



RAINMAKER PLATFORM

Rainmaker Webinars

How to Set Up and Manage Your Rainmaker Blog

Jerod Morris and Chris Garrett



TRANSCRIPT



How to Set Up and Manage Your Rainmaker Blog

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How to Set Up and Manage Your Rainmaker Blog

Jerod Morris and Chris Garrett

Jerod: Hello there everybody and welcome to the latest edition of the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap. Very excited to be with you here today along with Chris Garrett to talk about how to set up and manage your Rainmaker blog. Chris, how are you doing today?

Chris: Hello everybody.

Jerod: All right. This session begins our Blogging as Content Marketing section of the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap. That's what we'll be talking about over the next four sessions. We'll have two webinars, two Q&A's, the normal schedule, and this first session is called How to Set Up and Manage Your Rainmaker Blog.

What is your content marketing strategy? (00:00:40)

Jerod: I want to begin this session with a question. Here's that question for you because before we even get into the actual mechanics of setting up your blog, it's important to reflect on a question that Rafal asked us to ask ourselves



back in the design session that we did a couple of weeks back and that is with content.

We can't really effectively talk about our design without understanding what our content is going to be and it's very hard to set up a blog and figure out how everything on our site is going to be laid out in respect to content until we understand what our content strategy is. That is my question for you here this morning and it's more of a rhetorical question than anything although if you want to drop us a note and let us know in the question box, certainly we'd love to read your answer but what is your content marketing strategy?

The reason why this is such an important question is because of what the research and the data has shown when it comes to actually having a documented content marketing strategy. The first step of course is to at least understand this, mentally to have thought about it.

The next step even better is to document it. A couple of bullet points from a recent article that Brian Clark posted in his content strategy series that he's been writing on Copyblogger and this relates back to some research that the Content Market Institute did but you're going to be far more likely to consider yourself effective at content marketing when you understand your strategy and have documented it.

You will feel significantly less challenged by every aspect of content marketing when you know your strategy and document it. You'll also generally consider



yourself more effective in your use of all content marketing tactics and social media channels and you will be able to justify spending a higher percentage of your marketing budget on content marketing. For all of those reasons and many more, it's important to understand this and to understand what your answer is to this question. I do want to offer up some resources for you that if you haven't already taken advantage of them, I highly recommend them.

If you go to rainmakerplatform.com/content-strategy, I've put together the links of Brian's five article series that he kicked off 2017 with about getting back to the basics of content strategy. They're all excellent articles in their own right. They walk you through how to be very intentional in defining and setting up your content strategy and so if you haven't had a chance yet to check out those articles, they're all linked right there. Again, that is rainmakerplatform.com/content-strategy.

What we are trying to achieve with the content marketing strategy (00:03:17)

Jerod: Chris, one more slide on this before we get into the tutorials and how to actually set this up with Rainmaker but let's just give a brief overview of a general content marketing strategy. And folks who have been on webinars with us before may have seen this graphic that we have up here but can you touch briefly on the concepts of attraction, retention and conversion, which is what we're trying to achieve with the content marketing strategy?



Chris: Yes. This is business blogging as content marketing, so there are other approaches but this is what we use as a company, and what Jerod and I personally do. Attraction, retention and conversion means you hit all the major points that you need to in the customers/buyers journey.

The reason why it's laid out like this is because it's a flow. It goes from somebody not knowing anything about you through to warming up to you and then converting at the end and actually becoming a customer but actually we also represent it as a cycle. When we go into the next webinar, when we talk about attracting and converting people into subscribers and converting them into customers, we'll go into more detail about that.

At the top here we've got the attraction strategy. You need attraction content. You need attraction mechanisms. We don't talk about driving traffic so much as attracting visitors because they're human beings with interests that you need to connect with.

Driving traffic sounds like a cattle rancher. It sounds like you're pushing people but you're actually magnetically attracting them. We need to pull people from offline and online spaces. Offline it might be word of mouth referrals, it might be doing in-person workshops, attending events, speaking at events, and going to meet ups. It might be print advertising and print articles.

Online you've got your forums, you've got your social media, other people's blogs, holding webinars, being an interviewee, interviewing people, and



writing online articles. That's attraction because content is the currency of the Web. It's what is shared in social media. It's what people click on. You need that content. You create content that attracts people but specifically you want to work out who you most wanted prospects are and attract them with their needs, their interests that overlap with your expertise. We get people to come to your blog and then hopefully we get them to come back and that's your retention.

You need to attract people from search engines, from clicking links, from social media, wherever they come from but they need to be attracted by your knowledge and your expertise. So when we say we've attracted people to our blog, we're attracting people to our articles and that's a vital difference.

Most people don't actually come to the homepage of your website, they come to a piece of content that has been shared by somebody else or shared by you and they click through to it. Each page of your website, each article on your blog needs to be its own landing page and get people on to the email list. Those are the prospects. That's your biggest asset.

In future you don't have to do that work. They're already in your list. You can just email your list and you can get the attention again but you need to keep them happy, you need to give them an incentive and then hopefully as they warm up to you and they realize that you've got expertise that's going to help them, it moves to the conversion phase where you've got a product sequence.



You might have a small, medium and large. You might have an introductory product. You might have a bigger product and then something to upsell them to. You need to cross sell and upsell and get them on to a buyer's list and email list about customers.

That's the content marketing strategy in a nutshell. As I said, we're going to go into this deeper on future webinars but right now what we're talking about is building the foundations. That platform that you can build upon which is going to help you have a home base where all your activities like social media, YouTube, interviews you do, articles you do, guest posts you do, it's all going to lead back to this central hub so you can capture their interest, warm them up and hopefully convert a percentage of them into customers. I've rattled through that whole thing like it makes sense.

