

How to Build A Social Networking Website with BuddyPress In Under 30 Minutes?



The process of building a social platform used to be close to impossible due to the fact that everything from design to creating the databases had to be done manually. In other words, everything had to be built from the ground up. The **BuddyPress** WordPress plugin makes things easier by handling many of the steps required to create and manage a social network.

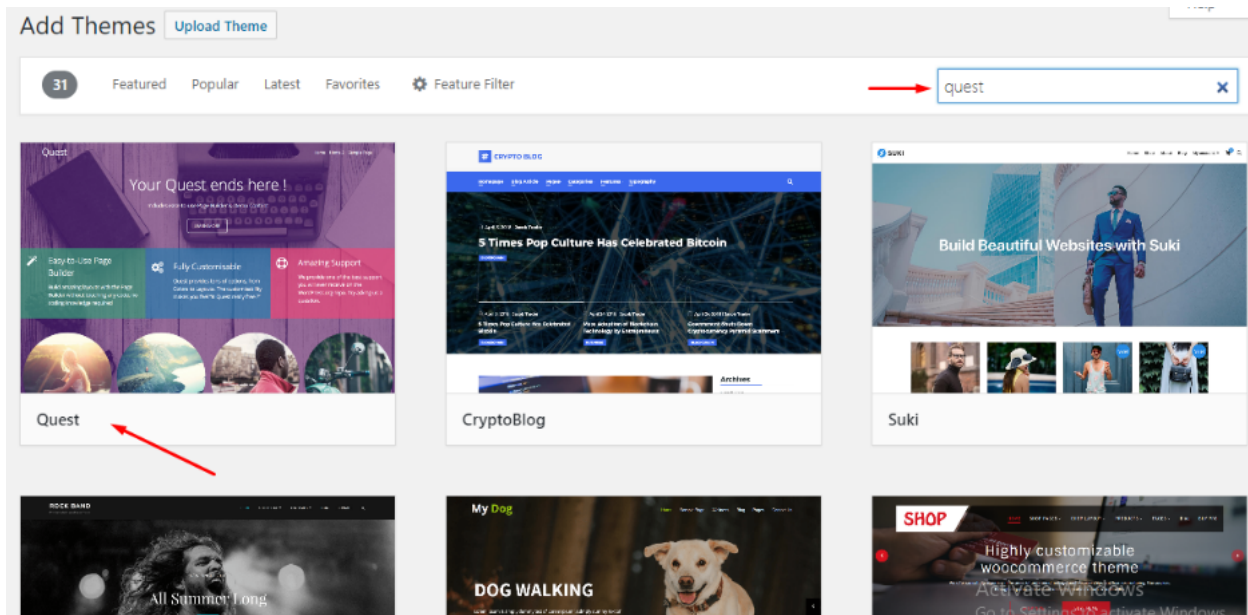
From a functional point of view, the plugin adds several features that can be mixed and matched in order to create a fully customized network.

This tutorial will guide you through all the steps necessary to set up BuddyPress and install a compatible theme. The entire process only takes 30 minutes and is easy to follow even if you have no technical skills or programming knowledge.

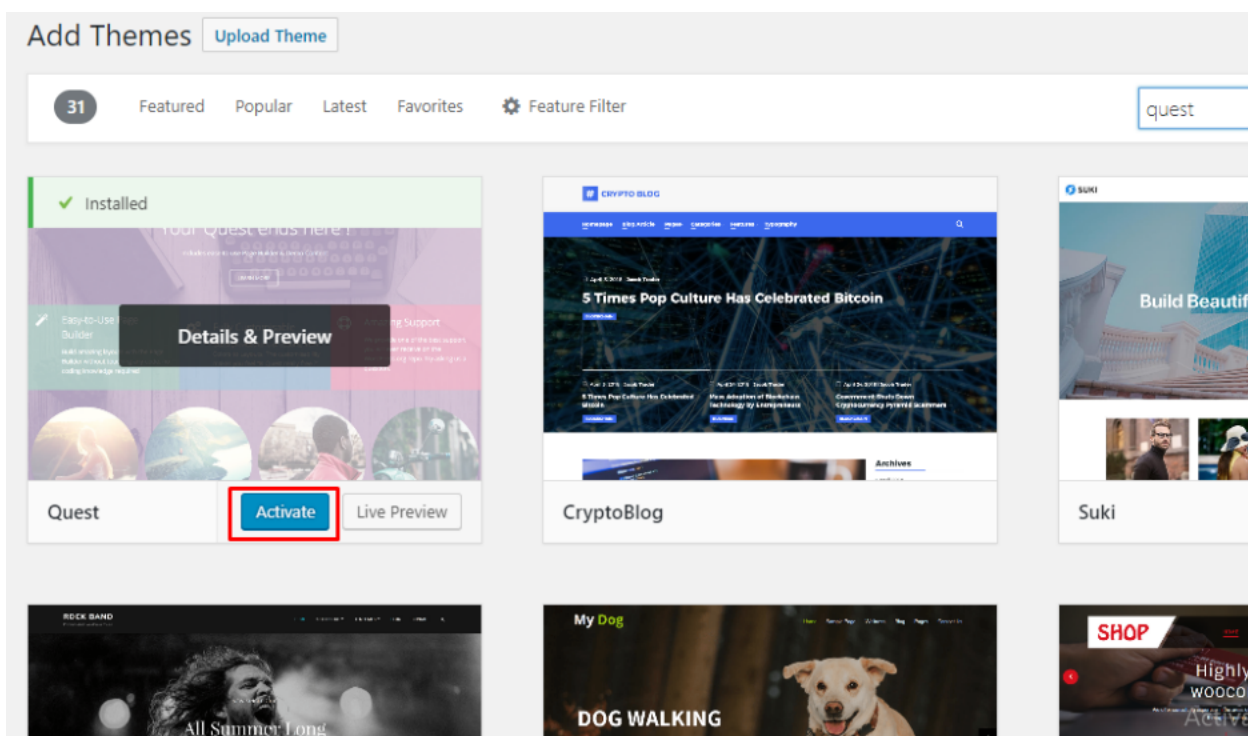
Step 1 – Installing a WordPress Theme

The first step is to install a WordPress theme. This process is extremely simple and there are no restrictions to what theme you can use.

