A detailed explanation of the WordPress platform

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WORDPRESS

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What is WordPress?

WHAT IS WORDPRESS?

WordPress is a free tool for developing dynamic websites. Originally developed as a blogging software, this robust platform gives web developers and computer users a chance to build interesting websites with no strings attached.

WordPress is free to use unlike trial versions that offer limited capabilities. WordPress, open source platform depends on the Developer community for testing and developing the software. Support is available via forums. In absence of

community, WordPress will not be as robust and may not even exist.

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How to install WordPress?

HOW TO INSTALL WORDPRESS?

WordPress (WP) is free to install on the servers and the WordPress.com blog site quickly and easily gets installed online. However, installation between the two differs. WordPress.com stores files on the server and you need an account for installing it. But when you install WordPress on the server, you can bypass WordPress.com. The storage of blog data is via the hosting server. This way, DIY management of WordPress site is easy and you do not have to go via WordPress.com.
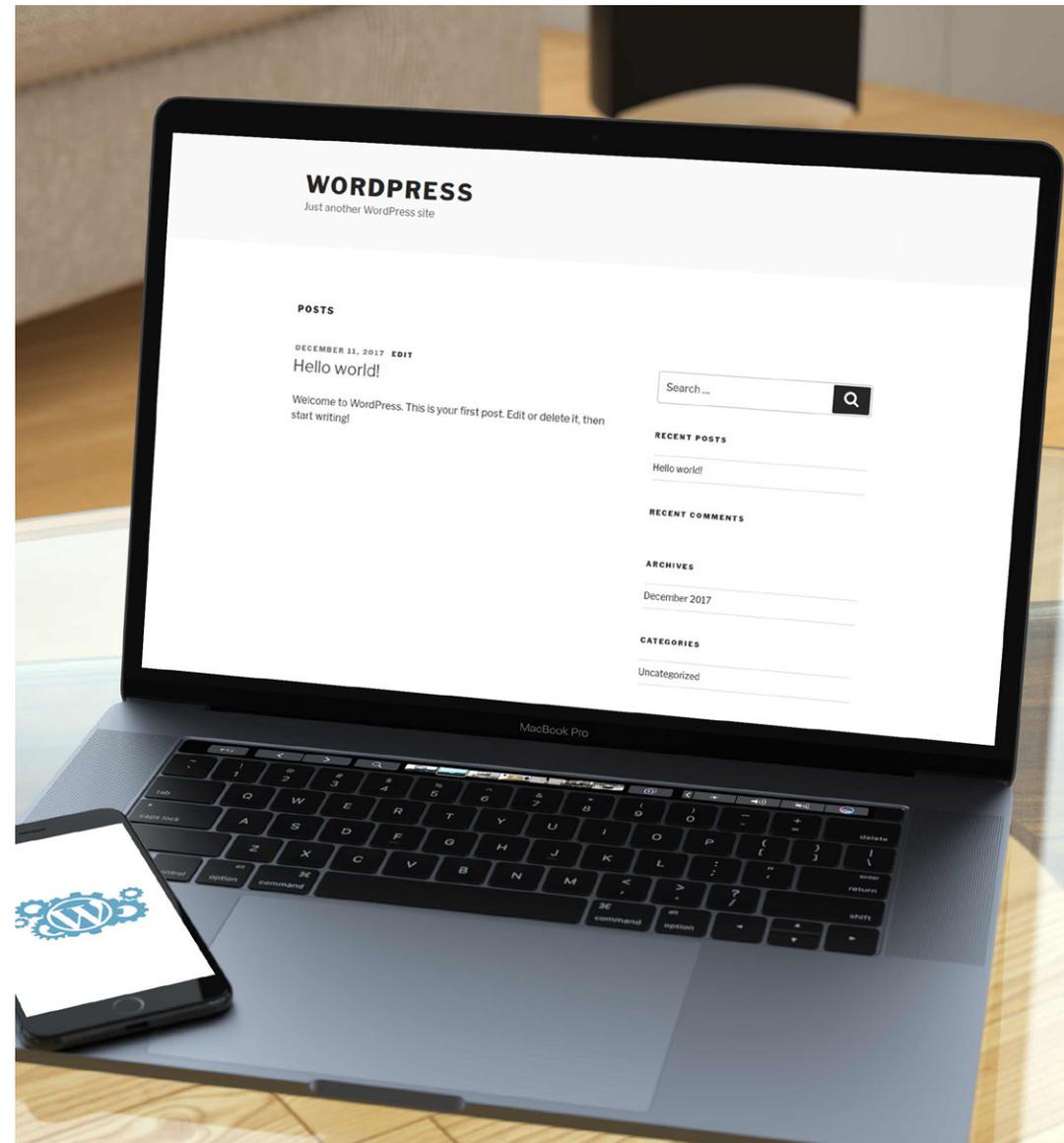
WordPress installation on the server can be via Softaculous or through manual software installation. Servers having cPanel Softaculous installation need a couple of clicks for installation. Softaculous configures databases, uploads files, and do the installation setup without involving file download or configurations.

Softaculous installation is not present on dedicated servers and VPS because it needs the paid license. But you can install WordPress through file download followed by server uploads. You need to create database user and database, upload files with file manager or FTP and server configuration of wp-config.php file.

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Which types of website can be built with WordPress

WHICH TYPES OF WEBSITE CAN BE BUILT WITH WORDPRESS

When WordPress originally came out in 2003, it was a blogging platform. However, the community soon realized its capability, i.e., the WordPress platform can be used for creating different types of websites using thousands of pre-installed templates. So what kind of website could be designed via WordPress? Let us look.

Business sites:

Launch business websites with WP, sell merchandise online, promote business, or

build brand.

Review sites:

Their sites were reviewing products and other sites with WordPress. This platform makes it easy to organize things into categories and options.

Informative site:

Create instructional sites for anything under the sun easily with WP.

Photo Gallery:

WP has innumerable plug-ins to customize the installation. Use the plug-ins for converting installation to portfolio or photo gallery.

Personal site:

Create websites and family sites for promotions with blogging easily with WP.
The best thing about WordPress is that it is highly customizable so it offers limitless options for building sites.
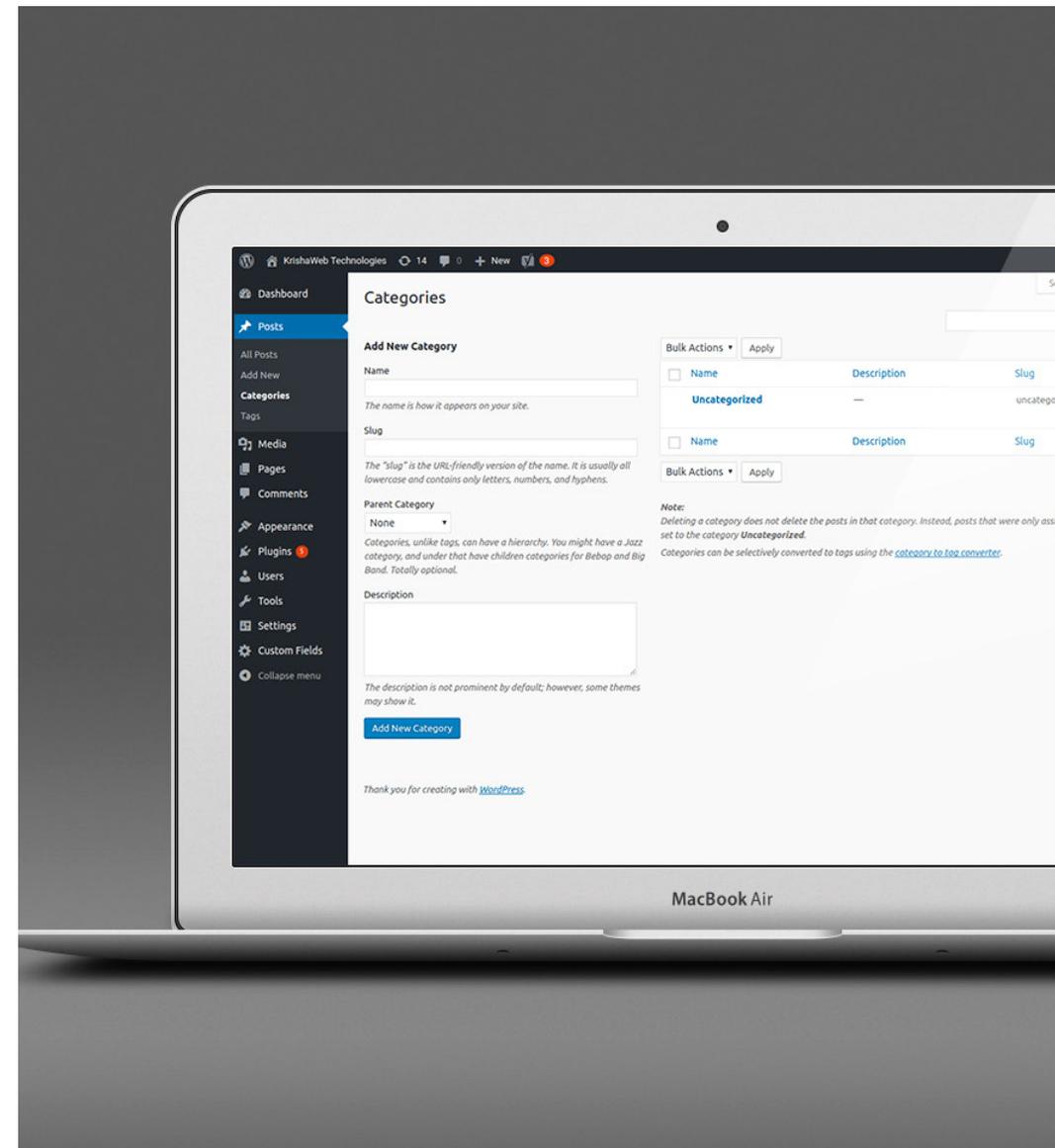
Understanding the WordPress dashboard

