Edublogs
(WordPress)

An Introductory Manual

Gail Desler – Area 3 Writing Project

[Drawing on/updating/expanding tutorials and explanations from James Farmer, Mike Temple, Ewa McGrail, Lorelle, Joan Boan, Alice Mercer, Kate Olson, The Edublogger (Sue Waters), and others]

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Getting Started

To create your blog, go to http://edublogs.org, which will bring you to the registration page. Scroll to the Sign Up Here button and click!

When the next screen appears, you will be asked to choose a username. You will always log into your Edublog - including future Edublogs that you create - using this original username. Your username is just about the only thing about your Edublog that you cannot later change. Add your email address, enter the verification code, and click on the Next button.

Tip: Be sure you type in a correct email because if you make a mistake, the username you originally chose will no longer be available. If you’re using a school email, check that your district does not block Edublogs.
You can relax about choosing a *Blog Title* because, unlike your username, you can change the title of your blog whenever you wish. Enter your title, select your blog type (*teacher, student, other*) and click on the *Sign up* button.

When the next screen appears with your URL (i.e., *edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/Is Yours*), you are almost ready to start blogging!

Check your email for a message from Edublogs with an activation link. Click on the activation link and head back to your email.

A second email should be heading into your box with your password – which you will want to change (instructions on page 6). Copy your password and click on *Login* [*View your site* shows you what your visitors will see. It’s not your working area (dashboard)].
Enter your username and password.

Login to your blog with the exact user name and password listed in your Edublog email. Click on the Login button.

If you're using a shared computer, it's always a good idea to deselect the Remember Me box.

Each time you visit your blog, you'll need to login. From your home page, locate the Meta section of the navigation bar. Click on Login.

Note: If you're already logged in, instead of Login, you will see Site Admin.

Viewing Your Blog

There are two views in an Edublog: the Dashboard, which is your working area and the Visit Site, which is what visitors to your blog will see. Each time you login, you will initially enter the Dashboard. From this page, you can see any recent activity on your site and any recent announcements for Edublogs. In the Latest Activity box, you'll be able to see at a glance if anyone has made new comments to any of your posts, or if there are comments that need moderation.

The blue tabs on the left (Write, Manage, Design, Comment, Upgrades) will take you to the features you will use most often. On the right, are the tabs you will probably use less frequently (Settings, Plugins, Users). The orange bar is set to take you to Write a New Page (Page 6) or Write a Post (Page 10). But first thing you'll want to do is change your password.
Changing Your Password

To change your password, click on the Users tab.

Scroll down to the New Password section and enter your new password. Don't forget to click on the Update Profile button (bottom left-hand corner) in order to save your new password.
Changing Other Information in the Users Panel

You cannot change your username. However, you can change your display name. This is the name that is displayed by any posts that you create. You will need to select your new display name from the drop-down menu.

Note: Your email address will not be displayed on your blog where it would be visible to your readers. This information is used by Edublogs.

Click on Update Profile and head back to your dashboard.

Designing the Layout of Your Blog

Everybody enters a newly created Edublog with the same default theme. To view the default design, scroll to the top of your blog and click on Visit Site.
You will be able to change and customize the design of your blog whenever you wish. The default theme has two sidebars (one on the right; one on the left). Posts are in the middle. In this particular theme (and in most of the themes), the image in the header can be customized.

Let’s head back to your dashboard and take a look at the setup options – and widgets – that come with the default theme. Click on Site Admin to return to your dashboard.

From your dashboard, click on the Design tab.

From the Design menu, click on the Widgets tab.
This is where the fun begins! New themes, along with great widgets (doodads that appear in your sidebar, such as links, calendar, text boxes, archives, etc.), are added to the Design menu on a regular basis.

To setup your sidebar(s), use the Current Widgets dropdown to select Left Sidebar or Right Sidebar. Head over to the Available Widgets column on the left and click on the Add link to make your selections. Once you've selected a widget, the Add link changes to Edit and the widget appears in the right-hand column. You can drag and drop to change the order. Don’t worry; you can always rearrange later. Be sure to add the Meta widget, as this is where you will find your Site Admin link for logging in or logging off. For a more detailed explanation of the Edublogs widgets, refer to the Widget Glossary (page 27).

