

WordPress Starter Toolkit by WPZOOM

In this seven-part guide you'll learn:

- What is WordPress
- How WordPress works
- Getting started with responsive design
- Understanding SEO
- Tricks to level up your site
- How to translate your website

Let's get straight to it.

WPZOOM

The background of the image features a large, light gray watermark of the WordPress logo, which is a circular emblem containing a stylized 'W'.

What is WORDPRESS

What is WordPress?

WordPress is a world leading web publishing platform. WordPress itself is free and open source, although there are typically some costs involved in a fully-functioning WordPress sites.

A WordPress powered site offers all sorts of features, including easy content management (both blog posts and regular website pages), multiple users and immense customisability.

WordPress dot what?

WordPress comes in two versions, WordPress.com and WordPress.org. These are the differences between the two:

- WordPress.com offers a pre-hosted version of WordPress with a limited amount of control for each website. It's free with paid-for addons. We'll call this **hosted** WordPress.

- WordPress.org lets you install your own version of WordPress on your own hosting. This requires having your own hosting and domain name (we'll cover these later). We'll call this **self-hosted** WordPress.

Hosted WordPress is great for getting started, but for anything more than a basic website – and definitely for anything professional – you'll want self-hosted WordPress.

The additional flexibility of self-hosted WordPress gives you full control over your website – including being able to install any WordPress theme. Crucially, that includes all of WP-ZOOM's WordPress themes.

Getting set up

What do you need to get your self-hosted WordPress site set up? Not much! Just set aside an hour and you should be able to handle everything.

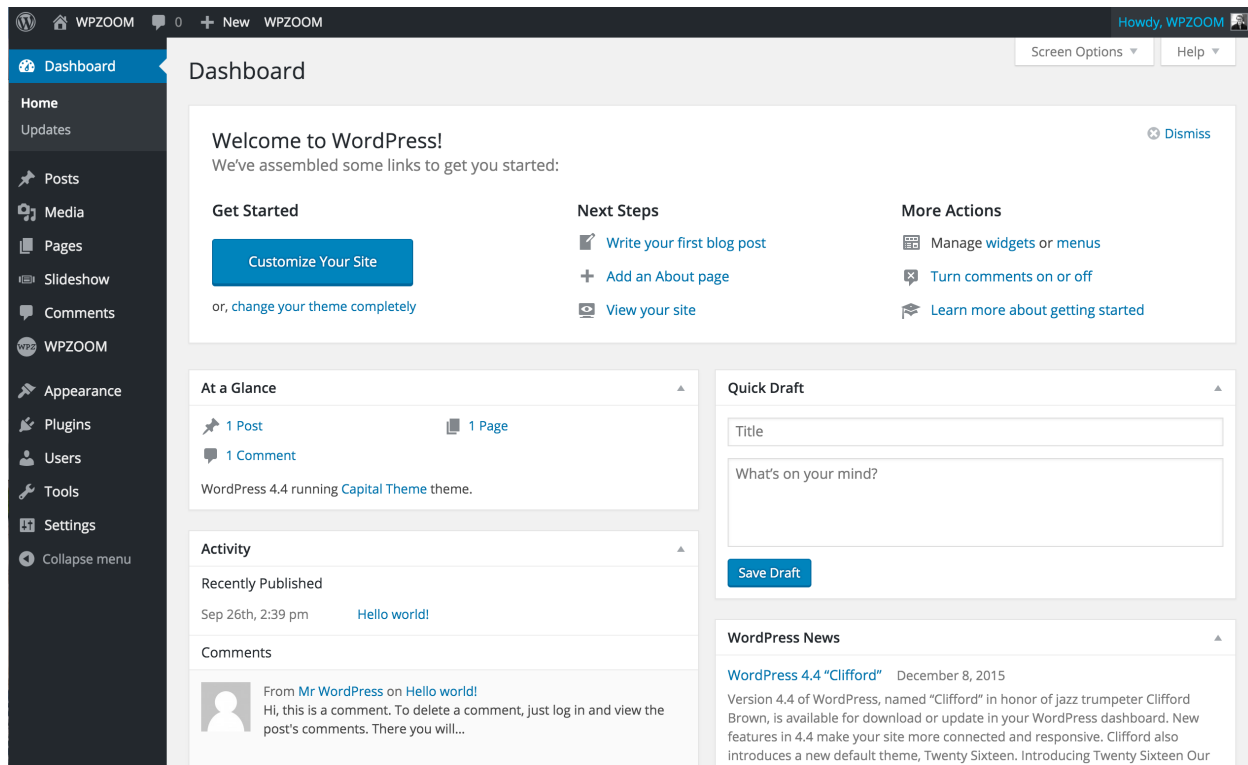
The first things you need are website hosting and a domain name. Website hosting is just somewhere to store your website and a domain name is just a website address for people to go to.

