

Designing Your Online Professional Presence

Rebecca J. Hogue

Table of Contents

Part 1: Professional Presence	1
Digital Identity	3
Networking and Personal Learning Networks	5
Personal Brand	9
LinkedIn	11
Following Blogs	13
Social Networking	15
Twitter	19
Part 2: Setting Up Your Website	23
Choosing Your Domain Name	25
Buying Your Domain	27
Buying Hosting	29
Installing WordPress	31
Adding Initial Content	33
Adding Media	37
Additional Configurations	39
Managing Comments	41
Part 3: Customizing Your Website	43
Anatomy of a WordPress Site	45
Designing your website	49
Plugins	51
Themes	53
FSE - Creating Your Custom Header	57
FSE - Customizing Navigation	61
FSE - Creating Your Landing Page	63
FSE - Customizing Your Blog Pages	67
Using Customizer to Customize Themes (not Full Site Editing)	69

Part 4: Portfolio Contents	71
What Goes in an Instructional Designers Portfolio	73
About Me Page	77
Images	79
Writing Good Blog Posts	81
Writing Comments	85
Case Studies	87
Video Introduction	91



Rebecca J. Hogue

University of Massachusetts-Boston

I (Rebecca J. Hogue) have a professional background in instructional design and software quality assurance. I hold a Master of Arts Degree in Distributed Learning (Distance Education), and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science. I am passionate about teaching instructional designers. I teach (online) instructional design at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. I host a podcast called Demystifying Instructional Design where I interview instructional designers about what they do. I recently self-published a memoir called "Never knew I wanted to be a breast cancer survivor", which is available on Amazon.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence.

Part 1: Professional Presence

What does it mean to have a professional presence? The definition that I like the most comes from Karen Gray at Columbia Business School “Presence is letting the most powerful version of yourself shine through” ([Ref](#)).

Other key words associated with professional presence include: self-confidence, concise communicator, and gravitas.

Professional presence is also called personal brand.

Creating a professional presence on the Internet takes time. It needs to be fostered and intentional. You cannot put something together today and expect it to be available tomorrow. You need to cultivate online relationships and seed the internet with the things you want to show up in search results.

Things you can do to improve your professional presence ([Ref](#)):

1. Make private any social media you don't want to be part of your professional presence.
2. Take a high-quality professional picture (use the same photo everywhere).
3. Start a blog.
4. Become an expert in something (find your niche).
5. Stay consistent.

Digital Identity
Networking and Personal Learning Networks
Personal Brand
LinkedIn
Following Blogs
Social Networking
Twitter





This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/part1.

Digital Identity

Digital identity refers to how “one’s online image is perceived by others” ([Ref](#)). Other terms used for this concept are online identity, and online reputation. The term also has a technical meaning when referring to online privacy and credentials.

In today’s overly digital world, it is very difficult to not have a digital identity. **If you do not foster the identity you want, an identity will be created for you.**

Tip: Google Yourself Often

Google yourself often (e.g. monthly). Resist the urge to click on anything negative as that increases the likelihood that google will show the result. Searching won’t affect what comes up, but clicking tells Google that something is interesting. Set up a Google alert on your name. That is how I found the ‘other’ Rebecca Hogue.

Activity: Google Yourself

1. Begin by opening an ‘incognito window’. If you search with your normal browser, your results will be influenced by your browsing history. By opening incognito, you are going to see results that are closer to what other people will see.
2. Reflect on what you like or not like about what you are seeing.
3. Check the image tab. Are the photos of you? Are they photos you want people to see?
4. Try searching for variations of your name. Are their variations that get better results?



After doing this activity the first time, I ended up ensuring that all my social media sites used the same profile image. The reason I did this was to ensure that a Google Search would show mostly my professional headshot. Having the same picture in multiple places meant that it showed up sooner on the list.

I have always used my middle initial as a way to differentiate myself from the other Rebecca Hogues out there. If I take away the J, I find a bunch of results for another Rebecca Hogue. Unfortunately one of the others was found guilty of killing her child, although the boyfriend did it.

In order to increase your professional presence on search results, you need to be a creator on the web. This can be in the form of a blog or website or podcast. The idea is that you need to create content that is associated with your name. This increases the chances that something you created shows up at the top of the search results.

References

Obana, T., Takubo, M., Orito, Y., Murata, K., Sai, H. & Okamoto, T. (2021). The Online Attention game for digital identity education: An exploratory study. *The Review of Socionetwork Strategies* 15, 251–276. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.umb.edu/10.1007/s12626-021-00077-6>



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/digital_identity.

Networking and Personal Learning Networks

Merriam-Webster defines networking as “the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions”.

Many people are uncomfortable with the idea of networking because they see it as a way to get something for yourself. If you change the way you view networking and instead think of it as a way to help others, then it becomes a lot easier to do, but also you will be more effective with it. Networking is an act of generosity ([Ref](#)).

If you need a job, it is too late, networking needs to start three to six months before you “need” something from it.

Personal Learning Network (PLN)

We all have a Personal Learning Network (PLN), even if we are not aware of it. Marc-André Lalande describes a PLN as “a way of describing the group of people that you connect with to learn their ideas, their questions, their reflections, and their preferences” ([Ref](#)).

Example nodes in my PLN are: Maha Bali, #lrnchat on Twitter, Virtually Connecting, and Demystifying Instructional Design.

[Maha Bali](http://mahabali.me) (<http://mahabali.me>) - Maha challenges my thinking when it comes to intentional equitable hospitality - her reflections provide me with a completely different perspective on what it means to be an open educator. She regularly challenges my thinking. Plus she is a pretty awesome human too :-)

[#lrnchat on Twitter](#) - #lrnchat (pronounced Learn-chat) is a weekly twitter chat that focuses on learning in the professional context. It is a place where you see a lot of instructional designers and is hosted by Jane Bozarth (who wrote the book on social media and professional learning) and Clark Quinn (who has written books on mobile-learning in the workplace context). This is definitely less academic focused and much more corporate sector focused. If you have never done a Twitter chat before, it is a great place to start.

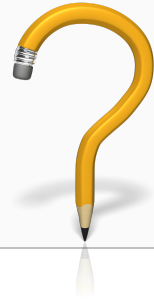
[Virtually Connecting](#) - VC is an organization that I cofounded to help allow for "hallway conversations" at academic conferences. It is what we call a Little Open Online Movement (LOOM) that helps people connect through both the background work required in setting up a VC sessions and in the sessions themselves. VC is open to anyone who is interested. If you are interested, feel free to sign up - it is free to watch and free to participate (you can watch the prior sessions anytime as they are all saved on YouTube). For me personally, I find that I regularly meet new people on VC and I learn by listening to the conversations that occur (I rarely join in the sessions themselves these days, mostly I 'lurk').

[Demystifying Instructional Design](#) - Demystifying instructional design is a podcast that I host. As a result of being a podcaster, I have met a variety of instructional designers that I connect with through interviews. I learn something from every interview I do.

Activity: Draw your PLN

Drawing your PLN allows you to see your network in a visual way and may help you identify gaps in your PLN.

1. List all your sources of learning (e.g. people, organizations, networks).
2. Group your sources in a logical manner.
3. Draw your PLN.



Instructional design professional networks

There are quite a few organizations that support learning and development (sometimes called talent development). Here is a list of instructional design related professional networks:

- [Association for Computing Machinery](#) (ACM)
- [Association for Educational Communications and Technology](#) (AECT)
- [Association for Learning Technology](#) (ALT)
- [Association for Talent Development](#) (ATD)
- [Educause](#) (check your institution, you might have free membership)
- [Global OER Graduate Network](#) (GO-GN)
- [International Association for Language Learning Technology](#) (IALLT)
- [Learning Guild](#) (free membership)
- [Merlot](#)
- [Online Learning Consortium](#) (OLC).
- [Training Magazine Network](#) (has a free level of membership)

I asked my colleague about instructional design related professional organizations - here is what he had to say:

Apostolos Koutropoulos:

I joined the ACM, AECT, and ISPI a while back. I like the ACM stuff, but it's not as relevant to ID (unless you really like the nitty-gritty of computing). The ISPI membership is basically good for the journal access that they provide (which I don't read as often in recent years). For the AECT I get the mails, but beyond reading the journal that comes out every so often I haven't really jumped in. Since these are lifetime memberships, I feel like I can jump in at any time.

I joined ATD (national), and I think this was the biggest bang for the buck (I pay for this on my own). I like that as part of the membership you get tokens for free ebooks (sort of like audible subscribers get tokens), and it's a way to keep up on things. I don't see much value in the local (I can't really attend in person, and COVID makes it impossible now).

I recently joined ALT (in the UK), this was a free membership via [GO-GN](#). I like the ALT's online conferences, and even when I wasn't an ALT member I attended them.

I pay my own fare for IALLT as well, but this is more specific to technology in language learning (so if we have IDs who are also language teachers, this is perfect). IALLT has free webinars each month. The archive is only available to members, but the live ones are free to anyone who wants to join synchronously.

I am also in the Learning Guild (free membership). I recommend it for access to their publications and webinars. I also keep an eye out for IABL ([International Association for Blended Learning](#)) webinars that deal specifically with the subject of blended learning.

Finally, there is the [Training Magazine Network](#). It's not an association per se, but they have a lot of webinars, a means to track your PD, and a rather large webinar recording archive. I join in from time to time when I have time.

Activity: Explore professional networks

Membership in professional learning networks is one way to show that you are committed to lifelong learning.

1. Explore the professional learning networks in the list above.
2. Consider joining a few. Some of them have free membership.



Activity: PLNs and networking as generosity

When you combine the idea of a PLN and Networking as generosity, then it provides a way you can be a creator.

Take some time to reflect: What can you offer your PLN?



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/networking.

Personal Brand

The characteristics of a personal brand include:

- **Unique and consistent:** A personal brand should be unique to the individual and should consistently convey their values, personality, and message across all platforms and interactions.
- **Authentic:** A personal brand should reflect the individual's true self and should not be a false representation of who they are.
- **Clear and compelling:** A personal brand should have a clear and compelling message that differentiates the individual from others in their field.
- **Cohesive:** A personal brand should be cohesive across all platforms, including social media, website, resume, and business cards.
- **Relevant:** A personal brand should be relevant to the individual's target audience and industry.
- **Reflects the individual's skills and expertise:** A personal brand should reflect the individual's skills, expertise, and accomplishments.
- **Consistently Evolves:** A personal brand should be consistently developed, re-evaluated and updated to align with the individual's goals and the evolution of their career.
- **Consistently Communicated:** A personal brand should be consistently communicated to the target audience via different mediums to ensure its visibility and reach.

Remember, personal branding is an ongoing process, it's important to continuously reflect on how you want to be perceived and to actively work on building and maintaining your brand.

How to improve your personal brand

There are many things you can do to improve your personal brand, some of which include:

- **Define your brand:** Clearly define your brand message, values, and unique selling points.
- **Establish an online presence:** Create a professional website, social media accounts, and blog that reflect your brand and showcase your skills and expertise.
- **Network and build relationships:** Attend industry events, join professional organizations, and connect with people in your field.
- **Create valuable content:** Develop content such as articles, blog posts, or videos that demonstrate your expertise and provide value to your audience.
- **Be consistent:** Maintain consistency in your branding across all platforms, including your website, social media accounts, and business cards.
- **Be authentic:** Be true to yourself, and don't try to be someone you're not.
- **Get feedback:** Ask for feedback from colleagues, mentors, and friends to get a better understanding of how you are perceived and identify areas for improvement.
- **Continuously learning and developing:** Always keep learning and developing new skills, knowledge and experiences that align with your personal brand and career goals.
- **Showcase your achievements:** Highlight your achievements and successes, such as awards, publications, or speaking engagements, to showcase your expertise and credibility.

