# THE WRITING CENTER

## ePortfolio guide #2: Setting up your ePortfolio and its front page

This guide will assist you with the layout and visual design of your ePortfolio and its front page using the **Themes** and **Customize** tools.

Choosing a theme

Themes are customizable templates that unify each page of your ePortfolio with a consistent layout and visual design. There are 150+ themes to choose from; consider your ePortfolio's particular audience and purpose when making this important decision. To get started:
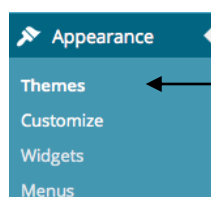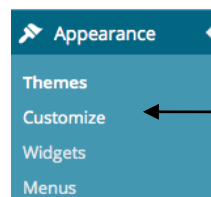
1. Login at sites.vmi.edu and navigate to your Dashboard.
2. Click **Appearance** along the left side and choose **Themes**.
3. Browse through the available themes, and find out more by clicking on one.
4. To preview a theme on your own ePortfolio, hover over the theme and click **Live Preview**.
5. To choose a theme, hover over it and click **Activate**.
6. To change your theme, return to your Dashboard and repeat this process as often as you like.
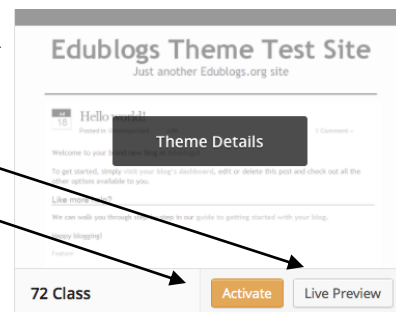
Customizing your theme

Once you have chosen a suitable theme, make your ePortfolio your own by using the **Customize** tool to change the title, colors, and header and background images. Note: some themes allow more customization than others. To get started:

1. Login at sites.vmi.edu and navigate to your Dashboard.
2. Click **Appearance** and then **Customize**.
3. A white column of options will appear; work through each one to customize your theme.
4. Click **Save & Publish** to save changes.
5. Click **Cancel** to return to the Dashboard without saving.
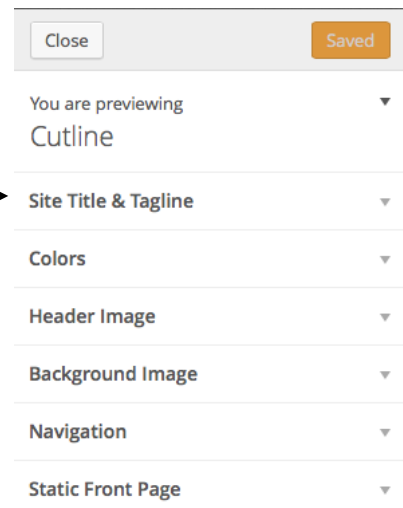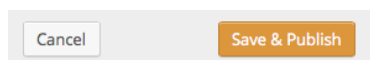
More information about the "Customize" tool is available at http://help.edublogs.org/theme-customizer/
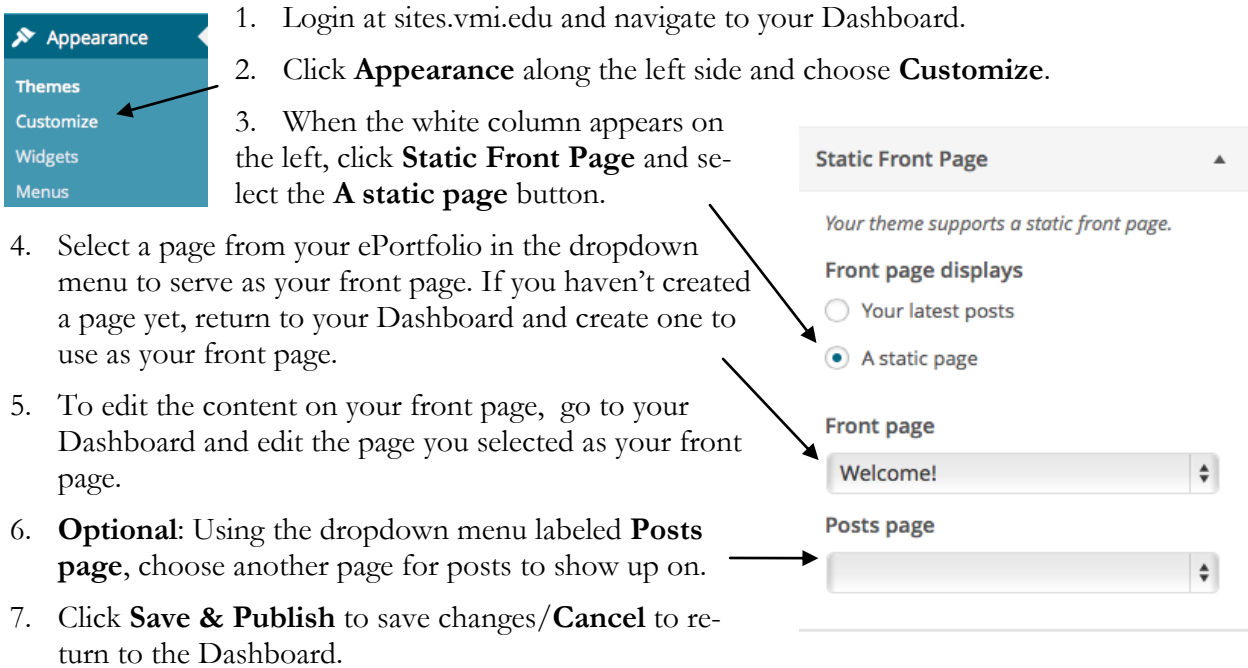
Designing your front page

