

How To Use WORDPRESS:



A Beginners Guide

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BLOGGERSJOURNAL.COM

WORDPRESS

101

How To Use WordPress: A Beginners Guide

What is WordPress101?

WordPress101 is a guide brought to you by Mark Bell from BloggersJournal.com.

A while back, I used to be making websites by hand. I was coding each and every page to the requirements I was given. The problem came when I needed a way to easily update the content of the website, without having to get my hands dirty with lots of HTML coding.

I soon found myself developing my own content management system. However, it was a lot of work, and I hadn't the time. I decided to go forward with some of the free alternatives, starting out with Joomla and ModX. However, these systems seemed quite complicated to use. Once I knew how they worked, as with anything - let's be honest - they were easy to use. I wanted a solution that would be easier to learn for my clients.

I now use WordPress for any site I am working on, and provide tuition to my clients on how to use it. I guess you could say this is where this book grew from!

About Mark

I am not a professional in the web industry. In fact, far from it. I've a degree in Aeronautical Engineering, and making websites is a fun hobby that I've managed to earn some extra cash from. I work for a university in the Aerospace sector, and I've been fortunate enough to have travelled a little with my job.

I started learning how to make websites back around 2000, if not before! I taught myself - first using Microsoft FrontPage - using the design interface to construct the web page, then using the code interface to learn HTML. It really went from there. I've now experience of coding with these languages and markups: HTML, CSS, PHP, Javascript, MySQL, XSLT, RSS.

If you'd like to learn more [about me](#), check out my website at, www.BloggersJournal.com



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Key Functionality

Before you start

Before you start using WordPress, there are a number of plugins which I recommend using to enhance the functionality of the core WordPress installation. The great thing is that these plugins are free, and easily installed through your WordPress Dashboard.

I recommend these plugins,

Akismet

Is a fantastic plugin that detects spam comments on your blog, and automatically puts them in the spam bin. Be careful however, as occasionally legitimate comments are listed as spam. Filter these out of the spam bin manually before deleting the spam comments completely.

All in One SEO Pack

Allows you to customise the title tag and the description and keyword meta tags for each post (or page) on your website.

All in One Webmaster

Allows you to centrally control any global scripts which are required by your site. For example, you can easily install your Google Analytics information here.

Contact Form 7

I'll show you later how you can use this plugin to create a Contact form on your website without knowing any HTML.

Easy Privacy Policy

It is often good to have a privacy policy on your website which explains how you manage the data that is collected from visitors. It saves you having to write out your own! This plugin is used by many internet marketers to great success.

File Gallery

Is a plugin which enhances the existing controls for the media management in each of your posts (or pages).

Lightbox 2

Creates the glossy translucent popup boxes which are very common throughout the internet at the minute. This feature is used to create popup-image galleries with relative ease.

Simple Google Sitemap

This super plugin automatically creates and submits a search engine friendly site map of your website to Google, Ask, Yahoo and MSN search engines.

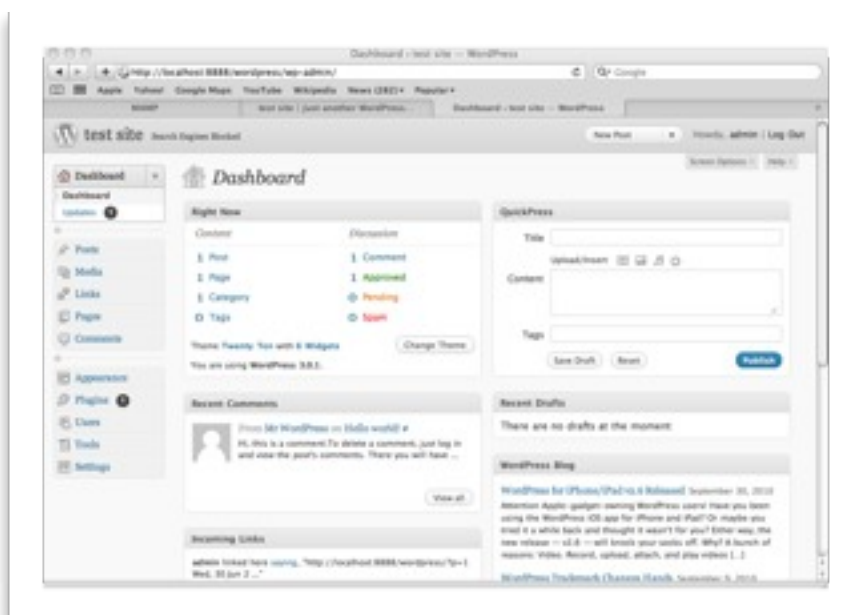
Logging in and dashboard

You access the control panel for your WordPress installation by adding “/wp-admin” to your website address. So, if your website address is www.yourdomain.com, you access your admin panel via, www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin.

To log in you will need your username and password. The default administrator username is “admin”. However, this may be different if you changed it when installing WordPress. Your password was also set when WordPress is installed.



The standard layout of the dashboard will show you a summary of your website statistics as well as a number of other things. The first, is a panel which allows you to write a very quick post. It's limited functionality, but great for writing posts which are short and sweet! There is also a panel featuring a summary of your most recent comments, and another which shows your draft posts - perfect for reminding you what you have still to publish/complete.



Posts or pages

Posts and pages are two different ways of publishing to your WordPress website. They are slightly different too, and for different purposes.

Posts

Posts are used to create continuous content. This type of content is often used for weblogs, or new systems. When you write a post, you create an article which is categorised.

By default your content is shown on your homepage from all categories. When you click on a category name, you will see all posts which are included in that category.

Pages

Pages are used to create static content. This type of content is used for creating pages which will not be changing regularly. For instance, you would create your “About Me” page using the WordPress Pages system. Alternative Pages include, Disclaimers, Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policies and Contact pages.

The Media Library

Everyone loves a picture on a website, or a video all the more. WordPress offers a fantastic way to centrally manage all of your uploaded media. From pictures and videos to PDF documents and much more.

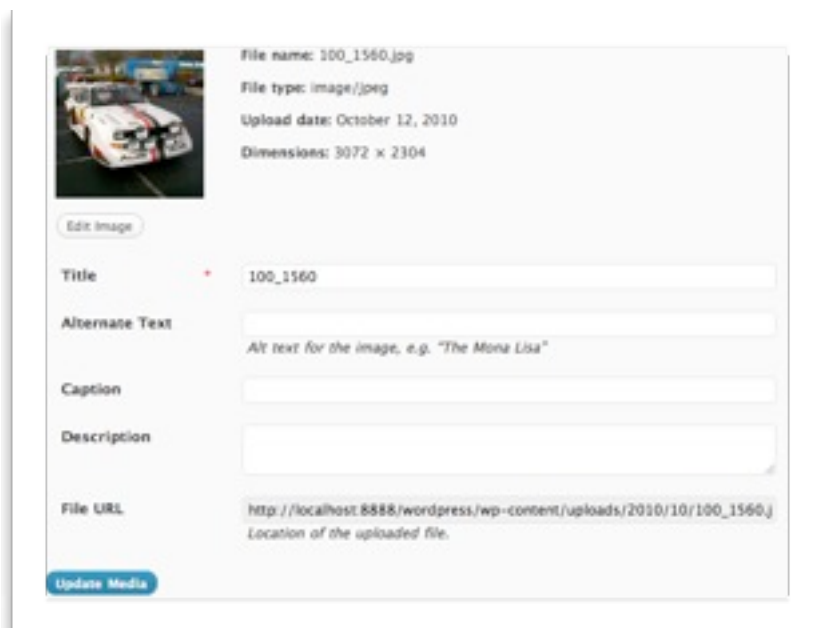
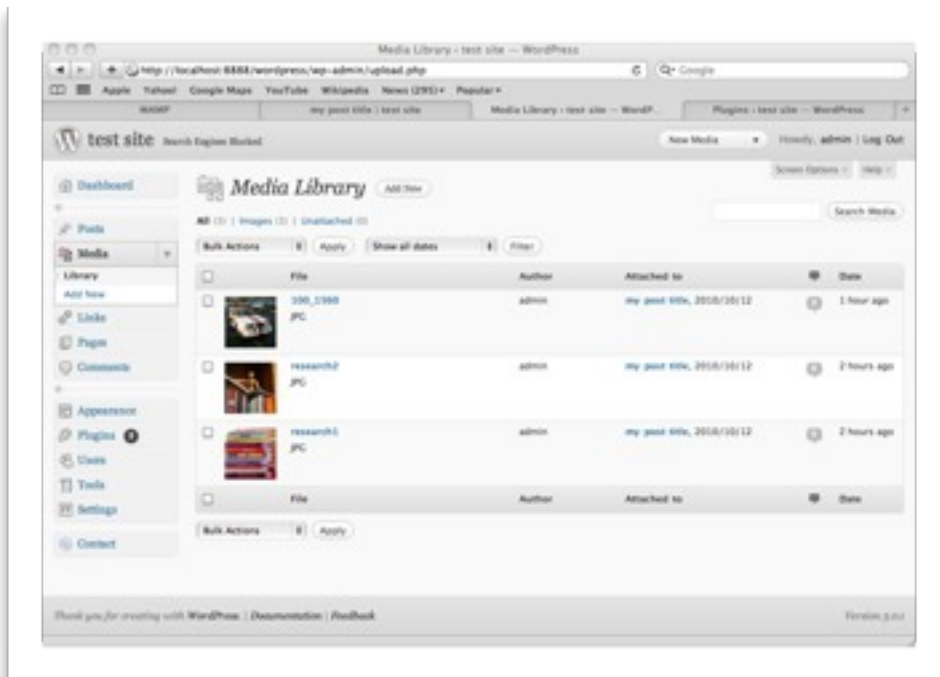
The Media Library is accessible on the left panel of your Dashboard, underneath the Posts menu. By default, you are shown a list of all of your posts in the Media Library. You can also easily upload new media.

