

A Recipe For Stonesoup

Table of Contents

Topic	See Page
1. About Stonesoup	1
2. Posting Your First Entry	4
3. Editing and Deleting Entries	6
4. Adding Pictures to Your Blog	8
5. Changing the Look of Your Blog	10
6. Getting More Readers (or How to be a Traffic Ho)	11
7. Changing Your Add/Edit Entry Form	12
8. Adding Links to Your Homepage	13
9. About Me, 100 Things, and Other Extra Pages	15
10. Configuring It (or Comments, Trackbacks, & Other Bits)	17
11. Backups and Exports	20

1. About Stonesoup

What is stonesoup?

Stonesoup is a New Zealand based, privately-run site for blogs. (What is a blog? Find out here: <http://www.unc.edu/%7Ezuiker/blogging101/index.html>.) Most of us are:

- in or from Wellington, New Zealand
- first-time bloggers
- friends or friends of friends.

That said, we're building a community and we're happy to include new people. Don't be shy.

Because we're not running the site professionally, and those of us doing the admin stuff also have paid employment, we offer no service guarantees. Things happen when we have time to make them happen. At the moment, the site's still pretty small and easy to manage, so we're fairly prompt at getting back to people.

We use Moveable Type software. You can find out more about that at <http://www.moveabletype.org/>.

Continued on next page

1. About Stonesoup, Continued

Asking for a blog

If you want a weblog, email Iona at iona@stonesoup.co.nz, including:

- your name
 - your weblog name
 - some description of yourself and your intentions that reassures us you won't impugn our honour or get us into legal hot water.
-

Disclaimer

We reserve the right to revoke your website at any time for no reason whatsoever, though we will give you two weeks' notice (unless, you know, you've done something really bad). If we close your blog we will help you save your content. That said, we want Stonesoup to be a happy friendly commune-type thing. So play nice.

Koha (donation)

Stonesoup is privately-owned and running on a koha basis. If, after a while, you end up loving blogging and you really like Stonesoup then we'd love to see a donation for whatever you think the service is worth.

When you join stonesoup

When you join Stonesoup, we'll:

- send you a username and password
 - send you your blogname and its URL (web address; this will be <http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog>)
 - redirect the email address yourusername@stonesoup.co.nz to the email address you give us; this means that any emails sent to you at Stonesoup will be forwarded automatically to your pre-existing email account
-

General blog: Too Many Cooks

Too Many Cooks (2MC) is a blog for all stonesoupers. It can be found at <http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/general>. You'll be able to post there as well as to your private blog.

On 2MC you can ask questions (or make suggestions) about the Moveable Type blogging software and the Stonesoup site, or post things of interest to other bloggers generally. Occasionally social occasions are organised through 2MC, so keep an eye out.

Continued on next page

1. About Stonesoup, Continued

The Stonesoup homepage

The Stonesoup homepage lists all the active Stonesoup blogs. It shows the first few lines of each blog's most recent entry, and says how many comments have been made in response to that entry (the number is shown in brackets after the entry's title). For 2MC, it also says who authored the entry.

Example:

Too Many Cooks
Another ingredient (3) | Jul 3 10:05 | by: iona
Welcome to Karen's new blog History has expired due to inactivity, now added to the homepage. Yay, another one! :-) By the way, I'm planning to write a brief, really basic newbie's guide to Stonesoup covering the following: Logging on...

In this example, **iona** has posted an entry called **Another ingredient** on **Too Many Cooks**, which has three comments.

When you've published your first entry on your blog, we'll add it to the Stonesoup homepage.

Some of us check the homepage several times a day, looking for new posts and seeing who has new comments. If you're on this page, chances are the Stonesoup locals are reading your blog, and this can lead to interesting conversations and increased numbers of readers.

2. Posting Your First Entry

Logging on

Follow these steps to log in to Moveable Type (MT) on Stonesoup.

