

Introduction to WordPress

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Spring 2020



Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

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

Group Discussion: Your Portfolio

Break into smaller groups of 2-3. Take a few minutes to discuss these questions, and then we will share your answers in the larger group.

- What do you want to spotlight in your portfolio? What type of work have you created or plan to create?
- Who is the audience for your portfolio?
- Do you imagine having a “theme” or central idea in your portfolio? If so, what is it?



Workshop Agenda

- Introduce Wordpress
- Choose a Theme
- Learn how to make new pages and posts, and how to utilize widgets
- Customize your Portfolio Site

Slides and handouts available at <http://bit.ly/diti-spring2020-nardone>



What is Wordpress?

Wordpress is a professional **website-building tool** that allows you to build your own website, provides a free domain name, and installs plugins and themes to customize your website. There are other website-building tools, such as Wix. We are using WordPress because it is often used for blogging and academic websites; for many majors, especially, being familiar with Wordpress is an important skill because Wordpress often favors text-heavy content and has features for blogging, tagging, and categorizing.

Examples of Northeastern websites (which use Wordpress):

- <https://dsg.neu.edu/>
- <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/>
- <https://des4div.library.northeastern.edu/>





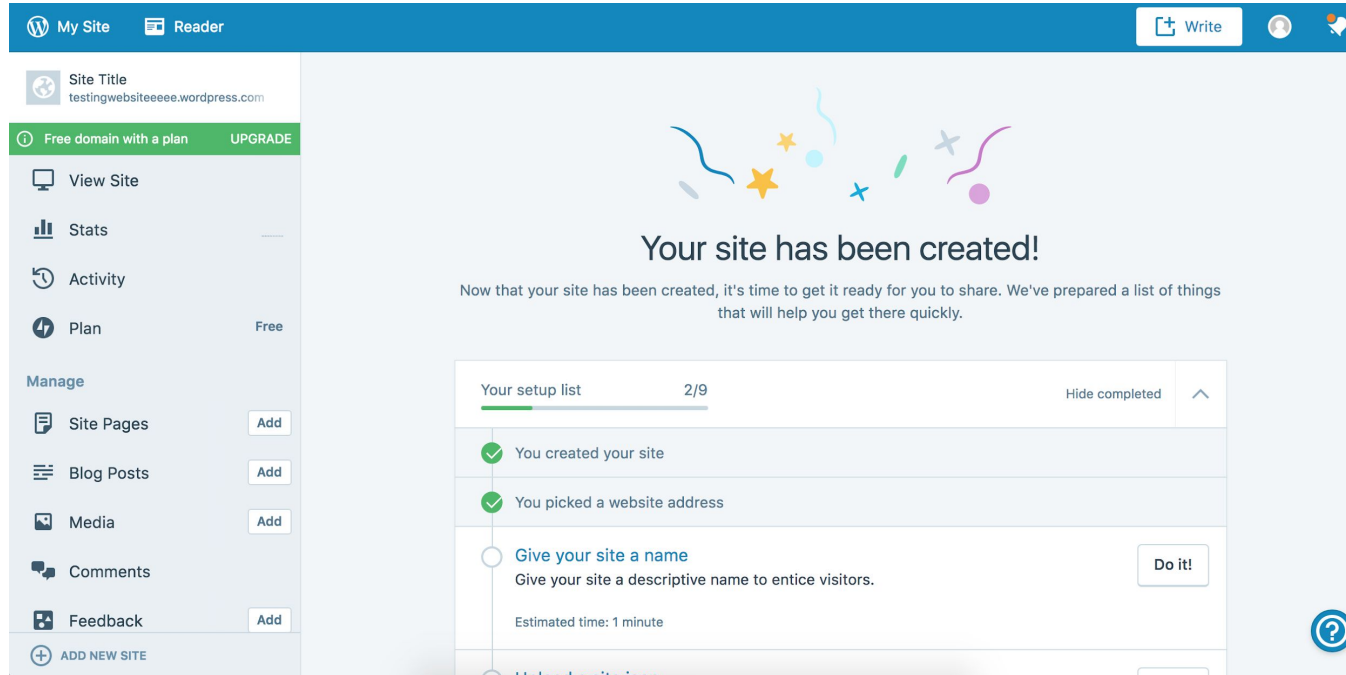
Getting Started

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 website which you could send to potential employers
- Choose a **domain name** that is professional: I recommend using your full name. Wordpress provides a free domain with “.wordpress.com”
- Use an **email** that you associate with your professional identity



Any volunteers to make a site?



