

# WordPress Blogs for CFCC Faculty and Staff

## What is WordPress?

WordPress is a web log program that allows users to create and manage their own blogs. Users can create and manage blog posts using a web based interface and see their content published instantly.

## Who can use WordPress?

WordPress blogs are available to CFCC **Faculty** and **Staff** for use as their personal CFCC web pages. While each faculty or staff member controls the content of their blog they are still representing Cape Fear Community College to the public. Subject matter and content published to the WordPress blogs should be relevant and appropriate to Cape Fear Community College. It is also important to keep in mind that the CFCC Acceptable Use Policy for computers and technology applies to the WordPress blogs.

## Why Use WordPress?

Because WordPress Rocks! It is also a great way to connect with students and colleagues. A WordPress blog can be used to supplement instructional material, journal professional development, support research or just blog about things that are interesting. Here are a few examples of how blogs are used at CFCC and other schools:

Cape Fear Community College provides up-to-date information with a News and Events blog.

<http://cfcc.edu/blogs/news/>

CFCC's Webmaster uses a WordPress blog to share web related how-tos for CFCC Faculty and Staff. <http://cfcc.edu/blogs/cwheikkila81/>

*Doc Searls Weblog* is a blog maintained by a professor at Harvard.

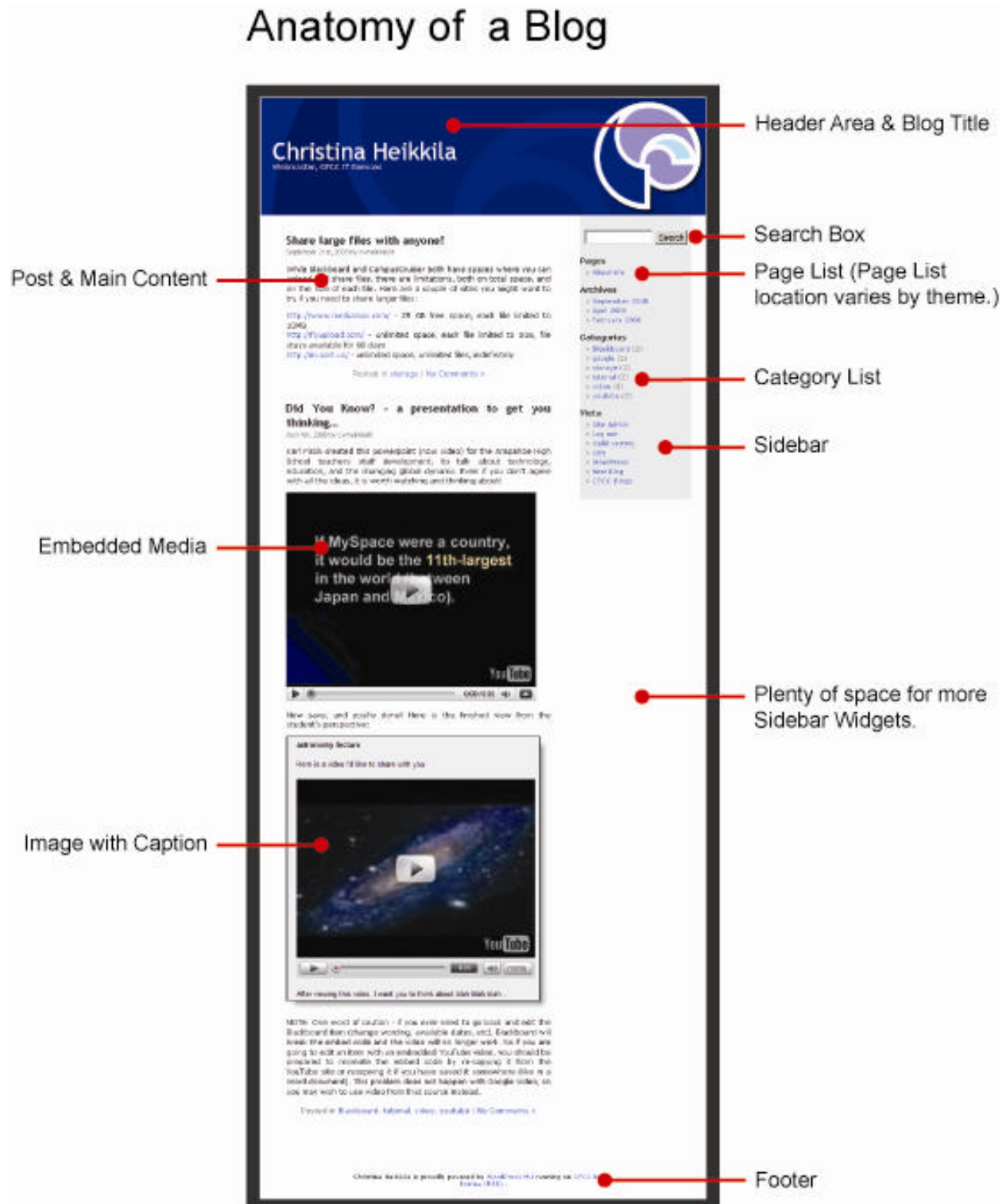
<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/doc/>

*A View to Hugh* is a UNC Weblog cataloging the work of photographic archivists who are processing the Hugh Morton Photographs and Films Collection

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/blogs/morton/>

## Anatomy of a blog

Blogs and their uses can be very unique. However, many blogs share common elements specifically in the structure of their layout. For example, most blogs have a header, footer, content area and a sidebar. The diagram below shows common blog features and how they may be arranged.



