

CODICES
&
WIDGETS
&
PLUG-INS
Oh My!

Putting WordPress to Work for Archivists

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W

hat we will cover

- PART 1:** How to make a decision tree or checklist of information to think about before embarking on site construction
- PART 2:** Look at information architecture and workflows as they relate to WordPress site construction
- PART 3:** Learn about the more technical aspects of making WordPress function the way you want it

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art 1 – the decision tree

Starting the decision tree. The reason we are going through all these questions is because we want to know what sort of website we need to plan on building.

This first question can be much harder to answer than you think. It's so basic but it really will influence everything that you do after so I encourage you to really dive in and think about it.

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art 1 – the decision tree

Who are you?

- College & University archives
- Corporate archives
- Government archives
- Historical Society
- Independent archives
- Museum
- Religious archive
- Special collection

Your mission – who you are – will help guide the kind of website you will end up creating.

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art 1 – the decision tree

What's the point? (even if you already have a website – what purpose does it fulfill)

- to give direction
- to inform users about what you have/who you are
- to provide remote research assistance
- topical updates of interest
- encourage donations
- how dynamic will it need to be
 - A blog updated daily/weekly or a static website which changes infrequently or something in between

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art 1 – the decision tree

Who is your target audience?

- Students (grade school, college, grad school)
- Donors (monetary or collections)
- Members (friends groups, subscription)
- Researchers from the community
- Remote researchers...

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art 1 – the decision tree

What are your resources?

- Staff time (not just to set up but to maintain)
 - Who will be in charge of the site, interns, volunteers, staff
- \$\$\$ (one time and ongoing expenses)
 - Hosting is generally an annual fee
 - A theme you only have to pay for once
- Do you have any IT or design support from your institution
 - This could be anything from guidance to doing the work for you

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art 1 – the decision tree

What are your restrictions?

- Institutional restrictions – colors, branding, content, URL
- Images – can you show photos of researchers in your reading room?
- Is there digital content you can or cannot provide access to?
- Are there sites you should not link to or opinions you need to steer away from/be mindful of.

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art 1 – the decision tree

Now that you have a sense of your framework decide which of the following is for you:

- wordpress.com – free and hosting is included, but limited options for customization
- wordpress.org – free, with more options but you need to handle hosting
- If .org, hosting through your institution or paid third party
- If .org can you pay for themes, widgets or plug-ins
- Pay someone to do some work for you if what you want is beyond your skill (here's a great article on contracting out <http://www.wpexplorer.com/wordpress-theme-developer/>)

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art 2 – content creation

Now we have our technical parameters it's time to start thinking content and information architecture.

Information architecture (IA) is the structural design of shared information environments; the art and science of organizing and labelling websites, intranets, online communities and software to support usability and findability; and an emerging community of practice focused on bringing principles of design and architecture to the digital landscape. **Typically, it involves a model or concept of information** which is used and applied to activities that require explicit details of complex information systems. These activities include library systems and database development.

(from Wikipedia.com)

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art 2 – content creation

Some things to consider prior to content creation

- Review some good websites
- What are similar organizations doing
- What is trending now
- If I do something snazzy will I have to spend a lot of time keeping it current

Writing great content is important but knowing what sort of container it needs to fit into will guide what you end up needing to write

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art 2 – content creation

What is a good website?

- It should be visually appealing and functional.
 - Visual appeal is subjective so ask an array of colleagues what they think of your design – the amazing font you found for your headers might be impossible for everyone else to read
- Being a functional website is both about utilizing technology and about knowing your target audience.
- We have all experienced websites where we can't find information we know is there, or where the purpose becomes muddled.

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art 2 – content creation

Spend some time browsing what's out there, what are your favorite sites and why?

Here are some sites I think are really well done

- <http://www.newburyportmovies.com/>
- <http://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/hiphop-archive-research-institute>
- <http://discover.store.sony.com/be-moved/>
- <https://www.spotify.com/us/>
- <http://jacksonvilleartwalk.com/>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek>
- <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>
- <http://postalmuseum.si.edu/>
- <https://www.etsy.com/>
- <http://www.montshire.org/>
- <http://www.vam.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.bandofhorses.com/home/>
- <http://www.fourcenturies.org/>
- <http://www.mfa.org/>
- <http://www.pem.org/>
- <https://www.artifactuprising.com/>

Not only should you pay attention to websites in general but also what similar organizations to you are doing – why reinvent the wheel? If someone else has a really great layout or approach to delivering content take inspiration and work those ideas into your design.

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art 2 – content creation

Current trends (as of fall 2014)

Paying attention to trends will help keep your site from looking dated. Some current trends are:

- Responsive themes, so it looks good on a smart phone or tablet (hopefully this sticks around)
- Headers and images that span the full width of your screen
- Masonry tile post layout <http://www.nypl.org/>
- One page layout <http://jacksonvilleartwalk.com/>
- Parallax <http://www.spaceneedle.com/home/> (this site also features an up scroll which is super cool and makes total sense)
- Sliding sections <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek>

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art 2 – content creation

Taking all the ideas from your web exploration – make a map!

