WordPress FAQ for Teachers & Staff

Migrating to WordPress

What is WordPress?

Originally released in 2003 as a blogging system, WordPress has grown over the years to become a feature-rich website content management system (CMS) which can be used to manage large scale multi-user websites. It is completely free and open-source, meaning that web developers and programmers are invited to improve its functionality. As a result, WordPress is incredibly popular system, currently used by 20% of the top 1 million websites on the internet.

Why are we switching to WordPress?

The three main reasons we are changing the District's standard website content management system (CMS) from FirstClass Rapid Web Designer (RWD) to WordPress are:

1. **The District is switching its email system**
   The District is in the process of switching our email system from FirstClass to Office 365. Because most of our websites are managed in FirstClass, it is necessary to move all of our websites to another system.

2. **Cost savings**
   In order to use FirstClass and its web page editing add-on, Rapid Web Designer (RWD), the District paid annual user license fees. WordPress is completely free and will do everything RWD was able to do and more, so moving to WordPress will mean a substantial cost savings for the District.

3. **More features**
   As its popularity indicates, WordPress is a much better content management system than FirstClass RWD, and will allow our users to do much more with their websites.

How does WordPress differ from FirstClass Rapid Web Designer (RWD)?

Features are similar
Prior to using WordPress, all of our school and district websites were managed through FirstClass RWD, an add-on to the District's email system. Since WordPress and FirstClass RWD were both designed to allow you to edit web pages, most anything that you could do with FirstClass RWD, you can do with WordPress, though the steps you follow may be different.

No software to install
One main difference between the two systems is that, unlike FirstClass, WordPress is not software that needs to be installed on your computer. With WordPress, you login directly to your website and edit it using the same web browser that you use to view your website. As a result, all you need to work on your

website is a web browser such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome and an active internet connection.

Your content is safe
Without going into great detail, another key difference between the two systems is that WordPress has more "safety nets" in place to protect your web page content. Over the years, some users of FirstClass RWD have unfortunately experienced data corruption on their web pages where they suddenly found all of the content of a given web page "scrambled" without reason. Since WordPress has been used by the District, we've had no reports of that sort of data loss.

How are our school websites being transitioned from FirstClass to WordPress?

All of the live content on our school websites is being moved from FirstClass to WordPress by the District Webmaster. Websites are being moved according to grade level, so elementary school websites are migrated first, followed by middle school and high school websites. Personal on-site training is provided to each school webmaster prior to re-launching their school website on WordPress. Any school staff who had access to edit areas of their school website through FirstClass retain that same access when the site is moved to WordPress. For instance, a Media Specialist will still be able to edit their Media Center web pages once their school site is migrated to WordPress.

How are our teacher websites being transitioned from FirstClass to WordPress?

Teachers who currently maintain their own teacher website through FirstClass RWD who would like to being using WordPress have these options:

A. **Have their content transferred**
   Teachers may submit a Web Help Desk ticket to have the live content of their FirstClass website transferred over to WordPress for them. Please note that there is a waiting list, and it may take several weeks for their pages to be moved. The teacher will continue to have access to edit their FirstClass site until their WordPress site is ready for use. Once it is ready, we'll link to their WordPress site from your school's website and the old FirstClass conference will be removed from their FirstClass desktop.

B. **Start with a blank WordPress site**
   Teachers may submit a Web Help Desk ticket to get a blank WordPress site. If a teacher wants to move some content on their own from their old FirstClass site, they may do so. Once they have their WordPress site ready with some content, they can contact their school webmaster or the District webmaster to have their WordPress site linked from the school website.

Will the address of my website change when I switch to WordPress?

School Websites: No
As school websites are moved from FirstClass to WordPress, they will retain their current website

address. For example, Crookshank's website address on FirstClass was http://www-ces.stjohns.k12.fl.us and it stayed http://www-ces.stjohns.k12.fl.us when it was switched over to WordPress.

