

WordPress 101: Introduction to WordPress

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A big thank you to Kiera Howe for the use of DragonTeach.com who is providing this service free to us today!

Agenda

- Introduction & Housekeeping
- Getting Your Sandbox Site
- What is WordPress?
- WordPress.com vs WordPress.org
- Hosting Considerations
- Canadian Considerations for Website Owners
- Q&A

Disclaimer & Housekeeping

Please note:

- These slides contain detailed notes for your reference
- Slides will be uploaded to my website after the session
- This session will be recorded (hopefully for WordPress.tv!)
- Please ask questions! I'll do my best to answer them
- There's a 15-minute break between this session and Part Two

Speaker Notes: Mention the Happiness Bar for technical issues during the conference. Let attendees know they can come back for troubleshooting help there.

Getting Started - Your Sandbox Site

Let's get you set up!

- We're going to walk through setting up your sandbox site together at: <https://shanta.dragonteach.com>
- (Don't use "admin" as the username!)

What's a sandbox site?

- A safe place to learn and experiment
- If you break anything, it will be limited to your own site.
- Available for the duration of WordCamp Canada and into the new year!
- Perfect for practicing what you learn today and through the conference.

Speaker Notes: Walk through the registration process step by step. Make sure everyone has successfully logged in before proceeding. This is critical - check the room to ensure no one is stuck.

What Is WordPress?

- WordPress powers over 40% of all websites on the internet
- For the most part complete website creation and management system
- Powers everything from personal blogs to major publications like TIME Magazine
- Easy to use - no coding required for basic sites, but can get complicated
- Supports multiple contributors with different access levels
- Constantly updated and improved by a global community (such as on Contributor Day today)
- Why should Canadians care?

Speaker Notes: Emphasize that WordPress is both powerful and accessible. Many major Canadian organizations use WordPress.

WordPress.com vs WordPress.org

- Two different platforms - it's important to know the difference!
- Which one are we using today?
- WordPress.org (self-hosted) - this is what most businesses use! However, you may still have your own domain on WordPress.com if you have a business account. Make sure to check!
- Speaker Notes: Make it clear that while .com is easier to start with, .org gives you true ownership and control. Most WordCamp talks focus on .org because that's what professionals use.

WordPress.org - Self-Hosted

- What does "self-hosted" mean?
- Think of it like renting vs. owning:
- WordPress.com = Renting an apartment (someone else owns the building)
- WordPress.org = Owning your home (you control everything)
- What you need for WordPress.org:
- Hosting - Where your website files live (like the land your house sits on)
- Domain name - Your website address (like your street address)
- WordPress software - The actual website platform (FREE to download!)
- Your sandbox sites are running on WordPress.org!

Speaker Notes: This analogy helps beginners understand the difference. Emphasize that "self-hosted" doesn't mean hosting on your personal computer - it means you choose a hosting company.

Hosting - What You Need to Know (1)

- Hosting is where your website lives on the internet
- Types of hosting:
 - Shared Hosting - Most affordable, good for starting out
 - Managed WordPress Hosting - WordPress-specific, handles updates & security
 - VPS (Virtual Private Server) - More control, more technical
 - Dedicated Server - Full server just for you (usually overkill for beginners)
- What to look for:
 - ✓ Good uptime (99.9%+)
 - ✓ Fast loading speeds
 - ✓ Reliable customer support
 - ✓ Automatic backups
 - ✓ SSL certificates included

Hosting - What You Need to Know (2)

- ✓ Easy WordPress installation

- ✓ Built in CDN

Speaker Notes: Don't overwhelm beginners with too much technical detail. Focus on the fact that they should research hosting carefully and not just go with the cheapest option.

