

# digital media issues

communication... technology... culture

## Intro to WordPress

### What is WordPress?

WordPress is a popular, free, open-source blogging system. It was started in 2003 by Matt Mullenweg and Mike Little. It allows bloggers to choose themes and add plug-ins 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 basically 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, orange “Sign Up Now” 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 username and pw, provide an email address. Your username will be what's in the url for your blog (username.wordpress.com) Use your username and pw to login at WordPress.com on subsequent visits. You'll come to the main Dashboard where you can choose your blog (if you have more than one blog, you'll see it here). Choose your blog's dashboard.

On the Dashboard page, you'll see some stats and your options. WordPress provides a lot of info that helps you control and manage your site.

The screenshot shows the WordPress Dashboard interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'My Account', 'My Dashboards', and 'New Post'. The main header includes the site name 'South By Texas State' and a 'New Post' button. Below the header, there's a 'Show on screen' section with checkboxes for 'Right Now', 'Recent Comments', 'Incoming Links', 'Your Stuff', 'What's Hot', 'QuickPress', 'Recent Drafts', and 'Stats'. The 'Dashboard' title is prominently displayed. A yellow tip box says 'WordPress tip: Update your about page so your readers can learn a bit about you.' The 'Right Now' section shows 'At a Glance' with 1 Post, 1 Page, 72 Categories, and 1 Tag. It also indicates the theme is 'Kubrick with 1 Widget' and that Akismet has protected the site from 8 spam comments. The 'Recent Comments' section shows 'No comments yet.' The 'Incoming Links' section shows 'This dashboard widget queries Google Blog Search so that when another blog links to your site it will show up here. It has found no incoming links... yet. It's okay — there is no rush.' The 'What's Hot' section features 'WordPress.com News' with links to 'Tune in to WordPress.tv', 'First Theme of 2009: Grid Focus', 'Subscribe to Comments', and 'A Smaller Number'. The 'Recent Drafts' section shows 'There are no drafts at the moment.' The 'Stats' section contains a line graph showing a peak in activity around 01:20. The 'Top Posts' and 'Top Searches' sections both list 'test post' with 1 view. A 'View All' button is located at the bottom right of the stats area.

## **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]
```

## **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 stop 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**

Here's where the magic happens. With a \$15 annual upgrade fee, you 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.