Setting Up Your First Blog

brought to you by Vic Bilson

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So you have finally decided to take the plunge and create your first blog, don't worry this is not as difficult as it might sound. This short guide will help take you through the process and result in you having your own blog ready to be filled with content.

Step One: Choosing a Free or Paid Blog

If you are setting up a blog for your business then it will be worth your while to get a paid blog. All this actually means is that you will be purchasing your own domain name and opening up a hosting account for your blog.
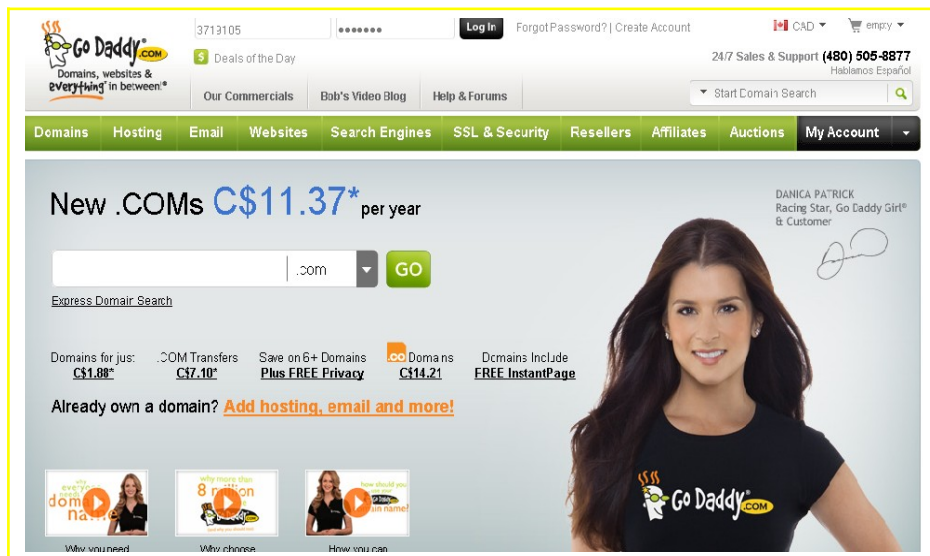
If you just want a personal blog you can opt for a free method by using a service such as blogger dot com. The downside to this is that you could run the potential of waking up one morning and your blog has been shut down. This does happen so this is just a word of warning.

For the purpose of this report we will follow the paid method and create a blog using Wordpress.

Step Two: Choosing a Domain Name

You will need to purchase a domain name for your new blog. This could be your name at dot com or something to describe your business. A domain name will run you around $10 and can be purchased at:
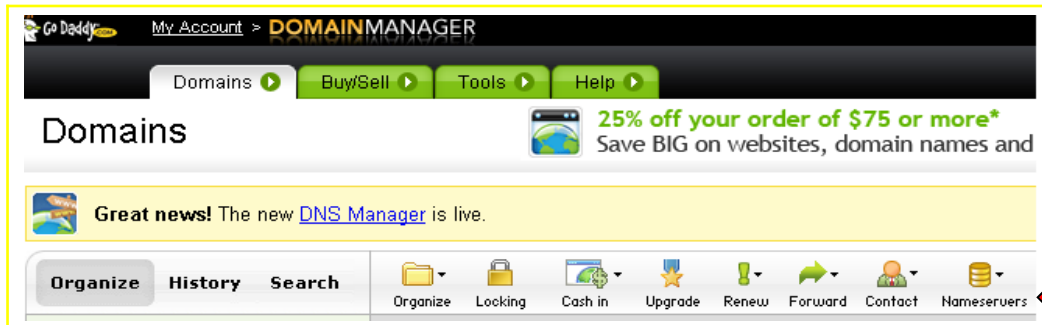
Go Daddy dot com

