

How to create a WordPress blog for your class

WordPress is the most versatile and widely used blogging platform on the web. It's powerful enough to run thousands of complex, commercial websites, but also intuitive enough to get a simple site up and running in just a few minutes. If you want a dedicated place for class discussions and course content to reside, one that you can establish and manage yourself, WordPress is your best bet.

WordPress.COM

Home Sign Up Features News Support Themes Stats About Us

Get your own WordPress.com account in seconds

Fill out this one-step form and you'll be blogging seconds later!

Blog Address

Choose an address for your blog. Don't worry, you can change this later.

If you don't want a blog you can [signup for just a username](#).

Username

Your username should be a minimum of four characters and can only include lowercase letters and numbers.

Password

Great passwords use upper and lower case characters, numbers and symbols like !@#\$%^&().

Confirm

E-mail Address

We'll send you an email to activate your blog, so please triple-check that you've typed it correctly.

Follow our blog to learn about new themes, features, and other news.

What language will you be blogging in?

Your selection here will determine which language to show menus and settings in.

Thinking about upgrading?

Grab the WordPress Value Bundle and save some cash.

Free Blog	✓	✓
Domain Name & Mapping	✓	✗
10GB Space Upgrade	✓	✗
No Ads	✓	✗
Custom Design	✓	✗
VideoPress	✓	✗
	\$99 per year	Free

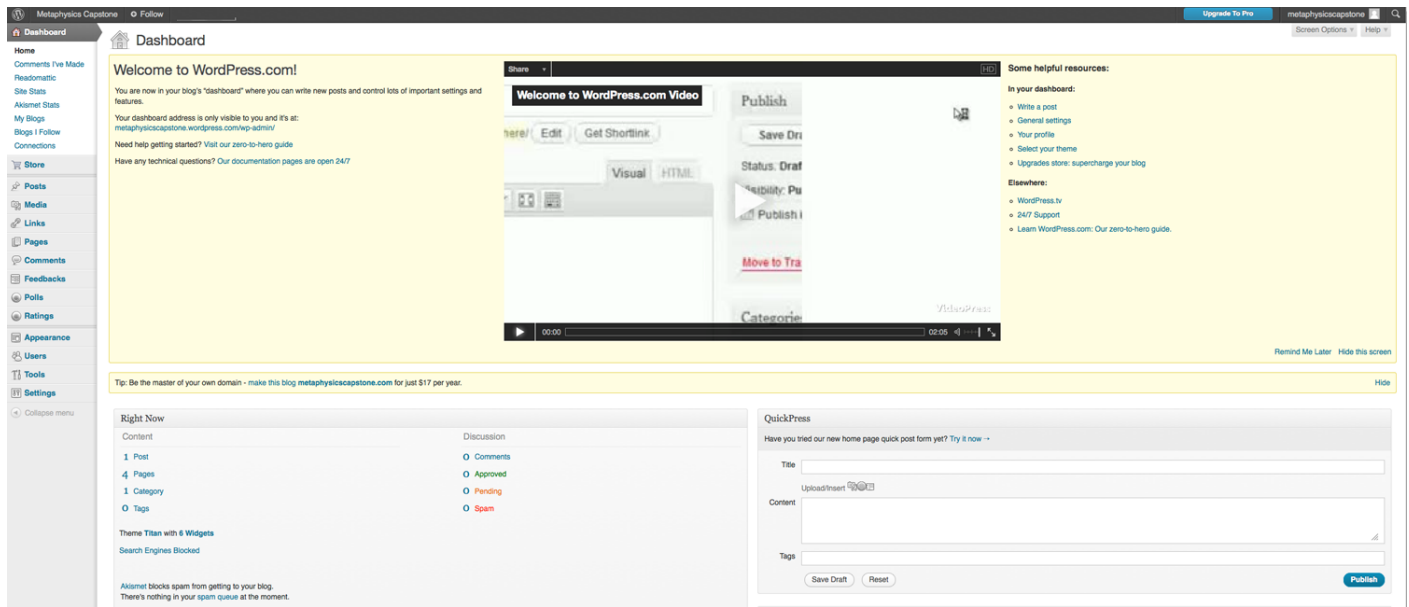
You agree to the [fascinating terms of service](#) by submitting this form.

Upgrade -> **Create Blog ->**

Save 40%!

