



C o m m u n i t y E x p e r i e n c e D i s t i l l e d

WordPress 4.0 Site Blueprints

Second Edition

Create a variety of exciting sites for e-commerce, networking, video streaming, and more using WordPress

Rachel McCollin

[PACKT] open source*
PUBLISHING community experience distilled

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BIRMINGHAM - MUMBAI

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Preface

WordPress is now by far the most popular content management system (CMS) with over a quarter of the total websites on the Web running on it. Originally, it was developed as a blogging platform, but it can do much more than that.

If you're like the millions of people who want to use WordPress to sell products, reach an audience, showcase your work, or communicate with a team, among other things, this book is for you. In each chapter, I've used WordPress and shown you how to set up a site that does exactly that.

You don't need to write code to follow the majority of the chapters; all you need is some familiarity with WordPress and adding content to it and the enthusiasm to create a great website.

So what are you waiting for? Here you go for your fantastic website!

What this book covers

Chapter 1, Migrating a Static Site to WordPress, explains how to move an existing site to WordPress and import content from your old site to your new WordPress site.

Chapter 2, Creating a Social Media Site, shows how to use BuddyPress to create a networking site for a community of users.

Chapter 3, Creating a Network of Sites, shows how to create a WordPress Multisite network that will allow users to create their own blog, such as <https://wordpress.com/> or <http://edublogs.org/>.

Chapter 4, Creating an E-commerce Site, explains how to use the free WooCommerce plugin to create an e-commerce site and add real and virtual products to it for sale.

Chapter 5, Creating a Video Streaming Site, shows how to use WordPress to set up and manage a video streaming site, which automatically updates from your own YouTube channel.

Chapter 6, Creating a Review Site, explains how to create a WordPress site that lets users post reviews on products or services.

Chapter 7, Creating a Jobs Board, shows how to use WordPress to create a jobs board so that users can post job advertisements and apply for jobs.

Chapter 8, Creating a Team Communications Site, shows you how to use the free P2 theme to create a site for the members of a team to communicate with the team and update each other on the progress of a project.

Chapter 9, Creating a Gallery Site, explains how to build a WordPress site using a suitable theme and the popular NextGEN Gallery plugin to display images.

Chapter 10, Creating a Membership Site, shows how to create a site that allows users to register as members and view content, which only the registered members have access to.

What you need for this book

To use this book, you will need:

- One or more development sites (one per chapter) running the latest version of WordPress
- Administrator access to your WordPress sites
- Access to files in your site via FTP or cPanel
- A text editor or code editor

Who this book is for

WordPress 4.0 Site Blueprints, Second Edition, is suitable for both new and experienced WordPress users. You don't need to be a PHP developer or have ever created a WordPress theme or plugin; instead, the book will help you use themes and plugins (all free) to create a wide range of sites. Familiarity with the WordPress interface will help you, but you don't need to be able to write code.

Conventions

In this book, you will find a number of text styles that distinguish between different kinds of information. Here are some examples of these styles and an explanation of their meaning.

Code words in text, database table names, folder names, filenames, file extensions, pathnames, dummy URLs, user input, and Twitter handles are shown as follows: "Sometimes, your `wp-content` directory will have some extra folders, for example, if a plugin adds one."

A block of code is set as follows:

```
require ( './wp-blog-header.php' )
```

New terms and **important words** are shown in bold. Words that you see on the screen, for example, in menus or dialog boxes, appear in the text like this: "Click on the **Databases** tab."



Warnings or important notes appear in a box like this.



Tips and tricks appear like this.

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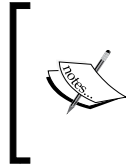
Migrating a Static Site to WordPress

Many people come to WordPress after some experience of creating static sites using HTML and CSS; in fact, this is what happened to me. I had been building static sites for a while and wanted to start developing with **content management system (CMS)**, which would make it easy for me to import existing static sites and update them using the CMS interface.

