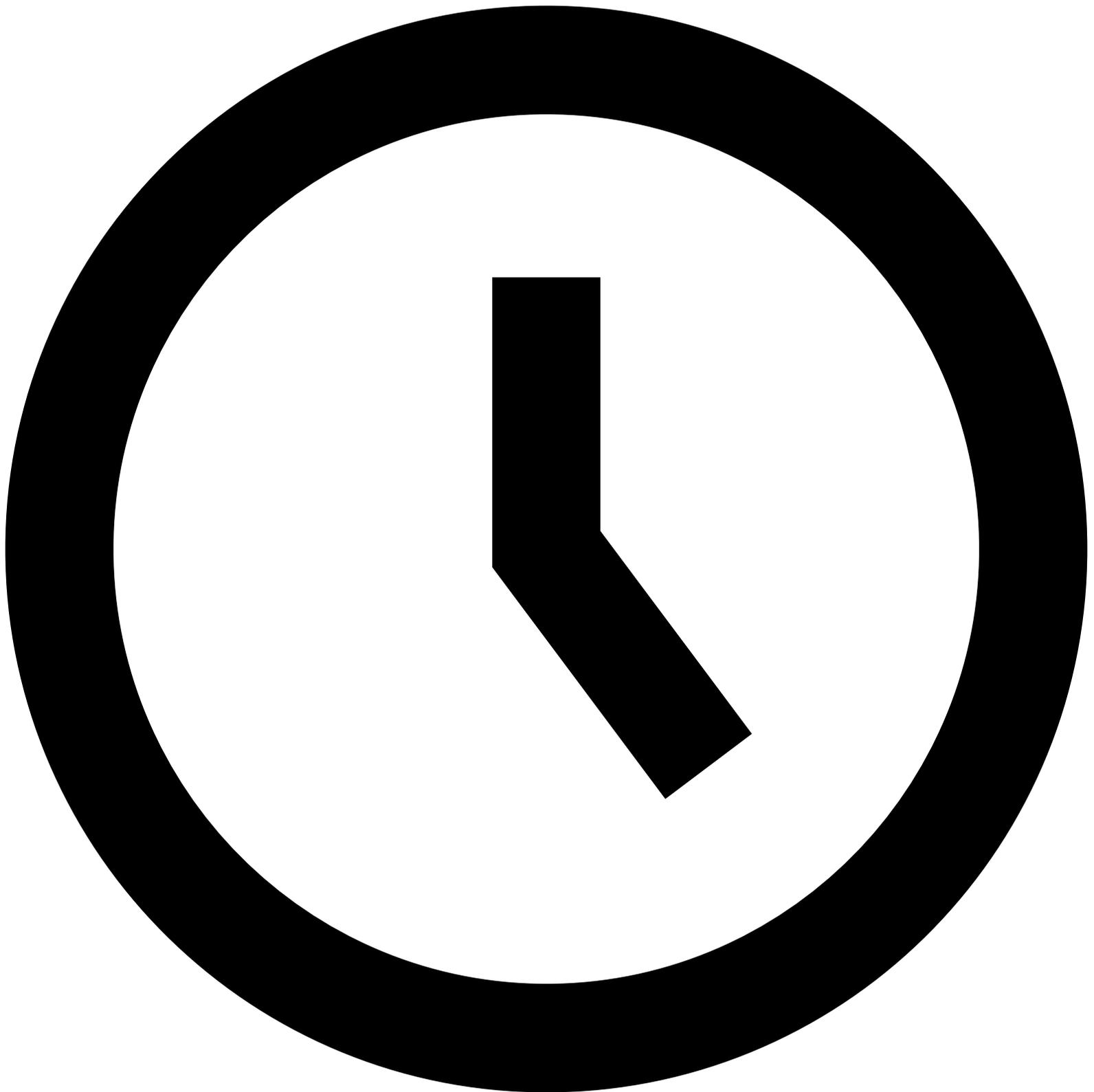


[The WordPress.com Blog](#)

## Independent Publisher 2 Is Here

A beloved WordPress.com theme, improved for simplicity and speed.



