

A Complete Guide To Using The Yoast SEO Plugin



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This guide is current as of v 4.4 of the plugin, March 2017.

While some general aspects of SEO will be touched on in this guide in the course of explaining the plugin, beginners may find that they need a more fundamental understanding of how SEO works in general, in order to get the best use out of this plugin. I have written an ebook that addresses that need:

Need to learn SEO fundamentals? [The Beginner's Guide to SEO for Business](#)
Get 50% off with this coupon code: YOASTSEO

[The Beginners' Guide to SEO for Business](#)

Get 50% off with this coupon code: YOASTSEO

Yoast SEO is on most lists of 'must-have' WordPress plugins. But the extensive set of options it provides can seem intimidating, especially to newer users.

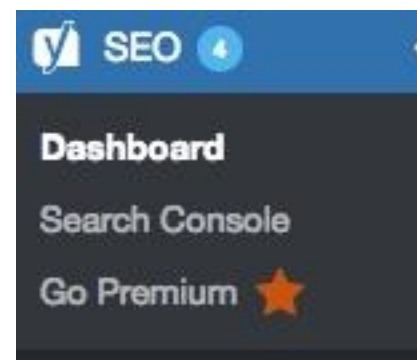
Yoast has a fair amount of commentary and explanatory text throughout the plugin screens so I won't duplicate anything he's saying there, but I'll try and clarify the less obvious parts.

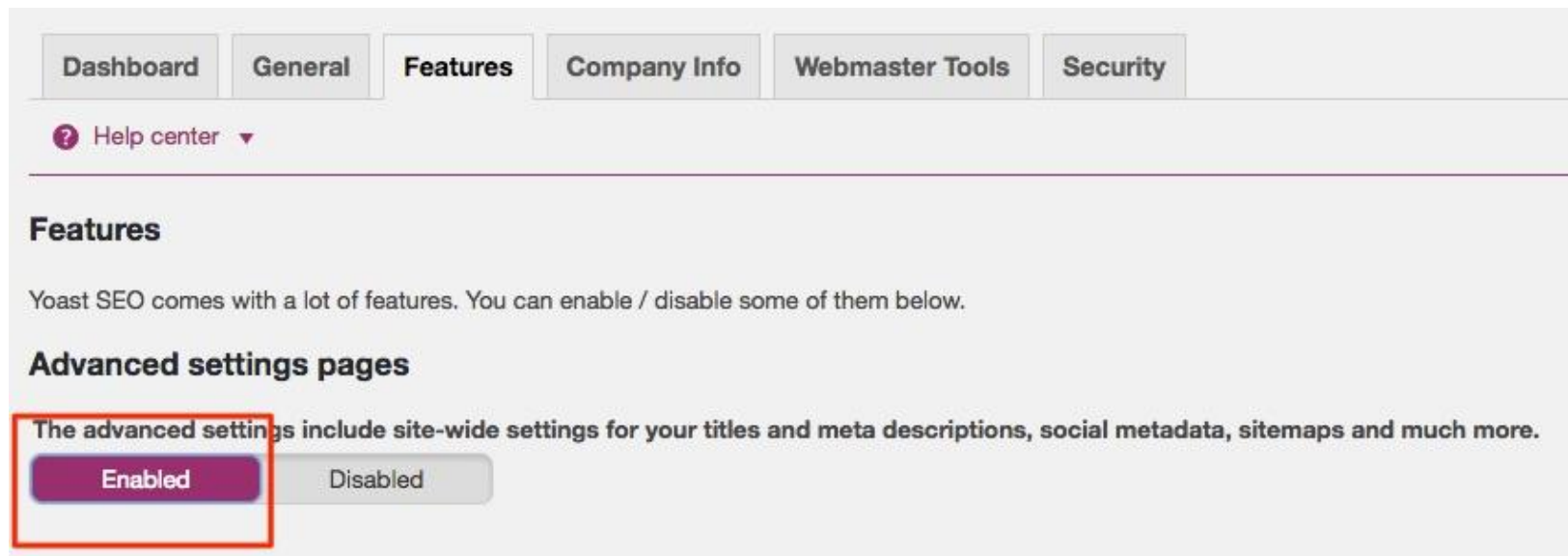
If you've used an older version of Yoast on a site, there are several menu tabs you're used to seeing, that are hidden by default on first activation of more recent versions.

To access all of the settings referred to in this guide, you will need to activate the Advanced settings.

You will know if you've already activated this by the menu options available. If you have not activated Advanced, you will only see *Dashboard*, *Search Console* and *Go Premium* on the left.

If that's the case, go to *Dashboard > Features > Advanced settings* pages and click *Enabled*:





Dashboard General **Features** Company Info Webmaster Tools Security

? Help center ▼

Features

Yoast SEO comes with a lot of features. You can enable / disable some of them below.

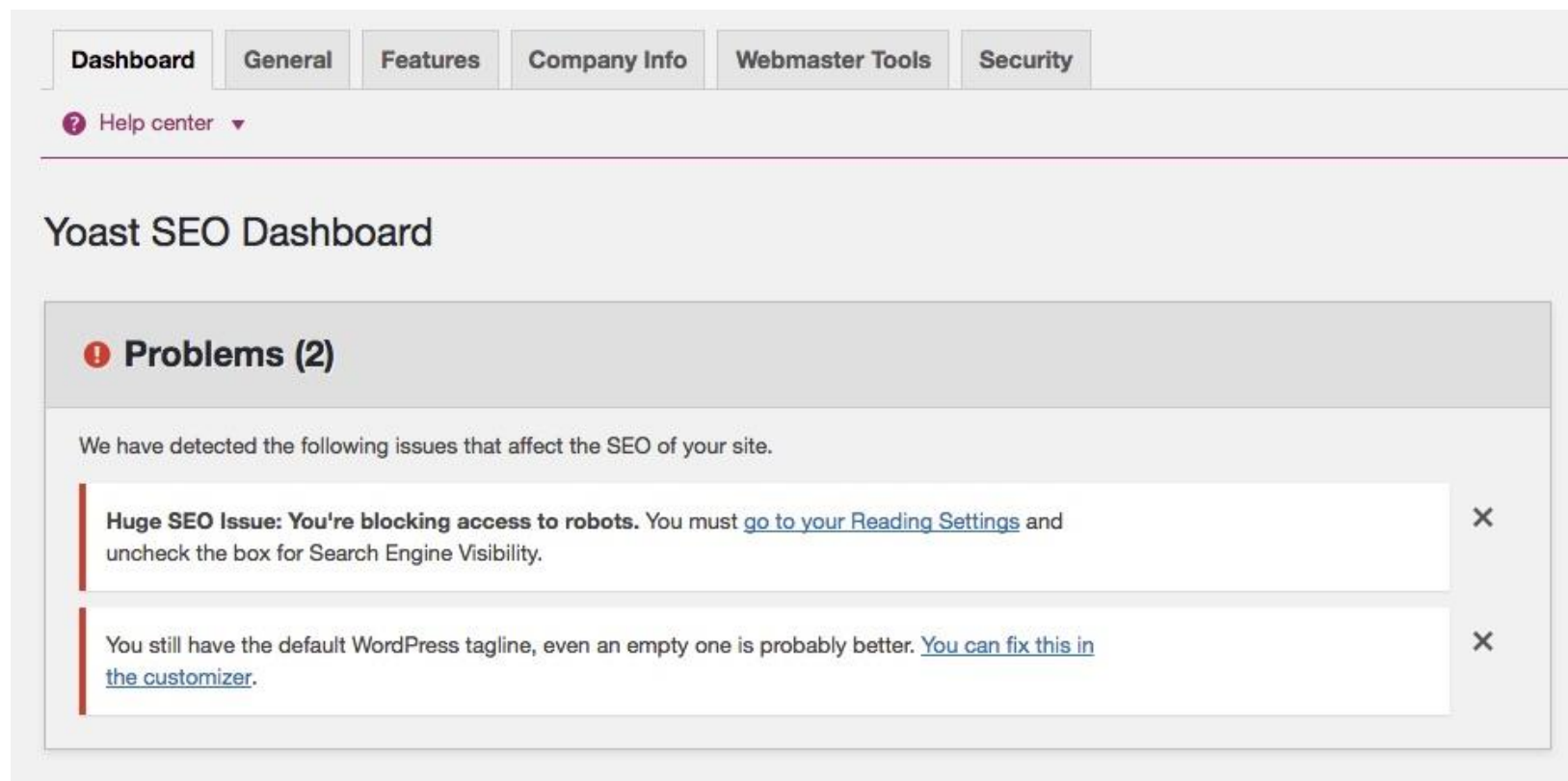
Advanced settings pages

The advanced settings include site-wide settings for your titles and meta descriptions, social metadata, sitemaps and much more.

