Small Business Owners Guide To WordPress

A comprehensive manual for users of all levels
to create, connect and grow their WordPress website.

Harry Jackson, #MakeWordPress Marketing Team

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Foreword

When I first started using WordPress, I thought, "here's a clever way to build a website." And that was as far as my thinking went at the time. Fast forward more than a decade, and it seems silly to have not recognized the potential it had to change the internet.

One of the great things about InMotion Hosting is that every single website we host is fully integrated with WordPress, the world's most popular website creation tool.

And it's clear to see why it has grown so large, so fast. WordPress is free, easy to use and flexible enough to make all different types of websites.

As InMotion's residential WordPress expert, I'm here to teach you everything you need to know to master one of the internet's most powerful tools. The purpose of this ebook is to serve as a resource for you to craft and hone your WordPress expertise. Inside, you'll find detailed articles outlining the skills needed to take you from WordPress beginner to a WordPress master.

I hope you'll look at this ebook as a reference guide. Whether you need help with something as simple as installing WordPress for the first time or as foreign as disabling your WordPress cronphp, this book's got you covered with relevant articles to assist you throughout every step of your WordPress journey.

In each section, this guide will outline the skills needed to be considered proficient in WordPress at that level, as well as the steps you can take to master them. Learn them all, and you'll have the skills and confidence to create, connect and grow your business as an authority in the WordPress community.

Harry Jackson

Products Manager
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Career Highlights

Harry Jackson is the Products Manager for InMotion Hosting by day, Batman by night. He has been with InMotion for over six years, earning Marketing Contributor, Marketing Team Rep, Meta Contributor, WordCamp Organizer, WordCamp Speaker and Plugin Developer WordPress badges in that time. He is a proud member of the awesome #MakeWordPress Marketing team.

What You'll Learn

This ebook is for anyone looking to add WordPress their professional toolbox or take their WordPress knowledge to the next level with advanced skills.

It is designed to take you from a complete beginner to an expert and covers everything you'll face in between.

Like anything, WordPress will become easier the more you practice, so the more time you spend with this book the better your WordPress skills will be.

And remember, you're not alone. If you struggle with any of the skills or need some help applying them to your site, InMotion customer support is always there for you 24/7 to assist.

Beginner Users

This section is for people who have little to no experience using WordPress. Here we will cover all the introductory skills you'll need to create your foundation.

Moderate Users

In the second section, learn how WordPress can connect you to your customers with useful tools and plugins. Consider the lessons in the beginner section prerequisites for these skills.

Expert Users

Our final section will highlight the most advanced skills you'll need to master WordPress and grow your business. Successfully complete this section, then relax knowing you can now face anything WordPress throws your way.

Are you ready to become a WordPress Expert?

Introduction

Before we hop into the water and start getting your feet wet in WordPress, it's important to cover the basics and make sure you're fully prepared to dive in. In this Introduction, you will learn how to install WordPress and login to your dashboard, as well as change your home settings and website URL to customize your WordPress experience. Whether you are new to WordPress or migrating your existing site to an InMotion server, the information in this chapter covers each step of the onboarding process and offers solutions to troubleshoot any issues you encounter.

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How to Install WordPress Using Softaculous

WordPress is an open-source content management system (CMS) that is available to install using the cPanel Softaculous Apps Installer for free. In this guide, you can learn how to install WordPress using Softaculous.

For WordPress users in need of a lightning-fast hosting solution, we now have a WordPress Hosting package that has all your needs for speed and reliability covered.

Install WordPress through Softaculous

Step 1:   Log into your cPanel.

Step 2:   Go to the Software section, then click the Softaculous icon.

Step 3:   Click on the WordPress logo. This will open a screen with several options displayed. You will see a screen with Install, Overview, Features, and Import. Click on the Install link.

Step 4:   Fill in the WordPress installation details. The following is the necessary information you need to fill in:

Software Setup

Choose Domain   Select the Domain you want to install your WordPress on from the drop-down menu.

In Directory   Leave this blank to install on the domain directly. If you are installing in a subfolder of your site you type the folder name here. This will make the blog load like the following: example. com/foldername.

Admin Username   Enter a username for your WordPress Dashboard login.

Admin Password   Enter whatever password you want for the Dashboard Login.

Admin Email   Enter a valid email here. The system will place an invalid email here.

Installing WordPress on a Subdomain

If you decide that you wish to install to a subdomain, then you will need to first make sure that you have correctly created the subdomain in cPanel. The main difference is that the path will appear like this:

subdomain.main_domain.com

instead of like this:

main_domain.com/subdomain.

If the subdomain is already created, then you will be able to select the subdomain from the Choose Domain drop-down menu.

Installing WordPress in a Subdirectory

If you are trying to install WordPress into a sub-folder (that is not specified as a subdomain), then the Choose domain option should remain as the domain name that you wish to use for the installation. Be sure to specify the folder that you wish to use in the In Directory field – as per the example above.

Step 1: Click install

Step 2: Softaculous will check the submitted data and install the files to your server for WordPress. Click Return to Overview. You will then see your WordPress installation in the Current Installations list.

Step 3: Visit your website in your browser. You should see a new WordPress install like the snapshot to the right.

Congratulations, now you know how to install WordPress using Softaculous!

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How to Log Into Your WordPress Dashboard

A couple of benefits of being an InMotion Hosting WordPress customer is that we can migrate over your existing website or easily get you set up with a site that has WordPress already installed. At that point, it's just a matter of logging in and getting started.

The admin section of WordPress, the "WordPress Dashboard", is where you will begin building your WordPress site. Please take note that your login credentials are not the same as your cPanel username and password unless you set them up as the same.

- **WordPress Installation URL:** if you installed WordPress on the root of your domain, your URL to access WordPress would be: example.com/wp-admin
- **WordPress Username:** This is the username you set up when initially installing WordPress.
- **WordPress Password:** This is the password you set up when installing WordPress. If you emailed the installation details during the installation process it will be in that email as well.

