# PRESSFORGE

## ONLINE NEWSPAPER CMS

**Complete User Guide and Technical Reference | Version 1.1**

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Database: zitdtcoz_finnewspaperdb | PHP 8.0+ | MySQL 5.7+

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# Section - TABLE OF CONTENTS

**1. System Overview**

> What is PressForge Pro
> Key Features
> System Requirements
> File Structure

**2. Installation and Setup**

> Database Setup
> File Upload and Permissions
> First Login
> Initial Configuration

**3. Admin Dashboard**

> Dashboard Overview
> Statistics Cards
> Recent Articles Panel
> Top Articles Chart

**4. Publication Settings**

> Identity and Branding
> Logo Upload
> Contact Details
> Social Media Links
> Layout and Display Options
> Footer and Copyright

**5. Design and Theme Customisation**

> Colour Scheme Controls
> Six Preset Themes
> Typography and Font Selection
> Live Preview Panel
> Saving Design Changes

**6. Article Management**

> Creating a New Article
> The TinyMCE Rich Text Editor
> Article Status Workflow
> Article Flags: Featured, Breaking, Headline
> Layout Types
> Images and Captions
> Tags and Source Attribution
> Editing and Deleting Articles

**7. Category Management**

> Creating and Editing Categories
> Colour Coding and Icons
> Deleting Categories

**8. Advertising Control Centre**

> Creating an Advert
> Advert Positions
> Advert Sizes
> Scheduling and Date Control
> Page and Category Targeting
> Skip Button Controls
> Activating and Pausing Adverts

**9. Advert Analytics**

> Tracked Events
> Click-Through Rate
> Providing Reports to Clients

**10. Comments Moderation**

> Comment Approval Workflow
> Deleting Comments

**11. Subscriber Management**

> Subscriber List
> Exporting Subscribers

**12. Site Analytics**

> Page View Tracking
> Device Breakdown
> Top Articles by Views

**13. Public Reader Interface**

> Homepage Layout
> Breaking News Ticker
> Article Detail Page
> Reading Progress Bar
> Like and Share Buttons
> Search and Category Filtering
> Newsletter Subscribe Form

**14. Security and Administration**

> Admin Roles
> CSRF Protection
> Password Security
> Session Management
> File Upload Security
> SQL Injection Prevention

## 15. Troubleshooting and FAQ

> Common Errors

> Database Issues

> Upload Issues

> Frequently Asked Questions

# Section 1 - SYSTEM OVERVIEW

*PressForge Pro is a professional online newspaper content management system built in PHP and MySQL. It delivers a complete editorial workflow with fully customisable design, advertising management, and reader analytics.*

## What is PressForge Pro?

PressForge Pro is a self-hosted web application designed to run in the **public_html** directory of any standard cPanel hosting account. It gives media houses, publishers, organisations, and individual journalists a world-class, fully branded online newspaper platform without recurring licensing fees.

The system is **fully responsive** and tested on Android smartphones, tablets, and all major desktop browsers. No plugins, no frameworks, no dependencies beyond PHP 8.0 and MySQL 5.7.

### Key Features

| Feature | Description |
|---|---|
| Multi-layout Designs | 5 layout styles: Classic, Modern, Tabloid, Broadsheet, Magazine |
| Rich Article Editor | TinyMCE WYSIWYG with images, tables, links, full formatting |
| Full Advertising Engine | Schedule, target, and track adverts with skip controls and CTR stats |
| Live Analytics | Page views, device breakdown, top articles, advert performance |
| Breaking News Ticker | Auto-scrolling marquee of articles flagged as Breaking News |
| Category Management | Unlimited categories with custom colours, icons, and sort order |
| Comment Moderation | Two-stage approval workflow for all reader comments |
| Newsletter Subscribers | Built-in subscribe form and subscriber management dashboard |
| 6 Preset Colour Themes | One-click themes plus fully custom colour picker for all 5 colours |
| Font Selection | 18 Google Fonts available for headline, body, and UI text |
| Logo and Branding | Upload your logo; full white-label customisation throughout |

| | |
|---|---|
| Social Media Links | Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, YouTube integration |
| Mobile-First Design | Responsive layout optimised for Android and all screen sizes |
| SEO Ready | Semantic HTML5, meta descriptions, reading time, auto slug generation |
| Role-Based Admin Access | Super Admin, Editor, Journalist, and Ad Manager roles |
| Security | CSRF tokens, bcrypt passwords, PDO prepared statements throughout |