Enabled Disabled

SEO > Dashboard

This tab will display problems and notifications to alert you of potential issues on your site:



The screenshot shows the Yoast SEO Dashboard interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Dashboard (selected), General, Features, Company Info, Webmaster Tools, and Security. Below the tabs is a 'Help center' link with a question mark icon. The main heading is 'Yoast SEO Dashboard'. A prominent section titled 'Problems (2)' with a red exclamation mark icon contains the following text: 'We have detected the following issues that affect the SEO of your site.' Below this, two problem notifications are listed, each with a red vertical bar on the left and a close button (X) on the right. The first notification reads: 'Huge SEO Issue: You're blocking access to robots. You must [go to your Reading Settings](#) and uncheck the box for Search Engine Visibility.' The second notification reads: 'You still have the default WordPress tagline, even an empty one is probably better. [You can fix this in the customizer.](#)'

SEO > Dashboard > General

From here you can access the configuration wizard and restore the default plugin settings.

Configuration wizard

This “wizard” provides a 10-step process to configuring a few key settings in the plugin. I don't personally find it that useful, but your mileage may vary. There's nothing here that can't be accessed through the normal settings screen, so this is not a mandatory process.

Steps 4 - 9 are the most pertinent.

[link to sections]

[Step 4 Company or Person](#)

[Step 5 Social Profiles](#)

[Step 6 Post Type Visibility](#)

[Step 7 Multiple authors](#)

[Step 8 Google Search Console](#)

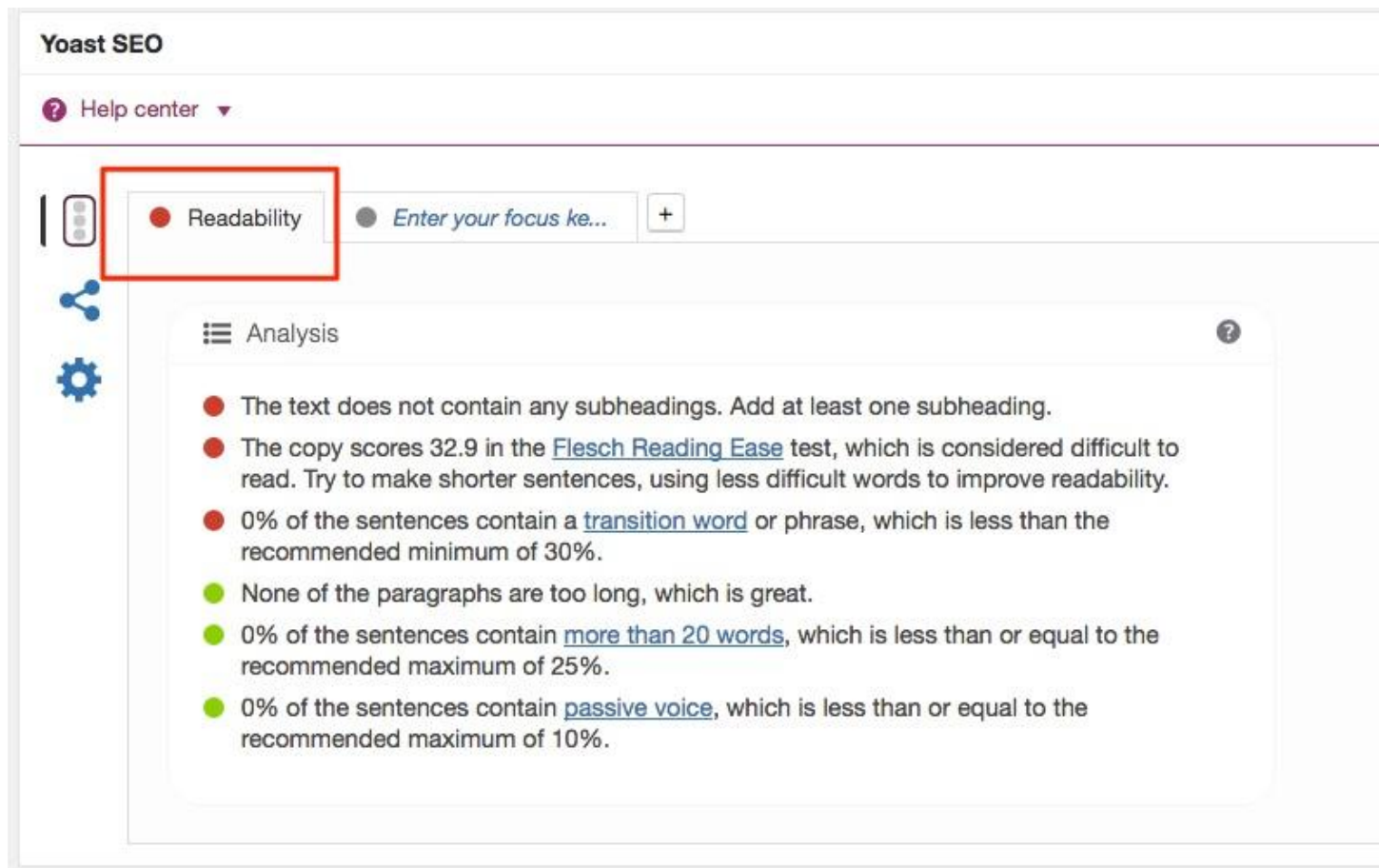
[Step 9 Title Settings](#)

SEO > Dashboard > Features

Readability Analysis

This tool gives suggestions about the readability of your content - how hard or easy it is to understand etc. It favors easy to understand text - short sentences and a reading level appropriate for 13 - 15 year old students, based on the Flesch measure. I personally don't use this feature because I think my audience has a higher reading and comprehension level.

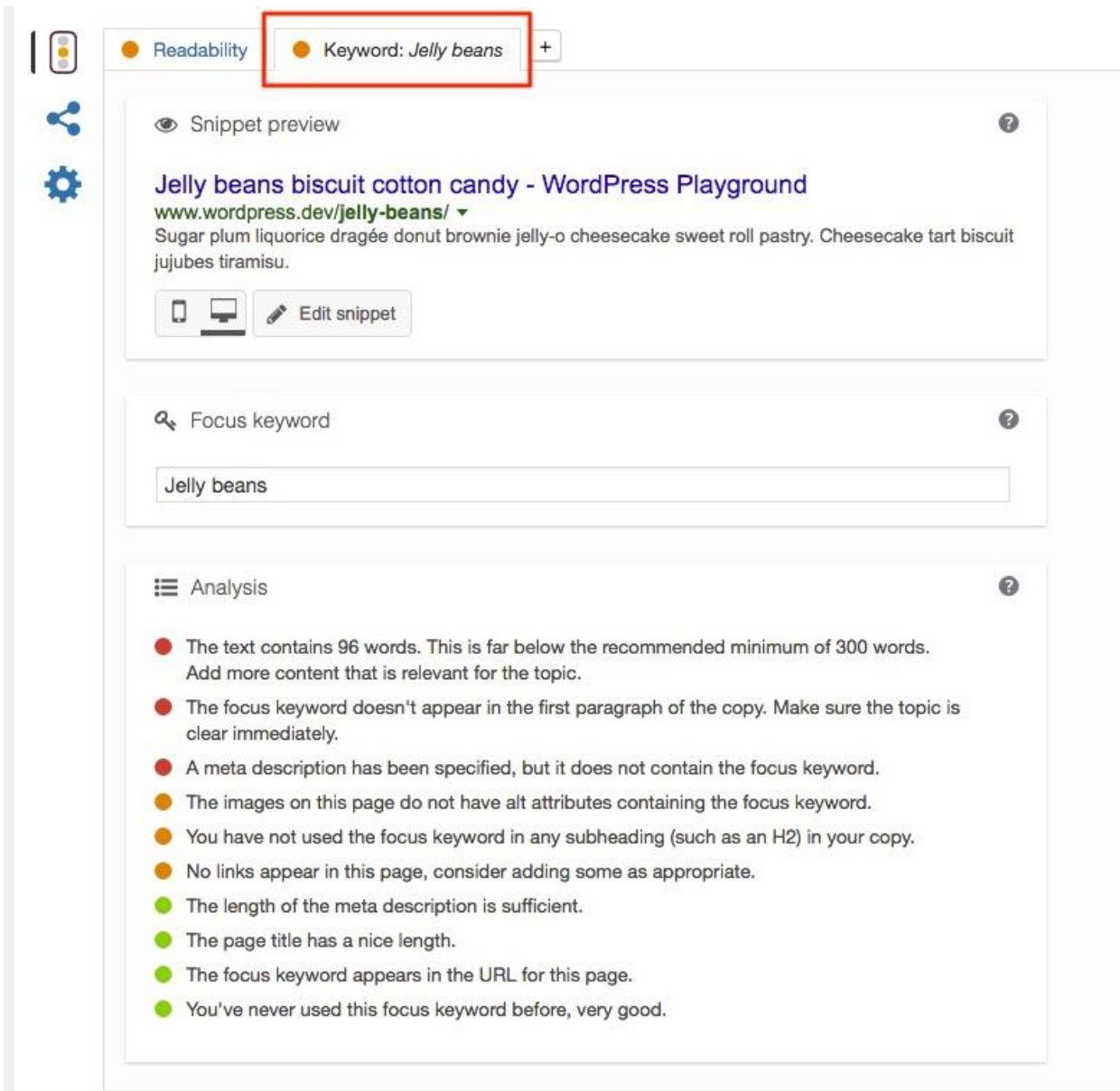
Once disabled, it will remove this section from the Yoast SEO box on post/page edit screens:



Keyword Analysis

This tool enables you to enter the keyword or phrase for a given post and the plugin analyzes your content to see how well you've optimized for it. If you are just learning about SEO, it can be useful, although a lot of people misuse it. I explain how to use it properly in the section [dealing with optimizing individual pieces of content](#).

