WordPress Website Setup Tutorial

Hello Everyone, my name’s Shelley and I work at the Atlantic Association of CBDCs. CBDCs, or Community Business Development Corporations, are a network of 41 not-for-profit organizations that provide business financing, support and advice across Atlantic Canada.

Today, I will be providing you with a tutorial outlining how to set up a basic WordPress website. In this day and age, businesses need to have a strong online presence to grow and thrive, so I invite you to follow along with me as I demonstrate how easy it can be to get your business online.

This tutorial covers the very basics of setting up a business website and I encourage anyone who thinks they may not have good computer skills to give it a try anyway!

For this tutorial on how to set up a business website I will be using the WordPress platform, however, this is just one of many website building options out there, you can experiment with other platforms such as Wix or Shopify to see what works best for you.

The best thing about this tutorial is you can create your website for free, and choose once it's completed if you're happy with the results and want to purchase a domain and web hosting. At this time I will share my computer screen and talk you through how to set up your WordPress website.

1. First, go to [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com). Setting up your WordPress website is easy if you just follow along with the prompts to design your site. You’ll want to have your email opened and any logos, branding and product pictures on hand as you begin. Click Start your website now.
2. Now enter your email and password to sign up.
3. The next step is to choose your domain, this is the address people will type in when they want to visit your website. You want to keep your domain short, and it’s a good idea that you keep it as close to your business name, and the handles your use on your social media platforms, as possible. You don’t have to purchase a domain immediately, but do check that the domain you want to use is available for purchase at a .com or .ca extension.
4. If you're ready to purchase a plan immediately you can choose your plan and purchase it, however, you can also build your site, determine if you like it, then purchase a plan at a later day. Purchasing a plan and domain simply means that your website address will be www. mybusiness.com rather than [www.mybusiness.wordpress.com](http://www.mybusiness.wordpress.com) which is longer, less professional looking and does not do as well in search engines. You can look through the benefits and capabilities to determine which plan is right for you, and you can always upgrade as needed.
5. Once you go through the three initial steps you’re ready to begin building your actual website. WordPress has a convenient checklist that you can work through to get your site ready. Start by going into your email and verifying your site. Once you’re taken back to the WordPress website, look on the left of your page and click on Design, this is where you can choose your theme and customize your website.
6. A WordPress theme is a design template that changes the look of your site. Many free themes allow you to set up a website that works best for your industry and how you want your site to function for your clients or customers, to choose a theme, click themes and take a look at what's available. You can learn more about the different themes by clicking on the options that interest you. You can always switch themes if you want, however, you will have to re-customize once you switch, and not all capabilities exist for all themes.
7. One of my favourite themes is the Dara theme, that is what we will use today. Select the Dara theme, activate the design then click to customize. Your site customizer is where you will do much of the work building the bones of your site. Starting from the top we will add in our business name, a tagline if we have it and upload our logo. Finally, we will upload an image for our site icon, that the small graphic you see on your browser tab and can be a cropped version of your logo or a separate image.
8. Remember to save as you go! You can also open a new tab in your web browser and type in your website URL so you can see what your site looks like so far.
9. Next, we'll customize our colours. If you have brand colours you can choose them, or you can choose any of the suggested colour pallets. You can adjust the colour of the menu bar and the colour of your text. Don’t worry about button colours at this time, you can adjust those later. Once you’ve chosen your colours and saved your changes, go back to your site customizer menu and you can pick your desired font as well.
10. From here, we will ignore the Menu tab at the moment, but we will adjust our Content Options, homepage setting. As you click through these options you can decide how you want your content to look and what information you want to show. I prefer a static homepage, with post excerpts; we will not be using the Featured Content and Theme Options at this time, but once you feel more familiar and confident with using your WordPress website you can certainly add them in.
11. After you’ve done some basic customization and have saved all your changes, hit the X in the top left corner of your page which will take you back to My Home. From here we will take a look at our site pages and make adjustments here, click on Site on your left navigation menu, then click Pages. When you set up your website, it will come with some basic pages already set up for you, you can decide if you want to keep those pages or not, but I recommend at a minimum you have three pages, your Home page, a middle page and your Contact page. Your middle page can be called whatever you want depending on your business, it might be Services or Menu or Products. To adjust your pages, go to the page you want to change, click on the three dots and choose the action you want to take, we will now edit our Home page. To edit your pages, click on the settings widget to open the editing window, and click on the Page tab, then you can work your way down, customizing your page as you go, you can change your layout, change the page link, add tags to sort content on your website, add a featured image and write an excerpt, decide whether to allow comments and determine the level of your Page, this feature becomes relevant when you have sub-pages and can also be adjusted in your Customizer through your Menu. You can also click on the blue box in the top left corner of your page with the plus sign, this allows you to look at the variety of different blocks you can add to your page. You can also click on blocks within your page and make adjustments from there, changing images and text, centring or changing alignment, adding or removing links; through either clicking on the block, or opening up your setting and clicking on the Block tab. Here is also where you can add in your brand colours, add/remove/change buttons and adjust button styles and decide whether you want links to open in another tab or go directly to the new location. Once you’ve completed the edits you want to do for your page, you can click update, or preview your changes first in the top right, or even switch a page to draft if you want to take it off the website for the moment.
