

BIG 2017 EDITION



WordPress Plugins **YOU SHOULD KNOW!**

Fifty original reviews of the best WordPress plugins for optimizing, securing and rocking out your blog or website.

Packed with usage recommendations, compatibility warnings and more!

By Scott Winterroth

50

WordPress Plugins You Should Know

2017 edition - *Complete with compatibility warnings and usage tips!*

Fifty original reviews of the best WordPress plugins for optimizing, securing and rocking out your blog or website. Packed with usage recommendations, compatibility warnings and more!

By
Scott Winterroth

Contents

For Contact Forms	3
For backup and hardening WordPress.....	3
For ecommerce and shopping carts	4
For content optimization and SEO.....	5
For popups.....	6
For social media	7
Sliders.....	8
For admin to-do lists, notes and reminders.....	9
For site speed optimization	10
For Content Organization	11
For Event Calendars.....	13
For linking needs:	14
For membership sites	15
Potpourri	17

WordPress is a powerful website content management system that and has skyrocketed in popularity. It's safe to say this largely due to its extreme flexibility care of a wide variety of plugins. Thousands of plugins had been crafted by developers from around the world to scratch about any itch.

The good news is, you can almost always find something close to what you need for your project. There isn't an easy way to try every plugin out so most users rely on word of mouth for recommendations and feedback.

All plugins in the guide have been field tested.

This guide is to help you identify some production tested plugins so you can save time and build the WordPress site of your dream. I hope you find it valuable and as always, got a recommendation or need some ideas? Tweet me at @swinterroth or head on over to my blog swinterroth.com. Powered by WordPress of course!

How this guide was made

Each plugin recommendation is a personal tidbit of my 9+ years of using WordPress. I could probably go on and on with way more than 50 plugins but I thought this would be a good start. I've broken them up into use case categories such as content optimization plugins or social media plugins, skim these section headings to find what you are looking for or spend a few hours going through each review. I've included any compatibility warnings and other notes along the way.

About Scott Winterroth

I've been blogging, building and teaching WordPress for 9 years and hands down think WordPress is the best platform for any type of content driven website such as blogs or content marketing driven business websites. I started using WordPress in 2008 when I launched a niche country music blog in Chicago. Today, I've build hundreds of sites for myself and for clients as well as coached bloggers on how to get started and maintain a content strategy. Learn more about the author at contentacademy.com

Twitter: [@swinterroth](https://twitter.com/swinterroth)

LinkedIn: [/in/swinterroth](https://in.linkedin.com/in/swinterroth)

Instagram: [@swinterroth](https://www.instagram.com/swinterroth)

1. JetPack

JetPack is a suite of plugins maintained by the team at Automattic, the force behind WordPress.com. This suite of addons brings a host of valuable resources to your WordPress site and they all come from a very trusted development team. I love this plugin simply for the WordPress stats dashboard widget, photon a free image CDN service, and brute force protect to better secure my website backend.

Recommended Read: [Useful Jetpack Features on Content Academy](#)

My most used modules:

- WordPress.com Stats
- Photon
- Brute Force
- Subscriptions
- Sharing
- Backup
- Publicize
- Centralized Management
- Video hosting

Automattic has released a tiered pricing model that starts at free with upgrades to \$299/year for PRO service. The one-stop service provided by premium plans are nice but there are many plugins that do it for free or less. This plugin also requires users to have a wordpress.com to connect, which is free but sometimes trips people up so take your time and read the steps.

Free+ | <https://jetpack.com/>

For Contact Forms

2. Gravity Forms

Must Install*

Every website needs a contact form and Gravity Forms does contact forms better than anything else. But wait, there's more! Gravity Forms provides users with a very simple “drag-and-drop” form builder to create all types of data capture forms. I've used it to create very simple email newsletter subscribe forms to very complex user lead generation forms. Best of all, because it's so popular, there's a host of add-ons available that can extend the functionality of how the forms work and interact with other plugins and services. For example, users can connect Gravity Forms to zapier.com to send user entries to hundreds of other web services such as webinar programs, CRMs and other databases.

In addition to the zapier add-on, Gravity Forms has a few developer plugins for streamlined integration with MailChimp Email Marketing and one that will create new WordPress users or create simple polls and quizzes for user engagement.

