The Ultimate WordPress Handbook 3.0

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HARSH AGRAWAL

SHOUTMELOUD

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THE ULTIMATE WORDPRESS GUIDE FROM SHOUTMELOUD

By Harsh Agrawal

START A PERFECT WEBSITE IN 30 MINUTES: ARE YOU READY?

Foreword: Why this eBook?

Hey there,

Usually, I call my blog readers, “Shouters”, and in case you are new here, let me welcome you & and for the first time, proudly say,

“Hey there, Shouter.”

Welcome to ShoutMeLoud & before you get into the journey of starting your first blog, let me quickly brief you about why this book is useful and answer the question of, “***who the hell is Harsh Agrawal?***” (Yah! Me!)

I’m an ordinary guy, but my friends describe me as someone who is

passionate & creative. At the time of updating this book, I'm 30 years old, a "digital nomad" (i.e. I travel a lot), and I am following my **dream of living an independent & *happy life***.

It may sound ideal, but it definitely wasn't ideal just a few years ago. I come from a small town & like any other young guy, I dreamed of "making it big". My idea of "big" back then was to join a large multi-national corporation (MNC) & *earn a handsome income*. Thanks to my immense love for computers & "All Things Internet", I got a good job at **Accenture** & was all set to kick-start my boring 9-6 career.

I originally started blogging to share my learning like everybody else who starts up a blog. But after a while, **with a lot of hard-work** (and perhaps a bit of luck), in the last couple of years, my blog has become **a source of inspiration for many**.

And that's what reflected from ShoutMeLoud's mission statement: Living a boss free life.

Today, ShoutMeLoud.com, receives more than **13 million page-views every year**. With my blog earnings, I have purchased a nice car & a nice flat in the heart of India. At times, it feels like a dream to me (and certainly to others), but let me tell you, **it was not as easy as it sounds.**

Spending ***16 hours a day working*** *is no joke & I spent the first 2 years of my career in a one-bedroom apartment working* ***16 hours every day.***

So here's the question: Was it worth it?

Here's the answer: **Totally.**

I believe that you need to work like there is nothing else that matters for the first few years, and after that, *your life will be truly yours.*

Since blogging has changed my life, I have decided to pass on my learning's to as many people as I can. After all, I love writing, and nothing feels better to me than helping someone change his or her life.

Why this book? Part II

I started my online journey in 2008, and after 2 months of blogging, I moved from BlogSpot to the WordPress platform.

The **very first challenge** for me was trying to understand how to install and set-up my own blog. *That was only the first challenge.*

Back then, there weren't any eBooks like this one that could guide me step-by-step on how to launch a search engine friendly blog using WordPress. I had to learn the hard way: by trial and error.

This book is written **exclusively for readers like you** who want to create a WordPress blog & earn passive income and/or make a career in blogging.

IMPORTANT: (*I should note that all throughout this eBook I use the words "blog" and "website" interchangeably. In today's world, these terms are basically the same. If you are not a blogger and are looking to create a website that isn't about blogging, this eBook will be* ***just as informative*** *to you as it will to those who are creating a "blog" for strict "blogging" purposes.*)

Now, you don't have to be "*tech-savvy*" to do various WordPress tasks, as these days almost everything is automated. There's also a **really big blogging community** out there waiting to help you improve & grow your website.

The biggest things that you need to know are *how to create* a WordPress website/blog, *how to use* a WordPress website/blog, and where to look for help when you need it.

This eBook is **going to be your best friend**. It will help you learn *all the basics of WordPress* and will work as your personal assistant when you're ready to set up your own WordPress blog.

By the end of the day, you will have your blog up & running.

This book is going to change your life for good.

Throughout this eBook you will find me cracking light-hearted jokes and explaining technical details in the way that even my college dropout dad can understand.

Let's have a look at our list of topics covered:

- What is WordPress?
- Different types of WordPress platforms; which one is the best for you?
- How to buy web-hosting and a domain name for your blog
- How to install WordPress Blog Yourself (Complete DIY)
- How to setup WordPress for the first time
- Essential WordPress plugins and how to configure them

I.

Before we move ahead, it's important for you to know **why you should be using the WordPress platform for your blog.**

There are many other platforms, like Medium.com. Tumblr, BlogSpot, and WordPress.com (*more on this later*), ***which are free,*** but then why are 33% of the websites in the world powered by WordPress?

Because the *power* of WordPress is in the **community.** Its powerful community comes from WordPress's open-source CMS software which is powered by PHP and MySQL.

To put it in non-technical jargon:

- ***It's a brilliant blogging platform***.
- It's a great platform to sell online and offline products

Basically, it makes it *really easy* for technical & non-technical people to make a website.

According to the recent stats (April 2019), 33.33% of all the websites on the internet are powered by WordPress. In case you don't know, that's a lot.

You may know that BlogSpot is powered by its parent company: Google. Likewise, WordPress is powered by its parent company: Automattic.

Automattic offers two variations of this popular blogging platform:

1. ***WordPress.com***
2. ***WordPress.org*** *(Self-hosted WordPress)*

History of WordPress: Useful info

WordPress was first started (2003) as an all around blogging tool

and has turned into a *constantly evolving* CMS (content management system).

The first version of WordPress was released as an open source project licensed under GPLV2. In the last 16 years, WordPress has evolved as **the most popular platform** for creating blogs and websites.

WordPress was co-founded in 2003 by Matt Mullenweg & Mike Little. WordPress is backed up by its parent company Automattic, which also offers various WordPress related services and products like WordPress.com, VaultPress, JetPack, VideoPress, WordPressVIP,

Gravatar, and many others.

As a beginner, you really only need to know **two important things about WordPress:**

1. WordPress Themes

Unlike standard websites and CMSs that we know of, WordPress is backed by a **huge community** of freelance designers and development companies that offers *free and premium WordPress themes.*

One of the biggest challenges for a website today is to **have a great design,** and WordPress themes are the solution to that problem.

Anyone can download a WordPress theme for free from the official WordPress repo or 3rd party website. If you want to go for a more professional route, you can pay a small amount and get a premium WordPress theme.

With a few clicks of your mouse, you can change the overall design and look of your theme. As I mentioned above, WordPress can be used to create a blog or a website, and the theme aspect makes it **really easy** for *anyone* to start a blog or website with almost no coding knowledge.

I personally use the Astra theme on all of my blogs, including ShoutMeLoud, as it's the most optimized WordPress theme out there.

One reason for this is that this theme has *in-built schema markup* & it has **zero** compatibility issues with all the popular WordPress plugins.

Advice: If you are not a programmer, don't waste too much time fixing your theme. Pick a theme from WordPress theme clubs which comes with installation & configuration guide. Usually, such themes cost anything from $19-$59. Take my advice & save your precious time for something meaningful. I have listed great site for purchasing WordPress theme at the end.

Here are the top 3 websites to pick the theme for you:

- Official WordPress theme repo
- Astra theme
- MyThemeShop (They have free & paid themes)

2. WordPress Plugins

The most fascinating things about WordPress are the plugins.

Plugins **extend** the core features of the WordPress software. They help in adding new features to your WordPress-powered websites and there is a WordPress plugin for ***almost everything.***

If you want to show a related post after an article, or you want to add your bio in the sidebar, or you want to add a Facebook follow link, yes, **there's a plugin for that**.

All you need to do is think of a feature that you want and search for a plugin using Google or the WordPress plugin repo *(link at the bottom of this eBook)*. Once you download the plugin, you can **easily** add your desired features. No coding involved.

Due to the **huge number** of WordPress plugins, one can easily get confused with which plugin to use. But don't worry. After years of personally working with WordPress and collaborating with professional WordPress users, I will help you identify the best and most useful plugins to use. (*Spoiler Alert: In the last section of this*

eBook, I have shared a list of WordPress plugins that ***you must have*** *on your WordPress blog/website.)*

You can download WordPress plugins from the official plugin directory for free, or you can get them from premium stores such as CodeCanyon.

