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WordPress custom post types, custom back-end columns and post thumbnails



WordPress 3.0 added very useful and cool new functionalities. One of the most popular is ability to create custom post types, so we are not limited only to pages and posts.

In following article I will explain why custom post types are easier to use, how you can register and call in your theme the custom post types and how you can customize their back-end custom overview columns.

5

tweets

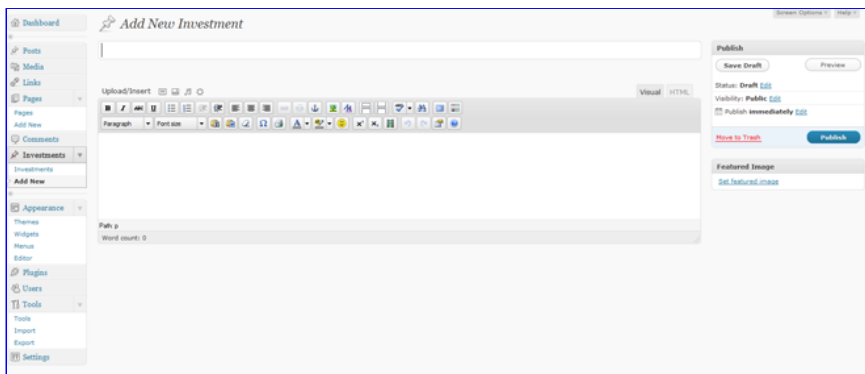
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Basically, most of times, you can achieve the custom post types functionality using regular posts and categories. However, it is much harder for a non-techie user, such our clients, to create a post, assign it to the right category and make sure it won't screw other things up.

While the possibilities of using custom post types are limitless, for the sake of simplicity, I will use as example a simple investment website, which will feature a title, description and a thumbnail with a property.

Register and calling the custom post type

First, I want to exemplify how the back-end of our custom post type will look like. As you can see, the interface is simplified and contains only the necessary editing areas.



Register the custom post type

In the `functions.php` file from the active theme directory, add the following code:

```
//-----register custom post type
register_post_type( 'investments',
    array(
        'labels' => array(
            'name' => __( 'Investments' ), //this name will be used when will call the investments in our theme
            'singular_name' => __( 'Investment' ),
            'add_new' => __( 'Add New', 'investment' ),
            'add_new_item' => __( 'Add New Investment' ), //custom name to show up instead of Add New Post. Same for the fol
            'edit_item' => __( 'Edit Investment' ),
            'new_item' => __( 'New Investment' ),
            'view_item' => __( 'View Investment' ),
        ),
        'public' => true,
        'show_ui' => true,
        'hierarchical' => false, //it means we cannot have parent and sub pages
        'capability_type' => 'post', //will act like a normal post
        'rewrite' => 'investment', //this is used for rewriting the permalinks
        'query_var' => false,
        'supports' => array( 'title', 'editor', 'thumbnail', 'excerpts', 'revisions' ) //the editing regions that will support
    )
);
```

For more information regarding `register_post_type` please visit the official codex documentation: http://codex.wordpress.org/Function_Reference/register_post_type.

At this point, you can go ahead in back-end and add a new investment, which will show up next in our site, after we do the following step.

Creating and calling the custom post type in our template

Next, we will create a file called `investments.php` and add the following code to it:

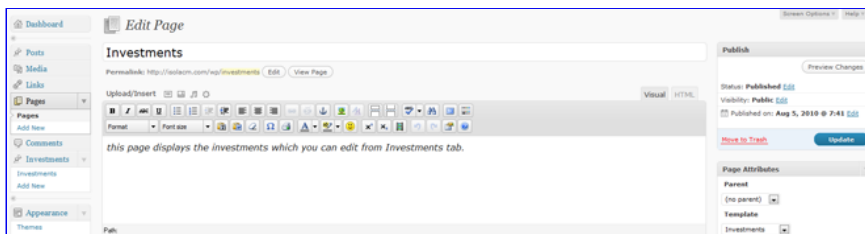
```
<?php
/*
Template Name: Investments
*/
?>
<?php get_header(); ?>

<?php $loop = new WP_Query( array( 'post_type' => 'investments', 'posts_per_page' => 10 ) ); ?>

<?php while ( $loop->have_posts() ) : $loop->the_post(); ?>
<div class="invest_thumb">
<?php
    if ( has_post_thumbnail() ) { ?>
        <a href="<?php the_permalink() ?>"><?php
    <?php } else { ?>
        <a href="<?php the_permalink() ?>"><im
    <?php }
    ?>
</div>
<div class="investment_info">
    <h2><?php the_title() ?></h2>
    <?php the_content(); ?>
</div>
<?php endwhile; ?>

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

As you can see at the top, we specified to this page a special template name. In back-end, we have to create a page, which we can be named investments (or any other name), than assign it our newly created template. This page, will display our investments and now we can organize our general navigation easily.



We specified that our custom post type should behave like a post, which means we can have single post view. We can do that by duplicating our **investments.php** file and name it: **investments-single.php**. For this file we don't need anymore the template name anymore at the top, so make sure you remove that part, so we don't mess up the first template.

Custom post thumbnails in edit post / custom type overview

Starting with WordPress 2.9, we have the ability to easily attach to any post or page a featured image. Our purpose is to show up a preview of this thumbnails in our investments back-end overview.

In **functions.php** file add the following code:

```
//ENABLE POST THUMBNAILS FOR ALL POSTS AND PAGES
add_theme_support( 'post-thumbnails' );
set_post_thumbnail_size( 200, 125, true ); // hard crop mode true

//-----enable post thumbnail preview for custom columns
if ( !function_exists( 'fb_AddThumbColumn' ) && function_exists( 'add_theme_support' ) ) {

    // for post and investments

    function fb_AddThumbColumn($cols) {
        $cols['thumbnail'] = __( 'Thumbnail' );
        return $cols;
    }

    function fb_AddThumbValue($column_name, $post_id) {

        $width = (int) 200;
        $height = (int) 125;

        if ( 'thumbnail' == $column_name ) {
            // thumbnail of WP 2.9
            $thumbnail_id = get_post_meta( $post_id, '_thumbnail_id', true );
            // image from gallery
            $attachments = get_children( array( 'post_parent' => $post_id, 'post_type' => 'attachment', 'post_mime_type' => 'image' ) );
            if ( $thumbnail_id )
                $thumb = wp_get_attachment_image( $thumbnail_id, array( $width, $height ), true );
            elseif ( $attachments ) {
                foreach ( $attachments as $attachment_id => $attachment ) {
                    $thumb = wp_get_attachment_image( $attachment_id, array( $width, $height ), true );
                }
            }
            if ( isset( $thumb ) && $thumb ) {
                echo $thumb;
            } else {
                echo __( 'None' );
            }
        }
    }

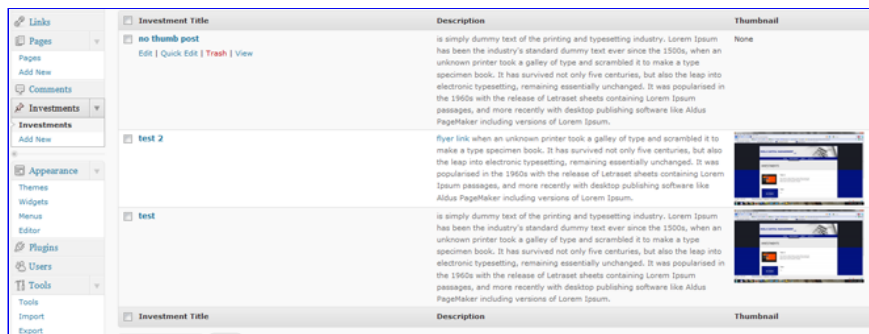
    // for posts
    add_filter( 'manage_posts_columns', 'fb_AddThumbColumn' );
    add_action( 'manage_posts_custom_column', 'fb_AddThumbValue', 10, 2 );

    // for investments
    add_filter( 'manage_investments_columns', 'fb_AddThumbColumn' );
    add_action( 'manage_investments_custom_column', 'fb_AddThumbValue', 10, 2 );
}

```

Custom back-end columns overview

By default, any WordPress post or page will display the title, author, categories, date which is not relevant to our investment page, where we want to display only title, description and the investment thumbnail, like in following image:



The only left thing to do, is to add in **functions.php** file the next code:

```
//-----edit custom columns display for back-end
add_action("manage_posts_custom_column", "my_custom_columns");
add_filter("manage_edit-investments_columns", "my_investments_columns");

function my_investments_columns($columns) //this function display the columns headings
{
    $columns = array(
        "cb" => "<input type='checkbox' />",
        "title" => "Investment Title",
        "description" => "Description",
        "thumbnail" => "Thumbnail"
    );
    return $columns;
}