Mailchimp Addon

User Registration Add-on

Polls & Quizzes

Starting at \$39 to \$199 - gravityforms.com

For backup and hardening WordPress

3. Updraft Plus

must install

Backing up your WordPress site is critical, UpdraftPlus allows users to set a remote location such as Dropbox or Amazon S3. It not only backs up the uber important database it creates a clone of the site files on the server. The backup automatically runs on a set schedule so once it's set you can forget it. Tip: It's good to only set the backup to run every few weeks, unless you're a super blogger who posts something every day. Then turn the backup to run often. Backups are only as good as the ability to restore them. I suggest testing out a backup restore process to make sure you know how to do it should the need arise.

Free+ - [WordPress.org](https://wordpress.org)

4. WordPress Zero Spam

Creating a membership site can be an effective way to market your blog and build community. The problem is, user spam is rampant. WordPress Zero Spam blocks registration spam and spam in comments automatically without any additional config or setup, and for free. Not exactly sure how it works but works with BuddyPress, Gravity Forms and more!

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/zero-spam/>

5. Limit Login Attempts

You know when you type in your password in wrong too many times into your bank's website and it locks you out. This plugin mimics that functionality of locking out users who type in the wrong password too many times. Compatibility alert, this is may be an overlap to the Jetpack "Protect" module.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/limit-login-attempts/>

6. Akismet

Must Install

This is one of those plugins you just have to use. Akismet is maintained by Automattic and provides seamless spam comment filtering similar to how your email provider filters spam messages. It requires a Akismet API key, which is free for personal use. The actual plugin is free and likely installed in your site already as it comes packaged by default with WordPress. I typically turn on the setting to silently remove some of the most obvious spam automatically.

Free+ | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/akismet/>

For ecommerce and shopping carts

7. WooCommerce

WooCommerce is a very popular ecommerce plugin for WordPress which, when activated, creates a cart checkout process, a post type for products and a order tracking feature for store admins. According to the plugin's page, WooCommerce powers 30% of all online stores.

Recently acquired by Automattic, the company behind WordPress.com, Woo-

Commerce provides a great open-source, no-cost entry into selling products and services through your website and is extremely flexible with the availability hundreds of free and premium add-ons to extend the functionality of the core plugin.

Compatible with almost any WordPress theme and integration with all of the major payment processors, such as PayPal, Stripe an Authorize.net and major shippers such as U.S. Postal Service, FedEx and UPS (premium plugins required) WooCommerce tops my list the #1 e-commerce platform for WordPress in 2016. WooCommerce is also highly recommended as it is widely supported by independent developers and programmers around the globe.

Free+ - <https://woocommerce.com>

8. WooCommerce Product Tab Pro

WooCommerce Product Pages come with a few nifty tabs for description and reviews but if you want to add a few other tabs, such as product FAQs, videos or contact, this nifty plugin will do that at a fraction of the price from the official WooCommerce Tab Manager plugin offered by WooThemes.

\$22 <https://codecanyon.net/item/woocommerce-tabs-pro-extra-tabs-for-product-page/8218941>

9. Easy Pricing Tables lite

Pricing tables are a great way to explain what is included in a given package and are known as a simple way to upsell a visitor into a more expensive package or service. I found easy pricing tables simple and useful and easy to implement with a shortcode into post or page. Premium version includes more templates and additional Google Analytics integration. Free version available in the Plugin Directory on WordPress.org.

Free+ - <https://fatcatapps.com>

For content optimization and SEO

10. Yoast SEO

Must Install

Yoast SEO, formally WordPress SEO, is a pretty comprehensive solution to help manage your site's SEO meta data, content optimization and xml sitemap. This plugins provides a simple interface within the post and page editor that allows

users to edit the page's or post's meta title and meta description on the fly and provides other great recommendations for improving your overall content optimization. Like most popular WordPress plugins, Yoast has a complex web of expensive add-ons and upgrades aimed at specific areas of SEO optimization. I typically use only the free version. Warning: Avoid installing with other SEO plugins such as All in One SEO as they will likely cause a conflict.

Free+ | yoast.com

11. WordPress Rankie

Rankie is a cute little plugin that provides rank position in search terms for a given website and search term. For example, let's say I want to track what position my site is for free blog tutorials. I can enter that keyword into Rankie and it will provide me with an ongoing rank of where my website stands within the SERP (Search Engine Results Page). Not as robust as a full SEO monitoring program such as Moz.com but handy for small projects or just for fun.

