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Kreg Steppe

Sams **Teach Yourself**

WordPress 3

in **10**
Minutes

SAMS



Sams Teach Yourself WordPress 3 in 10 Minutes

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Introduction

Blogging has been booming for years, and it shows no sign of slowing down. It is an easy and organized way to deliver news, tutorials, and podcasts; it's even an easy way to share personal thoughts and stories. It was the social network before other social networks existed. Like blogging, WordPress has grown over the years to a mature platform that is accessible to everyone, including you. Starting your own blog can be a fun and rewarding experience, but getting there might take a little work. Navigating your way through installation, profile accounts, themes, and plugins will be easier after you complete the lessons in this book. You will have all the knowledge you need to start your own blog right away.

About This Book

As part of the *Sams Teach Yourself in 10 Minutes* guides, this book shows you all the caveats of setting up a blog with WordPress either as a hosted blog or on your personal website. All the topics are separated into easy-to-handle lessons that you can complete in 10 minutes or less. The lessons cover the following tasks and topics:

- ▶ Creating a blog at WordPress.com or installing your blog on another server
- ▶ Configuring and customizing your blog
- ▶ Writing blog posts and pages
- ▶ Mapping your way around the WordPress Dashboard
- ▶ Adding media to your posts
- ▶ Installing themes and plugins
- ▶ Customizing widgets
- ▶ Drawing attention to your blog
- ▶ Blogging on the go

Who This Book Is For

Sams Teach Yourself WordPress 3 in 10 Minutes is for individuals who want to create and operate a personal weblog or website for an organization using WordPress. WordPress is one of the most popular blogging systems, but uninitiated users might need help getting started with it. There are a lot of options and choices to be made within the software. Do you want to host a personal blog or a blog for a business? Maybe you want to show off your photography, or maybe you want to use WordPress to start a podcasting site. WordPress can do all these things, and it includes something for everyone. The advice in this book can make your foray into blogging with WordPress more satisfying.

Each lesson focuses on a particular subject such as installation or managing comments. You can skip around from lesson to lesson or follow through the entire book from beginning to end.

What You Need to Use This Book

To use this book, you first need a can-do attitude and the curiosity to learn something new. You probably already have the tools you need to start using WordPress: an Internet connection, a computer, and a web browser. If you have those, you are ready to go.

You might also need a credit card or some other payment type to purchase your own domain, and you might need to subscribe to hosting services if you want to host your own WordPress site. You can learn more about these things in Lesson 8, “Setting Up Hosting.”

Conventions Used in This Book

Whenever you need to watch for something in particular or are directed to click on something, those items will appear as **bolded** text, such as “Click the orange **Download** button.” There are also some special sidebars that call out Tips, Notes, and Cautions.

TIP: Tips are nuggets of information that are good to know as you proceed. Tips might also offer shortcuts for getting things done.

NOTE: Notes are extra information that might give you a deeper understanding of a topic and help you expand your knowledge.

CAUTION: Cautions are warnings that alert you to possible consequences or an outcome of using a particular task or feature.

Screen Captures

The screen captures in this book were taken using the Firefox web browser. If you use a different web browser, your screens might look slightly different. The content in this book is based on the current release of software on WordPress.com as of September 1, 2010 and WordPress.org version 3.01. While most features of these two versions are the same, any significant differences between them are noted as necessary.

Also keep in mind that the WordPress developers are constantly at work, and new releases and updates are frequently available. Often new features are added or pages are slightly redesigned. These updates mean that the screen captures in this book might differ a little from what you see when using WordPress. Just remember: Don't panic. Even though things change regularly over time, the basic principles and functionality are the same.

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LESSON 7

Using RSS and Data Migration Tools

In this lesson, you learn what RSS is, the value of having an RSS feed, and how to set one up. You also learn how to back up and migrate your data to another blog.

Syndicate Your Blog with RSS

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. It is a method by which readers can subscribe to your blog by means of an RSS file, often called an RSS feed.

