Study Unit 8:   WordPress Themes and Plugins

Outline

Creating website in WordPress and Manage Website through Admin Panel and Themes / plugins & Widgets Installation in wordpress. Introduction to Bootstrap

➢ Why should use WordPress
➢ WordPress Dashboard
➢ WordPress Plugins Installation
➢ WordPress Theme Installation and Management

Learning Outcomes of Study Unit 7/8

Upon completion of this study unit, you should be able to create a website on WordPress and Manage WordPress website From Backend

Admin Panel, Pages, Posts, Forms and Hosting a Local website.

1. Important Reasons to use WordPress
2. WordPress Plugins
   - What are Plugins
   - How do they relate to WordPress core?
   - Some of the more popular plugins categories:
   - Finding and Installing Plugins
   - Plugin Updates

- Plugin Compatibility
- Installing Plugins
- Automatic Plugin Installation.
- Upload via WordPress Admin.
- Manual Plugin Installation.
- Uninstalling Plugins
- Automatic Uninstallation
- Manual Uninstallation
-
3. WordPress Theme Installation
   - What is a Theme?
   - Default Themes
   - Get New Themes
   - Adding New Themes
   - Adding New Themes by using cPanel
   - Activating the Theme

Important Reason to use WordPress

1. WordPress is Free as in Freedom

WordPress is a free software. It means you are free to download, install, use and modify it to match your needs. You can use it to create any kind of website. To learn more, see our article about why is WordPress free?.

While the WordPress software itself is free, you need a domain name and web hosting to install it.

A domain name is the address of your website on the internet. This is what your users type in their browser's address bar to access your website (for example, wpbeginner.com).

Web hosting is your website's house where all your website files are stored.

2.WordPress is Easy to Customize with Themes and Plugins

A large portion of people using WordPress are neither web designers nor programmers. As a matter of fact, most folks start using WordPress without any prior knowledge of designing websites.

For non-tech savvy folks, WordPress is the perfect solution because there are thousands of free website templates (themes) that you can choose from. There is a perfect WordPress theme for just about every kind of website (whether it's a blog, business site, or an online store).

WordPress themes are easy to customize because a lot of them come with their own options panel allowing you to change colors, upload logo, change the background, create beautiful sliders, and truly customize it to your needs without writing any code at all.

3. WordPress is SEO Friendly

WordPress is written using standard compliance high-quality code and produces semantic markup. In non-geek terms, this makes Google and other search engines love WordPress.

This is why WordPress sites tend to rank higher than others in search engines.

By design, WordPress is very SEO friendly out of the box. You can also use WordPress SEO plugins to further optimize your website. For complete step by step instructions, see our ultimate WordPress SEO guide to properly optimize your website.

4. WordPress is Easy To Manage

WordPress comes with a built-in updates management system. This allows you to update your plugins and themes from within your WordPress admin dashboard.

WordPress also notifies you when there is a new version of WordPress available, so you can update your site by simply clicking a button.

To protect your data from any accident or hacking, you can easily use a WordPress backup plugin to automatically create backups and store them safely on a remote location.

5. WordPress is Safe and Secure

WordPress is developed with security in mind, and it is considered to be a very safe and secure platform to run a website. However, just like the real world, the internet can be an uncertain place.

6. WordPress Can Handle Different Media Types

WordPress is not just limited to writing text. It comes with a built-in media uploader to handle images, audio, and video files.

WordPress supports oEmbed enabled websites which means you can embed YouTube videos, Instagram photos, Tweets, and Soundcloud audio by just pasting the URL in the WordPress post editor.

What ways to use WordPress?

WordPress can be used in many different ways from simple websites to eCommerce marketplaces and anything in between.

Following are just a few examples of different kind of websites you can make with WordPress.

Start a Blog
Make a business website
Start an online store
Build a membership website
Sell online courses

What are plugins? #What are plugins?

WordPress Plugins are PHP scripts that extend the functionality of WordPress. They enhance the features of WordPress, or add entirely new features to your site. Plugins are often developed by volunteers, and are usually free to the public.

Plugins are available via the WordPress Plugin Directory. Although plugins you find here are thoroughly tested and considered safe to use, they are of varying quality and are often works in progress.

