ONE-DAY PRACTICAL WORKSHOP

WordPress.com Website Design Masterclass



A beginner-friendly workshop for NGOs, schools, community organizations and small businesses

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Learning outcomes

PLAN

Define audience, purpose, goals and a simple site map.

DESIGN

Choose a suitable theme and apply clear visual principles.

BUILD

Create pages, add blocks, media, navigation and contact pathways.

PUBLISH

Preview, test and publish responsibly.

MAINTAIN

Identify ownership and routine website care.

Our one-day learning journey

1. **Purpose, platform choice & planning**
2. Branding, design & accessibility
3. WordPress.com setup & dashboard
4. Pages, blocks, media & forms
5. Lunch / independent catch-up
6. **Case studies & practical build**
7. SEO, publishing checklist & quiz
8. **Peer review, next steps & close**

Icebreaker: Your website in one sentence

“If I had a website, it would help people to…”

THINK

Write one sentence. Be specific about the people you want to help.

Time: 5 minutes

SHARE

We will hear three examples and identify the common goals.

Word cloud: What makes a website useful?

TRUSTWORTHY

CLEAR

MOBILE-FRIENDLY

ACCESSIBLE

CURRENT

FAST

SIMPLE

USEFUL

WELCOMING

Start with purpose, not decoration

WHO?
Who is the primary audience? What do they need to know?

WHY?
What should the website help the organization achieve?

WHAT?
What information will visitors look for first?

NEXT?
What one action should visitors take?

Example: an NGO may prioritize programme information, impact stories and a clear way to contact the team.

Choose the right WordPress route

WORDPRESS.COM

Hosted service with a guided setup and platform-managed infrastructure. A practical starting point when teams want to publish without managing a hosting stack.

WORDPRESS.ORG

Open-source WordPress software installed with a hosting provider. Offers deeper technical control, with more responsibility for setup, updates, backups and security.

Today’s hands-on exercises use WordPress.com. The comparison helps you recognize when another route may fit later.

WordPress.com vs WordPress.org: Hosting & setup

HOSTING

WordPress.com

Hosting is included as part of the service. You focus on your site rather than arranging a separate hosting account.

WordPress.org

The software is self-hosted. You choose a hosting provider and connect your domain and installation.

SETUP

WordPress.com: generally easier and more guided for beginners.

WordPress.org: more technical choices, including hosting, installation and configuration.

WordPress.com vs WordPress.org: Maintenance & cost

MAINTENANCE • WordPress.com

The platform manages much of the underlying infrastructure and service maintenance.

MAINTENANCE • WordPress.org

The site owner coordinates hosting, software updates, backups, security and compatibility.

COST • WordPress.com

Free and paid plans are available; features depend on the plan.

COST • WordPress.org

The software is free; hosting and related services generally have costs.

WordPress.com vs WordPress.org: Plugins & best fit

PLUGINS • WordPress.com

Plugin availability depends on the plan. Check current plan details before promising a feature.

PLUGINS • WordPress.org

Broad plugin and code flexibility, with responsibility for choosing, testing and securing extensions.

BEST FIT • WordPress.com

Beginners, NGOs, schools and small businesses seeking a quick, lower-maintenance start.

BEST FIT • WordPress.org

Developers and organizations needing deeper technical control or custom functionality.

Training decision: build on WordPress.com today; revisit self-hosting when requirements justify the extra responsibility.

Anatomy of a website

Domain
The web address people type

Hosting
The service that stores and serves the site

CMS
Content Management System: software for managing site content

Theme
A design system controlling layout and styling

Page / Post
Stable information / dated update

Navigation
Menus that help visitors move around

CTA
Call to action: the next step you want visitors to take

Plan your site: audience and goals

WORKSHEET • 7 MINUTES

01 **My primary audience is…**

02 **They need answers to these three questions…**

03 **The most important action is…**

Build a simple sitemap



Keep the first-level menu familiar. Add subpages only when the content needs them.

