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WordPress Absolute Beginner's Guide

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Contents at a Glance

	Introduction	1
1	How Websites Work	5
2	What WordPress Is and How It Works	15
3	Installing WordPress	25
4	Installing WordPress Plugins	49
5	Installing WordPress Themes	67
6	Setting Up Your WordPress Site Right the First Time	89
7	Setting Up Your WordPress Site the Right Way: SEO, Social Media, and More	121
8	All About Jetpack Settings	145
9	How WordPress Themes Work	167
10	Tweaking, Tuning, and Customizing Your WordPress Site	179
11	Using WordPress: Content	207
12	Using WordPress: Images, Videos, and Other Media	259
13	WordPress and Mobile Users	285
14	All About WordPress.com	307
15	Maintaining WordPress Sites	333
16	Customizations Without (Much) Coding	345
17	Advanced WordPress Settings and Uses	365
18	Troubleshooting Common WordPress Problems	393
	Index	399

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **1**

Who This Book Is For 2

How This Book Is Organized 2

The Only Constant Is Change…and WordPress Updates 2

A Note About Browsers and Such 3

Conventions Used in This Book 4

1 How Websites Work **5**

All About Domain Names and DNS 6

Choosing a Good Domain Name 9

Choosing a Web Host 10

Conclusion 14

2 What WordPress Is and How It Works **15**

What Is WordPress? 16

How WordPress Works 17

WordPress.org Versus WordPress.com 19

Which WordPress Is Right for You? 22

Conclusion 24

3 Installing WordPress **25**

Using One-Click or Easy Installs 26

Installing WordPress Manually 29
Before You Get Started 29
Manual WordPress Install 32

Quick Look at the WordPress Dashboard 44

WordPress Directory Structure 45

A Note About Users 47

Conclusion 48

4 Installing WordPress Plugins 49

Choosing WordPress Plugins 51
Finding Plugins 51

Installing WordPress Plugins 56
Easy Install 56
Two-Step Install 58
Manual Install 61

Plugin Tips 63

Recommended Starter Plugins 64

Commercial Plugins 65

Conclusion 66

5 Installing WordPress Themes 67

Choosing the Right WordPress Theme for Your Website 68

Installing Themes on Your Blog 73
Easy Install 74
Two-Step Install 77
Manual Install 80

Recommended Starter Themes 83

Commercial/Premium Themes 83

Advanced Tip: How Do I Find What Theme a Website Is Using? 85

Conclusion 88

6 Setting Up Your WordPress Site Right the First Time 89

Basic WordPress Settings 90
General Settings 90
Writing Settings 92
Reading Settings 93
Discussion Settings 98
Media Settings 103
Permalinks 106

Akismet 109

Setting the Right User Roles 114

Conclusion 119

7 Setting Up Your WordPress Site the Right Way: SEO, Social Media, and More ... 121

Doing WordPress SEO the Right Way ... 122
- Settings ... 122
- Writing ... 123
- Categories and Tags ... 126
- Plugins ... 127

Using Social Media Sharing Tools ... 130
- Posting to Your Social Network ... 130
- Helping Visitors Post to Their Networks ... 131

Finding Out How Many People Visit Your Site ... 132

Helping WordPress and Your Site Run Faster ... 134
- Caching ... 135
- Optimizing Your Theme ... 137
- Optimizing Your Graphics ... 138

Backups and Security ... 139

Conclusion ... 143

8 All About Jetpack Settings ... 145

WordPress.com Stats ... 150

Publicize and Sharing ... 151

Subscriptions ... 153

Likes ... 155

Spelling and Grammar ... 156

Contact Form ... 157

WP.me Shortlinks ... 161

Shortcodes ... 161

Custom CSS ... 163

Extra Sidebar Widgets ... 164

Photon ... 165

Conclusion ... 165

9 How WordPress Themes Work 167

WordPress Themes Explained 168

Working with WordPress Themes 169

Theme Settings 169

Default WordPress Themes Explained 170
- Twenty Twelve 171
- Twenty Thirteen 175
- Twenty Fourteen 175

Conclusion 177

10 Tweaking, Tuning, and Customizing Your WordPress Site 179

Using Custom Headers 180

Using Custom Backgrounds 184

Using WordPress Menus 188

Using WordPress Widgets 196
- Adding a Widget to a Widget Area 198
- Moving Widgets Around in Widget Areas 199
- Removing Widgets from Widget Areas 199
- Text Widget: The Most Powerful of Them All 200
- Custom Menu Widgets 203
- Cautions 204

Conclusion 205

11 Using WordPress: Content 207

Posts, Pages, Custom Post Types, and Post Formats Explained 208
- Posts: Also Known as the Blog Post, But More 208
- Pages: Standing Alone with Purpose 209
- Custom Post Types: Pulling Posts Out of the Blog Stream 209
- Post Formats: Styling Posts in New Ways 210

The Post and Page Editor Explained 211

Writing and Posting Content 218
- Creating Links 219
- Inserting Images 220
- Headings and Paragraph Styles 227
- Blockquotes 227
- Editing Published Posts 229

Autosaving: Save Your Work and Your Sanity 230
Scheduling Posts and Pages 230
Post/Page Status 231
Controlling Who Sees Your Content 232
Visual Versus Text Views 233

More About Posts 235
Post Formats 236
How to Use Categories 238
What Are Tags? 242

Taking Advantage of Pages 244
Parent-Child Pages 244
Page Order 245
Page Templates 247

Using Revisions 248

Managing Posts and Pages 250

Importing and Exporting Content 253

Managing Comments 257

Conclusion 258

12 Using WordPress: Images, Videos, and Other Media 259

Managing Media 260

Working with Images 262
Using Featured Images 262
Using Galleries and Slideshows 264
Using the Image Editor 270
Optimizing Images 274

Video and Audio Files 276
Embedding Content in Posts and Pages 278

Other Files 282

Conclusion 283

13 WordPress and Mobile Users 285

Making Your WordPress Site Mobile Ready 286
Themes 286
Plugins 292
How to Decide What's Right for You 296

Writing, Posting, and Managing Your Site from a Mobile Device....296
WordPress Mobile App....297
Adding Your Sites....298
Posting Through the Mobile App....301
Managing Comments....306
Administering Your Site....306

Conclusion....306

14 All About WordPress.com....307

Creating a WordPress.com Account....308

Creating More Sites on WordPress.com....314

What's the Same....316

What's Different....316

Key Built-in Features....317
Omnisearch....318
Polls....318
Ratings....319
Feedbacks/Contact Forms....321

Users and Making a Private Site....321

Managing Blogs....323
Hiding Blogs....323
Changing a Blog's Address....324
Transferring a Blog to Another User....325
Deleting Blogs....325

Premium Add-ons....326
Domains....327
Premium Themes....328
Custom Design....328
More Space....328
VideoPress....329
Site Redirect....329
Guided Transfer....329
No Ads....330
Professional Package Bundles....330

Conclusion....332

15 Maintaining WordPress Sites 333

Updating WordPress 334

Updating Plugins 336

Updating Themes 337

Managing Your WordPress Database 338

Backing Up Your Site 341

What About the Rest of the WordPress Files? 344

Conclusion 344

16 Customizations Without (Much) Coding 345

Easy WordPress Theme Customizations Without Much Coding 346

Widget Locations 346

Editing Your Theme's Style with CSS 350

Using Google Fonts 353

Icon Menus with Font Awesome 357

Custom Post Types 359

Conclusion 364

17 Advanced WordPress Settings and Uses 365

Using WordPress as a Website 366

Making a Private WordPress Site 374

WordPress for Communication and Collaboration with P2 375

Setting Up Forums in WordPress 378

Running WordPress on Your Computer 383

Moving a WordPress Site 388

Conclusion 392

18 Troubleshooting Common WordPress Problems **393**

Fixing Problem Plugins 394

Untangling WordPress Theme Issues 395

Fixing a Damaged Database 396

When WordPress Doesn't Work 396

Help! I've Been Hacked! 397

Conclusion 398

Index **399**

About the Author

Tris Hussey was Canada's first professional blogger, and along the way he became a freelance writer, best-selling author, technologist, and lecturer. He has written several best-selling books on social media and technology, including *Create Your Own Blog* (1st and 2nd editions), *Using WordPress*, *Sams Teach Yourself Foursquare in 10 Minutes*, and *WordPress Essentials* (video). You can read Tris' posts on TrisHussey.com and other sites around the Internet.

Tris lives and works in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia.

Dedication

For Mom.

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We Want to Hear from You!

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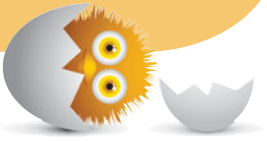

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Absolute Beginner's Guide to WordPress*. Before we dive into the book, I want to make sure we're all on the same page about who the book is for, how it's organized, and how I deal with the inevitable updates to WordPress after this book goes to press.

Who This Book Is For

First, who is this book for? Almost everyone. I've written the book to be accessible for the novice user but helpful as a reference book for the intermediate user. Advanced users? This isn't the book for you, unless you're giving it as a gift to someone you'd like to see jump onto the WordPress bandwagon. I've been using WordPress for seven years; I've written two books on it, taught hundreds of people how to use WordPress, and given talks at WordCamps all over North America. I'm approaching this book differently than most other introduction to WordPress books. I'm looking at the process of learning about WordPress from the perspective of the average computer user who just wants to make a website or blog and wants to make sure they do it "right." I go through the steps in the order that I think make sense for people to follow.

How This Book Is Organized

All the above said, this book is written and organized to be flipped through. Think of it as a quick reference to WordPress (which makes it handy for intermediate users). Jump to the section you need right now to solve the problem at hand. So if you get through Chapter 5, "Installing WordPress Themes," and want to jump right to Chapter 7, "Setting Up Your WordPress Site the Right Way: SEO, Social Media, and More," no problem! You can circle back to "How WordPress Themes Work" (Chapter 9) and "All About Jetpack Settings" (Chapter 8) when you're ready. The book is organized like this so you can (if you want) read it start to finish, cover to cover, and have a complete understanding of WordPress. If you're already pretty familiar with WordPress and need a book to look up something quickly, that works, too.

The Only Constant Is Change…and WordPress Updates

Let's talk about WordPress updates. At the time of writing this book (fall of 2013), WordPress has just celebrated its 10th anniversary, and WordPress 3.6 has just come out. Ten years is a long time in the software world, and I can honestly say WordPress just gets better and better with each new version. Speaking of versions, I'm starting this book just after WordPress 3.6 (Oscar) has been released and expecting WordPress 3.7 to be released in October and WordPress 3.8 a couple months after that. This means that while writing this book, I'm planning for at least three versions of WordPress that will come out while this book is in production. Challenging? Yeah, you could say that. However, I am going to take the same

approach here that I did with *Using WordPress*, which is to write and cover all the features and facets of WordPress as version agnostic as I can. There are some things that I don't expect to change in WordPress anytime soon, and some things I know will be changing in coming versions. By the time you read this book, chances are that there will be new versions of WordPress available, so screenshots, steps, and features may look different here versus what you're seeing in real life. Don't sweat it. Between the built-in help within WordPress, this book, and updates that I'll post on my own website (http://trishussey.com), you should be good to go.

Now that those details are out of the way, let's talk about what this book is really about: Freedom.

This book is all about learning to use one of the best (and easiest) website and blogging platforms around. About 20% of the world's websites run WordPress, and a good number of the biggest websites in the world (like CNN and The New York Times) use WordPress, making this free, open source tool a great choice for sites large and small. Most importantly, to me, WordPress represents the ability for regular people to be able to install, manage, and customize their own blogs and websites without needing professionals to help them. WordPress is about the freedom to create, build, compose, and publish to the world. You can start out completely free on WordPress.com and move all the way up to a completely customized website like the big players have, all using the same tools and software. Throughout this book, there are tips, tricks, interesting facts, techniques, and tools to help you get the most out of your WordPress-powered website.

A Note About Browsers and Such

I'm a Mac guy, so all the screenshots in the book use Chrome (or Safari) for Mac and Chrome or Safari for iOS (for iPad- and iPhone-related discussions). This *doesn't* mean that I'm ignoring all the Windows (or Linux) users out there; it just means that this is what I use, so that's what I have for examples. Great pains have been taken to double (and triple) check that what you see on a Mac screen is *pretty darn close* to what you see on a PC screen. Does this mean that there aren't going to be *slight* differences? Nope. Buttons and menus might look a little different, but that's going to be about it. Because WordPress is designed to work within a web browser, it doesn't matter what operating system (OS) you use. Whether it's on Mac, PC, or Linux, WordPress itself works the same in all three. As I mentioned previously, I've written the book to be as "future proof" as possible. The goal is that the book won't be worthless to you in six months or a year. I've written this book so that you can get years of use out of it before you think, "Wow, things are really different now."

Conventions Used in This Book

The Absolute Beginner's Guide to WordPress uses a number of conventions to provide you with special information. These include the following elements:

TIPS offer suggestions for making things easier or provide alternative ways to perform a particular task.

NOTES provide additional, more detailed information about a specific WordPress feature.

CAUTIONS warn you about potential problems that might occur and offer advice on how to avoid these problems.

Sidebars interspersed throughout the chapters cover things that are related to the topic at hand, but go into more detail than the flow of the chapter allows for.

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IN THIS CHAPTER

- Different types of WordPress content and how they work
- Using the Editor
- Writing and posting content on your site
- Using WordPress Posts beyond blog posts
- Using WordPress Pages for more than static content
- Importing and exporting your content
- Managing using comments

11

USING WORDPRESS: CONTENT

This chapter is all about words—specifically, putting words onscreen that will become the content for your website. We'll cover how the Post and Page editors are the same—and how they're different. We'll cover what Posts and Pages are, and why I keep referring to them separately (and why I also talk about pages with a lowercase "p"). We'll talk about categories, tags, and how to use them to organize your content throughout your site. If you need to move your content to another site, or bring another site's content into yours, we'll get to that, too. Finally, we'll wrap up with managing comments, because although not specifically content-related, comments are tied to the content, so it makes sense to talk about them. Before we get to how to create content in WordPress, let's talk about the main types of content: Posts and Pages.

Posts, Pages, Custom Post Types, and Post Formats Explained

There are two basic types of content in WordPress: Posts and Pages. All other kinds of content are derived from one of those two types (generally Posts). So what are Posts and Pages (and why do I keep capitalizing them!)? Let's start with Posts.

Posts: Also Known as the Blog Post, But More

When WordPress first came out, the only content type was a Post. That was the way a lot of blogging tools worked back in 2003 when WordPress 0.75 came out. A post was, essentially, a blog post. A piece of content that was intended to be a part of a much larger whole—a blog. It's that sense of connectedness that is essential to understand posts. Posts are *always* connected to each other. All posts are connected to each other by time, and we can see this through the time-based archives within WordPress (day, month, year). You can go back and page through all the posts you've written (and published), based on when they were published. Posts are also connected by author, category, and tag. However, if more than one person is writing on a site, each post could have different authors, categories, or tags from any other post; you can't say that *all* posts are connected to each other this way. Just to make things a little more confusing, all posts must be in at least one category. Remember in Chapter 6, "Setting Up your WordPress Site Right the First Time," that when we looked at the Writing settings, there was the Default Category, and it was set to Uncategorized. That's it. If you don't assign a post to a category when you publish it, it will be assigned to the default category. This is, by the way, why we'll edit the name of the default category to something (anything) other than Uncategorized. If you forget to assign a post to a category, the default category should at least be something meaningful.

Okay, let's recap. Posts are content that are connected to each other through time (all posts), category, tags, and author. That's the key. Posts are *pieces of content that have a relationship to other pieces of content*. You can always look at the "Archive" page for an author, category, tag, or date and see all the Posts that match those conditions. "Archive" is in quotes because it isn't so much an "archive" as storage as it is "archive" as a list. Being able to list all the posts of one particular type is very, very powerful and allows you to do some very clever things with your content. Later in the chapter, I'll talk about these clever ways to organize your content using posts and pages (and other content types). This is very important to think about if you're using WordPress to build a website. Now let's talk about pages.

Pages: Standing Alone with Purpose

Pages are what people tend to think of as "regular web pages." They are intended to be (relatively) static and can stand alone and still have context and meaning. The best examples of pages are the About Me and Contact pages. If you get to those pages on a site, they make sense all on their own. They don't need any other pieces of content for context or to make sense. Pages can't be assigned to a category or tag, and although pages do have published dates and authors, you can't look at all pages in a list (easily) using either of those. Pages aren't just boring old content, though. They have tricks of their own—page templates. Page templates are used to do things like have content without sidebars, have a Page that displays Posts, and many other cool things we'll see throughout this chapter and book. The catch is that Page templates are defined by the theme you're using. Some themes have lots of Page templates; others only one (the default one). Pages were developed as a response to WordPress users who wanted content that could stand alone outside of the stream of blog posts and maintain a place in the site. We all wanted Contact and About pages that we could keep outside of the flow of posts and be used for content that didn't match up nicely with what a blog post was or is. Pages were also the first things to be pulled into the early ways we handled menus. The reasoning is that we wanted people to read our posts, but the pages were the extra information (About, Contact, Downloads, Hiring) that visitors wanted to know as well. Then people wanted to use WordPress to make "traditional websites" and things got *really* interesting, but that's a story for Chapter 17, "Advanced WordPress Settings and Uses." Now what if you'd like content that looks, works, and behaves like a post, but *not* in the stream of blog posts? Content that is contextually linked, but as you create more content, it doesn't clutter up your stream of carefully crafted blog posts? That is why and how Custom Post Types were developed and added to WordPress.

Custom Post Types: Pulling Posts Out of the Blog Stream

WordPress 3.0 (Thelonious) didn't just bring in menus, new admin interfaces, and other changes; WordPress 3.0 also introduced Custom Post Types to the WordPress community. Custom Post Types are pieces of content that work and behave like posts, but they don't appear in your "regular" stream of posts. For example, you want to add testimonials, happy customers gushing about you and your company, to your site. It makes sense to have those as posts because you can easily put all testimonials in a Testimonials category and point visitors to something like http://abgwp.trishusseyc.com/archive/testimontials (or just /testimonials if you use WordPress SEO and set it up to do that—see Chapter 7, "Setting Up Your WordPress Site the Right Way: SEO, Social Media, and More")

to read all the testimonials. However, you also have a blog, and if you created each testimonial as a Post—even under a single category like Testimonials that blog posts never used—visitors (and search engines) could see the testimonials mixed in with blog posts. Not terrible, but it makes for a messy content listing. Also, you can't just point visitors to a menu or link to all your posts without doing something like making sure all posts are *always* in one particular category (as well as others) that you can use for navigation. But this approach, relying on people to remember to always set a specific category, is doomed to fail at some point. Someone will forget to set the right category (even if it's the default one) and will wonder why their post isn't listed on the blog, and you'll have to look to see they missed the check box.

