

Discovering What's New in WordPress 2.5

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-

WordPress 2.5 was a much anticipated release, and it was officially available to the public on March 29, 2008. Why so much anticipation and excitement over this new version? In the months leading up to the public release, the WordPress community started hearing the buzz about all the new and exciting changes to their favorite blogging platform. These changes promised a complete design overhaul of the WordPress Administration panel, a built-in gallery integration for your photos and images, one-click plugin upgrades, a fully customizable Dashboard, and a Media Library, just to name a few of the changes users were hearing about.

Matt Mullenweg, the co-founder and most public face of WordPress, announced version 2.5 on the official WordPress blog by saying, “WordPress 2.5 [is] the culmination of six months of work by the WordPress community . . . and almost entirely a result of your feedback.” (<http://wordpress.org/development>) In case you’re wondering what makes the WordPress community such an exciting thing to be a part of, Matt’s comments in his announcement of 2.5 give it to you in a nutshell: WordPress is built for the community, by the community.

Because this chapter assumes a certain existing level of comfort with the WordPress software — and it's an addendum to my book, *WordPress For Dummies*, which covers the platform through version 2.3.3 — you can reference Chapters 6–11 in *WordPress For Dummies* to find those step-by-step directions on setting options, writing posts and pages, and setting up categories, blogrolls, and so on. What I highlight in this chapter are some of the major things that are new with WordPress 2.5.

You'll discover what's new and how to navigate your way through the new user interface with comfort and ease. Be sure to hang in there through the end of this chapter to read about what to expect in the second edition of *WordPress For Dummies*, which I'm in the process of writing, due to be released in Fall 2008.

Touring the New WordPress Dashboard

If you're familiar working with WordPress 2.3, one of the first things you immediately notice when you log in to your WordPress 2.5 Dashboard is the design of the user interface. The WordPress folks hired the great design talents from Carsonified (<http://carsonified.com>) to complete this new design, and as you'll see, it's quite pleasing to the eye.

After you've logged in, you'll find the WordPress 2.5 Dashboard (as shown in Figure BC-1) within the WordPress Administration panel. You can consider the Dashboard to be a control panel, of sorts, because it provides you with several quick links and areas that provide you with information about your blog.



Users of WordPress prior to 2.5 will notice that a lot of the elements of the Dashboard page are still present; however they're presented a bit differently with the new interface design. One of the nicer features of the 2.5 Dashboard is that most of these areas are configurable, allowing the user to configure what information they want to present in this Dashboard area. Sweet!

The Dashboard menu in the top portion of the page shows links to other sections of the Administration panel (such as Write, Manage, Design, Comments, and so on), which I cover later in this chapter, in the "Setting Options for Your Blog" section. In the following sections, I take a look at the Dashboard page, starting from the Dashboard header that appears directly beneath those tabs (as shown in Figure BC-1).

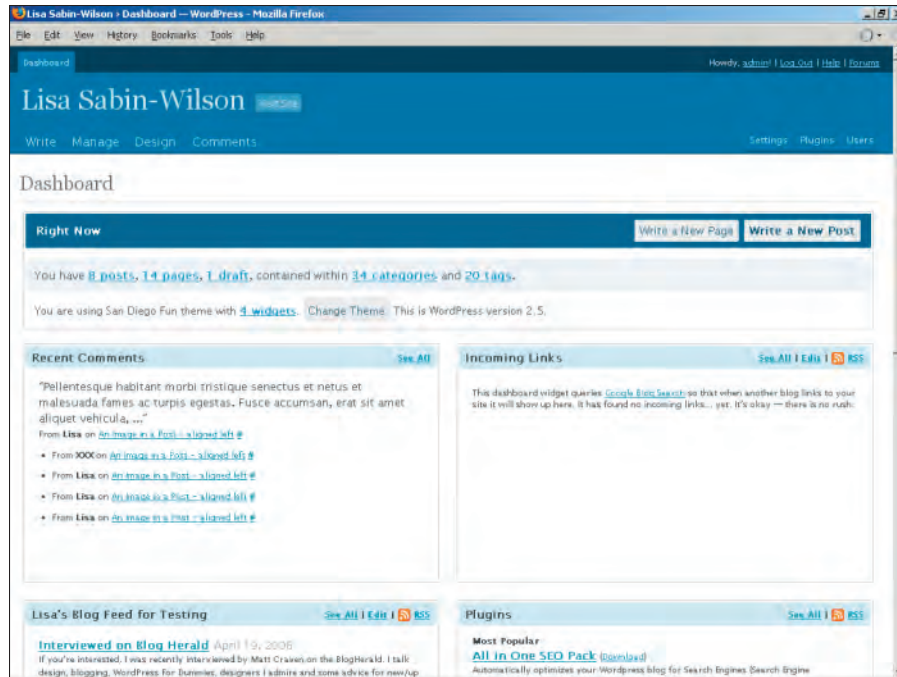


Figure BC-1:
The
WordPress
2.5
Dashboard.

Right Now

The Right Now section of the Dashboard tells you what's going on within your blog right now, right this very second! Refer to Figure BC-1, and you'll see a snapshot of what was going on within my blog when I took that picture.

Directly to the right of the Right Now heading, you see two different buttons:

- ✔ **Write a New Page:** Click this button, and you're taken directly to the Write Page page, where you can proceed with writing and publishing a new static page for your blog. You can also set all the different page options here. I do cover how to write a new page, as well as setting the different page options, later in the chapter.
- ✔ **Write a New Post:** Click this button, and you're taken directly to the Write Post page, where you can proceed with writing and publishing a new post to your blog. You can also set all the different post options here. I do cover how to write a new post, as well as setting the different post options, later in the chapter.

Directly underneath the Right Now heading, you find information about the posts and pages you currently have in your WordPress blog. Refer to Figure BC-1, and you'll see that WordPress has given me this information about my blog posts, pages, categories and tags. (Remember, the numbers listed here are from my own blog, and your numbers will vary.)

- ✓ **8 posts:** The current number of posts on your blog, which will change as you add more posts to your blog in the future.

On your screen, you'll notice that the *posts* text is a darker blue color, and it's underlined. This tells you that you can click that link and WordPress takes you to the Manage Posts page, where you can view, edit, or delete your current posts (more about that later).

- ✓ **14 pages:** The current number of pages on your blog, which will change as you add or delete pages on your blog in the future.

Pages refers to the number of static pages you've created within your blog. Clicking this link takes you to the Manage Pages page, where you can view, edit, and delete your current pages.

- ✓ **1 draft:** The current number of draft posts you have on your blog, which will change as you add or delete drafts on your blog in the future.

Draft posts are posts that you've written but haven't published to your blog yet. Clicking this link takes you to the Drafts page, where you can view, edit, and delete your current draft posts.

- ✓ **34 categories:** The current number of categories you have on your blog, which will change as you add or delete categories on your blog in the future.

These are the categories that you've created for your blog, so far. Clicking this link takes you to the Manage Categories page, where you can view, edit, and delete your current categories.

- ✓ **20 tags:** The current number of tags you have on your blog, which will change as you add or delete categories on your blog in the future.

These are the tags that you've created for your blog, so far. Clicking this link takes you to the Manage Tags page, where you can view, edit, and delete your current tags.

The last section of the Right Now area of the Dashboard tells you the following information:

- ✓ **Which WordPress theme you're currently using:** In Figure BC-1, you see that WordPress tells me I'm currently using the San Diego Fun theme.

- ✔ **How many widgets you're currently using:** If you click the Widgets link, WordPress takes you to the Widgets page, where you can change your widget options by editing them, moving them, or removing them. I cover widgets a bit later in this chapter.
- ✔ **A list of available themes:** Clicking the Change Theme button takes you to the Current Theme page that lists all the available themes on your WordPress blog. Your Active Theme, meaning the theme currently visible on your active blog, is shown at the top, under Current Theme. All other available themes currently available on your blog are listed and shown under Available Themes. You can click any theme on this page in order to activate it on your blog.
- ✔ **Your version of WordPress:** The last statement in the Right Now section of the Dashboard shows you the version of WordPress you are using. Figure BC-1 shows that I'm currently using WordPress version 2.5. In the future, this version announcement will change if you're using an older version of WordPress. For example, when WordPress upgrades the software to 2.6 and you're still using 2.5, this statement will tell you that you're using an outdated version of WordPress. It will encourage you to upgrade to the latest version.

Recent Comments

Moving on within the Dashboard, on the left side of the page you see a box labeled Recent Comments. This area displays the five most recent comments published to your blog. It shows the comment author's name along with a link to the actual post that she left the comment on. You see the post title to the right of the commenter's name. Click that link, and you're taken to that post on your blog, where you can scroll down and review the comments or leave a comment of your own. There is also a hash mark (#) that is linked directly to that comment. This is different from the post link that precedes it because clicking the # takes you directly to that specific comment on the post page, rather than taking you to the post and having you scroll down to see the comments.

At the top-right corner of the Recent Comments box, you see linked text called See All. That link is inviting you to see all your comments that have been left on your blog. Clicking the See All link takes you to the Manage Comments page within the WordPress Administration panel, where you can view and edit, moderate, or delete any comments that have been left on your blog. More information about managing comments on your blog comes later in this chapter.