How do they relate to WordPress core? #How do they relate to WordPress core?
The WordPress content management system software, or WordPress core, provides the primary functionality for publishing content and managing users. Each WordPress plugin is an additional piece of software that can be easily installed to extend the functionality of WordPress core.

This allows you to customize your WordPress site with your desired functionality. Since so much functionality is provided through plugins, WordPress core is full-featured and customizable, without having to include everything for everyone.

What are some examples?

Some of the more popular plugins in the WordPress Plugin Directory fall into these categories:

Spam control
SEO
Data import and export
E-commerce
Security
Caching

This is just a small sample. There are thousands of plugins available in the directory, so there's a good chance you'll find some that are useful to you.

Finding Plugins

You can browse and search for plugins in the WordPress Plugin Directory. Each plugin listed there is available for download as a zip file you can upload to your WordPress site.

An alternative way to find and install plugins is from within the WordPress admin screens. Navigate to Plugins > Add New, and you can browse and search for plugins from within your dashboard. Each plugin listed there has an "Install Now" button so you can easily add it to your site.

Plugin Updates #Plugin Updates

Plugin developers update their plugins occasionally, and those updates will be visible to you on your site's Plugins page. To find any plugins installed on your site that need to be updated:

Click the "Plugins" link in the left nav of your site's dashboard.
Look down the list of installed plugins for any that include a line reading "There is a new version…"

Click the "View version…" link in that note to view details about the plugin's update.
Click the "update now" link to update the plugin.

Plugin Compatibility #Plugin Compatibility

If a plugin hasn't been updated since the most recent update to WordPress core, it may be incompatible, or its compatibility may be unknown. You can view compatibility information about plugins from the Add Plugins page, or from the Installed Plugins list.

Compatibility of New Plugins #Compatibility of New Plugins
To learn about the compatibility of a plugin before you install it, navigate to Plugins > Add New. Each plugin description on this page includes a note that reads "Compatible with your version of WordPress" or "Untested with your version of WordPress." You can click the "More details" link to see information about this plugin's compatibility.

Compatibility of Installed Plugins #Compatibility of Installed Plugins

To learn about the compatibility of plugins you've already installed, click the "Plugins" link in the left nav of your site's dashboard. Each item on this list should contain a "View details" link. Click this to see information about this plugin's compatibility with different versions of WordPress.

Installing Plugins #Installing Plugins

There are 3 ways to install WordPress plugins.

Automatic Plugin Installation. Any plugin available on the WordPress Plugins Directory can be installed via the built-in plugin installer.

Upload via WordPress Admin. You can easily add a new plugin by uploading a zip archive of the plugin from your local computer.

Manual Plugin Installation. In some cases, you may need to manually upload a plugin directly using an SFTP client.

Automatic Plugin Installation #Automatic Plugin Installation
This is the simplest method of installing a plugin. To add a plugin using the built-in plugin installer:

Navigate to Plugins > Add New.
Use the search form in the top-right to search by keyword, author or tag.
On the search results that appear, click a plugin's title to read more about it. This page may contain installation notes, plugin documentation or other useful information.
Click the Install Now button to install the plugin.
Click Activate to activate the plugin.

Manual Upload via WordPress Admin #Manual Upload via WordPress Admin
If you have a copy of the plugin as a zip file, you can manually upload it and install it through the Plugins admin screen.

Navigate to Plugins > Add New.
Click the Upload Plugin button at the top of the screen.
Select the zip file from your local filesystem.
Click the Install Now button.
When installation is complete, you'll see "Plugin installed successfully." Click the Activate Plugin button at the bottom of the page.

Manual Plugin Installation #Manual Plugin Installation
In rare cases, you may need to install a plugin by manually transferring the files onto the server. This is recommended only when absolutely necessary, for example when your server is not configured to allow automatic installations.

This procedure requires you to be familiar with the process of transferring files using an SFTP client.

Warning: this process may put your site at risk if you install a WordPress plugin incompatible with the current version or from an unreliable source. Back up your site completely before proceeding.