- An outline in word
- Stickies on the wall (take a picture so the janitorial staff doesn't clean up your project)
- Doodles
- PowerPoint

What will be on the main menu, the submenus, the footer, sidebars...?

Here's an example from the Phillips Academy archives site redesign.

Home
(one paragraph introduction to history, mission, collections)

About
Brief prose history of the school followed by a more in depth history of the Archives and Special Collections.
[key dates/donations/early archivists/what we collect...]

Using the Archives
What the archives is here for. Documenting /teaching/learning. Open to public, students, faculty and administrators. The kind of questions can range from __ to ____.

Our Collections
Overview of what we collect. Refer to Donating page. Lay out categories of collections which appear in the dropdown menu.

Donating
Explanation of what a donation of materials can mean for the school. Past donors and notable research projects made possible.

Link to alumni relations.

Transferring Records
Why transfer records? Refer to mission and mandate

Mission statement
[use content on current landing page]

PA/AA Historic Calendar
[from current chronology]

Hours & location
[include directions]

Contact
[Online reference request form]

FAQ
Who can use
Motto
Seal
Presidents
Abbott merger
Would you like my PA stuff

Research at PA
[who can use the collections]

Faculty/curriculum support

Administrative research

Planning a visit
[include directions]

Permissions

Reproductions

Guidelines for handling archival materials.

PA/Abbot Records

Personal Archives

PA/Abbot Publications

Scrapbook collections

Photograph collections

Special Collections and Rare books

Additional resources
Vertical Files.
Primary sources coll.
Selected bibliography
Complementary coll.

Collections Online

What to donate
[overview of the categories of materials we collect]

The donation process

Gift agreement

How we care for your collections
[include directions]

What records to transfer

E-records

Maintaining active records
What should not be transferred yet, or destroyed.
Email management

How to transfer records
Include sample box list

Restricted or confidential listing
How and why and when this is appropriate.

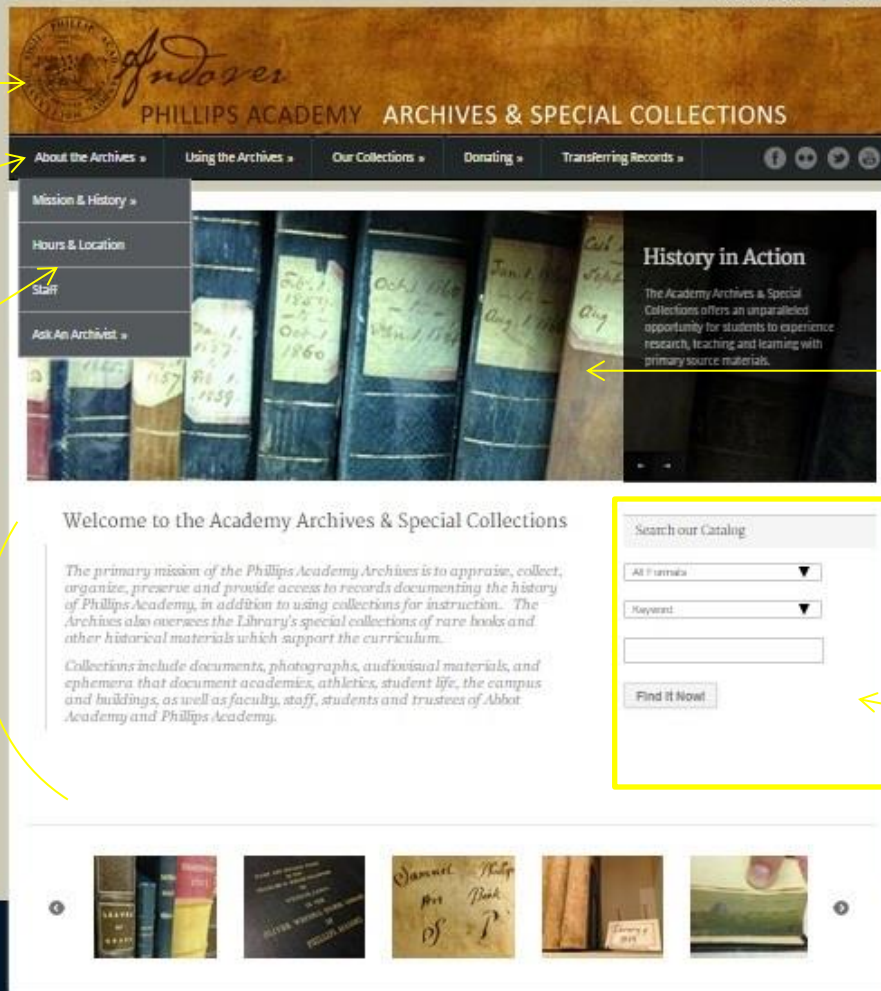
Header banner with logo

Main navigation

Sub navigation dropdown

Main content area

Banner, navigation and footer are visible on all pages



Social media icons

Homepage banner image

Search box code entered into a "text" widget in the sidebar

Custom menu widget in footer area

More Collections at PA

- The Addison Gallery of American Art
- The Community and Multicultural Development (CAMD) Library
- The Oliver Wendell Holmes Library
- The Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology
- The Sidney H. Nashel Map Collection
- The William B. Calk Music Library

Contact Us

Name

Email

Message

Submit

Quick Links

- Cite primary sources
- request an appointment
- find school history
- donate to the archives

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art 2 – content creation

Examples

Following are live examples of sites I've worked on that were created in WordPress. Each one uses a .org installation and is hosted through a different service.

