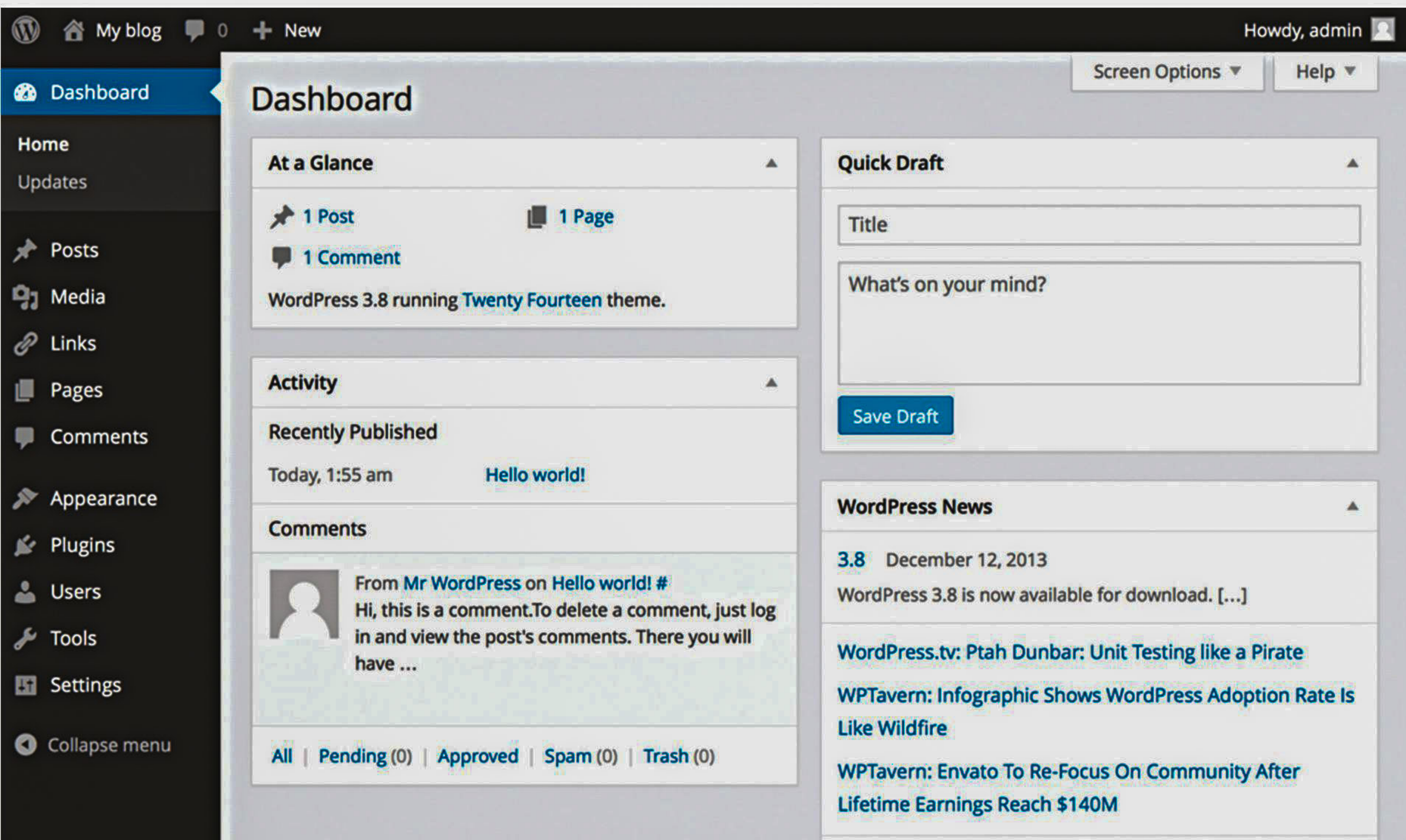


Getting started with your own WordPress website



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The ability to create a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing website without knowing how to code is the prime reason why people choose WordPress over hard-coded platforms. Plus, it is easier to modify WordPress sites in comparison to those that are built using languages such as HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Of all the content management systems (CMS) out there, WordPress is by far the most popular one and hence, it should also be your first choice for building your very own website. Here are some of the things you should know as you get started.

