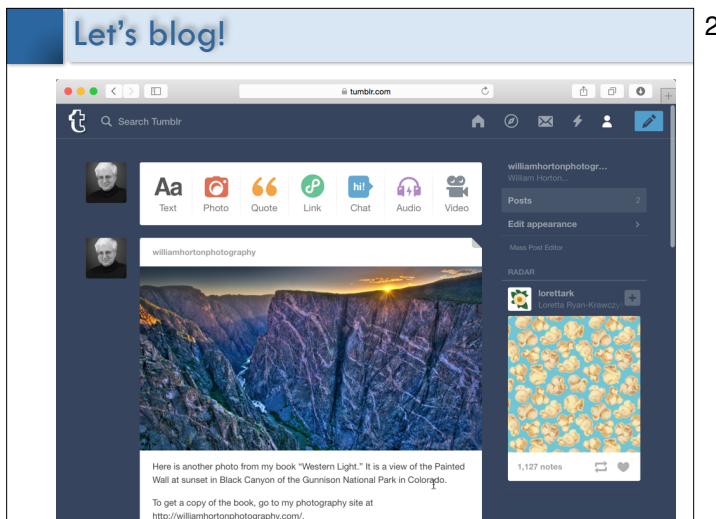**1**

So you want to blog? How do you get started?

That's what we will talk about today. We'll talk about how to choose a tool, prepare your content, write your first post, and branch out and do more with your blog.
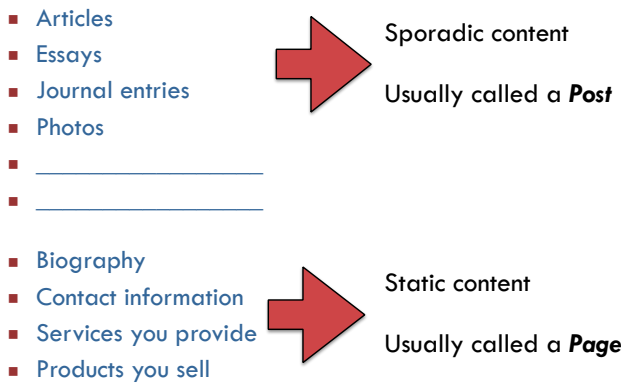

2

Let's just blog!

I'm in the edit view of a tool called Tumblr. Have any of you heard of Tumblr?

I'm going to create a photo post - that is, I want to create an entry about a photo.

To do that, I will click the photo button and choose the photo I want to use. I will write a little bit about this photo. Then, I will review my new post to see how it will appear to the viewer. Finally, I will publish my post so that it appears to viewers of my blog.

Slide 3

Wait, what's a blog?

- Articles
- Essays
- Journal entries
- Photos
- _____
- _____

- Biography
- Contact information
- Services you provide
- Products you sell

Sporadic content

Usually called a *Post*

Static content

Usually called a *Page*


Wait, do we all know what a blog is?

A blog can be a collection of articles, essays, journal entries, photos, travelogue, or maybe even a novel serialization.

This content is sporadic and such entries are usually referred to as POSTs.

A blog can have other kinds of information, too, such as your bio, contact information, services you provide, and perhaps a store with products.

This content is more static and these entries are usually called PAGEs.

Slide 4

Preparing a post

Make it easy to cut-and-paste content.
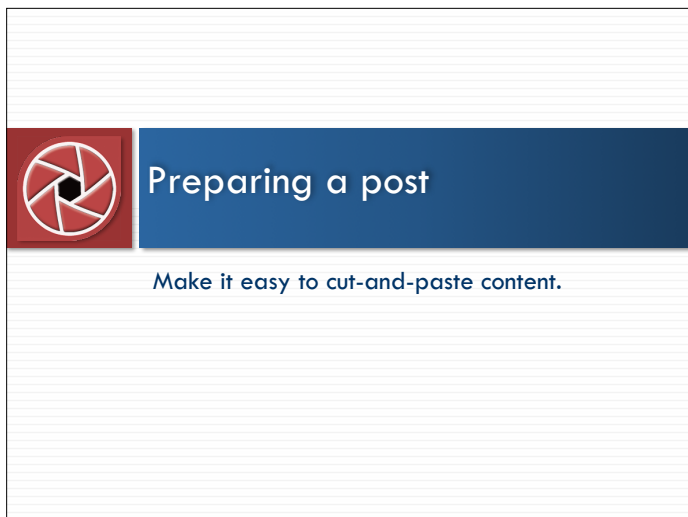
Here are some tips for making it easy to gather your content (both text and visuals) so that you can simply cut-and-paste the content into your blog tool.

