

WordPress®



IN DEPTH

que®

Bud Smith and Michael McCallister

WORDPRESS® IN DEPTH

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Introduction

WELCOME

We're glad that you've purchased, or are considering the purchase of, this book. WordPress, in its various forms, is amazing blogging software. It's also an amazing project, a shining example of human collaboration, a great example of open source at work, a fascinating business, and much more.

In less than a decade, WordPress has become the most important tool around for blogging, which itself is the channel for one of the great uncensored, unedited, unrestrained outpourings of creativity in human history. WordPress blogs often serve as a home for breaking news or insightful comments that affect other media. As such, WordPress is important to people who don't like blogs or who don't even like computers.

WordPress is a serious and tremendously flexible tool—and also a framework for creating more tools. WordPress blogs include some of the biggest websites around, as well as spur-of-the-moment creations that attract a few posts, perhaps a few comments, and then go the way of the dodo.

Along with the blogs themselves, one of the amazing things is the power of blogs as a network, referring to each other, with blog entries and comments forming a mesh—well, a web, actually—of comment, criticism, and encouragement. (Even a criticism can serve as a form of encouragement, inspiring a blogger to answer a complaint or to post a better entry next time.)

Another powerful feature of blogs in general, and WordPress blogs in particular, is the strong community that's formed around them. That's partly because of the popularity of WordPress blogs and partly because of the open source nature of WordPress software. The WordPress community seamlessly intermixes reaction to blog postings with advice and help on technical aspects of running a blog. It's often hard to tell where one ends and the other begins, but that's part of the fun.

Why This Book?

This book is, of course, *WordPress In Depth*, and the *In Depth* part means something.

There are a few things that any book about WordPress should seek to do. It should seek to explain the different forms of WordPress—primarily the two versions called WordPress.com, a kind of sandbox for easy blogging, and WordPress.org, in which you more or less build your own sandbox, then blog in it.

A book about WordPress should show you how to use either version to get up and running with your blog as quickly as possible. And, for WordPress.org users, it should show you how to install your blog software quickly and easily.

An *In Depth* book, though, does even more. So we show you how to create your own themes and plug-ins in WordPress.org—and how to use upgrades in WordPress.com to get some of the power of WordPress.org for only a small amount of money per month.

WordPress is a framework as well as a tool. It allows you to take advantage of graphics, video, audio, HTML, CSS, PHP, and more. (Don't worry if you don't know what all of this means; we explain it as we go along.) We cover a great deal of this in the book you hold in your hands.

We explain your choices at each step of the way thoroughly, giving you perspective lacking from the voluminous but disorganized online resources that exist for various versions of WordPress.

Our hope is that we've provided a complete, coherent, useful resource. The WordPress universe is so vast that no one can cover all of it in one place. But our aim has been to cover the core of the two main WordPress versions so you can spread your wings and fly. Then you can take advantage of other WordPress resources, such as the WordPress community, to help you catch an occasional updraft and soar even higher.

In writing this book, we sought to be concise, accurate, interesting, elegant, and (occasionally) funny. A few words on each of these goals might be appropriate here.

By concise, we have worked to keep our explanations as brief as possible—but no briefer. That is, we don't assume you know much coming in. The book tries to provide all the “salmon ladders” needed so you can swim upriver with confidence, eventually arriving at your goal.

Accurate should speak for itself, but much of the explanatory material we found about WordPress in our research for this book is sadly inaccurate. Part of this is because WordPress has so many versions. As it's upgraded, old information hangs around, and even updated versions don't always fully reflect current reality. And some of it is just lack of care. We tried to be careful and up-to-date to make this book accurate.

A special note about versions: This book is going to press just as Version 2.9 is being completed. We've used a very late beta version of 2.9 for some screenshots. Please excuse any minor differences that result from changes in the final version of 2.9 or additional updates after this book is published.

We also sought to make this book interesting. You, the design of your blog, the words, the images and more that you put into it, and the ways in which you extend it are the main source of interest in the use of this book, of course. However, we have tried to help by using examples and references that are up-to-date, not trivially simple, and relevant to the topic at hand.

To write elegantly is even harder than writing interestingly. Each of us, though, brings years of past experience, as well as ongoing current work, in conveying detailed and sometimes difficult information in a useful way. We hope that we've managed a turn of phrase here, a trick of organization there, that make you feel that you're in the hands of people you can trust as you seek to get the most of WordPress.

Which brings us to funny. We doubt anyone will, to put it bluntly, bust a gut cracking up, or roll on the floor laughing, over any of our meant-to-be humorous asides. A wry smile from you here and there might be the best we achieve. However, a little bit of humor reminds us of our shared humanity, which can be reassuring when things get difficult, and makes learning easier as well.

In all of this, we try to reach relative beginners, intermediate users, and experts. The way in which each such audience uses the book might differ, but the goal of being useful to each and every one of you remains. We believe we've achieved it.

How Our Book Is Organized

We've divided the book into four parts. Each builds on the previous ones.

The first three parts are usable by both WordPress.com and WordPress.org users. Only in Part IV, "Building Your Own WordPress Installation," do we address WordPress.org users exclusively. This is intended to help users of both kinds of WordPress. WordPress.org users sometimes use WordPress.com for specific projects, and often end up serving as unpaid, informal support for WordPress.com users as well.

This is different from the practice in many other WordPress books and online resources, which mash WordPress.com and WordPress.org together. We believe that this just confuses people and increases the burden of informal support on the more knowledgeable users.

Don't worry if you feel like an unpaid tech support person for a WordPress.com user; at some point, your student might mature and "graduate" to WordPress.org. Then you get to serve as unpaid, informal support for them in their new role as a WordPress.org user instead!

With all that in mind, here's a brief description of each major part of the book:

Part I, "Getting Started with Your Blog," handles the naming of parts of different WordPress versions and introduces the WordPress community. We also compare WordPress with a popular alternative, Blogger, and introduce WordPress hosting options. We then describe getting your blog started and introduce the rich topic of domain name options for your blog. Finally, we describe the theme, header, and widget options available to WordPress.com users. (And, in much richer form, to WordPress.org users.)

In Part II, "Running Your Blog," we go through actually running your blog—the heart of using WordPress. This is where you learn how to create a post with links and formatting and publish it. Then, we step you through putting posts in categories and using tags. WordPress sometimes uses the same words a bit differently than anyone else, and categories, in particular, are an example of this. We finish by showing you how to extend your blog with static pages and polls and how to use statistics.

Some blogging tools start running out of gas at this point, but WordPress is just getting going. Part III, “Taking Your Blog Further,” shows how you can add graphics, which requires paying some attention to issues like copyright as well as the mechanics of actually getting the graphic into your blog post. We then go on to describe how to add audio or video to your blog, whether you’re a WordPress.com user, in which case, each requires the purchase of an upgrade, or a WordPress.org user, in which case you should know if your host charges extra for the bandwidth needed to serve a popular audio, or especially, video file.

Part IV is where we take you into the WordPress features exclusive to WordPress.org. This part begins with a description of installing and upgrading the WordPress software. We then take you through choosing from existing themes and plug-ins for your blog and, finally, show you how to use CSS to build your own theme or PHP to create your own plug-ins. You don’t have to learn the languages from scratch; in fact, many excellent WordPress blogs have been built through tweaks to existing code, which you can learn through a bit of reading (ahem) and trial and error. No, that’s not part of the “funny” we said we tried to add to the book.

Part V, “Appendices,” begins by taking you through using WordPress.com versus WordPress.org in so much depth that you can probably even explain it to your boss after reading this. We then describe the WordPress online documentation in some detail, as it’s a fantastic resource, but sometimes causes as much wasted time as joy.

Conventions Used in This Book

Special conventions are used throughout this book to help you get the most from the book and from WordPress.

Text Conventions

Various typefaces in this book identify terms and other special objects. These special typefaces include the following:

Type	Meaning
<i>Italic</i>	New terms or phrases when initially defined
Monospace	Information that appears in code or onscreen
Bold monospace	Information you type

All book publishers struggle with how to represent command sequences when menus and dialog boxes are involved. In this book, we separate commands using a comma. So, for example, the instruction “Choose Edit, Cut” means that you should open the Edit menu and choose Cut.