There are tons of hosting and domain name providers to choose from, but we'd recommend [SiteGround](#). They're a great value host and will give you a free year providing your domain name too.

Getting set up with **SiteGround** is really easy: you can install WordPress in a couple of clicks. We've even got [a video tutorial walking you through the whole thing](#). Purchase a year of hosting, check out the video and get WordPress installed.

Next steps

You can have your WordPress site set up very quickly, but what's next? **In the next chapter we'll look at how WordPress works.** We'll look at the Dashboard, how to customize your site with themes and how to customize your site with plugins.



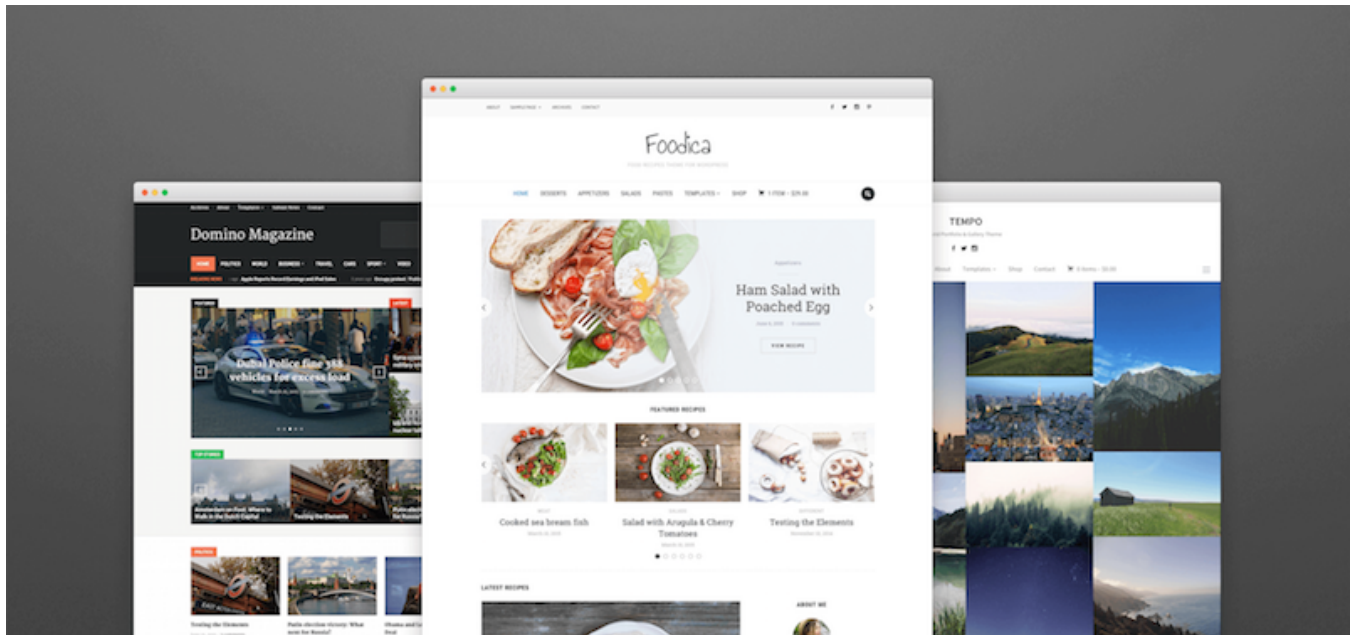
How WordPress works

The Dashboard

Everything with WordPress starts with the Dashboard. The Dashboard is the “admin hub” for WordPress and where you can manage absolutely everything.

You can access the Dashboard by going to yourwebsite.com/wp-admin/ and filling in your username and password. Only users with admin privileges can access the full Dashboard so you don’t need to worry about others changing your site – unless you let them.

