

# Introduction to Website Building & WordPress

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LCWRI-5250: Electric Frontiers  
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# Workshop Agenda

- Understand best practices in website creation
- Analyze WordPress website examples
- Learn how to plan a website
- Learn how to create a website with WordPress
- For more information, see: [Introduction to Wordpress Handout](#)

Handouts and slides are available at:

[\*\*https://bit.ly/Kemp-LCWRI5250\*\*](https://bit.ly/Kemp-LCWRI5250)

# What is WordPress?

- WordPress is a professional **website-building tool** that allows you to build your own website
- It provides a free **domain name** with “wordpress” in the URL, and also has paid versions
- You can use WordPress **themes** and **widgets** to customize your website



# Website Building Vocabulary

- **Pages:** The main areas of your website that your audience will be able to navigate in your site's menu. Pages are part of the **structure** of your site.
- **Posts:** Blog or news posts that show up as you publish them. Posts are part of your site's **content**, but they do not form its structure.
- **Domain:** The unique URL that leads to your website.
- **Design:** The aesthetic choices for your website.
- **Navigation:** The way a user moves through your website using menus, buttons, and links.
- **Menus:** The collection of hyperlinked pages used to navigate through a website.

# Thinking Critically about Website Building

# Why are you building a website?

- A website is just like a research report or an essay—it needs to clearly communicate its message or purpose to a specific audience.
- Critical first steps in website design are to consider *who* your audience is, *what* they will need to be able to find and do on your site, and *how* they will move through the site.
- It can be tempting to add media and components to a website that don't contribute to the site's message/purpose, but resist this temptation. Going into any site-building platform with a clear idea of what your site needs is essential! Anything unnecessary is likely to be distracting.

# Starting Points: Questions to Consider

- *Who* is this site for?
- *Why* would your identified audience(s) visit your site?
- *How* will they find what they need, and navigate around?
- **Accessibility:** How can you ensure everyone, including people with disabilities, can use your site effectively?

# Considerations when planning your website

- Structure
  - Audience (Message/Purpose)
  - Content (Posts, Bio, Images)
  - Navigability (Headers, Pages, Menus, Hyperlinks)
  - Accessibility (Color scheme, Readability, Alt text)
- User Experience and Impact
  - Look (Font size, Typeface)
  - Media (Images, Embedded elements)
  - Other Functionalities (Widgets, Buttons, etc.)

# WordPress Examples

Explore and evaluate the following faculty and institutional WordPress websites on design, navigation, accessibility, media, content, etc.

Some examples of personal professional websites:

- [Dr. Julia Flanders' website](#): professor
- [Bernard Cornwell's website](#): author
- [Antony Beever](#): author and historian

**Navigation menu:** How clear is it? How easy is it to use on each page?

**Design choices and accessibility:** Is the site easy to read and look at?

**Audience and user experience:** How well-tailored is the site to meet the needs of its audience?

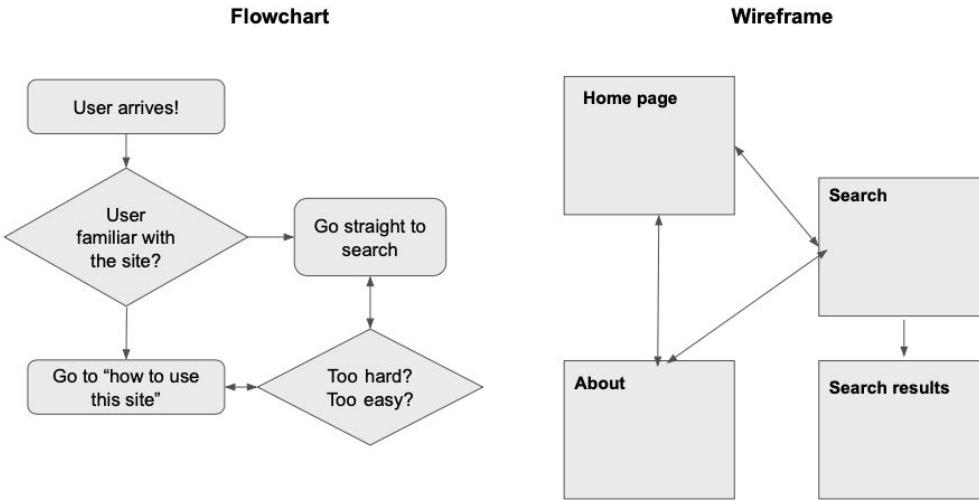
# Planning a Website

# Wireframing: Planning your Site

- Some questions to consider as you plan your site are:
  - What is the **purpose** of this site?
  - Who is my **audience**?
  - What **site features** will best support my goals and audience?
  - How can I make my site **easy to use**?
  - How many pages do I need?
  - What content will you include on each page? Where on the page?
  - How do pages relate to each other?
  - What different pathways can users take among the pages?
  - What is most important for your users?

# Wireframing

One way to plan a website is to wireframe. Wireframes are rough outlines or sketches for the design and placement of a website's content. They help us imagine how we envision users interacting with our site.



This is an example of a wireframe. (Sourced from [Professor Julia Flanders](#), Northeastern University; slidedeck: “Wireframing and Project Design Processes”)

# Wireframing tools

These are some Wireframing tools/frameworks that help brainstorm and visualize a website

- MockFlow: <https://www.mockflow.com/>
- Wireframe CC: <https://wireframe.cc/>
- Digital Humanities Toolkit Wireframing guide:  
<https://dh.sites.gettysburg.edu/toolkit/design/wireframing/>

# Website Hosting

# Website Hosting

- WordPress provides free domain names, but they must include “wordpress.com” at the end of the URL.
- Hosting your own website, through a service like Reclaim Hosting, allows you to have more control over the URL, but it is paid.
- Hosting gives you more control over the capabilities and appearance of your site, but it costs money.

# Website Hosting with Reclaim

**Reclaim Hosting**: is a hosting service designed specifically for educational purposes (that is, for students and teachers to host their own sites). Reclaim tends to be less expensive than other services.

- Reclaim Hosting has very communicative customer support, which can be helpful if issues come up with your site.
- In addition to WordPress, Reclaim also supports many other applications, including Omeka, Scalar, Drupal, phpBB, and Canvas.

# Hosting Options

The slides that follow will show how to host a site via WordPress, but once the site is set up, the options will look similar whether you host via WordPress, Reclaim, or some other platform. The main differences are:

- The initial setup for Reclaim works differently. You can see this [tutorial on installing WordPress via Reclaim](#) for more on the setup.
- There are more options in a site you host yourself, compared to the free version hosted by WordPress.