The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for a newly created site. The top navigation bar includes 'My Site', 'Reader', a 'Write' button, and user profile icons. The left sidebar contains a menu with 'View Site', 'Stats', 'Activity', 'Plan' (labeled 'Free'), and a 'Manage' section with 'Site Pages', 'Blog Posts', 'Media', 'Comments', and 'Feedback', each with an 'Add' button. At the bottom of the sidebar is an 'ADD NEW SITE' button. The main content area features a celebratory message 'Your site has been created!' with a list of setup steps. The first two steps, 'You created your site' and 'You picked a website address', are marked as complete with green checkmarks. The third step, 'Give your site a name', is the current active step, indicated by a blue circle and a 'Do it!' button. Below this step, it says 'Give your site a descriptive name to entice visitors.' and 'Estimated time: 1 minute'. A 'Help' icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the main area.

My Site Reader Write

Site Title
testingwebsiteeee.wordpress.com

Free domain with a plan UPGRADE

View Site

Stats

Activity

Plan Free

Manage

Site Pages Add

Blog Posts Add

Media Add

Comments

Feedback Add

ADD NEW SITE

Your site has been created!

Now that your site has been created, it's time to get it ready for you to share. We've prepared a list of things that will help you get there quickly.

Your setup list 2/9 Hide completed

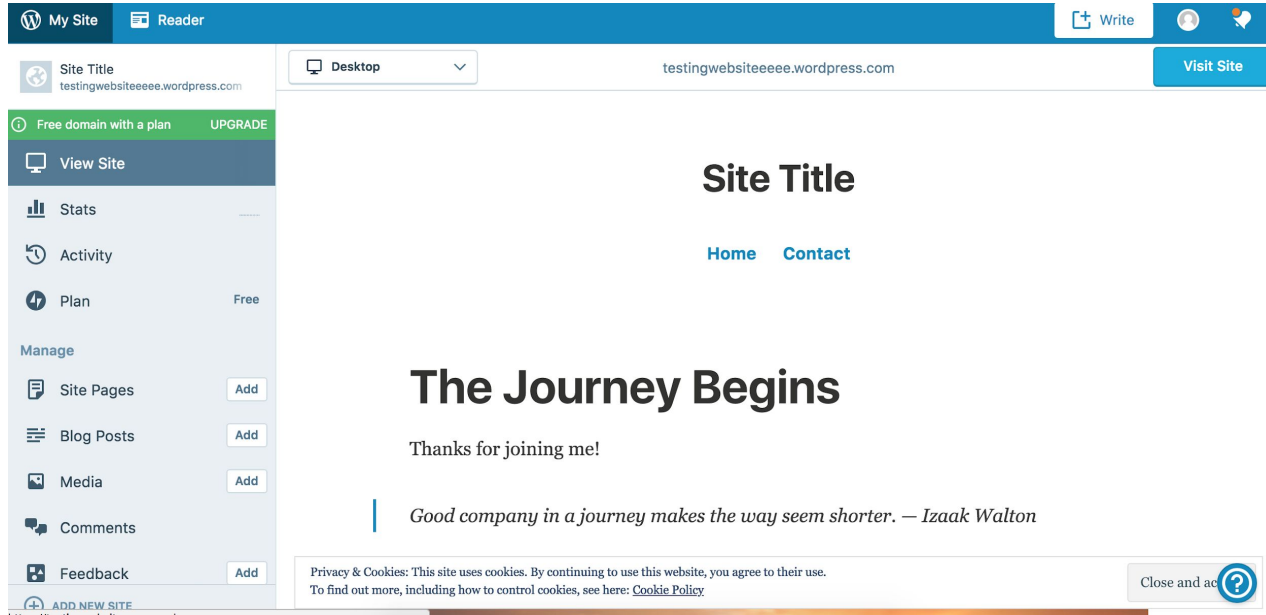
- ✓ You created your site
- ✓ You picked a website address
- Give your site a name
Give your site a descriptive name to entice visitors.
Estimated time: 1 minute
Do it!

