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WordPress User Guide
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Version 3.1

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Introduction to WordPress

WordPress is an open source Content Management System (CMS), often used as a blog publishing application.

 It has many features including a plug-in architecture and a template system. Used by over 12% of the 1,000,000 biggest websites, WordPress is the most popular CMS in use today.

As of August 2010, version 3.0 had been downloaded over 12.5 million times

Great Things about WordPress

1. It's easy to learn

2. It's stable and relatively bug free

3. It's used by millions of people around the globe

4. It scales well – you could run a hugely popular blog on your site, with a hundred thousand visitors a day and WordPress will still be adequate – and it should still work on a light-duty single server

5. It's simple, yet flexible – and developers love it

6. It has a huge selection of plugins that can add new features and tricks to your site

Logging in to WordPress

Log In!

If you haven't got a login link on your site's front page, simply add /wp-admin to the root address and you'll arrive at the login page as below:

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If you lose your details, you can click on 'Lost your password?' and a new Password will be generated and e-mailed to you. You'll need to change this to something more memorable.

Enter your details, select 'Remember me' if your computer is secure and only used by you and you'd like not to have to log in each time, and click on the Login button.

Now you're logged in, you'll arrive at the Dashboard – a screen that gives a range of information about your website:

Understanding the difference between pages and posts

Pages are usually those which have a static purpose in life. For example an about page, resumé page or contact forms. They do not usually contain information about news items, for example, which are added to the site on a regular basis.

Pages are generally defined so that they are always accessible from the front page. Some people build entire sites with just Pages – this is especially the case for sites with little need for dynamic content and is very popular with small businesses who simply want an online brochure.

Posts usually contain semantically and chronographically arranged information – for example, news reports, event results, and of course blog entries! The semantic structure is defined by categories and tags, and whilst making it easy for people to navigate your site will also help search engines to understand the content of your site and so improve the relevance of search results.