# WordPress: Getting Started

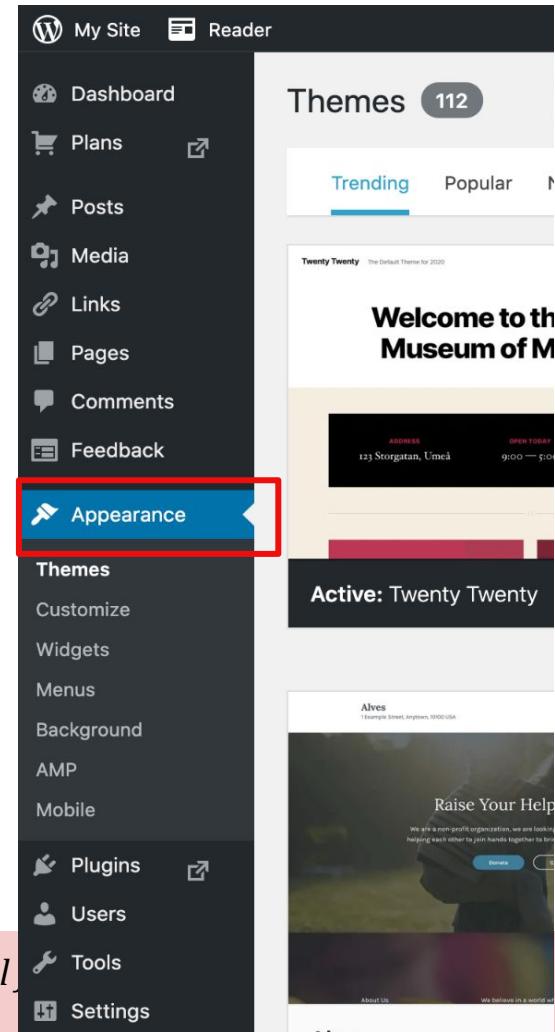
# Get Started

- Go to <https://wordpress.com/> and click “**Get Started**” in the upper right corner
- Fill out the “**Create a Site**” information
- Choose a **domain name**. WordPress provides a free domain with “.wordpress.com” at the end of the URL.
- Make sure to select the free version of **hosting** (on wordpress.com)
- After adding domain name, WordPress will ask you to “**choose a theme**” or “**design your own**” (which allows you to create your site from scratch).



# Choose a Theme

- Themes control your WordPress site's appearance and functionality.
- Depending on the content of your website, each theme will offer strengths and weaknesses. You can try out different options and see what will work for your website (you can change your mind later too, but know that some site contents might break when you change themes).
- To change the theme on your site, go to the left-hand column of your dashboard, scroll to “Appearance” and then click “Themes”.



# Logging into WordPress

For existing websites, the first step to working in WordPress is logging in, either in the administrator account or your individual user account.

To log in to any WordPress site, add this to the site's URL:

[SITE URL]/wp-admin

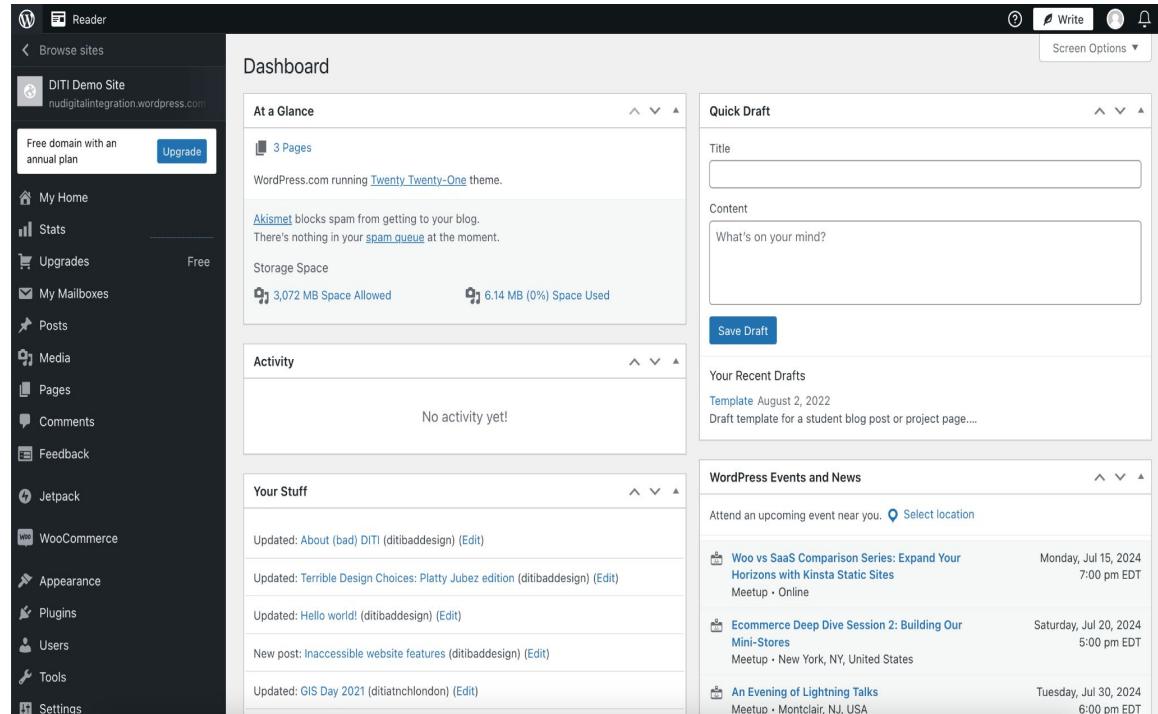
**NOTE:** to log in to a WordPress site, you must be an existing user!

# WordPress Dashboard

Once you have logged into WordPress, you are brought to the WordPress Dashboard.

This is the **side menu** in the dashboard, the main way to navigate.

It includes links to all **pages** and **posts**, and information about **users** (where you can update your user profile if needed).



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

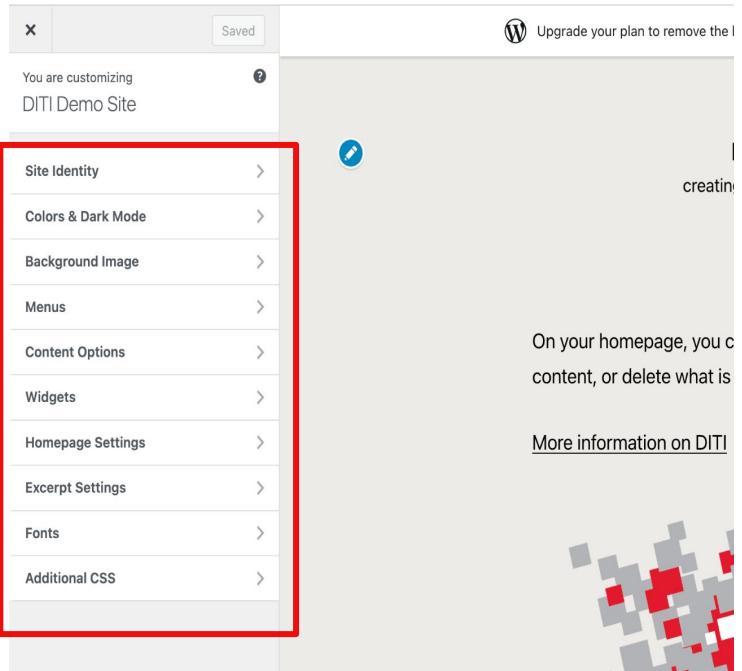
# Your Homepage

“My Home” page has navigation links on the left, and a useful “Quick links” section on the right with options for editing your homepage, adding a new page, editing your menus, and more.

