



blogs.ed.ac.uk
Spam and Disappearing
Comments

Workbook

Edition #1
October 2018

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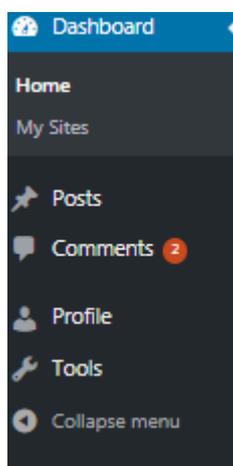
1. Why are my comments disappearing?

One big problem with public WordPress sites is they are often targets for spam comments and so users of WordPress will often have to put processes in place to deal with it so as not to be flooded by these messages.

We have an anti-spam plugin called Akismet on blogs.ed.ac.uk that is on by default. This should block spam comments so they aren't visible on your post. Unfortunately, sometimes it might be a bit over-zealous with what it marks as spam. It is a good idea to get into the habit of checking the comments that Akismet has marked as spam to make sure they aren't in fact genuine. When you tell Akismet that comments are genuine and not spam, it will learn and so will be better at spotting spam in future.

2. How to check what has been marked as spam

1. Log into blogs.ed.ac.uk and go to the dashboard of your blog.
2. Click on the **Comments** menu item in the left-hand menu. It will have a number beside it which signifies the number of 'pending' comments you have waiting – these are comments you need to approve. However, spam comments are not counted here.



3. On the comments page, you will see pending comments in the main grid as well as some links along the top. These allow you to view different types of comments. There is a link called **Spam**.

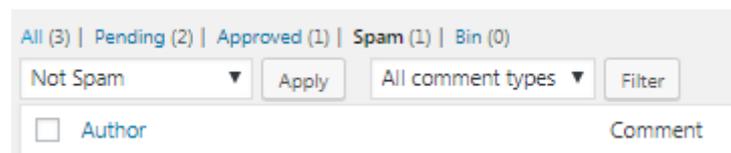


4. By clicking on this, you will see comments that have been marked as spam automatically and read them in order to check whether they are genuine and possibly publish them if that is the case. Consult our next section to learn how to unmark genuine comments labelled as spam.

3. How to publish a comment initially marked as spam

If you have found out that one comment marked as spam is in fact genuine, here are the steps to publish it back onto your blog.

1. Go to **Comments>Spam**, as explained in our previous section.
2. Find the comment you wish to reinstitute and tick its corresponding box.
3. Once ticked, click on the drop down **Bulk Actions** above the comment.
4. Click on **Not Spam** and **Apply**.



5. Your comment should now appear in the comments section and be available to moderate and view.
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4. Cookies for Comments

By default the Cookies for Comments (CFC) plugin is on to also help reduce comment spam.

Cookies for Comments loads an image when a page on your WordPress site is accessed and if the user's browser downloads the image file the plugin sets a cookie in the user's browser. The plugin will check for the cookie when any user tries to post a comment and if the cookie does not exist then the comment they submit is marked as spam. Like with Akismet, you should check the spam comments in case they have been incorrectly marked.

Comments for Cookies Configuration

What should happen to comments caught by CFC?
Spam

Payload Delivery Mechanism
 CSS file.
 Image file. (recommended)

The CSS file loads at the top of the page, possibly slowing down how fast the page renders. The image loads at the end but if your server is very slow someone may have time to enter a comment before the image loads. Unlikely but it might happen.

Speed Spammers
Some spammers visit your site, leave a real looking comment and disappear again. They'll do this quickly and then move on to the next target site.
To stop them we check how long they spend on your site before leaving the comment. Any value above 0 will reject those comments but might catch legitimate comments too. Recommended values from 3 to 6 seconds and send comments to the spam folder.
3 seconds

Rejection Message
When a comment fails to be posted it's not always a spammer. Add a message here to be shown to those users. Be aware that real spammers will see this message too! The comment they made will be shown below your message.

Save Options

You can access the configuration settings for this plugin by going to 'Settings' on the dashboard sidebar and clicking on 'Cookies for Comments'. Here you can adjust things like what happens to comments when they are caught by CFC and set a rejection message when a comment fails to be posted.

Once you have adjusted your configuration click on 'Save Options'