Once disabled, it will remove this tab:



The screenshot shows the Yoast SEO interface for a WordPress post. At the top, the 'Keyword' field is highlighted with a red box and contains the text 'Jelly beans'. Below this, the 'Snippet preview' section shows the page title 'Jelly beans biscuit cotton candy - WordPress Playground' and the URL 'www.wordpress.dev/jelly-beans/'. The 'Focus keyword' section shows 'Jelly beans' entered in the input field. The 'Analysis' section contains a list of 10 items, each with a colored dot indicating its status: red for errors, orange for warnings, and green for good practices.

- The text contains 96 words. This is far below the recommended minimum of 300 words. Add more content that is relevant for the topic.
- The focus keyword doesn't appear in the first paragraph of the copy. Make sure the topic is clear immediately.
- A meta description has been specified, but it does not contain the focus keyword.
- The images on this page do not have alt attributes containing the focus keyword.
- You have not used the focus keyword in any subheading (such as an H2) in your copy.
- No links appear in this page, consider adding some as appropriate.
- The length of the meta description is sufficient.
- The page title has a nice length.
- The focus keyword appears in the URL for this page.
- You've never used this focus keyword before, very good.

Advanced settings pages

Enabling this will give you back all the features you are used to seeing in the Yoast plugin if you're a long-time user.

You can also enable / disable the **Admin bar menu**

OnPage.org

Enable / disable the onpage.org indexability check. This performs some tests to make sure everything is OK with your site and verifies that it's available for indexing:

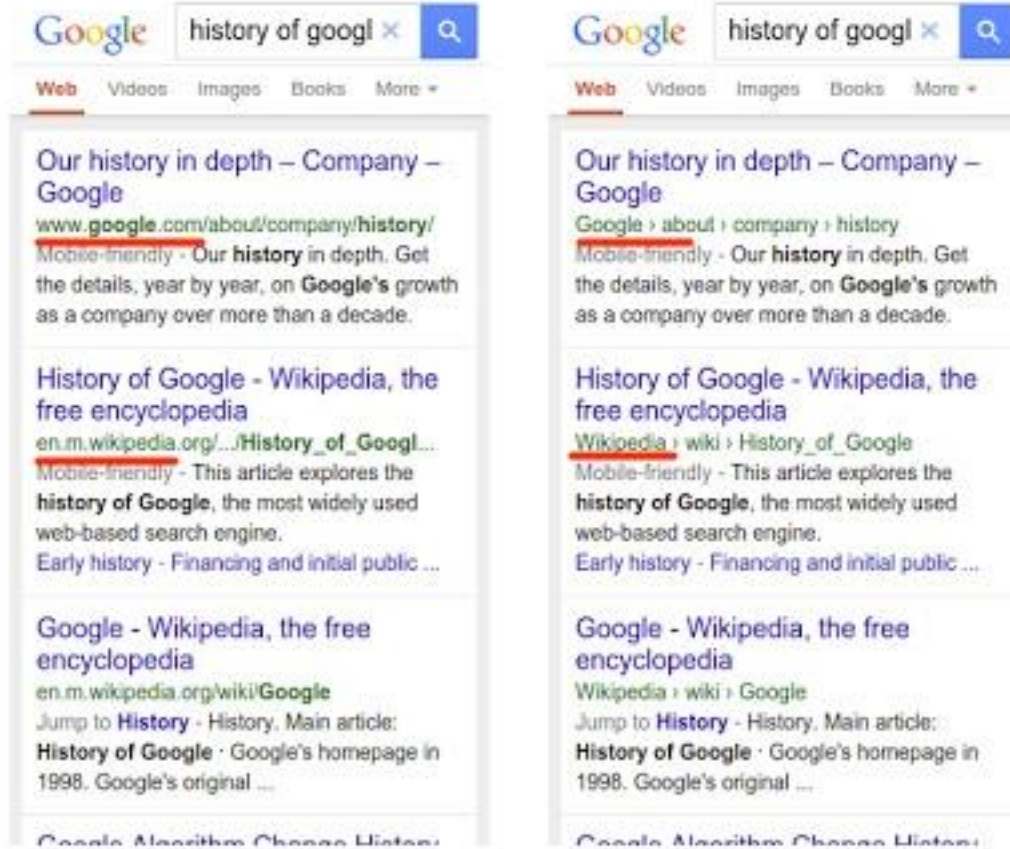
"They fetch the homepage of your Domain and check a couple of things in order to make sure, everything is fine with your site."

More info on the specifics: <https://en.onpage.org/lp/yoast/faq/>

I personally have never had the need to turn it off, but should it cause any issues, you can disable it. Per the link above, issues generally involve false positives, rendering the feature useless in those cases.

SEO > Dashboard > Company/ Your Info

The **website name** is for display in mobile search results. Previously the domain name would be displayed, but now you can choose your website name instead. See screenshot below. Currently it's only used in mobile results, but it's possible it could port to desktop in the future.



Company or Person

This is used only for Google's Knowledge Graph. The Knowledge Graph is part of structured data, (<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/guides/intro-structured-data>), specifically to provide at-a-glance information in search results for certain 'authorities'.

For example, if you do a search for a brand, you'll likely see a Knowledge graph card in the results:

BedBathandBeyond.com - Bed Bath & Beyond

Ad www.bedbathandbeyond.com/

4.6 ★★★★★ rating for bedbathandbeyond.com

Shop The Brands You Love & More. Free Standard Shipping Over \$29!
Free Shipping On Returns · America's #1 Registry · Buy Online Or In Store

- Buy Gift Cards
- Great Values & Closeouts
- 50% Off Holiday Clearance
- Create a Wedding Registry

Knowledge graph card



Bed Bath & Beyond: Bedding, Bath Towels, Cookware, Fine China ...

<https://www.bedbathandbeyond.com/>

Shop **Bed Bath & Beyond** for bedding, bath towels, kitchen electrics, cookware, cutlery, coffee makers & K-Cup Packs, window treatments, storage items, gifts ...

Wedding & Gift Registry
Bed Bath & Beyond's Bridal Registry (Wedding) and Gift ...

Find A Store
Use BedBathandBeyond.com to help find a store convenient to ...

Bedding
Sleep tight with bedding sets and comforters from ...

Bed Bath & Beyond Culver City
Get Directions to Bed Bath & Beyond 10822 Jefferson ...

Top stories



Bed Bath & Beyond

Retail-store company



bedbathandbeyond.com

Bed Bath & Beyond Inc. is an American chain of domestic merchandise retail stores in the United States, Puerto Rico, Canada and Mexico. Formed in 1971, the stores sell goods primarily for the bedroom and bathroom, as well as kitchen and dining room. [Wikipedia](#)

Customer service: 1 (800) 462-3966

Stock price: BBBY (NASDAQ) \$40.64 +0.20 (+0.49%)
Jan 10, 10:04 AM EST - Disclaimer

Headquarters: Union, NJ

CEO: Steven H. Temares (Apr 2003–)

Number of locations: 1,504

Subsidiaries: Buy Buy Baby, Cost Plus World Market, More

Founders: Warren Eisenberg, Leonard Feinstein

Profiles

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Google+

SEO > Dashboard > Webmaster Tools

Yoast provides a very handy way to verify your site with Google Search Console (formerly Webmaster Tools), Bing webmaster tools and Yandex. Alexa used to be available here but Alexa themselves retired their "claiming" feature, so it's no longer needed in the plugin.