## **Header**

The header of a web blog is the area at the top of the blog. The header usually contains the title of the blog, the blog's description and graphics. Some headers may include a navigation menu that is dynamically created from blog pages. The appearance and function of the header may change depending on the blog's current theme.

## **Content**

The content area of the blog is where the information added by publishing posts and pages will appear. The content area is typically the largest column in the layout and displays the text and images the author publishes on the blog.

## **Sidebar**

The sidebar is a smaller, second column in the blog layout. The sidebar is typically where search fields, page menus, category menus and widgets are displayed. The combination of the content area and single side bar is a Two-column layout. Some blog themes feature more than one sidebar. The combination of the content area and two sidebars is a three column layout.

## **Footer**

The footer is located at the bottom of the blog and minimally presents closing information about the blog, such as copyright notification and author identification. However, depending on the theme the footer can present additional content and information and some themes feature a widgetized footer that can display selected widgets.

The use and presentation of these layout elements within a blog is highly dependent upon the theme being used. Headers, footer and sidebars may have varying levels of sophistication and functionality depending on the selected WordPress theme.

## Create a Blog

Activating a new blog is simple, users should go to <http://cfcc.edu/blogs>. This link displays the CFCC Blogs home page and presents a login form asking for a user name and password. Users logging in for the first time should use the same Username and Password they would use to access CampusCruiser, Blackboard or WebAdvisor.



Once logged in the user will see their WordPress dashboard. Users will also receive a welcoming email in their Campus Cruiser email account. After logging in the user can change the email address from their Campus Cruiser account to their Groupwise email on the general settings page.

## Dashboard

The dashboard is the main control panel for the WordPress blog. From here the user can access all of the features and preferences for their blog. The dashboard also provides current statistics on the number of posts, pages, tags and categories that are in the blog and informs the user of their current storage space available.

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard interface. At the top, there are navigation menus for 'Dashboard', 'Posts', 'Media', 'Links', 'Pages', 'Comments', 'Appearance', 'Plugins', 'Users', 'Tools', 'Settings', 'WordPress', and 'Log Out'. The main content area is titled 'Dashboard' and includes several widgets:

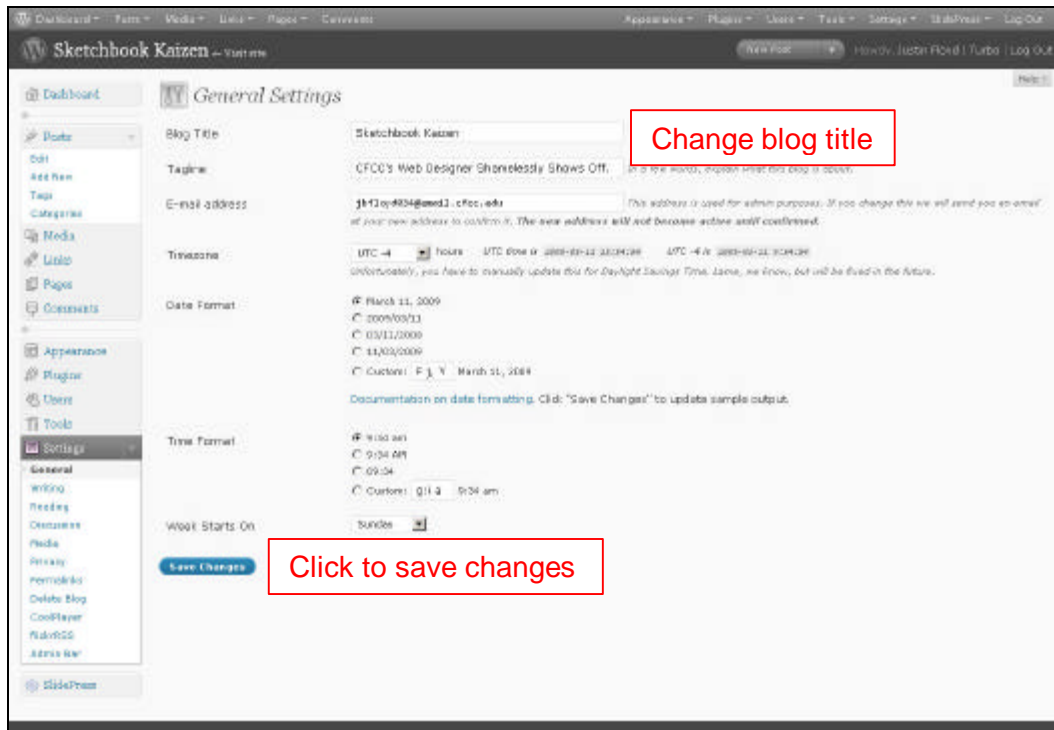
- Right Now:** A summary of site statistics: 4 Posts, 3 Pages, 3 Categories, and 5 Tags. It also shows '0 Comments', '0 Approved', '0 Pending', and '0 Spam'. Below this, it indicates 'Theme: 01 with 7 Widgets' and 'Storage: 150MB Space Allowed' with a progress bar showing '5.95MB (4%) Space Used'.
- QuickPress:** A form for creating a new post, including fields for Title, Content, and Tags, with 'Save Draft', 'Cancel', and 'Publish' buttons.
- Recent Drafts:** A section indicating 'There are no drafts at the moment'.
- WordPress Development Blog:** A section with two articles: 'Change the Web Challenge' (February 24, 2009) and 'New and Improved Plugins Directory Search' (February 10, 2009).
- Other WordPress News:** A section with two links: 'WordPress Theme Release for v1.5.1' and 'Secure Coding with WordPress - WordCamp SF 2008 Slides'.
- Recent Comments:** A section showing 'No comments yet'.
- Incoming Links:** A section with a message: 'The dashboard widget queries Google Blog Search so that when another blog links to your site it will show up here. It has found no incoming links... yet. It's okay - there is no rush.'