Incoming Links

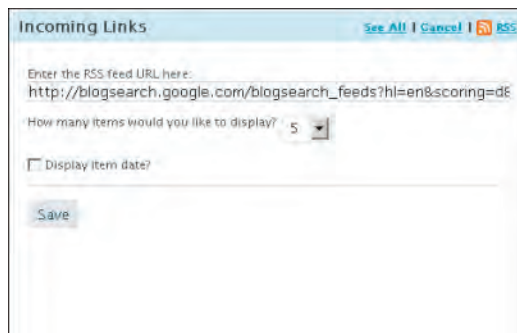
Directly to the right of the Recent Comments area in the Dashboard, you see a box called Incoming Links. This box lists all the blog-savvy people who wrote a blog post that links to your blog. In Figure BC-1, you see that I don't have any incoming links to my blog. How sad is that? This is because my blog is so brand new, people haven't discovered it yet. But I'm sure as soon as they do, my Incoming Links list will start filling up, in no time!

In the meantime, you see a message in that Incoming Links box that says, "This dashboard widget queries Google Blog Search so that when another blog links to your site it will show up here. It has found no incoming links. . . yet. It's okay — there is no rush." The words *Google Blog Search* are underlined because it's a link, and once you click it, you're taken to the Google Blog Search page, which is a search engine for blogs only.

Back to the Incoming Links box, you see three little items in the top-right corner:

- ✓ **See All:** Click this, and you're taken to a page on the Google Search Engine page that lists all of your incoming links, past and present.
- ✓ **Edit:** Click this, and the box changes, providing you with options to change (as shown in Figure BC-2) the settings for the Incoming Links box. Here's what you can do with this area:
 - *Enter the RSS feed URL.* You can enter any RSS feed URL you'd like in order to display incoming links to your site in the Incoming Links box. Some other RSS feeds you can use include Technorati feeds, Yahoo Search feeds, and so on. You aren't restricted to using Google Blog Search engine to provide your incoming link information.

Figure BC-2:
Changing
the options
in the
Incoming
Links box by
clicking the
Edit link.



Incoming Links [See All!](#) [Cancel!](#) [RSS](#)

Enter the RSS feed URL here:

How many items would you like to display?

Display item date?

- *Enter the number of items that you'd like to display.* The default number here is set to 5. However, by using the drop-down menu, you can choose to display up to 20 items (or incoming links) in the Incoming Links section on your Dashboard.
- *Select the Display Item Date check box if you'd like each incoming link to also display the date that the link was created.* If you don't want the date display, leave that box blank, without a check mark.

Be sure to click the Save button in order to save all of your preferences. Clicking Save refreshes the Dashboard page and resets the Incoming Links box to its original display.

✓ **RSS:** This provides you with an RSS feed of your incoming links. Click this link, and you can subscribe to the RSS feed of your incoming links using your favorite RSS feed reader, such as Google Reader, Bloglines, News Gator, and so on. Many folks call them *vanity feeds* because you're basically keeping your eye on what people are saying about you, and your blog, across the World Wide Web.

On your Dashboard page, you need to scroll down just a little bit to see three new sections underneath the Recent Comments and Incoming links sections (as shown in Figure BC-3).

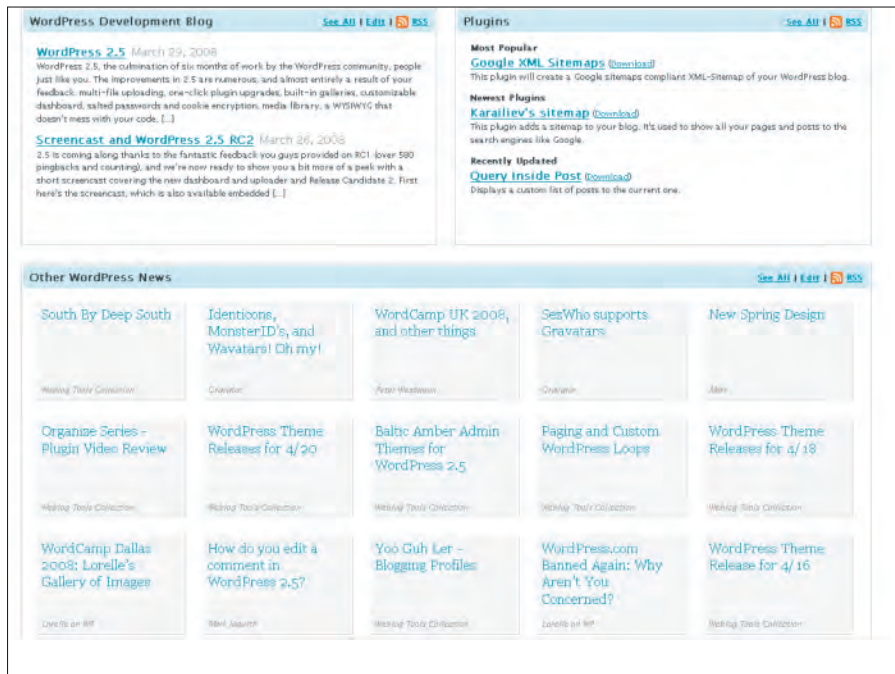


Figure BC-3:
The bottom half of the Dashboard page.

WordPress Development Blog

When you first install WordPress, the WordPress Development Blog box is, by default, populated with the last two most recent posts from the official WordPress Development blog. Here, you'll see the title of the last post, the date it was published, and a short excerpt of the post. Click the title of the post, and you're taken directly to that specific post on the WordPress Development Blog.

Now, following the updates on the WordPress Development Blog is very useful and I highly recommended doing so. Why? Because every single time you log in to your WordPress Dashboard, a quick glance at this section informs you of any news, updates, or alerts from the makers of WordPress. You can find out if there are new versions of the software, security patches, or other important news regarding the software you're using to power your blog.

While I, personally, recommend you keep the WordPress Development Blog updates in this section, the WordPress platform does give you the ability to change this. Maybe you'd rather have updates from a different blog in this section? You can accomplish this change by doing these easy steps:

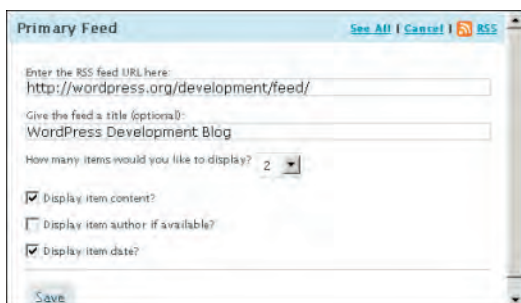
- 1. Click the Edit link shown on the top-right corner of the WordPress Development Blog box.**

The Primary Feed window opens within the same box, giving you several options to change the information contained within this box (as shown in Figure BC-4).

- 2. Type your preferred RSS feed in the Enter the RSS Feed URL Here field.**

So that you can see how this area changes when you enter new information, type the following RSS feed in this area: `http://feeds.feedburner.com/Lisas-Blog/`. (Disclaimer: This is the RSS feed URL for my own personal blog. Use it for testing purposes only.)

Figure BC-4:
Options to
change the
Primary
Feed box.



The screenshot shows the 'Primary Feed' settings window. At the top right, there are links for 'See All', 'Cancel', and 'RSS'. The main area contains several input fields and checkboxes:

- 'Enter the RSS feed URL here:' with the text 'http://wordpress.org/development/feed/'
- 'Give the feed a title (optional):' with the text 'WordPress Development Blog'
- 'How many items would you like to display?' with a dropdown menu set to '2'
- Three checkboxes: 'Display item content?' (checked), 'Display item author if available?' (unchecked), and 'Display item date?' (checked)
- A 'Save' button at the bottom left.

3. Type your preferred title in the Give the Feed a Title (Optional) field.

For your testing purposes, type the following title: **Lisa's Blog Feed for Testing**.

4. Select the number of items you would like to display using the drop-down menu to the right.

By default, the number of items is 2; however, you can choose up to 20 by clicking the down arrow on the drop-down menu and clicking your preferred number.

5. Select the Display Item Content check box if you would like to display the item content.

Item content refers to the text content of the post. If you don't select this check box, the small excerpt of the post won't display. Instead, it displays only the post title.

6. Select the Display Item Author, If Available check box if you would like to display the name of the person who wrote the post.

Leave this box unmarked if you don't want the author's name displayed.

7. Select the Display Item Date check box if you would like the date displayed.

Leave this box unmarked if you don't want the date displayed.

8. If you change your mind about editing this area, click the Cancel link at the top right of this box.

Do this *only* if you've decided against making any changes here. Clicking Cancel discards any changes you've made so far and refreshes the Dashboard page, keeping the original settings intact.

9. Click the Save button at the bottom.

This saves your changes; if you don't click this button, your changes won't be changed or applied to your Dashboard.

If you took my suggestion in Steps 1 and 2, you see how the WordPress Development Blog box has changed to Lisa's Blog Feed for Testing, and it now contains blog titles and posts from my blog feed (as shown in Figure BC-5), and not the WordPress Development Blog feed. This area is completely configurable based on your own preferences.

In the top-right corner of this WordPress Development Blog box, you can click the RSS link or RSS icon in order to subscribe to this feed in your favorite RSS feed reader. You can also click the See All link in the top-right corner, which takes you to the site that you've linked to, where you can read all posts available on that site.

Figure BC-5: WordPress Development Blog box changes are based on the options you set under the Edit link.



