Introduction to WordPress

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Developed by Colleen Nugent for
Issues and Methods in Public History
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What is WordPress?

WordPress is a professional **website-building tool** that allows you to build your own website, provides a free domain name, and supports plugins and themes to customize your website. There are other website-building tools, such as Wix and Squarespace. WordPress is often used for blogging and academic websites; it has features for blogging, tagging, and categorizing.

Examples of websites that use WordPress:

- http://ecda.northeastern.edu/
- http://moyabailey.com/
- https://bostonresearchcenter.org/ *
- https://marathon.library.northeastern.edu/ *

**Uses CERES plug-in managed by the DSG (Digital Scholarship Group)

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Getting Started
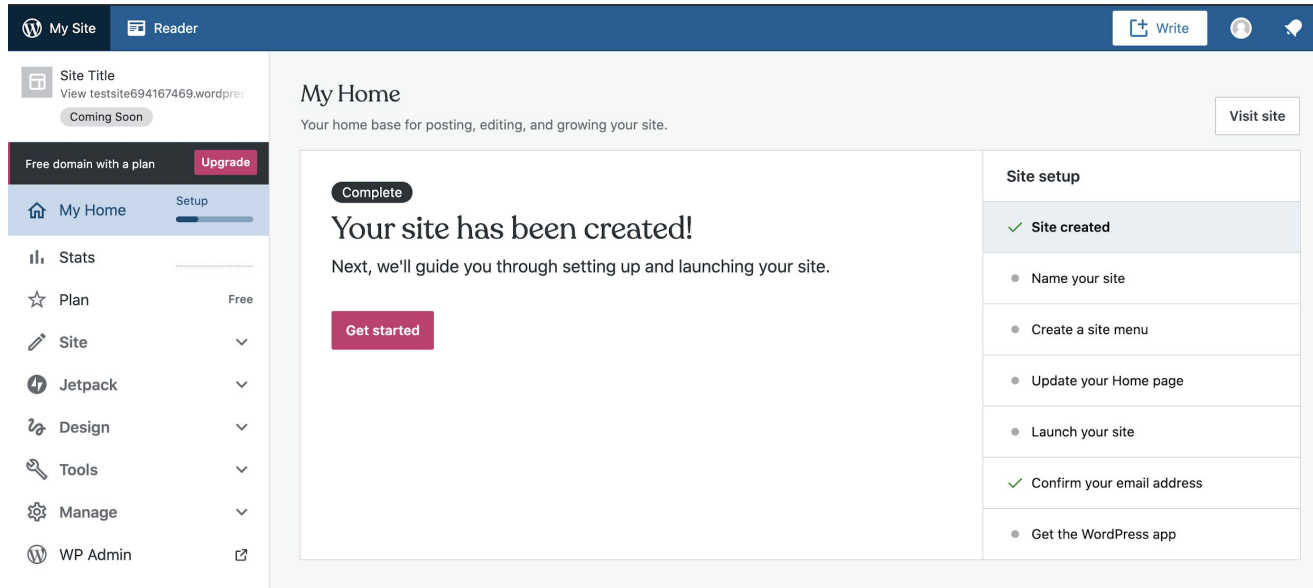
To get started, follow these steps:

- Go to https://wordpress.com/ and click "Get Started" in the upper right corner
- Fill out the "Create a Site" information; keep in mind that the *purpose* of this website is to act as a professional site and representation of your work
- Choose a **domain name** that is professional: for example, you could use your full name. WordPress provides a free domain with ".wordpress.com" at the end of the URL
- Use an **email** that you associate with your professional identity

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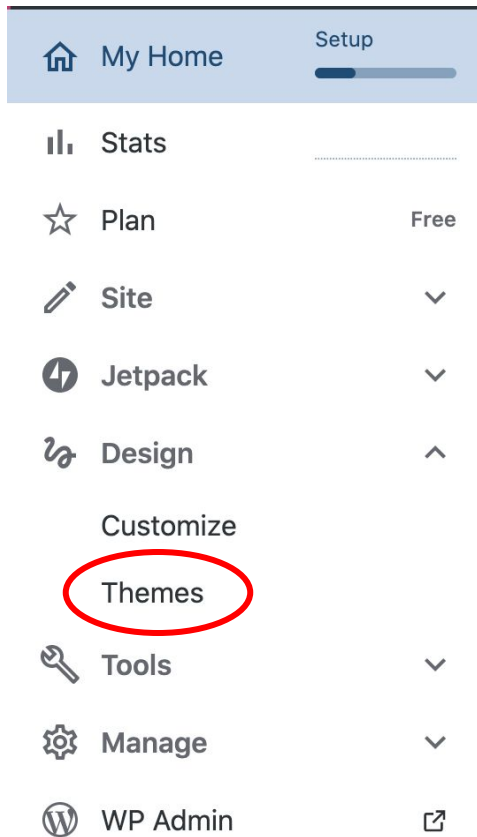*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

Your Dashboard

Once you have created your site, you will be brought to your website's **dashboard**. This is where you can add new posts and pages and customize your WordPress site.

