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Template settings in Movable Type

With the blogs named and located, you can decide how the posts will be arranged in the site with templates.



Once you have the site architected and the blogs created in the database, you can tweak the publishing settings. Start with a sub-directory that does not already have some old legacy content.

The first thing to do is turn off the accursed Zemanta plugin. Zemanta is essentially a virus that plops JavaScript running programs into you blog entry pages. It looks at the words you are typing and brings up pictures from the web it thinks you would like to insert. This is great for those 8 idiots writing about cats. Those of us that need pictures not scrubbed by some privacy-invading cloud Satan program will need to disable Zemanta. You have to go into your system overview>tools>plugins tab and disable it there. That will kill it in all the blogs and the whole website. Hallelujah.

Next go to the "Design" tab of a blog. The templates are the programs that assemble and update your top-level blog pages every time you add a blog post. There are two top-level pages. index.html is what the conventional blog roll page is built on. It puts the blog posts in chronological order. Next is the Archive page. That is really a contents page. It has a listing of all you categories and all blog posts under them.

I change the Archive entry output file to Contents.html. I change the stylesheet file from styles.css to the name of the sub-directory, Suffer.css. In the "Link to file" box put Suffer.css. This does a cool thing. If you change the css file with another program, then Movable type will not overwrite it, it will update its database to the new file. If you make changes in Movable Type instead of an outside program it will just publish that.

This is essential since now you can use Stylizer to design the css for the blog and update it from Stylizer. Next time you publish the stylesheet it will be changed inside the Movable Type database.

After changing these index templates, move down to the archive template box. Open the templates "monthly entry listing" and "page". In the template options you can tell the system to not publish these pages. I am not of the "diarrhea today" journalism school so I think of the blog content as timeless. I am not commenting about current events, I don't need a monthly entry page. I also don't see a need for pages extraneous to the blog posts.

Finally I change the output file-names for blog posts and categories. I change the output filename to a custom form of %E.html. This means the blog post URL will not be the name of the post buried in sub-directories for the month year day and nanosecond. The %E is just the number that MT assigns to each new post. So instead of URLs like rako.com/Suffer/some_long_wordy_title_makeurl_long.html, I get rako.com/Suffer/6.html.

For the Category entry listing page template, I change the output file to %C.html. This creates a summary page for each category and gives it the name of the category. So if you have a category Microsoft Sucks, the system will create a page called rako.com/Suffer/microsoft_sucks.html when you first post a blog using that category. The page gets updated with subsequent blog posts having the same category.

[Update 2018: Turns out it's handy to have the blog post entry permalinks in their own named sub-directories, I did this for the 2018 redesign. It makes it easier to find content when sifting through the hard drive itself.]