

Teaching with Blogs

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Objectives

1. Share some examples of how I have used blogs in my courses.
2. Share some lessons that (I think) I have learned from these experiences.
3. Demonstrate “how to” create and maintain a blog in Wordpress MU.

How I've (Mainly) Used Blogs

- As “course management” software for publishing syllabi, assignments, & announcements
- As a place to post questions about assigned readings (either from myself or from students) and invite written student responses prior to class discussions
- As a place to have students post assigned writing, chronicle their research projects, and do informal writing about course themes.

Blogging Setups I've Used

- One blog, with myself as the sole author: students write comments but can't post
- One blog, with students as authors who can both comment and post
- Multiple blogs, one for the course as a whole to which I alone post, and multiple other blogs (linked from the main one) that students author

Lessons I'm Still Learning

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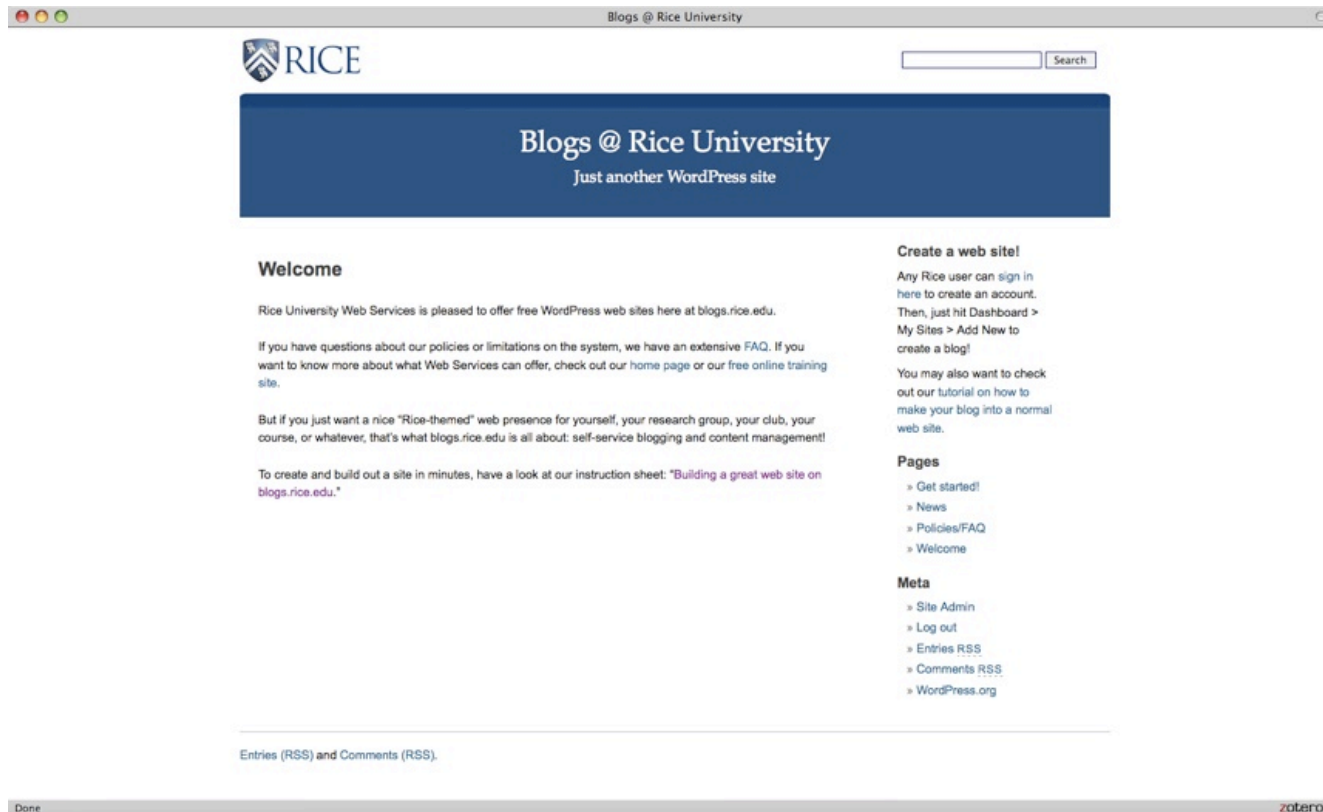
- A blog is not a silver bullet for sparking student participation.
- A blogging assignment is a type of writing assignment. Similar rules apply.
- Professor participation required!
- **Know why you're using the blog: what learning objective does it serve? (For me, it has to do with learning how to write for an audience greater than one.)**

Wordpress MU vs. Wordpress

- MU offers more control over privacy, technical support from Rice IT, and easy steps for adding students as users
- Your own installation of Wordpress would give you more control over the “look” of the blog and access to more “plugins” designed to extend functionality

Wordpress MU

- <http://blogs.rice.edu> -- Click “sign in” and use NetID and password to create a blog



The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Blogs @ Rice University". The page features the Rice University logo and a search bar. A prominent blue banner reads "Blogs @ Rice University" and "Just another WordPress site". The main content is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "Welcome", contains three paragraphs of text providing information about the service, including a link to an FAQ and an instruction sheet. The right column, titled "Create a web site!", provides instructions on how to sign in and create a new blog, and lists several links under "Pages" and "Meta". At the bottom of the page, there is a link for "Entries (RSS) and Comments (RSS)". The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and "zotero".

