

Building a Digital Portfolio With WordPress



Aaron Brenner
April 8, 2016

ULS/iSchool Digital Scholarship Workshop Series



Building a Digital Portfolio With WordPress by Aaron L. Brenner
is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Workshop Outline, Part One:

- ★ Why create a digital portfolio?
What reasons are most important to you?
- ★ Identify other portfolios you can use as examples
- ★ Planning your portfolio: What's your approach? What content do you include? How do you organize it?
- ★ Considerations for a digital portfolio

Workshop Outline, Part Two:

- ★ What are the basics of using WordPress?
- ★ Get started!
- ★ How you can learn to do more with WordPress?
- ★ What is your plan for continuing to develop your portfolio?

Exercise 1: Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

In your workbook, find Exercise 1:

There are many possible reasons for creating a professional digital portfolio. Write at least three reasons why you -- or anyone -- might want to create a professional digital portfolio.

After you've written your reasons, write numbers next to them ranking which are most important to you right now.

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

Some of my reasons:

- ★ Document and demonstrate what you can do
- ★ Show a **broad view** of your work, activities, and philosophy
- ★ It's yours -- you own it and control it

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

★ Control your online identity

“Carefully crafting and cautiously managing one’s public image is a critical aspect of living in a mediated public world. Every advice column I’ve read warns people of the dangers of living online. I think that this is idiotic. People need to embrace the world we live in and learn to work within its framework. Don’t panic about being public – embrace it and handle it with elegance.”

danah boyd, “controlling your public appearance”

boyd, danah. (2007). danah boyd | apophenia » controlling your public appearance.
Retrieved from http://www.zephorias.org/thoughts/archives/2007/09/07/controlling_you.html

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

★ Control your online identity

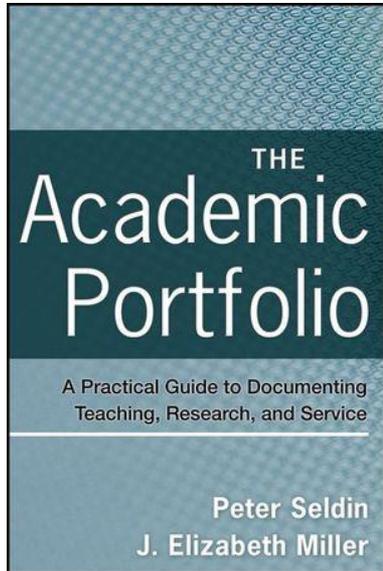
“[P]rofessors, vendors, colleagues, and prospective employers will google you. They're going to find something about you. The question is: Does it represent you?
... For me, this means it's really important to take control of what people see about me when they do a web search. I want the first few pages of hits to be about what I'm doing now, not when I first got on the Internet at age thirteen. And I want them to represent my professional skill set, not my personal life.”

Andromeda Yelton, “Personal Branding for New Librarians”

Yelton, A. (2011). Personal Branding for New Librarians | New Members Round Table (NMRT). Retrieved March 4, 2016, from http://www.ala.org/nmrt/news/footnotes/february2011/personal_branding_for_new_librarians_yelton

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

- ★ Reflect, identify gaps, future directions

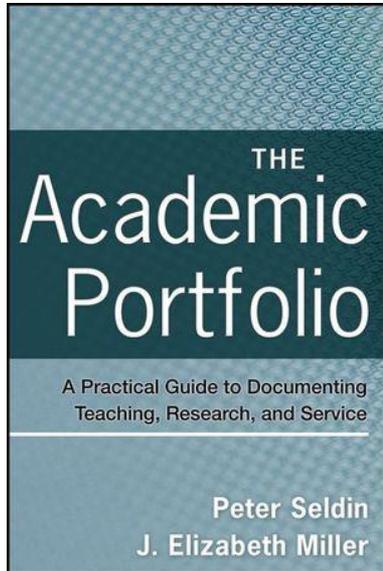


“The process of taking a fresh look at my teaching, scholarship, and service was motivating and even eye-opening. I especially valued the opportunity to reflect on how my efforts in the proverbial trinity of the professoriate are not as integrated as I originally thought. I’ll work to improve that situation”

“An English professor in California”

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

- ★ Reflect, identify gaps, future directions



“Developing the portfolio enabled me to take a more systematic look at everything I’ve been doing in the classroom, as department chair, and in professional activities and then tying the threads together. Areas for improvement are more clear now”

“An engineering professor in Indiana”

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

★ Networking on the network

- A website raises your visibility, helps attract relevant people to you
- Cross-link your personal site your other online presences
- Statistics can give you a sense of who / how many people are visiting

★ Web publishing is a valuable skill in its own right

- Put WordPress on your C.V.!

★ Gather and preserve your own work

Before we go further -- Let's look at some examples

Five portfolios / personal sites I
found from people in my field:
Librarians, Archivists, Faculty

Dr. Amanda Visconti

Parsons Email Research blog Social Projects

A Smarter online communities via the digital humanities.

I envision, prototype, & analyze digital learning interfaces & their user communities, grounded on a strong research background (new PhD, MS) and nearly 10 years professional web design & development. [Download my resume.](#)

Currently: Tenure-track Assistant Professor & Digital Humanities Specialist in the Purdue University Libraries.

Project Highlights

I realize the humanities at scale, with digital making grounded in cultural heritage to create real-world, innovative impact; & radically open collaborations toward more thoughtful, generative, & productive online learning communities.

Social reading interface design

Challenge: Pull the right "sound" for each reader out of the "noise" of a socially annotated text.

How I met the challenge: Designed InfiniteUlysses.com, a digital platform for collaborative annotation of James Joyce's challenging novel. Personalized which annotations on the book were shown to any individual reader through features successful on sites like Reddit and StackExchange: voting, tagging, filtering, sorting, and browsing, with user-rating and site analytics analysis supporting these methods of customization.

Infinite Ulysses made it into the daily top 20 on Hacker News and had 12,000+ visitors during just the first few weeks of the open beta. 400+ readers have created site accounts and authored 900+ annotations on the text during this early period.

A post-Ph.D. 1.0 release of the site is planned for in late Summer 2015 (see mock-up screenshot at bottom of left collage images). This release will divide the site into two parts. One part will be an elegantly minimalist, table-friendly "reading" text to serve the many users who come to the site just to get help with annotating reading. The other piece is a "Lab" text where I'll continue experimentation with annotation filtering and creation, interface design, and other features.

Read Ulysses with us!

<http://www.amandavisconti.com/>

Exercise 2: Identify digital portfolios you can use as examples

In your workbook, find Exercise 2:

Identify two or more digital portfolio sites from peers, colleagues, or leaders in your field*.

Write the URL of the site, and then write a few words to capture your reaction or impression of the site.

* Suggestions for identifying people: use your social network, look at people's profile pages. Search your colleagues / instructors. People who write or speak in your field or profession often have personal websites / portfolios.

Planning your portfolio: What's your approach?

- ★ How much personal information do I share/reveal?
- ★ What's my tone?
- ★ How do I balance personal versus professional identity?
- ★ Who is my audience?

How to Separate the Personal and Professional on Social Media

by Ariane Ollier-Malaterre and Nancy Rothbard

MARCH 26, 2015

Open strategy - share everything, but risky...

Audience strategy - keeping separate personas for separate audiences. But hard to maintain separation...

