

# The Little Green Book.

BY MICHAEL HEMINGWAY  
WINTER 2016 EDITION

**the plant**

# Foreword

Hello All.

To the new guys, welcome to the staff, and welcome to the web. To everyone else, *there's no shame in checking this guide out often*. Hell, it's better that you do than you don't.

To those that aren't sure, this guide covers the basic operation of the plant's wordpress interface, plugin operation and our web standards. A quick reference to all the most important bits is on the next page. Email me ([mikemingway@gmail.com](mailto:mikemingway@gmail.com) or [webmaster@theplantnewspaper.com](mailto:webmaster@theplantnewspaper.com)) if anything here isn't clear, or if there's a change to be made.

Cheers,  
Michael Hemingway

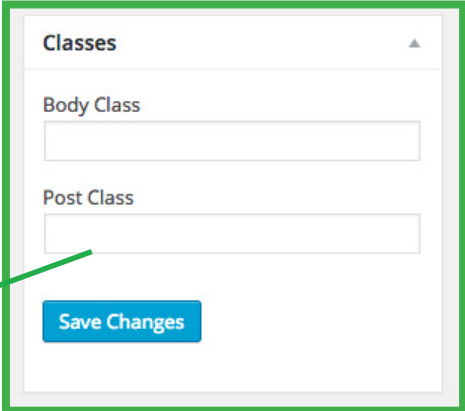
**the plant**

# Quick Reference

## Post classes

Essential to homescreen styling (and eventually, different post types), the three classes govern the size of article elements within the loop. These are:

.three-wide = 300px wide  
.six-wide = 550px wide  
.eight-wide = 800px wide



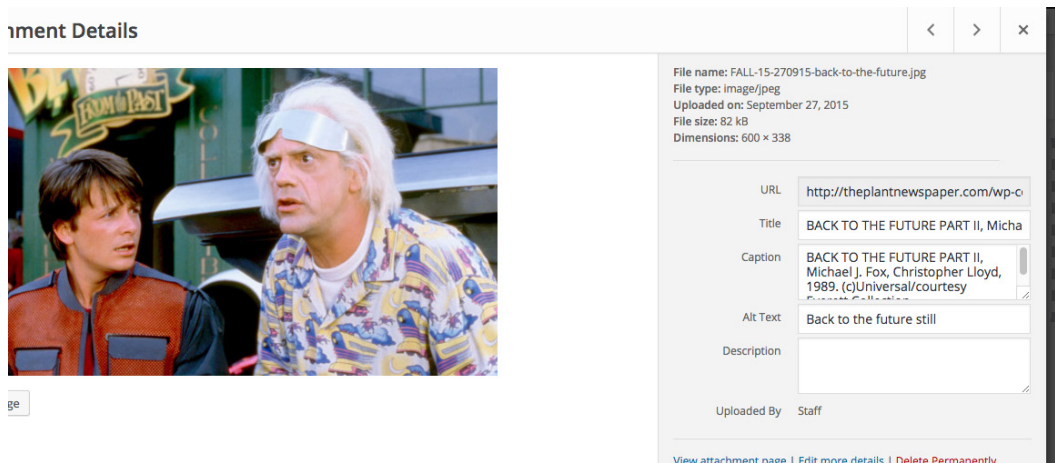
Classes

Body Class

Post Class

Save Changes

## Image Sizing & Naming Convention



Attachment Details

File name: FALL-15-270915-back-to-the-future.jpg  
File type: image/jpeg  
Uploaded on: September 27, 2015  
File size: 82 kB  
Dimensions: 600 × 338

URL: <http://theplantnewspaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/FALL-15-270915-back-to-the-future.jpg>

Title: BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II, Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, 1989. (c)Universal/courtesy

Caption: BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II, Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, 1989. (c)Universal/courtesy

Alt Text: Back to the future still

Description:

Uploaded By: Staff

[View attachment page](#) | [Edit more details](#) | [Delete Permanently](#)

