

# Roller User Guide

Roller Weblogger  
Version 2.1-incubating

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# 1 - Introduction

This user guide describes how to use Roller, a web application that can support a single user weblog, thousands of weblogs and/or group weblogs. You'll learn how to register as a new user, create weblogs, edit and post weblog entries and manage your weblog. You'll also learn how to customize your weblog's *blogroll*, a list of links to your favorite web sites, and how to change the look-and-feel or *theme* of your weblog.

A word about terminology is necessary because the word weblog is both a noun and a verb. In this guide we use the words weblog and weblog entry as follows:

- *Weblog*: a weblog or blog is an online journal written by one or more authors. In Roller a weblog consists of weblog entries, weblog categories, favorite bookmarks and settings that define the appearance and behavior of the weblog.
- *Weblog entry*: a weblog entry is an individual entry within a weblog with a title, date and text.

## 2 - Getting started with Roller

We'll start by explaining how to get started with a fresh Roller server, one that was just created and has no users at all. If you are using an existing Roller server, which has already been setup by somebody else, then you can skip to section [2.2 - Getting started with an existing Roller installation](#) where we discuss how to register for an ordinary Roller user account.

### 2.1 - Getting started with a new Roller installation

If you've just installed a new Roller server, make sure that you create the first user yourself. Roller grants global admin permission to the very first user that is created. Later, you can use that admin user to grant global admin permission to other users. Here's how to create your first user:

**How to create the first user and weblog on a fresh Roller site:**

1. Start Roller and navigate to the main page (e.g. <http://localhost:8080/roller>).
2. Click the **Register** link in the top right corner of the page.
3. Fill out the information for your new user, perhaps using the username 'admin' since the first user is the admin user. Once you've filled out the form, click the **Register User** button.
4. On the Welcome to Roller page, choose the **Click here** link to login as your new user. You'll be taken to the Roller Main Menu page.
5. On the Main Menu page, click the **create a weblog** link to create a new weblog.
6. Fill out the Create Weblog page and when you're done click the **Create Weblog** button.

### 2.2 - Getting started with an existing Roller installation

To get started on an existing Roller installation, first you need to create a user account. Once you've done that, you can create one or more weblogs for your user.

**How to create a user account**

Some Roller sites require you to use a separate system to create a Roller account. For example, at Sun we require [blogs.sun.com](http://blogs.sun.com) bloggers to register using an internal system called BAM.

With a stock Roller installation, here's how you register a new user:

1. Use your web browser to go to the main page of the Roller installation
2. Click the **Register** link in the top right corner of the page
3. Fill out the information for your new user. Once you've filled out the form, click the **Register User** button.
4. On the Welcome to Roller page, choose the **Click here** link to login as your new user. You'll be taken to the Roller Main Menu page.

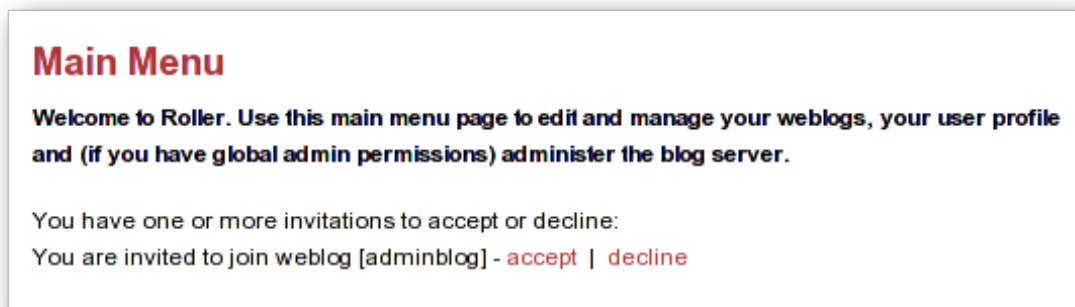
### How to create a weblog for your user

Here's how you create a new Roller weblog for your user:

1. Login to Roller by clicking the **Login** or the **Main Menu** link
2. On the Main Menu page, click the **create a weblog** link to create a new weblog.
3. Fill out the Create Weblog page and when you're done click the **Create Weblog** button.

## 2.3 - Accepting an invitation to join a weblog

Roller supports group blogging. That means that more than one user can edit and manage a single weblog. If somebody invites you to join their weblog, an invitation message will appear at the top of the Main Menu page. Depending on how Roller is configured, you may also get an email message that informs you of the invitation. To accept an invitation, login to Roller go to the Main Menu page and you'll see something like this.



*Illustration 1: Main Menu with invitation to join a group blog*

That's an invitation to join the weblog with the handle 'adminblog'. To accept click the accept button. Once you do, you'll be a member of the weblog and the weblog will appear on your Main Menu page as one of your weblogs.

## 2.4 - Getting around in Roller

When you log into Roller, Roller sends you to the Roller *editor interface* -- a set of web pages for editing and managing your weblog and (if you have global admin privileges) the Roller installation itself.

### Find your way around the editor interface

No matter where you go in the Roller *editor interface*, you'll always see a *status bar* across the top of the page with convenient links to the Roller front page and main menu.

*Illustration 2: Status bar, no weblog*

That's what the status bar looks like when you are logged in (assuming your username is 'admin'), but you haven't chosen a specific weblog in which to work. What's going on here?

- The text on the left indicates that you are logged in as user admin.
- On the right, the words **Front Page** link to the front page of the Roller site. Your site's administrator may have changed the words Front Page to something else, but the link should still take you to the site's front page.
- Also on the right, the words **Main Menu** link to the main menu of Roller, where you can manage your weblog(s), create new weblogs and accept invitations to join other user's weblogs.

If you are logged into Roller and you are editing one specific weblog, the status bar will include a link to that weblog. For example, the bar below indicates that user 'admin' is logged-in and editing weblog called 'adminblog.'

*Illustration 3: Status bar within weblog*

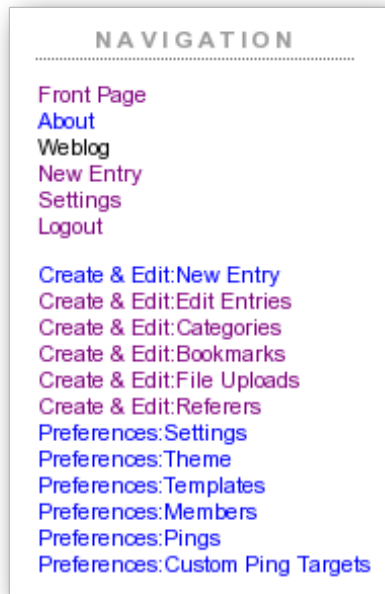
## Going from your weblog back to the editor interface

When you're on your weblog page and you need a way to get back to the Roller editor interface, look for the *weblog navbar*. All of Roller's built-in themes include the navbar. It looks slightly different in each theme, but it always includes the same set of links.



*Illustration 4: Weblog navigation bar*

That's what weblog navbar looks like this when you are *not* logged in (note that the exact appearance varies in each theme). The words **Front Page** link to the front page of the Roller installation and as with the front page link in the banner-status bar, the words may be different on your site. Next are links to the public pages of the weblog, and this particular weblog includes pages called **Weblog** and **About**. Finally, there is a link to **Login**.



*Illustration 5: Weblog editor navbar*

That's what weblog navbar looks like this when you are *are* logged in. After the familiar Front Page link and the page links there's a link to the weblog's New Entry page, the weblog's Settings page and a **Logout** link.

After the logout link is the *editor navbar*, which includes shortcuts to all of the editor pages for this particular weblog. It is also included on all of the built-in Roller themes, but is a separate component from the plain old weblog navbar.

Now that we've covered the basics of registering a new user, creating a new weblog and finding your way around let's start blogging.

## 3 - Creating and editing your weblog

First, you login to Roller. What happens next depends on the number of weblogs that you have. If you have one weblog, you'll be taken directly to the **New Entry** page for that weblog. If you have more than one weblog or none at all, then you'll be taken to the **Main Menu** page, shown below, so you can pick which weblog to edit and/or create new weblogs.

logged in as **admin** [Front Page](#) | [Main Menu](#) | [Logout](#)

### Main Menu

Select a weblog to edit, manage, or configure.

---

**Admin's blog**

<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://localhost:8080/roller20/page/adminblog">http://localhost:8080/roller20/page/adminblog</a>
<b>Permission</b>	ADMIN
<b>Description</b>	Admin's daily rants

[New Entry](#)  
 [Edit Entries](#)  
 [Settings](#)

**Actions**

---

**Create new weblog**

Feel like you've got more to say? Maybe another weblog is what you need.

**Edit user profile**

Change password, contact info, select language.

**Server administration**

Make site-wide administration changes.

**Planet administration**

Manage the planet aggregator. Add feeds, organize groups, set configs.

Powered by [Roller Weblogger 2.0-alpha-incubating](#) | [Report an Issue](#) | [User Guide](#) | [Macros](#) | [Mailing List](#)