Content strategy - "resigning oneself to posting only carefully considered content."

Custom strategy - manage both audience and content. Consideration of different audiences and use with different platforms, ex.: LinkedIn (professional), Twitter (informal/blended), Facebook (only personal)

Planning your portfolio: What content is included?

★ What kind of content should I select?

- Personal statement
- Curriculum Vitae
- Academic work
- Research
- Teaching / instruction / workshops
- Service work
- Creative work
- Other personal accomplishments
- Include fairly recent and up-to-date examples
- Select a variety of forms / modes of work

★ How much should I include?

- Select a sampling of high quality or representative work
- Link out to more complete versions if appropriate

Planning your portfolio: How do you organize and present content?

★ What are my categories / menu items?

- No single right answer -- look to your exemplar portfolios for ideas and terminology appropriate to your field

★ How do I explain my samples?

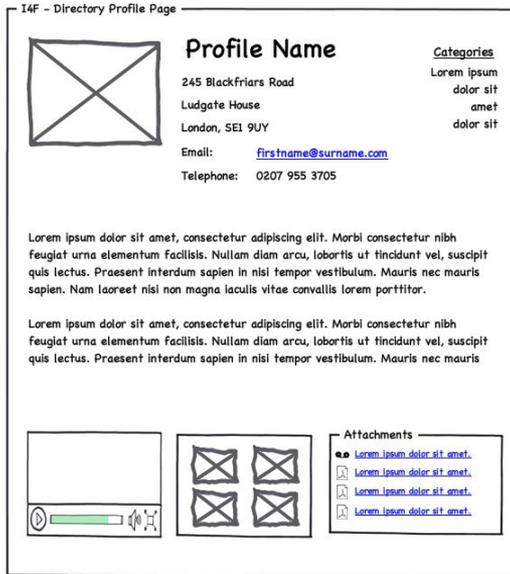
- Include a reflection or short abstract along with your work samples
- Describe the work, explain what you achieved or learned, explain why you selected it for the portfolio

★ Cross link and link out

- You're on the web! Take advantage and use links to show relations within your work
- You can also link to more complete or related work elsewhere, particularly in other places you "live" online
- As appropriate, link to related content, people, projects, and groups online

Planning your portfolio:

Quick testing with wireframes & paper prototyping



created with Balsamiq Mockups - www.balsamiq.com



Exercise 3: Paper Prototyping!

In your workbook, find Exercise 3:

Use these wireframe templates of a typical WordPress layout to prototype your site. Wireframes are helpful because you can focus on the site's content and not worry about fonts, color schemes, or the particular controls within the software. You can also do multiple versions very quickly without worrying about losing the time you've invested.

Here are some things to consider and include: What is the title? Do you have a subtitle or tagline? What are the main categories of content in your navigation bar? Does your main page have mostly text, mostly images, or a mix? What sort of content is in those blocks?

Create at least two different paper prototypes. Then, if you're comfortable, exchange the prototypes with a neighbor. Tell your partner if anything is unclear, or whether you respond more to one design than another. You could also do this with a friend or colleague after this workshop.

How do you create a digital portfolio?

(domain, hosting, CMS) + your content = portfolio

Let's break this down if you're using WordPress.com...

- ★ Free *yoursitename.wordpress.com* domain *or* you can pay for a custom domain registration
- ★ (Basic) hosting is free. More storage, themes, features = \$\$\$
- ★ CMS software is WordPress. WordPress is free, open-source software that can run on almost any server
- ★ You create content in WordPress, and upload, embed, and link to other content

Some other free hosting and building options:



A few reasons why we're using WordPress:

- ★ Used for many, many sites on the web
- ★ Versatile -- can be used to build many different kinds of sites
- ★ Free, open-source software (WordPress.org)
- ★ Huge developer base



WORDPRESS.COM

VS



WORDPRESS.ORG

Some paid web hosting with easy WordPress



The screenshot shows the Installatron application browser interface. At the top, it says "Installatron" and "My Applications (1) Applications Browser". Below that, there's a search bar and a list of applications. The "WordPress" application is highlighted, and a red box is drawn around the "+ install this application" button. The WordPress application card includes the WordPress logo, the text "WordPress", and a description: "WordPress is an open source blog application. WordPress forked from b2/cafelog in 2003, and WordPress Mu multiple website functionality has been integrated since 2010. Today WordPress is the most used blog application powering millions of blogs and being used by tens of millions of people every day." Below the description, there's a "WORDPRESS" heading and a list of features. On the left side of the application card, there's a table with details:

Application	WordPress
Current Version	3.5.2
Released	21 June
Category	blog
Requirements	
Cost	free
Install Size	21MB
Requires MySQL Database	
License	open source

Below the table, there's a "Demonstration" section with a link to "WordPress Demonstration". There's also a "Support" section with links to "WordPress Website", "Documentation", "Frequently Asked Questions", "Support Page", and "Installatron Plugin Auto-Installer Support".

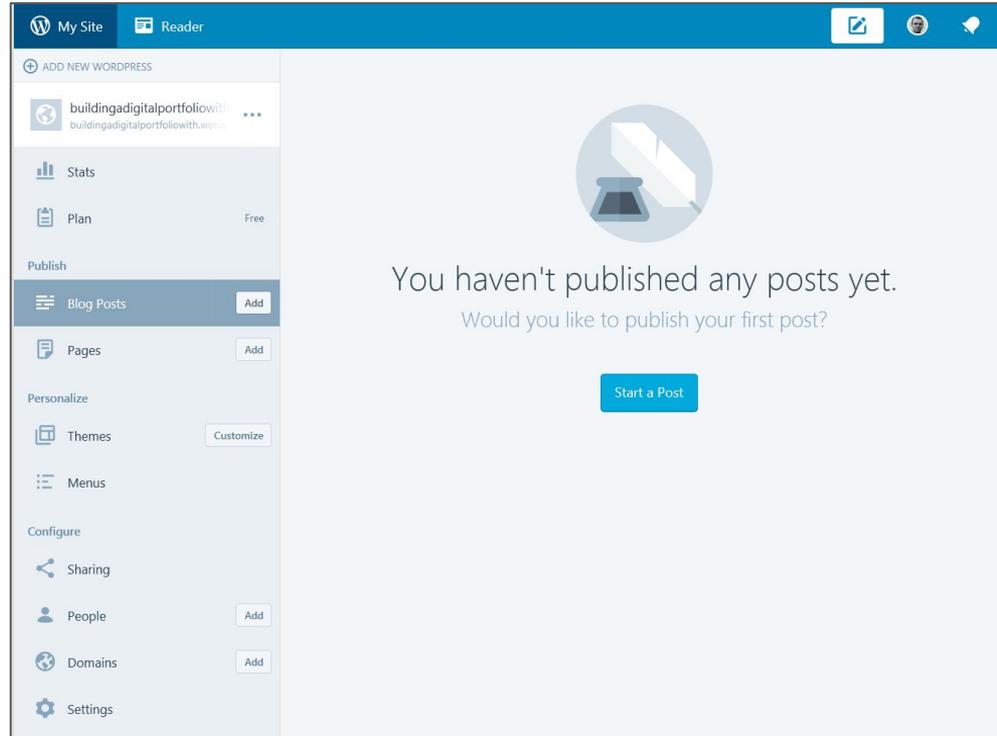
The banner for Bluehost's WordPress service. It features the Bluehost logo at the top, followed by the WordPress logo. Below the logo, the text reads "1-click WORDPRESS Installs & Upgrades". The entire banner is enclosed in a blue border.

