

Introduction to WordPress: Digital Composition and Publication

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ENGW 1111: First Year Writing
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Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

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

Class Discussion

Break into small groups and talk amongst yourself for five minutes, choosing one person to report back to the larger group. Think about these questions:

- How do you usually write or compose? Do you start by hand or on a computer?
- What platform, software program, or word processor do you use to write (i.e. Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Pages)?
- Have you worked with WordPress before? Have you done any website building?



Workshop Agenda

- Objectives
- Overview of digital composition and publication
- Introduce WordPress
- Learn how to make a new page and navigate the block editor
- Copyright and Fair Use

Slides, handouts, and data available at **LINK TO GITHUB**



Workshop Objectives

- Understand the layout of the WordPress platform and create a post for the course website.
- Understand design choices to set up an appealing and user-friendly webpage.
- Understand the affordances of digital composition and processes of digital publication.



What is Digital Composition?

Composing is the process of writing or creating; it is more than just working in a word-processor, but we **compose** when we make slide shows, websites, and more.

Digital composition is composing in digital environment. Materials or media made in this process are often called **born-digital media**.

- Born digital media is often **multimodal** with photos, videos, interactive maps, etc.



What is Digital Publication?

Digital publication is simply the process of publishing materials online, written or not. As with other forms of publication, copyright and publication guidelines do apply in digital environments, including websites. This includes:

- Proper citations (works cited, in text citations, etc.)
- Proper attribution (photo credits, copyright licenses)
- Publication workflows and roles (author, editor, contributor)



Introduction to WordPress



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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 installs plugins and themes to customize your website. There are other website-building tools, such as Wix and Squarespace. We are using WordPress because it is often used for blogging and for academic purposes. 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 (that use Wordpress):

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



Class WordPress Site

For this course, we have created a class website:

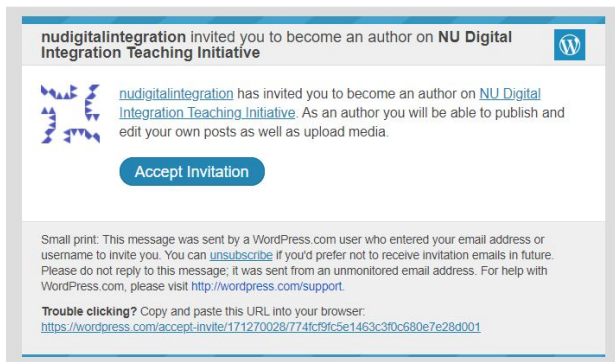
<https://utopiaactivismnow.wordpress.com/>

All of you have been invited as **authors** to this website. Take a minute to access that invite in your email.



Accessing the WordPress Site

Your email invitation will look something like this:



First, create a WordPress account with your Northeastern email, choosing a username and password.
Write this down!

Then, join the WordPress as an **author**.