\$16 - <http://codecanyon.net/item/rankie-wordpress-rank-tracker-plugin/7605032>

12. Google Analyticator

Keeping tabs on your website traffic is not only good practice for data feedback but it's also a motivational tool to keep blogging. Google Analyticator authenticates with Google Analytics to insert the Google tracking code on each page of your website and creates an admin dashboard widget to visualize your site's stats and a birds eye view of some of the most common metrics.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/google-analyticator/>

For popups

13. Popup Ally Pro

I've been using the free version to this plugin for years, which creates dead simple newsletter optins that pops up after a defined time delay or when a user starts to leave the page known as exit intent. Both methods are powerful ways to grab a reader email address before they leave.

The Pro version is well worth the upgrade and allows for unlimited popups and split testing, which allows you to test one popup over the other to see which one might work better with your audience. Both version work with almost any email

marketing service such as MailChimp or Aweber and the pre-defined designs make it simple to setup and start converting!

Pro: \$97 - <http://ambitionally.com/popupally-pro/>

14. Popup Builder PRO

Popups are effective ways to put important information in front of your users, albeit they can be annoying. Sometimes popups are also part of the website user experience, for example, maybe a popup displays a login or a contact form. Popup Builder Pro provides a seamless way to incorporate popup user elements with shortcodes. It also accounts that some popups do not display correctly on mobile devices and allows for turning off on devices with a particular size screen. Also includes controls for selecting what pages the popup shows and does not show on. Free version available on WordPress.org; pro version includes mobile support.

Free+ - <http://sygnoos.com/wordpress-popup/>

15. Lightbox Plus

There are many great lightbox plugins in the WordPress plugin directory what will create a faded overlay when you click on a image, video or link. Lightbox Plus is the one I've relied on for years, great for popups gallery images, contact forms or anything where you don't want to drive your visitor away from the page they are currently browsing. Doesn't appear to be in the directory any more but still available on the author's website:

Free | <https://www.23systems.net/wordpress-plugins/lightbox-plus-for-wordpress/>

For social media

16. Fuselight Social Sidebar

In the world of WordPress, I love SIMPLE. There are plenty of options when it comes to social media link plugins but this one provides an all encompassing solution for side social media links. It's very important to encourage website visitors to follow your social profile on various networks, even if it's a bit annoying. The Fuselight Social Sidebar plugin creates a right side or left side tab with links to your various social profiles or easy sharing buttons. It's colorful and super simple to setup and provides options for mobile devices.

\$14 - <http://codecanyon.net/item/wordpress-social-sidebar/14819664>

17. Revive Old Posts

When your library of content starts to get large, it's important to continue to push that content out over social media profiles. Revive old posts does exactly that. Once connected, it will tweet older posts over a set time interval and is very useful for driving traffic back to your website and keeping your Twitter profile looking up to date. The PRO version includes more social networks such as LinkedIn/

Free+ - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/tweet-old-post/>

18. Instagram Feed

Instagram is awesome, showing your instagram photos on your blog is even better! Use this plugin to connect to your instagram feed and create a feed of your photos or select photos from certain users, hashtags or locations. Best of all, it is free and pretty easy to implement with shortcodes. Locations and hashtags are part of pro upgrade which also includes more layouts and social interactions.

Free+ - <https://smashballoon.com/instagram-feed/>

19. Facebook Open Graph, Google+ and Twitter Card Tags

This is probably more of an advanced plugin for the inner social media nerd but when someone shares your website on Facebook or Twitter, you want the correct preview image to show up with each share. This plugin allows authors to select a suggest image for social networks to use when someone shares their post.

