Agenda

- 6:30 – Meet and greet
- 7:00 – Meetup Kickoff
  - Introductions
  - Review agenda
  - Call for Open Forum discussion topics
- 7:15 - Topic A: Best (and safe) practices for backing up and updating the software in your site
- 8:00 - Open Forum
- 8:25 - Closing Remarks and Shout Outs
- 8:30 - Post-Meetup Networking/Refreshments

Topic A: Best (and safe) practices for backup and updating your Wordpress software

- If your site is hosted on wordpress.com, sit back and enjoy some nachos. Otherwise...

- Site backups 101

- Software updates 101

- ***Bonus Topic***: Creating a Locally Hosted Test Bed Environment

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Manchester NH WordPress Meetup
March 11, 2013 Meetup

Site Backups 101

- What comprises a WordPress backup?
  - All the files in the file structure at your WordPress site _synchronized with a_ n export of all the data in the MySQL database
- Why do I need to take backups?
  - To create a copy of your site that can be migrated to another location, e.g.,
    - To another web hosting vendor
    - To or from a test bed site on your laptop or desktop
  - To restore your site (save your a - -) in case of catastrophe
    - Sooner or later, one of these **will** happen to you!
      - Your site gets hacked
      - Your hosting vendor has a meltdown event
      - You break your own site, e.g., via code customizations, adding a plugin, changing to a new theme
      - A software update breaks your site (like when a recent one broke mine)

Site Backups 101

- How often should I take backups?
  - On a regular, ongoing basis, depending on <u>how much</u> and <u>what type</u> of data you stand to lose
  - Right before you apply a moderate- to high-risk software update

- How should I take backups?
  - Various tools available to take backups manually or automatically
    - See: http://codex.wordpress.org/WordPress_Backups
  - Rely on your web hosting vendor's free or premium backup procedures
  - My preference: Backup Buddy premium plugin from iThemes.com

    Link to Backup Buddy home page

Site Backups 101

- My preference for a WordPress tool

  Backup Buddy premium plugin from iThemes.com

  Click here to go to Backup Buddy home page

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Site Backups 101

- Where should I store backups?
  - Somewhere that is:
    - <u>other than</u> on the same server where your Wordpress site is located

      AND

    - a place where you are <u>sure</u> you will be able to retrieve the backups when you need them
  - Some options
    - Your laptop or desktop (not so great)
    - CD's/DVD's
    - My preference: "in the cloud", e.g., on Amazon S3, Skydrive, Dropbox, Rackspace

Software Updates 101

- What software needs to be updated?
  - WordPress core software
  - Themes
  - Plugins
- Why should I update my software?
  - Take advantage of improvements and additions to functions/features
  - ***Apply bug fixes and security patches***
- How will I know when an update is available?
  - WordPress will notify you about updates available at wordpress.org on the Dashboard => Updates menu
  - The vendor for your premium theme or plugin will notify you (hopefully)

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Software Updates 101

- Why are software updates potentially risky?
  - They can introduce unwanted side effects, especially due to *incompatibilities between different software components,* e.g.,
    - Theme "X" and Plugin "Y" don't play nicely together
    - Version x,y.z of Theme "X" does work with the latest update to WordPress core software
- When should I apply an update?
  - As soon as possible
    - After WordPress or the theme/plugin vendor announces an update is available

      AND

    - *You take steps to ensure the risk of updating is low*
  -

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Software Updates 101

- How do I assess the risk of applying a software update?
  - Look at the **change in the software version** and **research the details in the software change log**
  - As a rule:
    - Generally low risk: updates that include only bug fixes and security patches
      - Example: updating from version 5.2.6 to version 5.2.7
    - Moderate risk: updates that include minor improvements/additions to features/functions
      - Example: updating from version 5.2.6 to version 5.3
    - High risk: updates that involve significant changes to the architecture/functions/features of the software
      - Example: updating from version 5.2.6 to version 6.0
  - ***Exception***: for updates to the WordPress core software, I treat both of the last two categories as "high risk"

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Software Updates 101

- How do I minimize the risk of applying a moderate- to high-risk update?
  - For moderate/high risk updates to WordPress core software, *wait* for the next "bug fix release"
    - Recent example: I did not update to version 3.5 right away – I waited about six weeks until version 3.5.1 was available
  - Update all your themes and plugins <u>before</u> applying a core software update
  - Take a full backup of your production files and database before applying risky updates, and be ready to restore it if you encounter problems
    - ***Suggestion:*** <u>test</u> the restore process <u>before</u> you need to use it!
  - Test the updates in a test bed environment before applying the updates to your live production environment

Creating a Locally Hosted Test Bed Environment (fairly easily)

1) On your laptop/desktop: prepare the test bed location

   a) Install a copy of AMPPS (available at ampps.com) on your laptop or desktop (can be either Mac or Windows o/s)

      • This installs all the software components your need to run a WordPress site locally (Apache Web Server, MySQL, and PHP), as well as dozens of other blogging tools, content management systems, etc.

   b) From the AMPPS tool, use phpMyAdmin to create a MySQL database AND a database user with all privileges to access that database

   c) Create a new, empty folder in the /ampps/www/ directory with an appropriate name. For example:

   /ampps/www/**your-site-home-directory**

Creating a Locally Hosted Test Bed Environment (fairly easily)

2) On your production site: install the backup plugin and create and download a backup
   a) Download the Backup Buddy plugin from iThemes, and install and activate the plugin
   b) Go to the Backup Buddy settings and enter a password in the **ImportBuddy password** field. You will use this password when executing the script to install a copy of your site in the test bed environment.
   c) Take a complete backup using Backup Buddy
   d) Download both the backup file created in step 2.c *and* the importbuddy.php script to your laptop

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Creating a Locally Hosted Test Bed Environment (fairly easily)

3) On your laptop/desktop: migrate the backup to the test bed

   a) Move both the backup file and importbuddy.php script to the folder you created in Step 1.c

   b) Enter the following in the address field of your browser to excute the installation script:

   http://127.0.0.1/**your-site-home-directory**/importbuddy.php

   c) As the script executes, you will need to enter enter certain information and take actions at various steps

   1. Enter the ImportBuddy password created in Step 2.b

   2. Select the backup file that you downloaded to the laptop

   3. The database name, user name and password created in Step 1.b Leave the MySQL Server name as "**localhost**". Click on **Test Database Settings** before proceeding to the next step

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Creating a Locally Hosted Test Bed Environment (fairly easily)

c) After the database import in Step 5 completes successfully, you will be prompted to test the new locally hosted site. Using our example you should be able to access the front end of site at **http://127.0.0.1/your-site-home-directory**, and access the WordPress dashboard at http://127.0.0.1/**your-site-home-directory**/wp-admin

d) If the site checks out okay, go ahead and click on the **Clean Up and Remove Temporary Files** button to execute the sixth and final step.

DONE!

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Thanks for listening!

Jonathan May

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