The dashboard will also display recent comments and inform the user if comments are awaiting moderation.

*Please note that storage space is limited to 150MB for each blog.*

## Change Your Title

The very first task a user should perform is to change the name of their blog. Upon logging in for the first time the blog uses the username as a default title. The user can change the title by accessing the settings link on their dashboard.



The first editable field on the General Settings page is for the blog title. The user can enter a new title here and then scroll to the bottom of the page to click the “Save Changes” button.

The changes will be saved and the blog will be updated immediately. The user is now ready to begin creating posts for their blog.

## Getting Started

WordPress allows the users to create Posts, Pages and Links. The user can insert images, audio and with the help of special plugins Flash or video media. The user can also organize their content through the use of categories and tags. The following section will highlight the most common features that allow the user to create and manage their content.

## Terminology

Below are terms and definitions that introduce the main features and functions of WordPress.

### Post

Posts are considered *dynamic* content because they constantly change. Posts are like a journal entry each new post replaces the one before it and old posts are archived. Most new content a user will add to their blog will be in the form of a post.

### Page

A Page is *static* content where the user can create content that does not change. This is more like a traditional web page like an “About Me” page or a “Contact Me” page. Anytime the user wishes to publish information that is not going to change and should be available anytime the user should put that information on a page.

### Images

WordPress allows the user to insert images into posts and pages. While WordPress provides several options to manage images it does not edit images. Use photo editing software to crop and resize photos for web viewing. Keep file size small, WordPress upload storage space is limited and large photos will fill storage space quickly.

Because of limited storage space the user may consider one of many free photo storage websites such as Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>). The user can upload photos to Flickr and then link to the photo when posting to the WordPress blog.

### Link

A link is a hyperlink to another page or website. In WordPress the user can create links to their favorite websites or other blogs and have those links appear in a sidebar widget called a Blog roll. The user can also create categories to organize links into custom menus.

## Category

Categories help WordPress to organize posts, pages and even links. The user can create categories to organize pages and posts into related groups. Categories often appear on the blog as a list of links where each category will provide the site visitor with a listing of posts related to the category. This can serve as a secondary form of navigation for the blog.

## Tags

A tag is a keyword or term that can be applied to blog posts to create highly searchable metadata. For example, if a blog post is about the history of Art Nouveau posters from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century then key words like art, poster or history may be appropriate tags for the post. If these are applied to the post then a site visitor can search for “art” on the blog and find the post about Art Nouveau posters. If a future post that discusses modern movie posters shares the tag “poster” with the previous Art Nouveau post then the two posts will be associated by the tag. Both posts may be provided in results of a search for the keyword poster. Some WordPress themes may include a sidebar widget know as a “tag cloud” that will display tags associated with the blog providing site visitors an alternative to categorical navigation. Tags are determined by the user and can be applied to posts when they are created.

## Themes

Themes control the look and feel of the blog. A selection of themes can be found under the “Design” tab on the dashboard. The Themes page is the first page displayed under the Design tab. The Themes page displays the blog’s current theme and a listing of available themes. WordPress has a large user community and free high quality themes are popular and easy to find on the web. Any new themes must be submitted to the Web Master (Christina Heikkila) or the Web Designer (Justin Floyd).

## Comments

Comments are a way for site visitors to interact with the author’s posts. Comments can provide engaging interactive content and feedback. It is also important to moderate comments for inappropriate content. The user can set a series of rules to help WordPress identify spam comments or inappropriate comments and send them to a Moderation Queue. The blog user can view, approve or disapprove incoming comments in the Moderation queue.

## **Plugin**

Plugins are programs that extend the functionality of the WordPress blog. Plugins allow users to do things like embed video, display Flickr galleries, or just about anything the user can imagine. Available plugins are listed on the Plugin management page. Interested in Plugins? Learn more at the WordPress plugin directory. <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/>. Submit any plugin requests to CFCC's Web Designer [jfloyd@cfcc.edu](mailto:jfloyd@cfcc.edu).

## **Widget**

Widgets are blocks of content the user can assign to designated areas of the blog. Typically Widgets are assigned to the Sidebar. Most blogs have two or three columns: a main column for the pages and posts, and a smaller secondary column called a sidebar. Most widgets are added to WordPress in the form of Plugins.