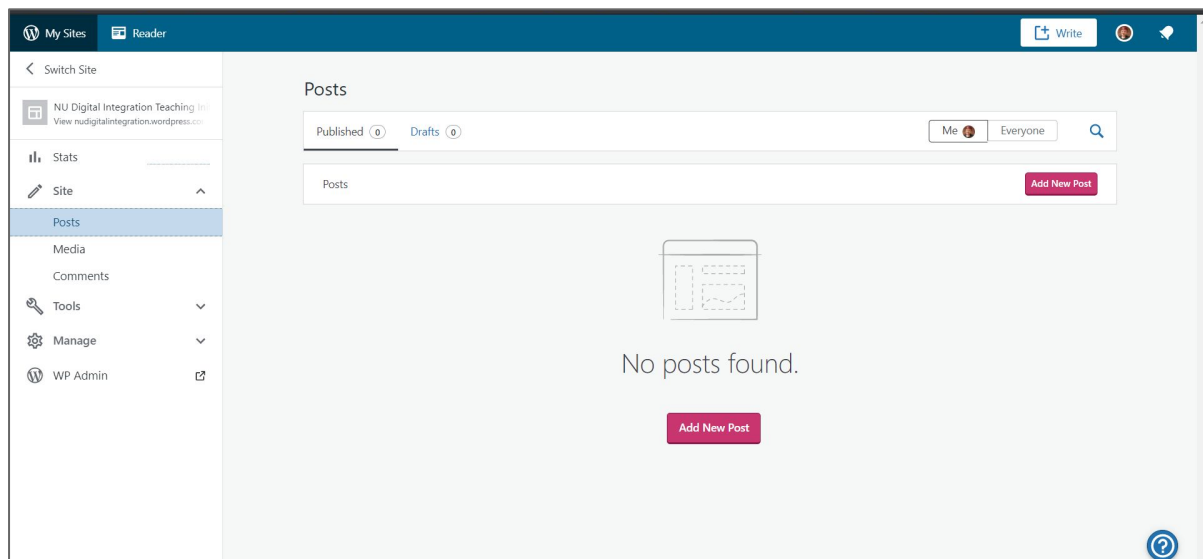
A screenshot of the WordPress sign-up form. It says "Sign up to start writing for NU Digital Integration Teaching Initiative." and "As an author, you will be able to publish and edit your own posts as well as upload media." There are three input fields: "Your email address" (with "johnson.lau@husky.neu.edu" entered), "Choose a username", and "Choose a password" (with a strength indicator). Below the fields is a link to "Terms of Service" and a pink button that says "Sign Up & Join".A screenshot of the WordPress "Join as" screen. It says "Would you like to start writing for NU Digital Integration Teaching Initiative?" and "As an author, you will be able to publish and edit your own posts as well as upload media." There is a circular profile picture of a woman. Below it, it says "Join as Laura Johnson". There are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Join". At the bottom, there is a link that says "Sign in as a different user".

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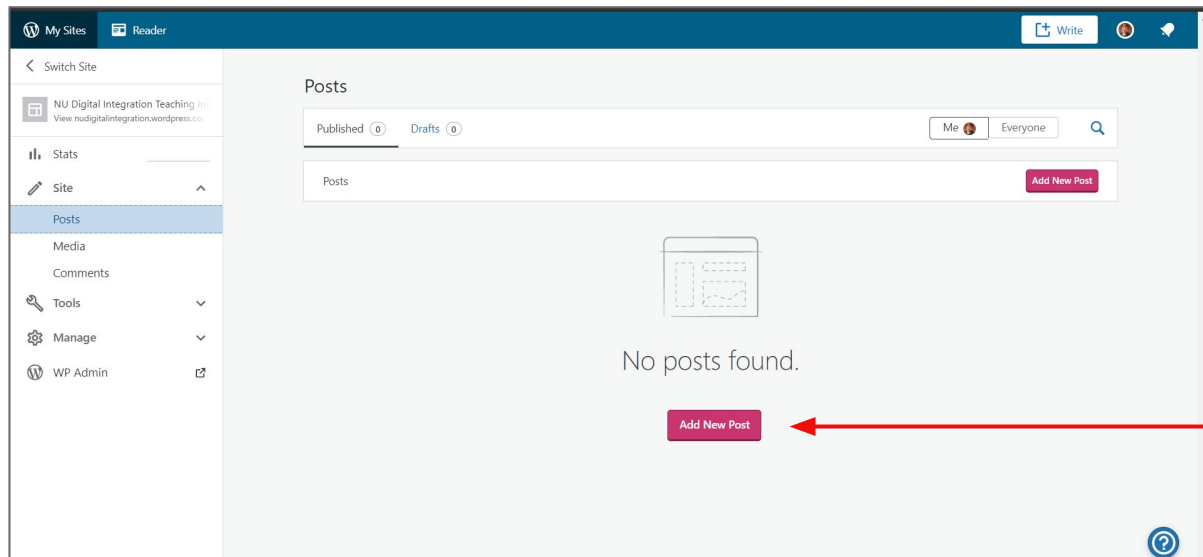
Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

WordPress Dashboard

Once you have created an account, you will be brought to your WordPress **dashboard**. This is the interface where you can create new posts, and see your drafts.



