

Beginners Guide to FTP for WordPress

When you self host your own WordPress blog you have access to the most basic of WordPress functionality.

In order to get the same functionality, and more, for your blog as that provided by WordPress.com, you will need to install some of the many [WordPress.org plugins](#).

This guide you show you how to:

- Configure FileZilla, an FTP client, to allow you to transfer files to and from your blog.
- Download a plugin.
- Install the plugin onto your blog using FileZilla.
- Activate the plugin.

Copying Files to Your Blog

Installing a new plugin involves copying, or transferring, files from your computer to the computer which contains the files used to manage your blog (your host).

To copy files you will need to use FTP, which stands for [File Transfer Protocol](#). FTP is the method used to transfer files from one computer to another.

To use FTP, you will need an FTP client, an application that runs on your computer. There are many available, and historically the better ones are free to trial only (i.e. you need to pay for continued usage).

If you don't already have an FTP client, an excellent [Open Source](#) FTP client is freely available, being [FileZilla](#), which is currently available for the Windows, Linux and Mac OS platforms.

Go ahead and [download the FileZilla client](#) and install it now.

Connecting to Your Blog

The FTP client software communicates with an FTP server which is managed by your host. For the FTP client to connect to the FTP server, it will need the following information, all of which should have been provided by your host upon signup:

1) Host Name

This is the name of the computer which contains the files which manages your blog. Typically, this is either myblog.com or ftp.myblog.com, where 'myblog.com' is the domain name of your blog.

To make things confusing, a host can mean:

- a) The name of a machine which "hosts" Internet services such as HTTP (your blog) and FTP (copying files), or
- b) A company which provides web hosting services, such as Go Daddy, DreamHost or Laughing Squid etc.

2) Port Number

By default, FTP uses port number 21. This may or may not be the case for your host, however, they will tell you what port number their FTP server is using.

The Internet uses port numbers for all different protocols. For example, you view your blog over port 80, which is used for HTTP. A [list of official and unofficial port numbers](#) is available on [Wikipedia](#).

3) User Name

The user name of the account, created by your host, which is authorized to transfer files to, and from, the computer hosting your blog.

4) Password

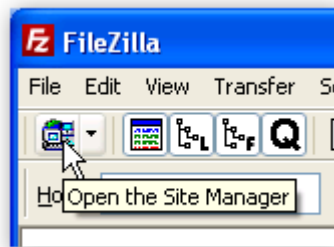
The password of the above account.

Configuring a Site

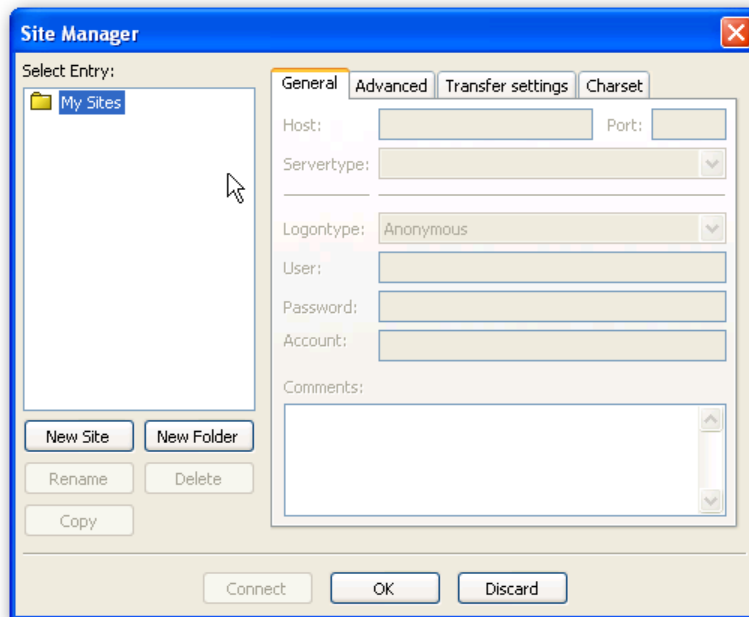
Within the FileZilla client, a computer it connects to, for the purposes of transferring files, is called an “FTP Site”.

In order to connect to the computer hosting your blog, you need to configure its site information.

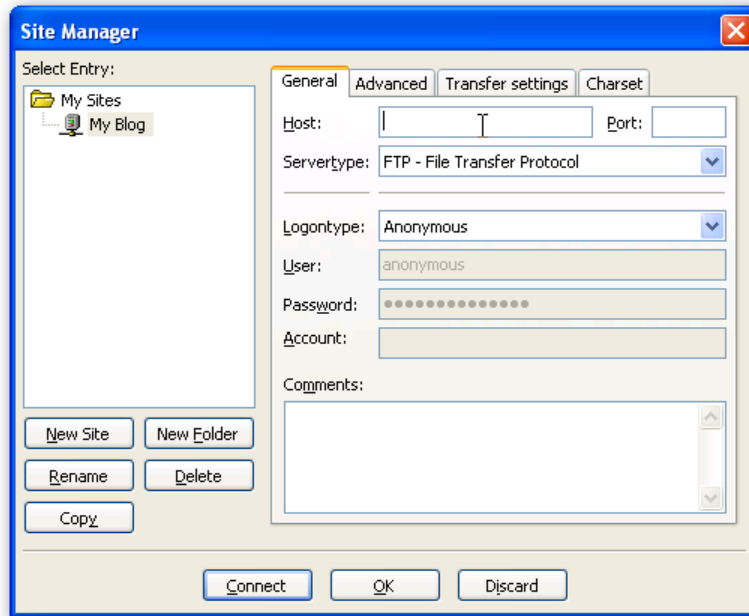
The Site Manager is where you setup site information within FileZilla, and this is available by selecting File – Site Manager, or selecting the Site Manager toolbar button.



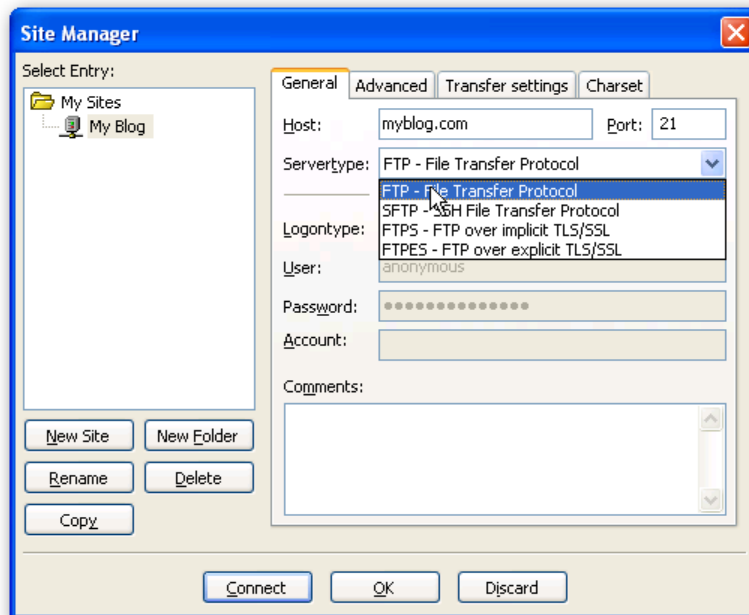
The Site Manager dialog is now displayed:



Select “New Site” and call it “My Blog”, or whatever you feel is more descriptive, and then press Enter.



