Subdomains
A Cost-Efficient Way to Maximize the Use of Your Primary Domain
By
James L. Paris

If you keep buying domains, things can get expensive. If you buy them for $7, $8, whatever...your overall costs can certainly be impacted. If you're someone who is new to this and does not think you will have any reason to keep buying domains outside of the one you already have for your proprietary site; think again. As long as you are in the business of providing information, what you have to offer is essentially limitless, and it won't be long before you realize that having a multitude of domains is in your best interests. Even if you find yourself dedicating a lot of your resources to auto-content sites, where you may not be creating much organic content yourself, you still need the domains. It is not unusual for individual, professional Internet marketers who do this at a high level to own thousands of domain names. The point is, if you seek to continue to expand your efforts, you *will* be in the position of needing to expand your domain ownership, and it can get pricey.

In order to help keep this cost down, you would be wise to look to the use of *subdomains*. With a basic GoDaddy account, or with a James L. Paris Internet account, you receive up to *90* subdomains for free with your domain—pretty cool!

Before we go any further, then, let's clarify just what a subdomain is. A subdomain is a domain that is basically part of a larger domain. Think of the domain system as something that can be graphically represented like a hierarchy, with the root domain at the top and the subdomains placed below the root domain as related variations to the root (alternatively, I guess you could think of the structure as a tree, with the root domain serving as the base from which the subdomains grow out). For example, you may be familiar with the blogging platform Typepad. Typepad.com would be the root domain that represents Typepad. However, when you first sign up with Typepad, you will be assigned your own domain that's really a *subdomain*. For example, if your name is John Smith and you just opened an account with Typepad, the basic subdomain that represents your online presence with them would be johnsmith.typepad.com. Obviously, it could not be typepad.com, because that is the root, but by allowing for this sort of variation as a subdomain, Typepad can maintain its proprietary interest in your blog while still providing you with a stand-alone web presence. Anyway, johnsmith.typepad.com is an example of a subdomain of www.typepad.com.

Let me show you how I've been using subdomains on behalf of my own businesses. As you may know, I do a live podcast show each Friday, the Jim Paris Show. If you do listen to it, you may hear me announce how

you can receive all three of your credit reports for free through one of our sponsors—they will give you all three of your credit reports for free if you agree to join a free, 30-day trial membership to their credit monitoring service. I further mention that if you want to get in on this special deal, you need to go to creditreport.christianmoney.com. When a listener does that, they are taken directly to an affiliate opportunity I have with Commission Junction, in the form of Free Score 360, which is the actual monitoring service. One of the reasons to use subdomains, then, is to make it easy for people to navigate to a certain section of your website.

For example, last week, I was interacting with someone who has a website that's all about automobile-themed t-shirts; if you're someone who's a fan of Corvettes, you can get a t-shirt that says, "I Love Corvettes," that sort of thing. Anyway, this person was looking for ways to improve the site, and one of the ideas I suggested was to use subdomains: corvettes.cartshirts.com, or ford-trucks.cartshirts.com, for example. You can use these domains in your word of mouth marketing, in your print advertising, anywhere. They're also great for the search engines; you know how we always discuss the benefit of putting your keywords in your domain? By using subdomains to your keyword-based root, you can preserve that root and still maintain a variety of components of your site to which you can direct people easily. Let's say you have a website on dieting; for the sake of discussion, let's say the domain is lowfatdiets.com. Let's go further

and say that you have a section on your site for people who have diabetes. That section could be indentified by its own subdomain, like diabetes.lowfatdiets.com. Not only will you then have a separate domain for a specialized section of your site that, on its own, could be the source of a lot of interest (and leads), but you've accomplished this by preserving the integrity of your keyword-friendly root domain.

I use these subdomains all of the time. Here's another example of how I make use of these when I am speaking publicly, or I am on the radio or television.