In the upcoming pages of this eBook, you will learn all you need to know about installing WordPress themes & plugins.

So keep reading, enjoy learning, and sip some coffee!

WordPress.com vs. WordPress.org: What's the difference?

WordPress offers two variations of its software:

- **WordPress.com and WordPress.org**

(WordPress.org is also known as a "self-hosted WordPress blog".)

WordPress.com:

WordPress.com is a *free blogging platform* offered by Automattic

which will let anyone create a blog for free. When you create a blog on WordPress.com, you will get a web address like:

- **http://www.yourname.WordPress.com**

Your blog will be hosted on the WordPress server which is perfect for those people who want to have a *blog for personal writing*.

There are many paid add-ons that are also available; you can buy a custom domain name and you can use paid themes.

But WordPress.com has **many limitations** in terms of managing your blog.

For example: **You can't install 3rd party plugins** and you have *very limited* choices for themes.

From a personal hobby blog perspective, this is not a bad option, as the WordPress team takes care of managing your blog's architecture and backing it all up. But if **you plan to make money** from your blog & want to create a future/career, ***ignore WordPress.com& use WordPress.org.***

Note: If you want to *just explore* WordPress initially, create a free blog on WordPress.com & it will give you an overview of how cool & easy it is to work with WordPress. (*Takes only* 5 *minutes*)

Later on (when you will be installing WordPress on your server), you can easily differentiate & understand how much more awesome it is to use WordPress.org.

WordPress.com is for:

- Individuals who want to start a personal space for writing.
- Companies who just need a blog without much control & branding. Factors like design and hosting are not issues.

WordPress.com is *not* for:

- Individuals who are planning to make money. You can't use

AdSense, Media.net, or any other popular ways to make money from your website/blog.
- Individuals who need total control over their website/blog.

Here is an official TOS page for using WordPress.com, which will give you all the information regarding fair usage and the TOS of WordPress.

WordPress.org a.k.a "Self-Hosted WordPress Platform"

WordPress.org is a complete solution for people like you & me who are looking to start a website/blog to make money, for promoting their small business, or for any other "professional" usage like creating an e-commerce site.

In the old days, you needed to download a copy of WordPress.org from the official download page and install it onto your own hosting server.

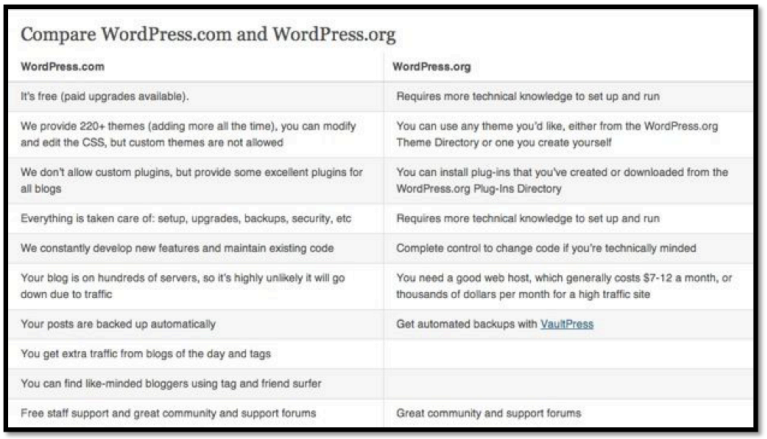
These days, all web-hosting companies let you install WordPress with a few clicks (thanks to **automatic installer** tools).

WordPress.com and WordPress.org have similar interfaces (the WordPress dashboard), but WordPress.org **removes all the limitations** of WordPress.com, and offers you *complete control* over your website.

Quote: "A *good website is your personalized home!*"

You can use any theme (design), install 3rd party themes, and install 3rd party plugins on your self-hosted WordPress blog. You can also monetize it in any way that you like (AdSense, Media.net, affiliate marketing, banner ads, sponsored posts, paid reviews, and so on).

Here is a basic chart showing the difference between WordPress.com and WordPress.org:



Compare WordPress.com and WordPress.org

WordPress.com	WordPress.org
It's free (paid upgrades available).	Requires more technical knowledge to set up and run
We provide 220+ themes (adding more all the time), you can modify and edit the CSS, but custom themes are not allowed	You can use any theme you'd like, either from the WordPress.org Theme Directory or one you create yourself
We don't allow custom plugins, but provide some excellent plugins for all blogs	You can install plug-ins that you've created or downloaded from the WordPress.org Plug-Ins Directory
Everything is taken care of: setup, upgrades, backups, security, etc	Requires more technical knowledge to set up and run
We constantly develop new features and maintain existing code	Complete control to change code if you're technically minded
Your blog is on hundreds of servers, so it's highly unlikely it will go down due to traffic	You need a good web host, which generally costs $7-12 a month, or thousands of dollars per month for a high traffic site
Your posts are backed up automatically	Get automated backups with VaultPress
You get extra traffic from blogs of the day and tags	
You can find like-minded bloggers using tag and friend surfer	
Free staff support and great community and support forums	Great community and support forums

If at this point you're still saying, "Why WordPress?" here are a few more interesting facts to know:

- Some of the most popular websites in the world (Techcrunch, CNN, Forbes) are powered by WordPress VIP.
- 33% of the websites in the world are powered by WordPress.
- The WordPress app is available for all popular mobile platforms (iOS, Android, Blackberry).
- You can always migrate your Medium blog, BlogSpot blog or WordPress.com blog to self hosted WordPress at any time (& it's free).
- WordPress has a **complete marketplace** for individuals and companies that want to make money. You can find or post jobs on many freelance marketplaces like Jobs.WordPress.com, Freelancer.com, and others. You can additionally get **free support** from the amazing community of WordPress via their support forum.
- WordPress is used to create various types of websites like blogs,

coupon/discount websites, directory websites, affiliate systems, portfolio websites, ticketing systems, and so on. There is a plugin **for almost everything** on WordPress.
- You can install WordPress locally to learn, test, or develop anything on WordPress. (Windows and Mac)

2. Web-Hosting for WordPress

So now you know what WordPress is and a little bit about the different types of WordPress platforms. Now it's time to learn about WordPress hosting.

To install your own WordPress website/blog, you need to have web-hosting and a domain name.

(If you wish to take an in-depth look at web-hosting for WordPress, you can download the eBook from here.)

What are the features you need in a WordPress web-host?

Below I have mentioned the list of features that you should look for before buying a web-hosting package for WordPress. Don't get overwhelmed with this list as I have ***also listed down the best web-hosting companies for WordPress*** at the end of this section. But it's important to understand ***why*** they're the best.

Server Compatibility with WordPress:

One of the important features that you need to see in a web-hosting company is **compatibility with WordPress**. WordPress uses PHP and MySQL and as such, your web-host's server should have the **latest version of PHP and MySQL**.

Always look for a***Linux host for WordPress*** or web-hosting companies which are ***designed for WordPress***. For running a WordPress site, the host's server should have a minimum of:

- PHP version 7.0 or greater
- MySQL version 5.6 or greater

Server Uptime:

A web-host with excellent uptime ***is essential***. There are many web-hosting companies that offer you a hosting space *for free*, but they don't, and can't, guarantee good uptime. This is just one reason why you should ***avoid free web-hosting*** companies, and ***buy reliable*** web-hosting.

If your website is down, you not only lose traffic, but it also affects your website/blog's search engine ranking. Free web-hosts have serious issues with uptime; most of the time your site will go down and customer service will respond with the message:

"*We are looking into it*".

The best way is to go for hosting companies that offer **maximum uptime**. That said, ***it's impossible to achieve 100% uptime***, but anything above 99% is what you should look for.

Bandwidth and Storage:

The higher the bandwidth and storage are, the better it is for your website. There are renowned hosting companies that offer **unlimited bandwidth and storage**. In my recommended hosting companies section (below), I have listed down those hosting companies for WordPress that offer these unlimited resources.

