

**Roll your own
alternative to
Ning.**

**Aaron Sumner
University of Kansas
Center for Research on Learning
SIDLIT, August 2010**

Handout: <http://db.tt/f8udAD>
Slides: <http://db.tt/rIZt5A>

A little about me:

- 16 years experience developing web apps at KU, KU Med, University of Washington
- Developed Ning networks for projects at KU and ESU



April 15, 2010

An Update from Ning

Posted by [Jason Rosenthal](#) on April 16, 2010 – 3:13 pm

Hi Everyone,

As many of you know, we made a decision yesterday to focus 100% of the company on enhancing the features and services we offer to paying Ning Creators. The tens of thousands of you who already use our paid service represent over 75% of our traffic, and we've heard repeatedly from you ways that we can deliver a killer service to help make your Ning Network more effective. Some examples of things we are working on that you've asked for include new APIs, a new mobile experience and new advertising and revenue opportunities.

As part of this change, we'll be phasing out our free service. On May 4, 2010, we will share with you all of the details of our new offering, including features and price points, through a series of blog posts, emails, and conference calls. We recognize that there are many active Ning Networks for teachers, small non-profits, and individuals and it's our goal to have a set of product and pricing options that will make sense for all of them. For Ning Creators using our free service who choose to move to another service, we will offer a migration path and time to make that change. We will still continue to allow free trials and test networks on the Ning Platform.

We look forward to talking to you further on May 4th.



Posted by [Jason Rosenthal](#), written on April 16, 2010 – 3:13 pm.

It is filed under [Company](#) ([Permalink](#))

July 20, 2010

You have received this email because you created a Ning Network.



Last week our three new plans went live. Many of you chose to upgrade immediately to take advantage of our new features and get your transition out of the way early. If you haven't chosen a plan yet, [your three choices](#) will remain available until August 20, 2010. Today, we want to give you some insight into the new plans, provide you with some additional ways to include music on your Ning Network, and highlight some of your most urgent questions.



John McDonald
VP, Advocacy

TOP 5 QUESTIONS

Got a question about the new plans? We've collected the most popular questions we're hearing [on Creators](#).

- How do I buy?
- Am I going to lose features?
- What happens to my content?
- When should I switch?
- No credit card. What can I do?

HAVEN'T UPGRADED TO MINI, PLUS OR PRO?

GET STARTED NOW »

August 20, 2010

Three options:

1. Stick with Ning
2. Switch to a hosted, non-Ning platform
3. Host your own

1. Stick with Ning

NING MINI <i>The simplest and fastest way to set up a social network for your classroom, community group, small nonprofit or family</i>	NING PLUS <i>The tools and features you need to customize your Ning Network with greater design flexibility and control over your members' experience</i>	NING PRO <i>The ideal solution for building a custom social experience with premium add-ons, integration options, and more bandwidth and storage</i>
\$2.95/month or \$19.95/year* (save 44%)	\$19.95/month or \$199.95/year* (save 16%)	\$49.95/month or \$499.95/year* (save 17%)
Up to 150 members	Unlimited members	Unlimited members
	Full control over your branding and member experience	Full control over your branding and member experience
Features include blogs, photos, forum and video embeds	Full feature set including events, groups, chat, pages and Ning Apps	Full feature set plus video and music uploads and branded players
Simple customization options	Advanced customization options including CSS, Javascript and the Language Editor	Advanced customization options, plus the API access upgrade when launched
Includes run your own ads	Includes run your own ads, use your own domain and remove Ning links	Includes run your own ads, use your own domain, remove Ning links and add storage and bandwidth
Community-based support	Help Center support	Premium support

NING MINI

The simplest and fastest way to set up a social network for your classroom, community group, small nonprofit or family

NING PLUS

The tools and features you need to customize your Ning Network with greater design flexibility and control over your members' experience

NING PRO

The ideal solution for building a custom social experience with premium add-ons, integration options, and more bandwidth and storage