The Basics of WordPress

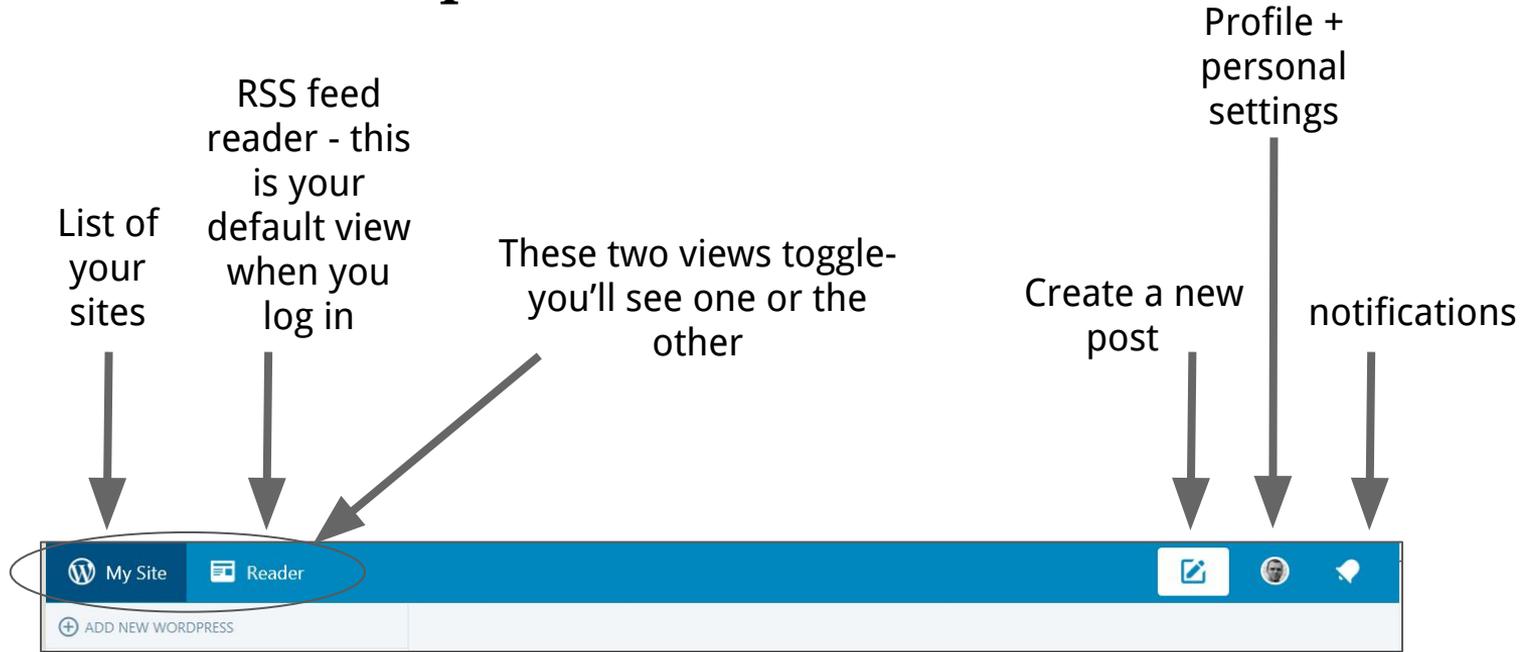
- ★ Create Wordpress.com account
- ★ Log in
- ★ Get acquainted
- ★ Privacy
- ★ Understanding Pages vs. Posts
- ★ Create a Page
- ★ Add an image
- ★ Create a static front page
- ★ Create your Menu
- ★ Explore themes

Exercise 4: Get Started!

Getting Acquainted with WordPress: Control Panel Overview



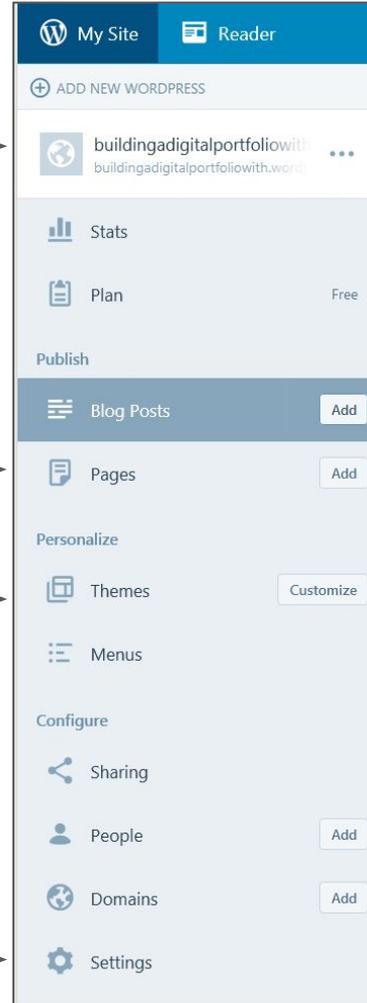
Getting Acquainted with WordPress: Control Panel Top Menu



If you have one site, you'll see this text. If you have more than one site, you'll see "Switch site"

Getting Acquainted with WordPress: Control Panel Side Menu

Clicking here takes you to your site



"Pages" is the content type we'll use



Clicking here lets you browse themes



Clicking here lets you customize your current theme

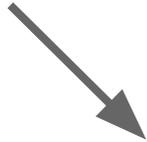


There are some important configurations in settings



Getting Acquainted with WordPress: The Customizer

Adjust settings
in your theme
using this
menu...



The screenshot shows the WordPress Customizer interface. At the top, there is a close button (X) and a 'Saved' button. Below that, it says 'You are customizing buildingadigitalportfoliowith'. A list of settings categories follows: Custom Design, Site Title, Tagline, and Logo, Colors & Backgrounds, Fonts, Header Image, Menus, Widgets, and Static Front Page. Each category has a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom, there is a 'Collapse' button and icons for desktop, tablet, and mobile views.

The screenshot shows a WordPress site titled 'buildingadigitalportfoliowith'. The site has a navigation menu with 'HOME' and 'ABOUT' links. The main content area features a large image of a lake at sunset with the text 'Welcome to Your WordPress Site'. Below the image is a date 'APRIL 7, 2016' and a link to 'LEAVE A COMMENT'. The text below reads: 'You haven't written anything yet, but that's easy for you to do later! Here's your chance to get your site looking just the way you want it to before the words start flowing. Some inspiration from someone who knew a thing or two about writing:'. On the right side, there is a search bar and several widget areas: 'Recent Comments', 'Archives', 'Categories', and 'Follow me on Twitter'. Each widget area has a blue pencil icon (edit icon) next to it. An arrow points from the text on the right to the 'Categories' edit icon.