Each of those services will give you a meta tag to paste into your code as a method of proving your ownership of your website. However by pasting the meta tag here you can save yourself the need to touch any code – the plugin will add the code for you.

Google Webmaster Tools is a must-have account since it will give you useful information about the health of your website, and will provide enhanced info inside your Google Analytics account.

Bing webmaster tools also provides some helpful info, including a good keyword research tool. Yandex is Russia's biggest search engine.

Below you can see the meta tag that Webmaster Tools provides you. The underlined part is what you will paste into this field of the SEO plugin (although even if you paste in the whole thing, the plugin is smart enough to clean it up for you ;)).

Recommended method

Alternate methods

HTML tag

Add a meta tag to your site's home page.

1. **Copy** the meta tag below, and paste it into your site's home page. It should go in the <head> section, before the first <body> section.

```
<meta name="google-site-verification" content="UMGkA7euVeXJCxhtiBkvcovxkP5a_2vWkQicfsGwYXA" />
```

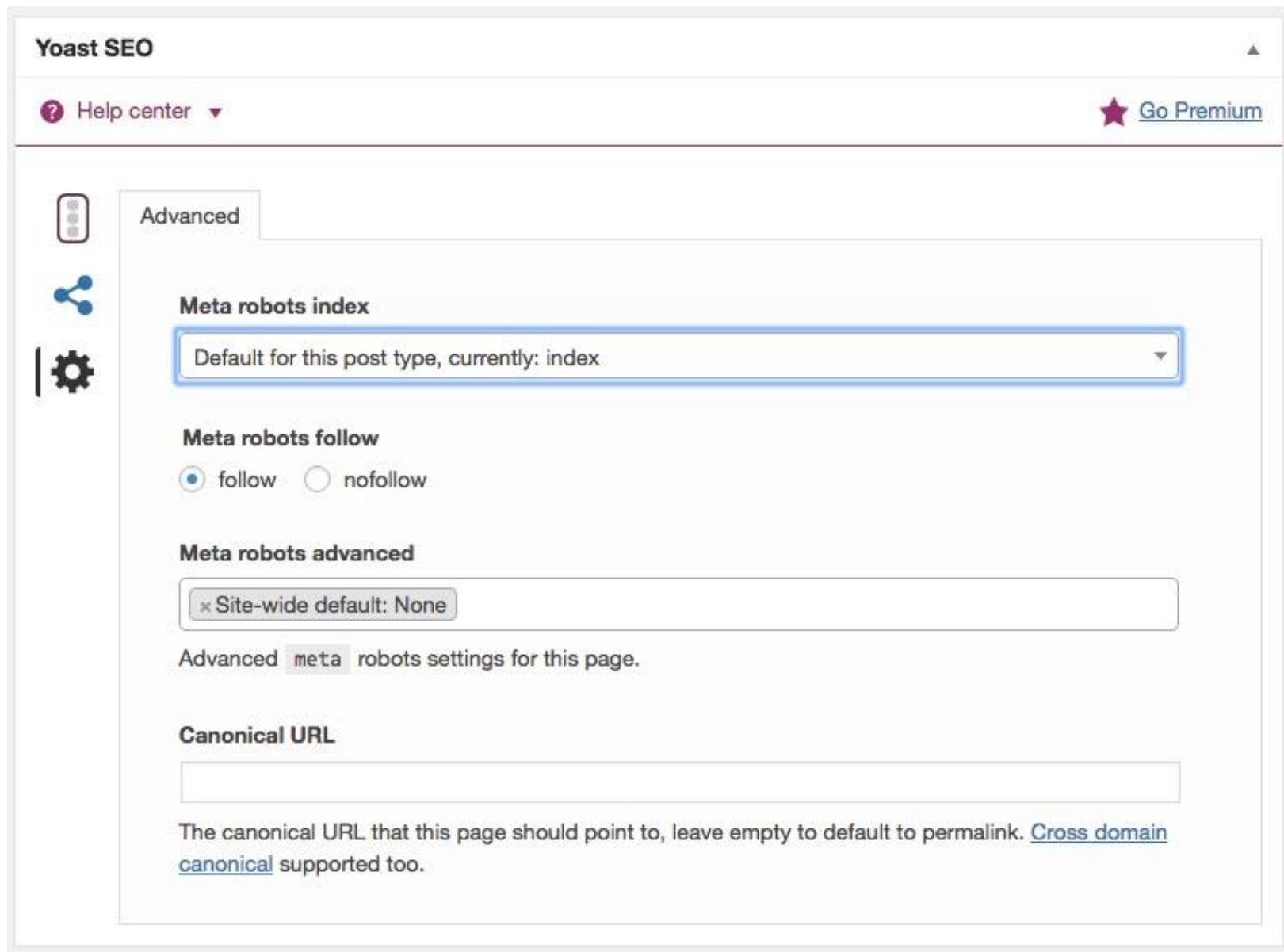
▶ [Show me an example](#)

2. Click **Verify** below.

To stay verified, don't remove the meta tag, even after verification succeeds.

SEO > Dashboard > Security

If you are an advanced user, enable this since it allows you to noindex pages and a few other things. If you don't need it, you can disable it, particularly if you have multiple users on your site that might wreak havoc with this. Below is a screenshot of the box that will be added when this option is enabled.



Yoast SEO

[? Help center](#) [★ Go Premium](#)

Advanced

Meta robots index

Default for this post type, currently: index

Meta robots follow

follow nofollow

Meta robots advanced

x Site-wide default: None

Advanced meta robots settings for this page.

Canonical URL

The canonical URL that this page should point to, leave empty to default to permalink. [Cross domain canonical](#) supported too.

SEO > Titles & Metas

SEO > Titles & Metas > General

Force Rewrite

You will only see this option if your theme does not declare support for the native WordPress 'title-tag' feature. This will likely only happen with older themes.

This is a bit of a technical setting, which may be necessary to activate depending on your theme. Sometimes there's a conflict between the Yoast SEO plugin and your theme which may also be outputting some SEO info. The typical indication of this is duplication of information being output:

```
<title>WordPress Beta | Just another WordPress siteWordPress Beta | Just another WordPress site</title>
```

So if you have strange output like this you will need to check the "Force rewrite titles" box to resolve the problem.

Title Separator

This is a purely aesthetic setting to determine how you want your meta tags to display in the search results. The symbol you choose separates the post title from the site name in the meta tag.

e.g. Post Title | Your Site Name :

Maintaining Your WordPress Site | Web Training Wheels

webtrainingwheels.com/maintaining-your-wordpress-site/ ▼

Keep your **WordPress site** safe, secure and running smoothly. Includes a free, downloadable checklist.

-- or --

Post Title - Your Site Name

[Configuration Guide For Yoast SEO - Yoast Knowledge Base](#)

<https://kb.yoast.com> > [WordPress Plugins](#) > [Yoast SEO](#) ▼

Nov 2, 2016 - After you have installed **Yoast SEO**, you will have a new menu available to customize your **SEO** global settings. The plugin also adds **SEO** settings at the post, page and taxonomy level. Log in to your **WordPress** website. When you're logged in, you will be in your 'Dashboard'.

SEO > Titles & Metas > Homepage

This, and the next few tabs are the places where people tend to get confused. Before we look at the configuration details, there are a couple things to understand.

First, one must understand that one of the major purposes of this plugin is that it allows you to control the meta information for each piece of content on your site, in all the ways that WordPress displays it (homepage, single post, tag archive, category archive etc)

Secondly, "titles & metas" refers to the meta title and the meta description which determine how your site's pages/posts appear in Google search results:

WordPress Plugins by Yoast ← **Meta Title**
[yoast.com/wordpress/](#)
Yoast offers several WordPress plugins built by Joost de Valk to optimize your **WordPress SEO**, track its performance and tweak the minor usability issues power ...

WordPress SEO Tutorial • The Definitive Guide • Yoast
[yoast.com/WordPress-SEO](#)
by Joost de Valk - in 17,336 Google+ circles - More by Joost de Valk
Oct 27, 2012 – This is the **ONLY** tutorial you'll need to hugely increase your search engine traffic by improving your **WordPress SEO**. Plugin, theme & site ...

Why can I only use one focus keyword in WordPress SEO? • Yoast
[yoast.com › SEO](#)
by Joost de Valk - in 17,336 Google+ circles - More by Joost de Valk
Feb 21, 2013 – You can only chose one focus keyword for a post in our **WordPress SEO** plugin. This post explains why you really don't need more than one.

WordPress SEO • Archives - Yoast ↗ **Meta Description**
[yoast.com/tag/wordpress-seo/](#)
Dec 12, 2012 – Today is the first result of what might become a somewhat longer tradition: **WordPress SEO** is now a Sucuri Safe Plugin. What this means? It...

