USER MANUAL

PHP Business Directory

Version 6.1

Configuration and daily use of the directory website, the user panel and the admin panel.

NetArt Media https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com November 2026

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PART 1

Getting Started

What PHP Business Directory is, how this manual is organised, and the first settings to make.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to PHP Business Directory

PHP Business Directory is a self-hosted PHP script for running your own business directory, yellow pages or local guide website. This chapter explains how the software is organised and how to get the most out of this manual.

PHP Business Directory is software for running a business directory website: a yellow pages site, a city guide, a niche directory of wedding venues or lawyers, or a regional chamber of commerce listing. You install it on your own web hosting, you own the data and the full source code, and you decide how the directory makes money.

This manual describes version 6.1. It is written for directory owners and their staff, not only for developers: every page of the software is explained in plain language, with screenshots.

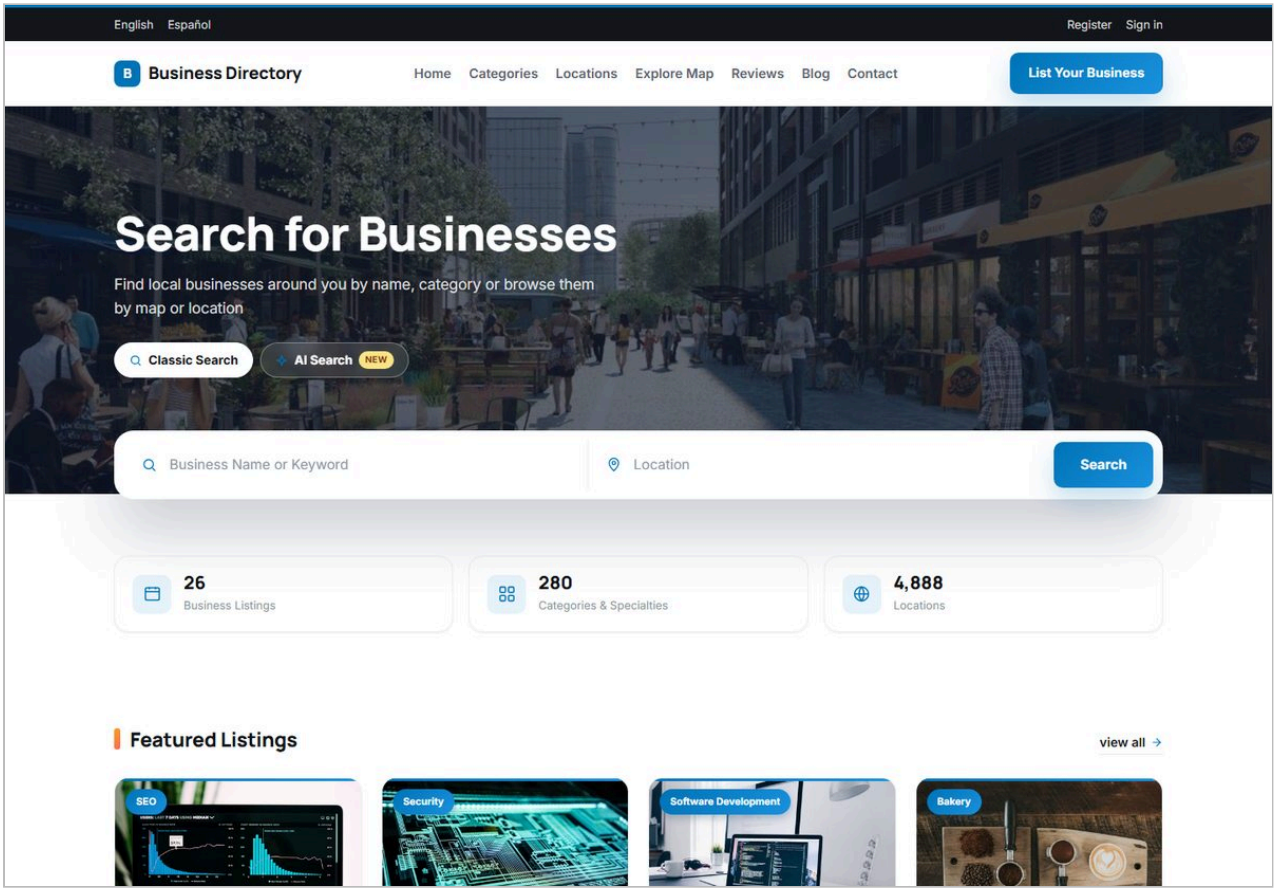


Figure 1.1 The home page of a PHP Business Directory website with the default Business template.

The three parts of the software

PHP Business Directory has three separate areas, each with its own users.

AREA	WHO USES IT	ADDRESS	WHAT HAPPENS THERE
The website	Visitors	`yourdomain.com/`	Searching and browsing businesses, reading and writing reviews, booking appointments, adding and claiming listings.
The user panel	Business owners	`yourdomain.com/USERS/`	Managing their own listings, photos, messages, appointments, employees and banners.
The admin panel	You and your team	`yourdomain.com/ADMIN/`	Approving listings, managing users and reviews, configuring the directory, payments, AI, design, content and SEO.

The manual follows the same structure. Part 2 covers the website (chapter 3), Part 3 covers the user panel (chapter 13) and Part 4 covers the admin panel (chapter 18).

Main concepts

A few terms appear throughout the software and this manual:

- **Listing:** one business in the directory, with its description, contact details, address, map position, photos, opening hours, reviews and, optionally, appointment booking. Listings are also called ads in some places of the admin panel.
- **Package:** a pricing plan that a business owner chooses when adding a listing, for example Free, Standard or Featured. A package sets the price, how long the listing stays online, how many photos and categories it can have and whether it is featured. See Listing Packages and Pricing Plans (chapter 25).
- **Category:** the type of business, for example Restaurants › Italian. Each listing can be in up to three categories, depending on its package. See Managing Categories and Category Images (chapter 28).
- **Location:** where the business is, organised as a tree of countries, states or regions and cities. See Managing Locations and Location Images (chapter 29).
- **Featured listing:** a listing that is highlighted on the home page and at the top of search results, usually because its owner paid for a featured package.
- **Approval:** new listings and listing claims wait for an administrator to approve them, unless you switch on automatic approval for listings. Reviews are published immediately and can be edited or deleted by administrators.
- **User:** a registered business owner with access to the user panel. Visitors do not need an account to search, write reviews or even submit a single listing.
- **Administrator:** a member of your team with a login to the admin panel. Each administrator belongs to a group that decides which admin pages they can open. See Admin Users, Groups and Permissions (chapter 39).

What is new in version 6.1

Version 6.1 adds artificial intelligence features and four new templates to the modern 6.0 code base:

- **AI writing assistant** in every listing form, which writes or improves business descriptions.
- **AI search** on the home page, where visitors describe what they need in their own words.
- **AI review summaries** on listing pages, and AI tools for news, pages and SEO texts in the admin panel.
- **Five front-end templates** with different layouts: Business, City Guide, Explorer, Yellow Pages and Luxe, with a safe preview before you switch.
- **Better SEO:** real page titles and meta descriptions, schema.org data for local businesses, Open Graph tags and a cleaner sitemap.
- **Security:** all user passwords are now stored as secure hashes.

How to use this manual

If you are setting up a new directory, start with Quick-Start Checklist: Setting Up Your Directory (chapter 2). After that, use the manual as a reference: every admin panel page has a section that explains its fields and buttons.

Some conventions are used throughout:

- Text in **bold** is a button, field or menu item, written exactly as it appears on screen.
- A path such as Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Packages shows where to find a page: open the **Directory Settings** menu and click **Packages**.
- The screenshots show the default Business template and demo data. Your directory will look different once you choose a template and add your own content.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/introduction.html

CHAPTER 2

Quick-Start Checklist: Setting Up Your Directory

The directory works right away, but a few settings turn the demo content into your own directory. Follow this checklist in order and you will be ready to launch.

This checklist takes you from the demo content to a directory that is ready for visitors. Each step links to the chapter with the details.

1. Basic settings

`Admin Panel › Settings › Configuration Options`

- Enter the **Website Name**, the **Admin Contact Email** (where contact form messages arrive) and the **System Timezone**.
- Switch on **Enable SEO URLs**.
- Fill in the **Company Information** tab with your company name, address, phone and public email.

Details: System Settings, Tracking Codes and Social Links (chapter 36).

2. Email addresses

`Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Configuration Options › Emails And Messages`

Set **System Email From** (the sender name) and **System Email Address** (the sender address) used for all emails the directory sends. Use an address on your own domain, such as `info@yourdomain.com`, so that emails are not marked as spam. Details: Directory Configuration Options (chapter 24).

3. Branding and template

- Upload your logo and favicon in Website › Logo & Favicon.
- Preview the five templates in Website › Templates and activate the one that fits your directory.
- Upload a home page background photo and write the home page title in Directory Settings › Configuration Options › Home Page Settings.

Details: Templates, Logo and Appearance (chapter 34).

4. Categories and locations

The demo database contains a general list of business categories and a world-wide list of locations. Adapt them to your directory:

- A niche directory needs niche categories: replace the demo tree in Directory Settings › Categories.
- A local directory only needs its own country, region or city: remove the other locations in Directory Settings › Locations.
- Add images for the main categories and locations; they appear as tiles on the home page.

Details: Managing Categories and Category Images (chapter 28) and Managing Locations and Location Images (chapter 29).

5. Packages and payments

- Decide how the directory earns money and set up your packages in Directory Settings › Packages. A common start is a free basic listing plus one or two paid upgrades.
- Choose the currency and enable PayPal, Stripe or bank transfer in Directory Settings › Configuration Options › Payments.
- Create banner areas if you want to sell banner space.

Details: Listing Packages and Pricing Plans (chapter 25), Payments: Stripe, PayPal and Bank Transfer (chapter 26) and Banner Areas, Banners and Ad Zones (chapter 31).

6. AI features

Paste an API key from Groq (free tier available), OpenAI or DeepSeek in Directory Settings › Configuration Options › AI Features and click **Test connection**. Details: Setting Up the AI Features (chapter 27).

7. Remove the demo content

Before launch, delete what you do not want to keep:

- demo listings in Directory › Current Listings,
- demo users in Directory › Users,
- demo reviews in Directory › Reviews,
- demo news articles and FAQ entries in Website › News and Website › FAQ,
- demo banners in Directory Settings › Banners.

8. Add your first listings

A directory with no listings does not attract visitors or paying businesses. Import a list of businesses from a spreadsheet with Bulk CSV Import and Export (chapter 23), or add them by hand in Directory › Add Listing. Imported listings can later be claimed by their owners; see Claiming an Existing Listing (chapter 9).

9. Content, SEO and tracking

- Review the texts of the pages and the FAQ, and write a first news article.
- Add your Google Analytics ID and Search Console verification in Settings › Tracking Codes.
- Add your social media profiles in Settings › Social Media.
- Submit `https://www.yourdomain.com/sitemap.php` to Google Search Console.

Details: Website Pages and Menu (chapter 32), News (Blog) and FAQ Management (chapter 33) and SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data (chapter 37).

10. Test before launch

1. Add a test listing from the website, with each package, and approve it in the admin panel.
2. Register a test user and log in to the user panel.
3. Send a message from the contact page and from a listing, and check that the emails arrive.
4. Look at the website on a phone.
5. Make a backup in Settings › Backups.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/quick-start-checklist.html

PART 2

The Website (Visitors)

Everything visitors can do on the public directory: search, browse, review, book, add and claim listings.

CHAPTER 3

The Home Page, Classic Search and AI Search

The home page is where most visitors start. It combines a search form, featured and latest listings, and links to browse by category or location.

The home page introduces the directory and puts search front and center. Its exact layout depends on the template (chapter 34) you choose, but every template contains the same building blocks.

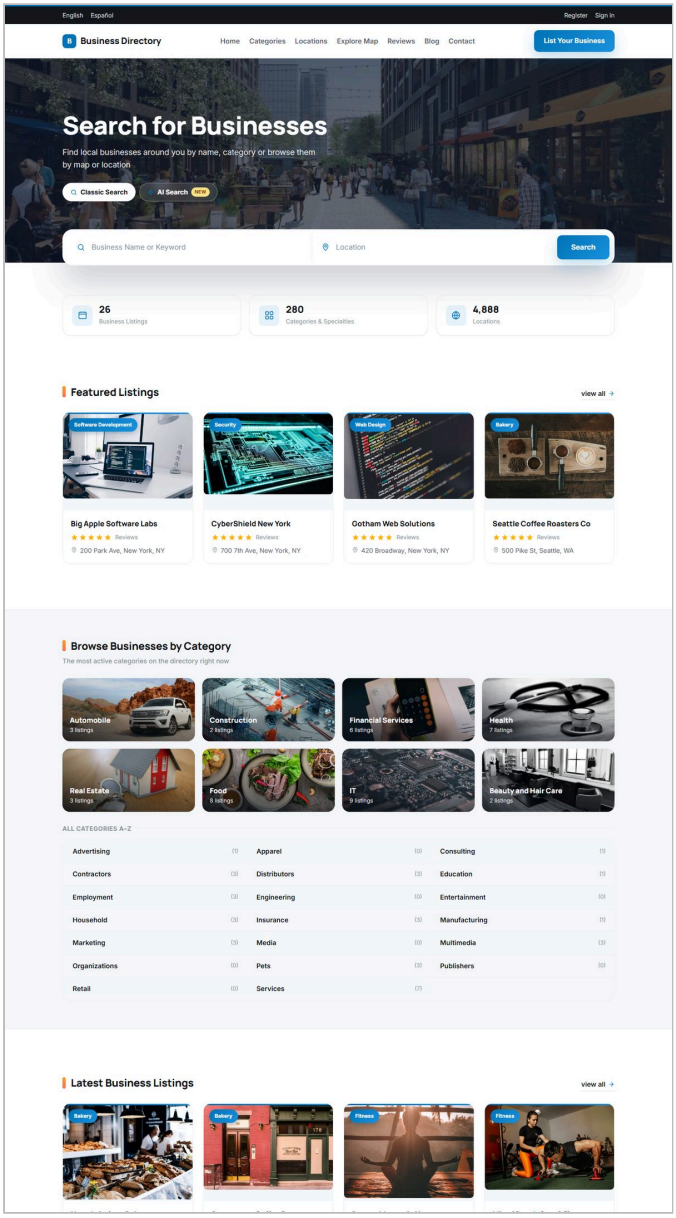


Figure 3.1 The home page of the Business template: search, statistics, featured listings, latest listings, categories and locations.

Parts of the home page

- **Top bar:** language links (when the website has more than one language), and **Register** and **Sign in** links for business owners. After login, they lead to the user panel.
- **Menu:** the pages you manage in Website › Pages, and a **List Your Business** button that opens the add listing (chapter 8) page.
- **Hero and search form:** a title, a subtitle and a background photo that you set in Directory Settings › Configuration Options › Home Page Settings.
- **Statistics:** the number of listings, categories and locations.
- **Featured Listings:** listings with a featured package. The number shown is a setting.
- **Latest Listings:** the most recently approved listings.
- **Browse by Category** and **Browse by Location:** image tiles for the main categories and locations, followed by a complete A–Z index.

Each section can be switched off with the **Show Latest Listings**, **Show Featured Listings**, **Show Categories Section** and **Show Locations Section** options. See Directory Configuration Options (chapter 24).

The classic search

The classic search form has two fields:

- **Business Name or Keyword:** matches each word in the business name, description or address. As the visitor types, suggestions of matching businesses and categories appear below the field.
- **Location:** a country, state, city or zip code. Suggestions from your location list appear as the visitor types. A city or zip code typed here is also found in business addresses.

Both fields are optional. An empty search lists all businesses. The results open on the search results page (chapter 4), where visitors can refine the search further.

The AI search

When the AI features are enabled, an **AI Search** tab appears next to **Classic Search**. Visitors describe what they need in their own words, in any language that your AI model understands:

- "a plumber in Florida for an emergency"
- "best rated yoga studio in New York"
- "coffee roasters in Seattle open on Sundays"

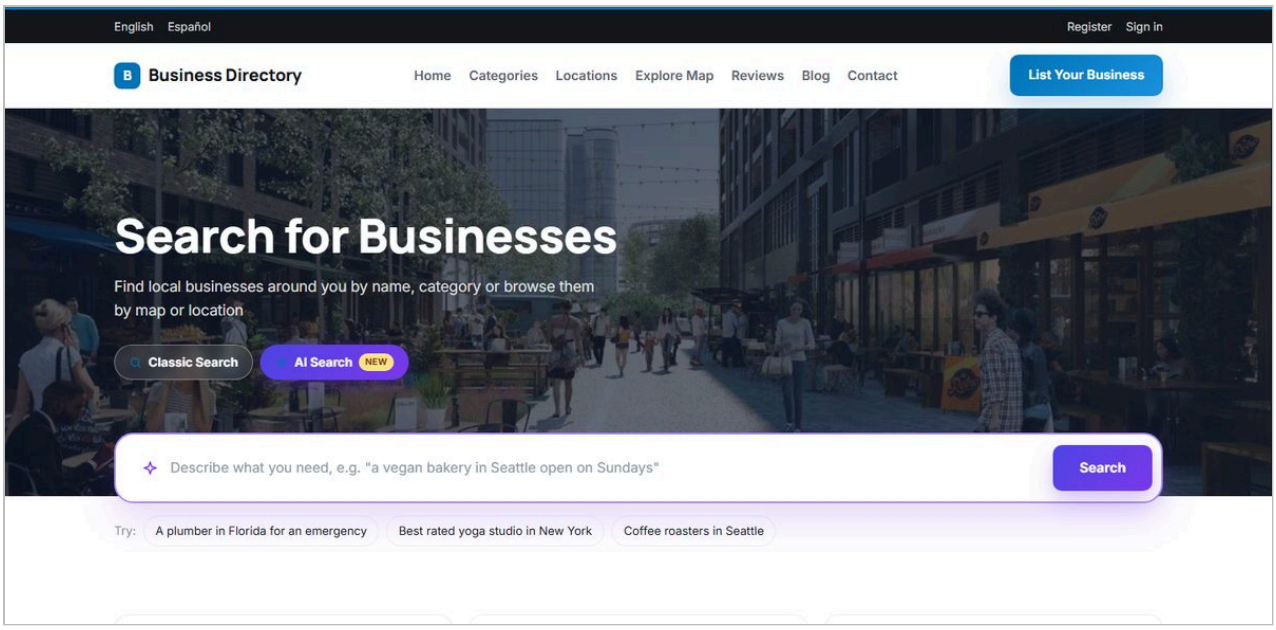


Figure 3.2 The AI Search tab, with example searches below the field.

The AI turns the sentence into normal search filters: keyword, category, country or state, city, minimum rating, sort order and featured listings. Category and location names are always matched against your own lists, so a visitor can never land on a page that does not exist. The results page shows a small **AI search** banner with the original sentence and an **Edit search** link.

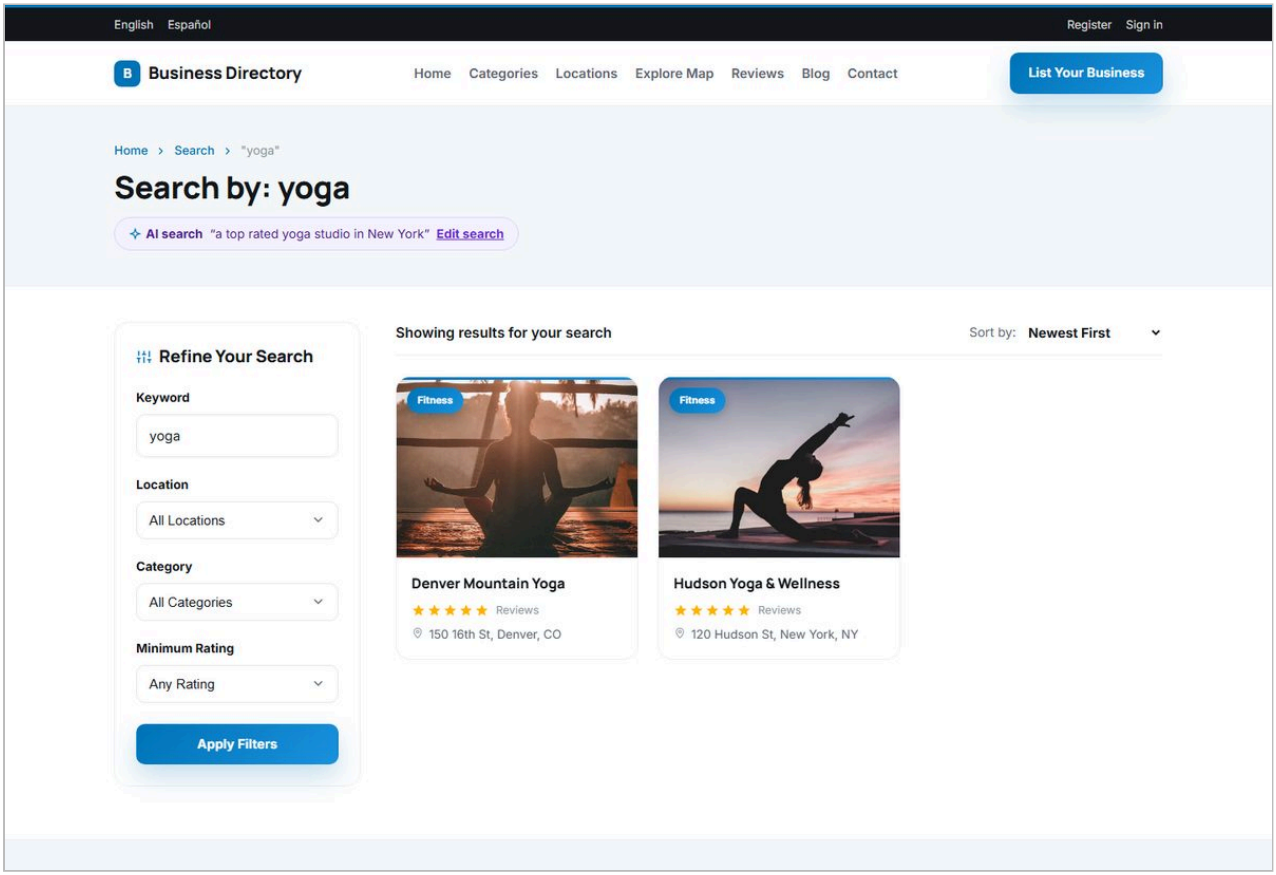


Figure 3.3 Search results opened by an AI search, with the visitor's request shown above the results.

> **NOTE**
>
> The AI search never blocks visitors. If no API key is set, the hourly limit is reached or the AI service does not answer, a built-in matcher still recognizes category and place names in the sentence and the search continues as a keyword search.

To enable the AI search and set its hourly limit per visitor, see Setting Up the AI Features (chapter 27).

Language versions

If your directory has more than one language, each language has its own home page and URLs, for example `yourdomain.com/es` for Spanish. Category names, location names and all interface texts are shown in the visitor's language, and the AI search answers in that language too.

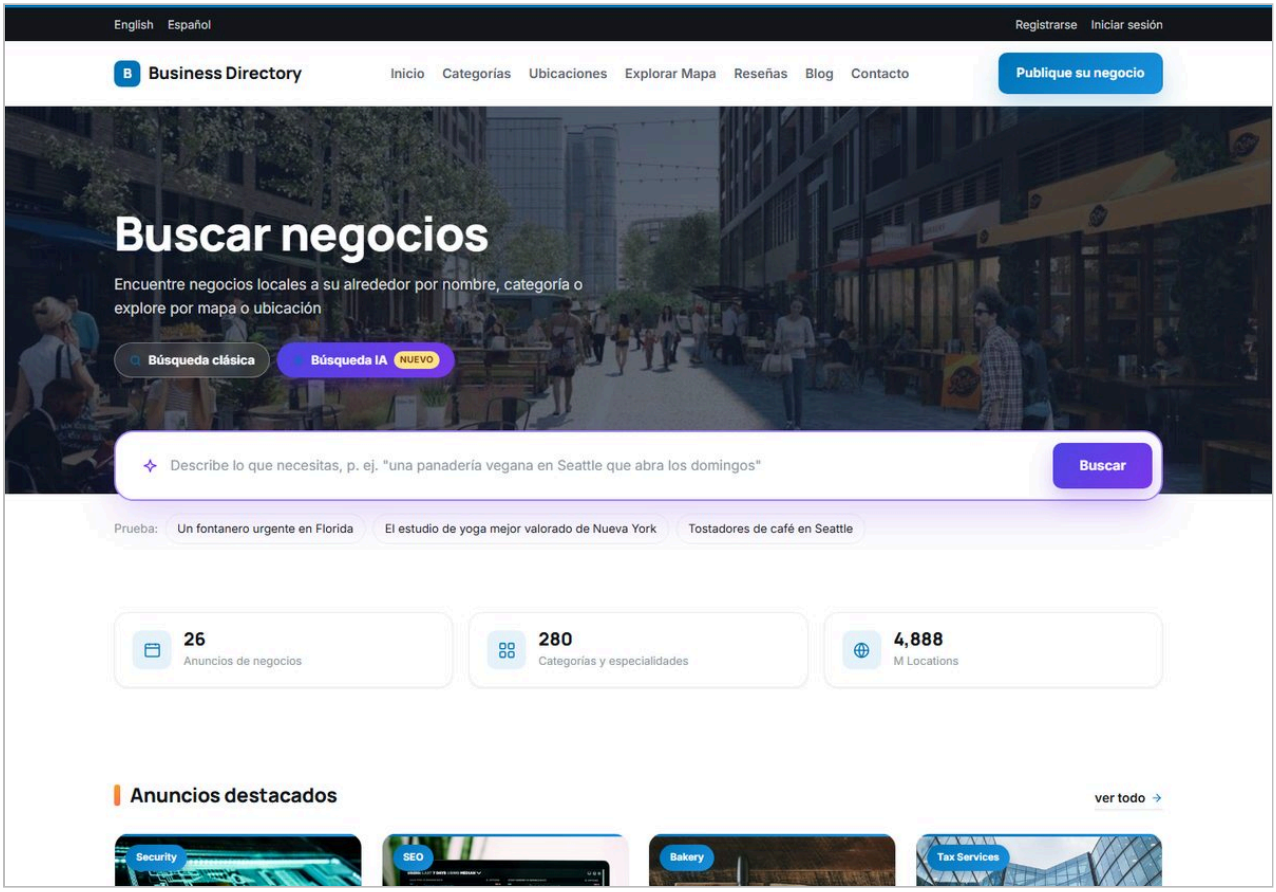


Figure 3.4 The Spanish version of the same home page.

See Languages and Interface Texts (chapter 35).

CHAPTER 4

Search Results, Category and Location Pages

Search results, category pages and location pages share one powerful results page with filters for keyword, location, category and rating.

Search results, category pages and location pages all use the same results page. A category page is simply a search filtered by that category, which means visitors can combine it with a location, a keyword or a minimum rating.

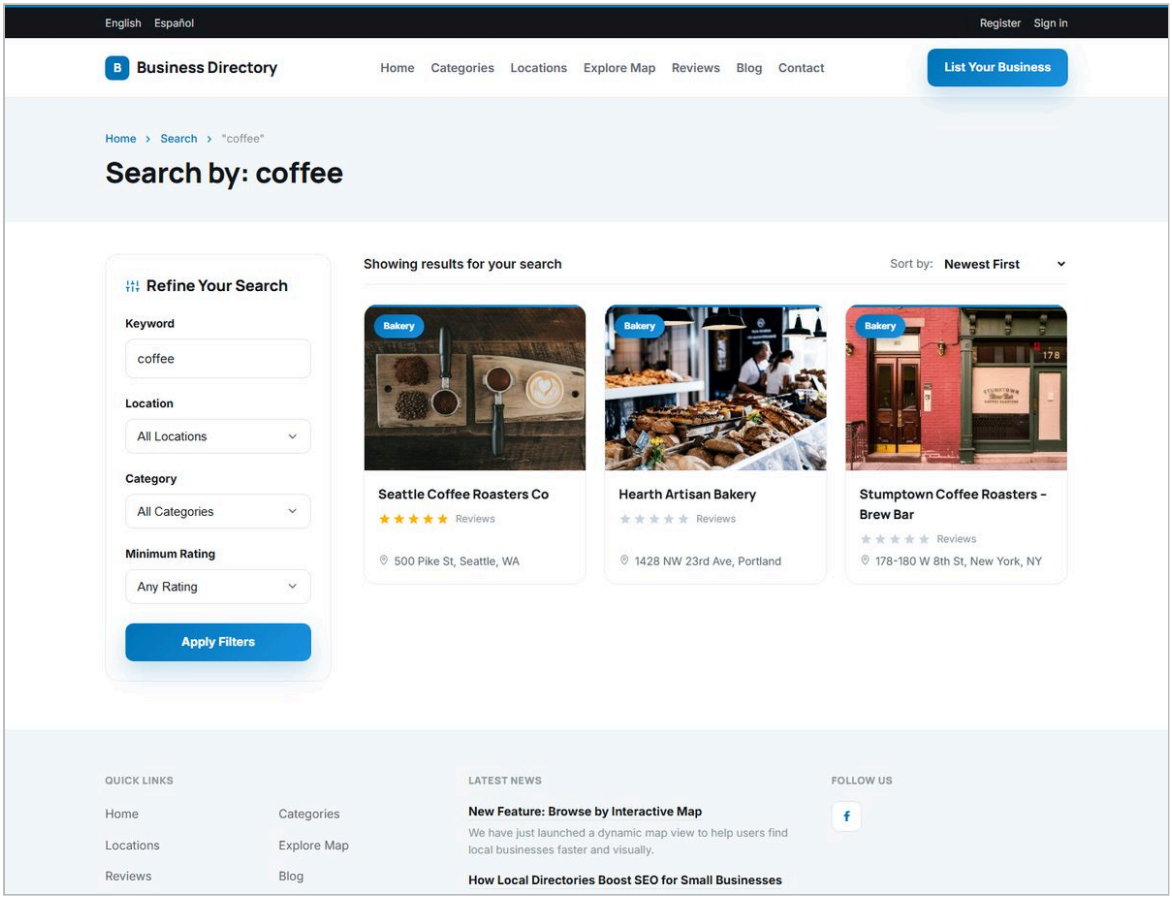


Figure 4.1 Search results for "coffee", with the filters on the left.

Filters

The **Refine Your Search** panel has four filters:

FILTER	WHAT IT DOES
Keyword	Matches words in the business name, description and address.
Location	Limits the results to a country, state or city, including all locations below it.

FILTER	WHAT IT DOES
Category	Limits the results to a category, including its subcategories.
Minimum Rating	Shows only businesses rated **1 Stars & Up** to **5 Stars**, based on their reviews.

Click **Apply Filters** to update the results.

Sorting and paging

The **Sort by** menu orders the results by **Newest First**, **Oldest First**, **Alphabetical (A-Z)** or **Highest Rated**. Until the visitor picks a sort order, featured listings are shown first. The number of results per page is set with **Results Per Page** in Directory Configuration Options (chapter 24).

Category pages

The **Categories** page lists all main categories with their subcategories and the number of listings in each one. Clicking a category opens its results page, with a friendly URL such as `/en-category-it-50`.

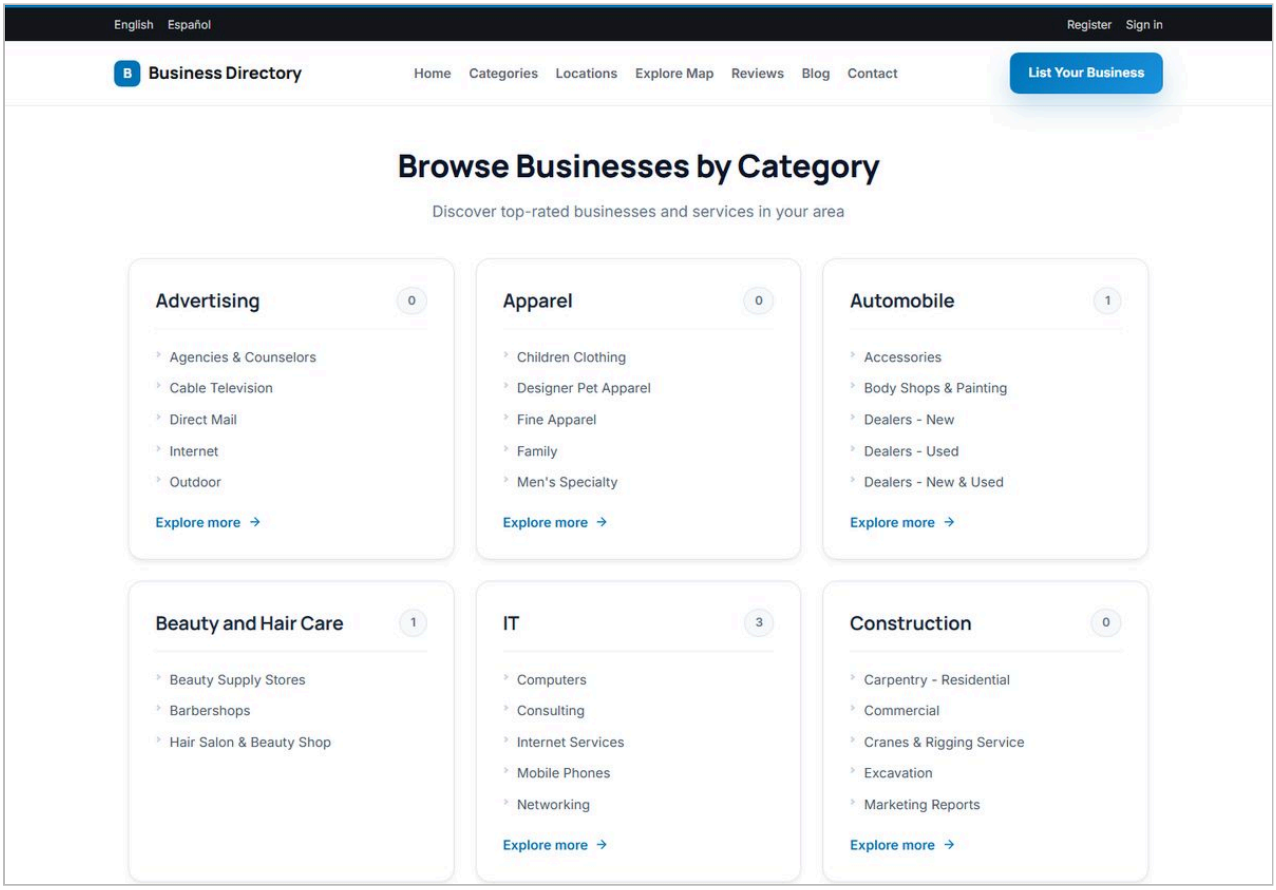


Figure 4.2 The Categories page lists every main category with its subcategories.

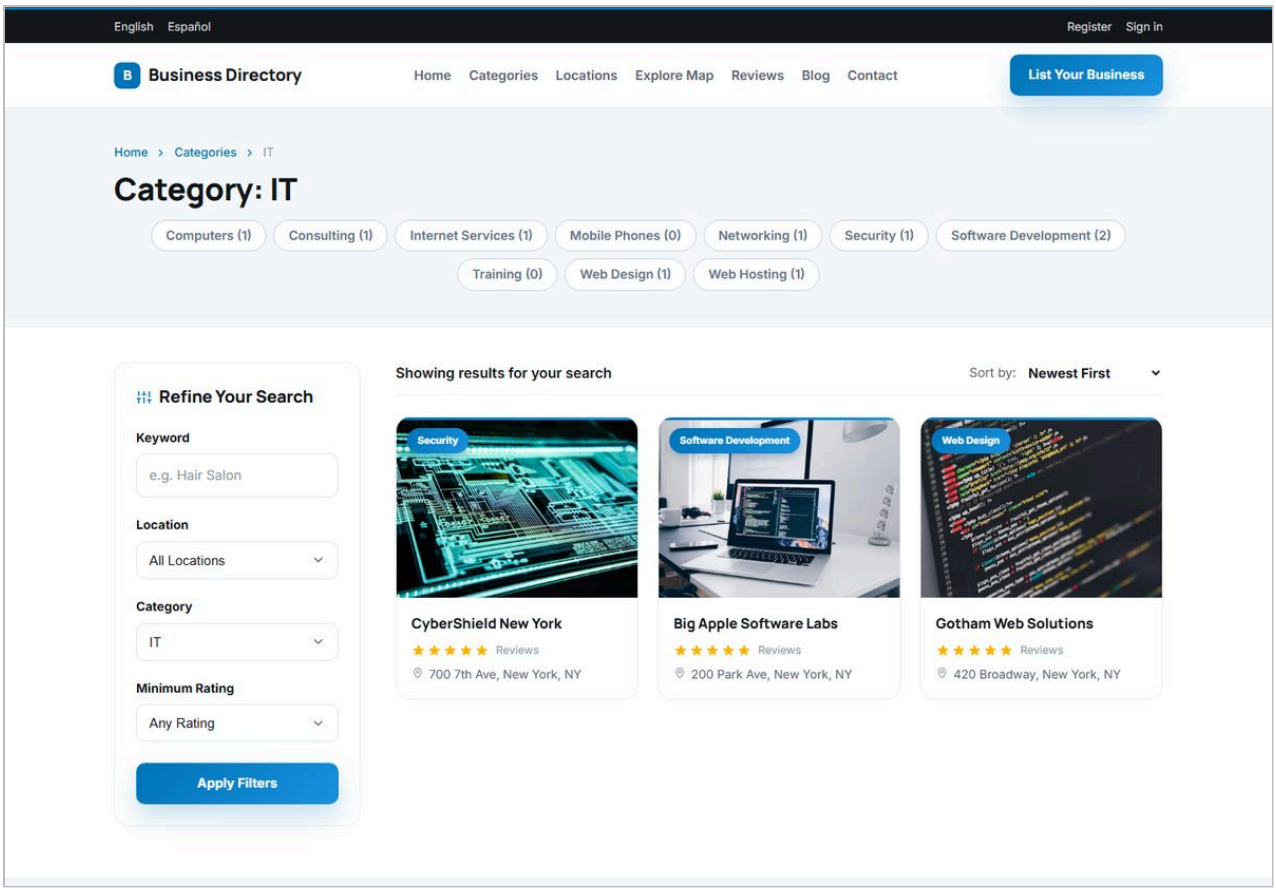


Figure 4.3 A category page: the results page filtered by the IT category.

For each category you can write your own page title, meta description and introduction text, which appear on its page. This is an important SEO tool; see SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data (chapter 37).

Location pages

The **Locations** page works in the same way for countries, states and cities, with URLs such as `/en-location-new-york-229-37`.

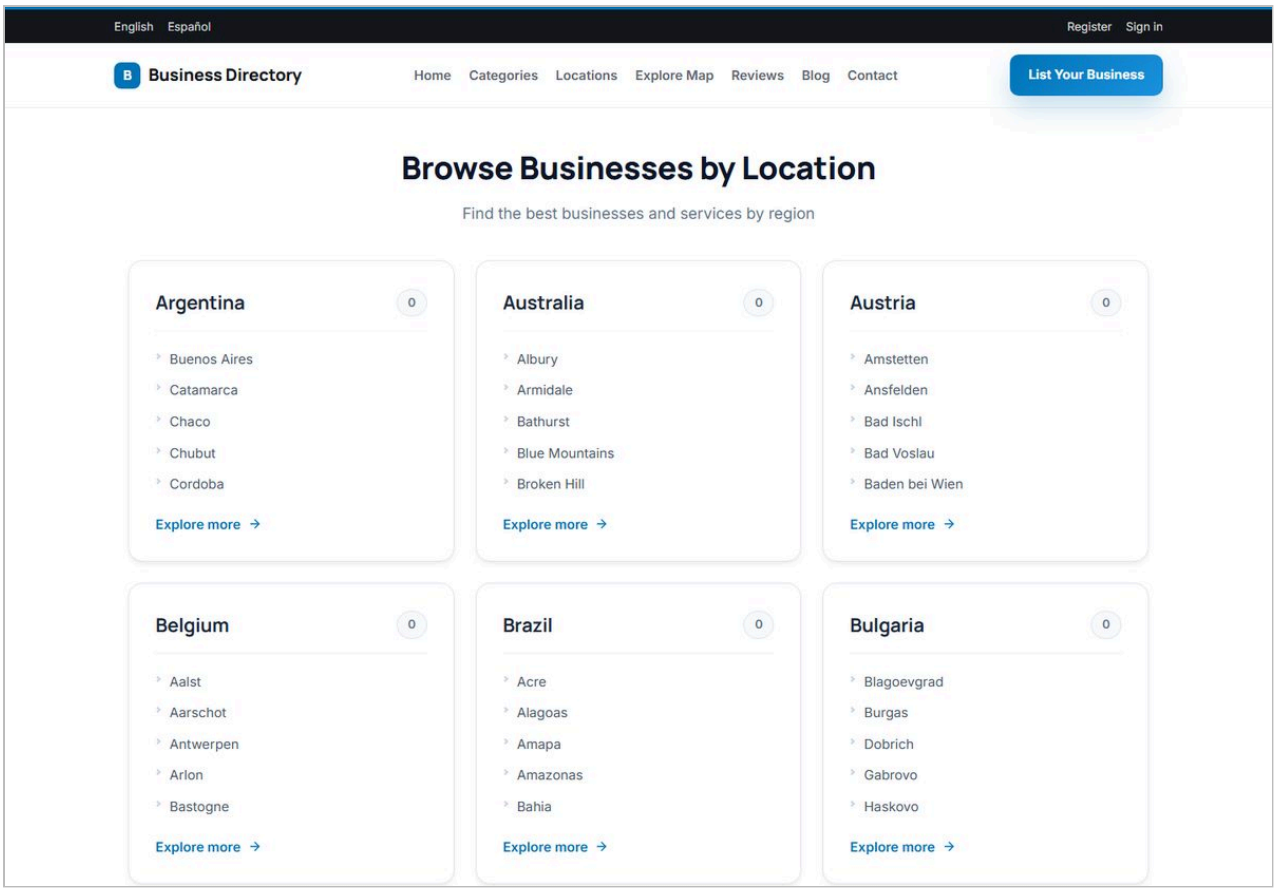


Figure 4.4 The Locations page lists countries and their regions.

Category pages and location pages are what local search engines love: "dentists in Denver" or "IT companies in New York". The directory creates them automatically for every category and location in use.

Featured listings page

The **view all** link next to the Featured Listings section on the home page opens the results page filtered to featured businesses only.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/search-results-categories-locations.html

CHAPTER 5

The Business Listing Page

Every business in the directory has its own page. It is designed to give visitors everything they need to contact the business, and to rank well in search engines.

The listing page is the most important page of the directory: it is where a visitor decides to call, visit or book a business. It is also the page that search engines show for searches by business name.

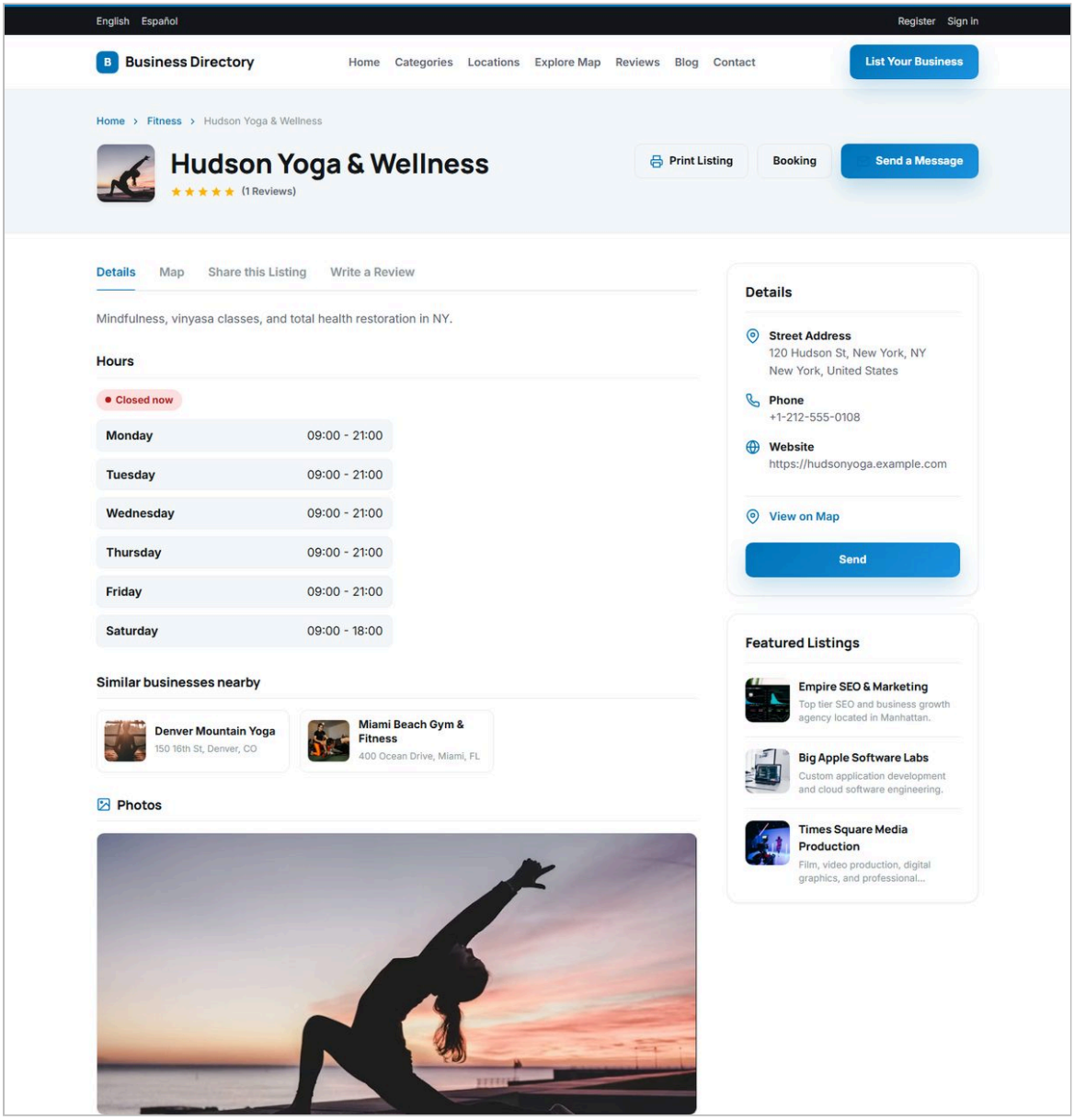


Figure 5.1 A business listing page with opening hours, contact details, similar businesses and photos.

