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UMaine Website Owners and Managers — December 2018 update

1 message

UMaine Digital Communications <um.weboffice@maine.edu>
Reply-To: UMaine Digital Communications <um.weboffice@maine.edu>
To:

Tue, Dec 18, 2018 at 9:59 AM



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UMaine website managers

Community update • December 2018

You are receiving this email because you have an account in UMaine's public website system, WordPress. If you no longer manage web content, please contact us at um.weboffice@maine.edu

In this email:

- Happy Winter Break
- Upcoming training dates
- WordPress 5.0 and UMaine

[If you have a question you would like to see answered, let us know.](#)

Happy Winter Break

The team here at UMaine Digital Communications (in the Division of Marketing and Communications) wishes everyone a happy winter break. May we all use this time between semesters to recharge, and tackle the challenges and opportunities of 2019 with renewed focus.

Upcoming training dates

Training is conducted in the Marketing and Communications conference room on the second floor of Alumni Hall (next to Fogler), suite 213

UMaine WordPress Basics: Thursdays, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

December 20, January 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31

NOTE: No training December 27

Do you have new faculty, staff or students working on your website? Need a WordPress refresher? Digital Communications offers training in the basics of our WordPress system every week. This 90-minute session covers the basics of WordPress— how to log in, create pages, and edit header, footer and sidebar elements. We welcome anyone and everyone to join us for an orientation or refresher. Walk-ins are fine, but if you can let us know you are coming that's always a good idea. Just email um.weboffice@maine.edu to give us a heads up.

SEO Workshops: Alternating Thursdays, 2 - 3 p.m.

January 10 booked

January 24 available

What is SEO? This jargon is an abbreviation for "search engine optimization," and our SEO workshops will explain what you should focus on to improve how your web pages are found by users of Google, Bing and our own UMaine site search. For each workshop we will focus on a participant's website, identifying changes to content and structure that can have a positive impact. These workshops are intended for small groups, so please email mike.kirby@maine.edu to express interest and get your spot saved for an upcoming date.

UMaine Map Training: Alternating Wednesdays, 10 - 11 a.m.

January 2, 16 & 30

Our most recent new feature: maps for your websites. If you need to depict points of interest on campus, across the state, or around the globe, our new map feature is worth exploring. In this training you will learn how to create individual map points, categorize map points together in a single map, and customize the map points by adding icons for easy visual identification. Please email um.weboffice@maine.edu to schedule one of the upcoming dates in November/December.

NEW Using Monsido to Improve Your Website: Alternating Thursdays, 9 - 10 a.m.

December 27, January 10 & 24

The University of Maine System has provided a website tool to aid in the important task of managing the quality and accessibility of web content. Monsido has been scanning UMaine websites, and interactive reports are now available.

If you want to learn more about Monsido's reports and how you may use its information to fix broken links, find misspellings, and find where content updates are most needed, we are providing 1 hour overview sessions to share what we know about this tool and how you can use it. If you have not yet begun using Monsido,

Digital Communications can set you up with an account; email mike.kirby@maine.edu to get started, and review your site's scan results.

WordPress 5.0 and the "Gutenberg" editor

University of Maine has used WordPress for our public website for many years, and we have welcomed the improvements and features that the product has grown to include. WordPress has recently made available version 5 of this popular software, and it includes significant changes to the page editor. The new page editor is called "Gutenberg" and provides some of the same functionality we currently enjoy with our own "Content blocks" feature.

Because the changes in this latest update are significant, a comprehensive plan is in development to minimize the effects of this update to our users while we keep WordPress up to date.

In the most general terms, here is what you can expect in regards to the UMaine website and any changes related to WordPress updates:

1. We will be updating to the current version of WordPress in early 2019, once full testing for compatibility with our website has concluded. When we first update, the Gutenberg editor will be disabled, and we will continue to use the "classic" editor.
2. This new editor will first be tested in "posts" for websites, and once we are comfortable with its use training will be offered for the new editor, and sites will be allowed to use this new editor for posts on request.
3. "Gutenberg blocks" will be developed to mimic the features of our existing "content blocks." Once we are comfortable that the Gutenberg editor can meet the needs of our web pages, we will offer training for their use, and newly created sites will be able to use Gutenberg instead of content blocks.
4. Simultaneous to this, we will explore options to automate the transition from content blocks to Gutenberg blocks.
5. Once we are satisfied that the new WordPress editor fully meets our needs without using our Content Blocks system, we will transition websites using content blocks to use the newer Gutenberg editor on a site by site basis.

What do you need to do?

For the immediate future, no action is needed on your part. We will update our community on progress, and as we get closer to offering the Gutenberg editor in our umaine.edu environment, training will be announced in this newsletter.


Should you stop using content blocks?

The short answer is no. We want our content managers to use all of the tools available to create compelling, engaging websites.

At the same time, we want to be transparent about our plans for the UMaine website and how we use WordPress, and this update is an acknowledgment that our Content Blocks system will eventually go away. It is unlikely that we will expand the functionality of content blocks, instead our focus will be to make the most of the opportunity this new WordPress feature offers.

We do not expect this transition to be as noticeable to site visitors as our 2015 website redesign, for the look and feel of our site should stay unchanged.

We hope you have found this update from Digital Communications helpful. Feel free to forward this newsletter to a colleague:

 Forward this newsletter

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