WordPress SEO, more secure than ever before. • Yoast
[yoast.com › WordPress](#)
by Joost de Valk - in 17,336 Google+ circles - More by Joost de Valk
Dec 7, 2012 – What this means? It means I've asked Sucuri to do a full security review of my **WordPress SEO** plugin. They found a couple of small issues, ...

What is a meta description or meta title *template*?

Ideally you would handcraft the title and description for every single page or post. But if you're only starting this process when you already have a lot of content not yet optimized, or perhaps you have authors who you think won't fill it in, the templates you can create in this section allow *something* to be output in the event you don't handcraft it, or if you just want to "set it and forget it". So at least you will be providing some information to Google rather than nothing at all.

The template is created by replacing the variables you see with the content from that post.

So for example, `%%title%%` will be replaced with the title of the post or page in question.

`%%sitename%%` will be replaced with whatever you have designated as your site title in

Settings > General > Site Title and `%%sep%%` will be replaced with the symbol you chose as the separator in the *General* tab.

So if your Posts Title template is this:

Need to learn SEO fundamentals? [The Beginner's Guide to SEO for Business](#)
Get 50% off with this coupon code: YOASTSEO

General Homepage **Post Types** Taxonomies Archives Other

? Help center ▼

Posts

Title template:

The output will look like this:

%%title%% %%sep%% %%sitename%%
Image Positioning | WordPress Playground
www.wordpress.dev/image-positioning/ ▼
Marzipan topping chocolate pastry. Chocolate bar apple pie bear claw. Sweet roll caramels gummi bears
muffin muffin. Candy caramels pudding. Carrot cake ses

The description defaults to pulling the first couple lines of text from the post/page.

All the possible variables are found by clicking the *Help center* tab. The defaults that the plugin sets up are fine to use for templates, but as I mentioned before, hopefully you'll be customizing on a [per post basis](#).

Even if you set up templates, you can still customize individual pages/post by filling in the info in the Yoast SEO box on that individual piece of content. The template just makes sure that your title and description aren't totally empty.

SEO > Titles & Metas > Homepage

If your site is set to show Posts on the homepage, you will see this option to set the meta title and description for your homepage:

Homepage

Title template:

Meta description template:

If you have set a static page for your homepage, you will see this:

Homepage & Front page

You can determine the title and description for the front page by [editing the front page itself »](#)

And you will be directed to use the Yoast SEO box on the edit screen of the page itself.

SEO > Titles & Metas > Post Types

This allows you to set up templates for the output of the meta title and description for every regular and custom post type on your site.

Meta Robots

Unless you have a specific use-case, you'll want this set at *index*. Using an SEO plugin on a site that is *noindexed* is pointless since that setting prevents Google crawling your site. A possible use-case might be a site in development.

Authorship: You can choose to remove the authorship info per post type

Date in Snippet Preview

There are varying schools of thought on this. Generally speaking you would want to show the date in the snippet preview if you run a news-style site that has time-sensitive content. For other sites you'll probably want to leave it set to *Hide*.

Yoast SEO Meta Box

This is the box that appears on the editing screen for every individual piece of content on your site, allowing you to customize the meta information for it. 99% of the time you will keep this set to *Show*.

If you have custom post types (such as a portfolio, or products for example) they will automatically show up here and you can customize them just like regular posts and pages. If your custom post types have archive pages, they will show at the bottom of this screen.

SEO > Titles & Metas > Taxonomies

This tab allows you to control meta information for all the taxonomies on your site such as tags and categories, in addition to any custom taxonomies generated by themes or plugins.

SEO > Titles & Metas > Archives

This section pertains to the author and date archives, which WordPress creates by default. The explanation provided by Yoast on this page is mostly sufficient, but it's worthwhile to note that if you enable the Author archives, you will then also have the option of enabling a sitemap for the user archives. That option appears in the *XML Sitemaps* tab. If you disable Author archives, that option disappears from the Sitemaps tab.

When using the configuration wizard, the selection you make in Step 7 "Multiple authors" is related to these options. If you select "yes", the Author archives will be automatically enabled, and if you select "no" they will be automatically disabled.

Additionally, you can control the meta info for your search and 404 pages here.

[SEO > Titles & Metas > Other](#)

[Sitewide Meta Settings](#)

Subpages of archives

It's recommended to *noindex* this to avoid people performing a Google search and ending up on, for example, page 2 of your archives, which may not be the best place for them to land. Archive pages change over time as you add new posts - so something that is on page 2 of the archives today, could be on page 3 tomorrow. It's not ideal to have people land on these pages because they may not be able to easily find what they are looking for. You want people to always land on the most relevant page/post for their search and typically that's *not* an archive page.

Use meta keywords tag?

This should be *Disabled* because no search engine uses meta keywords for ranking any more.

Force noodp meta robots tag sitewide

This makes sure that search engines don't use Dmoz meta descriptions for your site, instead of the meta descriptions you will provide. These directories used to be authoritative guides to the web but now they are significantly less so, particularly Dmoz, so there's no value in using info from those listings. You'll want to set this to *Disabled*.

SEO > Social

SEO > Social > Accounts

Enter any profiles associated with your site; they will be utilized for things like Google's Knowledge Graph. With all things social, you should assume that how these pieces of information will show up, will change over time. Facebook and Google in particular, constantly change how they use meta data (for example, Google killing off Authorship). So I recommend filling in as many details are as pertinent.

For each of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google+, Yoast SEO can provide all the necessary social meta info. You should make sure you don't have other plugins duplicating what's being done here. For example some social sharing plugins might have a similar feature.

For the more advanced and/or nerdy amongst you, the profiles you add in this section are output into meta tags on your site.

For example, the *Twitter Username* you enter ends up in the source code as:

```
<metaname="twitter:site"content="@yourusername" />
```

The *Facebook Page URL* is output as the *Publisher* tag:

```
<metaproperty="article:publisher"content="http://facebook.com/yourpage" />
```

At the time of writing it's unclear how this is being used, but the *Author* tag is certainly valuable.

See: [Personal Social Links](#)

SEO > Social > Facebook

Add Open Graph meta data

If you have a social sharing plugin that already does this, you can set this to *Disabled*.

When you (or someone else) shares a link from your site to Facebook, it typically displays with a title, description and thumbnail:

Adding a top bar to your WordPress site to improve email opt-ins, is quick and easy 😊



How to Add a Top Bar MailChimp Opt in on your WordPress site | Web Training Wheels

It takes less than 15 minutes to set up a top bar MailChimp email sign up for your WordPress site. Increase subscribers without being annoying.

WEBTRAININGWHEELS.COM

If your links are not showing up with the correct or desired info, it's probably because you have not specified your Open Graph info. This is the specific info about a page that Facebook. If you don't provide it, Facebook is left to its own devices and sometimes that results in random thumbnails showing up when a URL is shared.

So Yoast can output that info for you, but other plugins also do it, so only enable this option if you don't already have it in place.

To see if your site is outputting open graph info you can view the source code of your site and look for the following og tags:

```
<meta property="og:image" content="http://webtrainingwheels.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/droid-search-fb.jpg" />
<meta property="og:title" content="Swifttype &#8211; WordPress Plugin For Enhanced Search"/>
<meta property="og:type" content="article"/>
<meta property="og:url" content="http://webtrainingwheels.com/swifttype-wordpress-plugin-enhanced-search/" />
<meta property="og:site_name" content="Web Training Wheels"/>
<meta property="og:description" content="Swifttype is a new WordPress plugin to spruce up the search feature on your site. It's promising but won't be satisfactory for everyone just yet. " />
```

[Open Graph information](#)

Frontpage settings

This info will be used specifically when someone shares the homepage of your site.

Default settings

This is the fallback image to be used if the content being shared doesn't have any images specified.

Facebook Insights and Admins

At the time of writing, Facebook have disabled new domains signing up for Insights, but you can use the feature with an existing Insights domain.

SEO > Social > Twitter

Add Twitter card meta data

Twitter now displays links in a similar way to Facebook, with a title and image. If you want to benefit from that, set this to *Enabled*. Choose either the summary card, which has a smaller thumbnail image or summary with large image.

