

*skillcrush* MASTER CLASS

# 5 WAYS TO DEVELOP WORDPRESS THEMES

*with* JAMIE SANCHEZ

Overview:

**YOU'RE IN THE  
RIGHT SPOT IF...**

Overview:

**LET'S IMAGINE...**







# CUSTOM THEMES

Starting from square one with brand new documents.

**Custom Themes:**

**LIKE BAKING A CAKE  
FROM SCRATCH**

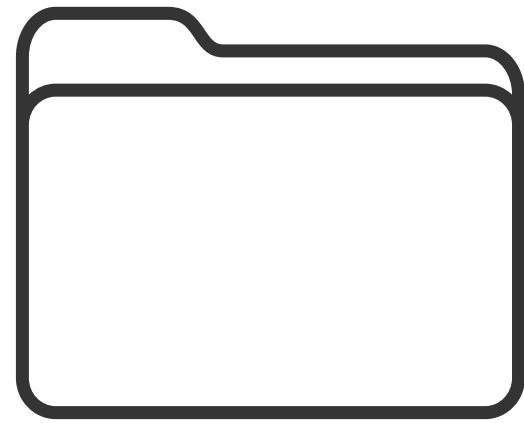




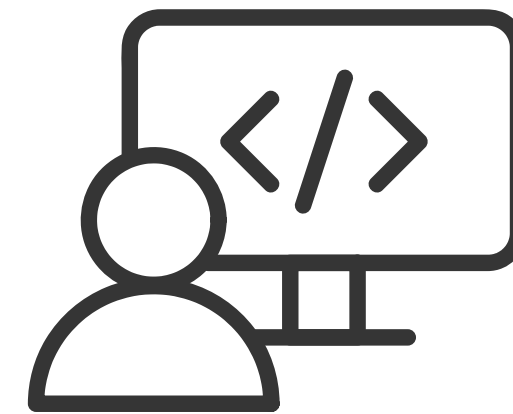
# **GATHER ALL INGREDIENTS AND ASSEMBLE ON YOUR OWN**



# CUSTOM THEMES



Ideally functions as single unit without a child theme.



Build out the entire front-end and theme functionality yourself.



Client doesn't update. They must directly contact you with quality concerns.



# BENEFITS OF CUSTOM THEMES

- ✓ You own it all
- ✓ You know everything
- ✓ You have complete control



# DRAWBACKS OF CUSTOM THEMES

- ✗ Repetitive
- ✗ Time-consuming
- ✗ Lots of blank spaces
- ✗ Compatibility concerns
- ✗ Knowledge of best practices
- ✗ Documentation for 3rd-parties



# RESOURCES

- [developer.wordpress.org/themes/getting-started](https://developer.wordpress.org/themes/getting-started)
- [themeshaper.com/2009/06/22/wordpress-themes-templates-tutorial](https://themeshaper.com/2009/06/22/wordpress-themes-templates-tutorial)
- [wphierarchy.com](https://wphierarchy.com)



# STARTER THEMES

Made by third-parties and distributed for free!



**Starter Themes:**

# **BUYING BOXED CAKE MIX AND ASSEMBLING IT YOURSELF**



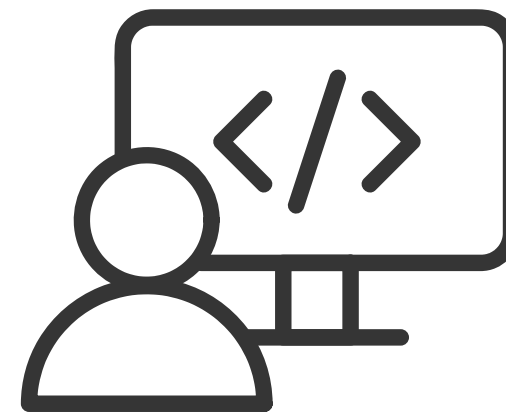
# **START WITH A TRUSTY BASE AND MODIFY AS YOU GO**



# STARTER THEMES



Edit it directly without the use of a child theme.



Front-end is a blank slate but theme contains useful structures and functions behind the scenes.



Client doesn't update. They'll contact you with concerns or issues. Pocket the savings.

# BENEFITS OF STARTER THEMES

- ✓ Time-saver!!!
- ✓ Best practices
- ✓ Built by veterans
- ✓ Easy to customize
- ✓ Typically includes CSS resets
- ✓ Edit directly or with child theme
- ✓ Popular CSS frameworks
- ✓ Create your own!



# DRAWBACKS OF STARTER THEMES

- ✗ Lots of blank spaces
- ✗ No automatic updates
- ✗ 3rd-party design choices
- ✗ Redo similar work every project
- ✗ Future releases alter your workflow

# RESOURCES

- [components.underscores.me](https://components.underscores.me)
- [themble.com/bones](https://themble.com/bones)
- [foundationpress.olefredrik.com](https://foundationpress.olefredrik.com)
- [themes.simplethemes.com/skeleton/](https://themes.simplethemes.com/skeleton/)
- [understrap.com](https://understrap.com)
- [roots.io/sage](https://roots.io/sage)

Coding Your First Theme Post-Blueprint with Underscores

*by Skillcrush Instructor Maren Vernon*



# FREE THEMES

Made by third-parties and distributed for free!