Header and actions

The top of the page shows the business logo, name, category and star rating with the number of reviews. Three buttons give quick access to the main actions:

- **Print Listing:** a clean printable version of the listing.
- **Booking:** opens the appointment calendar (chapter 7). It appears when the business takes appointments.
- **Send a Message:** jumps to the contact form.

Tabs

- **Details:** the description, opening hours, custom fields, similar businesses and photos.
- **Map:** the location on an interactive OpenStreetMap map, when the listing has map coordinates.
- **Share this Listing:** buttons for sharing on social networks, and a form for recommending the listing to a friend by email.
- **Write a Review:** opens the review form (chapter 6).

Opening hours and "Open now"

The opening hours entered for each day of the week are shown in a table, with a badge that says **Open now** or **Closed now**. The badge is calculated with the time zone of your website, set in System Settings, Tracking Codes and Social Links (chapter 36).

Contact details and the contact form

The **Details** box shows the street address, phone number and website link, and a **View on Map** link. Below it, the **Contact** form sends a message to the business owner by email: the visitor enters a contact name, email address, an optional phone number and the message. If the listing belongs to a registered user, the message is also saved in their user panel (chapter 13).

> TIP
>
> Whether the website link is a normal "dofollow" link, which passes SEO value to the business website, depends on the listing's package. This is a popular reason for businesses to choose a paid package. See Listing Packages and Pricing Plans (chapter 25).

Photos and video

The listing shows its main image or logo in the header and the other photos in a gallery that opens in a full-screen viewer. The number of photos allowed depends on the package. A YouTube video can be added to any listing.

Similar businesses nearby

Each listing suggests other businesses from the same category, starting with those in the same region. This keeps visitors on your website and gives every business extra exposure.

What customers say (AI summary)

When the AI features are enabled and a listing has at least three reviews, a short, balanced summary of the reviews appears on the page. The summary is generated once and stored, and is only refreshed when new reviews arrive, so it does not cost an AI request on every page view.

Claim this listing

Listings that do not belong to a registered user, for example listings you imported, show a **Claim this listing** link. See Claiming an Existing Listing (chapter 9).

Built-in SEO

Every listing page has its own page title and meta description, schema.org `LocalBusiness` data with the address, map position, phone, opening hours and rating, Open Graph tags for attractive previews when the page is shared, and a canonical URL. The page also shows the date the listing was added and the number of times it was viewed.

> NOTE
>
> Pending, rejected and deleted listings return a "page not found" response to visitors. Only the owner and administrators can still see a pending listing.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/business-listing-page.html

CHAPTER 6

Reviews and Ratings

Reviews build trust. Visitors can rate any business from one to five stars and share their experience, and you keep full control over what stays published.

Visitors can review any business without creating an account. Reviews are published immediately, and administrators can edit or delete any review afterwards.

Writing a review

On a listing page, the visitor clicks **Write a Review** and fills in the form:

- **Rate:** one to five stars.
- **Your Name** and **Email:** the name is published with the review; the email address is not.
- **Review Title** and **Comments**.

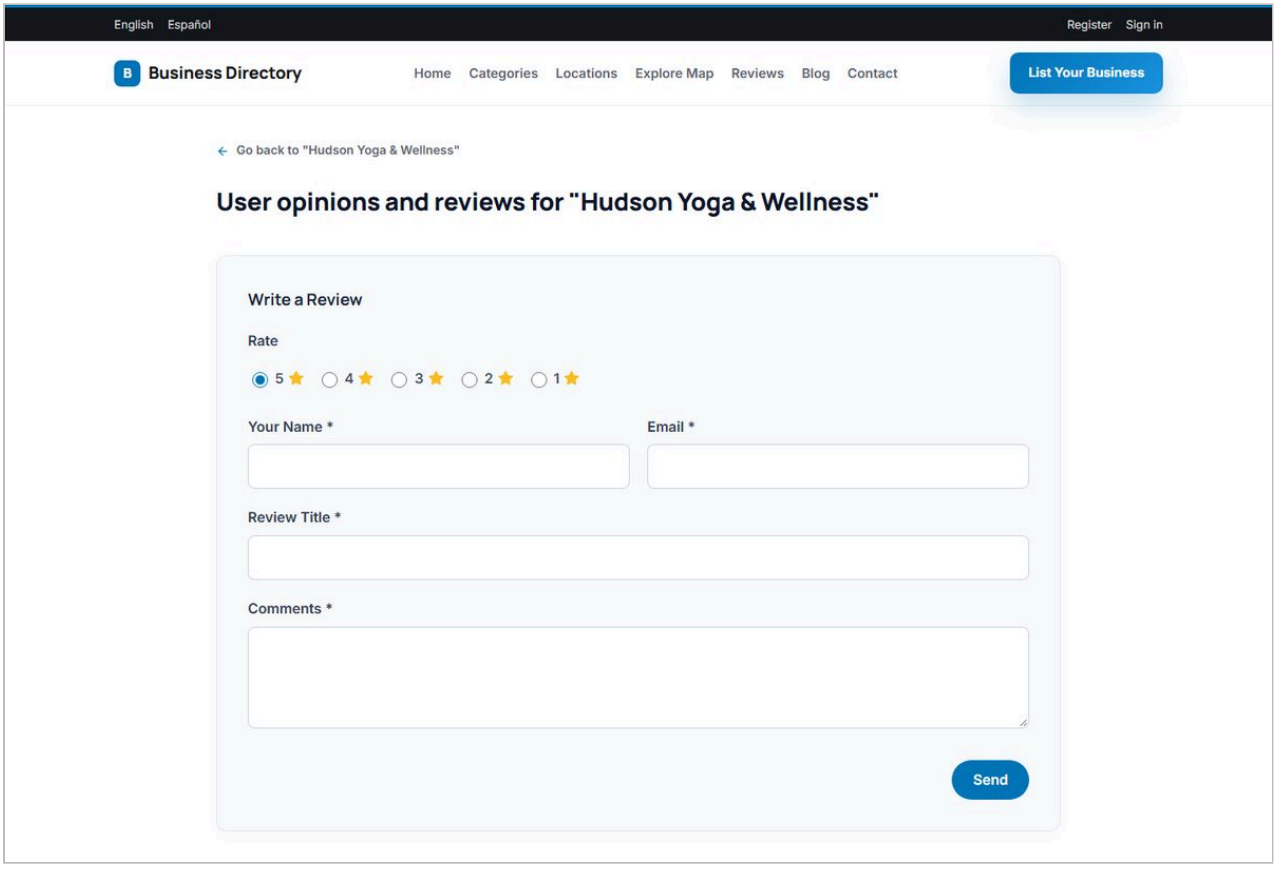


Figure 6.1 The review form of a listing.

After clicking **Send**, the review is published on the listing and the listing rating is updated. To limit abuse, each visitor can review a business only once, and automated submissions are rejected. All reviews can be edited or deleted in Admin Panel › Directory › Reviews; see

Moderating Reviews (chapter 22).

How ratings are calculated

A listing's rating is the average of the stars of its reviews, shown with one decimal and the number of reviews. It is recalculated whenever a review is added, changed or deleted. The rating is used for the stars on the listing, the **Highest Rated** sort order and the **Minimum Rating** filter.

The reviews page

The **Reviews** page in the main menu brings together the latest reviews of all businesses. It shows the total number of reviews, the average rating, the number of businesses reviewed and a breakdown by stars. Visitors can search reviews by keyword or business and sort them.

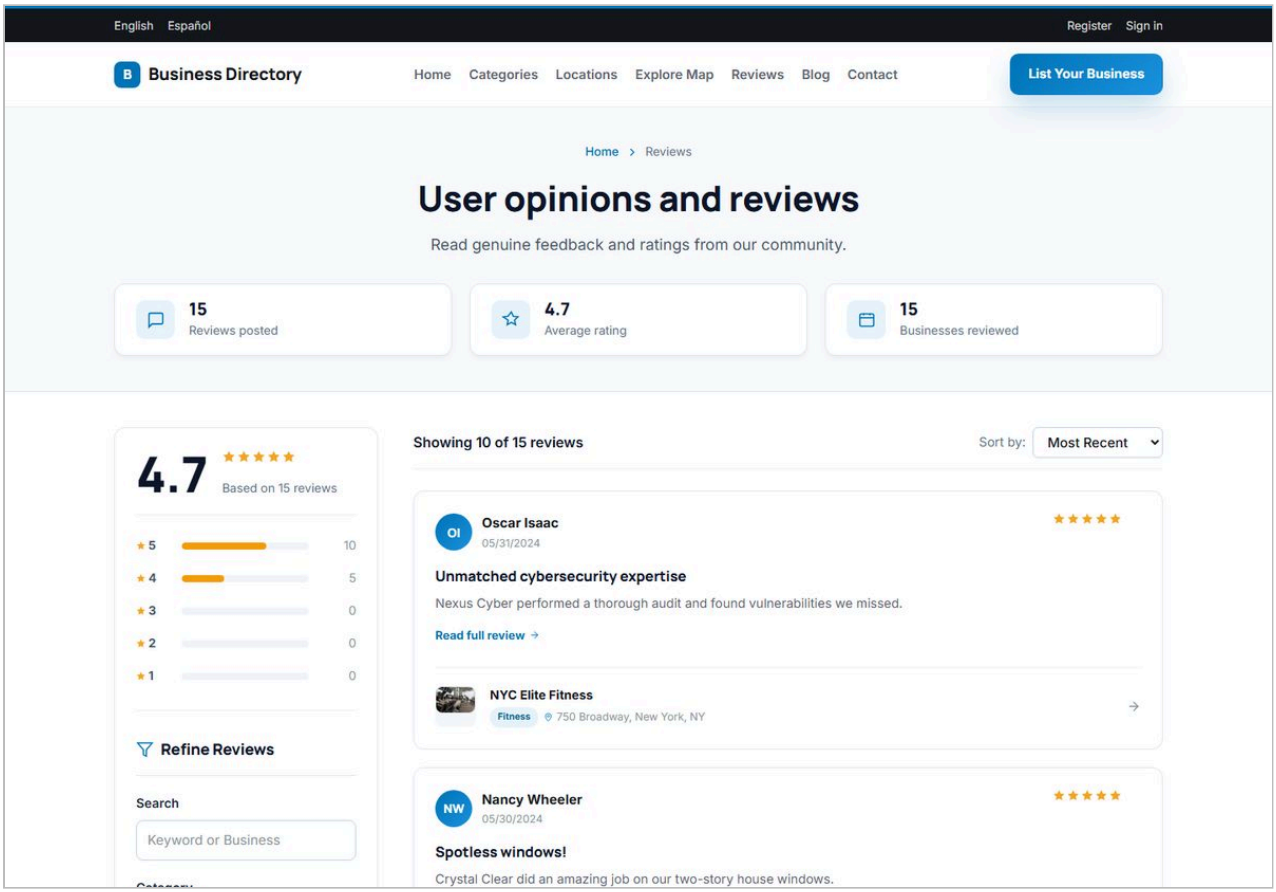


Figure 6.2 The Reviews page with statistics and the latest reviews.

Each review also has its own page, which helps search engines find genuine customer opinions about your listings.

AI review summaries

For listings with at least three reviews, the AI can add a short "What customers say" summary to the listing page. It is switched on with **AI review summary on the listing pages**; see Setting Up the AI Features (chapter 27).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/reviews-and-ratings.html

CHAPTER 7

Booking an Appointment Online

Businesses that take appointments, such as salons, clinics or consultants, can let visitors book a time slot directly from their listing page.

Appointment booking lets visitors reserve a time with a business directly from its listing. It is available for every listing whose owner has added at least one employee and their working hours in the user panel.

How a visitor books

1. On the listing page, the visitor clicks **Booking**.
2. A calendar of the current month opens. Days on which the business works show a **Book** button; other days show **N/A**. The **Previous Month** and **Next Month** links move through the calendar.
3. After choosing a day, the visitor chooses an employee (or **I have no preferences**) and a free time slot. Slots that are already taken are not offered.
4. The visitor enters a first name, last name, email, phone and optional comments, and confirms.

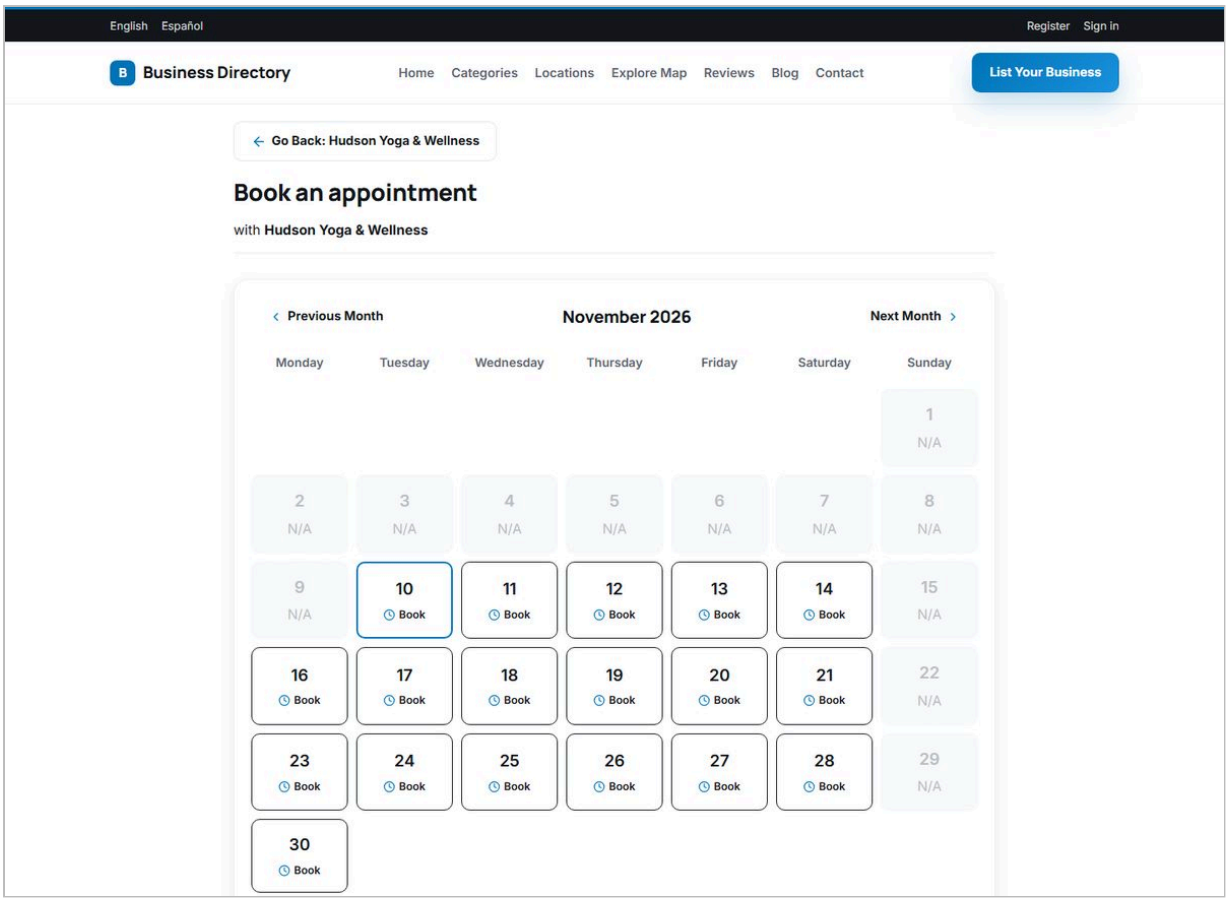


Figure 7.1 The booking calendar of a listing.

The visitor sees a thank-you message. The appointment appears as new in the owner's user panel, where the owner confirms or cancels it. See Managing Appointments and Employees (chapter 15).

What decides the available times

- The **working hours** of each employee, per day of the week.
- The **appointment duration** (from 15 minutes to 3 hours) and the **break between appointments**, set per employee.
- The appointments already booked.

> **TIP**
>
> Online booking is a strong selling point for salons, clinics, consultants, driving schools and other appointment-based businesses. Mention it in your package descriptions; all default packages include it.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/online-appointment-booking.html

CHAPTER 8

Adding a Business Listing from the Website

Business owners can submit a listing without creating an account. They choose a package, fill in one form, and the listing waits for approval.

Any visitor can add a business to the directory from the **List Your Business** button, without registering. Business owners who plan to manage several listings can instead create an account (chapter 12) and add listings from the user panel (chapter 14).

Step 1: Choose a package

The first page shows your packages side by side, with their prices and what each one includes: number of categories, number of images, featured status, a direct link for SEO and appointment booking. The visitor clicks **Select** under the chosen package.

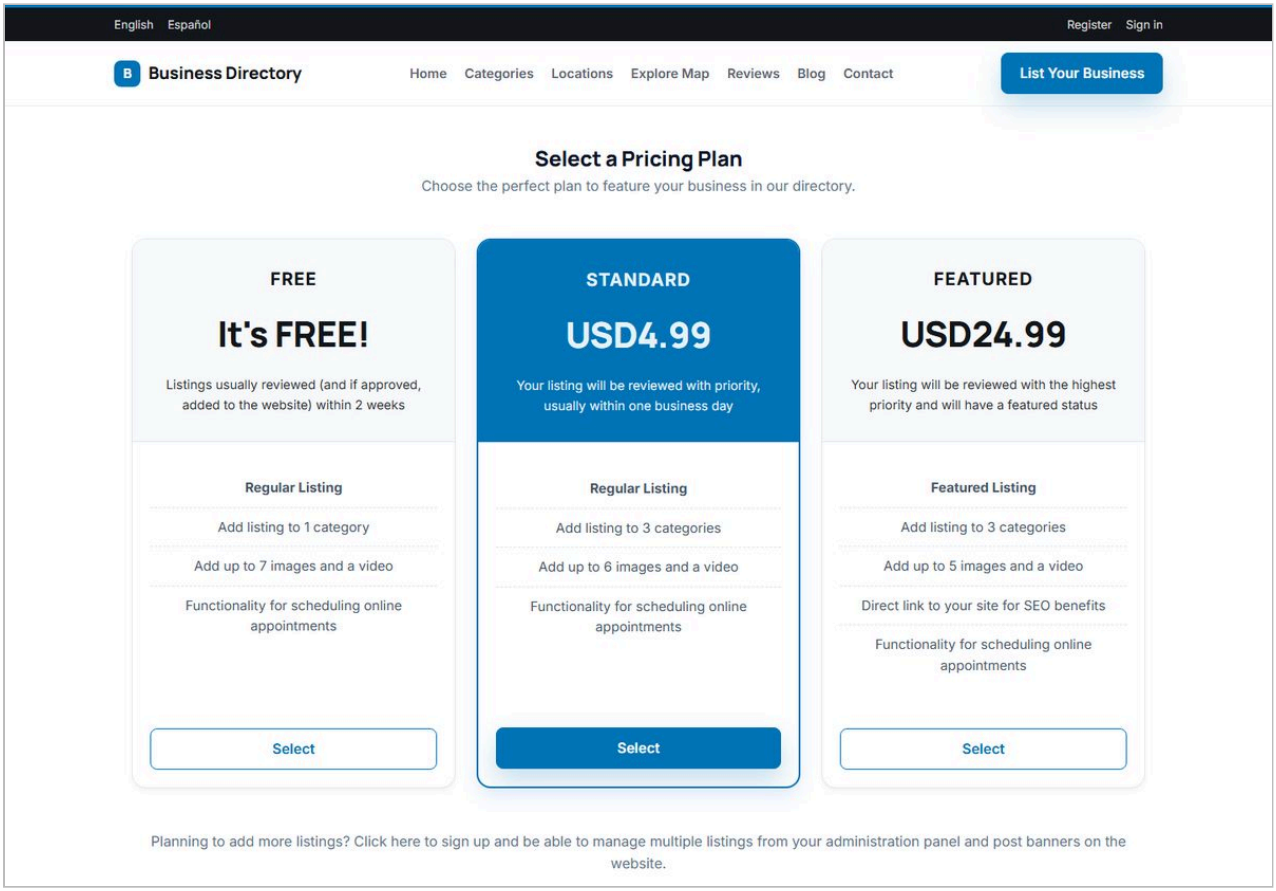


Figure 8.1 Choosing a package. The packages and their texts come from Directory Settings › Packages.

Step 2: Fill in the listing form

The form is divided into sections:

- **Category:** one to three categories, depending on the package.
- **Logo & Images:** the main image or logo, and additional photos up to the package limit.
- **Business details:** the company name, the description, an optional YouTube video (ID or link), the website and phone number, and any custom fields (chapter 30) you added.
- **Location:** the location from your location list, the street address and zip code. The **Add a map to your listing** button finds the address on the map; the pin can be dragged to the exact entrance, or the latitude and longitude can be entered directly.
- **Hours:** opening hours for each day, added with **Add hours**.
- **Owner Information:** the contact person and email address. The email address receives the confirmation and the code for editing the listing.

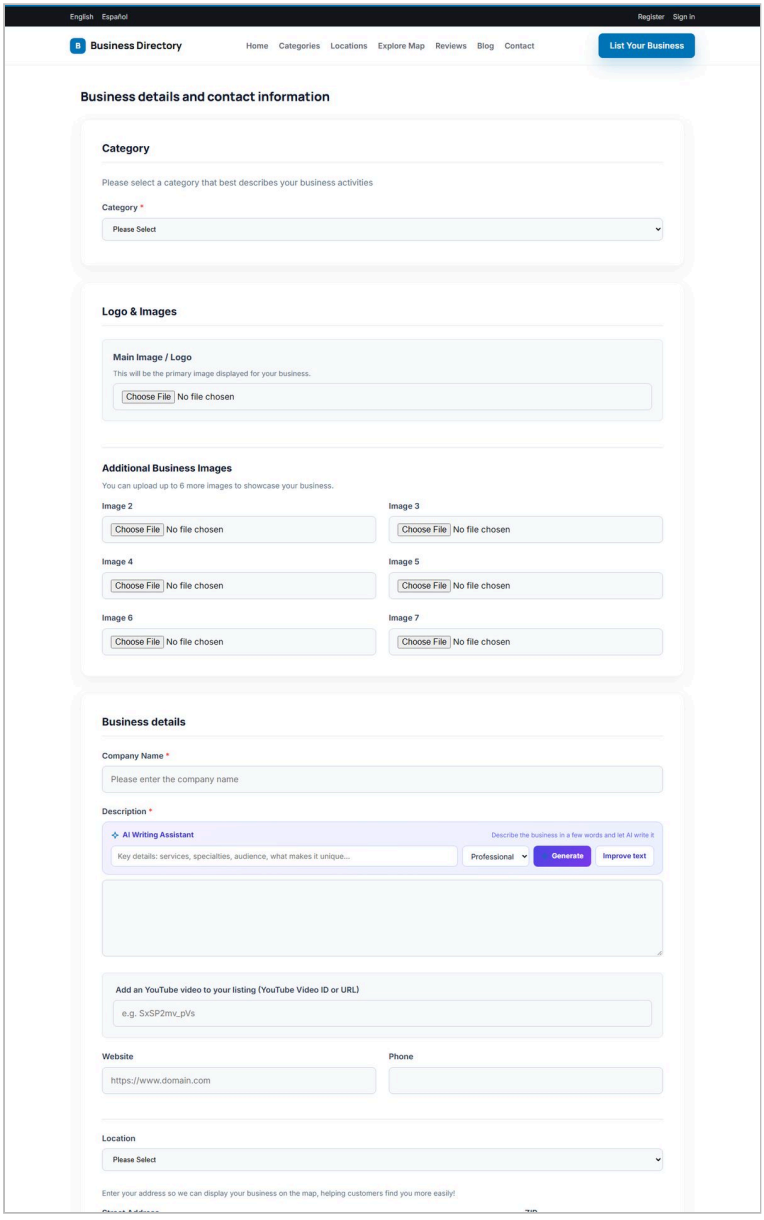


Figure 8.2 The listing form.

The AI writing assistant

When the AI features are enabled, an **AI Writing Assistant** box appears next to the description:

1. The owner types a few key facts, for example "family bakery since 1998, sourdough, vegan cakes, open Sundays".
2. They choose a tone: professional, friendly, premium, energetic or concise.
3. They click **Generate**. The AI writes a description that uses the name, category, location and website already entered in the form, in the visitor's language.

Improve text rewrites a description the owner has already written, fixing grammar and making it clearer. Every result can be undone. The AI is instructed not to invent facts such as years in business, awards, prices or certifications.

You can decide whether visitors who are not logged in may use the assistant; see Setting Up the AI Features (chapter 27).

Step 3: Confirmation and payment

After **Submit**, the owner sees a confirmation message, which you can edit (**Success Message Free** and **Success Message Paid** in Directory Configuration Options (chapter 24)).

For a paid package, the payment options you enabled are shown right away. A card payment opens Stripe's secure payment page and returns to a confirmation page; PayPal is paid without leaving the website; bank transfer shows your account details and a reference. See Payments: Stripe, PayPal and Bank Transfer (chapter 26).

The listing then waits for approval in Admin Panel › Directory › Approve Listings, unless **Auto Approve Listings** is switched on.

Editing a listing later

Owners who submitted a listing without an account receive a secret code with it. To change the listing later, they open **Edit Your Listing** from the menu or footer and enter the code.

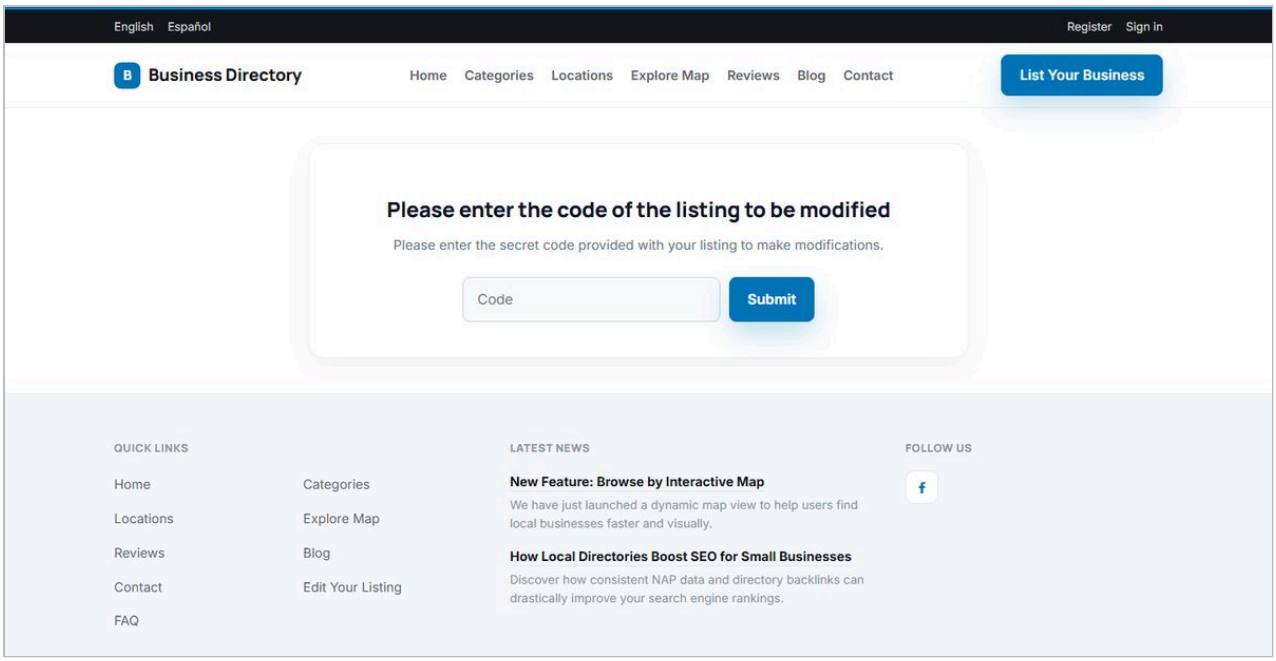


Figure 8.3 Owners without an account edit their listing with its code.

Registered users simply edit their listings in the user panel.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/add-a-business-listing.html

CHAPTER 9

Claiming an Existing Listing

When you pre-fill your directory with businesses, their owners can claim their listings and take them over. Claims are a powerful way to turn listings into customers.

Many directories start with listings collected or imported by the directory owner, before the businesses know about the website. Claiming lets each business owner take over their listing, which is the first step towards turning them into a paying customer.

Which listings can be claimed

A **Claim this listing** link appears on listings that do not belong to any registered user, typically listings you imported (chapter 23) or added yourself in the admin panel without an owner. Claiming must be enabled with **Enable Claim Listing** in Directory Settings › Configuration Options › Listings And Approvals.

How an owner claims a listing

1. The owner opens the listing and clicks **Claim this listing**.
2. They enter their name, email address, phone number and a message explaining their relationship with the business, for example "I am the owner and need to update our opening hours".
3. The claim is sent. A notification is emailed to the **System Email Address**, and the claim appears in Admin Panel › Directory › Claimed Listings.

What happens next

You verify the claim, for example by calling the phone number listed for the business, and approve it. The listing is then marked as claimed and transferred to the claimant, who receives an email with a private link for managing it. See Handling Listing Claims (chapter 20).

> **TIP**
>
> Claiming is free by default. After an owner has claimed their listing, it is a natural moment to offer an upgrade to a featured package.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/claim-a-listing.html

CHAPTER 10

The Explore Map

The Explore Map shows all businesses on an interactive map. It is the fastest way for visitors to find something near them.

The **Explore Map** page shows every listing that has map coordinates on one interactive map. It works on phones and computers and uses OpenStreetMap, so no Google Maps API key is needed.

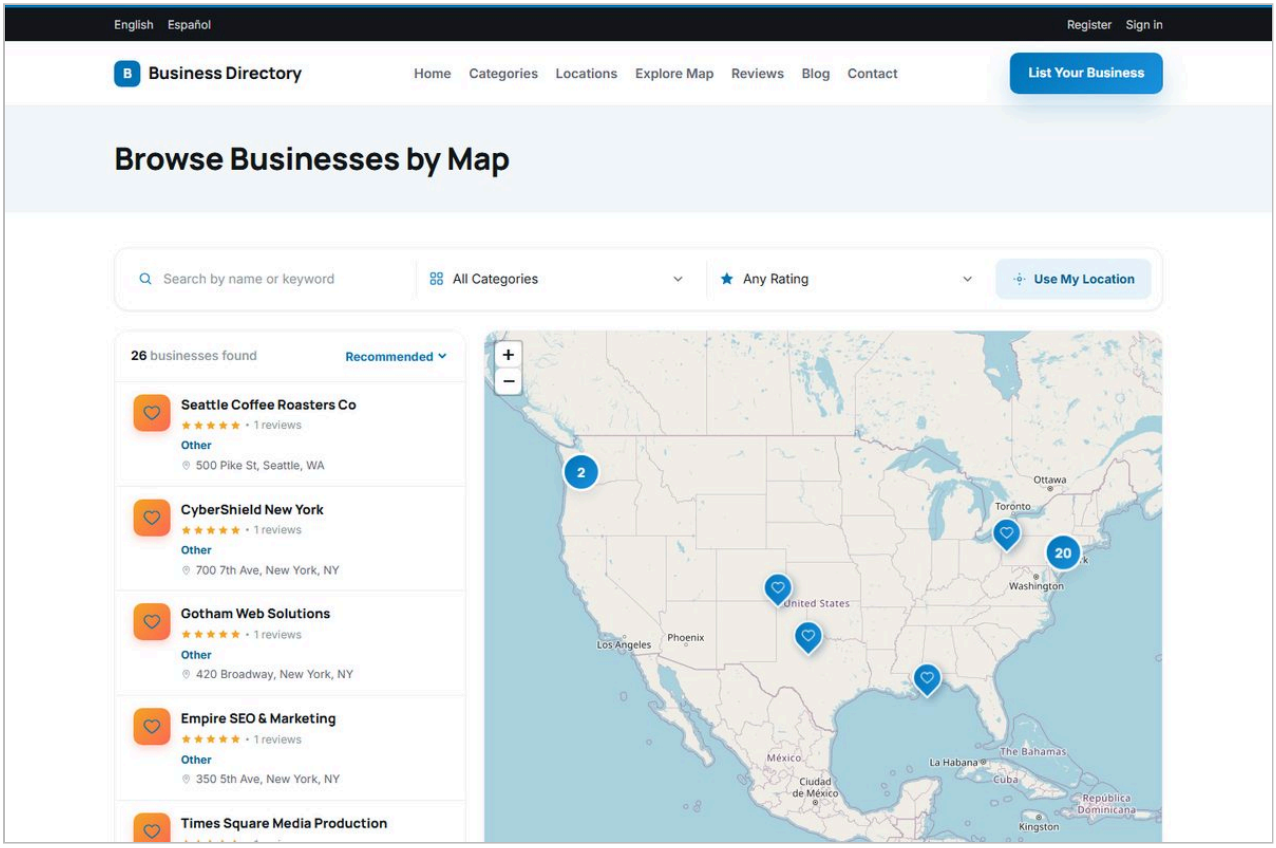


Figure 10.1 The Explore Map with the list of businesses on the left.

Using the map

- Businesses that are close together are grouped in numbered clusters. Clicking a cluster zooms in.
- Clicking a marker shows the business name, rating and address with a link to the listing.
- The list next to the map shows the businesses found, with their rating and address, and can be sorted.
- The filters above the map search by name or keyword, category and minimum rating.
- **Use My Location** centers the map on the visitor's position (after the browser asks for permission) and shows the businesses nearby.

Getting listings on the map

A listing appears on the map when it has a latitude and longitude. These are filled in automatically when the owner clicks **Add a map to your listing** in the listing form, or can be entered by hand in the admin listing editor. Imported listings appear once their coordinates are added.

> **NOTE**
>
> The Explorer template shows a map on its home page and next to the search results as well. See Templates, Logo and Appearance (chapter 34).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/explore-map.html

CHAPTER 11

Blog, FAQ and Contact Pages

Besides listings, your directory has content pages that answer questions, publish news and let visitors contact you.

Content pages help visitors and search engines. All of them are managed in the admin panel without any HTML knowledge.

Blog (news)

The **Blog** page lists your news articles with their cover images, newest first, with a search box and a list of recent posts. Each article has its own page and friendly URL. Articles are written in Website › News; see News (Blog) and FAQ Management (chapter 33).

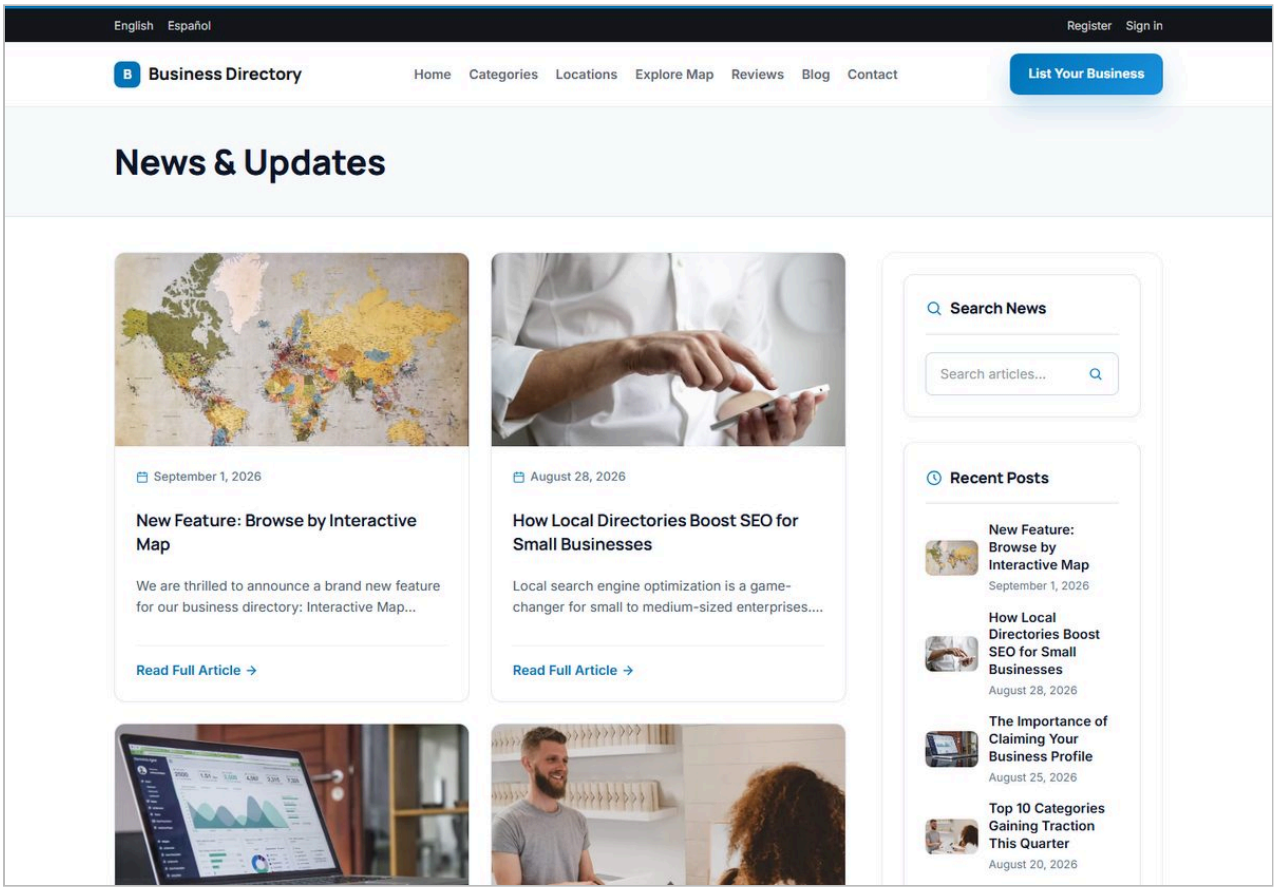


Figure 11.1 The Blog page.

TIP

Articles such as "The 10 best coffee shops in Seattle" bring visitors from search engines and give you a reason to link to your listings. They are also a good offer for paying businesses.

FAQ

The **FAQ** page shows your frequently asked questions as an accordion: clicking a question opens its answer. The demo questions explain how to add, edit and claim a listing, how to book an appointment, how reviews work and how to search; edit them to match your directory.

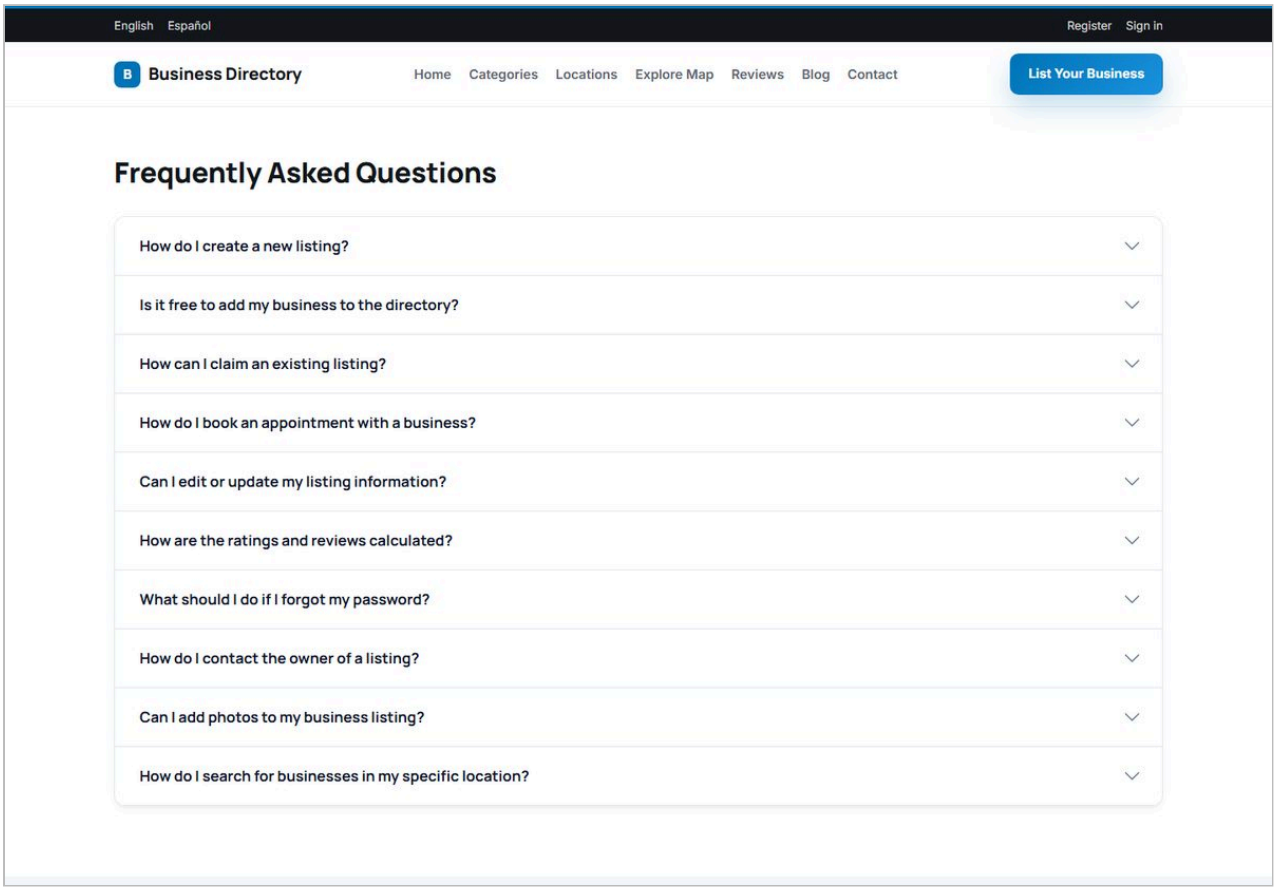


Figure 11.2 The FAQ page.

Contact page

The **Contact** page has a form with the visitor's name, email address, phone number, subject and message. Messages are emailed to the **Admin Contact Email** address and saved in Admin Panel › Home › Messages.

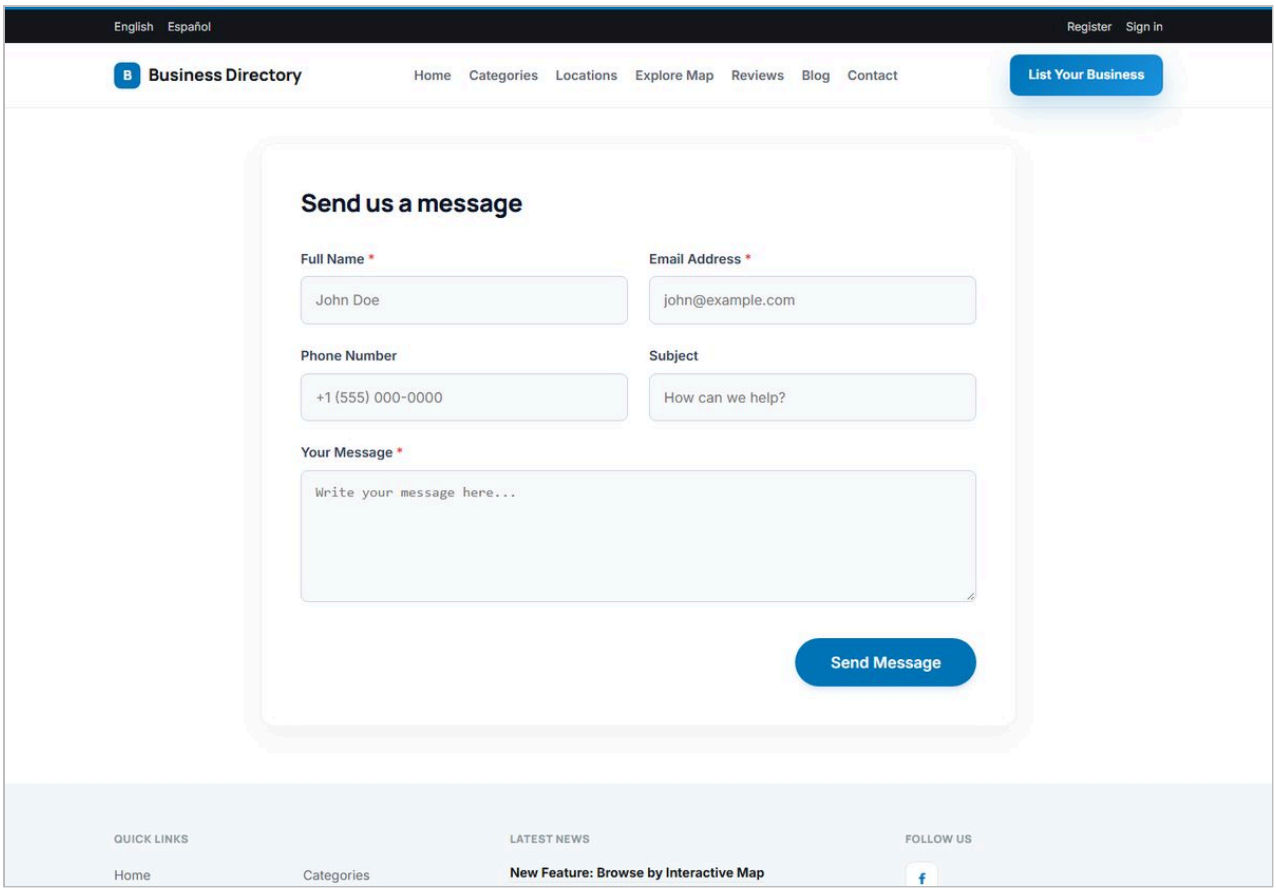


Figure 11.3 The contact form.

