



Lesson #9

Developing sidebar.php

By

Lynette Chandler
Tech Based Training

<http://TechBasedTraining.com/>

**NOTICE: You Do NOT Have the Right
to Reprint or Resell this Report!**

You Also MAY NOT Give Away,
Sell or Share the Content Herein

If you obtained this report from anywhere other than **Tech Based Training.com** , you have a pirated copy.

Help stop internet piracy by letting me know. Send email to
customerservice@techbasedsupport.com

© 2010 Copyright Lynette Chandler

Legal Disclaimer: Keeping things simple here, I have to say that I cannot promise you success. I can give you direction and advice based on my experiences and good internet marketing practices. What you do with this information is up to you. As a Tech Based Training member you agree to not hold me responsible for your results.

Ah... The Beloved Sidebar

If you have worked with WordPress themes before, this is the one file you edit often. It is in fact, one of my favorites. So much fun and money making stuff can be put in here. Today, you and I are going to add tags that will list the categories, authors, archives, blog roll and meta information into this file. These are the same tags you've been briefly introduced to these tags in the last lesson while we were building our footer.

Start Up Your Engines

By now you should more or less know the drill. Every time you sit down to work on a theme, you'll need to start or gather your tools.

- Start up your local server
- Launch PsPad
- If developing on web server, launch Pspad and connect to your web host
- in PsPad, navigate to the theme folder
- Open your browser
- If you want you can log into your sandbox blog. That is my habit. Most importantly is to visit your sandbox blog in your browser. Keep it open so you can refresh this to check your progress as you go

sidebar.php

In PsPad, open sidebar.php. One of the first things you'll notice is that the links and just about every bit of information in the sidebar is inside an unordered list item . This is so the theme will be compatible with WordPress under as

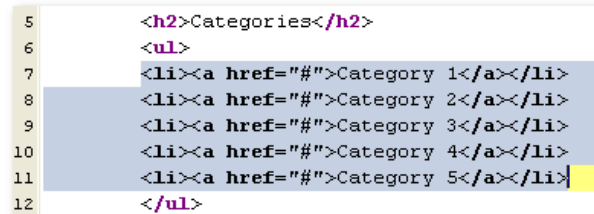
many varied conditions as possible. This will become awfully important the moment we start widgetizing the theme in later lessons.

You probably also notice that sidebars like headers and footers can contain static HTML – text, images etc that do not change when your client adds posts or categories. But the reason we want to add tags in the sidebar is so that things can be automated some what. For example, archives will automatically update to show the last few months, author listings will be updated when the client adds or removes authors and so on.

We want the client to be as independent as possible – no, you won't lose their long term business. There will always be something they will need you to fix or add or modify.

Displaying categories

In sidebar.php, highlight the text after `</h2>` to just before ``



```
5 <h2>Categories</h2>
6 <ul>
7 <li><a href=\"#\">Category 1</a></li>
8 <li><a href=\"#\">Category 2</a></li>
9 <li><a href=\"#\">Category 3</a></li>
10 <li><a href=\"#\">Category 4</a></li>
11 <li><a href=\"#\">Category 5</a></li>
12 </ul>
```

Delete and replace that chunk of code with this one.

```
<?php wp_list_categories('title_li='); ?>
```

Now, refresh the sandbox blog in your browser. You should see a list of categories from your blog. If you haven't added new categories in your blog, you will probably only see one – 'Uncategorized'. That's fine. You can go ahead and add more categories now if you wish – just to check how it'll look like when a real blog starts adding categories.

When you have created several categories, then refresh your blog. You could find that not all of them are showing up. This is because by default, `wp_list_categories` will hide categories that don't have posts in them. There is a reason to that. Because when someone clicks on a empty category, they will get a

nasty 404 not found error. But sometimes you just want to list them all whether there posts or not. To force WordPress to display all categories, simply add this to the end of your code.

