Create a Blog using Sites at Penn State

Sites at Penn State is a tool to enable students, faculty and staff to easily create and publish blogs and simple websites. *Sites* is powered by Wordpress, an open-source web publishing and content management tool.

This handout describes creating a blog only (not a full website). For information on creating a full website using Sites at Penn State, see http://www.personal.psu.edu/dys100/handouts/sites.pdf .

Create a New Blog

- Go to http://sites.psu.edu
- Click 'Create a Site' in the middle of the page
- Authenticate with your Penn State userid and password
- Enter a **site address** – this will determine the URL of your blog or website, so choose carefully. Your new blog or site will be located at **sites.psu.edu/site name.** This cannot be changed once your blog or site is created.
- Enter a site title – this will appear at the top of your blog or site and can be changed after it is created.
- Select privacy options, and click 'Create Site'.

Manage your Blog

 Content management and settings for your blog are all accessed through the **dashboard**. To open the dashboard of your blog, hover over 'My Sites' in the top left and click on the blog you want to work with. You can also see all your sites and navigate to the one you want to work on simply by clicking directly on My Sites.

Dashboard tools

Posts – These are your blog entries and the place you will go to edit or create new blog posts.   Click 'Posts', then click 'Add New' to create a new post. Delete the sample post that is present.

Media – the area where you upload and store files you wish to use in your posts (images, sound files, video, pdf's, word documents, etc.).   More information on inserting media into your blog is on the next page.

Pages – webpages you would create if you were interested in making a website (not just a blog).

Comments – manage/approve comments that have been submitted to your pages or posts. Note that comments are allowed by default, but you can change this under Settings (see next page).

Appearance – themes, background and header images, menus, and widgits (objects to add to your website, like an RSS feed, search, etc.).   To select a theme, click **'Appearance….Themes'** from your dashboard, then click **'Activate'** under the theme you choose (and you can change this at any time by repeating these steps).   Once you have selected the theme, you can click **'Customize'** to manage lots of details.

Users – provide other individuals the ability to administer or edit your blog or site. This means you can have a group of individuals all contributing to the same blog or site.

Tools –import, export, or delete a site. Note that you can export to any other Wordpress site (i.e. wordpress.com)

Settings – control basic features of your blog or site. Some of the more commonly used setting features are described on the next page.

- **General** – change your title, enter or change a tagline, adjust other basic features of your site.
- **Reading** – choose your 'front page'. This can be a static page, or the blogging area of your site. If you select a static page but still want to maintain a blogging page, you can create a new page to house your blog posts.
- **Discussion** – adjust settings for comments on your site. To prevent any comments, **uncheck** "allow people to post comments on new articles". You can also turn off commenting for a specific post or page by clicking **'Quick Edit'** underneath a specific entry and **unchecking** "Allow Comments".

Uploading Media

Each of your blogs includes a media library to store files you want to add to your posts. The maximum file size to upload is 500 MB, so larger files (i.e. video files – see below) should be stored elsewhere (Box!) and linked from your posts. Click the 'Media' tab on your dashboard to view and manage your uploaded files or to upload new files.

Insert Links to Files into Pages

To insert files (pdf's, Word documents, etc.) into a page or a blog post:

- Position the cursor where you would like to insert the file
- Click the 'Add Media' button   Add Media
- Select an item from your Media Library, or upload a new file
- Enter a title (this is the text that will appear as the link)
- Click 'Insert into Page' or 'Insert into Post'

Insert Images into Pages or Posts

- Position the cursor where you would like to insert the image, then click the 'Add Media' button
- Select the image from your Media Library, or upload a new image
- Enter the information in the fields on the right of the screen:
  - A caption will appear directly underneath the image
  - Alt Text is a clear, brief description of the image – necessary for accessibility standards
  - Display settings (alignment, size, and linking properties)
- Click **'Insert into Page' or 'Insert into Post'**

To edit or delete images after they have been inserted into a page, click the image on the page or post to display the editing toolbar

Insert Video into Pages

Video (and audio) files can be uploaded to your Media Library   if they are smaller than 500 MB. Video stored at certain hosting sites can be embedded into a page or post by simply inserting the link to the video on its own line (YouTube) or inserting the Embed code (Box at Penn State).

View your Site

View your site and see the URL to share with others by hovering on the name of the site and clicking "Visit Site"

More Help

Sites at Penn State Support – the main support page. Find documentation, FAQs, training opportunities and an update blog that you can follow.