Lessons for Beginners from Seven Years of Working with WordPress Clients

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What I See...

• 17% of websites have evidence of malware.

• 50% of websites have no viable backup system.

• Businesses do a major refresh every 2-5 years.

• Most web design freelancers aren’t on their own more than 2-3 years.
Everyone Wants a website that...

• Functions properly
• Looks Professional
• Attracts Visitors
• Makes conversions
My customers span across the most tech savvy metro-areas.

- Portland
- Denver
- Los Angeles
- Silicon Valley
Most digital marketing competition you’ll come up against was command performed by these guys...
How do you out-maneuver your competition?

Do the easy stuff first!
Planning Your Website
Learning WordPress
Designing & Building
Maintenance
SEO/SEM
Planning Your Website
WordPress.com vs.

“WordPress.org”

WordPress.com is an online service, owned by Automattic, Inc., running on the WordPress platform. The entry-level service is free and similar to Blogger, Tumblr or Blogspot. It’s VIP enterprise version of WordPress.com starts at $5k per month, with a $15k setup fee.

“WordPress.org” refers to the free WordPress software and the idea of self-hosting your own site with the software.
Skill-sets

IT SKILLS
Hosting Basics
Server troubleshooting
FTP
Security
SQL basics

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Color theory
Typography
Logos
Style guides

CODING
HTML
CSS
Php
.js

MARKETING
SEO
SEM
Social Media
Email marketing

COPYWRITING
Quality of writing affects SEO and conversions.

PHOTOGRAPHY

VIDEOGRAPHY

UX DESIGN (user experience)
Sets processes and techniques for optimizing and improving user satisfaction, system accessibility and usability. Skills touches everything from planning, production, testing and maintenance.
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Tip Area: Planning Your Website

- **Use Full Service Agency**: Website owner hires agency to plan, build and manage website.
- **Provide Copy & Images**: Website owner only provides text and images.
- **Blogging Only**: Website owner only publishes blog posts. Sub-contractor is hired for remaining tasks.
- **Content & Layout**: Website owner publishes all content and layout design. Sub-contractor is hired for monthly updates and periodic troubleshooting.
- **100% DIY**: Website owner is responsible for and undertakes all website tasks.
Make a Plan to Avoid Big Issues

Understand the purpose of your website in detail.

How will the website directly influence business goals?

Why someone would visit your website over the competition?
Why is your website different? Is it really?

- Compare and contrast what your business wants with what customers need.
- Research competition
- Research complimentary industries.
Make a Plan to Avoid Big Issues

How frictionless will your site be for a conversion?

How does your homepage contribute to conversions?

Who will you lean on when things go terribly wrong?
Make a Plan to Avoid Big Issues

As you plan, understand that these are the universally most visited pages...

• Home page
• About Us page
• Primary Product / Service page
Make a Plan to Avoid Big Issues

Contemplate Traffic-flow...

Tip Area: Planning Your Website
What type of Website will it be?

**Corporate brochure**
https://www.sonymusic.com/

**Blog- News- Magazine- Information portal**
http://www.newyorker.com/
http://fortune.com/

**Membership platform**
https://premium.wpmudev.org/
https://wpml.org/
https://wordpress.org/

**Website as Product**
https://vip.Wordpress.com

**ECommerce Site**
http://store.airstream.com/
http://www.taylorswiftstore.co.uk/

**Social Media / Forum platform**
http://rideoregonride.com/
Hosting Starts at $10-12 per month

**Domain** Starts at $12 per year

**Premium Theme:** $25-200 (not including yearly maintenance)

**Other possible additional costs...**
- written copy
- Images
- video
- Membership software
- Security Software
- SSL/https
Choosing Branded Domain is more important than incorporating geo- or industry-related phrases. Regional and City names, and keywords no longer help with SEO; and they confuse visitors.

Which website is Johnson Law?

dwiattorneywilmingtonnc.com

wilmingtonlegalplanning.com

www.wilmingtonncdivorce lawyer.com

www.ncdruginjurylaw.com

www.carolinaaccidentattorneys.com
Tip Area: Planning Your Website

Tips on Deciding a Domain

Suffix needs to be appropriate.
.com
.net
.edu
.org

Best domains end with .com and have 5 or less syllables before suffix.

WWW- or no WWW Domain? Need to decide!
How to Choose a Host Service

My three criteria categories: Need to have, Want to have, and Nice to have.

Need to have:
- Server must be in a Data Center
- Ticketing Support system
- WordPress-centric services
- No over-subscribed resources
- Industry standard interfaces
- Specific plugin Compatibility
- No pre-installed software
- 99.9% SLA

Want to have:
- 24hr chat support
- U.S.-based company (buy local)
- Chat Support
- Telephone Support - American English speaker

Nice to have:
- Support trifecta.. 24hr chat support, telephone support & email support.
- 100% WordPress focused
- Data Center Redundancy
- White-labeled reseller services

Hosting pricing is secondary to criteria above.
Look for a long-term theme solution, not short-term stop-gap.