The great news is that WordPress makes it possible for you to do this. In this chapter, you'll learn how to move your old site to WordPress as well as gain an understanding of how WordPress works and the benefits of using it. We'll cover these topics:

- The difference between a WordPress site and a static site
- How WordPress is structured and how it stores your site's content and design information
- How to install WordPress on your server and set it up while keeping your old site live
- How to choose and install a theme
- How to add content to your new WordPress site, including importing content from your old site and adding new posts and pages
- Installing plugins to add extra functionality
- Launching your site once it is ready

So let's get started!



In this book, you'll learn how to download and activate a theme that will give your site its styling and layout. If you want to learn how to take your static site and develop your own theme-based on the code in your HTML files, I recommend *WordPress Theme Development Beginner's Guide*, Packt Publishing.

WordPress versus static sites – the differences

If you've built static sites before, you'll know that they consist of a number of files that you upload to your server. These will include:

- HTML files
- One or more CSS files (referred to as style sheets)
- Possibly JavaScript files if you're running sliders or other dynamic elements on your site

Your WordPress site will include different file types and it will also include a database, which is where your content will be stored.

The main elements of a WordPress site are:

- The files running WordPress itself. These are mainly PHP files.
- The files in your site's theme, including one CSS file (occasionally more) and a number of PHP files.
- The files in any plugins you install. These will always include PHP files but may also include CSS and JavaScript files.
- Files you upload to your site, including images and PDF files.
- Your site's database, which will include a number of tables storing your content and site settings.

You'll learn more about these and what they do in the next section.

Understanding how WordPress stores content

Having read the list of files contained in a WordPress site, you may be feeling quite daunted! But the good news is that you don't need to think about the files I've listed here as WordPress does the thinking for you.

So, let's take a look at the contents of a WordPress site in more detail.

WordPress files

When you install WordPress, a number of files are uploaded to your server. The good news is that you don't need to do anything to these files; in fact, you shouldn't. If you edit these files (referred to as the core files), any changes you make will be lost when you install the next WordPress update.

Later in this chapter, you'll learn how to install WordPress. Once you've done that, you can ignore the core files. Phew!

Theme and plugin files and uploads

The next set of files is stored in the `wp-content` directory, inside your WordPress installation. This directory will normally look similar to this:



Name	Size	Date
▶ uploads	--	15 Jan 2015 20:46
▶ themes	--	15 Jan 2015 21:02
▶ plugins	--	15 Jan 2015 23:22
index.php	28 B	15 Jan 2015 14:39

Fig 1.1: The `wp-content` directory

Let's take a look at the file types:

- `themes`: When you create your site, you will need to install a theme, which is what will give your site its design and layout and possibly, some extra features too, depending on the theme. There are thousands of themes available for you to download and use on your site, and a lot of them are free. WordPress stores the files for your theme in the `themes` folder, with each theme having its own folder. You'll never need to open these files or edit them.

- **plugins:** These are extra packages you install in your site to add more functionality. There are thousands of plugins available, and like themes, a lot of them are free. Later in this chapter, you'll learn how to install and configure plugins on your site. Again, the good news is that you don't have to worry about these files; WordPress will do the work for you.
- **uploads:** This folder contains all of the images and other media that you upload to your site. When you first install WordPress you might not have this folder yet, as it's automatically created the first time you upload media to your site. You don't actually upload these directly to this folder; instead, you use the WordPress interface to upload them and then WordPress stores them in the correct place for you. It is another example of WordPress making your life easier! Later in this chapter, you'll learn how to upload an image and insert it in a page on your site.

Sometimes, your `wp-content` directory will have some extra folders, for example, if a plugin adds one. Don't worry if that happens, just leave them alone!

Database

The final piece in the jigsaw is the database. This is where all of your content is stored — your posts, pages, and any settings you've made on your site.

The main benefit of using a database is that it keeps your content and your design separate. As your site grows, this makes your life much easier because you don't have to directly edit HTML files if you want to make changes to your site. The parts of each page that are the same across the site (for example, the header, footer, and sidebars) are kept separate from content, meaning if you want to change them you only have to do it once.