Free Themes:

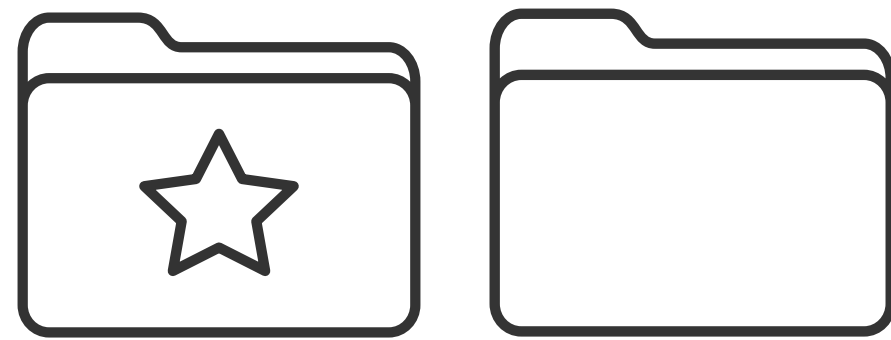
# TAKING PRE-MADE CAKE AND ADDING THE DECORATIONS!



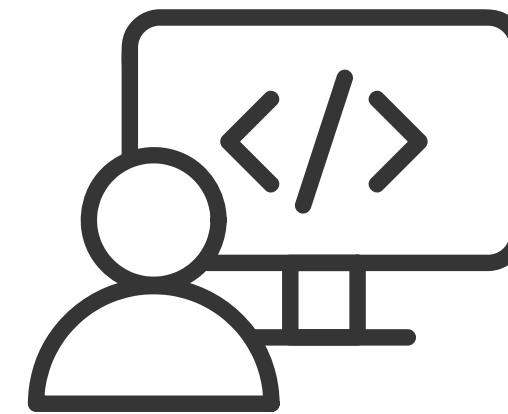


**IT'S MOSTLY DONE, BUT NEEDS  
YOUR INPUT FOR COMPLETION**

# FREE THEMES



Alterations should be made with child theme.



Front-end is highly-styled and backend is complete with structures and functions.



Client should be educated on update process.

# BENEFITS OF FREE THEMES

- ✓ FREE!
- ✓ Complete design ready to launch
- ✓ Save hours with light branding
- ✓ Millions to choose from
- ✓ Built by veterans



# DRAWBACKS OF FREE THEMES

- ✗ License constraints
- ✗ Rigid structures
- ✗ Nightmare to modify
- ✗ Lots of hunting for the “right” one
- ✗ Built by newbies

# RESOURCES

- [wordpress.org/themes](https://wordpress.org/themes)
- [wordpress.org/plugins/theme-check](https://wordpress.org/plugins/theme-check)
- [thethemefoundry.com/blog/best-wordpress-themes](https://thethemefoundry.com/blog/best-wordpress-themes)

# PREMIUM THEMES

Made by third-parties and sold commercially.



Premium Themes:

# BUYING A FANCY CAKE FROM AN EXPERIENCED BAKER

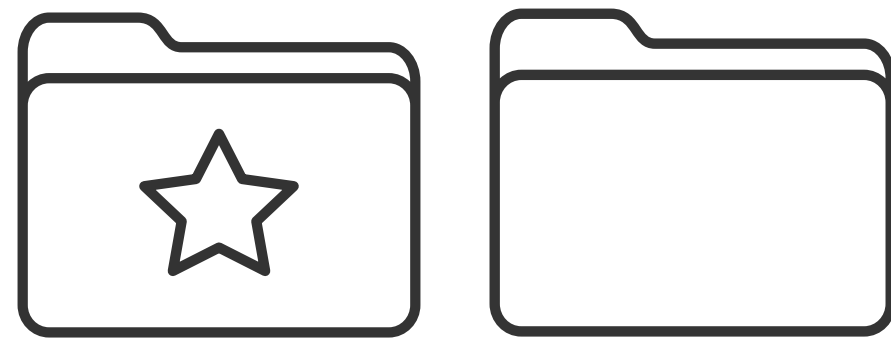


A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a slice of chocolate cake on a white plate. A single strawberry sits on top of the cake. A knife is visible in the foreground, partially obscured by the cake. The background is a warm, out-of-focus light brown.

