

Mastodon: Blogpocket Technical Guide (Part III)

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MASTODON

BLOGPOCKET TECHNICAL GUIDE PART III

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FEDERATE YOUR WORDPRESS BLOG!

WHAT IS A FEDERATED BLOG AND HOW TO BUILD ONE

Turn your WordPress blog into a kind of Mastodon instance

GITHUB, WORDPRESS AND BLOGGER!

HOW TO ADD A SHARE BUTTON IN MASTODON

SOCIAL ICON

Get the Mastodon Social Icon Using a WordPress Block

AUTOMATION

Create a bot in a Mastodon instance, using a WordPress plugin

About this book

Welcome. This ebook dedicated to Mastodon is a manual that explains its basic operation. Initially, it is divided into four parts and this is the third of them.

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Disclaimer. Due to the changes introduced in the Twitter API and the speed with which events around the Fediverse are happening, in real boiling, it is possible that some of the tools and resources mentioned in this ebook no longer work.

Thanks. To José Luis Orihuela who instilled in me an interest in Mastodon, trusted me as administrator of federate.blogpocket.com and created his account associated with ecuaderno.com there.

Dedication: To my followers at Mastodon.

Index

How to turn your blog into a kind of Mastodon instance	4
What it is and how to create a WordPress blog connected to Fediverso	4
Steps to follow to create a federated blog	4
1. Create an account on a Fediverso platform and a WordPress installation on your own web server	4
2. Install and activate the Activity Pub plugin	5
3. Configure the plugin with your Fediverso username and password, and customize additional options as needed	5
4. Turn your WordPress into a Fediverse node with the Friends plugin	6
Steps to follow to create a federated WordPress.com blog	6
OpenPress	6
Conclusions	6
Share buttons	7
Creating a share button in Mastodon: GitHub	7
More projects to share on Mastodon	8
Creating a share button in Mastodon: WordPress without plugin	8
Classic theme	8
Blocks theme	9
Creating a share button in Mastodon: WordPress with plugin	9
Creating a share button in Mastodon: Blogger	10
Auto alojar TootPick	11
Conclusions	11
The Mastodon Social Icon	12
WordPress Block (Social Icons)	12
Bots	12
How to create a bot in a Mastodon instance	12

How to turn your blog into a kind of Mastodon instance

The Fediverse is a set of networks and websites that use the ActivityPub protocol to connect and share content. By connecting a WordPress website to Fediverse, you can allow published content to be shared with other sites on Fediverse. In addition, you can interact with content published on other Fediverse sites from your WordPress website.

This can help increase the visibility of your website and attract new users and visitors. It can also encourage user engagement and create a larger, more connected community around your website. If you are interested in connecting your WordPress website to Fediverse, in this post we help you understand how to do it.

What it is and how to create a WordPress blog connected to Fediverse

A federated WordPress blog is a blog that is connected to other blogging platforms through a network called “Fediverse”. This means that the content of the blog can be shared and viewed on other Fediverse platforms, such as Mastodon, Pleroma or even another WordPress blog.

To build a federated WordPress blog, you will first need to have an account on a Fediverse platform (eg Mastodon) and a WordPress installation on your own server. Then you can use the WordPress plugin called [Activity Pub](https://wordpress.org/plugins/activitypub/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/activitypub/>) to connect your WordPress blog to your Fediverse account.

Once you have installed and activated the plugin, you will need to configure it with your Fediverse username and password. You can also customize some additional options, such as the type of data that will be published on the Fediverse network (posts, pages, etc.)

Steps to follow to create a federated blog

Let's see, in a little more detail, the steps to follow to build a federated WordPress.org blog.

1. Create an account on a Fediverse platform and a WordPress installation on your own web server

To sign up for Mastodon (if you choose that Fediverse platform), follow the keys given in our [Quick Start Guide to Mastodon for WordPress Users](https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/12/20/guia-rapida-de-iniciacion-a-mastodon-para-usuarios-de-wordpress/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/12/20/guia-rapida-de-iniciacion-a-mastodon-para-usuarios-de-wordpress/>).