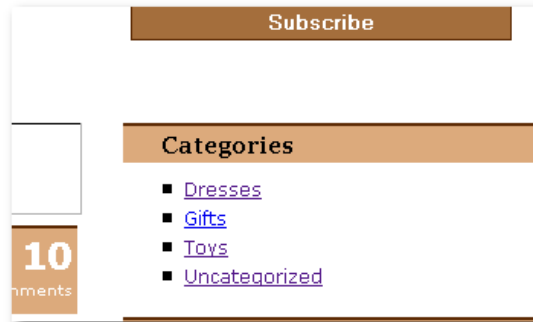
```
&show_option_all=1
```


so your final code is

```
<?php  
wp_list_categories('title_li=&hide_empty=0  

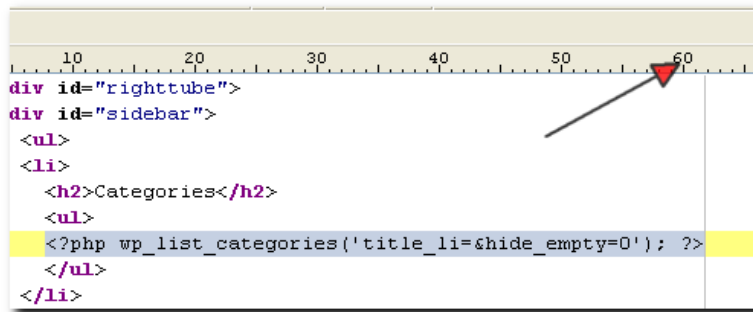
```

Now, all my categories show up like this.

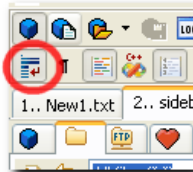


 Please make sure the code does not get on another line when you paste it into PsPad. Sometimes this may cause problems. When I say another line, I don't mean wrapping. In PsPad, you can wrap the code so the page is not so wide you can hardly see what you're doing.

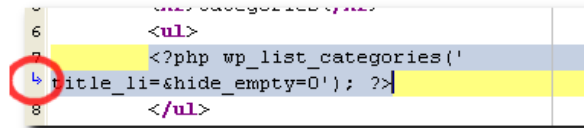
To wrap, simply click on the ruler to the top of the screen



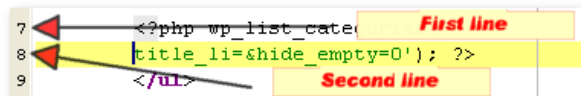
A thin grey line will be displayed all down the page. This is what sets the wrap width. If your text still does not wrap, try clicking this button on the toolbar.



This is wrapping and it is fine. You can tell when a text is wrapped and when a text is on another line by looking at your line numbers. This little angled arrow tells me the line is wrapped – OK.



This tells me the code is on another line – Not OK.



Alright, so much for a mini PsPad tutorial. Moving on.

Displaying archives

Back to PsPad and sidebar.php, highlight all the list items. Replace them with this code:

```
<?php wp_get_archives(); ?>
```

So you go from this

```
11 <h2>Archives</h2>
12 <ul>
13 <li><a href="#">Archives 1</a></li>
14 <li><a href="#">Archives 2</a></li>
15 <li><a href="#">Archives 3</a></li>
16 <li><a href="#">Archives 4</a></li>
17 <li><a href="#">Archives 5</a></li>
18 </ul>
```

To this

```
11 <h2>Archives</h2>
12 <ul>
13 <?php wp_get_archives(); ?>
14 </ul>
15 </li>
```

Refresh your blog in the browser. You should see links by month in the sidebar. If all your posts are in one month, you'll only see one months' links. If you have a history of posts in different months like I do – having worked with the Sandbox blog for so long, you'll see several links. Like this.



You can modify this tag further. Supposing you prefer weekly archives instead, then simply change your code to this. Notice I only added quotes and the type.

```
<?php wp_get_archives('type=weekly'); ?>
```

Save the file, refresh your browser. You should see links like these.