Your own pages

You can add any number of pages, such as "About us", "Advertise with us" or "Terms of use", and choose where they appear in the menu. See Website Pages and Menu (chapter 32).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/blog-faq-contact-pages.html

CHAPTER 12

Registration, Login and Password Recovery

An account gives business owners a private user panel for managing several listings, messages, appointments and banners.

Visitors do not need an account to search, review or submit a single listing. An account is useful for business owners: it gives them the user panel (chapter 13), where they manage several listings, read messages, take appointments and buy banners.

Creating an account

The **Register** link in the top bar opens the registration form:

- **Username** and **Password** for logging in,
- **Your Name**, **Email** and an optional **Phone**,
- an optional checkbox for subscribing to your newsletter.

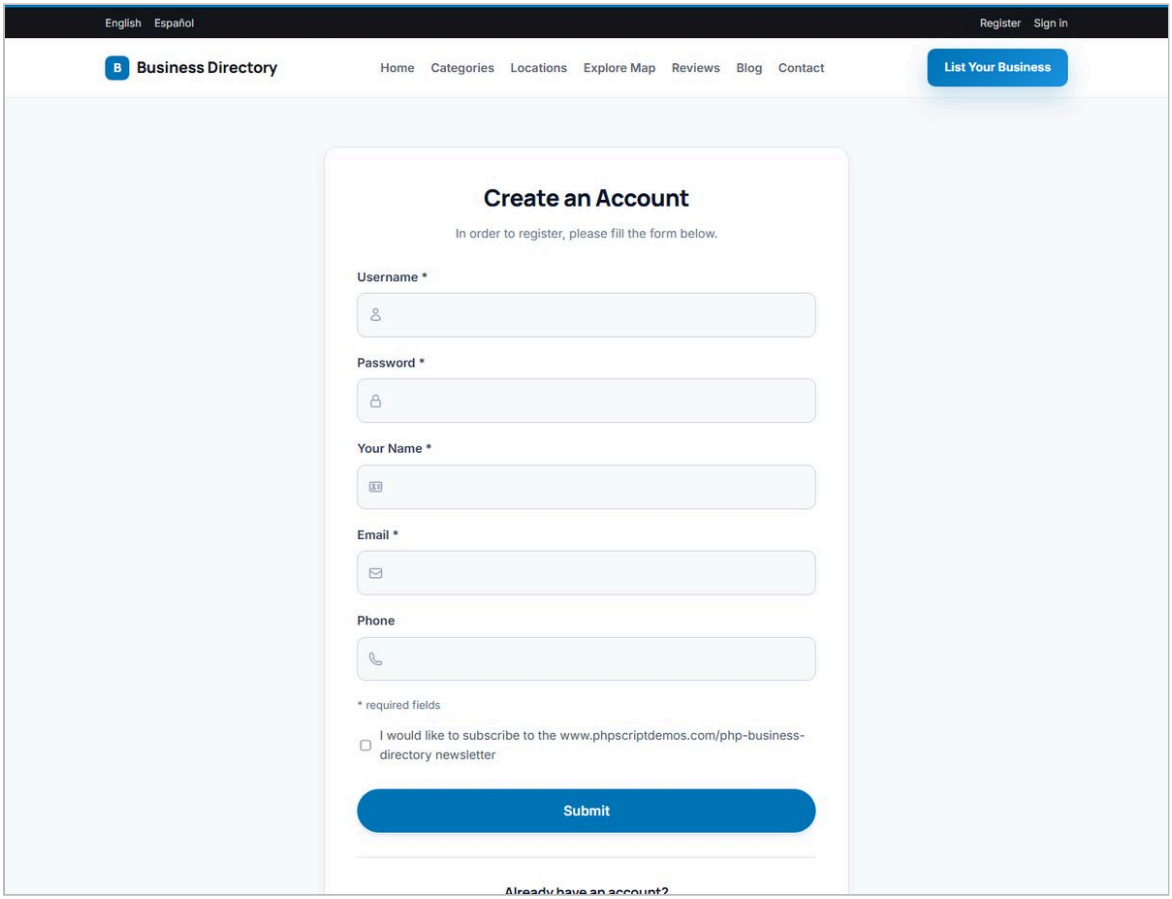


Figure 12.1 The registration form.

After **Submit**, the new user is logged in directly and taken to the user panel.

If you enable reCAPTCHA in Directory Configuration Options (chapter 24), the registration form is protected against automated sign-ups.

Logging in

The **Sign in** link opens the login page. Users enter their username and password, optionally tick **Remember me**, and are taken to the user panel.

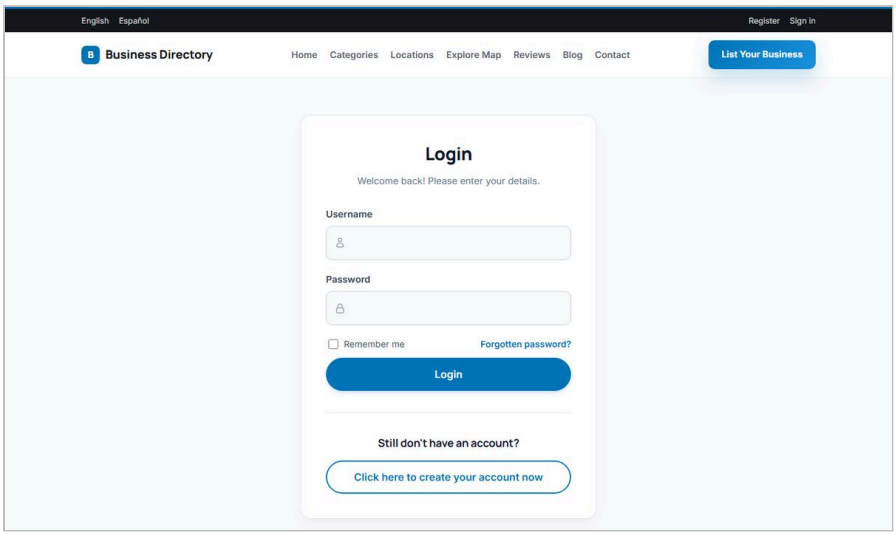


Figure 12.2 The login page.

Forgotten password

The **Forgotten password?** link asks for the email address used at registration. The directory emails a new random password to that address. The user logs in with it and changes it in Profile › Change Password.

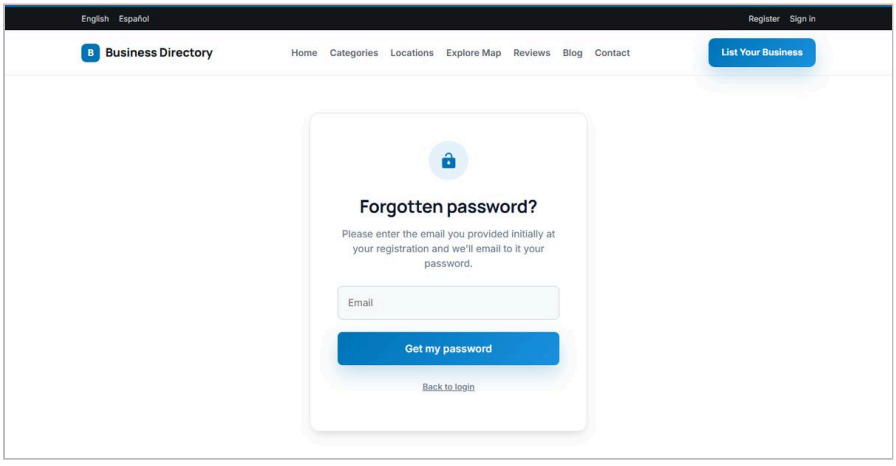


Figure 12.3 Requesting a new password.

> **NOTE**
>
> Passwords are stored as secure one-way hashes, so nobody, not even an administrator, can read a user's password. That is why the reminder sends a new password instead of the old one.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/registration-and-login.html

PART 3

The User Panel (Business Owners)

The private area where business owners manage their listings, messages, appointments and banners.

CHAPTER 13

The User Panel: Dashboard and Messages

The user panel is the private area for business owners. The dashboard shows how their listings perform and what needs attention.

Business owners reach the user panel by logging in on the website, or directly at `yourdomain.com/USERS/`. It is a separate, simple interface designed for people who are not technical.

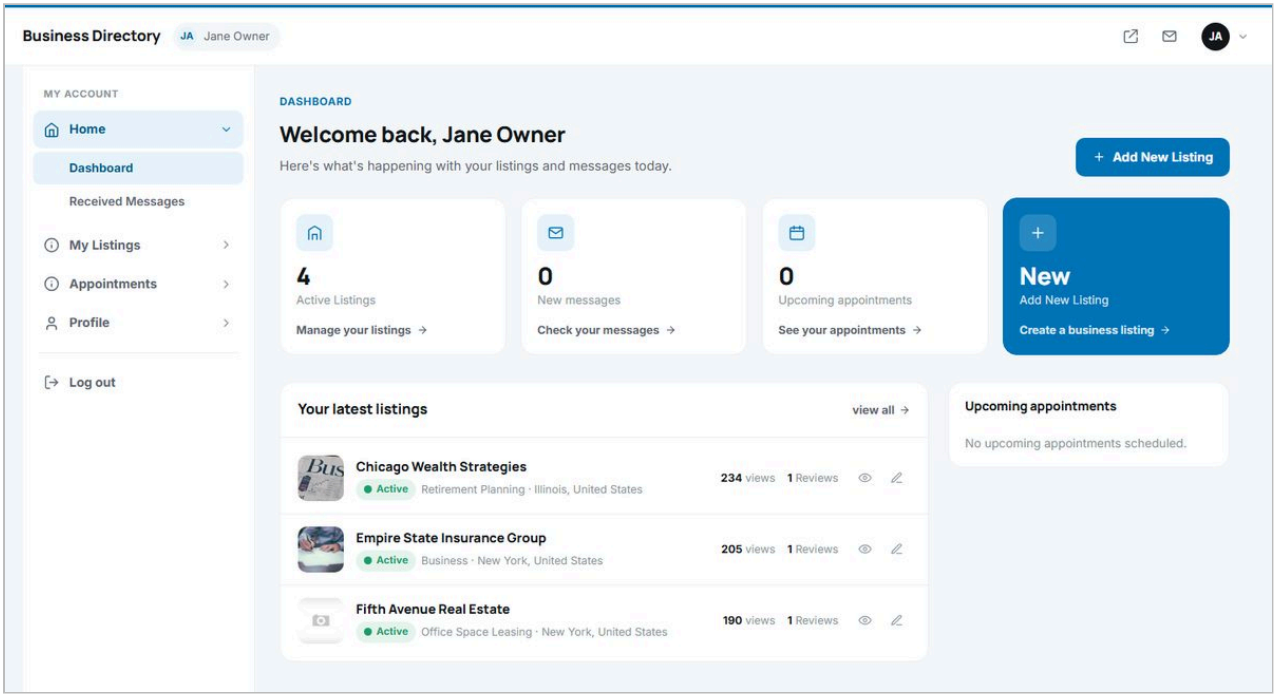


Figure 13.1 The user panel dashboard of a business owner with four listings.

Layout of the user panel

- **Top bar:** the directory name, the user's name, a link to the main website, a messages icon and the account menu with **Contact details**, **Change password** and **Log out**.
- **Menu on the left:** four sections, each with its pages.

SECTION	PAGES
Home	Dashboard, Received Messages
My Listings	Your Current Listings, Listings Pending Validation, Expired Listings, Banners, Add New Listing
Appointments	New Appointments, Confirmed Appointments, Cancelled Appointments, Employees
Profile	Contact Details, Change Password

The user panel uses the language the user chose on the website.

The dashboard

The dashboard greets the user and summarizes what matters today:

- **Active Listings**, **New messages** and **Upcoming appointments** counters, each with a link to the matching page.
- An **Add New Listing** shortcut.
- **Your latest listings** with their status, category, location, number of views and number of reviews. The view count shows business owners the value of their listing.
- **Upcoming appointments** booked by customers.

Received messages

User Panel › Home › Received Messages

When a visitor uses the contact form of a listing, the message is emailed to the business and also saved here. Each message shows the sender's name, email address, phone number, the date and the text.

- **Reply** sends an answer by email to the visitor, directly from the user panel.
- **Delete** removes the message after a confirmation.

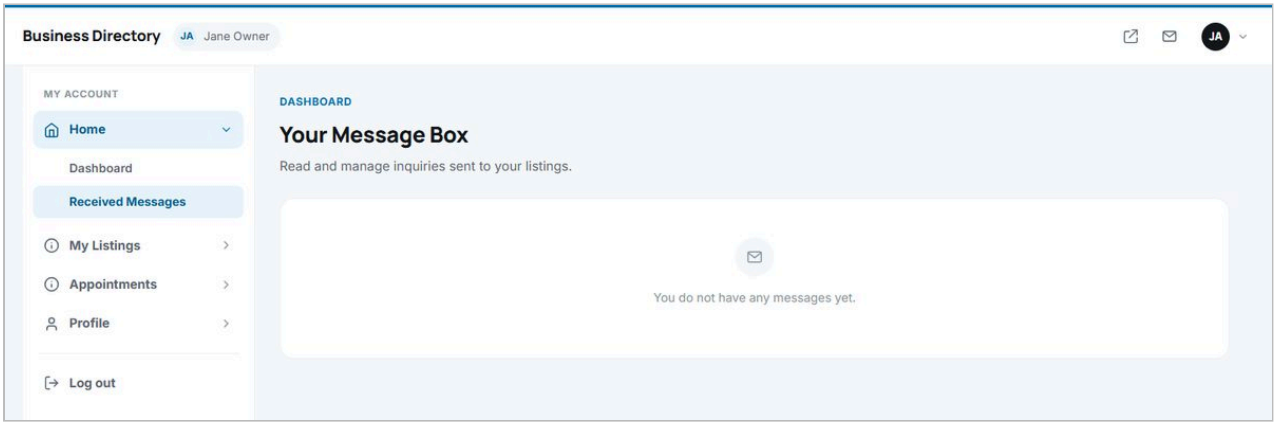


Figure 13.2 Received Messages. New users start with an empty message box.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/user-panel-dashboard.html

CHAPTER 14

Managing Your Listings

The My Listings section lists every business you own, with its status, views and reviews, and lets you add new ones.

The **My Listings** section shows every listing that belongs to the user, sorted by status: current, pending validation and expired.

Your current listings

User Panel › My Listings › Your Current Listings

Each active listing shows its image, title, status, category, location and expiry date, with its number of views and reviews. Three actions are available on the right:

- **View** opens the listing on the website.
- **Edit** opens the listing form.
- **Delete** removes the listing after a confirmation. This cannot be undone.

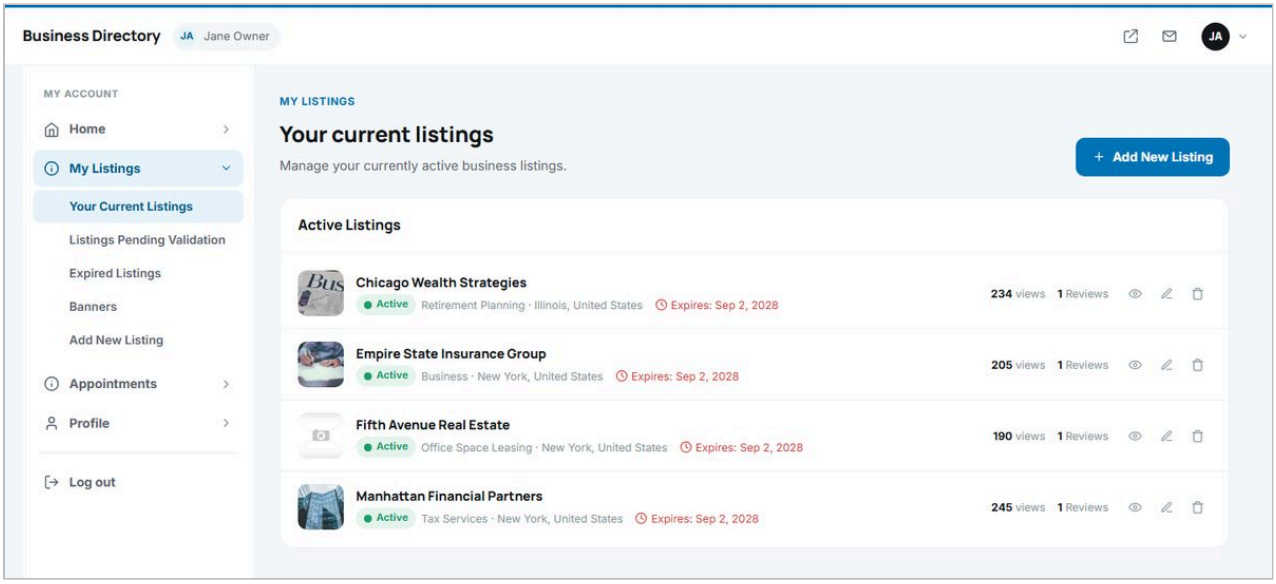


Figure 14.1 Your Current Listings with views, reviews and expiry dates.

Adding a new listing

User Panel › My Listings › Add New Listing

1. Choose a package. The most popular paid package is highlighted.
2. Fill in the listing form: categories, logo and images, business details, location and map, opening hours. The form is the same as on the website and includes the AI writing assistant (chapter 8).

3. Submit the listing and, for a paid package, pay with one of the offered payment methods.

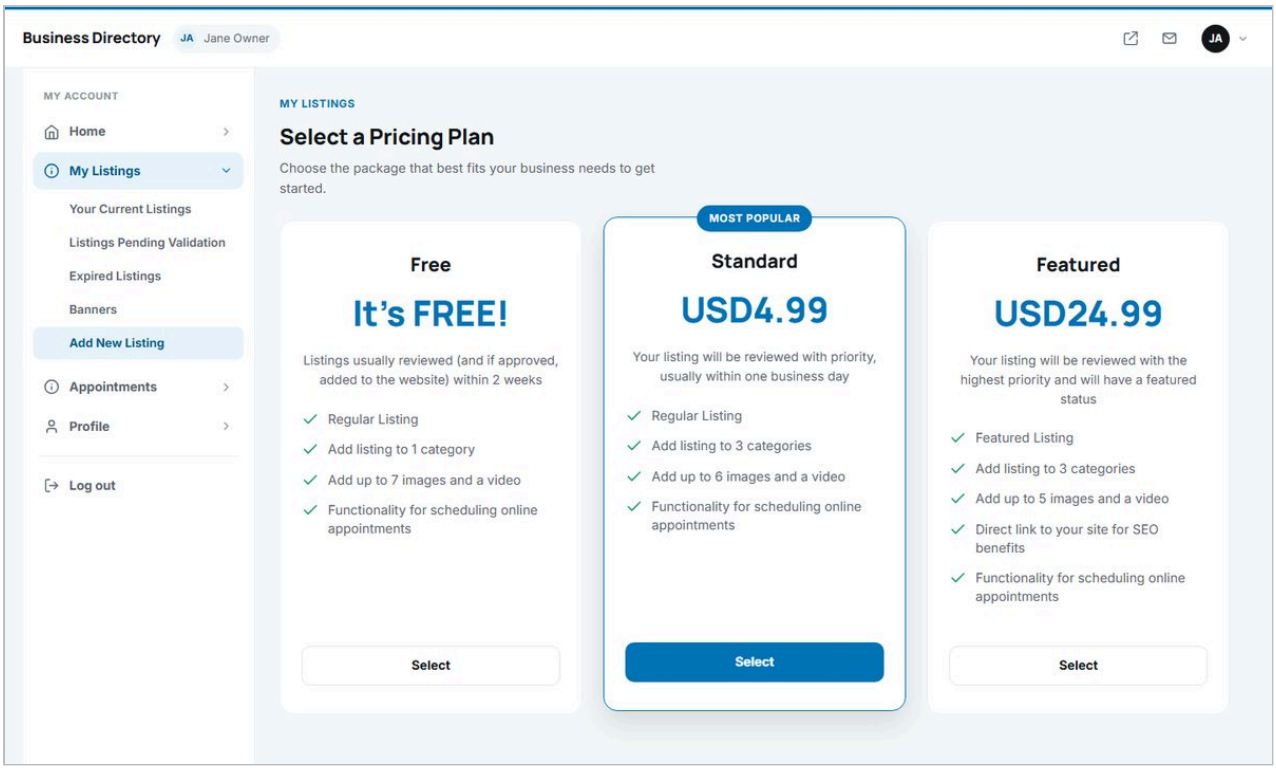


Figure 14.2 Choosing a package in the user panel.

New listings appear under **Listings Pending Validation** until an administrator approves them, unless your directory approves listings automatically.

Editing a listing

The edit form contains all fields of the listing. Owners can:

- change the categories, within the limit of their package,
- replace the main image or logo and upload additional photos, within the photo limit of their package,
- update the description (with the AI writing assistant), website, phone, YouTube video and custom fields,
- move the map pin and change the address,
- update the opening hours.

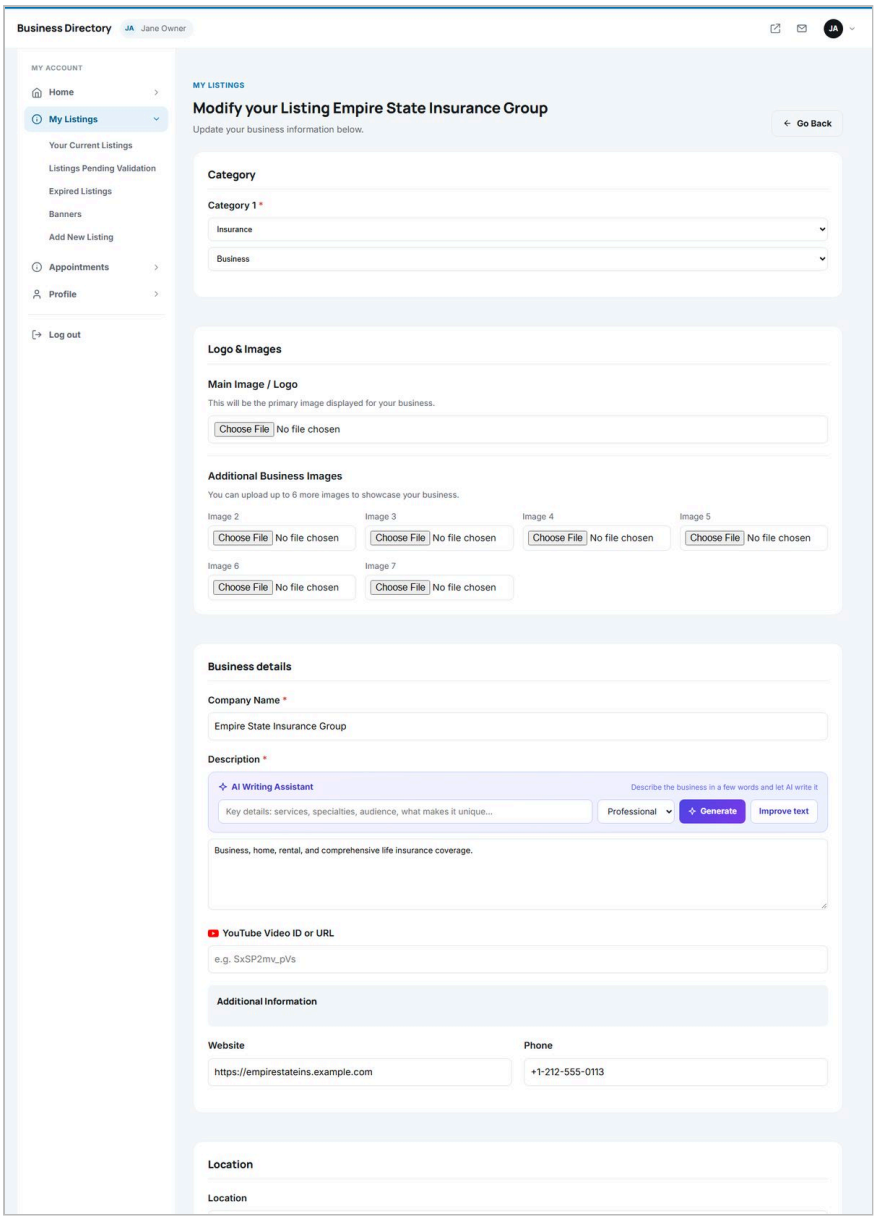


Figure 14.3 Editing a listing in the user panel.

Click **Save** at the bottom of the form. Changes appear on the website immediately.

Pending and expired listings

- **Listings Pending Validation** are listings waiting for approval. They are not visible to visitors yet.
- **Expired Listings** have passed the end date of their package and are no longer shown on the website. Click **Renew** to put them back online.

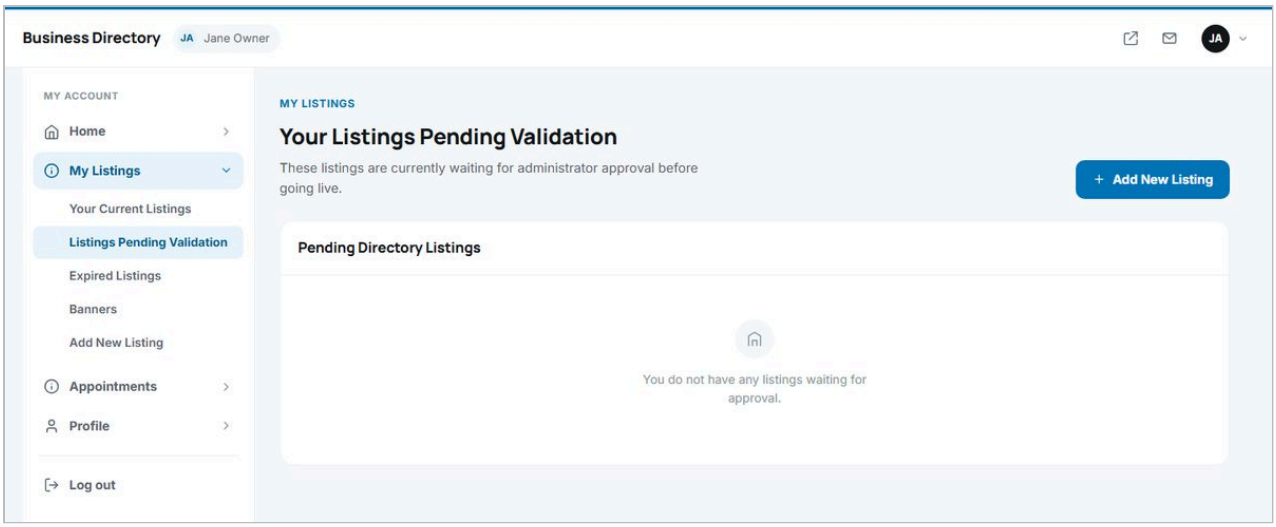


Figure 14.4 Listings Pending Validation.

Renewing a listing

User Panel › My Listings › Expired Listings › Renew

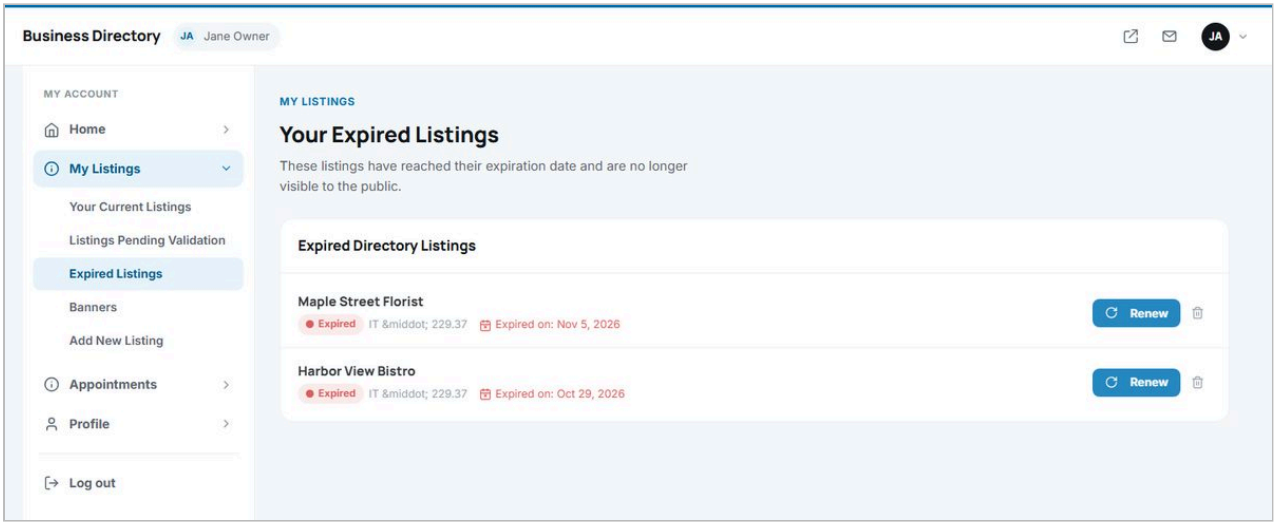


Figure 14.5 Expired listings, each with a Renew button.

The renewal page shows the package, the expiry date, the new date after renewal and the price.

- **Free packages:** click **Renew now**. The listing is back online immediately.
- **Paid packages:** choose card, PayPal or bank transfer. Card and PayPal payments renew the listing as soon as they are confirmed; a bank transfer renews it when the administrator records the payment.

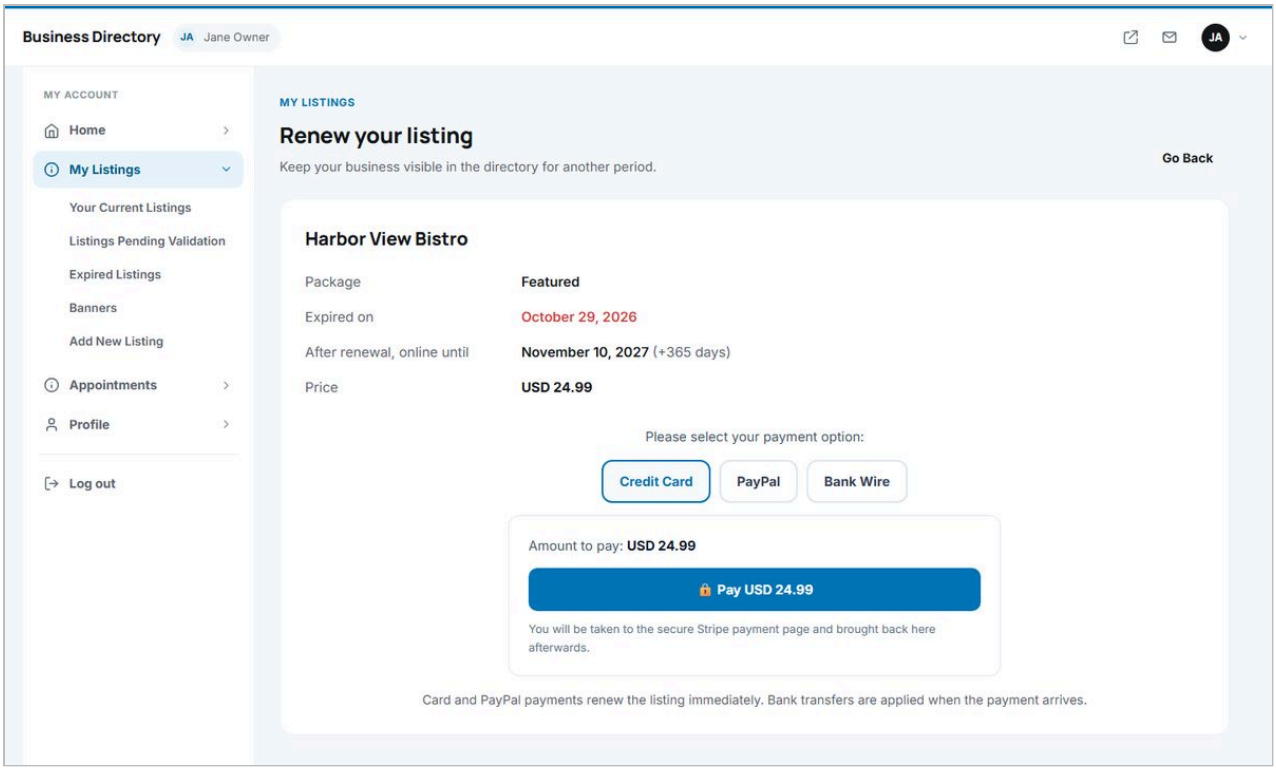


Figure 14.6 Renewing a listing with a paid package.

The listing is extended by the duration of its package, counted from today, or from the current end date if it has not expired yet. The administrator can also renew any listing; see Approving, Adding and Editing Listings (chapter 19).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/manage-your-listings.html

CHAPTER 15

Managing Appointments and Employees

The Appointments section turns a listing into a simple booking system: you define who works when, and customers book the free time slots.

Online booking needs two things from the business owner: at least one employee with working hours, and a few seconds each day to confirm new appointments. Customers then book on the listing page as described in Booking an Appointment Online (chapter 7).

Setting up employees

User Panel › Appointments › Employees

An employee is anyone customers can book: a hairdresser, a doctor, a consultant, or simply the business itself if one person does everything.

1. Enter the **First Name** and **Last Name**, and optionally the phone and email.
2. Under **Working Hours**, choose a day, a start time and an end time, and click **Add**. Repeat for every working day. Add two ranges for the same day for a lunch break, for example 09:00–12:00 and 13:00–18:00.
3. Choose the **Appointment Duration**, from 15 minutes to 3 hours.
4. Choose the **Break between appointments**, used for cleaning, travel or preparation.
5. Click **Submit**.

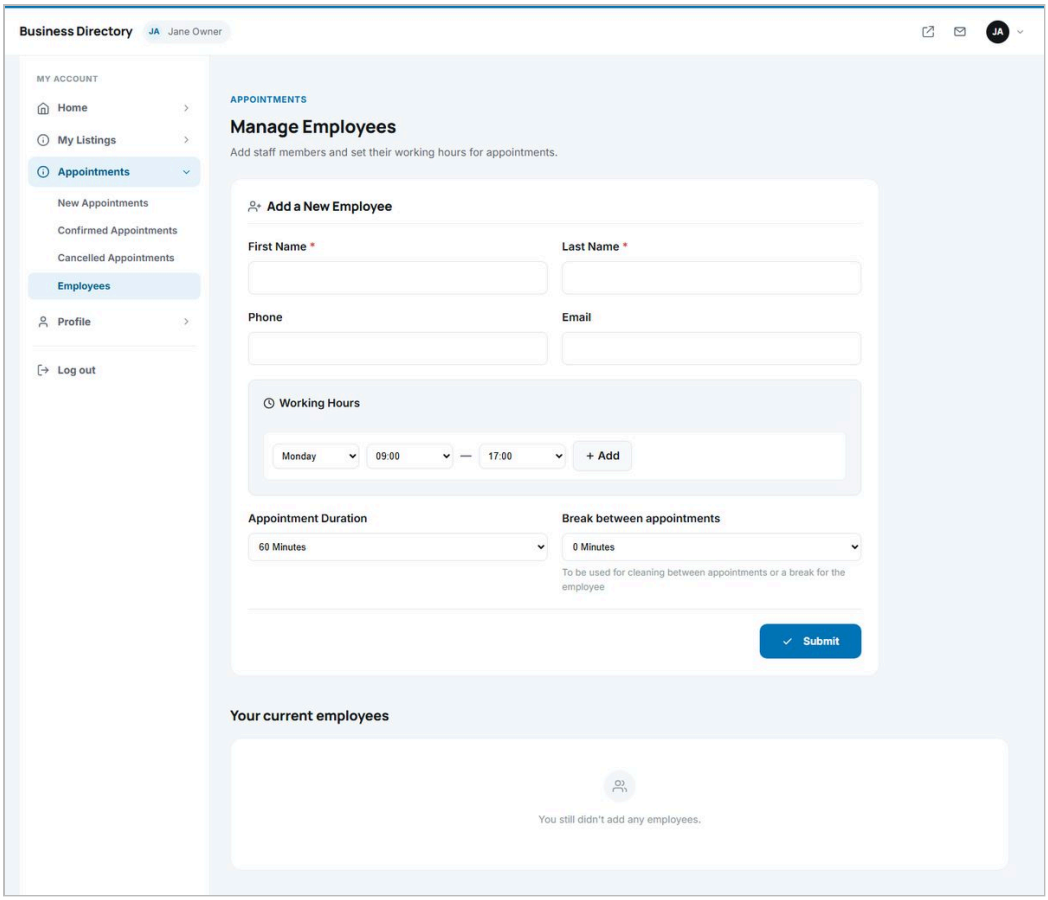


Figure 15.1 Adding an employee with working hours.

The employee appears under **Your current employees**, where you can edit or delete them. The booking calendar on the listing page is updated immediately.

Confirming appointments

User Panel › Appointments › New Appointments

New bookings arrive here with the customer's name and contact details, the employee, the date and time and the customer's comments.

- **Confirm** accepts the appointment. It moves to **Confirmed Appointments** and appears among the upcoming appointments on the dashboard.
- **Cancel** declines it. It moves to **Cancelled Appointments** and the time slot becomes free again.
- **Delete** removes it completely.

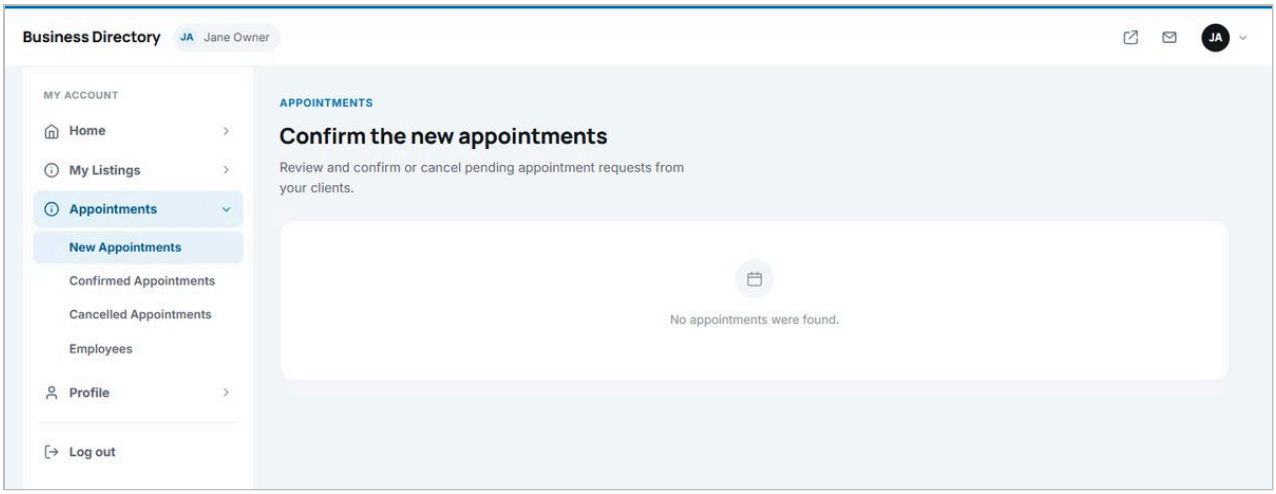


Figure 15.2 New Appointments waiting for confirmation.

> **TIP**
>
> Confirm or cancel new appointments quickly: customers expect an answer the same day, and a quick confirmation is the best advertisement for online booking.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/appointments-and-employees.html

CHAPTER 16

Buying Banner Advertising

Registered users can buy banner space on the directory themselves, which gives you a second, fully self-service source of income.

Registered users can buy banner space on your website from their user panel: they choose where it appears, upload the banner and pay, without contacting you. You create the banner areas and set their prices in the admin panel; see Banner Areas, Banners and Ad Zones (chapter 31).

Choosing a banner area

User Panel › My Listings › Banners

The page lists the banner areas you offer. Each area shows its description, the banner size in pixels, the price, the duration and its capacity (how many places are taken out of how many). Full areas are marked **SOLD OUT**; the others are marked **Available** and have a **Select** button.

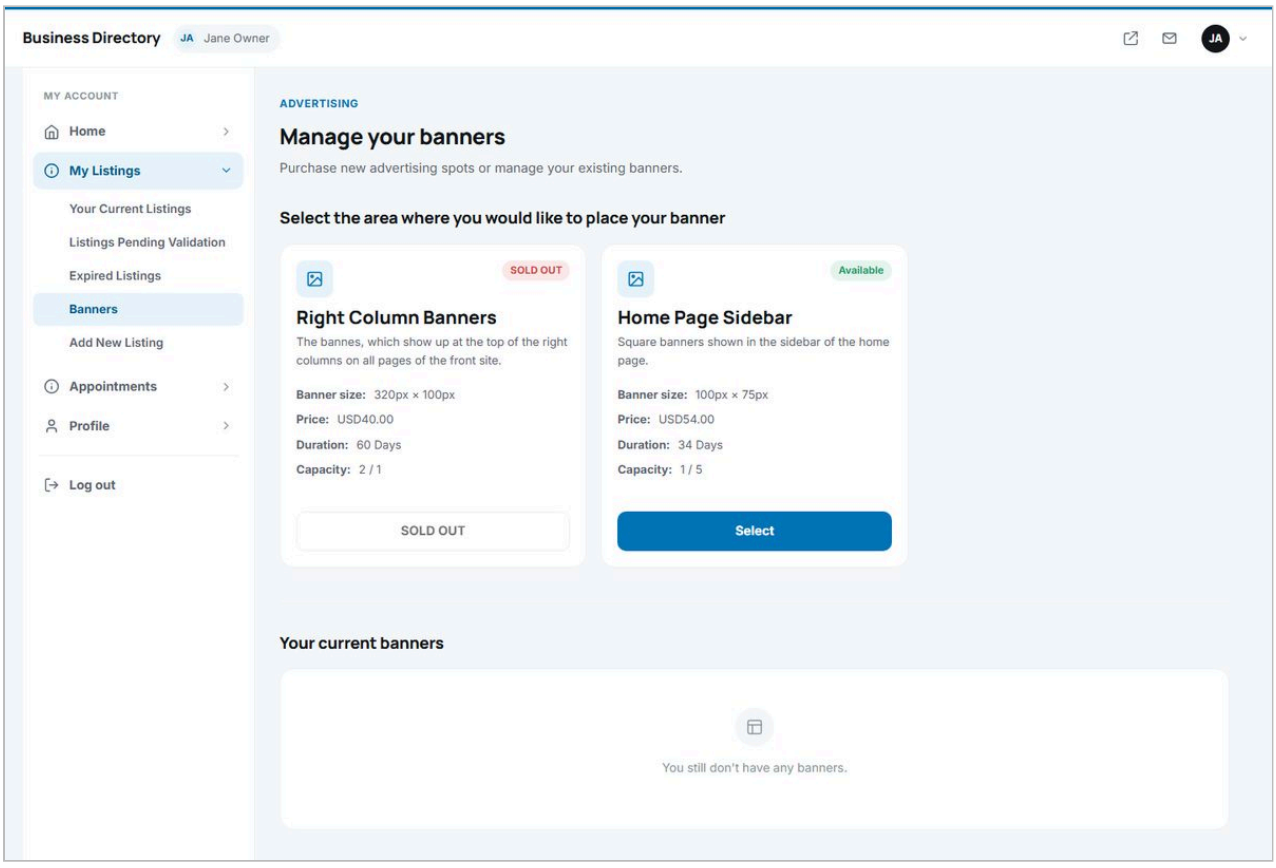


Figure 16.1 Banner areas offered to users, with size, price, duration and availability.

Creating the banner and paying

1. Enter a **Banner name**, for your own reference.
2. Upload the banner **Image** (JPG, PNG, GIF or WEBP) in exactly the size shown for the area, for example 320 × 100 pixels.
3. Choose where the banner links to: one of your listings on the directory, or an external website, and enter the link.
4. Click **Submit**. For a paid area, the payment options follow: card (on Stripe's secure page), PayPal or bank transfer. Banners in free areas are submitted without payment.

