

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 Get Started at the top of the page. For this project, choose the first option, Start with a Blog. You can skip picking a theme for now, because you will be able to choose from more later.

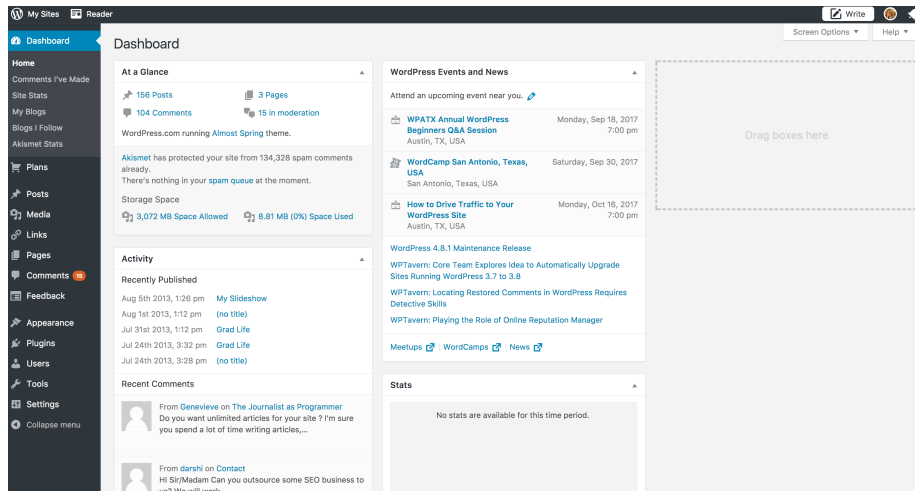
Next, you'll be asked to create a site address for your blog. You can use anything you want at this point, but perhaps something that includes your name and something about the course, like “royaldigitalissues”. Choose the free option that will include it as a wordpress.com address. Then choose Start with Free for the plan. We want this to be free!

Then create a username and pw and 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 Site, under the My Sites Tab.

On the Dashboard page for the blog, you'll see some stats and your options. Select your blog from the list (if you have more than one). Scroll to the bottom of the page to switch to the WP Admin view.

The WP Admin view should look something like this:



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).

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 Media button, Select File and upload. You can adjust alignment and size when you upload the image or later in the post.

Add Video. When you click on the Add Media button, you can choose Insert YouTube and include a url. It is best to host videos on YouTube and include them in this manner. You may also include existing YouTube videos in your posts.

Edit Posts

You can go to the All Posts page to Edit, Delete or View a previous post and check its stats. You can also go to the Media, Links 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 All Pages. You can adjust how the menu shows under Appearance, Menus.

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.

Customize

In this area, you can change other options that your theme provides. The free version of Wordpress gives you limited ability to customize, but try to find an appropriate theme and work with the options it gives you.

Settings

- General – Change Blog Title and Tagline (give these good titles –don't just keep the defaults), Timezone, Date Format etc.
- Writing – Post defaults
- Reading – Front Page Display, # Posts on Front Page, Syndication options – For this project, leave Your Latest Posts as the option. We'll discuss.
- Discussion – default settings, moderation, blacklist
- Media – sizes
- Sharing – include Sharing buttons on your posts.

Users – under Users, make sure your Display Name As is your first and last name.

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 in all posts when relevant.