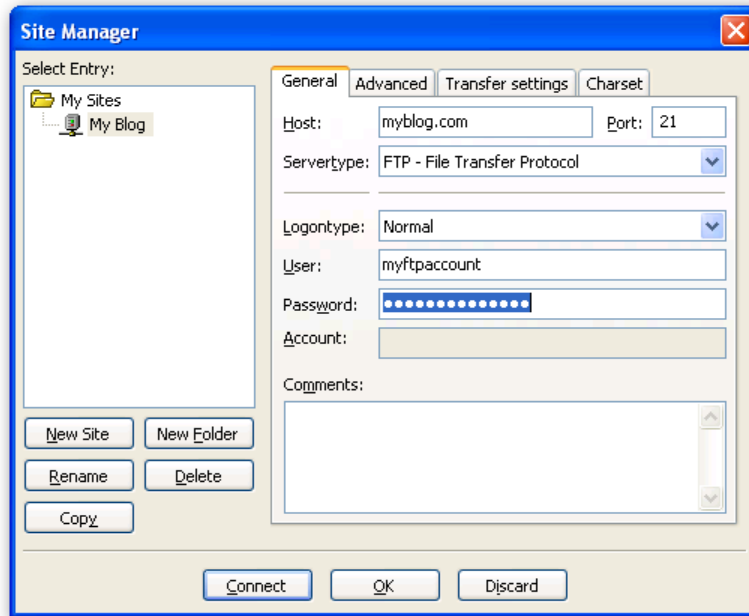
Enter the host name and port number values provided by your host, and select “FTP – File Transfer Protocol” as the servertime.



The other three servertypes, SFTP, FTPS and FTPES are all more secure forms of FTP in that they are more robust or provide encryption support. Again, you host

will tell you whether they use regular FTP or one of the other available types. Unless you are totally paranoid, FTP is acceptable for blogs.

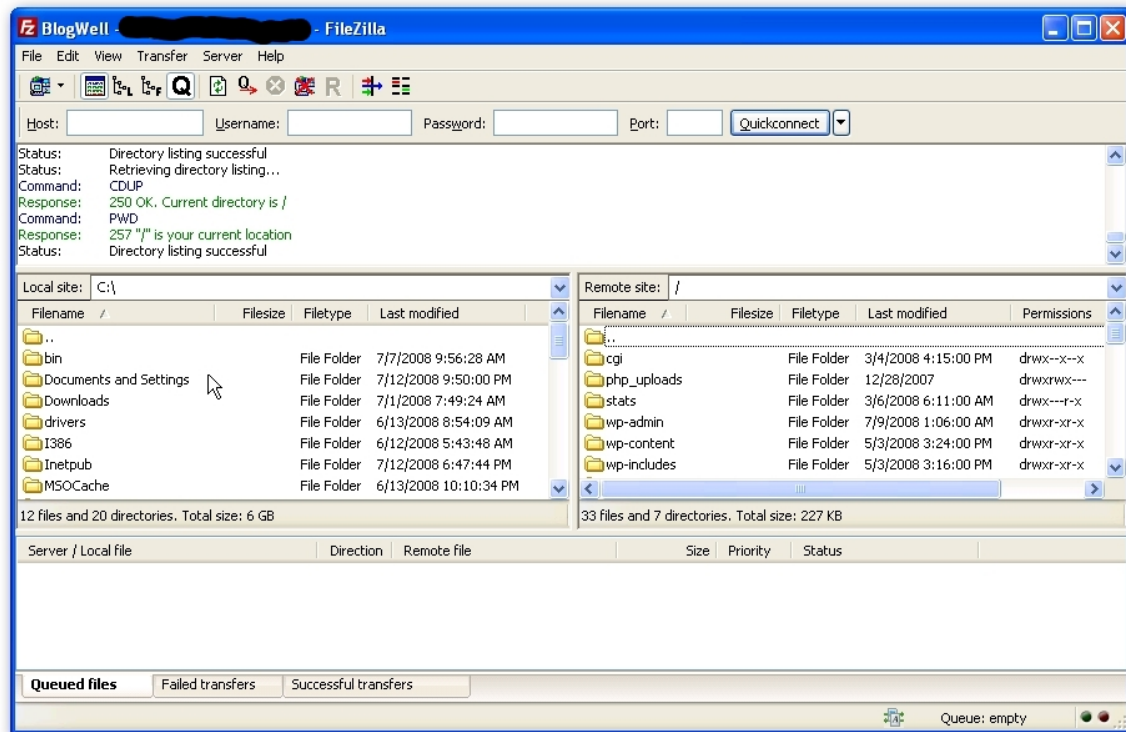
Now you will need to enter the user name and password to use. Before you can enter this information you need to select “Normal” as the logontype.



Select “Connect” and it will both save the site connection information, so you can connect again without re-entering this information, and attempt to connect to the site.

Connecting to a Site

When you connect to a site, FileZilla will display the files & folders available on the local site, your computer, on the left hand side, and the files & folders available on the remote site, the site to which you are connected, i.e. the computer which hosts your blog, on the right hand side.



The top level folder of the remote site is shown.

The top level folder of your WordPress blog will be the folder which contains the 'wp-admin', 'wp-content' and 'wp-includes' folders.

You may find that your host places the WordPress blog files within the 'public_html' folder. Our host, Go Daddy, however, does not.

The folders 'cgi', 'php_uploads' and 'stats' may or more not exist on your FTP account, as these may be host dependent (our host is Go Daddy).

The top portion of the FileZilla client is the message log. This lists the information sent by FileZilla, in the form of FTP **commands** issued, and the information received by FileZilla in the form of the **response** retrieved.

The bottom portion of the FileZilla client is the transfer queue, which is divided in three sections:

1) Queued files

This shows a list of files which are currently being transferred and the files waiting to be transferred. By default, only 2 files can be actively transferred at any one time and any number of files can be waiting to be transferred.

2) Failed transfers

This shows the list of files whose transfer failed.

Insufficient disk space, on either your computer or the remote computer, will be the most likely cause for file transfer failures.

3) Successful transfers

This shows the list of files which were successfully transferred.

Transferring Files

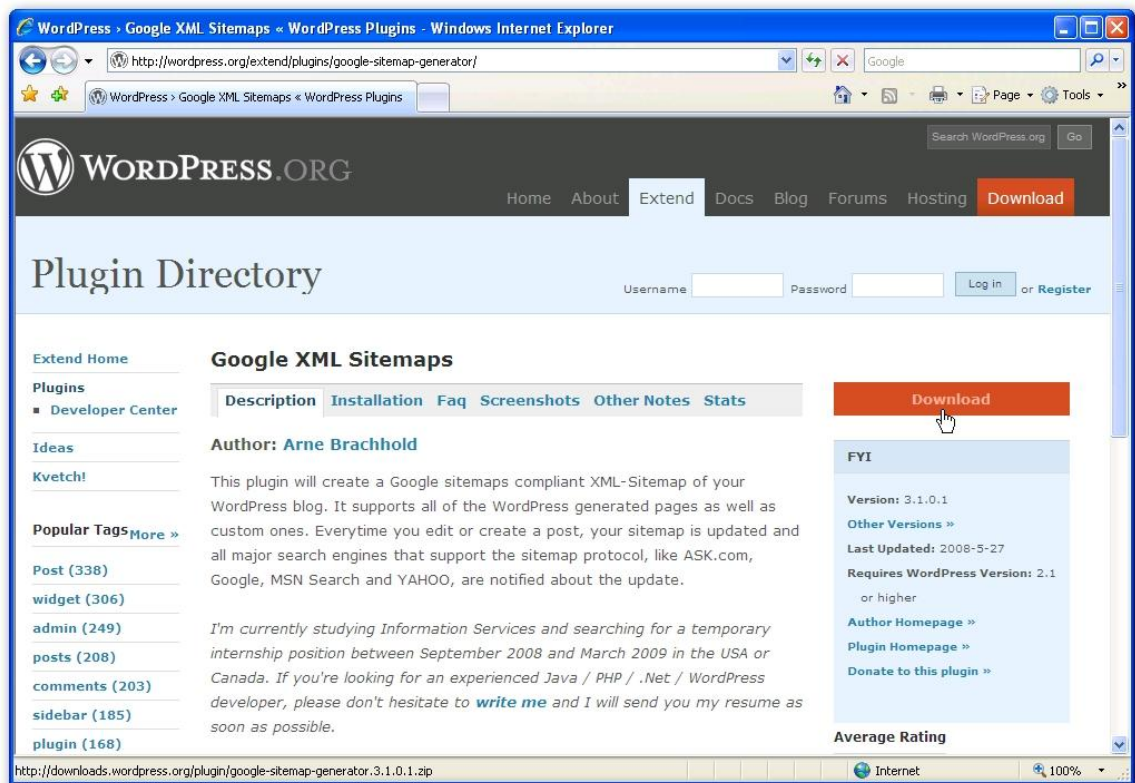
Now what we have setup FileZilla and can connect to the blog's FTP site, we can walkthrough copying some files.