The Media Library shows a list of all existing media. Each file is listed with a small thumbnail to remind you what it looks like. The author column informs you who uploaded the file. The “Attached to” column refers to the post title for which the image is displayed. The two remaining columns list how many media tags are associated with the image, and the date it was uploaded

Hovering your mouse over any row in the list will give you the following commands,

- Edit
- Delete Permanently
- View

Editing your image allows you to alter the Title and other associated information. This includes the Alternate Text, Caption and Description.

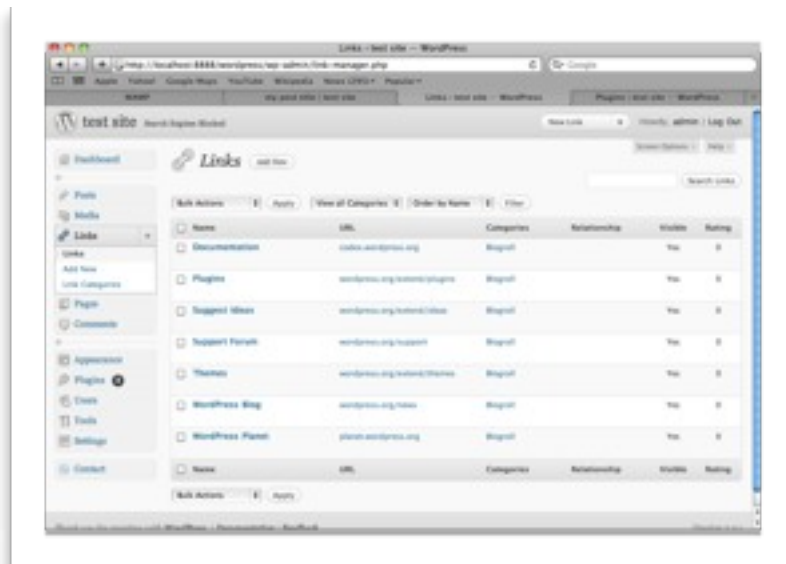


Deleting the image will remove the image from your web space, and therefore from all posts on your website.

The final option, View, opens the full size image on your website.

Links

Links is part of WordPress and allows you to create links to other websites which you find useful. You create your links, and like posts, categorise them.

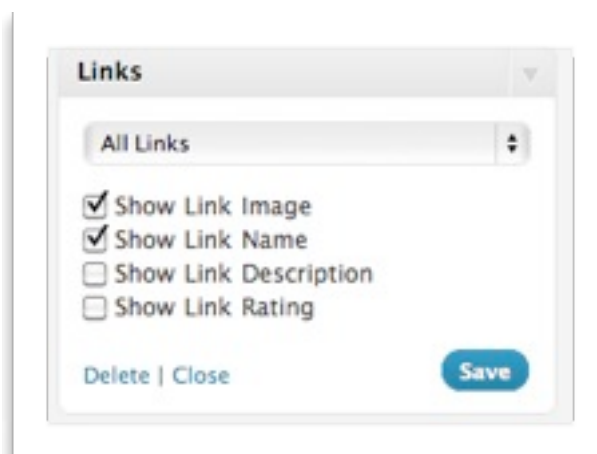


When adding new links, each link is given a name, which is shown on your website. An associated web address is required. You can also add an optional description. You can also add your link to a category. There are additional pieces of information which can be specified. These include the target of your link, as well as the relationship between you and the targeted website.

Publishing Links

Links are published to your blog using the Widgets feature. You create a Links Widget, and set up the Widget to publish links from selected categories. Widgets are accessed through the Appearance menu on the Dashboard.

You can drag your “Links” widget to one of the sidebar panels on the right hand side.



This allows you to choose whether you want all your links to show, or just those from a particular category. The check boxes provide some additional display options.

Comments

One of the most useful features of WordPress is that it is perfect for create weblogs - online communities. Comments allows your readers to leave a comment after your post. It's a great way to engage with your readers, and allow them to give feedback, or to contribute to your post.

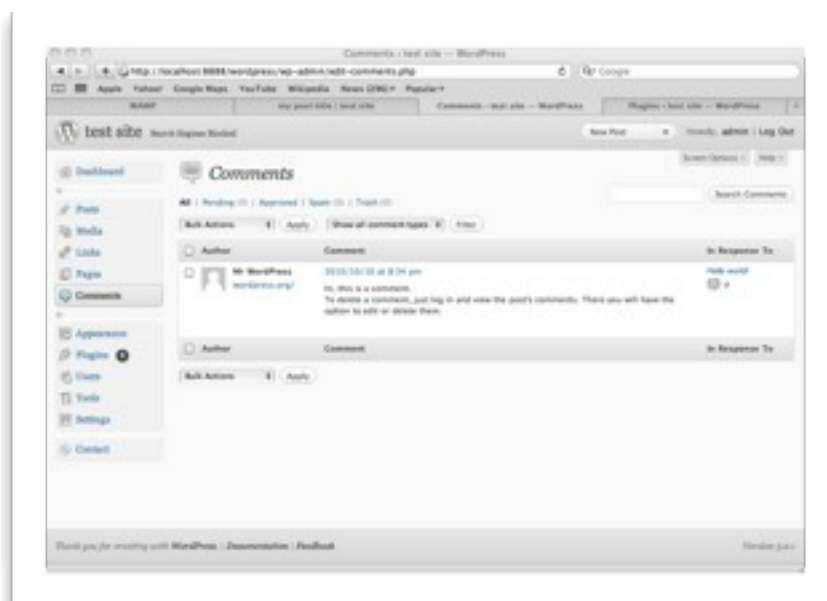
There are many different plugins available to enhance the Comments feature. The most recommended one is called Akismet. This excellent plugin manages your spam. We're all familiar with getting useless post through our door. The same happens on the internet.

Akismet works by assessing the content of the comment, and evaluating details of the user against a collection of data, to determine whether or not the comment may be considered spam. If the content is considered spam, it is marked as spam in your dashboard. If not, the comment is either held over for approval, or published below your post.

On the comments page, you are provided with a summary of the comments on your website. Each page contains 20 entries. The display can be categorised to show,

- All comments - shows all of the comments, regardless of their status
- Pending comments - comments awaiting your approval for publication are listed as pending
- Approved comments - are comments which are visible on your website
- Spam comments - these comments are those written by spam robots scouring the internet, or invaluable content written by users. These comments are not visible to the reader
- Trashed comments - these comments are hidden from the website, and are ready to be deleted permanently

The list of comments shows a summary of each and every comment, and which post it has been written on.



Hovering over any comment, you can instantly approve/unapprove it clicking on the link. Similarly, you can reply, edit, mark as spam or delete the comment.

Website Management

Appearance

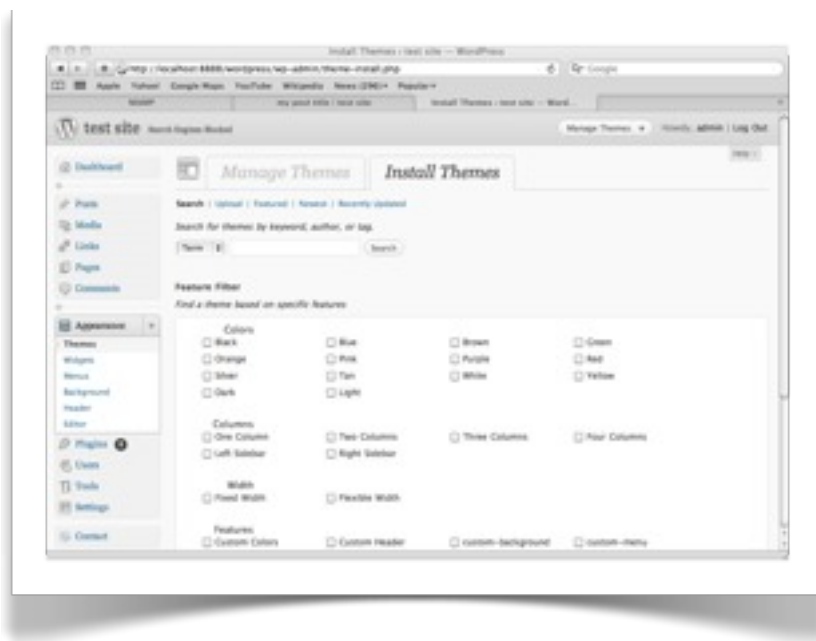
The appearance of your website is something that is used to brand your service. It is imperative that your site remains memorably whilst enabling your readers to browse your content with relative ease.

The Appearance settings on WordPress allow you to manage your,

- Website Theme
- Widgets
- Menus
- Additional Theme options

Theme Management

There are many free themes available for installation through the Dashboard, however there are also premium themes available at other websites, such as [WooThemes](#). When you launch the Themes page, click on the “Install Themes” tab.



Here you can search through a library of themes which are ready for you to install and use on your website.

When you find a theme you like, click the install button. Instantly, the theme installs from the WordPress server to your website. When it is installed, you need to activate the theme to make it go live on your site.