12. To go back to your WordPress Home, click on the WordPress icon and click View Pages, now you can edit further pages, adding in your information for your About and Contact pages if you would like. On your contact page, you can add an email contact form, a map or a mail-chimp sign-up. Once you’ve made the adjustments you want to the pages you already have created for you can go back to your site pages again and add any new pages you want, just click on the pink, Add new page button. When you add a new page you can decide the layout you want to use, or choose a blank page and add blocks as you desire. Lastly, you may choose to keep or delete your Blog page; this is the page where any pew Posts will show up. If you provide a service, you may want to create posts that you can share on social media to increase your brand awareness; or you may use this page to provide news and updates or share special promotions or offer.
13. Posts work the same way as Pages, except you can add categories and blocks but the layout remains static. We can practice adding a post by clicking Post in the left navigation menu, then clicking on Add new post. When we’re on the new Post page we can start by adding a title, assigning a category, such as Sales, adding tags, putting in a featured image, and it’s important to add an excerpt, especially if you’ve assigned your post to show up with an excerpt on your customizer page. Depending on what you seek to achieve with your post, you can add a variety of blocks allowing you to create columns, add media and embeds, use widgets or simply write text; once you’ve built your post, click Publish!
14. Now that you’ve learned the basics for Pages and Posts, we can go back to our Customizer and adjust our Menu and look at some of the widget options we can add to our Home page. Widgets are like add-ons that are pre-built, such as email sign-ups, maps, hours of operation and more. Navigate to your Site Customizer and click Menus then click primary. Here you can click Add Items, if you’ve added any Pages you would like to add into your menu that runs across the top of your site under your logo and title; you can also reorder your menu, either by dragging menu items up and down, or clicking on Reorder and using the navigation arrows. You can also add links to your social media by clicking on the Social menu, then Add Items, and choose Custom Links, then pop open a new tab on your web browser, open the social media page you want to link, such as your Facebook, copy the link then paste it into the URL line and add in the name of the site in Link Text, click Add to Menu and then Save Changes. Next, we're going to look at widgets, so hit the back arrow at the top of your top left, to take you back to the main Customizer navigation bar.
15. Depending on your theme, you can add widgets to the side of your Home page or the bottom of your Home page. Scrolling through the widget options you can see what might work for your website and your business. You can add in an email sign-up, feeds for your social media, MailChimp subscriber and more. To start, I recommend adding your hours of operation and a map to your business if you have a brick and mortar store, or you can add a line of text explaining how delivery works with a slideshow of products. Remember to save any changes you make, and take a look at how your site looks by refreshing the tab of your site you have open in your web browser. Your site should be mostly set up at this point, so hit the x on the top left corner and we’ll take a look at analytics and how to set up your site to accept purchases.
16. When you’re back at your WordPress My Site, My Home page toward the top of your navigation bar on the left you can find Stats. Stats lets you see how many people have visited your site, what posts and pages they looked at when they visited and how they found you. This can help you decide what your customers like, where to find them and can help you develop successful marketing to increase your sales. You can see how you’re doing over weeks, months and even years. For more information click on the insights tab.
17. You will also see on your Stats page a promotion with a pink star that says Start Earning Money Now, take a look at this and read through the options to determine what might work best if you do want to collect payments online. If you choose to set this up it is easy to do so and WordPress walks you through the process, however, depending on how you would like to collect payments you will need a certain level of WordPress Plan to support the payment method you want.
18. Now is when you can decide if you’re happy with what you’ve created in WordPress and would like to purchase a plan and domain. Below Stats you have Plan, this is where WordPress will walk you through purchasing a plan. Keep in mind if you do purchase a plan and domain it can sometimes take a few hours for your new site to go like. However, as I said at the beginning of this tutorial, there are many options to help you build a website and WordPress is just one of many great choices, other options include monthly payment plans such as Wix and online shops such as Shopify. Finally, if you wanted to add a payment method, you would add that in now.

That concludes our tutorial on how to set up a WordPress website. You should now understand the basics and be capable of setting up your site, although practice and exploration will help you gain experience in managing your website and allow you to unlock more site capabilities once you gain confidence in your skills.

Please continue to use the CBDC Learning Library as we’ll continue to add new material on a variety of business-related topics to help your business grow and thrive.