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Learn to:

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- Select the best pricing plan for you and your blog
- Personalize your blog
- Take advantage of TypePad's built-in SEO features and templates

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Author of Rocks In My Dryer, a TypePad blog



TypePad For Dummies[®]

Chapter 4: Touring the TypePad Dashboard

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Chapter 4

Touring the TypePad Dashboard

In This Chapter

- ▶ Knowing the navigation menu options
 - ▶ Understanding the Library options
 - ▶ Changing your account info
 - ▶ Monitoring your TypePad community
 - ▶ Having more than one blog
-

Your TypePad Dashboard is the hub of all your TypePad activity — it's the first thing you see when you sign in to your TypePad account. Your Dashboard is the starting place for all the links you need to access your blogs, change your Profile information, manage your library of stored files, search the Knowledge Base (TypePad's help files), access your account information, and keep tabs on your TypePad community. Navigating your Dashboard comfortably is critical to managing your blog well, and this chapter provides a brief overview of what you can expect to find. Think of this chapter as your Dashboard geography lesson — we show you a left-to-right, top-to-bottom explanation of each button, link, and section. In other chapters, we help you apply many of these functions in further detail.



Depending on which TypePad account you have, some of the items discussed in this chapter and others may not be part of your account. For example, TypePad Micro doesn't have access to TypeLists or File Manager.

Understanding the Navigation Bars

To access the Dashboard, you simply need to sign in to your TypePad account (instructions on how to do that are in Chapter 3). Throughout this chapter, it will be helpful to refer to Figure 4-1 because it shows the basic layout of the Dashboard.

Account-level bar

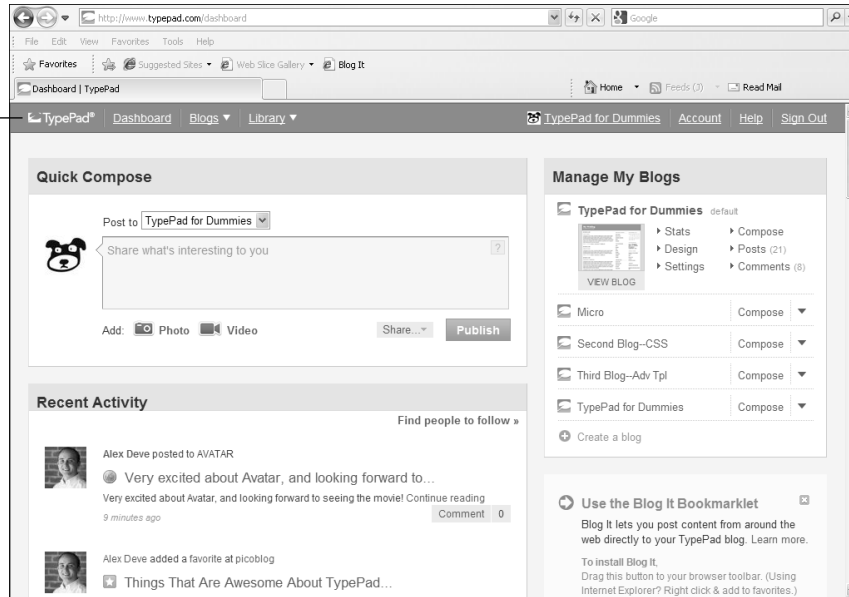


Figure 4-1:
The
TypePad
Dashboard.



The key to moving around the Dashboard is understanding the two primary *horizontal navigation bars* — the bars that run all the way across the top of the Dashboard. If you've just now logged into your account, you're probably seeing only one bar — it's a green one, and it contains links such as TypePad, Dashboard, and Blogs. This is the *account-level bar*. You use it to access core account information relevant to your entire account, not just your individual blog — an important distinction to draw, because many people manage multiple blogs from one account. When we explain how to establish and manage individual blogs (in Chapter 5), you'll also see a blue bar right below the account-level bar. The blue bar is the *blog-level bar*. This bar provides links to blog-specific information, such as your posts, settings, and comments.

Right now, we want to discuss the account-level bar and make you familiar with its options. Table 4-1 explains the purpose of each link in the account-level bar (moving from left to right).

<i>Click This Link</i>	<i>To Do This</i>
TypePad	View the TypePad Dashboard.
Dashboard	View the TypePad Dashboard.
Blogs	See a pull-down menu of the blogs you've set up with this TypePad account as well as an Add a Blog link, which allows you to create a new blog on the same account or connect blogs on other blogging platforms to your TypePad account. You can choose which of your blogs (if you have several) you want to work on from this menu. When you click a blog name, you're taken to a page that gives you an overview of that blog's statistics and links to other tasks (posting, comment moderation, design, and settings).
Library	See a pull-down menu that allows you to access your photo albums, TypeLists, and files. If you have a TypePad Micro account, you do not have this option.
[Your Username]	See your TypePad Profile page as it appears to your readers. The exception is that you also see the Edit Your Profile button — your readers don't see that. We explain how to create and edit your Profile in Chapter 3.
Account	See and update your TypePad account information — if you have one of the TypePad Pro accounts. From your account information page you can edit your personal information, notifications, billing information, and About Me page information. You can also add or delete additional social media and affiliate accounts (such as Amazon.com, Facebook, Twitter, or FriendFeed), change your password, or map a domain name to your blog (see Appendix A). We explain how you can edit account information later in this chapter. If you have TypePad Micro, you can update your personal information and notifications settings, and add or delete social media accounts.
Help	Find answers to your TypePad questions and access TypePad's support team.
Sign Out	Sign out of your account.

With the overview in Table 4-1 in mind, let's begin exploring.

Locating Your TypePad Library

Your TypePad library is the repository for your files and TypeLists (see Chapter 8 for an explanation of TypeLists). When you click the Library link on the account-level bar, you see a pull-down menu with these choices: Photo Albums, TypeLists, and File Manager. Each choice offers you a way to manage a variety of files.

Knowing where your files are and how they're organized helps you manage your blog as it grows. You'll be able to find the information you're looking for quickly and easily if you take the time to set up an intuitive folder system for the files you share with your readers. You may want to re-create the system you use on your home computer because you're most likely already in a groove there and are familiar with where things are.