The screenshot shows the "My Home" page of a WordPress site. At the top, there's a header with a "Write" button, a "View site" button, and a "Hosting Overview" button. Below the header, the main content area is titled "My Home" and describes it as a hub for next steps, support center, and quick links. The left sidebar contains a "Free domain with an annual plan" offer and a list of navigation links: My Home (selected), Stats, Upgrades (Free), My Mailboxes, Posts, Media, Pages, Comments, Feedback, Jetpack, WooCommerce, Appearance, Plugins, Users, Tools, Settings, and a "Collapse menu" option. The right sidebar features a "Site setup" section with four completed steps: "Give your site a name", "Update your site's design", "Verify email address", and "Launch your site". It also includes sections for "Install the mobile app", "Enable post sharing", and a "Own a domain. Build a site." promotion for nudigitalintegration.com. A red box highlights the "Quick links" section on the far right, which lists: Edit homepage, Write blog post, Promote with Blaze, Add a page, Add a domain, and Manage all domains.

# Customize your Theme

- From the Customizer, you can change your Site Title and Tagline, add Widgets to a Sidebar or Footer, create Menus, change your Homepage Settings, and more.
- In the left-hand column of your homepage/dashboard, scroll to “Appearance” and then click the “Customize”
- More Info:  
<https://wordpress.com/support/customizer/>



# Customize Site Menu

- In the “Customize” page left-hand column, go to “Menus,” which will allow you to add pages, posts, and other content to the site’s menus
  - You can create subsections in the menu by sliding one page under another “parent” page.

The screenshot shows the WordPress 'Customize' page with the 'Menus' section selected. The top navigation bar includes 'Save Changes' and a gear icon. The main content area has a header 'You are customizing Menus' with a help (?) and settings (gear) icon. Below this is a list of menus:

- Primary** (with a right arrow)
- Example menu** (Currently set to: Primary menu) (with a right arrow)

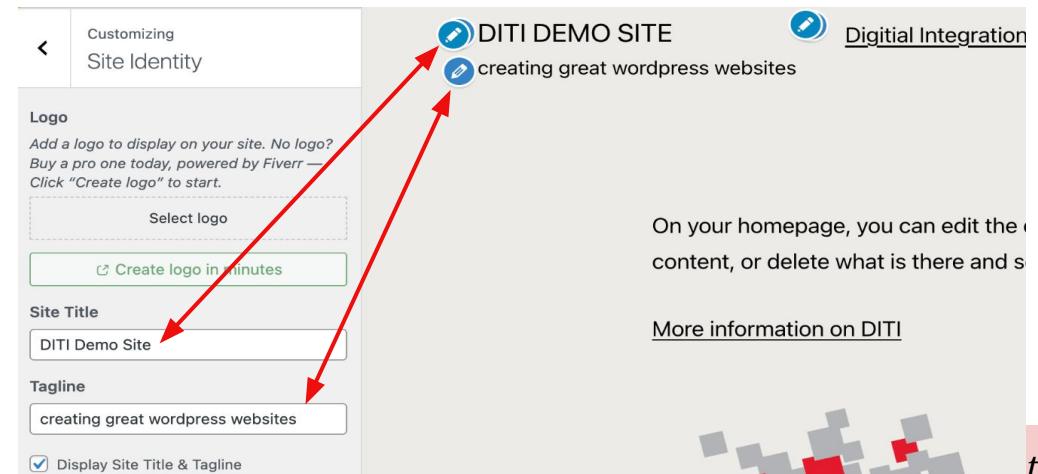
A 'Create New Menu' button is located at the bottom of this list. A red arrow points from the 'Example menu' item to the right side of the screen, where the 'Example menu' configuration panel is displayed. This panel includes fields for 'Menu Name' (set to 'Example menu'), 'Digital Integration Teaching Initiative' (set to 'Front Page'), 'Practice Page' (set to 'Page'), and 'Demo page' (set to 'Page'). It also features 'Reorder' and '+ Add Items' buttons. Below this is the 'Menu Locations' section, which states 'Here's where this menu appears. If you would like to change that, pick another location.' with three options:

- Primary menu (Current: Example menu)
- Secondary menu

The 'Menu Options' section contains a single checkbox:  Automatically add new top-level pages to this menu. At the bottom right, there is a pink box containing the text 'Feel free to d' and a red 'Delete Menu' button.

# Customize Header

- Your website, like all websites, should have a clear identity. The **header** (“site title”) and **subheader** (“tagline”) can help with this. The header is the phrase/name that appears at the top of each page (the subheader, if applicable in your theme, appears below)
- You can change your header in “**Site Identity**” under the “**Customizing**” menu.



On your homepage, you can edit the content, or delete what is there and s

[More information on DITI](#)

Please feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

# WordPress: Pages and Posts

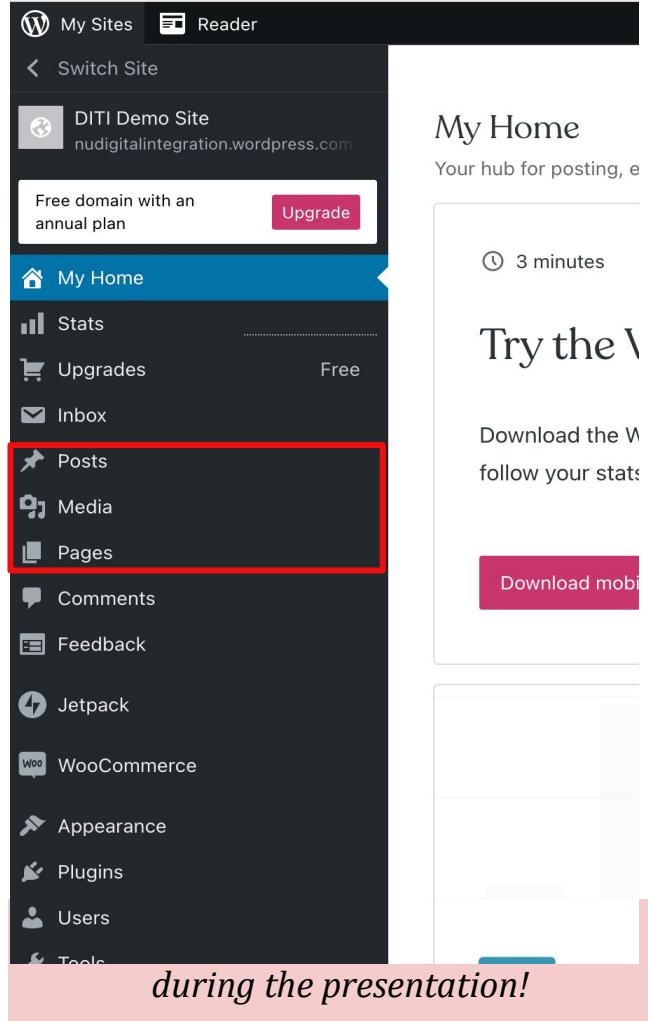
# Website Content: Pages vs. Posts

**Pages** are the static infrastructure of your website, and they appear across your header menu. Pages are content with a fixed location on the site.