Content that earns trust

ACCURACY
Correct names, dates, services and contact details

CURRENCY
Remove outdated announcements and broken links

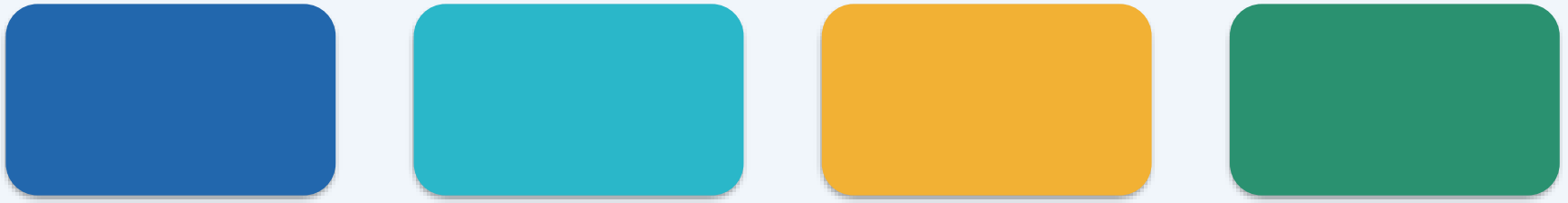
EVIDENCE
Use genuine stories, examples and verified results

PERMISSION
Use images and testimonials with consent

OWNERSHIP
Name who reviews and updates content

Branding & visual identity

A compact brand kit



Primary | Accent | Highlight | Support

LOGO + TYPE

Use a recognizable logo and one or two readable type styles.

VOICE + IMAGERY

Keep tone and image choices consistent with your audience.

Design principles: hierarchy and whitespace

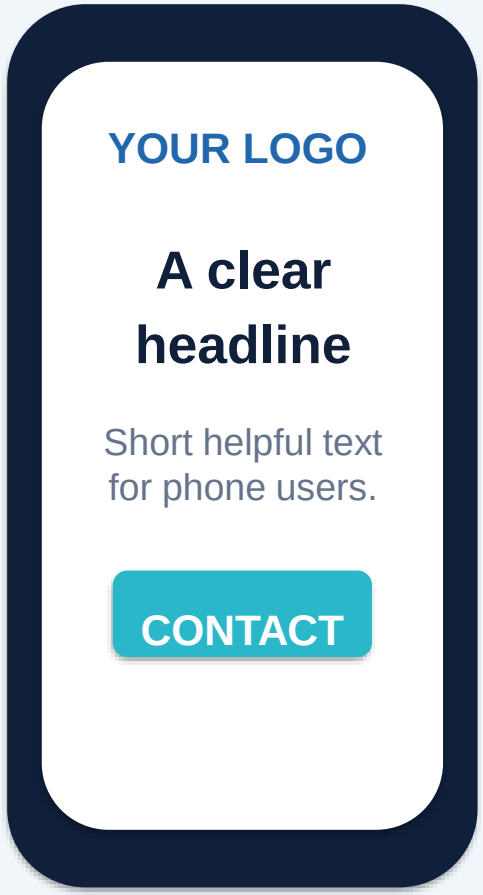
01 PRIORITIZE
One clear page title. Put the most important information first.

02 ORGANIZE
Use meaningful subheadings, short paragraphs and scannable lists.

03 SIMPLIFY
Use whitespace. Limit competing buttons and decorative clutter.

A visitor should understand the page's purpose in a few seconds.

Design for mobile first



READABLE

Use short headings, legible text and enough spacing.

LIGHTWEIGHT

Compress images and avoid heavy media that slows loading.

TESTABLE

Preview on a phone; check menus, buttons and forms.

Accessibility basics

Headings
Use a logical heading order

Links
Write descriptive link \text

Images
Add useful alt text for informative images

Contrast
Keep text readable against backgrounds

Media
Provide captions or transcripts where appropriate

Keyboard
Ensure interactive elements can be reached and used

Create your WordPress.com account

- Visit WordPress.com and choose to start or sign in
- Use an email account you can access
- Follow the site-creation prompts
- Choose a site address and design option carefully
- Keep your password private; never share it with the group

Interface labels and plan prompts may change. Follow the current on-screen guidance.

Understand the WordPress.com dashboard

Pages
Create stable information

Posts
Publish dated updates

Media
Manage images and files

Design / Appearance
Control theme and site style

Comments
Review visitor responses

Settings & Users
Manage site configuration and access

Choose a theme and style

PURPOSE

Does the layout suit the kind of information visitors need?

READABILITY

Are headings, menus and body text easy to read?

FLEXIBILITY

Can you adapt the design without fighting the theme?