The left hand menu gives you access to all of the different parts of the Dashboard, including creating and editing posts and pages – the content that goes on your site. You’ll want to spend some time familiarising yourself with the Dashboard. If you’re stuck at any point, click the “Help” dropdown on the top right for additional guidance.



What are themes?

WordPress themes are pre-built designs which can be applied to any WordPress site.

They're a great way of getting a professional design for your website at a fraction of the cost. Free WordPress themes are available from the [WordPress Theme Repository](#). There are thousands of free themes available, although they can be of varied quality and typically don't come with any support or assistance.

For a professional design and professional support, you'll want a **Premium WordPress Theme**. Choose a specifically built theme rather than an all-in-one theme for the best results (you may get a slower site, find features removed in updates or see a reliance on third party plugins).

WPZOOM offers [dozens of high quality Premium WordPress themes](#). We have purpose built themes for every kind of site, including:

- [Business Themes](#)
- [Portfolio Themes](#)
- [Magazine Themes](#)
- [And more...](#)

Choose one you like or [get the whole lot with the All Themes Package](#).

Your WordPress Theme is the look and feel of your site. Get something professional.

Extend WordPress with plugins

One of WordPress' most useful features is its **extensibility with plugins**. Want to add a feature which WordPress doesn't offer as standard? No problem, just install a plugin.

There are thousands of free plugins available from the [WordPress plugin repository](#). Popular options include:

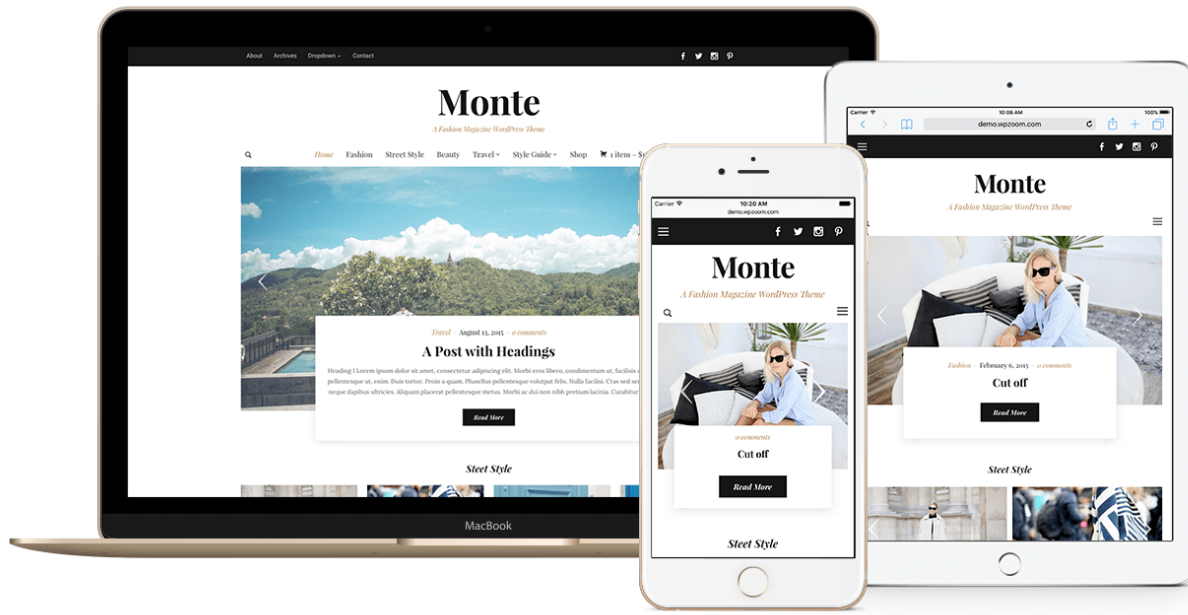
- [Jetpack](#) - adds stats, security services and image management.
- [Contact Form 7](#) - add a contact form to any post or page.
- [W3 Total Cache](#) - speeds up your site.
- [WooCommerce](#) - sell products and services straight from your site!

Using plugins it's super-easy to add features to your site. You can also get Premium Plugins with super-advanced features, including [drag and drop layout creation](#).

Plugins are the secret to WordPress' flexibility: easily add new features to your site.

