



# Create Your Website



**Build your own website with WordPress for complete beginners. No coding required.**



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Tiger illustration by Emmie Norfolk

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# Introduction

Once upon a time, a merchant earned a large sum of money by selling his goods. With his goods sold and his purse full, he began the long trip home. He went to the stable to get his horse. The stable master brought out his horse and said, "Sir, your horse has lost a shoe nail. If you wait a bit, I will repair it for you." The merchant said, "There's no time, I must get home before dark. Moreover, one nail more or less in the shoe does not matter." Saying so, he got on his horse and galloped it towards his destination.

After some time, another nail from the shoe of the horse came off. The horse began to limp. Being in a hurry, the merchant did not stop to repair the damage. More time passed, and the horse began to stagger. Presently, the dark of night descended. The horse slowed to a walk.

Evening enveloped the land, and the horse was moving so slowly, the merchant decided to get down and lead the horse. Suddenly, a gang of robbers appeared from the forest. The merchant tried to mount his horse again to escape, but the horse faltered, and he was thrown to the ground. He was at the mercy of the looters. They thrashed him thoroughly and snatched his money. The merchant returned home with a lame horse and empty pockets. His carelessness cost him a heavy price.



# **Making a Website can be Hard**

The internet is full of promises stating claiming you can “create a website in five minutes!”, or “set up a website with one click!” and other such snake oil. But, if you are reading this guide, you must know that these are empty promises. Making a website is not simple. It can be infuriating. And, how to make one is constantly changing.

But there is hope. The main challenge is choice. There are too many ways to build a website, too many places to keep it, too many styles to choose from. This book is the solution. I’ve carefully designed this book to reduce complexity and decisions as much as possible, while still allowing you to make the website of your dreams.

I created this book because I know there is a need for it, and I love teaching. I make websites for businesses, non-profits, artists, and entrepreneurs. I offer a wide array of services, but most of my clients have no understanding of how a website works, or how they can change it. I’ve been making websites for eleven years, and teaching coding to elementary school students for three years.

Over time, I developed a teaching strategy that helps non-technical people make changes to their website on their own. I would like to share this strategy with you. Follow this guide, and you will be able to create a website on your own, customize it to fit your needs, and make it live on the internet.

This walkthrough is for people that are ready to create a website, but don't know where to start. You don't need any coding experience, or any experience with making a website. We won't be doing any coding at all. All you need is a willingness to learn something new, and some time.

This is not a “5 minute tutorial”. This is the whole process. My goal is to make sure you understand how your website works, so you can change it later on, and make it look the way you want, without having to hire anyone.

If you are looking to get a website up as quickly as possible, here are some other websites that offer all-in-one website makers: [Wix](#), [Weebly](#), [Squarespace](#), and [Shopify](#).

When you are done pulling your hair out trying to use these services, come back to this book, and we will create your website with WordPress. I prefer WordPress because it is more customizable, and has lots of excellent add-ons, plenty of guides on the internet, and it's free.

## **Overview of this Course**

This book is a detailed, step-by-step walkthrough. We're going through the entire process: In the [Getting Started](#) chapter, you will pick a name for your website, and how to set up your name so

anyone on the internet can find it. Then you will set up a place for the files that make up your website to live.

In the next chapter, [How to Install WordPress](#), we will set up WordPress, so you can use it to create your website.

After that, you will learn [How to Use WordPress](#). You will learn about what WordPress does for you, and how to use it to create a website.

In the next chapter, [How to Add a WordPress Theme](#), you will pick out and install the theme, or design of your website. This chapter ties in with the next, [How to Customize your WordPress Theme](#), where you learn how to customize the look of your website without coding.

Then we will go over one of the most popular features of WordPress: plugins. In [All About Plugins](#), you will learn how to add powerful upgrades to your website with a couple of clicks.

After that, we dive into the concepts SEO. Learn what makes good content that will be easy to find on Google and other search engines, in the chapter [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#).

Finally, we wrap up with a preflight checklist to [Launch Your Website](#), and a few closing thoughts.

There is also a glossary at the end, where I define some technical terms I use.

The goal of this book is to guide you, hand in hand, through this entire journey, but you can also use it as a reference guide, and just read the chapters you need. When you are ready, grab a drink, put on some light jazz, and let's get to it!

## **About the Links in this Book**

Throughout this course, I make recommendations for free and paid products and services. Website Shepherd is not affiliated with these organizations, and we don't get anything out of sharing these links. We've just worked with these companies, and like what they do.

# Getting Started: Hosting & Domains

To get started with your website, you will need to purchase a domain and hosting. These are things you must buy. There are companies offering these services for “free”, but I’m sure you know, nothing is really free online. These free services often cost more money later, or they cram your website with ads and online tracking software. For domains and hosting, our motto is “you get what you pay for”.

## What is a Domain?

A domain is your domain – or territory – you stake out in the online world. Think of a domain like a deed to a parcel of land. Like a deed, you pay a realtor to buy a deed, and then you own that piece of land, and you can do whatever you want with it. In this case, we want to build a house on this land.

On the internet, a domain is represented by the text you see in the address (Search) bar of your browser. *www.google.com* is a domain. *www.cutepuppies.net* is a domain. A domain may or may not have *www* at the beginning (it doesn’t really matter).



*Example of a domain in your browser's address bar*

A domain can be any word you want, so long as it is only numbers and letters (no symbols like: !@#\$%^&\*), doesn't have any spaces, and isn't taken by someone else. Usually, domains end in *.com*, *.net*, or *.org*, but there are now many other options for the end of a domain. The *.com* or *.net* part of a domain is called the Top Level Domain (TLD). There are dozens of new TLD added in the last few years. Some examples of new TLDs: *.academy*, *.xyz*, *.yachts* (see [the complete list here](#)). These new TLDs are fun, but I would recommend sticking with *.com* or *.org* (*.org* is generally best for non-profit organizations). Most people don't know about the new TLDs, and they might get confused if there is no *.com* at the end.

The big difference between buying a real-world parcel of land, and a domain is, you don't really ever own a domain. You are renting it (called registering the domain) from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). It's a non-profit that organizes and sets up the rules for the internet. Every year, you have to pay around \$10 to the ICANN to renew your domain. The confusing part is you don't pay the ICANN directly, you need to use a company to register your domain. More on this in a bit.

If you ever forget to pay the annual fee, you can lose the domain, and anyone can steal it from you. You will get an email reminding you, but I recommend putting a reminder on your calendar to ensure you pay up every year. I've had many clients miss out on their payment by just a few days, only to have some nefarious squatter swoop in and buy up the domain. If this happens, the only way to get the domain back is to pay the squatter, which

could be hundreds or thousands of dollars, they get to set the price. So, don't forget, pay a few weeks ahead of time, and you will have no problems.

Start thinking of a good name for your website. You could pick your name, or the name of your organization, or anything you want. Start brainstorming and writing down some good names now.

## **What is Hosting?**

The other required purchase is hosting. Hosting is like a house. If you want to build a new house, you need some land to put it on. You can pay someone to build a house for you, or build one yourself. Either way, the house needs to go on some land. You can't have a home without a house *and* land, so to create your website, you will need both.

Hosting is actually a rental as well. You are paying a company to use one of their computers to store the files for your website on their hard drive. These special computers (called "servers") hold on to all the information about your website (text, images, links), and send the information to people who want to visit your website. They also help protect you from hackers, and set up all the complicated internet configuration stuff, so you don't have to.

All websites are on a server somewhere in the world. A good hosting company will have several locations scattered around the

world, and they make a copy of your website for each location. So if one server stops working, or catches on fire, or loses power, your website stays safe at the other locations.

Hosting prices can vary widely, depending on how many files you want on your website, how fast you want your website to be, and what other services (like an email address or extra security) you want. For a website that is just starting out, you can expect to pay around \$50-\$150 every year.

## **Choosing Your Hosting Company**

There are hundreds of places you can buy hosting and domains from on the internet. To make it simpler, I would recommend buying both the domain and hosting from the same company.

You've probably heard of GoDaddy. They spend millions of dollars making sure you've heard of them. GoDaddy sells both domain registration and hosting for websites, as well as many other services. When clients come to me with existing websites, they often go with GoDaddy because it's a familiar name. But, I would *strongly* recommend not using GoDaddy. Here are a few reasons:

### **Reasons to Avoid GoDaddy**

- Support calls have long wait times, and most of the staff is overseas.



- Once you sign up, they will call and email you relentlessly to sell you more products.
- They are such a big company, that they are monopolizing the industry, stifling innovation from smaller companies.
- Your website shares and IP address with many other websites. If any of those websites are doing things Google doesn't like, your website will be punished as well. You have no control over this.
- Closing your account to move somewhere else is a nightmare; they use high-pressure sales tactics to keep you.
- Really poor help documents.
- Wikipedia has a laundry list of other [controversies](#).

There's more, but that should be enough. Yes, it's cheaper, but remember our motto? You get what you pay for.

Another company to avoid, for similar reasons, is the behemoth Endurance International Group. They own dozens of hosting companies that look like they are independent, but are not at all. Bluehost, HostGator, iPage, FatCow, TypePad and more all belong to the same company, which can create price fixing, and a lower standard of support. Here's [the complete list](#) of companies they own. Save time and money in the long-run, and go with a good company.

## The Better Choice for Hosting

Going for a medium-sized company means better, more human, support, a faster and safer website, and if you pick the right one, it can even help your website show up higher on a Google search.

This book will walk you through buying a domain and hosting from a company called [KnownHost](#). I've been using them for years. Their support is friendly, not bureaucratic, and usually takes 1.3 minutes to get a solution. The prices are good, and they are big enough to have a great product, but small enough to care about you. They are based in West Chester, PA, with their support staff in Birmingham, Alabama. Support is available all day, every day, even on holidays. If you already have a website with another hosting company, they will move it for you free of charge. They also backup your website for free, twice a day. If you managed to break your website, just call them up, and they will fix it for you.

The best part, their hosting starts at \$3.47/month, and comes with a free domain.

### **Sidebar: The Fast Way to Make a Website**

KnownHost is a great company, but you will have to set up WordPress yourself. If you want a quick and automatic way to get a website up and running, [go with WPEngine](#). They take care of hosting, domains, WordPress set up, and have tons of cool designs to choose from, so you can get your website up fast. It costs a lot, but if you're in a hurry, go with them.

## Choosing your Domain Name

Before you buy anything, you need to pick a domain name, and choose how your domain will end (the TLD, like *.com* or *.org*). A TLD makes no difference in how your website works, it is just what people type in the address bar to go to your website. Kind of like your home's street address, it's just how people find your house. Your choices are many:

### KnownHost's Choices for Your Top Level Domain

- .center
- .legal
- .info
- .blog
- .com
- .net
- .org
- .biz
- .xyz
- .in
- .co
- .ca
- .us
- .ws

## Should You Use a .com Domain?

Most people go for a .com, because it's what most people are used to typing in.

### Why You Should Choose a .com Domain

The new TLDs are only a few years old, and it's like new country has suddenly appeared, with land available for all. For example, if you want to register the domain *cutepuppies.com*, you can't; it's taken. But you could register *cutepuppies.xyz*, or *cutepuppies.academy*.

And with the new TLD, you can do clever tricks like making a word out of it. For example *blo.gs* uses the *.gs* TLD to spell out the word "blogs". Other examples are *every.one*, *swit.ch*, and *brief.ly*. While these domains can be confusing for some visitors, it looks great on a business card.

### Why You Should Avoid a .com Domain

The big problem with the *.com* TLD is, most of them are taken. This means you will have to get creative with the name you pick.

And, a visitor to your website might not understand the *.com* version and the *.xyz* version are two different websites, owned by different people, so they might go to the wrong one.

Also, in general, most people on the internet are so used to .com at the end of a domain, that they don't trust anything else. This is slowly changing, so you have to decide if you want to be a trendsetter, or go with the flow.

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There are dozens of TLDs to choose from, and you can have more than one. If you want to search for ones that [KnownHost](#) doesn't offer, you can check out [NameCheap](#), a great place to register a domain, and a bit cheaper than most places. Please note, if you register a domain from NameCheap you will have to go through an extra step to connect it to your website, which is outside the scope of this course. [Here is a guide](#) on how to connect your domain to your hosting, if you are feeling adventurous.

## Choosing a Hosting Plan

To set up your website, we will be using [KnownHost's Basic Shared Hosting](#). This is the cheapest option, and has everything you need. Below is a list of features of the plan, and what they mean:

<i>Hosting Plan Feature</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
-----------------------------	-----------------------

Basic Shared Hosting	The level of hosting you are getting.
1 Domain	You can only have one website on this account, which is all you need. And it's free!
5 GB SSD Cloud Storage	How many files, text, video and pictures you are allowed to have. A regular website will take up 1/5 <sup>th</sup> of 1 GB, so don't worry about filling it up. SSD = fast hard drive.
5 Email Accounts	You can have up to 5 emails like <i>anything@yoursite.com</i> . You can put whatever you want before the @ symbol. Optional.
2 MySQL Databases	A database is like a spreadsheet, it's just a way for your website to remember things. Don't worry about it.
LiteSpeed Optimization	Makes your website run fast. You don't need to do anything with this.
Unlimited Premium Bandwidth	Oooooohh, <i>premium</i> . Bandwidth is like a pipe in your bathroom. Some hosting companies watch how much water flows through the pipe, and if it's too much, they will slow down the water flow.

	Unlimited means you don't need to worry about too many people visiting your website, they won't slow you down just because you are popular.
Free SSL Certificates	Free is good. An SSL certificate changes a website from <i>http://www.example.com</i> to <i>https://www.example.com</i> (adds an s). This makes your website more secure against hackers, and Google likes it when you do this. It is a must for all websites.

