



# Getting Started With WordPress

WordPress Beginners Guide



Learn How To Start a Blog With WordPress

## About The Author



Howdy Folks!

My name is Brad Dalton and I'm a full time WordPress Consultant and the founder of WP Sites.

www.wpsites.net contains over 700 tutorials, reviews & posts as well as 150 video's to help you learn WordPress.

I first discovered WordPress while I was searching for software to rebuild my website back in 2009.

I had been using Microsoft Publisher for several years and wanted to find more user friendly software to create a better website and add a blog.

A web designer I met recommended WordPress as the most flexible & popular platform, so I installed the WordPress software which is where it all began.

- [Read More About Brad Dalton](#)

## 7 Reasons you'll Benefit Using WordPress

**Ease of use:** It's never been easier to install WordPress and start a website without the need to hire a web designer. Adding new content and customizing your website to your own unique style has also never been easier.

**Valuable feedback:** Comments & feedback are a valuable source of information your readers & prospective customers give you that you can use to improve in many ways.

**Complete Control:** When you own your own WordPress site, you totally control all the content on your site and build your trust & authority on your own unique address on the web.

**Increase Traffic:** Increasing traffic to your website increases readership and helps build your brand. Blogging with WordPress allows you to connect with the right readers which have a need for your solutions and services.

**Social Media Connections:** WordPress integrates perfectly with social media enabling you to easily share new content to like minded individuals across hundreds of different social media networks across the entire worldwide internet.

**Cost Effective Marketing:** Adding blog posts helps drive targeted traffic to your commercial website at a minimal cost. Getting started with WordPress only costs you about \$80 a year and the content you add brings new readers to your site for a lifetime.

**Content Distribution:** WordPress offers many ways to distribute your content to your readers as well as gain new readers globally. RSS is a free service which automatically updates your readers with new content every time you add a new blog post.

*Companies that blog, average 55% more website visitors and up to 88% more leads per month than those who use a static website.*

# Installing WordPress

In the good old days, the only way to install WordPress was to [download the software](#) and upload the files to your server.

These days, installing WordPress is far easier.

If you're not technically minded, I suggest you either:

- Use our [free setup service for WordPress](#) or
- [Choose a hosting plan](#) which offers a simple one click installation tool and install WordPress automatically.

Login to your web hosts cPanel and scroll down to Software/Services and locate the WordPress icon (Circled in Orange below).



Once you've clicked the WordPress button you'll arrive at this screen below.

## Install WordPress

By clicking Install/Import below, you accept the [SimpleScripts Terms of Service](#) agreement.



Click the Install button to install the latest version of WordPress.

If you get stuck and need technical assistance, try these [support forums](#).

## Video Installation Guide

[Blue Host](#) is one of the top 3 [recommended web hosting](#) providers for WordPress.

In this short video, we walk you through the process of installing WordPress with [Simple Scripts provided by Bluehost](#).



The screenshot shows the WordPress installation configuration interface. It includes the following sections:

- What version of Wordpress would you like to install?**  
It is highly recommended to choose the latest version to ensure your website's security and enable the latest features.  
A dropdown menu is set to "2.7 (Stable)".
- Where would you like Wordpress installed?**  
A dropdown menu is set to "http://www.bluehostforwordpress.com" followed by a text input field.  
Below this, it shows:  
Access URL: http://www.bluehostforwordpress.com/  
This is the URL your visitors will type in to view your site.  
Server Path: /home2/bluehow4/public\_html/  
This is the location of your website's files on your server.  
This directory is not empty, but there no apparent file conflicts with the new installation.
- Additional Options**
  - Please give your new site a name.**  
A text input field contains "Blue Host for WordPress Blog".  
ie. My Site, etc.  
This field is optional.
  - Advanced Configuration**
    - Generate me an Administrator Login**  
If this box is checked, we will create a random administrator username and password for you.
    - Automatically create a new database.**  
If this box is checked, we will attempt to create a new database for you.

If you're new to WordPress, why not take advantage of our [free setup service](#).

We'll setup your new site the right way the first time so you can focus on what you do best.