When your readers subscribe to RSS, they don't have to visit your website periodically to check for new content. Instead, programs such as Mozilla Thunderbird, Google Reader, NetNewsWire, Microsoft Outlook, and Internet Explorer download the RSS files from all sites readers subscribe to at regular intervals. The postings are then displayed much like email to make it easy for the readers to quickly glance over the headlines and open postings that are of interest.

RSS feeds are available from most blog and news sites. They are typically indicated by an orange icon (see Figure 7.1) or the words *RSS* or *Subscribe*.

If your blog does not currently have an RSS feed available, consider adding one to increase readership. With RSS functionality becoming more popular in applications, a large number of people on the Internet use RSS readers almost exclusively for content delivery (see Figure 7.2).



FIGURE 7.1 The RSS icon is a quick way to indicate people can subscribe to a site.

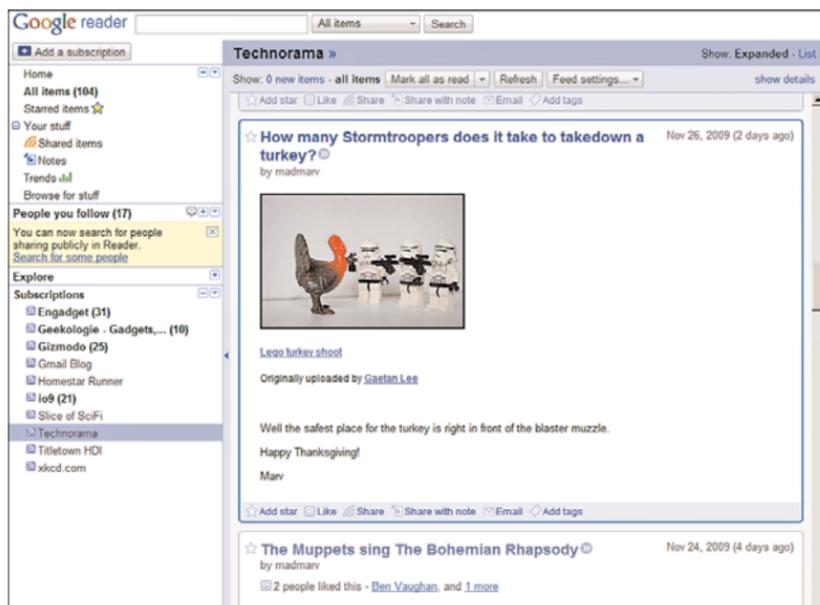


FIGURE 7.2 RSS applications like Google Reader deliver websites directly to you.

Setting Up an RSS Feed

You can set up RSS feeds for posts or comments. The most common feed is the one containing your most recent posts. To create an RSS feed, follow these steps:

1. Select **Appearance, Widgets**.
2. Add the RSS Links widget to your sidebar by dragging it from Active (or Inactive) widgets to the sidebar.
3. Click the downward-facing triangle on the right side of the RSS widget (see Figure 7.3).

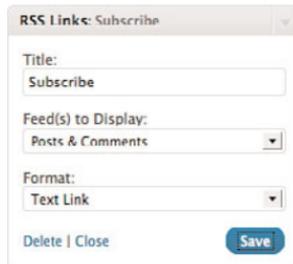


FIGURE 7.3 Use the RSS Links widget to allow your readers to subscribe to your blog.

4. Provide a title for your sidebar widget. Many people simply put “Subscribe”.
5. Indicate which feeds to display. You can choose to have either a feed for your posts, a feed for your comments feed, or one of each.
6. Select how your feed links will be displayed with the Format option. You can choose to display an RSS icon (image), text, or both.
7. Click the **Save** button to save your changes and then **Close** to close the widget.

Now when readers want to subscribe to a feed on your site, they right-click on the orange icon, copy the link location, and paste it into their RSS reader. From then on, they will automatically know when you have posted something to your site.

Your link shows up on your page similar to the one shown in Figure 7.4.