Plugins

The next box, to the right of the WordPress Development Blog box, is called Plugins. This box pulls information from the official WordPress Plugin Directory located at <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins>. This box randomly displays information about different plugins that are available within the WordPress Plugin Directory, along with a small description of the plugin and a link that takes you directly to that specific plugin page within the directory.

Clicking the See All link in the top-right corner takes you to the official WordPress Plugins Directory on the WordPress Web site, where you can freely browse all of the plugins that are currently available for download and use from that Web site.

Clicking the RSS link in the top-right corner allows you to subscribe to the RSS feed for that site in your favorite RSS feed reader.

Other WordPress News

By default, the Other WordPress News area of the Dashboard pulls in posts from a site called WordPress Planet. By keeping the default setting in this area the same, you'll always stay in touch with several posts made by folks involved in WordPress development, design, and troubleshooting. You'll find lots of interesting and useful tidbits of information if you keep this area intact. Quite often, I find some great information and resources on new plugins, new themes, problem areas and support, troubleshooting, and new ideas about WordPress, so I stay with the default setting.

However, WordPress is all about user experience, so you do have the ability to change the options for what you would like to display in this area. The directions for changing the items listed here are just like how you changed the options for the WordPress Development Blog box in the preceding section. Review those instructions, apply them to this section, and you'll be all set!

That is the front page of the WordPress 2.5 Dashboard, in a nutshell. At the very top, the Dashboard has several tabs and links that take you to other areas of the WordPress Administration panel, and the sections that follow take you through each section, where you set general options for your blog, write posts and pages, manage categories and tags, explore the image gallery and media library, manage comments, trackback, and spam — and where you'll find your design, theme, and plugin options.

One really nice feature introduced into WordPress 2.5 is the inline documentation scattered throughout the new Administration panel. Each area has short little snippets that give some information on what each configuration or setting does to and for your blog. The inline documentation is unobtrusive and helps guide the user along his or her way.



Should you ever need to get back to the WordPress Dashboard front page again, all you need to do is click the Dashboard link that appears at the top left of any of the pages within your WordPress Administration panel.

Setting Options for Your Blog

One of the first things I like to do when I'm setting up a new WordPress blog is set the general options. In this new WordPress 2.5 Administration panel, you find a link (Settings), at the top right of the Dashboard, that takes you to the settings options. Clicking that link takes you immediately to the General Settings page, which is under the General subtab (as shown in Figure BC-6).



If you're familiar with versions of WordPress prior to 2.5, you recognize the absence of an Options tab on the Dashboard menu. Options was removed in 2.5 and replaced with the Settings link that you find at the top-right corner of your WordPress Dashboard. Many of the same options and settings you had under your Options subtab are now found under Settings in WordPress 2.5 (as shown in Figure BC-6).

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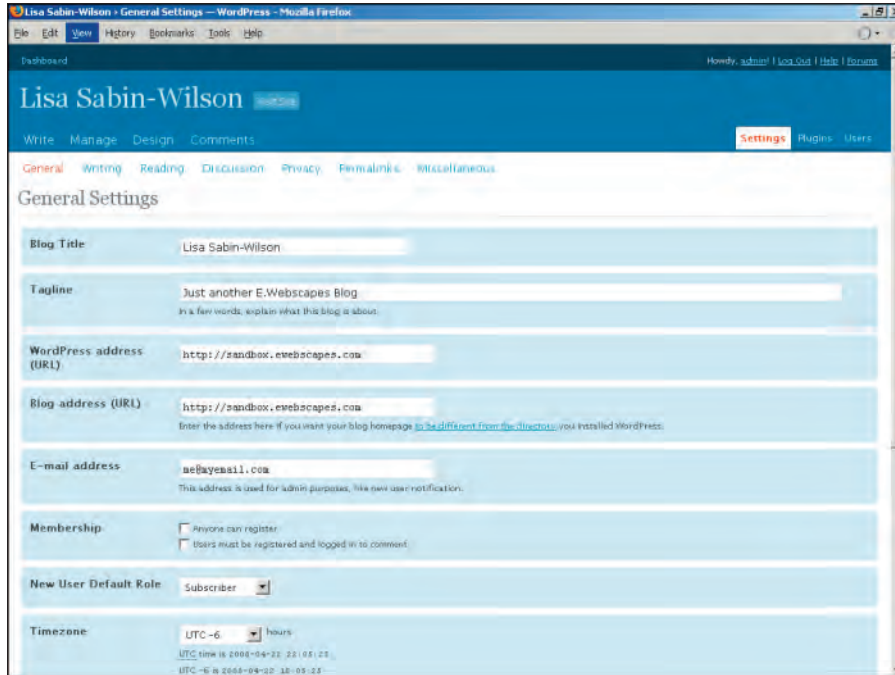


Figure BC-6:
The General
Settings
under the
General
subtab.

You can see that several subtabs are underneath the Settings tab: General, Writing, Reading, Discussion, Privacy, Permalinks, and Miscellaneous. However, notice (on your screen) that only the General subtab shows in bright orange, where the rest of them are blue. This color distinction tells you which page you're on — the orange-colored subtab is the active one, and that's the page you're currently looking at. If I were to click the Writing subtab, the Writing subtab would turn orange, and the General subtab would turn blue. Hopefully, none of you are color blind!

Within each of these sections, the options and settings are primarily the same as what you found in the previous version of WordPress 2.3.x. The biggest difference with this new version, 2.5.x, is the visual design and layout of each of these sections. Table BC-1 gives you a handy reference on where you find detailed information for each of the subtab sections.

Table BC-1	Gallery Short Codes
<i>Details on Options and Settings For</i>	<i>Find It in WordPress For Dummies</i>
General	Chapter 7; pages 112 - 115
Writing	Chapter 7; pages 123 - 124
Reading	Chapter 7; pages 124 - 125
Discussion	Chapter 7; pages 125 - 126
Privacy	Chapter 7; pages 126 - 127
Permalinks	Chapter 8; pages 141 - 146
Miscellaneous	Chapter 7; page 127



Remember to click the Save Changes button at the bottom of any page where you set new options. If you don't click Save Changes, your option isn't saved, and WordPress reverts to the old options that were set. Each time you click the Save button, it reloads the page that you're currently on, displaying your new options that you just set.

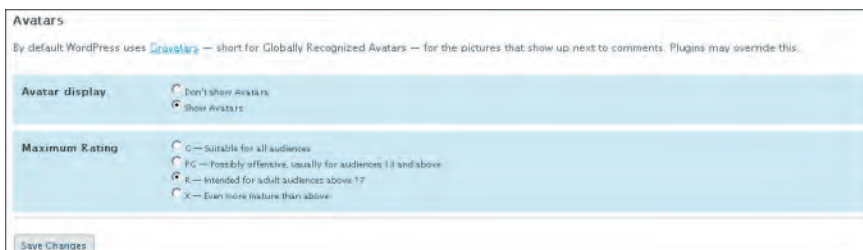
Something brand-new to the Discussion Settings page is the inclusion of avatars. Scroll down to the very bottom of the Discussion Settings page and you discover a section entitled Avatars (as shown in Figure BC-7).

What are avatars and how do they relate to WordPress?

What is an *avatar*? It's an online graphical representation of an individual. It's a very small graphic icon that people use to visually represent themselves on the Web in areas they participate in conversations like discussion forums, blog comments, and so on. Figure BC-7 refers to *gravatars*, which are globally recognized avatars. The basic idea is to have an avatar that you can take with you wherever you go. It will appear on blog comments, blog posts, discussion forums, and so on — as long as the site

you're interacting with is gravatar-enabled. In October 2007, Automattic, the core group behind the WordPress platform, purchased the gravatar service and then integrated it into this latest version of WordPress so that all could enjoy and benefit from the service. Gravatars aren't automatic, however. You need to sign up for an account with Gravatar. You can have a gravatar assigned to you, via your e-mail address. Find out more about Gravatar by visiting its site at <http://gravatar.com>.

Figure BC-7:
Avatars
section
on the
Discussion
Settings
page.



Displaying avatars on your WordPress blog is very easy with WordPress 2.5. You just visit the Discussion Settings page, scroll down to the Avatars area, and follow these steps:

1. Under Avatar Display, click the radio button next to your selection.

If you select Don't Show Avatars, your blog won't display them. If you click Show Avatars, your blog will display them. Easy, right?

2. Set the Maximum Rating for the avatars that do display on your site.

This works much like the movie rating system we're all used to. If your site is family friendly, you probably don't want to display R- or X-rated avatars on your site. You can select G, PG, R, or X ratings for the avatars that display on your site.