To install WordPress on your own web server, I recommend following [this checklist](https://www.blogpocket.com/metodo-blogpocket-curso-web-checklist/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/metodo-blogpocket-curso-web-checklist/>) or, if you need more depth, [this guide](https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/04/18/instalar-wordpress) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/04/18/instalar-wordpress>).

Mastodon: Blogpocket Technical Guide (Part III)

The blog social.blogpocket.com (<https://social.blogpocket.com/>) is a real example of a federated WordPress blog and was created from the “social” subdomain of blogpocket.com, within the [GreenGeeks web hosting service](https://www.blogpocket.com/curso-greengeeks/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/curso-greengeeks/>). The Twenty Twenty-Three block theme was used. It was configured, following the aforementioned checklist, with the aim of achieving a website optimized for performance, security and SEO, in addition to complying with the GDPR, being accessible and sustainable.

Blogpocket.com is also a federated blog and you can follow the user [@acambronero@www.blogpocket.com](https://www.blogpocket.com/curso-greengeeks/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/curso-greengeeks/>) from Mastodon and other Fediverse platforms.

At social.blogpocket.com we publish, in English, a selection of blogpocket.com articles. The user in Mastodon is: [@antonio@social.blogpocket.com](https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio) (<https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio>).

2. Install and activate the Activity Pub plugin

the plugin [Activity Pub](https://wordpress.org/plugins/activitypub/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/activitypub/>) will allow you to connect your WordPress blog to Fediverse. The immediate consequence is that it can be followed from any account on a Fediverse platform, such as Mastodon.

In the example, it will be necessary to follow the user [@antonio@social.blogpocket.com](https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio) (<https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio>). Note that the URL is the one corresponding to the WordPress author file: <https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio>.

3. Configure the plugin with your Fediverse username and password, and customize additional options as needed

To get the Activity Pub plugin up and running and configure it, follow these instructions: [Your WordPress blog as an instance of Mastodon \(fediverse\)](https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/11/22/tu-blog-de-wordpress-como-una-instancia-de-mastodon-fediverso/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/11/22/tu-blog-de-wordpress-como-una-instancia-de-mastodon-fediverso/>).

Now, every time you publish an article or a page on your WordPress blog, a toot will be published on Mastodon that will be seen by all the followers of the account. [@antonio](https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio) ([https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio/](https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio)) (continuing the example). But, remember that when searching for the user, you will have to do it using the URL <https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio> (<https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio>).

Replies to [@postsantonio@social.blogpocket.com](https://social.blogpocket.com/author/antonio) on Mastodon, they will automatically be seen as comments on the blog.

4. Turn your WordPress into a Fediverse node with the Friends plugin

[Friends](https://wordpress.org/plugins/friends/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/friends/>) is a WordPress plugin that allows you to turn your website into a kind of instance of the Fediverse. You will be able to publish statuses and share content with those users who also have the plugin installed on their website.

with the plugin [Webmention](https://wordpress.org/plugins/webmention/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/webmention/>) installed you will also be able to receive and send post warning notifications.

Steps to follow to create a federated WordPress.com blog

ActivityPub automatically allows anyone in a federated network to follow your blog posts, which will appear in your main feed. One of the federated networks is Mastodon, but -as you know- there are others like Pleroma, Peertube, etc.

Responses on those platforms appear in the comments of your WordPress post, allowing you to directly engage with readers across the Fediverse, optimizing engagement and creating a more cohesive online presence.

Additionally, by using ActivityPub for WordPress, you are supporting the open source movement, promoting transparency and collaboration, and empowering users to take control of their online experience and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive Internet landscape.

Follow the steps below to install ActivityPub on WordPress.com:

1. From the menu on the left side of your dashboard, navigate to [the plugin marketplace](https://wordpress.com/plugins) (<https://wordpress.com/plugins>) and search for “ActivityPub” (a whole word). Alternatively, [you can click here](https://wordpress.com/plugins/activitypub/) (<https://wordpress.com/plugins/activitypub/>) and go directly to the plugin page.
2. Click “Install and Activate”.
3. Once activated, you can click on “Manage plugin”, which allows you to choose the type of content that will be displayed in the Fediverso feeds. If you're not ready for that yet, you can always access it later in “Settings” > “Pub Activity”.