FIGURE 7.4 Sample RSS links and icons using the RSS Links widget.

Adding Other RSS Feeds

You can also add feeds to other sites using the same widget by including their RSS feed. Having a feed from another blog is useful if you have multiple blogs that are related and want to show the latest content from one on the other. For example, I have a personal blog that has a sidebar widget with links from my various podcasts. When I update one of the podcasts, the content on my personal blog is updated automatically via the RSS feed (see Figure 7.5). To obtain the RSS feed from another site, follow these steps:

1. Visit another website or blog and look for the orange icon, *Subscribe*, or *RSS*.
2. Right-click and choose the option to copy the link location.
3. Paste the link location into your RSS feed URL space in the RSS widget.
4. Click the **Save** button and then the **Close** link.

Using a Redirected Feed

An RSS feed is a convenience for your readers. However, you might want to better understand how many people are subscribed to your feed and what posts are generating traffic. You can do that by using a redirected feed.

Using a redirected feed might sound like something the “big guys” use to track statistics and drive traffic, but it’s also useful for occasional bloggers to just find out the health of their feed.

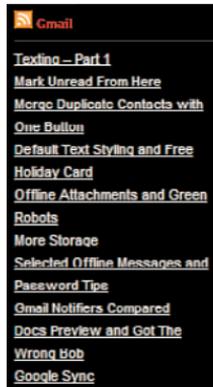


FIGURE 7.5 The RSS widget allows you to show content from another feed on your site.

A common way to do this is to create one feed that you make public and keep your real feed private. The public feed sends subscribers through a service that gathers statistical information about their habits. One popular service is called FeedBurner. It offers basic stats free and extended services for a fee. To get set up with FeedBurner, do the following:

1. Go to the FeedBurner site (<http://feedburner.google.com>).
2. Create an account or log in with your Google account if you already have one.
3. Enter your blog or RSS feed URL in the box under the label Burn a Feed Right This Instant (see Figure 7.6).
4. Click **Next**.
5. Edit the Feed Title and Feed Address if necessary. In most cases, the default values work fine.
6. Click **Next**.
7. The critical part is done. FeedBurner displays the URL of the feed you can publish to the public. Use this as the URL in your RSS widget described earlier. If you want to collect additional

feed stats, click **Next** one more time and check the options you like; otherwise, click **Skip Directly to Feed Management**.

8. Click **Next**.

Log in to FeedBurner and check your stats, growth, and readers' behaviors at any time.

The screenshot shows the FeedBurner dashboard with the following data:

FEED TITLE	SUBSCRIBERS
Anthrobinary	2
ChuckChat - Freestyle Blog	70
ChuckChat Freestyle	29
Gmail Podcast	1,101
Gmail Podcast Enhanced	0
Radio Yesterday	221
Technorama	353
Technorama Blog	863

Below the table, there is a section titled "Burn a feed right this instant. Type your blog or feed address here:" with a text input field containing "http://izero1.wordpress.com/feed/rss/" and a "Next" button. An arrow points from the text "Enter your blog address or RSS URL" to this input field.

Enter your blog address or RSS URL

FIGURE 7.6 FeedBurner makes it easy to collect subscriber statistics.

TIP: **Set Up a Redirected Feed Right Away**

If you are considering gathering statistics about your blog, it is strongly recommended that you establish and publish the redirected feed right away. If you make your default WordPress feed and then decide to gather stats with a redirected feed later, all your readers will have to unsubscribe from the original feed and resubscribe to the new feed, which can cause you to lose some of your audience.

Other Useful Tools

Several other useful tools in WordPress don't seem to fit anywhere else in the side menu, so they are placed under Tools, Tools.

Press This

Press This is a small web application that streamlines the process of posting articles as you are browsing around the Web. As you are browsing the Internet and come across text, images, or video you want to reference, you can use Press This to quickly make a post in your blog.