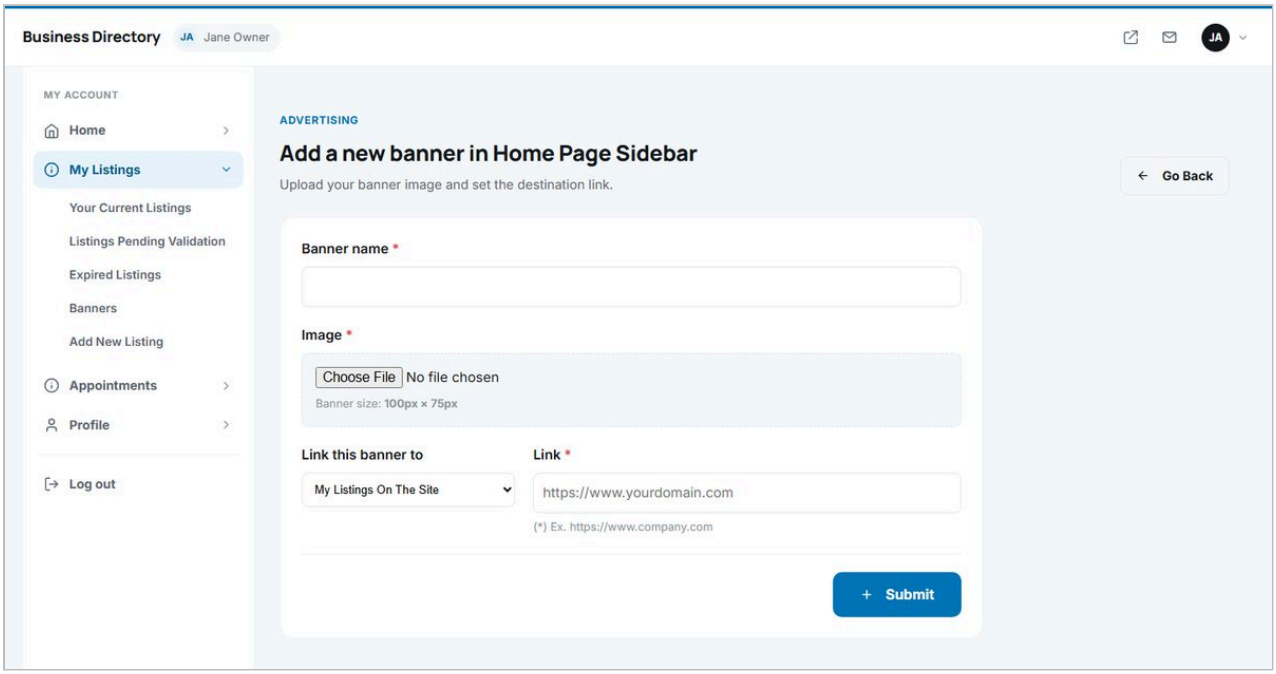


Figure 16.2 Adding a banner in the Home Page Sidebar area.

Card and PayPal payments are confirmed immediately and shown as paid to the administrator. The banner is checked by an administrator and then shown in rotation in its area until its period ends. Your banners are listed under **Your current banners**, where you can change the image or link.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/buy-banner-advertising.html

CHAPTER 17

Profile, Password and Account

The Profile section keeps your contact details and password up to date.

The **Profile** section holds the account details. They are separate from the contact details of each listing, which are edited in the listing form.

Contact details

User Panel › Profile › Contact Details

Update **Your Name**, **Email** and **Telephone** and click **Save**. The email address is used for messages from the directory and for password resets, so keep it current.

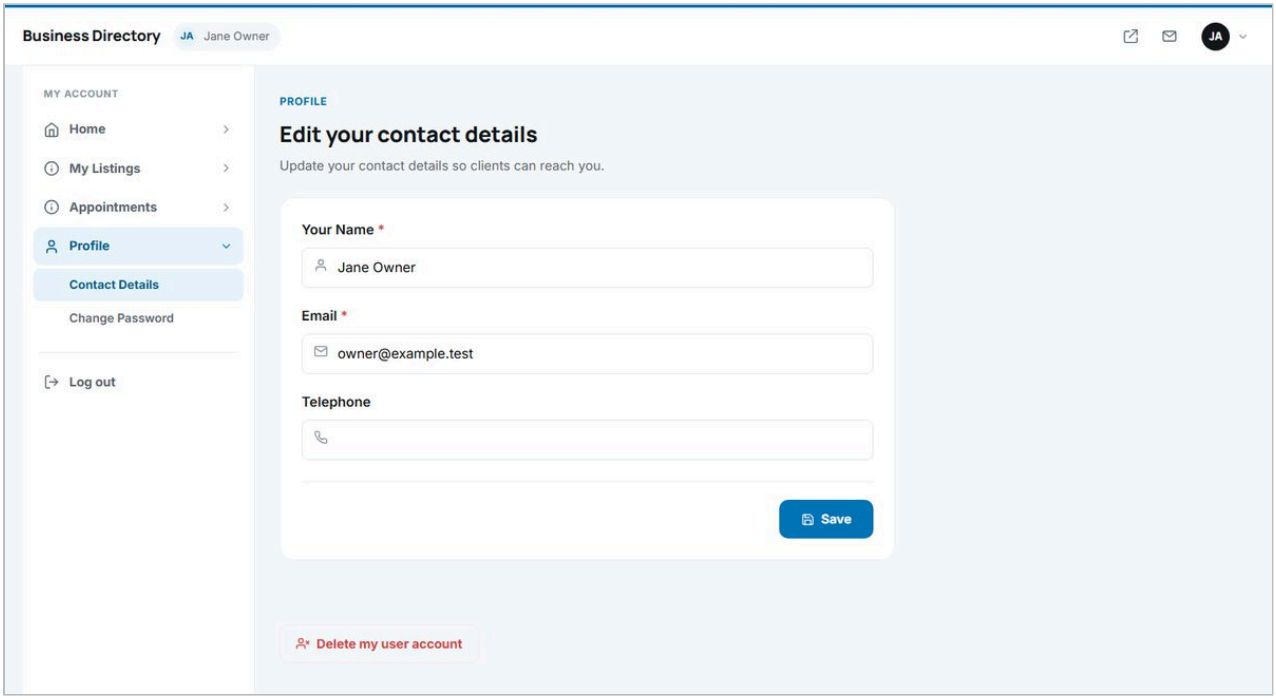


Figure 17.1 Editing the account's contact details.

Changing the password

User Panel › Profile › Change Password

Enter the **Current Password**, then the **New Password** twice, and click **Save**. Use a long password that you do not use on other websites.

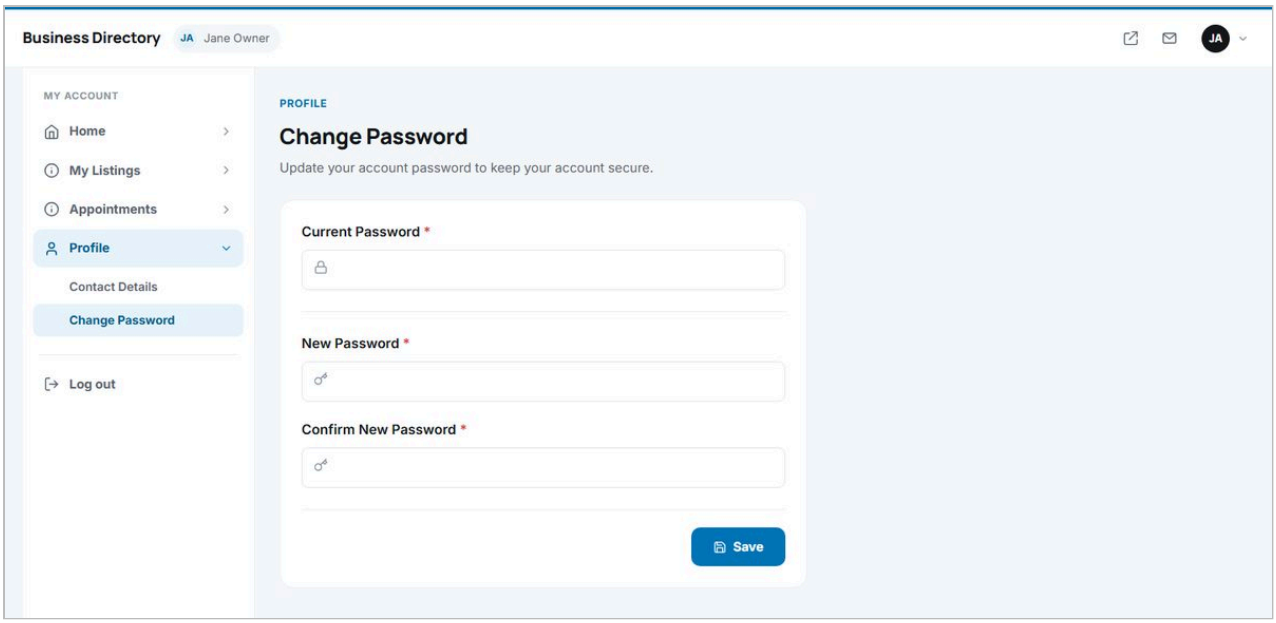


Figure 17.2 Changing the password.

Deleting the account

At the bottom of the Contact Details page, **Delete my user account** removes the account after a confirmation. Ask the directory administrator first what should happen to your listings; the deletion cannot be undone.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/profile-and-password.html

PART 4

The Admin Panel (Administrators)

Running the directory: listings, users, settings, payments, AI, content, design, SEO and statistics.

CHAPTER 18

Admin Panel Overview

The admin panel is where you run the directory. It is organised in nine sections, and every page can be found from the menu, the quick links or the search box.

The admin panel is at `yourdomain.com/ADMIN/`. Log in with your administrator username and password; each login is recorded in the login logs (chapter 18).

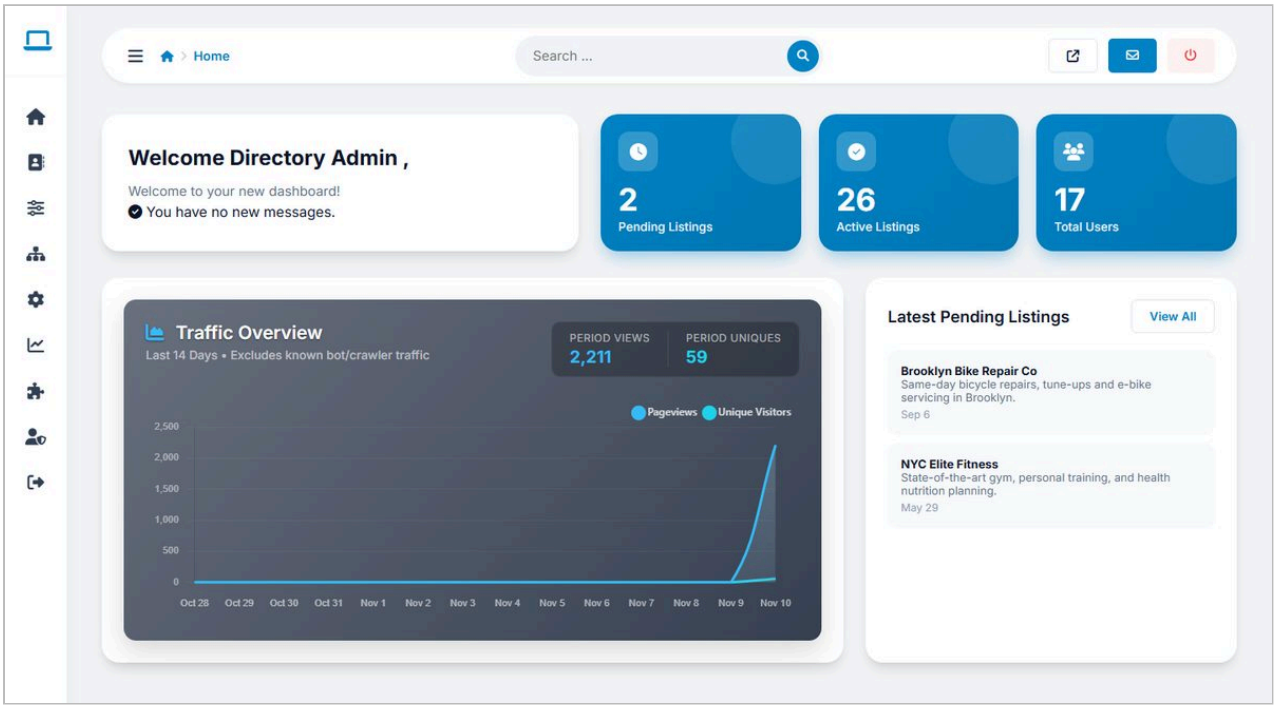


Figure 18.1 The admin panel dashboard.

Layout and navigation

- **Menu on the left:** nine sections, shown as icons. Hover or click an icon to see its pages. The ☰ button at the top expands or collapses the menu.
- **Breadcrumb:** shows the current page.
- **Search box:** type part of a page name, for example "pack" or "backup", and jump straight to the matching admin page.
- **Buttons at the top right:** open the website in a new tab, open the messages, and log out.

SECTION	PAGES
Home	Dashboard, Quick Links, Messages, Login Logs, Change Password
Directory	Approve Listings, Add Listing, Current Listings, Claimed Listings, Payments, Users, Reviews, Import

SECTION	PAGES
Directory Settings	Configuration Options, Packages, Categories, Locations, Custom Fields, Banners, Category Custom Titles, Location Custom Titles
Website	Pages, News, FAQ, Logo & Favicon, Templates, Interface Texts, Advertisements
Settings	Configuration Options, Tracking Codes, Social Media, Backups, Language Versions
Statistics	Traffic Reports, Referrals & Sources, Audience & Tech, Live Activity Log
Extensions	Extension Files, Custom Tags
Admin Users	Admin Users, Groups, Permissions

Administrators who are not in the Super Administrator group only see the pages their group is allowed to open. See Admin Users, Groups and Permissions (chapter 39).

The dashboard

- A welcome message with the date of your last login and whether you have new messages.
- Counters for **Pending Listings**, **Active Listings** and **Total Users**.
- **Traffic Overview:** page views and unique visitors of the last 14 days, without known bots and crawlers.
- **Latest Pending Listings**, with a **View All** link to the approval page.

> TIP
>
> Start each working day on the dashboard: the pending listings counter tells you whether businesses are waiting for you.

Quick Links

`Admin Panel › Home › Quick Links`

All admin pages on one screen, grouped by section. Useful when you are new to the admin panel.

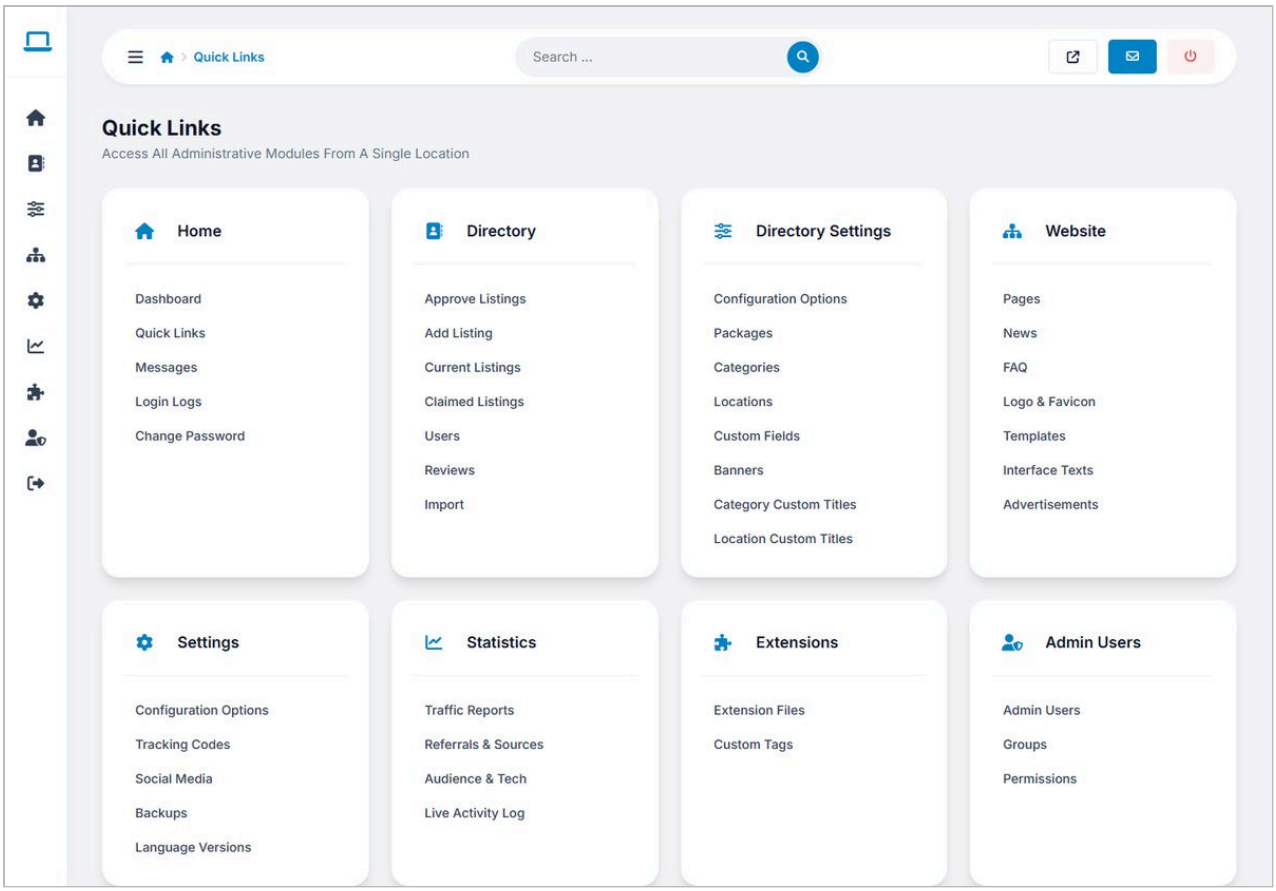


Figure 18.2 Quick Links show every admin page.

Messages

Admin Panel › Home › Messages

The inbox of the website's contact form. Each message shows the sender's name and email address, the subject, the date and whether it has been read. Open a message to read it, reply to the sender by email directly from the admin panel, or delete it. Search the messages by email, phone, sender or subject.

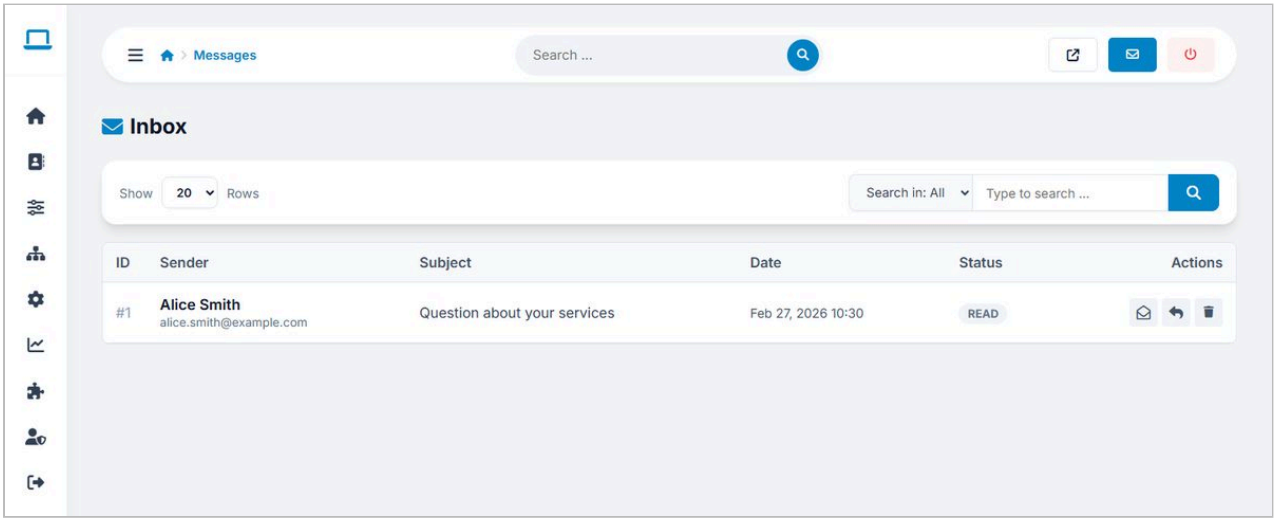


Figure 18.3 Messages sent from the contact page.

Login logs

Admin Panel › Home › Login Logs

Every attempt to log in to the admin panel, successful or not, with the date and time, the username that was tried, the IP address and the browser. Several failed attempts with unknown usernames usually mean that a robot is trying to guess passwords: use a strong password and unique admin usernames.

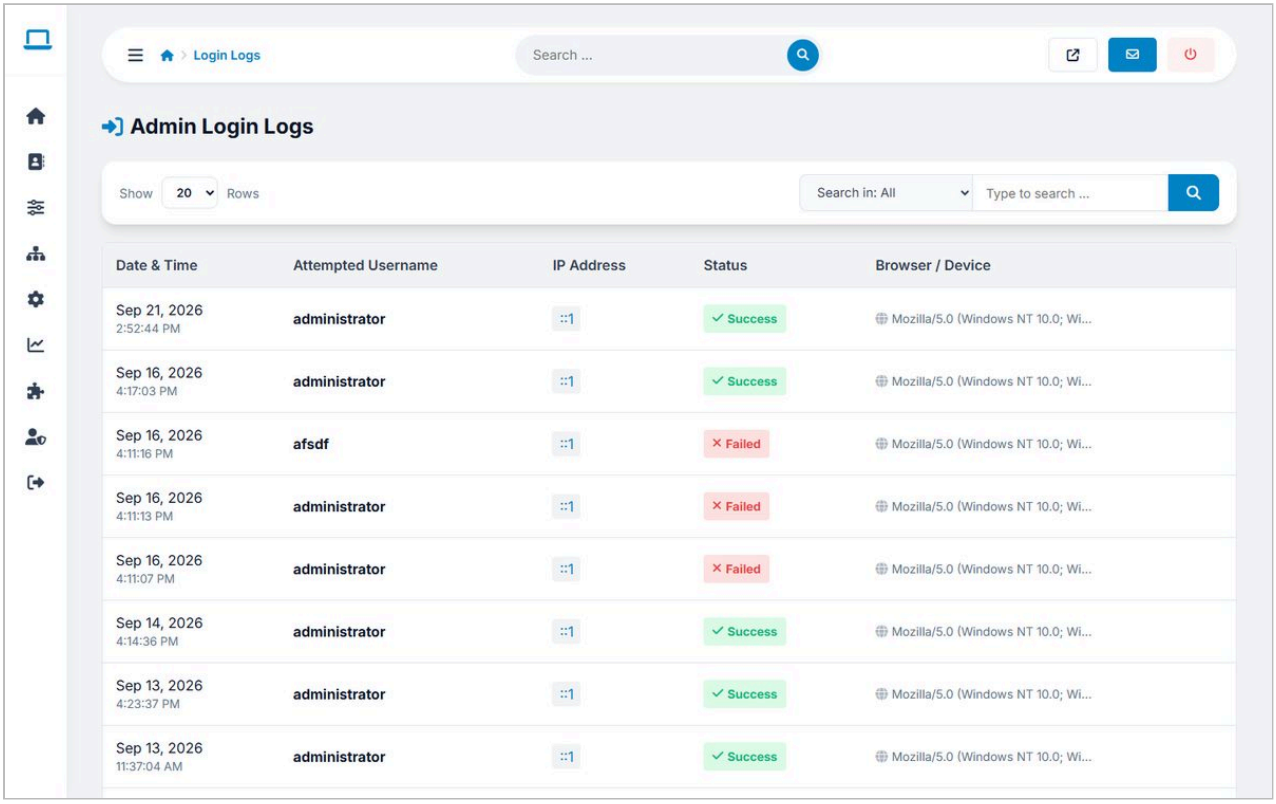


Figure 18.4 The admin login logs.

Change password

Admin Panel › Home › Change Password

Enter your current password and the new one twice, then click **Submit**. The password is stored as a secure hash.

Working with lists

Most admin pages show a list with the same controls: **Show … Rows** sets how many rows appear per page, the **Search in** menu chooses which column to search, and the buttons on the right of each row edit or delete it. Deleting always asks for a confirmation.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/admin-panel-overview.html

CHAPTER 19

Approving, Adding and Editing Listings

Listings are the heart of the directory. This chapter covers the whole life of a listing in the admin panel, from approval to renewal.

The **Directory** section manages listings through their whole life: new listings are approved, active listings are edited and expired listings are renewed.

Approving new listings

Admin Panel › Directory › Approve Listings

New listings from the website and the user panel arrive here unless **Auto Approve Listings** is on. Each row shows the image, title, description, owner, package and category, and, for paid packages, the payment status: **Paid**, **Check the payment** or **Awaiting payment**.

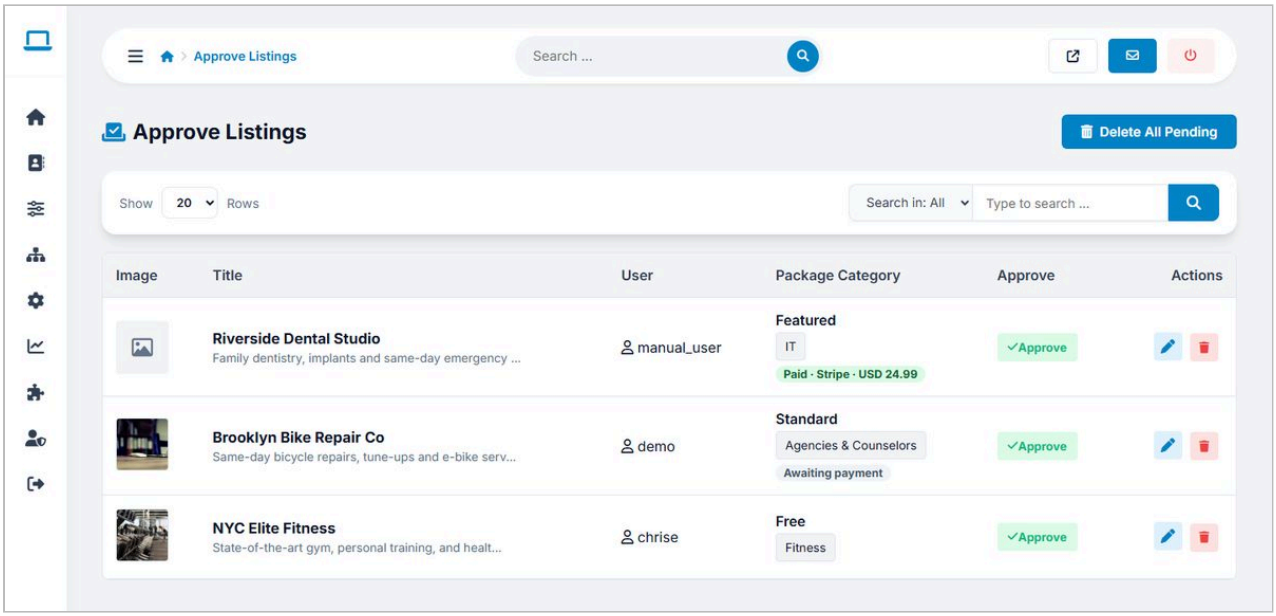


Figure 19.1 Listings waiting for approval.

- **Approve** publishes the listing.
- The **edit** button opens the listing editor, for example to correct the category or a typo before approving.
- The **delete** button rejects and deletes the listing.
- **Delete All Pending** removes every pending listing at once, which is handy after a wave of spam.

> IMPORTANT
>
> For paid packages, approve a listing once it shows **Paid**. Card and PayPal payments are marked automatically; record bank transfers on the Payments page. See Payments: Stripe, PayPal and Bank Transfer (chapter 26).

Adding a listing

Admin Panel › Directory › Add Listing

1. Enter the **Title** and choose a **Package**.
2. Optionally enter the **Owner username** of a registered user, to give them the listing. Leave it empty for listings that business owners may claim (chapter 9) later.
3. Click **Continue**. The listing is created and opens in the full listing editor.

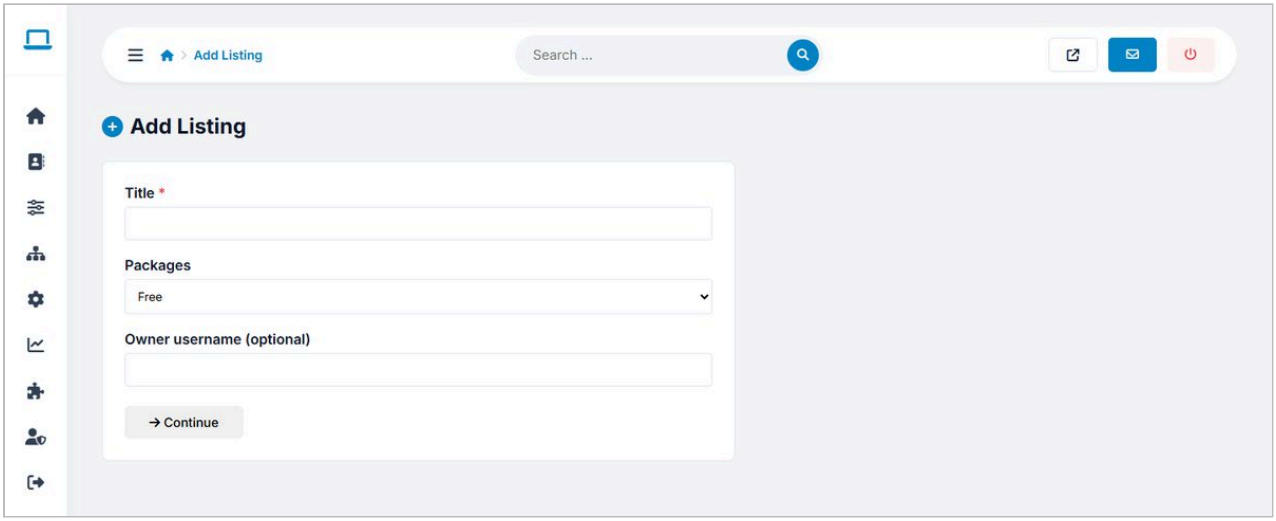


Figure 19.2 The first step of adding a listing.

Listings added by administrators are active immediately.

Current listings

Admin Panel › Directory › Current Listings

All active listings with their image, title, owner, package, category, expiry date and number of visits. Search by title or user, and use the buttons on the right to edit or delete a listing.

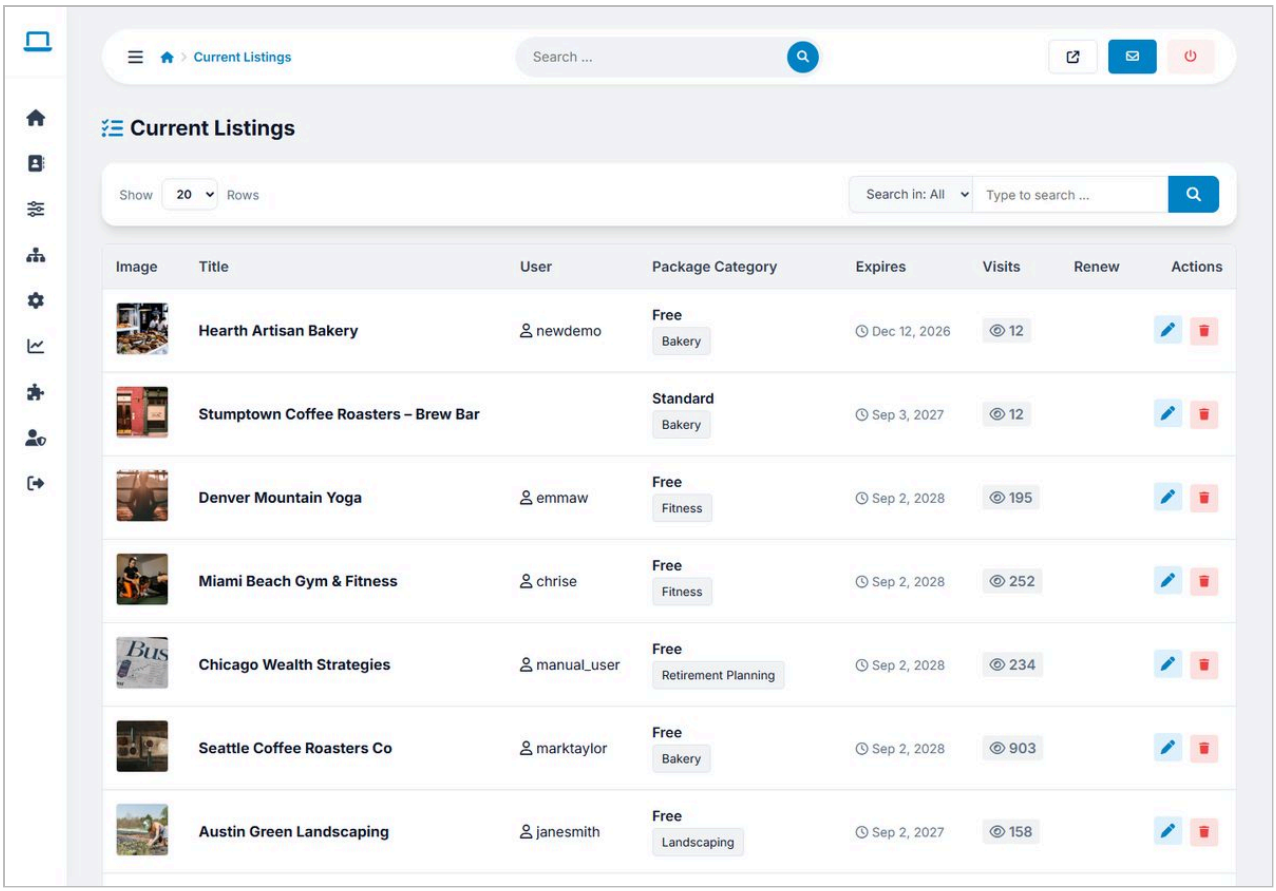


Figure 19.3 Current Listings with expiry dates and visit counts.

The listing editor

The editor contains every field of the listing, in sections:

SECTION	FIELDS
Category	Up to three categories.
Logo and Images	The main image or logo and the additional images, with delete buttons.
Website Details	Title, description (with the AI writing assistant) and YouTube video ID.
Additional Information	Website and phone number, and your custom fields.
Location	Location, street address, zip code, map position (latitude and longitude, with a draggable pin).
Hours	Opening hours for each day of the week.
Administration settings	Approved, Featured, Dofollow link, Package, owner Username, contact name and email, and the secret edit Code.
SEO	Custom meta title and meta description for the listing page.

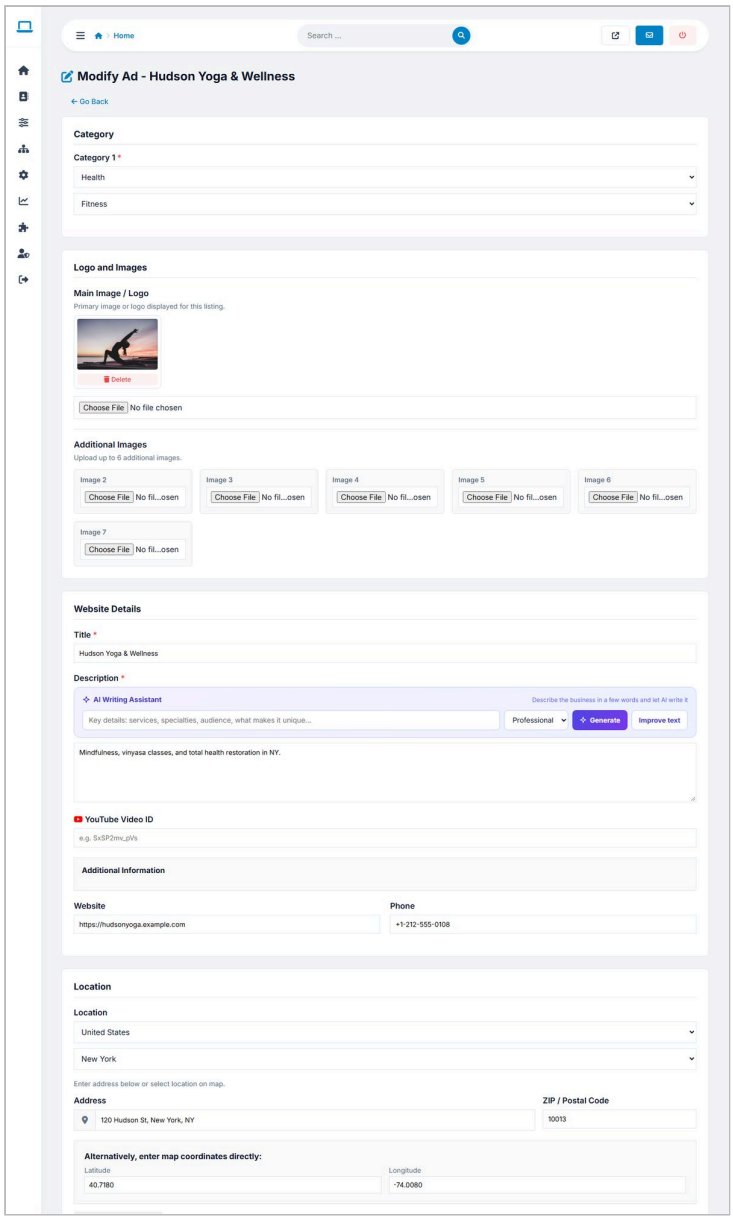


Figure 19.4 The admin listing editor.

- **Featured** highlights the listing on the home page and puts it first in search results, regardless of its package. Use it for special deals or to reward good customers.
- **Dofollow link** makes the website link a normal link that passes SEO value. Without it, the link carries `rel="nofollow"`.
- **Username** assigns the listing to a registered user, who then manages it in the user panel.
- When the AI features are on, **Suggest SEO title & description** fills the custom meta fields from the listing content. Review the result before saving.

Click **Save** at the bottom. Changes are visible on the website immediately.

Renewing listings

Each listing expires after the duration of its package (or the default **Listings Expiration Days**). Expired listings disappear from the website but are not deleted. Owners can renew their own listings from the user panel and pay online; renewals paid by card or PayPal are applied automatically. In **Current Listings**, the **Renew** button extends a listing by the default expiration period, counted from today, for example after an offline payment.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/approve-and-edit-listings.html

CHAPTER 20

Handling Listing Claims

When an owner claims a listing on the website, the request arrives in Claimed Listings for you to verify and approve.

Admin Panel › Directory › Claimed Listings

When a business owner claims an existing listing on the website, the request appears here. See Claiming an Existing Listing (chapter 9) for how claims are made.

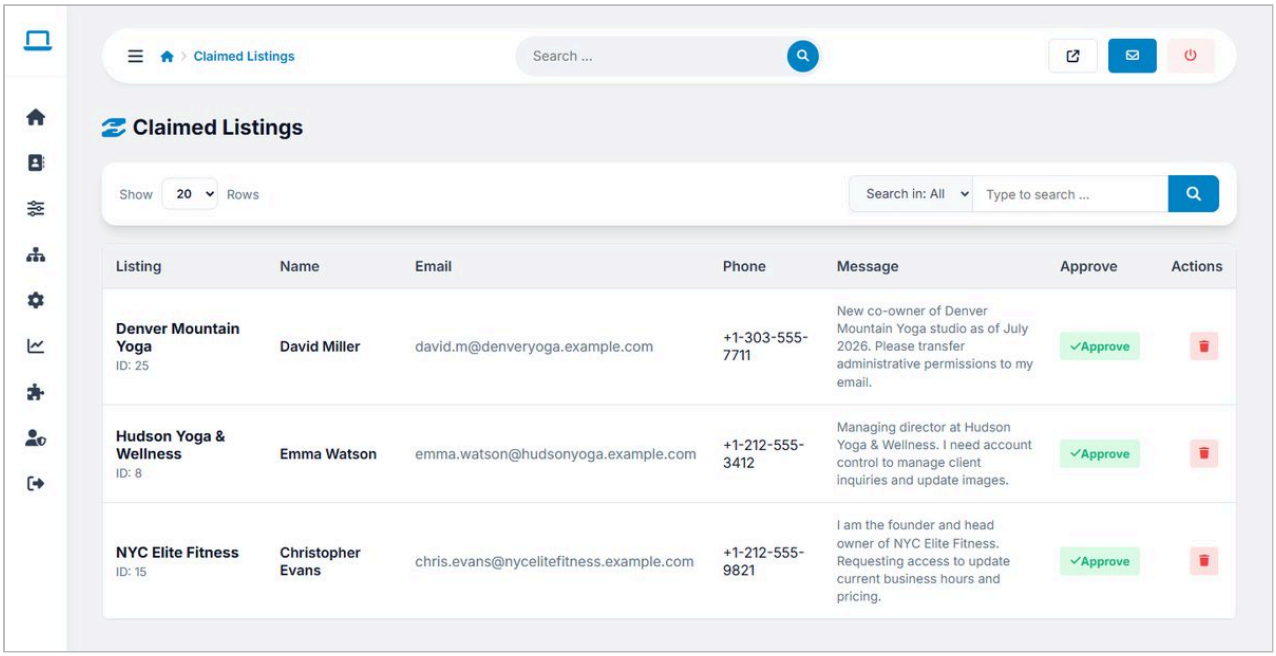


Figure 20.1 Claims waiting for review, with the claimant's details and message.

Reviewing a claim

Each claim shows the listing (with its ID), the claimant's name, email address and phone number, and their message. Before approving, make sure the person really represents the business:

- Call the phone number shown on the listing (not the one in the claim) and ask for the person.
- Check that the email address uses the business's own domain, for example `name@hudsonyoga.com` rather than a free email service.
- For high-value listings, ask for a document such as a business registration or a utility bill.

Approving or rejecting

- **Approve** transfers the listing to the claimant and marks it as claimed. The claimant receives an email with a private link for managing the listing.
- The **delete** button rejects the claim. The listing does not change.

> TIP
>
> A claimed listing is a warm lead. A short personal email after the approval, offering a featured upgrade or a banner, converts better than any advertising.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/listing-claims.html

CHAPTER 21

Managing Directory Users

The Users page lists everyone who registered on the website, mostly business owners who manage listings from their user panel.

Admin Panel › Directory › Users

This page lists the registered users of the website: business owners who manage listings from the user panel. Administrators are managed separately, in Admin Users, Groups and Permissions (chapter 39).

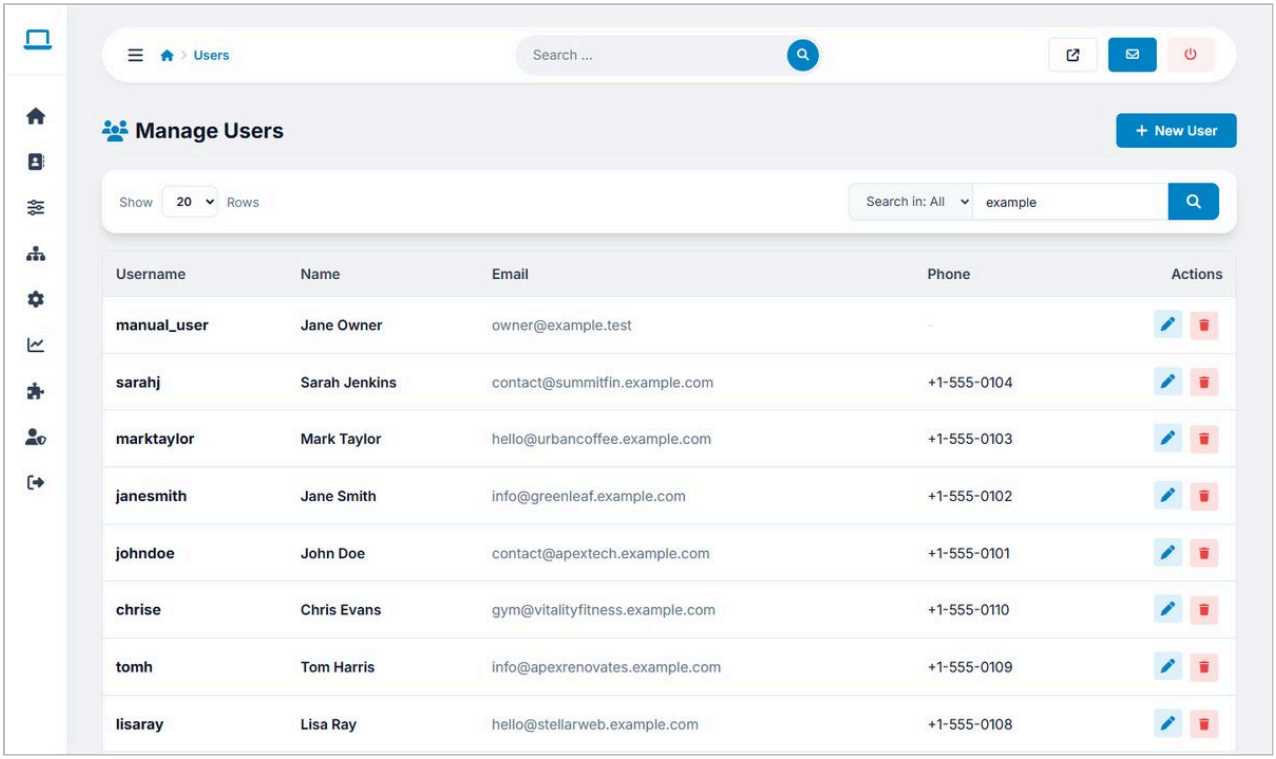


Figure 21.1 Directory users, filtered with the search box.

Finding a user

Search by username, name or email address with the search box. The list shows the username, name, email address and phone number of each user.

Adding or editing a user

Click **New User**, or the edit button of a user, and fill in the **Username**, **Password**, **Name**, **Email** and **Phone**. When editing, leave the password empty to keep the current one. Click **Save User**.

To give an existing listing to a user, enter their username in the **Username** field of the listing editor (chapter 19).

Deleting a user

The delete button removes the user account after a confirmation. Decide first what to do with their listings: reassign them to another user, or delete them.

> **NOTE**
>
> For security, passwords are stored as one-way hashes. You cannot see a user's password; if a user forgets it, they can request a new one on the website, or you can set a new one here.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/directory-users.html

CHAPTER 22

Moderating Reviews

Reviews are published as soon as visitors write them. The Reviews page is where you keep them honest and useful.

Admin Panel › Directory › Reviews

All reviews written on the website appear here, newest first, with the listing, the title and beginning of the text, the star rating, the author and the date.

