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OVERVIEW

NYU Web Publishing, the NYU instance of WordPress, is a sophisticated and complex platform that may be used to build professional-grade websites, with or without an embedded blog space. It offers a wide variety of themes and plug-ins; this variety of options gives it great flexibility, but can require a considerable up-front investment of time from users in building a site.

The User Advisory Group developed a survey, working with members of the NYU-WP team, in the early spring of 2017. It was sent to all NYU full-time, part-time, and TA/GA faculty under a cover email from Matthew Santirocco, chair of the Teaching Technology Committee, on April 3rd, 2017; the UAG chairs sent out reminder emails on April 10th and April 24th, and the survey closed on April 30th. 770 faculty members responded to at least one survey question (the parallel number for the Spring, 2016 NYU Classes survey was 2310, which likely indicates the more widespread use of the Classes platform, as is borne out by the data adumbrated below).

See the end of the document for recommended next steps regarding the further integration of NYU-WP in the NYU Digital Learning Environment.

USAGE

Totals

- 81% of respondents (614 of 762) report they do not use NYU-WP
- 19% of respondents do use NYU-WP
  - 11% (of total respondents) use in teaching
  - 7% use for disseminating their research
  - 5% use for posting information/announcements
  - 4% use to display a professional profile
While the number of faculty who report using NYU-WP in teaching (87) seems small, it is consistent with back-end statistics provided by the NYU-WP team. While 2192 Teaching & Learning sites have been created, only 229 faculty members have created sites (of any kind) in NYU-WP. This suggests that a relatively small percentage of faculty use NYU-WP in teaching, but that they do so very consistently, creating a new site for each course for each semester (sites that contain student data would not be re-used; a new site would be generated for each new semester, even if the instructor taught the same course), though part of the explanation may also be that instructional technologists are creating WP sites for faculty members (as in Gallatin). It also suggests the NYU-WP survey captured a fairly high percentage of the faculty members who use NYU-WP in teaching, giving us some confidence in the validity of the results.

Use in Teaching

Survey respondents cited four main reasons for using NYU-WP in teaching (which effectually boil down to two: use as a website and use as a blog space):

- To manage all online contact with students in my class [sharing resources, communicating, running discussion, etc.] 49.37%
- As a website I build and share with students 48.10%
- As a web space for students to build pages and create content 35.44%
- As a single, collective student blog 37.97%

Reasons for Not Using NYU-WP:

Two reasons dominated the results:

- “Don’t have enough information about what NYU Web Publishing is or does” 59.57% of respondents to this question (611)
- Other software meets all my needs (such as NYU Classes, Google Sites, Omeka, Squarespace, etc) 50.08% of respondents to this question

All other reasons lagged far behind these two, with “Other” next highest at 13.09% (a wide variety of responses were given under this label) and “I don’t feel I have the technical skills to use NYU Web Publishing” at 10.15%.

Qualitative data supports the conclusion that many faculty are simply unaware of NYU-WP; of 135 “additional comments” left by those who do not use WP at all, a huge preponderance involved lack of information about the platform:

- 74 comments (55%) referenced lack of knowledge about NYU-WP, broken down as follows:
  - 35 comments - Didn’t know we had it/What it is
○ 30 comments mentioned needing more information on what NYU-WP does before deciding whether to use it
○ 9 comments mentioned wanting to know what specifically NYU-WP does compared to what NYU Classes does

● No other sort of comment occurred nearly so often:
  ○ 11 comments (8%) indicated a preference for other platforms (including non-NYU WP)
  ○ 9 comments (7%) indicated that WP didn’t fit the individual’s pedagogy
  ○ 5 comments (4%) indicated need for more direct support to use
  ○ 4 other response types received at least one comment: Don’t have time to learn WP; worry about data security; wary of technology’s value in teaching; would like alumni access.

Comments from those who do use NYU-WP reiterated the need for a wider variety and greater ease in implementing or choosing with themes and plugins that is clear in the quantitative data below.

See Additional Data Analysis for more information on use patterns across units, disciplines, and faculty status.

SATISFACTION

Overall Satisfaction

Among ALL Respondents to this Question [n=162]

● Satisfied = 51.85%
● Neutral = 29.01%
● Dissatisfied = 19.14%

[Full breakdown]

Excluding Respondents who Answered “I Do Not Use NYU-WP” [n=117]

● Satisfied = 68.38%
● Neutral = 11.97%
● Dissatisfied = 19.65%

[Full breakdown]

Only Respondents who Answered “I Use NYU-WP in Teaching” [n=70]

● Satisfied = 74.29%
● Neutral = 12.86%
● Dissatisfied = 12.86%

[Full breakdown]
By comparison the overall satisfaction rate in the 2016 NYU Classes survey was 71%, with 16% neutral and 14% dissatisfied; when only respondents who reported using NYU Classes were included, the satisfaction rate rose to 81%.