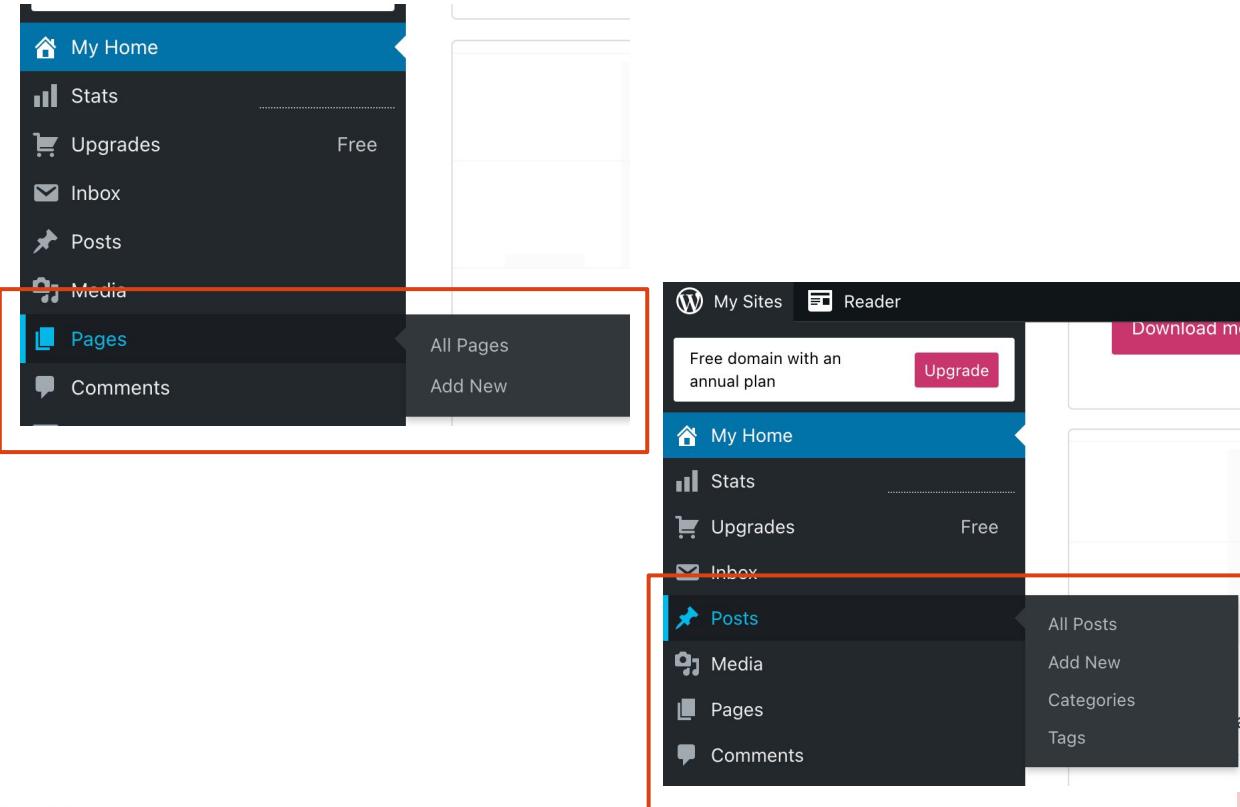
**Posts** are blog or news posts that show up as you publish them, usually in a feed that appears on a page.

# Manage Pages and Posts

- Go to the left-hand column of your dashboard.
- Click the “Pages” button or the “Posts” button.
- You will navigate through your pages and posts using this side menu.



# Create a New Page (or Post)

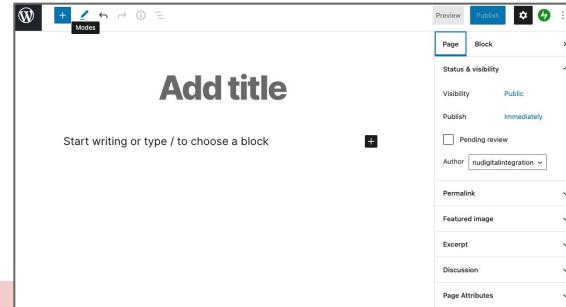
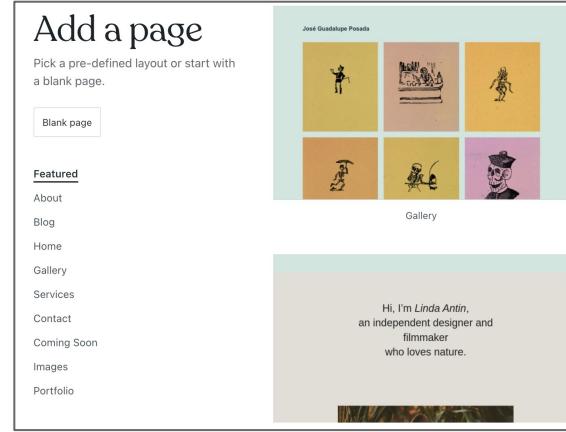


To create a new page, go to “**Pages**” in the left-hand side-menu and click the “**Add New Page**” button. The same works for Posts.

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

# Visual Editor (Pages and Posts)

- Creating a new page will open up the visual editor.
- You can pick a predefined layout or start with a blank page.
- This is where you fill in your content!
- You have options to style your content (font size, styles, colors, add images, add links, bullet points, etc).
- You can also use HTML, if you know that. Note that some themes have back-end HTML/CSS that may not allow you to make certain changes.



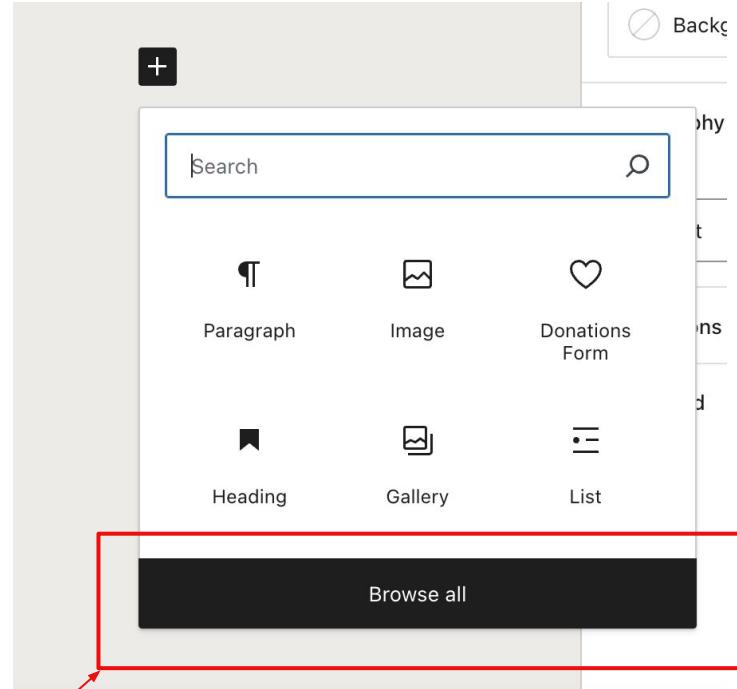
*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# WordPress: Blocks

# WordPress Blocks

WordPress pages are organized into pre-formatted sections called “**blocks**.”

