

StudioPress Workshops

# Brian Gardner's 5 Favorite Jetpack Features, and 2 He Always Avoids

Brian Gardner and Pamela Wilson



STUDIOPRESS  
Workshops



## Brian Gardner's 5 Favorite Jetpack Features, and 2 He Always Avoids

### Brian Gardner and Pamela Wilson

**Brian Gardner:** Hey everyone, this is Brian Gardner, and I want to thank you so much for signing up to learn more about StudioPress Workshops.

Today, we're going to talk about the very popular Jetpack plugin created by the folks at Automatic, and specifically how to use it on your Genesis Framework website. I'm here with Pamela Wilson, Vice President of Educational Content at Copyblogger.

**Pamela Wilson:** Hi Brian, how are you?

**Brian Gardner:** I'm doing absolutely wonderful, and I'm very excited to talk about this today.

**Pamela Wilson:** I am too. I'm looking forward to going over this plugin. Jetpack is such an interesting plugin. It's a different plugin, because you install it once, and then it has all these features that you can either turn on or turn off. Some of them seem really useful, but I know there are at least a couple that



you think people should avoid. I'm wondering if we should just dig right in and start going over everything.

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, so let's get started with the five Jetpack features that I would advise and consider my favorite, and then we'll go into the two features that I always advised folks to avoid.

## 1) WordPress.com stats

**Pamela Wilson:** I know we're starting with WordPress.com stats, which is here at the bottom of the Jetpack settings menu.

**Brian Gardner:** There are many plugins and services out there that provide statistics, but data can sometimes be overwhelming. WordPress.com stats make the most popular metrics easy to understand through a clear and attractive interface. When you activate the Jetpack plugin, WordPress.com stats is automatically activated for you. For whatever reason, if it's not active, you can turn that on by heading to the settings screen within Jetpack.

**Pamela Wilson:** Then once we have Jetpack working, we can see some really, really great and helpful stats, right?

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, so at a quick snapshot, this is an example on my wife's site, of traffic. You can see there that there's daily traffic, which is a very



visual graph and you can tell the trends, and you can also sort that by days, weeks, and months as well. So you can get a quick snapshot and a long-term snapshot, as you can see here for the last 12 months. Thankfully for us, we've had an increase in traffic, so that's a good thing for us to see at a glance.

You can also access the referrers, the search engine terms, and just kind of view which of your links get clicked going out, as well as what top posts and pages you have on your site. By default, it will show today's stats, and if you want to look back the day before, you can click on the tab there that shows yesterday and that's also very helpful.

**Pamela Wilson:** It's so great to have all that in one place, and just to be able to access it at a glance. This is one of my favorite parts of the Jetpack plugin.

**Brian Gardner:** This is always the one I turn on, on my websites.

**Pamela Wilson:** Yeah, so smart. I know you also want to talk about related posts.

## 2) Related Posts plugin

**Brian Gardner:** The Related Posts plugin from Jetpack shows additional relevant links from the site underneath your posts. There are many related post plugins out there. Since Jetpack is installed on your site, it makes sense to

---



just use the one that they have, just to alleviate the need to continually update and maintain a separate plugin.

**Pamela Wilson:** It looks like once you hit on that configure link, you get some options here for different ways to display related posts, right?

**Brian Gardner:** The related posts functionality within Jetpack is very lightweight, and it's definitely one of the reasons why I advise staying away from another plugin.

The two options you have are basically just to show the 'Related' header, which basically will tell your visitors these are related posts. If you click the 'Use a large and visually striking layout', you'll see that it adds thumbnails to it.

Let's take a look at [Marc and Angel's site](#), because they have that active. You can see that it's a very visually appealing section there, which at the end of the post will output a couple of related posts. I always like using this one, too.

**Pamela Wilson:** It's great. I love it, and it keeps people on the blog, and it keeps them reading. So it's a very smart thing to have enabled.



### 3) Sharing

**Pamela Wilson:** I know you want to talk about Sharing, which we can access from right here on the main Jetpack dashboard. This is something that's already activated, correct, and we just have to configure?

**Brian Gardner:** Correct. The sharing functionality will allow you to add sharing buttons to your blog, and allow your visitors to share your posts with their friends.

As you can see, there are many services that are available, the most popular ones being Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Google, and a couple of other ones that aren't available in other sharing plugins, for instance, e-mail and print. As you can see, much the way that you do with Widgets, all you need to do is pull down the services that you want into the sections, and you can see a live preview.

The cool thing about the sharing functionality as you scroll down, is you can display the buttons in various ways. Right now, we see the 'Icon only', but there's a couple of other options you've got there with icon and text, and you've even got the 'Official buttons' as well.



## 4) Monitor

**Pamela Wilson:** I know you wanted to talk about Monitor. What exactly does Monitor do, and it looks like we have to activate it before we can use it, right?