Right—messy and annoying. By using Custom Post Types, this isn't an issue at all. Blog posts are created as posts and you can use any of the ways—including the default ones—to list the posts for people to read. Testimonials have their own, separate way of being displayed and listed. Nice, neat, and simple. Some of the original explanations of Custom Post Types talked more about needing specific types of posts and how to organize them (with their own category and tag tools), but in the three years since WordPress 3.0 came out, the most popular use to Custom Post Types I've seen is being able to pull postlike content (content that is connected to each other) out of the regular blog stream. We'll talk more about setting up Custom Post Types and how to incorporate them into your blog in Chapter 16, "Customizations Without (Much) Coding." You'll find themes and plugins create Custom Post Types to work their magic (like Testimonials and Slideshow plugins), so you're likely to come across Custom Post Types and not even know it!

Post Formats: Styling Posts in New Ways

WordPress 3.1 (Reinhardt) brought in a new way to style posts: Post Formats. Post Formats are designed to allow theme designers to provide ways to offer quick, styled ways of presenting content. Formats such as asides, quotes, images (where the entire Post is a single image), and image galleries are some of the default Post Formats WordPress starts with (themes and plugins can create their own, as well). You can read the (somewhat geeky) explanation on the WordPress Codex (http://codex.wordpress.org/Post_Formats), but essentially, Post Formats created a standardized way to let WordPress users have a similar experience as Tumblr (www.Tumblr.com), which is a hosted blogging service that focuses on the idea of post formats as a way to style content in different ways. So if you have a quote you'd like to share, it might have a nice big quote mark image at the top; maybe the text is in a nice italic font, and there is space at the bottom for who said the sage words. Photo galleries, asides, even Twitterlike status updates—each has a style that reflects and displays that content in the best way possible. The important

thing to understand is that Post Formats are not a separate kind of post, just a different way to *style* it. You can even have Post Formats for Custom Post Types! Remember that Post Formats are just and only that—formatting, style, and layout for regular posts.

These are the basic types and kinds of content in WordPress. They *sound* a lot more complicated than they really are. Just remember: Pages stand alone, posts are connected, Custom Post Types are a special kind of post separate from your blog posts, and Post Formats make posts look cool. Now that we have that straight, let's look at how content is created: the Editor.

The Post and Page Editor Explained

The first thing to know is that the Post, Page, and Custom Post Type editors are *functionally the same*. The only differences between them come down to Posts and Custom Post Types having sections to add Categories and Tags, whereas Pages have Page Templates instead (not that the functions are the same). Just like with Menus in Chapter 10, "Tweaking, Tuning, and Customizing Your WordPress Site," checking out the Screen Options is a good idea here, too. Figure 11.1 shows the options I like to see. I tend to write for sites that have more than one author, so I like to be able to switch authors if I need to. I also like to be able to see the check marks to enable or disable comments or trackbacks on that post (or page) as well. If these bug you, hide them from view. Many plugins (like WordPress SEO and All In One SEO Pack) add sections to the Editor as well, so things can get cluttered at times. Hide the sections you don't want to see (or don't need to see), and you'll be happier for it. You can also collapse sections by clicking the triangle in the corner of the title bar. Heck, you can even move the sections around to the order you want by clicking and dragging them. The Post and Page editors are very flexible to match how you like to work.

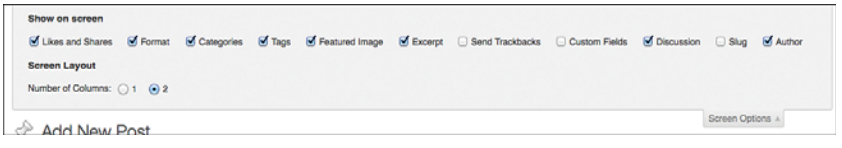

FIGURE 11.1

Screen options for the Editor window.

Now let's get down to the Editor itself. Regardless of whether you mouse over the Posts button in the admin area and select Add New, hover over the Pages button and select Add New, or use the +New menu at the top and select Post or Page (Figure 11.2), you'll get to the Editor screen (for Posts or Pages).

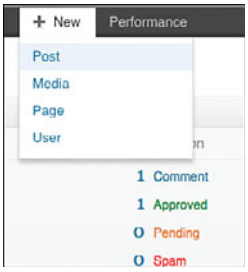

FIGURE 11.2

+New menu.

Figure 11.3 shows the Post Editor, and Figure 11.4 shows the Page Editor. They look pretty much the same, don't they? This is good. You don't have to learn different editors for the different kinds of WordPress content. Even Custom Post Types use the same Editor, making learning those easy as well. Besides the top of the page that says Add New Post/Page, the only difference you'll see is in Figure 11.5—the Tags, Categories, and Post Formats on the Post Editor and Page Templates in the Page Editor.

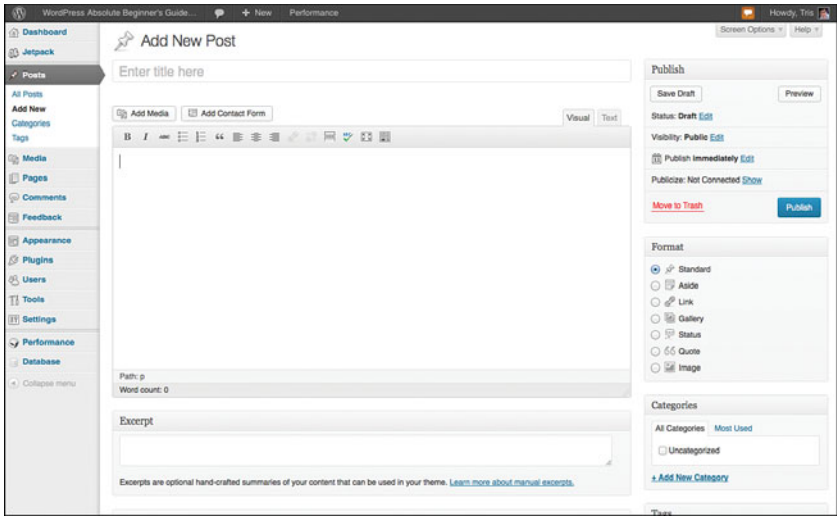

FIGURE 11.3

Post Editor.

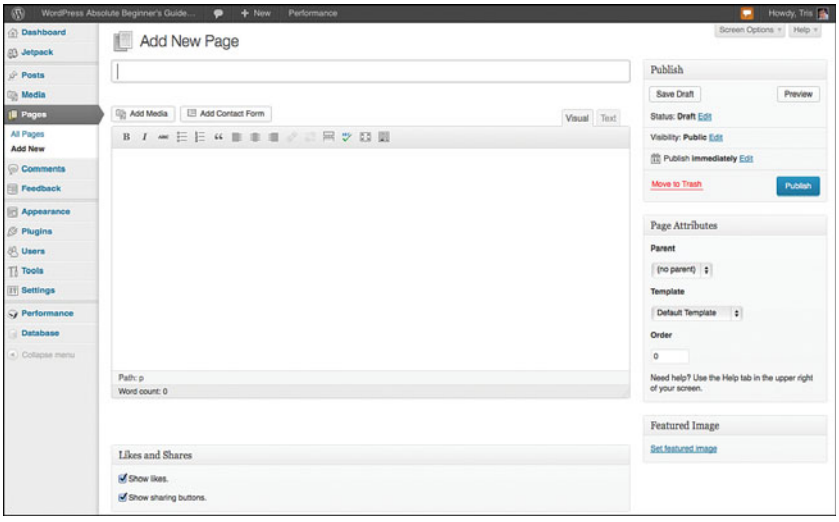

FIGURE 11.4

Page Editor.

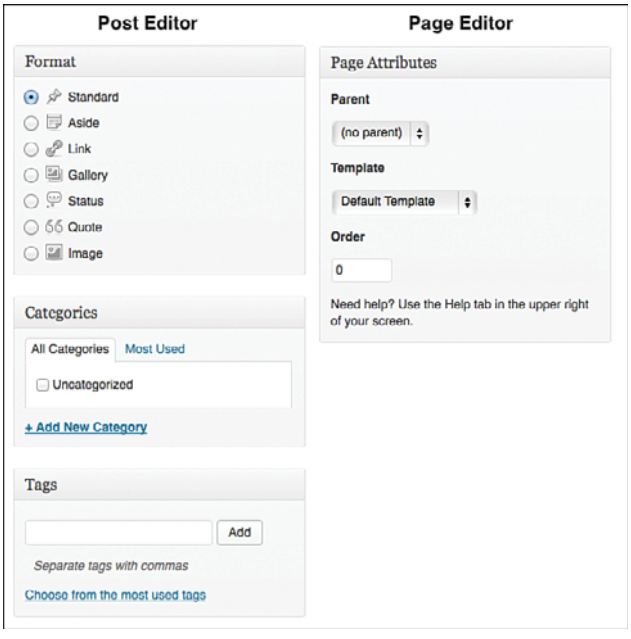

FIGURE 11.5

Post versus Page Editor.

Before we continue the tour of the Editor, we need to click one wee but important button; we need to open the Kitchen Sink. This little button in the editing toolbar reveals a second row of buttons that are packed with handy features. We'll talk about them shortly, but for now click the button and check out the fancy new buttons (Figure 11.6).

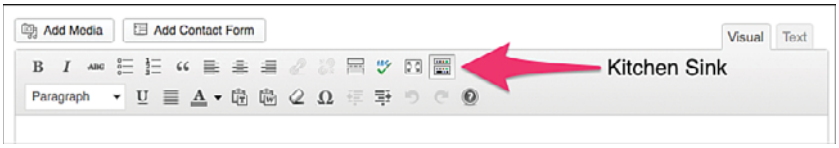

FIGURE 11.6

Opening the Kitchen Sink.

Because we have Jetpack enabled, we have an extra button next to Add Media: Add Contact Form. As you add other plugins or themes, more buttons might appear in your editing area. Some themes help you with quick shortcodes for buttons, multicolumn layouts, and other tools, but for now we're going to stick to the basics.

Most of the icons on the toolbar should be pretty familiar to you if you've used a word processor, but some might leave you a bit stumped, so let's cover those. Figure 11.7 has the annotated image and the descriptions follow.

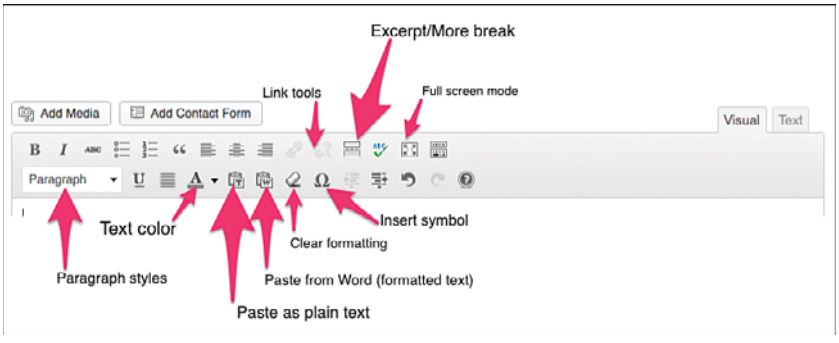

FIGURE 11.7

A few tools you might not recognize.

Let's start at the top and work our way down through the buttons. The pair of icons that look like links in a chain are the tools for creating (the whole links) and removing (the broken links) links in your content. They don't "light up" until there is text selected. Next is an odd-looking button that inserts the <!-- more --> HTML

tag in your post at the insertion point. The "more tag" is what gives you the break in your content where you'd see the Read More… link. If your theme shows just excerpts on your home page or archive page, you might not ever need this. However, if you have a really long post that you don't want taking up a lot of real estate on the home page, you can use this tag to split the post into two parts so readers can finish the post on its own page. This makes for less clutter on your home page but lets people continue reading if they want. The button with the arrows pointing out to the corners is the full-screen, distraction-free writing mode. A common practice for many writers (including this one) is to block out all other distractions while writing to focus at the task at hand—writing. If you click the button, you get a screen that looks like Figure 11.8.

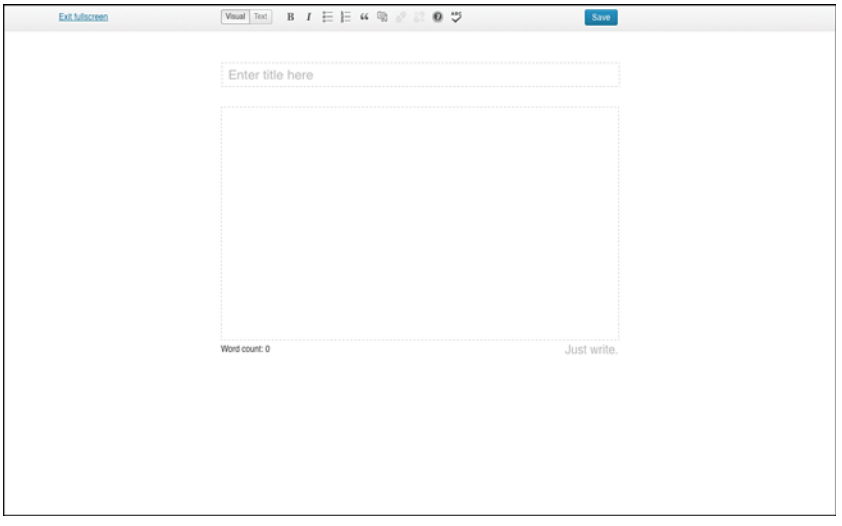

FIGURE 11.8

Distraction-free writing.

When you start typing, even the toolbar at the top disappears. Talk about focus! You already know what the Kitchen Sink is, so let's move down to the next row. The Paragraph Styles menu (Figure 11.9) lets you quickly switch between different built-in styles for your text. These aren't definable styles; these are HTML styles that are important for creating structure for documents. Paragraph is normal text, Address is for addresses, Preformatted is typically used for code, but the headings are probably the most important ones in the list. Heading 1 is usually the title of the post or page, but consider Headings 2 through 6 as sections and subsections of your content. Breaking up the content with headings does several things: First, it makes the content easier to read. There are breaks in the flow of the text for people's eyes to stop on. Second, it gives your readers an idea of the structure

of your content. H2 is a major heading after the title, H3 is a subsection of the H2 above it, and so on. Again, a structure makes it easier for people to read and follow your content. Third, headings give search engines an idea of the big sections of the document as well so they can characterize and index the content more fully and accurately. Headings are a simple thing you can do to make your content so much better for readers and search engines. The styles menu is one of my favorite tools in the Kitchen Sink, but my real favorites are still to come!

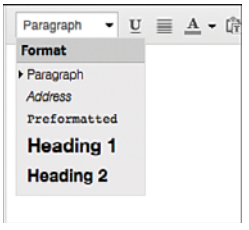

FIGURE 11.9

Paragraph styles.

The "A" with the gray bar is a menu that lets you change your text's color (Figure 11.10). This is something that I tend to caution against. It is very easy to get carried away with colors in your text and have things get out of control. I've had to fix more than my share of posts and pages that went sideways from over-exuberant color application. Use it like hot sauce on your food; use a little to try, and use a lot only if you know what you're doing.

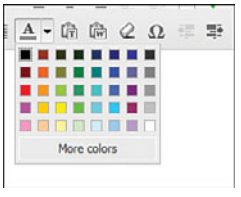

FIGURE 11.10

Text color menu.

The next two buttons, Paste as Text and Paste from Word, go hand in hand with each other. They handle the same task or problem in slightly different ways. Suppose you have some text from a Word document (or web page) that you'd like to put into your post or page. However, when you copy and paste the text, everything seems messed up on your site or the text just looks different from the rest of the site—and just wrong. These buttons fix this. After you copy the text, but before you paste it into your post or page, you can click the Paste as Text button (Figure 11.11) and paste the text into the window. Then when you click

OK, WordPress will put the text into your post as plain text. All formatting, links, and such will be gone. Now, if you'd like to keep some of the formatting (bold, italic, bullet lists) and the links, you click the Paste from Word button and do the same steps (Figure 11.12). Now when you click OK, WordPress keeps some of the formatting and discards the rest. Paste from Word is like "Paste and Match Style" functions in word processors. Use this for times when you want the basic formatting, but not things like fonts, font sizes, or colors. Believe me, this is a very handy button indeed!

FIGURE 11.11

Paste as Text window.

FIGURE 11.12

Paste from Word window.

NOTE In the newest version of the code that makes the editor work, the need for Paste from Word has been diminished. The basic function handles pasting rich content (the term for formatted text) much more smoothly. As good as the Editor is, it's better to be safe than sorry in my book. I use Paste as Text and Paste from Word myself.

The little eraser icon is a Clear Formatting button. It's for those cases when the formatting of the text has gotten out of hand and you need to start from scratch. It happens. It's easy to get formatting a little wonky if you've been working on a post or page for a while and maybe copying and pasting sections of text around. This will get you out of a jam in a click.

The last button on the tour is the Insert Special Character/Symbol button. When you click that button, you'll get a table of special characters and symbols you might need in your text (Figure 11.13). If you know how to type en dashes, em dashes, or ü, the Editor will handle those just fine, but if you don't, this is the tool you need.

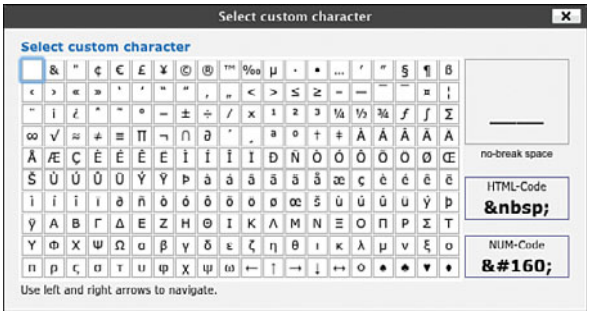

FIGURE 11.13

Insert special characters.

Now that we've discussed some of the key buttons, let's start creating content.

Writing and Posting Content

Because the Editor works the same when you write a post or page, we'll cover the mechanics of writing and posting content first: the basic tasks for typing content in, formatting it, adding links, and clicking the Publish button (and what happens after that). For the examples, I'll switch between creating a post and a page just to illustrate the *similarity* between the two, but later in the chapter, I'll create posts and pages focusing on the special features in each of them. For now, let's start typing.

Regardless of how you get to a blank Editor window, the first thing is the title at the top of the screen. I typically have a snappy title in mind before I start my posts, but that's just my process. You can put a title in whenever you want, and change it anytime you want, but after you save to Draft or Publish, the URL for the post is automatically set based on the title you have at the moment. Yes, you can change the URL later, but it's not a good idea to do that after the post or page has been *published*. After you've published content, changing the URL can cause people to get a 404 Page Not Found error. So, from a fresh Editor screen, type in a title (remember from Chapter 7 about how to write for search engines), and then click down into the content area (Figure 11.14).

