

# WordPress Websites 101

Do-It-Yourself Website Guide

**DIY**

**Web Guides**

by Lisa Marie Designs

## DIY Website Guide

### WordPress Websites 101

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
Philosophies for Being on the Web .....	5
Is WordPress Right For You? .....	6
<b>WordPress is a Great Option for You If...</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Benefits of WordPress</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Questions to Ask Yourself Before Getting Started .....	8
Website Components – A Visual Analogy .....	9
Next Steps.....	10
Glossary of Terms .....	11

## Introduction

Greetings! Welcome to this introductory guide for folks who are new to WordPress websites. My intention is to provide you with entry level information to help you gently, comfortably, and easily decide if a WordPress website is for you.

### Why an Introductory Guide?

1. After building many WP websites for my clients, by far the most popular issue we discuss is “how does all of this work and what do I have to do to maintain it?”
2. After submitting my existing DIY Web Guides to a well known business coach for review, she responded that even the clear, basic instructions in the guides would be too intimidating a starting point for her techno-phobic clients. That’s when I realized that I was missing an initial bridge of information and guidance for people who are hesitant about venturing into the world of WordPress. I want you to feel totally confident that this is the right direction for you.

So, I hope this guide will provide you with basic information about the concepts, definitions, relationships, and FAQs about working on your own WP website so that you can make a confident decision about whether or not you want to move forward with a WP website.

*Note #1: because I specialize in working with individuals, entrepreneurs and small businesses, the focus of this guide is oriented towards them. If you’re part of a very large company or have large-scale technical needs, WordPress is infinitely flexible and can be a fantastic foundation, but will call for significant customization and will mean working with a WordPress developer rather than a designer.*

*Note #2: Some of the links in this PDF are affiliate links. That means that if you click on one of the links and then sign-up for the service or purchase a product, I make a little bit of money. Using an affiliate link does not cost you any additional money. Thank you for your support!*

## Philosophies for Being on the Web

These are some of my personal philosophies and suggestions for creating a successful online presence.

**Tailor your website and social media participation** to your own needs, business, talents and time constraints. Just because everybody says you HAVE to blog 3 times a week, doesn't make it true. Your website should serve both your viewers and yourself. It's not being of service if you badger yourself into doing too much and then can't keep up. If you set up a Twitter account without carving out time every day to connect with people on there, is it really worth your time? Make a realistic plan for how you want to participate and how often you'll spend time on these things.

**Build community.** One of the amazing benefits of WordPress websites is how they facilitate community building. If you're writing regular blog posts and getting some great comments and discussions going on your site, it can make a big difference in repeat traffic and establish you/your site as a place for credible expert information.

**Create a bridge of trust by using an authentic voice.** I strongly suggest being as honest and transparent as possible with the content on your website. That doesn't mean total honesty...viewers most likely don't care what you had for breakfast. But, speaking from a sincere and authentic voice comes across to viewers and helps to build a bridge of trust between you and your potential customers. Be generous with information.

**Create strategy, marketing and SEO plans.** It's well worth the time it takes. Which social media services will you use? What persona do you want to project online? What personas do your potential clients have? Do some basic keyword research and integrate the results into your site content so that it is relevant to what your viewers are looking for. Map out a funnel of steps that you want your customers to take in order to get to the product/service most suited to them.

**Be yourself. Be generous. Be supportive. Be kind.**

## Is WordPress Right For You?

WP is a great fit for most businesses. The big decision is more a matter of figuring out your specific project/company needs and then tailoring your WordPress website to fit.

In truth, I haven't come across a client yet who wasn't a great fit for a WordPress website. The flexibility, technical superiority and ease of access make it, in my opinion, the best website tool available today.

### WordPress is a Great Option for You If...

1. **You are new to websites or WordPress.** Honestly. I swear. It's true.
2. **You want a new website,** but are not ready to hire a professional and pay for a full custom design package.
3. **You are a techno-phobe.** Nervous about technology? Afraid to be in over your head? Unwilling to feel like a failure when it comes to the web...again? In my opinion and wide scope of experience, WordPress is by far the easiest to learn, and allows you to move at your own pace.
4. **You are starting your own business,** but still have a day job. WordPress is a great way to dip your toes in.
5. **You are a professional** looking to add WordPress to your skill set.
  - a. For working Virtual Assistants, you're likely already web-savvy and comfortable in programs like Word and Excel. The WordPress editing tools are very similar and should immediately feel familiar to you.
  - b. For working web designers who are expert in other web languages/tools, you may want to start offering WordPress services to your clients.