\$2.95/month

or \$19.95/year* (save 44%)

\$19.95/month

or \$199.95/year* (save 16%)

\$49.95/month

or \$499.95/year* (save 17%)

Up to 150 members

Unlimited members

Unlimited members

Full control over your branding and member experience

Full control over your branding and member experience

Features include blogs, photos, forum and video embeds

Full feature set including events, groups, chat, pages and Ning Apps

Full feature set plus video and music uploads and branded players

Simple customization options

Advanced customization options including CSS, Javascript and the Language Editor

Advanced customization options, plus the API access upgrade when launched

Includes run your own ads

Includes run your own ads, use your own domain and remove

Includes run your own ads, use your own domain, remove

PEARSON



NING MINI

The simplest and fastest way to set up a social network for your classroom, community group, small nonprofit or family

\$2.95/month

or \$19.95/year* (save 44%)

Up to 150 members

Features include blogs, photos, forum and video embeds

Simple customization options

Includes run your own ads

Community-based support

<http://about.ning.com/pearsonsponsorship/>

2. Non-Ning hosted platforms



[Follow Spruz on Twitter!](#)

[Login](#) | [Sign Up!](#)



Free Website

Features

Q & A

Services

Enter Site Title

(this can be changed at any time)

Enter Site Address

<http://www.name.spruz.com>

Start!

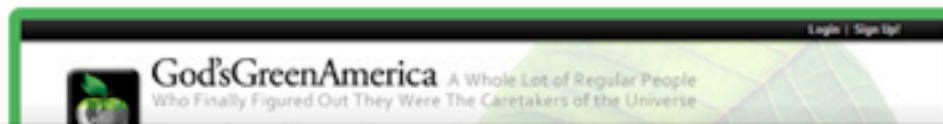
Be the 401,797th person to make a free website with us!

Spruz welcomes Ning Social Network Creators! [Get Started](#)

We have live chat staff on hand to help you with your questions or if you need help getting familiar with the Spruz Platform. Our Live Chat Buttons are located on our website and in the management bar of your new Spruz powered website! [Spruz Welcomes You!](#)

[Try our Ning Member Migration Script](#)

Spruz allows you to export your data, and we will never market to your members.



Social Networking

God's Green America has utilized the Spruz platform's



Share

Translate

Fans on Facebook

Like This Page



News



[Follow Spruz on Twitter!](#)

[Login](#) | [Sign Up!](#)



Free Website

Features

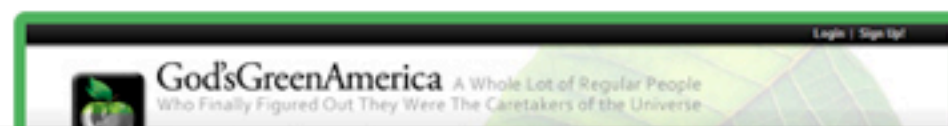
Q & A

Services

Free or Pay it is up to you. Our plans help you grow before you have to pay us a dime!

Features	Free	20G	100G	250G
Pricing	Free	\$9.95/mo	\$19.95/mo	\$49.95/mo
Member Limit	250	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Monthly Bandwidth/Transfer Allowance	5GB	20GB	100GB	250GB
File Space*	100MB	2000MB	10,000MB	25,000MB
User your own domain name (myname.com)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ad Placement Module	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Word Replacement Filter Control	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Member Subscription Module	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Video Processing	No	Add \$10/mo	Add \$10/mo	Add \$10/mo
Shopping Cart	No	Add \$10/mo	Add \$10/mo	Add \$10/mo
Remove "Powered by Spruz"	No	Add \$4.95/mo	Add \$4.95/mo	Included

Promotional advertisements may display on free website accounts. Save up to 50% by prepaying your plan!