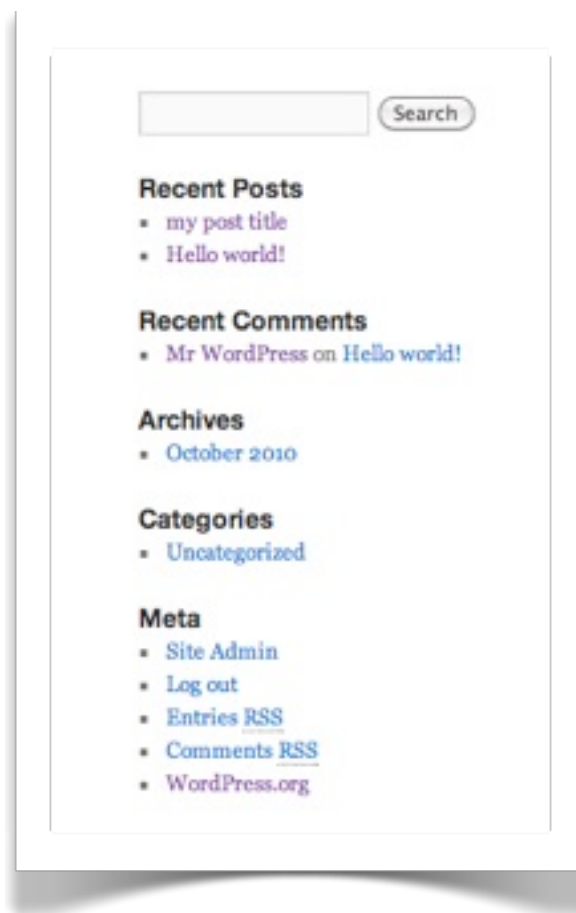
After this, you can play around with the theme’s options (if there are any), and set up the Menus and Widgets.

Widgets

Widgets are essentially blocks which add additional functionality to your website. Some of the common widgets include,

- Search Box
- Recent Posts
- Recent Comments
- Archives
- Categories
- Links

You can place widgets into widget areas - traditionally, in the side bar. However, modern themes provide numerous areas which are capable of facilitating widgets. On the home page, here are some example outputs of widgets.

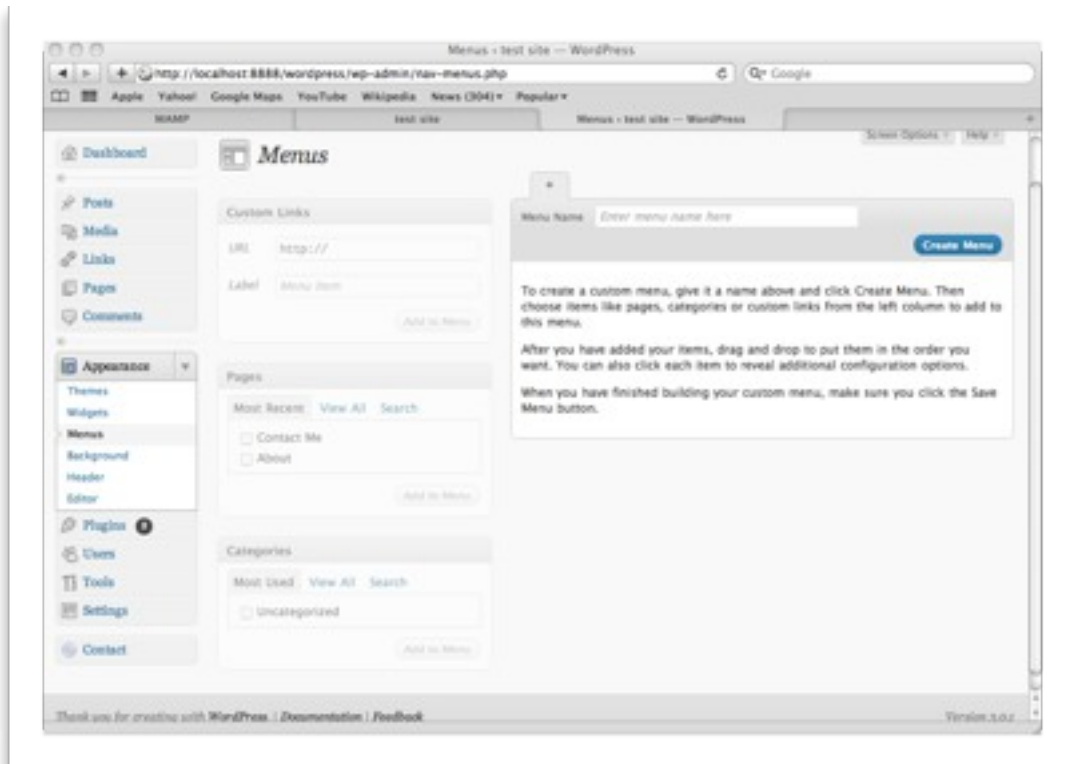


Menu Manager

WordPress 3 featured an excellent feature - the Menu Manager. Traditionally WordPress themes create the navigation bar of the website using either Categories or Pages. With the Menu Manager you can create a custom menu. Whether you use the default settings, or a custom menu is determined in the Theme Settings.

With Menu Manager, you can create as many menus as you need. Each item in the menu can be created from a selection of Categories, Pages or custom links. Simply set the menu item up on the left, and insert it to the menu on the right.

You can drag and drop menu items to different part of the menu to create a navigation hierarchy.

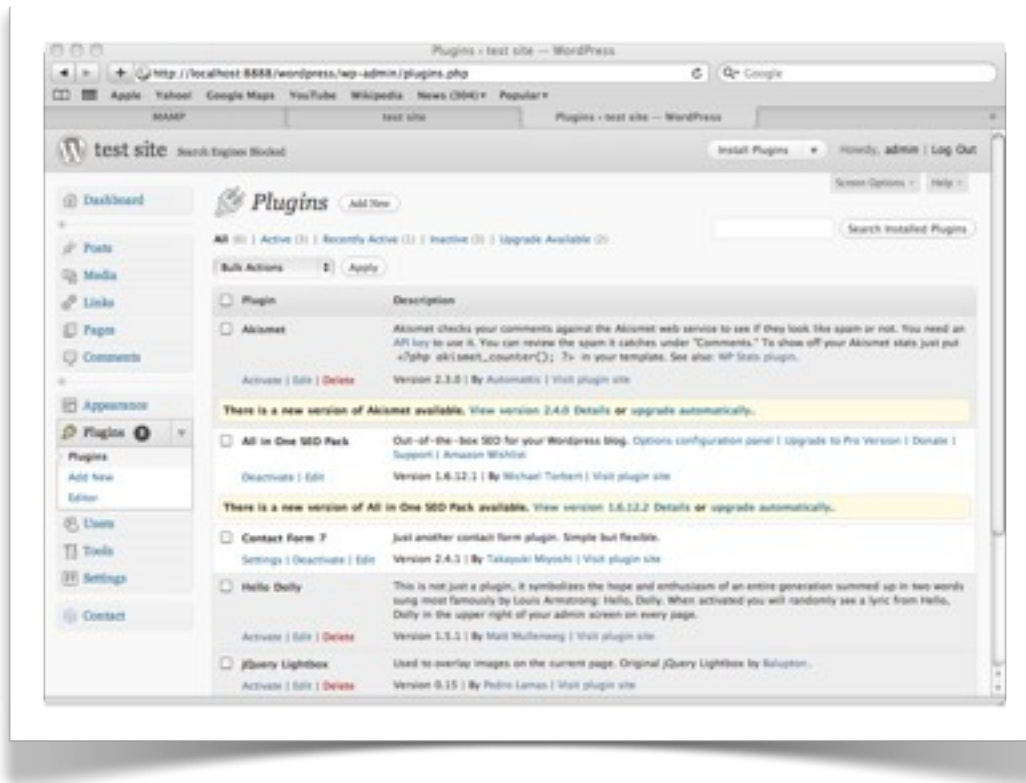


Plugins

WordPress has a core functionality. However, this can be extended using Plugins. These are small programs which run using the WordPress framework. Fortunately they are incredibly easy to use.

Clicking the Plugins link on your Dashboard, you are shown a summary of your existing plugins. By default, the display shows All Plugins which are installed. However, you can sort your Plugins by,

- Active
- Recently Active
- Inactive
- Upgrade Available



Active plugins are those which have been installed and are functional on your website.

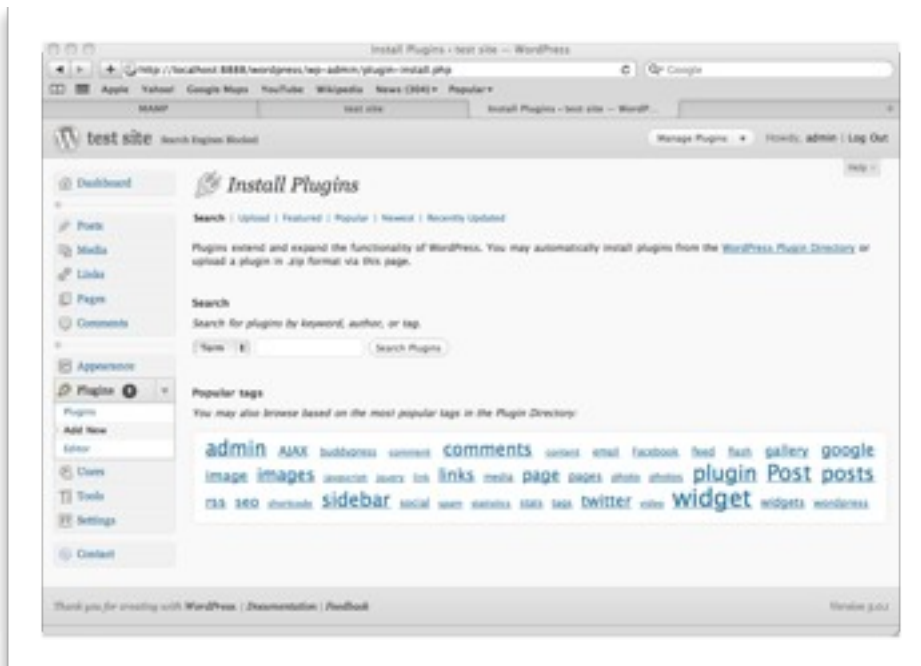
Recently active plugins are those which have been installed and activated recently.