Next steps

Customising your WordPress installation with themes and plugins is crucial. In the next chapter we'll show you **how to be ready for mobile and tablets**.



Are you ready for mobile?

Internet users spend **more time browsing using mobile devices** (smartphones and tablets) than desktop computers or laptops ([source](#)).

It's essential your website is "mobile ready". Historically this would have meant having a separate version of your design for mobile devices, but now it's possible to have the same design for your whole site, regardless of where it's viewed.

We call this **responsive design**.

Having a responsive website is absolutely crucial: with the majority of people browsing on mobile, it's paramount that they're able to view your site properly. Fortunately, it's straightforward to get a responsive design for your WordPress site.

Where do you get a responsive design? Look no further than [WPZOOM's themes](#). Check out the demo for each theme to see a preview of what it looks like on **smartphones** and **tablets**.

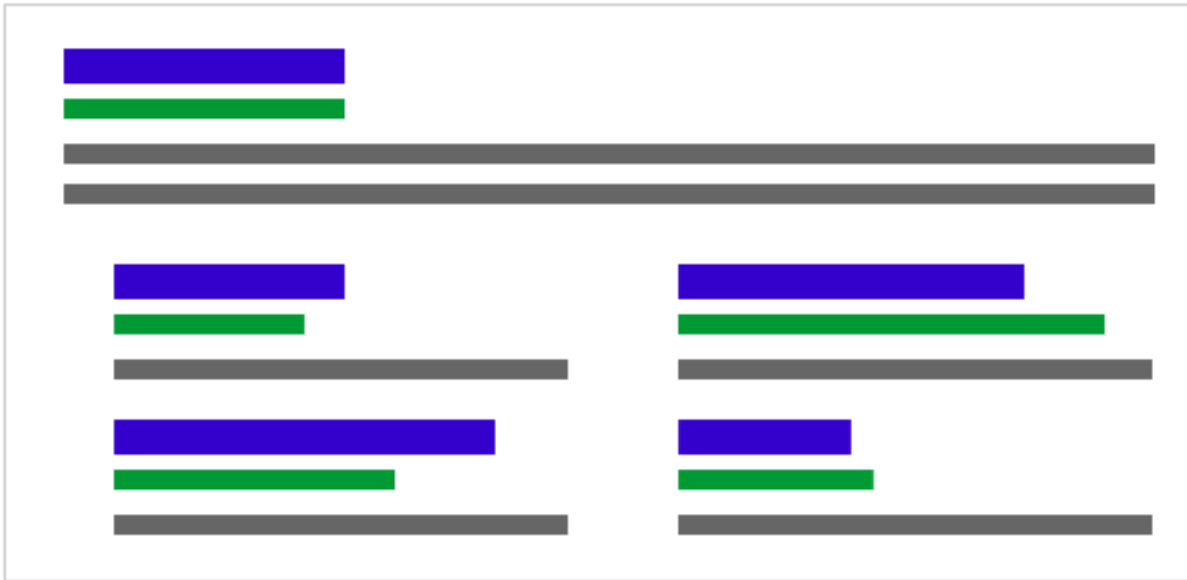
To help you get responsive, get **10% off** any WPZOOM theme with the code:

WPTOOLKIT

[View all themes here.](#)

Next steps

Responsive design is essential on a modern website. In the next chapter we'll show you **how search engines work** and how to make sure your website is findable through search.



Can anyone find your website?

Having a beautiful website is no use if nobody can find it. It's common to think Google and other search engines will automatically display your website as the first result for your business' name or key words related to your business, but that's not actually the case.

To rank highly on search engines you need **search engine optimisation** (SEO for short). SEO is - simply - "the optimisation of web pages for success with search engines".

How do you actually *get* SEO? This is simple: you need great content on your website and an SEO ready WordPress theme. **All of WPZOOM's [WordPress themes](#) are SEO ready.**

How WPZOOM themes optimise for search engines

One of the big parts of SEO is letting search engines know exactly what's on the page and all of WPZOOM's themes have logically placed code which search engines can easily understand.

We've put the right header tags in the right places for you, so search engines know which are the important bits on the page. You'll often find little features like breadcrumbs

which give search engines a better idea of how your content is laid out. Don't worry about the the theme itself; we've got you sorted there.

Should I install an SEO plugin?