*Features may have changed since this book was published*

The pricing for hosting plans is always confusing, so I will explain it here. Hosting can be paid monthly or yearly (most people do yearly). The more you pay now, the cheaper it will be overall, like buying in bulk. Here is the break down:

<b><i>Payment options for Basic Shared Hosting</i></b>	
\$10 one-time setup fee	
Pay monthly	First month: \$6.71 \$8.95 every month after that
Pay yearly	First year: \$80.55 \$102.03 every year after that
Pay every 2 years	First 2 years: \$118.14

	\$193.32 every 2 years after that
Pay every 3 years	First 3 years: \$124.92 \$257.76 every 3 years after that

*Prices may have changed since this book was published*

You can always switch payment schedules at any time.

## Sidebar: There's an Easier Way

KnownHost knows some people don't want to deal with setting up a website. If you don't mind paying a few extra bucks, they offer a [Managed WordPress plan](#) (in the menu on this site, click "WordPress Hosting"). They take care of all the little details, and get you into your website faster. If you choose this option, you can skip the *Install WordPress* section in the WordPress chapter.

## Good Alternative Hosting Companies

If you don't want to use [KnownHost](#), check out these other good hosting companies:

- [WPEngine](#)
- [Flywheel](#)
- [SiteGround](#)



# How to Buy Hosting

1. [Visit this page](#).
2. There are three plans to choose from. Pick whichever you like, but most people will be just fine with the cheapest option. You can always switch later.
3. Click the *Order Now* button.
4. On the next page, there is a section on the left labeled *Configurable Options*. Where it says *Domain* type in the domain you want, for example *yourwebsite.com*
  - a. Optional: Backups twice a day comes free, but you can pay more for even more backups. The free option is plenty for most people.
5. On the bottom-right, choose a *Payment Method*, same options as in the domain purchase.
6. Make sure you are still logged in from buying a domain, and if not, log in. You know you are logged in if you see your name lower down on the page, on the left, in the *Client Information* section.
7. Check the “I have read and agree to the Terms and Conditions” checkbox on the bottom-left.
8. Now you are back on the standard checkout page. Make sure your details are all correct.
9. Click the *Pay & Complete Order* button.
10. Make sure the payment went through. You did it!

Whew! Okay, You now have a domain and hosting.

Congratulations! Now you are ready to set up your website.

You can set up a lot of different kinds of websites, but in this guide, we will be using a website manager called WordPress.

## How to Register just a Domain, Without Hosting



This section is only for people using a hosting company besides KnownHost. If you are following this book exactly, you can skip this section.

No matter what company you buy hosting from, you can get your domain name from KnownHost.

To buy and register your domain name with KnownHost:

1. [Visit this page](#).
2. In the search box, type in the domain name you want to register.
3. Choose your TLD (go with *.com* if you are unsure).
4. Click the *Check Availability* button.
5. When the page reloads, look lower down on the page. There will be a red or green bar.
  - a. If the bar says “Sorry, that domain is not available.” then you will have to use a different name or different Top Level Domain.

- b. If the bar is green and says “Congratulations, that domain is available.” then your domain is available for purchase. Yay!
6. Domains are paid annually, so the minimum is one year. You can also choose to pay for two or three years ahead of time. That’s up to you.
7. Click the *Order Selected* button on the bottom right. You are then taken to a shopping cart checkout.
  - a. On this page, there is a section labeled *Configurable Options* with some boxes for *Name Server* information. Just ignore them; they are for advanced set up.
8. Check the box labeled *Whois Privacy*. It’s a tiny checkbox, below all the *Name Server* boxes in the left column. Whois Privacy is a free service that makes it so you don’t have to put your home or business address on the domain (a legal requirement). Instead, KnownHost will put their address. This will save you from hoards of sales calls from random people, and there’s no setup or cost, ever.
9. Click the *Continue* button on the bottom-right.
10. Now you are in a standard shopping cart. Fill out the form. You are also creating an account, so you can log in later to get the hosting and pay bill next year. Make sure you use a strong password and have a way to remember it! Anyone with this password can destroy your website, put up new pictures of text, or even steal your domain. Keep it secret, keep it safe (or do what I do, and use [LastPass](#)).
11. Click the *Create Account* button at the bottom-right.
12. On the Order Summary page, read the terms and conditions (haha) and check the “I have read and agree to the

Terms and Conditions” checkbox. Then click the *Checkout & Pay* button in the bottom-right.

13. Then, choose a payment method. You can pay via ACH, credit (or debit) card, or [PayPal](#).
14. Click the *Pay & Complete Order* button.
15. Make sure the payment went through. You did it!

Now you have registered your own domain. You are a proud owner of a piece of the internet! Now that you have the land, it's time to build the house.

# How to Install WordPress



If you know HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, you can create a website from scratch. But most people don't know any coding. If you want to create a website without having to code, you use a Content Management System (CMS). There are dozens to choose from, but we are going to use one called WordPress. WordPress is used on 27% of all websites on the internet, and for websites that use a CMS, 76% use WordPress. It is open source software, which means no company owns it, and it doesn't make anyone any money. It is supported by a non-profit, and a huge, world-wide group of programmers. Governments large and small, universities, and businesses all use WordPress, so we will too.

## Sidebar: A Tale of Two WordPresses

The people who made WordPress decided it wasn't confusing enough, so they made two versions. One is found on **WordPress.com**, the other on **WordPress.org**. The *.org* version is the real, regular WordPress; this is the one you want. The

.com version is a hosting and domain registration company, like [KnownHost](#). WordPress.com is not the best hosting, and it costs a bit too much, so it's best avoided. It's also a more limited version of WordPress, so you won't have as much control. So only go to the .org version of WordPress, which comes with your KnownHost account.

## **Install WordPress on your Hosting Account**

Once you've purchased hosting, check your email for a welcome email. In the email will be a link for your *cPanel*.

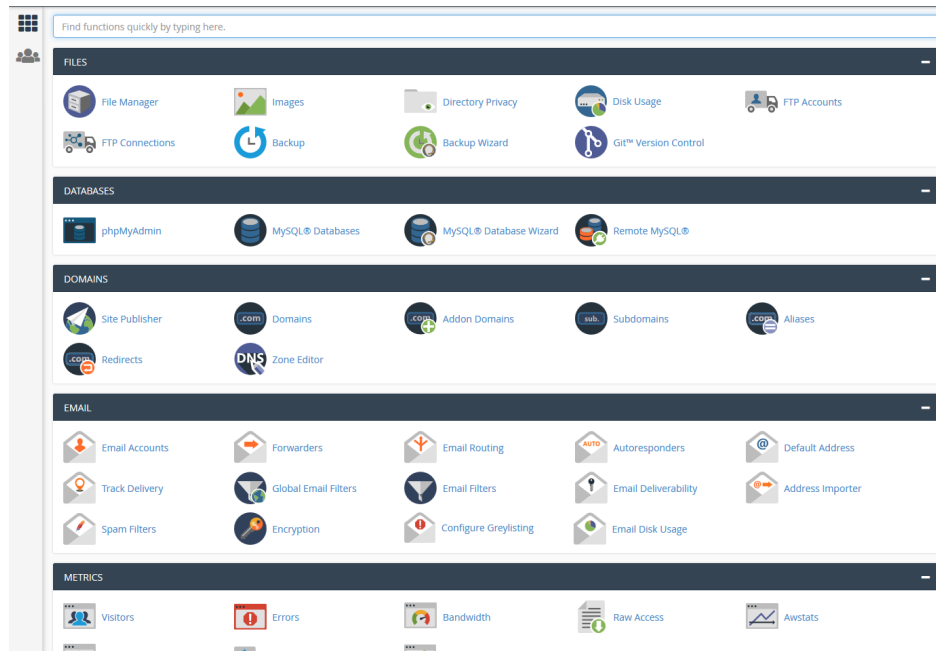
cPanel is your hosting control panel. It's full of buttons and knobs that allow you to customize how your hosting works. There isn't much in cPanel that you will want to change, but you can use it to [make yourself a new email address](#).

cPanel is not how you will make your website. It's only purpose for you is to install WordPress. If all goes well, you will never have to come back to cPanel ever again.

This is a tricky part. Take your time, read what's on the screen, take a break if you need to. In fact, a cup of chamomile tea might be a good idea. If you get stuck, or something weird happens, call KnownHost support at 866-332-9894. They are professional, kind, and they know websites in and out. There is no cost for their support.

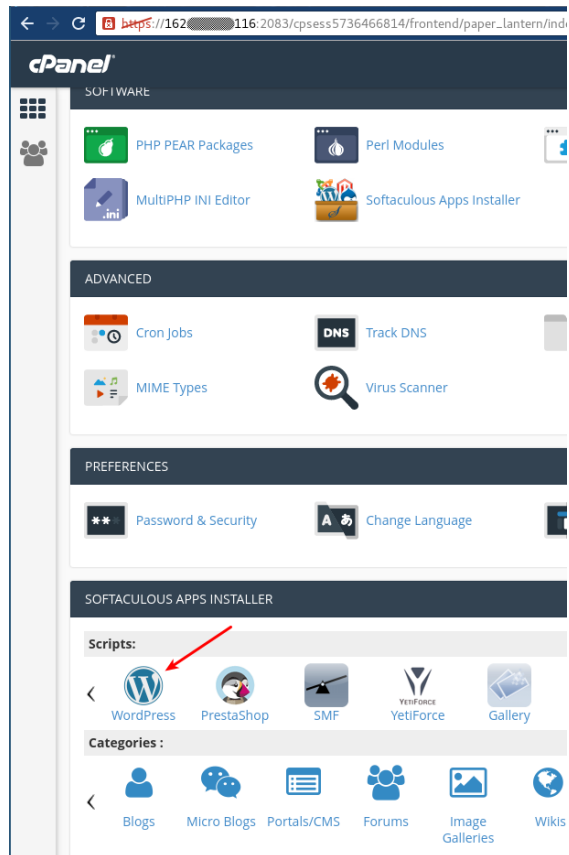
## Step 1: Log into cPanel

Log in to cPanel using the welcome email in your inbox.



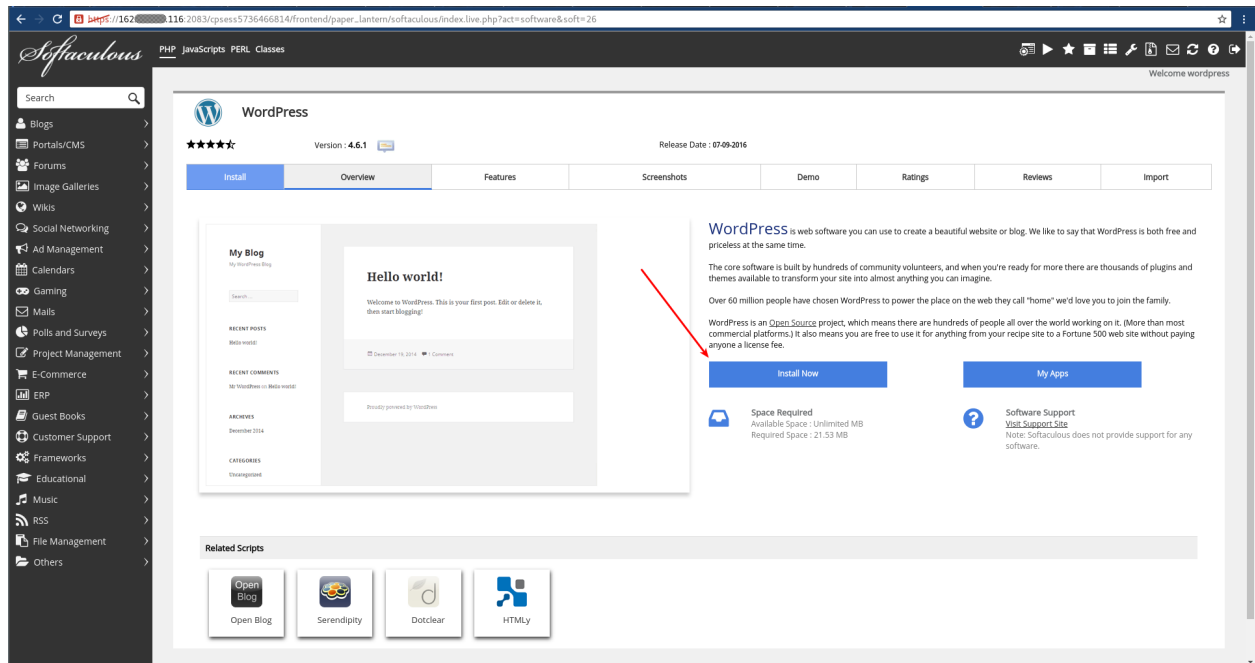
## Step 2: Find the WordPress Automatic Installer

After logging in to cPanel, scroll down to section *Softaculous Apps Installer*. In the sub-section *Scripts*, one of the options should be WordPress. Click it.



