

Introduction to WordPress

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Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

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 English and Political Science 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://dsq.neu.edu/>
- <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/>
- <https://des4div.library.northeastern.edu/>

Getting Started

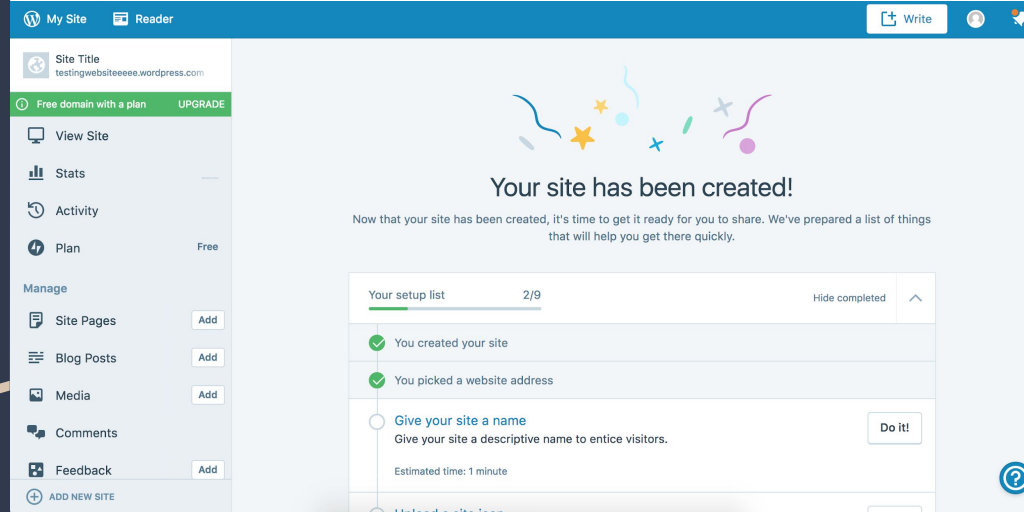
To get started, follow these steps:

- 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?

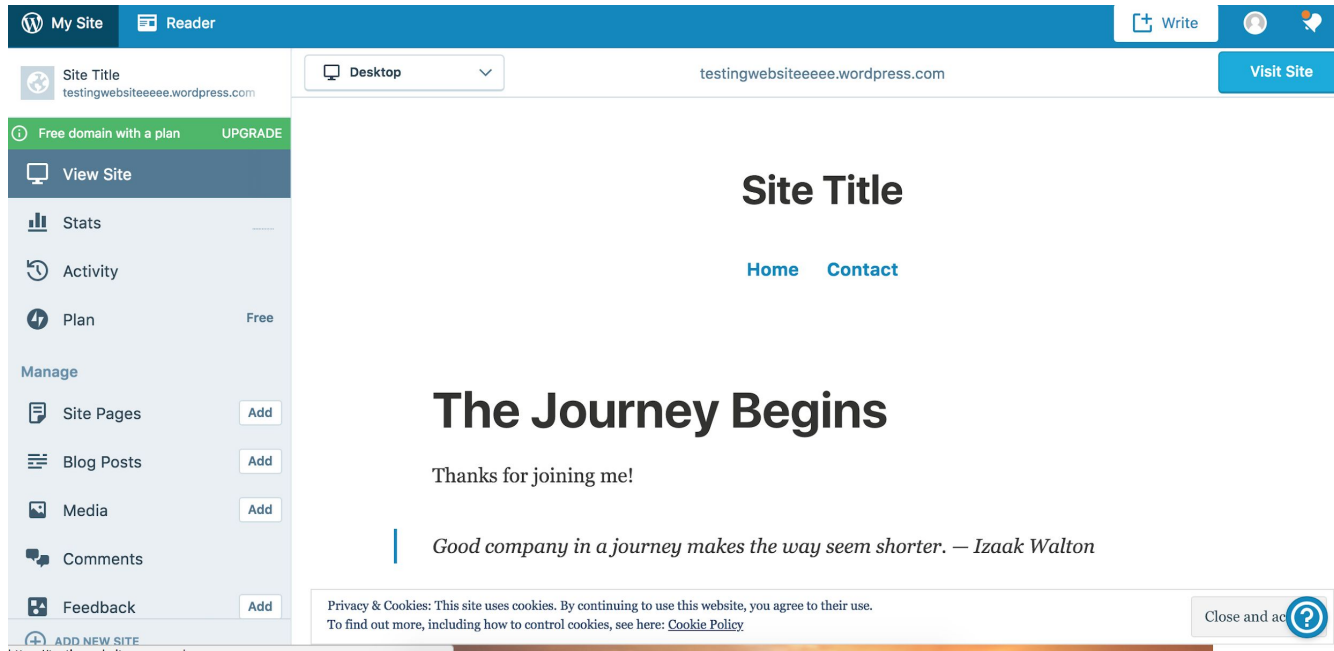
Now that we have the steps to make a site, can I get a volunteer to come to the front of the room so we can go through step by step together? As the volunteer is “Getting Started,” follow along on your computers, as well.