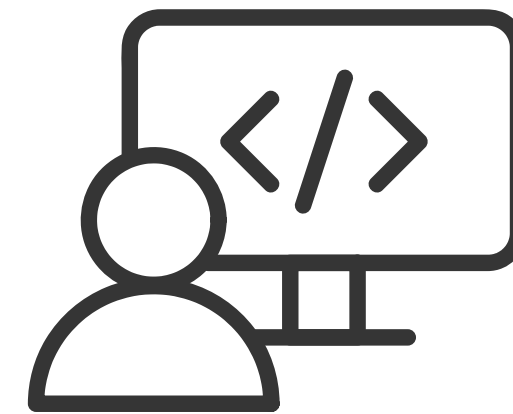
**MADE TO MEET MOST OF  
YOUR SPECIFICATIONS**



# PREMIUM THEMES



Use backend tools for light styling. Make heavier modifications using child theme.



Front-end may be slightly or highly-styled. Backend is fully tricked out.



Educate client on theme's WYSIWYG features, like shortcakes and updating.



# BENEFITS OF PREMIUM THEMES

- ✓ All the bells and whistles
- ✓ Made by experienced devs
- ✓ Designed for 1000s
- ✓ Complete and ready to launch
- ✓ Customer support and docs
- ✓ Paid updates for 1 year

# DRAWBACKS OF PREMIUM THEMES

- ✗ Someone has to pay
- ✗ Lacks documentation
- ✗ Bloated and complex
- ✗ Headache to alter or modify
- ✗ Locked into content structures
- ✗ Future updates and support = \$\$\$

# RESOURCES

- [wordpress.org/themes](https://wordpress.org/themes)
- [thethemefoundry.com](https://thethemefoundry.com)
- [wpexplorer.com](https://wpexplorer.com)
- [elegantthemes.com](https://elegantthemes.com)
- [themeforest.net](https://themeforest.net)
- [studiopress.com](https://studiopress.com)

Finding the Best Themes

*by Theme Foundry*



# THEME FRAMEWORKS

Made by third-parties and distributed for free or commercially.

**Starter Themes:**

**BREAK OUT YOUR  
EASY-BAKE OVEN!**

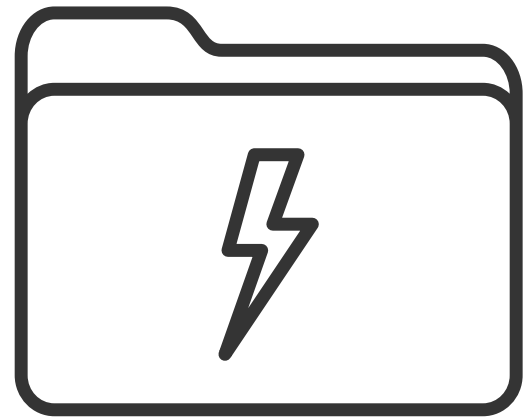


**LEARNING CURVE IS BOTH  
FUN AND FRIGHTENING**

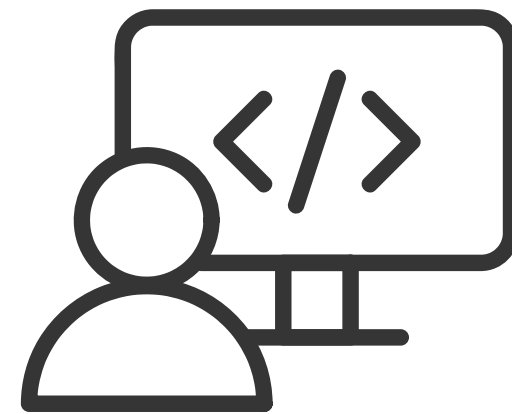




# THEME FRAMEWORKS



Front-end is often styled lightly and sometimes completely optional.



Backend powered by a variety of “hacks” such as shortcodes.



Drag-and-drop WYSIWYG is complex. Client needs education.