Summary style:

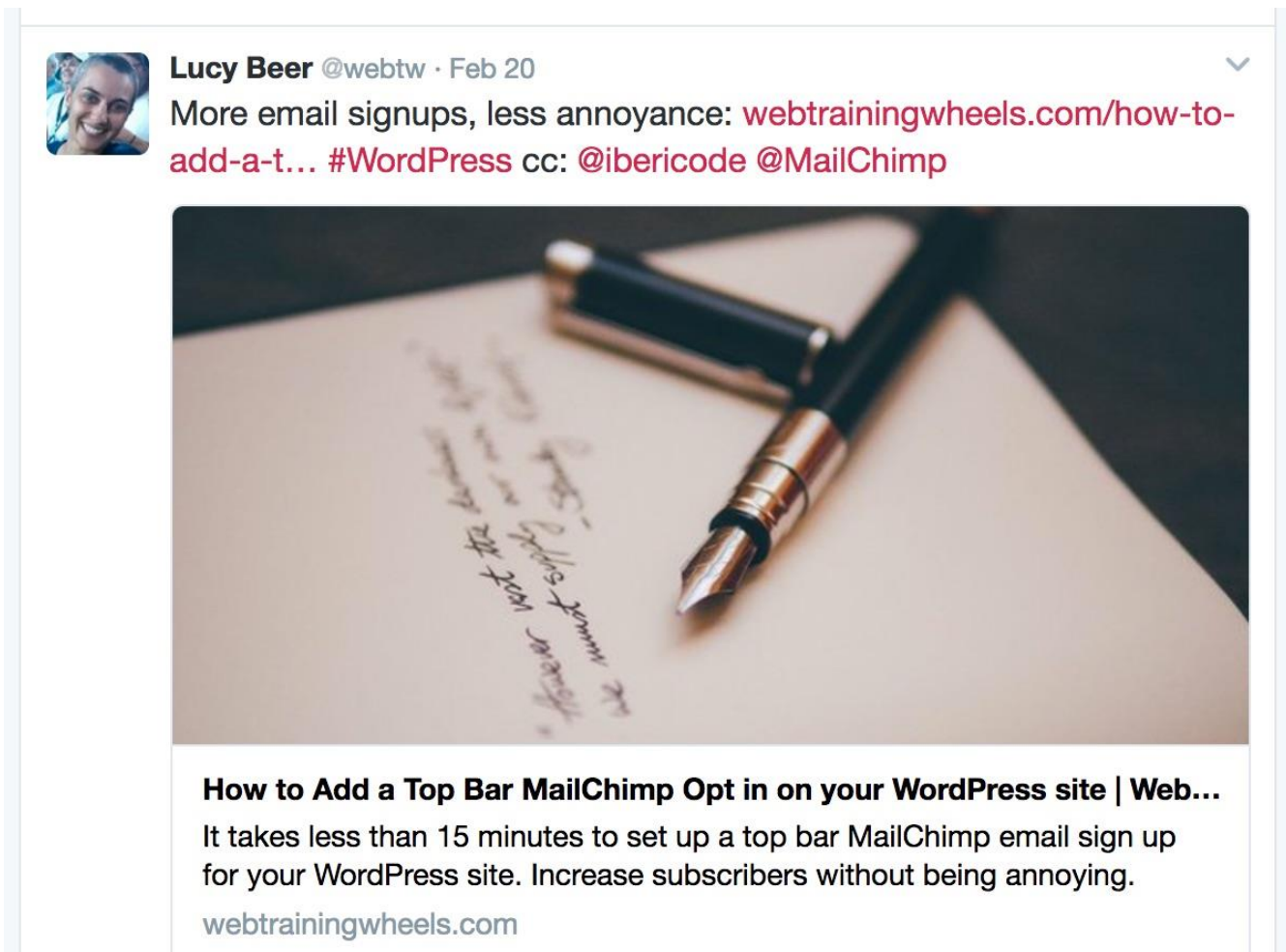


Truth matters. We're getting behind journalists. | Po...

Postmatic announces a new initiative to support the free press, the exchange of ideas, and democratization of publishing: Postmatic Press. Free WordPress services...

gopostmatic.com

Summary with large image:



Lucy Beer @webtw · Feb 20

More email signups, less annoyance: webtrainingwheels.com/how-to-add-a-t... #WordPress cc: @ibericode @MailChimp



How to Add a Top Bar MailChimp Opt in on your WordPress site | Web...

It takes less than 15 minutes to set up a top bar MailChimp email sign up for your WordPress site. Increase subscribers without being annoying.

webtrainingwheels.com

SEO > Social > Pinterest

Yoast's explanation here is clear 😊

SEO > Social > Google+

Google's Authorship markup, which used to show your profile picture in search results is no longer used but you can use this tab to connect your site with your Google+ page.

Personal Social Links

A somewhat hidden feature of the Yoast plugin is that it adds social profile fields, for Google+, Twitter and Facebook, to the *Users > Your Profile* screen.

If you want to differentiate between yourself (or other users on your site) as an individual, and your company, you can use these fields for your *personal* social profiles. At least for Twitter and Facebook these values are added to the social meta data on blog posts IF you've enabled that meta to be displayed, in the social section.

Twitter:


```
<metaname="twitter:creator" content="@yourusername" />
```

Facebook:

```
<metaproperty="article:author" content="facebook.com/yourusername" />
```

If you want everything to be associated with your company and not yourself, you can use your company page here. This field is important to fill out if, when links are shared on Facebook, you want a link to your Facebook page included, and a Like/Follow button also embedded.

In the screenshot below, it's the Author property, when set to your Facebook page, that produces the "by Ezra Klein" attribution, which links to his Facebook page. The "see more" line appears after you click the article link from your Newsfeed.



Tim Ferriss on suffering, psychedelics, and spirituality
Among our topics: why Ferriss fills his home with reminders of his eventual death.

VOX.COM | BY **EZRA KLEIN** **author markup**

See more from Ezra Klein.

appears after link is clicked

XML Sitemaps

SEO > XML Sitemaps > General

Having an XML sitemap helps Google find all of the content on your site quickly and efficiently. The XML sitemap automatically updates as you add new content. This type of sitemap is designed for bots not humans. [Read this post for an understanding of the difference between XML and HTML sitemaps.](#)

Note that Yoast SEO used to have a shortcode to generate an HTML sitemap, but that feature is no longer available in the free version of the plugin.

Once you've enabled the sitemap, you should submit the URL to your Google Webmaster Tools account. Inside Webmaster tools, from the nav menu on the left, click on Optimization, then Sitemaps. You will see the Add/Test Sitemap button at the top right. Click that and then Submit Sitemap. Add your sitemap URL and you're done.

Post Types / Excluded Posts / Taxonomies

If there are certain post types that you never want to include in your sitemap (because you don't want Google to know about them or index them) you can exclude them all here, but you can also control it individually per post type. For example, I don't usually have a need to activate the Media sitemap. Nor do I usually need the Post Format sitemap.

Advanced

SEO > Advanced > Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are navigational aids that help humans orient themselves within a site – understanding what section or sub-section they are in. They also provide help to bots in discovering all the content on your site. For most personal blogs, or small sites, breadcrumbs wouldn't really be necessary. But if your site has a more complex structure that goes several

sub-sections deep, or provides many ways to get to the same content, as many ecommerce sites do, for example, you may find them useful. This is what breadcrumbs look like:



All of the options in this section let you customize how you want your breadcrumbs to look and where on the site you want them to show up. However, unless you happen to be using one of a handful of themes that natively support Yoast’s breadcrumbs (Thematic and Hybrid are examples), you will have to add the code that Yoast provides into your theme. Consult this article: <https://kb.yoast.com/kb/implement-wordpress-seo-breadcrumbs/>

If you are a beginner uncomfortable with code, this would not be recommended. You would be best not bothering with this section. You can check if your theme has its own method of breadcrumbs built-in – many do.

SEO > Advanced > Permalinks

This is fairly advanced stuff - most users will not have need for it and can use the default settings. Yoast's comments are pretty well detailed here.

SEO > Advanced > RSS

RSS feed settings

This is a useful feature Yoast has provided to foil scrapers (dodgy sites that automatically republish content from other sites without permission). They work by scraping, i.e. copying, the content of your RSS feed, so Yoast provides a way for you add a footer or header to your feed which contains links back to your site. This way, even if someone does scrape the content, at least you will be credited. If you're not sure what to do here, just leave the default settings.

Tools

SEO > Tools > Bulk Editor

This provides a handy way to edit the SEO titles and meta descriptions for your content on one screen, without having to go into each individual edit screen:

Title		Description					
? Help center ▼							
All (248) Published (234) Drafts (12) Private (2) Trash (0)							
Show All Post Types ▾		Filter					
248 items		« ‹ 1 of 25 › »					
WP Page Title ▲	Post Type	Post Status	Publication date	Page URL/Slug	Existing Yoast SEO Title	New Yoast SEO Title	Action
434 horrible dates	Post	Published	December 17, 2011	/test-post/		<input type="text"/>	Save Save all
5 Tips For Finding a Great Advisor	Post	Published	August 6, 2014	/5-tips-for-finding-a-great-advisor/		<input type="text"/>	Save Save all
A Download For Members Only	Page	Published	February 13, 2012	/a-download/		<input type="text"/>	Save Save all

SEO > Tools > File Editor

WordPress dynamically generates a virtual robots.txt file, but if you manually created one, you could edit it here.