Steps to log into WordPress

Step 1:   To access the WordPress dashboard you simply need to add /wp-admin to the end of the URL where you installed WordPress. For example, example.com/wp-admin

> **Note!**   If you installed WordPress to the document root of the URL it would be example.com/wp-admin. If you installed WordPress on a folder called "blog" on your domain you would go to example.com/blog/wp-admin

Step 2:   Type the username and password you used when you installed your WordPress.

> **Note!**   Your WordPress login is a different login than your cPanel and your AMP. If you cannot remember your Username or Password, please see our article on Resetting your WordPress Admin Password.

Once you login you will see the WordPress dashboard.

If you installed WordPress on a new domain or on a domain that is not yet pointed to your account with InMotion Hosting, you will not be able to use the dashboard until you point the domain to our servers or until the DNS changes take effect. Until then, you can set WordPress up to use your temp URL which can be found in your AMP technical details.

Please note: If you change WordPress to work using your temp URL, when you are ready to have the site go live, you will need to change it back so it will function using the real domain name instead.

I can't log in to my WordPress dashboard

There are several reasons why you may be getting errors when trying to log into your WordPress dashboard. We will go over a few of the common ones.

WordPress login disabled

If you are getting this error, it is because there have been too many failed logins on your dashboard. Our automated systems have disabled your WordPress admin to prevent your site from being compromised due to WordPress brute force attacks. To resolve this issue, we recommend you increase the security measures utilized on your WordPress site. (Click the link below for tips on how to make your site more secure.)

Username or password is incorrect

Many times, users simply forget their password. Luckily, we have written an excellent article on resetting your WordPress password. See #6 of this chapter!

Two Factor Authentication for WordPress

For increased security, check out our full guide on how to enable two-factor authentication for WordPress.

Changing The Site URL and Home Settings

If you need to migrate your WordPress site or change the location of your WordPress installation, it's good to keep in mind how WordPress keeps track of itself via the WordPress Address and Site Address settings. These settings can be adjusted directly in the WordPress admin dashboard from **Settings > General,** or you can make these modifications to your **wp-config.php** file as well.

WordPress WP_HOME and WP_SITEURL settings

There are two WordPress options that you can adjust to change the behavior of how WordPress works.

- WordPress Address (URL) / WP_SITEURL: The address where your WordPress core files reside.

- Site Address (URL) / WP_HOME: The address typed in a browser to reach your WordPress blog.

Say you keep your WordPress core files stored inside my /public_html/wp directory so that they aren't clogging up your root directory, but you still want them to be able to type just https://example.com to get to your WordPress site.

Simply set https://example.com as your Site Address so WordPress knows this is what you want to be displayed instead of the core files location.

This is just one example of what can be done with WordPress URL settings. You might also need to modify these settings after moving your WordPress website to a new server, or testing a new structure for your website.

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Change your WordPress address in the admin dashboard

You can also adjust your WordPress URL settings directly from the admin dashboard. This method will typically work if you haven't moved your WordPress installation and aren't having any issues accessing it.

Step 1: Login to the WordPress admin dashboard

Step 2: Click on **Settings >> General**

Step 3: Fill in your **WordPress Address** and **Site Address** and click **Save.**

Change the WordPress address directly in the Database

The easiest way to modify your WordPress URLs is via the **wp-config.php** file. If you've moved your WordPress site or are trying to test it from a temporary URL, this also might be the only method that works for you.

Note! Be aware of these settings in the **wp-config.php** file, the ability to modify them from the dashboard is lost.

Step 1: Edit your **wp-config.php** file.

Step 2: Use phpMyAdmin to manage your WordPress database.

Step 3: Select your WordPress database from the left.

Step 4: Then select your **wp_options** table. Your **wp_** prefix may differ depending on your install settings.

Step 5: Click **Edit** beside either the **site URL** or **home** entries. You may need to search for them with the Filter rows function at the top.

Step 6: Enter your new value in the **option_value** field, then click **Go.**

Detect and change WordPress address with RELOCATE

If you're having issues accessing your WordPress dashboard, you can have WordPress automatically try to figure out what the correct WordPress address should be using the **RELOCATE** flag in your **wp-config.php** file.

Note! With the **RELOCATE** flag set, WordPress will automatically update your WordPress core files path to the URL used to attempt to access the **wp-login.php** script. This only affects the WordPress dashboard and not the site itself.

Step 1:   Edit your **wp-config.php** file.

Step 2:   At the top of the file add a **define('RELOCATE',true);**

define('RELOCATE',true); // ** MySQL settings - You can get this info from your web host ** //

Step 3:   Now visit your https://example.com/wp/wp-login.php page in your web browser. Be sure to type in the path of your WordPress core files before wp-login.php.

Step 4:   Log into your WordPress dashboard as you normally would.

Step 5:   If you navigate to **Settings > General**, you should now see that WordPress has automatically populated the **WordPress Address (URL)** field for you, with the path to your WordPress files.

Section 1: Beginner Skills

These first six tasks feature our most popular articles for beginners. These articles were created in response to the most common questions and discussion topics our support team encounters with new WordPress users. The knowledge and skills acquired in this section will form the foundation for your WordPress journey, and enable to think critically when working through WordPress problems.

Change WordPress Admin Username For Security

In this article, you will learn how you can update and change your WordPress admin username, as this can be a great security measure to help prevent unauthorized access to your WordPress admin dashboard.

Update WordPress Admin Username

Using the steps below, you'll see how easy it is to add a new WordPress administrator user, delete your old non-secure default admin one, and then assign or attribute all of the old user's posts to your new secure user.

Step 1:   From the left-hand menu, hover over **Users,** then click **Add New.**

Step 2:   Fill in all of the user fields with new information, then select **Administrator** from the **Role** drop-down. Finally, click **Add New User.** You should now see the new admin user you just created.