To save your new setup, click on Save Changes.

To see what your theme now looks like, click on the Visit Site link at the top of your blog.
Writing a Post or Page

To write your first post, click on the Write menu, give your post a title and add your content. Before you Publish a post, you might want to use the Preview this Post option to see how it will appear to your readers. If you're not ready to go live yet, click on the Save button. The Save option saves your post as a draft, which you can reopen whenever you wish.

You have a number of options available in the formatting bar, such as bold, italic, and create a bulleted list. For more formatting options, click on the Show/Hide Kitchen Sink icon!

Editing a Post

If you have already saved and/or published a post and have closed out of the Write screen, return to your dashboard and click on the Manage tab. Scroll down until you find the post you wish to edit. Click on the link to open it and edit away!
Once you've made your changes remember to click on the Save button!

**Writing Pages**

For the most part, you will be creating posts. If you wish to post a more static item that would not necessarily be open for comments, such as an About Me page, this is when you would write a Page rather than a Post. From your Dashboard, click on the Write menu and select the Write Page option.

Enter your title, type (or paste) your page content, and click on the Publish button.
If you scroll down to Advanced Options, you'll find some handy options such as the Page Parent feature, which allows you to organize your pages into subcategories, and the Page Order option, which allows you to organize the order in which your pages appear. Don't forget to save your changes!
Writing a Tweet

If you already have a Twitter account (http://twitter.com), you have the option of sending a Tweet to your "followers" directly from your Edublog. If you're not familiar with Twitter, it's a form of micro-blogging. You are limited to 140 characters per post. "It's sort of the 21st century version of the telegram" (Paul Allison). To write and send a Tweet from the Write menu, click on the Write Tweet link. Don't worry about exceeding the 140 character limit because a counter will be keeping track for you (lower left-hand corner). When you've finished your message, click on the Post Tweet button.

Adding Hyperlinks to a Post (or Page)

Blogs posts often include hyperlinks, which take your readers to other blogs or websites. To create a link from your blog to the Edublogger's Quick Tour Guide website, for instance, start by selecting the word or phrase you wish to turn into a link. From the formatting bar, click on the chain link icon.
Type or – better yet – paste in the URL. Click on Insert. Whatever you selected is now underlined.

I recommend opening the Target dropdown and selecting the Open in new window option so that your readers are not directed away from your blog.

If you type in a Title, it will appear as a pop-up when readers mouse over the link.

To test your links, click on Visit Site.

**Time Stamping Your Posts**

A handy feature available on your Edublog is the option to change the date and time of your post. Let's say, for instance, you want to post an assignment for your students, but don't want them to view until the following week. Simple solution! Click on the Edit link under Published on (right-hand column under Keep this post private). The link will change from Edit to Cancel – and you will now have a dropdown calendar with date and time. Pretty cool, no?!?

**Adding Tags and Categories to a Post**

Let’s start by looking at the difference between a tag and a category:
"Tags are like your blog’s index. They are keywords that represent the micro-categorization of your blog’s content. To work effectively, they need to be words that people search for, called search terms." * Separate multiple tags with commas.

"Categories are like chapters of a book; they provide a general overview of the topics you blog about."** Just like tags, you can assign as many categories as you like. Depending on the theme you’ve chosen, your categories will appear above or below your post. They will also appear in your sidebar, functioning like a file draw that opens at the click of mouse to bring up all posts or pages you've assigned to a particular category.


**From The Edublogger (Sue Waters) - http://theedublogger.edublogs.org/.

**Adding Links to Your Sidebar(s)**

To add a link to your sidebar, start by clicking on the Links tab in your Dashboard. In the Name box, type the name of the website (this is what your readers will see when they view your sidebar rather than the actual web address). Type or copy and paste the Web Address. If you add a Description, when your readers mouse over the link, your description will appear as a pop-up.
To organize your links under specific headings in your sidebar, scroll down the Add Categories link. You can create as many link categories as you like. New categories will not appear in your sidebar until you've actually assigned a link to them. If you don’t feel the Blogroll has enough space for all your links, you could also create Pages for your links, such as a Math Page with links, or a Teacher’s Resources Page.