# BENEFITS OF THEME FRAMEWORKS

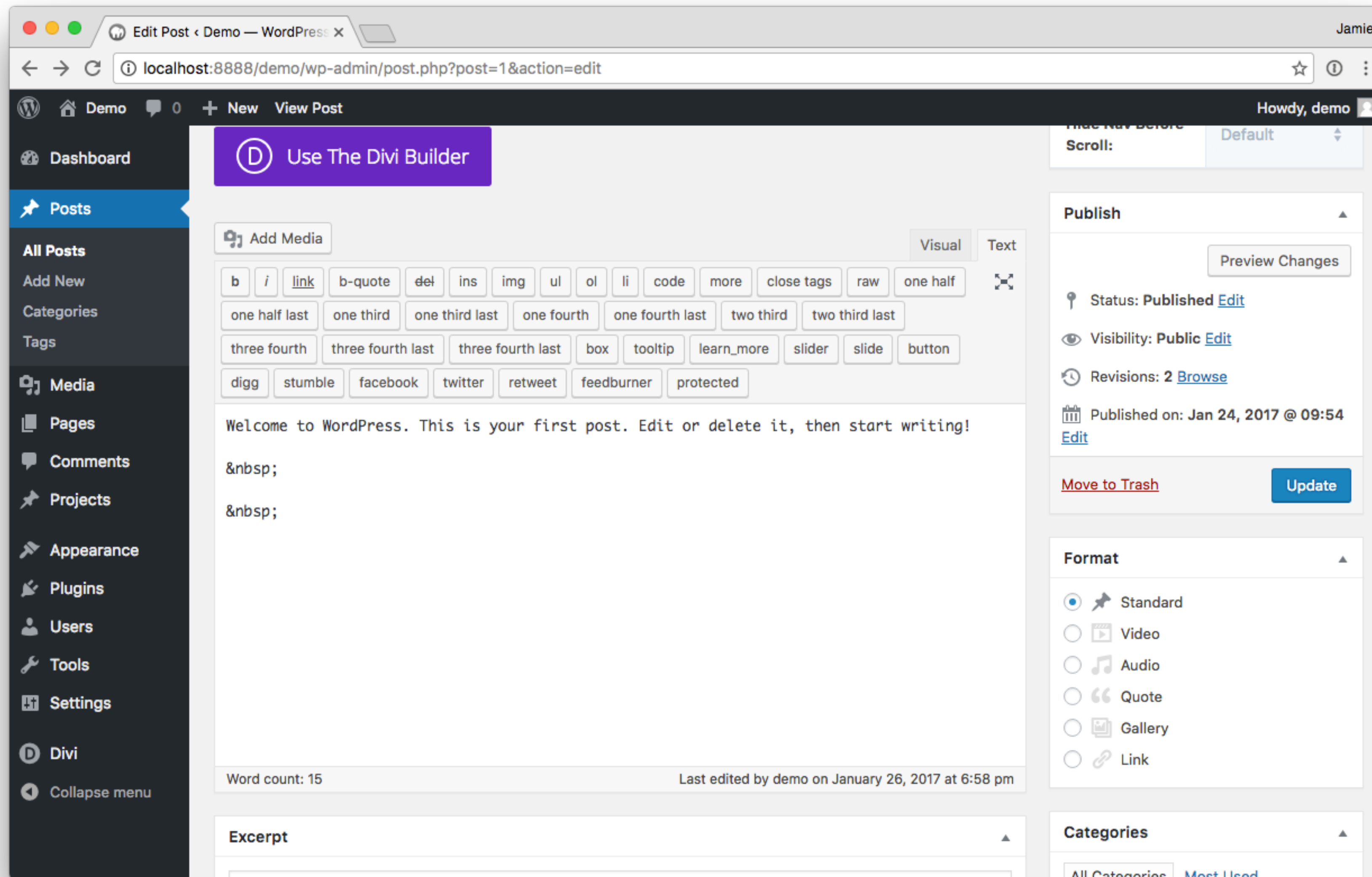
- ✓ All the bells and whistles
- ✓ High-level front-end
- ✓ Click-and-drag
- ✓ Greatest complexity in simplest form
- ✓ Tested for a variety of scenarios
- ✓ Customer service support