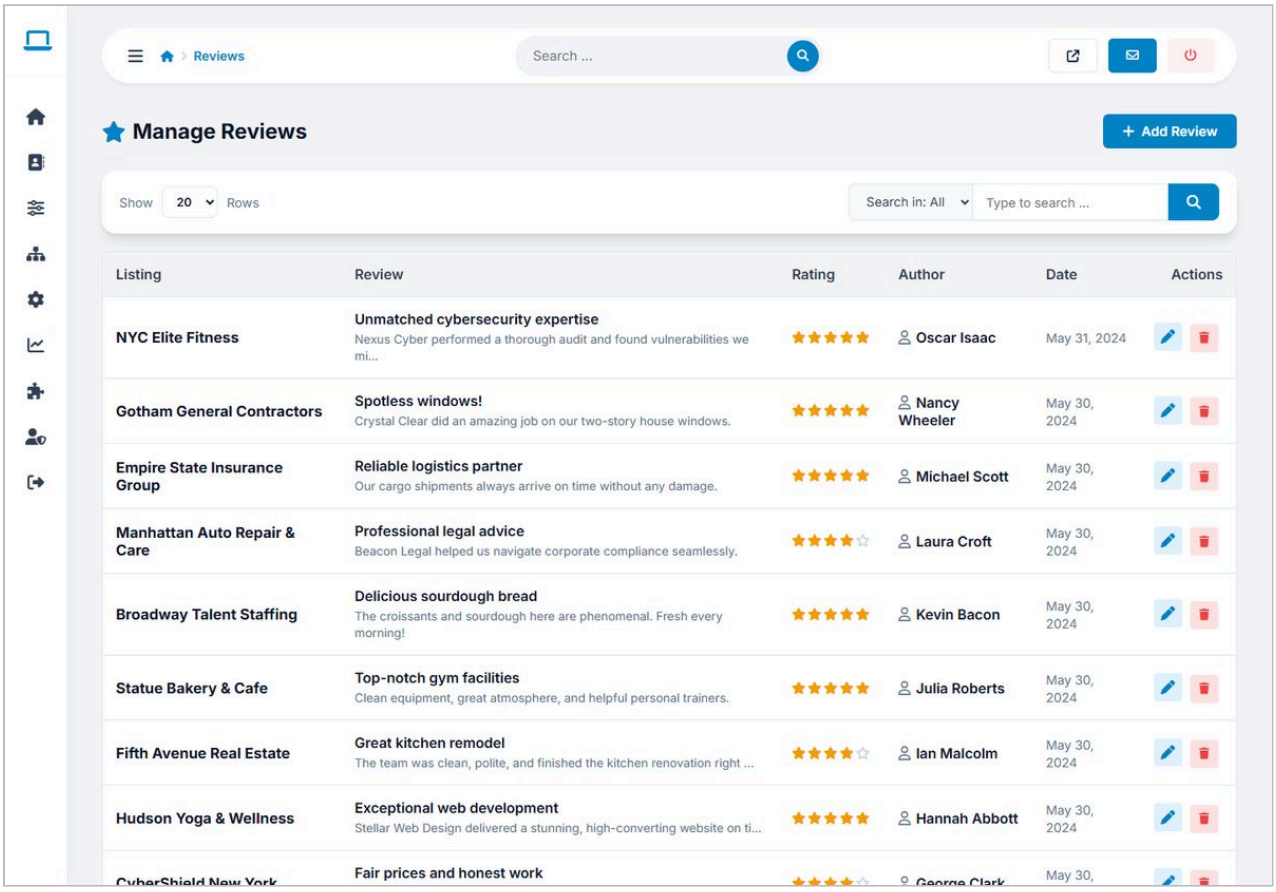


Figure 22.1 Managing reviews.

Editing and deleting reviews

Use the edit button to correct a review, for example to remove a phone number or an insult while keeping the opinion. Use the delete button for spam, fake reviews and reviews that break your rules. The listing's rating and review count are recalculated after every change.

Search the reviews by title, author or listing to find all reviews of one business.

Adding a review

Click **Add Review** to enter a review on behalf of a customer, for example one received by email or on paper. Choose the **Listing**, enter the **Author**, the **Rating**, the **Review Title** and the **Review Content**, and click **Save Review**.

A fair review policy

- Publish your review rules on a page, for example: real experiences only, no personal data, no offensive language.
- Do not delete negative reviews just because they are negative. A mix of opinions makes the directory believable.
- Check new reviews regularly: every visitor can write one review per business, and automated submissions are rejected, but people can still write unfair reviews.

When the AI review summary is enabled, the summary of a listing is refreshed automatically after its reviews change. See Setting Up the AI Features (chapter 27).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/moderate-reviews.html

CHAPTER 23

Bulk CSV Import and Export

The Import page fills a new directory in minutes from a spreadsheet, and exports your listings for backups, mailings or analysis.

Admin Panel › Directory › Import

The import turns a spreadsheet of businesses into directory listings in one go. It is the fastest way to launch a directory with real content. The export does the opposite: it downloads your listings as a CSV file.

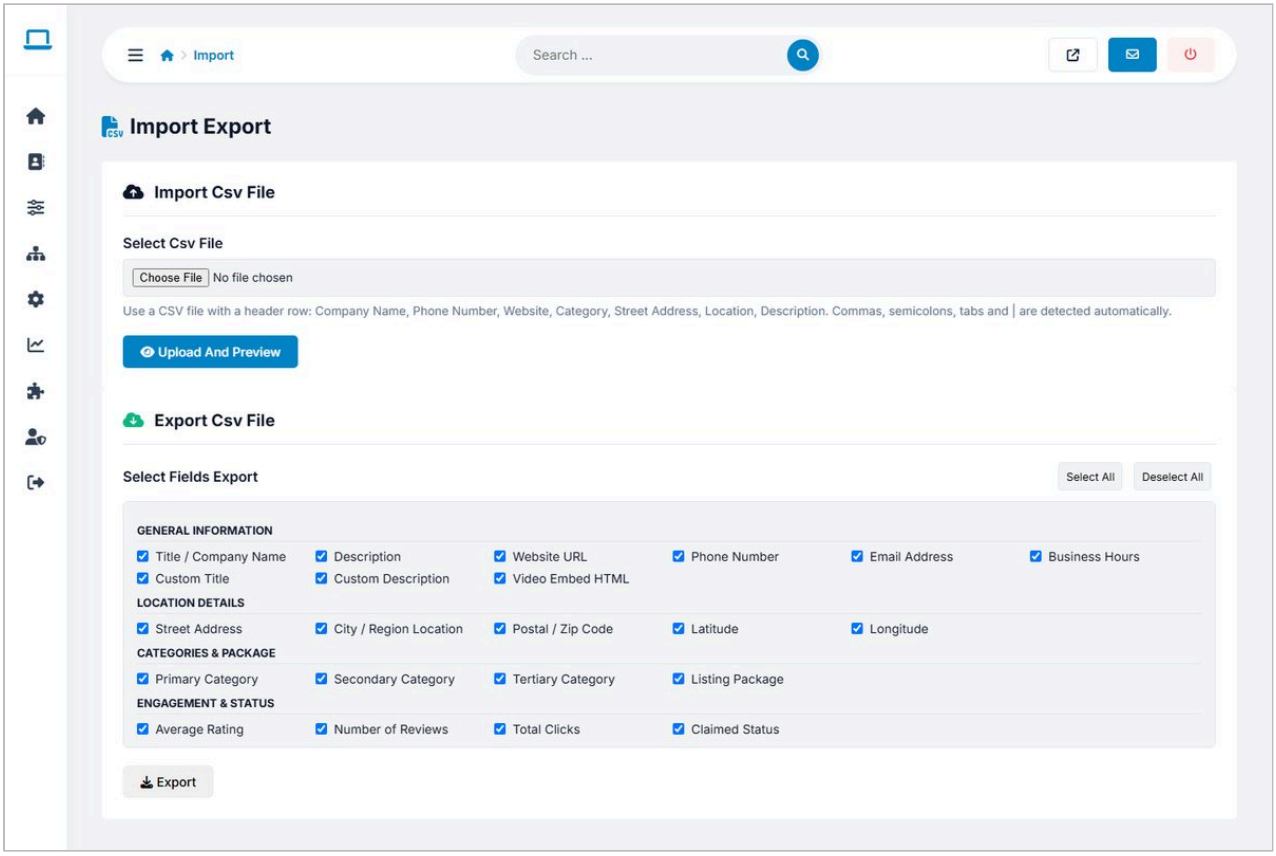


Figure 23.1 The Import Export page.

Preparing the CSV file

Create the file in Excel, Google Sheets or LibreOffice and save it as CSV. The first row must contain the column names below; the order of the columns does not matter.

COLUMN	CONTENT
Company Name	The business name. This becomes the listing title.

COLUMN	CONTENT
Phone Number	The phone number.
Website	The website address. If several are given, separated by commas, the first one is used.
Category	Up to three category names separated by semicolons, written exactly as in your category list, for example `Bakery;Coffee Shops`. Unknown names fall back to the first category.
Street Address	The full street address.
Location	The ID of the location from your location tree, for example `229.37` for New York, United States.
Description	The business description. HTML tags are removed.

The delimiter (comma, semicolon, tab or |) is detected automatically. Save the file with UTF-8 encoding so that accented characters are imported correctly.

```
Company Name,Phone Number,Website,Category,Street Address,Location,Description
Hearth Artisan Bakery,+1-503-555-0142,www.hearthbakery.com,Bakery,1428 NW 23rd
Ave,229.38,"Wood-fired sourdough and pastries."
```

Importing

1. Click **Select Csv File**, choose the file and click **Upload And Preview**.
2. The preview shows the number of listings found and the first ten rows. Check that the columns are recognized.
3. Click **Import These Listings**. A message confirms how many listings were imported.

Imported listings are active immediately, valid for one year and have no owner, so their owners can claim (chapter 9) them. Add map coordinates later in the listing editor to show them on the map.

> **TIP**
>
> Import a small test file of five rows first. When the result looks right, import the full list.

Exporting

In the **Export Csv File** box, tick the fields you need (use **Select All** or **Deselect All**) and click **Export**. The fields are grouped as general information, location details, categories and package, and engagement and status: average rating, number of reviews, clicks, claimed status, featured status and the AI review summary. The CSV file opens in any spreadsheet program.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/csv-import-export.html

CHAPTER 24

Directory Configuration Options

Directory Settings › Configuration Options controls how the directory behaves. The page is divided into tabs; this chapter explains each one except AI and payments, which have their own chapters.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Configuration Options

The settings are grouped in tabs on the left: **AI Features**, **Display And Layout**, **Listings And Approvals**, **Payments**, **Home Page Settings**, **Emails And Messages**, **Seo** and **Security**. All tabs are saved together with **Save All Settings** at the bottom.

The AI Features and Payments tabs are explained in Setting Up the AI Features (chapter 27) and Payments: Stripe, PayPal and Bank Transfer (chapter 26).

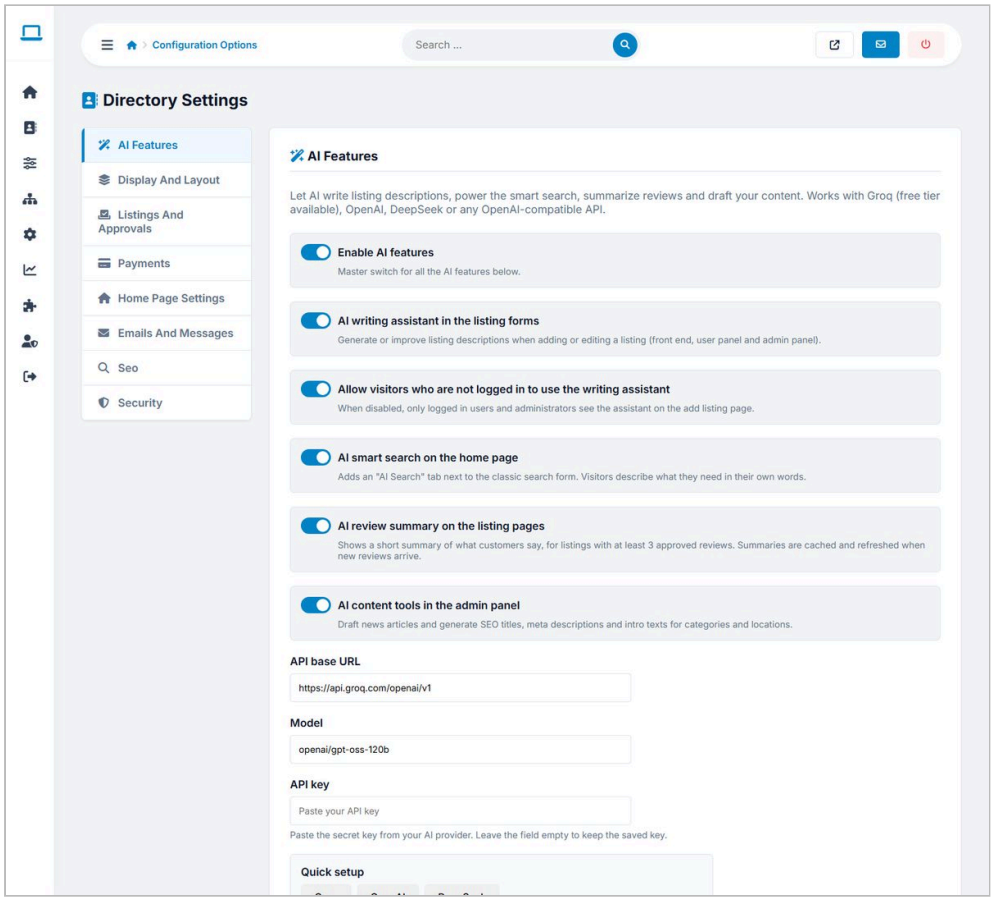


Figure 24.1 Directory Settings with the AI Features tab open.

Display and layout

SETTING	MEANING
Number Of Featured Listings	How many featured listings appear on the home page.

SETTING	MEANING
Categories Per Row	The number of columns in the category lists.
Show Listings Number	Shows the number of listings next to each category.
Results Per Page	How many listings appear on each page of search results.

Listings and approvals

SETTING	MEANING
Auto Approve Listings	Publishes new listings immediately, without waiting in Approve Listings. Convenient, but spam and paid listings that were never paid go live too. Most directories leave it off.
Enable Claim Listing	Shows the "Claim this listing" link on listings without an owner.
Listings Expiration Days	The default number of days a listing stays online, used by packages whose duration is 0 and by the Renew button.

Home page settings

- **Home Background Image:** the photo behind the home page search (JPG, PNG or WEBP). Use a wide, calm photo of at least 1920 pixels; most templates darken it so the text stays readable. **Delete image** returns to the template's default photo.
- **Home Title** and **Home Subtitle:** the main heading and the sentence under it. Make the title describe your directory, for example "Find trusted wedding suppliers in Ireland".
- **Show Latest Listings**, **Show Featured Listings**, **Show Categories Section**, **Show Locations Section:** switch the home page sections on or off.

Emails and messages

SETTING	MEANING
System Email From	The sender name of all emails, for example your directory name.
System Email Address	The sender address of all emails. It also receives notifications such as new claims. Use an address on your own domain.
Activation Email Title	The subject of the account activation email.
Success Message Free	The message shown after a listing with a free package is submitted.
Success Message Paid	The message shown after a listing with a paid package is submitted, above the payment options.

SEO

- **Seo Append Title:** text added to the end of the page titles of category, location and search pages, for example "| Your Directory Name" or "in Ireland".
- **Seo Append Description:** text added to the end of the meta descriptions of the same pages.

Keep both short: search engines show about 60 characters of a title and 155 of a description. See SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data (chapter 37).

Security

Enable Recaptcha protects the registration and listing forms against robots with Google reCAPTCHA. Create the keys for your domain in the Google reCAPTCHA admin console and paste the **Recaptcha Public Key** (site key) and **Recaptcha Private Key** (secret key).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/directory-settings.html

CHAPTER 25

Listing Packages and Pricing Plans

Packages are the pricing plans business owners choose from when they add a listing. They are the main way a directory earns money.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Packages

Packages are the plans that business owners choose from when they add a listing. You can create as many as you need, free or paid.

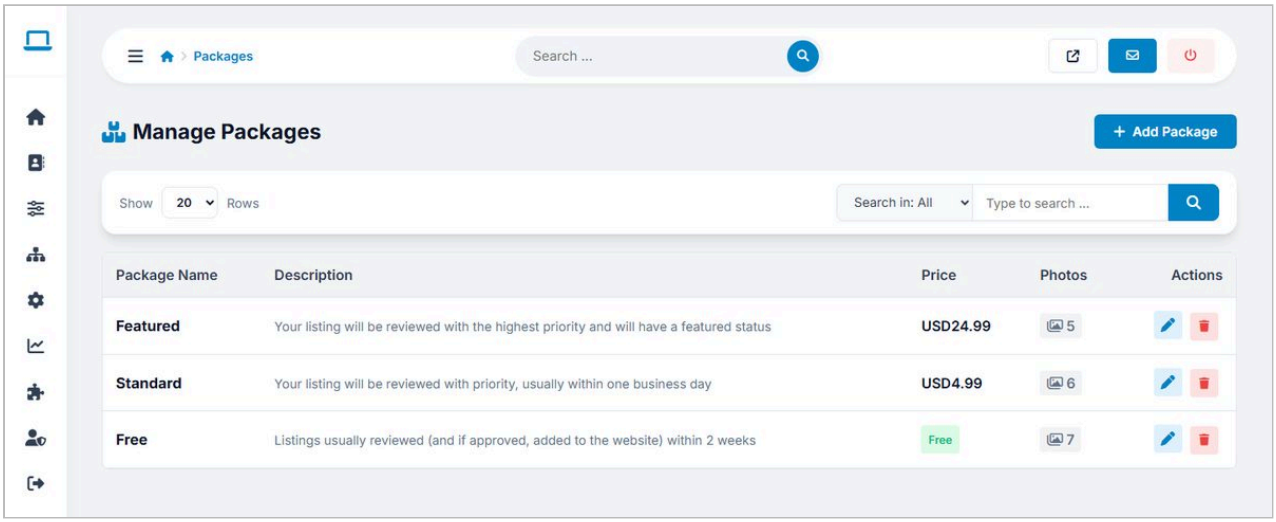


Figure 25.1 The demo packages: Free, Standard and Featured.

Package options

Click **Add Package**, or the edit button of an existing package:

FIELD	MEANING
Package Name	Shown as the plan name, for example "Premium".
Price	In the website currency. 0 makes the package free, and no payment is requested.
Max Images Allowed	How many photos the listing can have, including the logo.
Duration Days	How long the listing stays online. 0 uses the default **Listings Expiration Days**.
Description	A short sales text shown on the package card, for example "Reviewed within one business day".
Featured listing	Listings with this package are featured: shown on the home page and first in search results.

FIELD	MEANING
Up to 3 categories	Allows three categories instead of one.
Allow a YouTube video	Lets the owner add a video to the listing.
Dofollow link	The link to the business website passes SEO value. Businesses value this highly.
Online appointment booking	Shows appointment booking as part of the package.
Active	Only active packages are offered. Untick it to retire a package without deleting it.

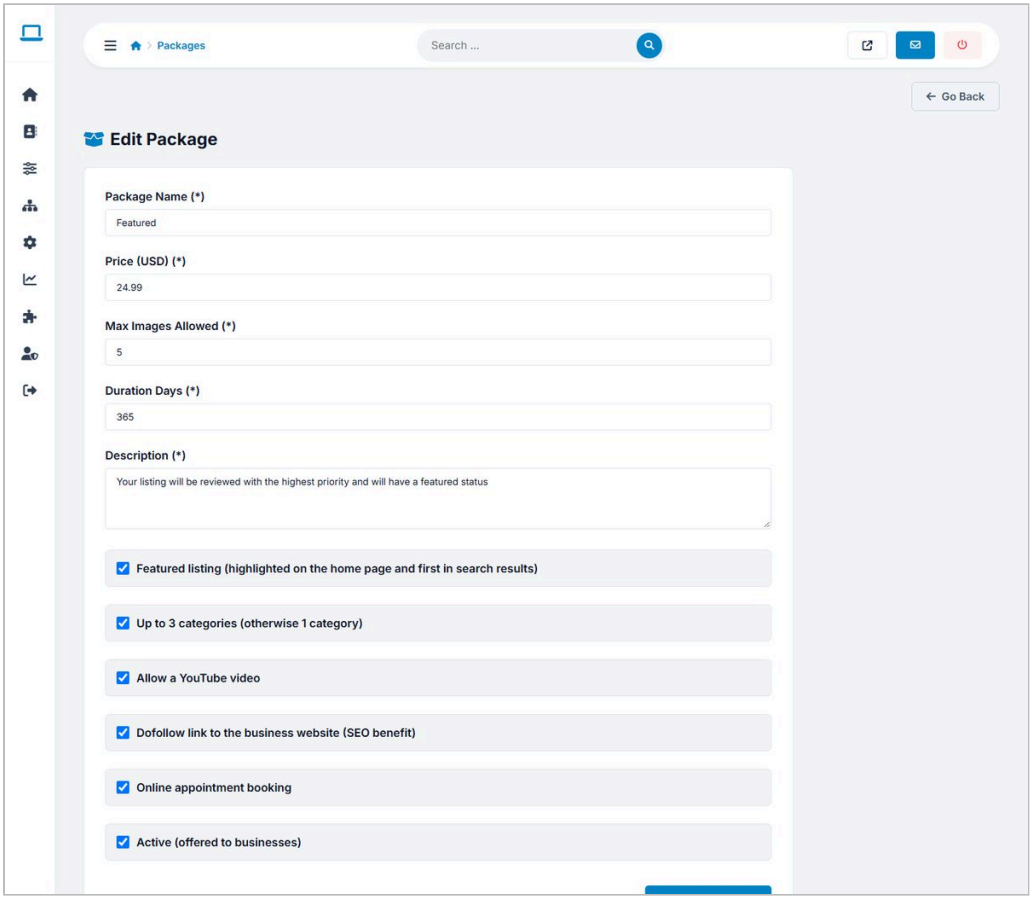


Figure 25.2 Editing the Featured package.

The package cards on the website list these options automatically ("Add listing to 3 categories", "Add up to 6 images and a video", "Direct link to your site for SEO benefits"...), so you do not need to repeat them in the description.

Deleting a package

A package that is used by at least one listing cannot be deleted. Untick **Active** instead, so it is no longer offered.

Pricing ideas

- **Free + paid upgrades:** a free basic listing fills the directory; featured status, more photos and a dofollow link are reasons to upgrade.
- **Annual pricing:** a duration of 365 days means one invoice a year and fewer renewals to manage.
- **Few choices:** two or three packages are easier to choose from than six.
- **Anchor price:** a premium package makes the middle one look reasonable; that is why the demo highlights the second package as "Most Popular".

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/listing-packages.html

CHAPTER 26

Payments: Stripe, PayPal and Bank Transfer

Paid listings, renewals and banners can be paid by card through Stripe, with PayPal or by bank transfer. Every payment is confirmed on the server and recorded in the admin panel.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Configuration Options › Payments

Paid packages, listing renewals and paid banner areas use the payment methods you enable here. Card and PayPal payments are confirmed with Stripe or PayPal on the server before they are recorded, so a payment only counts when the money has really been taken. Every payment appears in Directory › Payments.

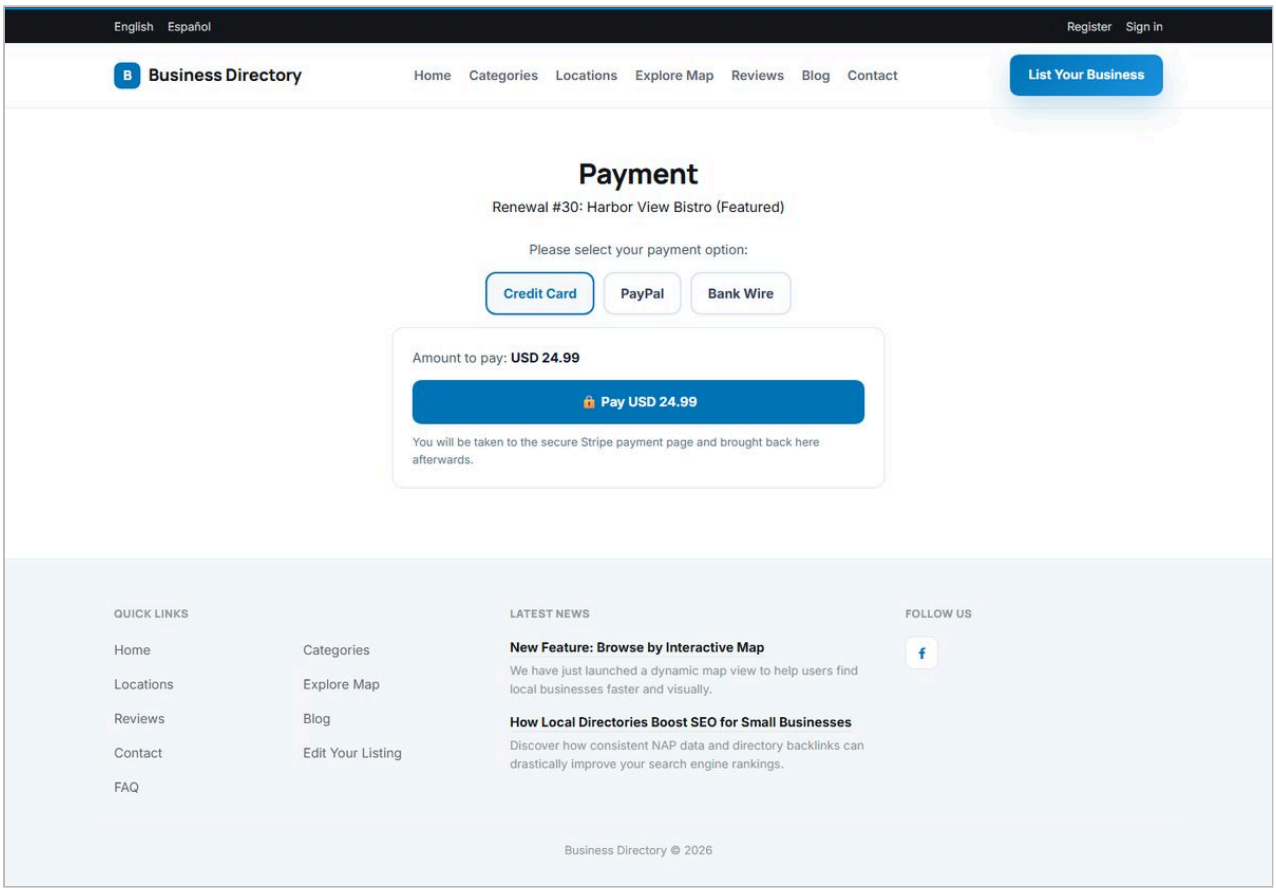


Figure 26.1 The payment options shown to a customer, here for a listing renewal.

Currency

Website Currency is the three-letter code of the currency used for all prices, for example `USD`, `EUR` or `GBP`. Stripe and PayPal charge in this currency, so use one that your accounts support.

Stripe (credit and debit cards)

Stripe Checkout takes card payments, Apple Pay and Google Pay on Stripe's own secure page. The customer clicks **Pay**, pays on Stripe, and is brought back to your website, which checks the payment with Stripe and records it.

1. In your Stripe dashboard, open **Developers › API keys**.
2. Copy the **Publishable key** and the **Secret key** into **Stripe Publishable Key** and **Stripe Secret Key**. The secret key is required: it is used to create each payment and to confirm it.
3. Choose **Test Mode** with Stripe's test keys while you try it out (test card 4242 4242 4242 4242, any future date and CVC), and **Live Mode** with the live keys when you are ready.
4. Switch on **Enable Stripe** and save.

The Stripe webhook (recommended)

If a customer pays but closes the browser before returning to your website, the webhook still records the payment:

1. In Stripe, open **Developers › Webhooks** and click **Add endpoint**.
2. Enter the endpoint URL shown under **Stripe Webhook Secret**, for example `https://www.yourdomain.com/include/stripe_webhook.php`.
3. Select the event `checkout.session.completed` and save.
4. Copy the endpoint's **Signing secret** (it starts with `whsec_`) into **Stripe Webhook Secret**.

Each webhook call is checked with the signing secret and confirmed again with Stripe, so it cannot be faked. A payment is never recorded twice.

PayPal

1. Log in to the PayPal Developer dashboard with your PayPal business account and create an app under **Apps & Credentials**.
2. Copy its **Client ID** and **Secret** into **Paypal Client Id** and **Paypal Secret Key**.
3. Choose **Sandbox Mode** to test with PayPal's test accounts and **Live Mode** for real payments. Sandbox and live use different credentials.
4. Switch on **Enable Paypal** and save.

Customers pay with the PayPal button, or by card through PayPal, without leaving your website. The website then asks PayPal to confirm the order, the amount and the currency before recording the payment. Without the secret key, the order cannot be checked and the payment is recorded as **Check the payment** for you to verify in your PayPal account. The **Paypal Webhook Id** field is not needed.

Bank transfer

Switch on **Enable Bank Transfer** and enter the **Bank Account Name**, **Bank Name**, **Bank Account Number** (or IBAN), **Bank Routing Number** (or SWIFT/BIC) and **Bank Instructions**. The customer sees these details with the amount and a reference such as "Listing #29". When the money arrives, record it on the Payments page.

The Payments page

Admin Panel › Directory › Payments

All payments for new listings, renewals and banners, newest first, with the date, the item, the method, the amount, the status and the Stripe, PayPal or bank reference. The total paid in the last 30 days is shown at the top.

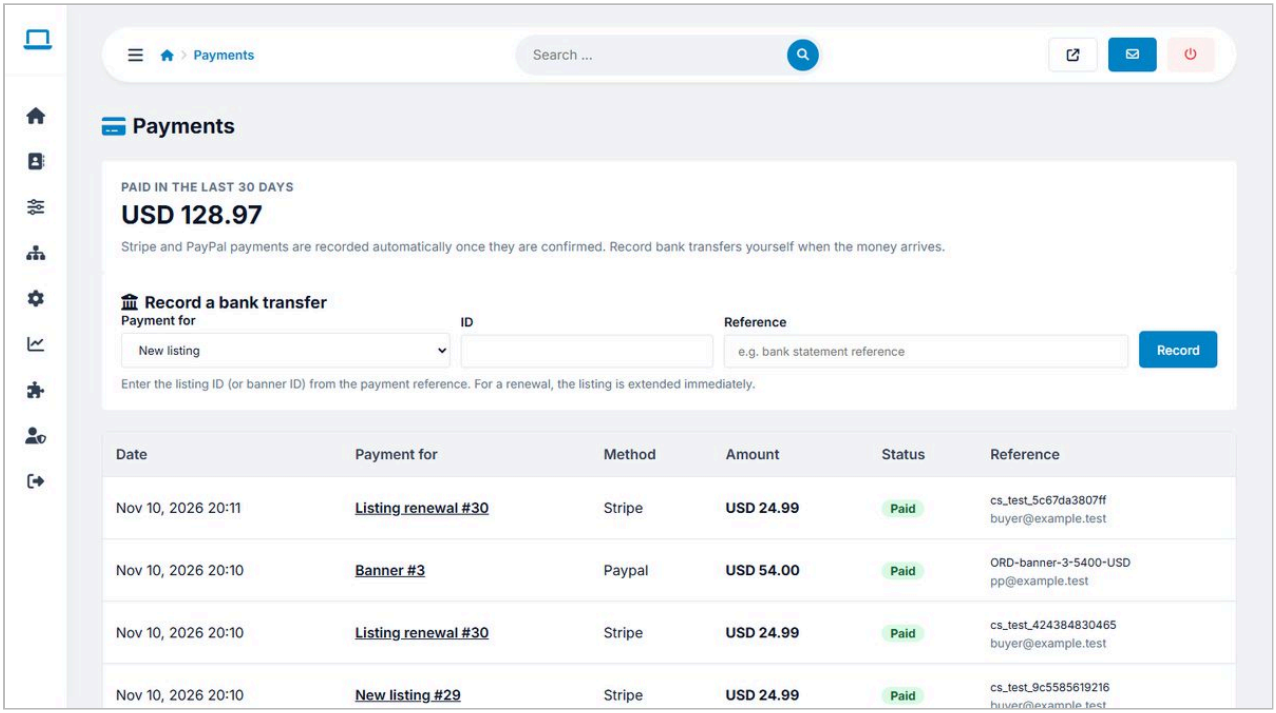


Figure 26.2 The Payments page, with the form for recording a bank transfer.

- **Record a bank transfer:** choose **New listing**, **Listing renewal** or **Banner**, enter the ID from the payment reference and, optionally, the bank's reference, and click **Record**. A renewal is applied to the listing immediately.
- **Mark as paid:** confirms a PayPal payment that could not be checked automatically, after you have seen it in your PayPal account.

The **System Email Address** also receives an email for every payment.

Approving paid listings and banners

Paid listings still wait in Directory › Approve Listings, so you can check their content. A label under the package shows the payment status: **Paid** with the method and amount, **Check the payment**, or **Awaiting payment**. Banners show the same label in Directory Settings › Banners.

Edit **Success Message Paid** in the Emails And Messages tab to tell customers when they can expect their listing to go live.

> IMPORTANT
>
> Keep **Auto Approve Listings** off when you sell paid packages; otherwise listings go live before they are paid.

Renewals

When a listing with a paid package expires, its owner can renew it from the user panel and pay online. Card and PayPal payments extend the listing at once by the package duration; see renewing in the user panel (chapter 14).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/payment-gateways.html

CHAPTER 27

Setting Up the AI Features

Version 6.1 adds AI that writes listing descriptions, understands plain-language searches, summarises reviews and drafts your content. Setup takes two minutes.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Configuration Options › AI Features

The AI features work with any service that offers an OpenAI-compatible API. Three providers can be set up with one click: **Groq** (which has a free tier), **OpenAI** and **DeepSeek**.

What the AI does

SWITCH	FEATURE
Enable AI features	The master switch for everything below.
AI writing assistant in the listing forms	Writes or improves listing descriptions on the website, in the user panel and in the admin panel.
Allow visitors who are not logged in to use the writing assistant	When off, only logged-in users and administrators see the assistant.
AI smart search on the home page	Adds the AI Search (chapter 3) tab next to the classic search.
AI review summary on the listing pages	A short summary of customer opinions, for listings with at least three reviews.
AI content tools in the admin panel	Drafts news articles and pages, and generates SEO titles, meta descriptions and intro texts for categories, locations and listings.

Connecting a provider

1. Create an API key with your provider: Groq at console.groq.com, OpenAI at platform.openai.com, or DeepSeek at platform.deepseek.com. OpenAI and DeepSeek need an account with credit.
2. In **Quick setup**, click **Groq**, **OpenAI** or **DeepSeek**. This fills in the **API base URL** and a recommended **Model**: `openai/gpt-oss-120b` for Groq, `gpt-4.1-mini` for OpenAI and `deepseek-chat` for DeepSeek.
3. Paste the key into **API key** and click **Save All Settings**.
4. Click **Test connection**. A success message confirms that the key, URL and model work.

For another OpenAI-compatible provider, enter its API base URL (ending in `/v1` in most cases) and a model name by hand.

> NOTE
>
> The saved API key is never shown again in the page. To keep the current key while changing other settings, leave the field empty.

Cost control

- **Writing assistant: requests per user per hour** limits how often one person can generate texts. Administrators are not limited. 0 means no limit.
- **AI search: searches per visitor per hour** limits AI searches per visitor. After the limit, the classic keyword search is used automatically.
- The page shows the number of AI requests in the last 24 hours and the last 30 days.
- Review summaries are stored and only regenerated when new reviews arrive.

With typical traffic, a small directory uses a few hundred AI requests a month, which fits within Groq's free tier or costs a few cents with OpenAI or DeepSeek.

Where AI appears in the admin panel

- **Listing editor:** the writing assistant, and **Suggest SEO title & description**.
- **News and Pages editors:** an **AI Writing Assistant** box that drafts an article or page from a title and optional notes, in each language tab.
- **Category and Location Custom Titles: Generate with AI** writes the page title, meta description and intro text. See SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data (chapter 37).

> TIP
>
> Always read AI texts before publishing. The AI is instructed not to invent facts, but you know your businesses and your city better.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/ai-features.html

CHAPTER 28

Managing Categories and Category Images

Categories organise the businesses in your directory. PHP Business Directory uses a simple text tree that makes even hundreds of categories quick to edit.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Categories

Categories are edited as plain text: one category per line, in a tree that you can change with copy and paste. There is one tree per language, so category names can be translated.

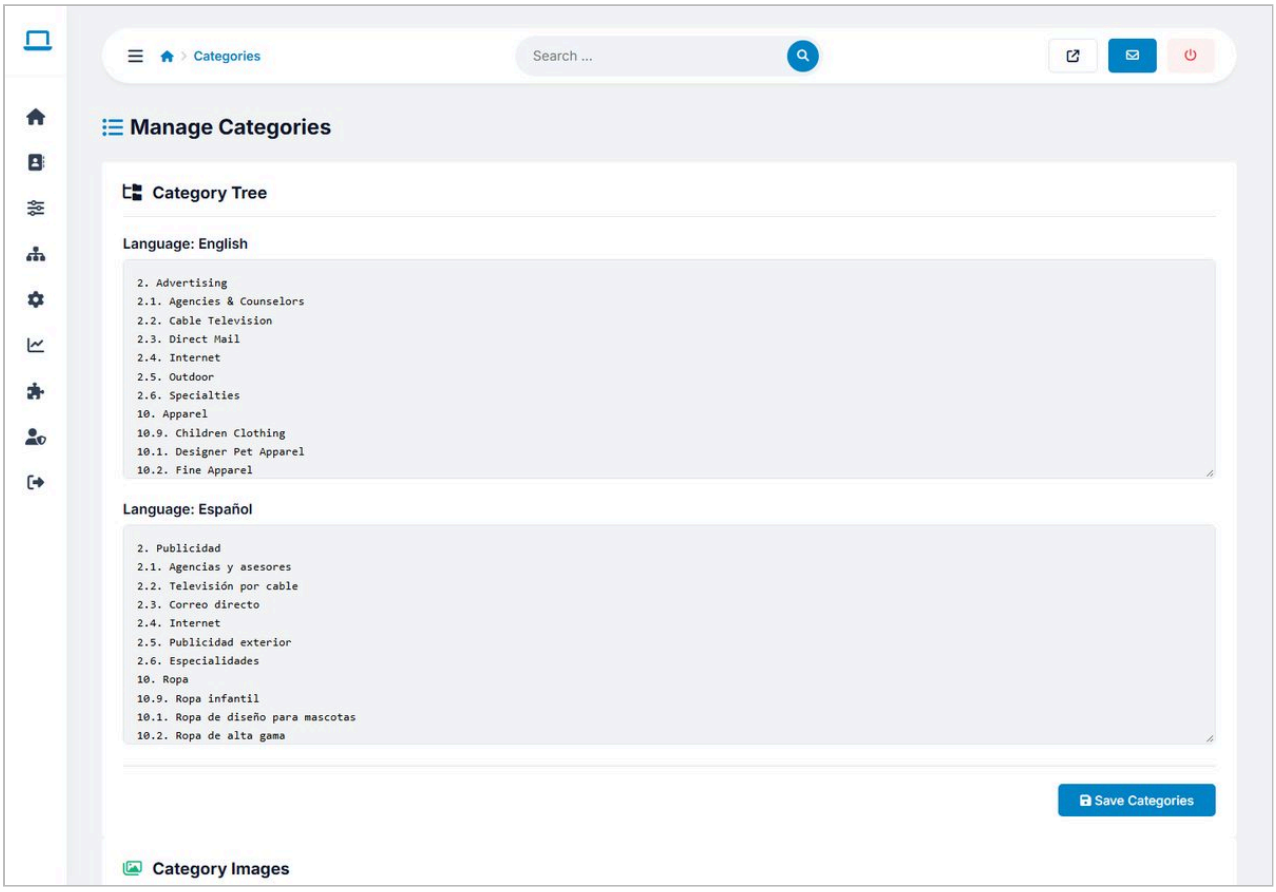


Figure 28.1 The category tree in English and Spanish, with the category images below.

The category tree format

Each line starts with the category number, a dot and a space, followed by the name. Subcategories add their own number after their parent's number:

```
2. Advertising
2.1. Agencies & Counselors
2.2. Cable Television
10. Apparel
10.1. Designer Pet Apparel
10.2. Fine Apparel
```

Here "Agencies & Counselors" is the first subcategory of "Advertising". Click **Save Categories** to save all languages at once.

Adding, renaming and removing

- **Add** a category with a new line and a number that is not used yet, for example `12. Wedding Venues` or `12.4. Barns & Farms`.
- **Rename** a category by changing only the text after the number.
- **Remove** a category by deleting its line. First move its listings to another category, or they will no longer appear in any category.
- **Reorder** categories by moving lines up or down. The numbers do not have to be in order.

> IMPORTANT
> Never change the number of an existing category. Listings are linked to categories by their numbers, so a listing in `2.1` would suddenly belong to whatever category now has that number.

> TIP
> Starting from scratch? Paste a list of names without any numbers, one per line. The directory numbers them automatically. Then add subcategories by hand.

Translating categories

Each language version has its own tree with the same numbers. To translate, change only the names in that language's box, keeping the numbers identical to the English tree. A category added in one language must also be added, with the same number, in the others.

Category images

Below the tree, **Category Images** shows a tile for each main category. Click **Edit** on a tile to upload an image or delete the current one. The images appear on the category tiles of the home page and the categories page. Use photos of the same size and style, for example 800 × 600 pixels, for a tidy look.

Page titles and texts for categories

Each category page can have its own title, meta description and introduction text, written by you or by the AI. See SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data (chapter 37).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/categories.html

CHAPTER 29

Managing Locations and Location Images

Locations let visitors browse businesses by country, state or city, and create location pages that rank for local searches.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Locations

Locations work like categories: a text tree of countries and their states, regions or cities, plus images for the location tiles.

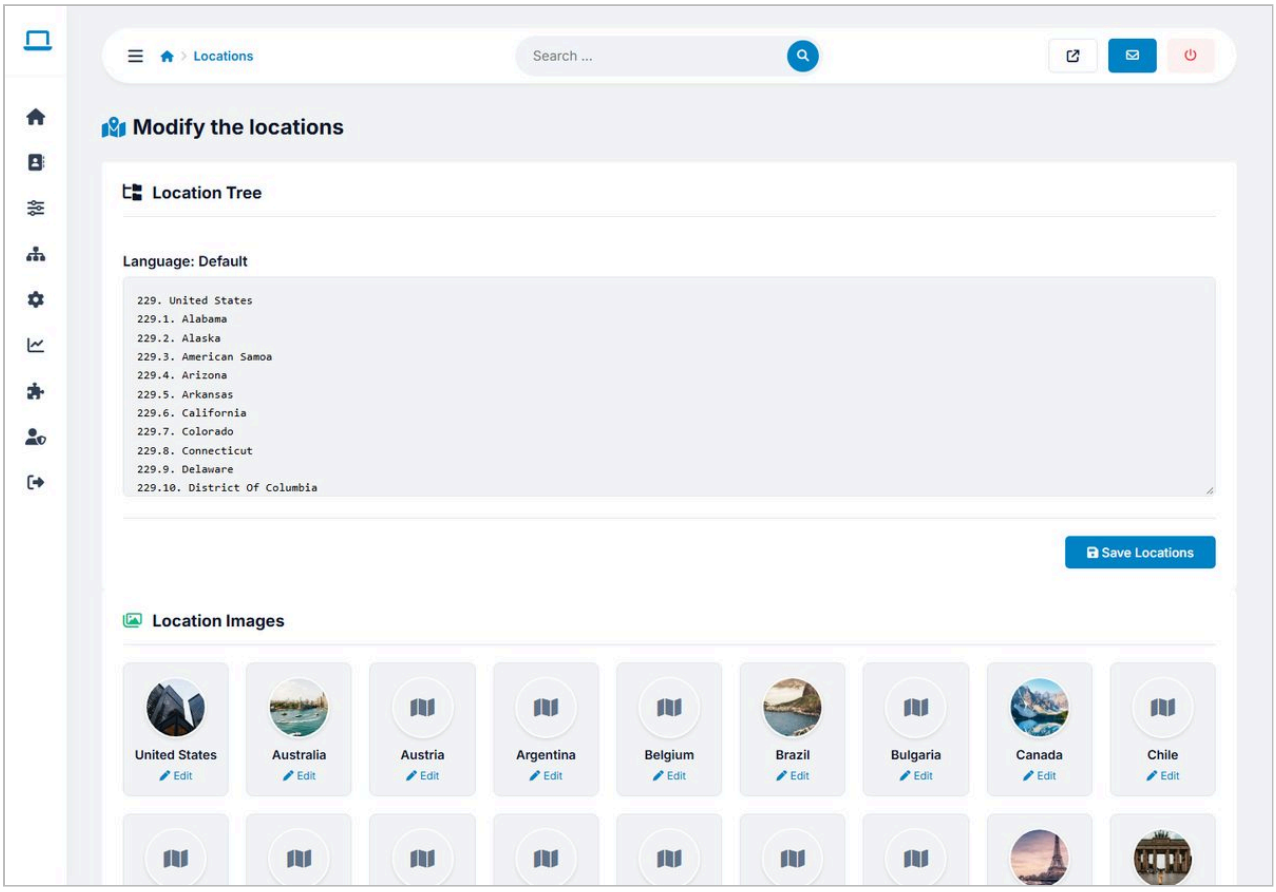


Figure 29.1 The location tree and the location images.

The location tree

The same numbering format is used as for categories:

```
229. United States
229.12. Florida
229.37. New York
113. Australia
113.1. Albury
```

Edit the tree and click **Save Locations**. The same rules apply: keep the numbers of existing locations, use new numbers for new ones, and move listings before deleting a location.

