

Introduction to Website Building



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Digital Integration Teaching Initiative (DITI)

GRMN 1101

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Workshop Agenda

- Understand best practices in website creation.
- Understand the strengths of building a website with WordPress and Wix.
- Learn how to build a website with WordPress
- For more information, see: [Introduction to Wordpress Handout](#)

Handouts and slides are available at:

bit.ly/fa24-fuchs-grmn1101-wordpress

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
- **Domain:** your domain name is the unique URL that leads to your website
- **Design:** the aesthetic choices for your website, including colors, font, and more

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?

Starting Points: Questions (cont.)

- **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
 - Look
 - Navigability
 - Functionality
 - Accessibility

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.)

Website building tools: WordPress and Wix

What are WordPress and Wix?

- WordPress and Wix are professional **website-building tools** that allow you to build your own website
- They provide a free **domain name** with “WordPress” or “wixsite” in the URL, but both have paid versions
- They both support **themes** (both), **widgets** (WordPress), and **apps** (Wix) to customize your website



WordPress vs Wix



WordPress	Wix
Often used for academic websites	Often used for businesses and artistic websites
Template-based design (You can change your theme at any time)	Customizable design that is less template-bound (You cannot change your template on an existing site)
Better for websites with a blog component (has features for tagging and categorizing)	AI Design feature—recommends features to you

WordPress and Wix examples



WordPress	Wix
https://madisonwaldron.WordPress.com/	https://bellama9.wixsite.com/website
https://jordanwlai.WordPress.com/	https://johnsonmaryb.wixsite.com/firstyearwriting2020
https://web.northeastern.edu/nulab/	https://www.helenakruger.com/
https://dsg.northeastern.edu/	https://www.laurabaross.com/

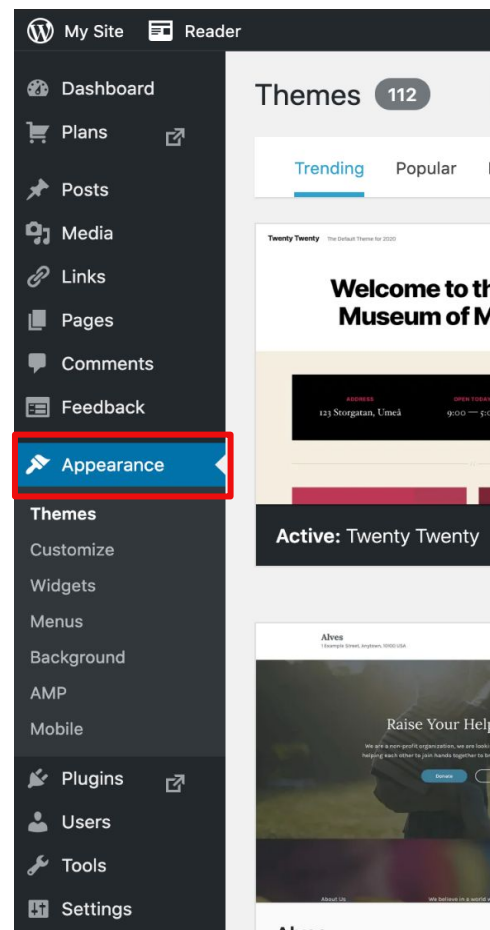
Building your website with WordPress

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"**.



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

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

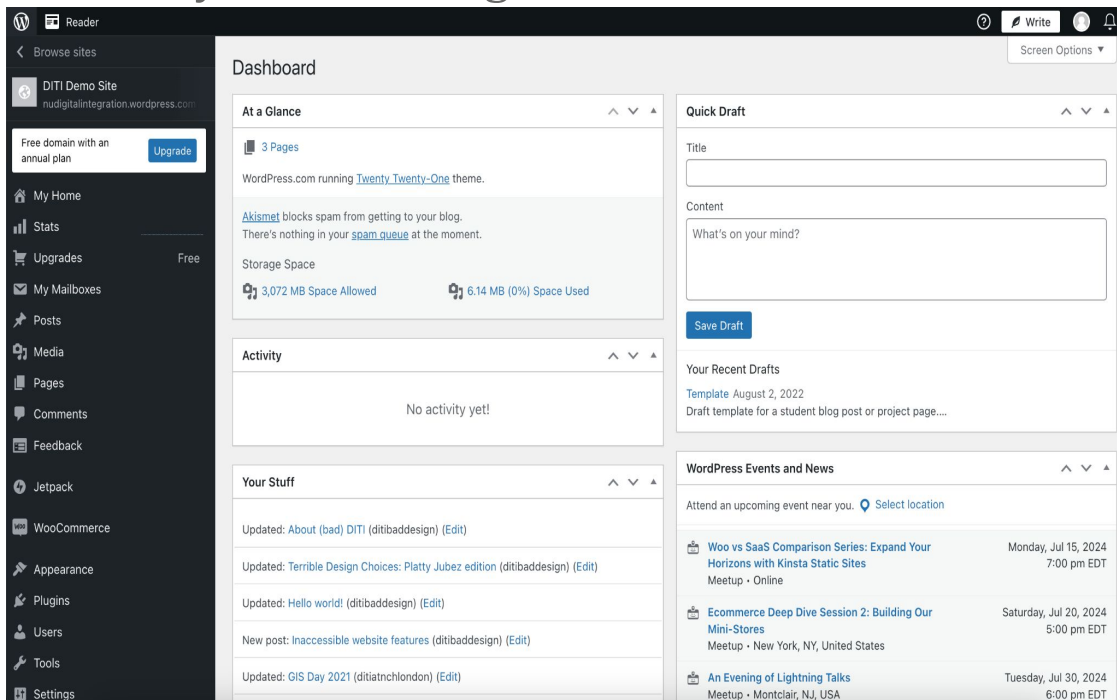
NOTE: to log in to a WordPress site, you must be an existing user!