Everything you may need to do with your WordPress site can be done via the WordPress administration screens; you never need to touch the code. If you're not a techie, this will be a very good news!

Installing WordPress

Now that you understand how WordPress works, you're probably itching to get started! So, let's start by installing WordPress. There are two ways to do this:

- Using an installer such as Softaculous or Fantastico, which may be provided by your hosting company
- Directly installing WordPress using the Famous 5 Minute Install

Let's start with the easier way, which is to use an installer.

Installing WordPress using an installer

If your hosting provider gives you access to an installer, it will probably be accessible via your hosting dashboard or cPanel, which is a dashboard many hosting providers give you to manage your site.



The exact way this looks and where you find it will vary from host to host, so your screen will probably look slightly different from what you see here, but the process is much the same.

My hosting provider includes a link in its control panel called **Web Apps**. Yours might be called Fantastico, Softaculous, or something else. If you're unsure, check with your hosting company and ask them if they provide a WordPress installer.



Fig 1.2: Accessing an installer

When I open this, I see a list of the web apps available to me, including WordPress:

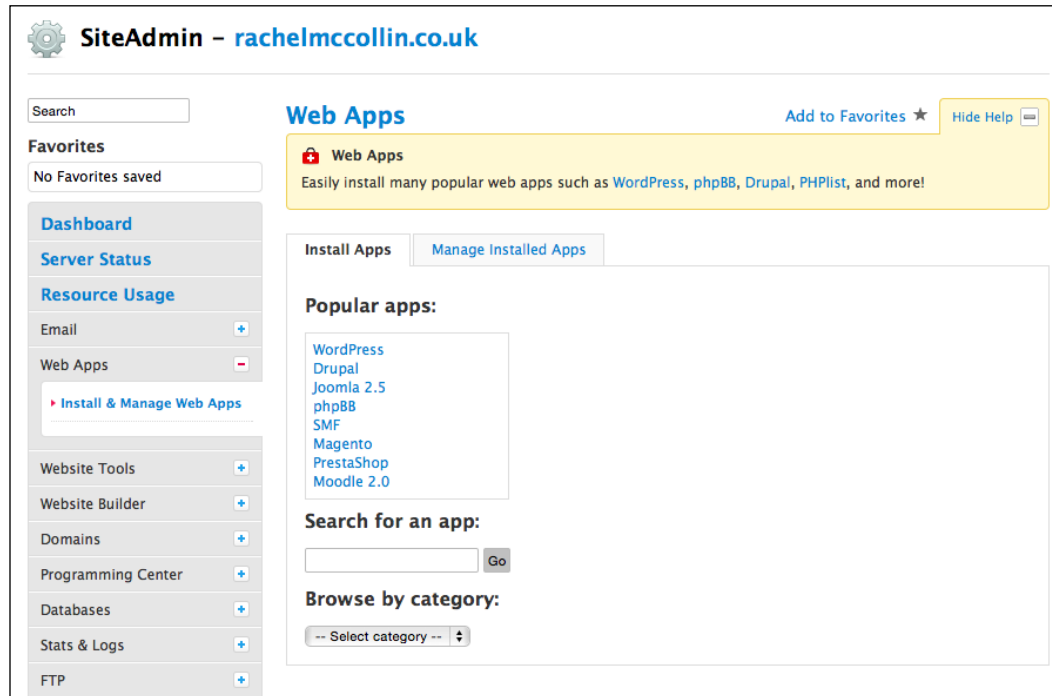


Fig 1.3: Choosing WordPress in the installer

These are the steps you need to follow now:

1. Click on **WordPress** and then on **Install Now**.
2. You will be presented with a list of fields to complete. Fill them out as follows:
 - **Prefix:** I prefer to use just `http://` as the `www` really isn't necessary these days.
 - **Domain:** This will already be filled out with your domain name; leave it as it is.
 - **Directory:** If you add something here, WordPress will be installed in a subdirectory of your site and not in your root directory. If you already have a static site running on this domain, using a subdirectory will mean that your static site will still work while you install and set up WordPress. If not, it's easier to leave this empty. You'll learn later in this chapter how to manage your old site while you're setting up WordPress.

