



# WordPress Manual

**Basic maintenance procedures**

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A very short guide for reasonably intelligent people

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**Andrew Francis**





***This manual is for you if;***

- *you've been given the job of maintaining a WordPress website*
- *you've set up your own WordPress site and you want a reminder of the basics*
- *you just want to muck about.*

*Have fun!*



# WordPress Manual

**Andrew Francis – WordPress Version 3.5 - June 2013**

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## What is WordPress?

WordPress is free software that allows you to build a website without having to install dedicated software on your computer. The tools that run a WordPress site are part of your website and can be accessed through a normal browser such as Internet Explorer or Firefox.

The people behind WordPress allow enthusiasts to develop tools for it and thus it is constantly evolving. There are tens of thousands of plugins available that allow you to extend WordPress functions, from flashy image effects to specialised contact forms.

## Themes

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WordPress is suitable for non-professional web managers because it uses themes to help you keep your pages looking good.

You can choose your own theme and customise it to suit. A theme controls the size and shape of pages, all the fonts used, the colours and the backgrounds etc. When you add text it will conform to the rules for font type, size and colour laid down in the theme. So you don't have to edit each new addition to keep it consistent with the rest of the website.

Bespoke themes can be purchased from most web designers.

## **.ORG vs .COM**

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A word of warning. WordPress originated as a simple online platform for bloggers ([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)). The software that allows you to build your own site resides at [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org). If you are looking for tools or support for a WordPress site, make sure you are looking on the .org site.



## How to access the control panel

The control panel for WordPress sits behind the pages the public sees. It can be accessed by anyone with the appropriate passwords.

### From the home page

To get to the log-in page for any WordPress site just add “wp-admin” to the home page address. Get the username and password from the person who installed Wordpress. You can always change these later (look in “Your Profile” under the “Users” menu).



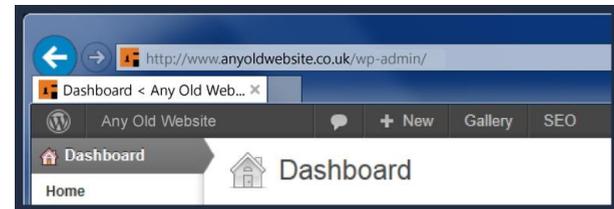
### From the side bar

Optionally, you can have a login application (or “widget”) appear on the sidebar (the column to the left or right) of your website.



### Dashboard

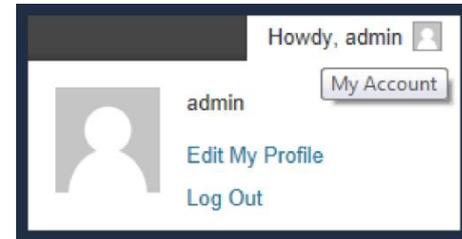
When you log into WordPress you go straight to the control panel (or “Dashboard”). You will notice a bar at the top of page that allows you flick between the website and the dashboard at any time.





## Logging out

If you want to get rid of the of the Dashboard bar (and see your site as other do) you will need to log out. Go to the “Howdy, admin” button in the top right-hand corner and click “Log Out”.



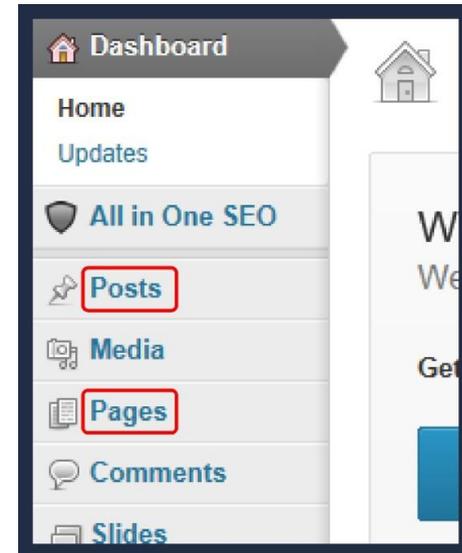
## Posts and Pages

There are two main element to a WordPress website.