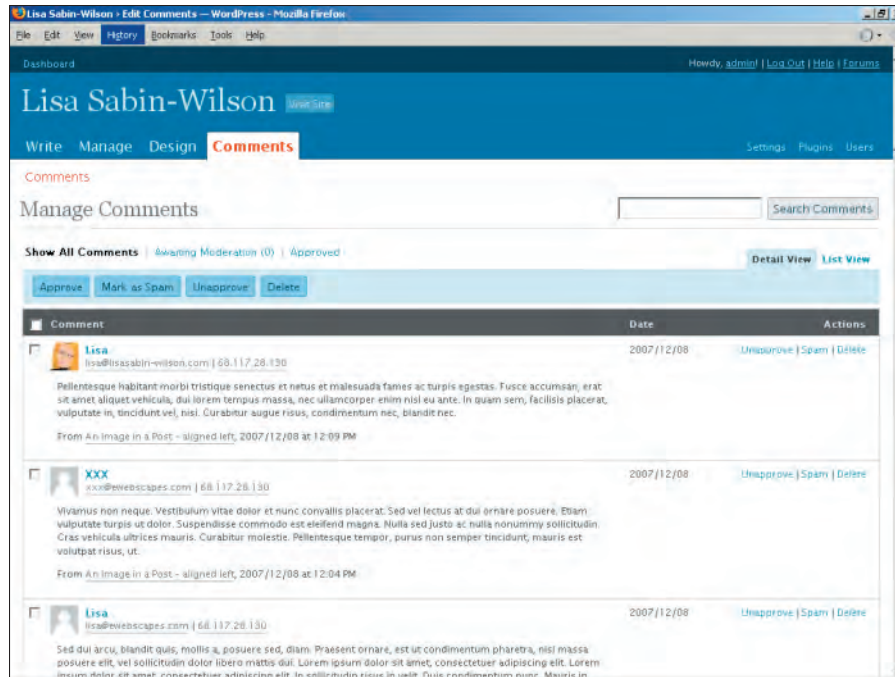
3. Click Save Changes at the bottom of the Discussion Settings page.

This saves your changes and refreshes the Discussion Settings page, displaying all of your new settings.

You may be wondering, at this point, where do these avatars display? Well, several different places, really. Within your WordPress Administration panel, they display on the Comments page. In Figure BC-8, you see that the first three comments on that page have the commenters' avatars showing to the left of their comments.

Gravatars can also show up in the comments on individual blog posts on your blog, as shown in Figure BC-9.

Figure BC-8:
Comment authors' avatars show on the Comments page in the WordPress Administration panel.



However, you do need to make an adjustment to your Comments template to add the correct template tag, in order for the gravatars to show up on your site. To accomplish this, follow these steps. (For the purpose of sticking with what we know, I'm working with the Default Theme for WordPress that all users initially have installed in their WordPress installations.)

1. On your WordPress Dashboard page, click the Design tab.

This opens the Themes page, showing current and available themes.

2. Click the Theme Editor subtab.

This opens the Theme Editor page, where you see a large text box on the left with the names of the different templates contained within the theme on the right. The text box on the left is where you edit the templates and make your changes.

3. Click the Comments (`comments.php`) template in the listing on the right.

This opens the Comments (`comments.php`) template in the large text box on the left. Now you're ready to edit your Comments template!

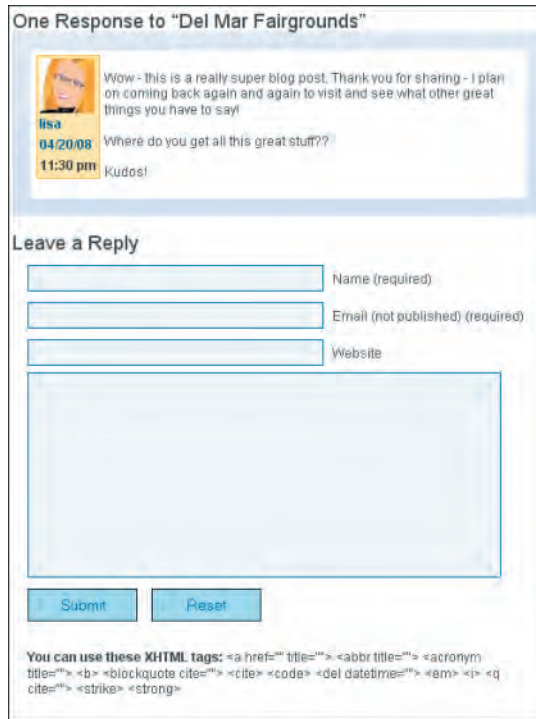


Figure BC-9:
Comments
on a blog
showing the
comment
authors'
gravatars.

4. Locate the line of code that says this:

```
<li <?php echo $oddcmt; ?>id="comment-<?php comment_ID() ?>">
```

5. Directly beneath that line of code, type this code to display the gravatars on your site, in the comments:

```
<?php echo get_avatar( $comment, 50 ); ?>
```

This code tells WordPress to get the avatar and display it here. The number 50 that you see in that code tells WordPress the width dimension of your avatar. You can change this number to whatever you'd like, depending on how large or small you want the avatars on your site displayed. The \$comment portion of that code tells WordPress that the avatar is displayed in the comments template, and it should display the comment author's personal avatar.

6. Click the Update File button.

This saves your changes and updates the template. The Theme Editor page refreshes with your new, updated Comments Template.

Writing Posts and Pages

The mechanics of writing a post haven't changed from the earlier versions of WordPress. I cover those mechanics in Chapter 8 in *WordPress For Dummies*. What has changed, however are a few new tools that were included in this new version to make your blogging life lots easier!

Toggleing the Post text box to a full screen

A new button that was added to the Visual Text Editor is called Toggle Full Screen, and it's the second button from the right in the row of editor buttons (as shown in Figure BC-10). This is an excellent addition for those of you who want to really focus on the writing, without being distracted with other items on your screen. Figure BC-10 shows the Write Post page as it would normally appear to you when you click the Write tab on the main menu. Check out Figure BC-11 for what happens after you click the Toggle Full Screen button in your Visual Text Editor!

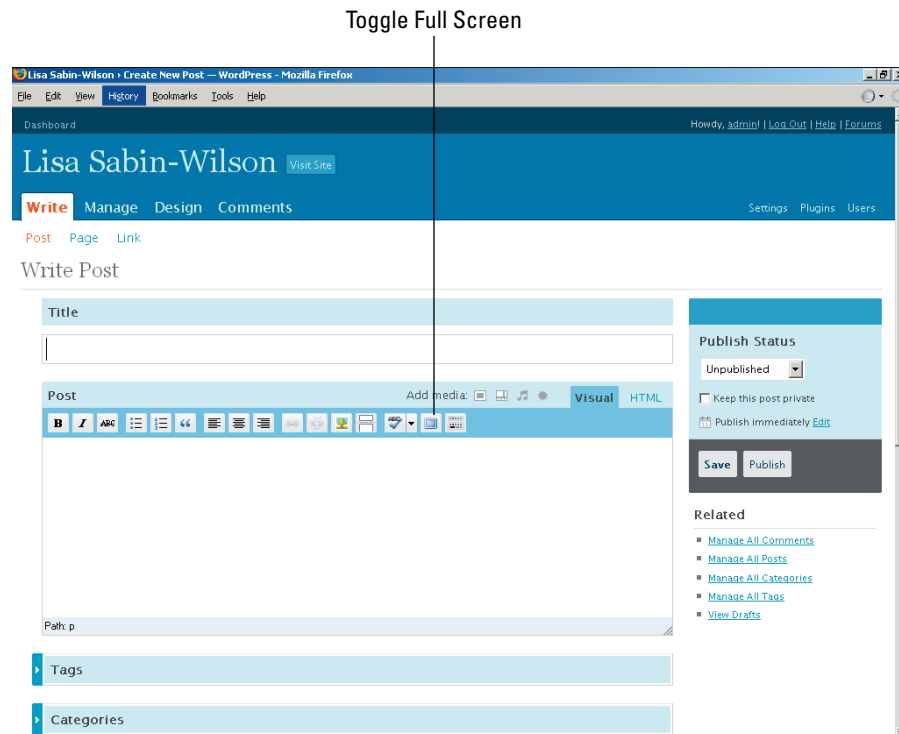


Figure BC-10:
The Write
Post page.

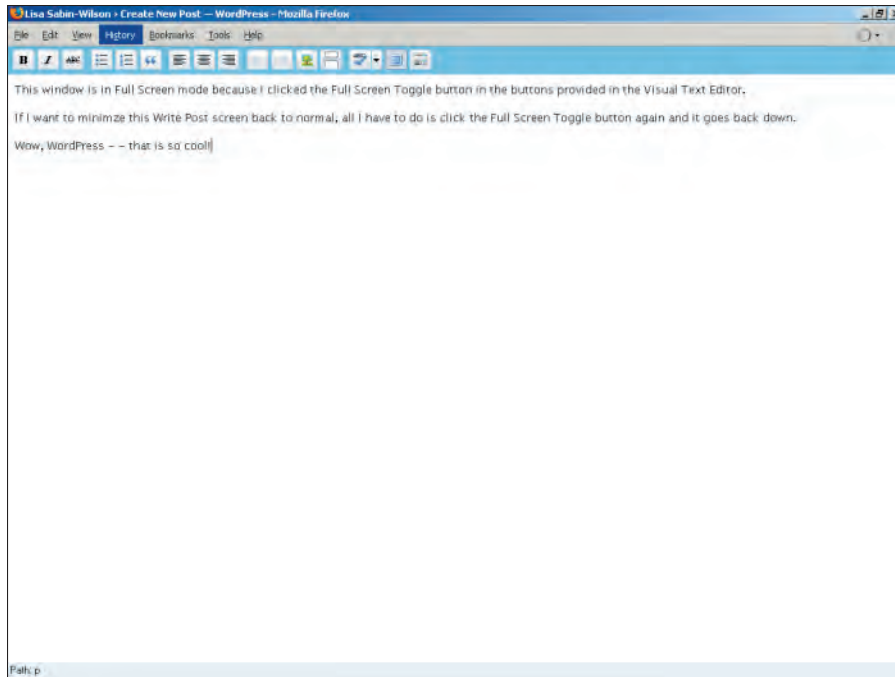


Figure BC-11:
The Write
Post
window
with Toggle
Full Screen
on.

