

3. Working with Themes



Once you have *WordPress* correctly installed and set up, you can begin to build your website. The default method of building a website in *WordPress* is to use a *theme*. A theme is a ready-made template for a website. It contains all the information about the layout and formatting. If you use a theme, you will not need to build the website from scratch.

Usually a theme will already contain some sample text and images. You can easily replace these items with your own text and images.

There are many elements in a theme that can be changed according to your own preferences. For example, you can choose different colors and adjust the layout of the pages. The options may vary according to the theme selected. By using a theme as a basis, you can build your own website very quickly.

WordPress makes it easy for you to find themes that match the category or type of website you want to build. By using the search function you can quickly find the appropriate themes. Then you can easily install a theme and use it for your website. You can also try out a new theme without too much trouble. In this way, you can quickly restyle your website and give it a whole new look without having to convert or transfer the content.

In this chapter you will learn how to:

- find a theme;
- install a theme;
- change a theme;
- delete a theme;
- set up a theme;
- edit the header.





Please note:

In this book we will build a sample website called Visual Steps WordPress. You can follow the steps to build this sample too, or start building your own website right away. If you decide to build your own website, you need to take into account that the screenshots in this book may differ from the screens of your own website.

3.1 Viewing the Default Theme

In order to build your website, you need to log on to *WordPress* first:

 **Open the Internet browser**  6

 **Open the login window by *WordPress***  7


 **Log on with *WordPress***  8

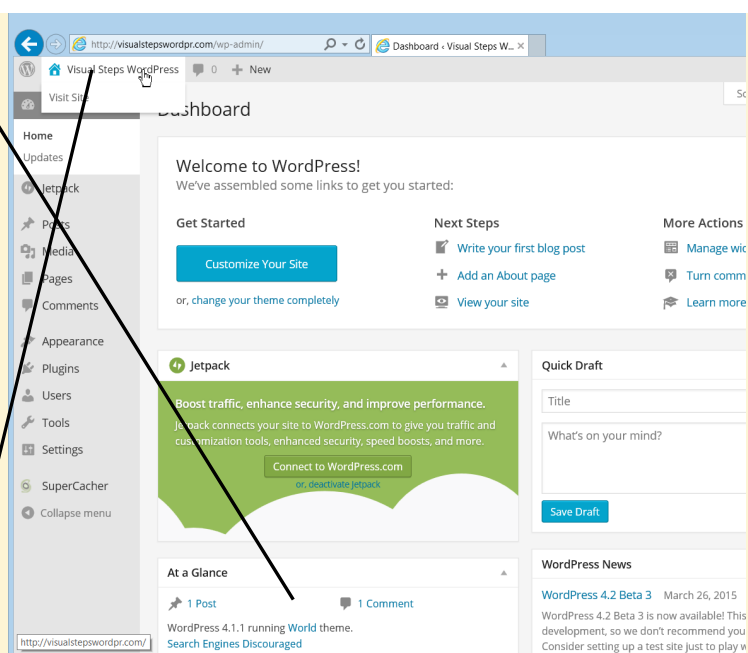
You will see the *WordPress* Dashboard. By default, a basic theme has already been installed with the installation of the *WordPress* program. When we were writing this book, this default theme was called *Twenty Fifteen*.

Your hosting provider may also provide their own default theme as a basic theme. If this is the case, the theme will differ from the *Twenty Fifteen* theme. SiteGround, for example, the provider used for the examples in this book, uses their own basic theme.