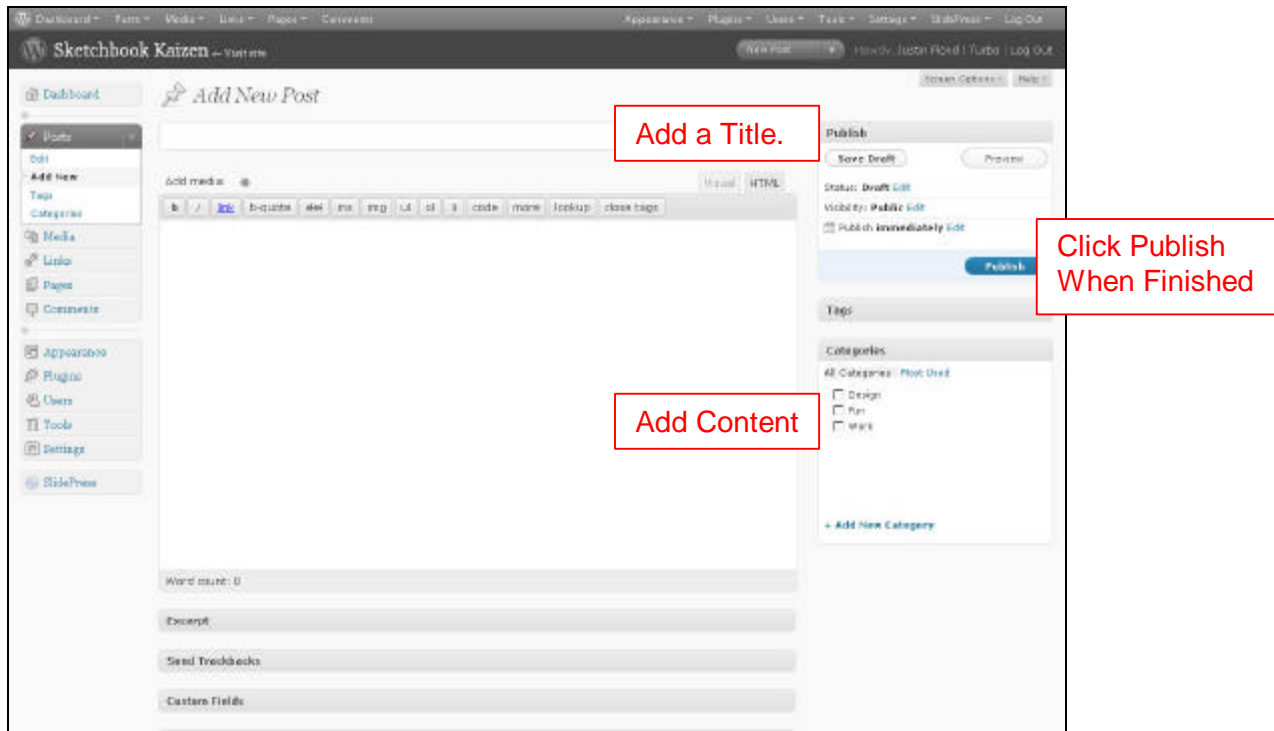
## Working with WordPress

The following section will detail the most common tasks the user may perform in WordPress.

The information presented here is taken directly from documentation on the WordPress website ([http://codex.wordpress.org/Main\\_Page](http://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page)).

## Writing Posts

Posts are the entries that display in reverse chronological order on your home page. In contrast to pages, posts usually have comments fields beneath them and are included in your site's RSS feed.



### To write a post:

- ? Log in to your WordPress Administration Panel.
- ? Click the Post tab, then click Add New.
- ? Start filling in the blanks.
- ? As needed, select a category, add tags, and make other selections from the sections below the post. Each of these sections is explained below.
- ? When you are ready, click Publish.

The following describes features and options available to users when creating a new post.

## **Title**

The title of your post. You can use any words or phrases. Avoid using the same title twice as that will cause problems. You can use commas, apostrophes, quotes, hypens/dashes, and other typical symbols in the post like "My Site - Here's Lookin' at You, Kid." WordPress will clean it up for the link to the post, called the post-slug.

## **Post Editing Area**

The big blank box where you enter your writing, links, links to images, and any information you want to display on your site. You can use either the Visual or the HTML view to compose your posts.

## **Preview this Post**

Allows you to see how your post will look before officially publishing it.

## **Publish Status**

Shows three states for the post: Published, Pending Review, and Unpublished. A Published status means the post has been published on your blog for all to see. Pending Review means the draft is waiting for review by someone else prior to publication. Unpublished means the post has not been published and remains a draft. If you select a specific publish status and then click the Save button, that status is applied to the post. For example, to save a post in the Pending Review status, select Pending Review from the Publish Status drop-down box, and then click Save. You can see all posts organized by status by going to Manage > Posts.

## **Schedule Post**

To schedule a post for a future time or date, hit "Edit" in the Publish Status area of the post screen. Change the settings to the desired time and date. You must also hit the "Publish" button when you have completed the post for the post to be published at the desired time and date.

