Edublogs
(WordPress)

An Introductory Manual

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[Drawing on/updating/expanding tutorials and explanations from James Farmer, Mike Temple, Ewa McGrail, Lorelle, Joan Boan, Alice Mercer, Kate Olson, The Edublogger (Sue Waters), and others]

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Table of Contents

Getting Started ................................................................. 3
Viewing Your Blog .............................................................. 5
Changing Your Password ....................................................... 6
Changing Other Information in the Users Panel ............................. 6
Creating a Post or Page .......................................................... 7
Editing a Post ........................................................................ 7
Creating Pages ....................................................................... 8
Adding Hyperlinks to a Post (or Page) ........................................ 9
Adding Anchor Links .............................................................. 9
Creating Categories ............................................................. 10
Assigning Categories ........................................................... 10
Adding Tags to a Post ............................................................ 11
Adding Links to Your Blog Roll .............................................. 12
Adding Your Blog Roll to the Sidebar ....................................... 12
Changing the Presentation (Theme) .......................................... 12
Adding Images or Documents to Your Blog .............................. 14
Formatting Images ................................................................ 15
Changing Your Blog’s Tagline .................................................. 15
Monitoring Your Blog ............................................................ 16
Moderating Comments .......................................................... 17
Approving Comments ........................................................... 17
Editing Comments ............................................................... 17
Adding Edublog Community Users ........................................... 18
Limiting Comments to Edublog Community Members .................. 19
Ready for Advanced Edublogs Tutorials? ................................. 19

"Blogging across the curriculum offers students and teachers not only the ability to infuse writing into all disciplines, it facilitates connections in ways that plain paper cannot."

Will Richardson, Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web tools for Classrooms
Getting Started

To create your blog, go to http://edublogs.org, which will bring you to the registration page. Scroll to the Sign up for FREE button and click!

When the next screen appears, you will be asked to choose a username. You will always log into your Edublog – including future Edublogs that you create – using this original username. Your username is just about the only thing about your Edublog that you cannot later change. Add your email address, enter the verification code, and click on the Next button.

**Tip:** Be sure you type in a correct email because if you make a mistake, the username you originally chose will no longer be available. If you’re using a school email, check that your district does not block Edublogs.
When the next screen appears, take a minute to think about what you want your URL to be. If you want to have your domain name the same as your username, that is fine. Or, if you would prefer a different URL, you can replace your username. For instance, I could swap out edubloggerfan1 for desler. My URL would then be http://desler.edublogs.org.

You can relax about choosing a Blog Title because, unlike your username, you can change the title of your blog whenever you wish. Enter your title and click on the Signup button.

When the next screen appears with your URL (i.e., edubloggerfan1.edublogs.org/Is Yours), you are almost ready to start blogging! First you need to check your email for a message from Edublogs, which will have an activation link for you to click on.

Once you have activated your account, you will very quickly (hopefully) receive a second email that will contain both your assigned password (which you will soon change) and a link to your blog. Record or print out your user name and password and click on the Login Here link.
Viewing Your Blog

There are two views in an Edublog (or any blog, for that matter): the Dashboard, which is your working area, and the View, which is what visitors to your blog will see. Each time you login, you will initially enter the Dashboard. From this page, you can see any recent activity on your site and any recent announcements for Edublogs. In the Latest Activity box, you’ll be able to see at a glance if anyone has made new comments to any of your posts, or if there are comments that need moderation.

Toward the top of the screen is a list of menu options: Dashboard, Write, Manage, Blogroll, Presentation, Plugins, Users, Options. These options are the same on every panel you work in inside the Administrative Area.

Note: If you’re already logged in, instead of Login, you will see Site Admin.

Login to your blog with the exact user name and password listed in your Edublog email. Click on the Login button.
Changing Your Password

To change your password, click on the Users menu.

Scroll down to the Update Your Password box in the lower right corner of the panel and enter your new password. Don't forget to click on the Update Profile button (bottom right-hand corner) in order to save your new password.

Changing Other Information in the Users Panel

You cannot change your username. However, you can change your nickname. This is the name that is displayed by any posts that you create. Simply type your new nickname in the Nickname box and click the Update Profile button.
You will need to select your new display name from the drop-down menu. Press Update Profile once more.

Note: Your email address will not be displayed on your blog or in your profile. This information is used by Edublogs.