WordPress Dashboard

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

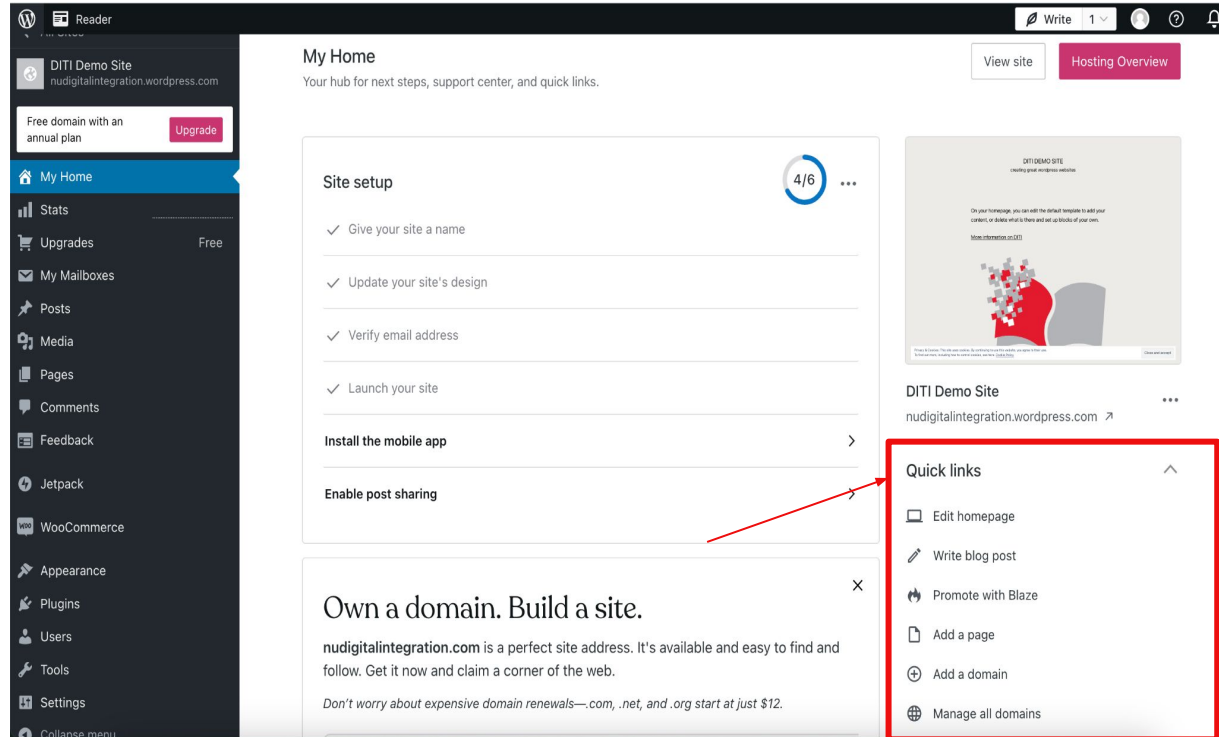
This is the **side menu** in the dashboard, the main way to navigate.

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



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.

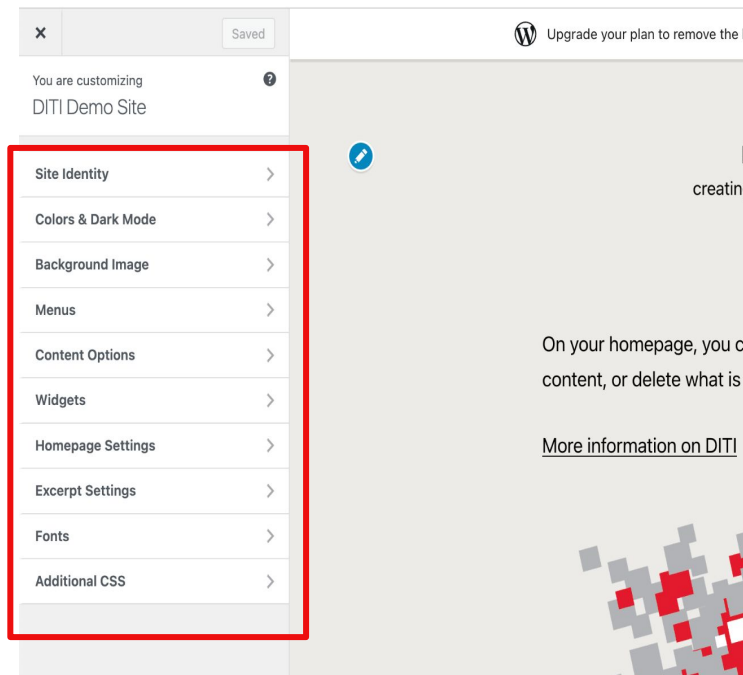


Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

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:

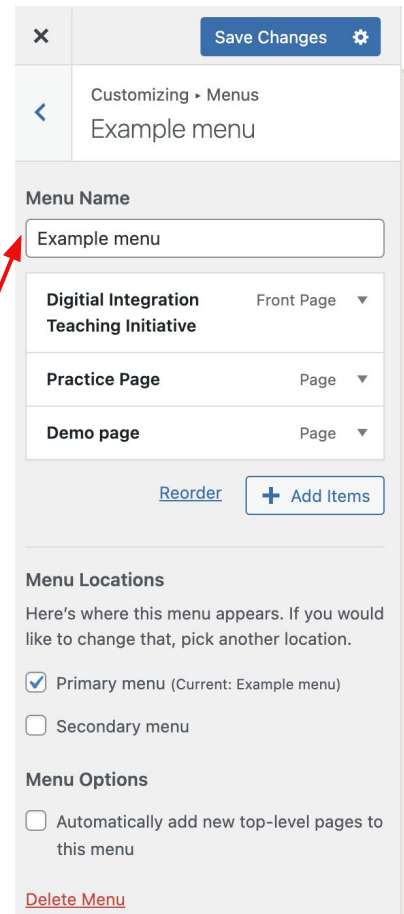
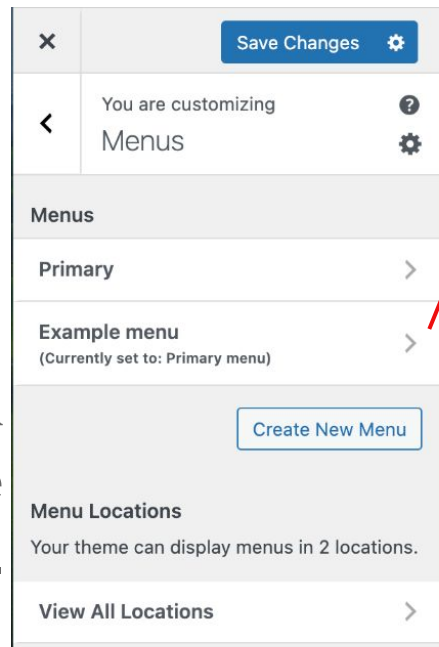
<https://wordpress.com/support/customizer/>



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

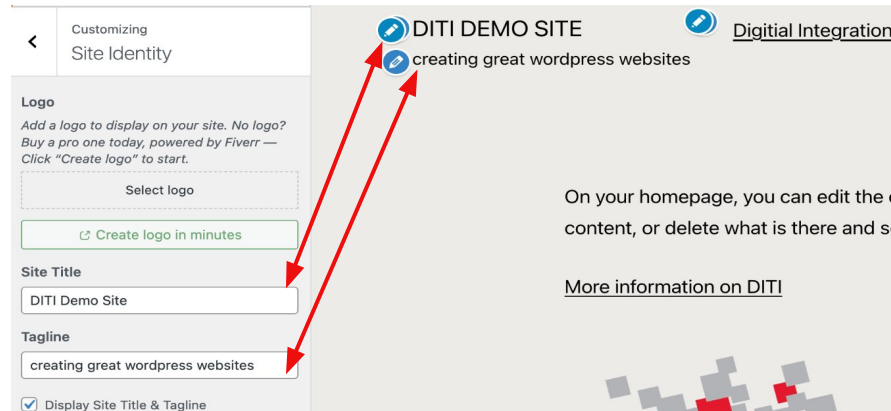
Customize Site Menu

- 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.



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.



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

WordPress: Pages and Posts

Website Content: Pages vs. Posts

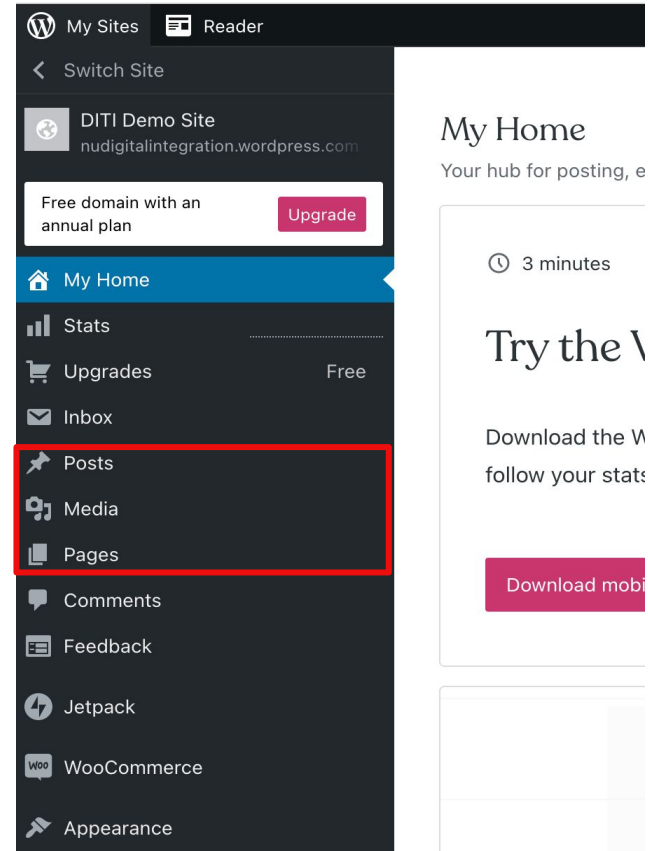
Pages are the static infrastructure of your website, and they appear across your header menu. Pages are content with a fixed location on the site.