Step 3:   Hover over **Howdy, admin** at the top-right, then click **Log Out.**

Step 4:   Now type in your new WordPress admin username and password and click **Log In.**

Step 5:   Hover over **Howdy, admin** at the top-right, then click **Log Out.**

Step 6:   Hover over the old admin user, then click **Delete.**

> **Note!** Prior to deleting your old admin user, I'd recommend you backup your WordPress database in cPanel just in case.

Step 7:   Now select your new admin user from the **Attribute all posts** drop-down, and click **Confirm Deletion.**

> **Note! BE CAREFUL!** Deleting your old WordPress admin user, without attributing its posts to your new admin user will delete all those posts!

Step 8:   You should now see the old admin user has been deleted, and you should only be left with the new administrator user, will all the old posts attributed to it.

You should now understand how you can easily update and change your WordPress admin username so that you're better protected against common brute force attempts at gaining access to your WordPress website.

How to Change the WordPress Title and Tagline

When you first install WordPress through Softaculous, you may set up the site with a temporary site name and tagline just to complete the installation process. See the snapshot to the right. In the event you want to update the main title of your WordPress site, you can change it in the WordPress dashboard general settings. Next, are the steps on how to do this.

Changing the Title and Tagline

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   On the left in the sidebar, hover over "Settings" and click **General.**

Step 3:   The "Site title" and the "Tagline" can be changed here. Enter a new title and tagline, then click **Save Changes**

Step 4:   Now, visit your WordPress site and you will see the title and tagline changed.

Congratulations, now you know how to customize the Title and Tagline in your WordPress site!

How to Change the Header Banner Image in WordPress

Modern WordPress themes have the capability to edit the header, footer and other theme areas within the Appearance section of the WordPress dashboard. This article will explain how to change the banner in the header of your WordPress site. The Theme we will use in this example is the "Twenty Twelve theme". Other themes use the same steps to edit the banner.

Steps to Change the Header Banner

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   Navigate to **Appearance** and click **Header.**

Step 3:   To upload a new banner, click the **Browse** button. Find your banner on your local computer and click the **Upload** button.

Important! Keep in mind the banner must be made to the size the Theme requires. In this example, the Twenty Twelve theme requires the size to be 960px wide by 250px height. Each theme will have its own image size requirement.

Step 4:   You will be taken to the Crop Header Image page. You can adjust the size of the image and click **Crop and Publish.** You can also click **Skip Cropping, Publish image as is** to publish without editing.

Step 5:   You will see the preview of the site with the banner. Click **Save Changes** at the bottom of the page. Your custom banner will now show in the header of your WordPress.

How to Remove the Blog Posts Page in WordPress

This article will guide you on how to remove the blog index page for WordPress so you can display only your custom static pages. WordPress is a very versatile program, allowing you to create different types of sites. Some want eCommerce, some want the basic blog, etc. Some, however, want to create a regular site with static pages and no blog posts, including the post index page that displays the recent posts.

Removing the blog posts page in WordPress

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   Look to the left-hand sidebar menu and click the Settings option.

Step 3:   From the expanded menu, click the **Reading** option.

Step 4:   You are brought to the Reading Settings page. From here, locate the **Front Page** display section and select the radio button for **A static page (select below).**

Step 5:   Next, select the page you want as your front page from the **Front Page** dropdown.

Step 6:   Finally, set the Posts page: dropdown to Select. This effectively removes it from displaying on your site.

Step 7:   Click on the **Save Changes** button to activate the new setup.

How to Change your Font Globally in WordPress

WordPress Templates will have a default font applied to them. When you want to change the site font globally throughout the site, you will need to edit the CSS **"style.css" file** for your WordPress.

You can change the font throughout your WordPress site by following these steps for any theme.

Steps to change your Font Globally

Step 1: Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2: Go to **Appearance,** then click **Editor.**

Step 3: Make sure you are on the main "style.css" stylesheet. The "Twenty Twelve" theme uses the style.css style sheet. See the image to the right.

Step 4: Paste the following code at the top of the "style.css" sheet:

```
* {font-family:"Courier New", Courier, monospace}
```

In this case, the font we are changing to is the "Courier New, Courier, monospace" font type. The (*) in the CSS code will apply the Font style to all text on the website.

Step 5: Click **Update.**

Visit your website you should see the font applied to your whole website. If you do not see the font change, you may need to clear your browser cache.

Adding a Form Using Contact Form 7 in WordPress

Having a contact form on your WordPress website is a great way for your visitors to communicate with you. While there are many plugins for WordPress that allow you to add a contact form to one of your website's pages, Contact Form 7 makes it a simple task.

How to Add a Form in WordPress

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   Go to **Plugins,** then click **Add New** and search for the plugin **"Contact Form 7."**

Step 3:   Click **"Install"** and then click **"Activate."**

Step 4:   Click on **"Contact"** in your WordPress Dashboard left side menu pane. Contact Form 7 comes preconfigured with one form already set up to use. If you want to use the basic form, simply copy the code at the top of the form. You can change where the email is sent to by changing the email address under the **"Mail"** section in the **"To:"** heading.

Step 5:   Paste the code into a post, page or text widget that you'd like the form displayed on and click "save" or "update."

