



DO YOU NEED A REDESIGN?

Jo Amos | Geek Fairy

WHAT DO I DO?

WEBSITE DESIGN | WORDPRESS MAINTENANCE

LOGO DESIGN | BLOG MAKEOVERS & TRANSFERS | WORDPRESS TUTORIALS

(The quick answer is I make and fix WordPress websites)



SO WHO IS THE GEEK FAIRY?

(talking in a weird third person way?)

Someone who is really good at Googling stuff, with a good mix of being really pig headed. Possibly the perfect combination for fixing stuff.

I started a baby blog in 2008, exactly the same way as many bloggers begin. Used Blogger and hated it, moved to Wordpress.com, and in 2010 moved to a WordPress self hosted site.

The baby blog evolved and turned into a lifestyle one and very quickly once self hosted I found the passion for the behind the scenes rather than the writing stuff.

I am a rubbish blogger.



BLOGGER / WORDPRESS.COM / WORDPRESS SELF HOSTED

These are the main blogging platforms, but there are others like Squarespace too.

I mainly work with WordPress self hosted, but a lot of the talk today is the planning behind a redesign and is relevant to all platforms.



WHY SHOULD YOU DO A REDESIGN?

- Changing name of the blog
- Changing domain
- It's broken
- You've been hacked
- It's not responsive
- Your theme is no longer supported and updated (security risk)
- You're bored of it
- It's out dated
- It looks like everyone else's
- You're going self hosted
- Moving from blogger to WordPress self hosted
- You need it to function in a different way
- It doesn't show your images/ photos off well
- You want to add a shop
- You want a more modern look
- You just want to



THINGS TO THINK BEFORE YOU TOUCH YOUR SITE

- **Budget**– do you want to do it or pay someone else? Theme costs.
- **How much time you have spare to do it** – work involved can take several hours
- **When will you do it**
- **What do your clients / readers come to your site to find?** (if you don't have a stats plugin, get one and look at the details, and also what they're viewing the site on)
- **Homepage** – what content is going to be on there
- **Themes** - Is it easy to use and set up?
- **Images** - quality and size, if new theme has a full width slider will your images work
- **Featured images** - If it uses 'features images' do your posts all have them
- **Sliders** – SEO / ease of use, there are arguments for and against
- **Form over function**– a pretty site is lovely but if no one can read the font or find the content, it is pointless



CHOICES YOU NEED TO MAKE

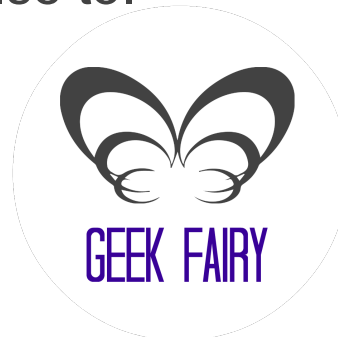
- Homepage
- Your logo
- Fonts
- Colours
- Background colour
- Full width or boxed
- Images
- Sidebar - left or right or none on homepage
- Menu – less tabs and dropdowns are better, but you still need to display the content



HOW TO START

- Decide your budget
- Spend an hour or more looking at other blogs, ones you don't usually visit too. List things you like and don't like. Not just visually but how things work.
- Do this on different devices and list again.
- What do you want to keep about your blog?
 - Logo
 - Colours
 - Branding
 - Side bar contents

All the above needs done regardless if you're doing it yourself or paying someone else to.



LOGO AND BRANDING

If you are going for a full re design start with your logo and colours

Resources for designing logos

www.picmonkey.com

<https://www.canva.com/>

- Keep it simple, you're less likely to hate it in a year
- Does it work in a square & circle for social media?
- Can you read the font
- Do you need a tag line
- Ask other opinions but it is you that has to really love it





LOGO AND BRANDING



The Dakota Diary
TALES OF A SPROCKER SPANIEL CALLED DAKOTA



SO HAPPY IN TOWN S·H·I·T

LIFESTYLE & PARENTING BLOG FOR THE S·H·I·T & PROUD



IN THE DOGHOUSE
DOG BOARDING IN A HOME ENVIRONMENT
SELSDON

Girl on the river
THE DIARY OF A PINT-SIZED ROWER



Purple Ella



InversionArts



Hoop | Pole | Yoga | Stretch



notjustthe3ofus

NOTES TO SELF

by Cheshire Mum

Everything Mummy

RIDING THE WAVES OF PARENTHOOD



FINDING A THEME

The main choice is dictated by the homepage style & layout.



