

WEBSITE IN A WEEKEND: THE NO-STRESS, STEP-BY-STEP WEBSITE RECIPE

This recipe is **failure-friendly**; any mistake you could make is **easy to fix**. The worst outcome would be that you might have to delete what you've done and start again. (Actually, I suppose the absolute worst outcome is that you waste a bit less than a hundred dollars.)

Don't listen to the voice that says, "This is too hard. I'm not technical. I can't do this!". Think of it like cooking, or model building. **Follow the instructions**, watch the videos, and have faith in your intelligence! If you get stuck, I'm only an email, Twitter or Skype call away and I'm happy to help you get back on track.

Don't tell anyone (other than family and friends, if you like) about your new website for awhile. You can muck it up **without fear or embarrassment** if no-one's watching.

In order to not make this impossibly complicated, I cut out **every non-critical choice**. As a result, this recipe will fit about 80% of the time. If you're one of the 20%, I'd recommend that you try following the standard way first, just so you get comfortable with using the system before you adapt it.

So get started, and enjoy the accomplishment of pointing at a website and shouting, "I did this!"

STEP 1: CHOOSE A DOMAIN NAME (30 MINUTES)

A domain name is the label for your website and email, like google.com, oxfam.org, and usa.gov.

- 1) Go for a twenty-minute walk with your dog and a notepad. Think about your business and write down a word or short phrase that could describe your website:
 - a) Your business name
 - b) The products or service you provide
 - c) The benefit of your business
 - d) A quirky description
- 2) Pat the dog and start up your computer. Go to <http://domain-suggestions.domaintools.com/> and start entering the phrases. The page will tell you whether the most common variants (.com, .org, .net etc) are available and suggest a large number of alternatives. Note down any that you like, but only if they have the .com variant available. (It's almost always best to use the .com)
- 3) From that list, choose the domain name you like the best. Give it a few quick tests:
 - a) Is it easy to say?
 - b) Is it easy to spell?
 - c) Does it accidentally make a rude word? (i.e. expertsexchange.com vs experts-exchange.com)
 - d) Does it describe your business?
- 4) Does it pass? Success! You've chosen a domain name.

DON'T GET WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHOICE! IT ONLY COSTS \$10 TO REGISTER ANOTHER DOMAIN NAME. ALSO, YOU WON'T BE ADVERTISING THIS WEBSITE AT FIRST, SO YOU'LL HAVE TIME TO CHANGE YOUR MIND IF YOU THINK OF A BETTER CHOICE LATER. THIS IS ALL ABOUT GETTING STARTED.

STEP 2: CHOOSE A WEB-HOSTING PROVIDER (20 MINUTES)

You pay a web-hosting company for the use of their servers (big computers), software, network and electricity. This is the technology that supports your website.

- 1) Read the article <http://www.beawesomeonline.com/how-to-choose-a-web-hosting-provider>
- 2) Choose one of the listed providers or search online for another. (If you choose someone else, they MUST have one-click installs and support multiple domains. Not sure if they'll be suitable? Ask us!)
Don't feel pressured to get expensive hosting. Start cheap (but decent) and scale up once your website is earning its keep.
- 3) Click on the *Sign Up Now* button and fill in the form.
- 4) It will give you the option to register a domain name. Good thing you already decided on one, eh?

IF YOU CHOOSE DREAMHOST, YOU'LL RECEIVE A FREE BONUS DOMAIN NAME WHEN YOU USE THE CODE **BEAWESOME**. (THIS WON'T COST YOU EXTRA AND WE GET A SMALL COMMISSION.) WE'RE HAPPY TO RECOMMEND DREAMHOST; WE HOST OUR WEBSITES WITH THEM AND THINK THEY'RE PRETTY GOOD.

STEP 3: INSTALL WORDPRESS (5 MINUTES)

WordPress is the software that does all the work of making webpages. It originally was used solely to create blogs, but it's matured very well and is now a very user-friendly and flexible website builder. (Want to know a bit more about what it is? Read this article: <http://www.beawesomeonline.com/what-is-this-wordpress-you-speak-of-earthling>)

- 1) Your web-hosting provider probably sent you a number of welcoming emails. One will have your login details to the webhost control panel.
- 2) Once you're logged in, find the one-click installer. (It might be called Fantastico or Simple Scripts). Some providers (like DreamHost) have an Easy Mode installation which they manage and upgrade for you. If you're not technically-minded, this removes 80% of the frustration of running a website!
If you're a bit more technical or you want more flexibility, use the Advanced Mode. It's not much harder to use, but you do have to do the updates yourself.
- 3) Choose WordPress from the list of software. There are a few fields you have to fill in:
 - a) The site name will become the title of the website. (Don't worry, you can change it!)
 - b) The domain should be your domain name, preferably with "www" in front, like www.BeAwesomeOnline.com
 - c) For everything else, use the default settings.
- 4) Click install, and go make a cup of tea. By the time you're finished, you'll have a website.