If you do not have your computer with you, follow along with your neighbor.



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 displays the WordPress dashboard for a newly created site. The top navigation bar is blue, featuring the 'My Site' and 'Reader' tabs, a 'Write' button, and user profile and notification icons. Below this, the site's title 'Site Title' and URL 'testingwebsiteeee.wordpress.com' are shown, 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', and 'Manage', each with an 'Add' button. The main content area shows the site title 'Site Title' and navigation links for 'Home' and 'Contact'. A large heading 'The Journey Begins' is followed by the text 'Thanks for joining me!' and a quote: 'Good company in a journey makes the way seem shorter. — Izaak Walton'. At the bottom, a privacy and cookies notice is visible, along with a 'Close and accept' button.

My Site Reader Write

Site Title testingwebsiteeee.wordpress.com Desktop testingwebsiteeee.wordpress.com Visit Site

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

Site Title

Home Contact

The Journey Begins

Thanks for joining me!

Good company in a journey makes the way seem shorter. — Izaak Walton

Privacy & Cookies: This site uses cookies. By continuing to use this website, you agree to their use. To find out more, including how to control cookies, see here: [Cookie Policy](#) Close and accept



Manage



Site Pages

Add



Blog Posts

Add



Media

Add



Comments



Feedback

Add



Plugins

Manage



Import

Personalize



Customize

Themes

Configure



Sharing

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).

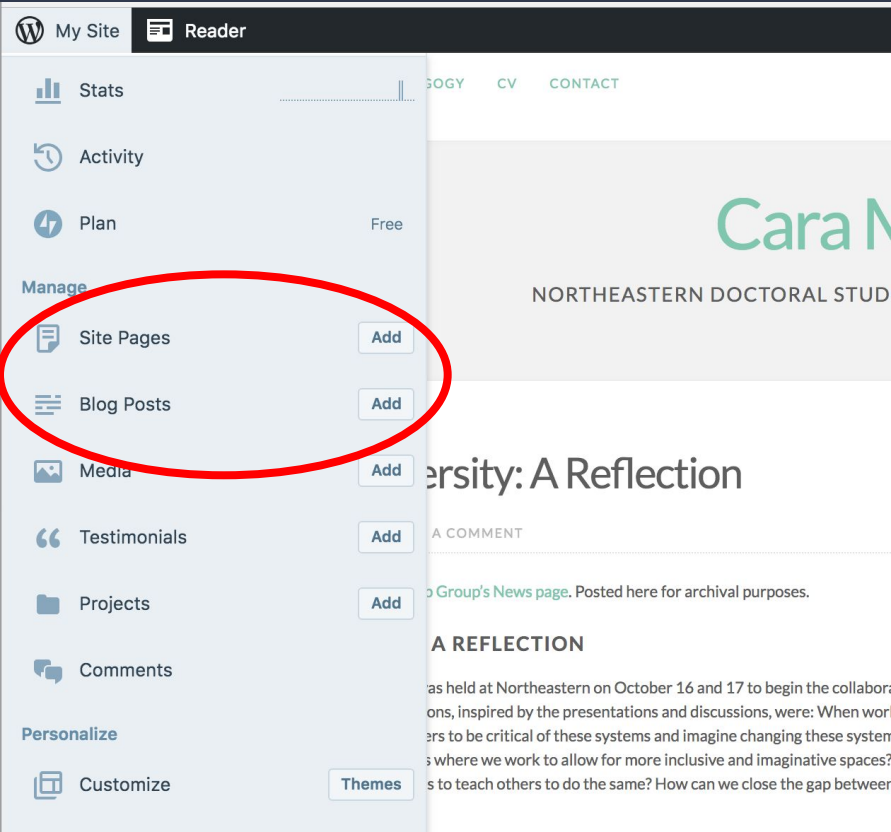
Remember: you are setting up this website in the context of professional development. Know your audience.