Help



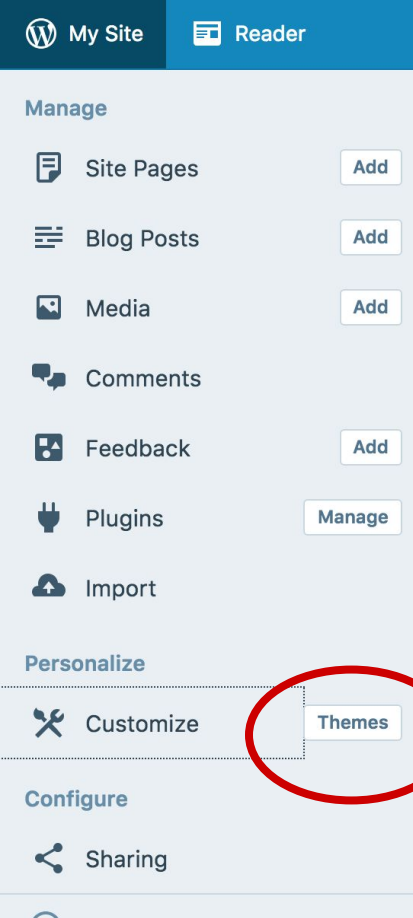
Your Dashboard

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.



The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for a new site. The top navigation bar includes 'My Site', 'Reader', and a 'Write' button. Below this, the site title 'testingwebsitewordpress.com' is displayed, along with a 'Desktop' view selector and a 'Visit Site' button. The left sidebar contains a menu with options like 'View Site', 'Stats', 'Activity', 'Plan', 'Manage', 'Site Pages', 'Blog Posts', 'Media', 'Comments', and 'Feedback'. The main content area displays the site title 'Site Title', navigation links 'Home' and 'Contact', and a large heading 'The Journey Begins' with the text 'Thanks for joining me!'. A quote by Izaak Walton is also visible. At the bottom, a privacy and cookies notice is shown.





Choosing a Theme

The first way to customize is to choose a **theme**. A **theme** is your WordPress' particular appearance.

In the left-hand column of your Dashboard, scroll to “Customize” 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 it 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.