Pages are permanent (or static) bits of text and graphics that you access one at a time. Usually, pages are organised into menus and sub-menus.

Posts usually reside on one page only in a WordPress site and are a series of “news” items posted chronologically. Each time you add a post it pushes the previous one down the page. The number of posts at any one time is limited so eventually your first post will drop off the page as it is replaced by new items. But you can usually still access it through an “archive” menu that sorts old posts into months and years.

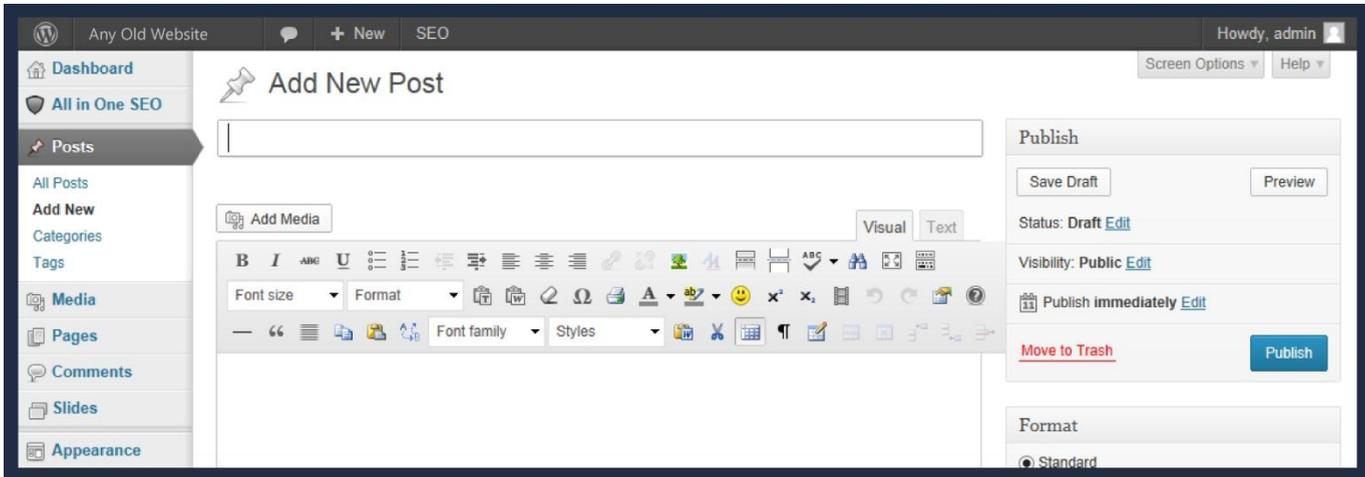
So, the **pages** make up the permanent information on your website whilst the **posts** are news or opinion items (also called blogs) that come and go from time to time.





## Adding a post

In the control panel, click on the “Posts” menu in the leftmost column. You will see a list of previous posts that you can edit (or delete). Click on “Add New” near the top.



Add your title (or headline) in the box at the top.

Below there are some editing tools and a blank space for the main body of text. Simply type in here or paste (Ctrl C) your text from another source (such as a Word document or another webpage).

Now click on the blue “Publish” button on the right (or click “Save Draft” if you are not done editing). You can see how it looks on the website by clicking “Preview Changes”.

That’s it. Your text will automatically be formatted in the house style and colours that are built into your theme. Posts will usually appear on the home page or on a dedicated menu page (called News or Blog etc.).

If you want to see more of the text box you can grab it by the bottom right corner and drag downwards.