UNDERSTANDING THE WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

Upon logging onto WP website, you come to the admin area homepage that displays the dashboard. This provides website overview and displays quick links to perform common tasks like quick draft writing and replying to current comments. A dashboard is used for simple website updates and statistics.

Multiple widgets are present on the dashboard and you can enable or disable them as per the need. Configuration

options of widgets are available and for accessing them hover over title bar, click on configure link when it appears. Example: Drag and drop for proper positioning of widgets, roll them by clicking on down arrow.

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How to Use the WordPress Dashboard

HOW TO USE THE
WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

On the right-hand upper corner of the WP dashboard, you will find pull-down tabs with labels 'Help' and 'Screen Options'. When you click on Screen Options, this brings up the customization options related to the dashboard. Turn off/on widgets based on what you want to be hidden/shown at a given time. Simply uncheck widgets to remove and this hides them automatically. Beginners may not alter default dashboard but WP facilitates
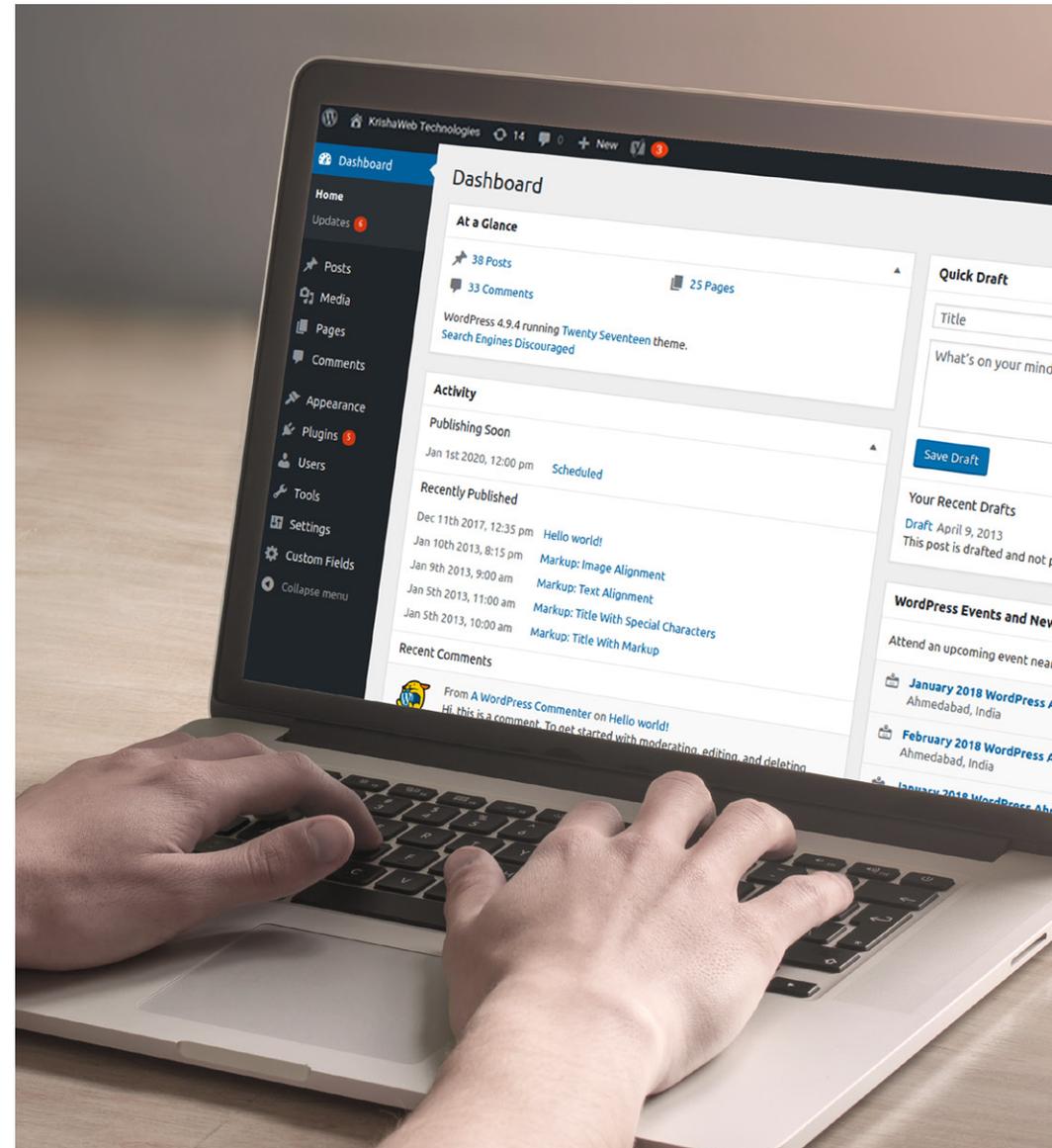
minimization of the widgets for drag them to new locations. For example, you might want to place the frequently used widgets at prominent positions. Find the needed information with 'Help' tab regarding customization with helpful links for support and documentation.

Move over sidebar to find buttons for access to the different website areas. Upon the selection of menu items list of the sub-menu items appear below. Hovering over the mouse on the buttons displays sub-menu. Click on them for easy access to various site subsections.

The main menu items include:

Dashboard:

Receive statistics and updates regarding websites here. The home admin page displays the dashboard and gives general website overview.

Posts:

Create, manage posts on blogs along with management of categories and tags.

Media:

This is for the management of the library of media content as audio, video, and images.

Pages:

This is for the creation and the management of site pages.

Comments:

Use this to manage the feedback from the visitors.

Appearance:

Use this for choosing the themes, setting up widgets, creation of the menu for custom navigation and more.

Plugins:

It gives the users an ability to extend website capabilities and facilitates their management, activation, and deactivation.

Users:

It facilitates management and viewing the users on the site. Use this to edit personal profile, with options for changing a password, screen name, and email address.

Tools:

It provides powerful options and tools to import and export content.

Settings:

It maintains the bulk site options such as name permalink setting and the privacy of the websites.

Admin Bar:

Located on the top of the page, it provides an access to the commonly used information and features.

Changing Your Password:

For this navigate to profile at 'Users' and 'Your Profile'. There is a place for entering the new

password on the page bottom with another box for confirming the same. Strength indicators assist in the creation of strong passwords for users. Replace old password with 'Update Profile'.

Settings to Change Immediately after Setup:

Navigate to the 'Settings' followed by 'General'. Now verify time zone and email. If needed add personal www address. Navigate to 'Settings', 'Permalinks'. The page determines the appearance of page addresses and blog posts. Choose the preferred structure.

Next Steps:

From this point, one can understand the basic settings and move on to better and bigger things.

Most users consider WordPress dashboard as the page to click on admin menu for navigating to the specific page. Others consider it a nuisance filled with some useless widgets. Once you can control the dashboard, it becomes an amazing tool, a place for saving ideas, replying to

comments, and viewing statistics of current traffic. WordPress provides tools for controlling the dashboard but it is up to the users to optimize the benefits.