function my_custom_columns($column)
{
    global $post;
    if ("ID" == $column) echo $post->ID; //displays title
    elseif ("description" == $column) echo $post->post_content; //displays the content excerpt
    elseif ("thumbnail" == $column) echo $post->post_thumbnail; //shows up our post thumbnail that we previously created.
}

```

Resources

Custom columns:

<http://kovshenin.com/archives/custom-post-types-in-wordpress-3-0/>

Post thumbnail post and page overview:

<http://wpengineer.com/1960/display-post-thumbnail-post-page-overview/>

Conclusion

Using custom post types we can provide easy to use content management systems, yet powerful and flexible.

Going the extra mile and customize the WordPress back-end, it makes a difference between good developers and great developers, while our clients can enjoy their polished and simple to use websites.

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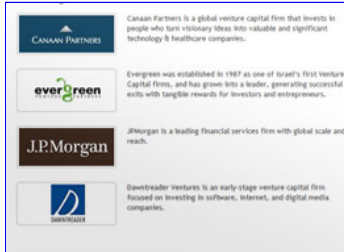
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14 Responses to “WordPress custom post types, custom back-end columns and post thumbnails”



1. [Mel](#), on [August 21st, 2010 at 7:49 am](#) Said:

Thanks for the info.

Update for WordPress 3.0:

Just add the following line to functions.php
`add_theme_support('post-thumbnails');`

Then, you don't need the two functions to enable thumbnail support – it will automatically be supported.

Then, do the following

```
function my_custom_columns($column)
{
    global $post;
    if (“ID” == $column) echo $post->ID; //displays title
    elseif (“description” == $column) echo $post->post_content; //displays the content excerpt
    elseif (“thumbnail” == $column) the_post_thumbnail(); //shows up our post thumbnail that we previously created.
}
```



2. [Amanda](#), on [September 11th, 2010 at 11:03 am](#) Said:

Is there a way to specify the width of the custom columns in the Edit backend? Other than through the CSS, I mean?



3. [Lucian Florian](#), on [September 11th, 2010 at 3:41 pm](#) Said:

CSS is a good solution for that and it should work well.

4. [Custom Post Types Numeric Title Order – Web Design / Development | FLDtrace](#), on [September 19th, 2010 at 8:50 am](#) Said:

[...] created the custom post type for our top 10 and I will focus only on the ordering part. In my last article, I have already explained how to create custom post types and improve the back-end [...]



5. [Freddie](#), on [September 25th, 2010 at 3:54 pm](#) Said:

I have a strange issue. The column pulls the thumbnail, but it pulls the same exact photo for every post... I haven't modified your code in any way, and even in your example its the same thumbnail for both posts. Why is that?



6. [Lucian Florian](#), on [September 26th, 2010 at 8:03 am](#) Said:

Freddie, you need to assign the featured image for each post, if not, a default one will be loaded. In my demo I uploaded the same for each post.

When you edit a post, you have under publish section, on the right, "Set Featured Image".



7. [Mike](#), on [October 3rd, 2010 at 11:56 pm](#) Said:

How would you display data from a custom meta box?

8. [Setting up a Staff Directory using WordPress Custom Post Types and Plugins | The Corkboard](#), on [October 15th, 2010 at 1:01 pm](#) Said:

[...] it takes a little PHP maneuvering to succeed. Feel free to dissect my PHP below. This resource among others (search "wordpress custom columns") were helpful with my [...]



9. [Scott](#), on [October 25th, 2010 at 5:42 pm](#) Said:

Thanks for the post. This has been a great help in devoping a CMS for my church using wordpress.

I am having a issue with my permalinks. My blog url shows up twice in the permalink.

For example...a page is <http://tlcjenera.org/http://tlcjenera.org/investments/blah>

I am using a custom permalink structure as `/http://tlcjenera.org/%postname%`

Any ideas on why this is?

Thanks,

I will Tweet you blog as a thankyou!

Scott



10. [Lucian Florian](#), on [October 26th, 2010 at 5:12 am](#) Said:

Try: `%postname%/`
or `%category%/%postname%/` without the link in the front.



11. [Sebastian](#), on [November 3rd, 2010 at 6:48 am](#) Said:

@Scott: i would also recommend either `%postname%/` or `%year%/%postname%/`
I had `%category%/%postname%/` on my blogs until i read an article on yoast or a similar site that showed that the `%category%/%postname%/` permalink structure is not favorable.

Of course this depends on what you are trying to accomplish and you should choose what fits the needs of your church best. 😊

Anyway i second Lucian's recommendation and if you implement it your problem will be gone!



12. [Joseph](#), on [November 3rd, 2010 at 10:01 pm](#) Said:

It's good to note that you can't change the columns of a post type that's set to "Page" or has "hierarchical => true".



13. **James**, on [December 7th, 2010 at 4:08 pm](#) Said:

Thanks for this post, it was almost everything I was looking for. Can anyone help me with creating a custom post type that allows the uploading of two images (before pic, after pic) and then displays these images side by side on a page?

The part I am having trouble with is adding the two image upload areas and how that is designated in the custom post type.

I am relatively new to WP and any help would be appreciated.



14. **Leo Plaw**, on [December 11th, 2010 at 9:28 pm](#) Said:

WordPress 3.1 (I'm currently using the beta) brings with it sortable columns.

The following post shows you how to make your custom columns sortable.

<http://scribu.net/wordpress/custom-sortable-columns.html>

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