# DRAWBACKS OF THEME FRAMEWORKS

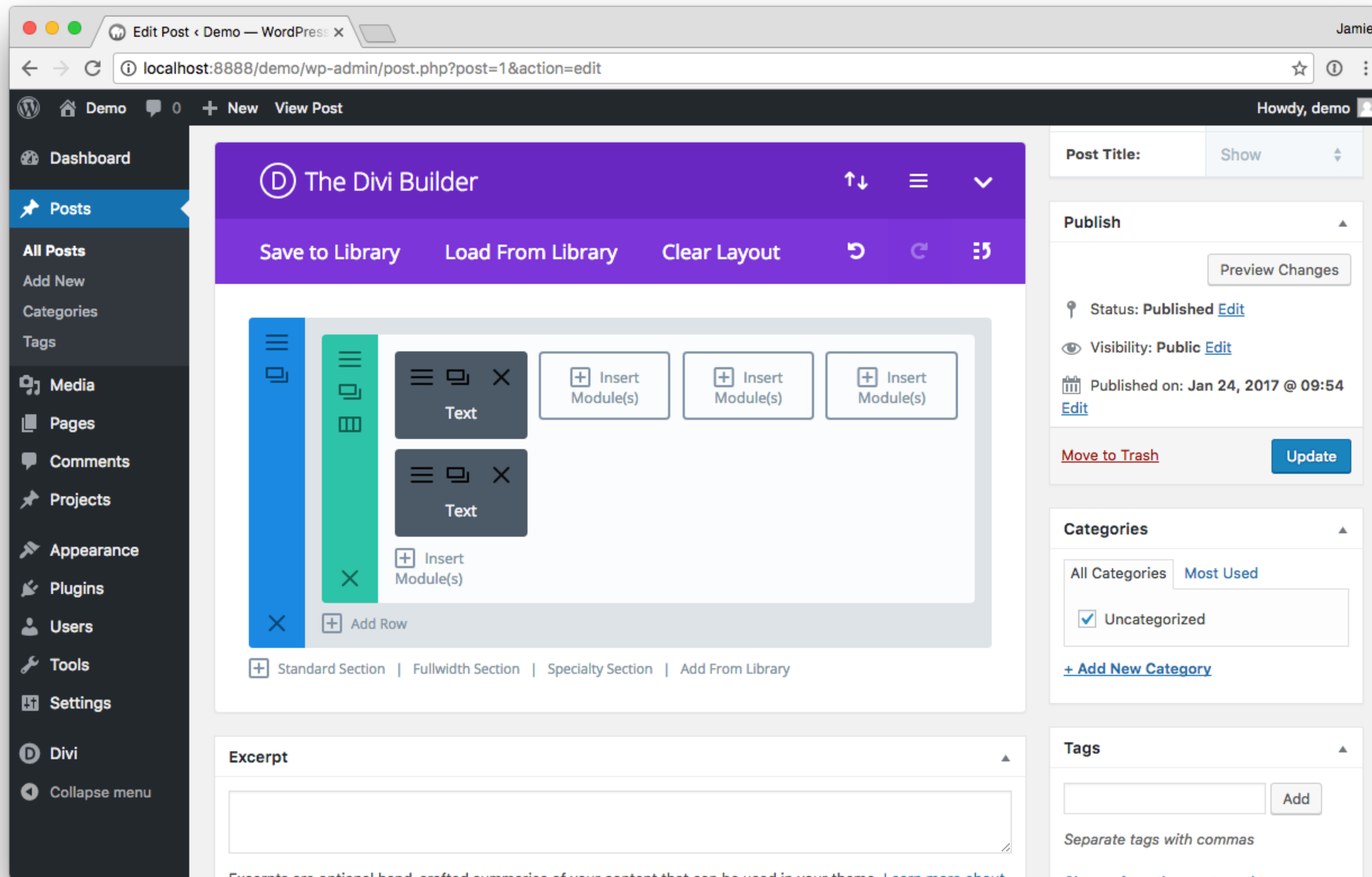
- ✗ Structures too rigid
- ✗ Migration nightmares
- ✗ Client can break things
- ✗ High learning curve per framework
- ✗ Front-end can feel flimsy
- ✗ Bugs can hinder final product