Teacher Websites: Yes
As we transition our websites from FirstClass to WordPress, all teacher websites are being created on a new WordPress network at http://teachers.stjohns.k12.fl.us with the site naming convention of full last name, hyphen, first initial. As an example, John Doe's teacher website would be created at http://teachers.stjohns.k12.fl.us/doe-j

The advantage is that a teacher's website address no longer reflects their school location, so a teacher who moves from one school to another will not see their website address change. This will greatly decrease broken links as teachers transfer between schools.

When do I need to start using WordPress?

Teachers who maintain their own teacher website are encouraged to start the 2014-2015 school year in August 2014 using WordPress. Come December 15th of 2014, the FirstClass server will be taken offline. To help us make a smooth transition, we ask that you do not wait until the last minute to make the switch. Thus far roughly 20% of our teachers are managing their websites through WordPress.

Terminology

What are plugins, widgets, etc.?

Below is a quick overview of some important terms as they relate to WordPress.

- **Page –** A page is just a single web page, like the pages we created with FirstClass RWD. Pages are best used for content which will be pertinent for a long time.

- **Post –** Posts refer to blog entries and are best for time-sensitive content – information that may only be useful for a short span of time, like class events, homework assignments, etc.

- **Media Library –** The Media Library stores all of the supporting files that you upload to your website, such as images and PDFs.

- **Theme –** The "theme" refers to the overall look of your website including the layout, the color scheme, fonts, and so on. Because WordPress keeps the content of your website separate from the design, you may completely change the look of your website by selecting a different theme. Currently, each school has a single theme reflecting their school colors and mascot. In the future, more themes will be made available to our WordPress users.

- **Plugin –** Plugins are optional tools or add-ons that add more features to WordPress. An example plugin would be **"**MCE Table Buttons" which adds buttons to WordPress that allow you to create and edit tables.

- **Widget –** Widgets are optional blocks of information which can be placed in the sidebar of your website. An example widget would be the "Pages" widget which automatically displays links to all of your published web pages.

- **Shortcodes –** Shortcodes are simple lines of text enclosed in brackets like [shortcode] which WordPress recognizes to display stylized content. An example shortcode would be the [gallery] shortcode which displays all of the photos attached to a web page in a photo gallery.

Using WordPress for the First Time

How do I login to my WordPress site?

Once your website has been created, follow these steps to login:

1) Visit your website's address in a web browser (Internet Explorer / Firefox / Chrome)
2) Scroll down to the very bottom of the web page
3) Click the "Log In" link at the bottom of the web page
4) **Login to WordPress using the same e0 username and password that you use to login to your computer, FirstClass and Sungard Business Plus.**

Once you've successfully logged in, you will be taken to the WordPress "Dashboard", the area of your site which you will use to edit it.

What is the Dashboard?

When you login to WordPress, you will be taken to the back-end area of WordPress where you will do all of your editing. The **Dashboard** is a web page on the WordPress back-end which gives you a general overview of what you have on your site. It shows how many posts and pages you have published and how much storage space you have used.

As with most of the pages in the back-end area, you can customize what you see on the Dashboard by clicking the **Screen Options** button toward the upper right hand corner of the Dashboard. That will open a panel where you can choose how many columns appear on the Dashboard, as well as which blocks of