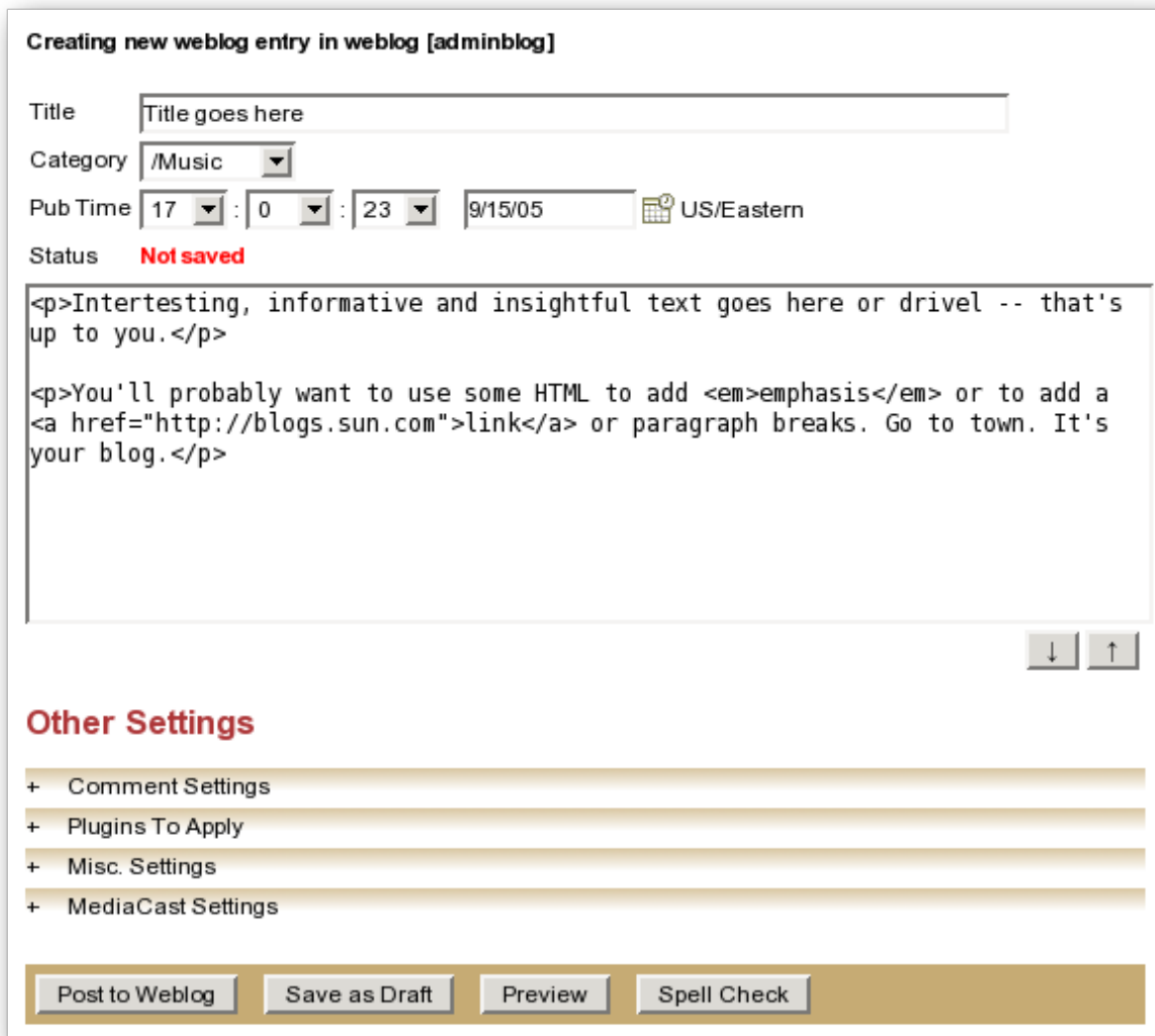
*Illustration 6: Main menu*

The main menu page lists all of your weblogs and for each, shows you links to its New Entry, Edit Entries and Settings pages. You can also create a new weblog, edit your user profile and perform administrative duties (if you have global admin permissions).



## 3.1 - Creating and editing a weblog entries

To create a new weblog entry, go to your weblog's **New Entry** page, enter a title in the Title field, enter the your post in the Content text area, choose a category from the Category combo, and hit the **Post to Weblog** button. As soon as you do that, your weblog entry is posted to your weblog for the world to see. Here is the relevant part of the New Entry page.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Creating new weblog entry in weblog [adminblog]". It contains several input fields: a "Title" text box with placeholder text "Title goes here", a "Category" dropdown menu showing "/Music", and a "Pub Time" section with three dropdowns for hours (17), minutes (0), and seconds (23), followed by a date field (9/15/05) and a time zone selector (US/Eastern). Below these is a "Status" label that says "Not saved" in red. The main content area is a large text box containing raw HTML code for two paragraphs. To the right of the text box are two small buttons with down and up arrows. Below the text box is a section titled "Other Settings" with four expandable items: "Comment Settings", "Plugins To Apply", "Misc. Settings", and "MediaCast Settings". At the bottom of the form is a row of four buttons: "Post to Weblog", "Save as Draft", "Preview", and "Spell Check".

Creating new weblog entry in weblog [adminblog]

Title

Category

Pub Time  :  :

Status **Not saved**

`<p>Intertesting, informative and insightful text goes here or drivel -- that's up to you.</p>`

`<p>You'll probably want to use some HTML to add <em>emphasis</em> or to add a <a href="http://blogs.sun.com">link</a> or paragraph breaks. Go to town. It's your blog.</p>`

Other Settings

- + Comment Settings
- + Plugins To Apply
- + Misc. Settings
- + MediaCast Settings

*Illustration 7: Weblog editor*

The above screenshow shows the default plain text weblog post editor. With this editor, you are entering raw HTML and if you don't know HTML you will not be able to do bold, italics, paragraph breaks, etc. Roller also support several other [WYSIWYG editors](#) and you can pick the one you want using your weblogs's **Preferences:Settings** page.

Let's cover the fields on the page:

- **Title:** this is the optional title of your entry you don't have to include one, but we recommend that

you do. If you don't some readers might see the first couple of words of your entry used as your title.

- **Category:** You must pick a category for your entry. You can change the list of categories available in your weblog by using the **Create & Edit:Categories** page.
- **Pub Time:** Roller will set the Pub Time of your entry to the time when you first click the **Post to Weblog** button. If you'd like your post to be published at a specific time in the future, you can set the Pub Time yourself. Your new entry won't appear on your weblog or in your newsfeed until the time you specify. You can also use Pub Time to publish entries in the past.
- **Status:** This field displays the status of your weblog entry. The possible values are Not saved, Draft and Published.
- **Your post:** the big text box is the body of your blog entry. Normally, you enter the HTML for your post here. You don't have to enter a complete HTML document, just the text your post.

Below the weblog entry fields are the Other Settings

- **Comment Settings:** Click on the little plus-sign plus (+) to expand the Comment Settings control, where you can enable/disable comments on your blog entry.
- **Plugins to Apply:** This control allows you to pick which plugins are to be applied to this entry. For example, if you want ;-) smilies in your text to be replaced with smiley-face images, choose the emoticons plugin. You can set which plugins are to be applied by default on your weblog's **Preferences:Settings** page. Note that your Roller site administrator controls the list of available plugins. Here's the current list of plugins included in Roller:
  - Plugin1
  - Plugin2
  - etc.
- **Misc settings:** Here you can control misc. settings like text right-to-left and, if you're an administrator, you can "pin" an entry to the top of the front-page of the site.
- **MediaCast settings:** This control allows you to specify the URL of a file to be included in your blog entry as an RSS enclosure, also known as a *podcast*. See the next section for more information on podcasting with Roller.

Below that is a row of buttons.

- **Post To Weblog:** Don't click this button until ABSOLUTELY SURE you're ready to publish your weblog entry for the entire world to see.
- **Submit for Review:** If you only have limited blogger rights in the weblog, you won't see the Post to Weblog button because limited bloggers are not allowed to publish directly. Instead, you'll see a Submit for Review button. Click this button when you are ready for the authors of the blog you are working in to review your work and either publish or save it as a draft and ask you to revise it.
- **Save as Draft:** Click this button to save your post as a draft entry for editing later.
- **Preview:** Click this button to see what your post will look like when displayed in a browser. Not that preview is not exactly like what you'll see because your weblog may have different font and style settings than the edit weblog page, but it will be pretty close.
- **Spell Check:** Click this button to spell check your post.

## 3.2 - Finding and editing weblog entries

All of your blog entries are saved in a database. Once your blog entries scroll off the front page or off the recent entries list of the **Create & Edit:New Entry** page, they are still available to your readers on your weblog pages. They're available to you too.

### Finding old entries with the Create & Edit:New Entry page

If you go to the **Create & Edit:New Entry** page, you'll see on the right a list of recent Pending Entries, Draft Entries, and Recent Entries. You can edit any of these by simply clicking on title.

- *Pending Entries* are entries created by limited bloggers who are not allowed to publish directly to the web. If you have author or admin permission in the blog you can edit and publish these entries.
- *Draft Entries* are entries that are not yet visible on the web because you, or somebody else in your weblog is not yet done editing them. You can edit any draft entries in your weblog.
- *Recent Entries* are entries that have been published to the web. If you have author or admin permission in the blog you can edit and re-publish these entries.

### Finding old entries with the Create & Edit:Edit Entries page

You can use the **Create & Edit:Edit Entries** to find and edit your old posts. That includes posts that have scrolled-off the bottom of the Pending, Draft and Recent Entries lists we discussed above. When you first arrive on the page it will show you most recent entries, as shown in the screenshot below. If you want to find an old post you can use the start and end date calendars to look for posts in a specific time period. You can edit any of the entries in the Weblog Entries list by simply clicking on its title.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Entries' page of a weblog. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'logged in as roller - editing weblog roller' and 'rollerweblogger.org | Main Menu | Logout'. Below this is a header 'Edit Entries' with tabs for 'Create & Edit' and 'Preferences'. A secondary navigation bar lists 'New Entry | Entries | Comments | Categories | Bookmarks | File Uploads | Referrers'. The main content area is titled 'Find and edit entries in weblog roller' and includes a brief instruction: 'You can select an entry from the list below to edit or use the Filter entries control to look for entries in a specific category, date range or status.' Below this is a table of 'Weblog Entries'. The first entry is 'The Aquarium: Roller-powered group blog on Glassfish' with a link, published date 'Dec 8, 2005 3:23:16 PM', and category '/Java'. It includes a small image of a fish and the text 'Project GlassFish'. The second entry is 'Catching up with the APP' with a link, published date 'Dec 8, 2005 1:18:14 PM', and category '/Blogging'. To the right of the table is a 'Filter entries' sidebar with options to filter by category (set to 'Any'), start and end dates (with calendar icons), max entries (set to 25), and status (radio buttons for 'All Entries', 'Draft Only', 'Published Only', and 'Pending Only'). A 'Filter' button is at the bottom of the sidebar.

Illustration 8: Edit entries page

## Finding old entries using the pages of your weblog

You can also use the pages of your weblog to navigate into the past and find old blog entries. If you do this when you are logged in, then you'll see an **Edit** link on each weblog entry, which will load that entry into the weblog editor (i.e. the New Entry page).

There are several ways to do this:

- **Using the calendar:** most weblog themes include a calendar, which you can use to navigate back and forwards in time.
- **Using the next/prev links:** most weblog themes include next/previous links, which allow you to navigate back and forwards in time.
- **Using URLs:** you can also use URL's to navigate back in time. Roller URLs take the form /page/username and /page/username/date where date is formatted YYYYMMDD. So, you can navigate into the past by using URLs.

## Finding old entries with Roller's built-in search engine

Roller also has a built in search engine, which you can use to search for entries in the entire site, or in just your blog. If you're logged in, when you find one of your old entries, it will have an **Edit** link.

## 3.3 - Weblog categories

Roller's weblog categories feature allows you to organize your weblog posts by category. For example, you might setup a category called "Family" for your family related posts, a category called "Music" for your music posts, and a category called "Misc" for everything else.