SSL Certificate:

In 2019 & coming years, having SSL certificate is essential. It's an official search engine ranking factor and it offers better security for you & for your readers. There are many hosting companies now offer integrated free SSL that is one feature you must look at.

If you are running a blog or simple information based website on WordPress, you can use free SSL. If you are running an e-commerce store using WooCommerce or EDD, you should consider using paid

SSL from a reputed supplier. No need to worry about this, as I have covered only those hosting that are reputed & offers everything you require for running your blog.

Support: Get help in time!

There are times when you will need technical assistance from your hosting company. You should *ensure that you could connect with your hosting support team.* They should at least offer support by telephone or live-chat. Moreover, ensure that that support is given **in real-time** so you don't have to wait for hours to have your issue addressed.

GETTING READY TO LAUNCH YOUR WORDPRESS SITE:

To start with, I recommend you use Bluehost for installing your WordPress site.

I will also explain the difference between hosting plans offered by Bluehost and how to buy web-hosting from Bluehost. For now, let me quickly explain ***why*** you should use Bluehost:

Bluehost is **officially recommended** by the team at WordPress.org (see screenshot below).

Apart from Bluehost, SiteGround is another good hosting company to consider:

1. SiteGround

I have used SiteGround too. SiteGround offers cutting edge server for WordPress & offers great customer support.

With SiteGround, the only problem is that they don't offer unlimited hosting. So as soon as your website starts getting a good amount of traffic, you need to **pay more for the higher plans**.

For your new WordPress site, Bluehost or SiteGround will be good enough and provide you with everything you need.

Now, let's move ahead & learn about different hosting packages offered by Bluehost & which one is most appropriate under certain conditions.

Different Packages Offered by Bluehost:

Bluehost U.S offers 3 different shared hosting plans. This is useful for end-users like you and me who want to save money and get exactly what we need. For a new WordPress blog or website, a shared hosting plan is the best in terms of money and basic requirements.

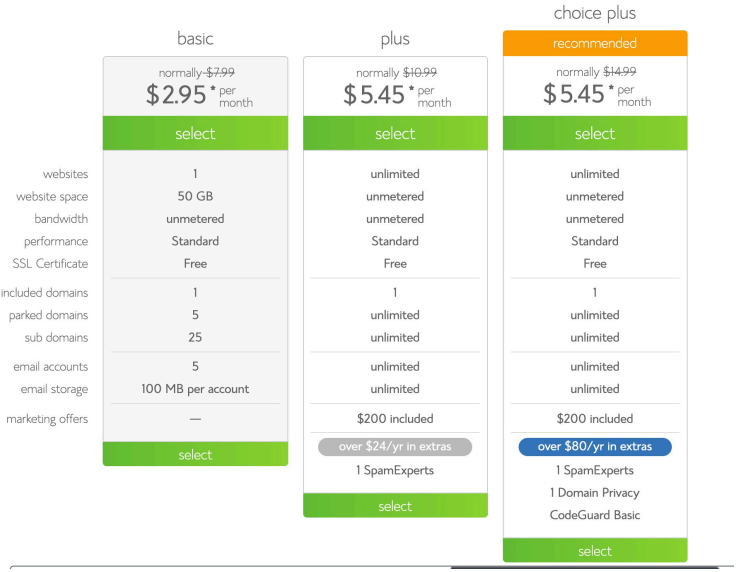
To start with, head over to the Bluehost site and check out their existing shared hosting plans.

Bluehost offers **"Basic", "Plus", and "Prime"** shared hosting packages. The "Plus" package is the *most popular* because it offers great features for a low price.

To help you understand better, let's have a look at the differences between these 3 packages.

3. A Definite Guide to Bluehost's Shared Hosting Packages

Before I share the difference between Bluehost's "Basic", "Plus", and "Choice plus" plans, take a look at the image below.



This image will give you an overview of what all the packages have to offer and afterward, I will explain every package in detail.

Basic:

This is the entry level and cheapest shared hosting package that

you can buy from Bluehost. This is indeed a good package that is feature rich and costs only $2.95/month.

The "Basic" package allows you to host only **one website.** *(This is one reason why I recommend you opt for the "Plus" package as that will allow you to host* ***multiple websites****. It only costs $2.50/month more and will save you a lot of headaches in the future. More on this later.)*

The "Basic" package offers **50 GB bandwidth/month** which is *more than enough* for you to run your website on shared hosting.

The "Basic" package doesn't come with CloudFlare CDN offered by Bluehost, but you can always directly signup for CloudFlare and integrate free CDN. This will help you reduce the bandwidth of your hosting account by a great extent.

You should choose the "Basic" package only when you are planning to host ***only one website*** *and have no plans for adding more websites in the future.*

Plus (most popular & recommended for you):

This is my favorite (and the most popular) package on Bluehost. The "Plus" package is feature-rich and offers everything, which the "Basic" package offers. But it also comes with:

- + ***Unlimited*** *domain hosting*
- + ***Free marketing coupons worth $200***
- + ***Free CDN*** *via CloudFlare*

The "marketing coupons" are usually free Adwords coupons, Facebook Ads coupons, Bing Ads coupons, and the like, which you can use to market your website. This package also comes with **one free domain** that will save you some extra money.

The price for this package is $5.45/month if you use this special link (normally $10.99/month). If you value my recommendations (and I'm assuming you do because you are reading this eBook), I recommend the "Plus" package.

This is a **complete value** for the money and will help your site grow

in the future. You should consider buying it for a minimum of 2 or 3 years to help you save money on your hosting bill. This is because the Bluehost coupon I shared above is **valid only on the first bill**; there is no discount on renewals.

- Related reading: How to add extra domains to your Bluehost account

Choice plus:

This is another package, which I usually don't recommend. This package only offers free who.is guard & cost almost the same as plus package. This package is targeted to businesses that are hosting their site on shared hosting and are looking for extra features. Do yourself a favour & pick plus package.

So which Bluehost shared hosting package is best for you?

Here are my suggestions on how you can identify which package is right for you:

- Running ***only one*** site: "Basic"
- Running ***more than one*** site: **"Plus"** (*Recommended*)
- Need***dedicated I.P & who is guard.***: "Choice plus"

If you *are planning* to buy the "Basic" Bluehost package, I would still recommend you grab the "Plus" package as the price difference is minimal and in the future, if you want to host more than one website, you don't have to spend extra money on upgrading. Below link is a special discounted link to save money.

Grab Your Bluehost Shared Hosting Package (discount with this link)

4. How to Buy Web-Hosting and Domain

To buy web-hosting for your WordPress blog/site, you need to be ready **with your domain name** & preferred payment mode. In this section we will look into the things that you need before launching your site:

Domain name:

This is the domain name **which you want to buy** and use. You will get *one free domain name* **or** you can use any of your existing domain names (you can claim your free domain later too).

If you have not decided on your domain name, check out this guide to learn how to select a domain name. You can use this free service called BustAName to find cool domain names for your site.

Since you are purchasing hosting from Bluehost, ***you don't need to pay extra for a domain***. You will be getting a free domain name with your package and for right now, you just need to *find a domain name that you want to buy.*

Payment mode:

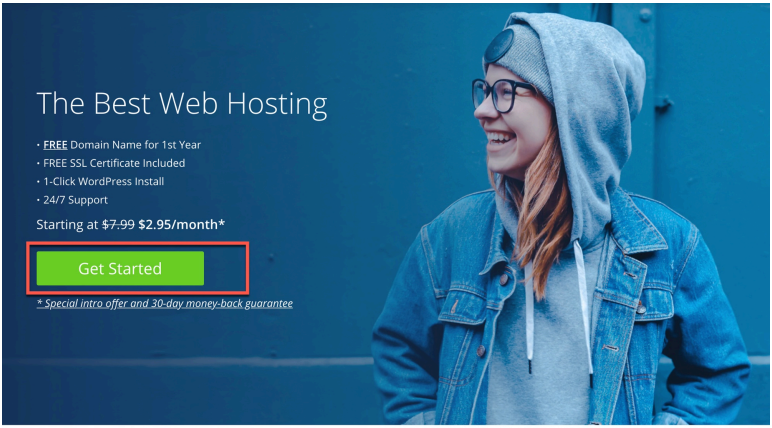
You can make *payment via credit card, PayPal, or international debit cards* that allow online international transactions.

