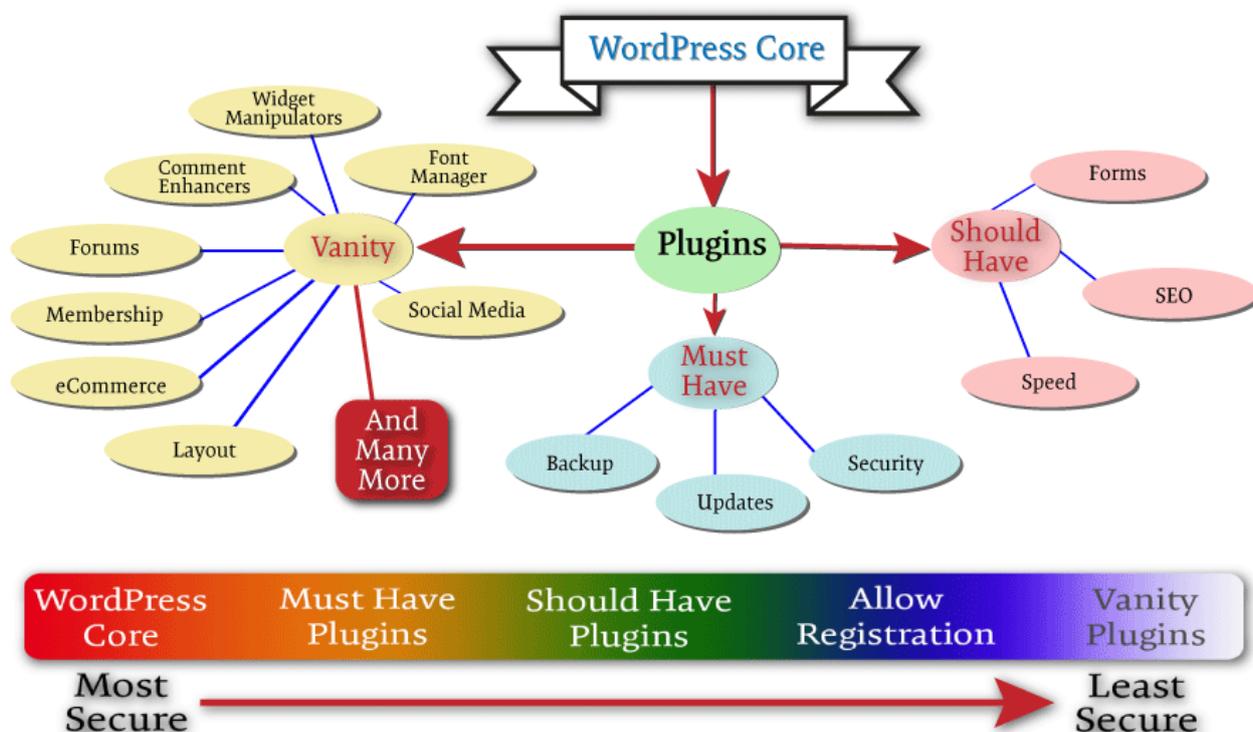# Types of WordPress Plugins I Should Use

WordPress plugins tree

As you can see from the above chart, it is more like the family tree of plugins off the main WordPress core. The explanation and the presentation of it is my interpretation of the WordPress plugin hierarchy. I know some of you may not agree, some of you will, and even more of you will think it is over simplified, but that's the kind of thing I meant to convey.

The WordPress core itself is extremely secure, and by that I mean as secure as any content management system, CMS out there can be. Since it is written and updated by developers, and has a whole community behind it helping its validity, it is one of the most secure CMS's out there today. It has checks and balances because if it.

The WordPress core, (red,) is the most secure version of your site. As it moves to the right and you keep adding more and more things, such as plugins, it gets less secure, (white.) Coming off of the green into the blue area denotes a

website that is more vulnerable to breaking and/ or getting hacked. My best advice is to make sure security is in place, and research your vanity plugins thoroughly before installing them.