Adding and Editing Content

WordPress provides a number of tools – for editing, and for image management. It allows you to easily manage your content with a familiar editing interface. You don't need to learn HTML – just the skills you've already acquired using word processors like Microsoft Word.
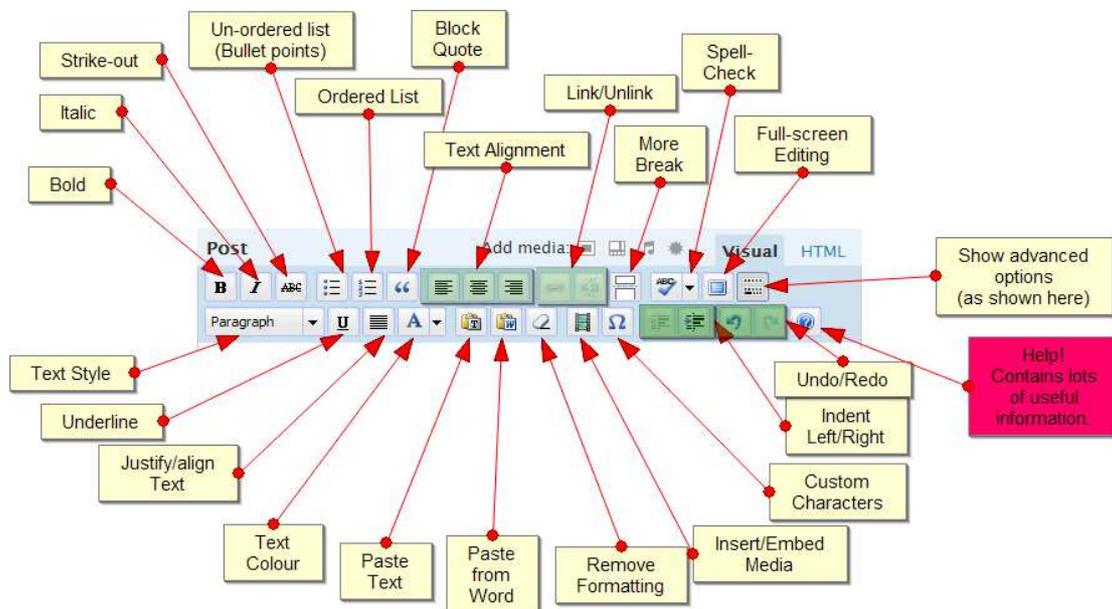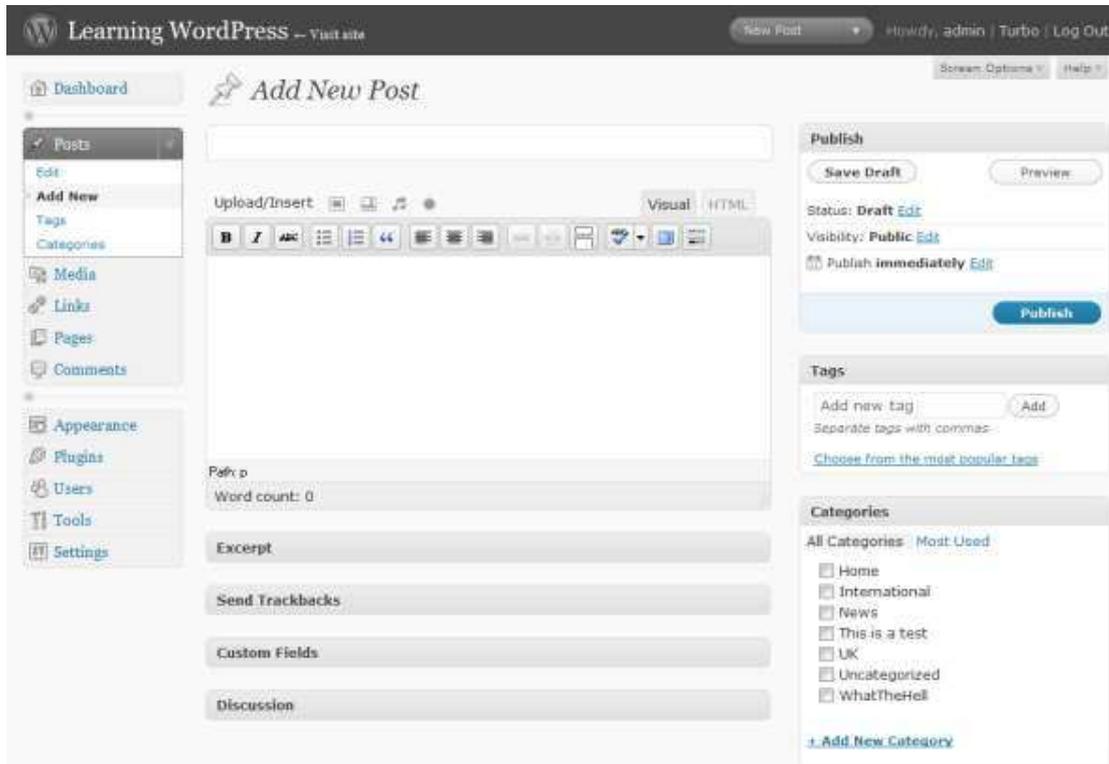
Formatting text using the rich editor
You can easily enter format text using the rich editor if you're familiar with any word processing packages.

Let's create a news article – just Posts and Add New in the left hand toolbar (if you're writing a static Page, you go to Pages and Add New instead)

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As you can see from the buttons, it's possible to format text in a number of ways using the buttons and they'll be familiar to any user of word processor software. You can also extend the size of the box by dragging on the bottom right of it.

By default you'll only see one line of buttons, not the two below – that's because you need to press the

Advanced Options button on the far right to see them.

Don't forget – if you get stuck, hovering over the buttons will describe what they do, and the short cut to use them from the keyboard.

Essentially, what you're working with should be familiar to you – it's rather like using Wordpad or some other similar low-end word processor.

In the example above, you can see the Categories box to the bottom-right of the editor window. Select a category of „News'.

Let's make this a short article about launching the website. Place the text below into it the text box, with the title Our First News:
Today we launched a new website. We'll be producing news and
Articles here for your enjoyment.

Scroll back up, press Publish, and hey presto! Your article is on the website and the navigation area has reflected this change with the category of News now appearing:

Now create a couple of articles for testing with – one called 'Interesting cats for 2009', and one called 'WordPress Is Great'.