Blocks allow you to manipulate the layout of the page. The different kinds of blocks are organized into categories, including: text, media, design, widgets, theme, embeds, and “crowdsignal.” You can see all of the options by pressing “**browse all**” after selecting the “+” button to add a block

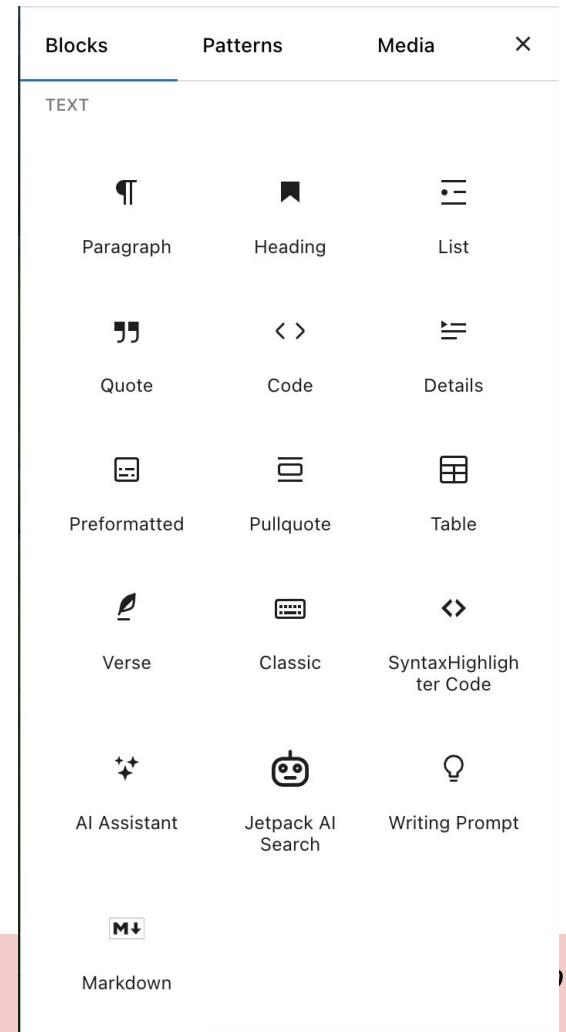


*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# WordPress Blocks: Text

After pressing “**browse all**” you will see the many options and categories for blocks that you can add.

Text blocks let you add headings, paragraphs, and other text elements to your content.



# WordPress Blocks: Media

Media blocks let you upload various files to the media library and embed them in your content.

## MEDIA



Image



Gallery



Audio



Cover



File



Media & Text



Video



VideoPress



Image Compare



Slideshow



Story



Tiled Gallery



Collage



Masonry



Offset



Stacked

# WordPress Blocks: Design

DESIGN

Using the WordPress block editor, it's possible to customize the content layout using design blocks. While this block type doesn't add content, it helps shape how the content will appear to site visitors.

		
Buttons	Columns	Group
		
Row	Stack	Grid
		
More	Page Break	Separator
		
Spacer	Table of Contents	Layout Grid
		
Dynamic HR	Hero	Pricing Table

*during the presentation!*

## WIDGETS

# WordPress Blocks: Widgets

Widgets now come as blocks that you can insert anywhere on the page, including the footer and sidebars.



Archives



Calendar



Categories List

HTML



Custom HTML

Latest Comments

Latest Posts



Page List



RSS



Search

[/]

Shortcode



Social Icons



Tag Cloud



Star Rating



Repeat Visitor



Event Countdown



Fe

Timeline



Blog Posts



Post Carousel

t

# WordPress Blocks: Theme

Most theme blocks are dynamic, pulling in content information like post content, query loop, and post comments and displaying them on the site. Several of them are also essential to display the site identity, including the site logo, site title, and site tagline.

Navigation	Site Logo	Site Title
Site Tagline	Query Loop	Posts List
Avatar	Title	Excerpt
Featured Image	Author	Author Name
Date	Modified Date	Categories
Tags	Next post	Previous post

# WordPress Blocks: Embeds

## EMBEDS



Embed



Twitter



YouTube



SoundCloud



Spotify



Flickr



Vimeo



Animoto



Cloudup



Crowdsignal



Dailymotion



Imgur



Issuu



Kickstarter



Mixcloud



Pocket Casts



Reddit



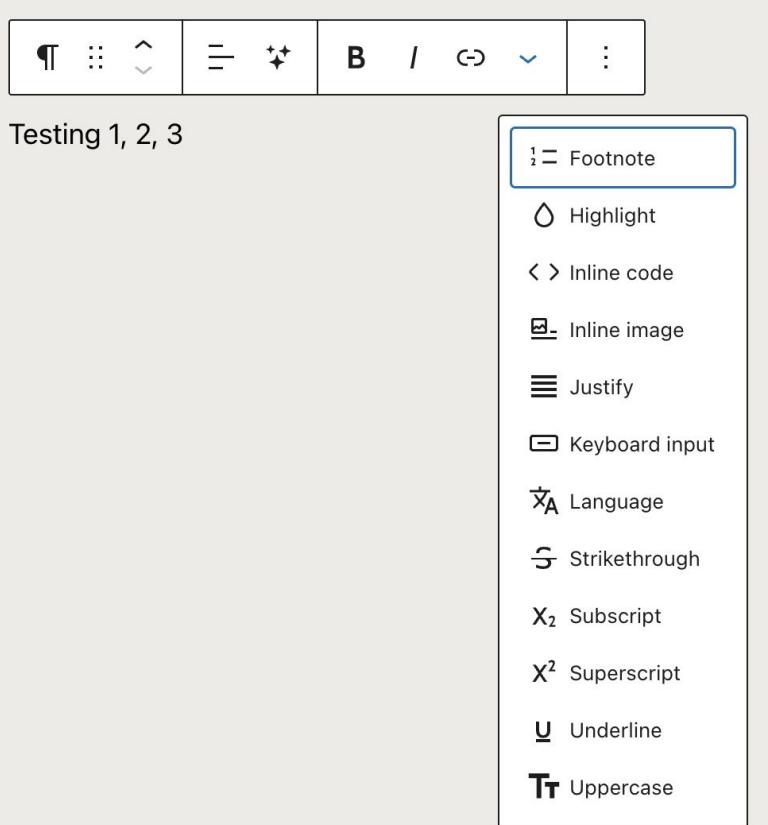
ReverbNation

The new block editor lets you embed external content by copying and pasting URLs. For example, there's a dedicated block for embedding a video from YouTube.

