



*a*Links

headzoo
<http://www.headzoo.com>

aLinks

WordPress Plugin
Version 2.0

Created by [Sean Hickey](#)
Released 2008 under the GPLv3 License

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Introduction

What is aLinks?

aLinks is a WordPress plugin that automates the task of creating links in your blog posts. Really though it's much more than that.

Why use aLinks?

Do you find yourself repeatedly using the same links in your blog posts, and want a way to automate the task of creating those links?

Do you want to monetize your blog through the use of affiliate links, but you don't want to think about always putting those links in your posts?

Do you want to increase SEO for your sites through the use of links?

If the answer to any of those questions is yes, then aLinks is the plugin for you! Thousands of people have used aLinks for a myriad of reasons.

System Requirements

WordPress 2.x

PHP 5.x

MySQL 4.x

Installation

Installing aLinks is no different than any other WordPress plugin you may have installed. It basically boils down to uploading the aLinks files into the */wp-content/plugins* directory, and giving write permissions to a couple directories.

The ZIP file

Begin the installation by downloading the plugin from <http://alinks.headzoo.com/downloads>. The ZIP file will contain a README.txt document, a LICENSE.txt document, and a directory named *alinks*.

Unzip the file on your computer.

Uploading

Upload the *alinks* directory to your web host. Place the directory into the */wp-content/plugins* directory. The README.txt and LICENSE.txt documents do not need to be uploaded.

Read [this article at the WordPress Codex](#) for more information on uploading files to your web host server.

You should now have the directory */wp-content/plugins/alinks* on your web hosting server. The *alinks* directory will contain many sub-directories, and files.

Write Permissions

A few of the *alinks* sub-directories will need write permission.

Read [this article at the WordPress Codex](#) for more information on giving directories write permission.

You need to give write permission to the following directories:

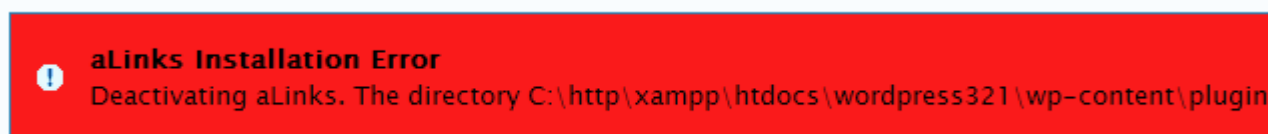
- */wp-content/plugins/alinks/temp*
- */wp-content/plugins/alinks/temp/logs*
- */wp-content/plugins/alinks/temp/cache*
- */wp-content/plugins/alinks/factories*

aLinks cannot run without write permission on those directories. The plugin won't even allow you to activate it until you've given proper permissions to the directories.

Activation

Log into your WordPress administration site, and click on the “Plugins” tab. If you uploaded aLinks correctly, you will see it listed in the available plugins. Click the “Activate” link to activate the plugin.

aLinks will perform a number of self-diagnostic tests to ensure that it's installed correctly. You need to retrace the installation steps if you see an error message like the one below.



aLinks has been installed and activated successfully if you don't see any error messages.

Upgrading

It is ***strongly recommended*** that you backup your keyphrases and settings before upgrading your version of aLinks. Use the Import/Export menu, and export your keyphrases before upgrading.

To upgrade from a previous version of aLinks, begin by *deleting the old aLinks plugin files*. You want to completely remove all traces of the plugin. This will not destroy your keyphrases, as they are stored in your database.

From this point on, follow the same directions above for installation and activating the plugin. aLinks will detect that a previous version was installed, and it will automatically upgrade itself.

The installation and upgrading is successful if you don't see any error messages.

Factories

aLinks by itself really isn't capable of much. It can't even create links! It takes factories to do that. Factories are to aLinks what plugins are to WordPress. They are installed “inside” of aLinks, and enhance it's functionality, in the same way that plugins enhance WordPress. Factories actually create the links inside of your blog posts. They really are little “link factories”.

Default Factory

The plugin comes pre-installed with the Default factory. This is the most basic of all factories, and for many people it's all they will ever need. The Default factory lets you define keyphrases by supplying a phrase, a description, and a URL. When the Default factory finds the phrase in your blog posts, it will replace it with a link that points to the URL.

The Default factory should never be uninstalled!

Amazon Basic Factory

The plugin also comes pre-installed with the Amazon Basic factory. This is a factory for people who take part in Amazon.com's Associates program. With this factory you define keyphrases by supplying a phrase, a description, a product category, and a search term. When the factory finds the phrase in your blog posts, it will transform it into a link to Amazon.com. The Amazon page will show search results for the search term you defined, in the product category you chose.

The URL will contain your associates ID so you can earn money when you visitors buy products on Amazon.com.