I have said things like this many times on the radio: "So you may have seen my recent article on how to get rid of cable television by getting a device called a Roku digital video player. You can get this box for about $70, connect it to your TV, and then you can watch TV shows and movies over the Internet, using this device. Now, if you would like to order this mechanism, it's easy; all you have to do is head on over to roku.christianmoney.com." So what happens next? Well, an interested listener will then be taken right to the page of the product within my affiliate account inside of Amazon.com. Something else I've done, and you might do this for your church: "Would you like to support Christian Money.com? Well, the next time you're going to buy something from Amazon, what we'd like you to consider doing is going over to shop.christianmoney.com." In that case, I logged into my Amazon Associates account,

clicked on one of the ads, and then I just navigated around inside of Amazon until I found a good opening menu page, and that's the link that I use toward which to point my subdomain. I'm going to show you how to do this in a minute, but this is really easy to do, and it's super-beneficial for so many different reasons, to include optimization for the search engines and as a mechanism that provides an easy way for your followers to remember key components of your site that you especially want them to remember. If your website lends itself to being categorized, it's particularly useful; let's say you have a website on travel—you could have separate subdomains at your site on travel to the East Coast of the U.S., travel to the West Coast of the U.S., discount airfare, etc. Now, none of this keeps you from having *links* in your site's main menu on which people can click to get to those sections; this is just like a secondary way for people to get to important web pages within your website, to include affiliate opportunities that you may have.

Bringing Your Subdomain to Life

Let me show you how all of this is done. Using GoDaddy (whether you have accounts with GoDaddy directly or with James L. Paris Internet, it's the same procedure—if you don't happen to have accounts with either, the general procedure I'm outlining here will be applicable to wherever it is you have your account), I'm going to log in. Once I've done that, I'm going to hover my mouse over "Domains," and then click on "Domain Management." What I am doing is getting to the section of my account that lists all of the domains that I have. I will then click on the domain on which I want to work, and that will take me to what is basically the manage-ment control panel of that particular domain.

Remaining on that same page, I'm going to scroll down to the point where there is a reference to the subdomains. In this GoDaddy control panel for domains, I'm looking for the section entitled "Forward Subdomains." It is currently near the bottom of this referenced page, off to the left-hand side. If I want to actually forward a subdomain, I need to have a page in mind to which I want to send the subdomain. Here's where you really have to pay attention. I'm going to minimize the GoDaddy page I'm in, and open a new browser to *go to a page of a website to which I will want to forward a subdomain*. I will copy the URL of that page, and then go back to the "Forward Subdomain" section of the GoDaddy domain control panel. When I get back there, I will click on the "Manage" link that sits just to the right of the heading "Forward Subdomains." Where that will bring me is to what is essentially the subdomain manager of Godaddy.com (again, there will be a similar mechanism inside of wherever it is that you have your domains, if it's not GoDaddy). Inside of that screen, there is a link that I can click labeled "Add a Subdomain." I will click on that, and then a screen will open up that allows me to actually complete the process. At the top of that screen, there will be a space, labeled "Add Subdomain," which asks me to name the subdomain page. In that blank, I will create a name for the subdomain that is appropriate to the page I'm looking to highlight. For example, if I want to highlight a page on stopping collection calls at Christian Money.com, I might use as the name of the page perhaps *collectioncalls*.christianmoney.com.

Moving on slightly further down that screen, I am asked to indicate the URL of the actual

page to which the subdomain will be forwarded. In that box, labeled, "Forward this subdomain to," I will right-click and paste the URL I previously copied. From there, I will click on the "Advanced Options" link that's indicated just underneath the block into which I inserted the URL. When I click on that, I'm presented with two options for proceeding: "Forward Only," and "Forward with Masking." I'm going to choose "Forward with Masking." If I choose "Forward Only," what happens is that when the visitor actually gets to the page, instead of it continuing to show the subdomain name where the URL is reflected, the reflected URL will change to that of what the page actually is; for example, if my subdomain points to an affiliate opportunity at Amazon, the "Forward Only" option will make it so that when my visitor arrives at the Amazon page, the URL that's shown will be of the Amazon domain.