Finding photo albums

After clicking the Library link in the green account-level bar, choose Photo Albums from the drop-down menu. This takes you to a screen listing any photo albums you have created in your TypePad account. If you haven't created any albums yet but would like to, just click Add a Photo Album in the top-right corner (more detailed instructions on photo albums are in Chapter 9). Photo albums are a particularly handy tool under the following circumstances:

- ✓ You're a photo blogger whose blog is geared largely to your photographic content, and you need a streamlined way to organize all the images.
- ✓ You're documenting a specific event (such as a vacation or a home remodel) that generates a large number of photos, and you want those photos grouped in one place. In Chapter 11, we explain how you can set up your sidebars so that you link directly to one (or all) of these photo albums.

The Photo Albums tool in TypePad is such a large and powerful feature that we devote much of Chapter 9 to it (other multimedia tools are addressed there as well). In that chapter, we walk you through the specifics of setting up your photo albums, and we tell you how you can maximize your use of this tool. For now, simply be aware that the green account-level bar is where you access your photo albums; We dive into the subject more deeply in the later chapter.



If you're a blogger who posts primarily text, posting photos only occasionally, you may find that photo albums are not an especially integral part of your TypePad use. When you write a post, you can easily insert an image or a photo with a few quick clicks (see Chapter 6) without ever accessing your photo albums.

Navigating TypeLists

TypeLists are TypePad's way of organizing any sidebar information you include on your blog. Sidebar information can include everything from your contact information to links to your favorite or most popular posts to advertisements. To access your TypePad TypeLists, create a new TypeList, or edit an existing TypeList, click the Library link in the account-level bar and choose TypeLists from the pull-down menu.

TypePad offers four kinds of TypeLists:

- ✓ **Links TypeList:** Post basic links in the sidebar, such as a text link to your Twitter account.
- ✓ **Notes TypeList:** Post customized HTML or complex code in the sidebar. You can use this kind of TypeList to place images or buttons in the sidebar.
- ✓ **Books TypeList:** Share and rate book lists in the sidebar. You can link the list to Amazon.
- ✓ **Albums TypeList:** Share music lists in the sidebar. Similar to the Books TypeList, the Albums TypeList enables you to rate and comment on the music you've listed.

TypeLists are an important part of your blog's design because they control the contents of the sidebars. We discuss them at length, with specific instructions on how to set up individual TypeLists, in Chapter 8.

Managing stored files

A blog is often much more than just the text you see on the screen. Bloggers can share with readers a wide variety of files and media that they want readers to see (or be able to download), such as photos, spreadsheets, PDF files, music, and video. To upload or access your various blog files, you use File Manager. On the Account-level bar, click the Library link and choose File Manager from the pull-down menu.

Any time you upload a file (such as a photo), it's stored in File Manager. You don't *have* to create a filing system to organize File Manager — many TypePad bloggers just upload files and dig around for them as needed — but if you take the time to set up a clear filing system, you can avoid some serious headaches down the road. You can reference parts of your blog easily if you know where you store the files.

Your main blog hosts its files and subfolders in the main Home directory. By default, each blog you set up on your TypePad account in addition to your first blog has its own folder in the Home directory. See Figure 4-2 for an example of how File Manager might look with three blogs on the same account.

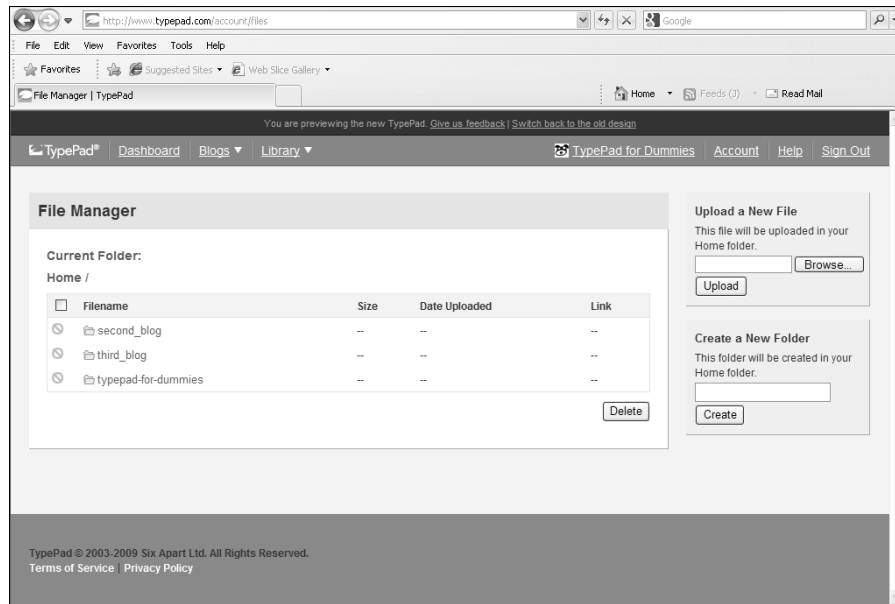


Figure 4-2:
File
Manager
set up with
multiple
blogs on
a single
account.

While in File Manager, you'll be able to create new folders and subfolders and create a file structure that makes sense to you. It may work best for you to mirror the file structure you've set up on your computer. For instance, if you keep all your PDF documents in a folder named PDF on your computer and plan to share PDF documents on your blog, it's logical to make a folder named PDF in your TypePad File Manager and store the blog's PDFs there. You may also want to consider setting up folders specifically for podcasts or video files, as shown in Figure 4-3.