Simply click on the **Themes** tab in the **Appearance** menu and choose one of the many themes that are available to you. You can search for specific themes using the search bar positioned in the upper-right corner.

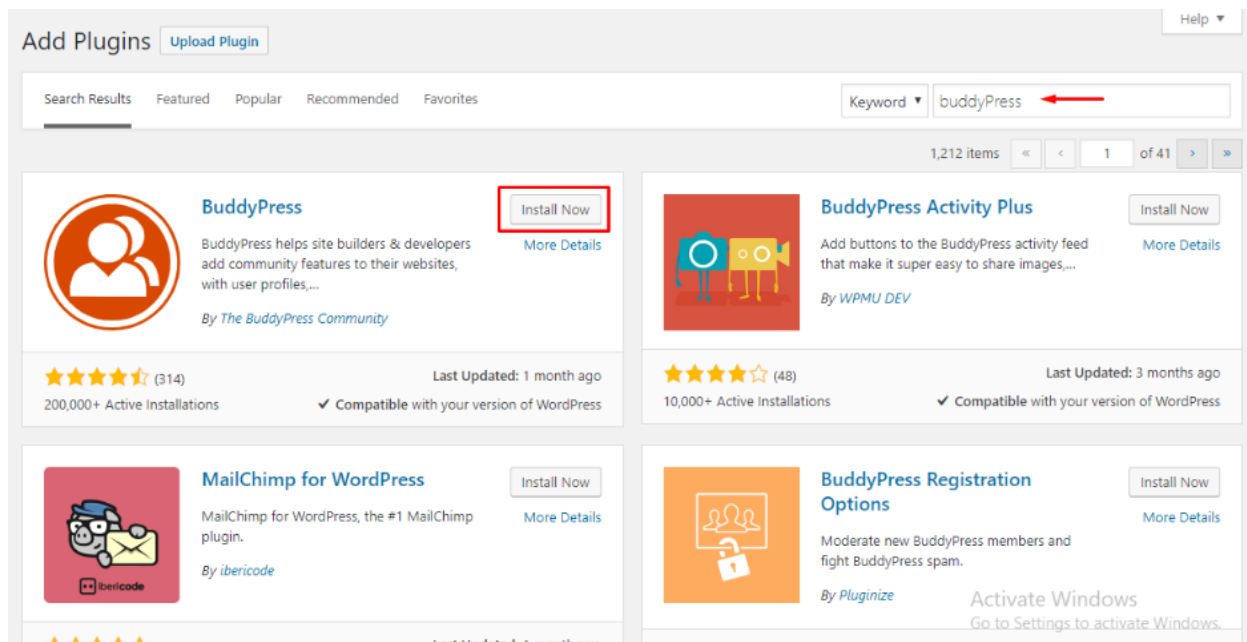


Once you've decided which theme you would like to use, select it and click the **Install** button that will be displayed. Lastly, click Activate in order to apply the theme.



Step 2 – Installing the BuddyPress Plugin

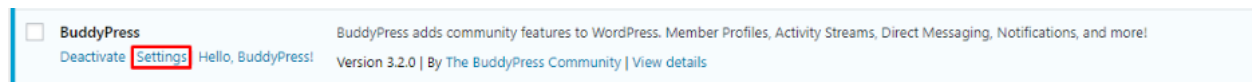
This can be done by navigating to the **WordPress Admin Panel**, selecting **Plugins**→**Add New**. Now, search for **BuddyPress** by using the search box in the upper right-hand corner.



Once you've found it, click on **Install Now**, and then on **Activate**. This will complete the installation of the plugin.