## **Permalink**

After you save your post, the Permalink below the title shows the potential URL for the post, as long as you have permalinks enabled. (To enable permalinks, go to Settings > Permalinks.) The URL is generated from your title. In previous versions of WordPress, this was referred to as the "page-slug." The commas, quotes, apostrophes, and other non-HTML favorable characters are changed and a dash is put between each word. If your title is "My Site - Here's Lookin' at You, Kid", it will be cleaned up to be "my-site-heres-lookin-at-you-kid" as the title. You can manually change this, maybe shortening it to "my-site-lookin-at-you-kid".

## **Save**

Allows you to save your post as a draft rather than immediately publishing it. To return to your drafts later, click the Manage tab, click the Drafts link that appears below the Manage Posts title, and then click your draft post.

## **Publish**

Publishes your post on the site. You can edit the time when the post is published by clicking the Edit link above the Publish button and specifying the time you want the post to be published. By default, at the time the post is first auto-saved, that will be the date and time of the post within the database.

## **Tags**

Refers to micro-categories for your blog, similar to including index entries for a page. Posts with similar tags are linked together when a user clicks one of the tags. Tags have to be enabled with the right code in your theme for them to appear in your post.

## **Categories**

The general topic the post can be classified in. Generally, bloggers have 7-10 categories for their content. Readers can browse specific categories to see all posts in the category. To add a new category, click the +Add New Category link in this section. You can manage your categories by going to Manage > Categories.

## **Excerpt**

A summary or brief teaser of your posts featured on the front page of your site as well as on the category, archives, and search non-single post pages. Note that the Excerpt does not usually appear by default. It only appears in your post if you have changed the index.php template file to display the Excerpt instead of the full Content of a post. If so, WordPress will automatically use the first 55 words of your post as the Excerpt or up until the use of the More Quicktag mark. If you use an Explicit Excerpt, this will be used no matter what.

## **Comments & Pings**

Options to enable interactivity and notification of your posts. This section hosts two check boxes: Allowing Comments and Allowing Pings. If Allowing Comments is unchecked, no one can post comments to this particular post. If Allowing Pings is unchecked, no one can post pingbacks or trackbacks to this particular post.

## **Password Protect This Post**

Allows you to keep this particular post private so that only those with the password can read it. Be sure and write down the password and keep it in a safe place.

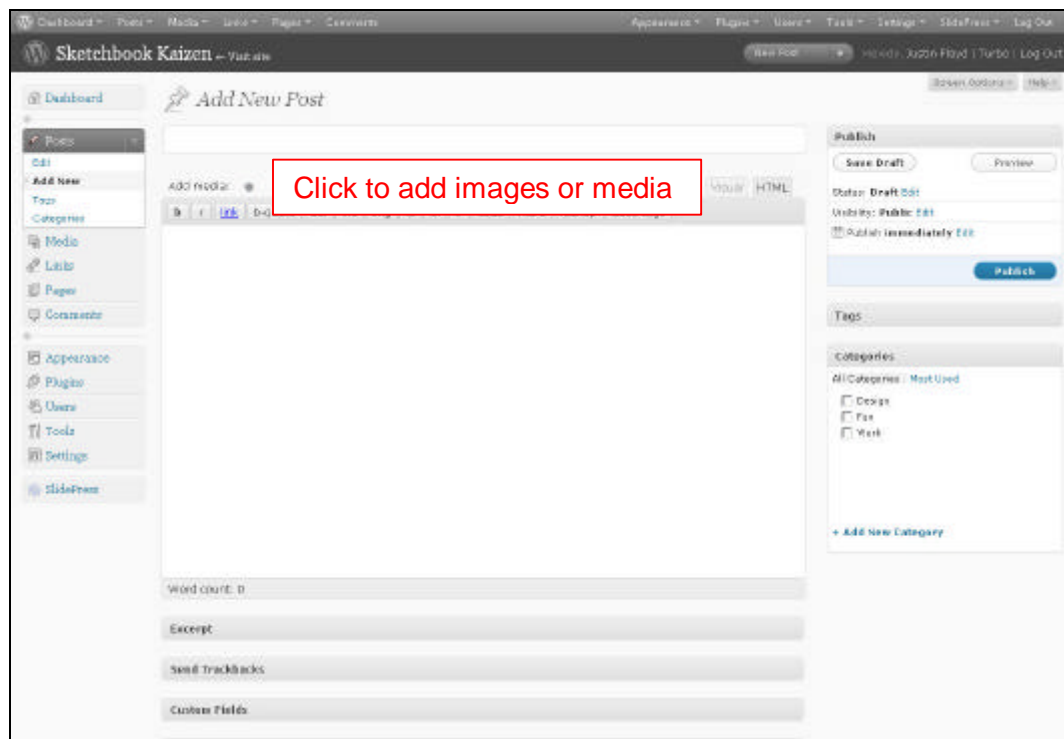
## Using Images in Posts

Images can be used in a variety of methods in your WordPress posts and Pages. They can be a major subject, or a referenced detail that enhances the information or story.