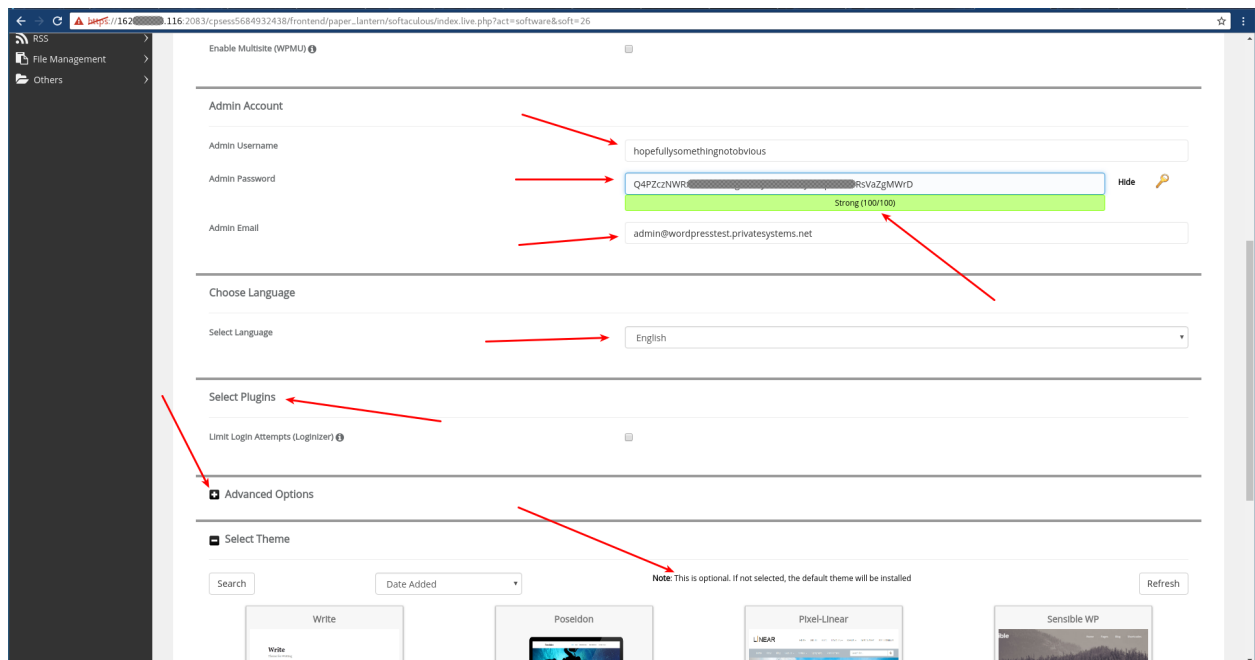
Then on the next page, click the *Install Now* button.





## Step 3: Fill in many boxes

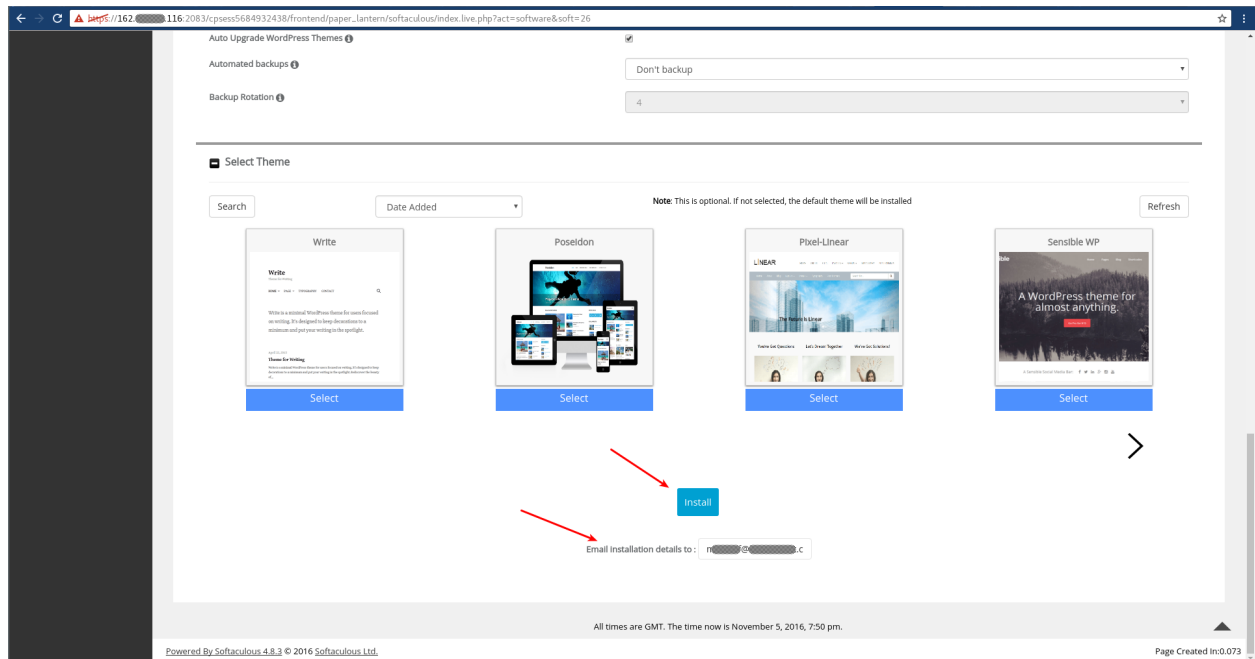
There are a lot of boxes to fill in. Don't panic! Let's do it together:



Boxes to Fill In	Interpretation
Choose Protocol	You want the one with the s: choose <i>https://</i>
Choose Domain	Type in your domain name you bought earlier: <i>yourdomain.com</i>
In Directory	Leave empty.
Site Name	Up to you. What is the title of your website. You could use your name, or your organization's name, or anything you want.
Site Description	It's like a slogan, and totally up to you. When people search for your website, this text will come up, along with the title. You can just leave it blank, but either way, remove "My WordPress Blog".
Enable Multisite (WPMU)	Nope.
Admin Username	The Administrator information is your login for your website. You will use this anytime you want to make changes to your website. The username can be anything you'd like, usually just your first name.
Admin Password	Put in a strong password. Remember it.
Admin Email	Used in case you forget your password. This will not send you any spam.

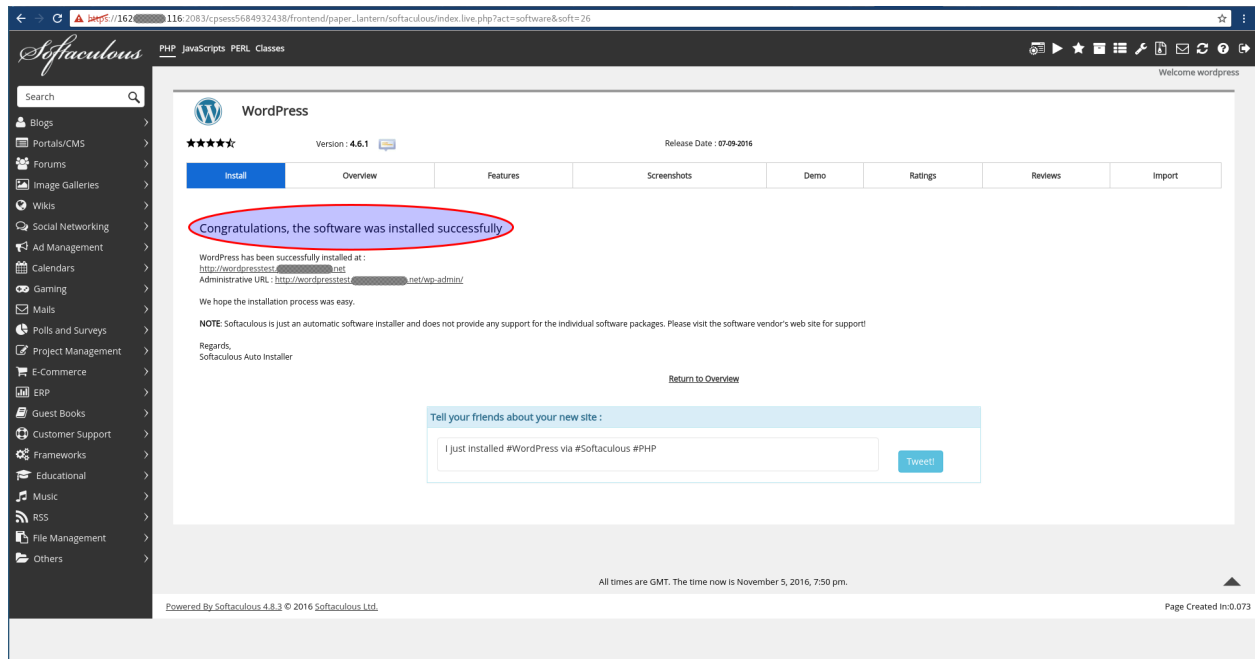
Choose Language	I like English.
Select Plugins	Skip this. You can do it when your website is set up.
Limit Login Attempts (Loginizer)	A good idea, but not required. If a hacker tries to guess your password over and over again, they will get temporarily blocked. But it also means if you try to guess your passwords over and over again, you will be temporarily blocked. Then you have to try again a few minutes later.
Advanced Options	Nothing to see here. Move along.
Select Theme	Optional. We will cover themes in the next chapter, but if you like the way one of these looks you can click on it to use it on your website. You can easily change it later.

At the bottom of the page, click the *Install* button. Don't worry about that email field below it, it will just email you when the website is finished installing.



On the next page, a progress bar will slowly fill up. Your website is cooking, and will be ready soon! This process should take 20 seconds, but could take up to five minutes.


If it worked, you should see the success page. If you see an error, call KnownHost support at 866-332-9894.



See that link labeled *Administrative URL*? Give that a click. That URL is your special backdoor for accessing your website.

## Step 4: Log In to WordPress

Once the website has been installed, you can then log into your website. Use the *Admin Username* and *Admin Password* from the previous step.



Username or Email Address

Password

☐ Remember Me

[Lost your password?](#)

[← Back to Websites Explained Simply](#)

You are now in WordPress! If you want to see what your website looks like, click on the little house icon in the upper-left hand corner. That's your website!

You can look at your website and see it like visitor to your website will see it, but you (and only you) have access to the WordPress “admin screen” as well. That's the page with the black bar with a bunch of options on the left side. This admin screen of your website is where you will create content and customize your website.

Your website is now live on the internet, which means anyone can see it. But don't worry, no one will, not yet. A new website isn't known by Google or other search engines. It will take weeks or even months for Google to notice your website exists, and even then, they won't care much until you start following good SEO practice, and get people to visit your website from social media. A great saying summarizes this situation perfectly: making a new website is like putting up a banner in your basement. No one will see it.

So, let's turn it into something that will amaze Google!

# How to Use WordPress

Oooohh, boy. There's a lot going on here. So many things to click on! Luckily, you only need to focus on a few things.

If you followed the steps in the last chapter, [How to Install WordPress](#), you will already be logged into your website, in what I call “edit mode”. Edit mode is a secret set of pages that only you can see, and they give you the ability to change anything on your website. These pages are called the “admin screen” of WordPress.

## Sidebar: Backend vs. Frontend

The admin screen (AKA the backend) of a website is only for the person who runs the website. That's you.

It's like being in the back end of a butcher shop: The customer never sees it, and it's where the sausage is made. You know you are in the admin screen of WordPress if there is a thin black bar along the top, and a larger black bar along the left side. You will also see your name in the upper-right corner, it will say “Howdy, [your name]”.

Frontend is what visitors to your website see. It's the regular website. If someone doesn't have a special (Administrator) login to a website, all they will ever see is the frontend.



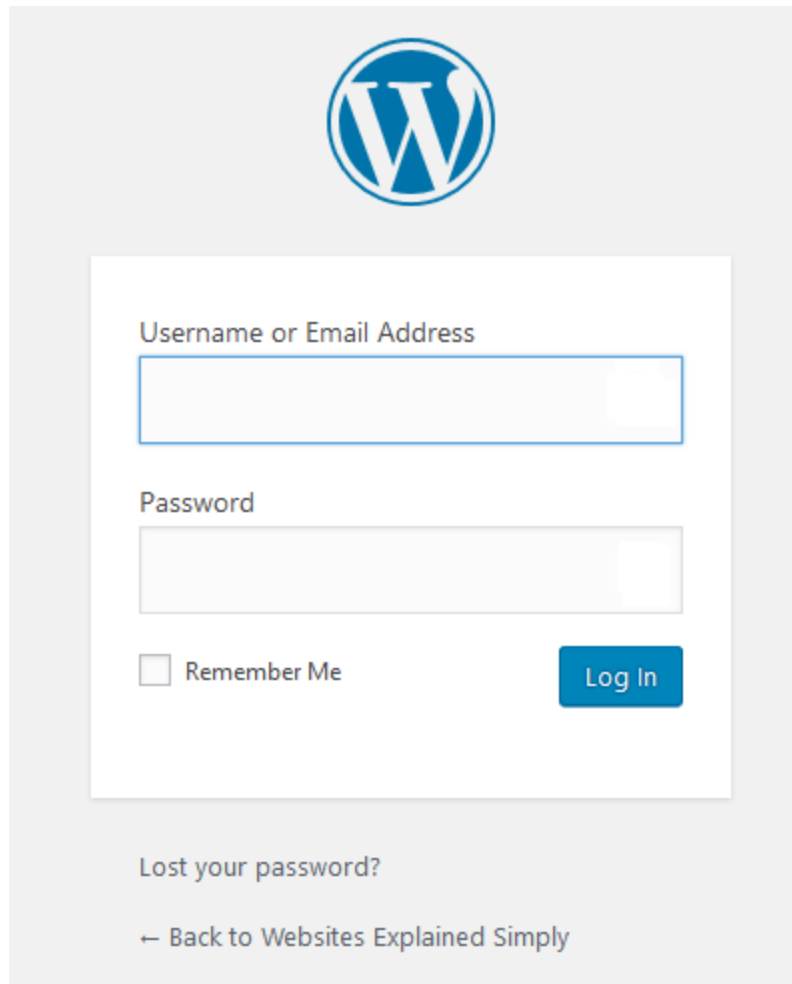
The admin screen's just for you, the frontend is for everyone else.

## Logging In

But how do you get back to the login page? This trips up a lot of people because, unlike every other website on the internet, on yours, there is no log in link for you to click on. In WordPress, you have to go to a certain web page to log in, and you will need to remember it, or create a bookmark on your browser.

