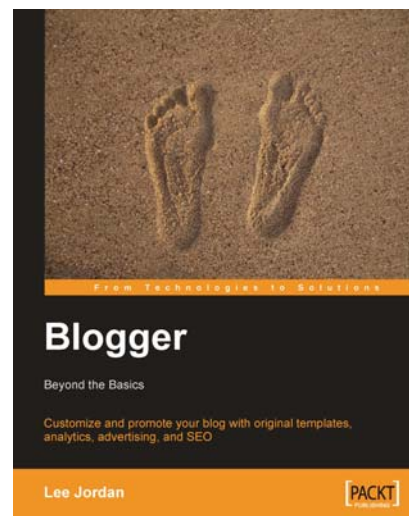




Blogger

Beyond the Basics

Lee Jordan



Chapter No. 3

"Social Bookmarking"

In this package, you will find:

A Biography of the author of the book

A preview chapter from the book, Chapter NO.3"Social Bookmarking"

A synopsis of the book's content

Information on where to buy this book

About the Author

Lee Jordan is an avid user of Blogger, Twitter, and other useful web applications. She designs interactive customer service portals, enterprise-level websites and other web-based applications and writes web content and user guides. She applies over ten years of experience designing and writing for the web to developing interactive, user friendly web sites and writing technical guides to popular web technologies. This is her second book with Packt Publishing. Get Blogger tips and download source code on her companion web site to this book at <http://bloggerbeefedup.blogspot.com>.

A big thanks to my daughter Celeste who practiced her reading skills by looking over my shoulder, and editing my writing. Her cheerful suggestions kept me motivated.

An Innocent Drinks smoothie or ten is owned to David Barnes. His vision for the book, and constructive feedback kept me focused and helped me through the rough spots.

For More Information: www.packtpub.com/blogger-beyond-the-basics/book

Blogger

Beyond the Basics

This book actively immerses you in going beyond the default Blogger blog. Descriptive tutorials help you take action and learn to customize Blogger templates, add and create your own widgets, use social bookmarking tools, optimize your blog for search engines, attract more readers, play nice with other bloggers, understand Google Analytics, and make money with your blog.

As a bonus, you will also learn many delicious fruit recipes and have access to a rich array of images, code, and tips for your blog.

What This Book Covers

Chapter 1 will help you start by comparing a default Blogger blog with top blogs. You will meet Georgia and her organic fruit company Fruit for All. Georgia's blog will be our example throughout the book. Developing a wish list of the features and design elements for her blog will include an overview of the many types of features and online tools used by bloggers.

Chapter 2 will help you plan and customize your Blogger template to give your site its own look. This will include the blog post, sidebar, header, and footer areas of the blog. Tweaking the template will include quick fixes such as fonts, colors and background images and then cover more complex tasks, including adding a third column to your design.

Chapter 3 covers the types of social bookmarking and network tools, along with the most popular sites. Promoting your site using social bookmarks and using related widgets adds interactivity. You will use social bookmarking techniques with your blog and apply them to different parts of your blog. Blogger and third-party tools are customized and integrated into your blog.

Chapter 4 is all about being an active citizen of the Blogosphere. You will set up Blogger link backs, use tools to make it easier for other bloggers to link back to you, and learn ways to attract other bloggers to your blog.

Chapter 5 covers the best widgets for Blogger. Widgets are small, self-contained programs that can help you build a community, provide rich content, show and sell products, and make money. They give you more choices for how you can use your blog. You will not only add Blogger and third-party widgets to your blog, you will create your own custom widgets. Picking the right widgets for your blog is covered by widget type and function.

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Chapter 6 will help you make the most of Blogger's feed syndication. You'll learn how to make it easy for people to subscribe, use tools like Feedburner to promote, measure and share your feed, and go beyond basic feed syndication with widgets and optimization tips.

Chapter 7 covers advertising as a source of revenue for your blog. Using Google AdSense and other popular programs, you will select ad formats, customize widgets, and place ads on your blog. Rich media formats including YouTube AdSense units are explored.

Chapter 8 covers the ways to measure the performance of your blog using Google Analytics. You'll start with installing Analytics code on your blog and learning how Analytics is useful for Blogger blogs. This chapter is full of active tutorials on getting the most out of Google Analytics, including how to use regular expressions to create custom filters. Understanding and analyzing the reporting features of Analytics is also explored.

Chapter 9 focuses on optimizing your blog for search engines. Create site maps, understand the cryptic syntax of robots.txt, and learn tips specific to how search engines crawl and rank blogs. Taking action with checklists and techniques designed to get you started in five minutes or less.

Chapter 10 integrates your blog with your main website or any other site or blog you already have. You will add dynamic universal navigation, match the fonts and colors of your blog to other sites, add content from your blog to an external site, and learn multiple ways to use a custom domain for your Blogger blog.

For More Information: www.packtpub.com/blogger-beyond-the-basics/book

3

Social Bookmarking

Blogging is not done in a vacuum. We are all looking for ways to attract readers and share our message. Social bookmarking will help you find new readers and measure successful posts. The features of social bookmarking sites are in constant evolution. Currently they can be broadly categorized into three types:

- **User generated news:** The main goal is to increase visits by getting on the front page of a site like Digg or Reddit. This will increase traffic to a site by huge amounts for anywhere from a few minutes to a day. Sites unprepared for the avalanche of hits often choke on the visitor overload. This is commonly known as the *Slashdot effect* (<http://www.slashdot.org>); a popular technologies site whose readers have broken many a site under the crush of their visits.
- **Circle of friends sharing:** When posting to Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>), Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>), Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>), or a blog, the user knows that the main purpose of these sites is sharing content with friends and people. When a user shares a link with a friend, a slight increase in traffic may occur (unless the user is a "celebrity" blogger with thousands of followers). Focusing on such groups would be more effective for smaller blogs.
- **Online bookmarks:** Readers use these sites to manage their bookmarks online. Links can be public, and may even serve the public interest, such as "How To". Most people see these sites as a welcome alternative to trying to export or duplicate bookmarks across multiple browsers or computers. Adding links to these sites will increase the chance of first time readers becoming regulars. Examples include del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>), Furl (<http://www.furl.net>), and Ma.gnolia (<http://ma.gnolia.com>).

For More Information: www.packtpub.com/blogger-beyond-the-basics/book

How Social Bookmarking Works

Social bookmarking works because people share information they find online with each other. The different features that social bookmark services such as online bookmarks, categories, and rss feeds provide make it easier for people to find sites that interest them in new and sometimes unpredictable ways. People are connected to each other through these services, forming social and interacting networks, helping others find information, and spreading the word about sites they enjoy.

Submitting Posts without Bookmarks

Bookmarks are convenient for readers and bloggers. Submitting articles and posts manually is extra time and work for a reader. Making it easier for them by linking the post title and URL automatically encourages readers to submit posts spontaneously. Let's recommend a site to Reddit (<http://www.reddit.com>) without using bookmarks. Reddit is a popular online bookmark and user-generated news service.

