

ACUMEN WEB SERVICES PRESENTS

A THEME FOR YOUR BLOG



**HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT
THEME FOR YOUR
WORD PRESS BLOG**



Choosing A Blog Theme

Choosing a Theme for Your Word Press Blog

Word Press Blogs are a GREAT way to maintain a presence on the web.

- The search engines LOVE properly set up Word Press blogs PLUS
- Word Press blogs are easy to update and maintain

As if that weren't enough, probably one of the most appreciated aspects of a Word Press blog is its design flexibility.

If you've ever had a traditional HTML web site, you might be nervous about making the choices on how your web pages will look. After all, with an HTML web site, the design is an INTEGRAL part of each and every page. With an HTML web site, choosing the design is like choosing a tattoo. If you decide to change the design later, you basically have to tear the site down and start from scratch.

However, with a Word Press blog, choosing your site's look is more like choosing an outfit than choosing a tattoo. If you decide 3 months... heck, even 3 weeks or days after the launch of your blog that the look isn't right, we can just purchase and install a new theme or look for your site.

With Word Press blogs, changing the look of the site is as easy as changing your clothes.

The look of your Word Press blog is governed by a theme. The theme determines the font styles, sizes and colors along with how and where elements will be displayed with your blog.

Some themes utilize a 2 column format while others utilize a 3 column format. In the case of a 3 column format, those three columns may be distributed in a number of different ways. Some themes are "clean" while others are "ornate".

When it comes to your theme, there is no "wrong" theme. The combination of the colors, layout, fonts, style, etc will all provide a strong visual basis for your blog.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

Remember, the theme for your blog is “packaging” for your blog. Just as a valuable diamond ring makes a better “impression” when it’s boxed inside a gorgeous red or blue velvet box with the right “name” embossed in gold... the real value is in the diamond, not the box.

Your Word Press blog comes with a “standard” default theme. You may choose to “live” with the default theme until you find a theme that “speaks” to you. If you were to make a choice between a beautifully packaged blog with no content, and an active blog with lots of posts wrapped in the default theme... choose the latter!

Keep in mind, your theme is your first impression. Your content is what will bring visitors back time and time again!

OFF THE RACK VS CUSTOM

To stay with our “outfit” analogy, just like purchasing a new outfit for you to wear, you basically have a few choices when it comes to your Word Press blog.

It’s important to remember that when it comes to software, ANYTHING is possible. However, the limiting factor that comes into play whenever you’re talking about web applications is the budget with which you’re working.

Option 1: You can have a custom designed blog theme developed for your blog.

Just as you can hire a fashion designer to design an outfit especially for you and only you, you can also have a custom outfit prepared for your blog.

WARNING! This is neither cheap nor easy!

Anyone who tells you differently is IGNORANT of the process of theme development.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

Having a blog theme custom designed includes:

- a) hiring a web savvy, blog savvy graphic artist
Budget \$800-\$1500 for the design

- b) hiring a blog savvy coding team to take the design and convert it to a theme.
Budget \$750+

You might be able to find a rare individual who can do both. ([Brian Gardner](#) is the only one I know of who possesses a great eye for design and an equal great love of coding!) However, such individuals are rare and as such, become quickly booked to capacity. The only way for such an individual to survive is to raise his/her rates.

If your business coach tells you that they know of someone who will do it for less, feel free to allow them to help you to exercise that option. You will either have stumbled onto a great treasure that hasn't been discovered yet... or you'll find yourself left with little more than empty promises issued by either actual criminals or the criminally inept. If you find a rare gem (such as the developer mentioned above) PLEASE contact [Kathy directly!](#)

Now, at some point in your business you may find you NEED a custom theme for your Word Press blog and at that point you'll be able to determine whether the \$2000 + investment (plus your valuable time) needed for custom theme development is a good investment on your part.

For most boot strapping entrepreneurs, using a pre-made theme and customizing it is the best option by far when starting out!

Option 2: You can find a free Word Press Blog theme.

Free is always VERY appealing to boot strapping entrepreneurs. However, free is not always the most cost efficient solution.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

Word Press blogs are a powerful marketing tool being used by MILLIONS of people for both work and pleasure. As a result, there are a lot of savvy marketing people who design Word Press blog themes and distribute them for free. The only “catch” is that you must keep the links to the author’s web site visible so the theme author gets the “Google juice” from all those free themes populating the web.

