



T H E S I M P L E W E B

A web philosophy for
getting what you want.

By Skellie



All photography in this eBook by visualpanic. See page 26 or profile link.

INTRODUCTION

Most hard questions have simple answers. The hard part is in the doing.

The question: how can I lose weight? can be answered truthfully in one sentence: eat three modest, healthy meals each day (and no more), and make exercising a habit.

But that isn't good enough. It's the how that gets us. It's not enough to say what we have to do. We need to know *how* to do it.

As bloggers and webmasters, we want most or all of these things: more visitors, more subscribers, more comments, more money, more inbound links, and more people saying good things about us. Our wants aren't in question. It's the *how* that gets us. It's the how that has us reading a dozen blogs a day, trying to find the answer (or at least a little piece of it).

You can stop searching, for now. The answer is in this eBook.

The Question

How can I get visitors, subscribers, comments, inbound links, and people saying good things about what I do?

The Answer

Evaluate every action, every possible change, and every existing feature of your blog or website, and ask: Is it gripping? Can the reader resonate with it? Does it make it easy (and rewarding) to interact? And most importantly: is it easy (or rewarding) to talk about?

That's all you need to know. Do these things, and you'll get everything you want.

Not satisfied?

Keep reading if you feel under-whelmed or disappointed.

Of course you do. If you don't, you've probably got everything you want already.

There's nothing wrong with the above answer. After all, it's true. If you did all those things, you'd get what you wanted (and more). Trouble is, like the answer to all our weight-loss woes above, it deals with the What, not the How. It's all very well to want to write something worth talking about, but *how* do we do it?

That's where the idea of the *Simple Web* comes in.

What is the Simple Web?

It's my name for a practical philosophy of actions and results. As the name implies, it's simple enough for anyone to follow.

Every website or blog has elements that help you get what you want, and elements that are obstacles to doing so. Those elements which help you fall into four distinct categories, and I'll be discussing each of them in more detail throughout the rest of this eBook.

#1 – Gripping

Each new visitor has a limited amount of attention to give. Are you focusing it on elements that further your message, or squandering it away on distractions?

#2 – Resonating

If your content or design can't be understood, it has failed, and complex ideas are no excuse. The only obstacle to expressing a complex idea in simple terms is laziness. If visitors don't understand your message, how can they interact with it, or talk about it?

#3 – Interacting

Every webmaster or blogger wants their visitors to do the following (subtracting those that don't apply to you): subscribe to their site's feed, comment, buy — if they're selling — or click on ads, explore your best stuff, and come back regularly. Are you making all of these actions as easy (and rewarding) as possible?

#4 – Talking

All of us want visitors to recommend and promote our site. This might involve sharing with social media, telling friends, or blogging about it. Does your content and design make this easy by being worth talking about? Are you helping to start the conversation, both on your site and off it?

Obstacles

Every design element, every function, every blog post or article, which does not fulfill one of the actions above, is holding you down. They serve only to distract, and to suck away attention from what is important. The actions in this category don't merely sit there, ineffective and neutral. They hurt your site.

What makes it simple?

The 'Simple Web' is about simplifying both our sites and ourselves (as bloggers and webmasters) down to doing and adding only things that help us get what we want.

These actions are divided into four practical spheres. This makes it easier to work out whether an action fits into the philosophy. If it doesn't, drop it, and do something that does.

What will I end up with?

- A site layout in which every element fulfills an important function in growing your blog or website.
- A site layout which squanders zero reader attention.
- Content that is always worth talking about.
- Content that will turn casual visitors into loyal readers.

How do I get it?

In the first part of this eBook, I'll outline the actions that help and the actions that hinder the essential task of creating a **gripping** site.



G RIPPING

If your site — and I use this to mean blog or website — isn't gripping, readers aren't going to engage with your content. If they don't engage with your content, they'll forget about you.