Inactive plugins are plugins which have been installed on your website, but are not in use.

When plugins have an upgrade available, they are shown as “Upgrade Available”.

Installing a WordPress Plugin

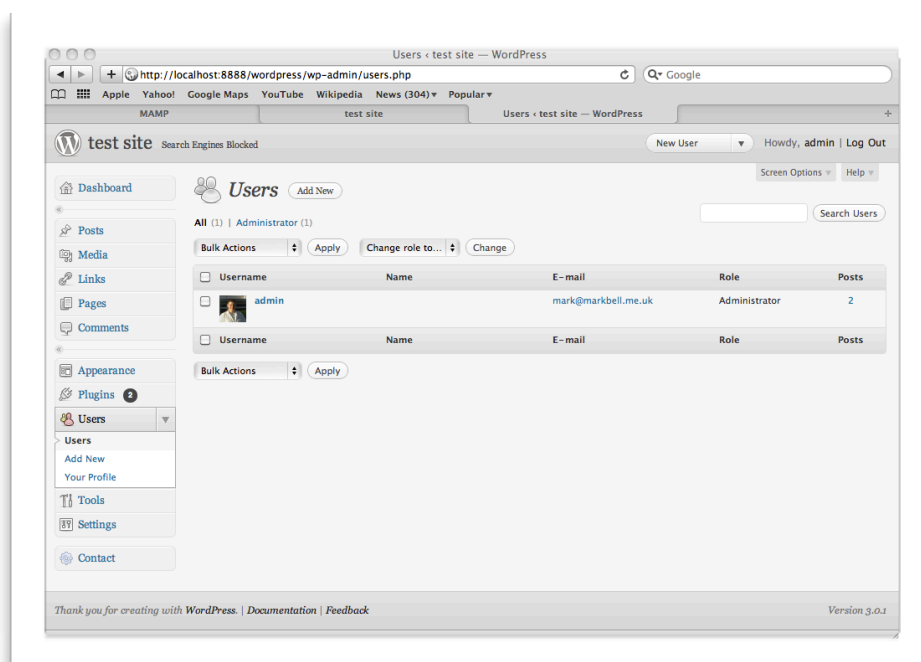
Installing a WordPress Plugin is very easy. Click the “Add New” button in the Plugins menu, and you are taken to a screen which allows you to search the Plugin’s library, Upload your own plugin, or view the featured, popular, newest and updated plugins.



When you search for your plugins, you install them by clicking the “Install Plugin” link, and click OK/Yes on the popup. The screen will show that the plugin is being downloaded from WordPress, and installed on your website. Once it is installed, click the link “Activate Plugin”.

Users

WordPress offers some user management features. The Users menu on the Dashboard summarises all of the users which are active on the website. WordPress features a number of user groups, each with different functionality.



These groups are,

- Subscriber
- Contributor
- Author
- Editor
- Administrator

A Subscriber is a user that can only manage their profile on your website.

A Contributor is a user who can write posts or pages for your website, and can submit them for approval.

An Author is a user who, like Contributor, can write posts or pages. However, Authors have the power to publish their own posts or pages.

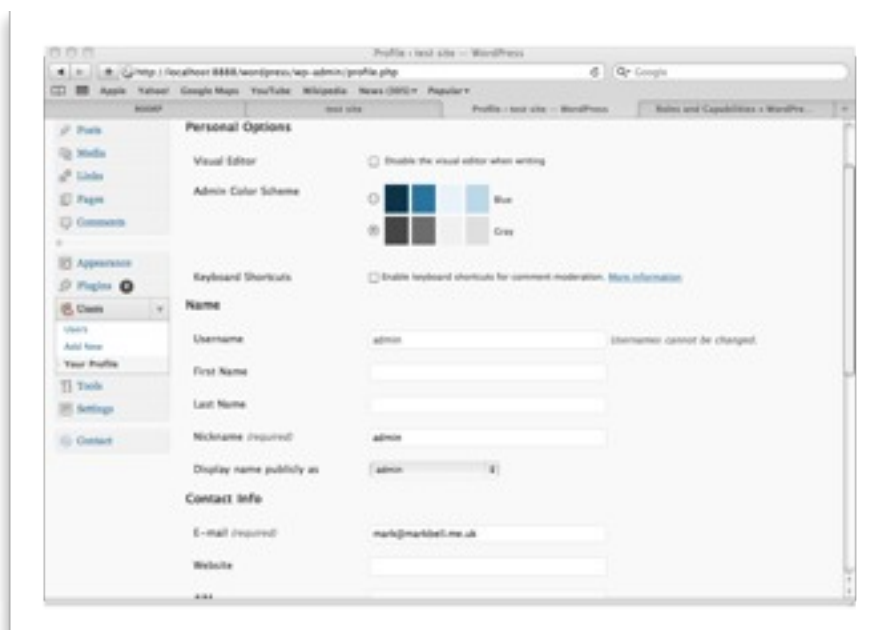
An Editor inherits all the functionality of an Author, with the additional ability to edit and publish other users' posts.

Administrators are those users who have access to the administration functions in the Dashboard.

You can use the Users manager to create user accounts, and even have their login information emailed to them.

Editing Users

Hovering your mouse over any user in the summary, you can click on their associated Edit Link. You have total control over their profile. Similarly, this is the same information which can be altered by the user when they log in.



Tools

The Tools menu on the Dashboard provides you with some additional tools which may be convenient for you. For example you can convert your Tags to Categories or vice versa.

There are also import/export functions which allow you to transfer content from other blogging applications, or even an RSS feed. You can import blog posts or comments from,

- Blogger
- Blogroll
- LiveJournal
- Movable Type and TypePad
- WordPress

You can also export the posts, comments, categories and tags from your current installation is a useful method of performing a basic backup of your content.

It should be noted that some plugins when installed may appear in the Tools menu.

Settings

The Settings panel is probably where you will spend some time familiarising yourself with the core functionality with you WordPress installation. The settings are broken down into 7 core sections. Additional settings will appear when you install plugins.

- General
- Writing
- Reading
- Discussion
- Media
- Privacy
- Permalinks

The General Settings give you a place to set your website Title and Tag line. The address of your website/blog is defined as well as your email address. There is also provision to set up your date and time formats.

The Writing Settings sets up how WordPress handles new posts and pages on your website.

Reading Settings set up WordPress to display your website content.

Discussion Settings give you total control over how your website comments are managed. There is provision for moderation processes, as well as banning particular domains.

The Media Settings allow you to define the sizes of your Thumbnail, Medium and Large image dimensions.

The Privacy setting is very compact. It enables you to set your website to be visible by search engines or not.

The last settings, Permalinks, define how your website links work. Here you can set up the structure of your website addresses. By default your web addresses will look like,

domain.com?p=123

However, you can change the structure to something much more informative. I recommend using a Custom Structure. Enter the following line into the text box.

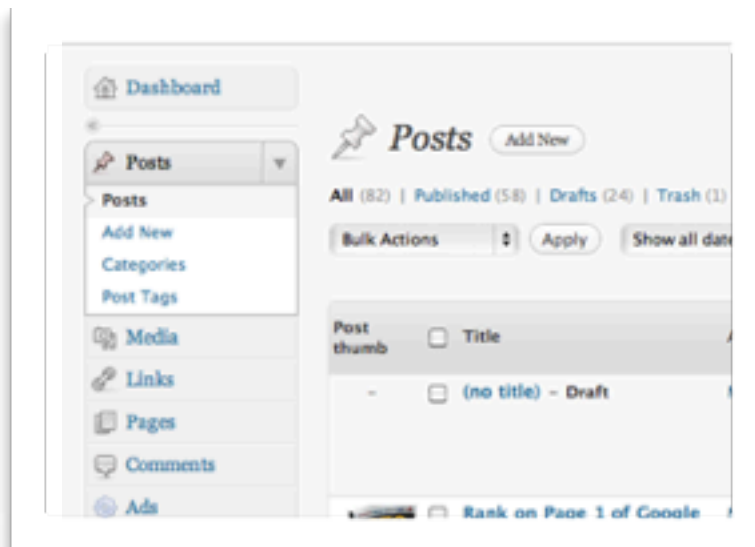
`/%category%/postname%/`

Demonstration

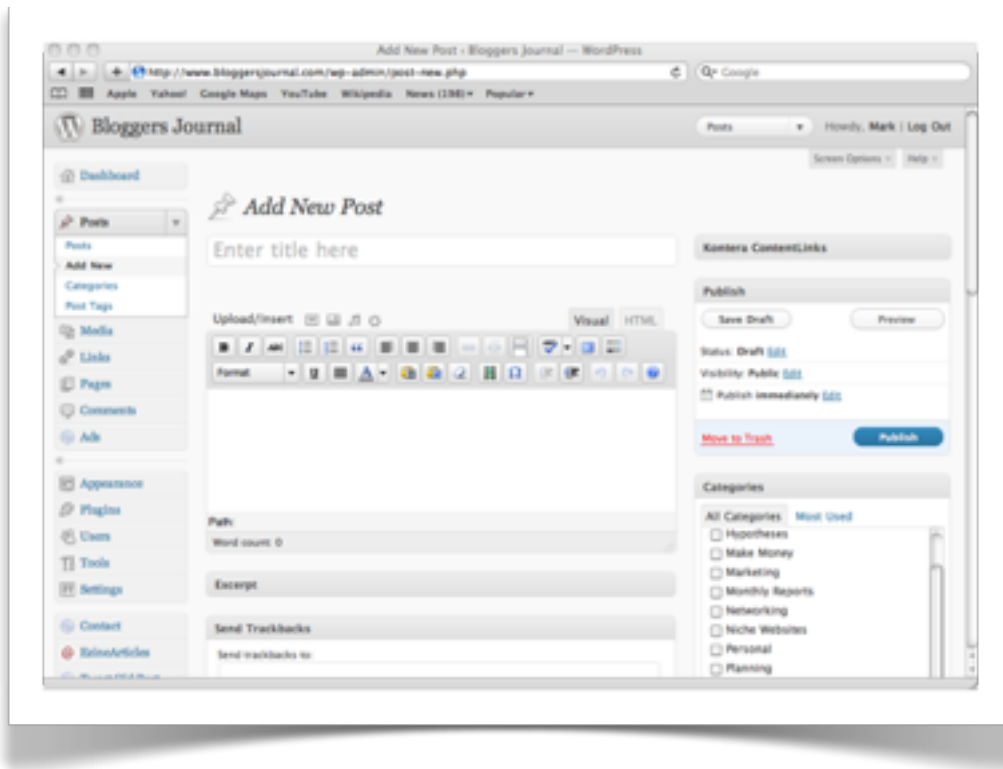
How to create your first post

Creating your first post on your WordPress website is very simple. When you have logged into your dashboard, click on Posts (on the left side of the dashboard). A sub-menu will load up, with options to view all of your Posts and Add New Post.