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Choosing a Theme

The first way to customize is to choose a **theme**. A **theme** controls your WordPress site's appearance and functionality.

In the left-hand column of your Dashboard, scroll to "Design" and then click the "**Themes**" button.

Take a few minutes to go through the themes and see which might appeal to you. Depending on the content of your website, each theme will offer strengths and weaknesses; themes provide descriptions of how they can be used. You can play around with the different options and see what will work for your website (you can change your mind later too).

**Remember:** you are setting up this website in the context of professional development. Know your audience.

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Website Content:
Pages vs Posts

PAGES are the static pages that appear across your header menu. Typically, this will be your "About Me," your resume/CV, and other content that has a fixed location in your site's organization.

POSTS are blog or news posts that show up as you publish them. For example, you might want to publish short piece of writing you've done in class as posts.

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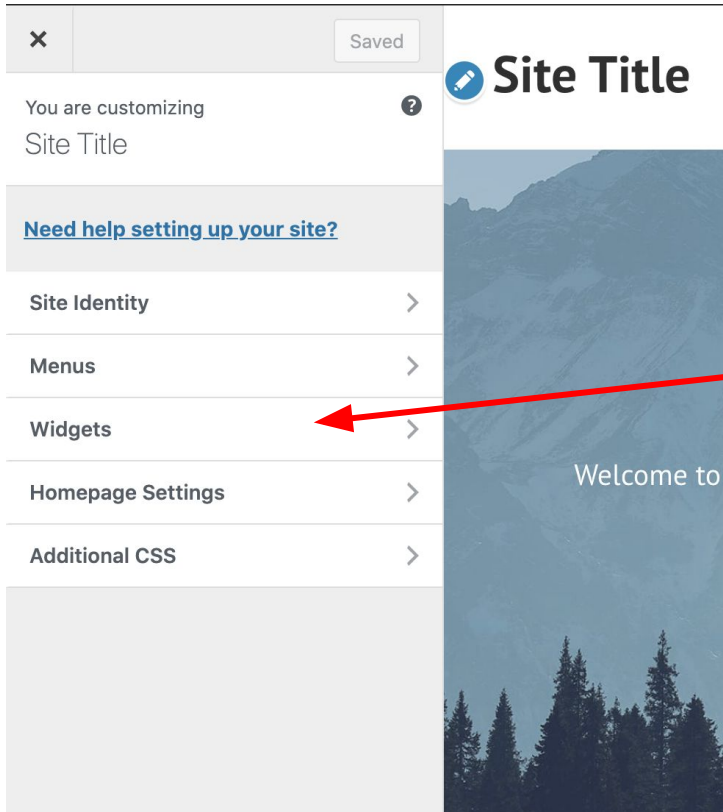
Add Posts and Pages
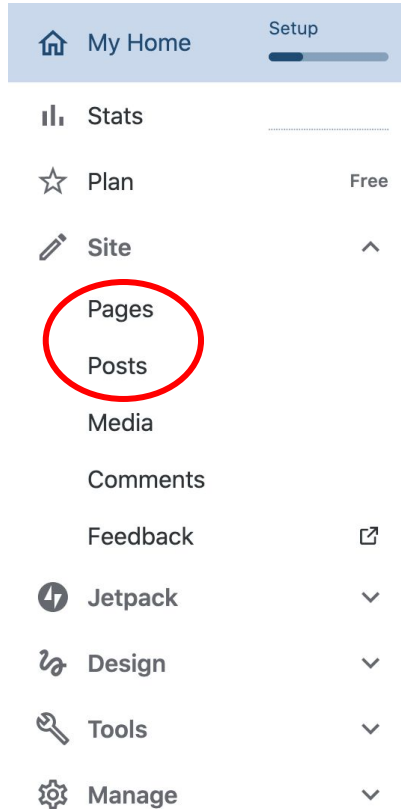
Go to your Dashboard and click "Site." Then either click the **Pages** button or **Posts** button (depending on what you want to add).

This is where you fill out your content! You have options to style your content (font size, style, colors, add images, add links, bullet points, etc.).

You can also use HTML, if you know that. Note that some themes have backend HTML/CSS that may not allow you to make certain changes.