Must have plug-ins: These are the plugins in my book that I feel no WordPress website should be without. This will definitely vary from person to person, and from developer to developer. These are the plugins that I recommend, and I am totally open to this changing as I learn more or hear better arguments. That can happen a lot in this business, and one of the coolest thing about WordPress. In this area I have the following categories: **Backups, Updating, Security, and Anti-spam.**

Should have WordPress plugins: These are the plugins that you will install after you have finished installing and testing the plugins on the "Must have" list. This section, plus the previous section will give you a fully functioning interactive site, with the bare minimum of headache when you are trying to keep your site secure. I have included the following categories in this area: **SEO, Caching, Responsiveness, and Forms.** Personally I don't think you can do without any of the plug-ins from either of the above areas. This, to me, is a full site if you are looking to have a functional, interactive site, that also has the chance to be discovered in the web.

Vanity WordPress plugins: Believe it or not, this is a favourite section of mine. I do like my Vanity plugins, because some of them are really cool, add value, and most are very well supported. I am not one of those developer that will poo-poo you because you want to add vanity plugins to your website. If I am designing your website you just have to abide by my rules when it comes to any plugins in this category. You just have to be careful how you choose a Vanity plugin, and what purpose it is supposed to serve on your site.

I have created a table for you to look at with specific examples of plugins I use that fall into each of the areas. Also when adding a new plugin directly from the list below, I have outlined the procedure below, and this procedure should work most of the time, but otherwise it is very easy to figure out:

1. Click the link to the plugin
2. Download the plugin to your hard-drive
3. Go back into your "Admin" section of your site

4. Select "Plugins"
5. Select "Add New"
6. Select "Upload Plugin" at the top of the page
7. Cling the "Choose file" button
8. Find the plugin on your heard-drive – highlight file and select Open, (usually in your downloads folder.)
9. Click the "Install Now"
10. Activate plugin
11. Re-read documentation on the plugin to know how it sets itself up on your computer
12. Check that plugin is there and configure it

Video coming soon on how to download and install a plugin

Area	Category	Specific plugin (* = Best in my book)
Must Have	**Backup**	Backup Buddy * No free version BackWPUp * – Free
	Updating	iThemes Sync * Free – on-line service JetPack Monitor Free – on-line service ManageWP * Monthly subscription – on-line service
	Security	iThemes Security * Free and paid version Sucuri * No free version – on-line CloudFlare * Free and paid version – on-line service Really Simple CAPTCHA – Free
	Anti-Spam	Akismet – * Free and comes with WordPress
Should Have	**SEO**	WordPress SEO by Yoast * Free and paid version
	Caching	W3 Total Cache * – Free and paid version P3 (Plugin Performance Profiler) – Free
	Responsiveness	WP Touch * – Paid version JetPack Mobile theme – Free
	Forms	Gravity Forms * – No free version Contact Forms 7 * Free
Vanity	**Editor**	WPEdit * Free
	Social buttons	Floating Social Bar * Free SumoMe – Free and paid version – On-line service with plugin

Area	Category	Specific plugin (* = Best in my book)
	Widgets	[Display Widgets](#) – Free
	Media Library	[Enhanced Media Library](#) – Free
	Typogrphy	[Google Font Manager](#) – Free [Hide Title](#) – Free [No Page Comment](#) – Free [Yet Another Related Posts Plugin](#) – Free

There are definitely tons more plugins than this, but this will give you a basic idea of the areas that you will most likely need to fill first. Whatever you are looking for can be found by following the steps above the table for finding a plugin or a type of plugin. Let's say you have an idea and you want to see if there is a plugin exists that might help, then type it in.

Remember that a bad plugin has the potential of crashing your site. So when you install a plugin, always check that your site is working after **EACH** install. Don't install 5 or 6 plugins, and then check your site. If it isn't working, then there is no way to tell which plugin was responsible. So take your time and test, test, test as much as you can. Try and limit the number of plugins you install, and delete the plugins that you are not using. Also delete any themes that you aren't using as well. This can help the possible chances that a hacker can get to your website, but all of this is discussed in another article with this site, when I talk about how to tighten up, or lock down your site.

Wanna Find a Plug-in?