Time for Action!—Become a "Bookmarker"

1. Navigate to <http://www.reddit.com> and click the **submit** link at the top of the screen.
2. You will be redirected to the register or login screen. A username and password are all that is needed. Enter a username into the **username** box. You can enter an email address such as `fruitforall@gmail.com` into the **email** text field. Type a password into the **password** box and again into the **verify password** box.

- You can choose to have the site remember your login for you by clicking on the **remember me** checkbox. After reviewing the privacy policy and user agreement pages, place a check in the box next to **I understand...** Click on the **create account** button after the form has been filled out as shown in the following screenshot:

want to join? register in seconds | submit | help | blog

reddit hot new browse stats search

create a new account

all it takes is a username and password

username:
fruitforall

email: (optional)
fruitforall@gmail.com

password:
XXXXXXXXXX

verify password:
XXXXXXXXXX

remember me

I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

is it really that easy? only one way to find out...

login

already have an account and just want to login?

username:
[input field]

password:
[input field]

remember me

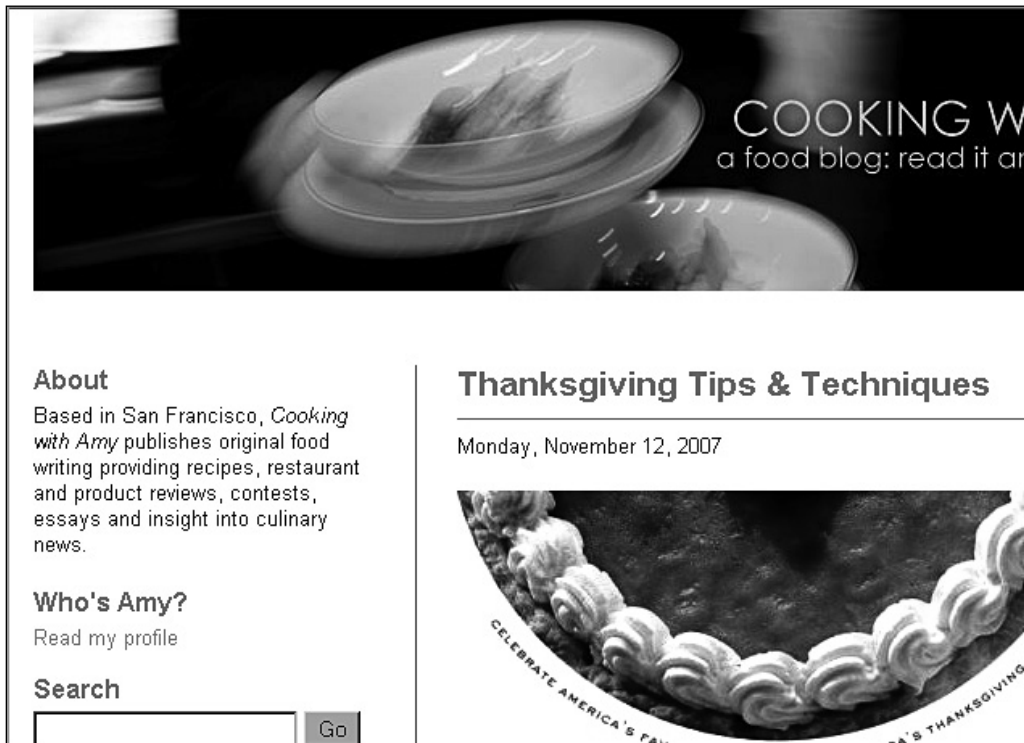
[forgot your password?](#)

feedback | bookmarklets | buttons | widget | store | advertise

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4. Find an interesting article to submit. We will submit the latest post on the (<http://cookingwithamy.blogspot.com>) blog. An example of the post being submitted is shown in the following screenshot. Copy the URL and the title of the post into a text editor such as Notepad (Windows) or Textpad (Mac).



5. Log in to Reddit and click the **submit** link. Enter all the data manually, as shown in the following screenshot. Click the **submit** button. The link has now been shared.

submit

url

title

subreddit add to my saved sites



human?

What Just Happened?

It took three steps to add one link to Reddit. That did not include the time spent finding the site we wanted to submit. Then we had to log in to the bookmarking service and go to the submit form. We had to copy all the submission information ourselves and then enter it all manually into the bookmarking site form. The URL had to be entered correctly. If we had made a mistake while typing, the process would have taken longer and been more frustrating. It took a minute or two instead of the few seconds a bookmark would take. Now let's see how social bookmarks are a useful addition to our blog. They save the readers' time and make it more likely that new readers will impulse bookmark.

Sharing Posts by Email

A common way for visitors to share posts and articles they like is to email them to other people. Blogger has an *Email Post to a Friend* feature. Using features that make sharing posts more convenient for visitors will increase the exposure of your blog. This is a small subset of a type of marketing known as **viral marketing**, where readers spread your message for you from one person to another.

"How hard is it to turn on this feature?" asks Georgia as she navigates the blog. "I'd like to try it. Then my readers will have an easy way to share my posts!"

Time for Action!—Turn On Email Posting

1. Log in to the blog, click the **Settings** link, and navigate to the **Basic** sub tab link.
2. Scroll down the list to **Show Email Post links?** and select **Yes** from the drop-down list as shown in the following screenshot:



The screenshot shows a portion of the Blogger Settings page. It contains three settings, each with a label, a description, and a dropdown menu set to 'Yes':

- Add your Blog to our listings?** A Public blog appears in your Blogger Profile. If you select "No" we will not show your blog anywhere on Blogger.com, but it will still be available on the Internet.
- Show Quick Editing on your Blog?** When you're logged in to Blogger, edit your posts from your blog with one click.
- Show Email Post links?** Email Post links let your visitors easily email posts from your blog to their friends.

3. Click on **Save Settings**. Now it's time to test the feature.
4. View the blog and click on the small email icon below the post. The **Email Post to a Friend** screen will appear.
5. The sender will need to enter his name and email address and the email address of the person he wants to send the post to. The **Message** box, which is not a required field, can contain any notes from the sender. A sample of the post content is displayed at the bottom of the screen. Click the **Send Email** button to send the message.

Email Post to a Friend: Fruit for All Test: Seasonal and shipped to you!

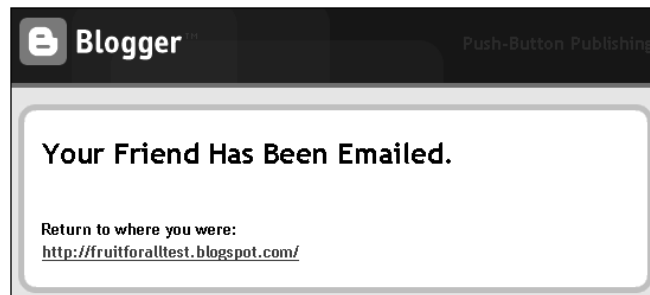
The information you provide on this form will not be used for anything other than sending the email to your friend. This feature is not to be used for advertising or excessive self-promotion.