To log in to WordPress, type in your search bar:

*yourwebsite.com/wp-admin* (replace *yourwebsite.com* with the domain you purchased earlier). The *wp-admin* page will take you into the admin screen, or, if you are not logged in, it will take you to the hidden login page.



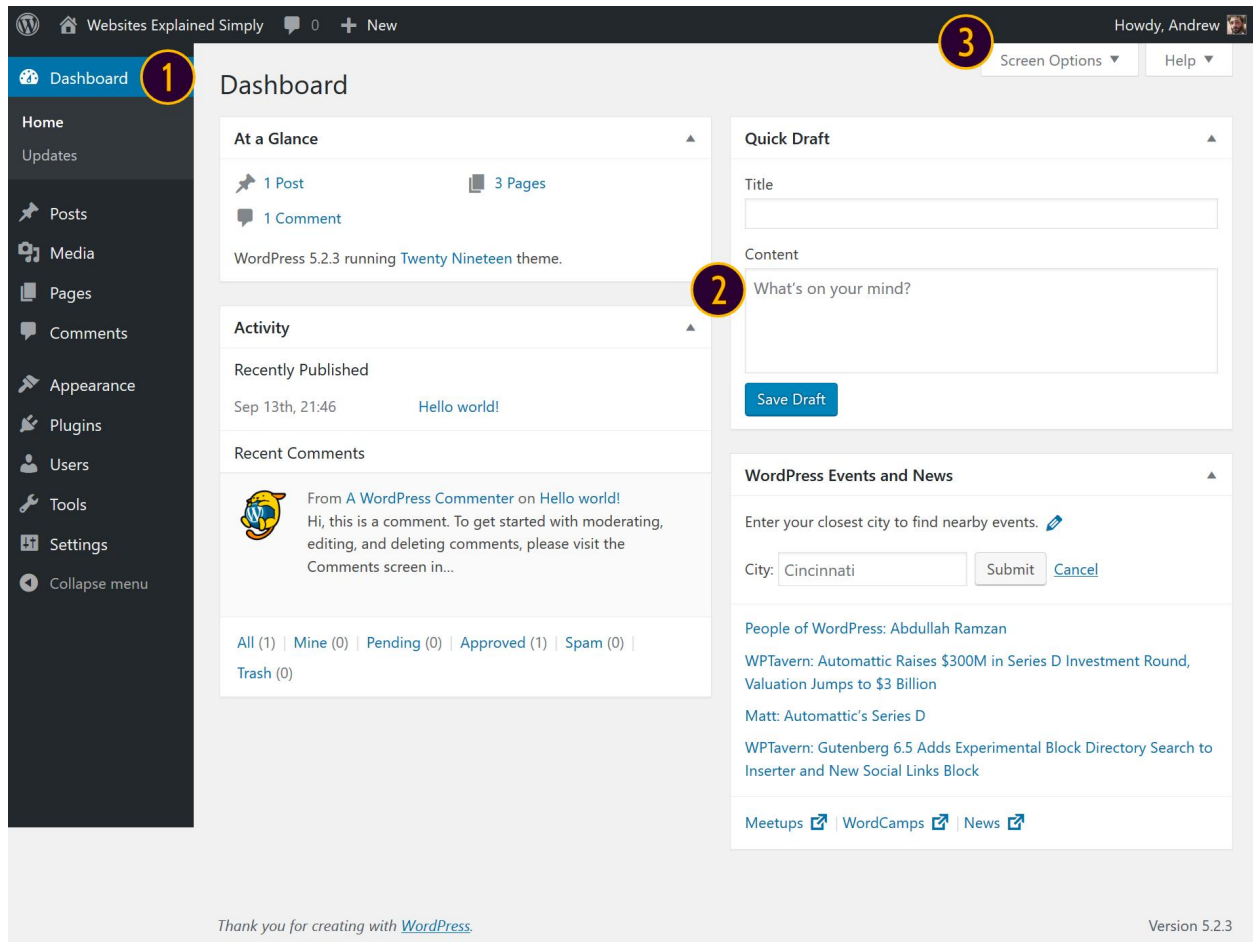
From there, enter in your *Admin Username* and *Admin Password* from Step 3 of the previous chapter, [How to Install WordPress](#). Click the *Log In* button, and you're in!

## Navigating the WordPress Admin Screen

What you should care about is the black bar along the top and left-hand sides of the page. This is the navigation menu for the admin screen, which is generally known as the “sidebar”. It's the

way you can see all the parts of your website, and customize it. Let's go through all the sidebar links.

## Dashboard

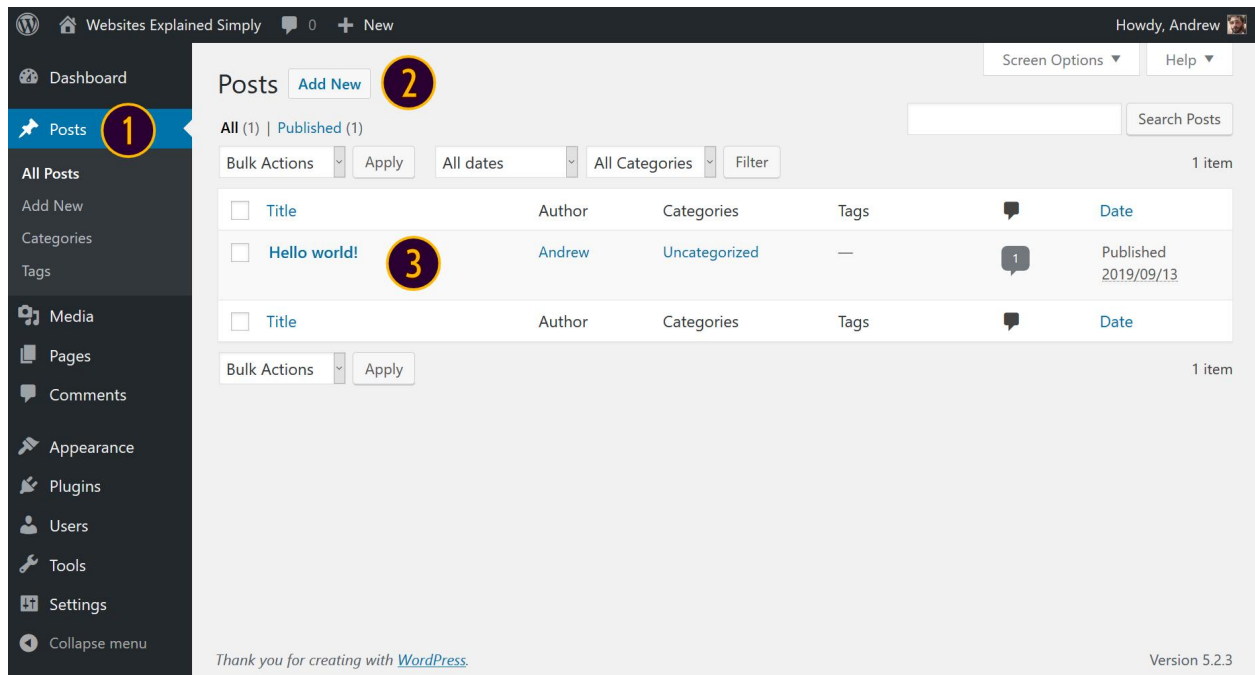


1. Click here to see the Dashboard
2. The Dashboard's rearrangeable cards
3. Screen Options: Show/hide cards on the dashboard

Right now, and whenever you log in to your admin screen, you are on the dashboard. It's like the overview of your website. It gives you statistics and news from WordPress. You can click and drag the little boxes around, and sometimes new stuff magically appears. It looks impressive, but it's kinda pointless. I've never

used the dashboard, so I recommend ignoring it, but feel free to play around with it. You can add/remove stuff by clicking the little tab on the top-right that says *Screen Options*.

## Posts



1. Click here to see all blog posts
2. Create a new blog post
3. See all current blog posts

This is where you make and edit blog posts. If you aren't doing a blog, newsletter, or regular events or announcements, then you can just ignore it.

A “post” is a regular page that is timestamped. Use a post when your content is time-based, like an announcement (think

newspaper article). Blog posts will show up only on the blog page (and maybe on the homepage, depending on your theme).

WordPress gives you a sample post entitled “Hello world!”. You can take a look at it to see how it’s set up, but you should throw it in the trash before launching your website.

A post is almost identical to a page. Posts will show up on the Blog page, and the most recent posts will also show up on the homepage (you can change this behavior in *Settings* → *Reading*). They will not show up on the website’s menu, unless you manually add them there from *Settings* → *Menu*. A post will also have three extra features pages don’t have: tags and categories, and comments.

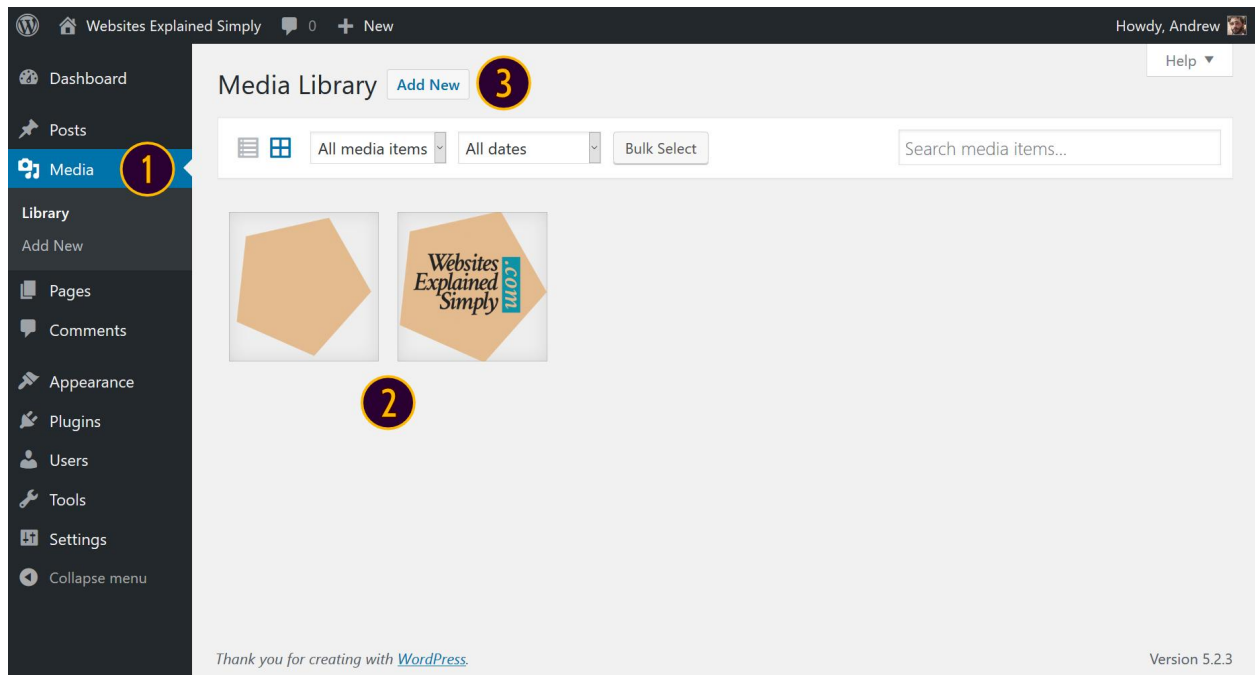
**Tags** are search keywords for a post. You can have as many as you like. For example, if you are writing a blog post about how to wash a puppy, your tags could be: *bath, wash, puppy, puppies, dogs, how-to*. These optional keywords help people find this post when searching for those keywords.

**Categories** organize your posts, which is especially helpful if you have many posts. They will organize your posts if a visitor wants to search by category, and will give them an idea of what the article is about before they read it.

**Comments** are something your website’s visitors can leave on a post. You will find the comment section at the bottom of a blog post. You can require people to sign up for your blog before

leaving a comment, which helps keep spam down. If you prefer, you can also make it so no one can leave a comment. Settings for all comments are in the admin screen sidebar, under *Settings* → *Discussion*.

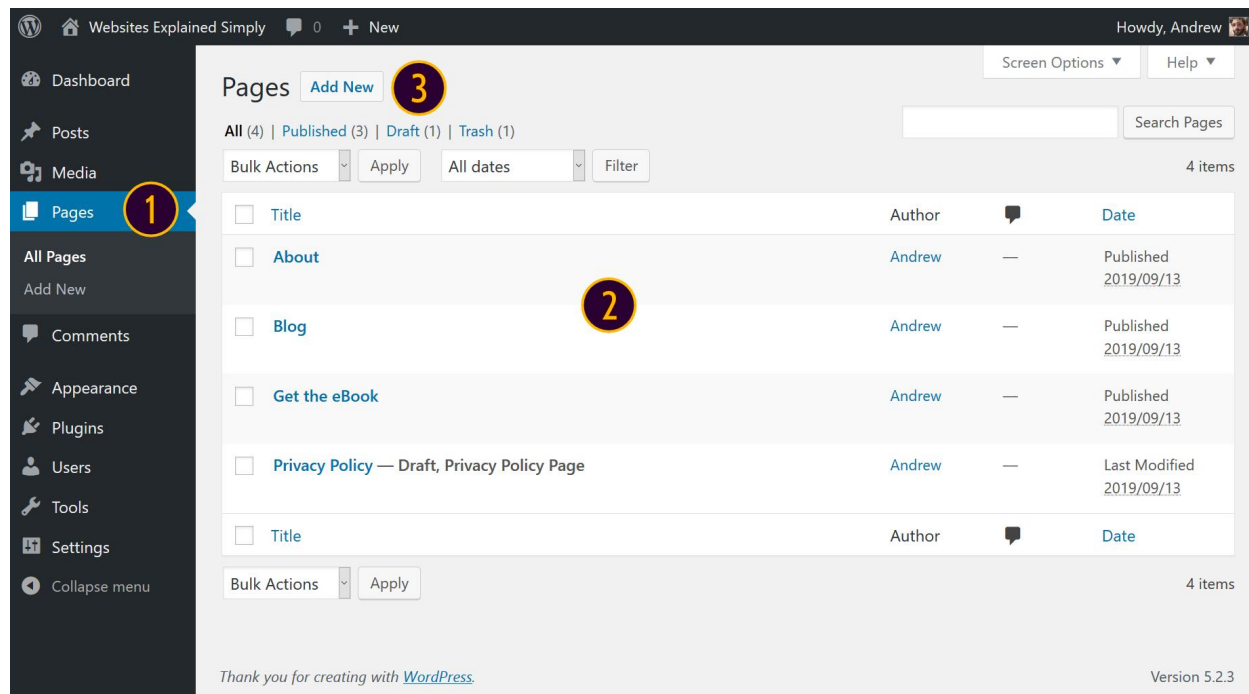
## Media



1. Click here to see the all website images
2. List of images. May not be visible on site
3. Add new image. It's better to do this on a post or page edit screen

Where your pictures live. Generally, you won't need to visit this page. You will add images when you are creating a page or post.