Jerod: No, that's great. Thank you Chris. Like you said, we're going to be talking about this part right here in the center over these next couple of sessions, your blog.

Here's the Blogging as Content Marketing Series. Today we're talking about how to set up and manage your Rainmaker blog. We'll have a Q&A on the topics that we discuss today and then webinar two in two weeks will be How to Use Rainmaker to Turn Blog Traffic into Subscribers. If you have questions about that, about opt ins and that kind of thing, we will be covering that in webinar number two. We'll cover all of this over these next two sessions with Q&A's after each one.



The topics for this session (00:08:28)

Jerod: In terms of the roadmap for today's session, as we move through How to Set Up and Manage your Rainmaker Blog, here are the topics that we're going to tackle today.

We're going to talk about sidebars or maybe no sidebars but how you set those up, how you set up your content areas, how you create and manage your categories and your tags as well as comments, plus some other content settings that you want to be aware of in Rainmaker. How you easily add social sharing buttons to your Rainmaker blog pages and then some basic pages that you want to make sure that you have set up and ready to go when you're ready to start blogging.

Sidebar (or no sidebar?) (00:09:05)

Jerod: Without further ado let's hop right in here to the tutorial part of the presentation and let's start out by talking about sidebars. Of course the question to answer is, do you want to have a sidebar because there has obviously been a movement in part led by Brian Gardner, one of our colleagues here at Rainmaker Digital where some sites for simplicity sake, for minimalism sake, do not have a sidebar and so you want to make that choice for if you want one or not.



For some really good insight on how to make that decision I recommend you go back if you haven't listened to those sessions on design with Rafal. Definitely take a look at those.

I think certainly if your long term plan is to do something with a membership site, to have an LMS ... There are a lot of reasons to have a sidebar on your site and so you just want to make sure that you're intentional as you make that decision.

Now the first step that you are going to want to take once you do make that decision is you want to choose your default layout. Most of the themes that you can choose in Rainmaker will give you the option to have a sidebar or to not have a sidebar. What you want to do to choose this is go to Settings and click on 'Design' and then the very first option in your design settings is Site Layout.

This is what is typical, is you have an option for a sidebar on the right, you have an option for a sidebar on the left or you have the option for no sidebar and this will be the default. Your posts and pages they will be set to this by default. Now, you can override it on an individual page basis but it's obviously easier to set your default to be the one that you're going to use most often. Make your choice right here. Then again you can override that default layout for individual posts and pages.



I want to show you how to do that because like Chris said, you have to think of your pages as landing pages. Every single page because if someone comes from social media, if they come from search engine or wherever they come from, whether that's their first time there, their 15th time there, there should be some kind of call to action on that page for what you want them to do.

Again, the goal of one page may work better without a sidebar and the goal of another page may work better with a sidebar. You want to be able to have that granular control and you want to be intentional about it and you do have that.

Obviously there are a couple of different ways that you can get to a post or a page. You can add a new one and to do that you just click here for 'Add New' or you can go to pages that are already created. If you do that just edit a page that is already created. I created a test post that we can use for purposes of demonstration here and so either way that will bring you to the post edit page. If you scroll down the layout settings are typically right underneath the content area where you enter your content and so you can select the layout for this particular page.

The default option obviously is the default layout that you chose in design settings but if you want to vary from that then you can choose one of these three options right here. Choose one of those options. You'll see a subtle highlight there so you'll know that you've chosen it and then you want to actually choose your sidebar. Rainmaker will give you the choice of as many



different sidebars as you want to create. Once you have gone and chosen where the sidebar will be for this particular post, go to Sidebar Selection and then you can choose your sidebar.

You'll have a default sidebar and that will obviously be the one that is chosen by default. I'm going to show you how to edit that here in just a minute but if you have created any dynamic sidebars and we'll cover the creation of dynamic sidebars in a future session, you can choose those sidebars here. They'll all be created right there and you can create dynamic sidebars for a number of different reasons.

Like for example on my site [The Assembly Call](#) we have several different shows in addition to our post-game show. For each one of those shows it has its own sidebar that has the show art for that show and different things that are particular specific to that show and we can just choose the sidebar right here when we're going in and editing that particular page.

If you want more on dynamic sidebars right now, I would recommend the Knowledge Base article [Add a Dynamic Sidebar to Your Site](#). That will give you the overview and of course if you have any specific questions about it you can always ask Support and they will be able to help you out with that. There's also lots of other documentation in the Knowledge Base about it. That is where you would choose your sidebar and then of course it gets into content areas.



We'll get into that in just a second because the sidebar is only as good as the content areas that fill it. Chris, any additional insight on sidebars? How to choose them, when to choose them?

Chris: Yeah. I think the first thing I'd say is the default sidebar is going to be fine if you're just doing a blog and just fill it with the content that you want to have.

The only reason I've got a different sidebar is because I have a course so it's my sign up incentive. I have a robot building course. In the course I have the sidebar on the left and it's all about the course and in the blog I've used the regular sidebar on the right, so there's a shift there so I have set the sidebar. For most people one sidebar is going to be fine if it's a blog and you're not doing different things like that, and as Jerod says he's got different shows so he has different sidebars for the shows. Don't be overwhelmed by it. It's just an option.

