

# Getting Started with WORDPRESS



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Building beautiful and user friendly websites is the goal of every online and offline business owner. Today, no matter what kind of business you have, you need a website and a blog. The very best system to use today is hands down, WordPress. WordPress allows you to build a dynamic website that you'll not only be proud to show off, but that will actually produce results for you.

## **What is WordPress?**



Most people who are doing business today on the Internet talk a lot about WordPress. WordPress is a fabulous open-source website building software that cannot be beat for functionality and usability. Most people who try to use it to build a basic website are easily able to do so alone, or with just a little minor help. If you can use Facebook, LinkedIn.com, and Twitter then you can use WordPress.

WordPress can be used to build a simple blog, or a full featured ecommerce website or community. It is essentially a content management system (CMS). This is the best term to use to describe what WordPress software can do. It helps you manage all the content that you want to distribute to the world about your business. Whether that content is a blog post, articles, products and services, or a beautiful portfolio, WordPress can deliver what you need in a website.

## **WordPress.com vs. WordPress.org**

Many people get confused by the term "WordPress" because they immediately think about the WordPress.com website. WordPress.com is a multi user blogging platform that uses WordPress software to operate, but it has limitations.

First, it's hosted on WordPress.com's servers. Secondly, you are very limited regarding the functionality of the website that you create unless you upgrade for a price. Plus, you do not really own your own content when you host it on WordPress.com's servers, while you can back it up, if you don't and they decide to delete you, you've lost everything. In addition, you have to

follow all their rules as to what content you can display and it's quite expensive hosting once upgraded.

In this report we are talking about WordPress.org, the free, open-source software that you can download and upload into your own server space to create dynamic websites. WordPress.org is where you can learn everything you ever wanted to know about the self-hosted version of WordPress. With WordPress.org you have complete control over your website including content, where you host it, and the look and feel of your website. What's best is that it's free. You only have to pay for hosting fees and if you choose to use premium WordPress themes or plugins. We'll talk more about that later.

## **What are the Benefits of using WordPress?**

Due to the fact that WordPress is one of, if not the most, popular website building software that you can find, the benefits are vast. Not only is WordPress perfect for creating a simple blog site, but it's also the perfect software to create a dynamic fully-featured ecommerce website. WordPress is essentially a content management system (CMS) in which you can add functionality to make it do the things you need it to do.

**There are many benefits to using self-hosted WordPress to build your website such as:**

1. **Simplicity** -- Right now you might not believe that but WordPress is a lot easier to use than other website builders on the market. You don't need to know any code, and you can build a beautiful website in just a few hours. You don't even have to have FTP software.
2. **Cloud Based** -- Due to the fact that you build your WordPress site in the cloud, you can build your website from any location using any computer. You don't have to come back to your computer to access the website building software and files. They're all up there "in the cloud" waiting for you. Even if your computer burns up in a fire you will have access to your site.
3. **Search Engine Love** -- Due to the clean and simple code that is WordPress, and the fact that WordPress sites are so easily updated, search engines really love WordPress sites. They are indexed faster, and more likely to be optimized correctly due to the ease in which that can be done. So, you're more likely to be found. That's the entire point of having a site right?
4. **Control** -- While some super complex things may need to be outsourced, you won't need to call on a web designer to do small updates. You will easily be able to add a page, a blog post, images, and more when you want to. You may find you only need an expert for security updates, although you can learn about that too. Nothing is too complex that you can't learn how to do it.



5. **Customizable** -- Every WordPress site can look completely unique. There isn't anything about it that cannot be changed or customized per your preferences. Depending on which theme you choose to use you can change headers, footers, sidebars, colors and more. Your website can be truly unique.
6. **Blogging** -- Today everyone who has a website needs a blog and the blog should be part of the website not housed somewhere else. The point of the blog is to create content that will bring traffic to your website. WordPress makes this process easy by having the blog built in to the software, nothing new to add. You have control over where and how you want the blog to look, but the software is all inclusive.
7. **Functionality** -- Outside of basic functions and blog you can also use additional software called "plugins" that enable you to give your site more functionality. Additional functions make your site more usable, such as adding social media links to your site, or a specialized contact form, or even a shopping cart. With plugins, the sky is truly the limit.