information will be shown. Any settings you choose will automatically be saved to your account, so the Dashboard will look the same for you the next time you login.
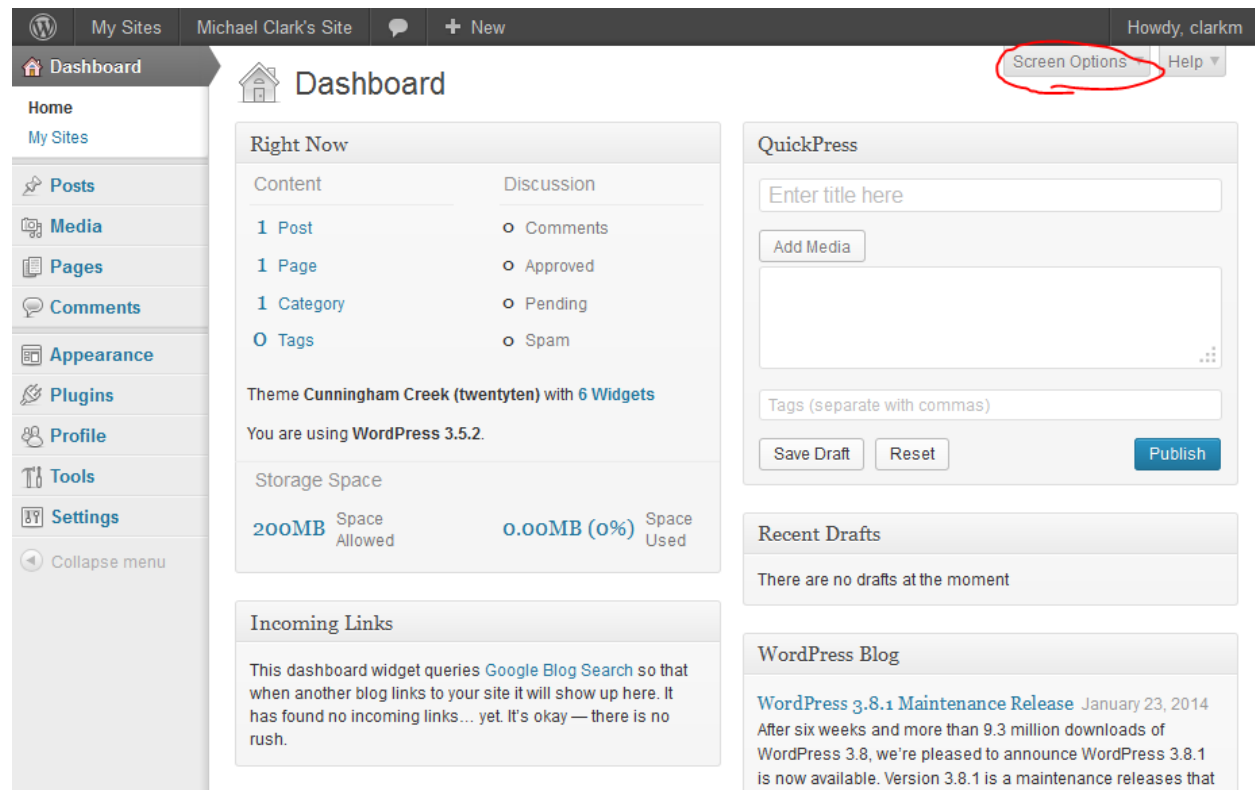
Note that on the left hand side of the page there is a navigation menu with a list of links. As you work on your website you will use these links quite a bit to jump to the different areas of the back-end. As you activate different plugins, additional links may appear in the list given you more options to manage your site.

What should I do the first time I log in?

If this is your very first time you've logged in to your WordPress site, there are two things you may want to do right away: edit your profile and activate some plugins.

Edit Your Profile

Click the **Profile** link on the left to access your account's profile. Here you can edit your first name, last name and nickname and choose how you would like your name to be displayed on your website using the drop down menu next to "Display name publicly as." Your name will not appear on your pages, but will show up on your blog posts to identify you as the author.

If you make any changes to your profile, be sure to click the blue **Update Profile** button at the bottom of the page.


Activate Plugins

Plugins are optional tools which add features to WordPress. Think of WordPress as a car with a standard set of features, and plugins are your upgrades like power windows. We have made available a handful of plugins to help teachers edit their websites. You can see the full list of available plugins, activate and deactivate them by clicking the **Plugins** link on the left-hand navigation menu.

A few plugins that you may want to activate right away are…

- **Fonts**, which will allow you to use different fonts and sizes on your posts and pages,

- **MCE Table Buttons**, which gives you **a** set of buttons that let you create and edit tables as we did in FirstClass,

- **Marquee**, which lets you display a scrolling test message across the top of your pages, and,

- **Background Per Page**, which lets you set an image or color as a page background.

