

20

Blogging Tools

I Could Not

Live Without!

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Living For Naptime

1. WordPress (FREE) – WordPress is by far the best blogging platform out there. As a matter of fact, 25% of all websites are said to be built on the platform, how's that for world class? Not only is it super easy to use and highly customizable, but it's also FREE...you can't beat that. If you aren't on WordPress now, but would like to upgrade, check out this blog post on [How to Start a blog](#) for a step-by-step video how you can purchase a domain name, hosting and install WordPress on your own blog!

2. Bluehost/ GoDaddy – Honestly, these are pretty interchangeable to me. I use both BlueHost & GoDaddy for hosting my websites and find them both very easy to use and navigate. Their customer service has always been super helpful to me AND they offer some of the cheapest hosting out there. If you are looking towards self-hosting a blog, I feel very comfortable recommending both of these to you.

3. Google Analytics (FREE) – This is another MUST-HAVE can't-go-without-tool. If you want an in-depth look at your visitors and pageviews, you need to have Google Analytics installed on your blog. Here's a step-by-step tutorial on how to install Google Analytics. Once the analytics are installed on your blog, you can see how many people are on your blog at this very second! And you'll be able to see where they live, how much time they spend on your site and which pages they visit!

4. Click to Tweet (FREE) – I only recently started using this plugin and am kicking myself in the butt for not using it sooner. Click to Tweet allows you to embed a clickable quote, phrase or call to action within your blog post. Having this easy to use tweet, actually encourages readers to tweet your phrase. I was really surprised at how many readers actually click to tweet! Which increases your Twitter following & exposure. P.S. Feel free to click to tweet the phrase below!

5. Yoast (FREE) – If you have a blog...you NEED Yoast, especially if you don't know much about SEO. Honestly, I can't even begin to describe all the magical SEO-y things that Yoast does which is why I love it. I install it in my WordPress blogs, it shows me how to optimize my titles, descriptions, headlines & body structure to perform its best in Google search. As a blogger Google search matters, you WANT/NEED to be found in Google in order to increase traffic and readership.

6. SumoMe (FREE) – I've talked about SumoMe on the blog before, but I use SumoMe for my social sharing buttons. You can see them on the side of the website, this little toolbar makes sharing your blog posts dead simple and easy for your readers! SumoMe also has other nifty features like the "Welcome Mat" which is a drop down screen that encourages your readers to sign up for your newsletter.

Photography **Tools**

7. HauteChocolate (\$29/mo) – One of my big struggles as a blogger is being able to continually find unique and high quality photography for my blog posts. I generally hate the standard stock photography as it looks so staged and stereotypical. A few months back, I found HauteChocolate, which is a membership site, and I have been using it almost exclusively since then. They have a large selection of feminine photographs ranging from work station to holiday to social media quotes.

8. AlltheFreeStock (FREE) – This website is also my absolute go-to for all of my stock photo needs. Essentially it's a collection of ALL of the other free stock photo sites out there. So instead of visiting 15 different stock photo sites, you can go to AlltheFreeStock and it has all of the sites listed right there and they are all entirely viewable. All of the photos on this site are Creative Commons Zero, which means you can use them for commercial purposes with no attribution.

9. Adobe Photoshop (\$10/mo) – I've had a love of Photoshop since the day I started using it...and that was a while ago. So this is my absolute favorite photo editing tool. There is a bit of a learning curve to it, but once you get the hang of it, it totally trumps Canva & PicMonkey in terms of what you can do to a photo.

Monetization & Email

10. Viglink (FREE) – Viglink offers a plugin that essentially turns every link on your blog into a moneymaking opportunity! It totally eliminates the need to go out and join dozens of different affiliate programs...set it and forget it...and receive a monthly check!

11. Google AdSense (FREE) – I've been using Google AdSense for over 10 years now and it's still the easiest way to make money from a blog in my opinion. You set up a few banner ads on your site and whenever someone clicks on those ads, you earn money. Now you probably won't get rich with Google AdSense (unless you've got a LOT of traffic) but it's a nice little bonus for all of the writing you do.

12. Mailchimp (FREE) – I've used MailChimp for years and I absolutely LOVE it! Simple to use and FREE for the first 2000 subscribers! How can you go wrong with that? They've got built-in templates that make it super easy for your to set up a weekly or monthly newsletter.

13. ConvertKit (\$29.00/mo) – Now this one is new to me. I only started using last month, but it has already helped me DOUBLE my subscriber list! I use ConvertKit to offer content upgrades on my blog posts. But there is so much more functionality that I haven't even taken advantage of yet in terms of email automation.

14. Boardbooster (\$10/mo) – I've talked about Boardbooster in more detail in this post & in this one, but essentially I use Boardbooster to automatically pin my blog posts to group boards & to loop my pins within my boards! Boardbooster saves me so much time throughout the week, I no longer have to manually pin my blog posts to all of my group boards, it does it for me, automatically!

15. Tailwind (\$15/mo) – Tailwind is similar to Boardbooster in that it automatically pins to your boards. However, I use Tailwind to pin other people's pins. With Pinterest it is VERY important to pin other people's stuff and not just your own. So I take a few minutes first thing in the morning and find a dozen or so pins that I want to pin to my own boards. I use the Tailwind app to automatically publish them throughout the day at the optimal pinning times! (YES, Tailwind tells you when the best times to pin are!)

16. Followers Mobile App (FREE) – I use the Followers Mobile App to keep track of who is following & unfollowing me on Pinterest. I am able to keep my followers/ followees ratio in check by unfollowing those that unfollow me, etc.

17. Likestagram (\$9.99/ 25,000 likes) – This has been THE biggest game changer for me in terms of increasing my Instagram following! I could NOT live without this app :) Likestagram automatically likes photos tagged with the keywords that I have designated. I'm looking to connect with other mom bloggers, so I have Likestagram set up to like photos with the tag #momblogger or #mommyblogger. It doesn't leave spammy comments or anything like that, it just gives the photo a like. I was able to get 1,000 Instagram followers in 30 days by using Likestagram

18. Crowdfire (FREE) – I use the Crowdfire mobile app to manage my Instagram followers. This app tells me which users have unfollowed & followed me which allows me to manage my follower/followee ratio. The app also allows you to copy another user's (say...like your competitors) follower list which you can then start following.

19. ColorStory Mobile app (FREE) – This app only came out a few months ago, but it's by far my favorite app for making all of my Instagram images brighter and whiter! There are several free & premium features to choose from. As of right now, I only use the free filters and never had the need to upgrade to the other ones!

20. Post Planner (\$7/mo) – I've only been using PostPlanner for a few months, but I absolutely love it. It's part scheduling tool and part content finder. PostPlanner allows me to schedule status updates to my Facebook pages & group throughout the day. It also gives me an entire bank of status updates, engaging quotes and photos to use & share that have proven to be engaging and popular on Facebook.