Step 3 – How to configure the BuddyPress Plugin

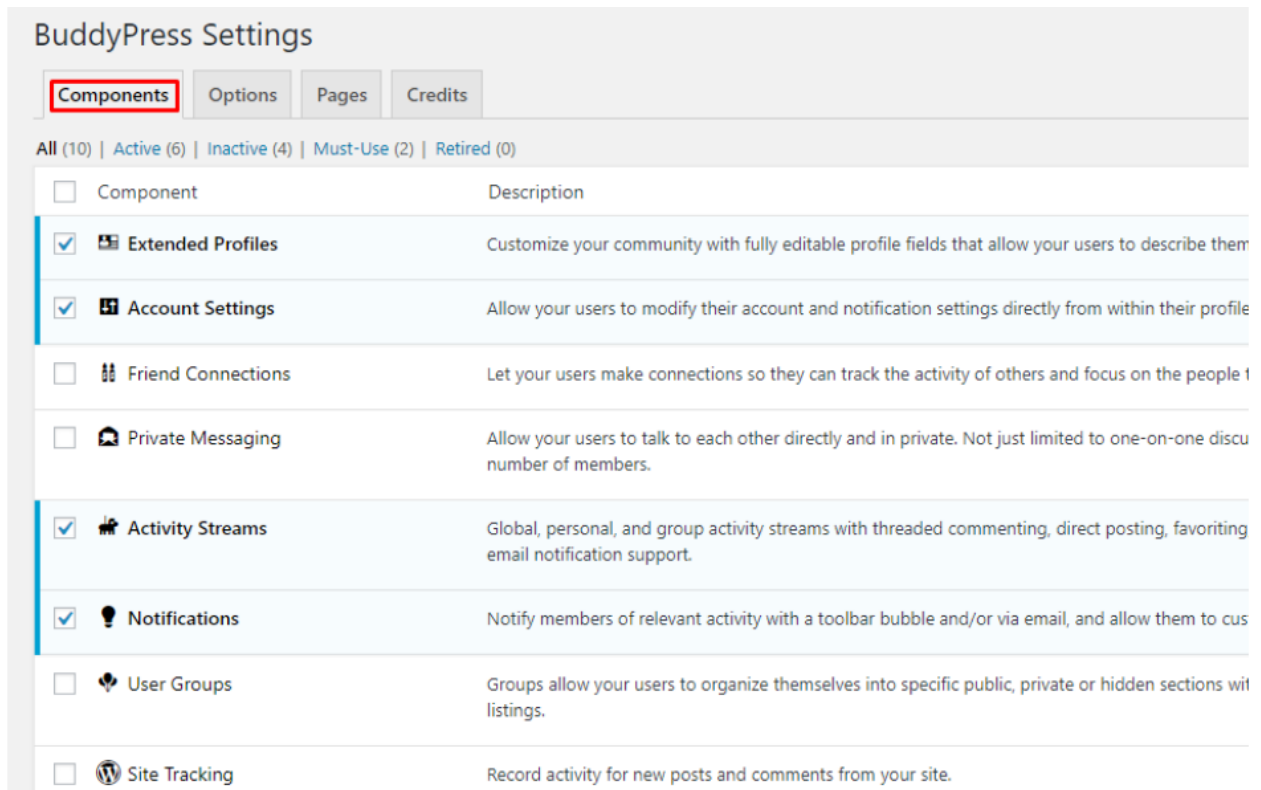
The configuration process is relatively simple. Go to **Plugins** → **Installed Plugins** → **BuddyPress** → **Settings**. The WordPress interface will look like this:



Once you click on **Settings**, several tabs will appear:

1. The Components tab

Here, as an Administrator, you are able to modify options that have a direct impact on how users will interact with individuals from other social networks.



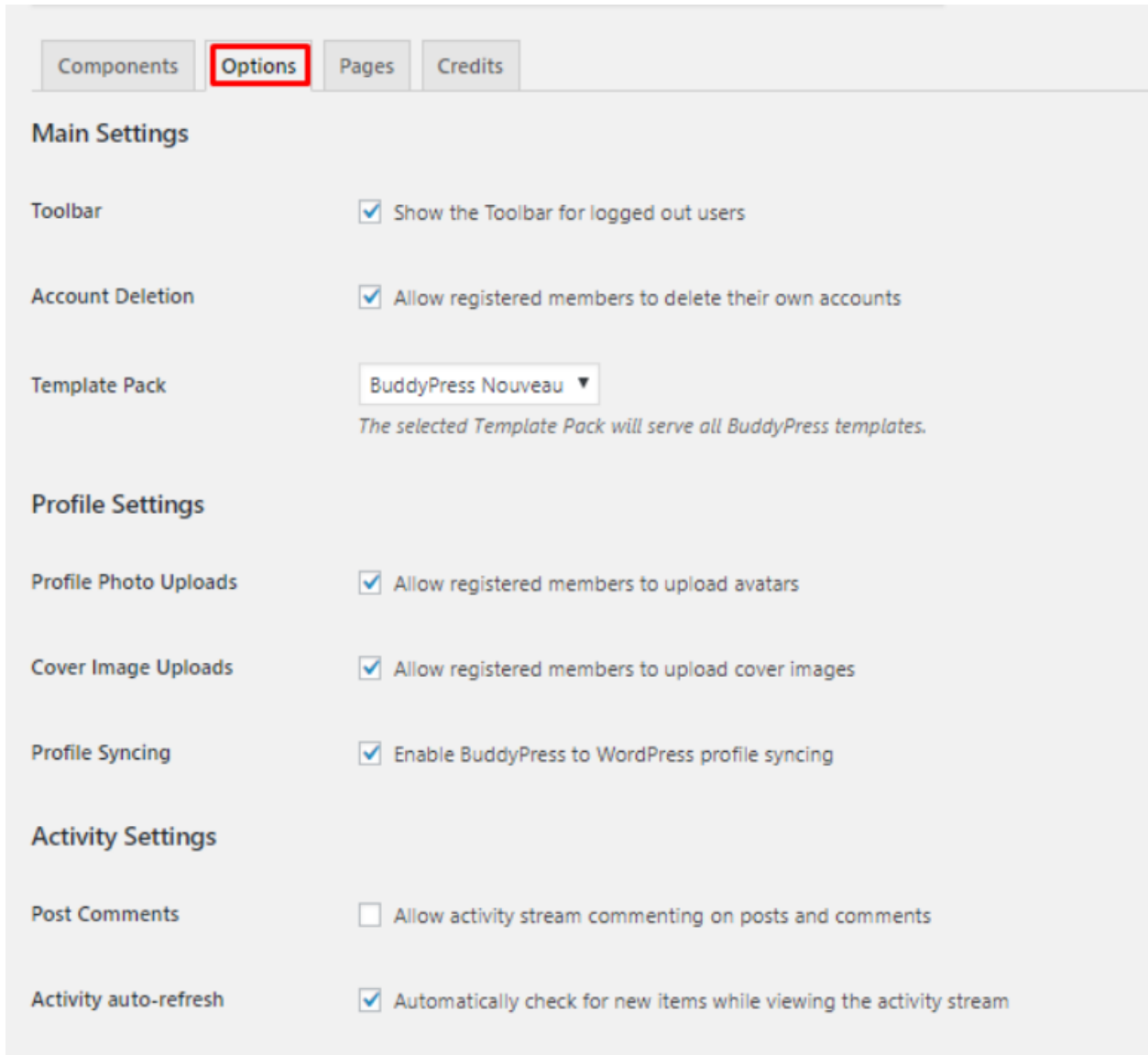
☐	Component	Description
☒	 Extended Profiles	Customize your community with fully editable profile fields that allow your users to describe them
☒	 Account Settings	Allow your users to modify their account and notification settings directly from within their profile
☐	 Friend Connections	Let your users make connections so they can track the activity of others and focus on the people
☐	 Private Messaging	Allow your users to talk to each other directly and in private. Not just limited to one-on-one discus number of members.
☒	 Activity Streams	Global, personal, and group activity streams with threaded commenting, direct posting, favoriting email notification support.
☒	 Notifications	Notify members of relevant activity with a toolbar bubble and/or via email, and allow them to cus
☐	 User Groups	Groups allow your users to organize themselves into specific public, private or hidden sections wit listings.
☐	 Site Tracking	Record activity for new posts and comments from your site.

