

LEARNING MADE EASY



4th Edition

# WordPress<sup>®</sup>

ALL-IN-ONE

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand



**Lisa Sabin-Wilson**

Bestselling author of *WordPress Web Design For Dummies*





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ALL-IN-ONE

4th Edition

by Lisa Sabin-Wilson

for  
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A Wiley Brand

## WordPress® All-in-One For Dummies®, 4th Edition

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# Introduction

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**W**ordPress is the most popular online content management software on the planet. Between the hosted service at WordPress.com and the self-hosted software available at WordPress.org, millions of bloggers use WordPress, and to date, WordPress powers 30 percent of the Internet. That's impressive. With WordPress, you can truly tailor a website to your own tastes and needs.

With no cost for using the benefits of the WordPress platform to publish content on the web, WordPress is as priceless as it is free. WordPress makes writing, editing, and publishing content on the Internet a delightful, fun, and relatively painless experience, whether you're a publisher, a designer, a developer, or a hobbyist blogger.

## About This Book

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The fact that WordPress is free and accessible to all, however, doesn't make it inherently easy for everyone to use. For some people, the technologies, terminology, and coding practices are a little intimidating or downright daunting. *WordPress All-in-One For Dummies*, 4th Edition, eliminates any intimidation about using WordPress. With a little research, knowledge, and time, you'll soon have a website that suits your needs and gives your readers an exciting experience that keeps them coming back for more.

*WordPress All-in-One For Dummies* is a complete guide to WordPress that covers the basics: installing and configuring the software, using the Dashboard, publishing content, creating themes, and developing plugins. Additionally, this book provides advanced information about security, the WordPress tools, the Multisite features, and search engine optimization (SEO).

# Foolish Assumptions

I make some inescapable assumptions about you and your knowledge, including the following:

- » You're comfortable using a computer, mouse, and keyboard.
- » You have a good understanding of how to access the Internet, use email, and use a web browser to access web pages.
- » You have a basic understanding of what a website is; perhaps you already maintain your own.
- » You want to use WordPress for your online publishing, or you want to use the various WordPress features to improve your online publishing.

If you consider yourself to be an advanced user of WordPress, or if your friends refer to you as an all-knowing WordPress guru, chances are good that you'll find some of the information in this book elementary. This book is for beginner, intermediate, and advanced users; there's something here for everyone.

## Icons Used in This Book

The little pictures in the margins of the book emphasize a point to remember, a danger to be aware of, or information that you may find helpful. This book uses the following icons:



TIP

Tips are little bits of information that you may find useful — procedures that aren't necessarily obvious to a casual user or beginner.



WARNING

When your mother warned you, "Don't touch that pan; it's hot!" but you touched it anyway, you discovered the meaning of "Ouch!" I use this icon for situations like that one. You may very well touch the hot pan, but you can't say that I didn't warn you!



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

All geeky stuff goes here. I use this icon when talking about technical information. You can skip it, but I think that you'll find some great nuggets of information next to these icons. You may even surprise yourself by enjoying them. Be careful — you may turn into a geek overnight!



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, brand the text next to it into your brain so that you remember whatever it was that I thought you should remember.

## Beyond the Book

On the web, you can find some extra content that's not in this book. Go online to find

- » The Cheat Sheet for this book is at [www.dummies.com/cheatsheet](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet). In the Search field, type **WordPress All-in-One For Dummies Cheat Sheet** to find the Cheat Sheet for this book.
- » Updates to this book, if any, are at [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com). Search for the book's title to find the associated updates.

## Where to Go from Here

From here, you can go anywhere you please! *WordPress All-in-One For Dummies* is designed so that you can read any or all of the minibooks between the front and back covers, depending on what topics interest you.

Book 1 is a great place to get a good introduction to the world of WordPress if you've never used it before and want to find out more. Book 2 gives you insight into the programming techniques and terminology involved in running a WordPress website — information that's extremely helpful when you move forward to the other minibooks.

