LEARN WORDPRESS

Wordpress Terminology Guide

INTRODUCTION

WordPress can be a tricky thing to understand if this is one of the first times you have tried to use it. So, we are going to go over some of the key terms to help you better understand the ins and outs of WordPress. Now, these are not all the terms and phrases, but these ones have been picked out so you can get more comfortable with WordPress.

Technical
Technical SEO is making sure all the correct buttons and levers are set correctly on your website. It can seem overwhelming but we'll walk you through the steps to get it all setup.

TERMINOLOGY

Admin Area or Admin Screen
The admin area, or also known as the admin screen or admin dashboard, is the area you will see right after you login to your WordPress site. It's where you can easily change how your site looks, manage posts and pages, install plugins and themes, and add new users.

Author
The term author has two meanings. The first means the person writing the post or page. The second is a pre-defined user role. A user with author role can upload files, write, edit, publish, and delete their own articles. They can also edit their profile and change their passwords.

Administrator
An Administrator is a user role in WordPress. When a user installs WordPress, it creates a new user with the username and password defined during the installation. That first user is assigned the user role of administrator. They can perform all actions on a WordPress website and have full capabilities.

Attachment
An attachment means an uploaded file, whether that is a picture, pdf or otherwise. When a file is uploaded using the Add Media button from the post or page edit screen, that file automatically becomes an attachment of that particular post.

Admin Bar
The admin bar is a horizontal black bar at the top of the screen. It gives quick access to common admin tasks in WordPress such as adding a new post or editing your profile. You can only see the admin bar if you have already logged into your website.

Backend

When you hear the term "backend" of your WordPress website, they are meaning your admin area, where you create content, install plugins, manage design settings, and more.

Category

Category is a default way inside WordPress to organize your posts. For instance, if you were creating a home repair site and wanted to write blogs on plumbing, you could create a plumbing category where all your plumbing blogs would be stored on one page.

cPanel

Some hosting accounts come with what's called a cPanel. It's like a master control section to your hosting. More specifically, cPanel allows you to publish websites, manage domains, organize web files, create email accounts, and more.

Custom Headers

Many WordPress themes allow you to swap out their default header image and information for customized images and information. You will usually find this either in the customizer located in your dashboard, or theme settings.

Custom Backgrounds

Like custom headers, many themes in WordPress allow you to customize the background of your site. These settings would be found usually in the customizer located in your dashboard, or theme settings.

CSS

CSS stands for Cascading Style Sheet. Think of this coding term as part of building a house. CSS would be what color paint the house would be or what kind of exterior trim would be on the home. CSS is one of the main coding languages responsible for how the site looks. Every WordPress theme contains a style.css file which has style rules to define the formatting of pages generated by WordPress.

Child Theme

Every WordPress site has a "theme". A theme encompasses all the base looks and functions of the website. A child theme in WordPress is a sub theme that inherits all the functionality, features, and style of its parent theme. The advantage to having a child theme is you can customize your child theme as you see fit, and when you go "update" the parent theme, your customizations are still there. If you did the customizations straight on a parent theme, it is possible to lose the customization during updating.

DNS
DNS stands for "Domain Name System" In simple terms, this is the system that houses your "URL" of your website.

Database
Every WordPress site has a database. The term database refers to a software used to store and organize data. Think of it as a file cabinet where you store data in different sections called tables. WordPress uses a MySQL database. WordPress is built on top of and in a MySQL database in order to store all its files and data.

Editor
An editor is a user role of WordPress. An editor can write, edit, publish, and delete posts including posts of other users. Usually, the only role that has higher functions than an editor is an administrator.

Functions.php
This bit of code file uses PHP code to add functions and customizations to your WordPress. Unless you are getting comfortable editing files and understand a bit of PHP, it's best to leave editing a functions.php file to a professional.

FTP
FTP stands for 'File Transfer Protocol'. This is a way to download your website's files, edit them and upload them back to the website securely. To do this, you run software on your computer called an FTP client. It can connect to your website's FTP server so that you can transfer files.

Featured Image
In WordPress you have pages, and you have posts. Posts are the typical blog posts you think of when you are thinking of WordPress. Each blog post has what is called a Featured Image. This is your primary image for a blog post.

Footer
The Footer of a website is the bottom section of a web page. This is where you would find copywrite notices, links to privacy policy, credits, etc.

Gallery
A gallery in WordPress is a collection of images grouped together and displayed in a variety of rows and columns.

Homepage

A home page is the main page of a website. This should be a summary of what your website and your organization is about.

iFrame

An iFrame is an inline frame used inside a webpage to load another HTML document inside it. Examples include embedding video or Google maps. It can look like <iframe width="420" height="315" src="//www.youtube.com/embed/qzOOy1tWBCg?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

Java Script

As a beginning WordPress user, Java script is not something you will be editing, but it is something you should understand what it is. Java Script is a type of programming language developers use to add dynamic elements to your websites such as a slider, display alerts, buttons, popups, etc.

Meta Data

Meta Data is information about the information on your website. This could include the author, page title, description of the page or post, when it was posted, etc.

MySQL

MySQL is the database management system used by WordPress to store and retrieve your blog information. (See Database)

Media

Your media is the extra files you upload to your site to enhance your page experience. This would include images, PDF's, videos, audio, etc. They are stored and retrieved in a section of your WordPress called the media library.