As my little message to you in Figure BC-11 states, to bring that Write Post window back to its normal state, you just click the Toggle Full Screen button again, and wala! It's back to normal! This is a really nice feature for those who like to eliminate distractions and maximize their writing space.

Inserting images and other media in your blog posts and pages

One of the most exciting and most anticipated additions to WordPress is the Image Uploader and Media Manager. It's so different from the older versions of WordPress, even vastly different from the most recent version. Let's start with inserting images into your posts, since this is an area most bloggers do on a regular basis!

Refer to Figure BC-10, where you see the Write Post page. Look right above the formatting buttons, and you see an area called Add Media. Have a look again; it's pretty small, but it's there! In that Add Media area, you see four very small icons. From left to right, they are

- ✓ Add An Image
- ✓ Add Video
- ✓ Add Audio
- ✓ Add Media

Inserting images in your blog posts

Adding images to your post is so much easier now, with this new image uploader, shown in Figure BC-12. Jump right in and give it a go by clicking the Add An Image icon. This pops open a smaller window that gives you the options to choose images from your hard drive or from a location on the Web. The following steps tell you how to do both.

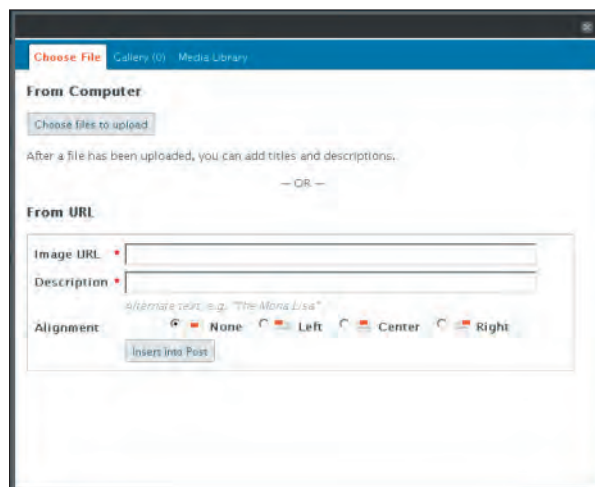


Figure BC-12:
The
WordPress
2.5 Image
Uploader.

To add an image from the Web after you click the Add An Image icon, follow these steps:

- 1. Type the URL (Internet address) of the image in the Image URL field.**
- 2. Type the description of the image in the Description field.**
- 3. Choose your alignment options by clicking the small circle next to None, Left, Center, or Right.**
- 4. Click the Insert into Post button.**

To add an image from your hard drive after you click the Add An Image icon, follow these steps:

1. Click the Choose Files to Upload Button.

A dialog box opens allowing you to choose an image from your hard drive. You can choose one image or multiple images to upload.

2. Chose your image(s) and click Open.

3. Edit the details for the image(s) by clicking the Show link to the right of the image thumbnail.

Clicking Show drops down a box with options for the image including the following:

- *Title:* Type the title for your image.
- *Caption:* Type a caption for your image (such as **This is my pet cat**).
- *Description:* Type a description of your image.
- *Link URL:* Type the URL that you want your image linked to.

For instance, when readers click the image, where do you want them to go? You can select None, File URL, or Post URL, or you can type your own URL in the Link URL field.

- *Select Alignment:* Select None, Left, Center, or Right.
- *Select Size:* Select Thumbnail, Medium, or Large.

4. Click the Insert into Post button.

This automatically inserts the correct HTML code needed to display the image within your published post. This action also closes the Image Uploader window and returns you to the Write Post or Write Page page.

Inserting an image gallery in your blog posts

Along with just one image, you can also use the WordPress 2.5 Image Uploader to insert a full photo gallery in your posts. Go through the steps I outline in the preceding section to upload images, except don't click the Insert into Post button. Instead, click the Gallery link at the top of the Image Uploader window (as shown in Figure BC-12).

This displays thumbnails of all the images that you've uploaded. (See Figure BC-13.)

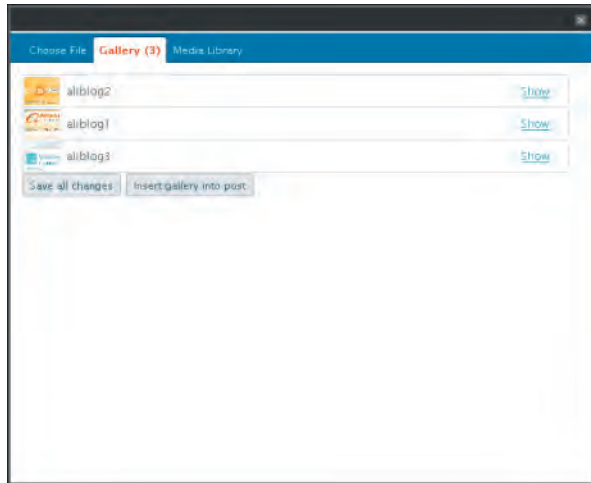


Figure BC-13:
The Gallery
section of
the Image
Uploader.

Here, in the Gallery section, add an image from your hard drive by following the steps in the preceding section. Configure all the settings for each individual image you see in the gallery. When you're done, following these steps:

1. Click the Save All Changes button.

This saves all the changes you made to each individual image in the gallery.

2. Click the Insert Gallery into Post button.

This inserts a short piece of code into your post that looks like this:

```
[gallery]
```

3. The `[gallery]` code has a few different options you can add to further configure the display of the gallery in your post.

- *Columns*: If you're displaying a lot of images (say . . . 8, 10, or 20) you may want to display those images in columns. You can do so by altering the short code like this: `[gallery columns="5"]`. This displays a five-column gallery. The default number for columns is 3, so if you don't specify a column number, WordPress automatically displays three columns. You can specify `columns="0"` if you don't want any columns at all.
- *ID*: You can specify a post ID that pulls the images from an individual post on your blog and displays them as a gallery within your new post. You can do this by altering the short code to look like this: `[gallery id="9876"]`. This pulls the images from the post

with the ID of 9876 and displays them as a gallery in your new post. Nifty, no?

- *Size:* You can specify the size of the images within the gallery by altering the short code to look like this: `[gallery size="full"]`. This displays the full size of the images in the gallery. The other two options are `medium` and `thumbnail`.

Table BC-2 shows a list of the gallery short codes.



WordPress automatically creates a small and medium sized thumbnail for the images you upload through the built-in image uploader. A thumbnail is a smaller version of the original file. You can completely control the size of that thumbnail by going to the Miscellaneous Settings page (choose Settings → Miscellaneous). In the Images Sizes section, you can designate your desired height and width of the small thumbnail and medium thumbnail file generated by WordPress.

4. You can change the order of appearance of the images in the gallery, as well as the markup (HTML tags or CSS selectors).

- `captiontag`: Change the markup that surrounds the image caption by altering the gallery short code to something like this: `[gallery captiontag="div"]`. This places `<div> .. </div>` tags around the image caption. Or use `[gallery captiontag="p"]` to place `<p class="gallery-caption">...</p>` tags around the image caption. The default markup for the `captiontag` option is `dd`.
- `icontag`: Change the markup around the `icontag` (thumbnail icon) of the image by altering the gallery short code to something like this: `[gallery icontag="p"]`. It places `<p class="gallery-icon">...</p>` tags around each thumbnail icon. The default markup for `icontag` is `dt`.
- `itemtag`: Change the markup around the `itemtag` (each item) in the gallery by altering the gallery short code to something like this: `[gallery itemtag="span"]`. This places `...` tags around each item in the gallery. The default markup for the `itemtag` is `dl`.
- `orderby`: Change the order used to display the thumbnails in the gallery by altering the gallery short code to something like this: `[gallery orderby="menu_order ASC"]`. The thumbnails are displayed in ascending menu order. Another parameter you can use here is `ID_order ASC`, which displays the thumbnails in ascending order according to their IDs.

Table BC-2	Gallery Short Codes
<i>Example</i>	<i>Output</i>
<code>[gallery columns="4" size="medium"]</code>	A four-column gallery containing medium-sized images.
<code>[gallery columns="10" id="215" size="thumbnail"]</code>	A ten-column gallery containing thumbnail images pulled from the blog post with the ID of 215.
<code>[gallery captiontag="p" icontag="span"]</code>	A three-column (default) gallery where each image is surrounded by <code>...</code> tags.

You can define the style of the span tags in your CSS stylesheet if you have a little knowledge of CSS. For example:

```
span.gallery-icon img {
padding: 3px;
background: white;
border: 1px solid black;
margin: 0 5px;
}
```

Placing this CSS in the stylesheet of your active theme automatically inserts a one-pixel black border around each thumbnail, with three pixels of padding and a white background. The left and right margins are five pixels in width, creating nice spacing between images in the gallery.

Real-world example of the WordPress Gallery in action

Almost everyone who uses the WordPress blogging platform recognizes this name: Matt Mullenweg. He is the co-founder of the WordPress platform, and he's the most public face of the project. His Web site is located at

<http://ma.tt>, and he has a very extensive photo gallery that he's built using the built-in gallery options in WordPress 2.5. Check out his fabulous photo gallery on his site right here: <http://ma.tt/category/gallery/>.

Inserting video files in your blog posts

Placing a video file in your blog post has never been easier! Revisit the Write Post page (shown in Figure BC-10). The second icon in the Add Media section is Add Video. The steps to upload a video file from your computer or add a video URL from the Web are the very same steps you take to add an image to your post.