To create a new folder in the Home directory:

- 1. Click in the text box under Create a New Folder.**
Create a New Folder is in the right sidebar.
- 2. Type the name of the new folder.**
- 3. Click the Create button.**

To create a new folder within an existing folder (in other words, to create a subfolder):

- 1. Click the folder you'd like to open.**

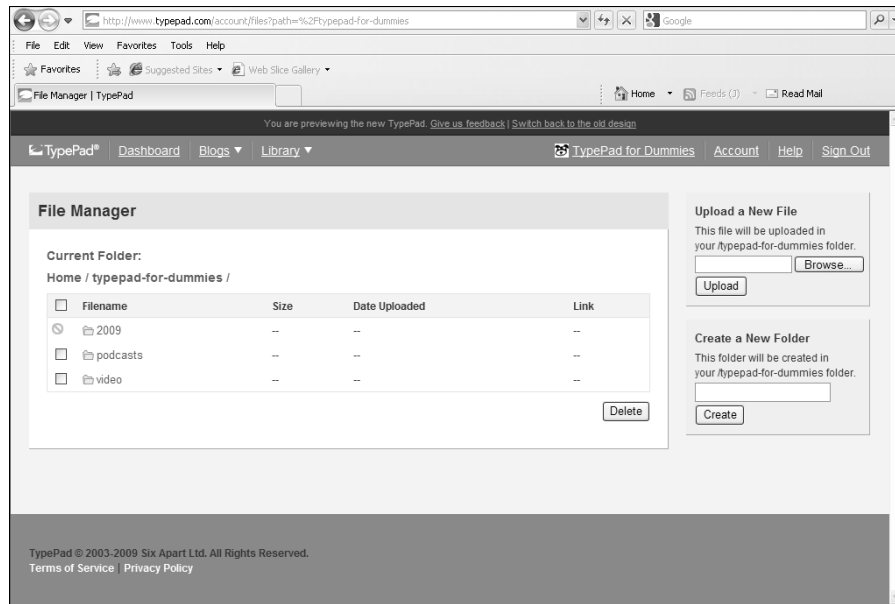


Figure 4-3:
An example
file structure
for storing
media and
other files.

2. Click in the text box under **Create a New Folder**, which is in the right sidebar.
3. Type the name of the new folder.
4. Click the **Create** button.

When you upload files to TypePad, the process is similar to what you're used to when uploading or downloading files to your own computer and its filing system:

1. Click the folder where you would like to store the new file.
2. Click inside the text box under **Upload a New File** (it's the top box in the right sidebar).
You see your own computer's file manager.
3. Choose the file you want to upload.
4. Click **Upload**.



Right-click the name of the file you just uploaded and choose **Copy Link Location** to save the file location to your clipboard.

Editing Your TypePad Account Information

Your TypePad account information includes everything from your personal and billing information to links to your other social media accounts and password information. Only the account owner can see the information on the Account page — any guest or junior authors of your blogs can't see this information. You can change or edit any of your account information as needed by clicking the Account link at the top of the Dashboard. You'll see a page that looks like Figure 4-4.

You'll notice a list of options in the left sidebar. Each of these tabs opens a new form for you to edit. In this section, we walk you through each one, from the top down.

Summary tab

The Summary tab is exactly what you think it is: It lists a summary of the account information you shared when you initiated your TypePad account. You can change or edit the following information:

- ✓ First name
- ✓ Last name
- ✓ Display name
- ✓ E-mail address (and whether you'd like to share that e-mail address)



You use your e-mail address to sign in to your TypePad account. If you change your e-mail address here, you'll need to remember to use the new one the next time you want to sign in to TypePad.

Sharing your e-mail address is a good idea because it allows other bloggers to contact you when you leave a comment at their blog. This is particularly handy when you're part of a great discussion.

- ✓ Domain



If you change your TypePad domain (for example, changing from `typepadfordummies.typepad.com` to `dummies.typepad.com`), you can't change it back later. The name you stop using will be available to other TypePad users for use on their own blog(s). We suggest that you buy and map a domain to your blog (see Appendix A), rather than changing your TypePad domain here.

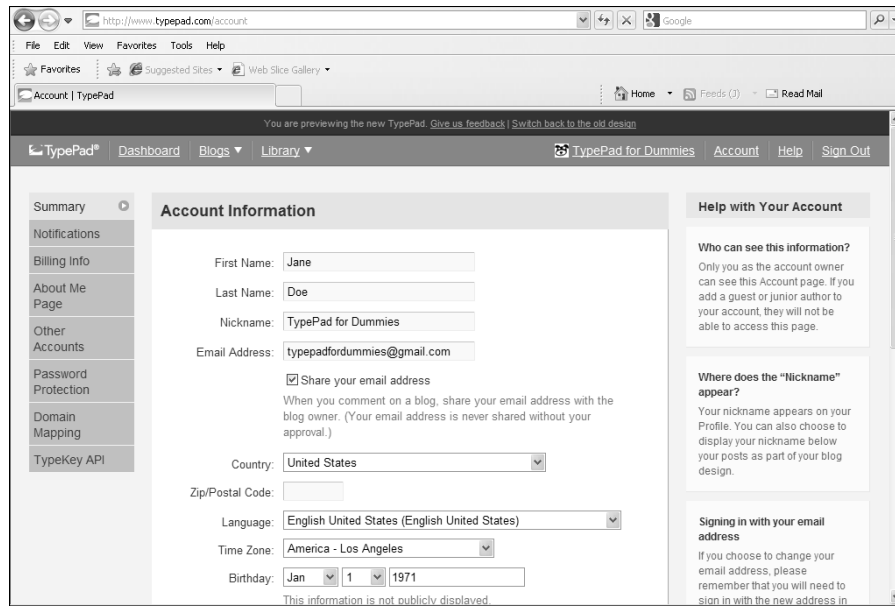


Figure 4-4:
TypePad
Account
page.

- ✓ Country
- ✓ Zip/Postal Code
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Time Zone
- ✓ Birthday (This is simply to verify that you are 13 or older; the United States Children's Online Privacy Protection Act asserts that no company can obtain information from a child under 13 without express consent from the parents.)
- ✓ Gender

If you make any changes on this Summary page, be sure to click the Save Changes button, or you'll lose the changes you made.

If you want to change your password, scroll to the bottom of the Summary page to find the box titled Password Changes and then follow these instructions:

- 1. Type your current password in the Current Password box.**
- 2. Type your new password in the New Password box.**
- 3. Retype your new password in the Confirm Password box.**
- 4. Click the Change Password button to save your changes.**

Notifications tab

The Notifications tab is where you can set up how and when you are notified via e-mail about new comments, Six Apart newsletters and offers, and how those e-mails appear (that is, plain text or with HTML formatting). The Notifications tab has three sections: News, Activity, and Email Format. We describe each next.