Here's why that's significant: people have a tendency to become suspicious when they type in one domain, and another domain is reflected when that new page loads. Also, preserving the subdomain as your URL helps you with the search engines, because you're able to put in a title, description, and selected keywords for that page.

Once I've finished putting in the requisite information, I will click "OK" on the button that's located at the end of this screen. After a few seconds of processing, I will be able to see that the subdomain has been added. Now, it will take 15 to 20 minutes after you've completed the process before it actually begins functioning as a forwarded subdomain, so don't panic if it doesn't seem to be working as soon as you've finished the process; it's going to take a few minutes for

the new configuration to take hold. However, you should be able to go in and test it after, say, 45 minutes, and be assured it's functioning properly. If it's still not working after that time, give it a little longer and then try again, but if it's not in place after an hour, you may need to repeat the process or seek help from a technical support representative from the place at which your domains are housed.

Now, be forewarned as you read this and perhaps do some additional research on your own, there is a bit of a buzz going on that suggests that subdomains are not all they're cracked up to be. Specifically, there's a view that these are not as helpful within the search engines because Google made a decision some months back to look at subdomains no differently than the actual domain, and that the extra word or words that make up the subdomain will not be uniquely "seen" by their various mechanisms. Honestly, I don't know that I entirely believe that. Knowing how the search engines work...that they are all about looking for the keywords...I think that this is an excellent way to build subsections of your site. I can tell you from my own personal experience that subdomains have been very useful for me in terms of their "reads" by the search engines.

Again, the overriding benefit of subdomains, as I see it, is that it allows you to promote something specific on your main website but still give the promoted section its own, easy-to-remember identity without having to purchase another, separate domain. Looking at them in this fashion, as domain mechanisms that can stand alone but still work very much in concert with your root domain, can solve a lot of problems for you as you seek to find the best, most cost-effective way to market.

WordPress

An Overview of the Very Popular Website and Blog Platform

By
James L. Paris

WordPress has become a very popular option for people to use as a platform for developing websites and blogs. Innovation is ongoing and endless in the area of the Internet, as we all know, and there will be times when one brand of product tends to enjoy a "frontrunner" status in comparison to the other brands in its same product category. Such is largely the case here with WordPress and the development of website and blog structures. In my research, including my travels to Internet marketing conferences and conventions, I have found that more and more people who really know what they're doing are using WordPress for their various web platform needs. Accordingly, we think it's a good time to spend some newsletter space looking at WordPress.

Obviously, a thorough, top-to-bottom examination of WordPress in all of its possible configurations would fall outside the scope of a manageable article. Accordingly, what we want to try to do here is provide an overview of WordPress and just what it is, as well as tell you about some of its key features.

At the outset here, I want to make note of, and have *you* make note of, three things in particular related to WordPress that are particularly important: *themes*, *widgets*, and *plug-ins*. Now, let me tell you this up front: There's a bit of a learning curve to WordPress. In the beginning, it will be a little more difficult for you to use it than using something like Website Tonight or Quick Blogcast, which are platforms that have been historically popular with people relatively new to establishing web presences. How-ever, once you get past that learning curve, you're going to find WordPress much easier to use, and you're going to be able to do many more things with it.

WordPress Themes

So what is a WordPress *theme*? At first glance, it looks like its purpose is to help you to customize the *appearance* of a WordPress website or blog. In Internet geek-speak, something like that which changes the look or design of your site is called a "skin." However, WordPress themes do much more than just change how a site or blog looks from a design or graphical perspective; they control what and how information is displayed on your site. More technically, a theme is comprised of a variety of file templates that work in concert to adjust the appearance and functionality of your site. The use of themes is particularly important for those people who are not prepared for the complexities of utilizing the necessary code on their sites and blogs that can facilitate the changes and adjustments made by themes.