As an example, we will install the [Google XML Sitemaps](#) plugin onto your blog.

Step 1 – Download the Plugin

Visit the [WordPress.org Plugin Directory](#) and search for “Google XML SiteMaps”.

The first result should take to page describing the [Google XML Sitemaps plugin by Arne Brachhold](#).



All plugins are packaged as a ZIP archive file, which allows a number of files and folders to be contained within a single file, which greatly simplifies downloading.

Select the “Download” button.

Internet Explorer will prompt as to whether the file ‘google-sitemap-generator.3.1.0.1.zip’ should be opened or saved to the file system. Select the “Save” button.

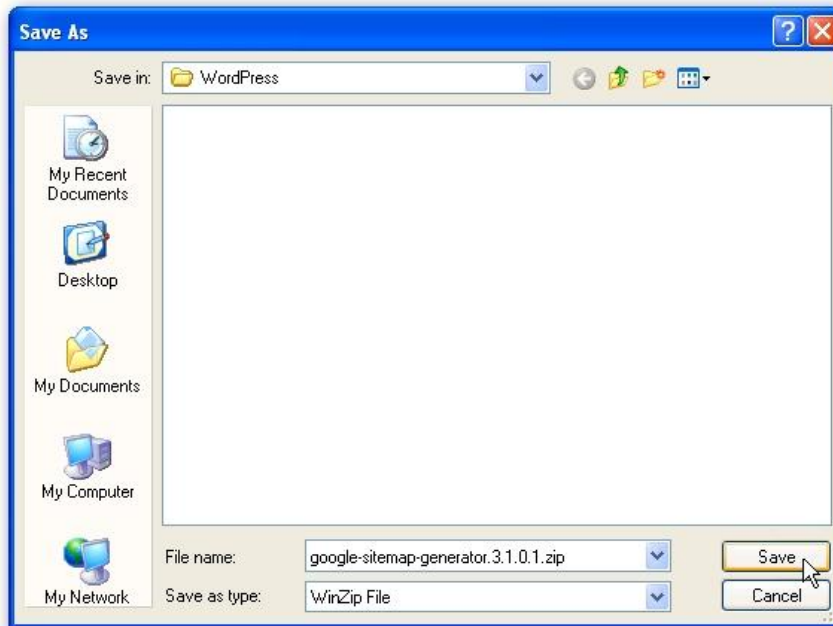
If you are using Firefox, then you will get a similar dialog; however, when you save the file to the file system, Firefox will automatically save it to the currently configured download folder, which by default is your “Desktop”.

NOTE: The plugin may have been updated since this article was written, so the version number may be greater than 3.1.0.1, and so the name of the plugin ZIP file may be different to reflect the latest version number available.



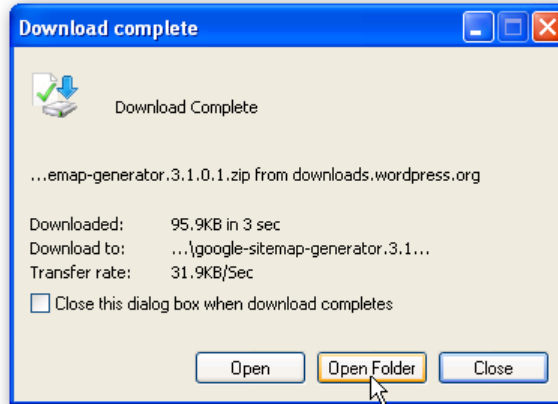
Internet Explorer will now display the Windows “Save As” dialog which allows you to save the file in any folder and also rename it if you so desire.

Personally, I download WordPress related files to “C:\Downloads\WordPress”.

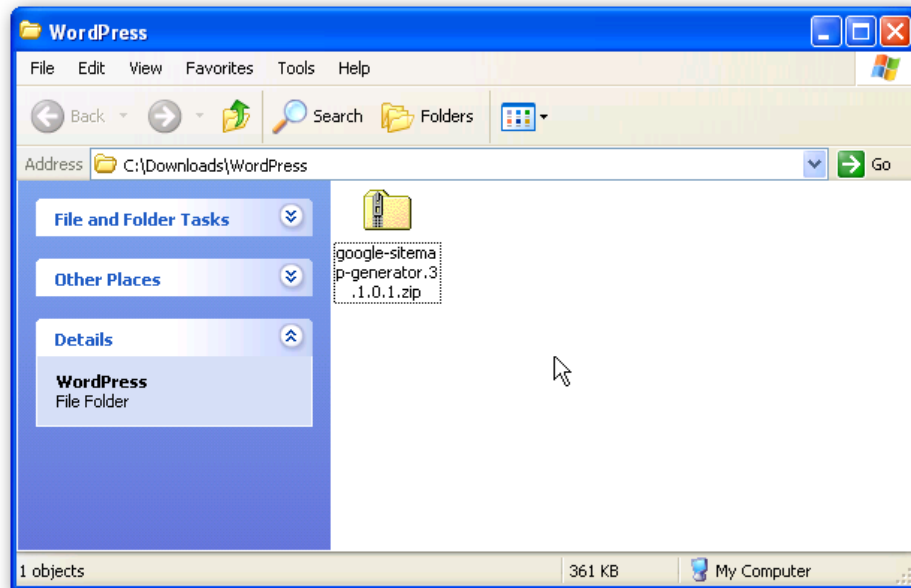


Select “Save” and Internet Explorer will start downloading the plugin. The plugin file is very small at only 361 KB, so it will be downloaded almost immediately.

If the “Close this dialog box when download completes” is not checked, then Internet Explorer will display the following dialog when the download is complete.



Select “Open Folder” and the folder “C:\Downloads\WordPress”, or the folder which you specified to download the plugin to, will be opened.