Content areas (00:14:40)

Jerod: Yup. Let's talk now about content areas. Content areas are the elements that will go into your sidebars. Let's talk about how and where you add those. If you click on 'Design' you will see a link for Content Areas and that will take you to the Content Areas menu. Click that link and then the first one that you will see is your Primary Sidebar. This is going to be that default sidebar



that will be up there for you and so there are a number of available widgets here that you can add to your content areas. Number of pre-made, ready to go widgets so you ... I dragged several of them over here just for purposes of demonstration but they're the ones that you would typically see in a sidebar.

You've got an opt in form, which is perhaps the most common and useful widget that you could have in your content area, so an opt in form. You can add a member profile. You can add recent posts which can obviously be very useful in terms of keeping people on the site, getting them to click through to other pages on your site. You can add simple social icons and of course you can add a simple text widget right here and put anything in there that you want. Whether it's text, whether it's code, anything that you want to put in there. If you're going to have ads on your site you would do that there.

You can drag and drop and move them around. If I want to put recent posts at the top I could drag that and move it up here. You've got a lot of different options here and when you click on the down arrow on any of these, it will open up a whole range of options so that you can set these content areas up properly. I'm going to show you a couple examples here.

For example the opt in form, and this is an example of the opt in form from Chris's site, [Maker Hacks](#). You see that you can define the title. You can define the text that will show before the form or after the form. You can choose your opt in service.



If you're going to use RainMail then you can obviously choose the RainMail list that people would go to when they opt in. You can define your button text. You can define all of that here. Click 'Save' and then that will automatically populate on any sidebars that you have chosen to use the primary default sidebar for. Very easy. Same thing here. You can add member profile. You can ... It'll pull in your picture. It can pull in your author bio if you want it to. Number of different options there.

As I will show you in the future on my test site I have my author box at the bottom of my post and so you don't necessarily need to do a box in the sidebar or at the bottom of the post but may be you want yours at the top of the sidebar so people can see you right when they get to the page as opposed to the bottom. Those are all choices that you get to make and they will be determined in part by your content strategy and by your content and your audience and your context and your design.

Obviously, all of those different elements there will enter into the decision but Rainmaker offers a lot of flexibility that will allow you to make the choice that best fits your content.

Chris: In that case Jerod in the screenshot, that's actually a text box.

Jerod: Oh, that is a text box. Okay.



Chris: Yes. When somebody comes to the website I want people to know where they are and why they should listen to me and then they can click through to my About page. It's just a way of orienting people and getting them to know me and be more familiar and it's like a welcome. It's nice especially if you're a solo, entrepreneurial solo blogger, it's nice for people to get to know you. This is off my chrisg.com site.

It's basically a single author blog so when somebody comes to the site, it allows them to get to know me a little bit. The good thing about having a little about box is it means that people don't have to go hunting around for it and it might be enough that, that little elevator pitch kind of thing might be enough for them to just think, "Okay, this is somebody I should listen to."

Jerod: Yeah, and I think especially if you're going to use a sidebar it can be very helpful especially in that context. I have tended on my content pages like on my blog pages to go without a sidebar just because I like that as a reader and so I tend to choose that on my sites and so I will often use the author box at the bottom of the post. You do lose a little bit obviously in the fact that not everybody is going to get to the bottom of your posts to see that but to me you gain a little bit better clearer reader experience.

There's positives and negatives to each choice and you just want to weigh them and make the best one that works for you. I think you could actually recreate something that looks just like this with the member profile widget



and obviously you can do with a text widget because those are extremely versatile because they're so open ended.

Chris: But the member profile shows who is currently logged in, so it'll be showing your profile to you.

Jerod: Oh, good call. That's right. So you do want to use that more on a membership type site?

Chris: Yeah.

After Entry content areas (00:19:33)

Jerod: Okay. Let's talk about After Entry content areas. These are especially helpful if you're not going to have a sidebar but they can still be very useful even if you are going to have a sidebar.

Someone asked here also about the different content areas here front page one through front page seven and this looks different for you. The theme that you have will dictate the different default content options that are here. The site that I'm using for the test is using Altitude Pro and Altitude Pro has seven content areas on the front page. A different theme is going to have different content areas right here. That's why those look different and will be different from theme to theme.



For the After Entry content area you edit this the same way that you would do your primary sidebar and you can click this arrow here to open it up and see what widgets are in there and drag new widgets in and drag new widgets out. A lot of times again, Opt In Form is nice to have here after the entry.

The thinking there is, if someone has made it all the way to the bottom of your post they're probably pretty engaged. That's a pretty good indication and so having an opt in form down there for them to get more can be a very useful spot for it but you can add anything that you want here to the After Entry widget and then that will show up as it suggests right after the entry.

Here's just that very basic text widget that you saw right here. This is just default text just so that you can see where it is and then I also will have an opt in widget there. You can see it but I didn't set it up so that's why it didn't actually populate in this screenshot right here. Then the Author Box is turned on or off from your profile settings.

This isn't actually a widget that you would edit in content areas but you can turn it on or off in your Author Box and I believe the first webinar that we did about the basic Rainmaker settings shows you how to turn that on or off on individual posts and on your author archive page.

Now, here's the question. As we look here at the bottom of this page it says categorized, uncategorized. That's not very helpful so let's talk next about



categories. Chris, anything else to add to After Entry widget or Content Areas before we move on?

Chris: We'll talk more about that when we talk about getting people onto email. Just remember it's an important area like Jerod said earlier. After somebody has read the article, that's what they're going to see so it's a vital area to work on.

Categories and tags (00:22:04)

Jerod: Yup. Let's talk about categories and tags. How you set them up, how you edit them, how you manage them.

The first step is to create your categories. Again, this is going to go back to your content strategy. I know one failing that I have had on a lot of sites that I have started is not thinking very intentionally about my categories and just kind of creating them adhoc. "Oh, I've got a new post. Doesn't really fit in any of the categories that I have. Let me just add a new category." That quickly gets kind of unwieldy.