Creating a new post

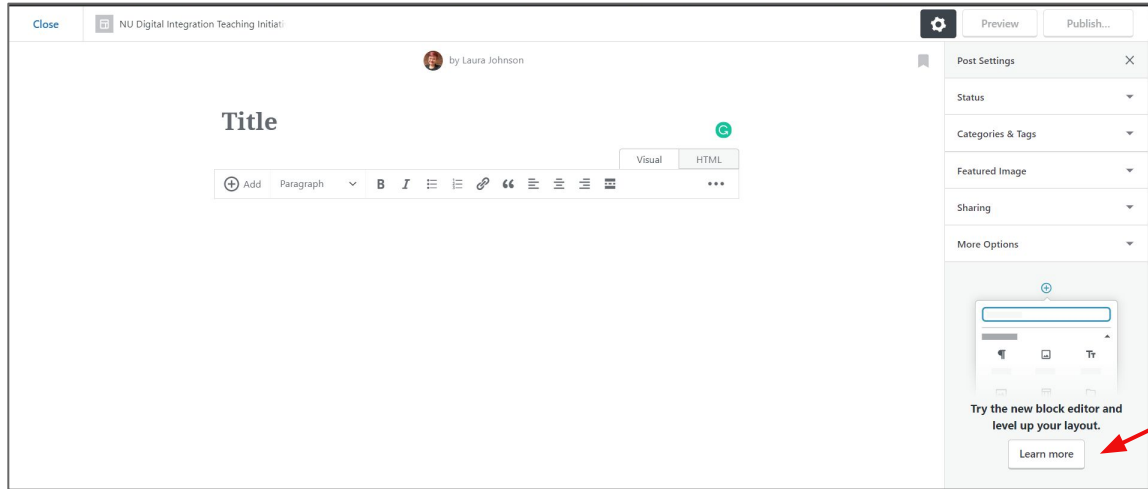


To create a new post, go to your **dashboard** and click the “**Add New Post**” button.



Visual Editor

Creating a new post will open up the visual editor. In this, you can compose a blog post, insert media, add different elements, and do customized formatting.

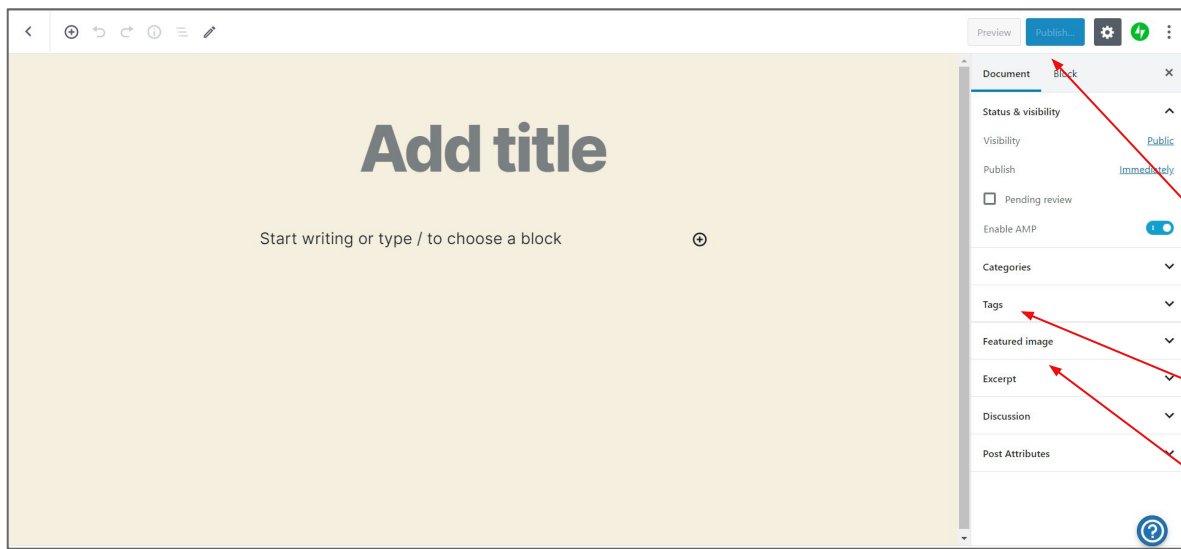


For more navigation and control of “blocks” on your posts, try switching to the **“Block Editor.”**