Your Name	<input type="text" value="Lee Jordan"/>	Required
Your Email Address	<input type="text" value="leej@leesjordan.net"/>	Required
Friend's Email Address	<input type="text" value="fruitforall@gmail.com"/>	Required

Message Maximum 300 characters

Hi Georgia,
The Email Post to Friend feature is turned on!

6. An email will be sent to the address **fruitforall@gmail.com**, and a success screen is displayed with a link back to the blog, as shown in the following screenshot:



7. The submitter will be able to return to the blog using the link under **Return to where you were** on the confirmation screen.

What Just Happened?

When you logged into the blog and turned on the email post links feature, **The Email post** link setting in the blogger template was set to "show". The icon for the Email-Post-To-A-Friend feature was then visible under each blog post. Clicking on the icon brought up a new screen with a form that prompted the submitters to enter the email information for themselves and their friends. The code displayed the post at the bottom of the screen, automatically. The friend is then sent an email with a link to the post.

Adding Bookmarks to Blogs

Social bookmarks can be displayed on blogs as text links, buttons, or as dynamic mini-widgets showing the number of submissions. Adding bookmarks to blogs is a task that ranges from simple cut and paste to custom coding. We will first choose the social bookmarks and then explore several different techniques to add them to our blog.







Choosing the Right Bookmarks for Your Blog






Blogs that focus on specific topics or points of views stand out from thousands of other blogs and attract a more regular following. The social bookmarks you choose should fit the subject and tone of your blog. A technology blog would most likely have bookmarks to Digg (<http://www.digg.com>), Slashdot (<http://http://www.slashdot.org>), and Reddit (<http://www.reddit.com>).

"There are so many social bookmarking services out there," says Georgia. "How do I pick the ones that are right for my blog?"

Earlier, we had defined three broad types of social bookmark systems. You could just choose whatever bookmark sites you see your friends using. But you're smarter than that. You are on a mission to make sure your blog post links will show up where readers interested in your topic congregate. Listed below are the most popular and useful social bookmark systems and networks.

Popular Social Bookmarking Sites:

Name/Link	Symbol	Type	Description
Del.icio.us http://del.icio.us		Online Bookmarks	The most popular social bookmarking site across all types of users. Provides many categories. Most useful for bloggers who post tutorials and "How To" articles.
Digg http://www.digg.com		User Generated News	Users submit links of articles to Digg and rate them. Can search, filter, and browse. Primarily a collection of technology links, with popular news and culture.
Blinklist http://www.blinklist.com		Online Bookmarks	Easy tools to display bookmarks on social network pages or blogs, auto-fill description fields, import bookmarks from competing sites, use of thumbnails.
Furl http://www.furl.net/		Online Bookmarks	Site with a mature set of features including exporting, site caching, and metadata.
Yahoo My Web 2.0 http://myweb2.search.yahoo.com/		Circle of Friends, and Online Bookmarks	Not very focused on one audience, categories shaped by users.
Flickr http://www.flickr.com		Circle of Friends	Social bookmarking for images. Sort, browse, search, and categorize images in ways that can be listed. Interest groups and metadata may lead people to your blog. Best for blogs that use images as a major part of content.

Name/Link	Symbol	Type	Description
YouTube http://www.youtube.com/		Circle of Friends, Online video storage, and Site Bookmarking.	Visitors' rates, categories, tags, and watch videos on many subjects. A useful site for video "How To", including recipes, troubleshooting, decoration, and artistic techniques. Best for cutting edge blogs or blogs about visual topics.
Reddit http://www.reddit.com		User Generated News	Users vote submitted links up or down. Has a very general article, but also "Hot" and "Popular" categories.
Twitter http://www.twitter.com		Circle of Friends	Users give short updates and share links
StumbleUpon http://www.stumbleupon.com/		Online Bookmarking	Browse and search bookmarks and add your own. Uses a toolbar widget with browser. Categorized collection of site links.
Ma.gnolia http://ma.gnolia.com		More feature rich than Del.icio.us, same type	Rate links with a five star system, browser bookmarklet, thumbnails, and page caches.

There are many social bookmarking sites out there. If you are just starting out, submitting to a site like Reddit can't hurt. But don't be disappointed if users don't flock to your site right away. Start with sites that categorize content and encourage visitor interaction. If users can search a social bookmarking site by category, tag, or by browsing, they are more likely to find you.

Deciding Which Bookmark Services to Use

Is your blog a "niche" blog like Georgia's, or one with broader appeal that falls into a general category, such as a technology blog? If your audience is more likely to find you through specific tags, searches, or by browsing user generated categories, services offering finely categorized community driven features are the best fit. Many of these services also provide RSS feeds based on categories or tags their users show interest in.

Georgia's best bets are del.icio.us, StumbleUpon, Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit.

Having trouble deciding? Pick two or three services, and then submit posts you write for several weeks. Make sure the posts offer "How To", commentary on new products, or industry news that readers will find useful. We will cover the details of "killer" content later in this chapter. Review the results of your efforts to see if the services attracted readers or increased the hits of your blog. Remove the service with the worst results and add a different one.

The "Circle of Friends" services operate differently from the *User-News* and *Online Bookmark* services. They are usually added as third-party blog widgets, which we will explore in Chapter 5—*Using Widgets*. We will focus now on different ways to add the online bookmark type of site to our blog.

Using Simple Text Link Bookmarks

The most basic type of social bookmark is a text link. Currently the bottom of each post on Georgia's blog contains only a comments section. Georgia wants readers to be able to click a link to recommend one of her posts, instead of submitting them manually to the bookmark service.

Time for Action!—Adding Bookmarks as Text Links

Backup the current Blogger template, as discussed in Chapter 2—*Customize and Create Templates*.

