

Stoked About **WordPress**



**How To Build A WordPress
Website In 3 Easy Steps!
Install, Optimize & Custom
Design From Scratch.**

for **BEGINNERS**

Reeta Krishna

Stoked About WordPress (A Preview)

How To Build A WordPress Website In 3 Easy Steps! Install, Optimize And Custom Design From Scratch (For Beginners)

-Reeta Krishna

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Introduction

My name is Reeta and I have been working with WordPress websites since 2010. I graduated from Texas A&M University with a Masters degree in Economics, but then my inner geek nudged me into the world of web development and here I am.

"Stoked About WordPress" was brought into existence with a lot of love, care and patience. Yes, I know we are talking about a technology book and not a puppy. BUT! It was my first book and I wanted it to be as perfect as I could possibly make it.

Just in case it isn't evident from the title (or the fact that I wrote a whole long book about it), I think WordPress is a fantastic tool. I really *am* stoked about WordPress and open source projects in general. Through the book, I hope I am able to pass some of my fondness for WordPress, on to you.

I would very humbly like to dedicate the book to all open source developers and contributors. The world wide web wouldn't be the same without you!

Step 1: The Essentials- By The End Of This Step, Your Website Will Go Live On The World Wide Web.

Chapter 1: Have A Question?

First of all, kudos for zeroing in on WordPress; you've made the right choice. Setting up a website with WordPress is a cinch. Once you have surmounted the initial (mild) learning curve, you'll be whipping out incredibly cool websites.

But as with any new skill, the path might be fraught with a few bang-fist-on-the-table moments.

However, such moments aren't to be dreaded. On the contrary they are, dare I say, to be almost relished! For on the other side, are answers that will take your understanding to a deeper level. And that's pretty neat, right?

But you don't need to break your fist for it.

Or the table.

There's an easier way out. I have created an exclusive section on my website, where you – the reader, can use the comments section to ask any website related question(s)-

<http://utterlyweb.com/stoked-about-wordpress/>

- Not being able to decipher a step outlined in the book?
- Want to share your website's progress?
- Generally feeling stuck?
- Found a broken link or an error- big or small, grammatical or conceptual?

Just use the comments section! I'll do my best to help you out.

If you would like to send an email instead, write to me at reeta@utterlyweb.com

Also, the above page is **chock-full of free resources** that will come in very handy when you are building your website. From WordPress themes, to free graphics, to fun tools for making your own graphics, to plugins, and lots more. It's all in there. I recommend you bookmark the page.

There are some paid resources too. But whenever possible (which is pretty often) I list free alternatives. Plus, I'll keep augmenting the page with new resources as and when I find them.

Last but not the least, in case you haven't already - you can **sign up for a set of free website graphics**. It includes background textures, buttons, ribbons and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, Google Plus, Pinterest..you name it!

Chapter 2: How To Use This Book

Since this is a do-it-yourself guide to building websites, you will get the most out of the book by reading it on your computer's Kindle application.

There are several reasons for this suggestion –

You can easily go back and forth between the Kindle book and your browser, to actually build your website as you read along.

The images might not be crystal clear on the Kindle device. However, they will be loud and lucid on your computer's Kindle application.

From time to time I'll be referring to external online resources. In fact, a couple of times you'll find the book pointing you to my personal website for greater details on certain topics. These include topics that:

- Need to be updated frequently (e.g. purchasing web hosting)
- Entail an image-intensive explanation (e.g. WordPress manual installation)
- Are a bit advanced/optional (e.g. contact form customization)

If you're at your computer while reading the book, you'll easily be able to access and make use of these resources.

I recommend you have two tabs/windows open- one for the WordPress administration panel through which you'll be accessing the site's back end to make changes and the other for your website. As and when you make tweaks through the admin panel, refresh the WordPress website to take a look at the changes (I'll repeat this point time and again).

One final point- I'll be using shortcuts in the instructions. Don't worry, they will be self-explanatory! But just so we're clear, here's an example- instead of saying "login to the WordPress dashboard, then click on the Settings tab and finally on Discussion", I will simply use a shortcut such as "Go to **'Dashboard'**, **'Settings'**, **'Discussion'**".