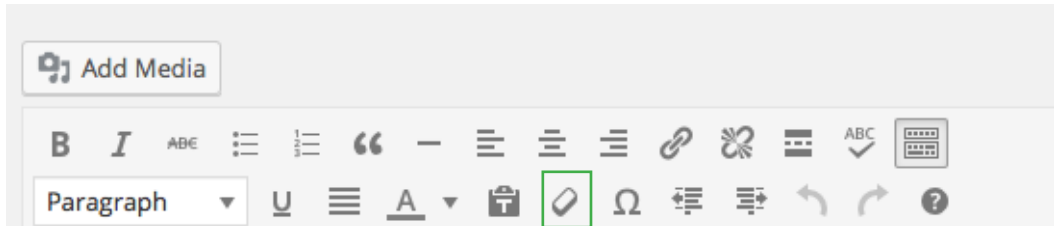
The file size and naming scheme to all images is very important. All post thumbnails must be **larger than 932x524px\*** and follow this naming scheme:

‘SEASON-YEAR-date-article-slug.jpg’ which translates to:  
‘FALL-15-270915-back-to-the-future.jpg’

Remember to always fill out the alt tag and credit the photographer (or source if unavailable) in the credit and credit URL section.

# Quick Reference 2

## Editing



Note the highlighted button. When first pasting a prewritten article, it's good measure to clear any invisible formatting the text may have with it. This formatting can override the default styling of the plant to change fonts, colors and alignment, breaking our look.

Additionally, the button to the left of the currently depressed one, marked ABC, is that of the autocorrection feature, automating proofreading on most articles.

**the plant**

# Quick Reference 3

## Content

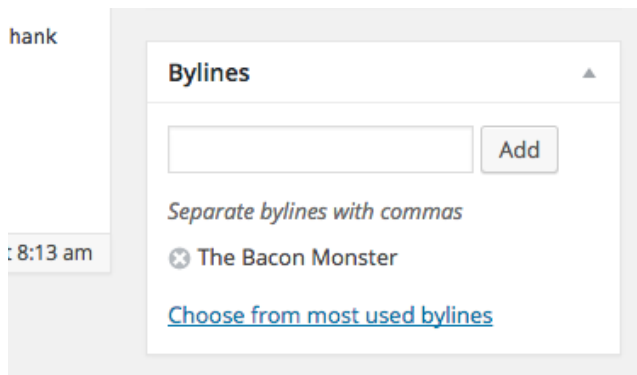
Video will currently upload unstyled when wrapped in the video element. YouTube links should be embedded with the embed feature. **Please upload using the official Plant account.**

Extremely long article titles in excess of 70 characters (including spaces) may break some layouts. Please use large post classes or **write a separate, web title for the article** and include the full title as a heading within the article.

Good SEO (Seach engine optimization) includes setting a meta description, filling out alt tags for users with screenreaders in each image, and providing relevant links and copy.

Avoid Clickbait. Refer to BuzzFeed and Upworthy for what that entails.  
Avoid multiple YouTube embedding within a single page. Create a YouTube playlist instead.  
Avoid censoring opinion.  
Do link to attributable content, especially with Dawson Students.

## Author Attribution



On the post creation page, always remember to credit the post's author when it isn't you.

Leaving the bylines field empty will attribute the post to the user that created it. More than one author can exist per article.

Frequent authors should be sought out and encouraged to provide information to fill out their author bios within the full byline menu. Verify that all sites and links submitted adhere to the Dawson Code of conduct where applicable.

# An intro to WP & The Plant.

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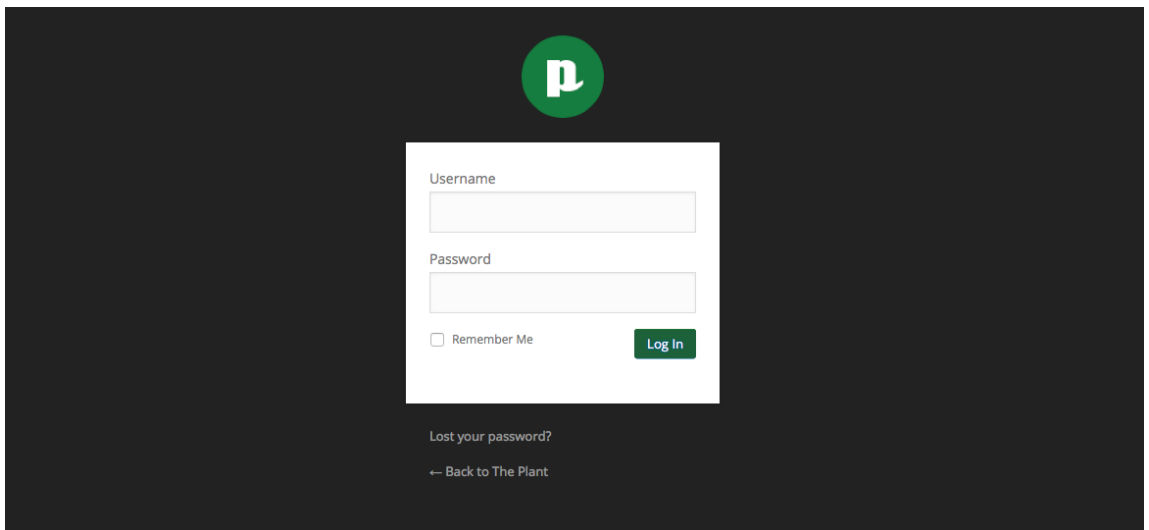