You really want your categories to align with the cornerstone concepts that you're going to be talking about and if there are way too many of them that may be an indication that you aren't properly categorizing your content. Maybe you don't understand it clearly enough or not that you don't



understand the content but may be that you don't understand the paths that you're taking your audience on and kind of the ways that you're explaining it and breaking it down for them.

What's really good about going through this exercise with categories and creating them ahead of time is it really forces you to go back to the basics of your content strategy, which is such an important part of creating a successful site. When you are ready to do that, go to click on the Content button and then you will find a link for Post Categories. You want to click on that and then this allows you to add new categories. You can see right now it's just the default. You just have, there's Uncategorized and that's where the posts go by default and so I can go in and create some categories.

I'm going to create a category called Basics. I can also choose the slug for that and I mean, almost always that's just going to be the same category name unless the actual name of the category is a little bit complicated or you're already using that slug for something else. You then you just very simply hit 'Add New Category'. If you want to have nested categories within bigger categories, you can obviously choose a parent. I could have a basics category and then have several different subcategories beneath that if I wanted to.

You would just choose that and if you don't choose it right away but you realize later that you want to reorganize things, you can edit the category and edit the parent, edit the name. Any of that that you want to do and if you want



to edit just come right back to this page, scroll over the category. Once it's been created, click 'Edit' and that will bring up the options for you to edit it as well as ...

Chris: And I always edit the Uncategorized so I rename it to News or something so that I don't have uncategorized at all on my site.

Jerod: Yup. Then you can also set up and I didn't create slides for this but once you go in here and edit the category you can then edit the settings for that page. The title that's on the page, the description of the top of the category page. All that is available right there from the edit category page.

Chris: Let's just talk about that a second because it's not on the screen but if you edit your category, that's called an archive page and you can actually have copy and content about that archive and that can help your search engine traffic because what you're doing is you're making a straight list of articles into something that's more like a content landing page.

Say you've got a category that is tutorials at the top of that, you can have it say, "This is my tutorials category where you can learn about keyword, keyword, keyword" and that can help your search engine traffic because it allows you to direct people to that category and talk about that as an archive. That can be quite powerful. What Brian did on [his Boulder site](#) is the same thing. He has restaurant reviews and stuff.



Jerod: Yeah, that actually would have been helpful to add into the slides here so I'm going to live dangerously Chris. I'm going to do something live here real quick just to show an example of this. This is on my Assembly Call site. This is my category page. For example, we do a news round up every week and we call it [6-Banner Saturday](#). If we go and view the category page for this, you'll see that the top of the page it has the title, I've got a description in there, I've got a description of exactly what it is for every Saturday morning we round up blah blah blah.

Then I've also for people to get the full round up they have to be members and so I've even got an opt in right here, a link that takes them to where they can start their free membership and then it rolls through all of the different pages that are tagged with this category.

If we click right here on Edit, you'll see all the different options for being able to edit this. You've got name, slug and parent, like we showed you before. You can actually add a dynamic sidebar to this, if you want a custom sidebar to it and then you've got your headline. You can do your intro text and it does accept HTML in here so that's why I was able to add a link and that's where I could do a subhead with an H4 tag.

You can choose a layout, so if you do want to have a sidebar and then you have your SEO settings as well. You can see that I kind of combine the two titles for my SEO title because 6-Banner Saturday, is a very, very specific



name to our site that's kind of branded around the topic but IU basketball news roundups, that's the kind of thing someone might actually search for. That's why I want to have both of those in there even though I didn't want to complicate the category name too much.

All those different options available for you there on your category page. I highly recommend that you take advantage of those and make sure that your category pages offer a very nice inviting experience for people when they get there either navigating from your site or even better when people find them via search engines to help orient them for what kind of content is going to be there.

Chris: We'll talk more about that when we get more into traffic and search and things because we'll have a dedicated session about that.

Jerod: Yeah. I wanted to make sure that we covered that. The way that you assign categories to posts once you have them created. Very, very simple. If you want to go and add categories like for instance this test post that I did, when I created it I didn't have any categories yet.

Now that I have added a category, I want to add that category here where you can go and just click 'Quick Edit' and you don't actually have to click in all the way to the page and reload the page and you can just with Quick Edit you can use the quick edit options and I can add basics to it. I click update and now



this page is automatically updated and there's a way to do that in bulk too. If you have questions about how to do that in bulk, we talked about that on the first or second webinar back when we worked on the default settings.

The other way of course is that you can actually go into the page. If you're actually working on the post itself, then your categories are right over here to the right, right underneath the Update, Publish and Schedule buttons so that you can't miss it. Make sure that you ... You always want to make sure that you hit these categories before you publish the post and so you just choose the category right there. You can choose multiple categories if you want to and sometimes based on how you have things set up, you may want to choose multiple categories.

Like for example, you may have a category for Basics but you may also want to have a separate category for Popular Posts or My Best Stuff. You know that this is one of your best posts and you want to keep all of those organized so you might have that set up as categories. You can do it with tags too but if you want you can use multiple categories and there are many different reasons why you may want to do so based on how you're organizing your content.

If you get here and you say, "Okay, I think this is a good spot for a new category." What I would say is before you click 'New Category' and just add it because if you do that too much, again you run the risk of your categories getting kind of crazy.



Make sure that you step back, really think about it, be intentional, and make sure it's how you want to organize your content but then you can add the new category right there. You can make it a subcategory of another one but you can do that right there from the post edit page as well.

