugin Repository, the paid version costs around \$49 annually and gives you flexibility with shortcodes and a few other features.

Both lite and pro versions allow you to customize average ratings based on five stars, a percentage or an aggregated score. You can also integrate the plugin with several add-ons, including the REST API, Gravity Forms, and reCAPTCHA.

#### Rating-Widget: Star Review System



Rating-Widget's star review system allows you to receive ratings and comment reviews on all sorts of content including WooCommerce products, author reviews, BuddyPress, bbPress, and more. The plugin claims to work out of the box and requires zero configuration.

In addition to offering a free plugin, Rating-Widget also has advanced plans ranging from \$3.99-\$29.99 annually, as well as agency and enterprise-specific plans.

#### Yasr – Yet Another Stars Rating



Yet Another Stars Rating (YASR) allows for both visitor reviews and voting reviews. You can also create multiple sets of stars for multiple criteria of a page or post. Installing the plugin is a little more technically advanced, but YASR provides well-detailed instructions in the Plugin Repository.

The plugin also supports shortcodes, rankings, and rich snippets. While the plugin is free, YASR does offer paid extensions for user reviews, custom rankings, and "Stylish," a way to customize the color and look of the stars you're using.

# **TOOLTIP PLUGINS**

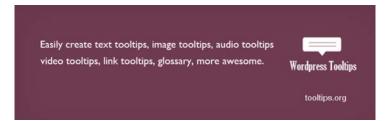
A "tooltip" is a little popup that appears when a user hovers his or her cursor over or clicks on a particular icon or a highlighted word or phrase on your site. They're mainly used to display explanatory text that not every reader will need to go through (hence the name "tooltip")—for example, to define a word of jargon or a little tip of basic information relevant to the text or webpage at hand. Tooltip plugins can help you easily gain this functionality on your site.

#### **CM Tooltip Glossary**



CM Tooltip Glossary is an excellent tooltip plugin with great functionality. This plugin is able to create a glossary of tooltips rather than just inserting random ones without having any real way of keeping track of them. CM Tooltip's design is an underline to highlight a tipped word or phrase and a nondescript pop-up with a solid color background. The rather simple design allows for ultimate readability.

# **WordPress Tooltips**



This powerful plugin gives you a great deal of customization ability and options for your tooltips. WordPress Tooltips has a glossary functionality and also allows you to add multiple types of content to each tool tip: text, images, links, videos, radio, and MP4 are all possible. You can also choose from seven preset color schemes and nine trigger methods.





# **SECURITY PLUGINS**

While WP Engine does a lot to harden the security of your WordPress site, it's never a bad idea to install additional precautions. Besides, security is about risk reduction, not risk elimination. According to WordPress.org, "It's about employing all the appropriate controls available to you, within reason, that allow you to improve your overall posture reducing the odds of making yourself a target, subsequently getting hacked."

While WP Engine does ban some security plugins like the most downloaded one, Wordfence, (because many of its functions exist natively in our environment already), here are some security plugins you might consider using to further harden the security of your website.

#### iThemes Security



iThemes Security provides more than 30 ways to help secure your WordPress site, including 2FA, a malware scanning schedule, password security, Google reCAPTCHA, and more. The plugin will also ban accounts that have already tried to break into other sites through brute force attacks.

You'll also have a peace of mind knowing the plugin has worked to secure your server and also instantly reports where vulnerabilities exist and fixes them in seconds.

#### **BulletProof Security**



BulletProof Security provides strong protection against a range of common injections, including XSS, RFI, CRLF, CSRF, Base64, Code Injection, and SQL Injections. The all around security solution also includes firewalls, login security monitoring, idle session logout, DB backup logging, HTTP error logging, and more.

#### Sucuri Security



Sucuri Security helps harden your WordPress site through monitoring all security related events within your WordPress site. By logging all activity to a cloud, this ensures the attacker cannot mess with your security logs or wipe your forensic data.

The plugin also provides Security File Integrity Monitoring that compares a known good with the current state to better detect when (and if) you have a problem. In addition, Sucuri provides you with remote malware scanning, blacklist monitoring, post-hack security actions, and more.

# **USER ROLE PLUGINS**

By default, WordPress comes with five predefined user roles:

- Administrator
- Editor
- Author
- Contributor
- Subscriber

Each of these roles comes with a set of specific permissions on what a user can and cannot do. However, out of the box, these user roles cannot be customized to limit or add new permissions.

Should you want to expand the capabilities a particular role is allowed (or even add new roles), you'll need to install a plugin. Here are a few of our top picks that can help you further establish user roles on your site.