Step	Action
1	Open the login page. Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• go to http://www.stonesoup.co.nz and click on the Stonesoup logo at the top of the homepage, or• open http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/cgi-bin/blog/mt.cgi directly. Result: A login screen displays.
2	Enter your username and password, and click “Login”. Result: The menu page opens. This lists the blogs you have access to (usually 2MC and your personal blog). It also lets you edit your profile (which is where you can change your password or email address).

Posting an entry

Follow these steps to post an entry to your new blog.

Step	Action
1	From the menu page, click the “New Entry” link under your blog title. Result: The Add/Edit Entry form displays with a Title field, an Entry Body field, a Post Status drop-down, and Preview and Save buttons*.
2	Enter a title in the Title field.
3	Enter some text in the Entry Body field. Note: You can use HTML tags to format text or create hyperlinks in the Entry Body field. See below.
4	Select “Publish” from the Post Status drop-down box. Note: Your entry won’t display on the site until you’ve saved it with a Post Status of “Publish”. You can save drafts to work on, and publish at a later date.
5	Click the “Save” button. Result: You’ve made your first blog entry. Cool.
6	View your site and make sure it looks how you want it to.

* Your editing form

You can change the look of your editing form by clicking the “Customize the display of this page” link at the bottom of the page. See page 12.

Continued on next page

2. Posting Your First Entry, Continued

HTML basics

HTML works with tags, usually in pairs. An open tag goes before the affected text, and a close tag (with a / in it) goes at the end of the affected text. Here are some common HTML tags:

`<i>text</i>` puts text in italics (*text*)

`text` puts text in bold (**text**)

`click on this` makes “click on this” a link to <http://www.address.co.nz/>.

`` and `` start and end a bullet pointed (unordered) list, and `` and `` start and end a numbered (ordered) list. Each item in the list should start and end with `` and ``. For example:

```
<ul><li>shoes</li>
<li>socks</li>
<li>jersey</li></ul>
```

would display as

- shoes
- socks
- jersey

`
` starts a new line.

For a beginner’s guide to HTML, try <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/primer.html>. This will take you directly to the section on bolding and italicising, but there’s a lot of other useful stuff on this page too: lists, hyperlinks, etc.

3. Editing and Deleting Entries

Making changes

Follow these steps if you want to make changes to an entry (either published or draft).

Step	Action
1	From the menu page, click the “Manage Weblog” link under your blog title.
2	<p>When you can see the left-hand menu bar, click the “Edit Entries” button.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>The screenshot shows a vertical menu bar with the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> POST (header) NEW ENTRY (with document icon) EDIT ENTRIES (with pencil and document icon) UPLOAD FILE (with folder and plus icon) MANAGE (header) TEMPLATES (with T icon) CATEGORIES (with abc icon) NOTIFICATIONS (with envelope icon) WEBLOG CONFIG (with gear icon) UTILITIES (header) SEARCH ENTRIES (with magnifying glass icon) IMPORT/EXPORT (with double arrows icon) REBUILD SITE (with circular arrows icon) VIEW SITE (with eye icon) </p> </div> <p>Result: All your previous entries display in a list. (If you have lots, you may have to click a link at the bottom of the page to see earlier entries.)</p>
3	<p>Click on the title of the entry you want to edit or delete.</p> <p>Result: The editing form displays.</p>
4	<p>If you want to edit an entry, make the required changes and click the “Save” button.</p> <p>Result: The changes are published on the site, if the Post Status is “Publish”.</p>

Continued on next page

3. Editing and Deleting Entries, Continued

Making changes (continued)

Step	Action
5	<p>If you want to publish a draft entry, change the Post Status to “Publish” and update the Authored On timestamp. (This must be in the correct format or you’ll get an error.) Then click “Save”.</p> <p>Note: If you can’t see the Authored On field, see instructions on page 12.</p> <p>Result: The changes are published on the site, if the Post Status is “Publish”.</p>
6	<p>If you want to delete an entry, click the “Delete Entry” button.</p> <p>Result: A pop-up will ask you to confirm the deletion.</p>

Previewing entries

At any time during the writing and editing process, you can click the “Preview” button to see how the post will appear. This is particularly useful if you’re using HTML tags or pictures, since you can see how the formatting looks.