Enter any text you like in the post box. Make sure that these two posts are in Trivia and WordPress categories respectively. Don't forget to add tags as well!
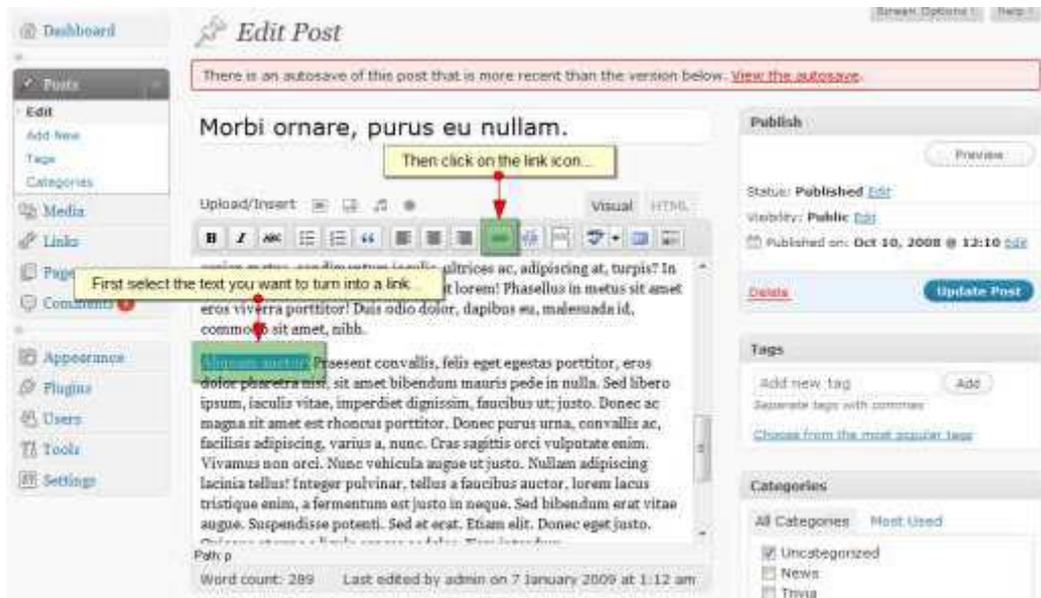
Adding links to your posts

One of the most important things you can do on your website is to link out to other sites. Those other sites will appreciate the links, but it also shows where you get your information from. This is useful to the reader and also a sign of an experienced and skilful blogger who cites his references. There's also absolutely nothing wrong with linking within your own site. Of course, it takes a little extra time, but it's worth it for the extra engagement.
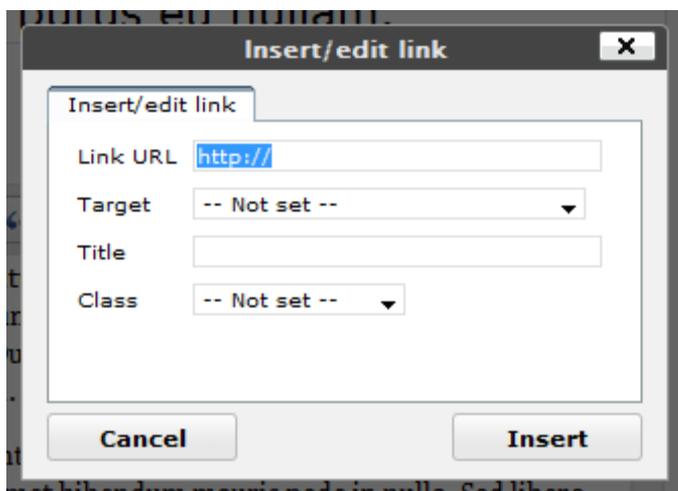
To create a link in text, highlight the text you wish to link, then click on the link icon

Once the link icon is selected, you have a pop-up dialog:

Adding images to your posts

You can easily add images using the standard WordPress tools. Again, like so much of WordPress, there have been some dramatic improvements in recent versions – including the automatic sizing of images, thumbnailing and image management.

To add media to your post, you'll see a number of tools added. You may find that on a lot of custom
installations of WordPress MU you only have the small button that looks like a sun, on the right. If that's the case then for most things you can use that image, but you may be limited with items such as YouTube videos.