- **Extended Profiles** – Enables you to add custom fields to user profiles;
- **Account Settings** – Permits users to change their accounts and notifications from their profile screen;
- **Friend Connections** – Required to allow users to send friend requests to users from other websites. This also enables the **Activity Log** that shows users what friend requests have been sent or accepted;
- **Private Messaging** – This enables private and group messaging for all members;
- **Activity streams** – Enabling this will permit users to see other user’s activities on the website. This includes streams, comments, mentions, direct posting and others. The notifications are sent by email;
- **Notifications** – This enables instant notifications for the activities mentioned above;

- **User Groups** – Enables users to create public, private or hidden groups;
- **Site Tracking** – Records new posts and comments;

2. The **Options** tab

The options here enable or disable various actions that users can take on the website.



The screenshot shows the 'Options' tab selected in the BuddyPress settings. The 'Options' tab is highlighted with a red border. The settings are organized into sections: Main Settings, Profile Settings, and Activity Settings. Each section contains several options with checkboxes or a dropdown menu.

Section	Setting	Value
Main Settings	Toolbar	☒ Show the Toolbar for logged out users
	Account Deletion	☒ Allow registered members to delete their own accounts
	Template Pack	BuddyPress Nouveau ▼ <i>The selected Template Pack will serve all BuddyPress templates.</i>
Profile Settings	Profile Photo Uploads	☒ Allow registered members to upload avatars
	Cover Image Uploads	☒ Allow registered members to upload cover images
	Profile Syncing	☒ Enable BuddyPress to WordPress profile syncing
Activity Settings	Post Comments	☐ Allow activity stream commenting on posts and comments
	Activity auto-refresh	☒ Automatically check for new items while viewing the activity stream

Most of these are self-explanatory, however, there are a few that aren't particularly clear:

- **Activity auto-refresh** – This is useful to activate. It automatically refreshes news feeds so that users do not have to manually refresh the webpage;
- **Profile Syncing** – Enabling this will allow users to sync their WordPress profiles with their BuddyPress ones;
- **Post Comments** – This allows users to add comments to posts and on their activity stream;

3. The Pages tab

This is the true command centre of the entire social network.

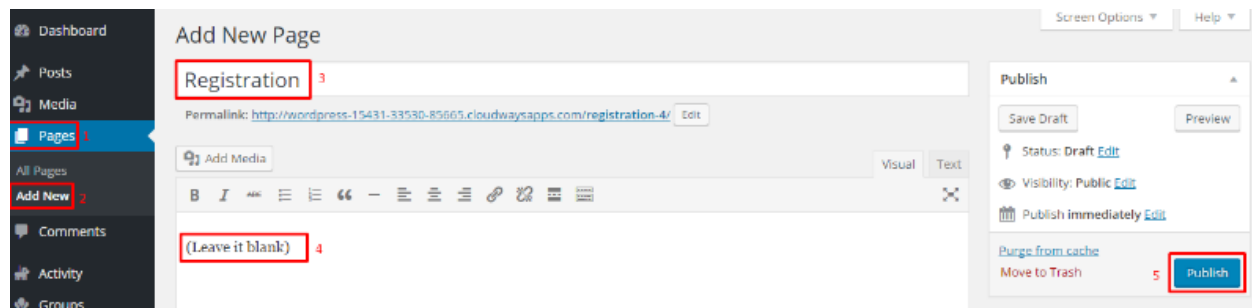
The screenshot shows the BuddyPress administration interface with the 'Pages' tab selected. The 'Directories' section allows associating WordPress pages with BuddyPress components. The 'Members' and 'Activity Streams' rows are highlighted with a red box. The 'Registration' section is currently disabled, and a 'Save Settings' button is at the bottom.