#### **User Role Editor**



The User Role Editor plugin lets you adjust user roles and capabilities with ease. Including full support of WordPress Multisite networks, you can pinpoint specific tasks per user and even hide front end menu items from other users. While the plugin is free to activate in the WordPress Repository, you can upgrade to a premium version for an abundance of additional modules to work with.

#### **Members**



With Members, you'll be able to smoothly control permissions beyond what WordPress can do. Key features the plugin contains include a role manager, the ability to hand out multiple user roles and explicitly deny capabilities, cloning capacity, content permissions, shortcodes, widgets, plugin integration, and more.

#### **WPFront User Role Editor**





The WPFront User Role Editor is another top option for managing user roles in WordPress. Through the plugin, you can add, edit, and delete user roles. The free version of the plugin also allows you to migrate users to other sites. Through paid premium options, a ton of features are added, including custom post type permissions, content restriction shortcodes, an admin menu editor, and more.





# **BOOKING + CALENDAR PLUGINS**

Getting your name on the map as a musician or artist can be difficult if people don't come to your shows. Putting a calendar directly on your site is a great way to keep your audience informed and get people to your events. These calendar and booking plugins make it a lot easier for visitors to schedule appointments and see availability right on your WordPress website. It looks a lot nicer as well! Here are a few worthy ones to know about.

#### **Event Tickets**



Provide easy ways for customers to RSVP to events by using Event Tickets. Pair with Events Calendar and pair up existing events with RSVP functionality. With its plug-n-play system, Event Tickets is built for developers; site builders can access tools including partial template overrides, a host of template tags, hooks, and filters, careful documentation, as well as a library of free extensions.

#### **Ticket Tailor**



Ticket Tailor uses an intuitive, versatile e-ticketing system that provides the ability to quickly and easily sell tickets. E-tickets will be automatically sent with QR codes and barcode to attendees. Ticket Tailor is highly customizable with the ability to customize e-tickets to say whatever you want.

In addition to an easy to use and highly customizable platform Ticket Tailor features essential integrations that make ticket visibility and usability easier. Ticket Tailor uses PayPal for simple credit card payments, MailChimp to email attendees, and Facebook for direct event registration.

#### **Tickera**







With Tickera, you can avoid the profit sharing with a third party which means no middlemen and unnecessary costs. Tickera's platform lets you manage various events, ticket distribution, and discount codes with ease.

Tickera users can access various ticket options including VIP tickets, check-in, ticket sale dates, or simpler options like quantity and price. Users can choose to capitalize on all available options or opt to keep their ticketing simple and option-free. Most recently, Tickera has released a drag and drop strategy for creating stunning floor plans.

#### **Events Manager**



Events Manager not only displays your events but also lets users register for upcoming ones. You will receive booking results and know exactly how many people are expected to show up. Whether your event is free or paid, you'll be able to easily keep track of attendance. You can even customize whether or not users can buy bulk tickets, or get discounts for certain items.

You can also choose how the events are displayed. For instance, you can add an image, description, time, and map. This is a great option for a site that needs to keep track of attendance.

#### Simple Calendar



If you actively use Google Calendar, there's no reason to double your work by creating an entirely new calendar. Simple Calendar allows you to pull in any events you've already created right from Google. You can, of course, input your events directly into WordPress, but you can also choose any public calendar to pull from. Events can repeat or only show up once.

You can also choose to display your calendar in a month view or as a list. Either way, it's a beautiful way to get people interested in your events.

# DIRECTORY PLUGINS

It's easy to convert your WordPress site into a robust directory business. Using one of these plugins as an aid, you can either turn your entire site into a directory website or only add the feature to certain pages.

#### Sabai Directory



The premium plugin Sabai Directory grants you the ability to build a community driven local business directory, similar to Yelp.com, Yahoo! Local, or Google+ Places. The plugin utilizes fully interactive and customizable maps to help visitors detect the closest resources to them and vote on photos and reviews to help others discover high-quality local businesses through your site.

#### **Business Directory Plugin**



The Business Directory Plugin works to add a Yelp-style review or Yellow-Pages style directory to link your users to. With full customization possibilities, you can meld this plugin with the theme of your site to stay on brand. The plugin comes with fully modifiable form fields, as well as the ability to upload photos and accept payment for listings. In no time you'll be able to turn your website into a thriving online directory.

# **Geo Directory**



Geo Directory lets you add millions of listings to your blog or site through free and premium add-ons. In a short amount of time, you'll be able to create a fully customizable listing that provides a compelling user experience. No need to sacrifice design or aesthetic; this tool can be fully adjusted to match your current site.