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Installing a theme

INSTALLING A THEME

Are you looking to install a WordPress theme?

Beginners keep on hearing about numerous paid and free WordPress themes. When starting out, it is normal to try themes on site to find the most appropriate one. The following guide contains systematic instructions on installing WordPress themes to help beginners. It covers 3 ways of installation.

Before You Install a WordPress Theme

As anyone that has done this before knows
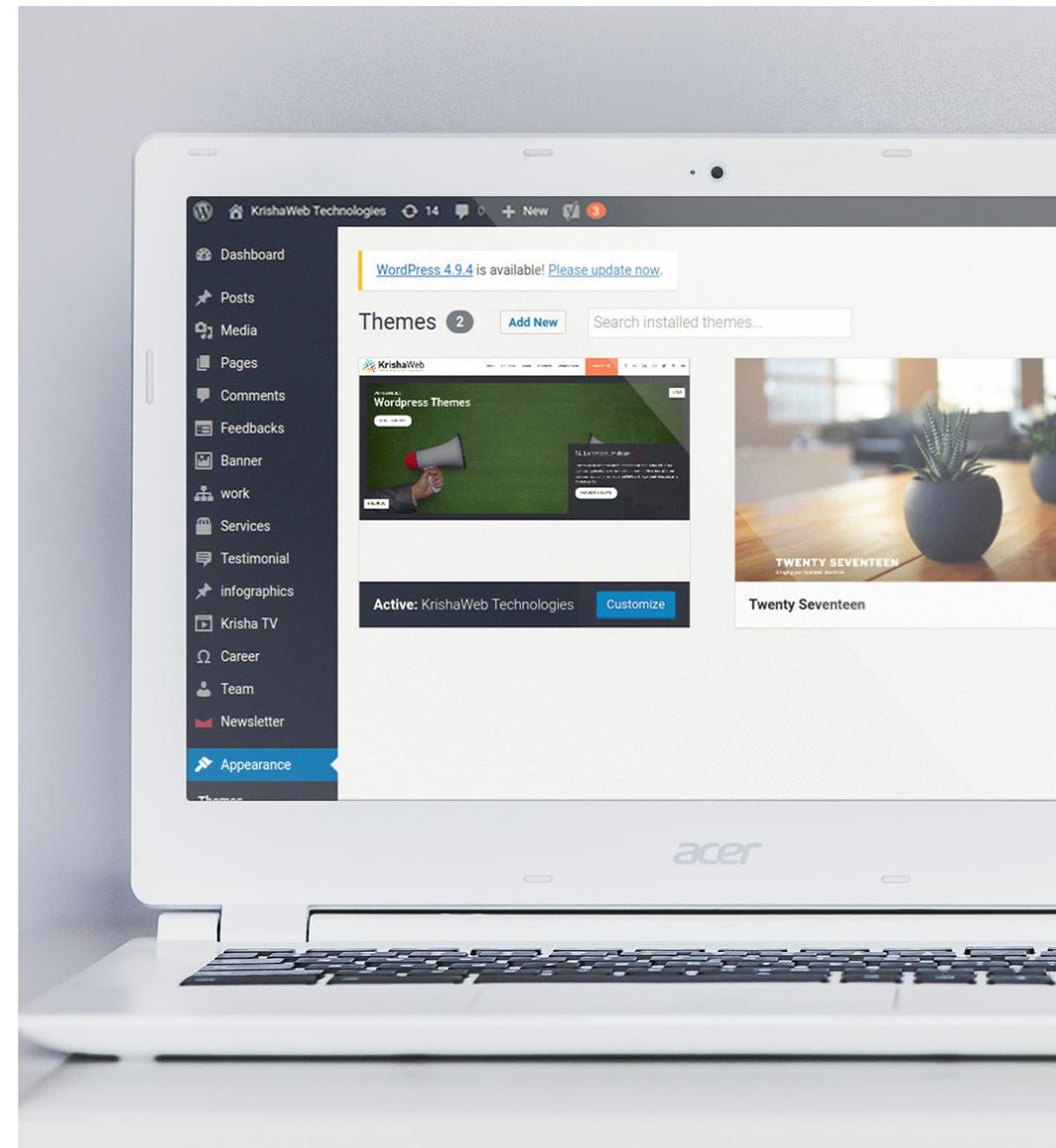
very well installation of the themes is an easy process. Upon activation of the new theme, it changes the function and appearance of the website in some ways.

Install a Theme using WordPress Admin Theme Search

When installing the free themes from WordPress.org directory use the admin search functionality.

- Login to admin area
- Click 'Appearance' then 'Themes'
- On themes click on 'Add New' (button) on top
- Select from Popular, Featured, or Latest themes

This allows you to search for themes with specific features or specific themes. Install a theme by bringing the mouse on the image top which reveals install button, details button and preview button. Click on install button to start the installation.

Install a Theme by using Upload Method from WordPress Admin

Use this method for installing custom and premium commercial themes from iThemes, ThemeLab, or StudioPress. Download .zip file for the theme you purchase.

- On admin area click 'Appearance' then 'Themes'
- On themes page go to 'Add New' on top
- Click 'Upload Theme' on next screen
- Choose the downloaded zip file
- Click on 'Install Now'

Installing a WordPress Theme using FTP

Take themes to next level with the advanced method that the true beginners will find a tad difficult to do. For this connect to the host via FTP and go to the path '/wp-content/themes/'; now upload the required theme folder there. Before the theme upload do unzip folders and once done go to the admin area, click Appearance then Themes. Find the uploaded theme

and bring cursor there and click activate button.

The systematic approach would help you to install the WordPress themes on site successfully.

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Creating pages and publishing posts

CREATING PAGES
AND PUBLISHING POSTS

Upon setup and installation of the WordPress site, you will come across menu tabs on dashboard sidebar related to pages and posts. Using them might seem confusing to the beginners. Understanding the difference between pages and posts would prove to be helpful.

Pages:

The commonest pages are - About,
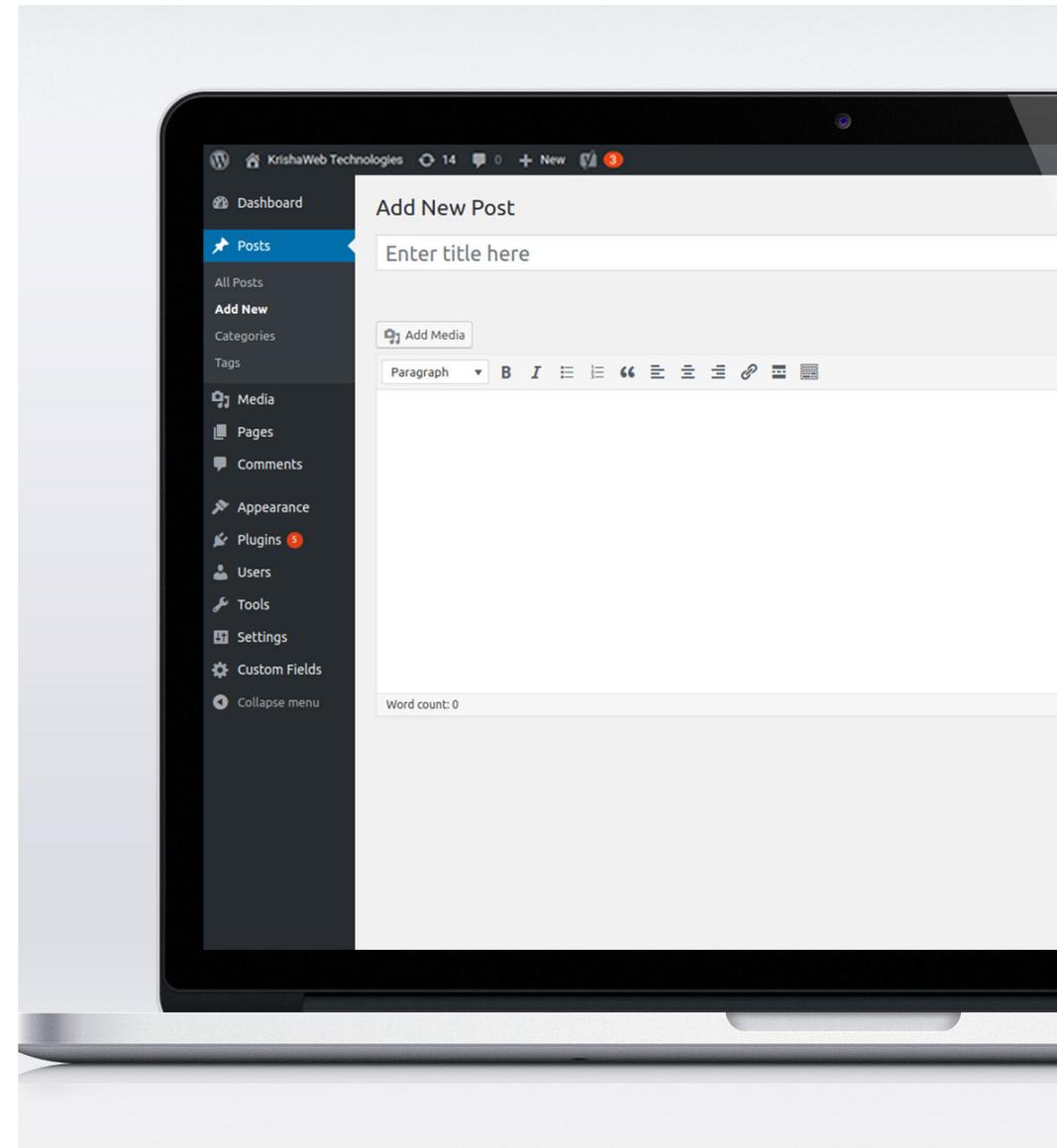
Services, Contact, Blog, TOC & Privacy