Save

When you’re writing an entry, it’s worth saving often. Especially if it’s a long rant. If your browser crashes, or you accidentally open a different page in the same browser window, you’ll lose all unsaved writing, and possibly cry.

4. Adding Pictures to Your Blog

What kinds of pictures

When publishing pictures on the internet, it's best to use .gif or .jpg files, since these formats are most widely supported.

- GIF files are best for logos, simple blocks of colour, and uncomplicated graphics.
 - JPEGs are best for photos or pictures with subtle colour shifts. JPEGs tend to be bigger (in file size) and so take longer to download.
-

You will need

You will need to have the picture electronically stored on your computer.

Procedure

Follow these steps to post a picture on your blog.

Step	Action
1	From the menu page, click the "Manage Weblog" link under your blog title.
2	When you can see the left-hand menu bar, click the "Upload File" button. Result: The Upload File pop-up window displays.
3	Click the "Browse" button. Result: A "Choose File" pop-up displays.
4	Navigate through your computer's directories to the picture file. Click on the file name, then click the "Open" button. Result: The "Choose File" pop-up closes, and the directory path displays in the File field.
5	Click the "Upload" button. Note: By default, the file will be saved as http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog/archives/filename.gif (or jpg). If you want to save the file as http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog/filename.gif , click the Local Site Path radio button. (It doesn't make much difference, though.) Result: A message displays asking whether you want to create a new entry or view the HTML, and giving you two buttons: Pop up Image and Embedded Image.

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4. Adding Pictures to Your Blog, Continued

Procedure (continued)

Step	Action
6	<p>If you want to put the picture in a new blog entry, choose “Create a new entry...”. If you want to add the image to an existing entry, choose “Show me the HTML” (and then copy the HTML and paste it into the entry).</p> <p>Pop-up images display as a link when the page is first loaded. Visitors to your site will have to click the link to see the picture.</p> <p>Embedded Images appear whenever the page is loaded.</p>

5. Changing the Look of Your Blog

Introduction How your blog looks depends on your stylesheet. Here are the Moveable Type instructions for changing your stylesheet.

Save first Whenever you're making changes to templates, always copy the current template into a text file and save it. That way, if you delete something you need, or if you make a mess, you can change it back without any hassle.

Default Templates

Movable Type ships with a set of default templates that are customizable through stylesheets; the same template markup can be made to look completely different by inserting a new stylesheet. You can view the default templates themselves at http://www.movabletype.org/default_templates.shtml.

To select a new style for your weblog, follow these instructions:

1. Log in to Movable Type, select the weblog you wish to edit, then click **List & Edit Templates**.
2. In the list of Index Templates, you will see a template called **Stylesheet**; open this template for editing.
3. The prebuilt stylesheets used to customize your pages are located at http://www.movabletype.org/default_styles.shtml. On this page, you can view screenshots of each style; once you have selected the style you wish to use, copy the contents of the text box, and paste those contents into the **Template body** box of the template you opened for editing in Step 2.
4. Press the **SAVE** button to save the new stylesheet.
5. You will be prompted to rebuild your site; click the **REBUILD** link, select **Rebuild Indexes Only** from the pulldown menu, and click the **REBUILD** button.
6. When the rebuild has completed, your site will now be using the new stylesheet.

NOTE: some browsers (Internet Explorer for Windows, for one) refuse to reload a stylesheet from the webserver once they have fetched it once; if, when you view your site, nothing has changed, you should empty your browser cache and try again.

These instructions are taken from http://www.movabletype.org/docs/mtmanual_templates.html#index%20templates.

6. Getting More Readers (or How to be a Traffic Ho)

What is traffic and why do you want it?