You can find Press This under Tools, Tools in the side menu. To start using Press This, follow these steps:

1. Either drag the **Press This** link to your browser's link bar or add it as a favorite.
2. Find a story you like, select the text you want to include, and then click the Press This link (or favorite).
3. The Press This window appears with the title and link in the article body already filled in (see Figure 7.7). Add your additional text, images, categories, tags, and other standard post material.
4. Click **Publish**.

Your post has been published. Press This offers you the options to view your post, edit your post, or close the window. When you are done, your main browser window is still where you left it. Press This can be a real time saver.

Webmaster Tools Verification (WordPress.com Only)

Google, Bing, and Yahoo! offer tools that provide you with detailed information and statistics about how your readers access and index your website. They can provide you with additional information to the standard WordPress statistics. Using the webmaster tools is completely optional. You can verify your site with one or all if you like with no impact to your site's performance or your readers' experience.

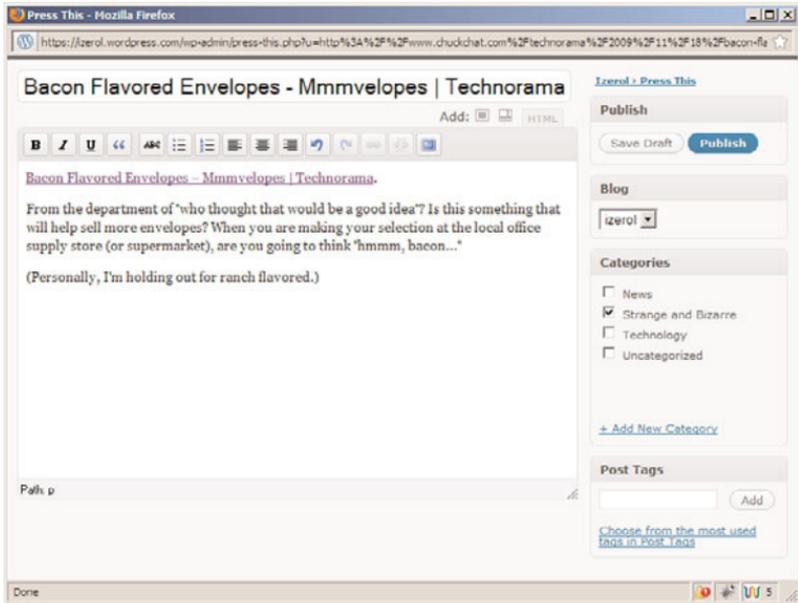


FIGURE 7.7 Grab bits of the Internet and post it back to your blog with Press This.

Before you can use these tools, you need to sign up for an account with the service of your choice and verify your blog. Use the instructions from the appropriate following section to verify your blog with one or more of the services.

Google Webmaster Tools

1. Log in to www.google.com/webmasters/tools/ with your Google account.
2. Click **Add a site**.
3. Enter your blog URL then click **Continue**.
4. Copy the meta tag, which looks something like `<meta name='google-site-verification' content='dBW5CvburAxi537Rp9qi5uG2174Vb6JwHwIRwPSLIK8'>`.
5. Leave the verification page open and go to your blog Dashboard.

6. Open the **Tools, Tools** page and paste the code in the appropriate field.
7. Click **Save Changes**.
8. Go back to the verification page and click **Verify**.

Yahoo! Site Explorer

1. Log in to <https://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/> with your Yahoo! account.
2. Enter your blog URL and click **Add My Site**.
3. You are presented with several authentication methods. Choose **By Adding a META Tag to My Home Page**.
4. Copy the meta tag, which looks something like `<meta name='y_key' content='3236dee82aabe064'>`.
5. Leave the verification page open and go to your blog Dashboard.
6. Open the **Tools, Tools** page and paste the code in the appropriate field.
7. Click **Save Changes**.
8. Go back to the verification page and click **Ready to Authenticate**.
9. Go to the main page using the **My Sites** link on the left. In the status column, look for a green check mark indicating your site has been validated.