Free | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wondermoons-simple-facebook-open-graph-tags/>

Sliders

20. WEN Logo Slider

For a simple sliding logo slider to display your partners, clients or sponsors, WEN is your guy. Simply activate plugin, upload your logos and insert shortcode in the place the slider should show. It might make sense to resize each logo to a square or rectangle dimension such as 150px by 150px before uploading as this plugin doesn't provide any type of image editing but it is lightweight and responsive.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wen-logo-slider/>

21. Master Slider by Averta

Sliders are a key design component to almost any website. They provide a beautiful way to display images, recent posts, videos or pretty much anything you can imagine. The thing is, many sliders look great but sometimes don't play nice with mobile devices and tablets. Since a lot of traffic comes from mobile, it's important to select a slider that is compatible on all screen sizes. Master Slider was built with mobile in mind utilizing touch gesture features to control the slides and it is fully responsive. Probably one of the most popular features of Master Slider is its animated layers. Though a easy to use drag-and-drop admin interface, users can create mini animations to really make each slide pop with elements sliding in or appearing in intervals. Careful, this is also available in other flavors not compatible with WordPress.

\$20—<http://codecanyon.net/item/master-slider-wordpress-responsive-touch-slider/7467925>

For admin to-do lists, notes and reminders

22. WP Dashboard Notes

Post-it Notes for your WordPress Dashboard! Super helpful for creating simple to-do lists or internal notes for other writers/users on your site. The notes are colorful and simple to setup. Can create multiple notes.

Free | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-dashboard-notes/>

23. Blog Coach

Must Install

Ok, a blatant self promotion. Blogging can be fun and rewarding but you have to stay on track. This plugin I have created reminds users with a simple visual notification on how many days have passed since something was posted. It also provides a free dashboard widget with recent articles from ContentAcademy.com, packed with blogging and content strategy tips.

Free | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/blog-coach/>

For site speed optimization

24. WP Rocket

Must Install

Speed up your site with the best premium caching plugin. What I love about this plugin is it's pretty much as easy as install and turn on. Out of the box, you will notice a zipper site with its provides HTML page caching, minification and lazy load for images. Other caching plugins such as WP Super Cache and W3 Total Cache require heavy configuration, WP Rocket is easy to setup and does a killer job. It also integrates seamlessly with CloudFlare.com and with SiteGround.com Hosting, which also provides a server side caching. It's great when they all work in tandem.

\$39 - <http://wp-rocket.me>

25. Imagify

Must Install

If your WordPress site is slow, don't blame your host immediately. Uploading images without optimizing for web resolution can be part of the culprit. Imagify is a service that will automatically reduce the size of your images as you upload or in a bulk. After installing and optimizing images already in my site though a bulk process, I noticed a significant increase in site speed and also a huge reduction of overall file size on the server. Best of all, they offer a free plan and very affordable upgrade options. The actual WordPress plugin is free but it doesn't do anything on its own.

Free+ - imagify.io

26. Better WordPress Minify (!)

In the world of WordPress, there's a process of combining code scripts into one large file. This is known as minification and can help reduce the overall site load time because the browser only had to check one file vs many. Better WordPress Minify is a great plugin for doing this at it is for the most part turn on and it will manage the somewhat complicated process for the user. The bad news, this plugin is often not compatible with other caching plugins such as WP Rocket.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/bwp-minify/>

27. WP Optimize

WordPress is run by a database, where it stores cookie crumbs tracks of all of your moves within the admin side. Sometimes, these cookie crumbs are no longer needed to find your way back, for example, a draft post revision you made 6 months ago. This plugin will work towards clearing out the extra unnecessary crumbs to streamline the in/out access of the database. It is a really great idea to backup your website before you run any type of database optimization plugins such as WP Optimize, but good news they also have a backup plugin called UpdraftPlus. Another recommended plugin within this list.

Free+ | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-optimize/>

For Content Organization

28. SiteOrigin Page Builder & Widgets

SiteOrigin Page Builder is a page builder plugin that replaces the standard WYSIWYG editor with a drag and drop visual content layout. Great for visually laying out long and complex blog posts or using to create a service or product page. I personally don't love page builder plugins because they add a new layer of complexity and you are pretty much stuck with them once you start using them. If you deactivate the plugin your content will be all mumbo jumbod. Also, WordPress Core team is working on building a page page builder direct into CORE called Gutenberg. So this who process may change for the better in the near future. Page builders can be a great way to build WordPress sites without learning any code but expect to spend time learning how to use the page builder.