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, along with your CV, you may also want to post writing you’ve done in the past. You can use the Posts feature to do this.

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.**

The screenshot shows the WordPress Customizer interface. On the left is a sidebar menu with the following items: 'You are customizing Cara Messina', 'Need help setting up your site?', 'Site Identity', 'Colors & Backgrounds', 'Fonts', 'Header Image', 'Menus', 'Content Options', 'Widgets', 'Homepage Settings', and 'Theme Options'. The 'Published' button is at the top of the sidebar. The main area displays the site's header with the name 'Cara Messina' and the subtitle 'Northeastern Doctoral Student | Acafan | Digital Pedagogue'. Below the header are four social media icons. A navigation menu includes 'About', 'Blog Posts', 'Digital Pedagogy', 'CV', and 'Contact'. The 'About' page is currently selected and displayed in the main content area. A red arrow points from the text 'Customize' in the paragraph above to the 'Customize' icon (a pencil inside a circle) located next to the 'You are customizing' text in the sidebar.

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

Cara Messina

Northeastern Doctoral Student | Acafan | Digital Pedagogue

About Blog Posts Digital Pedagogy CV Contact

About

Cara Messina [she/her] is a second year doctoral student focusing on Writing and Rhetoric in [Northeastern University's English Department](#). She is currently plowing – well, crawling at a brisk pace – through her Comps Exams on [Digital Pedagogy](#), Rhetorical Genre Studies, and Mixed Methodologies in Writing Studies. In her first year at Northeastern, she held the position of Director of Research at the Writing Center where she led NuRig – the writing center research inquiry group – to collect data about [how clients and consultants articulate their understanding of the work done in writing centers](#). She has taught First Year Writing and Advanced Writing in the Disciplines. She currently works as the Coordinator for the [NULab](#) at Northeastern as well as the Research Associate for [Design for Diversity](#), an IMLS-grant funded national forum project, at Northeastern's Digital Scholarship Group.

Her pedagogy and overall values center around transparency, documenting and valuing process, subverting normalized cultural and social narratives, vulnerability, collaboration, justice, and cross-disciplinary conversations. In her classroom and her research, she incorporates Digital Humanities (especially [#transformDH](#) conversations), Writing Studies, Fan and Media Studies,

