Changing items in the drop-down menu

One of they key navigation elements on many websites is the drop down menu at the top – this, like the header, is usually persistent across all your website pages – but how on earth do you change the info in there?

Like most things with WordPress, it's pretty easy, and hard at the same time.
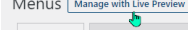
This worksheet will cover 3 things:

1. Accessing and identifying menus your website may have.
2. Identifying the types of items that can be linked in a menu.
3. Arranging and organizing the menu items. ("**Jump to recipe" and skip the lecture)**

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1. Accessing and identifying menus

Menus are accessed through the dashboard menu under "Appearance."
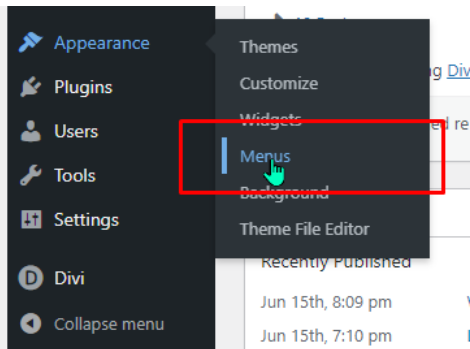

This opens the Menus editor page.

Note: there is a "Manage with Live Preview" editor option *as well as a standard editor option. This tutorial will focus on the standard editor – my advice is to have your live website open in a second tab so you can manipulate the menu on one tab and refresh to see changes on the other. Once you are comfortable with how the menu structure works, you can try the "Live Preview" version.*

Identifying menus:

Select "Manage Locations" tab.
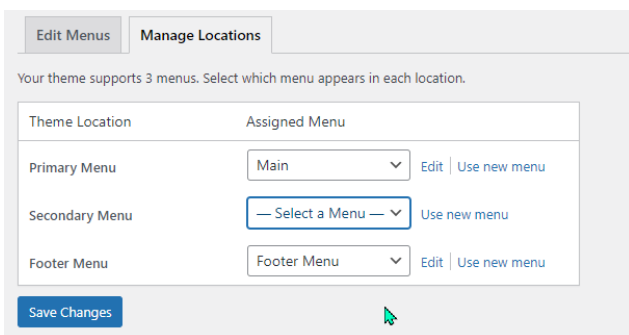
There are three locations possible for a menu: A "primary" menu at the top of the page, a "secondary" menu usually at one side or the other, and a "footer" menu for the bottom.
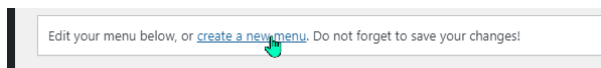
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Secondary menus have generally fallen out of fashion and are rarely used today. Here's a screenshot of a 2013 version of the www.demmerlibrary.org website with a primary and secondary menu, before drop-down menus became a thing:
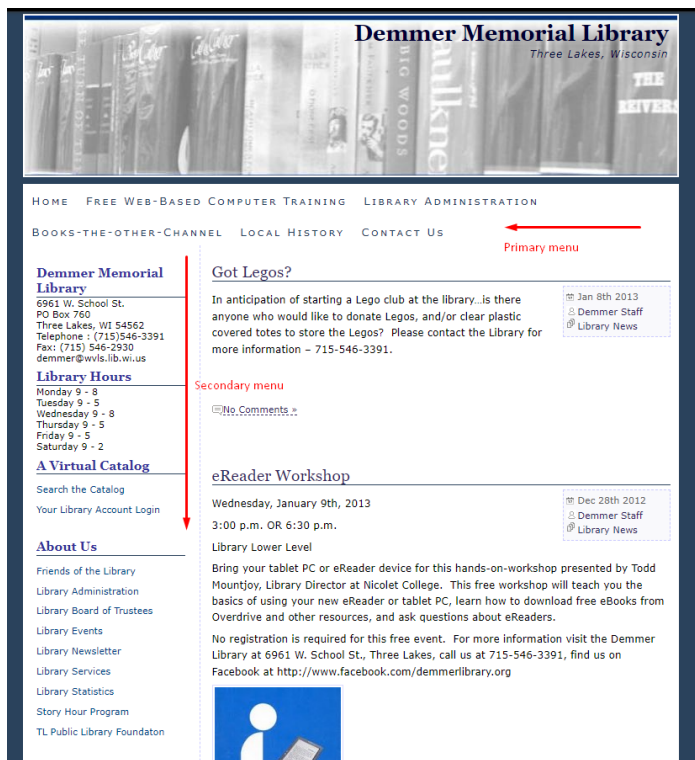
(Image credit: https://web.archive.org/, aka Wayback Machine)