Visit Bluehost U.S.

If you are done with these two things, you are all set to **buy** your web- hosting & domain for your new blog.

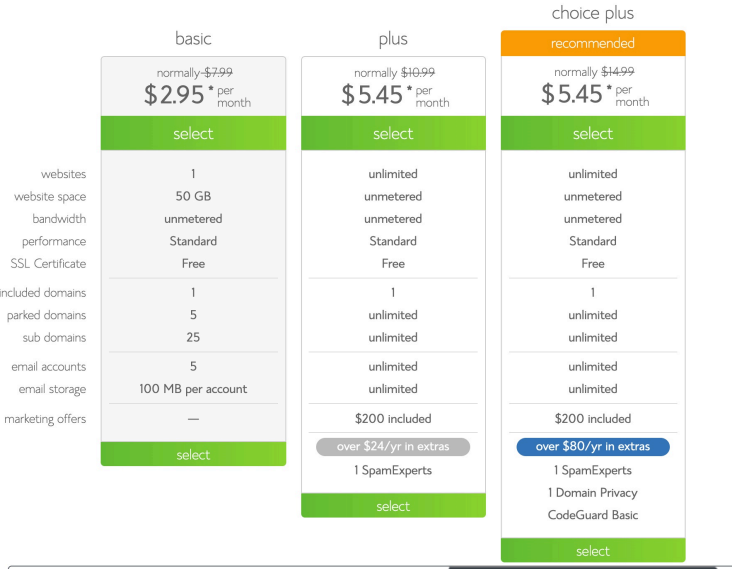
STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BUYING BLUEHOST WEB-HOSTING:

To start with, click here & go to the Bluehost site.



Click on “get started now”.

This will take you to a page where you will see the three different packages to choose from.



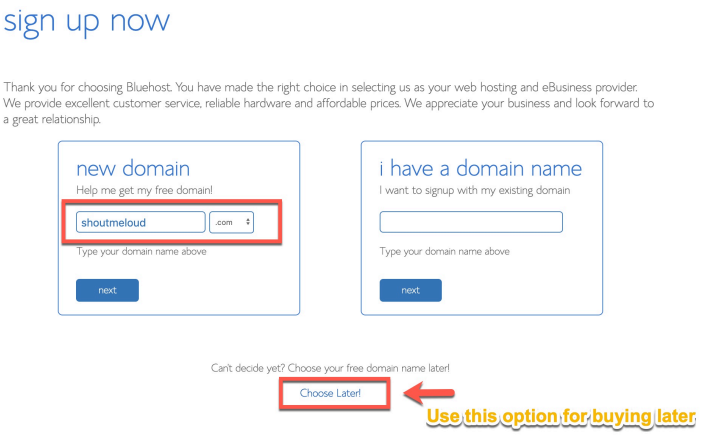
I have already explained above about the difference between these packages. You can pick the one according to your needs, but for me, I'm going to be purchasing the "**Choice plus**" **package**.

Do remember this discount is only for the first bill. So it's best to purchase hosting for 2 or 3 years.

Click on "select" to select your plan.

Choose a free domain or use your existing domain name:

On the next page you can either get a free domain name or you can use any of your existing domain names.



Even if you don't use the free domain feature right now, you can always get your free domain later.

Note: *If you are using an existing domain name from some other domain registrar, such as GoDaddy, you need to change your domain's name-servers to:*

NS1.Bluehost.com

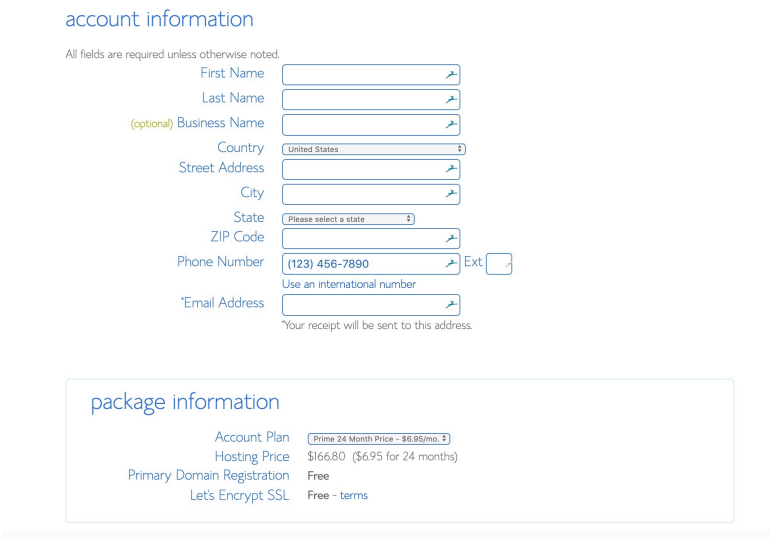
NS2.Bluehost.com

Here is an easy to follow guide on doing that.

If you want to keep things simple, it's better to enter the domain name you wish to buy in the "new domain" field and your free domain *will be activated* with your hosting purchase.

Click on "next".

Account details:



In this section you need to enter your details (name, email address, address, etc.) which is pretty straightforward. Make sure you verify every detail ***(especially your email address, as you will get your login and hosting information sent to your email address)***.

(Note: The above details are dummy details for reference only!)

Package information:

This part is ***crucial*** and you should ***pay extra attention*** at this stage to ensure that you are not over-charged for add-ons that you don't need.

As I said above, pick a hosting package for a 24 or 36-month term, as you will notice the price *decreases* as the length of service *increases*.

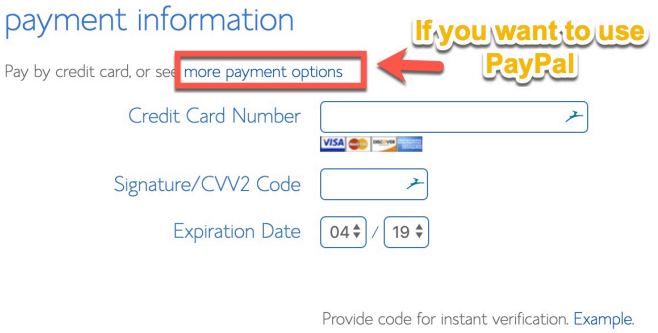
Also make sure you **deselect** the option "**Site Backup Pro**" "**SiteLock Security – Find**", as you don't need them & there are free plugins for WordPress which you can use to get these same features.

You can purchase domain privacy protection in case if you need to hide your contact info. If you are working from office & using your official contact info, then you don't need domain privacy protection.

Note: You can always add another services later from your dashboard.

Complete hosting purchase:

By default, you will see the option to **make payment via credit card** only, but if you want to make payment via PayPal, click on "More payment options" and it will **show you the "Pay by PayPal" option**.