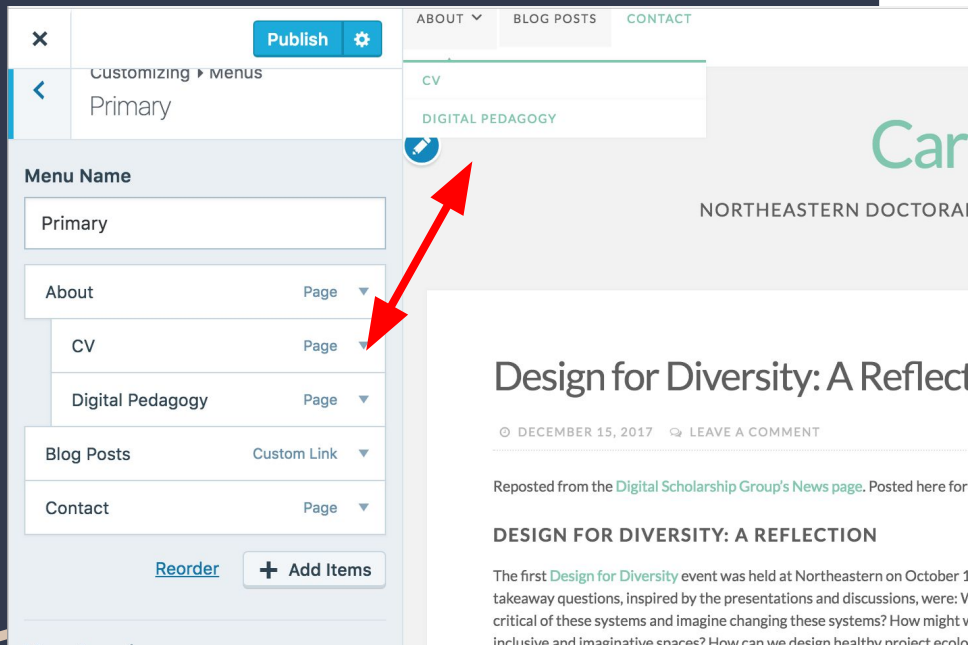
** Depending on your theme, some of your customization options will change.

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.

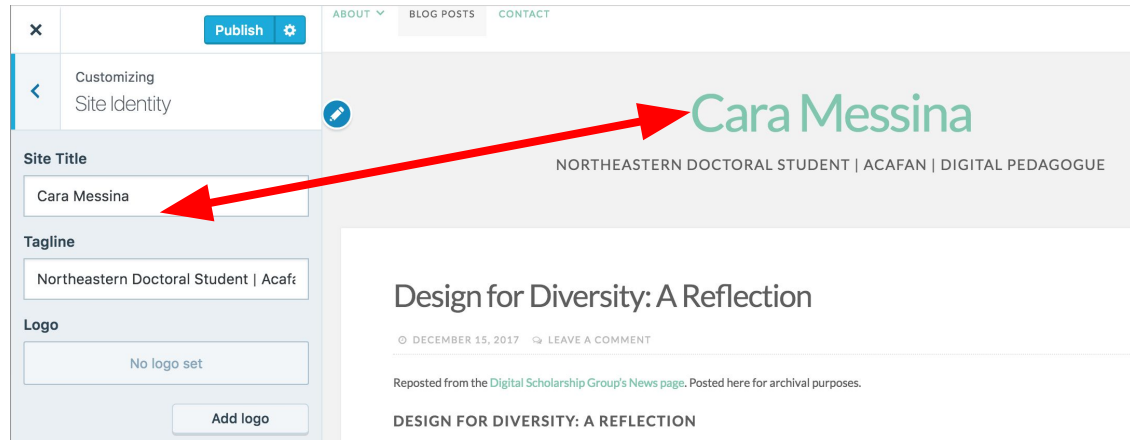


Header

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.