Key combinations are represented with a plus sign. For example, if the text calls for you to press Ctrl+Alt+Delete, you would press the Ctrl, Alt, and Delete keys at the same time.

Special Elements

Throughout this book, you'll find Notes, Tips, Cautions, Sidebars, and Troubleshooting Notes. Often, you'll find just the tidbit you need to get through a rough day at the office or the one whiz-bang trick that will make you the office hero. You'll also find little nuggets of wisdom, humor, and lingo that you can use to amaze your friends and family, not to mention make you cocktail-party literate.



tip

We specially designed these tips to showcase the best of the best. Just because you get your work done doesn't mean you're doing it in the fastest, easiest way possible. We show you how to maximize your WordPress experience. Don't miss these tips!



note

Notes point out items that you should be aware of, but you can skip them if you're in a hurry. Generally, we've added notes as a way to give you some extra information on a topic without weighing you down.



caution

Pay attention to cautions! They could save you precious hours in lost work.

We Had More to Say

We use sidebars to dig a little deeper into more esoteric features, settings, or peculiarities of WordPress. Some sidebars are used to explain something in more detail when doing so in the main body text would've been intrusive or distracting. Sometimes, we just needed to get something off our chests and rant a bit. Don't skip the sidebars, because you'll find nuggets of pure gold in them (if we do say so ourselves).



Something Isn't Working

Throughout the book, we describe some common trouble symptoms and tell you how to diagnose and fix problems with WordPress. These troubleshooting notes are sure to make your life with WordPress a bit easier.

USING HTML IN YOUR WIDGETS AND BLOG

How HTML Can Take You Further

Much of the effectiveness of WordPress comes down to how much it lets you do without any kind of coding. Millions of wonderful blogs have been launched and are living full and productive lives because WordPress, and other tools, hide any kind of machine talk from the user.

However, at some point you might want to put down the handsaw and sandpaper and pick up some power tools. WordPress is carefully designed to let you go as far as you can without power tools, then gracefully add just as much or as little coding as you need to get the results you're looking for.

The first and simplest power tool that you can use with WordPress is HTML. HTML is an acronym for Hypertext Markup Language, which is the underlying language of web pages. It controls what appears on a web page and affects how things are laid out. HTML was all people had for writing and maintaining web pages for the first several years after the Web was invented in 1989.

HTML also provides a front end for the protocol that determines how web links and domain names work, called HTTP, or Hypertext Transfer Protocol. HTML code that sets up hyperlinks—the links you click to move from one web page to another—serves as a front end for HTTP.

You can use HTML in WordPress.com—in fact, it's always just a click away. The HTML code underlying your blog entries is available on the HTML tab whenever you are writing or editing a blog entry.

There are some fairly routine tasks in WordPress that you can only do using HTML. For instance, if you want to add a YouTube video to your blog, YouTube provides you with HTML code. You have to find the right spot in the HTML for your blog entry and paste in the HTML code that YouTube provides.

One of the most useful widgets, and the most customizable one, is the Text widget. The Text widget allows you to use HTML for formatting text, creating links, and so on.

In this chapter, we introduce the use of HTML as it can be used in the WordPress.com environment. This is useful whether you just want to do a few simple things with your blog postings and the Text widget, or if you want to go much further. To go further, you'll need additional tools, which are described throughout this book.

Power Tools for Better Blogging

You can use several major types of tools to improve your blog. The way you use them varies across WordPress.com and WordPress software-based blogs, with more power made available as you take on more responsibility for your blog.

Our intent in this book is to always provide a salmon ladder so that you can learn a moderate amount, improve your blog, and repeat—all the way from beginner to power user.

You can use HTML in any WordPress blog, including WordPress.com blogs, as described in this chapter. What you're actually using in WordPress, and what we show in this book, is XHTML, a newer and somewhat stricter version of HTML.

The people behind WordPress, users, and the entire web-oriented community are caught up in a shift between standards at present. XHTML was meant to be the replacement for standard HTML, but it now appears that HTML will be replaced by a new version, HTML 5, instead. XHTML is, therefore, looking to be something of a placeholder.

Everything we show works as either HTML or XHTML, unless noted otherwise. So if you want to go writing a lot of (X)HTML code of your own for use in WordPress blogs, start by looking at the differences between them as described in the WordPress Codex:

http://codex.wordpress.org/HTML_to_XHTML

CSS, or Cascading Style Sheets, is a further addition to HTML that allows you to take a more thoughtful and managed approach to editing web pages. WordPress themes are written in CSS. CSS had a rocky beginning because of competing standards and varying implementations, but its future looks secure.

As a WordPress.com user, you can change the CSS in your theme and preview the result at any time. You will need to buy a \$15 per year CSS upgrade to actually change the CSS in your WordPress.com theme, all described in Chapter 10, "Adding Upgrades, Audio, and Video."

As a WordPress software user, you can use many more themes, modify them freely, and create your own, all using CSS. This is described beginning in Chapter 11, "Installing and Upgrading WordPress Software."

The other major technology you can use for turbocharging your blog is PHP, which stands for PHP Hypertext Preprocessor. PHP is a scripting language. It's used to write plug-ins, which can add a great deal of capability to blogs based on WordPress software, and which are described beginning in Chapter 13, "The WordPress Toolkit: Plug-Ins." Widgets, a limited selection of which are available to your blog, are described in Chapter 3, "Creating Your Blog's Look," this chapter (the Text plug-in), and Chapter 8, "Tracking Statistics and Bringing in Visitors" (the RSS plug-in). Widgets are limited versions of plug-ins.

The major tools for modifying your blog are as follows:

- Themes, with a limited selection available in WordPress.com and a much wider selection in WordPress.org-based blogs
- Widgets, a limited selection of which are available in both WordPress.com and WordPress.org-based blogs
- HTML, which can be used in WordPress.com and WordPress.org-based blogs
- CSS, which can be used with WordPress.com blogs to modify a theme via a CSS add-in, and can be used freely in WordPress software-based blogs
- PHP, which can be used to create plug-ins, but only in WordPress software-based blogs

How's that for a salmon ladder?

HTML Basics in WordPress

There are lots of good books about HTML out there, but using HTML in the WordPress environment is unique. Many of the problems that make using HTML a hassle are handled for you, and the WordPress environment can teach you HTML as you work.

In this chapter, we use WordPress to demonstrate the basics of HTML. Once you have a feel for HTML itself and how it works in the WordPress environment, you can use other HTML and XHTML resources to go further, applying what you learn in your WordPress blog as you go.

The key tool we'll use is the Visual and HTML tabs in the WordPress Post editor. (The Post editor is the same for adding new posts, editing existing posts, and creating pages—standalone web pages you can integrate into your blog.)

The formatting that WordPress makes available to you on the Visual tab is the formatting that's made available in the most basic HTML, supported by the widest range of browsers across the widest range of systems.

The Post editor has tabs that allow you to work in *Visual* mode or HTML mode. Visual mode is what the user sees when they visit your blog. In HTML editors, Visual mode is often referred to as WYSIWYG, pronounced "whizzywig," for What You See Is What You Get.



note

The HTML basics described here are the same for WordPress.com or WordPress software-based blogs.

HTML Tags

The basics of HTML can be unraveled by looking closely at its name: Hypertext Markup Language.

A *markup language* is a set of codes inserted within a flow of text that describe how the text should be formatted, or that give other instructions. A markup instruction in HTML is called a *tag*.

A typical tag looks like this: ``. The angle brackets indicate that the text inside them isn't to be displayed—instead, it's an instruction.

Many tags come as beginning and ending tags, like this:

The last word in this sentence is displayed in `bold`.

That's how the text would look on the HTML tab. On the Visual tab, or in your blog after you publish, the same sentence would appear like this:

The last word in this sentence is displayed in **bold**.