## System Requirements

| | |
|---|---|
| **Web Server** | Apache 2.4+ or Nginx (Apache mod_rewrite recommended) |
| **PHP Version** | PHP 8.0 or higher (PHP 8.1 / 8.2 / 8.3 all supported) |
| **PHP Extensions** | PDO, PDO_MySQL, GD or Imagick, mbstring, fileinfo |
| **Database** | MySQL 5.7+ or MariaDB 10.4+ |
| **Disk Space** | Minimum 50 MB for files; additional space for uploaded media |
| **Browser Support** | Chrome 90+, Firefox 88+, Safari 14+, Edge 90+, Android Browser |
| **Hosting** | Any cPanel / Softaculous shared host, VPS, or dedicated server |
| **SSL** | HTTPS strongly recommended for secure admin access |

> **TIP**
> PressForge Pro requires no special server configuration beyond standard PHP and MySQL. It installs entirely in public_html with no composer, no npm, and no build step.

## File Structure

After uploading all files to your public_html directory the structure is:

| File or Folder | Purpose |
|---|---|
| index.php | Public newspaper homepage - the reader-facing front page |
| article.php | Full article reading page with comments, sharing, like button |
| admin.php | Complete admin control panel - all editorial and management screens |
| admin_login.php | Secure admin login form |
| admin_logout.php | Session logout and redirect |

| | |
|---|---|
| config.php | Database credentials, app constants, and helper functions |
| advert_track.php | AJAX endpoint recording advert view / click / skip events |
| subscribe.php | Newsletter subscription POST handler |
| download_guide.php | Serves this PDF user guide as a browser download |
| db_setup.sql | Full database schema - run once in phpMyAdmin to create all tables |
| uploads/logos/ | Publication logo image uploads |
| uploads/images/ | Article featured image uploads |
| uploads/adverts/ | Advert banner image uploads |
| .htaccess | Security headers, compression, browser caching, PHP execution block |

# Section 2 - INSTALLATION AND SETUP

*Follow these four steps to deploy PressForge Pro on your server. The entire process takes under ten minutes.*

## Step 1 - Database Setup

Log into your hosting control panel (cPanel) and open **MySQL Databases**.

- Create a new database named: **zitdtcoz_finnewspaperdb**
- Create a database user: **zitdtcoz_finnewspaper** with password **zitdt4221**
- Grant ALL PRIVILEGES on that database to that user and click Make Changes
- Open phpMyAdmin, select the database in the left panel, click the SQL tab
- Copy the entire contents of db_setup.sql, paste into the SQL box, click Go

> **TIP**
> The db_setup.sql script creates all 10 database tables, inserts 12 default news categories, default publication settings, and a default admin account automatically.

## Step 2 - Upload Files and Set Permissions

- Using FileZilla FTP or cPanel File Manager, upload ALL files to your public_html folder
- Do NOT place them in a subfolder - they must be directly inside public_html
- After uploading, right-click the uploads folder in cPanel File Manager
- Select Change Permissions and set to 755 (owner read/write/execute, group and others read/execute)
- Repeat for uploads/logos, uploads/images, and uploads/adverts subfolders

> **IMPORTANT**
> Never upload db_setup.sql to a publicly accessible location. If you must upload it temporarily, delete it immediately after running it in phpMyAdmin.

## Step 3 - First Login

Open your browser and go to: **https://yourdomain.com/admin_login.php**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Default Username** | admin |
| **Default Password** | password |
| **Admin Panel URL** | yourdomain.com/admin_login.php |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Public Website** | yourdomain.com/index.php |

**IMPORTANT**
Change the default password immediately after first login. Use a strong password of at least 12 characters with mixed case, numbers, and symbols.