Now when you visit your site you should see your form displayed wherever you posted the code from above.
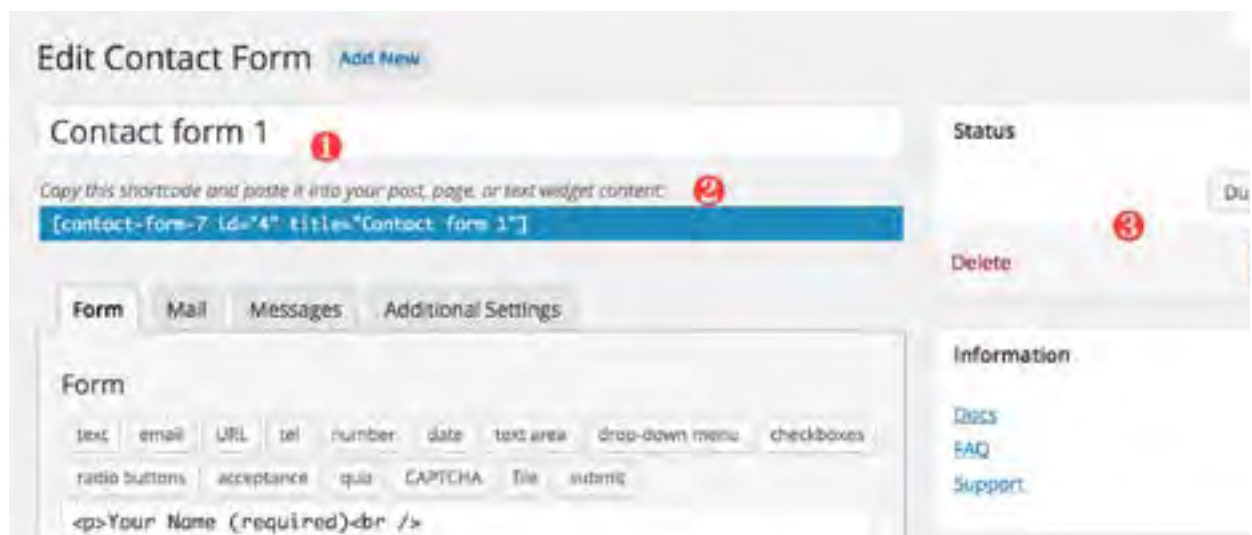
Section 2: Moderate Skills

Congratulations! You've officially mastered the basics and have a fully functioning WordPress website. Now that you have the fundamentals down, it's time to take your WordPress abilities to the next level with our intermediate-level articles. These skills require a bit more practice, so make sure you're comfortable with all the skills in the Beginner section before proceeding with the next section.

How to Enable HTTPS (SSL) in WordPress

In this tutorial, we will show you how to enable https in WordPress, so you can connect to your website securely over SSL.

Note! You will need an SSL before attempting to complete this tutorial. Don't have an SSL yet? Learn how to get SSL.

Enabling HTTPS in WordPress

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   Scroll over to **Settings** in the navigation menu, then click **General.**

Step 3:   In the **WordPress Address (URL) field,** enter your https address.

Step 4:   Enter your https address in the **Site Address (URL) field.** WordPress advises "Enter the address here if you want your site homepage to be different from the directory you installed WordPress."

Step 5:   Click **Save Changes.**

You are finished when you see a "Settings saved" message.

You will now be able to connect to your WordPress site over an SSL connection.

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Adding HTML to a WordPress Page/Post

There may be times when you want to use HTML in your WordPress website. For example, you may prefer to code a hyperlink by hand or you want to adjust the header size.

In this tutorial, we show you how to view/add HTML code to a Page or Post in WordPress.

As per WordPress' official Code support page, Javascript and other embeds such as Flash are not allowed on pages or in posts in WordPress.

Here is a list of the specific HTML tags that WordPress allows: address, a, abbr, acronym, area, article, aside, b, big, blockquote, br, caption, cite, class, code, col, del, details, dd, div, dl, dt, em, figure, figcaption, footer, font, h1, h2, h3, h4, h5, h6, header, hgroup, hr, i, img, ins, kbd, li, map, ol, p, pre, q, s, section, small, span, strike, strong, sub, summary, sup, table, tbody, td, tfoot, th, thead, tr, tt, u, ul, var.

How to Add HTML to a Page/Post

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   In the navigation menu click **Pages** or **Posts** link, depending on which one you want to add HTML.

Step 3:   Click the page or post that you want to edit.

Step 4:   Click the **Text** tab. You will then see the text of the page or post and you can enter the HTML. In our example, we are adding a link to an email address.

Step 5:   Click **Update** to save your changes.

Congratulations, now you know how to add HTML to a WordPress Page or Post!

Schedule Backups with BoldGrid Backup

BoldGrid Backup includes many capabilities for security and disaster recovery such as backups before auto-updates. Below we cover how to schedule backups to a specified directory.

Schedule Backups

Step 1:   Log in to the WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2:   **Select Settings under BoldGrid Backup.**

Step 3:   In the **Backup Schedule** section, set a schedule, Cron or WP Cron (if the cron service isn't on the server), days to backup, time of day, backup location, and files to backup.

Step 4:   Select **Retention** to set the number of backups to store.

Step 5:   Select **Backup Directory** to change the storage location from /boldgrid_ backup if desired. You'll be prompted to choose whether to move the backups and it'll still show under the **Backups** tab.

Step 6:   Select **Notifications** to set an email account to receive notifications for backup completion. Your admin user email is set by default. You can also ensure your **BoldGrid Connect Key** is enabled.

Measuring For Keyword Relevance (WordPress SEO)

Keywords are the terms people might use to find your website in a search engine. It's easy to generate long lists of potential keywords for your site, but how do you know if the keywords you've selected are relevant for your site?

Keyword relevance is an important factor to consider when optimizing your landing pages for SEO, and it's easy to overlook the relevance of a particular keyword during your selection process.

Placing Keywords Strategically

Strategically placing relevant keywords in your page content will help search engines rank you appropriately, but if you abuse your keywords, or try to stuff too many into one page, the search engines are likely to drop you in the rankings.

The Keyword Relevance Checklist

As you're selecting keywords for your landing pages, use this checklist to make sure your keywords are relevant.

- Is the keyword relevant to the page itself (for example, if you sell mountain bikes, don't use a keyword-relevant to motorcycles)?

- Does the keyword compete with another page (don't use the same keyword for another landing page)?

- Is the keyword specific enough (trying to rank for the word "bike shop" may be too specific)?

If your selected keyword meets the above criteria, you will be in good shape.