So in HTML, you format a word as bold by surrounding it with the beginning bold tag, ``, and the ending bold tag, ``. Similarly, you use the `<i>` and `</i>` tags around words or characters that you want to display in italic.

HTML was developed in accordance with a strong set of ideals, alongside strong practical concerns, which sometimes conflicted.

For instance, HTML is meant to convey *meaning*, not *formatting*. The bold and italic tags are formatting tags. They're tremendously popular because each “does what it says on the tin,” across a wide range of devices to boot.

The meaning behind the styles might be different from their look. An HTML purist would prefer to use tags that specify the meaning rather than the formatting. So, to follow along with the theory behind HTML, you should use `` to emphasize text and `` to make it appear strongly. What this means in practice is that HTML purists use `` for italic and `` for bold, along with the corresponding ending tags, even though the pure tags are much harder to remember and take longer to type.

CSS is meant to be a triumph of the purist approach because it separates meaning from the specifics of how something appears. In practice, CSS just gives you the tools to spend far more time working on the details of appearance, often well beyond the importance of the underlying text.

So that's the markup language part of HTML. Figure 6.1 shows the HTML source code underlying a post on gvDaily.com. To complete our look at the words behind the acronym HTML, let's look at the HT, or Hypertext, part.

note

We're not just introducing these HTML specifics for fun, or your general education; they're needed for you to understand why WordPress handles HTML the way it does, which would otherwise seem confusing. We've simplified years of history and acres of onscreen and in-person exchanges among competing opinions to the bare bones that affect how you write HTML code for WordPress.

tip

You can see HTML in action on any web page. Almost any web browser has a command that displays the underlying HTML-tagged text. In Internet Explorer, the command is on the View menu, and is called Source; other browsers use the same or similar wording. The View Source command causes the HTML, CSS, and other code underlying the web page to display.

Figure 6.1

You can easily view the source code behind any web page.

```

192 <div id="mcePaste" style="left:-
10000px;width:1px;position:absolute;top:0;height:1px;">Don't be surprised if the
FCC's next steps focus on the existing developers whose Google Voice apps were
yanked by Apple a month ago. There's no defensible rationale for that action, and
Apple has, mistakenly, not yet put the issue to bed. It's a wedge
into much that Apple would prefer not to discuss, disclose, or change.
193 <p><em>It's not the crime that gets you, it's the cover-up; Washington saying,
originally referring to Watergate<br />
194 </em></p>
195 <p>Google Voice continues to serve as the catalyst for a major conflict around the
rights of cell phone app developers and customers that will likely, in the end, serve
to open up these platforms.</p>
196 <p>The FCC <a title="FCC news - gvDaily"
href="http://gvdaily.com/2009/08/04/gv-daily-update-on-fcc-news-biggest-ever/"
target="_blank">letters</a> of three weeks ago have now received responses from <a
title="Apple answers via Scribd" href="http://www.scribd.com/doc/18984364/Apple-
Response-to-FCC" target="_blank">Apple</a>, <a title="AT&T response via Scribd"
href="http://www.scribd.com/doc/18984425/Att-Response-to-Fcc"
target="_blank">AT&T</a> and <a title="Google response via Scribd"
href="http://www.scribd.com/doc/18984367/Google-Response-to-FCC"
target="_blank">Google</a>. The letters asked a series of questions about the rejection
by Apple of Google's iPhone app for Google Voice. The answers are little short of
amazing.</p>
197 <p>Apple claims that it has not rejected the Google Voice app; it simply
has not been approved. Of course, it was not approved; on
the same day that Apple <a title="Apple pulls apps"
href="http://gvdaily.com/2009/07/31/apple-just-says-no-to-google-google-voice-apps/"
target="_blank">pulled</a> three already-approved Google Voice apps. Also,
Google's statement at the time that the app was rejected; and that it
would instead be shifting its efforts to improving the Google Voice mobile Web site

```

What distinguishes HTML as a *Hypertext* Markup Language is the use of additional tags that refer to hypertext links. For instance, here's the HTML code to link some text to the WordPress.com home page:

To go to WordPress.com, click `here`.

This code causes the word *here* to become a hypertext link. By default, the word *here* is displayed in blue and underlined. When the user clicks on it, the contents of the browser change from the page with the sentence in it to the WordPress.com home page.

The `a` in the tag stands for *anchor*. (Anchor management is important in complicated websites.)

The `href` in the tag stands for *hypertext reference*. A chunk of text that isn't a tag, but is used in a defined way within a tag (as is done here), is called an *attribute*. *Hypertext* means that text can exist in various files, on various web servers.

The great thing about learning and using HTML in the WordPress.com environment is that all sorts of hassles are handled for you. You work at the level of individual posts; WordPress handles making up the complete page by putting your post within a theme, as described in Chapter 3. WordPress also hosts your files.

This saves you from one of the biggest hassles in web publishing. Traditionally, web developers create web pages on their own machines. Once everything's right, the web developer then transfers the web page to a web server.

During this transfer, all sorts of things can go wrong because the files go to a different machine, with a different folder structure. The links between files are easily disrupted by the transfer, and all sorts of hassles ensue.

WordPress.com handles all this through a very controlled process. You never upload the title and text of your post at all; that's handled by the Add/Edit Post page. For graphics and, if you choose to use them, audio and video files, you upload files one at a time using another tool, and only then use the files in your blog. You never have to worry about creating a set of link relationships on one machine, then transferring them to another machine. (Automattic might move your blog around on their servers, but you never see this happen.)

If you move to a WordPress software-based blog, you take on these hassles. Different hosting providers might protect you from them to a greater or lesser extent, but you're never quite as protected and carefree as in WordPress.com. However, on a WordPress.org blog, you do have much more power to do things your way.

HTML Support

The late 1990s saw an explosion in Internet-related business called the “dot-com boom.” Internet-related companies that had never made a dime in profit, and some that had yet to even generate any revenues at all, were valued at many millions and even billions of dollars. Those that could actually show profit were valued at far more; AOL, famous for helping millions get dial-up subscriptions to the Internet, acquired publishing and film giant Time Warner at the peak of the boom in 2000. A decade later, the merged company is seen as being worth more without AOL than with it.

HTML was at the center of this boom, and the pressure on HTML to do more and more, so websites could do more and more, was enormous. Microsoft (Internet Explorer) and Netscape (Navigator) were the two main companies competing to add new HTML tags to their respective browsers. (Navigator eventually provided the base for today's popular Firefox browser.)

CSS went through a similar boom. In its early days, it was less standardized and less well-supported than HTML. A reliable CSS core that's in widespread use today has evolved.

It's still common today for a web page to not work well on some browsers. In particular, highly functional sites such as banking sites will often work reliably only on recent versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer on Windows-based systems, leaving users of other browsers and other systems, such as Safari users on the Macintosh or Firefox users on various platforms, in the lurch.