Note: If your Blogroll does not appear in the sidebar, you will need to return to the Design screen and drag and drop the links widget into your sidebar.

Changing the Design (Theme)

Tired of your theme? No problem. From your Dashboard screen, click on the Design tab and head back in to select a new one.

Scroll down and click on any of the themes to update your blog. To see what your new theme looks like on your site, click on the Visit Site link (top of your blog, next to your blog name). Most themes are customizable, making it possible for you to change color themes, upload an original graphic in the header, etc. All themes have a selection of widgets that you can drag and drop onto your sidebar(s).
Uploading Images, Documents, or Podcasts to Your Blog

The first step to adding an image file (jpg, gif), a document file (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDFs), or a podcast is to browse to and upload the file to your blog. From the Write Post or Write Page panel, head up to the Add media section of the visual editor.
Click on the icon of whichever media type you wish to upload (Add an image, Add video, Add audio, Add media). Browse to wherever you have saved the file, select it, and click on the Upload button.

**Formatting Images**
You can do some formatting to an image as you are uploading it. Besides selecting the alignment, you can also choose between Thumbnail, Medium, and Full size.

You can also realign images after uploading them into a post. Select the image and then click on the tree icon.
From the Insert/edit image screen, use the dropdown menu to choose your alignment preference. You can also add some padding around your image by adding a few pixels to the Vertical space and/or Horizontal space boxes.

**Embedding Media**

Besides linking to a media file (e.g., YouTube, SlideShare, VoiceThread), you can also embed the file. You will need to copy the embed code from the media site and then open the HTML editor of your post or page. Put your cursor wherever you wish the media to appear and paste it in. Save and you’re done…unless you’re using Internet Explorer for your browser.

Here’s a tip you will need for working with IE: Once you’ve pasted the embedding code into the HTML editor, click on Publish or, if you’ve already published this page or post, click on Save. Do NOT go back into the Visual editor. For some reason, with IE, if you head back into the Visual editor, the embed code changes, which is not good.
Changing Your Blog’s Tagline

If you have selected a theme that includes a tagline, you’ve probably noticed that the default tagline is “Just another Edublogs.org weblog.” To edit the tagline, return to your Dashboard and click on the Settings tab. Scroll down to the Tagline window and add your own tagline. Click on the Save Changes button.

Note: Not all themes include a tagline.

Adding a Blog Avatar

An avatar is some sort of visual representation of you. You can choose an actual photo, clip art, or any image you want. You also have two avatar options: 1) blog avatar – appears on the front page of your blog, and 2) user avatar – appears when you comment in your blog, or on another Edublogs blog, or in the forum. Your blog and user avatars can be the same image or different images.

The default theme comes with an avatar. To upload your own, go to Settings > Blog Avatar and browse to wherever you have saved the image you wish to use. Click on the Upload Image button.
When your image uploads, you may need to do a bit of cropping before sending it out to your landing page.

**Monitoring Your Blog**

Concerned about the possibility of someone from the general public posting inappropriate comments to your blog? No need to worry because you have complete control of what is actually published to your blog. To choose your settings, click on the *Settings* tab, and open the *Discussion* menu. For maximum control, make sure the first two options under *Before a comment appears* box are checked.
By selecting the **E-mail me whenever anyone posts a comment** option, you will receive an email message that looks something like this:

![Email example](image)

When you open the email, you'll see a copy of the comment, a link to the corresponding post, and links to approve, delete, or mark it as spam.

**Moderating Comments**

You can also moderate comments from your *dashboard*. In the screenshot below, you can see that I have six comments awaiting moderation. Click on the *Comment* link to bring up the *Manage Comments* screen.
Approving Comments

To approve a comment, click on the *Awaiting Moderation* link. Click on the selection box of the comment(s) you wish to Approve, Mark as Spam, Unapprove, or Delete. Use the buttons on the top left-hand side, or the links to the right of each individual comment.

Editing a Comment

You have the option of editing comments before approving them (e.g., deleting a student's last name, providing a little help with spelling and grammar, etc.). From the *Manage Comments* screen, scroll to the comment you wish to edit and click on the name link.