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, that is correct. Nobody likes downtime, and that's why the Monitor feature from Jetpack is on the job, because it keeps tabs of your site by checking it every five minutes. As soon as any downtime is detected, you'll receive an e-mail notification alerting you to the issue. That way you can act quickly and get your site back up online.

**Pamela Wilson:** I see we have to link it to a WordPress.com profile, is that right?

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, that is right. When you enable Jetpack, you have to link it to your WordPress.com website to get it active anyway, so that is definitely one requirement.

**Pamela Wilson:** That's free, right? It's free to set up a WordPress.com profile?

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, just go to WordPress.com and sign up. One other benefit of having that is the [Akismet plugin](#), which is the anti-spam, and usually requires a WordPress.com API key, which would be found in your WordPress.com dashboard. That will absolutely help knock down the spam.



## 5) Photon

**Pamela Wilson:** I know the last one you want to recommend is this Photon option, and I'm going to go ahead and activate it so you can tell us all about it.

**Brian Gardner:** There really isn't any configuration screen for Photon. What Photon really does, is it gives your site a boost by loading images in the posts from the WordPress.com content delivery network, also known as a CDN. What they do is capture images and serve them from their super-fast network, reducing the burden on your web host with the click of a button.

In other words, if you have a highly-trafficked website, and you have a lot of images on there, these images get there from the WordPress.com CDN versus maybe you're on a shared host, so images are a very resource-heavy thing to have on your site. If you have a lot of them what that does, is it speeds up the load of your page.

**Pamela Wilson:** Once we have Photon activated, we can just upload the files using 'Add media', is that right?

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, so what you do, is you just go into your post, you add media, and then you just upload the photo, anything that you would have handy, and then just add it to the post. Once you do that, you go to the front end. Let's right click that image and just open it in a new tab, and we can show



everyone what that looks like. If you go up into the URL, you'll see the image URL is wp.com/ and that shows you that's coming from their content delivery network.

**Pamela Wilson:** Nice.

## A couple of Jetpack features you should avoid and the reasons why

**Pamela Wilson:** Brian, I know you have a couple of Jetpack features that you recommend that we stay away from. Do you want to talk about those?

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, so the first one is the most obvious to me, which is the 'Mobile Theme' functionality. If you're not running a StudioPress theme, then maybe this makes sense, because maybe your theme is not mobile-ready. And what it does, is it outputs a very vanilla-looking mobile theme for people who are on iPads and iPhones. The great thing about StudioPress and all of our Pro Themes, are that they come mobile friendly out of the box.

In other words, if you're using our theme such as Altitude, or Modern Studio, or just any of the ones you can find on [our themes pages](#), they are already mobile-ready, which means you don't need this from Jetpack.



If you take the Jetpack feature and override what we have with our themes, basically you're removing the branding from any experience that someone's using via either an iPhone or an iPad. So instead of serving them your logo and your colors, and basically the experience you have on your desktop, you're kind of paring that down to a very basic, non-appealing thing.

**Pamela Wilson:** It's very generic looking, right? And you don't want your site to look like everyone else's, so there are a lot of advantages to basically not using this, and using the built-in mobile-responsive themes that carry your style through to the mobile experience.

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, that is correct.

**Pamela Wilson:** I know you have one more that's just a personal pet peeve, and I definitely want to hear about this one.

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, 'Gravatar Hovercards'. I understand why that functionality is there. Basically, whether it's an author box or in the comments, any time you see a Gravatar on your website, typically on a post page, when you hover over that Gravatar, a little pop-up shows a profile card of the person with a little link to their WordPress.com profile and things like that.



To me, it just seems like a little bit of an intrusive annoyance, that when someone's on your site, scrolling down, looking through comments, that every time they hover over a picture of somebody, this little photo card thing pops up. It's definitely just a personal preference, kind of pet peeve thing of mine, but it's something I absolutely turn off every time I use Jetpack.

**Pamela Wilson:** This is good to know. So this is not something that will break your site if you use it, but your site will annoy Brian Gardner, so you don't want to use it for that. Just for the aesthetic sense, it sounds like.

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, and the other thing, with some of our StudioPress themes, Sixteen Nine is a good example. We actually use the Gravatar as the custom header site logo, and so anytime anyone wants to click on your face to get back to the home page, the Gravatar Hovercard actually pops up and in that case, it's extremely obtrusive.

**Pamela Wilson:** Okay, so it will kind of break your site depending on what theme you're using, so we should definitely avoid this, it sounds like.

**Brian Gardner:** Yeah, that's right.

**Pamela Wilson:** Thanks for joining us for this overview of the Jetpack plugin.



**Brian Gardner:** To make the most of your Genesis Framework website, we've love for you to join us at the Structured for Success Workshop. We'll cover the ins and outs of the Genesis Framework with the focus on helping you make the most of it in your business. Thanks again for watching.