Use a digital notebook

- OneNote
- Evernote
- Word*
- Pages*
- _____
- _____
- _____

* Beware of embedded formatting

Use a digital notebook, such as Microsoft OneNote (That's what I'm using in this example.), Evernote, Microsoft Word, or maybe Apple Pages. Can you think of any other tools?

I've put an asterisk next to Word and Pages because you may need to make an extra effort to keep built-in formatting from mucking up the appearance of your blog entry.

Include what the viewer will see

Title

Before you go out into the cold…

- Not too long
- Not too cute

Illustration or photo

Sunburst and Shadow

Sunlight through a tree radiate through the branches, casting shadows on the steam rising from a thermal pool in the Upper Terraces area of Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park.

- Title the photograph
- Give it a complete description

Text content

Cold-weather photography is a lot more successful and far less painful if you prepare before getting out into the cold. The principle is very simple: Do as much as you can while you are still snug and warm. Prepare yourself and your gear before venturing out. Here's a checklist of things to do while still in your car, den, or duck blind:

1. Load a fully-charged battery and an empty memory card.
2. Put spare batteries and memory cards in a pocket close to your body but where you can get to them with gloved hands.
3. Make all camera settings for your intended shoot. Pick settings that you can use for many shots without change. Remember, changing settings may be difficult once you don thick gloves.
4. If your camera has programmable buttons, assign to these buttons functions you will need to change while in the cold.
5. Mount the first lens you want to use. To avoid having to change lenses, go with a wide-range zoom lens. Also mount the lens hood and remove the lens cap.
6. Put on your cold-weather clothes. We recommend lots of layers. Make sure you can reach your spare batteries and memory cards.
7. Make sure your gloves and boots do not cut off circulation. Wait a few minutes to warm up and make sure you can move comfortably.
8. Attach the camera to your tripod and extend its legs. Also attach any remote control or flash unit you are using.
9. Now go get some great cold-weather shots.

Include main topic idea in the first paragraph

Include everything the viewer will see. For each entry include a title that is not too long and not too cute.

Write the text content. Be sure to include the main idea of your entry in the first paragraph. In this example, "cold-weather photography" and "checklist" are right in the beginning of the entry.

Place the illustration or photo for your entry right in your notebook. Make sure your graphics are ready to go, that is edited and sized. Give each graphic a title and description. How you use this information will differ with each blogging tool.

Also include meta information

Meta Tags or keywords

Cold-weather photography
Photography checklist
Photography in the cold

List the main ideas covered in the post — the phrase someone might use to find this post.

Meta Description

This is a cold-weather photography checklist to help you stay warm and get great cold-weather shots.

Include as many keywords as possible.

Meta Title

Cold-weather photography checklist

Include all *main* keywords.

Visual media need keywords too

"Mammoth Hot Spring", Yellowstone, "Yellowstone National Park", fog, sunburst, terraces, tree

This meta-data is used for SEO (Search-Engine Optimization).

There is more information you should include with your entry that your viewers won't necessarily see, such as meta-tags or keywords.

For these, list the main ideas covered in the post, using the phrases someone might use to find this post.

Give your entry a meta-title. This title may differ from the one the viewer sees. Try to include the most important keywords.

Compose a meta-description that search engines will display in a list of results. Include as many keywords as possible in this description.