Keep in mind that building and maintaining a personal brand takes time and effort, but by consistently working on it, you can improve your personal brand and increase your visibility and credibility in your field.

How to harm your personal brand

Your personal brand isn't just about the things you should do, it is also about the things you should not do:

An instructional designer can harm their personal brand by:

- **Not being clear and consistent:** If an instructional designer is not clear or consistent in their brand message, it can be difficult for their audience to understand or remember who they are and what they offer.
- **Not being authentic:** If an instructional designer is not authentic in their brand, it can be difficult for their audience to trust or relate to them.
- **Not being professional:** If an instructional designer is not professional in their communication or work, it can damage their reputation and credibility.
- **Not being responsive:** If an instructional designer is not responsive to emails, phone calls or other forms of communication, it can be perceived as unprofessional and can damage the relationship with clients or colleagues.
- **Not staying up to date with industry trends and best practices:** If an instructional designer does not stay current with the latest trends and best practices in their field, it can be seen as a lack of expertise and competence.
- **Not providing quality work:** If an instructional designer does not provide quality work, it can damage their reputation and credibility.
- **Not being respectful:** If an instructional designer does not show respect for their colleagues, clients, or learners, it can damage their reputation and credibility.
- **Not being open to feedback:** If an instructional designer is not open to feedback and is unwilling to make changes or improvements, it can be seen as a lack of flexibility and can damage their reputation and credibility.

Remember, personal branding is an ongoing process, and it's important to be aware of how you present yourself, and to actively work on building and maintaining your brand.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/personal_brand.

LinkedIn

You can think of [LinkedIn](#) as a professional version of Facebook. It is where you make professional connections rather than social connections. It is not the place to share what you had for breakfast! (historical note - that expression comes from the early days of Twitter where people didn't see value in reading about what others had for breakfast).

Since I have had several jobs, I use LinkedIn as a way to stay in touch with people that I have worked with in past jobs. My first manager is connected to me on LinkedIn - without that connection we would have lost touch. I actually started on LinkedIn when a colleague in my Master's program invited me to connect. It was a brand new platform at that point.

When I returned from our 16-month bike trip and was looking for work, I posted a message on my LinkedIn status saying "I'm looking for work", and someone from a previous job reached out to me with a job opportunity that I otherwise would not have found. I ended up getting the job and was back at work within a month of our return - in a job market that was taking people on average 6-months to find a job. It was letting my network know I was looking, that helped me land that job.

I recommend that everyone have at least a minimum profile on LinkedIn, and that you use it to connect with your colleagues. If you don't need it now, you may find that you need it at some point in the future - and when you need it, it is often too late to start. You can add your new website to your LinkedIn profile. If you make a blog post that your network might be interested in, you can post it to your linked in status. This let's people in your network see your post. I don't do this that often - as I don't want to overwhelm my network, but if I write something that I'm particularly proud of I do broadcast it there. This practice of posting content to LinkedIn is becoming more common.

If you want to grow your network outside of the people you already know, then joining LinkedIn groups is a good way. One way to do this is to search for several LinkedIn groups and join them. Watch the group for a while to get a sense of what people are posting. When you have something to contribute, jump in and add your thoughts. When others see them, they may want to connect with you.

Think about who you want to connect with and who you don't. I generally try to avoid accepting connection requests from people I don't know. When sending a connection request, it is a good practice to tell the person how you know them (unless you are close friends or colleagues). For example, I meet a lot of people at conferences. If you don't tell me you met me from the conference, I may not accept the invitation because I don't know who that person is.

If you have access to LinkedIn Learning, there is a great course called [Rocking your LinkedIn profile](#). One nice thing about this course is that it is regularly updated as new functionality becomes available on LinkedIn. I recommend reviewing it at least twice per year.

LinkedIn Groups

Joining a LinkedIn group is a great way to connect to professionals in fields that you are interested in. In addition, it is a great way to share your ideas and thoughts on topics of interest. Remember that LinkedIn is a professional social media platform. This is not the platform to be sharing your vacation photos. I highly recommend lurking (reading/following) the LinkedIn groups for a while before posting to them - that way you get a better sense of the type of things that are shared within the groups.

- [Instructional Designers](#)
- [The Learning Guild Community](#)
- [Instructional Design Central](#)
- [Freelance Instructional Design and E-Learning Industry](#)
- [uMass Boston Alumni](#)



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/linkedin.

Following Blogs

There are several ways to follow blogs, including following the Facebook or LinkedIn page associated with the blog, signing up for email updates (if the blog has that option), and using an RSS feed reader. Your preference will depend on how you like to read blog posts. Personally, I use a combination of all three, depending on the type of blog.

Further, as a blogger, you will want to make sure you are providing as many pathways as possible for people to follow your blog. That way, they are informed whenever you publish a new post.

Facebook or LinkedIn Pages

If you are on Facebook or LinkedIn, consider creating a page for your website / blog. This will allow people you do not know to “follow” you without you needing to follow them back or friend them. Pages are created specifically as a way to broadcast information and as a way for customers to interact with businesses.

Examples:

- [Facebook Page for Demystifying Instructional Design](#)
- [LinkedIn Page for Demystifying Instructional Design](#)

eMail Subscriptions

You will notice that some blogs have an email subscription button. This allows you to sign up to receive an email anytime a new blog post is published. I subscribe to my own blog as a double check that when I hit publish I can see my posts.

There are several ways to setup a subscribe email button. I found the easiest thing to do was to use Jetpack's feature for this purpose. WordPress dot com, via Jetpack, then manages your subscriptions for you.

RSS Feed Readers

RSS stands for Really-Simple-Syndication. An RSS reader collects all new blog posts into one place. You ‘subscribe’ to a blog feed and anytime that blogger posts a new post, it is updated on your feed. WordPress automatically sets up your feed for you.

One of the more popular feed readers is [Feedly](#). Note that you do not need to pay to use Feedly to follow blogs. You can use their free version; however, it does limit how many blogs you can follow and how you organize them. For me personally, I find that if I have too many I stop reading them, so the limit doesn't directly impact me.

Newsletters

A recent trend is for bloggers to also have newsletters. Signing up to follow the newsletter allows you to be informed about various blog posts from your email inbox.

Instructional Design Blogs

There are several great blogs for instructional designers to follow. Some of these take a little to find on their websites. Blogs are included, but they might not have RSS feeds, so you'll need to subscribe if you want to automatically follow. These are not typically blogs that you leave comments on. You should focus leaving comments on personal blogs.

1. [eLearning Industry](#): This blog offers a wealth of resources and articles on topics such as eLearning design, instructional design theory, and eLearning technology.
2. [The eLearning Coach](#): This blog is written by Connie Malamed and provides practical tips and advice on instructional design, eLearning development, and related topics.
3. [Instructional Design Central](#): This blog is focused on instructional design and eLearning and covers a wide range of topics including instructional design models, eLearning trends, and design strategies.
4. [Learning Solutions Magazine](#): This blog is the online presence of the magazine of the same name and features articles on eLearning, instructional design, and related topics from experts in the field.
5. [Articulate Blog](#): This blog is focused on eLearning and instructional design and features articles and tutorials on using Articulate software for eLearning development.
6. [ATD Blog](#): This blog is run by the Association for Talent Development (ATD) and covers topics related to talent development, including instructional design and eLearning.
7. [E-Learning Heroes](#): This blog is run by Articulate and offers resources and tutorials for instructional designers and eLearning professionals.

These blogs offer a wealth of information and insights that can help instructional designers stay up-to-date on the latest trends and best practices in their field.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/following_blogs.

Social Networking

With the demise of Twitter, instructional designers have moved to either LinkedIn communities or Slack communities.

Getting Started

Once you've joined a community, begin by lurking (watching the community and figuring out how people interact). Then don't just lurk. Engage with others by commenting on posts, sharing your own content, and participating in discussions. This will help you build relationships and establish yourself as a valuable member of the community.

One thing you can share with your communities is your blog posts. If you have written a post that shares some form of knowledge that the community would be interested in, then you can share a link to your post. You can also share links to other peoples blog posts - and this is a really good practice - you can be seen as someone who is contributing to the community.

When posting a link to a blog post on social media, it's important to make it clear what the post is about and why your followers might be interested in reading it. Here are some tips on what to say when posting a link to a blog post:

1. **Use an attention-grabbing headline:** Use the headline of the blog post as the main text of your social media post, or create a shorter, more attention-grabbing version that summarizes the main point of the post.
2. **Highlight the main points:** Provide a brief summary of the key points covered in the blog post. This can help entice your followers to click through and read the post.
3. **Add your own commentary:** Share your own thoughts or reactions to the blog post. This can help add value to the post and encourage discussion among your followers.
4. **Use visuals:** Include an eye-catching image or video to accompany your post. This can help draw attention to the post and make it more shareable.
5. **Provide context:** If the blog post is part of a larger series or project, provide some context to help your followers understand how it fits into the bigger picture.

Here's an example of what a post might look like:

"Check out this new blog post on [topic]! The post covers [main points], and I found it really insightful. [Add your own commentary or reaction]. If you're interested in [related topic], you won't want to miss this one! [link to blog post] #blogging #contentmarketing"

Hashtags

Hashtags are a ubiquitous feature of social media platforms today, but they actually have a relatively short history.

The first use of the hashtag on social media is widely credited to Chris Messina, a former Google employee, who suggested the idea in a tweet in August 2007. Messina proposed using the hashtag as a way to group conversations

around specific topics, writing: "how do you feel about using # (pound) for groups. As in #barcamp [msg]?"

At the time, Twitter was still a relatively new platform, and Messina's idea of using the hashtag to create a sort of ad hoc categorization system quickly caught on. Soon, other Twitter users began using hashtags to group tweets around specific events, topics, or movements.

The use of hashtags spread quickly to other social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, and today they are an integral part of the social media landscape. Hashtags are used to identify and categorize content, facilitate conversations around specific topics, and increase the discoverability of posts.

Over time, hashtags have also become a tool for activism and social change, with movements like #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #ClimateStrike using hashtags to raise awareness of issues and spark public discussion.

In summary, hashtags have a relatively short history, beginning with a suggestion by Chris Messina in 2007, and quickly spreading to become an integral part of social media platforms and online culture.

LinkedIn Communities

In the [LinkedIn chapter](#), we talked about LinkedIn communities to follow. Following is a passive activity, where you read the content of the community but you do not actively participate. In this section, I'm suggesting LinkedIn communities where you should consider participating:

- [University of Massachusetts Boston Instructional Design Alumni](#) - Make sure you get the right one. If one of the admins asks (Tod Hebbington), you can tell them you are in my class. I recommend posting a blog post or two to this social group and asking for people to leave comments on your blog. Since this is an Alumni account, you will find that people are very receptive to your posts as long as you don't spam the community (try to avoid sharing more than one of your blog posts per week).
- [Instructional Designers](#) - This is more of an advertising group. It is a great place to share your blog posts. It would be good to use the method mentioned above for this one - summarizing the relevance when including the link.
- [The Learning Guild Community](#) - The Learning Guild has the pulse on instructional design outside of formal education. If you are looking at Freelance, Corporate, Non-profit, Government, etc, then they are a great group to connect with. This is a great place to ask questions. Don't ask for jobs, ask questions about different aspects of eLearning or instructional design. Try to be specific in your question. [Here is a link to a question that I asked](#).

Slack

Slack is like other social media platforms except that the communities are all private. You need to be invited into the community to participate. It has become one of the most used communication tools in business. It is useful for direct messaging (texting) as well as sharing files. It integrates with a bunch of other platforms like Zoom. It is worth learning, regardless of joining specific communities.

See [How to use Slack: Your quickstart guide](#) for directions on how to use Slack.