To activate a plugin, just click the Activate link under its name. You may also use the checkboxes and "Bulk Actions" drop down menu to activate or deactivate several plugins at once.
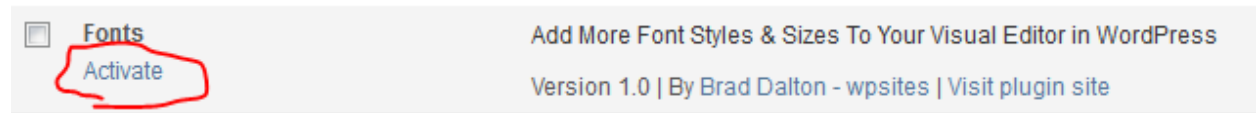
More information about all of the available plugins is provided later in this documentation.

Should I make pages or posts?

With WordPress, you may create either **Posts** or **Pages**. Though there are some exceptions, posts are intended to contain time-sensitive information, content that may only be pertinent for a week or a month, whereas Pages are intended to have information that will always be useful to the reader. Pages are akin to the web pages we created and edited in FirstClass.

As an example, if you are planning to write about a homework assignment, an upcoming event, or put up a weekly newsletter, you may want to write a **post**. By contrast, if you are writing about your class rules, your teaching style or your course syllabus (information that would be useful to a website visitor at any point during the school year), then a page might be a better option.

You may choose to write strictly posts, strictly pages, or a little of both.

Below are some of the additional differences between posts and pages which you may want to consider as you choose between writing posts or pages.

Posts	Pages
Several posts may be displayed at a time, listed chronologically with the newest post at the top	Only 1 page is displayed at a time
Can be organized by subject matter with categories and tags you create	Cannot be organized with categories or tags, but can be organized in a hierarchical or outline format
Are included in your website's RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed	Are not included in your website's RSS feed

Editing

How do I edit my site with WordPress?

While you are logged WordPress, there will be a gray toolbar displayed at the top of the web page. You see the toolbar because you are logged in, but visitors to your website will not see it. This toolbar provides a quick way to do a number of actions, including editing an existing pages and posts, and creating a new ones.

Shown below are some of the things you can do from the top toolbar.
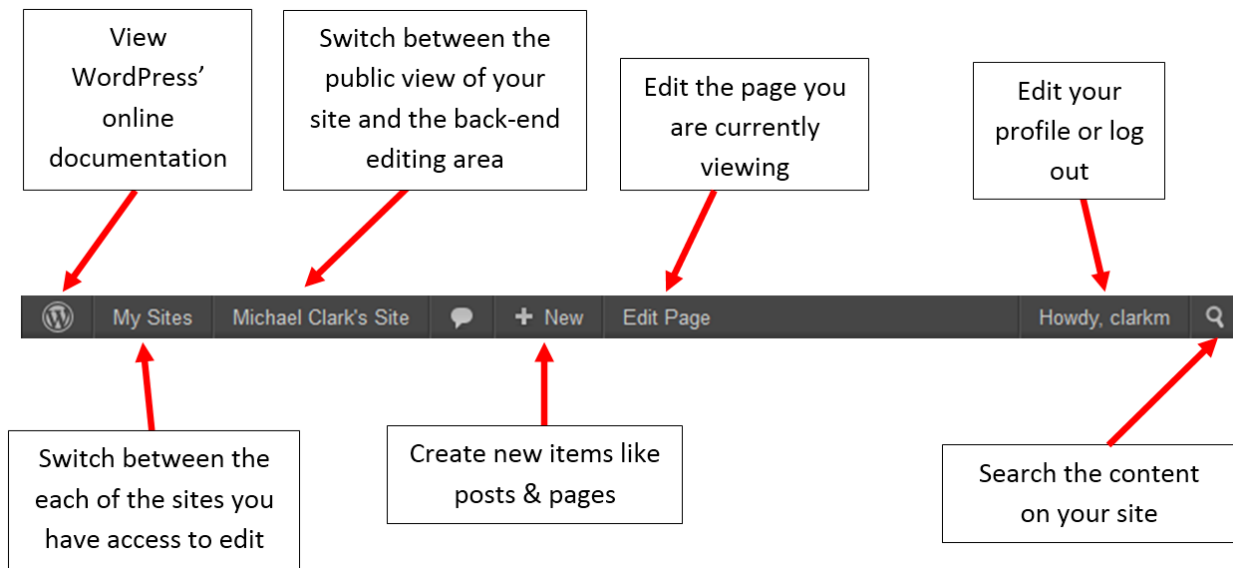
How do I edit my pages?

