Intro to Website Building in WordPress for Public Collaboration

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INSH5602 Documenting Fieldwork
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Spring 2023

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

Module 1: Introduction to WordPress + Hosting

Module 1: WordPress + Website Building

- How do you design an effective website?
  - Website Evaluation + Wireframing
- Website hosting using Reclaim Hosting
- Overview of WordPress
  - Getting started with WordPress: themes, navigation, domain, etc.
- Best Practices + Accessibility
- Website Questionnaire

Slides, handouts, and data available at:

https://bit.ly/sp23-nieves-lee-insh5602-wordpress

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Website Evaluation: What makes a good website?

Questions to Consider

- ***Who*** is this site for?
- ***Why*** would the identified audience visit the site?
- ***How*** will they find what they need, and navigate the site's contents?

Questions to Consider

- What is the **purpose** of this site?
  - How can you communicate this clearly in the site's content and design?
- **Can *everyone* use your site effectively?** Is it accessible on mobile devices, and to people with disabilities?
- How can you make **smart design choices** to enhance the site's:
  - Appearance
  - Navigability
  - Functionality
  - Accessibility

Planning your website (overall considerations)

Audience (Message/Purpose)

Content (Posts, Bio, Images)

Navigability (Headers, Pages, Menus, Hyperlinks)
. . . .
Accessibility (Color scheme, Readability, Alt text)

Appearance (Color scheme, Font size, Typeface)

Media (Images, Embedded elements)

Other Functionalities (Widgets, Buttons, etc.)

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Wireframing: Planning a Website

- Before most people create websites, they create **wireframes**. Wireframes are rough outlines for the design and placement of a website's content. They also help us envision the user experience of our site. Some questions to consider as you make a wireframe are:
    - What are the **essential components** I need to get this point across?
    - What **site features** will best support my goals and audience?
    - How can users **search specific information** or find resources on the website?
- Wireframing tools:
    - MockFlow: https://www.mockflow.com/
    - Wireframe CC: https://wireframe.cc/
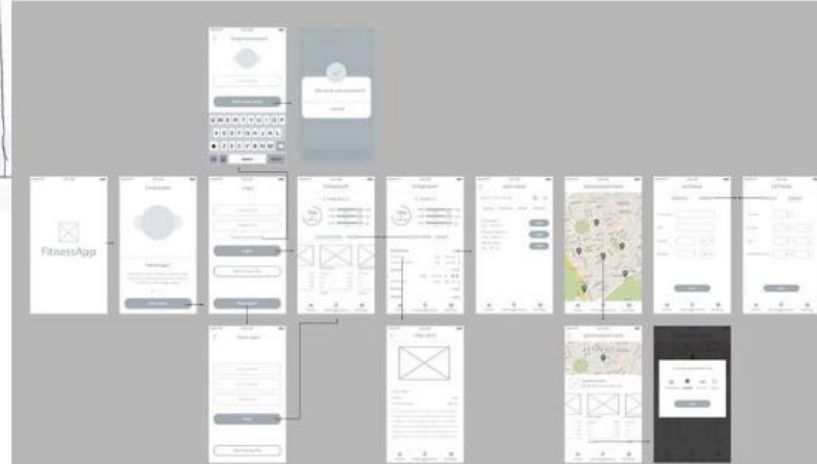
Wireframe Examples:

Wireframes help us plan and anticipate:

- **Layout of individual pages**
  - Galleries, blog posts, etc.
- **Site navigation**
  - The menu organization and hierarchy
- **User experience**

Both fine!

