



How to build a simple WordPress website

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Introduction

Many people get by in business without having a website. Quite a few local business owners bypass the whole website thing and rely on their Facebook Page to attract customers.

And why not, you may ask.

Well here's one good reason. If Facebook folds tomorrow – or if they decide you've breached their terms of service, your page will disappear, along with your content, contacts and goodwill.

The same goes for any 'free' web-hosting platform. It's been said before, but it's worth repeating – in the context of social media ...

If something's free, you're not the customer, you're the product.

If you want a free blogging platform, there are many around. However, if you want a professional-looking website, without spending a fortune, then a self-hosted WordPress website could be for you.

The beauty of WordPress is that it grows with you. As you become more confident with the platform you can add video, webinars, create a membership site or sell physical or digital goods online

I could give you a comparison between the pros and cons of all the free and paid-for options, but that's another booklet.

For now, you'll have to trust me and follow these steps to get your website up and running.

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Step One

Choose a domain name

Your domain name is your address. It might go something like this: **www.** followed by **myaddress.com**. Or you can leave off the **www.** and just have **myaddress.com**.

You can't have a website without an address. Imagine inviting someone around for tea for the first time and when they ask for your address, you say "Over there, somewhere."

Not very helpful, is it?

In the same way, you can't find a website without an address – in other words, your domain name.

Top Tips

Keep it short and memorable, which also means leaving out hyphens and numbers as they are a pain to type and very easy to mistype.

Use keywords in your domain name such as editorial, proofreader, writer, wordsmith – this helps with your rankings and makes it easy for people to understand what you do.

If you want to research the subject more deeply, off you pop to Google and type in ‘Tips for choosing a domain name’.

Six hours later ...

Once you’ve settled on a possible domain name, type it into the Google search bar. If you get the message “this website cannot be found”, chances are no-one has claimed it. If it takes you to an actual website, someone already owns that domain. Time to head on back to the drawing board and start again.

Step Two

Open a web-hosting account

Find a web host you like the look of **(see How to choose a web host, next page)**, open a web-hosting account and purchase your domain name through them. It’s just easier.

Sometimes, a hosting company will give you the domain name of your choice free for the first year.

If not, a domain name costs around £3.99 to £8.99 a year, with discounts for multiple-year purchases.

How to choose a web host.

What are your criteria? Fast customer service, cost, disc space, WordPress-friendly ... haven't a clue? Time to do some research.

Again Google (other search engines are available) is your friend. In the search bar, type Best UK Webhosting Services, followed by the year. You should see a list of review articles.

Make a cuppa and take your time making your choice. At the time of writing, the top-rated hosts are iPage (Business), Bluehost (WordPress),



Siteground (Customer service), and Hostgator (Beginners). You can pay for your hosting monthly or annually, which usually carries a discount.

Make sure you read the small print. Sometimes there's an initial offer of say £2.99 per month which can leap to £8.99 per month after a year.

Top Tips

- Remember, cheaper does not necessarily mean poorer service or a slower website.
- Reviews are your friend.

Checklist

So, now you have a **domain name** (your address), your **web space** (your rented apartment). All you need now are **web pages and content** (your furniture).

I'm parking this metaphor here right now before it ties us all in knots. Let's get on to the good stuff.

Step Three

Visualise your website

You could dive right in to your hosting account and install WordPress using the **One-Click Installer** method – or you could press an imaginary pause button and step back for a minute.

Now would be a good time to close your laptop and take out a pen and notebook. Jot down some ideas about what you want your website to look like, what purpose it will serve and how you will fill it.

Content rules

You don't have to have all of the following but if you do, you're off to a good start: a logo; well-lit headshot; some words for the Home Page and About Page; a summary of your services and pricing.

All this comes under the heading, **Content**. You may have heard the expression **CMS** or **Content Management System**. In WordPress terms, this means you are in control of your website's content: the pages, blog posts, images, video, contact

details, special offers, downloads, and comments. You will have the flexibility to change, update, remove and add content whenever you like.

You will be in charge of your domain and everything that lives there.



Step Four: Install WordPress

From your web-hosting account, install WordPress using the One-Click Installer. Follow the instructions, which are pretty easy – just take it slowly.

When installation is complete, you will be taken to your WordPress dashboard which will invite you to Customise Your Site or change your theme completely.

Welcome to WordPress!





