

# Hacks 2010 WordPress Theme

## Installation Guide

The Hacks theme installs like any other WordPress theme, with just a few extra steps required by the design and architecture of this particular website. Since this theme was designed and built as an update to an existing site with a lot of existing content, this setup guide glosses over some of the details of installing and configuring WordPress from scratch, and makes some assumptions about existing categories and settings. Should you need to install the Hacks theme on a pristine (i.e. empty) WordPress blog, you may need to vary the steps slightly to fill in some of the gaps we're skipping over.

This theme was built for WordPress 2.9, the current release as of this writing. Older versions are not compatible with some theme features, so WordPress 2.9 is the minimum requirement.

### Step 1: Activate the theme

In the WordPress administration panel, navigate to Appearance → Themes. Select the Hacks 2010 theme and activate it. This part is easy.

### Step 2: Activate the plugins

The theme is bundled with a few related plugins but all are technically optional so you can disable any or all of them, if you so choose, and the theme will still work (without the enhanced functionality provided by the plugins, of course). The ones you'll need are:

- Co-Authors Plus (allows a single post to be credited to multiple authors)
- FC Pagination (displays numbered pagination)
- ShareThis (displays the ShareThis button; requires an extra code snippet)
- TMH Pagehits (tracks post views for sorting; requires Stats)
- Wordpress.com Stats (statistical tracking; requires an API key)

Other plugins (such as WP-Syntax, Subscribe to Comments, WP-reCAPTCHA, Twitter Tools) may already be present and active, and are compatible with the theme, so these are just the ones that are new and/or directly associated with the Hacks theme.

Future updates to third-party plugins (Co-Authors Plus, ShareThis, and Stats) may alter the way those plugins behave, or could introduce new bugs that interfere with other parts of the theme, though generally upgrading plugins is safe and seamless. Just the same, upgrade with care.

### ShareThis

ShareThis is a third-party service that allows people to easily share links across the web with a number of social networking and bookmarking sites. They provide a free WordPress

plugin for publishers, but the plugin requires an additional code snippet to identify the site on which the code is embedded.

Visit <http://sharethis.com/publishers/getbutton> to begin the process. You'll be asked to register (it's free), or to log in if you're already registered. Once you've passed that hurdle you can continue to configure the button however you like. The result will be a bit of HTML code that retrieves the ShareThis JavaScript with your site's unique publisher identifier. It will look something like:

```
<script type="text/javascript" charset="utf-8" src="http://w.sharethis.com/button/sharethis.js#publisher=xxxxx-xxx-xxx-xxx-xxxxxxx"></script>
```

Back in WordPress, navigate to Settings → ShareThis (available once the plugin is active) and paste your widget code into the box. Note that each domain on which the plugin runs requires separate activation, but you can use the same publisher code on multiple domains. If you activate this plugin on a staging server you may need to reactivate it manually in production as well.

On the ShareThis settings page, set *both* automatic embedding options to **NO**. The template tag is already built into the theme so we won't need the automatic embedding.

## WordPress.com Stats

The Stats plugin is provided for free by Automattic (the people who make WordPress) and adds basic site statistics and traffic analysis to a WordPress blog. The actual data is stored and processed offsite so the plugin requires a WordPress.com API key to operate. You can obtain this API key for free by creating an account at <http://wordpress.com/signup/> (you can create an account without creating a hosted blog). Once signed in, you can find your unique API key at <http://wordpress.com/profile/>.

Back on the Hacks site, navigate to Plugins → WordPress.com Stats and paste your API key into the field. This completes activation of the Stats plugin, which will begin tracking traffic to your blog. Note that each new domain on which the plugin runs will require separate activation, but you can use the same API key for multiple domains. If you activate this plugin on a staging server you may need to reactivate it manually in production as well.

The TMH Pagehits plugin uses the data collected by the Stats plugin to keep a tally of how many times an individual post has been viewed, allowing users to sort articles by number of views. If either plugin is missing or disabled, the option to sort articles by views will be disabled also.

## Step 4: Set image sizes

Navigate to Settings → Media and modify the maximum sizes for both thumbnails and large images:

- Thumbnail: 220 × 220
- Large: 500 × \_\_\_

The main content column is 500 pixels wide, so setting that as the maximum width for large images will ensure they'll fit within the page. The height for Large images can be any reasonable limit, or set to 0 for no maximum height. The Medium size can be whatever you like, but I recommend a width of 250 pixels (half the width of the main content column).

The largest Thumbnail size used in the Hacks design is 220 pixels by 125 pixels, so that should be the minimum for thumbnails. If you upload a smaller image (or crop an image to produce a smaller thumbnail), the image will be displayed scaled up to 220 pixels wide, and may look blurry or jagged as a result. Though the set size is square, the bottom of the thumbnail is trimmed off to form a rectangle on the rendered page (setting square dimensions seems to improve the cropping and also offers a bit more flexibility for future updates). You can custom crop a thumbnail within WordPress and override the default settings to produce a smaller image, so crop with care if you choose to crop manually.