If ever you need to update or edit an existing page on your site, an easy way to do so would be to navigate to the page as you normally would and then click the **Edit Page** link on the top toolbar.

Clicking that link will bring you to the **Edit Page** screen which gives you a wide range of options for editing a web page.

A complete guide to the Page Editing Screen can be found at:
http://en.support.wordpress.com/pages/new-page-screen/
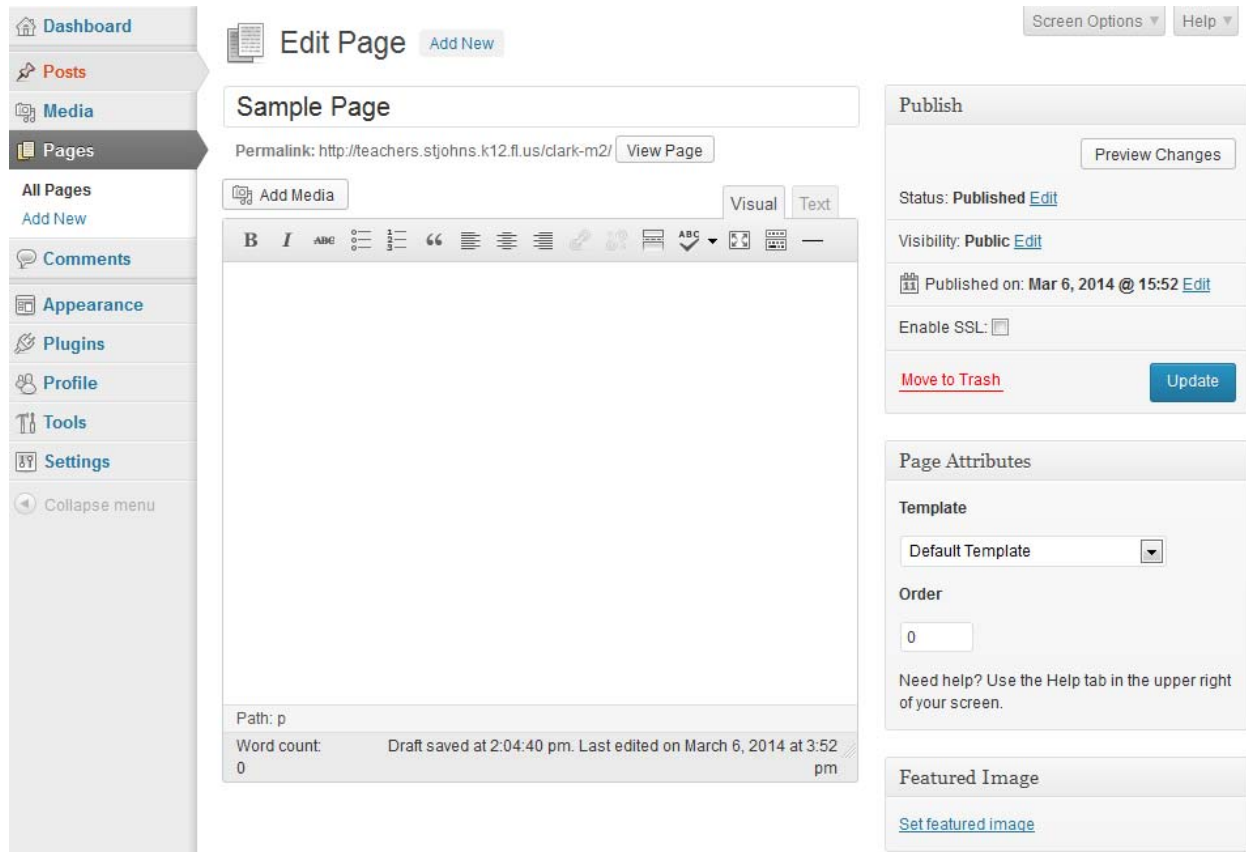
How do I make a new page?