If you press the Add Image button you'll be presented with a pop-up window:
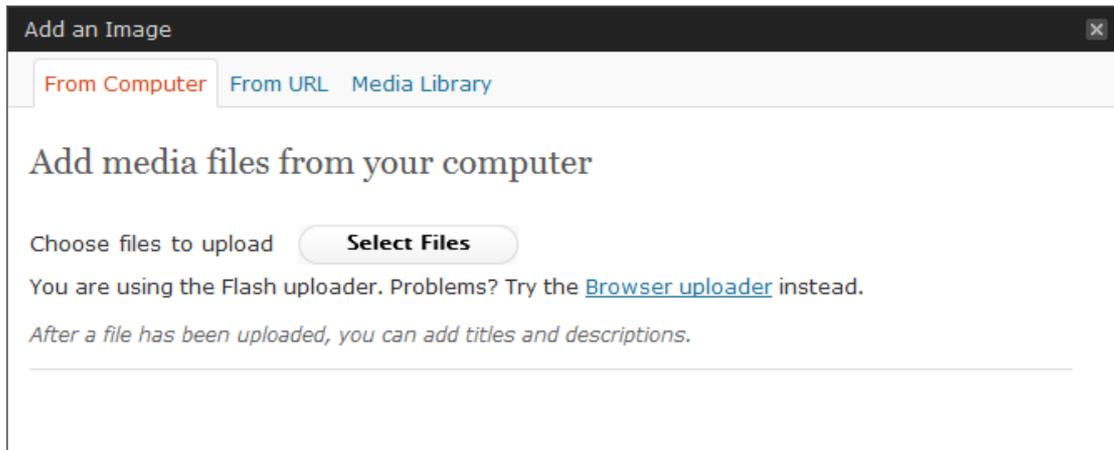
You can close this window with the small X in the top-right corner, or by clicking outside of the box.

Generally you won't upload images from a URL and will use the button „Choose files to upload'. Here you can upload one or many images. On most servers you'll be limited to images of 2MB or less in size, so if you have a high-res digital camera you might need to resize the images before uploading.
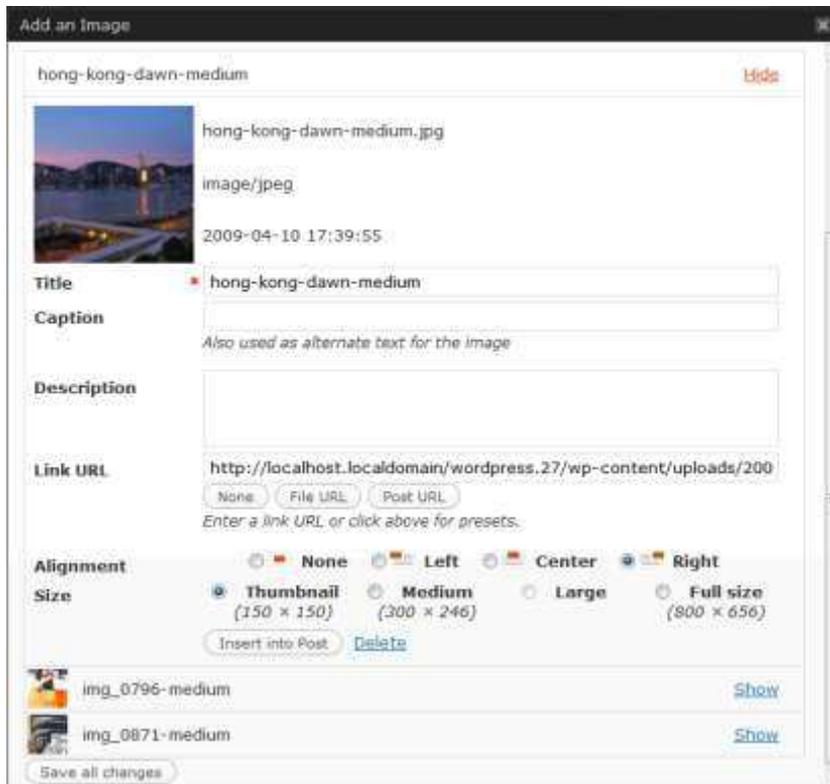
Once you've selected the images, simply press the Open button, and you'll see the window come back with the following showing in it as it uploads and resizes the images:
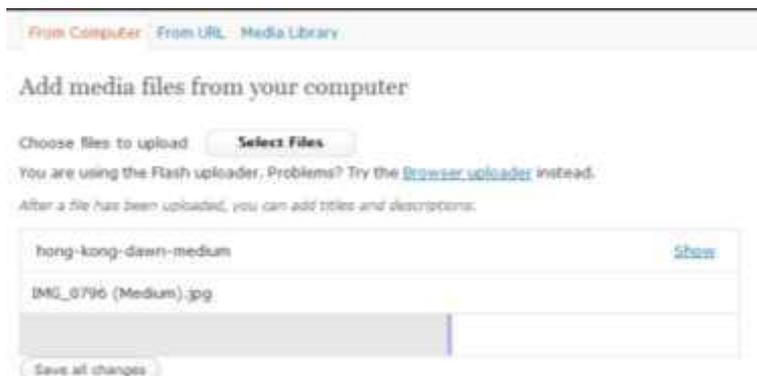
Once done, you'll see a list of the images you've just attached to the post.