If your site isn't gripping, your other actions are wasted. Your articles might be top-notch, but if few visitors are gripped enough to read them from start to finish, you'll never see the rewards those articles deserve. I don't mean to sound dire, but a failure to 'grip' readers is something I often see crippling otherwise excellent sites.

The key question is: *how can I make sure every element of my site is gripping, and how can I remove the elements that aren't?*

Building a gripping layout

1. Make it memorable. How distinctive is your site? Do you have your own logo, or a unique header? People remember visuals much more strongly than names — that's why big brands place such an emphasis on their logo.

2. Use eye-catching headline presentation. We're not yet talking about the content of those headlines, but simply how they're presented. Are they eye-catching, distinctive, and do they stand out from your content? [See it: [Cornwall SEO](#)]

3. Put your best foot forward. Work your best content into your design. Are your most popular, or favorite posts, highlighted enough that the average visitor will see them? A 'Popular Posts' widget is more gripping than a 'Recent Posts' widget. If visitors were looking to find your most recent posts, they'd be scrolling down the page.

4. Work images into your articles. As Robert Scoble said when [explaining how he reads feeds](#), images slow the eye down. They're magnetic when it comes to eye contact, and do a lot to encourage readers to focus on your articles.

Repairing non-gripping layout elements

1. Simplify down only to the elements that will grip visitors.

MyBlogLog widgets, Recent Comments, long Archive lists and blogrolls in the sidebar, too many (or boring) ads and other unessential layout elements all fail to grip visitors. Gripping layout elements provide concise doorways to essential functions and content. Non-gripping elements distract from what is essential, and can work to make the rest of your site less gripping.

Build gripping content

1. Craft attention-grabbing or interesting headlines. I like to think of each headline as the sign on a door you want readers to open. If the sign promises something good/interesting in the room ahead, readers will peek inside. If not, they'll move on to the next door.

If you feel like too much of a sell-out going for the jugular with big-numbered headlines then you might simply settle for 'interesting' — a headline which works to pique interest in a subtle way. I'd recommend switching between the two strategies so neither overstay their welcome.

Attention-grabbing:

[Get Off Your Butt: 16 Ways to Get Motivated When You're In a Slump](#)

Interesting:

[The finger moustache virus](#)

2. Create content with your 'Most Popular' list in mind. Build a collection of 5 or so really impressive posts with headlines that promise immense value and display them somewhere highly visible on your site (preferable 'above the fold'). These posts will be magnetic to new visitors, and instantly communicate that your site is packed with value.

3. Tell them what you're going to tell them. If your headline is good or relevant, readers will 'open the door'. Before stepping completely inside they'll take a peek at what the article has to offer. This peek is your first few paragraphs — or better, your first paragraph.

Don't be afraid to 'spoil' your readers. If your article was a short story, you'd start with telling the reader what happens in the end. Why? Because the value doesn't lie in the what, it lies in the *how*. If a potential reader is clear on what she stands to gain by finishing the article, she's more likely to do so. And that's what we want — reading, not scanning.

4. Write for the new visitor. Would your article be gripping to someone who had never visited your site before? Is it likely to be submitted to social media? Articles that don't make sense without background information generally have little success on social media services, where content needs to be self-sustaining. If it's not self-sustaining, new visitors are unlikely to be gripped by it.

5. Write for your target audience. Who is the ideal visitor to your site, and what kind of content would they want? What answers would they be searching for? One thing to note is that you are (probably) part of your target audience. Most of us write for those with the same interests and goals as us. What kinds of articles would you most love to read? What kind of site would you most wish to discover? The next step in the process is to start creating a site that resembles the ideal. Chances are others in your target audience will appreciate it, too.

6. Create an About page that promises value. A good About page explains what kinds of topics you write on and why you're qualified to write about them. A *great* About page explains what visitors to your site *stand to gain* by reading its content.

Repairing non-gripping content

1. Change what isn't working. If a particular type of content consistently generates little interest, either change the way you do it or do something else. Uninteresting content doesn't merely sit there, neutral, neither adding nor detracting from your site. If a great article is a +1, a boring one is a -1. Boring articles have the potential to outweigh the benefits of good ones.