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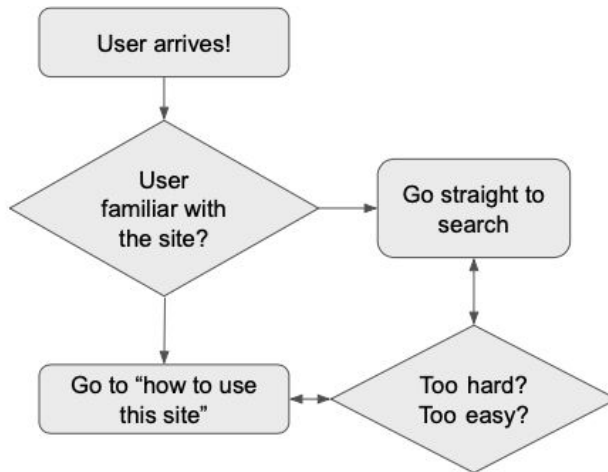*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*
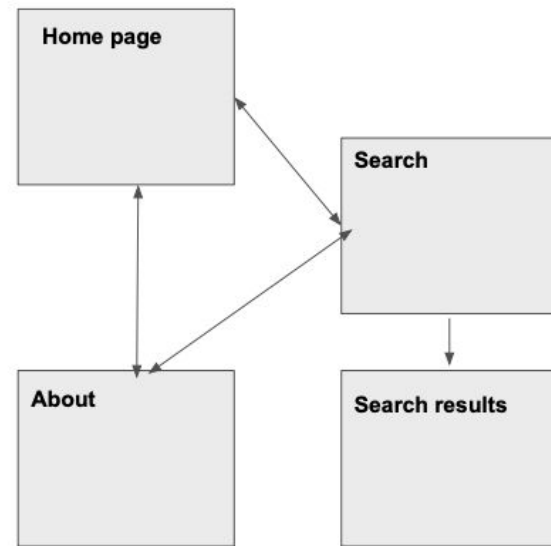
Interpreting Wireframes

Let's Discuss!

Take a look at the image.

- What's going on here?
- How do these two illustrations relate to one another?
- What do they have to do with design, usability, and user experience?

Flowchart

User arrives!

User familiar with the site?

Go straight to search

Go to "how to use this site"

Too hard? Too easy?

Wireframe

Home page

Search

About

Search results

Wireframe examples sourced from **Professor Julia Flanders**, Northeastern University; slidedeck: "Wireframing and Project Design Processes"

Group Activity: Reckonings' Website

Northeastern Reckonings Project Website: reckoningsproject.org/

Consider all these questions about website creation and design when you navigate the website:

- How does the Reckonings project describe their project and audience?
- Where do you see the intentional design for navigation and ease for users in this website?

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Website Hosting

Website Hosting with WordPress

- 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
  - Example: colleenlnugent.com/ vs. colleenlnugent.wordpress.com/
- Hosting also provides access to more services available through WordPress, when compared to the free version
- In short: hosting gives you much more control over the capabilities and appearance of your site!

Reclaim Hosting

[Reclaim Hosting](#): founded in 2013, this organization provides educators and institutions an easy way for students to control and own their domains and web hosting for digital projects/identities. There is still a cost for hosting and paid plans, but it is specifically made to be accessible for students.

- Reclaim Hosting has very communicative customer support, working to empower educators and projects with public facing, open access projects to own and control their work.
- Supports popular applications including: WordPress, Omeka, Scalar, Drupal, phpBB, Canvas, and more. (Over 100+ applications!)

WordPress Hosting: 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.
- Use an email that you associate with your professional identity
- Make sure to select the free version of **hosting** (on wordpress.com)
- After adding domain name, WordPress will ask you to **select a theme**.

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Overview of WordPress

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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**: These are the main areas of your website that your audience will be able to navigate in your site's menu
- **Posts:** These are blog or news posts that show up as you publish them.
- **Domain**: Your domain name is the unique URL that leads to your website
- **Design**: The aesthetic choices for your website, including colors, font, embedded media content, and more.
- **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. Menus are usually located at the top of a website or on the left or right side of the webpage.

