How to start an email list as a content creator (and why you should)

Hi, I'm Elaine!

- Started my first blog is 2009
- Studied Creative Digital Media
- Launched a freelance business (XOmisse) in May 2013
- Within 13 months of launching, I had
  - Interned at a digital marketing, SEO and web design agency
  - Started writing for Blogosphere (now Creative Director)
  - Been nominated for best technology blog
  - Reached over 1 million unique pageviews
  - Spoke at conferences
  - Booked out at least 6 months in advance

All through consistent and strategic blogging but I made one huge mistake…

What is an email list?

An email list is a list of email addresses that you've (legally - with permission) collected to send out promotional and marketing emails such as blog posts, news and announcements.

It can be used to build relationships with your audience, boost brand awareness, promote your content, market your products and services and nurture leads.

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Out of all the channels I tested as a marketer, email continually outperforms most of them
– Neil Patel

Benefits to an email list

More control
Your email list is yours, you have control. You can decide what to send, when to send and how often to get in touch. No algorithms, no paying for reach and no shadow banning...

Highly targeted
People on your list have <u>signed up</u> your list. They have taken action, they want to hear from you. They want to engage and interact with you, and they value what you have to say and what you offer.

One on one
With email, you're essentially speaking one on one with the people on your list. This makes it easier to build relationships and trust, because you can have a proper conversation.

Higher return on investment
According to DMA in 2019, email marketing has an ROI of 3800%. What about click-through rates? It's roughly 3% for email and 0.5% for Twitter - that's 6x more likely to get a click-through in an email than from Twitter.

How to start an email list

1. Sign up to your preferred email marketing provider
2. Set up subscription form within the platform
3. Embed subscription form on your blog or website
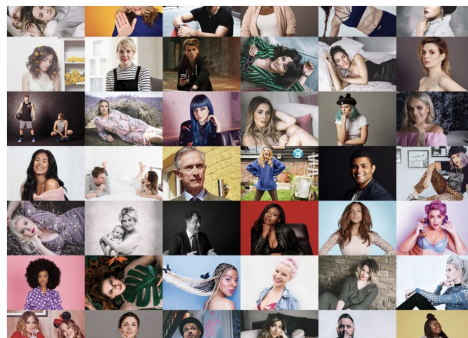4. Promote the form and start sending emails

First Name

Your email address

Interested In:
- Blogosphere news and updates
- Blogosphere Events
- Industry news
- Sponsorship opportunities

Subscribe

BUILT WITH ConvertKit

Join the Blogosphere Newsletter

First Name

Your email address

Interested In:
- Blogosphere news and updates
- Blogosphere Events
- Industry news
- Sponsorship opportunities

SUBSCRIBE

Embed this form ✕

JAVASCRIPT HTML SHARE WORDPRESS UNBOUNCE

Embed your form onto your site with one line of JavaScript

Place this code where you want the form to display on your site

`<script async data-uid="682ffead1a"`   COPY

Email marketing platforms

Mailchimp
If you're just getting started/on a budget

ConvertKit
If you need advanced segmentation

Flodesk
If you want beautifully designed emails

Jilt
If you run an e-commerce site

Other options
MailerLite, Constant Contact, SendinBlue, Drip, Aweber,
GetResponse, Moosend, ActiveCampaign

Email marketing and the law

In the UK, anti-spam law is enforced by the ICO and breaches can lead to fines.

Laws vary by country (like CAN-SPAM Act in the US, CASL laws in Canada and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations in the UK) but are fairly similar.
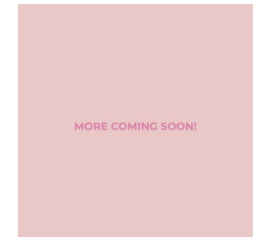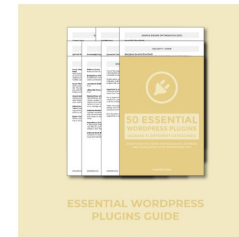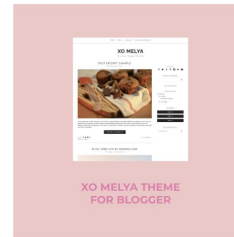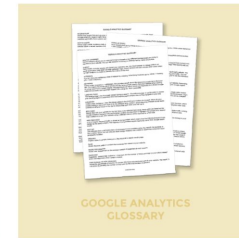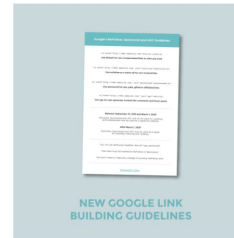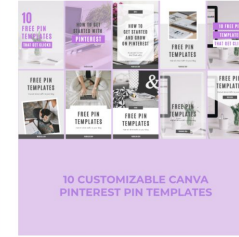
- Individuals must specifically consent to receiving emails
- Cannot send unsolicited marketing emails
- Emails must clearly include a valid postal address or PO box and an unsubscribe link
- If you're a limited or private limited company - include legal company name, registration number, place of registration and registered office address
- Also comply with GDPR - consent must be separate from other T&Cs and pre-ticked opt-in boxes are prohibited

There's also rules depending on the provider you use. For example if you send emails through Mailchimp, you must comply with the U.S. CAN-SPAM Act, even if your business is outside the United States. If you use ConvertKit, they will allow you to use their address in your email footer.