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How to Use the Website Creator SEO Plugin

With **Website Creator,** you can create a website quickly and easily. Building your website is one piece of the puzzle though. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is another critical segment that you should take into account while you make your own website. This article describes how to use the BoldGrid Easy SEO plugin included with the Website Creator to improve your website's SEO.

An Introduction to SEO

SEO is the method of enhancing your website's visibility to increase the quantity and quality of organic website traffic from the results displayed to a user making a search query. Search engines (e.g., Google, Bing, and DuckDuckGo) systematically review websites and analyze the content within to determine the best search results to match what the user is seeking. If you want your beautifully crafted website to display as an option, then your SEO game needs to be on point.

To learn more about SEO basics check out our article: Search Engine Optimization Getting Started Guide.

Website Creator SEO Plugin

It is important to keep SEO in mind while you build your website. This ensures that your content displays more often in search engine results. Website Creator comes with BoldGrid Easy SEO installed to help you create more compelling content. Ultimately increasing your website's visibility and rank in search engine results.

BoldGrid Easy SEO analyzes your page content in real-time and makes recommendations that will help you maintain the best SEO practices. Once you establish a target keyword or phrase, the BoldGrid Easy SEO dashboard automatically displays suggestions for you to improve your on-page SEO. Regardless of your SEO skill level or knowledge, BoldGrid Easy SEO provides simple, yet powerful tools for improving your content as you create it.

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How to Use BoldGrid Easy SEO

BoldGrid Easy SEO uses a red, yellow, and green rating system. Green indicates that your content aligns with some popular SEO Best Practices; while yellow and red imply SEO improvement opportunities. Follow the steps below to learn how to use the BoldGrid Easy SEO interface.

Step 1: Log into the [Website Creator account](#).

Step 2: Navigate to the **Page/Post Builder** and select the content you would like to edit.

Step 3: Scroll down to the bottom of your content.

> **Note!** If you do not see the BoldGrid Easy SEO section below your content in the Post and Page Builder, you will need to adjust your screen options settings. The Easy SEO checkbox should contain a check.

Step 4: On the Keyword Phrase tab, enter your desired keyword or phrase into the field labeled **Target Keyword or Phrase.**

> **Note!** If you enter a single keyword, the color indicator will change from red to yellow and provide more insight on how to improve SEO. As suggested, if you enter a phrase, then the indicator will turn green.

Step 5: Click on the Title & Description tab.

Step 6: Enter a title for your content in the **SEO Title** field. If you need help, refer to the text above this field. It will guide you in choosing a title that aligns with SEO best practices.

Step 7: Enter a more detailed description of your content in the **SEO Description** field. Again, follow the guidelines that the BoldGrid Easy SEO tool provides. This ensures your content encompasses fundamental SEO tactics.

Step 8: Click **Publish** or **Update** to save the changes.

Now you know how to use the BoldGrid Easy SEO plugin, included with your Website Creator account. Take your SEO skills to the next level and learn more from our other [SEO articles](#).

Recommended WordPress Security Plugins

There are many different security plugins available for WordPress. Below are the most recommended plugins and a brief explanation of the plugin from the developers.

WordPress Core Security

Wordfence Security – Firewall & Malware Scan

By: Wordfence

Notes from the plugin developer: "Wordfence Security is a free enterprise-class security plugin that includes a firewall, anti-virus scanning, malicious URL scanning and live traffic including crawlers. Wordfence is the only WordPress security plugin that can verify and repair your core, theme and plugin files, even if you don't have backups. Wordfence is now Multi-Site compatible."

All In One WP Security & Firewall

By: Tips and Tricks HQ, Peter Petreski, Ruhul, Ivy

Notes from the plugin developer: "WordPress itself is a very secure platform. However, it helps to add some extra security and firewall to your site by using a security plugin that enforces a lot of good security practices. The All In One WordPress Security plugin will take your website security to a whole new level. This plugin is designed and written by experts and is easy to use and understand. It reduces security risk by checking for vulnerabilities, and by implementing and enforcing the latest recommended WordPress security practices and techniques."

Cerber Security, Antispam & Malware Scan

By: Gregory

Notes from the plugin developer: "Defend WordPress against hacker attacks, spam, trojans, and malware. Mitigate brute force attacks by limiting the number of login attempts through the login form, XML-RPC / REST API requests or using auth cookies. Restricts access with the Black IP Access List and the White IP Access List. Tracks user and intruder activity with powerful email, mobile and desktop notifications. Stop spam: activates Cerber antispam engine and Google reCAPTCHA for protecting registration, contact and comments forms. Hardening WordPress with a set of security rules and comprehensive algorithms. Malware scanner, integrity checker, file monitor."

BulletProof Security

By: AITpro Website Security

Notes from the plugin developer: "WordPress Website Security Protection: BulletProof Security protects your WordPress website against XSS, RFI, CRLF, CSRF, Base64, Code Injection and SQL Injection hacking attempts. One-click .htaccess WordPress security protection. Protects wp-config.php, bb-config.php, php.ini, php5.ini, install.php and readme. html with .htaccess security protection. Security Logging. HTTP Error Logging."

Blackhole for Bad Bots

By: Jeff Starr

Notes from the plugin developer: "Add your own virtual Blackhole trap for bad bots. The Blackhole plugin includes a hidden link to your pages. You then add a line to your robots.txt file that forbids bots from following the hidden link. Bots that ignore or disobey your robots rules will crawl the link and fall into the honeypot trap. Once trapped, bad bots are denied further access to your WordPress-powered website."

Look-See Security Scanner

By: Blobfolio, LLC

Notes from the plugin developer: "Look-see Security Scanner is a relatively quick and painless way to locate the sorts of file irregularities that turn up when a site is hacked."

Sucuri Security

By: Sucuri

Notes from the plugin developer: The Sucuri WordPress plugin, "...will monitor file changes, provide audit trails, apply hardening features and detect various types of malware, SPAM, and other infections. [It] allows Sucuri Firewall clients to access the Firewall dashboard without logging into their Sucuri account. It takes the most common features, like clearing cache and daily monitoring and makes it available to you via your WordPress administration dashboard."

