Welcome to Master Point Press’s New Blogger Tutorial!

Right now, you are probably wondering about a lot of things. Maybe you don’t know how to use WordPress. Maybe you have never blogged before. Maybe you are not even sure what a blog is. Maybe you just wandered in here by mistake (don’t worry, it happens to everyone).

This tutorial series is meant to be a beginners introduction to blogging with MPP and WordPress. In the first installment, you will learn what a blog is, what WordPress is, how to login, how to navigate the dashboard, which boxes do what, and what all the important buttons do. Most importantly, you will learn how to go about publishing a blog entry. This is good to read before starting to write your first post.

In another tutorial, we’ll cover several useful WordPress functions that will make your blogging life easier, such as adding a profile page, using a more advanced level of text editing functions, and how to link to other people’s websites. Read this after you’re sure you know the basics.

A third tutorial will include instructions for unnecessary (but fun and convenient) additions to your blog such as how to schedule a post to go live when you’re on vacation, quick posts, and how to embed completely unrelated videos from YouTube in your blog. This is only to be read when you can describe the layout of the dashboard in your sleep 😊

Quick Hint: If at any point in this introduction you feel you know everything and want to skip right to blogging, or if you find the overview is too much to absorb and you want to get to the good stuff, simply skip to Page 8.

What is a Blog, anyway?

An excellent question. Wikipedia (an online encyclopedia) defines a blog as both a noun and a verb:

A blog (a contraction of the term “web log”) is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

For all intents and purposes, a blog is essentially an on-line journal kept by one or more people, usually about a specific subject. In Bridge Blogging’s case, the subject is Bridge (Bridge hands, Bridge anecdotes, Bridge players, Bridge competitions, etc).

As a vehicle to get your thoughts on this most glorious of games to the masses, Master Point Press is using WordPress, a desktop publishing program that makes it easy to get your writing onto the Internet.

One of the benefits of WordPress is how easy it is to use! It practically does all the work for you. All you’ll have to do, is enter the appropriate information into the appropriate
boxes, and press PUBLISH. Kind of like doing your taxes, except the results of WordPress are usually positive. Before you can do any blogging, you’ll have to understand the basic idea of how you can get WordPress to do what you want with the least amount of effort.

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WordPress 101

So how does this magic happen?

Though it may sound intimidating, desktop publishing with WordPress is not complicated. If you can use Microsoft Word, you'll do just fine with WordPress.

You'll need two things to operate the WordPress program:

1. The Internet (which we already know you have)
2. Words (preferably about Bridge-related things)

Great! Once you have these essentials, it's time to take a look at what you'll expect to see when you open up WordPress for the first time.

If you’ve reached the point where you’re reading this tutorial, we’ve probably already set you up with a WordPress account, user name (likely your name), and a temporary password. Don't worry if you don’t like or can't remember the password, you'll get the chance to change it later.

Your first step will be opening up your Internet browser of choice, and entering the URL (website address) we gave you into the address bar, just like you do when you go to browse ebooksbridge.com.

It'll probably look something like:

http://yournamehere.bridgeblogging.com/wp-login.php

This address will take you to a page that looks like:
Simple enough, right? All you have to do on this screen is log in, entering the appropriate information into the **Username** and **Password** boxes. If you are the only person using *WordPress* on your computer, you can click **Remember Me** to store this information so you won’t have to enter it again later. Using this option will keep you from ever having to use the **Lost Your Password?** link at the bottom of the page. Also, note that whenever you are directed to “click on” something, I usually mean clicking the left mouse button. Don’t worry, I will tell you if that changes!

Assuming the Internet doesn’t experience a massive catastrophe somewhere along the line while you are logging in, the next thing page you will see is the *WordPress Dashboard* illustrated below. This is the screen that is going to help you manage your *WordPress* account. From here, it is possible to see the details on your overall number of **Posts** (a post is just a name for an individual blog entry), how many drafts you have waiting to be published, and a few recent comments that other people have made on your blog. The Dashboard is also the place where you can tweak various settings relating to the appearance of your blog, and the pages connected to it. But we’ll come back to that later.

You may also notice that you can scroll further down the page than what I have shown below. Don’t worry: you don’t need to know about any of those things right now. We will talk about them in another tutorial. For now, let’s just stick to the main Dashboard.
Voila, the **Dashboard**! Its job is to keep things nice and neat so you can begin your blogging with a minimum of fuss, and no muss whatsoever. Let’s do a quick breakdown of the most important things you need to know about on this page.
The central Dashboard panel shown above tells you what’s happening (or what has been happening) on your blog. It keeps a cumulative tally of how many posts you’ve made, how many Pages you’ve put up (one page for every separate area of the website; your blog is one page, your profile is another, etc.), and the number of Tags you have used (a tag is just what it says it is: a keyword for identifying subjects in a given post).