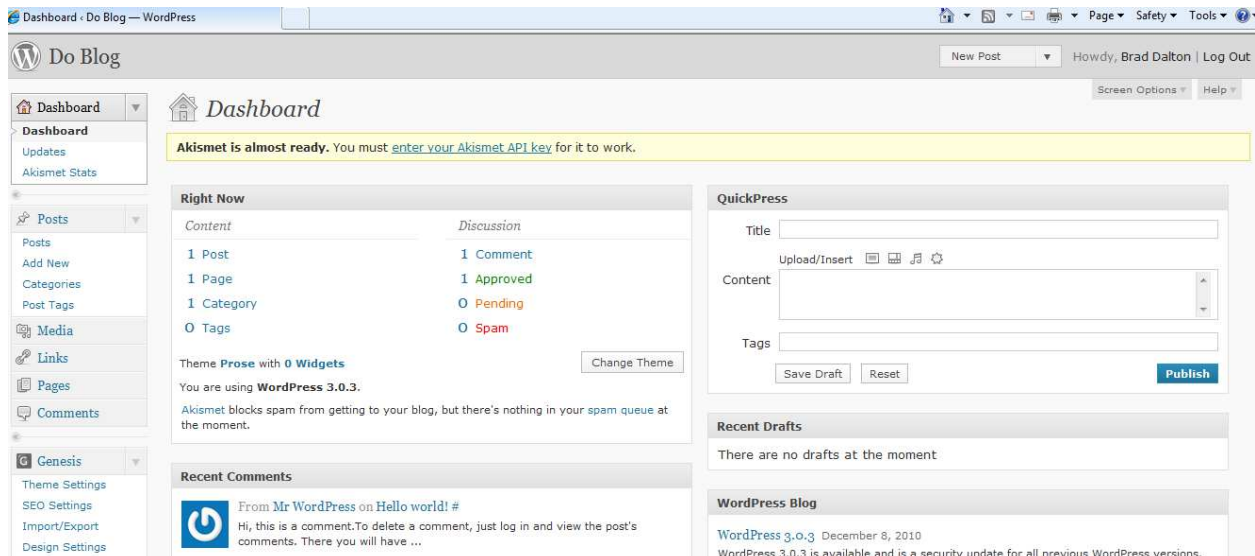
Another way to install WordPress automatically is to use [Fantastico Deluxe](#).

## After Installation Tips

Once you've successfully installed WordPress, there's several after installation tips which will guide you through the best way to setup your site the right way the first time.

Firstly you'll need to login to your Dashboard.

If you cannot find the link to your login page, type your website address and add /wp-login.php on the end.



Example: <http://www.example.com/wp-login.php>

This should take you to your login page where you can enter your username and password.

Login and you will see your Dashboard which looks like this.

Scroll down to settings in the left sidebar and under Settings, click on General.

The first step is to enter your Site title and Tag line.

I recommend you use keywords that are relevant to your site content, topics and categories.

This will insure better search engine indexing and a consistent stream of new visitors to your site.



## General Settings

Site Title

WordPress Sites

Tagline

Guide To WordPress Blogging

WordPress Address (URL)

http://wpsites.net

Site Address (URL)

http://wpsites.net

E-mail Address

brad@wpsites.net

Membership

Anyone can register

New User Default Role

Subscriber ▼

The 3 most important settings after your site title are:

- Leave the Membership box (Anyone can register) unchecked. This will help stop automated spammers leaving bad links on your site.
- Don't change the WordPress Address (URL)

- Don't change the Site Address (URL)

## Change Permalink Settings

This step is one of the most important to setup the right way before you do anything else.

It is strongly recommended to change these settings to a Custom Structure before you create any pages or posts.

This way you can still use categories but they won't be included in your permalinks so you can easily change and consolidate them if needed without breaking all the linked pages.

Any of the permalink settings in the screenshot below are fine to use as long as you don't use the Default or Numeric.

### Common Settings

<input type="radio"/> Default	<code>http://127.0.0.1:4001/wordpress/?p=123</code>
<input type="radio"/> Day and name	<code>http://127.0.0.1:4001/wordpress/2012/08/07/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Month and name	<code>http://127.0.0.1:4001/wordpress/2012/08/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Numeric	<code>http://127.0.0.1:4001/wordpress/archives/123</code>
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Post name	<code>http://127.0.0.1:4001/wordpress/sample-post/</code>
<input type="radio"/> Custom Structure	<input type="text" value="/%postname%/"/>

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# Profile Settings

Biographical Info will appear at the end of each post if your theme offers an author box as long as you enter your Bio information in the Users field.