Page Attributes:

Create WP pages and add them to parent page to create the hierarchy. Complete this by using the drop-down menu present under page attributes on Edit Page.

Page Templates:

The big advantage of using pages is the template selection feature. With different themes offering different templates, it is possible to install the plugin for using page templates for posts.

Order Number:

This is the page order in the menu and when you want page displayed as the second item on menu enter 1. It displays page following home page, in the main menu.

Editing Pages:

Click on 'Pages', then 'All Pages' to find a list of pages created, saved as drafts or published.

Delete, edit or view pages easily with bulk delete or edit feature available as well.

Posts:

These are different from pages. Assign these to category and have better navigation with post tag addition. Blog page displays the posts listed from the newest to the oldest.

Creating New Posts:

Click on 'Add New' on Posts Tab. Add a title to write the blog post. Insert media as audio, video, and images. Create links to pages and posts externally or within website domain.

Assigning Posts to a Category:

This is important or it goes to an uncategorized category by default.

Tags:

Use this to group related content and fine-tune navigation.

Publishing, Saving & Previewing Posts:

After adding post content save this as a draft, publish it later, preview, or publish on the

website.

Featured Images:

Display this on the archive page of blog near post content excerpt.

Sticky Posts:

Use this to keep posts on top of the blog page.

Changing Posts to Pages & Vice Versa:

This is easy to do using the plug-in. The flexibility of posts is more than the pages. Learn to customize files for using different formats and templates.

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Creating categories for your site

CREATING CATEGORIES FOR YOUR SITE

Organize posts conveniently with WordPress categories. Have child and parent category, make hierarchical arrangement for posts, or place single posts in multiple categories. This helps you to achieve flexibility of showing the exact posts needed in menus, widgets, or in WordPress theme directly.

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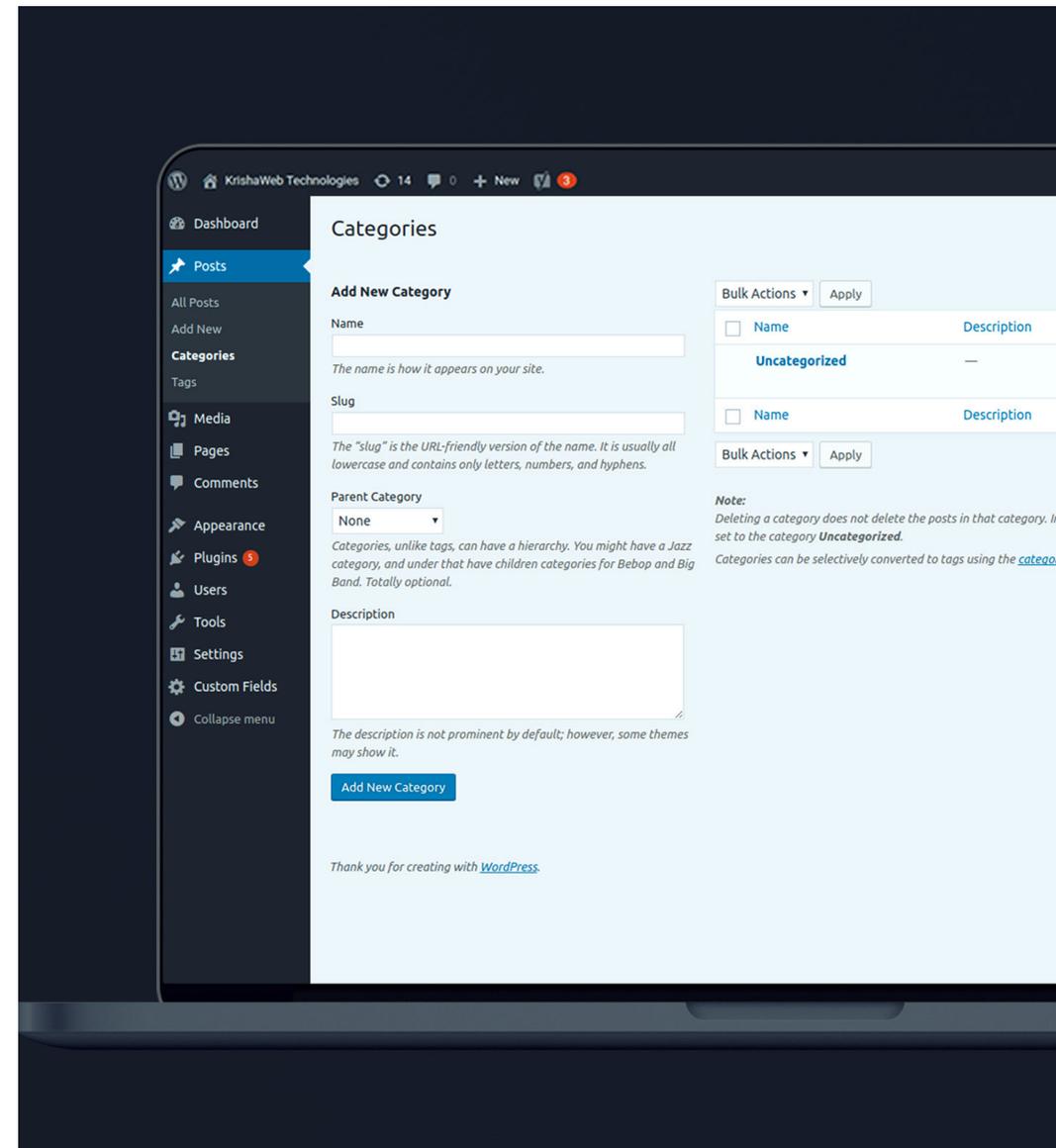
How to create WordPress categories

HOW TO CREATE WORDPRESS CATEGORIES

Access 'Posts Categories', the left page side has a tab for creating categories. Fill category name, slug for use in category URLs, and category description, now press 'Add New Category'. If you want, create sub-category complete with name, assign the original category as the parent of the new one. Press 'Add New Category' again for saving the sub-category.