OpenPress

[OpenPress](https://openpress.social/) (<https://openpress.social/>) is a concept project that could turn a WordPress site into a fully functional Fediverse node for creating, sharing, and consuming content from a network of community members. community.

Conclusions

While OpenPress is not a reality, at the moment only the ActivityPub plugin gives us the possibility that our website can be followed in the Fediverso (Mastodon, for example), as if it were one more instance. The plugin is under development, so one may miss many features. However, it's great if you only want your posts to be seen by your community on Mastodon and don't want to create an account on Mastodon.

Another way is to turn your WordPress into a Fediverse node with the Friends plugin. This requires that your followers also have the Friends plugin installed.

Share buttons

In this chapter, we will see the different ways that exist to add, in each of your blog posts, a share button on Mastodon. With that button, your blog readers will be able to post a toot in their Mastodon instance, related to any of your posts.

Creating a share button in Mastodon: GitHub

Before we see how to create a Mastodon share button within a WordPress and Blogger blog, let's see how to do it on GitHub and Jekyll.

To know how to create a blog on Github, I invite you to read [How to blog with GitHub and Jekyll](https://www.blogpocket.com/2018/09/02/tener-un-blog-con-github-y-jekyll/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/2018/09/02/tener-un-blog-con-github-y-jekyll/>).

Customizing a GitHub and Jekyll blog requires some technical knowledge, especially HTML and CSS.

Add the following code to the `/_layouts/post.html` file:

```
<a title="Share on Mastodon"
href="https://tootpick.org/#text=Check%20out%20https://miblogen.github.io{{ page.url
}}%20by%20@usuario@instancia.mastodon"></a>
```

The "trick" to get that HTML code to work is based on the following:

- Use of software [Tootpick](https://github.com/Juerd/tootpick) (<https://github.com/Juerd/tootpick>) from [Juerd Waalboer](https://github.com/Juerd) (<https://github.com/Juerd>), to display the screen that allows you to customize the toot text and choose the instance. Unlike a share button in a centralized network, you need to know the url of the specific instance to which you want to send the message. Thanks to Terence Eden, I learned about this software in a comment to the post [Create a «Share To Mastodon» Button for WordPress](https://shkspr.mobi/blog/2022/06/create-a-share-to-mastodon-button-for-wordpress/) (<https://shkspr.mobi/blog/2022/06/create-a-share-to-mastodon-button-for-wordpress/>). The Tootpick software, like [Toot Proxy](https://toot.kytta.dev/) (<https://toot.kytta.dev/>) from [Nikita Karamov](https://www.kytta.dev/) (<https://www.kytta.dev/>), can also be self-hosted, but it's more accessible than the other one because Tootpick is built as a single static HTML file. It's also more privacy-friendly, as explained in the project's documentation. It is recommended that the software runs from your own server so as not to depend on external resources, which implies dependency and low final loading speed. See the "Self-hosting TootPick" section at the end of this article to learn how to self-host this software.
- The icon image, corresponding to Mastodon, can be uploaded to a folder in your GitHub installation (images). But you can also use

Mastodon: Blogpocket Technical Guide (Part III)

`https://edent.github.io/SuperTinyIcons/images/svg/mastodon.svg`. Although it is more advisable, to host the file with the icon on your server, for the same reason described for the software.

The text that appears in the box by default, as well as the size of the icon, can be customized within the above code. As shown in the snippet below, you can put your own GitHub domain immediately before `{{ page.url }}`.

```
https://miblog.github.io{{ page.url }}
```

And you can also change your Mastodon user to:

```
%20by%20@username@instance.mastodon
```

The icon size is changed to:

```
width="40"
```

More projects to share on Mastodon

As you can read in the Toopick documentation, this is not the first of its kind. It is inspired by:

- [toot](https://codeberg.org/kytta/toot) (<https://codeberg.org/kytta/toot>)
- [Advanced Sharer for Mastodon](https://sharetomastodon.github.io/about/) (<https://sharetomastodon.github.io/about/>)
- [Mastodon Share Button](https://aly-ve.github.io/Mastodon-share-button/) (<https://aly-ve.github.io/Mastodon-share-button/>)

Creating a share button in Mastodon: WordPress without plugin

From the implementation of the share button in Mastodon came the idea of doing it in WordPress without using any special social sharing plugin.

