



The Handbook

Codex

[http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress Site Reviews](http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Site_Reviews)

Version Date

9 August 2005

WordPress Site Reviews

To help you with your WordPress site, the [WordPress Support Forum](http://www.wordpress.org/support) (<http://www.wordpress.org/support>) offers a section called [Your WordPress](http://wordpress.org/support/forum/11) (<http://wordpress.org/support/forum/11>) for reviews and critiques of WordPress powered sites. Posts in this forum do not show up in the "latest posts" on the front page to avoid distraction from people looking for support. **Requests for Reviews outside of the Your WordPress section may not be reviewed.**

By submitting your site in the **Your WordPress** section of the Forum, you are giving permission for the volunteer forum members and reviewers to visit your site and comment on the design and use of WordPress.

Some of these volunteers are experts in web design and programming. Some are not as experienced, but they enjoy helping others develop their own WordPress sites. None are paid. All are volunteers and doing this because they want to help and give back to the WordPress Community. They may say nice things, or not, and they will generally offer suggestions for improvements.

If you would like your site reviewed, please review the following information.

You Asked For It

When posting your site in the [Your WordPress](http://wordpress.org/support/forum/11) (<http://wordpress.org/support/forum/11>) section of the WordPress Forum, you are inviting critique and review of your WordPress site. If you are not specific with the feedback you want and need, reviewers will be as kind or harsh as they see fit. You asked for it, and you are going to get it.

Remember, none of the comments are personal. They do not reflect upon your ability, or lack thereof, to design or develop websites or web pages. They are meant to be constructive, informative, and helpful when possible.

If you are [new to WordPress](#), [PHP](#), [CSS](#), and [HTML](#), then say so and reviewers will be a little more gentle and helpful, leading you through the process of fixing the problems and making changes. If you wish to have a very critical review of your site, say so. The reviewers will "let you have it," good or bad, all in an attempt to help you improve your site.

Reviewers will inspect the following:

- Overall Presentation
- Use of Colors and Graphics
- Site Navigation
- Use of WordPress Features, Tools, and Plugins
- Code Validation

Reviewers will not "rate" your site compared to other sites. They will not comment on content or editorial material, so do not ask for such reviews. If they feel inclined, they will post a note directly on your site or via email to you.

A WordPress Forum Reviewer will do their best to give you an objective perspective on

your site. The information they provide will usually follow web standards and WordPress practices. They might add comments about their personal preferences for colors, fonts, use of images, and such, but these are their opinions.

The volunteer reviewers do their best to speak the truth and help you improve your site or celebrate it. You can take their recommendations or not, it is up to you. Just remember, you asked for it.

Review Criteria

Any site powered by WordPress is eligible to be reviewed.

To have your site reviewed and critiqued, post a link and a description of your site's purpose and what you want and expect for a review. Detail if you want a soft or harsh review.

List the URL (link) to the site as a complete clickable link. You can write the link in a full HTML anchor on the forum like these:

```
<a href="http://example.com/wordpress/index.php">Title of Website</a>
```

```
<a href="http://example.com/wordpress/index.php">http://example.com/wordpress/index.php</a>
```

```
http://example.com/wordpress/index.php
```

Note: The last example must have a space before and after it to show up as a link. Do not put it in quotes or parentheses. You can put it on its own line to make sure it will turn into a link.

Sites that are reviewed tend to be categorized into two areas: **blogs** and **websites**. Please indicate which category your site falls into so reviewers can report back with a review that more closely aligns itself to your site's category.

Blog

A **blog** is a personal reflection of the blogger's interests and topics. Reviewers may comment on how they perceive the Theme and use of WordPress features reflect the personality of the site and blogger.

Website

A **website** is a site typically dedicated to a purpose or function, and it might be personal or commercial. Reviewers may comment on how they perceive the site's Theme and layout to reflect the products or content.

We do ask that if your site has adult or content that might be offensive, tell us. You will still get reviewed, it just helps to provide people with a little warning.

Responsibilities of the Reviewers

To be sure we are playing fair and nice when reviewing WordPress sites for the Forum, the following are the guidelines for reviewing sites:

1. Reviews will be fair and non-personal.

2. Play nice or do not play.
3. If you do not like the content or purpose of the site, refrain from reviewing it.
4. Review only presentation and use of WordPress. Save comments on editorial content for the comment sections on that site, not on the WordPress Forums.
5. Personal bias and preferences on design elements may be mentioned, but state that this is your opinion, not a web standard.
6. Statements will be practical, helpful, and encourage good web practices.
7. When referencing a specific problem or resource, be as specific as possible and use links to the problem or resource.
8. If the site has a problem beyond the scope of the **Your WordPress** section, refer them to the **Support** sections for posting a question on the specific problem.
9. Remember, all reviews, critics, and comments are the responsibility of the reviewer and not WordPress nor its representatives.