If we take a look at my flagship site, Christian Money.com, and we scroll to the very bottom of the page, you will see a note that reads, "Designed by Gabfire Themes." The actual name "Gabfire Themes" appears there as an active link. If you click on that link, you will be taken to the home page of Gabfire. On that page, at the top, you will find a link labeled "Themes." If you click on *that*, you will be taken to the Gabfire Themes Library. Note that many of the themes featured there are known as "premium themes," because they cost a little bit of money to obtain.

For example, I think I paid about $50 for the theme we're currently using at Christian Money.com. However, it's important to note that most WordPress themes are available for *free*; again, as with most of what we do here, we like to be able to present those options that make your total cost of running an Internet business as low as possible. Still, if you find a theme that's particularly intriguing from the premium selection, know that you will only pay a one-time cost in the neighborhood of $30 to $50 to purchase it, so the cost of getting something especially appealing isn't too bad at all. In fact, one thing that's sort of fun to do is simply head to Google and search for "WordPress themes." Do that, and you'll see returned literally hundreds of websites that you may find useful. What is so especially terrific about these WordPress mechanisms like themes, widgets, and plug-ins is that almost *all* of them are *free*.

What's more, you can change your theme as much as you want, and you can do so without worrying about losing any of your content. This is important. Let's say you've built a comprehensive site...perhaps you now have hundreds of pages that make it up. Let's also say that you've decided it's time for a fresh look (which, by the way, is important when you have a site; even if your content changes regularly, the design of your site will get stale after a while to loyal visitors who keep coming back). Well, you can change the theme of your site without worrying that you have to rebuild all of those pages, and changing your theme is something that can be done in just a few minutes.

To help yourself out in a search for the best, most useful theme for your site, you can do a Google search on a basis that is more spe-cific than just "WordPress themes." Let's say your site is about the subject of travel. You can do a search for "WordPress travel themes," and when you do, you'll find a lot of helpful results that provide the opportunity for you to really tailor your site or blog with a theme that resonates in appearance with the subject of travel. I would suggest that you, as appropriate, think about using a theme that projects your subject area in a fashionable sort of way, and that begins with a search that couples "WordPress themes" with whatever your area of interest is.

Something else I should mention. A lot of you use Google AdSense to monetize your websites and blogs. Given that, you might want to do a search for "AdSense WordPress themes." What you'll find returned are sites that offer themes which are specifically designed to make the most out of your page in terms of realizing the greatest number of clicks from your AdSense ads.

Widgets

Let's talk about *widgets*. A widget is a small program that you can download into your WordPress website or blog that basically extends its functionality. A widget is something that generally appears in sidebars, which are the narrow columns that exist to the left and right of your blog. With widgets, you can make changes to the sidebar(s) without having to deal with any code. Think of the widget as a WordPress theme within a WordPress theme.

If you take a look at the right-hand side of the home page at Christian Money.com, most of what you'll see there has been built with widgets. You can use widgets to display links, ads, text, and a lot of other information

without really needing to know anything about WordPress, let alone anything about code.

Plug-Ins

So what is the difference between a widget and a *plug-in*? Well, they're similar in a lot of ways, but a plug-in is sort of like a widget on steroids; it will do a lot more than what a typical widget will do, and you *will* have reason to use plug-ins from time to time. If you look at the home page of Christian Money.com, you will see a host of my most recent articles featured there. In these cases, the plug-in enables me to take RSS feeds from any page that has RSS content. I can even create RSS feeds from Google, and then I can use those as the bases for content from the news. For example, if you look on the left-hand side of the home page at Christian Money.com, you will see a RSS feed for something called Christian News—this is built with a RSS plug-in. How did I do that? Well, I went to Google and did a search using the word "evangelical." After the initial round of results was returned, I went to the top of the page and clicked on "Blogs," which you may have to first locate via the "More" dropdown menu. Next, down at the very bottom, there's a button simply labeled "RSS" that I can use to create a RSS feed of all the stories containing the word "evangelical." Once I created the feed, I used the plug-in to create the sidebar content for the home page, which automatically updates throughout the day. Again, something that's *very*, *very* easy to do.