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

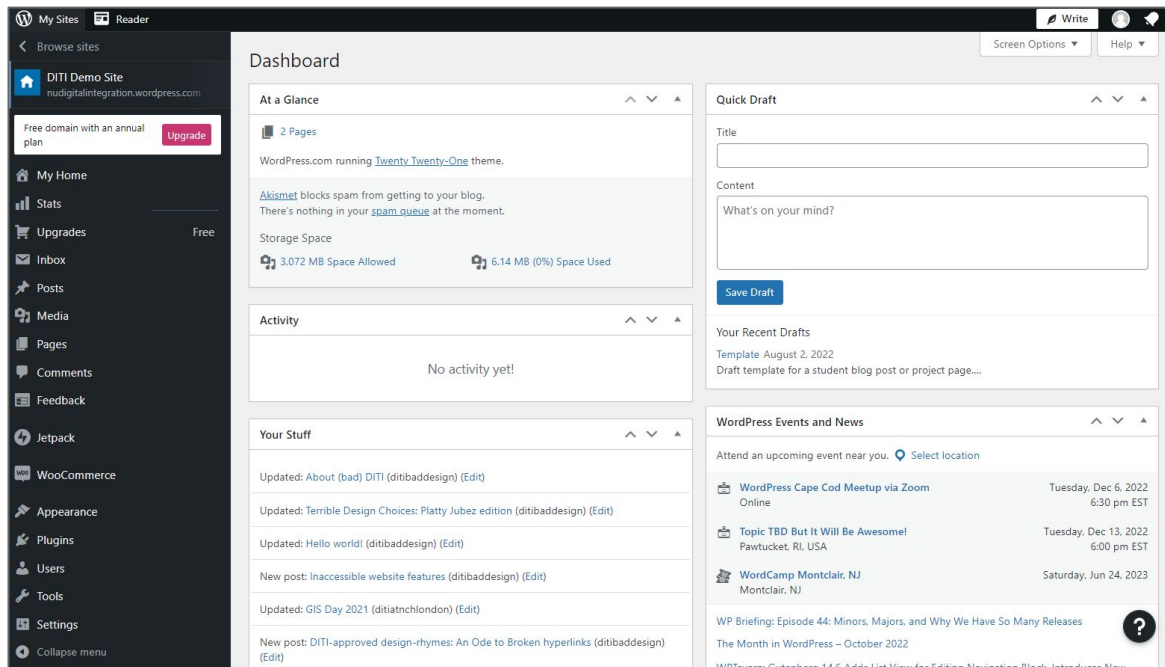**NOTE:** to log in to a WordPress, you must be an existing user!

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).

Choose a Theme

- **Themes** control your WordPress site's appearance and functionality.
- In the left-hand column of your homepage/dashboard, scroll to **"Appearance"** and then click the **"Themes".**
- Remember the context and audience of the website, and choose a theme accordingly.

NOTE: Themes, like other kinds of technology, need to be updated regularly. Updates to WordPress themes will show in the Dashboard.

For existing websites, themes sometimes stop being updated. Do not update a theme automatically or without seeing if it will impact your site design or organization.

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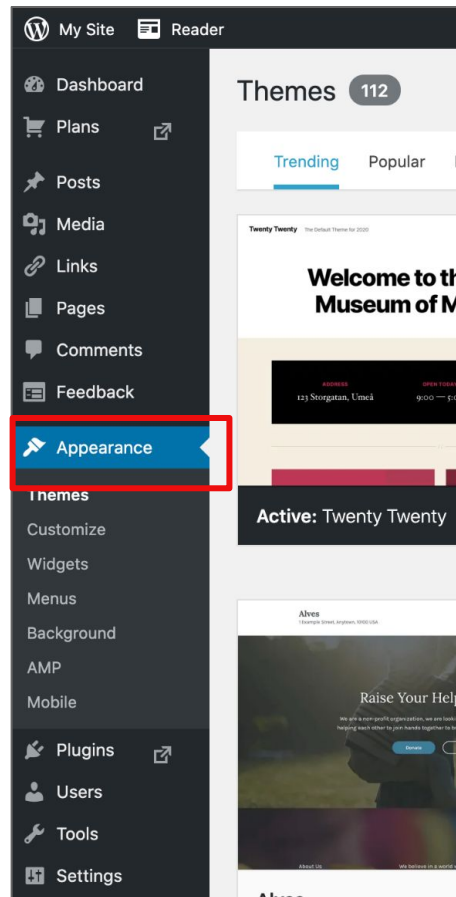
Your Homepage