Click on Add New Post.



You are presented with the new post page, which allows you to write anything that you need to publish on your site. Each post on your website will contain a title. The great thing with WordPress is the WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) text editor. No longer do you need to learn HTML code to make text bold, or add a list. Simply click!



To start out your post, give it a title, and enter it in the textbox at the top (where it says, “Enter title here”).

When you’re ready, start typing your post into the text area below the title. You’re not limited too much to the length of post you create. Fortunately, WordPress can accommodate posts which are over 1,000 words!

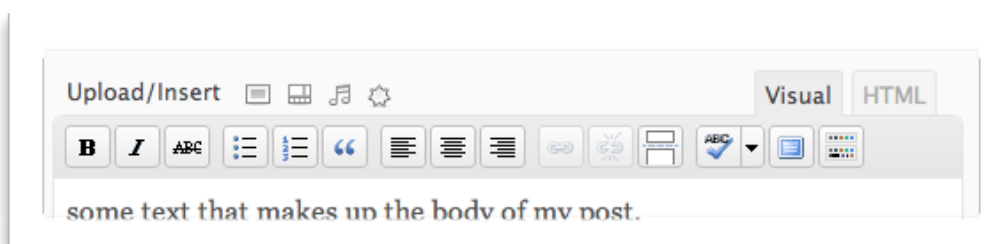
You can categorise your posts to make it easier to link posts together. On the right side of your dashboard, there is a box which lists all of the categories. You can link your posts under as many categories as you wish.

Finally when you have created your post, you can publish it but hitting the big turquoise button in the Publish panel.

How to insert an image or gallery

When you are creating a post, you can add any type of media to your post. This means you can insert an image (or gallery), or a video, or even link to a different type of file - a PDF, for example.

To insert media, you use the 4 buttons above the text editor.



The 4 buttons, above the text editor buttons, listed left to right are,

- Images
- Videos
- Audio
- Media

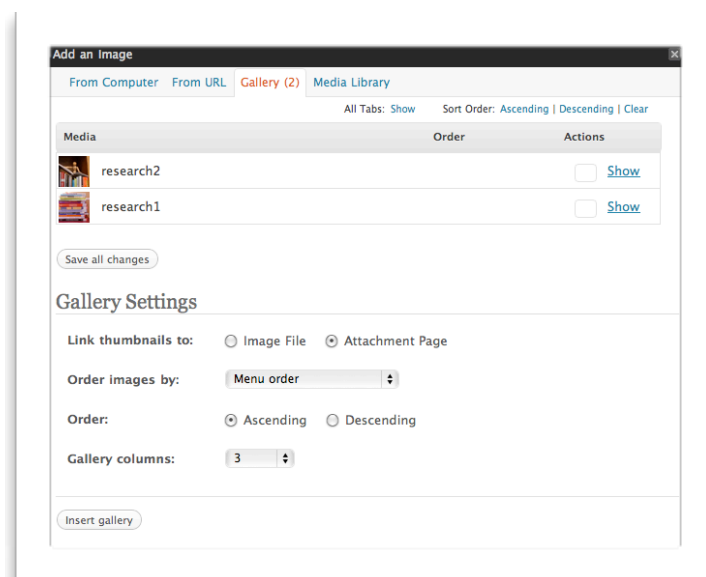
It is common that images are placed into posts (or pages) to add appeal to the content. To upload images, click on the Add Images button (left).



Typically you will upload images from your computer. However, you may also link images from another source, such as another website, or even use one of the images in your media library.

When you upload images, the files are assigned to the post you are working on. A fourth tab will appear in the popup box called Gallery, with the number of uploaded images shown in brackets. If it doesn't, close the popup box, and click the Add Image button again to reload the popup box.

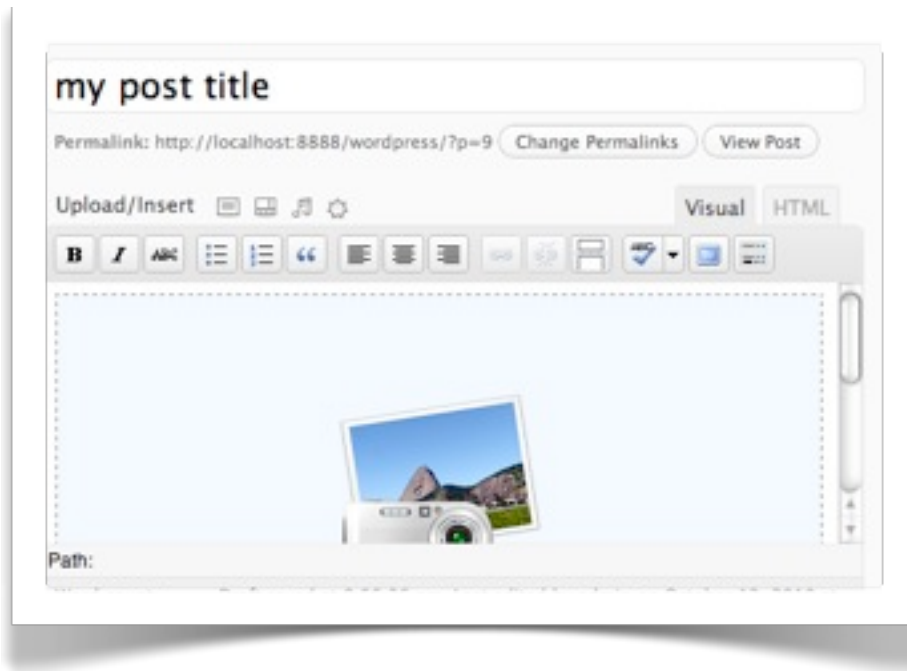
Clicking on the gallery, you can see a summary of the images uploaded. On the right side of each image, a button, "Show", allows you to expand the information on that image. At the bottom, if you have uploaded more than one image, you have gallery settings.



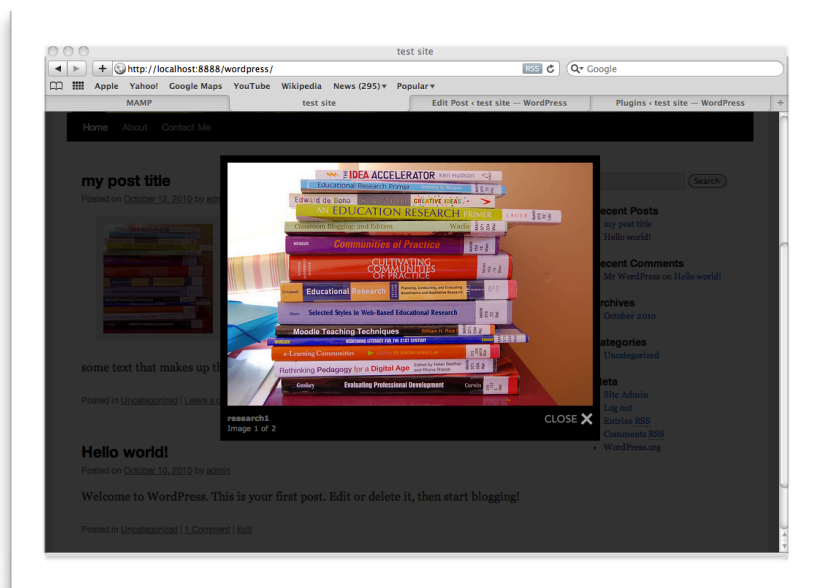
To create a gallery, I recommend that you install the “Lightbox 2” plugin.

Set the “**Link thumbnails to**” to “**Image File**”. The remaining information may remain as default. However, you can alter this to suit your needs. If, however, you have uploaded the images in an order that you are not satisfied with, point your mouse over one of the rows of your listed images. Click once, and whilst holding the mouse button down, you may drag the image up or down relative to it’s current position. When you unclick the mouse, the order automatically saves.

When you have set up your gallery, click the “**Insert Gallery**” button. A box, with a blue background, will be inserted into the text area.



If you click on the blue box, two buttons appear on the top left. The first is to edit the gallery setup, and the second, deletes the gallery from the text editor. Publishing your post will show your gallery on your website.