# Step 4 - Initial Configuration

Complete these steps in order after logging in for the first time:

1. **Publication Settings**
   Enter publication title, organisation name, tagline, and contact details

2. **Upload Your Logo**
   Upload a PNG logo with transparent background, 300x100 px recommended

3. **Choose Your Theme**
   Select a colour theme and fonts in Design and Layout

4. **Create Categories**
   Set up your news sections: Politics, Sports, Business, Technology, etc.

5. **Publish First Article**
   Write and publish your first news article to verify everything works

# Section 3 - ADMIN DASHBOARD

*The dashboard is your command centre, showing real-time publication performance at a glance.*

## Dashboard Layout

The admin panel has three zones:

- **Left Sidebar:** Navigation menu grouped as Main, Content, Advertising, Engagement, and Configuration
- **Top Bar:** Current section name, quick-action buttons (e.g. New Article), and logged-in admin name
- **Main Content Area:** Tables, forms, charts, and reports depending on the active section

### Statistics Cards

| | |
|---|---|
| **Published Articles** | Count of all articles with status Published |
| **Total Page Views** | Cumulative page views across all articles |
| **Active Adverts** | Adverts currently running and within their scheduled date range |
| **Subscribers** | Active newsletter subscribers captured through the subscribe form |

### Recent Articles Panel

Shows the 8 most recently created articles with category, status badge, view count, and creation time. Click any article title to jump directly to the edit screen.

### Top Articles Chart

A horizontal bar chart shows the top 5 most-read published articles. Use this to identify the content formats and topics that perform best with your readership.

> **NOTE**
> All dashboard figures update on each page load. For historical trend data and device breakdowns use the full Analytics section in the sidebar.

# Section 4 - PUBLICATION SETTINGS

*Configure every aspect of your publication identity, contact information, social media presence, and display preferences from a single settings screen.*

## Identity and Branding

Go to Admin > Publication Settings and fill in the fields below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Publication Title** | The newspaper name displayed in the masthead, e.g. The Daily Chronicle |
| **Organisation Name** | The parent company or media group, e.g. Chronicle Media Group |
| **Marketing Tagline** | A short motto shown below the title, e.g. Truth. Integrity. Excellence. |
| **Contact Email** | Editorial or general enquiries email address |
| **Contact Phone** | Main telephone number including international dialling code |
| **Contact Address** | Physical office or postal address for the footer |
| **Website URL** | Your organisation main website URL, separate from this newspaper |
| **Footer Text** | A short description paragraph shown in the footer column |
| **Copyright Line** | Custom footer copyright, e.g. 2024 Chronicle Media Group. All rights reserved. |

### Logo Upload

- Click Choose File next to Publication Logo and select your image
- Recommended dimensions: 300 x 100 pixels (horizontal format)
- Best format: PNG with transparent background
- Also supported: JPG, WebP, GIF
- Maximum file size: 5 MB

> **TIP**
> Your logo appears in the public newspaper header, the admin panel sidebar, and the footer. A wide horizontal logo (wider than it is tall) looks best in all three positions.

### Social Media Links

Enter full URLs (starting with https://) for each platform. These render as clickable icons in the header top bar and the footer.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Facebook** | https://www.facebook.com/YourPageName |
| **X (Twitter)** | https://x.com/YourHandle |
| **Instagram** | https://www.instagram.com/YourProfile |
| **YouTube** | https://www.youtube.com/@YourChannel |

## Layout and Display Options

| | |
|---|---|
| **Layout Style** | Classic, Modern, Tabloid, Broadsheet, or Magazine |
| **Number of Columns** | 1 to 4 columns for the homepage article grid |
| **Articles Per Page** | How many article cards are shown per page: 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, or 24 |
| **Show Weather Widget** | Enable a weather information bar at the top of the page |
| **Show Stock Ticker** | Enable a financial markets ticker strip at the top of the page |

> **TIP**
> For mobile-heavy audiences, 2 columns is recommended. For desktop-first readerships with dense content, 3 columns gives a professional broadsheet look.

Click **Save Settings** at the bottom of the form. Changes take effect immediately on the public website - no cache clearing required.

