

# WordPress Primer and Quick Start Guide

by Teli Adlam

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As you may have surmised from the title of this ebook, this is intended to be a very short guide to get you started with the WordPress blogging software. The basic tasks will be covered, with links to read tutorials or articles with more in depth information.

This guide covers the following:

- The Difference Between WordPress and WordPress.com
- Installing WordPress and the Famous 5 Minute Install
- Update Your Profile and Password
- Update Your First Post, Comment, and About Page
- Installing New Themes
- Installing New Plugins

If you already know how to do all of the above, you may just want to skip to the end and start perusing those links ;).

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## The Difference Between WordPress and WordPress.com

Back in August 2005, Matt and the WordPress team launched a hosted blog site at

<http://www.wordpress.com/>. Because there was some confusion over the standalone version of the software and the hosted version, a general naming convention has emerged. The standalone version of WordPress that can be installed on your own server is referred to as WordPress while the hosted service is called WordPress.com (note the .com at the end).

If you're brand new to WordPress and want to get a feel for the admin panel, then you could sign up with a free account at WordPress.com (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/189/>). You will get the overall feel of WordPress, though there are a couple things to keep in mind as you test out the blog. Features like custom themes and custom plugins are disabled for security reasons and the stats that are available on WordPress.com are not yet available in the standalone version of WordPress.

This quick start guide is written for those who will be using the standalone version of WordPress, though some information such as editing the initial post, comment, and about page will apply; it is something to keep in mind while reading.

## Installing WordPress and the Famous 5 Minute Install

One beneficial feature of WordPress is the famous 5 minute installation. In reality, the install can take anywhere from three to ten minutes from start to finish.

### One-click Installation



Some web hosts, especially those using cPanel with Fantastico, will have one-click WordPress installation enabled. This is the fastest WordPress installation method, but it has some drawbacks.

Before going the one-click installation route, it's important to make sure the version of WordPress being installed is up to date. Also, you will not be able to perform any advanced installation of WordPress when using the on-click installation method.

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If you believe the one-click installation method would be the best for your needs, you can follow the one-click installation with Fantastico tutorial (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/187/>) to get started. If your host does not have cPanel or Fantastico, you will need to refer to your host's knowledge base or FAQs.

## Famous 5 Minute Install (aka Manual Installation)

In order to install WordPress manually on your website, there are a few programs you will need:

- An FTP program (You can download a free Windows FTP program from <http://filezilla.sourceforge.net/>)
- A zip extraction tool (You can download a trial copy of WinZip from <http://www.winzip.com/>)
- A plain text or PHP editor such as Notepad or Dreamweaver.

If you have these tools, along with *a basic knowledge of how to use them*, then you're all set and ready to go.

Download the most recent version of the WordPress software from <http://www.wordpress.org/download/> and unzip the files to your computer. Make sure to note where you unzipped the files because you will need them to continue with the installation.

Next, create a database for your new WordPress blog. If you don't know how to create a database, you can review the **Creating a Database With cPanel** tutorial (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/188/>). Note the database name given, username, and password selected during the creation process because you will be using it in the next step.

Now, you'll need to find the `wordpress` folder you unzipped after downloading from the WordPress website. Inside the folder, there should be a file named `wp-config-sample.php`, open it using your plain text or PHP editor.

```
define('DB_NAME', 'wordpress'); //  
define('DB_USER', 'username'); //  
define('DB_PASSWORD', 'password'); //  
define('DB_HOST', 'localhost'); //
```

The first three lines that begin with `define` are the only ones you'll most likely need to worry about. The first of the three defines your database name; you'll need to replace the word `wordpress` with the exact name of the database you created. Next you

need to add the user name you created when setting up your database by replacing the word `username`. Finally, the database user password will need to be updated by changing the word `password` to that selected when you created your database user password.

**Quick Note:** Many cPanel hosts will append your account username before the database name and database username. So, if your hosting account has a username of

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`myusername`, then your databases and database usernames will have `myusername_` added to them. Example: `myusername_wordpress`.

The only time you will need to change `localhost` is if your hosting company doesn't have its databases on the same computer. If you're not sure, make sure to ask your hosting provider.

When you've updated your database information, make sure to save the file as `wp-config.php` (notice that `-sample` has been removed from the name).

FTP all the files in the `wordpress` folder to your server wherever you'd like your WordPress installation to be. If you want your WordPress blog to be your homepage, then you'll most likely need to upload it to your `public_html` or `www` folder (folder names may vary by hosting provider).

To complete the installation process, you'll need to load up the WordPress installation file using your browser. If you go to the root directory where you uploaded the WordPress files, you'll be greeted with a message saying that WordPress needs to be installed and points you to the installation file. Or, you can simply go to your website and add `wp-admin/install.php` to access the installation file directly.

Example: <http://www.mysite.com/wp-admin/install.php> (this assumes you've uploaded the files to your root directory).

If everything is well with your config file, you'll be prompted to supply some information about your new blog; otherwise, you will receive an error message. Follow the prompts that WordPress provides and the installation will be complete.

To see an example WordPress installation from database creation to password update, you can watch the WordPress installation video tutorial (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/26/>).

## Advanced WordPress Installation

Two great things about WordPress are that it's written in PHP and open source which makes it very flexible. If you have coding knowledge, you can modify the installation process to suit your particular needs. For some examples, you can review the ***Super Powered WordPress Installation*** tutorial (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/130/>).

Even if you do not have coding knowledge, there are products on the market like WordPress Manager DX (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/141/>) that allows custom installation and management of WordPress.