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

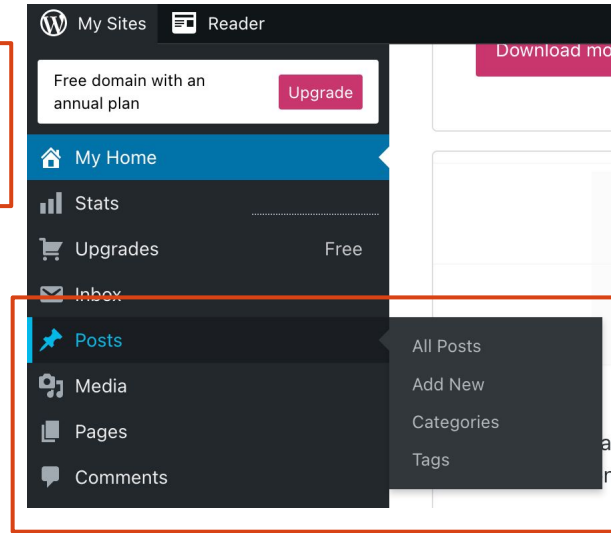
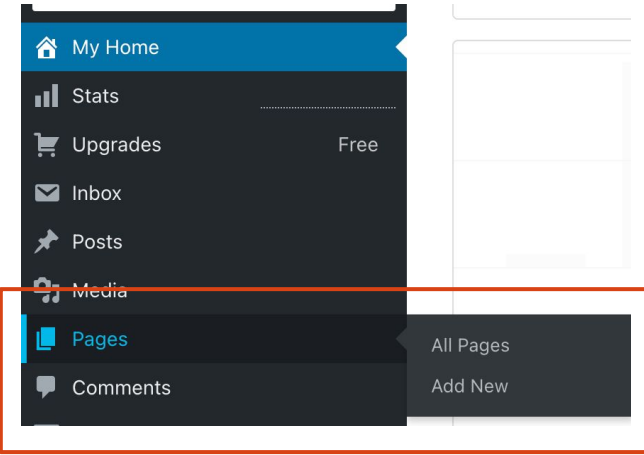
Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

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.



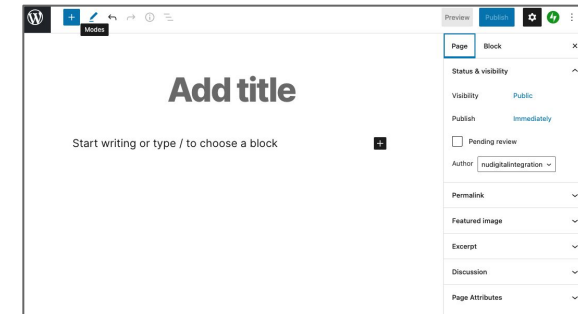
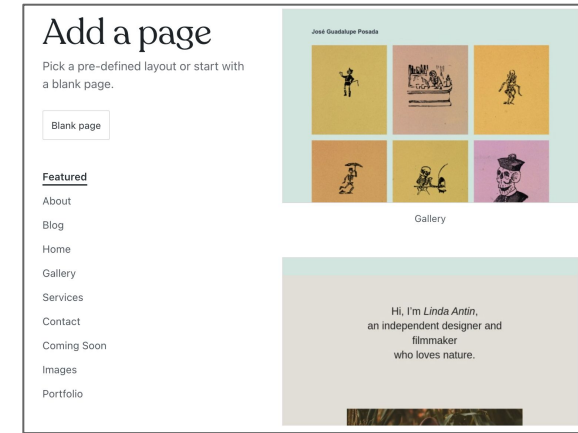
Create a New Page (or Post)



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**.

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.