# **INVOICE PLUGINS**

These plugins make manually sending an invoice a thing of the past. These plugins make sending an invoice a breeze. Key features make payments easier and more flexible and settings to make your invoice notifications more customizable.

### **Sprout Invoices**



Ease up on and improve your invoice workflow with Sprout Invoices. The plugin provides a number of fully customizable templates to fit with your theme and accepts a variety of payment methods. While the free version comes with PayPal payments, the pro version gives you additional upgrades along with payment add-ons.

#### WooCommerce PDF Invoices & Packing Slips



Automatically add a PDF invoice to your ecommerce order confirmation emails with WooCommerce PDF Invoices. With the plugin, you can issue invoices in 18 different languages, fully customize the HTML/CSS of a template, and store all generated invoices within your account page.

#### Sliced Invoices



Sliced Invoices is another invoicing system that makes invoicing a breeze. Key features include offline payment methods, PayPal Express Checkout, invoicing in any currency, exporting invoices to CSV, and more.

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLUGINS

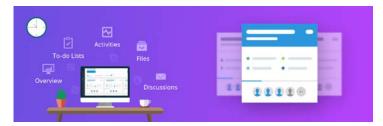
A key aspect of any well-run WordPress site is organization. Project management plugins help facilitate planning, order, and discipline within your business. A good project management plugin can help ensure that tasks are properly delegated and deadlines are easy to keep track of; these plugins ultimately help save an enormous amount of time.

#### SP Project & Document Manager



SP Project & Document Manager is a powerful plugin that allows you to manage documents and files across many media types, allowing you to manage clients, documents, accounts, vendors, distribution and more. Users at all levels are able to create and manage projects. Administrators control all aspects of user access; interactions with clients, management of sales organization and more are all easily maintained within this plugin. With an easy-to-use template, clients have complete control over the flow of information and can add/modify projects.

#### **WP Project Manager**



WP Project Manager is a plugin designed specifically to be used for project management within WordPress. Features include everything you need to run an efficient site: ability to create and modify projects, assign team members to projects, send messages about projects with attachments, and add comments about projects. Additional features include the ability to make custom to-do lists as well as create milestones for better project management.

#### **Project Panorama**



Project Panorama gives clients and team members a visual representation of project progress. Panorama communicates project status and phases as well as document status, important events and timing. Panorama's timing features allow you to keep track if you are on track or behind schedule.



# SITE OPTIMIZATION PLUGINS

Fast website speed plays a vital role in boosting traffic and revenue. Yet, just fractions of a second can make the difference between a positive and a sour experience. In fact, studies today show that a quarter of your audience will be gone after waiting just four seconds for a page to fully load.

If looking to speed up page load times, check out the plugins below which can dramatically help with site optimization.

#### **Autoptimize**



Minification, the process of removing unnecessary characters from source code (like whitespace and newline characters), is one way to improve page load times. Autoptimize helps with WordPress site optimization by minifying certain assets of your site, like CSS, HTML, and JavaScript files.

Simply install the plugin and then checkmark the boxes for the code you want to be minified. You can even add scripts for the code you don't want to be compressed, as well as control whether or not you want the compressed files in the HTML code header or footer.

By using a minification plugin like Autoptimize, your site will load quicker and code will be much easier to read.

#### **WP-Optimize**



Over time your site will start to accumulate unnecessary data. WP-Optimize is a WordPress site optimization plugin built to help clean up your WordPress database for maximized efficiency. The plugin works to de-fragment MySQL tables as well as remove data like pingbacks, trashed comments, expired transient options, post revisions, and so on.

The plugin offers great control over which areas of your site you want to optimize. You also have the option to run automatic, scheduled cleanups of your site's database.



#### **Optimize Database after Cleaning Revisions**



If you'd rather clean up your database in a single click, then the Optimize Database after Cleaning Revisions plugin might be for you. In just one-click, the plugin will work to delete a number of unnecessary data, like trashed posts, spammed comments, unused tags, expired transients, and more. Additionally, the plugin keeps a log of everything it does, is available in multiple languages, and also works with WordPress Multisite.

#### **WP-Smush Image Optimization**



It's important not to forget about optimizing images for fast load times. In fact, according to Soasta.com, images account for 62 percent of a page's total weight. Therefore, using a plugin like Smush Image Compression and Optimization can make a huge impact on page load times. The plugin works to resize, optimize and compress all of your images for the web so they load faster than before. If your site is photo-rich, then this plugin is a must-have.