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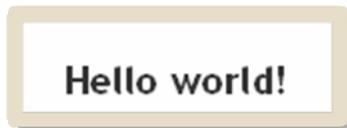
## Update Your Profile and Password

Upon successfully completing the WordPress installation, you should take a moment to update your profile information and change your password to something memorable.

Login to your WordPress account using the information provided during the installation process and click on the **Users** button from the admin panel. You should find yourself at your profile page. Update your nickname, website, password, and other applicable information, and then click on the **Update profile** button to save your changes.

**Quick note:** When you add a nickname to your account, WordPress will automatically use this name when you publish a blog entry or leave a comment on the blog unless you change the **Display name publicly as** value.

## Update Your First Post, Comment, and About Page



You may have noticed, upon visiting the homepage of your new blog, that it's not empty (assuming you didn't do a custom install). During the installation process, WordPress automatically added your first post, first comment, and about page for you. Because each of these entries contains fairly standard filler text that will make no sense to your blog visitors, it's a good idea to update or delete them.

### Edit (or Delete) Your First Blog Post

Login to your WordPress account and click on the **Manage** button from the menu. A list of your blog entries should appear and you should see a post titled *Hello World!*. Directly to the right of that post, you should see three links: **View**, **Edit**, and **Delete**.

If you don't even want to bother editing the post, simply click on the **Delete** link and the post, along with its accompanying comment, will be nuked. On the other hand, you can create an introductory post using this default post as your template.

Click on the **Edit** link next to the post. When the editing page loads, the default title and content will appear. Simply highlight what you'd like to change and type over it. When you've finished making your desired changes to the post, click on the Save button directly below the post content text area.

### Delete Your First Comment



Unless you deleted the first post, you will have a generic comment to deal with. To remove this comment, click on the **Manage** button from the admin menu, then click the **Comments** button directly below admin main menu.

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When the page loads up, you'll see the comment left by *Mr. WordPress*, and all you'll need to do is click on the **Delete Comment** link just below it. You will be asked to make sure first, and click on the OK button.

## Edit (or Delete) Your About Page

The about page is what lets your blog visitors know more about you and the topic of your blog. You should probably keep this page, however, if you don't have anything to say right now and you don't like it staring at you, then deleting it until you're ready to create one may be your best option.

From the WordPress admin panel, click on the **Manage** button and then click on the **Pages** button directly below the main admin menu. Much like editing the first post, you should see a blog entry titled *About* with three links directly to the right of it. To delete the page, simply click on the **Delete** link, otherwise, click on the **Edit** link.

After you update the page with the information you want to display to your blog visitors, make sure to click on the **Save** button directly below the post content text area to save your changes.

By this time, your blog should really begin to look like *your blog*, but there are still a couple more things to consider: themes and plugins.

## Finding and Installing WordPress Themes



There is a large community that supports WordPress in various ways, and one of the most popular ways is through **free theme development**. You can think of themes as clothing for your blog and, thankfully, themes are usually as easy to install as getting dressed.

Look around until you find a theme that suits your fancy (<http://www.optiniche.com/blog/190/>). After you find a theme, make sure to download the zip file to your computer, unzip its contents, and FTP the entire theme folder to your `wp-content/themes/` folder on your website.

Some themes may require configuration or editing first, in such an event, you should consult the included read me file or follow the instructions provided on the theme author's website.

When the theme folder has finished uploading, login to your WordPress admin panel and click on the **Presentation** button from the menu. If the theme you selected includes a preview image, you should see it on the page, otherwise look for the theme's name and click on it to activate it.

Some themes have configuration settings which allow you to customize the colors or sidebar to your liking. Normally, a tab will appear in the sub-menu letting you know. For instance, the default Kubrick theme allows you to edit the header image and color by clicking on the **Header Image and Color** sub-menu.

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## Finding and Installing WordPress Plugins

Plugins are bits of code wrapped up into a file that you can *plug in* to your WordPress blog which enable it to do things it normally wouldn't do straight out of the box. As an example, the included *Hello, Dolly* plugin will add quotes from the play to your WordPress admin panel when it's activated.

Many plugins are available as free downloads and add functionality ranging from simple comment functions to major admin changes. To view a long list of available plugins, check out the WordPress plugin database (<http://www.wordpress-plugins.net/>).

Installing a plugin is very similar to installing a theme. Some plugins will require modifications to the plugin itself or your WordPress theme; for those plugins, you will need to refer to the included **read me** file or the plugin author's website before continuing.

To install the plugin, you will need to FTP the plugin file(s) to your `wp-content/plugins/` directory where your blog is installed. Then, login to your WordPress admin panel and select **Plugins** from the admin menu. When the list of plugins appears, scroll down and find the title of the plugin you wish to use, then click on the **Activate** link next to it. If the plugin is already active on the blog, then the link will read **Deactivate** and you will need to click that if you wish to disable the plugin.

## That's All She Wrote

Mentioned in the beginning, this is only intended to be a quick guide to getting started with WordPress and only covers the initial basics.

If you want more in depth information on managing your blog, the WordPress Codex (<http://codex.wordpress.org/>) is an excellent resource. There are also a number of great video tutorials at WordPress Tutorials (<http://www.wptutorials.com/>) aimed at beginning to advanced WordPress bloggers. (Though the WordPress Tutorials are not free, they are an excellent value if you're a visual learner.)

For additional WordPress tips and notes, check out the OptiNiche blog at <http://www.optiniche.com/blog/> and make sure to sign up for the weekly mailing list to be kept up to date at <http://www.optiniche.com/blog/maillist/>.

I'm always looking for ways to improve this short guide, so if you have any suggestions or comments, please let me know by sending an e-mail to [wp@telidesign.com](mailto:wp@telidesign.com).