Lesson 1: Getting Started With WordPress

Chapter 1, Video 1: "Introduction"

Hi, and welcome to Creating WordPress Websites II. I'm John Agress, and I'm really glad that you're going to be joining me to learn how to build content management websites using the WordPress.org platform. This is the follow-up course to Creating WordPress Websites, which focuses on WordPress.com, and I'd like to take a little time to explain the difference between the two versions.

WordPress.com gives you the opportunity to learn about Web page publishing at no cost to you. It's perfect if your goal is to create your own small website or blog. You can do just about anything with WordPress.org. You can install any of thousands of themes and tens of thousands of plugins. You can explore and change the theme and site structure once you've learned the proper codes, and you can set up a real content management system to let nontechnical people contribute by using a "What You See Is What You Get" text editor. Unlike WordPress.com, which is hosted by the WordPress organization, you must install WordPress.org on a hosting company server, and that will cost about $100 a year.

How do you know if you're ready for this course? Well, if you've taken my WordPress.com course, you're ready. If you've used WordPress, FrontPage, Dreamweaver, or Blogger, you should feel comfortable with the self-hosted version of WordPress. But if you're new to website building, I suggest you switch over to the introductory course. You're probably also better off in the other course if you don't know how to do the following tasks: cutting and pasting text, downloading online files to your hard drive, and creating directories, and moving your files all around your hard drive.

One way you'll learn how to use WordPress is by creating a class project website from scratch. This will keep us all on the same page and lets me show you the features that you're going to need to know. Many students ask if they can work on their project on their own instead of on the class site. And while you can do that, I don't recommend it. That's because you simply won't learn and remember as much as the students who practice with the project website. And I may not be able to answer all the questions about your personal site. So if you have the time and energy to work on the project site and your own website at the same time, please do so. But if you want to get the most out of this course, please do follow along as we put together the class project.

I'm looking forward to helping you take advantage of everything that WordPress can do. Please be sure to visit the Discussion Area with your questions or comments. If you can answer a classmate's question, please feel free to jump in. And check the Supplementary Material section at the end of each lesson, as well as the Frequently Asked Questions, and the Index. They're both in the Resources area. So let's get started. I will see you in Chapter 2.
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Chapter 4, Video 1: "Installation Process"

This is where we will start the installation process. It's the Home page of your control panel. Now, I'm using Bluehost as an example, and the Website Builders, which are the scripts to build your WordPress website, are in the top menu of this particular control panel. They might be in a different place on yours.

There's also two choices here: either WordPress or Simple Scripts. You can choose either one with Bluehost. I'm going to choose WordPress, and it's going to check out my computer just to make sure that I have the capacity to handle the installation, and the speed is enough to handle it, and it will let us know then that everything's okay, and then we're going to be able to proceed with the WordPress installation. So let's wait for that to happen.

And here we are. This is the first screen of the WordPress installation. It will tell you what version—which is the most recent version of WordPress at the time that we're recording this, and the next step is to simply press the Install button.

And the next step after that is to choose the domain into which you want to install WordPress. Now, I have a whole bunch here from the sites that I have done on this particular hosting company server. You probably won't have as many, so it'll be easier to make your choice. You have a choice of choosing domains that begin with www or the same domain that doesn't begin with www. I would choose the latter. WordPress prefers not to use the www, and they will work just as well as if you do use it. So the site we're going to install this WordPress into is called buildabackyardwatergarden.com, so I will click that. It will appear up here in the window, and in the blank after the slash here in the directory field, don't put anything. Just leave it empty, and click the Check Domain button.

What's going to happen now is that the autoloader will make sure that there are no files already installed in this particular area of your server and will tell you that everything is okay. Takes a couple of minutes to do this, so let's hang on. And it tells us that everything's alright.

So what we're going to do then is click the Show advanced options button, and this is going to allow you to fill in some things here that normally would fill in when the WordPress back end loads here. We'll just take care of it in advance. So for the Site Name or Title, we're calling this website Build a Backyard Water Garden. That's the site title, and it doesn't have to be exclusive. You can use whatever title you want. And for your class project, you can use Build a Backyard Water Garden. That's the name that's going to appear in the header of the website.

For the Admin Username, you can use anything you want. Just don't use single word "admin," because that was what WordPress used to recommend everybody to use. Everybody started using it, and the hackers realized that that's half the way of getting into the website, just by typing "admin." So if you do use the word "admin," add a few letters or numbers after that to make it a little bit unique.
The uploader gives you an administrative password that you can use if you want. I normally do because it's a good, strong password. If you want to, you can use your own. Doesn't really matter.

We're then going to click the button that says Automatically create a new database for this installation. So we're going to do that, and it gives you that information. It will create the database for you. Then what we're going to do is click the button that says, "I have read the terms and conditions of the loading agreement," and the next button is the last one. You'll click Install Now, and WordPress will be installed on your server.