We've assembled some links to get you started:

Get Started

[Customise Your Site](#)

or, [change your theme completely](#)

Next Steps

-  [Edit your front page](#)
-  [Add additional pages](#)
-  [Add a blog post](#)
-  [View your site](#)

While we're on the subject ...

What is a theme?

A theme is a website template – it comes preloaded with colours, fonts, and styles such as right-hand sidebar, grid layout or featured image.

Most themes are customisable. For example, you can change the fonts or colours to suit your branding; switch the sidebar from right to left, or change the number of columns.

WordPress has lots of free, responsive themes. **Responsive** means they will work across all

devices so your website will look just as good on mobile, tablet and laptop.

Take time to explore until you find one you're happy with. It's a good idea to stick with the pre-installed theme for now and change it when you feel confident with WordPress.

Further down the line, you might want to sell items from your website, such as books, downloads or courses. That would be the time to check whether your current theme is compatible with Woo Commerce. If not, it's easy enough to switch.

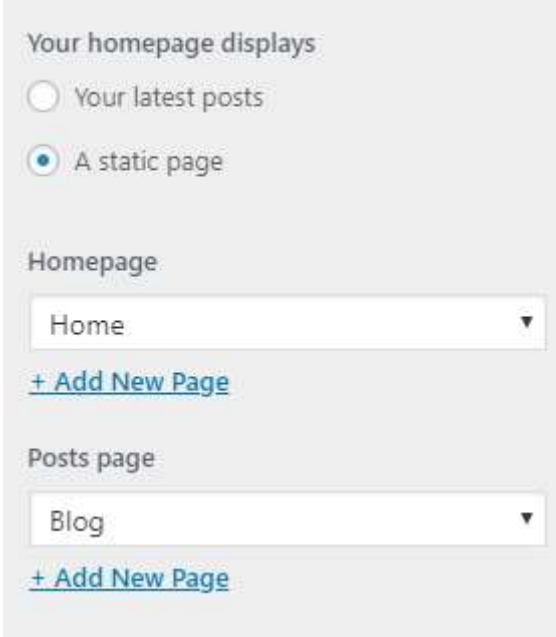
Step Five

Customise your website

So, let's assume you want to take the simple option for now.

You've decided to stick with the preloaded theme. Next step is to click on the big blue button Customise Your Site to open the Customiser.

Under General > Homepage settings, you will be offered two options: Do you want your home page to display your blog posts or do you want a static home page?

A screenshot of the WordPress 'Appearance' settings page, specifically the 'Homepage' section. The title is 'Your homepage displays'. There are two radio button options: 'Your latest posts' (unselected) and 'A static page' (selected). Below this, there are two dropdown menus. The first is labeled 'Homepage' and has 'Home' selected. The second is labeled 'Posts page' and has 'Blog' selected. Below each dropdown menu is a blue link that says '+ Add New Page'.

If you want your homepage to just display your blog posts, then click on the button 'Your latest posts' and you're away.

If, however, you want a more conventional website, one you use to promote your editing, proofreading and writing services, it's best to click on 'a static page'.

A static front/home page is your shop window. Use it to tempt visitors to your site to explore further.

Give brief details about what you offer, and display clickable links to direct the visitor to your Services, Pricing and Contact pages.

Later, you can have a big hero image, In-yer-face front page. Just, not yet.

So, if you set a static home page, where will your blog posts go? Well, as you can see from the image **(previous page)**, WordPress lets you set up another page to house your posts and that page is called Blog.

Top Tip

Some advice about home pages. If they are too wordy, visitors will bounce in and bounce off again.

We skim rather than read on the web, so my advice is to go for minimalism, a captivating image/headshot and no clutter.

Step Six

Pages and Posts

Just as you can't have a book without pages, the same goes for your website. After you have edited your front page, you will need to add more pages.

Now is a good time to flag up the difference between pages and posts.

A **page** is a static item. You can change the content on a page, but the page doesn't move from the menu, unless you decide to move it.

You can add as many pages as you need, but don't go mad. As with most things in life, it's best to keep it simple.

Pages live on the website's main menu. The menu is the bit that goes across the top with the name of each page and it looks something like this.



[Home](#) [About](#) [Services](#) [Blog](#) [Get in touch](#)

A **post** is like a page but it goes under the section Blog. This is where your posts are stored, in date order, with the most recent on top.



A blog post is like an online diary. You can use it to inform, educate and entertain visitors to your site.

Your blog posts keep your website relevant and up to date. A blog is also very good for your search engine rankings. It informs visitors – and Google – that you are still active.