However, if you include the URL to a video, all WordPress does is post a hyperlink to the video within your post, not the actual video. Using this method doesn't embed the video in your blog post, just a link to its location on the Web — which is the URL you inserted.

The very same holds true for videos you upload from your hard drive, although you can set options for that video using these steps:

- 1. Click the Choose Files to Upload button.**

This opens a dialog box on your computer. Choose the file you wish to upload and click Open (or double-click the file). This returns you to the file uploader window in WordPress and shows you a progress bar while it uploads. When the upload is complete, a box drops down with several options.

- 2. Type the title of the file in the Title field.**

- 3. Type the caption for the file in the Caption field.**

- 4. Type the description of the file in the Description field.**

- 5. Select the URL for the file in the Link URL field.**

Here you can type your own URL or use the buttons underneath to choose None, File URL, or Post URL.

- 6. Click Insert into Post.**

This closes the file upload window and inserts a link to the video in your post. Many people expected that it would embed the actual video in the post so that visitors to the site can play the video within the blog post, but it inserts only a link to the video, which makes the visitors click the link to load another page where the video can be found and played.

Inserting audio files in your blog posts

The steps to insert audio files in your blog posts are the same as the steps to insert a video file presented previously. Inserting an audio file in your blog post inserts a link to the audio file you've uploaded.

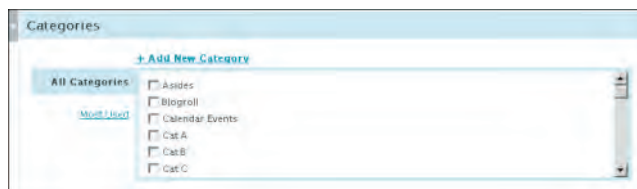
Setting options for your posts

One of the first things I noticed in WordPress 2.5 is all of the post options. I completely covered each of these options in Chapter 8 in *WordPress For Dummies*, so please refer to that chapter to find out about these options, what they do, and why you use them. What's different about these post options in WordPress 2.5 is that they're no longer to the right of the text box where you write your post. They're beneath the text box, requiring you, the writer, to scroll down to set the options in all of the different areas. So, the options are essentially the same, it's just that the placement of these options changed. In order of appearance, these are the options that appear beneath the Post text box:

- ✓ Tags
- ✓ Categories
- ✓ Excerpt
- ✓ Trackbacks
- ✓ Custom Fields
- ✓ Comments & Pings
- ✓ Password Protect This Post

To configure the settings on any of these options, you need to open the option box by clicking the white arrow that's shown to the left of the option name. In Figure BC-14, I've chosen to configure the Categories.

Figure BC-14:
Configuring
the settings
for
Categories
on the Write
Post page.



To accomplish this, follow these easy steps:

- 1. Click the white arrow to the left of the Categories option name.**

This opens the Categories box and displays the options for the Categories, as well as a listing of all categories on your blog, with a box to the left of each category name.

2. Select the check box next to the category you'd like to use.

3. Click the Most Used link.

This changes the display of the category list by showing categories in the order you most often use them. It also places a link above the Most Used title that says All Categories.

4. Click the All Categories link.

This returns the category list to show all categories on your blog, in alphabetical order.

5. Click the + Add New Category link at the top.

This opens a text field where you type the name of your new category, a drop-down menu to allow you to assign this category to a Parent category, and an Add button that you click to add the category to your blog. This new category appears in the list of categories under the All Categories heading.

6. Click the white arrow to the left of the Categories option name.

This action closes the Categories option box back up to the way it was when you first started.

Use this same convention to configure the settings for all of the options on the Write Post page.

Previewing, saving, or publishing

After you finish writing your post and setting all the individual options for that post, you need to scroll all the way back up to the top and decide whether you're going to preview your new post, save it, or publish it. At the top of the Write Post page, you see the Publish Status box, which contains several different options for your new post. The steps that follow show you how to use each of these options, if you choose to.

1. Click the Preview This Post button.

This button is located at the very top of the second column on the Write Post page.

Your unpublished post opens in a new window and displays it on your blog the way it would be displayed once it's published. Because it's a preview, the general public can't view it. Close the preview window when you're done previewing the post.

2. Select the status for your post from the Publish Status drop-down menu.

- *Published*: Selecting this status publishes your post to your blog.
- *Pending Review*: Selecting this marks your post as Pending Review, which alerts the site administrator that this post needs to be reviewed before it is published to the blog. This is a very helpful option for multi-author blogs where the administrator of the blog requires posts to be reviewed prior to publishing.
- *Unpublished*: Selecting this saves the post as a draft. It isn't publicly posted to your blog, rather it's saved for publishing at a later time of your choosing.

3. Select the Keep This Post Private check box to publish the post as private.

It's published to your site, but only people who have the password (which you set in the Post options) can access this post.

4. Click the Edit link.

Clicking the Edit link changes the link name to Cancel. You can click Cancel if you've changed your mind, and it closes this option. Here you can edit the time stamp for this post. This is where you can also future-date posts to publish at a future time. (Or you can post-date a post to publish it in the past, if you want to.)

5. Click Save.

This saves the post. If you have the Post Status set to Unpublished (in Step 2), the post is saved as a draft only. If you have the Post Status set to Published (in Step 2), it publishes the post to your blog, publicly.

6. Click Publish.

This publishes the post to your blog, publicly, despite the settings you've set under Post Status. So if you have the Post Status set to Unpublished, clicking the Publish button publishes the post publicly and ignores the Unpublished Post status. Be careful on how you choose your options here!

Managing your pages and posts

After you publish posts and pages to your blog, you may find a time when you want to edit those posts or pages — or even delete them, if needed. I cover editing posts and pages in *WordPress For Dummies*, in Chapter 8, so you may want to review the specifics of editing a post or a page in WordPress by reviewing that chapter.

However, there are some changes in the layout and information presented in the WordPress 2.5 Administration panel where you do the editing.

To edit a post or a page in WordPress 2.5, follow these steps:

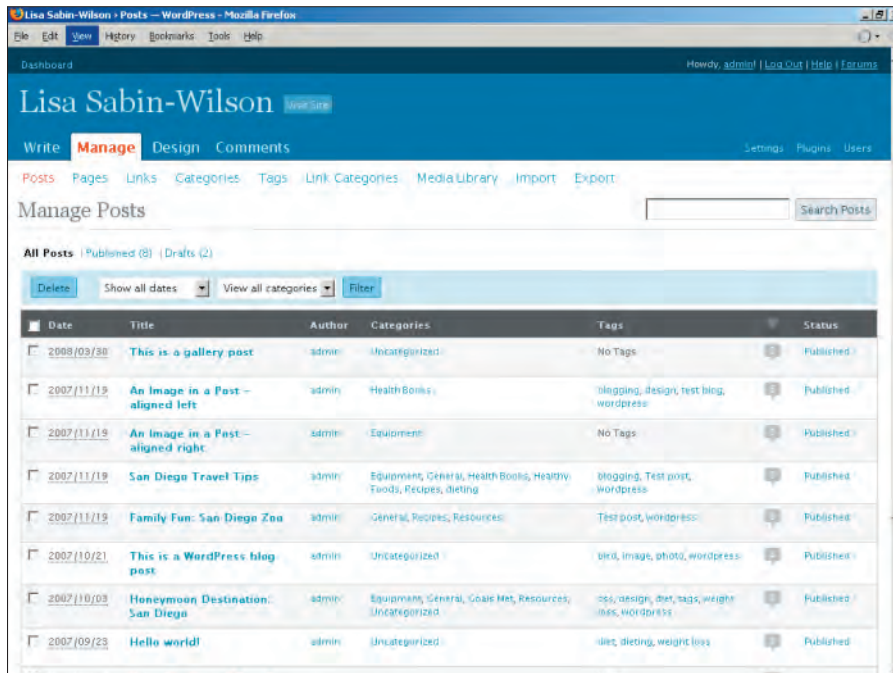
1. Click the Manage tab on the Dashboard menu.

This takes you to the Manage Posts page, which lists the posts you've made to your blog. If you intend to edit a page, click the Pages subtab to display a list of pages that you've created. (See Figure BC-15.)

The posts are listed by date and contain different columns of information regarding each entry:

- *Date*: The date the post or page was published
- *Title*: The title of the post or page
- *Author*: The name of the author of the post or page
- *Categories*: The category or categories the post or page is filed under
- *Tags*: The tag(s) assigned to the post or page

Figure BC-15:
The
Manage
Posts page
in the
WordPress
2.5
Administra-
tion panel.



- *Comments*: The number of comments on that post or page
- *Status*: The status of the post or page (such as Published or Unpublished)

On this page, you can also sort the type of pages or posts you want to see. Click the Published link to see all posts or pages that are currently published; or click the Drafts link to see all posts or pages that currently are unpublished. (Note: If you don't have unpublished posts or pages, the Drafts link doesn't show up here.)

2. Click the title of the post or page and edit it.

You go to the Write Post page, if you're editing a post, or the Write Page page, if you're editing a page. This is the same setup you see in Figure BC-10, where you can edit the body of the post or page and its options and re-save it.

3. Click Save when you're done.

The changes are applied to that post or page on your blog.