That satisfaction with NYU Web Publishing is highest (and dissatisfaction lowest) among respondents who use the platform in teaching may indicate that its utility for creating general purpose websites is currently more limited than its use in teaching; this may have to do with the limitation on themes and plug-ins imposed by the need for maintaining data and SSO security.

Individual Tool Satisfaction

The NYU-WP platform includes a wide range of functionalities and features. In the following ratings, 1=Very Satisfied and 5=Very Unsatisfied; thus, an average rating of 2 would indicate a high level of satisfaction and an average rating of 4 would indicate a low level of satisfaction.

**Highest-rated Features** (All Respondents; n=101)
- Creating a site 2.2
- Creating/editing a page 2.3
- Creating/editing a post 2.3
- Choosing a theme 2.5
- Uploading media 2.6

**Lowest-rated Features** (All Respondents; n=101)
- Activating/deactivating/placing plugins 3.1
- Activating/deactivating/placing widgets 3.0
- Creating menus 2.9
- Managing comments 2.9
- Using Help features 2.9

**Highest-rated Features** (Respondents who use NYU-WP in teaching; n=61)
- Creating a site 2.2
- Creating/editing a post 2.2
- Creating/editing a page 2.3
- Assigning Roles/Permissions 2.5
- Adding users 2.5
- Choosing a theme 2.5
**Lowest-rated Features** (Respondents who use NYU-WP in teaching; n=61)
- Activating/deactivating/placing plugins 3.0
- Activating/deactivating/placing widgets 2.9
- Using Help features 2.9
- Creating menus 2.9
- Embedding Media in posts or pages 2.9

**Highest-rated Features** (Respondents who use NYU-WP, but not in teaching; n=42)
- Creating a site 2.2
- Creating/editing a page 2.3
- Creating/editing a post 2.4
- Uploading media 2.5
- Choosing a theme 2.6

**Lowest-rated Features** (Respondents who use NYU-WP, but not in teaching; n=42)
- Activating/deactivating/placing widgets 3.2
- Activating/deactivating/placing plugins 3.2
- Adding users 3.1
- Using categories and tags 3.1
- Managing comments 3.1

While the features ranked highest and lowest remained largely consistent regardless of whether the faculty members used NYU-WP in teaching, overall tool satisfaction was lower among faculty who used NYU-WP for non-teaching purposes. It is especially notable that Adding Users ranked among the five lowest-rated features among respondents who did not use NYU-WP in teaching, while ranking among the five highest-rated features among those who did use NYU-WP in teaching. This may have to do with the inability to add users from outside NYU at various levels of access permission. The small number of respondents coupled with the relative compression between the top and bottom ranked features, however, should lead one to interpret this data cautiously; focus groups might provide better, more granular data on the success of different features in NYU-WP.

**Most-Desired Additional Features**

Among respondents who report using NYU-WP in teaching (n=66)

Integration with NYU Classes (auto-create WP site as blog in Classes menu) 30%
Bulk roster import from Albert 30%
Easy request for additional plugins and themes 20%
Create site from template 20%
Expanded theme options 20%
Copy a layout and content of existing NYU Web Publishing site to a new NYU Web Publishing site 18%
Integration with NYU Drive 18%

Among respondents who report using NYU-WP, but not in teaching (n=42)

Easy request for additional plugins and themes 33%
Expanded theme options 29%
Integration with NYU Classes (auto-create WP site as blog in Classes menu) 29%
Greater support/training 21%
Create site from template 19%

It is notable, if curious, that even among respondents who reported using NYU-WP, but not in teaching, the desire for an integration with NYU Classes was high; indeed, this group clearly preferred a Classes integration to a pull from Albert (only 5% listed the latter among their most desired additional features), while the demand for either was about equal among faculty who did report using NYU-WP in teaching.

The ability to copy a site and integrate with NYU Drive were named by 17% of faculty who use NYU-WP, but not in teaching - just out of the top five, but not significantly different than the data for faculty who do use NYU-WP in teaching. However, the desire for greater support/training was considerably higher among those who use NYU-WP for non-teaching purposes (21% vs. 11% for those who use NYU-WP in teaching). Either or both of two factors may explain this discrepancy: 1) the greater availability of instructional support than for non-pedagogical projects and 2) the greater variety and complication of the uses of NYU-WP for non-teaching purposes.