1. Log in at `Blogger.com` and click the **Layout** link on the **Dashboard**. The **Page Elements** sub tab is opened by default. Click on the **Edit HTML** sub-tab of the **Layout** tab. Click on the **Expand Widgets Template** checkbox. Scroll down to this line: `<p class='post-footer-line post-footer-line-2'>`.
2. We type a list of bookmark links just above the `<p class='post-footer-line post-footer-line-2'>` line in the template code:

```
<!-- social bookmarks -->
<ul id="postsocial">
  <li>
    Bookmarks:
  </li>
  <li>
    <a expr:href="'http://del.icio.us/post?url=' + data:post.url +
      '&title=' + data:post.title' target='_blank'>
      del.icio.us</a>
  </li>
  <li>
    <a expr:href="'http://www.stumbleupon.com/submit?url=' +
      data:post.url + '&title=' + data:post.title'
```

```

        target='_blank'>StumbleUpon</a>
    </li>
    <li>
        <a expr:href='"http://reddit.com/submit?url="
            + data:post.url + "&title=" + data:post.
            title' target='_blank'>Reddit</a>
    </li>
    <li>
        <a expr:href='"http://www.blinklist.com/index.
            php?Action=Blink/addblink.php&Url=" +
            data:post.url + "&Title=" +
            data:post.title' target='_blank'>BlinkList</a>
    </li>
</ul>
<!-- end social bookmarks -->

```

3. Add the following CSS styles to the page just below the closing bracket of the `.post p` class:

```

#postsocial
{
    float:left;
    width:95%;
    margin:0;
    padding:2px 2px 2px 2px;
    list-style:none;
    background:#d1fbb2;
}
#postsocial li
{
    float:left;
    margin: 1px;
    padding:0;
    font-size:80%;
}
#postsocial a
{
    float:left;
    display:block;
    margin:0;
    padding:2px 2px;
    text-decoration:none;
    border:1px solid #f0f0ff;
    border-bottom:none;
    background:#ffffff;
}
#postsocial a:hover
{
    border-color:#727377;
    background:#d1fbb2;
}

```

3. **Save** the changes. The links should be displayed just below the comment's block. Hovering over a link with your mouse should cause a gray border and green background to display. The rest of the time the links should have a white background.



4. It is time to test the links and make sure that they work the way we expect them to. They should cause a new window to open with the **URL** and **description** (title) already populated. Click on the **del.icio.us** link to test the results:



What Just Happened?

When we loaded the blog after making the changes, we saw a group of simple button links across the bottom of each post. These were generated by the lines of XHTML tags containing each bookmark link. Each item in the bookmark list was contained in a tag like this one:

```
<a expr:href="http://del.icio.us/post?url=" + data:post.url +  
      "&amp;title=" + data:post.title' target='_blank'>  
del.icio.us</a>
```

Every link used within the Blogger template begins with `<a expr:href`. This beginning portion of the link tag identifies the tag as a link to the template code. The tags contain reference attributes such as `data:post.url` and `data:post.title`, which will automatically gather the title and label information of the posts so that the reader can easily submit the post to the bookmark service. The example tag above is saying, display the link `del.icio.us`. When it is clicked, grab the description and URL of the blog post and automatically populate the information into the submit form on the `del.icio.us` site. Each tag link may look slightly different, depending on the required format for the bookmark service.

Take it Further—Bookmark Link Scavenger Hunt

The links for over 20 popular sites are included in the code folder on this book's companion site. Most of the bookmark service provide text links you can modify to fit the blogger link tags. Find the submit link of a bookmark service you use and convert it using the tag format shown above.

If you get stuck, seven of the most popular sites are already formatted for you in the `pop_textlinks.html` file in the code folder of this book's companion website located at `http://bloggerbeefedup.blogspot.com`. We've added text links and they look fine. Many blogs use them. You can add your own background images to social bookmark links. They can look like buttons or have other attention grabbing backgrounds.

Adding Social Bookmark Buttons

"The text links work," Georgia says, as she examines the new bookmarks on the blog, "but actual buttons would look more professional."

Graphical button links are easier to spot among all the comment links and other information at the bottom of a blog post. Using buttons will give readers a quick visual cue to submit the post if they have enjoyed it.

Time for Action!—Adding Bookmark Buttons to Posts

1. Collect the bookmark images to add to the template. Most bloggers collect the icons from the bookmarking service sites, resize them, and store them on Photobucket (`http://www.photobucket.com`), Google pages (`http://pages.google.com`), Flickr (`http://www.flickr.com`), or their own domain. We will be using button icons stored at `http://www.leesjordan.net`.

2. Select the **Expand Widget Templates** checkbox. Type the following code into the template, replacing the text link code we entered previously:

```
<!-- social bookmarks with image buttons -->
<ul id="postsocial">
  <li> Bookmarks: </li>
  <li>
    <a expr:href="http://del.icio.us/post?url=" + data:post.url +
      "&title=" + data:post.title' target='_blank'>
      <img alt='Save to Delicious' src=
        'http://www.leesjordan.net/social/
        delicious.gif' /></a>
  </li>
  <li>
    <a expr:href="http://www.stumbleupon.com/submit?url=" +
      data:post.url + "&title=" + data:post.title'
      target='_blank'><img alt='Stumble It!'
        src='http://www.leesjordan.net/social/
        stumbleupon.gif' /></a>
  </li>
  <li>
    <a expr:href="http://reddit.com/submit?url=" +
      data:post.url + "&title=" + data:post.title'
      target='_blank'> <img alt='Submit to
        Reddit' src='http://www.leesjordan.net/social/
        reddit.gif' /></a>
  </li>
  <li>
    <a expr:href="http://www.blinklist.com/index.
      php?Action=Blink/addblink.php&Url=" +
      data:post.url + "&Title=" + data:post.title'
      target='_blank'> <img alt='Save to Blinklist'
        src='http://www.leesjordan.net/social/
        blinklists.gif' /></a>
  </li>
</ul>
<!-- end social bookmarks -->
```

3. **Save** and view the blog. We can see how they look on the blog in the following screenshot:



4. Test the links to see if they work as expected. Click the **StumbleUpon** button (the second button in the row) to submit Georgia's post.

Please tell us a bit about this website...

URL **http://fruitforalltest.blogspot.com/2007/10/apples-fall-fruit.html**

Title

Review

Topic arts bizarre blogs books business computers design **food** games health history home humor internet linux living mac movies music photos politics science shopping society sports technology windows

Adult? no yes - contains nudity or adult content

Language

What Just Happened?

We added image links instead of text links this time. The most important thing to remember is to decide where to host the bookmark links. The image links can be found on the bookmark service sites, but you will not have control over the size of the image. Self hosting on a free site such as Flickr, Photobucket, or Google pages is the best option if you don't have a web space. Don't forget to change the image link code shown below to match your hosting service.

```
<img alt='Save to Blinklist'
      src='http://www.leesjordan.net/social/blinklists.gif' />
```

The button link tags contain special link references that collect dynamic information from the bookmark service. When a button is clicked, the attributes in the tag are used to automatically populate the title and the URL for the reader.

Many of the popular social bookmark icons, as well as a Photoshop .psd file of the button background, are in the code folder of this book's companion website. Other icons can be found on the bookmark service sites themselves. You can use a simple image editor to shrink the icon down to 16 pixels by 16 pixels.

Adding buttons gives the site a more homemade feel, but it is time consuming to hunt down the links to the different services on the social networking sites. Wouldn't it be great if there was a third-party service out there that did the gathering for you? AddThis (<http://www.addthis.com>) offers a multi-bookmark widget popular with many bloggers.