...or by clicking
the "edit" icons
next to theme
elements



Getting Acquainted with WordPress: The Customizer

For a portfolio site, this “Static Front Page” setting is important



The image shows the WordPress Customizer interface. On the left, a sidebar lists various customization options: Custom Design, Site Title, Tagline, and Logo, Colors & Backgrounds, Fonts, Header Image, Menus, Widgets, and Static Front Page. The 'Static Front Page' option is highlighted, and a grey arrow points to it from the text on the left. The main preview area shows the site's header with the title 'buildingadigitalportfoliowith', navigation links for 'HOME' and 'ABOUT', a 'Welcome to Your WordPress Site' message, a search bar, and a list of widgets including 'Recent Comments', 'Archives', 'Categories', and 'Follow me on Twitter'.

Wordpress Privacy Settings: Site Visibility

Start at your
Control Panel,
then "Settings"

The image shows a screenshot of the WordPress dashboard. On the left is a sidebar menu with various options. At the bottom of this menu, the 'Settings' option is highlighted with a blue bar and a gear icon, and an arrow points to it from the text 'Start at your Control Panel, then "Settings"'. The main content area shows the 'Settings' page for a site named 'buildingadigitalportf...'. The 'Language' section is visible at the top, with a dropdown menu set to 'en - English'. Below this, the 'Visibility' section is highlighted with a rounded rectangle. It contains three radio button options: 'Allow search engines to index this site', 'Discourage search engines from indexing this site', and 'I would like my site to be private, visible only to users I choose'. The third option is selected. A 'SAVE SETTINGS' button is located to the right of the options. Below the 'Visibility' section is the 'Related Posts' section, also with a 'SAVE SETTINGS' button. An arrow from a text box on the right points to the 'Visibility' section. The text box contains the text 'Options for your site's visibility are here'.

Options for your site's visibility are here

Language
en - English

Language this blog is primarily written in. You can also modify the interface language in your profile.

Visibility [SAVE SETTINGS](#)

- Allow search engines to index this site
- Discourage search engines from indexing this site
- I would like my site to be private, visible only to users I choose

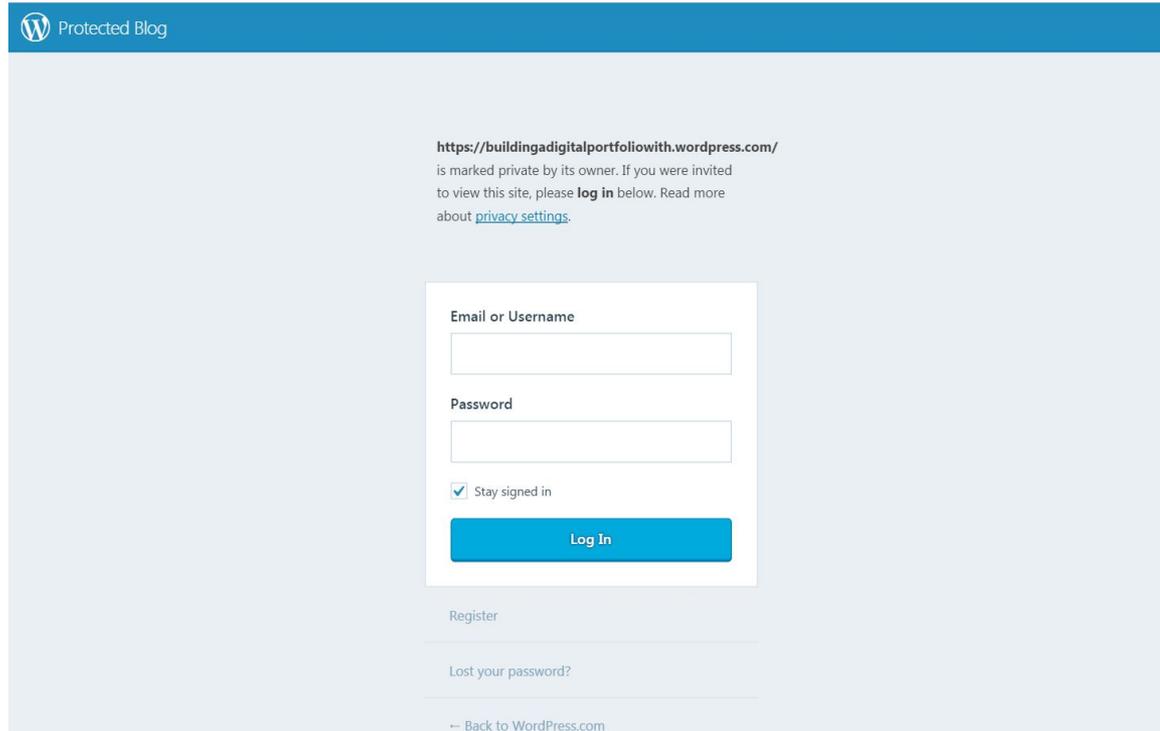
Note: This option does not block access to your site — it is up to search engines to honor your request.

Related Posts [SAVE SETTINGS](#)

- Hide related content after posts
- Show related content after posts
- Show a "Related" header to more clearly separate the related section from posts
- Use a large and visually striking layout

Preview:

Wordpress Privacy Settings: Site Visibility



The image shows a screenshot of a WordPress login page for a protected blog. At the top, there is a blue header with the WordPress logo and the text "Protected Blog". Below the header, the main content area is light gray. In the center, there is a message: "https://buildingadigitalportfoliowith.wordpress.com/ is marked private by its owner. If you were invited to view this site, please **log in** below. Read more about [privacy settings](#)." Below this message is a white login form with the following elements: a label "Email or Username" above a text input field; a label "Password" above a text input field; a checked checkbox labeled "Stay signed in"; and a blue "Log In" button. Below the form, there are three links: "Register", "Lost your password?", and "← Back to WordPress.com".

Protected Blog

<https://buildingadigitalportfoliowith.wordpress.com/> is marked private by its owner. If you were invited to view this site, please **log in** below. Read more about [privacy settings](#).

Email or Username

Password

Stay signed in

Log In

[Register](#)

[Lost your password?](#)

[← Back to WordPress.com](#)

Wordpress Privacy Settings: Turn Off Comments

Still within
"Settings"

A screenshot of the WordPress 'Discussion Settings' page. The page is divided into several sections: 'Default article settings', 'Other comment settings', and 'E-mail me whenever'. The 'Default article settings' section is highlighted with a rounded rectangle, and an arrow points from a text box to the 'Allow people to post comments on new articles' checkbox, which is currently checked. The 'Other comment settings' section includes checkboxes for 'Comment author must fill out name and e-mail', 'Users must be registered and logged in to comment', 'Automatically close comments on articles older than 14 days', 'Enable threaded (nested) comments up to 3 levels deep', and 'Break comments into pages with 50 top level comments per page and the last page displayed by default'. The 'E-mail me whenever' section has a checked checkbox for 'Anyone posts a comment'. The sidebar on the left shows the 'Settings' menu item highlighted. A 'SAVE SETTINGS' button is visible in the top right corner of the settings area.

Uncheck this box to turn off comments

Discussion Settings

SAVE SETTINGS

Default article settings

- Attempt to notify any blogs linked to from the article
- Allow link notifications from other blogs (pingbacks and trackbacks)
- Allow people to post comments on new articles

(These settings may be overridden for individual articles.)