Choose a good-enough design and move on to building useful content.

The block editor: your building blocks

Paragraph
Body text

Heading
Structure and hierarchy

Image
Visual explanation

Button
Clear next action

Columns
Side-by-side content

List / Quote
Scannable details or emphasis

Embed
External media or content

Practice: add a block, move it, duplicate it, then remove it.

Build the homepage: the first screen

A strong homepage answers four questions quickly:

WHO ARE YOU?

Organization or business name

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Plain-language value statement

WHO DO YOU HELP?

Audience or community served

WHAT NEXT?

One primary action

Build key pages: About and Services

ABOUT PAGE

- Who you are
- Mission and background
- People and place
- Evidence that builds trust
- Clear next step

SERVICES / PROGRAMMES

- What you offer
- Who it is for
- How it works
- Eligibility or service area
- How to enquire

Repeatable pattern: page title → short introduction → sections → evidence → next step.

Navigation, header and footer

HEADER

Logo or site name, a simple menu and a clear route to key information.

NAVIGATION

Use familiar labels. Keep top-level items limited and predictable.

FOOTER

Contact details, location, social links and relevant policy information.

Navigation should help visitors answer: “Where am I?” and “Where can I go next?”

Images, video and media library

RIGHTS

Use media you own or have permission to use.

ACCESS

Add alt text and captions where useful.

PERFORMANCE

Resize/compress large images; avoid heavy galleries.

A relevant, well-optimized image is better than a large collection of decorative images.

Forms and contact pathways

A good contact form is short, clear and respectful of privacy.

- ☐ Name (if needed)
- ☐ Email or phone (choose what is necessary)
- ☐ Reason for contacting
- ☐ Message

BEFORE YOU ADD A FORM

Collect only necessary information. Provide a success message and an alternative contact method.

Check which form features are available on the current WordPress.com plan and interface.

Blogging and news updates

PAGES

Stable information: About, Services, Admissions, Contact.

POSTS

Dated updates: news, announcements, stories and event reports.

A useful post includes a clear title, a strong opening, headings, relevant media and a review before publishing.

SEO fundamentals

Title

Describe the page clearly

Headings

Use meaningful structure

Keywords

Use natural language your audience uses

Alt text

Describe informative images

Links

Connect related pages

Quality

Publish useful, original and trustworthy content

SEO helps search engines understand your content; it does not guarantee instant rankings.

NGO case study: Community Impact Network

SCENARIO

A local NGO needs to explain its mission, programmes, impact and partnership opportunities.

SUGGESTED PAGES

Home • About • Programmes • Impact & Stories • Get Involved • Contact

PRIMARY ACTIONS

Explore programmes • Contact the team • Discuss a partnership

Group task: draft a homepage headline and three proof points.

Small business case study: BrightPath Services

SCENARIO

A small service business wants to attract local customers and make it easy to request a quote.

SUGGESTED PAGES

Home • Services • About • FAQs • Testimonials • Contact

TRUST BUILDERS

Clear service area • Opening hours • Genuine reviews • Working contact route

Group task: write one specific service description and a clear call to action.

School case study: Horizon Learning School

SCENARIO

A school wants parents to find admissions details, learning programmes, calendar updates and contacts.

SUGGESTED PAGES

Home • About • Academics • Admissions • News & Calendar • Contact

CARE POINTS

Protect children’s privacy • Obtain photo permissions • Keep dates current

Group task: outline the information a parent needs before making an admissions enquiry.

Practical build: create your site

BUILD SPRINT 1 • 25 MINUTES

- Create or open your WordPress.com site
- Choose a suitable design/theme
- Set the site title and tagline
- Create three pages: Home, About and Contact

Work individually or in pairs. Ask for help when stuck; keep control of your own keyboard.

Practical build: add content and navigation

BUILD SPRINT 2 • 25 MINUTES

- Add a clear homepage headline and short introduction
- Insert one relevant image and write alt text
- Add one button or meaningful link
- Add a section to the About page
- Add pages to your site navigation and review the footer

Practical build: publish and test

PREVIEW

Check desktop and mobile layouts. Read every page as a visitor.

TEST

Check links, navigation, image loading and contact details.

DECIDE

Publish when ready, or keep as draft/private for review.