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Jetpack

By: Jetpack

Notes from the plugin developer: "Jetpack Premium and Professional plans include daily, automated security scanning and one-click threat resolution. Jetpack Protect allows you to protect yourself against traditional brute force attacks and distributed brute force attacks that use many servers against your site. Jetpack's site management tools allow you to choose which plugins update automatically. [Jetpack will also] automatically filter comments, pingbacks, and contact form submissions for known spam."

Read our Jetpack Security Features article.

BoldGrid Total Upkeep

By: BoldGrid.com

Notes from the plugin developer: "The Total Upkeep Plugin is an automated, worry-free WordPress backup plugin that allows you to update, secure, restore or migrate your website with ease. With the Total Upkeep Plugin, it's easy to schedule a time and day for backups to run automatically so you can rest assured that your website data is safe. You can also manually create a backup at any time with a single click, allowing for quick, worry free restorations on the fly. There are useful tools that can be utilized, such as the ability to set automatic upgrades to ensure your site is safe from the latest vulnerabilities."

Caldera Forms – More Than Contact Forms

By: Caldera Labs

Notes from the plugin developer: "Caldera Form is a free and powerful WordPress plugin that creates responsive forms with a simple drag and drop editor. Caldera Forms has many free user-friendly add-ons for both beginners and web developers."

Secure Image Protection

By: ArtistScope

Notes from the plugin developer: "Insert Secure Image Pro encrypted images to pages and posts from your WordPress page editor that are supported across all web browsers on all operating systems, ie: Windows, Mac, and Linux. Hand-held devices that can use Java will also be supported. Install, upload and embed encrypted images using WordPress native media tools."

Section 3: Advanced Skills

Two sections down, one to go! By now, you ought to have a majority of the skills required to become a WordPress champion and feel comfortable using most WordPress tools and Plugins. In this final section, we'll outline the nine skills to add to your repertoire to officially become a WordPress expert and start growing your business.

How to Optimize WordPress With W3 Total Cache

By default, WordPress is a dynamic CMS (Content Management System). This means that for every visitor request that WordPress has to process, it must first connect to the database to see if the requested page even exists.

In a lot of cases, this might not be problematic on a site that doesn't receive much traffic. However, a sudden surge in traffic caused by search engine bots, or just a general increase in normal traffic can quickly cause your WordPress site to use up a lot of CPU resources from the server while trying to fulfill needless duplicate requests again and again.

You can counter this increase in CPU usage by implementing a caching plugin. What these do is cache the first visitor's request of a new page to a plain HTML file on the server, then when another visitor comes through and requests the same page, so long as the page wasn't updated in your administration section, or updated by a comment, the cached HTML page will be served.

This can greatly reduce CPU usage of your WordPress site very easily. As an example let's say you had 100 views of your front page, without caching that would require the same database query to have to run 100 times and every time it's just getting back the exact same data anyways.

With a caching plugin, only the first user would have the database query run to generate the cached HTML file, then the next 99 visitors would get that cached HTML served to them right away, without having to wait for any database activity to complete.

This is just about always a win-win, because your visitors don't have to wait as long for your pages to load, and you're reducing the impact of WordPress's requests on the server's performance.

One of the simplest WordPress caching plugins to setup is WP Super Cache which is discussed in a previous article of ours.

Optimizing WordPress with W3 Total Cache plugin

Step 1:   Hover over Plugins in the left-hand menu, then click **Add New.**

Step 2:   In the Search box, type in "w3 total cache" and select **Install Now.**

Step 3:   Click **Activate.**

Step 4:   From the left-hand menu, you should now have a new Performance section. Hover over this and click **General Settings.**

Step 5:   Scroll down the General Settings page ensuring that each main section is enabled. These sections would be Page Cache, Minify, Database Cache, Object Cache, and Browser Cache. Once you have checked the enable option, click **Save all settings.**

> **Note!** If you are using minify, make sure to enable the option, save it and then immediately look at your WordPress site to make sure that the site looks normal. If you see problems with formatting, it's possible that a theme or plugin is causing issues due to the minification. You should then disable minification and not use this option with your website.

Step 6:   Hover over Performance again in the left-hand menu, and click Page Cache.

Step 7:   Ensure that these options have a checkmark beside them:

- Cache home page
- Cache feeds: site, categories, tags, comments
- Cache 404 (not found) pages
- Cache requests only for example.com hostname
- Don't cache pages for logged in users

Step 8:   Click **Save all settings.**

Step 9:   From the left-hand menu, you should now have a new Performance section. Hover over this and click **General Settings.**

Once you've confirmed that W3 Total Cache is up and running properly on your website, you're done. Now you can enjoy quicker page loads, and reduced resource usage from your WordPress site!

How to Duplicate a WordPress Site for Development and Testing

It's best to test major changes on a duplicate WordPress website before doing so on a live website. There are multiple ways to accomplish this including plugins like the BoldGrid plugin suite and Softaculous Staging option.

Below we'll outline how to manually create a copy of a WordPress site for testing.

Warning! This tutorial is made for single-site installations. If you are using the multisite option, this method will create TWO SEPARATE MULTISITE installations. When you duplicate a multisite installation, the duplicated structures and data will fall under the respective multi-site installation database and WordPress files. This can be confusing. If you are not familiar with the differences between multisite and single-site, please only use these directions for duplicating a single-site WordPress installation.

Copy a WordPress Site to Another Location

Step 1: Login to cPanel.

Step 2: Create a subdomain for the testing site – e.g. testsite.example.com.

Step 3: Open cPanel File Manager and ensure **Show Hidden Files** is enabled.

Step 4: Navigate to your WordPress root directory and copy your WordPress files from your current directory to the subdomain root directory you created, usually the same name as the subdomain itself.