Probably the easiest way to make a new web page is to use the **+ New** link on the top toolbar.
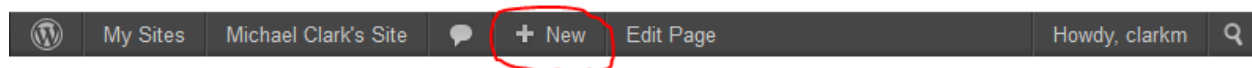
From the back-end area you can also click **Pages > Add New** on the left-hand navigation menu.

What do the buttons on the editing toolbar do?

If you're seeing the Edit Page screen for the first time, the editing toolbar will look "trimmed down" to a single row of buttons. Be sure to click the **"Show/Hide the Kitchen Sink"** button in order to see the complete set of buttons.

Note that you would normally only see two rows of buttons, but if you've activated the **Fonts** plugin, the **MCE Table Buttons** plugin or both, you will see 3 rows of buttons as shown below.
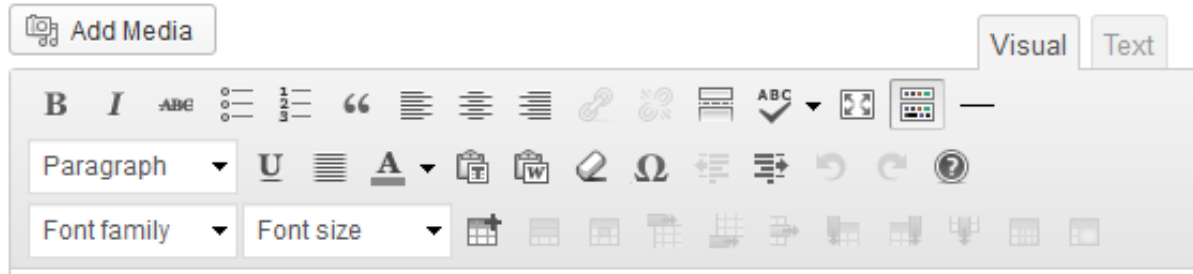
A comprehensive guide to WordPress' Visual Editor and all of its buttons is available at:
http://en.support.wordpress.com/visual-editor/

How do I change my home page?

WordPress will allow you to display either a group of blog posts on your home page or an individual web page. If you choose to display blog posts, you can choose how many will be shown. If you choose to display a single web page, you can decide which one of your published web pages will be used.

To set which page will be your home page…

1) Go to **Settings > Reading** on the left-hand navigation menu.

2) On the Reading Settings page, make sure **Front page displays** to **"A static page."**

3) Use the drop down menu to choose which of your pages you want to use as your site's home page.

4) Click the blue [Save Changes] button.
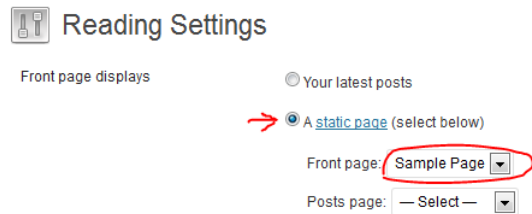
Plugins

What do all of these plugins do?

- **Akismet –** If you allow the public to submit comments on your posts and pages (commenting is turned off by default), you may receive "spam" comments similar to the spam you receive via email. This plugin helps filter out those spam comments automatically.