Feel  
during the presentation!

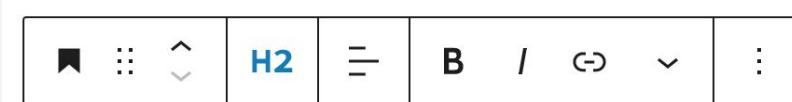
# Add text

The default type of block is a **paragraph**. When you add a new paragraph, you will be taken to the editor interface, which allows you to add and edit text in a variety of ways. It looks similar to a word processor, complete with a **menu bar** allowing you to italicize, bold, or otherwise format the text.



# Format

Here are some examples of things that you can format with your blocks. You can choose different levels of headings, bolding text, italicizing text, hyperlinking text, etc. The formatting options available will depend on the type of block you are working on.



Headings H1 H2 H3 H4 H5 H6



Testing 1, 2, 3

↻

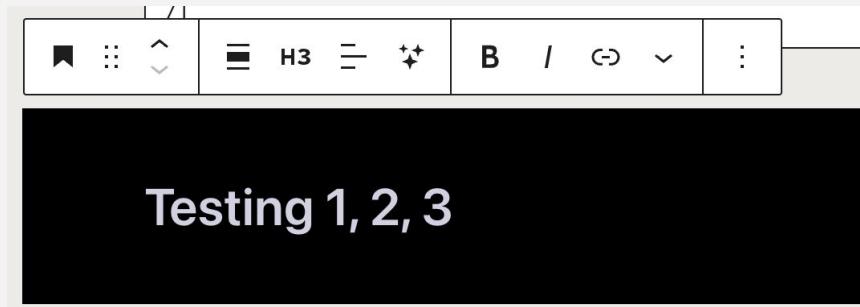
☰  
[Practice Page](#)  
[Demo page](#)  
[Digital Integration Teaching Ini...](#)

[Page](#)  
[Page](#)  
[Front Page](#)

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

# Format (Cont.)

You can also change the color of your text by navigating to the right hand “block” menu. You can select either “text” or “background” under the “Color” subheading within this menu to adjust color as you like.



The image shows the Microsoft Word ribbon with the "Block" tab selected. The main content area displays a heading block with the text "Introduce new sections and organize content to help visitors (and search engines) understand the structure of your content." Below this is a "Block guide" link. On the right, there is a "Color" section with "Text" and "Background" options, each accompanied by a color swatch and a checked checkbox. A red vertical bar on the far right contains the text "I can answer any questions during the presentation!"

Page Block X

Heading

Introduce new sections and organize content to help visitors (and search engines) understand the structure of your content.

[Block guide](#)

Color

Text

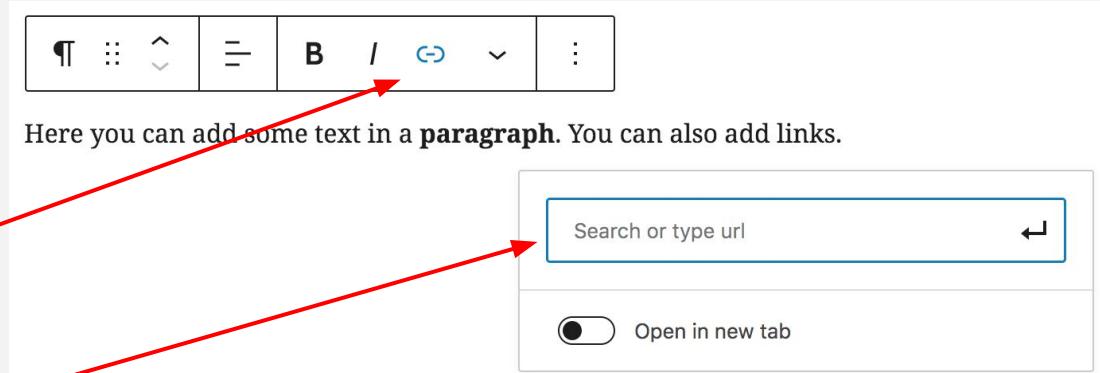
Background

I can answer any questions during the presentation!

# Add Links

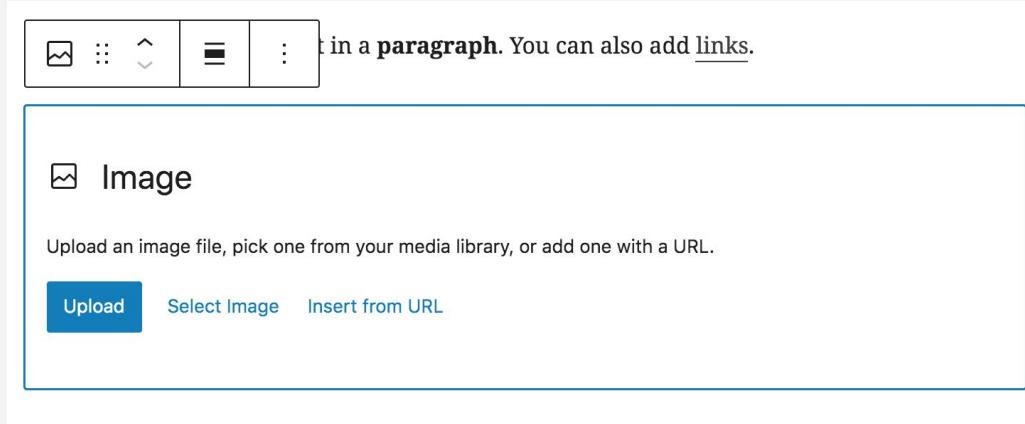
To add links to your content:

1. Select the text you wish to add a link to.
2. Click the “**Insert link**” button in the menu.
3. Add the URL in the link window.



# Add Images

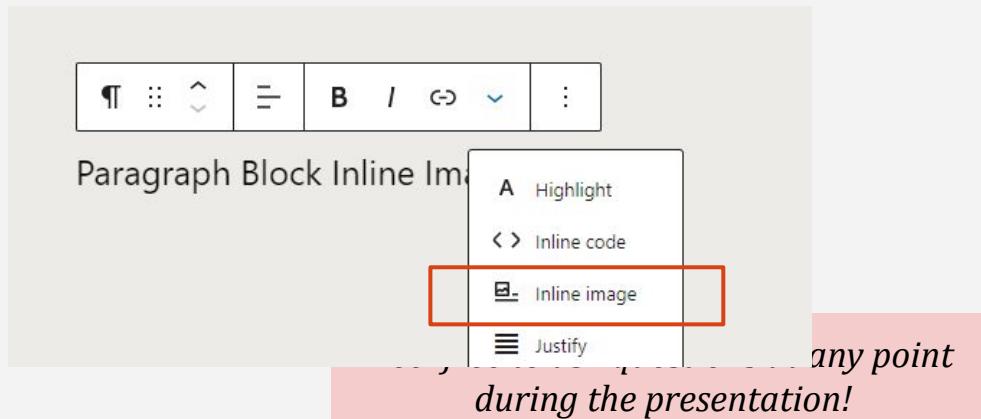
If you want to add images to a page or post, you can do so by adding a new block of the type “Image.” Then, you can either upload a new image or select one from the library of media files already uploaded to the site. Once you have added images, you can then edit and format them.