You can sign up for the Amazon Associates program [here](#).

You can safely uninstall this factory if you're not interested in creating Amazon Associates links.

Automatic Factories

There are factories you can install that define keyphrases for you. They require no work or effort on your part. You simply install them, and they do the rest.

The Tags to Keyphrases factory that's included with aLinks is an example of an automatic factory. You don't define keyphrases with that factory. Instead it creates keyphrases for you, using your posts tags. The links it creates point to the tagged posts.

You won't see the keyphrases created by automatic factories in the keyphrases grid.

Getting More Factories

You can browse, download, and install more factories by visiting <http://alinks.headzoo.com/factories>.

Settings

This section describes the aLinks settings that are available from the settings menu. Depending on the factories you have installed, you may see more settings than what's described here.

Max Links Per Keyphrases

In a nutshell this setting controls how many times the same keyphrase will be linkified in the same blog post. As an example, imagine that you defined the keyphrase “book”, and you wrote a blog post where that word appears 7 times. How many times should aLinks linkify that same phrase? Just once? Twice? All 7 times?

That's what this setting controls. Enter the number of times you want aLinks to linkify the same keyphrase when it's found several times in a blog post. Enter the value -1 if you want aLinks to linkify the phrase an unlimited number of times.

Max Links Per Post

You may have limited the number of times aLinks will linkify the same phrase via the Max Links Per Phrase setting, but how many links should aLinks create in the same post?

If you write a blog post that contains 20 different phrases that have been defined for aLinks, should the plugin linkify all 20 occurrences?

That's where this setting comes in. It limits the number of links created in a single blog post. A value of -1 means linkify every keyphrase found in the blog posts.

Linkify Comments

Sure aLinks can create links inside your blog posts, but what about your user comments? Should keyphrases found in the comments be turned into links also?

When this option is turned on, any keyphrase found in user comments will be turned into links. Note that these links count towards the max links per page setting.

Inner HTML

The HTML created for each linkified keyphrase generally looks like this:

```
<a href="http://headzoo.com" title="Visit my site!">headzoo</a>
```

More often than not that is fine. But maybe you need to have some additional HTML inserted into each `<a>` tag? Maybe you are using some fancy JavaScript clicking tracking program, and you need to have some special code placed inside of each link. That's what this setting is for.

If you set this to a value like `onclick="execute()"`, the link that will be created will look like this:

```
<a href="http://headzoo.com" onclick="execute()" title="Visit my site!">headzoo</a>
```

Any value you use for this setting gets put inside the `<a>` anchor tag.

CSS Classes

Use this setting to apply a special CSS class to each link. As shown above a typical link looks like this:

```
<a href="http://headzoo.com" title="Visit my site!">headzoo</a>
```

If you use the value `my_links` for this setting, the link created will look like this:

```
<a href="http://headzoo.com" class="my_links" title="Visit my site!">headzoo</a>
```

You can add more than one class to each link by separating them with a space.

Open Links In New Window/Tab

When this setting is turned on, the attribute `target="_blank"` will be added to each created link. A new window or tab will open when the links are clicked.

Be aware though that the `target` attribute is not valid XHTML, and any links containing the attribute will fail validation. So don't use this setting if you're the kind of person that cares about creating valid XHTML.

If you want valid links, and you want them to open in a new window or tab, then try using some JavaScript. Use the Inner HTML setting, and try a value like `onclick="window.open(this.href); return false;"`.

Default Export Type

The Import/Export menu isn't the only place where keyphrases can be exported. They can also be exported from the Keyphrases menu. To export from the Keyphrases menu, simply select the keyphrases you want to export from the grid, and then click the export button.

The question though is what kind of document will you get when you click that export button? aLinks can export keyphrases in 4 different formats. That's what this setting controls. This setting tells aLinks what kind of document you want, when you click the export button on the Keyphrases menu.

Defining Keyphrases

Defining keyphrases is the at the heart of aLinks. While it's true aLinks automates the task of creating links in your blog posts, it does need to know which phrases to linkify.