Bing Webmaster Center

1. Log in to www.bing.com/webmaster with your Live! account.
2. Click **Add a Site**.
3. Enter your blog URL and click **Submit**.
4. Copy the meta tag from the text area at the bottom. It looks something like `<meta name='msvalidate.01' content='12C1203B5086AECE94EB3A3D9830B2E'>`.

5. Leave the verification page open and go to your blog Dashboard.
6. Open the **Tools, Tools** page and paste the code in the appropriate field.
7. Click **Save Changes**.
8. Go back to the verification page and click **Return to the Site List**.

NOTE: Authentication Takes Time

Most authentication with Google, Yahoo, or Bing happens within a few minutes; however, it might take up to 24 hours.

After you've got your site validated, you can use the webmaster tools to leverage the power of these search engines to determine who is linking to your site, what pages are most popular, and other statistics. You can even block the search engines from indexing part of your blog if you have pages you would like to exclude.

Backing Up Your Data

Computers are not perfect. Sooner or later, we all lose data. To reduce your risk, make regular backups of your information including your blog data.

The way to make backups of your WordPress data is to go to **Tools, Export** in the side menu. Fortunately, this is one of the easiest things to do in WordPress; there is only one button! (See Figure 7.8.)

There are several options to filter your data to dates, categories, and other criteria. However, I recommend leaving the options at their default settings and backing up everything.

When you click the **Download Export File** button, WordPress saves all your information in a file and sends it to your computer. Save the file on your computer. If you ever need to restore the information, you can use the Import feature. You can also use this feature to migrate your data from

one WordPress.com blog to another, or a WordPress.com blog to a WordPress.org blog.

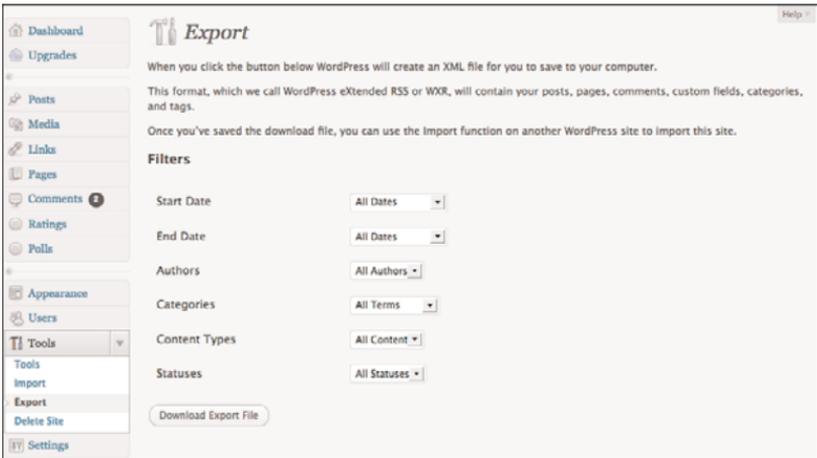


FIGURE 7.8 Use the export feature to back up or migrate your blog data.

NOTE: Take Note Where You Save Your Export File

Mac OS X automatically saves the file in your Download folder, whereas Windows users need to tell the computer to open or save the file. Be sure you know where your browser is saving the file in the event you ever need to import it.

Migrating Your Blog

There are several reasons why you might want to move your blog data from one WordPress instance to another. You may be starting your own website with its own hosted WordPress blog, or you want to change the name of your blog and keep the content, or you want to transfer ownership and control of the blog to another user account. WordPress has a way to address all these requirements.

If you are starting your own hosted website, the process is as follows:

1. Register your domain.
2. Download the software from WordPress.org.
3. Install the WordPress software.
4. Export the data from your current blog (refer to “Backing Up Your Data” earlier in this lesson).
5. Import the data to your new blog (refer to “Importing Data from a WordPress Export in the next section).

The first three steps are covered in greater detail in Lesson 8, “Setting Up Hosting.”