April 25, 2017



The popular [Independent Publisher](#) design is a WordPress theme that has long been beloved for its simplicity and legibility. So we are happy to announce that it has been improved, ever so slightly, with the design talents of Caroline Moore and Kjell Reigstad.

Introducing [Independent Publisher 2](#):



## Independent Publisher 2

A beautiful, reader-focused theme with a clean, responsive layout, ideal for personal bloggers.



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### The Start of a New Journey

They were not long in discovering the cause of all that commotion. A yellow dog of no particular breed but of the kind generally denominated “cur,” came tearing around the corner of the street. He had an old rusty tin pan tied to his tail, and as this struck him at every jump, he was yelping like mad and trying every way possible to outrun the strange thing that rattled and banged at his heels.

People thrust their heads out of windows and doors. Most of them smiled or laughed

*Independent Publisher* was first designed, developed, and released four years ago by Raam Dev in his introductory [post](#) to the Independent Publisher Project:

“I’ve been using WordPress for the past 8 years and in that time my site has always had a modified version of someone else’s theme. I always found it easier to start with a theme created by someone else and then modifying it until I had it the way I wanted.” —Raam Dev, 2013

I recently caught up with Raam to learn about the origins of *Independent Publisher*.

**JM:** How did *Independent Publisher* come to be?

**RD:** I had that design swimming around in my head for years—it’s the culmination 7 years of hacking away at a constantly-evolving WordPress theme for my personal site, tweaking and updating it every few months to apply my latest understanding of what ‘good design’ meant. Over the years I had gotten so many requests from people who wanted to use the theme that I was using, but the current theme was always so hacked-together that I wasn’t able to easily share it. Finally in 2013 I decided to put everything that I’d learned into building a theme that could be shared and that’s where the *Independent Publisher* theme was born. I’ve been amazed by how many people use it—it’s such a weird feeling to visit the site of a stranger on the internet only to discover they’re using the theme that I helped build!

**JM:** Are you a designer or a developer? I mean, your last name is ... “Dev.”

**RD:** I’m definitely a bit of both. I love building things but I also love thinking about the ultimate purpose of what gets built, the ‘why’ behind the ‘what.’

About my last name, it hadn’t even occurred to me how appropriate my last name was for the type of work that I do until my developer friends started asking if it was really my last name.

**JM:** What advice do you give for budding designer/devs like yourself when starting off in creating a theme?

**RD:** Start with the end in mind. When I built the *Independent Publisher* theme, I kept revisiting the same set of questions at every step along the way: What’s the ultimate purpose of this theme? What is it trying to do? What is its ultimate objective?

**JM:** How have mobile devices changed how we consume content these days?

**RD:** If there was ever a good example of the importance of considering the design impact of what we build, mobile would be it. With mobile devices, users don’t get to choose the size of their web browser. They have little choice about the constraints imposed on them by the devices in their hands. That means it’s up to us developers and designers to ensure that content can be consumed as easily as possible on mobile.

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In case you are wondering, “What is a theme?” I can tell you that according to Automattic founder and CEO Matt Mullenweg, “themes” [began](#) from WordPress version 1.5 way back in 2005. A theme is an encapsulation of code and design knowledge — it lets you customize the look and feel of a WordPress site to be exactly the way that you want. If you are a designer that is new to themes, I suggest that you read this short [essay](#) by Mel Choyce on “3 Reasons Why Every Designer Should Create A WordPress Theme.”

Because *Independent Publisher* came out in 2013, it deserved a tiny set of enhancements. We thought the best two people to lead the design challenge needed to be our theming veteran Caroline Moore and our [typography expert](#) Kjell Reigstad.

**JM:** What makes a good theme?

**CM:** A rock-solid code foundation like [Components](#) and a design that feels like home. My favorites are bold, colorful themes with lots of personality; [Scratchpad](#) by my colleague Laurel Fulford comes to mind.