#### **WP Rocket**



Typically WP Engine disallows caching plugins (because we already do it for you). However, we've recently worked with WP Rocket, who has optimized their caching plugin to work on our platform. WP Rocket is a WordPress plugin that helps with site optimization through things like minification of CSS and JS, lazy loading images, deferring remote JavaScript requests, and more. It's a great plugin to invest in if looking to improve site speed and page load times across multiple websites.

#### **PHP Compatibility Checker**



If looking to optimize your site for improved page speed, you might consider switching to PHP 7. PHP is the most popular web development language in the world and with the release of PHP 7 — which can double your site speed — it's important to make sure your site is compatible.

To reap the benefits of PHP 7, you can use the PHP Compatibility Checker to detect which theme(s) and plugins are compatible and which have conflicting code. It's important to do this because PHP 7 is not backwards compatible, meaning once you switch over you cannot go back to legacy systems.

# PLUGINS TO HELP MAKE YOUR SITE RESPONSIVE AND MOBILE-FRIENDLY

Looking good on a phone and tablet isn't just an option anymore — it's a requirement. In November 2016, mobile usage surpassed desktop usage on Black Friday for the first time in history. This only shows the scope of importance for mobile-friendly design and responsiveness to deliver the best online experience possible.

To be mobile-friendly and responsive means you want your site not only to load fast, but it also must be easy to navigate, text must be easy to read, pictures must load correctly, and forms should submit properly. In other words, the user experience should be phenomenal.

Although it can be tricky to make your website aesthetically pleasing and easy to use on mobile, these plugins can help you attain responsiveness and mobile-friendliness.

#### Touchy: A WordPress Mobile Menu Plugin



Given a mobile screen's smaller size, its navigation cannot be as complex as a larger screen. With Touchy, you can easily translate your desktop site to be tailored for a smaller screen, offering a flawless browsing experience. Through its



mobile-focused usability features, you are given complete control with how you want your mobile site to look while still keeping parts of your desktop site intact.

#### Superfly — Responsive WordPress Menu Plugin



Let's face it, aside from beautiful aesthetic, easy navigation is one of the most crucial components of a great user experience. Superfly is a top choice by many when it comes to building a 100 percent responsive WordPress menu that's user-friendly on both desktop and mobile.

The plugin promises to make website navigation easier by removing extra clicks while also providing a ton of customization options, like enhanced mobile support, a styling menu, and displaying control for different pages.

#### **AMP**



A responsive, mobile-friendly site is all for nothing if your site fails to load fast. Implementing AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) on your WordPress site will make your mobile pages load instantly through its lightweight framework. This is because the open-source AMP works to strip all extraneous "fluff," leaving you with a lean, stripped-down mobile version of your site. This is a great option for sites with a ton of content (like news sites) and can also help your content rank better on search engines.



# **GAME PLUGINS**

WordPress developers and users work hard. Sometimes they need to have fun. That's where gaming plugins come in. Site visitors can stop by, read your content, and play a quick game. Check out some of these awesome games you can play on WordPress.

#### **Multiplayer Games**



When it comes to gaming, the more the merrier. Why not involve more people and embed some free multiplayer games? Bring people together with fun and more importantly, free games.

Because these games are all browser based, they are not responsive. If a lot of your traffic comes from mobile, you may want to choose a different plugin.

#### **Arcade Ready**



If you want to give your site visitors something fun to do, beside check out your awesome content, use ArcadeReady to embed games right into posts. This is perfect for game review sites, game makers, or anyone that wants to add some fun. It currently supports .swf (flash), HTML5 Games, and an embed code. Just find something you like embed, and people can play away.

# **HOLIDAY PLUGINS**

A site tuned for the holiday season brings joy. With these plugins, you can easily customize your site to fit the season. Take a look below for some plugins you might install this winter to get into the holiday spirit.

#### **Holiday Countdown**



With the Holiday Countdown plugin, you can easily create animations that countdown to Christmas, New Year's Eve, Hanukkah, Kwanza, or any other festive day. This plugin is fully customizable with custom fonts, colors, and backgrounds, as well as adjustable sizing and spacing. Holiday Countdown also supports text in any language. Other features include live editing, mobile responsiveness, and customer support.



#### WooCommerce Gift Wrapper

If your ecommerce store runs on WooCommerce, try adding this plugin to your checkout page, enabling customers to request gift-wrapping with tangible goods. With this plugin, you can customize individual prices, images, and descriptions. WooCommerce Gift Wrapper is also fully CSS-tagged.



# MAP PLUGINS

Any business owner knows that getting customers to your building is an incredibly important part of being successful. If people can't find you, they can't pay you. And that's a huge problem. Just like everything else, WordPress plugins have a solution, maps. Implement a map widget and you will no longer have to field phone calls telling people to turn left at the big tree.