Chris: I recommend that you have a maximum of five to seven categories. What you've got to remember is categories are not for your own sense of organization, they're not a filing system, they are more like aisles in a bookstore or a library. It's what people are going to be looking for on your site. If you have too many categories then it's overwhelming, it's the paradox of choice. People end up making no choice and they go away.

So, what are people going to look for on your site? What are you wanting to signal to search engines that your site is about? I have like news and I have tutorials. It's the sections of the site that somebody might look for and then the tags are for cross filing.

If you're doing a site with movie reviews, you would have science fiction, romantic comedy, that kind of thing, documentary. Think about the organization in terms of what you want to attract people to, rather than how you mentally categorize it in your head.

Jerod: Yeah. Great advice Chris.



Create tags (00:31:07)

Jerod: Let's talk about tags and Chris just gave you a very great description of the difference between categories and tags, how you want to think about them, how it is best to use them and you create tags in a very similar way to how you create categories.

Go to the content menu, click on 'Post Tags' and then you add the name of your tag, add the slug for your tag, click 'Add New Tag' and it goes right here into the menu. If you need to edit the tag you can do it the exact same way by going back in here, scrolling over and you'll find the edit button and you can edit that tag. Chris, does the tag edit, does it give you the same options as category edit, if you want to create tag pages that look like category pages?

Chris: Yeah. I think so. Amelia and Brian should be able to tell me if we're wrong but I think so because tags are very similar in terms of how they're used in terms of blogging for a visibility. Tags do help your search engine optimization but again I write for a site about 3D printing and all the brands of 3D printers are tagged.

If somebody just wants to know about the certain printer called the Prusa, they can click on Prusa and see all their articles that have been done about that particular brand and skip everything else. Brian says, "Yes, you do get a tag page for each tag." I thought so because it's an archive. It's the same with the categories. It's an archive of those.



Jerod: Yeah you do ... Going live again. If you go to your tag page you'll also see a nice little tag cloud here, that kind of tells you how often you've been using tags which is interesting as you look at just different content, how often you've talked about certain things and I believe you can put that tag cloud on your sidebar too, if you want to, as a content area. Yes, you have that to look at when you go in here to your tags and then again you click 'Edit' right there and you'll be able to see where you edit for that tag page. Back over here.

Chris: Kelly says too many categories on her blog showed her focus was drifting. Thanks for sharing the five to seven. I've got a friend who went absolutely crazy with the categories to the point where he was using the words education, tutorial, class, workshop and they're all the same thing but every time he did a new post he created a new category because it was like in his head subtly different so nobody knew what to click and his sidebar became massive. He also went crazy with tags and it actually slowed his entire site down because the database got big. So that's another consideration.

Jerod: Yup. As Amelia says, categories are like chapters in a book and tags are like the index at the back of the book, which is a great way to look at it and think about it.

Chris another question I want you to address real quick. Jarmar asked, "Are these tags related to RainMail tags?" That answer is no.



Chris: Yeah. These are purely about organizing your blog posts and your articles. Email tags are similar in that what you're doing is adding information to the information so it's meta. It's information about information. You're organizing it but with the email tags what you're doing is you're tagging the person, you're tagging the subscriber. With the blog post tags you're tagging the content.

Assign tags to posts (00:34:29)

Jerod: Yup. All righty. Then assigning tags to posts is very similar to how do you assign categories to post. So if you want to do a quick edit and add some tags to a post that is already published click 'Quick Edit' and you can go over here ... Here's what's nice about tags because again you're probably going to have more tags than you have categories and sometimes you think, "Oh crap. Let's see this. Here's another post where I mentioned Steve Jobs. You know, did I just put his last name or did I put both of his names?"

As you search for it it'll come up with tags that start with similar letters, so it gives you the options of what you've already used which is really, really helpful because it would obviously not be fun to have to go back and look through all your tags, to look for that each time.

As you start to type it in you'll see it come up right here and you can click on it, add it. Same thing. Just click 'Update' and the tag will be updated and assigned



to that post. Again, the same thing if you're actually in there editing the post on the post edit screen it's the same thing. You can start typing in your tag. You can actually choose from the most used tags if you click that link. Just click 'Add' and then 'Update' and you will be good to go.

Chris: Really good tips from Amelia. What they see in the Support desk a lot is where people use the same slug for different things. Don't have a page with the same slug as a tag because the archive will override the page. You might have a landing page called News. If you then created a tag called 'news,' then you're going to override that page.

Amelia says people actually use the tag 'blog,' which means nobody can find your blog anymore. You have to be really careful with your slugs to keep them unique and then you're not going to have that problem. Good point Amelia.

Jerod: Very nice. Then, and Catherine said, "What is a slug?" The slug is just like when you have a URL. Remember that URL that I put at the very beginning of the presentation RainmakerPlatform.com/content-strategy, the slug there is content-strategy. Right here when we define this slug, if the slug were 'humility' then that's what would be in the URL. It's that little part of the URL.

Yeah, as Chris said, example.com/slug like the filename part of the link. That's what the slug is. On individual posts you can edit the slug for each individual post and page. It's right there underneath the subject line. You can actually edit that.



Comments (and other content settings) (00:37:05)

Jerod: Let's talk comments and other content settings because comments are a big decision. If you are going to allow comments on your posts, on your pages, again, this goes back to your content strategy, to your blog strategy so you really want to think about that.

Do you want people to be able to comment on posts? Obviously there are positives to that. You get activity. It's a great way to learn from your audience. It's a great way to see what concepts are hitting, what concepts aren't, what people are interested in and what they want more of. The benefits of comments are pretty clear to see but you'll also need to remember that there are costs of comments.