I participate in two communities:

- [Pedago.me](#) - This is a great professional development oriented community. They have a book club among other things.
- [L&D Collective](#) - This one has more people who are doing instructional design, rather than studying it. It is focused also more on the corporate space. Each week they pair up people for 'coffee talks'. It is a great way to meet new people. Use my name when signing up.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/social_networking.

Twitter

Twitter used to be a powerful social networking tool. It has become much less useful since Elon Musk purchased it and started disrupting many of the community norms. I used to get a lot of great information in my feed, but now I get a lot of spam and much of it isn't pleasant, so I am no longer recommending Twitter to students. That being said, some communities still meet on Twitter and if you are willing to filter through the crap, there is still value in this platform.

Twitter is a powerful tool for professional networking as it allows users to connect with industry experts, join conversations relevant to their field, and share their own thoughts and ideas with a wide audience. Additionally, it can be used to promote one's personal brand and connect with potential employers or clients. Using Twitter effectively can help professionals expand their networks, gain visibility in their industry, and stay up-to-date on the latest developments in their field.

Getting started with Twitter

There is one great saying here - Facebook is where you go to connect with people you **already know**, Twitter is where you go to connect with people you **want to know**.

Twitter is how I met AK, which is how I ended up teaching at uMass-Boston. Twitter is how I met a lot of people in my network. It is how most of the people in my academic network connect with one another. I remember going to an OLC (Online Learning Consortium) conference and exchanging twitter handles rather than business cards. Since then, Twitter has gotten a little crazy. I have a lot of followers and a lot of people who follow me. Most of the connections are not personal - however, they can be. **You can make personal connections on Twitter if you have something to say.**

In addition to professional networking, I also use Twitter to follow local events. I follow my local police department and fire department. I find Twitter is one of the best places to get news when there is some kind of disaster (e.g. flooding, fires, earthquakes).

I also use Twitter to contact support for some services. For example, I find Twitter help for United Airlines is more efficient than waiting on the phone forever.

For example of how I use Twitter to help me design a Twitter activity, I went on to Twitter and asked some of my friends what they would recommend (see Wakelet link below). Several great ideas came up. What started out as me tagging two people has turned into a longer conversation - at least one of which is a complete tangent.

I liked what Maha Bali said when she highlighted that Twitter can be used to help you answer questions that Google can't answer - in my case, that was "what is a good asynch Twitter activity" ([Tweet Reference](#)).

[Async Twitter Activities - Wakelet](#)

Louise Fletcher on Blue Sky Blog provides [eleven concrete ways to use Twitter for networking](#). For contrast, Lily Herman on *themuse* explains [Five things to avoid when you're networking on Twitter](#).

Twitter Hashtags

A hashtag is a keyword preceded by the # symbol. Hashtags originated on Twitter as a way to categorize or tag tweets, so that people could find conversations. It has since been adopted by other social media sites such as Instagram and LinkedIn. They are not used the same way, in that it is common to list a bunch of hashtags on Instagram but it is rare to use more than one or two on Twitter. Also, on Twitter, it is considered rude to tweet irrelevant stuff to a hashtag - ensure that your content aligns with the hashtag before using it.

Anyone can make up and use a Twitter hashtag. It is recommended, however, that before you decide to use a hashtag that you first monitor that hashtag to ensure that it isn't already being used - or worse, isn't already being used by a group whose values don't align with your brand!

Twitter Chats

Back when I started using Twitter, I remember telling a colleague at a professional event that I just didn't understand the point of Twitter. He recommended that I join #lrnchat, a Twitter chat about learning and development. I gave it a try and realized that the authors of some of the books I was reading were on the chat. I had an opportunity to actually talk to them and ask them questions.

A Twitter chat is typically a live-conversation that happens over Twitter at a specified time. The facilitator of the chat begins by asking a question and anyone participating in the chat answers the question. A specific chat hashtag is used in order for people to follow the conversation.

Advice for professional networking on Twitter

- **Create a professional profile:** Use a professional profile picture, bio and handle that reflect your profession or field of study.
- **Follow industry leaders and influencers:** Follow industry leaders and influencers in your field to stay up-to-date on current trends and gain insight into the industry.
- **Share relevant content:** Share content that is relevant to your field, including articles, blog posts, and research. This will demonstrate your knowledge and interest in the industry to potential employers and professionals.
- **Participate in Twitter chats:** Participate in Twitter chats related to your field to connect with professionals, share your insights and knowledge, and learn from others.
- **Network:** Use Twitter to connect with professionals in your field. Follow, retweet and engage with professionals that you admire, or that have experience in the field you are interested in.
- **Use hashtags:** Use relevant hashtags to increase the visibility of your tweets and make them more discoverable to potential employers or professionals in your field.
- **Be yourself:** Twitter is a great platform to showcase your personality and interests. Show your potential employers or professionals that you are more than just a resume by sharing who you are and what you stand for.
- **Be respectful and professional:** Remember that Twitter is a public platform, so be respectful and professional in all interactions. Avoid controversial topics and keep your tweets appropriate for a professional setting.
- **Protect your privacy:** Be mindful of the information you share on Twitter, and be sure to adjust your privacy settings as needed to protect your personal information.
- **Keep it active:** To maintain a professional network on Twitter, it is important to keep your account active by posting regularly, engaging with others, and staying up-to-date with the latest trends and information in your field.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/twitter.

Part 2: Setting Up Your Website



Part 2 focuses on the things you need to setup a self-hosted

WordPress-based website. This part is all about the skills involved in using WordPress, it is not about the content around what makes a good site. I've divided the process into six steps:

1. Choose your domain name.
2. Buy your domain.
3. Buy hosting.
4. Install WordPress.
5. Add initial content.
6. Configure themes and plugins.

Choosing Your Domain Name
Buying Your Domain
Buying Hosting

Installing WordPress
Adding Initial Content
Adding Media
Additional Configurations
Accessibility
Creating Subdomains
Managing Comments



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/websitesetup.

Choosing Your Domain Name

The domain name is the address of your website. When we talk about owning one's domain, we are talking about owning (technically renting) an address on the Internet.

You may also hear the term URL – Uniform Resource Locator - that is the technical term for the website address.



Domain names have three components: the top-level domain, mid-level domain, and subdomain.

Top-level domain. Historically, there were only a few that were 2 or 3 letters and each had a specific meaning. The most common one is **.com** which stands for company. You will also be familiar with **.edu** which represents educational institutions. There are also country specific top-level domains such as **.ca** for Canada. Now there are many more, some of which are gaining popularity but the most common is by far **.com**.

Mid-level domain. The main part of a domain name. It is the part that most people remember. When you purchase a domain, you are purchasing a mid-level-domain and top level domain combination (e.g. **goingeast.ca**).

Subdomain. When you own your own domain you can create as many subdomains as you like.

Setting up a Domain

The first step in setting up your website is to determine your domain name. You may want to have a couple of options as you cannot use a name that is already taken. Also, you may want to try googling common misspellings of your domain name, as that may happen - although really, most people find you via search or links you share on other social media profiles (e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook).

A creative domain name is always fun, but not always feasible. It can also be a challenge if your site speaks to different aspects of yourself.

The domain name for my professional site and blog has gone through many iterations. It started out as a subdomain of my travel blog, then moved to <https://rjhogue.name>, and has recently transitioned to <https://rebeccahogue.com>. However, I'm putting all my instructional design related materials on <https://DemystifyingInstructionalDesign.com>.

Tip

I recommend using a .com for your domain.

Google has a good page that talks about [how to come up with a good domain name](#). I like the Google article in part because it talks about not stressing over the name too much. The name doesn't play a direct role in your searchability. You'll soon learn that most people just bookmark it or put it into something like Diigo or Feedly or subscribe to updates on things like Facebook or emails via WordPress (see [Following Blogs](#)).

You can change your domain name later for a small cost, but know that any work that you do to build your online image in one domain can get lost when you change domain names. It is also more difficult to track site analytics as they will be reset in the new domain. When I moved from rjh.goingeast.ca to rjhogue.name and then to rebeccahogue.com, I put forwarders in place so that when people went to my old URL they were automatically redirected to the new one.

Tip

If you change domains, put a redirect in place to ensure your followers can find you. You can redirect from cPanel as long as you own the domain names.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at
https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/choosing_your_domain.

Buying Your Domain

Where do you get a domain? You 'rent' domain names from domain name providers. This can be coupled with your website hosting, or it may be separate. In either case, you rent or lease your domain name either yearly or for five years. The cost of the domain depends on the top level domain as well as other mysterious things – some providers charge more or less to register domain names. Typically, you can expect to pay \$12-\$15 per year for a domain name.

If this is your first time buying a domain, I recommend that you use the same provider as your hosting provider - see [Buying Hosting](#).

You do not pay for subdomains. You can create as many subdomains as you want on your mid-level domain.

Tip

Buying domain names can get expensive if you buy new ones for everything you do. Subdomains are free, so it is often better to just subdomain off your main domain.

[Bluehost](#) (formerly GoDaddy) is the most common domain name provider; however, many people opt to purchase their domain names from their hosting provider. One benefit to this is that you can usually purchase it as a 'bundle' and your hosting provider will automatically setup the necessary configuration to make your domain work.

[Reclaim Hosting](#) is a name and hosting service that is specifically designed for students and educators. I recommend them because they have excellent customer service which is really helpful when you are first learning.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/buying_your_domain.

Buying Hosting

What do we mean by web hosting? Everything on the web needs to exist on a computer, called a server, somewhere. The folks that provide the service of hosting websites on their servers are called website hosts. When you purchase website hosting, you are renting space on a server that is accessible on the Internet.

Note

If you purchase your domain name from one place and your hosting service from another, you will need to tell your domain name provider what the address is of the server your website is hosted on.

Tip

For all in one domain name and hosting service, with excellent customer service I recommend [Reclaim Hosting](#). They are specifically setup to support students who are learning how to create their own self-hosted domain. They are familiar with WordPress and if you get into trouble they are usually very quick to help you sort things out.

Activity: Purchase your domain and hosting

1. Look into options for purchasing your domain and hosting.
All examples in this book will use Reclaim Hosting as both the domain name provider and domain host provider.
2. Choose a provider and purchase both a domain and a hosting service.





This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/buying_hosting.

Installing WordPress

WordPress is software that is installed on a web server.

WordPress was created in 2003 as an open source blogging platform. It has since evolved from its limited functionality as a blogging platform to a complete Content Management System (CMS). WordPress is the backend for about [65% of known content management systems on the Web](#).

Although WordPress was created initially as a blogging platform, it has evolved and is now used as a website platform as well as a blogging platform. WordPress is ever evolving, which means it takes advantage of newer technologies and user experience design practices; however, it also means that there is a lot of legacy functionality that can make it confusing to learn.

Tip

Learn to use the newer features of WordPress as some of the old ones will become deprecated (unsupported).

cPanel

cPanel is the software that many host providers use. cPanel allows you to manage what happens on your domain. From cPanel you can do things like:

- Installing WordPress
- Managing WordPress instances (as well as other applications - MyApps)
- Creating subdomains
- Creating email accounts
- Creating redirects
- Managing files
- Other advanced features!

Video: Creating a subdomain and installing WordPress using cPanel



[Watch on YouTube](#)



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/installing_wordpress.

Adding Initial Content

To get started on your website, you will want to create some initial content. There are several pages you will want to create, and if you are blogging you will want to create one or two initial blog posts. This chapter describes the mechanics of adding things to your site. It does not describe what makes good content. For what makes good content, see Part 3: Portfolio Contents.

Tip

WordPress is not an authoring tool. I recommend that you create your content on a tool like Google Docs or Microsoft Word, and then move that content into WordPress. This also means that you can create some of your content before you are ready to create your website or blog.