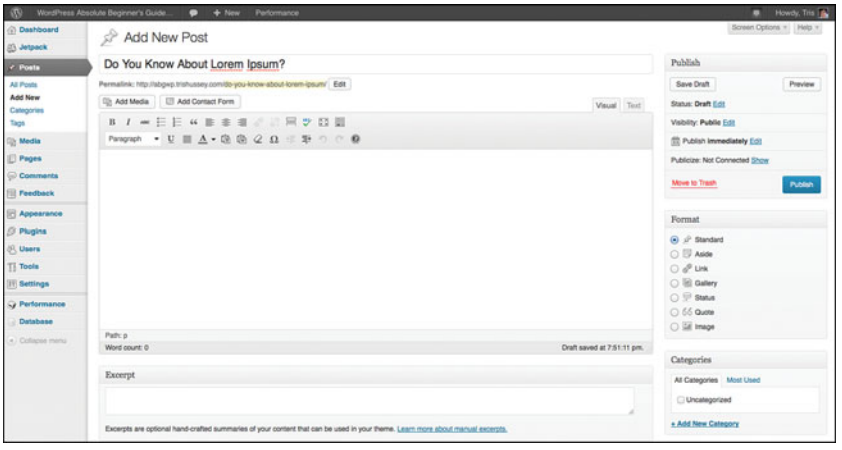

FIGURE 11.14

Post with title, ready to accept content.

NOTE What's the deal with the weird text? I'm using some handy *lorem ipsum* text as fake text for these posts. Yes, it's Latin. No I'm not making this up. You can learn more about *lorem ipsum* from lipsum.org.

Formatting text works exactly like you'd expect. Select some text; click the I to format the text with italic. Select some text; click B to format the text as bold. So let's get to things that *aren't* so straightforward, like links, headings, and blockquotes.

Creating Links

To create a link within your text, first select the text to be the link (remember the lessons from Chapter 7 on writing for SEO); then click the Link tool button (the whole links icon) and you get to a window like Figure 11.15.

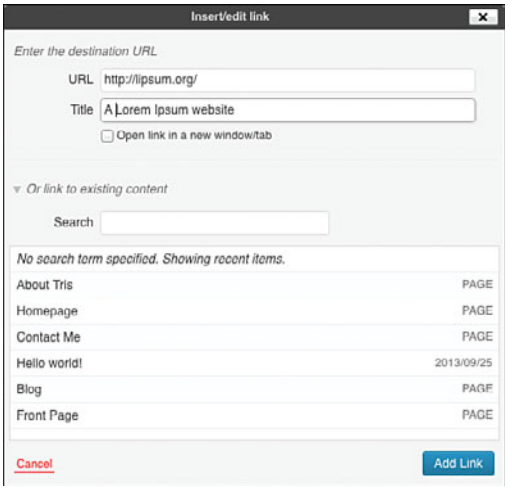

FIGURE 11.15

Inserting a link.

The URL for where you'd like the link to go to goes in the top box (where I have a URL) and the Title is what readers see if they pass their mouse pointer over the link *without* clicking on it. The Title is optional, but a nice thing to do for visitors and search engines. Below that section is one that is closed when you first come to the Insert Link screen—Link to Existing Content. This lets you quickly look for past posts (they have dates beside them) or pages (they just say PAGE) to link to within your content. This is a fast and easy way to link to content within your site without having to go to your site, find the post or page, copy the URL, and come back to the editor to insert the link. When you click Add Link, you return to the Editor with the link all set and done. Simple as that.

Inserting Images

I'm going to spend a lot more time talking about images and other media in Chapter 12, "Using WordPress: Images, Videos, and Other Media," but if I don't talk about how to insert images, at least briefly, parts of Post Formats won't make sense. Inserting an image (or other kinds of "media") all starts with clicking the Add Media button above the main editing toolbar (Figure 11.16).

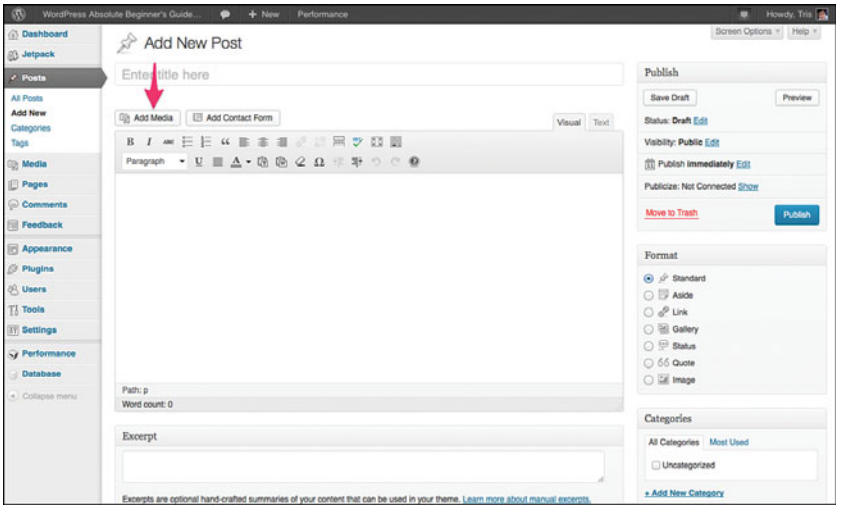

FIGURE 11.16

Media button in the Editor.

Technically, you need to click in your post where you'd like have the image inserted, and *then* click the Add Media button. I'm going to insert an image in the second paragraph of the text and have the image float to the right and the text wrap around it to the left. Clicking the Add Media button brings you to a window where you can upload your pictures, videos, PDF files, and podcasts. You can drag and drop as many images as you want onto this window for them to upload. If that doesn't work for your browser, you can click the Upload button to see the regular file chooser window. I'm going to drag two images onto the window. We're only going to use one for this example (Figure 11.17).

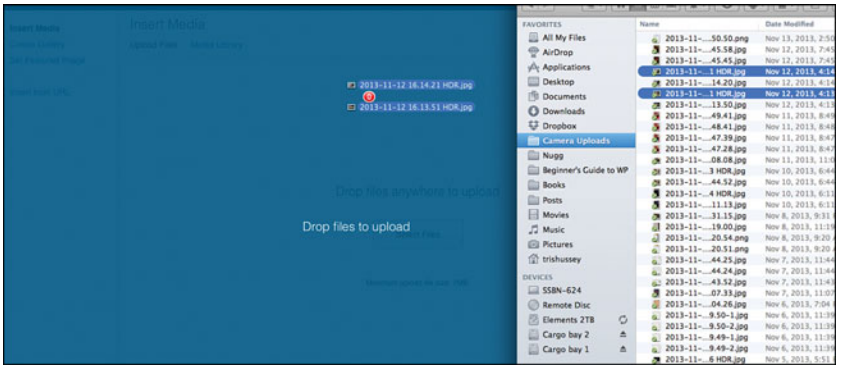

FIGURE 11.17

Dragging and uploading images.

If you don't have any images uploaded yet, you'll just see a blank window to upload, like in Figure 11.17. But if you already have images uploaded, you see the other images. You can still drag new images to upload into this window and the images will upload. No need to click the Upload tab; WordPress figures it out.

NOTE How big an image can I upload? If by "big" you mean dimensions, there isn't a limit. However, the real limit is file size, which tends to be 7MB for most hosts. If you have files larger than that to upload (videos and podcasts can often be far, far more than 7MB), you'll need to use FTP to upload them. The downside is that media files that you upload via FTP *aren't listed in the Media Library*. More about managing media in Chapter 12.

After uploading my two images, both have check marks in the upper-left corner of the image (Figure 11.18), so I click the check for one of the images to deselect. This makes sure I'm putting only one image in right now. In Figure 11.19, you can see the options I've set for this image. I've given it a caption, set the alignment to Right, and if someone clicks the image in the post, it will show the image on its own page (Media file option). And I've set the medium-size image (300×225). When I click Insert into Post, I get Figure 11.20.

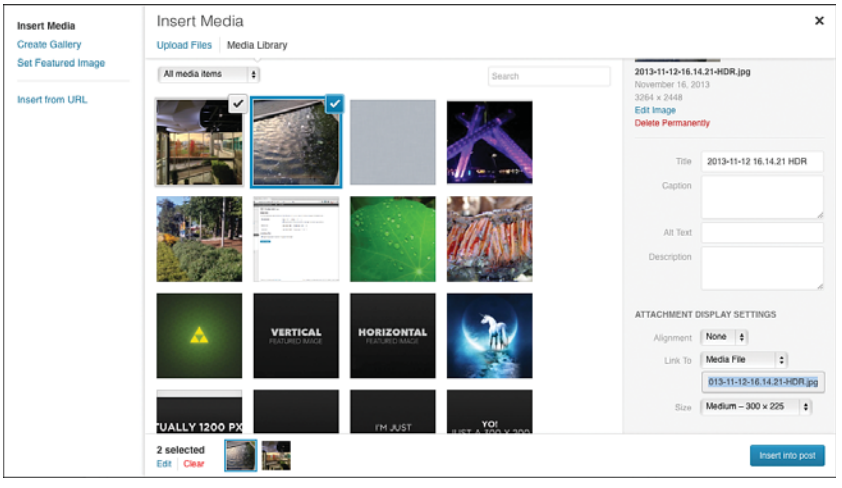

FIGURE 11.18

Images uploaded and selected.

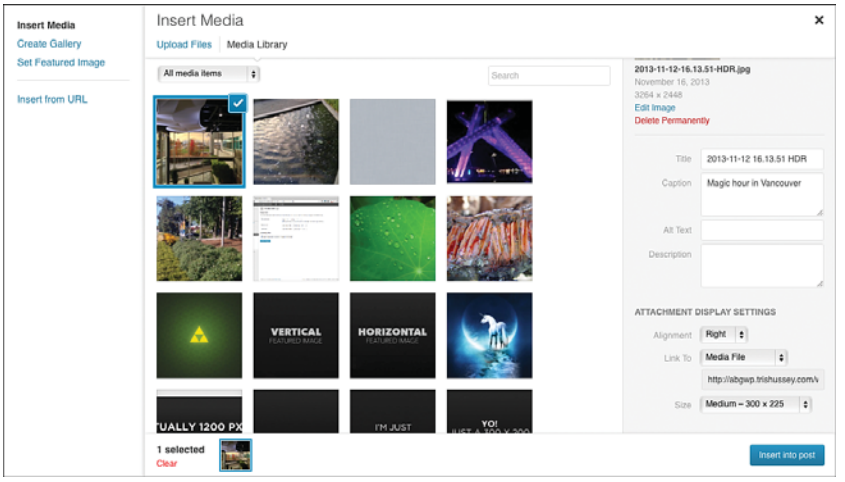

FIGURE 11.19

Setting the options for the image.

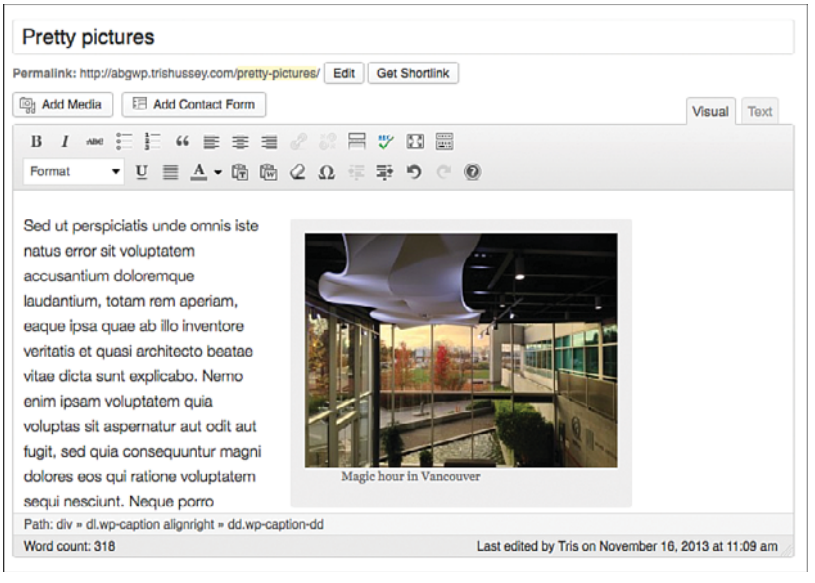

FIGURE 11.20

Image in the post.

Looks pretty spiffy. Now let's insert another image with a few different settings. I put a blank line between a couple of the paragraphs and clicked the Add Media button again. Using the second image I uploaded, I'm opting for no caption, no alignment, and the large size (Figure 11.21), which in the post gives me what you see in Figure 11.22.

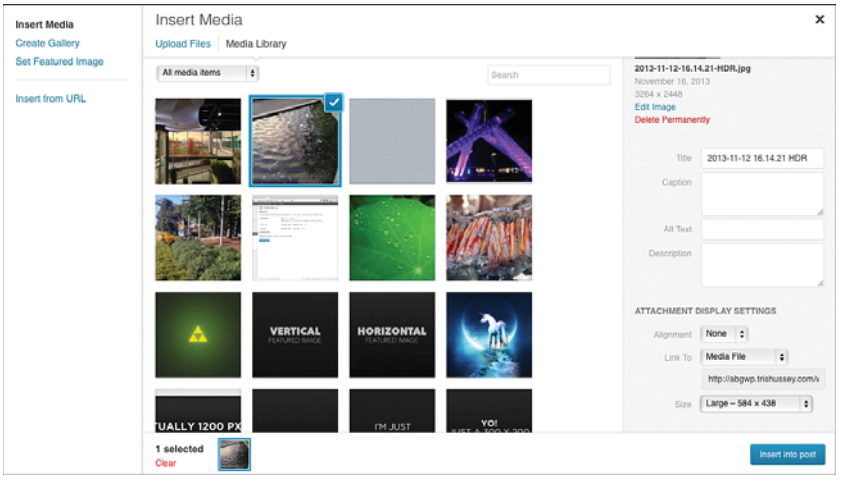

FIGURE 11.21

Inserting a second image.

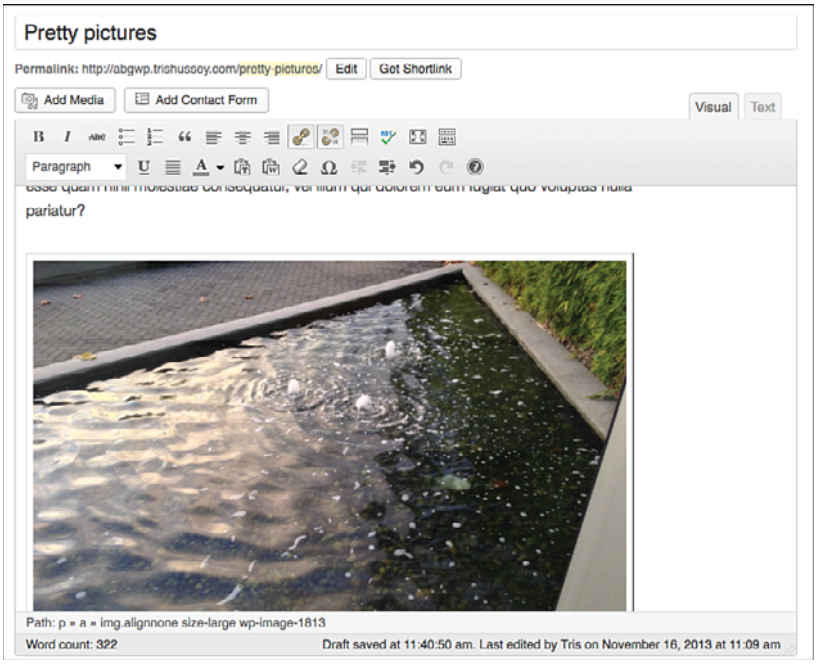

FIGURE 11.22

Second, larger image in place.

Before I publish this post, I'd like the image to be centered on the page. All you need to do is to click the image and then the center text button on the editing toolbar. Images behave just like paragraphs or any other text in that respect.

If you want to change something about the image after you insert it, click the image once in the Editor, and two icons appear in the upper-left corner. The picture icon lets you edit the properties of the image; use the other icon to remove the image from the post (Figure 11.23). I'm going to switch the first image from floating right to floating left. After clicking the picture icon, I see this edit screen (Figure 11.24).

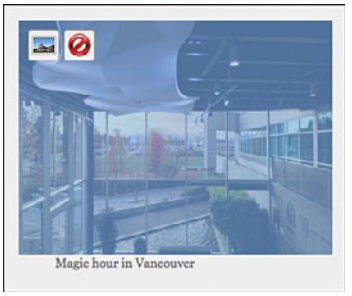

FIGURE 11.23

Editing image properties and settings.

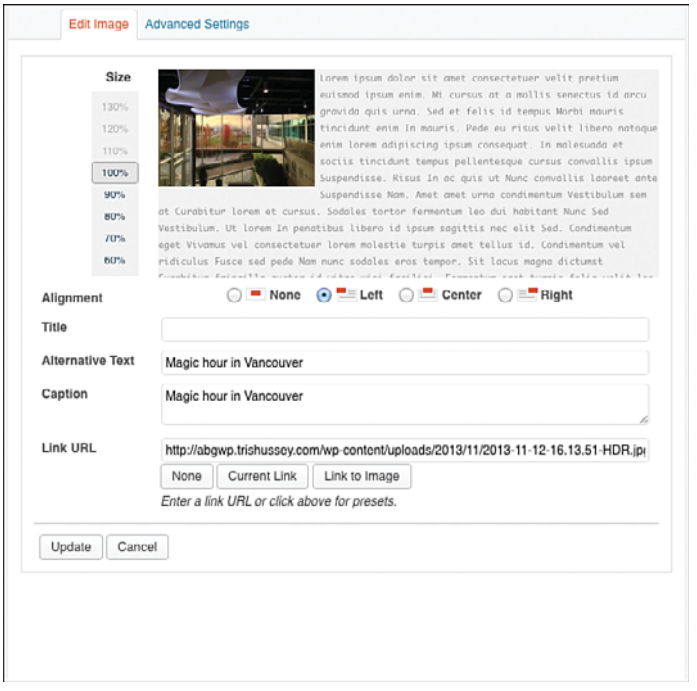

FIGURE 11.24

The editing window with float left set.

There is a lot more to that screen than what we just did. Don't worry, we'll cover all of that in Chapter 12. For now I'm going to hit Publish, and you can see the post with the images in Figure 11.25.

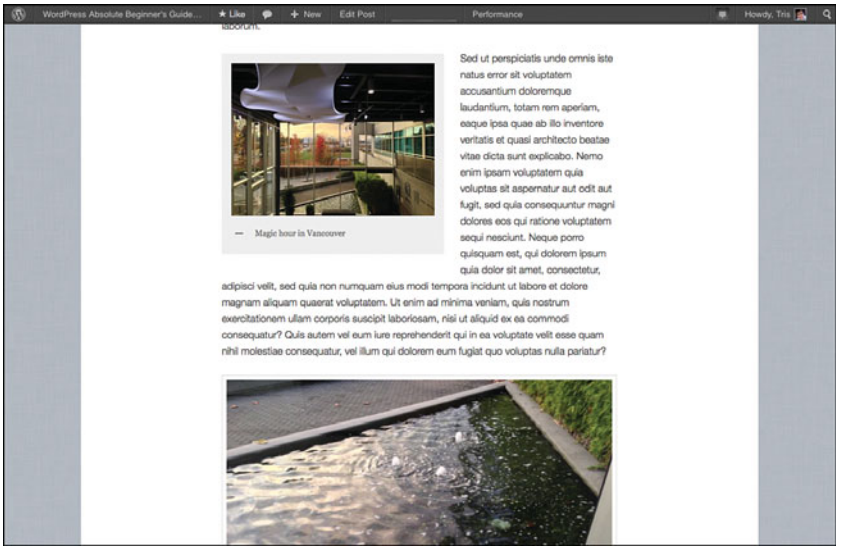

FIGURE 11.25

Yes, those are pretty pictures.