Block Editor

This will open a different interface, allowing you to add sections to your post in pre-formatted sections, or “**blocks**.”



In the sidebar are important sections that allow you to:

See the **visibility** of the post

Publish the post

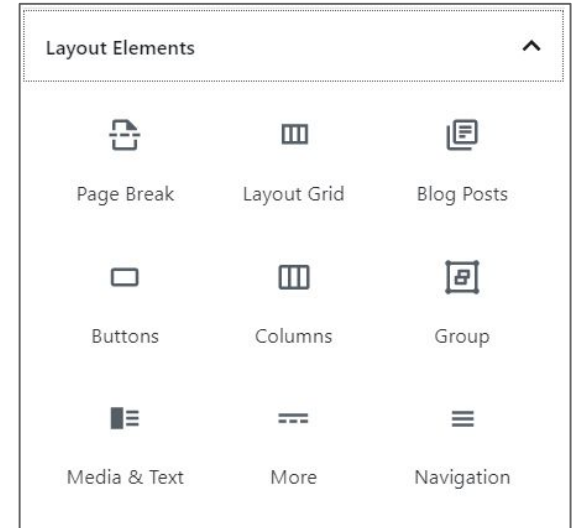
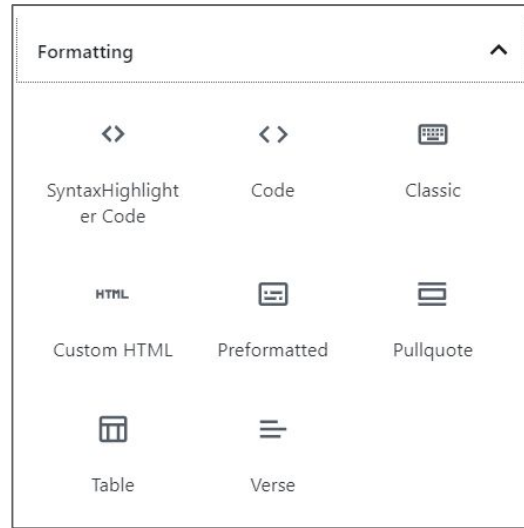
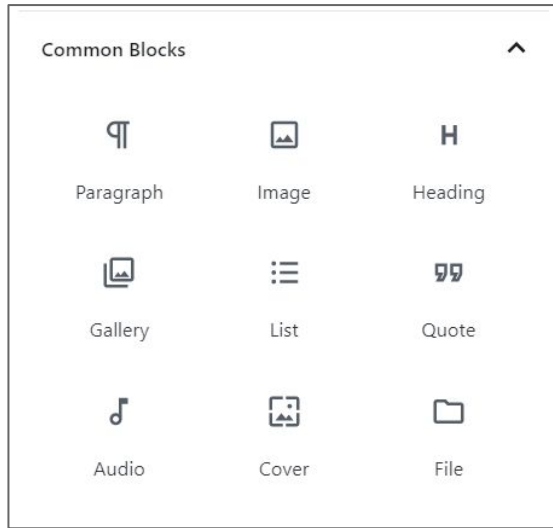
Add **tags**

Add a **featured image**



About WordPress Blocks

In the Block Editor, there are many different types of **blocks**. These are preformatted sections that allow you to manipulate the layout of the post. These include:



Your Turn!

Take a few minutes to play around with the Block Editor in WordPress. As you explore, keep these things questions in mind:

- What do you notice about formatting in this platform?
- How easy is it to add content to navigate this editor? Have you encountered any challenges?
- Are there any components of the Block Editor that confuse you? Save these and we will ask questions!