Go to Users > Your Profile and enter your Bio and user details including contact information.

## About Yourself

Biographical Info

```
I'm a WordPress consultant, traveller and lover of big surf & water sports. <a href="http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=wpsitesdotnet" target="_blank">Subscribe for the latest news</a> or let us know what you like in the <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGc0cFVaTlJaTFFUUUd1b1UtX2lzckE6MQ">survey</a>.
```

*Share a little biographical information to fill out your profile. This may be shown publicly.*

This gives your readers some info on the author whether that be yourself or a guest author.

It's also a good idea to change the public display name in the drop down so it's different than your username.

## Name

Username

First Name

Last Name

Nickname *(required)*

Display name publicly as



## Change Password

If you haven't already, choose a long password of more than 10 digits including lower & uppercase letters, numbers and symbols.

This will help protect your site from being hacked.

Example of strong password: !BR0)CI7HUDF\$

Example of weak password: fish89

*If you would like to change the password type a new one.*

*Type your new password again.*

## Discussion Settings

The 2 most crucial settings are:

1. Other comment settings - Users must be registered and logged in to comment (Uncheck). If you check this box and allow anyone to register before they submit a comment you leave yourself open to automated spammers who will leave thousands of links in your blog.
2. Before a comment appears - An administrator must always approve the comment (Check). If you leave this unchecked you'll find thousands of automated spammers leaving links in the comment field.

Setting up your discussion settings immediately after installing WordPress is essential.

Spam can be a major problem for bloggers.

If you configure you discussion settings correctly, you will never have to worry about comment spam.

## Discussion Settings

### Default article settings

- Attempt to notify any blogs linked to from the article
  - Allow link notifications from other blogs (pingbacks and trackbacks)
  - Allow people to post comments on new articles
- (These settings may be overridden for individual articles.)*

### Other comment settings

- Comment author must fill out name and e-mail
  - Users must be registered and logged in to comment
  - Automatically close comments on articles older than  days
  - Enable threaded (nested) comments  levels deep
  - Break comments into pages with  top level comments per page
- Comments should be displayed with the  comments at the top

### E-mail me whenever

- Anyone posts a comment
- A comment is held for moderation

### Before a comment appears

- An administrator must always approve the comment
- Comment author must have a previously approved comment

## Plugin Installation

Plugins are little software programs which add additional functions to your site.

They are like add-ons or extensions which enable you to create any type of website you like.

Some examples of what plugins enable you to do are:

- Create an ecommerce site with shopping cart
- Create a membership site
- Prevent and avoid comment spam
- Secure your website from hackers & backup your site

Some of the best plugins you should consider installing after installing WordPress are:

- [Jetpack](#)
- [WooDojo](#)
- [Related Posts](#)
- [Wordfence Security](#)
- [Akismet](#)
- [BackupWordPress](#)

[Read more about these 7 plugins](#) and why it's essential to install them when you first get started with WordPress.

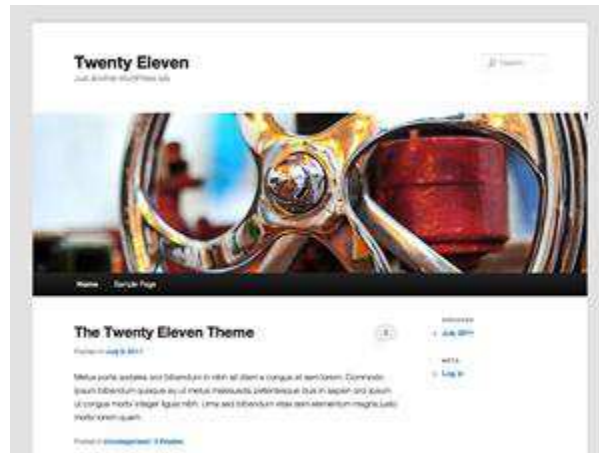
You may also choose to install [premium plugins](#) which add even more functionality to your WordPress site.

# Installing a Theme

One of the best features of WordPress is using themes.

