

THE ULTIMATE
WORDPRESS TOOLKIT

BY WPBEGINNER

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The Story Behind this Toolkit

When I first started using WordPress in 2006, I wanted to know what were the exact plugins and tools that “experts” are using on their website.

At the time, no such resource existed. I struggled my way through and learnt from every single mistake that I made.

In 2009, I decided enough was enough and created WPBeginner which became the largest free WordPress resource site for beginners.

Today, I want to share with you my toolkit - a collection of WordPress related products and resources that I use on our websites and projects.

I hope you will find it useful in building / improving your WordPress site.

Yours Truly,

Syed Balkhi
Founder of WPBeginner

Why Having a Toolkit is Important?

When growing a business, **time is money.**

Leveraging the right set of tools will help you save time and get ahead.

On the other hand, using the wrong set of tools can cost you a lot of money and hassle in the long run.

That’s why I always recommend choosing the best tool for the job.

Note: Not all plugins / services that I use are free.

I pay for them because they make me more efficient. Instead of looking at them as costs, I look at them as investments.

A toolbox stuffed with necessary tools is crucial for the success of your website.

Web Hosting

Often overlooked, web hosting is one of the key components of every successful website. Web hosting is where your website lives on the internet. Similar to a house, each website has different needs.

Knowing what you need will help you make the right decision and save time / money.

Where I host WPBeginner:



SiteGround - The WPBeginner website is hosted on a SiteGround Enterprise server. I have been using SiteGround since 2015. They host over 2.8 million websites.

SiteGround provides the perfect combination of speed, performance, and reliability. They have plans that grow with your business.

Alternatives:



Bluehost - One of the oldest web hosts started in 1996. Great for small businesses. I use them for my smaller websites. Officially recommended by WordPress.org.



Hostinger - Another great yet affordable web hosting provider. They have many data centers across the world. In our speed tests, their servers turned out to be one of the fastest on the market.

Enterprise WordPress Hosting



WPEngine - WP Engine offers WordPress-specific hosting built to ensure high performance, security, and uptime. With WPEngine, you'll have an army of WordPress experts on your side for assistance.

Read more about when do you need Managed WordPress Hosting.

Security & Performance

Making sure that your website is secure and loads fast is detrimental to your success. Below are my favorite security & performance tools:



Duplicator - Schedule cloud backups for your site. This is like a time-capsule for your website. If something goes wrong, you can go back in time. You can get the free plugin from here.

Alternative: UpdraftPlus



CloudFlare - One of the best CDN services available. Cloudflare offers a free CDN that speeds up your website along with a suite of powerful security features. Learn to set up Cloudflare Free CDN.



WP Rocket - Best caching plugin for WordPress. Caching is a must have for every website because it reduces server load and significantly speed up your website.

Essential Functionalities

Want to add basic functionalities to your WordPress website? Take a look at some of the best WordPress plugins I use on all my websites.



WPForms - Drag & drop WordPress form builder. Easily create contact forms, subscription forms, payment forms, or any other type of forms without hiring a developer. Here's the free version.



WP Mail SMTP - The most popular SMTP and PHP mailer plugin for WordPress. Ensures emails sent through your WordPress sites are delivered properly. Here's the free version.



WPCode - Add code snippets safely without having to worry about breaking your site. It significantly reduces the number of plugins installed on your site. Take a look at the free version.

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SearchWP - Make your site's content more searchable. It indexes additional content that the default WordPress search ignores like custom fields, ACF fields, product attributes, and more.

SEO & Marketing

Want to get more traffic and subscribers on your website? Here are the best WordPress SEO and marketing plugins to help you boost your website traffic.



All in One SEO (AIOSEO) - The best WordPress SEO plugin. It helps optimize your content by adding meta titles, descriptions, sitemaps, and more. Get the free version here.



OptinMonster - Converts abandoning website visitors into email subscribers. I created this plugin for WPBeginner and now it's being used by some of the largest websites on the internet.



Drip – Powerful tool to send email newsletters. Makes it easy to segment your audience, set up automation and workflows. I use it on WPBeginner and most of my websites.

Alternatives: Constant Contact and Brevo.



MonsterInsights - Most popular Google Analytics plugin for WordPress. See how visitors find and use your website, so you can keep them coming back. Simply put get the stats that matter.



PushEngage - Easiest way to drive repeat traffic to your website. It lets you notify your site visitors via push notifications and encourage them to return to your site. I use it on WPBeginner.



RafflePress - The best contest and giveaway plugin for WordPress. With RafflePress, you can grow your email list, social media following, and more. You can get the free version.



Smash Balloon – The best social media feeds plugin for WordPress. Create and display custom Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube feeds on your WordPress site.