Free - <https://siteorigin.com/page-builder/>

29. Pods - Custom Content Types

WordPress has two main types of content, posts and pages. Let's say you want to create a listing of reviews but you don't want to comingle them with your normal posts. You shouldn't use pages because they don't have categories or tags and too many of them can become cumbersome to manage. Pods provides a no-code solution for the creation of custom post types, custom fields and taxonomies to go beyond just posts and pages creating directories such as business listings, bookmarks, portfolios, staff directories and more. Also integrates with a bunch of other plugins including Gravity Forms.

Free - pods.io

30. Reviewer

Reviewer is a premium plugin that enables users to create advanced review content with features such as overall scores per category, user reviews and pros and cons. Pretty powerful for creating a website similar to a consumer electronics style blog where they list score by category and then calculate an overall score.

\$25 - <http://codecanyon.net/item/reviewer-wordpress-plugin/5532349>

31. BAW Manual Related Posts

I'm a control freak, what can I say! Manual Related Posts is a great plugin for adding "related posts" to your content to increase page views and just to provide your readers with a service to find something else useful and interesting. Manual related posts allows bloggers to select the posts that should be related or will automatically select some if you do not. Insert as a widget or with a shortcode. Warning: If you're using Jetpack, they also provide a related post feature that should be turned off to use this plugin.

Free | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/baw-manual-related-posts/>

32. MaxButtons

Beautiful buttons can make a website tick. Buttons with gradient colors and hover effects will really make them irresistible to not want to click. MaxButtons Pro comes equipped with a user button creator, button templates and users can simply add buttons to their content with shortcodes. Create custom buttons to social media profiles, products or other important pages.

Free+ - <http://maxbuttons.com/>

33. Simple Author Box

Readers want to connect with writers, it will help writers build an authority and make it more likely someone will follow them on social media channels. The simple author box plugin adds the blog post's author photo, bio and links to social media channels. Works pretty seamlessly and pulls information from the WordPress user profile. It's responsive so the author box also looks nice on mobile phones as well.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/simple-author-box/>

34. Video.js - HTML5 Video Player for WordPress

WordPress works seamlessly from video sharing services such as YouTube and Vimeo but there are times where hosting and streaming the video directly from a server or CDN makes sense. This plugin allows you to do just that with shortcodes and will stream HTML5 compliant versions of the video for browsers that may not be compatible with certain file formats such as mov, m4v, ogg etc. Another cool feature is you can define a freeze frame or cover photo to show when the video is not playing which also supports .gif formats to show a pre-roll before the user selects play.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/videojs-html5-video-player-for-wordpress/>

35. Special Text Boxes

Long WordPress blog posts sometimes require call out sections for special data or fancy quotes. Special text boxes mimics a print newspaper article where they provide additional information and the main article text wraps around the box. This plugin does that and can also be used for alerts and the like. It's sort of a large plugin to install for just one or two posts but if you're into long form blogging then this might be for you.

Free+ | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-special-textboxes/>

36. Duplicate Post

Must Install

There are times it makes life a lot easier to simply click "copy" to duplicate a page or post. This plugin does exactly that, it creates a way to simply hit "duplicate" and the post, page or custom post will do that. Used on over 1 million active WordPress installs.

Free | <https://wordpress.org/plugins/duplicate-post/>

For Event Calendars

37. The Events Calendar

Creating a list of upcoming events is one of the easiest and powerful types of content one can add to a website or blog. The Events Calendar has been around for a long time and is the best when it comes to monthly event calendars. The core plugin is free but a host of available premium add-ons make it easy to sync with other calendars, sell tickets or create community submitted events to take

one more thing off your plate.

Free+ theeventscalendar.com

38. The Events Calendar Shortcode

There's one 3rd-party plugin for The Events Calendar that I highly recommend. This plugin makes it easy to show your upcoming events list or calendar with a simple shortcode. Something you think would be provided by the core plugin.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/the-events-calendar-shortcode/>

For linking needs:

39. WP Gallery Custom Links

Must Install

This is a plugin that you would think would be part of the Core WordPress software. Users can create galleries of images in the native image uploader but it does not have the ability to link the images to a URL. This plugin does exactly that in a no-frills kind of way. Super useful for staff profiles pages or linking photos to the source.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-gallery-custom-links/>

40. Page Links To

Must Install

For various reasons, you might want to link a post or page to an external URL or to another page on your website. For example, let's say the homepage of the site contains a special blog loop of featured news articles from other sites. This plugin makes it easy to link the post title to an external address so when the user clicks on the post title it goes directly to the source website. Also allows for opening the link in a new tab.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/page-links-to/>