We've already looked at how WordPress plugins work. There is one great WordPress SEO plugin you should definitely use – and it's free.

The plugin you want is called [WordPress SEO](#). It's free and comes from Joost de Valk, an SEO expert. Features include page analysis, focus keywords and XML sitemaps. You can install it and let the plugin handle the heavy lifting for you.

Once you've installed WordPress SEO you don't probably don't need any other SEO plugins. The code in all WPZOOM themes will handle most of the "heavy lifting" for you; the plugin just optimises everything a little bit more.

Does the speed of my website matter?

Website speed is a factor in Google's algorithm for ranking websites. **The speed of your website is very important.** It's important that your WordPress theme is well coded to allow fast loading – obviously WPZOOM themes are optimised for this.

Google uses a thing called PageSpeed in order to measure your site's speed, which ranks your site on a scale of 1 to 100. This measures the potential of your site to load quickly (not whether it actually does – you might just have a slow internet connection).

Here a score of 75+ is okay, and 85+ is great. Google will tell you what you can do to increase your PageSpeed and give you instructions how to do so. You can [test your PageSpeed here](#).

You can also use a tool such as [Pingdom](#) to test the real-world speed of your website. Kingdom will also give you a rating out of 100 and rate your site's performance in relation to other sites. [WPZOOM.com](#), for example, is faster than 95% of other websites. Get testing!

If you find you need to make your site faster, install [W3 Total Cache](#). *Total Cache* is a free plugin which stores a static copy of your site rather than grabbing the dynamic content (the bits which change) every time your site is loaded. Install and fully set up and you should see big improvements.

So what should I be doing?

If you're using a [WPZOOM theme](#) in conjunction with [WordPress SEO](#) then most of the SEO work is covered for you. All you need to do now is fill your website with useful, quality content. That's the main variable factor here and somewhere where you can spend serious time.

You can see all of [WPZOOM's SEO ready WordPress themes here](#) (that's all of them btw).

Next steps

Making sure your website is visible on search engines is crucial for capturing new customers and getting visitors. In the next chapter we'll look at practical and actionable **tricks to level up your site**.



WordPress essentials: 5 tricks to level up your site

We've now looked at how WordPress works, responsive design and SEO. You're getting a pretty good idea of how WordPress works and how you can extend it. Today we're going to take it up a notch. We're looking at **5 tricks to level up your site**. The little things that make the big difference.

1. Install Jetpack

We mentioned [Jetpack](#) back when we learned about [How WordPress Works](#). It's an incredibly powerful plugin and brings many advanced features found on WordPress.com sites to self-hosted WordPress. Those features include:

- Site states
- Beautiful galleries
- Email subscriptions
- Fast image loading
- And a ton more

Jetpack runs with individual “modules” which can be enabled or disabled depending on your requirements. It’s well worth spending some time using the plugin. To help you out, we’ve got [a great blog post](#) on some of the things you can do with Jetpack.

2. Install Google Analytics tracking code

[Google Analytics](#) is a great tool which you may want to integrate with your site. It’s a free service run by Google which primarily allows you to track the number of visitors to your site.

Google Analytics also gives you access to a number of other helpful metrics including which pages on your site are most popular, where visitors are coming from and how they’re getting to your site.

You can [sign up to Google Analytics here](#). Once you’ve followed the process through and got a tracking code (which will be given to you), you need to insert it onto every page on your site.

For [WPZOOM theme](#) users that’s easy. From the WordPress Dashboard click on “WP-ZOOM” and then select the “Miscellaneous” tab. Now paste the code in the “Footer Code & Analytics” section. Hit save and you’re done. Easy!

3. Set your custom menus

The navigation bar on your site is key to ease of use for all of your visitors. WordPress makes it easy to customise your menus using a drag and drop interface.

Head to “Appearance” and then “Menus” from the WordPress Dashboard and add menu items as you wish. Drag and drop to reorder and add submenus. Once you’re done creating, click on “Manage Locations” and select your new menu to display in the location you’d like.

WPZOOM theme users will typically find multiple menu locations, allowing for multiple menus per site. Each theme’s [documentation](#) has details and we’ve got a step-by-step [video tutorial here](#).

4. Get a custom background

Stamp your mark on your design with a **custom background**. Head to “Appearance” and then “Background” on the WordPress Dashboard to access.

