Wordpress 101 for Small Business Owners

Presented by:

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About Me & Alt Creative

- Originally from Sugar Land, Tx and moved to Austin to attend University of Texas.

- Spent the beginning of my career in UI Design, Web Development and Marketing.

- Became a full time freelancer in 2005.

- Started my own business, Alt Creative, in 2008 to focus on working with small businesses, entrepreneurs, and non-profits.

- Began working almost exclusively with Wordpress in 2009.

- Member of the Wordpress Users Association since 2013.

- Member of the International Webmaster Association since 2005.

What is Wordpress?

WordPress is an open source website platform designed to allow for easy website creation and administration. It's considered the most powerful and extensible website content management system (CMS) in existence today.

- Started as a blogging tool in 2003.

- Built on PHP programming language and MySQL database.

- Is open source meaning anyone is freely licensed to use, copy, study, and change the software in any way, and the source code is openly shared so that people are encouraged to voluntarily improve the design of the software.

- As of February 2016, WordPress is used by 59.1% of all the websites whose content management system we know. This is 25.8% of all websites.

- New York Observer, New York Post, TED, Thought Catalog, Williams, USA Today, CNN, Fortune.com, TIME.com, National Post, Spotify, TechCrunch, CBS Local, NBC all use WordPress.

- Around 15,886,000 websites on the entire web use WordPress.

- 22% of new domains in the US are run with WordPress.

- 120 languages are in use at WordPress.com sites.

Why is Wordpress a good choice for small businesses?

It's free.
There are some costs associated with running your website on Wordpress, but the software is free.

Easy to learn
Managing a Wordpress site is intuitive, making it easy to use.

Secure (mostly)
Wordpress is developed with security in mind and is battle-tested.

Powerful
Wordpress has a large network of developers who are constantly making it better and more powerful.

Extensible
There are thousands of plugins, themes, and tools to add functionality to your Wordpress site.

SEO friendly
Wordpress is built with SEO in mind and uses SEO-friendly permalinks.

Which Wordpress is right for your business?

WordPress.com is a commercial site where you can host your own site for free, but with some limitations.Started as a blogging tool in 2003.

- Limited to WordPress.com themes – you can't upload your own.
- No custom plugins.
- Limited storage space.
- Limited control of your content, i.e. you must pay to remove ads.
- No FTP access to your files.

WordPress.org is where you can download a copy of the WordPress software for free. There are less limitations, but more expertise and setup is required.

- Installing and setting up your WordPress site.
- Purchasing and setting up hosting.
- Regularly updating your WP version, themes, and plugins.
- Keeping your site secure for your visitors and protecting your site against hackers and spam.
- Backing up your whole site regularly in case it breaks.
- Resolving problems with your site and server if they arise.

Comparison Chart

	Wordpress.org	Wordpress.com
E-commerce	Allowed through plugins	Functionality does not exist
Included Maintenance	None. Unless you hire a developer.	Full maintenance of WP, themes, and plugins included.
Customize look and/or functionality	Download, install, and/or create your own themes and plugins.	No custom themes or plugins available.
Control the amount of storage for videos, images, etc.	This is determined by the host your choose.	Limited amount available.
Custom web address (url)	Buy your own domain (cost vary) and point it to your host.	Buy your domain via Wordpress.com and point it to your account.
Scalability	Scalable and extensible	Not scalable
Website support	None included. Unless you hire an expert (additional cost).	Full support included.

Installing and setting up Wordpress

WordPress.com is a commercial site where you can host your own site for free, but with some limitations.Started as a blogging tool in 2003.

What you need:

- A registered domain name

- A good Linux-based hosting company

- A strong password

Options for setting up Wordpress:

- Set it up manually via FTP (requires some expertise in server administration).

- One-click install (if available on your host). GoDaddy and Bluehost have this option.

- Hire an expert to do it for you.

Primary Content Types in Wordpress

01 **POSTS**
Typically used for blog posts, announcements, content that is available for comment. Can be categorized and tagged.

02 **PAGES**
Typically used for static content such as the homepage, about, contact, etc. Can't be categorized, but can be structured with subpages.

03 **MEDIA**
Images, videos, documents, and other content that may be contained in a page or post but is not text.

Primary Content Types in Wordpress

Creating Posts & Pages

What are themes?

A WordPress Theme is a collection of files (called template files) that work together to produce a graphical design interface for a Wordpress website. A Wordpress theme modifies the way the site is displayed, without modifying the underlying software.

Most WordPress themes provide the overall design or style of your site including:

- font styling

- colors

- page layouts (or templates)

- styles for blog posts and blog archives

- additional stylistic details

Choosing and installing a Wordpress theme

- You can choose from over a thousand free themes from the WordPress Theme Directory or invest in premium, or paid themes. However, when choosing a theme for your small business website, make sure to carefully consider how it fits with your company's brand and target audience.

- You can install Wordpress themes from the Wordpress Theme Directory from directly inside your Wordpress administration area. You can install premium themes my uploading the theme files in the administration area.

- Remember that not all themes are created equal. We recommend only downloading themes from the Wordpress Theme Directory or popular premium theme libraries like ElegantThemes.com or ThemeForest.net.

- Once your theme is installed and activated, you will likely need to make some updates to your site structure and page content to fit the theme layout. This often requires the expertise of a developer.

View the directory at https://wordpress.org/themes/

What is a plugin?

Plugins are ways to extend and add to the functionality that already exists in WordPress. The core of WordPress is designed to be lean and lightweight, to maximize flexibility and minimize code bloat. Plugins then offer custom functions and features so that each user can tailor their site to their specific needs.

Wordpress plugin examples:

- WooCommerce - extends Wordpress to allow for e-commerce capability.

- Yoast SEO - adds SEO specific input fields to the page and post editor to allow for great search engine performance.

- Backup Buddy - adds functionality to allow for automatic backups.

- Contact Form 7 - adds functionality to embed contact forms into your pages.

- AddThis - Sharing buttons to allow visitors to easily share your site content on Social Media.

When to hire an expert

The power of Wordpress comes from its extensibility and flexibility. Because of that, there are several ways to accomplish your goals, but you may need to invest in working with a Wordpress developer to get things done correctly. After all, a Wordpress expert can likely get things done faster and without the frustration of you having to research plugins, themes, etc.

When to hire a developer:

- When purchasing a new theme and you need help configuring it to your content/ brand.

- When you want to add functionality to your site such as e-commerce through a plugin.

- When you know you don't have time to maintain your site, you can hire a developer to do periodic maintenance such as updating your Wordpress version and plugins while testing your site functionality.

Recap

- Wordpress is a powerful tool for your website.

- There are two ways to use Wordpress (.org and .com) depending on your site goals.

- It can be extended through plugins.

- You can easily create layouts using themes, but make sure to consider your brand and audience!

- You can create pages, posts, and add media such as images and videos.

- Wordpress must be maintained to function properly and remain secure.

- A Wordpress developer can be a valuable resource.

Get in Touch

Want to know more? Alt Creative provides professional design services, expert WordPress development, and reliable on-going maintenance solutions tailored to your brand.

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