Welcome

Rice University Web Services is pleased to offer free WordPress web sites here at blogs.rice.edu.

If you have questions about our policies or limitations on the system, we have an [extensive FAQ](#). If you want to know more about what Web Services can offer, check out our home page or our free online training site.

But if you just want a nice “Rice-themed” web presence for yourself, your research group, your club, your course, or whatever, that’s what blogs.rice.edu is all about: self-service blogging and content management!

To create and build out a site in minutes, have a look at our instruction sheet: “[Building a great web site on blogs.rice.edu](#).”

Create a web site!

Any Rice user can sign in here to create an account. Then, just hit [Dashboard > My Sites > Add New](#) to create a blog!

You may also want to check out our tutorial on how to make your blog into a normal web site.

Pages

- » [Get started!](#)
- » [News](#)
- » [Policies/FAQ](#)
- » [Welcome](#)

Meta

- » [Site Admin](#)
- » [Log out](#)
- » [Entries RSS](#)
- » [Comments RSS](#)
- » [WordPress.org](#)

[Entries \(RSS\) and Comments \(RSS\)](#)

- Dashboard
- Dashboard
- My Sites
- Posts
 - Posts
 - Add New
 - Categories
 - Post Tags
- Media
 - Library
 - Add New
- Links
- Pages
 - Pages
 - Add New
- Comments 1
- Appearance
 - Plugins 1
 - Plugins
 - Users
 - Tools
 - Settings

Dashboard

Right Now

Content	Discussion
5 Posts	26 Comments
1 Page	9 Approved
8 Categories	1 Pending
0 Tags	16 Spam



Theme LetterHead with 6 Widgets Change Theme

Recent Comments

- From [masonry supplies](#) on [Teaching with Blogs # \[Pending\]](#)
Commenting on posts is not my thing, but I just cannot resist here. Your post is awesome and helpful! Thanks!
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QuickPress

Title

Upload/Insert  

Content

Tags

Save Draft Reset Publish

Recent Drafts

There are no drafts at the moment

Blogs @ Rice

[Blogs.rice.edu upgraded](#) August 15, 2010
Welcome to the upgraded version of blogs.rice.edu. If you encounter any unusual new issues, please email webservices@rice.edu. [...]

Add and Manage Posts and Categories

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for a site named 'Offprints'. The browser address bar displays 'http://mcdaniel.blogs.rice.edu - Dashboard < Offprints - WordPress'. The dashboard header includes a 'New Post' button, the user name 'Howdy, Caleb McDaniel', and a 'Log Out' link. On the left sidebar, the 'Posts' menu is expanded, and a large blue arrow points to the 'Add New' option. The main content area features a 'Right Now' widget with a table of site statistics:

Content	Discussion
5 Posts	26 Comments
	9 Approved
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Below the 'Right Now' widget is the 'Recent Comments' section, listing several comments with their authors and the posts they commented on. On the right side of the dashboard, there is a 'QuickPress' widget with a 'Title' field, an 'Upload/Insert' button, a 'Content' text area, and a 'Tags' field. Below these are 'Save Draft', 'Reset', and 'Publish' buttons. Other widgets include 'Recent Drafts' (showing no drafts) and 'Blogs @ Rice' (announcing an upgrade of blogs.rice.edu).

Add Links you Want to Appear in Sidebar

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for 'Offprints'. The left sidebar contains a menu with 'Dashboard', 'Posts', 'Media', 'Links', 'Pages', 'Comments', 'Appearance', 'Plugins', 'Users', 'Tools', and 'Settings'. A blue arrow points to the 'Links' widget in the sidebar. The main content area shows a 'Right Now' summary table, a 'QuickPress' form, and a list of comments. The 'Right Now' table has the following data:

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The 'QuickPress' form has fields for Title, Content, and Tags, with buttons for 'Save Draft', 'Reset', and 'Publish'. The 'Recent Drafts' section shows 'There are no drafts at the moment'. The 'Blogs @ Rice' section shows a post from 'Blogs.rice.edu upgraded August 15, 2010'. The comments section shows several comments, including one from 'masonry supplies on Teaching with Blogs # [Pending]' and another from 'Caleb McDaniel on Post the Fourth, In Which I Digitally Archive Some Articles #'. A blue box with white text contains the following note:

NOTE: To make these links appear, you must activate the link “widget.”