Don't forget about your graphics. Give

From preparation to post

WILLIAM HORTON PHOTOGRAPHY   HOME   MY BLOG   NEWS   ABOUT ME   MY PORTFOLIO ▾   MY SERVICES ▾   CONTACT

BLOG

BEFORE YOU GO OUT INTO THE COLD…

JUNE 25, 2015   WILLIAM   LEAVE A COMMENT   EDIT

Cold-weather photography is a lot more successful and far less painful if you prepare before getting out into the cold. The principle is very simple: Do as much as you can while you are still snug and warm. Prepare yourself and your gear before venturing out. Here's a checklist of things to do while still in your car, den, or duck blind:

1. Load a fully-charged battery and an empty memory card.
2. Put spare batteries and memory cards in a pocket close to your body but where you can get to them with gloved hands.
3. Make all camera settings for your intended shoot. Pick settings that you can use for many shots without change. Remember, changing settings may be difficult once you don thick gloves.
4. If your camera has programmable buttons, assign to these buttons functions you will need to change while in the cold.
5. Mount the first lens you want to use. To avoid having to change lenses, go with a

Sunlight through a tree radiate through the branches, casting shadows on the steam rising from a thermal pool in the Upper Terraces area of Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park.

CONTACT US

Name: *
E-Mail Address: *
Subject: *
Message: *

three × ▢ = 21

SUBMIT

FOLLOW MY BLOG

Sign up to receive e-mail notices of my new posts.
You may manage your subscription options from your profile

The content and meta-data is ready to be transferred to the blog.

Let's see how this process looks in WordPress, one of the blogging tools we will discuss a bit later.

Here is the post form. I'll fill in this form by cutting-and-pasting text from the digital notebook.

First, I will enter the title, and then the content. Now I'll upload the photograph. In the available blanks, I'll add a title and description.

Finally, I'll enter the meta-data. Notice that the title has been shortened to keep it under 60 characters.
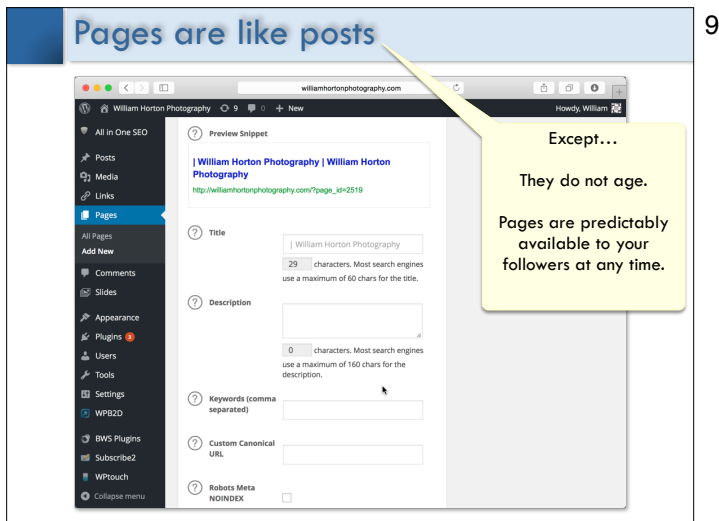
Forms for pages look almost like forms for posts. In WordPress, you do not assign tags or categories to pages. But, you can change their visual appearance by assigning a template. And you can categorize pages hierarchically.

Just remember that pages do not age and are predictably available to your followers at any time.
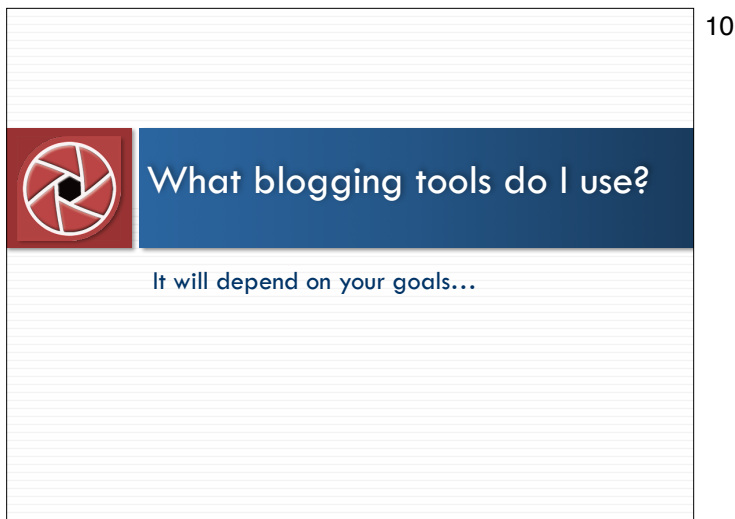
So, what blogging tool should you use? Well, it depends entirely on what you want to accomplish with a Web presence and how comfortable you are using Web technologies, such as CSS, HTML, PHP, and other programming languages.