Offering Multiple Bookmarks with One Button

Using a widget like the one offered by AddThis frees you to spend your time blogging. You can choose to show all the main bookmark networks or pick and choose from an extensive list. We'll configure the widget and then install it on our blog.

Time for Action!—Offering Multiple Bookmarks with AddThis

1. Register at the AddThis (<http://www.addthis.com>) site. Georgia has already created an account for *Fruit for All*.
2. The **AddThis Social Widget Builder** screen has multiple options to customize the widget code. Choose the **Bookmarking widget** option from the **Which kind of widget?** drop-down box. Select the style of bookmark button you want to use. We will choose the second one. The **on a Blog** option should be selected for **Where?** Choose **Blogger** for the **Blogging Platform** and then click **Get Your Free Button>>** for the code.

AddThis Social Widget Builder

Welcome to the new AddThis Social Widget Builder, a simple wizard that will help you build the widget(s) that best fit your needs. [All widgets are free!](#)

Which kind of widget?

Which widget?

- BOOKMARK
- BOOKMARK [icon] [icon] [icon] [icon]...
- SHARE [icon] [icon] [icon] [icon]...
- ADD THIS [icon] [icon] [icon] [icon]...
- Bookmark [icon] [icon] [icon] [icon]...

Where? Where do you want to put the widget?

Blogging Platform:

Free Stats
The widget comes with free stats showing what your visitors bookmark on your website, and how often?

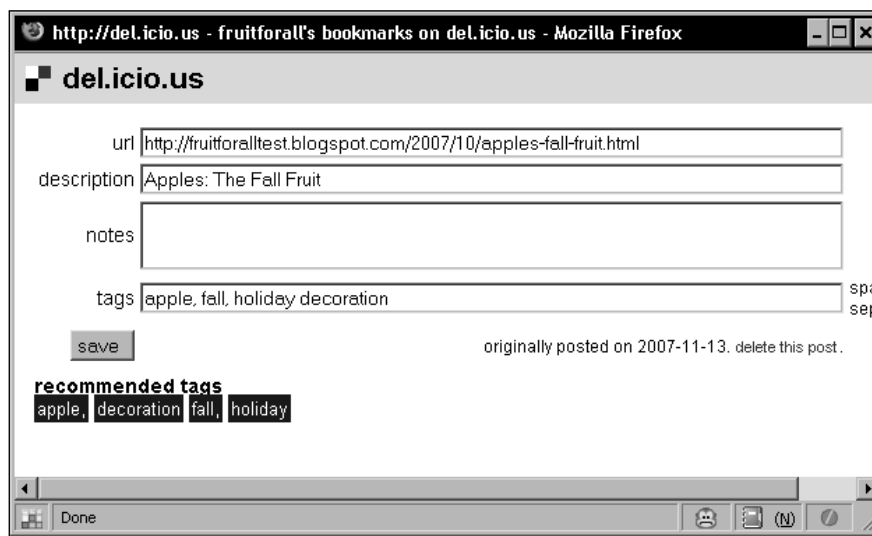
3. Next, AddThis will provide you with the code. Copy the code from the site or type the code below in place of the button links, above the `<p class='post-footer-line post-footer-line-2'>` tag in the template code:

```
<!-- AddThis Bookmark Post Dropdown BEGIN -->
<div>
  <script type='text/javascript'>addthis_url='<data:post.url/>';
    addthis_title='<data:post.title/>';
    addthis_pub='fruitforall';</script>
  <script src='http://s7.addthis.com/js/addthis_widget.php?v=12'
    type='text/javascript'></script>
</div>
<!-- AddThis Bookmark Post Dropdown END -->
```

4. **Save** the template changes and view the blog. Try hovering the cursor over the **Bookmark** button to see whether the list of bookmarks appears.



5. The button looks great. We need to test an icon to see how AddThis submits posts. Click the **Del.icio.us** icon to bring up the submission window.



6. The **URL**, **description** (title), and **tags** were auto populated for us. Taking a note of the recommended tags will help us label future posts, and will guide us in adding more labels to the current post.

What Just Happened?

The AddThis button replaced our group of social bookmark buttons. When the visitor hovers their cursor over the button, a list of social bookmark icons appear. The visitor also has the option to choose from social bookmarks not listed in the main group. A new window opens with a submission form for the service we selected. After the form is filled out, AddThis collects statistical data for us and displays it graphically on our AddThis account page. The icons displayed on the button can be changed on the AddThis site.

You can't predict which bookmarks your visitors use. Using a multiple bookmark aggregator such as AddThis keeps your posts free of bookmark clutter while giving visitors more bookmarking choices. There are other options as well. ShareThis (<http://www.sharethis.com>) has recently released the latest version of its multiple bookmark service, which includes tracking. It is available at <http://sharethis.com/publisher/>.

Adding Dynamic Counters to Bookmark Links

Showing counters on social bookmark icons is becoming popular. Dynamic counters are offered by bookmark services Reddit, Del.icio.us, Ma.gnolia, and Digg. Bookmark services are adding their own counters every day.

Readers can quickly see if a post has already been submitted to a service and can vote to increase or decrease the popularity of the post while still at the blog. We will add the popular del.icio.us dynamic bookmark and examine the features it offers. We will then explore and then explore using Feedburner Flare (<http://www.feedburner.com>) to show multiple counters easily.

Time for Action!—Adding Dynamic Links with Counters to Posts

1. Navigate to the **Edit HTML** screen on the blog, and click the **Expand Widget Templates** checkbox.

2. Type the following block of code directly above the `<p class='post-footer-line post-footer-line-2'>` tag in the template code, deleting any existing social bookmark code we added before:

```
<script type="text/javascript">if (typeof window.Delicious ==
    "undefined") window.Delicious = {};
    Delicious.BLOGBADGE_DEFAULT_CLASS = 'delicious-
    blogbadge-line';</script>
<script src="http://images.del.icio.us/static/js/
    blogbadge.js"></script>
```

3. Save the template, and view the blog to see the changes. An example of how it should look now is shown in the following screenshot:



4. Are there any differences between the information captured using this bookmark and others? Let's test the bookmark and find it out. Click on **bookmark this** on the del.icio.us button and review the results:

del.icio.us / fruitforall /

your bookmarks | your network | subscriptions | links for you | post

popular | recent

logged in as **fruitforall** | settings | logout | help

url

description

notes

tags space separated

originally posted on 2007-11-15. delete this post.

▼ **recommended tags**
apple, decoration, fall, holiday, red

▼ **your tags** » sort: alphabetically | by frequency
apple, blogging, bookmarks, decoration fall, holiday social

5. The bookmark does not display the actual post title and post URL. We will need to customize it to display that information when the reader submits the post.

What Just Happened?