You often won't know an article is boring until you hear the chirping of crickets in the comments section. It's a distinctive and valuable message: don't do the same thing again.

2. If in doubt, don't publish it. It's better to not post (which has a neutral effect on your site), than post something sub-standard merely to show signs of life, or because you should.

How this ties into the 'Simple Web'

Simplify down to the design elements and content that will grip your readers. If it's not gripping, it's distracting, or boring — the opposite of gripping.

Allowing non-gripping elements to stand, or non-gripping actions to continue, is often mistaken as being harmless — as neither hurting nor harming your site. This isn't the case. Every boring, distracting or irrelevant inch of your site and its content will weaken what is gripping about it.

Ask yourself: is this element/action +1, or -1? If it's not one, it's the other. The belief in zero, in certain things being neither one nor the other, and therefore acceptable, causes us to waste time and visitor attention on actions and elements that simply don't contribute to the growth of your site.

A challenge, if you'd like to try it: Eliminate every zero or -1 action from yourself and your site.



RESONATING

Once you've created [gripping](#) content and a gripping environment for it, the next step is to construct a site that resonates with your reader.

You might have the most clickable headlines in the world coupled with a flawlessly simple and usable design, but if your ideas don't resonate, it won't count for much.

Resonance is a prerequisite for every reader action that works to grow your site. The behavioral flow is: entry — grip — resonance — interaction — talk, and resonance is arguably the most important link in the chain. Readers won't interact with the site if they don't resonate with it. Readers won't talk about it if they don't resonate with it. But a reader can talk about it without interacting, and vice versa.

In other words, resonance is key. In this post, I want to show you how to create a site with the resonance of a bell.

What is resonance?

Resonance is not the same as agreement, or even disagreement — though it may involve either. Resonance is understanding followed by an internal reaction.

Content with this resonance is at first understood, but what happens after is more unpredictable. Does it link-in with feelings of self-confidence, or feelings of inadequacy? Does it make a point the reader has always felt, but never been able to articulate? Does it arouse emotions? Approval? Amusement? Does it seem as if the information will contribute to ‘being better’ at something?

Any kind of understanding and internal reaction is resonance, whatever form it may take. Understanding alone is not enough. Your words must mean something to the reader. When I tell you “The sky is blue,” you certainly understand, but it won’t resonate because it’s old knowledge.

Building a design that resonates

1. Create an About page that resonates. Don’t simply list the topics you write about — explain your core message, your mission statement, and what you hope to bring. Make sure it’s something no-one has seen before.

I’d argue that there are two types of resonance: resonance with a general message and resonance with a specific one. A reader might resonate with the idea of making money online, but how can you be unique enough with your mission statement that the reader will also build specific resonance with your site alone?

2. Create a design that resonates with your message. Once you’ve worked out your unique message and mission statement, take some time to think about how you could use your design to further that message. For me, it’s incredibly important to have a simple, minimalist design because simplicity is something I often advocate. If my design were messy and cluttered, my calls for simplicity wouldn’t resonate at all.

To extend the make money online example earlier, a blog I think does this particularly well is [Dosh Dosh](#). The site has built itself around approaching the topic in a friendly and fun way, and the design reflects that perfectly. Does *your* design suit your message?

3. Do the words and structure resonate? It's easy to forget, sometimes, that your design and navigation is hinged on words and expressions you can change, and structures that can be rebuilt in different ways. Can you mine opportunities to resonate from these elements?

Repairing a design that doesn't resonate

1. If your design says "I'm not serious", rebuild it. If it's messy, cluttered, sloppy, or jarring in any way, your design is an obstacle. It's what your content comes clothed in. If your content is badly dressed, it appears less trustworthy and informed.

Wordpress users are spoiled for choice when it comes to gorgeous, easy-to-use themes. There's really no excuse for a bad design.

