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Profile pictures in WordPress: how Gravatar works and how to change yours

WordPress & CMS

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Profile pictures in WordPress: how Gravatar works and how to change yours

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The short answer: the small photo beside your name (in comments, on authors) comes, by default, from **Gravatar**, a free service that ties a photo to an **e-mail address**. To change yours, you change it at Gravatar, not in WordPress. Anyone without a photo there gets a generic image.

How it works

Question	Answer
Where does the photo come from?	From Gravatar, by the user's e-mail address. WordPress asks the service for it.
How do I change it?	On the Gravatar website, signing in with the user's **same e-mail**, and uploading another image.
What if I have no account there?	The default image appears, which you choose under Settings > Discussion > Avatars.
Can I switch avatars off?	Yes, under Settings > Discussion, by unticking "Show Avatars".
Can I have a photo only on my site?	Yes, with a local avatar plugin, which keeps the photo in the site's library.

Changing the photo, step by step

1. **Confirm the user's e-mail** under Users > Your Profile. The photo is tied to it.

2. **Sign in at Gravatar** with that address (or create the free account) and upload the image. Use a square one, with the face in the centre.

3 **Wait a few minutes** and refresh the site. Images are kept in memory for a while, and the old one may stay until then.

4 **Choose the default image** for people without a photo, and the maximum rating, under Settings > Discussion.

5 **If you prefer not to use Gravatar,** untick avatars or install a local avatar plugin.

Gravatar is an outside service.
To ask for the photo, WordPress sends the service a coded version of the e-mail of each person who appears. On a site with visitors who comment, this counts for the privacy policy: **Personal data protection**.

If avatars make the page slow, the reason is usually the request to the outside service: switch them off on pages with many comments. **WordPress comments**.

NEED A HAND?

The photo does not change and you have already waited? Open a ticket with the site's address and the user's e-mail.

Open a support ticket →

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