GRID THEME



Weight Loss Diary – Weeks 85-88 (WHY I STOPPED)

by Kate Sutton | Sep 17, 2017 | Lifestyle | 8 Comments

Well hello you. I haven't written my usual weight loss journey post on a Sunday for a month now and I thought I'd sit down and explain why. If you're still around that is. It boils down to a few things but predominantly, I got bored writing the same thing every...



A Story About Dad

by Kate Sutton | Sep 15, 2017 | Lifestyle | 2 Comments

I was meant to see my Dad yesterday, just to briefly pop in for a coffee, but I was heading off to Whitstable for the day and I just didn't have time. He was also going to play golf so y'know, we're all busy busy. But I wanted to take the time to talk about my Dad,...



TRADITIONAL BLOG

DANNYUK
THE BEARDED BLOGGER

[ABOUT ME](#)[READ ME](#)[HEAR ME](#)[SEE ME](#)[WORK WITH ME](#)[CONTACT ME](#)[WIN WITH ME](#)

How long would she have waited?

by DannyUK | Sep 13, 2017 | Articles | 0 Comments

How long would she have waited? I visited a Costa Coffee store in Waterloo a little while back. Partly in my quest to visit as many Costa stores as possible, but mostly because I happened to be in Waterloo to meet somebody. The toilets there have coded locks on them...

[read more](#)



Southbank singing lift – video

by DannyUK | Sep 5, 2017 | Articles, London | 0 Comments

If you're heading to London, take 2 minutes to see the Southbank Singing Lift – it's great and it's free! (video in link)

[read more](#)

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I'm Danny, I live in the heart of Essex. I'm a Parent Blogger (or more precisely a daddy blogger), Vlogger, occasional Essex Chronicle columnist and more.

This blog is filled with an eclectic mix of posts about me, my family and my life.

It has honest reviews and opinions as well as stuff about Chelmsford, London, Liverpool and the North West.

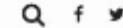
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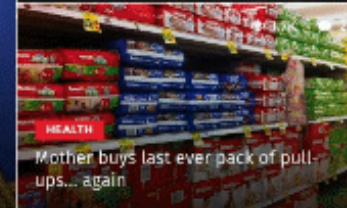
NEWS
EU referendum Remain campaign ponder why Blair and Brown support didn't work



NEWS
Brexit vote decisions based on whichever bollocks prediction is less unbelievable



CULTURE
Adults fail to notice Banksy's great big flaming tyre



HEALTH
Mother buys last ever pack of pull-ups... again

THE LATEST



PARENTING
Man forced to explain to mother that 'twat' isn't the past tense of 'twit'



NEWS
Indian couple in their 70s name their newborn son 'Orphan'



EDUCATION
Nicky Morgan fails driving test for attempting an unconvincing U-turn



EDUCATION
The Great Minors' Strike of 2016

FEATURED NEWS

PARENTING



CULTURE
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Man forced to explain to mother that 'twat' isn't the past tense of 'twit'

LIFESTYLE



MOST POPULAR



EDUCATION
Tories to force Brixton Academy to become a secondary school



EDUCATION
"Plane travel during term time sucks children's brains out", warns ghost of Michael Gove