A theme changes the appearance, look and feel of your site as soon as you install it.

As soon as you install WordPress, you'll also install a theme which is currently named Twenty Eleven.



It's a free theme which you can customize to your own styling preferences once you learn how. Or you can hire a web designer to do this for you.

Another option is to find and install another theme.

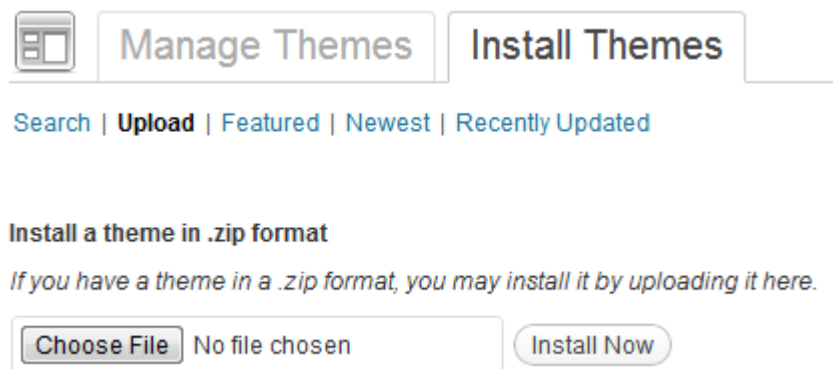


- You can choose to install a free or premium theme. You could even install a [free premium theme](#) as well.

- [Premium themes](#) generally offer free updates and lifetime support for a one off investment in today's dollars.
- [Free themes](#) don't guarantee support or security updates so be aware.

## Changing Themes

Login to your WordPress dashboard and navigate to Appearance > Themes > Install Themes and search for a free theme using the search box.



You can also upload a premium theme then activate it from this location also.

It's advisable to install a premium framework (If you can afford it) when you're first getting started with WordPress.

This way you avoid the pitfalls of changing themes like loss of SEO settings, formatting problems and many of issues which can be caused when you change themes.

## Avoiding Common Mistakes

Setting up WordPress the right way the first time is easy in hindsight, not when you're a beginner.

Here's some of the most common mistakes beginners make and solutions of how to avoid them.

## **Width of Content Area**

Your site visitors will find it easier to focus on your content if they don't need to read from one side of the screen to the other.

It's best to try and keep your content area between 500-600 pix max for this reason.

Changing the size of your content area after you have already written hundreds of posts and inserted images and video's can be a lot of work and very time consuming.

## **Featured Images**

Generally, your blog page or home page which displays a list of your 20 most recent posts also includes a featured image.

If it doesn't, your theme may include a function you can use for a generic image if you haven't set a unique one that paints a picture of each particular post.

Unique images which are pleasing on the eye should be descriptive of the content of each post to attract targeted traffic to your site.

On top of this, Google images will index each featured image and send you free traffic.

If you don't design & include a featured image for your posts, it can be very time consuming to go back and find or create an image for this purpose.

## **Image ALT Text**

When you insert an image in a post or page, you also have the opportunity to add some text which displays if the image doesn't for some reason.

Another benefit of adding what is called “ALT Text”, is that it will optimize your images to rank higher in the search engines as they can’t read images. This will help bring more traffic to your site and create better optimized content.

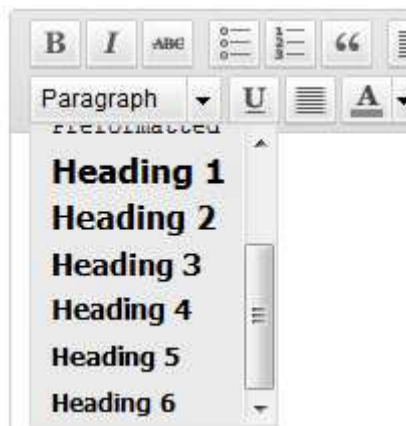
If you don’t add ALT Text from the start, going back over hundreds or thousands of images can be a huge job which isn’t much fun.

## The Correct Sub Heading Size

Sub heading within your content help break up large chunks of content into more specific bite size chunks of information.

If you don’t use the correct size for your sub headings, it can be a lot of work to go back and change them all. Another benefit of using the right size is search engine optimization.