We inserted a ready made counter bookmark script from the del.icio.us site into our template code. The first JavaScript code snippet will check to see if a link to del.icio.us already exists. If it does not, a special default CSS class is set to control the appearance of the badge. The code is shown for reference below:

```
<script type="text/javascript">if (typeof window.Delicious ==
    "undefined") window.Delicious = {};
    Delicious.BLOGBADGE_DEFAULT_CLASS =
    'delicious-blogbadge-line';</script>
```

Calling the code controlling the badge counter is done with the final script tag. It links to an external JavaScript file stored at the del.icio.us site.

```
<script src="http://images.del.icio.us/static/js/blogbadge.js">
</script>
```

The script counts how many times readers have recommended the blog site to del.icio.us using their own script counter. The number shown will increase each time the site is bookmarked by someone on del.icio.us.

Adding Multiple Counter Scripts Simultaneously

What if we want to display multiple scripts for different bookmarks or social networking services? Adding them individually can be very frustrating with Blogger's current syntax for post titles and URLs. We can also do it the easy way and have the bonus of automatic feeds and site statistics using a service such as Feedburner (<http://www.feedburner.com>).

Time for Action—Add Multiple Counter Scripts with Feedburner Flare

1. Log into Feedburner (<http://www.feedburner.com>) and click on the **MyFeeds** link at the top of the page. Choose the **Optimize** tab and select **FeedFlare** from the left menu. Select the checkboxes next to each service you wish to add. You can choose to show some services on the site or the feed only. Checkout the items you will be able to see in the following screenshot:

Analyze
Optimize
Publicize
Monetize
Troubleshootize
My Feeds

VIEW

Your Feed

XML Source

SERVICES

BrowserFriendly
Make subscribing simpler

SmartCast
Podcasting and iTunes settings

SmartFeed
Ensure maximum compatibility

FeedFlare
Build interactivity into each post

Link Splicer

Photo Splicer

Geotag Your Feed

Feed Image Burner

Title/Description Burner

Convert Format Burner

Content-Type Burner

Summary Burner

Event Feed

Tickerize

FeedFlare

Give your subscribers easy ways to email, tag, share, and act on the content you publish by including as many or few of the services listed below. FeedFlare places a simple footer at the bottom of each content item, helping you to distribute, inform and create a community around your content.

Official FeedFlare

Feed	Site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email This ▼ Email the current item using a web-based email form.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Email The Author ▼
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technorati Cosmos Links ▼ Displays a link to Technorati search results
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments Count ▼
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> View Creative Commons License ▼
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subscribe to this feed ▼ Provides a link to the feed. Most appropriate as a Flare choice for the site, but it might be useful for feeds that are widely resyndicated rather than subscribed to directly in a news reader.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sphere: Related Content ▼ Let your readers discover blog posts and articles related to your posts, automatically. Clicking the link pops up a cool widget with links to related content. If there is no related content for an item, the link will be hidden. NOTE that this widget should be enabled only in your site, not in your feed, because it uses Javascript to display a widget with the related content, which won't work in some feed readers.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Save to del.icio.us ▼

- As we scroll down the list we will be able to see more services. We need to check the boxes next to Technorati, Digg, and Delicious. The **Personal FeedFlare** section will remain blank until we add a new flare. Reddit is not listed under the **Official FeedFlare** section as a service. So we will add it by typing in a link to an XML file found while clicking **Browse the Catalog**. Later on, when you have extra time, check out the catalog for many other FeedFlare choices. Go ahead and type this URL into the **Personal FeedFlare** textbox: `http://dmiessler.com/feedflare/reddit.xml`.

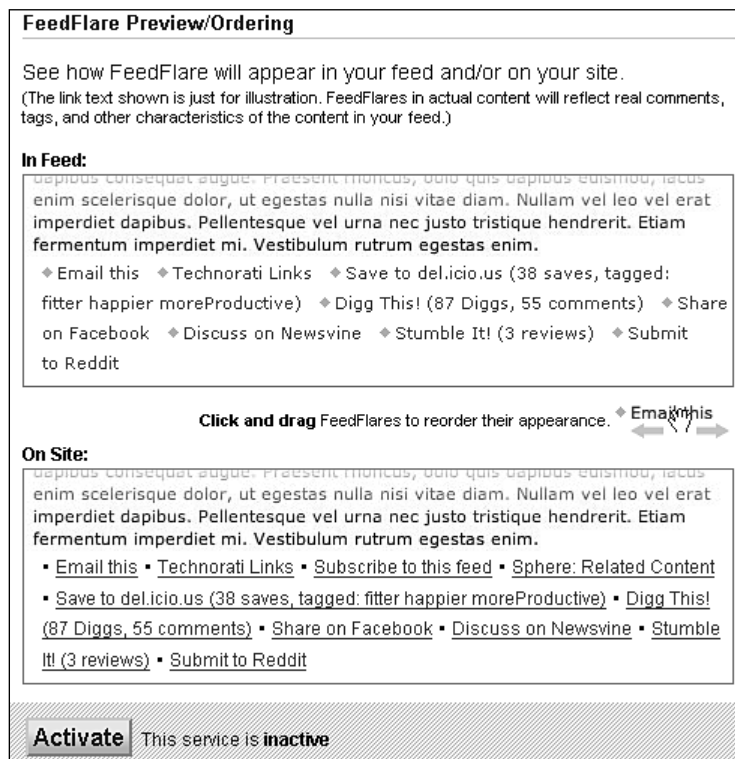
[97]

For More Information: www.packtpub.com/blogger-beyond-the-basics/book

After clicking the **Add New Flare** button, the service will show up under the **Personal FeedFlare** section as shown in the following screenshot:



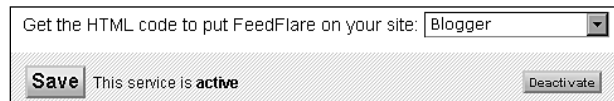
3. After selecting the **Reddit service** checkbox, scrolling down further will reveal the **FeedFlare Preview/Ordering** section. Drag and drop links into the order you wish to appear on the blog and the feed. When we are done, the service links will be in alphabetical order. Activate FeedFlare by clicking the **Activate** button at the bottom of the screen.



- A success message appears at the top of the screen indicating that the feed was updated. Now, we are ready to add the FeedFlare code to our blog.



- Scroll down to the bottom of the screen. A new drop-down option, **Get the HTML code to put FeedFlare on your site** has appeared. Select **Blogger** from the drop-down list. A new window will automatically open with the codes and instructions.



- The new window contains basic instructions and codes which we can copy and paste into our blog. Scroll down and copy the code in the text area box under the **Editing Blogger "Layouts"** heading. Now, we need to paste it into our template code.

Adding FeedFlare to your Blogger blog

This guide is for "New Blogger". Still using "Old Blogger"? Show me the Old Blogger steps.