When you write a new weblog post you must decide which category to place it in. On the Weblog:Edit page, there is a combo-box that allows you to pick a category for your post or to change the category when you edit an old post. Currently, Roller only allows you to assign each weblog post to one category.

### **The Weblog Category Chooser**

When a user views your site, they can choose which category to view. All of the stock Roller weblog templates include the Weblog Category Chooser (displayed by the `#showWeblogCategoryChooser()` macro) close to the top of the page so that your readers can pick which category to display or "All" for all categories of posts.

### **RSS Feed for Each Category**

Your weblog's main RSS newfeed includes all categories, but users can choose to subscribe to specific categories. All of the stock Roller weblog templates display a list of your RSS feeds (displayed by the `#showRSSLinks()` macro), one for all categories and one for each separate category.

### **Adding, Renaming, and Removing Weblog Categories**

You can change the names of your categories, add new categories, and delete categories using the Weblog:Categories page of the Roller Editor UI.

## 3.4 - Podcasting with Roller

Roller now includes support for *podcasting*, a way to distribute files through your weblog's newsfeed. Typically, folks use Podcasting to distribute audio files, but the technique can be used to distribute any type of file. Specialized Podcast client software (such as [iPodderX](#)) downloads the audio files that are referenced in your newsfeed and copies them to an music player, such as an MP3 player.

### How to create a podcast feed with Roller

In Roller a Podcast is like an attachment to a weblog entry. We call it *mediacasting* in the Roller UI because it can be any type of file and is not necessarily destined for play on an Apple iPod. Here are the steps involved in Podcasting with Roller:

- Record an interesting Podcast (that's the hard part, by the way)
- Save your Podcast in MP3 format (or whatever you prefer).
- Upload your Podcast to a web server somewhere and take note of your Podcast's URL. If you have the space for it and your Roller admin allows MP3 files, you can use file-upload capability to upload it to your Roller website. Chose the **Create & Edit: File Uploads** menu item to get to Roller's file-upload page. For example, if Nina of example.com were to upload a file to Roller, then the URL would look something like this:

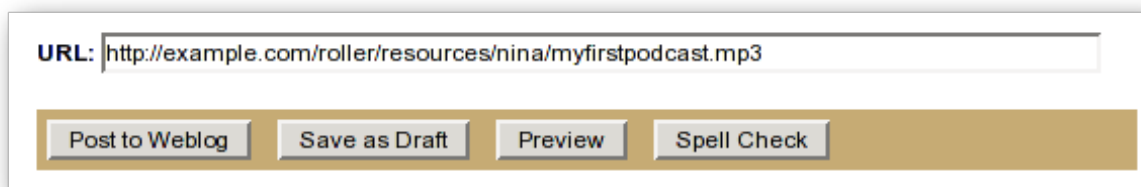
`http://example.com/roller/resources/nina/mycast.mp3`

- Create a new Roller Weblog entry via **Create & Edit:New Entry** describing your new Podcast. You might want to provide a link to it so that those without a Podcast client can click to download it directly. Using Nina as an example again, she would add the following HTML to her blog entry to provide a link to her Podcast:

Hey now! I just created my first Podcast you can download it  
by clicking on this file name:

```
<a href="http://example.com/roller/resources/nina/mycast.mp3">mycast.mp3</a>
```

- And the most important step: in the lower-half of the Edit Weblog page, you'll see an expandable control labelled *+MediaCast Settings*. Click on that to expand the MediaCast control and paste into the URL field the URL of your Podcast.
- Once your blog post is ready, save it as a draft or publish it. Once you've done that you'll see that the MediaCast Settings control has the content-type and file-size of your Podcast. If not, then Roller could not access your Podcast due to network problems or perhaps a bad URL. Make sure the URL is correct and save again. If your Podcast is OK, you'll see something like this:



The screenshot shows a web form for configuring a podcast. At the top, there is a label 'URL:' followed by a text input field containing the URL 'http://example.com/roller/resources/nina/myfirstpodcast.mp3'. Below the input field is a horizontal row of four buttons: 'Post to Weblog', 'Save as Draft', 'Preview', and 'Spell Check'.

*Illustration 9: Podcast URL field*

- Roller will add the Podcast to your RSS newsfeed as an <enclosure>. You can check this by looking at your RSS newsfeed. Go to your weblog and click the orange XML icon, or just enter your newsfeed URL into your browser. After you download your newsfeed file, open it with your favorite text editor and in the most recent entry you'll see an RSS enclosure. For example, Nina would see the following enclosure in her newsfeed:

```
<enclosure url="http://example.com/roller/resources/nina/mycast.mp3"
  type="audio/x-mpeg" length="3409127" />
```

That's all there is to podcasting with Roller.

## 3.5 - Referrer rankings

The **Weblog:Referrer** referer rankings page shows the hits that are coming in from other websites and weblogs that have links to your weblog and to specific entries in your weblog. By looking at your referrer logs, you can get an idea of who is reading and commenting on your weblog.



## 4 - Working with comments and trackbacks

Roller supports weblog comments and *trackbacks*, which provide a way for other bloggers to add comments to your blog remotely. By default comments and trackbacks are enabled, but you can turn them off on your weblog's **Preferences:Settings** page of your weblog. Note that turning off comments, disables both comments and trackbacks.

### 4.1 - Comment notification via email

If you're going to leave comments turn on then take the time to read them, to respond where appropriate and, when you receive spam or other forms of offensive comments, delete them from your weblog. You can't respond to comments if you don't know when you get one, so make sure you enable email notification of comments. You can do that on the **Preferences:Settings** page.

If you've got email turned on then you'll receive an email every time you get a new comment and the email will include the text of the comment, a link to the entry that was commented upon and a link to the comment management page, shown below, where you may choose to approve, mark as spam or even delete the new comment.

### 4.2 - Comment management and moderation

If you'd like to preview and approve comments before they are displayed on your weblog, then you'll want to turn on *comment moderation* via **Preferences:Settings**. When comment moderation is enabled, then each new comment will be marked as pending and unapproved and will not appear on your weblog. To check for new comments, go to the **Create & Edit:Comments** to check for and either approve or delete new comments. If you've got comment notification enabled, make sure you also enable comment notification so you'll know when new comments arrive. To moderate comments, use the comment management page, described below.

#### The comment management page

The comment management page, shown in illustration 10, allows you to manage comments for your weblog. If you arrive on the page from the link in a comment notification email, then you'll see only the comments for the one entry that was commented upon. If you arrive via the menu, you'll see all recent comments in reverse chronological order.

Comments that are suspected to be spam are shown with a light red background, with the spam check-box checked. Comments that are new and pending your review are shown with a light yellow background.

#### *How to moderate comments*

- Review each new comment and decide if it is to be approved for display, marked as spam and hidden or deleted entirely.
- Only comments that are marked as approved and are not spam will be displayed on your weblog. So set (or unset) the corresponding checkboxes for each comment, or leave them the way they are.
- When you are done. Click the save changes button at the bottom of the page. You'll see that comments that were pending are no longer pending and those that you marked for delete will be gone.

#### *How to search weblog comments*

You can also use the comment management page to search for comments across all entries in your weblog by keyword, status and date. Use the Filter comments area of the page to set the fields you want to search and click the Query button. If there are more comments than can be displayed on one page, then a next page link will be displayed at the top of the list of comments so that you can navigate into the past.

logged in as roller - editing weblog roller rollerweblogger.org | Main Menu | Logout

## Comment Management

Create & Edit Preferences

New Entry | Entries | **Comments** | Categories | Bookmarks | File Uploads | Referrers

### Manage comments in weblog roller

You have comments. You can change approval, spam status and delete comments via the checkboxes below. If you make any changes, be sure to save them by clicking the *Save changes* at the bottom of the page.

Displaying 30 comments 12/9/05 12:42 PM — 11/10/05 5:54 PM

« Previous page | Next page »

Approved	Spam	Delete	Comment
Select All None	Select All None	Select All None	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regarding Don't worry about Ruby Posted by Victor (bobbie@ua.fm) from IP address 212.109.44.52 http://livejournal.com/~vityok Posted at 2005-12-09 12:42:41.0  Dynamic languages? And why only Python and Ruby? And how about PHP and Perl? It seems to me that their "market" share is not so small...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regarding Don't worry about Ruby Posted by afsina (afsina@gmail.com) from IP address 65.23.249.96 Posted at 2005-12-08 16:56:48.0  i am not bashing Ruby but, there is a catch. Before all this ruby-RoR hype, probably the sold ruby books were only a handful a year. So, any kind of immediate gain will reflect

Filter comments

Filter comments by search string, status, and/or date

Search string

Pending status ☒ All ☐ Pending only ☐ Approved only ☐ Disapproved only

Spam status ☒ All ☐ No spam ☐ Only spam

Start date:

End date:

Illustration 10 Comment (and trackback) management page

## Global comment management

If your user has global administration privileges, then you can manage comments across the entire Roller site, including every weblog. To do this, go to the **Server Administration:Comments** page and you'll see a page that is almost identical to the weblog-specific comment management page.

### Limitations of global comment management

You can use this page to mark as spam or delete any comment in the system, however you cannot change the approval status of comments through this interface. Approving comments for display is the duty and responsibility of the individual webloggers, so comment approval is only available in the context of a weblog.

### A word about receiving trackbacks

Incoming trackbacks are treated differently, depending on how your Roller site is setup. Your site administrator may choose to disable incoming trackbacks entirely. In that case, anybody who tries to send a comment to your weblog via trackback will receive an error message and no comment will be added.

Your site administrator may choose to enable a spam prevention measure known as *trackback verification*. If that's the case, then each incoming trackback will be verified. If the weblog that sent you the trackback does not link to your weblog entry, then that trackback will be marked as un-approved and pending. You'll have to visit the comment management page to approve that trackback before it is displayed as a comment on your weblog.

## 4.3 - Preventing weblog spam

There are three forms of comment spam that can affect your weblog:

- *Comment spam*: spam that arrives via the comment form on your weblog. Sometimes spam comments are added by a human and sometimes by a computer program known as a *spambot*.
- *Trackback spam*: spam that arrives via trackbacks sent by a spambot.
- *Referrer spam*: spam that arrives in web requests and appears on the **Create & Edit:Referrers** page of your Roller blog or on your blog (but only if your blog theme uses the `#showReferrers()` macro).

Fortunately, there are counter-measures for each type of spam. For comment and trackback spam, you can use email notification of comments, comment moderation and trackback verification (described in the previous section) to manage spam. That's not all. Roller also includes a blacklisting feature, which can be used to fight all three forms of spam.

