

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO DESIGN, PRIVACY, SUPPORT, AND OTHER MATTERS

Here are a number of things to consider as you choose a theme for your portfolio and make important decisions about content, design, and privacy.

1. WEBSITE NAVIGATION

- The main navigation should use clear keywords that identify the content on the other side of the click. Avoid generic terms like “Writings” or “Photos.” People don’t search the web for writings or photos, they look for writing on a specific topic or photos with a particular focus. Use descriptive, revealing keyphrases that accurately reflect your content or work.
- Usability studies suggest that you should limit your navigation choices to no more than seven items.
- Use consistent navigation across all of your pages to help orient your readers.

2. EMPHASIZING WHAT'S IMPORTANT

- Use color, size, and position to emphasize what is most important on your site. Things higher on your pages take on an increased importance to readers while lower things are deemphasized. Distinct color or relatively large size also signal something of importance that requires action or attention.
- Usability studies show that the eye follows an “F” or “Z” pattern across a webpage; place important items, such as navigation, in these lanes to capture the notice of your readers.

3. RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN

- If you have ever used your smartphone to examine a restaurant’s **poorly designed online menu**, you’ve undoubtedly experienced the problems that ensue when designers don’t consider the variety of devices used to view the web. To avoid this problem on your site, choose a theme that uses **responsive web design** and your site will look beautiful on any device.

4. WRITING FOR THE WEB

- Readers *scan* web content rather than read it straight through. And when confronted with a large block of unbroken text, readers will often choose to look elsewhere. As a result, writing for the web is quite different than writing in other contexts. To keep your readers focused and engaged, write your online content in smaller, more digestible, chunks. Also, make liberal use of subheadings in longer prose to indicate the topic of each section of text so that readers may jump to what interests them immediately.

5. CURATING YOUR DIGITAL SELF

- The work you post online will be available to anyone with a web browser unless you take action to prevent it. Internet search companies like Google crawl the web constantly,

mapping and archiving every public keystroke published on the web. What do you want to share with the world? And what story will it tell about you? Think carefully about how you curate your site and your digital identity. If some of your work is not intended for a broad audience, use a password to protect or selectively share it with others.

6. LIMITING ACCESS

- You have a range of options to limit access to your digital portfolio.
 - + **PROTECT PAGES OR POSTS:** You may choose to make only certain pages or posts private. When editing a page or post, choose from the “Visibility” options, which may be found in the menu located at the top right of the editing window. New pages and posts have “Public” selected by default; however, you may choose to make a page or post “Private” or create a password to protect it.
 - + **PREVENT INDEXING:** You may request that search engines like Google not index your site, which will prevent others from finding your site through a keyword search. In the WordPress **Dashboard**, go to **Settings > Reading > Site Visibility** then click the box that says “Discourage search engines from indexing this site.” While many search engines will honor this request, some may not.
 - + **FURTHER PROTECTION:** More aggressive protection may be achieved in WordPress. You may, for example, prevent anyone from visiting your site or limit visitors to the Dartmouth community. The various options to restrict access may be found in the **Dashboard** under **Settings > Reading > Site Visibility**.
 - *Note: The default setting for all new Dartmouth digital portfolios limits visibility to the Dartmouth community. However, you may change this setting if you prefer a larger audience.*

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

- Placing your address, telephone number, and email address on your digital portfolio may expose you to unwanted contact, communication, or spam. Consider what personal information genuinely needs to be publicized and how you might minimize possible problems. For example, you might choose to create a separate email account for your digital portfolio that you could abandon if it were to become the subject of unwanted spam. Or you might choose to use a contact form plugin that conceals your email address from the public.

8. COPYRIGHT CONCERNS

- You may plan to later publish the work you upload to your digital portfolio. Publishing your work to your digital portfolio *does not* prevent you from publishing this work later with an academic or professional journal (or similar forum). **Section 102 of the US Copyright Act** states that any “original work of authorship” is protected by copyright the moment it is “fixed in any tangible medium of expression.” Your WordPress digital portfolio is a “tangible medium.” The moment that you save and publish a blog page or post, you are protected by copyright. Similarly, any writing, artwork, photography, music, or other original work you upload to your digital portfolio is your property. Of

course, there may be very good reasons not to share some of your original work online before securing publication. It really is up to you.

For more information, the US Copyright Office [provides an excellent summary](#) of the basics of copyright. Dartmouth College maintains [a helpful page on copyright information](#) as well.

9. FIND ROYALTY-FREE IMAGES

You may want to decorate your digital portfolio with images or other content you've found on the web. But using such found content without permission may infringe on the creator's rights and expose you to legal action. Unless you've received explicit permission to publish someone else's work, it is best to refrain from using it.

Many photographers and other content creators release their work to be used by others without financial compensation. However, there are a variety of licenses that may govern the use of this content. For example, licenses may require that you only use the content for a non-commercial purpose or that you include attribution to the content's creator. There are, however, a number of sites that offer free stock photos, vector graphics, and videos that you may use free of charge and without attribution. Here is a list of a few of these sites:

- [Unsplash](#)
- [Pixabay](#)
- [StockSnap](#)
- [Pexels](#)
- [Flickr \(CC\)](#)
- [Library of Congress](#)

10. OTHER HELPFUL LINKS

- *Smashing Magazine*, [Creating a Successful Online Portfolio](#).
- Orbit Media, [Website Navigation](#).
- Orbit Media, [Web Design Tips](#).
- Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton, [Web Style Guide](#).

11. SUPPORT OPTIONS

- CampusPress, the internet host for your WordPress installation, maintains an excellent [user guide](#) that can answer virtually any question you may have about using WordPress.
- Dartmouth's technical help may be contacted at wordpress@dartmouth.edu or help@dartmouth.edu.
- Students may [schedule an appointment with an RWIT tutor](#) for help with a number of subjects including: theming and customizing, editing and designing pages and posts, altering privacy settings, and developing new ideas or content.

- You may also contact [Nick Van Kley](#) or [Alan Taylor](#) with questions or to request an appointment to discuss your digital portfolio.
- For questions about what content to include in your digital portfolio, write to the [DartWrite program](#).
- Additional information about the [DartWrite](#) program may be found on our website.