There is the cost of the time to moderate the comments. You probably are going to want to go in and respond to comments if you're having them. That encourages people to continue commenting. You just want to make sure that if you're going to tacitly agree to that investment of time that there's a real reason behind why you're doing it.

I think when you're beginning a site, you definitely almost surely want to have comments and as your site gets a little bit more mature and may be you're having 50 to 100 comments on each one, that can definitely be a good thing. But if you're also having to go in and moderate a lot and respond to a lot of comments, you may say, "You know, this isn't worth the time."



Chris: There is the opposite problem as well where you don't get any comments and that's negative social proof because it's like if you're inviting people to comment and nobody is commenting, and no matter what you do nobody adds a comment, then it looks like it's an unpopular blog. I actually found that with my nerdy Maker Hacks site. I've got 4,000 Facebook group members but nobody was commenting on the article. So I turned comments off and just send people to the Facebook group now.

Jerod: Yup. When you make that decision and you want to decide what you're going to do with comments, you want to go to your content settings. The way that you get to your content settings, as with all settings is the little settings gear. Click 'Comment' and then this will take you to these global comment settings. Right up here at the top that is where you'll find Comment Settings. You can choose the defaults here.

If you want to enable comments on posts, if you want to enable comments on pages, and if you want to enable comments on protected content. Say a page in your Learning Management System or some page that is behind a membership wall that not everybody can get to. They have to log in to get to that. You choose your defaults right here.

Now, the other thing to remember is just as we talked about before with sidebars, you can override the default on individual posts if you want to. One thing that you want to do if you're thinking about comments and certainly if you're going to add comments to your site is there's a little button up here. It's



a gray button so it can be easy to miss but when you're in there editing a post for Admin Screen Options, click that button and it will bring up some different options for what you want to show on the screen and what you don't want to show on the screen. That means right here in the Edit Post page. All these little widgets. Obviously the publish widget is an important one to keep but you could turn Categories off if you didn't want to see it right here.

Now you probably do so it's on by default but you have all these different options. Maybe you just want to declutter this page or there's something that you're never using. You can remove it but Comments and Discussion, if you're going to be having comments, then you probably want both of these checked. So you check this one, you check this one and then those will both show up.

As you scroll down you'll see these little content areas right here. One is for discussion and it will give you the option to allow comments or disallow them. So if your default is to allow comments this will be checked, but say that you're doing just an admin announcement and you don't necessarily want people to be able to comment, there's no reason for people to comment, then you can just turn comments off for that post without changing the default for all of the other ones.

As people leave comments, all the comments will actually show up right here. You can see the comments, you can respond to them, you can add a comment



yourself if you want to. You'll have both of those options right here in the post edit page.

Then, other content settings. If we go back to Settings > Content. There are some other content settings to be aware of. I'm not going to go through all of them because they're not all relevant for this session but we talked about the content archives earlier. Content archives, this is for archive pages, author pages, category pages, search and tag types. You can define what shows on those pages. You can display the entry content.

I believe you can choose to do the excerpt as well. There are a couple of different options there. You can choose to limit the content to a certain amount of characters. You can add a featured image. You can add entry pagination. Before when I showed you my page for the news round ups and you scrolled down and you saw all the different posts there one by one, this allows you to define what is shown for each of those entries.

Chris: The pagination as numeric is good for search engines because search engines can't click Next and Previous. They just follow links. If you have numerical pagination it allows search engines to index all of those pages instead of having to keep returning to the next and previous buttons.

Jerod: Yup. Carol asked about comment spam. I don't have that page on here but you can manage comments and define a comment as spam. Rainmaker



does a pretty good job of managing those on their own but you can help train it and make sure that no spam comments get through. There's a little link for spam when you go up here to the Manage > Comments.

Chris: You can set the rules for that as well so they don't just appear on the site you have to moderate them.

Jerod: Then we've got ... You've got content optimization. You can choose what permissions people need to be able to use the content optimization tools of Rainmaker. You can make sure that you have your Home page SEO as you want it. What your title template is, what's in your meta description and then you can also go in and define it for four pages. Again, I'm not going to get into the details of those right now. The Knowledge Base does provide excellent insight on all of them. You get to all those from your content settings and those are important things to think about before you start publishing content on your blog.

Social sharing buttons (00:43:46)

Jerod: All right. Let's move on to social sharing buttons because as you get content out there you want to have some social sharing options on the page to subtly suggest to people that if they like the post that they share with their network and people are just kind of used to that now.



When we read a piece of content and we like it and we want to share it, we immediately go looking for those social sharing buttons to make it nice and easy on us when we're on a page.

Let's talk quickly how to do that because Rainmaker makes it very easy. If you go to the settings gear icon and click 'Traffic,' that will take you to the settings for sharing icons.

To begin you want to just set the rules for the icon so you can choose the icon size and you can choose from a small bar, medium bar or box. Choose the icon appearance where it is outlined or filled. You can then decide if you want the icons to be displayed before the content, after the content or both before and after and then you can enable your social sharing buttons on the different types of content that you'll have. Post pages, attachments, proposals, books, all the way to podcasts and archive pages. You can decide where you want your social sharing icons to be.

For example, if you have a public forum, you may want your forum post to be able to be shared but if it's a forum that's behind a membership wall, then maybe you don't necessarily want to be suggesting that people share those because then when people who come to the forum who aren't members they're not going to be able to log in and that can create a confusing experience. You just want to think these things through for where you're going



to add your social sharing buttons and where not to have them. As you scroll down on this page then you can activate and position the different social networks.