In order to add FeedFlare to your blog, you'll need to insert a small piece of code near the post metadata (author, date, comments, etc) in your template. Fortunately, this is really easy (really!) — just follow these seven short steps.

- Sign in to Blogger.
- For the blog to which you're adding FeedFlare, click "Manage Template" or "Manage Layout" (you'll see one or the other).

View Blog

Testor's
11 Posts, last published on Sep 28, 2006

New Post Manage: [Posts](#), [Settings](#), [Template](#)

If you clicked "Layout," follow the instructions for editing Blogger Layouts. If you clicked "Template," follow the instructions for editing Blogger Templates. (Yes, we realize that's a little confusing!)

Editing Blogger "Layouts"

- Copy this code:

```

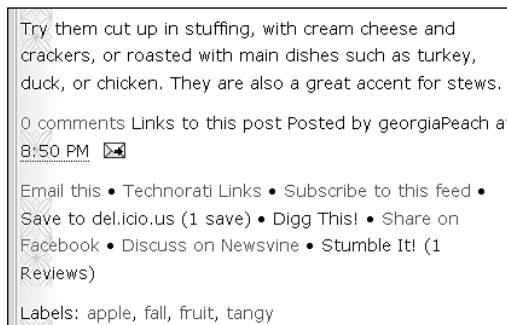
<script expr:src='http://feeds.feedburner.com/~s/FruitForAll?i=' +
data:post.url' type='text/javascript' charset='utf-8'></script>

```

7. Just like with the other buttons and bookmark links before, we will click the **Edit HTML** link under the **Layout** tab of our blog, select the **Expand Widget Templates** checkbox, and paste the code just above the second post footer line `<p class='post-footer-line post-footer-line-2'>`. The code should look like:

```
<!-- social bookmark dynamic badges -->
<script charset='utf-8' expr:
src='\"http://feeds.feedburner.com/~s/FruitForAllTestSeasonal
AndShippedToYou?i=\" + data:post.url' type='text/javascript' />
<!-- end dynamic badges -->
```

8. Save the changes and view the blog. It may take a few minutes for the links to show up, since Feedburner processes them. Clear your browser's cache. Closing and restarting your browser may also help. The block of links will appear in an ordered set below the comments area. Counters will appear after the post has been submitted to an individual bookmark service. You can see an example of the links in the following screenshot:



9. It's time to test the FeedburnerFlare code. Click the **del.icio.us** link to submit the post and view the results. The individual post title and URL are sent to the submission form just like we had intended. A copy of the submission form is displayed in the following screenshot:

The screenshot shows the del.icio.us submission interface. At the top, it says 'del.icio.us / fruitforall /' with a search box. Below that are links for 'your bookmarks', 'your network', 'subscriptions', 'links for you', and 'post'. On the right, there are links for 'popular', 'recent', and 'logged in as fruitforall | settings | logout | help'. The main form has fields for 'url' (http://fruitforalltest.blogspot.com/2007/10/apples-fall-fruit.html), 'description' (Apples: The Fall Fruit), 'notes' (empty), and 'tags' (apple, fall, holiday decoration). A 'save' button is at the bottom left. Below the form, there are 'recommended tags' (apple, decoration, fall, holiday) and 'your tags' (apple, blogging, bookmarks, decoration, fall, holiday, social). A link to 'delete this post' is also visible.

What Just Happened?

Using the del.icio.us Tagometer badge reveals to us that the information submitted was the general site title and description, and not the post title and post URL that we wanted. We took the easy route and installed multiple bookmark links with counter functionality using the FeedburnerFlare tool.

We selected the bookmark services we wanted and then activated the tool. The code for all the bookmark services was gathered by us. Once the FeedburnerFlare tool was successfully activated, we were able to copy an expression tag specifically designed for blogger:

```
<script charset='utf-8' expr:src='"http://feeds.feedburner.com/~s/
FruitForAllTestSeasonalAndShippedToYou?i=
" + data:post.url' type='text/javascript' />
</script>
```

Notice the `expr:src` attribute, which is a part of the syntax for blogger's XML template code. It converts a normal script containing link data into a tag specifically designed to be used in the template code. FeedburnerFlare tracks and updates the bookmark links using special dynamic code that communicates with the API (Application Program Interface) of each bookmark service. Every time a user submits a post to one of the bookmark services, the individual counters increase by one.



Visit the Feedburner forum (<http://forums.feedburner.com>) for more tips, common questions, and techniques.

Attracting Readers with Links

Georgia's blog is all about fruits. She has discovered that this is still a very broad topic. Creating interesting content that will attract new readers (also known as **link bait**) is vital to marketing her blog and her company. How can she figure out the different topics that visitors are really interested in? She can discover what content is spreading among people like a virus, by doing a little research.

What People are Tagging

Georgia is eager to create her own viral content. She wants to know what sort of "fruity" content people are most likely to bookmark. Searching <http://del.icio.us> for the tag "fruit" gives us the following results:

The screenshot shows the del.icio.us search interface. At the top, it says "del.icio.us / search" with navigation links for "popular | recent", "login | register | help". A search bar contains the word "fruit" and a dropdown menu is set to "del.icio.us". Below the search bar, there are "Related tags" including "food", "fruit", "health", "recipes", "gardening", "nutrition", "shopping", "science", "design", and "garden". It shows "showing 1 - 10 of 23911" results with "previous | next" navigation. The main list of results includes:

- Fallen Fruit** - save this - to food free urban fruit mapping ... [saved by 142 people](#)
- HOWTO make the perfect fruit salad and get laid [dive into mark]** - save this - to food cooking humor recipes fruit ... [saved by 128 people](#)
- Can This Fruit Be Saved? - Popular Science** - save this - to food science banana environment economics ... [saved by 147 people](#)
- Edible Arrangements® Delicious Fresh Fruit Baskets & Gift Bouquets** - save this - to gifts food shopping fruit gift ... [saved by 155 people](#)
- Where to Find Pick-Your-Own Fruit / Vegetable Farms and cut-your-own Christmas Tree Farms** - save this - to food local farm produce gardening ... [saved by 148 people](#)
- innocent drinks - fresh fruit smoothies and other healthy drinks** - save this - to drinks food innocent design health ... [saved by 148 people](#)
- Fruit & Vegetable Crate Labels - a photaset on Flickr** - save this - to flickr design images vintage retro ... [saved by 123 people](#)
- Raintree Nursery, fruit, nut and berry plants for the American fruit grower** - save this - to garden fruit gardening nursery plants ... [saved by 58 people](#)
- Read the numbers on your fruit - megnut.com** - save this - to food fruit reference organic health ... [saved by 74 people](#)
- How to Get Rid of Fruit Flies - wikiHow** - save this - to howto diy fruitflies lifehacks tips ... [saved by 100 people](#)

On the right side, there is a "sponsored results" section with several ads for fruit baskets, including "Fruit Baskets from \$29.99" and "Purchase Gourmet Fruit Baskets". At the bottom left, there is a link for "Using Firefox?".