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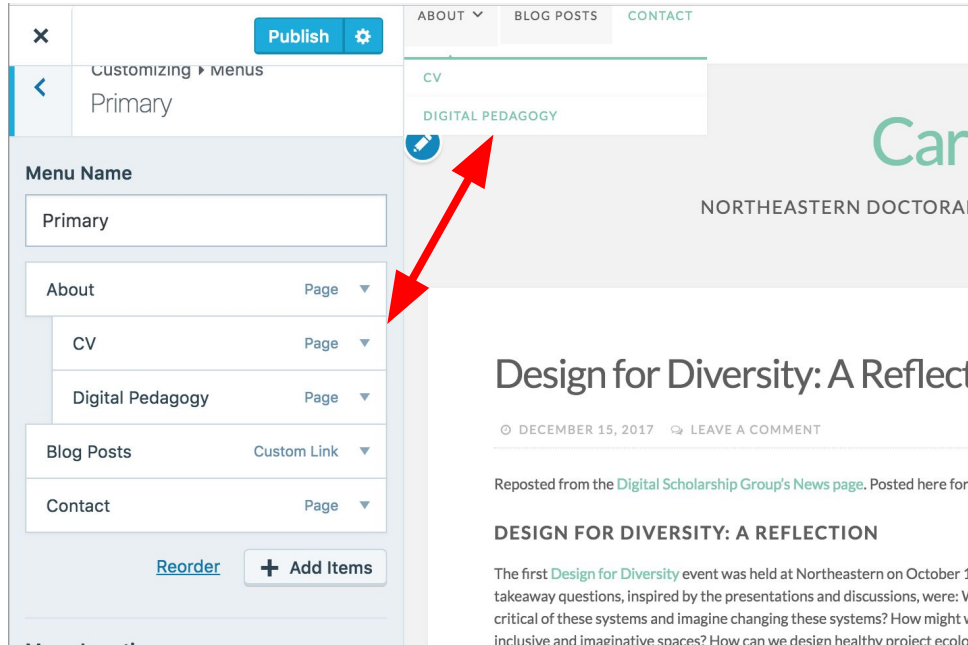
Customize Menu

Under "Display" you can click "Customizer," which is a bar on the left-hand side that shows you changes you can make across your site.

You can get back to this "Customize" menu by clicking "Customize" on your Dashboard.**

** Depending on your theme, some of your customization options will change.

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Site Menu

Once you have content, you want to make sure it is accessible to your potential audience.

Go back to your "Customize" menu (in the Dashboard under Customize).

In the "Customize" menu, go to "Menus," which will allow you to add pages, posts, and other content to the overhead meus. You can even create dropdown menus by sliding one page under another page.
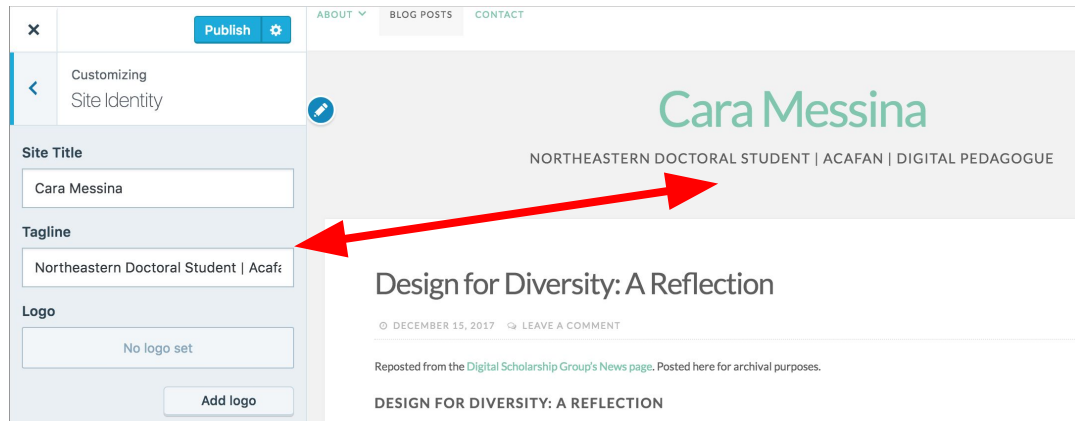
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Header

Your website, like all websites, should show off a "brand" of some kind. The **header** and subheader can help with this. The **header** is the phrase/name that appears at the top of each webpage (the subheader, if applicable in your theme, appears below)

Typically, for professional websites, the header is your name, although some people choose more creative headers.

You can find the ways to change your header in **"Site Identity"** under the "**Customize**" menu.