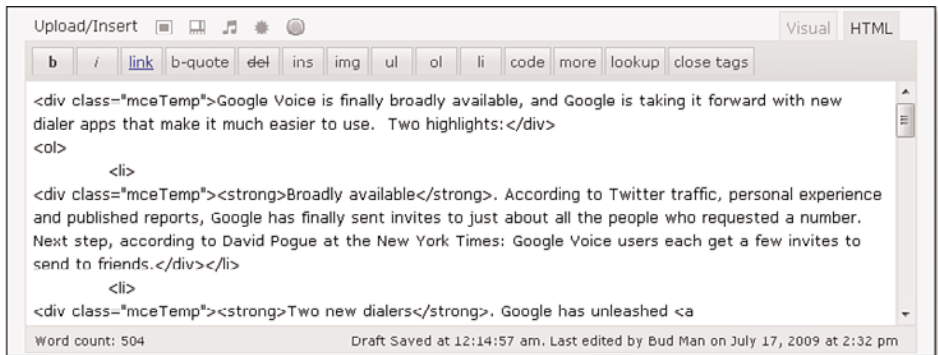
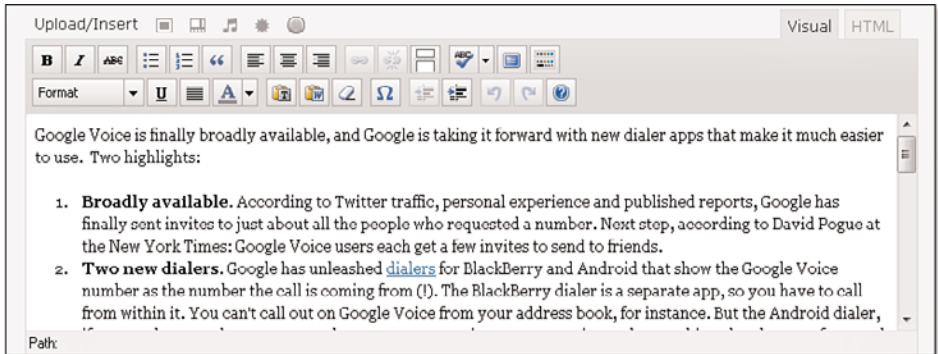
Although many of the additions to HTML became more or less standardized, savvy providers—such as the folks behind WordPress—count on HTML only for a core set of agreed-on functions that work not only on personal computers but on all kinds of devices, from smartphones to screen readers for the blind. You can count on your WordPress blog to be accessible to a very broad audience indeed.

The Visual and HTML Tabs

Let's take a close look at the Visual and HTML tabs to get a feel for the differences. Figure 6.2 shows the editing area for both.

Figure 6.2

The Visual and HTML tabs do most of the same things in different ways.



The buttons available on the Visual tab are a close match for those on the HTML tab. Table 6.1 shows the correspondence between one and the other. The first section shows the main, or top, line of editing buttons; the second section, the second line of editing buttons, only appears when you click the Kitchen Sink button on the first line.

Table 6.1 Buttons for Visual and HTML Tabs

Visual Tab	HTML Tab	Meaning
Image	img	Insert image
B	b	Bold
I	i	Italic
ABC	del	Strikethrough
Bullets	ul	Unordered list (bulleted list)
Numbers	ol	Ordered list (numbered list)
	li	List item (bulleted or numbered list)
Left-align		Text aligned left, ragged right

Table 6.1 Continued

Visual Tab	HTML Tab	Meaning
Center		Text centered
Right-align		Text aligned right, ragged left
Link	link	Hyperlink
Break link		Remove hyperlink
More tag	more	Provide special link to the complete post
Spell-check		Check spelling
Full-Screen mode		Expand to editing window only
Show/hide kitchen sink		Display/hide additional formatting options
Paragraph pull-down (includes Address, Preformatted, headings 1–6)	code	Various text formatting options
Underline	ul	Underlined text (can confuse readers by looking like a link)
Centered		Centered image
Text color		Change the display color of text (can confuse readers who think the text is a link)
Text import		Bring in text from text editor
Word import		Bring in text from Microsoft Word
Remove formatting		Change text to plain, unformatted text
Outdent		Reverse any indenting
Indent		Indent the text by shifting the left margin to the right
Undo		Reverse most recent change
Redo		Re-instate most recent change
Help		Go to Codex (note that this is not very specific help)
	ins	Inserted text, that is, to note updates
	lookup	Look up item in dictionary
	close tags	Add ending tags to open items, but check where WordPress puts them

Character Formatting

The character formatting commands that are made available in WordPress are the ones most widely supported in HTML: bold, italic, and—a bit of a latecomer to HTML—strikethrough.

Figure 6.3 shows text on the Visual tab of WordPress using the bold, italic, and strikethrough formats. The beginning words of each sentence are in *italic*—*How*, *Where*, *What*, *Why*. The word you is repeated in **bold** four times. The word *so* is shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

Figure 6.3
Formatting is easy to understand on the Visual tab.

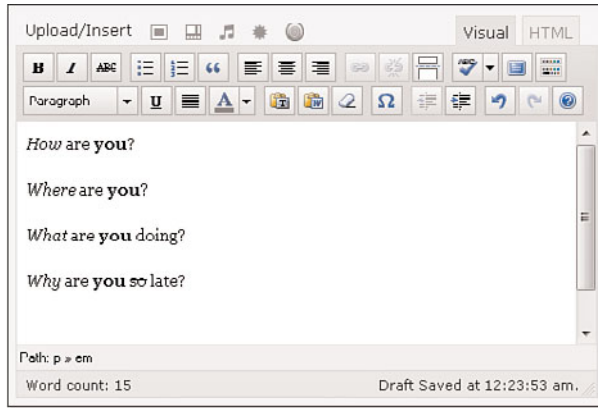
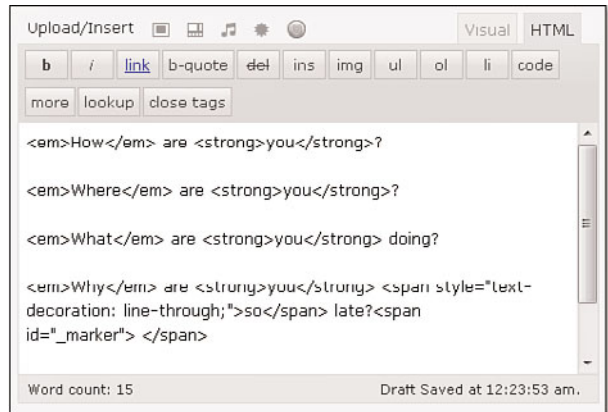


Figure 6.4 shows the same text on the HTML tab. You can see the HTML codes that cause the formatting on the Visual tab to be displayed.

Figure 6.4
Formatting is a bit trickier on the HTML tab.



Now, what's going on? Table 6.2 shows the text in visual and HTML modes for comparison.

Even though WordPress displays the bold button as **B** on the Visual tab and **b** on the HTML tab, it actually implements bolding with the `` tag, not the `` tag. This is a combination of practicality—no one would know what WordPress meant if they showed *strong* in the button—and purity in the use of HTML.

Similarly, the ``, or emphasis, tag is used for italic.

Table 6.2 Visual Versus HTML Text

Visual	HTML
How are you ?	<code>How are you?</code>
Where are you ?	<code>Where are you?</code>
What are you doing?	<code>What are you doing?</code>
Why are you so late?	<code>Why are you so late?</code>

Strikethrough is implemented using CSS via the `` and `` tag pair. These tags are like a red flag to let you know that classic, basic HTML is being left behind. They mean something like this: "The span of text between these tags has shared characteristics," which are then defined within the opening tag. In this case, the `style` attribute defines formatting, called `text-decoration`, which is `line-through` to produce the strikethrough effect. It's understandable that WordPress uses CSS for this; the strikethrough effect is implemented in HTML as `<s>`, `<st>`, or `` (for *delete*) in various versions of HTML.

Still, the pure version is much harder to read. If you get some experience working with HTML, you learn to ignore the HTML tags when you want to read the underlying text. It's much harder to ignore `` when you're scanning in this way (because it's actually a word) than ``. The `` tag is both reminiscent of Auntie Em in the *Wizard of Oz*, or an em dash if you work with typography, and easy to confuse with ``.

Here's the same text with the more commonly used tags, so you can see how much clearer a less pure version of HTML is to read:

```
<i>How</i> are <b>you</b>?
<i>Where</i> are <b>you</b>?
<i>What</i> are <b>you</b> doing?
<i>Why</i> are <b>you</b> <st>so</st> late?
```

WordPress will accept the more commonly used, and easily understood, tags, such as `` and `<i>`, if you type them into the HTML tab, or copy them in from a tool that uses them.

If you look at the result on the Visual tab, then return to the HTML tab, the tags will be changed to `` and ``. Less widely supported tags, such as `<st>`, are simply dropped; you'll have to notice they're missing and reenter them in a WordPress-approved form on the HTML tab, or by using the buttons on the Visual tab.

The Mysterious `<p>` Tag

The paragraph, or `<p>`, tag is one of the greatest sources of frustration in HTML editing.

The `<p>` tag was originally used to indicate formatting, not meaning; you dropped one in when you wanted to end one paragraph and start another one.

