



February 2, 2010

Make Your Blog More Dynamic with Static Pages

When blogging platforms first came into being, they were used primarily by people who needed to write regular posts on a given topic of interest—travel, politics, technology, food, etc. But it didn't take long before bloggers realized they had some content they wanted to be more easily accessible on a permanent basis and the "sticky" feature wasn't quite enough. Then along came "pages"—a way to create static pages of content that wouldn't be affected by the constantly changing posts that make up what we think of when we think of a "blog." This newsletter provides some tips on how to incorporate pages into your own blog to make it as useful as possible for your visitors.

TYPES OF PAGES

When you first install WordPress, your blog has one post, Hello World, and one page, About. While the About page is a natural choice for a static page, here are some other types of pages you should consider when creating your site.

Landing Pages: If you're driving people to your site through ads, directories, or guest posts, landing pages are a great way to tailor content to those audiences, as well as track the traffic coming from each different source. [Copyblogger](#) has great information about the importance of landing pages and regularly conducts "makeovers" to help their readers create more effective ones.

Portfolios: Creative types, like photographers and writers, are used to showcasing their work. But every type of business can benefit by highlighting their expertise. For example, check out marine products supplier Marine Stainless's gallery of [Featured Work](#).

Frequently Asked Questions: FAQ pages are a great way to help readers because they show that you're aware of what questions are most likely to be uppermost in their minds and are making it easier for them to find the answers to them. Check out these very different examples from [Hynobirthing Utah](#) and [Motorcycle Insurance](#).

Policies: Blogs are being scrutinized a lot more intently nowadays, as seen by the **recent FTC rules** regarding product endorsements. In addition to providing disclosures within individual posts, consider creating a page that explains your overall approach to endorsements, like my (full disclosure here :) friend Charmian does on her fabulous food blog, **Christie's Corner**. You can also use pages to inform readers of your policies regarding the privacy of information they share with you, guidelines regarding visitor comments, and site content usage restrictions.

Additional Resources: These can be your own documents that people can download from the site or links to other sites that have related content. I'm not a big fan of the lengthy sidebar blogroll, but a page of links with a brief explanation of why you're listing them, like on environmental site **Green Pepper**, can be very helpful.

Other uses of static pages:

- Case studies
- Testimonials
- Tutorials
- Featured articles
- Forms
- Events
- Contact information

WORKING WITH PAGES

Here are a few tips for working with pages.

Make a Static Home Page: There's no rule that says your home page has to be a list of posts. You can use a static page as your home page by going to the Settings > Reading panel in your WordPress dashboard. Simply select an existing page as your Front Page. If you want a page of blog posts as well, create a new blank Page named Blog (or whatever you want to call it) and select that as the Posts Page.

Front page displays

Your latest posts

A [static page](#) (select below)

Front page:

Posts page:

Remove Bylines from Pages: Thesis Options > Display Options > Bylines. Uncheck all the boxes for displaying byline content on pages.

Remove Comments Box from Pages: Thesis Options > Display Options > Comments. Check the box to disable comments from pages.

Change Page Name in Menu: Thesis Options > Thesis Options > Navigation Menu. Click on a page in the list, select the text, and type in a new name.

NOT JUST FOR BLOGGING ANYMORE

Thanks to Page functionality, you can now use WordPress and Thesis as a content management system (CMS) for entire websites, even if there's no blog component. I like this approach because not only can you take advantage of all the benefits of WordPress and Thesis for building the site (point-and-click design options, no-code plugins and widgets for advanced functionality, etc.), but it makes it easy to allow non-techies to update the site because they don't need any special software and not much training is required. Also, if you ever do want to start a blog, you're already set up for it and can ensure it has a consistent look-and-feel as the overall site, an important branding consideration.

I recently completed a redesign project for the **Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley**, a nonprofit organization that rehabilitates sick, injured, and orphaned birds and mammals. It has more than 100 static pages and I don't think most people would even realize it was built on a blog platform.

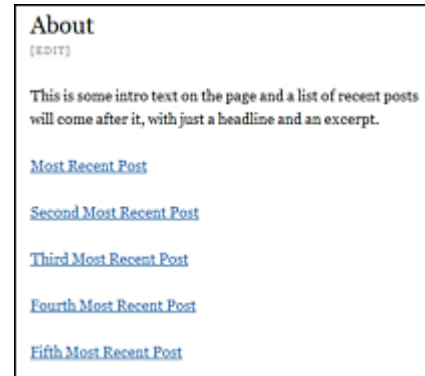


For more information about using WordPress and Thesis as a CMS, [check out this article on DoubleMule](#).

JUST THE CODE, PLEASE

Add Recent Posts to a Static Page

Sometimes you want to have dynamically generated links to posts within a static page. This example will display a list of the headlines for your five most recent posts, linked to the full posts, on a page with the title About. This page in the [WordPress Codex](#) provides a list of parameters you can add to customize the list. For example, you can restrict the posts to ones in a certain category or that have a specific tag, order them alphabetically instead of by date, etc. You can also learn more about using conditional tags [here](#).



In custom_functions.php

```
function recent_posts_static() {
    if (is_page('About')) {
        global $post;
        $myposts = get_posts('numberposts=5');
        foreach($myposts as $post) :
            setup_postdata($post);
        ?>
        <p><a href="<?php the_permalink(); ?>"><?php the_title(); ?></a></p>
        <?php endforeach;
    }
}

add_action('thesis_hook_after_post','recent_posts_static');
```

Now, when you do this, you may get a comments box on the page (if you haven't turned them off for all pages in the Thesis Options panel). If you don't want that, you'll need to add this CSS code as well. You just need to change the ".about" part to the class name for the relevant page.

In custom.css

```
body.about #comments {  
display: none;  
}
```

HOT SITE SPOTLIGHT



Overheard in Court

This site, which features humorous courtroom exchanges, was designed by **Andrew Norcross**. I think it has to be one of the most creative interpretations of a Thesis site I've seen to date. I especially love the background—scroll up and down the page slowly to really get the full effect.

You can follow Andrew on Twitter at [@norcross](#).

RECENT POSTS

[QuickTip: Adding Thumbnails to Your Teasers](#)

[Applying Functions Only to Specific Pages](#)

[Where Do You Put the Code?](#)

[What Is the Thesis Theme and Why Would You Want It?](#)

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This **15-page eGuide** offers explanations of the basic Thesis concepts, step-by-step instructions, and code samples for several popular customizations, including adding a clickable header to your site.

The Starter Pack is free to anyone who purchases Thesis through the Tech for Luddites site. The offer applies whether you're purchasing a Personal or Developer option, or upgrading from Personal to Developer.

"I LOVE Thesis Theme Starter Pack. It answers some simple but important questions that I couldn't find the answer to anywhere else."

– Yael K. Miller, Co-Founder of [Miller Mosaic, LLC](#)

If you've already purchased Thesis elsewhere, you can also purchase the guide for \$9.95.

Get the Starter Pack today!