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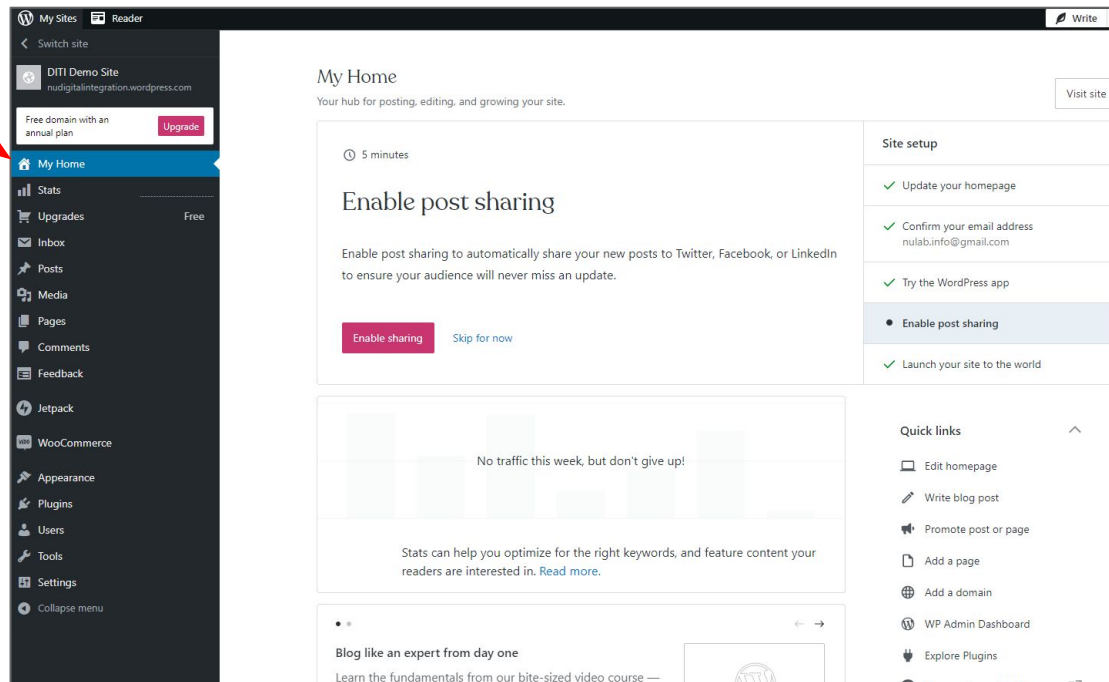
Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

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.
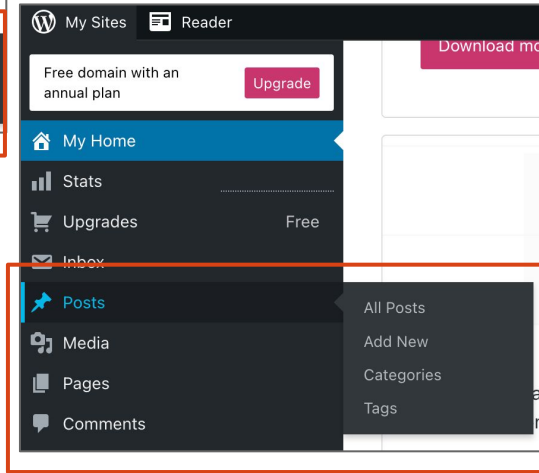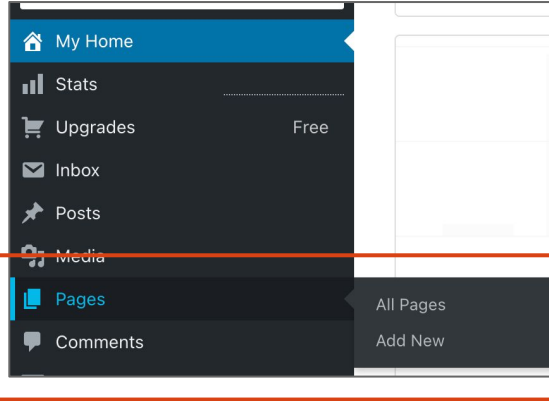
Manage Pages and Posts