Most web browsers display some blank space at the start of the next paragraph. It's common for web page designers to often want either no extra space or a lot of extra space.

If you didn't want the extra blank space, you used the `
`, or *break*, tag instead, to force a line break. However, if you wanted more space, you were stuck. Most browsers are programmed so that, if you use multiple `<p>` tags, multiple `
` tags, or a mix of both, the "extra" tags are ignored. You can't get the extra spacing conveniently with HTML.

Over time, the paragraph tag has often been used as a container tag, with a `<p>` tag at the beginning of a paragraph and `</p>` at the end. This is a more purist approach, in that the beginning and ending tags denote, "this is a paragraph unit," whereas `<p>` by itself meant, "put a paragraph break here!"

In CSS, it's more common to use the `<div>` tag to indicate a division, the exact nature of which is defined in a style sheet. This is powerful but obscure, as you have to look in the style sheet file to understand what the `<div>` tag will do. And because one style sheet can override another—that's why they're called Cascading Style Sheets—you might have to look in many files to figure out what's going on.

WordPress hides tags such as `<div>` from you in HTML mode; it must be that it's confusing enough without them!

Now that you see how hard it is to get HTML to give you a break, you can understand the frustrations web designers have suffered for years. It's common for web designers to relate how frustrations with HTML, CSS, and various browsers have led them to break down in tears.

List Formatting

It's good to understand the list formatting in WordPress because lists are very convenient (for you and your readers), but also a frequent source of frustration with HTML. Browsers tend to display lists in ugly ways—with a wedge of blank space in front of the first list item and no spacing at all between items.

It's quite common for HTML maestros to use all sorts of tricks to make lists come out better and for CSS experts to use CSS, in an approved way, to get excellent results.

HTML implements lists by specifying the type of list up front, then surrounding each line in the list with tags to show it's a list item. This makes it easy to switch between the two types of lists that HTML supports:

- **Unordered list**—*Unordered* means "it doesn't matter what order is used," but HTML always displays the items in the order you provide them. Unordered lists always show up as bulleted lists. However, calling them *unordered* instead of *bulleted* is part of the preference in HTML for specifying meaning, not specific formatting details.
- **Ordered list**—*Ordered* means "the order is important," and browsers always display ordered lists as numbered lists.

The group of items in unordered (bulleted) lists are surrounded by the `/` tag pair. Each list item is preceded and followed by the `/` tag pair, with *li* standing for *list item*.

In ordered (numbered) lists, the items are surrounded by the `/` tag pair. Just as with unordered lists, each list item is preceded and followed by the `/` tag pair.

Table 6.3 shows two lists as they appear on the Visual tab and the HTML tab.

Table 6.3 Visual Versus HTML Lists

Visual	HTML
These are a few of my favorite Shakespeare quotes:	These are a few of my favorite Shakespeare quotes: <code></code>
All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players.	<code></code> All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players. <code></code>
The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones.	<code></code> The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones. <code></code>
The course of true love never did run smooth.	<code></code> The course of true love never did run smooth. <code></code> <code></code>
From first to last, my favorite Shakespeare quotes are:	From first to last, my favorite Shakespeare quotes are: <code></code>
The little foolery that wise men have makes a great show.	<code></code> The little foolery that wise men have makes a great show. <code></code>
The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together.	<code></code> The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together . <code></code>
There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.	<code></code> There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. <code></code> <code></code>

Note that the formatting for the lists looks very similar; the only difference is the use of the `/` tag pair for one and the `/` tag pair for the other. When editing HTML, it's easy to change from one type of list to the other just by changing two u's to o's or vice versa.

Also note how the list items in the column of HTML code are indented, as they are in WordPress, for both the unordered (bulleted) and ordered (numbered) lists. This indenting has nothing to do with the HTML code itself; it's called "prettyprinting,"

whether it's used for onscreen display or a physical printout. Prettyprinting is used with various kinds of code to make it easier to work with. Some HTML editors have very elaborate prettyprinting, including further use of indentation, colors, fonts, text styles (bold, italic, and so on), and any other ploy that helps make it clearer what's going on in all that code.

You can see that, even in this brief example, the HTML code takes up a lot of space on the page. The same is definitely



It wouldn't be a bad idea for Automattic to include a full-screen HTML editor alongside the full-screen version of the editor for the Visual tab in future versions of WordPress. Until then, you'll have to find workarounds.

true onscreen. A big part of the reason that WordPress is a poor HTML editor is the limited screen space available for the contents of the HTML tab in the Shared-Screen mode of the Post editor.

Linking

Linking is the creation of hyperlinks in HTML code. Hyperlinks are at the very core of the Web. Specifying a link can be quite difficult and links are easy to make a mistake in or to have break even after they've been working for a while. Luckily, links in WordPress are simplified, without taking away much from what you can do. And you can always dive into the HTML and make a link as complex as you want.

For light work with a WordPress.com or WordPress.org-based blog, though, the main reason for understanding linking is that it's one of the main reasons you'll work in HTML rather than on the Visual tab. This is for two reasons:

- Many websites give you HTML to add to your page if you want, for instance, to include a video. The Google Voice website gives you HTML to include a Call Me button for your Google Voice number. AltaVista gives you code for various Translate This buttons for your blog, and so on.
- Linking is also useful for the Text widget that we describe later in this chapter.

There are three forms of links worth being familiar with:

- **A link to a home page**—An example is as follows:

```
Visit <a href="http://www.wordpress.com">WordPress</a>.
```

HTML is doing a lot of the work for you here. When you give a domain name as the link destination, a web browser looks for a web page called any of the following:

```
index.htm  
index.html  
home.htm  
home.html
```

These web page names are privileged in that you don't have to enter them for a web browser to look for them. You don't even need to know which one of the four forms the website's author used; any of them will do.

- **A link to any web page**—An example is as follows:

```
Visit the new Great Stuff list at <a href="http://www.wordpress.com/greatstuff/  
latest.htm">WordPress</a>.
```

This takes you to the WordPress.com site, into a folder called `greatstuff`, and to a web page called `latest.htm`. (Web page files always end in `.htm` or `.html`.)

- **A link within a web page**—An example is as follows:

```
Visit the new Great Stuff list at <a href="http://www.wordpress.com/greatstuff/  
latest.htm#item20">WordPress</a>.
```

As with the previous example, this takes you to the WordPress.com site, into a folder called `greatstuff`, and to a web page called `latest.htm`. It then goes one step further and scrolls down to a special type of tag called an *anchor* within the file. (If the anchor is missing, the link takes the user to the top of the page.) The anchor takes this form:

```
<a name="item20"><h4>Item 20</h4></a>
```

In this case, the anchor is around a header, as is commonly the case. For anchors of this type, the `<a>/` tag pair doesn't have to surround anything, as it marks a point in the file rather than a designation. However, some of us like to surround text with the tag pair so that if things are moved around, the intended destination of the anchor is clearer.

These are the kinds of links that you'll need for the Text widget, described later in this chapter. For links within web pages, you can add anchor tags to your own blog posts or static pages, and you can look in the HTML code for a web page, as described previously, to find existing anchor tags to which you can link.



caution

Web pages and named anchors within web pages change and are moved around all the time. Blog postings are somewhat specific to the time when they're written, so you don't necessarily have to recheck them over time to make sure the links are okay. But for static pages, or your top few all-time favorite posts, you might want to periodically check links and repair any that have been broken by changes at the destination end.

Anchor Management

Technically, the beginning of a link is called an anchor, as well as the destination. A named anchor within a file, such as the `item20` anchor described previously, is simply a specific type of link.

However, most people, even HTML authors—who tend to be careful with words—still use the term *link* or *href* for the beginning of a link. The term *anchor* is used for specific, named anchors within files.

So if you read or hear anchors being discussed, it usually means a named link destination in a web page. Unless you're hanging around down at the shipyards, in which case, anchors aweigh!

The More Tag

WordPress includes a WordPress-only tag called More that shows how HTML works—and how WordPress uses it to make your life as a blogger easier.