What are your goals?

You can have more than one.

☐ Publish articles — documentary or fiction.
☐ Showcase new work — photos, paintings, etc.
☐ Attract clients for your business.
☐ Sell products from your site.
☐ Have a special area just for clients.
☐ _____
☐ _____

Your choice of tools will depend on your goals.

Let's list some goals for your blog. What do you want to accomplish?

For instance, you may be a writer and want to self-publish your work.

Or, you're an artist and want to showcase your art.

Or, you may want to attract clients for your business.

Or, you may want to sell products from your site.

Or, you want a special area just for clients.

Or, you have several of these goals.

These are the big three tools

Tumblr
www.tumblr.com

They are all Web-based

Blogger by Google
www.blogger.com

WordPress
www.wordpress.com
www.wordpress.org

There are many tools you can use to start your blog, but I'm going to concentrate on just three tools, the big three.

Blogger at blogger.com.

Tumblr at tumblr.com.

WordPress at wordpress.com or wordpress.org.

These are all Web-based tools. That is, you interact with them using a Web browser. You do not need any special software on your computer.

Blogger — www.blogger.com

Features and caveats

Cost for tool	Free - need free Google account
Cost for hosting	Free
Design templates?	Yes
Customize templates?	Yes, with CSS
Both pages and posts?	Yes
E-commerce available?	Third-party plugins
Use your own domain name?	Yes
Extend with plugins?	Yes - limited

On the next four slides, I will compare each tool against features I think are important to consider.

So, for Blogger, the cost for the tool is free.

Hosting is free, too.

Multiple design templates are available to change how the blog will look.

These design templates can be customized using CSS, or cascading style sheets.

You can create both posts AND pages.

You can use provided third-party extensions for e-commerce.

Tumblr — www.tumblr.com

Features and caveats

Cost for tool	Free - need free Tumblr account
Cost for hosting	Free
Design templates?	Yes - free and for sale
Customize templates?	Yes, with CSS
Both pages and posts?	Yes
E-commerce available?	Third-party plugins
Use your own domain name?	Yes
Extend with plugins?	Yes - limited

As you can see, Tumblr is very similar to Blogger.

WordPress — www.wordpress.com

Features and caveats

Cost for tool	Free - need free WP account
Cost for hosting	Free for very basic features
Design templates?	Yes - free and for sale
Customize templates?	Yes, with CSS
Both pages and posts?	Yes
E-commerce available?	Via PayPal - built-in w/business
Use your own domain name?	Yes - with premium account
Extend with plugins?	No - but some are included

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WordPress.com is a hosted solution, like Blogger and Tumblr. You get basic features with the free account. But if you pony up and pay for their premium or business levels, you get additional features.

WordPress — www.wordpress.org

Features and caveats

Cost for tool	Free (download or ISP)
Cost for hosting	You buy hosting package
Design templates?	Yes - free and for sale
Customize templates?	Yes, with CSS
Both pages and posts?	Yes
E-commerce available?	Third-party plugins
Use your own domain name?	Yes - you may need to configure
Extend with plugins?	Yes - 100's and 100's available

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From WordPress.org, you can download a complete installation of WordPress to your own server or to a shared hosting service, like GoDaddy or Network Solutions.

Why would you want to do this? Because you gain complete control over how your site looks and behaves. Through plug-ins and widgets you can extend your site to handle just about anything you would want to do without programming skills.

But, if there is not a plug-in that does just what you want, you can program a one-off solution just for your site. And, if it really works well, you can make it available to other WordPress users.