Review Procedure

Everyone has their method for reviewing a site. Some only look at the surface presentation of the site and rarely delve deep within a site's depths to see all the pages and posts. Others will look at the site's use of presentation styles, dig into the code to check it, and give a more detailed review. Be sure and ask for the depth of review you need when requesting a review of your site.

To help you understand what reviewers look for when reviewing a WordPress site, here is a checklist.

Access

How long does the site take to load? What comes up first? Are wait times long because of large graphics or links to external references like graphics off-site? Extremely long load times will often result in a site not being reviewed.

Overall Presentation

While WordPress comes with two [Themes](#), reviewers want to see what you have done beyond the core Themes. They are looking for [use of color](#) and graphics, then layout and navigation. Do the colors match or contrast in a way to accentuate the content and purpose of the site? Are they overwhelming or hard to read or easy on the eye? Are the navigation areas easy to find? Is the purpose of the site clearly visible to the eye?

Site Architecture

Does the site make use of CSS layout and presentation? Is it in tables, frames, or iframes, or other non-standard web structures? In general, these are considered bad design form, but they might work for your site and reviewers will comment on their usage, good or bad. Does the sidebar overlap or is too close to the content? Is the footer a great distance from the rest of the content. All site architecture will be inspected and commented on if it is either not working or looks "uncomfortable."

Site Purpose

While not critical to the review, visitors look for clues to the purpose of a site. This is often reflected in the layout and design elements, use of color and graphics, and clear titles and explanations. Reviewers will look for these elements, too.

The Header

The header is a very important part of a site. It provides immediate information about the site and its purpose. It can be done through the use of words, color and graphics. If the header lacks definitive style and information, the reviewers will let you know immediately.

Navigation

[Navigation elements](#) for a site are often found within the sidebar of a web page, but they may also be within the header and footer. Reviewers will hunt for these and look at how the information is laid out, and how navigation works through your site. This includes clear use of [Pages](#), [Categories](#), [Archives](#), Calendar, and other navigational tools.

Use of Color and Images

As part of the overall presentation of a site, reviewers will look at the [use of color](#) and images within the site. This includes the use of these in the header, sidebar, footer, content, and titles. It also includes the use of color and graphics in the background of the overall site and individual sections like the sidebar and header. Is the font readable against the graphics or photographs? Do these colors and images overwhelm or enhance the site?

Fonts and Text Size

Small fonts are one of the most complained about elements on many sites. Make sure [fonts are readable](#) and have enough of a color contrast between the background color and text color. White text on a black background is fine as long as the text is large enough and "thick" enough to be seen against the black background. Gray text on a black background may look good in theory, but is very hard to see. Same as pink on red, or green on blue. Since people tend to look at the words on a site from the moment of their arrival, the readability of the fonts counts.

WordPress Tags and Templates

As the reviewer moves around your site and inspects the navigation, they are also looking at how WordPress is used to display your site's content and information. Are you using [template tags](#) to list your categories or the drop-down menu tags? How are you using the [WordPress PHP Loop](#) within your site to change how content is generated? Does the sidebar change when visiting the single post or category pages? Do other elements within the [template files](#) change as the reviewer move around the site, displaying information unique to each web page? Are the search, category, or archive pages unique and different from the rest? WordPress has a lot of powerful features and [conditional tags](#) that generate different information as well as different looks depending upon the request and serious reviewers are looking for such usage.

WordPress Plugins

Reviews often recognize the use of [popular plugins](#) and tools and may comment on usage of these add-on features, especially if the usage is distinctive. If there are too many plugins cluttering things up, or problems with the plugins, they will also point these out.

Cross-Browser Inspections

Typically, the **Themes and Templates Support** section handles issues with browsers on website design and layout, but some dedicated reviewers may inspect your site in various browsers to help you out. If you would like this service, ask.

Code Validation

Every web page generated by WordPress is based upon two core files: [template files](#) and the [style sheet](#). There can be one or many different template files and one or more style sheets, and all of this code needs to be checked for errors. Many reviewers will run your site's pages through a [validator](#) to check for HTML and XHTML errors and errors within your style sheet or CSS. These checks help you know if your site meets the web standards, and it also helps to clean up errors and prevent bigger ones from occurring. Part of having a solid website is having solid code and reviewers will inspect it for you and report on errors and ways to fix it, if they can.

Say Thank You

WordPress volunteers on the Forum offer this service for free. Their goal is to help you create the best WordPress site you can. They take time out from their own busy schedules and WordPress sites to help. Be sure and take a few minutes of your time to show your appreciation and say thanks.

And from the lessons you learn from your own review, you will start paying attention to other sites and how they work, and soon you can show your appreciation to the WordPress Community by reviewing other people's WordPress sites.