## Benefits of WordPress

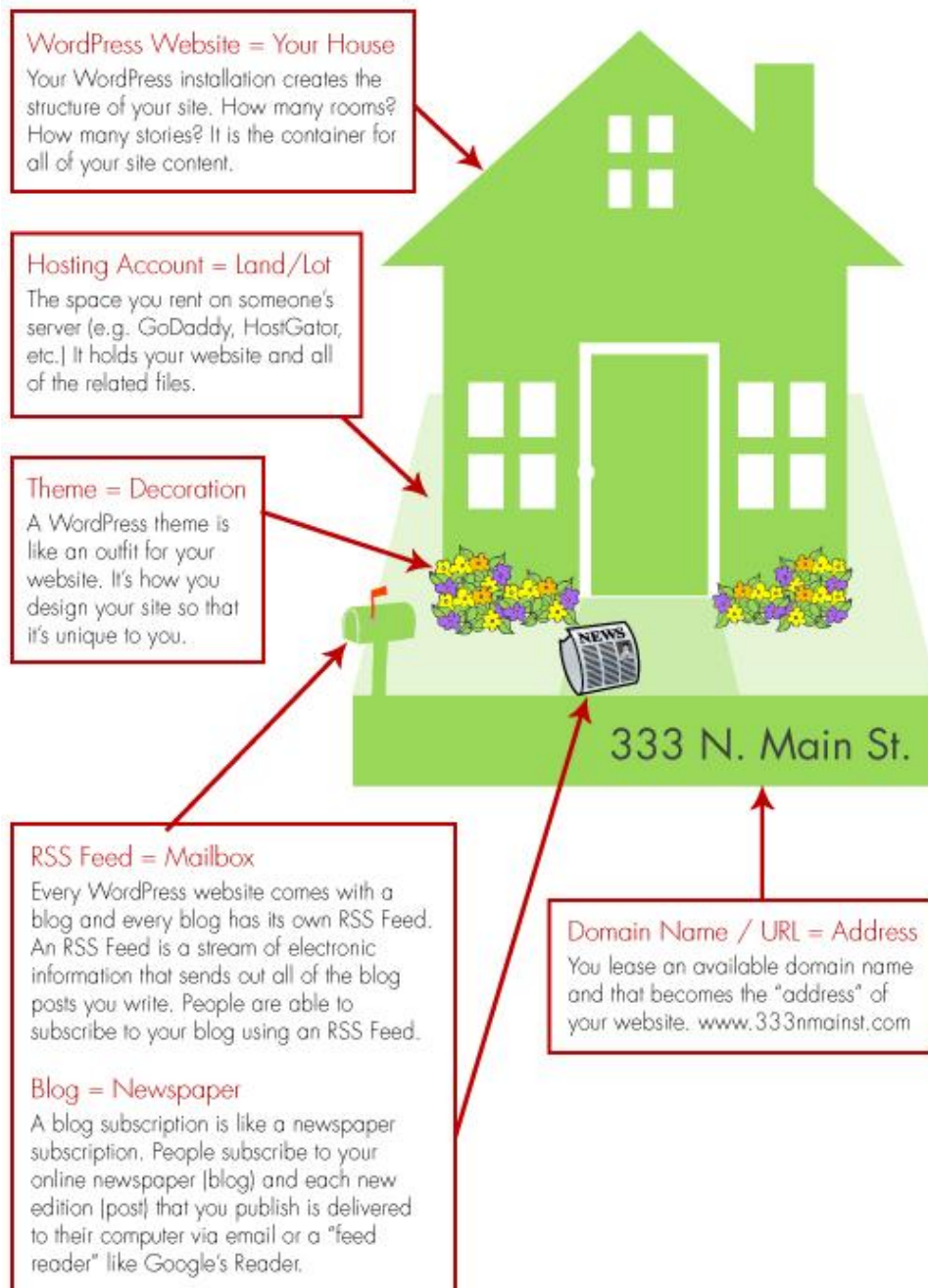
1. **No knowledge of coding languages is necessary** to build/use/customize a WordPress website. Awesome!!!
2. **WordPress is very intuitive and user friendly.**
3. **A WordPress website is very affordable.** Since the WordPress software is FREE, the minimum associated costs are:
  - a. a domain name (~~\$7~~-~~\$12~~ per year)
  - b. a hosting account (~~\$5~~-~~\$20~~ per month)
4. **Every WordPress installation includes a blog.** A blog is an awesome tool for community building and positioning yourself/your business as a credible expert. *FYI, if you're not ready to start blogging (me, blogging?? aaack!), you don't have to use the blog. You can wait as long as you want, until you're ready. :D*
5. **WordPress has superior Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** compared to traditional HTML websites and other website technologies.
6. **WordPress is open-source.** This means that the software and associated plugins are constantly being updated and evolving.
7. **You don't have to go it alone.** There are plenty of books, guides and online tools to help you along the way.  
*Shameless plug: [DIY How-to Guides for WordPress](#)*
8. **Ease of installation.** Most hosting companies offer a one-click WordPress installation, you don't have to upload files to a server or mess with MySQL databases. Whew!  
*Shameless plug: [DIY How-to Guide for Installing WordPress](#)*

## Questions to Ask Yourself Before Getting Started

Asking yourself these questions and creating a plan will give you a head start regardless of whether you're going the DIY or paid professional route.