To save some money you can try doing a quick search for coupon codes which will help get you a cheaper price at final checkout.
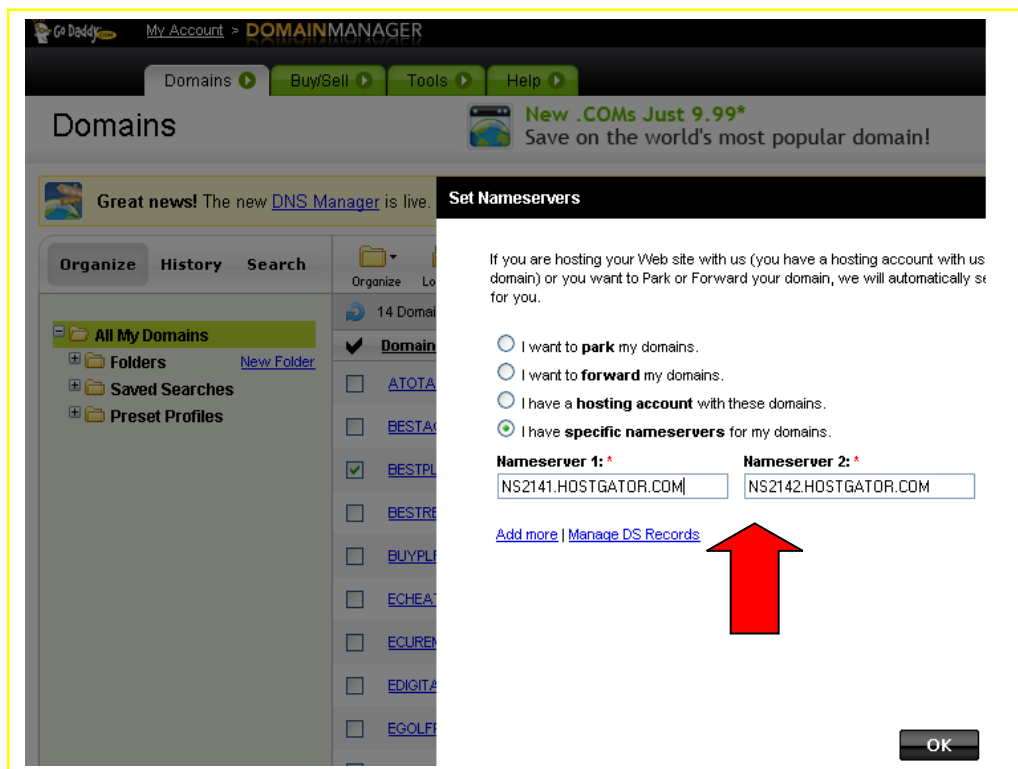
Step Three: Setting Your Name Servers

To do this you will need to login to your godaddy account or the account associated with your domain name.

Click on My Account – Domain Manager and then place a check against your domain name. Look to the right and you will see where it says Name servers and click on this tab.

This will open up the next screen:

After hitting ok your domain will now be redirected to your hosting account. This can take up to twenty four hours to populate but is normally done faster. To get your name server id's you will first need to sign up for a hosting account.

Step Four: Hosting Account

Again there are several hosting accounts that you can use. I prefer to use GVO as they allow you to pay a monthly fee that also includes an income opportunity attached. Some hosting companies offer cheaper rates but don't include the additional web marketing services included in a GVO account. Right now you can get a HostThenProfit account at GVO that allows you to host up to 4 different domains for as low as $19.97.