Social Networking

God's Green America has utilized the Spruz platform's



Share



Translate



Fans on Facebook



Like This Page



News

Group Title

Catchy tagline - explains the group mission

My Account • Administrate • Sign Out

Select

GROU.PS BETA

[Learn More](#)

[Use Cases](#)

[Pricing](#)

[Sign In](#)

Create your own Flickr

Site URL: .grou.ps

Email:

Password:

or



Connect



MySpaceID

It's FREE



by clicking this button,
you agree our [terms of use](#).

Migrate Your Ning Network

[About Us](#)

[Advertisers](#)

[Investors](#)

[Skip this step](#)

• **Step 1**
Select your basic settings
such as site title, tagline
and keywords

• **Step 2**
Change your site
appearance

• **Step 3**
Now customize your look'n
feel

• **Step 4**
Create questionnaires to
get to know your users

• **Step 5**
Invite users and create
content together

• **Step 6**
Edit profile

• **Finish**
Ready to rock!

Site Description:

Catchy tagline - explains the group mission

Membership:

☒ Free

☐ Moderated

Notifications

Group Title

Catchy tagline - explains the group mission

My Account • Administrate • Sign Out

Select

Pricing

GROU.PS has a very simple pricing plan:

Storage Tier	Bandwidth Tier	Pricing
First 10GB	First 100GB Data Transfer	FREE
Next 1TB	Next 10TB Data Transfer	0.90 Crd* per GB of storage and 10GB of data transfer
Next 4TB	Next 40TB Data Transfer	0.85 Crd* per GB of storage and 10GB of data transfer
Next 15TB	Next 150TB Data Transfer	0.80 Crd* per GB of storage and 10GB of data transfer
Storage Used	Data Transfer	0.75 Crd* per GB of storage and 10GB of data transfer

*Crd means Credits

Also we offer Premium Support, with 24 hour response guaranteed for max 30 tickets per month and it's 10 credits per month. (<http://premiumsupport.grou.ps>)

content together

• Step 5
Edit profile

• Finish
Ready to rock!

Membership: ☒ Free
☐ Moderated

🔔 Notifications

mixxt for colleagues and partners



- Create a network for colleagues and partners
- Discuss and share ideas and projects in Forums
- Keep your knowledge and experiences in your wiki
- Communicate faster, more efficient and more productively
- Use the power of shared knowledge and collaboration



mixxt-ID

Password

☐ **Remember me**

Sign In

Forgot your password?
Sign up here for free!
OpenID?

Start your own free Social Network with these features:



Forums



Events



Wiki



Your design



Images



Private networks

Search for networks

Search

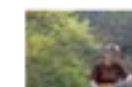
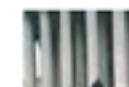
Featured networks

Largest networks

Most active networks

All networks

mixxt members



mixxt for colleagues and partners



- Create a network for colleagues and partners
- Discuss and share ideas and projects in Forums
- Keep your knowledge and experiences in your wiki
- Communicate faster, more efficient and more productively



mixxt-ID

Password

☐ Remember me

[Sign In](#)

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Sign up here for free!](#)

[Create ID?](#)

No word on pricing.

Start your own free Social Network with these features:



Forums



Events



Wiki



Your design



Images



Private
networks

Search for networks

[Search](#)

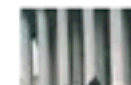
Featured networks

[Largest networks](#)

[Most active networks](#)

[All networks](#)

mixxt members





Data Ownership
GUARANTEE



LIVE HELP

I'm Online

Start Chat >>



Home

Features

Customization

Monetization

Free vs Premium

Plans and Pricing
Create a FREE Network Now!

Build a **FREE** Social Networking Website in minutes

Whether you're a beginner or seasoned developer, build a feature-packed Social Network customized for your group on SocialGO.

No software, hosting or coding required just pick your features, monetization options, support package and GO.

1. Is Social Networking for me?

SocialGO let's you take your offline community online so you can build a thriving social network where you & your members can communicate & share.

