

**How to Launch Your Own Website with WordPress**  
**Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center**  
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***What is WordPress?***

WordPress is an open-source content management system (CMS) invented in 2003 by then-19-year-old Matt Mullenweg to build and maintain websites. It now holds 60% of the CMS market and is used by 23% of all websites.

***What can I do with WordPress?***

*Anything!* Originally just for blogs, WordPress has matured into a CMS that can be used for portfolios, event calendars & registration, podcasts, e-commerce, and more.

***Where do I get WordPress?***

There are two kinds of WordPress: [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com) is a company that will host your site for you; or you can go to [WordPress.org](http://WordPress.org) and download their software for yourself. Both are completely free up-front but offer different features:

<u>WordPress.com</u>	<u>WordPress.org</u>
Free hosting	Self-hosted
336 themes	Infinite themes
Default plugins	Infinite plugins
Cannot modify PHP code	Customizable code
Secure and backed up	Responsible for own security & backups
3 GB storage	Storage varies — often infinite
Advertisements	Ad-free
Less knowledge needed	Learn by doing

***Where can I run WordPress?***

The software downloaded from WordPress.org requires you pay a hosting company to run the software for you. I recommend DreamHost, which offers unlimited storage and bandwidth and comes with one free domain name. Their basic price of \$9.95/month can be discounted to \$2.95/month with this promotion: <https://www.dreamhost.com/promo/lifehacker295/>

***What plugins do you recommend?***

- **Jetpack:** Made by Automattic, the same company that runs WordPress.com, this plugin adds almost three dozen features to your site.
- **Akismet:** Prevents your site from being spammed.
- **iThemes Security:** Prevents your site from being hacked.
- **All in One SEO Pack:** Optimizes your site for search engines.
- **TablePress:** Powerful utility for creating tables and importing Excel files.
- **Redirection:** Lets you change URLs without breaking links.

These and countless other plugins and themes can be found at <http://wordpress.org>

**Any questions? Email Ken Gagne by visiting <https://about.me/kgagne>**