# Pages



1. Click here to see all pages
2. Create a new page
3. See all current page

The web pages of your website. You will need at least one of these, but you can have as many as you like. Many people create an *About Me* page, *Contact* page, or pages about certain topics. It's up to you what pages you have.

WordPress comes with a sample page (which you can just throw in the trash), and a Terms of Service page. Technically, every website should have a Terms of Service and Privacy Policy page, but I'm not a lawyer, so I'll leave that up to you.

## **Making a Page**

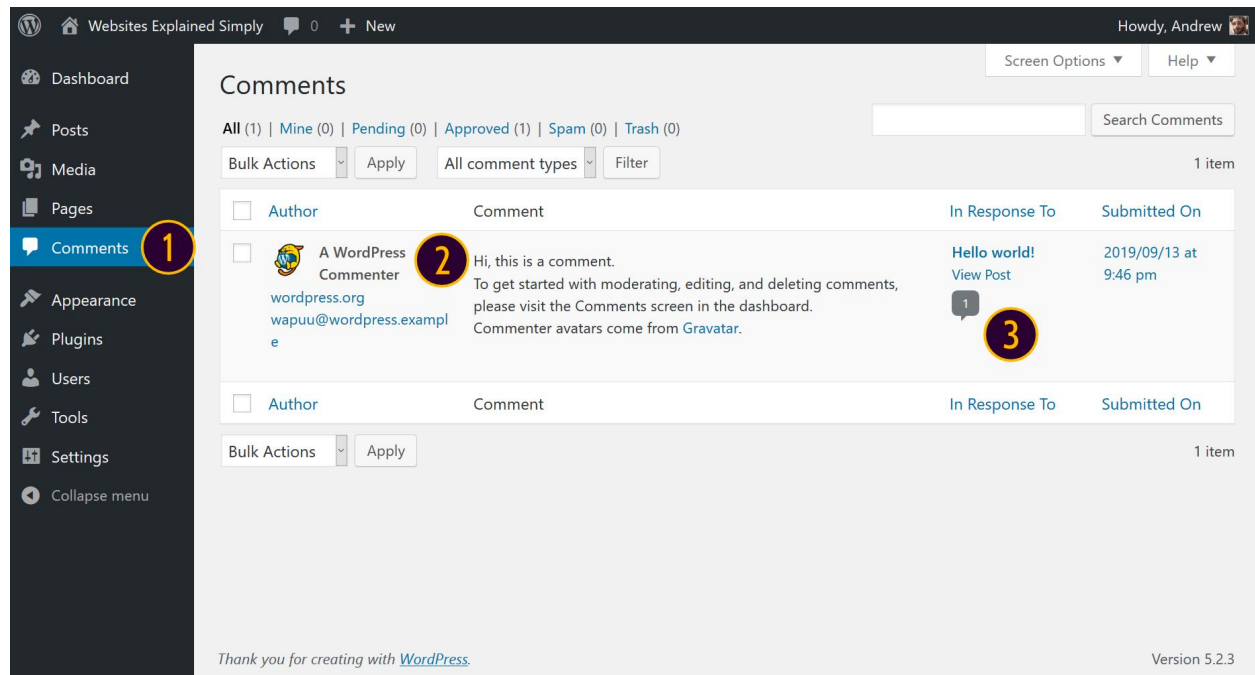
If you click on the Pages link in the sidebar, you will see you can make a new page at the top with the *Add New* button. You can also edit existing pages by clicking on their name from the list below.

Every page comes with basic text controls like underlines, heading text, etc. Make sure every page has a title. When you are ready to make the page live on your website, click the *Publish* button on the right. Once it's published, you can see what it looks like on your website by clicking *View Page* in the black bar on the top of the page.

If the tools are too confusing or limited for you, check out the WYSIWYG section in the next chapter.



# Comments



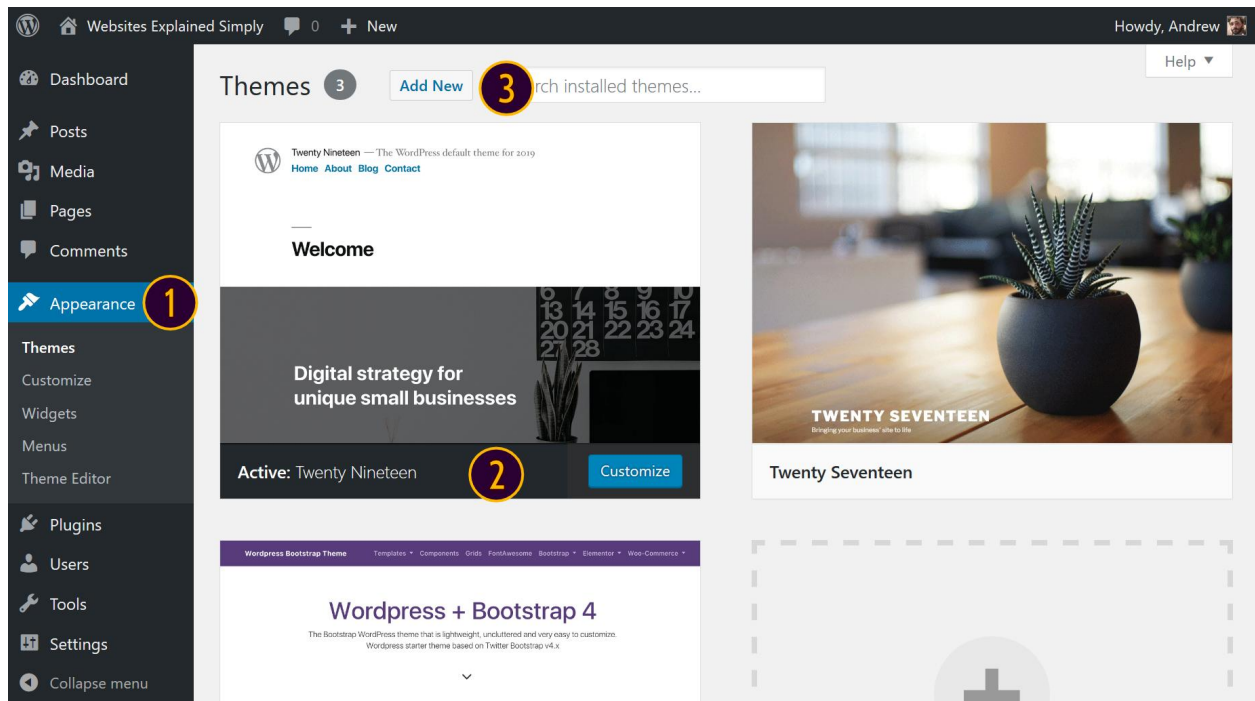
1. Click here to see all comments
2. List of all comments
3. Which blog post the comment was made on

If you have a blog, on the bottom of every published post, readers of your blog have the opportunity to add a comment. Comments are a mixed blessing: they add a community element to your site, and help your page rank on Google and other search engines. However, they are often spam. Use the Comments page to read through, and if necessary, delete comments. You can also respond to them from this page, opening up a public dialog with your readers.

You can control who can post and other details from *Settings* → *Discussion*. From there you can set it, so you have to manually approve all comments before they go live on the site, which I

would recommend. Spam comments are much more sophisticated nowadays, so read each message completely, and make sure there are no weird links. You can also activate an anti-spam plugin like [Akismet](#) to help reduce the bogus comments.

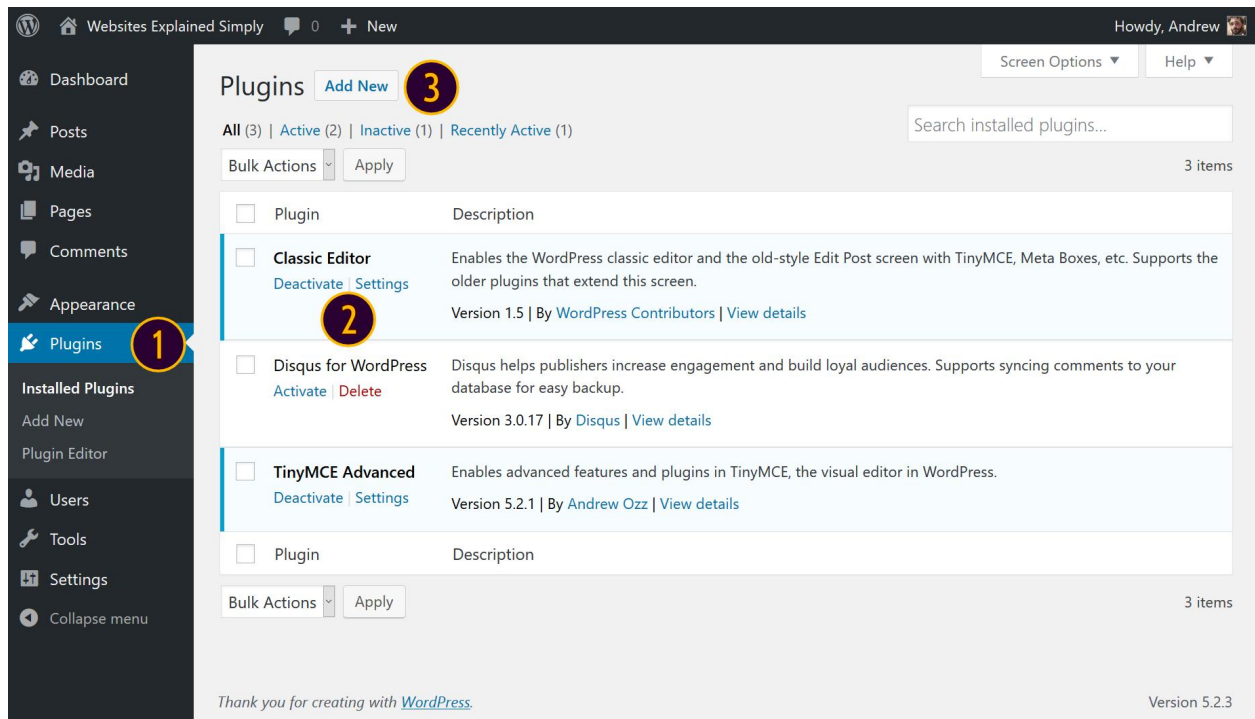
## Appearance



1. *Click here to see all installed themes*
2. *Theme you are currently using*
3. *Add new theme*

This is where you edit the way your website looks. You don't need to go in here if you like the way your website looks. More on this in the upcoming chapter, [How to Customize your WordPress Theme](#).

# Plugins



1. *Click here to see all installed plugins*
2. *Options for individual plugins*
3. *Add new plugin*

One of the great things about WordPress is the thousands of free plugins you can add to your website. A plugin is a little upgrade, and they do all sorts of stuff. They can add a Facebook button, change all the fonts on your website, add extra levels of security and so many other things.

You don't need any plugins. Whether you use plugins is up to you. More on this in the upcoming chapter, [All About Plugins](#).

# Users

The screenshot shows the WordPress dashboard's 'Users' section. The left sidebar has a 'Users' menu item highlighted with a yellow circle containing the number 1. The main content area has a 'Users' header with an 'Add New' button circled in yellow with the number 4. Below the header, there's a table of users. The first user, 'andrew', is circled in yellow with the number 2. The 'Role' column for this user, 'Administrator', is circled in yellow with the number 3. The table has columns for Username, Name, Email, Role, and Posts. Below the table, there are bulk action buttons and a 'Change role to...' dropdown. The footer of the page includes a thank you message and the version number 5.2.3.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Username	Name	Email	Role	Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	andrew	—	criticalslinky@gmail.com	Administrator	1

1. Click here to see all users
2. List of users
3. The role, or “level of power” this user has

Want to invite other people to edit your website? Click on Users, then press the *Add New* button at the top. Fill out the information on the user, and let WordPress generate a password for you (they can change it later). Make sure to check the box that says “Send the new user an email about their account.” This will send them an email with everything they need to login. Make sure you choose the *Role* wisely. A user’s role dictates how much they can change on your website. It’s how much power you are giving them.