If your plugin is in the form of a zip file, unzip the contents. You should see a single folder named after the plugin.
Look in the plugin folder for a readme.txt file. Read the file to confirm that this is the correct plugin, and to look for any special instructions.
Connect to your WordPress server with your SFTP client.
Copy the plugin folder to the wp-content/plugins folder in your WordPress directory. This installs the plugin to your WordPress site.
Navigate to your Plugins admin screen and locate the newly uploaded plugin in the list.
Click the plugin's "Activate" link.
If there is one, click the plugin's "View details" link to learn more about the plugin.

View a User's Favorite Plugins #View a User's Favorite Plugins

To see a WordPress.org user's favorite plugins (including your own):

Browse to the Add Plugins admin screen (Plugins > Add New).
Click the Favorites tab.
Type the user's name in the "Your WordPress.org username" field.
Click Get Favorites.
Each of the plugins listed here has an Install Now button you can use to add the plugin to your site.

Uninstalling Plugins #Uninstalling Plugins

Plugins have a safe and easy-to-use uninstaller. If that's unavailable to you for some reason, you can also manually uninstall them.

Automatic Uninstallation #Automatic Uninstallation

The safe and easy way to uninstall a plugin is via the WordPress admin screen.

Navigate to your Plugins admin screen and locate the plugin to be installed.
Click the plugin's "Deactivate" link.

Click the plugin's "Delete" link.

Manual Uninstallation #Manual Uninstallation

In rare cases, you may need to manually uninstall a plugin without using the Plugins admin screen. This is recommended only when absolutely necessary.

Warning: The following procedure involves manually deleting files from your WordPress server. This can be dangerous. Back up your site completely before proceeding.

Navigate to your Plugins admin screen and locate the plugin to be installed.
Click the plugin's "Deactivate" link.
If installing the plugin required you to edit your WordPress theme, manually edit the theme files to remove those modifications.
Connect to your WordPress server with your SFTP client.
Navigate to your WordPress directory, then into the wp-content/plugins folder. Locate the folder named after the plugin to be uninstalled. Note: the folder name will not match the plugin completely, but it should be recognizable. A plugin named The Most Useful Plugin Ever would probably be located at wp-content/plugins/the-most-useful-plugin-ever.
Delete the plugin folder and its contents.
Navigate to your Plugins admin screen and review the list of plugins to confirm that you have successfully removed the intended plugin.

What is a Theme? #What is a Theme?

Fundamentally, the WordPress Theme system is a way to "skin" your WordPress site. Yet, it is more than just a "skin". Skinning your site implies that only the design is changed. WordPress Themes can provide much more control over the visual presentation of your content and other data on your WordPress site, as well as behavior of certain site's elements while interacting with visitors.

A WordPress Theme is a collection of files that work together to produce a graphical interface with an underlying unifying design for a website. These files are called template files. A Theme modifies the way the site is displayed, without modifying the underlying software. Themes may

include customized template files, image files (*.jpg, *.png, *.gif), style sheets (*.css), custom Pages, as well as any necessary code files (*.php). For an introduction to template files, see Template Files.

Let's say you write a lot about cheese and gadgets. Through the use of the WordPress Loop and template files, you can customize your Cheese category posts to look different from your Gadgets category posts. With this powerful control over what different pages and categories look like on your site, you are limited only by your imagination. For information on how to create custom look for various templates in your theme, take a look at Template Hierarchy.

Template Hierarchy – the structure of WordPress theme files
To better understand this diagram, you can interact with it.

Default Themes #Default Themes

WordPress currently comes with three themes: the default Twenty Nineteen theme (demo), and the previous defaults Twenty Seventeen (demo) and Twenty Sixteen (demo) themes.

You can switch between Themes using the Appearance in the Administration Screen. Themes you add to the theme directory will appear in the Administration Screen > Appearance > Themes as additional selections.

Themes Administration Screen – Installed Themes

Get New Themes #Get New Themes

The WordPress Theme Directory is the official site for WordPress Themes. Every theme in this directory is reviewed by a dedicated team and tested against wide range of rules, all of which are ensuring secure and pleasant experience for theme user.

Among almost 2,900 themes in directory, you can easily find the right one for your site with advanced search feature using filters for layout, subject and specific theme's features.

Themes Directory – Feature Filter

If you need more than screenshot and features list to decide whether the theme fits your needs, you can see the demo for the theme with Preview feature on theme's info page.

