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Melanie Nelson
Founder of BloggingBasics101.com
Shannon Lowe
Author of Rocks In My Dryer, a TypePad blog

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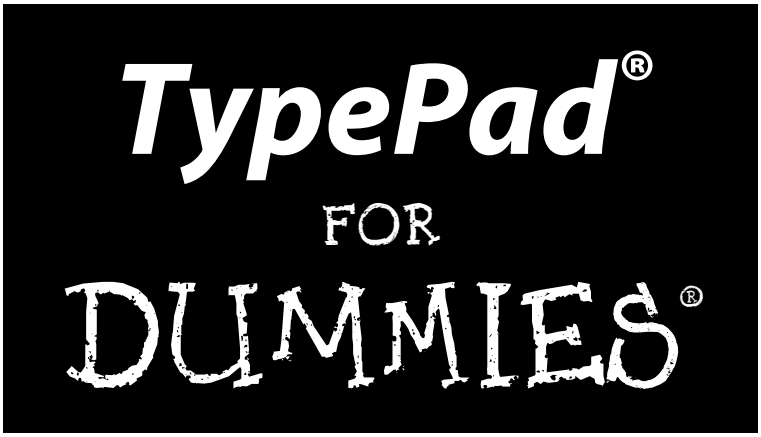
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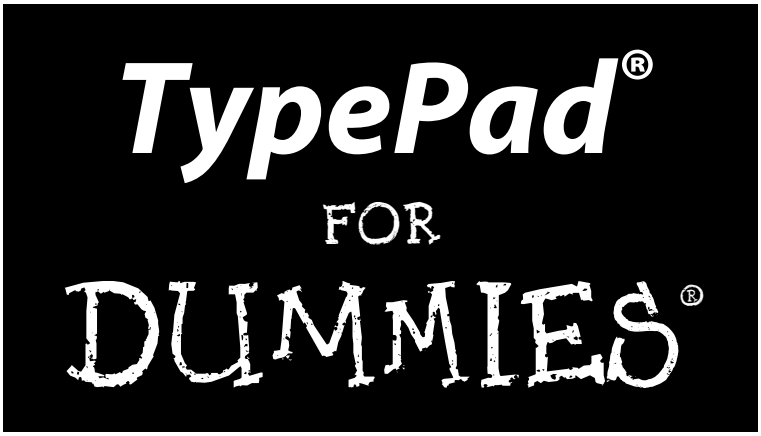

by Melanie Nelson and Shannon Lowe

WILEY
Wiley Publishing, Inc.

TypePad® For Dummies®
Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2010920258

ISBN: 978-0-470-55094-6

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Dedication

To Bill and Mac, for everything.

Authors' Acknowledgments

This book was a team effort, in every sense. We heartily thank our hard-working and patient project editor, Susan Pink — we learned so much from you! Many thanks to Amy Fandrei and Jodi Jensen of Wiley Publishing, who helped us in countless ways. Still more thanks to the rest of the Wiley team. Thank you, too, to Andy Wibbels of Six Apart for serving as our technical editor.

We give our deep thanks to the readers of our blogs, Blogging Basics 101 and Rocks In My Dryer. You guys are the reasons we get to do what we do and we're endlessly thankful you've taken the time to offer us your support and encouragement over the years.

Melanie: I would like to thank my husband, Bill, and our awesome, funny children. Without your patience and support my blogging endeavors, let alone writing a book, wouldn't be possible. Our life is the life I always wanted.

I also want to thank Jann Nelson, Donna Monthei, and John and Robin Monthei for always being available to help with anything that came up; Robert M. Brown, PhD for being a constant voice in my head telling me to write well; and Kathy Cordeiro for so many things I couldn't possibly list them all. I appreciate all of you.

Shannon: I'd like to thank my parents, Don and Cathy Dunn, and my grandmother, Bonnie Young, for all the practical help and support through this hectic book-writing process. To the other family members and friends who offered healthy doses of sanity and encouragement — thank you. I couldn't have done it without you!

A very special thanks to my four fantastic kids for being such good sports. I'm proud of this book, but I'm a million times prouder to be your mom.

Most of all, thank you to Mac for being Mac, which is always just exactly what I need.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments at http://dummies.custhelp.com. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

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Introduction

The blogosphere is a busy place. It's hard to nail down a firm number, but the best estimates indicate that there are more than 200 million blogs bumping around globally in cyberspace. It can be daunting for a beginning blogger (or even an intermediate one) to comfortably find a spot of his or her own in such a crowd. Where can you learn all the technical jargon you need to know? How do you host a blog? How do you manage a community? What do you do about privacy concerns? Is it really even possible to make money in the blogosphere?

Fortunately, TypePad exists as a very large and streamlined toolbox to help bloggers of all levels of experience and interest manage their home on the Web. It is widely regarded in the blogging world as a simple, affordable, and easy-to-manage platform, used by millions of bloggers around the world. TypePad is frequently updated with new features — including a complete overhaul in 2009 — in an effort to offer users the best of the blogosphere.