- **Database Name:** You can leave this as it is or change it to something that's more memorable to you. If you're not going to be working on your database, just leave it alone.
- **Table Prefix:** Leave this as wp_.
- **Site Name:** This is where you enter your site's title.
- **Site Description:** This is where you enter your description or strapline. Most themes will display this below the title at the top of your pages. If you don't have a description, leave this blank.
- **Enable Multisite:** If this is offered by your installer, leave it unchecked.
- **Admin Username:** The default is admin, but for security reasons, you should change this to something unique and memorable for you.
- **Admin Password:** Enter your password twice for logging in to your site. Be sure to make it secure, including uppercase letters, numbers, and other characters.
- **Admin Email:** Enter your e-mail address.
- **Select Language:** If this is an option, select your language if it isn't English.
- **Select Plugins:** This isn't offered by all installers, so you may not see it. I leave this blank, preferring to install plugins later on.
- **Email recipient:** If you add your e-mail address here, you will receive an e-mail with details of your new WordPress installation, including a link to the admin screens.



Some installers offer a backup option, which is a good idea to select if available. It's also a good idea to use a backup plugin in your site too. For a review of some of the best backup plugins, visit <http://premium.wpmudev.org/blog/premium-freemium-wordpress-backup-plugins/>.

Here, you can see an example for the installation I'm setting up:

The screenshot displays the WordPress installation configuration interface. On the left is a sidebar with a 'Resource Usage' section and a list of tools including Email, Web Apps, Website Tools, Website Builder, Domains, Programming Center, Databases, Stats & Logs, FTP, DNS, Backups, Security, and Advanced. The main area is divided into three columns. The first column, 'Popular apps:', lists WordPress, Drupal, Joomla 2.5, phpBB, SMF, Magento, PrestaShop, and Moodle 2.0, with a search bar and a 'Browse by category' dropdown. The second column, 'WordPress', contains the following settings: Prefix (http://www.), Domain (rachelmccollin.co.uk), Directory (blueprints1), Database Name (bluep1), Database Settings (Table Prefix: wp_), Site Settings (Site Name: WordPress Site Blueprints, Site Description: Migrating a Static Site to Worc), Enable Multisite (WPMU) (unchecked), Admin Account (Admin Username: rachelmccollin, Admin Password: masked, Confirm Password: masked, Admin Email: contact@rachelmccollin.com), Choose Language (English), Select Plugins (Limit Login Attempts: unchecked, Clef Secure Passwordless Login: unchecked), and Email Installation Details (Recipient: empty). At the bottom right are 'Cancel' and 'Install' buttons.

Fig 1.4: Enter your site details

Once you've entered your details, click on **Install** and the installer will do its work. You will see a screen with a link to your new site and to the admin screens. Well done!

But what do you do if your hosting provider doesn't give you access to an installer? That's where manual installation comes in.

Installing WordPress manually

Installing WordPress manually takes a little longer, but isn't difficult as long as you know the steps to take. You'll need to learn how to do this if your hosting company doesn't provide an installer or if you want to install WordPress locally on your PC or Mac. This can be useful for working on a development site, where you're creating a dummy version of the site before you launch it to the world.



If you want to install WordPress on your local machine, the process is very similar to the one here, but you'll also need to install an app such as MAMP (for Mac and Windows) or XAMPP (for Mac, Windows, or Linux). You can find instructions at http://codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress_Locally_on_Your_Mac_With_MAMP and <http://premium.wpmudev.org/blog/how-to-install-wordpress-locally-for-pc-windows-with-xampp/>. For a guide to migrating your site to the live site once you're happy with it, refer to <http://code.tutsplus.com/tutorials/migrating-a-wordpress-site-from-a-local-server-to-production--wp-26>.

Installing WordPress manually consists of four steps:

- Downloading the WordPress files
- Creating a database on your web server
- Uploading the WordPress files to your server
- Running the WordPress installation script by accessing the URL for your site in your browser

Let's work through each of those steps in turn.