If you are renaming your blog or migrating from one WordPress.com blog to another, the process is similar:

1. Register the new blog (refer to Lesson 1, “Introducing WordPress”).
2. Export the data from your current blog (refer to “Backing Up Your Data” earlier in this lesson).
3. Import the data to your new blog (refer to “Importing Data from a WordPress Export” in the next section).

NOTE: Media Not Included

Creating an export file only exports the posts, pages, comments, categories, and tags. With the exception of migrating between two WordPress.com sites, you need to manually migrate the media files. If you have a large number of files and are migrating from one WordPress.com blog to another, you can contact support at <http://en.support.wordpress.com/contact> for assistance.

Importing Data from a WordPress Export

If you are importing from a previously exported WordPress (XML) file, follow these steps:

1. Log in to your blog as an administrator.
2. Go to **Tools, Import** in the side menu.
3. Choose **WordPress** from the list.
4. Select and import the file. Click the browse button and navigate to your export file. WordPress names the exported file `wordpress.date.xml`, where date is in the *year-month-date* format, such as `wordpress.2010-11-30.xml`. When you've located the file, select it and click **Open**. On the WordPress page, click the **Upload file and import** button.
5. Map the authors in the export file to users on the blog. For each author, you may choose to map to an existing user on the blog or to create a new user.
6. Check the box marked **Download and import attachments**. This downloads the media library from the original site if possible. This option is only available if you are migrating between two WordPress.com sites.
7. Click **Submit**. A screen is displayed indicating the import has started. You will receive an email when it is complete.
8. WordPress then imports each of the posts, comments, and categories contained in this file into your new blog.

The import could take up to 24 hours, depending on the amount of data in your blog. You will receive an email when the import is complete. If you do not, contact WordPress.com support at <http://en.support.wordpress.com/contact>. When the import is complete, review your new blog to ensure everything migrated correctly.

Transferring a Blog

WordPress allows you to transfer your blog to another WordPress.com user. You may choose to do this to transfer ownership to someone new, or you may have created a new account for yourself and want all your previously independent blogs under one account. The procedure to transfer a blog is as follows:

1. Log in as an administrator.
2. Go to **Dashboard, My Blogs**.
3. Move your cursor over the address of the blog you want to transfer.
4. Click on the **Transfer Blog** link. Note that you do not see this link if you are not the owner.
5. Read and review the Big Important Warning that appears. It is important that you understand all the terms and conditions of the transfer. This procedure cannot be undone (see Figure 7.9).
6. Check the check box on the bottom of the warning.
7. Enter the WordPress.com account or email address of the person you are transferring the blog to and click the **Transfer Blog** button.
8. A confirmation email is sent to your registered WordPress email address. The transfer does not occur until you read the message and click the link in email.

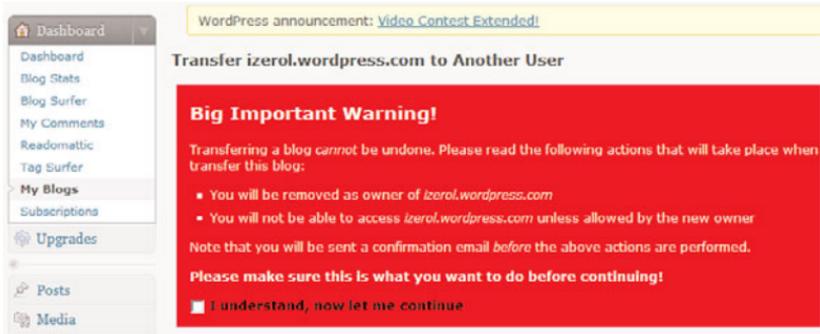


FIGURE 7.9 Transferring a blog to another user cannot be undone.

NOTE: Upgrades Transfer, Too

Upgrades to a blog are transferred with that blog to the new owner. A blog with domain upgrades is processed manually by a member of the WordPress.com staff. All other upgrades (space, videopress, and so on) are processed automatically.

