

This site I like

WordPress: an excellent way to promote journals and connect with readers



WordPress is a free service launched in 2003 that can be used to build a fully customizable, professional website. According to their own site, www.wordpress.com, WordPress powers 24% of the internet and welcomes 50,000 new sites every day. It is very easy to use, and depending on your level of expertise you can create anything from a simple page to a complicated, multi-level site.

As an example of the level of complexity that a WordPress site can handle, our association (the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists) recently hired an advertising agency to refresh our website (www.camrt.ca). They designed a custom template using WordPress that reflects our new logo and graphic image and provides the functionality required to meet the needs of our members. Among other features, the site offers an event calendar and links to social media, as well as housing our extensive educational offerings and association information. It includes a members' only section where people can log-in and access our member benefits, such as the Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences (JMIRS), and process payments for selected services.

Once the site was created, in-house staff were trained to update the site as necessary and, although it was a bit of a learning curve, it is very user friendly and allows us to be more responsive compared to when changes had to go through a webmaster. As the Managing Editor for JMIRS, I have used the site's "news" functionality to create calls for papers, recruit reviewers and promote our research grant. These news items are created as individual posts in a newsfeed and used as links in a bi-weekly e-blast sent to our membership. It is a very handy tool to keep the association (and JMIRS) top of mind with our membership.

On the other end of the spectrum, a simple site can be created using WordPress templates to meet more basic communication needs. There are over 360 "themes" that are ready-made; all you have to do is customise it. The JMIRS participates in an online journal club, #MedRadJClub, in partnership with two other related society-based journals representing Canada, Australia and the UK. It is an opportunity for our readers worldwide to harness the power of social media to discuss current topics, explore international collaboration and promote evidence-based practice. To facilitate this monthly Twitter chat, a WordPress site was created using the "Hemingway Rewritten" theme. This is a basic site that was created in a day, and has been used to provide a home base for our growing club at <https://medradjclub.wordpress.com/>. Since starting out with a one-page site promoting the required readings and chat topics for each session, it has expanded to include blogs, chat transcripts, a "how-to" section for those new to Twitter, and a news page.

WordPress provides as many "plug-ins" as you can imagine—software uploads that enhance your site, or aid in the management of back-end content. For instance, a Mendeley plug-in can display a shared bibliography system. WordPress can create the simplest or most complex site to meet your needs.

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