

How to make a \$3000, professional looking small business website from scratch, and optimize it for the search engines with simple and easy to follow step by step process for beginners.

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Smashwords Edition

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## **Introduction**

This step by step guide is designed to help any beginner interested in building a professional looking website, without the need of learning HTML or any other programming language. Every step is explained in details, and includes a screen shot, to help the readers to better understand the whole process of creating and maintaining their website.

The secret behind is a content management system called WordPress, which is the most popular free online publishing platform available now, and currently is serving more than 20% of the world web.

WordPress simply makes the whole process of creating and updating a website extremely easy, and cost effective. Those are just some of the reasons why many famous names out there are using WordPress for creating and managing their websites. For example New York Post, Sony Music, LL Cool J, Snoop Dogg, Flickr, LinkedIn, The Rolling Stones, and many many others are currently running their websites under the WordPress platform.

If you follow all of the steps in this guide, pretty soon you will be able to build and manage fantastic looking websites from scratch, in just a few hours or less. This guide will also save you thousands of dollars on web developing and design. After you complete all of the steps, you will be able to :

- 1.Register a domain name and set up a hosting account for your website.***
- 2.Register email address under your personal domain name.***
- 3.Install WordPress on your website.***
- 4.Find free high quality images, and prepare them for your website.***
- 5.Create a company logo***
- 6.Install a theme***
- 7.Create main navigation menu and pages***
- 8.Add content to your pages***
- 9.Add social sharing, and a follow us bars with buttons for all the major social networks.***
- 10.Insert a video to your website***
- 11.Add secure contact form, and map to your website***
- 12.Create an image gallery***
- 13.Add testimonials to your site***
- 14.Create a grid view with images for your services or products page***
- 15.Optimize your website for the search engines***

## Getting a domain name and hosting account.

First thing you need to do is to register your domain name, and set up your hosting account, which will allow you to install the WordPress platform on your website.

The domain name is basically the unique web address, which people will type in their web browsers to access your website. The cost of the domain name is around \$13 per year, which is pretty reasonable.

The web hosting is a service that stores your website and all the data that you upload to it, on a high-powered computers called web servers. Those servers are also connected to a very fast network, and they all stay on 24/7 which gives the ability to anyone using the Internet to visit your website at any given moment.

The hosting company that I am using and strongly recommend, is called HostGator. They provide a very reliable and affordable hosting plans, which will cost you between \$8 and \$12 a month, depending on the plan.

To get started, open a new window in your web browser, and type into the address bar:

[www.hostgator.com](http://www.hostgator.com)



The image shows the HostGator website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for WEB HOSTING, RESSELLER HOSTING, VPS HOSTING, DEDICATED SERVERS, DOMAINS, SUPPORT, and AFFILIATES. The main headline is "Unlimited Web Hosting" with a sub-headline "Web Hosting made EASY and AFFORDABLE!". A large yellow banner on the right says "Get 20% OFF now!" and "Starting at only \$3.96/mo". Below this, there are three columns of services: Reseller Hosting (starting at \$19.96/mo), VPS Hosting (starting at \$15.96/mo), and Dedicated Servers (starting at \$139/mo). At the bottom, there are two sections: "Creating a new website?" and "Coming from another host?". The footer mentions "We have received many awards in our 11+ years of providing web hosting services."

Click on the **View Hosting Plans** button to see the web hosting plans.



They are three plans to choose from. The first one is called the **Hatchling Plan**, which is the very basic and the cheapest one, but only allows you to host one website at a time.

The second one is called the **Baby Plan**, which I am currently using. It cost a few more dollars, but includes the most valuable options, which are: unlimited websites hosted, unlimited disk space, or the amount of data uploaded to those websites, and unlimited bandwidth, which refers to the amount of data transferred from a website to its visitors, not the speed of the transfer which the term bandwidth originally refers to.

