Web & Print Design   Graphics, and Illustration   Publishing & Promotion
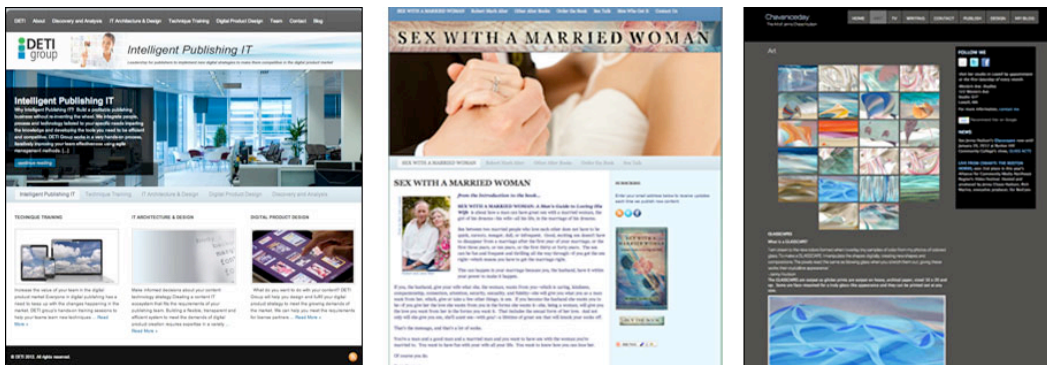
Creating Websites that YOU Can Update

WordPress sites that make you look like a pro!

Don't break the bank on a website. The good news is that WordPress, a web-authoring tool that can create a professional looking website that you can easily update has been around for about five years and it's getting better all the time. The even better news is that it's free on one version and economical on a more robust version.

WordPress, is a blogging system that doubles as a website with a content management system built in. In the world of Web 2.0 where websites connect to social media and have easy tag input for search engines to help get you noticed, WordPress fits the bill on many fronts. It allows you to enjoy up-to-the-minute functionality, great Search Engine results, and the ability to update your site yourself (it's as easy as sending an email). WordPress sites are attractive, functional and can be modified to uniquely reflect your business or your client's. This is a great solution for the author or small business to get found and appear professional, offering a good user experience on your site.

There are two kinds of WordPress

WordPress.com (**http://wordpress.com/**)

If you go to WordPress.com, you can get a free account and in moments you will have a blogging system that is great for getting your feet wet. However, the templates here are limited and although you can upload your banner or logo, it doesn't allow you to tinker under the hood. Since this is hosted on their site, the

URL will look like this:
- http://yourname.wordpress.com.

If you don't want "wordpress" to appear in your website URL, for only $10 per year you can opt to have WordPress host your URL (which you have to reserve and pay for through a domain registry site, like GoDaddy.com).

WordPress.org (http://wordpress.org)
WordPress.org allows you to select from a huge range of free templates, which are totally customizable in both design and functionality and is more appropriate for a business. However, unless you are a web designer or a programmer, some of this is not for the timid. Without going too deep under the hood, there are lots of options, depending on the template you select. All templates allow you to upload your own banner or logo for a custom look which is easy enough, but you may also want a designer to change other graphics in the template to fit your own color scheme. Compared to the cost of designing a site from scratch with comparable functionality, it is actually pennies on the dollar. The good new is that once it's in place, updating it yourself is easy.

To run WordPress your host just needs a couple of things:
- PHP version 4.3 or greater
- MySQL version 4.1.2 or greater

That's really it. WordPress recommends Apache or Nginx as the most robust and feature rich server for running this program, but any server that supports PHP and MySQL will do.

Once installed, browse through your *Dashboard* which is command central for your site. If you click on *Appearance*, you'll find links to the free templates and will be able to select a few that are close to what you want. It is advisable to get your template through the site since it will have less bugs. You can preview them and download them instantly. If you want something with advanced functionality, you may want to spring for a purchased template and for under $100 you can get something that is easier to use with features like homepage slide shows for the featured articles.

Once you've decided on a template, you can start customizing it to make your site reflect your unique branding. Once complete, you will be able to add written content, photos (easy upload, galleries, and instant sizing), video, and audio files. The dashboard allows for different users so that you may have unlimited contributors, each with their own login, with levels of power within the site.

You can add pages (static pages like traditional websites) or "categories" which operate like a blog, WordPress will create a searchable archive for your articles. Many WordPress templates allow you to create drop-down menus instantly. You can add tags for search engines, connect to Facebook, Twitter, and many other social media.

You may also want to check out the free *Plugins* which can extend the functionality of your new site. http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/.
You can download new plugins directly from your dashboard once you have the program installed, but this will give you an idea of what's out there. As of now, there are over 20,500 to chose from! Make sure that the plugin you chose is right for the version of WordPress you are running or it won't work. Two of my favorites are All in One SEO Pack (http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/)which lets you put metatags and descriptions on each page to help with search engine rankings and Fast Secure Contact Form (http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/si-contact-form/), which has a short code that enables you to put a slick form on any page with a captcha to prevent spam.

Adding Content: Posts VS Pages

Posts
Posts are used for blogging and are entries listed in reverse chronological order on the home page or on the posts page and they will appear before the other posts. Posts can be found in the Archives, Categories, Recent Posts, and other widgets. Posts are also displayed in the RSS feed of the blog. You can control how many posts are displayed at a time in the Reading Settings under settings in your dashboard. In wordpress.com, The URL for a post includes the date the post was published like this:
http://blogname.wordpress.com/2008/11/30/post-title/ If you want your posts to appear on a page other than your home page, read this:
http://en.support.wordpress.com/pages/front-page/.
See http://en.support.wordpress.com/posts/ for more detailed information.

Pages
Pages are static and are not listed by date and do not use tags or categories. An About page is the classic example. The URL for a page looks like this:
http://blogname.wordpress.com/page-title/ There is no limit on the number of posts or pages you can have.

How do I create a Page or a Post?
Both posts and pages are in your dashboard menu. Under each one is "see all pages (or posts)", "edit", and "create new." Click on create new. Be sure you type in the title and then add your content to the center section. If you are creating a blog post, you must also click the category you want (or create a new category to start) or the post will not show up. You can preview this before you publish and when you are happy, click publish. If you still want to make changes, go back and edit and re-upload.

Menus
If your template has custom menus, you'll find it in the dashboard. Click on *Menus*, and on the top right of the menu page, *create a new menu*. You will see lists of your pages and categories below. Select what you want and click *Add to Menu*. You can drag them into the order you want and create dropdowns by sliding them into an indented position to indicate hierarchy.

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