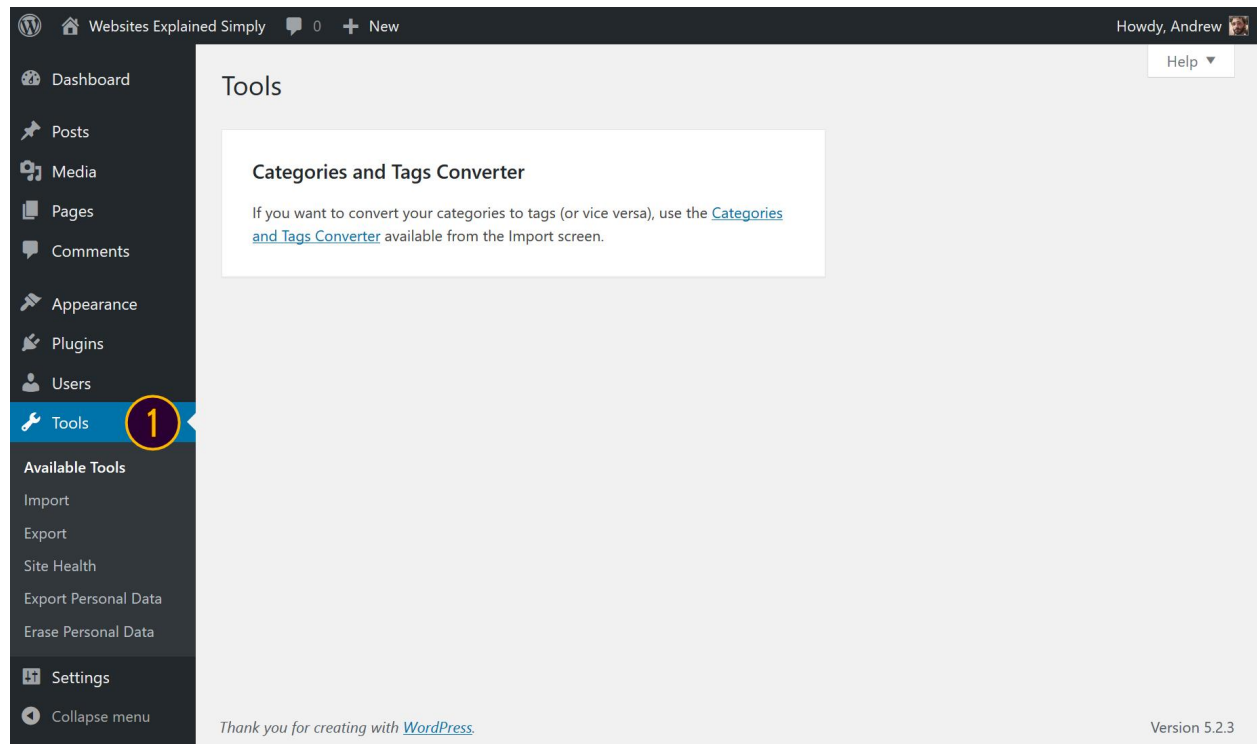
## WordPress User Roles

- **Administrator:** somebody who can do anything. This is the level of power you have.
- **Editor:** somebody who can make, edit, and delete pages and posts (even ones other people make). They can not change the way the website looks, just the content on it.
- **Author:** somebody who can make, edit, and delete their own pages and posts, but not anyone else's.
- **Contributor:** somebody who can make, edit, and delete their own pages and posts, but cannot publish them. Someone with more power must approve their content.
- **Subscriber:** somebody who can only manage their profile. They have no access to the admin screen. Usually used only on blogs, for making blog comments.

From the Users link, you can also change user accounts and delete them. If you click on your own name, you can change your details, and most importantly, the colors of the admin screen! This color scheme has no effect on your website, it's just for you :)

If you made any changes to a user, remember to press the save button way down at the bottom of the page.

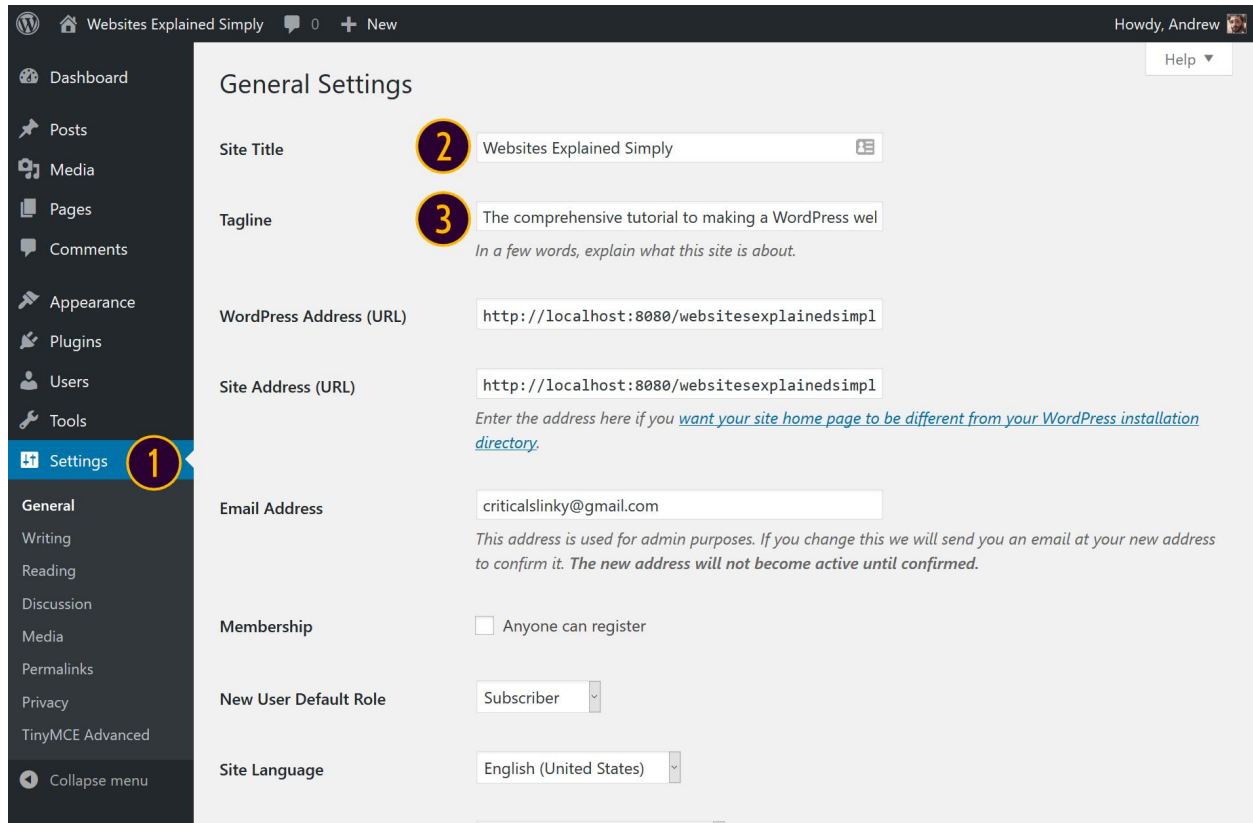
# Tools



1. *Click here to see all tools*

Not very interesting. Miscellaneous website tools that you will probably never use.

# Settings



1. *Click here to see the Settings page*
2. *Name of your website*
3. *Optional slogan (may not show on your theme)*

Various setting for how the website works. Take a look through these options, and make any changes you like, but you don't need to do anything in here.

---

It takes awhile to get used to how WordPress organizes everything, but with practice, it will feel like second nature. Most of the time, you will be only in the Pages and/or Posts sections.

If you get stuck, try searching online for your issue. You can try something like “how do I do *X* in WordPress”. It’s a popular platform, and chances are, someone else has gotten stuck where you are.



# How to Add a WordPress Theme

## Designing Your Website

Now for the fun part: web design! Colors, fonts, layout, oh my! Design is my favorite part of making a website, so please forgive my giddiness.

The biggest challenge my clients have when they first get on WordPress is choosing a theme. A theme is a pre-made set of rules for how content looks on your website. Should the text be big or small? Should the background be dark or light? What color are the buttons? A theme controls everything about the color, size, and organization of your website. It does not control what the text says, just what it looks like.

## What is a Theme?

In WordPress, a “theme” is a pre-made website design. A designer decided which fonts, colors, shape, and size the website should have, and packaged it all up for you to use. It could also be called a “template”.

A theme is easy to add to your website, and you can just as easily switch between themes with a click of a button. It’s nice to add several themes to your website, and try each one out. Think of it as an outfit. You can change outfits easily, but each one makes you look different.

Like everything with WordPress, there are thousands of themes out there. Many clients get caught in what I call “theme paralysis” because there are just too many good options to choose from. To make matters worse, many themes are free. Selecting a free or paid theme should be your first decision.

Before you start looking, set a deadline for when you are going to decide on which theme you will be using. This will help you keep on track. Remember, you can always change it later, and a demo of a theme never really looks the same as when you use it.

Paid themes usually have support, so you can contact the theme maker with any questions. Paid themes also get updates, so if they make a better version later, you get that version automatically. Some paid themes come with plugins or other add-on that makes changing things like colors and fonts (and even the entire layout), easier.

Free themes are offered as is, and the quality varies wildly. Luckily, if a free theme is terrible, you can tell. If it’s terrible on the outside, it will be terrible on the inside. Trust your gut.

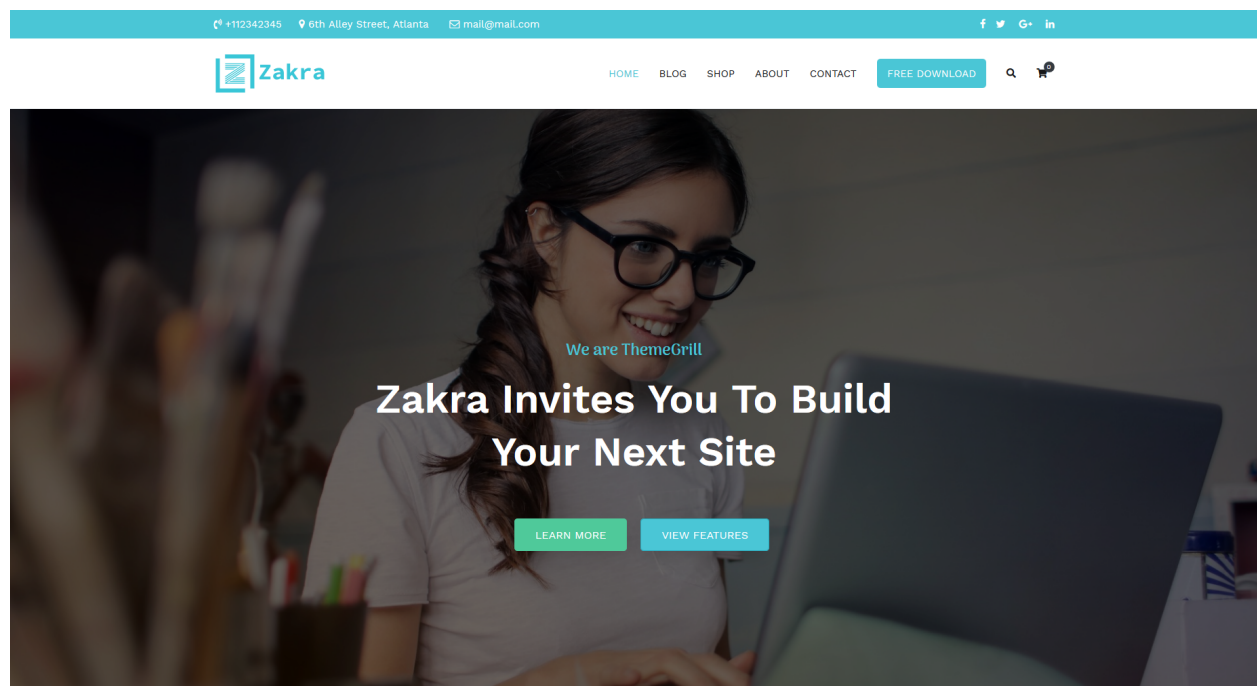
To complicate the “free vs. paid” choice, most paid themes have a free version that unlocks more features.

At the end of this chapter, I will recommend some other good themes, but for now, I’m going to recommend one theme, just to make this simple. But this method will work on any theme you

dine, and at the end of this chapter, I have a great list of good themes for you to use, if you don't like this one.

Zakra is an excellent theme, and you can make changes without coding. But if you know some CSS, then you can get under the hood and make advanced changes, but it is not at all required.

## Recommended Theme: Zakra



[Zakra](#) – This theme is perfect for a beginner. It has good [documentation](#), which you can reference to find out how the theme works, and a [support forum](#) where you can ask questions.

It also comes with 20 optional starter demo themes, which is unusual. Zakra's basically like [20 themes packed into one](#), and you can use any of them as a base for your website design. You can modify these demos, or just use them as is.

You just click on the one you want, and it makes a theme, pages and content for you. Obviously you will want to add your own content, but if you want to start with a strong base, this is the way to go. Find the demo themes in the WordPress admin screen, under *Appearances* → *Demo Importer*. Try one out, and if you don't like it, you can completely undo it and try another.

One thing to note about the demos is – and I'm not sure if this is a good thing or not – when you import one into your website, it also adds several free plugins, automatically. These plugins do various things, like help people contact you, make it easier to edit the theme. You can turn them off under the *Plugins* page from the admin screen sidebar.

Zakra also sets up WooCommerce, a free plugin that helps you sell products on your website. This is optional, and you will need to activate the plugin (see the section [How to Install a Plugin](#) for how to activate a plugin).

They have [a paid version of the theme as well](#), which comes with support and more themes. This email-based support can help you if you get stuck. The paid version also adds a few more features (see [free vs. pro comparison here](#)), but the free version has everything you need to make a great website.

## Other Good Free Themes

Below are a few other free themes to look through. There are also thousands in the [WordPress Theme Directory](#).

The themes below are all free, but really they are “freemium”. Some more advanced features require you to pay for the pro version. Some have an annual payment, but you only need to pay once to get the theme. You only need to keep paying if you want support, and updates for the theme, which isn’t required.

I’ve found the free version usually has all the things you’ll need. But, the paid versions also comes with support, so if you get stuck, buy the paid version to get help.