The last one is the Business Plan which is the most expensive one, but it also includes private SSL, IP, and free Toll Free Number. This plan will be useful for a company which will be running bigger than the average online business. Company that serves thousands of customers will need secure encrypted connection to protect its customers' information. A site of that scale will also need to have a toll free number for its customer support, sales or any other department related to the business.

Another option is to choose the billing cycle for your hosting plan. If you click on the little arrow, for the plan you chose, you will see a drop menu that will let you select either 1 month, 6 months, 1 year 2 years or 3 years for your billing cycle.



I personally prefer the 6 months option, because it saves me money and time in a long term. However, if you are on a budget, or decided that the monthly payment plan is fine for you, then select that option from the menu and click the **Order Now** button.

You will be sent to the **Order Wizard** page, where your first option is to either choose the domain name that you want to register for your website, or if you already have a domain name you can choose **“I already own this domain”** and type it in the field below.

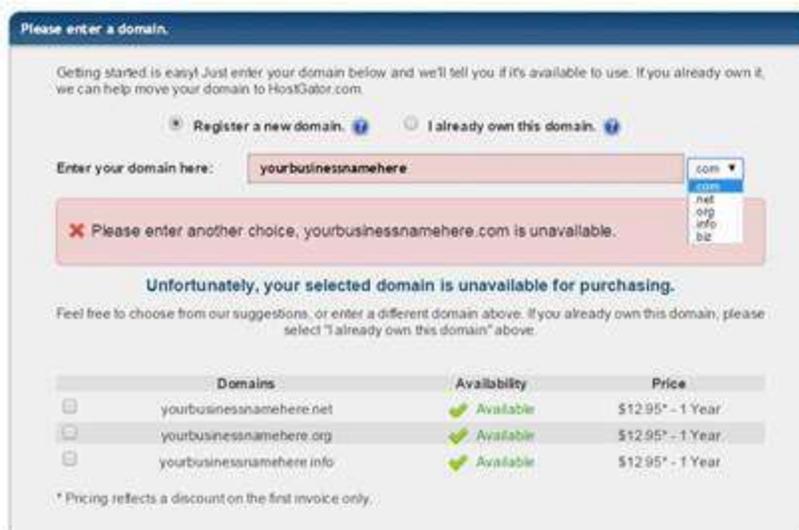


The screenshot shows the HostGator Order Wizard interface. At the top, there is a logo for HostGator with the tagline "we eat up the competition". To the right, contact information is provided: Toll Free: 1.866.96.GATOR, Local: 1.713.574.5287, and a note "Now hosting over 9,000,000 domains!". A "LIVE CHAT" button is also visible. The main heading is "HostGator Order Wizard". Below this, a section titled "Please enter a domain." contains instructions: "Getting started is easy! Just enter your domain below and we'll tell you if it's available to use. If you already own it, we can help move your domain to HostGator.com." There are two radio buttons: "Register a new domain." (selected) and "I already own this domain.". Below the radio buttons is a text input field with the placeholder "yourbusinessnamehere.com". A note states: "Highly Recommended - Secure ownership of our most popular top level domains: Having more than one top level domain allows you better control over your brand name and helps keep your name associated with your company and not someone else." A table lists domain options:

| Domains                                            | Availability | Price             |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> yourbusinessnamehere.net  | ✔ Available  | \$12.95* - 1 Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yourbusinessnamehere.org  | ✔ Available  | \$12.95* - 1 Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yourbusinessnamehere.info | ✔ Available  | \$12.95* - 1 Year |

\* Pricing reflects a discount on the first invoice only.

In case you are registering a new domain name, you will notice that there is a drop menu next to the field where you type in the desired domain name for your site. By default .com is selected, because that is the most popular domain extension. If you click on it, you will see that you can also choose either .net .org .info or .biz from the list of extensions.