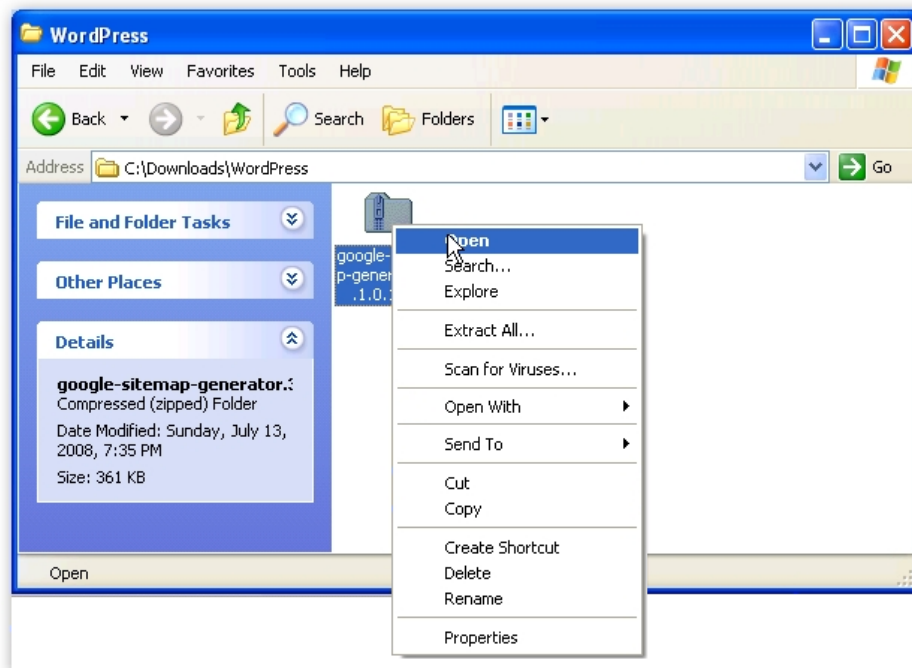
The plugin has now been successfully downloaded to your computer.

Step 2 – Unzip the Plugin

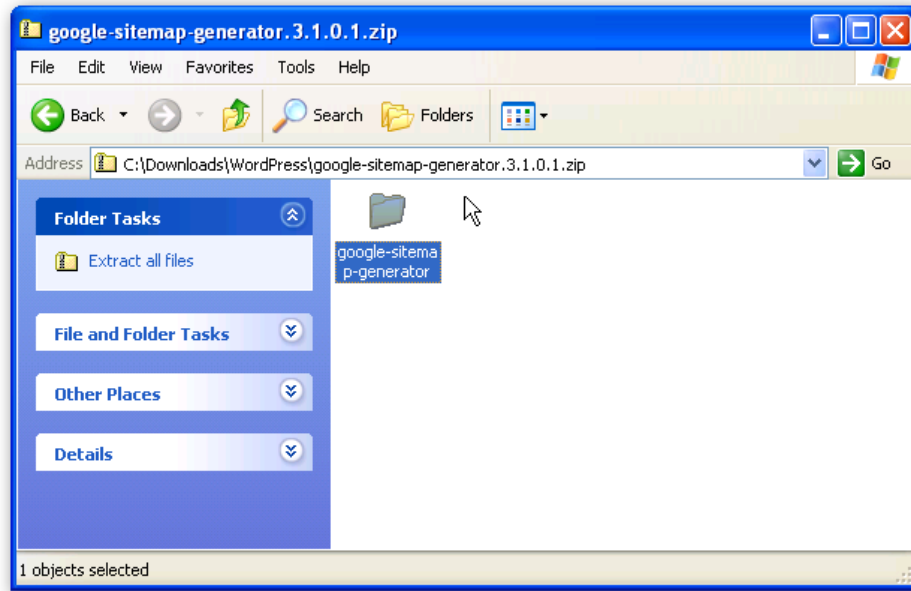
The next step is to unzip the plugin ZIP file.

The easiest method to save the files within a ZIP file to a folder on the file system, is to use the built in ZIP support provided by Windows XP (Windows Vista should have similar functionality). If you have installed a separate ZIP application, such as WinZip etc, then you can use this.

You can left double click on the “google-sitemap-generator.3.1.0.1.zip” file, or right click and select the “Open” option.



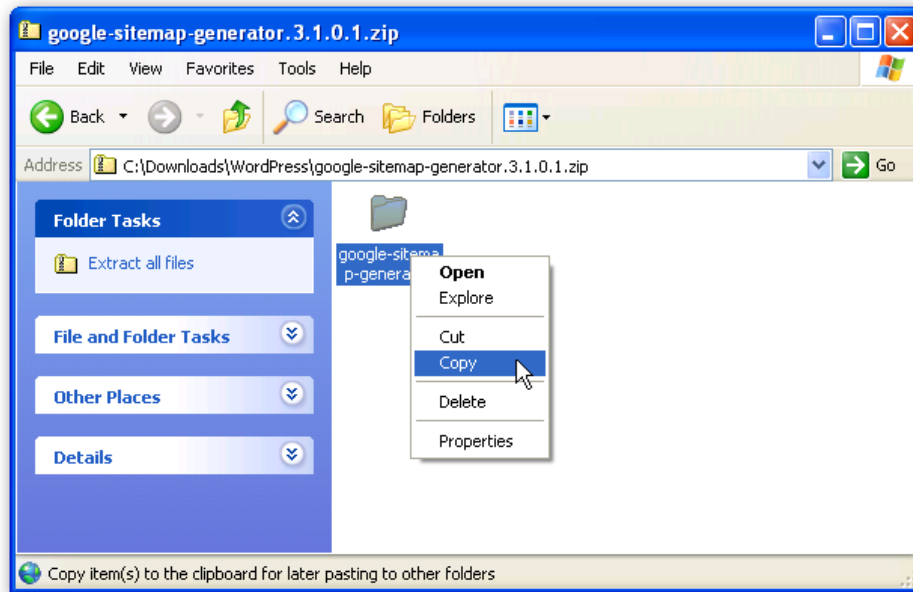
This will now display the contents of the google-sitemap-generator.3.1.0.1.zip file



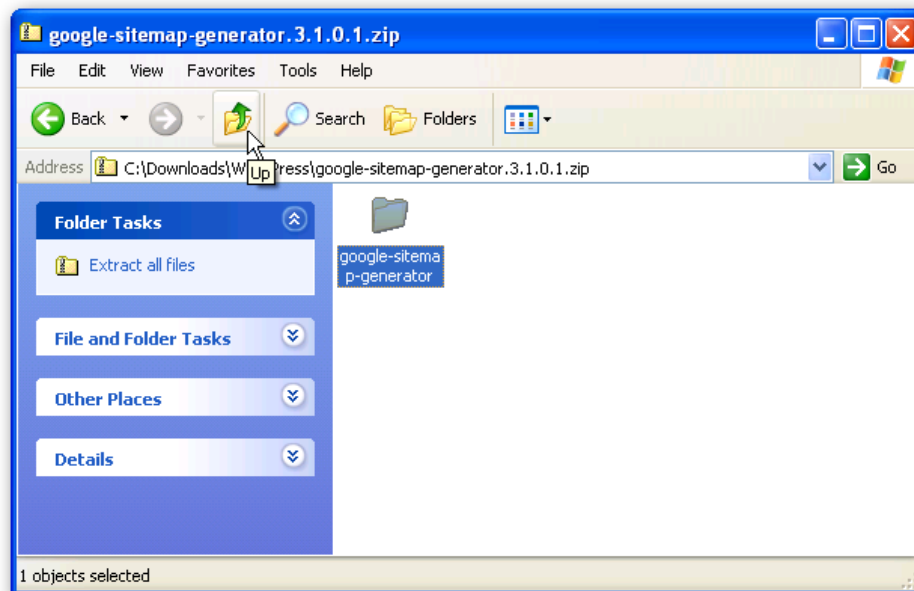
As you can see the ZIP file contains a single folder. It is this folder, and the files and folders within it, which must be extracted from the ZIP file, copied to the file system, and then copied to your blog.

The easiest method is to copy the folder. You can either:

- a) Select the folder and pressing Ctrl-C, or
- b) Select the folder, clicking the right mouse button and selecting Copy.

