

Building A Website Using WordPress

Outline of the presentation by Chris and Daniel Mower at Media Network Idaho social networking workshop, October 2, 2010 in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

NOTE: The number one piece of advice is...Google is your friend! If there is anything you don't understand here or if you need more detail, Google is a great place to look for answers.

You can also email Chris at chris@chrismower.com.

We have divided the process of building a WordPress website into four phases: Brickwork, Content, Connect and Fine-Tuning.

WordPress offers its own hosting at WordPress.com. Rather than do this, we recommend installing WordPress.org on your own server, which gives you more control and allows you to have your own URL instead of "yoursite.wordpress.com".

Phase 1: Brickwork

- a. Choose and register a domain with the hosting company. We've been working with Bluehost for a while and have good success with them.
- b. You will need to purchase a shared hosting account with Bluehost. [Click here to sign up for Bluehost.com](#). (Affiliate link).
- c. Domains registered with other hosting companies (i.e. GoDaddy) can be transferred to BlueHost, but the process takes several days. You will probably meet with a little resistance from the company losing your domain as you work with customer service to get this done.
2. Install WordPress on the domain (explain between wordpress.com and wordpress.org)
 - a. Log in to your Bluehost account and run the WordPress install simple script in the cPanel.
 - b. Choose the domain where you want to install WP
 - c. When installation is complete copy the password before leaving the page.
3. Navigate to your.domain/**wp-login.php** and log in to the admin panel
 - a. Username = admin
 - b. Password = password you were given after installation
 - c. Change the password in the Users > Your Profile menu
 - d. Change the name of your blog
4. Quick review basic settings (author, comments, etc.)
 - a. General
 - i. Settings > General > Blog Title
 - ii. Settings > General > Blog Description
 - b. Discussion
 - i. Settings > Discussion > comments
 1. Allow comments
 2. Require admin approval for first-time commenters
 - c. Settings > Privacy > Make site visible to search engines
 - d. Settings > Permalinks

- i. Make your URL permalinks search-engine friendly
- ii. Recommended format: `/%monthnum%%day%%postname%/`

Phase 2: Content

1. Choose a Theme.
 - a. Do your research and decide what you need your site to do, then find a theme that matches that functionality. Not all WP themes are blog-centric. There are themes for magazines, newspapers, art galleries, etc.
 - b. We recommend a premium theme, they're worth the money. (See [Chris's amazing list](#) of sites that provide free and premium themes.) The page is password protected, but you can get the password from a friend who knows it, or by contacting Chris directly.
2. Upload the new Theme
 - a. Appearance > Themes > Install Themes > Upload > Install
 - b. Activate the theme
 - i. Each theme behaves differently. A newly activated theme will not necessarily look right until you go through and tweak settings, add widgets, etc.
3. Add About Page
4. Add Categories
5. Choose a theme layout
6. Install Essential Plugins
 - a. Akismet
 - i. Spam sucks. Use Akismet.
 - ii. Akismet requires an API key. You can get this by creating an account for yourself at WordPress.com. Create the account but do not create a blog. When your account is created, you can access your API key in the admin panel.
 - b. WordPress.com Stats
 - i. An excellent tool to track your site statistics
 - c. All-in-one SEO
 - i. Without going into the details, this plugin allows you to keyword optimize your posts and pages so that blogs can more easily find you. This is an essential plugin if you're not comfortable messing around in the code and if your theme doesn't already do this for you.
 - ii. Not necessary for themes with built-in SEO such as Genesis or Thesis, and some WooThemes themes.
 - d. Google XML Sitemap
 - i. Another SEO-related plugin. Creates an xml sitemap of to help search engines find content easier on your site.
 - e. Ultimate Google Analytics
 - i. Automatically installs Google Analytics code into your blog pages. You still have to set up a Google Analytics account, but you won't have to worry about adding code to your pages to get it to work
 - f. Revision Control
 - i. Keeps your database small. Load time plays a part on your site's page rank in the search engines. Minimize the revisions so that your database doesn't flake out. This is important especially on shared hosting accounts.
7. Start Posting! Remember, search engines love new content.

Phase 3: Connect

8. You want to immediately start connecting to your outposts so that traffic starts coming in. Waiting for general internet traffic can take a long time—months—and if you're not really into it, it may never happen.
9. Depending on the theme, you either customize built-in social media, or add it yourself.
 - a. Built in:
 - i. Find the administration area in your theme that allows you to customize social media
 - ii. Insert the URLs to the corresponding social media pages
 - b. By Yourself:
 - i. Find the social media icons you want to use.
 1. There are tons of SM icons out there, so pick at your pleasure—evil, happy, goofy, professional, theme-based—or have some custom made.
 2. The link to Chris's site has links to icons you can use.
 - ii. Upload to your Media Library and use a text widget to place icons on your website.
 1. Sample HTML Code for Facebook & twitter
 - a. ``
 - b. ``
 - c. Find the URL for an uploaded image in Media Library > Library > Edit the image you want to use. URL is at the bottom of the edit media page.
10. Publish RSS Feed to Feedburner
 - a. I always recommend feed burner. It helps you connect to the greatest number of people.
 - b. Navigate to Feedburner.com
 - c. Enter in your website
 - d. Activate first & last checkboxes
 - e. Optimize > SmartFeed > Activate (helps your feed be compatible with all types of readers)
11. Ozh Better Feed plugin will help you do what you've always wanted to do with your feed.
12. A quick reminder that social media is not the end goal, but a way to bring people to your website.

Phase 4: Fine-tune Your Site

13. Child Themes
 - a. A child theme inherits the functionality of another theme (the parent theme) and lets you modify and add to the parent's theme functionality. This prevents you losing any changes when you update the parent theme.
 - b. It requires a little knowledge of HTML and CSS. It's especially helpful if you also know PHP.
 - c. A good tutorial on how to do this: <http://op111.net/53>
14. Custom page templates & stylesheets
 - a. You can create special page templates to do anything you want: play games, use a different width, hide the sidebar, display an entirely different sidebar, etc. You can also add new stylesheets.
15. Special plugins
 - a. There are a lot of cool special plugins out there to help you create your ideal site. Keep in mind that the more plugins you have, the slower your site becomes, so anytime you can just code in the plugin function to your own theme, the better.

- b. Some awesome plugins let you view images in a lightbox, embed video, create your own social network, add a forum, etc. Chances are, if you need a function, there's a plugin for that.
16. More settings
 - a. WordPress has quite a few more settings, take some time to fine-tune them and fine-tune the settings from your plugins.
 17. Rearrange content
 - a. The categories you made may not be relevant with your content anymore. You can change them up and also move them around. You can also start refining your current content to read better or add things that you think you might have missed.
 18. Greater focus on SEO
 - a. At this point, you can dive in head first and really start analyzing your data. One way to do that is to find the keywords that people have used to find your site, and turn those keywords into posts.
 19. Spend time commenting on other people's websites (always link your name back to your website when you leave a comment) and building your network in social media.
 20. And don't forget to connect to Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics)
 21. And anything else
 - a. Gravatar.com. You'll notice pictures next to a lot of comments. These are called Gravatars. They're fun.
 - b. Fine-tune design
 - c. Custom icons
 - d. Google Alerts - use Google alerts to see what people are saying about you and other things in your niche.

Questions? Email Chris – chris@chrismower.com.