What is WordPress Multisite and how to enable your own network

Tutorial · https://mhthemes.com/support/knb/how-to-enable-wordpress-multisite-network/

WordPress has additional functionality that allows you to create an entire network of websites as opposed to a singular WordPress website. This is known as WordPress Multisite. WordPress Multisite allows you to create an endless number of *subsites* using just a single WordPress installation. Each subsite of the network is administered from the same familiar WordPress dashboard. Subsites are completely independent instances in their own right.



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The whole multisite network also makes use of just a single database, not only does this make administering the database a much simpler process, but it also opens up the possibilities of inter-connecting subsites to create even more complex network structures. The multisite network administrator can also make available a certain collection of *Themes* and *Plugins* that its subsites within the multisite network can choose (or indeed be forced) to make use of.

Each subsite of a WordPress Multisite behaves just like any standard WordPress installation and includes all default taxonomies and basic features such as *Posts*, *Pages*, *Tags*, *Categories*, *Menus*,

Widgets and the *Customizer*. Everything you should be and probably are perfectly familiar with.

Examples of WordPress Multisites in action

There are many good examples of WordPress Multisites in action that you can take a look at:

- MH Themes
- EduBlogs
- Harvard Blogs
- BBC America
- NY Times Blogs
- Reuters Blogs
- University of Mary Washington
- American University
- University of Leicester

Enabling WordPress Multisite

By default, multisite functionality isn't enabled when you first install WordPress. However, you can quite easily enable multisite by making one very small modification to your *wp-config.php* file.

```
define( 'WP_ALLOW_MULTISITE', true );
```

Simply add the above code directly above the below stated message using your text editor or IDE.

```
/* That's all, stop editing! Happy blogging. */
```

By doing so, you will be enabling the ability to create your own network, which you can do so via the **Tools => Network Setup** administration menu from within your WordPress dashboard. The first thing is to choose whether you wish to use subdomains or subdirectories for your future network.

Subdomain vs. Subdirectory

The obvious difference between both subdomain and subdirectory installations are the subsite URL's. All new subsites on a subdomain network would be created using a subdomain as the blog name, for

example *blogname.mydomain.com*. Whereas a subdirectory network would create new subsites in a subfolder of where your network is installed, such as *mydomain.com/blogname/*.

[Subdomain vs. Subdirectory]

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The simplest option is to use subdirectories for your network as you don't need to make any modifications to your *Domain Name System* (DNS). When you're choosing to install a subdomain based multisite network, this will require you to *add a wildcard A entry to your domain name*. No need to worry though as this is generally quite straight-forward - let's see how that would work.

Wildcard A Entry for Subdomain based WordPress Multisite

A *wildcard A entry* basically allows for dynamic creation of subdomains on your particular domain name. Without a wildcard, you and your networks' users won't be able to administer or visit any of the network subsites. You can create a wildcard for your domain using software provided to you by your server or hosting provider.

cPanel: Some hosts and server configurations will allow you to create wildcard subdomains directly from within the very popular cPanel software. Simply click on the **Sub-Domains** icon under the *Domains* heading, and enter an **asterisk (*)** in the field marked *Subdomain*. Hit the **Create** button to complete the wildcard creation process.

Plesk: Users of Plesk will have issues in creating a wildcard entry for their domain name. The official Plesk instructions don't actually work due to the way Plesk handles subdomain folder creation.

WHM: The most popular *Web Hosting Manager* software that web hosts tend to provide their customers is WHM. If the cPanel method above fails to work then you can try to do the same thing using WHM. Login to WHM and navigate through the main menu and click the **Edit DNS Zone** menu under the *DNS Functions* heading.

[cPanel and WHM]

Image Source: Screenshot – CPanel.com

Select your domain name from the list shown on-screen and click the **Edit** button to begin adding your wildcard. You should now see a list of fields, each containing information about your domain name. Copy to your clipboard the **IP number** that appears in most of these fields, it will look

something like *123.456.78.90*.

Locate the heading **Add New Entries Below This Line** and enter an **asterisk (*)** in the first empty text field. Leave the number *14400* in the field next to it, and select **A** from the drop down list. Once you select **A** from the drop down list, another empty field will appear. Simply paste in the IP number you copied to your clipboard into this field. Complete the process by hitting the **Save** button.

Alternatively: If all of the above fails to work, there may be another method you can use via your hosts control panel. I personally have to use this method too as my server provider also manages my DNS settings via a web-based control panel. Login using the information provided to you by your hosting provider and locate either **Domain Name** or **DNS Settings** menu option (the name may vary) from within the software your host provides you with.

If your host or server provider manages your DNS like mine does, you should be able to modify each of your registered domain names. Select to modify your chosen domain name and add a new subdomain using an **asterisk (*)** as its name.

Final Steps to Enable your WordPress Multisite Network

Upon clicking the **Install** button, you will be given two snippets of code with on-screen instructions for you to follow. So all you need to do in the next step is copy and paste the first snippet of code into your *wp-config.php* file, at the same location where you enabled your multisite. The second snippet needs to be pasted into your *.htaccess* file.

Once you have done both of the above steps, you can return to your WordPress Multisite dashboard and click the **Login** link to complete the installation process. Now your multisite installation is complete and you've successfully created a multisite network in WordPress.

Conclusion and further assistance

Setting up a WordPress Multisite to create a professional network in WordPress can be achieved with only a few steps. If you would like to find out more about multisite networks in WordPress, there is lots of additional basic and advanced information provided on *WordPress.org*:

- Before you create a Multisite Network
- Create a Multisite Network
- Search for Multisite Plugins

- Configuring Wildcard Subdomains