

# 7 Insanely Useful Tools for Bloggers

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## Critique

Want critical feedback about your site from complete strangers because your friends are tired of you asking them for their advice? [Critique.com](https://critique.com) is a site where you can ask for feedback and “pay” with your feedback on other sites.

The key to getting the most out of these critiques is to be specific when asking for feedback. “What could you improve?” or “Do you have any advice?” are too general to elicit useful responses.

Ask for specific feedback about one or two aspects of the page you’re submitting, like:

- Is the purpose of the site clear?
- Do you trust the site? Why or why not?
- Do you believe the claims of the site?
- Would you enter your email address? Why or why not?

**It’s important to also take the feedback with a grain of salt.** This is a random sampling of individuals with a bias towards people who are also running internet businesses (they’re giving feedback because they themselves want feedback). Their feedback may be useful but they also bring their own prejudices and preconceived notions, which may impact their critique.

All of the responses are moderated by a human being so you can be sure that you won’t get obvious spam critiques. There is also a rating system so you can review the credibility of a responder.

Finally, and this is critical, do not change your site simply because someone says something negative. They’re just one voice and they may not be your target reader. You should, however, read each one and use it to discover any blind spots you might have about your site.

Fresh eyes never hurt.

# Copyscape

## Copyscape

Trust but verify – as the saying goes!

A lot of bloggers use staff writers to help produce and manage content on their sites. In many cases, freelance staff writers write for multiple sites around similar subjects, so there's always the concern that a writer might borrow from someone else or themselves.

The risks of duplicate content are well understood, search engines don't like it, and as site owners, we never want to publish someone else's work and pass it off as our own. That's why a service like Copyscape is so important for bloggers – you can use it to check the work of your staff writers.

**Copyscape Premium Search** costs 5 cents a search but will scour the internet on your behalf to look for instances of the text you send it. It'll list the results and give you a comparison tool that shows you what parts of the content they found on a live page.

If you use freelance contributors, I recommend sending some of their work through Copyscape just to confirm they haven't "borrowed" that work from somewhere else, even if they copied from themselves elsewhere.

The cost is modest, 5 cents a search with a minimum purchase of \$5 (100 searches).

**Free Alternative:** You can do a similar search by using the [allintext search operator](#) in Google. Google limits this search to just 32 words but it's also free, so you can search as many 32 word blocks as you'd like.

## Xenu's Link Sleuth (TM)

### Xenu Link Sleuth

Xenu Link Sleuth is a very powerful website crawler that will help you find broken links on your site. I use the simplest option and just have it crawl my entire site, which means it'll find any broken link whether it's internal or external.

Then I filter by Status and take a peek at what it has problems finding – here's a recent run:

Address	Status	Type	Size	Title	Date	Level
http://momandmore.com/	no connection			Cher		3
http://microblogger.com/favicon.ico	not found					1
http://www.calebwojcik.com/blog/category/podcast/	not found			Cubicle Renegade podcast		3
javascript:javascript:void((function(){var e=document.createE...	not found			Technology -> Browser & OS**.		



## Google Browser Size

Google keeps saying they're going to sunset the tool but the announcement was in June 2012 (and they said it'd be retiring in a month) and the tool still exists.

You can get similar functionality in Google Analytics, under In-Page Analytics, but going to <http://browsersize.googlelabs.com/> is just so much faster.

## ButtonOptimizer.com

Need a quick way to generate a button? [Button Optimizer](#) is a really simple to use, quick, tool that can make buttons for you. You can download the button as a PNG file or CSS, making it extremely versatile.

Only downside is that you can't import your button back afterwards. Once you close the browser, all of your changes to the sliders and dials revert back to the default. Other than that inconvenience, it's the quickest way I know to make a reasonably nice button.

## MICROBLOGGER



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Cheers,  
Jim Wang