



The Handbook

Codex

[http://codex.wordpress.org/Finding WordPress Help](http://codex.wordpress.org/Finding_WordPress_Help)

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Finding WordPress Help

Besides the helpful [WordPress forums](http://www.wordpress.org/support) (<http://www.wordpress.org/support>) and this Codex, there is an amazing number of sites on the Internet dedicated to helping WordPress users use WordPress even better. Help with WordPress is everywhere. So how do you find it when you really need it?

The [WordPress FAQ](#) provides extensive answers to frequently asked questions. We've even included a document on how to [use the WordPress support forums](#) to get better results on your requests for help.

Before posting in the [forums](http://www.wordpress.org/support) (<http://www.wordpress.org/support>), since it is run by volunteers working their buns off over long hours when they could be doing something much more constructive ;-), maybe you should start with a **search**.

To increase your search capabilities, you can add the [Codex and Forum Searcher Plugin](http://asymptomatic.net/wp/2005/07/20/1765/codex-searcher/) (<http://asymptomatic.net/wp/2005/07/20/1765/codex-searcher/>) and search both the Codex and Forum from your WordPress Administration Panels. Click on one of the search results and the page will open in a new window or tab so you can have the article or discussion open while working on WordPress.

Searching The Net For WordPress Help

There are a variety of ways to search the Internet and find the information you need. The biggest problem is finding the "words" that describe your problem. The next biggest problem is limiting your search to only WordPress resources or sites. Let's look at how to do this.

Search Using Keywords

Sometimes it's easy to search using keywords because the problem you are having tells you what is wrong with it. That's the fun of WordPress. [PHP](#) code often tells you what the problem is immediately. Don't you wish WordPress was sophisticated enough to give you the answer to the problem while telling you there is an error? Someday. Until then, copy the most important words from the error and paste them into a text editor and take a good look at them. Here is an example:

```
Warning: main(/home/atlantis/public_html/wp-includes/
functions.php): failed to open stream: No such
file or directory in /home/stargateatlantis/
public_html/wp-settings.php on line 67
```

```
Fatal error: main(): Failed opening required
'/home/atlantis/public_html/wp-includes/
functions.php' (include_path='./usr/lib/php:
/usr/local/lib/php') in /home/stargateatlantis/
public_html/wp-settings.php on line 67
```

Hidden within this information are the key words you need to help you get the answers.

Opening the template file referenced, like `functions.php`, might help, but other functions and template files are often generated long before it gets to `functions.php` or `wp-settings.php` and the line number related to the generated file is not necessarily the line number in those template files. It might get you close, but maybe not.

From this error, though, you have some critical information to help you with your search. You know the names of the files that are causing the grief:

```
functions.php
wp-settings.php
```

These are part of the *keywords* that you will need to be looking for.

Look closer. The specific errors are **failed to open stream** and **failed opening required** and they both happen within the `wp-settings.php` file. Maybe the problem isn't in the `functions.php` but in the `wp-settings.php` file? And you see the words "failed" and "open" in both errors. That's a clue.

Create a search in your favorite search engine that included the words:

```
wordpress failed open wp-settings.php
```

This should get you started on narrowing down the problem.

But not all keywords can be so easily found. If the problem is with CSS or HTML, you can include the [specific tag](#) or selector that has the problem, but this might not be the problem at all, so you need to hunt for words that describe your problem.

If there is a difference in your web page layout in Microsoft Internet Explorer and another browser, then search for information on **Internet Explorer layout bugs**. If you have a consistent error in the different browsers in the layout, which part of the layout is it affecting? The *sidebar*, *header*, *post content*, or *comments*? If the problem is the image in the header not showing up or not working right, then search for **wordpress header image** to start, then add the specifics like **wordpress header image missing** to narrow things down.

Brainstorming Search Terms

When really struck for keywords, there are a few other things you can try. These involve *brainstorming* your keywords.

First, write down the problem on paper or on the computer. Just make a note of it. Be as descriptive as you want.

I'm having trouble with the nested list in the sidebar of my layout. It isn't lining up the items under the titles right. It is keeping things on the left margin when I want them to be indented.

Right there, you've listed keywords to search with within your description. There are:

```
sidebar
layout
nested list
left margin
indented
```

Arrange those in different ways and you have some keywords to search with.

A second method is to talk it out with someone. Luckily, an analytical friend or family member can often help, but it helps to explain it to someone who doesn't understand any of this. Just ask them to help you figure this out, even if they don't understand PHP, CSS, or HTML. It will force you to use very simple terms and references, and *among those are your keywords*. Your friend might respond to your description with:

"Oh, you are trying to change X to B and get the result P. Why didn't you say so?"

There, you have your search keywords.