# Hello, World!

Welcome to Wordpress!

Chances are, you're an editor, and the most important parts of your online work consist of managing your content with features unique to the web (video, interactivity and links), moderating comments and designing your section. So firstly, let's cover:

## Logging In

A screenshot of the WordPress login interface. At the top center is a green circular logo with a white lowercase 'p'. Below the logo is a white rectangular login form. The form contains two input fields: 'Username' and 'Password'. Below the 'Password' field is a checkbox labeled 'Remember Me'. To the right of the checkbox is a green 'Log In' button. Below the login form, there is a link 'Lost your password?' and a link '← Back to The Plant'.

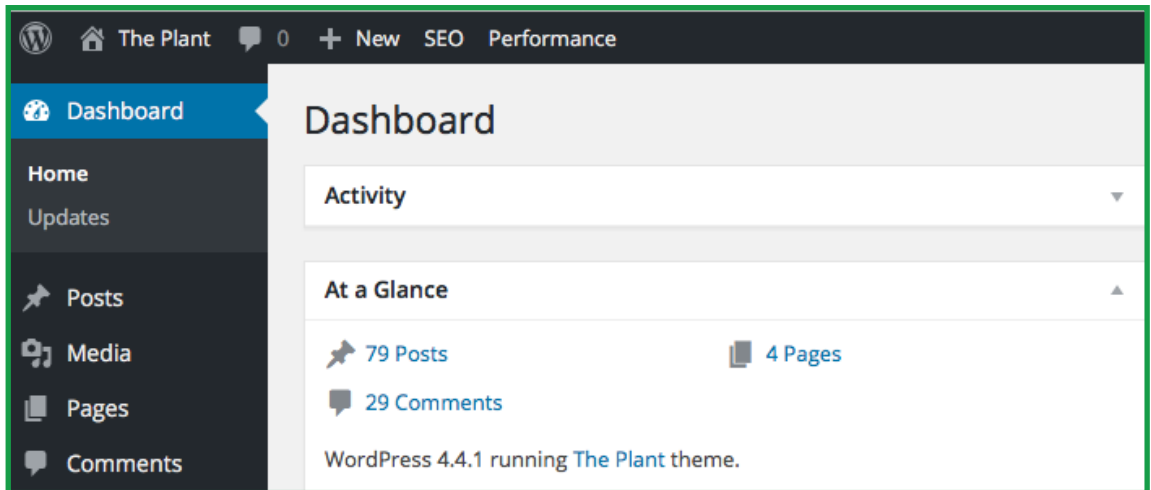
<http://theplantnewspaper.com/wp-admin/> (for your convenience) is where you go to login. Remember you can always shoot me an email if you lost your password and can't recover it. Also note that login details are case sensitive, including usernames.

You are not to distribute your username or password to anyone outside the plant.

In the event that you find someone else's account logged in on the computer you are working on, kindly log them out as both a courtesy and a security measure.

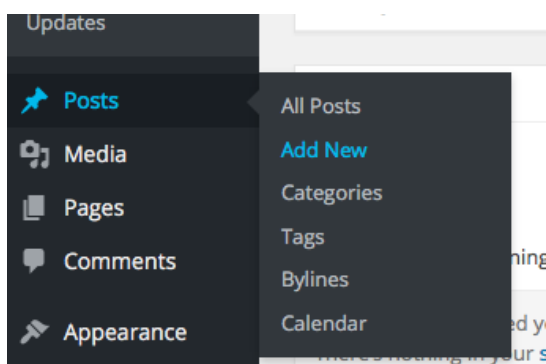
# Working with WordPress

Now that you're in, take the time to properly acquaint yourself if you're new to the platform, and prepare your first post. We'll be walking through a few real posts to acquaint ourselves with what content should look like on the plant. Firstly, the WordPress interface:



The *Dashboard* is where you can find all the links to the functionality necessary to managing your section. Note in the section below that the bylines *taxonomy* is a subset of the post menu, as is the calendar scheduling functionality.