Ease of use versus purpose

Ease of use from 1 to 4		Best for:
1	Blogger	Best for your first effort. Has the basic tools without any additional cost.
2	Tumblr	A step up from Blogger in social integration. Not the best tool for full-featured Website.
3	Wordpress.com	Good for blogs and business Websites. Has *basic* tools without additional cost.
4	Wordpress.org	Best for blogs *and* business Websites. Implementation is not free. FULLY CUSTOMIZABLE.

To sum it up, here is a table that compares ease of use versus what you want to accomplish.

Easiest to use is Blogger. It's best for your first effort. It has all the basic features you will need when starting out, without any additional cost. As an aside, if you want more functionality, you can export a Blogger site and import it into WordPress.

Only slightly more difficult to use is Tumblr. Tumblr has more social integration with Instagram, Pinterest, and other social media sites. However it, as well as Blogger, is not the best tool for full-featured Websites.

Next comes wordpress.com. It is good

Where to learn more

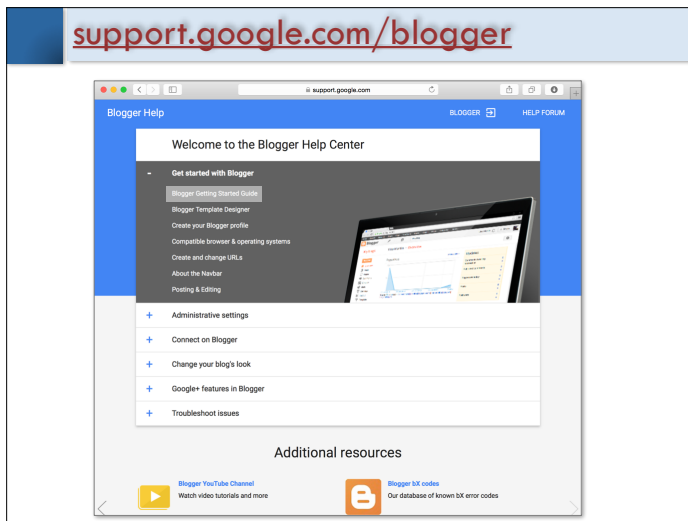Check the tool's Help files and "Google."

So where should you go from here? Look at the Help files for each of the tools you are considering, as well as Google the tool to find third-party information.

What follows are some resources to help you decide which tool to use and how to make the most of it.

support.google.com/blogger

Google Blogger has really good user documentation. Go to support dot google dot com slash blogger. You will see a page similar to this one with timely topics that will help you get started, customize your site, and troubleshoot most problems that you may encounter.

Blogger Getting Started Guide

The first thing you should read at the Blogger support site is the Blogger Getting Started Guide. It is the first link under Getting Started with Blogger. It will walk you through the steps to get your blog up and running as soon as possible.

www.amazon.com

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Still need more information? Go to amazon.com and search for "Google Blogger." Your search will return a list of books that may be helpful.
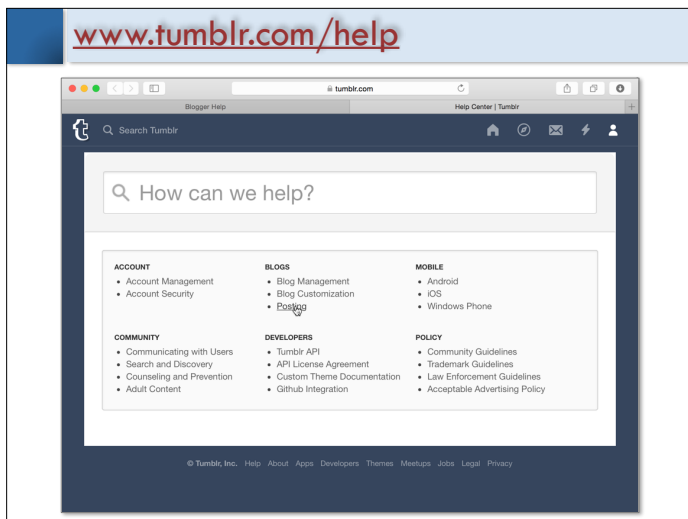
www.tumblr.com/help

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For Tumblr, go to www.tumblr.com/help. You will find all the basic information needed to get started with Tumblr. This Help is not as comprehensive as the information for Google Blogger. But it is sufficient to get you going.

www.lynda.com - search for Tumblr

For more in-depth training on how to use Tumblr effectively, go to lynda.com and search for "Tumblr." That search will take you to a course called "Up and Running with Tumblr."