After creating an account for your domain, use the information provided to set your name servers above.
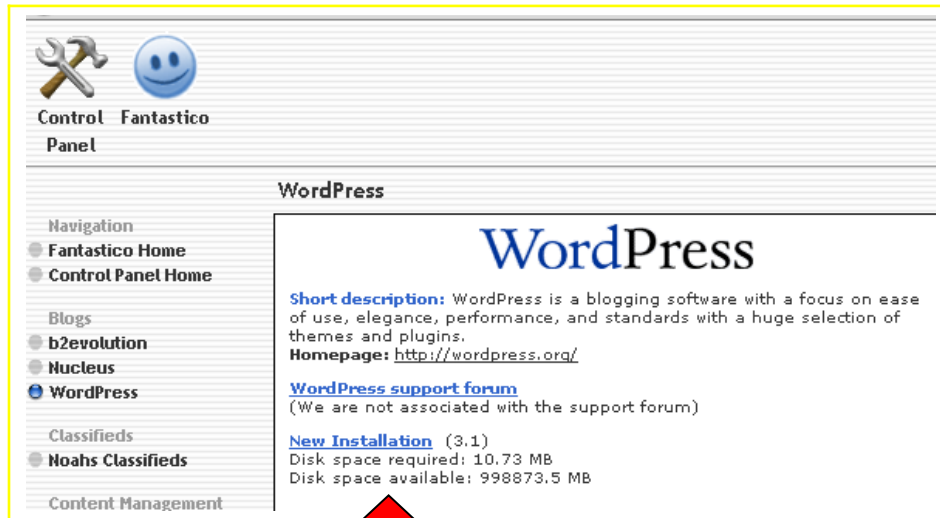
Step Five: Installing Wordpress

Create your account and then login to your cpanel. You will see a page like this:

Click on the Fantastico button above and you will be come to this page:

Click on Wordpress and then New Installation on the following screen.

In the next section fill out the details as prompted

Installation location

Install on domain

Install in directory

Leave empty to install in the root directory of the domain (access example: http://domain/).
Enter only the directory name to install in a directory (for **http://domain/name/** enter **name** only). This directory SHOULD NOT exist, it will be automatically created!

Admin access data

Administrator-username (you need this to enter the protected admin area)

Password (you need this to enter the protected admin area)

Base configuration

Admin nickname

Admin e-mail (your email address)

Site name

Description

[Install WordPress]

The system will then tell you to bookmark your login information. Choose the option to email the information to yourself and then simply save it into a folder in your email account.
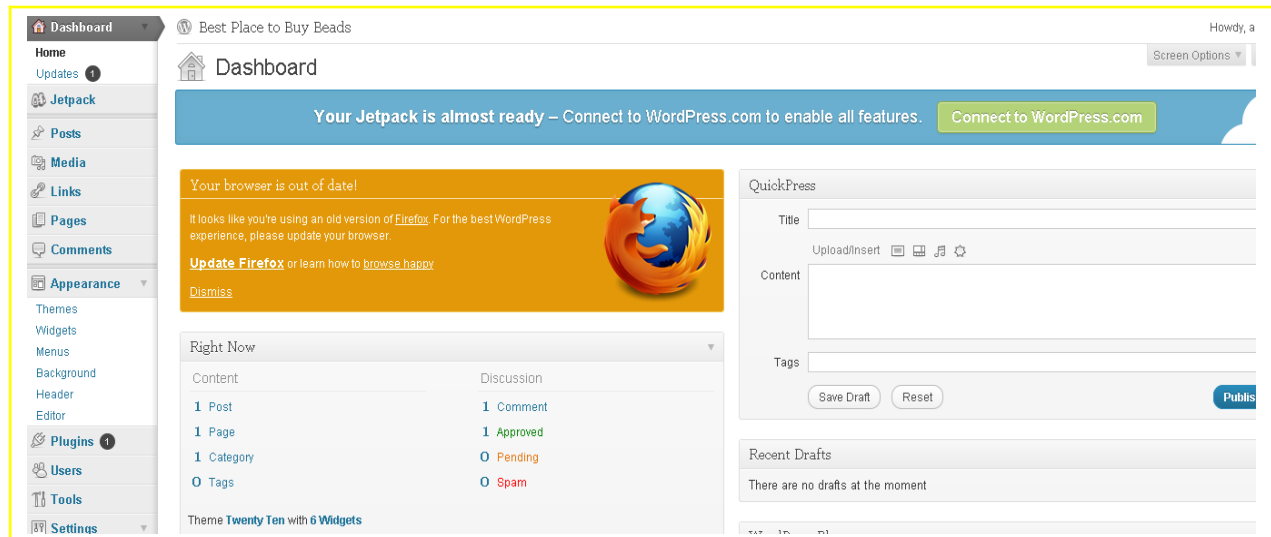
Step Six: Logging Into Your Wordpress Account