UserFeedback – Easy survey tool that gives you more insights into what users wanted. Create surveys like feedback/experience, NPS, product usage survey, etc. Get the free version here.



Keyword Generator Tool – Our FREE tool enables you to create 300+ SEO keyword ideas in a click. With it, finding keywords are no longer tedious or time consuming.



SEO Analyzer – Our FREE SEO tool lets you quickly perform an SEO audit, finds critical errors, and generate a report to fix them. No signup or installation needed to use it.

Free tools: Get access to more free tools from WPBeginner.

Suggested Readings:

- Ultimate WordPress SEO Guide for Beginners (Step by Step)

- Why building your email list is so important today!

- Why you should never use WordPress to send newsletter emails - This is quite tempting but don't do it.

- 19 actionable tips to drive more traffic to your new website

Themes & Styling

The look and feel of your website are crucial for delivering a great user experience. Here are my favorite theme shops and design plugins.

I highly recommend that you read this guide on selecting a WordPress theme before you make any decision.



SeedProd - Create custom WordPress themes and page layouts without a developer. Also design landing pages, and get access to 200+ built-in themes. Here's the free version.



Divi - The easiest way to design a WordPress site without hiring a developer. It comes with a drag and drop builder that lets you customize every part of your WordPress site.



Thrive Architect – Premium page builder that comes with 350+ pre-designed layouts for homepages, sales page, and more. You can connect it with their Thrive Optimize addon to split-test your pages.



Astra - It's a free WordPress theme that comes with tons of ready-to-build starter site templates. It's optimized for performance and seamlessly integrates with most drag and drop page builders.



Envira Gallery - Easily create WordPress photo and video galleries, organize them in an album, sort them by tags, add social media integration, eCommerce, and more. Get the free version.

Alternatives: NextGEN Gallery (plugin), Photocrati (theme)



SoliloquyWP - The fastest WordPress slider plugin. Easily create image and video sliders in WordPress. Features include dynamic content sliders, carousels, lightbox, and more. Download for free!

Monetization

At the end of the day, your goal is to make money with your website. Below are the tools I recommend:



ThirstyAffiliates - Easy solution to manage your affiliate links. It automatically detects keywords on your website and adds affiliate links. I use it on WPBeginner and my other websites.



Advanced Ads - WordPress banner ads made easy. Easily rotate banner ads, set ad expiration dates, see stats, and more. Over 150,000 sites use Advanced ads to optimize their ads.

Suggested Readings:

-6 Best WordPress Ad Management Plugins

-30 Proven Ways to Make Money Online Blogging

Ecommerce

One of the best ways to monetize a website is through an online store. Below are the best WordPress eCommerce solutions.



WooCommerce - The most popular WordPress eCommerce plugin. Easily add an online store on your WordPress website. Best for selling products where shipping is involved.



Easy Digital Downloads - Makes it easy to sell digital products with WordPress. Great for selling eBooks or online software. We use it to sell our WordPress plugins. Get the free version.



WP Simple Pay – Allows you to accept one-time or recurring payments via Stripe without setting up a shopping cart. Great for setting up a payment form in WordPress. Free version is here.

Membership

Another way to monetize your website is by creating a membership website and offering premium content to paying subscribers. Below are the best WordPress membership plugins.



MemberPress - Easy to set up membership plugin that allows you to build and sell online courses. You can also create content dripping, and integrates with most popular marketing and payment solutions.



Thrive Apprentice - Best WordPress membership site and course builder. Its drag and drop course builder makes it easy to create modules, chapters, and lessons to keep your courses well organized.



MemberMouse - Enterprise-level membership plugin to sell products with members-only pricing. Create member-only content with access controls and manage members with CRM tools.

Additional resource: Ultimate guide to creating a membership site

Translation

If your business has an international presence, then you may want to localize your content for certain geographical regions. Here are the best plugins to add and manage translations in WordPress.



TranslatePress - Short for WordPress Multilingual, allows you to create content in different languages. It's powerful enough for corporate sites while simple enough for small blogs.



WPML - Short for WordPress Multilingual, allows you to create content in different languages. It's powerful enough for corporate sites while simple enough for small blogs.

Additional Info: 9 Best Translation Plugins for WordPress Websites

Additional Resources

Thank you for reading my toolkit, and I hope you found it to be helpful.

If you did, then please consider following WPBeginner on:

- Facebook Group (Get free WordPress assistance from our experts)
- Facebook Page (Like us on Facebook)
- Twitter (Follow us on Twitter)
- YouTube (Subscriber our channel on YouTube)

We share tons of awesome video tutorials on YouTube, so definitely check that out.

You may also like the following sections on WPBeginner:

- WordPress Dictionary - WordPress terms explained in plain English.
- WPBeginner Deals - Exclusive discounts on the best blogging tools and services for WPBeginner users.

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