That's all there is for images—for now. In Chapter 12, we'll get more into galleries, featured images, slideshows, and all other media-related topics.

Headings and Paragraph Styles

Inserting headings (or using any of the styles from the pull-down menu) is as simple as clicking in the paragraph you'd like for the heading and picking the heading level from the menu. The same process goes for any of the other styles. The default style is the Paragraph style. For clarity, a "paragraph," when you're editing text like this, is a chunk of text that you separated from text above and below with a return. This is important because even though a heading (like Headings and Paragraph Styles above) isn't a paragraph in the grammar world, for formatting content, it is. It's a distinct and discrete block of text that has formatting distinct from above it and below it, and the formatting will carry throughout the entire block of text. Like a blockquote, for example.

Blockquotes

If you have some text you'd like to stand out from the rest of the text, especially if it's a quote from someone else, you can use the Blockquote button. Just click in the section of text and click the button with the big quotation mark (") icon. You'll

see something in the Editor that looks like Figure 11.26, where the text in italic is the text with blockquote applied (the bold text above is a Heading level 2).

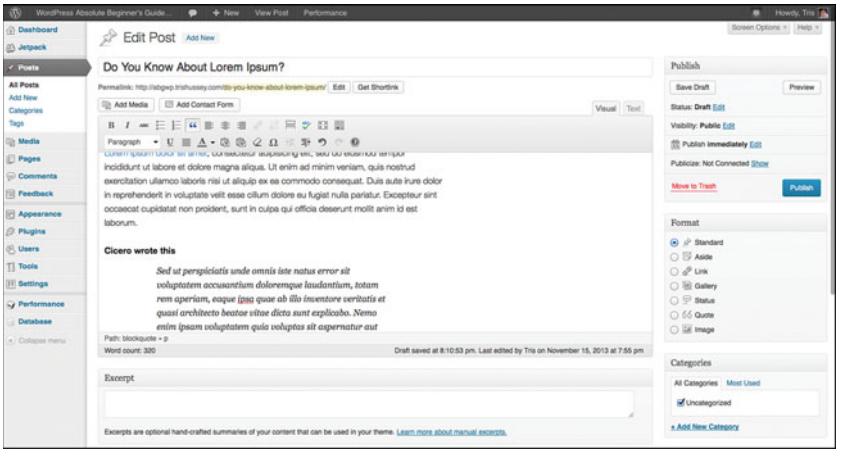

FIGURE 11.26

Blockquoted text and a heading.

Clicking the Preview button gives you a look at what the post looks like thus far (Figure 11.27).

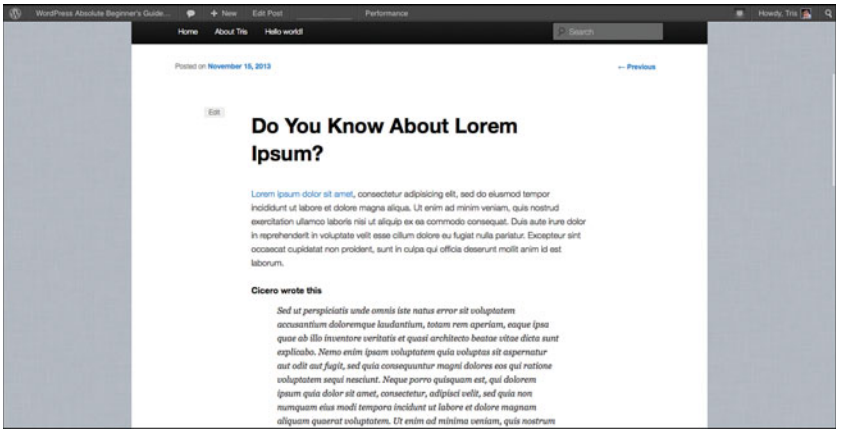

FIGURE 11.27

A preview of our post.

Editing Published Posts

Notice the little Edit Post in the menu bar at the top of the window and the little Edit in the gray box on the page? If you click those, you'll be tossed back into the Editor to be able to edit the post some more. This post isn't published yet, but even if it were, as long as you're logged in to your site, you'll see those. No, your visitors can't see them (I know you're wondering that), just you, and only when you're logged in (which will probably be most of the time). I went ahead and clicked Publish back in the Editor, and after WordPress works its magic, the post is live and ready for the world to see (Figure 11.28). You'll notice that Publish from Figure 11.14 is now Update, as in Figure 11.28. If you make changes to the content, you click Update to make those changes live. Don't worry, you don't have to publish a post before you leave the Editor. In Figure 11.14, you'll notice a Save Draft button. You can at any point click that button, leave the Editor, and come back later to finish the content. You can get back to any post or page you have on the go (or have already published) by clicking the Posts or Pages button on the left. The default behavior for those buttons is to show you a list of all the posts and pages. (You can also get to that page from the All Posts or All Pages fly-out menu as you pass your mouse over those buttons.) From that list, clicking the title of a post or page will bring you to the Editor. We'll talk more about the All Posts and All Pages list and how to use it later in the chapter.

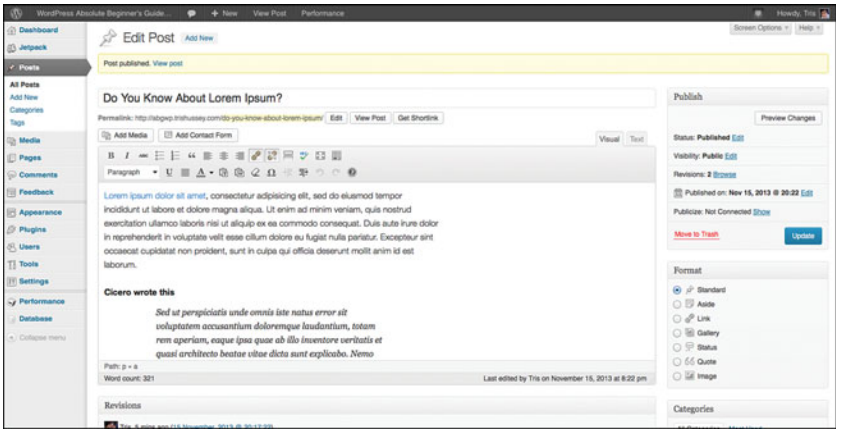

FIGURE 11.28

Post published.

Autosaving: Save Your Work and Your Sanity

If you've been trying this as you read, you might have noticed that WordPress automatically saves your work as you go. Your content is automatically saved every few minutes, so if you accidentally close the window or lose your Internet connection, or whatever, you won't lose all your work between clicking Save Draft or Publish/Update. This is a handy feature that everyone uses from time to time. I certainly do. Even while writing this section, I accidentally hit the Back button between creating Figures 11.14 and 11.15, and the text I pasted in was there when I came back to edit. The link was gone, but the bulk of the text was there. Now what if you're working on a longer post or working on a post with a few people? What about going back to a previous version or seeing who made what changes? WordPress has you covered there with Revisions. We'll come back to it later in the chapter and show you what a great tool it is.

Believe it or not, that's the basics of editing content. I encourage you to experiment with the full-screen Distraction-Free Writing Mode, inserting symbols, the Paste as Text, and Paste from Word tools, but as far as the basics of writing and posting content in *general*, that's it. I'll cover inserting and managing images, videos, and other media in Chapter 12. I'll cover Categories, Tags, Page Templates, and all the rest in their own sections later in this chapter. This section is about the general writing. We're not all done with the Editor, though—we still have a lot of nifty features to go through.

Scheduling Posts and Pages

What if you have some content that you don't want to appear until sometime in the future? Maybe you have an announcement that can't be live until 8:00 a.m. on a Monday, but you want to finish writing on Friday and have it "be live" Monday morning without needing to do anything else. That is as simple as a few clicks from the Editor (Post or Page).

Start with whatever content you're working on, and *before* you hit Publish, click the Edit link next to Publish Immediately. You'll see something like Figure 11.29 with options for changing *when* the page (or post) will be published.

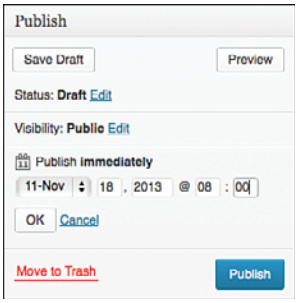

FIGURE 11.29

Scheduling a post.

When you click OK, Publish becomes Schedule, so when you're done with the content, clicking Schedule will tell WordPress to publish that post at that date and time (Figure 11.30). Until that time, the only people who can see the post or page are the author of the content, an Editor, or an Administrator of the site.

FIGURE 11.30

Post ready to be scheduled.

NOTE Can I backdate content? Yes, you can, and there aren't any rules against doing that, but the real question is *why* are you doing it. If it's making sure your content has a certain flow or order, that makes sense, but you might want to think of using Pages instead of Posts if time and order are that important.

Post/Page Status

Even after content is published, you can change its status from the Editor using the Status menu. Clicking Edit next to the status gives you a menu where you can change content from Draft, Pending Review, or Published/Scheduled (Figure 11.31). So content that is live (or due to be live) can be pulled back to Draft (unpublished) status at any time. Functionally, Draft and Pending Review are the same (the content isn't live), but in an All Posts or Pages list, Drafts and Pending Review can easily distinguished from each other (Figure 11.32).

FIGURE 11.31

Published, Draft, or Pending menu.

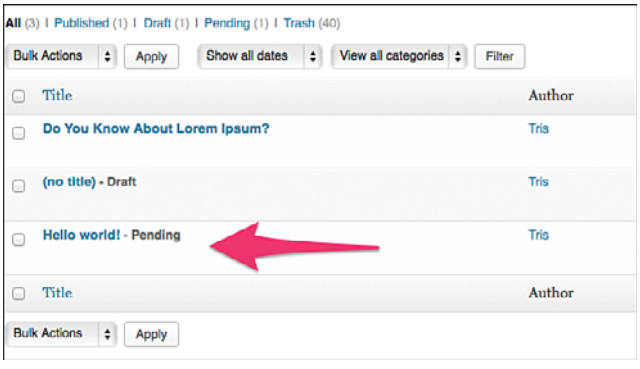

FIGURE 11.32

Draft and Pending posts.

What Pending Review means to Editors is that there is content ready for their review and approval before it goes live. For sites where the Editor has final say, especially where you use the Contributor role, which can't publish content live, this feature is handy to be able to tell what is ready and what is still being worked on.

Controlling Who Sees Your Content

Although most of the time you want people to be able to read everything on the site, there are times when you might like to hide some content from most visitors, or even behind a password. This is what the Visibility options are all about (Figure 11.33). Public is the default; anyone and everyone can read the content on the site. Password protected will see that the post or page exists, but unless you have

the password, you can't read the content. Private means that no one except the author, Editor, or Administrator can even see that the content exists. It doesn't appear on post or page lists within the Dashboard, or on any public part of the site—even if you know the URL to the content, it doesn't exist for you to view (if you're not logged in to the site *and* have the required privileges to see it). This is more than just hiding a page in plain sight by publishing it and not directly linking to it (there are always ways to find that kind of content). This is a complete "need to know basis" kind of hiding content.

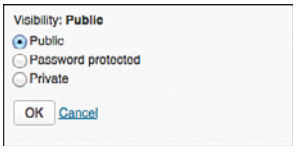

FIGURE 11.33

Public, Private, or Password Protected posts.

If you're setting the Visibility on a post, you'll also see an option below Public to "Stick this item on the Front page" (aka a Sticky Post). This pulls that post out of the timeline and puts it at the top of the Post stream—regardless of how old the post is. As newer posts gather below it, this Sticky Post will remain at the top. This is a great way to make sure certain posts (think in general content terms) are more likely to be seen. It will also come into play later when we talk about the special Showcase Page Template in Twenty Eleven.

Visual Versus Text Views

The last part about working with content is the difference between the visual (or rich text or WYSIWYG editor) and the text (or source or HTML) views of the content. The visual view in the Editor lets you see what the content looks like (for the most part) when it's published. You can always click Preview to see what the content will look like on your site within the template, but you have a general idea of how things will be. The key here is that while you *see* bold, italic, links, and images, in the background, WordPress and the Editor components are writing HTML (the language of websites) for the content. Most people rarely (if ever) need the Text view, but sometimes….

First, let's look at one of the posts on my personal blog in the visual editor (Figure 11.34).

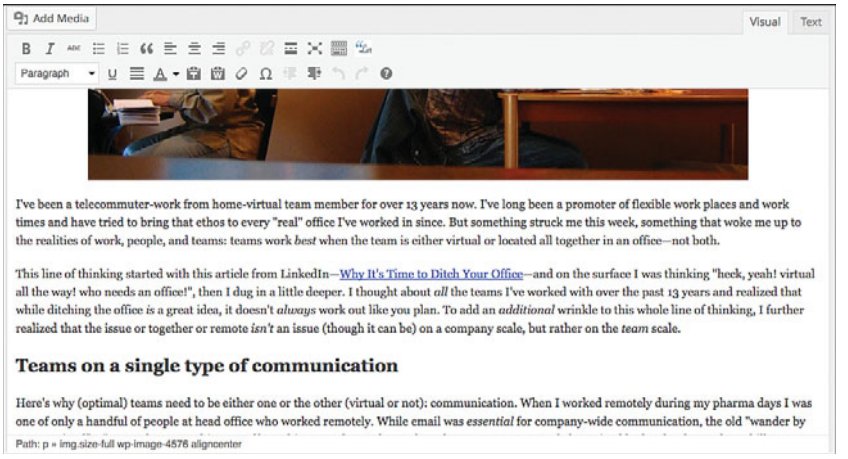

FIGURE 11.34

A post in the visual editor.

Now the same post in the text view (Figure 11.35).

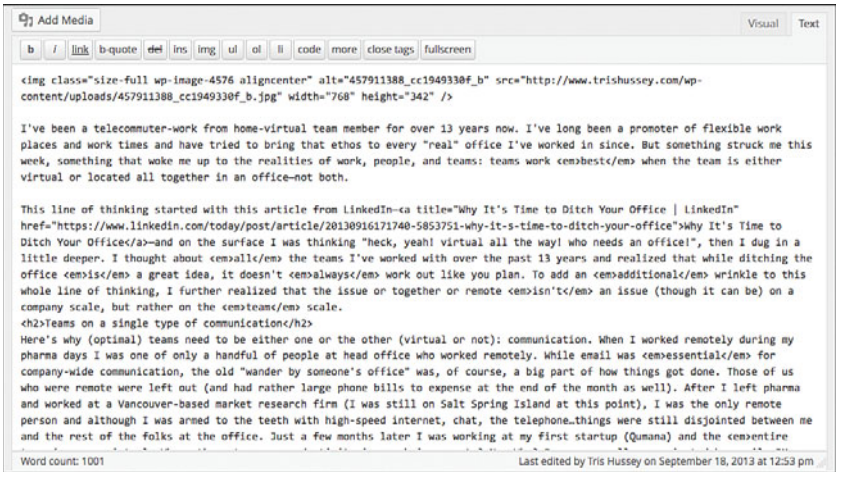

FIGURE 11.35

Same post, but all HTML.

Yep, that's HTML. If you look closely, you might make out some of the text and formatting that makes the things you see. Those of us who learned to create web pages back in the 1990s remember this code well. It's all we saw of our pages before the world saw them as websites. Today—not so much. Why would you ever need to switch into text view? A few reasons. One (and most common) is if there is something on the page that just doesn't look right, you can see if looking at the source view helps. Clicking the Close Tags button sometimes helps to fix strange formatting problems that might have crept in. Generally this isn't something you want to mess about with. It's pretty easy to wind up with a real mess if you aren't careful. The other reason is if you need to paste in HTML code to embed a video, slideshow, or some other interesting piece of web content. If you paste HTML into the visual editor, WordPress will convert the code into…well…words. It will make sure that the code isn't code anymore so it won't do anything on the page. Sometimes we *want* this to happen when we're showing off samples of our code (there are better ways to do it, though), so this isn't a bad thing that WordPress does, but it's not what most people want to happen when they are pasting code into the Editor.

For the code to "work," you need to flip to text view, make space for the code, and paste it in. It will *generally* be okay to switch back to the visual side to continue working on the content, but be ready for it not to work. Pasting the code into Notepad or TextEdit wouldn't be a bad idea just until you're sure it works.

More About Posts

Now that we have all the basics of the Editor down, it's time to look at things specific to Posts and Pages. First up are Posts. In Chapter 17, when we talk about using WordPress to make a "website," we'll *really* tap into clever ways to use Posts to get content grouped and gathered how you'd like them to be. And when combined with Custom Post Types, things get really interesting and fun. For now, let's stick with standard posts as blog posts and start off with Post Formats.

Post Formats

When Tumblr came onto the scene in 2007, it turned the blogging world on its head. Instead of focusing on posts as posts, Tumblr looked at each type of content and developed styles to match and reflect the content. So, yes, Text (a post in the WordPress world) is pretty straightforward, but the way Tumblr styled quotes, pictures, updates (like Twitter tweets), and other content was quite interesting and appealing to people. In 2011, WordPress 3.1 first included Post Formats as a way to appeal and keep up with the Tumblr phenomenon. By officially codifying Post Formats into the WordPress core, it made it easier for theme developers to take advantage of, making certain kinds of posts look different from others just by letting users click an option button in the Post Editor. The standard Post Formats are as follows:

- Aside
- Gallery
- Link
- Image
- Quote
- Status
- Video
- Audio
- Chat

Asides and Status are designed to be like Facebook updates (Asides) or tweets (Status). Chat is designed to look like a conversation through instant messaging or any other back and forth with people. Gallery and Image are for multiple (Gallery) or single (Image) images to show them off. Video is for showing a video as the sole piece of content. Likewise, Audio is for embedded audio files (like for podcasting). Finally, Link is for sharing just a single link to another website.

How each of these Post Formats look for your theme—and even which ones are supported—is truly dependent on the theme developer herself. For example, Twenty Eleven doesn't have Chat, Audio, or Video Post Formats included, and Figure 11.36 shows you what a few of the Post Formats look like in Twenty Eleven (not terribly fancy).