You can also limit the the number of links to display. I want to limit it to only three links to keep the sidebar short and nice. So I'll add this right after weekly, still inside the quotes.

```
&limit=3
```

The finished code is:

```
<?php  
wp_get_archives('type=weekly&limit=3'); ?>
```

You can also display the number of posts each week. Just add

```
&show_post_count=1
```

Full code:

```
<?php  
wp_get_archives('type=weekly&limit=3&show_  
post_count=1'); ?>
```

This is what you'll get:



Tag options

Quick note about the WordPress template tags we've been using so far. These are referred to as 'parameters'. Parameters are the tiny little add ons – example &show_post_count=1 to the template that that alter the final output slightly.

As you have witnessed in the Archive template tag – we added a few parameters to the tag that changes the links. Not all template tags have parameters, but many do. That includes the wp_list_pages you have used and a few more template tags that follow.

We will combine a few parameters for demonstration sake. But to find out all the parameters, [visit the Codex](#), click on the template tag you want to explore. For the bootcamp, our goal is to convert a template to WordPress, not customization. However, knowing there are parameters to add and how to add them as we do here, will be very helpful when you are customizing any template for your client.

Add an authors' list

Once more, highlight the authors' list. Replace with this code.

```
<?php wp_list_authors(); ?>
```

We want to go from this:

```
17 <h2>Authors</h2>
18 <ul>
19 <li><a href="#">Author 1</a></li>
20 <li><a href="#">Author 2</a></li>
21 <li><a href="#">Author 3</a></li>
22 <li><a href="#">Author 4</a></li>
23 <li><a href="#">Author 5</a></li>
24 </ul>
```

To this:

```
17 <h2>Authors</h2>
18 <ul>
19 <?php wp_list_authors(); ?>
20 </ul>
```

Refresh your blog and you should see.... nothing! Well, that's not true. I don't know what you will see because I don't know if you added authors to your blog or not. Remember, in lesson 20, I encouraged you to add a few authors? This is why.

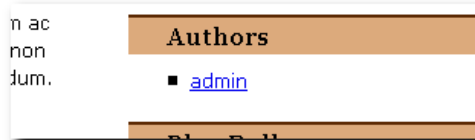
The template tag `wp_list_authors` hides the admin account by default. So if you don't have any authors in your blog, no authors will be displayed. If you want to display the admin as well, you can force it to by adding this parameter to the template tag.

```
'exclude_admin=0'
```

The final code is:

```
<?php
wp_list_authors('exclude_admin=0'); ?>
```

Save, refresh the blog and this is what I get on my sandbox blog.



Adding the blog roll

Highlight the list items, replace them with:

```
<?php wp_list_bookmarks(); ?>
```

We want to go from here:

```
23 <h2>Blog Roll</h2>
24 <ul>
25 <li><a href="#">Link 1</a></li>
26 <li><a href="#">Link 2</a></li>
27 <li><a href="#">Link 3</a></li>
28 <li><a href="#">Link 4</a></li>
29 <li><a href="#">Link 5</a></li>
30 </ul>
```

To here:

```
23 <h2>Blog Roll</h2>
24 <ul>
25 <?php wp_list_bookmarks(); ?>
26 </ul>
```

Refresh your browser and you will see... this.



Something not quite right there. That's not your fault. It's because WordPress is being inconsistent. The `wp_list_bookmarks` tags do not behave like the other tags do. So, we have to improvise a bit when adding the blogroll. Add some parameters.

```
<?php
wp_list_bookmarks('title_li=&categories=0
'); ?>
```

Now, when you refresh your browser, the blog roll should turn out nicely.



Adding meta information

Unlike the other tags, there is no one quick and neat template tag to do this. Most blogs also do not display this information. The login, logout and register links. It is not exactly a security issue to display them. After all, anyone who is familiar with WordPress like a hacker will know exactly how to go to the login, log out and register pages whether you display the link or not.

This is a matter of preference. For general templates, where we are unsure what kind of web site the template will be used on, we will go ahead and add at the minimum a login/logout and register links.