The screenshot shows a rich text editor interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with icons for image, alignment, and other text styling. Below the toolbar, a callout box contains the text: "Insert in a **paragraph**. You can also add links." Below this, a large blue-bordered box contains the "Image" block. The block has a title "Image" with a camera icon, a placeholder "Upload an image file, pick one from your media library, or add one with a URL.", and three buttons: "Upload" (blue), "Select Image" (light blue), and "Insert from URL".

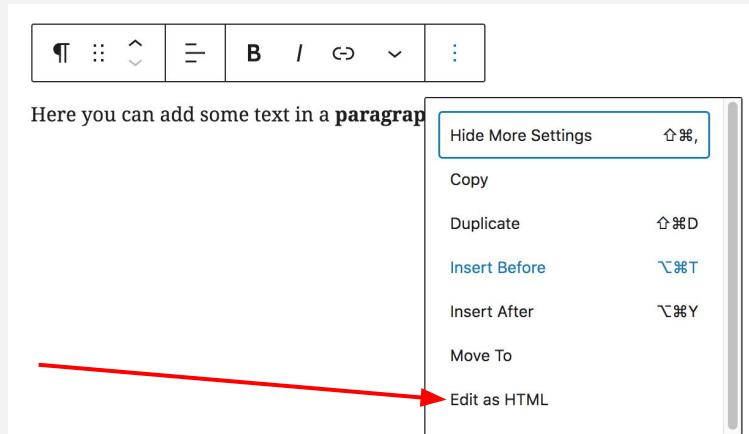
# Add Inline Images to Paragraphs

If you want to add images in your paragraph block, you can do so by adding a new block of the type “Paragraph.” Then, you can click the down arrow on the block toolbar and select “Inline Image.” You can either upload a new image or select one from the library of media files already uploaded to the site. Once you have added images, you can then edit and format them.



# HTML Editor

When you are editing blocks, you can toggle between the **Visual and HTML editors** with the “Edit as HTML” button under the three dots for “more options.” The HTML editor is the “back end” version of the website. To switch back, go to the same menu and pick “edit visually.”



Here is the same paragraph in HTML:

```
<p>Here you can add some text in a <strong>paragraph</strong>. You can also add <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL">links</a>.</p>
```

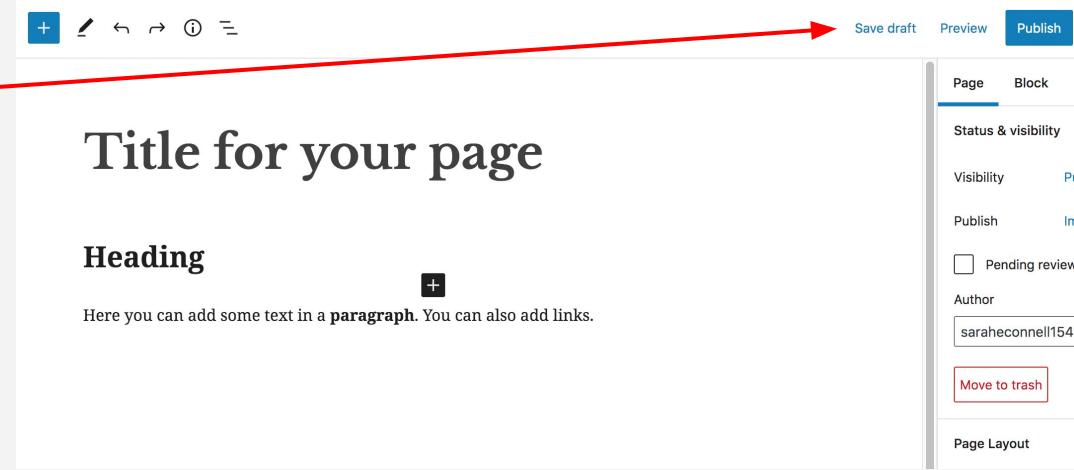
# WordPress: Saving and Publishing

# Save Draft

When you are working, it is very important to save your changes.

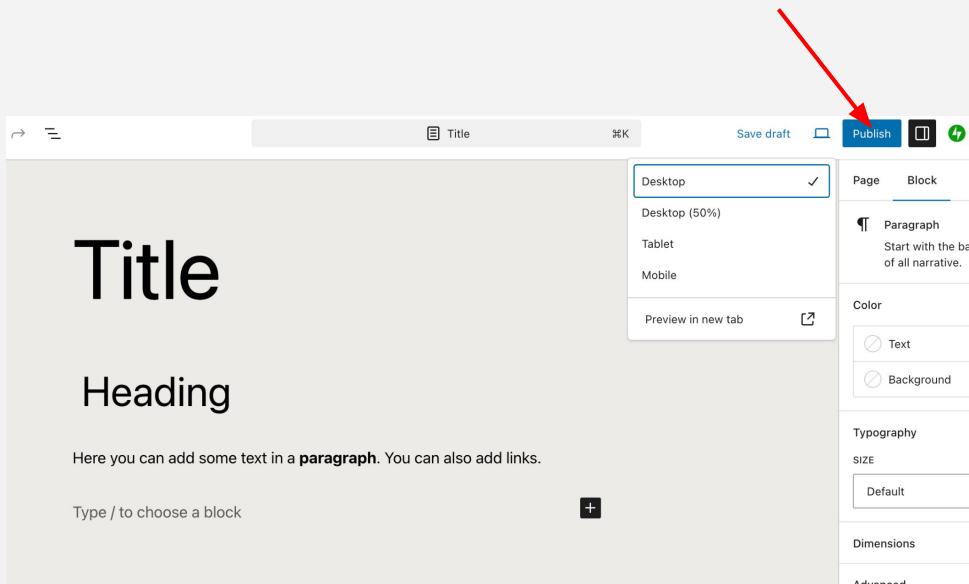
To save your draft, click the “**Save Draft**” button on the right-hand side of the screen.

Saving your page as a draft does not mean that it is visible on the website. Only publishing the page will make it available online.