- [The Astra Collection](#) (over 1 million downloads!)
- [Cali by aThemes](#)
- [Airi by aThemes](#)
- [20+ other themes by aThemes](#) (scroll down a bit)
- [Neve by Themeisle](#)
- [Hestia by Themeisle](#)

## The Best Paid Theme

If you are willing to pay for a professional looking theme that is easy to edit, check out [StudioPress](#). It comes with a built-in page

editor (called Genesis Pro), that makes sure your content always looks good, and is quick to edit.

It's not one theme, they have 35 designs to choose from. StudioPress is a good choice if you are starting a business, or need to impress clients. When you sign up, you also get a free year of hosting. It's expensive, but they do all the setup for you, and your website *will* look great.

## **Install the Recommended Zakra Theme**

1. From the WordPress admin screen, click *Appearance* → *Themes*
2. Click the *Add New* button on the top.
3. On the next page, it will show some recommended themes you can install. Look for the search bar on the right.
4. In the search bar, type: *Zakra*.
5. Only one result will come up. Put your mouse cursor on the Zakra box, and two new buttons will appear. Click *Install*.
6. Wait a moment.
7. When done installing, you will see the word *Installed* on the top of the Zakra box. Put your mouse cursor back on top of the box, and click the new button that says *Activate*.

Your theme is now installed and ready to use. The page reloads, and you can then pick which layout you would like to use.

## Install Your Custom Theme from the Internet



If you are using the *free* Zakra Theme, skip this section. This section is just for people using a theme downloaded from somewhere else on the internet. Use this section if you are using [the Pro \(paid\) version of Zakra](#).

If you want to use another theme **other than the free Zakra theme**, download the theme from its website, and follow the instructions below.

1. Find and download a theme from the internet to your computer. When you download it, the file you get will end up with a *.zip* file. Look in your *Downloads* folder on your computer.
2. From the WordPress admin screen, click on Themes.
3. On the next page, click the *Add New* button on the top-left of the page. Then, in the same spot, there will now be an *Upload Theme* button. Click that, and look down the page a bit for a *Browse* button.
4. Click the *Browse* button. Then, find your theme file (the *.zip* one) you downloaded to your computer in step 1. (if you don't know where the theme file is on your computer, look in your computer's Downloads folder).
5. Once you find it, double-click on it.

6. Once you've done that, back in WordPress, the name of the file you uploaded should appear in the same spot the *Browse* button was in.
7. Click the *Install Now* button next to the name of your theme file.
8. Wait a moment.
9. The page will refresh, and if everything worked, you should see a new theme option, next to the default WordPress themes.
10. Put your mouse cursor over the theme you want, and click the *Activate* button that appears over the theme's picture.
11. Your theme is now activated! Click the name of your website in the upper-left hand corner of the admin screen to see what it looks like.

Anytime you want to try out another theme, repeat this process. You can try out as many as you want! Once a theme is installed, all you have to do is click the *Activate* button to switch to that theme.



# How to Customize your WordPress Theme

Your theme is activated and looks great! If you are happy with the way it looks, then you are all set. But, chances are there is something you want to change. It could be a font is too small, or something is a dumb color, or there are parts of a web page that you don't need.

Before we get started, it's a good idea to add at least one post (if you are doing a blog) and one page, just so you can see what they look like when the theme changes.

## Appearance Menu on the Admin Screen

This is where the Appearance link on the admin screen comes in. In *Appearance*, there are several options to customize your theme's appearance. Unfortunately, every theme is different, so there is no guide that could encompass all themes. If you purchased a theme, go to the website where you bought it, and look for the theme documentation. This can help you understand how that particular theme works. For the theme I recommended (Zakra), [the documentation is here](#).

## Theme

Click on *Appearance* → *Themes*. From here you can change your theme. When you first log into a new WordPress website, you will start with a few default themes, made by WordPress. If you have downloaded a theme from the internet that you want to use, you can add it to your website from this page.

See the [How to Add a WordPress Theme](#) section above for how to add a new theme from the internet.

## Customize

When you click *Customize*, you are taken to the frontend of your website, with a special sidebar on the left. The sidebar is full of settings that control a wide variety of settings for how your website looks and works. Customize also shows you these changes right as you make them, so no need to save to see what changes you made.

What shows up in Customize depends entirely on your theme, and some themes will have quite a few options in Customize, and some have only a few. When you are trying out different themes, take a look in Customize to see what you can control.

When you make any changes using the Customize sidebar, make sure to press the *Publish* button at the top of the sidebar.

## Widgets

A widget is an optional add-on for your website. They have preset locations where they will appear, controlled by your theme.

Widgets are similar to plugins: they add functionality to your website, but they are usually less exciting. A common widget is a search bar for your website, or a gallery of photos. If you don't want to use them, you don't have to.

Themes usually have one sidebar for widgets, but could have more. Some themes won't have any widget areas. Some put a widget area in the footer of your website. To see how many sidebars you have, and to customize your widgets: from the admin screen, click on *Appearance* → *Widgets*.

### Widgets Page

On this screen, on the left, you will see all available (but unused) widgets. On the right, is all of your widget areas, and any active widgets. A widget area is the place on your website where that group of widgets will show up. It could be on all pages, on the homepage, in the footer, or only on blog pages. It depends on how your theme is set up.

You may need to open the widget areas to see what's inside. To open a widget area, click on the title the widget area rectangle. WordPress automatically adds a search, tag cloud (for blogs), and categories (also for blogs).

### **How to Add a Widget**

You can add a widget by choosing one from the list of available Widgets, and clicking-and-dragging to the right, and drop the widget on top of the widget area rectangle where you want the new widget to show up. That's it!

### **How to Customize a Widget**

Some widget can be customized once you add them. You can do this by clicking on its name, which will open up that widgets settings, if any.

### **How to Remove a Widget**

To remove a widget, click on the widget so its setting appear, and press *Delete*.

Please note there is no save button on this page, it does it automatically, but if you customize a widget, you will need to press the *Save* button on that widget.

## **Menus**

A menu is a customizable list of pages that visitors to your website use to navigate from one page to another. A menu is usually on

the top of all pages, but some themes put the menu along the side, or even attached to the bottom edge of the screen. Some themes even have multiple menus, for example, there could be a second menu for the footer. You can also make more menus, but it will come with at least one primary (main) menu.

You can change what shows up in your menu by visiting Appearance → Menus. From this page you can edit your starter menu, or make more.

### **Manage Menu Locations**

On the top of the page, notice the two tabs: *Edit menus*, and *Manage Locations*. You start on the Edit menus tab. Manage Locations allow you to switch which menu shows up in which location. A good theme will set this for you.

### **Switch Menu to Edit**

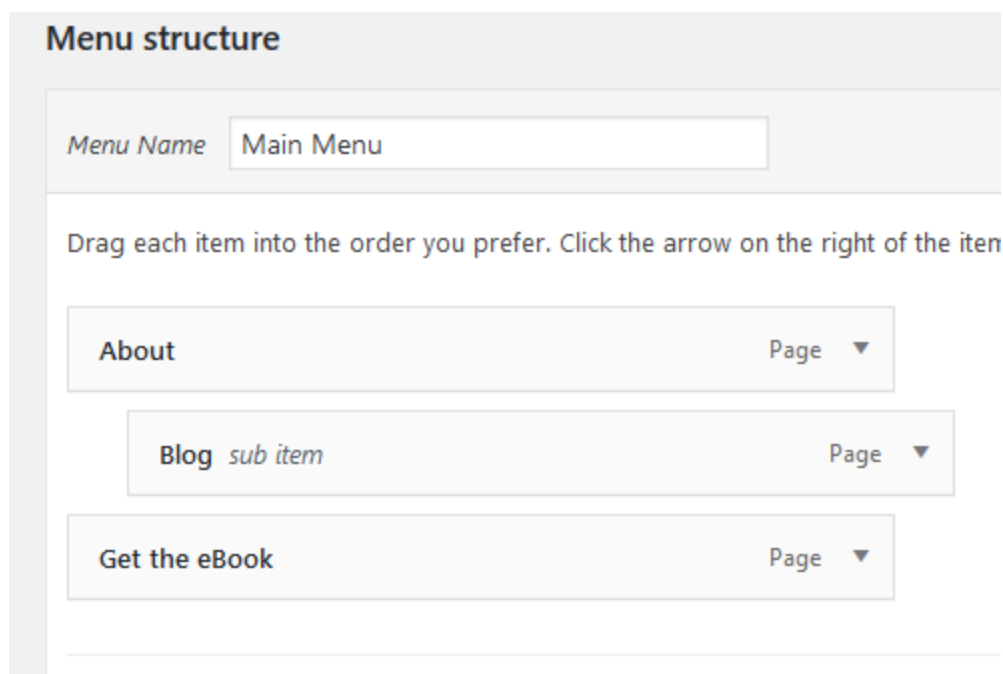
Just below the tabs at the top of the page there is a box that has “Select a menu to edit”. You can use this drop down to switch between menus so you can edit them. You can only edit one menu at a time.

### **Menu Page Layout**

Below the tabs you will see a sidebar on the left side of the page, labeled *Add menu items*. This is a list of all the items you can add

to your menu. You can add pages, blog posts, custom-made links (for example, a link to another website), and blog post categories. Usually menus only have pages, but it's up to you. If you are selling products on your website, there will also be a list of products.

To the right of the sidebar is your *Menu structure*. You can use this area to drag-and-drop the order of your menu. When rearranging, be mindful that all the menu item boxes are lined up on the left side. It's very easy (and infuriating) to put a menu item inside the one above it, which makes a drop-down menu.



*The Blog page will be in a drop-down, under About.*

You can tell this is happening when the menu item you just moved is more to the right than the other menu items. If this happens, just try to move it again.

## **How to Add a Page to the Menu**

Make sure all the pages you want to add have been created and published. You can not put a draft page in a menu.

On the page, in the left *add menu items* sidebar, check the box next to the page you want to add to the menu. If you don't see the page you want, you can try clicking on *View all* just above the list of pages. You can add multiple at the same time.

Then, press the *Add to Menu* button. This will put your new page at the bottom of the menu on the right side of the page. If desired, click-and-drag your new menu item to the position in the menu you want.

Repeat this process for every menu item you want. When done, press the *Save Menu* button on the far right of the page.

## **Menu Settings**

At the bottom of the page, there is an option: *Auto add pages* as a checkbox. If you check this option, any new pages you make will automatically be added to this menu, when you publish the page. This saves you the hassle of adding it yourself, but it can add pages you may not want in the menu. It's your call. I usually leave this option unchecked, and control the menus myself.

## Theme Editor

### **DANGER ZONE!**

Under *Appearance* → *Theme Editor*, you will find direct access to your active theme's code. From here, you can modify the CSS, HTML, and PHP code. This course isn't about coding, so we won't dwell on this section. Just know that if you make even one mistake in this area, your whole website can go down. Trust me, I put a semicolon on a page in this area one time, pressed the save button, and the website was so broken, I had to hack into the database to undo it.

If you have a little CSS you want to add (the language that controls colors, sizes, and layout), you can safely add CSS from *Appearance* → *Customize*, then go to the bottom of that page, click on *Additional CSS*. No need to add anything to your Theme Editor.

## Child Theme

When you go into this page, there is a warning. The warning is saying you shouldn't ever make direct changes to your theme. If you do, when you update the theme your changes will be lost.

If you want to make changes, WordPress recommends making a "child theme", which is a copy of some of your theme's files that you can edit. This helps separate out your changes from the original code.



It's a bit fiddly to set up. [Here is a guide](#) to help you if you want to give it a try. Remember to back up your website (I use the [Duplicator plugin](#)), and have a copy of the backup on your computer, in case you can't get back into your website.

If you are serious about making changes to the code, you should be using an FTP client like [Filezilla](#), and a code editor, like [Sublime](#). Use [this guide](#) to securely connect to your website via sFTP. You should still make a child theme if you are connecting with Filezilla. Good luck, brave adventurer!

# All About Plugins

Plugins are optional add-ons for WordPress. They add extra abilities, so you don't have to write the code yourself. Almost all WordPress websites have at least one plugin installed, and some have dozens. Plugins are free, but some have paid upgrades, like WordPress themes.

Plugins can add neat features to your website, make your life easier, or connect to other online services. There's a plugin for everything. Just to give you a feel for what's out there, here are the 10 most used plugins worldwide, at the time of writing:

1. [Yoast SEO](#) – Make your website easier to find on Google. Helps you figure out the best way to write your content and organize your website.
2. [Akismet](#) – Protects your website from spam comments. Comes preinstalled with WordPress, but you have to activate it to use it.
3. [Jetpack](#) – A all-in-one plugin. Offers a dozen little features to make your website work better. Tends to slow down websites and doesn't play nice with other plugins.
4. [Contact Form 7](#) – An excellent way for visitors to your website to email you, without telling them your email address.
5. [Wordfence Security](#) – Beef up your website's security.
6. [WooCommerce](#) – An eCommerce shopping cart. It lets visitors buy products. Core product is free, but there are lots of paid add-ons.

7. [All in One SEO Pack](#) – Like #1 above.
8. [Google Analytics for WordPress](#) – Connects your website to Google Analytics, a free way to track how many people visited your website, and more. If you are starting a business, seriously consider this one.
9. [WP Super Cache](#) – “Caching” is a technical term for remembering. Helps your website load faster, automatically. Can cause problems when you change the website.
10. [WordPress Importer](#) – Want to move a WordPress website from one hosting company to another? Try this guy!

Whether you use them or not is up to you. Keep in mind that every plugin slows down your website a tiny bit, and poorly made plugins can create security issues. When you hear about a WordPress security problem in the news, it's a plugin creating the problem.