Adapting the list to your directory

The demo database contains a long list of countries and their regions. A local or national directory should only list its own area:

- A national directory keeps its country and lists its states, provinces or counties below it.
- A city guide can use districts or neighborhoods as the locations, for example `1. Manhattan`, `1.1. Upper West Side`.

A shorter list makes the location menus easier to use and creates only the location pages you want search engines to find.

> NOTE
> Visitors can also type a city or zip code in the search, even if it is not in the tree: the search looks for it in the business addresses.

Location images

Below the tree, **Location Images** shows a tile for each main location. Click **Edit** to upload a photo of the city or region. The photos appear on the location tiles of the home page and the locations page.

Page titles and texts for locations

Location pages such as "Plumbers in Florida" can rank well in search engines, especially with a good title and introduction. See SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data (chapter 37).

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/locations.html

CHAPTER 30

Custom Listing Fields

Custom fields add information that is specific to your niche, such as "Price range" for restaurants or "Languages spoken" for lawyers.

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Custom Fields

Custom fields add your own questions to the listing form. Owners fill them in when they add or edit a listing, and the answers are shown on the listing page.

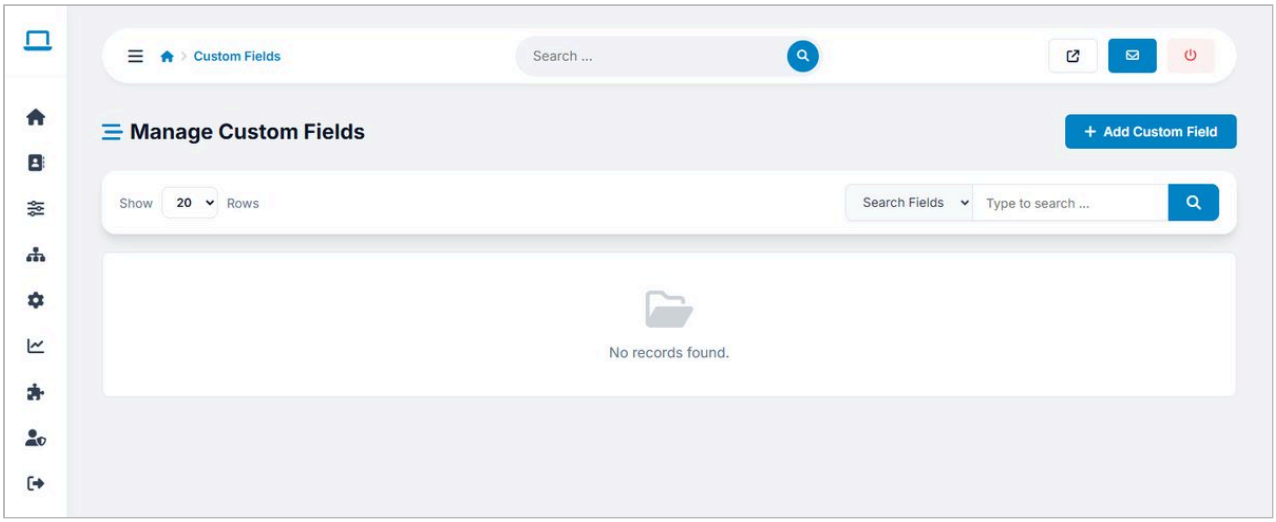


Figure 30.1 Custom Fields. The demo data has none.

Adding a field

1. Click **Add Custom Field**.
2. Enter the **Field Name**, for example "Price range".
3. Optionally enter the **Possible Values**, one per line. With values, the field is a drop-down menu; without values, it is a free text field.
4. Click **Save Field**.

```
Field Name:       Price range
Possible Values:  $
                  $$
                  $$$
                  $$$$
```

Ideas by niche

DIRECTORY	USEFUL CUSTOM FIELDS
Restaurants	Cuisine, Price range, Outdoor seating, Reservations
Lawyers and consultants	Languages spoken, Free first consultation, Years of experience
Wedding suppliers	Capacity, Price from, Service area
Health and beauty	Accepts insurance, Wheelchair access, Parking

> **TIP**
>
> Keep the number of fields small. Every extra question makes the listing form longer, and long forms are left unfinished.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/custom-fields.html

CHAPTER 31

Banner Areas, Banners and Ad Zones

PHP Business Directory has two advertising systems: banner areas that businesses buy themselves, and ad zones for scripts such as Google AdSense.

PHP Business Directory has two advertising tools:

- **Banner areas** are spaces you sell to businesses. They choose an area, upload a banner and pay from their user panel.
- **Ad zones** hold advertising code from networks such as Google AdSense, or a simple image ad.

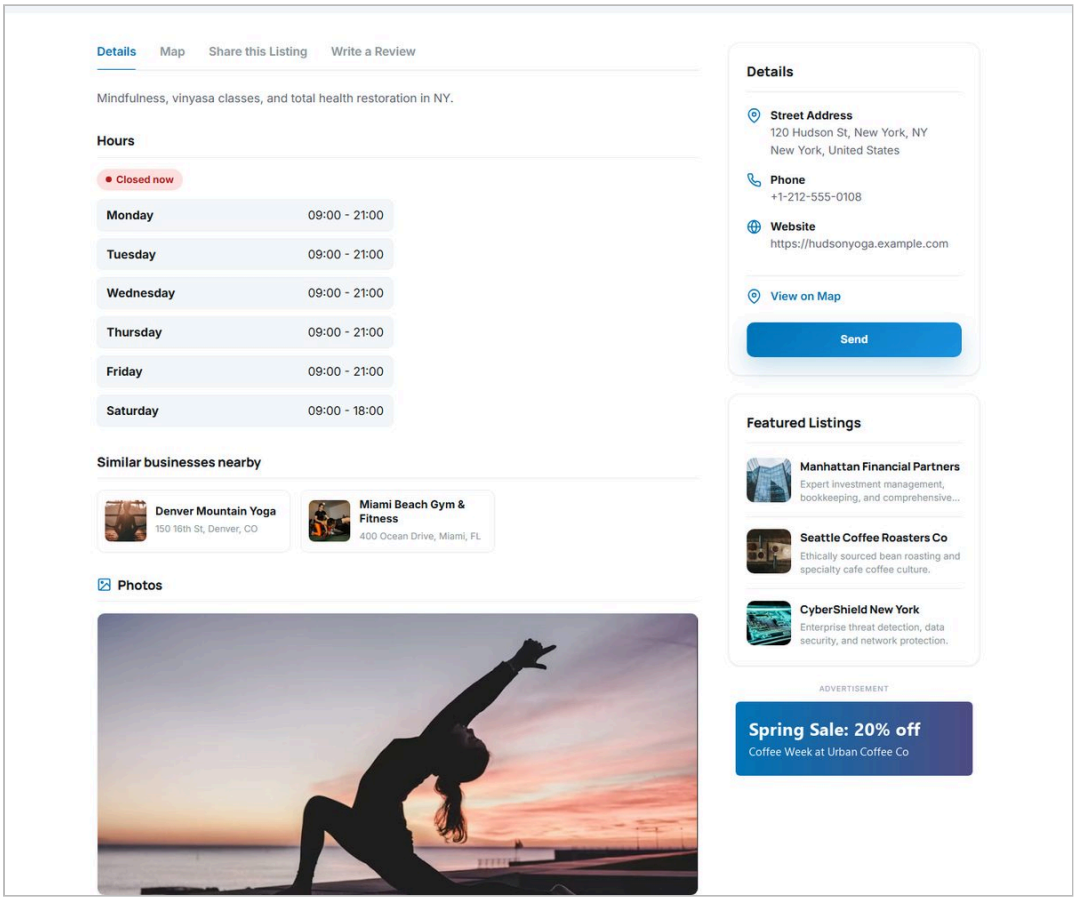


Figure 31.1 A banner in the sidebar of a listing page, marked "Advertisement".

Banner areas

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Banners › Manage Banner Areas

A banner area is a place on the website where banners rotate. Click **Add Banner Area** and enter:

FIELD	MEANING
Area Name	Shown to users when they choose where to advertise, for example "Home Page Sidebar".
Width and height	The banner size in pixels, for example 300 × 250. Users must upload banners of this size.
Price per period	What one banner costs for the period below. 0 makes the area free.
Duration days	How long a purchased banner is shown.
Max banners in rotation	How many banners the area can sell at the same time. When it is full, users see it as SOLD OUT.
Banners shown at once	How many of the area's banners appear on a page. When there are more, a random selection is shown on each page view.
Where the area is shown	**Home page**, **Sidebar of listing and search pages**, **Above the footer of every page**, or **Only where its template tag is placed**.
Description	A sentence for advertisers, shown in the user panel, for example "Seen on every listing page, next to the contact details."

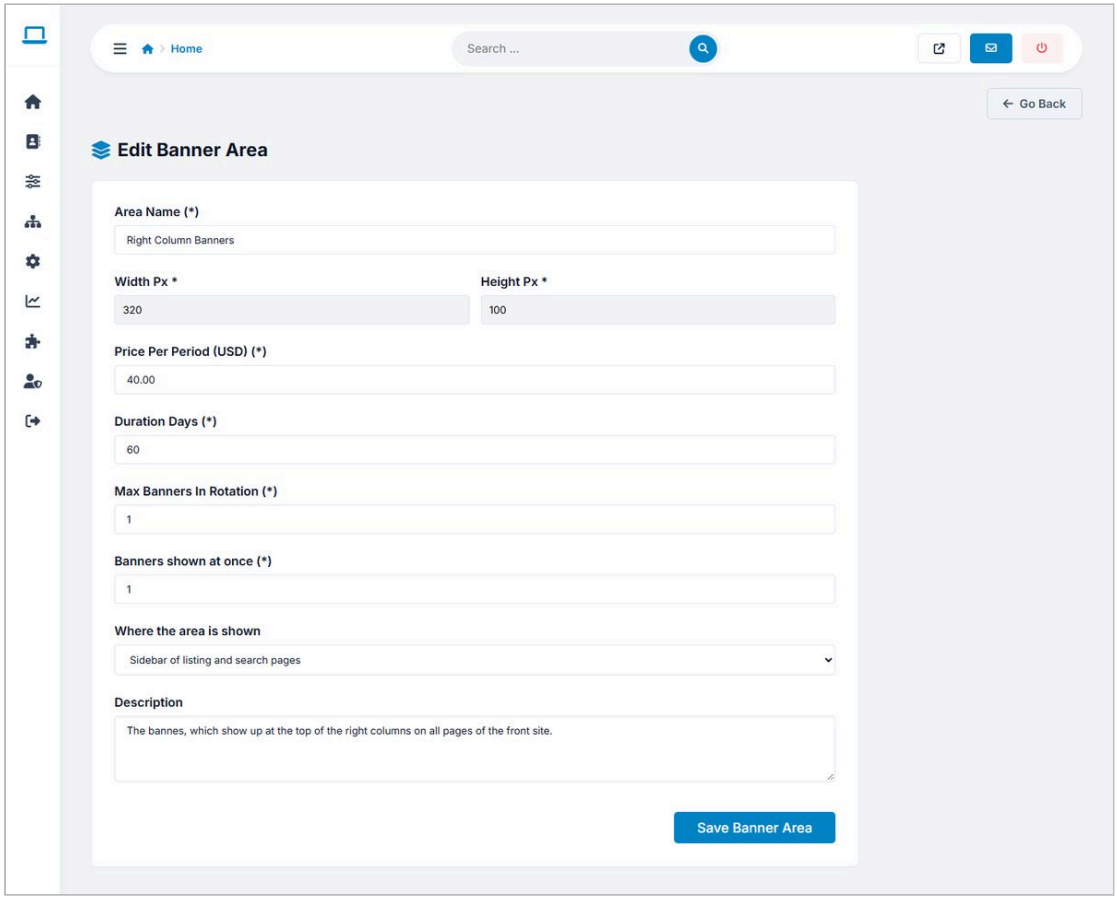


Figure 31.2 Editing a banner area.

The list shows each area's position, size, price and how many places are taken. Each area also has a template tag, for example `[BANNER_AREA_1]`. With the position **Only where its template tag is placed**, the area appears wherever you put that tag: in a template file or in the content of a page.

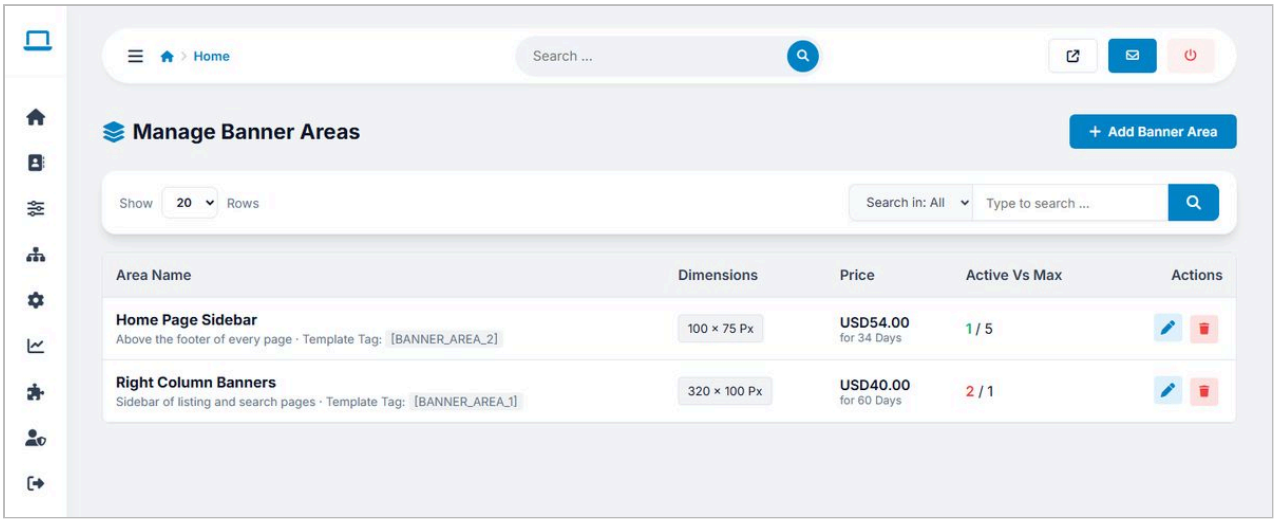


Figure 31.3 Banner areas with their positions, template tags, sizes, prices and occupancy.

All five templates show home page areas below the home page search, sidebar areas at the bottom of the listing page sidebar (and of the search results sidebar in the Business and Yellow Pages templates), and footer areas just above the footer.

Managing banners

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Banners

All banners, whether bought by users or added by you, are listed with their image, name, link, area, status and expiry date. For banners in paid areas, a label shows whether the banner has been paid.

- Check new banners and tick **Active** when the image and link are acceptable and the payment has arrived. Only active banners that have not expired appear on the website.
- **Renew** extends a banner for another period.
- **Add Banner** creates a banner yourself: enter the **Banner Name**, the **Target URL** it links to, choose the **Banner Area**, upload the image and tick **Active**. Use this for your own promotions or for advertisers who paid offline.

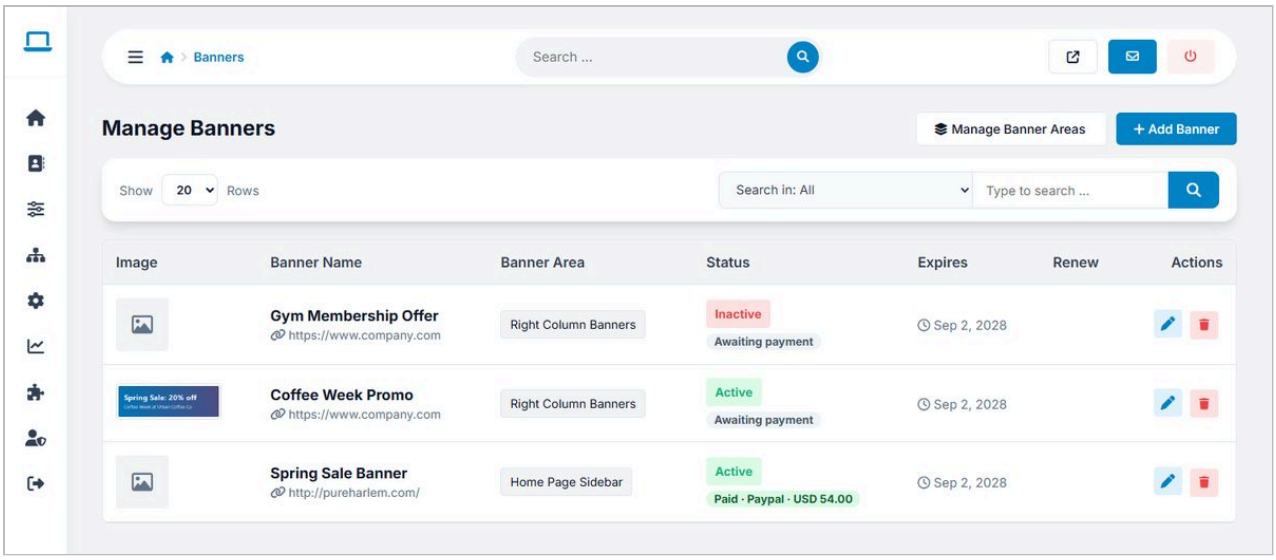


Figure 31.4 Banners with their status and payment labels.

Banners that link to another website open in a new tab and carry `rel="sponsored"`, as search engines require for paid links. How users buy banners is described in Buying Banner Advertising (chapter 16).

Ad zones

Admin Panel › Website › Advertisements

The website has six ad zones:

ZONE	WHERE IT APPEARS
Header (Top of page)	Just below the header, on every page.
Sidebar (Top) and Sidebar (Bottom)	At the top and the bottom of the listing page sidebar, and of the search results sidebar in the Business and Yellow Pages templates.
Above / Below Article Content	Above and below each news article.
Footer (Bottom of page)	Just above the footer, on every page.

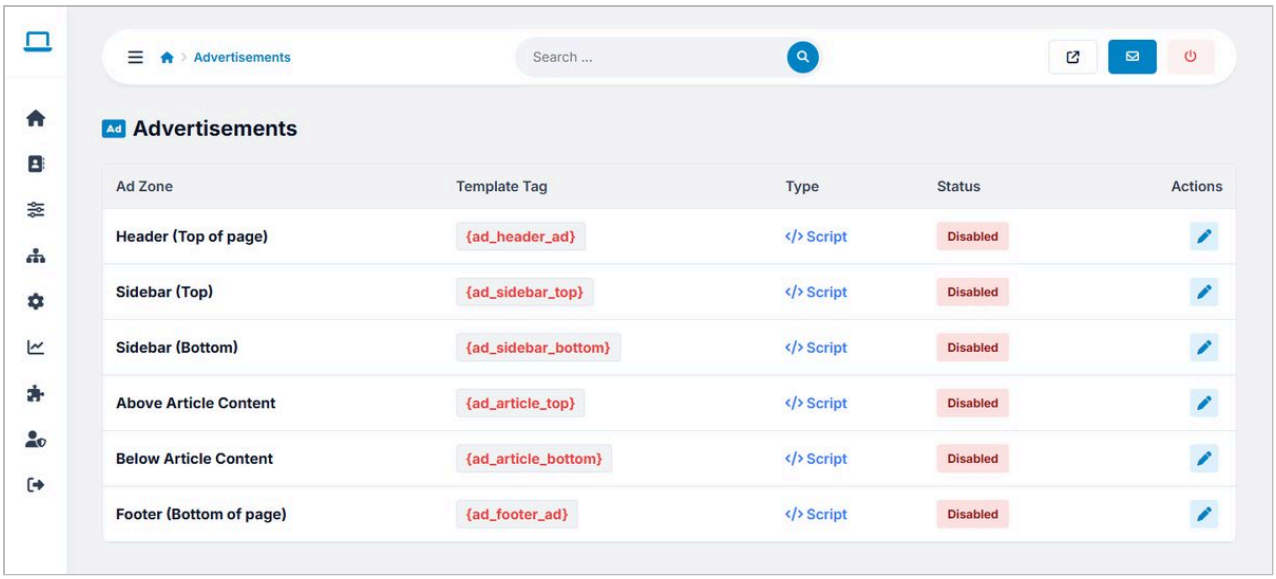


Figure 31.5 The six ad zones.

Click the edit button of a zone, choose the type and fill it in:

- **Script:** paste the HTML or JavaScript code from your ad network, for example a Google AdSense ad unit.
- **Banner:** upload an image and enter the target URL, for a simple image ad.

Tick **Enable** and save. A disabled zone shows nothing. Each zone also has a template tag, such as `{ad_header_ad}`, to place it somewhere else in a custom template.

> TIP
>
> Do not overload the website with ads. Visitors come to find businesses; one or two well-placed ads earn more over time than ads in every zone.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/banners-and-ads.html

CHAPTER 32

Website Pages and Menu

The Pages section manages the website structure: which pages exist, how they appear in the menu, and what they contain.

Admin Panel › Website › Pages

The Pages section shows the structure of the website as a tree. The order of the tree is the order of the main menu, and pages placed under another page become its sub-pages.

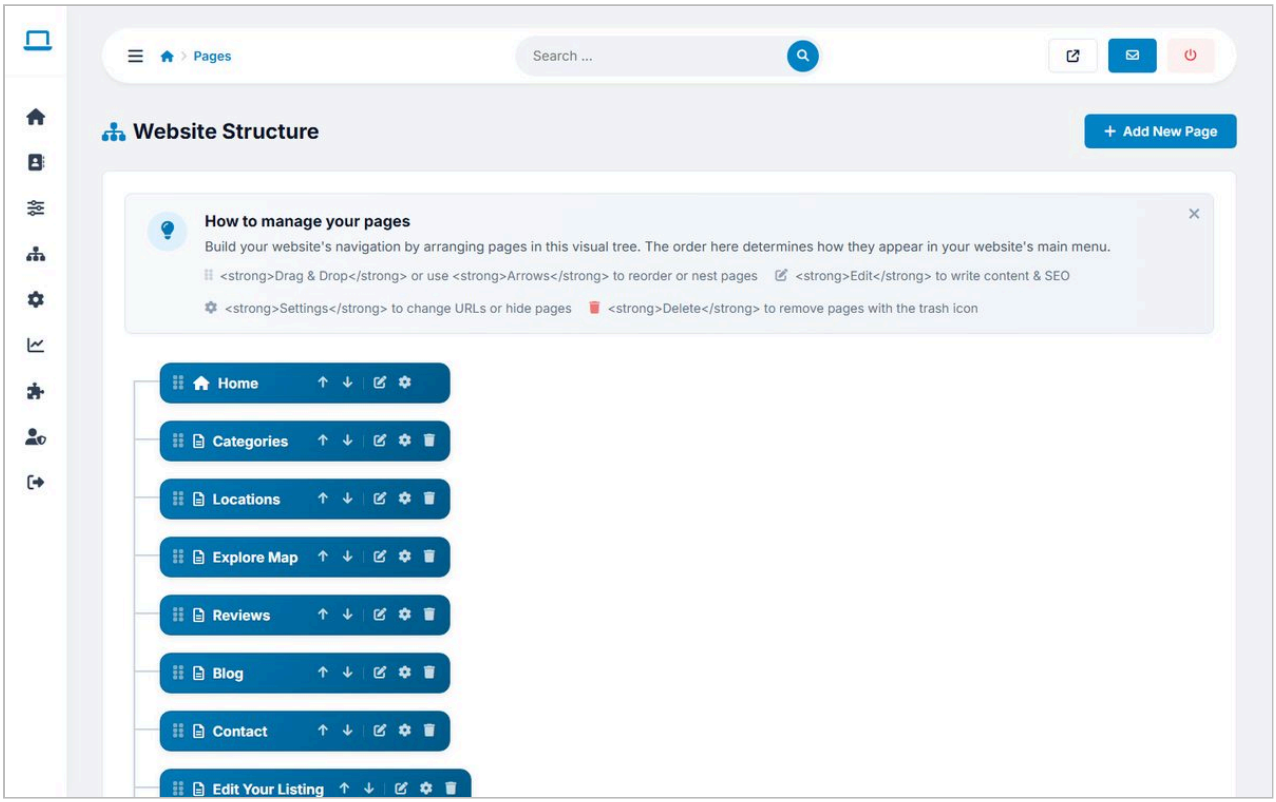


Figure 32.1 The website structure.

Arranging the menu

- Drag a page by its handle to move it, or use the **up** and **down** arrows.
- Drop a page onto another page to nest it as a sub-page.
- The structure is saved automatically; a **Structure Saved!** message confirms it.

Each page in the tree has buttons to **edit** its content, open its **settings** and **delete** it.

Adding a page

1. Click **Add New Page**.

2. Choose the **Parent Page**, or **None (Root Level)** for a main menu item.
3. For each language, enter the **Page Title** and optionally the **URL Slug**; it is generated from the title when empty.
4. Optionally enter a **Meta Title** and **Meta Description** for search engines.
5. Click **Create Page**, then edit its content.

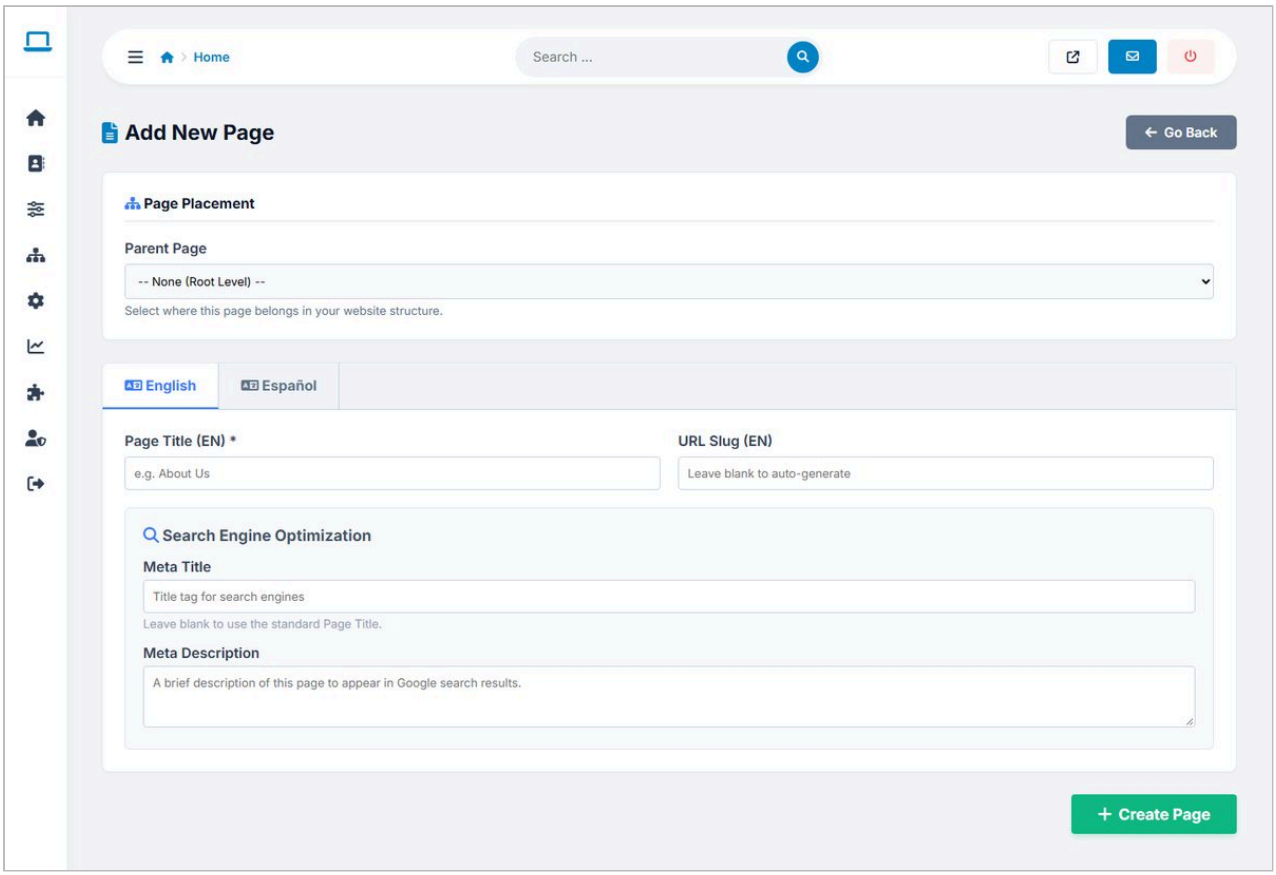


Figure 32.2 Adding a page in two languages.

Editing the content

The content editor works like a word processor: headings, bold text, lists, links, images, tables and embedded videos. Each language has its own tab. When the AI features are on, the **AI Writing Assistant** above the editor drafts the page from the title and a few notes.

The home page has extra **Global Hero Settings**: the hero background image, a badge text, the headline, the subtitle and an optional button.

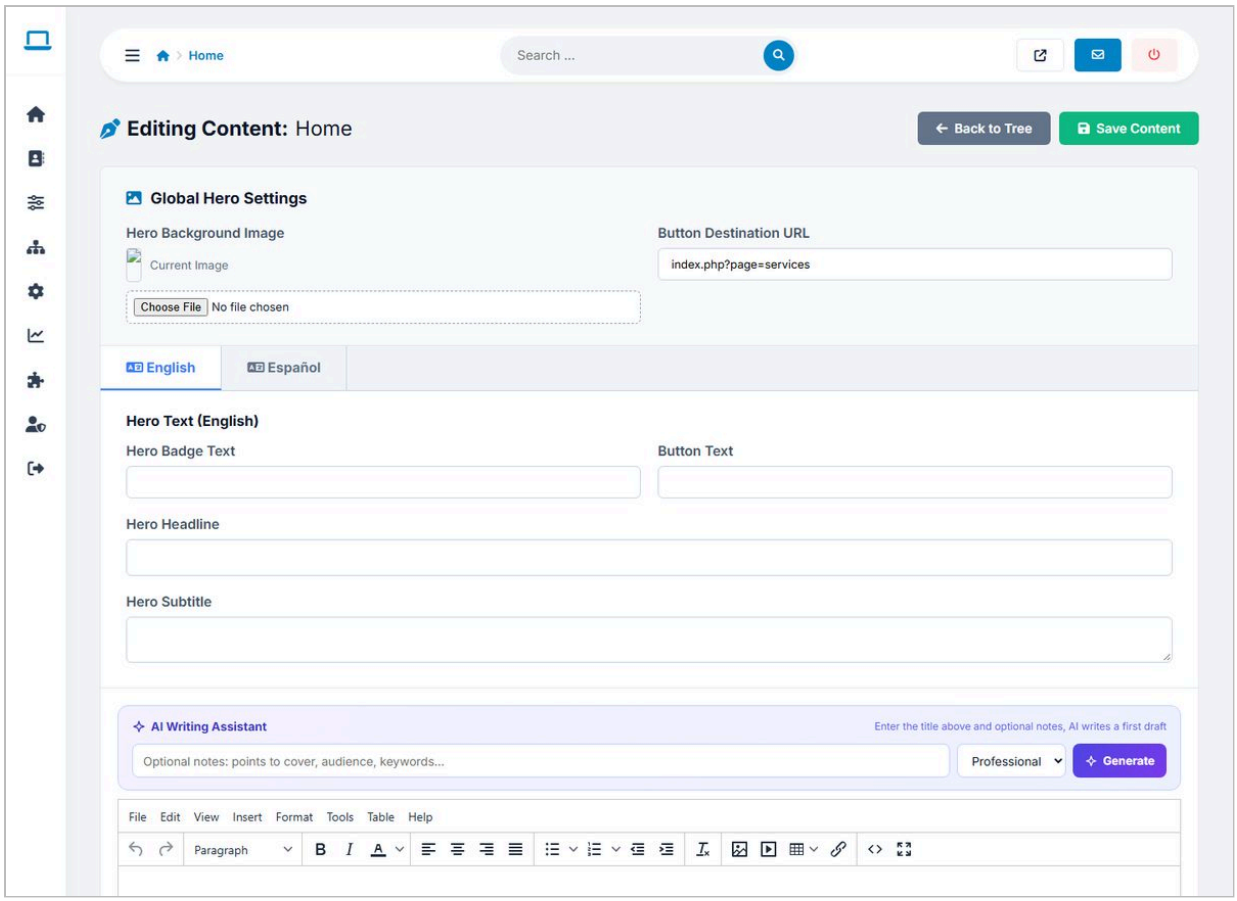


Figure 32.3 Editing the content of a page, with the AI Writing Assistant.

Page settings

- **Parent Page:** moves the page in the structure.
- **Extension File:** a PHP file from the `extensions` folder that runs on this page. The built-in pages use this for their features, for example `map` for Explore Map and `contact` for the contact page. Do not change it for those pages. See Extensions and Custom Tags (chapter 42).
- **Active (Published):** untick it to hide a page without deleting it.
- **Show Only in Footer Menu:** removes the page from the main menu and lists it in the footer instead. Use it for pages such as Terms of Use or Privacy Policy.
- The title, URL slug, meta title and meta description of each language.

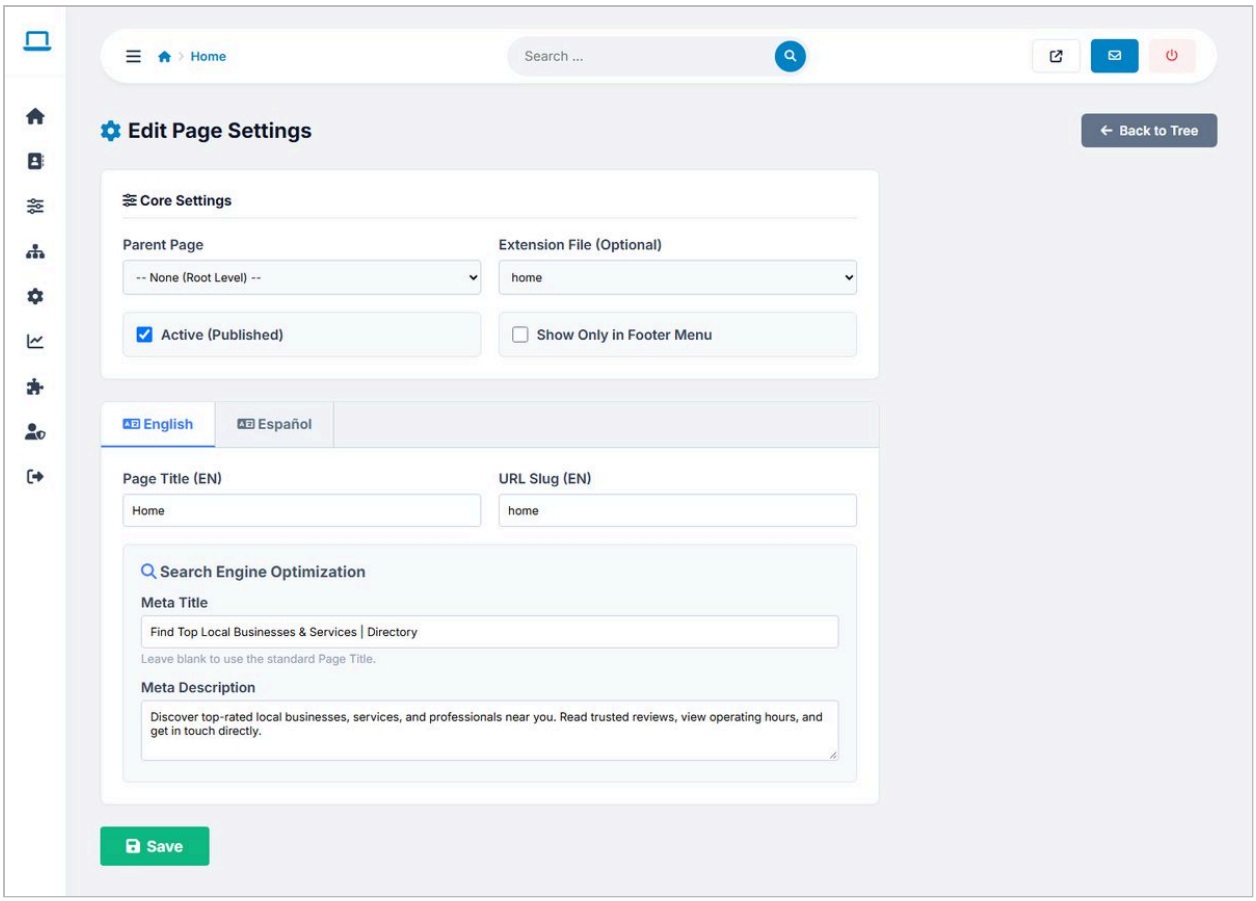


Figure 32.4 The settings of a page.

> IMPORTANT
>
> Deleting a built-in page such as Categories, Locations or Contact removes that feature from the menu. Hide it with **Active** instead if you might need it later.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/pages-and-menu.html

CHAPTER 33

News (Blog) and FAQ Management

News articles bring visitors from search engines and keep your directory alive. The FAQ answers common questions before they reach your inbox.

News articles

Admin Panel › Website › News

The News Manager lists your articles with their cover image, title, publication date, number of views and status. They appear on the Blog page of the website and in the latest news box of the footer.

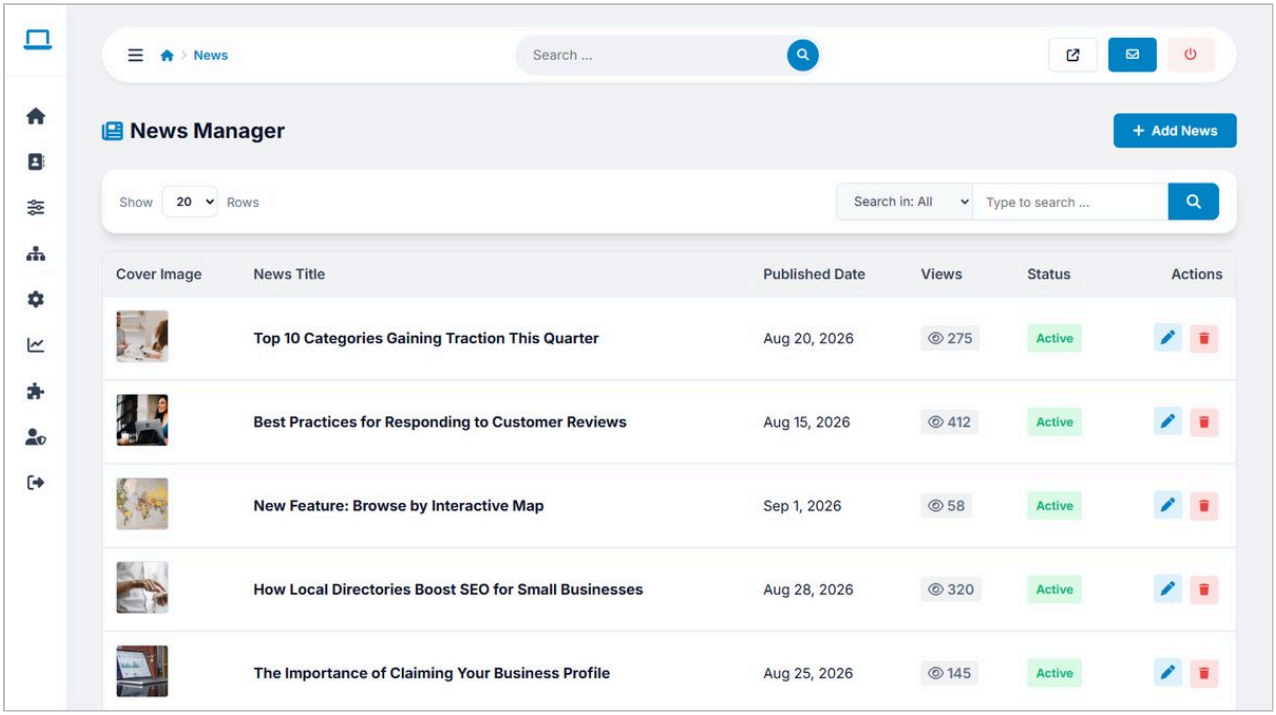


Figure 33.1 The News Manager.

Click **Add News** to write an article:

- **Article Title** and **URL Slug** for each language. The slug is generated from the title when empty.
- **Article Content** in the visual editor. With AI enabled, the AI Writing Assistant drafts the article from the title and your notes.
- **Cover Image**, shown on the Blog page and when the article is shared.
- **Active (Published)**, to publish or hide the article.

> **TIP**
>
> Write for the searches your visitors make: "best bakeries in Portland", "how to choose a wedding photographer", "new businesses in town this month". Link to the listings you mention; businesses like being featured and share the article.

FAQ

Admin Panel › Website › FAQ

The FAQ Manager lists the questions in their display order, with their status.

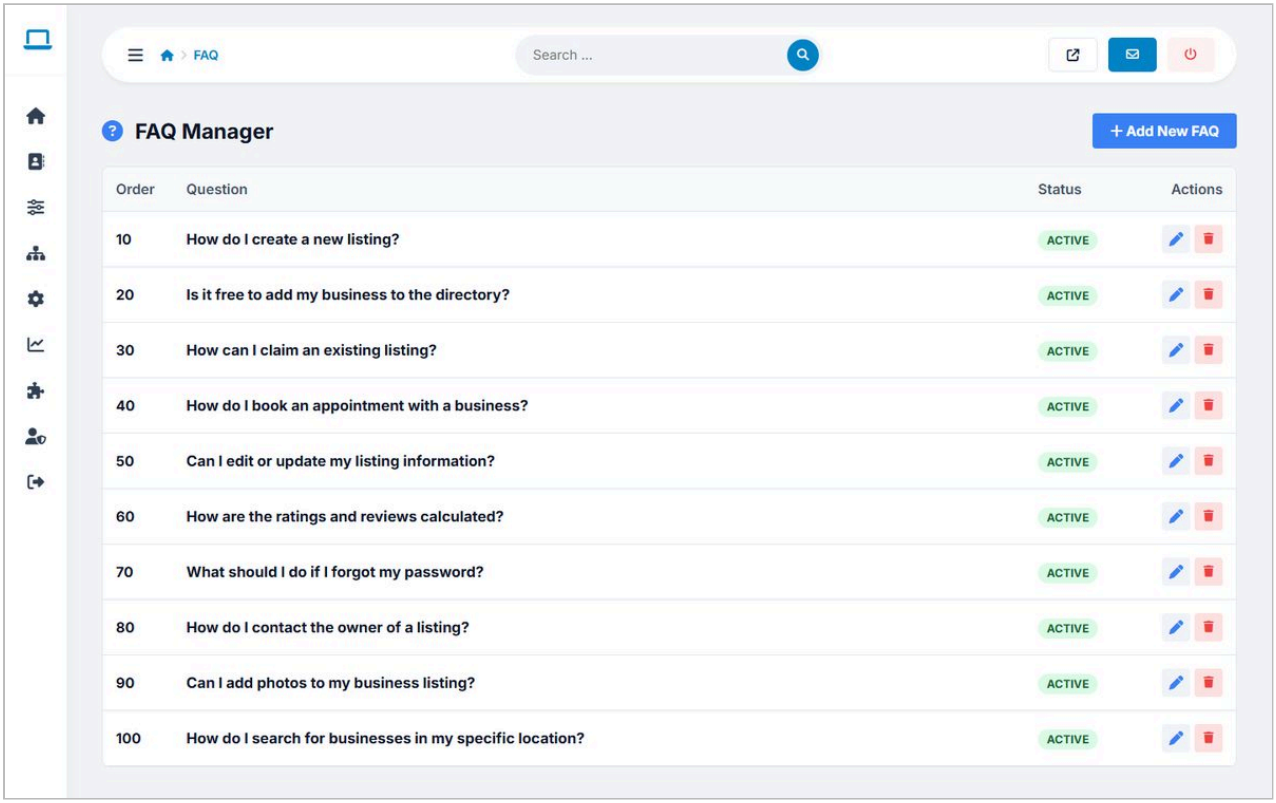


Figure 33.2 The FAQ Manager with the demo questions.

Click **Add New FAQ**, enter a number for the order (lower numbers come first; steps of 10 leave room for later questions), the question and the answer for each language, and the status. Answers can contain links, for example to the add listing page or the packages.

Update the demo questions to match your own rules, prices and review policy before launch.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/news-and-faq.html

CHAPTER 34

Templates, Logo and Appearance

PHP Business Directory 6.1 includes five templates, each with its own layout and concept. You can preview any of them before switching the live website.

The look of the website comes from its template. Version 6.1 includes five templates, each based on a different idea of what a business directory is, with its own layout, colors and fonts.