Setting up your first WordPress blog is among the easiest things you'll ever sign up for on the Internet. It's one screen, with just a few fields, as seen above. Don't worry about upgrading to the paid version. WordPress' free features are all you need to use it as an instructional tool. Likewise, it's fine to host the blog for free on wordpress.com rather than pay for your own domain name. The blog will function the same no matter it's address on the web.

Once you've got your blog set up, you'll be taken to the **Admin Dashboard**. It looks like this.

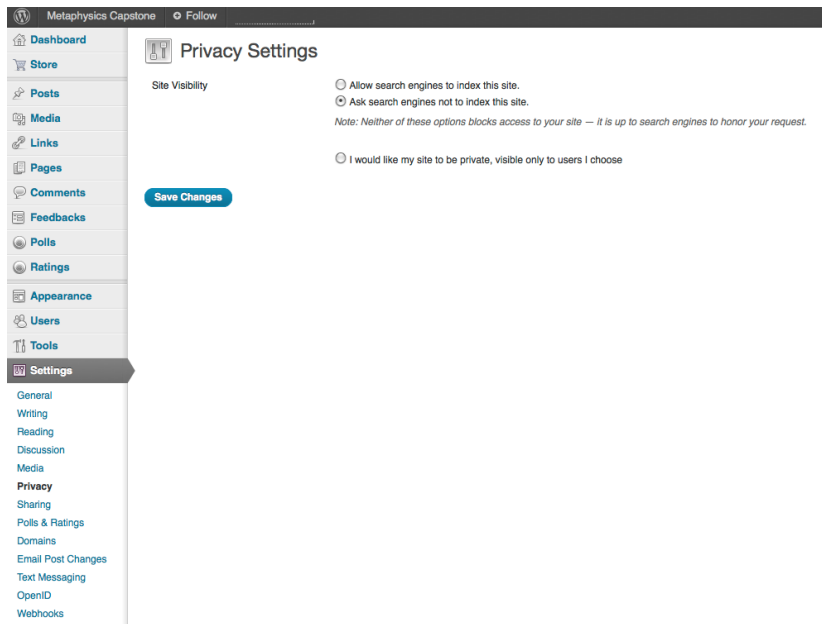


The dashboard can be daunting at first, but remember that WordPress is an extremely versatile platform with tons of features and options, most of which you'll never need to touch. The toolbar on the left side of the screen will allow you to navigate those options. This guide only touches on the toolbar items most relevant to using WordPress for education. You can play around with the other options, or just ignore them for now.

On the dashboard, you can get a quick snapshot of the blog, including how many posts and pages have been created, what comments have been posted, and how many hits the blog has received during the past several days. These will all be useful later on, but only after you've got your blog up and running.

If you ever want to reach this dashboard to edit your blog, go to <http://BlogName.wordpress.com/wp-admin>
You'll have to log-in with the username and password you created when you signed up.

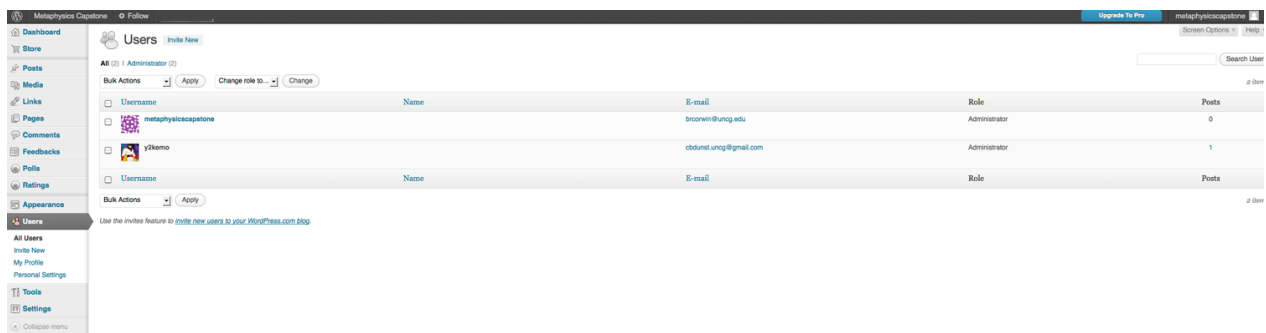
Privacy



Your first decision as the owner of a new WordPress blog is whether to make it public or private. By default, all WordPress blogs are public, but you can change that by choosing “Settings” in the toolbar, and then selecting “Privacy.”