By **At a Glance** you can see which theme has been installed:

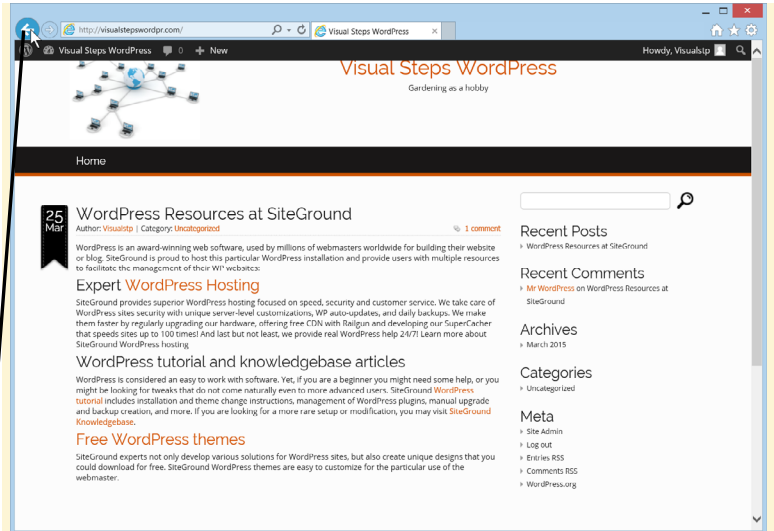
On the Dashboard you can view the basic *WordPress* website:

 **Click the name of your website, for example**
Visual Steps WordPress



You will see the *WordPress* basic website created with the default theme:

This website does not yet have any images and still uses default text. In the next few chapters you will be replacing these items with your own text and photos.



3.2 Finding a Theme

You can use the default *WordPress* theme to build your website, if you wish. But there are lots of other themes you can install from the *WordPress* website.



Please note:

It is recommended that you download themes only from the official *WordPress* websites, or from websites that *WordPress* acknowledges. These websites usually offer professional themes at a fee. If you download themes from other, unknown websites, you may run the risk of infecting your computer with viruses or spyware.

The *WordPress* theme finder is very useful, when you are looking for a theme that goes with your website topic or purpose. With this tool you can enter your preferences and find the matching themes.



Tip

The right theme for your website

What the right theme for your website is also depends on your taste, among other things. Because of this, it is difficult to give you objective tips for finding the best suitable theme.

In the first place, it is wise to determine how much text and photos you want to place on the website. This can help you decide on a theme that meets the requirements. If your website contains a lot of photos, it is best to use a theme that has already reserved space for a lot of photos. For example, a theme with a photo gallery. This means you will not need to change so many things on your website.

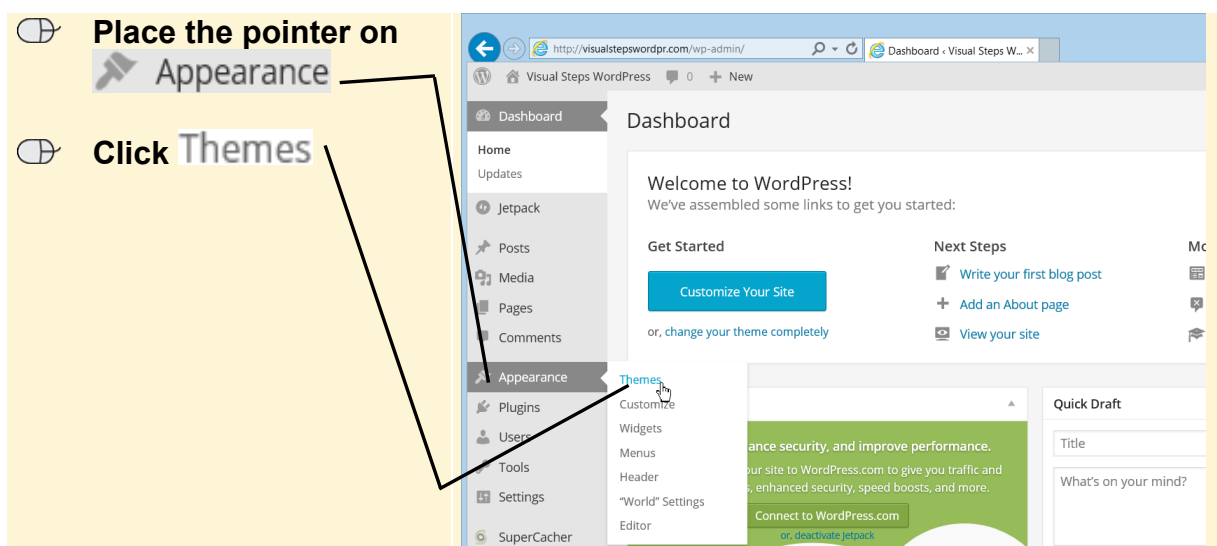
- Continue on the next page -

If you already have a specific subject for your website, you can use the search function to look for this subject. You will often find multiple themes that suit your subject. For instance, a gardening theme.

