Web Design & Publishing

WordPress

Your Bluehost account allows you to install a self-hosted WordPress installation. We will be doing this, and you will be customizing it for your final project. wordpress.org/showcase is a gallery of sites hosted by WordPress as a CMS.

» Create a Subdomain for your Project

Go to bluehost.com and login. Under **Domains**, click **Subdomain**. Here you can name a subdomain and connect it to a folder. This way, the URL is subdomain.domain.com. (for example sxapp.cary-anne.com). You can remove or manage the subdomain redirection from here.

» Using WordPress

1. Go to bluehost.com and click the control panel login button.

2. Login with your domain name and password.

3. Look for **WordPress** under **Site Builders**.

4. Click **Install**. Then choose the most current version, and choose if you want to install at top of your domain or on a subdomain. For this project, we will be using a subdomain that you created for the final project.

5. Choose the folder under which you want to install this. If you have not already created the folder, you can just tell it what you want to name it and Bluehost will create that folder. Later you can make this into a subdomain, but it is best to do the subdomain process first.

6. Under **Advanced**, choose a password for your admin account (better than clicking for it to choose a random password for you). You can keep the plugins Bluehost installs by default. They do not cost anything, but you may not use them.

7. Click the **Terms and Conditions** and choose **Complete**. That is it. In a few seconds, Bluehost will direct you to your WordPress dashboard.

» Working with Your Custom WordPress Site

Now that you have your WordPress installation complete, it is time to start using it. If you go to yourdomain.com/foldername, you can see that the blog is ready to go and what it looks like right now. When you are ready to start customizing it, go to yourdomain.com/foldername/wp-admin (use your domain name). Or foldername.yourdomain.com/wp-admin, if you set up the subdomain.

» WordPress Admin Panel Settings

- **Appearance:** change the theme. Find a very simple theme that you can modify to your desired design.
- **Plugins:** add extra functionality and features. We will discuss how to use plugins and the **Editor** to customize the site. You cannot access the **Plugins** on a wordpress.com site. There is much flexibility in having a self-hosted WordPress blog.
- **Users:** control your login information, add people who have access to your site, and set their login settings.
  - » For your account information, go to **Your Profile.**
    - Make appropriate changes to the way your name displays, any contact info.
    - You can also change your password here.
  - » To add users, go to **Add New.**
    - Provide info, password and give them a role. They can log in and change the password later.
    - **Administrator** can do everything.
    - **Editor** can do anything related to posts, including delete.
    - **Author** can only change own posts.
    - **Contributor** can make posts, but a moderator must approve first.
    - **Subscriber** has limited access to the site.
- **Settings:** change your site settings.
  - » **General** you can change the site title, add a tagline and make other changes. If you have used an add-on domain that you have linked to a custom domain (as we did with the sxtxstate.com site), you may need to change the blog addresses.
  - » **Reading** allows you to set and review the Privacy Settings to make the blog content available to search engines when you are ready.
  - » **Permalinks** shows how WordPress creates links for pages and posts. You can adjust if you want. The name in the permalink refers to the slug name.
  - » In the **Writing**, **Discussion** and **Media** sections, you can change other settings to customize the site.

» Posts

- Under **Posts**, you can see the list of posts. The first thing you can do is remove the Hello World post and start adding new posts.
- In the **Categories** section you can use categories to easily organize your posts. There are things you can do to include certain posts on certain pages. The slug is a URL friendly name, so add a word without spaces or capital letters.

» Pages

You can go under **Pages** and add or edit any pages you want on the site. Use the form to add content to the pages.

» Themes

WordPress themes use HTML, CSS and PHP to determine the look of the site. You can use the themes as is, or you can modify in the code. Since you are just modifying code, you do not need to be a coding expert, just someone who understands how to troubleshoot. You can set new themes or download new themes from the thousands that are available on the Web.

You can get more themes by installing them from the WordPress Themes directory. You can peruse the site, see how themes look and what features they have. Choose **Install Themes** to automatically install a theme. Make sure you find well-designed, updated themes to install on your blog. Look at your blog to see how it looks with the new theme.

Customizing a Theme

codex.wordpress.com provides excellent information about WordPress templates. The **Using Themes** page does a great job of describing the template files and how they work together. The **Template Tags** page describes all the PHP tags used in a WordPress theme.

Modifying CSS

We already know CSS. So you can go into the CSS to change the style of the blog. Under **Appearance** choose **Editor**. You can see all the template files. You may need to look in some of the templates to be able to understand which styles need to be modified. For example, look in the header.php file to understand how it relates to the CSS.

There may be multiple CSS pages, but start with style.css. Look for the sections you want to change. Feel free to experiment. Change things and see what it effects, colors, fonts, sizes, etc.

You can change the header in the **Header** area of the **Appearance**, if your template has that. Or you can change it in CSS by modifying the background property of the header div.

When you make changes to your template in the WordPress Admin interface, it directly changes on the blog. Be careful, remember what you do, go back to fix changes that didn't work. If all else fails, you can re-install your theme if you have backed up files, or install another theme. WordPress recommends that if you're going to make changes to the template to do what's called a Child Template.