2. Fix elements that say "I'm in this for me." Nothing spoils the resonance of a blog that tells the reader "I'm doing this for you" like ad placement which impedes usability.

In-text advertising, or blocks of AdSense within blog posts, say: "This content comes at a cost." This loss of resonance will be crippling in the long-term.

A simple, suggested solution: less ads + less clutter = less ad-blindness + more clicks.

Build content that resonates

1. Focus on clarity. Your idea might be a great one, but it won't mean much if readers can't understand it. I'm a firm believer in the principle that even complicated ideas can be expressed in simple terms if enough care and attention is put into the process.

Readers won't resonate with your content if its meaning isn't clear to them. What you think is over-simplification is probably just right; after all, you already understand.

2. Does it bear resonating qualities? These might include: the promise of self-improvement, new but welcome knowledge, humor, interesting facts, a powerful story, or any other qualities likely to elicit an internal reaction.

3. Another option for resonating content: does it articulate something your readers already believe? We spend so much time trying to avoid stating the obvious but, strangely enough, those that do are often rewarded.

What seems like common sense often seems to others like material worthy of the front page of Digg. People have a lot of opinions and beliefs and little time to express them. They tend to reward those that express what they've been thinking but haven't had time (or the desire) to say.

You can bet that the [Miss South Carolina video](#) was most popular among those who already had certain views about blondes and beauty-pageant contestants. It's why articles discussing why StumbleUpon is so great do well on [StumbleUpon](#), or why articles about Digg's greatness do so well on [Digg](#).

In short: people like to see their own world-views reaffirmed.



4. Is it what the reader has been looking for, but didn't know it? Often content with the potential to become wildly popular is content that taps into a want or need that has not yet been acknowledged in the niche.

Some suggestions on how to pick these up: participate in forums and scrutinize comments on sites in your niche, including your own. You may be able to pick up a problem others have as yet been unable to solve. Another strategy is to look inwards: what is the most important unanswered question you want answered? The next step is to answer it yourself.

5. Pick a voice that resonates. A [humor blog](#) begs for informal language, an [authority blog](#) begs for great spelling, grammar and expression, a [copywriting blog](#) begs for crisp, lyrical writing. Is your voice betraying your message, or resonating with it?

Repairing content that doesn't resonate

1. Listen to comments and feedback (or the lack thereof). If it's clear that readers don't understand, or have misunderstood you, I'm sure it's tempting for some to believe that the 'right' reader would have understood. Not so. If readers aren't resonating with your content, the cause almost always lies in your own practice. How could you have been clearer? How might you have expressed things more simply?

2. Put readers first, social media second. The real reason why Digg-bait and link-bait are almost dirty-words is that they imply content which puts in-bound links before readers. The mind of the author can be seen too clearly, constructing each sentence, bullet-point, link and screenshot for maximum social media impact.

In truth, link-bait articles are often really valuable to both readers and social media users, but it's the sense of self-interest behind them which gives them a bad name. The key is to write content addressed squarely at readers, while simultaneously having the capacity to resonate with social media users, too. It's tricky, but you can get better at anything with practice.

3. Minimizing content with little resonance. ‘Thanking your sponsors’, paid reviews of products we could all do without, and badly presented link-round ups are all examples of content with little chance for resonance. Before hitting publish, ask yourself: does this have more value for readers than it does for me? If not, question whether the content is worth publishing.

How this ties into the ‘Simple Web’

Every word that doesn’t resonate is wasted. Like cotton wool around a bell, the elements of your site that don’t resonate will counter-balance the resonance you do achieve. Once again, there are no zero actions.

There is a tendency to think that elements which don’t resonate, but don’t impact on the resonance of other elements, are harmless — that it doesn’t matter whether they exist or not. Surely this is the logic behind self-serving posts, or self-serving advertisements.

The ‘Simple Web’ philosophy doesn’t accept this. What adds nothing to your site also hinders it. It’s an action you could have spent elsewhere. It works against the resonance you’ve achieved.