Downloading the WordPress files

To download the WordPress files, follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://wordpress.org/download/> and click on the **Download** button to download the files.
2. This will download a .zip file to your computer. Unzip this.

Creating a database on your server using phpMyAdmin

Your site will need a database to hold all of your content. WordPress doesn't create this for you; you'll have to do it yourself.

1. In your hosting provider's dashboard or in cPanel, go to phpMyAdmin. If you can't find this, ask your hosting provider; they might have a different way to create a database, such as using a wizard.

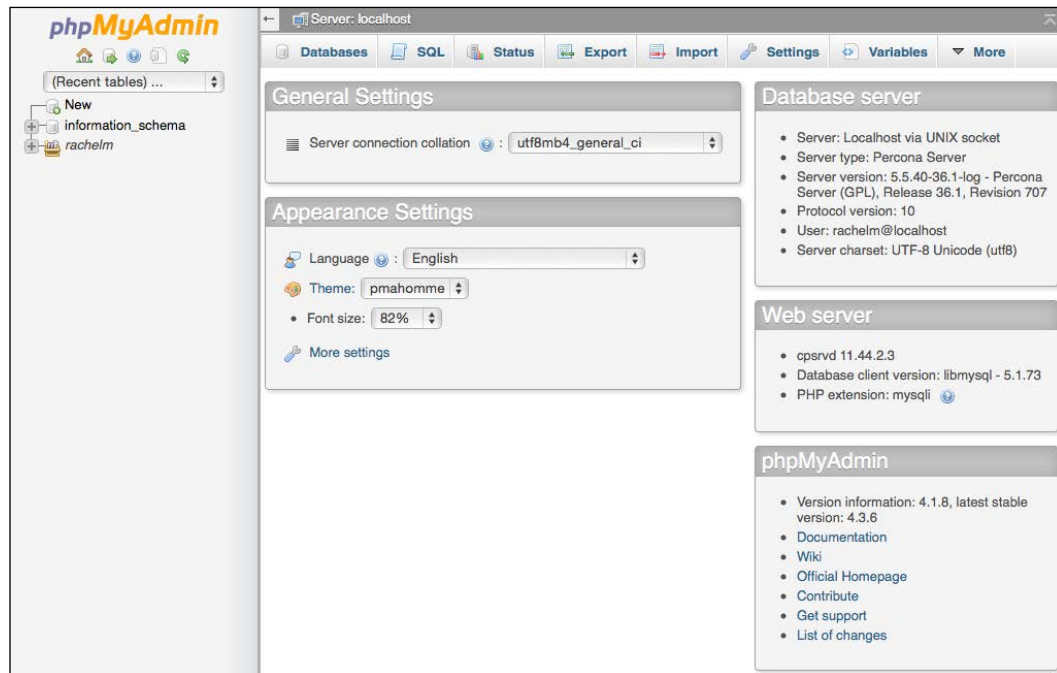


Fig 1.5: The phpMyAdmin home screen

2. Click on the **Databases** tab.
3. You will see a field labeled **Create a new database**. Type the name of your database in this field. Make a note of this as you'll need it again later.
4. Click on **OK**.

You now have an empty database set up. The next step is to upload WordPress.



Some hosting providers don't let you create databases in phpMyAdmin; you have to do it in your hosting dashboard instead. If this is the case, follow the instructions given by your hosting provider.

Uploading WordPress to your server

To upload WordPress, you'll need an FTP client or a code editing program with FTP built in. I tend to use Coda (<http://panic.com/coda/>), which is a code editor for the Mac, or FileZilla (<https://filezilla-project.org>), which is a free FTP client.

1. In your FTP client or code editor, display your Downloads folder locally and the files on your remote server.
2. If you already have a static site on your server and want to keep it running while you create your new site, create a folder inside your `public_html` folder. I'm creating a folder called `blueprints1`, as you can see in the following screenshot. If you don't have an existing site, you can skip this step.