### Three levels of blacklisting

Roller uses a *blacklist*, a lists of words which are used to check incoming comments, trackbacks and referrers for spam. The blacklist includes several thousand words and regular expressions which are used to check incoming comments and trackbacks. If the name, URL or content of a comment or trackback includes one of the blacklist words or matches one of the expressions then that comment or trackback is marked as spam and is not displayed on your weblog, unless you use the comment management page to unmark it.

Actually, there are three levels of blacklist:

- Level 1 blacklist: This is the built-in blacklist, the one that comes with Roller. This can only be changed by somebody with root access to the Roller server itself.
- Level 2 blacklist: This is the site wide blacklist, which can only be edited by a global administrator via the **Server Admin:Configuration** page.
- Level 3 blacklist: Weblog specific blacklist, which you control in the **Preferences:Settings** page of your weblog.

Incoming comments and trackbacks are checked against all three levels of blacklist. Incoming referrers, however, are only checked against the levels 2 and 3 blacklist.

### How to add words and expressions to the blacklist

If you have a spam problem on your weblog and you'd like to add words to the blacklist, it's probably better for you to ask your administrator to add the words to the level 2 blacklist for you. That way, every blogger on the site will benefit from the addition. If you must do it yourself, here's how you do it:

- Go to the **Preferences:Settings** page and scroll down to the blacklist fields
- Enter your spam words, one per line
- Lines that begin with a left parenthesis will be treated as regular expressions (see the Java API documentation for `java.util.regex.Pattern` for a guide to regular expressions). Don't try to use a regular expression unless you really know what you're doing.

## 4.4 - Sending trackbacks

If you are writing about something you read on another weblog, you want to let the author and readers of that weblog know that you are doing so, and that other weblog is trackback enabled, then you should send that weblog a trackback ping.

Here's a story that illustrates how trackback works:

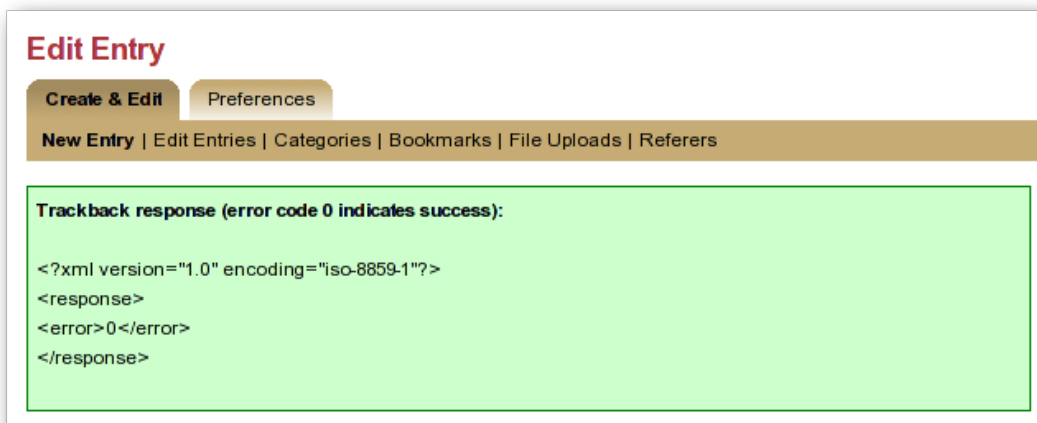
- You read an interesting blog entry on Otto's blog. You notice that Otto's blog entry has a trackback URL, so instead of leaving a comment on Otto's blog you decide to comment by writing a blog entry in your own blog. You copy that trackback URL (using ALT-C, or right-click-copy, or whatever) cause you'll need it later.
- You go to your blog and write a new blog entry in response to Otto's entry. Click the Post to Weblog button to publish your new entry. After you publish, scroll down on the New Entry page until you see the following text field and button:



The screenshot shows a form titled "Trackback" in red. Below the title is a label "Trackback URL" and a text input field containing the URL "http://localhost:8080/roller20/trackback/adminblog/Weblog/title\_goes\_here". To the right of the input field is a button labeled "Send Trackback".

*Illustration 11: Send trackback control*

- Enter the trackback URL from Otto's blog entry into the text field and click the Send Trackback button. Roller will respond by printing the response received from Otto's blog server. If the trackback was successful, you should see something like this:



The screenshot shows the "Edit Entry" page. At the top, there are tabs for "Create & Edit" and "Preferences". Below the tabs is a navigation bar with links: "New Entry", "Edit Entries", "Categories", "Bookmarks", "File Uploads", and "Referers". The main content area has a green background and contains the text "Trackback response (error code 0 indicates success):" followed by an XML response:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="iso-8859-1"?>
<response>
<error>0</error>
</response>
```

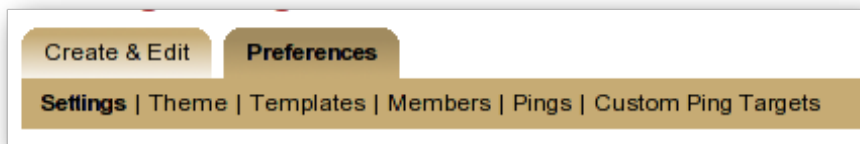
*Illustration 12: Result of sending trackback*

- You should now see your trackback listed among the comments on Otto's blog entry.

## 5 - Managing your weblog settings

As a Roller user, you are free to customize the look-and-feel of your weblog as you wish. When you establish your Roller user account, you can choose one of the dozen or so stock themes for your website. Later, you can use the theme switcher to switch to a different theme. Or, if you know something about HTML and CSS you can customize the look-and-feel and layout of your website yourself by modifying the page templates that make up your site and by adding new pages. Best of all, you can do all of this through the web-based Roller Editor UI.

To manage your weblog, use the Preferences menu. You can get there from the Main Menu page, by clicking the **Settings** link for your blog. Or, if you're already editing your weblog, you can just click on the **Preferences** menu in the tabs. Once you're there, the tabbed menu should look like this:



*Illustration 13: Weblog preferences menu*

In the rest of this section we'll cover each of the items on the Preferences menu.

## 5.1 - Weblog settings

The **Preferences:Settings** page allows you to set the configuration parameters for your weblog. You can see all of the settings on the screen-shot below:

logged in as **roller** - editing weblog **roller** rollerweblogger.org | Main Menu | Logout

### Weblog Settings

Create & Edit **Preferences**

**Settings** | Theme | Templates | Members | Pings | Custom Ping Targets | Maintenance

Manage settings for weblog **roller**

Title	<input type="text" value="Blogging Roller"/>
Description	<input type="text" value="Dave Johnson on blogging, open source and Java"/>
Email address of weblog owner	<input type="text" value="dave.johnson@rollerweblogger.org"/>
Locale	<input type="text" value="English"/>
Timezone	<input type="text" value="EST - America/New_York"/>
Weblog editor page to be used	<input type="text" value="editor-text.jsp"/>

### Comments

Allow Comments for your weblog?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moderate comments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email Comments?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Default <i>from</i> e-mail address for notifications	<input type="text" value="dave.johnson@rollerweblogger.org"/>
By default, allow comments for new entries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Default time to allow comments for new entries	<input type="text" value="unlimited days"/>

### Weblog Client API

Enable Blogger and MetaWeblog APIs for your weblog?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Category for posts received via Blogger API	<input type="text" value="/Links"/>

### Formatting

Default Entry Formatters (applied in the listed order)	<input type="checkbox"/> JSPWiki Syntax ?
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topic Tags ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Textile Formatter ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Acronyms ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bookmark Linker ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Email Scrambler ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Emoticons ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Read More Summary ?

Illustration 14: Weblog settings page part 1

Here is an explanation of each of the settings on the weblog **Preferences:Settings** page:

### General settings

- **Title** - The title of your weblog may include HTML, but the HTML will be stripped out in your RSS feed. You can access your title in a page template with the expression `#showWebsiteTitle()`
- **Description** - The description of your weblog may include HTML, but the HTML will be stripped out in your RSS feed. You can access your description in a page template with the expression `#showWebsiteDescription()`.
- **Email address of owner**: Enter the email address that you would like people to use to contact the person in charge of your blog; usually that's you.
- **Default from address**: Enter the email address that should be used as the *from address* for emails sent by Roller.
- **Page to be used as the homepage** - Choose a page template to be used as the main page of your weblog.
- **Weblog editor page to be used** - Choose a weblog editor page, some are rich-text editors:
  - editor-text.jsp: simple text editor
  - editor-dhtml.jsp: rich text editor (works only in MSIE)
  - editor-ekit.jsp: rich text editor (a Java applet)
  - editor-rte.jsp: rich text editor (works in most browsers)
  - editor-text-js.jsp: enhanced simple text editor

### Comments

- **Allow comments for your weblog** - Set this to true to allow visitors to leave comments on your weblog.

### Weblog client API

- **Enable Blogger API for your weblog** - Set to true to enable weblogging via the Blogger API. This will allow you to use handy blogging clients like w.bloggar to post to your weblog.
- **Category for posts recieved via Blogger API** - Choose the category for incoming posts made via the Blogger API. This only applies if you blogging client does not support categories.

### Formatting

- **Default entry formatters**: this is the list of plug-ins to be enabled by default on a new weblog entry.

## Spam Prevention

List of words and regex expressions listed one per line to be added to the blacklist used to check comments, trackbacks and referrers.

Update Weblog Settings

## Remove Weblog?

You are the last contributor to this weblog, would you like to remove it?

**WARNING: removing a weblog will remove everything: all of the weblog entries, bookmarks, comments and settings. Weblog removal is NOT REVERSIBLE.**

Remove Weblog

*Illustration 15: Weblog settings page part 2*

### Spam pevention

- **Ignore incoming referer URLs that contain any of these (comma-separated) words** - you can use this to filter out what referrers are accepted. Somewhat useful if you start getting hit by referrer spam, but not a complete solution to the referrer spam problem. See section for more information on spam prevention.



## 5.2 - Weblog themes

A weblog theme is a set of templates, style-sheets and image that determine how your weblog will be displayed. A theme can define both the layout and color-scheme of your weblog. When you start a Roller weblog, you choose from one of the built-in themes. You can change your weblog's theme at any time by going to the **Preferences:Theme** page, show below.

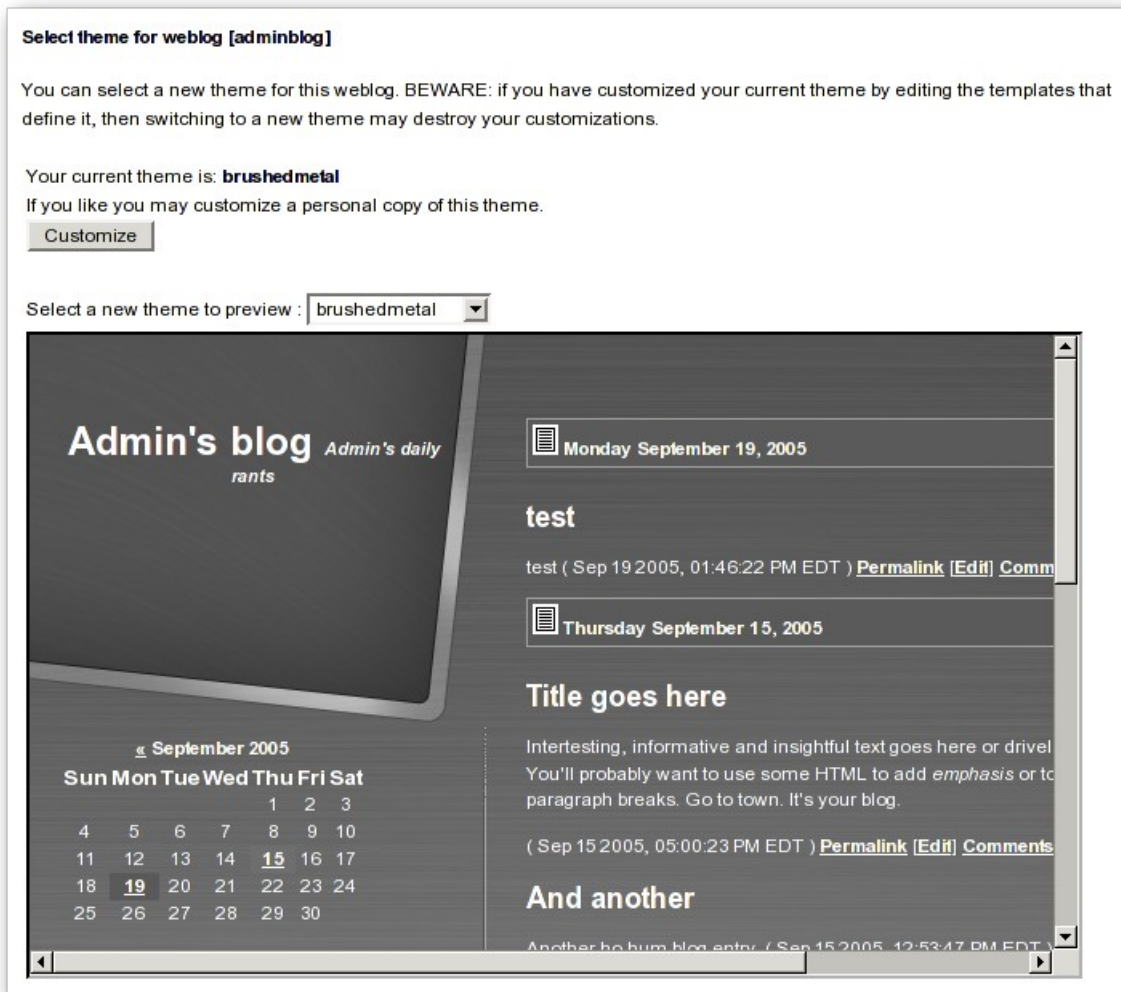


Illustration 16: Theme selection page

You can also choose to customize your theme. If you click the *Customize* button the templates that define your current theme will be copied into your blog where you can edit theme. See section [5 - Customizing your weblog's them](#) for more information on theme customization.

**WARNING:** if you *have* customized your theme, then watch out. Switching themes using the **Preferences:Theme** page will destroy the custom changes you've made.

## 5.3 - Uploading Files

Roller includes a file-upload feature that allows you to upload images and other files for use in your weblog.

Here are the steps to upload an image to Roller and to use it in a blog entry:

- **Upload the file:** Use the **Ceate & Edit:File Uploads** page to upload your image file. Once it is loaded, locate it in the list of file uploads, right-click on it and copy the link.
- **Create a weblog entry:** Use the **Create & Edit:New Entry** page to add or edit a weblog entry.
- **Include the image:** Place an HTML `<img>` tag where you want the image in your blog entry.

If you don't know HTML, you might need help with that last step. Here is what an `<img>` tag looks like.

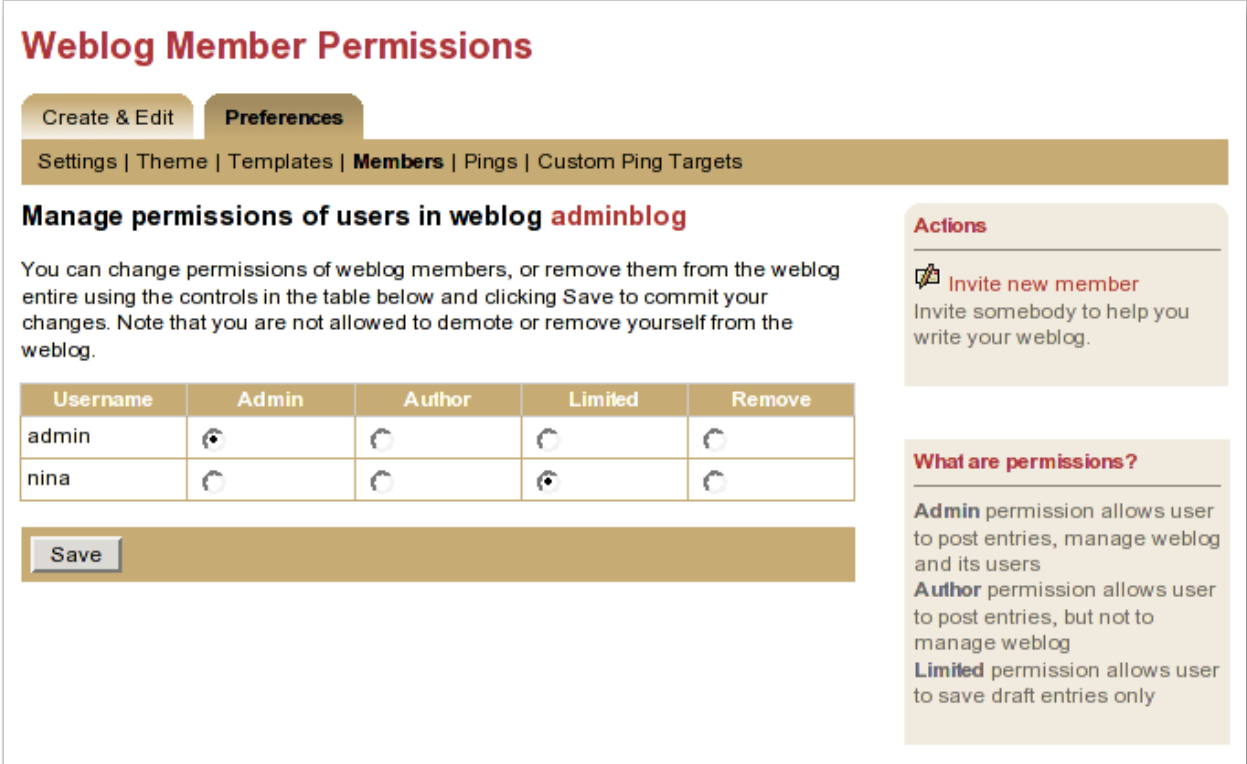
```

```

You need to include the `src` attribute and it's also good form to include an `alt` attribute that describes the image (for those who cannot see the image).

## 5.4 - Setting up a group blog

To create a group blog, create a new weblog or log into an existing weblog that you'd like members to contribute to. Creating a weblog for group blogging is the same as creating a personal weblog (see section [3] for instructions). Navigate to the **Members** menu item in the **Preferences** tab. The **Preferences:Members** page enables weblog admins to invite members to a group blog and manage the group blog user access.



The screenshot shows the 'Weblog Member Permissions' page. At the top, there's a title 'Weblog Member Permissions' in red. Below it are two tabs: 'Create & Edit' and 'Preferences', with 'Preferences' being the active tab. A navigation bar below the tabs contains links: 'Settings | Theme | Templates | **Members** | Pings | Custom Ping Targets'. The main heading is 'Manage permissions of users in weblog adminblog'. Below this is a paragraph explaining that users can change permissions or remove members using the table below, and that they cannot demote or remove themselves. The table has five columns: 'Username', 'Admin', 'Author', 'Limited', and 'Remove'. It lists two users: 'admin' and 'nina'. The 'admin' user has the 'Admin' permission selected (indicated by a filled radio button), while 'nina' has the 'Limited' permission selected. Below the table is a 'Save' button. On the right side, there's an 'Actions' section with a link 'Invite new member' and a description 'Invite somebody to help you write your weblog.' Below that is a 'What are permissions?' section with definitions for 'Admin', 'Author', and 'Limited' permissions.

Username	Admin	Author	Limited	Remove
admin	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
nina	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Illustration 17: Weblog permissions page

You can use the **Invite new member** link to invite any Roller user to join your weblog, but before you do you should understand the three different permission levels allowed for members of a weblog. They are:

- **Admin:** an admin can create/edit weblog entries and publish them to the web. They can also manage the weblog by changing the theme, editing the page templates that define the look of the blog, and managing the users of the blog. Roller will grant you admin rights in any weblog you create. Admin users can see both the Create & Edit tab and the Preferences tab of Roller.
- **Author:** author permission allows users to create entries, edit entries and upload files. But authors cannot weblog settings, change the theme or manage users. Authors can see the weblog Create & Edit tab, but not the weblog Preferences tab.
- **Limited:** limited bloggers can create and edit blog entries and save them as drafts, but cannot publish them to the web.

Select **Invite new member** from the right navigation to invite Admins, Authors, and Limited authors to join the group blog. You'll need to know the user's individual blog username to find them in the list of users. You may scroll through the list, but it's best to begin typing their username to locate them. Set the

users Permissions by selecting Admin, Author, or Limited. Click on **Send Invitation**. If roller is not configured to talk to the mail server, you may get the following messages:

```
User successfully invited.  
ERROR: Notification email(s) not sent, due to Roller configuration  
or mail server problem.
```

As long as the first message is present, the invite is successful. The next time the user logs into the blog site, they will see the following: on the Main Menu page:

```
You are invited to join weblog [weblog name will appear here] - accept | decline
```

Once a user is a member of your blog, you can change their permissions. Just click the appropriate radio button in the table and click the **Save** button. You can also remove users from the site, but note that you cannot reduce your own permissions or remove yourself from the weblog.

### **Accept or Decline a Group Blog Invitation**

If you are invited to become a member of a group blog, an invitation will be present at the top of the Main Menu page. Example:

```
You have one or more invitations to accept or decline:  
You are invited to join weblog [sputnik] - accept | decline  
You are invited to join weblog [dotSunNews] - accept | decline
```

Click 'accept' to become a member of the group blog or 'decline' to turn down the invitation.

### **Contribute to a group blog**

Once you're a member of a group blog, contributing is as easy as creating blog entry content. To access the group blog, login, from the **Main Menu** navigate to the group blog you'd like to contribute to and select any of the following: New Entry, Edit Entries, Settings (weblog admins only).

For users who participate in multiple weblogs it is important to note that the Main Menu page is how you switch between the various weblogs you can author to. The Main Menu will always show you what weblogs you are participating in and what privileges you have on each weblog.

### **Resign from a Group Blog**

To resign from a group blog, login, on the Main Menu page, navigate to the blog information for which you wish to resign. Select 'Resign'.

## 6 - Customizing your weblog's theme

When you create a weblog, you must select a theme. The theme defines how your weblog will look in terms of page layout, fonts, colors and images. If you don't like your theme, you can use the **Preferences:Theme** page to switch to a different one.

If you're not happy with the set of themes built-into Roller, you can create a custom theme by changing the templates used to display your weblog. To customize your theme, go to the **Preferences:Theme** page and click the customize button. That will copy the templates that define your theme into your weblog where you can edit them. After you click customize, go to the **Preferences:Templates** page to view a list of the templates that define your weblog's appearance.

### Weblog templates

Your weblog's theme is defined by a set of templates. A template is a file with some special macros that indicate where Roller is supposed to put your weblog entries, weblog calendar, and other dynamically created content. See the **Roller Macro Reference** for a complete listing of the Roller macros. A template can be an HTML file, an HTML fragment, a CSS page, or just about anything else you can enter into Roller as text.














Roller uses the powerful Velocity template language to define templates and this gives you a lot of power and flexibility in customizing the look and feel and layout of your weblog pages. You can set and use variables, use if-then-else statements and specially designed macros to control your weblog's appearance. For more information on the Velocity template language, refer to the Velocity web site and the **Velocity Reference Guide**.

Below is the Roller **Preferences:Templates** page. Use this page to add, remove, and to select pages for editing.

**Manage templates that define weblog [adminblog]**

You can edit the templates that define the layout, colors and fonts of your weblog. You can also create new templates to define entirely new pages. This is for advanced users only, if you're not comfortable with HTML, you might want to leave your templates alone.

**Reminder:** You are currently using the brushedmetal shared theme, so some template edits may not effect how your blog looks.

Name	Link	Description	Edit	Remove
About	About	About		
Test	Test			
Test2	Test2			
Weblog	Weblog	Weblog		(required)
_css	_css	_css		
_day	_day	_day		
_decorator	_decorator	_decorator		

NOTE: Template with names that start with '\_' are hidden. They will not be shown in the navigation bar.

**Add a new template**

Name:

Illustration 18: Weblog templates page

## Editing a weblog template

Below is the **Preferences>Edit Template** page which you use for editing of your page templates. Note that if the page name begins with an underbar "\_" then the page will not appear in your weblog's navigation menu.

### Edit Template

**Edit Template: Weblog**

Name

Link

Description

Template

```
<div class="entries">
  <h1>#showPageDescription()</h1>

  #showWeblogCategoryChooser()

  #showNextPreviousLinks()

  #showWeblogEntries("_day" 15)
</div>
<div class="rightbar">
  <h2>Calendar</h2>
  <div class="sidebar">
    #showWeblogCalendar()
  </div>

  <h2>RSS Feeds</h2>
  <div class="sidebar">
    #showRSSBadge()<br>
    #showRSSLinks()
  </div>

  <h2>Search</h2>
  <div class="sidebar">
    #showSearchForm()
  </div>

  <h2>Links</h2>
  <div class="sidebar">
    #showBlogroll()
  </div>
</div>
```

*Illustration 19: Edit template page*

## 6.1 - Weblog and day templates

Every Roller theme is a little different, but all themes have a minimum of two templates: a **Weblog** template, which defines the main page of your blog, and a **\_day** page, which defines how each day of entries are displayed on your weblog. Let's discuss each of these templates.

### Your Weblog page

Your weblog page is the main page of your web site, the one that is specified as the default page in your **Preferences:Settings** page. This page is the page that displays the entries in your weblog, your weblog calendar, etc. This page can be very complex, or very simple, depending on your page design.

To understand the weblog template, let's take a look at a simple example. Below is the weblog page template from Roller's Basic theme. This is a good example because it is so basic and because it uses most, if not all, of the Roller macros that you'd want to use on a weblog page. Roller macros and Velocity expressions are shown in bold.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
  <title>#showWebsiteTitle()</title>
  <style type="text/css">#includePage("_css")</style>
  #showRSSAutodiscoveryLink()
<script type="text/javascript" src="$ctxPath/theme/scripts/roller.js">
</script>
</head>
<body>
<table border="0" align="center" width="95%"><tbody><tr>
  <td class="entries" width="80%" valign="top" bgcolor="#ffffff">
    <center>
      <h1>#showWebsiteTitle()</h1>
      <p class="descrip">#showWebsiteDescription()</p>
      #showWeblogCategoryChooser()<br>
    </center>
    #showWeblogEntries("_day" 15)
  </td>
  <td width="20%" valign="top" bgcolor="#ffffff" width="20%">
    <h2>Calendar</h2>
    #showWeblogCalendar()<br>
    <h2>RSS Feeds</h2>
    #showRSSBadge()<br>
    #showRSSLinks()
    <h2>Links</h2>
    #showBookmarks("Blogroll" true false)<br>
    #showBookmarks("News" true false)
    <h2>Navigation</h2>
    #showBasicNavBar(true)<br>
    #showEditorNavBar(true)<br>
    <h2>Referers</h2>
    #showReferers(30 20)
  </td>
</tr></tbody></table>
</body>
</html>
```

For a listing of key Roller macros and variables, refer to the section below. The most important macro on the page is the **#showWeblogEntries** macro. As you can see, it takes two arguments, the first is the name of the day page to use in the display of the weblog entries and the second is the number of weblog entries to be displayed on the page.

## Your Day Page

Your Day page is used by the **#showWeblogEntries** macro to display your weblog entries. This is where you customize the display of each day and of each weblog entry. Returning to our example, below is the day page from the Basic theme:

```
<div class="box">
<div class="entry">
  #showDayPermalink( $day )
  #showEntryDate( $day )
</div>
#foreach( $entry in $entries )
  <p>
    <b>$entry.title</b> $entry.text
    <span class="dateStamp">($entry.pubTime)</span>
    #showEntryPermalink( $entry )
    #showCommentsPageLink( $entry )
  </p>
#end
#showLinkbacks( $day )
</div>
```

Note that there are two variables **\$day** and **\$entries** available for use in the day template that are not available in other templates. The **\$day** variable refers to a date object (`java.util.date`) that contains the date of the day that is being rendered by the day page. The **\$entries** variable contains a collection of weblog entry objects (`org.roller.model.WeblogEntryData`). The example above uses a Velocity **#foreach** loop to iterate through the individual entries in the entries collection and to display the title, text, and publish time of each.



## 6.2 - Define standard headers and footers with a decorator

Some themes use a decorator, a special page that serves as a sort of Master Template for a website (i.e. for your blog). A decorator allows you to define a standard header and footer for all of your pages so that you don't have to repeat the same header and footer on every page. If your website defines a page named `_decorator` (and all new Roller themes do), then Roller will use that `_decorator` to display all of your pages.

Here is an example of a decorator page. At page display time, Roller will insert the contents of the page being displayed where you see the `$decorator_body` marker below:

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<!-- decorator began with line above -->
<html>
<head>
    #showContentType("text/html; charset=utf-8")
    #showContentLanguage($locale.language)
    #includePage("_css")
    #showRSSAutodiscoveryLink()
    <script type="text/javascript" src="$ctxPath/theme/scripts/roller.js">
    </script>
    <title>#showWebsiteTitle() : #showPageName()</title>
</head>
<body>
<!-- next print \$decorator_body -->