> **Copy WordPress files**
>
> 1. Select all WordPress files.
> 2. Click **Copy** on the top of File Manager.
> 3. Type the path to the new subdomain document root folder.

Step 5: Scroll down the General Settings page ensuring that each main section is enabled. These sections would be Page Cache, Minify, Database Cache, Object Cache, and Browser Cache. Once you have checked the enable option, click **Save all settings.**

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Step 6: Create a database. This will be used to separate the test site from your main site. If you use the same database for the test site, the live site will reflect made on the test site. Using a new test site database prevents this.

Step 7: [Export your current database](#).

Step 8: [Import Your Database to the new database you created](#).

Configure the Test Site

Step 1: [Configure the Test WordPress](#) wp-config.php file for the test site. This ensures it uses the new database.

Step 2: Change the site and home URL for the test site to the test subdomain to update the WordPress database.

Step 3: [Correct image links](#) as these are in the database but not connected to the site URL.

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How to Move WordPress from a Subfolder to the Root Directory

Many people like to create and test a new version of their site in a subfolder so that it does not affect their main domain. Once completed, they will want to migrate the new site over to the root directory for the domain. This is very common with WordPress. Follow the instructions below as we guide you on how to move WordPress from a Subfolder to the Root Directory.

Make a Backup of your account

Before performing the following procedure, it is a good idea to make a backup of your account prior to making any changes.

Prepare your WordPress installation for the move

Prior to physically moving the files, you will need to prepare the installation to accept the new URL name.

Step 1: Login to your WordPress Dashboard.

Step 2: From the main dashboard, go to **Administration -> Settings -> General.**

Step 3: Next, look for the WordPress address (URI): and change it from **(example. com/WordPress to example.com).**

Step 4: Lastly, look for the Site Address address (URL): and change it from **(example.com/WordPress to example.com).**

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Moving your WordPress from a subfolder to your main folder

After you have made your backup, removed the site files from the builder, and prepared your WordPress files, it is time to move your WordPress to the primary folder.

Step 1:   Log into your cPanel admin dashboard.

Step 2:   From the main cPanel area, look for the Files category and then click the **File Manager** tool. Go to **Settings** In the Preferences window that appears, select the checkbox entitled **Show Hidden Files.**

Step 3:   Once inside the File Manager, you will want to navigate to the folder you have the WordPress site in. For example, a folder named **WordPress.**

Step 4:   You will see a list of all the WordPress files and folders in the right-hand panel. Highlight them all and click the **Copy** icon from the menu toolbar across the top of the page.

Step 5:   A popup will appear so you can enter the destination folder. Continuing with our WordPress folder example, it should show as public_html/ WordPress. Remove the /WordPress from the destination path so that it simply displays as public_html. Click the **Copy Files** button.

Step 6:   This will copy the files up to the public_html folder. Use the File Manager to navigate back to the public_html folder. (You can do this by clicking on the **Up One Level** button from the toolbar across the top of the right-hand panel.)

Step 7:   You should now see the same files as you have in your **WordPress** folder.

Step 8:   You can now delete the old **WordPress** folder.

Log in and finish the URL details

Step 1:   Log into your NEW WordPress admin dashboard. For example (example. com/wp-admin or example.com/wp-login.php)

Step 2:   Go to **Administration > Settings > Permalinks** and ensure the link structure is the same as your new URL.

Changing a WordPress Theme in the Database

Sometimes new changes such as plugins or updates are simply not compatible with your current theme. Often, with this incompatibility, you are unable to enter the admin area to switch the theme. This can leave you in a circular problem as you need to change the theme in order to get into the admin area. In this scenario, you will need to change it directly in the database. This article will guide you on how to do that within your WordPress site.

Log in and finish the URL details

Step 1:   Login to your cPanel.

Step 2:   Look for the Databases category and click the **phpMyadmin** icon.

Step 3:   Once inside the phpMyadmin look to the left-hand sidebar and click your specific WordPress database.

Step 4:   From there, select the **wp_options** table.

Step 5:   Once the table is opened, look to the tab menu on the screen and click the **Browse** tab option. This allows you to browse the columns broken down into pages. Click on the **Show All** option at the top so it will list all the columns on one page.

Step 6:   Next, you will need to locate two rows on the page, the **template** and the **stylesheet.** Select the template and click the **Edit** link.

Step 7:   This will take you to the edit page where we will change the data for the option_value. In our example, the value is set for the Alexandria template. Change this to the default theme name, Twenty Twenty and click the **Go** button.

Step 8:   Perform the same procedure on the stylesheet row. When you finish the stylesheet and return to the list, you should see the new theme in the value portion of the list for both. You can now visit your website and see that it is using the default theme. From here you should also be able to log into your wp-admin area.
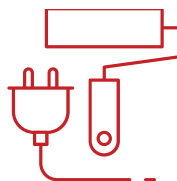
Locking the WordPress Admin Login with .htaccess Rules

If you are a website administrator, security should be at the top of your list. That's why your first step should be to work with InMotion's WordPress Hosting team to get your website up and running. After that, you can lock down the WordPress admin login with some .htaccess rules to prevent unauthorized login attempts.

Limit WordPress admin login attempts

This guide will show how you to limit WordPress admin login attempts by IP address or referrer. Below we'll show you how to get to your **.htaccess file,** and what edits to make, to limit WordPress admin logins.

Step 1:   Login to your cPanel.

Step 2:   Find the Files category and click the **File Manager** icon.

Step 3:   Click **Settings** in the top right corner.

Step 4:   Select the **Document Root** for your domain and check the box next to **Show Hidden Files.** Click **Save.**

Step 5:   Right-click the .htaccess file and select the **Edit** option.