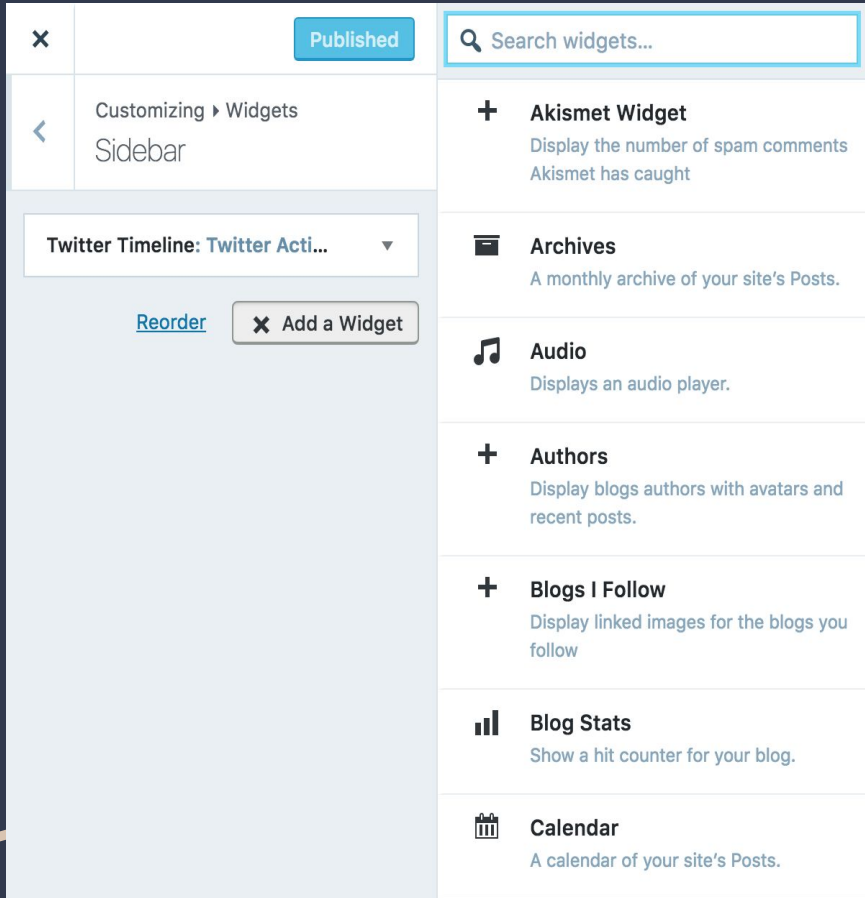
The image shows a WordPress Customizer interface. On the left, the 'Customizing Site Identity' panel is open, showing fields for 'Site Title' (Cara Messina), 'Tagline' (Northeastern Doctoral Student | Acafi), and 'Logo' (No logo set). A red arrow points from the 'Site Title' field to the live preview on the right. The live preview shows the website header with the name 'Cara Messina' in green, followed by the tagline 'NORTHEASTERN DOCTORAL STUDENT | ACAFAN | DIGITAL PEDAGOGUE'. Below the header, the main content area displays the title 'Design for Diversity: A Reflection' and the date 'DECEMBER 15, 2017'.

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.

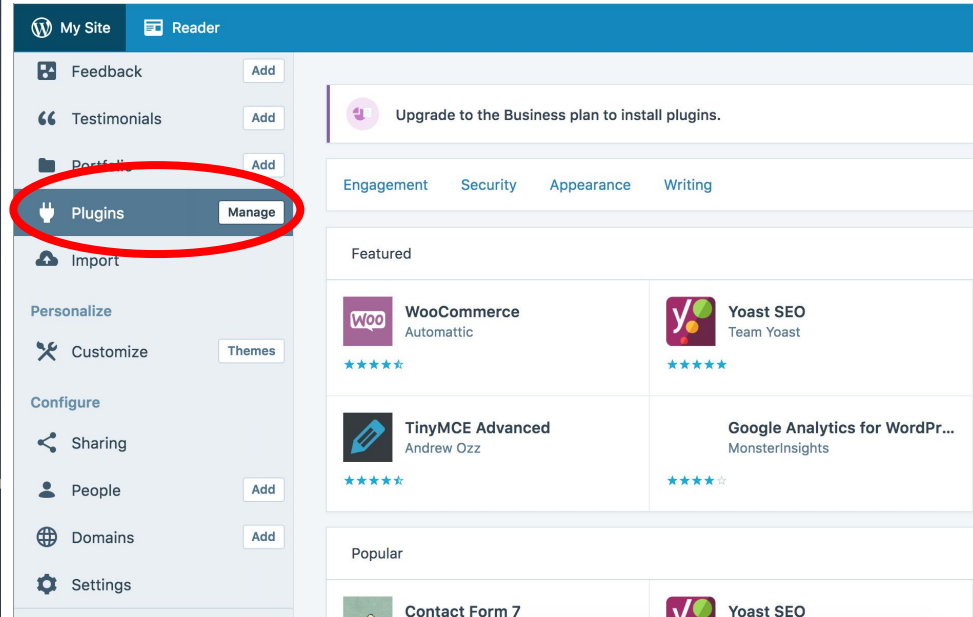


Plugins

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.



Keep in mind—

- **Always remember your audience and think about how you want to represent your identity 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

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