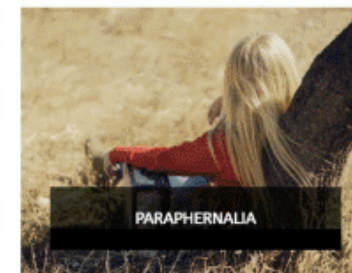
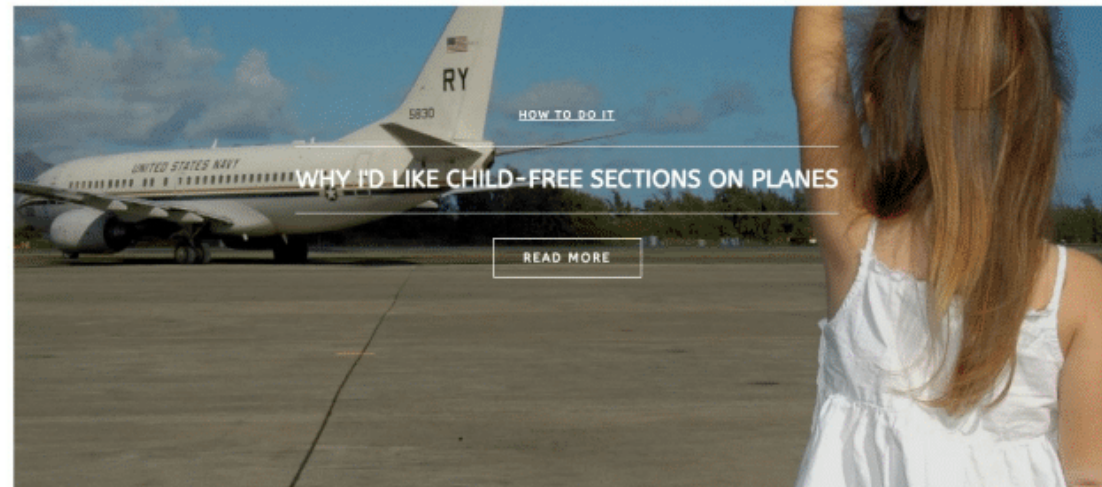


SLIDERS AND CATEGORIES BEFORE BLOG POSTS



MUMMY TRAVELS

Can you really keep travelling with a child in tow?



FIND A THEME

Then 2 choices for types of theme (WordPress self hosted only have the choice)

Traditional – add the theme, tweak the home page contents and settings and you are done.

Pros – easier to achieve the finished product with less technical knowledge

Cons – You are stuck with the options the theme has

e.g. Pipdig themes

Page builder - you build the contents for home and other pages row by row

e.g. DIVI by elegant themes

Pros – You have total control over how the contents looks and what features where

Cons – Can take a while to get your head around



BEFORE YOU BUY A THEME

- Check you like all the pages types it has, not just the home page
- Can you move the sidebar
- Can you use a full width header / change the position to suit your logo
- Are the colours for fonts etc. easy to change
- Is there any reliable support for it if you get stuck
- Is it updated regularly against security issues
- Is there anyone to contact if it goes wrong
- Check the reviews for the theme
- Is it the same one 'everyone' has (this is fine if you are happy with that!)
- Is it easy to work with behind the scenes
- Does it look similar to the style you want
- Are there any on going costs to get updates
- Is it responsive



DESIGN POINTS

Fonts

- No one will ever look at the font you use in the same way you do during a redesign
- Most important thing about fonts (for me as a user) is that I can read it. And there aren't too many different ones.
- Resources for free fonts
www.dafont.com www.1001fonts.com www.fontsquirrel.com

Sidebars

- Keep it simple and no longer than the page content on home page.
- If you need badges on the home page think about moving them to the bottom.
- If you have lots of badges try and get them to be the same / similar size. (Same for ads)

Sliders

- Speed they move
- Pause on hover with the mouse
- Does the click on them work



WHAT DOES GOOGLE LIKE?

(this is my translation of it!)

Fast sites

- Compress your images and resize them to what is needed
- Use a cache plugin
- Limit amount of posts on home, category and archive pages
- Limit the amount of plugins you use
- Use decent hosting

Responsive sites

- Work well on mobiles and tablets

No ads / pop ups that block content on mobiles

SSL Certificates

- Personal annoyance of mine as really only selling sites need one

GOOD QUALITY CONTENT!