Publishing makes content publicly accessible according to your site settings. Confirm before you click.

Publishing checklist & launch readiness

- ☐ Purpose and audience are clear
- ☐ Content is accurate and current
- ☐ Navigation and links work
- ☐ Mobile layout is readable
- ☐ Images are permitted and optimized
- ☐ Alt text and contrast have been checked
- ☐ Forms/contact details work
- ☐ Privacy information and ownership are clear
- ☐ A maintenance and review plan exists

15-question knowledge check

01 What does CMS stand for?

02 Which platform are we using today?

03 What is website hosting?

04 Page vs post: what is the difference?

05 What does a theme control?

06 What is a block?

07 Why add alt text?

08 What is a domain name?

09 Name one SEO practice.

10 What belongs in navigation?

11 Why preview on mobile?

12 What is a contact form for?

13 Who manages a self-hosted site’s updates?

14 What is a call to action?

15 Name one check before publishing.

Run in Kahoot, Mentimeter or as a paper-based team challenge.

Assessment rubric & peer review

Purpose & audience	**15%**
Content clarity	**15%**
Navigation	**15%**
Visual consistency	**10%**
Mobile usability	**10%**
Accessibility basics	**10%**
Functional links/forms	**10%**
Publishing readiness & ownership	**15%**

PEER REVIEW

One strength

One improvement

One next step

Next steps: keep the website healthy

MONTHLY

Review content, dates, contact details and announcements.

REGULARLY

Test links and forms; review user access and site presentation.

OWNERSHIP

Assign a named content owner and agree who approves changes.

Use the platform’s current guidance for plan features, security and maintenance tasks.



WordPress

What is WordPress?

- WordPress is a free and open-source content management system (CMS) that helps bloggers and webmasters edit content on a regular basis without the need to use a traditional HTML editor software, for example, Dreamweaver or Frontpage..
- **WordPress is the simplest, most popular way to create your own website or blog.**
- In fact, WordPress powers over **43.3%**of all the websites on the Internet
- A content management system is basically a tool that makes it easy to manage important aspects of your website – like content – without needing to know anything about programming.
- The end result is that WordPress makes building a website accessible to anyone – even people who aren't developers.

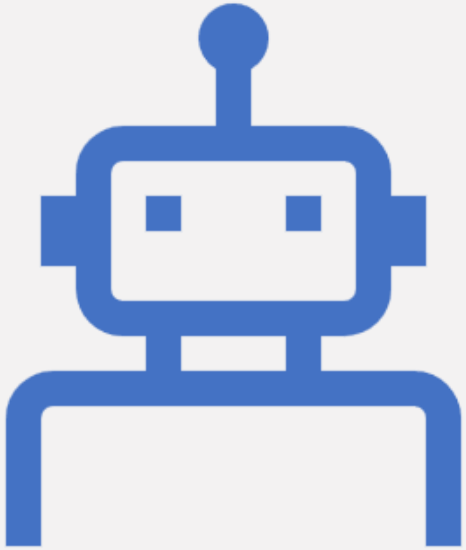
What Kinds Of Websites Can WordPress Make?

- Business websites
- eCommerce stores
- Blogs
- Portfolios
- Resumes
- Forums
- Social networks
- Membership sites
- …pretty much anything else you can dream up.

What's The Difference Between WordPress.org and WordPress.com?

- **WordPress.org**, often called **self-hosted WordPress**, is the free, open-source WordPress software that you can install on your own web host to create a website that's 100% your own.
- **WordPress.com** is a for-profit, paid service that is powered by the WordPress.org software. It's simple to use, but you lose much of the flexibility of the self-hosted WordPress.
- Most of the time, when people say "WordPress", they mean the self-hosted WordPress available at WordPress.org. **If you want to truly own your website, self-hosted WordPress.org is almost always the best option.**
- All you need to do to get started with self-hosted WordPress is purchase web hosting and a domain name.

Who Made WordPress And How Long Has It Been Around?