I love lynda.com and have purchased an annual subscription. If I need to learn something, I can usually find it on Lynda.
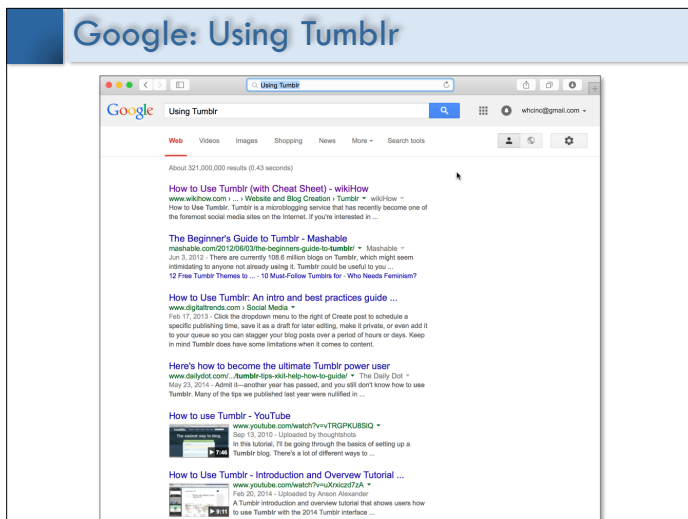
Google: Using Tumblr

Need more information on Tumblr, then google "Using Tumblr" and check out the various results that are returned.

en.support.wordpress.com
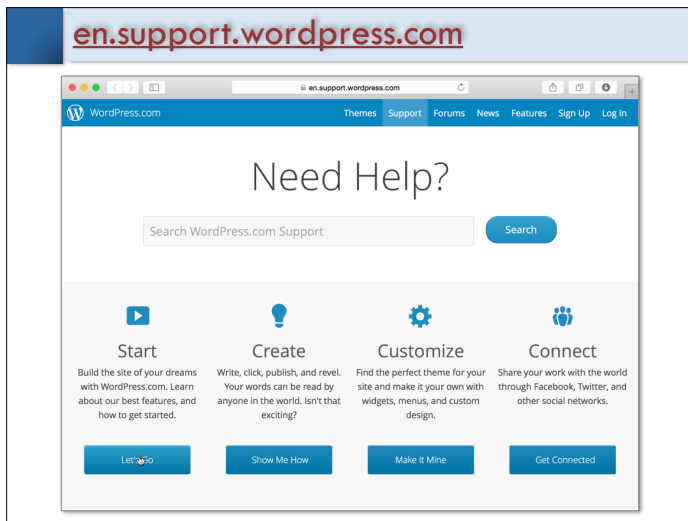
25

Wordpress.com does a good job of documenting how to make the best use of WordPress on their site. Go to en.support.wordpress.com. You will see a nicely organized page with both getting started information, as well as advanced concepts to help you gain a larger readership.

learn.wordpress.com
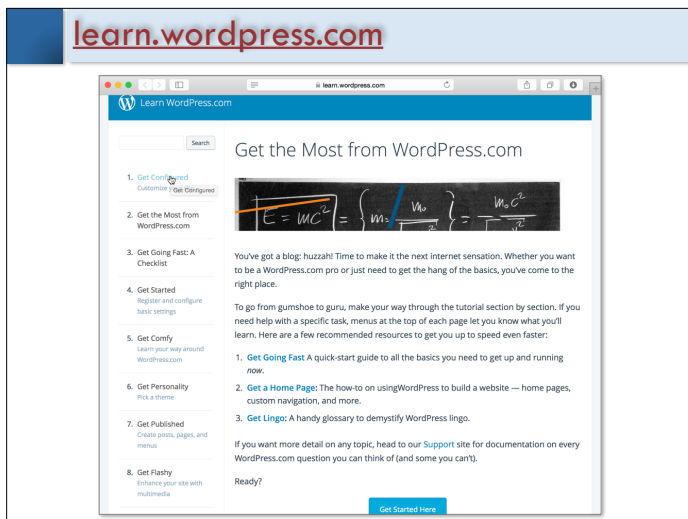
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Clicking "Learn more" under Start takes you to an introductory article, "Get the Most from WordPress.com." This is a wonderful quick-start guide to get you blogging right a way.