Some websites utilize the footer menu; many use a Divi module as part of the theme template that appears on each webpage. Your webpage may only use the primary menu.

WordPress does give you the option to create a new menu, but unless you're redesigning your webpage completely, you shouldn't need this. And if you are redesigning, please let me know!
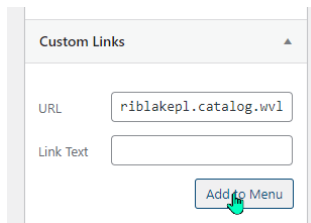
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2. Identifying the types of items that can be linked in a menu.

The Primary (header/dropdown) menu is not limited to linking just to other pages on your website. On the right side of the "Edit Menus" screen, under "Add menu items" there is a toggle with the different items that can be linked:
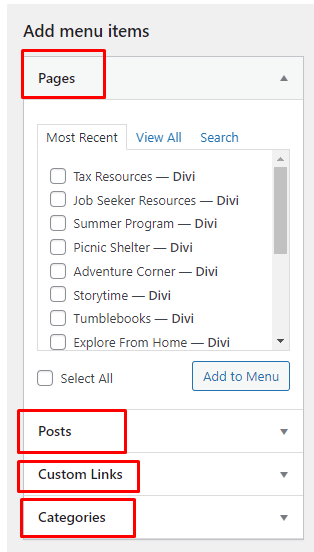
95+% of the time we will be linking to other website pages. However, you can create a link to an outside website by filling in that website under "Custom Links" (example, linking to the discovery catalog):

Or even create a link to all blog posts in a category:
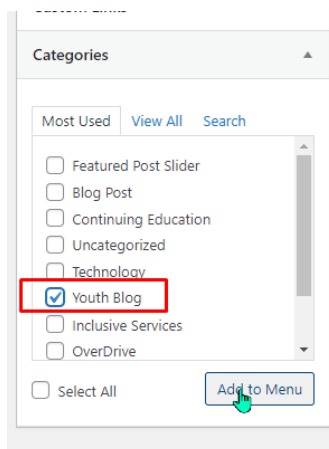
Options abound!
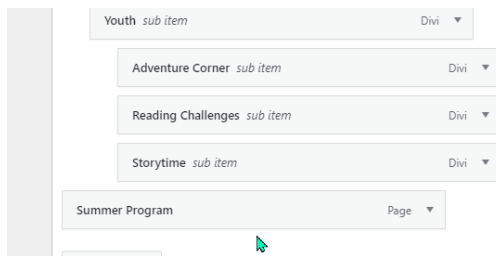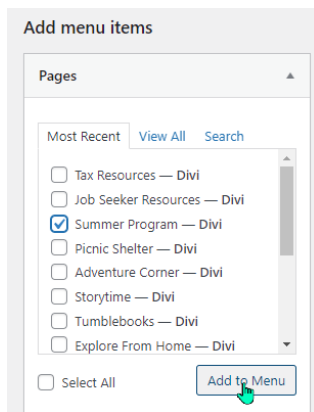
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3. Arranging and organizing the menu items

Okay, okay, cut to the chase. How do I change the things in my website menu?

Now that you know where you're going, it's pretty easy.

To add an item:

Select item from "Add menu items," and click "Add to Menu." The item you selected will be added to the bottom of the list of menu items on the right.