When the *Editing Comment* screen opens, you can edit content in any of the boxes.
Responding Directly to a Comment

Edublogs does not currently offer the option of commenting on a comment. But Edublogger Alice Mercer has a solution for those times you would like to respond directly to a specific comment. From the Comments screen, click on the commenter's name link to open the Editing Comment screen. Scroll down to the Comment box and add your response. You'll want to make your comment noticeably different so that it stands out from the original comment. When you've finished with your comment, select italic and/or bold to close your comment. Save your changes.

To checkout your comment-on-a-comment, click on the Comments link or go to Visit Site.

Adding a Hyperlink in a Comment

If you’re wondering how Mathew included a “live” hyperlink in the above comment, or how Sue included one in the comment below, the answer is that they both added a little bit of html coding on both sides of the link. Here’s the code: <a href=”URL”>whatever you want to be the link</a>.

Example: <a href=”http://resiever.edublogs.org”>she blogs</a>

Sue Waters on 6 August, 2008 at 4:04 pm #
Adding a Comment Avatar

If you would like your avatar to appear when comment in your blog – or other Eblogger's blogs - click on the User's tab > Your Avatar tab. Click on Browse and navigate to wherever your image is saved. After you click on the Upload Image button, you may need to do a little cropping to fit the comment avatar proportions.

Adding Edublog Community Users

If you wish to limit posting comments on your blog to Edublog members only or to provide greater posting privileges to certain individuals, you will need to add their email to your Users list. From your Dashboard, click on the Users link > Authors & Users. Scroll down to the User Email box and type the email address. Before clicking on the Add User button, think about the permission level you wish to give an individual user.

When you add users, you can also determine what their permissions (capabilities) are by assigning one of five roles from the Role drop-down box. The default selection is Subscriber. A Subscriber can see the Dashboard and edit his/her own profile. That is all. A Contributor can draft posts but cannot publish them. An Author can publish posts. An Editor can edit other people’s posts and can manage categories, links, comments, and pages. An Administrator can do everything. Each role is simply a set of capabilities. The Editor and Administrator roles have the capability to edit posts that do not belong to them. They can edit anyone’s posts, including each other’s.
Note: If the people you are adding to your user community need instructions for registering with Edublogs, I’ve included a handout for them on page 29.

Limiting Comments to Edublog Community Members

If you wish to limit posting only to members you have added to your Edublog community, click on the Settings tab > General. Click in the Membership checkbox to require that users are registered (members of your community) and logged on in order to comment. By selecting the Membership option, anyone who clicks on the comment link for any post, will be redirected to a WordPress login box.

Looking for More Edublogs Resources?

- Start by subscribing to Sue Waters’ The Edublogger - [http://theedublogger.edublogs.org/](http://theedublogger.edublogs.org/) - “which is jammed with helpful tips, ideas and more.”
- Check out the video tutorials posted at Edublogs.org - [http://edublogs.org/videos/](http://edublogs.org/videos/)
- Visit the Edublogs Forum - [http://edublogs.org/forums/](http://edublogs.org/forums/)
- Edublogger Mike Temple also offers excellent tutorials for the advanced user at his Edublogs Tutorials site - [http://miketemple123.edublogs.org/](http://miketemple123.edublogs.org/).
Edublogs Glossary of Widgets*

Archives – Having an archives widget in your sidebar is like having a file cabinet with folders organized by month and year. By clicking on a May 2006 archive link, for example, a window will instantly open displaying all your posts from that month and year – a much faster way to access previous posts than by scrolling back through months and years!

Avatar – A graphic or photo that in some way represents the blogger. Edublogs provides you with the option of uploading two types of avatars: 1) blog avatar – appears on the front page of your blog, and 2) user avatar – appears when you comment in your blog, or on another Edublogs blog, or in the forum. Your blog and user avatars can be the same image or different images.

Calendar – The calendar widget is another great organizing tool, similar to the archives link. When placed in the sidebar, the calendar widget displays the current month, with a link to previous months. Dates on the calendar that appear in bold type indicate dates that you have posted and they are hyperlinked to the actual posts.

Categories – Another great tool for organizing, the categories widget is like the drawer of a file cabinet. You can create as many categories as you wish. Each time you assign a category – or multiple categories – to a post, they will appear in your sidebar as hyperlinks to all posts you have assigned to those categories. Categories are much like a table of contents for your blog.