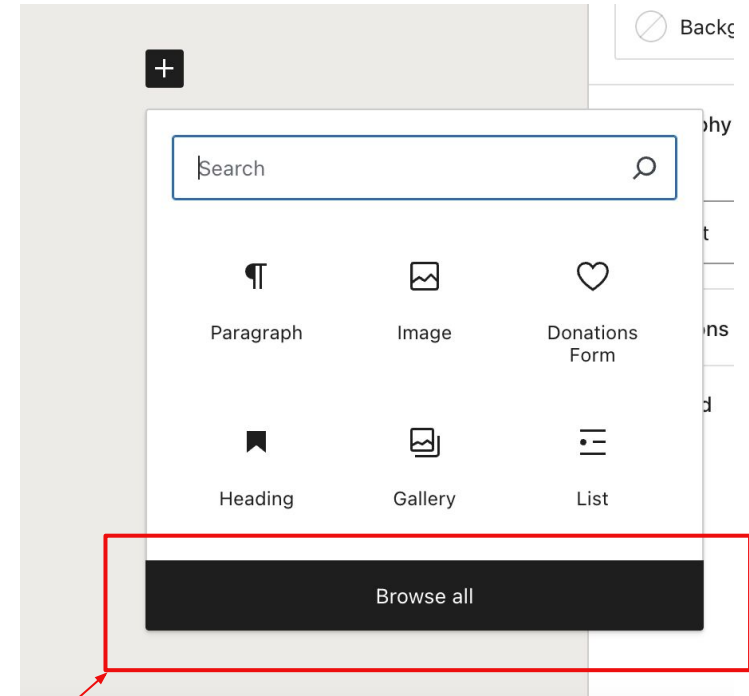


WordPress: Blocks

WordPress Blocks

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

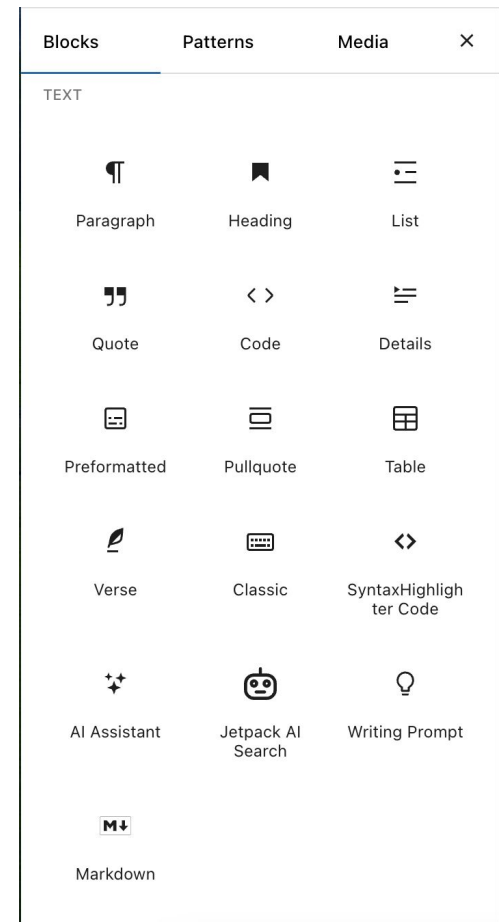
Blocks allow you to manipulate the layout of the page. The different kinds of blocks are organized into categories, including: text, media, design, widgets, theme, embeds, and “crowdsignal.” You can see all of the options by pressing “**browse all**” after selecting the “+” button to add a block



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

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.

DESIGN



Buttons



Columns



Group



Row



Stack



Grid



More



Page Break



Separator



Spacer



Table of Contents



Layout Grid



Dynamic HR



Hero



Pricing Table

WordPress Blocks: Widgets

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

WIDGETS



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



Timeline



Blog Posts



Post Carousel

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.

THEME



Navigation



Site Logo



Site Title



Site Tagline



Query Loop



Posts List



Avatar



Title



Excerpt



Featured Image



Author



Author Name



Date



Modified Date



Categories



Tags



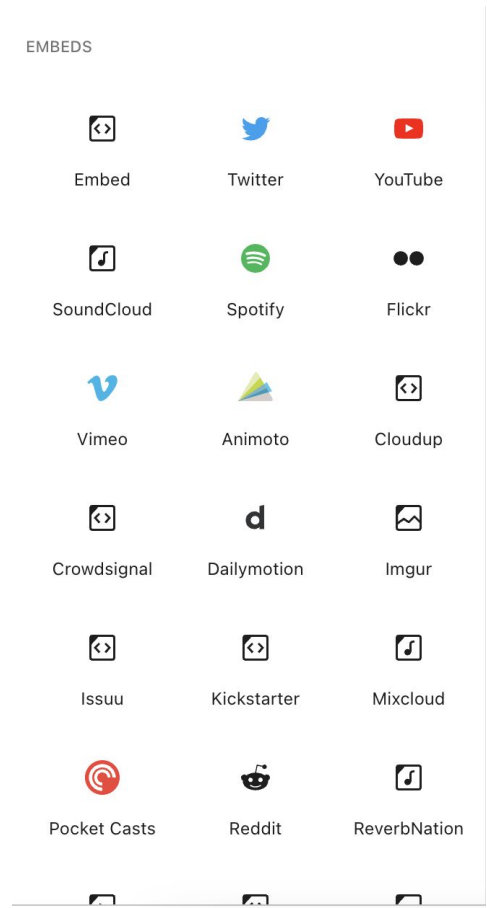
Next post



Previous post

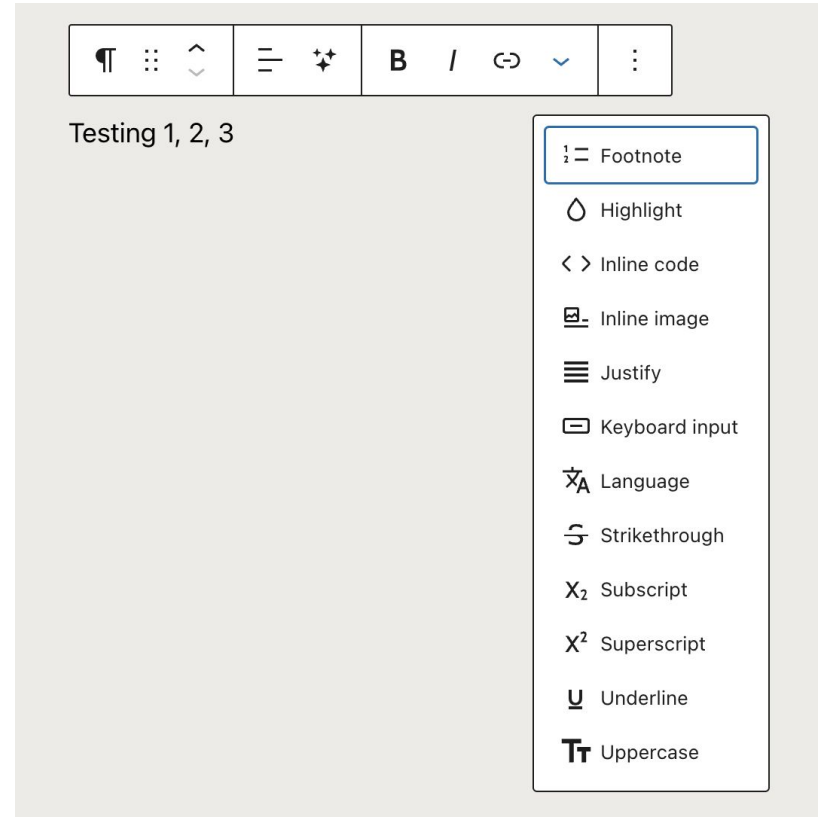
WordPress Blocks: Embeds

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.