#### **Google Maps Widget**



If you like a little more control and customization for your Google Maps, then installing the Google Maps Widget is a good way to go. With Google Maps Widget you can easily set up a thumbnail with a lightbox. After installed, you can then adjust how the thumbnail looks and decided whether or not you want street or satellite view. Upon clicking on the thumbnail, the map will expand for a clearer view.

#### WP Google Map Plugin



Like above, if you like to use Google Maps, the WP Google Map Plugin is perfect for you. With this plugin, you can add an unlimited number of responsive maps directly to your site through shortcodes. Add multiple points to one map or just show one location. All maps are responsive, can be used with Multisite, and allow for easy access to Google Earth view. You can even show traffic real time conditions on your map if you choose.

All of this is included in the free version, but if you want to go pro you can display maps based on the user's current location, use custom post types, and more. The free version is full-featured and will display maps in minutes.

#### **Leaflet Maps Marker**



If you abide by strict security standards, then Leaflet Maps Marker might be for you. The plugin gives you the ability to display locations and directions on your WordPress site and is up to par on its security standards. With Leaflet Maps Marker you can search for locations by using keyless geocoding providers (like Google Places) that uses a mandatory API key registration.

The plugin offers a great deal of customization items, like like matching your map to the basemap of choice (e.g. Open Street Map, Google Maps, Bing, Mapbox, and any custom WMTS-map). The backend also contains an array of options, like enabling a TinyMCE button for easily searching and adding maps on post/pages edit screen.

# **REAL ESTATE PLUGINS**

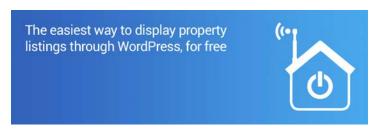
When it comes to building a real estate site you are going to want plugins that attract and inform real estate customers. These plugins are some of the best in the dozens of real estate plugins available. These plugins are feature packed with features like lead generation tools, creation of stunning picture galleries, advanced search options and more.

#### Optima Express + MarketBoost IDX Plugin



The Optima Express + MarketBoost IDX Plugin from iHomefinder adds responsive IDX real estate search and MLS property listings to your WordPress site, with branded drip emails including sold, open and active listings. Optima Express magnetizes customers to your site with high quality photos, galleries, reports and lead generation tools.

#### **Easy Property Listing**



Easy Property Listings might be the most feature-rich real estate plugin on the market. This plugin will work with any theme and notable features include multiple listing types, integration with Google Maps, and support for currencies.

# **COMMENT PLUGINS**

Adding a comment section to your site is a great way to interact with your audience. Equipping your site with the right comment plugin can tremendously improve the user experience and make people more inclined to interact with your website. Here are some various comment plugins that can assist you with this.

#### Comments - wpDiscuz



Extending WordPress' comment system is super easy with Comments – wpDiscuz. Using an AJAX real-time comment system, the plugin gives you the ability to add interactive comment boxes to your posts and pages. Providing a clean interface with responsive comments, wpDiscuz can also be integrated with user profile plugins, like BuddyPress, and antispam plugins, like Akismet. You can even integrate Social Network Login plugins with this comment plugin.

The plugin offers many other features to choose from, including comment author notification options, a "Read More" option for super long comments, an email subscription option, ability for users to edit their comments, and more.

#### **Disable Comments**



While comments can be great, sometimes people don't always have the nicest things to say. Or perhaps specific posts have been bombarded with unwanted/spam comments and you just don't want people commented there at all.

Disable Comments is a handy plugin for restricting comments on certain pages of your site. That way you don't have to regulate unwanted comments day to day — you won't have to worry about it at all!

# TORQUE®

# **About Torque**

Torque is a news site featuring all things WordPress. We are dedicated to informing new and advanced WordPress professionals, users, and enthusiasts about the industry. Torque focuses primarily on WordPress News, Business, and Development, but also covers topics relating to open source and breakthrough technology. Torque made its debut in July 2013, at WordCamp San Francisco, and has since produced valuable content that reflects the evolution of WordPress, both as a platform and a community. Torque is a WP Engine publication, though maintains complete editorial independence. torquemag.io



# **About WP Engine**

WP Engine powers amazing digital experiences for websites and applications built on WordPress. The company's premium managed hosting platform provides the performance, reliability and security required by the biggest brands in the world, while remaining affordable and intuitive enough for smaller businesses and individuals. Companies of all sizes rely on WP Engine's award-winning customer service team to quickly solve technical problems and create a world-class customer experience. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in Limerick, Ireland, San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas, and London, England. wpengine.com



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