In addition, you can easily add administrators and other users to your WordPress site so that multiple people can help with the site. You can have multiple bloggers for instance; you assign them a user name and assign the access level you want to each new user. That way you can also delete them if needed. No need to feel trapped by your web designer anymore. What's more is a WordPress site can truly grow right along with your business.

## WordPress Compared to Other Options

There are other options outside of WordPress but they all have different problems and none of them are as simple to use as WordPress. But, it's fair to talk about them so that you know the difference. There are many more options than listed below, but most options outside of WordPress have a huge learning curve.

- [Textpattern](#) -- This is a publishing platform that is also a free open source CMS a lot like WordPress. However, in order to use this powerful platform it's important that you understand PHP and have an awareness of what a CMS can do. Because of this, you may as well use WordPress.



- [Adobe Dreamweaver](#) -- You've likely heard of this website building software. You must purchase it and upload it on your computer to use. Although Adobe does now offer its creative suite so that you can get a more cloud like feel and updated software, and they claim you can build a dynamic site without understanding code, just don't do it. It's frustrating to use for most people including developers.

- [Yahoo! SiteBuilder](#) -- While this is a popular way that some businesses build websites for their business it's not very intuitive and the sites often don't look very professional unless you understand how code works and just code the site yourself. Using the builder can be frustrating. You also cannot do much to help your site rank with a Yahoo! site.
- [Go Daddy's Builder](#) -- They offer a few options, one of which is called Website Tonight. It is confusing, convoluted, and most people hate it when they try it. They claim that anyone can build a site "tonight" that is up and running tomorrow but the fact is it's not very easy to use and will not build a dynamic site that is easy to update like WordPress.

The truth is, none of the builders out there are going to be as simple to use, or as effective as WordPress. While one might build what you think are really beautiful awesome sites, something will be missing on the back end that enables people to find your site. Beauty is just as important as functionality when it comes to websites.

With WordPress you are able to create not only beautiful and useable sites, but sites that people will find. That's what makes WordPress different. WordPress is designed for search engine optimization (SEO). As long as you go through each section of your Dashboard to properly set up each area, and blog regularly, you will get more visitors to your WordPress site than other types of websites.



## How to Set Up Your WordPress Site

Installing WordPress is straightforward. There are different ways in which it can be accomplished. You can do a manual install, or use "one click" installation software to help you do it. Of course, you can always hire someone to do it for you if you don't want to try, but you should at least give it an attempt. If you use the software available to install WordPress you won't break anything, and it'll work just fine. Installing it takes a few "clicks" when using the software to install.

A manual install is a lot harder to do than using the software that is available but some people insist it is more secure, but the truth is few people do manual installs anymore. This involves building a MySQL database and using FTP to upload and install WordPress. While that is not that hard, for beginners it is better to use the automatic installation. With the right software it can be just as secure for most uses.

If you chose a hosting provider that supports WordPress they will have either Fantastico, or Softaculous as the program to help you install WordPress. Ensure that they have Softaculous because it is safer and is a better program. Usually your host will brag in their advertising that they have "one click installation" for a variety of software. If you want to ensure that your database is safe use Softaculous.

## Hosting Recommendations

These recommendations are based on rankings and ratings as well as personal experience. Choose the hosting that best fits your needs and technical skill level for best results. A hosting service is how your website becomes visible to the public. Think of it as where your website lives. It's important to know how much space you have, and how much bandwidth you're allowed to use for the price you're paying.

Many offer a free trial or a short term commitment. Try a couple of different services to find the one that is easiest for you.

- **Bluehost.com** – This is the host that is recommended by WordPress.org to use. They offer low price hosting packages and excellent support.
- **Momwebs.com** – This is a smaller business owned by people who are used to dealing with those who don't understand all the ins and outs of servers. They have topnotch very personalized customer service geared toward customers who don't know what they're talking about.
- **Hostgator.com** – This is a very large hosting provider that offers low priced hosting accounts as well as reseller accounts. Customer service is pretty good but can sometimes be frustrating if you don't know what you're talking about.
- **Justhost.com** – Very highly recommended hosting service for those who want to use WordPress. They offer low cost hosting, plus excellent customer service.



There are many other choices, but these are the best choices for WordPress sites. You'll have to decide which package you need. If you plan to host a lot of videos that take a lot of space, you'll need more space. If you have a high traffic site you'll need more traffic space or bandwidth.