Manage & organize your community and even build a lasting and profitable business.

[View some of our social networks](#) and see how people are bringing offline communities online today.

2. Create a Network

Name your social networking website:

Choose an address:

http:// .socialgo.com

Add your own domain later.

It's FREE! Click Here

Go for a [Premium Network](#) now
Get a 30 day FREE trial. Cancel at any time.

3. Help on Demand

Choose to D.I.Y. or get a helping hand from us. SocialGO has a range of services to help you set up and run your network.



[GO Setup and Design](#)

We will work with you to setup, create, design and launch your SocialGO network.



[SocialGO Concierge](#)



Get a personal support service from a member of the SocialGO team.



[SocialGO Help](#)

24/7 Helpdesk & useful tutorials.

Social Networks Made With SocialGO...

	Concierge WE BUILD IT FOR YOU	Premium ALL THE FEATURES	Free BASIC + ADVERTS
Monthly subscription   	\$149.99 /mo.	\$24.99 /mo.	-
Free trial period	7 DAYS FREE	1 MONTH FREE	FREE FOREVER
Included storage	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED	1 GB Storage
Included bandwidth	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED	10 GB Bandwidth
Standard features	✓	✓	✓
No SocialGO advertising	✓	✓	✗
Run your own advertising	✓	✓	✗
Widget store	✓	✓	✗
Use your own URL	✓	✓	✗
Live audio/video chat	✓	✓	✗
Advanced layout manager	✓	✓	✗
Advanced developer access	✓	✓	✗
Network Setup & Design Service	✓	✗	✗
Priority Support	✓	✗	✗
White Label No SocialGO branding or references.	✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Add \$ 19.99 /mo.	✗
Member Billing Member billing allows you to charge members to join your network.	✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Add \$ 19.99 /mo.	✗



A leading open source social networking platform

The smart way to Connect, Share and Collaborate

Create your own social network

Our award-winning platform provides a great way to connect, share and collaborate. Ideal for businesses, schools, universities, groups and associations.



Get Started!

Sign up for your own social network with a free 15 day trial.

Email address:

Choose a network address:

Register now!

Got a question? **Get in touch**

In Beta



See more organizations who choose Elgg to power their social networks.

Everything you need for a great social network

Elgg enables you to create a rich social environment, with a host of features that facilitate communication and collaboration **More.**

Keep control of your data and relationships

Maintain full ownership and control over your data, with a platform built on our award-winning open source software.

Customize your site to engage your audience

Choose from a selection of compelling themes, upload your own logo or banner and make it your own. Need something tailored just for you? **We can help.**



Create your

Our award-winning
connect, share and
schools, universities



See more organizations who

Everything you need great social network

Elgg enables you to create a rich
environment, with a host of features
facilitate communication and
More.

	Pilot To get up and running with Elgg, this package is a low cost option	Popular The best way to get a fully featured, unlimited user, social hub into your organization	Campus A dedicated option designed for institutions, school districts and large organizations
Monthly subscription	\$29.95	\$49.95	Find out more
Number of users	100	Unlimited	Unlimited
Features:			
User profiles	✓	✓	✓ Features will be customized and configured as required to meet your objectives
Activity streams	✓	✓	
Conversations	✓	✓	
Channels	✓	✓	
File sharing	✓	✓	
Social bookmarks	✓	✓	
Facebook / Twitter login	✓	✓	
Blogs	✓	✓	
Groups	✓	✓	
Pages	✓	✓	
Video embeds	✓	✓	
Photo Albums	✓	✓	
Google App Integration			
Export all data	✓	✓	✓
Custom options:			
Custom branding and design	◊ Your own logo or banner Choose from professional themes	◊ Your own logo or banner Choose from professional themes	Fully customized to meet your branding and design requirements
Your own domain name		\$4.95 month	✓
SSL encryption			✓
Dedicated communities			✓ Customized to your requirements
Deployment:			
Storage/bandwidth allowance	1GB/10GB	3GB/30GB	Customized
Support and consulting:			
Support channel	Forum / Email	Forum / Email	Phone, email or on-site consulting
Level	Unlimited / 5 tickets per month	Unlimited / 10 tickets per month	Premium support levels, tailored to meet your needs
Education and training			Tailored to meet your needs

Partners Blog Login

networking platform

Connect, Share and Collaborate

Started!

your own social network
day trial.