## Creating a Post



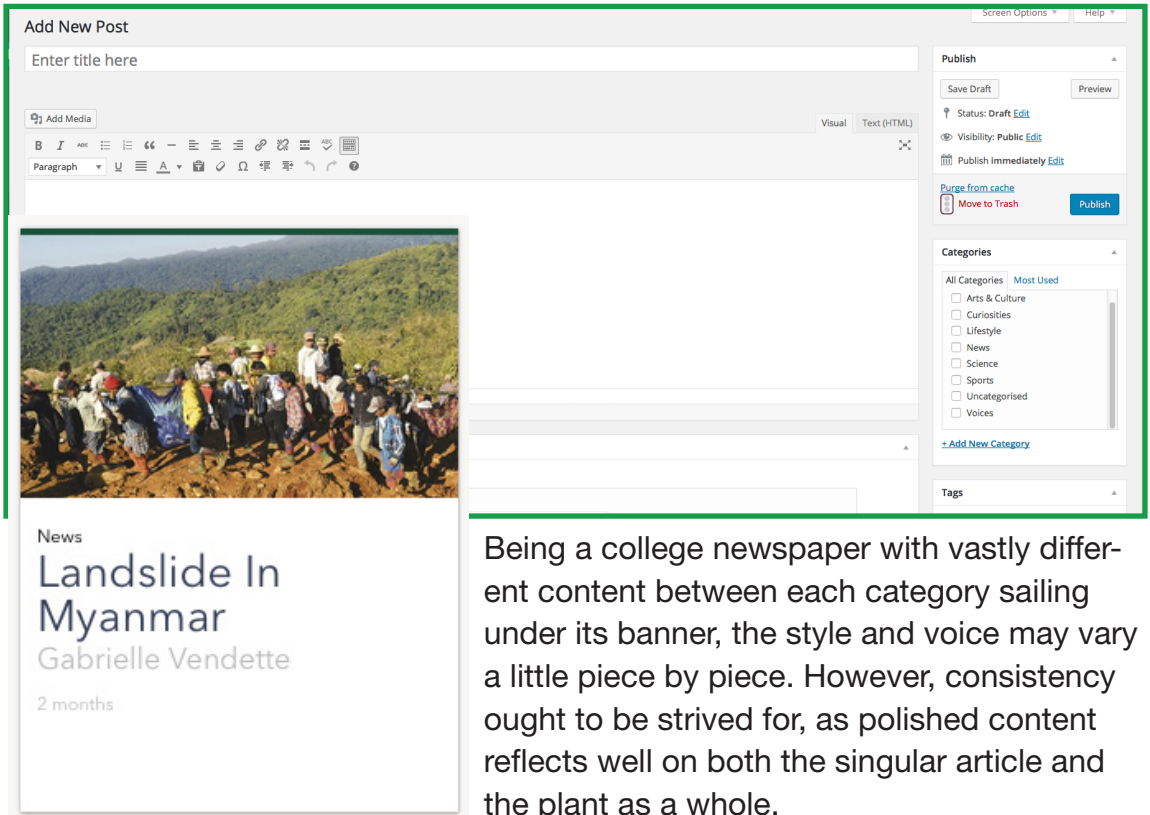
Under **Posts** and **Media** you can upload your next article. Note that a page is not a post, and will behave differently. Under most circumstances, you will not be creating pages.

We're going to take a look at a real post soon.

When asked about this particular article's importance relative to all the others in his section this month, on a scale from one to four, Micko chose three. He gave his post the **.six-wide** class to reflect that decision. It is absolutely *crutial* that all posts should be categorized before publishing, or they will be quickly buried from the home page and will not display elsewhere.



# The Post



News

## Landslide In Myanmar

Gabrielle Vendette

2 months

Being a college newspaper with vastly different content between each category sailing under its banner, the style and voice may vary a little piece by piece. However, consistency ought to be strived for, as polished content reflects well on both the singular article and the plant as a whole.


## Standards

We are aiming for excellent SEO (search engine optimization) here, and thus the toolbar at the bottom of each post in the editor is a good indication of how we're doing.