The home page of your blog shows your most recent posts. However, if a post has a More tag in it, only the part before the More tag displays. The part after the More tag only shows if the user links to it, either from your blog home page or somewhere else.

The More tag looks like this:

```
<!--more-->
```

As far as HTML is concerned, any tag that begins with the exclamation point character, `!`, is a comment. Web browsers ignore such tags, so you can put remarks to yourself in them. Comments are often used for notes to support project management for website creation and updating, such as a list of changes to the site.

However, WordPress.com is not just any website. It can set rules by which, for instance, comment tags can be analyzed and treated as meaningful if they meet certain rules. The More tag is a specialized comment tag.

You can insert a More tag in your post at any point you like to make your blog home page act the way you want it to.

HTML Editing in WordPress

The Post editor is quite good as a WYSIWYG editor and really, really poor as an HTML editor. Here's why:

- As a WYSIWYG editor (that is, on the Visual tab), the Post editor offers buttons for HTML features, easy integration of content from text editors or Microsoft Word, spell-checking, and a Full-Screen mode.
- As an HTML editor, the buttons are confusing and, much worse, there is no Full-Screen mode. HTML eats screen space, and being forced to work in the narrow confines of the Shared-Screen mode of the Administration area makes it almost impossible to see what you're doing. The lack of basic capabilities, such as Find and Replace, really shows in HTML editing as well.

Because the Post editor is a poor HTML editor, the ability to use WordPress for HTML work is limited. If you need to do extensive HTML work with your WordPress blog, you should work in a different editor, and cut and paste between the other editor and the Post editor.

The possibilities for becoming confused and losing time or losing work when you're switching back and forth between editors are obvious, but manageable.

There are a lot of HTML editors out there for different platforms, and there's no one universal standard. A wide range of editors appeared when the Web exploded in popularity in the 1990s; some editors that were popular then are no longer supported or receive minimal support, a picture which changes year by year. For example, the widely popular FrontPage tool from Microsoft has been *orphaned*—withdrawn from sale and left without updates. Microsoft replaced it with a much more technically oriented set of tools, called the Microsoft Expression Studio, that competes with the widely respected, but also complex, Dreamweaver suite from Adobe.

To find an HTML editor for your computer type, search online for reviews. You can find adequate basic editors as freeware or shareware, then upgrade to paid software if and when your needs dictate.

What Tags Can I Use?

If you know something about HTML, you'll be wondering just what tags you can use. If you use external resources to learn more about HTML, you'll soon be wondering the same thing.

Here are the tags you can use that we've already mentioned (though WordPress might convert them to other tags): a, b, blockquote, br, del, div, em, li, ol, p, s, span, strike, strong, and ul.



tip

Many users expect to see the whole of the most recent blog posting when they visit a blog home page. You can put up new posts with no More tag, but insert it in older posts. That way, you can include whole posts on your home page for your most recent one, two, or three posts (or however many posts pleases you), and only initial teasers for older entries.

Here are some additional tags, with a word or two of description so you can follow up on the interesting ones: `font` (yes, you can specify fonts in your blog!), `h1`, `h2`, `h3`, `h4`, `h5`, `h6` (headers, from biggest to smallest), `hr` (a horizontal rule or line), `img` (insert an image using similar rules as for a web link), and `table` (powerful and potentially dangerous, as tables often work differently on different browsers).

Just for completeness, here are the remaining tags that are supported (several of which are dependent on the `table` tag): `address`, `abbr`, `acronym`, `big`, `caption`, `cite`, `class`, `code`, `col`, `dd`, `dl`, `dt`, `i`, `ins`, `kbd`, `pre`, `q`, `sub`, `sup`, `tbody`, `td`, `tfoot`, `tr`, `tt`, and `var`.

We mentioned previously that WordPress uses XHTML. What does this mean to you as you work directly in HTML?

Not that much because most of the additional complexity of XHTML comes at the level of the overall page and its major divisions (head, body, and so forth), which WordPress handles for you.

Here are a few key rules to follow to make your code work as XHTML:

- **Use all lowercase for HTML**—This was always the “cool kids’” way to write HTML code, but in XHTML it’s a rule.
- **Nest tags properly**—If you surround a word with the `/` tag pair, then make the same word the beginning of a link, the `<a>` and `` tags should surround the `` and `` tags, not be intermixed with them.
- **Use tag pairs**—In particular, always use the `<p>/</p>` tag pair, not the `<p>` tag by itself.
- **Always put attribute values in quotes**—Before, you might have worried whether a browser was too stupid to tell the difference between an attribute and an argument. Under XHTML, the answer is officially “yes.” So format a link, for instance, this way:

Come to the `Metaverse` for more.

If you follow these simple rules, your HTML code should work well in either an HTML or, as with WordPress, an XHTML environment.

As with HTML tools, there are many sites about HTML and XHTML; some are out of date, some might not be technical enough, some might be too technical, and some might be just right for you. Search for the tag name you’re wondering about, along with the keywords “HTML tag” to find a variety of sites that will define the tag name for you. You’ll soon find a site you like.

Here are tags you can’t use, for security reasons: `embed`, `frame`, `iframe`, `form`, `input`, `object`, and `textarea`.

YouTube as an Example of Embedded HTML

YouTube is a good example of a service that provides you HTML to put in your web page—in the case of WordPress, in your blog posting.

YouTube is a great service to use with WordPress. When you put a YouTube video on your site, all you really put on your site is a link. The actual video stays on YouTube’s servers, not on WordPress’s servers.

When your blog visitor clicks the Play button on a video, the streaming all happens between YouTube's servers and your user's machine. Your blog isn't directly involved at all.

The really cool thing is that you don't pay for any of this. Before YouTube, it was common for web publishers to pay high fees to have video streamed—partly because of the very large amount of data being transferred and partly because of the extra command and control code and bandwidth required to achieve good streaming performance. If you wanted the hosts to compress your video, that would cost even more. Google, YouTube's owner, pays for all of this for you. (And, as of this writing, continues to lose a great deal of money on YouTube, but that's not your problem.)

Your visitor will know it's a YouTube video because it has the word *YouTube* stamped into the image, but a bit of branding is a small price to pay. You get to share the information, entertainment, or other benefit of the video with your blog visitor with little hassle and no expense.

You can use either HTML or a new approach called oEmbed to embed a video. With oEmbed, you simply insert a URL, not a chunk of HTML code. However, using the HTML code gives you more control, so it's good to know how to use both.

Here's how to use HTML to host a YouTube video (other services that provide HTML for you to paste in are similar):

1. If you have a post in progress that you'll be putting the video on, save it and preview it to make sure there are no problems before you insert the HTML code for the video.
2. Go to YouTube at www.youtube.com. If you have a video, upload it; you'll find instructions in Chapter 9, "Adding Graphics to Your Posts."
3. Find a video you want to share on your blog, or go to the video you just uploaded.
4. On the right edge of the YouTube web page with the video, find the area with the fields labeled URL, which has the web page address of the video, and Embed, which has the code you need to embed the video in your blog.
5. Click the Customize button next to the Embed code. Additional embedding options appear below the embedding code. The example shown in Figure 6.5 is from The Onion, a satirical website.
6. Set or clear the check boxes to include related videos, show a border, and enable delayed cookies. Click the rectangles to choose a color scheme and set a size for the video.

As you change the settings, the embedding code is changed. Try changing the size and you'll see the change in the values assigned to the width and height attributes, which are visible onscreen next to the prompt. (Note the XHTML-friendly quote symbols surrounding the values.)

We recommend you generally say no to related videos, yes to including a video, and yes to delayed cookies (which only sets a cookie on your user's machine if they play a video, not just when they see the preview image). Choose the color scheme and image size that best fit your blog posting.

7. Click in the code area next to the Embed prompt and copy the code.



Figure 6.5

The Onion will make your blog visitors cry—with laughter.