Other comment settings

- Comment author must fill out name and e-mail
- Users must be registered and logged in to comment
- Automatically close comments on articles older than days
- Enable threaded (nested) comments up to levels deep
- Break comments into pages with top level comments per page and the page displayed by default

Comments should be displayed with the comments at the top of each page

E-mail me whenever

- Anyone posts a comment

Wordpress “Pages” vs. “Posts”

Posts

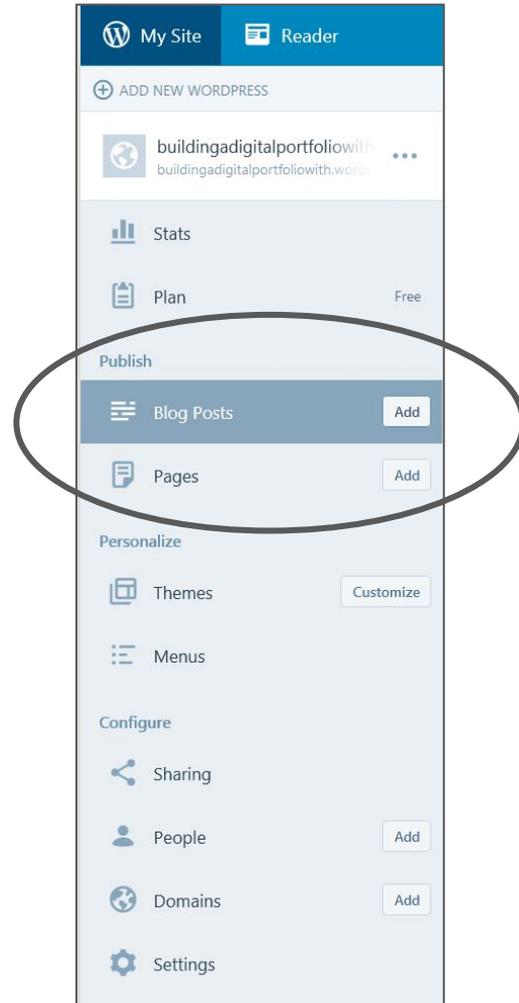
- Think “Blog”
- Display in reverse chron order
- URL includes the date blogname.
wordpress.com/2008/11/30/post-
title/

Pages

- Static, not displayed by date
- Organize pages into hierarchy, including
menus

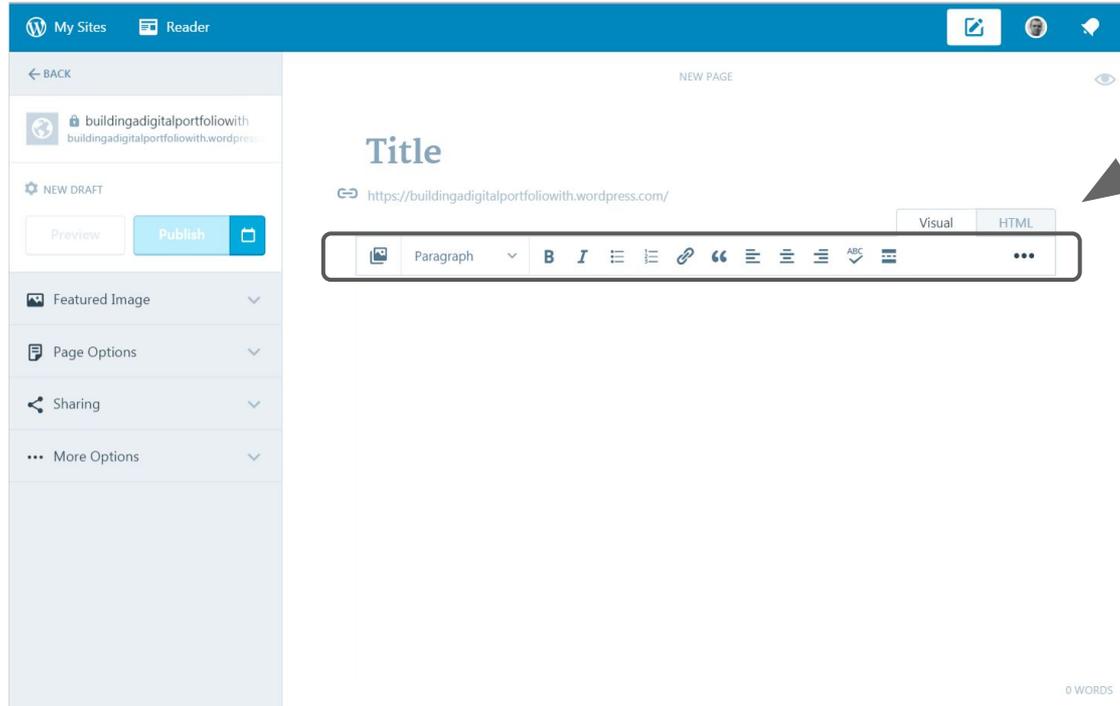
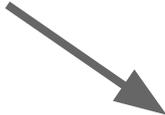
For a portfolio site we will use
pages.

...but can I have both? A portfolio site that
includes a blog? Yes!



Wordpress: Create a Page

A few options here, but none are essential



Typical WYSIWYG editor



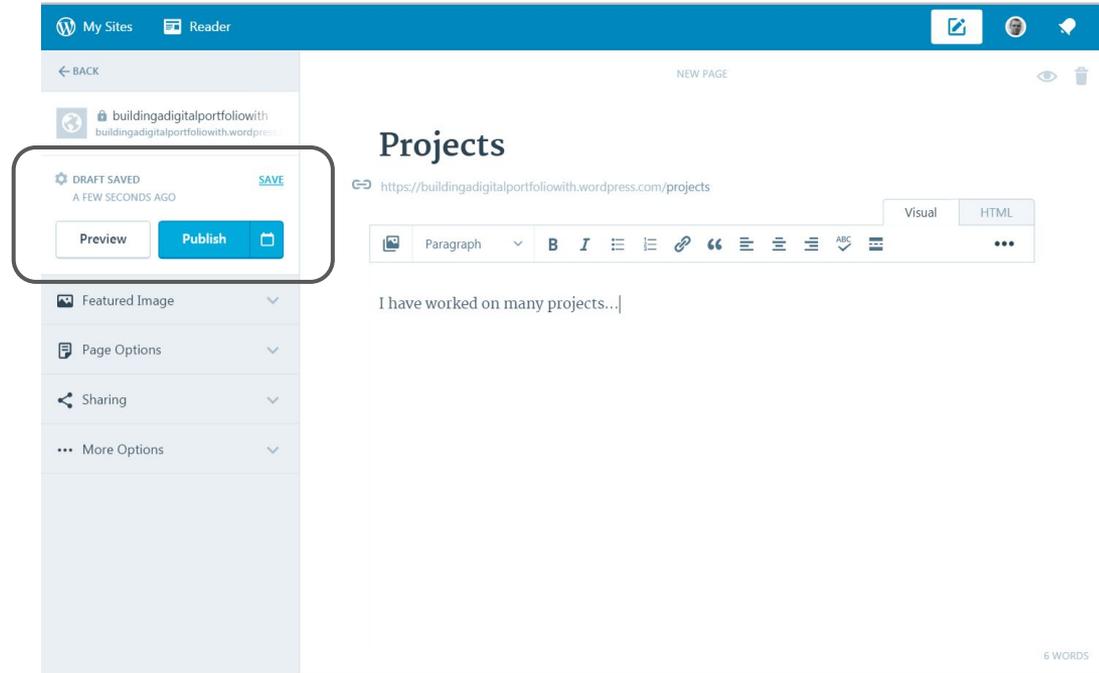
Wordpress: Drafts vs. Published

As soon as you type anything, you'll have the option to "Save" -- WordPress will autosave, too.