- The title should be to the point and descriptive written in *title case* with ampersands (&) replacing "and" where necessary. Max 120 letters, best 6 words.
- Content should be stripped of markup and re-added as necessary. This is mostly a problem with MS Word documents.
- All posts must be categorized appropriately save for announcements.
- Tags should be used effectively to allow for keywords that an article is related to, but does not contain, to make it into search. Avoid generic words like "news" or "recent" that do not give extra context.
- All posts must have a meta description filled and the appropriate *byline* filled.

# Images

## Attachment Details



Edit Image

File name: Merry-Minimal-Christmas.jpg  
File type: image/jpeg  
Uploaded on: December 4, 2015  
File size: 143 kB  
Dimensions: 1920 × 1080

URL:

Title:

Caption:

\* Alt Text:

Description:

Uploaded By:

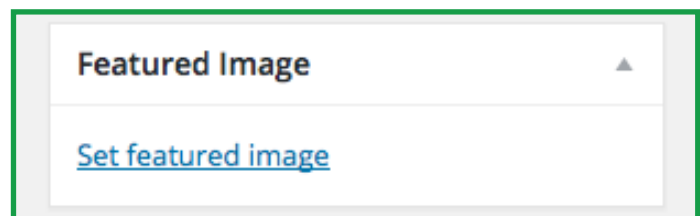
Uploaded To: [Happy Holidays From the Plant](#)

Credit:

Credit URL:

Buried underneath loads of settings is the ‘post-thumbnail’ feature. Clicking on this link opens a media selection (or upload) dialog box. As per the spec defined in the Quick Reference section, your image must meet minum sizes, and be at least consistent with our standards. Those are:

- No watermarks
- Properly sourced
- No Pornography
- No Gore
- No large white sections, Nor pure white.
- Have an aspect ratio 16:9
- No visual artefacts



Images should, if possible, conform to the overall *look* of the section they belong to, and to the Plant’s visual aesthetic as a whole. What that means is dependant on the creative vision of the section manager, the editor-in-chief and the Plant’s current style. Centered subjects and bold, uniform color looks best, and attracts the most attention. Avoid stock photography when possible, however <https://unsplash.com/> is great for that.

**All posts must have a post thumbnail, and all images must have alt tags.\*** *Alternative Text* is an accesibility standard for blind people, so that the context an image imbues the article isn’t lost on them. In short, describe the image.

# Fields

Tags should allow a reader to follow a concept through stories that aren't necessarily related. A thematic relation if you will, where a topic like Crimean military involvement would be tagged as such, even if the story is about Putin buying jets. For Sports, key players and seasons, as well as the games mentioned.

Post visibility, as it sounds, hides posts from the main “loops”, the main page and the category pages. It is inadvisable that one use this too often, or use the date archives one. Note that users with a permalink will still be able to access the content.

Post Classes concern the physical size of stories within the grid views in search, category and home-pages.

Note that larger sizes should be used sparingly, and in concert with a good eye for visual design.

Larger-than-default sizes should present only the best and richest content we have. The role of assignment should befall hierarchically on the staff, the editors, the content manager, the art director depending on availability.

The classes are:

- three-wide = 300px wide
- six-wide = 550px wide
- eight-wide = 800px wide

Tags

Add

Separate tags with commas

[Choose from the most used tags](#)

Bylines

Add

Separate bylines with commas

[Choose from most used bylines](#)

Post Visibility

☐ Hide on the front page.

☐ Hide on category pages.

☐ Hide on tag pages.

☐ Hide on author pages.

☐ Hide in date archives (month, day, year, etc...)

☐ Hide in search results.

☐ Hide in feeds.

[Leave feedback and report bugs...](#)

[Give 'WP Hide Post' a good rating...](#)

[Donate...](#)

Classes

Body Class

Post Class

Save Changes

# Bylines

Note these fields available in the dedicated byline panel. Silent updates currently push more and more features visible on the “author” page.

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ose menu

Add New Byline

Name

The name is how it appears on your site.

Slug

The “slug” is the URL-friendly version of the name. It is usually all lowercase and contains only letters, numbers, and hyphens.

Description

The description is not prominent by default; however, some themes may show it.

Profile Picture

No image selected

Add Image

Email

example@mail.com

It could be dangerous to add this, never author data without permission. Leave blank to ignore.

Twitter

@ twitterHandle\_123

Leave blank to ignore.

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/groups/groupname or name

The part after “facebook.com/” and before any question marks or ampersands. The Plant’s Facebook group resolves to “groups/482516958582726” and a random person as “ctkellermann”.