# Preview and publish

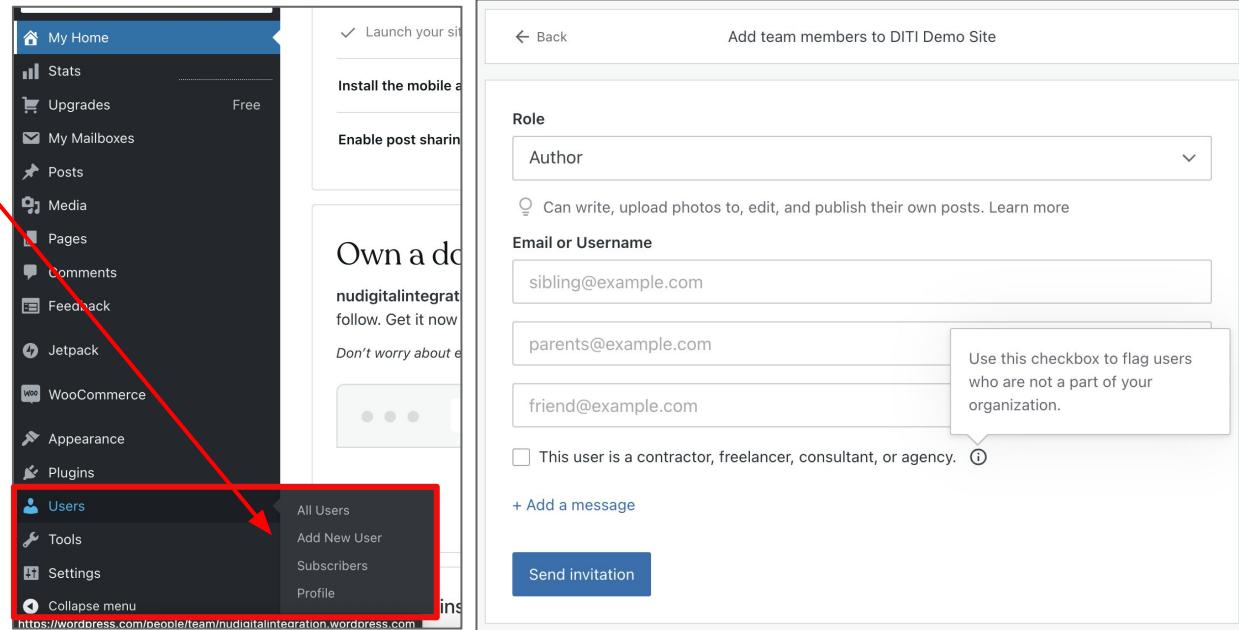
As you are editing your page, it is useful to see how your changes will look on the website itself. You can preview any changes you make with the “**Preview in new tab**” option under the desktop icon on the right-hand side. This will open a new tab in your web browser, showing the page. When you are ready to publish, hit the “**Publish**” button.



# Adding New Users

To add new users,  
select the “**Add New User**” menu option  
under the “**User**”  
section.

This will bring up a  
prompt where you can  
add people by email  
and assign each a  
particular role.



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

# User Permissions & Roles

WordPress has specific “roles” that the administrators or super administrators assign to users, each with specific permissions and editing capacities.

**Super Admin** – access the site network administration features and all other features.

**Administrator** (slug: ‘administrator’) – access all the administration features within a single site.

**Editor** (slug: ‘editor’) – publish and manage posts including the posts of other users.

**Author** (slug: ‘author’) – publish and manage their own posts.

**Contributor** (slug: ‘contributor’) – write and manage their own posts but cannot publish them.

**Subscriber** (slug: ‘subscriber’) – only manage their profile.

# Useful WordPress Documentation

Here are some helpful pages in the WordPress Support pages:

- [Getting Started with WordPress](#)
- [WordPress Glossary](#)
- [WordPress.com Support](#)
- [Common WordPress Errors \(troubleshooting\)](#)
- [Backing up WordPress](#)

# Activity: Your Turn to Explore WordPress

# Activity: Build a Website!

- Login and create a profile for yourself on  
<https://wordpress.com/>
- Experiment with picking a theme, adding widgets, adding pages/posts, text formatting, adding and moving blocks around, and uploading images.
- Share screen and your work [if time permits]

# Website Development Best Practices



# Presentation and Design

- Always remember your audience and think about how you want to represent your identity and your work to that audience.
  - Use the “Preview” button to see how your site will appear to your audience.
  - More isn't necessarily better. You want your website to be easy to navigate, informative, and appealing.
  - Pick a theme/format that is compatible with mobile phones.
  - Design choices should be based on the content you are communicating.
  - For maximum readability, use simple fonts and a high color contrast between text and background color. This is particularly important for accessibility.
- Good      Good      Not so good      **Not so good**



# Accessibility

- Some themes are accessibility-ready
  - Some themes support screen readers and keyboard navigation
- Use accessibility references to ensure your site has sufficient color contrast
  - Use solid and consistent background colors
- Select fonts that are responsive and can resize automatically for different windows
- Make your page layouts consistent and predictable
  - Keep images and text blocks in similar spots page to page
- Another useful resource: "Five Steps toward Making your WordPress Site Accessible"



# Accessibility Tips: Links and Media

- **Links**
  - Use descriptive links ("[the NULab homepage](#)" and not "[here](#)")
  - Use bolding or underlining, not just color, to make links visually distinct.
- **Images and multimedia content**
  - Include captions and alt text for any images that are not purely decorative
  - Include captions and, if possible, transcripts for multimedia content
  - Avoid putting text over images; this is usually difficult to read



# Accessibility Tips: Interactive Content

- **Interactive site contents**
  - Make sure that all interactive site contents are visually distinct; for example, checkboxes or input boxes should be large and visible
  - Think about how things like mouseovers will behave for those who need to zoom in closely



# Accessibility and Markup Languages

- Use appropriate heading levels for the contents in your site; that is, don't use a first-level heading for a third-level section
- If you're editing HTML directly, use the appropriate elements; e.g., don't stick a non-table thing in a `<table>` just to get the formatting to look right
- If you're comfortable working with markup, use the semantic `<em>` tag when, by italicizing text, you mean to emphasize its content (e.g. “I'm going to get those books *right now*”). Use the `<strong>` tag when, by bolding text, you mean convey the strength of the content's importance (e.g. “**Important:**” ).
- The semantic tags can be interpreted by screen readers and used to put audible stress on parts of your content.



# How to assess accessibility:

- **Accessibility Checker** (<https://www.accessibilitychecker.org/>): provides a list of specific problems and information on how to fix them
- **WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool** (<https://wave.webaim.org/>): shows the structure of the web page, with accessibility features and issues flagged
- **Also of interest: Color Contrast Checker** (<https://contrastchecker.online>): lets you enter specific text and background colors and check for readability
- **Natural Reader** (<https://www.naturalreaders.com/online/>) lets you test your site with screen reader technology



# Accessibility: Standards & Guidelines

- **WCAG: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines**
  - International recommendations for making web content accessible to people with disabilities
  - All web content should be **perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust**
- **ARIA: Accessible Rich Internet Applications**
  - A technical specification for a specific way to make web pages and web-based applications accessible to assistive technologies
  - For instance, through specific additions to web data structures that communicate with assistive devices



# Media sharing and permissions

- It is important to verify that you are allowed to use images before you put them in your exhibit if you will be publishing it online.
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# Resources to Learn More

[Accessibility in Digital Content Handout](#)

[Copyright and Fair Use Handout](#)

[Data Privacy Handout](#)

[WordPress Handout](#)

[HTML Handout](#)



# Thank you!

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