



## **The Handbook**

### **Codex**

[http://codex.wordpress.org/Creating an Archive Index](http://codex.wordpress.org/Creating_an_Archive_Index)

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# Creating an Archive Index

## Introduction

So you want a single page with links to all your archived entries, arranged *just* so to form the main gateway into your blog's past. With the WordPress 1.5 theme system, you can create template files to customize this archive gateway for each theme you use.

Or, maybe you're just wondering how to use the `archives.php` template file that's included with the WordPress Default Theme.

This article describes both those things. The method outlined here can also be used to make other specialized pages that are integrated with the WordPress theme system: a links page, site index, or anything else your heart desires.

## *Creating the Archive Index Template and Page*

To set up a separate archive index in a way that plays with the Version 1.5 theme system, you'll need to create it as a [Page](#), and assign it a special template.

### The Template (`archives.php`)

Start off with a simple template called `archives.php`, stored in your theme's directory. The WordPress Default Theme includes such a template, and it makes a good starting point.

Technically, the template can be called almost anything (see [these two lists](#) for names you should *not* use; these are special file names WordPress reserves for specific purposes). However, using a standard name for your template will make it easier to change your blog's theme or distribute your theme and template to the WordPress community. It's also possible to display a large archive index using one of the all-purpose templates (like `index.php` or `category.php`) and the [is\\_page](#) function, but again, taking advantage of the theme system's modularity makes it easier for others (and for you!) to edit your template later.

For more information on creating templates, see [Template Tags](#), particularly [wp\\_get\\_archives](#).

### The Archives Page

Upload the `archives.php` in your theme directory (`wp-content/themes/themename/`). Then from the Admin Panel, [Write > Write Page](#), and choose **Add a New Page**:

1. Give your new archives Page a suitable title like *Archive Index*. Leave the Page content blank.
2. Under **Custom Fields**, select **\_wp\_page\_template** from the dropdown. Leave the Key field blank, and enter **archives.php** into the **Value** field.
3. Click **Add Custom Field**.

#### 4. Voila! Your archive index can be accessed at

<http://example.com/index.php?pagename=archive-index>.

## ***Customizing Your Archives***

There are a variety of techniques to customize your Archive Index page. Some involve incorporation of plugins or PHP code to create customized lists of archived posts, and others provide more interesting ways of displaying your archives.

### **List Archives By Year**

You can set your archives up to be displayed by the year, such as:

#### **Archives**

- [2005](#)
- [2004](#)
- [2003](#)
- [2002](#)

To setup your archives list to group posts by year instead of by month, a query to the database is made to sort the posts by year and display them:

```
<ul>
<li>Archives</li>
<li><ul>
<?php
$years = $wpdb->get_col("SELECT DISTINCT YEAR(post_date) FROM $wpdb->posts ORDER
BY post_date");
foreach($years as $year) : ?>
<li><a href="<?php echo get_year_link($year); ?> "><?php echo $year; ?></a></li>
<?php endforeach; ?>
</ul></li>
</ul>
```

## ***Setting Up Redirects***

If you're using [Permalinks](#), WordPress will generate a new set of [rewrite rules for your new Page](#). You may need to update your `.htaccess` file by hand, if WordPress is unable to do so automatically. See [Using Permalinks](#) for more information.

These automatic rules are based on your Page title or "slug": If your Page is named Archive Index, you'll be able to see it at `http://example.net/your-wordpress-dir/archive-index/`.

## **Problems with Auto-generated .htaccess Files**

If your archive index Page has a slug that's the same as part of your permalink structure - e.g., your Page is named Archives, and your permalinks are set up as `/archives/%post-id%/` or `/archives/%year%/%monthnum%/%day%/%postname%/` - WordPress will create conflicting rewrite rules. This can cause your monthly/category archives to be displayed using your archive index template.

There are two ways to avoid this problem:

1. Use a different name for your archive index Page
2. Don't allow WordPress to automatically manage your `.htaccess` file.

## ***Further Reading***

### **Useful Plugins**

- [Group Archives By Year](#) (<http://blindmuse.com/blog/2004/03/31/group-archives-by-year/>)
- [WordPress Heat Map](#) (<http://www.engadgeted.net/archives/2005/02/10/wordpress-heat-map-plugin/>) - Display your archive links with varying sizes or colors, depending on how many posts they contain.
- [DC's Nicer Archives](#) (<http://www.davidsaccess.com/?p=124>) - Create a list of archives that can be expanded from a bulleted list to a series of excerpts.
- [WordPress Plugins](#) - for more possibilities.

### **WordPress Support Forum Threads**

- [How to Use Archives.php of Ryan's Kubric Theme](#) (<http://wordpress.org/support/topic.php?id=18934>)
- [Year Archive Pulling Up Archives.php Page](#) (<http://wordpress.org/support/topic.php?id=24290>)

### **Interesting Examples of Archive Indexes**

- [Hit or Miss](#) (<http://www.hitormiss.org/archives/>) - Flickr-style weighted categories and keywords.
- [Engadgeted](#) (<http://www.engadgeted.net/archives/>) - The Heat Map plugin in action.