Websites and Blogs

Merriam-Webster definitions:

Website: *a group of World Wide Web pages usually containing hyperlinks to each other and made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization.*

Blog: *a website that contains online personal reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks, videos, and photographs provided by the writer.*

The key difference between a website and a blog is that a website is made up of **pages** and a blog is made up of **posts**. A blog exists on a website. When creating a portfolio, your blog is part of your larger website.

A single entry on a blog is called a **blog post**; however, it is becoming more common to refer to a single post as a “blog” as well as using the term “blog” to represent the collection of posts. Typically you create “pages” for the static content on your site and you use “posts” for your blog posts.

Ipsum Generator

When you are setting up a new site, you might not have enough content. You need content in order to determine if the theme (the look-and-feel) is what you want. One tip is use Lorem Ipsum. Lorem Ipsum is placeholder Latin text that is designed to look like English text - that is, it has the same general sentence word length variability, sentence length, and paragraph length.

Lorem Ipsum is a great choice for filler text when setting up your website and exploring themes. I recommend creating posts and pages with 3-5 paragraphs.

There are standard ipsum generators and some fun ipsum generators. For example:

1. [Standard ipsum generator](#)
2. [Pirate ipsum generator](#)
3. [Star Trek ipsum generator](#)

For a longer list of options see the [Ultimate list of lorem ipsum generators](#).

Typically, **pages** contain static content that does not change often, where posts are dynamic content. Blog **posts** are dated journal entries and are constantly being added. They are posts. Where the “About Me” **page** is static content that rarely changes.

To create a new page or post, from your Dashboard select either **Posts >> Add New** or **Pages >> Add New**.

Video: Creating pages and posts in WordPress



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Using the Block Editor

The Block Editor, sometimes known as Gutenberg, is the current way to edit WordPress content.

Video: Tips for using the block editor in WordPress



[Watch on YouTube](#)

What is the difference between patterns and reusable blocks? In both cases they are a collection of one or more pre-configured blocks. The difference is that a **pattern** is designed to be changed. Once you have placed a pattern on a post or page, there is no longer a link to the pattern. The underlying pattern could change, but it would have no affect on the post or page. A **reusable** block is a configured block that is repeated across pages. If you edit the reusable block, it will update that block on all pages where it is being used.

I recommend reading this [article about re-usable blocks written by WordPress](#), which describes how WordPress envisions blocks and re-usable blocks are to be used.

Activity: Create posts and pages

1. Create three or four pages. If you know the names of the pages you want, then use that. If you don't, make up some short names.
 1. Include an image and feature image for each page.
 2. Include 4-5 paragraphs of text for each page.
2. Create three or four posts.
 1. Include an image and feature image for each page.
 2. Include 4-5 paragraphs of text for each post.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/adding_content.

Adding Media

For information on how to choose images for your website, see [Images](#).

Image Alt Text (Alternative Text)

Image alt text serves a couple of purposes on your website. The most important thing is that it makes your site accessible. The easiest way to manage this is to always include the alt text when you add a new image to your media library. That way, anytime you use that image the alt text will be included.

The alt text also adds searchable keywords to your website improving your Search Engine Optimization (SEO). If you can, you should try to use keywords in your alt text; however, the text still needs to make sense and give an appropriate experience for those using a screen reader.

Tip

If you are planning to work in K-12 or Higher Education, your portfolio must be accessible. Don't skip this step!

Reducing Image Size

You will soon discover that if you are planning to load large items like Articulate Storyline modules, or Captivate modules, that you have limited disk space with your website provider. There are a few things you can do to reduce your disk usage when it comes to images: (1) store images in image repositories, (2) resize the images, (3) use jpg format, and (4) compress the images.

Your feature image needs to be in your media library. However, other images do not need to be stored locally on your system. If you use another image repository such as Flickr or Smugmug you can embed your images rather than storing them directly on your website.

Another thing you can do to reduce the file size is to resize the image. I recommend resizing to twice the size you needed, which helps keep the image looking sharp on high resolution screens. For example, if my image is 900 x 1200 on the screen, then I would crop and resize my image to be 1800 x 2400.

Images can be stored in a variety of formats including jpg, png, gif, and svg. JPG images result in the smallest file size and if they are resized as above they still appear clear.

Finally, you can use a tool to compress your image. I find that the free tool, [compressor.io](#) to do a great job of making my images smaller without negatively impacting the quality.

Image Workflow

For images that will be stored on my website, such as feature images and icons:

1. Choose image, ensuring it is free of copyright.
2. Resize and crop the image to 2X what you need.
3. Export resized image as jpg.
4. Run image through compressor.io.
5. Upload image to media library.
6. Add description and alt text.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/media_library.

Additional Configurations

In this section, I will outline some additional configurations you may wish to make on your site to help customize it to suit your needs.

Static Front Page and Posts Page

By default WordPress sets your front page to be a page that lists all your blog posts. You can change this to provide a static page - that is any specific page on your website. You must first create the page before selecting the page as the static front page.

For your blog posts page you have two choices. You can use the one generated by WordPress, or you can create your own page and use a menu to directly link to it.

Users

By default the name of the admin user is “admin”. If you are the primary user of the site, you will want to change the display name of the admin user to be your name. If anyone else will be contributing to your website, you can set them up as users.

Permalinks

Permalinks are direct links to specific posts or pages on your website. You can set the format for how these are auto generated using the settings menu. You should set this once when you first set up your site and not change it. Changing it will cause the permalinks to be reset on all existing content. You can override an auto generated permalink for a given page or post when you create or edit the page or post.

Tags and Categories

Tags and categories are different ways to organize your blog posts, allowing your readers to discover posts based upon their interests. Loosely, you could think of categories as chapters, except that they are on a website and a given post can exist in more than one category.

Categories are usually accessed through a list of available categories, which are often made available in the sidebar of the blog.

Tags on the other hand are more like an intentional index of your site. Each post can have as many tags as you like. Tags are often represented the sidebar of a blog as a tag cloud - which is represented differently depending on the theme. Some themes display the tag cloud with the text size related to the frequency of the tag, where others just label them.

Site Performance

If you are finding that your site is getting slow, there is a great article on Reclaim Hosting - [Troubleshooting slow sites](#). This is useful regardless of whether you are using Reclaim Hosting.

What is *caching*? WordPress dynamically generates each page in your website every time someone navigates to it. Caching creates a static version of each page, allowing the site to load faster. If you make significant changes to your site, you will want to “clear” the cache to ensure that it gets updated correctly. Most caching plugins do this automatically for you.

Subdomains

When you are exploring themes and plugins, use a clone of your site on a subdomain so that you don’t break your original site.

Demonstration: Creating a subdomain and installing WordPress using cPanel - https://youtu.be/jF1HD_p7d48

Cloning Your Site

Demonstration: https://youtu.be/4JV6QK_3X94



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/additional_configura.

Managing Comments

For information on how to write good comments or write responses to comments see the Chapter: [Writing Comments](#). This chapter focuses on the technical aspects of managing comments on your site.

Typically, pages do not have comments; however, blog posts usually do allow for commenting. Blog content provides the option for readers to comment and ask questions on individual posts. That means that visitors are engaging with your blog posts in a different way than they are your main site pages.

Comments are helpful in building a relationship between the blogger and its readers. Blog commenting gives an opportunity to ask or reply to questions. A user may like to appreciate the content. So it helps in the exchange of ideas, thoughts and opinions related to a specific topic. The development of these connections can prove to be very helpful to you in the long term.

However, allowing comment on your blog posts also has some risks. Even with the help of spam filter services, you still run the risk of providing a space for people to post offensive or defamatory content, off-topic remarks, or promotional content linking back to inappropriate or irrelevant links. One method of managing this is to moderate your blog comments.

Setting Up Comment Moderation

Comment options are controlled through the Settings >> Discussion menu.

I do not recommend you allow for anonymous comments, especially on a portfolio website. Anonymous comments defeat the purpose of making connections with your audience, but also provide an opportunity for bad actors to leave inappropriate comments.

I recommend that you setup your blog to either require moderation for all comments (option: Comment must be manually approved) or requiring the first post from a given author to be approved (option: Comment author must have a previously approved comment).

If you are finding you are getting regular comments of a type you do not want, you can use comment moderation features to automatically hold specific types of comments for moderation.

Comment Spam

WordPress websites often get spam comments. Before you approve comments on your blog, make sure that they don't contain any spammy content, such as excess hyperlinks to websites that are not relevant to your blog. Tools like Akismet Anti-Spam can help reduce comment spam. Akismet is a plugin that comes pre-installed with Reclaim Hosting WordPress installations. You will need to create a key before you can use it. Akismet keys are free for personal websites.

Moderating Comments

Comment moderation is done using the Comments menu. This will list all your blog comments, including spam. It is a good idea to check your spam occasionally to ensure that real comments didn't get routed to spam. In addition to releasing comments that are in moderation, you can also reply directly to comments from the Comment menu.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/managing_comments.

Part 3: Customizing Your Website

You have installed WordPress and added some pages and posts, now what?

Now is when you get to design your site, and then implement that design using *themes* and *plugins*. **Themes** control the look-and-feel of your website. There are 1000s of themes, which support different WordPress functionality (e.g. menu appearance, number of columns, headers, footers). **Plugins** can be installed to your site to add functionality. For example, the Spectra plugin adds additional blocks that you can use on your pages and posts.

The process for creating a website using WordPress with Full Site Editing includes:

1. Installing WordPress
2. Adding placeholder content
3. Creating a design
4. Adding any required plugins
5. Choosing a theme
6. Editing the theme to align with your design

Steps five and six are iterative and may be done in either order depending on the features of your theme and what your design requires.

Anatomy of a WordPress Site
Designing your website
Plugins
Themes
FSE - Creating Your Custom Header
FSE - Customizing Navigation
FSE - Creating Your Landing Page
FSE - Customizing Your Blog Pages
Using Customizer to Customize Themes (not Full Site Editing)
Customizing Themes - Full Site Editor



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

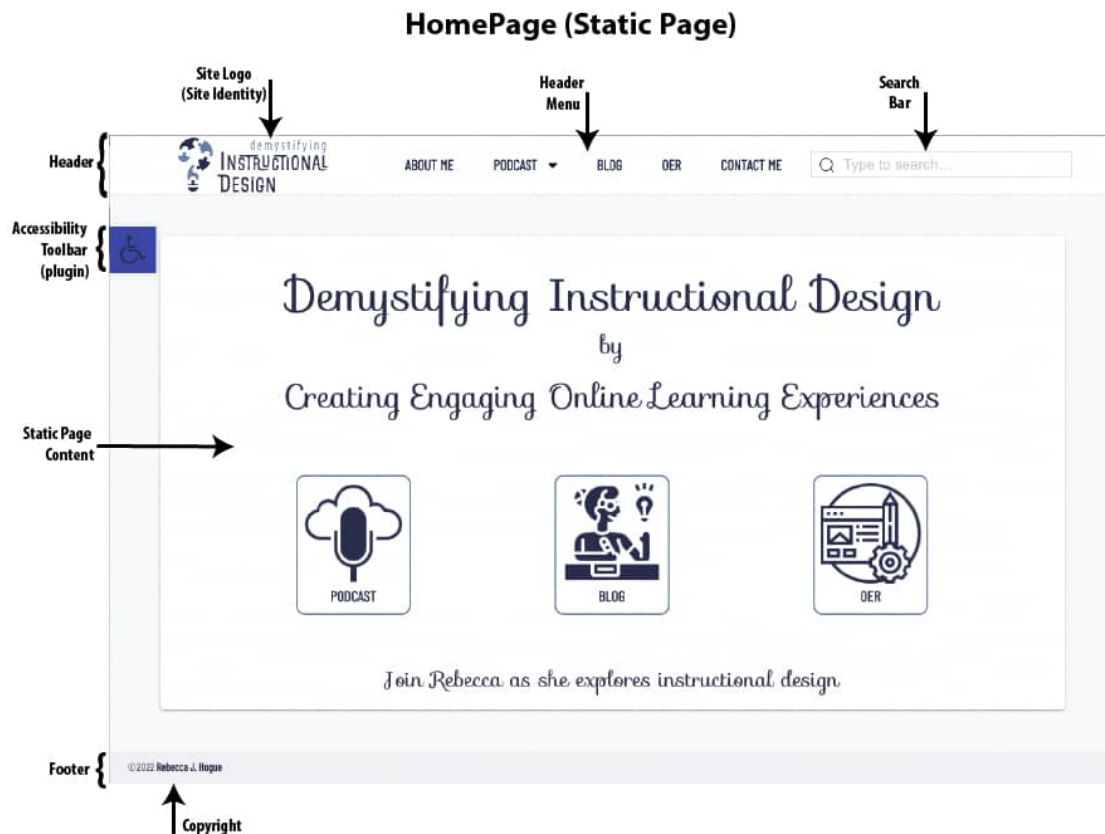
Access it online or download it at

[https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/part_3_customizing_y.](https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/part_3_customizing_y)