- **All-in-One Event Calendar by Timely –** Use this plugin to maintain a calendar of events on your website. Your events can be displayed in a few different layouts including a standard monthly calendar. Your site visitors will be able to "subscribe" to your calendar to stay up to date on your events.

- **All in One Video Pack –** This plugin will allow you to quickly add videos to your website, whether you want to record new videos with a webcam or upload them.

- **All in One Video Pack Sidebar Widget –** If you are using the All in One Video Pack plugin, this companion plugin can be used to display your recently uploaded videos in your website's sidebar.

- **Allow Multiple Accounts –** Teachers who would like to allow a group of students to login to their website to post comments may use this plugin to create the student accounts using their own email address. Without this plugin, WordPress requires every user to have a unique email address.

- **Authors Widget** – This plugin is useful for sites which have several editors. This plugin will display links in the sidebar with each editor's name, so a viewer can click an editor's name to see which blog posts they have published.

- **Background Per Page –** Use this plugin to display a solid color or background image behind the content of a web page.

- **Display Widgets –** By default, WordPress will display the same widgets on all of your web pages. This plugin will let you display certain widgets on certain web pages.

- **Document Links Widget –** This plugin provides a quick way to link to documents like PDF files in your sidebar. Just upload a PDF to your Media Library, and this plugin will automatically add a link to the document in the sidebar of your site.

- **Email Log –** This plugin is a good companion to the Subscribe2 widget. It will show you a log of all of the emails which have been sent from your website.

- **Fonts –** Activating this plugin will add a spot on the editing toolbar where you can change the font faces and font sizes of text.

- **Google Analytics for WordPress –** Use this plugin to see detailed statistics about your website traffic.

- **Image Widget –** This simple plugin makes it easy to display an image in the sidebar of your website.

- **Insert HTML Snippet –** coming soon

- **Lightbox Gallery –** coming soon

- **Link Manager –** coming soon

- **Marquee –** coming soon

- **MCE Table Buttons –** coming soon

- **Meteor Slides –** coming soon

- **Quick Page/Post Redirect Plugin –** coming soon

- **Shortcodes Ultimate –** coming soon

- **Subscribe2 –** coming soon

- **WordPress Importer –** coming soon

- **WP Mail From II –** coming soon

- **WP Render Blogroll Links –** coming soon

- **WYSIWYG Widgets –** coming soon

Widgets

How do I change the information in the sidebar?

On the left-hand navigation menu, click **Appearance > Widgets**

A comprehensive guide to working with widgets is available at
http://en.support.wordpress.com/widgets/

What do all of these widgets do?

Archives – only useful if you make blog posts. This will show links to your blog posts based upon the months they were posted. It gives visitors to your site an easy way to navigate to your old blog posts. Options: a) if the list of months gets too long, you can display them in a dropdown menu instead; b) you can also show the number of posts you made each month.
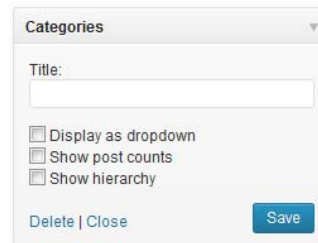
Calendar – only useful if you make blog posts several times a week. Not to be mistaken for a calendar of events, this will show a links to your blog posts based upon the dates they were posted.
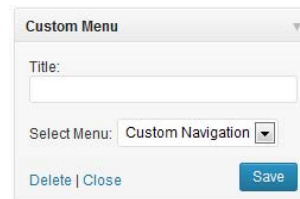
Categories – only useful if you make blog posts in more than one category. This will display a list of your blog post categories as links, allowing visitors to click on a one category to see the posts you've made in that one category. Options: a) if you have a lot of categories, you can display them in a dropdown menu instead of a list; b) you can show the number of posts you've made in each category; c) you can display the categories in an outline format
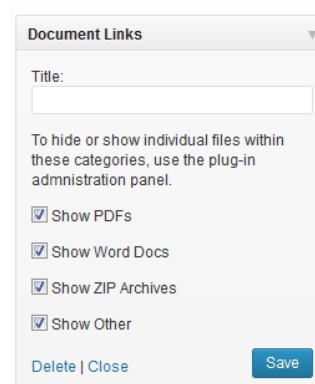
Custom Menu – this will display a custom menu that you've created under *Appearance > Menus.* Creating a custom menu allows you make a list of links to your pages and/or other web pages. You'll have full control over the order in which the links are displayed and how they read. *Learn more about creating custom menus.*
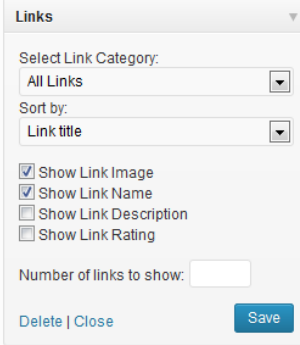
Document Links* - to get this widget, go to *Plugins* and activate the plugin named "Document Links Widget." Once you place this widget in a Widget Area, it will automatically display links to any PDFs, Word documents or ZIP files you have uploaded to your media library. Option: a) you can choose to show links to one of more of those file types b) you can also "hide" links to certain files when you click *Document Links* link on the left-hand menu.