Choose a multi-use theme to have a longer design life-span. Specialized themes will box-in growth & creative potential.

Look for established Theme manufacturer - in the industry more than 3 years.

Sucuri Audited themes
How to Choose a Theme

Top 5 Premium theme manufacturers
WooThemes (Now WooCommerce by Automattic)
ElegantThemes
StudioPress
WPMU Dev
iThemes

What I found to avoid...
Premium theme and plugin marketplaces.
Themes with bundled premium plugins.
Free themes except for themes that are bundled with WordPress.
Sushi from the gas station.
Discount dental work at the flea market.
How to Choose a Plugin

**Premium Plugins**
Tend to have longer life-cycle and better support than most free plugins.

Single site Licenses
Developer Licenses

Club Licenses
Support renewals
How to Choose a Plugin

Free Plugins
Only use free plugins from WordPress.org

How to identify good Plugins from WordPress.org

Who is the author?

How many active installs?

Is it compatible with the latest WordPress version and regularly updated?

Is the support forum well-managed?
How will you address Mobile-friendliness?

Mobile-friendliness affects Website’s SEO

Google Mobile-friendliness test
Mobile-Friendly Test

http://MyInternetScout.com/

Awesome! This page is mobile-friendly.

How Googlebot sees this page

This page uses 4 resources which are blocked by robots.txt.

Does this screenshot look incorrect? Learn how to let Googlebot view the page correctly.

Show resources

Learn more about mobile-friendly pages

If you’re interested in learning more about mobile sites, check out our Webmaster’s Mobile Guide or the Principles of Site Design Web Fundamentals.
Mobile-Friendly Test

http://www.nytimes.com/

Not mobile-friendly

Page appears not mobile-friendly

- Text too small to read
- Links too close together
- Mobile viewport not set
- Content wider than screen

How Googlebot sees this page

This page uses 10 resources which are blocked by robots.txt.

Does this screenshot look incorrect? Learn how to let Googlebot view the page correctly.

This page may appear not mobile-friendly because the robots.txt file may block Googlebot from loading some of the page's resources. Learn how to unblock resources for Googlebot.

If you've made sure Googlebot is not blocked, you can see Pagespeed Insights for more details on detected issues. Learn more about the tool.
Learning WordPress
“I need some help with my website. WordPress is definitely not rocket science.”

- Former NASA Apollo Mission Engineer at San Jose WordPress Meetup.
Gurus of WordPress

When they speak, people listen...

**Matt Cutts** - former head of Google’s Anti-web spam team.

**Matt Mullenweg** - CEO of Automattic, Inc. (company behind WordPress.com), and one of the original developers of WordPress.

**Rand Fishkin** – Founder of Moz.com, SEO optimization firm for professionals.

Watch out for the “Top Tens” recommending themes, plugins, services and other solutions. Many links are affiliate links.
Immerse yourself in the WordPress mindset!

Resources

Books to Read


Don’t Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, Steve Krug
Resources

Immerse yourself in the WordPress mindset!

Online WordPress Learning
WordPress.tv
WordPress.org

Associate with other WordPressers!
Meetup.com
WordCamps
Facebook User Groups

Other Resources
https://moz.com/blog
https://vimeo.com/blog/category/video-school
https://www.google.com/trends/
Designing & Building
What’s a Child Theme?

What is Child Theme?

It's a theme that inherits attributes (functionality and style) of a parent theme. It allows a designer to customize a website without losing custom changes after a theme upgrade.
Set up a Child Theme

20-40% of Don’t Have a Child Themes

Install your Child Theme today! 30 Second install...
One-Click Child Theme plugin
Set up a Child Theme

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Publishing Photos & Images

Do not cut & Paste images from Internet without written permission!

Full width images (the Hero image) should have the following attributes...

Pixel resolution: 1920p Wide X original ratio high

Should be as far under 250k as possible before becoming too fuzzy.

Body Content Images under full width should be under 100k as much as possible.

Use image tools such as Adobe Photoshop to help you optimize before uploading.
Layout & Design Tips

Leave Homepage Sliders Behind

Use videos instead of a photo galleries

Present Galleries as part of an internal page. Most visitors view galleries when they’re in a research mindset.

Use Logo in header across all pages.

Test all mobile versions of pages.
Maintenance
Website Backups

It’s a system, not a file.

3-2-1 Method

Three Files
Two files on different media
One file at remote location

Frequency of Backing up is a business decision
Website Security

Starting today, all passwords must contain letters, numbers, doodles, sign language and squirrel noises.
Website Security

Limit number of admin users

Never use as user name:
Admin
Administrator
Test
Variation of your domain name

Never use a password less than 16 characters.

Don’t use Webserver as a depository for items not directly related to website.
Q & A

Shoot!