This screenshot shows the HostGator Order Wizard page with a domain availability error. The "Register a new domain." radio button is selected. The text input field contains "yourbusinessnamehere". A dropdown menu is open, showing options: .com (selected), .org, .net, .info, and .biz. A red error message box states: "Please enter another choice, yourbusinessnamehere.com is unavailable." Below this, a message reads: "Unfortunately, your selected domain is unavailable for purchasing. Feel free to choose from our suggestions, or enter a different domain above. If you already own this domain, please select 'I already own this domain' above." The same table of domain options is shown at the bottom:

| Domains                                            | Availability | Price             |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> yourbusinessnamehere.net  | ✔ Available  | \$12.95* - 1 Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yourbusinessnamehere.org  | ✔ Available  | \$12.95* - 1 Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yourbusinessnamehere.info | ✔ Available  | \$12.95* - 1 Year |

\* Pricing reflects a discount on the first invoice only.

All of the domain extensions on that list are considered Top-Level Domains, and they are all unrestricted, which means that they can be purchased by any person or company from any country in the world.

I suggest that when choosing your domain name, you include your business name in it.

However if the domain name you chose is already taken for the .com extension, you might be able to find it under one of the other extensions. In case you really want to go with the .com extension, you just have to experiment with different word combinations till you find available name that satisfies your needs. For example if my business name is **Van's Surfboards** I can try [vanssurfboards.com](http://vanssurfboards.com) and if this is already taken under .com, it might be available under another extension. And if I really want to have .com extension I can try **vanssurfboardrentals.com**, **vanssurfboardsforrent.com** or something else till I find combination I like. In general you want your domain name to be combination of two to three words, and be easy to remember.

Next section will ask you to confirm the plan and the billing cycle which you already selected, in the previous step.



Please confirm your hosting package information:

|                      |                                                        |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Package Type<br>Baby | Billing Cycle<br>6 Month @ 7.97/mo 20.000% Percent Off |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|

Below that will be the section where you can choose your user-name and security pin code for your hosting account,so make sure you write that down somewhere for future reference.



Please choose your account information:

|                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Username<br><input type="text"/><br>• May not contain capital letters<br>• Must start with a letter<br>• Must be 2-8 characters long<br>• May not contain special characters/values | Security Pin<br><input type="text"/><br>• Must be 4-8 characters long<br>• May only contain numbers |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Next you will be asked to fill out your billing and payment information. It is important to enter a valid email address, because you will receive an email with information regarding your hosting account.



Please enter your billing information:

|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Billing Information</b><br>Email<br>First Name<br>Last Name<br>Company<br>Home Phone<br>Cell Phone<br>Address<br>Address 2<br>City<br>State: Alabama<br>Zip Code<br>Country: United States | <b>Payment Information</b><br><input checked="" type="radio"/> Credit Card<br><input type="radio"/> PayPal<br>Name on Card<br>Credit Card Number<br>Expiration Date<br>CVV Code<br><a href="#">Help: Where is my CVV Code?</a> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

After you fill out your billing information you can choose to either pay with your Pay Pal, debit or credit card.

The next section will offer you three hosting Addons. The first two will be selected by default, which you can uncheck unless you really need to purchase those Addons for your website.

**Hosting Addons:**



**Secure and Accelerate Your Site — Highly Recommended \$1.67 /mo (Billed Annually)**

Protect your website from fraud and malware, while speeding up its performance for visitors. This advanced security helps to block malicious traffic and scans daily for other harmful threats. A \$99 value.

Add SiteLock



**Site Backup: Daily website backups to the cloud \$19.95 /yr**

Feel confident knowing your website is protected from accidents, data loss, or malicious activity. Recover from problems quickly with a time machine for your website! This product is provided by CodeGuard. CodeGuard's terms apply.

Add CodeGuard



**Increase your Search Engine Visibility with SEO Gears \$14.99 / yr**

Get your site listed in Google, Yahoo!, and Bing in days, not months. We do it for you! Learn how to rank better with our Search Engine Optimization (SEO) E-Book and SEO Tools.