If you have chosen some specific colors for your website, you can also look for these colors. If the default theme contains these colors, you will not need to change them later on. Although some themes offer a possibility of adapting the colors of various components according to your own taste.

You can also look for other properties of a website. For example, if you know that you want the layout of the website to span three columns, you can search for this property. If necessary, you can search for multiple properties at once. This way, you will limit the number of suitable themes, but you will surely find the themes that best suit your wishes.

This is how you find a theme:

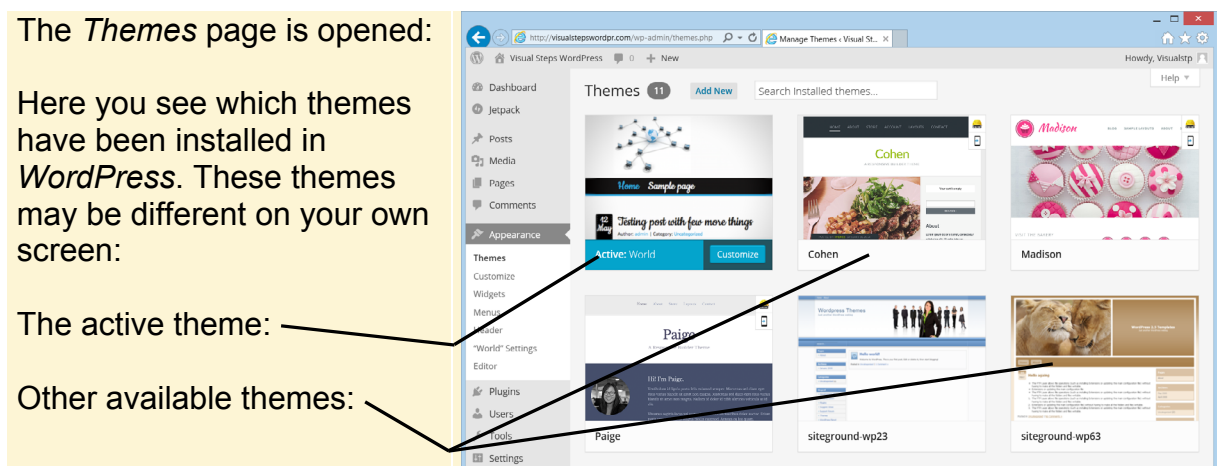


The *Themes* page is opened:

Here you see which themes have been installed in *WordPress*. These themes may be different on your own screen:

The active theme:

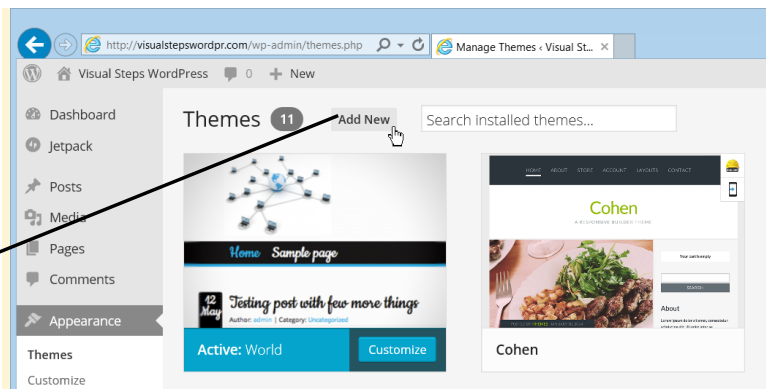
Other available themes:



You can install multiple themes in *WordPress*. Next, you can choose the theme you want to activate. This means that the activated theme will be applied to the website.