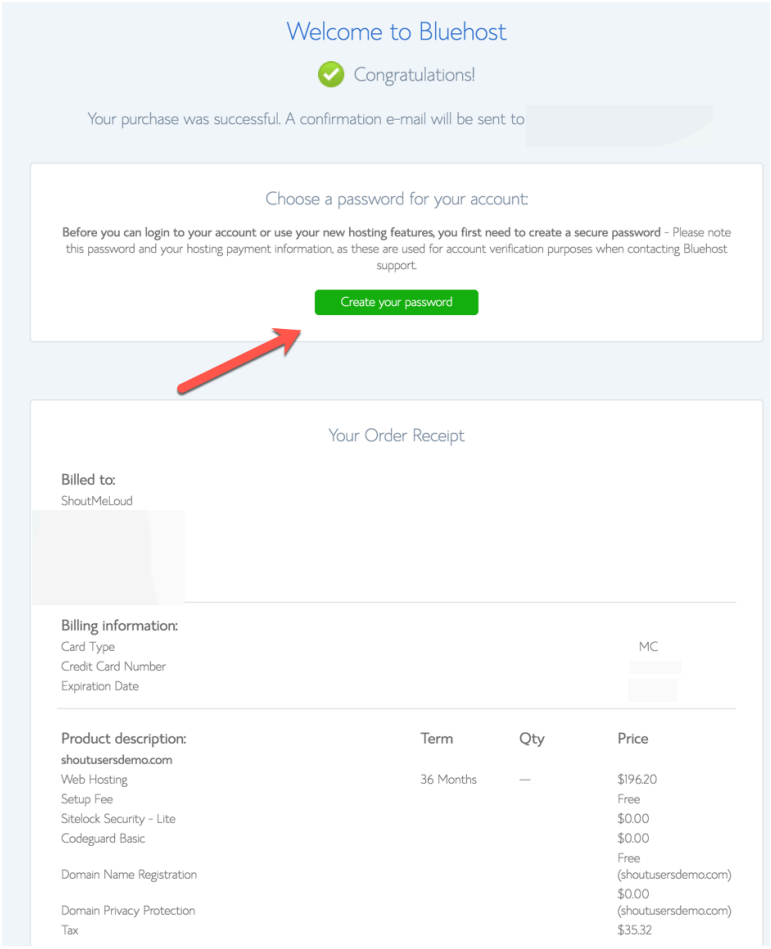


Before you make the payment, I suggest you scroll up and *verify all the information one more time.*

After making your payment, you will see another after-sales page like this.

Just ignore everything and click on "no thanks".

On the next page you will get a confirmation for your hosting purchase, and you will see a screen like this one:



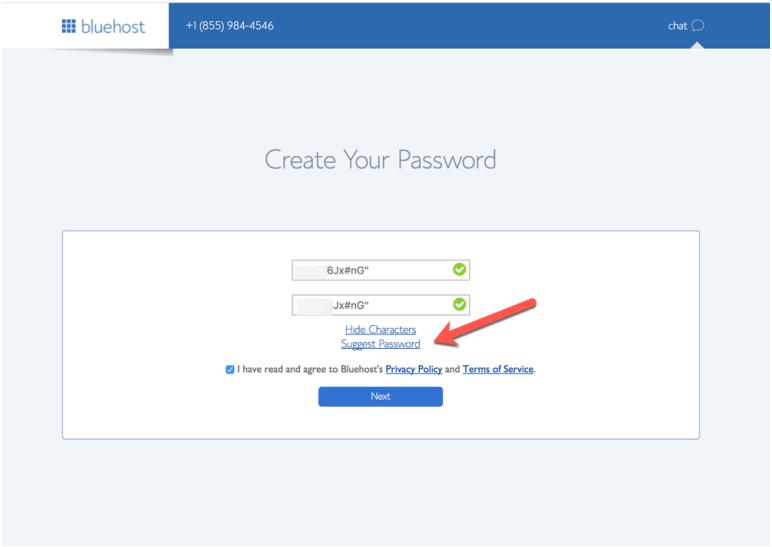
Click on “create your password”.

Selecting the password:

This is the *last stage of your web-hosting purchase*, and now all you need to do is set the password for your hosting login. You can create a password yourself or you can use their password generator to create a complex password. (*Using their generator is* ***recommended****. Their password will be very challenging, so if you go this route, copy and paste this impossible to guess the password in a safe place.*)

Click on "Create" and that's it!

Now you are **98% done** buying and setting up your web-hosting package.



Log in into Bluehost cPanel:

Check your email inbox for your confirmation email with all the login information for your new web hosting account. The only thing, which you won't get in the email, is the password you created in the last

step. This is for your own security and the reason why you should have copied and pasted it somewhere like I recommended!

It's time to do great things on the web. Log in now to start work on your website, set up your email, and more. Not sure where to start?
We're here to help.

Save this Important Account Information

Your Account Information

Domain:
shoutusersdemo.com

Username:
shoutuse

Password:
change your password

Temporary URL:
http://box5653.temp.domains/~shoutuse/

Email Server:
mail.shoutusersdemo.com

Name Server:
ns1.bluehost.com

Name Server 2:
ns2.bluehost.com

Your FTP Information

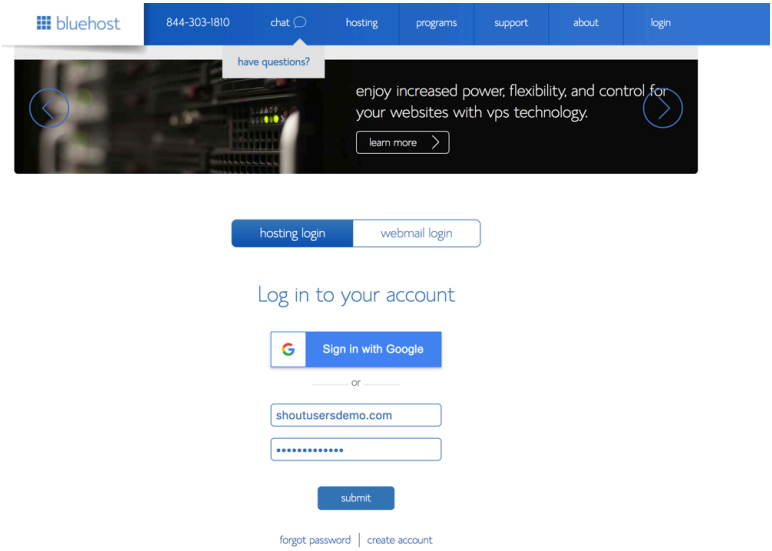
Host:
ftp.shoutusersdemo.com

FTP Username:
shoutuse

Password:
change your password

Directory:
public_html

Now, go to Bluehost.com and click on “hosting login” at the top. In the login field type your domain name (username) and in the password field input your password (of course!).



On the next page click on “home”, and you will be at the Bluehost cPanel.

That’s it!

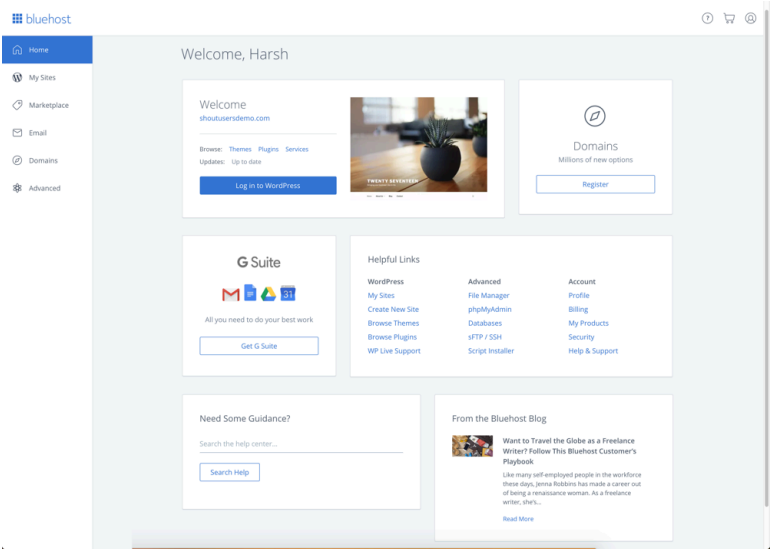
Congratulations! You just finished buying your web-hosting and domain name!

5. How to Install WordPress on Bluehost Hosting

Bluehost has completely revamped their web-hosting and made it WordPress oriented. Unlike old times when you had to create your blog manually, these days Bluehost automatically install and setup WordPress for you. If you have followed the above guide and simply purchased hosting + free domain name from Bluehost, it will start installing WordPress for you automatically.