You have these six options. Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and StumbleUpon. I always use Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter and then it just kind of depends on the site and the type of content whether I use the other ones but for the Twitter one you can actually add in your Twitter handle so that that will be added to the default tweet text.

Then for Pinterest, if you are going to use Pinterest, you can enter the default image URL so that way if there's no image available when people share the content there's something there by default. Maybe your company logo or just a generic image that you may find putting there on Pinterest.

Choosing those that will determine which one show up on the site and then you can also, there's a print button by default so that if people want to print your content they can and if you want to disable that print button, just put the check mark right here and that print button will no longer show up on your site.

Then here's just an example of what it looks like. I chose those three social sites to display and so there's Facebook, there's Twitter, there's LinkedIn all right there at the top of the page and I also have them at the bottom of the



page right there. They're all right there nice and easy conveniently located for people who read the content and want to share the content.

Chris: Just a note about those social buttons. Putting your Twitter @name into the settings is really important for two reasons. One, when somebody tweets you'll get to know because Twitter will inform you and so you can thank them, which is reinforcing the positive behavior. It's a nice thing to do. It's polite but also it's more social proof and more people getting to see your @ name because that's how you're going to grow your Twitter account. The more people see that you're creating good stuff; the more people might want to follow you. It's a good thing to put that in there.

Don't overlook things like Pinterest. If you've got visual content or if you've even just got really good featured images or really good images on your site, it's amazing how many people use Pinterest now. It's a really big social network.

On my site I do 3D designs or 3D printing, it's amazing how many people pin those. It's a really good thing to get into and to check out. The demographics are very different on Pinterest, so your audience may or may not be represented but it's worth checking out.

Jerod: Yeah, excellent advice Chris.



Basic pages (00:47:57)

Jerod: Let's move on to our last section for this session, which is basic pages that you want to consider having as you get set up and as you get ready to start publishing content. The About page.

We talked about this in a previous session so I'm not going to go into it too much but you can look at that previous session and I'll just reiterate these links which provide excellent insight on creating a great about page. You've got rainmakerplatform.com/go/about1 and then you've also got rainmakerplatform.com/go/about2 for these two articles by Sonia and Leanne. Are You Making These 7 Mistakes with Your About Page? And The 5-Step Process for Writing An About Page that Connects (and Converts).

Highly recommend that you have your About page ready to roll when you start publishing content. Some other pages to keep in mind then. One is a subscribe page. Obviously you're going to want to have your opt in and your sidebar and your after entry widget as we talked about but having a specific page dedicated for subscriptions is also very important.

For example if you go to assemblycall.com right now we do some different things with pop ups and we've got it in widgets and that kind of thing but when we first started, we very simply had a page assemblycall.com/subscribe that outlined all the benefits of subscribing with an opt in page.



I was able to link to it right there in the navigation bar and that drove tons of sign ups for us for a while until we started to get a little bit more sophisticated and take the next steps with our conversion strategies, which is having a subscribe page that also makes it very nice and easy for if you ever being interviewed somewhere on a podcast and the people ask, “Hey, where can we get more?” “Hey, go to assemblycall.com/subscribe. Check it out. That’s how you get our best content.” So it gives people a nice easy place to go and it’s just nice and easy to get set up so that you have it there for as you go for publishing content.

A good idea is to have a resources page and Chris do you want to talk about what your thought process was for setting up your resources page on your Maker Hacks site?

Chris: Yeah. Back in the day when I started blogging people used to create websites that were pretty much just a set of links and then that trend went away and people moved towards articles. But that roundup page always stuck with me and then I was talking to Pat Flynn and it turned out that the majority of his affiliate income was coming from [his resource page](#). And I talked to Darren Rowse, and his [photography resource page](#) that he had, I don’t know if he still has it, but that was doing the same thing.

In conversations people are always asking me what tools I use, what printers I have, and what do I recommend. If you come at it from different angles



there's lots of different reasons to have a resource page. It might be just things that you recommend. It could be things that you use. It could be things that you're asked about a lot. On a blog, even just who do you use for domain registrations. Who do you use for hosting? What software do you use? For Rafal, people are always asking him, "Do you use Photoshop or do you use something else?" and he's tried different design tools.

It's a useful resource on its own. It's good for search because you're going to constantly be linking to it and referring people to it and sharing it, and it's good for your visitors because it gives people a central place to look at what you use. There are various reasons to have one and you can just grow it incrementally. You don't have to have this fully formed thing from day one.

I'm adding to mine. I might reorganize it but I started off with a straight bullet list and then I've expanded the descriptions, I've added a video in there. You can grow it over time. It doesn't have to start as this wonderful thing but because it's linked from my header navigation it means it's linked from most of the pages on the site. I link to it from within articles. That means it's getting more search attention. It's getting more prominence in search.

Jerod: Kelly asked, if you have an opt in page, do you need a subscribe page? It's a good question Kelly and you could have both really. It depends on how you're using it. Your subscribe page could be subscribe to your email list. Let's say that you also have a podcast, you may want to put on your subscribe page lots of different ways to subscribe to your content. It could even be a place to



add your social media links because there's lots of different ways that people can subscribe and lots of different ways that people think about subscription.

On any subscribe page, the first subscription I always want is email. That's always the one that I feature the most prominently even if I'm adding some other options there. Opt in, most people are going to take that as kind of a more specific request, as in opt in via email to get updates or to get on your newsletter. The expectation so people are probably going to be a little bit more specific there.

Subscribe, people can come to a page like that with a little bit more varied interest and you can probably add a few more different things there. Again, it's going to go back to your strategy.

