



KEVIN O'NEILL / STAFF ARTIST

Build it and they might come

WordPress helps novices publish blogs

So you want to write a blog, but your computer skills are limited to checking your e-mail. Or maybe you want to build a website, but hypertext markup language (html) might as well be Greek to you. Don't give up on your dream just yet, because **WordPress.com** has a solution for all you Web wannabes.

The site will host your blog or website for free, and provide prebuilt templates for you to use, also for free. You do need to register in order to get started.

WordPress has a 10-step walk-through guide to help you set up your site relatively painlessly. The guide covers everything from signing up and adjusting your site's settings, to generating blog ideas and posting them from your mobile device.



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InSites

Pick a look

The templates, called themes, are what makes WordPress attractive to the web novice. They are basically a predesigned shell for a website into which you can insert your own content. There are more than 100 themes available covering many different styles, from fun and funky to slick and professional.

Once you pick a theme you like it's fairly simple to post text and pictures, or to add pages. There's a text editing window in which you can type your

blog entry or copy for a web page. Above the window, there's an icon you can click on to insert a picture. It gives you choices of uploading a picture from your computer, from a website or from images you have already uploaded. Adding pages is as simple as clicking a button, typing in a title and adding content.

You can also add video to your page from sites like YouTube or Hulu. There are free widgets available, such as calendars, RSS feeds or Twitter links. The site also has stat tracking and an impressive support system consisting of documentation, support contact forms, WordPress.tv and active user forums.

Advanced users

There are enough freebies and customization options to keep the casual blogger or Web page enthusiast happy, but some people will want more. For them, WordPress has premium options available:

- **Domain names:** Instead of having your Web address be "yourname.wordpress.com" you can have it be "yourname.com" for a more professional appearance.
- **Extra storage:** If you need more than the generous three gigabytes that you get for free, you can upgrade to as much as 25 gigabytes.
- **Custom CSS:** For those who are skilled with cascading style sheets, you can use this feature for greater control over the look of your site.
- **VideoPress:** This is a more sophisticated way to incorporate video into your site.

- **Ad-free:** WordPress occasionally puts ads on under-used blogs. With this feature you can keep them off your site.
- **Unlimited users:** The free limit is 35 users per private blog. This upgrade allows large online communities or organizations as many users as necessary.

If the premium options are still not enough for what you want to do, WordPress has yet another way to help you get on the Web. It offers free, open-source, web-building software at **WordPress.org**. If you have advanced Web skills, you can use this feature to build sites of your own design, or you can use one of the thousands of custom themes available from third-party providers not supported by the free site.

If you use WordPress.org, you need to have a Web hosting service that you can upload your page to. The free site at WordPress.com doesn't host these sites. Some hosts, such as GoDaddy.com, have WordPress software built in as part of their Web tool kits.

WordPress is a solid site that delivers what it promises. It's a good way for people who are intimidated by Web technology to get their feet wet. The company is a major online player whose software is used by companies such as CNN, Time, the NFL and even The Times-Tribune.

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