**Theme Development**

WordPress Themes are files that work together to create the design and functionality of a WordPress site.

**Theme Development Standards:**

* Use well-structured, error-free PHP and valid HTML.
* Use clean, valid CSS.
* Follow design guidelines in Site Design and Layout.

WordPress Themes typically consist of three main *types of files*, in addition to images and JavaScript files.

* The *stylesheet* called style.css, which controls the presentation (visual design and layout) of the website pages.
* WordPress *template* files which control the way the site pages generate the information from your WordPress database to be displayed on the site.
* The optional *functions* file (functions.php) as part of the WordPress Theme files.

**Basic Templates:**

A WordPress Theme consists of two files: style.css, index.php Both of these files go into the Theme directory.

**index.php:**

The *index.php* template file is very flexible. It can be used to include all references to the header, sidebar, footer, content, categories, archives, search, error, and any other page created in WordPress.

Using these template files you can put template tags within the index.php master file to include these other files where you want them to appear in the final generated page.

* To include the header, use get\_header(). <?php get\_header(); ?>
* To include the sidebar, use get\_sidebar(). <?php get\_sidebar(); ?>
* To include the footer, use get\_footer(). <?php get\_footer(); ?>
* To include the search form, use get\_search\_form(). <?php get\_search\_form(); ?>