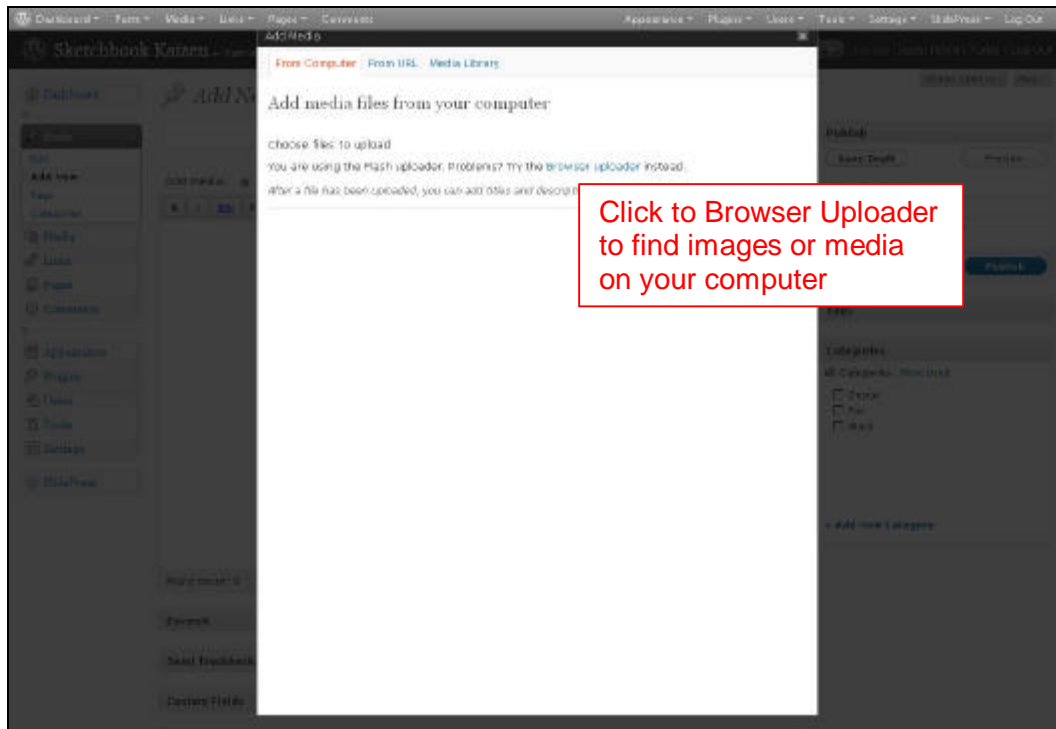
### Inserting an Image into a Post.

There are 2 steps involved to inserting an image into a post. First, the image file must be uploaded onto your web server before it can be inserted into a post. The second step is to actually insert the image into the post in the appropriate location.

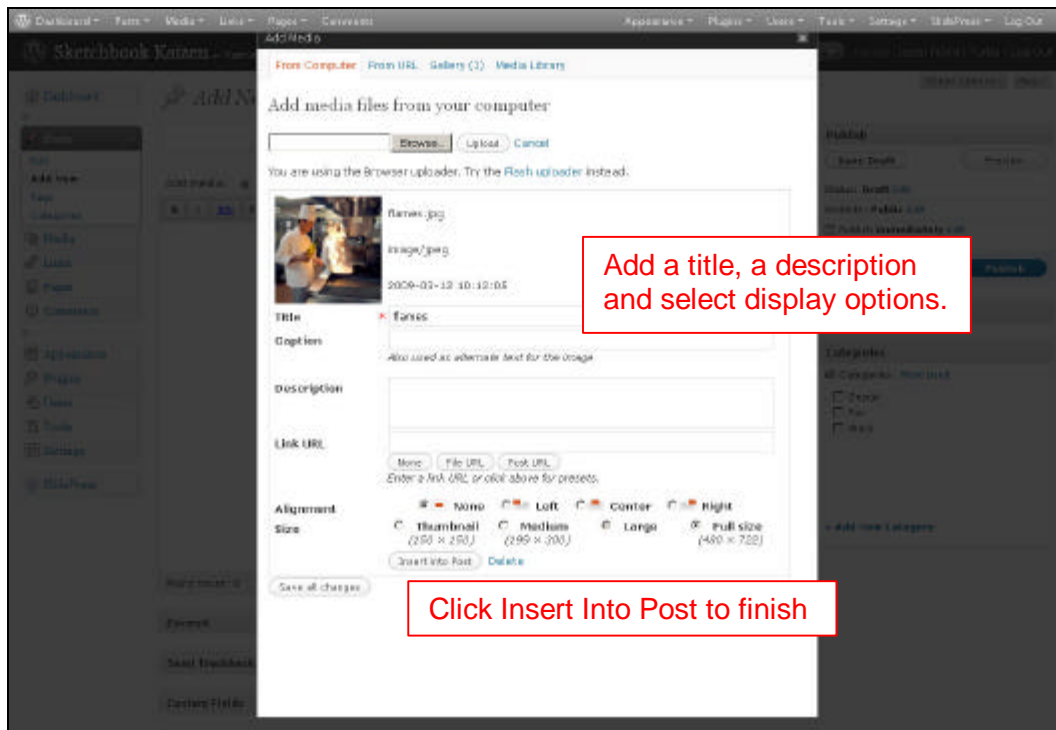
The simplest way to do this is to use the "Add Media" function on the post screen (beside the "Visual" and "HTML" tabs). Choose the appropriate button depending on whether you are adding photos, videos, audio, or miscellaneous media (e.g. PDF files).