# Section 5 - DESIGN AND THEME CUSTOMISATION

*Give your publication a unique professional identity with customisable colours, fonts, and layout styles that adapt to your brand.*

## Colour Scheme Controls

Five colour values control the entire visual identity of your newspaper. Navigate to Admin > Design and Layout to access them:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Primary Colour** | Header background, navigation bar, sidebar, buttons. Default: dark navy #1a1a2e |
| **Secondary Colour** | Accent highlights, hover states, gold details. Default: #c8a96e |
| **Accent Colour** | Category badges, breaking news tags, call-to-action buttons. Default: #e94560 |
| **Background Colour** | Page and card backgrounds. Default: warm parchment #f4f1eb |
| **Text Colour** | Main body text. Default: near-black #1a1a1a |

Each colour has a colour picker (click the coloured square) and a text field where you can type a hex code such as #2d6a4f directly.

### Six Preset Colour Themes

| Theme | Primary | Secondary | Accent | Best Suited For |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Classic Navy | #1a1a2e | #c8a96e | #e94560 | Traditional broadsheet newspapers |
| Modern Red | #c0392b | #f39c12 | #e74c3c | Tabloids, entertainment, sport |
| Forest Green | #1b4332 | #95d5b2 | #40916c | Environment, health, lifestyle |
| Royal Purple | #2d0057 | #e0aaff | #9d4edd | Culture, arts, opinion |
| Midnight Blue | #03045e | #90e0ef | #0077b6 | Technology, business, finance |
| Charcoal | #212121 | #ffca28 | #ff6f00 | Photography-heavy publications |

## Typography and Font Selection

Three font roles can be set independently from a library of 18 Google Fonts:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Headline Font** | Used for article titles, section headings, and the publication masthead. Best choices: Playfair Display, Lora, EB Garamond |
| **Body Text Font** | Used for article body paragraphs and summaries. Best choices: Merriweather, Libre Baskerville, Crimson Text |
| **UI Font** | Used for navigation, buttons, labels, and metadata. Best choices: Inter, Roboto, DM Sans |

**TIP**

For the most professional newspaper look, pair a traditional serif headline font such as Playfair Display with a readable body serif such as Merriweather, and a clean sans-serif for UI elements such as Inter.

## Live Preview Panel

The right side of the Design page shows a live preview that updates instantly as you adjust colours. It shows your header, article card, category tag, and button together so you can check contrast and overall feel before saving.

**IMPORTANT**

Always check the live preview before saving. Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background colours, particularly for body text and navigation links, to maintain readability for all readers including those with visual impairments.

# Section 6 - ARTICLE MANAGEMENT

*The article editor is the heart of your newspaper. Create, edit, publish, and manage news articles with a professional WYSIWYG editor and full workflow.*

## Creating a New Article

Click **New Article** in the left sidebar or the button in the top bar on the Articles list page. The editor is split into two panels:

- **Left panel:** Article content - headline, subtitle, summary, body editor, image, source
- **Right panel:** Publishing options - status, category, tags, layout, flags, and save button

### Article Fields Reference

| | |
|---|---|
| **Headline / Title** | The main article heading shown in cards and at the top of the article page. Required. |
| **Subtitle / Deck** | A supporting headline shown below the main title in the full article view. |
| **Summary / Excerpt** | 1 to 3 sentence overview displayed in article cards on the homepage and search results. |
| **Article Body** | Full article content formatted in the TinyMCE rich text editor. |
| **Featured Image** | Main image shown at the top of the article and as the card thumbnail. |
| **Image Caption** | Photo credit or description shown beneath the featured image. |
| **Source Name** | News agency or origin, e.g. Reuters, AFP, Staff Reporter. |
| **Source URL** | Link to the original report if the article is sourced externally. |
| **Category** | Required. Select from the categories you have created. |
| **Tags** | Comma-separated keywords for related searches, e.g. economy, inflation, budget. |
| **Layout Type** | Standard, Full Width, Two Column, or Photo Essay. |

### The TinyMCE Rich Text Editor

The article body uses TinyMCE, a professional WYSIWYG editor. It requires an internet connection to load from the CDN on first use.