DOMAIN AND HOSTING PLAN

Come up with a name for your website and check for its availability online or with your internet service provider (ISP). After you ensure the availability, you can purchase it from a domain and web hosting service. On average, 1 GB storage will cost you about 1000 to 1500 taka. The cost may vary depending on the type of storage you are provided with, for instance, faster SSD storage will cost you a bit more. Most packages will include some common services that require no additional charge such as unlimited databases, email accounts, sub-domains and so on. Prices will mainly vary depending on the quality of service, uptime, and bandwidth. Another thing to keep in mind during the purchase is how much storage you might need. If you are creating a website for your company profile, personal profile or for simply blogging, a minimum of

2 GB storage will be enough. For the purposes of e-commerce or websites which will store a large number of pictures and user accounts, 10 GB will initially be enough to serve your purpose.

CHOOSING A THEME

WordPress will offer you free themes to choose from. However, those themes may not always serve your purpose. They are limited in terms of styling and functionality. For a modern and professional website, both in terms of aesthetics and functionality, you should try out a premium theme available on WordPress theme vendors like theme-forest.net. Average price of popular themes including Avada, BeTheme and Ultra can cost you around USD 50 to 60. There are cheaper ones as well which you can get for less than USD 20. However, the popular themes give you a lot more options and freedom to play around with your design and thus, they are worth their price tags. Another thing you need to keep in mind while setting up a theme is to ensure its user friendliness, for instance, if you are running an e-commerce platform and are showcasing your products, you should not overdo the website's design or aesthetics in a way that it draws more attention than the actual products. Visitors often get annoyed when they cannot focus on what they want to see.

PLUGINS

The plethora of plugins you have at your disposal is one of the many advantages WordPress offers when you use the platform

to build your website. Most of these plugins come free of cost and are full of features that can help make your website more dynamic. Plugins, such as Google Analytics, provides you with statistical and graphical data regarding the reach of your website. Form plugins, like Contact Form 7, allows users to enter feedback or contact you through which their messages will automatically be sent to your preferred email address. E-commerce plugins such as WooCommerce lets you organise your product listings, prices and offers that you might want to provide to your customers. Then there are different local plugins such as local payment gateways which will allow users to avail the mobile banking facilities available in Bangladesh. Be sure to check the reviews and user ratings before you install any plugin, just like you would do while installing any application from Google Play Store.

SPEED, SEO, AND SECURITY

The most preferred loading time for a website is 2-3 seconds after which, users tend to leave the website as they do not want to wait. To ensure a speedy website, be sure to optimise your images using plugins available on WordPress. You can also store images and other important content of your website using content delivery network (CDN) which will allow users to access your content from the server which is geographically closer to them. For search engine optimisation (SEO), allow your website to be indexed by Google which you will be asked for at the time of

installing WordPress. Plugins such as Yoast, can help you deal with keywords, URLs, and other necessary tricks and tips to index your website and give them a higher position on search engines such as Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. As for security, you need to equip your website with anti-malware plugins and secured authentication plugins. Use SSL to encrypt your data. Also, frequently check your activity panel to see what your users are up to and which ones are trying to access confidential data.

BACKUP

One of the most important things to remember while maintaining your website is to ensure that your data is being backed up on a regular basis. The data on your web server may get corrupted due to unforeseen circumstances like malware attack, server failure or any other issue that might occur during website servicing. This can lead to the loss of important data including user data, viewer statistics and your monetary data as well. Hence, you need to have a backup. This can be done based on the number of everyday visitors on your website. If the number is high and you have high activity on your website regularly, it is wise to keep a backup every 24 hours or maybe twice a week minimum.

WordPress isn't limited to just these points. There is a lot more to discover about the platform as you go about using it. But for starters, this is more than enough to ensure that you can build yourself a professional website.