Really Useful Top Tip

It's good practice to put all written content for your website on Word documents and store them in a designated folder. That way, you always have a back-up.

Also, before putting the content on your website, copy and paste it from the Word document into Notepad (Windows) or TextEdit (Mac) to get rid of any odd Word formatting.

Then copy and paste that content from Notepad into the relevant WordPress page/post editor.

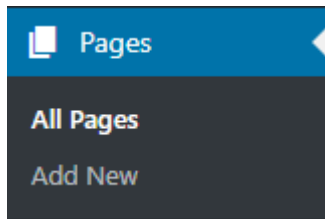
The WordPress Editor

Before we go on, it might be an idea to have a look at the WordPress editor, so we're all on the same page, so to speak. This is what you will see when you click on Add New Page or Add New Post. The big white area is where your words go.



Adding Pages and Posts

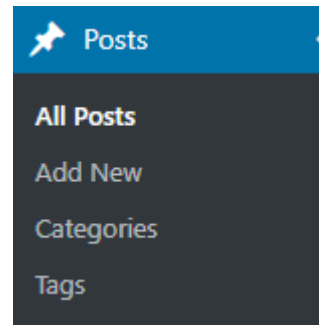
If you want to add a page, let your eyes wander down the left-hand menu on your **dashboard** until you see the tab **Pages**. Click on it and you get the following options:



Click on Add New to open the WordPress editor (**see previous page**). Give the page its title and add your content in the space provided.

If you have an image, now is the time to add it. When you're happy with your work, click publish.

If you want to add a post, click on the **Posts** tab and you get this:



You'll notice that Add New Post gives two more options: Categories and Tags. What does this mean?

Categories and Tags

If you have lots of blog posts on a variety of subjects, you might want to group them into **categories** such as: Fiction Editing; Proofreading; Academic; Content Writing, and Self-publishing.

This is helpful for visitors to your site and also to anyone searching online for information which falls into any of those categories.

Tags are more specific. Think of them as keywords that give the reader more information about the post.

So, a blog post in the category Fiction Editing might have the **tags**: crime, female detective, stabbing, unsolved.

It's debatable whether WordPress tags help with SEO, but they make a good indexing system.

Every time you click on a tag, it will bring up every piece of information on your website relating to that tag.



Creating your blog post

When you want to add a blog post, click on Add New Post; it will bring up a similar text/visual editor to Add New Page.

However, on the right-hand sidebar there will be the opportunity to add a new category or tick a category you've already added. There is also a section to add tags. Each one must be separated by a comma.

Make sure each post is accompanied by an image. There are plenty of places where you can get free stock






good quality images, such as Pexels, Unsplash and Freemages

Add an image and publish your post. It will automatically appear on your Blog page, either as a title, excerpt or the full post, depending on the options you checked in the Customiser under Layout Options > Blog Post Options.

I like excerpts. They are tidier and more tantalising than titles and let you see more at a glance. A blog post teaser in the sidebar might entice the visitor to explore further.

How your Blog page might look if you select excerpts in the Blog Post Option settings in Customiser. I've used a **plugin** (more about these later) to show thumbnails in the left sidebar of the top five most recent blog posts.




Latest Posts

-  **Some tips for a tidy NaNoWriMo manuscript**
October 11, 2017
-  **10 Reasons for Starting a Business Blog**
July 22, 2017
-  **Buy Local Norfolk takes the 'work' out of networking**
April 6, 2017
-  **Use the 'Power of Why' to attract your Ideal Customer**
April 4, 2017
-  **Artisan producers have the best marketing tool – their own story**
March 10, 2017

Newsletter

Sign up for offers and discounts




Some tips for a tidy NaNoWriMo manuscript

 **October 11, 2017**  **annegillion**  **No comments exist**

National Novel Writing month – or NaNoWriMo as it's widely known – is fast approaching. Yes, come November 1, many of us will be poised to tackle the task of writing 50,000 words in 30 days. That's roughly 1,666 words per day ... every day. Needless to say, commitment is needed, and you'll find the...

[Read More](#)

10 Reasons for Starting a Business Blog

 **July 22, 2017**  **annegillion**  **No comments exist**

As a business owner, you may have encountered the term business blog and wonder what you have to do to get started. Is it even worth bothering? Well, if you're not sure whether your business needs a dedicated blog, the following 10 reasons should help make up your mind 1. Buying habits have changed The...

