

Blogs @ CofC - Advanced Lab

Adding Widgets

A widget allows you to add tools or sections to the sides of your blog. For example you can add a calendar, a set of links or a tag cloud. Follow the instructions below and test out a few widgets. Try out a few and see how they look on your page. Remember, different design templates will allow more or less columns for widgets so experiment to see what fits your needs best.

1. Click on the **Appearance** area then choose **Widgets**.
2. **Available Widgets** lists all the widgets not currently being used on your blog. To add a new widget click the **Add** button next to the widget.
3. The **Current Widgets** (on the right) lists the widgets on your blog. To edit the widget click **Edit** next to the widget you wish to change.
 1. You can add or change content in the widget and click on **Change**.
 2. To finalize the changes click on **Save Changes** at the bottom of the Current Widgets list.

Note: if you are using Categories to separate your classes then make sure to add the **Categories** widget to your **Current Widgets** list.

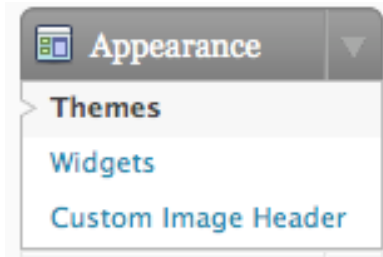
4. You can delete a widget by clicking on **Edit** next to the widget you wish to edit. From the edit window you can delete the widget by clicking on **Remove**.

Customizing your Blog

While most of the blog templates available are "as-is" there are some that allow you to customize the color scheme and/or the banner image. There is a [full list of the templates](#) that allow for customization along with the appropriate banner size at the end of this lab.

Changing your Banner

1. Begin by choosing a template that allows for an alternate banner (**Appearance > Themes**)
2. Now there should be a new menu under **Appearance** called **Custom Image Header**. Click on that menu.



3. There may be many options on the page but you are looking for something like **Upload New Header Image**.
4. Click the **Browse** button below **Choose an image from your computer**.
5. Locate the image on your computer that you wish to use as your banner and click **Open** or **Ok**.
6. Click **Upload**.
7. Your next window allows you to choose what is to be viewed in the banner. Choose your viewable area and click **Crop Header**
8. Now click **Visit Site** to view your new header.

Syndication

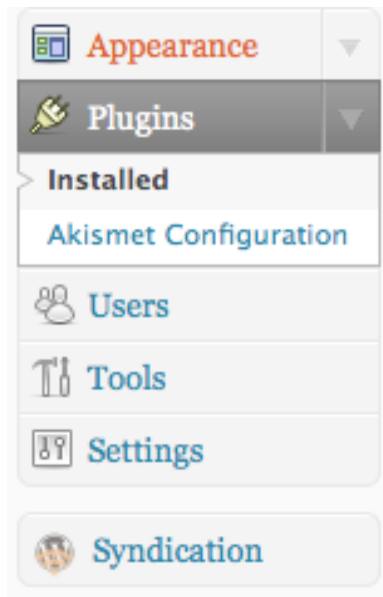
Syndication is combining multiple blogs into one. Earlier you added an RSS feed from another blog or podcast into a box in your sidebar. Syndication is similar to this except the RSS feed displays directly in your blog itself. So why would you want to use this? Well, here's an example: In TLT several of us maintain blogs specific to the schools we cover. We also have a group blog that we use to contribute to as well. So now, instead of posting to two blogs, the main TLT blog is configured to accept RSS feeds from our individual blogs. Now when we publish to our individual blogs and tag it "TLT" it automatically posts to the main TLT blog. Now, basically the TLT blog is a composite of our individual blogs.

Turn on the Syndication Plugin

1. Click on **Plugins** link from the right side of the window.
2. From the list locate the **FeedWordPress** and click on the word **Activate** to the right.

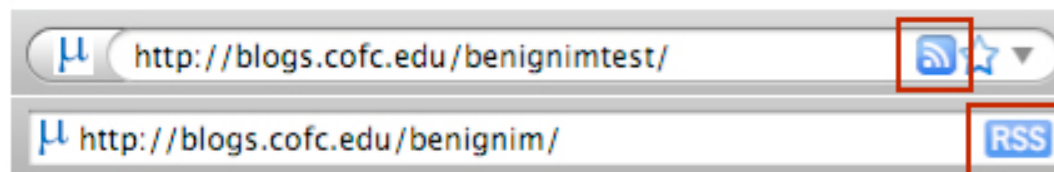


3. You should now see a new menu item on the side entitled **Syndication**.

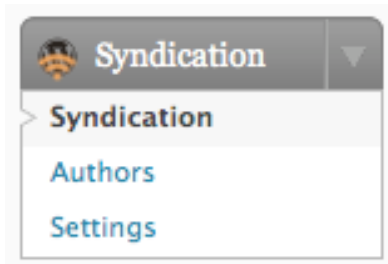


Syndicating Another Blog

1. The first thing you need to do is locate the feed address of a blog you would like to include. To include another blog, navigate to that blog using Firefox or Safari then click on the RSS icon in the web address. Note: this may not work the same when using Internet Explorer.



2. When you click on the icon the browser will open a page containing the RSS feed. Highlight the URL for the feed and then click Copy (**Edit > Copy** or **Apple-C** or **Control-C**). It may look something like this:
feed://blogs.cofc.edu/benignimtest/feed/
3. Now navigate back to your blog and, as the administrator, click on **Syndication** in the side navigation.