Anatomy of a WordPress Site

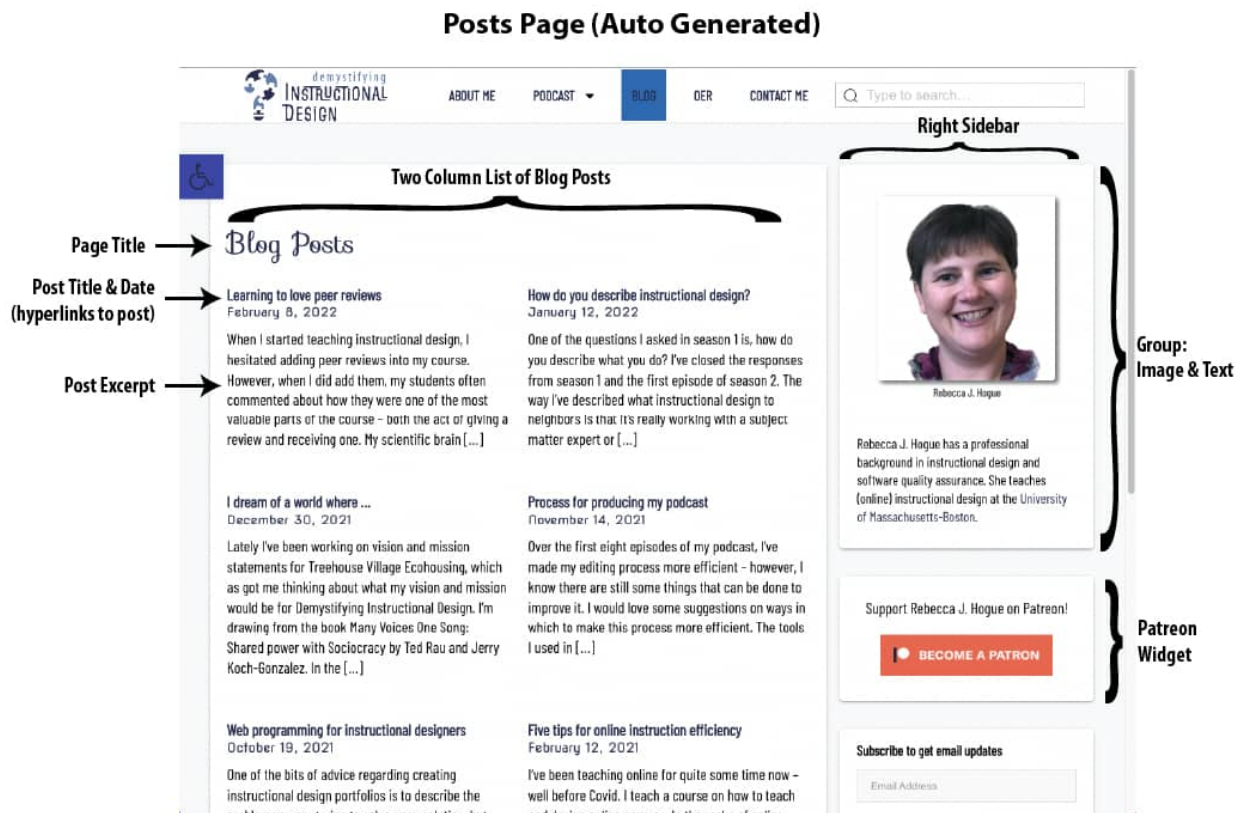
The HomePage (Static Page) graphic shows how a static home page might be setup. It includes:

1. Header containing the site logo, header menu, and search bar
2. An accessibility toolbar that is added as a result of a site plugin
3. Static page content
4. Footer containing the copyright information



The Automatically generated posts page layout is determined in part by your theme as well as any customizations you add to it. The posts page (auto generated) graphic shows the following:

1. A two column list of blog posts
2. The page title (page name)
3. Each blog post containing
 1. Post title and date
 2. Post excerpt
4. The right sidebar containing:
 1. A group with an image and text
 2. A Patreon widget (from the Patreon plugin)



In addition to using an automatically generated posts page, you can create a customized page that contains static content that you define as well as the list of posts. The Customized Post page graphic example shows:

1. A list of the five latest podcasts shown as an embedded player from BuzzSprout.
2. A list of podcast subscription icons (plugin)
3. Two column list of title and date for posts. Only posts with the category Podcast are displayed.
4. In the right sidebar there is:
 1. A widget that displays the five latest blog posts
 2. A category dropdown widget

Customized Posts Page

BuzzSprout embed code to show latest 5 episodes


Plugin to display podcast subscriptionservices


Two column list of posts onlyu post with category Podcast are displayed

When you click a single post you get the Posts Page - Single Post view. The Post Page - Single page shows:

1. The post's feature image
2. Post title
3. Post author
4. Post text

Posts Page - Single Post

[ABOUT ME](#)[PODCAST](#)[BLOG](#)[OER](#)[CONTACT ME](#)




Post Title → *Learning to love peer reviews*

Author → **Rebecca J. Hogue**

Date → February 8, 2022


Post Text → When I started teaching instructional design, I hesitated adding peer reviews into my course. However, when I did add them, my students often commented about how they were one of the most valuable parts of the course – both the act of giving a review and receiving one.



Rebecca J. Hogue

Rebecca J. Hogue has a professional background in instructional design and software quality assurance. She teaches (online) instructional design at the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Support Rebecca J. Hogue on Patreon!

 **BECOME A PATRON**



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/anatomy.

Designing your website

As with the creation of instructional materials, **designing** a website before implementing it in WordPress is a crucial step in the website development process. It involves planning and organizing the content, layout, and functionality of the site. By doing this, you can ensure that your website will be user-friendly, easy to navigate, and have a cohesive look and feel.

One of the main benefits of designing a website before implementing it in WordPress is customization. By planning ahead, you can identify the features and functionalities you need, such as custom post types, page templates, and plugins. This can help you to customize your website to meet your specific needs and goals.

Another benefit of designing a website before implementing it in WordPress is efficiency. By having a clear plan, you can avoid unnecessary revisions and modifications during the development process. This can help to streamline the development process and ensure that your website is completed on time and within budget.

Overall, designing a website before implementing it in WordPress is essential for creating a successful and effective website. It can save time and resources, ensure that your website meets your goals, is user-friendly, and is optimized for search engines. Taking the time to plan and organize your content, layout, and functionality can help to create a website that engages and converts visitors into customers.

Tools

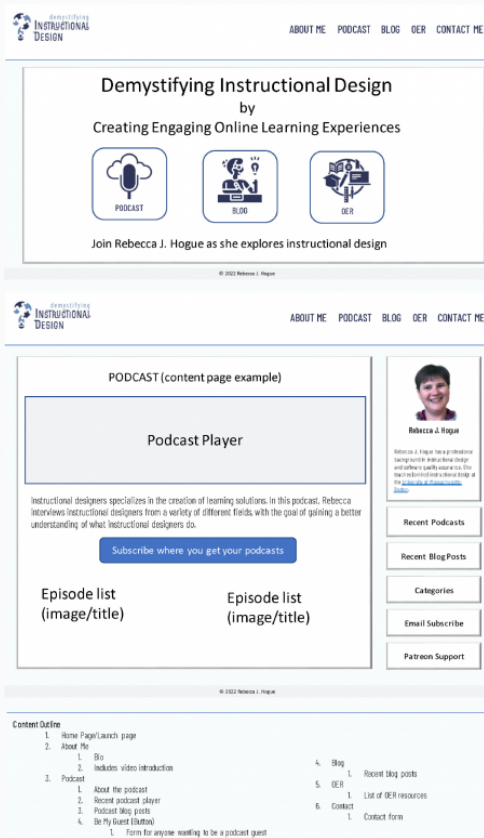
There are many tools to support designing websites. Personally, I find it easiest to just use PowerPoint and create a poster of my website. Website designs should include:

- Page layouts for the different types of pages (launch screen, blog screen, individual blog post, individual page)
- Menu structure and content outline
- Images and color scheme including logos and font choices

Tip: Fonts

One way to make your site unique is to use different fonts. Google fonts are free and can be used on any website. I recommend exploring [Google fonts](#) and choosing two or at most three: one for titles, one for content, and one for menus.

Example Website Design Poster



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/designing_your_websti.

Plugins

Plugins add functionality to your site. You want to have the least number of plugins to provide the functionality that you want. Plugins are powerful and can add a lot of functionality to your site, however, they can significantly slow the performance of your website. Disable plugins that you do not need.

You might be interested in the following plugins:

- **Fonts Plugin | Google Fonts Typography** - This plugin allows you to use Google fonts on your site. In addition, it uses the customizer, allowing you to access customizer features like creating menus and adding CSS to your site.
- **Spectra** - This plugin gives you access to a collection of additional blocks for coding your site.
- **Akismet** - This plugin helps reduce spam comments on your site. It also will reduce spam in your contact form.
- **Jetpack** - This connects your site to WordPress.com. It gives you access to features such as statistics, social sharing, etc that are provided by WordPress. It also allows you to monitor your site and will inform you if your site is down.
- **Site Kit by Google** - If you use Google Analytics, this is a great plugin to quickly connect your site to the Google sphere.
- **H5P** - This plugin includes a lot of eLearning tools. You may want to use H5P to create some eLearning content.
- **W3 Total Cache** - This plugin allows you to setup site caching which significantly improves the speed of your site.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/plugins.

Themes

A WordPress theme is a collection of files that determine **the look and feel** of a WordPress website. It includes templates for the website's pages, styling for various elements, and functionalities that are specific to the theme. Themes can be customized by users to change the layout, colors, and other design elements of their website. WordPress offers a wide variety of free and paid themes to choose from.

Activity: Explore portfolios & design your site

Before choosing a theme, decide which characteristics of a site you like and don't like. One way to do this is to explore other people's portfolios and note what you like and don't like about them.

Once you know what you want, use a graphic tool (it could be PowerPoint) to roughly sketch out the design for your site. It is a good idea to choose a color scheme and key imagery before you choose your theme.

Choosing a Theme

You can choose from 1000s of available free themes, or you can pay for a premium theme. I recommend starting out with a free theme and only pay for a theme if you are certain you will want it.

Although the theme affects many aspects of the way your site looks, they are also highly customizable. This can make choosing a theme challenging, as you may not know if the theme works the way you want until after you have made specific customizations. Further, with the introduction of full site editing, you can now build your own theme without the need for any coding. This gives you even more flexibility in how your site looks.

Video: Choosing a theme

This video was recorded before full site editing was available. The method for installing the themes is the same; however, themes that support full site editing will likely not use the WordPress Customizer to control the sites look and feel, rather, they use the full site editor.