We have our own TypePad history — professional *and* personal. Melanie is a technical writer who has blogged professionally for years on numerous blogging platforms, including TypePad, giving her a solid basis for comparison. Shannon is a personal blogger who has been hammering out posts from the TypePad Dashboard since 2006. Just like you, we started out as beginners. We studied the TypePad help section and submitted help tickets. We discovered some shortcuts and found out other things the hard way. We asked the same questions you're asking now, and we're eager to show you what our own TypePad experience has taught us.

About This Book

Because you've picked up this book, chances are you fall into one of two categories: You want to start your first blog, and you've heard that TypePad is a user-friendly way to find your place in the blogosphere; or you already have a TypePad blog, and you want to better understand some of the significant changes Six Apart made in 2009 when it released the newest version of TypePad. Or we may be completely off-base and you just picked up this book because it's a pretty yellow color. Whatever the reason, we're glad you're reading it.

We've written this book with the beginning to intermediate TypePad user in mind and have included information on the most recent features available to users as of late 2009.

Even beginners can expect to find TypePad a hassle-free tool for building a polished, professional blog. Just as TypePad is known for its user-friendliness, we've written this book to be user-friendly as well. You won't find an abundance of technical talk, because we know that many TypePad users choose TypePad specifically to avoid technical headaches. We tell you the terms, techniques, and processes you need to know to navigate this software like a pro, even if you do not bring a lot of technical experience to the table. Whether you're blogging as a hobbyist or as a professional, we fully expect this book to give you what you need to build a stellar TypePad blog.

Conventions Used in This Book

Conventions are large and scary gatherings of unknown people with name tags, but don't worry — we don't have any of those in this book. The conventions we're talking about in this book are simply formatting rules we'll follow to make it easier to navigate the information we've shared. Here are the ones we'll use.

When we place a word in italics, we're telling you that it's an important word you need to know, and we define it immediately. Let's try it out:

> Your userpic can be a picture of yourself or your brand. A *brand* is simply a concept or visual image your readers associate with you.

When you see a word written in bold, we're referring to specific text that you need to enter in the designated field on your screen. Here's an example:

> If you're looking for a post you wrote about the world's best hash brown casserole, typing **hash brown** in the search bar will pull up every post you've written that contains those words.

When we change the font to `look like this`, we're indicating that this is a Web address (URL), an e-mail address, or a piece of code. Here's one last example:

> Choose your blog URL. The *URL* is your blog's address online (for example, `http://www.typepadfordummies.typepad.com`).

What You're Not to Read

You certainly don't have to read this book from cover to cover. We expect that you'll likely jump around between chapters, searching for answers to your particular questions. We've written this book with that in mind — you'll

notice that we frequently point you toward another chapter where the topic is discussed in further detail.

If you already have a decent amount of TypePad experience, you'll probably skip some parts of this book altogether. The earliest chapters, especially, are geared toward true beginners. If that isn't you, skip ahead until you find the information you need. Likewise, if you're just starting out as a blogger, some of the later chapters about custom CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) and advanced templates may seem overwhelming. Don't sweat it. Get comfortable with the easier parts of the process and then look at the later chapters in a few weeks or months. They won't feel so overwhelming then.

So scan ahead, reread, underline, make notes, draw daisies in the margins — do whatever you have to do to make this book helpful. That's why we wrote it.

Foolish Assumptions

Assumptions can be dangerous, but we had to make a few as we wrote this book. We've assumed the following:

- You either own a computer or have access to one, and you are familiar with its most basic functions.
- You know how to access the Internet, and you know how to maneuver around Web sites by pointing and clicking. (If not, you might want to check out *The Everyday Internet All-in-One Desk Reference For Dummies,* by Peter Weverka.)
- You have an e-mail address and know how to use it.
- You have a general sense of what a blog is and probably have already read at least a few of them. (If not, you'd benefit from *Blogging For Dummies,* 2nd Edition, by Susannah Gardner and Shane Birley.)
- You may not know much about TypePad (at least, not yet — we'll fix that soon enough), but you do understand that TypePad has something to do with blogging, and you want to find out more.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into five parts. Our goal is to introduce you to everything you'll need to best use TypePad as your blogging platform. We start by explaining the basic premise of blogging, move on to setting up your TypePad account and blog, and then show you how to take your blog to the next level (with customized designs, for example).

Part I: The Basics of Blogging

If you're new to blogging, Part I is where you want to start. We explain the dynamics of blogging so you can understand why people blog and why community is such an important part of blogging. We also discuss how you can develop your own blogging identity and build a community around your particular niche. Then we introduce you to some of the basic technology that powers blogs (such as RSS feeds and search engine optimization). By the end of Chapter 1, you'll know the difference between hosted and self-hosted blogging platforms and which is right for your blog's purposes.

In Chapter 2, we introduce you to Six Apart (TypePad's parent company). We explain the costs of TypePad and help you decide which pricing level to choose based on whether you're blogging for business, pleasure, or both.