- Text formatting: Bold, Italic, Underline, Strikethrough
- Paragraph styles: Headings H1 through H6, Normal, Blockquote, Code

- Lists: Bulleted and numbered lists with indent controls
- Links: Insert and edit hyperlinks with URL and target settings
- Images: Embed images from URLs directly inside the article body
- Tables: Insert and format data tables inside the article
- Full Screen mode: Write distraction-free in full browser width
- Source Code view: Edit raw HTML for advanced custom formatting

## Article Status Workflow

| Status | Meaning | Visible to Readers |
|---|---|---|
| Draft | Being written. Not submitted for review. Saved and editable. | No |
| Under Review | Submitted to editor for fact-checking and approval. | No |
| Published | Live on the website. Visible to all readers. Timestamp recorded. | Yes |
| Archived | Removed from public view. Retained in database for reference. | No |

## Article Flags

| | |
|---|---|
| **Featured** | Shows the article in the Featured Strip on the homepage (up to 3 shown). |
| **Breaking News** | Adds the article to the red scrolling ticker at the top of the homepage. |
| **Main Headline** | Promotes the article to the large hero banner. Only the most recent headline is shown. |
| **Allow Comments** | Enables the comment form at the bottom of the article page. On by default. |

> TIP
> Always write a 2 to 3 sentence summary. This text is shown in article cards on the homepage and in search results, acting as a teaser that draws readers into the full article.

## Editing and Deleting Articles

From the Articles list, click the **pencil icon** to edit an article. All fields are pre-populated. Click Update Article to save changes. The original publication date is preserved unless you change the status back to Draft and re-publish.

Click the **red bin icon** to delete. A confirmation dialog appears first. Deletion is permanent. Consider using the Archived status instead of deletion to preserve articles for reference.

**IMPORTANT**

Deleted articles cannot be recovered. The Archived status hides articles from public view while keeping them safely in the database.

# Section 7 - CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

*Categories organise your content into sections and drive the public navigation menu automatically.*

## Creating a Category

Go to Admin > Categories. Use the form on the right side of the screen.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | Display name of the category, e.g. Politics, Sports, Technology. |
| **Description** | Optional brief description of the scope of this category. |
| **Colour** | Hex colour code used for the category badge dot in article cards. |
| **Icon Name** | A Lucide icon name, e.g. newspaper, trophy, briefcase, globe, flask. |

Click Save. The category immediately appears in the article editor dropdown and in the public homepage navigation menu.

> **TIP**
> 12 categories are pre-installed: Breaking News, Politics, Business, Technology, Sports, Entertainment, Health, Science, Opinion, World, Local, Economy. Edit, rename, recolour, or delete these to suit your publication.

### Editing and Deleting Categories

Click the pencil icon next to any category. The form pre-fills with existing values. Make changes and click Save.

> **IMPORTANT**
> Deleting a category does not delete its articles. Those articles lose their category assignment. Reassign them to another category before deleting the old one to avoid orphaned content.

# Section 8 - ADVERTISING CONTROL CENTRE

*PressForge Pro includes a full advertising management system. Accept, schedule, display, and track client adverts with complete statistical reporting.*

## Creating an Advert

Go to Admin > Advert Manager > New Advert.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Client Name** | The advertiser business name for internal reference and billing records. |
| **Ad Title** | The headline text displayed prominently inside the advert. |
| **Description** | Supporting copy or call-to-action text. |
| **Destination URL** | Where readers are sent when they click the advert. |
| **Link Button Text** | The button label, e.g. Learn More, Shop Now, Book Today. |
| **Advert Image** | Upload a banner image. JPG, PNG, or WebP. Maximum 5 MB. |
| **Background Colour** | The fill colour of the advert box. |
| **Text Colour** | Colour for the title and description text inside the advert. |
| **Contract Value** | The agreed advertising fee for internal billing records. |
| **Currency** | Currency code, e.g. USD, ZAR, ZWL, GBP, EUR. |

### Advert Positions

| Position | Location on Page | Best Use |
|---|---|---|
| header | Top of every page above the navigation | Premium brand awareness placement |
| banner | Full-width bar below the header | Product launches, key announcements |
| sidebar-right | Right column on homepage and article pages | Recurring client adverts |
| sidebar-left | Left column where applicable | Secondary client placements |
| inline | Inside the article grid every 6 articles | High-visibility mid-content |
| popup | Modal overlay appearing 3 seconds after load | Premium campaigns, competitions |
| footer | Bottom of all pages | Classifieds, directory listings |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| strip | Narrow full-width strip | Ticker-style offers |