This could take anywhere between 5-10 minutes. In case if you see a screen like this and you are stuck, re-login to your Bluehost Dashboard:

Ultimately you will see Bluehost Dashboard like this and click on Login to WordPress to automatically login inside your WordPress dashboard.



Now your WordPress blog is up & running.

If you have any questions or confusions regarding any steps up until this point, you can email me at harsh@shoutmeloud.com or tweet me at @denharsh.

Now the hard part is done & the fun part starts.

In the next section, you will learn all about setting up your WordPress blog. Your site has now been born and here you will start adding flavors & your own personal swag to give it some life!

So let's get on with it, shall we?

6. Basic WordPress Info

How to install WordPress plugins:

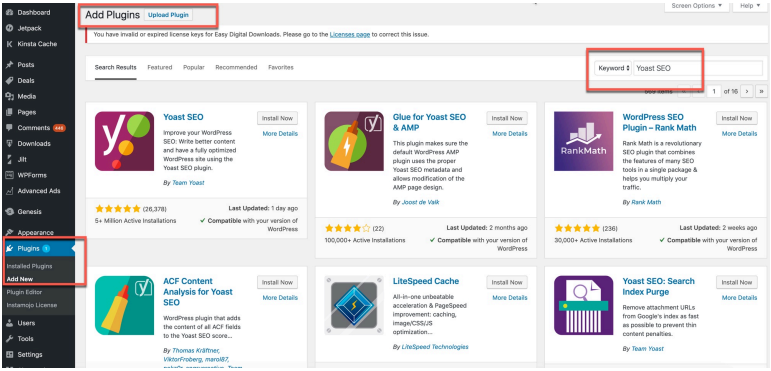
One of the most basic things which you need to learn about your self-hosted WordPress blog is how to install WordPress plugins. There are many ways to do this. Here are three of the easiest ways:

1. Install plugins by searching from the dashboard
2. Upload a .zip folder to WordPress
3. Install via FTP

I wouldn't recommend installing by FTP unless you don't have permission to install a plugin from the dashboard. But most of the recommended hosting companies like Bluehost, SiteGround, and InMotion Hosting give you permission to add plugins from the dashboard.

If you want to search for a plugin from the WordPress plugin repo, you can simply find the name of the plugin and do a search from the dashboard.

- Login to your WordPress dashboard
- Click on Plugins > Add New
- Search for a plugin that you want to install
- Click on "Install Now"
- Activate the plugin

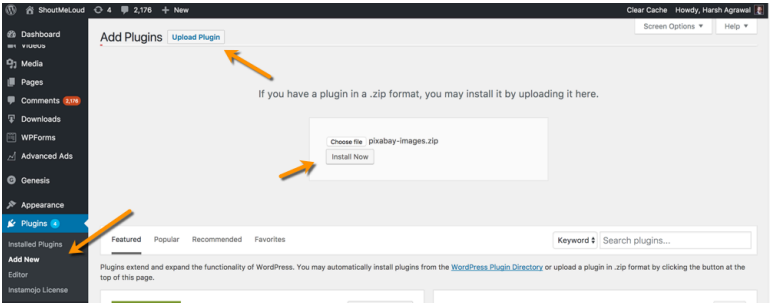


That's it!

Now, there are many plugins that are old and have not been updated for years, but they are **still very useful.** But you won't be able to install such plugins by searching for them. You will have to *download the .zip folder from the official repo* and install it.

Here is a quick guide on installing a .zip format plugin:

- Login to your WordPress dashboard
- Click on Plugin > Add New > Upload Plugin
- Browse for the .zip file and install the plugin
- Click on "Activate Plugin"



When you are downloading plugins, make sure you download them from **credible sources** like the Free WordPress plugin repo, CodeCanyon, or the official plugin page of the plugin's developers.

Avoid downloading plugins from **any non-credible sources like *free file sharing sites or torrents!***

Installing a WordPress theme:

Installing a theme is *just as easy* as installing a plugin. It's almost the exact same process. Instead of me repeating myself, you can read this blog post to learn the process.

The complete WordPress video training is now available at ShoutUniversity. This is the blogging course I created for the user like you who wish to make a career online. Along with WordPress training videos, you will have access to 2 more popular courses.

7. WordPress Setup Guide: Let's make it perfect!

Congratulations for your WordPress website. However, the battle is half won and now the real work starts. There are more than a few things you need to make your WordPress perfect.

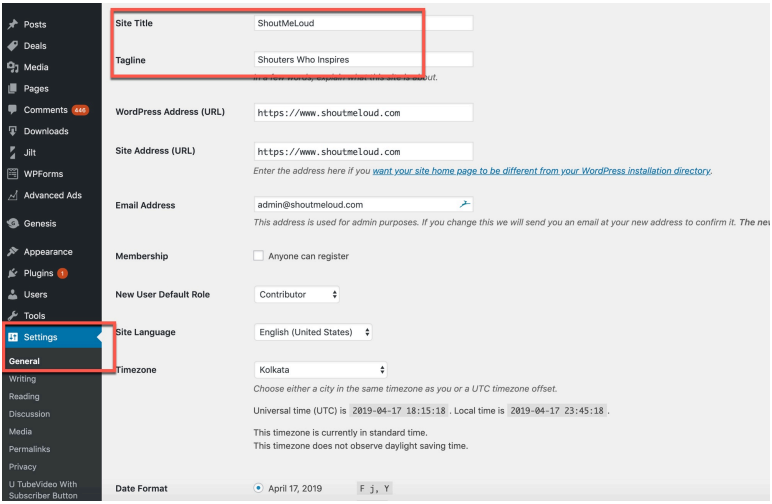
In the further section, you will by learning how to setup WordPress properly. These are mostly one time settings and will ensure your WordPress website will be future proof.

So, let's get started & start setting up your WordPress website!

First, log in to your WordPress dashboard by going to http://**domain.com**/wp-admin (replace "**domain.com**" with your actual domain name).

Settings > General: (Basic WordPress configuration)

If at the time of installing WordPress on Bluehost, you added your "Site Title" & "Tagline", you can change it anytime from this settings page. "Site Title" & "Tagline" are ***very important*** as **this is what shows up on Google**.



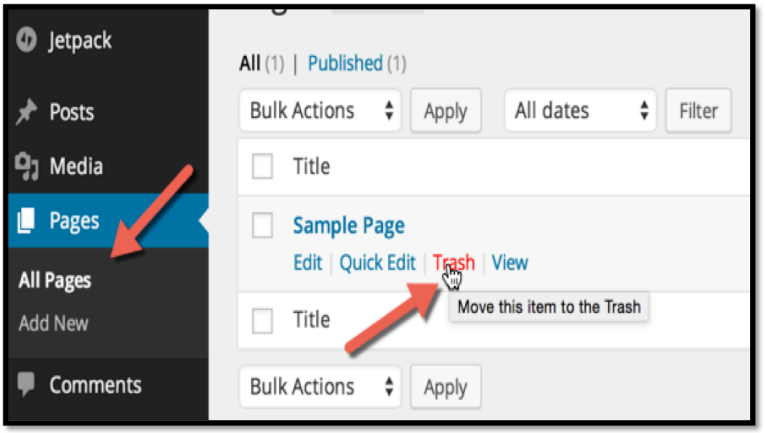
"E-mail Address" will be your site admin's email address. This is where you will get all email notifications related to your site.

Make sure you set up the time zone to your local time as this will make sure your scheduled posts get posted according to your own time zone.

Delete Default Post, Page, and Comment

Log in to your WordPress dashboard and go to **Posts > All Posts** and delete the default "Hello world" post.

Similarly, go to **Pages > All Pages** and delete the default "Sample Page".



And finally, click on **"Comments"** and delete the default comment.

Set Your Timezone

The next two settings are found in **Settings > General.**

Make sure to set your timezone to your local time so that when you schedule posts, they will go live according to your time.

Also note:

When you installed WordPress, you added a "Site Title" & "Tagline". You can change those anytime from this settings page. These two things are very important because this is what shows up in Google Search.