Saving a draft does **not** publish the page. This can be useful while you're working.

When you're ready to release it, click "Publish"

You can revert published pages back to draft status, too!

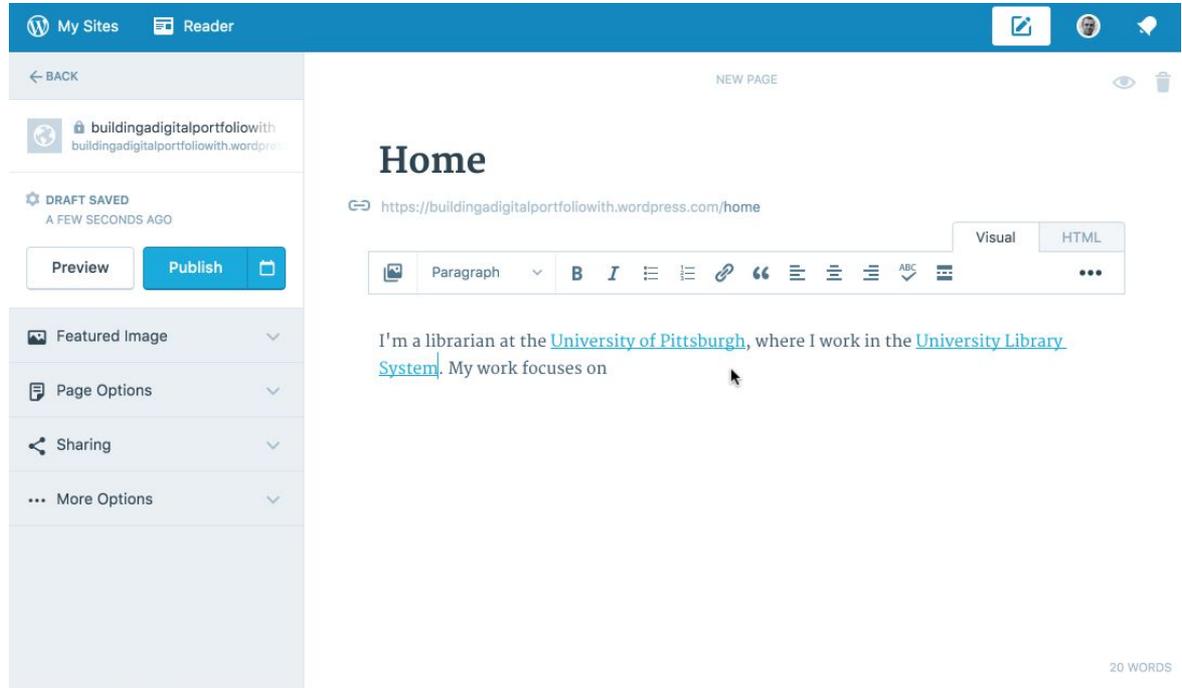


The screenshot displays the WordPress editor interface for a page titled "Projects". The top navigation bar includes "My Sites" and "Reader" links. A notification banner at the top left states "DRAFT SAVED A FEW SECONDS AGO" with a "SAVE" link. Below this, a "Preview" button and a "Publish" button (highlighted with a red box) are visible. The main content area shows the title "Projects" and the URL "https://buildingadigitalportfoliowith.wordpress.com/projects". The editor includes a "Paragraph" block with the text "I have worked on many projects...|". The bottom right corner indicates "6 WORDS".

Wordpress: Create a Front Page for your Portfolio

WordPress defaults to post and blog mode, so we'll need to create a specific page to use as our portfolio's static homepage.

Starts by creating a regular page. Call it whatever you like, I'm using "Home" here.

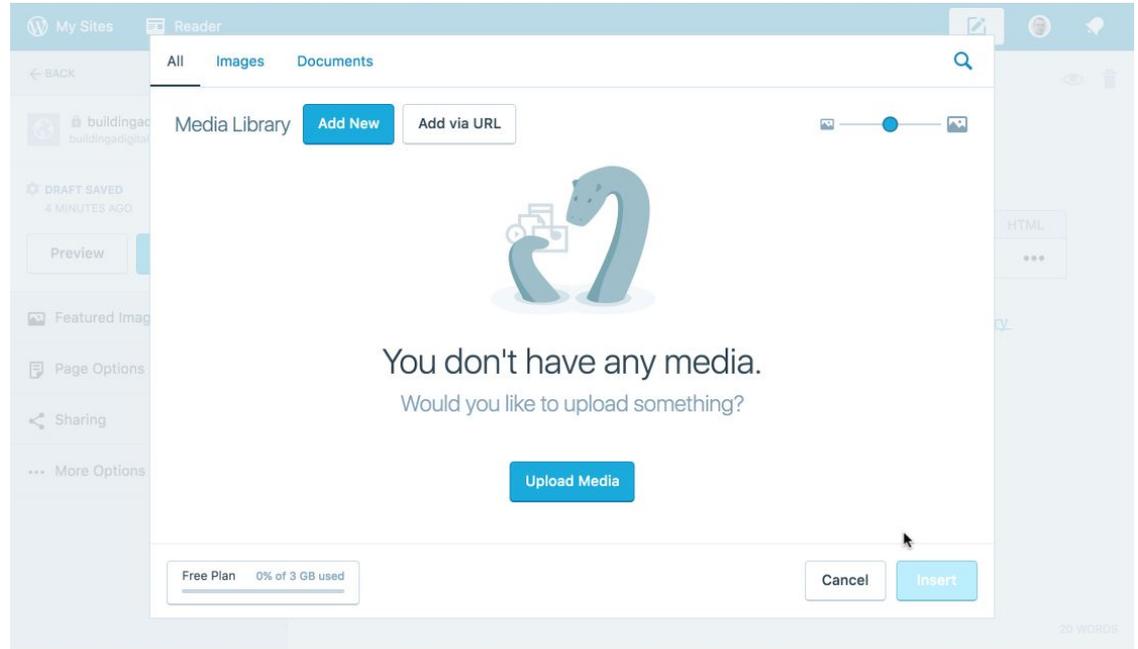


The screenshot shows the WordPress editor interface for a new page titled "Home". The top navigation bar includes "My Sites" and "Reader" on the left, and a "NEW PAGE" indicator on the right. The main content area displays the title "Home" and the URL "https://buildingadigitalportfollowith.wordpress.com/home". Below the title is a rich text editor with a "Paragraph" block selected. The editor toolbar includes options for bold (B), italic (I), list (bulleted and numbered), link, quote, indent, and text color. The text in the editor reads: "I'm a librarian at the [University of Pittsburgh](#), where I work in the [University Library System](#). My work focuses on". The left sidebar contains a "DRAFT SAVED" notification and buttons for "Preview" and "Publish". Below these are sections for "Featured Image", "Page Options", "Sharing", and "More Options". The bottom right corner of the editor shows a word count of "20 WORDS".

Wordpress: Adding Images

WordPress uses a “Media Library” to hold all the media you may use in your site.