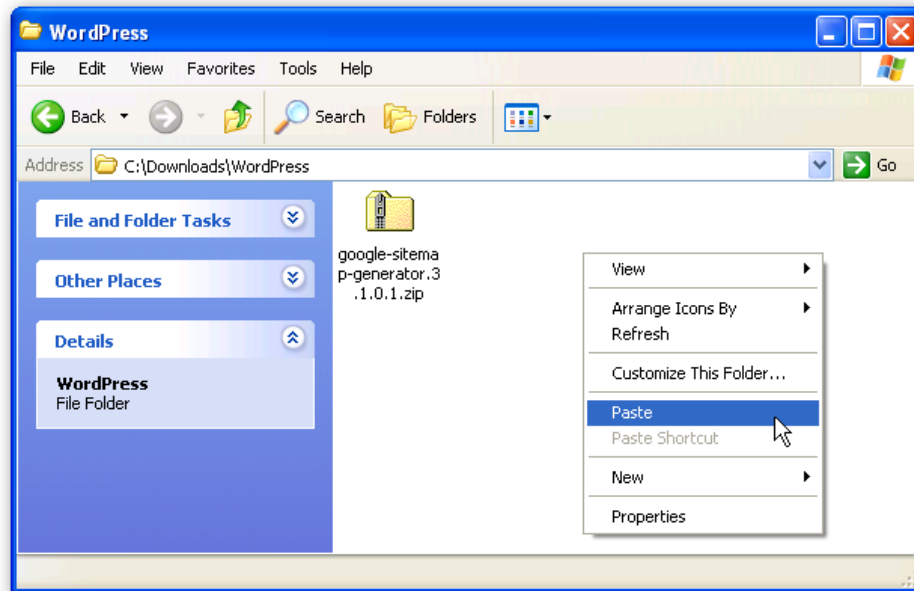


Once copied, we need to return to the folder containing the ZIP file, which is done by clicking on the “Up” toolbar button, or pressing backspace (ensuring that the folder within the ZIP file is selected).

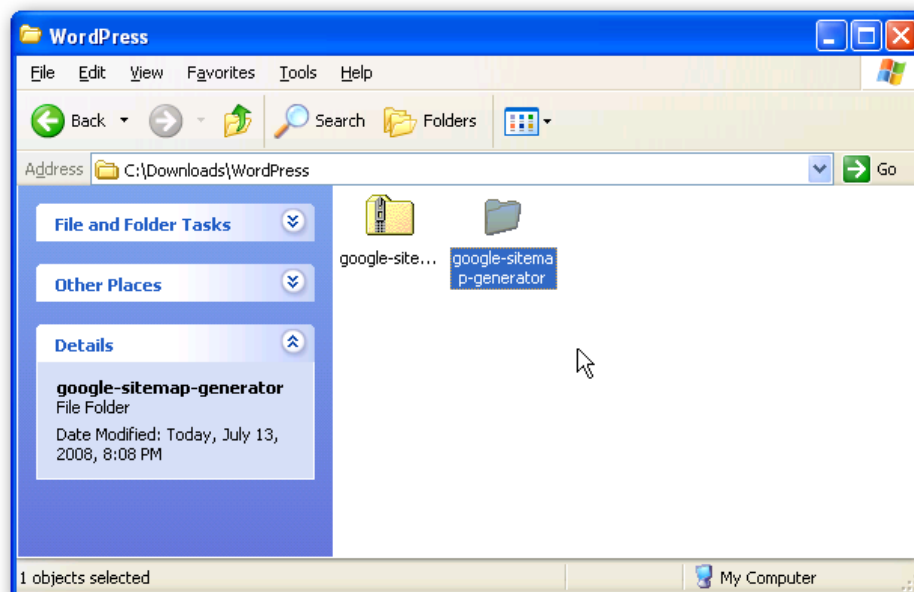


Once we have returned to the “C:\Downloads\WordPress” folder, you can paste the copied folder, by either:

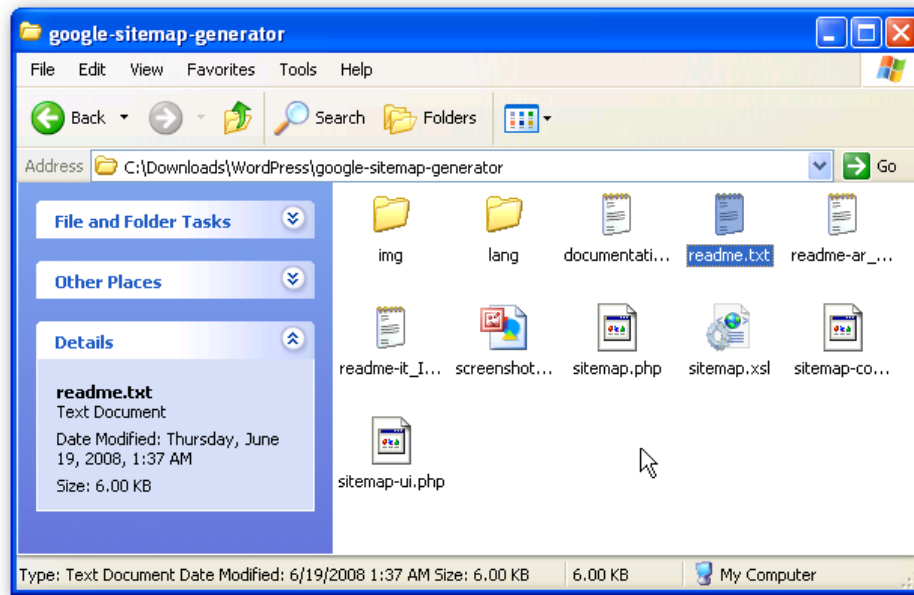
- c) Pressing Ctrl-V, or
- d) Selecting the blank area within the folder (i.e. not a file or folder within “C:\Downloads\Wordpress”) and clicking the right mouse button and then selecting Paste.



The “google-sitemap-generator” folder will then be copied to the “C:\Downloads\WordPress” folder.



If you double click the left mouse button on the “google-sitemap-generator” folder, its contents will be displayed.



Step 3 – Read Readme File

Each plugin should contain a “readme.txt” file which describe the installation instructions.

For the Google Sitemap Generator plugin, the installation instructions are:

== Installation ==

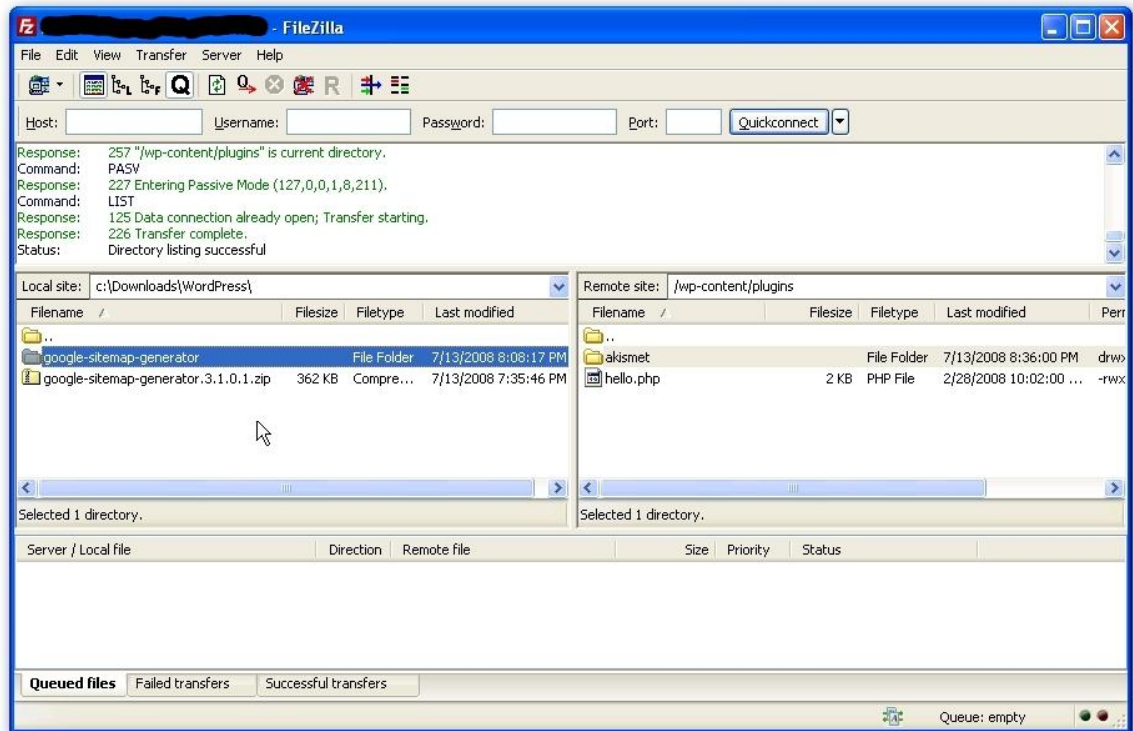
1. Upload the full directory into your wp-content/plugins directory.
2. Use your favorite FTP program to create two files in your WordPress directory (that's where the wp-config.php is) named sitemap.xml and sitemap.xml.gz and make them writable via CHMOD 666. More information about CHMOD and how to make files writable is available at the [WordPress Codex](#) and on [stadtaus.com](#). Making your whole blog directory writable is NOT recommended anymore due to security reasons.
3. Activate the plugin at the plugin administration page
4. Open the plugin configuration page, which is located under Options -> XML-Sitemap and build the sitemap the first time. If you get a permission error, check the file permissions of the newly created files.
5. The plugin will automatically update your sitemap of you publish a post, so there's nothing more to do :)

Step 4 – Copy the Plugin Folder to Your Blog

The “google-sitemap-generator” folder, which was copied from the downloaded plugin ZIP file above, needs to be copied to the “wp-content\plugins” folder within your blog.

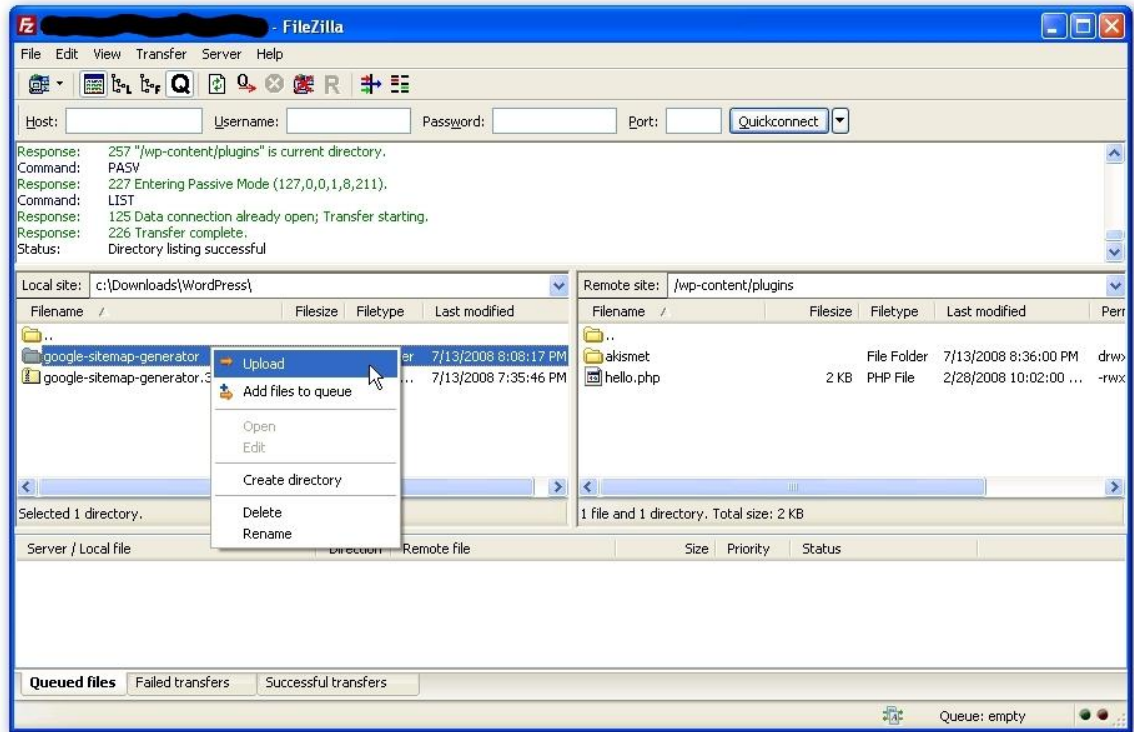
Start FileZilla and:

- 1) Connect to your blog using the Site Manager information setup previously.
- 2) Set the local site folder to “C:\Downloads\WordPress”.
- 3) Set the remote site folder to “/wp-content/plugins”.



To copy the “google-sitemap-generator” folder to your blog’s plugins folder, you need to:

- 1) Click on the “google-sitemap-generator” folder within your local site’s list of files and folders.
- 2) Click the right mouse button, and
- 3) Select the “Upload” button.

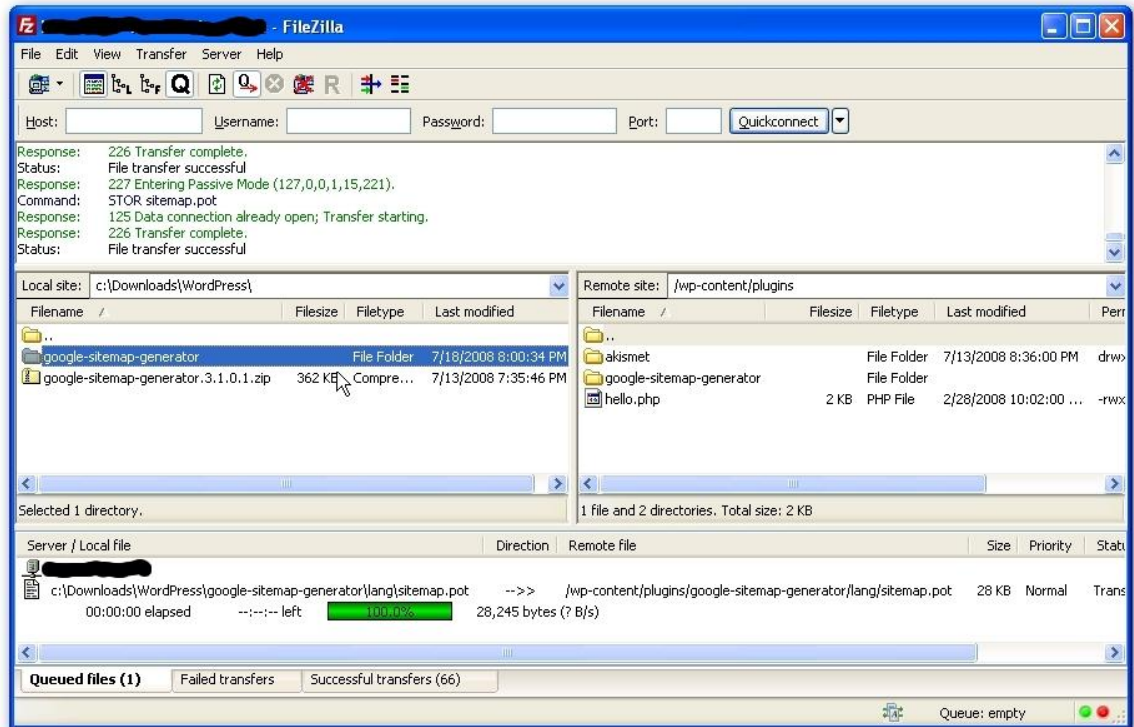


A bit on terminology:

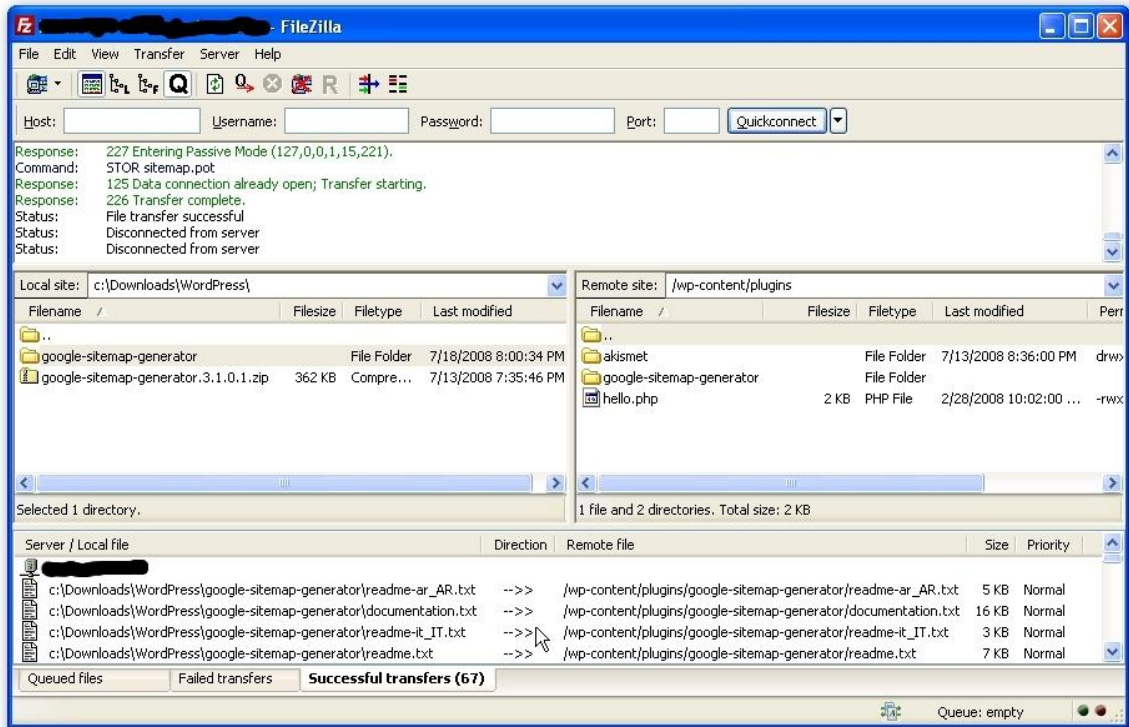
When you copy a file or folder from your computer to the remote computer you are “uploading” the file.

When you copy a file or folder from the remote computer to your computer you are “downloading” the file.

Whilst the files and folders within “google-sitemap-generator” folder are being copied, you will see FileZilla show information within the “Transfer queue” section show the files being copied, and the files yet to be copied.



Once the folder has been copied, the list of “Successful transfers” will show 67 files.



NOTE: Version 3.1.0.1 of the “Google XML Sitemaps” contains 67 files. Subsequent versions may contain more or less.

Step 5 – Activating the Plugin

Within your blog’s WordPress Administration Dashboard, select Plugins located in the upper right hand corner of the dashboard.

Plugin Management

Plugins extend and expand the functionality of WordPress. Once a plugin is installed, you may activate it or deactivate it here.

Plugin	Version	Description	Status	Action
Akismet	2.1.6	Akismet checks your comments against the Akismet web service to see if they look like spam or not. You need a WordPress.com API key to use it. You can review the spam it catches under "Comments." To show off your Akismet stats just put <code><?php akismet_counter(); ?></code> in your template. See also: WP Stats plugin . <i>By Matt Mullenweg.</i>	Inactive	Activate Edit
Google XML Sitemaps	3.1.0.1	This plugin will generate a sitemaps.org compatible sitemap of your WordPress blog which is supported by Ask.com, Google, MSN Search and YAHOO. Configuration Page <i>By Arne Brachhold.</i>	Inactive	Activate Edit
Hello Dolly	1.5	This is not just a plugin, it symbolizes the hope and enthusiasm of an entire generation summed up in two words sung most famously by Louis Armstrong: Hello, Dolly. When activated you will randomly see a lyric from Hello, Dolly in the upper right of your admin screen on every page. <i>By Matt Mullenweg.</i>	Inactive	Activate Edit

Select “Activate” to activate the “Google XML Sitemaps” plugin.

Once activated, plugins will be highlighted green.

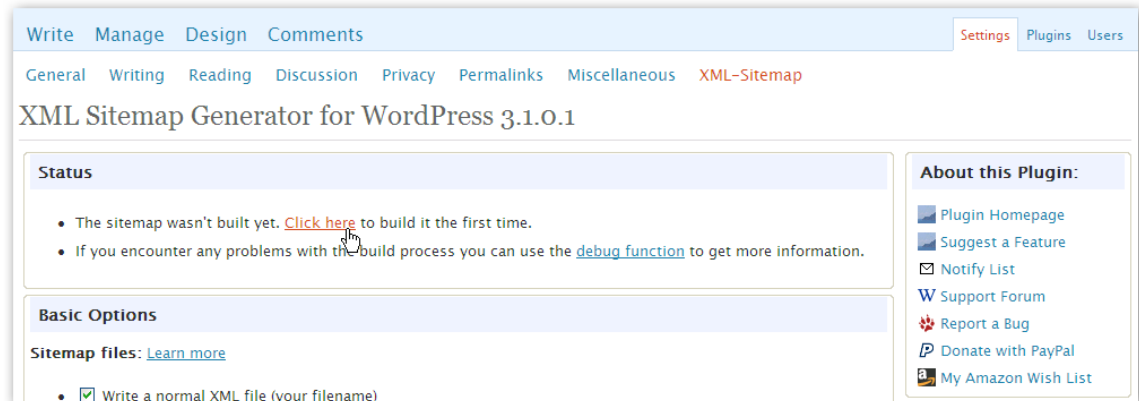
Plugin Management

Plugins extend and expand the functionality of WordPress. Once a plugin is installed, you may activate it or deactivate it here.