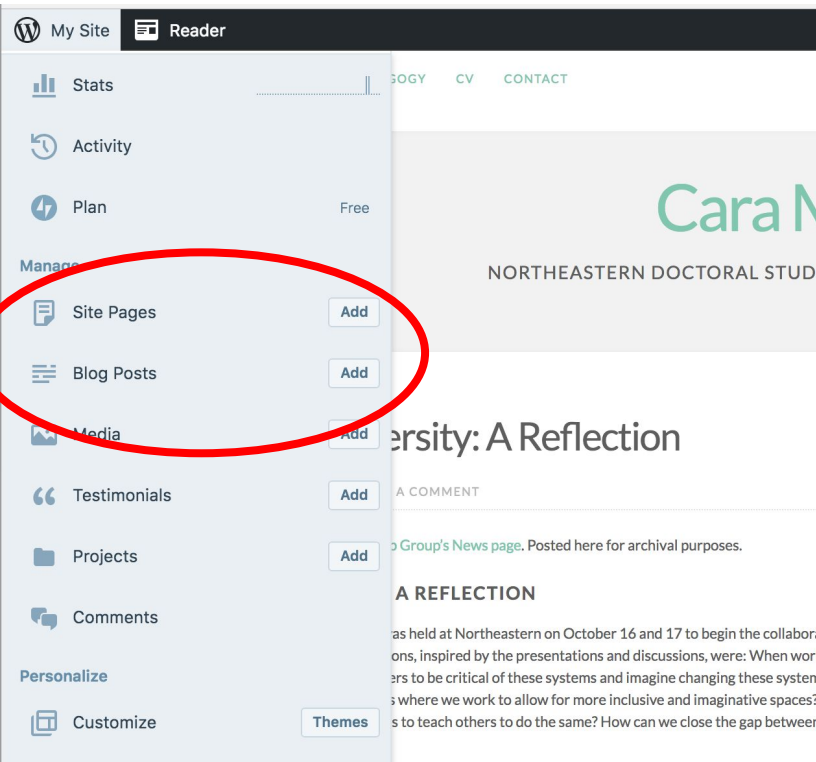
Website Content: Pages vs Posts

PAGES are the static pages that appear across your header. Typically, this will be your “About Me,” your resume/CV, and other content that only needs to appear on one webpage.

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



Add Posts and Pages



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

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

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

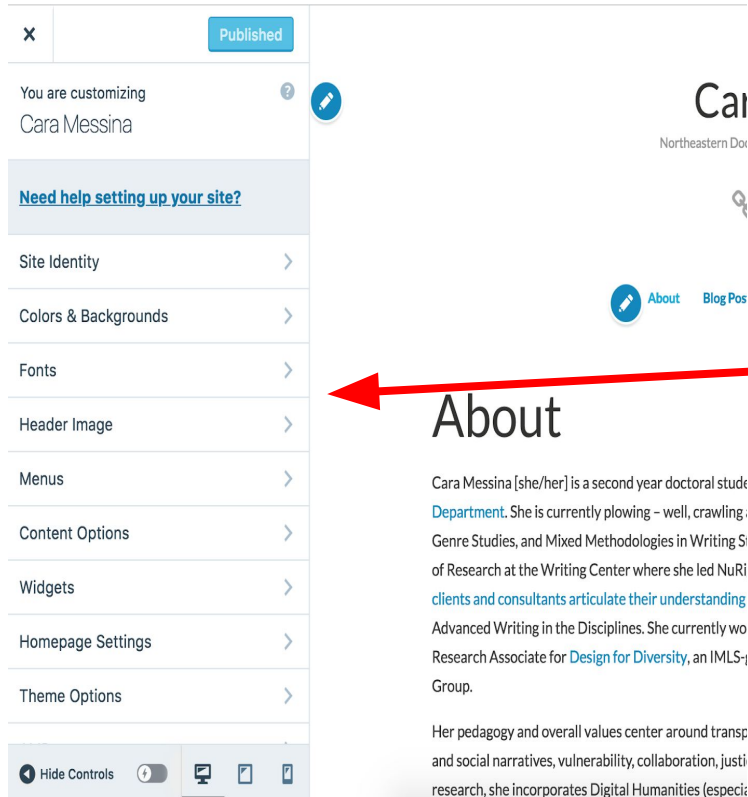


Customize Menu

Once you choose a theme, you will be brought to the “Customizer,” which is a bar on the left-hand side that shows you the changes you would like to make on 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.



Published

You are customizing
Cara Messina

[Need help setting up your site?](#)

Site Identity >

Colors & Backgrounds >

Fonts >

Header Image >

Menus >

Content Options >

Widgets >

Homepage Settings >

Theme Options >

Hide Controls

Customize

About Blog Post

About

Cara Messina [she/her] is a second year doctoral student in the [Department](#). She is currently plowing – well, crawling – through Genres, and Mixed Methodologies in Writing Studies of Research at the Writing Center where she led [NuRi clients and consultants articulate their understanding](#) Advanced Writing in the Disciplines. She currently works as a Research Associate for [Design for Diversity](#), an IMLS-funded Group.