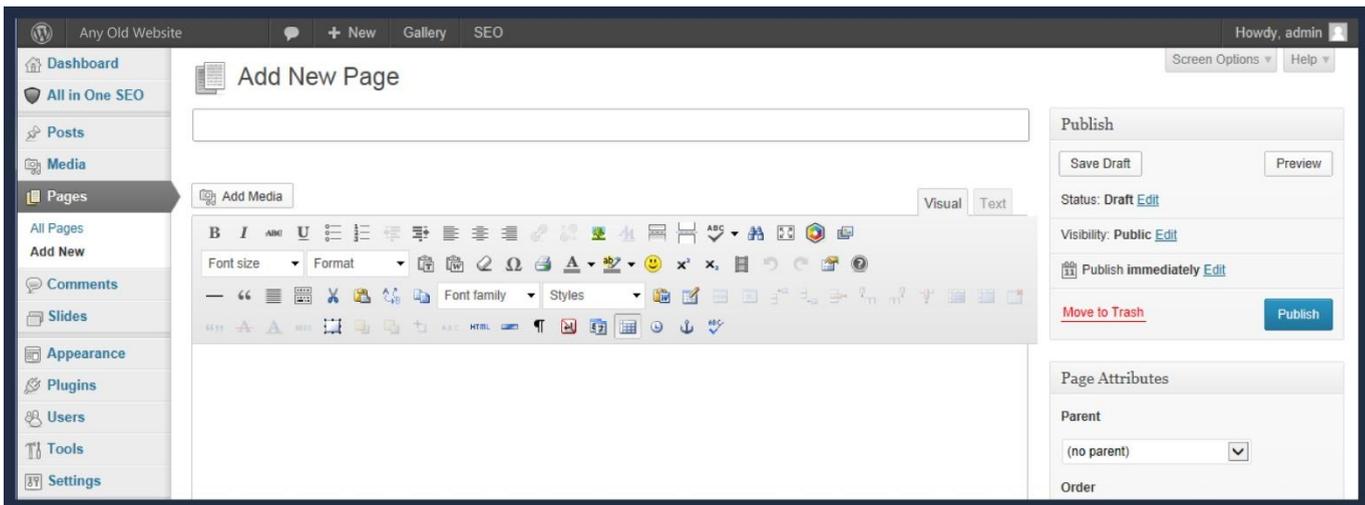
We’ll come on to adding an image later.



## Adding a page

Adding a page is almost identical to adding a post except that you have to decide where the page will appear on your website.

In the control panel, click on the “Pages” menu in the leftmost column. You will see a list of previous pages that you can edit (or delete). Click on “Add New” near the top.



Suppose you want to add a new page called “Bognor” to a menu called “Trips<sup>1</sup>”. You can specify this in the Page Attributes box on the right. Expand the “Parent” drop-down box and select “Trips”.

If you forget this last operation, WordPress will assume you want to add a new parent menu and will add your page title to the menu buttons along the top of the website. But you can always go back and correct it at any time.

When you are logged on, each page has an edit button above the content for easy access to the editing controls.

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<sup>1</sup> See also “Adding a menu”.



## Adding an image

### Editing images

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You can edit images in WordPress but it's much easier to prepare them before you add them to your website. There are plenty of free image editing tools on the net such as Picasa (basic) and Gimp (complicated). Online editing tools such as Pixlr and Fotor are quick, easy and free. Here are a few simple procedures:

**Adjust** – adjust the contrast and brightness to improve the look of your image.

**Crop** – use a crop tool to trim off the bits you don't want.

**Size** – scaling your images is important because you want to keep them consistent with the rest of your website. You can scale an image down successfully but trying to enlarge it will only reduce its quality. So start with the largest images available to you. To find the original size of a web image you want to match, right click on the image and select "Properties". The dimensions (in pixels) will be listed.

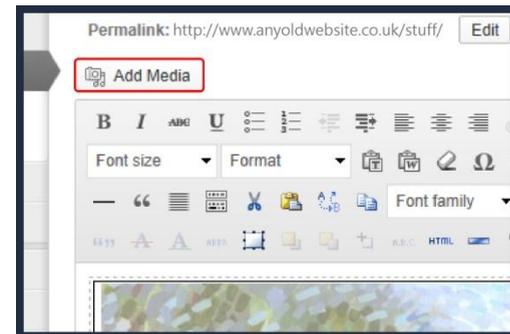
### Using the library

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WordPress manages most images on a site in the Media Library. The library also contains any other types of file on the site such as PDFs and music files. Click on "Media" in the left-hand column to access it.