Part II: Getting Started with TypePad

Part II helps you establish your account with basic settings and billing information. Then we describe a TypePad Profile and why it's important, and we walk you through setting up your own Profile. We show you what the Dashboard is and discuss each of the options and features it offers. Next, we get to what you've been waiting for: setting up your first blog. We walk you through choosing your basic blog settings (for example, handling your RSS feeds and sharing your content), checking your stats (to see who's visiting your blog), and managing your posts after you've written them. We not only give you instructions to compose a blog post (including how to insert images into the post, format the text, and set keywords for your post) but also address how TypePad can help you manage your blogging community as your blog readership grows.

Part III: Adding Useful Elements to Your TypePad Blog

In Part III, you find the real nuts and bolts. You begin to customize your TypePad blog to reflect what suits you — and your readers — best. We tell you about dozens of tools available to TypePad bloggers who want to maximize their online space. We show you how to use TypeLists (TypePad's way of sharing content in your blog's sidebars) and widgets (bits of code that offer additional functionality for your blog, such as a search bar) to help you organize your content and make your blog more user-friendly. We also explain how to integrate podcasting and video into your blog.

We figure if you're blogging, you probably have other social media accounts as well (maybe Twitter or Facebook?), and you'll want to connect those Profiles with your blog. We have you covered. If you don't have other social

media accounts or would like to know what social media is, don't worry. We define it and explain how you can use it to promote your blog.

Part III also deals with the meaty issue of TypePad blog design. We show you how to harness TypePad's powerful design tools.

Part IV: Taking Your Blog to the Next Level

Part IV is for those of you who are ready to blog like a pro. We tackle the issue of migrating an existing blog to TypePad from more than one blogging platform. If you're interested in making money from your blog, we help you sort through the various monetizing options (affiliate marketing, ad networks, or personal ad campaigns) so you can determine which one fits you best. Last, if you're not afraid to get your hands dirty in some coding, you may be ready to customize your TypePad experience at the coding level. We share a few easy tweaks (such as changing color options or using your own header image) and move on to more advanced changes (such as using custom CSS). We also explain Advanced Templates, starting you down the path of making this powerful option work for you.

As we stated, if you're a beginning blogger, Part IV may be daunting. However, many experienced TypePad bloggers can tell you stories of jumping in feet first when they first began blogging. It really is the best way to learn — you might surprise yourself by discovering that you enjoy the technical parts!

Part V: The Part of Tens

Part V is the place to find a list of quick-reference tips and tricks. We've found the best tips, TypePad resources, and TypePad blogs and listed them for you (with their URLs, of course). You can find out how to publish a post through e-mail or your cell phone and add e-mail subscriptions to your blog. We also tell you where you can find help for your TypePad questions, and we share a few tips on engaging courteously and professionally with your blogging peers. Finally, we show you some phenomenal examples of customized TypePad blogs that will blow you away with their originality. These bloggers are implementing the best that the TypePad platform has to offer.

Appendixes

This section offers you some additional helpful information for polishing up your own blog. Interested in having your own domain name? We walk you through the how's and why's of owning your own domain name, helping you

put your most professional foot forward. We also show you how to install a third-party statistics counter and give you some basic pointers about interpreting the blog traffic that funnels through these counters.

Icons Used in This Book

Pay special attention when you see this icon, because it means we're sharing something especially important. Read it, highlight it, and read it again.

This icon may not appear very often, but when it does, it means we're sharing some especially technical information that the Average Joe probably doesn't really need to know. But if you're a tech geek, or you want to become one, look for this icon to give you some technical tips. If technical tips make your head hurt, skip right past it.

We all love finding tips that make life easier, and we give you plenty of them in this book. When you see this icon, know that you're reading a trick or a shortcut worth learning — maybe we can save you some time.

This spooky little icon has a bomb on it, but never fear: You probably aren't going to blow anything up. We use this icon to point out potential problems with certain issues, and we give you the know-how to avoid them.

Where to Go from Here

This one's easy: Just turn the page, and let's get started. Right away, we want to fill you in on some basic blogging principles, and then we'll fill you in on some simple history about TypePad. If you already have a TypePad account, you might want to skip ahead to Chapter 4 (where we explain what the Dashboard is and how to use it). If you have some solid TypePad experience behind you, you can jump ahead even further, to Chapter 8 (where we discuss using TypeLists and widgets). Wherever you rejoin us, we're looking forward to helping you navigate this user-friendly blogging software with confidence. It's our goal that this book will put you solidly on the path to a TypePad blog that represents you or your business well.

Part I
The Basics of Blogging

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant

"Their fatal mistake was getting involved with TypePad. Building a blog is so easy, it's irresistible. They included a photo of themselves holding the stolen money next to the getaway car, a list of their favorite aliases, banks they'd like to rob again..."

In this part . . .

Let's start at the very beginning! This part of the book is aimed at those who are new to blogging and aren't familiar with TypePad. We explain the basics of blogging technologies and help you understand what TypePad has to offer you.