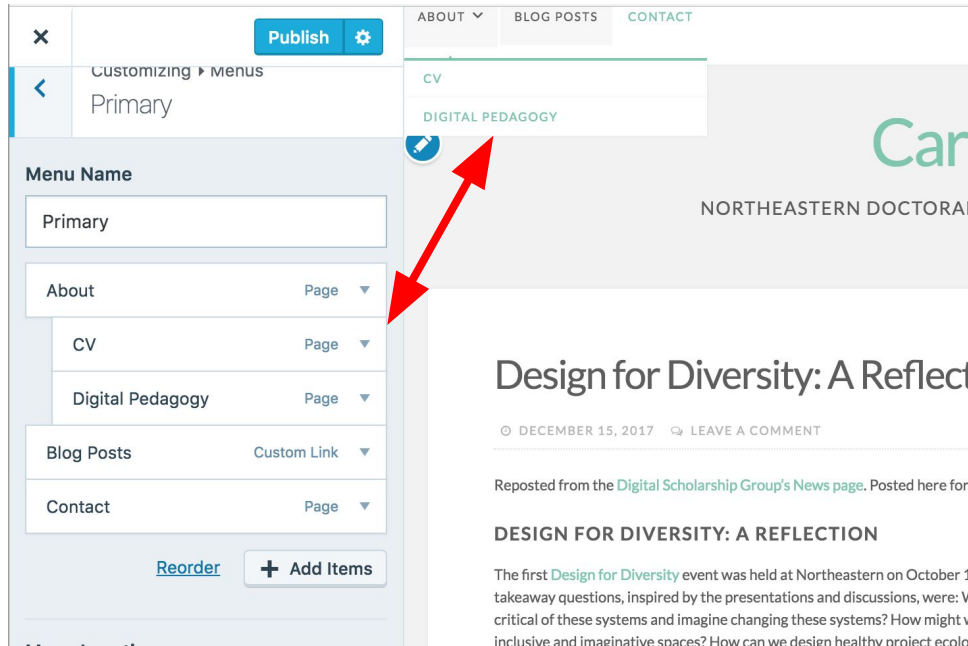
Her pedagogy and overall values center around transparency and social narratives, vulnerability, collaboration, justice research, she incorporates Digital Humanities (especially



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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 menus. You can even create dropdown menus by sliding one page under another page.



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, like the menu (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.

The screenshot displays the WordPress Customizer for a website. On the left, the 'Customizing Site Identity' panel is open, showing the following settings:

- Site Title:** Cara Messina
- Tagline:** Northeastern Doctoral Student | Acafi
- Logo:** No logo set (with an 'Add logo' button)

On the right, the live preview of the website header is shown. It features the name 'Cara Messina' in a large green font, followed by the tagline 'NORTHEASTERN DOCTORAL STUDENT | ACAFAN | DIGITAL PEDAGOGUE' in a smaller grey font. Below the header, a post title 'Design for Diversity: A Reflection' is visible, along with a date 'DECEMBER 15, 2017' and a 'LEAVE A COMMENT' link. A red double-headed arrow highlights the connection between the 'Tagline' field in the Customizer and the tagline text in the live preview.