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Tip

When installing themes ensure that you have at least **three** pages and **three** posts on your site as well as a few images; otherwise, you will not get a good sense of how the site will look with the theme.

You can filter themes based upon a variety of different features. As WordPress changes, the things that you can filter on also changes. Claire Brotherton provides a great resource that describes [what the different feature filters mean](#).

Tip

Choose a theme that supports **block patterns**. At the time of writing, this is one of the newer features of WordPress. Choosing a theme that supports block pattern helps to ensure that you are getting a theme that is designed for a newer version of WordPress.

If you wish to use the full site editor, you must choose a theme that supports **site editing**.

Tip

If your site is being used as a portfolio for a position in education (e.g. K-12 or higher ed), it is highly recommended that you choose a theme that is **accessible**.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/themes.

FSE - Creating Your Custom Header

Design

WordPress

Full site editor

This chapter outlines how to create your header using the full site editor. You should have a design before you try to create your header.

Identify the header and header components

If you designed multiple pages, you might have different headers. Do this activity for each of your headers. Note that most websites only have one header.



Once you have identified the header and its components, you will want to create and collect anything you need to build the header. In this case, you need to:

- **Create your logo file.** Logos appear small on your site. If your logo contains text, one way to keep the text clear is to use an .svg file, which allows your logo to be a small file and it to easily resize on your site.
- **Upload your logo** as media into WordPress.
- **Create a page** for each item in the navigation menu.
- **Install fonts** that your website requires. I use the plugin **Fonts Plugin | Google Fonts Typography** to add Google font functionality to my site.
- **Collect color scheme.** You will want to have your color scheme hex codes readily available (e.g. #6D8CB5)

Identify rows and columns

There are several ways to build your header using the Blocks editor. The simplest is to use the default blocks called **row** and **stack**. See the WordPress [row and stack documentation](#) for more details.

Take your header and outline the rows and columns needed.

For Demystifying Instructional Design, I have two rows. The upper row has two columns, one containing the logo and the other containing the navigation menu. The second row has one column containing a thin line.



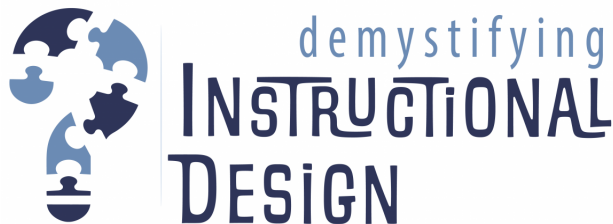
Collecting Information and Assets

One final step before, beginning implementation, is to identify any fonts that are needed, color schemes, in particular, knowing the hex value for any colors required, any graphics required, and the list of pages needed to create the navigation menu. For example:

Color Scheme

Dark Blue #2E3559;
Medium Blue #6D8CB5;

Site Logo



Navigation Font

Barstow Condensed (Google Font)

Site Page list

About Me, Podcast, Blog, OER, Contact Me

Setting up WordPress

In WordPress, I setup the site by:

- adding the required graphics into the media library
- adding any required plug-ins, in this case, I'm using a Google font plug-in
- adding a page for each item in my menu

The Google Font plugin that I installed allows me to use the customizer to select the correct Google font. I use the customizer to change the navigation font to be Barstow condensed, to align with my design.

Now that I've done all of the preparation, I'm ready to begin using the full site editor to create a custom template part that will be my custom header.

Implementing the Heading Template Part in WordPress

Now that I have my elements and I understand the structure of my design, I can move onto creating a new Template Part that will be my custom header.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/fse_header.

FSE - Customizing Navigation

As you edit your website, you may wish to change what is available for site navigation. Within your site navigation, you can include items such as:

- Your blog posts page
- Any page on your website (e.g. a portfolio page)
- Blog posts based upon a category or tag
- Static hyperlinks (e.g. links to other websites)

If you have a site icon, you do not need a menu item called "Home", as it is understood that the site icon points to the landing page.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/fse_navigation.

FSE - Creating Your Landing Page

WordPress

Full site editor

This chapter assumes you have read and viewed the demonstration on in the [FSE - Creating a Customer Header](#) chapter.

The page that your main URL goes to is known as your home page, landing page, cover page, or front page. The various ways this page is named makes the WordPress interface a little confusing. To avoid this confusion, I will call this your *landing page*. That is when someone types in your main URL (e.g. <https://demystifyinginstructionaldesign.com>), the page that displays is the landing page.

Landing Page Components

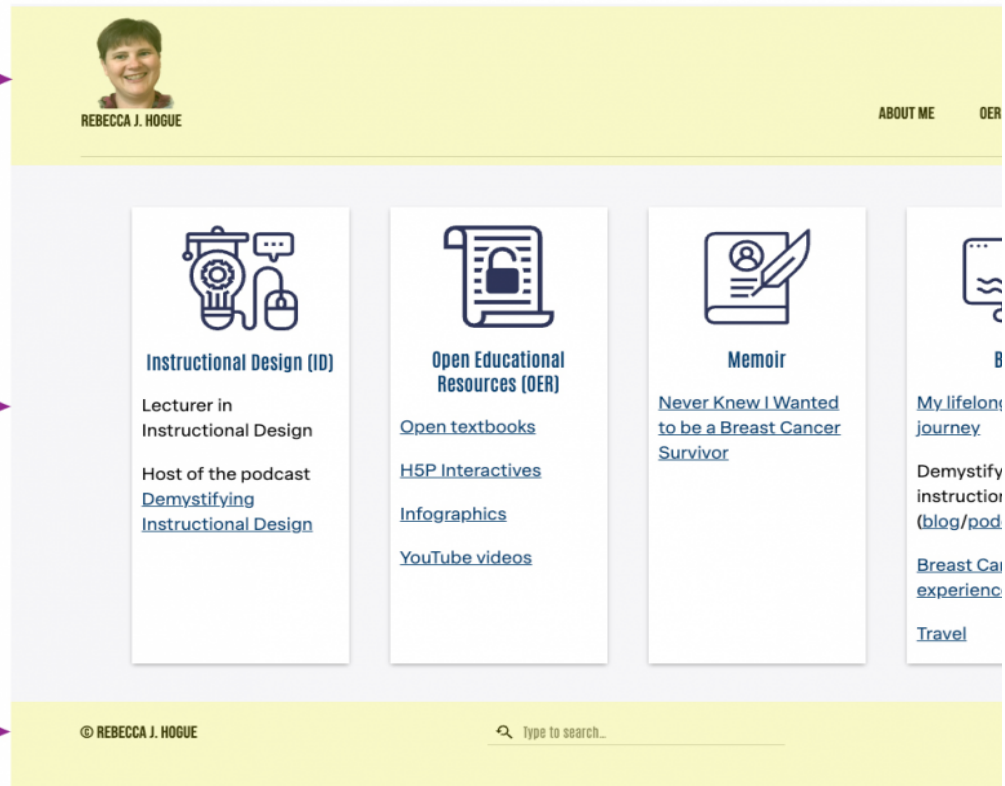
An page on your website can be broken down into three components - a header area, a content area, and a footer area. The header and footer areas are created as Content Parts in the Full Site Editor. See [FSE - Creating a Customer Header](#).

The content area contains formatting and page content. The page content is added the same way any other page is within WordPress. Any special formatting is configured using the Full Site Editor with a specialized template called a Front Page template.

Header →

Content Area →

Footer →



Creating Page Content

Use the block editor to create a page that will be your landing page. It is a good idea to use the title of your website as the title for this page. See [Adding Initial Content](#) for tips on how to use the Block Editor.

Setting Page Content

The content area of your landing page is configured as a WordPress page. You then set this page as your landing page by selecting it as a static homepage. This is set using the Settings >> Reading menu. In the image below, I have set the landing page content to be the page with the title "Rebecca J Hogue". This page has to be created before it can be set as the landing page.

Reading Settings

Your homepage displays

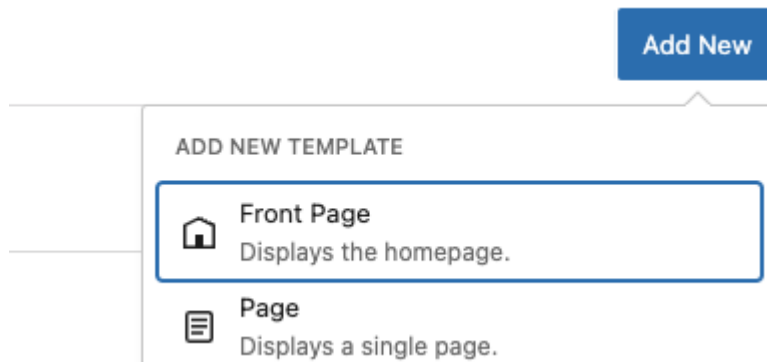
- ☐ Your latest posts
- ☒ A [static page](#) (select below)

Homepage: Rebecca J Hogue

Posts page: — Select —

Configuring the Page Template

In FSE, if you want a static landing page that is formatted in a different way than your other pages, then you need to have a "Front Page" template. Some themes will come with this template already created, while others will not. If your theme has a Front Page template, you will need to edit that template. If it does not, then when you click Add New from the template editor, Front Page is an option you can select. You can have only one Front Page template.



If your site does not have a Front Page template, then the site will use the "Home" template for the front page. The "Home" template is a template that displays a list of your blog posts. This is where their terminology gets confusing. To help, you can read the text under the title which provides a description of where that template is used.

Adding Post Content

When configuring the formatting of your Front Page template, to get content from the page you have identified as your landing page content, you need to add the blog "Post Content" block. The blocks of your landing page template should be:

1. Header template part
2. If you wish your feature image to display, add the Feature image block
3. Post Content block
4. Footer template part

When you add the post content block, it will link to the page that you selected as your static landing page in the Settings >> Reading panel. You can edit the content of that page from either the page editor or the template editor.

Implementing Your Landing Page

The procedure for implementing your landing page is as follows:

1. Identify landing page components
2. Create header and footer template parts
3. Create a Page and add the page content
4. Set your page to be the Static landing page
5. Configure / Create your front page template
6. Add the header part, post content block, and footer template part to the front page template



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/fse_LandingPage.

FSE - Customizing Your Blog Pages

By default, there are two templates associated with blog posts: Home which defines the display of your "posts" page, and Single which defines how a single blog post is displayed. You have only one "Home" page template. You can have multiple templates of type Single. If you have multiple, then when you create a page, you can select which template you wish to apply.

In addition, there are specific blocks that you add to these templates that allow for dynamic content display. These are listed under the THEME heading in the add block panel. They include: Post Featured Image, Post Title, Post Excerpt, Previous Post, Next Post, and Query Loop.

Tutorial



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/fse_blog.

Using Customizer to Customize Themes (not Full Site Editing)

Rebecca J. Hogue

WordPress uses a tool called the Customizer to allow you to change different parts of your theme. What is changeable depends on what the theme author allows to be changed. These include things like fonts, colors, images, menus, headers, footers, etc.

Some plugins affect what is available in the customizer. For example, I have a plugin on my website called Accessibility that uses the Customizer as a way to customize the appearance and location of the accessibility icon. This is not controlled by the theme and works the same regardless of the theme that I installed.

Caution

When you change themes, you lose your customizations. It is recommended that if you are experimenting with theme changes that you use a subdomain until you know what you want.

[Draft Customizer Screencast](#)

Customizing Menus

[Draft Editing Menus Screencast](#)

Menu customization can happen in two places - either through the customizer or through the original menu editor. If your theme allows menu changes through the customizer, I recommend using that method. You can select any page, category, or tag to be a menu item, as well as links to specific web pages. You can also change the title of the menu. Generally you want your menu to have short titles.