You can also edit your htaccess but you should only do that if you know exactly what you are doing. For advanced users you can use htaccess to do redirects, security tweaks and more. It wouldn't really be advised to make changes from within the dashboard, but this tool can be useful to easily view the file if you don't (for some reason) have FTP access. Generally speaking, non-technical users should ignore this section.

SEO > Tools > Import & Export

So let's say you've been using some other SEO plugin on your site for a long time and now everyone is telling you to use Yoast's plugin. Will you have to start from scratch or lose all that meta data you already input in your other plugin? NO! Yoast provides an import feature here which allows you to move your exiting meta information from another plugin into WordPress SEO so that you don't have to re-do everything. Likewise you can also export all of your Yoast data here as well.

Search Console

The Google Search Console integration enables you to see any reported crawl errors right inside your WordPress site. If you have the Premium version of Yoast SEO, you'll be able to set up redirects to resolve 404s, directly from this screen.

For the full range of information available, besides crawl errors, you should still log in to Search Console directly every so often.

Search Console - Yoast SEO

Desktop Smartphone Feature phone Settings

Not found (555) | Access denied (201) | Server Error (10) | Soft 404 (29) | Other (3)

Bulk Actions Apply 800 items

<input type="checkbox"/> URL	Last crawled	First detected	Response code
<input type="checkbox"/> /%20[...]	January 5, 2016	August 19, 2015	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /%20target=	December 20, 2015	April 8, 2014	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /%E2%80%8E	January 5, 2016	April 5, 2014	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /,http://yoast.com/wp-plugin-review/	December 14, 2015	April 26, 2015	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /-/plugins/seo/ Create redirect View Mark as fixed	February 14, 2016	February 14, 2016	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /.IndexA	January 5, 2016	January 5, 2016	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /2008/page/15/	December 12, 2015	December 9, 2015	404
<input type="checkbox"/> /5-things-you-didnt-know-about-me/trackback/	January 15, 2016	September 29, 2015	404

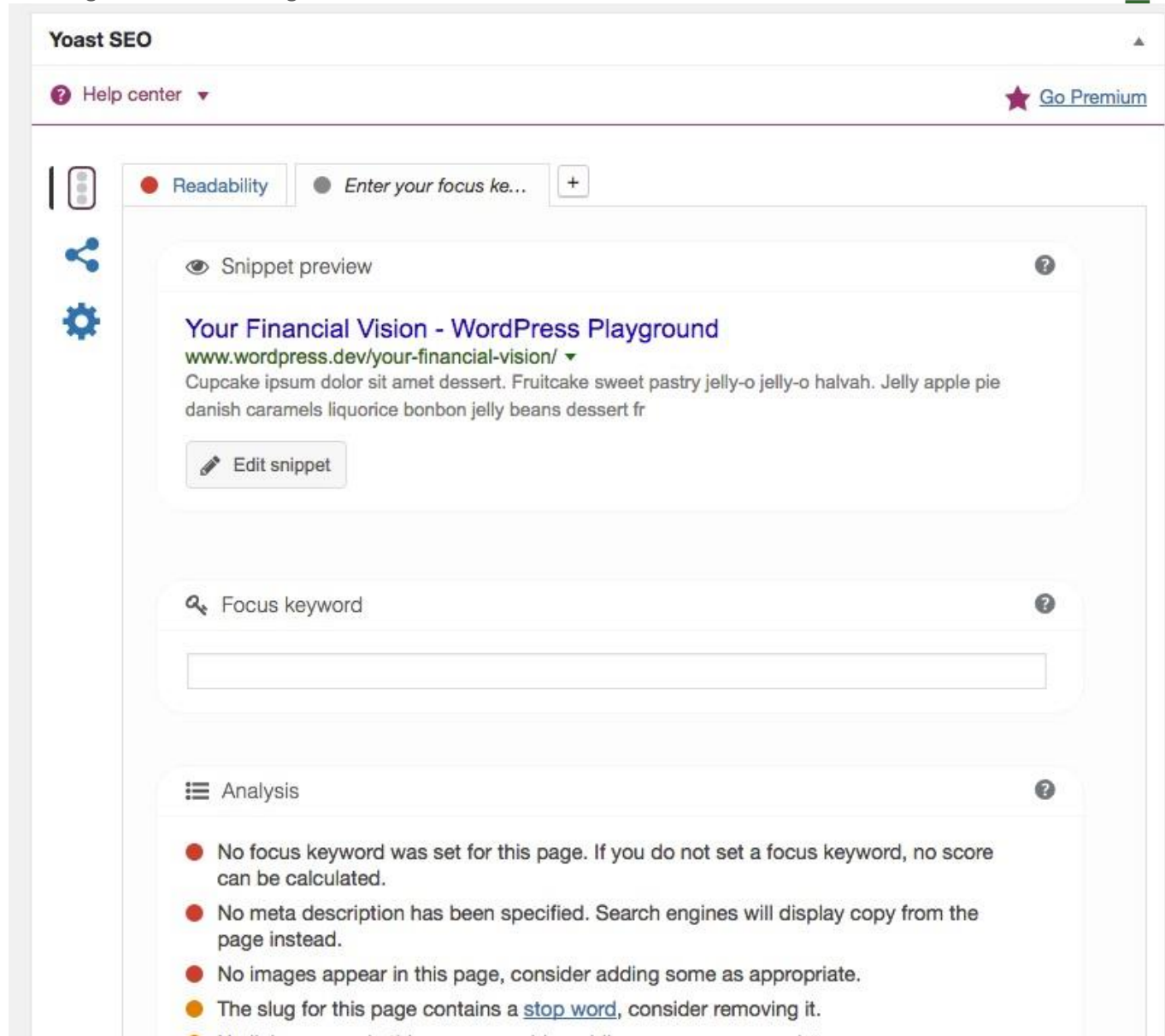
Those are all the main plugin settings, as found under the SEO menu tab.

However, you'll also find Yoast SEO meta boxes on individual posts, pages, categories etc This is where you'll be most frequently interacting with the plugin, and what requires more of your time and attention.

Managing Meta Data for Individual Pieces of Content

Posts, Pages, Custom Post Types, Taxonomies

You will see the following box at the bottom of each piece of content you are editing:



The screenshot displays the Yoast SEO interface for a WordPress page. At the top, there's a 'Yoast SEO' header with a 'Help center' link and a 'Go Premium' button. Below this, a navigation bar shows 'Readability' as the active tab, with a placeholder for 'Enter your focus ke...'. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Snippet preview', 'Focus keyword', and 'Analysis'. The 'Snippet preview' section shows the page title 'Your Financial Vision - WordPress Playground', the URL 'www.wordpress.dev/your-financial-vision/', and a meta description: 'Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet dessert. Fruitcake sweet pastry jelly-o jelly-o halvah. Jelly apple pie danish caramels liquorice bonbon jelly beans dessert fr'. An 'Edit snippet' button is located below the meta description. The 'Focus keyword' section has a search icon and a text input field. The 'Analysis' section contains a list of four error messages, each with a colored dot: a red dot for 'No focus keyword was set for this page. If you do not set a focus keyword, no score can be calculated.', a red dot for 'No meta description has been specified. Search engines will display copy from the page instead.', a red dot for 'No images appear in this page, consider adding some as appropriate.', and a yellow dot for 'The slug for this page contains a stop word, consider removing it.'

Content Optimization



Earlier in this article I talked about how the plugin allows you to create a template for your meta title and description, but that you may want to customize it on a per-post basis. This is where you would do that.

Snippet Preview

If you set up a meta information template in the SEO > Titles & Metas section you'll already see some information populated in the Snippet Preview area. This gives you a preview of how your post will look in the Google results pages, based on your current settings. You will notice that if you start typing something into the SEO Title or Meta Description fields, the snippet preview will change in real time to reflect the new information you are providing.

Everything should be written in human-friendly English (no lists of keywords or other tricks). The title should have your keywords for that post/page in it.

The description is like ad copy - a compelling description of the content that will encourage people to click on your result in the search results.



This is useful since in some cases you may have crafted a clever or funny post title for your readers, but that may not be the most search-engine friendly way of describing it. So the SEO title lets you give Google a more straightforward title.

Focus Keyword



Many people on first glance get hung up on or confused by this field. Here's what you have to understand - this is only a *tool*, and does *not* affect the output of the code on your site. Only the actual content of your page does that. If you leave this field blank, it will have no adverse effect. If you are already competent at SEO you will not need this tool, but it may be helpful for beginners.