News: Click to select this box if you'd like to receive newsletters from Six Apart and notices about your account. We strongly recommend that you select this box. Six Apart offers users new features and themes often, and being on its mailing list means you will understand the new features available to you. The notices are not sent very often, but when they are, the information is usually important.

Activity: If you're interested in knowing when someone responds to one of your comments on a blog (explained further in Chapter 7) or starts following your updates to your blog and other social media sites, you can be notified via e-mail. You can also choose to be notified via if someone selects your blog as a favorite. Click to select the box beside each option you're interested in using.



If you think you'll be distracted by watching your inbox for comments all day long, consider setting up a separate e-mail account just for your TypePad blog. You can use that e-mail address for all things blog-related and keep your blogging correspondence separate from your private, "real-world" correspondence.

Email Format: You can receive your e-mail notifications in either HTML format or plain text. HTML format usually includes images and design elements. Plain text is just what it sounds like: words and links with no spiffy design. Your e-mail client can probably handle either format, so it's really a personal preference. Click to select the radio button beside the type of e-mail you'd like to receive.

Billing Info tab

The Billing Info tab shows an overview of the billing information you provided when you set up your TypePad account and gives you a summary of your billing history (all the monthly charges you've incurred thus far and any changes you've made to your billing information, such as changing your credit card).

Billing Summary: This section shows you which billing options you chose when you set up your TypePad account:

- ✓ **Current Plan** lists which package you're currently using (Chapter 2 explains the blogging packages TypePad offers and helps you decide which one is right for you). You have the option of upgrading or downgrading your current package or canceling your account.



- ✓ Billing Cycle tells you when you can expect to be billed (monthly or yearly). You chose your billing cycle when you established your TypePad account, but you have the option of changing it here, if you like. Your only choices for billing cycles are monthly or yearly (you get two free months of service if you choose yearly).
- ✓ Payment Method lists the last four digits of the credit card you have on file with the TypePad billing department (you shared this information when you set up your account). You have the option of updating your credit card. If you click the Update link, you can apply a discount code, update your credit card information, or change your credit card completely. You can also edit your billing address if necessary.

If you do a Web search for *TypePad discount code*, you'll usually find a few to choose among. Refer to Chapter 3 for a special discount code for readers of this book.

- ✓ Billing Rate is your monthly TypePad rate, which depends on which blogging package you chose when you signed up for your TypePad account.
- ✓ Next Billing tells you when you can expect your next bill.
- ✓ Member Since tells you when you established your TypePad account.

Transaction History: This section shows you a complete list of all your TypePad billing transactions. This list includes billing dates, payments made, and any changes you may have made to your billing information (such as changing your credit card information or your billing address).

About Me Page tab

Every blogger needs an About Me page — it's the place your readers can quickly find out more about you. New readers often look for a link to an About Me page (and click it!) the first time they stop by your blog. Your blog should include an obvious, easy-to-find link to your About Me page. (We tell you how to set up that link when we discuss blog design in Chapter 11.) You have four distinct options for setting up this important page on TypePad: your account's default About Me page, your own HTML page, your TypePad Profile, and your own personally constructed About Me page written in your WYSIWYG editor. Let's discuss all four of them, and you can decide which one fits you best.

TypePad's default About Me page

Because we're working our way through your Account Summary, you'll notice an About Me Page tab on the vertical bar on the left side of the screen. Click that tab, and you see a list of information TypePad can pull from your account to populate the default About Me page. If you choose this option, simply click the items you want TypePad to pull into the page. Also notice that the URL to the default page is listed toward the top of the screen; click that, if you want to see how it looks.

The default About Me template allows you to share specific information from your Account, Profile, and TypeLists with your audience. To choose the information and allow it to appear on your About Me page, simply click to select the box next to the item you want to include.

Account: The information listed under Account is pulled directly from the data you shared in your Account Summary and Other Accounts tabs, with the exception of the photo option (which is pulled from your Profile). You can choose to include

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Display name
- ✓ Photo (the photo you shared as your userpic when you set up your Profile in Chapter 3)
- ✓ Email (if you share your e-mail address, it's automatically encrypted to keep it safe from spammers)
- ✓ Other accounts (any accounts listed in the Other Accounts tab is listed if you choose to include this option)
- ✓ Publish FOAF file (*FOAF* is an acronym for *Friend of a Friend*; the FOAF project creates machine-readable pages that contain information about people and the things they create online)
- ✓ Edit Account Settings (links to the Account Summary tab, where you can edit your name, display name, and so on)

Profile: The information options listed under Profile are pulled directly from the data you shared when you set up your Profile in Chapter 3:

- ✓ Web address (your blog's URL)
- ✓ Country
- ✓ Interests
- ✓ One-line bio
- ✓ Amazon Wish List (you need to log in to your Amazon account and find your Wish List ID and, if you're an Amazon Associate, your Amazon Associate ID); your Amazon Wish List is an option only if you've shared this information via your Profile (see Chapter 3)
- ✓ Edit your Profile (links directly to your Profile so you can edit any information you've shared there)

TypeLists: You may want to include specific TypeLists in your About Me sidebar. The TypeLists option for your About Me page lists all the TypeLists you've set up for your blog (see Chapter 8 for instructions on setting up TypeLists); if you haven't set up any TypeLists yet, you won't see the option

to include them on your About Me page. To include a specific TypeList in your About Me page, simply click to select the box next to the TypeList you want to include.

Biography: If you'd like to include a short biography or information that isn't covered with the previous data choices, you can type that information in the text box labeled Biography. When you're happy with your information, click to check the box next to Biography so your information will show up on your About Me page.

Choose a Style: You can choose to style your About Me page so that it reflects the theme (design) of your blog. Use the pull-down menu to choose which style you'd like to apply. If you're using one of TypePad's basic design themes, it's a good idea to apply the same theme to your About Me page for consistency. To do this, click the pull-down menu and choose your own username.