This shows the thumbnails created..

So – click on 'Show' for each image and you'll get a dialog expanding into place:

This dialogue provides a lot of options and controls – let's go through them:

Title – this is the title of the image.

Caption – the caption for the image. Shows as alternate text, but since WordPress 2.6 if your theme supports captions, it will allow you to caption your image.

Description – the description. Not used by all themes, but handy to complete and may be used further in the future. It's often just seen when you view an image as an attachment.

Link URL – this is the address of the original image you've uploaded, by default, but it also allows you to create a link to another website here – quickly and effectively. You can also press the three buttons – None, meaning the image has no link, File URL, the default, and Post URL which will show your image within the design of the site rather than as an image on its own.

Alignment – This allows you to set how the image is aligned. The small icons show the effect on the textwrapping.

Size – you'll want to choose how big the image is. If it's not too massive, you can use the Full Size image – just make sure it fits into the space available. Otherwise, a Thumbnail, by default is a 150x150px square, and Medium is cropped to fit in a 300x300px space.

Once you've selected your options, you press the Insert into Post button to add the image to where your cursor was when you chose to Add Images. In this example we've gone for a thumbnail to the right, with a caption.

And if you press the preview button, you can see that on the website, it looks like:

It's worth noting that deleting a captioned image from the post can appear a little tricky if you try and do it the same way as you might in Word. Instead, if you click on the picture you'll see two icons appear as shown to the right, one a red circle with a line, and another a little panorama. The red circle is for deleting the image, and the panorama (which is mostly used only by advanced users) allows you to change some settings in the image, but without actually changing the attachment details.

After uploading, if you forgot to add images to a post you can still press the Add Images button and then click on the Gallery tab. In there you can see all images attached to this post, and insert them individually.

Setting posting and page options

There is a large range of posting options that are available to you if you look around the writing area and which give you finer control over how your content is presented. The order can change according to user preferences – what's important are the titles.

Excerpt Use this to create a short introductory text (you can add HTML if you desire) about your post. This is used by some themes and plugins, as well as by your site's RSS feed.

Send Trackbacks Not often used these days, but this allows trackbacks to be sent to a specific location. You can use it to notify certain sites your new post. Other WordPress blogs, and sites that support a protocol called XML-RPC are automatically informed if you happen to link to them.

Custom Fields Custom fields are used by certain themes and plugins. Some will use these fields but you won't ever have to touch them, others will require you to input values. Information on this should be included in your theme or plugin instructions. Top-of-the-range themes tend to add boxes for you to tick but use custom fields – you may see values added automatically. In some cases being able to edit these values will give you finer control over your posting, or allow you to fix problems that might come up.

Discussion Allow Comments on This Post If checked, allows a visitor to add comments to the posting albeit according to rules defined in Settings | Discussion Allow Trackbacks and Pingbacks on this post This means that if someone links to the posting from another website using similar software you will be notified on the Dashboard page and the trackback may show in the comments section if authorised.

Saving & publishing your post or page

Once you've written your masterpiece you'll want to save it… and then publish it (i.e. Make it visible on the site) for the whole world to see – you've probably already pushed that publish button, but we're returning to it because there are various options that are worth learning:

The Publish box above is usually at the top right of the page. By default it looks like the above.

As you can see, the simplest way to publish your content is simply to press that big blue Publish button.

If you're a contributor, you'll have found that you can't do much in WordPress beyond contribute words, and your Publish box will actually look like this:

Preview This button allows you to preview how the content will look.

Status This shows the Status of your post, for example, whether it is visible

Publish (immediately)

Private If you want to keep the post from prying eyes you can do this. If a post is private only registered members of the site can see it. Making a post private means it can't be published – you'll see the button change to reflect this.

Public If you click on Edit the box will expand to offer you the facility to edit the date on which this page will become published. This allows you to create content in advance – handy for holidays.

Password Protected You can also create posts that are protected with a password which you will have to distribute amongst readers. This can be useful where you want to give a selected few advance access to content.

Delete Be careful here – you'll be asked if you really want to delete, but if you click yes there's no Undo or Restore facility. It's permanently removed.