**JM:** What makes for good typography?

**KR:** Good typography doesn’t get in the way. It’s balanced, legible, and subtle.

**JM:** Are there any aspects of *Independent Publisher* that caught your attention when it was first released on WP.com?

**CM:** Using a Gravatar as a site logo wasn’t common around the time *Independent Publisher* was released, so that stood out to me as a neat way to make the theme more personalized right out of the box.

**JM:** What makes one paragraph more legible than the other?

**KR:** There are a number of variables that affect the readability of paragraphs. Aside from the more obvious ones like typeface and font size, I find leading and column width to be the most important.

Leading (also known as “line-spacing”) is the space between lines of text. If the space is too wide, your eyes have to work hard to jump from one line of text to the next. If it’s too narrow, your eyes have to work hard at differentiating each line as you’re reading. Leading adjustments can be very subtle, but the right balance makes a big impact.

Column width is a little more self-explanatory. If a paragraph of text is too wide, your eyes will have to take a

large horizontal jump each time you progress onto a new line. If the paragraph is too narrow, your eyes will have to make the jump more often. Both of these cases can cause eye fatigue. An ideal column width is somewhere in the middle.

**JM:** What about this *Independent Publisher* refresh benefits the reader?

**KR:** In my opinion, the best update is the switch to using system fonts by default. More often than not nowadays, websites load in custom font files to display all their text. This is great visually, but it does lead to slightly longer page load times.

System fonts are included with your device by default. These are pretty standard fonts, and tend to be very widely available. You've probably heard of many of them: Helvetica, Times, and Georgia for instance. Switching to use these fonts means we don't have to load in additional font files every time your site loads. This saves time, and is especially handy when visitors are on a slow or unstable mobile connection.

Best of all, the system fonts we used are beautiful! Headlines are set in your computer's default sans serif font Apple's [San Francisco](#) font, and Android's [Roboto](#) for example, and body text is set in [Georgia](#) by the beloved Matthew Carter.

**JM:** Where do you see the world of themes heading, Caroline?

**CM:** I want to see themes condensed into a single CSS file, applied over different components that you can mix and match to build any kind of site you can imagine.

**JM:** If I'm a beginner to design and want to learn more about typography, how do I start, Kjell?

**KR:** This is a quick, 6-minute video that I made last year to share the joy of typography:

**JM:** Thank you Raam, Caroline, and Kjell!

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So there you have it — enjoy the new power of [Independent Publisher 2](#), and set yourself free to write with enhanced legibility, special tweaks for mobile, and an overall faster experience for your readers.

Read more about Raam Dev, Caroline Moore, and Kjell Reigstad on their respective websites:



[Raam Dev](#)

[Caroline Moore](#)

[Kjell Reigstad](#)

