Getting Started with WordPress

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No more is a blog just a single page with a "what I did at the store today" kind of dialog. Blogs are the lifeblood of the Internet, bringing publishing to the masses. Gone are the days of individual page creation to post an entry, too. With WordPress you can have enterprise-level content management capabilities for your blog and Website, for the same cost as the air you breathe: Free! **So what the heck is WordPress, anyway?** WordPress is a Web-publishing platform frequently used for Web logs, or "blogs", that focuses on speed, ease of use and one of the best user experiences available. With WordPress, you can manage anything from a simple personal site with just a few pages all the way up to a commercial site with hundreds of pages. The sky is the limit with WordPress, and thanks to that ease of use, it doesn't matter if you're a Web expert or just getting started. Anyone can create a fantastic website using WordPress. WordPress is an Open Source project, which means there are hundreds of people all over the world working on it. (More than most commercial platforms.) It also means you are free to use it for anything from your dog's home page to a Fortune 500 website without paying anyone a license fee. Started in 2003, WordPress has become the largest self-hosted blogging tool in the world, used on hundreds of thousands of sites and seen by tens of millions of people every day. **What's next?** After WordPress is installed and you get the email from us telling you that everything is ready, it's time to log in to the WordPress Dashboard for the first time. Open your Web browser of choice and go to the domain name where you installed WordPress. For example: http://*mycoolnewblog.coolexample.com*Â (*mycoolnewblog.coolexample.com*Â is the domain name you used to set up WordPress). **WordPress Layout** You'll notice that your new blog looks pretty basic. Before you dive in and start to change the look of things, have a look around at the layout. This will help you later when you start to customize your site, as you'll know where everything is, and most important, what everything is called. The layout you are looking at is called aÂ **theme**. The default WordPress theme features a header at the top with the title placeholder of your site. Along the side are titles and links. This is your sidebar menu. The post is the primary, middle section. The footer is at the bottom of the page. Let's look at the post for a moment. Below the post's title is some information, called theÂ **meta data**, which contains information about the post such as the date and time the post was made, the author, and the categories the post is in. Scroll down the page and notice the bar at the end of the page. This is theÂ **footer**, and for now it says, "Your blog is proudly powered by WordPress." Back to the sidebar, you can see different sections with information. Among these you might find a list including Pages, Categories, Archives, Calendar, and Dates. This is part of the menu or navigation panel that people can use to move around your site, visiting posts from different categories or time periods. **Viewing the Dashboard** On the right side of your blog, in the sidebar, is a section calledÂ **Meta**. In that section you'll see a link labeledÂ **Site Admin**. Click that link and you'll be whisked away to your site's administration login page. Log in to your site using the user name and password established during the install process. **Note:**Â You can also go straight to the login page by addingÂ **/wp-admin**Â to the end of your site address. For example:Â ***http://coolexample.com/wp-admin***. Once you're logged in, the first thing that displays is the dashboard of the administration panel. The administration panel is the brain behind your website. This is where the organization of your site begins. The administration panel provides access to the control features of your WordPress installation. The panel is presented in sections: the header, the main navigation, the work area, and the footer. The large area in the middle of the screen is the work area. Specific information relating to a particular navigation choice, such as adding a new post, displays here. You can customize the work area for each administrative function by clickingÂ **Screen Options**, and then selecting what information you want to display. **Navigating the Menu** On the left side of the screen is the main navigation menu detailing each of the administrative functions you can perform. The expand/collapse arrow just below the main navigation menu lets you collapse the menu to a set of icons, or expand (fly-out) to show an icon and description for each major administrative feature. Within each major feature, such as Posts, a submenu displays when you hover your mouse over the title area. The default main navigation menu consists of: **DashboardÂ** — View recent activity both at your site and in the WordPress ecosystem at large. **PostsÂ** — Create and edit published posts, categories, and tags. **MediaÂ** — Manage your images, videos, and files. **LinksÂ** — Create and edit links to display on your site. **PagesÂ** — Create and edit static pages for your site.

CommentsÂ — Manage reader comments for your blog. Using the Comments panel you can edit and delete comments, and mark them as spam. **AppearanceÂ** — Change the look of your site. Using the Appearance panel you can customize your site theme, manage widgets, create your site menu, and edit your PHP and CSS files. **PluginsÂ** — Add and manage features to your WordPress blog that don't come standard with the default installation. **UsersÂ** — Manage user accounts for your site. **ToolsÂ** — Speed up WordPress for your local machine, import content from other sources, export your content, or to upgrade your WordPress software to a new release. **SettingsÂ** — Customize how your site behaves, how you interact with your site, and how the rest of the world interacts with your site. **Other Resources** You can find more help at theÂ WordPress website, which offers resources on these subjects: Welcome to the WordPress Support Forum New to WordPress — Where to Start Frequently Asked Questions about Installing WordPress First Steps with WordPress Writing Posts in WordPress

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