- WordPress is open-source software, so nowadays it’s made by a huge community of contributors. But if we were to trace WordPress’ origins back to its roots, its original creation was a collaboration between Matt Mullenweg and Mike Little.
- Since then, Matt Mullenweg has largely become the face of WordPress. And he’s also the founder of Automattic, which is the company behind the for-profit WordPress.com service.



www.wordpress.com

Step 1:



Step 2:

Sign Up by

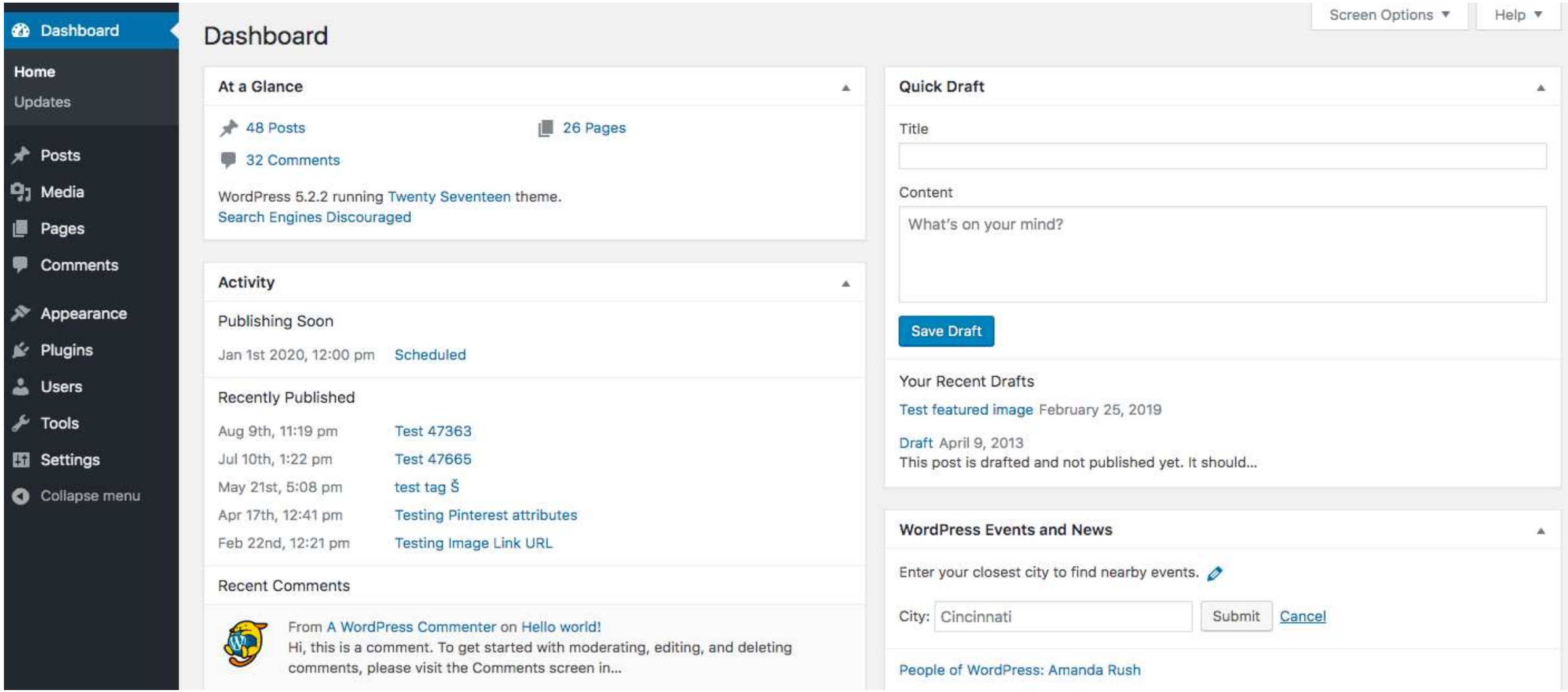
Email:

Username:

Password:

Go to email & Confirm

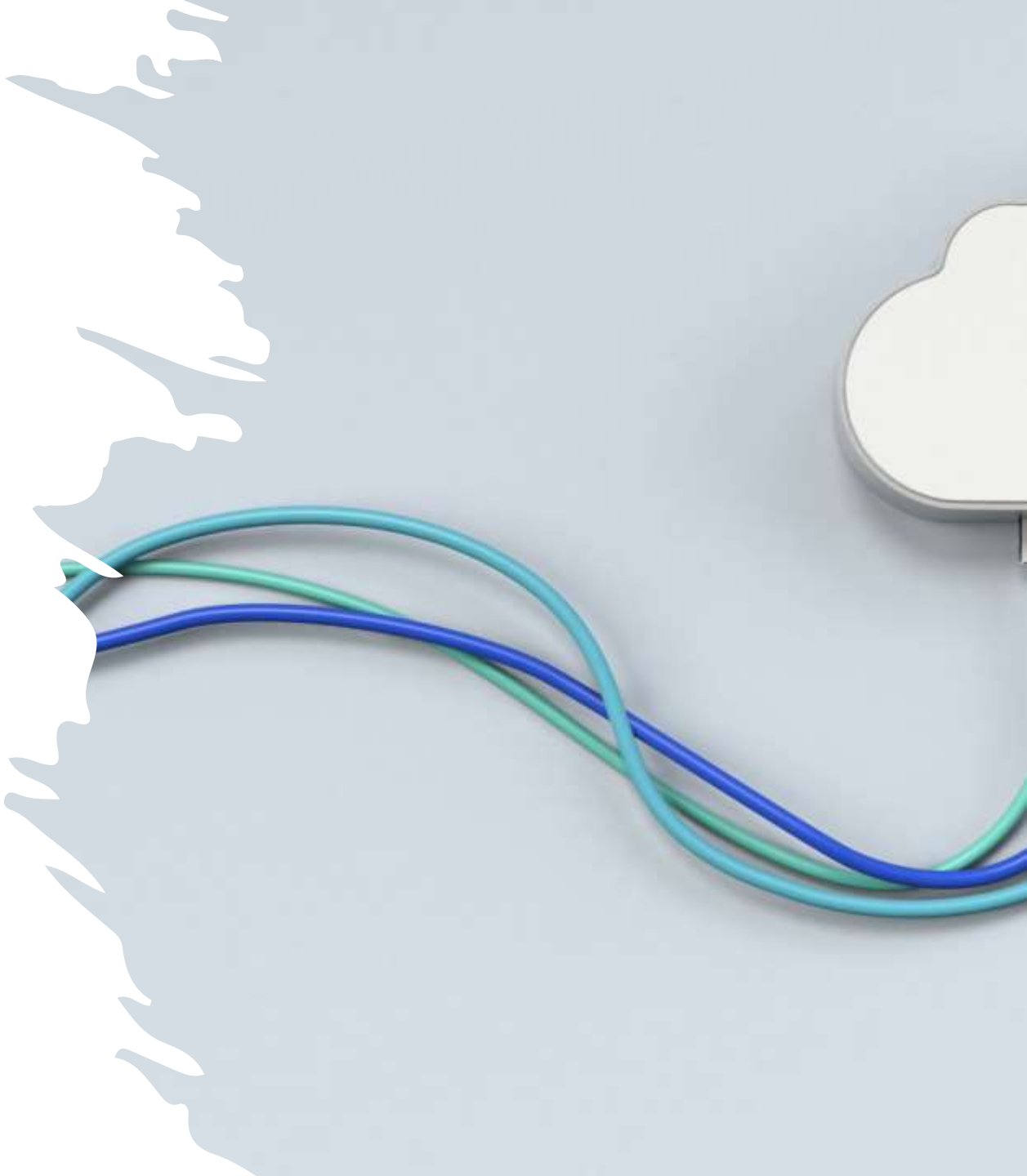
Adminpanel: WordPress uses an interface to make websites. The Adminpanel gives you various tools to make and customize your website.



To the left you have a long menu. This menu is used for making and editing your website.
The menu is divided into,

1. Dashboard
2. Posts
3. Media
4. Pages
5. Comments
6. Appearance
7. Plugins
8. Users
9. Tools
10. Settings

Dashboard There you will see the latest events on your website, e.g, news by WordPress, latest post you made, recent comments by users to review before publishing them and so on.



My Home

Your hub for posting, editing, and growing your site.

Plugins

The plugin allows to easily transform, customize or intensify WordPress blog or post. The WordPress Plugin is an application that can be uploaded to increase the functionality of the website. They add services or features to the WordPress blog. Plugins are used to make your work straightforward.

Page

A page in WordPress usually refers to the page post type. It is one of the default pre-defined WordPress post types.