If you are not using a basic TypePad theme (perhaps you use a custom header design like the kind we discuss in Chapter 11), you can still match your About Me page to your custom design. The instructions in the previous paragraph won't work, though; you'll need to set up a specific design for your About Me page to match your custom design. We cover this issue when we address all design-related questions in Chapter 11.

When you've chosen the information you'd like to share, written your biographical information, and think you have your About Me page finished, click the Preview or Save and Publish button. If you click the Preview button, a new window opens with a preview of your About Me page. If you're not happy with the information, change what you need to by selecting new information options or deselecting current information options. Rewrite your bio if necessary or change your userpic if you want to. Click the Preview button again and see how it looks. When you're satisfied with the outcome, click the Save and Publish button.

Figure 4-5 shows you a sample of an About Me page constructed using the default template.

Your own HTML page

Below the Default Template section, you can see the Write Your Own HTML Page option. If you are comfortable with HTML and have an idea of how you'd like your About Me page to appear, you can type the code in the HTML box. You can check your progress by clicking the Preview button. When you're satisfied with how the page looks and have finished tweaking the code, click the Save and Publish button to save the page and have it automatically published to your blog. This option requires a good bit of coding knowledge, which the average blogger may not have. We advise that you tackle this option only if you have experience with HTML.

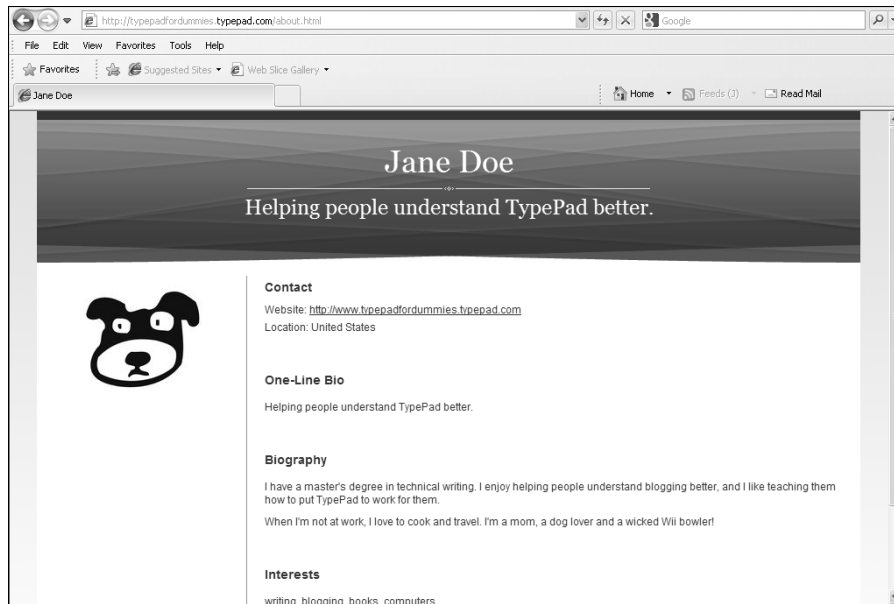


Figure 4-5:
A TypePad
About Me
page using
the default
template.

Your TypePad Profile

In Chapter 3, we explain that a TypePad Profile is essentially a hub site that you can use to show readers all the places you can be found online. Your Profile is central to your participation in the TypePad community. Because it contains so much information about you, it could serve as a decent About Me page (you can insert a direct link to your Profile into the Content portion of the Design tab — Chapter 11 details how). Figure 4-6 shows you a completed TypePad Profile. (Can't remember how to access or edit yours? See the instructions in Chapter 3.)

One of the drawbacks of using the Profile as your About Me page is that you don't have your e-mail listed on your Profile. Including a way to contact you is a crucial part of your About Me page. To get around this issue, you could easily create a TypeList (see Chapter 8) with a link to your e-mail address and include it in your blog's main sidebar.

A personally constructed About Me page

All TypePad users (except those with Micro accounts) can create pages in addition to posts. (A *page* is basically a freestanding, undated post you can create in your Rich Text editor; we explain this further in Chapter 6.) Creating a page is as simple as writing a post. When readers click a link to one of your pages, they're still at your blog, seeing your header and sidebar, just as if they were reading a post — this makes for much better design continuity. You can write an About Me page this way with great results (see Chapter 6 for instructions on publishing posts and pages). See Figure 4-7. Generally, a more narrative About Me page is preferable to a simple bulleted list of hobbies.

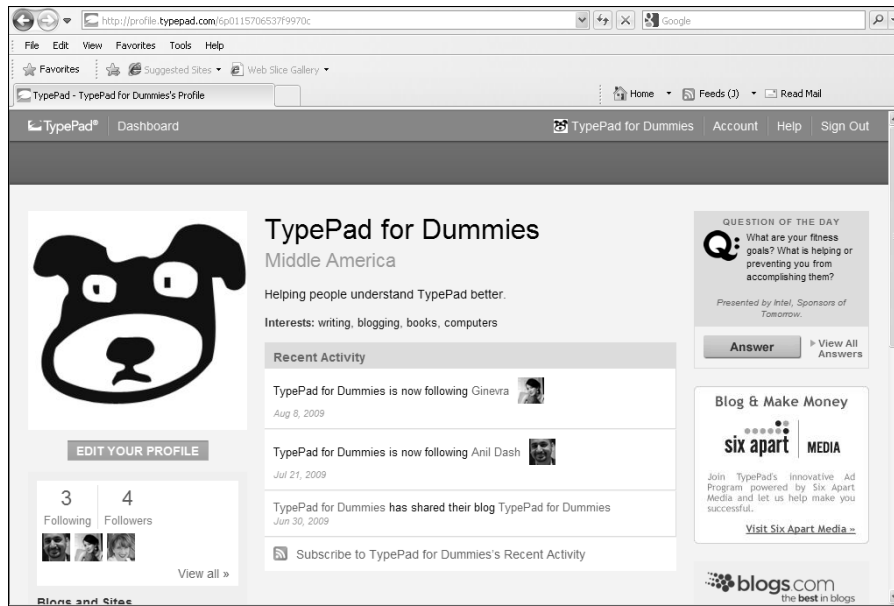


Figure 4-6:
A sample
TypePad
Profile.