Chris: It's going to be an easy call to action for you. If you don't have an opt in form on your About page, link to the Subscribe page. You can either pin the post in your Twitter account that goes to your subscribe page. You can have a pinned post on your Facebook page that goes to your subscribe page.

Wherever people find you, one of the first things they see is a link to the subscription and why they would care, why they would bother, what's in it for them. It's a really easy and simple thing to do to get more subscriptions but if you're interviewed you can say [example.com/subscribe](#) to find out more, right? It's just a ready call to action that you always have in your pocket.



Jerod: We talked about subscribe, we talked about resources. Services would be another one Chris and this is [an example](#) from your page [chrisg.com](#), which not everybody may need but certainly could be very useful for someone who has different services they're offering.

Chris: Yeah, and since I changed to work with Rainmaker Digital, my products and services has gone down to just these things that I haven't updated in a while but I used to have a really big services page because I used to do a lot of consulting and coaching.

On your site what you would need to do is, a) remind people that you're in business and whatever the business you're in remind people of that and you need a place to link to. Again, like the subscribe page, it's an easy call to action to have. So give it a slug that's easy to read out over the telephone or in an interview so /services or /products and link to it from everywhere.

In an article on your site you can say, "One of my clients was talking to me." You can say all around "clients", make that the link. You can go to your services page. You can say, "If you want more information about this, check out my services" in the emails and your auto-responder sequence. If you do a guest post, it's something you can link back to from your author bio. Don't overlook any opportunity to link back to the fact that you've got products and services, and that people might want to check them out, because they will.



Jerod: Then landing pages. Obviously we will have future sessions on landing pages. I think it's really important with landing pages. The pages that we just talked about, subscribe page, resources page, services page. Those are landing pages. Right? They have a very specific purpose. They're giving people calls to action on those pages but it's important with landing pages to remember to think about all pages as landing pages and Chris made this point earlier. When people search for something and they come to your site via Google, may be it's a blog post but that's still a landing page. They've landed on that page and you should have a goal for that page that you want people to achieve.

Maybe it's a blog post and so your goal is that you want people to read and comment. That's fine but that post is still a landing page. I would think about all pages in terms of landing pages and what your goal is for that specific page. Again, talk about design. Obviously Rainmaker has landing page tools in there.

We also mentioned on the last session about the Visual Page Builder which you can get too from Rainmaker Labs, so make sure that you have labs activated and then go in and activate the Visual Page Builder. It is a new tool that we're continuing to work on. I'm not going to get into it in detail here but we will have a future session on it but that will help you with designing your pages visually and just give you some more flexibility in how you're designing them.



All righty, Chris anything else before we wrap up this session?

Chris: No. We'll get more into it when we get into the next webinar. This was basically setting up your blog and the next webinar will be about moving towards using your blog for your business goals. The main one will be getting that retention going and getting people to subscribe.

Coming up ... (00:57:15)

Jerod: Yup. Coming up. Next week we're going to have another Q&A. I have to tell you, I'm really loving this format. I hope that you all are too with doing the webinar and then being able to answer the questions because there are a lot of questions. I know we weren't able to get to all of them. We got to some of them but we were unable to get to all of them.

Next week we'll have that Q&A. It's going to be Thursday, March 16th at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time and I believe we have the link. One of the things that we want to start doing right now Amelia or Kelton, anybody if you want to post that link to everybody. Yeah, if you're here right now, we want to give you the first opportunity to get your questions in because even on the Q&A so many questions come in that we can't get to all of them.

As I'm putting those together, the two things I'm always thinking about is prioritizing the questions that come in first but then trying where I can to



group questions together into composites if several different questions cover the same topic. The quicker that you get those in the better the chance that we'll actually be able to address it.

If you've been on those before, you'll know that we don't just pop the question up there and talk over that slide for five to ten minutes. We really try to make these tutorials and show you a list of different screenshots and step by steps how to do things. The earlier you can get those in the better. It gives us more time to prepare and since you're here on the live session we want to give you dibs. And then following that, as Chris mentioned, we will be taking what we talked about today and going to the next step and talking about how you use Rainmaker to turn blog traffic into subscribers.

You've got people there on your site, now from how you're using images and featured images to how you're actually setting up your different opt in widgets. Many different ways you can use Rainmaker to turn your traffic into subscribers because that is the ultimate goal as we look to build our audiences that will eventually help us build our businesses.

Questions? (00:59:06)

Jerod: We are over time. Chris, are there any other questions in there that we want to do address real quick before we have to bounce out of here?



Chris: I think we covered everything that we could get to today and there is that question. We've done the link for the next Q&A. So real quick, where do you find the replays? We have the page for all the replays on rainmakerplatform.com/webinars. Is that correct?

Jerod: I believe so. I'm double-checking right now and I'll put the link in there. No, it's not on webinars. It's site ...

Chris: It's rainmakerplatform.com/site-building-roadmap. Sorry about that.

Jerod: Yeah. There we go. Those are added there and typically the way that we've been doing it is on Friday we will send out the email for the next session and we've typically always had the replays ready by then, so we're including the link in that email. Sometimes they're posted before then.

Tim, Kelton and the guys do an awesome job of getting those posted quickly but almost always by Friday they're up there and we include them in that email that we send out. Sometimes they are available sooner and they will be right there at that link [site-building-roadmap](https://rainmakerplatform.com/site-building-roadmap).

All righty. Excellent. Well Chris, thank you for your insight on this session. I appreciate it.

Chris: Thank you for having me.



Jerod: Yeah, and thank you to everybody who is here. We look forward to answering your questions on next week's Q&A. Until then, have a great time and a productive time building your Rainmaker sites and we will talk to you next week.