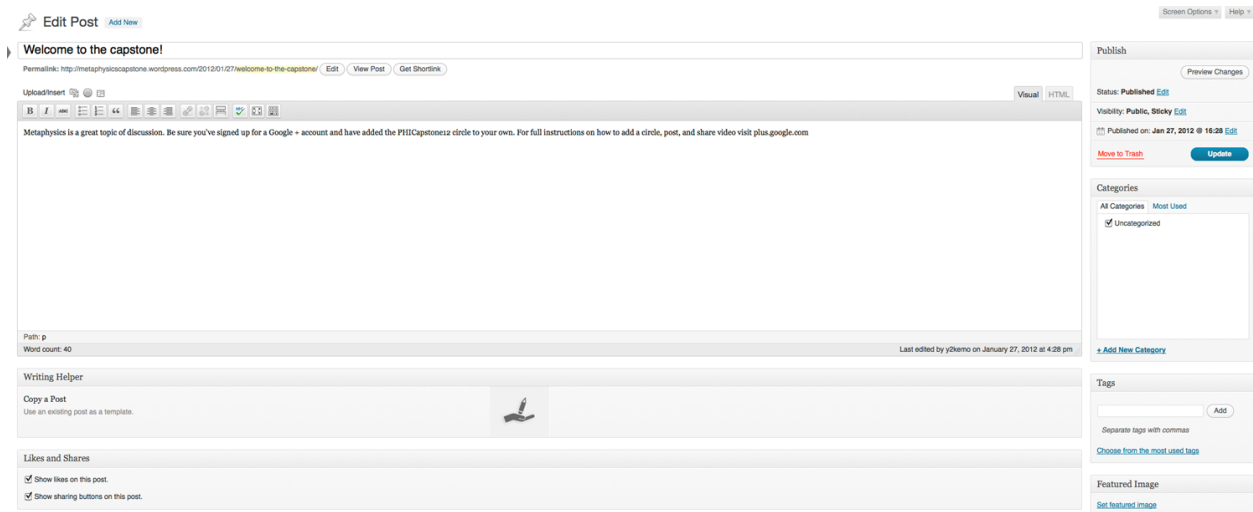
If you keep your site public, all you need to do is share the link with your students and they can immediately access the content. If you make it private, you’ll need to invite your students through the “Users” option on the toolbar.

Users



If your blog is set to private you must invite new users to give them access. You’ll need each student’s email address to do this. Each user can be assigned a different role, which determines what powers they have to modify and edit the blog. If you just want your students to read your posts and comment, assign them as “followers.” If you want students to post their own updates, give them the role of “author” so they can publish but not edit. If you have a teaching assistant who will help manage the blog, assign them as “editor,” which gives them the ability to both publish and edit posts. An “administrator” has authority to do anything to the blog, including deleting it entirely, so make sure you’re the only user assigned to that role.

Posts



Each entry in your blog is called a “post,” and they’ll be presented on the site in reverse chronological order. The basic interface for creating and editing posts will be familiar to anyone who has used Microsoft Word. Your posts can have lists, links, and uploaded images, just like a word document. If you want to embed a YouTube clip, click on the “html” tab on the upper right. This will switch the entry field into code view, and you can paste the embed code for the video (found on YouTube by clicking “share,” then “embed”). Note the “tag” and “categorize” fields on the right-hand side. You don’t need to organize your posts by tags or categories, but this will make them easier to find later in the semester.

Posts can function as class announcements, or they function as threads for class discussion. Every post already has a comments feature built in, so students can immediately answer any questions you pose. WordPress has a **Comments** option on the sidebar that allows you to moderate these discussions by approving or deleting each comment.