Here you will be able to allow members to register and to access various sections of the platform. These are easy to understand, however, enabling the Registration Page requires a few more steps:

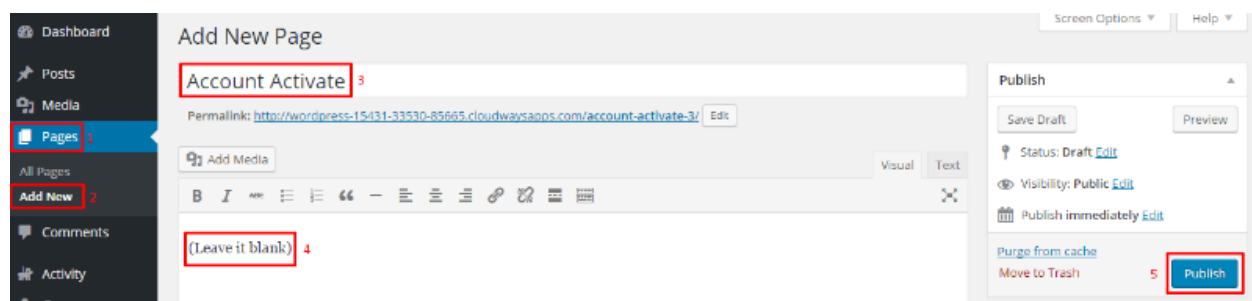
Creating Registration and Activation pages

In order to allow users to register, a new page must be assigned to BuddyPress in order to display the Signup Form. Furthermore, another page will have to be assigned for Account Verification. Here is what you need to do:

Registration - Go to **Pages**, and click **Add New**.



Account Activation – Create a second page following the instructions below.



Activating the settings

Next, go to **Settings**, click on **BuddyPress**, and then **Pages**

BuddyPress Settings

Components Options **Pages** Credits

Directories

Associate a WordPress Page with each BuddyPress component directory.

Members Members ▼ View

Activity Streams Activity ▼ View

Registration

Associate WordPress Pages with the following BuddyPress Registration pages.