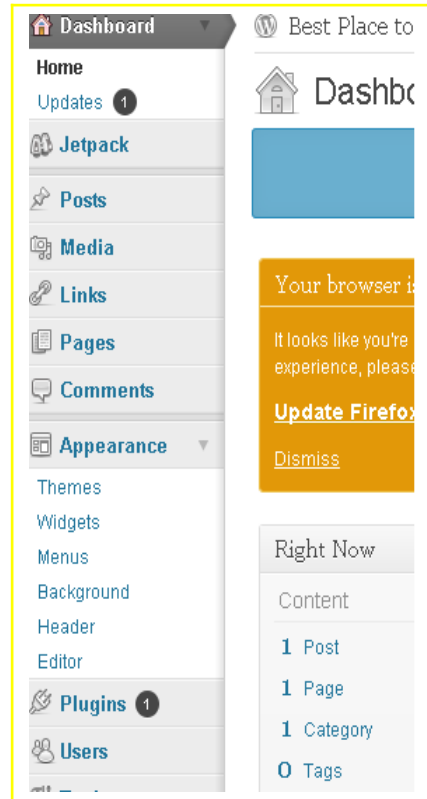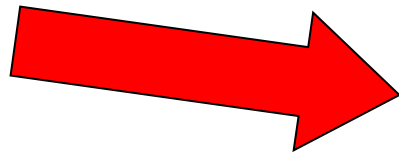Open up your email from wordpress and click on the admin link to your site:

You will now be at your dashboard and it will look similar to this screenshot.

So far you have successfully installed wordpress onto your hosting account. The next step is to install a theme and then add content to your site. On the left hand side under appearance click on themes.

This will take you to a page which says Manage Themes. Wordpress comes with some basic themes which work very well. For now it is best to use one of these themes but you can always search for other free themes later on and install them in the same way.

The newest them... Wordpress is their 2011 theme. To install your new theme just click on the Activate button at the bottom. To see what your theme looks like at any time just click on the name of your blog, above the words mange theme while holding the CTRL key.

If you now look under the appearance theme you will see that some new choices have been installed.

Clicking on the Theme Options will bring up options for installing a header. If you click on headers you will see that there are some preinstalled headers which you can use for now.

Select which header you would like to use for now and click on Save Changes. You can always come back and upload a new header of your choice. This theme actually tells you the size so if you have some create one then you can give them these dimensions 1000 x 288 pixels.