Your About Me page may form a reader's first impression of you, so include succinct details that communicate who you are.

Apply your own sense of style to your About Me page (if your blog is, for example, inspirational, reflect that same tone in your About Me page). Here are some items you might want to include if you construct this page yourself:

- ✓ Your name (or the name you go by in the blogosphere)
- ✓ Where you live
- ✓ A general explanation of what your blog is about
- ✓ Your e-mail address
- ✓ Links to other social networking accounts, such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn
- ✓ Hobbies
- ✓ Your favorite movies, music, and sports team



Whatever option you choose, remember that sharing information online is sharing information with the world. Before you publicize certain aspects of yourself in an About Me page (or anywhere else on a blog), consider whether you really want people to know where you live or the names of your family members. If you haven't already read the "Considering privacy issues" section in Chapter 1, this is a good time to do so.

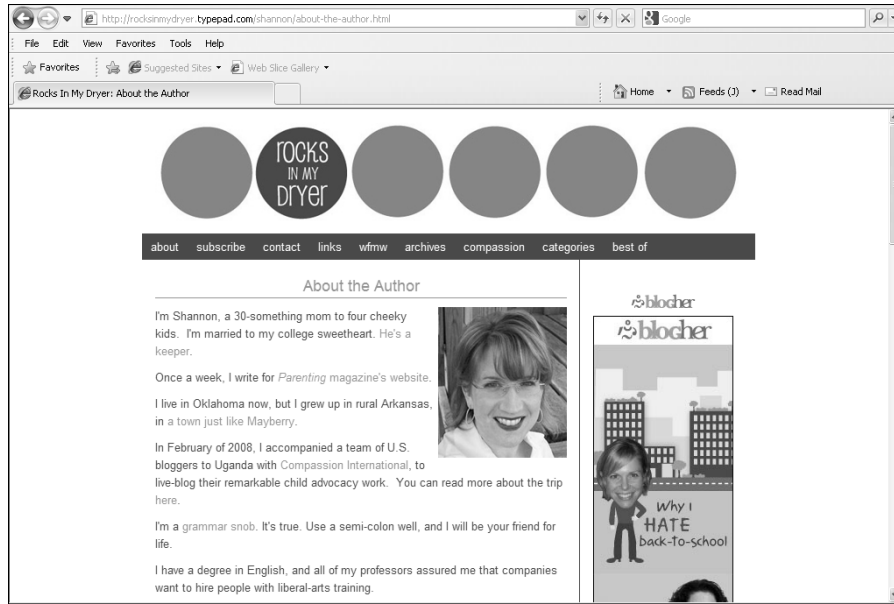


Figure 4-7:
An About Me page made with the page option.

Other Accounts tab

Your Other Accounts tab is where you list the other social media sites you belong to and link them to your blog. *Social media* includes all the ways you interact with friends and colleagues online (blogs, Twitter, Facebook, FriendFeed, Digg, LinkedIn, and so on).

You may want your readers to be able to find you on Facebook or follow you on Twitter. It's a fairly simple process to integrate this information into your TypePad account. After you've established your additional social media links, TypePad can integrate them into your TypePad Profile or your default About Me page. (If you manually create your own About page, as we recommended in the previous section, note that the accounts you link here do not automatically appear in your manually created page. You'll need to link them yourself in your Rich Text editor when you create or edit the actual page.)

To add new social media account information to your TypePad account, follow these instructions:

1. Click the pull-down menu.

You'll see a list of many social media sites, some of which you won't use. That's okay. There are so many social media sites, you can't use them all effectively. It's best to choose just a few and concentrate on using them well. TypePad offers a fairly comprehensive list of social media options because so many people use different ones.

What to include in your About Me page

Your About Me page is one of the most important pages you'll include in your blog. Think of it as your online business card of sorts. When people are new to your blog, one of the first things they will do is click your About Me link to see if the blog is a fit with their interests. Your About Me page is a way to engage with your readers and let them know a little more about you. Your About Me page is a highlight of you. It's a page devoted to what sets you apart from everyone else.

If you're at all interested in working with advertisers or marketers, your About Me page is crucial in helping you establish those relationships. Advertisers and marketers have hundreds of blogs to review to determine if they are a fit with their product or campaign. When they decide a blog is a fit, the advertiser or marketer contacts the blogger and extends an offer. If you'd like to help this relationship along, you can do a few things — and they all start with your About Me page:

- ✔ **Make your contact information clearly visible.** If a marketer or advertiser (or even a loyal reader) wants to contact you privately, they'll need a way to do so. If your e-mail is buried or not even listed, visitors quickly tire of trying to find it and move to the next blog. If you're worried about a text link to your e-mail being harvested by spammers, create a small image (or button) with your e-mail address and insert it into your About Me page that way.
- ✔ **Give a brief overview of what your blog is about.** You can give a bit of your

background, why you chose to write about this particular blogging niche, your blogging goals, and so on. This is the perfect opportunity for you to explain why you're different from other bloggers in your area. When you're writing about yourself, it can be hard to decide how much information is too much. Because your blog can probably speak for itself to some degree, try to keep your About Me page short but entertaining. Short and interesting trumps long and overdone every time.

- ✔ **Establish your credibility.** Your About Me page is the perfect place to let readers know why you're the go-to source for your topic. If you have pertinent background experience, have won awards, or have professional designations or degrees that apply directly to your niche, mention them here.
- ✔ **Explain what types of advertising or marketing relationships you're interested in.** This might include giveaways for your readers, product reviews, or sharing press releases for causes you're passionate about (then tell them which causes those are). If marketers can readily see that you are a good fit for their product, they're more likely to contact you. You may also want to share a link to your disclosure policy. (Chapter 12 advises you further about how to disclose relationships and why it's important.) These details can also be packaged into what's called a media kit (see Chapter 12).

2. Choose the social media link you want to start with, such as Facebook.

3. Click the Add button.

A pop-up window appears with sign-in information for that Web site (such as a Facebook sign-in). You must share your sign-in information so TypePad can access that account and bring the information to your blog.