Add Static Pages (e.g, a syllabus)

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for 'Offprints'. The left sidebar contains a menu with 'Pages' highlighted by a blue arrow. The main content area features a 'Right Now' summary table, a 'Recent Comments' list, and a 'QuickPress' form. The 'Right Now' table shows 5 Posts, 1 Page, 8 Categories, and 0 Tags. The 'Discussion' column shows 26 Comments, 9 Approved, 1 Pending, and 16 Spam. The 'Recent Comments' section lists several comments, including one from Caleb McDaniel and another from Joe A. The 'QuickPress' form has fields for Title, Content, and Tags, with 'Publish' and 'Save Draft' buttons. The 'Recent Drafts' section is empty. The 'Blogs @ Rice' section mentions an upgrade on August 15, 2010.

Dashboard

Dashboard

My Sites

Posts

Media

Links

Pages

Comments

Appearance

Plugins

Users

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Settings

Right Now

Content	Discussion
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Theme LetterHead with 6 Widgets

Change Theme

QuickPress

Title

Upload/Insert

Content

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Approve, View, and Delete Comments

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for 'Offprints'. The left sidebar contains navigation menus for Dashboard, Posts, Media, Links, Pages, Comments, Appearance, Plugins, Users, Tools, and Settings. A blue arrow points to the 'Comments' menu item. The main content area features a 'Right Now' summary box with the following data:

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Below this is the 'Recent Comments' section, which lists several comments from users like 'masonry supplies' and 'Joe A.' on the post 'Post the Fourth, In Which I Digitally Archive Some Articles #'. The 'QuickPress' widget on the right provides a form for creating new posts, including fields for Title, Content, and Tags, along with 'Save Draft', 'Reset', and 'Publish' buttons. The 'Recent Drafts' section shows no drafts at the moment. The 'Blogs @ Rice' section contains a notice about the upgrade of blogs.rice.edu on August 15, 2010.

Change Themes and Add “Widgets”

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The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: Dashboard (selected), My Sites, Posts (with sub-items: Posts, Add New, Categories, Post Tags), Media (with sub-items: Library, Add New), Links, Pages (with sub-items: Pages, Add New), Comments (with a notification badge '1'), Appearance (highlighted with a blue arrow), Plugins (with a notification badge '1'), Users, Tools, and Settings.

The main content area is titled 'Dashboard' and features several widgets:

- Right Now:** A summary table showing site statistics. It lists 5 Posts, 1 Page, 8 Categories, and 0 Tags. In the 'Discussion' column, it shows 26 Comments, 9 Approved, 1 Pending, and 16 Spam. Below this table, it indicates the current theme is 'LetterHead with 6 Widgets' and provides a 'Change Theme' button.
- Recent Comments:** A list of recent comments. The top comment is from 'masonry supplies' on the post 'Teaching with Blogs # [Pending]', with the text 'Commenting on posts is not my thing, but I just cannot resist here. Your post is awesome and helpful! Thanks!'. Below it is a comment from 'Caleb McDaniel' on the post 'Post the Fourth, In Which I Digitally Archive Some Articles #', with the text 'esitate to give any definitive, generalizable advice here, not just'. Other comments are from 'Joe A.' and 'Lisa Spiro' on the same post, and 'Laurel L. Russwurm' on 'In Search of John Brown's Timbucto, Part II #'. Each comment includes the author's name, the post title, and a snippet of the comment text.
- QuickPress:** A form for creating a new post. It includes fields for 'Title', 'Content', and 'Tags'. There are 'Upload/Insert' and 'Publish' buttons, along with 'Save Draft' and 'Reset' options.
- Recent Drafts:** A section indicating 'There are no drafts at the moment'.
- Blogs @ Rice:** A section titled 'Blogs.rice.edu upgraded August 15, 2010' with a welcome message: 'Welcome to the upgraded version of blogs.rice.edu. If you encounter any unusual new issues, please email webservices@rice.edu. [...]'.

The bottom of the dashboard shows a 'Done' status on the left and a 'zotero' logo on the right.

Add Users (e.g., student authors)

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- Recent Comments:** A list of recent comments, including one from 'masonry supplies' (Pending) and one from 'Caleb McDaniel'.
- QuickPress:** A form for creating a new post, with fields for Title, Content, and Tags, and buttons for 'Save Draft', 'Reset', and 'Publish'.
- Recent Drafts:** A section indicating 'There are no drafts at the moment'.
- Blogs @ Rice:** A section titled 'Blogs.rice.edu upgraded August 15, 2010' with a welcome message and contact information.

Adjust Settings and Viewing Permissions

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard for the site 'Offprints'. The browser address bar indicates the URL is <http://mcdaniel.blogs.rice.edu>. The dashboard includes a sidebar menu on the left with categories like Dashboard, Posts, Media, Links, Pages, Comments, Appearance, Plugins, Users, Tools, and Settings. A large blue arrow points to the 'Settings' option in the sidebar. The main content area features a 'Right Now' widget with a table of site statistics, a 'QuickPress' widget for creating new posts, a 'Recent Comments' widget listing recent user interactions, and a 'Blogs @ Rice' widget with a recent update notice. The 'Right Now' widget table is as follows:

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The 'Recent Comments' widget shows three entries:

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