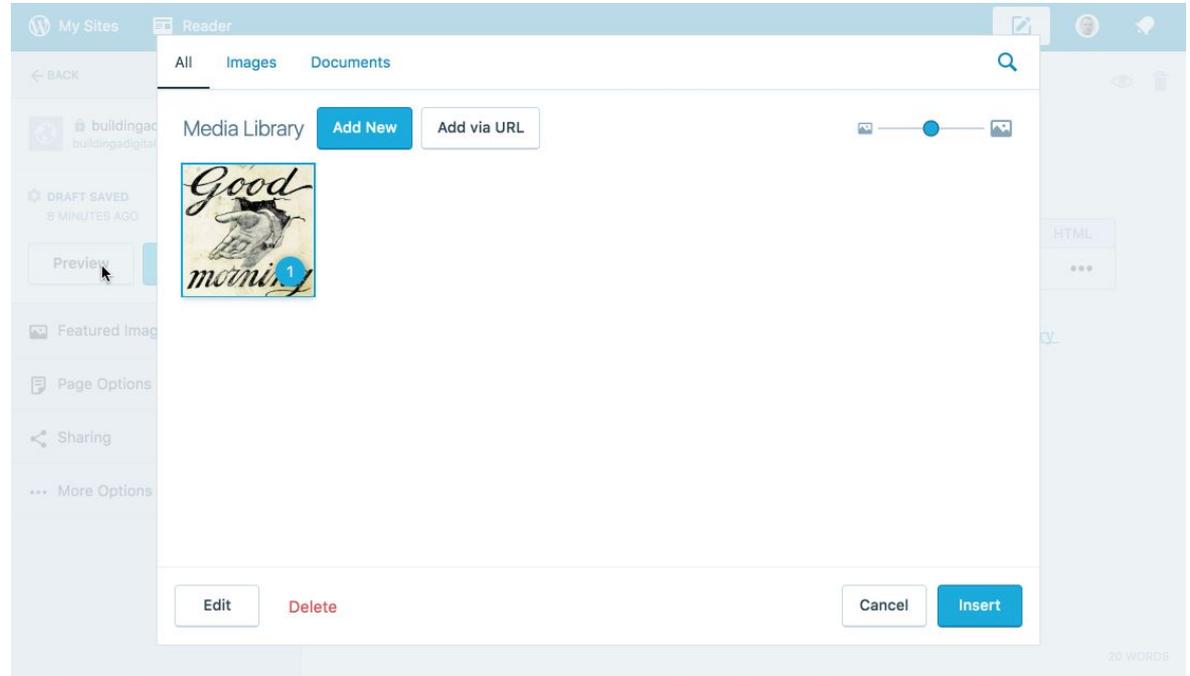
If you haven’t uploaded any media yet, you’ll see this:



Wordpress: Adding Images

After uploading some content, select the image you want and click the "Insert" button

Note that the image will be inserted at the location of your edit cursor!



Wordpress: Change the Static Front Page Setting

1. Change "Front page displays" to "A static page"



2. Select the page you created as the "Front page"

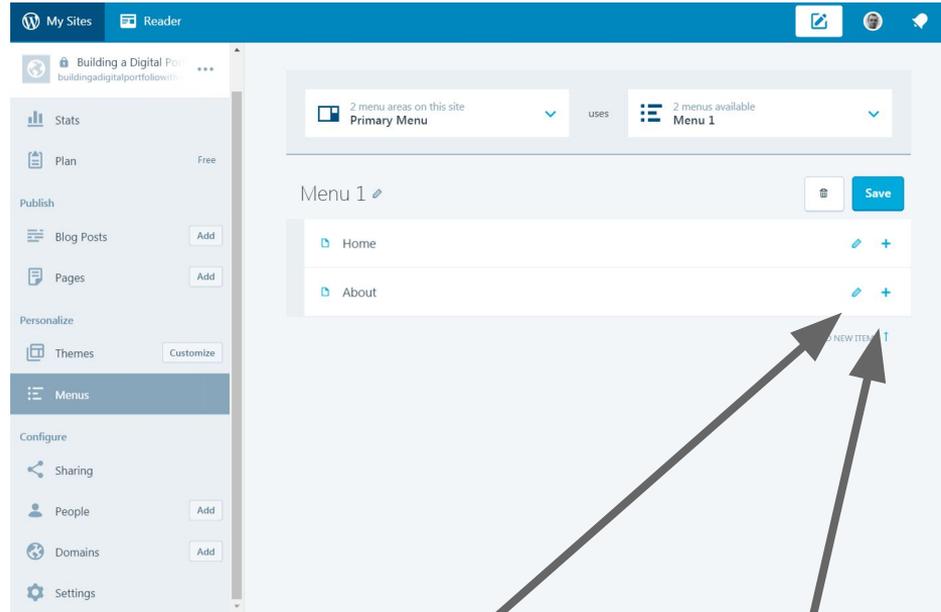


Remember to click the "Save & Publish" button at the top when you're done

The screenshot shows the WordPress Customizer interface. On the left, the 'Customizing Static Front Page' panel is open, displaying the 'Front page displays' section with two radio button options: 'Your latest posts' (unselected) and 'A static page' (selected). Below this, the 'Front page' dropdown menu is set to 'Home'. The 'Posts page' dropdown menu is set to '— Select —'. At the top of the panel is a blue 'Save & Publish' button. On the right, a preview of the website is shown. The website header includes the site title 'buildingadigitalportfoliowith' and a 'MENU' button. The main content area features a heading 'Home' above a featured image of a hand holding a piece of paper with the words 'Good' and 'morning' written in cursive. Below the image is a bio: 'I'm a librarian at the University of Pittsburgh, where I work in the University Library System. My work focuses on'. An 'EDIT' link is visible below the bio.

Wordpress: Working with Menus

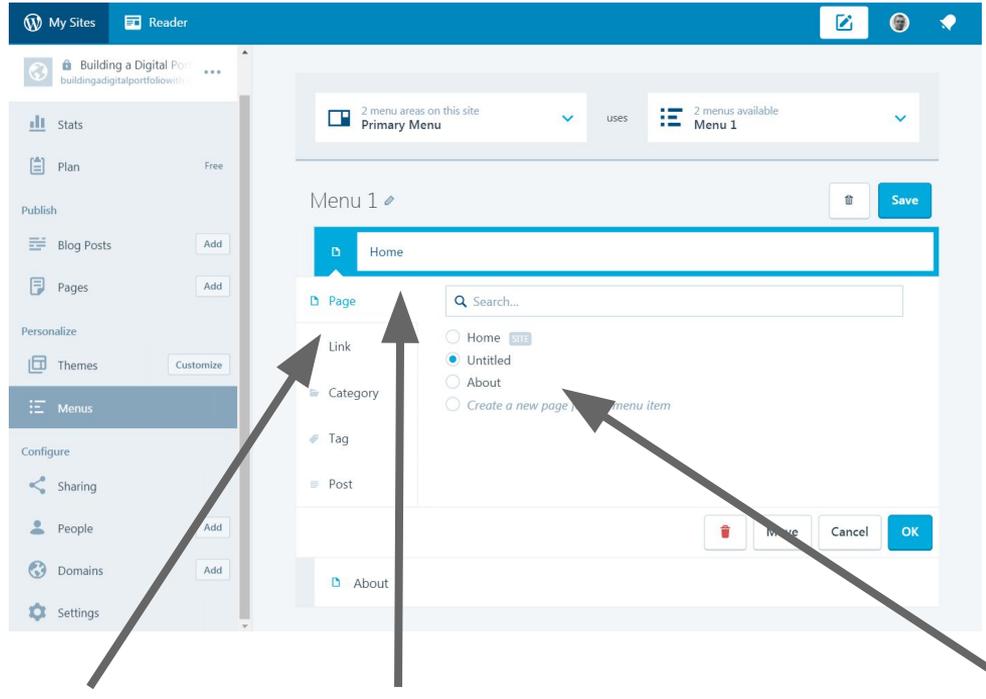
We're here, in the
Menus control



Edit controls

New menu or submenu
item

Wordpress: Configuring a Menu Item



What kind of thing does the menu item link to? We're using "Page"