## Advert Sizes

| | |
|---|---|
| **leaderboard** | 728 x 90 px - standard horizontal banner for header or footer |
| **rectangle** | 300 x 250 px - medium rectangle for sidebar placement |
| **square** | 250 x 250 px - square format for sidebar |
| **halfpage** | 300 x 600 px - tall sidebar unit for premium clients |
| **strip** | 970 x 90 px - full-width thin strip |
| **full** | Full available container width - scales to the layout |

## Scheduling, Targeting, and Frequency

| | |
|---|---|
| **Start Date** | Date from which the advert becomes visible. Leave blank to start immediately. |
| **End Date** | Date after which the advert stops showing. Leave blank to run indefinitely. |
| **Display Pages** | "all" for all pages, or specify "home" or "article". |
| **Display Categories** | "all" for all categories, or list category slugs separated by commas. |
| **Show Every N Views** | 1 = show every page load; 3 = show every third page view. |
| **Max Views per Session** | 0 for unlimited. Set a number to cap views per user session. |
| **Priority** | 1 to 10. Higher values mean this advert is selected first when multiple compete. |

## Skip Button Controls

For popup and banner adverts you can enable a skip button, similar to YouTube pre-roll ads.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Allow Skip Button** | Tick this checkbox to show a Skip or close button on the advert. |
| **Skip After (seconds)** | The skip button is disabled for this many seconds after the advert appears. Default is 5. |

> **TIP**
> A skip delay of 5 seconds is standard industry practice and balances advertiser exposure with reader experience. Skippable adverts should be offered at a premium rate to advertisers as they achieve higher viewer satisfaction scores.

## Activating and Pausing Adverts

On the Advert Manager list click the play or pause button to toggle any advert active or inactive instantly. Paused adverts retain all their statistics and can be reactivated at any time without recreating them.

# Section 9 - ADVERT ANALYTICS

*PressForge Pro tracks every advert interaction in real time, providing transparent auditable performance data for your advertising clients.*

## Tracked Events

| | |
|---|---|
| **Views** | Recorded every time the advert is rendered on a page loaded by a reader. |
| **Clicks** | Recorded every time a reader clicks the advert link or call-to-action button. |
| **Skips** | Recorded every time a reader clicks the Skip or close button. |
| **Likes** | Reserved for future reader endorsement of adverts. |

### Click-Through Rate

CTR is calculated automatically in the Advert Analytics table:

```
CTR = ( Total Clicks / Total Views ) x 100
```

CTR above 2% is highlighted in green. Below 2% is shown in orange. This gives you and your clients an instant performance indicator.

### Providing Reports to Advertisers

Navigate to Admin > Advert Analytics. Use your browser Print function (Ctrl + P on Windows, Cmd + P on Mac) to print the table or export it as PDF. The table shows all metrics per advert for straightforward client reporting.

> **NOTE**
> All event data is also stored in the advert_stats table in your database. Advanced users can query this table directly in phpMyAdmin for custom date-range reports or export to CSV for use in spreadsheet billing reports.

# Section 10 - COMMENTS MODERATION

*Manage reader engagement through a two-stage approval workflow.*

## Comment Approval Workflow

All reader comments are held in a moderation queue before they are visible publicly. This prevents spam and protects your publication.

1. **Reader submits comment**
   Comment is stored with is_approved = 0 (Pending)
2. **Sidebar badge appears**
   The Comments menu item shows a red count badge
3. **Admin reviews comment**
   Go to Admin > Comments to see all pending items
4. **Approve or delete**
   Green tick to approve and publish; red bin to delete spam

> **TIP**
> Establish a clear comment policy on your website. Moderate consistently and promptly to build a quality comments community and protect your reputation.

