THE COMPLETE WEB DEVELOPER COURSE

How to make **$10,000** while learning to code

By Rob Percival

Chapter One: Building Beautiful Websites With Wordpress

Earnings Summary

Before This Chapter	After This Chapter
TOTAL EARNED: $200 TIME SPENT: 4 weeks	TOTAL EARNED: $1400 TOTAL TIME SPENT: 10 weeks

So far you've learned some basic web development skills, and earned some cash doing small web development work on freelance websites. That's great! But if you want to work on larger (ie. higher paid) jobs, you're going to need to be able to build

websites from scratch. This is where this chapter comes in.

At this point, it's worth clarifying the difference between web *development* and web *design*. Generally speaking, web development is putting together a website that *works*, and web design is putting together a website that *looks great*. If you're one of those lucky people that can do both, and has an knack for making great looking sites, then you may not need this chapter.

As developers, however, design is not likely to be our strong suit. We need a way to make our site look good that doesn't require us to put together a beautiful design in Photoshop. Fortunately there is one. Read on, MacDuff…

Premium Wordpress Themes

Most clients don't make the distinction between development and design, and will expect you to be able to make something that both works and looks good. Fortunately, in recent years a number of gorgeous and hugely flexible themes have sprung up, which can be customised as required to make a website which is clean, professional and looks great.

Go on your freelance website of choice and search for 'build a website'. You'll see a number of projects around the $500 mark, and most likely they'll want the

following:

- A clean, professional, custom design

- 5-10 pages of content, including an 'about us' page and a contact form

- Possibly a blog, portfolio or shop

- The ability to update the website themselves

If you can cater to this market, there will be no shortage of work for you.

Now, take a look at themeforest.net, specifically the Wordpress Themes section. Spend a few minutes clicking around the demos of the Avada and X themes, and any others that take your fancy.

These themes generally look great, are hugely customisable and contain a huge variety of page layouts and designs, allowing you to display your client's content in an engaging and attractive way. They also have blog and shop designs built in. Finally, they generally come with thorough documentation and active forum-based support.

You need to become an expert on creating sites with these themes, so that you can develop attractive, functional sites fast. Follow through the Wordpress chapter on The Complete Web Developer course for a full guide on how to use these themes.

It is very difficult to get these $500 web design jobs without a portfolio. In fact, I

wouldn't even try. So how do you get your first gig? Here are a few challenges to get you going.

Challenge 1: Your Portfolio

Now is the time to revamp your own website and make it look awesome. There is a step by step guide to doing this at the end of the Wordpress section of The Complete Web Developer Course, but you can also just install a theme and get cracking. Your site needn't (ie. shouldn't) be flashy, but it should be clean, clear and showcase your work.

As always, post a link in the forum to get feedback from me and other students!

Challenge 2: Create A Website For A Friend

Find a friend who needs a website for themselves and offer to make one for them for nothing. Or better, charge them $100 (including the cost of the template), and

run it through your freelancer site. This will make them value the site more, and get you a great review. Do an excellent job and add it to your portfolio. Find some more friends and repeat!

Challenge 3: 'Build A Website for $100'

If you run out of friends, go public. You'll need a couple of sites in your portfolio first, but when you've got them, write a post on your blog offering to design a site for anyone (or perhaps the first 10 people) for $100. This is a great deal, and if the sites you've developed already look good, you'll be inundated with requests. Post your offer on reddit and other forums, and make it clear that you're doing this to build up your portfolio. Run the gigs through your freelancer site, and do an excellent job.

Challenge 4: Design Your Own

If you really can't get anyone to pay you, then spend your time creating great sites anyway. If you have an idea for an app or product, create a landing page marketing the project. Redesign a famous site (paypal.com is a popular one for this!) and post the result on dribble.com. Or build a theme to sell on themeforest.net - simple but effective landing pages are always popular.

Or a final suggestion, find a poorly designed site for a local small business and do an awesome redesign. Send the design to them and offer it to them for $200 (or more). Very few business owners would turn that down.

Bidding For Gigs

Now you've got a small number (4 is a minimum) of sites in your portfolio, start bidding on website design jobs on your chosen freelance site. Remember that you are still there primarily to learn, so keep your bids low (perhaps around $300 to start with), give a detailed bid, pointing out similar sites you've made if possible, and be responsive to messages.

Once you have your first website design gig, put your heart and soul into it, send them a great first draft, make any necessary changes that they request and then send a second draft.

I always make it clear that after the draft is agreed no substantive changes to the design (eg. colours, layouts) can be made. I would also recommend having a two stage payment release structure, so that half the fee is released when the design is agreed, and the rest on completion of the website. As before, make sure that the milestone is paid in advance, and that you are clear what needs to be done.

It's particularly important to clarify what you will provide and what the buyer will provide. Are you expected to create a logo? What about images? Any content?

Challenge 5: Get Your First Website Design Gig

So you've got your portfolio, you've identified some jobs to bid on, you've decided on your price, so get bidding! Again, it may take a while before you get accepted, and that's fine - keep going and keep positive. You'll get there eventually.

When you secure your first web design gig, post the result in the forums so we can give you feedback and congratulate you.

You're A Web Designer!

Nice work! Hopefully by now you will have completed four $100 web design jobs and two $300 jobs. I'm assuming you're still doing some small jobs (although we'll start to phase these out soon), and that you've earned $200 from those. That means a grand total of $1,400 in 10 weeks, not bad for a beginner!

At the same time, you should have more or less finished The Complete Web Developer Course, so you'll know about API's, making HTML5 apps for iOS and Android, and have built your Twitter clone. That's really impressive, and gives some opportunities to start developing some revenue-generating websites, which is where the real fun begins.

For now, grab a latte and congratulate yourself on a fantastic couple of months - the best is yet to come!

Progress Update

So far, you should have earned around $1,600:

Activities	Total Income ($)
Month 1 10 small freelance jobs at $20 each	200

Months 2/3	
10 small freelance jobs at $30 each 4 website jobs at $100 each 2 full website jobs at $300 each	1200
TOTAL	**$1,600**

Further Reading

http://wordpress.org/

The home of Wordpress

http://wordpress.org/themes/

Free Wordpress themes

http://themeforest.net/

The biggest collection of premium themes

http://theme.co/x/

The X theme

http://theme-fusion.com/avada/

The Avada theme

http://www.elegantthemes.com/

http://themify.me/

http://www.templatemonster.com/wordpress-themes.php

http://themeroulette.com/

Some other sources of Wordpress themes

http://codex.wordpress.org/Using_Themes

The Wordpress guide to installing themes