Theme Info Page

Theme Info Page

Adding New Themes

Most of themes in WordPress Theme Directory come with installation instructions, especially the ones that may require more steps than the usual theme installation. Be sure to read through and follow those instructions for the successful installation of the Theme. If your Theme does not work after following any provided instructions, please contact the Theme author for help.
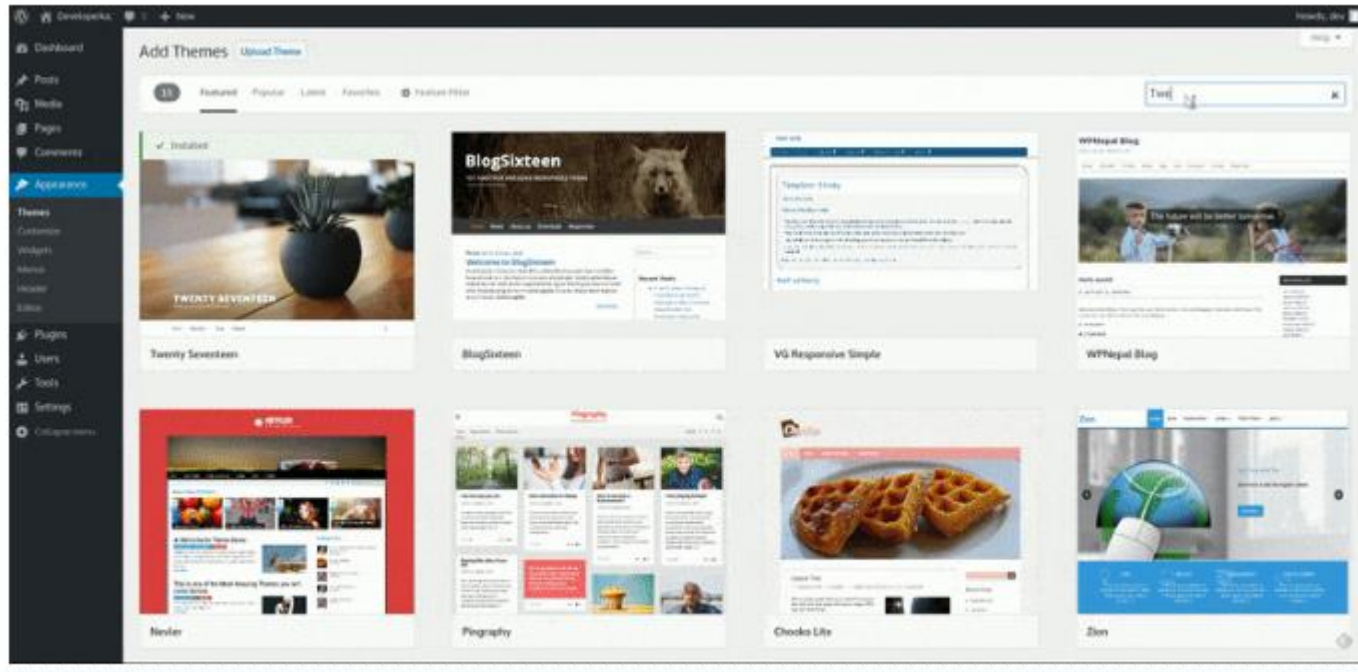
Adding New Themes using the Administration Screens

You can download any theme from WordPress Theme Directory directly to your site by using the Add New option in the Appearance sub-menu.

Log in to the WordPress Administration Screens.
Select the Appearance screen, then Themes.
Select Add New.

Install New Theme – Administration Screens

https://i1.wp.com/wordpress.org/support/files/2018/10/theme-install-new.gif?ssl=1
Either use the Search or Filter options to locate a Theme you would like to use.
Click on the Preview link to preview the Theme or the Install link to upload the Theme to your site,
Or use the Upload Theme button at the top of page to upload a zipped copy of a Theme that you have previously downloaded to your machine.

Install New Theme – Administration Screens
When the Theme is already downloaded but not activated Live Preview option will give you preview of your site with your own, existing content.