SUPPORT

Those who use NYU-WP in teaching largely take the lead in setting up and managing their sites, but to a lesser extent than in NYU-Classes, which offers fewer design choices:

- Do all set up and management on my own 66% (compared to 76% in NYU Classes 2016 Survey)
- Wholly set up and managed by assistant(s)/TAs 8% (compared to 5% in NYU Classes 2016 Survey)
- Some assistance in setting up or managing 27% (compared to 19% in NYU Classes 2016 Survey)
The sources of support for use of NYU-WP differ significantly from those for NYU Classes:

- Teaching Assistant/Global Academic Fellow 26% (30% in NYU Classes Survey)
- Administrative assistant/Faculty Support 33% (51% in NYU Classes Survey)
- Digital Studio 11% (not listed for NYU Classes Survey)
- School or program-based IT or Educational Technologist 30% (15% in NYU Classes Survey)
- Central IT@NYU (Help Desk, Academic Technology Specialist or Educational Technologist) 11% (10% in NYU Classes Survey)
- Other 18% (12% in NYU Classes Survey)

As it seems unlikely the profile of the instructional technologists has grown so much in a year, the most plausible explanation for the greater reliance on instructional technologists for NYU-WP (as opposed to administrative aides for NYU Classes) is the greater complexity and perceived boutique character of NYU-WP; that is, faculty assume it is known to the few rather than than many.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the survey results, the UAG chairs recommend consideration of the following steps for raising the profile and increasing the use of NYU-WP in teaching and learning:

- Integrate NYU-WP as the default blog tool in NYU Classes. Classes has a much broader user base, so the presence of NYU-WP as a tool option in Classes will both increase awareness of NYU-WP and manifest how it differs from Classes.
- Showcase some of the best pedagogical uses of NYU-WP for the Instructional Technologist Subcommittee and develop a Best Practices document for its pedagogical use, stressing the different use cases for NYU-WP and NYU Classes.
- Create a guide to the different options for creating websites using NYU platforms (NYU-WP, Google Sites, Reclaim hosting, etc.), outlining the features they provide, the average time it takes to create sites, and the learning curve in developing proficiency in the platform.
- Consider whether sites created for non-teaching purposes (ie, that do not house student data) need to meet the same security standards for plug-ins and themes as teaching sites.
ADDITIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

Class Mode

Use of NYU-WP in teaching appears to be associated more heavily with discussion-based classes than with lecture or mixed mode courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pct of Respondents who Answered Do Not Use NYU-WP in Teaching</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents who Answered Use NYU-WP in Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix of Lecture/Discussion</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily Discussion</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided Practice</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully Online Course</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disciplinary Area

Use of NYU-WP in teaching skews heavily toward Humanities disciplines and away from professional and social science contexts; the areas where there was a substantial discrepancy between the overall percentage of respondents to the survey and the percentage who report using NYU-WP in teaching:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Overall</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Answering Use NYU-WP in Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experience

Contrary to the common perception that older faculty members would be less likely to adopt relatively complex platforms like NYU-WP, the number of years in teaching made little difference in the likelihood of faculty members using NYU-WP:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Who Answered Don't Use NYU-WP</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Who Answered Use NYU-WP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status

However, part-time and TA/GA faculty are considerably less likely to spend the time necessary to learning the platform than full-time faculty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Who Answered Don't Use NYU-WP</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Who Answered Use NYU-WP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FT</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA/GA</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There was also a substantial discrepancy in the relative volume of use among different academic units, with Gallatin and Liberal Studies in particular using NYU-WP disproportionately to their overall numbers; conversely, SPS used NYU-WP much less in proportion to their overall response to the survey. This probably reflects the large number of PT faculty in SPC, while the heavier use in Gallatin and LS reflects their emphasis on the liberal arts and the active support of educational technology in those units. Here are the six schools that had the highest percentage of the respondents who used NYU-WP, compared with their percentage of the respondents who do not use NYU-WP:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Who Answered Don't Use NYU-WP</th>
<th>Pct of Respondents Who Answered Use WP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS/GSAS</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinhardt</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallatin</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tisch</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandon</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix: Granular Overall Satisfaction Responses

Satisfaction (all respondents)
Very Satisfied 6.17%
Satisfied 29.01%
Somewhat Satisfied 16.67%
Neutral 29.01%
Somewhat Dissatisfied 9.88%
Dissatisfied 5.56%
Very Dissatisfied 3.70%

Satisfaction (excluding respondents who do not use NYU-WP)
Very Satisfied 8.55%
Satisfied 36.75%
Somewhat Satisfied 23.08%
Neutral 11.97%
Somewhat Dissatisfied 12.82%
Dissatisfied 5.98%
Very Dissatisfied 0.85%

Satisfaction (only Respondents who use NYU-WP in Teaching)
Very Satisfied 10.00%
Satisfied 40.00%
Somewhat Satisfied 24.29%
Neutral 12.86%
Somewhat Dissatisfied 11.43%
Dissatisfied 0.00%
Very Dissatisfied 1.43%