Add Search Engine Visibility

The section below will display a coupon code which will discount 20% off of your hosting purchase.

If you chose to go with the 6 months or longer for your billing cycle, I have a coupon code which will save you 25% instead of 20% . Simply type in: **“MoreThanTwenty”** into the coupon code field, and you will save 25%. instead of 20%.

**Have a coupon code?**

Coupon Code  ✔ You have chosen our most valuable coupon!

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**Please review the order details below:**

|                                          |                                   |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 24/7/365 Phone, Live Chat, Email Support | <b>FREE!</b>                      |
| Instant Account Activation               | <b>FREE!</b>                      |
| Money Back Guarantee!                    | <b>45 Days</b>                    |
| Baby: 6 Months                           | <del>\$59.70</del> <b>\$44.78</b> |
| Hosting Addons                           | <b>\$0.00</b>                     |
| <b>Sub-Total:</b>                        | <b>\$59.70</b>                    |
| <b>Discount:</b>                         | <b>\$-14.92</b>                   |
| <b>Total Due:</b>                        | <b>\$44.78</b>                    |

I have read and agree to the [terms and conditions](#) of use.

In case you decided to go with the monthly plan, I also have a coupon code, which will give you the first month of your hosting plan for only one cent.

Type in **“OneCentAway”** into the coupon box and your first month of hosting will only cost you a penny.

Have a coupon code?

Coupon Code  ✔ You have chosen our most valuable coupon!

---

Please review the order details below:

|                                          |                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 24/7/365 Phone, Live Chat, Email Support | FREE!                                                                   |
| Instant Account Activation               | FREE!                                                                   |
| Money Back Guarantee!                    | 45 Days                                                                 |
| Baby: 1 Months                           | \$9.95 <span style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">\$0.01</span>     |
| Hosting Addons                           | \$0.00                                                                  |
|                                          | Sub-Total: <span style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">\$9.95</span> |
|                                          | Discount: <span style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">-\$9.94</span>   |
|                                          | Total Due: <span style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">\$0.01</span> |

I have read and agree to the [terms and conditions](#) of use.

So it doesn't really matter which plan or monthly cycle you selected, because you are receiving credit whichever way.

The last step is to check the box that's next to **“I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of use.”** and click on the create account button.

You should receive an email from HostGator, where you will find a link to your **Control Panel**, and underneath will be your User-name and Password. Make sure you save this email.



When you click on your Control Panel link, a new window will pop up where you can copy and paste the user-name and the password from your email.



## Registering an email address.

Once you are logged into your cPanel, you need to scroll down to the section named “**Mail**”, and click on “**Email Accounts**”



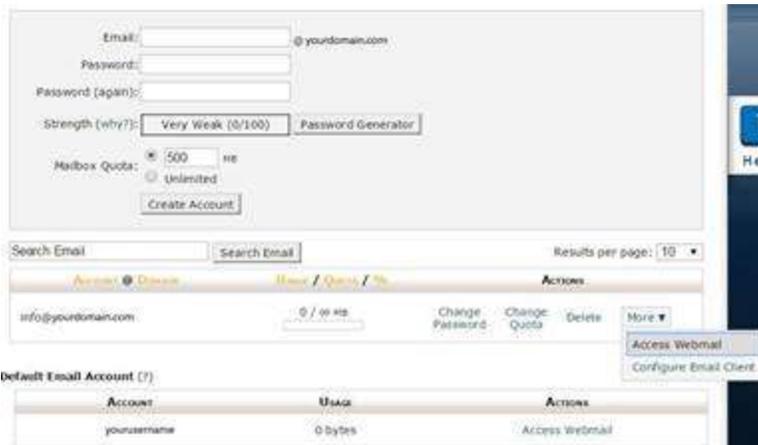
Next step is to choose a name for your email address. For example you can type **info** for your name, so your new email will be [info@yourdomain.com](mailto:info@yourdomain.com) Select a password, choose the option **Unlimited** and click on **Create Account**.