Website

https://example.com/about.html

The author’s portfolio or other media publisher, not what they endorse. Full URL including “http://”.

Add New Byline

☐ Anthony Fiorino

☐ Antonio Mastrangelo

☐ Athina Khalid

☐ Candice Pye

☐ Charles Garand

☐ Claire Peacock

☐ Deborah Barrasso

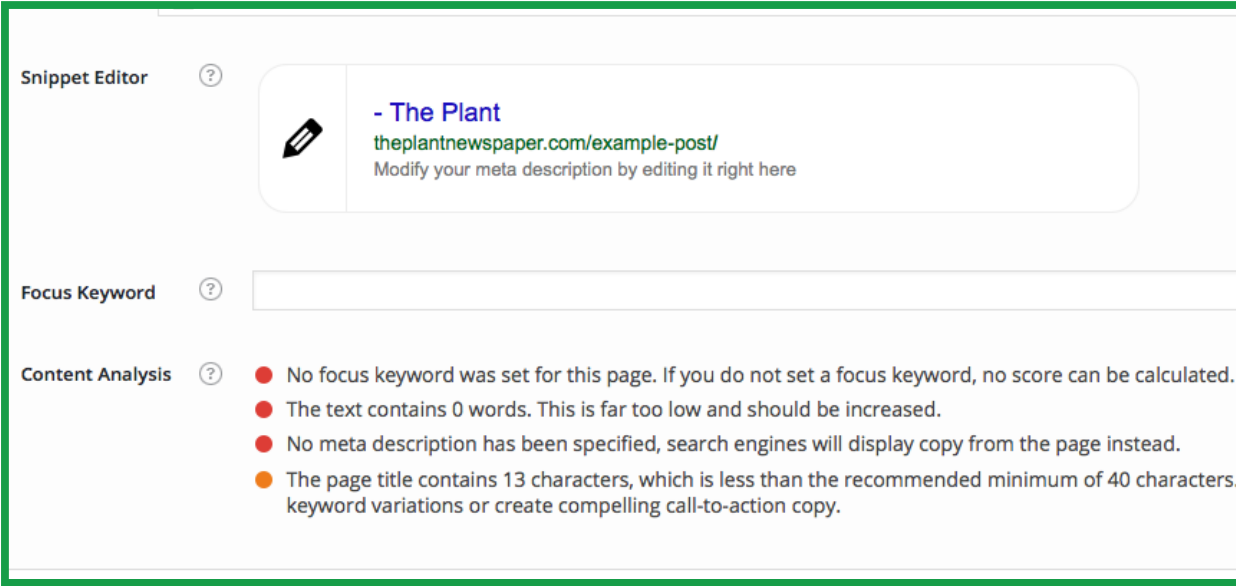
☐ Despina Daniilidis

☐ Gabrielle

☐ Gabrielle Jay-Riendeau

☐ Gabrielle Vendette

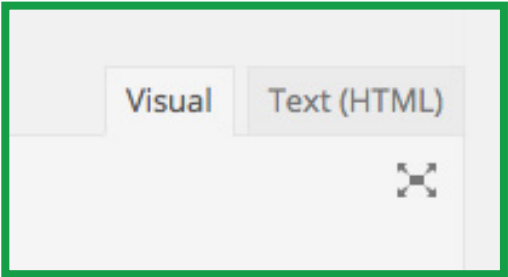
# SEO



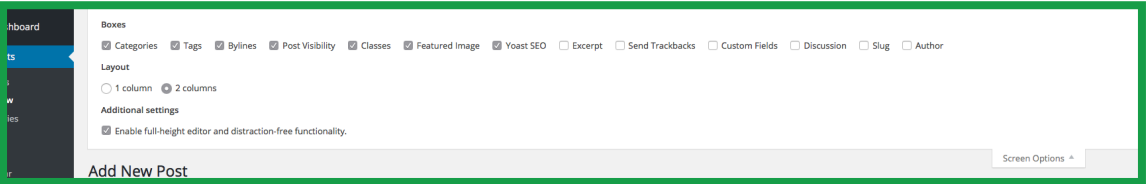
We are aiming for excellent SEO (search engine optimization) here, and thus the toolbar at the bottom of each post in the editor is a good indication of how we're doing. Adding meta descriptions improves search rankings, as does filling out alt tags and doing your absolute best to optimize the site. Note that the panel above can be switched into views specific for social media sharing.