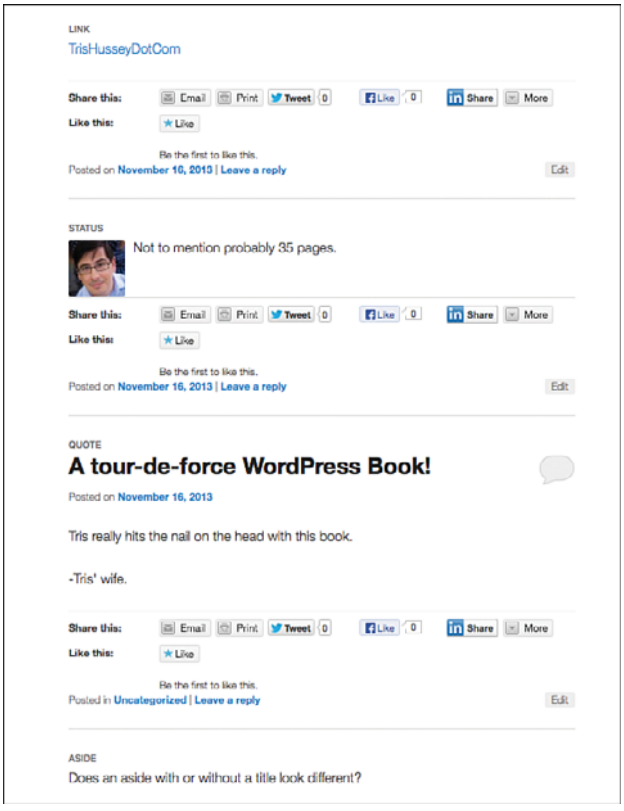

FIGURE 11.36

Some Post Formats in Twenty Eleven.

For the most part, using Post Formats is like creating any other post. The only trick is seeing how they *look* when the post is published. For example, Asides and Statuses in Twenty Eleven don't show the title of the Post on the home page. However, if you have a listing of Recent Posts (by using the Recent Post widget), if you skip the title entirely, there will be an entry with the post's ID number (such as 204). So you might need to put a title in so the rest of the site (and regular post) looks logical. The best way to learn about Post Formats is to try them and use them. If you don't like how they look, just click the option button from whatever the format was to Standard, and it's a "regular post." One of the longer-term projects within the WordPress development community is to work on how you set and use Post Formats. Right now, the debate is still going on about how to handle Post Formats in the Editor. I'm pretty confident that by the time this book is in your hands, Post Formats in the Post Editor will look different than they do now.

How to Use Categories

Categories are one of the key underpinnings of Posts in WordPress. Because all posts must belong to at least one category (and if you don't set one, one will be set for you), categories are the main way to organize your posts in WordPress. Pages, remember, can't be assigned to Categories (pages stand alone). So, what are categories anyway? Categories are big buckets to group content together. If you have a site about crafts, you might have categories for knitting, crocheting, pottery, and card making. If you have a site about cars, you might have categories for makes (Ford, Chevy, Toyota) or models (sport, SUV, trucks) or whatever your niche is. Categories are the large groups that you can use to put posts together. Categories can have subcategories, as well, so if you have a knitting category, you might have subcategories for hats, sweaters, or scarves. A category about Ford cars could have subcategories for the various Ford models (Mustang, F-150, Focus, Model-A, Model-T). Categories are all about organizing your content.

Before you can assign posts to categories, you need to create them first. There are two ways to do that. One is within the Post Editor and the other is in the Category manager. Let's look at the Post Editor first. Opening the post from Figure 11.25, I'm going to create a category of Photography to file it under (right now, it's just Uncategorized).

After reopening the post in the Editor, on the right side I click +Add New Category, and there is a form field I can fill in. I put in Photography (Figure 11.37) and then click Add New Category. The Category is created, and now I uncheck Uncategorized (because I don't want that to be one of the post's categories anymore) (Figure 11.38). When I click Update post, the new category will be set for the post.

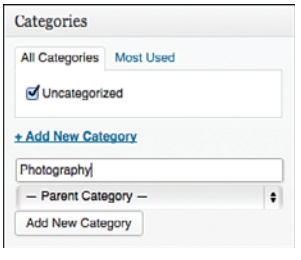

FIGURE 11.37

Creating a new category.

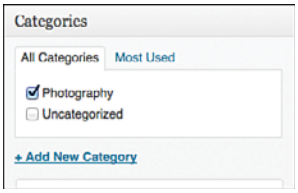

FIGURE 11.38

Category created.

Now if wanted a subcategory for Photography, I would click +Add New Category again, and after Enter the New Category (I'm using Magic Hour), I use the pull-down menu to select Photography from the list (Figure 11.39) and then click Add New Category. I now have a subcategory of Photography in the list above indented from its parent (Figure 11.40).

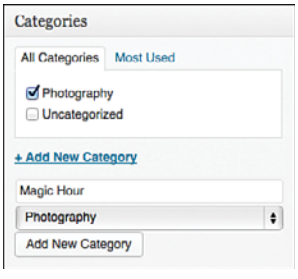

FIGURE 11.39

Creating a subcategory.

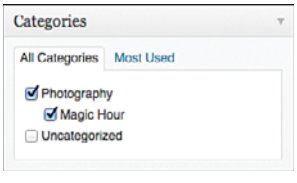

FIGURE 11.40

Subcategory created.

That's creating Categories within the Post Editor. If you click the link in the main Admin menu bar below Posts, labeled Categories, you come to the Category management screen (Figure 11.41). From here, you can see all the categories for the site and how many posts are in that category. You can see on the left side the area to create categories, and it works the same as within the Post Editor. The Description field is optional, but some themes use it to add information to the top of Category archive pages (all the posts within that Category). To find out if your theme supports it, put a description in for one of your categories, and go to the Category archive. You can jump to the Category archive for any of your categories by passing your mouse over the name of a category and clicking the View link. This brings us to editing existing categories. Let's fix that Uncategorized category once and for all. Passing my mouse under Uncategorized, I click Edit and get to a screen where I can edit everything about the category. In Figure 11.42, you can see I've changed the name to Everything Else and added a description. Notice that the field Slug is blank? It used to have Uncategorized in it, and I deleted it so when I changed the name of the category, the slug would be updated as well. The Slug is what is used for the URL of the Category archive. Figure 11.43 shows the new category listing with the updated category name, slug, and description. You might have noticed that unlike the other two categories, I can't delete Everything Else. That's because it's the default category. If I switched to a different category under Writing settings, then I could delete the category.

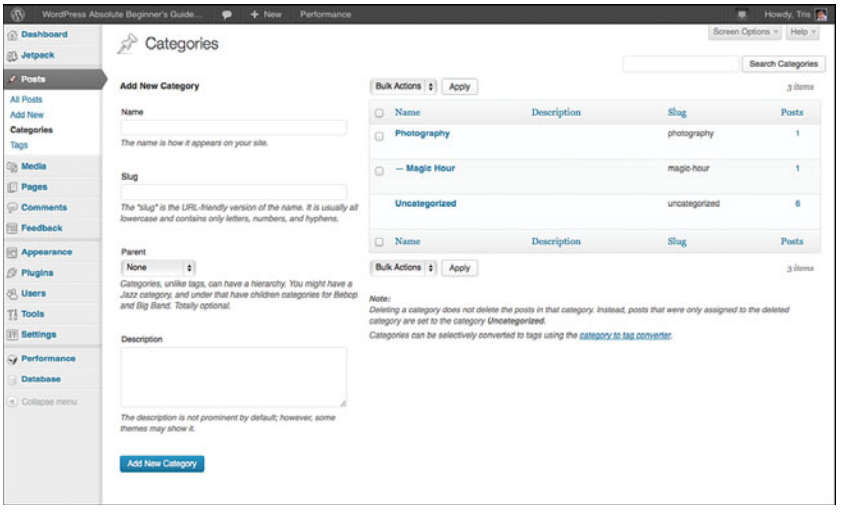

FIGURE 11.41

Main category management screen.

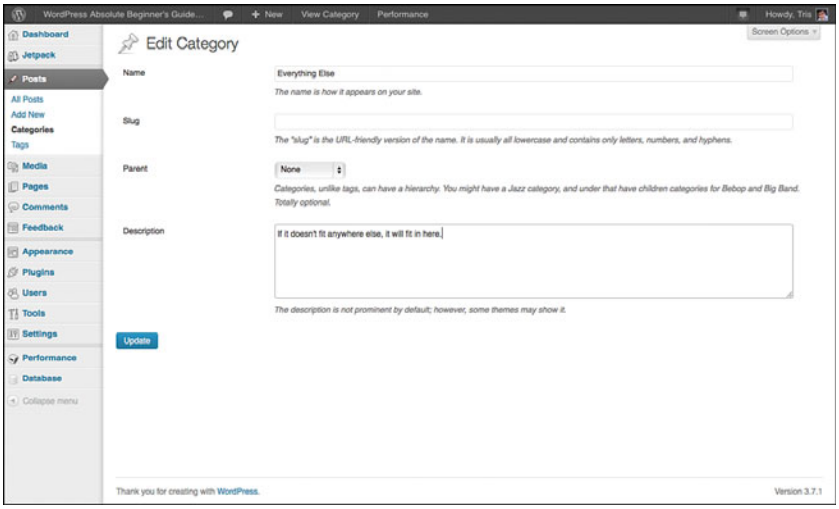

FIGURE 11.42

Editing Uncategorized.

FIGURE 11.43

Category editing complete.

NOTE What happens when I delete a category? Do those posts disappear? No. If you delete a category that posts are assigned to, one of two things will happen. If a post was assigned only to that single category, it would be put into the default category (from Writing Settings). If it has more than one category, then essentially nothing happens. The deleted category disappears, and that's that.

The topic of Categories and Tags can get pretty confusing, but remember that Categories are big topics that many posts could fall under. Even subcategories are "big" topics, just not as big as their parents. Now Tags are something slightly different.

What Are Tags?

Tags in WordPress are essentially keywords specific to that particular post. Although you can use the same tag on different posts (meaning they are all about that specific topic), Tags are meant to be specific. The line between what makes a good tag and what makes a good category is pretty blurry. After a while if you've tagged a lot of posts with the same tag, you might want to promote it to a Category. Likewise, if you think you're going to have a lot of posts about a certain category and it turns out you don't, you might want to make it a tag. There are plugins to help you make this switch as well as a manual way I'll talk about later in this chapter.

Just like Categories, you can add Tags in the Post Editor or through a special Tag management page. Back to the Pretty Pictures post, below Categories is the space for Tags. You can enter as many Tags at once as you like, separated by commas. Click Add when you're done (Figure 11.44). You can always keep adding tags; you don't have to add them all at once. When you click Update, the tags will be set. Notice that tags don't have a hierarchy. There are no parent or child tags. Tags are all equal and are all keywords.

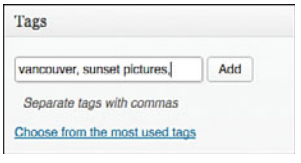

FIGURE 11.44

Adding tags within a post.

Click the Tags link from the Admin button area and you'll come to the Tag management screen (Figure 11.45). Just like categories, you can create and edit tags in the same way. Because there is no "default" tag (tags are completely optional for posts), you can delete any tag you want. Editing works the same way as Categories (with the exception of setting a Parent).

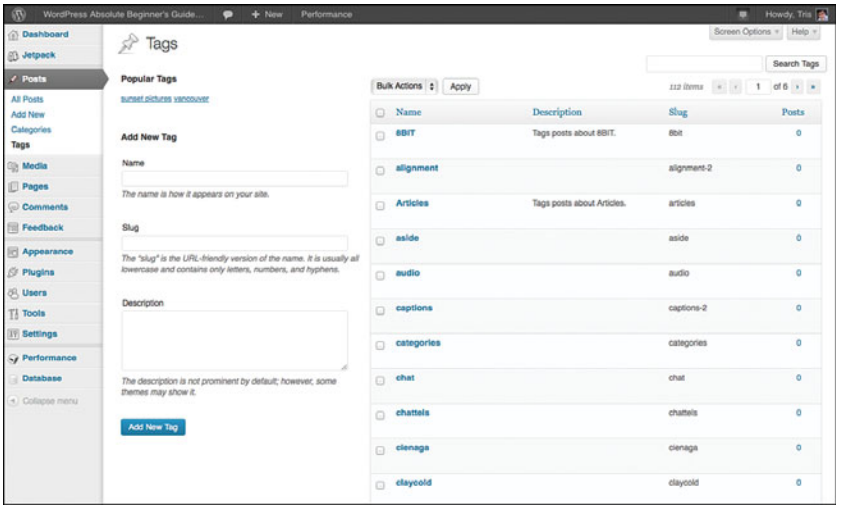

FIGURE 11.45

Tag management screen.

In the examples I've been using, we're been adding tags and categories to *existing* posts; typically, you add tags and categories to posts before they are published. This makes sure that readers and search engines all know the context of a post when they first see it. And as you've seen, you can always add and remove categories from any post after it's been published.

TIP How many Categories and Tags should I have? This is a common question people ask. I like to keep my sites to 10, maximum 15, categories. More than 15 categories (often even more than 10), I find that only a single post is in a category. That's fine when you're just starting out, but as your site matures, if you still have a lot of categories with only one or two posts, you should think about demoting those to tags. As for tags, I think the sky is the limit. Because tags are designed to be post-specific keywords, it's natural to have lots and lots of tags. Don't go crazy per post (I'd say no more than 5 to 8 tags per post), but in general don't worry about how many tags you have.

That does it for the special powers that Posts have. Now it's Pages' turn, and although Pages might seem pretty boring, standing alone and all, Page templates are so interesting and powerful that they make Pages a superhero in a league of its own.

Taking Advantage of Pages

Pages might not seem like they have the sexy versatility of Posts, but believe me, Pages have lots of tricks up their sleeves. Depending on your theme, the pages in your site can be just plain old content or super flexible content containers. How? Through Page Templates, but we'll save those for the end of this section. First let's recap what pages are and aren't.

Remember that pages are content designed to be able to stand alone. They don't have the inherent connection to each other like posts do. While pages do have a sense of time in terms of when they were published, you can't (by default) go to a Page archive that lists all the pages in a site, ordered by time. Pages fill a need for content that is outside of the stream of posts (or Custom Post Types) that has its own sense of meaning. Before WordPress Menus were introduced in version 3.0, we used Pages to determine and drive the navigation for the site. Today, Menus allow us to have much more flexible navigation, but Pages still have their own organizational structure that you can leverage in your site to organize content: Page Order and Parent-Child Pages. All the settings for these features are on the right side of the Page Editor (Figure 11.46).

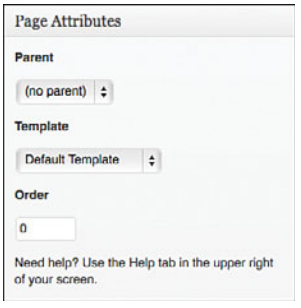

FIGURE 11.46

Page Attributes.

Parent-Child Pages

Using categories (and subcategories), you can get a an idea of a hierarchy of content, but really it's more a hierarchy of topic. The posts themselves are all at the same hierarchical level. With Pages, you can create a page that is a Parent Page to another, and this defines a clear hierarchy that is reflected in the URLs of the two pages. I created a page called "Hire me" and set its Parent to be "About Tris" (Figure 11.47). When I publish the page, the URL for the new page becomes

http://abgwp.trishussey.com/about-tris/hire-me/, and you can see a sense of hierarchy between the two pages (Figure 11.48). But that's as far as the hierarchy goes for the pages at this point. Unless you manually delete /hire-me/ from the address bar, there isn't a built-in connection to About Tris. Nor is there any indication on About Tris (not automatically, at least) that there are child pages connected to it. Yes, there is a hierarchy, but it isn't one that is discernible by default on Pages. Advanced WordPress theme developers can make these connections in the templates for Pages and use them; in practice, though, few people do. There is one way that we look at a list of all the pages on a site, and that is the Pages widget for the sidebar. This is a handy tool and gives us a chance to talk about Page Order.

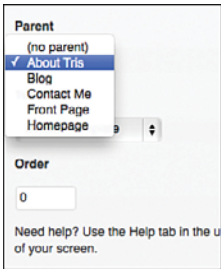

FIGURE 11.47

Setting Page parent-child relationships.

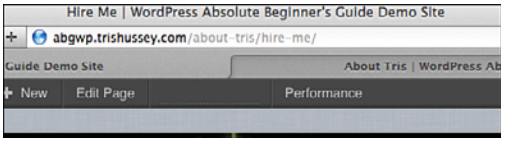

FIGURE 11.48

Page hierarchy (ish).

Page Order

Page Order is a simple way to list pages in an order you'd like other than by the date. First let's look at the Page widget and how it works. By putting the Page widget in the sidebar, you can choose to have the pages sorted by Title, Page Order, or Page ID (Figure 11.49). Page ID is essentially order by date, because the ID number of a page (or anything in WordPress) increases by increments. I set the Widget to Page Order and in Figure 11.50, you can see how the Pages are

ordered. You can see that Hire Me is a child of About Tris because it is indented below it. Beyond that, this looks like sorting by title. Essentially it is, because all the pages in the list have the same Page Order, 0. I'd like the order to be About, Contact, Blog, Homepage, Front Page; the way to do that is to set the Page Order for the Pages (respectively) 0, 1, 2, 3, 4. I'm going to use the Quick Edit function to set this instead of opening each page in the Editor. This is just a teaser for talking more about managing posts and pages later.

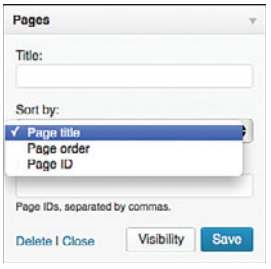

FIGURE 11.49

Looking at Page Order in a widget.

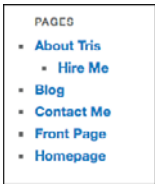

FIGURE 11.50

How the widget looks on the site.

From the listing of All Pages, I pass my mouse over the title of the page and click Quick Edit. The area that opens up lets me adjust several things about the page, but not its content. Figure 11.51 shows editing "Blog" and making its page order 2. Page Order counts up from zero, and if pages have the same order number, it then orders them alphabetically. If you have lots of pages, you could have all the ones together, all the twos together, and so on. The result of changing the order of all these pages is in Figure 11.52.

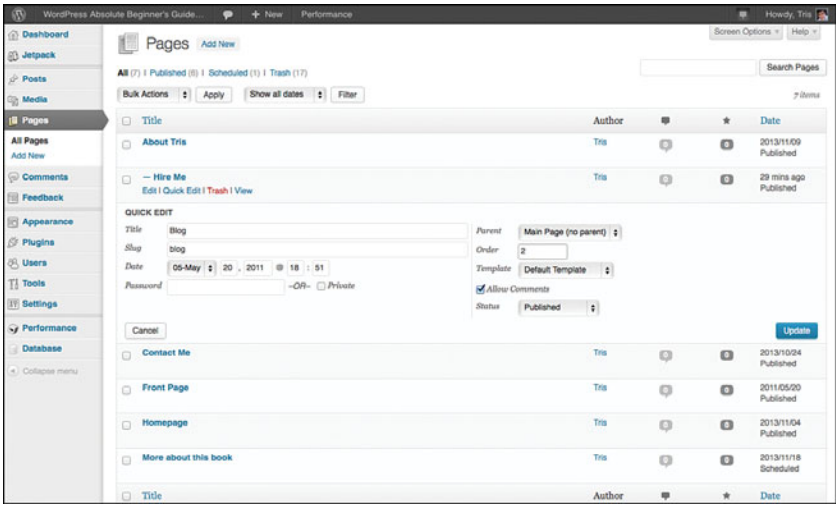

FIGURE 11.51

Setting the page order for the Blog page.

