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# What's a WordPress and how do I use it?

*Info session to review WordPress  
usage and best practices*

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## AGENDA

- **WHAT'S** a Wordpress?
- **USE** your words
- **BUILD** an audience
- **NEWS** vs. updates
- **WORDPRESS** nuts and bolts
- **GETTING STARTED**



## WHAT'S A WORDPRESS?

- Open source **blogging tool** and publishing platform
- A blog (web log) is a type of website or part of a website regularly updated with new content (including announcements, commentary, accomplishments).
- Most good quality blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments or share content.
- Okanagan campus **News Portal** is a WordPress blog  
<https://news.ok.ubc.ca/>
- Okanagan campus units/departments can choose to have their own News Portal set-up  
<https://news.ok.ubc.ca/hr>    <https://news.ok.ubc.ca/it>    <https://news.ok.ubc.ca/smp>

(Source: Wikipedia)



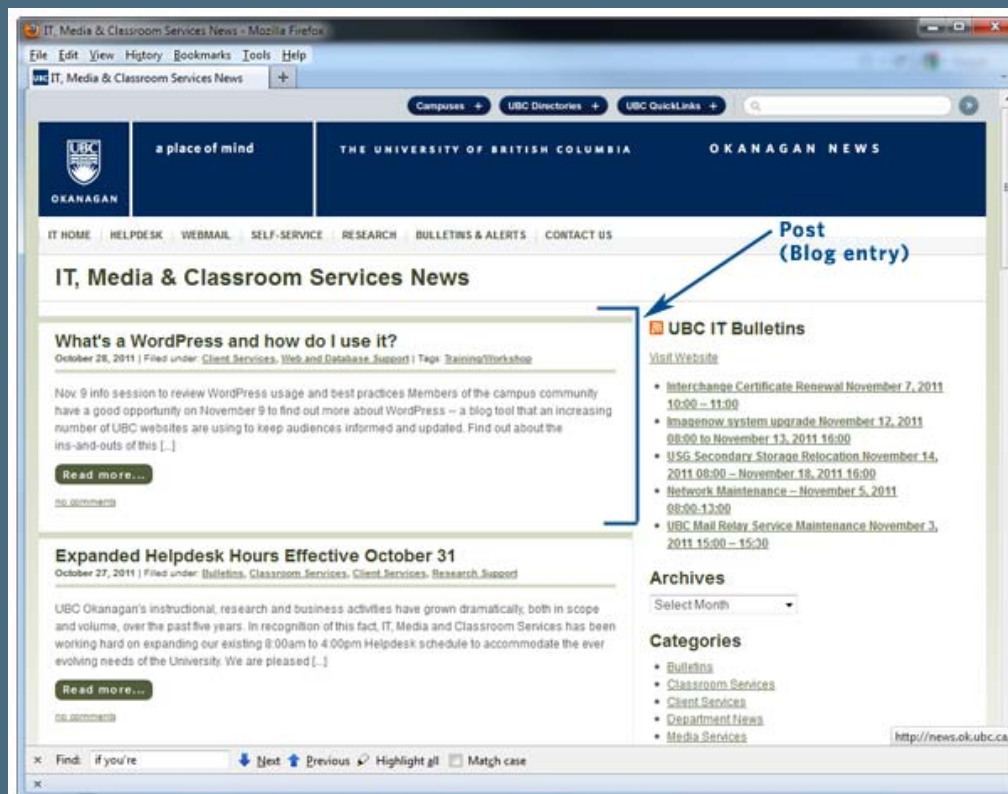
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# BLOG ENTRIES

- An individual blog entry is called a **post**.



IT News Portal (Blog)  
news.ok.ubc.ca/it

\*WordPress is the platform (software) used to create this blog.



## POSTS VS. PAGES

What is the difference between a blog post and a webpage?

- **Pages** - Active Content Manager
  - Primary online presence, used to create hierarchy and structure within your website (parent – child relationship)
  - Contain static content
  - Time insensitive



## POSTS VS. PAGES

What is the difference between a blog post and a webpage?

- **Posts** - WordPress
  - Listed in reverse chronological order on the blog's home page
  - Time sensitive
  - Allow for comments and sharing
  - Associated with categories and/or tags



**QUESTIONS?**



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## USE YOUR WORDS

**Content for a WordPress blog post should be a short burst of information. Like a bulletin.**

These updates are intended for an audience that's looking for details and not a long preamble.

The 5 Ws. Just the facts. In 150 words or less.

Use shortened "inverted pyramid" format: important stuff to start, followed by supporting details.

In case you've forgotten: the five Ws

Paragraph one: what and why

Paragraph two: where, when, who (and sometimes how)



## USE YOUR WORDS

- Keep it short: try to keep sentences to 20 words or less, and paragraphs to 70 words or less. If you can't read a sentence out loud and comfortably in one normal breath, it's too long.
- Brevity good.
- Prepare your posting without jargon or dense language. Get to the point. Don't muddle up three or four issues into a single posting if you can avoid it.
- What could be misconstrued? Is the wording precise enough that someone won't think you mean something else?
- To finish things off: provide a contact (name, title, organization, email and phone number).