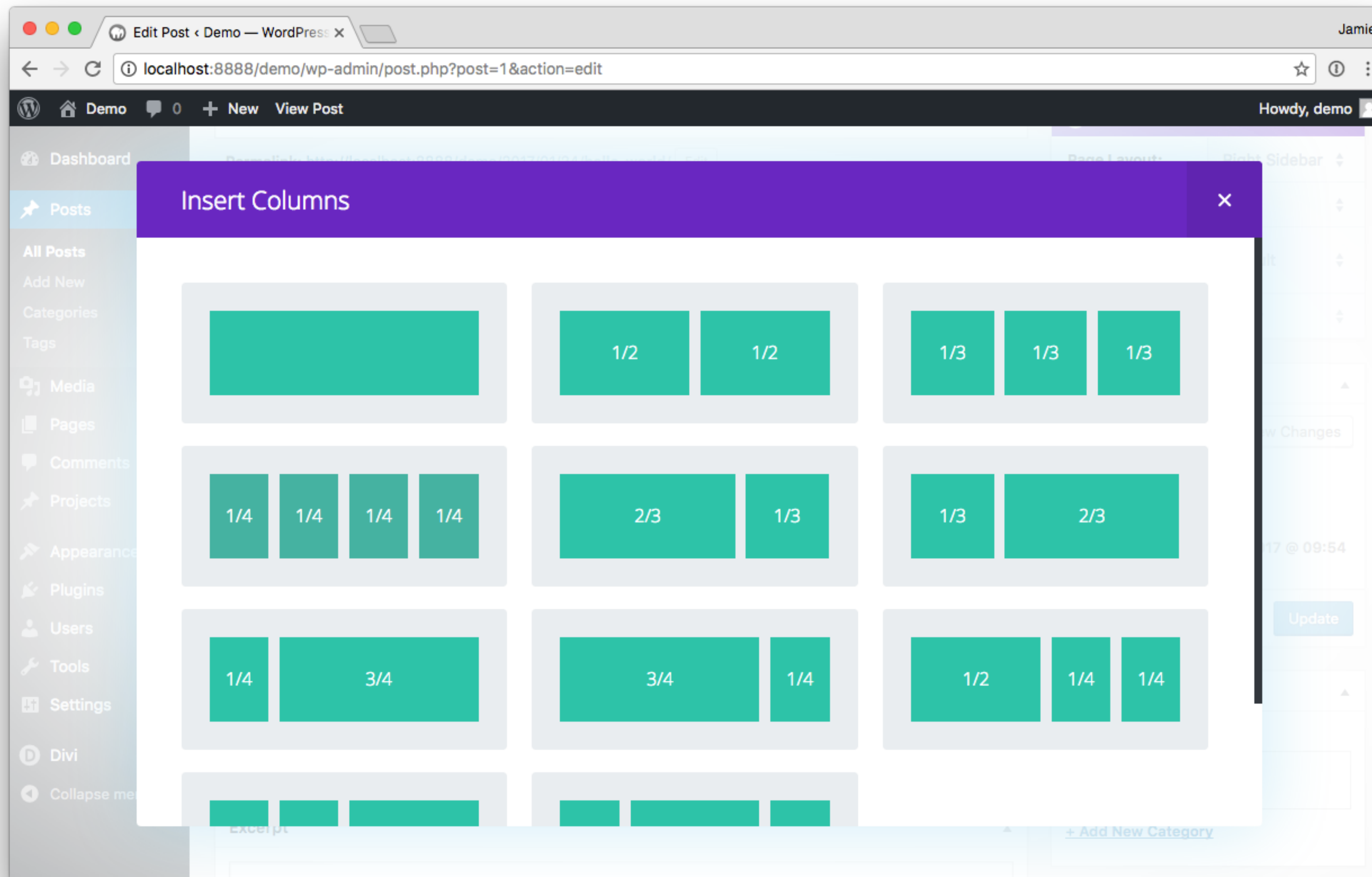
# RESOURCES

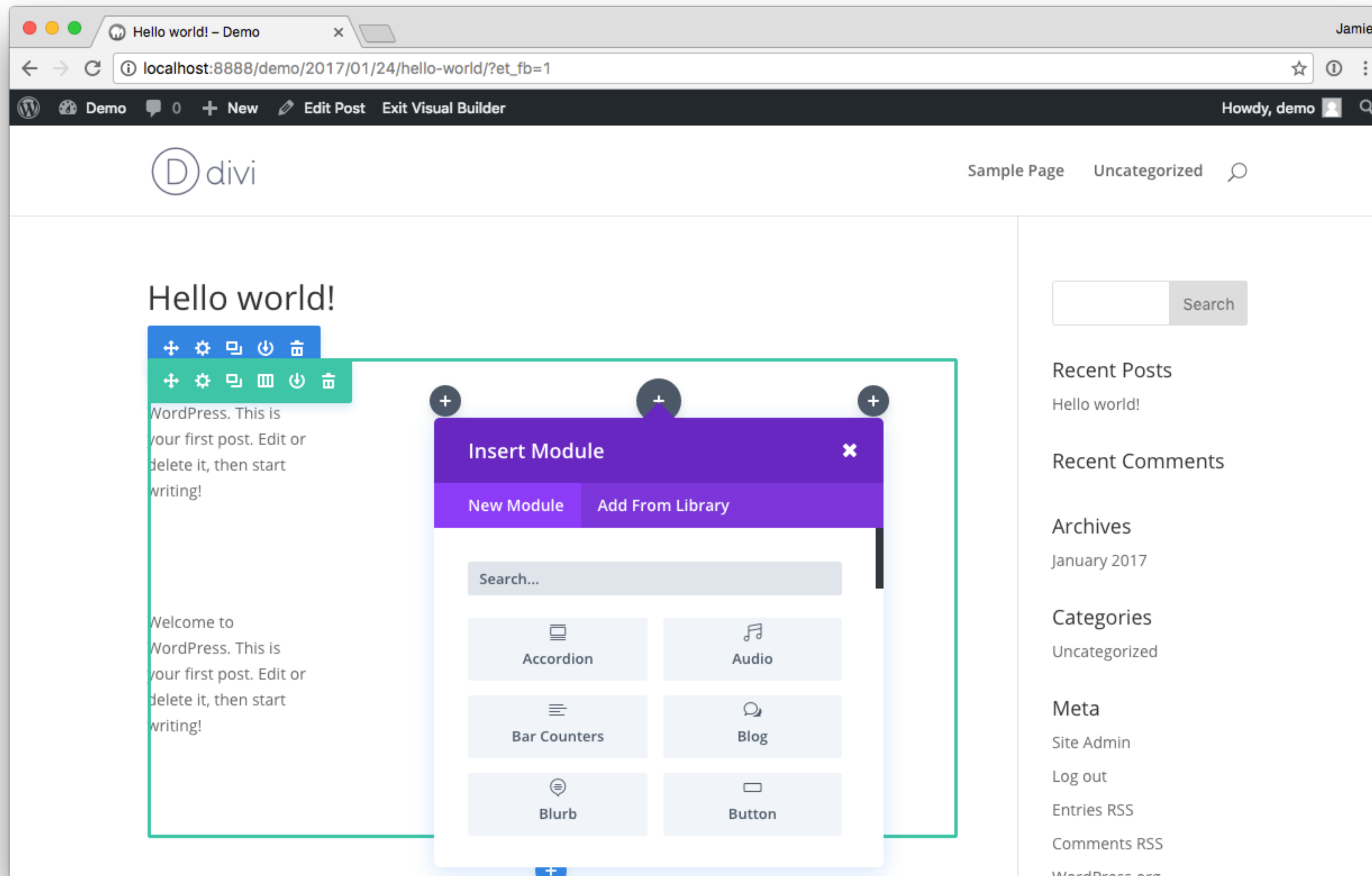
- [codex.wordpress.org/Theme\\_Frameworks](https://codex.wordpress.org/Theme_Frameworks)
- [my.studiopress.com/themes/genesis](https://my.studiopress.com/themes/genesis)
- [elegantthemes.com/gallery/divi](https://elegantthemes.com/gallery/divi)
- [woothemes.com/wooframework](https://woothemes.com/wooframework)
- [pagelines.com](https://pagelines.com)
- [semplichelabs.com](https://semplichelabs.com)