- Go to the left-hand column of your homepage/dashboard.
- Then either click the **"Pages"** button or **"Posts"** button. You will navigate through your pages and posts using this side menu.
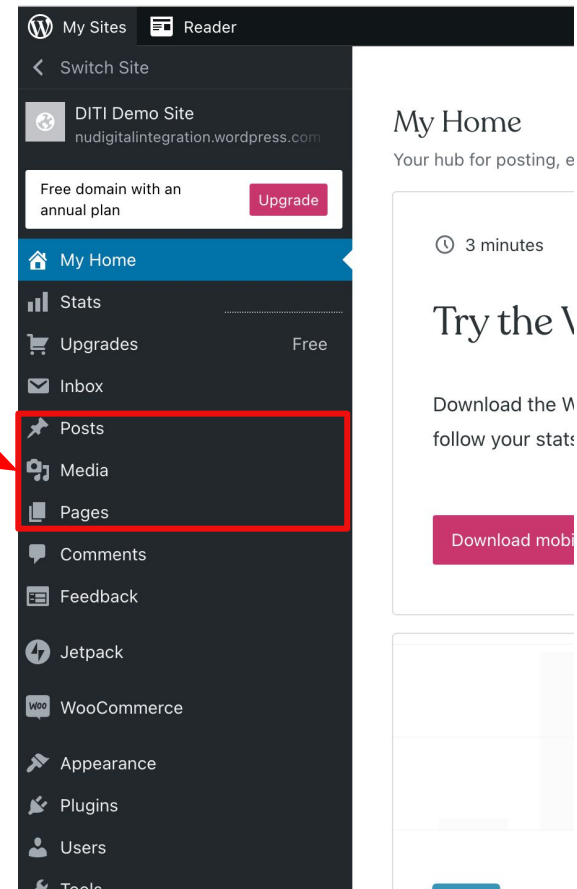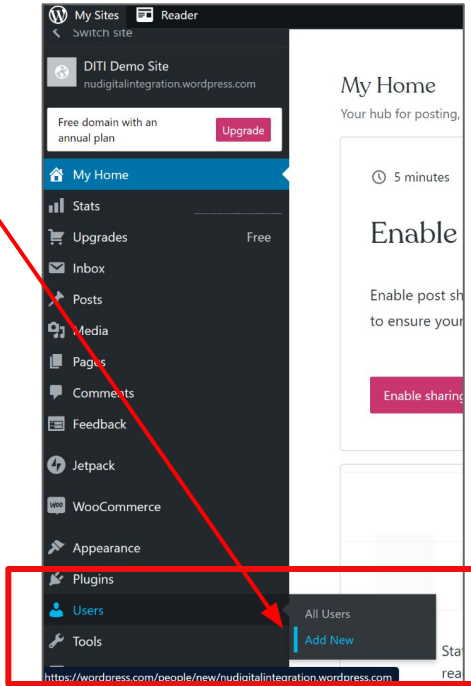
Create a New Page (or Post)

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

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Adding New Users

To add new users, select the "**Add New**" 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.

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User Permissions & Roles

WordPress has specific "roles" that are the administrator assigns to users, each with specific permissions and editing capacities. **Only administrators or super administrators can add new users.**

- **Super Admin** – somebody with access to the site network administration features and all other features.
- **Administrator** (slug: 'administrator') – somebody who has access to all the administration features within a single site.
- **Editor** (slug: 'editor') – somebody who can publish and manage posts including the posts of other users.
- **Author** (slug: 'author') – somebody who can publish and manage their own posts.
- **Contributor** (slug: 'contributor') – somebody who can write and manage their own posts but cannot publish them.
- **Subscriber** (slug: 'subscriber') – somebody who can only manage their profile.

Useful WordPress Documentation

Here are some helpful pages in the WordPress Support pages:

- [Getting Started with WordPress](#)
- [Updating WordPress (latest version)](#)
- [WordPress Glossary](#)
- [Working with WordPress FAQs](#)
- [Common WordPress Errors (troubleshooting)](#)
- [Backing up WordPress](#)

Website Development Best Practices

- **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   *Potentially not great*

Designing for Accessibility in WordPress

- 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

Designing for Accessibility in WordPress

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

Interactive site contents

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

Designing for Accessibility in WordPress

Considerations if you already understand 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.

Designing for Accessibility in WordPress

Plugins + Widgets

- Be aware that adding more complexity means adding more possibilities for your site to become inaccessible, and look for plugins that have been tested for accessibility

Site identity

- Whatever platform you're using should have a place to fill in the identity of your site—make sure that this is correct and visible online; that is, make sure that **text** and not just a logo or image tells people what your site is

Research and resources

- Do your homework! There are lots of good resources online, for example: [University of Minnesota "Cultivate Inclusion" guide](#) and [TAMU Web Accessibility Standards guide](#)

Credit and thanks to Tabitha Kenlon and Ash Clark for assistance with these points.

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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

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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

Questions?

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Next DITI Session: Preview

- Review: WordPress Concepts
  - Discussion: Website Questionnaire from Module 1
- Using and Maintaining a WordPress Site
  - Editing with the visual block editor
- Adapting content for existing or new websites
  - Design choices + fair use + online identity
- Materials for Consulting with Community Partners

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Thank you!

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

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Have questions? Schedule an appointment with us! **calendly.com/diti-nu**

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