Not only is all of this stuff easy to do, but the flexibility it affords to you lets you create in an almost unlimited fashion. One of the things you can do, of the countless many, is to install a "slider" plug-in. What's a slider? Well, many of you have probably seen websites where there is a sort of rotating graphic that keeps appearing and disappearing, or changing, on the page somewhere (to see an example, you can go to the home page of the Point of View radio show at www.pointofview.net to see a slider in action; they have one going right at the top of their page, in the middle). That's called a slider, and it's a graphical way to help a website come to life. Not only does the slider work to present the various pieces of information in a rotating, graphical form, but the slider is "clickable," which means that when a visitor sees something come up on the slider about which they want to learn more, they can click on it and be taken to the appropriate page.

The other thing I just absolutely love about WordPress is how everything lines up perfectly and automatically on the page. If you look at the home page of Christian Money.com, you should be able to notice how symmetrical everything there looks; it all lines up so well, and it just looks completely professional. Well, I don't have to worry about making that happen manually, which is something I *would* have to deal with using so many other website programs. All I did on behalf of the site was select, within the theme, a three-column layout, and everything just lines up. I know that a lot of peo-

ple reading this may struggle with the wide variety of other website building programs, like Website Tonight and Quick Blogcast, in your efforts to see the elements on your pages line up satisfactorily, but with Word-Press, that becomes nothing more than a historical problem. Another cool benefit to WordPress is that it goes a long way to solving the problem of a website looking different from browser to browser. I'm sure you've noticed how websites can look a bit different from one browser to the next; your website might look one way in Internet Explorer, and then look a little different from that in Mozilla Firefox. With WordPress, because the software is regularly updated, there's a real consistency in website appearance, regardless of the browser being used to view it.

Now, when WordPress was first developed, it was created to be used for blogging. However, as you know by now, you can also use WordPress to build a website. There are just a few changes that you're going to make in the settings of your WordPress control panel.

If the Christian Money.com website was actually a blog, every time I posted a new article, it would appear right at the top of the home page, which is very similar to what happens with Quick Blogcast and the other platforms that are originally designed for blogging. However, because the Christian Money home page is a static page, meaning it's not a post, that shows you that there is a way to build bona fide pages inside of Word-Press. Websites have pages, and blogs have posts, and each look and function differently. The good news is that because WordPress makes available the option of building pages inside of it, you can build a true website. The Christian Money.com website is so

much better of a site than I could have built using another platform, and it's much easier to maintain and to which to make changes than anything else out there, in my opinion.

Something else: if you fashion yourself as someone who will ultimately go out on the economy and charge people to set up websites and blogs for them, which is another available source of income for you to consider and something we talk about from time to time here, you absolutely have to know WordPress. This is the "cutting edge" when it comes to website and blog platform selection for so many businesses now, and when I say "businesses," I'm not speaking just of small sole proprietorships that dot the landscape of neighborhoods throughout the country; I'm speaking, too, of enormous companies, including those whose purpose is delivering communications, like major news networks and other significant media outlets. Some examples of those include the online versions of *The Wall Street Journal*, *People*, and *CNN*, so your intimate knowledge of WordPress can put you in fast company. It's also a good idea to visit sites such as those so that can see just how great of a site can come simply from WordPress.

If you are already a member of our Internet Coaching program, than you know that you can receive unlimited email support if you seek to have your own WordPress-based website or blog. However, if you are *not*, and you wish to convert your existing Internet business to WordPress and would also like the ability to receive help along the way with that, as well as with other key aspects of Internet marketing, allow me to invite you to join our Internet Coaching program. You may learn more about that by visiting www.makemoneywithawebsite.us.