Publishing an article on Torrens University blog: A complete step-by-step guide

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1. Introduction

This guide is designed to walk you through the process of publishing a blog post on our company website, from start to finish. Whether you're an experienced content creator or new to WordPress, this step-by-step guide will ensure that your article is formatted correctly, optimised for SEO, and ready to engage your audience.

If at any point you need assistance or run into technical difficulties, our team is here to help. Below you'll find contact information for the relevant support channels, ensuring you can quickly resolve any issues and keep your publishing process on track.

1.1. Contact Information

If you encounter any challenges or have questions during the publishing process, please reach out to:

- **Content Manager**: For help with formatting, content-related queries, or guidance on best practices for writing and publishing.
    - **Name:** Chini Ogundare
    - **Email**: [Insert content manager's email]
- **Technical Support**: For technical issues, troubleshooting WordPress, or problems with media uploads, metadata, or publishing the article.
    - **Email**: [Insert technical support email]

Feel free to contact us during normal business hours for prompt support. We're committed to ensuring your publishing experience is smooth and successful.

2. Requirements

- **Staging Username and Password**
- **WordPress Username and Password**
- **Your article** (well-written and finalised)
- **A great title**
- **A feature image (or video)**
  - Size: 772 x 435 pixels
  - Format: JPEG
  - Suggested free image sources: Unsplash, Pixabay, Pexels

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3. Step-by-step instructions

3.1. Log in to the WordPress Admin Dashboard

- Visit the provided URL for the blog's admin panel.
- Enter your **staging server** username and password to access the staging environment.
- Use your **WordPress credentials** to log in to the dashboard.

3.2. Create a new post

- Navigate to **Posts > Add New** to open the post editor.
- **Select the appropriate category** for the article in the Categories widget.
- Enter the title of your article. This will auto-generate the permalink.
- **Upload your feature image** in the Featured Image widget.
- Paste your article into the main text editor, ensuring it's plain text to avoid formatting issues.
- **Save your draft** to avoid losing your work.

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4. Formatting your post

Proper formatting ensures that your article is easy to read, visually appealing, and optimised for search engines.

4.1. Title formatting

- **Include the main keyword**: Ensure your title includes the most relevant keyword to improve search engine visibility.
- **Use sentence case**: Capitalise only the first word of the title and any proper nouns.
- **Keep it concise**: Your title should be clear and no longer than 12 words.
- **Avoid full stops**: Punctuation at the end of titles is unnecessary and can look awkward.

4.2. URL (Permalink)

- **Edit the permalink**: WordPress generates a URL based on your title, but you can and should edit it. Keep it short and include the main keyword. Remove unnecessary words (e.g., "the," "and," "a").
  - Example: Change "5-Reasons-to-Use-AI-in-your-Marketing-Strategy" to "5-reasons-to-use-AI-marketing-strategy."

4.3. Featured image

- **Size**: Ensure the image is 772 x 500 pixels for optimal display on the blog.
- **File size**: Compress the image to be under 100 KB to keep loading times fast.
- **Format**: Stick to JPG or JPEG format for high-quality and lightweight images.
- **Alt text**: Always include alt text for accessibility and SEO. The alt text should describe the image and, if possible, include a relevant keyword.

4.4. Headings

- **Use Heading 2 (H2)** for subheadings. This helps break up content and make it easier to scan.
- **Avoid using Heading 1 (H1)**: This is automatically reserved for the title.
- **Skip unnecessary headings (H3-H6)**: Stick to H2 unless further division is needed.

4.5. Body text

- **Left-align text**: Avoid centering text unless for specific design reasons. Left-aligned text is easier to read.
- **Use bulleted lists**: Break up information with bullet points for clarity and easier scanning.
- **Bold important text**: Use `<strong>` or `<b>` tags to bold important words or phrases, making key points stand out.
- **Use blockquotes for quotations**: To make quoted text stand out, use the blockquote feature.

4.6. Inserting links

- Highlight the text you want to link.
- Click the **Insert/edit link** icon in the toolbar (chain link symbol).
- **Paste the URL** into the dialogue box and check **"Open link in a new tab"** to ensure external links don't navigate away from your site.
- Click **Apply** to insert the link.
- Always double-check your links by previewing the post.

4.7. Media

- **Add media**: Use the **Add Media** button to insert images or videos from your device or the WordPress media library.
- **Video embeds**: WordPress supports video platforms like YouTube and Vimeo. Use their shortcodes to embed videos, and consider adding a cover image for a professional look.

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5. Adding metadata (SEO optimisation)

To ensure your post is discoverable by search engines and offers a compelling experience for users, you'll need to add metadata.

5.1. Title metadata

- **Length**: Keep your meta title between 50-60 characters. This is the title that will appear in search engine results.
- **Include a keyword**: Make sure your primary keyword is included in the meta title.

5.2. Meta description

- **Length**: Your meta description should be 80-160 characters. This summary appears in search results below the title.
- **Compelling content**: Write a brief, enticing description that includes your main keyword and encourages readers to click. Example: "Discover how AI can boost your marketing strategy with automation, personalisation, and optimisation tips."

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6. Publishing your post

Once your post is properly formatted and optimised, you're ready to publish.

6.1. Preview your post

- Click the **Preview** button to view how your article will appear on the live site. Check for formatting issues, ensure images display correctly, and verify that all links work.

6.2. Final review

- Proofread for any spelling or grammar errors.
- Ensure all links are working and opening in the correct tab.
- Review your post structure to ensure clarity and readability.

6.3. Publish on the homepage

- **Duplicate the post** on the main site with the same title, URL, text, category, and media as in the staging environment.
- **Add metadata**: Ensure the meta title is 50-60 characters and the meta description is 80-160 characters.
- **Review and publish**: Double-check the final version and hit **Publish**.

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7. Going live (Deploying your post)

After publishing your post, send an email to the designated contact with the post's URL and title. This ensures the post is recorded and any additional promotion or tracking can begin.