Some of these free themes are exceptionally good... and some of these free themes are exceptionally bad. The only way to know which camp your free theme falls into is to try it out.

See, with the free themes... sometimes they look good until you begin to post to them. Others look good until you try to add a sign up box for your newsletter into the side bar.

Also, some of the links embedded within the design go to sites that Google thinks are in a “bad neighborhood.” Keeping those links within your blog may hurt your search engine rankings.

If you’re an Acumen Web Services or Easy Coaching Websites client, we will install ONE free theme as part of your set up. If the theme doesn’t function properly, then you’ll have to pay a \$35 installation fee for each subsequent theme installation.

Option 3: You can purchase a Word Press Blog theme.

Unlike the free themes, the Word Press themes offered for sale are VERY reliable. So reliable that Acumen Web Services offers to replaced any purchased theme that doesn’t function properly.

Note: This guarantee only applies to the Word Press themes for the current release of Word Press. We can’t guarantee you that a theme designed for Word Press 1.5 will function properly with Word Press 2.3.1 because it won’t.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

Acumen Web Services currently recommends the following resources to obtain your Word Press Theme:

[Template Monster Templates](#)

[Brian Gardner Themes](#)

Note: Brian does offer free themes. It's how he got his start. Feel free to choose his free themes with the same confidence as you would one of his paid themes. However, Brian is the EXCEPTION and not the rule when it comes to free themes.

When you purchase a Word Press Theme, we can help you to customize the theme so that it looks unique. It's amazing how changing the dominant image on a blog theme can change the look of the blog completely!

Acumen Web Services will swap out the dominant image on a theme ONCE at no charge. Acumen Web Services will provide the client with the image dimensions of the dominant image so the client can find and prepare/purchase a suitable replacement.

Acumen Web Services will charge \$35 per swap for subsequent image changes.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT THEME

We're going to use Template Monster Themes for this part of the tutorial.

PLEASE, CHOOSE FROM THE THEMES FEATURED ON THE ACUMEN WEB SERVICES WEB SITE.

[Click here](#) for the page which allows you to choose the theme.

Note: If you go directly to the Template Monster site, you will be offered choices that WILL NOT WORK for your Word Press blog. Even if you just search Word Press Themes, you'll still see options that WILL NOT WORK for the current version of Word Press.

You'll see the blog themes presented in a 4 column wide by 10 rows deep format. You'll see that there are 5 pages to choose from...and these are just the "current" offerings!



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Choosing A Blog Theme

Most people find their eye is attracted to the dominant image on the blog theme. However, if you have an image in mind and want to SWAP the dominant image in the theme with your own, then try to resist the temptation to look at those with a powerful dominant image and instead look at the presentation of the themes.

Remember, you are certainly able to use any theme “right out of the box”. If you find a theme that fits perfectly in every way, then rejoice! However, if you can’t find the perfect theme, remember we can often create the perfect look just by swapping the dominant image on the page.

When you are looking through the themes available on Acumen Web Services.com and you see a theme that catches your eye, click on the image. A page will open in a new window and you’ll see this button displayed on the page:

WordPress preview

Click here to see LIVE DEMO of this template ▶

Click on that button so you can see the theme “in action”. (It will open in a new window.)

The reason you want to see the theme “in action” is some themes are designed with a FLEXIBLE display format. That means they automatically “adjust” on the visitor’s computer. The nicely compact theme you see in the preview may look very different when you see it “in action” on your computer.