Link address:

.elgg.com

now!

Get in touch

In Beta

your site to engage ence

selection of compelling
your own logo or banner
your own. Need something
you? We can help.

3. Host your own

Comparison of social networking software

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Social Network Engine Comparison

[edit]

Social Network Engines provide the basis for community driven content and social/business networking.

Category	BuddyPress	EngineY	PeopleAggregator	ELGG	Mugshot	Drupal	Telligent Community	iScripts Socialware	ImpressCMS	Joomla!	PHPizabi	ODS	Jcow	phpFox	XOOPS
Last Access	2010-03-25	2010-02-26	2007-03-05	2009-03-21	2008-10-31	2008-11-02	2009-06-23	2008-10-10	2009-10-07	2007-03-05	2007-03-05	2008-03-06	2010-03-29	2010-05-19	2010-06-06
License	GPL 2.0	Apache 2.0	Custom [1] [5]	Open source under the GPL 2.0[2] [6]	GPL 2.0	GPL 2.0[3] [7]	Custom	Custom	GPL 2.0	GPL 2.0	Custom	Licensing Terms (based on GPL 2.0)	Creative Commons	Custom [4]	GPL 2.0
Cost	Free	Free	Free (not free, \$2700–\$20,000) [clarification needed]	Free	Free	Free	Per License	Per License, \$147.00	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free, \$299	\$99, \$199, \$299	Free
Source Code	Yes	Yes	Yes	Freely available via stable releases and development SVN	SVN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Version	1.2	N/A	1.2pre6	1.7.1	N/A	5.12, 6.16	5.0	2.2	1.1.3	1.5.12	0.848b C1 HFP1	5.0.5	1.3.5	2.0.5	2.4.4
Installation	Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box		Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box	Out of the box		Out of the box	Out of the box
Codebase	PHP, MySQL	Ruby, Rails	PHP, MySQL	PHP, MySQL/PostgreSQL		PHP, MySQL	ASP.NET 3.5 / Microsoft SQL Server	PHP, MySQL	PHP, MySQL	PHP, MySQL	PHP, MySQL	VSP/VSPX	PHP, MySQL	PHP, MySQL	PHP, MySQL
SSO support	Facebook Connect Twitter Connect LDAP OpenID (via plugins)	Facebook Connect OpenID	Yahoo Flickr ID, OpenID , VardSpace (under dev)	LDAP built in, OpenID by plugin	No	Yes – OpenID, module	Yes – OpenID LDAP Active Directory Facebook Cookie Forms	No	Yes – OpenID + LDAP + Active Directory built in	Yes – OpenID, module		Yes – OpenID and Yadis compliant	Yes – OpenID, module	Facebook Connect	Yes – LDAP + Active Directory built in

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_social_networking_software



BuddyPress

elgg.

Nice things about Elgg and BuddyPress:

- Open Source (free)
- Written in PHP
- Relatively easy to configure
- Good functionality out of the box
- Plugin architecture
- Hosting options available

Caveats:

- No clean way to export from Ning into Elgg (yet)
- You need server access
- You need some tech know-how
- Yet-another-social-network

Setup:

- **Download Elgg or BuddyPress**
- **Configure your web server**
- **Add the database**

Enter your database settings below and hit save:

Database user

ruralcityelgg

Database password

.....