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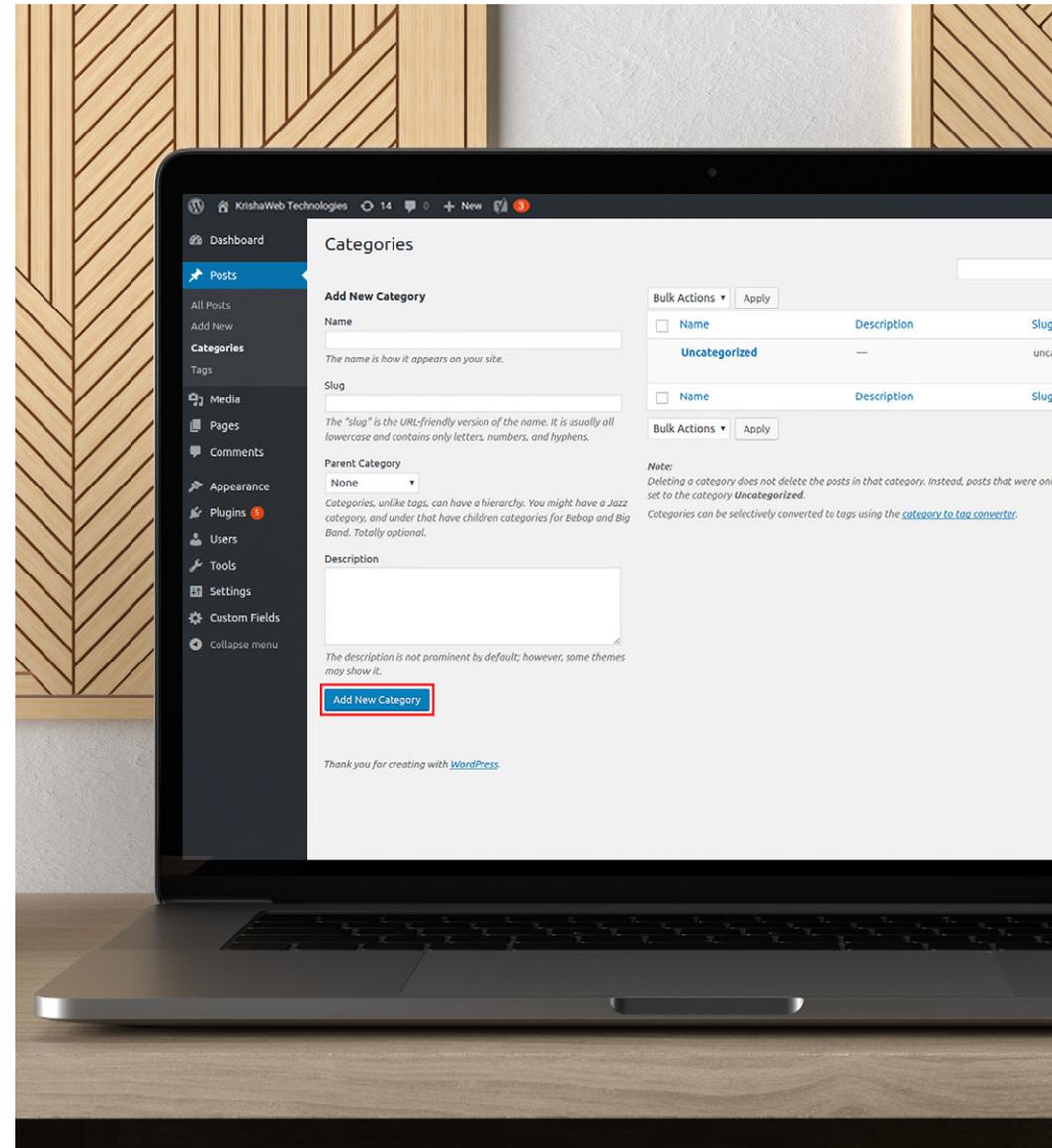
How to assign posts to categories

HOW TO ASSIGN POSTS TO CATEGORIES

After creating category structure, add posts by writing new or opening an old post. Now place a checkbox in the category for assignment. You can also add bulk posts to the category by going to 'Posts, 'All Posts', now select posts for adding to the category, click 'Bulk Actions', 'Edit', press 'Apply' button. Edit settings for selected posts and 'Categories', select category for adding a post, now click 'Update'.
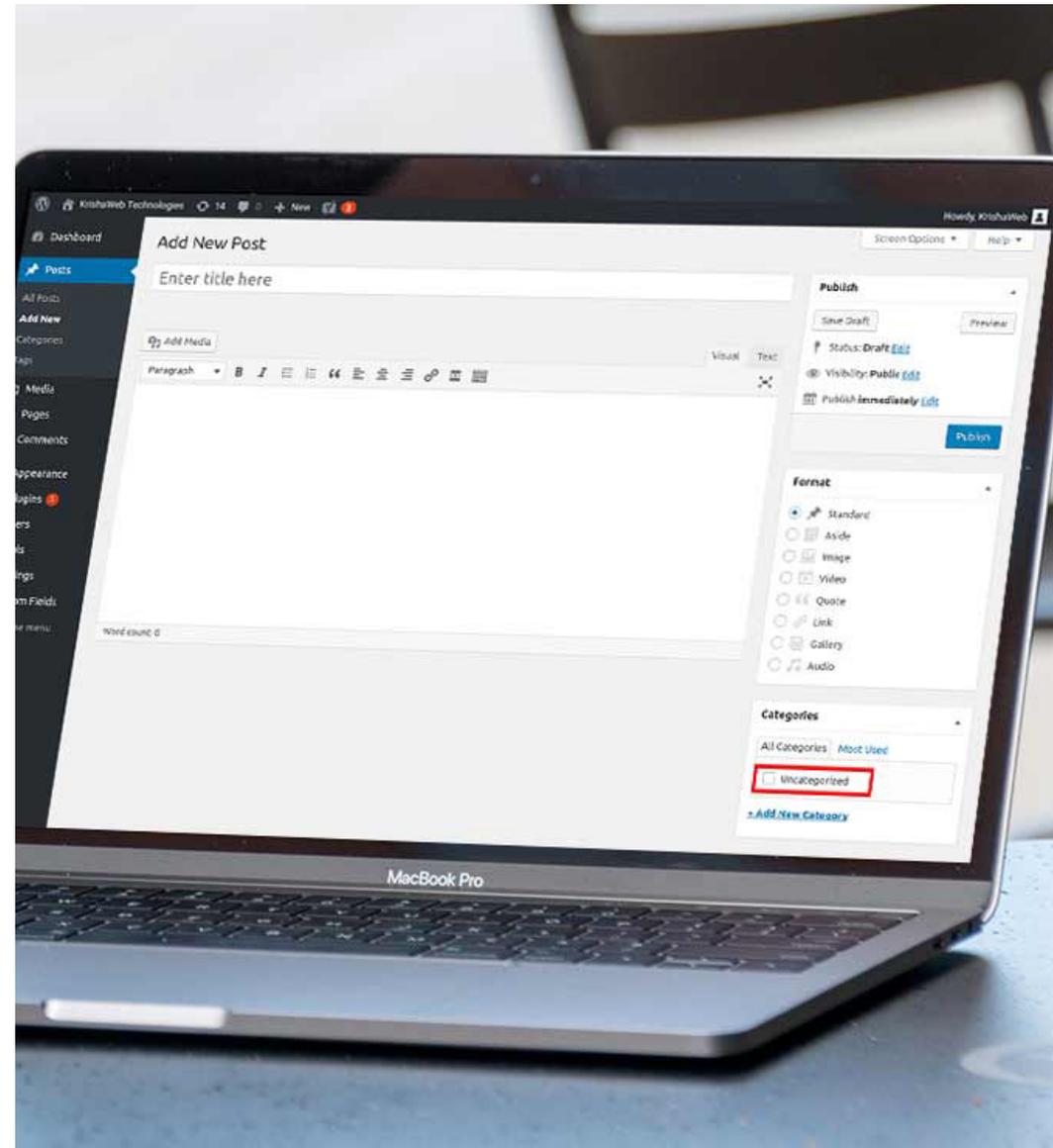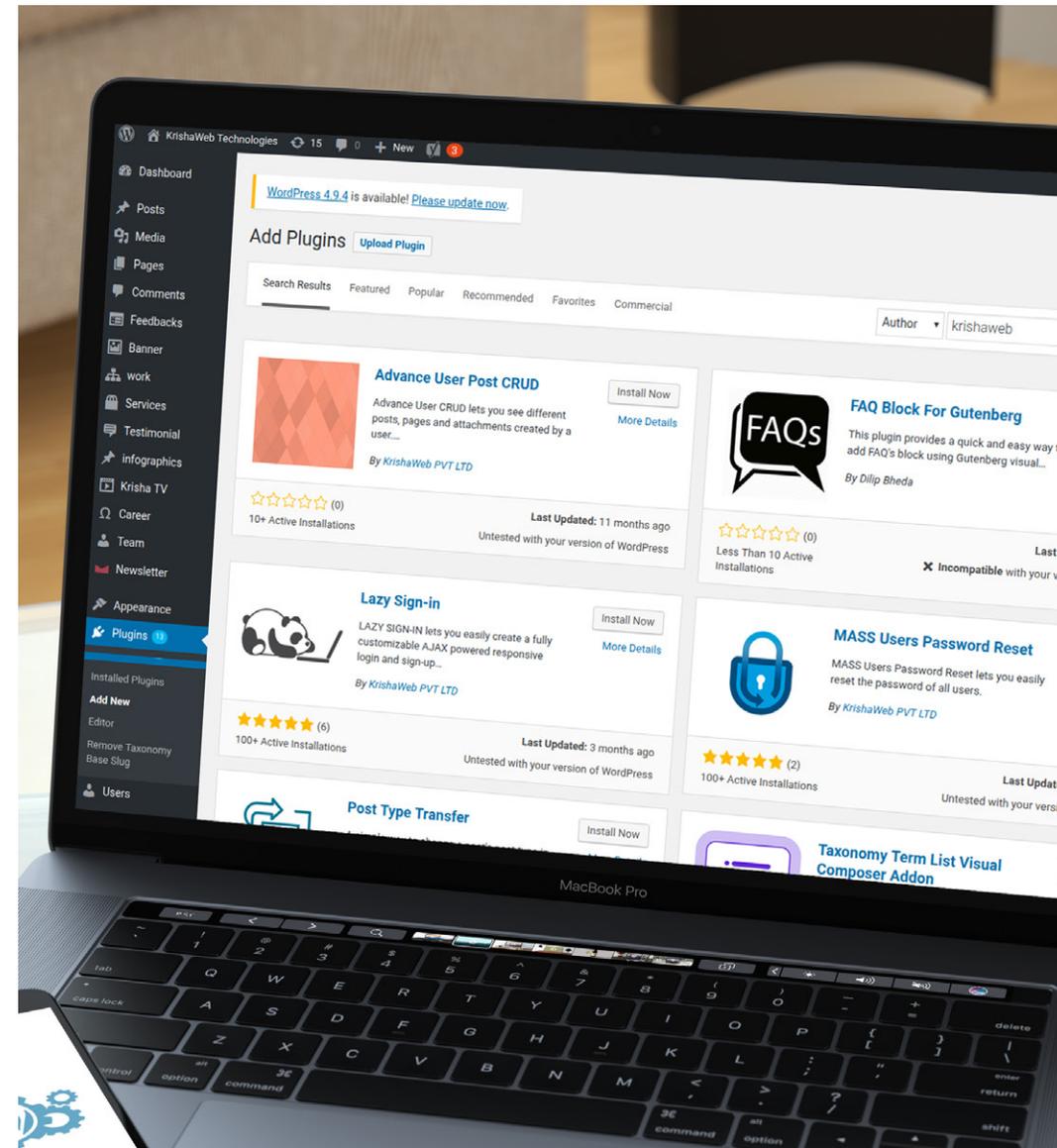
How to install WordPress plugins

