

# Why Use WordPress?

Why should you choose WordPress for building your nonprofit, commercial or personal website? Because it fuels simple 1-page blogs AND it handles enormous fully-featured commercial and publishing endeavors; it grows with your needs and you're in charge.



WordPress was first introduced in 2003. What started as a simple intuitive blogging platform on a pre-defined design theme has since grown into a massive web development tool.

Back then, it helped millions around the world—from internet novices to techies—gain their first web presence to get their message out or to start their business. All you needed was (and still is) an internet connection, any kind of browser on any kind of operating system.

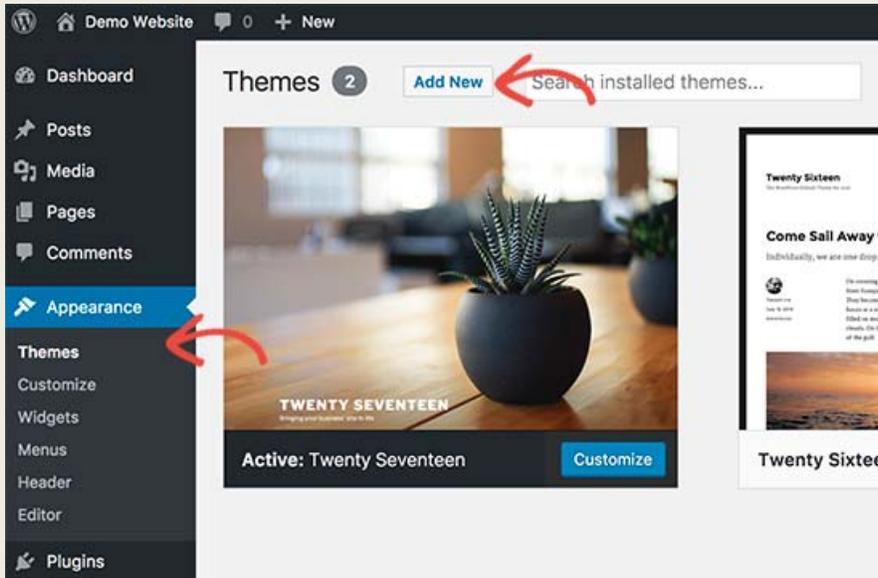
Today, WordPress still describes its mission as *Democratize Publishing. The freedom to build. The freedom to change. The freedom to share.*

*"We believe in democratizing publishing and the [freedoms that come with open source](#) (OpenSource.org). Supporting this idea is a large community of people collaborating on and contributing to this project. The WordPress community is welcoming and inclusive. Our contributors' passion drives the success of WordPress which, in turn, helps you reach your goals. WordPress contributors work around the globe, and have dedicated countless hours to build a tool that democratizes publishing. WordPress is open source software that is both free and priceless."*

Which websites are built on WordPress? On one end of the spectrum are those using a few pre-developed chosen WordPress themes and plugins, designed and fully hosted by WordPress for a small annual fee ([wordpress.com](#)). You can customize the look of your site but with limitations.

On the other end are fully customizable, intricate and scalable websites that run the WordPress software for free (download at [wordpress.org](#)). These are self-hosted sites: You buy your domain

name, choose a web host to host your site, download the core WordPress software to their server and start customizing. Websites can be built using thousands of highly flexible themes (or themes that you install without customizing them at all; just paste in your



content). You can choose from more than 50K available plugins that add additional functionalities.

Or you can design and develop your site from scratch, based on the

core WordPress software and then add your own code.

Either way, with this range of flexibility, WordPress has morphed into a leading full-fledged website content management system (CMS) with open source property, meaning that it grants users the right to review, change or improve the code and distribute it as they see fit.

This ensures that security flaws are found quickly and fixed efficiently. No one owns WordPress; it is a global community of coders.

WordPress powers many of the largest websites (among them IBM, BBC, ESPN, The New Yorker, Bloomberg, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times). A total of a quarter of all commercial, personal and organizational websites use WordPress and 50,000 new sites are added daily.

In 2019, the number of total active websites that ran on WordPress was estimated at over 172 million and nearly 60% of all CMS-based websites were built on the WordPress platform. It is the only CMS that experiences consistent growth.

WordPress websites have many advantages over the competition, i.e. site builders like Weebly, Wix, Squarespace and Flywheel, or sites created on other drag and drop site editors.

The biggest difference is that WordPress is a fully-fledged content management system that you control, while the others are website builders hosted on their servers that offer much less flexibility and customization options.

You could end up creating a cookie-cutter site that underwhelms and is more restrictive on creativity. That might initially suffice—but the site cannot grow with your needs.

## What else is unique to WordPress?

### It is Free

WordPress is free, lightweight and uses clear code. In addition, you own your own data and can easily access and move it. You can choose to host your WordPress-based website on any internet host you like or on your own server and under your own domain name. You have unlimited development and design control over it. Or you can host in on WordPress.com for a small annual fee and build your site by choosing from a limited set of themes.