Class Discussion and Questions

After exploring the Block Editor on WordPress, we will talk about our first impressions, any questions, or comments that we had.



Next Steps: Wireframing

As you experienced, working with a website is a different kind of composition than writing. That's why most people, when they create a website or even a blog post, start with **wireframes**.

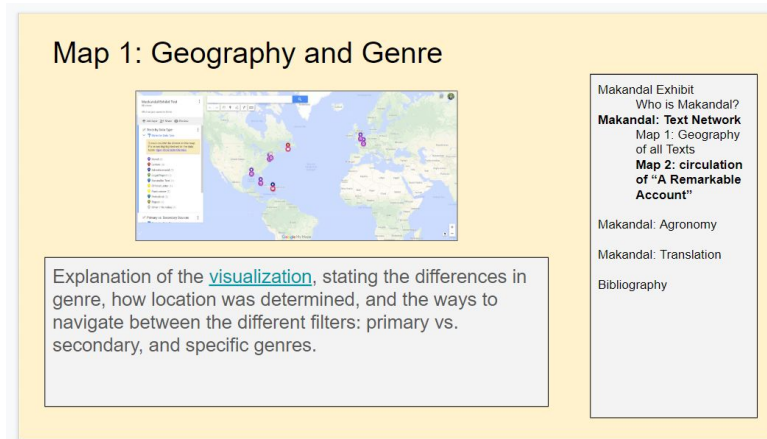
Wireframes are rough outlines of the design and placement of a site or page's content, focusing on these questions:

1. What content do you want to feature (i.e. featured image, pull quotes, media)?
2. How do you want users to navigate your post(s)?
3. How will information be placed, read, or interacted with?



Wireframing Examples and Resources

Wireframing can take many forms: it can be drawn by hand, made with a powerpoint slide, or created using wireframing platforms.



MockFlow :

<https://www.mockflow.com/>

Wireframe CC:

<https://wireframe.cc/>

Example wireframe from an digital exhibit for the ECDA



A Note on Copyright and Fair Use

Types of Materials

Fair use is an exemption to the laws governing reuse of certain types of use of **copyrighted material**.

Material that is in the **public domain** is no longer under copyright and can be used.

Materials under a **Creative Commons** license have set guidelines for use and republication.

Use /Adaptation

Fair use considers how **material under copyright** is used or adapted following four factors:

- Purpose and Character
- Nature of Work
- Amount
- Market Effect

Exceptions largely favor the use of material for commentary and critique and for educational settings.

Publication /Distribution

Fair use also considers how material under copyright is being **published** or **distributed**:

Restricted or **public access**: is it being published for a restricted community (a classroom) or published for everyone?

Commercial or **not-for-profit**: fair use favors not-for-profit use of copyrighted material as it doesn't signify financial gain.



Resources for Finding Media

Here are some helpful resources for finding media that fall under either public domain or creative commons licenses:

- Creative Commons Collections:
<https://search.creativecommons.org/collections>
- The Public Domain Review:
<https://publicdomainreview.org/collections/>
- Internet Archive Audio library: <https://archive.org/details/audio>
- Images on Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/>



Keep in Mind

- There are many different ways that you can compose in WordPress, either directly in the editor, or outside.
- WordPress posts should be easy to read and navigate, so explore how you can play with different formats and blocks to utilize space and media as part of your composition.
- Toggle between draft and “**Preview**” mode to see how your page will look like in the final form, making sure to see how it looks on different devices including mobile and desktop.



Your Turn!

Now that we have discussed some strategies for digital composition and publication, take some time to further explore WordPress. Try the following:

- Adding images or media
- Adding layout blocks
- Changing font size and color
- Adding pull quotes



Report Back

- Do you have any questions?
- What did you end up creating?
- How do you think you will use WordPress for your upcoming project?



Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact us at:

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Schedule an appointment with us! <http://bit.ly/diti-office-hours>



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