[Read More](#)

Step Seven

Menus

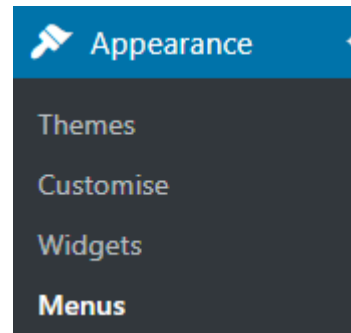
A quick word on how to arrange your pages on the main menu bar.

If your theme allows it, you might want your page names to appear on the footer menu as well, so that people don't have to keep scrolling back up to the top.

Arranging pages in the right order on the menu bar took me ages to work out when I created my first WordPress website in 2011. So, I'll keep it as simple as possible.

After you have created all your pages, regardless of whether they contain any content, decide on what order you want them to appear on your main menu bar.

Let your eye wander down the sidebar on your dashboard until you come to the tab Appearance. In the drop-down box click on Menus.

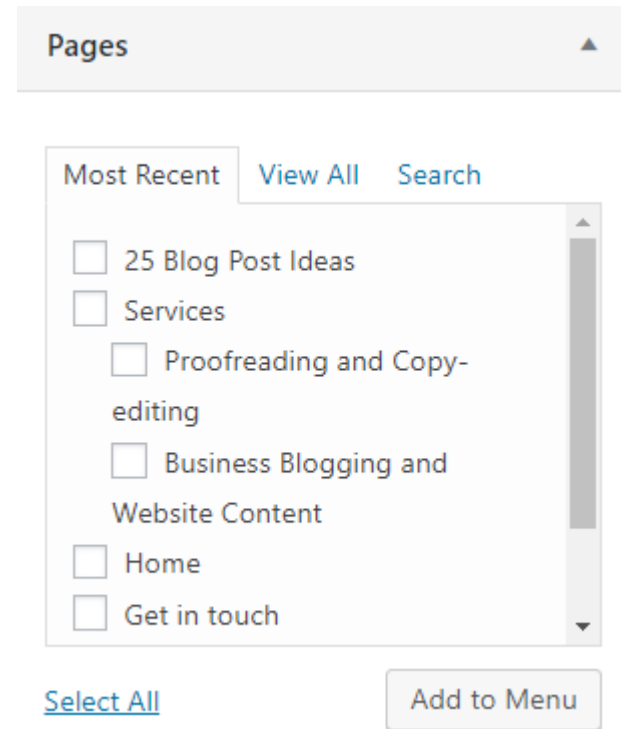


A new screen will open. On the left of the screen is a box containing names of all the pages you have created – in no particular order.

A bit like that sketch when Eric Morecombe defends his piano playing to André Previn. “I’m playing all the right notes ... but not necessarily in the right order.”

Anyway, I digress.

Inside the box are all the pages created on our sample website. Next, we have to check the boxes next to each page we want to include in



main menu bar. After that, you simply click the button Add to Menu.

Once you've done this, the page names will appear in moveable bars to the right of the Pages box under the heading Menu Structure just like this ↓

The screenshot displays the WordPress admin interface for configuring a menu. On the left, the 'Pages' widget is visible, showing a list of pages with checkboxes and an 'Add to Menu' button. The 'Pages' widget includes a search bar and a list of pages: 25 Blog Post Ideas, Services, Proofreading and Copy-editing, Business Blogging and Website Content, Home, and Get in touch. Below the list are buttons for 'Select All' and 'Add to Menu'. On the right, the 'Menu Structure' section is shown for the 'Footer' menu. It includes a 'Menu Name' field containing 'Footer' and a 'Menu Structure' heading. Below the heading is a instruction: 'Drag each item into the order you prefer. Click the arrow on the right of the item to reveal additional configuration options.' The menu items are displayed as moveable bars with labels and dropdown arrows. The items are: Home (Page), About (Page), Services (Page), Business Blogging and Website Content (Page, sub item), Proofreading and Copy-editing (Page, sub item), Blog (Page), and Get in touch (Page).

Pages

Most Recent View All Search

- 25 Blog Post Ideas
- Services
- Proofreading and Copy-editing
- Business Blogging and Website Content
- Home
- Get in touch

Select All Add to Menu

Posts

Custom Links

Categories

Format

Menu Name Footer

Menu Structure

Drag each item into the order you prefer. Click the arrow on the right of the item to reveal additional configuration options.

- Home Page
- About Page
- Services Page
- Business Blogging and Website Content *sub item* Page
- Proofreading and Copy-editing *sub item* Page
- Blog Page
- Get in touch Page

Are you still with me?