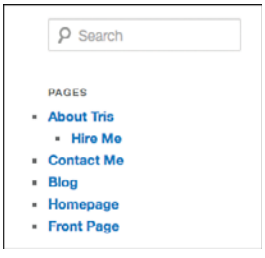

FIGURE 11.52

The Page widget on the site with the new order.

Page Order can be applied in several ways by template designers, but for day-to-day WordPress users, this is going to be the most common way they run into them. This leaves the best of the Page tricks for last: Page Templates.

Page Templates

Page Templates is where Pages really get cool. Page Templates can take several parts of WordPress and pull them into one interesting package. Most of the time theme designers include a default Page Template and maybe one that is full width

(no sidebars, or in Twenty Eleven's case, one *with* sidebars). Some themes include Templates that can list all Posts (in cases where the home page is technically a blog page, but doesn't display all posts), or like Twenty Eleven, a special home page style that includes a featured Post slider.

Using Page Templates is simple; in the Editor, choose which Template you'd like the page to use (Figure 11.53) and go from there. It's at this point that I can't tell you all the various options. I could tell you how to use the Showcase Template in Twenty Eleven, but that won't help you with the FrontPage Template in Twenty Twelve. Because Page Templates are up to the theme designer, the sky is the limit. I've created page templates that have different headers, sidebars, and footers from other posts and pages. I've make page templates to load only some posts. You can also create a page template that will list all that page's child pages (or when on a child page, its parent). There is lots you can do, and it all depends on the theme.

So—just explore!

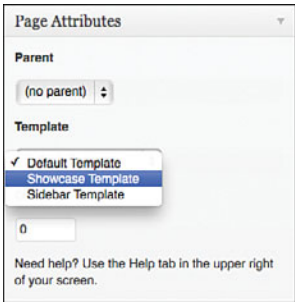

FIGURE 11.53

Choosing a Page Template.

Using Revisions

As you're working on your posts and pages, you are editing, tuning, tweaking, adding images, adding links, and all the rest. If you have a multi-author blog, you might also have other people doing the same. So, how do you see what someone else has done and "roll back" their changes if you don't like them? Just like Word, WordPress has a track changes feature called Revisions—and it's always turned on. Although not as powerful as Word's Track Changes function (being able to approve or reject individual changes), you can see what's been done between each Save or Autosave, compare between the two, and roll back to an earlier version if you need to. Figure 11.54 shows the revision history for my About Me page

on my own site (yes, the earliest entry is really 5 years ago), and Figure 11.55 shows you what it looks like to compare the current with the previous version. The check box at the top lets you compare two revisions (so a day ago versus two days ago, for example) against each other. Clicking to restore will take the current post or page and return it to the point of the last revision.

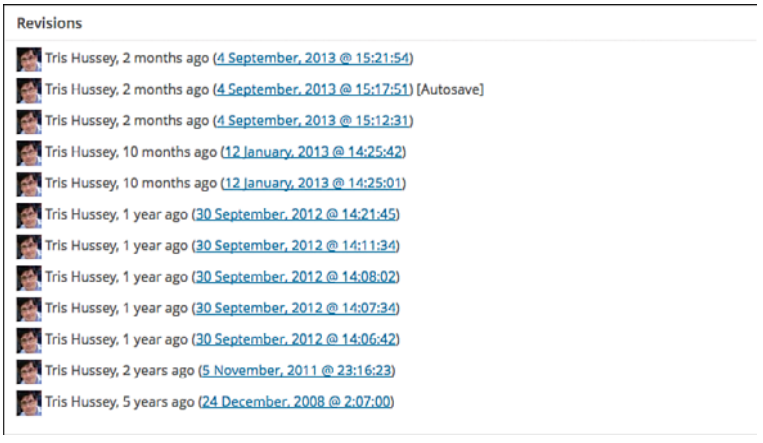

FIGURE 11.54

Revisions on my About page.

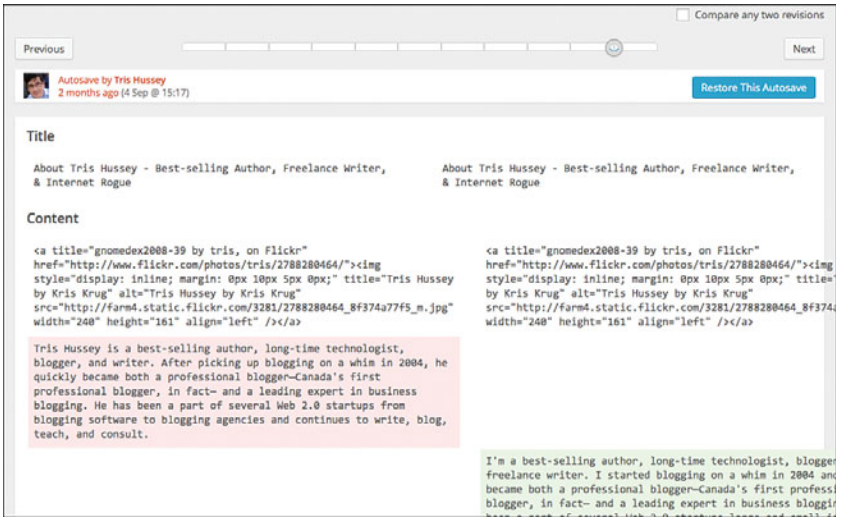

FIGURE 11.55

Comparing two revisions.

Perfect? Not really. It's getting there, though. WordPress 3.6 made a big step forward for revisions, but right now if you need to fix one part of a post or page and keep all your other changes, you can't do that. Yet. That feature is sure to be coming, but not in the near future.

Managing Posts and Pages

Throughout this chapter, you've seen figures with the All Posts or All Pages list, and now I'm going to spend a little time explaining how it works. Beyond the obvious (listing all the posts or pages you have, ordered with the most recent at the top), there are lots of other features that you can use to manage your site.

You can look at posts from a certain month and year, category, drafts, sticky, pending, or ones that you've deleted. You can even see your posts with an excerpt of the content with the click of a button (noted with an arrow in Figure 11.56). For pages, there are fewer options for looking at the list (Figure 11.57), but they both share the capability to quickly view, edit in the full editor, use the Quick Edit (you saw that for Pages when you set the page order), and best of all—bulk editing.

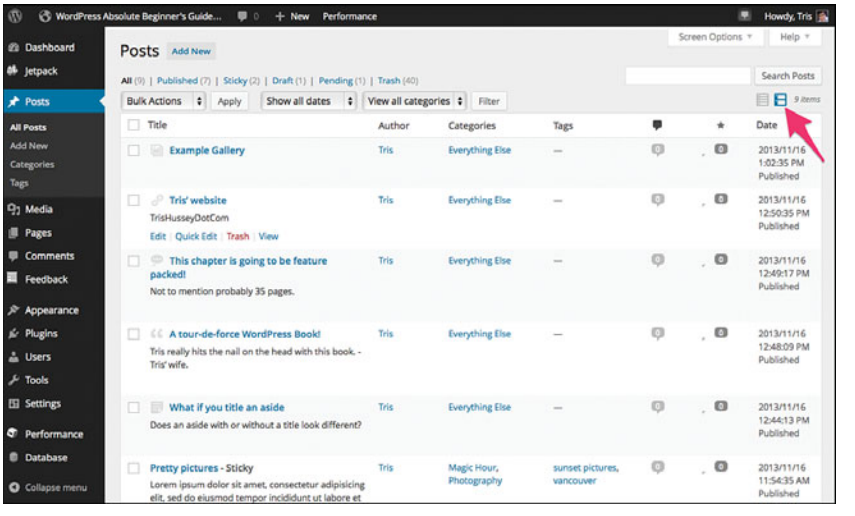

FIGURE 11.56

All Posts listing.

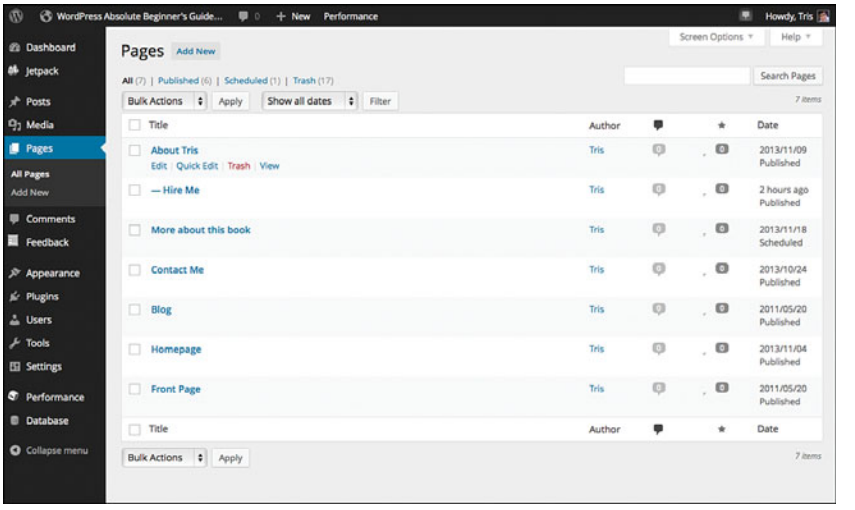

FIGURE 11.57

All Pages listing.

Bulk editing allows you to change things like the Published status, Author, Categories (Posts), Tags (Posts), Template (Pages), and other properties in one fell swoop. It works like this: Click the check marks next to the posts or pages that you'd like to edit (I'm going to use posts as the example to make two posts unsticky), select Edit from the Bulk Actions menu, and click Apply (Figure 11.58). Then select the option I'd like to change in both posts (in this case, to unstick them from the front page), and click Update (Figure 11.59). That's it.

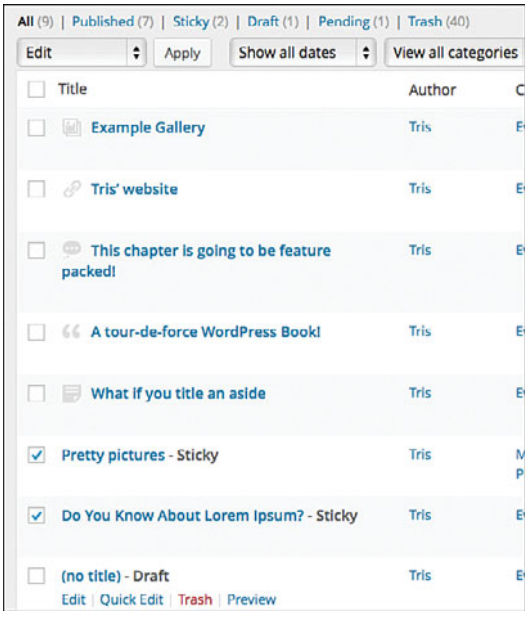

FIGURE 11.58

Selecting two posts to bulk edit.

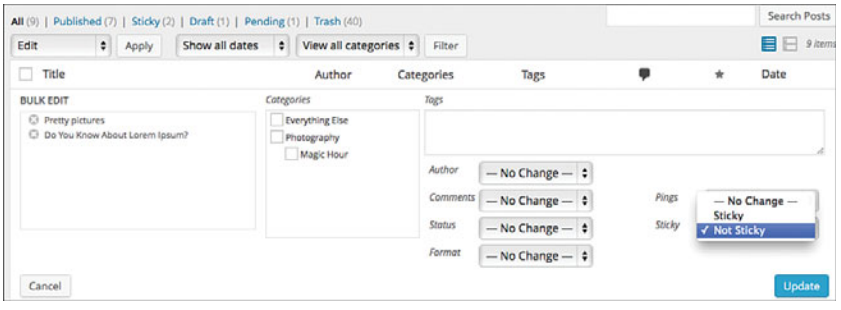

FIGURE 11.59

Changing the posts.

If you need to turn off the comments on a large number of posts or pages, this is *the* fastest way to get the job done. Remember, if you turn off comments on posts or pages, the change isn't retroactive, so this is the best option to take care

of that. The All Posts and All Pages screen is pretty powerful. Sometimes—in fact, most of the time—it's the fastest way to add a tag or two to a post, change a post or page back to Draft if it needs to be pulled, or lots of other changes. Take advantage of this tool! It's there, it's powerful, and it will get more powerful as WordPress becomes more sophisticated.

Importing and Exporting Content

Suppose you want to move your content to a new site or make a backup of your posts and pages. Or you have content from another site that you'd like to add to this site. Is it possible? Absolutely, just use the Import and Export functions. We'll start with Export for this example. Go to Tools from the side menu, then Export (or click Tools, then choose Export), and you'll see a screen like Figure 11.60.

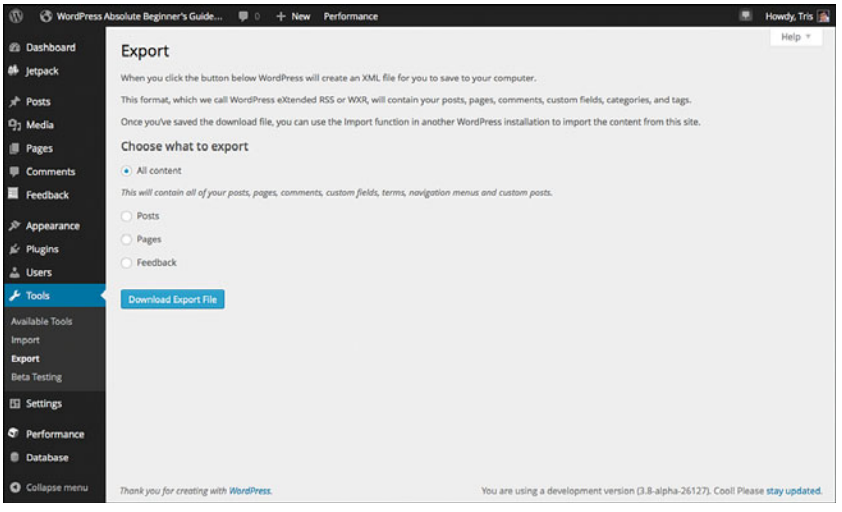

FIGURE 11.60

Export screen.

Choose what you'd like to export (I'm going to choose all the content for this example), and click Download Export File. In a minute or two (depends on how much content needs to be exported), WordPress will tell your browser to download the file (Figure 11.61), and if you want to open it, you can. It's just a text file in XML, but it isn't intended for people to read. WordPress export files are designed for WordPress or other CMS systems to read on import.

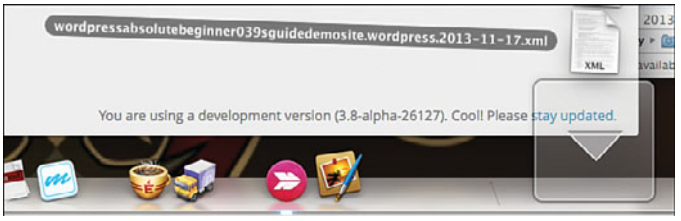

FIGURE 11.61

Exported and downloaded file.

What if you wanted to *import* that content? Simple, just use the Import tool. Now there is a trick. The first time you use Import, WordPress needs to install and activate the Importer plugin. Here's how that works.

First, click Import under Tools, and then click WordPress (assuming you're importing WordPress content; for another CMS, choose that one) (Figure 11.62). You'll see the Install plugin screen (Figure 11.63); click Install. After it is installed, click Activate and Run Importer (Figure 11.64), and you'll come to the screen where you can click to pick a file (Figure 11.65). I'm using the file we just exported, in case you're wondering. After you click Choose, and then Upload file, you'll come to a screen that will let you match the content to an existing user or create a new one (Figure 11.66). I chose to map to the existing user (me), but if you're importing a lot of content, it's a good idea to let WordPress create a new user. Then you can sort the content by user in the All Post or All Page views and go through it. You already know you can use Quick Edit and Bulk Edit to quickly change a piece of content's author, so the content you keep you can transfer to yourself or another user. The last screen shows the results of the import (only the bottom). In this case, because I was just importing the same content I just exported, WordPress didn't import duplicates (which is helpful) (Figure 11.67).

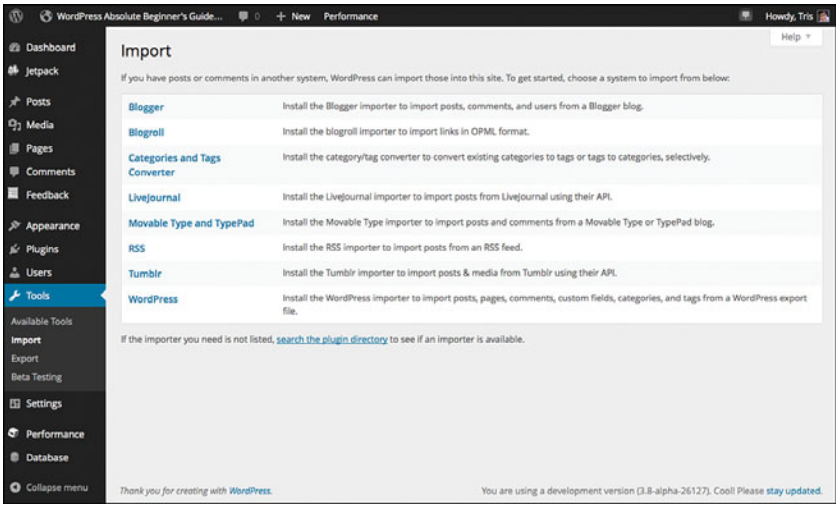

FIGURE 11.62

Import screen.

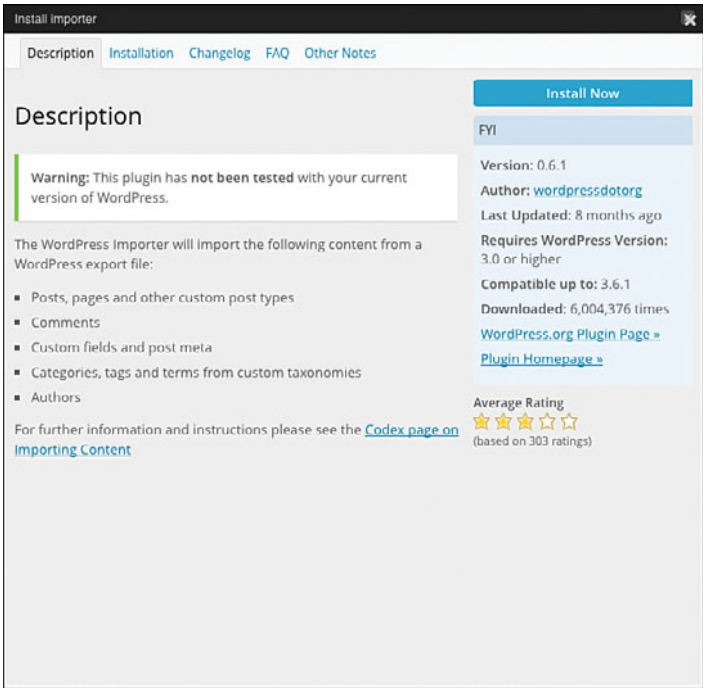

FIGURE 11.63

Installing the import plugin.