4. Continue to add accounts as you see fit.
5. Click the Save button when you're finished.

TypePad has a strong relationship with Amazon and allows you to easily share your Amazon Wish List or your Amazon Associates ID. (You can find out more about the Amazon Associates program by visiting affiliate-program.amazon.com. It's basically a program that allows you to receive a commission from goods sold when someone clicks to their site from yours.) You need to log in to your Amazon account to determine your account information before you can share it with TypePad. After you have your Amazon account info, you can choose which Amazon vendor you want to work with (for example, Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk, or Amazon.fr), type your Associates ID (if applicable), and type your Wish List ID (if you'd like to share it). Click the Save button, and you're all set.

Password Protection tab

Not everyone finds it appealing to have complete strangers popping in to read their blog. You may decide you want to exert a little more control over which eyes see your posts. You can easily password-protect one, some, or all blogs under your TypePad account, and you can send the sign-in details to only the people you choose.

Click the Password Protection tab. Note the simple question at the top of this page: Do you want to password-protect your entire site? You can click to select the button next to the option that best suits your needs:

- ✔ **No, Share My Site With Everyone:** This option makes all your blogs public. They can be found by search engines and anyone online.
- ✔ **Yes, Password-Protect My Entire Site:** This options makes all blogs associated with this TypePad account password-protected. If you choose this option, you're prompted to choose a username and password.

This username and password should be different from your TypePad username and password! Remember to send this new username and password to the readers you want to invite. They'll need to use it every time they visit your blog. Click Save Changes at the bottom of the page to apply the password to all the blogs on your account.

- ✔ **Password-Protect Some Blogs and Not Others:** This option allows you to apply password protection to some blogs and leave other blogs open to the public. To password-protect a blog, click the Settings link next to the blog's title. You'll be taken to that blog's Settings page. Click to select the Password option, and set a username and password. Then click the Save Changes button on that page.



If you make any changes to your privacy settings on the Password Protection page, be sure to click the Save Changes button at the bottom of the page so the changes will take effect.

Password protection is your most powerful privacy tool, but it's not the only one. As we mention in Chapter 1, occasionally your blog might be visited by someone intent on stirring up trouble in your comments section. If this happens to you, don't sweat it — this happens to nearly every blogger at some point. TypePad allows you to block unwanted commenters from ever leaving comments again — all you need is the person's IP address, which you'll be able to see the first time he or she leaves a comment. We show you how to do this in Chapter 7, where we deal with all comment-related issues.



Note that although TypePad allows you to block certain IP addresses from leaving a comment, it does not currently offer a way for you to block that IP address from *viewing* your blog. The only way to keep certain viewers from seeing your site is to implement password protection.

Domain Mapping tab

Domain mapping simply means that you're using your own domain name (`yourblog.com`) instead of your hosted domain name (`yourblog.typepad.com`). When you map your domain to your blog, you're telling the browser to recognize the `.com` (or `.net`, `.org`, and so on) as your URL. TypePad has thorough instructions for domain mapping with several domain hosts, including Yahoo! and GoDaddy — we also tackle domain mapping in Appendix A.

When you're ready to use your own domain for your blog, you'll come to the Domain Mapping tab and start the process. If you're a new blogger, this may not mean much to you right now. If that's the case, we encourage you to become comfortable with blogging first and consider this option in a few months. When you're ready to find out more, flip to Appendix A, where we explain how to find out if your domain name is available, how to purchase the domain name, and how to map it to your blog.

TypeKey API tab

You may see an API Key tab at the bottom of the tab list on the Account page. API Key is the software that allows you to turn on the comment features in Movable Type (if you have a Movable Type account). If you see this tab but don't have a Movable Type account, you can just ignore it; you don't need it. If you don't see this tab, that's okay too.

Getting Help

Now that you've seen all the items you can edit in the Account link, let's head back up to the green account-level bar and address the next link: Help. This is an important one, of course — it's the link you should click any time TypePad issues have you stumped. As we mention in Chapter 2, TypePad prides itself on its technical support, offering a thorough help section written without a lot of complicated jargon. It also gives you quick access to a real live person, by using the help ticket system. We describe both approaches in this section.

Using the Knowledge Base

After you click the Help link, you see a help screen that looks like the one in Figure 4-8.



If you have a TypePad Micro account, your Help screen will look a bit different: You are limited to searching the Knowledge Base, and you can't open a help ticket.

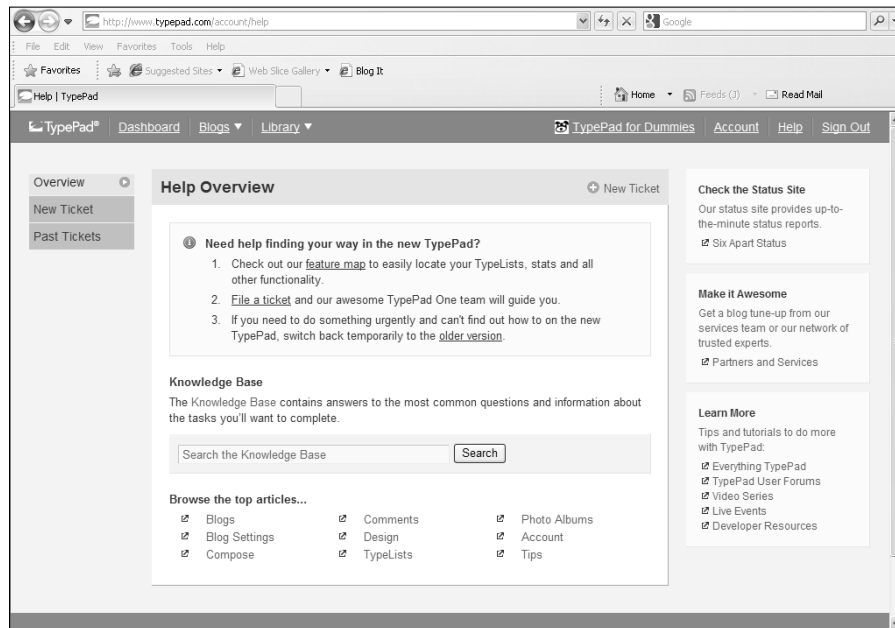


Figure 4-8:
TypePad's
Help
Overview
page.