Your sub heading shouldn’t be larger than your post/page title’s size or be smaller than bold text.



Use h2, h3, and h4 heading sizes. As the number gets bigger, the size of the sub heading should grow smaller as well as the focus on the content under that sub heading.

## Paragraph size

Your sites readers generally scan your content for the exact information they are looking for or for a headline or image that draws them in.

Most of your readers will find your content more attractive if it’s spaced out with paragraphs which are around 2-4 lines max.



Big chunks of text are not attractive and look like hard work to read therefore will be avoided. Make it easy for your readers.

It's a lot of work to go back over hundreds of posts and make your posts more scan able if you have large chunks of text that require your readers to concentrate heavily in order to understand what you have written.

## **Tracking & Shortening Links**

Many people start a blog to drive traffic to their website and make money online using affiliate programs.

The owners of the products and services you choose to promote tend to change the affiliate software or manager they use for their program, many, on a regular basis.

When this happens, most of the time your links will not continue to be tracked and even fail to work altogether.

The best way to avoid having to go back and find the posts which contain your affiliate links is to use a link manager plugin.

You can choose to use a free link shortening service like [Bit.ly](https://bit.ly) or Goo.gl however it still requires you to change these links when the affiliate program changes managers.

Therefore it's best to use your own self hosted link management tool or plugin where you can simply change your links within the interface of the tool rather than find each link individually.

Control your links using your own tools rather than allow a service to control them for you because that can be very dangerous.

## **Short codes**

Short codes enable you to easily add different types of styling to your content area without having to write, add and/or edit code to your themes files.

This is a note box

```
[box]This is an normal box[/box]
```

Many themes now include short codes which is great for beginners, however be warned.

Some theme developers use code which only works with their themes and stops working if you decide to change your theme down the track.

If this happens, the styling you added to your posts and pages will not work and the short code you inserted into those pages will also stop working and look very unprofessional.

The best solution is to add the css and php functions code that creates short codes to your child theme manually or use a plugin for short codes.

If you want to create your own short codes, make sure the code isn't specific to your current active theme and can be used on any theme.

## Keyword Density

If you don't have any experience with search engine optimization then it may be hard working out how often to use different keywords in your content.

There's some great free [SEO guides for beginners](#) which will educate you with best practices when optimizing your content.

If you make the same mistakes over and over again on all your posts, it can be very time consuming to go back and fix all these problems manually.

Another option is to install a keyword density plugin and try and keep your density below 5% in order to avoid a penalty from the major search engines like Google.

## Categories & Tags

I've already written about creating [categories and tags](#) in WordPress.

If you create dozens of categories when you first start and only add one or 2 posts to each category, it's not effective and difficult to change.

If you delete unused categories, you'll also suffer from broken links which can be a nightmare to fix and create a giant mess in your database.

When creating tags, keep in mind they should be used to group similar content together and you shouldn't use more than 2-3 tags per post max.

Your posts should focus on one topic and not include content that's not related to the title of each post.

Only assign each post to one category. If your content covers other categories, then it's not focused on one subject and/or you've created too many categories.

## Content Scraping

Splogs, are spam blogs setup to automatically [copy your content](#) from your RSS feed and display it on some else website.

The reason people do this, is to automatically generate posts to increase traffic to their site which generally contain lots of advertising.

You can prevent this from happening by configuring your reading settings to only display a summary of your posts and a link back to your site.

Blog pages show at most  posts

Syndication feeds show the most recent  items

For each article in a feed, show  Full text  Summary

## Unique, Useful, Relevant Content

The most successful WordPress websites & blogs are always adding new content.

The search engines like Google send you the most amount of free, targeted traffic in exchange for adding unique, useful & relevant content to their index.

It can be easy to conduct research on your competitor's sites and look to your niche for ideas however this normally produces similar content.

Base your content on your own personal experience about what you do best. You'll stand out from the crowd much more if you put all your cards on the table and speak your mind in a professional manner.

Adding more value from a different perspective extends the existing content which has already been written about and discussed.

## More Resources

- [24 Part Video Guide on Creating a Website With WordPress](#)
- [One Page Guide On Creating a WordPress Site](#)
- [WordPress 101 Premium Video Tutorial Series](#)