Let's see some ideas to carry it out in:

- A classic theme.
- A block theme.

Classic theme

In a classic WordPress theme, we have the widget areas to customize the website.

If the theme developer has prepared an "after entry" widget area, we can use this to add the widget available when we install and activate the plugin [Insert PHP Code Snippet](https://wordpress.org/plugins/insert-php-code-snippet/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/insert-php-code-snippet/>). This plugin allows you to create PHP code snippets and associate them with a short code. In addition, it includes a widget to use in the widget areas.

In this case, we will create a new snippet and add the "Custom PHP Code" widget to the After Entry widget area. In the widget configuration, we will choose the name of the snippet from the drop-down.

Mastodon: Blogpocket Technical Guide (Part III)

With that, we have all the gear to prepare a PHP code, based on the HTML code that we saw in the previous GitHub section. The snippet would be:

```
<?php
global $wp;
$current_slug = add_query_arg( array(), $wp->request );
echo '<a title="Share on Mastodon" href="https://tootpick.org/#text=I suggest
you:%20https://www.miblog.com/'. $current_slug. '%20by%20@
user@myinstance.mastodon"></a> ';
?>
```

Notice that before displaying the image, the slug corresponding to the post is obtained:

```
global $wp;
$current_slug = add_query_arg( array(), $wp->request );
```

And then the echo statement is used to display the same literal (HTML) that we used in the GitHub section.

To learn about the different options when it comes to obtaining the current URL, I recommend the masterwp article: [How to Get Current URL in WordPress \(PHP Snippet\)](https://smartwp.com/wordpress-get-current-url/) (<https://smartwp.com/wordpress-get-current-url/>).

If there was no after entry widget area, it would have to be created. That exceeds the purpose of this article, so I refer you to this post: [How to Create an After Entry Widget Area in a Classic WordPress Theme](https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/12/06/como-crear-un-area-de-widgets-after-entry-en-un-tema-clasico-de-wordpress/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/2022/12/06/como-crear-un-area-de-widgets-after-entry-en-un-tema-clasico-de-wordpress/>).

Blocks theme

In a block theme there is no widget area, but we have the templates in the site edition.

Simply, you have to edit the template corresponding to the individual post and add a shortcode block at the end, in which we will incorporate the one corresponding to the same snippet that we saw in the Classic theme subsection.

Creating a share button in Mastodon: WordPress with plugin

Terence Eden mentions in [His article](https://shkspr.mobi/blog/2022/06/create-a-share-to-mastodon-button-for-wordpress/) (<https://shkspr.mobi/blog/2022/06/create-a-share-to-mastodon-button-for-wordpress/>) that the Jetpack plugin (supposed to be the Jetpack Social plugin) allows to add the icon from Mastodon and configure it but I have not been able to get it to work.

There are other social sharing plugins. Most do not contemplate Mastodon.

Among those who contemplate decentralized networks like Mastodon, there is the plugin [AddToAny Share Buttons](https://es.wordpress.org/plugins/add-to-any/) (https://es.wordpress.org/plugins/add-to-any/) but I couldn't get it to work either.

Logically, this section is left open, although we should pursue a self-hosted solution and avoid plugins.

But, whether you have a classic theme, with an After Entry widget area, or a block theme, use the plugin [Insert PHP Code Snippet](https://wordpress.org/plugins/insert-php-code-snippet/) (https://wordpress.org/plugins/insert-php-code-snippet/) and self-hosted Toopick, seems like the best option.

Creating a share button in Mastodon: Blogger

If you have a blog on Blogger (.blogspot or custom domain) the best way is to edit the HTML of the template and add the following code:

```
<!-- Mastodon -->
<div>
<a alt='Comparte en Mastodon' expr:href='&quot;https://tootpick.org/#text=&quot; +
data:post.title + &quot;%20&quot; + data:post.url' title='Comparte en Mastodon'><img
alt='icono de Mastodon'
src='https://edent.github.io/SuperTinyIcons/images/svg/mastodon.svg' width='40' />
</a>
</div>
<br/><br/>
```

In Blogger you will not be able to self-host TootPick.