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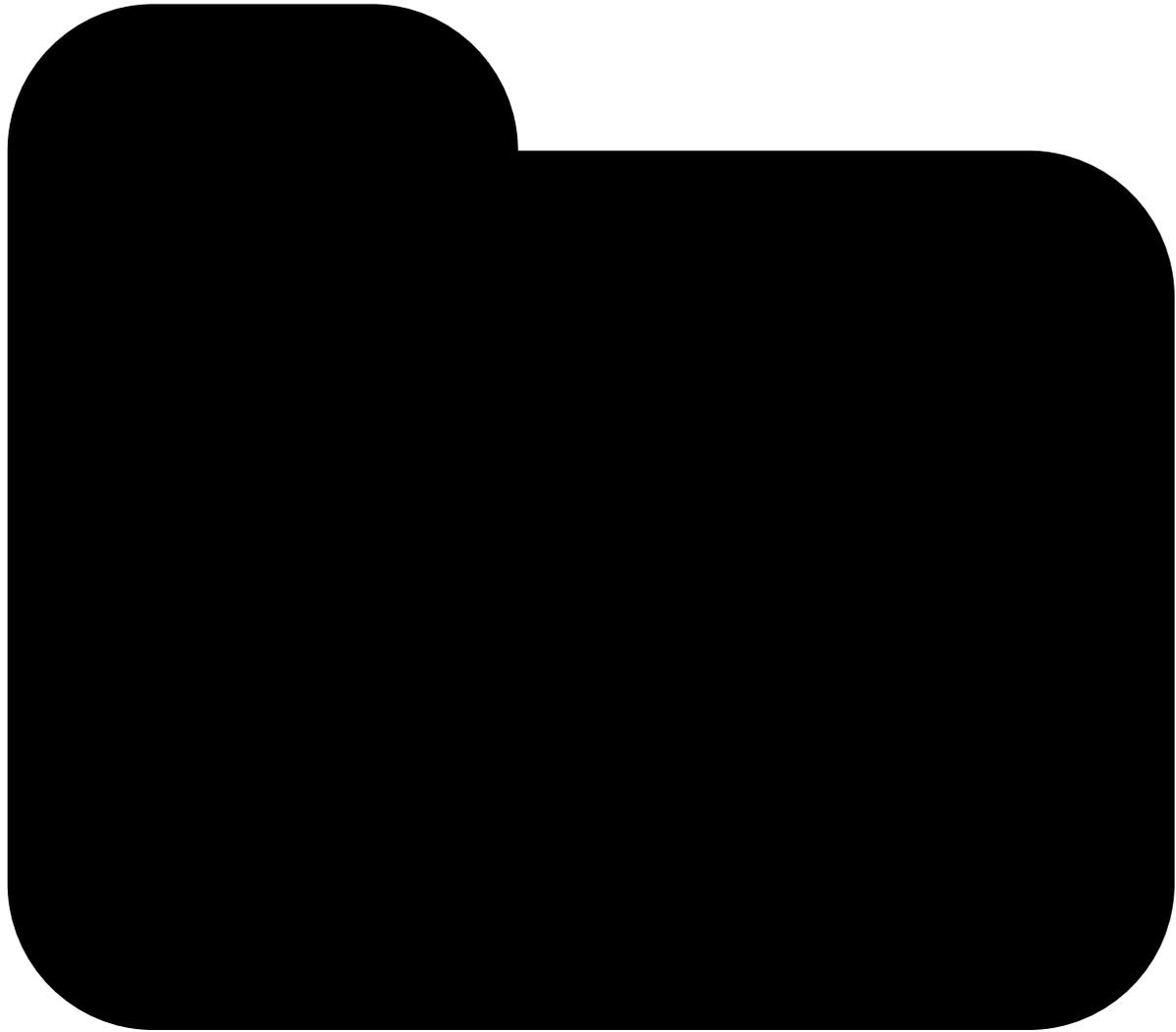
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## 22 Comments

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1.  *Kelly Smith* [Apr 25th at 1:42 pm](#)

Great blogpost

★ Liked by [3 people](#)

-  [John Maeda](#) [Apr 25th at 3:31 pm](#)

Thanks — Libre's a great choice for a theme, Kelly.

★ Like

2.  [Michael Meiser](#) [Apr 25th at 2:08 pm](#)

Thank you so much for this update! I have been using IP2 for a couple of days, it is exactly what I was waiting for.

★ Liked by [4 people](#)

-  [John Maeda](#) [Apr 25th at 3:32 pm](#)

Raam, Caroline, Kjell certainly made design magic happen. Glad that IP2 can showcase your beautiful photographs.

★ Liked by [1 person](#)

3.  [ivmaglio](#) [Apr 25th at 3:07 pm](#)

Good Look for Independent Publisher!

★ Liked by [4 people](#)

-  [John Maeda](#) [Apr 25th at 3:34 pm](#)

We hope you try it out!

★ Liked by [2 people](#)

4.  [scottgurvey101](#) [Apr 25th at 3:12 pm](#)

This looks interesting. Is IP2 available to free-standing WordPress sites? I don't seem to be able to find it in themes. I am a Jetpack premium account user. Thanks.