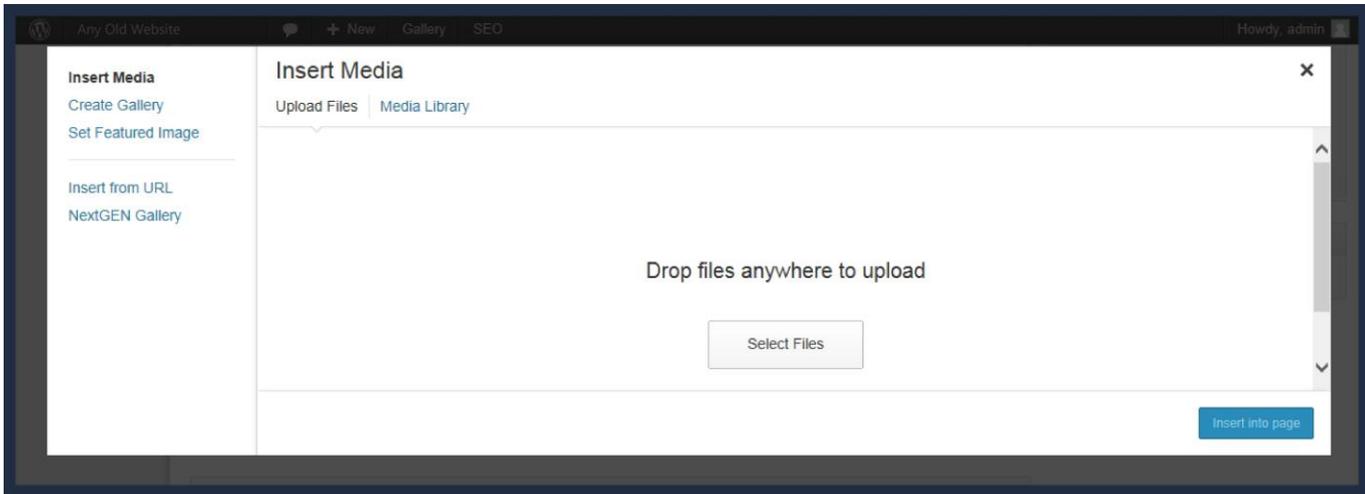
The simplest way to add an image is to open the page or post upon which you want it to appear and add it from there. It then automatically appears in the library. Or you can add to the library first and then place it on your page. Here's the first method:

1. Open the page or post you want to feature the image.
2. Place your cursor at the spot in the text where you want the image to appear.
3. Click on the "Add Media" button (just above the editing tools).





4. The “Insert Media” box will open. You can pick an existing file from the Media Library or...



5. Drag and drop your file(s) onto the page. Uploading begins immediately.
6. Alternatively, you can click on the “Select Files” button and locate your file(s) on your computer.
7. When the image loads, click the “Insert into page” button.

There are plenty more options for you to choose but that’s the basics.

You can align the new image on the page by selecting it and choosing one of the Left/Center/Right Align buttons in the text editing toolbox. (Warning: this doesn’t always produce expected results!)





## Using Gallery



NextGEN gallery is an add-on tool for managing and displaying images. It can display multiple images as thumbnails or a series of images in a slideshow. Clicking on the thumbnails usually open a larger version of the image. NextGEN can handle multiple galleries to help you organise your images.

When it's installed, NextGEN Gallery appears as a separate menu in the control panel.

These are the basic operations for displaying a gallery:

1. Add a new gallery from “Add Gallery/Images” menu.
2. Add images to that gallery from the same menu by uploading them from your hard drive.
3. Open the “Manage Gallery” menu to add any captions or change the order of the images. You can also delete old images from here.
4. Add the gallery to a page. A new “Add NextGEN Gallery” button appears at the end of the top row of editing tools on any page or post. Click the button and select the gallery you want to display.