HOW AWESOME IS THAT? NO CODING OR FIDDLING ABOUT. PRESS ONE BUTTON AND... VOILA! YOU HAVE A WEBSITE!

STEP 4: CHOOSE A THEME (10 MINUTES)

A WordPress theme changes the look of your website, including the fonts, colours, size and position of the items on the screen.

- 1) The automatic installer will send you an email with your username, password and a link to the administration page of your new website, the Dashboard. (It's the central repository of all the tools you'll need.) You'll be asked if you want to change your password, which is a good idea. Write it down and store it somewhere safe if you're likely to forget.
- 2) Click on the *Appearance* link, which will open a list. Click on *Themes*.
- 3) There will be a number of themes already installed. Use the *Preview* to look at them more closely, then click on *Activate* under the theme you like best. (You can change this as often as you like.)
- 4) Done! You've now chosen the style of your website.

YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND THAT NONE OF THE THEMES ARE QUITE RIGHT. YOU WANT THE COLOURS TO BE A BIT DARKER, OR THE FONTS LARGER, OR THAT THE SIDEBAR WAS ON THE RIGHT INSTEAD OF THE LEFT... LATER YOU CAN SEARCH FOR MORE DESIGNS, LEARN SOME CSS SKILLS, OR HIRE SOMEONE TO MAKE A THEME THAT'S PERFECT. FOR NOW, "GOOD ENOUGH" IS GREAT.

STEP 5: WRITE THE HOMEPAGE (60 MINUTES)

The content - the words, images, video and sound - is what a website all about. (No, I'm not telling you that you have to have video on your website! Just words is fine.) We'll start by writing the homepage, which is the front page of a website.

- 1) In the sidebar, click *Pages*, then *Add New*. This will take you to the cleverly named *Add New Page*.
- 2) There are lots of fields here, but you only need to pay attention to two of them for now:
 - a) The single long field at the top, which will be the title of the page.
 - b) The text box underneath, where all the content goes.
- 3) Start writing! If you get stuck, refer to the bonus worksheet, *The Fill-in-the-Blanks Homepage*.
- 4) Add italics by highlighting the words you want to italicize and clicking the slanting *I* button. Do the same for bold, bullet points, etc.
- 5) For headings, highlight the words and click on the style drop-down. The default is *Paragraph*, but you can change it to one of the *Heading* options: the larger the number, the smaller the header.
- 6) Once you're done, click the *Publish* button. Congratulations, you've created a webpage! You can repeat this process as many times as you like, for Contact Us, About Us, Save a Pigeon... whatever your website needs.

I HIGHLY RECOMMEND COPYING ALL THE TEXT YOU WRITE AND SAVING IT IN A DOCUMENT ELSEWHERE. LATER, IF YOU MAKE A HUGE MISTAKE AND DECIDE TO START YOUR WEBSITE AGAIN, YOU WON'T HAVE TO RE-WRITE ANYTHING.

STEP 6: THREE USEFUL TWEAKS (10 MINUTES)

- 1) Click *Settings* and review your *Blog Title* and *Tagline*. These two fields appear in the header at the top of the page; visitors use them to make a snap decision about whether they've come to the right website. Keep changing them until you're happy.
- 2) By default in WordPress, the homepage is your blog. If you don't want a blog, click on *Settings*, then *Reading*. For *Front page displays*, choose *Static page* and select the correct page from the drop-down. This will now be the homepage!
- 3) If you do want a blog, you'll want to get rid of the test post WordPress includes by default. Hover your mouse over the default post (Called, "Hello, world!") and choose *Delete*. Adding posts is exactly like adding pages, you just use the *Posts* menu instead of the *Pages* one.

STEP 7: DANCE A JIG (5 MINUTES)

Congratulations, you've created a website! It wasn't too hard, was it? Now play around with it, add pages and posts, show it to your friends and family!