Now let's get started!

Chapter 3: What Is Wordpress?

If you are reading this book, chances are that you're already sold on WordPress. But in the interest of starting at the very beginning, I'd like to give you a brief introduction to WordPress and its many advantages.

WordPress is arguably the most popular framework for setting up a website. WordPress started out as a blogging platform, but over time has morphed into a Content Management System (CMS) for blogs *and* also complete, feature-rich websites. It really has revolutionized the way websites are built and maintained.

With WordPress, you can have a site up and running very quickly, without messing around with code. A few clicks here, a few drag-drops there, and voila! Yes, the site will be very basic to begin with, but again, thanks to the cool tool that WordPress is, you'll be able to change the design very easily.

Using WordPress to create a site is akin to using your email account for sending out messages. You can send a message to anyone in the world, literally at the press of a button. You don't need to worry about what goes on at the backend. Similarly you can setup a WordPress website with a just few clicks, even if you don't know how to code.

Of course, the process of building a website is more involved. And that's precisely what makes it more fun. You'll see!

Difference between wordpress.org and wordpress.com

WordPress comes in two flavors – wordpress.com and wordpress.org. While a wordpress.com is a good choice for the casual blogger, if you want a serious web presence (be it as a blogger or a site owner), I recommend you go with the [.org](http://wordpress.org) version.

With wordpress.org, you can take your website to a whole new level- you are able to easily add plugins, custom themes, use Google Analytics to track traffic (none of which is possible with wordpress.com). If you have absolutely no idea what those are, trust me when I say you will want *all of those* for your website.

Using wordpress.org makes your website highly customizable and configurable. Ergo, you get far greater control over the design and also the functionality of your site.

I can blather on. But if you want more details, I suggest you take a look here –

<http://en.support.wordpress.com/com-vs-org/>

This book is for building websites using wordpress.org. From here on unless otherwise specified, whenever I talk about WordPress, I'll be referring to wordpress.org.

Why WordPress?

Here are a few reasons:

-It's very **easy to use**, even if you don't know how to code or haven't built a website before. You can set up a website using WordPress within minutes.

-It gives you a tremendous degree of **control over the design** and layout of your site

-You can **add/edit/delete** textual content, images, graphics, navigation links etc. with just a few clicks

-WordPress gives your site a **rock-solid back-end**

-It's a good choice from **SEO (Search Engine Optimization)** point of view.

And here's the kicker - WordPress is **absolutely FREE**.

Now there's a deal clincher if I ever saw one!

But before we dive into the world of WordPress, you will need to purchase a domain name and web hosting for your website. A domain and hosting are must-haves, if you want your own website. We will cover these next.

Chapter 4: What's In A Domain Name?

When contemplating an online presence, your website's domain is perhaps one of the first (of the many to follow) decisions that will need your attention. So, what exactly is a domain name? It is simply the web address to a website. For example- www.google.com is the domain name of the search engine giant, Google.

What your name is to you, your website's domain is to your online presence. It will behoove you to invest some time into crafting a domain name that is relevant, unique, has a good recall value and one that encompasses the spirit of your brand and/or business.

When you are ready to start shopping around for a domain, just hop over to a domain registrar's website, check for availability of your domain of choice and register it. Expect to pay \$10 a pop (for a year) for a .com name.

How To Pick A Domain Name

A lot of people/companies opt for a "firstname+lastname" domain name. It's undeniably a proud moment, seeing one's name on a website and all. While this might make the domain uniquely personal (which is a good thing), it might become a rather difficult to remember name for others

Another option is to go with a name that has little significance as far as your business is concerned but has a great recall value. Think google.com, bing.com, yahoo.com and the like. But most small business owners will have neither the marketing savvy nor the financial clout that biggies like Bing do, to build up a brand.

In my opinion, one's best bet is to mix it up. For instance, say you are a graphic designer, you could use a name such as:

-An adverb/adjective + [graphicdesign](http://graphicdesign.com)

-YourName + [thegraphicdesigner](http://thegraphicdesigner.com)

The name doesn't have to be grammatically correct. As long as it's relevant, easy to remember and catchy - that's what matters.