HOW TO INSTALL
WORDPRESS PLUGINS

WordPress plugins expand the site and improve experiences for owners and visitors. You can have the site without single active plug-in but the admins require some for starting the blog. The plugins increase with time and for this reason, new bloggers must learn about plugin installation for WP.

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Use Search Plugins feature in WordPress

USE SEARCH PLUGINS FEATURE IN WORDPRESS

Plug in installation from WP directory does not involve movement from dashboard because you can browse the available plug-ins in the repository in the search box. Go through details of each plug-in, install directly from the list.

- **Featured:** These are the WordPress recommended plug-ins and you can use tags for searching plug-ins on the page bottom.
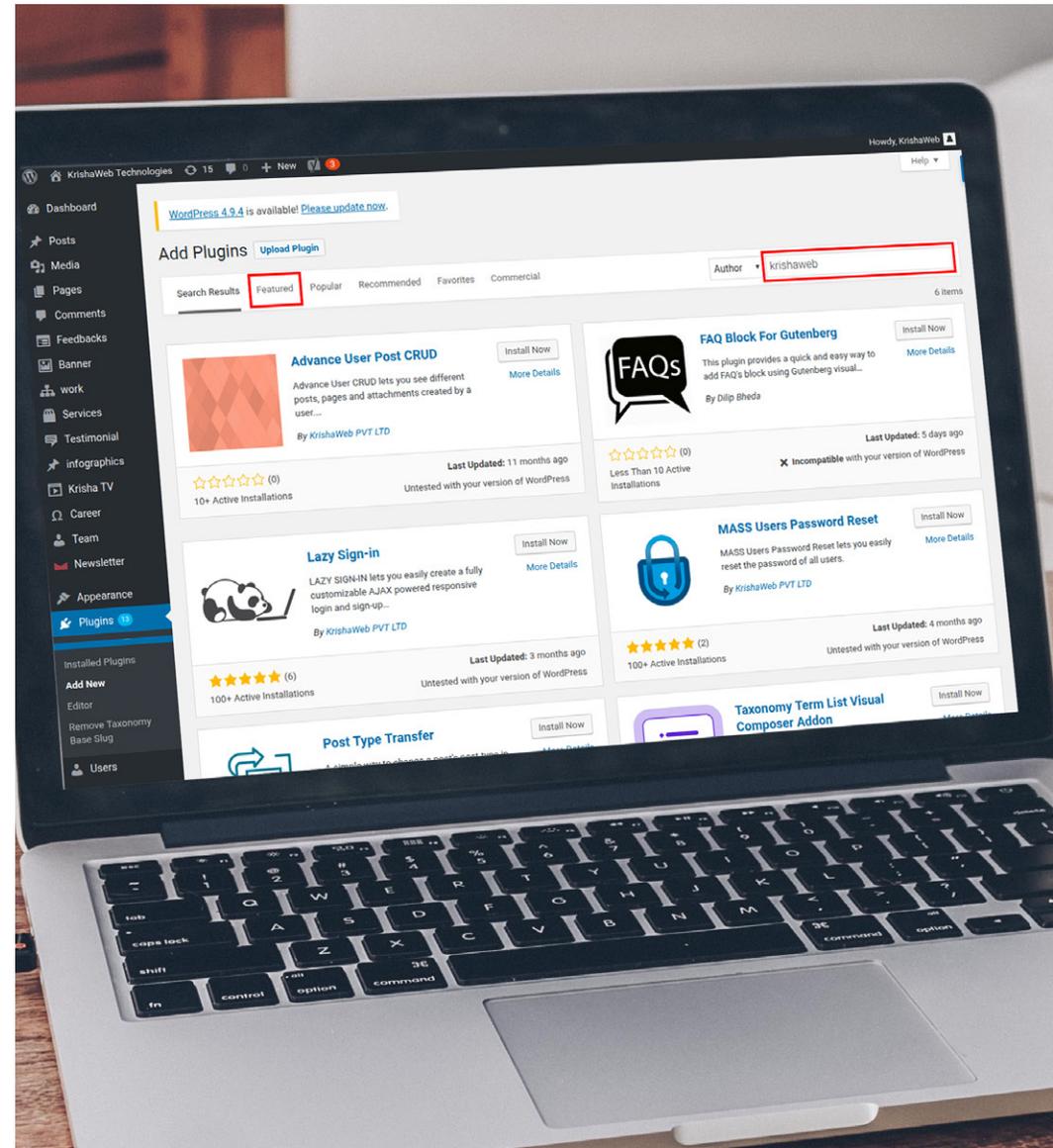
- **Recommended:** These are suggestions based on already installed plug-ins.

- **Most popular:** Complete plug-in list of 40,000+ sorted by the popularity.

- **Favorite plug-ins:** Mark plug-ins as favorite to make them appear here.

- **Search:** Here, you can type keywords for finding plugins to match the required criteria.

Install Plugin

Use functions and tabs for finding the matching plug-in list for installation. Click on a plug-in name; follow 'more details' to get additional information on this extension. View the rating, developer, active install numbers, compatibility info, and last update time. When the installation finishes, you will get information and the button label changes to 'Activate'. After activation, WP redirects you to active plug-in lists.

Upload a plugin through WordPress Admin

For installation of plug-ins outside official directory manual upload is necessary. Click

'Plugins', 'Add New', click on 'Upload Plugin'. For .zip format plugin click 'Choose File'. Select ZIP file on the computer, click on 'Install Now', and wait for WP for installation completion.

Install a Plugin via FTP upload

This is for the advanced users and involves manual upload files to the server. Now you can activate plug-in in the admin panel. Just like themes, there are different methods for plug-in installation in WordPress. The first two are for the beginners and for using the third method, you require basic FTP knowledge.

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Explore
WordPress widget

EXPLORE WORDPRESS WIDGET

What are Widgets? Why Do You need to Use Widgets in WordPress?