FIGURE 11.64

Activate and run the importer.

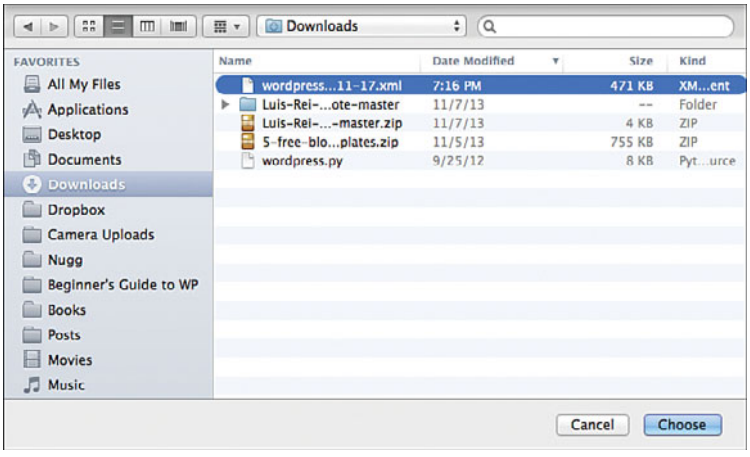

FIGURE 11.65

Choosing the file to import.

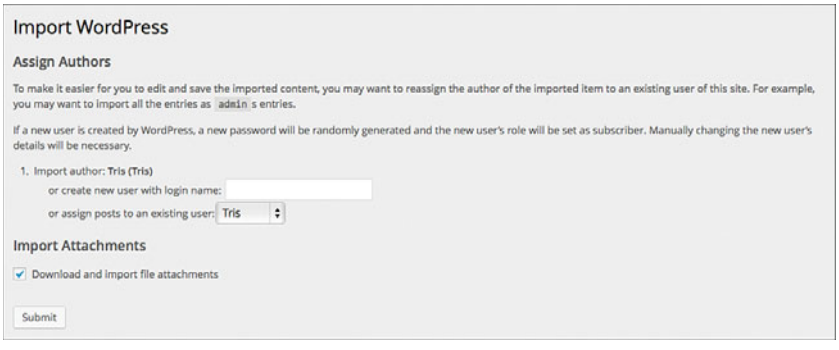

FIGURE 11.66

Mapping the imported content to a user.

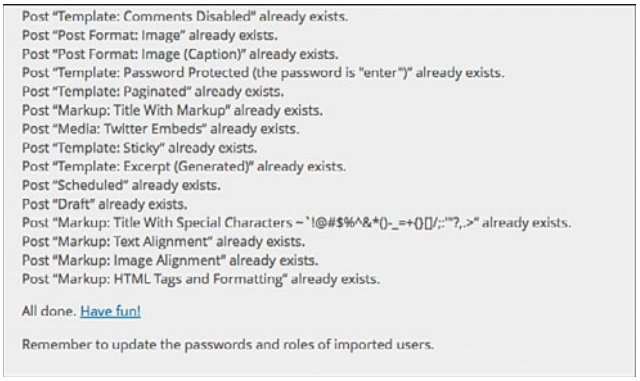

FIGURE 11.67

Import complete!

WordPress is designed so that you aren't locked into using it forever. You can always export your content to move it to another CMS. This is especially important when we talk about WordPress.com. If you start with WordPress.com and decide later to switch to hosting your own site using WordPress.org, you can quickly and easily move all your content from one to the other with just a few clicks—including all the images!

Managing Comments

The final part of this content chapter covers Comments. As I talked about in Chapter 6, "Setting Up Your WordPress Site Right the First Time," setting up Akismet is essential to keeping your site free of spam comments and links (and keeping your sanity intact, as well). Most comment management can be done in the Comments screen (Figure 11.68) or from the main screen of the Dashboard. When you have a new comment from someone who hasn't commented before (and Akismet didn't flag as spam already and didn't bother you with), you'll receive an email that there is a comment in moderation. From the Comments screen or the Dashboard, you'll see the comment highlighted, and you can approve, delete, or edit the comment. After you approve it, you can even reply to the comment right there by clicking the reply link. Simple as that. As more people comment, you'll see all the comments in the Comments screen.

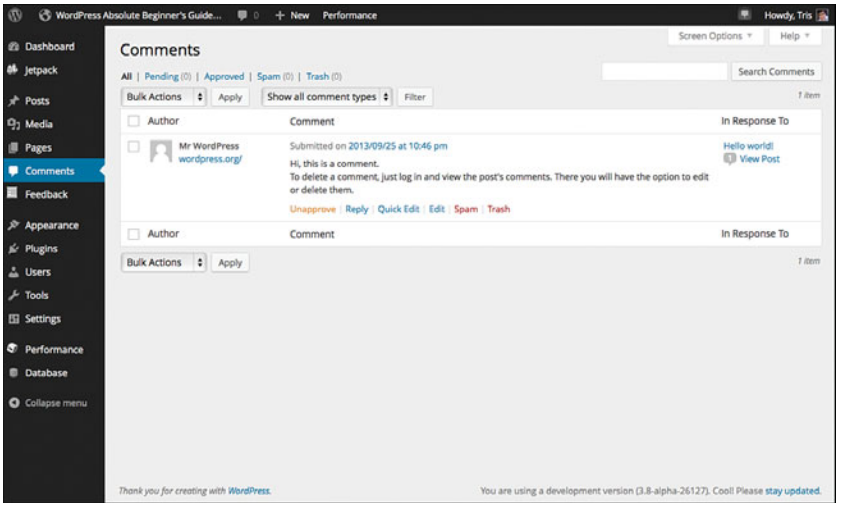

FIGURE 11.68

Main comments management screen.

NOTE Editing comments? Isn't that bad? Yes and no. Sometimes people leave a great comment, but maybe include a swear word or two. Instead of just trashing the comment and asking the commenter to resubmit it, you can (essentially) bleep out the swearing. Once in a while I've seen people leave things like their address, phone number, or email address in a comment. Because those are public, that's not always a great idea, so I edit those out, too. If I do end up editing a comment, I always put a note within the comment that I made an edit and why.

Conclusion

Whew. Now that was a chapter rich in content about Content. The lifeblood of a site is its content, so it makes sense that this might be the longest chapter in the book. We've covered the different types of content, how to create content, and specific things about each content type (except for Custom Post Type, which we'll cover in Chapter 16). There is much more I could write about (like the art of writing great blog posts), but for now the best advice I have is to try all the things in this chapter and then explore more to find the goodies that I didn't have space to mention! We'll come back to talking about content on and off throughout the rest of the book. Now it's time to move onto media!

Index

Symbols

2012 theme, 171-174
2013 theme, 175
2014 theme, 175-177
* (asterisk), 303
[] (brackets), 303
() [parentheses], 303
(pound symbol), 303

A

accounts (WordPress), creating, 308-314
addresses
  blog address, changing, 324
  Internet Protocol (IP) address, 6
ad-free option, 330
administering sites from mobile devices, 306
Administrator role, 48, 114-116
advantages of WordPress, 16
Akismet, 64, 109-114
All In One SEO Pack, 133, 211
Allow Link Notifications from Other Blogs setting, 98
Allow People to Post Comments on New Articles option, 99
ALT text, 126
apps, WordPress mobile
  comments, 306
  downloading, 297
  image handling, 304-306
  posting content, 301-303
  site administration, 298-301, 306
archive pages, creating, 359-361
assigning user roles, 114-117
asterisk (*), 303
Attempt to Notify Any Blogs Linked To from the Article setting, 98
attributes of Pages, 244
audio files, uploading, 276-281
Author role, 48, 114, 117
automatic WordPress updates, 334-336
Automattic, 20, 23
  P2 theme, 375-377
  PollDaddy, 318
  VaultPress , 341-342
autosave feature, 230
avatars, 101

B

backdating content, 231
backgrounds, custom, 184-188
backups, 139-142, 341-344
bbPress, 378-383
  Codex, 378
  installing, 58-60
Beautiful Math (Jetpack), 147
BitNami over MAMP, 384
blockquotes, 227-228
blog posts. *See* Posts
blogs. *See also* Posts
  changing blog address, 324
  deleting, 325-326
  hiding, 323
  transferring to another user, 325
Blogware, 99
brackets ([ ]), 303
BraveNewCode, 65
Business package (WordPress.com), 331

C

.ca domain, 6
caching, 135-136
Carousel (Jetpack), 147
Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), 163-164, 350-353
categories, 126, 238-242
changing
  blog address, 324
  user roles, 117-118
choosing
  domain names, 9
  passwords, 29
  themes, 68-73
  usernames, 29
  web hosts, 10-14
clients (FTP), 29-32, 47
CMSs (content management systems), 17
collaboration with P2, 375-377
ColorPicker.com, 356

.com domain, 6
command-line WordPress installation, 46
Comment Blacklist setting, 100
Comment Moderation setting, 100
comments
  avatars, 101
  Discussion Settings, 98-101
  Jetpack, 148
  managing, 257-258, 306
  moderation, 100
  spam comments, 100
commercial plugins, 65
commercial themes, 83-85
communication and collaboration with P2, 375-377
computers, running WordPress on, 383-388
configuration file, editing, 38-41
contact forms, 148, 157-161, 321
content
  autosave feature, 230
  backdating, 231
  backgrounds, 184-188
  blockquotes, 227-228
  comments, 257-258
  demo content, 189
  headings
    custom headers, 180-184
    inserting, 227
  images. *See* images
  links, 219-220
  menus, 188-189
    creating, 190
    custom menu widgets, 203-204
    editing, 190-195
  Pages
    attributes, 244
    Custom Post Types, 209-210
    importing/exporting, 253-257
    managing, 250-253
    overview, 209
    Page Editor, 211-218
    Page Order, 245-247
    Page Templates, 247-248
    parent/child relationships, 244-245
    Post Formats, 210-211
    revisions, 248-250
    scheduling, 230-231
    status, 231-232
    visibility options, 232-233
    visual versus text views, 233-235
  paragraph styles, 227
  Posts
    categories, 238-242
    editing, 229
    importing/exporting, 253-257
    managing, 250-253
    overview, 208
    Post Editor, 211-218
    Post Formats, 236-237
    revisions, 248-250
    scheduling, 230-231
    status, 231-232
    tags, 242-243
    visibility options, 232-233
    visual versus text views, 233-235
  widgets, 196-198
    custom menu widgets, 203-204
    inserting, 198-199
    moving, 199
    removing, 199-200
    text widget, 200-203
    when to use, 204-205
content management systems (CMSs), 17
Contributor role, 48, 114, 117
CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), 163-164, 350-353
custom backgrounds, 184-188
Custom CSS (Jetpack), 148
custom design, 328
custom headers, 180-184
custom menu widgets, 203-204
custom Post types, 209-210, 359-363
custom themes, 345-346
  CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), 350-353
  custom post types, 359-363
  Google fonts, 353-357
  icon menus, 357-359
  required tools, 346
  widget locations, 346-350
Customizr, 77-80, 370-373
Cyberduck, 30

D

Dashboard, 44-45
databases
  managing, 338-341
  MySQL, 17-18, 28, 37, 338-341
  troubleshooting, 396
Date settings, 91
defaut themes, 170-171
  Twenty Fourteen, 175-177
  Twenty Thirteen, 175
  Twenty Twelve, 171-174
deleting
  blogs, 325-326
  categories, 241
demo content, 189
descriptive links, 125-126
descriptive titles, 123-124
design, custom, 328
development of WordPress, 16
Digg Digg, 131

directories
directory structure, 45-46
root directories, 35
disabling Jetpack features, 149-150
disadvantages of WordPress, 16
Discussion Settings, 98-101
DNS (Domain Name System), 6-8
domains, 327
domain names
choosing, 9
DNS (Domain Name System), 6-8
explained, 6-8
subdomains, 8
TLDs (top-level domains), 6
downloading
FTP clients, 29-32, 47
WordPress, 33-37
WordPress mobile app, 297
Drafts, 231
Dropbox, 342-343
Duplicator, 389-392

E

Easy Install
plugins, 56-57
themes, 74-77
easy WordPress installation, 26-29
editing
configuration file, 38-41
images, 270-274
menus, 190-195
Posts, 229
theme styles, 350-353
users, 117-118
Edit Media screen, 260-261
Editor role, 48, 114, 117
Edit User screen, 117-118
.edu domain, 6
embedding audio/video files, 278-281
Enhanced Distribution (Jetpack), 148
Enterprise package (WordPress.com), 331
essay post type, creating, 361-363
exporting content, 253-257
Extra Sidebar Widgets module (Jetpack), 148, 164-165

F

Featured Content module (Jetpack), 148
Featured Images, 262-264
feedback forms, 321
files
audio files
embedding in posts and pages, 278-281
uploading, 276-277
configuration files, editing, 38-41
htaccess.txt, 339
image files. *See* images
PDF files, uploading, 282
.php files, 38
text files, uploading, 282
video files
embedding in posts and pages, 278-281
uploading, 276-277
Word files, uploading, 282
ZIP files, uploading, 282
FileZilla, 30
finding
plugins, 51-55
themes, 68-73
Firebug, 353
Firebug Lite, 346
Flash, 295
folders, wordpress, 36
Font Awesome 4 Menus, 357-359
fonts
Font Awesome 4 Menus, 357-359
Google fonts, 353-357
formats of posts, 210-211, 236-237
forms, 148, 157-161, 321
forums, 378-383
Fresh Ink Magazine theme, 74-76
FTP clients, 29-32, 47
Full Page Test (Pingdom), 134

G

GA (Google Analytics), 132-133
galleries, 264-270
General Settings, 90-91
Genesis Responsive Slider, 264
GoDaddy, 37, 327
Google Analyticator, 133
Google Analytics by Yoast, 133
Google Analytics (GA), 132-133
Google fonts, 353-357
Google+ Profile (Jetpack), 148
.gov domain, 6
graphics. *See* images
Gravatar Hovercards (Jetpack), 148
guided transfer, 329-330
Gzip, 341

H

hacked sites, 397-398
headings
custom headers, 180-184

inserting, 227
writing, 124-125
help from web hosts, 11-12
hiding
blogs, 323
widgets, 347-349
history of WordPress, 16
home page as static Page model, 366-370
HootSuite, 130-131
Houston theme, 376
htaccess.txt file, 339
HTML Markdown, 303

I

ICANN, 6
icon menus, customizing with Font Awesome, 357-359
identifying themes, 85-88
Image Editor, 270-274
images
ALT text, 126
editing, 270-274
Featured Images, 262-264
galleries, 264-270
handling from mobile devices, 304-306
Image Editor, 270-274
image optimization, 274-275
WP Photon, 276
WP Smush.it, 275-276
inserting, 220-227
Media Settings, 103-106
optimizing, 138-139
slideshows, 264-270
uploading, 105-106
@import directive, 354
importing content, 253-257
Infinite Scroll (Jetpack), 148
inserting
headings, 227
images, 220-227
widgets, 198-199
installing WordPress, 25
Dashboard, 44-45
directory structure, 45-46
from command line, 46
manual installation, 29-33
configuration file, editing, 38-41
FTP clients, downloading, 29-32, 47
MySQL database, creating, 37
troubleshooting, 42
WordPress, downloading, 33-37
WordPress install process, 41-43
one-click or easy installs, 26-29
plugins
commercial plugins, 65
Easy Install, 56-57
installation tips, 63-64
manual install, 61-63
recommended starter plugins, 64-65
two-step install, 58-60
themes, 73-74
Easy Install, 74-77
manual install, 80-83
two-step install, 77-80
user roles, 47-48
IP (Internet Protocol) address, 6

J-K-L

Jetpack, 56-57, 63, 131
Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), 163-164
contact form, 157-161
extra sidebar widgets, 164-165
features, 145-150
galleries and slideshows, 264-270
installing, 56-57
JSON API, 148
Likes, 155-156
mobile themes, 292-294
Photon, 165
Sharing settings, 151-153
shortcodes, 161-163
spelling and grammar settings, 156
Subscription settings, 153-155
WordPress.com Stats, 132, 150-151
WP.me shortlinks, 161
JSON API, 148

keyword stuffing, 123

LAMP (Linux Apache MySQL PHP) stack, 383
library. *See* Media Library
Likes (Jetpack), 148, 155-156
links
creating, 219, 220
descriptive links, 125-126
permanent links, 106-109
Linux Apache MySQL PHP (LAMP) stack, 383
locations of widgets, customizing, 346-350
lorem ipsum text, 219

M

Mac Apache MySQL PHP (MAMP) stack, 383-384
maintaining sites, 333
databases, 338-341
plugin updates, 336-337

site backups, 341-344
theme updates, 337-338
WordPress updates, 334-336
MAMP.info, 384
MAMP (Mac Apache MySQL PHP) stack, 383-384
managing
comments, 257-258
databases, 338-341
media, 260
audio files, 276-281
Edit Media screen, 260-261
Featured Images, 262-264
galleries, 264-270
Image Editor, 270-274
image optimization, 274-276
Media Library, 260-262
other file formats, 282
slideshows, 264-270
video files, 276-281
Posts/Pages, 250-253
sites from mobile devices, 296-297
comments, 306
content, posting, 301-303
downloading WordPress mobile app, 297
images, 304-306
site administration, 306
sites, adding, 298-301
manual WordPress installation, 29-33
configuration file, editing, 38-41
FTP clients, downloading, 29-32, 47
MySQL database, creating, 37
plugins, 61-63
themes, 80-83
troubleshooting, 42
WordPress, downloading, 33-37
WordPress install process, 41-43
Markdown, 303, 376
Media Library, 260-262
media management, 260
audio files
embedding in posts and pages, 278-281
uploading, 276-277
Edit Media screen, 260-261
images
Featured Images, 262-264
galleries, 264-270
Image Editor, 270-274
image optimization, 274-276
slideshows, 264-270
Media Library, 260-262
other file formats, 282
video files
embedding in posts and pages, 278-281
uploading, 276-277
Media Settings, 103-106
Media Uploader, 282
Meetup.com, 17
menus, 188-189
creating, 190
customizing, 357-359
custom menu widgets, 203-204
editing, 190-195
mobile devices, managing sites from, 296-297
comments, 306
content, posting, 301-303
downloading WordPress mobile app, 297
images, 304-306
site administration, 306
sites, adding, 298-301
Mobile Push Notifications (Jetpack), 148
mobile-ready sites
plugins, 292-295
themes, 286-291, 296
Mobile Theme (Jetpack), 148
moderating comments, 100
monitoring website traffic, 132-133
moving
widgets, 199
WordPress sites, 388-392
Mullenweg, Matt, 20, 375, 378
Multimarkdown, 303
MySQL databases, 17-18, 28, 37, 338-341

