Academic Domains and Websites @ Grinnell College

Introduction

- Welcome to Sites @ Grinnell, the college's web hosting platform. The Digital Liberal Arts Collaborative (DLAC) is happy to support your web hosting and publishing needs and help you to design and develop your domains and sites. Just drop us a note at dlac@grinnell.edu.
- To request a web hosting account, you'll fill out a short Qualtrics form. The "Request a Domain" button at https://sites.grinnell.edu will take you to the same form.
- When you request an account, we will create what is called a "primary domain" or a "main domain" (or, more technically, a subdomain), with a URL in the form of something.sites.grinnell.edu. You will tell us what you want the "something" to be. You will also have the ability to create and manage further domains and subdomains in your account.
- When your account is created, you should receive an email with your cPanel username and password. cPanel is the administrative dashboard of your account … which is different from the dashboard of specific applications such as WordPress or Omeka. You may not need to spend much if any time in cPanel, depending on how you use your account.
- You may not normally need to use your cPanel credentials, because Sites is part of the college's Single Sign-On system (SSO). But if you need to access your account via FTP or SSH, then you would need those credentials. If you don't know your cPanel username and password, please contact Mo Pelzel at dlac@grinnell.edu.
- To access your domain, when you are logged in to the Grinnell College network, go to https://sites.grinnell.edu. In the navigation menu at the top of the page, click on "cPanel Dashboard." Again, this is single sign-on (SSO), so if you are logged in to the college network with the same email address that is associated with your domain, you should not have to enter any credentials such as username/password:
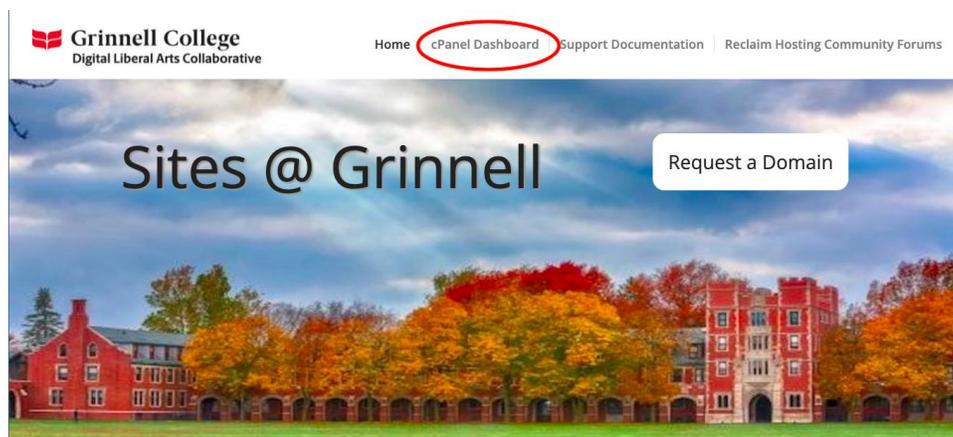
- This will take you to your cPanel, the administrative area for your web hosting account. There are many controls and icons here, but you will probably only need to deal with a few of them, including "My Apps" in the Applications module and "File Manager" in the Files module. If you have further questions about how to use features in the cPanel, please reach out to us at dlac@grinnell.edu.
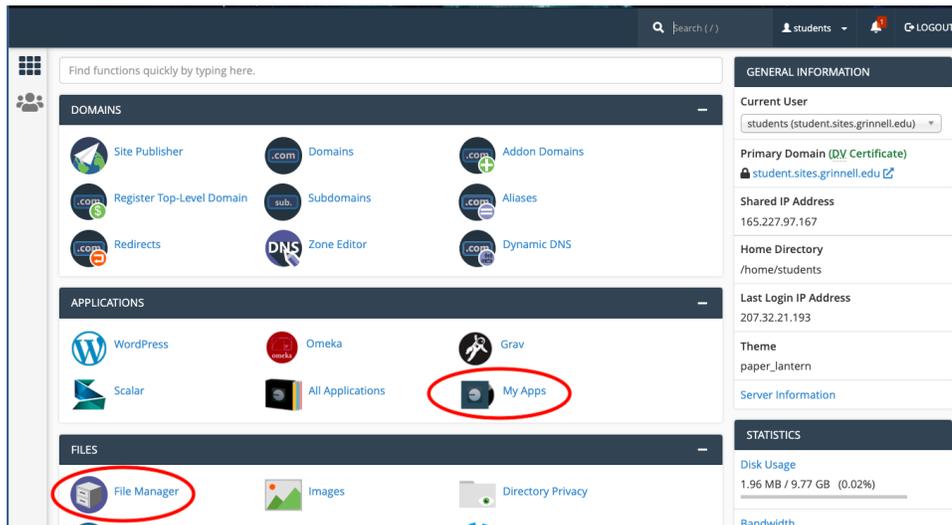
WordPress