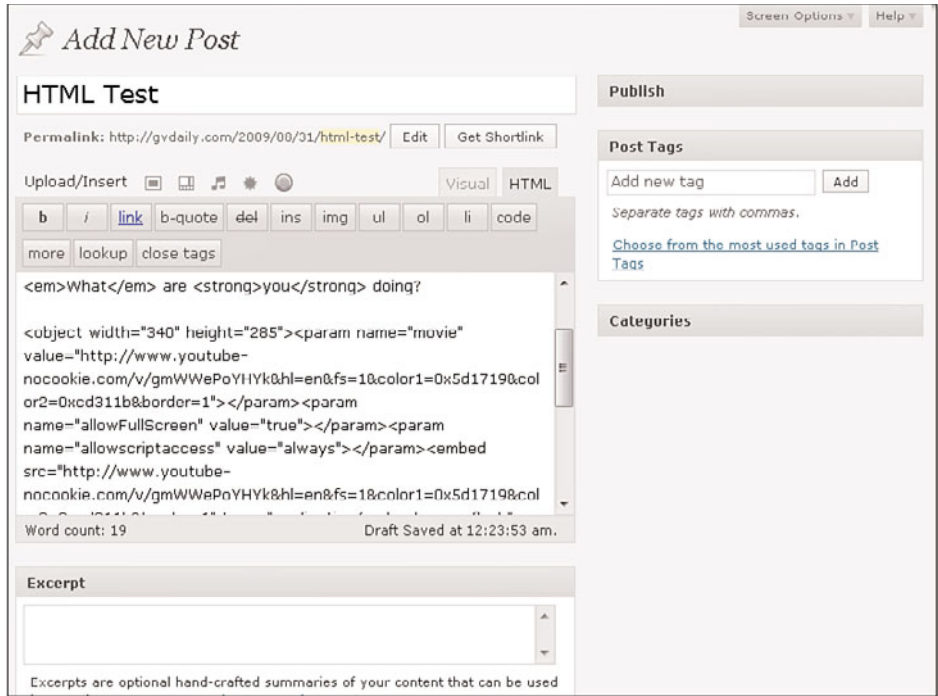
8. In your WordPress post, click the HTML tab.
9. Scroll up and down in the blog post's HTML code to find the spot where you want to insert the video. This can be difficult in a long post. You might need to copy the HTML code out to another program, such as a word processor, and use its larger window, Find capability, and other functions to find the right spot, and then return to WordPress to insert the video in the spot you found.
10. Paste in the HTML code, as shown in Figure 6.6.
11. Preview the post to make sure the video works and that the settings you chose in YouTube are the best choices for your blog posting.
12. If needed, return to YouTube and change the settings, repeating steps 6–11 until you're happy with the result.



In Chapter 9, we introduce other options for working with WordPress videos.

When you're done, you'll have your blog posting where you want it, looking how you want it.

Figure 6.6
HTML isn't usually funny, but the result can be.



caution

The terms of service for WordPress.com prevent commercial activity. Many online commercial activities begin with cutting and pasting HTML code into your web page or blog. Resist the temptation to engage in commerce. You might find some borderline activities you can get away with, for a greater or lesser period of time, but the WordPress community won't like it. You're likely to find that you need the support of the WordPress community to visit your blog, link to your blog from their blog postings, show you how to improve your blog, put you on their blogroll, and so on. Also, eventually, you might get an official "cease and desist" request from Automatic, or simply find the offending feature removed from your blog.

There are no such restrictions on commercial activity for blogs based on the WordPress software supported by WordPress.org. If you want to engage in commerce on your blog, move to WordPress.org. If you aren't quite ready to do that yet, continue on WordPress.com, learning how to run a good and useful blog, and then move to WordPress.org when you're ready. Chapter 11 tells you how to upgrade.

Using the Text Widget

In Chapter 3, we described the widgets you can use with a WordPress.com blog in detail. We left out the details on two of the best widgets because they need more explanation to use properly. The Text widget is covered here; the RSS widget is described in Chapter 8.

According to the WordPress.com support pages, the Text widget is the most popular widget of all, for three reasons:

- Its power
- Its flexibility
- The ability to use multiple instances of the Text widget in a single blog for various purposes

The Text widget is so popular that many plug-ins—the big brothers of widgets, which are only available to WordPress software-based blogs, as described in Chapter 10—are available for enhancing the power of the Text widget. One example is the WYSIWYG Text widget, which makes it easy to add colors, links, and images to the Text widget without knowing code.

Content Providers for the Text Widget

If you want to get a lot of power into the Text widget quickly, several content providers provide code that you can simply cut and paste into your Text widget. Your Text widget becomes a gateway into their blog.

Here are some of our favorites that relate directly to your blog:

- **Babelfish Yahoo Translation**—This service translates your blog for visitors. This is a marvelous service for visitors because many web users have English as their second or third language; a translation into their own language helps them get more out of your blog and improve their English at the same time.
- **ClustrMaps**—This is a hit counter that tracks where your blog visitors come from. It is fun, informative, and likely to generate comments.
- **Delicious**—This site, shown in Figure 6.7, is probably the most influential social media site for bloggers to blog about blogging—and track what they like most. Getting attention on this site sends your visits skyrocketing. Check it out—then join.

Here are a few content providers that add functionality to your blog:

- **Bitty Browser**—People can surf the Web in a widget! Shown in Figure 6.8, Bitty Browser is great for helping people go someplace you recommend without really leaving your blog at all. It is highly configurable and hours of fun.
- **Flickr**—Get into your Flickr photos. This is great if you're a Flickr user, or willing to become one to easily add photos to your blog.
- **Last.fm and Pandora**—Get the latest charts from Last.fm and favorite songs on Pandora. Let people listen while they surf your blog!
- **YouTube**—You can have a permanent YouTube window in your blog. It's great fun, but perhaps a good way to lose visitors who go off to YouTube instead?

Figure 6.7
Make delicious
your friend.

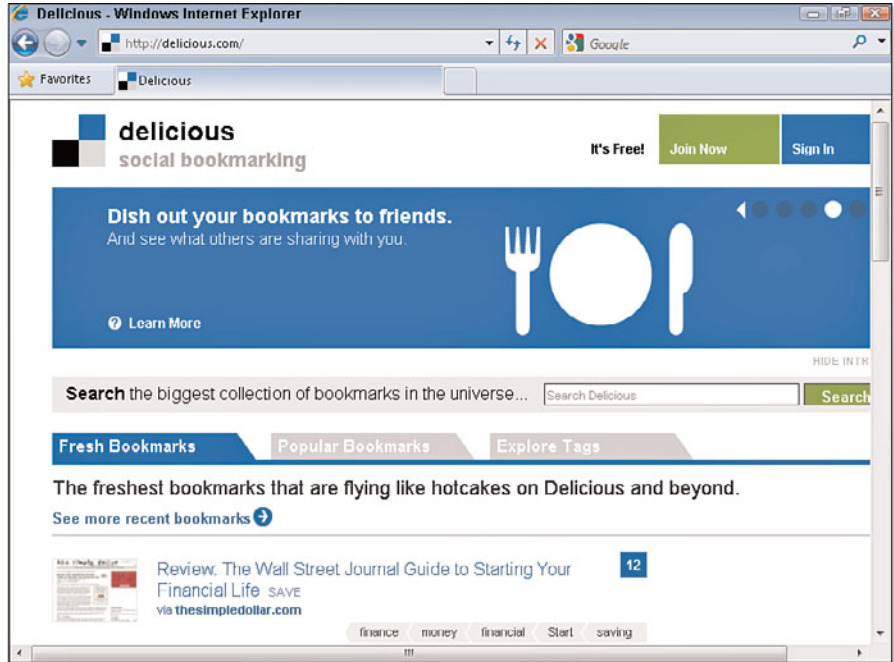
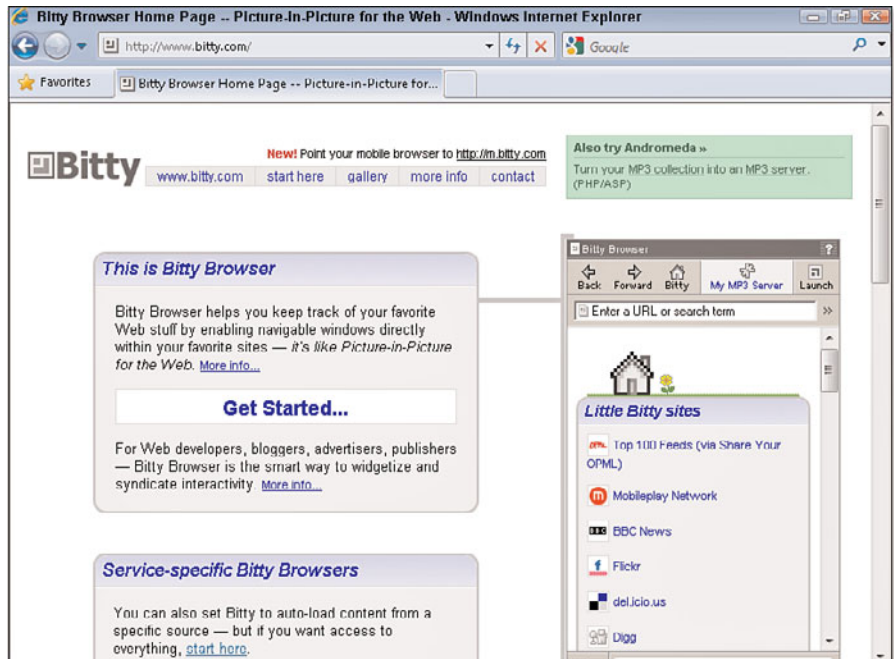