## Adding a menu

If you need to extend the range of information on the website you will probably need to add a new menu at some stage.

All you do is add a new page and assign it to “No parent” in the “Page Attributes” box. Publish the page and the new item will appear on your top menu bar. Clicking on the menu takes you to the page you just created. The new menu is now available as a “parent” for any new pages you wish to appear below it.

You can change the order in which the menu items appear by assigning them a number in the “Order” box under “Page Attributes”.

## Using editing tools

Because a WordPress theme defines the appearance of type (fonts, colours etc.) you shouldn’t have to do much formatting. Deviating from the basic type rules will only make your website look uncoordinated and inconsistent. But here are a few simple formatting changes you might need:

### Basic formatting

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**Bold and Italic** – select the text and use the “Bold” and “Italic” buttons.



**Type Style** – use the drop-down “Format” box to select a new heading style – but use sparingly!

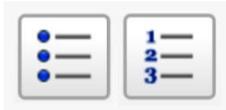




**Colour** – use the “Select text color” button to change text colour.



**Lists** – use “Unordered list” and “Ordered list” buttons to create bullet or numbered lists.



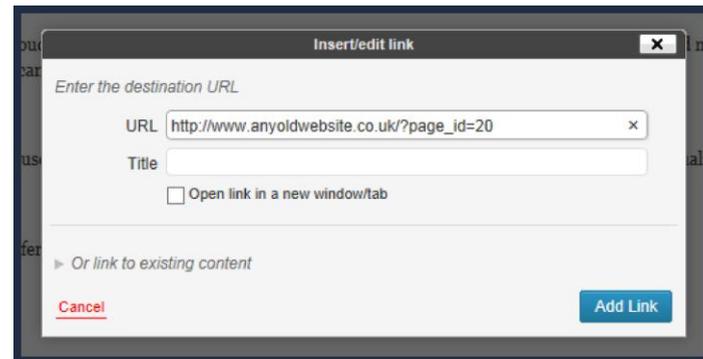
## Adding links

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To create a link to an external web page, highlight the relevant text and select the “Inset/edit link” button. Type or paste the address into the “URL” box and click “Add link”.



To create a link to a page within your site you need to find the code WordPress uses to identify each page or post. Open the destination page. Copy (Ctrl C) the address following “Permalink:” just below the title. Now open the page where you want the link to appear. Highlight the relevant text and select the “Inset/edit link” button. Paste the WordPress page address into the “URL” box and click “Add link”.





## Using tables

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Some pages may use tables to arrange text or images on the page.

Tables can be very useful but they are also a bit of a pain, so proceed with care. WordPress pages still use humble HTML (HyperText Markup Language) code to arrange items on a page. And HTML is not particularly clever at page layout.

A table with invisible borders is a good way of making things stay put. A table is just a grid, with columns and rows and you can paste what you want inside its cells. But be aware that tables are mostly fluid – they flow around depending on the size of the browser window or the device displaying the page. Unexpected results can and do occur.

The best way to familiarize yourself with tables (if you have to) is to experiment. You can add a table using the “Inset a new table” button on the editing tools suite. Use “Table row properties” and “Table cell properties” to manipulate your tables.