Creating a Post or Page

To write your first post, click on the Write menu, give your post a title, add your content, and click the Publish button if you are ready to “go live” with your piece. The Save and Continue option saves and keeps the post open. The Save option saves your post as a draft, which you can reopen whenever you wish.

You have a number of options available in the formatting bar, such as bold, italic, and create a bulleted list.

Editing a Post

You can edit any post from either the View site screen or your Dashboard. To edit from the View site screen, locate the post and click on the Edit This link.
To edit a saved or published post, from your Dashboard, click on Manage > Posts. Click on the Edit link.

Regardless of which screen you choose for editing your posts, remember to click on the Save button when you have completed editing and/or revising your post.

Creating Pages

For the most part, you will be creating posts, which tend to be short items. If you wish to post a static item that would not be open for comments, such as an About Me page, this is when you would write a Page rather than a Post. From your Dashboard, click on the Write menu and select the Write Page option.

Enter your title, type (or paste) your page content, and click on the Publish button.
Note: In the Post Pages Panel, the Page Parent feature allows you to organize your pages into subcategories. The Page Order option allows you to organize the order in which your pages appear. Unfortunately, this feature does not seem to work in many of the WordPress themes.

Adding Hyperlinks to a Post (or Page)

Blogs posts often include hyperlinks, which take your readers to other blogs, websites, or even to another area within your blog. To create a link from your blog to the district website, for instance, start by selecting the word or phrase you wish to turn into a link. From the formatting bar, click on the chain link icon.

Adding Anchor Links

Anchors allow you link to a specific location on the same post or page. To insert an anchor link, position your cursor to the place you want the link to point to, and click on the anchor icon. When the Insert/edit anchor box appears, enter a name for the anchor. Click on the Insert button. A small anchor icon should now appear in your post/page.

Type or – better yet – paste in the URL. Click on Insert. Whatever you selected in your post is now underlined. To test your link, click on View site.
To link text somewhere else in your post back to the anchor link, scroll the text and select it. Click on the chain icon. When the Insert/edit link box appears, type the pound sign # and whatever you named your anchor (i.e., #atwell). Click on the Insert button.

Creating Categories

Categories make it possible, at the click of the mouse, to reorganize your chronological postings according to themes or subjects. To set up categories for your blog, click Manage > Categories. Scroll to the Add New Category box, enter your new category, and click on the Add Categories button (bottom right-hand corner).

Assigning Categories

The default category for any post is Uncategorized. To assign a different category, click on the category you wish to assign to the post. You can assign a post to multiple categories.
Adding Tags to a Post
Let’s start by looking at the difference between a category and a tag:

“Categories are your blog’s table of contents. Don’t remove them, thinking tags are a better option. They aren’t. Your posts must be categorized. Remove them and they will be categorized as “uncategorized”, something you do not want, trust me.

Tags are like your blog’s index. They are keywords that represent the micro-categorization of your blog’s content. To work effectively, they need to be words that people search for, called search terms.

Categories are automatically marked as tags in WordPress. Theoretically, your blog doesn’t need tags. But many like the notion of breaking down the words that describe their content beyond categories, and tags offer that ability.” *

To add tags, type in your keywords, separating multiple tags with commas.

Adding Links to Your Blog Roll

To add a link, start by clicking on the Links in your Dashboard navigation bar. Choose the Add Link option. Type or copy and paste the URL and add the Link Name (this is what your readers will see when they view your navigation bar rather than the actual http://www.egusd.net/ web address). Click on the Add Link button.

The default category for navigation bar links is Blogroll. A description is not required, but if you add one, it will appear when visitors hover over the link.

If you are planning on adding many links, you'll probably want to create categories for your links. Click on the Link Categories menu to add your categories. Once you have added Link Categories, you can assign all your links to the appropriate link categories.

If you don’t feel the Blogroll has enough space for all your links, you could also create Pages for your links, such as a Math Page with links, or a Teacher’s Resources Page.

Adding Your Blog Roll to the Sidebar

If your Blog Roll does not appear in the side, you will need to include a Links widget in your sidebar (for further explanation, read the section below on customizing a theme).

Changing the Presentation (Theme)

From your Dashboard screen, click on the Presentation menu. This is where the fun really begins! New themes, along with great widgets (doodads that appear in your sidebar, such as calendar, text boxes, archives, etc.), are added to the Presentation menu on a regular basis.