Clicking on the background will allow you to change the color behind your blog, you can experiment with this to get a look that suits your blog.
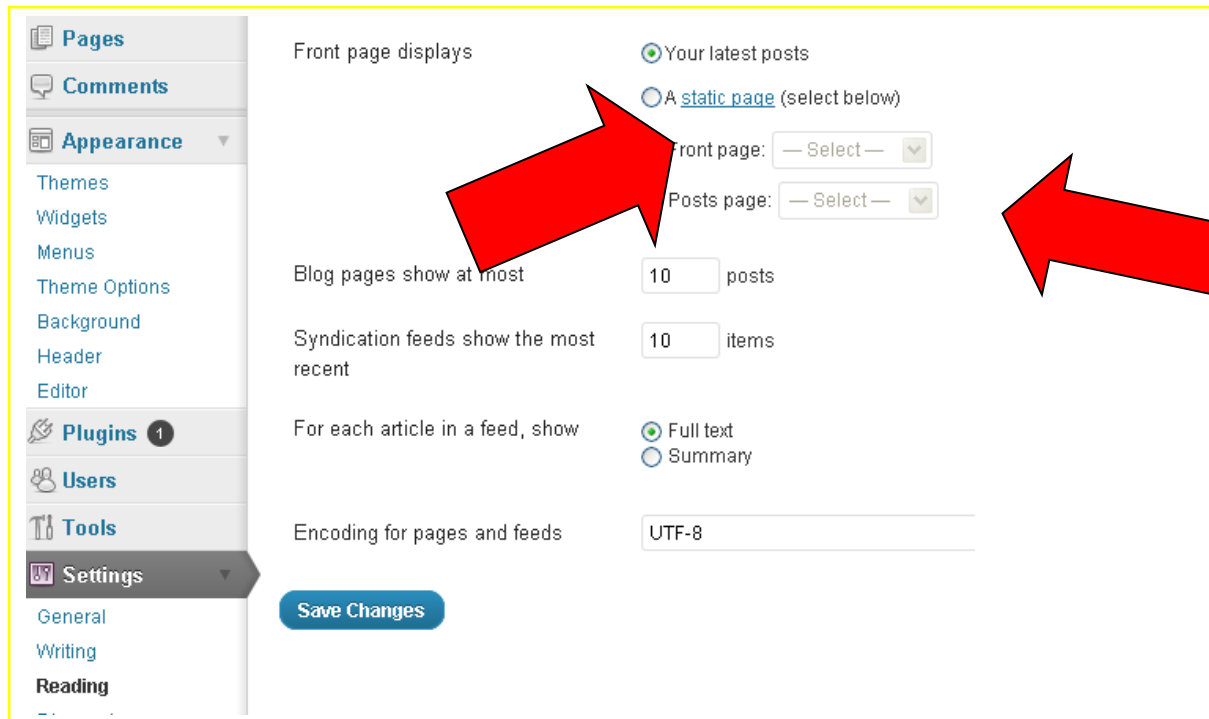
The next area that you want to make a few changes to is under the Settings tab in your dashboard.

General Tab: this is where you can add your email address and the correct time zone. Select the date and time formats that you wish to display on your blog.

If you have a blog which is a store then you may wish not to show the date. To do this simply select the custom box and erase the F j Y letters. This removes the date without messing around with coding.
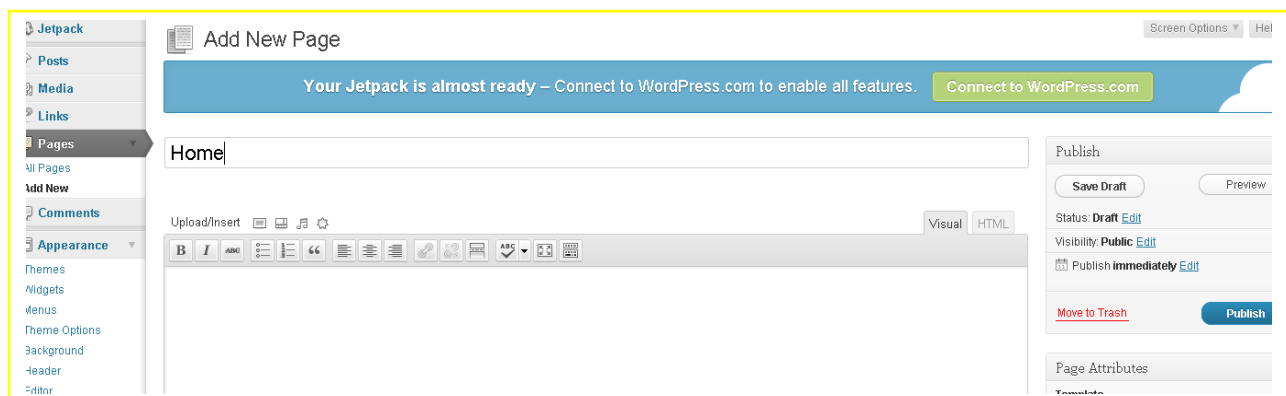
Reading Tab: this is where you select how you want your content to display. You want to decide if your blog is more of a static website than a general blog where the latest post will appear first.

