

Dreamweaver and Photoshop CS3 or later

Build a custom WordPress theme

Convert static HTML templates into a dynamic WordPress theme, no PHP skills required – just follow **Nick La's** copy-and-paste instructions

Creating a WordPress theme is extremely easy, as you don't need any PHP programming skills. However, in order to create a custom theme you need to be able to code your own HTML and CSS templates. Coding the theme on a local computer can also save a lot of time because you can quickly preview it and can avoid the hassle of uploading the files to the server.

We will also follow the structure of the default WordPress theme to create a custom theme from scratch, walking through how to convert a HTML template into a WordPress theme. All you need to do is copy and paste the PHP code from the default theme. After you complete this tutorial, you should understand how a WordPress theme works and be able to create your own. You will find a copy of the HTML template for this tutorial included on the disc.

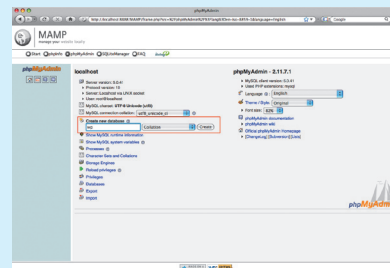


Nick La
— Nick is a freelance illustrator and designer from Toronto, Canada. He is a big fan of WordPress, which powers all of his projects: ndesign-studio.com, webdesignerwall.com, bestwebgallery.com and icondock.com

On the disc
The files accompanying this tutorial can be located on the disc in DiscContents\ Resources\ WordPress

Time needed
2-3 hours

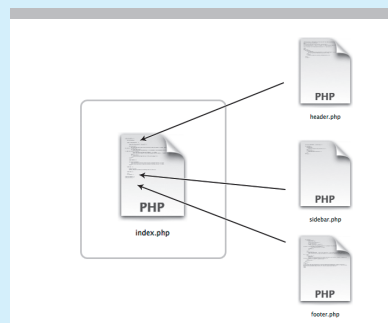
Skills
— Install a local server
— Install WordPress on a local computer
— Understand how a WordPress theme works
— Convert HTML templates into WordPress themes



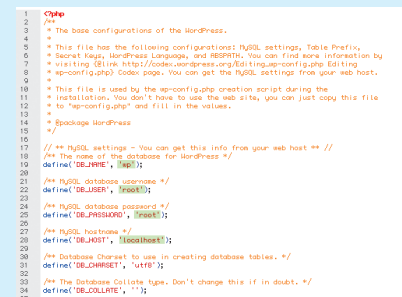
01 — In order for WordPress to run on your local computer, you need a local server. For Mac, download MAMP from <http://mamp.info> and install it (for PC, use XAMPP from <http://bit.ly/2azZ3M> or WAMP from <http://bit.ly/19htnc>). Run MAMP, go to the phpMyAdmin page, and create a new database that will be used for WordPress. Download the latest WordPress zip from wordpress.org and extract it to a new folder, 'wp', under the htdocs folder (under your MAMP folder).



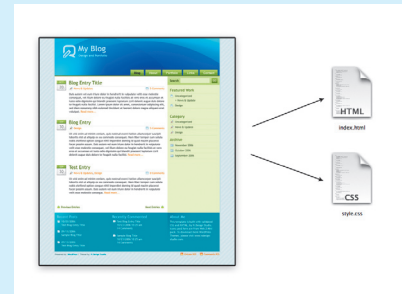
03 — After you've installed WordPress, log in and you may change your password and profile details. Before you start designing the theme, get yourself familiar with the blog front-end. Take a look at the default theme and see how the blog is put together. Take note of the elements such as header, post title, search form, navigation, footer etc.



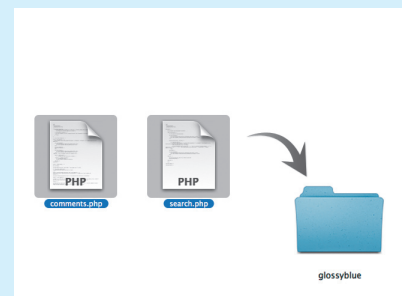
05 — So, how does a WordPress theme work? If you go to the default theme folder (wp-content/themes/default) you should see many PHP files (called Template files) and one style.css file. When you are viewing a page, WordPress actually includes several template files to generate that page. For example, if you open index.php you should see that it uses the get_header, get_sidebar, and get_footer functions to retrieve the files.



02 — Now to update wp-config.php and install WordPress. In the 'wp' folder, rename wp-config-sample.php to wp-config.php. Open the wp-config.php with Dreamweaver, and update the database setting according to your server. Then open your browser and go to <http://localhost:8888/wp>. It should direct you to the installation page. Enter your blog title and email address, and then click 'Install WordPress'.



04 — Based on the information gathered from the default theme, design a Photoshop mock-up of your blog. Then, slice the mock-up into a static HTML and CSS template. It is easier to create a static HTML file first and get it tested across all browsers, because then all you have to do is replace the HTML code with the PHP snippets; you no longer have to worry about CSS bugs or layout issues during the development process.



06 — In the 'wp-content/themes' folder, create a new folder called 'glossyblue'. Copy all files from the 'glossyblue static html templates' folder on your CD into the new 'glossyblue' folder. Then go to the default theme folder (entitled 'glossyblue HTML') and copy the comments.php and search.php files to your new 'glossyblue' folder.

```

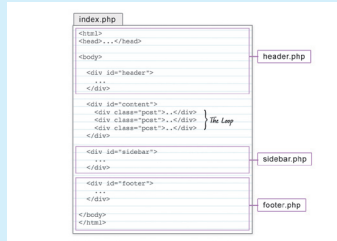
1 //
2 Theme Name: GlossyBlue
3 Theme URI: http://www.ndesignstudio.com
4 Description: A theme by @brn for http://www.ndesignstudio.com/it.Design Studio/ & p.
5 Version: 1.0
6 Author: Nick Lu
7 Author URI: http://www.ndesignstudio.com
8
9

```

07 Go to the WordPress default theme folder ('glossyblue HTML') and open the style.css file. Copy the commented code at the top and paste it into the GlossyBlue's style.css file. Change the theme name and the author information as you desire.

