



The Handbook

Codex

[http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress Semantics](http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Semantics)

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WordPress Semantics

As with many software packages, WordPress has its own lingo or [jargon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_terminology) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_terminology). This article will introduce you to some of the terminology used in WordPress.

Introduction to WordPress Terminology

WordPress was created by the [developers](#) as **weblog** or [blogging](#) software. A [blog](#), as defined in the [Codex Glossary](#), is an online journal, diary, or serial, published by a person or group of people. Many *blogs* are personal in nature, reflecting the opinions and interests of the owner. But, *blogs* are now important tools in the world of business, politics, and entertainment.

Blogs are a form of a [Content Management System \(CMS\)](#) which [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_management_system) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_management_system) calls "a system used to organize and facilitate collaborative content creation." Both *blogs* and *Content Management Systems* can perform the role of a [website](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website>) (**site** for short). A *website* can be thought of as a collection of articles and information about a specific subject, service, or product, which may not be a personal reflection of the owner.

Terminology Related to Content

WordPress Terminology

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The term **Word** in WordPress refers to the words used to compose [posts](#). *Posts* are the principal element (or [content](#)) of a blog. The *posts* are the writings, compositions, discussions, discourses, musings, and, yes, the rantings of the blog's owner and contributors. *Posts*, in most cases, are the reason a blog exists; without *posts*, there is no blog!

An important part of the [posting](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=post) (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=post>) process is the act of assigning those posts to [categories](#). Each post in WordPress is filed under one or more *categories*. Thoughtful *categorization* allows posts of similar content to be grouped, thereby aiding viewers in the navigation and use of a site. But *post categories* shouldn't be confused with the [Link Categories](#), which are discussed later.

In turn, post categories are one of the elements of what's called [post meta data](#). *Post meta data* refers to the information associated with each post and includes the author's name and the date posted as well as the post categories. *Post meta data* also refers to [Custom Fields](#) where you assign specific words, or keys, that can describe posts. But, you can't mention *post meta data* without discussing the term **meta**.

Generally, [meta](#) means "**information about**"; in WordPress, *meta* usually refers to **administrative**-type information. So, besides *post meta data*, *Meta* is the [HTML](#) tag used to describe and define a web page to the outside world, like *meta tag keywords* for search engines. Also, many WordPress-based sites offer a *Meta* section, usually found in the

[sidebar](#), with links to login or register at that site. And, don't forget [Meta Rules](#): The rules defining the general protocol to follow in using this Codex, or *Meta*, as in the [MediaWiki](#) (<http://www.mediawiki.org>) [namespace](#) (<http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Namespaces>) that refers to administrative functions within Codex. That's a lot of *Meta*!

One of the newer concepts in WordPress is something called a [Page](#). A *Page* is another tool to add content to a WordPress site and is often used to present "static" information about the site; *Pages* are typically "timeless" in nature. A good example of a *Page* is the information contained in "About" or "Contact" *Pages*. A *Page* should not be confused with the time-oriented objects called posts, nor should a WordPress *Page* be confused with the word "page" referring to any web page or HTML document on the Web.

Terminology Related to Design

The *flexibility* of WordPress is apparent when discussing terminology related to the [design](#) of a WordPress blog. At the core of WordPress, developers created a programming structure named [The Loop](#) to handle the processing of posts. *The Loop* is the critical [PHP](#) program code used to display *posts*. Anyone wanting to enhance and **customize** WordPress will need to understand [the mechanics of The Loop](#).

Along with The Loop, WordPress developers have created [Template Tags](#) which are a group of PHP functions that can be invoked by designers to perform an action or display specific information. It is the *Template Tags* that form the basis of the [Template](#) Files. *Template Files* contain the programming pieces, such as *Template Tags*, that control the structure and flow of a WordPress site. These files draw information from your WordPress [MySQL database](#) and generate the [HTML](#) code which is sent to the web browser. A [Template Hierarchy](#), in essence the order of processing, dictates how *Templates* control almost all aspects of the output, including [Headers](#), [Sidebars](#), [Archives](#), and [Posts by Category](#).