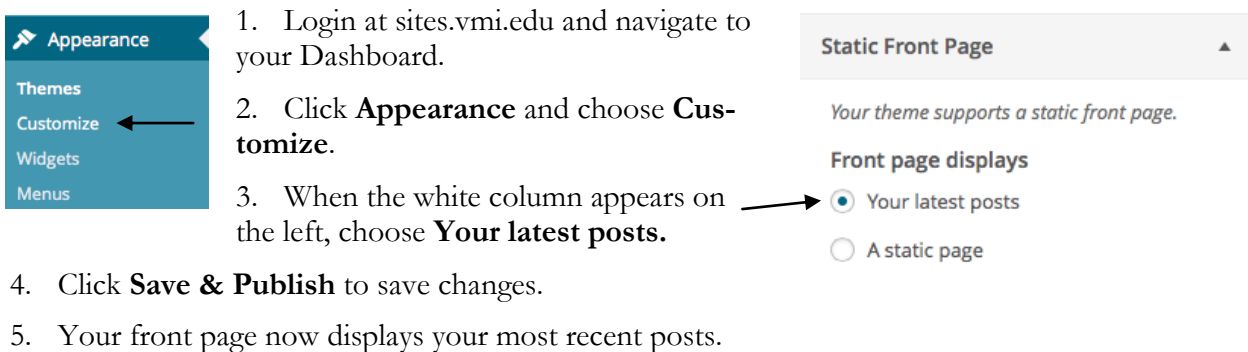Your front page is your chance to welcome visitors to your ePortfolio, and most themes offer two options for doing so:

1. **A static front page** has stable content and only changes when edited directly; this is useful if your ePortfolio is used as an archive of past work and you want to create a static welcome message or introduction to your ePortfolio. **Note: Not all themes allow a static front page.**

2. **A dynamic front page** changes whenever you publish a new post because it collects your most recent posts and displays them in reverse chronological order; this is the most common option for blogs, particularly if you post regularly and want visitors to see your newest work first. **Note: If you choose this, you cannot have a welcome message or other stable content on your front page.**

To build a **static front page**:

1. Login at sites.vmi.edu and navigate to your Dashboard.

2. Click **Appearance** along the left side and choose **Customize**.

3. When the white column appears on the left, click **Static Front Page** and select the **A static page** button.

4. Select a page from your ePortfolio in the dropdown menu to serve as your front page. If you haven't created a page yet, return to your Dashboard and create one to use as your front page.

5. To edit the content on your front page, go to your Dashboard and edit the page you selected as your front page.

6. **Optional**: Using the dropdown menu labeled **Posts page**, choose another page for posts to show up on.

7. Click **Save & Publish** to save changes/**Cancel** to return to the Dashboard.

To build a **dynamic front page:**

1. Login at sites.vmi.edu and navigate to your Dashboard.

2. Click **Appearance** and choose **Customize**.

3. When the white column appears on the left, choose **Your latest posts.**

4. Click **Save & Publish** to save changes.

5. Your front page now displays your most recent posts.