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE TOUCHING YOUR CURRENT SITE?

In an ideal world you would have a second copy of your blog on a different domain that you can go in and create a test site. But very rarely people do. (And that's OK)

If the new theme has a home page slider, find out how it works. Is it featured posts? Categories? Think what you want to go there. And make sure you have images the right size to work in it.

Back up your site before you touch anything (I use Updraftplus)

Take a screen grab of your current page with sidebar (if you can't screen grab take a photo of the screen on your phone)

In widgets dashboard if you've got code from ads / badges / images copy the code into a text file and name and save it. Often changing themes disrupts the widgets.

Put on a coming soon page (using a plugin)



ADDING YOUR NEW THEME

Upload the new theme and activate it (Tip - many themes you buy from theme forest you need to unzip once to find the zipped theme folder in)

Themes will often come with a how-to in the theme folder you buy or will have guidelines on the authors website. Some have nothing and it is a case of clicking around the theme in the dashboard or 'customise' option.

And then start playing. And don't freak out. Best advice is to slowly find where the control for the home page are.

If your previous theme (or moving from blogger / Wordpress.com) didn't use featured images then your new look site may be missing images in a grid / slider for posts. (see plugin recommendations at the end)



SETTING UP YOUR NEW THEME

- Set up your logo header
- Colour settings fonts / links / widget titles etc
- Homepage (sliders if you have them)
- Menu
- Widgets for sidebar
- Category pages
- Other pages
- Footer

Check how it looks on all devices & browsers

- Can you view the menu on a mobile
- Do the images resize and look ok on a mobile
- If it looks like crap on Internet Explorer, go back to your original stats and see if anyone is actually viewing it on that. Then track them down and tell them to stop using it. This might not be my actual official designer advice (except it is)

Once happy remove the coming soon page and launch it



TOP WORDPRESS PLUGINS

- **Duo Two-Factor Authentication** – Adding two step login with your phone
- **Google Analyticator** - Easy integration of your Google analytics account
- **Recent Posts Widget Extended** – If your new theme doesn't have a recent posts widget that has thumbnails, this adds one
- **UpdraftPlus - Backup/Restore** – Back ups and moving sites
- **Wordfence Security** – Won't stop you getting hacked but it will help
- **WP Fastest Cache** - Cache plugin, easy to set up and hasn't mangled any of my sites
- **Velvet blues update URLs** – If you change the domain of your site this will update all the URLs across the site (make sure new domain is pointing to the site & you've updated in the WP settings first!)
- **WP Smush** – Image optimizer, free to do 50 images at a time and then as you upload new ones
- **Use-any-font** – Add any font to your site
- **Generate post thumbnails** – If you've added content / gone self hosted etc and your posts didn't bring over featured images, this will add one to all your posts



SECURITY AND HACKING

Short version – WordPress sites get hacked as there are so many of them, and lots are not secured at all / properly

You can put in place lots of things to stop the hackers (although nothing is 100% safe) but take away the easy ways into your site.

- Two step authentication to log in (I use the Duo Two-Factor Authentication a guide here <http://geekfairy.co.uk/removing-replacing-clef-two-step-authentication-wordpress>)
- Use a secure password, not just adding a 1 to replace a l, but a really secure one like WordPress will suggest e.g. ghiee&r56(3463d@*
- Use the Wordfence plugin, and set it up properly and get alerts
- Use decent hosting
- DO YOUR UPDATES, yes it can be scary, but you are backing up your site regularly so do them!
- See this post for more info <http://geekfairy.co.uk/what-to-do-when-your-wordpress-site-gets-hacked>



MAINTAINING YOUR SITE

See the post here on things to look after your WordPress self hosted site
geekfairy.co.uk/looking-new-WordPress-website



HOSTING RECOMENDATION



Referral link www.siteground.com/go/geekfairy