You will want to ensure that the hosting provider offers Cpanel access as well as the Softaculous program to follow these directions.

**Once you know for sure that your hosting provider uses Softaculous just follow these steps:**

1. **Log in to your Cpanel.** Your login and password should have been provided by your website hosting provider. It will be at: <http://www.yourdomain.com/cpanel>.
2. **Scroll down** until you see the Softaculous icon or the Softaculous Apps Installer area. It is after the Software/Services area of your hosting Cpanel.

3. **Click the Softaculous** icon if it shows, or look under the Softaculous apps installer area and choose the WordPress icon. Click it.
4. **Look for the "install" icon**, usually a word on a tab and click that.
5. **Type in the domain name** -- or choose the domain in which you wish to install WordPress where it says "Chose Domain".
6. **Select which directly to install WordPress** -- NOTE: Usually you want WordPress to be accessed by people typing in <http://www.yourdomain.com>. If not, and a site already exists, type in the directory you want. By default it has the letters "wp". Delete that choose a better location.
7. **Choose your protocol:** If you want <http://> in front of your domain name, choose that.
8. **Database Name** -- Create something that cannot be guessed that is random. Remember what you called it. It's important that you write down everything you do.
9. **Leave table prefix** the same as it already is
10. **Site Name and Site Description** -- Put whatever you want, this can later be changed in your WP Dashboard and is not permanent.
11. **Admin Account Information** -- Put the email you'd like important information to be sent.
12. **NOTE:** Don't use Admin and Password as your admin name and password. Use something original and choose a difficult password. Write this down. When you write posts or do anything to your website and blog this is the name that will show up.
13. **Choose your language** – English
14. **Email Results** -- Enter an email address that you can easily access and that you check frequently but that is secure.

#### 15. Click install.



You're done. You've installed WordPress on your hosting account's server. Now you can access your site at the domain you chose. It will be either <http://www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin> or it will be <http://www.yourdomain.com/blog/wp-admin>. "Blog" being the new directory you chose to install it into. The window will give you that information when it's finished. Copy and paste the information into a text file with the password information and other information you kept during the process.

## Introduction to Customization

Once you load your site onto your hosting provider's service then it's time to customize your installation. You will receive information from your installation that gives you the URL in which to sign into your Dashboard. The Dashboard is where you will do all alterations to your WordPress site. It will usually look like this: <http://www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin> or <http://yourdomain.com/wp-admin>. You might have one more directory after your domain name /blog/wp-admin if you installed your instance of WP into a special directory. This is the link you sign in to in order to customize your WordPress site.

First, choose a theme, and then add in a few security-focused plug-ins. Next, you can add pages, create your blog, and more. As you move forward with the customization of your site it will start taking shape right before your eyes.

## Choosing a Theme

Inside your dashboard there are many themes you can choose from. Click appearance, themes, and install themes to search through the various free themes that are available. Some of these themes also offer premium upgrades, some are just free. Pay close attention to the documentation provided by the developer to ensure that you don't misuse the theme. Some developers require that you leave certain parts of the theme alone such as the "created by" usually at the bottom of the site. This is especially true of free themes.

You can also find premium themes. Simple do a search for "premium WordPress themes". These are themes created by individual developers for a fee. Ensure that you check out any theme developers to ensure that they are legitimate and not full of undesirable links. Some recommendations for premium themes are:



- **StudioPress.com** – These are professionally designed themes that are easy to use and customize. They already have a lot of the functionality that you need and offer the ability to customize easily from the dashboard. Support is provided in a private owners only message board.
- **ElegantThemes.com** – Professionally designed themes that pride themselves on their beautiful and clean design. They offer great customer support and a lot of different themes from which to choose.
- **Obox-design.com** – If you need an ecommerce theme then this is where you should get it. Obox offers many different types of premium themes and excellent support. They have great documentation and a support forum.



- **PremiumPress.com** – They pride themselves on providing what they call “turn-key” themes for those who want to run ecommerce sites. But, they have many choices that can be used for any type of site.

There are many more places you can get premium themes but these will get you started. Something to consider today is choosing responsive themes. That means that they will respond to whatever type of device or screen that the user is has including tablets and mobile devices. As our society shifts to a more mobile society, and mobile devices continue to outsell, this becomes an imperative for you as you start out creating your website. Thankfully, with WordPress it's easy to have a responsive website.