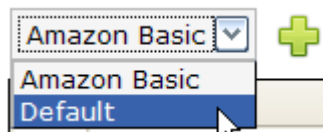
The Keyphrases Grid

The keyphrase grid on the Keyphrases menu is where you add, delete, edit, and export keyphrases.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Phrase	Description	Created	Factory
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stone Sour	Get their new album	2008-07-02	Amazon Basic
<input type="checkbox"/>	aLinks	A WordPress plugin that automatically links keywords in your blog post.	2008-07-01	Default
<input type="checkbox"/>	Headzoo	My WordPress plugin site	2008-07-02	Default
<input type="checkbox"/>	480x	My personal blog.	2008-07-02	Default
<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPress	The most popular blogging platform on the planet.	2008-07-02	Default

1. Used to create a new keyphrase. Select the type of keyphrase you would like to create from the drop down menu, and then click the + icon.
2. Used to filter the keyphrases grid. Enter a term in the text box, and select a column from the drop down menu. When you click the Filter button, only those matching rows will be displayed.
3. The – icon is used to delete keyphrases. Select the keyphrases you want to delete by putting a check mark next to the phrase, and then click the delete button.
4. This is the export button. Put a check mark next to the keyphrases you want to export, and then click the export button. This is handy for exporting only some of your keyphrases. For instance, if I wanted to export all of my Amazon Basic keyphrases, I would enter “amazon basic” in the filtering text box, select “Factory” from the drop down menu, and then click the Filter button. I would then put a check mark next to all the keyphrases that are still showing, and then click the export button.
5. Checking this box selects every keyphrase in the grid.

Creating a Keyphrase



Creating a new keyphrase is a simple task. Select which type of keyphrase you want to create from the drop down menu, and then click the + icon. The options you see in the drop down menu depend on the factories you have installed.

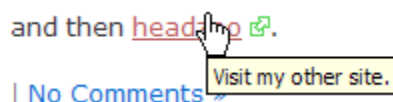
A screenshot of a dialog box titled 'Create Keyphrase'. It has three input fields: 'Phrase:', 'Description:', and 'URL:'. Below the 'URL:' field is a small text label: 'The URL the clicked link will go to.' At the bottom are 'Cancel' and 'Ok' buttons.

When you click the + icon, a new window will open up, that looks like the one above. Enter the values for the phrase, and then click the Ok button. The newly created keyphrase will immediately appear in the keyphrase grid.

If I wanted the phrase “headzoo” turned into a link to <http://headzoo.com>, I would use the following values:

A screenshot of the 'Create Keyphrase' dialog box with the following values entered: 'Phrase:' is 'headzoo', 'Description:' is 'Visit my other site.', and 'URL:' is 'http://headzoo.com'. The 'Ok' button is highlighted.

The description value is used as the “tool tip text” that appears when users place their mouse cursor over the link.



Editing Keyphrases

Double-click a row in the keyphrase grid to edit that keyphrase. A window will open like the one shown above. Enter the new values for the keyphrase, and then click Ok.

Wildcard Characters

Note: This is experimental, and won't work with non-Latin character sets.

You can include the words to the left and/or right of a phrase in your blog posts by defining a keyphrase with the * wildcard character. As an example, if I define the keyphrase **headzoo**, then aLinks will turn the phrase “headzoo” in my posts into a link, plus one word to the left and right of the phrase. If I define the keyphrase as ***headzoo***, then aLinks will turn the phrase “headzoo” into a link, plus the two words before it, and the three words after it.

The point of using wildcards is to make your links appear more natural. Lets look at a couple example blog posts. In this first example, I defined the keyphrase *headzoo*.

You can download the aLinks plugin from my [Headzoo](#) website. In addition, the [Headzoo](#) blog has been completely redesigned. Any feedback would be appreciated.

Now lets look at that same blog post if I defined the keyphrase as **headzoo**.

You can download the aLinks plugin from [my Headzoo website](#). In addition, [the Headzoo blog](#) has been completely redesigned. Any feedback would be appreciated.

You will probably agree that the links in the second post look more natural.

Defining Keyphrases In-Post

Sometimes you don't even think about defining a commonly used keyphrase until you're writing a blog post that uses the phrase. After saving the post you have to remember to define the keyphrase from the Keyphrases menu, but there is an easier way.

aLinks lets you define keyphrases (of the Default factory type) directly in your blog posts, as you're writing them.

To define a keyphrase in-post, just create a link like you would normally. For example like this:

```
<a href="http://google.com" title="Visit Google!">Google</a>
```

But change it just a bit to this:

```
<alinks href="http://google.com" title="Visit Google!">Google</alinks>
```

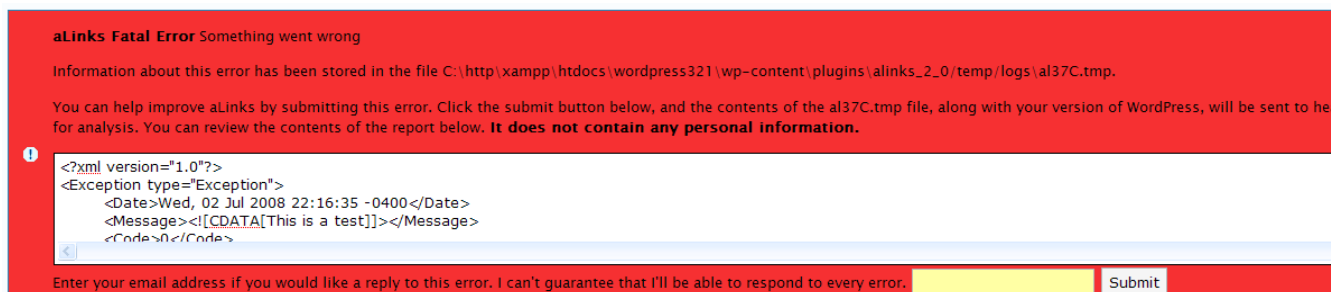
When you save the post, aLinks will define the keyphrase “Google”, with the URL “http://google.com”, and the description “Visit Google!”. The *title* in the tag is optional, but you must have the *href* attribute.