www.lynda.com - search for Wordpress

To learn how to use a self-hosted WordPress site, search lynda.com for "WordPress." You will find many available courses, sorted by version number, level of expertise, and specific purpose your site is to address.

wordpress.org versus wordpress.com

premium.wpmudev.org/blog/wordpress-org-vs-wordpress-com-a-definitive-guide-for-2014/

If you think WordPress is the best solution for you, but don't know whether you need a hosted or self-hosted version; then, check out this URL. It lays out important considerations you should think about as you make your decision.
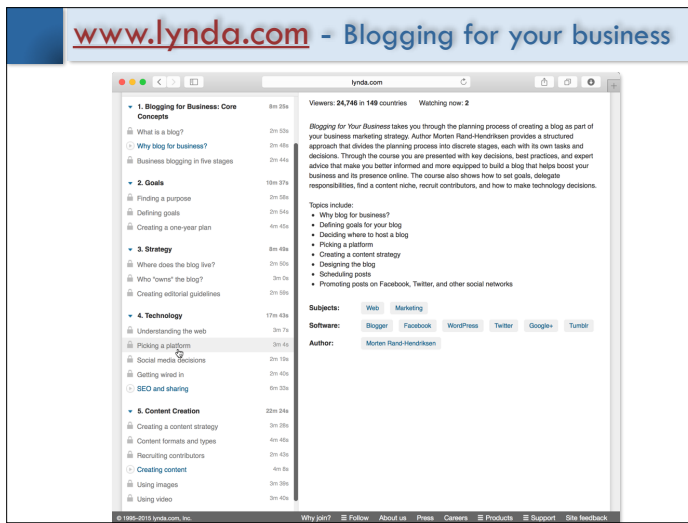
Finally, lynda.com has a good blogging course called "Blogging for Your Business." It will cause you to think about how your blog will fit in with your overall business strategy, help you choose the right technology, and provide tips for creating engaging content.
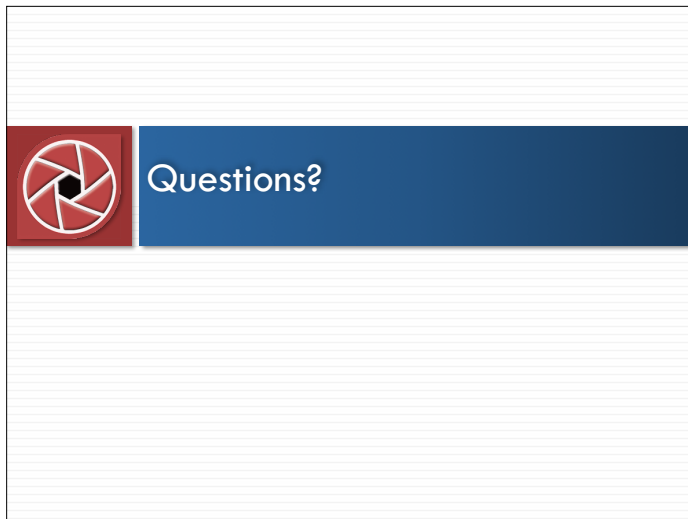
Questions? You can e-mail me with your questions (using the address on the next slide). But please, google your question first and see if you can answer it on your own.

-

Kit Horton

WilliamHortonPhotography.com

Kit @ Horton.com

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So, thank you for your attention. I'm Kit Horton, from William Horton Photography, and I can be reached at kit@horton.com.

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