To organize where it appears in your menu, simply click and drag the item. You can drop it in order, and then every indent indicates a subitem on the menu. Example: placing "Summer Program" under "Youth" which is already a subitem for Programs:
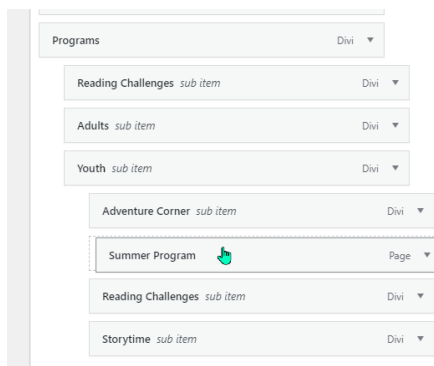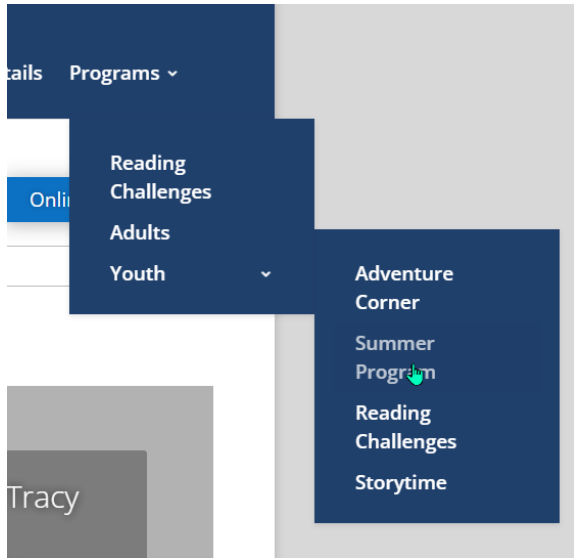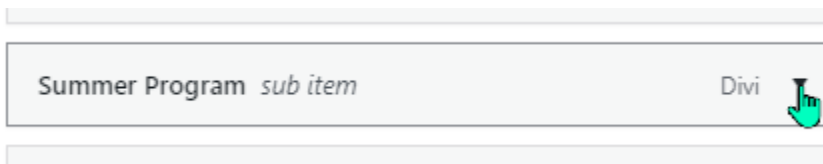

Click "Save menu" on the lower right.
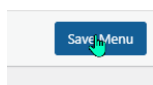
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Now when you refresh your homepage, the "Summer Program" will appear under Youth in the Programs menu header:
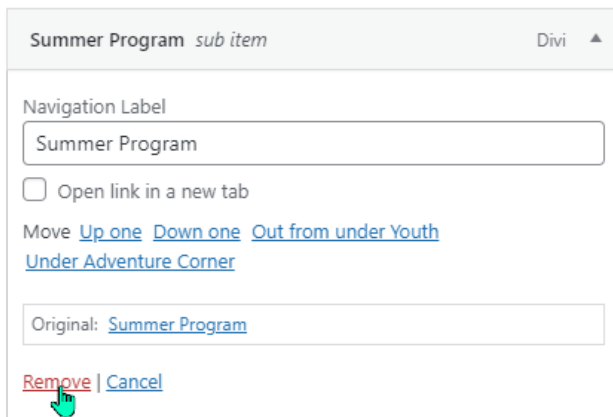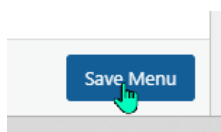

To remove an item from the menu:

Click the arrow toggle to open the menu item:

Click the red "Remove" and item will disappear from the menu.

Be sure to click "Save Menu."

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Items can also be renamed/reorganized manually by toggling open the item and then renaming, or moving by selecting the links in the box:

Notes: *be warned of adding too many items to the Primary menu as there is only so much space at the top, and different screens with different sizes may wind up filled with menu items. Also, too many layers of subitems can make navigation challenging. Be sure to be mindful of different screen sizes (desktop, tablet, phone) and skill level with using a mouse, etc.*

In this example on a phone, the menu appears as a three-line "hamburger" menu and drops down neatly with all subitems displayed:

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