Continuing the theme

Go to <http://codex.wordpress.org> to learn more about WordPress coding. If you are not a PHP programmer, the best way is to copy and paste the code snippets from the existing themes.



08 Now you need to understand where to split the HTML file into several files: header.php, sidebar.php and footer.php. The screenshot shows a simplified version of my index file and how the mark-ups should be split.

```

1 <?php include (TEMPLATEPATH . '/searchform.php'); ??
2
3 <div id="sidebar">
4 <h3>Category</h3>
5 <ul class="ul-cat">
6 <?php wp_list_categories('show_count=1&title_li='); ??
7 </ul>
8 <h3>Archives</h3>
9 <ul class="ul-archives">
10 <?php wp_get_archives('type=monthly'); ??
11 </ul>

```

10 Back to the index.html file. Cut from where the <form id=searchform> starts to the end of <!--/sidebar --> and paste it in a new PHP file. Save it as sidebar.php. Replace the searchform, category and archive list (the highlighted code in the screenshot) with the PHP code accordingly.

```

1 <?php get_header(); ??
2
3 <div id="content">
4 <div class="post">
5 <div class="post-date"><span class="post-month">0ct</span> <span class="post-day">13</span></div>
6 <div class="post-title">
7 <h2><a href="#">Sample Blog Entry</a></h2>
8 <span class="post-cat"><a href="#">News</a></span> <span class="post-comments"><a href="#">3 comments</a></span>
9 </div>
10 <div class="entry">
11 <p>Duis autem vel eum irure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu
12 odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue dui dolore te feugit nulla facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit
13 eiusmod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. <a href="#">Read more...</a> </p>
14 </div>
15 <div class="navigation"> <span class="previous-entries"><a href="#">Previous Entries</a></span> <span class="next-entri
16 </div>
17 <!--/content -->
18 <?php get_sidebar(); ??
19 <?php get_footer(); ??

```

12 In your index.html file you should now only have the <div id=content> wrap. Save the file as index.php. Copy and paste the codes get_header, get_sidebar and get_footer in the same order as your layout structure.

```

1 <?php get_header(); ??
2
3 <div id="content">
4 <div class="post">
5 <div class="post-date"><span class="post-month"><?php the_time('j') ?></span> <span class="post-day"><?php the_time('d') ?></span></div>
6 <div class="post-title">
7 <h2><a href="#"><?php the_title('') ?></a></h2>
8 <span class="post-cat"><?php the_category('') ?></span>
9 </div>
10 <div class="entry">
11 <?php the_content('Read the rest of this entry here!'); ??
12 </div>
13 <div class="comments"><?php comments_template(); ??
14 </div>
15 <div class="navigation">
16 <span class="previous-entries"><a href="#"><?php previous_post_link(' %link%', '<?php the_title('') ?>') ?></a></span>
17 <span class="next-entries"><a href="#"><?php next_post_link(' %link%', '<?php the_title('') ?>') ?></a></span>
18 </div>
19 <div class="found">
20 <p><?php the_posts_pagination(); ??</p>
21 </div>
22 <div class="found">
23 <p><?php the_posts_pagination(); ??</p>
24 </div>
25 <div class="found">
26 <p><?php the_posts_pagination(); ??</p>
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35 <p><?php the_posts_pagination(); ??</p>
36 </div>
37 <div class="found">
38 <p><?php the_posts_pagination(); ??</p>
39 </div>
40 <div class="found">
41 <p><?php the_posts_pagination(); ??</p>
42 </div>

```

14 Now it's time to do the single.php template. If you want, you can go through the same process – just cut and paste from the default theme. I find it easier, however, to use the index.php that's just been created and save it as single.php. Open the default theme single.php file, and copy and paste the wp_link_pages, comments_template, previous_post_link and next_post_link tag into the GlossyBlue's single.php accordingly.

```

3 <head>
4 <meta charset="utf-8" />
5 <title><?php bloginfo('name'); ?> <?php if ( is_single() ) : ( ?> <?php wp_title(); ?> </div>
6 </title>
7 <link rel="stylesheet" href=" <?php bloginfo('stylesheet_url'); ?> " type="text/css" />
8 </head>
9 <body>
10 <div id="page">
11 <div id="header">
12 <div id="header-1">
13 <div id="header-2">
14 <div id="header-3">
15 <div id="header-4">
16 <div id="header-5">
17 <div id="header-6">
18 <div id="header-7">
19 <div id="header-8">
20 </div>

```

09 In the 'glossyblue' folder, open the index.html file. Cut from the top to where the <!--/header --> ends, paste it in a new PHP file, and save the file as header.php. Go to the default theme folder and open header.php. Copy and replace the tags where it requires PHP code (Template Tag): <title>, <link> stylesheet, <h1>, and <div class=description>. Then replace the nav tags with <?php wp_list_pages();?>.

```

1 <div id="header">
2 <div id="header-1">
3 <div id="header-2">
4 <div id="header-3">
5 <div id="header-4">
6 <div id="header-5">
7 <div id="header-6">
8 <div id="header-7">
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