

WordPress – How to Maintain Your Site Menu

8/13/2013

Overview

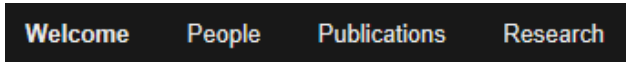
The menu of your WordPress site serves a critical function: navigation.

The more content you add to your website, the more effort site visitors must exert to locate the content.

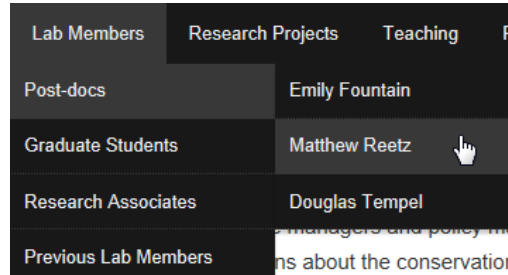
A well-planned menu lets visitors browse your content areas and helps them decide whether they want to read further.

Menu Structure

Menus can be flat...



or multi-level...



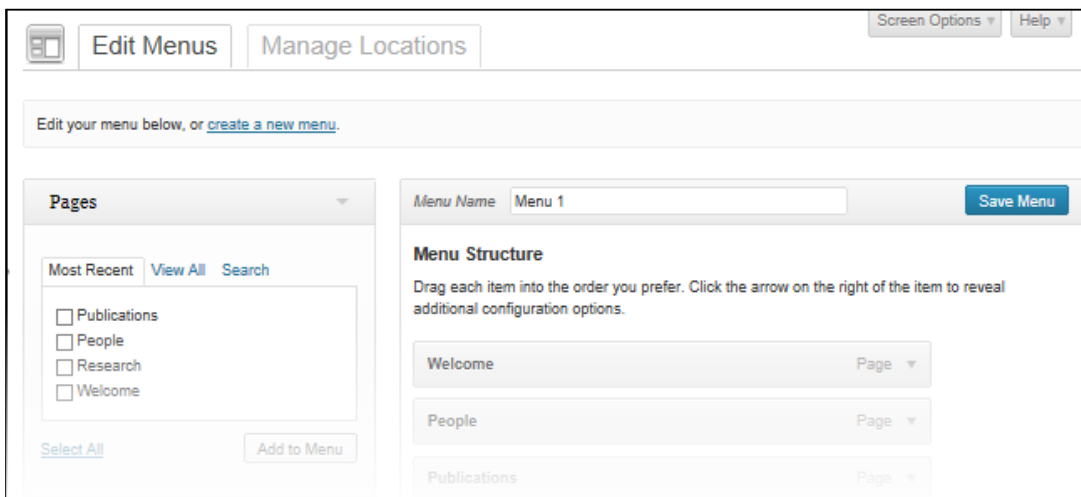
Once you create more than a handful of pages, you will run out of horizontal space on the menu. When that happens, the menu wraps around and doubles in height. One solution is to organize your content with a multi-level menu.

Parent entries (top level) hold **child entries** (2nd and subsequent levels). Child entries appear when the cursor hovers over the parent entry.

When you create your menu, you may also want to include **structural entries**. A structural entry is not clickable; it exists only to group entries below it. In the above illustration, the Post-docs menu entry is structural – it groups together the child entries of Emily Fountain, Matthew Reetz, and Douglas Tempel. If you click the Post-docs entry, nothing happens.

The Edit Menu Screen

The Edit Menu screen (Appearance..Menus) is very different from the Edit Page screen. It is closest in structure to the Widgets screen, and uses a drag and drop interface:



The Edit Menu screen is less forgiving than the edit screen:

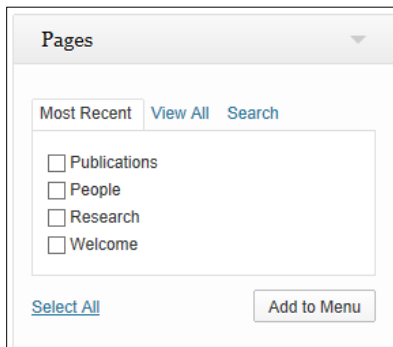
- undo does not work
- there are no revisions– if you make a mistake and save the menu, you are stuck with the results
- drag and drop indent is a bit flakey –dropped menu entries can land in unexpected places

Tip: When the number of menu entries exceeds the Edit Menu page length, it can be problematic to drag and drop new menu entries upward and drop them into place.

If this happens on your site, please email webeditor@russell.wisc.edu – we can turn on a plugin called Menu Tamer that will let you collapse parts of the menu (hide child entries) to make drag and drop easier to use.

Adding a Clickable Menu Entry

1. In the left column of the Edit Menu page, locate the Pages block:

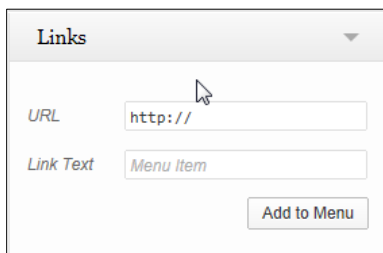


The tab at the front shows the most recent pages added to the site. You can also click the View All or Search tabs to locate the page you want to add.