To delete a post or a page in WordPress 2.5, follow these steps:

1. Click the Manage tab on the Dashboard menu.

You're taken to the Manage Posts page that lists the posts you've made to your blog.

2. Select the check box to the far left of the post or page date.

Clicking this check box marks the post or page to be deleted.

3. Click the Delete button at the top of the page.

Careful, though! WordPress doesn't give you a confirmation like "Are you sure you want to delete this?" Rather, WordPress just deletes the post or page you marked and refreshes the Write Post or Write Page page, and your deleted posts or pages are now gone.



Have a second look at Step 2 in my steps to edit a post. It tells you to click the name of the post in order to bring up the Write Post or Write Page page, right? This convention holds true throughout the entire WordPress 2.5 Administration panel: In order to edit something, click its name. For instance, to edit a Comment in the Administration panel, go to the Manage Comments page and click the comment author's name; to edit a user's details, go to the Manage Users page and click the user's name; to edit a Category, go to the Manage Categories page and click the category name, and so on, and so forth. This concept is universal throughout all areas of the WordPress 2.5 Administration panel, so keep it in mind!

Managing Blog Categories, Link Categories, and Tags

Chapter 8 in *WordPress For Dummies* has an entire section on managing post categories and creating new ones. Also in Chapter 8, you find information on managing your link categories.

Managing post categories

In WordPress 2.5, you find the Manage Categories page in the same spot as the previous version of WordPress (2.3) by clicking the Manage tab on the Dashboard menu, and then clicking the Categories subtab. The display in 2.5 has changed slightly; they've removed some of the items on that page, which you can see in Figure BC-16.

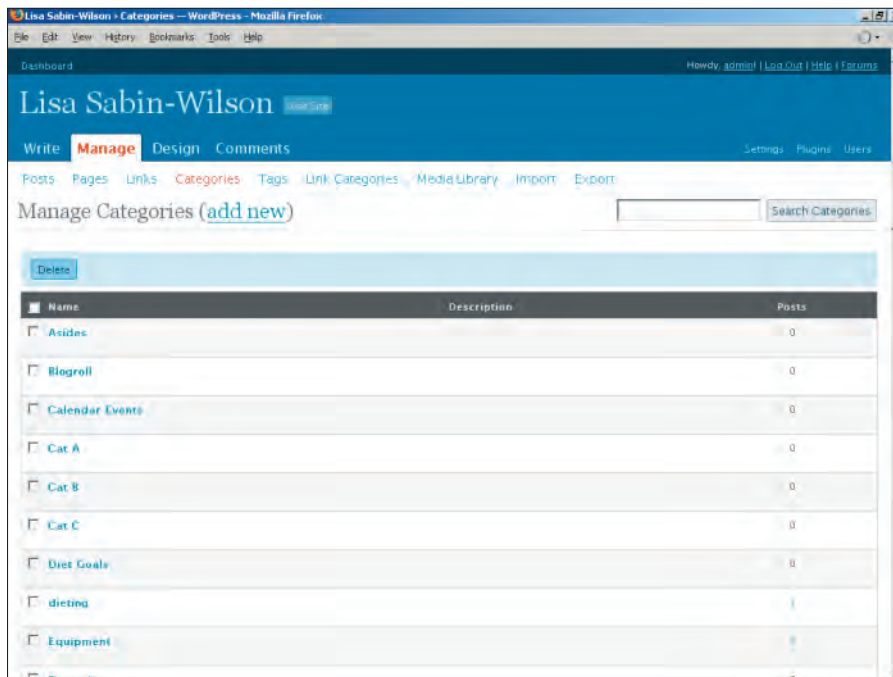


Figure BC-16:
The
Manage
Categories
page in the
WordPress
2.5
Administrati
on panel.

The Manage Categories page lists all of the categories you've created on your blog. To edit a particular category, click the category name, and you're taken to the Edit Category page. To delete a particular category, select the check box to the left of the category name and then click the Delete button at the top of the page.



When you delete a category, WordPress doesn't offer you a chance to confirm whether you really, really wish to delete this category. After you click the Delete button, the Manage Categories page refreshes, and the category that you deleted is . . . POOF . . . gone!



You may be wondering where the column containing the Category ID went. It was in WordPress 2.3, and it displayed the unique ID number that's assigned to each category. The ID is very helpful information to know when you start digging into WordPress template tags. The WordPress developers removed the ID column on the Manage Categories page. For that matter, they've also removed it from the Manage Posts page, Manage Pages page, and the Manage Link Categories page. This doesn't mean that the ID is gone, however; you just have to work a little harder. To find it, hover your mouse over the name of the category you want the ID number for (or the Post name, Page name, and so on). Then look at the status bar of your browser. (That's the tiny little bar at the bottom of your browser. Depending on what browser you're using, you may have to enable it by choosing View⇨Status Bar.) In Figure BC-17, I have my mouse hovered over my Calendar Events category. At the bottom of the figure is the URL to that particular category's edit page. The very last number in that URL is the Category ID number — in this case, the ID = 5.

Managing link categories and adding new links

Viewing, editing, and deleting your link categories involves the very same steps I outline in the previous section, except you find your link categories in a different place. Click the Manage tab on the top menu and then click the Link Categories subtab to be taken to the Manage Link Categories page. All of the information is the same, although you may notice that some of the wording is slightly different in 2.5.

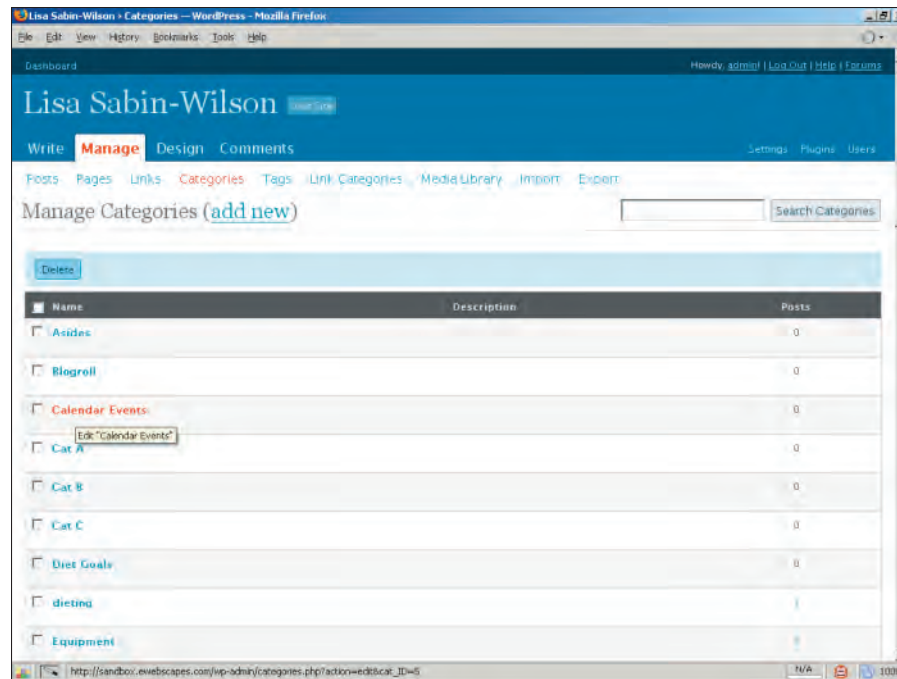


Figure BC-17:
Finding the
unique
Category ID
number in
WordPress
2.5.

Editing and deleting tags

The previous version of WordPress introduced tags, and you can find more information about them in Chapter 4 in *WordPress For Dummies*. However, the one item that was missing from 2.3 was a way to manage those tags by being able to edit or delete them. WordPress 2.5 brings you the Manage Tags page, so you can manage those tags on your blog now. Managing, editing, and creating tags works in the same way as doing it with categories, except you'll find the Manage Tags page by clicking the Manage tab on the Dashboard menu and then clicking the Tags subtab.

Design, Themes, and Templates

In previous versions of WordPress, you found your WordPress themes under a tab on the Dashboard menu called Presentations. In WordPress 2.5, they've totally moved your cheese! You can now find all the information, settings, and the Theme Editor on the Dashboard menu by clicking the Design tab.

The elements presented under the Design tab in 2.5 are the same ones that were presented under the Presentations tab in versions 2.3 and lower: Themes, Widgets, and Theme Editor. The Themes page is the same as it was before, and the Theme Editor page, aside from some design changes, hasn't changed a whole lot either. Widgets are located in the same place, but man did they change! Have a look at Figure BC-18 for a glimpse at the new 2.5 widgets, and you'll see what I mean.

Where WordPress 2.3 used to display the virtual sidebars on this Widgets page, you now work with each sidebar separately, using the drop-down menu on the top-right to toggle from one sidebar to another. Figure BC-18 shows that I'm using the following widgets in Sidebar 1: Pages, Links, and Categories.

The widgets used to be *draggable* — meaning that you could click the widget you want to use and then drag it to the sidebar. That functionality is no longer possible in 2.5. What a drag!