Further, your theme may allow for multiple menus and they may be located in different places. The various features depend on what the theme author has created. Before creating your menu, consider web design better practices that include having your logo go to your home page (most themes do this automatically now), having your About menu on the left edge of your menu and your Contact on the right edge.

Menus have names/identifiers and they have locations. The name/identifier can be anything you want it to be; however, the default names are primary and secondary. The location is determined by your theme and includes locations such as: header, footer, sidebar. The location options for your menus depend upon your theme.

Adding Widgets

[Draft Widgets Screencast](#)

Traditionally, widgets were used to add dynamic content to your website. Now, widgets are areas of your site where your theme allows you to add various blocks. In most modern themes, you will have several widget areas. You can add anything that is available within a block. One example of where widgets are used is on the sidebar. If your page has a sidebar, the content of that sidebar is added using widgets.

Adding Custom CSS

Sometimes you want to change something specific and your theme does not allow that customization. You can use CSS to create custom formats or to modify existing formats.

Tip

Before using CSS to change a format, check the customizer to see if your theme has a setting that allows you to change that format within the theme itself.

[Draft Editing CSS Screencast](#)

Previous Citation(s)

Hogue, R. J. (2022). *Designing Your Online Professional Presence*. EdTech Books.
https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/customizer.

Part 4: Portfolio Contents

Part 4 focuses on the different types of content that you may wish to include in your portfolio.

An instructional designer's portfolio is a collection of work that showcases their skills, experience, and achievements in the field of instructional design. The portfolio should include a variety of samples that demonstrate the designer's abilities and showcase the different types of instructional materials they can create. The following are some examples of what an instructional designer's portfolio might include:

- **Project summaries:** A brief overview of the projects the instructional designer has worked on, including the project objectives, target audience, and the instructional strategies used.
- **Samples of instructional materials:** Examples of instructional materials the designer has created, such as lesson plans, course outlines, assessments, and e-learning modules.
- **Design documents:** Examples of design documents such as storyboards, design templates, and script/instructional content.
- **Evaluation reports:** Reports that demonstrate the designer's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials and make revisions as needed.
- **Testimonials:** Testimonials from clients, colleagues, or supervisors who can vouch for the designer's skills and work ethic.
- **Professional Development:** Certificates, diplomas, or other professional development activities the designer has completed.
- **Awards and Recognition:** Any awards or recognition the designer has received for their work in instructional design.

It's important to keep in mind that a portfolio is meant to showcase the designer's best work and should be tailored to the specific audience and purpose. The portfolio should be well-organized, easy to navigate, and visually appealing. It should also be regularly updated with new work and achievements.

What Goes in an Instructional Designers Portfolio
About Me Page
Images
Writing Good Blog Posts
Writing Comments
Case Studies
Video Introduction



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/part_3_portfolio_con.

What Goes in an Instructional Designers Portfolio

Just before the first time I offered this course, I sent out a survey asking hiring managers what they want to see in portfolios. I summarize the results of the survey in this blog post: What should go into an instructional designer's portfolio?

<https://edtechbooks.org/-afdN>

Tip: Conducting a survey and sharing the results via a blog post is a great way to get traffic to your website.

Further, the following podcast episodes speak to Instructional Design Portfolios:

- [Episode 7: Arthur Harrington](#) (corporate)
- [Episode 10: Rob Pearson - Is designing at a systems level](#) (corporate)
- [S2E3: Lance Eaton Part 3: Thinking beyond...](#) (higher ed)
- [S2S4: Mary Helen Cutbertson](#) (higher ed service provider)

Example Portfolios

- <https://www.cathellis.com/>
- <https://www.devlinpeck.com/>
- <https://www.lila-azouz.com/>
- <http://corinnehandy.weebly.com/>
- <http://jackievanice.com/>
- <https://www.syniadlearning.com/>
- <https://blog.cathy-moore.com/>
- <https://beth-myers.com/>
- <https://www.mikezielinskie.com/>
- <https://edtechbooks.org/-Ysjd>
- <https://edtechbooks.org/-nFN>
- <https://www.knathony.com/>
- <http://tomwasham.com/>
- <http://www.freelanceinstructionaldesigner.com/>
- <https://jackiethrongard.me/>
- <https://www.nylalxd.com/>
- <https://edtechbooks.org/-sCF>
- <https://stylelearn.com/>
- <https://timslade.com/>
- <http://edutechdiva.net/>

Activity: Review Portfolios

Review instructional design portfolios and write down what you like and don't like about them. Reflect on where the portfolios are taking the advice of hiring managers and where they are not.

Note that what you like and don't like may involve a lot of personal preference. This activity is intended to help you get a sense of what you like.

Portfolio Contents

A general rule of thumb (not sure where this comes from originally, it was mentioned on a facebook chat):

- 1-3 eLearning courses (Rise, Storyline, etc)
- 1-2 ILT or vILT
- 1 job aid
- 1 video (explainer, screencast, etc)

Personally, I think it depends on what you are looking for. What messages do you want to send? What do you want people to know about you through your portfolio? It also depends on the type of work you are looking for. You need to tailor your portfolio contents to align with the type of instructional design you want to do.

Choosing Assets

It can be difficult to figure out exactly what types of things to include in your portfolio. You might also be tempted to just put everything into a portfolio. Before adding an asset to your portfolio, consider the following questions:

- Why are you including this specific asset in the portfolio?
- What skills are demonstrated with this item?
- What is the problem that is solved by this asset (what is the business problem that the training solves?)
- What part of the asset did you do?
- Why did you build it the way you did?
- What images or video clips can you include relating to this asset?

Describing Assets

Once you have chosen which assets you want to include on your portfolio, you need to tell the reader what the purpose of the asset is and why you have included it. I recommend that your description include the following:

- A meaningful name/title
- What is the business problem that the asset solves?
- What key design decisions did you make and why did you make the design decisions you did?
- What skills do you want to showcase with this asset?



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/portfolio_pieces.

About Me Page

Every website/portfolio should have an "about" or "about me" page. The page may not be called "About me". In some cases, people choose to use the landing page as their about me page. Regardless of where it is on your site, you should have a page that contains a brief bio of who you are. It should include a headshot photo, as this helps people ensure they are in the correct place (e.g. if you meet someone at a conference and then search for them, the photo helps ensure you get the right person). One reason to not include a photo is if a photo might cause you to be discriminated against.

For an example, see my about me page at <https://edtechbooks.org/-VLYD>.

Here are some readings with advice on what makes (or doesn't make) a good About Me page:

- Sonia, S (2018, August 22). [Are you making these 7 mistakes with your about page?](https://www.copyblogger.com/how-to-write-an-about-page/) <https://www.copyblogger.com/how-to-write-an-about-page/> (also read the comments)
- Planoly (2018, July 6). [How to improve your "about me" page.](https://www.planoly.com/blog/portfolio/how-to-improve-your-about-me-page-planoly/) <https://www.planoly.com/blog/portfolio/how-to-improve-your-about-me-page-planoly/>
- Lister, M. (2020, March 5). [Easy guide to creating an awesome "about us" page.](https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/05/27/guide-to-about-us-pages) <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/05/27/guide-to-about-us-pages>
- Further, Alyson Doyle has written a great blog post on how to write an about me page:
- Doyle, A. (2020, May 14). [How to write a perfect about me page with examples.](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-write-about-me-page-examples-4142367) *The balance careers.* <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-write-about-me-page-examples-4142367>

Tip: To help personalize your About Me page, I recommend including a video introduction.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/about_me.

Images

One of the biggest mistakes people who are new to creating on the web make is the assumption that you can use images that you find on the web. Images cannot simply be re-used. This is especially the case for photographs. By default images are copyrighted. Don't get yourself into trouble by illegally copying images. Educational use will not protect you.

Because your projects are likely to be used in your portfolios, you should stick to images that you are allowed to freely use. There are many sources for royalty free images that you can use. I recommend when searching that you select only images that you are free to use for commercial purposes, as you never know how you will use your project in the future. In addition, it is considered good practice to credit the source of your images, even when it is not technically required.

Creative Commons provides the most robust and common licensing mechanism for web resources that you are able to use in your projects. They provide a good overview on [how Creative Commons licenses work](#). Consider how you want to license each element that you create as well as your overall project. Be aware that some items that you use may be licensed as "share alike" such that you cannot copyright them, rather you must use a similar license on your derived product.

Tip

The easiest way to ensure your images are safe is to create them yourself. Especially if you are creating a portfolio website, it is best to create the majority of the images yourself.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/images.

Writing Good Blog Posts

The purpose of a blog as part of an instructional designer's portfolio is to showcase their expertise and skills in instructional design, as well as to demonstrate their ability to create valuable and engaging content. A blog can serve several purposes such as:

- **Demonstrating expertise:** A blog allows an instructional designer to share their knowledge and expertise in instructional design, and to demonstrate their understanding of the latest trends, best practices, and research in the field.
- **Showcasing skills:** A blog can be used to showcase an instructional designer's writing and presentation skills, as well as their ability to create multimedia content such as videos, podcasts, and infographics.
- **Building a personal brand:** A blog can be used to establish an online presence, to create a personal brand, and to connect with others in the field.
- **Providing evidence of work:** A blog can be used as a platform to share instructional design projects and examples of work, which can provide a visual representation of the instructional designer's skills and capabilities.
- **Engaging with an audience:** A blog can be used to engage with an audience, to receive feedback and to foster a sense of community.
- **Networking:** A blog can be used to network with other instructional designers, educators, and experts in the field.
- **Provide a platform for sharing ideas and promoting critical thinking:** A blog can be used to share ideas, opinions and strategies on instructional design, and promote critical thinking about the field.

Overall, a blog is a powerful tool for an instructional designer to showcase their skills, knowledge and expertise, and to build a strong personal brand that can help them stand out in the field.

Finding topics for blog posts

There are many topics that can be covered in blog posts for instructional designers, some examples include:

- **Instructional design theories and models:** Blog posts can cover different instructional design theories and models, such as ADDIE, SAM, and UDL, and how they can be applied to create effective learning experiences.
- **Emerging technologies in education:** Blog posts can cover the latest technologies and tools used in instructional design and how they can be integrated to enhance learning experiences
- **Learning strategies and activities:** Blog posts can cover different learning strategies and activities that can be used to engage learners, such as gamification, project-based learning, and problem-based learning.
- **Assessment and evaluation:** Blog posts can cover different assessment and evaluation methods that can be used to measure learning outcomes, such as formative and summative assessments, and how to use data to improve instruction.
- **Designing for accessibility:** Blog posts can cover strategies for designing inclusive and accessible instructional materials, such as accessibility guidelines and Universal Design for Learning.
- **Tips and better practices for remote learning:** Blog posts can cover best practices and strategies for creating effective remote learning experiences, such as online collaboration, video conferencing and online assessment.
- **Case studies:** Blog posts can cover case studies of instructional design projects, highlighting the design process, challenges and successes.
- **Professional development and career advice:** Blog posts can cover tips for professional development and career advancement for instructional designers, such as networking, mentoring and continuing education.

Again, these are just examples, there are many other potential topics that could be covered in blog posts for instructional designers. The most important thing is to choose topics that align with your interests, skills and expertise and that would be of interest to your target audience.

Writing good blog posts

If you Google "how to write a good blog post" you will get lots of advice; however, most of the advice about writing a good blog post is related to marketing. Your blog is your primary networking tool on the web. The following video provides some tips for writing good blog posts.

Writing Good Blog Posts



Rebecca J. Hogue





demystifying
**INSTRUCTIONAL
DESIGN**

DemystifyingInstructionalDesign.com

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Know your audience. Who are you writing for? A professional blog is typically written for others within the same profession. Someone who is your colleague today may be your boss tomorrow. Be aware that your audience is bigger than you think. You may be writing to a small group of people but because you are on the internet, that audience can grow. Make sure you include enough context so that your larger audience understands your post.