You can also set your admin email address (where you'll receive all admin correspondence) from this settings page.

Enable/Disable User Registration

You need to decide if you are going to have a multi-author blog (like ShoutMeLoud), or if you are going to be the sole author.

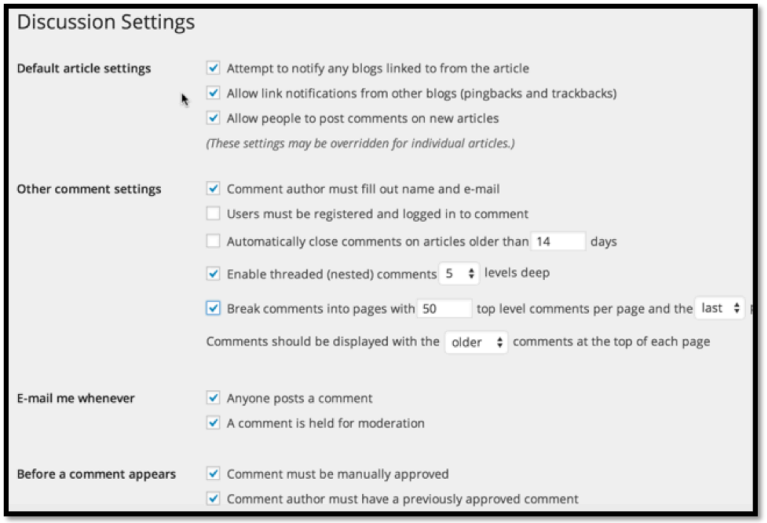
If you are going to allow guest posting (like SML does), then be prepared to get a lot of spam registrations. However, you can fix that with the help of a plugin.

To allow this, tick off the **"Anyone can register"** box, and set the **"New User Default Role"** as **"Contributor".**

If you don't want people to register, don't tick the "Anyone can register" box.

Set WordPress Discussion/Comments Settings

Now, go to **Settings > Discussion.**



This can get confusing if you don't know what to do here. But just follow the above screenshot and you'll be good.

Must read: 6 Tools for Stopping Comment Spam in WordPress (+ Discussion Settings)

5. Populate WordPress Ping List

By default, WordPress only pings one service. But you can notify many more services by extending the ping list.

Go to **Settings > Writing** and add in more services to the ping list.

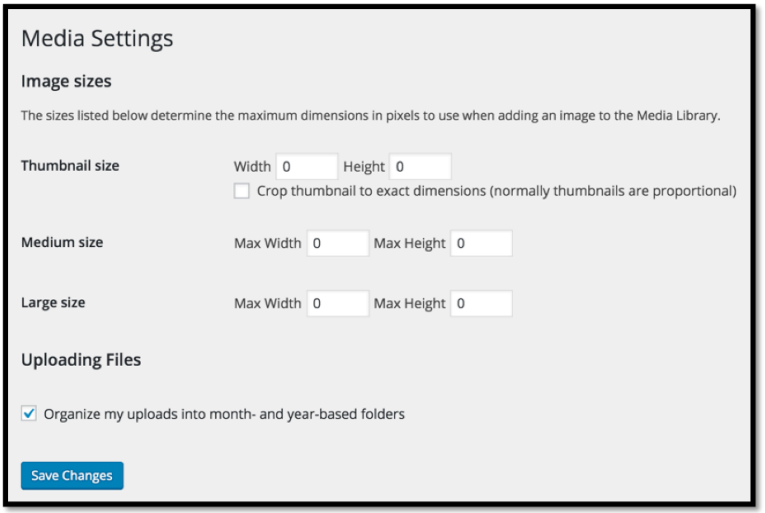
You can get a big ping list over here: WordPress ping list.

6. WordPress Media Settings

This setting will greatly improve the way WordPress handles images.

By default, WordPress creates multiple sizes for every uploaded image. This is not a good practice. This will load up your blog with unnecessary files and your blog will quickly become bloated.

Go to **Settings > Media,** and use the below screenshot to configure the proper settings:



I would also **highly recommend** that you add a plugin called ShortPixel which compresses images as they're uploaded.

You can read all about WordPress image compression plugins here.

7. Configure Google tag manager

In the days to come, you will be installing many scripts like Google analytics, Facebook pixels, and many others. Now, Google tag manager makes it easy to manage all these scripts (a.k.a tags) from a single dashboard.

This makes the process of site management easier and you don't even have to edit the theme to add any script in the future. Everything will be done from the GTM dashboard. Read everything about Google tag manager here.

8. Add Google Analytics

Google analytics is a free program from Google that will let you know everything about your WordPress site traffic. This will take 10-15 minutes to set up, but it's one of the most important things everyone should do after installing WordPress.

In this guide, I have shared how to put Google analytics code in WordPress.

9. Add Caching Plugin

A Caching plugin helps in improving the load time of your WordPress site. Without a caching plugin, every time a visitor visits your page, your server has to query the database to fulfill the request.

While a caching plugin helps in lowering down the load from the server and stores the repeated files in the cache.

Here are the best caching plugins for WordPress:

- WP Rocket (Paid)
- WP Super Cache (Free)

10. Disable Directory Browsing

For this setting, you will need to edit your WordPress .htaccess file. Don't panic; it's actually pretty easy.

- You can follow this guide to learn about editing your WordPress .htaccess file.

Add this line of code to your .htaccess file (at the bottom):

```
Options All -Indexes
```

This will disable directory browsing which is a very important step for maintaining the security of your WordPress blog.

Avatar settings:

Now, if you are new to WordPress, I suggest you to go to Gravatar.com, create an account, and upload an image for your email address.

This way your image will be shown on any WordPress site where you are posting, commenting, or guest posting.

With all these changes, you are done with the basic, yet most important, configurations of your WordPress website/blog.

Now it's time for you to learn doing the **essential stuff** such as installing new plugins, changing themes, maintenance & so on.

You will be surprised to know that this is **so easy** & you didn't need to wait so many months (or years) because you were afraid of not being technically smart enough to set up a website!

8. Must have WordPress Plugins

MUST HAVE WordPress plugins:

Here I will list the **exact names** of the plugins which ***you need to search for and install***. Most of these plugins come with extra configurations and you should make sure to optimize these plugins for your personal needs. If you need a tutorial for any specific WordPress plugin, you can let us know on our Facebook fan page.

Akismet:

This plugin is managed by the official WordPress parent company Automattic. This plugin is **very useful** to avoid spam comments. There are many alternatives to this plugin, but I prefer this one as it's fast and does the job pretty well. You can download the plugin from the official page here.

You will need an API Key to activate this plugin. To do this, you can quickly create a free account on WordPress.com and get your WordPress API key. Here is a guide which teaches you how to get a free API key for the Akismet plugin.

WordPress SEO by Yoast:

This one plugin will be responsible for the organic growth of your WordPress website. This is the most popular free SEO plugin for WordPress. What it means is, it will help you optimize your entire WordPress website and individual posts and pages for search engine. This plugin offers *Keyword Suggestion* and *Keyword Optimization*, which will give you an **extra edge** in search engine ranking.

The only thing is, it requires quite an amount of work to configure it correctly.

Also, you can configure indexing and non-indexing of your site structure which is ***very useful*** for the proper SEO of your website/ blog.

You can download this plugin from the official repo here.

(I know I have mentioned a few words which might have sounded a little too technical again, but believe me, it's really easy to use. I have created a text post & a video post on configuring & using this plugin. Follow both of the links below & learn how to configure this awesome free plugin.)

1. How to configure WordPress SEO by Yoast plugin

2. Here is the free video guide

If you are still stuck & unable to configure Yoast SEO plugin, grab the ShoutUniversity course & drop us an email. One of our experts will setup the plugin for you for free.

(Bonus tip: Always use your keyword or other relevant names as your image name. Avoid using *Image-001.jpeg* and other such non-optimized names.)