You might be content to write for yourself. You might only want to write for your friends. Or you might start to enjoy the knowledge that others are reading your words. (It can get addictive.)

“Traffic” means visitors to your blog, the people who click through to you from other places or who search in www.google.com and find you in their search results. Many will drop by once and never return. That’s the way of the internet. But some will make a connection, will like your words, and will come back for more.

Strategies

These are some things you can do to help others find your blog:

- Put your URL in the signature file on your email.
 - Comment on other people’s blog and include your URL in your details.
 - Join web rings (not sure about the efficacy of this).
 - Join things like the eatonweb blog portal <http://portal.eatonweb.com/>.
 - Make sure you’ve checked the pings in your blog configuration. See *10. Configuring It (or Comments, Trackbacks, & Other Bits)* on page 17.
-

Keep them coming back

The best thing you can do to keep people coming back is to update your blog regularly.

7. Changing Your Add/Edit Entry Form

Introduction

Whenever you add or edit an entry you use the same form on the screen to enter or edit the text. This section explains how to change the options on the form.

Note: Moveable Type has an excellent help screen that explains what the different options on the Add/Edit Entry Form are for. To see this screen, go to the form and click on the question mark next to Post Status (or any other question mark).

Changing options

To change the options on the form, click the “Customise the display of this page” link at the bottom of the form.

Result: A pop-up gives you these options:

- Basic
- Advanced
- Custom: show the following fields:
 - Category
 - Extended Entry
 - Excerpt
 - Keywords
 - Allow Comments
 - Text Formatting
 - Allow Pings
 - Editable Authored On Date (Edit Entry screen only)
 - URLs to Ping

Select the options you want and click “Save”.

Result: The screen refreshes with the new options.

8. Adding Links to Your Homepage

Introduction When your blog is set up, the navigation bar on your main page (www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog) will have a title “Links” with a note underneath that says “Add your links here”. This is a place to add hyperlinks to other blogs you read or sites you like. These instructions explain how to add links.

Save first Whenever you’re making changes to templates, always copy the current template into a text file and save it. That way, if you delete something you need, or if you make a mess, you can change it back without any hassle.

Procedure Follow these steps to add or edit your links list.

Step	Action
1	From the menu page, click the “Manage Weblog” link under your blog title.
2	When you can see the left-hand menu bar, click the “Templates” button. Result: The list of templates displays.
3	Click on “Main Index”. Result: The template displays in the Template Body field. It consists of a lot of HTML code. Don’t panic. :-)
4	Click in the Template Body and press [Ctrl] + A on your keyboard to select all. Copy this and paste it into a text file. Save it as a backup.
5	Click in the Template Body and press [Ctrl] + F on your keyboard. Search for “Add your links here”.
6	Delete this code: <code>Add Your Links Here
</code> then add your links in that place in the template. Note: Note: Your links should be formatted like this: <code>This is the bit you click on
</code> For example, you could link to the Stonesoup homepage by typing <code>Stonesoup homepage
</code> (The <code>
</code> tag means start a new line.)

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8. Adding Links to Your Homepage, Continued

Procedure (continued)

Step	Action
7	When you've added the links you want on your homepage, click "Save". Result: A message will tell you that you need to rebuild to see your changes reflected on the site.
8	Click the "Rebuild" button and, when the pop-up asks you to confirm, click "Rebuild". Result: There will be a delay while the site thinks about this. When it's finished, you can close the pop-up.
9	Look at your homepage and make sure it's how you want it. (You might have to reload or refresh the page to see the changes.) If you want to make any further changes, repeat this procedure.
10	If you've made a mistake or you want to change it back to how it was, copy the old template from the text file where you saved it and paste it in over the entire Main Index template in Moveable Type. Then Save and Rebuild your site. Now it should be exactly how it was before you started.

9. About Me, 100 Things, and Other Extra Pages

Introduction

There are two ways to make separate pages on your blog:

- The easiest way is to make the page a blog entry (possibly with an old datestamp) and then link to it. This means it's easy to edit later.
 - Slightly more complicatedly, you can copy the HTML code from an existing page and make a stand-alone page, then upload it to the site using the Upload File option.
-

Separate pages... why?