When you're facing a technical question, your best place to start is about halfway down the page, in the section called Knowledge Base. *Knowledge Base* is simply another word for a large collection of instructional articles users can access for assistance with questions. Many times, the particular question you're facing has already been addressed here. To find an answer in the Knowledge Base, click inside the search bar under Knowledge Base. Type the word or phrase that best describes the issue. Click the Search button, and a list of relevant Knowledge Base articles appears. Take a few minutes to browse through these search results and see if they offer the information you need.



The Knowledge Base is updated so frequently that you might want to keep a close eye on new articles being issued by subscribing to Knowledge Base updates. You can do this by visiting help.sixapart.com/tp/us and clicking the Feed Subscribe to Updates link in the right sidebar.

If you can't find an answer to your question in the Knowledge Base, you may require more personal assistance. In this case, opening a help ticket is the next step.

Submitting a help ticket

For direct access to someone on TypePad's support staff, revisit the Help Overview page (refer to Figure 4-8). In the blue list of links on the left side of the page, click New Ticket. (TypePad Micro users don't have this option.)

The next screen asks you what area of TypePad you need help with. Choose the best answer from the drop-down menu. Next, in the subject line, describe the problem succinctly. Be specific in the subject line: "Readers can't see my comments" is more descriptive than "Comment problem."

In the last field, describe your problem at length. Be thorough and specific — the support staff can best help you when you give them as much information as possible. Because the support team will try to replicate the problem to solve it, we suggest that you explain what you were doing when the problem occurred and also mention any error messages you saw. When you have finished describing the issue, click Create Ticket at the bottom of the screen.

After submitting the ticket, simply wait until the support staff responds — nearly always within 24 hours, and usually much less. You'll be notified by e-mail with their response. You can either read their answer directly in your e-mail or use the Active Ticket section in your blog's Help Overview page — just click the subject line of the ticket in question to see the answer. This will open a new page, with TypePad's response listed.

If the support staff has answered your question fully (and we hope they have), click the Mark This Ticket as Resolved box at the bottom of the page (this serves as a helpful reminder to both you and them that no further correspondence is required) and then click Submit Response.

If you're still uncertain even after their response, however, don't hesitate to write back for additional clarification. TypePad prides itself on customer service, so take full advantage of this tool as often as you need to!



TypePad conveniently keeps a record of all your old help tickets, making it easy for you to revisit questions. From the Help Overview page, simply click View All Past Tickets in the list of links on the left sidebar, and you're taken to a full listing of every help ticket you've ever submitted, complete with TypePad's responses.

Using Quick Compose

Near the top of the Dashboard (refer to Figure 4-1) is a Quick Compose section. You can enter text, photos, or videos here and then click Publish — the new post will publish instantly to whichever blog you've set up as your account's default blog. If you click the Share button, you can even share the content with whichever social media accounts you've linked with your blog.

Use this tool if it appeals to you, but keep in mind that (as of this writing) the Quick Compose section has no space for including a title for your post. Many bloggers consider this a glaring omission. Instead of using the Quick Compose section, we recommend that you write your posts using the Compose editor, which we discuss fully in Chapter 6.

Locating Your List of Blogs

Earlier in the chapter, we mention that a complete listing of your current TypePad blogs appears in the drop-down menu when you click Blogs in the green account-level bar. That's not the only place you'll find them listed, though. On the Dashboard, look at the right sidebar (refer to Figure 4-1). You see the name of your main blog, with links to its settings tabs. Below that is a list of the other blogs (if you have any) associated with this TypePad account. TypePad lists your blogs in both places (the Blogs pull-down menu and the right sidebar of the Dashboard), but clicking a blog's title in either

spot ultimately lands you at the same place: the overview for that particular blog. Work from whichever list feels the most natural to you. If you're a beginner who hasn't yet created a TypePad blog, you won't see anything listed in that box at this point. Don't worry — we show you how to set up your first blog in the next chapter.

If you *do* already have a TypePad blog, notice that this sidebar offers you some handy shortcuts that can take you directly to where you want to go. Below the title of your main blog, you see links to the tabs available in your blog-level bar: Stats, Design, Settings, Compose, Posts, and Comments. The blogs listed below the main one have a link to the Compose tab. Clicking that link takes you to the page where you write a new post for that particular blog. Clicking the down arrow next to Compose displays a pull-down menu, offering shortcuts to various locations in that particular blog's Dashboard. We cover each of those items thoroughly in Chapter 5; for now, know that this handy sidebar is a good starting point for managing every blog in your account.

Answering the Question of the Day

The Question of the Day (also known as the QotD) feature is tucked at the bottom of the Dashboard's right sidebar. This option is just for fun, but you won't want to miss it — it's a simple way to engage in the TypePad community, and it offers you some clever posting topics. TypePad freely accepts submissions for QotD; simply e-mail a creatively compelling question (95 characters or less) to gotd@typepad.com. Each day, TypePad lists a new question in this box, and you'll find that the questions range from the ridiculous to the thought-provoking. Notice, too, that the author of each day's question appears in the QotD box, garnering that blogger some good attention in the TypePad community.

To participate in the Question of the Day, click the yellow Answer button below the day's question. This takes you directly to a new post, and the question is automatically inserted into the top of your new post. Write your answer, click Save (more on post publishing options in the next chapter), and your answer will post on your own blog. Conveniently, your QotD answer is also linked to all the other answers to that day's question, and the answers are all listed at blogs.com, Six Apart's hub site for featuring interesting content around the blogosphere. (To see that particular day's answers, click View Answers in the QotD box.) This is not only a simple way to jump feet-first into the TypePad community, but also a handy cure for writer's block.

As you can see, there's much to know and understand about the TypePad Dashboard. If you're a beginning blogger (or if you're an old TypePad pro who is still getting comfortable with the big redesign of late 2009), give yourself some time to learn the ropes. Spend some time poking around on the Dashboard, and refer to this chapter as needed to help find your way around. In no time at all, you'll be navigating with ease!

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