2. Click the checkbox for the page you want to add.
3. Click Add to menu. The menu entry appears in the Menu Structure box to the right of the Pages block.
4. If desired, drag and drop the page menu entry up.
5. Click Save Menu.

Adding a Structural Menu Entry

1. In the left column of the Edit Menu page, locate the Links block. Click the down-pointing triangle to expand the block:



2. In the URL box, select the text [http://](#) and replace it with the pound sign:



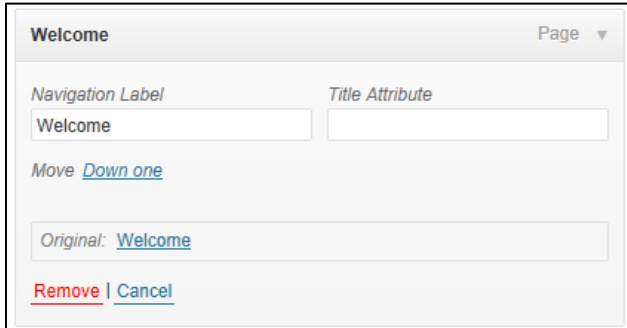
3. Click in the Link Text box and enter the link text.
4. Click Add to menu. The menu entry appears in the Menu Structure box to the right of the Pages block.
5. If desired, drag and drop the page menu entry up.

6. Click Save Menu.

Changing the Menu Entry Link Text

When you create a menu entry using the Pages box, the link text defaults to the page name. Since horizontal space is limited, you may want to shorten the link text.

1. In the Menu structure box in the right side of the screen, click the down-pointing triangle for the menu entry you want to edit. The menu entry expands:

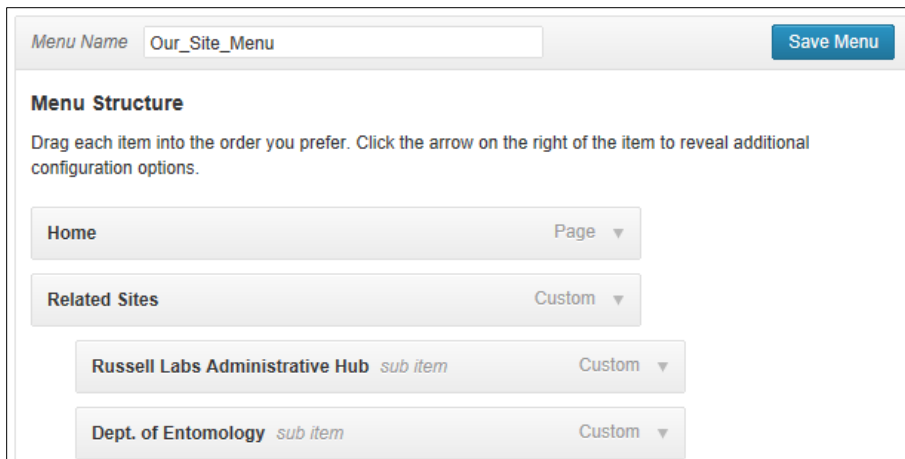


The screenshot shows a configuration box for a menu entry titled 'Welcome'. At the top right is a 'Page' dropdown menu. Below this are two input fields: 'Navigation Label' containing 'Welcome' and 'Title Attribute' which is empty. A link 'Move Down one' is visible below the input fields. At the bottom, there is a text field showing 'Original: Welcome' and two buttons: 'Remove' (in red) and 'Cancel' (in blue).

2. Edit the text in the Navigation Label box.
3. Click Save Menu.

Creating a Parent/Child Multilevel Menu

1. Add the menu items you want using the Page and Link boxes.
2. In the Menu structure box in the right side of the screen, drag and drop the menu entries to place them in the order you want.
3. Click and drag the menu entries right to indent them and create a child menu entry:



The screenshot shows the 'Menu Structure' configuration box. At the top, there is a 'Menu Name' field containing 'Our_Site_Menu' and a 'Save Menu' button. Below this is a section titled 'Menu Structure' with instructions: 'Drag each item into the order you prefer. Click the arrow on the right of the item to reveal additional configuration options.' The menu items are listed as follows: 'Home' with a 'Page' dropdown; 'Related Sites' with a 'Custom' dropdown; 'Russell Labs Administrative Hub' with a 'sub item' label and a 'Custom' dropdown; and 'Dept. of Entomology' with a 'sub item' label and a 'Custom' dropdown.

Note: Creating right-indents can be tricky when you get to the 2nd and subsequent menu levels. If you experience problems, email webeditor@russell.wisc.edu to schedule and in-person meeting.

4. Click Save Menu.