Navigation Menus

These are quite simply what you use to navigate throughout the website. You can locate them under appearance in your WordPress Dashboard. This area allows you to create custom menus of your own. You can add posts, pages, and custom links to a menu using drag and drop functionality. Generally, a theme will allow at least one menu in the header and one in the footer.

Page Builders

Page builders are plugins that can be added to your website to help build the look and functionality of a certain page or post. It does this by adding a new editor interface to your WordPress website to make customizing your page layout faster, easier, and more flexible. They often have drag and drop functionality and predesigned templates, layouts, and design elements. Elementor and Beaver Builder are examples of page builders.

PHP

PHP is the programming language that the WordPress core is built out of.

Page

WordPress can really be broken down to two major "post types". Posts, which are the blog posts everyone thinks of, and pages. Pages are a post type that allow users to create static pages that were not part of their blog posts. Pages are static one-off type of documents which are not tied to the blog's reverse chronological order of content

Parent Theme

A parent theme in WordPress is a theme that is declared parent by another theme, child theme. (See Child Theme)

Permalinks

Permalinks are the permanent URLs of your individual blog post or page on your WordPress site. You can change your permalinks by going to Settings » Permalinks option page. You can change these settings to show different information in the URL string. By a large majority you are going to want to choose post name. That keeps the URL clean, readable, and as short as possible.

Primary Menu

Primary Menu is the main menu selected as primary menu in the WordPress Menu Editor. Usually, you will have a setting to choose the location of your primary menu. You can find the WordPress Menu Editor by going to Appearance » Menu.

Plugins

If WordPress had an equivalent to "there is an app for that" it would be plugins. A plugin is a small software application (smaller than a theme) that extends the features and functions of your WordPress website. It does this with usually little to no extra code written, so just about any user can install and use plugins. There are thousands of free plugins at WordPress.org

SSL

SSL stands for Secure Sockets Layers. This is an encryption technology that keeps sensitive data between web servers and web browsers secure and private. Once you have enabled SSL, your website URL will use https instead of http.

Slider

A slider is a way to display pictures and images or even video, by one image or video at a time. Each image has a set time to view then it "slides" to the next image or video. This can be created just about anywhere on your website.

Shortcodes

Shortcodes are a small piece of code you can add to a post or a page to add a function that would normally take a bit of code. For instance, one piece of shortcode may look like this [button type="real" shape="square" size="mini" href="#example" title="Example"]Square Button[/button] to add a call to action button. You can also use shortcodes to embed filles and videos as well.

Theme

A theme is a zipped set of files that in WordPress make up the base look and function of your website. Each fresh WordPress install comes with a default theme. You can change the theme in WordPress to match your needs. Changing your theme can help with user engagement and how the site is displayed. Changing your WordPress theme does not change the content of the site in most cases, just on how the content is displayed.

Toolbar

The horizontal black section at the top of your WordPress site that is displayed after you login is your toolbar. It is also known as the admin bar. By default, it displays a predefined set of links to specific administration pages that are found on the admin sidebar and allows you to perform tasks quickly.

Tags

Tags are one of the default taxonomies that can be used to organize your blog posts. They are normally made up of one or two words and describe specific details of a post. If you were writing a home improvement blog, you might create a tag called "cabinets and counters" for all the posts you have that list about fixing or getting new cabinets and counters.

Templates

Templates are predefined layouts and designed on how your content on a page or post will be displayed. This is usually either created and can be edited by your theme or page builder such as Elementor.

Theme Options

Many themes have a theme options page in your admin. The Theme Options page is where you can customize things like site background, fonts, site wide layouts and a ton of other options. They are usually organized by tiles or tabs in order to make it easy to read and understand.

Text Editor

There are two types of text editors for WordPress. The first is where you edit the coding of your files. The second and the one we will focus on is located on WordPress post edit screen. When you type in a line of text on a post or page, there is usually two tabs that say Visual and Text. The text editor requires you to add any formatting such as italics, alignment, and spacing manually using HTML, whereas the visual tab, most of this is added for you.

Updates

Just like most other pieces of software used today, WordPress's main files, and most themes and plugins need occasional updates. WordPress highlights available updates in the Dashboard » Updates menu. Usually anything that is downloaded from WordPress.org will have the automatic upgrade option built in.

Visual Editor

Visual Editor is a rich text editor in the WordPress post edit screen. The WordPress post edit screen has two editors, Visual and Text. (See Text Editor) Up to WordPress 5.0 WordPress came with a modified version of TinyMCE, which is an open-source WYSIWYG HTML editor. It mimicked the behavior of desktop publishing tools such as Microsoft Word. However, since WordPress 5.0 TinyMCE was replaced with Gutenberg. For those that want the classic word editor feel, you can install a plugin called Classic Editor and it will give you back that classic Microsoft Word editor feel.

Widgets

Widgets are blocks of content that you can add to your site's sidebars, footers, and other areas. When you go to someone's blog post and see a form or a list of related posts, that is usually added by a widget. Each widget can add a feature or function to your site, without having to write any code. Common widgets to add to your site are menus, popular post lists, calendars, banner ads, social icons, and more.

CONCLUSION

We hope that this has helped with understanding some of the parts and terms of a WordPress website. If you have started building your website and feel overwhelmed, or not sure what some of the parts of your WordPress website are, contact us at designersfornonprofits@gmail.com and we will do our best to answer your questions.