### It is Secure

WordPress' open source core software is constantly updated and robust. It is time-tested and approved upon for more than 15 years; and that will not change anytime soon. There is a growing number of security plugins for WordPress that you can install to add additional layers of protection, like SSL encryption (https), 2-factor authentication and other password and firewall strengthening options to block security breaches. WordPress-based websites experience very

little downtime because of the robust infrastructure and underlying clean code.

## **It is Simple & Intuitive**

WordPress can handle the simplest and also the most elaborate designs. It is highly customizable with a trove of free and fee-based open-source themes and plugins that you choose as the need arises to customize your site. It is designed not only for designers or developers but with every user in mind.

You can scratch its surface, dip in your toes and build a robust yet very simple, small site in just a few days. You can dig deeper and add every function needed to develop a highly complex website, coded at the back end from scratch. Or you can design your own child theme that is built upon an existing theme and expand it gradually.

Since WordPress is so widely used, there are many tutorials and manuals available to answer every question possible. There are chat groups and online forums, WordPress Meetups and global WordPress WordCamp conventions for WP beginners and experts.

## **It is Easy to Maintain**

WordPress makes it easy to maintain, update and refresh your content with its visual drag and drop editor and its intuitive user-interface components. This makes it especially suitable for volunteer-driven organizations or businesses with a small staff and even smaller budgets.

Communicators, marketers and content creators can be fully in control of publishing, editing and updating content without having to rely on their IT department or offsite tech admins. WordPress makes it easy to schedule regular backups of your site or revert to earlier backups if need be. You control the front-end with ease.

## **It is Functional & Dynamic**

WordPress is SEO- and mobile-optimized; it offers many plugins to take this even further and add even more high-powered SEO optimization. WordPress is also dynamic and integrates well with other online platforms, like Stripe, PayPal, YouTube or email marketing programs such as MailChimp or ConvertKit. And it handles e-commerce, chat functions, calendars, scheduling and online forms to name just a few seamlessly. Because it is open source, it is

multilingual; you can create websites that are targeted to a global audience.

## **It is Business- and Nonprofit Friendly**

WordPress grows with your organizational, commercial, nonprofit or personal website needs. It is easier and less costly to develop, maintain, redesign and upscale WordPress websites compared with other open-sourced CMS platforms like Joomla or Drupal.

Once you install WordPress, you have full control over it. And it frees organizations from static or proprietary CMS that cannot be adjusted after the primary development is done or the initial developer is gone.

Want to check whether a website runs on WordPress? One giveaway is that WordPress usually adds a back slash at the end of an URL (i.e. <https://www.tekla-szymanski.com/about/>)—but developers can remove them. A more fool-proof check is to add `/wp-admin/` to an URL. If that takes you to a WordPress login screen, the website was built on WordPress and if not, you get a 404 error page. To check a site's theme, WP version and plugins used, there are online tools available, like\* [isitwp.com](https://isitwp.com), [WordPress Theme Detector](#), [WWPTIT](#) or [Scan WP](#). Or you can install Google Chrome extensions like [WP Theme and Plugin Detector](#) or [Sniffer](#) to take a peek.

Remember, using WordPress is your choice. Other platforms might perform better for you. Experiment with your design choices and pick the one content management system or website builder that best suits your brand or organization.

There's no one size fits all.

*\*At the time of writing, all links worked. If they don't, please [alert me](#), so that I can update this guide and send you the updated links.*

*I am not affiliated with any of the suggested linked services and platforms in this guide, including WordPress.*

## ABOUT CONTENT DESIGN LLC

Hi, I am Tekla Szymanski, founder of Content Design LLC, your one-stop shop for content strategy and web development for content-rich nonprofit and personal websites.

You have a small team and even less time? I hear you. And since your website deserves an editor, writer and web designer who understands how to leverage your unique content and then adapt the right design to it, I can help you.



You have a story to tell, a mission to share or a service to offer, and we will find the right platform to build a website around your unique content needs that converts your site visitors into loyal donors, paying clients or new members.

What sets me apart?

Most web designers and developers don't come from a content-creating background. I do.

## DISCLAIMER

WordPress should become your platform of choice when creating your website. You produce the content, tell your story and get your message out—and WordPress will let you post it into the world. But the effectiveness, scalability and conversion rates that your website delivers all depend on the design, the theme you choose, the plugins you add and whether you keep all components updated, synced and backed up.

At Content Design LLC, I can help you smooth out any technical hurdles, lead you through your WordPress design process, assist you in upscaling your site or moving your site from other site builders to WordPress. And I can teach you how to work with WordPress and how to maintain and optimize your site going forward.

**Schedule a free consultation call:** [bit.ly/AcuityContentDesign](https://bit.ly/AcuityContentDesign)

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**Visit my website & blog:** [www.tekla-szymanski.com](http://www.tekla-szymanski.com)