To have your posts display as a blog then just leave the settings the way they are. To create a static page you will need to do the following first.
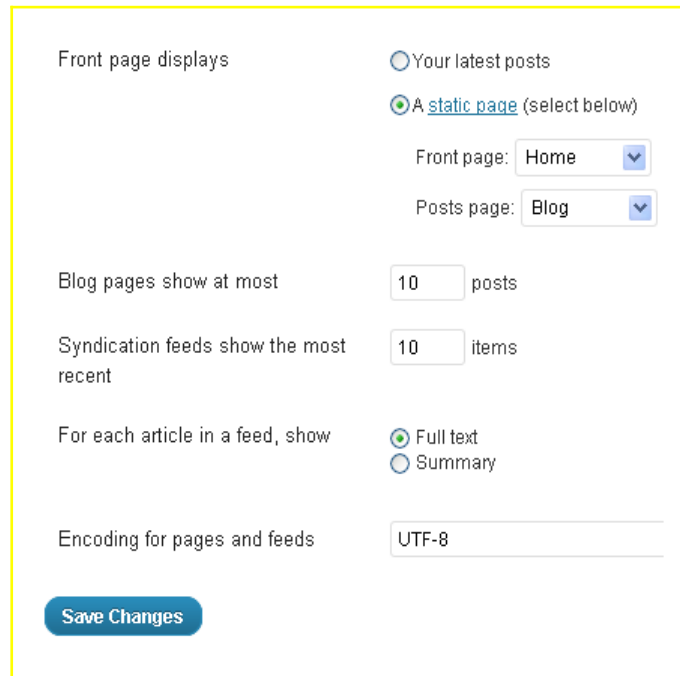
Go back to your dashboard and click on Pages, delete the default page and then click on create new. You are going to create two pages.

1. Home

2. Blog

After naming the page hit publish and then repeat the process for the second page.

Next you will return to the reading page and make the following changes:

Your blog is now set up to have a static home page.

Let's go back to the Settings Tab and the next one you want to check is the privacy tab. Insure that the box which says to make your website visible to everyone is checked. Otherwise no one will ever find your blog!

Next go into the Permalinks setting and make the following change:

You want to use the custom structure feature and use the following permalink:

/%postname%/

There are variations to this and some people prefer to use this one:

/%post_id%/%postname%/

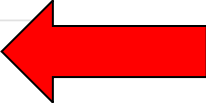Both will work and this allows your category to be displayed in the URL of your post which helps for SEO purposes.
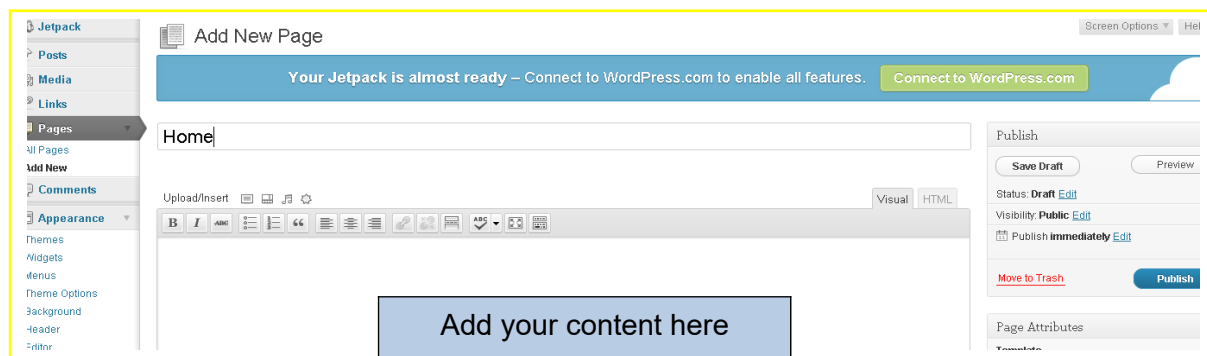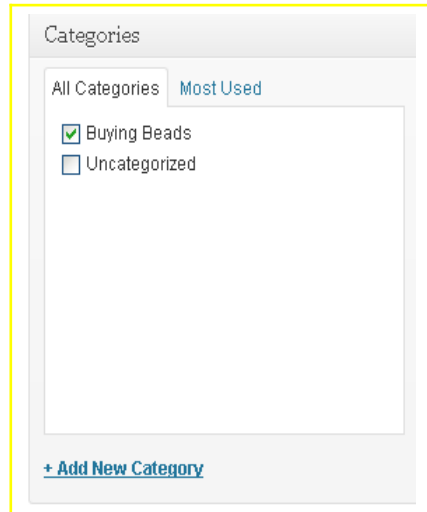
Adding Content to Your Site