Canadian Hosting Considerations (1)

Why hosting location matters for Canadians

- Data Residency & Privacy Laws:
- Canadian data should ideally be stored in Canada, if required.
- Helps with PIPEDA compliance (more on this next!)
- Some industries require Canadian data storage
- Canadian hosting providers with data centres in Canada:
 - Web Hosting Canada (WHC) - Toronto & Montreal data centres
 - HostPapa - Canadian company with Canadian servers
 - WPCloud - Specialized Canadian WordPress hosting
 - Hosting.ca - Government-certified, PIPEDA compliant

Canadian Hosting Considerations (2)

- International providers with Canadian data centres:
 - Amazon AWS (Montreal)
 - Google Cloud (Montreal, Toronto)
 - Microsoft Azure (Toronto, Quebec City)
- Speaker Notes: Mention that some WordCamp sponsors may offer hosting services - check the sponsor page! Emphasize that while you can use US-based hosting, Canadian hosting helps with compliance and speed.

Canadian Considerations - I Am Not A Lawyer (IANAL) (1)

- Important legal and practical considerations for Canadian website owners
- What we'll briefly cover:
 - Privacy laws (PIPEDA vs HIPAA)
 - Anti-spam laws (CASL)
 - Accessibility requirements (AODA in Ontario, but it's province by province)
 - Language and localization
 - Other practical considerations

Important disclaimer:

- I'm not a lawyer! This is general information to make you aware of these topics. Always consult with legal professionals for your specific situation.

Speaker Notes: Set the tone that this is educational, not legal advice. These are things they should be aware of and research further for their specific needs.

PIPEDA - Canadian Privacy Law (1)

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act

What is PIPEDA?

- Canada's federal privacy law for private-sector organizations
- Governs how businesses collect, use, and disclose personal information
- Applies to organizations that collect personal data in commercial activities
- Key principles:
 - Obtain consent for collecting personal information
 - Use information only for stated purposes
 - Protect personal information with appropriate security
 - Be transparent about privacy practices

PIPEDA - Canadian Privacy Law (2)

- Give individuals access to their own information
- US Equivalent: Various state laws, CCPA in California, but no single federal law like PIPEDA
- Why it matters for your website:
 - Privacy policies must be clear and accessible
 - Contact forms need proper consent
 - Data should ideally be stored in Canada
 - Cookie notices may be required

Speaker Notes: This is why Canadian hosting matters! If you're collecting email addresses, contact information, or any personal data, PIPEDA applies to you. Make sure attendees know they need a privacy policy on their website. Take a look at [Termageddon](#).

CASL - Canadian Anti-Spam Law (1)

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation

What is CASL?

- One of the strictest anti-spam laws in the world
- Governs commercial electronic messages (emails, texts, social media DMs)
- Went into effect July 1, 2014

Key requirements:

- Get express consent before sending commercial emails
- Identify yourself clearly in messages
- Provide an easy unsubscribe option
- Keep records of consent
- Double Opt-in
- US Equivalent: CAN-SPAM Act (less strict than CASL)

CASL - Canadian Anti-Spam Law (2)

Why it matters for your website:

- Email signup forms must get explicit consent
- Pre-checked boxes are NOT allowed
- Keep records of when and how people subscribed
- Serious penalties for violations (up to \$10 million!)

Speaker Notes: If you're building an email list (and you should!), CASL is critical to understand. Tools like Mailchimp have built-in CASL compliance features, but you need to use them correctly.

AODA - Accessibility for Ontarians (1)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

What is AODA?

- Ontario law requiring organizations to make their websites accessible
- Applies to public, private, and non-profit sectors
- Based on WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards
- Key requirements for websites:
 - Text alternatives for images (alt text)
 - Keyboard navigation support
 - Colour contrast for readability
 - Clear, simple language
 - Accessible forms and error messages
 - Captions for videos
- US Equivalent: ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

AODA - Accessibility for Ontarians (2)

Why it matters:

- Better user experience for everyone
- Legal requirement for many organizations in Ontario
- Other provinces have similar legislation
- Search engines favour accessible websites
- Good news: There are a bunch of Accessibility talks at WordCamp Canada!

Speaker Notes: We'll cover alt text for images in Part Two. Accessibility isn't just a legal requirement - it makes your site better for everyone. Mention that choosing accessible themes and plugins is important. [Insert link to AODA]

Language Settings - English (Canada) (1)

Making your WordPress site Canadian

Why change language settings?