To look for another theme:

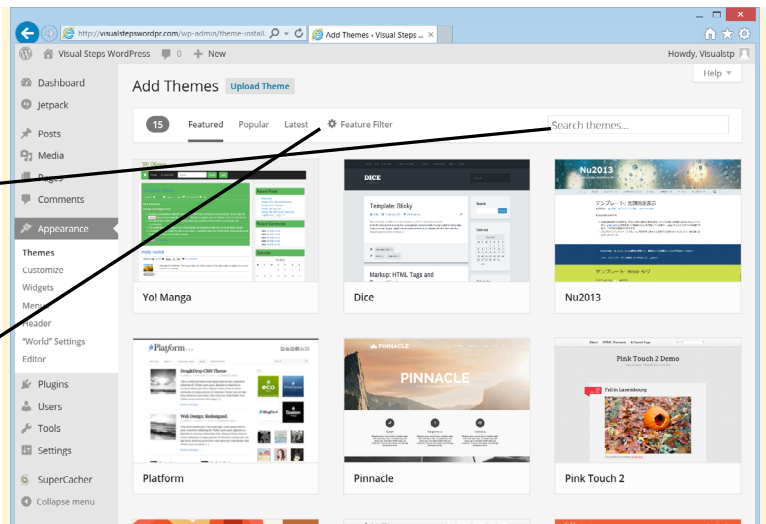
Click **Add New**



You will see the themes search function:

Search box:

With the  **Feature Filter** button you open the properties filter:

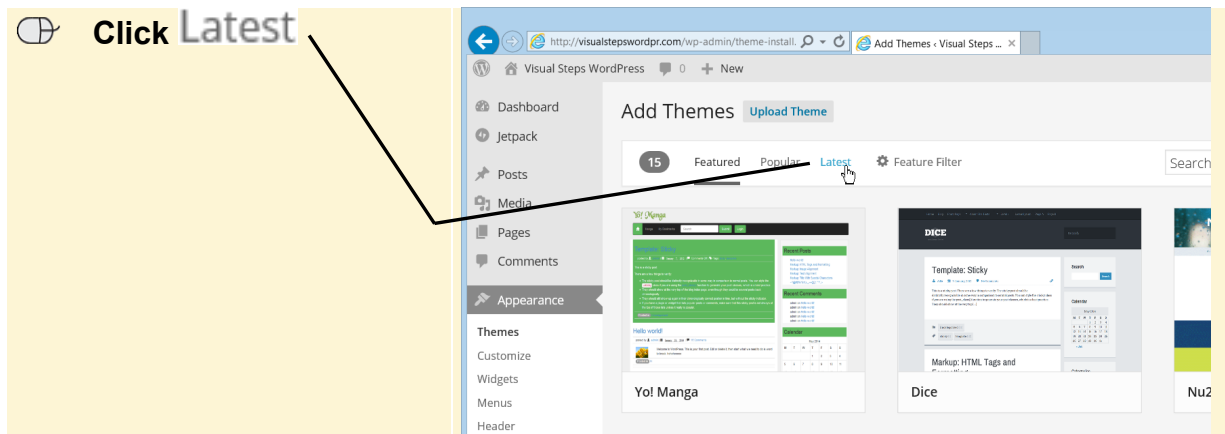


There are different ways of looking for themes with this search feature. The first method is by using the categories at the top of the window. You will see themes that have been featured (highlighted) by the *WordPress* editors, for example, or the latest themes.



Please note:

You may see a different feature theme or new theme. These themes are refreshed on a regular basis.