Lead magnet

You may find that in order to get someone to sign up to your list, you may have to offer a lead magnet (also known as an incentive or opt-in offer).

- Quick start guide
- Resource or tool list
- Resource library
- Cheat sheet
- Checklist
- Workbook
- Guide/ebook
- Webinar
- Challenge

- Discount/coupon code
- Swipe file
- Worksheets
- Mini email course
- Sample chapter
- Template/presets
- Printables
- Hidden bonus content
- How to video

YEARLY BLOG AND SOCIAL MEDIA STAT TRACKER

10 CUSTOMIZABLE CANVA PINTEREST PIN TEMPLATES

SEO CHECKLIST

TECHNICAL AND CONTENT STEPS - SEO CHECKLIST

NEW GOOGLE LINK BUILDING GUIDELINES

GOOGLE ANALYTICS GLOSSARY

9 CUSTOMISABLE CANVA INSTAGRAM SQUARE TEMPLATES

XO MELYA THEME FOR BLOGGER

ESSENTIAL WORDPRESS PLUGINS GUIDE

MORE COMING SOON!

Content upgrades

A content upgrade is a lead magnet created specifically for a particular blog post or page. They help new people get to know you, your business and the value you provide while also giving them a quick win.

Brian Dean, from Backlinko, reported that content upgrades helped him boost his email conversion rate by 785%.

What to include? Consider the information covered in your post, where your reader is in the sales funnel and the problem they may be having with the topic.

Post summaries, exclusive extra content, checklists and cheat sheets work well as content upgrades.

I'm talking about **content upgrades**.

If you don't know what they are, I will explain you everything you need to know about them.

Let's get started.

Get Your Content Upgrades Cheat Sheet Now
Plus, join our email list to stay up to date.

⬇ Get It Now!

What Content Upgrades Really Are

A content upgrade is any kind of extra content that your blog's visitors can get access to in exchange for their email address. In a way, they resemble to lead magnets, in the sense you send them something for their email address. But what sets them apart is what makes content upgrades so effective.

First of all, a content upgrade needs to be **relevant** to the content piece that visitors are already consuming. Then, they need to add **extra value** to the reader **for free**.

Audience segmentation

Not everyone on your list is going to be the same or have the same interests, this is where segmentation comes in. Segmentation is a tactic of dividing your list into smaller segments based on different criteria.

Mailchimp's recent user data showed that on average segmented campaigns result in 23% higher open rates and 49% higher click through rates than unsegmented campaigns.

Once you segment your list, you can then personalise the content delivered.

You may choose to segment your list based on your audience's location, interests, purchase history, biggest challenge, budget, engagement, where they are in their journey, etc.

Segmentation features vary depending on your email marketing provider, but most allow some of of tagging.

Downloaded family recipes

Yoga Beginner

Budget traveller

Welcome series

We already know how important first impressions are. When somebody first subscribes to your email list, they are at their peak interest level and therefore you want to make sure you're welcoming them.

To do this, we can set up an automated welcome series. This is an easy way to greet new subscribers, tell your brand story and start building a relationship.

You can create this however you want, but it typically starts with an immediate welcome email that briefly introduces yourself, delivers your lead magnet and gives the subscriber their requested information.

From there you can set up an onboarding automation that send an email every couple of days covering different topics or areas - maybe showing your expertise and giving specific tips before inviting them to take the next step like signing up to a webinar or booking a service with you.

< **Welcome Sequence** ✎

Grab your freebies in the XO...
⏰ Immediately

A welcome to XOmisse!
⏰ 1 day 📅 Not on Fri

Let's get to know each other...
⏰ 1 day 📅 Not on Fri

+ Add Email

Final tips

- How often should you send marketing emails? It definitely depends on you and your audience. I'd recommend as often as you can be consistent.
- Play around with where you're putting your subscription forms and test what is working. You can try putting it in your site's header, blog archive page, within your blog posts, your sidebar and/or footer, about page, resource page, designated sign-up page, in an exit-intent popup.
- Should you use a single or double opt-in? Single opt-in means that once a visitor clicks "subscribe" they're on your list. While double opt-in means that they click "subscribe" and then have to confirm that by clicking a link in a confirmation email. Certain laws and countries require a double opt-in.
- Remember to optimise your subject line and write as if you're speaking to an individual person.
- Don't be over salesy - send a balance of personal nurturing emails and sales emails.
- Optimise your design and content for mobile devices.
- Include a call to action in each email (one CTA in multiple places tends to work best).
- Help to avoid spam filters by sending emails through a verified domain, keeping your email template code clean, personalising the "To:" field, showing subscribers how to whitelist your email address (by adding you as a contact) and avoiding overly "salesy" language that could be spam triggers.
- Periodically remove inactive subscribers to keep your list fresh.

Thank you for your time!

Find me at xomisse.com or @xomisse on social media