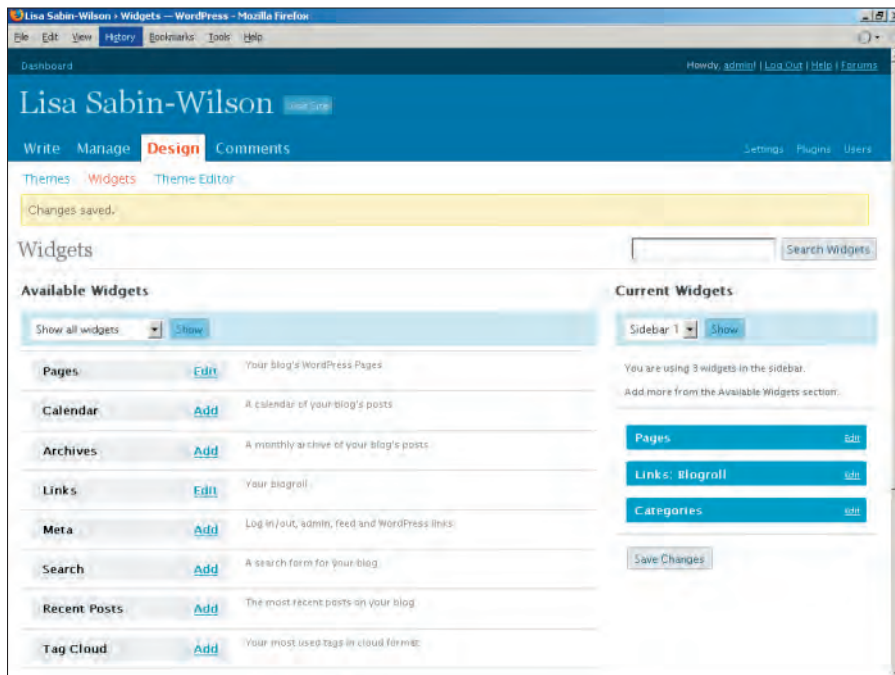


Figure BC-18:
Widgets in
WordPress
2.5.

In order to add a new widget to your sidebar, follow these steps:

1. Choose the widget you'd like to use.

You find that all widgets are listed under Available Widgets on the left side of the Widgets page. For testing purposes, choose the Archives widget.

2. Click the Add link shown to the right of the widget title.

This automatically places the widget you select underneath the Current Widgets header on the right side of the page, underneath any of the other widgets you have listed there. An Edit link also appears to the right of the widget's title.

3. Click the Edit link to configure the options for this widget.

This drops down a box with options. Each widget has different options you can configure. The Archives widget allow you to configure the title, display of the post counts, and display of the archives in a drop-down menu.

4. Select your options.

5. Click the Change button.

This saves the configurations you set and closes the box.

6. Arrange your widgets in the order you'd like them to appear on your site by clicking a widget under the Current Widgets on the right side of the site and dragging it above or below another widget.

Keep doing this until your widgets are arranged the way you want them.

7. Click the Save Changes button when you're done configuring your widgets.

All your changes are saved and the Widgets page is reloaded, with all your changes displayed.

To remove a widget from your sidebar, follow Steps 1–3 and then click the Remove button. The widget is removed from the Current Widgets list on the right side of this page and places it back under the Available Widgets on the left side of the page.

WordPress Plugins

WordPress plugins are half the fun of working with WordPress because they offer a great deal of extensibility and flexibility to your blog. I cover plugins in

WordPress For Dummies in Chapter 10. Review that chapter for more information about how you can use plugins, including how to find them, install them, and manage them for your own WordPress blog.

WordPress 2.5 brings some very exciting changes to the Plugin Management section of your WordPress Administration panel. You gotta see this! You won't find it in the place you were used to in previous versions of WordPress, however. They've removed the Plugins tab from the Dashboard menu. Instead, you'll find it as a little link on the upper-right side of the WordPress Administration panel. (If you refer to Figure BC-1, you'll see it there next to Settings.)

Click the Plugins link and you're taken to the Plugins Management page. Here you find a full list of the plugins you have in your plugins directory in your WordPress installation directory. They're listed in alphabetical order and display the plugin name, version, description, a link to activate or deactivate individual plugins, and a link to edit a plugin. By now, you're asking me what's so different. It sounds just like the Plugin Management page in WordPress 2.3, doesn't it?

I know! But take a look at Figure BC-19, and you'll see a little something different!

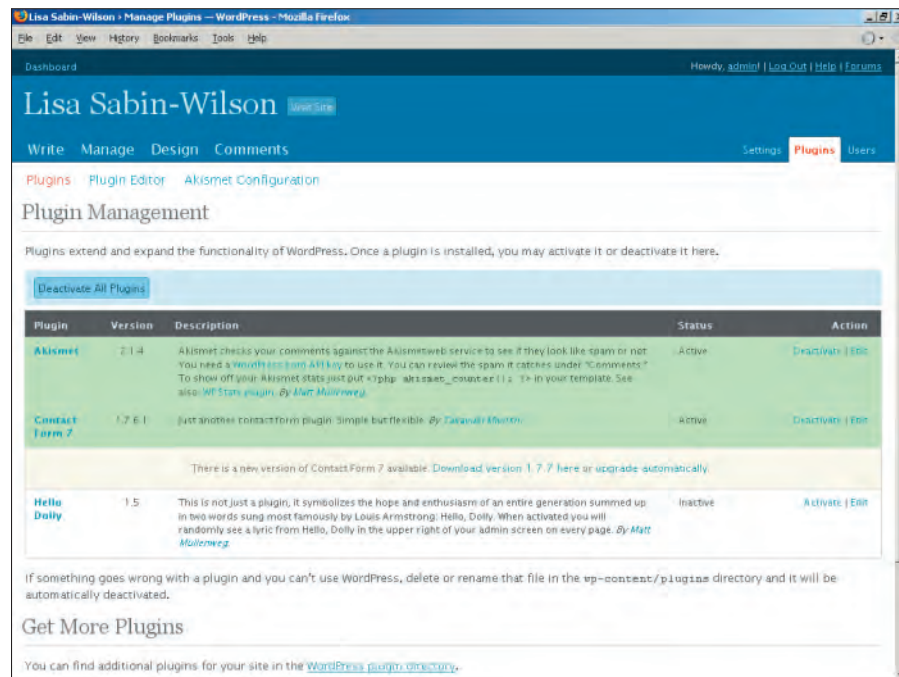


Figure BC-19: The Plugin Management page in WordPress 2.5. Notice anything different?

Have a look at the plugin I have in Figure BC-19, called Contact Form 7. You see the plugin name, version, and description. Directly underneath the description of this plugin is where the new WordPress 2.5 magic is happening! WordPress has a message there for me: "There is a new version of Contact Form 7 available. Download version 1.7.7 here or upgrade automatically." WordPress 2.5 now alerts you when a new version of the plugin is available and gives you a link you can click to download the new version.

Want more? You'll also find a link there that says Upgrade Automatically. Automatically? Yep. That means what it says. Click that link and the upgrade will happen for you right there within your WordPress Administration panel.

No more downloading plugin files? No more uploading the plugin files via FTP and worrying that you uploaded them to the incorrect place? That's right! WordPress 2.5 now has auto-updating of plugins.

Of course, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. There are a few caveats to consider here:

- ✓ The plugin in question *must* be listed at the official WordPress Plugin Directory site at <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins>. If it isn't listed there, auto-updating that plugin isn't available, and you'll have to go about it the old-fashioned way.
- ✓ Auto-updating of plugins is somewhat dependent on your Web hosting setup and how your Web host has its servers configured. With some hosting setups, you may find that WordPress asks for your FTP password. With other hosting setups, you may find that the auto-updating doesn't work at all. Your mileage, as they say, may vary. If you run into troubles with the plugin auto-updater, have a word with your Web host support to see if there's something they can do to help a blogger out!

Anticipating WordPress For Dummies, 2nd Edition

I knew writing this chapter was going to be tough. I'll tell ya, keeping up with the development of the WordPress project is a lot like trying to jog in the ocean, knee-deep in water. Development on the WordPress platform moves at a very fast pace. The developers keep to a strict release schedule, putting out three major upgrades to the software each year!

Both Wiley Publishing and I recognize the passion behind this project, and we strive to keep *WordPress For Dummies* relevant and up to date, to the most current version of WordPress. The current edition of *WordPress For Dummies* is current up to WordPress version 2.3.3. It covers the basics of how to use WordPress, and even WordPress 2.5 users can benefit from the plethora of information detailed in that book, especially in conjunction with this free chapter made available by Wiley Publishing.

However, *WordPress For Dummies*, 2nd edition is currently in the works. As you read this chapter, yours truly is hard at work writing the second edition, which covers, in detail, everything that is new in the hosted version of WordPress.com and the self-hosted version of WordPress.org.

Here's a sneak peek at a few other additions to the book that you can look forward to:

- ✔ Comprehensive information about WordPress theme development. The first edition delves into WordPress themes and templates on a very basic level; however, the second edition goes even deeper, providing more in-depth information on how to creatively work with WordPress template tags and functions to make your blog do wondrous things!
- ✔ Introduction of design information, including basic CSS tips, tricks, and how-to's to create a unique style and flair to your own personal blog design.
- ✔ Full coverage on how to use custom fields in WordPress to create a great deal of dynamic functionality for your blog and posts. This includes several excellent examples of specific custom fields and some ways that you can apply them to your own blog!
- ✔ In-depth information about WordPress plugins, including information on how you can develop a simple plugin. With this information, you can expand your new skills and start making plugins on your own.

I'm really excited to begin this new edition of WordPress, less than a year after the first edition was published! WordPress is a very popular platform, and it's very exciting to be a part of the WordPress community of users. Look for *WordPress For Dummies*, 2nd edition to be published and released in Fall 2008.