If you enter a focus keyword (that's one keyword or one phrase) for your post, then after saving the page you will see an analysis of the content which lets you know how well (or not) you've optimized this content for your given keyword.

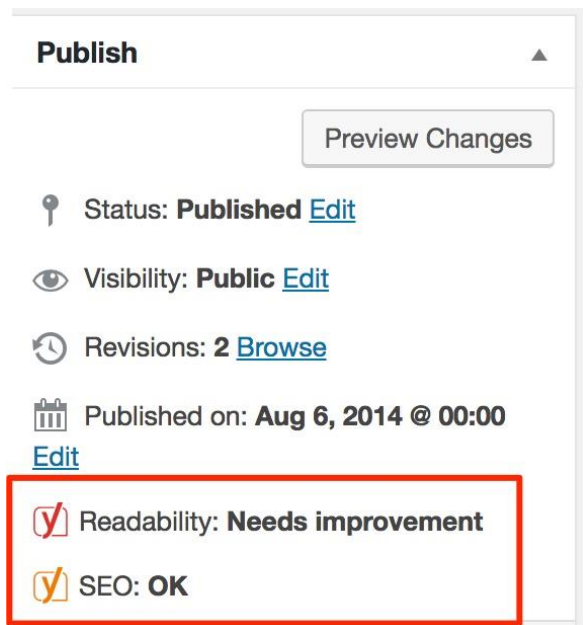
The value for beginners is in reading the analysis, which will help you understand what it expects from you to optimize your content.

 Focus keyword 

financial vision

 Analysis 

- No meta description has been specified. Search engines will display copy from the page instead.
- The focus keyword doesn't appear in the first paragraph of the copy. Make sure the topic is clear immediately.
- No images appear in this page, consider adding some as appropriate.
- The keyword density is 0%, which is too low; the focus keyword was found 0 times.
- The slug for this page contains a [stop word](#), consider removing it.
- No links appear in this page, consider adding some as appropriate.
- The SEO title contains the focus keyword, but it does not appear at the beginning; try and move it to the beginning.
- The page title is too short. Use the space to add keyword variations or create compelling call-to-action copy.
- The focus keyword appears in the URL for this page.
- The text contains 300 words. This is more than or equal to the recommended minimum of 300 words.
- You've never used this focus keyword before, very good.



The color indicator at the top of the tab and in the Publish box shows you well you're doing. Don't obsess about making it turn green however; you never want to sacrifice well-written content for the sake of search engine optimization.

Each post or page should be tightly focused around one concept- that's why you only enter one word or phrase for this to work. If you don't know what to put it means you may not have a clear direction with this piece of content.

You only need to enter a focus keyword if you want to utilize the page analysis tool.



Social

You will only see this tab if you enabled it in the main Social settings of the plugin.

The Social tab allows you to specify the title, short description and an image, to be displayed when your content is shared on social media. If you don't specify this info, whatever you have created for your title and meta description will be used as the snippet, and the image could be random, depending on what images are found on your page, how big they are etc. To have full control over how your links will look when shared, you should specify all the information here.



Advanced

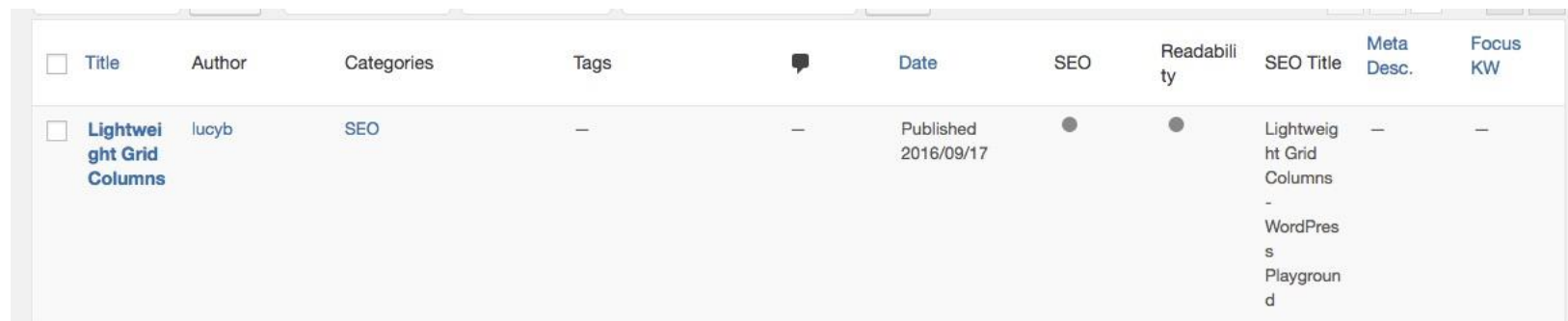
If enabled, this tab gives you control over the robots meta tag for the page/post, allowing you to specify if the page should be noindex-ed and/or nofollow-ed. This isn't a commonly used setting; a typical use case might be if you are creating a landing page that you don't want to show up in search results.

You can also control the canonical url for the page.

If you don't know what any of these settings relate to, you would be advised not to change them!

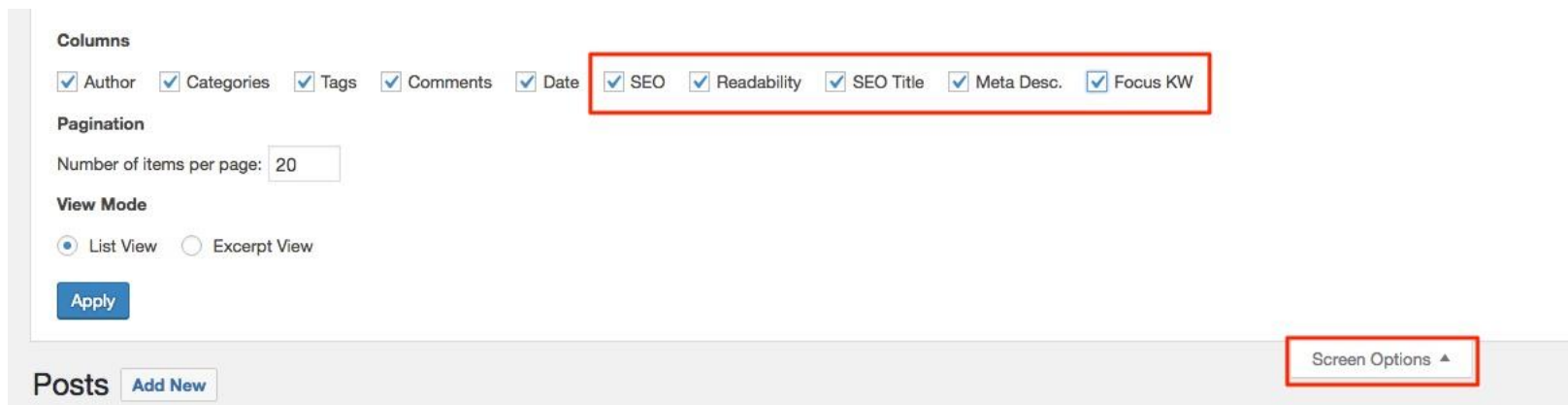
All Posts / All Pages screen

After activating the plugin, you will see some new columns show up on the All Posts and All Pages screen.



<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	Author	Categories	Tags		Date	SEO	Readability	SEO Title	Meta Desc.	Focus KW
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lightweight Grid Columns	lucyb	SEO	—	—	Published 2016/09/17	●	●	Lightweight Grid Columns - WordPress Playground	—	—

This can clutter up the screen and make it harder to read. To remove some or all of them, simply go to *screen options* and un-check the ones you want to hide.



The screenshot shows the 'Screen Options' panel for the WordPress 'Posts' screen. The 'Columns' section is highlighted with a red box and contains the following checked items: Author, Categories, Tags, Comments, Date, SEO, Readability, SEO Title, Meta Desc., and Focus KW. The 'Pagination' section shows 'Number of items per page' set to 20. The 'View Mode' section has 'List View' selected. An 'Apply' button is located below the 'View Mode' section. At the bottom right of the panel, a 'Screen Options' button with an upward arrow is also highlighted with a red box. The main content area shows the 'Posts' header and an 'Add New' button.

Thanks for reading! If you found this guide useful, drop a comment on the blog, Tweet it to your friends or drop me an email: lucy@webtrainingwheels.com !

If you need to learn more about the fundamentals of search engine optimization, check out my ebook:

The Beginner's Guide To SEO For Business:

<http://webtrainingwheels.com/beginners-guide-to-seo-ebook/>

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