Register Register ▼ View

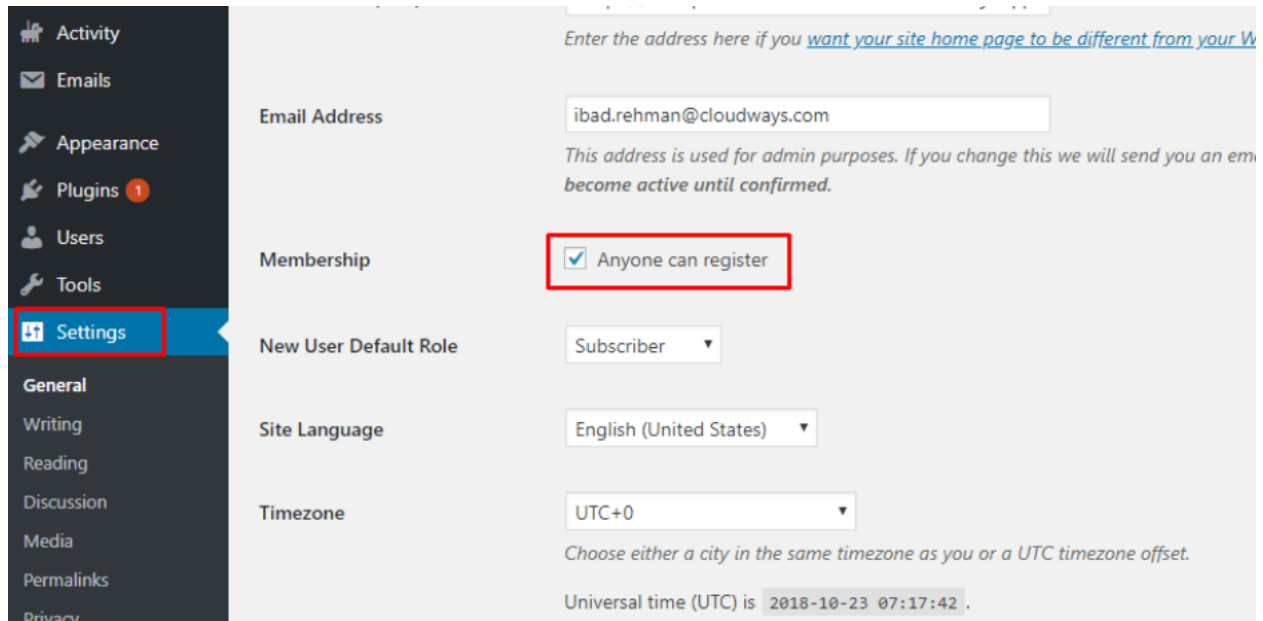
Activate Account Activate ▼ View

Save Settings

Settings

- General
- Writing
- Reading
- Discussion

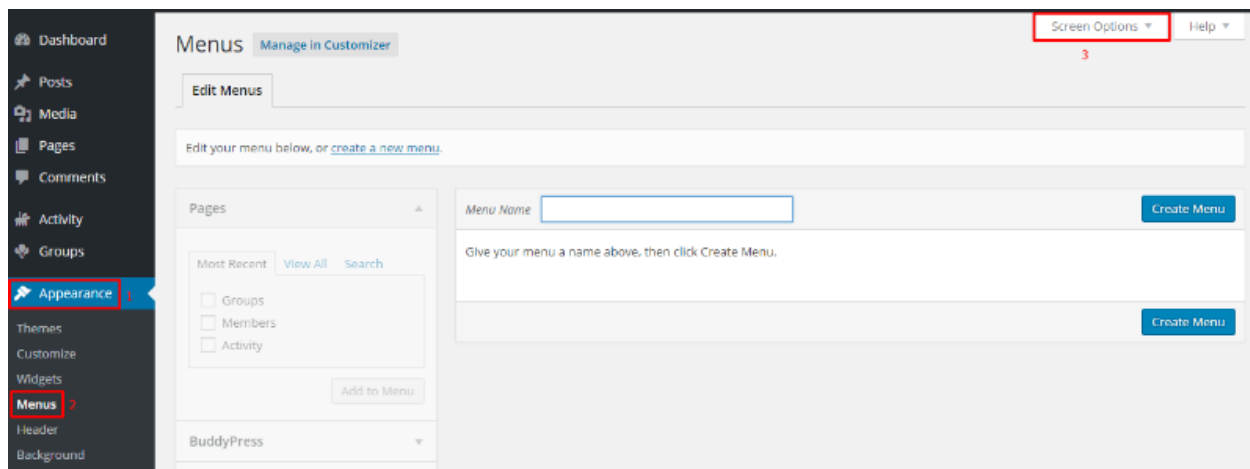
If the options below “**Register**” are not visible, you must go to **General**, in the **Settings** menu and check the box “**Anyone can register**”.



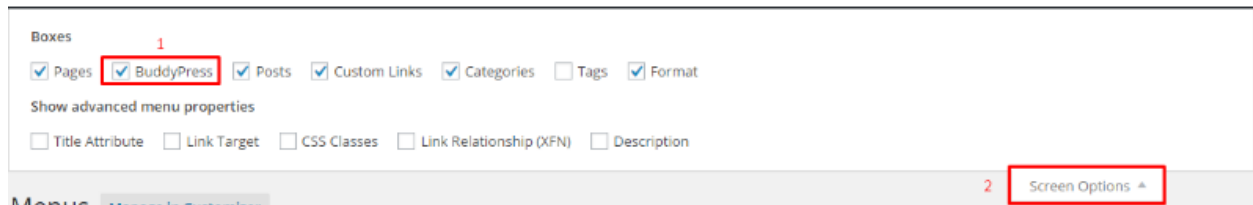
Once you've done this, click on “**Save changes**”.

Step 4 – Using the BuddyPress Plugin with your theme

By going to **Appearance**→**Menus**, you will be able to open the **Screen Options**.

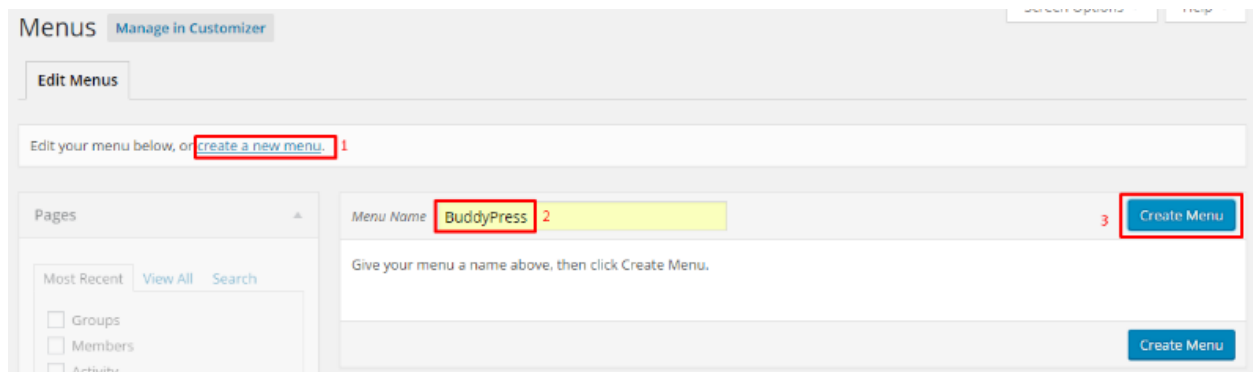


Before clicking on this option, make sure that **BuddyPress** is selected as shown below:

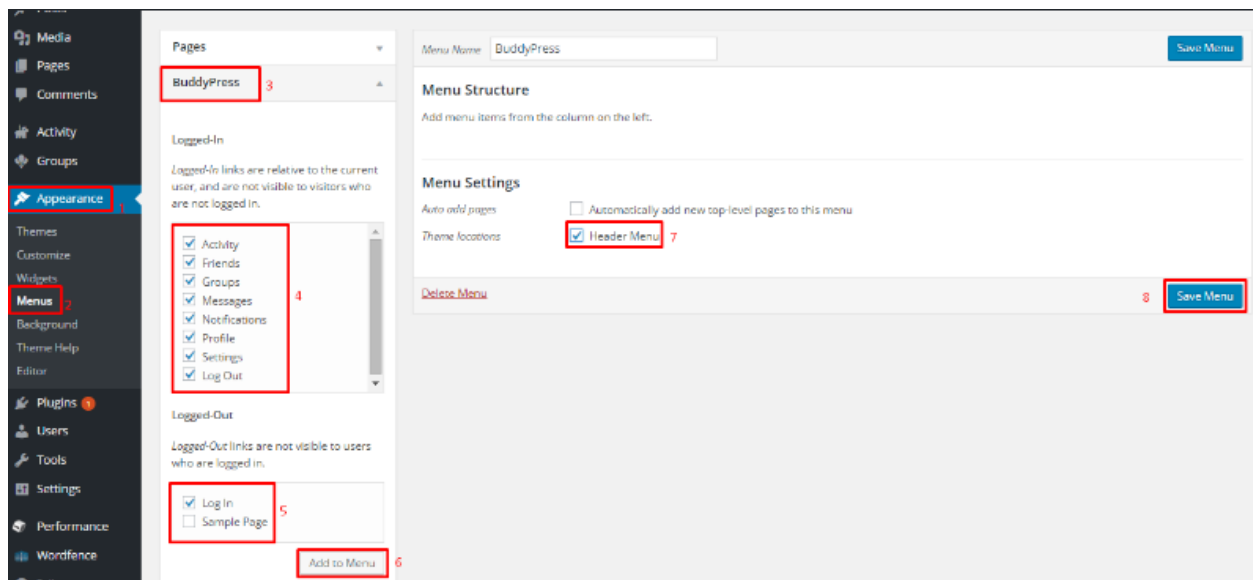


Step 5 – How to Create a Menu for the Navigation Bar

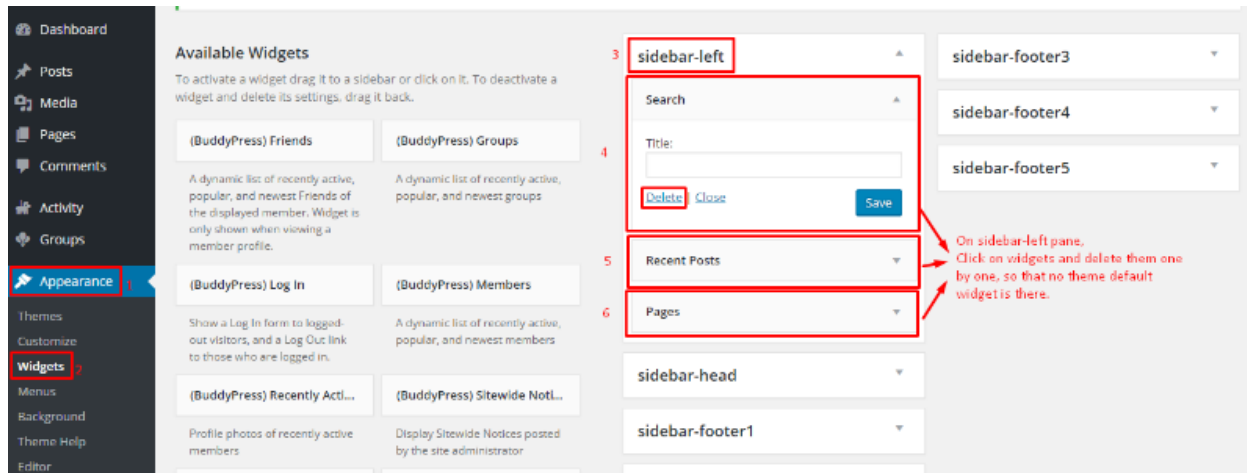
Before moving forward, delete any other menus that you might have. Next, select **Create a new menu**, and enter **BuddyPress** as its name:



A new interface will open that will allow you to customize your new menu. Select the options presented below:



Next, go to **Widgets** and remove any default theme widgets that you might have:



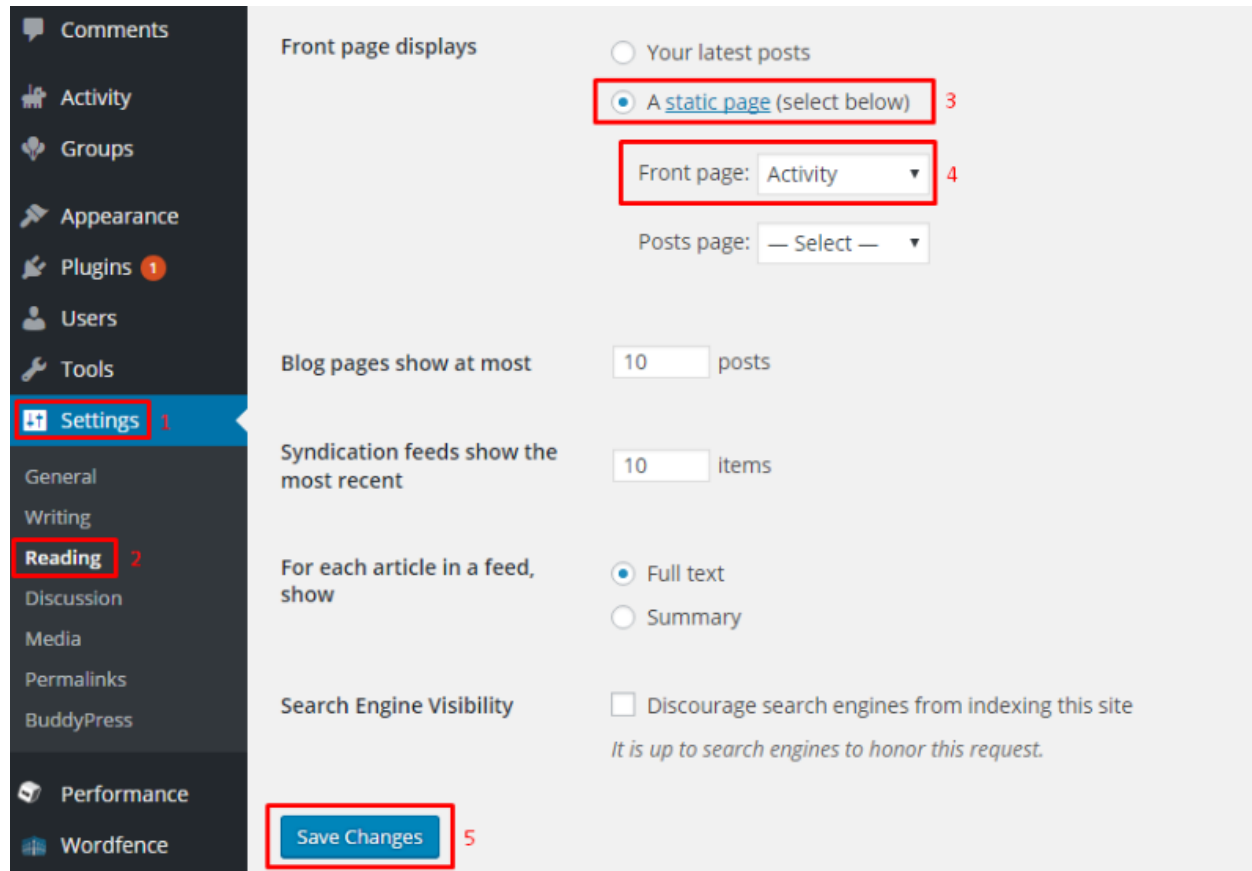
Lastly, add whatever **BuddyPress Widgets** you may need, to the side menu.