Share useful information. What is something that you know that might help your colleagues? What is one thing that you do, and how can you show that you know that topic? Try to “show” rather than “tell”. For example, I will often post YouTube screencasts on how to do things in Microsoft Word, and then blog about it - embedding my YouTube video. In this way, I’m talking about it - sharing it - but also showing it.

Remember that networking is an act of generosity, and your blog post is in part about sharing something that other people might want to learn.

Create a meaningful title. You want your title to be as concise as possible, but also have enough information in it that the reader knows what to expect. Make sure your title matches the content of the post.

Find a matching feature image. Originally feature images were not a thing. It was not necessary to include an image with your blog post. As a result, it can be easy to forget this vital step. In today's blog posts, it is necessary to include a feature image. When you share your post on social media, the feature image is a key part of what draws readers to your post. Your feature image should be in some way related to your post.

Ensure you have permission to use the image (see [images](#)). If you are searching for images on the web, ensure that the image allows for commercial use. Also, it is a good practice to credit the creator or source of the image, even if it is public domain.

State the problem in the first paragraph. Your first paragraph is often used as the excerpt for the blog post – unless your theme allows you to specify an alternative excerpt. In many cases, readers will read the first paragraph and if it isn’t engaging they stop reading. You want to use this paragraph to draw people in. One trick is to pose a question in the first paragraph that you answer in the rest of the post.

End with a question or call to action. If you want engagement, that is comments, on your post, one way to help encourage people to leave comments is to end your post with a question. That makes it easier for someone to jump in and answer your question. For example: in my post “What I learned about online teamwork”, I ended the post with the question “What do you do to help your online students work as a team? What strategies have worked for you?”

Be your authentic self. Don’t try to be something you are not. Part of the reason a blog adds value to your portfolio is that it helps the reader get to know who you are – and the types of things that you can contribute. People read your blog to learn, but also to get to know who you are. They want to hear what you have to say.

Don’t struggle. When you first start, you need to experiment a bit to find your voice. It can take a while with regular practice before you figure out your style. Try not to struggle too much with it. If it feels unnatural for you, then it likely isn’t your style.

The only way to figure out your style is to practice. After writing a few different posts, you will figure out what style you like. Also, reading different blogs will help you figure out what you like and don’t like.

When Scott and I started writing for GoingEast, our travel blog, it took a while to figure out how to write as “us”, learning to refer to yourself in third person, but using “we” when it was both of us. Things like that take a while to figure out, but once you do, writing becomes a lot easier.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/writing_blog_posts.

Writing Comments

Comments on other people's blogs are just as important as your own blog posts. These help you connect to other people and let people know that you are reading what they are writing. Commenting on blogs tells the writer of the blog that you are interested in what they have to say. Writing quality comments is a way to get to know people better and build your PLN.

Writing Good Comments

As a general rule, a comment should be 1-3 paragraphs in length. If the comment is getting much longer, then you should consider writing a blog post in response rather than writing a comment to respond. When writing comments, try to add something meaningful to the conversation. You are encouraged to add your personal perspective.

When you leave a comment on another WordPress blog, it will link back to your blog. This is one way to improve your SEO (Search Engine Optimization), as it causes other websites to have links to your website.

I have one blog post on my professional blog that received several comments - most from people I don't know. What I want you to observe here is the comments they left and my responses to them. [How do you describe something you chose not to finish?](#)

For the technical side of commenting see [Managing Comments](#).

Responding to comments

It is a good practice to reply to comments. This helps to encourage people to comment on future posts. It is a way to tell the commenter that you have read what they are contributing to the conversation. If the person commenting provides criticism of your post, you will want to make sure you are replying factually and without emotion. If you feel emotional about the comment, you may wish to step away from it for a while before addressing it. Since this is your website and your blog, you get to control which comments appear and which are deleted. However, it is poor practice to delete posts just because they disagree with you - rather, if the commenter is interested in true dialogue, it can be a learning experience for both of you.

There are times when you should not reply to a comment. If the comment has profanity or inappropriate language, the comment should be deleted. If it appears that the comment is intended to make you mad and doesn't add to the conversation, then it is appropriate to ignore the comment (publish it but don't respond to it) or delete it.

Further reading

Agrawal, H. (2018, July 25). [How to comment on other blogs and become a better blogger](https://www.shoutmeloud.com/how-you-should-comment-on-other-blogs.html).
<https://www.shoutmeloud.com/how-you-should-comment-on-other-blogs.html>

Collier, M. (2017, May 1). [How to write great blog comments](http://mackcollier.com/how-to-write-great-blog-comments/). <http://mackcollier.com/how-to-write-great-blog-comments/>

Jayawardhana, N. (2020, September 10). [How to handle negative comments to your blog](https://www.woblogger.com/how-to-handle-negative-comments-to-your-blog/). Woblogger.
<https://www.woblogger.com/how-to-handle-negative-comments-to-your-blog/>



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/writing_comment.

Case Studies

Note: Most of this chapter was written using the results of queries from ChatGPT.

A case study is a sometimes detailed description of a project or person. They are used in a variety of fields as educational materials as well as research materials. For an instructional designers portfolio, a case study provides a way to give context to project samples and explain why you designed a learning experience the way you did. It helps the reader of your portfolio gain a deeper understanding of your contribution and thought process in creating the portfolio item.

When used for research or education, case studies tend to be very detailed. When used for your portfolio, they need to be concise and clearly articulated.

An instructional design case study template for a portfolio typically includes the following elements:

1. **Problem statement:** A brief description of the problem or need that the instructional design project aimed to address.
2. **Project overview:** A summary of the project, including the goals, objectives, target audience, and timeline.
3. **Instructional design process:** A description of the instructional design process used, including the methodologies and tools applied.
4. **Design solution:** A description of the instructional design solution, including the final product or deliverable, and how it addressed the problem or need.
5. **Evaluation and results:** Information about how the instructional design solution was evaluated and the results achieved, including any metrics used to measure success.
6. **Reflection:** A reflection on the project, including what was learned, challenges faced, and areas for improvement.
7. **Supporting materials:** Examples of the instructional design solution, such as screenshots, videos, or samples of the final product.
8. **Conclusion:** A summary of the key takeaways and the impact of the instructional design solution.

In summary, An instructional design case study is a document that describes the process and the outcome of an instructional design project, it usually includes elements like problem statement, project overview, instructional design process, design solution, evaluation and results, reflection, supporting materials and conclusion.

Process (from ChatGPT)

A good process for creating an instructional design case study typically includes the following steps:

1. **Gather information:** Collect all relevant information about the instructional design project, including project goals, objectives, target audience, and timeline.
2. **Organize information:** Organize the information into a logical and coherent structure, including a problem statement, project overview, and instructional design process.
3. **Describe the design solution:** Provide a detailed description of the instructional design solution, including the final product or deliverable and how it addressed the problem or need.
4. **Include evaluation and results:** Describe how the instructional design solution was evaluated and the results achieved, including any metrics used to measure success.
5. **Reflect on the project:** Reflect on the project, including what was learned, challenges faced, and areas for improvement.
6. **Add supporting materials:** Add examples of the instructional design solution, such as screenshots, videos, or samples of the final product.
7. **Revise and edit:** Review and edit the case study for clarity, coherence, and consistency, paying attention to grammar and spelling.
8. **Format and Design:** Format the case study in a professional and visually appealing way, using a consistent template or design.

Key elements of a case study (from ChatGPT):

A good instructional design case study for a portfolio should demonstrate the designer's ability to identify the needs of the learners, create effective and efficient instruction, and evaluate the instruction's effectiveness. Here are some key elements that can make an instructional design case study for a portfolio stand out:

- **Clear problem statement:** The case study should clearly articulate the problem or need that the instructional design project aimed to address. This could be a specific learning gap or challenge faced by a particular group of learners.
- **Design process:** The case study should provide an overview of the instructional design process, including the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation stages. The designer should demonstrate how they used the ADDIE model to guide their work.
- **Evidence of effectiveness:** The case study should include data or evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the instruction. This could be in the form of pre- and post-testing results, feedback from learners or instructors, or other metrics that measure the instruction's impact.
- **Original and creative solutions:** The case study should demonstrate the designer's ability to come up with creative solutions to instructional problems. This could include the use of new technologies, innovative approaches, or unique methods.
- **Reflective practice:** A good instructional design case study also includes a reflection on the design process and the outcome, it should include the designer's insights and lessons learned, and how they will apply them in future projects.
- **Aesthetically pleasing:** The case study should be well-organized and easy to read, with clear headings and subheadings, and should be visually appealing, with images, charts, and infographics that help to convey information.

Overall, a good instructional design case study for a portfolio should showcase the designer's abilities and skills, and should provide a clear and compelling picture of the instruction, the design process, and the outcome.

Additional information

For more information on creating case studies for instructional design portfolios, see:

- Malamed, C. (n.d.). [How to write instructional design case studies for your portfolio](#). *The eLearning Coach*.



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/case_studies.

Video Introduction

The ability to do basic video creation and editing is critical for instructional designers. One way to demonstrate your video creation skills is through a video introduction.

Example: Rebecca's Video Introduction

Video Creation Process

By Rebecca J. Hogue



1 - Ideate



2- Script



3 - Storyboard



4 - Film



5 – Collect and Construct



6 – Publish and Distribute



CC-BY - By Rebecca J. Hogue – March 2020
Icons via The Noun Project

Video Explanation of Video Creation Process

Step 1: Ideate

A story or two will go a long way in making your video introduction speak to the audience. Try to stay away from relaying facts and focus more on stories. One way to do this is to think of what emotions you want to evoke in the viewer, then think of things that you have done in the past to evoke those emotions.

Ask:

- What emotions do you want to evoke?
- What stories do you want to share?

When speaking specifically about your introductory video, you might want to consider answering some of these questions:

- What inspires you to do good work?
- How did you get into instructional design? Everyone's path is different, is there an interesting ah-ha moment in your story?
- What types of projects do you find most interesting?
- What do you want to be remembered for?
- What type of work do you want to do? Do you have a story about that type of work?
- What message do you want people to leave with?

Step 2: Script

Some people don't think it is necessary to script. They are wrong. Scripting allows you to communicate what you want to communicate in a concise way - without the umms and other filler words that sneak into our language when we speak. Scripting also makes sure we say everything we want to say.

A 2-3 minute introduction is approximately 250-300 words.

Once you have scripted your story, practice reading it out several times. Does it flow? Is it easy to read? When it comes time to recording your story audio, you may wish to consider using a teleprompter application. These tools make it easier for you to read without sounding like you are reading.

Step 3: Storyboard

Once you have written your script, break your script up into logical chunks. Generally this aligns with a few sentences and can be thought of as a change in scenes. Each chunk then becomes its own panel on a storyboard.

Creating a storyboard is a vital step as it saves you a lot of time when it comes to producing your video. It also helps you ensure that you have all the visuals and audio that you will need before you attempt to put your video together.

Step 4: Film

If you have any live panels on your board that you need to film, now is the time to do it. Your storyboard will guide you so that you gather the clips that you need. Creating audio and creating images also occurs in this step.

Step 5: Collect and Construct

In this step you take all the pieces of your story, specifically any audio, image, or video footage and collect it all together in one place. Then you import it into whatever software you are using to construct your story. Your storyboards provide a

detailed guide for what you need to do to put your story together.

Step 6: Publish and Distribute

The final step is to publish and distribute. I recommend uploading to YouTube and then linking to the YouTube video. This ensures that the video will play appropriately regardless of the device it is played on.

Example: Finding Treehouse Village

[Script for Finding Treehouse Village](#)



This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

https://edtechbooks.org/professional_presence/video_introduction.