- Many of our clients use the WordPress content management system (CMS). If you have requested WordPress to be installed in your primary domain or in another domain, you access the WordPress site by clicking on "My Apps" from the cPanel dashboard, which will bring you to a page that lists all your installed applications. On this page, you can access the WordPress admin dashboard (which, again, is different from the cPanel admin dashboard) by clicking the link that ends in /wp-admin. Again, you should not have to enter any credentials:
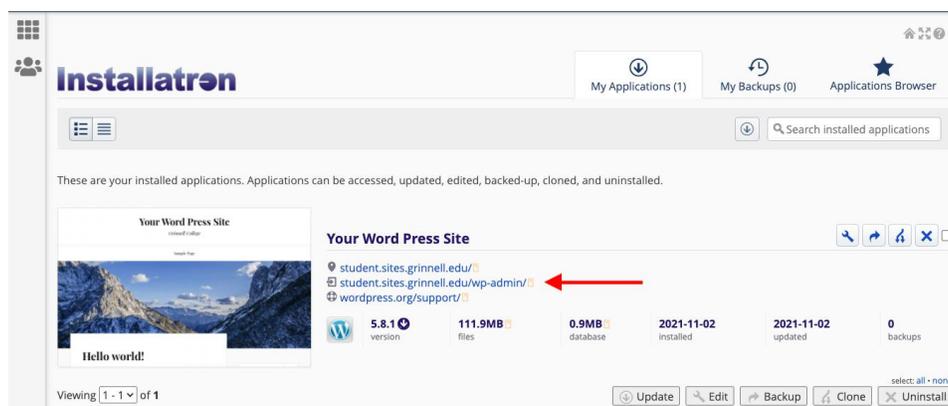
- That will bring you to your WP dashboard, where you can design and develop a WordPress site. We have a quick guide introduction to WordPress at Getting Started with WordPress.docx. There is also basic documentation at https://sites.grinnell.edu/support/wordpress-community-docs/ , and you can always contact us at dlac@grinnell.edu for support with designing and developing your site. We also recommend the tutorials and guides at WP Beginner (start guide, YouTube channel).
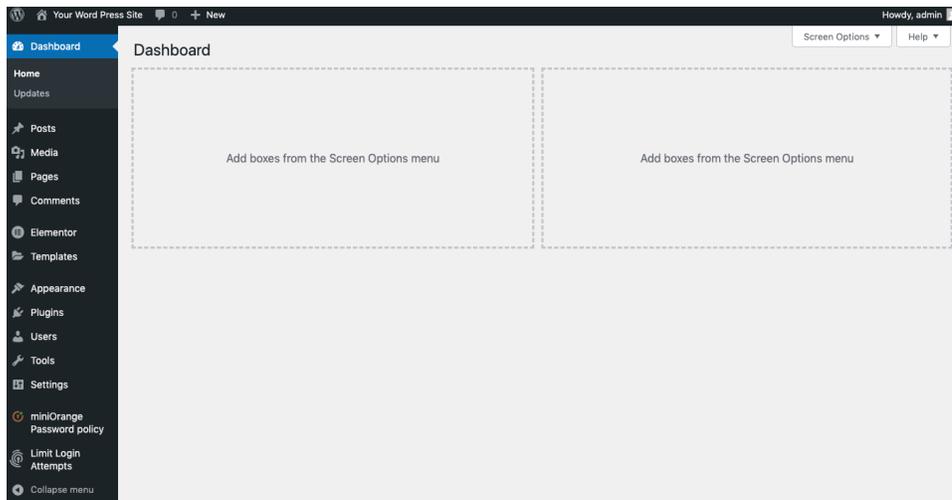
- By default, the "Lovecraft" theme is installed, but you can switch to a different theme if you wish. Consult with us to determine an appropriate theme for your site.
- There are several possible interfaces for composing and editing content in WordPress. By default, we set up your WP site to use the "Classic Editor" interface. This is an editing interface that is most similar to those of word processing applications such as MS Word and Google Docs. WordPress also comes with a modular way to compose content known as the "block editor." If you want to learn more about the block editor, consult with us. The block editor can be enabled by deactivating the classic editor plugin. Finally, we also support a "page builder" interface called Elementor. Elementor also employs a modular format to build pages and posts. We have a license for the Pro version of Elementor as well. Again, consult with us to learn more if you are interested.

Ongoing support

- Now that you have web hosting and your own domain, you can use these resources in your courses, projects, research, etc. You have the opportunity to build on the Web, create additional subdomains, start a blog, etc. There are many applications that can be installed in your web spaces, or you can build your own websites using standard web authoring tools.
- Students might think about using their domain to begin building a portfolio of your academic and professional work, so that by the time you get to fourth year and are seeking a job, grad school admission, a grant, or some other opportunity, you will have an attractive website to display your best work, reference your resume, etc. WordPress is a very good platform for a portfolio. As long as you are a student at the college, there is no cost to you, and you have access to our support services.
- When you leave the college, you will have the ability to take your domain with you by migrating to a new hosting service. Contact us at dlac@grinnell.edu for more information. Generally, we can keep your domain up for a few months after you leave the college, until you switch to a new hosting provider or tell us to delete the account.

- As always, we are here to help. If you have any questions, contact us at dlac@grinnell.edu.