Elgg database

ruralcity_elggdemo

Database hostname (usually 'localhost')

ruralcity-elggdemo.rura

Database table prefix (usually 'elgg_')

elgg_

Save

System settings

Elgg's database was installed successfully.

Now that the Elgg database has been successfully installed, you need to enter a couple of pieces of information to get your site fully up and running. We've tried to guess where we could, but **you should check these details.**

The name of your site (eg "My social networking site"):

SIDLIT 2010 Network

Short description of your site (optional)

A demonstration network for the SIDLIT conference.

Site email address (used when sending system emails)

asumner@ku.edu

The site URL, followed by a trailing slash:

http://localhost:8888/elgg/

The full path to your site root on your disk, followed by a trailing slash:

/Applications/MAMP/htdocs/elgg/

The full path to the directory where uploaded files will be stored, followed by a trailing slash:

/Applications/MAMP/elggdata/

Enter the view which will be used as the default for your site or leave this blank for the default view (if in doubt, leave as default):

default

The default language for your site: English

The default access permissions: Logged in users

Debug mode provides extra information which can be used to diagnose faults. However, it can slow your system down so should only be used if you are having problems:

Turn off debug mode (recommended)

Enable this to have user logins performed over HTTPS. You will need to have https enabled on your server for this to work.

☐ **Enable HTTPS logins**

The RESTful API is a flexible and extensible interface that enables applications to use certain Elgg features remotely.

☒ **Enable the RESTful API**

Save

Your initial configuration settings have been saved. Now register your initial user; this will be your first system administrator.

[click to dismiss](#)

Register

Display name

Email address

Username

Password

Password (again for verification)

Register

Register

Display name

Aaron Sumner

Email address

asumner@ku.edu

Username

asumner

Password

••••••••

Password (again for verification)

••••••••

Register



You have successfully registered for SIDLIT 2010 Network.

[click to dismiss](#)

Log in

Username

Password

Log in

☐ Remember me

[Register](#) | [Lost password](#)

Latest activity

You have been logged in.

[click to dismiss](#)

Your new Elgg site has been successfully installed and your administrator account created. You can now configure your site further by enabling various installed plugin tools.

Statistics

Site Administration

User Administration

Tool Administration

System diagnostics

Log browser

Replace profile fields

This admin panel allows you to control and configure tools installed on your site.

Disable All

Enable All

blog

Elgg blog plugin

[more info](#)

Down Bottom

Enable

bookmarks

Elgg bookmarks plugin.

[more info](#)

Top Up Down Bottom

Enable

captcha

Provides captcha support (Requires the php_gd library).

[more info](#)

Top Up Down Bottom

Enable

categories

Site wide categories

[more info](#)

Top Up Down Bottom

Enable

crontrigger

Provides a poor man's cron trigger to trigger cron scripts based on site visits.

[more info](#)

Top Up Down Bottom

Enable

custom_index


A simple plugin to replace the sites index page with boxes containing the latest content from the site.

[more info](#)

Top Up Down Bottom

Enable

SIDLIT 2010 Network

 Bookmark this[Statistics](#)[Site Administration](#)[User Administration](#)[Tool Administration](#)[Set site categories](#)[System diagnostics](#)[Log browser](#)[Replace profile fields](#)

Tool Administration

This admin panel allows you to control and configure tools installed on your site.

[Disable All](#)[Enable All](#)

blog

Elgg blog plugin

[more info](#)[Down](#) [Bottom](#)[Enable](#)

bookmarks

Elgg bookmarks plugin.

[more info](#)[Top](#) [Up](#) [Down](#) [Bottom](#)[Disable](#)

captcha

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custom_index

A simple plugin to replace the sites index page with boxes containing the latest content from the site.

[more info](#)[Top](#) [Up](#) [Down](#) [Bottom](#)[Enable](#)



SIDLIT 2010 Network

Your dashboard is your gateway into the site. Click 'Edit page' to add widgets to keep track of content and your life within the system.