The whole tag will be removed by aLinks when you save the post, because it's no longer needed.

Troubleshooting

aLinks Fatal Error

You may see an error message like the one below, if an error occurs inside of aLinks that is unrecoverable.



An error message like that means aLinks has caught itself before it crashed. Unfortunately there isn't anything that can be done about this type of error.

What you can do to help improve aLinks, is to submit the error to headzoo.com by clicking the submit button. Details about the error will be sent to me so I can fix the bug in future versions.

WordPress: Cannot Load XXX

aLinks can't always catch it's own errors, and when this happens you may see an error message like the one below.



When these types of errors happen, an XML file will be written to the /alinks/temp/logs directory that describes the error. You can help improve future versions of aLinks by sending me a message via headzoo.com's contact form, and attach the XML file.

F.A.Q

How does aLinks caching work?

aLinks caches linkified posts and comments so they don't need to be parsed on each page load. It also caches your keyphrases so they don't need to be read from the database on each page load.

The plugin has it's own caching mechanisms built in, however it will use WordPress's own built in caching if it's enabled. If you're using an advanced caching plugin (such as the memcache plugin), it will be used by aLinks.

What is a “Factory”?

Factories are scripts installed inside of aLinks, in much the same way that plugins are installed inside of WordPress. aLinks by itself can't do much; It can't even turn keyphrases into links! It takes factories to do that.

The purpose of factories is to make defining keyphrases easier for specific purposes. Some factories are even capable of defining their own keyphrases!

Visit <http://alinks.headzoo.com/factories> to find and download more factories.

Does v2.0 support the old .ale files exported by previous versions of aLinks?

Yes. Even though new versions of aLinks export keyphrases (and settings) as an XML file, the new version can still import the old .ale files.

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1. Source Code.

The "source code" for a work means the preferred form of the work for making modifications to it. "Object code" means any non-source form of a work.

A "Standard Interface" means an interface that either is an official standard defined by a recognized standards body, or, in the case of interfaces specified for a particular programming language, one that is widely used among developers working in that language.

The "System Libraries" of an executable work include anything, other than the work as a whole, that (a) is included in the normal form of packaging a Major Component, but which is not part of that Major Component, and (b) serves only to enable use of the work with that Major Component, or to implement a Standard Interface for which an implementation is available to the public in source code form. A "Major Component", in this context, means a major essential component (kernel, window system, and so on) of the specific operating system (if any) on which the executable work runs, or a compiler used to produce the work, or an object code interpreter used to run it.

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b) Convey the object code in, or embodied in, a physical product (including a physical distribution medium), accompanied by a written offer, valid for at least three years and valid for as long as you offer spare parts or customer support for that product model, to give anyone who possesses the object code either (1) a copy of the Corresponding Source for all the software in the product that is covered by this License, on a durable physical medium customarily used for software interchange, for a price no

more than your reasonable cost of physically performing this conveying of source, or (2) access to copy the Corresponding Source from a network server at no charge.

c) Convey individual copies of the object code with a copy of the written offer to provide the Corresponding Source. This alternative is allowed only occasionally and noncommercially, and only if you received the object code with such an offer, in accord with subsection 6b.

d) Convey the object code by offering access from a designated place (gratis or for a charge), and offer equivalent access to the Corresponding Source in the same way through the same place at no further charge. You need not require recipients to copy the Corresponding Source along with the object code. If the place to copy the object code is a network server, the Corresponding Source may be on a different server (operated by you or a third party) that supports equivalent copying facilities, provided you maintain clear directions next to the object code saying where to find the Corresponding Source. Regardless of what server hosts the Corresponding Source, you remain obligated to ensure that it is available for as long as needed to satisfy these requirements.

e) Convey the object code using peer-to-peer transmission, provided you inform other peers where the object code and Corresponding Source of the work are being offered to the general public at no charge under subsection 6d.

A separable portion of the object code, whose source code is excluded from the Corresponding Source as a System Library, need not be included in conveying the object code work.

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