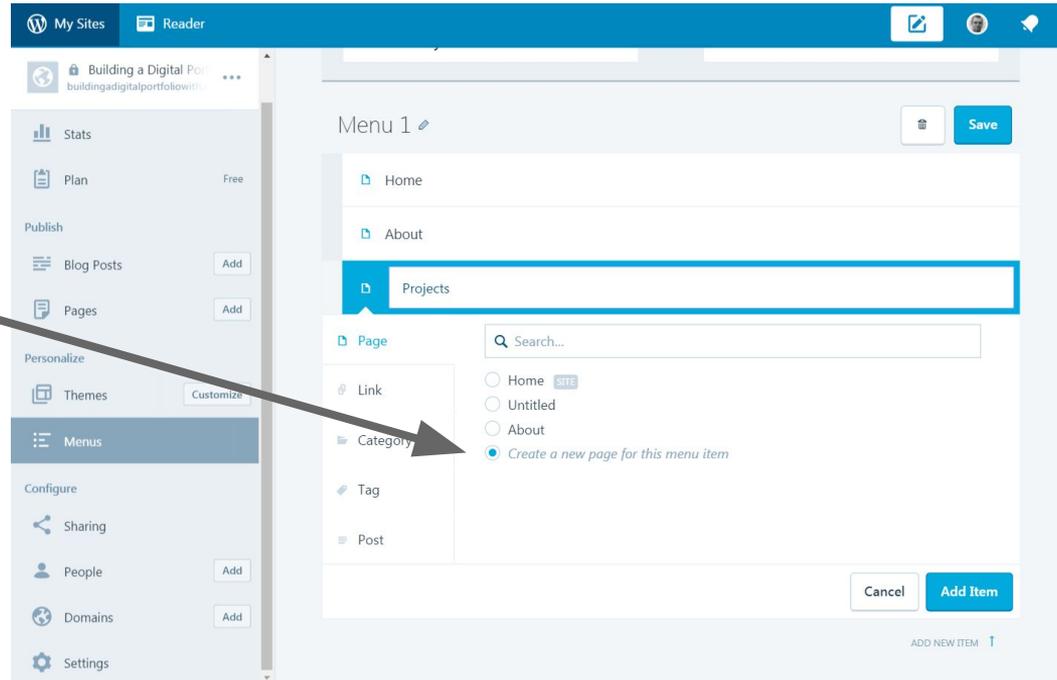
Change the menu item label

Choose the specific page to link to

Wordpress: Creating a new Menu Item (& the new Page, too)

Choose *“Create a new page for this menu item”* and then click the *“Add Item”* button.

Remember to also click the *“Save”* button next to the menu name!



Wordpress: Exploring Themes

Themes control the *overall* look and layout of your site. Themes also allow for certain site functions (or not).

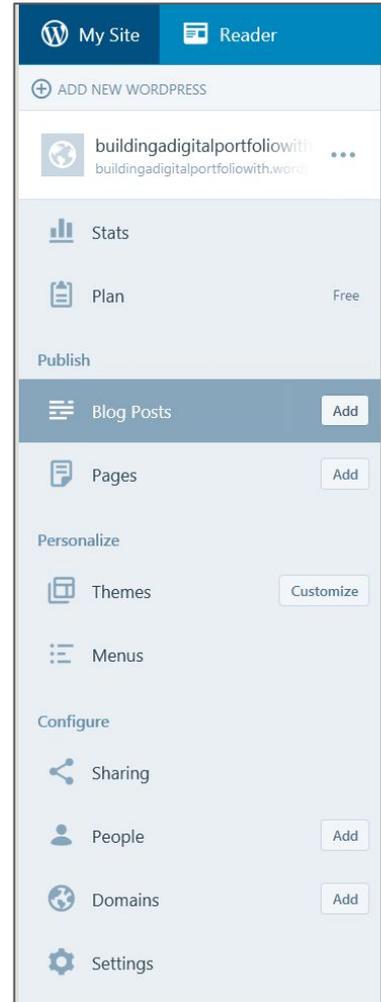
There are many themes that cost money, but there are many that are free:

wordpress.com/themes/type/free/

wordpress.com/themes/filter/portfolio/type/free/

You can spend a lot of time exploring themes and previewing them. This is fun, but watch out for getting distracted from actually building your portfolio!

Clicking here lets you browse themes



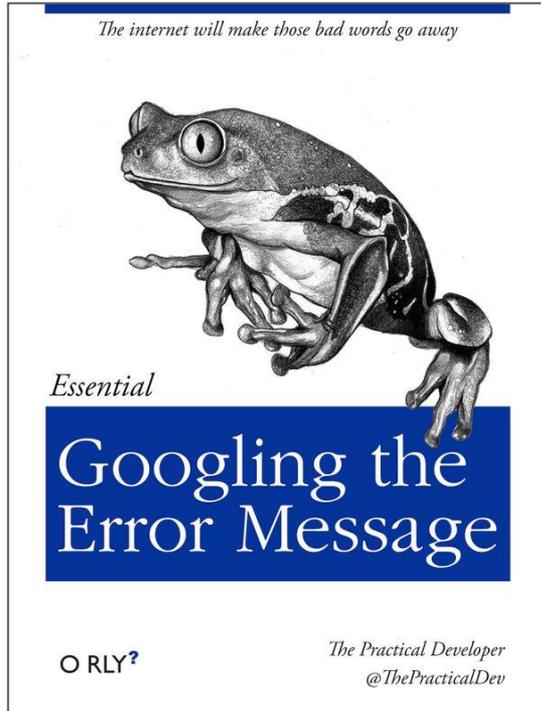
Learning how to learn more

→ wordpress.com/help

→ support.wordpress.com

→ codex.wordpress.org

Learning how to learn more



Play

Read

Watch

Learn from / teach to others

Google it

try "WordPress.com *thing*"

Exercise 5: Learning how to learn more

As a group, you will figure out how to do one of these things:

- ★ Embed a document from Google Docs
 - Your choice, or <https://goo.gl/6tA3yz>
- ★ Embed an audio track from SoundCloud
 - Your choice
- ★ Include a Twitter account timeline
 - Use twitter widget ID: 297487559557251073
- ★ Embed a SlideShare slide deck
 - Your choice

Exercise 6: What is your plan for continuing to develop your portfolio?

You can take time now to write some ideas in your workbook, or revisit this question later.

Writing down some plans will give you some specific next steps for after this workshop is done.