In the "From Computer" area of the screen you need to upload the desired image file. NOTE: Before hitting the "Upload from Computer" button it is recommended that you select the "Browser Uploader" instead of using the default Flash Uploader. After selecting the "Browser Uploader", hit the "Browse..." button and choose the desired image file on your computer. Then, hit the "Upload" button. Your image file is now on your web server.



Make sure you give the image an appropriate title, as well as a relevant description if desired. Choose the desired alignment and size, and hit the "insert into post" button. Your image is now inserted into the post at the location where your cursor was last active.



Every time you upload an image to your web server it is added to the "Gallery" of images that are available for that blog. If you want to insert the same image into another post go to the "Gallery", hit the "Show" link, and then follow the same instructions to insert that image into another location or post.

## Pages

In WordPress, you can write either posts or pages. When you're writing a regular blog entry, you write a post. Posts automatically appear in reverse chronological order on your blog's home page. Pages, on the other hand, are for content such as "About Me," "Contact Me," etc. Pages live outside of the normal blog chronology, and are often used to present information about yourself or your site that is somehow timeless -- information that is always applicable. You can use Pages to organize and manage any amount of content.

Other examples of common pages include Copyright, Legal Information, Reprint Permissions, Company Information, and Accessibility Statement.

In general, Pages are very similar to Posts in that they both have Titles and Content and can use your site's Presentation Templates to maintain a consistent look throughout your site. Pages, though, have several key distinctions that make them quite different from Posts.

## Pages in a Nutshell

### What Pages Are:

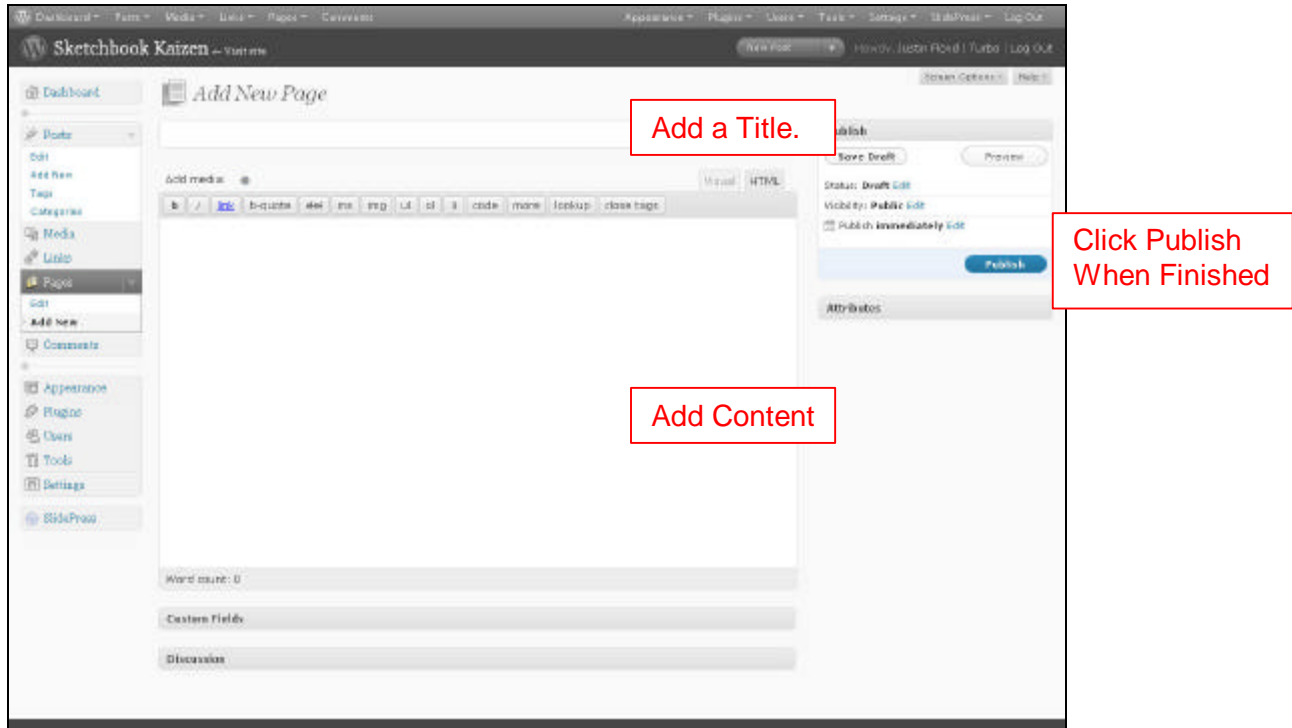
- ? Pages are for content that is less time-dependent than Posts.
- ? Pages can be organized into pages and Subpages.

### What Pages are not:

- ? Pages are not Posts, nor are they excerpted from larger works of fiction. They do not cycle through your blog's main page.
- ? Pages cannot be associated with Categories and cannot be assigned Tags. The organizational structure for Pages comes only from their hierarchical interrelationships, and not from Tags or Categories.
- ? Pages are not files. They are stored in your database just like Posts are.

## Creating Pages

To create a new Page, log in to your WordPress blog. On the Dashboard, choose the Pages tab and then choose the Add New subtab to access the screen where you can create your new Page. Complete the title and add content to the Page. Select Publish when you are finished.