Media

Refers to any kind of media you have uploaded e.g., Pictures

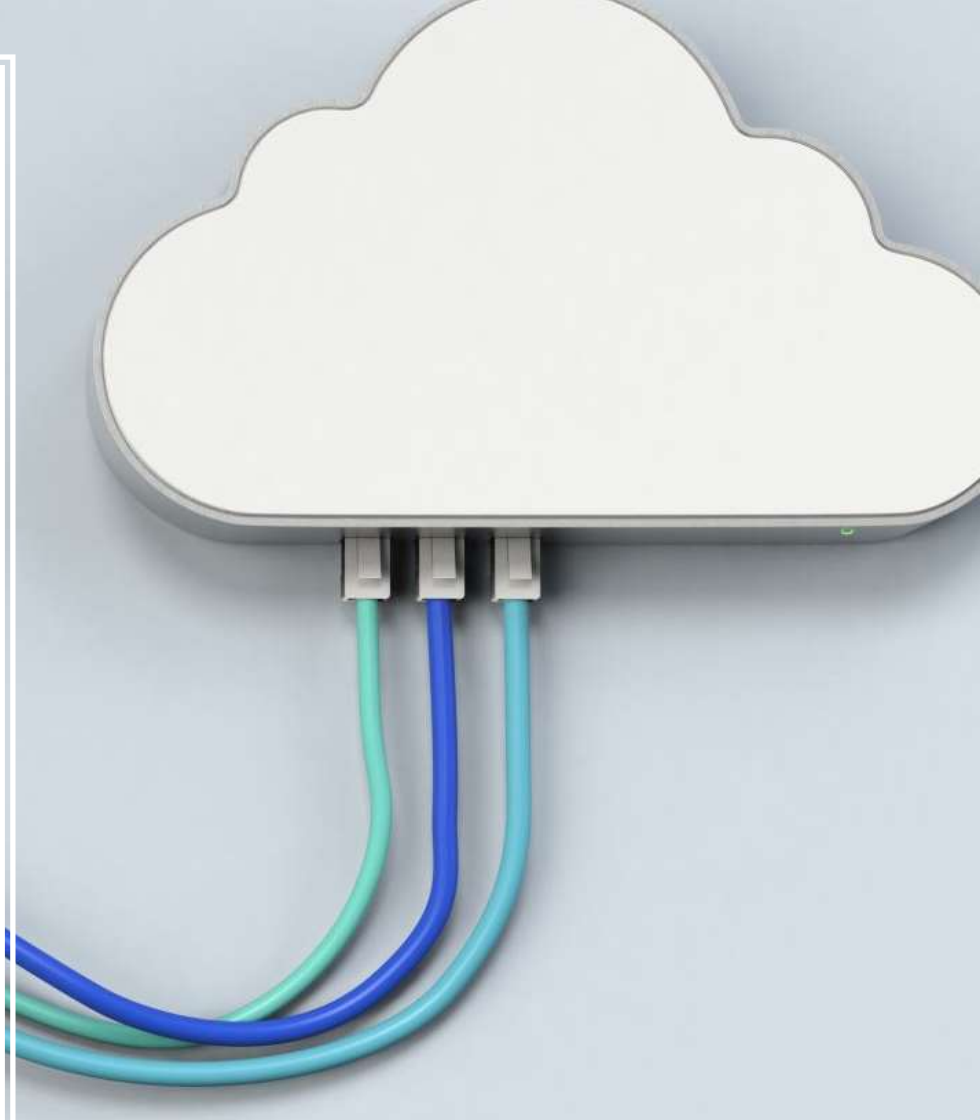


Comments: These are comments in your blogposts.

Jetpack: Provides an activity Log and backup. These are not available in the free plan.

Design: Where you can customize your website and install a new theme

WP Admin: Where you can design and navigate your website



Some of the key differences between posts and pages are:

- Posts are timely content part of a series of posts in a blog. Pages are static one-off type of documents which are not tied to the blog's reverse chronological order of content
- Pages can be hierarchical, which means a page can have sub pages, for example a parent page titled "About us" can have a sub-page called "Our history". On the other hand posts are not hierarchical.
- By default posts in WordPress can be sorted into taxonomies Categories and Tags. Pages do not have categories or tags
- Pages can utilize custom page templates. Posts can not utilize this feature by default in WordPress.
- WordPress posts are displayed in RSS feeds while Pages are excluded from feeds.