There is also information about Comments people have made, including how many of them you have approved, and how many are spam. Comments are sort of like answering machine messages. People who read your blog can choose to leave them to let you know their thoughts on what you wrote. As a blog author, you have the ability to screen the comments on your blog. Comments can be set to be approved automatically. You’ll be able to see the two or three most recent comments people have made in the box right under this one on the Dashboard. Only after you approve something will it be visible to others viewing your blog. We will discuss this a little later.

Hopefully, you will not get any spam comments. We set up software called Akismet to catch (what it thinks are) spam comments on all our writers blogs. You may want to review the spam queue from time to time to make sure it hasn’t accidentally stopped anything important from coming through. Note: Comments flagged as spam will be deleted automatically from the spam queue after 10 days, so if you are worried, check about once a week (or more often if you want!).

Things in this box not to worry about:

1. The Theme and the Widgets. We take care of that for you.
2. Updating your WordPress version. We take care of that as well. Besides, you cannot do it anyway 😐
This is the Dashboard Sidebar (seen at the left), and this is how it will look when you first see it. As you begin using *WordPress*, you'll notice that hovering the cursor over each of the icons opens a drop-down menu with several options.

At the bottom of the set of icons is a small, right-facing arrow. If you click on this, the sidebar will be expanded so you can see names beside (to the right) of each icon (seen at the right). Since it is pretty easy to move your cursor over the icons — and in no time at all, you’ll end up remembering the one you use the most — you may want to leave it the way it is. The advantage is when you are editing a page or post, the area of the window where the post is will be wider. Most writers prefer that.

For the moment, we'll go over what each option represents:

The **stick-pin icon**: The main *Posts* panel, which you will be using the most often.

The **camera-music note icon**: The *Media* section which lets you upload, well, “media” — pictures for example.

The **links of a chain icon**: The *Links* section allows you to connect to other websites.

The **pages icon**: *Pages* is used to add pages to, and edit pages on, your blog.

The **chat bubble icon**: The *Comments* panel provides the ability to manage comments on your blog.

You will not be using the bottom section of the panel very much; mostly these options help tweak the appearance of the blog, who has access to post on it, and some other incidental settings we will cover in another tutorial.

For now, it’s best you know that these things are here, so that you don’t experiment with them and accidentally break your blog site.

Before we get into talking about posting, we should briefly mention the bottom half of the Dashboard screen.

As I mentioned, you can see any new comments made on your posts under the *Recent Comments* Section, and the *Recent Drafts* section gives you quick access to anything you haven’t published yet. Both of these are shown below. The *WordPress Blog* section doesn’t directly relate to your goings-on; it is there so you can keep up-to-date with *WordPress* company news and additions to the program, if you choose to (this display can be suppressed).
The Great Posting Adventure

Now that we’ve walked through the Dashboard interface, it’s time to explore the posting window. This is where you’ll be entering and editing the text of your blog.

First, we have to get there. To do so, you can either click on the Posts icon (the stick-pin), or hover your cursor over it. Hovering will reveal the drop-down menu pictured to the right. Clicking Posts straightaway will take you directly to the Posts window (as shown below).

All you need to know right now about this drop-down menu are the Posts and Add New links. The former will also take you to the Posts screen, while the latter goes directly to the Add New Posts window. Let’s say you click Posts first. You will go to a screen that looks like the one pictured below:
You’ll notice that this window is neatly divided up into columns. Any information here that is colored blue is a link that will take you to a new area of WordPress. These columns should be largely self-explanatory, but we’ll run them through quickly to make sure we’re all on the same page...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Shows the title of your post, which you can click on to go directly to that entry, as well as whether or not the post is a draft.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Indicates the author of the post. This will usually be you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Shows how you have classified each post. For example, you can have a “Bridge” category, and a “Life” category. Later on, we will explore adding categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tags</td>
<td>Similar to Categories, except usually more specific. These will help to further sort your posts. For example, you could tag a post with “NT hands” or “Slams”. A post could be in the “Bridge” category, but tagged with “Regionals”. Then, clicking on “Regionals” under this bar will bring up all the posts you have tagged with Regionals, as opposed to sorting through the entire bridge category to find them. Adding tags is simple, and will be discussed later in this tutorial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>While not actually labeled as such (it is represented by the speech bubble), the “Comments” section keeps track of how many people have commented on each post. Clicking on the comment bubble for a given post will bring up any comments made, and give you the option to approve or delete them, if you have not already done so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>The Date column lists the last time you edited post X if the post is a draft. If not, the date displayed will be the day you published the post.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **Posts** panel covers the main part of the screen. Above it, you will find various options for sorting the information you can view on this screen. The first three options (**All**, **Published**, and **Drafts**) will show only posts of that type, depending which one is selected.