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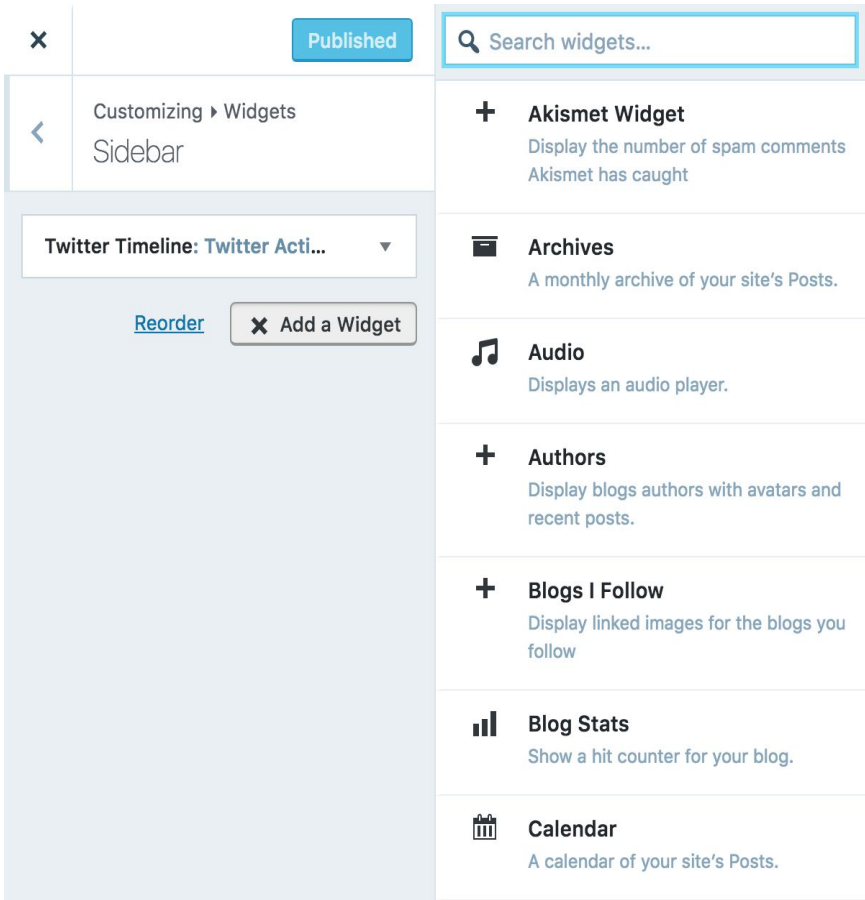*NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks*

Widgets

Widgets on WordPress are small applications and components that appear on your WordPress site in specific areas across your website.

For example, a "Footer" widget will appear at the bottom of your website across the different pages. The widgets you put in "Sidebar" will appear in the sidebar. You might attach your Twitter feed to your website, or a "Contact Me" section.

Think about what information you want to be presented to your audience, and where you want that information to be presented.

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Plugins

Like Widgets, Plugins are ways to further customize your WordPress site You can Google or use the Plugin search box to find Plugins that may be suitable for your needs.

Plugins are *not* necessary to create an awesome WordPress page, but they can help if you are looking for more features.

Do not overload your WordPress page with Plugins–be careful which you install as some might not be WordPress certified or might clutter your Dashboard or conflict with one another.

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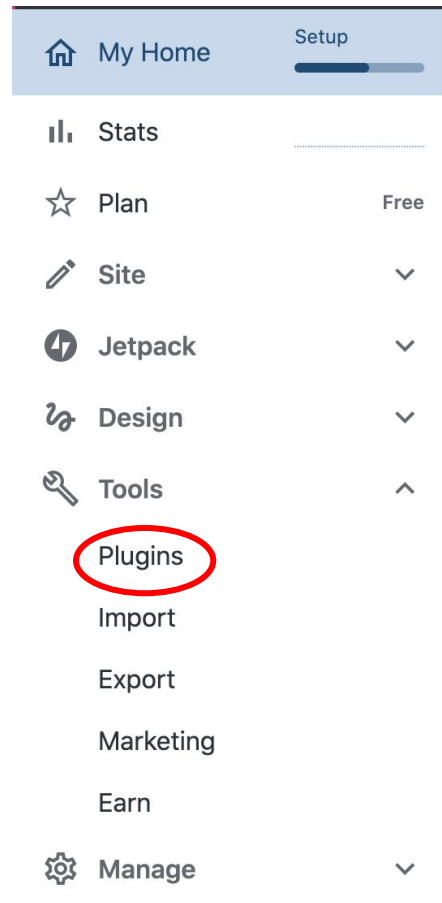
Keep in mind–

- **Always remember your audience and think about how you want to represent your identity and your work to your audience**
- Don't overload your website with plugins and widgets; you want your website to be easy to navigate, informative, and appealing
- WordPress has comment and tagging features. You can access other blogs and create a network.
- WordPress does not have unlimited features, but they offer **a lot**! Play around, see what works for you.
- For any questions you have, there are probably YouTube videos or written tutorials to provide an answer; just make sure you are looking at the correct WordPress version.

Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact DITI at nulab.info@gmail.com

Developed by Colleen Nugent
Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
DITI Research Fellow

Slides, handouts, and data available at
http://bit.ly/diti-spring2020-nardone

Schedule an appointment with DITI: **http://bit.ly/diti-office-hours**

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