Add features and content to Sidebars with WP widgets. They were originally for providing simple structure and design control for WP themes. They do not require expertise or code experience. Add, remove, or rearrange them on Theme Customizer, 'Appearance', 'Widgets' in WP Administration Screens. Options and customization is available with some widgets with form filling, information, and data, excludes or includes, optional images,
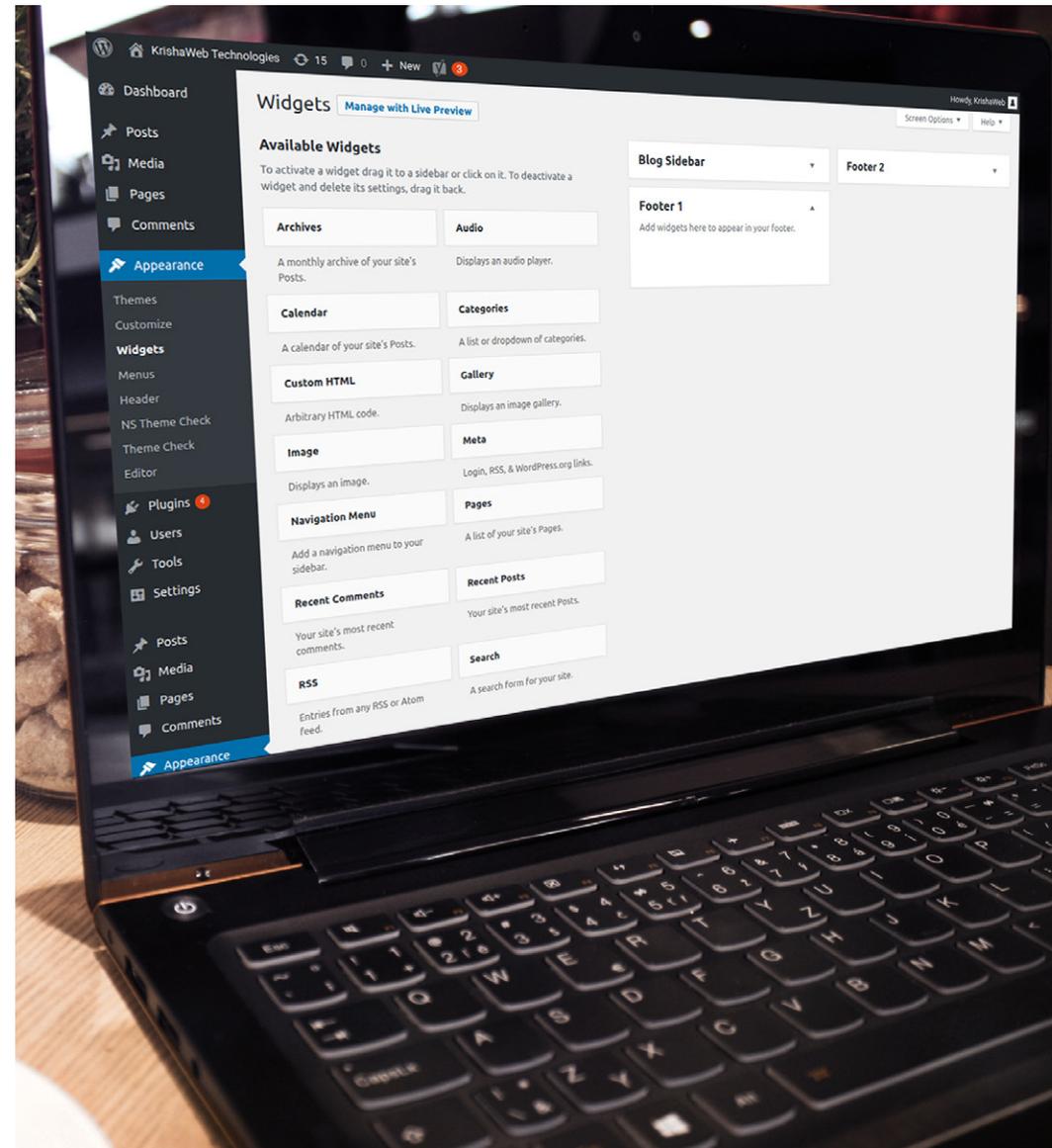
and more.

How to add Widgets to WordPress?

Find widgets on the dashboard, now go to 'Appearance' menu

and to 'Widgets'. Drag-and-drop widgets to available areas and this is the traditional way to add widgets. Widgets are available in 'Customize' within Customizer-based current themes. Add or reorder with Customizer live previews.

How to Remove a Widget in WordPress?

Log into WP dashboard, go to Appearance and then Widgets, and click on adding and removing widgets.

What Kind of Widgets is Available for WordPress?

Default WP installation has built-in widgets as recent posts, comments, search, and archives. Countless plug-ins and themes add widgets allowing the users to add things on sidebars without HTML or code writing.

What Else can you do With WordPress Widgets?

They are incredibly flexible and powerful tools and developers use them in innovative ways. Site owners can use them for adding almost anything to the WordPress site. Those comfortable with the code writing part can create custom widgets.

Best WordPress Widgets worth Checking Out in 2017

- **Flash Toolkit Plugin:** It has 12 customized widgets for empowering Flash Theme. Use this for building multipurpose sites as one-page sites, business sites, food & restaurant sites, and construction sites.

- **Calendar Widgets:** This includes Simple Calendar and Event All-in-One Calendar.

- **Social Media Widget:** This includes Social Icons and Twitter feeds.

- **Facebook Widget:** This includes Facebook Simple Plugin and Facebook Widget.

Securing your website from hackers, spammers and harmful malware

SECURING YOUR WEBSITE FROM HACKERS, SPAMMERS AND HARMFUL MALWARE

Why Protect Your Website from Malware?

As WordPress grows in popularity, the interest among the hackers is increasing as well. Among the 80 million sites powered by WP, over 70% are open to attacks. Many owners mistakenly believe their sites to be secure or consider their blogs or business sites too small. Nothing matters, when it comes to attacks because it will target a vulnerable website. Hackers do not decide

to break into businesses, it happens when it is vulnerable.

Secure the login page and prevent brute force attacks

The standard WP login URL is common knowledge and it is possible to access website backend from there. People use brute force for getting their way inside. Simply add /wp-admin/ or /wp-login.php in end of domain name to get started. Here is what to do with securing the login page.

Set up website lockdown and ban users:

Solve huge problems with lockdown feature in case of failed attempts at login. Get notifications for hacking attempts and repetitive use of wrong passwords.

Use 2-factor authentication:

Here users provide the login details related to two components and the site owner is the decision maker. Use the password and the secret question, code, and characters.

Use email as login:

Use email ID and not username for improved security because predicting username is easy.

Rename your login URL:

Replace login URL to remove 99% chances of brute attacks because it restricts unauthorized entities from accessing the login page.

Adjust your passwords:

Change passwords regularly, improve strength through lowercase and the uppercase letter, special character, and number additions.

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Secure your admin dashboard

SECURE YOUR ADMIN DASHBOARD

Hackers find the dashboard highly engaging and any security loopholes there allows them to do significant damage so it is necessary to take extra care for protection.

Protect the wp-admin directory:

This is the central part of WP website. To secure this use password protect where the owners submit two passwords for access- one for admin area and the other for the login page.
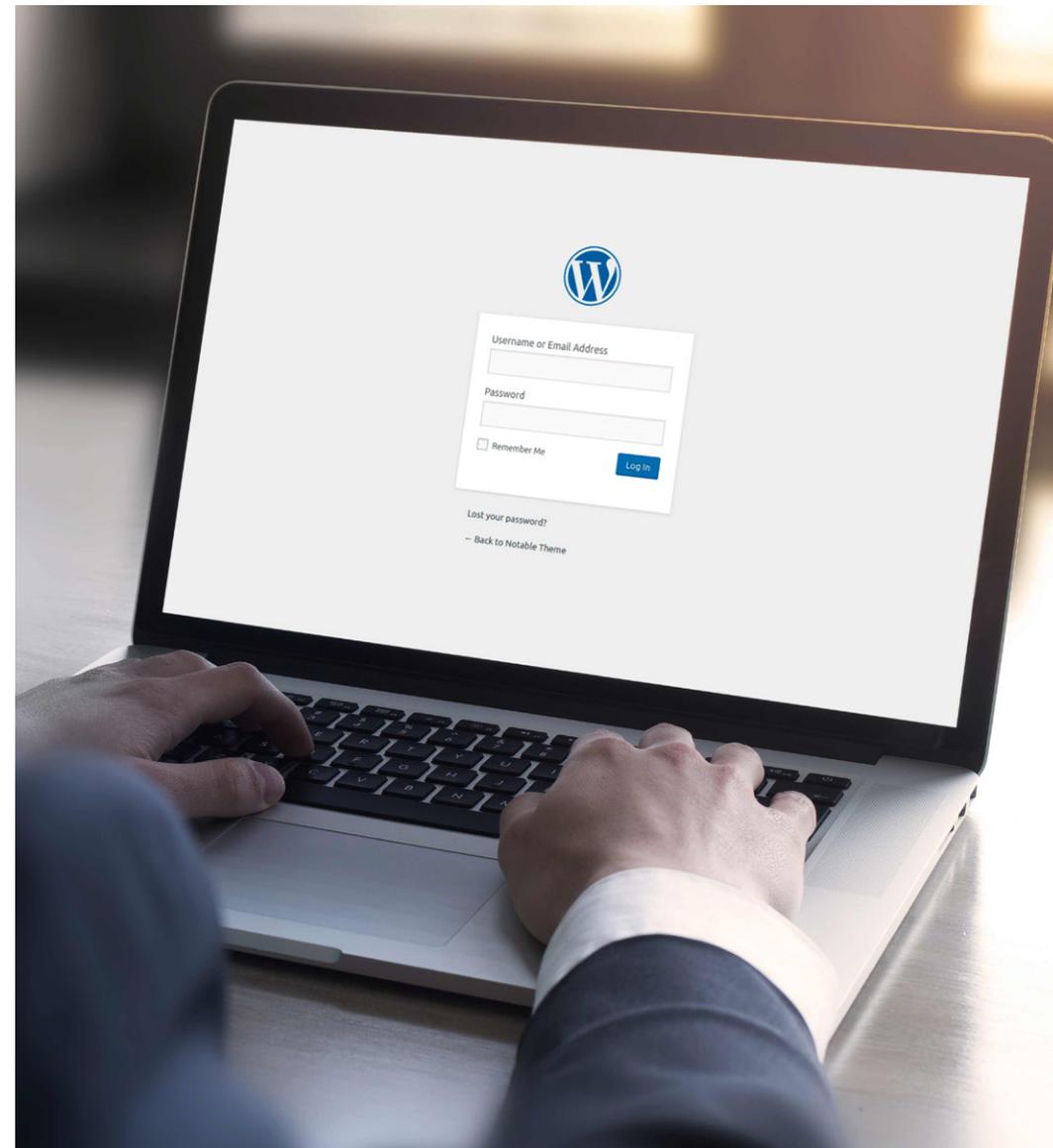
Use SSL to encrypt data:

Secure admin panel with SSL certificate implementation. This way the data transfer becomes secure between server and browser.

Add user accounts with care:

Multiple people access to admin panel increases security threats. Use plugins for users to make their passwords secure.

Change the admin username:

Admin as the username for administrator main account is easy-to-guess username so change this as soon as possible.

Monitor your files:

Use plugins like iThemes Security or Wordfence to monitor website file changes.

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Secure the database

SECURE THE DATABASE

Database stores all the information and data for your site so emphasize on related security.

Change the WordPress database table prefix:

Use of default prefix for wp- table makes the site database open to SQL injection use. It is possible to prevent this attack by using some other term for wp-.

Backup your site regularly:

With backup, restoring the WP site to
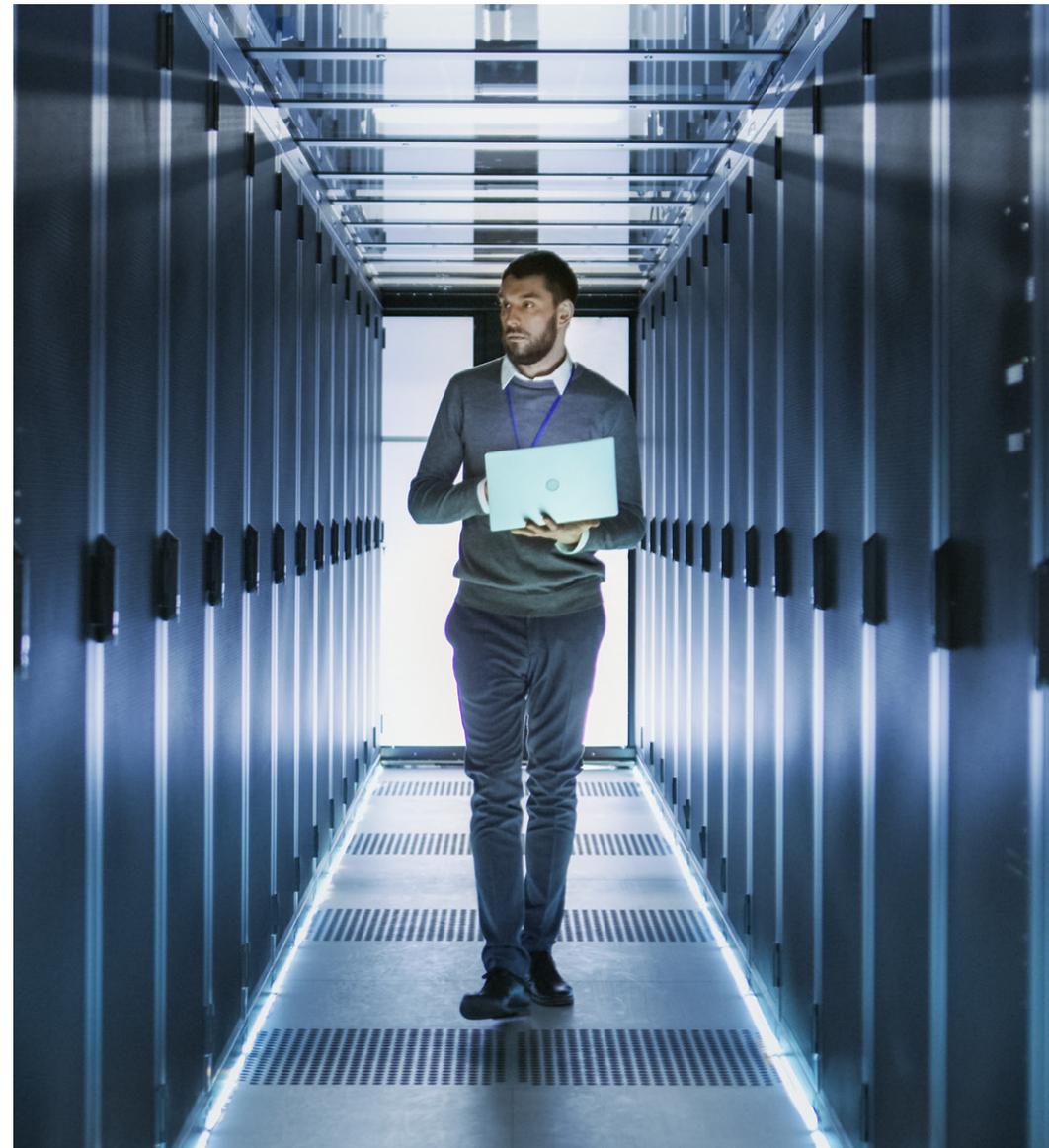
working state is easy. Take help from plug-ins for the purpose.

Set strong passwords for your database:

Use special characters, lowercase, uppercase, and numbers for passwords.

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Secure your hosting setup

SECURE YOUR HOSTING SETUP

They may have optimized WP environment but take one-step further for assured security.

Protect the wp-config.php file:

Protect WP blog core by taking a wp-config.php file to higher levels to the root directory. WordPress sees it easily.

Disallow file editing:

Prohibit this so that even after obtaining admin access for WP dashboard the hacker cannot modify files.

Connect the server correctly:

Connect server only with SSH or SFTP. SFTP is better than FTP because of its security features.

Set directory permissions carefully:

With shared host, error in directory permissions might be fatal. Secure site at hosting level by

changing permissions. Set 755 for directory permission and 644 for file permission. This protects complete file system.

Disable directory listing with .htaccess:

Do this by adding 'Options All –Indexes in .htacess file.

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Secure your WordPress themes and plugins

SECURE YOUR WORDPRESS THEMES AND PLUGINS

For WP site plugins and themes are essential. Do away with related security threats with the following.

Update regularly:

Fix bugs and get vital patches for security with regular updates of themes, plugins and other WP products.

Remove your WordPress version number:

Hide version number from hackers with security plugins.

Conclusion

These steps will get you on the right path of security for your WP sites. Focus on security to make it harder for the hackers.

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