Domain Name Checklist

-Use **keywords in your domain**, if possible. For example, if you are looking to launch a shoe store, try to use the word "shoe" in the domain. While not of utmost importance, a keyword-rich domain name is a good SEO strategy.

-You should have **complete ownership** of your domain name. Never let anybody register a domain on your behalf.

-Do what you can to **get a .com extension**. Your domain of choice might be available with a .org/.net/.info extension, not to mention a whole lot cheaper. But remember that .org is for non-profit, .net for a network, .biz for a business etc. While nobody will sue for using a .org extension for a website selling shoes, it will come across as a tad unprofessional. Also, use an extension other than .com and you run the risk of looking spammy or scammy.

-**Steer clear of using established brands** as part of your domain. You don't want to get into trouble for copyright/trademark infringement.

-Make sure the domain is **devoid of any hyphens**. A hyphenated name is hard to spell out verbally.

-Try to make sure that the **domain name is available as a username on social media sites** such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest and even as a Google/Yahoo email ID.

Buy A Domain Name

There are plenty of domain name registrars to choose from such as Namecheap or GoDaddy- to name two. I use both, GoDaddy as well as Namecheap for different websites. While I haven't had a problem with either, I think Namecheap does have an edge.

GoDaddy has way too many add-on options/upsells, which makes the purchase process unnecessarily complicated. Plus, I think Namecheap is cheaper of the two (both, the upfront cost and the renewals), although some might contest this.

Tip: Try to look around for coupons before purchasing a name.

For the purpose of this tutorial, I'll be using Namecheap to illustrate each step.

#1 Go to www.namecheap.com and look for the 'Search For A Domain' box (or similar). Type in your domain name of choice and make sure that the .com extension has been selected. Click on the 'Search' button.



Figure 4.1

Namecheap will tell you if domain is available or if it has already been registered by someone else. If the domain is not available, you'll have to look for another one.

Tip: Namecheap will give you a list of names that are available and similar to the one you searched for. Sometimes, the suggestions in the list are surprisingly useful, so do take a look at it.



Figure 4.2

#2 When you find a name that you like and is available, add it to your cart.

#3 Before you checkout, I'd like to draw your attention to what's called 'Whois Guard Protection' on Namecheap and 'Private Registration' on GoDaddy.



Figure 4.3

When you purchase a domain, the personal details you use during the registration- your first name, last name, address etc. go into a public database. If somebody were curious about the ownership details of a particular domain name, one could easily look them up at a site such as -

<https://www.namecheap.com/domains/whois.aspx>

However, you do have the option of keeping your personal details, well, personal. At an additional cost, of course. If you want to go that way, you'll need to choose the Private Registration (or Whois Guard Protection) option when buying your domain.

Tip: Whois Guard Protection is free for the first year if you buy your domain name at Namecheap (at the time of writing).

Also take a look at the SSL option. SSL is short for "Secure Sockets Layer" and you should consider investing in it if you're planning a website that'll solicit & store sensitive visitor information such as name, address, payment information etc.

Once you have selected the appropriate options- checkout, create your account, pay up and you're done.

When you login to your domain name account- view the domains in your account and make sure that the WhoisGuard Protection is enabled (indicated by the third icon in Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4

Try This: Once you have purchased a domain, go to [www.\[yourdomain\].com](http://www.[yourdomain].com) (please use your actual domain name). You should reach a web page that's blank for the most part and with the message such as "This domain was recently registered..":



Figure 4.5

Chapter 5: Web Hosting

Assuming that you have purchased a domain name, your website now has an address. While congratulations are certainly in order, don't forget that the site also needs a "house", if you will. That's right. You need to buy/rent space on the world wide web, where you can setup your site. And that's where web hosting comes in.

Choosing a web hosting company can get a little tricky. But it's an important decision; one that warrants some amount of research.