★ Liked by [2 people](#)

-  [John Maeda](#) [Apr 25th at 8:46 pm](#)

Yes it can be downloaded from the showcase page. Enjoy!

★ Liked by [2 people](#)

5.  [Mubarik7](#) [Apr 25th at 3:32 pm](#)

I had blogs and would like to carry on doing so except I can't do it any more because I can't sign on. It doesn't except my correct passwords and you are not helping either to carry on. RegardsMs Mubarik Iqbal

★ Liked by [1 person](#)

6.  [susurrus](#) [Apr 25th at 5:15 pm](#)

Interesting post – I’d love to see a mix and match theme.

★ Like

7.  [angelvancouver](#) [Apr 25th at 5:22 pm](#)

Cool story. I know nothing about writing code. I know what it is but don’t know how to write it. Even so, I found the story of how the theme was created fascinating.

★ Liked by [2 people](#)

8.  [Fotis](#) [Apr 25th at 5:44 pm](#)

Great update to an already great theme. Many thanks to the designers!

★ Liked by [1 person](#)

9.  [Saurabh](#) [Apr 25th at 6:45 pm](#)

Awesome work!

★ Liked by [1 person](#)

10.  [Madelyn Griffith-Haynie, MCC, SCAC](#) [Apr 25th at 7:09 pm](#)

Super update on a theme that looks quick and easy. I may well investigate using it if I go forward with a second public blog. I appreciate the designers idea of functionality.

I must admit I always shudder at the word “improved” because, as a long-form, science-based, informational blogger with an Everygreen platform, my idea of an “improvement” and yours is most often radically different.

As you optimize for the “new kids” who run their lives on their smart phones, please don’t ignore the needs of the writers who have been on the web since inception and most often blog using computer-based interfaces. IF it takes increasingly longer to get a draft formatted and UP, forcing us to html code pages to retain former functionality, it doesn’t matter how “reader friendly” it might be, most of us who share info sans remuneration will hate it. 😊 Just a thought.

XX,

mgh

(Madelyn Griffith-Haynie – ADDandSoMuchMORE dot com)

ADD Coach Training Field founder; ADD Coaching co-founder

“It takes a village to educate a world!”

★ Liked by [3 people](#)

11.  [homeomart](#) [Apr 26th at 4:11 am](#)

Nice, Simple, Clutter & Jazz free....the beauty in simplicity...love it. This theme puts the spotlight where it should be – “Content”!

★ Liked by [2 people](#)

12.  [indiadigitalprints](#) [Apr 26th at 5:56 am](#)

Thank you for the post...It is really helpful

★ Liked by [1 person](#)

13.  [JenT](#) [Apr 26th at 7:00 am](#)

Beautiful work and many thanks for the refresh to Independent Publisher, which is a relative “new kid on the block.” One theme I really hope you update is Oxygen, introduced in 2012, and another well-beloved theme here on WordPress.com.

★ Liked by [2 people](#)

14.  [Victoria K Gallagher](#) [Apr 26th at 7:46 am](#)

I don't really have too much to add except that I like the concept regarding readability and how importantly it has been thought out. I checked out the themes features and am quite impressed there are layout options such as the side bar – I've always had one on my blog so it wouldn't be a far cry from what I'm used to. I like that adding images to posts is there – a lot of the stories I write are written from photo prompts so I need this feature. I like this theme.

★ Like

15.  [Bagus Frayoga](#) [Apr 28th at 1:29 am](#)

thank you so much for this new theme, I used IP before now I switch to the new one 😊

★ Like

16.  [deepanilamani](#) [Apr 28th at 9:50 am](#)

Thank you so much for the update. Wonderful work 😊

★ Like

17.  [myamazingblog2017](#) [Apr 29th at 5:23 am](#)

wonderful work  
plz follow me back

★ Like

18.  [sonetteam](#) [May 2nd at 12:00 pm](#)

Great Update . Thanks for sharing !!!

★ Like

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