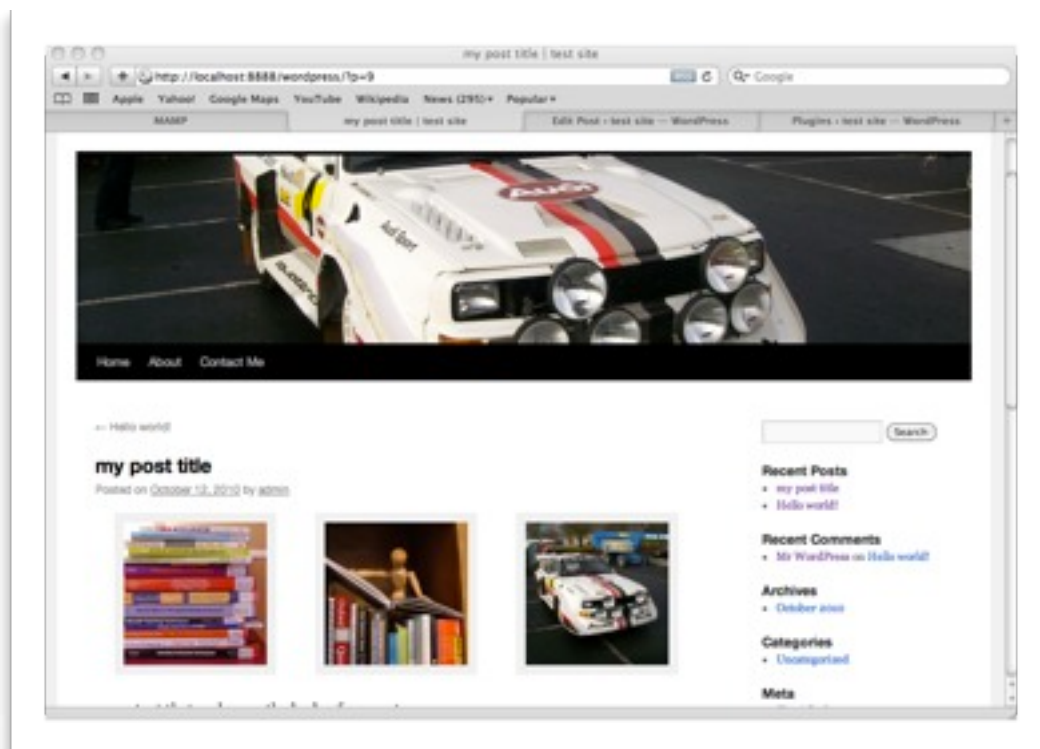


In the background of the image, the post has been added to the home page. When you click on any of the images, it pops up on screen in the lightbox. The gallery is continuous. So clicking on the left or right sides of the image will go to the previous and next images in the gallery, respectively.

Create a Featured Image

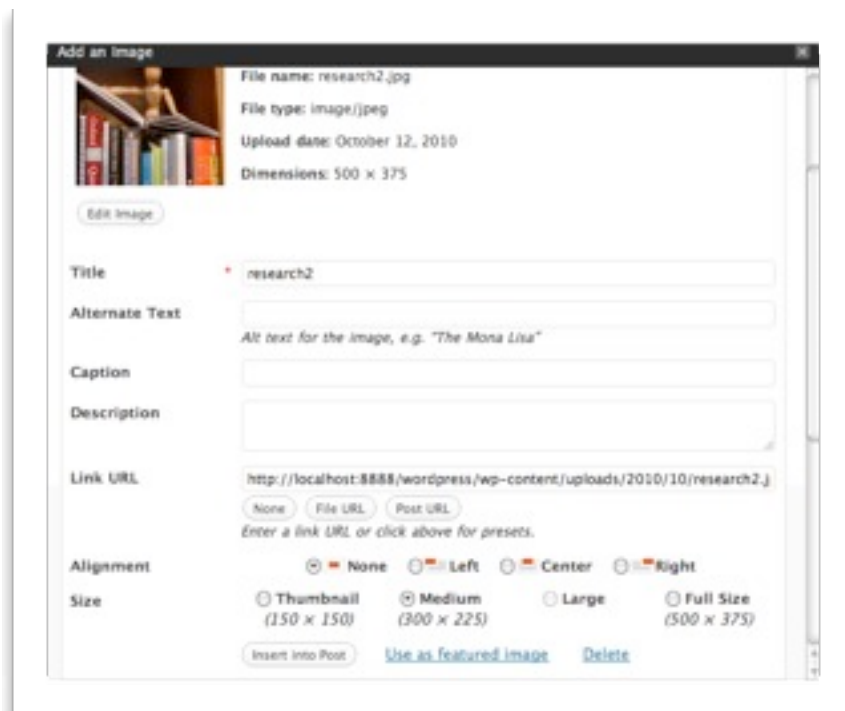
A featured image is one which is used to summarise the content of the post. Some WordPress themes will show the featured image alongside the post title. The default 2010 (Twenty Ten) theme which is on WordPress uses feature images on the banner in the header.

To create a featured image, click the Add Image button again, and go to the Gallery tab. Choose an image, and click the “Show” link to the right side. The details of this image will expand. At the bottom of the information on the image, there is a link “Use as featured image”. Click this, then click the “Save all changes” button, below your images list. Then, Update your post, using the big blue button.



Insert a Single Image

Inserting a single image is simple. Click on the Add Image button to bring up the popup, and click on the Gallery tab. Click the “Show” link to the right of any image in your Gallery, to expand the information.



You can edit any of the information on the image here. To insert a single post, one must select the alignment of the image. This is chosen from “None”, “Left”, “Center”, or “Right”. You can also set what size you want the image: “Thumbnail”, “Medium”, “Large”, “Full size”. When you have set up your image, click the “Insert into Post” button. The image will be placed where the cursor is.

How to set up your post (or page) for search engines

Earlier I mentioned a recommended plugin, All In One SEO, which allows you to manually set the keywords and description meta information, and the title tag for each post (or page) on your website.

Without this plugin, you will not have any information set for this header information about your website.

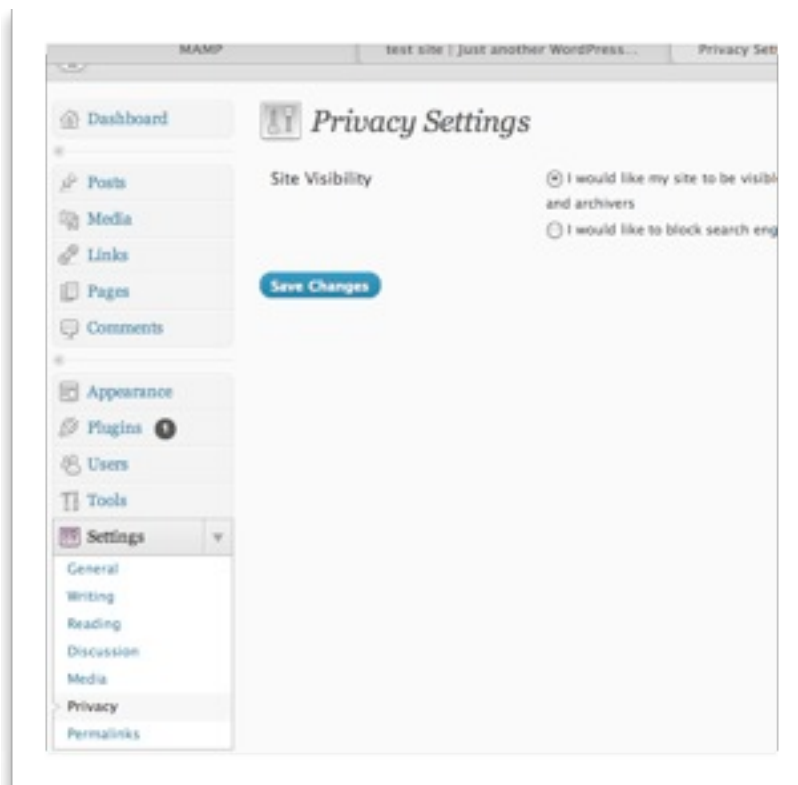
Whilst search engine rankings are compiled based on a much more extensive analysis of your web page, adding these pieces of information helps that little bit more.

If you want to learn a little more about search engine optimisation, I recommend the eBook by Dan Lew, [SEO Revenge](#). I have used this book to good effect myself, and have written a [review of SEO Revenge](#) on my website.

To allow the search engines to access your website, you must do two things. The first is access the Settings Panel on the left side of your dashboard, and open the Privacy page.

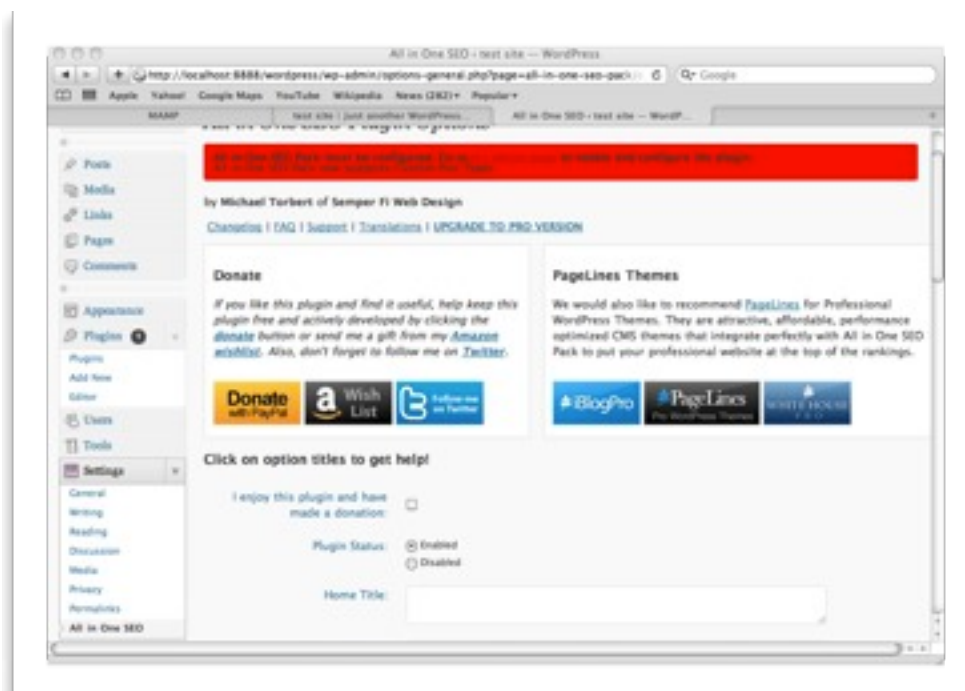
Dashboard -> Settings -> Privacy

Here you must set your website to allow your site to be visible to everyone, including search engines. Choose the first option, and click Save Changes.