We see some expected results including recipes for making fruit salad and picking fruits. We also found several commercial sites offering fruit baskets and fruit drinks. Practical articles about fighting fruit flies and fruit labels also appeared in the results. Based on the results, it appears people are interested in sampling free fruits, protecting the fruit they have, and looking for new ways to enjoy fruits. Georgia now has more article ideas and additional related tags to search on. It is time to use the research to create an interesting content article.

Planning an Article

The goal is to create an article that a wide number of people might find useful, as well as attract visitors who would not normally go to a fruit related site. The content should deliver exactly what the title promised: *five interesting ways to use lemons to "clean green" every day*. Users will recommend the content they like. Taking care to match the content to the title also builds visitors trust. They will see you and your site as more reliable, which will build a positive relationship and encourage repeat visits.

Keywords should be used for the labels attached to the post. The labels are also known as "tags" in social bookmarking. They are the keywords and search terms people use to identify information, including blog posts, images, podcasts, and videos. Users can also subscribe to news feeds of labels. Any type of content posted to the web can be tagged.

We are going to perform the following tasks:

- Detail five ways to "clean green" in the content of the blog post.
- Use keywords as labels.
- Upload a descriptive image that matches the content.

Time for Action!—Create a Killer Article

Georgia decides to start with a more general article that will be useful to those looking for environment friendly alternatives for cleaning products. She writes a post focusing on using lemons for household cleaning.

1. Create a new post and enter the text **Five Reasons to Go Green with Lemons** in the title area.
2. Type the following text into the content portion of the post:

`Tart, bright, and shaped like a smile, the simple lemon is useful for a variety of purposes including decorating, cooking, and cleaning. Lemon is delicious in tea or a tall icy glass of lemonade. It adds tart zest to many dishes, even pancakes. Lemon`

is also an eco-friendly household cleanser. Here are five ways to use this cheerful fruit every day.

- **Making Lemon Buttermilk:** Add a teaspoon of lemon for every 1/4 of milk to curdle milk for cooking. I use this method whenever I make pancakes.
- It can be used instead of vinegar for windows.
- The acid in lemons is very effective at removing tough stains from stove tops.
- Using it as a drain cleaner is a biodegradable way to clean the kitchen pipes without using harsh chemicals. Drop three tablespoons of baking soda into the sink drain, then squeeze one cup of lemon juice onto the powder. It creates a chemical reaction with the soda, causing a fizzing that is fun to watch!
- **Don't throw away the lemon rinds:** Use the drained lemons as cleaning pads. Sprinkle baking soda into the sink basin. Turn the lemon skins inside out so the fleshy inside will touch the surface of the sink. Scrub away until it shines.

The natural fresh scent the lemon leaves behind is a pleasant byproduct. Add a little lemon to your cleaning routine to go green.

3. Upload an attractive image that fits the content. We will use this closely cropped image of a cut lemon:



4. Publish the post. We aren't done yet. The labels need to be added to the post.
5. Open up the new post for editing and type the following keywords into the labels text entry field of the new post: lemons, environmental, environment friendly, lemonade, remove stains, biodegradable, green clean, lemon, tea, yellow, tart, fruit.
6. Are the labels we just assigned to the post effective? Do searches contain the phrases "lemon" and "eco-friendly cleaning"? The results show that we could have also used the following tags in the labels section of our post: howto, lemon tips, cleaning, organic, home, eco, sustainability.

What Just Happened?

When we created the title we used keywords to identify, clearly and briefly, what the post was about. Potential readers will often click a searched link based on the title alone. People interested in finding out more ways to clean using simple and effective natural products will be tempted to click the descriptive title.

We used the actual content in the post as a source for our keyword labels. This is an easy way to find meaningful keywords to use as labels. Next, we checked a couple of the keywords on the del.icio.us site to see if we found results related to our own post topic. We also used this opportunity to gather other labels to add to our own post. Labeling posts properly directly affects the easiness of potential readers to find your blog posts.

Feed readers, sort and present blog posts not just to people but to news aggregator services, search engines, and other web-based services. Discover the keywords potential readers use while searching for bookmarks and information by using services such as del.icio.us for research. Using keywords as labels will increase your chances of positive site traffic.

All social bookmarking sites have some type of labeling or tagging system. Visitors will be more likely to use the labels you want them to if you provide the labels with your posts.

Building an Audience with Regular Posts

Readers prefer sites that update on a regular basis. It is important to pick a post schedule and stick with it as much as possible. You will be seen as a more reliable source by posting consistently.

How do we pick one for Georgia's blog? Many blogs update every day. If there is no dedicated person, whose only job is to blog, it can be difficult to meet that expectation consistently. Many company blogs update once a week on a scheduled date, or rotate responsible bloggers. Special notices or updates would occur whenever there is time sensitive information to share.

Time for Action!—Develop a Post Schedule

Let's break it down as a chart. Create two columns on a piece of paper. Write "**Types of information**" in the column on the left and "**How often to post**" in the column on the right. Make a list of the different types of information you are posting on your blog. Are you focusing on only one type? The more time sensitive the information, the more frequently you should post.

Here is an example of a post schedule for different types of content:

Types of information	How often to post
Urgent news (Topics might include politics, Internet security, and celebrity gossip)	Several times a day
Online diary and daily progress log	Daily
Company news and weekly feature articles	Weekly
Longer, and more complex magazine style articles	Monthly

If you are using a feed service or if your users use a blog tracking service, keep in mind that updates that appear too frequently may overwhelm readers or cause them to "burn out" on the blog. The more time sensitive the information, the more often you should post. Weekly is a good place to start for most company blogs. Readers will get used to reading the blog once a week consistently. Georgia should start posting once a week, using Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>) for sporadic news updates the rest of the time.

What Just Happened?

When you filled out your own post schedule chart, you set a deadline for regular posts. Whether daily, weekly, monthly, or once an hour, you committed yourself to posting consistently. Evaluating the types of content that were the most urgent gave you the chance to step back and have the content dictate the schedule.

Summary

Now you know how to add social bookmarks to your blog and focus your posts to attract readers. We explored the different ways to add bookmarks, how to choose the social bookmarking sites that are right for your blog, how to do social networking, and shape blog content into tasty morsels for visitors.

Where to buy this book

You can buy Blogger from the Packt Publishing website:

<http://www.packtpub.com/blogger-beyond-the-basics/book>

Free shipping to the US, UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and India.

Alternatively, you can buy the book from Amazon, BN.com, Computer Manuals and most internet book retailers.



www.PacktPub.com

For More Information: www.packtpub.com/blogger-beyond-the-basics/book