Note: For a comprehensive introduction to Edublogs widgets, visit Sue Water's, "The Edublogger," online explanation "Limits to Customizing Widgets" at http://theedublogger.edublogs.org/ .
Click on any of the themes to update your blog. To see what your new theme looks like on your site, click on the View site link (top of your blog, next to your blog name). Many themes are customizable, making it possible for you to change color themes, upload an original graphic in the header, etc. Most all themes have a selection of widgets that you can drag and drop onto your sidebar.

To add widgets to your sidebar, click on the Presentation link and select the Widgets tab.

Scroll down to view the available widgets.

You can drag and drop the widgets up to the sidebar(s).

Below the Available Widgets box are options to choose how many Text (these are really handy in a sidebar!), RSS Feed, Widgetbox Widgets and Video Widgets you would like.

When you have finished selecting and customizing a theme, click on the Save Changes button. To view your new theme, click on the (View site) link.
Adding Images or Documents to Your Blog

The first step to adding an image file (jpg, gif) or document file (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDFs) is to browse to and upload the file to your blog. From the Write Post or Write Page panel, scroll down below the post area until you see the area for uploading. Click the Browse button and navigate to wherever you have saved the file(s) you wish to upload. You may put a title or leave this line blank. **Note:** If you leave it blank, Edublogs will use the file name for the title.

When you click on the **Upload** button, the image or document appears in the bin.
After your image or document has been uploaded to the bin, click on the Send to Editor link – or just drag and drop the image into your post.

To resize an image, click once on the image to select it. Then drab one of the corner handles.

**Formatting Images**

To re-position an image, click on the tree icon and select an alignment option. To add some padding around your image, add a few pixels to the Vertical space and/or Horizontal space boxes.

**Changing Your Blog’s Tagline**

If you have selected a theme that includes a tagline, the default tagline is “Another Excellent Edublogs Blog.” To edit the tagline, go to your Dashboard and click on the Options tab. Check to see that you are in the General screen. Scroll down to the Tagline window and add your own tagline. Click on the Update Options button.
Monitoring Your Blog

Concerned about the possibility of someone from the general public posting inappropriate comments to your blog? No need to worry because you have complete control of what is actually published to your blog. For maximum control, make sure all three options for Before a comment appears box are checked.

By selecting the E-mail me whenever anyone posts a comment option, you will receive an email message that looks something like this:
Moderating Comments

To moderate comments, go to Manage > Awaiting Moderation (Note the (1), which indicates one comment is awaiting your approval or deletion.

Approving Comments

To approve a comment, click on the Approve radio button and click on the Moderate Comments button. If you click on the View site link, you will see that the approved comment now appears under the Comments link of that particular post.

Editing Comments

Edublogs does not currently offer the option of commenting on a comment. But Edublogger Alice Mercer has a solution for those times you would like to respond directly to a specific comment. From your Dashboard, click on the Comment tab, locate the comment you want to respond to and click on the Edit link.

When your code view opens, select italic and/or bold so that your comment will be noticeably different from your student’s comment, and add your comment. When you’ve finished, select italic and/or bold to close your comment, and click on the Edit Comment button.
Adding Edublog Community Users

If you wish to limit posting comments on your blog to Edublog members only or to provide greater posting privileges to certain individuals, you will need to add their email to your Users list. From your Dashboard, click on the Users menu > Authors & Users. Scroll down to the User Email box and type the email address. Before clicking on the Add User button, think about the permission level you wish to give an individual user.

When you add users, you can also determine what their permissions (capabilities) are by assigning one of five roles from the Role drop-down box. The default selection is Subscriber. A Subscriber can see the Dashboard and edit his/her own profile. That is all. A Contributor can draft posts but cannot publish them. An Author can publish posts. An Editor can edit other people’s posts and can manage categories, links, comments, and pages. An Administrator can do everything. Each role is simply a set of capabilities. The Editor and Administrator roles have the capability to edit posts that do not belong to them. They can edit anyone’s posts, including each other’s.
Limiting Comments to Edublog Community Members

If you wish to limit posting only to members you have added to your Edublog community, go to your Options menu > General. Click in the Membership checkbox to require that users are registered (members of your community) and logged on in order to comment. By selecting the Membership option, anyone who clicks on the comment link for any post, will be redirected to a WordPress login box. Don’t forget to click on the Update Options button.

Ready for Advanced Edublogs Tutorials?

Edublogger Mike Temple offers tutorials for the advanced user at his Edublogs Tutorials site - http://miketemple123.edublogs.org/.