Many blogs have a separate “About Me” page, where the author says a bit about who they are, what they like and why they blog. This provides an insight for new readers into where you're coming from.

There is also a popular concept called the “100 Things” meme (or idea), in which you write a list of a hundred things about yourself and put it on a separate page. It's really fun and challenging. Recommended. Look here <http://www.ringsurf.com/netring?ring=100things&action=list> for some examples.

Option 1: Blog Entry option

Follow these steps to make a separate page from a blog entry.

Step	Action										
1	Create a new blog entry and save it as a draft.										
2	Make sure you can see the Authored On field. (If you can't, customise your Add/Edit Entry form so that you can. See page 12) Change the date to before you started blogging, and save again.										
3	To link to this entry: <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Step</th><th>Action</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1</td><td>Open the entry by going to your homepage (http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog), clicking on the earliest archive in your navigation bar, and scrolling to the entry.</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Click on the time at the end of the entry. Result: This displays the entry on a separate screen.</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Copy the URL (http address) in the Address bar at the top of the screen.</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Paste the URL either into your Main Index template (as described on page 13) or into a new entry.</td></tr></tbody></table>	Step	Action	1	Open the entry by going to your homepage (http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog), clicking on the earliest archive in your navigation bar, and scrolling to the entry.	2	Click on the time at the end of the entry. Result: This displays the entry on a separate screen.	3	Copy the URL (http address) in the Address bar at the top of the screen.	4	Paste the URL either into your Main Index template (as described on page 13) or into a new entry.
Step	Action										
1	Open the entry by going to your homepage (http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog), clicking on the earliest archive in your navigation bar, and scrolling to the entry.										
2	Click on the time at the end of the entry. Result: This displays the entry on a separate screen.										
3	Copy the URL (http address) in the Address bar at the top of the screen.										
4	Paste the URL either into your Main Index template (as described on page 13) or into a new entry.										
4	You can edit this page as you would any other blog entry.										

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9. About Me, 100 Things, and Other Extra Pages, Continued

Option 2: Stand-alone page option

This is trickier and I don't really know what I'm talking about, but you can try following these steps.

Step	Action
1	From your blog homepage (www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog), open a blog entry on a separate page by clicking on the time at the end of the entry.
2	In the View menu, select Source . Result: A text screen shows the HTML code for the page.
3	Select all the source text and copy it into a text editor such as Notepad (under Programs, then Accessories in your Start menu, if you're using Windows).
4	Save it with a filename that ends ".html".
5	Find the <Title> </Title> tags, and edit the text between them to say what the page should be called. This will appear in the blue bar at the very top of the screen.
6	The rest is all kind of hit-or-miss, I'm afraid. Delete out anything that doesn't look useful. Replace bits you think you want to replace and keep bits you think you want to keep.
7	You can check how it looks by saving the file and then opening it in your browser (eg, Internet Explorer) using the Open option in the File menu.
8	When you've got it how you want it, upload it to the site as if it were a picture. Note: If you save it in the archives directory, the URL for it will be http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog/archives/filename.html . If you save it in your main directory, the URL for it will be http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/yourblog/filename.html .
9	Either paste the URL into your Main Index template (as described on page 13) or into a new entry.

10. Configuring It (or Comments, Trackbacks, & Other Bits)

Introduction This is stuff like changing the name of your blog, how the archives work (but I don't know anything about that), trackbacks and comment formatting, and random other bits and pieces. This is gleaned knowledge. If you want to know something specific that isn't here, ask on Too Many Cooks and I'll find out and add it to this document.

First glance Follow these steps to get started playing with your weblog's configuration.