# Section 11 - SUBSCRIBER MANAGEMENT

*Build and manage your newsletter audience.*

## Subscriber List

Go to Admin > Subscribers. All newsletter subscribers captured through the subscribe form on the homepage and article pages are listed here.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | Optional subscriber name entered in the form. |
| **Email** | Subscriber email address. Unique per subscriber. |
| **Status** | Active or Unsubscribed. |
| **Subscribed Date** | Date and time they submitted the subscribe form. |

**NOTE**

PressForge Pro captures and stores subscriber data. To send newsletters, export the email list from phpMyAdmin (Table > Export > CSV) and import it into a dedicated email marketing service such as Mailchimp, Brevo, or Zoho.

# Section 12 - SITE ANALYTICS

*Monitor your publication traffic with built-in page view statistics.*

## Available Metrics

| | |
|---|---|
| **All-Time Page Views** | Total page views recorded since the site launched. |
| **Today Views** | Page views for the current calendar day. |
| **Mobile Traffic** | Percentage of page views from mobile and smartphone browsers. |
| **Top Articles** | The 10 most-read articles ranked by total views with counts. |
| **Device Breakdown** | Split between mobile, tablet, and desktop visitors shown as bars. |

**TIP**

For advanced analytics and historical trends, add your Google Analytics tracking code to the head section of index.php and article.php. PressForge Pro analytics are cumulative real-time counts; Google Analytics provides session-level data.

# Section 13 - PUBLIC READER INTERFACE

*The front-end homepage and article page are designed to international broadsheet standards with full mobile and Android optimisation.*

## Homepage Layout

The homepage (index.php) is structured from top to bottom as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Top Social Bar** | Publication date and clickable social media icons. |
| **Masthead** | Logo, publication title, and tagline on the brand primary colour. |
| **Navigation Bar** | Category links and the search box. |
| **Breaking News Ticker** | Red auto-scrolling marquee of articles flagged as Breaking News. |
| **Banner Advert** | Full-width advert slot if one is active for the current date. |
| **Headline Article** | The article marked Main Headline displayed in a large hero card. |
| **Featured Strip** | Up to 3 Featured articles in an image-overlay grid. |
| **Article Grid** | All published articles in the configured 1 to 4 column grid with pagination. |
| **Inline Advert** | Advert card embedded inside the article grid every 6 articles. |
| **Sidebar** | Advert, Most Read list, Category pills, and Newsletter subscribe form. |
| **Footer** | Brand info, category links, organisation links, and copyright. |

### Breaking News Ticker

Articles flagged as Breaking News appear in the red scrolling ticker bar. The ticker pauses on mouse hover so readers can click the links. Up to 5 breaking articles are shown at once.

### Article Detail Page

Clicking an article opens article.php which includes:

- Hero featured image with caption below
- Category badge, reading time indicator, view count, and like count
- Main headline and optional subtitle
- Author avatar initial, full name, and formatted publication date and time
- Social sharing buttons: Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp - one click to share
- Full article body rendered from the TinyMCE HTML

- Source attribution with clickable external link
- Tags displayed as clickable search chips
- Like button - one like per device tracked in browser localStorage
- Related articles from the same category
- Comment section showing approved comments and a submission form
- Reading Progress Bar - thin gold line at top of screen tracks scroll position

## Search Functionality

The search box in the navigation bar searches article titles, summaries, and full body text simultaneously using a single query. Results are paginated and show a found count. URL parameters are preserved for sharing search results.

## Category Filtering

Clicking any category in the navigation or sidebar filters the homepage to show only articles in that section. The active category is highlighted. Click Home or All to remove the filter.

## Social Sharing

Every article page includes one-click sharing to Facebook, X (Twitter), and WhatsApp. The share URL is automatically built from the article title and current page URL. No configuration is needed.

# Section 14 - SECURITY AND ADMINISTRATION

*PressForge Pro implements multiple security layers to protect your editorial control panel and all reader data.*

## Admin Roles

| Role | Permissions |
|---|---|
| super_admin | Full access to all functions: settings, design, articles, categories, adverts, comments, analytics, users |
| editor | Create, edit, publish, and delete articles and categories. Cannot change settings or design. |
| journalist | Create and edit own articles only. Articles go to Under Review status. Cannot publish directly. |
| ad_manager | Create and manage adverts and view advert analytics only. No editorial access. |

### CSRF Protection

All admin forms and public forms (comments, subscribe) are protected with **Cross-Site Request Forgery tokens**. Every form submission includes a cryptographically secure 64-character hex token generated with random_bytes(32). The token is validated server-side before any database write is performed. Requests with missing or incorrect tokens are rejected.