Above all else, have fun with the information contained within these pages! Read the minibooks on topics you think you already know; you might just come across something new. Then dig into the minibooks on topics that you want to know more about.





# 1

# WordPress Basics

# Contents at a Glance

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- » Discovering content publishing
- » Publishing and archiving content
- » Interacting through comments
- » Syndicating through RSS
- » Using WordPress as a content management tool to create different types of sites

## Chapter **1**

# Exploring Basic WordPress Concepts

**B**logging gives regular, nontechnical Internet users the ability to publish content on the World Wide Web quickly and easily. Consequently, blogging became extremely popular very quickly, to the point that it's now considered to be mainstream. In some circles, blogging is even considered to be passé, as it has given way to publishing all types of content freely and easily with WordPress. Regular Internet users are blogging, and Fortune 500 businesses, news organizations, and educational institutions are using WordPress to publish content on the web. Today, 30 percent of all sites on the web have WordPress behind them.

Although you can choose among several software platforms for publishing web content, for many content publishers, WordPress has the best combination of options. WordPress is unique in that it offers a variety of ways to run your website. WordPress successfully emerged as a favored blogging platform and expanded to a full-featured content management system (CMS) that includes all the tools and features you need to publish an entire website on your own without a whole lot of technical expertise or understanding.

In this chapter, I introduce you to such content basics such as publishing and archiving content, interacting with readers through comments, and providing ways for readers to access to your content through social media syndication

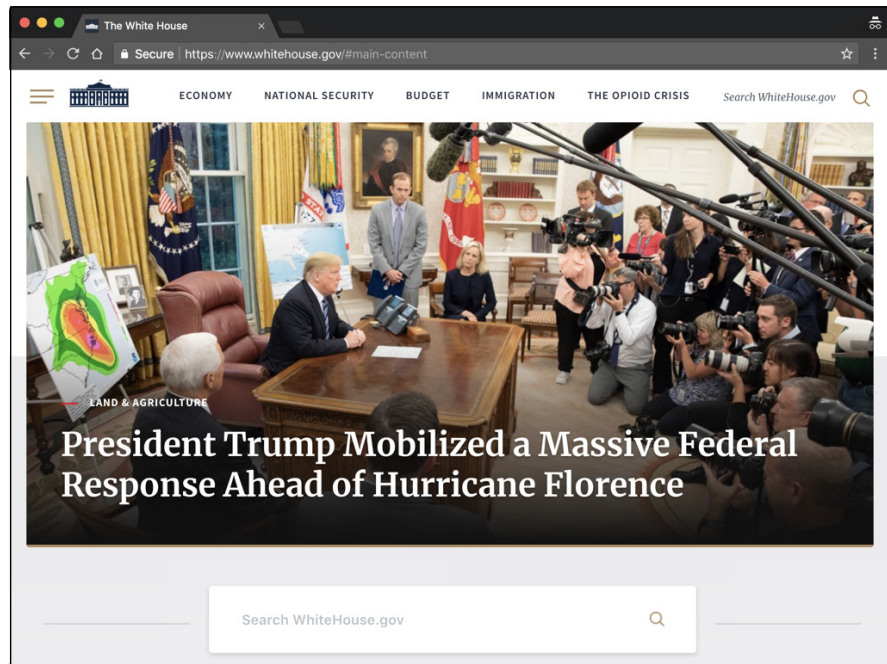
(RSS technologies). This chapter also helps you sort out the differences between a blog and a website, and introduces how WordPress, as a CMS, can help you build an entire website. Finally, I show you some websites that you can build with the WordPress platform.