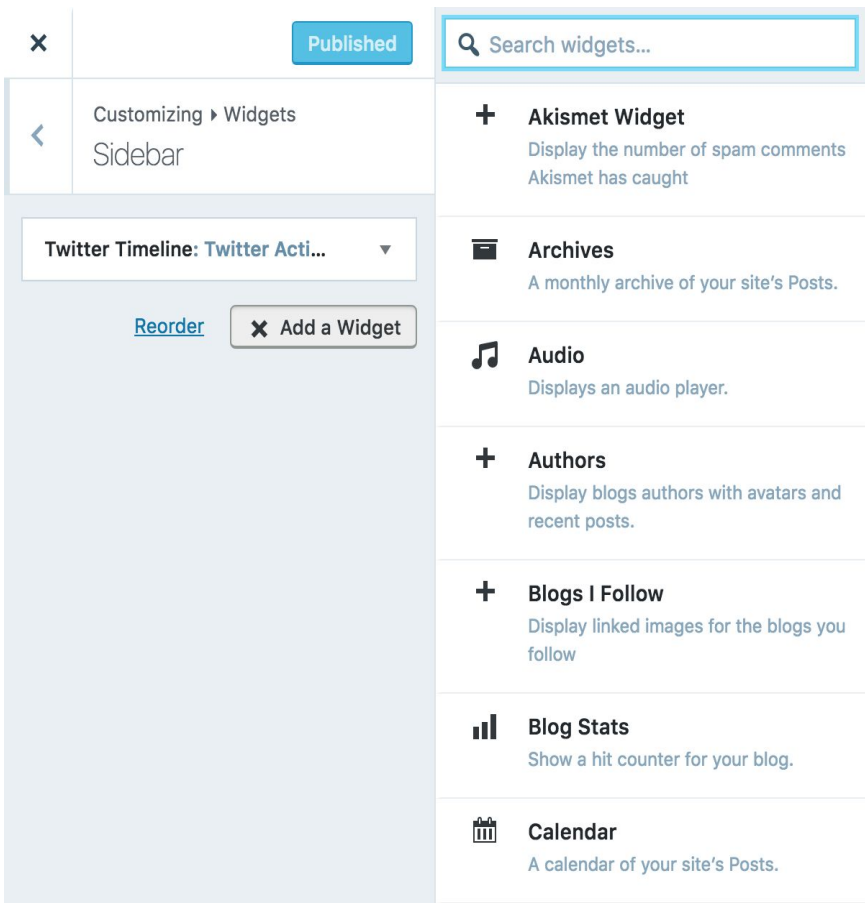


Widgets

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 “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, where you want it to be presented, and if you want it to be centered, off to the side, across your website, and more.

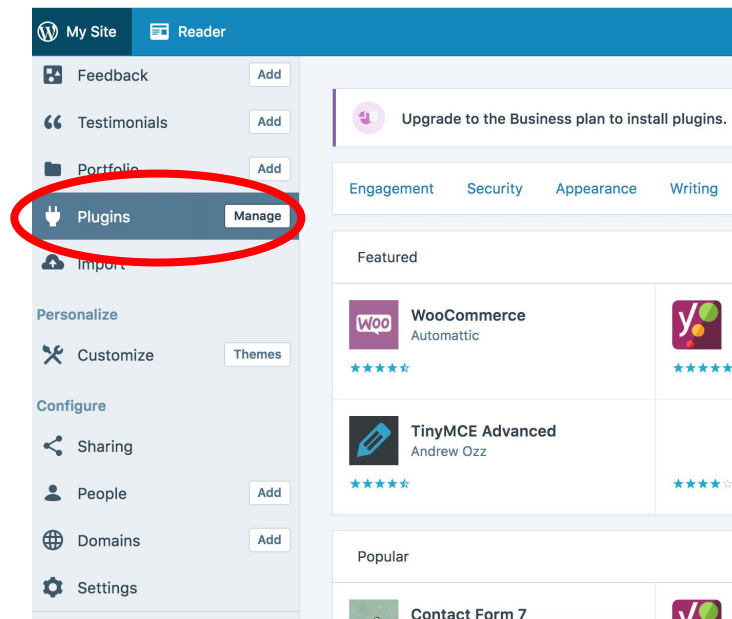


Plugins

Like Widgets, Plugins are ways to further customize your WordPress. Typically, 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 some might clutter your Dashboard or conflict with one another.



WireFraming: Planning your Site

Before most people create websites, they create **wireframes**.

Wireframes are rough outlines for the design and placement of a website's content:

- What content will be spotlighted on the homepage and in the menus?
- What pages will be included? What will go on each page?
- How will users navigate from page to page—or navigate all the information?
- Where will information be placed?



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; make sure you are watching/looking up the correct WordPress version



Your Turn!

Begin to create and play with your WordPress

- Create your WordPress (if you have not already) and choose a domain name
- Create an “About Me” page – you do not need to populate this with content yet, so simple information will suffice
- Create one blog post using writing you have done in this class
- Play around with your website’s menu, your site’s identity, and the themes



Report Back:

- Questions?
- What did you wind up creating?
- What is challenging or exciting about WordPress?



Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact me at:

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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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