Build a website for your boat

Entering the blogosphere

STEP 1 Choose your theme

- You are now ready to start creating your website. The first step in doing this is to choose what you want your website to look like. Wordpress calls this the ‘theme’, and the beauty of Wordpress is that there are hundreds of free page styles to choose from. The theme selection screen is shown below.

There's no need to worry if you later decide you don't like the one you initially choose as you can change your mind any time. Indeed, with any blog you can change your website design in seconds with your moods or with the vagaries of the weather if you want to. My blog address is http://charmary.wordpress.com and this uses a theme called Splendio, but just search around until you find one you like. With most themes you can upload your own images to replace the standard ones in the theme, allowing you to personalise your website completely.

STEP 2 Watching the dashboard

- You control your website through what Wordpress calls your dashboard. Think of this as the website control panel. You use this to change the settings, add new content, change the theme or anything else in relation to the website. Your dashboard is only available to you as the blog owner: no one else can see it, and you access it through your web address followed by /wp-admin. You log into this page using the username and password you set up previously, and when you first go in you will see something like the screenshot below.

STEP 3 Posts and pages

- Your website has two possible types of content. These are called posts and pages. The easiest way to think of the difference is perhaps to think of pages as static content. In other words, this is content that doesn't really change that much. This may perhaps be information about the boat, about you as the owner or anything else that will remain broadly the same. The posts, on the other hand, can perhaps best be thought of as the constantly changing content – the entries in the log, for example. The front page of your website can be either a page or a post.

  - If you want the site to be changing constantly, then choose to have the posts as the front page – this is the default setting for Wordpress. On the other hand, if you want to keep the front page always looking the same, then choose to have the main page to be a page. You can always change this under your dashboard by going to Settings and then Reading on the left-hand side.

  - To start creating content and see what it looks like, log into your dashboard. On the left-hand side you will see a link to add either a post or a page.

  - Try clicking on Posts and then Add New. This will bring up the editing page to allow you to add your first website or log entry. This should look something like the screenshot below.

  - You should find adding content essentially like working in Word or a similar word processing program. You just type what you want to into the box and can format it by selecting the relevant content and clicking the buttons at the top to create bold, to italicise words or phrases or to create bulleted or numbered lists. Once you are happy with what you have added, just click the Publish button on the right. Now go to your website and see how it looks. The example text in my ‘Welcome to Charmary’ post (below left) appears on my website home page like this:

- You have just added your first content to your site. It really is that easy. When you add further posts, your site will always show the latest content at the top, so your readers will always see what you have added most recently. You now have a website and can just keep adding posts to update your friends and family about what you and the boat are up to. The rest of this article will now really just concentrate on refinement of your basic website.