Other actions you can take from this window are shown in the following picture and explained below it.

![Posts Panel](image)

Fig #8

Clicking the little arrow to the right of “**Bulk Actions**” reveals the options **Edit** and **Move to Trash**, which will be applied to any posts you have check off when you click the **Apply** button.

Clicking the little arrow to the right of “**Show all dates**” shows a list of months in which you created posts. Clicking one of them will restrict posts to those from that month.

Similarly, selecting a category from the **View all categories** menu (which will include all the categories you have set up and “**Uncategorized**”) restricts posts to ones having that category set.

If you click the **Filter** button, then the criteria you have selected from **Show all dates** and **View all categories** are applied and the list of posts is updated.

Also on this page, you’ll find a couple of buttons in the top-right corner. The buttons shown to the left change the way you see the Posts window. The one on the left selects the **List View**, which is the default, and shows only the title of all of your posts. The button on the right selects **Excerpt View**, which not only gives the title of your posts in the main panel, but also a few sentences from each article.

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**What Does This Button Do?**

Now that we’ve covered all the basics, and hopefully any questions you’ve had on the way in, we can get down to what we came here for: getting your blog out there. Let’s reiterate your directions, taking the most immediate route possible:

1. Login
2. Click “Add New” on the Dashboard side-panel

That was easy, huh? Now we’re at the place where you’ll be spending most of your time: the **Add New Post** page. Let us break it down into manageable pieces.
Above is the title bar, found just below the “Add New Post” heading. Simple enough. When you have entered a title, it will change slightly, as shown below.

What you shouldn’t worry about here is the Permalink. All this does is inform you what the direct link to your post will be. There is no reason you should ever need to edit this information. (However, should you want to, this will be discussed in another tutorial.)

Below the title bar you will see a big white empty panel. This (finally!) is where you’ll be entering the text of your blog. Now, I can’t tell you what to write about, but I can help you to make it look pretty.

Let’s take a look at some text editing options shown in the “tool-bars” above that big, white, empty panel. There are two ways the tool-bars may display, The first, shown immediately below, shows two rows of icons (buttons you can click):

When you hover your mouse pointer over any of these buttons (or “tools), a “hint” will be displayed. If you hover the mouse pointer over the right-most one in the top tool-bar, it will reveal the hint, “Show/Hide Kitchen Sink (Alt + Shift + Z)” (even software developers can have a sense of humor). If you see the tool-bars as pictured above, clicking that button will change your window so you see the tool-bars as pictured below; if you seen them as below, it will change it to the above. It “toggles” the display.

Quick Hint: If you do not see one of the above sets of tool-bars when WordPress loads,
try switching the tab (in the upper right corner just above the tool-bars) from **HTML** to **VISUAL**

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We are just going over the basics, so we will only describe the buttons on the two-tool-bar configuration — if you see four tool-bars, click the **Show/Hide Kitchen Sink** button to get rid of the middle two. In fact, the very important tools in the bottom row are described in detail on another page: **Creating and Editing Posts — Tips and Techniques**.

Each of these buttons influences the text directly. Some of these have more obvious functions than others, and can be applied to the text by either selecting/de-selecting them before/after the words or phrases that you want affected, or by **highlighting** (simply, holding the left mouse button down and dragging it over the text — you’ll know it’s working when the colors of the text and background invert) the relevant text, and then clicking the desired button.

Let’s talk about what each of these buttons does:

Functions followed by ** are explained further in another tutorial.

- **B** Bolds the text
- **I** Italicizes the text
- **ABC** Strikes out selected text
- **[ ] “** Creates a bulleted, or a numbered, list
- **“** Highlighted, block-quote.
- **[ ]** Aligns your text to be flush left, centered, or flush right in the box
- **[ ]** Inserts a link in the post, or undoes a created link
- **[ ]** Inserts a “More…” tag which affects the display of the post **
- **ABC** Activates the spell-checker. Clicking on the arrow will present a drop down box that enables you to switch the language the spellcheck recognizes
- **[ ]** Clicking this button allows you to expand the text editing box to fill the entire screen, like a Word document. You can switch back to standard by clicking this button again
- **[ ]** Clicking this button reveals the Kitchen Sink**
- **[ ]** Inserts the suit symbol that is clicked on **
- **[ ]** Presents a dialog allowing a bridge auction to be entered (two types of auction diagrams) **
Lastly, you may have noticed the little bar resembling the above picture. Clicking on this leads into a dialog with lots of things to discuss, which we do in another tutorial. For now, just remember that if you accidentally click a button that results in a dialog box you do not understand, the X button (upper right corner of the dialog) closes it.