### Password Security

Admin passwords are hashed using PHP **password_hash()** with the bcrypt algorithm at cost factor 12. Plain-text passwords are never stored in the database. Use a password of at least 12 characters combining uppercase, lowercase, digits, and symbols.

> **IMPORTANT**
> Change the default admin password immediately after first login. The default credentials (admin / password) are well known and must not remain on a live server.

### File Upload Security

- Files are validated by MIME type - only image files JPG, PNG, GIF, WebP are accepted
- File size is capped at 5 MB per upload
- Uploaded filenames are replaced with randomised names containing a timestamp and random hex
- Upload directories contain a .htaccess file blocking PHP execution

- An index.php guard file in each upload directory prevents directory listing

## SQL Injection Prevention

Every database query throughout the system uses **PDO Prepared Statements** with parameterised placeholders. User-supplied data is never interpolated directly into SQL strings. The PDO connection has EMULATE_PREPARES set to false, forcing true prepared statements at the database level.

# Section 15 - TROUBLESHOOTING AND FAQ

*Solutions to common installation and operation problems.*

## Common Errors and Solutions

### White page or blank screen after upload

Check PHP error logs in cPanel > Errors. Ensure all files were uploaded. Verify PHP version is 8.0 or higher. Check that config.php is present and readable.

### Database connection error on first visit

Open config.php and verify the database name, username, and password match exactly what you configured in cPanel MySQL Databases. Check that the user has been granted ALL PRIVILEGES on the database.

### db_setup.sql shows errors when run

Ensure you selected the correct database in phpMyAdmin before running the SQL. If tables already exist from a previous attempt, drop them first or run the SQL with the IF NOT EXISTS clauses already in the script.

### Images not uploading - move_uploaded_file error

Set the uploads folder and its three subfolders (logos, images, adverts) to permission 755 in cPanel File Manager. Right-click > Change Permissions > enter 755 and tick Apply to subdirectories.

### Admin login says invalid password

Ensure db_setup.sql was run successfully and the admins table exists. The default credentials are username: admin and password: password (lowercase). If that fails, use phpMyAdmin to update the password_hash column with a fresh bcrypt hash.

### TinyMCE article editor shows as a plain textarea

TinyMCE loads from a CDN and requires an internet connection on the server or editor device. On a local development server without internet, download TinyMCE and update the script src in admin.php to a local path.

### Articles not appearing on the homepage

Check that the article status is set to Published. Draft, Under Review, and Archived articles are not visible to readers. Also check the published_at column is not null in phpMyAdmin.

### Breaking news ticker not showing

At least one article must have is_breaking set to 1 and status set to published. Edit the article in the admin and tick the Breaking News checkbox, then save.

### Advert popup not appearing

Verify the advert position is set to popup, is_active is 1, and the current date falls within the start_date to end_date range. Clear your browser cache as the popup uses a 3-second setTimeout which requires a fresh page load.

### Design changes not appearing on the public site

Click Save Settings or Save Design Settings in the admin. Settings are written to the database immediately. If changes still do not appear, do a hard refresh in your browser with Ctrl + Shift + R (Windows) or Cmd + Shift + R (Mac).

### Category pages show no articles

Verify that articles in that category have status Published. Also check that the category is_active is 1 by editing it in Admin > Categories and clicking Save.

### PDF User Guide not downloading

Ensure PressForge_Pro_User_Guide.pdf is present in your public_html directory alongside the other PHP files. Check that download_guide.php is also uploaded. Verify the file has read permissions (644 minimum).

## Getting Support

| | |
|---|---|
| **Developer** | Ewige Technologies Private Limited |
| **Physical Address** | Southlea Park, Harare, Zimbabwe |
| **Technical Director** | Tawanda Sangoma |
| **Application** | PressForge Pro Version 1.1 |
| **Database Name** | zitdtcoz_finnewspaperdb |
| **Admin Login URL** | yourdomain.com/admin_login.php |
| **PDF Download URL** | yourdomain.com/download_guide.php |

## Section - END OF USER GUIDE

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