## BUILD AN AUDIENCE :: RSS

- RSS = Really Simple Syndication. A format for delivering regularly changing web content.
- Every WordPress blog has an RSS feed.
- This is great for people who regularly use the web. It allows those interested to easily stay informed.
- RSS feeds keep you updated through RSS readers. RSS readers are built into Outlook, Entourage and most other email clients. Also: Google Reader.
- Keep your WordPress blog updated and those who use the RSS feed will see the updates and visit your site more often. An effective way to push information to those most interested.



## BUILD AN AUDIENCE :: TWITTER

- Twitter is a great tool to push out your updates similar to RSS, but is also more interactive. It gives your audience one more way to share your content and help you reach new people.
- "Tweets" are publicly visible by default and can be synched to your WordPress blog to update automatically.
- One more way you can push information to those interested.
- Facebook is also an option to help engage audiences, but is less effective for these purposes. Facebook is more about sharing experiences and less about sharing information.



## BUILD AN AUDIENCE :: WEBSITE INTEGRATION

- Integrating blog posts into your website is another way to increase the visibility of your content
- Posts can be grouped by category or tag, and displayed in various formats on one or more pages of your site
- **Samples:**
  - UBC HR Okanagan (simple list)  
[www.ubc.ca/okanagan/hr](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/hr)
  - Men's Volleyball (story snippets with images)  
[www.ubc.ca/okanagan/athletics/mensvolleyball](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/athletics/mensvolleyball)
  - IT News & Updates (extended list including post date/category)  
[www.ubc.ca/okanagan/itservices](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/itservices)
  - UBC Library Okanagan (slideshow)  
[www.ubc.ca/okanagan/library](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/library)



## NEWS VS. UPDATES

### Why is it important to keep my website updated?

Simple -- to keep people coming back. This is one part (of many) that will keep your website interesting and fresh.

### What should be shared on our blog?

- simple topics that site visitors will find immediately useful.
  - new services, changes to existing services or disruptions to existing services
  - short departmental announcements (e.g. small staffing changes, new titles or roles for existing staff)
  - new workshops that haven't been offered before
  - post-event debriefs or accomplishments



## SO WHAT'S NEWS ANYWAY?

**I've got something important that needs reach people beyond our website. What makes something 'news' and how do I get the word out?**

Ask yourself what is new and significant about the project or topic.

- First of its kind / benchmarks
- Impact -- did this change someone's life? Or will it?
- Proximity -- news that affects the entire campus or beyond
- Trends -- the next big thing for your research scope or group
- Consequences -- major changes to service levels or staff (that hopefully improve the lives of the campus community)
- Quirky -- e.g. Student rap video promotes water-conserving xeriscape gardens



If your topic or news doesn't satisfy these qualifications, then it is more difficult for communicators to find news value for the campus and greater community.



## HOW UNIVERSITY RELATIONS CAN HELP

- **Event promotion and electronic communications**
  - Event promotion form:  
[www.ubc.ca/okanagan/communications/services/events](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/communications/services/events)
  - The Exchange: twice monthly -- first and third Wednesday
  - UBCO.TV info channel -- the TV displays that are in every building on campus
  - The electronic sign on University Way
  - Campus-wide events calendar



## HOW UNIVERSITY RELATIONS CAN HELP

- **Services for departments and units**
  - Strategic consultations: for topics you don't know how to communicate properly (sensitive issues) big events or extended information campaigns
  - Design services: posters, brochures, advertisements, website consultations, html emails, photography, promotional items and swag.
  - Copy editing for web content



## HOW UNIVERSITY RELATIONS CAN HELP

- **The Exchange: news, events, people and workshops**
  - News: new programs, initiatives and updates that effect the entire campus or great community
  - Major departmental announcements -- e.g. new FT staff members that will expand or change service delivery options
  - New workshops that haven't been offered before
  - Upcoming events: one month lead time is preferable. finalized details are even more preferable.



**QUESTIONS?**



## WORDPRESS nuts & bolts

- **Dashboard**
  - behind-the-scenes control panel where you can publish content, manage comments, and change your settings
  - Also referred to as the “back end” - only you (and other users you’ve assigned) can see it
  - Presents information in blocks called **modules**
  - **Screen options** allow you to choose how/which modules are displayed



## WORDPRESS nuts & bolts

- **News Portal**
  - Also referred to as the “front end” - what the outside world sees when they access your blog
  - Home page
  - Archives – by month/year or category
  - Posts



## POSTS :: MAKE SOME CONTENT

- **Posts** are the principal element (or content) of a blog. Without posts, there is no blog.
- Login to WordPress and click Posts > **Add New**
- **First, write a title for the post in the space at the top.**
  - Think of your post title as a **headline** for a news article — the more detailed and captivating it is, the more readers it's going to attract.
- Below the title you'll see the **visual editor**, which allows you to easily create, edit, and format the content of your post, similar to the way you would with a word processor or other content management system.
  - Enhance your post content with links, images or video.
- Choose one or more categories or add tags to aid visitors in the navigation and use of your blog.