Not only does one have to shortlist a hosting company, but also think about what kind of hosting plan to opt for. Along the way, you might find yourself drowning in a pool of brain rattling techy gibberish. I mean, cPanel, Diskspace, Bandwidth, Server, Reseller? I can wager that those aren't a part of your everyday conversation. Unless you're a geek. Like me!

But worry not. I will break down the process; we'll go through it step-by-step.

Choosing a Web Hosting Company

There are many options to choose from. Some great, others decent and then there are those that you should steer clear of. One should be particularly wary of 'free' web hosting services. You might not be required to pay cash for them, but you might end up paying in other ways.

For instance, many free web hosts will require you to place ads on your website. Fair enough. And that really might not be such a problem for some. But a bigger issue is reliability (or lack thereof).

Don't get me wrong, I am all for freebies. Why, I have used many free resources on my own website!

In my opinion, it's okay to use free plugins, wallpapers, fonts, icons and such (albeit from a trustworthy source). I mean what's the worst that could happen, if for example, a plugin were to stop working? Yes it would be a bother, no doubt. But at least your blog will not crumble into nothingness.

However, what if a 'free' web host decided to leave you in the lurch? Now that's trouble.

Remember, all the bells and whistles can come and go. But it's important to make your website's foundation strong. So, I recommend investing in a reliable web-host. That would translate into a cost of no more than \$8 per month.

Web Hosting Checklist

The hosting company that I personally use (and recommend) is HostGator. It's among the leading web hosting companies. I have been using their service for the last two years and am a satisfied customer.



Figure 5.1

In case you would like to explore other options - HostMonster, Dreamhost and Bluehost, are a few other companies that I have heard good things about.

In a minute, I will walk you through the exact steps involved in purchasing web hosting. But for now here is a general checklist -

#1 Are you getting **good value for money**? Some web hosting companies offer a free domain when you purchase their services. However, keep in mind that usually the domain is free only for the first year. The renewal costs for such a domain tend to be much higher. Also, what happens to your domain if you decided to switch hosting companies in the future? It's best to have an answer to such questions so that one can make an informed decision. Do your research!

Personally, I like to buy hosting from a company that's primarily a web host and domain from a domain registrar.

#2 Please make sure the hosting company has the right kind of plan for you. Some plans will allow you to attach no more than a single domain. If you need hosting for **multiple websites**, **make sure you choose a plan that can support unlimited domains**. Typically, the latter will also be a much better bang-for-your-buck; for a small extra charge you'll be able to use the hosting account for as many domains as your heart desires.

#3 Does the web hosting company have a **monthly plan** or are you bound by a contract?

#4 Will it **backup** your website on a regular basis?

#5 What are the options available as regards **disk space and bandwidth**?

-Disk Space is the amount of space you get on the web host's server

-Bandwidth sets a limit on the download of data from the host's server

A plan that provides unlimited disk space and bandwidth is worth investing in.

#6 What is the quality and response time of their **customer support**? How can you get in touch with them - only by phone, email? Or do they have **live chat support** (I have found this feature to be particularly useful) as well?

#7 Uptime is another factor to look out for; it is an indicator of how reliable the servers are. Your website will work as long as the hosting company's servers are working. Reputable hosting firms claim an uptime of 99.9%.

#8 Does the web hosting company provide an easy-to-use graphical interface such as **cPanel** (Control Panel)?

#9 Do make sure that the web hosting is **compatible with WordPress**. Also does it support one-click WordPress installation?

#10 Will you be allowed to switch from one plan to another (upgrade/downgrade)?

Please note that if you are a small business owner/ blogger etc., a **shared hosting plan** will suffice for your needs. Under shared web hosting, multiple websites reside on a single server.

Buy Web Hosting

You will find a detailed breakdown of the purchase process and a **25% HostGator coupon code** at the my site -

<http://utterlyweb.com/website-resources/>

The tutorial at the above link includes instructions for buying web hosting from HostGator as well as Bluehost. *****END OF SAMPLE*****

If you enjoyed this sample, you can purchase the complete book on Amazon –

[Buy 'Stoked About WordPress' on Amazon](#)

Thank You!