Will your next action be +1, or -1? Refuse to accept an internal ‘neither’. Your site and your own actions will be sleeker, more focused and more effective because of it.



INTERACTING

In this section I'll be looking at ways to encourage readers to interact with your site. I'll be focusing on three key areas of interaction: **subscribing to your feed, commenting, and exploring more deeply.**

Building your subscriber base

1. Move your feed icon to the top of your sidebar. As I discussed on a recent article about [basic usability](#), readers looking to perform an action they've repeated elsewhere (such as subscribing to a feed) will first look for the 'standard' — in other words, the way things are usually done. Feed icons are usually near the top of the page, so we should look to emulate this.

2. Add a 'subscribe' message to the bottom of your articles. I've noticed an increase in feed subscribers since adding the message

you can see at the bottom of this post (if you're viewing directly on the site).

I suspect this is for a number of reasons: 1) someone who has taken the time to read to the end of your article is probably feeling good about your content and 2) visitors are still in 'reading' mode and will probably take in the message. You might also consider adding a feed icon and even your feed count to add visual impact.

3. Promote incentives. Chris Garrett [offers a free eBook](#) to every feed subscriber. Others have run competitions and offered prizes via their feed footer. What's your incentive?

4. List the benefits. Most site owners advertise their feed as a benefit in itself. Another option might be to tell readers exactly what they're going to get. To use the example above, [ChrisG.com](#) accompanies its subscribe icon with:

Receive more blogging and marketing tips, new media news and a FREE eBook.

Highlighting the value of subscribing to your site is a good way to increase subscriber numbers.

Encourage comments

1. Make leaving a comment the easiest thing to do after finishing an article. This is the time when the reader's reaction is still fresh, so you want to make the segue into commenting as smooth as possible.

2. Ask for opinions. Opinions are easy. We all have them, and on non-controversial topics, there's little personal investment involved in providing them. Asking for experiences is a little more difficult as it requires readers (to a varying extent) to step out of their comfort zone.

A simple tip: if you want to hear what readers have to say, ask them.

3. Rethink the recent comments widget. The most common format for this widget is 'name' commented on 'headline'. For the

reader, this means: “Name I don’t recognize commented on article I haven’t read yet.” Not much value.

A far better option, I think, would be to include a 50 word excerpt of the most recent comment in the sidebar. This provides some interesting reading in its own right and may encourage the reader to want to give the comment some context. You can see another alternative I quite like at this [personal finance blog](#). The key is that the widget shows other people are not just commenting in general, but leaving *interesting* and insightful comments on the site.

4. Make commenting worthwhile. If you participate in comments on blogs you read, you’ll probably notice that there is a ‘polite’ culture on non-political/controversial blogs, where commenters tend to restrict themselves to addressing either the post or its author, but rarely engage with other commenters.

This means that if you don’t respond to commenters you can’t count on others responding for you. If you don’t respond, the commenter will never know if you even read their input or not. This doesn’t make the act of commenting very rewarding for them.

Even a one word response (if you’re strapped for time) will show the commenter you’ve acknowledged their opinion. A blogger who interacts with commenters in a meaningful way, and gets plenty of comments because of it, is Michael Martin. You can see some examples at his excellent [blog customization](#) blog.

Build a site readers want to explore

1. Offer your best content to each new visitor. I’m a big fan of the ‘Popular Posts’ sidebar addition and all its variants. I don’t recommend using a plug-in for this, however. Most of us know which of our posts caught fire with readers and which didn’t. Construct your own selection of great posts and make them as prominent as possible. I’d recommend putting them under your feed button.

Why? Because impressive headlines show the new visitor just how much your site has to offer. They provide an entry into the depths of your site after the reader has finished with the main page.

2. Simplify and be picky. A long list of great content is less likely to be engaged with than a short one. A short one is manageable, it makes the headlines easier to read, and it allows the reader the possibility of reading all of them if they so choose. A long list can be intimidating and will make it harder for your really stellar articles to stand-out. I'd recommend having around five great articles showcased in your design, but you might experiment with other numbers.