## Choosing Plugins

One thing that makes WordPress super special is the ability to customize the site. You can customize with themes and with plugins. The community is large so you can find a lot of the



customizations you seek free of charge, or for a very small donation or price. There is a large developer community that creates premium plugins that enable you to have even better access to even more customization for a small fee.

In addition to themes as discussed above finding plug-ins that define the look and feel of your website isn't very hard. One way to find plug-ins is to go to the WordPress.org site and click “plugins” to look at what is available there. You can also do a search for “premium WordPress plugins” just like you can with themes on a search engine. It's important to check out any vender to ensure that they are

legitimate and well known before purchasing or even using free plugins and themes.

You can easily add plugins by signing into your Wordpress Dashboard. Look under Appearance to find plugins. Some of them come with an option to upgrade for even more features. You can do a search for a function you'd like to have, or you can scroll through all of them. You can install right from your dashboard. Some plugins that are premium and found elsewhere, in that case you'll have to download to your computer then upload via your dashboard. It's a very straightforward process. Most premium plugins come with step-by-step instructions.

When you first create your WordPress site it will have a couple of plugins already installed depending on the theme you chose. One of them is *Hello Dolly* which you can uninstall and delete. There is no need for this plugin. Depending on the theme you may already have some plugins installed that give the theme the functions it has. It's always a good idea to take a look at what is already installed for any particular theme so that you don't add anything that might work against what you already have.

It's also a good idea to only install one plugin at a time, set it up completely, and then make sure your site works the way it's supposed to. That way if you do add a plugin that causes problems you'll be able to easily pinpoint the issue. Some plugins don't play well together, so it's always a good idea to read the documentation that is available, as well as reviews of any plugin you think you want to try.



**There are some basic plugins that you will want to start with such as:**

- [WordPress SEO by Yoast](#) -- This plugin allows you to improve the search engine optimization of your WordPress site. While WordPress already has some things built in for SEO, this improves it a lot by helping you focus on a certain keyword within each blog post and more.
- [Google sitemap plugin](#) -- This lets you create and add a sitemap file to Google's webmaster tools easily. This can help you a lot with your Google ranking and since Google is still the number one search engine this will be very helpful.
- Akismet -- This plugin is usually already installed on WordPress. Some people really love it and others don't. But, it can really help you by checking for spam comments. You need to activate it by getting an [Akismet.com API key](#). There is a small fee for business websites but a personal blog is free. There are other options available like [Comment Redlist](#).
- [UpdraftPlus](#) -- This is a WordPress backup and restoration plugin. It's very important that if you don't use this plugin that you find a back up service of some sort that will take care of this for you. If anything happens you'll be able to quickly reactivate your site. A great service is also available here: [VaultPress](#).
- [W3 Total Cache](#) -- This speeds up your page loads and helps visitors not become impatient. This plugin hasn't been updated this year, so you may want to keep an eye on it so that it doesn't become outdated. There may be other options but for now this one works fine.

- [Broken Link Checker](#) -- As your site grows it will be more difficult for you to manually check for broken links. No matter how good your website is there are times when broken links will happen and this plugin will help you avoid missing out on a sale, or frustrating a visitor.
- [Contact Form](#) -- You need to be able to have a form so that people can contact you. A form cuts down on spam and makes it easy for people to contact you. This is one of many different types of forms. You can spend some money and get a better form maker here: [Gravity Forms](#).
- [Better WP Security](#) -- This is a very easy to use plugin that helps you improve the security of your WordPress site without really understanding what you're doing. If you just pick one security plugin, this is the one.

All of these can be found by clicking the link, or by searching for them in your Dashboard. There are also a number of premium plugins that can be found from developers. Typically, they will put a free version on the WordPress.org site and then in the dashboard you'll have a chance to upgrade if you want. Always check the reviews of any plugin because developers sometimes stop supporting them. What is listed here could be out of date by the time you read it, but you do need these types of plugins so you can get started on the right foot.

### **Wrapping it up**

WordPress is clearly dynamic website building software that anyone can use to build awesome websites. There is not a huge learning curve to get up a basic website with a blog. It might take a few more lessons if you want to build a website with ecommerce capabilities, message boards, and more. But, most people can build a successful business website in just a few hours with WordPress that works well to bring traffic to the site. Why don't you give it a try?





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