

What is WordPress?

Table of contents

[Learning objectives](#)

[1. What is WordPress?](#)

[2. What can you do with WordPress?](#)

[Key takeaways](#)



Learning objectives

In this lesson, you'll learn:

- what WordPress is and what it can do for you;
 - what a content management system is;
 - what open-source software entails.
-

1. What is WordPress?

Welcome to this WordPress for beginners course! In this course, we're going to teach you everything you need to know about setting up and managing your WordPress site. We'll start off by exploring what WordPress is and what it can do for you.

WordPress is a **content management system (CMS)**, which means it allows you to build a website and publish content that you want to share with the world. There are basically three elements that are central to what WordPress does:

1. Create content

First of all, there's an advanced **text editor**, called the block editor, that helps you create posts and pages. It also allows you to add all kinds of media to your posts and pages.

2. Organize content

Secondly, WordPress offers ways to **manage and structure** your content. For example, in its Customizer, you can add menus and arrange your categories and tags. There are also possibilities to add breadcrumbs. And, with [Yoast SEO Premium](#), you can organize your internal linking structure. In this way, your content becomes an actual website, not just a collection of posts and pages.

3. Customize your site

Thirdly, WordPress has all kinds of options to customize how your site works and what it looks like. For instance, there are a lot of ready-made themes to choose from. Alternatively, you can also add custom code and make your website unique.

Of course, we'll go into all three of these elements in more detail later in this course. For now, we'll broadly explore a few other cool aspects of WordPress.



Image 1: WordPress

Ready-to-use resources

One of the cool things about WordPress is that there are gigantic libraries of **ready-to-use templates and features** that people have created for you to hand-pick and apply to your site. Some of those are free, and for some, you will have to pay.

In any case, all of these resources allow you to do a lot of things, even if you don't know how to code. They'll allow you to add functionalities to your site

and change the way your site looks. By making smart use of these resources, you can make your site exactly what you want it to be.

This makes WordPress a very **easy-to-use** CMS. In the next modules, we'll show you exactly how to make maximum use of the beginner-friendly nature of WordPress.

WordPress is free

WordPress is **free**, which means you won't have to pay license fees to use it: you can just download it. Please note that this is true for WordPress.org, the version of WordPress we'll focus on in this course. For the other version of WordPress, WordPress.com, there are paid plans available. We'll explain more about the difference between WordPress.org and WordPress.com in the next lesson.

WordPress is open-source software

Another great thing about WordPress is that it is **open-source** software. Open-source software is a software that's developed within a community. Everyone can use, alter, and distribute the code. People are encouraged to participate and improve the software project.

This means that everyone can see and contribute to the program code that shapes WordPress. This creates a very powerful ecosystem, which we'll explore further in module 8 of this course. WordPress doesn't belong to a company. It is freely editable by a bigger community of people, who build on what's already there, improving WordPress one step at a time. That's one of the reasons why there are so many great extensions to the core of what WordPress provides, and why it's so versatile!

2. What can you do with WordPress?

But what can you actually do with WordPress? Well, almost everything! As we've mentioned before, one of the big powers of WordPress is that you can use it to do all kinds of things. For example, you can set up:

- a blog
- a news site
- a membership site
- a photography site

- an online store
- a business site
- a discussion forum
- a knowledge base
- ... and much more!

This list could go on and on, the options are countless. Because it's so easy to customize, WordPress is a very strong and flexible foundation that can house anything you want to build. Later in this course, we'll dive deeper into how to determine how you want to use WordPress.

Key takeaways

- WordPress is a **content management system (CMS)**, which means it allows you to build a website and publish content that you want to share with the world.
- There are three elements that are central to what WordPress does:
 - a **text editor** that allows you to create content;
 - it offers ways to **manage and structure** your content;
 - it has options to **customize** how your site works and what it looks like.
- WordPress is very easy to use because there are a lot of **ready-to-use templates and features** available.
- WordPress is **free and open-source** software with a lot of possibilities.