WordPress 101: Introduction to WordPress

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WordCamp Canada 2026

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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 may 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

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.

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?

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!

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!

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
  - ✓ Easy WordPress installation
  - ✓ Built in CDN

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
- International providers with Canadian data centres:
  - Amazon AWS (Montreal)
  - Google Cloud (Montreal, Toronto)
  - Microsoft Azure (Toronto, Quebec City)

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.

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

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!)

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!

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

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

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

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 week!
  - 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

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