## Widgets and Plugins

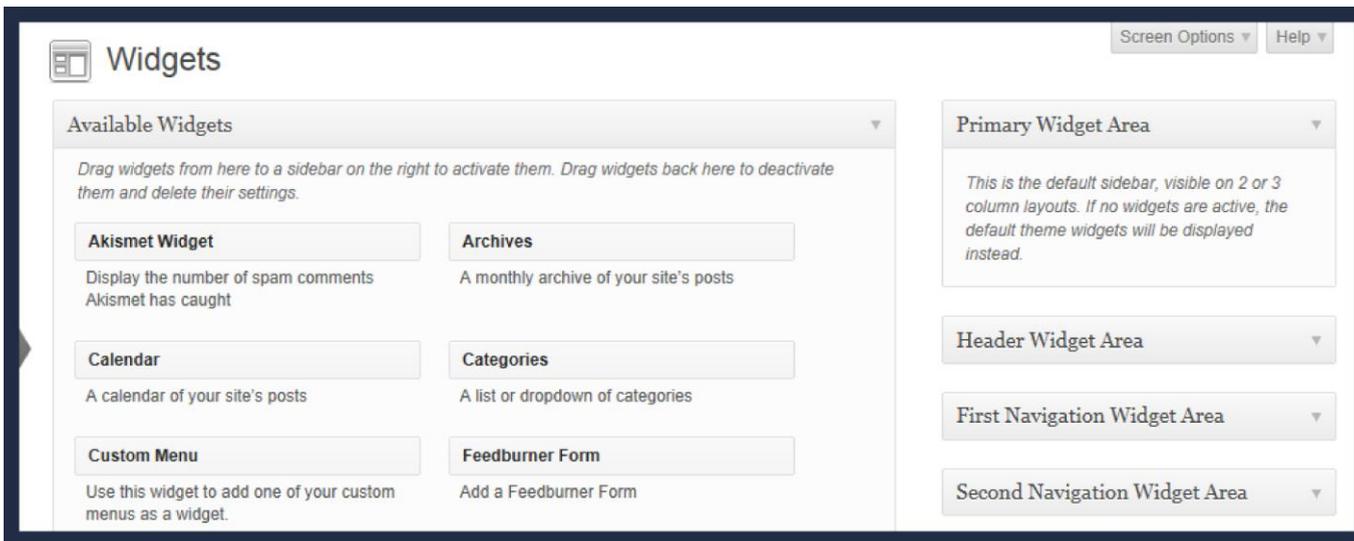
### Widgets

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You can control the fundamental layout of your website using widgets. The WordPress theme determines the size and shape of pages but you can add (with care!) elements to the sidebar or footer areas.

Go to the “Appearance” menu and then select “Widgets”. The boxes represent various tools that can be dragged into the “Widget Area” boxes on the right. For instance, dragging the “Calendar” widget into the “Primary Widget Area” will add a little calendar to your sidebar.

Go ahead and experiment. You can always put it all back by dragging new widgets back to their original place.



## Plugins

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Plugins provide more advanced functionality to a WordPress site. There are thousands available to choose from. Some are essential, some are useful and some are duds. Proceed with caution – they can produce unexpected results.

See the “Plugins” menu for more information.

## Managing comments

Posts may attract legitimate feedback or comments. WordPress will notify you by email when they arrive and will ask you to log on to accept or reject them.

Unfortunately, you will also get lots of spam comments. The vast majority is generated automatically by malicious software designed to trick you into accepting the comment as genuine. Here’s how to spot them:



1. They will be general rather than specific. They may mention the title of your post but won't contain a pertinent response to your blog.
2. They will contain a link to a site or URL that they wish to promote.

It's safe to ignore this spam. You may delete them from the control panel once in a while.

If it's really starting to bother you, activate the Akismet plugin. That usually sorts it. It may cost you a small donation.

## Keep your site updated

WordPress will tell you when there's a new version to install and which plugins need upgrading. This is necessary from time to time - old plugins may not continue to work as WordPress evolves.

If you get a glitch with any of the features on your WordPress web site, try updating everything first. If that doesn't work, deactivate each plugin in turn – they are often the culprits and can affect parts of the site you wouldn't expect.

## Getting more help

Most menu pages have a help button in the top right corner. The "Overview" tab will give you an idea of what the menu does. More detailed information is available via the link to [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org). However, you might find the information dry at best, impenetrable at worst. Often it's better to use Google to find a third-party blogger or enthusiast for a more down-to-earth explanation of WordPress's quirks and foibles. Good luck and enjoy!



**Andrew Francis – 2013**

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