Links* - to get this widget, go to Plugins and activate the plugin named "Link Manager." This widget will display a list of links you've added in the Links Manager. To add or edit your list of links, click Links on the left-hand menu. Options: a) Choose to show one or all of your link categories b) Choose the order in which the links are listed c) Choose to show/hide the link name, an associated image, its description or its rating. *Learn more about how to use the Links Manager*.
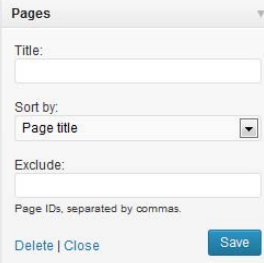
Meta – this simple widget will automatically display these 5 links: Site Admin, Log in / Log Out, Entries RSS, Comments RSS, WordPress.org. No options for customization.
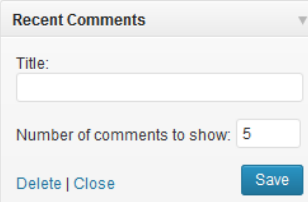
Pages – highly recommended if you create pages, this widget will automatically show links to all of your published pages in a list. The page title will be the link. Options: a) choose the order in which the links are listed: by Page title (alphabetically by the page title), by Page order (a specific order you set), by Page ID (the order in which the pages were created); b) choose certain pages to hide from the list.
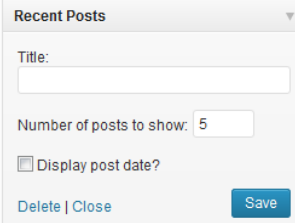
Recent Comments – only useful if you are accepting comments on your posts and pages, this will show links to recent comments you have received. Option: a) choose how many recent comments are displayed.
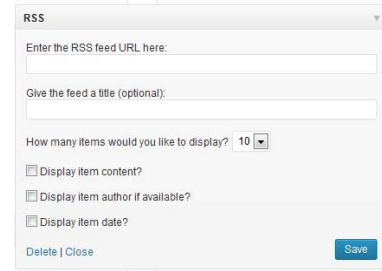
Recent Posts – only useful if you create blog posts, this will show a list of links to your most recent posts. The post title will be shown as the link. Options: a) choose how many recent posts are displayed; b) show or hide the date on which the post was published.

RSS – coming soon

RSS	▼

Enter the RSS feed URL here:

Give the feed a title (optional):

How many items would you like to display? 10 ▾

☐ Display item content?

☐ Display item author if available?

☐ Display item date?

Delete | Close   Save

Search – coming soon

Tag Cloud – coming soon

Text – coming soon

Upcoming Events* – coming soon

WYSIWYG Widgets* – coming soon