4. Next to **Add new source:** paste in the blogs RSS URL (**Edit > Paste** or **Apple-V** or **Control-V**).

Add new source:

5. Click the **Syndicate** button to add the RSS feed to your blog.
6. On the next screen will be a preview of what the feed will look like. If you're happy with it then click **Use this feed**.
7. At this point the RSS feed will only update when you click on the **Update** button. If you want to click on automatic updates click on the **Syndication** link in the header.
8. Next click on **Settings > Syndication**.
9. Next to **Check for feeds ready to be polled for updates:** choose **automatically**.
10. Now click **Save** from the right side of the window.

Deleting a Syndication

1. To delete an RSS feed from syndication click on the **Syndication** link in the left navigation.
2. Mouse over the feed you wish to delete and click on **Unsubscribe**.
3. Next to **Subscription Options** choose the radio button next to your preference.
4. Click on **Unsubscribe from selected feeds**.

Enhancing your Embedded Video from YouTube

Thanks to Jim Duran for sharing an article with me on how to make small

changes to the videos you embed from Youtube. This is considered a more advanced skill because it requires that you work in the **HTML** tab instead of the simpler **Visual** tab. The article can be found at <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/10-youtube-url-tricks-you-should-know-about/>

1. Create a new post and place your cursor within the post where you wish your video to appear.
2. Now click on the **HTML** tab.
3. In your web browser open a new window (**File > New Window**) or a new tab (**File > New Tab**) and navigate to the YouTube video you want to use.
4. Now this time highlight and copy the text from the Embed text box. Do Not use the URL for this technique.



5. Navigate back into your blog post window and, making sure you are in the HTML tab, and paste the text into your post. Your window should look something like this:

Post Add

b i link b-quote del ins img ul ol li co
close tags SWF Media

CofC Flash Rave at the Library

```
<object width="425" height="344"><param name="movie"
value="http://www.youtube.com/v/r6pSTCxf26U&hl=en&fs=1">
name="allowFullScreen" value="true"></param><param name=
value="always"></param><embed src="http://www.youtube.c
hl=en&fs=1" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" allowscriptac
allowfullscreen="true" width="425" height="344"></embed></
```

6. Now comes the editing part :) - Locate within the text **<embed src=**
The URL after that is where you are going to make your additions.
Basically you are going to add certain commands onto the end of the
URL (web address) to make the video react in specific ways.
7. Using the example above with the embed code of **<embed
src="http://www.youtube.com/v/r6pSTCxf26U&hl=en&fs=1"**
here are the commands and how they would look on this url:
 - To hide the search box that appears when a video finishes
playing type **&showsearch=0** at the end of the url.
 - To have the embedded video begin playing at a certain
point type **&start=30** at the end of the url. '&start=30'
will skip first 30s of the video. In general you can modify
the value after start= to the number of seconds you want
to skip the video for.
 - To have the video start automatically when the blog loads
type **&autoplay=1** at the end of the url.
 - To loop the video and have it play over and over again type
&loop=1 at the end of the url.
 - To disable the Related Videos window that displays when
the movie finishes playing type **&rel=0** at the end of the
url.

- To bypass YouTube Regional Filtering change the url from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=<somecode>> to <http://www.youtube.com/v/<somecode>>. Some videos are only available in certain parts of the world. Your IP Address is used to determine your location and then allow or deny access to the video. Note: I was not able to test this myself.

8. Here is the new code with all of the commands added:

```
<object width="425" height="344"><param name="movie" value="http://www.youtube.com/v/r6pSTCxf26U&hl=en&fs=1"></param><param name="allowFullScreen" value="true"></param><param name="allowscriptaccess" value="always"></param><embed src="http://www.youtube.com/v/r6pSTCxf26U&hl=en&fs=1&start=40&showsearch=0&autoplay=1&loop=1&rel=0" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" allowscriptaccess="always" allowfullscreen="true" width="425" height="344"></embed></object>
```

Advanced RSS Inclusion

As you noticed there are widgets that allow you to bring other blog or podcast RSS feeds into the sidebars of your blog (not to be confused with Syndication which merges the RSS feed into your actual blog posts.) However, sometimes you may want to include feeds from many blogs but don't want a bunch of individual boxes cluttering your blog. Well you can use third party online resources to combine several RSS feeds into one that you can then use in your RSS Widget.

1. Using your web browser go to RSS Mixer - <http://www.rssmix.com/engine.php>
2. Within the large text box you will paste the RSS feed URLs. Locate the RSS feed from several blogs and paste them into text box. If you don't have any feeds to use you may use these:
 - <http://blogs.cofc.edu/benignim/?feed=rss2>
 - <http://blogs.cofc.edu/harveyem/?feed=rss2>
 - <http://blogs.cofc.edu/duranj/?feed=rss2>
3. Now click on the **Create!** button.
4. The next window should inform you that **Your new RSS file is here:**

5. Copy the web address listed, ex. <http://www.rssmix.com/u/148565/rss.xml>
6. Now go back into your blog's administrator interface and click on **Appearance > Widgets**.
7. Choose the RSS widget from the left and click **Add**.
8. On the RSS widget on the right click **Edit**.
9. Paste the URL from RSS Mixer the fill out the rest of the form to suit your needs.

RSS [Cancel](#)

Enter the RSS feed URL here:

Give the feed a title (optional):

How many items would you like to display?

Display item content?

Display item author if available?

Display item date?

10. When finished click **Change**.
11. Now click **Save Changes**.
12. Click **View Site**.