Step 6 – How to allow users to register?

Turning on the registration process is extremely simple. You need to go to **Settings→General** and select **Anyone can register**.

Step 7 – Creating a Front Page

The last part of the process is the creation of a front-page that will be displayed to newcomers. In most cases, the best choice for a front-page is the Activity Page. This can be set by going to **Settings→Reading**:



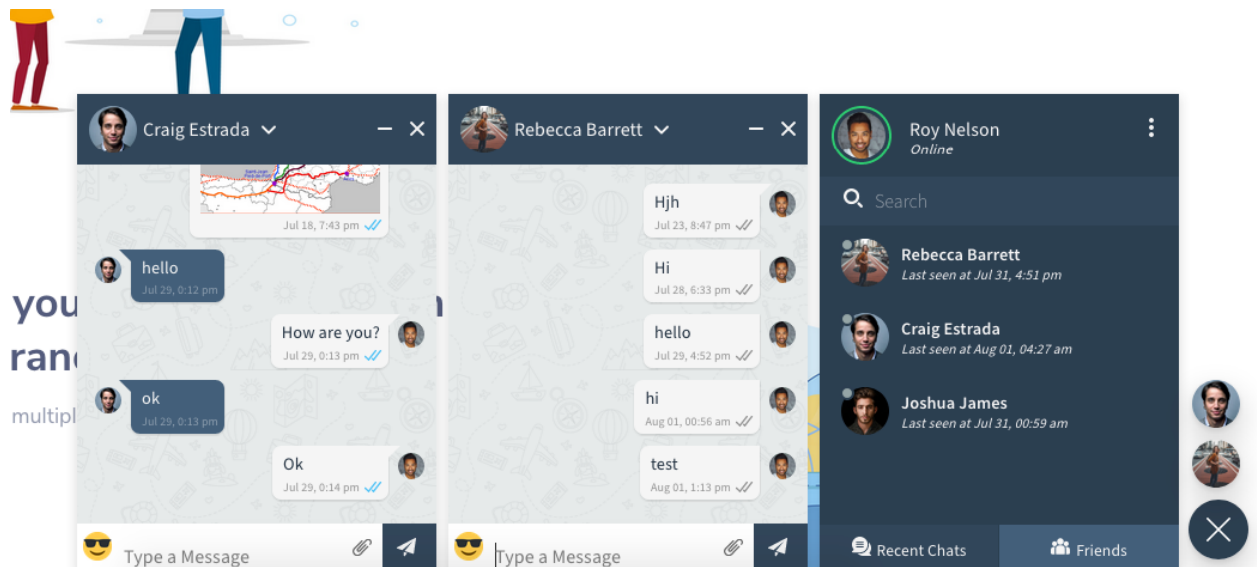
Better user chat

"There is also a BuddyPress communication module that you can enable from the **Settings menu**, by clicking on **BuddyPress** and then enabling the **Private Messaging** feature. This will allow users of the platform to communicate with each other using a basic private messaging system."

Components		Options	Pages	Credits
All (10) Active (7) Inactive (3) Must-Use (2) Retired (0)				
☐	Component	Description		
☒	 Extended Profiles	Customize your community with fully editable profile fields that allow your users to describe themselves.		
☒	 Account Settings	Allow your users to modify their account and notification settings directly from within their profiles.		
☐	 Friend Connections	Let your users make connections so they can track the activity of others and focus on the people they care at		
☒	 Private Messaging	Allow your users to talk to each other directly and in private. Not just limited to one-on-one discussions, mess sent between any number of members.		
☒	 Activity Streams	Global, personal, and group activity streams with threaded commenting, direct posting, favoriting, and @men full RSS feed and email notification support.		
☒	 Notifications	Notify members of relevant activity with a toolbar bubble and/or via email, and allow them to customize their settings.		
☐	 User Groups	Groups allow your users to organize themselves into specific public, private or hidden sections with separate streams and member listings.		

The chat widget looks plain and simple.

"Those interested in offering a more enjoyable user chat experience will find that they can do so by using the BuddyPress chat plugin. Our teams, at WPVenus, have designed the plugin to improve both the functionality and the appearance of the stock chat experience, making it similar to what you would find on Facebook and other similar platforms."



If you want to give it a try, here's a [demo link](#).

Overview

These are all the steps required to create a fully-fledged social network using **BuddyPress**. The whole process only takes 30 minutes and does not require any technical skills. All the features of the plugin are properly explained and easy to understand.