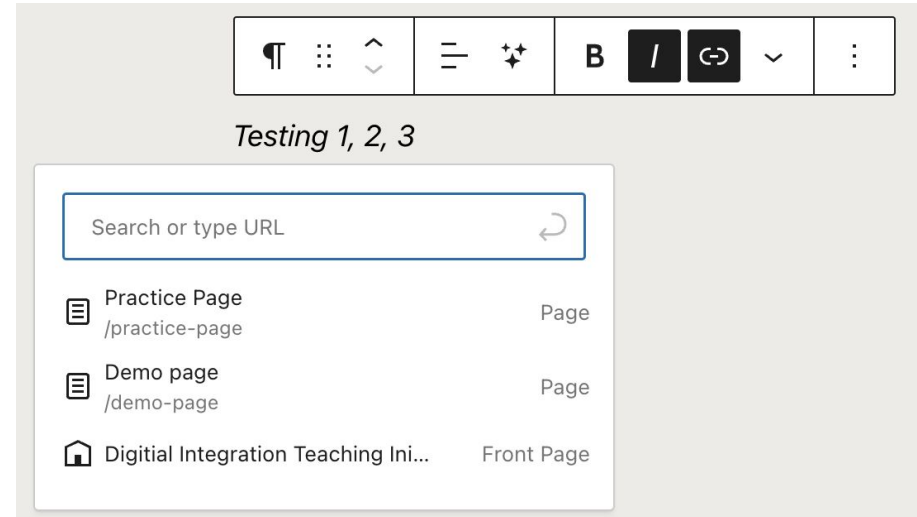
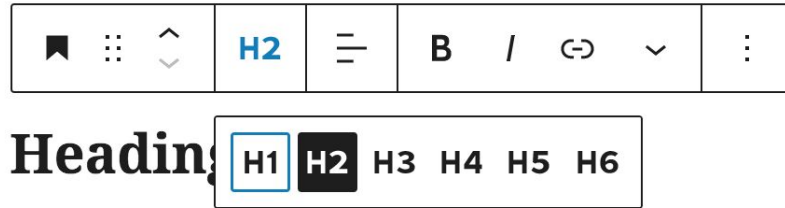
Add text

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.



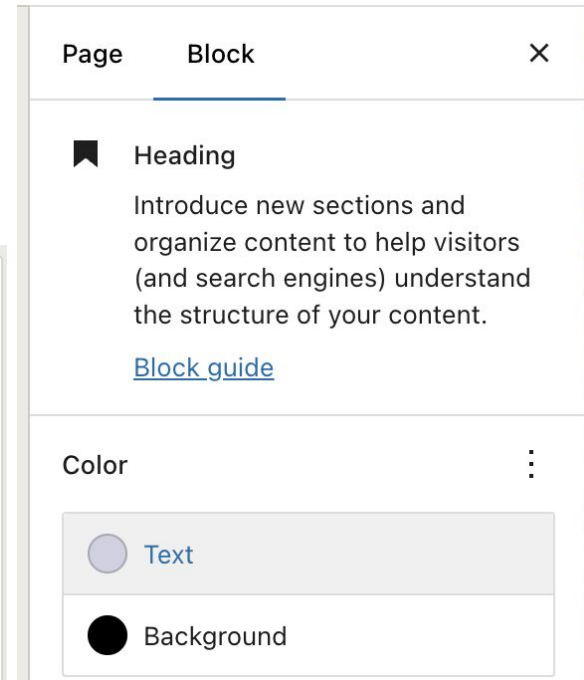
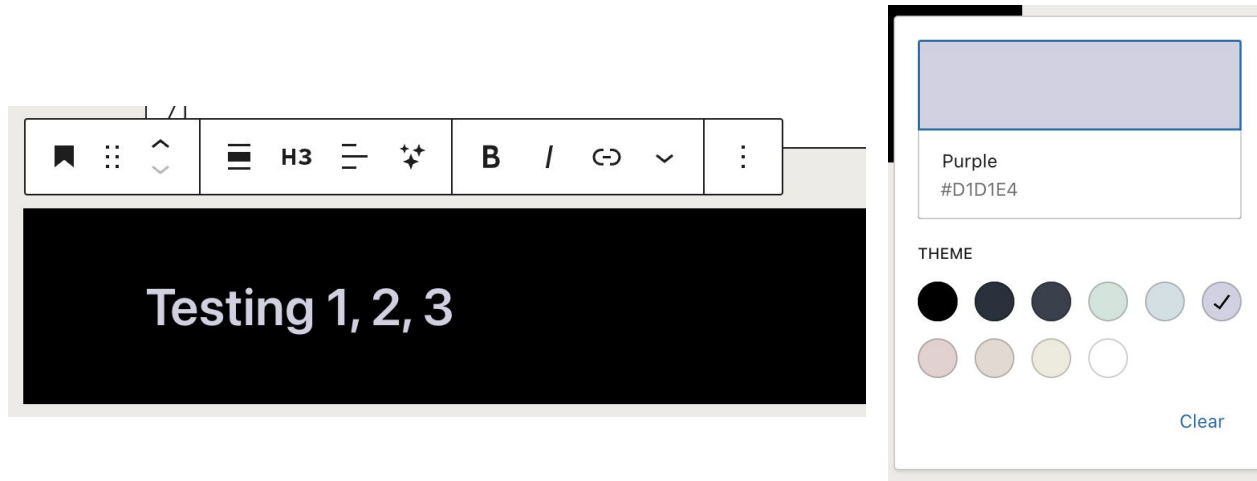
Format

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.