The five templates

TEMPLATE	CONCEPT	BEST FOR
Business	Clean corporate directory: photo hero with an overlapping search card, card grids, category and location tiles with an A–Z index.	General business directories, chambers of commerce
City Guide	Editorial city magazine: masthead header, editor's picks with a lead story, arched category cards.	City and tourism guides, lifestyle directories
Explorer	Map-first app: live map of all businesses on the home page, search results next to a map.	Local "near me" directories, services, real estate
Yellow Pages	Classic phone book: bold yellow header with What/Where search, A–Z category index, dense rows with phone numbers.	Large general directories, trades and services
Luxe	Premium curated guide: dark and gold header, full-screen photos, category mosaic, tall image cards.	Restaurants, hotels, wedding venues, luxury services

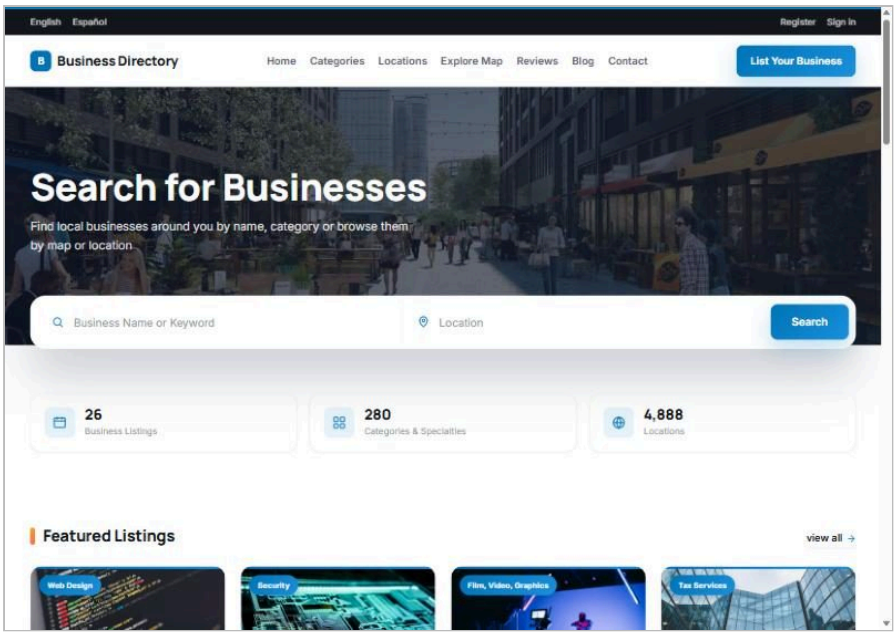


Figure 34.1 Business, the default template.

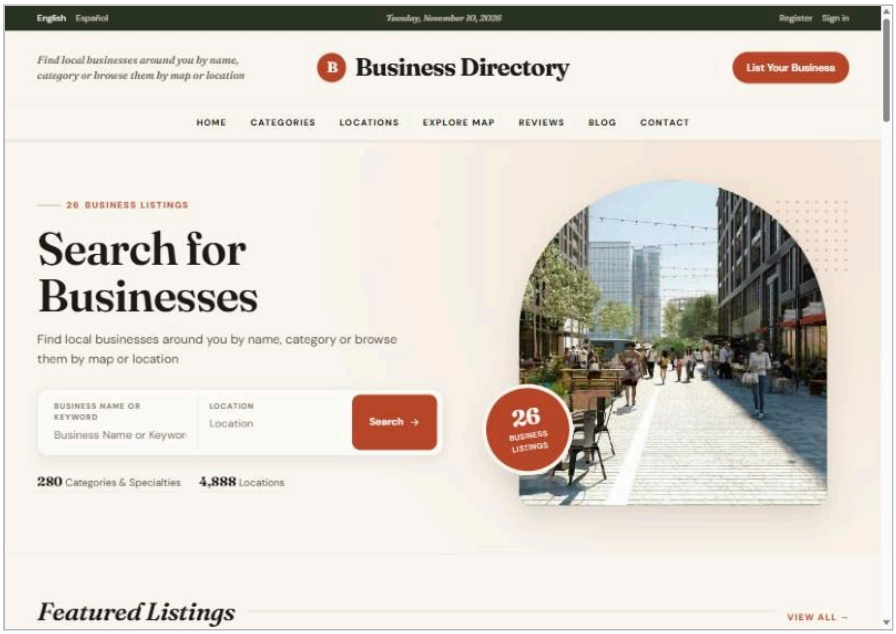


Figure 34.2 City Guide.

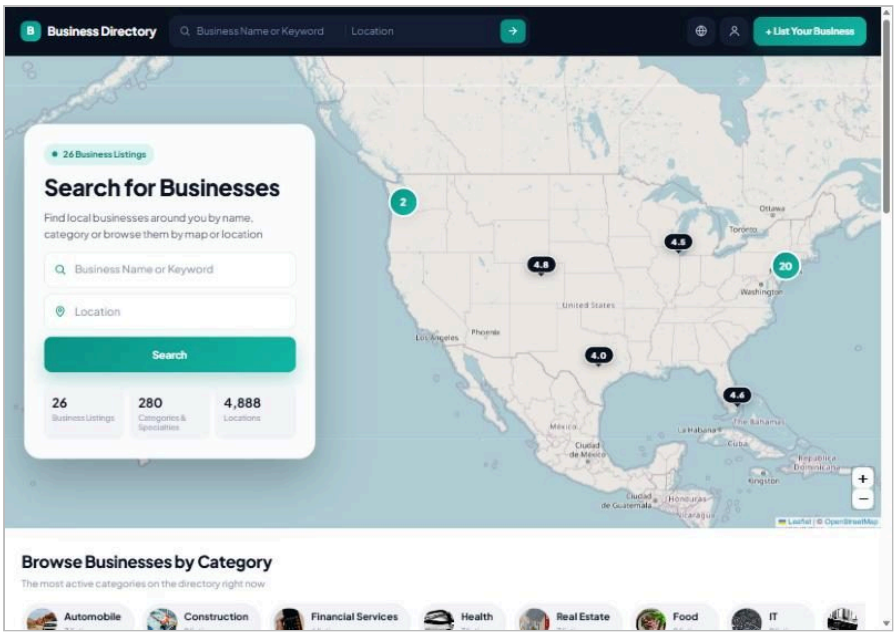


Figure 34.3 Explorer.

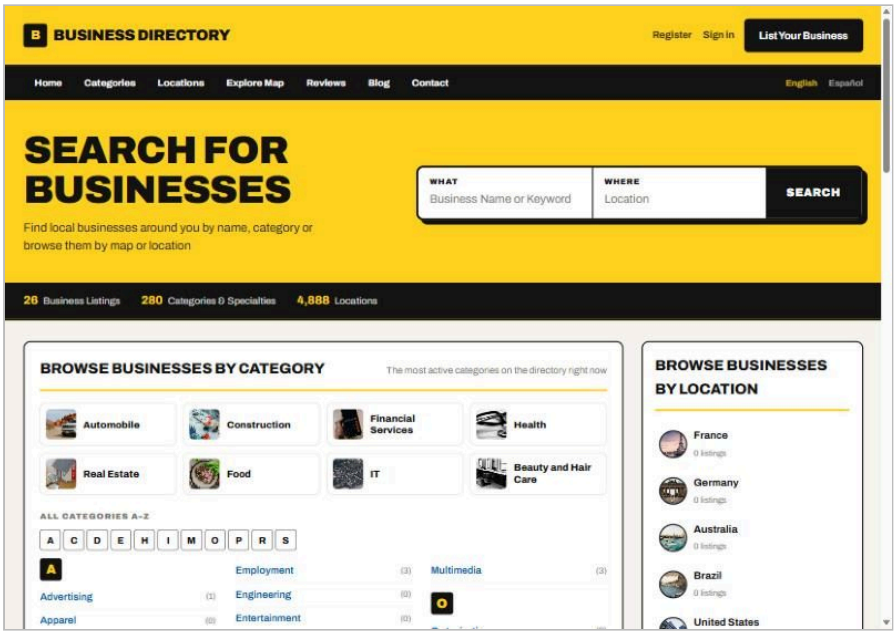


Figure 34.4 Yellow Pages.

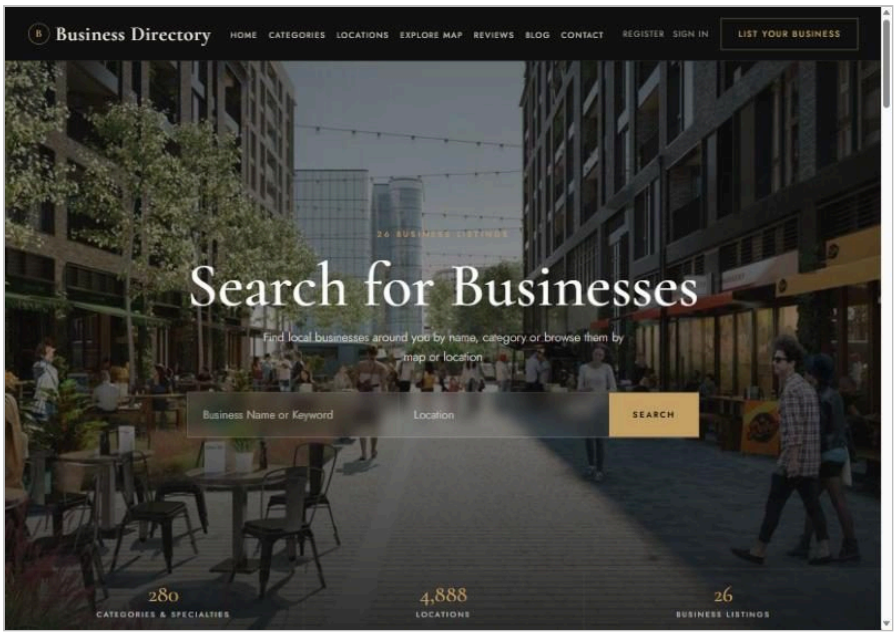


Figure 34.5 Luxe.

All templates support every feature: classic and AI search, suggestions, all languages, appointment booking, reviews and the user panel links. All are designed for phones as well as computers.

Previewing and activating a template

Admin Panel › Website › Templates

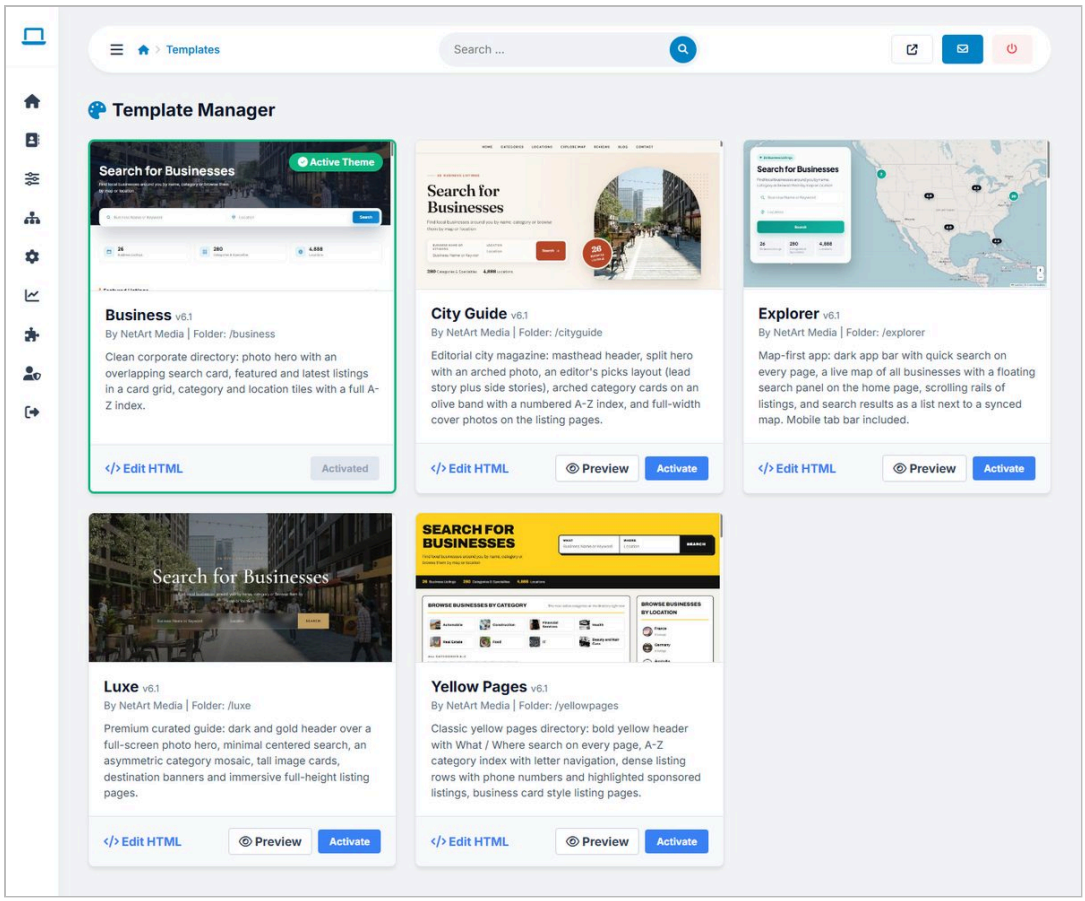


Figure 34.6 The Template Manager.

- **Preview** opens the website in a new tab with that template, for you only. Browse every page to judge it with your own content. Visitors keep seeing the active template. Click **Exit preview** in the bar at the bottom of the page to return to the active template.
- **Activate** switches the live website to that template.
- **Edit HTML** opens the template files in a code editor. See Customizing Templates (chapter 41).

> **TIP**
>
> Choose the template before you finish your category images and home page photo: Luxe and City Guide look best with high-quality photos, Yellow Pages works well even with few images.

Logo and favicon

Admin Panel › Website › Logo & Favicon

- **Website Logo:** upload your logo as a transparent PNG or WebP image. Without an image, the **Website Logo Text** is shown as a text logo.
- **Favicon:** the small icon in the browser tab (PNG, GIF, JPG or ICO), ideally square, 64 × 64 pixels or larger.

Click **Save Branding Settings**.

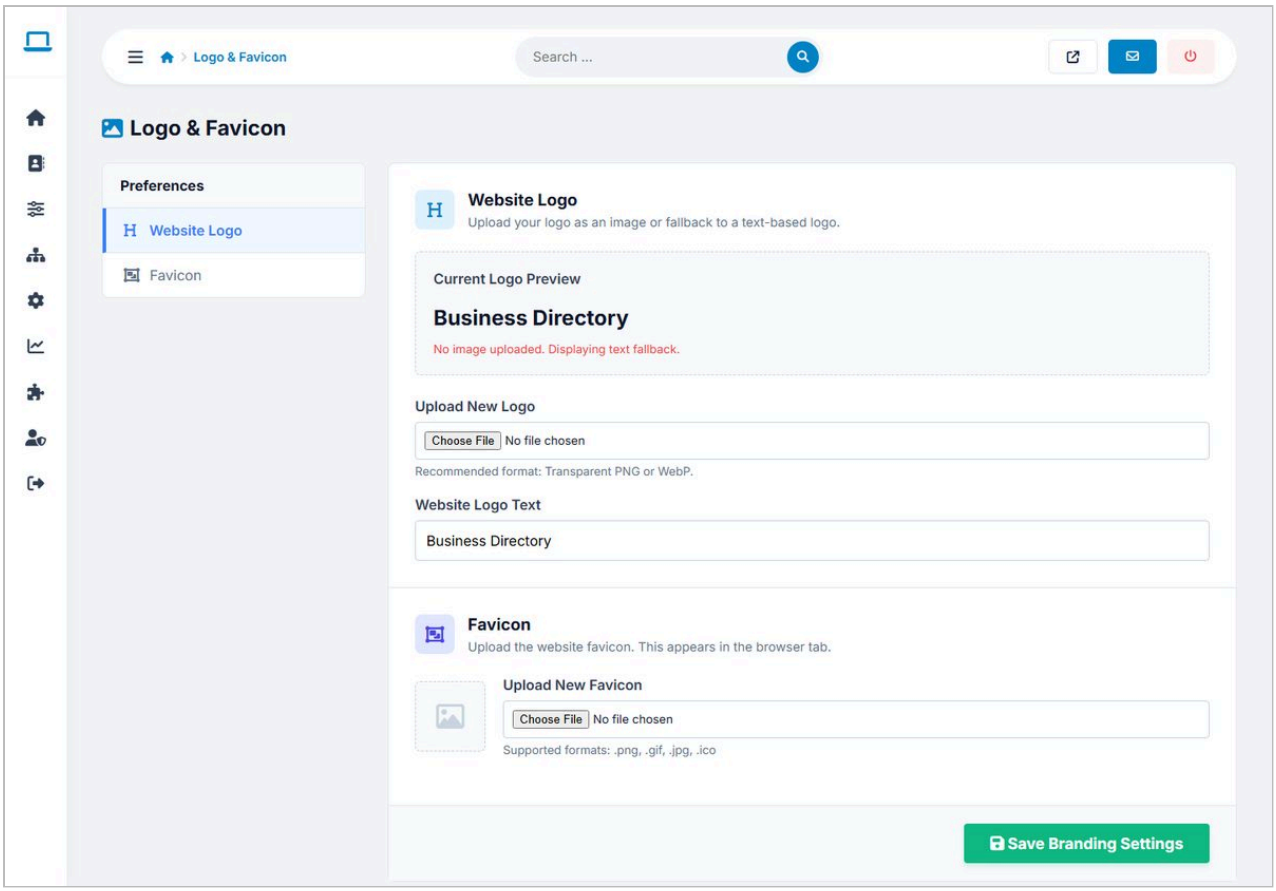


Figure 34.7 Logo and favicon settings.

Home page photo and texts

The home page background photo, title and subtitle are set in Home Page Settings (chapter 24), so they stay the same when you switch templates.

Colors and fonts

Each of the five templates has its own carefully matched colors and fonts. To change them, edit the CSS variables at the top of the template's stylesheet (`css/theme.css` , or `css/main.css` for Business), as described in Customizing Templates (chapter 41).

Without touching any file, you can also give any template your own brand colors in the **Appearance** tab of Settings › Configuration Options:

1. Switch on **Apply these colors and fonts to the template.**
2. Choose the **Primary Accent Color** (buttons, links and highlights) and the **Secondary Color** (the template's second brand color: the yellow of Yellow Pages, the gold of Luxe, the navy of Explorer, the olive of City Guide or the amber of Business).
3. Choose the **Typography Font**, the **Button Shape** and the **Footer Background**, then click **Save All Settings.**

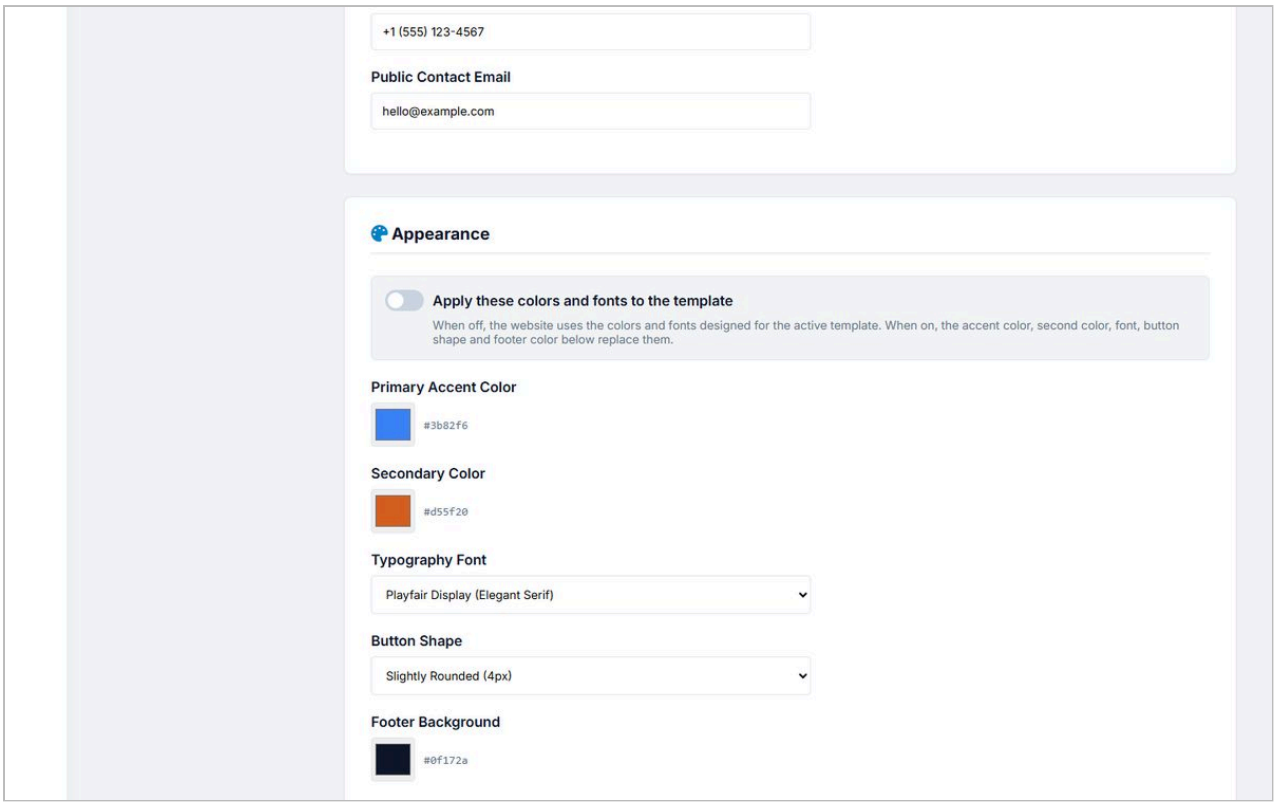


Figure 34.8 The Appearance settings with the switch that applies them to the template.

Lighter and darker shades are calculated automatically, and the footer text switches between light and dark to stay readable. Switch the option off to return to the template's original design.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/templates-and-design.html

CHAPTER 35

Languages and Interface Texts

Every text on the website can be changed, and the directory can run in as many languages as you need, each with its own URLs.

PHP Business Directory can run in several languages at once. The demo comes with English and Spanish. Each language has its own URLs, interface texts, category names, pages, news and FAQ.

Language versions

Admin Panel › Settings › Language Versions

The list shows each language with its code and status. Click **Add Language** and enter:

- **Code:** the two-letter ISO code, for example `fr` for French or `de` for German. It appears in the URLs: `/fr`, `/fr-category-…`.
- **Language Name:** the name in that language, for example *Français*, as shown in the language menu.
- **Language Is Active:** only active languages are offered to visitors.

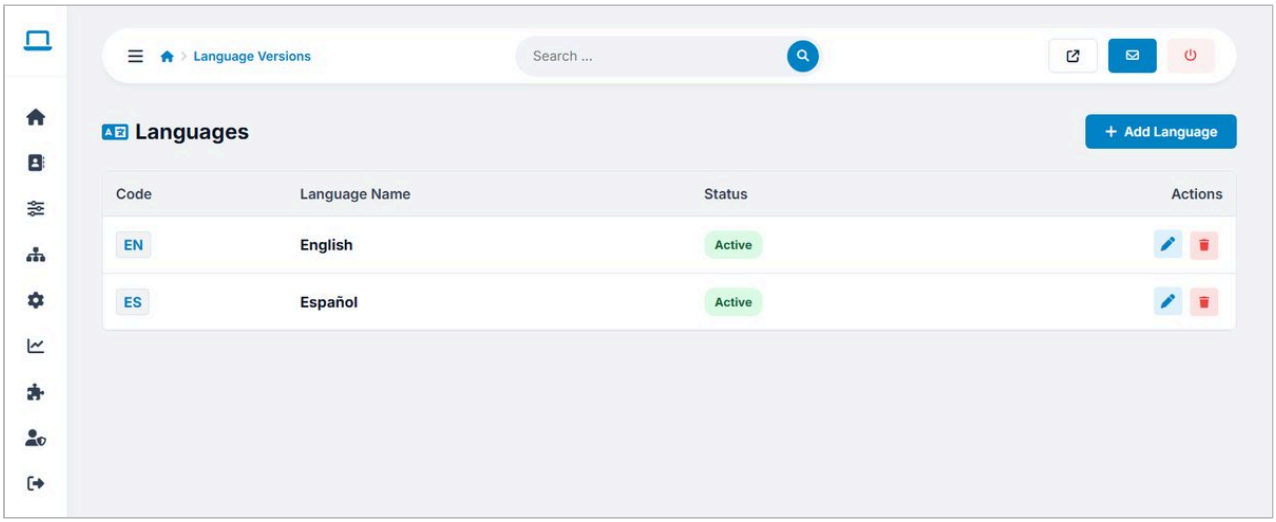


Figure 35.1 Language versions.

The new language starts with a copy of the English texts, which you then translate. To make the language selector appear on the website, switch on **Multi-Language Site** in System Settings, Tracking Codes and Social Links (chapter 36).

> NOTE
>
> For category names in the new language, copy `categories/categories_en.php` and `categories/categories_array_en.php` to files with the new code (for example `categories_fr.php` and `categories_array_fr.php`) with your FTP program. The new language then appears on the Categories page, where you translate the names.

Translating the interface texts

Admin Panel › Website › Interface Texts

Every text of the website and the user panel, from menu items to error messages, is listed here as a key (for example `m_submit`) with its text. Choose the language at the top, change the texts and click **Save Changes**.

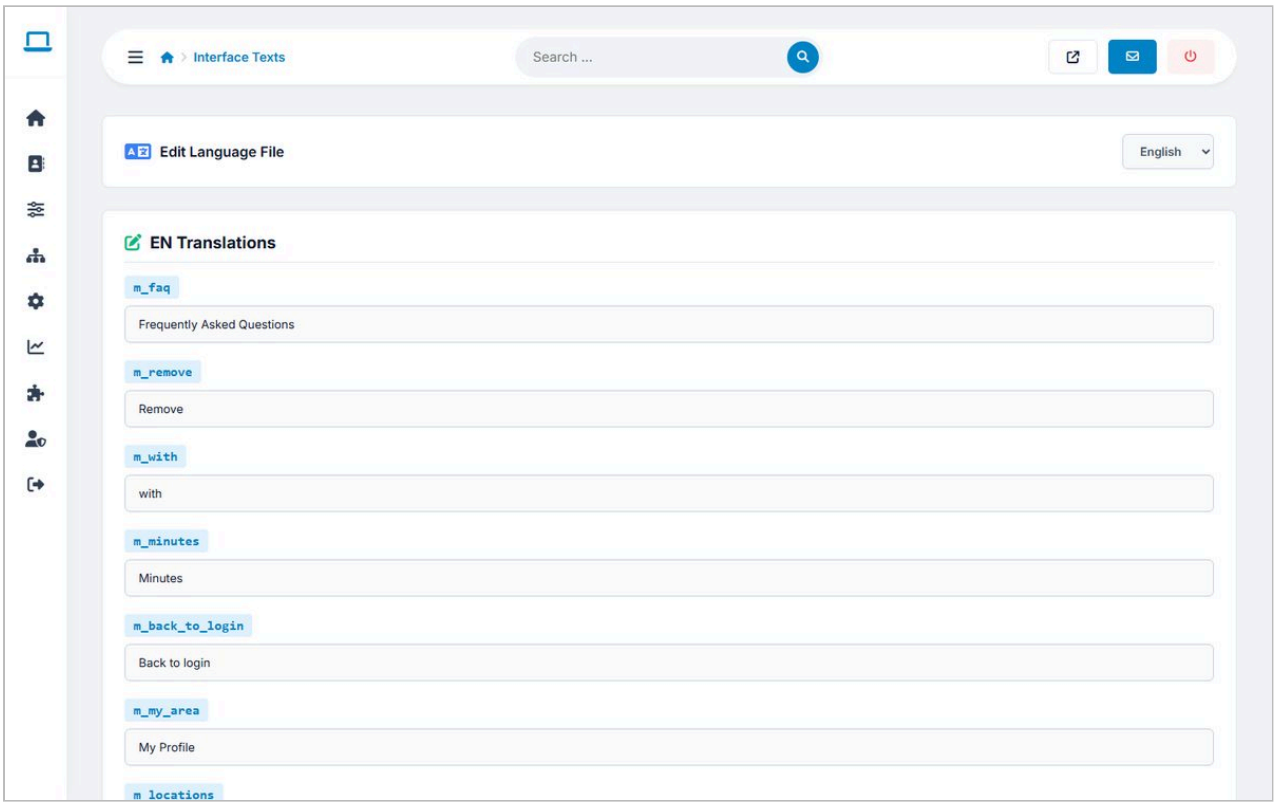


Figure 35.2 Editing the interface texts.

Use this page also to change wording in your main language, for example to say "Members" instead of "Users", or "Vendors" instead of "Businesses".

> TIP
>
> Use your browser's find function (Ctrl+F or Cmd+F) to locate the text you want to change on this long page.

Translating content

- **Categories:** one tree per language, with the same numbers. See Managing Categories and Category Images (chapter 28).
- **Pages, news and FAQ:** each has a tab per language in its editor.
- **Listings:** are shown as written by their owners. The AI writing assistant writes in the visitor's language when they create a listing.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/languages-and-texts.html

CHAPTER 36

System Settings, Tracking Codes and Social Links

The Settings section holds the website-wide options: names and contact details, appearance, maintenance mode, tracking codes and social links.

Admin Panel › Settings › Configuration Options

The System Settings page has four tabs: **General Settings**, **Company Information**, **Appearance** and **Advanced Settings**. Click **Save All Settings** after changes.

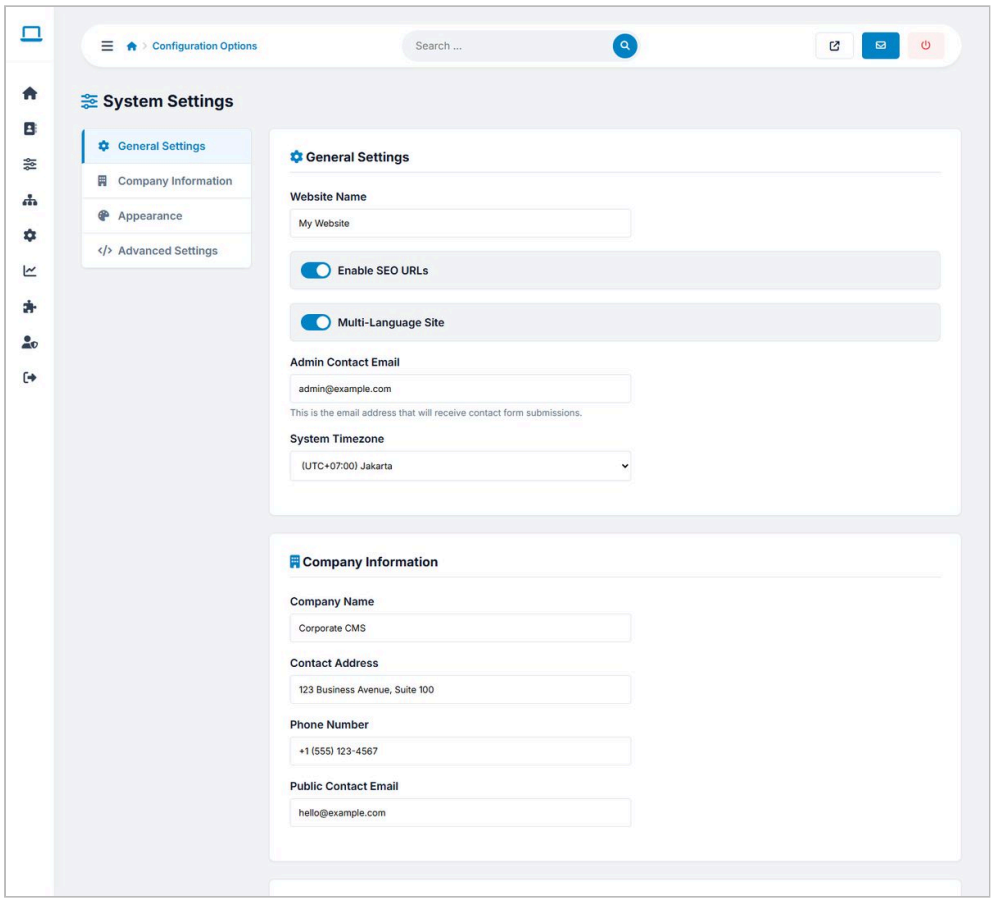


Figure 36.1 System Settings.

General settings

SETTING	MEANING
Website Name	The name of your directory, used in titles and emails.
Enable SEO URLs	Uses friendly URLs such as `/en-listing-hudson-yoga-wellness-8` instead of `index.php?mod=details&id=8`. Needs the `.htaccess` file and Apache `mod_rewrite`.

SETTING	MEANING
Multi-Language Site	Shows the language selector and adds the language code to URLs.
Admin Contact Email	Receives the messages from the contact form.
System Timezone	Used for dates and for the "Open now" badge on listings. Choose your directory's time zone.

Company information

Your **Company Name**, **Contact Address**, **Phone Number** and **Public Contact Email**. Templates can show them with the tags `<site company_name/>`, `<site contact_address/>`, `<site contact_phone/>` and `<site contact_email/>`.

Appearance

When **Apply these colors and fonts to the template** is on, the **Primary Accent Color**, **Secondary Color**, **Typography Font**, **Button Shape** and **Footer Background** replace the active template's own design. When it is off, each template keeps its original colors and fonts. See Templates, Logo and Appearance (chapter 34).

Advanced settings and maintenance mode

- **Google Analytics ID:** the measurement ID of your Google Analytics property (G-XXXXXXX). It can also be set in Tracking Codes.
- **Enable Maintenance Mode:** shows a "Down for Maintenance" page to visitors while you work on the website. Logged-in administrators still see and use the website normally. Remember to switch it off afterwards.

Tracking codes

Admin Panel › Settings › Tracking Codes

- **Google Analytics** and **Facebook Pixel ID:** enter only the IDs; the tracking code is added to every page automatically.
- **Header Scripts:** code added before `</head>`, for example the Google Search Console verification meta tag or another analytics service.
- **Footer Scripts:** code added before `</body>`, for example a live chat widget.

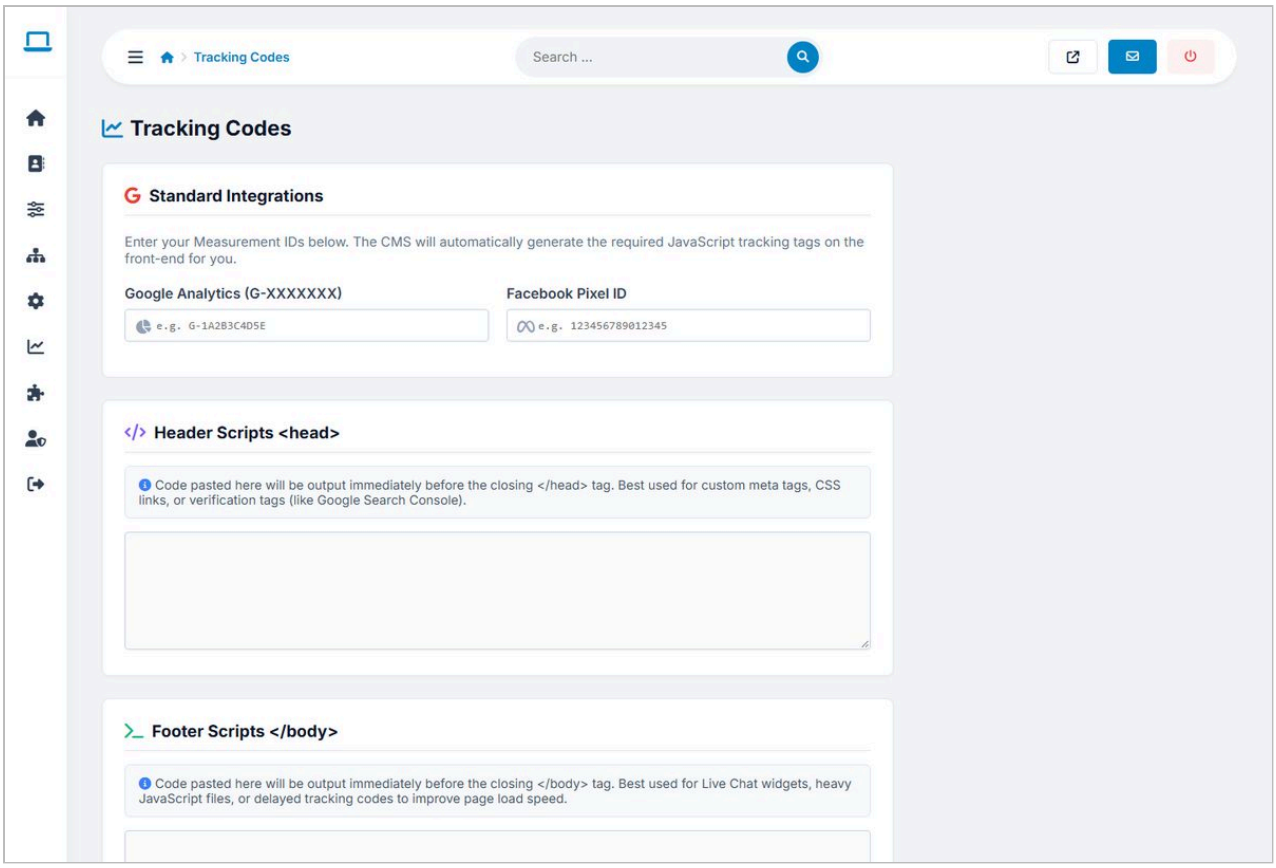


Figure 36.2 Tracking codes.

> NOTE
>
> Depending on your visitors' country, analytics and advertising pixels may require a cookie consent banner. A consent tool can be added with the Header Scripts field.

Social media

Admin Panel › Settings › Social Media

Enter the full addresses of your profiles on Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok and Pinterest. Icons for the profiles you fill in appear in the "Follow us" area of the website footer; empty fields are skipped.

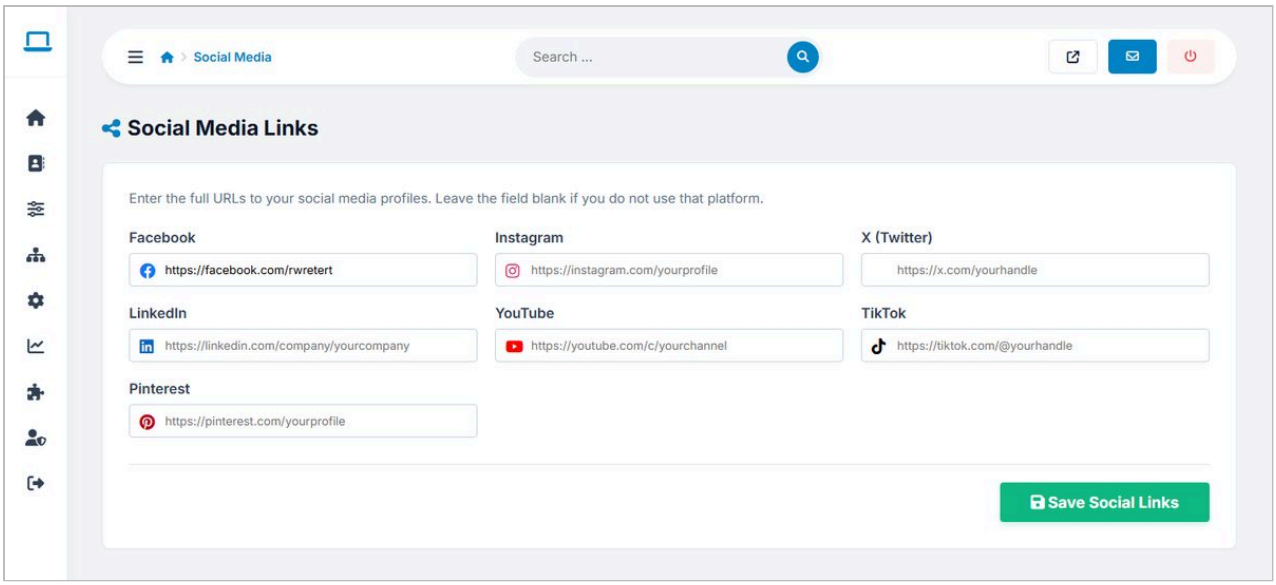


Figure 36.3 Social media links.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/system-settings.html

CHAPTER 37

SEO: URLs, Titles, Sitemap and Structured Data

A directory lives from search engine traffic. PHP Business Directory does most of the SEO work automatically; this chapter shows what it does and what you can fine-tune.

Search engines are the main source of visitors for most directories. PHP Business Directory creates thousands of useful, well-structured pages automatically; this chapter explains what it does and what you can improve.

Friendly URLs

With **Enable SEO URLs** switched on, every page has a readable address that includes its name:

PAGE	EXAMPLE URL
Listing	`/en-listing-hudson-yoga-wellness-8`
Category	`/en-category-it-50`
Subcategory	`/en-category-agencies-counselors-2-1`
Location	`/en-location-new-york-229-37`
Page	`/en-contact`
News article	`/en-news-new-feature-browse-by-interactive-map`

Page titles and descriptions

Every listing, category, location and search page has its own title and meta description, generated from its content. You can override them:

- **Listings:** the custom meta title and description in the listing editor, optionally suggested by the AI.
- **Categories and locations:** the Custom Titles pages, below.
- **Pages and news:** the meta title and description of each language.
- **Suffix: Seo Append Title** and **Seo Append Description** in Directory Configuration Options (chapter 24).

Category and location texts

Admin Panel › Directory Settings › Category Custom Titles / Location Custom Titles

These pages list every category or location. **Default** means it uses the automatic title and description. Click **Edit** to set:

- **Page title:** for example "Italian Restaurants in Chicago – Reviews & Menus".
- **Meta description:** the text search engines show under the title.
- **Intro text shown above the listings:** a paragraph that tells visitors and search engines what the page is about.

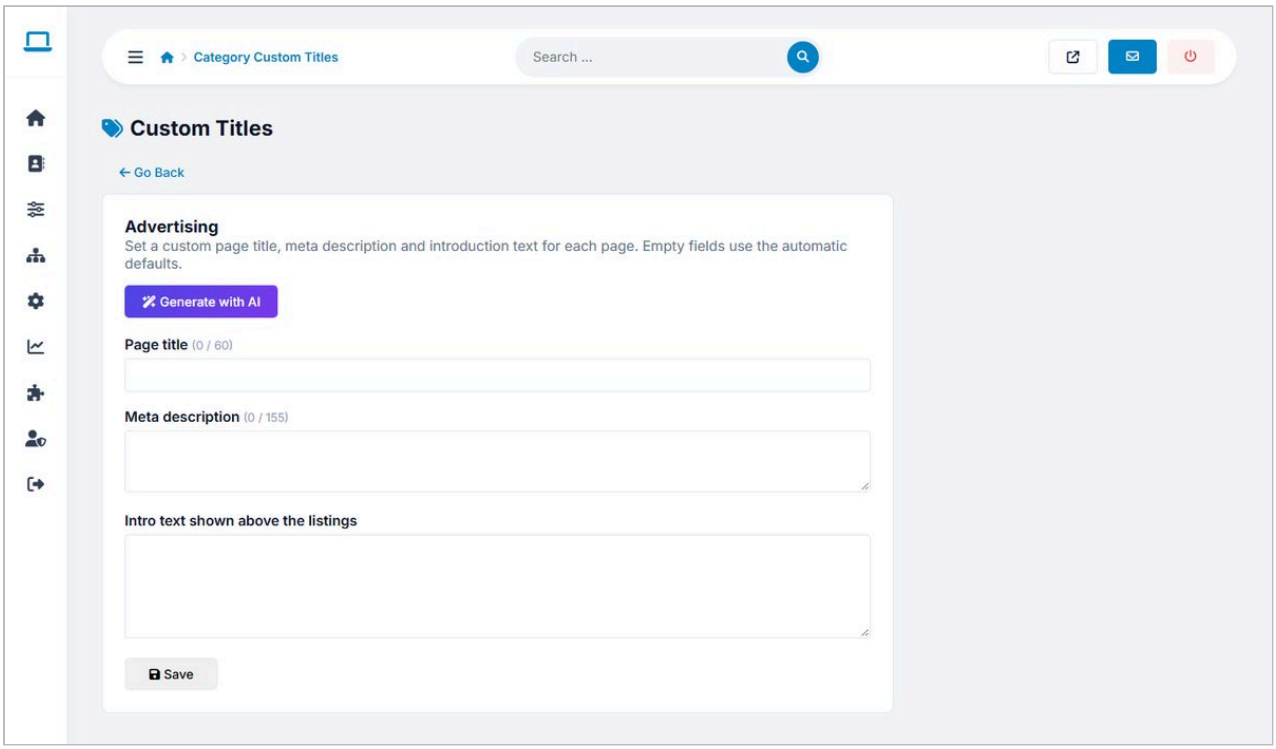


Figure 37.1 Custom texts for a category, with the Generate with AI button.

Generate with AI writes all three for you. Fields left empty use the automatic defaults. Start with your most important categories and locations; unique intro texts on these pages make a real difference.

Sitemap

The XML sitemap is at `yourdomain.com/sitemap.php`. It lists your pages, the listings, and the category and location pages that contain listings, in every language. Empty category and location pages are left out on purpose. Submit the sitemap address in Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools.

Structured data and sharing

- Listing pages include schema.org `LocalBusiness` data with the address, coordinates, phone, opening hours and rating, which can produce rich results in Google.

- Open Graph and Twitter tags give attractive previews when pages are shared on social networks and messaging apps.
- Canonical URLs prevent duplicate pages from competing with each other.

SEO checklist

1. Enable SEO URLs and submit the sitemap.
2. Add Google Search Console verification in Settings › Tracking Codes.
3. Write custom texts for your top categories and locations.
4. Encourage owners to write full, original descriptions; the AI writing assistant helps.
5. Publish a news article every week or two.
6. Get links from local organizations, chambers of commerce and the businesses you list.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/seo.html

CHAPTER 38

Statistics and Traffic Reports

The directory records its own traffic, without cookies or external services, so you always know how the website performs.

The directory records its own traffic, with known robots and crawlers filtered out. The reports show the last 30 days.

Traffic reports

Admin Panel › Statistics › Traffic Reports

- **Total Pageviews** and **Unique Visitors**.
- **Avg Actions / Session:** how many pages a visitor opens on average.
- **Retention Rate:** the share of visitors who come back.
- **Traffic Trends:** a daily chart of page views and unique visitors.
- **Top Content / Pages:** the most visited pages.