You are now ready to go back to your home page and add content to your site.

Simply click on pages then click on edit home page and this will open up in your dashboard.
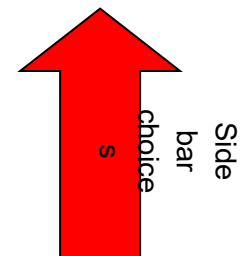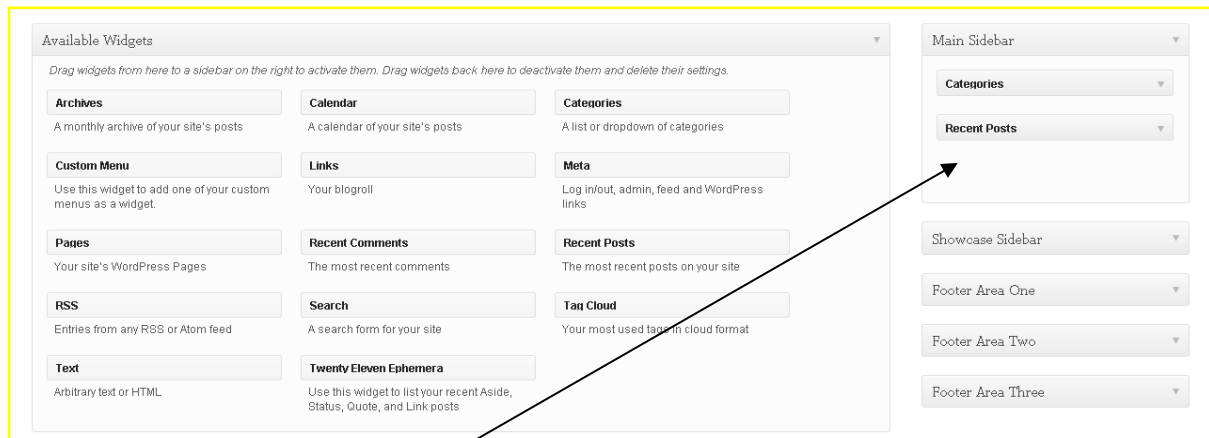

Then add your content to your page. Before publishing your page you will want to add a category to assign this content to.

When you are happy with your content you are ready to hit publish and your blog is now officially open for business. Congratulations!

Some other things you will want to do are to go back into your dashboard and visit the Widgets area. This is where you can have various items displayed on your blog such as recent posts, links, a search box and more. You simply drag the widget to where you want it to display and hit save.

Drag from here over

Side bar choices

Plugins

Plugins are pieces of software that add features to your word press blog. There are ones that help your page be found by the search engines. Then there are those that will add a contact page to your site.

Some common plugins you might wish to use are:

- All in One SEO

- Contact Form 7

- Google XML SiteMap

- Easy Privacy Policy – need this to confirm to Google Policies

- WP DB Backup – creates a weekly backup of your site which is emailed to you

- Share This & Sexy Bookmarks allow readers to share your posts via social sites

You will now have a good foundation for your blog and as you learn more you can easily come back and make changes. For now it is important to add content regularly to your blog.