## Step 5: Set the date format

The design calls for a particular date format with abbreviated days and months, e.g. "Mon, Dec 21, 2009." To achieve this you'll need to set a custom date format under Settings → General. WordPress uses standard PHP date/time notation, which is a bit cryptic if you're not familiar with it. The format setting should read **D, M j, Y**. This format isn't a technical requirement of the theme so you can use any date format you prefer, but it's what was shown in the original design so it's noted here for reference.

## Step 6: Create the Featured categories

Some posts on the Hacks blog are singled out as "Features," to be promoted above regular, non-featured posts. The theme relies on some special categories to distinguish these featured posts, so you'll need to make sure those categories exist for the theme to function properly. You can create and manage categories under Posts → Categories.

**Featured Article** – Should have the slug "featured" and no parent category. From now on, any article you wish to promote as a Featured Article should be assigned to this category.

**Featured Demo** – Should have the slug "featured-demo" and is a child of the existing Demo category (or, if it doesn't exist, you should create the Demo category as well, with no parent and the slug "demo"). Use the Featured Demo category to further distinguish Featured Demo posts from other Demos, as well as from Featured Articles (which may or may not be demos).

Creating these categories is a one-time operation when the theme is installed, so if the categories already exist you can skip this step.

## Step 7: Create the main pages

The Hacks site has four main pages: Home, Articles, Demos, and About. If these don't already exist (which they may), you'll need to create them under the Pages menu when you set up the theme. *These are static WordPress Pages, not blog posts.*

**Home** – Has no page parent and uses the *Home Page* template. The slug is of no consequence since it won't be displayed, but */home/* should suffice. The page content is the welcoming/introduction blurb (just a short sentence describing what this site is about). The page template populates the rest of the page automatically. Comments and pings should be disabled (they wouldn't be displayed anyway).

**Articles** – Has no page parent and uses the default page template. The slug should be */articles/* and the page should have no content (leave it blank; it's a dynamic page). Comments and pings should be disabled (they wouldn't be displayed anyway).

**Demos** – Has no page parent and uses the Demos page template. The slug should be */demos/* and the page should have no content (leave it blank; it's a dynamic page). Comments and pings should be disabled (they wouldn't be displayed anyway).

**About** – Has no page parent and uses the About page template. The slug should be */about/* and the content should explain what the Hacks blog is all about. This page already exists on the previous site, so you'll likely only be editing the existing page to change the page template. You can disable or allow comments and pings as you like (the template will display them if enabled, but you may not want comments on this page).

### The home page blurb

The design calls for a brief introductory paragraph on the home page. Because it's adjacent to a predetermined set of three links, this welcoming message should be short indeed (only a sentence, really) as too many lines of text wouldn't balance visually with the links beside them.

There are also some minor formatting choices available in this intro blurb, according to the original design. Text that is strongly emphasized (using the HTML `<strong></strong>` element) will be colored red. You can include a trailing link to the About page in smaller text using the class "more". Here's an example blurb:

```
<strong>hacks.mozilla.org</strong> is here to highlight leading  
edge stuff that people are doing with <a href="http://  
www.firefox.com/">Mozilla Firefox</a> and the open web. <a  
class="more" href="about/">Learn more&hellip;</a>
```

## Step 8: Set the blog's front page

By default, the front page of a WordPress blog shows the latest posts. You have the option of using a static Page as an alternative front page, with some other page showing the latest posts. Under Settings → Reading, toggle the option "Front page displays" to "A static page." Select the Home page you created in the previous step as the blog's front page. Select

the Articles page as the “posts page” (this is why you had to create those pages first: so they would be available as options in this step). Be sure to save your changes!

And with that, the theme should be up and running.

## Miscellaneous Details

### Widgets

The Hacks theme supports dynamic widgets in separate sidebars on each of the four main pages: Home, Articles, Demos, and About. According to the original design, each of these sidebars should include a listing of blog categories. If a particular sidebar bears no widgets at all, the category list is displayed by default.

Adding just one widget to a sidebar means that entire sidebar becomes dynamic, overriding the default display. This means using any widget necessitates adding the Categories list widget to replace the overridden default. Take note, this also means you can remove the Categories widget entirely, which could make it harder for visitors to find content of interest. The Articles and Demos pages especially should display the Categories widget.

Note that some widgets that weren’t specifically planned for in the design may require some additional styling, especially any third-party widgets.

### Threaded Comments

The theme supports threaded (nested) comments, which you can enable under Settings → Discussion. This is entirely optional, but if you choose to enable threaded comments, I recommend limiting them to only 5 levels. Nesting comments more than 5 levels deep starts to seriously cramp the layout.

### Gravatars

The theme supports author avatars (for both comment authors and blog authors) using the Gravatar service (<http://gravatar.com>). Though recommended, Gravatars are optional as well, and can be enabled/disabled under Settings → Discussion.

## **Installation Checklist**

1. Activate the theme
2. Activate the plugins
3. Set the image sizes
4. Set the date format
5. Create the Featured categories
6. Create the main pages (Home, Articles, Demos, About)
7. Set the blog's front page (Home) and posts page (Articles)

Craig Cook  
[www.focalcurve.com](http://www.focalcurve.com)  
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