Figure 6.8
Bitty Browser
has plenty of
power.



Links to these content providers and more are available on the [Text Widgets](#) page in the WordPress Codex:

http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Widgets#Using_Text_Widgets



caution

We'll briefly repeat the kid-in-a-candy-store warning that we gave with regard to widgets in Chapter 3; it's especially relevant when you see all the content providers for the Text widget. If you use more than a few widgets, including different versions of the Text widget, your visitors are likely to ignore most or even all of them. Be somewhat selective in deciding how many Text widgets to try on your blog; then try them, and be even more selective in deciding which ones to keep. Focus on relevance to your own blog as the deciding factor. (You can also ask your blog visitors to contribute their opinions on which widgets are best; that's part of what a blog's for, isn't it?)

Things You Can Do with the Text Widget

Now that you've seen some of the great things content providers can give you for the Text widget, what can you do with the Text widget yourself?

Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

- **Lists of key posts**—You can list your top posts of all time, or by a specific topic. You can link to the most commented posts. You can create a “getting started” list on your main topic(s) for newcomers. This can be a great way to help people get to know your blog.
- **About you/about your topic**—You can give a few words of introduction or welcome and perhaps links to a few key resources, on or off your blog.
- **Picture directory of contributors**—You can create a directory of blog contributors with their photos.

For more on the Text widget from WordPress.com support, visit <http://support.wordpress.com/widgets/text-widget/>.

The Text widget can contain text, HTML code, and small images. At one time, JavaScript was allowed, but it caused too many problems. The Text widget cannot contain code such as JavaScript or Flash.

Getting Images into the Text Widget

The easiest way to get an image into the Text widget is to upload it to the WordPress Media Library, as described in Chapter 9. Then use the URL from the Media Library in the Text widget. The HTML looks like this: ``, where *URL* is the web address of the image provided by the Media Library.

A Simple Sample Text Widget

You can create Text widgets when you add the Text widget to your blog. Here's an example of creating a Text widget; the one shown here combines text, graphics, and simple HTML:

1. In the Administration area, click the Appearance header, and then click Widgets. The Widgets page appears, as shown in Chapter 3.
2. Drag the Text widget from the Available Widgets in the center of the screen to the Sidebar on the right. The Text widget opens up.
3. Enter a title for the widget. This is important; a poor or confusing choice of title might annoy people every time they see any page of your blog.

We've titled the example widget ANDROID-RELATED POSTS, in reference to Google's Android operating system for mobile phones. (Widget titles always display in UPPERCASE.)

4. To add a graphic to the widget, upload it to the Media Library, as described in Chapter 8. Then copy the URL into the Text widget, using the `img` tag.
5. To add text and HTML to the widget, enter it in free-form fashion. Be sure to click the Automatically Add Paragraphs check box, unless you want to add a lot of `<p>` and `</p>` tags yourself.

For our sample site, a typical entry contains the name of a post, surrounded by code to link it to its permalink. The result looks like this:

```
<a href="http://gvdaily.com/2009/04/24/dialing-international-who-needs-mobile-minutes/">Dialing International: Who Needs Mobile Minutes?</a>
```

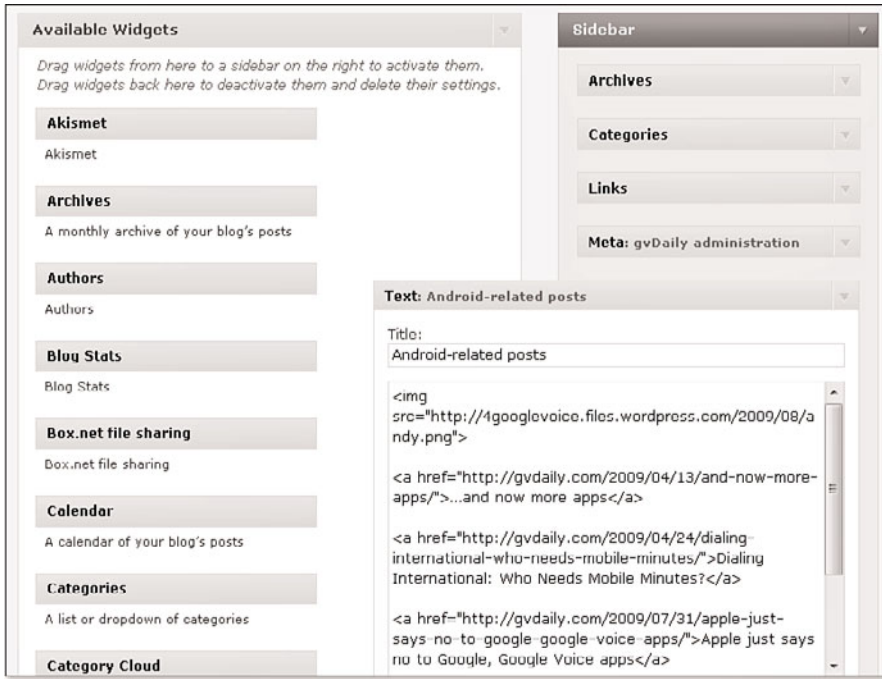
6. Click the Save button regularly to save your work.
7. When you're finished, click Save one last time, and then click Visit Site.

Our sample Text widget's code along with the resulting widget are shown in Figure 6.9.

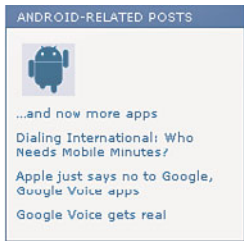
When you're done, always review your work, note what works well, and consider how to improve it.

For the Text widget described here, for instance, here are the things we like:

- A nice, distinctive image—easy to find for repeat visitors
- A good location—the main keyword, Android, is right at the front of the widget title
- A clear, simple topic

**Figure 6.9**

Text widget code isn't pretty...but the results can be beautiful.



Here are the ways we'd probably revise it on a second try:

- Revise the HTML code so that links move up into the space next to the figure, using vertical space better.
- Add some guiding text such as “Most recent first” at the beginning, or even dates next to the posts, so people knew what was recent and what was historical.
- Add a post to the site explaining what Android is and how it's relevant to the main topic of the site, Google Voice, then link to that in this widget.



tip

There is another way to create Text widget contents. Just create the content like it's a blog posting, using both the Visual and HTML tabs as needed. Preview the posting to make sure it's what you want. Then cut and paste the HTML out of the Add/Edit Post page's HTML tab into the Text widget and view the result.

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