3. There are better alternatives to 'Most Recent' posts. Unless your articles [are really long](#) a 'Recent Posts' sidebar area probably won't be interacted with. It's much easier to scroll down and get an overview of posts as a whole than try to pick-out headlines from the sidebar.

My suggestion would be to replace the 'Recent Posts' widget with a 'Popular' or 'Favorite posts' list. Readers already have access to your recent posts, but should never have to dig into your archives to uncover your best stuff.

How this ties into the 'Simple Web'

If your site doesn't [grip](#) readers, it won't have a chance to [resonate](#) with them. If it doesn't [resonate](#), readers won't feel compelled to interact in the ways described above.

If it doesn't [resonate](#), readers won't feel compelled to talk about you.

Two challenges, if you'd like them:

- Do something to make it easier to interact with your site
- Remove an obstacle to interaction



TALKING

In this section I'll be examining how we can create a site others will want to talk about. In the 'Simple Web' context, 'talking' refers to **linking in, sharing with social media, and word of mouth**. I'll also be examining how you can do some of the work, and start to 'talk' about yourself elsewhere.

Building a talk-worthy site

1. Create a unique or novel premise

Sometimes what your site promises to provide is sensational enough that it will get talked about. A number of bloggers put a new twist on the 'make money online' niche by [promising to document their journey](#) to a full-time income online.

Ambition is something that will be talked about. So will a site that promises something which has never been offered before (or at least,

not in that way). Can you make your premise unique, or novel, without changing your content?

2. Attempt something spectacular

A group writing project, a mammoth post-series, an ambitious goal, a remarkable act, a valuable resource given away. All have the potential to [be spectacular](#), all have the potential to fail. That's usually why things like that aren't attempted very often. What people often overlook is that it doesn't matter. People will talk about you for trying — just in case you do succeed.

I can see something along these lines unfolding at [Dosh Dosh](#) right now: Maki is trying to build a [free community compendium](#) on making money online. Whether the idea works or not, the process promises to be fascinating.

3. Be controversial

Sure, it's the oldest trick in the book. That's because it works. Those who agree with you might link to you. Those who disagree might link to you, and then try to disassemble your points in the same post. Those who agree might also share what you've written with social media, as everyone likes their world-view affirmed.

A final tip: trying to create controversy for its own sake won't work. I'm simply advocating the benefits of being brave enough to state your beliefs (when relevant to your niche).

4. Coin a word or phrase

[Seth Godin](#) invented the term '[ideavirus](#)', and there are 212,000 Google search results for the term. How many of those mentions, do you think, included a link to Godin as the term's inventor?

Surely not all — we could never expect so much from the Web — but I've got no doubt that many did. In fact, a specific search for "seth godin ideavirus" returns 196,000 results. A significant majority of those talking about an 'ideavirus' are mentioning Godin in the same breath.

Can you coin a word or phrase that describes what others in your niche have wanted to say, but haven't had the words?

5. Introduce a new (good) idea

Good ideas excite people. Those who like them will want them to gain traction: they'll tell others, expand on your thoughts, and otherwise get behind your cause. [If you have ideas, give them away](#). If you think an idea is truly great, that's all the more reason not to hoard it. Besides, are you really ever going to have the time to make it a reality?

6. Make yourself useful

Every person who reads web content finds some value in it for themselves. (Yes — even the three readers of your cat blog). [Lifehacks](#) are so popular because they promise incredible value: to make the act of living better. Why are [numbered lists](#) so big? Because they're an excellent preview of the value the article will present to the reader. Resource lists? Valuable — you've done the work for the reader, and saved them a few hours of time.

When writing, your compass should always be oriented towards providing value for your target audience. Value is more important than your writing style, or your spelling and grammar, or any other factor.

I call this '**vital content**' (as opposed to **viral**, though they're often one and the same). People judge content by the value it presents to them. The more valuable your content seems, the more likely it is to be talked about.