## Views

Note that many wordpress features can be enabled and disabled as necessary. The Text(HTML) view enables you to catch hidden markup like `<span style="font: times new roman">` And other such defects.



The views tab atop the screen can hide columns.



# Submit Direct

Posts submitted through the direct submission feature will appear in the post queue as “pending.” They should be treated with the same dignity as regular posts, and abide by the same standards.

## Submit

The (\*) marked fields are mandatory.

Your Name \*

Email \*

Website

Post Title \*

Start writing from here

In the event of a clearly bogus name, it is safe to omit it in favour of “Anonymous.”  
The person's email can be displayed (as well as the original submitted name) by toggling the appropriate field in the screen views section.

Category

Select a category

Keyword Tags

Separate tags with commas

SUBMIT

# Style

Replying to emails, social media presence, and what to edit.

## Voice

The plant should care to posit itself as an approachable body, taking and publishing as much as possible, while still keeping its reputation as pristine as possible. People want to promote themselves, and engage in communities. With that in mind, the plant's staff ought to emphasize exactly that in all communications.

If a post was rejected, tell the author why. They've worked hard on a piece pro bono in their time, and shouldn't be silently dismissed. They are customers, in that regard. We depend on submissions. Positive reinforcement is always more palatable and enjoyable than negative reprimand.

The plant, as a student organization, should only hold the views of the College above those of the student's. Political pieces and controversial material should be posted with their message unaltered. It's in the best interest of the plant that provocative pieces be left to garner attention and further engagement.

The "line" that a piece crosses when it should face rejection is that of content that violates Dawson's code of conduct.

Indeed, any voice should be left unaltered, with the exception of news and science pieces, for the sake of factual accuracy.

In the event an error comes up, the article should openly correct itself with an obvious reference to the error.

We are to respect any wishes of post removal should the author request. Taking care to minimize author loss, editors should care to limit editing to spelling and basic flow, preserving the piece's original voice.

Comments have been disabled in this update.

# Style me Silly

Much of the more advanced styling can be achieved through shortcodes.

## The Dropcap

For really long articles, cover stories and important pieces, you can choose to style the first letter with a dropped capital letter. In the editor, find the first letter and wrap it in the [dropcap] shortcode.

[dropcap]R[/dropcap]

— *Don't forget the forward slash in the closing tag!*

**R**emember that  
reset link. Go  
something you would  
Also note that this ar

## The Pullquote

With interview pieces, editorials or highlighted passages, the pullquote should be used. Note that short articles should refrain from anything extrenuous. To be used sparingly.

[pullquote]your content[/pullquote]

— *Don't forget the forward slash in the closing tag!*

## Titles (h2, h3 & h4)

On larger articles, titles should be used to separate sections of the piece thematically. Depending on size, no more than three *h2s* should find their way into the article. Smaller subheadings may be used as necessary. **Do not bolden normal text as a heading.**

## The Underline

On important links only.

[underline]your link[/underline]

— *Don't forget the forward slash in the closing tag!*

ot be reproduced,  
ission of The Plant and the



Video & Galleries

*Reserved for future use.*

# Featured Story & the Future.

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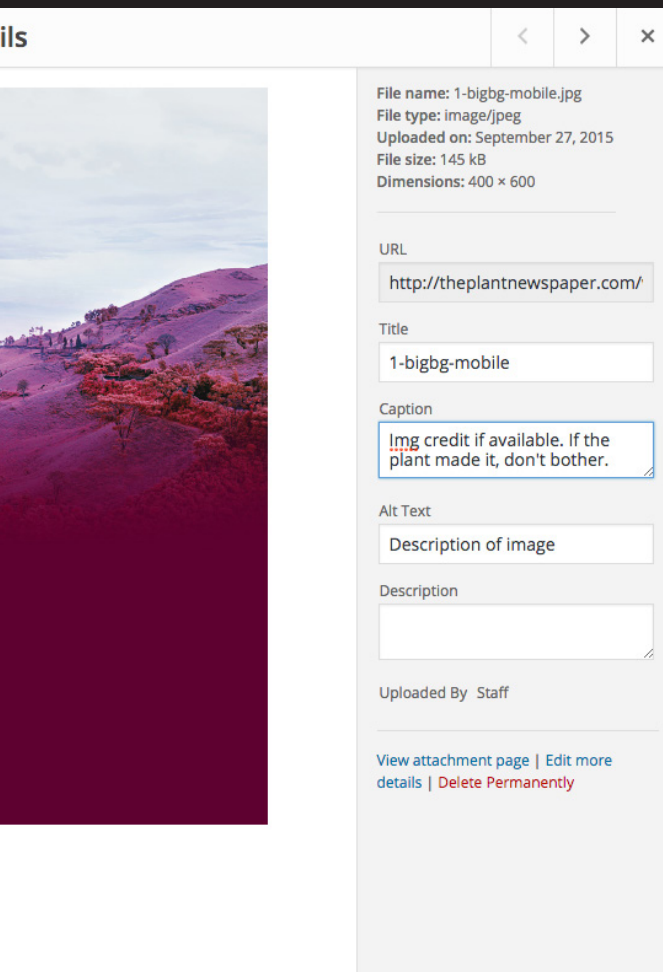