Importing from Another Blog

If you have set up a blog on another site, WordPress allows you to import the content from that blog using the **Tools, Import** feature (see Figure 7.10). You can import from several other blogging platforms (including other WordPress sites).

NOTE: WordPress.org Users Need to First Install the Importer

The first time you do an import as a WordPress.org admin, a pop-up window appears instructing you to install the importer. Simply click the red **Install** link to install the software, and then click **Activate Plugin & Run Importer** to continue.

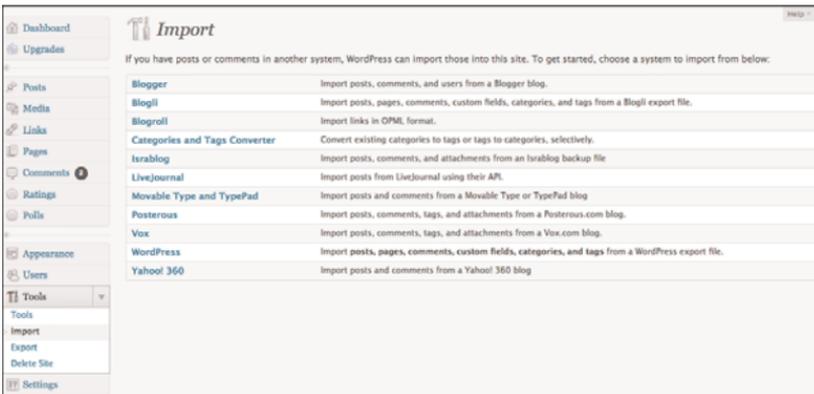


FIGURE 7.10 The Import subpanel allows you to import your blog data from another location.

Currently, it is possible to import your content from the following blogs:

- ▶ Blogger
- ▶ Blogli
- ▶ Israblog
- ▶ LiveJournal
- ▶ Movable Type or TypePad
- ▶ Posterous
- ▶ Vox
- ▶ WordPress
- ▶ Yahoo! 360

Each import tool walks you through the specific steps to import your data from your old blog to your new one. Follow the onscreen instructions for your particular situation. The importer is used only to retrieve the content. It does not import any themes, images, or media files you may have had on your other blog. In some cases, the importer brings in only posts and comments (Blogger). When you import from another WordPress blog, you can restore posts, pages, comments, custom fields, categories, and tags.

In addition, you can also import links and convert WordPress tags to categories and vice versa using **Tools, Import**.

Importing from Blogger, TypePad, or LiveJournal might seem like a logical thing to do if you are just getting set up with a WordPress blog; however, the WordPress option might not seem like an obvious choice at first. There are a few reasons why you might choose this option:

- ▶ **Restoring a previous backup of your blog.** Some people like to have two sites. The first is a public site that they want highly available, often called a *production site*. The second is a *sandbox* (or development) site where they can make changes without the public noticing. After they have made the necessary changes in development, they can promote the changes quickly from the development site to the production site. Periodically, they might want to refresh the information in development with the more current information in production. This is done by first creating an export file (covered later in this lesson) and then using the import to update the development site.

- ▶ **Migrating from the WordPress.com to WordPress.org site.** You might find that WordPress.com's features are too constraining and you would like to host your own blog. Similar to the preceding scenario, you import an existing WordPress export file to bring over the content. To learn more about how to migrate your blog from WordPress.com to WordPress.org, read the sections "Backing Up Your Data" (to export your blog data) and "Importing Data from a WordPress Export," earlier in this lesson.
- ▶ **Renaming your blog.** You might find at some point that your blog name and URL do not match the brand of content you are providing. You cannot rename the WordPress.com URL, but you can register a new blog and migrate the information from your old blog to your new blog.

Summary

Your WordPress.com blog is set up, and you have the skills to create the content you need and make it appear in a variety of formats. Now you have the necessary information to make it easy for readers to get your posts automatically with RSS. When you are ready to move to another WordPress blog or just make a backup to ensure your work's safety, WordPress has you covered there too.

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