A screenshot of the cPanel 'Email Accounts' form. The form includes fields for 'Email' (with 'info' entered and '@yourdomain.com' selected), 'Password', and 'Password (again)'. The password strength is indicated as 'Very Strong (98/100)'. There is a 'Password Generator' button. The 'Mailbox Quota' is set to 'unlimited'. A 'Create Account' button is at the bottom.

New window will pop up and it will offer you to learn how to use webmail, mobile webmail, and setup signatures in webmail. You can close this box for now.



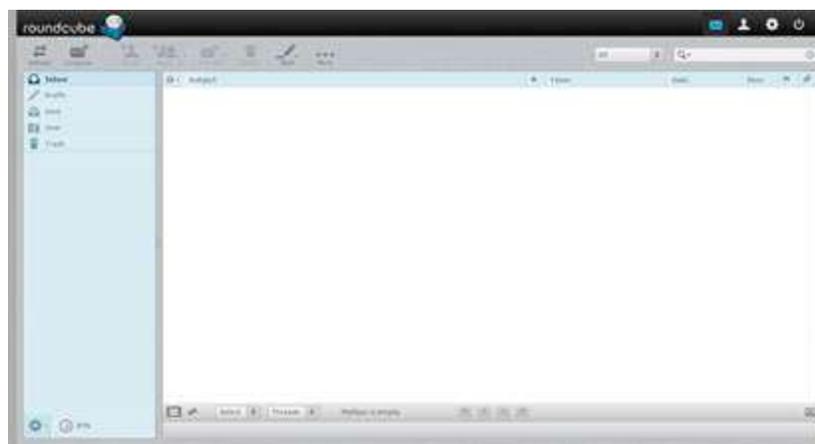
As you can see the email you just created is listed below. Go to **More** and click on **Access Webmail**.



In the new window that pops up, you will see that there are three options to choose from: **Read Mail Using Horde**, **Read Mail Using RoundCube**, and **Read Mail Using SquirrelMail**. I personally like **RoundCube**



Click on **RoundCube**. As you can see it has a very user friendly interface.



Next time you want to access your email, you can open a new window in your browser and type in :

<http://webmail.yourdomainname.com/> than type in your email address and password and click

**Log in**



Now that you have your email all set up, you are ready to install the WordPress platform.

## Installing WordPress

Go back to your **cPanel**, and scroll down to the section named **Software/Services** than click on the icon “**Quick install**”



In the quick install menu, you want to find the **WordPress** link on your left and click on it, then click **Continue**.



Now you want to select your domain name from the list, than enter a valid email address. For blog title you can just put anything you want for right now, because you will change that later. Select the admin name which you will be using to log in to your WordPress Admin Area, and finally type in your first and last name. Then click **Install Now**. It will take just a few moments for the installation to complete.

The screenshot shows the QuickInstall interface. On the left, there are several software categories: Billing Software (WHMCS), Blog Software (LifeType, WordPress), Calendar Software (WebCalendar), Chat Software (Crafty Syntax, phpFreeChat, X7 Chat), and CMS Software (b2Evolution, concrete5, Drupal 8). The main area is titled 'WordPress' and contains the following information:

- WordPress is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog. We like to say that WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.
- Version: 4.0
- Install Size: 39.94 MB
- Official Site: <http://wordpress.org/>

The 'Install WordPress' section includes:

- Application URL (where you will find the app in your browser): [http:// vansspot.com /](http://vansspot.com/)
- Enable Auto Upgrades:
- Admin Email:
- Blog Title:
- Admin User:
- First Name:
- Last Name:

At the bottom of the configuration area is an 'Install Now!' button.

If the installation was successful you should be able to see this message:

### Congratulations!

Your installation is ready. You can access it now by going [here](#). If there is any login information, it will have been sent to the email address you provided.