The image shows a screenshot of the WordPress 'Add New Page' editor interface. The page title is 'Sketchbook Kaizen - WordPress'. The main content area is empty, with a 'Word count: 0' indicator at the bottom. Three red callout boxes are overlaid on the interface:

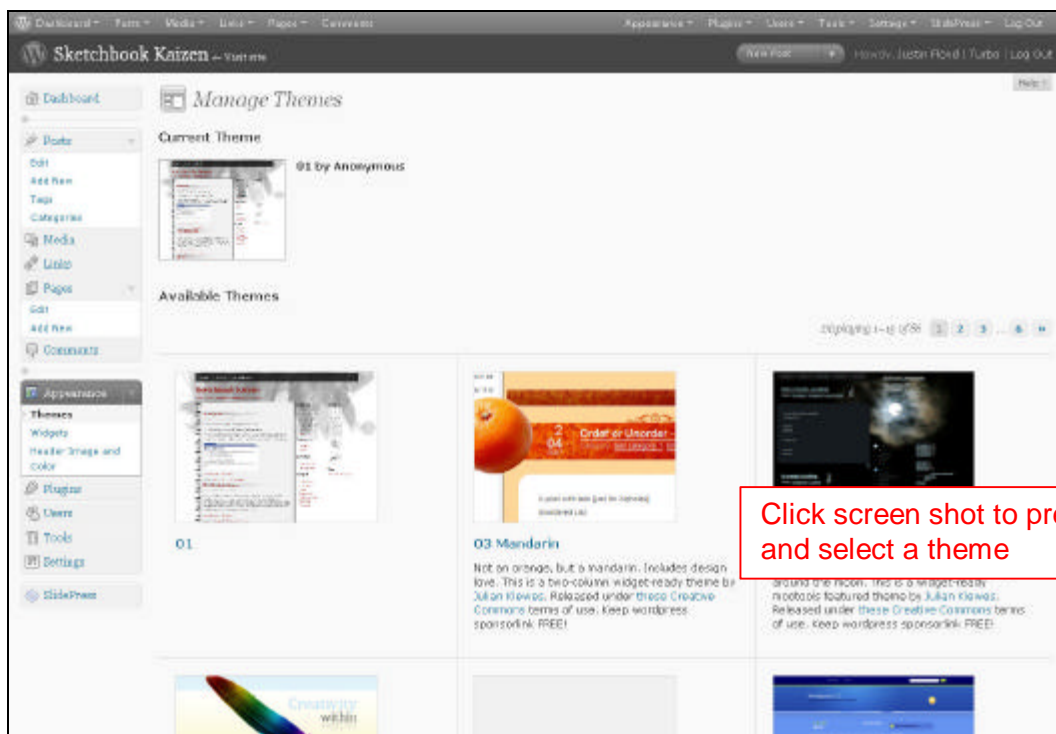
- A box labeled 'Add a Title.' points to the title input field at the top of the editor.
- A box labeled 'Add Content' points to the main content area.
- A box labeled 'Click Publish When Finished' points to the 'Publish' button on the right-hand side of the editor.

## What is a Theme?

Fundamentally, the WordPress Theme system is a way to "skin" your weblog. Yet, it is more than just a "skin." Skinning your site implies that only the design is changed. WordPress Themes can provide much more control over the look and presentation of the material on your website.

## Selecting the Active Theme

- ? To select the active theme for your site:
- ? Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.
- ? Select the Appearance subpanel, then Themes.
- ? From the Available Themes section, click on theme title (or theme screenshot) for the theme you wish to activate.
- ? A preview of the theme will be shown. To activate the theme click the Activate "Theme Name" link in the top right.
- ? Your selection should immediately become active.



## Comment Moderation

Comment moderation is a feature in WordPress that allows you to prevent comments from appearing on your site without your express approval. Moderation can be very useful in addressing Comment Spam, but it has more general applications as well.

## How Moderation Works

WordPress runs a number of tests on each new comment before posting it to your blog. If a comment fails one of these tests, it is not displayed immediately on the site but is placed in a queue for moderation, the process of manual approval or deletion by the blog's administrator.

## Controlling Moderation

You can control which comments get held for moderation on your Settings Discussion SubPanel page, which is located under Settings > Discussion.

If you would like every comment to be held for moderation, check the  An administrator must approve the comment option, listed under Before a comment appears.

If you would like to send suspicious comments to the moderation queue, while letting innocent comments through, you will need to specify a set of rules for determining which comments are suspicious. These rules are specified in on the Settings > Discussion > Comment Moderation. The first option is to hold comments for moderation if they contain an unusually large number of hyperlinks. Most normal comments contain at most one or two links while spam comments often have a large number. Look at your own comments and set this to a value that makes sense for your audience.

The second option is to specify a set of moderation keys which, if present in any part of the comment, will cause it to be held for moderation. These keys are specified one per line in the large text area, which is blank by default. Moderation keys can include Spam Words, swear words, IP addresses, and Regular Expressions.

When you add a new moderation key, it's a good idea to test its validity by checking previous comments. Simply use the link entitled Check past comments against moderation list, which is located underneath the text box containing moderation keys. This asks WordPress to check previous comments and tell you which ones would be flagged for moderation under your new set of keys.