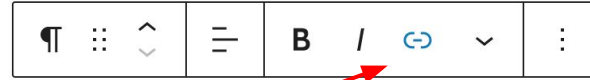
Format (Cont.)

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.



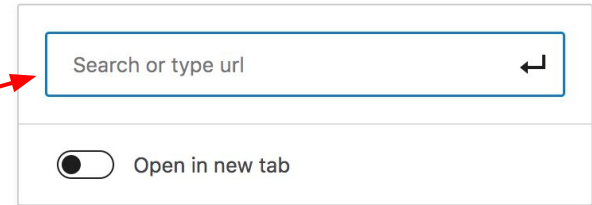
Add Links

To add links to your content:



Here you can add some text in a **paragraph**. You can also add links.

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.

A screenshot of the 'Insert link' dialog box. It features a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search or type url' and a submit button. Below the search bar is a toggle switch labeled 'Open in new tab', which is currently turned on. A red arrow points from the third step of the list to this dialog box.

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.



in a **paragraph**. You can also add links.

Image

Upload an image file, pick one from your media library, or add one with a URL.

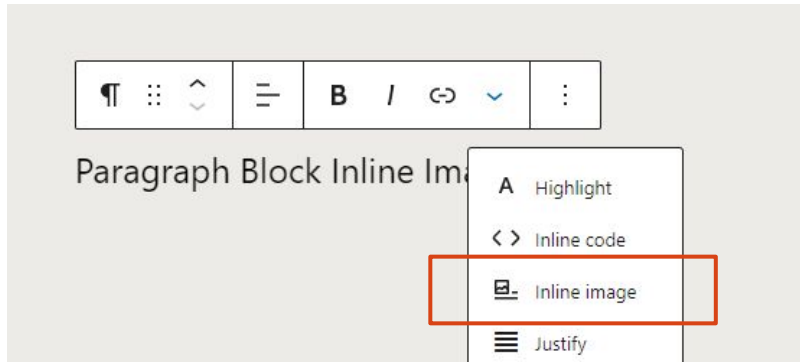
Upload

Select Image

Insert from URL

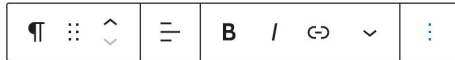
Add Inline Images to Paragraphs

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.

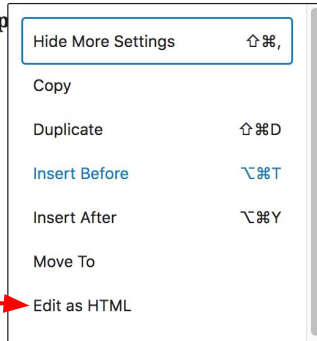


HTML Editor

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 you can add some text in a **paragraph**



Here is the same paragraph in HTML:

`<p>Here you can add some text in a paragraph. You can also add links.</p>`

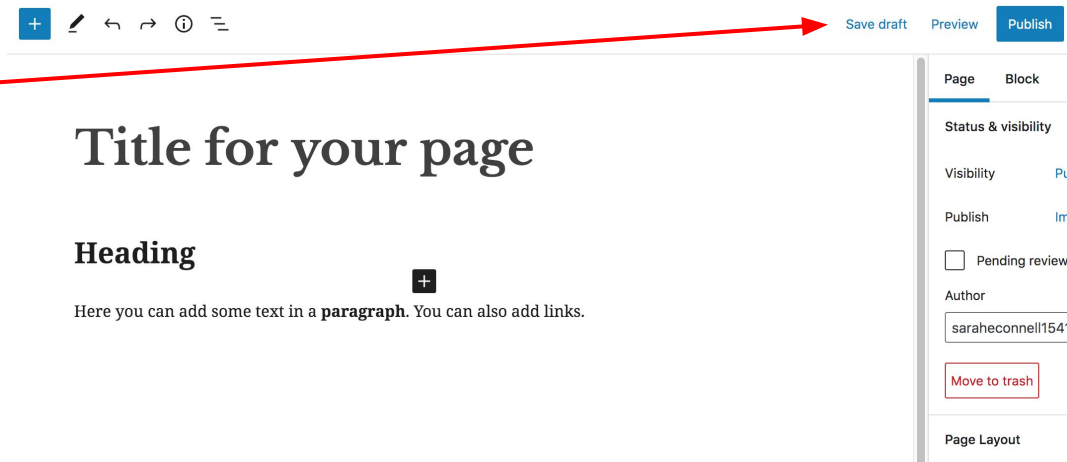
WordPress: Saving and Publishing

Save Draft

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

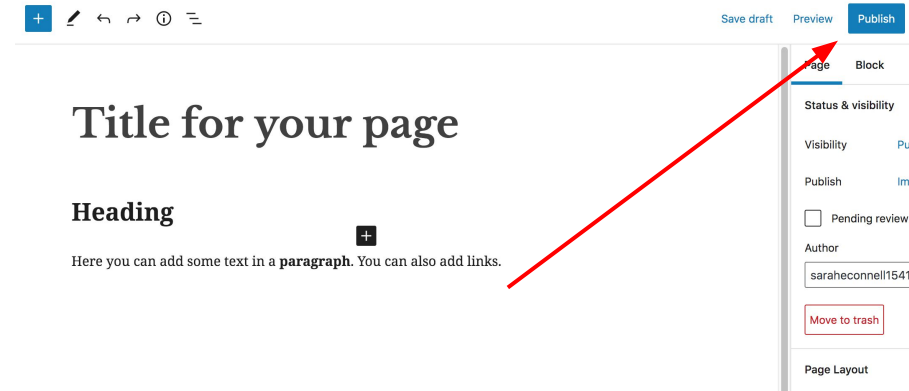
To save your draft, click the “**Save Draft**” button on the right-hand side of the screen.

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

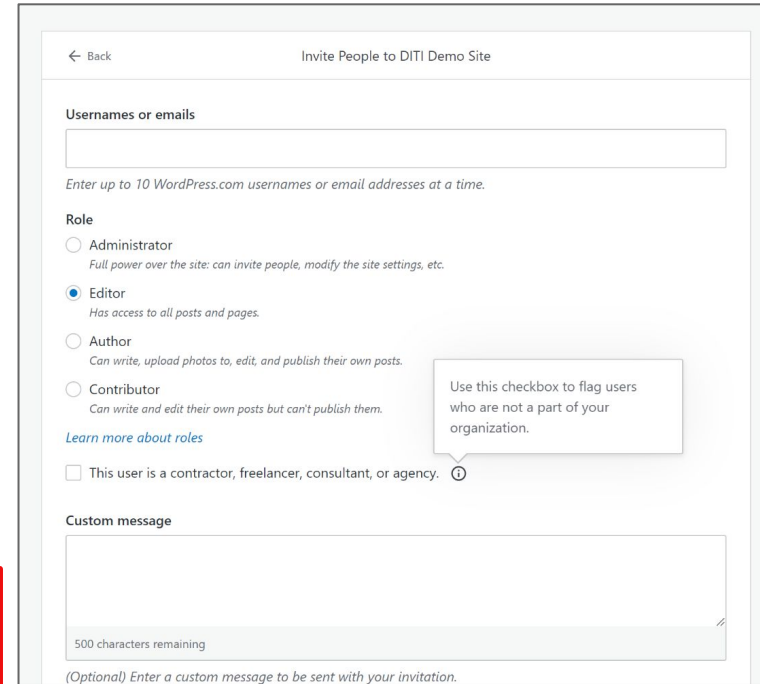
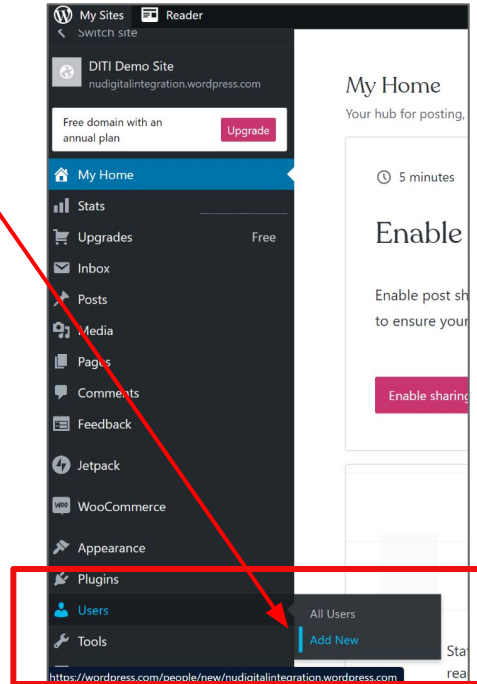
As you are editing your page, it is useful to see how your changes will look on the website itself. You can preview any changes you make with the “**Preview**” button on the right-hand side. This will open a new tab in your web browser, showing the page. When you are ready to publish, hit the “**Publish**”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



Adding New Users

To add new users, select the “Add New” 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.



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](#)

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 `` tag when, by italicizing text, you mean to emphasize its content (e.g. "I'm going to get those books *right now*"). Use the `` 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.
- Search for media that is public domain or shared with permissions that allow re-use.
 - DITI recommends [Wikimedia Commons](#) and DPLA ([Digital Public Library of America](#)).
- Ensure proper credit/attribution is given for all media

For more information on copyright and reuse, please see:

<https://bit.ly/diti-fair-use>

For further exploration

[Handout: Accessibility in Digital Content](#)

[Handout: Copyright and Fair Use](#)

[Handout: Data Privacy](#)

[Handout: WordPress](#)

[Handout: HTML](#)

Thank you!

—**Developed by** Juniper Johnson, Benjamin Grey, Dipa Desai, Emily Sullivan, Claire Lavarreda, Vaishali Kushwaha, Tieanna Graphenreed, Claire Tratnyek, Colleen Nugent, Talia Brenner, Ana Abraham, Chris McNulty, and Ayah Aboelela

A special thanks to Professor Julia Flanders for the wireframe examples used in this presentation.

- For more information on the DITI, please see: <https://bit.ly/diti-about>
- Schedule an appointment with us! <https://bit.ly/diti-meeting>
- If you have any questions, contact us at: nulab.info@gmail.com
- We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here: <https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>