Admin Area: <http://vansspot.com/wp-admin>  
 Username: **Admin**  
 Password: **Ec12xtvRDqnOhpu**

We are now packing WordPress with WP-Super-Cache and have it **enabled with recommended settings** to help maintain solid performance from your WordPress installations!\*\*

For more information on this plugin and its configuration please visit <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-super-cache/>

\*\*WP-Super-Cache can be disabled by going to your plugin section of your WordPress Dashboard and deactivating the plugin.

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Note: If you enable Automatic Upgrades for your package please make sure to enable Automatic Upgrades under Manage Installations for your account.

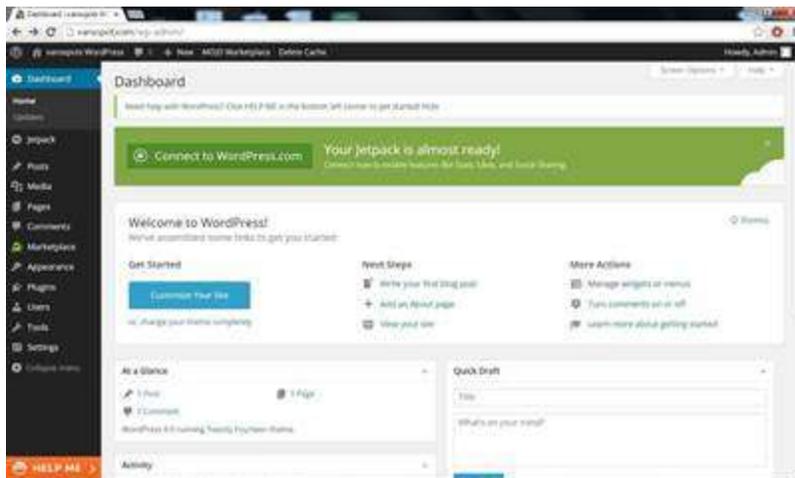
## Introduction to WordPress Dashboard

You should also receive an email from WordPress which will have a link to your Admin Area, and the user-name and password. Make sure you save that email.

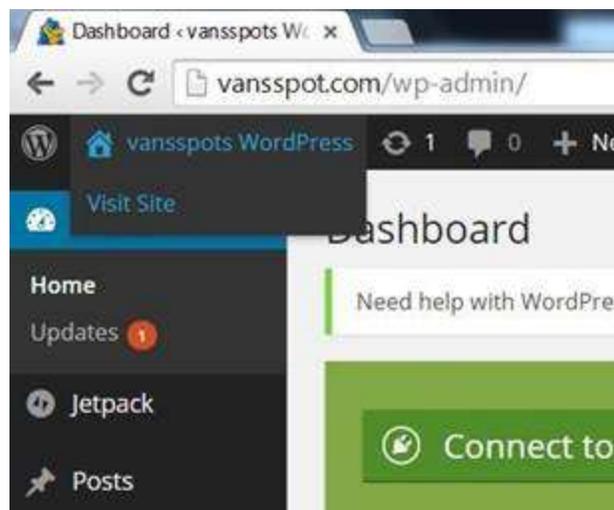
Now it might take between 30 min and a couple hours before you can start using WordPress.

I recommend that you wait at least 30 min, before you move on to the next step.

To access your WordPress **Admin Area** you need to click on the link for your **Admin Area**, and copy and paste the **User-name** and **Password**.



Once you are logged into your WordPress **Admin Area**, in the top left corner you will find a link that shows:” **yourdomainnames WordPress** “



Click on **Visit Site** to see your freshly created WordPress website, which by default contains only one sample page, one post, and one comment. You can click again on the **yourdomainname WordPress** link to go back to the WordPress **Dashboard**.

In the next few steps you will find out how simple and easy it is to turn this generic looking website into professional looking one.

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