N

Namecheap, 7, 327
names (domain), 327
choosing, 9
DNS (Domain Name System), 6-8
explained, 6-8
network-tools.com, 14
NextGEN gallery, 264
No Ads option, 330
Notepad, 38, 346
Notepad++ for Windows , 346

O

Omnisearch, 148, 318
one-click WordPress installation, 26-29
OpenDNS, 14
optimizing
images, 274-275
Photon, 276
WP Smush.it, 275-276
sites, 134
caching, 135-136

graphics, 138-139
themes, 137-138
order of Pages, 245-247
.org domain, 6
Organize My Uploads into Month- and Year-Based Folders setting, 103
Other Comment Settings section, 99
ownership of WordPress, 16

P

P2 theme, 375-377
packages (WordPress.com)
Business package, 331
Enterprise package, 331
Pro package, 330-331
Page Editor, 211-218. *See also* Pages
Pages
attributes, 244
Custom Post Types, 209-210
importing/exporting, 253-257
managing, 250-253
overview, 209
Page Editor, 211-218
Page Order, 245-247
Page Templates, 247-248
parent/child relationships, 244-245
Post Formats, 210-211
revisions, 248-250
scheduling, 230-231
status, 231-232
visibility options, 232-233
visual versus text views, 233-235
paragraph styles, 227
parent/child Pages, 244-245
parentheses, 303
Password Protected content, 232
passwords, 28-29
PDF files, uploading, 282
Pending posts, 231-232
Permalinks Settings, 106-109
permanent links, 106-109
Photon, 148, 165, 276
PHP, 17-18
.php files, 38
Pingdom Full Page Test, 134
plugins, 18, 49-51
Akismet, 109-114
All In One SEO Pack, 133, 211
bbPress, 58-60, 378-383
commercial plugins, 65
Customizr, 370-373
Custom Post Type UI, 359-363
definition of, 50
Digg Digg, 131
Duplicator, 389-392
finding, 51-55
Font Awesome 4 Menus, 357-359
Google Analyticator, 133
Google Analytics by Yoast, 133
HootSuite, 130-131
installing
Easy Install, 56-57
installation tips, 63-64
manual install, 61-63
two-step install, 58-60
Jetpack, 56-57, 63
Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), 163-164
contact form, 157-161
extra sidebar widgets, 164-165
features, 145-150
galleries and slideshows, 264-270
Likes, 155-156
mobile themes, 292-294
Photon, 165
Sharing settings, 151-153
shortcodes, 161-163
spelling and grammar settings, 156
Subscription settings, 153-155
WordPress.com Stats, 132, 150-151
WP.me shortlinks, 161
MAMP, 384
Markdown for P2, 376
mobile-ready sites, 292-295
NextGEN gallery, 264
P2 by Email, 375-377
Photon, 276
Private Only, 374
recommended starter plugins, 64-65
SEO (search engine optimization), 127-129
Simple Share Buttons Adder, 131-132
troubleshooting, 394-395
updating, 336-337
W3 Total Cache (W3TC), 135-136
WooSlider, 264
WordPress Backup to Dropbox, 141-142
WordPress Duplicator, 344
WordPress SEO, 133, 211
WP-DBManager, 140-141, 338-341
WP Smush.it, 139, 275-276
WP Super Cache, 61-63, 135-136
WPTouch, 65
WPTouch Mobile, 292-295
XAMPP, 384

PollDaddy, 318
polls, 318
Post by Email (Jetpack), 92, 148
Post Editor, 211-218. *See also* Posts
Post Formats, 210-211
posting
  from mobile devices, 301-303
  to social networks, 130-132
Posts
  audio/video files, embedding, 278-281
  categories, 238-242
  custom post types, 359-363
  editing, 229
  images. *See* images
  importing/exporting, 253-257
  managing, 250-253
  overview, 208
  Post Editor, 211-218
  Post Formats, 236-237
  revisions, 248-250
  scheduling, 230-231
  status, 231-232
  tags, 242-243
  visibility options, 232-233
  visual versus text views, 233-235
pound symbol (#), 303
preinstalled themes, 69
premium ad-ons, 326-327
  custom design, 328
  domains, 327
  guided transfer, 329-330
  No Ads option, 330
  site redirect, 329
  space, 328
  themes, 328
  VideoPress, 329
premium themes, 83-85
Press This bookmarklet, 92
Private content, 233
Private Only, 374
private sites, 321-323, 374-375
Prologue theme, 375
Pro package (WordPress.com), 330-331
protocols, DNS (Domain Name System), 6-8
Public content, 232
Publicize (Jetpack), 148

Q-R

Quattrocento fonts, 354-356

ratings, 319-320
Reading Settings, 93-97
recommended starter plugins, 64-65
recommended starter themes, 83
recommended web hosts, 10
removing widgets, 199-200
Responsive theme, 80-81
revisions, 248-250
roles (user), 114-118
  Administrator, 114-116
  assigning, 114-117
  Author, 114-117
  changing, 117-118
  Contributor, 114, 117
  Editor, 114, 117
  Subscriber, 114, 117
root directories, 35
RSS feeds
  explained, 95-97
  settings, 95
running WordPress on computers, 383-388

S

Safari
  Firebug, 353
  WordPress downloads, 35
saving work, 230
scheduling
  Pages, 230-231
  Posts, 230-231
search engine optimization. *See* SEO (search engine optimization)
searching
  for plugins, 51-55
  for themes, 68-73
  Omnisearch, 318
secure FTP (SFTP), 47
security, 139-142
  hacked sites, 397-398
  passwords, 28
  private sites, 321-323, 374-375
  user roles, 114-118
    Administrator, 114-116
    assigning, 114-117
    Author, 114, 117
    changing, 117-118
    Contributor, 114, 117
    Editor, 114, 117
    Subscriber, 114, 117
SEO (search engine optimization)
  ALT text, 126
  categories, 126
  descriptive links, 125-126
  descriptive titles, 123-124
  headings, 124-125
  keyword stuffing, 123
  plugins, 127-129
  settings, 122
  tags, 126
  writing normally, 124

servers, 11
settings
  Jetpack
    Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), 163-164
    contact form, 157-161
    extra sidebar widgets, 164-165
    features, 145-150
    Likes, 155-156
    Photon, 165
    Sharing settings, 151-153
    shortcodes, 161-163
    spelling and grammar settings, 156
    Subscription settings, 153-155
    WordPress.com Stats, 150-151
    WP.me shortlinks, 161
  SEO (search engine optimization), 122
  theme settings, 169-170
  WordPress site setup
    Akismet plugin, 109-114
    Discussion Settings, 98-101
    General Settings, 90-91
    Media Settings, 103-106
    Permalinks Settings, 106-109
    Reading Settings, 93-97
    user roles, 114-118
    Writing Settings, 92-93
SFTP (secure FTP), 47
Sharing (Jetpack), 149-153
Shortcode Embeds (Jetpack), 149
shortcodes (Jetpack), 161-163
sidebar widgets, adding with Jetpack, 164-165
Simple Share Buttons Adder, 131-132
site redirect, 329
sites (WordPress). *See* WordPress sites
Sixteen Nine Pro theme, 87
slideshows, 264-270
Smush.it, 275-276
Social Links (Jetpack), 149
social media sharing tools
  Digg Digg, 131
  HootSuite, 130-131
  Jetpack, 131
  Simple Share Buttons Adder, 131-132
social networks
  helping visitors post to, 131-132
  posting to, 130-131
spam comments, 100
speed of sites, optimizing, 134
  caching, 135-136
  graphics, 138-139
  themes, 137-138
Spelling and Grammar (Jetpack), 149, 156
starter plugins, 64-65
starter themes, 83
static Page model, 366-370
stats, 132-133
status of Posts/Pages, 231-232
storage space, 328
StudioPress, 354
styles, editing, 350-353
subdomains, 8
Subscriber role, 48, 114, 117
Subscriptions (Jetpack), 149, 153-155
SVN, 46

T

tags, 126, 242-243
templates, Page Templates, 247-248
testing site speed, 134
text
  blockquotes, 227-228
  headings, 227
  links, 219-220
  paragraph styles, 227
  text editors, 346
  text files, uploading, 282
  text widget, 200-203
TextEdit, 38, 346
text editors, 346
text files, uploading, 282
text widget, 200-203
TextWrangler, 346
themes, 17-18, 67-68, 167-169, 179
  choosing, 68-73
  customizing
    CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), 350-353
    custom post types, 359-363
    Google fonts, 353-357
    icon menus, 357-359
    required tools, 346
    widget locations, 346-350
  Customizr, 77-80
  defaut themes, 170-171
    Twenty Fourteen, 175-177
    Twenty Thirteen, 175
    Twenty Twelve, 171-174
  finding, 68-73
  Fresh Ink Magazine, 74-76
  Houston, 376
  identifying, 85-88
  installing, 73-74
    commercial/premium themes, 83-85
    Easy Install, 74-77
    manual install, 80-83
    recommended starter themes, 83
    two-step install, 77-80

mobile-ready sites, 286-291, 296
optimizing, 137-138
P2, 375-377
preinstalled themes, 69
premium themes, 328
Prologue, 375
Responsive, 80-81
settings, 169-170
Sixteen Nine Pro, 87
troubleshooting, 395-396
updating, 337-338
Tiled Galleries (Jetpack), 149
Time and Date settings, 91
titles, writing, 123-124
TLDs (top-level domains), 6
Toolbar Notifications (Jetpack), 149
top-level domains (TLDs), 6
transfers
guided transfer option, 329-330
transferring blog to another user, 325
troubleshooting, 393
databases, 396
hacked sites, 397-398
manual WordPress installation, 42
plugins, 394-395
themes, 395-396
WordPress issues, 396-397
Tucows Blogware, 99
Tumblr, 210
Twenty Fourteen theme, 175-177
Twenty Thirteen theme, 175
Twenty Twelve theme, 171-174
two-step install
plugins, 58-60
themes, 77-80

U

Update Services settings, 93
updating
plugins, 336-337
themes, 337-338
WordPress, 142, 334-336
uploading
audio/video files, 276-277
images, 105-106, 220-227
other file formats, 282
.us domain, 6
usernames, 29
user roles, 47-48, 114-118
Administrator, 114-116
assigning, 114-117
Author, 114, 117
changing, 117-118
Contributor, 114, 117
Editor, 114, 117
Subscriber, 114, 117
users
adding, 114-115
editing, 117-118
transferring blog to another user, 325
usernames, 29
user roles, 114-118
Administrator, 114-116
assigning, 114-117
Author, 114, 117
changing, 117-118
Contributor, 114, 117
Editor, 114, 117
Subscriber, 114, 117

V

VaultPress, 341-342
video files
embedding in posts and pages, 278-281
uploading, 276-277
VideoPress, 277-329
visibility options, 232-233
visual versus text views, 233-235

W

W3TC (W3 Total Cache), 135-136
WAMP (Windows Apache MySQL PHP) stack, 383
web hosts
choosing, 10-14
help, 11-12
WordPress.org recommended hosts, 10
websites. *See* WordPress sites
who.is, 14
widgets, 196-198
adding with Jetpack, 164-165
custom menu widgets, 203-204
customizing widget locations, 346-350
hiding, 347-349
inserting, 198-199
moving, 199
removing, 199-200
text widget, 200-203
when to use, 204-205
Widget Visibility (Jetpack), 149
Windows Apache MySQL PHP (WAMP) stack, 383
WooSlider, 264
WooThemes, 376
WordCamp central, 17
WordCamps, 17
Word files, uploading, 282
WordPress Backup to Dropbox, 141-142
WordPress Codex, 210

WordPress.com, 307. *See also* WordPress sites
accounts, creating, 308-314
blog management
changing blog address, 324
deleting blogs, 325-326
hiding blogs, 323
transferring blog to another user, 325
Business package, 331
compared to WordPress.org, 19-23, 316-317
creating additional sites on, 314-315
Enterprise package, 331
feedback/contact forms, 321
Omnisearch, 318
polls, 318
premium ad-ons, 326-327
custom design, 328
domains, 327
guided transfer, 329-330
No Ads option, 330
site redirect, 329
space, 328
themes, 328
VideoPress, 329
private sites, 321-323
Pro package, 330-331
ratings, 319-320
WordPress.com Connect (Jetpack), 149
WordPress.com Stats, 132, 149-151
WordPress Dashboard, 44-45
WordPress Duplicator, 344
wordpress folder, 36
WordPress installation, 25
Dashboard, 44-45
directory structure, 45-46
from command line, 46
manual installation, 29-33
configuration file, editing, 38-41
FTP clients, downloading, 29-32, 47
MySQL database, creating, 37
troubleshooting, 42
WordPress, downloading, 33-37
WordPress install process, 41-43
one-click or easy installs, 26-29
plugins
commercial plugins, 65
Easy Install, 56-57
installation tips, 63-64
manual install, 61-63
recommended starter plugins, 64-65
two-step install, 58-60
themes, 73-74
Easy Install, 74-77
manual install, 80-83
two-step install, 77-80
user roles, 47-48
WordPress Menus, 188-189
creating, 190
editing, 190-195
WordPress mobile app
comments, managing, 306
content, posting, 301-303
downloading, 297
images, handling, 304-306
site administration, 306
sites, adding, 298-301
WordPress.org, 19-23, 316-317
WordPress plugins. *See* plugins
WordPress SEO, 133, 211
WordPress sites
adding from mobile devices, 298-301
administration, 306
audio/video files, embedding, 278-281
autosave feature, 230
backgrounds, 184-188
backing up, 139-142, 341-344
blockquotes, 227-228
blog management
changing blog address, 324
deleting blogs, 325-326
hiding blogs, 323
transferring blog to another user, 325
BraveNewCode, 65
comments, 257-258
creating, 314-315
customizations, 346
CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), 350-353
custom post types, 359-363
Google fonts, 353-357
icon menus, 357-359
required tools, 346
widget locations, 346-350
domain names, 6-9
forums, 378-383
headings
custom headers, 180-184
inserting, 227
images. *See* images
links, 219-220
maintenance, 333
databases, 338-341
plugin updates, 336-337
site backups, 341-344
theme updates, 337-338
WordPress updates, 334-336
managing from mobile devices, 296-297
comments, 306
content, posting, 301-303
downloading WordPress mobile app, 297

images, 304-306
site administration, 306
sites, adding, 298-301
Meetup.com, 17
menus, 188-189
creating, 190
custom menu widgets, 203-204
editing, 190-195
mobile-ready sites, 286
plugins, 292-295
themes, 286-296
monitoring traffic to, 132-133
moving, 388-392
optimization, 134
caching, 135-136
graphics, 138-139
themes, 137-138
Pages
attributes, 244
Custom Post Types, 209-210
importing/exporting, 253-257
managing, 250-253
overview, 209
Page Editor, 211-218
Page Order, 245-247
Page Templates, 247-248
parent/child relationships, 244-245
Post Formats, 210-211
revisions, 248-250
scheduling, 230-231
status, 231-232
visibility options, 232-233
visual versus text views, 233-235
paragraph styles, 227
plugins. *See* plugins
Posts
categories, 238-242
editing, 229
importing/exporting, 253-257
managing, 250-253
overview, 208
Post Editor, 211-218
Post Formats, 236-237
revisions, 248-250
scheduling, 230-231
status, 231-232
tags, 242-243
visibility options, 232-233
visual versus text views, 233-235
private sites, 321-323, 374-375
security, 139-142, 374-375
SEO (search engine optimization), 122
ALT text, 126
categories, 126
descriptive links, 125-126
descriptive titles, 123-124
headings, 124-125
keyword stuffing, 123
plugins, 127-129
settings, 122
tags, 126
writing normally, 124
site setup, 90
Akismet plugin, 109-114
Discussion Settings, 98-101
General Settings, 90-91
Media Settings, 103-106
Permalinks Settings, 106-109
Reading Settings, 93-97
user roles, 114-118
Writing Settings, 92-93
social media sharing tools
Digg Digg, 131
HootSuite, 130-131
Jetpack, 131
Simple Share Buttons Adder, 131-132
themes, 17-18, 67-68, 167-169, 179
choosing, 68-73
commercial/premium themes, 83-85
customizing. *See* custom themes
Customizr, 77-80
defaut themes, 170-171
finding, 68-73
Fresh Ink Magazine, 74-76
Houston, 376
identifying, 85-88
installing, 73-83
mobile-ready sites, 286-291, 296
P2, 375-377
preinstalled themes, 69
Prologue, 375
recommended starter themes, 83
Responsive, 80-81
settings, 169-170
Sixteen Nine Pro, 87
troubleshooting, 395-396
Twenty Fourteen, 175-177
Twenty Thirteen, 175
Twenty Twelve, 171-174
updating, 337-338
troubleshooting, 393
databases, 396
hacked sites, 397-398
plugins, 394-395
themes, 395-396
WordPress issues, 396-397
web hosts
choosing, 10-14
help, 11-12
WordPress.org recommended hosts, 10
widgets, 196-198
custom menu widgets, 203-204
inserting, 198-199
moving, 199
removing, 199-200
text widget, 200-203
when to use, 204-205
WordCamp central, 17
WordPress as a website, 366
Customizr, 370-373

home page as static Page model, 366-370
WordPress site setup, 90
Akismet plugin, 109-114
backups, 139-142
Discussion Settings, 98-101
General Settings, 90-91
Media Settings, 103-106
optimization, 134
caching, 135-136
graphics, 138-139
themes, 137-138
Permalinks Settings, 106-109
Reading Settings, 93-97
security, 139-142
SEO (search engine optimization), 122
ALT text, 126
categories, 126
descriptive links, 125-126
descriptive titles, 123-124
headings, 124-125
keyword stuffing, 123
plugins, 127-129
settings, 122
tags, 126
writing normally, 124
social media sharing tools
Digg Digg, 131
HootSuite, 130-131
Jetpack, 131
Simple Share Buttons Adder, 131-132
stats, 132-133
user roles, 114-118
Administrator, 114-116
assigning, 114-117
Author, 114, 117
changing, 117-118
Contributor, 114, 117
Editor, 114, 117
Subscriber, 114, 117
Writing Settings, 92-93
WordPress updates, 142, 334-336
WP-DBManager, 140-141, 338-341
WP.me shortlinks (Jetpack), 161, 149
WP Smush.it, 139, 275-276
WP Super Cache, 61-63, 135-136
WPTouch Mobile, 292-295
WPTouch plugin, 65
writing for SEO (search engine optimization)
ALT text, 126
descriptive links, 125-126
descriptive titles, 123-124
headings, 124-125
keyword stuffing, 123
writing normally, 124
Writing Settings, 92-93

X-Y-Z

XAMPP, 384

ZIP files, uploading, 282