- How much time, money and energy are you willing to invest in a website?
  - The time it takes to do it yourself vs. the cost of paying someone to build/maintain your site for you?
  - How often will you update/maintain your site?
- What's your purpose/strategy for being online?
  - An online brochure for your business?
  - Community building?
  - Establishing yourself/your business as a credible source of information in your area of expertise?
  - New client leads? Product sales? Ecommerce?
- Who do you want to connect with?
  - What are the personas of your potential customers?
  - What are the questions/worries that are paramount to them?
- Are you ready to blog?
  - If so, how often?
  - Do you know what topics your target demographic wants to read about?

## Website Components – A Visual Analogy



## Next Steps

### **Ok, you're informed, you're planning, you're ready to go!**

What is your next step? Well, it depends on which route you've decided to take. If you want a WordPress website, the next step is to decide if you want to start DIY-style (build it yourself), or if you want to work with a professional web designer.

**If you're going it on your own**, find some helpful resources to take with you on your journey and jump right in! One of the brilliant things about WordPress is that you can always change, update and tweak your site.

*Shameless plug: May I suggest that you take a look at my [DIY How-to Guides for WordPress?](#) They're gentle but thorough guides that take you step-by-step through working with WordPress. If you want a little bit of hand-holding along the way, these might be the help you're looking for.*

**If you're going with a professional web designer**, start your search and take the time to find someone you like, who has good references and is a good fit for your project budget. Building a site that represents you well and clearly can be a surprisingly deep process, find someone with whom you'll enjoy taking the ride!

*Shameless plug: If you think I might be the one for you, [let me know!](#)*

## Glossary of Terms

### **Blog/RSS/Subscribers**

Each WordPress installation comes with a blog. A blog is kind of like a newspaper: you are the columnist; people can subscribe; and every time you send out a new edition (blog post) they will receive it either by RSS feed or via email. An RSS feed is simply the technical stream of information that projects your blog contents out into the web-o-sphere. My favorite is Google's feed reader. :D

### **Content Management System (CMS)**

A CMS is designed to simplify managing the content on your website. It allows users to publish content and perform updates without requiring knowledge of HTML or the uploading of files to a server. Basically, it does the technical work for you!

### **Domain Name**

The address or URL of a website. For example, my name is Lisa Roberts, so I purchased the domain name <http://www.lisaroberts.com>. So when I refer people to my website, I say: my business website URL is [www.lisaroberts.com](http://www.lisaroberts.com).

Domain names are often referred to simply as *domains* and domain name registrants are frequently referred to as *domain owners*, although domain name registration with a registrar does not confer any legal ownership of the domain name, only an exclusive right of use.

### **Front-end / Back-end**

The front end of a website is the live website that viewers can see when they come to your URL. The back end of a website is the place where you login to manage the website. Viewers can't see the back end of your website unless they have a login for the website administration panel. In WordPress, this administration control panel is called the Dashboard.

### **Hosting Account/Server**

Web hosting is a service that allows individuals and organizations to make their website accessible via the World Wide Web. Hosting companies provide space on a server that is rented in monthly/yearly increments. Think of the hosting account as the rented lot/land upon which you will build your custom home/website.

### **Newsletter/Mailing List**

A mailing list allows you to send out email newsletters to the people who have signed up to receive updates from you/your business. You'll need a mailing list service like [AWeber](#), [MailChimp](#) or [Constant Contact](#) to set this function up.

### **Social Media**

Social media services provide you with ways to connect with other users and share information online. There are a seemingly limitless number of social media services with Twitter, FaceBook and LinkedIn being a few of the most popular.


### **WordPress**

WordPress is an open source tool for building blogs and websites. WordPress started as a blogging system, but has evolved into a full-fledged content management system (CMS) used for building individual and business websites.

### **WordPress.org vs WordPress.com**

**WordPress.org** offers free, open-source software for use on a self-hosted website. Each WordPress installation includes a blog. You can customize site structure and design, limited only by the scope of your imagination and technical skills. **Wordpress.com** is a blog with limited features and flexibility and only provides a blog, not a full website.

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*Wishing you ease and success on your website journey, wherever it takes you.  
If you know someone who would find this guide useful,  
please refer them to [my website](#). Thank you!! *

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