Please read the next few paragraphs while looking at the image on the previous page, otherwise nothing will make sense.

In the top bar next to Menu Name, it says Footer, so this sample menu structure is for the footer area.

Make sure yours says Main or Header – unless, of course, you're creating a menu for the footer area.

After you've added the pages from the left by checking the boxes and clicking the button Add to Menu,

they will appear under the title **Menu Structure** as in this example.

Grab the bars with your cursor and move them around until they are in the order you want. Click Save Menu (not shown)

Creating drop-down menus

What is the point of having drop-down menus?

For one, they stop your menu bar from becoming too cluttered and unmanageable. They also neatly group sections in one place making your website easier to navigate

You can create drop-down menus by grabbing page bars with your cursor (**still looking at image two pages back**) and hovering them over a main page bar, slightly to the right and letting go. They then become sub-items. After you have saved, they will appear on your Main Menu as drop-down items, just like this.



Are we nearly there, yet?

We're almost done. I've given you the tools to start creating your own WordPress website. I've concentrated on the areas that left me scratching my head when I first started out. Simple questions like putting pages in the right order on a menu bar and knowing the difference between posts and pages.

Step Eight

Widgets and Plugins

If someone had taken the time to explain what both these terms meant when I first started using WordPress, I would have fallen on the floor sobbing and hugged their knees. Pathetic.

Widgets are tasty little bites that you drag and drop into the widget areas on your theme – usually the sidebar, footer area and sometimes the header area. It all depends on what theme you've chosen.

Your theme will come preloaded with **widgets**. You can also add more if you wish. Useful widgets include sidebar menu, social icons, post categories, tag cloud, recent comments, an image, video or text.

You could put a calendar, Twitter feed, Mailchimp subscriber form or a list of your Goodreads books in any of your widget areas.

Many themes come with three or four widget areas in the footer as well. Probably best not to overdo it, though – at least not to start with.

Plugins get things done – they add functionality to your site, but beware – too many can slow it down. Use them sparingly to start with.

It's simple to add a new plugin; you can do it right from your dashboard menu – Plugins > Add New – no technical knowledge required.

Favourite plugins include Askimet anti-spam (essential); Yoast for checking your posts meet the correct standard for readability and search engine optimisation; Smush for reducing image file sizes to avoid

slowing down your website; Jetpack, a bundle of little helpers providing security, analytics, stats, SEO tools and simple payment PayPal buttons.

You will also find plugins for other useful items such as booking calendars, appointment diaries and contact forms.



Last word

Well, that's it for now. I hope I've given you the confidence to set up and manage your own website.

This is really just an overview – a layperson explaining that it's not that difficult or expensive to have a beautiful, simple website.

I hope I've explained how important it is to have a website for your business. It tells people who you are, where you are, what you do – and that you are open for business.

There's much I haven't touched on here, such as use of images and optimising blog posts.

But, as long as potential customers can find you, that's all that matters.

As a wise person once said:

You don't have to start out perfect; you just have to start.

For a detailed step-by-step guide to setting up your website and beyond, you'll find all you need here:

www.wpbeginner.com

Credits

Louise Harnby's webinar [Ten ways to get editing work quickly](#) inspired me to write this booklet.

If you are struggling to find work as a proofreader or editor, click on the link above or visit Louise's website www.louiseharnbyproofreader.com

If, like me, you 'get' social media, but haven't embraced LinkedIn, take a look at John Esperian's website.

John explains the benefits of having a presence on LinkedIn, especially for people like us. By his own admission,

he's relentlessly helpful. Just click on this link and you're away: espirian.co.uk

I've used some free images from various Unsplash and Pexels to make this booklet.

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ABOUT ANNE



Anne is a professional copy-editor, content editor and proofreader.

After nearly three decades as a newspaper and magazine editor and sub-editor, Anne runs her own editorial business, [ASG Editorial](#).

Anne's main area of editing and proofreading expertise is fiction and non-fiction. She also edits and rewrites content for websites, blogs and print media.

Anne has received Inbound Marketing certification from Hubspot – the content marketing experts.

As well as in-house courses while working for Westminster Press (editing) and Archant (Adobe InDesign), Anne has completed the following courses:

Editing Fiction – [The Publishing Training Centre](#) (PTC)

Proofreading 3 (Progress) – [The Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading](#) (CIEP)

Anne is a member of the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading.