All Dressed Up, and Nowhere to Go?

Now that you’ve written your finely-crafted first blog post, you want to share it with the world! But how do you get your gussied-up post out the door? Where did he leave his coat anyway? And have you seen his umbrella? There are a few more steps you can take before releasing your post to the Internet.

There are options you can set that change the appearance of the whole editing window. We set these one way when we create a new blog site for you, but you can change them. Keep in mind that what we have been describing (for example the side-bar with just icons, not text) just reflects one lot of settings. The same applies to the following items. These “boxes” appear below that large edit pane, but if you change certain settings, they will appear as a right-hand side-bar.

While you were in the Add New Post window writing away, you may have noticed a few boxes we haven’t covered waiting expectantly below the edit pane: the Publish, Tags, and Categories boxes. The latter two, as I mentioned earlier on: page 7, are used to track and recall your posts. An example of a Tags box after tags have been added can be seen at the right.

You can see that any tags you add (by pressing the Add button) can easily be deleted by simply clicking the X next to them. You’ll also notice that tags can be whatever you wish; any theme or idea you wish to define can be a tag.

The picture at the left shows the results of clicking the “Choose from the most used tags” link at the bottom of this box. In my case, these are the only tags I have used so far. The results you get will depend on how often, and how varied, your tag usage is.
The Categories box, seen at the left, is similar to the Tags box, but less specific (see page 7 for details). Like Tags, new categories can be added easily (click + Add New Category), and posts can be saved under specific categories by simply clicking the white box next to the category name.

Finally, we come to the last step of the basic blogging process: Publishing. The Publish box, seen at the left, holds all the tools you’ll need to give your blog one big push out into the world.

As you are writing your blog, you will probably want to hit the Save Draft button every once in a while, to make sure you don’t lose your work. WordPress will do some auto-saving of its own, but to make sure that great turn of phrase isn’t lost forever, save your blog.

Quick Hint: Don’t panic if the page flashes when you hit Save Draft. It’s just your Internet browser reloading your work. Everything is still there!

The second large button in this box is Preview. Clicking this button causes a new browser window (or tab, depending on your browser settings) to open, which will display what your blog will look like once you have published it. You may want to preview your
work before publishing, just to make sure everything looks the way you wanted it to.

Also in this box are three options to fine-tune the publishing of your post. We will discuss **Status**, **Visibility**, and **Publishing Date** in another tutorial. For now, as long as the Status says **Draft** (when the post is a draft), the Visibility is **Public**, and the Publishing Time is **Immediately**, you are set to publish your post.

So what are you waiting for? Hit that **Publish** button already!

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**Hurray, I’m Published! — Now What?**

Once you hit the **Publish** button, your post will appear on the main page of your blog, which you can view at:

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http://yourname.bridgeblogging.com
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But if you should ever notice something about your published post that you want to change, all you have to do is select the post from the **Post** menu (click on the stick-pin icon to see it), make the changes in the text editing panel, and then head over to the **Publish** box, which will now resemble the picture below on the left.

![Publish Box](image)

Now, instead of just previewing, you can **Preview Changes** you want to make to your post, see the date of when your post was first published, and then either click the **Update Post** button, or, if you find you never really liked your post after all, the **Delete** button.

Then maybe go write a new post with your shiny new blogging skills!

**Quick Hint:** If you’re looking in vain on the **bridgeblogging.com** Home page for your entry, fear not! The compilation of all recently updated blogs takes a while to update — you should see your post within 1/2-hour, just be patient. Note: The Home page will not display more than three most recent posts from any Bridge Blogging Blogger. This is just to be fair to all our bloggers!

When you’re done blogging for the day, don’t forget to head on up to the top right-hand corner of the page where it says “**Howdy**…“. Hover the cursor over that until you see the drop-down menu shown at the right. Then move the cursor over “**Log Out**” and click it.

**Quick Hint:** If you click on “**Howdy**…” the page will be refreshed and show you something else strange! Just mouse on over to “**Howdy**…” again,
but this time don’t click on it — wait for the drop-down menu to appear and then click on “Log Out”.

Congratulations! You have just learned all about basic blogging using WordPress. Give yourself a pat on the back, and then head over to your blog to start Bridge Blogging!