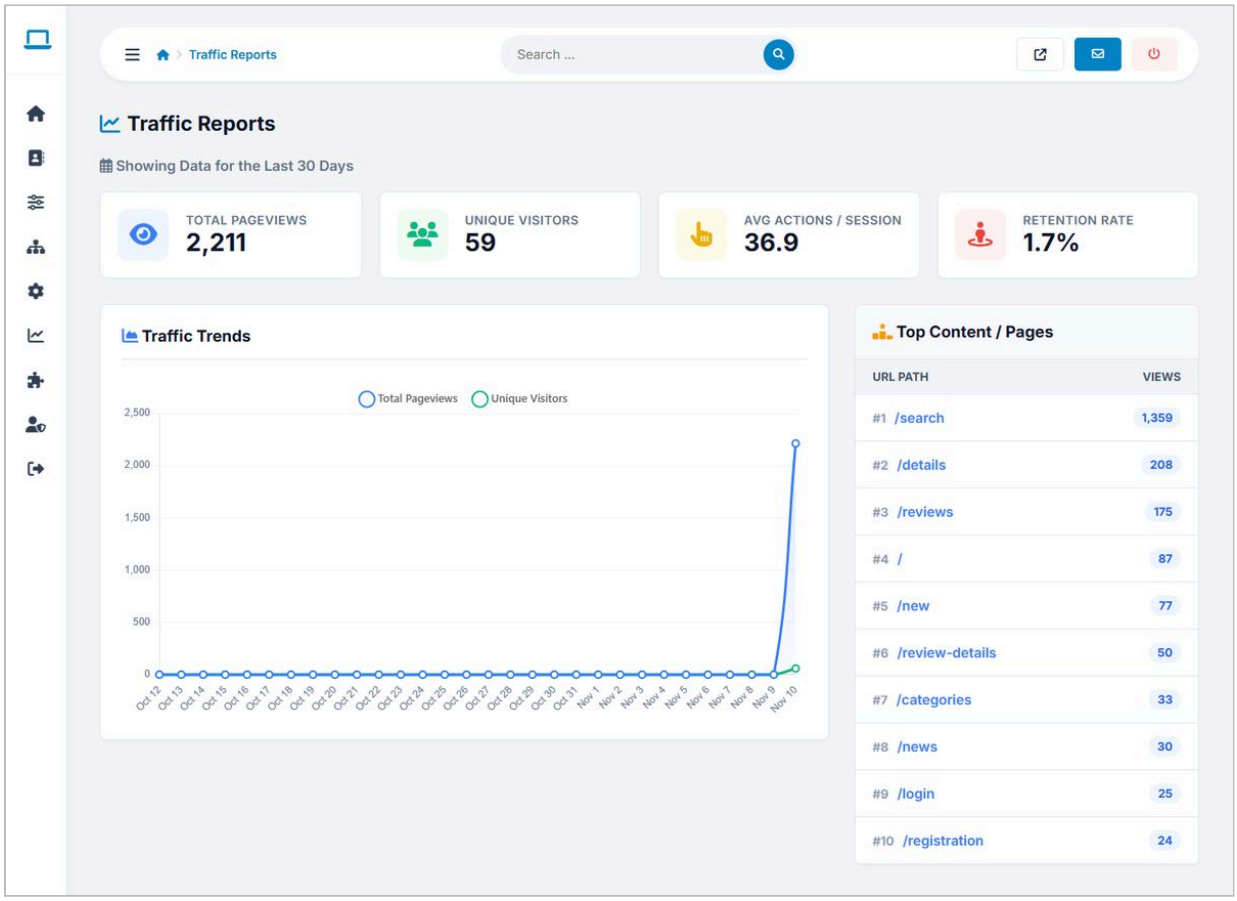


Figure 38.1 Traffic Reports.

Referrals and sources

Admin Panel › Statistics › Referrals & Sources

Where visitors come from: **Direct / None**, **Search Engines**, **Social Media** and **Other Websites**, with the top referring domains and the latest referrals with their landing pages.

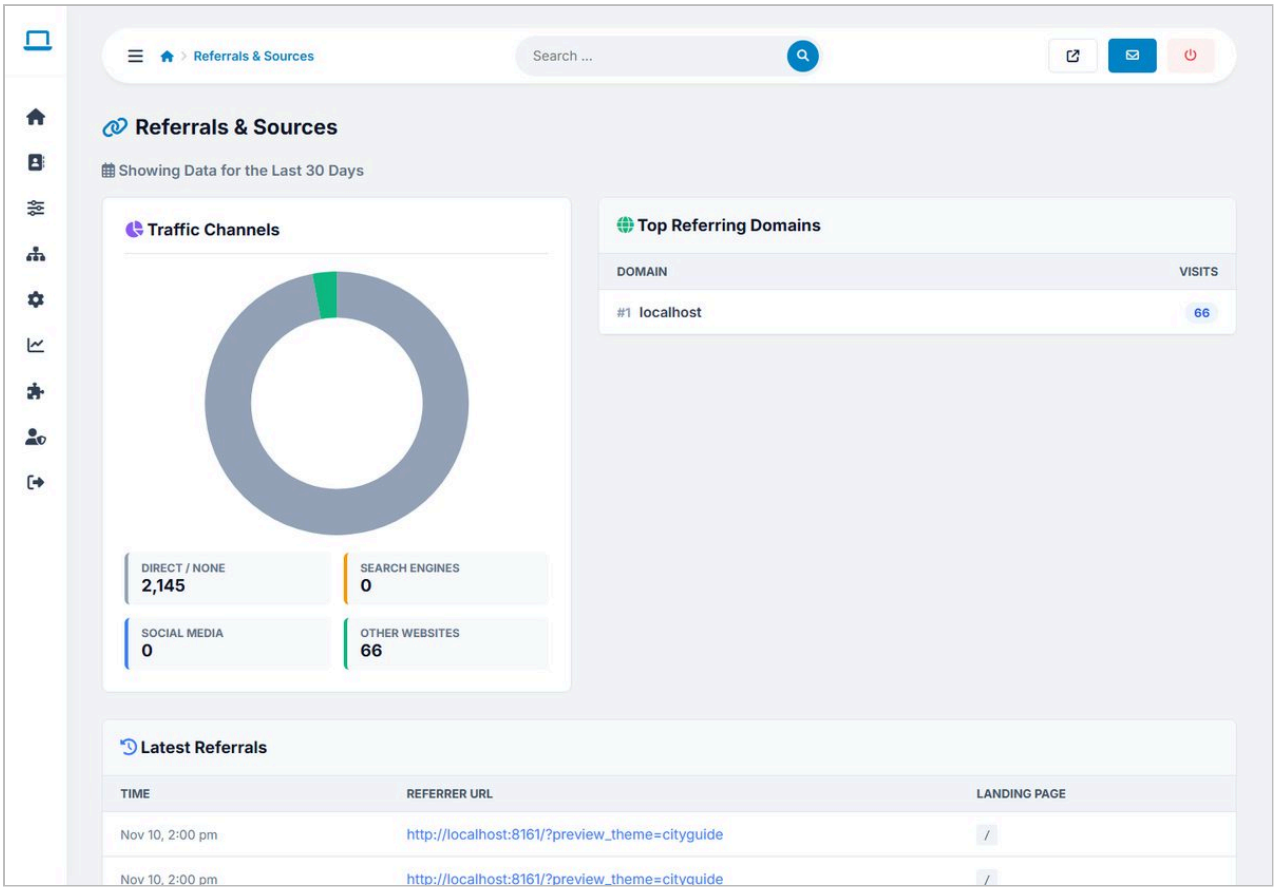


Figure 38.2 Referrals & Sources.

Audience and technology

Admin Panel › Statistics › Audience & Tech

The share of visits from desktop and mobile devices, operating systems and browsers. If most visitors use phones, check your most important pages on a phone regularly.

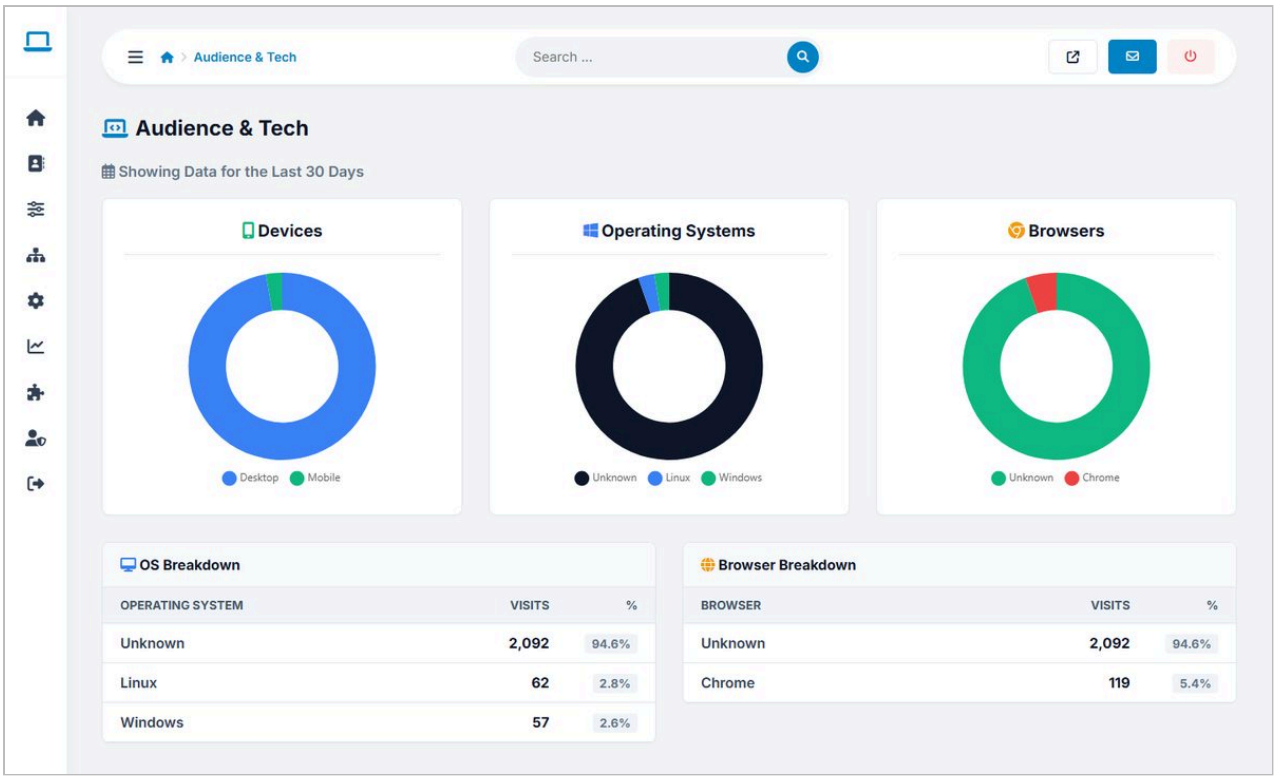


Figure 38.3 Audience & Tech.

Live activity log

Admin Panel › Statistics › Live Activity Log

The latest page views as they happen, with the time, visitor IP address, device, page and source. The page refreshes every 60 seconds, or immediately with **Refresh Now**.

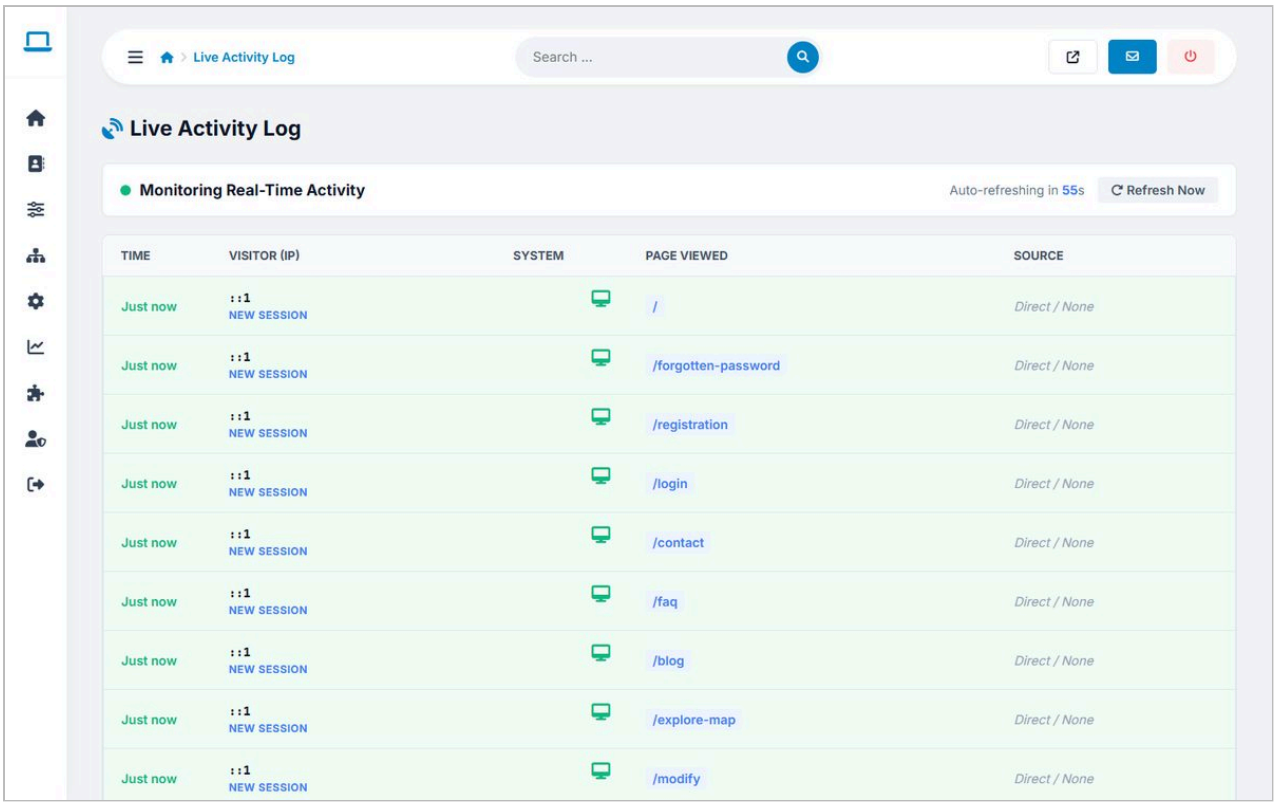


Figure 38.4 The live activity log.

> **NOTE**
>
> Business owners see the views of their own listings in their user panel. The visit counts are also shown in Directory › Current Listings.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/statistics.html

CHAPTER 39

Admin Users, Groups and Permissions

Each member of your team should have their own login. Groups and permissions decide what each of them can see and change.

Give every person who works on the directory their own admin login. You can then see who did what in the login logs, remove access when someone leaves, and limit each person to the pages they need.

Admin users

Admin Panel › Admin Users › Admin Users

Click **New User** and enter the **Full Name**, **Email**, **Login Username** and **Password**, choose the **Group / Role**, and tick **Account Is Active**. When editing, leave the password empty to keep the current one; untick **Account Is Active** to block a login without deleting it.

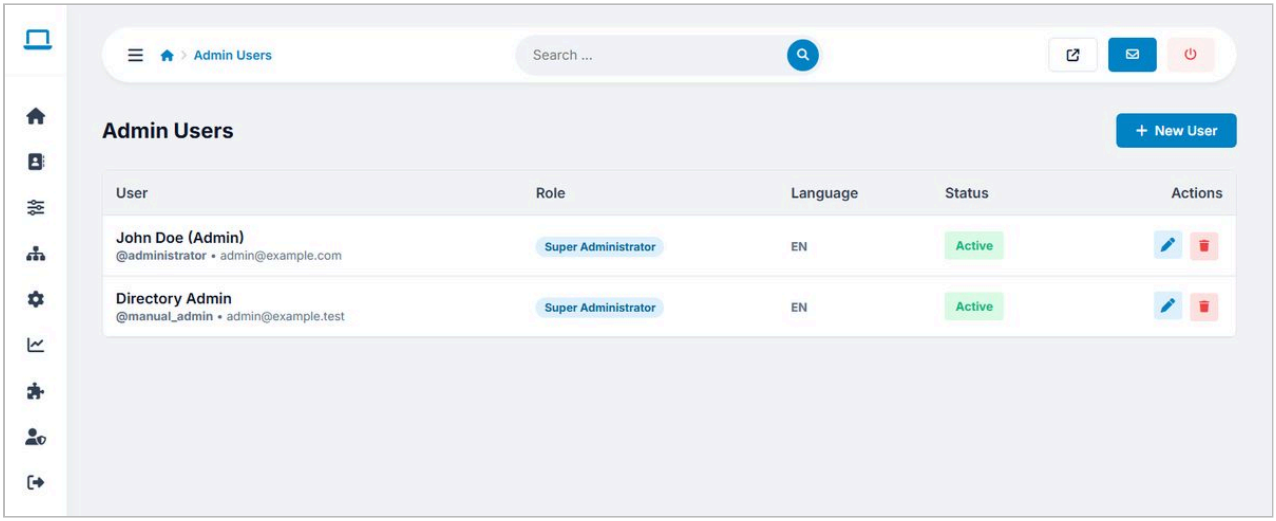


Figure 39.1 Admin users and their roles.

Groups

Admin Panel › Admin Users › Groups

A group is a role, such as "Moderator" or "News Editor". The demo has two: **Super Administrator**, which has full access to everything, and **News Editor**. Click **New Group** and enter a name and a description.

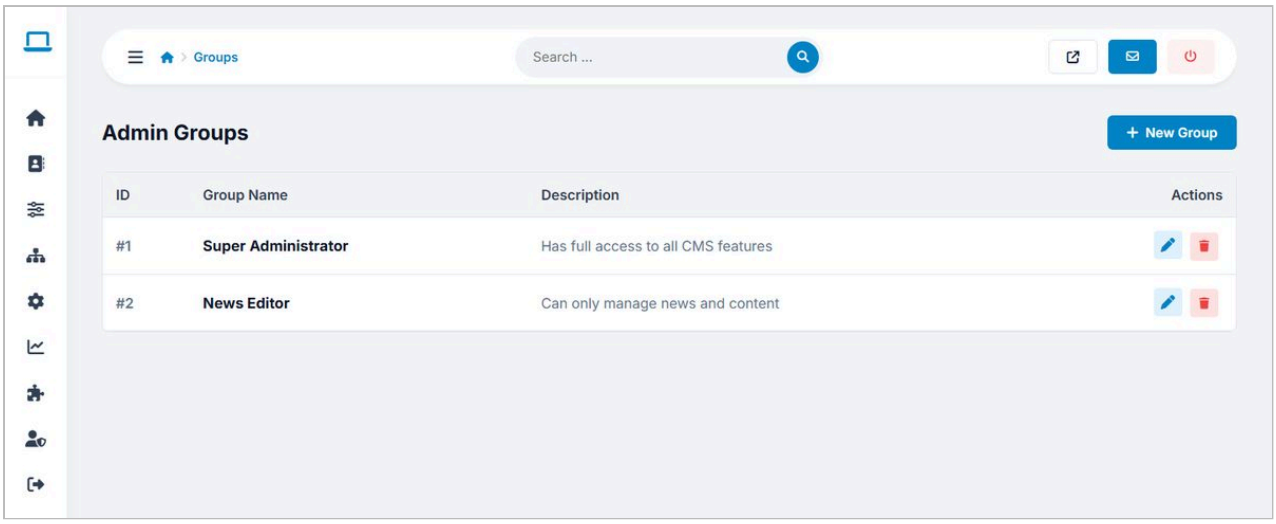


Figure 39.2 Admin groups.

Permissions

Admin Panel › Admin Users › Permissions

The permissions matrix lists every admin page, grouped by section, with a switch for each group. Turn on the pages a group may use and click **Save Permissions**. The Super Administrator group is not shown, because it always has access to everything.

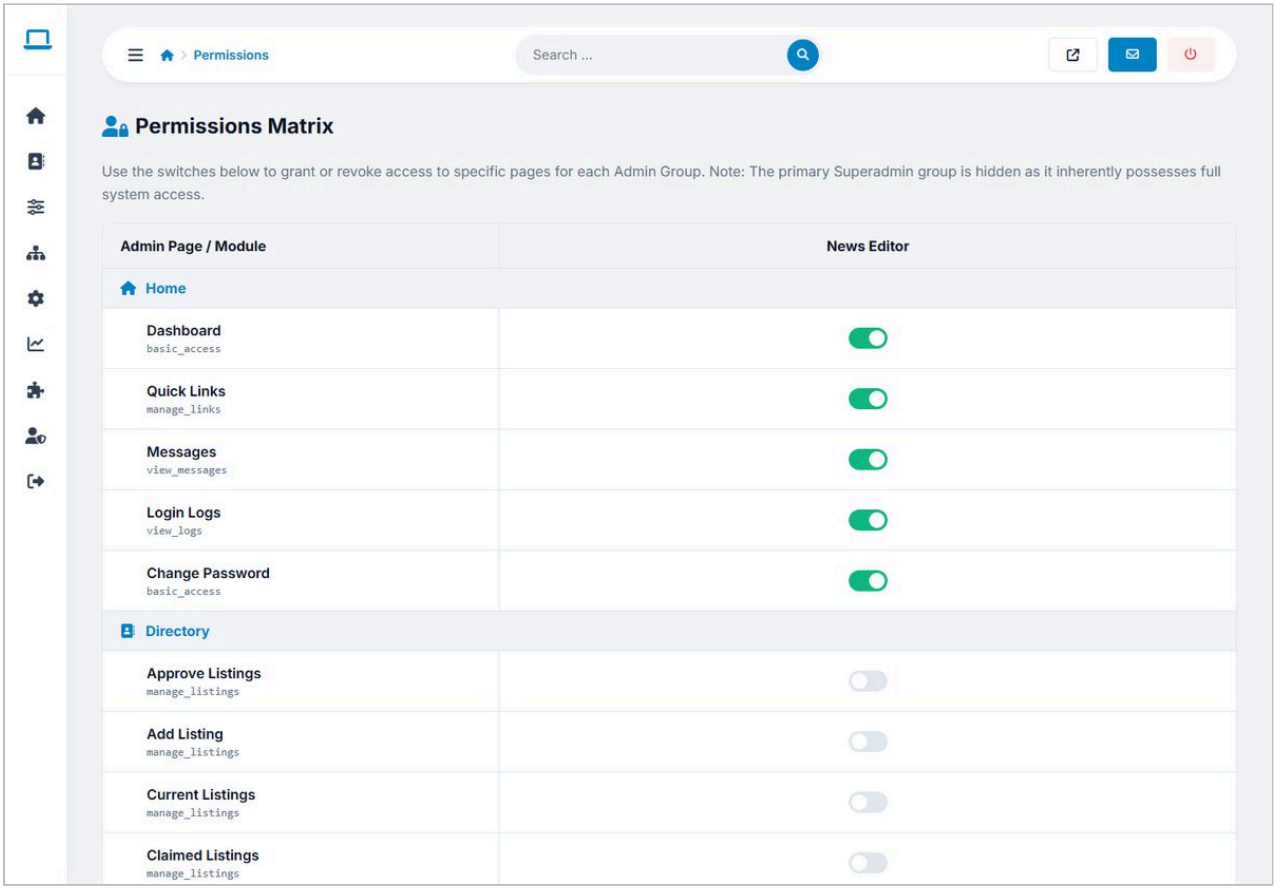


Figure 39.3 The permissions matrix.

Examples:

- **Moderator:** Dashboard, Approve Listings, Current Listings, Claimed Listings, Reviews.
- **Content editor:** Dashboard, Pages, News, FAQ.
- **Sales:** Dashboard, Users, Packages, Banners, Statistics.

> NOTE
>
> Some permissions cover several pages; for example the Approve Listings, Add Listing, Current Listings and Claimed Listings pages share the `manage_listings` permission.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/admin-users-and-permissions.html

CHAPTER 40

Database Backups

A backup takes one click. Make one before any large change, and download it to your computer.

Admin Panel › Settings › Backups

The Backups page saves a complete copy of the database: listings, users, reviews, pages, news, settings and everything else stored in it.

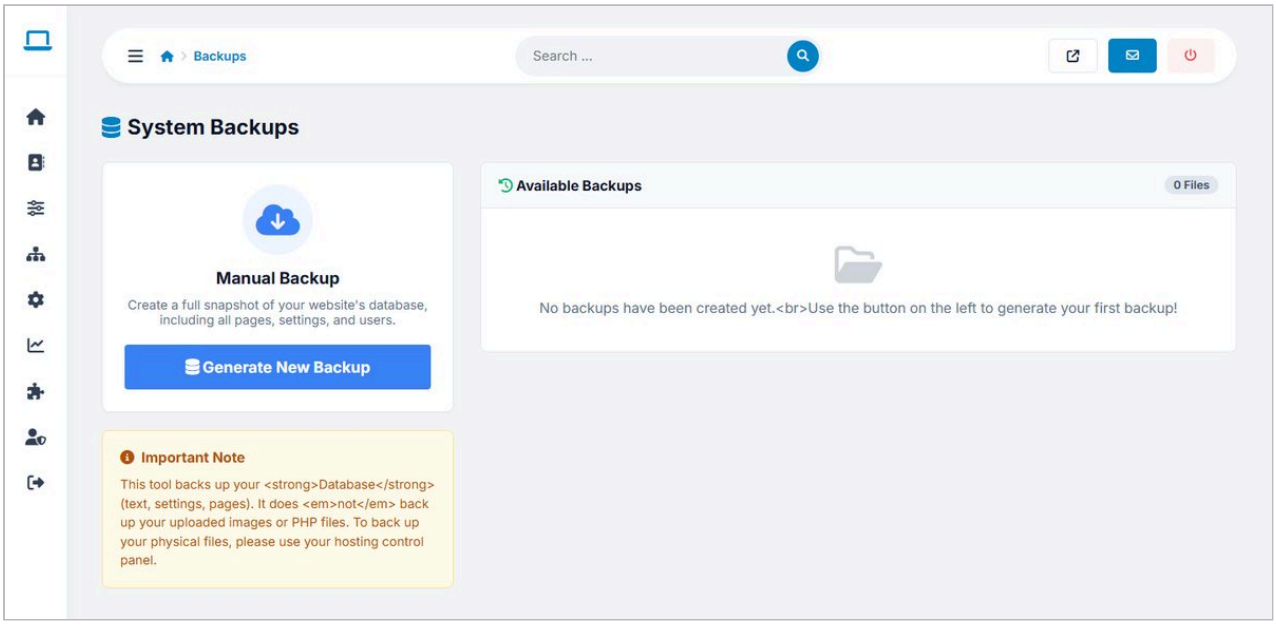


Figure 40.1 System Backups.

Creating and downloading a backup

1. Click **Generate New Backup**. The backup is created as an `.sql` file with the date and time in its name.
2. It appears in **Available Backups**. Click the download button to save it on your computer.
3. Delete old backups from the server from time to time; they contain your users' personal data.

> IMPORTANT
> The backup contains the database only, not the uploaded photos, logos and banners, nor the program files. Back up the `uploaded_images` and `thumbnails` folders with FTP or your hosting control panel.

Restoring a backup

To restore, open phpMyAdmin, select the directory's database and import the `.sql` file. This replaces the current data with the data in the backup, so make a fresh backup of the current state first.

A simple backup routine

- Before any large change: a database backup plus a copy of the uploaded images.
- Every week: a database backup, downloaded to your computer or cloud storage.
- Check that your hosting company also makes automatic backups, and how long it keeps them.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/backups.html

PART 5

Customization and Troubleshooting

Template customization, extensions and custom tags for developers, and solutions to common problems.

CHAPTER 41

Customizing Templates

Templates are plain HTML and CSS files. This chapter explains how they are put together, so you can adjust a template or create your own.

This chapter is for designers and developers. A template is a folder of HTML and CSS files in `templates/`; no PHP is needed to change the design.

> **IMPORTANT**
> Make a copy of a template folder before changing it, and keep your changes in the copy rather than in the original template, so you can always go back to it.

Files of a template

FILE	PURPOSE
`template.html`	The page frame used by every page: the `<head>`, header, menu, footer and the `<site content/>` tag where each page's content goes.
`home_page_template.html`	The home page sections: featured and latest listings, categories, locations.
`search_form.html`	The home page search (classic and AI tabs), shown through the `<site search_form/>` tag.
`search_results.html`	Search results, category and location pages.
`listing_details.html`	The business listing page.
`css/`	The stylesheets. Business uses one file, `main.css`. The other templates use `base.css` for the shared components and `theme.css` for their own design, with the colors and fonts as CSS variables at the top of `theme.css`.
`theme.json`	Name, author, version, description and options of the template.
`preview.jpg`	The picture on the template's card in the Template Manager (about 800 × 560 pixels).

Other pages (contact, login, add listing, map...) are produced by extension files and styled by the template's CSS, so they automatically follow the template's colors.

Site tags

Site tags are replaced by generated content. The most important ones are:

TAG	OUTPUT
`<site title/>` , `<site description/>`	The page title and meta description.
`<site content/>`	The content of the current page.
`<site menu/>` , `<site mobile_menu/>` , `<site bottom_menu/>`	The main menu, the phone menu and the footer menu.
`<site logo/>` , `<site favicon/>`	The logo (image or text) and the favicon.
`<site languages_menu/>` , `<site lang_code/>`	The language links, and the current language code.
`<site template_url/>`	The address of the template folder, for CSS and image links.
`<site search_form/>`	The home page search form (a custom tag).
`<site login_links/>` , `<site latest_news/>`	Register and sign-in links (or user panel links when logged in), and the latest news (custom tags).
`<site social_media/>`	Icons for the social profiles entered in the settings.
`<site search_hidden_fields/>` , `<site search_keyword/>` , `<site search_location/>`	For a search form in the header: the hidden fields it needs and the current search values.
`<site company_name/>` and similar	Company information from the settings.
`<site theme_styles/>`	CSS variables from the Appearance settings, for templates of your own. (When "Apply these colors and fonts to the template" is on, the overrides are added automatically.)
`<site top_banners/>` , `<site sidebar_banners/>`	The banner areas with the Home page and Sidebar positions. Footer areas are placed above the footer automatically.
`[BANNER_AREA_1]`	One banner area by its number, in a template or in a page's content.
`{ad_header_ad}` , `{ad_sidebar_top}` , `{ad_sidebar_bottom}` , `{ad_article_top}` , `{ad_article_bottom}` , `{ad_footer_ad}`	The ad zones. Without a header or footer tag in the template, those two zones are placed after the header and before the footer.

The full list, including your own custom tags, is shown at the bottom of Extensions › Custom Tags.

Texts and links

- `{{ m_key }}` is replaced by the interface text with that key in the visitor's language, for example `{{ m_list_your_business }}` . Use this instead of writing English text in the template, so the template works in every language.

- `{{ link_new }}` and similar tags produce the address of a page in the current language, with or without SEO URLs.

Placeholders and repeating blocks

The home, results and listing files use placeholders in curly braces, filled in by the software, and comment markers around parts that repeat or can be removed:

```
<!--listing_item-->
<article class="card {listing_featured_class} {listing_rating_class}">
  <a href="{listing_url}"><img src="{listing_image_url}" alt="{listing_title}"></a>
  <h3><a href="{listing_url}">{listing_title}</a></h3>
  <p>{listing_excerpt}</p>
  <span>{listing_rating_stars} {listing_rating_value}</span>
  <a href="tel:{listing_phone}">{listing_phone}</a>
</article>
<!--end_listing_item-->
```

- The block between `<!--listing_item-->` and `<!--end_listing_item-->` is repeated for each listing.
- `{listing_featured_class}` becomes `is-featured` for featured listings, and `{listing_rating_class}` becomes `has-rating` or `no-rating`, so you can style them differently.
- Other listing placeholders include `{listing_category}`, `{listing_address}`, `{listing_location}`, `{listing_latitude}`, `{listing_longitude}`, `{listing_reviews_count}` and `{featured_text}`.
- Sections wrapped in `<!--categories_block-->` or `<!--locations_block-->` are removed when the matching home page section is switched off in the settings.
- The search form can use `{home_background_url}` (the home page photo) and `{map_markers_json}` (the businesses for a map).
- The listing page offers `{listing_cover_image}`, `{listing_cover_class}` and `{listing_phone_text}` for designs with a large cover photo.

> **TIP**
>
> The easiest way to learn the placeholders is to open the same file in two templates side by side, for example `listing_details.html` of Business and of Luxe: the placeholders are identical, only the HTML around them differs.

theme.json

```
{
  "name": "City Guide",
  "author": "NetArt Media",
  "version": "6.1",
  "description": "Editorial city magazine: masthead header, …",
  "home_listings": 4
}
```

`home_listings` sets how many listings each home page section shows, so that a layout with rows of four (or rails of eight) is always filled.

Editing templates from the admin panel

In Website › Templates, **Edit HTML** opens the template's files in a code editor with syntax highlighting. The template folder must be writable on the server. For bigger changes, edit the files on your computer and upload them with FTP.

Creating your own template

1. Copy the folder of the template closest to your idea, for example `templates/business` to `templates/mybrand`. Use lowercase letters, digits, hyphens or underscores for the folder name.
2. Change the name and description in `theme.json` and replace `preview.jpg`.
3. Change the HTML and CSS.
4. Open Website › Templates; the new template has its own card. Use **Preview** to check every page type (home, search, category, listing, add listing, login, contact, map) on a computer and a phone, then **Activate** it.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/template-customization.html

CHAPTER 42

Extensions and Custom Tags

Extensions and custom tags let a developer add new features, such as a special form or a data feed, without changing the core files.

Extensions add PHP features to the website without changing the core files. Your own extension files stay separate, which keeps them easy to maintain.

Page extensions

Admin Panel › Extensions › Extension Files

A page extension is a PHP file in the `extensions/` folder that runs when a page is opened. Its output is added to the page content, inside the template. Most built-in features are extensions: `home.php`, `categories.php`, `contact.php`, `map.php`, `faq.php`, `reviews.php` and others.

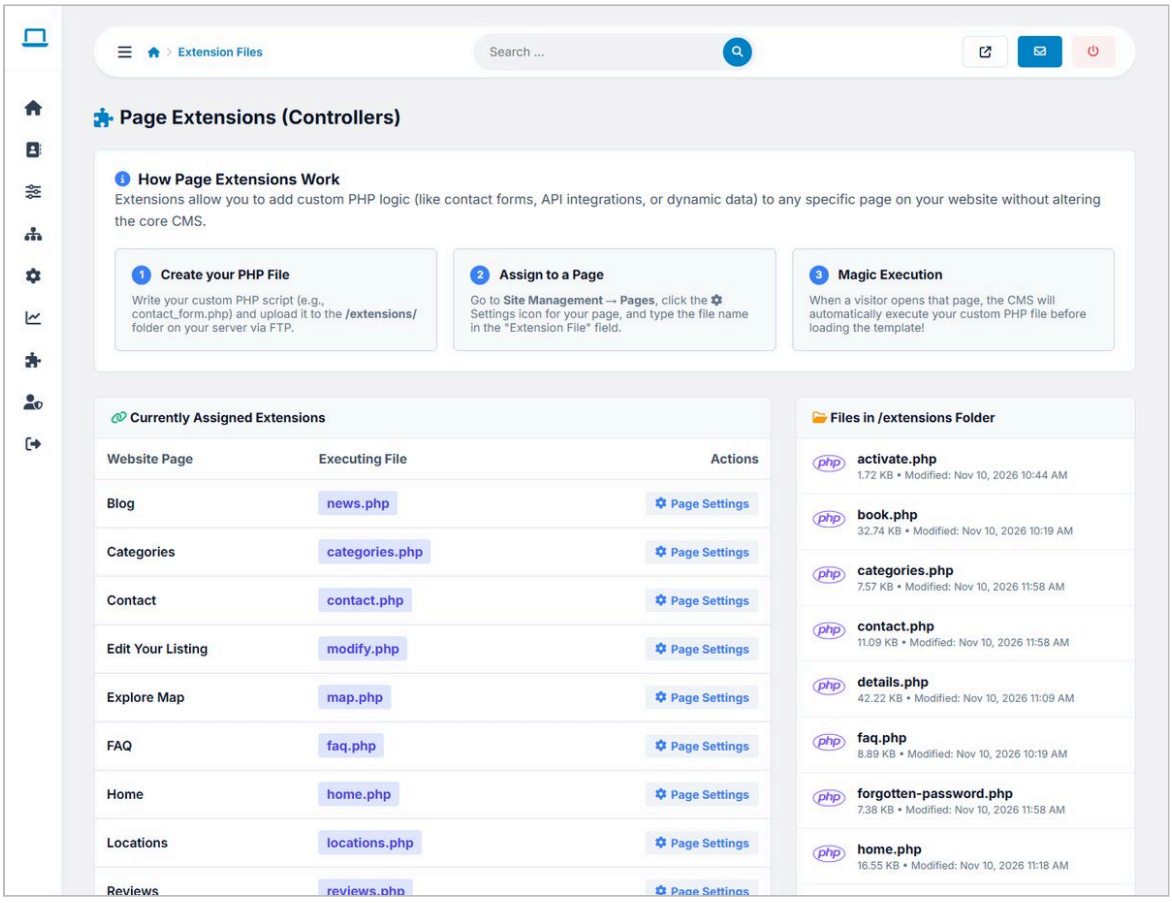


Figure 42.1 Extension Files: which page runs which file, and the files in the extensions folder.

1. Write your PHP file, for example `extensions/price_calculator.php`, and upload it with FTP.
2. Create a page in Website › Pages, open its **Settings** and choose the file as its **Extension File**.

3. Open the page: the file runs and its output appears in the page.

The Extension Files page shows which page runs which file and lists all files in the folder.

```
<?php
if (!defined('IN_SCRIPT') && !defined('IN_CMS')) die('');
// $this→settings holds the settings, __('m_key') returns a text in the visitor's
language.
echo '<h2>' . htmlspecialchars(__('m_price_calculator') ?: 'Price calculator') .
'</h2>';
// … your code …
```

Extensions can also be opened directly with `index.php?mod=name`, which runs `extensions/name.php`.

Custom tags

Admin Panel › Extensions › Custom Tags

A custom tag places the output of an extension file anywhere in a template, with a tag such as `<site opening_offer/>`.

1. Upload the PHP file to `extensions/`.
2. In **Add New Custom Tag**, enter the **Tag Name** (for example `opening_offer`), choose the file under **Execute Extension File**, add an optional description and click **Add Tag**.
3. Put `<site opening_offer/>` in the template where the output should appear.

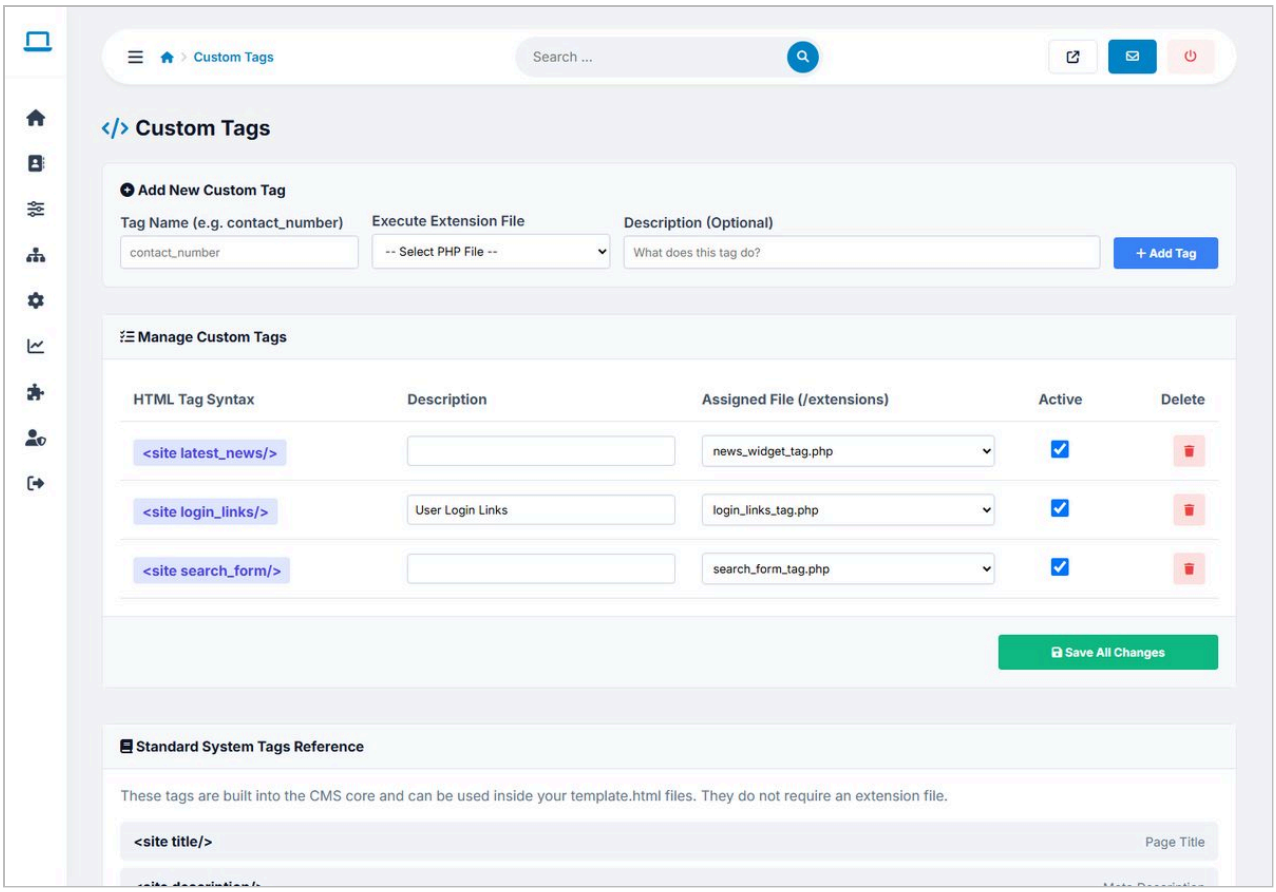


Figure 42.2 Custom Tags, with the built-in tags of the templates.

The built-in tags `search_form`, `login_links` and `latest_news` are custom tags too. A tag can be disabled with its **Active** box; a disabled or unknown tag produces no output.

> NOTE
>
> Keep extension files small and secure: escape every value you print with `htmlspecialchars()`, use the database class with parameters for queries, and never trust form input.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/extensions-and-custom-tags.html

CHAPTER 43

Troubleshooting and Common Questions

Most problems have a simple cause. Start with the symptom that matches yours.

If your problem is not listed here, contact NetArt Media support with a short description and a screenshot of what you see.

Emails do not arrive

- Set **System Email Address** to an address on your own domain. Many providers reject emails "from" Gmail or Outlook addresses sent by another server.
- Check the spam folder, and add SPF and DKIM records for your domain in your DNS settings; your host can help.
- By default emails are sent with PHP's `mail()` function. If your host does not allow it, emails can be sent through an SMTP server instead. Add these settings to the `directory_settings` table in phpMyAdmin (columns `setting_key` and `setting_value`): `use_smtp` = `1`, `smtp_host`, `smtp_port` (for example 587), `smtp_secure` (`tls` or `ssl`), `smtp_user` and `smtp_password`.

Image uploads fail

- The image may be larger than your server allows (often 2 MB). Resize photos to about 1600 pixels wide before uploading, or ask your hosting provider to raise the limit.

Saving categories or locations shows an error

The category and location trees are saved as files on the server. Ask your hosting provider to make the `categories` and `locations` folders writable.

A listing does not appear on the website

- It is waiting in Directory › Approve Listings.
- It has expired. Renew it in Directory › Current Listings.
- It does not appear on the map: it has no latitude and longitude. Open it in the listing editor and use the map to set its position.

The AI test connection fails

- Check that the key was copied completely and saved before testing.
- Use **Quick setup** to make sure the API URL and model match the provider of the key.
- OpenAI and DeepSeek keys need credit on the account.

- The PHP cURL extension must be enabled, and the server must be allowed to connect to the internet over HTTPS.

The AI Search tab or the writing assistant is missing

Both **Enable AI features** and the feature's own switch must be on, and an API key must be saved. For visitors who are not logged in, the writing assistant also needs **Allow visitors who are not logged in to use the writing assistant**.

A Stripe payment is not shown as paid

- The **Stripe Secret Key** must be filled in; it is used to confirm each payment.
- If the customer closed the browser on Stripe's page, the payment is only recorded through the webhook. Set it up as described in Payments (chapter 26), and check its deliveries in the Stripe dashboard.
- Test and live keys must not be mixed: test payments only exist with test keys.
- The currency in Stripe must match the **Website Currency**; payments in another currency or for a lower amount are refused.

Banners or ads do not appear

- A banner must be **Active**, not expired, and in an area whose position is used by your template. Areas with the position "Only where its template tag is placed" need their `[BANNER_AREA_n]` tag.
- An ad zone must be enabled and contain code or an image. Ad blockers in your own browser hide many ads; check in a private window without extensions.

"Open now" shows the wrong status

Set the correct **System Timezone** in Settings › Configuration Options.

Accented characters or emoji look wrong

When importing CSV files, save them with UTF-8 encoding. Text that was pasted from a word processor can also contain unusual characters: paste it as plain text.

I forgot the admin password

If another administrator can log in, they can set a new password in Admin Users › Admin Users. Otherwise, create a password hash with PHP, for example by running `php -r "echo password_hash('NewPassword123', PASSWORD_DEFAULT);"` on a computer with PHP, and paste the result into the `password_hash` column of your account in the `directory_admin_users` table with phpMyAdmin.

Changes do not show on the website

Reload the page with Ctrl+F5 (Cmd+Shift+R on a Mac) to bypass the browser cache. If your host or a service such as Cloudflare caches pages, clear that cache too.

Online version: https://www.phpbusinessdirectory.com/manual/troubleshooting.html