ClustrMaps – Your students will love this widget – and will probably improve their knowledge of world geography as they check for red dots appearing on the world map as readers from around the world visit their blog project.

Del.icio.us – Del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us/) is a social bookmarking tool that allows you to access your online bookmarks from any computer – and to share them with others.

Email Subscriptions – This widget makes it very easy for readers to subscribe to your blog. By typing their email address in the box and then clicking on the Subscribe button, they will receive an email each time you add a new post.

Flickr – Although blocked by many school districts, the flickr (http://flickr.com) widget allows you to display the latest photos you’ve added to your flickr account.

Google Search – Just one more option you can offer your readers: access to the world’s most popular search engine.

Links – This links widget will be the section in your sidebar(s) for links to other blogs and websites. You can organize your links by categories (i.e., Math, English, Blogroll)

Meta – This widget provides you with a login to your dashboard. Without the meta widget, you would have to go to Edublogs.org each time you wanted to get into your dashboard.
Pages – Pages are where bloggers keep more static information (e.g., about me, blog etiquette, grading policies, etc.). Depending on the blog theme you select, pages will either appear in the sidebar or in tabs across the top of your blog. Pages always appear in a separate area from your posts.

Recent Comments – Another very motivating widget for students. When you place this widget in your sidebar, readers will see snippets of your most recently approved comments.

Recent Posts – Similar to the recent comments widget, the recent posts widget will show snippets of your most recent posts.

RSS – This widget will show up in your sidebar – or maybe in your header, depending on your theme, as a small orange icon. By clicking on the RSS icon, your readers who use news aggregators (i.e., Bloglines, Google Reader, Pageflakes) can “subscribe” to your posts and/or comments, which means, rather than receive notification via email, they open their news aggregator to see what’s new in your blog.

Search – Another handy way for readers (or you) to locate information within your blog.

Tag Cloud – This widget will check your posts for “tags,” which differ from “categories” in that they are more like items listed in an index. Generally, tags are words that are actually included in a post. If I post about a rubric for evaluating podcasts, for instance, I might tag the post with “rubric” and “podcasts” (and also assign it to a broader category such as “Assessment”). If you’re tagging your posts and include a tag cloud widget in your sidebar, readers will be able to see at a glance what topics you are posting about and how frequently you write about those topics, as the more frequent the tag, the larger it appears in the tag cloud.

Text – Text boxes allow you to add more than just text to your sidebar. Besides adding, for instance, a favorite quote in a text box, you can also paste in some pretty fancy JavaScript, iframes and object codes, such as the code for adding a “voki” (speaking avatar) to your sidebar.

Twitter – The Twitter (http://twitter.com) widget allows your readers to view your latest “Tweets” (up to 140 character, a “micro blog”) from your Twitter community.

VodPod Videos – Many districts block this widget, which allows you to share the latest videos you’ve uploaded to your account (http://vodpod.com).

*Widgets – “In simple terms widgets are mini web applications that you can put onto your website.” To learn more about widgets, visit “The Edublogger” tutorials at http://thedublogger.edublogs.org/2008/01/19/getting-more-out-of-widgets/#more-19.
How to Register with *Edublogs* (without setting up your own blog)

In order for you to write a post (as opposed to a comment) in another person’s *Edublog*, you need to register with *Edublogs.org*. It’s easy!

**Step 1:** Go to [http://edublogs.org](http://edublogs.org). From the opening registration page, scroll to the *Sign Up Here* button and click!

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Step 2: When the next screen appears, you will be asked to choose a *username*. A *username* is the same as a login name. You will always log into an *Edublog* (including future *Edublogs* that you might create) using this same *username*. Add your email address; agree to the TOS; select *Just a username, please*; and click on the *Next* button.
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Step 3: Check your email for an activation link. You will need to activate your username within 48 hours of registering. And that’s it. Oh…Be sure to send whoever is adding you to his/her blog the email address you used for registering at Edublogs.

Blogging for teachers and students, made easy

escifan is your new username
But, before you can start using your new username, you must activate it.
Check your inbox at abanana@egusd.net and click the link given.
If you do not activate your username within two days, you will have to sign up again.