$decorator_body

<!-- now print decorator footer/close html -->
</body>
</html>
```

If you have a decorator like the above, then you don't need to include `<html>` and `<body>` tags on your individual pages.

## 6.3 - Roller Macros and Variables

For a complete list of the Roller Macros, see the Roller Macro Reference.

There are also a host of variables and objects that are available for your use in page templates:

<b>\$now</b>	The current time (a java.util.Date object).
<b>\$ctxPath</b>	The path under which Roller is running (see Webapp context).
<b>\$baseURL</b>	Base URL for your Roller website
<b>\$absBaseURL</b>	Absolute base URL for your Roller website.
<b>\$uploadPath</b>	The location where uploaded files are placed.
<b><a href="#">\$user</a></b>	The current user object for the page/entry being viewed.
<b>\$userName</b>	The current user's username.

<b>\$fullName</b>	The current user's full name.
<b>\$emailAddress</b>	The current user's email address.
<b><a href="#">\$website</a></b>	The website for the current user.
<b>\$page</b>	The current page being viewed.
<b>\$requestParameters</b>	A map of the request parameters
<b>\$rollerVersion</b>	Version number of Roller software
<b>\$utilities</b>	A utilities object
<b>\$stringUtils</b>	A string utilities object

Date formatting variables and objects:

<b>\$dateFormatter</b>	Date formatter object
<b>\$toStringFormat</b>	A date format to be used with the macro formatDate( \$dateFormat \$date ) : EEEE MMMM dd, yyyy
<b>\$plainFormat</b>	Another date format for use with the formatDate() macro: yyyyMMdd

If the page is a day page template, then these variables are available too:

<b>\$day</b>	Date object holding date being displayed
<b><a href="#">\$entries</a></b>	Collection of entries for date being displayed

If the page is a comments page, then these variables are available:

<b>\$isCommentPage</b>	will be set to true
<b><a href="#">\$entry</a></b>	weblog entry containing collection of comments
<b>\$autoFormat</b>	True if comments should be autoformatted
<b>\$escapeHtml</b>	True if HTML should be escaped

## 6.4 - Creating and packaging your own Roller theme

A Roller theme is, at a minimum, a subdirectory in the Roller *themes* directory with a page template named *Weblog.vm* in it. How does Roller determine what themes are available? Roller considers every subdirectory in the themes directory to be a theme.

### How does Roller create a theme?

When you create a new user or switch themes for an existing user, Roller will read in a new theme for that user. When Roller reads in a theme for a user, all it is does is to create or replace the user's page templates. Roller follows these steps to read in a theme:

1. For each file in the theme's subdirectory that ends with *.vm* Roller creates a page template with the same name as the file, minus the *.vm* extension
1. The page template that is named *Weblog* is set to be the website's default page.

### Including images, Javascript and CSS style sheets in a theme

If you want to create a more sophisticated theme, one that takes advantage of the Roller theme macros, you can use the following directory structure for your theme (as illustrated in the *x2* theme):



*Illustration 20: Theme directory structure*

The page templates go in the root directory of the theme, images in the *images* directory, Javascript files in the *scripts* directory, and CSS style sheets in the *styles* directory. Then, you can make your theme *distributable* by using relative paths to get to all of your themes images, scripts, and style sheets. You do this by using the Roller theme macros, listed below, whenever you refer to a file in your theme:

- `#showThemeScript( themeName, scriptFileName )`
- `#showThemeScriptPath( themeName )`
- `#showThemeStyleImport( themeName, scriptFileName )`
- `#showThemeStyle( themeName, styleFileName )`
- `#showThemeStylePath( themeName, styleFileName )`
- `#showThemeImage( themeName, imageFileName )`
- `#showThemeImagePath( themeName, imageFileName )`
- `#showThemePath( themeName )`

## 7 - Managing your weblog's blogroll

Roller makes it easy to maintain a *blogroll*, that is, a list of your favorite weblogs and web sites that is displayed in the sidebar of your weblog.

### 7.1 - Adding new links to your blogroll

Individual blogroll items are known as *bookmarks*. Use the **Create & Edit:Bookmarks** page to add, edit and delete bookmarks and bookmark folders in your blogroll.

### Bookmarks

[Create & Edit](#) [Preferences](#)

[New Entry](#) | [Edit Entries](#) | [Categories](#) | **[Bookmarks](#)** | [File Uploads](#) | [Referers](#)

#### Managing bookmarks in weblog [adminblog]

This is your top-level bookmarks folder. The bookmarks you keep here will appear in the blogroll section of your blog (assuming that you are using one of the default themes). You can create bookmark folders here, but you will have to add corresponding bookmark display macros to your weblog's templates if you wish to display their contents.

[Select All](#) [Select None](#) [Delete selected](#) [Move selected](#) / ▼

		Name	Description	Edit	Visit
<input type="checkbox"/>		Allen Gilliland			
<input type="checkbox"/>		Anil Gangolli			
<input type="checkbox"/>		blogs.sun.com			
<input type="checkbox"/>		Dave Johnson			
<input type="checkbox"/>		Henri Yandell			
<input type="checkbox"/>		jroller.com			
<input type="checkbox"/>		Lance Lavandowska			
<input type="checkbox"/>		Matt Raible			

#### Actions

- \* [Add Bookmark](#)
- \* [Add Bookmark Folder](#)

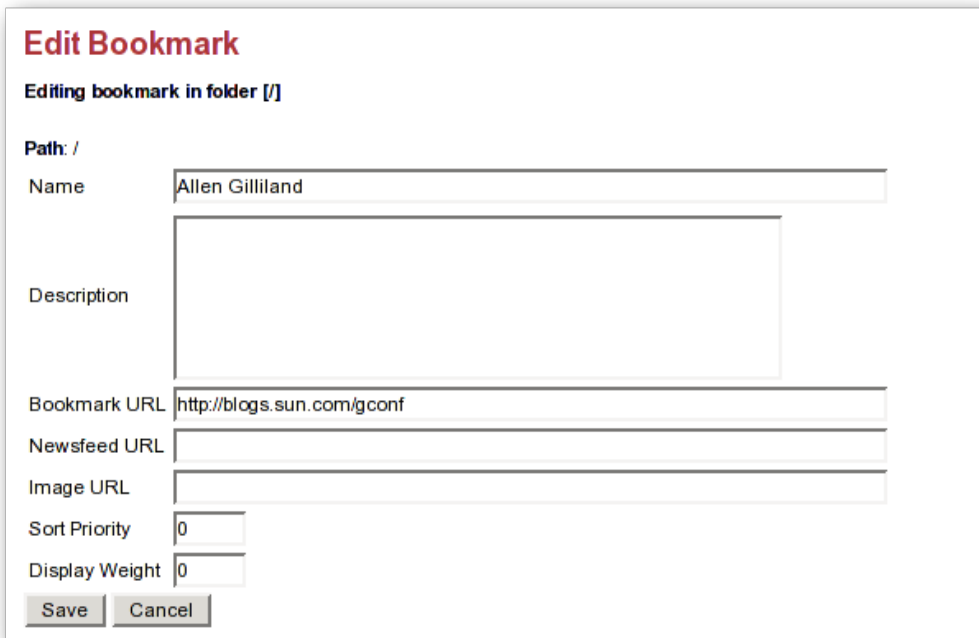
Illustration 21: Bookmarks management page

Here are some notes about the bookmarks page:

- The Add bookmark link takes you to the Add bookmark form, see below.
- The Add folder link talks you to the Add folder form, see below.
- The check-box allows you to select a bookmark for deletion or for moving to another folder.
- The Edit icon allows you to edit a bookmark using the Edit bookmark form, see below.
- The Visit icon allows you to visit the link.

## 7.2 - Adding new links to your blogroll

The Add/Edit bookmark form, shown below, allows you to enter information about one bookmark.



**Edit Bookmark**

Editing bookmark in folder [/]

Path: /

Name

Description

Bookmark URL

Newsfeed URL

Image URL

Sort Priority

Display Weight

*Illustration22: Add and edit bookmark form*

Here's an explanation of the fields:

- Name: Text to be displayed on the link
- Description: Description, displayed when viewer hovers over link
- Bookmark URL: The URL of the bookmark
- Newsfeed URL: The URL of the newsfeed associated with the bookmark (if any)
- Sort priority: Lower numbered bookmarks displayed first in blogroll
- Display weight: Higher numbered bookmarks displayed bolder/larger

## 7.3 - Adding new bookmark folders

If you'd like to display a separate list of links somewhere on your weblog, or you'd like to store links in Roller for some other reason, you can use the Add folder form, shown below, to do that.



**Add Folder**

Adding new bookmark folder in folder [/]

Path: /

Name

Description

*Illustration 23: Add folder form*

### Displaying new bookmark folders

You can use the **#showBookmarks()** macro to display your bookmarks on your website pages. The macro will display all of the bookmarks in one of your bookmark folders. The arguments are *String folderName*, *boolean showFolderName*, and *boolean expandingFolder*. The expanding folder feature is implemented using Javascript so, it will only work if the Roller Javascript file is included on the page where the macro is used.

For example, let's say that you want to display a folder named "News", you want to display the folder name, and you want to display it as an expanding folder. First, near the top and inside the `<head>` tag of your page, include the Roller Javascript page `roller.js`, as shown below:

```
...
<html>
  <head>
    <title>My badass blog</title>
    <script type="text/javascript"
src="/theme/scripts/roller.js"></script>
  </head>
  <body>
  ...
```

Later in your page, include the **#showBookmarks** macro to display your bookmarks:

```
...
  #showBookmarks( "News" true true )
  ...
```

## 7.4 - Bookmark import and export via OPML

Roller makes it easy to import bookmarks and build your blogroll by importing bookmarks in OPML format. XBEL might be a better bookmarks format, but OPML is more popular in the world of weblogs.

### *How to import OPML into Roller*

1. download bookmarks in OPML format from a site such as Scripting.COM and save them as a file on your hard disk.
2. Login to Roller and choose the Bookmarks:Import menu option.
3. Use the file-upload capability to upload the OPML file into Roller. The bookmarks will be imported into a folder called "unfiled". You can use Roller to organize the bookmarks as you wish.

### *How to export OPML from Roller*

Your bookmarks are automatically made available in OPML form via a URL of the form:

`http://serverhostname/flavor/webloghandle?flavor=opml`

You can also export one specific folder by using the path paramter. For example, if you have a folder called Solaris, export it like so:

`http://serverhostname/flavor/webloghandle?flavor=opml&path=/Solaris`

**NOTE:** For OPML export, Roller bookmarks must have at least a name and an HTML url; the name is taken from the text attribute (or if that is absent, the title attribute) of the OPML element, and the HTML url is taken from the htmlUrl attribute (or if that is absent, the url attribute) of the OPML element; if this forms a bookmark lacking a name or HTML URL then that entry will be silently skipped during import.

## 8 - Using a blog client with Roller

A blog client allows you to post to Roller remotely, from your desktop or from some other web site. For example, desktop applications such as Ecto and MarsEdit can post to Roller and so can the photo-sharing web site Flickr.com. This is possible because Roller supports the standard Blogger and MetaWeblog APIs.

### Configuring a blog client for use with Roller

First, make sure to enable Blogger API support in your weblog via the **Preferences:Settings** page. Next, start your blogging client, find the preferences or account setup dialog. You'll need to set the following parameters:

Username: your Roller username

Password: your Roller password

BlogID: the handle of your Roller weblog

URL: the URL of Roller's XML-RPC endpoint

Note that you may not need to enter your BlogID because some blog clients will login to Roller and then present you with a list of the weblogs that are available to your user.

### A blogs.sun.com example

For example, if you have an account on blogs.sun.com, your username is fred and your blog's handle is fredsblog (i.e. your weblog's URL is *http://blogs.sun.com/roller/fredsblog*), then your parameters would be:

Username: fred

Password: (your password)

BlogID: fredsblog

URL: *http://blogs.sun.com/roller/xmlrpc*

You may not need to enter your BlogID because some blog clients will login to Roller and then present you with a list of the weblogs that are available to your user.

### A jroller.com example

If you have an account on jroller.com, your username is fred and your blog's handle is fredsblog (i.e. your weblog's URL is *http://jroller.com/fredsblog*), then your parameters would be:

Username: fred

Password: (your password)

BlogID: fredsblog

URL: *http://jroller.com/xmlrpc*



## 9 - Using weblog pings

Weblog update pings provide a means for you to notify aggregation and indexing sites, (for example Weblogs.com, Technorati and javablogs.com) that your weblog has changed so that they will pick up your latest content from your RSS feed.

Roller supports conventional XML-RPC weblog update ping mechanism used by many sites for such notifications.

### 9.1 - Registering with an Aggregator

Generally speaking, aggregation sites first require you to register your weblog with their site. During this registration process you normally provide both the HTTP URL and the RSS feed URL for your weblog. This is important because the ping message conveys only the normal HTTP URL of your site, and the site will use that to lookup the registered RSS feed URL to fetch from.

Aggregation sites that accept ping notifications generally publish the ping URL to use to ping their site on their (human-readable) web site. Once you have registered your site with an aggregator, you can set up your weblog to deliver pings to that site.

### 9.2 - Ping Targets, Common and Custom

You can set up the Roller server to ping sites of your choice automatically whenever you post published updates to your weblog.

Roller uses the term **ping target** to refer to a site, such as an aggregator, that accepts weblog update ping notifications. A ping target is configured with a (display) name and the ping URL needed to reach the site. Before you can send a ping to a site, you must configure a ping target in Roller for the site. Roller supports the configuration of two types of ping targets:

#### **common ping targets**

These are ping targets that are configured by a Roller administrator, and are available to be used by all users. This allows the ping URLs for several well-known aggregator sites to be configured once for everybody.

#### **custom ping targets**

These are ping targets that are configured by individual users. If you don't find the site you wish to ping in one of the common ping targets, you can configure your own custom ping target.

### 9.3 - Setting up Automated Pings

Once a ping target (either a common ping target or a custom ping target) has been configured for the site that you wish to ping, you can use the **Weblog:Pings** page (shown below) to enable automatic pings and send manual pings.

## Configure Automatic Weblog Pings

[Create & Edit](#)[Preferences](#)[Settings](#) | [Theme](#) | [Templates](#) | [Members](#) | [Pings](#) | [Custom Ping Targets](#)

### Setup automatic pings for weblog [adminblog]

Pings allow you to notify sites that your weblog has changed so that the sites can read your feed to retrieve updates. You can enable automatic pings for sites that you wish to notify whenever your weblog changes. You can also trigger pings manually to specific sites from this page. **Note:** Normally, you are expected to register your weblog with a site before starting to send that site pings.

### Common Ping Targets

These ping targets have been configured by the site administrator for use by all users. You can send pings to any of these well-known sites.

Name	Ping URL	Automatic		Manual
blogs	http://ping.blogs/	ON	<a href="#">Disable</a>	<a href="#">Send Ping Now</a>
blogrolling.com	http://rpc.blogrolling.com/pinger/	OFF	<a href="#">Enable</a>	<a href="#">Send Ping Now</a>
java.blogs	http://javablogs.com/xmlrpc	OFF	<a href="#">Enable</a>	<a href="#">Send Ping Now</a>
Technorati	http://rpc.technorati.com/rpc/ping	OFF	<a href="#">Enable</a>	<a href="#">Send Ping Now</a>
Weblogs.com	http://rpc.weblogs.com/RPC2	OFF	<a href="#">Enable</a>	<a href="#">Send Ping Now</a>

### Custom Ping Targets

These are sites you have set up for yourself as custom ping targets. These are only available for your own use.

Name	Ping URL	Automatic		Manual
IceRocket	http://rpc.icerocket.com:10080/	OFF	<a href="#">Enable</a>	<a href="#">Send Ping Now</a>

Illustration 24: Automatic ping configuration page

To enable automatic pings to a ping target, find the ping target on the page and click the **Enable** link in the Automatic column. The status indicator turns to **ON** and the link changes to **Disable** (as shown for some sites in the screenshot above). To disable automatic pings to a ping target click the **Disable** link in the Automatic column. The status indicator turns to **OFF** and the link changes to **Enable**.

Custom ping targets that you have configured are displayed on this page in a separate table below the common ping targets; they work in the same way. You may need to scroll down the page to see them

When you have enabled automatic ping for a ping target, Roller will automatically send a ping to that site whenever you publish a new weblog entry or update a published weblog entry.

**Note:** In actuality, Roller queues a request to send the ping and processes this request in the background, so that you can get on with your blogging. The ping queue is processed at an interval configured by the site administrator; this interval is 5 minutes in a default configuration. In case the aggregator site is temporarily unreachable, Roller will requeue your ping request and retry on subsequent passes through the queue; in a default configuration the ping is requeued for up to 3 ping attempts.

## 9.4 - Sending a Manual Ping

You can also send a manual ping to a ping target using the **Send Ping Now** link listed for the target on the **Weblog:Pings** page. When you send a manual ping the ping is not queued, it is sent immediately and attempted only once. Roller shows you the response status (success or a failure message) that results from the ping. Using manual pings, you can test your custom ping targets to make sure that the URL you have entered is working properly.

You do not need to enable automatic pingging in order to send manual pings. You can send a manual ping whether or not you have enabled automatic pingging for that target.

You can use manual pings if you ping a site very rarely, or if you are feeling a bit impatient, and you don't want to wait for the next queue processing interval.

## 9.5 - Creating and Editing Custom Ping Targets

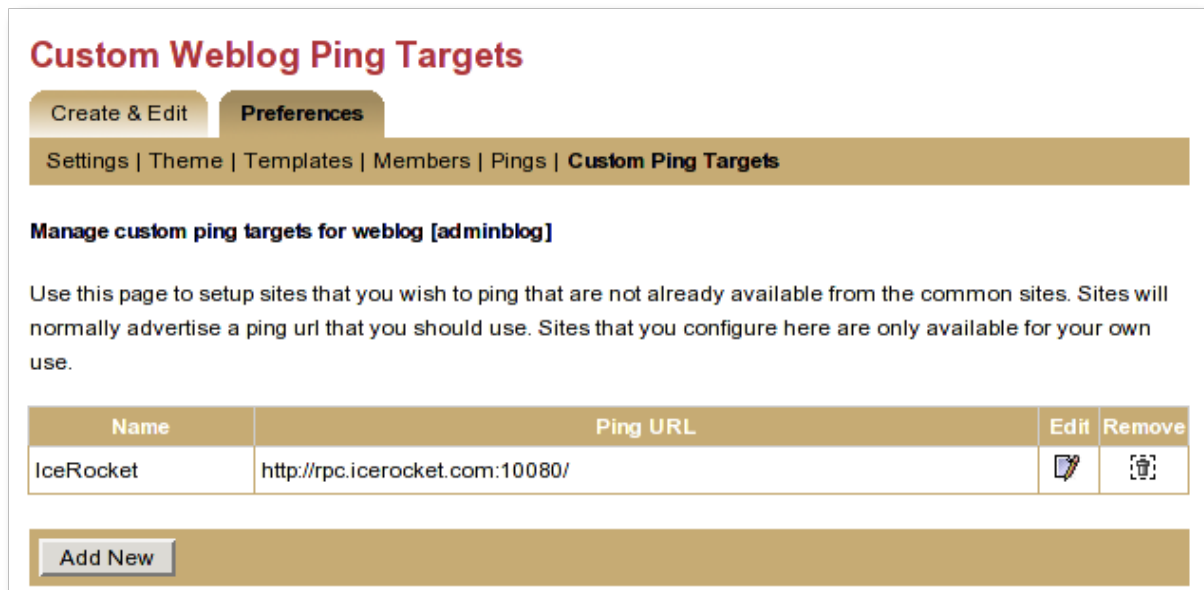
You should find that most popular ping targets are listed among the common ping targets and you can ping these without needing to create a new custom one. If you don't find a common target listed for the site you wish to ping, you have two options. You can request that your administrator add a new common ping target (directions in [\[21\]](#)); most likely, your friendly Roller administrator will be happy to add new common ping targets for aggregator sites that many other users will also be interested in using. Alternatively, you can add your own custom ping target using the **Weblog:Custom Ping Targets** page.

***Note:** Custom ping targets are a feature that the administrator can disable. If you do not see **Weblog:Custom Ping Targets** menu item, or any heading for Custom Ping Targets on the **Weblog:Pings** page, then an administrator has disabled it, and you will need to contact an administrator to get a new common ping target added.*

Before adding a custom ping target, you must determine the proper ping URL for the site that you wish to ping. You must get this information from the aggregator's web site or from another knowledgeable source.

It can be hard to find the aggregator's documentation telling you the specific ping URL to use to notify their site. Commonly aggregators list this on their web site under a topic providing help about registering your feed, or under a topic providing information for developers. Keep in mind that some aggregators only use periodic polling and do not accept ping notifications at all. If you can't find any information about pingging on the aggregator's web site, the site may not support pingging.

Once you have found the proper ping URL, you can add your custom target using the **Weblog:Custom Ping Targets** page, which looks something like the following screen-shot.



*Illustration 25: Custom ping targets page*

Click the **Add New** button to add a new custom ping target. This will bring up a form with a **Name** field and a **Ping URL** field. Fill in both fields, and click the **Save** button.

**Ping Target**  
Editing custom ping target in weblog [adminblog]

Name: IceRocket  
Ping URL: http://rpc.icerocket.com:10080/

*Illustration 26: Edit ping target form*

Once you have created a custom ping target, you will see it listed on the **Weblog:Custom Ping Targets** page. From this page, you can further edit it or delete it. To enable automatic pings or send manual using your custom ping targets, use the **Weblog:Pings** page.

The ping target's name must be unique among your own custom targets, and the Ping URL must be a properly formed URL with a known hostname (or a raw IP address). If any of these conditions are not met, the **Save** will fail, and you will get an error indication telling you what was wrong with your entry

## 9.6 - More on Registering with an Aggregator

When you register with an aggregator, you will usually need to provide two pieces of information as part of the registration, your blog's base (HTML) url and your RSS feed (XML) URL. Make sure to read the aggregator's documentation and help on registering.

For Roller weblogs, you get your weblog's base URL by viewing your weblog and taking the URL to the point just following your weblog's handle. (In other words it should end with *page/handle~~name~~here*).

The RSS feed URL for your whole feed can be obtained by substituting *page* in your weblog's URL with *RSS*. Most browsers will display this link in the status bar when you place your mouse over RSS badge (the little orange XML box) on your weblog page.

You also have category-specific feeds, which are useful for registering with topical aggregators like **java.blogs**. To get a category-specific feed URL, just append `?catname=/category/path` where */category/path* is the full path of the category. The "basic" theme has some category RSS feeds just below the RSS badge in the right-hand vertical bar.

Some aggregators can also scrape (read and parse the HTML of your weblog) to discover the feed URL automatically when provided with the HTML URL. The default Roller theme template pages include hints in the form of tags that many sites can use to determine the feed URL automatically.