I re-worked this wonderful compilation of plugins I have come across. Some of them will be old, so let me know, and I will try to keep an updated list. My favourites are among these, but I have probably test-driven all of them at some point. I have also left out some of the more obvious ones, and it's fine to bring my attention to those as well.

So if you have a plug-in you would like to see on the list feel free to post it in the comments section below along with anything else you might have to say. This

list will be changing from week to week and I will be adding new information as I get ideas of what to include, and I will be tweeting the changes so make sure [you are following me on twitter.](#)

I am also not rating which I think are best at the moment, but it is on the cards when I review this list for plugin additions, so if you see an asterisk, or other form of rating mechanism, then that means I have started doing just that. So check your twitter feed under [@barbapplestudio](#)

A really nice resource for searching for plugins based on category, downloads, votes, etc is:

http://wpplugindirectory.org/

"Google Trends for .org Plugins" – Simple tool to compare free WordPress.org plugins side-by-side:

https://bestfreewpplugin.com/

Custom Post Types

- http://www.wp-types.com
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/cpt-onomies/
- http://pods.io/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/my-content-management/ — Lesser known, not great for clients, but still powerful for developers and free.

Custom Fields

- http://www.advancedcustomfields.com/

OPTIMIZATION

For Images

- http://jetpack.me/support/photon/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/ewww-image-optimizer/
- http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-smushit/
- https://wordpress.org/plugins/imsanity/

For Managing When Plugins or Scripts Load

- http://wordpress.org/plugins/css-javascript-toolbox/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/plugin-organizer/

For Caching

- http://wordpress.org/plugins/w3-total-cache/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-super-cache/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/hyper-cache/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/cloudflare/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/em-object-cache/
- http://wp-rocket.me/ (Premium — free version on it's way soon)

SEO

- http://www.prelovac.com/vladimir/wordpress-plugins/seo-friendly-images
- http://www.vretoolbar.com/news/seo-slugs-wordpress-plugin
- http://yoast.com/wordpress/seo/
- http://www.weberz.com/plugins/404-redirected/

Google Analytics Dashboard

- https://wordpress.org/plugins/google-analytics-dashboard-for-wp/

Sliders

- http://soliloquywp.com
- http://codecanyon.net/item/slider-pro-wordpress-premium-slider-plugin/253501
- http://shouldiuseacarousel.com/
- http://codecanyon.net/item/layerslider-responsive-wordpress-slider-plugin-/1362246
- http://dimsemenov.com/plugins/royal-slider/wordpress/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/infinite-slider/

Full Screen Background Sliders

- http://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-supersized/

Social Sharing

- Social   Sharing   Toolkit

http://www.blogaid.net/social-media-widget-plugin-injecting-spam Video tutorial to help folks switch from the Social Media Widget plugin over to Social Sharing Toolkit and configure it.

Security

- iThemes Security (formerly Better WP Security) http://wordpress.org/plugins/better-wp-security/
- BruteProtect http://wordpress.org/plugins/bruteprotect/
- Wordfence Security http://wordpress.org/plugins/wordfence/
- All In One WP Security and Firewall http://wordpress.org/plugins/all-in-one-wp-security-and-firewall/

Spam

- http://bad-behavior.ioerror.us/
- http://www.itquad.com/wordpress/plugins/wp-email-guard

Event

- http://wp-events-plugin.com/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/the-events-calendar/
- https://wordpress.org/plugins/all-in-one-event-calendar/

RSS Aggregation / Feed to Post Import

- http://www.wprssaggregator.com

Frontend Post/Registration

- http://wedevs.com/plugin/wp-user-frontend-pro/

Forms

- http://www.gravityforms.com/
- http://contactform7.com/
- http://formidablepro.com
- http://ninjaforms.com

Backup/clone

- https://wordpress.org/plugins/duplicator/

Newsletter

- https://wordpress.org/plugins/wysija-newsletters/

Sidebar

- http://wordpress.org/plugins/content-aware-sidebars/
- http://wordpress.org/plugins/woosidebars/

This is by no means a definitive list but it will be growing and I will be posting it on twitter for sure.