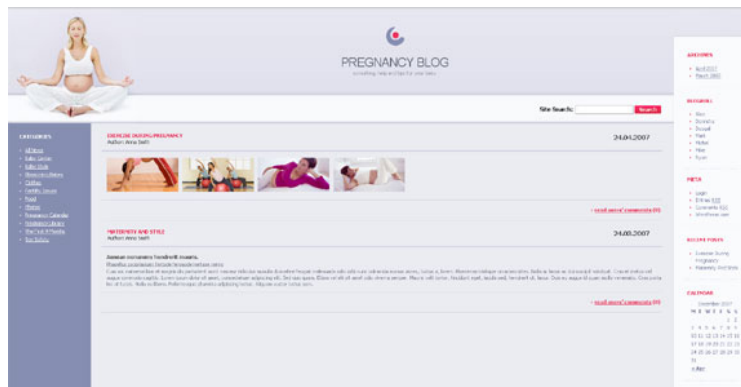
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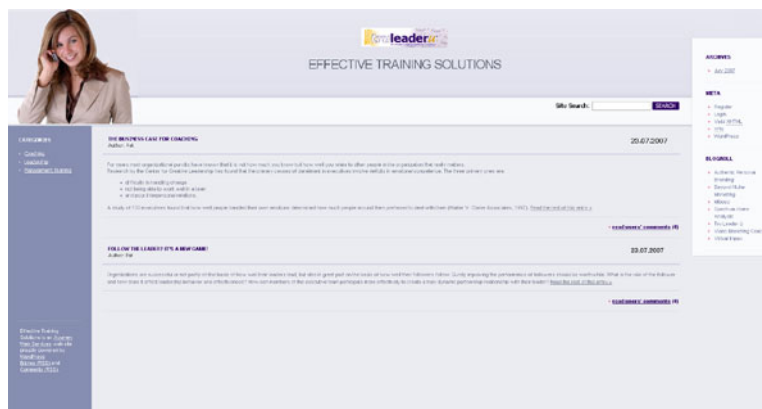
Choosing A Blog Theme

Example #1: IMAGE SWAP + FLEXIBLE DISPLAY

Here's an example of an adjustable width (or flexible) theme. This is how the theme is displayed and how it arrives "out of the box".



One Acumen Web Services client chose this theme and then, by swapping out the image of the pregnant woman and the "logo" element, ended up with this:



As you can see, changing the dominant image changes a theme significantly.

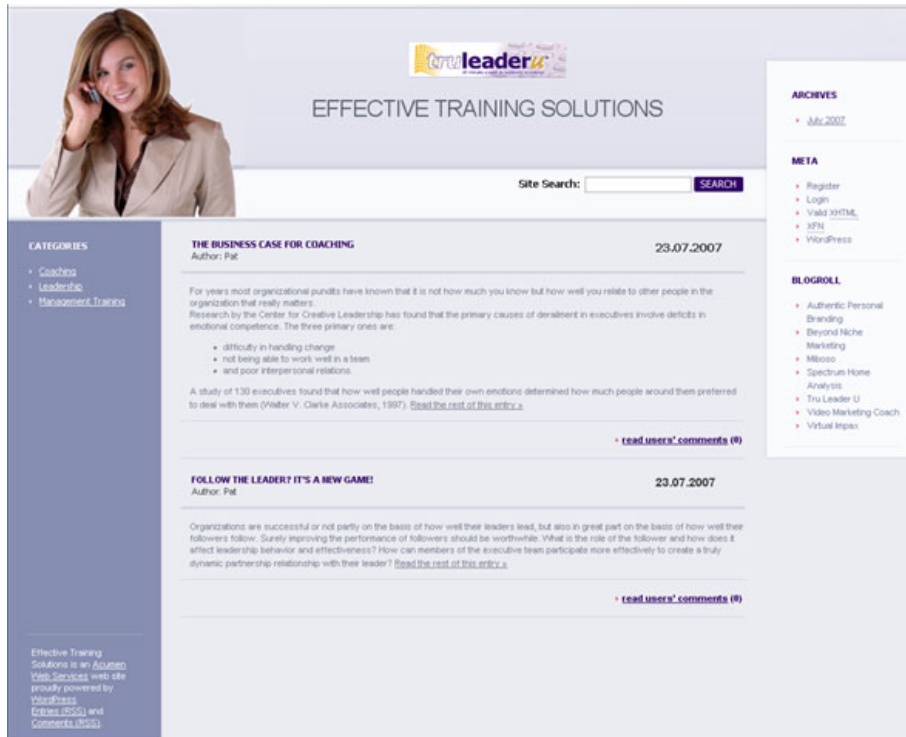


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Choosing A Blog Theme

This is an example of a flexible display theme. The first two images are how this particular theme appears on my 24" monitor. Here's how it might display on a 17" screen:



Remember, some of your visitors will be seeing your blog in one manner, while others will see it in another.

Also note that the categories are different, as are the title, the blog roll and other blog elements. These elements are controlled by what is included in YOUR blog's settings.