Step	Action
1	From the menu page, click the "Manage Weblog" link under your blog title.
2	When you can see the left-hand menu bar, click the "Weblog Config" button. Result: The Core Setup page displays.
3	On the Core Setup page you can change the name of your blog (if you must) and your timezone. Important: Don't mess with the directories or it'll turn to custard.
4	If you make any changes, Save and then Rebuild your site.

More The good stuff is on the Preferences page (click the Preferences link) and it's mostly pretty self-explanatory. Here's the stuff I play with most often and it's mostly under Publicity / Remote Interfaces / Trackback.

Option	Comment
Notify the following sites when I update my blog	I have both of these checked. They let an indexing site (I think it is) know whenever you post a new entry. Can increase traffic to your blog.
Allow ping on by default?	I have this checked. It means people can trackback to your entry. (More about that below.)
Email new Trackback pings?	This just means that the site will email you if someone trackbacks to your post.
Turn on Trackback autodiscovery	If you link to someone's blog entry, when you publish your entry Moveable Type will automatically notify that site of the link.

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10. Configuring It (or Comments, Trackbacks, & Other Bits), Continued

More, cont.

Under **Comments** I also use **Email new comments** (which means MT emails any new comments on your blog to your email address) and **Auto-link URLs**, which means that if someone posts an http address in a comment it's automatically linked up.

Everything else is pretty much default, I think.

Important: If you make any changes, Save and Rebuild your site.

What is this Trackback thing?

Because blogging is new and networky and interwebbynetty, people like to refer to each other's posts, and the authors/readers of the original posts like to know who's linked to them and what they've said. This shows trains of thought and development of ideas, and allows ongoing discussions across blogs.

And this is what Trackback is for. The second (inspired) post notifies (or "pings") the first (inspiring) post when it's published.

It's like this: I write an entry about coffee, and I have "Allow pings" checked for that entry (or on by default). Rachel reads my coffee story and wants to tell her own thoughts about coffee. She could comment on my blog, but her story is fairly long and involved, so she decides to write an entry on her own blog. She starts her entry with "I was reading Iona's coffee story, and it reminded me...", and she makes my name a link to my particular coffee entry.

If she has **Turn on Trackback autodiscovery** checked, when she publishes her coffee entry her site will automatically notify (or "ping") my site, which will email me to tell me of the new trackback. And down the bottom of my entry where it said "Trackback (0)" it'll now say "Trackback (1)". If I click on Trackback, there'll be a link to Rachel's story and a short excerpt from it.

Note: If she doesn't have **Turn on Trackback autodiscovery** checked and she wants to trackback to my entry, she needs to find the trackback link for that entry. To do this she would click on "Trackback" at the bottom of the entry, and a pop-up would say something like, "TrackBack URL for this entry: <http://www.stonesoup.co.nz/cgi-bin/blog/mt-tb.cgi/413>".

Then she'd copy that URL into the **URLs to Ping** field in her editing form. (If the **URLs to Ping** field isn't displaying, she needs to customise her editing form by clicking the link at the bottom of it.) This does the same thing.

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10. Configuring It (or Comments, Trackbacks, & Other Bits), Continued

Links for trackbacking

To trackback to someone else's entry, you need to find the permanent link for that entry. In Moveable Type, this is usually found at the bottom of the entry, and might be called Link, Permalink, or it might be found via the timestamp.

Click on it and the http address in the Address field will end with a # and a number and .html. This is the URL you need to link to/ping.

11. Backups and Exports

Introduction Backup your blog! Do it often! Anything could happen and everything could be lost!

Procedure This is how you do it.

Step	Action
1	From the menu page, click the “Manage Weblog” link under your blog title.
2	When you can see the left-hand menu bar, click the “Import/Export” button.
3	Scroll down to “Export Entries” and right-mouse-click on the “Export Entries From <i>yourblogname</i> ” link.
4	Select “Open in New Window” from the menu.
5	Wait until the new window has finished loading. Note: If your blog has lots of stuff in it, this can take a while.
6	When it’s done, select everything in that window and copy it into a text file.
7	Save it. Keep it somewhere safe.