## Discovering Blogging

A blog is a fabulous tool for publishing your diary of thoughts and ideas. A blog also serves as an excellent tool for business, editorial journalism, news, and entertainment. Here are some ways that people use blogs:

- » **Personal:** You're considered to be a personal blogger if you use your blog mainly to discuss topics related to you or your life: your family, your cats, your children, or your interests (such as technology, politics, sports, art, or photography). My business partner, Brad Williams, maintains a personal blog at <http://strangework.com>.
- » **Business:** Blogs are very effective tools for promotion and marketing, and business blogs usually offer helpful information to readers and consumers, such as sales events and product reviews. Business blogs also let readers provide feedback and ideas, which can help a company improve its services. A good example of a business blog is on the Discovery Channel site at <https://corporate.discovery.com/discovery-newsroom/>.
- » **Media/journalism:** Popular news outlets such as Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN are using blogs on their websites to provide information on current events, politics, and news on regional, national, and international levels. *Variety* magazine hosts its entire website on WordPress at <https://variety.com>.
- » **Government:** Governments use blogs to post news and updates to the web quickly and to integrate social media tools as a means of interacting with their citizens and representatives. In the United States, the White House is using WordPress to power its official website at <https://whitehouse.gov>, where the executive branch of the government provides policy statements and updates on the economy, national security, the budget, immigration, and other topics. (See Figure 1-1.)
- » **Citizen journalism:** Citizens are using blogs with the intention of keeping the media and politicians in check by fact-checking news stories and exposing inconsistencies. Major cable news programs interview many of these bloggers because the mainstream media recognize the importance of the citizen voice that has emerged via blogs. An example of citizen journalism is Power Line at <https://www.powerlineblog.com>.

- » **Professional:** Professional blogs typically generate revenue and provide a source of monetary income for the owner through avenues such as advertising or paid membership subscriptions. Check out Darren Rowse's ProBlogger blog at <https://www.problogger.net>. Rowse is considered to be the grandfather of professional blogging.



**FIGURE 1-1:** The official White House website is powered by WordPress.

The websites and blogs I provide in this list run on the WordPress platform. A wide variety of organizations and individuals choose WordPress to run their blogs and websites because of its popularity, ease of use, and large and active development community.

## Understanding WordPress Technologies

The WordPress software is a personal publishing system that uses a PHP-and-MySQL platform, which provides everything you need to create your blog and publish your content dynamically without having to program the pages yourself. In short, with this platform, all your content is stored in a MySQL database in your hosting account.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

PHP (which stands for *PHP Hypertext Preprocessor*) is a server-side scripting language for creating dynamic web pages. When a visitor opens a page built in PHP, the server processes the PHP commands and then sends the results to the visitor's browser. MySQL is an open-source relational database management system (RDBMS) that uses Structured Query Language (SQL), the most popular language for adding, accessing, and processing data in a database. If all that sounds like Greek to you, think of MySQL as being a big filing cabinet where all the content on your website is stored.



REMEMBER

Keep in mind that PHP and MySQL are the technologies that the WordPress software is built on, but that doesn't mean you need experience in these languages to use it. Anyone with any level of experience can easily use WordPress without knowing anything about PHP or MySQL.

Every time a visitor goes to your website to read your content, she makes a request that's sent to your server. The PHP programming language receives that request, obtains the requested information from the MySQL database, and then presents the requested information to your visitor through her web browser.



TIP

Book 2, Chapter 1 gives you more in-depth information about the PHP and MySQL requirements you need to run WordPress. Book 2, Chapter 3 introduces you to the basics of PHP and MySQL and provides information about how they work together with WordPress to create your blog or website.

## Archiving your publishing history

*Content*, as it applies to the data that's stored in the MySQL database, refers to your websites posts, pages, comments, and options that you set up in the WordPress Dashboard or the control/administration panel of the WordPress software, where you manage your site settings and content. (See Book 3, Chapter 2.)

WordPress maintains chronological and categorized archives of your publishing history automatically. This archiving process happens with every post you publish to your blog. WordPress uses PHP and MySQL technology to organize what you publish so that you and your readers can access the information by date, category, author, tag, and so on. When you publish content on your WordPress site, you can file a post in any category you specify; a nifty archiving system allows you and your readers to find posts in specific categories. The archives page of my business partner's blog (<http://strangework.com/archives>), for example, contains a Category section, where you find a list of categories he created for his blog posts. Clicking the Blog Updates link below the Categories heading takes you to a listing of posts on that topic. (See Figure 1-2.)