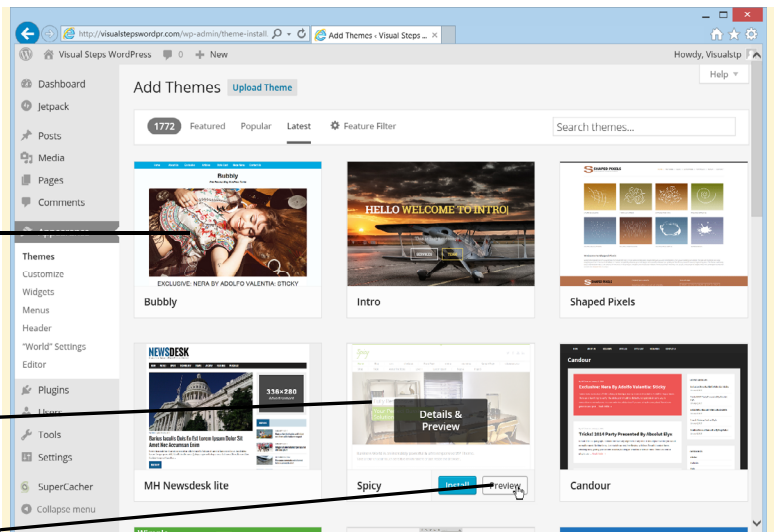
You will see the latest themes:

Image of a website with the theme:

You can view additional details, if you wish:

Place the pointer on a theme

Click Preview



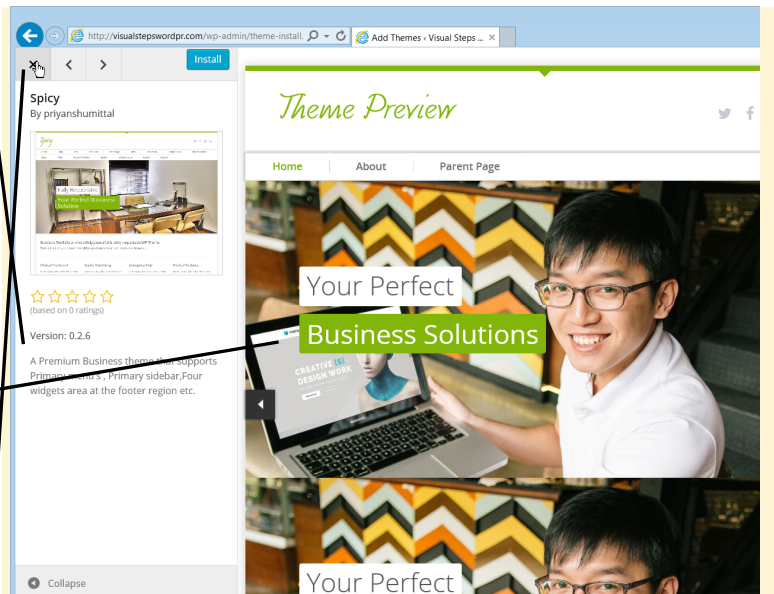
You will see information on the maker, the version, and users' reviews:

If a theme is brand new, there may not be any reviews yet.

You will also see a preview of the theme:

To close the preview:

Click X



**Please note:**

Some previews cannot display an image. These will be displayed once you have installed the theme.

You can also find a theme by entering keywords. For example, the title or description of a theme.


By way of exercise, you can search for themes that have to do with shops:

The screenshot shows the WordPress 'Add Themes' screen. On the left, a yellow callout box contains the text: 'In the search box, type: shop'. Below this, it says 'You will see themes that contain the keyword 'shop':' and 'The preview of these themes can be viewed as well.' A line points from the search box in the screenshot to the text 'type: shop'. The screenshot itself shows the 'Add Themes' interface with a search bar containing 'shop'. Below the search bar, there are several theme preview cards, including 'Shop Theme', 'TopShop', 'Multishop', 'Simply Jigoshop', 'SmartShop', and 'JShop'. The left sidebar of the WordPress dashboard is visible, showing the 'Appearance' menu item selected.

Furthermore, you can search by using *Property filters*. By applying one or multiple filters, you can limit the number of themes that are found, and narrow the search down to the type of theme you want to find.

You can filter on color, number of columns, and other technical properties, for example.

**Tip****Technical properties**

The properties you can enter by the  **Feature Filter** category are of a quite technical nature. They may contain special features or certain settings that can be adjusted in the theme. For instance, the option of adjusting a menu or the background color.