41. Quick Page/Post Redirect Plugin

Must Install

As any website matures, sometimes content is moved or removed. When the URL of a given post or page is changed, the status in Google will become what

is known as a 404 error or 'page not found'. There are many ways to create links from one page to another but the Quick Page/Post Redirect Plugin helps webmasters identify and link 404 pages.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/quick-pagepost-redirect-plugin/>

42. Easy Smooth Scroll Links

Anchor Links allows content creators to link to content and drive the browsers to a particular area on the page. For example, let's say you have a really long blog post and you want to provide users with a jump-to link to a particular section. Anchor links will do that. Easy Smooth Scroll links (ESSL) does not create anchor links but what it does provide is a smooth scrolling action when an user clicks on that anchor. Without the plugin, the browser will instantly jump. ESSL will also allow users to add a padding above the link anchor so it provides a bit of extra space between the anchor and the top of the browser and additional scrolling effects such as a ease-in or bounce.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/easy-smooth-scroll-links/>

For membership sites

43. BuddyPress

BuddyPress is a huge plugin that, in a complementary way, completely transform how WordPress works. BuddyPress adds a social media layer to your site which allows for registered users to create an enhanced profile and make "friend" connections. Let's say your blog is taking off and you find yourself with a community of members who would find value in networking through your website. BuddyPress can help facilitate that connection.

In addition to the social profiles, admins can create groups that allow for users to interact in a way that allows them to share content within the group. So, for example, I could post a status update and it would post to my profiles for others to see when they visit or in the activity feed. By posting an update to the group, my status update will appear in the group's feed.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/buddypress/>

44. S2 Member

Ok, so you're trying to build a membership site but you want to monetize the process a bit by charging members to join your site. S2 Member create this

mechanism to charge a subscription for access. It's also one of many plugins that allow you to gate content. For example, let's say I write a blog post but only want registered members of my site to see it. S2 Member allows admins to gate content based on users logged in status and what membership level they have.

Pro upgrade available, although free version is quite comprehensive without it.

Free+ - <http://s2member.com/>

45. Author Avatars List

Avatars are essentially another term for profile photo. This plugin creates a nice grid of either author profiles or BuddyPress user profiles to show community. It also creates a easy way for members to find new connections and review profiles.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/author-avatars/>

46. User Switching

When building membership sites, it's good to have a user login at the various membership levels so you can see exactly what your users are experiencing. User switching makes it easy to switch from the Admin login to another user profile for testing and for support help. Great timesaving tool.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/user-switching/>

47. DW Question Answer Pro

Your users have questions; your members have answers! Design Wall (DW) published a nifty free (and now pro) plugin that creates a Reddit meets Quora type experience where users can post questions, vote on them and anyone can answer them. Perfect for community engagement and just helping out others who have questions about topics within your space.

Free — <http://codecanyon.net/item/dw-question-answer-pro-wordpress-plugin/15057949>

48. Peter's Login Redirect

Most membership plugins do not create a streamlined user experience for subscribers. For example, you may have a new member to your site and when they login it punts them to the standard WordPress dashboard where they have no access to any of the editing tools. What you need is a redirect to a page where they can find the member only resources and not the content dashboard. This plugin does just that.

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/peters-login-redirect/>

Potpourri

49. Coming Soon Pro

There comes a time you need to just dive into your WordPress site and get something up. Coming Soon Pro is a great way to create a “coming soon” curtain that displays a email optin for your site visitors while anyone with a login and access the actual website to tinker with your theme or run some much needed maintenance.

Pro: Starting at \$29 - seedprod.com

50. WordPress Beta Tester

To be a model WordPress community citizen, it's a good idea to test new releases of the core software on a sandbox site to check for bugs and potential things and plugin conflicts. The WordPress Beta Tester plugin makes it super simple to join the beta program by installing plugin, then turning on if you want to test big “point” releases only or nightly releases. Nightly releases are sometimes less stable. This should never be used on a live production site but rather a “sandbox” testing site. If you find a bug in CORE, head over to make.wordpress.org and submit it. If anything, this helps you stay ahead with new versions of WordPress before they deploy to the masses. Gutenberg...

Free - <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-beta-tester/>