# Administrator Options

Under Plugins, “Big story Options” contains the settings to the featured image on the index. Note that the plugin is still in development and currently not the most user friendly thing.

## The Look

Assure that all images conform to standards, and fade to the correct color.



The screenshot shows a web interface for managing a featured image. On the left is a large image of a desert landscape with a gradient overlay. To the right is a form with the following fields:

- File name:** 1-bigbg-mobile.jpg
- File type:** image/jpeg
- Uploaded on:** September 27, 2015
- File size:** 145 kB
- Dimensions:** 400 × 600
- URL:**
- Title:**
- Caption:**
- Alt Text:**
- Description:**
- Uploaded By:** Staff

At the bottom, there are links: [View attachment page](#) | [Edit more details](#) | [Delete Permanently](#)

Background images are named as such:

`featuredstory#-bigbg-type`

The featured story number is simply the count of the number of previous featured stories.

The type indicated whether the image is the mobile or desktop variant. Both images should fade to the most prominent *dark* color of the featured image, which will then correspond to the *page background color* value in the input form.

The bg image and the corresponding title images should be made in tandem, as the title must be readable on all devices, and match light or dark text depending on the background.

Images must be detailed, and illustrative without being too specific.

The first title image serves as a perfect example of what the cover story should be. Image credit to WIRED magazine. Note the height of the gradient changes between type, and the sizes differ.

# The Setup

Copy and paste the permalink from of each image to the corresponding field, or simply write them in from memory. With proper naming conventions, the entire system should consist only of changing the featured story number in each box, updating the color and preparing the post.

The story to be featured should be created before this process and marked as a hidden post from the index within the post editor. When un-featured the story, be sure to visit the permalink and click “edit this” to arrive at the post’s edit page to return it to normal visibility.

Below we see what the Big story looks like in its current version.

The screenshot shows the 'Big Story / Hero image Options' settings page. On the left is a dark sidebar with a menu: Dashboard, Posts, Media, Pages, Comments, Appearance, Plugins, Users, Tools, Settings (highlighted), General, Writing, Reading, Discussion, Media, Permalinks, Big Story Options, XML-Sitemap, and Collapse menu. The main content area has a title 'Big Story / Hero image Options' and an introductory text: 'Hey there! This panel controls what the main page will display as the featured story. What you need to make it work are:'. Below this are five settings:

- URL of the featured story**: A text input field. Below it, a note states: 'This post must be created with the "featured-story" class in the post creation page. This will hide it from the main feed.'
- Title image (mobile)**: A text input field.
- Title image (desktop)**: A text input field.
- Cover image (mobile)**: A text input field. Below it, a note states: 'Must be 400x600px, .jpg' and 'Note that the cover images should fade to the background color specified. See reference guide for details.'
- Cover image (desktop)**: A text input field. Below it, a note states: 'Must be 2560x1600px, .jpg' and 'Note that the cover images should fade to the background color specified. See reference guide for details.'

At the bottom, there is a **Page background color** setting with a color input field showing '#000000'. Below this, a note states: 'If left blank, the cover image will fade to the default background color. This might look weird if the cover image isn't mostly white.' A blue 'Save Settings' button is located at the bottom left of the main content area.

## ACF

Advanced Custom Fields currently exports from a development environment all the required fields for the bylines taxonomy as well as the Staff page. Modify as such. The theme's functions file contains the appropriate array.

## Plugins

Many plugins contain modifications and direct integrations with the plant's theme. Such are marked with a "-TPMod" title. These should never take updates externally.

## Pages

Omitted.

Reserved for Future Use