- Canadian spelling (colour, not color; organize, not organise)
- Proper date formats
- Correct timezone
- Better localization

We'll take a look in Part Two (or you can take a look now), but here's what to know:

- WordPress supports English (Canada) as a language option
- Can be changed in Settings → General
- Doesn't affect the Dashboard language (but it can if you want!)
- Affects date formats, translations, and some text

Language Settings - English (Canada) (2)

Other considerations:

- Timezone: Select your city (America/Toronto for Ottawa)
- Date format: YYYY-MM-DD is common in Canada
- Metric measurements in your content
- Bilingual sites:
- Plugins like WPML can help create English/French sites
- Important for federal organizations and Quebec
- We won't cover this today, but good to know it exists

Speaker Notes: This seems small, but it's important for Canadian businesses to use Canadian spelling and formatting. It builds trust with Canadian visitors.

Other Canadian Considerations (1)

Quick hits - things to keep in mind

- **Currency & Payments:**
 - Make sure payment processors accept Canadian dollars
 - Consider Canadian-friendly options (Stripe, PayPal, Square all work in Canada)
 - WooCommerce (covered in another session) handles CAD
- **Healthcare & Sensitive Data:**
 - PHIPA (Ontario) for healthcare data
 - Additional provincial privacy laws may apply
 - If handling health information, extra security measures needed

Other Canadian Considerations (2)

- Bilingual Requirements:
 - Federal government sites must be bilingual (English/French)
 - Quebec has specific French language requirements
 - Plugins exist to help with multilingual sites (WPML, Polylang)
- Metric vs Imperial:
 - Use metric measurements in Canadian content
 - Kilograms, kilometres, litres, Celsius
- Canadian Content:
 - Use Canadian imagery and examples where relevant
 - Consider Canadian holidays and seasons in your content calendar

Speaker Notes: These might seem minor, but they add up to creating a genuinely Canadian presence online. Your audience will notice and appreciate these details. Check out [CIRA](#) for some great Canadian Creative Commons content.

Quick Tips for Success (1)

Do your research:

- Hosting companies - read reviews, compare features
- Themes and plugins - check ratings and recent updates
- Legal requirements - for your industry and province

Keep it secure:

- Use strong passwords (password managers help!)
- Keep WordPress, themes, and plugins updated
- Regular backups (we'll mention UpdraftPlus in Part Two)
- Security plugins help (WordFence will be on your sandbox)

Quick Tips for Success (2)

Don't overload your site:

- Start simple, add features as you need them Too many plugins can slow your site down
- Choose quality over quantity

Get help when you need it:

- WordPress.org support forums
- Happiness Bar (here at the conference!)
- Local WordPress meetups
- Consider hiring a professional for complex needs

Speaker Notes: Emphasize that WordPress has a huge community. People love to help! Don't be afraid to ask questions.

What's Coming in Part Two

After our 15-minute break, we'll dive into:

- Tour of the WordPress Dashboard
- Essential settings setup (including that English Canada setting!)
- Creating your first post using the Block Editor
- Uploading images and writing alt text for accessibility
- Brief introduction to plugins and themes
- Overview of Full Site Editing (FSE)
- Bring your questions!

Resources (1)

- WordPress Official Resources:
 - WordPress.org/support - Documentation and forums
 - WordPress.tv - Recorded WordCamp talks
 - Learn.WordPress.org - Free courses
- Canadian Resources:
 - [WordCamp Canada](#) (you're here!)
 - Local WordPress meetups across Canada
 - Happiness Bar - here this weekend!
 - WordPress Canada Slack – <https://wpslack.ca>
- My Resources:
 - These slides: Will be posted at <https://shanta.ca>
 - Follow along: <https://shanta.dragonteach.com>

Resources (2)

- Privacy & Legal:
 - PIPEDA: <https://priv.gc.ca>
 - CASL: <https://fightspam.gc.ca>
 - AODA: <https://ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r11191>

Speaker Notes: Encourage attendees to bookmark these resources. Remind them the slides will be available

Questions Before the Break?

- Let's talk!
- Connect with me:
- Twitter/Bluesky/Instagram: @ShantaDotCa
- Email: shanta@shanta.ca
- Website: <https://shanta.ca>
- Remember: Visit the Happiness Bar if you're having any technical issues