

# Woo Pains at Scale

Scalability and Complexity Pains on WooCommerce



**WooCommerce** is a collection of plugins that bolt onto the **WordPress** platform, consuming the same resources that the site itself uses to power both front and back-end experiences.



## Scalability Pains

### Shared impact/Back-end Bloat

It's hard to scale a Woo site without slowing down live store due to the storefront and backend admin collectively drawing from the same resources. Running an analytics report, bulk processing payments, performing large catalog updates, etc. are all examples of activities that would either slow the front and back end, or simply halt the site.

### Infrastructure Costs

Hosting costs are the responsibility of the site owner. While a solid WordPress hosting provider will be setup to handle traffic spikes and dev related activities (WP Engine, Pantheon), costs can easily get up there when you factor in the back of house functions.

### Heavy dependence on developers

Most of the Woo sites we bring over to BigCommerce today already have a handful of developers on staff. These folks aren't necessarily doing innovative things to help drive the business forward but rather working to keep the site from going down. At scale (\$1M+ GMV), these guys are all in with WP but need a solution to help offset the backend bloat issues.

WooCommerce is not a standalone platform; it's a plugin attached to a scalable CMS, WordPress. While WordPress as a CMS is built to scale (ex. [BBC](#), [New York Times](#), [TechCrunch](#), to name a few), plugins that require substantial backend resources to exist (Woo) don't scale as well, if at all.

### Plugin Issues

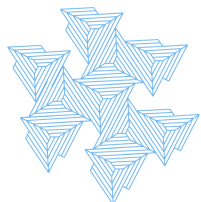
Everything you need for commerce isn't readily available when you install the WooCommerce plugin. Everything is a plugin, meaning if you want UPS shipping, that's a plugin. Amazon Pay? Plugin. Discount code capabilities, payment gateway, etc? All plugins. A lot of these are built by Woo, but the vast majority are built by 3rd party developers. So when there's a new version of WordPress, you can't update until you're sure that your Woo plugin will be compatible, but even then, there still might be a 3rd party plugin you're using that didn't get updated, thus removing it's functionality from your site. At scale (20+ Woo plugins), this can easily turn into a version-control nightmare.

### Total Cost of Ownership

It's easy to think that your ecommerce site will be <\$200/year using WooCommerce, but as soon as you start driving more than a handful of orders/month, you'll quickly realize how much these costs can add up. Developer overhead, hosting variables, plugin cost, PCI compliance, and overall time/labor/materials.

### More info on Woo's total cost of ownership (TCO):

<https://wpapprentice.com/blog/how-much-does-woocommerce-cost/>



## Complexity Pains

### Plugin Count / Compatibility

Even the most simple of commerce sites using Woo have at least 5 Woo plugins just to get their site live (Woo core, Stripe, Shipping options, product reviews, SSL). It's a lot to install and a lot of work to maintain for version control, bug fixes, patches, etc. Using the BigCommerce plugin, many of those functions are handled outside of WordPress by the BigCommerce tech stack. Merchants can still use WordPress plugins alongside the BigCommerce plugin, but fewer will be needed overall.

### Content, Not Commerce

WordPress was built to support content management. Woo attempts to repurpose the same WP admin for managing commerce as well. It's not built to support substantial ecommerce volume. Woo extensions are either limited in functionality, non-existent, or make simple things more complicated to manage.

### Catalog Management Woes

While WordPress lets you touch and manipulate any code or data on your site, some of the more complex catalog management functionality we offer natively is limited on Woo and require manual development. Even simple tasks like adding options and variants are 100% manual and have to be setup on each product. It can be very time consuming.

Outside of scalability, there are complexities and usability pains that come with using a collection of plugins instead of a centralized platform. While we are launching a plugin, it's just that; a single plugin that contains the necessary functions for commerce and removes the need to manage the commerce side of your business with the WordPress admin (control panel) that was built to manage content.

### Order + Shipping Management Woes

At scale, managing a lot of orders and getting them out the door takes substantial resources and if the frontend of your website is powering site traffic and page loads, those resources are limited on what you can do on the backend.

### Limited Support

Unlike BigCommerce, when you buy these plugins, you're on your own. There is not a support line you can call up, but rather a ticket queue and community you join. And like most things WordPress, you can always pay someone to help out, but it's another line item expense to add to your overall business.

### PCI Compliance

Similar to Magento, the merchant is on the hook for maintaining their own PCI Compliance. While the payment extensions from Woo are PCI compliant, ultimately, the merchant is 100% liable for making sure data is secure.