Highlight the login link – not the whole list item. This time, it is a little different because WordPress does not generate the login links in a list. Replace with this code.

```
<?php wp_logout(); ?>
```

So, again to be clear, we are going from this:

```
29      <h2>Meta</h2>
30      <ul>
31      <li><a href="#">Login</a></li>
32      <li><a href="#">Register</a></li>
33      </ul>
```

To this:

```
29      <h2>Meta</h2>
30      <ul>
31      <li><?php wp_logout(); ?></li>
32      <li><a href="#">Register</a></li>
33      </ul>
```

You don't have to add a log out link because the template tag `wp_loginout` will automatically display a log out link when you are logged in and a log in link when you are logged out. Try it. If you are not logged in to your sandbox blog, try logging in and refresh your blog. See what happens.

Finally, we highlight the Register list item – not the link only. I know, this is a bit confusing because WordPress coding is not consistent. As with any open source software, WordPress is a work in progress and you'll find inconsistency like these. Replace it with this.

```
<?php wp_register(); ?>
```

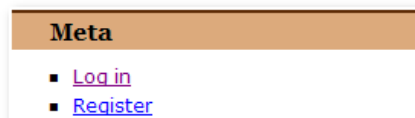
Once again, we are going from this:

```
29     <h2>Meta</h2>
30     <ul>
31     <li><?php wp_loginout(); ?></li>
32     <li><a href="#">Register</a></li>
33     </ul>
```

To this:

```
29     <h2>Meta</h2>
30     <ul>
31     <li><?php wp_loginout(); ?></li>
32     <?php wp_register(); ?>
33     </ul>
```

Refresh your browser, it should look like this when logged in

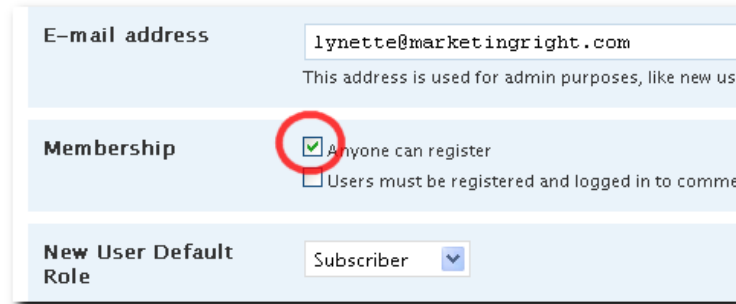


Problem?

Could it be that you don't see a Register link but the code is there? The answer is simple. New user registrations is probably closed. To make it display,

- Log in as admin to your sandbox blog, go to Settings >> General.
- Scroll down the page a little bit, look for Membership.

- Check the checkbox next to Anyone can register.
- Save changes.

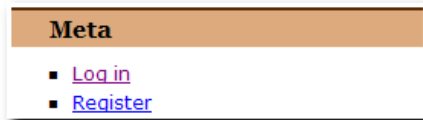


E-mail address
This address is used for admin purposes, like new us

Membership ☒ Anyone can register
☐ Users must be registered and logged in to comme

New User Default Role

Now, log out, refresh your blog and you should see this.



We are done with sidebar.php. In later lessons, we will come back to widgetize the sidebar.

[Here's the ZIP package](#) for the theme completed up to this lesson. When you run into problems, download and compare it with your work. This is often a great way to spot mistakes and learn from them.

*Do you have a tip, short cut or resource you'd like to share with other Blog Theme Bootcamp students?
[Submit them](#) to our knowledge base.*

Homework!

1. Replace the HTML list items and links with the proper template tags.

Next Lesson...

Things are getting a little hectic here. I hope you're keeping up because index.php which is the file we will work on next, is going to be more intense.

index.php will be a crucial file but also the most interesting part because once that is done, your theme is 80% complete. Remember, if you are struggling with these lessons, you can always get [one-on-one assistance](#).

Lynette Chandler

Lynette Chandler

Tech Based Training