## POSTS :: MAKE SOME CONTENT

- **Save** posts any time (without sharing them) by hitting the Save Draft button.
- When your post is finished, click **Publish**.
- Click **View Post** to see exactly how your post appears to the rest of the world.
- To **edit or delete** a post (whether it's saved as a draft or already published), go to Posts > **All Posts**.
  - Here you'll see a list of all of your posts. Various search and filtering options allow you to find the post you want to edit or delete.
  - Click Edit under the name of a post to go back to the editor, where you can make changes.
  - To delete a post, click Trash.



## POSTS :: CATEGORIES

- Categories allow the classification of your posts into **groups** and **subgroups**. Also referred to as the **topic**.
- Every post is filed under one or more categories.
- The Categories Screen allows you to add, edit, and delete categories, as well as organize your categories hierarchically.
  - Put some thought into what categories will be useful for your visitors, and re-evaluate as you go. Generally, bloggers have 5-10 categories for their content.

*Will there be an adequate number of posts for that category?  
Will you want to group content for display on different sections of your website?  
What will attract the attention of your visitors?*

- All categories to which a given post belongs are displayed above the title of that post.
- Clicking a category will display an archive page with all posts belonging to that category



## POSTS :: TAGS

- Tags are the **keywords** you might assign to each post.
  - Not to be confused with categories, tags have no hierarchy, meaning there's no relationship from one tag to another.
  - Posts from differing categories might have the same tags
- The Post Tags Screen allows you to add, change, or delete Tags. Tags can also be added when adding a new post.
- All post tags are displayed under the title of that post.
- Clicking a tag will display an archive page with all posts belonging to that tag



## POSTS :: EXTRA OPTIONS

On the Add New Post screen, there are a number of additional layout and publishing options available.

- **Screen options** – choose which Post Fields are displayed
- **Preview** - view the post before officially publishing it
- **Publish box** - schedule a post for publication on a future date
- **Permalink** – modify the default URL for the post
- **Page Links to** – turn a post into a link to another website
  - Post title and excerpt will be shown on your blog's home page, but visitors will be directed to the specified URL when they click to Read More



## POSTS :: EXTRA OPTIONS

- **Excerpt** – add a summary or brief teaser of your post
  - Excerpt is featured on the front page of your site as well as on the archive pages
- **Featured image** - display a unique image for specific posts
  - Image displays as a thumbnail on the front page as well as on the archive pages
- **Syndicated content** – pull posts into your blog from other sources (i.e. University Relations Media Releases)



## POSTS :: BEST PRACTICES

- Consider your readers
- Use Heading levels and paragraphs appropriately
  - When writing long posts, break up the sections by using headings and paragraphs.
- Practice accessibility
  - Include ALT and TITLE descriptions on links and images
- Spell check and Proofread
- Think before you post
  - Take a moment to read what you've written before hitting the Publish button.



## POSTS :: BEST PRACTICES

- Write frequently
  - But... don't let quantity get in the way of quality
- Make use of comments
  - Comments let people share their ideas. Be prepared to answer comments, or respond to those that contact you directly.
- Keep writing
- Save your posts
  - Save your posts before you press the Publish button. Anything can happen with your computer or internet connection. You don't need to lose your post.



## HOW WE CAN HELP

- News Portal set-up and website integration
  - <https://news.ok.ubc.ca>
- Event Calendar set-up and website integration
  - <http://www.events.ubc.ca>
- Drop-in Sessions (ACM and WordPress support)
  - Most Wednesdays from 12-1 in the IT Innovation Lab
  - Calendar of Availability  
<http://helpdesk.ok.ubc.ca/il>



## GETTING STARTED

1. Determine if a blog (News Portal) is appropriate for your unit/department.
2. Create a list of categories that your posts will be placed under.
3. Determine where within your departmental/unit website your blog should be linked, or posts displayed.
4. Enter a work request at [www.ubc.ca/okanagan/helpdesk](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/helpdesk) to have a News Portal set-up.
  - a. Request Something New > Websites > Other
  - b. In the Description area, indicate that you'd like a News Portal set-up. List who will need access.
5. Work with IT to format your blog's home page, and integrate posts into your website.
6. Get posting!



## ONLINE RESOURCES

- WordPress information and documentation
  - [http://codex.wordpress.org/Main\\_Page](http://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page)
  - <http://learn.wordpress.com/>
- Writing for the Web
  - <http://webcommunications.ubc.ca/support-resources/writing-for-the-web/>
- Communication Services at UBC's Okanagan campus
  - [www.ubc.ca/okanagan/communications](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/communications)