As for the image corresponding to the Mastodon icon, consider using a text "Share on Mastodon", instead of an image. In that case, you should remove the img tag from the previous code, leaving the following:

```
<!-- Mastodon -->
<div>
<a alt='Comparte en Mastodon' expr:href='&quot;https://tootpick.org/#text=&quot; +
data:post.title + &quot;%20&quot; + data:post.url' title='Comparte en Mastodon'>
Share on Mastodon
</a>
</div>
<br/><br/>
```

A trick to upload the Mastodon icon is to create an entry and insert an image from a file you have on your computer. After publishing the entry you could access the URL of the image.

To edit the template, go to the "Theme" option that you will find in the left column. There you will see, at the top of the screen, a drop-down that says "Customize". Click on the little arrow and then on "Edit HTML".

The location to add the code should be before closing the loop that displays the inputs:

```
</b:loop>
```

The mobile version of Blogger templates often differs from the desktop ones. Sometimes it's hard to easily tell which parts in code are the corresponding parts. But, in any case, mobile templates usually show, at the bottom of the page, the option "View web version". If you have not been able to add the code for the mobile version, the user can always go to that option.

Auto alojar TootPick

[TootPick](https://github.com/Juerd/tootpick) (<https://github.com/Juerd/tootpick>) is a very simple tooter that can be self-hosted on your server and even on GitHub to avoid calling the external server tootpick.org. Check the TootPick documentation first, in the GitHub repository (Readme file).

To self-host it in your own GitHub repository, create a folder to host TootPick's index.html file. Go into this file and copy the code to the clipboard.

To create the folder, go to "Add file > Create new file" and type tootpick/index.html. That will create the empty index.html file inside a new "tootpick" folder. Edit the new index.html file and paste the clipboard content into it.

Next, edit the "_layouts/post.html" file and change the domain tootpick.org to miblogen.github.io/tootpick.

To self-host it in WordPress, go to your hosting control panel and use the file manager, in order to create a new directory (tootpick) inside the root directory (this is usually public_html).

Once the new directory is created, create the index.html file, edit it, and paste the same content from the index.html file from the original Tootpick repository.

If you have a classic theme, edit the snippet corresponding to the plugin [Insert PHP Code Snippet](https://wordpress.org/plugins/insert-php-code-snippet/) (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/insert-php-code-snippet/>) and change the URL (see section «Creating a share button in Mastodon: WordPress without plugin»). And if you have a block theme, still edit the snippet and change the URL as well.

Conclusions

The problem with implementing a share button on a decentralized platform, like Mastodon, is that you need a variable with an unknown value, which is the instance.

We have seen different alternatives but it seems that implementing simple software on your server, in the style of Toopick, is the best solution. Let's not forget that we strive to maintain the high level of performance optimization and preserve privacy.

both in the [blog de Blogpocket](https://www.blogpocket.com/) (<https://www.blogpocket.com/>), like in [eCuaderno](https://www.ecuaderno.com/) (<https://www.ecuaderno.com/>) (José Luis Orihuela) and blogpocket.github.io (<https://blogpocket.github.io/>) you can see the share button working on Mastodon, using the Toopick software.

The Mastodon Social Icon

In this section, we will see how to get the Mastodon social icon using a WordPress block.

WordPress Block (Social Icons)

Finally, it can be very useful to get the Mastodon social icon and that is very easy with the native WordPress Social Icons block. Simply insert it and you can add that icon to your design.

Bots

In this chapter we will learn, as part of the WordPress integration with Mastodon, how to create a bot on a Mastodon instance.

How to create a bot in a Mastodon instance

For example, I have created a bot with Blogpocket.com updates (posts and podcast episodes) in the Wptoots.social instance.

For this, I created the account [@hechoconbloques@wptoots.social](https://wptoots.social/@hechoconbloques) (<https://wptoots.social/@hechoconbloques>), and in its configuration, I chose the option "This is a bot account", within the profile.

To send Blogpocket.com posts automatically to that Mastodon account, I simply installed the plugin [Mastodon Autopost](https://es.wordpress.org/plugins/autopost-to-mastodon/) (<https://es.wordpress.org/plugins/autopost-to-mastodon/>). To get it up and running, all you have to do is adjust your credentials and posting preferences in "Settings > Mastodon Autopost".