Adding New Themes by using cPanel #Adding New Themes by using cPanel

If your host offers the cPanel control panel, you can use its Upload option to upload the Theme files to your site. For this you will need Theme files in an compressed archive (.zip or .gz).
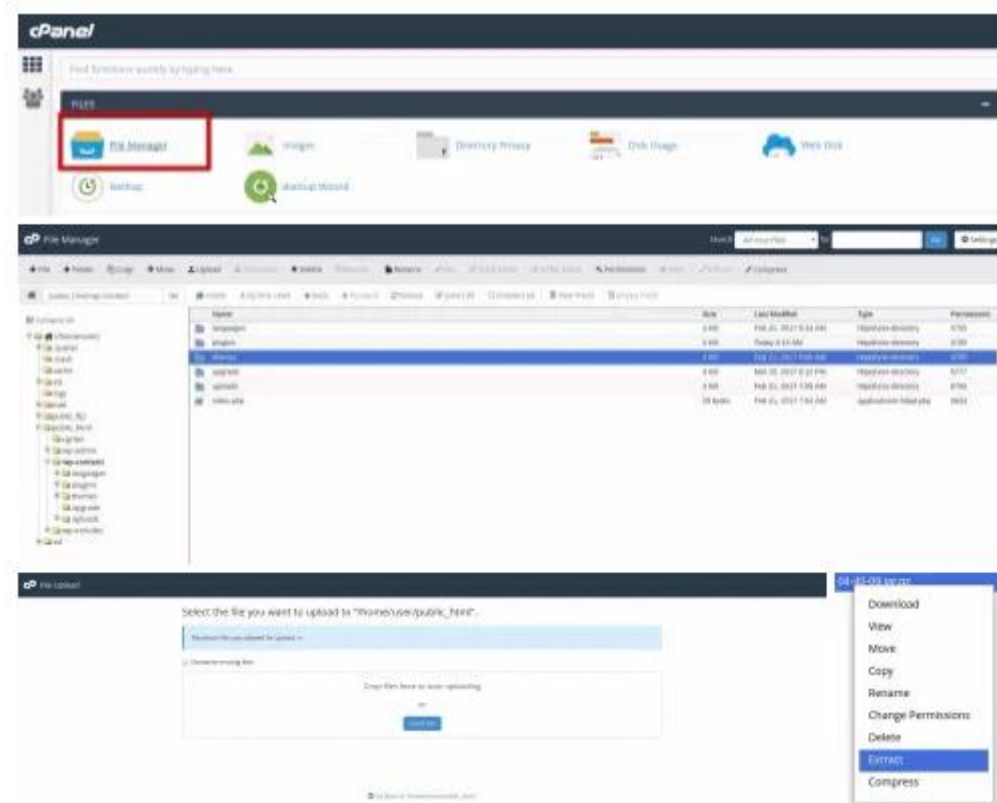
Download the Theme .zip file to your machine.

In cPanel File Manager, navigate to your Themes folder. Depending on your hosting, path to Themes folder can differ a bit but essentially you are looking for public_html inside which you'll find /wp-content/themes/.

Once you're inside the Themes folder in cPanel File Manager, click on Upload and upload that .zip file you saved in Step 1.

Once the .zip file is uploaded, right click on the name of that file in cPanel and select Extract from the context menu.

When Theme files are successfully extracted, follow the instructions below for activating the new Theme.

cPanel – File Manager
cPanel – Themes Directory
cPanel – Upload FilecPanel – Extract Archive

Activating the Theme #Activating the Theme

Now that new Theme is in /wp-content/themes/ directory (whether you used Administration Screens, cPanel or FTP method), this new Theme is ready to be activated. All themes in /wp-content/themes/ directory are available for Activation and Update (when update is provided by theme author), but only one theme from this directory can be Active.

When theme is Activated it means that this theme's style and functionality (look and behavior) will be applied on your site. You will be informed by Administration notification about successful activation of the Theme.