The custom background allows you to set either an image or a colour to be displayed as the background. Using this feature is straightforward: just either upload your image and follow the prompts or choose your background colour and save your changes.

Important note: not all WordPress themes support custom backgrounds! If you’re using [WPZOOM themes](#), obviously we support this.

5. Keep a backup

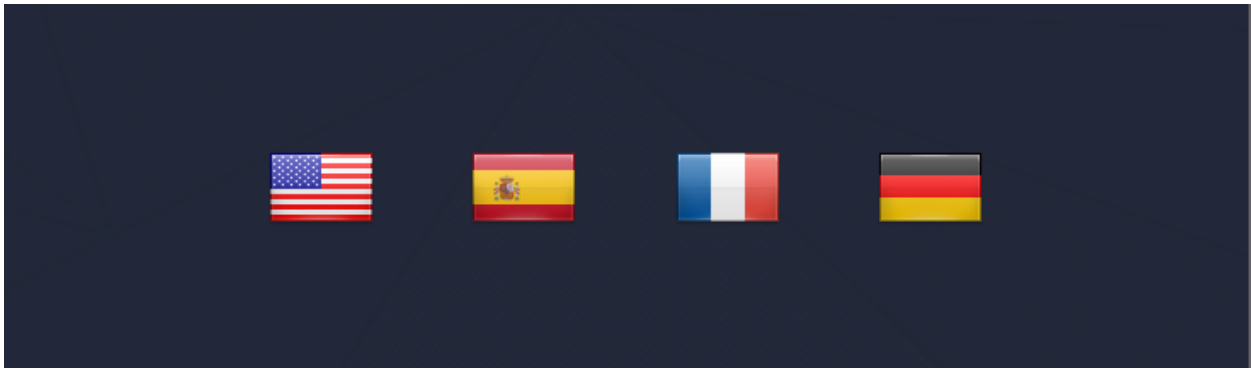
Having invested time and money in your site, the last thing you want is for anything to go wrong. **It’s incredibly important to always keep a backup**. For your peace of mind, there are [many backup plugins to choose from](#).

[BackWPup](#) is a free backup plugin which allows scheduled backups to cloud storage (i.e. Dropbox, Google Drive etc). That means you can set it and forget it with your files safely backed up external to your site. That’s especially important, as it means even if you can’t access your site you can still access your backups.

Backups are really important – make sure you’ve got them.

Next steps

There are lots of little tricks for having a better WordPress site and these here should give you a taster. In the next chapter we’ll look at **how to translate your theme** or make your site multilingual.



How to translate a theme or make site multi-lingual

WordPress is stunningly versatile and one of its neatest features is **letting you translate your entire site**. To translate your theme as well it will need to be translatable – don't worry here, [all WPZOOM themes](#) can be translated.

Changing the language of your WordPress install

Changing the language of your installation is straightforward. Head to "Settings" and then "General". Scroll down to the bottom of the page and use the dropdown to choose a different language.

Save your changes and you're done.

Translating your theme

The next step is translating your theme. Every WPZOOM theme comes with a **.pot** file (that's the industry standard) which contains all of the text in the theme which can be translated.

You'll want a plugin to help you translate all of the text. Our favourite is [Loco Translate](#). It's free and you can install it straight from the WordPress Dashboard.

Once you've got the plugin installed you'll see a new menu on the left hand side. From there you can "Manage Translations" and add a new language. Choose the language you want to translate to and you can enter the translations. You'll find [further details here](#).

Next steps

Translating your WordPress theme and making your site multilingual is a great way of bringing your website to an international audience. In the next chapter – the final one of the WordPress Starter Toolkit – we'll look at **choosing a killer WordPress theme**.



Choose a killer WordPress theme

Throughout the WordPress Starter Toolkit we've looked at:

- What is WordPress
- How WordPress works
- Getting started with responsive design
- Understanding SEO
- Tricks to level up your site
- How to translate your website

We've got one final bonus for you: **get 10% off any purchase from WPZOOM with the code TOOLKIT.**

You can check out [all our themes here](#) or see the [All Themes Package](#) (the offer code also works on the All Themes Package, making it incredible value).

Still want to know more? Take a look at the [Features](#) built into every theme and [Showcase](#) of what people have done with our themes.

Thank you for reading.

The WPZOOM Team, 2016.