Next, after you have installed All in One SEO Pack, you must access it's settings panel. You can do so by accessing your Dashboard, then Settings, and All in One SEO.

Dashboard -> Settings -> All in One SEO



First you must ensure that the Plugin Status is set to Enabled.

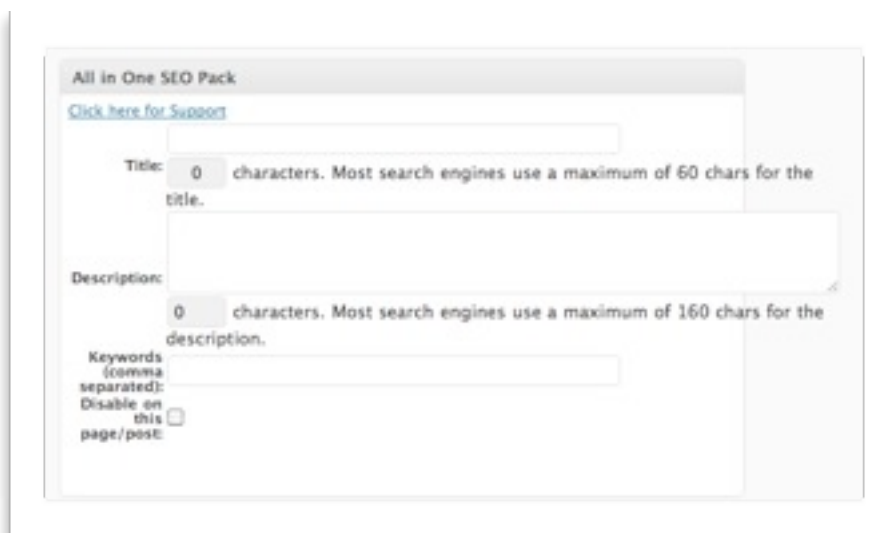
Here you have total control over how the search engine information is controlled on your site.

The majority of users will focus on setting the title, description and keyword information. This information is used to set the title, keywords and description of your home page.

The remaining settings control how your titles are controlled on particular parts of your website, however, the default settings are more than sufficient.

The final part to setting up your post (or page) for search engines is accessed when you create a post (or page).

When you create a new post, scroll down the page to the different panels which are present below your text editor panel. There will be one called “All In One SEO Pack”, and looks a little like this,



Here you can set up your title, description and keywords for your post.

If you're creating a Page however, scrolling down the page editor, you get the All in One SEO Pack panel, looking like this,

All in One SEO Pack

[Click here for Support](#)

Title: 0 characters. Most search engines use a maximum of 60 chars for the title.

Description: 0 characters. Most search engines use a maximum of 160 chars for the description.

Keywords (comma separated):

Title Attribute:

Menu Label:

Disable on this page/post:

As with the posts panel, you can assign a title, description and keywords. In addition, you set up your title attribute, and menu label.

I often set the title attribute and menu label to the same text. For instance, if I was creating an “About Me” page, or “Contact” page, I’d enter “About Me” or “Contact”, respectively.

How to set up categories

Posts can be categorised to make them easier to find. It is also better to categorise your posts to rank a little higher in the search engine results. To manage your categories, expand the Posts menu in the dashboard.

Categories

Add New Category

Name:
The name is how it appears on your site.

Slug:
The "slug" is the URL-friendly version of the name. It is usually all lowercase and contains only letters, numbers, and hyphens.

Parent:
Categories, unlike tags, can have a hierarchy. You might have a Jazz category, and under that have children categories for Bebop and Big Band. Totally optional.

Description:

Bulk Actions:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blogging Tips	Try something new
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hosting	Host it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hypotheses	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make Money	I'd like some cash
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing	Show off your work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly Reports	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Networking	Talk to people

On the default screen, it is easy to create new categories, as well as over view your existing categories.

Creating a category is simple. Each category is given a name to be recognised by. A slug is a shortened title name with no spaces which is used to manage the website address to the category. Categories can also be tiered in a hierarchy. By default a category has no parent category. However, from the drop down box, you can select a parent category. Finally each category is given a description. This small amount of text is used to describe what the category is about. The description can also be used by some of the WordPress themes.

Managing Categories

On the right side of the page, you are shown a list of existing categories. Hovering your mouse over any category will show some additional options available to you,

- Edit
- Quick Edit
- Trash

When you Edit a category, you have total control over the category set up. A quick edit reduces the control, however you don't need to load a new page. Quick Edit allows you to alter the Category Name and the Category Slug.

Clicking Trash will delete the category which you are hovering over. If you want to delete more than one category, tick the checkboxes alongside the categories you want to delete. When you've chosen your categories, choose Delete from the drop down box above the category list, and click Apply.

Category Tips

It is worth choosing category names which are rich in keywords. For example, if your website is about Money or Finance, you would probably have posts on how to save money, or how to earn money, or possibly on investments. Suggested keyword rich category names would be,

- Saving Tips
- Earn more money
- Investments

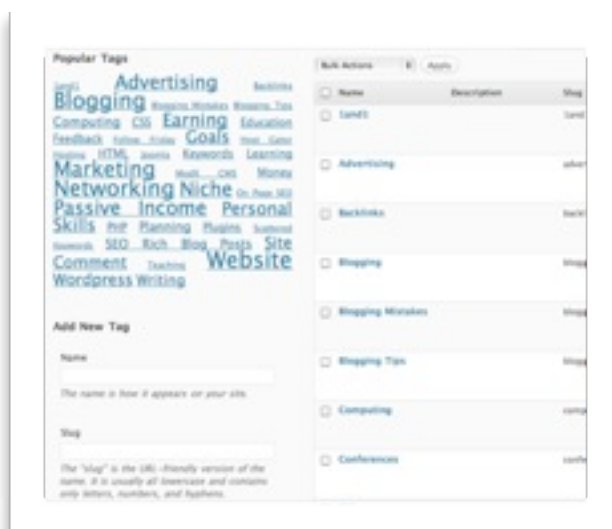
They add a little more depth to your post web address, and help with your search engine ranking.

Want to learn more on [search engine optimisation](#)?

Using tags in your posts

Whilst categories are used to introduce a structure to your posts, there is another method which can be used. Tags are essentially keywords which are common to posts. To explain this better, imagine Categories are used as a big filing cabinet for a particular post type, and Tags are used to describe parts of each post, rather than the post as a whole.

Post Tags are available in the Posts menu of the dashboard, and by clicking Post Tags. Much like the Categories, you can create a New Tag, and review your existing Tags. In addition to this, WordPress shows your most popular tags.



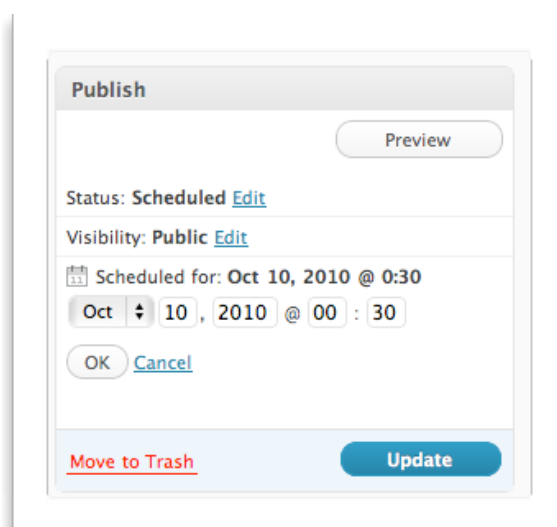
Each new Tag is given a Name, a Slug and a Description. The set up is identical to Categories, albeit, without a hierarchy.

To manage your existing Tags, the functionality is identical to Categories.

WordPress is renowned for its novel method of displaying Tags. As you can see from the graphic, the popular Tags are different sizes. Each Post Tag is sized based upon how many posts the Tag has been used in. The more times the Tag is used, the bigger the text.

Schedule your post

Often when you are writing a post to your website you will Publish it at that moment. However, you can control when you want the post to go live!



You can schedule your post when you are writing it. The scheduling feature is controlled using the Publish Panel. You are given 3 options,

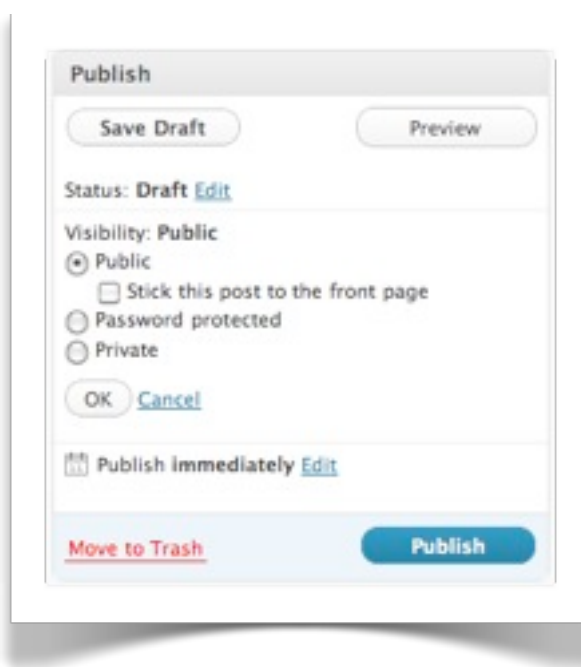
- Status (default, Draft)
- Visibility (default, Public)
- Publish (default, Immediately)

When you click Edit, beside Publish immediately, you can set a date and time that you want to your post to show.