7. Invest time in your content

We all appreciate those who do hard work for us. We tend to appreciate web writers who do the same. If you take the time to assemble 100 tips, or 50 links, or 25 resources, on any topic, there's a pretty good chance others will link to it. The great thing about this type of content is that *anyone* can produce it. The only ingredient is time.

8. Write lyrically

No, you don't have to rhyme, but taking the time to make the simple act of reading your writing a pleasure can pay great dividends. Every niche suffers from a hefty dose of repetition. Often the writer who succeeds amongst repetition is one who can write in such a way that every article seems fresh and scintillating, regardless of the topic.

Plenty of personal bloggers with relatively boring lives have built huge success on the back of sharp, witty writing. Imagine if we started combining vital content with writing that was, in itself, [a pleasure to read](#)?

9. Talk about yourself

Too much of this is usually frowned upon in social circles, and I'd argue that the same applies to social media. In most cases, though, talking about yourself indirectly is a great way to build your blog.

When you write a comment addressed to someone else's post, you're also talking about yourself: you're saying something about the worth of your opinions, your expertise, and your ability to write.

When you guest-post, you're talking about yourself once again, and demonstrating to potential readers what you have to offer. In the beginning, talking about yourself is the best way to get the conversation rolling.

How this ties into the 'Simple Web'

Does your site ask to be talked about as much as it could?

Is everything you do worth talking about?

What do you do that isn't worth talking about? Do you write articles with little chance of inbound links, or social media success? Could you replace them with something more talk-worthy?

Talk builds your site. It sends you traffic, and increases your exposure. It will build a name people recognize.

Ending thoughts

The core behavioral habit the 'Simple Web' attempts to introduce is the elimination of all actions that hurt or stagnate the growth of your site. Stagnating actions don't run counter to growth, but don't contribute to it, either. If each of us replaced every stagnating action with a proactive one I have no doubt that the result of our efforts would improve dramatically.

Some suggestions for getting started with the ‘Simple Web’

In the time you’d usually use to write a speed-links article, pitch a guest-post at another site instead.

Create a [gripping ‘About’ page](#).

[Simplify your layout](#) to enhance what’s best about your site.

Share an idea others might be enthusiastic about.

Create a valuable resource for your readers.

Showcase your best content in a place new visitors will see it.

Start to categorize your actions as +1 (growing), zero (stagnating) and -1 (detrimental). You’ve hopefully eliminated the latter — your next target is to eliminate zero.

Replace every stagnating action with a growing one.

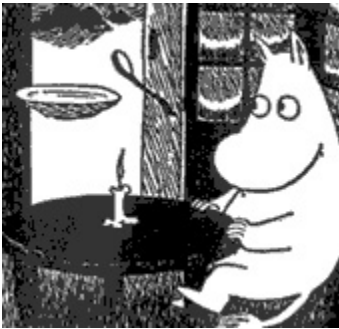
PHOTOGRAPHY



Visualpanic

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/visualpanic/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



I'm the blogger behind [Skelliewag](#) and [Anywired](#), editor in chief at 22,000+ subscriber [Freelance Switch](#), and have worked as a staff writer at [Daily Blog Tips](#), [Daily Bits](#), [North x East](#) and [Freelance Folder](#). My articles have also been published at [Zen Habits](#) and [Copyblogger](#).

Besides working on my two blogs, freelancing, editing another blog and writing a book (phew!) I'm studying final year Political Science and Communications in Melbourne, Australia. I've been creating web content on a wide variety of topics for more than eight years.

I write on this topic because it's a passion of mine. I'm also interested in web design, music, politics, gaming, creative writing, journalism and a little too crazy about football (of the soccer variety).

You're welcome to email me at skellie@skelliewag.org anytime. If you're interested in what I write elsewhere (and other stuff relating to me) you can connect in a number of ways:

[twitter/skellie](#)

my stumbleupon profile / [skellie.stumbleupon.com](#)