W3 Total Cache:

Page load time is one ***important*** factor for great user experience and also ***really important*** for search engine ranking. W3 Total Cache is a complete solution to your WordPress caching. Caching your site is a bit like taking out the garbage. Doing this will help you maintain optimal page load time.

This plugin comes with advanced configurations and caching options. Also, if you are using any CDN service like CloudFlare, this plugin offers easy to implement options for further configuration.

<Download W3 Total Cache>

Here is a detailed guide on how to configure W3 Total Cache.

WP DB-Manager:

This is a one-stop plugin for doing various maintenance jobs and scheduling jobs in WordPress. Using this plugin can quickly optimize your WordPress database, clean WordPress tables, take WordPress backups, and configure future WordPress backups.

This is a **very useful plugin** to *get many things done*. However, you will not require this plugin initially. This plugin should be used once every month to optimize the database.

<Download WP DB-manager>

AMP Plugin:

You are lucky that you are reading this eBook. I'm serious as very few get to know about such plugins which help them to establish a good blog from day 1. Have you ever clicked an article on Google & it opened instantly. That's the feature of Google AMP. Using this plugin, you can get it for your blog too.

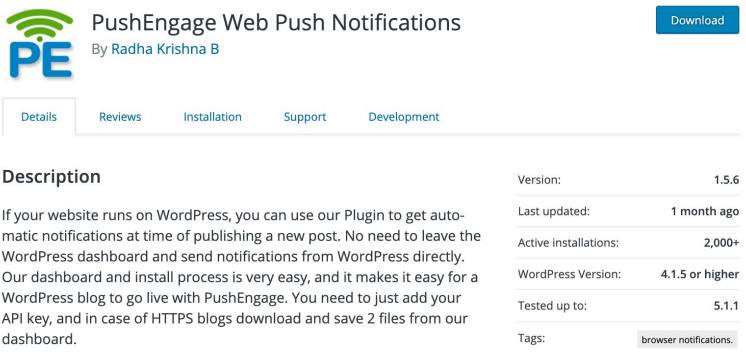
< Download AMP Plugin>

Facebook Instant Article plugin:

Just like Google AMP, Facebook have Instat article feature. Using this plugin you can get this feature for your blog too. Configuring this plugin is tricky, but using the below guide you can do it yourself in next 10 minutes.

<Configure Facebook Instant Articles>

Pushengage:

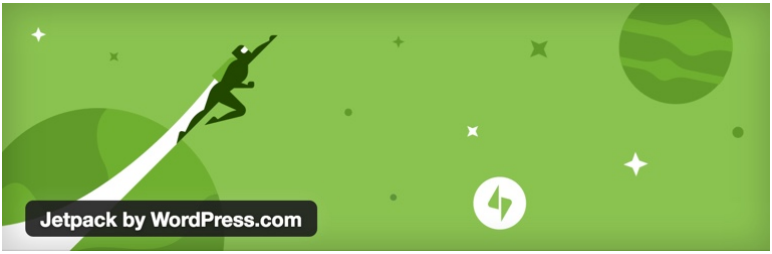


This is a new way to get subscriber for your blog. This is free for first 2500 subscribers which is actually a huge number. You need to create

an account to start using it. I have written a detailed guide on how to start using this plugin

< PushEngage Guide for beginners>

JetPack:



This is an *official plugin* by WordPress that comes with many options that they offer to WordPress.com users. This plugin contains some essential elements that you will need:

- WordPress stats
- Subscription options for commentators
- Spelling and grammar checks
- Social sharing buttons
- Related posts
- Contact forms
- ...and *many more* useful features

<Download Jetpack plugin>

ShortPixel:

ShortPixel is an online service that compresses your images for faster loading, but your *image quality* ***remains the same***.

One cool thing about this plugin is that it will compress **images at the time of uploading**. This plugin also comes with bulk image compression of already uploaded images. So if you have a new or old website, the WP Smush.it plugin will help you keep loading time optimal. Go here to read how to use the Smush.it plugin.

Download Shortpixel plugin

The lists of plugins for WordPress are **endless** and you can browse the WordPress plugin repo to find plugins for every use imaginable. But the ones I've listed are some of the *must-have* WordPress plugins which are essential for **every** WordPress website/blog.

Here are a few more plugin resources which you should check out:

1. List of WordPress Plugins I Use at ShoutMeLoud
2. Best SEO Plugins for a WordPress blog

I really wish I could keep writing more to help you grow your blog. Unfortunately, that's not possible with an eBook. Many of the stuff need videos to explain it better. This is why we have created ShoutUniversity that is accepting new students who wish to make a career online & earn money from blogging or other online marketing methods.

This winds up our WordPress eBook, but before I go, let me share some other useful blogging resources that I use for my websites and blogs.

Email Software:

- ConvertKit (Email marketing platform that I'm using right now)
- Aweber (Free account for the first month and a good alternative

to Convertkit)

Web-Hosting:

- Bluehost(Shared hosting)
- SiteGround (Popular for excellent customer support)
- Kinsta (Managed WordPress Hosting)

Domain Names:

- GoDaddy (Use this special link to get domain for only $1)

WordPress Themes:

- Astra theme (This is a modern theme and sometime in 2019, I will be moving ShoutMeLoud to this)
- Genesis Theme(The best WordPress theme in my opinion, and also the one that I use at ShoutMeLoud.com & WPSutra.com)

Social Media Management Tools:

- Socialpilot: Perfect for keeping your social-media profile updated.
- AgoraPulse: For replying to all the social media comments, tweets from your phone. They offer 30 days free trial.

Image Capturing Tool:

- SnagIt! (Best tool for screen-capture and image editing.) Offers 15 days trial.

Screencast Software:

- Camtasia (This is the video recording tool I use for creating videos for my YouTube channel. You can check out my video blog here.)

SEO Tools:

- SEMRUSH (This is the only SEO tool that you will ever need. You can do keyword research, track backlinks, Site Audio & many useful stuff that would help you to grow your traffic. You can check out a free tutorial here and here). This is a special link that will get you free account worth $149.

Monetization Programs:

- Google AdSense: Best contextual ad network.
- Viglink: Best way to monetize your outbound links.
- Media.net: Another popular ad network by Bing & Yahoo!
- Affiliate marketing: Learn all the tricks with this eBook

So what now?

Remember that creating a successful & profitable blog *takes time*, but it's ***well worth the effort***.

I can safely make that statement from my personal experience. At the time of writing this book, I'm in Bali working and traveling at the same time! This would not have been possible without blogging & WordPress.

You should browse the archive of ShoutMeLoud.com to learn **every trick** that I have personally used to earn over $32,000/month.

You can see my income reports here. (Yah! I like to be transparent! We've got only one life to live…)

9. Before we bid goodbye

Dear friend,

We have just spent some quality time together. What you have learned can change your life for good. But the only way to make it work is by taking action. You don't have to create a perfect blog or be the perfect person while working online, but you should at least try.

It's ok to start small, but most importantly, start right. Do it for the right reasons. We are going through a stage where we are seeing the transition of offline business to online business.

Many businesses have been successfully shut down by tech companies like Uber, Amazon, and Facebook (to name just a few). If you haven't started working online yet, you should do this while you still can. Once you start taking steps, you will find many people walking along this path with you.

You will always find help, but only when you ask for it. With this, I wish you luck & once you craft a perfect WordPress website, do let me know on Twitter-@denharsh.

With love!

Harsh Agrawal

Founder @ShoutMeLoud

I would love to connect on Instagram or YouTube

My Other eBooks that you should read next:

1. Affiliate Marketing Handbook
2. Web-Hosting Guide eBook
3. The AdSense Mastery Handbook

One Quick favor:

Can you share this eBook with your all of your friends who want to become their own boss? I know it won't help you or me much in terms of money, but it feels good to change somebody's life for the better. Don't you agree?

Click on the “click to tweet” image to share this WordPress Guide eBook on Twitter.

Here is the direct link of my eBook page, which you can share on Facebook or email it to your friends.

Join me in my mission, and become your own boss.

Be your own boss!