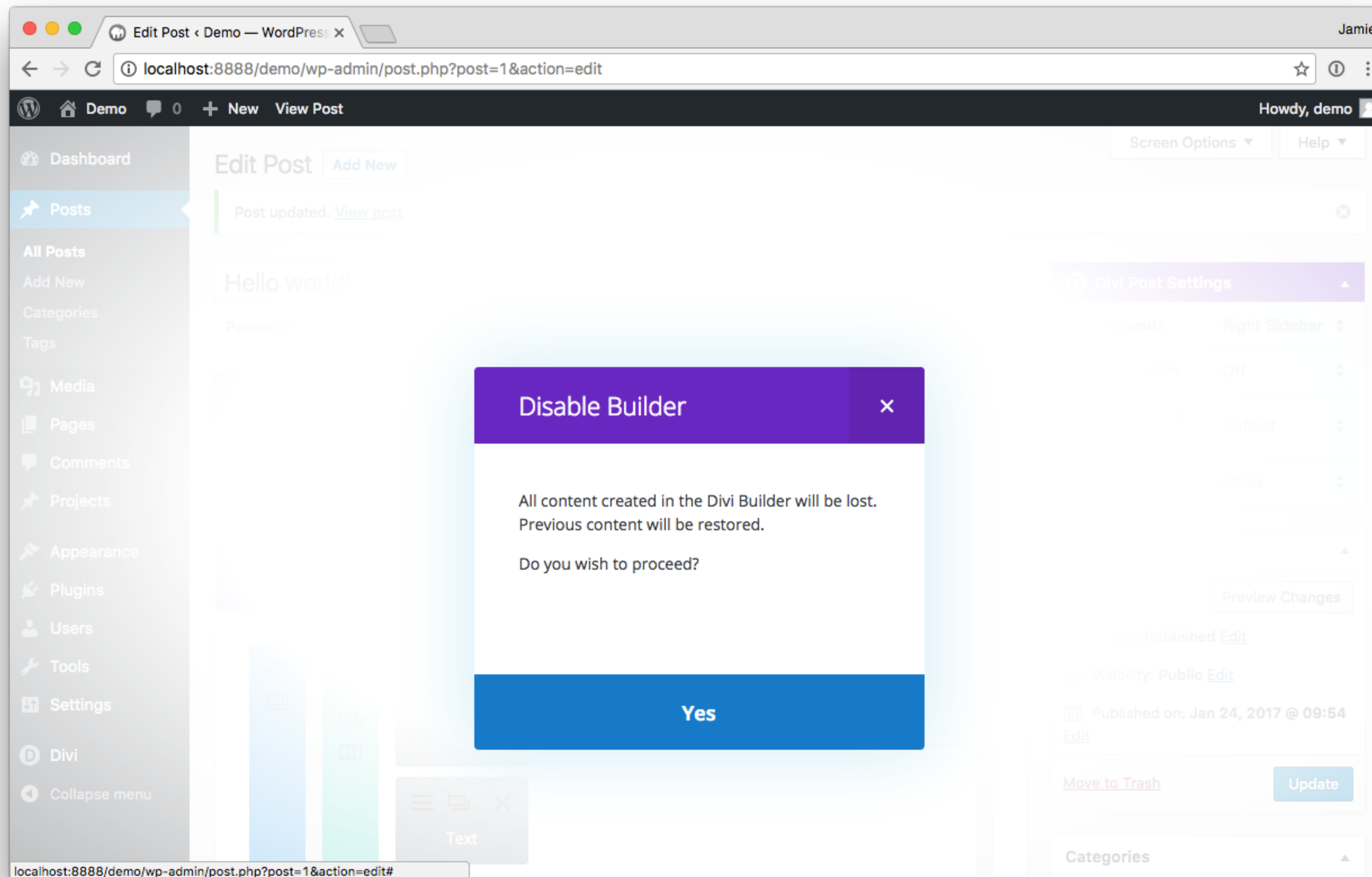




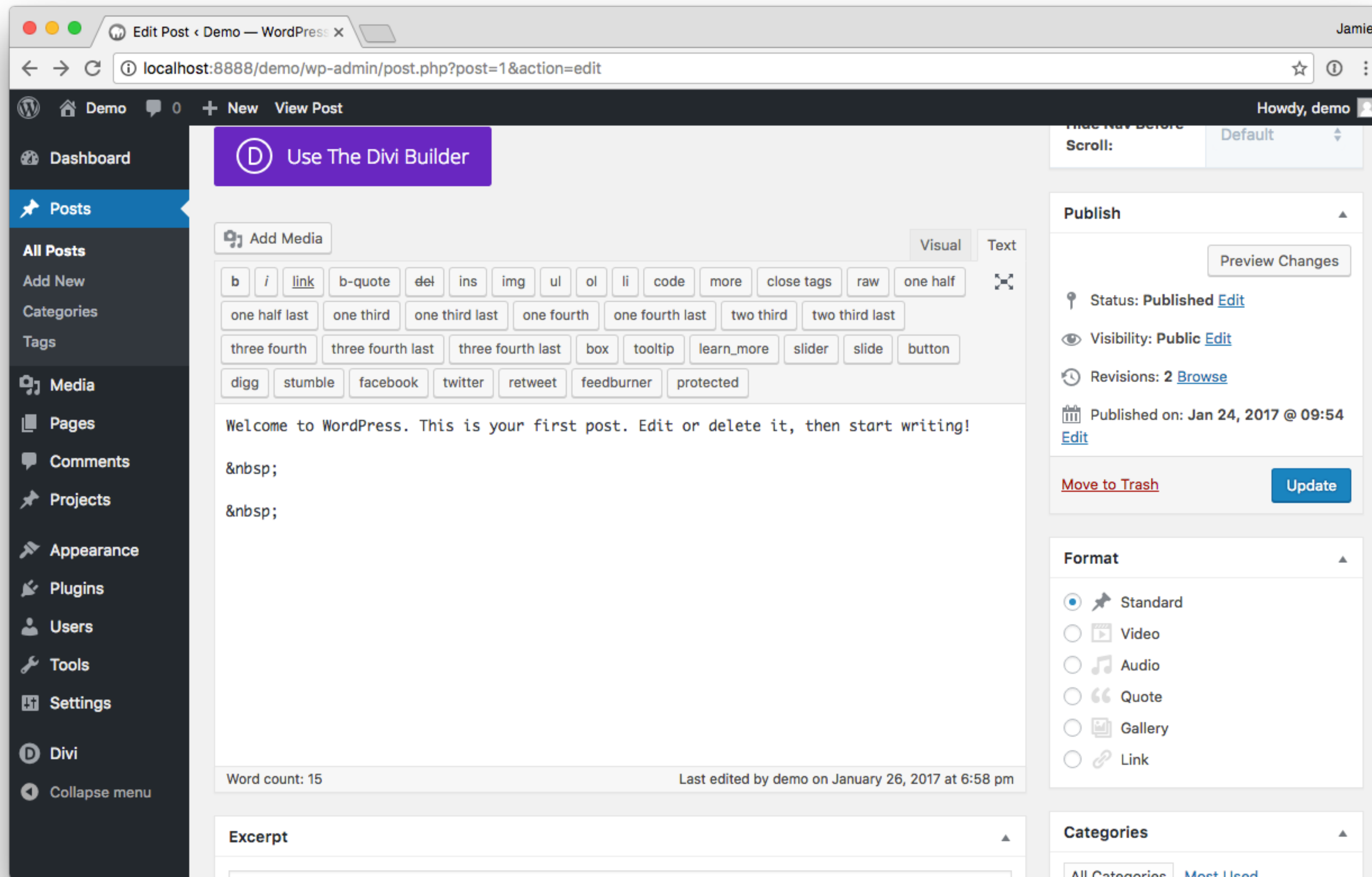












# IN CLOSING

It's up to you to determine how the cake happens.



# 5 METHODS

- ✓ Custom Themes
- ✓ Starter Themes
- ✓ Free Themes
- ✓ Premium Themes
- ✓ Theme Frameworks





**Wrap-up:**

**MIX AND MATCH,  
TEST AND PLAY**



**Wrap-up:**

**TRY A VARIETY OF  
THEMES AND SHOPS**

**Wrap-up:**

**DON'T OVERWHELM  
OTHERS WITH THE “HOW”**

**Wrap-up:**

**INFORM YOUR STAKEHOLDERS  
WHEN NECESSARY**

**Wrap-up:**

**ENSURE IT'S BEAUTIFUL,  
MEETS SPECIFICATIONS,  
AND DELIVERED ON-TIME.**



**Wrap-up:**

**ALL 5 METHODS  
ARE EQUALLY VALID!**

**LET'S EAT SOME CAKE!**