

Digital Media Issues

communication... culture... technology...

Intro to WordPress

What is WordPress?

WordPress is a popular, free, open-source blogging system. It was started in 2003 by Matt Mullenwag and Mike Little. It allows bloggers to choose themes and add functionality to their sites. It also has the ability to add “pages,” making it a more robust platform for Web development than Blogger or other blog platforms.

Wordpress.com vs. Wordpress.org

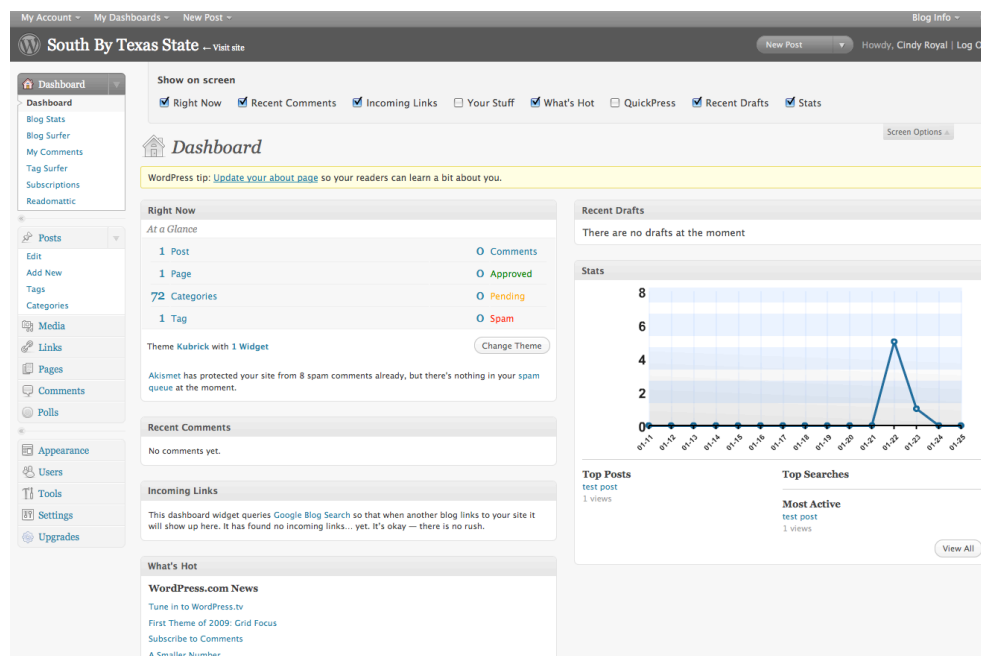
The difference is that with Wordpress.com, the servers and software are managed by the Wordpress people. With Wordpress.org, you install the files and manage on your own server. For a full list of benefits of each, visit <http://support.wordpress.com/com-vs-org/>.

Signing Up/Logging in

Each person in class will have their own blog. Go to Wordpress.com. Click the big, “Create Website” button (you may use an existing blog if you already have one, or set up a new one for this class). You'll be asked to create a site address for your blog, then a username and pw, provide an email address. Use your username and pw to login at Wordpress.com on subsequent visits. If you already have a Wordpress.com blog, you can create another site by choosing the Add New Wordpress button when you login and go to the main dashboard.

On the Dashboard page for the blog, you'll see some stats and your options. You may need to click on WP Admin to see this view.

Wordpress provides a lot of info that helps you control and manage your site.



Making a Post

It's very easy to add a post. Find the section on the left that says Posts and click on Add New. It'll bring you to a form. It's that simple. Give the post a Title, use the buttons to format your post content. Make sure you add appropriate Tags (or possibly Categories) to the post with the boxes on the right. Leave the settings on Excerpt, Send Trackbacks, Discussion, and Post Author.

Make sure you link to appropriate items using the Link icon. Use "Open Link in New Window" as the target.

You can work in Visual or HTML to make your post. You can use the Preview button to take a look at it before you Publish, Save Draft to save a copy before you Publish. When you are done with the post, Make sure you Publish (or Update for a previously published post).

You can use the More tag, if you have a long post and only want an excerpt to show on the main blog page.

Use only basic format tags (like paragraph, heading1, etc., so the format will be driven by the theme's CSS). Don't do anything crazy with colors unless you really need emphasis.

Inserting media – photos and video

Use Upload/Insert buttons to insert media. Images are easy. Simply click on the Add Image button, Select File and upload. Make sure you optimize ALL photos before uploading them to the site (use either Photoshop or webresizer.com). Use Center alignment and Medium or Large size.

Add Video. Embed tags don't work. Click on the Add Video button, then the From URL tag. Paste the URL code into the box (i.e. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHDavK5vaD4>). Add this to force it to show in High Quality (&fmt=18). If your video is HD, use this additional code (&fmt=22). The code in the html should look something like this:

```
[youtube=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgEmZ39EtFk&fmt=18]
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Edit Posts

You can go to the Edit Posts page to Edit, Delete or View a previous post, check its stats. You can also go to the Media Library, Link List and Comments to manage those entries.

Adding a Page

You can add a page to a Wordpress site, giving it more the feel of a regular Web site than an average blog. Consider what your sections should be and create several relevant pages. To create a new page, from the Dashboard, find the Pages button on the left and Choose Add New. Give it a title and some content. The new page will show up on as a navigation item on the site. You can adjust the Parent, Template and Order of the page on the right.

You can edit a page, by selecting it on Edit Pages.

Adding a Theme

Themes are the first step in adding customization to the site. Under Appearance, choose Themes. Pick a theme that has just the basic layout that you want. You can sort the themes based on the different tags or filters depending on what you need.

Widgets

Wordpress gives you lots of Widgets to add to the site. Go through and see which might be relevant. RSS feeds, Search form, Tag Cloud, Archives, Flickr, etc. Simply Add, then look for it on the right and click Edit. Fill out the information required by the box.

Custom Image Header

Change color or upload a new image.

Edit CSS

With a \$15 annual upgrade fee, you can edit CSS, either by editing the existing theme's stylesheet or creating a completely new one. You can not edit the stylesheets of your theme. Your stylesheet will be loaded after the theme stylesheets, which means that your rules can take precedence and override the theme CSS rules. The Sandbox theme is recommended for those who would prefer to start from scratch.

We can always go back to the themes CSS by removing our custom CSS. But, make sure to keep a copy of working CSS, in case we need to get back to a certain point. This will be a time consuming process and we'll need to make some decisions about the design and layout of the site before we Edit CSS.

Settings

General – Change Blog Title and Tagline, Timezone, Date Format etc. In this area, you should add your first and last name and use that in the Display Name As area.

Writing – Size of Post Box, Default Categories

Reading – Front Page Display, # Posts on Front Page, Syndication options

Discussion – default settings, moderation, blacklist

Media – sizes

We will discuss what makes a good post, but make sure you use the elements of the Web to create interesting content. That means using images, multimedia and links as appropriate.