Step 6:   If you have a text editor encoding dialog box pop up, simply click **Edit.**

How to restrict WordPress admin access

Single IP address access

To allow access from a single IP address, replace 123.123.123.xxx with your own IP address:

```
RewriteEngine on
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_URI} ^(.*)?wp-login.php(.*)$ [OR]
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_URI} ^(.*)?wp-admin$
RewriteCond %{REMOTE_ADDR} !^123.123.123.123$
RewriteRule ^(.*)$ - [R=403,L]
```

Multiple IP address access

To allow access from multiple IP addresses, replace 123.123.123.xxx with your own IP addresses:

```
RewriteEngine on
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_URI} ^(.*)?wp-login.php(.*)$ [OR]
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_URI} ^(.*)?wp-admin$
RewriteCond %{REMOTE_ADDR} !^123.123.123.121$
RewriteCond %{REMOTE_ADDR} !^123.123.123.122$
RewriteCond %{REMOTE_ADDR} !^123.123.123.123$
RewriteRule ^(.*)$ - [R=403,L]
```

Dynamic IP address access, limit by referrer

If your IP address changes, you can protect your WordPress site by only allowing login requests that come directly from your domain name. Simply replace **example.com** with your own domain name Most brute force attacks rely on sending direct POST requests right to your wp-login.php script. So requiring a POST request to have your domain as the referrer can help weed out bots.

```
RewriteEngine on
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_METHOD} POST
RewriteCond %{HTTP_REFERER} !^https://(.*)?example.com [NC]
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_URI} ^(.*)?wp-login.php(.*)$ [OR]
RewriteCond %{REQUEST_URI} ^(.*)?wp-admin$
RewriteRule ^(.*)$ - [F]
```

Wait at least 15-20 minutes, and try to log into your WordPress site again. If you try to access the WordPress dashboard within the 15-minute window of a block, this could extend the block longer.

It's important to wait for the previous block to expire and be patient before attempting to access your WordPress site again. You should now be blocking unauthorized WordPress admin login attempts utilizing .htaccess rules.

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WordPress Heartbeat and Heavy admin–ajax.php Usage

Introduced in WordPress 3.6, the **WordPress Heartbeat API** allows WordPress to communicate between the web browser and the server. It allows for improved user session management, revision tracking, and auto-saving.

The WordPress Heartbeat API uses **/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php** to run AJAX calls from the web-browser. Which in theory sounds awesome, as WordPress can keep track of what's going on in the dashboard.

However, this can also start sending excessive requests to **admin-ajax.php** which can lead to high CPU usage. Anytime a web-browser is left open on a page using the Heartbeat API, this could potentially be an issue.

WordPress Heartbeat API in action

Something handled by the WordPress Heartbeat API is the main WordPress admin dashboard page itself. If all you did was log in to WordPress and then minimized that window and started working on something else, you'd see requests for **admin-ajax.php** in your site's access logs.

With the WordPress dashboard in focus, a Heartbeat request should be spaced the max of 60 seconds that the API allows for. If the dashboard is out of focus, the Heartbeat requests space out to 120 seconds between them.

Now each of those POST requests had a corresponding PHP script execution on the server using CPU time.

Having our dashboard open for over a half-hour, generated 25 PHP script executions. With a total usage of 5.77 CPU seconds. Not terrible, but not great either, since we used up CPU essentially checking for nothing to happen.

Disable WordPress Heartbeat API

If you notice that you are having an excessive amount of admin-ajax.php requests, the WordPress Heartbeat API can be disabled to prevent this type of activity from happening automatically.

Note! By default WordPress uses the Heartbeat API to manage things such as post locking so only one admin can edit a post at once, it's also used for auto-saving. Going forward the API could be used more and more by WordPress developers to handle certain tasks, so keep this in mind if you choose to disable it.

Installing the Heartbeat Control plugin

Step 1:   Login to WordPress.

Step 2:   Within your dashboard, hover over **Plugins** and click **Add New**.

Step 3:   On this page, enter **Heartbeat Control** into the search box at the top and press the **Enter** key on your keyboard to perform the search.

Step 4:   As you have searched for the exact name of the plugin, it should be the first result that appears. To install it, click the **Install Now** button.

Step 5:   WordPress will now handle the download and installation of the Heartbeat Control plugin. Of course, be sure to click **Activate Plugin** when complete.

Configuring the Heartbeat Control plugin

Step 1:   Now that you have the Heartbeat Control plugin installed, you will need to configure its settings. To access the settings page, hover over **Tools** on the left side menu bar and click **Heartbeat Control**.

Step 2:   Once on the settings page, you will notice 2 different dropdown boxes. The first box will allow you to disable the WordPress heartbeat on the entire site or on specific locations. Depending on your needs, you may disable the WordPress heartbeat completely, or only allow it on specific locations such as on the post edit page.

Step 3:   The second box allows you to determine how often the WordPress heartbeat API will make a request. For example, on post edit pages it makes a POST request every 15 seconds. This can be modified within the heartbeat frequency dropdown to delay it up to 60 seconds between requests which would cut down server resources caused by admin-ajax requests by 75%.

Step 4:   Once your changes are made, click **Save Changes**.

Conclusion

There you have it! By now, you should feel like a WordPress expert and feel comfortable facing most of the challenges you come across when working with it. Several of the skills in this book may take practice and will become easier the more you put them to work. We appreciate you taking the time to read and hope you will keep this ebook handy as a reference to consult anytime you need a refresher on how to solve a particular problem.

For InMotion customers, as always, our Customer Service team is here 24/7 to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us via chat or call us at 1-888-321-HOST (4678).

And if you're not an InMotion customer yet, don't hesitate to contact us at any time to learn more about the services we offer and how we can help your business thrive.

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About InMotion Hosting

Founded in 2001, InMotion Hosting is a privately-held web hosting company providing custom web hosting services and solutions to businesses of all sizes across the world. With customers in six continents and more than 175 countries, InMotion Hosting has established a long-standing track record of helping small-to-midsize businesses achieve online success and technological innovation, all backed by live 24/7/365 U.S.-based support.

For more information on InMotion Hosting and a full suite of digital services, visit https://www.inmotionhosting.com.

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