More than one person has been disappointed to see that the pages, categories and blogrolls which appear on the sample are NOT what appears when the theme is applied to their blog while others are glad to see that it's their content that appears.



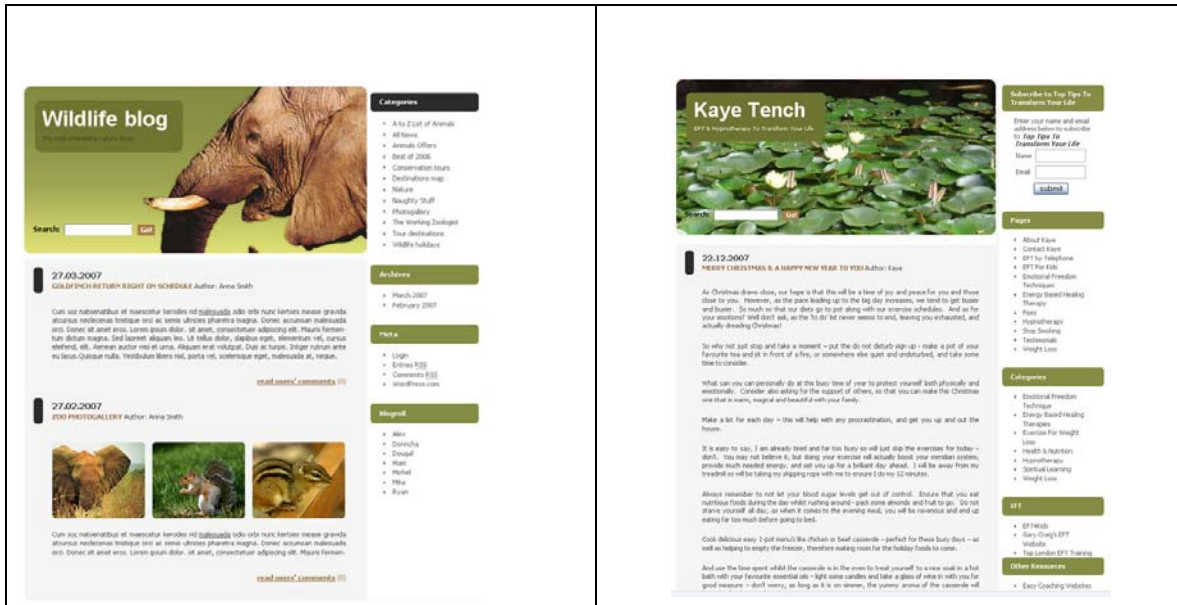
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Choosing A Blog Theme

Example #2: IMAGE SWAP + FIXED DISPLAY

Here's an example of a fixed width theme. To the left is how the theme is displayed and how it arrives "out of the box". By swapping out the image of the elephant and replacing it with an image she shot herself, ended up looking like the image on the right.



This is a fixed width design and the appearance of this theme is not affected by the visitor's monitor settings.



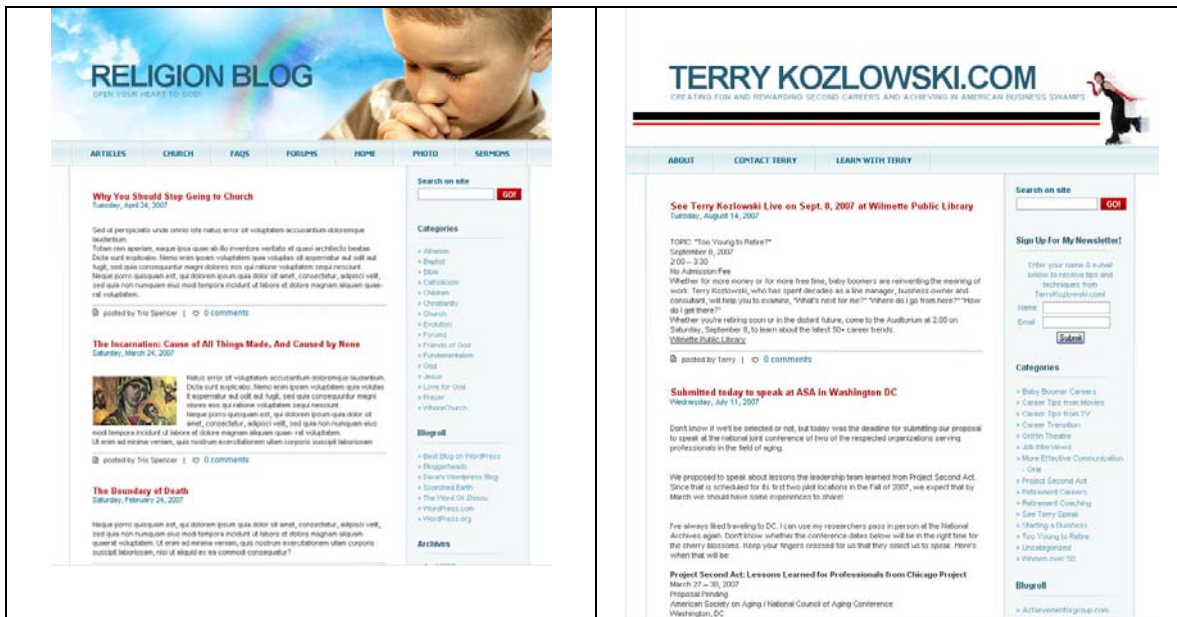
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Choosing A Blog Theme