In the figure, I have scheduled a post to go live on October 10th, 2010 at 00:30 (12.30am). When you've chosen your schedule date/time, confirm your choice with the OK button. At this point, the big blue Publish button becomes "Schedule".

How to control access to your post

All posts you write in the Dashboard are shown on your website. However, depending on what your site is about, you may want to restrict access to particular posts.



In the Publish Panel, you have the ability to control the Visibility. By default the visibility is Public. Clicking Edit will provide you with a few options to choose from,

- Public
- Password Protected
- Private

Public posts are those which are viewed by anyone who reads your website. You can also optionally stick your post to your home page. This feature is useful if you are writing a featured post which you'd like your readers to enjoy for a period of time.

Password Protected posts are those which are hidden behind an access panel. To view the post, the reader must know the password which is assigned to the post. Think of Password Protected as a locked door in front of your post. Without the password (key), the reader cannot get through.

Private posts are only accessible by Editors and Administrators.

If you alter the access rights to the posts, password protected posts will be listed on your blog, with titles prefixed with “Protected:”. Private posts do not appear on your blog, unless you are a logged in Editor/Administrator.

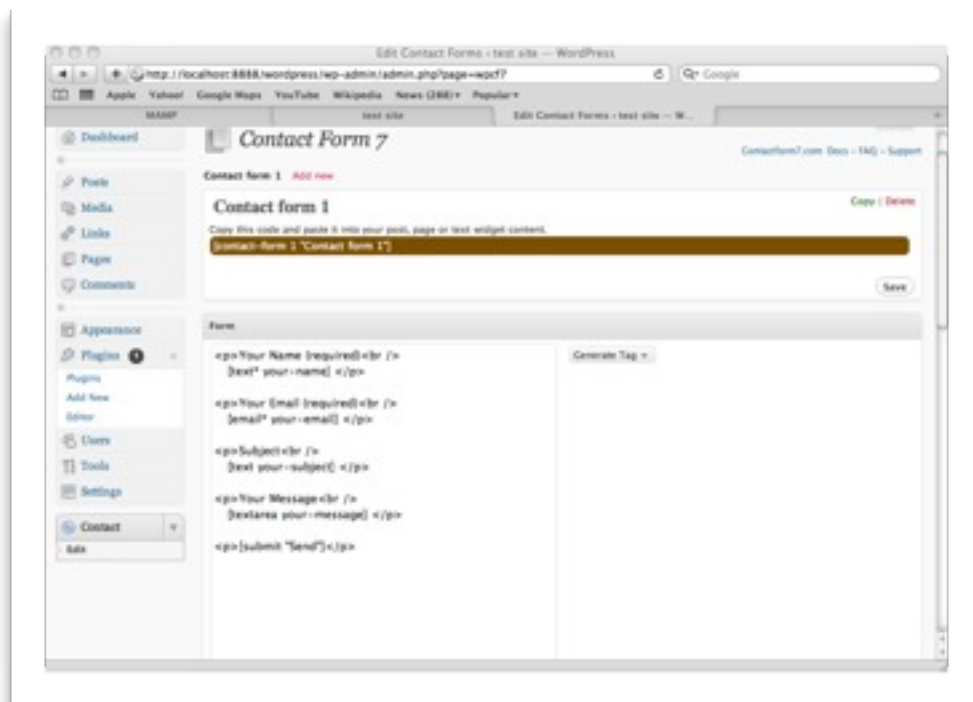
How to create a Contact Page

Creating a Contact Page is very simple and straight forward. What’s better, is that you do not need to know programming languages like PHP or Perl to make your form a reality.

To create your Contact Page, you need to install a plugin called “Contact Form 7”. Click “Add New” on the Plugins page, and search for “Contact Form 7”, choosing “Term” in the drop down box.

The plugin should appear first on the list of searched plugins. Click Install, and Yes/OK on the popup message. The plugin will install to your website. When installation is complete, click “Activate Plugin”.

Once the form is installed, it creates a new Options Panel below Settings on your Dashboard. Click on Contact.

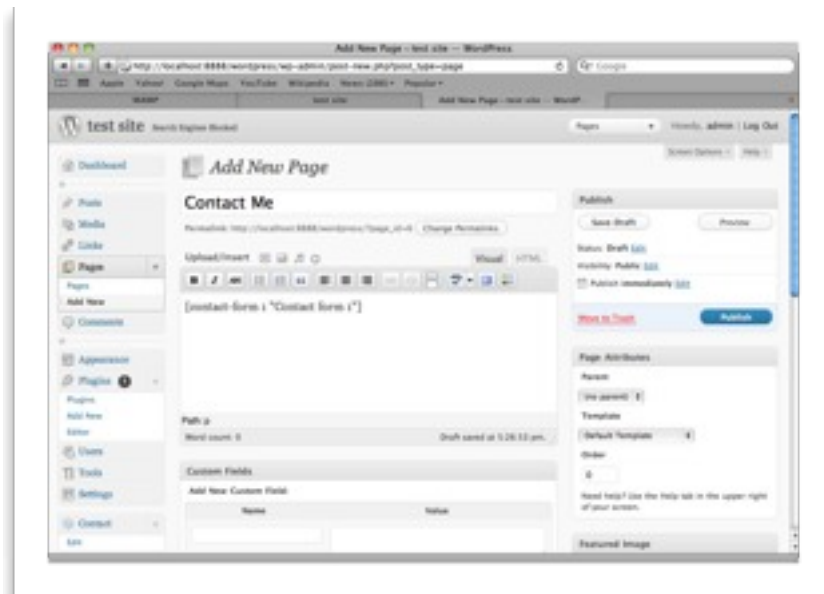


By default there is a demonstration form already created for you. It is easy to edit the form layout in the text editor on the left. On the right, there are a list of tags which you can insert to the text editor for specific fields such as new Textboxes, List boxes, or CAPTCHA tests.

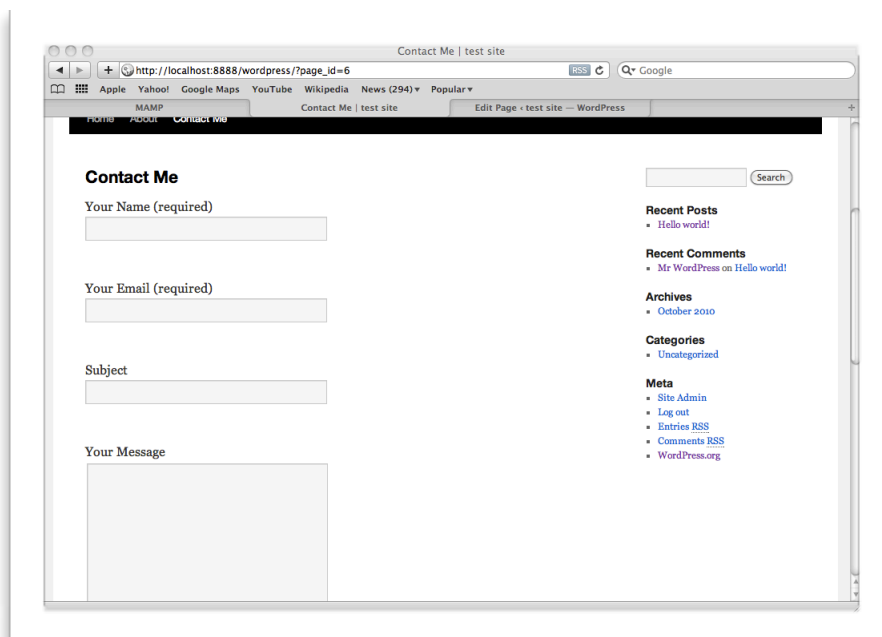
To create your Contact page, highly all of the text inside the brown bar at the top of the page.

Next you need to create a new Page. In the title, give your Contact page a name, for example, "Contact Me".

In the text editor, paste the text you copied from the Contact Form plugin.

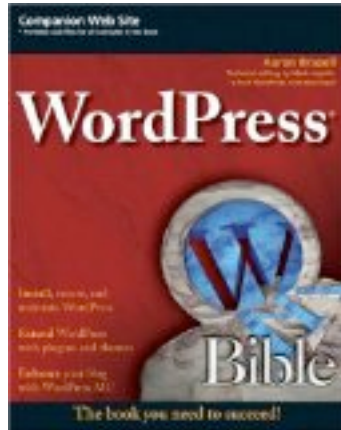


The text you have pasted into the text editor will create a simple contact form. If you write something before, or after, the pasted text, your form will be placed in it's location relative to the text.

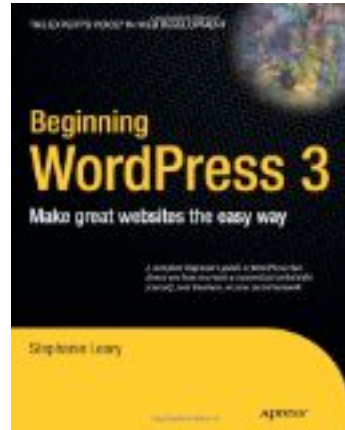


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