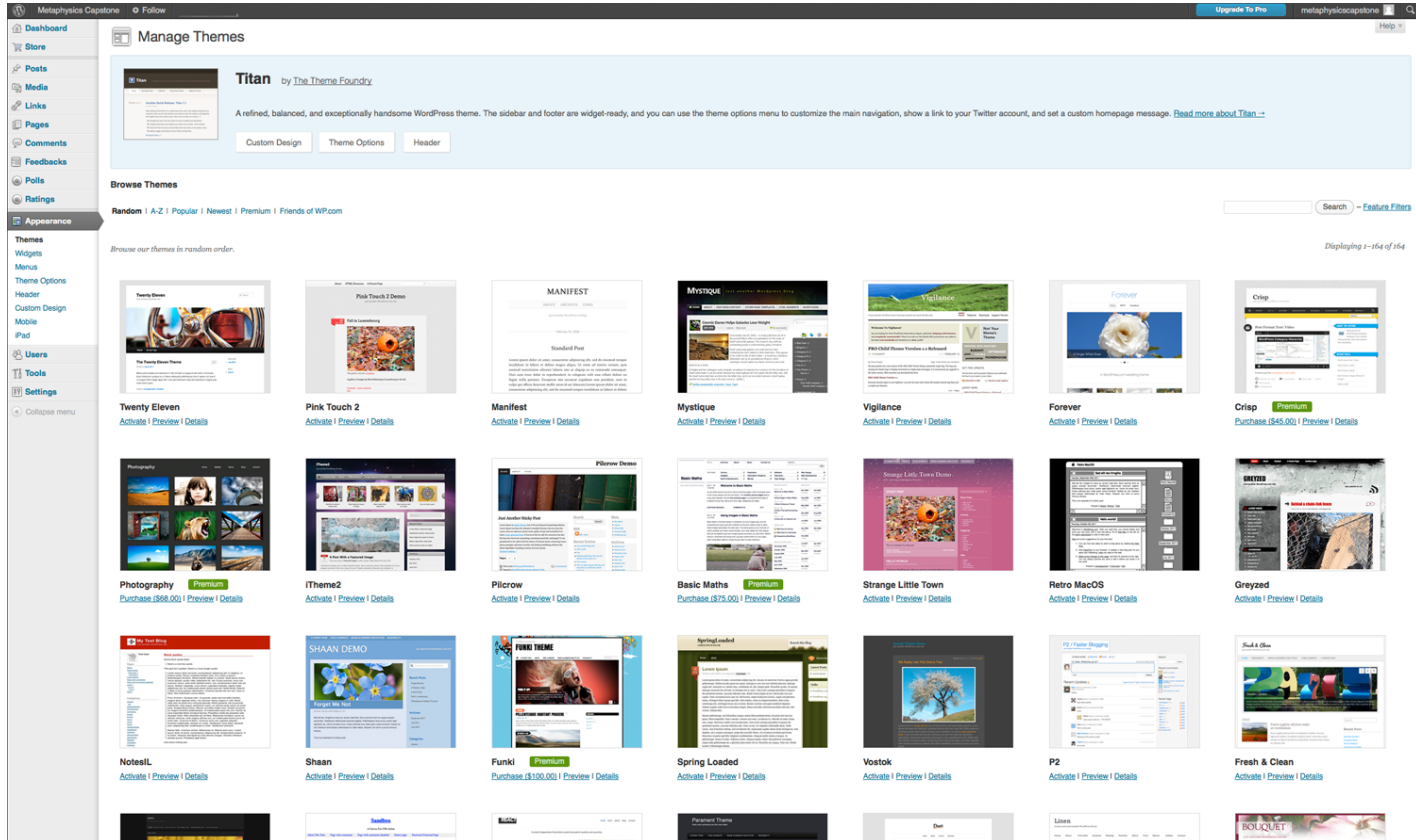
Pages



Pages are the static and fixed parts of your blog that are not time sensitive and can always be accessed from the homepage. These are often used for the “about me” or “contact” parts of a blog, as they appear on the main navigation. Here is where you can place assignments or

lecture content for that students will want to access throughout the semester. The process to create a page is very similar to creating a post, with the same interface and options.

Appearance



Giving your blog a complete visual makeover takes all of a few clicks in WordPress, because the platform has thousands of pre-built themes. In the appearance option on the toolbar you can browse these themes and preview how your content will look in the design. Most themes have customization options that allow you to change the main photo, modify the background color, or decide what appears in the sidebar. Once you've activated a theme, these customization options will be listed underneath "appearance" in the toolbar.

Remember that changing the theme does not change your content. It only changes the layout and design. So you can switch your theme at any point before, after, or during a semester and trust that you won't lose any of the posts and pages you've already created.