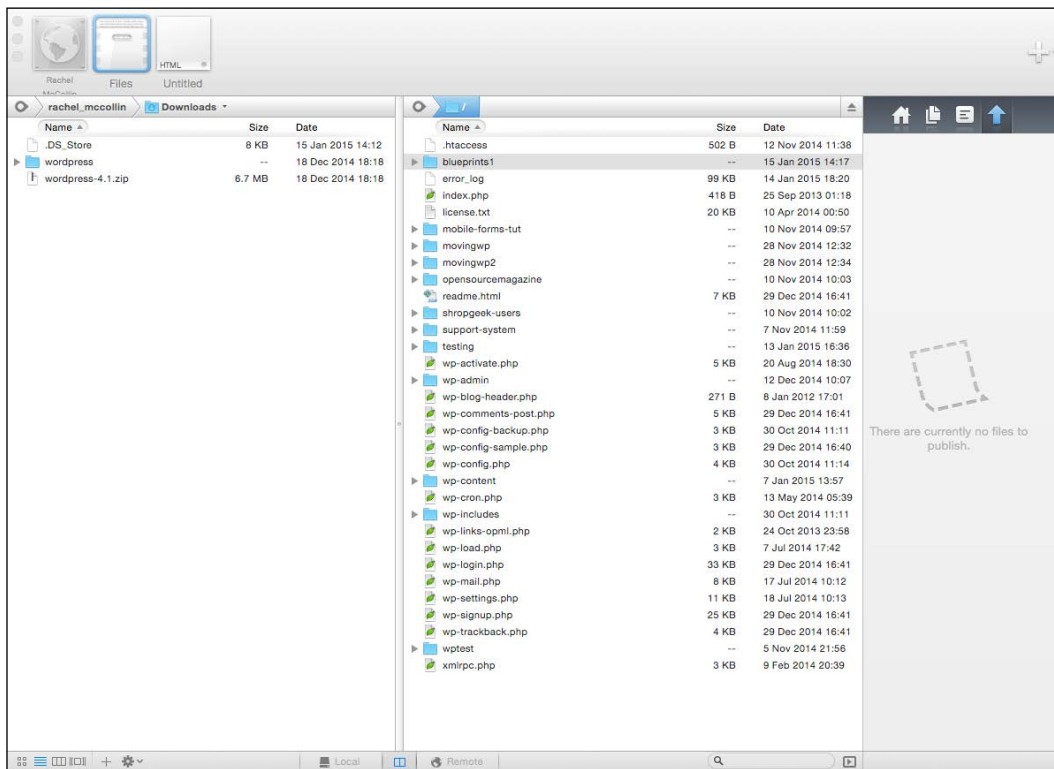


Fig 1.6: The blueprints1 folder

3. Now copy the contents of the `wordpress` folder from your Downloads folder to the folder you've created. If you haven't created a folder, copy it to the `public_html` folder. Don't copy the `wordpress` folder, copy its contents.
4. Make yourself a coffee while you wait for the files to upload!

Now that you have a database and the WordPress files uploaded, you just need to activate the WordPress installation script by visiting your new site's URL in your browser.

Activating the WordPress installation script

To activate the installation script, you'll need to perform the following steps in your browser:

1. In your browser of choice, type in the URL for your new site. Remember that if you've created a folder for your site, it will be `http://yourdomain.com/folder`, where `folder` is the name of your new folder and `yourdomain.com` is your domain name.
2. You will be presented with the first of the installation screens, where you choose your language. Select your language and click on **Continue**.
3. The next screen tells you what's coming up. Give it a quick read (and don't worry!) and click on **Let's go!**.
4. The following screen is where you need to give WordPress some information about your database so that it can access it. Input the following:
 - **Database Name:** Enter the name you gave your database earlier
 - **User Name:** Enter the username you created for your database earlier
 - **Password:** Enter the password you assigned to your new username
 - **Database Host:** Leave this as **localhost** (unless your hosting provider uses a different hostname)
 - **Table Prefix:** Leave this as **wp_**