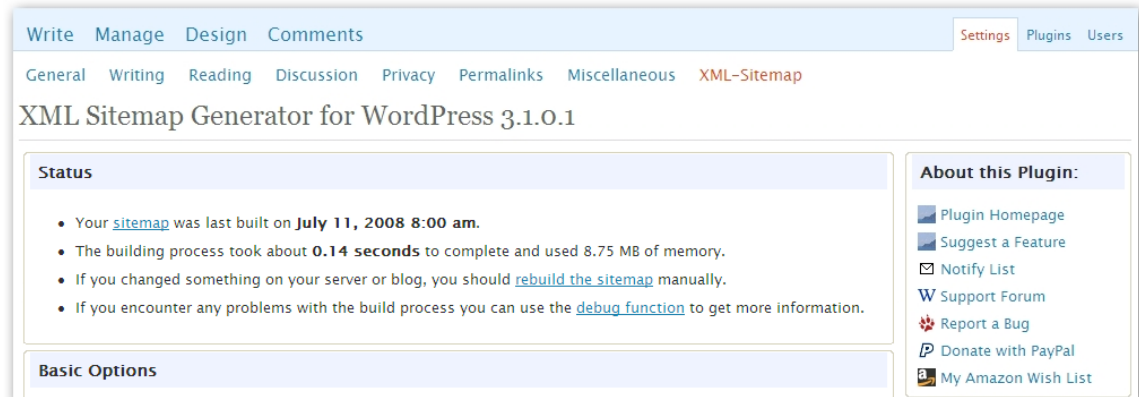
[Deactivate All Plugins](#)

Plugin	Version	Description	Status	Action
Akismet	2.1.6	Akismet checks your comments against the Akismet web service to see if they look like spam or not. You need a WordPress.com API key to use it. You can review the spam it catches under "Comments." To show off your Akismet stats just put <code><?php akismet_counter(); ?></code> in your template. See also: WP Stats plugin . <i>By Matt Mullenweg.</i>	Inactive	Activate Edit
Google XML Sitemaps	3.1.0.1	This plugin will generate a sitemaps.org compatible sitemap of your WordPress blog which is supported by Ask.com, Google, MSN Search and YAHOO. Configuration Page <i>By Arne Brachhold.</i>	Active	Deactivate Edit
Hello Dolly	1.5	This is not just a plugin, it symbolizes the hope and enthusiasm of an entire generation summed up in two words sung most famously by Louis Armstrong: Hello, Dolly. When activated you will randomly see a lyric from Hello, Dolly in the upper right of your admin screen on every page. <i>By Matt Mullenweg.</i>	Inactive	Activate Edit

Now that the “Google XML Sitemaps” plugin is activated, you need to create the initial sitemap. This is done by selecting “Settings” and then “XML-Sitemap” within the dashboard. Once the “Google XML Sitemaps” settings are displayed (it is now called “XML Sitemap Generator” as it really applies to all search engines, not just Google), you need click on “Click here” within the Status section at the top.



Once generated, you will no longer need to manually generate the sitemap, as it will now be automatically updated as you create or update your posts.

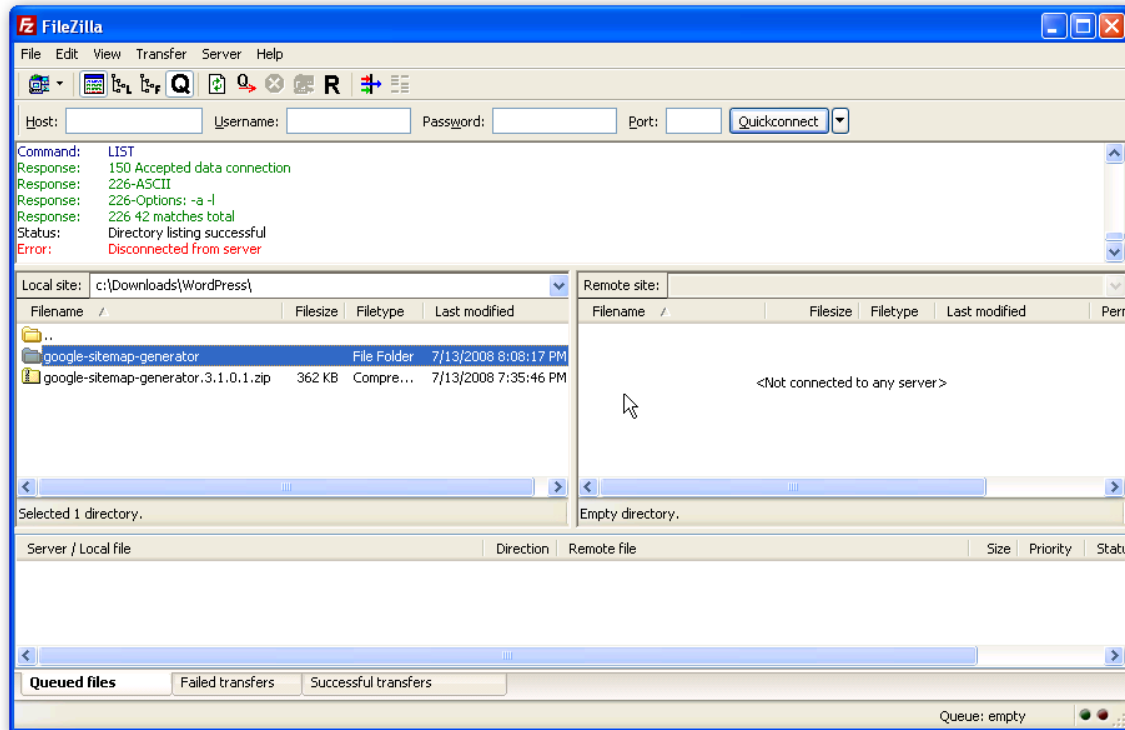


The sitemap has now been created for your blog, which can be viewed using the URL <http://myblog.com/sitemap.xml>, where myblog.com is replaced by the domain name of your blog.

For example, BlogWell’s sitemap can be viewed using the URL <http://blog-well.com/sitemap.xml>.

FileZilla and Disconnections

One of the confusing things you will experience with FileZilla, or any other FTP application, is when the message log section displays “Error: Disconnected from server” and the remote site folder displays “<Not connected to any server>”, and you are currently uploading or downloading files.



The uploading and downloading of files is not affected, as FTP uses two connections between your computer and the remote host to which you are connection. The connections are used for:

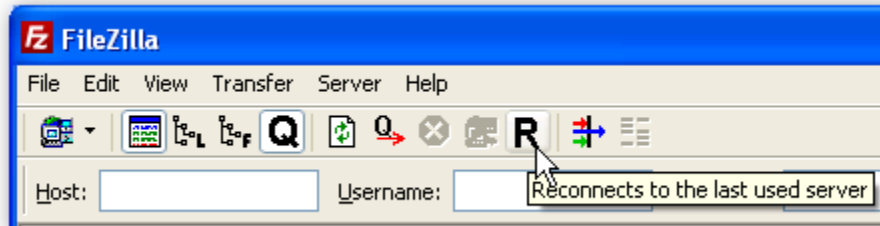
- 1) Displaying folder and file information on the remote host, and
- 2) Transferring files.

It is the first connection, the one used to display file and folder information, which is disconnected and not the second one used for transferring files.

Your hosting provider controls the period of time of inactivity before an FTP connection is automatically disconnection, so you will not have any control of this. Your hosting provider will typically have a single FTP server which handles the requests of many hundreds, and maybe thousands, of its customers, so this

ensures that resources are only used by active users, and not ones where the FTP client is running on machines where the user has left for the day or gone to sleep!

You can quickly reconnect by selecting the Reconnection toolbar button within FileZilla.



Uploading a WordPress Theme

Uploading and installing a WordPress Theme is very similar to the steps used to upload and install WordPress plugins.

[Village Idiot](#) provides an excellent [video based tutorial, in two parts, showing how to upload a WordPress theme](#) using FileZilla.

An Alternative to an FTP Client

[CyberNet News](#) shows [how you can map an FTP site to a file system drive in Windows](#).

Please read the comments to see the full pros and cons of this approach.

August 10, 2008 – Created.

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A MadLid creation

<http://blog-well.com>