Example #3: IMAGE SWAP + FIXED DISPLAY

Here's another example of a fixed width theme. To the left is how the theme is displayed and how it arrives "out of the box". By swapping out the image of the little boy praying and replacing it with an image designed by her graphic artist (which also is used for the cover of her upcoming book), her blog ended up looking like the image on the right.



Again, a HUGE transformation is achieved with a simple dominant image swap.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

Example #4: SOME THEMES CAN NOT BE EASILY ADAPTED

Not all blog themes can be easily changed. Some blog themes have the visual elements intricately woven into the display.

Notice in the previous examples how there is a strong visual element which is wider than it is tall across the top of the blog. In the blog themes we can easily alter, the dominant image is usually a rectangle (wider than tall). For example, in the Religion theme featured previously, the dominant image is this:



By swapping out this rectangular image with another image (of identical size, shape and composition) we were able to dramatically and easily change the look of the blog theme.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

However, not all the themes displayed are so easily altered. In a theme such as the one below, you'll see the dominant images are not just "floating" along the top of the blog:



Replacing the vase of flowers with an alternate image is going to require extra design time (and extra design cost).

If this is the perfect color combination and format for your blog, it may be a worthwhile investment to swap the vase with your choice of image. However, do not purchase this template and expect Acumen Web Services to: swap out the image, change the navigation bar from the left side of the content to the right, change the colors from pink to blue and change the font style and size.

We can do ALL of that for you, but we can't offer it with out additional charge.



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Choosing A Blog Theme

POINTS TO TAKE AWAY:

1. While your blog theme is an essential part of your web presence, choosing a theme is more like choosing a dress than choosing a tattoo. If you make a “mistake” it’s easily corrected.
2. If you find a theme that is perfect, right out of the box... REJOICE and buy it!
3. If you don’t find the perfect theme, and none of the options will do, begin by choosing the dominant image you want to use on your blog.

If you don’t have a logo or image, spend some time at the following web sites:

- a) [Shutterstock](#)
- b) [Istockphoto](#)
- c) [Comstock](#)
- d) [Getty Images](#)

If you find the perfect image, you’ll need to purchase it. If you’re an Acumen Web Services or Easy Coaching Websites client, [contact Kathy](#) before making your image purchase.

Remember, most blog theme images are wider than they are tall. If you find yourself having to choose between a great square image and a great rectangular image... choose the rectangle that is wider than it is tall.

Keep in mind that if you absolutely **MUST** have an image that is taller than it is wide, we may need to bring in a graphic artist to make the image work. Acumen Web Services will be happy to provide the specs for the image to your graphic artist.

4. Once you have an image selected, then it’s time to choose the theme. When you are choosing your theme, look at the composition of the theme instead of being swept away by the use of images. If your image is composed of cool blues, you won’t want a theme with dominant elements of orange and lime green.
5. Finally, remember... the theme you **THINK** you want today may not be the theme you need in 6 months. Because we’re working with mass produced themes, it makes changing the theme an easy and inexpensive option.



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