Alternatively, [click here to view the latest content from across the site.](#)

[Edit page](#)

SIDLIT 2010 Network

Add widgets to your page

Choose the features you want to add to your page by dragging them from the **Widget gallery** on the right, to any of the three widget areas below, and position them where you would like them to appear.

To remove a widget drag it back to the **Widget gallery**.

Left widgets

Middle widgets

Right widgets

Widget gallery

Bookmarks



Group
membership



Save

Cancel

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Profile box

(Fixed position on page)

Left widgets

Middle widgets

Right widgets

Widget gallery

- Blog  
- Bookmarks  
- Files  
- Group membership  
- Message board  

Elgg Demo SIDLIT 2010



Aaron Sumner

[Edit profile](#)

Brief description: Director of Technology for Research and Development, CRL

Location: [lawrence ks](#)

Interests: [baseball](#), [bowling](#), [kansas jayhawks](#)

Skills: [ruby on rails](#), [social media](#), [adobe connect](#)

Contact email: asumner@ku.edu

Website: <http://www.aaronsumner.com/>

[Edit profile icon](#)[Friends](#)[Friends of](#)

About me


I'm the Director of Technology for Research and Development and the Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas. I set this site up to demonstrate Elgg at the 2010 SIDLIT conference.

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Message board

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Group membership

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iPad Users Group

We are iPad users who want to get the most of Apple's magical device.



Rushmore Bombardment

Blog

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Blog: [Showing off Elgg](#)
[Aaron Sumner](#) yesterday

[More blog posts](#)

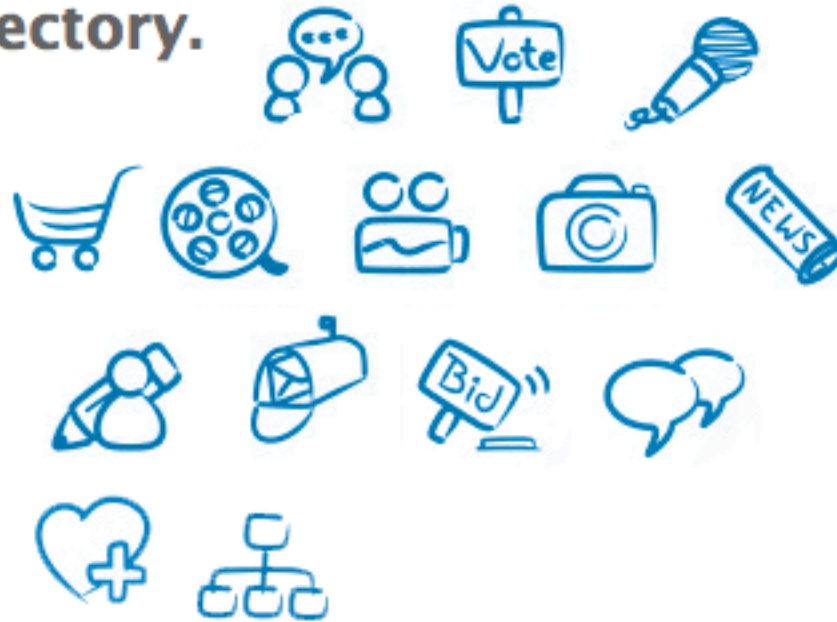


Welcome to Elgg's plugin directory.

What are plugins?

Plugins extend your Elgg site by adding additional functionality, languages and themes. They are contributed by members of the Elgg community.

To get started you could either browse the available plugins, or search for a specific one, upload one of your own, or rate & comment on others.



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Most recommended

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[Tidypics Photo Gallery Plugin](#)

Uploaded 488 days ago (24403)

<http://community.elgg.org/mod/plugins/all.php>

Try it out!

<http://elgg.ruralocity.com/>

Handout: <http://db.tt/f8udAD>
Slides: <http://db.tt/rIZt5A>

Thanks!

Keep in touch:

On the clock:

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