Searching Tips and Tricks

Once you have some starting keywords, it's time to put them to work. Remember, you are not stuck with your starting keywords. They are just that, a start. As you dig into the information, you may replace those words with ones that narrow the field down a little. For example, if you are looking for "wordpress sidebar layout nested links", you may discover that the problem lies within the specific [Theme](#) you are using, add the name of the theme to your keywords and it may narrow down your search.

Let's look at some more tips for improving your odds of finding a solution.

Search Engine Site Search

Did you know you can search a specific site from a search engine?

Google Site Search

To search a specific website, like **wordpress.org**, in the Google search window, type your keyword and end with the *site:* reference:

```
keyword1 keyword2 keyword3 site:wordpress.org
```

Google will search all **wordpress.org** sites such as *www.wordpress.org*, *wiki.wordpress.org*, and *codex.wordpress.org*.

To narrow down your search to a specific site, like *www.wordpress.org*, use the *site:* reference and type:

```
keyword keyword keyword site:www.wordpress.org
```

Google will search only the *www.wordpress.org* site, which includes the Support Forums, but not the WordPress Codex or Wiki.

Yahoo Site Search

To search a domain or website specifically in Yahoo, their [Yahoo's Advanced Search Page](http://search.yahoo.com/search/options?fr=fp-top&p=) (<http://search.yahoo.com/search/options?fr=fp-top&p=>) allows searching by domain name directly.

Other Search Engines

Other search engines provide a variety of ways to narrow your search to a specific site.

Check with their **Advanced Search Options**, if they provide them, or at the [Search](#)

[Engine Watch's Search Command](#)

[list](http://searchenginewatch.com/facts/article.php/2155981#Power%20Searching%20Commands) (<http://searchenginewatch.com/facts/article.php/2155981#Power%20Searching%20Commands>) for details on searching by domain or url.

Use Quotes to Group Keywords

You can group different keywords together to narrow your search. For example, instead of looking for:

```
sidebar layout nested list left margin indented
```

You can group key phrases together with quote marks:

```
sidebar layout "nested list" "left margin" indented
```

This would limit your search to anything with the words *sidebar*, *layout*, and *indented*, and the phrases "*nested list*" and "*left margin*".

You can also use Boolean references and a technique with plus and minus symbols to group keywords together. There are a lot of options for improving your searching techniques and you can learn more about these:

- [Search Engine Watch's Web Searching Tips](#) (<http://searchenginewatch.com/facts/>)
- [Internet Tips: Searching the Internet](#) (<http://www.cameraontheroad.com/searching-the-internet>)
- [Tutorial – Guide to Effective Searching of the Internet](#) (<http://www.brightplanet.com/deepcontent/tutorials/search/index.asp>)
- [Windweaver's Search Yahoo Tips](#) (<http://www.windweaver.com/searchyahoo.htm>)

WordPress Sources for Help

You are not limited to the Internet for your WordPress help and support. The following are the main places to go to get WordPress help and support:

- [WordPress Codex](#) - WordPress Online Manual
- [WordPress Support Forums](http://www.wordpress.org/support/) (<http://www.wordpress.org/support/>)
- [IRC Freenode WordPress Support on channel #wordpress](#)
- [WordPress IRC Live Help](#)

Other Helpful Resources

- Have you tried [Google](http://google.com) (<http://google.com>) yet?
- Refer to the [external FAQ site](http://faq.wordpress.net) (<http://faq.wordpress.net>) : The fledgling FAQ has quite a few answers for the troubled.
- Check out [Podz' tutorial collection](http://tamba2.org.uk/wordpress/) (<http://tamba2.org.uk/wordpress/>) : Podz is our lead support moderator, and Codex contributor. He might be working on the help you are seeking right now.
- Search the [support forums](http://wordpress.org/support) (<http://wordpress.org/support>). There are some WP-

geniuses over there that will try to help you out. Please read [Using the Support Forums](#) and **Finding WordPress Help** to find out how to search the forums and post a clear, answerable question.

- Using the Live WordPress Support on the IRC. See: [WordPress IRC Live Help](#) and [IRC](#).
- PHPbuilder has [how-to articles](#) (<http://www.phpbuilder.com/columns/>), [a library of PHP code snippets](#) (<http://www.phpbuilder.com/snippet/>), and a [discussion forum](#) (<http://www.phpbuilder.com/forum/>).
- Search the [Mailing Lists](#) and their archives. If you need professional support, you may try mailing the Wp-Pro mailing lists, and invite bids for your project ;)
- If all else fails, go to the [WordPress Trac](#) (<http://trac.wordpress.org/>) (bug tracker) and see if your problem has already been addressed by searching the bug database. If you think your problem merits a new bug report, file one.