<http://www.noblenet.org/owhl/academy-archives> - site under construction

<http://www.andover.edu/library>

<http://www.waldorfmoraine.org>

<http://theaterintheopen.org>

To find more examples trying doing a Google keyword search

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art 2 – content creation

Now that you know what content area's you plan on having. You can start writing your actual content.

(This is the hard part.)

But first...

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art 2 – content creation

Words are great – but let's talk pictures.

You don't need Photoshop (but if you can get it why not take the plunge) and many public libraries or educational institutions have subscriptions to Lynda.com (they have a pretty good website) that has online tutorials

Other options are: Picmonkey.com, MS paint, and to a degree Firefox. (right click then "View Page Info", for Mac users this is the two finger click)

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art 3 – making it happen

useful links

ONLINE RESOURCES

The WordPress Codex — <http://codex.wordpress.org/>

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) — <http://www.w3.org/>

ASCII character code list — <http://character-code.com/>

Table code generator — http://www.tablesgenerator.com/html_tables

Hex to RGB colors — <http://www.javascripter.net/faq/hextorgb.htm>

Online photo editor — <http://www.picmonkey.com/>

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

WordPress — <https://wordpress.org/>

WIX — <http://www.wix.com/>

SquareSpace — <http://www.squarespace.com/>

Open Scholar — <http://theopenscholar.org/>

HOSTING SERVICES

A Small Orange — <http://asmallorange.com/>

Pressable — <http://pressable.com/>

Bluehost — <http://www.bluehost.com/>

DreamHost — <http://www.dreamhost.com/>

Laughing Squid — <https://laughingsquid.us/>



Part 3 – making it happen

terminology

hosting – In order to publish a website online, you need a host server where all your data will live. The Web host stores all the pages and associated information of your website and makes them available to computers connected to the Internet.

Domain name/URL – When a visitor enters your domain name into a browser, the domain is then translated into your host server IP address, then the server sends that user your site files, which their browser represents to them as a typical web-page. According to Wikipedia “the domain name is a component of a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) used to access web sites, for example:

URL: <http://www.example.net/index.html>

Top-level domain name: net

Second-level domain name: example.net

Host name: www.example.net

Website vs blog – A blog is a type of a website (Web log= Blog), whereas a website is a more general term (site on web=website) – all blogs are websites but not all websites are blogs. The basic difference between a blog and a website is for the most part a difference in how data is being formatted.

Blogs tend to:

- Contain “posts” rather than pages
- Be added to chronologically
- Allow comments
- Tag information for easy searching

Web sites tend to:

- Contain pages, and sometimes posts
- Be fairly static
- Be closed to public comment
- Have a page hierarchy

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art 3 – making it happen

terminology

Content management system (CMS) – A content management system is an online application that has been designed to allow non-technical users to create, edit and manage a website. It provides the framework (HTML, PHP, CSS) and you provide the content.

Theme – A theme includes a set of templates, functions and style sheets that define what information is displayed and how it looks. Depending on the theme there is a greater or lesser ability to make minor adjustments to the look/feel of a theme.

Widgets – Widgets are tools that can be added to pages, generally in sidebars, that have a discrete application and are used/viewed by the site visitor. Examples include: tag clouds, counters, contact forms, twitter timeline.

Plugins – Like widgets plugins are tools that are added to a site to increase functionality, but unlike widgets these generally remain behind the scenes and are transparent to visitors

More definitions can be found at the Wordpress Codex Glossary –
<http://codex.wordpress.org/Glossary>



Part 3 – making it happen

HTML cheat sheet

Text Tags

<h[1-6]> heading
 or, bold text
 or, <i> italic text

Formatting Tags

<div> page section
 inline section
 <p> paragraph

 line break
 spaces
 <hr /> horizontal rule

Linking Tags

 page link
 email link
 anchor
 link to anchor

Image Tags

 Basic Image
 src="url" URL of image (required!)
 alt="text" Alternate Text (required!)

List Tags

 ordered list
 unordered list
 list item

Table Tags

<table> table
 <thead> table header
 <tr> table row
 <th> header cell
 <td> table cell
 cell padding=" "
 Cell spacing=" "

Attributes

<tag attribute1="value" attribute2="value">
 size=" " thickness in pixels (px)
 width=" " width in px or %
 height=" " height in px or %
 border=" " border thickness in px
 vspace=" " above and below in px
 hspace=" " on either side in px
 color="HEX#" color
 Bgcolor="HEX#" background color

Styles

<tag style="attribute: value;" >
 <p style="margin-left:1.0in;">
 <td style="text-align: left; vertical-align: top;">

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art 4 – download and do

All together now:

Go to wordpress.com,
register for a free blog,
and start experimenting.

Q uestions?

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