You can download plugins from the [WordPress plugin search](#), or, from inside the WordPress admin screen. I would recommend sticking with the WordPress admin screen way, it's easier, safer, and they are all free.

## How to Install a Plugin

1. In the WordPress admin screen, click on *Plugins* in the sidebar.
2. On the next page, you will see a list of all installed plugins, if any.

3. Click *Add Plugin* at the top.
4. Browse or search for the plugin you want.
5. Click the *Install Now* button on a plugin you want.
6. Wait a few seconds.
7. In that same spot where you clicked the *Install Now* button, there is now an *Activate* button. Click *Activate*.

Your plugin is now running on your website. Often (but not always) a plugin will add a new link to the admin screen sidebar, sometimes under *Settings* or *Tools*. Most plugins need to be set up in order to work. If you need help with a plugin, search for the plugin on the [WordPress plugin search](#), and find the support tab. There, you can ask the person/company who made the plugin anything you want. This is a free service, so support quality varies.

I recommend sticking with plugins that have more than 100 active installs (meaning at least 100 other people are using that plugin right now). There are also paid plugins found across the internet.

## **How to Remove a Plugin**

If you need to remove a plugin for any reason, it's simple to do. You can also temporarily disable a plugin as well. When you visit your plugin page for the first time, you will notice a few preinstalled plugins. For example, the *Hello Dolly* plugin, which, when activated, will randomly put a lyric from [Hello, Dolly](#) in the upper right of your admin screen. Huh.

The Hello Dolly plugin isn't very useful, but you can practice removing a plugin with it.

Please note: you can *delete* or *deactivate* a plugin. Deactivating a plugin turns it off, so it is no longer doing anything on your website. You can re-activate a plugin anytime by clicking the *Activate* link on the plugin.

Deleting a plugin permanently removes it from your website. There is no way to undelete a plugin, so if you want it back, you will need to install it again. Also, any settings you created will also be deleted. You have to deactivate a plugin before deleting it.

## **How to Delete a Plugin**

1. In the WordPress admin screen, click on *Plugins* in the sidebar.
2. On the next page, you will see a list of all installed plugins, find the one you want to remove.
3. Click *Deactivate* on the plugin.
4. Wait a second.
5. Find the plugin again from the list, and you will see it's been deactivated. There is now a *Delete* option. Click *Delete*.
6. When the plugin has been deleted, you will see a confirmation at the top of the page.

## How to Update Plugins (and WordPress)

One of the biggest security issues with WordPress is outdated plugins. Even if you aren't making changes to your website, you should log in at least once a month to see if any plugins need updating. Just like your computer, updates add new features and make the code more secure. But unlike your computer, it only takes a few seconds to update plugins, and they can be updated all at once.

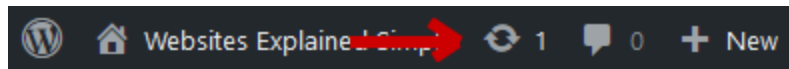
Even more important than up-to-date plugins, is up-to-date WordPress. Keeping WordPress updated is the most important security step you can make. Luckily, you can update both WordPress and your plugins for free, on the same page.

### **Sidebar: Always Back Up First!**

Before you do any updating, it is a good idea to back up your website, in case something goes wrong. I use Duplicator to do this. You can install the free version through the WordPress admin screen (on the Plugins page), or you can buy the [Pro version](#), which allows you to automatically schedule updates, and automatically send the files to [Dropbox](#) or another online file storage service.

## Steps to Update Plugins and WordPress

1. On your WordPress admin screen, look on the top bar, just to the right of your website's name.



*To update plugins and WordPress, click on the arrows pointing to each other (looks like the recycling symbol)*

2. If you have any updates pending, you will see two tiny arrows making a circle (like the recycling symbol) with a number next to them. That number is how many plugins need updating.
3. Click on that icon, and you will be taken to the update page.
4. At the top, if WordPress needs to be updated, it will say “An updated version of WordPress is available”. Click the *Update Now* button, and wait a moment while WordPress updates. Don't do anything while it's updating. It shouldn't take more than a minute. When it's done, a new page will come up telling you about the new features of WordPress.
5. Go back to the updates page.
6. Further down the page, any plugins that need to be updated will be listed. Check the checkbox on the ones you want to update, and click the *Update Plugins* button.
7. It shouldn't take more than a minute, depending on how many plugins you are updating. It will show you the progress on the page. When all the plugins are done updating, nothing will happen. So scroll to the bottom of the page, and look for

the words “All updates have been completed”. Once you see that, you are all done!

## **Recommended Plugins**

Here are a few plugins that I like:

[Wordfence](#) – Protects your website, and sends you a notice if anything strange happens. Needs a lot of fiddling, but you can rest easy knowing you have a security guard watching your website.

[Classic Editor](#) – WordPress has a new feature called Gutenberg, which changed the way you write posts and pages. It creates a bunch of “blocks” where you can put text, video, images, etc. Many people prefer a more standard page editor (more like Microsoft Word). The Classic Editor replaces Gutenberg with the older-style editor. This is only for editing pages and posts, it doesn’t change the way your website looks. Also, if you want a few more options in the Classic Editor, check out [TinyMCE Advanced](#). The Classic Editor is not compatible with any WYSIWYGs (see next section).

[Duplicator](#)– Makes a complete backup of your website. Download the files to your computer before making changes, and if anything goes wrong, [follow their instructions](#) to restore your website. Get the Pro version if you want automatic daily or weekly backups that can magically get added to [Dropbox](#), [Google Drive](#), and other cloud storage platforms. Your hosting makes a backup as well, but



this one is easier to use, and it can also be used to move your website to another hosting company.

## **WYSIWYGs**

There are a few plugins that you can use to make editing your website more of a drag-and-drop experience. These plugins are known as WYSIWYGs, an acronym that stands for *What You See Is What You Get*.

If you have ever used alternatives to WordPress, like Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, or Shopify, you have used a WYSIWYG editor.

WYSIWYGs allow you to add “blocks” of content to your website, similar to the regular WordPress page editor, but super-charged. For example, you could have a block with some big header text, then below, a block for a video, then below that, a block for paragraph text.

No coding, easy to edit and rearrange, and you can see exactly what it will look like on the page. Sounds awesome, right?

Clients who have tried a WYSIWYG plugin sometimes found them infuriating. I know how to code websites, and I struggle with them. The promise of easy editing seems great at first, but as you try to fine tune your blocks, you are confronted with an endless sea of options, many of which don't make sense unless you understand CSS, the language that controls how a website looks.

But, other people find them intuitive and easy to use, so maybe give it a try, and if it's not for you, you can just remove the plugin.

The advantage is WYSIWYGs give you the exact layout you want, instead of just putting up with how your theme does layout. If you want to customize your layout, give one of these a try. I would also recommend doing a little reading on the [CSS box model](#), which is the format the blocks in a WYSIWYG follow. Just understanding this one part of CSS will make using a WYSIWYG much easier.

## Recommended WYSIWYG Plugins

These are fancy plugins, but they are still plugins. Use the [How to Install a Plugin](#) section above to install them from the Plugin page on the admin screen.

They are all free, but for more than just basic tools, you'll have to pay for the pro version, which might be worth it for time saved. I'll leave that up to you.

- [Elementor](#) – Great place to start, and get a feel for how WYSIWYGs work.
- [Brizy](#) – I like the layout of this one, and they also offer themes to get you started faster

# Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Creating a good website means good planning. After you decide what your website should look like, you need to create and gather the words, images, and video you want. What kind of content you have on your website is totally up to you. This chapter covers the foundation of good website content, and some tips that will help your website show up on Google and other search engines.

## What is Search Engine Optimization?

Also known as SEO, Search Engine Optimization is the process of making your website easy for Google and other search engines to understand. The more they understand your website, the more visible your website will be when people search for content like yours. If showing up high on Google doesn't matter to you, feel free to skip this section.

SEO is a huge topic. In this section, we will just skim the surface. If you want to learn more about it, there are some good guides at the end of this section.

All SEO can be summed up in one simple statement: **Make good, original content, and share it.**

Original content means text, images or video that you create. The internet has a culture of “borrowing” content from other websites, but doing this is plagiarism, and Google knows it. Google knows

when new content is created, and if the same content shows up on your website, they can tell. This is more true for text, but as the technology gets better, Google is learning to understand images and video as well.

When making original content, think about your target audience. Who are you writing for? Often, it helps to picture your target audience as a single imaginary person. What do they look like? What kind of clothes do they wear? What hobbies do they have? The more you understand your audience, the more you can write content they will care about.

Once you've made good content, share it on social media, like Reddit, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, ideally all four. Post your content on these websites with a link back to your website, and you will attract new visitors to your website. Google will notice this new traffic and reward you with a higher rank on their search result (called "page rank").

It also helps if you engage with people on social media websites. Don't just post a bunch of stuff and then never look at it again. Go back to these social media websites later, and if people are talking about your content, have a conversation with them. Answer questions, ask their opinion, anything that gets them talking. Bizarrely, Google can tell this is happening, and this will help your page rank.

## Blog

A blog is like a personal newspaper. You can use it to share information about your life or organization, make announcements, or share opinions. Blogs are good for SEO, so long as it is your original content. This can be another thing to share on social media.

## Image

Almost every page or blog post will have at least one image. While not required, it will make your content more interesting, and will help your page rank. You can take your own pictures, or draw your own image. Or, you can use stock photos.

## Stock Photos

Don't confuse a stock photo with clip art. Clip art is the dreadful, low effort drawings from the 1990s that found its way onto every announcement back in the day.



*Stock art from the 90's, versus today*

Stock photos are the modern equivalent, but are much better. While making your own images will always rank better, having a stock photo is better than none at all.

[Pixabay](#) and [Unsplash](#) offer free images, even for commercial use. There are lots of other great websites that offer free photos, but many of them are released under a new special kind of copyright: Creative Commons. There are several types of Creative Commons licenses, but essentially it means that if you use the image, you need to provide a link on your website to the person who make the image. Learn more about [Creative Commons their website](#).

### **Search Engine Optimization Guides:**

- [A full introduction to SEO](#)
- [Google's Guide to writing good content](#)
- [The 200 things Google checks on your website to decide your page rank](#)

# Launch Your Website

You've been on quite a journey! Making a good website is hard work, but now you are ready to share it with the world.

Before you share the website with anyone, do a proofread of the entire website. Then, ask someone else to do a proofread. It's a pain, but worth it.

I learned this lesson the hard way. I made a website for a client, and the link to the contact page broke when I was finishing up the website. I didn't check everything at the very end. No one could contact the people that owned the website, which means no one could contact me to tell me it was broken. Ooof!

Learn from my mistake and check everything. Do this once you are completely done with the website.

## Pre-Launch Checklist

- Does the text have perfect spelling and grammar?
- Do all the images work?
- Do all the videos play (if applicable)?
- When you click on **every single link**, does it work?
- Do all the links in the menu work?
- Is there a way to get back to the home page?

Your website is already live on the internet, anyone with the link to your website (the domain name) can visit it already. But no one

will, unless you share the link to your website. To share the website, [copy and paste](#) the full URL from the search bar (for example: *https://www.example.com*) and send it to anyone and everyone.

You can paste this URL in an email, paste it into a social media post, or share it on an online forum where people interested in your topic meet up and talk.

It will take Google and other search engines a few weeks, or even months to realize your website exists, so don't expect it to show up right away. You can speed up this process by [telling search engines there is a new website in town](#).

After you launch, if you want to get lots of people to visit your website, it's all about good content and [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#) (discussed in previous chapter).



# Conclusion



Congratulations! You are now a proud owner of an excellent website, and you know how to use it. A good website is never truly done, so keep adding new content and sharing it with others.

There's so much more to WordPress and making websites, but you now have the skills to make a great website. On [our blog](#), we are adding new articles that expand what you learned in this book, so check it regularly for updates. Also, [subscribe to our newsletter](#), and the new guides, tips, and deals will be sent to your inbox.

I hope you enjoyed this course, and that it empowers you to make your mark on the internet. We would love to see anything you make! [Send us the link to your website](#), and I may feature your website on an upcoming blog post (with your permission, of course).

If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions of any kind, please email us: [hello@websiteshepherd.com](mailto:hello@websiteshepherd.com).

# Glossary

**Browser** – The computer application used to connect to the internet. Popular examples are Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Microsoft Edge.

**CMS** – Stands for Content Management System. A CMS allows you to make changes to your website without coding. Popular CMSs are [WordPress](#), [Joomla](#), Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, or Shopify.

**Content** – The content of your website: text, images, and video.

**CSS** – Programming language used on the internet. Stands for Cascading Style Sheet. CSS controls the color, size, position, and layout of your website.

**Domain** – A name for your website. When connected with hosting, a domain will show you a website. Example:  
*www.example.com*

**HTML** – Programming language used on the internet. Stands for Hyper Text Markup Language. HTML is used to describe what content is on a website.

**Hosting** – A service offered by hosting companies. For a fee, these companies store the files that make up your website. Required for all websites.

**Open Source** – software with code that anyone can inspect, modify, and enhance. As opposed to software protected by copyright.

**Page Rank** – Your position on a Google (or other search engines) search page. Rank #1 is the first search result. Your rank will be different depending on what you search for.

**Plugin** — An optional add-on for WordPress websites that extend its functionality. Free or paid.

**SEO** – Stands for Search Engine Optimization. The process of making your website more visible on search engines. Good SEO will improve your page rank.

**SSL Certificate** – A tool for connecting to a website securely. It's the *s* in *https://*. A good hosting company will include an SSL certificate with your hosting. Also improves your page rank. Strongly recommend.

**Theme** – Free or paid set of files that changes the way your WordPress website looks.

**WordPress** – A free and open source Content Management System (CMS). Requires hosting and a domain name to work.



**Website**  
**Shepherd**