Templates and Template Tags are two of the pieces used in the composition of a WordPress [Theme](#). A *Theme* is the overall design of a site and encompasses color, graphics, and text. A *Theme* is sometimes called the **skin**. With the recent advances in WordPress, [Theme Development](#) has become a hot topic. WordPress-site owners have available a long list of *Themes* to choose from in deciding what to present to their sites' viewers. In fact, with the use of a [Theme Switcher](#) Plugin, WordPress designers can allow their visitors to select their own *Theme*.

[Plugins](#) are custom functions created to extend the core functionality of WordPress. The WordPress developers have maximized flexibility and minimized code bloat by allowing outside developers the opportunity to create their own useful add-on features. As evidenced by the [Codex Plugins by Category](#) and the [Plugin Official Repository](#) (<http://www.wp-plugins.org/>); there's a *Plugin* to enhance virtually every aspect of WordPress.

Terminology for the Administrator

Another set of terms to examine are those involving the [Administration](#) of a WordPress site. A comprehensive set of [Administration Panels](#) enables users to **easily** administer and monitor their blog. A WordPress administrator has a number of powers which include requiring a visitor to register in order to participate in the blog, who can create new posts,

whether comments can be left, and if files can be uploaded to the blog. An Administrator also defines [Links](#) and the associated [Link Categories](#) which are an important part of a blog's connection to the outside world.

Some of the main administrative responsibilities of a WordPress blog involve adding, deleting, and managing [Registered Users](#). Administering users means controlling [User Levels](#), or permissions. **User Levels** control what functions a registered *user* can perform as those functions can range from just being able to login at a blog to performing the role administrator.

Another chief concern for the blog administrator is [Comment Moderation](#). [Comments](#), also called [discussions](#), are responses to posts left for the post author by the visitor and represent an important part of "the give and take" of a blog. But *Comments* must be [patrolled](#) for [Spam](#) and other malicious intentions. The WordPress Administration [Manage Comments SubPanel](#) simplifies that process with easy-to-use screens which add, change, and delete Comments.

The Terminology of Help

The final set of *jargon* relates to **helping** you with WordPress. There are many *help* resources available to WordPress users; [Getting More Help](#), [Finding WordPress Help](#), [Troubleshooting](#), and [WordPress FAQ \(frequently asked questions\)](#) are good starting points. Also [Getting Started with WordPress](#) will **jump-start** readers into the world of WordPress and the excellent [WordPress Lessons](#) provide in-depth **tutorials** on many of the aspects of using WordPress. Among the most important resources is the [WordPress Support Forum](#) where **knowledgeable** volunteers answer your questions and help solve any problems related to WordPress. And, of course, this [Codex](#) which is filled with hundreds of articles designed to make your WordPress experience a success!

History of the WordPress Name

Besides the technical terminology of WordPress, it's also interesting to know the history of the name, WordPress. The name "WordPress" was originally coined by [Christine Selleck](#) (<http://www.bigpinkcookie.com>) ([see related post](#) (<http://www.bigpinkcookie.com/2003/04/08/next-i-save-the-world>)) in response to developer [Matthew Mullenweg's](#) desire to associate his new software project with [printing presses](#) (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=press>). In this sense, **press** refers to the world of reporters, journalists, columnists, and photographers. An aptly chosen name, because WordPress serves as the **printing press** that enables its users to *publish* their **words**. It's a good name, don't you think so?

More Information and Resources

See Also

- [The WordPress Glossary](#)
- [WordPress Features](#)

- [Advanced Topics](#)
- [Mailing Lists](#)
- [WordPress Support Forum](http://wordpress.org/support) (<http://wordpress.org/support>)
- [Popular Codex Articles](#)
- [All Codex Articles](#)

External Links

- [World Wide Web @ Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wide_Web) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wide_Web)
- [Tim Berners-Lee creator of the World Wide Web @ Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Berners-Lee) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Berners-Lee)
- [The Semantic Web @ Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantic_Web) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantic_Web)
- [Word Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\) homepage](http://www.w3.org/) (<http://www.w3.org/>)
- [About the World Wide Web Consortium](http://www.w3.org/Consortium/) (<http://www.w3.org/Consortium/>)
- [Web Standards Project](#)