Activated Theme Notice

To activate a Theme for your site:

New theme activated. Visit site

Activated Theme Notice

Log in to the WordPress Administration Screens.
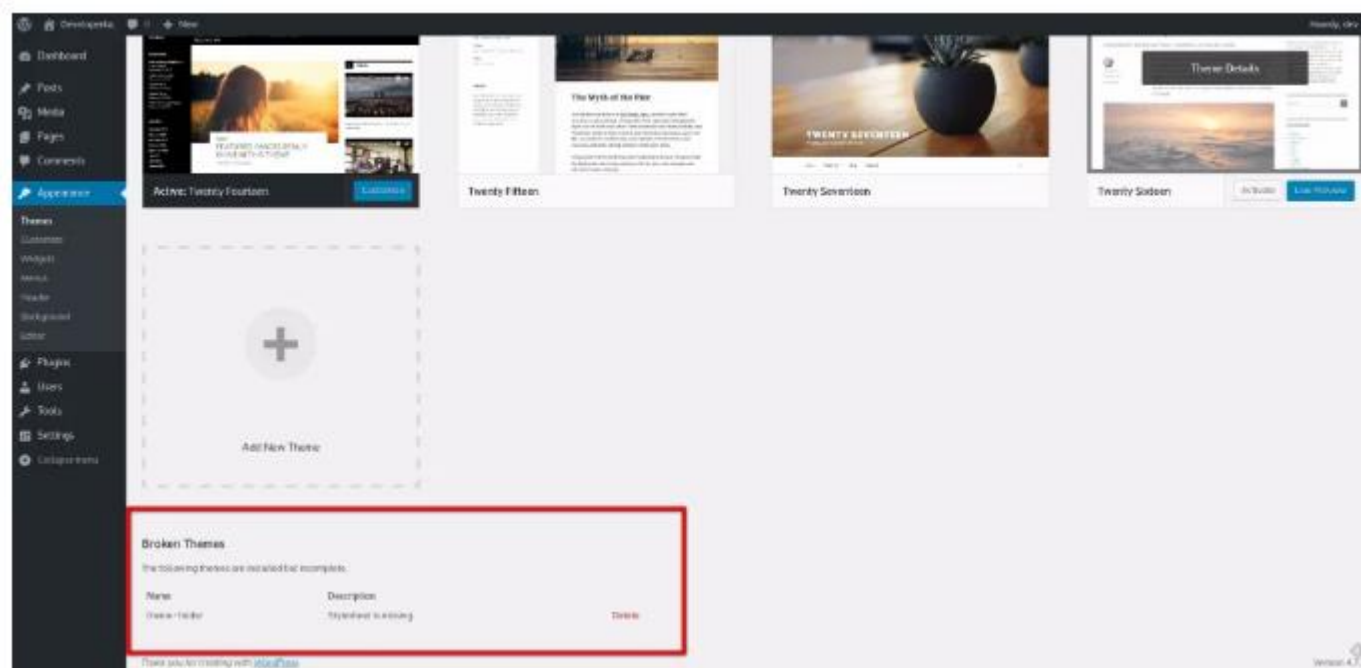Select the Appearance screen, then Themes.
You should see here all themes from your /wp-content/themes/ directory and from here you can see details for each of them by clicking on Theme Details (rollover the Theme thumbnail).
Live Preview option will give you preview of your site with your site's content.
To activate the Theme click the Activate button.
Your selection will immediately become active.

Note: If the Theme preview is blank, do NOT activate the new Theme without investigating further. Your site may not be displayed correctly, otherwise. If you do not see Theme's thumbnail at all, your new Theme might be corrupted or broken. Take a look below installed theme's thumbnails if there is any info about broken themes. In this case contact the Theme author for help.

Broken Theme

Now that you have completed this study unit, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting or Online interactive sessions. You can also check your answers at the Self-Review Answers section which is located at the end of this Module.

1: What is Plugin in WordPress? How to Install and Uninstall WordPress Plugin?
2: Reason to use WordPress.
3: What ways to use WordPress?
4: What is WordPress Theme? How to Install and Uninstall WordPress theme?

Self-Review Answers (SRA) for Study Unit 7/8

1: See following links.

References and Additional Reading Materials

Create WordPress website

https://wordpress.org/
https://wordpress.org/support/article/administration-screens/
https://wordpress.org/support/article/appearance-menus-screen/
https://www.wpbeginner.com/why-you-should-use-wordpress/#:~:text=You%20can%20also%20add%20custom,available%20for%20you%20to%20use.
https://www.wpbeginner.com/glossary/plugin/