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EXPERT ADVICE

How to Quickly Launch a Wordpress eCommerce Website

Despite its reputation as a reliable blogging platform, you can also create a powerful eCommerce website on Wordpress by following a few simple steps. While you may be tempted to choose a more eCommerce-orientated platform for your online store, Wordpress offers a few unique features and advantages depending on your needs and niche.

Wordpress may be the overall better option if you only have a select few products you want to focus on or if you need to get your store up and running as quickly and as cheaply as possible. For businesses that have been affected by the recent Coronavirus pandemic, being able to get a quick digital store launched to compensate for the lack of brick and mortar operations might be critical.

If you've been turned off by Wordpress in the past or think it's just not worth the hassle, this guide will help dispel your fears and answer all of your questions. I'm going to cover everything from choosing and purchasing your domain, to installing Wordpress as easily as possible.

A Wordpress eCommerce website is a simple solution to get your products in front of more people without investing a ton of time or money upfront. This enables you to focus more on your brand and business while letting Wordpress do the heavy lifting. Not only this, being able to quickly get a store up and running online is becoming increasingly more important as we all adjust to a quarantine lifestyle due to the Coronavirus outbreak. A seamless and affordable solution like Wordpress gives store owners

who otherwise wouldn't consider building an online store the opportunity to dip their toes into eCommerce and find real success.

The Benefits of Choosing Wordpress Over Other Platforms

With all of the dedicated eCommerce platforms that are out there these days, what makes Wordpress a viable option?

Perhaps the most obvious benefit is that you are in full control over your website. When you purchase your own hosting and install a Wordpress website, it's truly yours. You have complete access to the file system of your website, the database, where everything goes and what everything does. This is something that dedicated eCommerce platforms and website "builders" just don't offer. While this amount of freedom and options can seem daunting at first, in the long run, it is extremely beneficial.

Another major reason why Wordpress is viable is because it is perhaps the best natural blogging platform that exists on the web right now. Wordpress was originally built around blogging, and so it only makes sense that it excels in this area. Blogging is still one of the premier ways in which you can build a list, attract customers, and create brand authority online, making this a powerful perk in Wordpress's corner.

Wordpress is also known for its immense selection of free and premium themes and plugins. The sheer amount of functionality that you get with Wordpress dwarfs anything else on the web right now. You can do virtually anything with the right themes and plugins, far more than most other platforms allow. This can also be viewed as a negative for those who want merely a simple eCommerce solution, but the point is that the functionality exists and the options are there. You don't need to dive into everything at once. Over time you can install these plugins as needed to

slowly turn your website into a powerhouse.

Easy scalability and control over where you keep your domain is another awesome perk of Wordpress. When you build a website on affordable shared hosting, you can easily ask your webhost to scale you up when you need more power or space, or even move your website altogether to a dedicated server or another service entirely when you're ready to go big. There's no commitment to enterprise services or expensive monthly hosting. For instance, in this tutorial, we will be purchasing shared hosting on Namecheap, which will cost you literal pennies a month, for quite a bit of power. The best part? You can scale this anytime once your website starts to grow. Everything is in your hands.

With its wide range of power and flexibility, it's no wonder that Wordpress is still a strong eCommerce contender. But enough talking, let's dive into the tutorial so you can get started with a Wordpress website of your own.

Step 1. Obtain Your Domain Name and Hosting

Before you do anything, you need a domain. Not simply any domain will do, however, if you want an eCommerce website that actually performs. Your domain name is part of your business identity and brand.

While the domain name doesn't have to strictly be the name of your business, it should be catchy and relevant. So head on over to any reliable domain seller or hosting service and search for your domain of choice. Options include Namecheap, Siteground, and Bluehost to name a few of the more reliable ones.
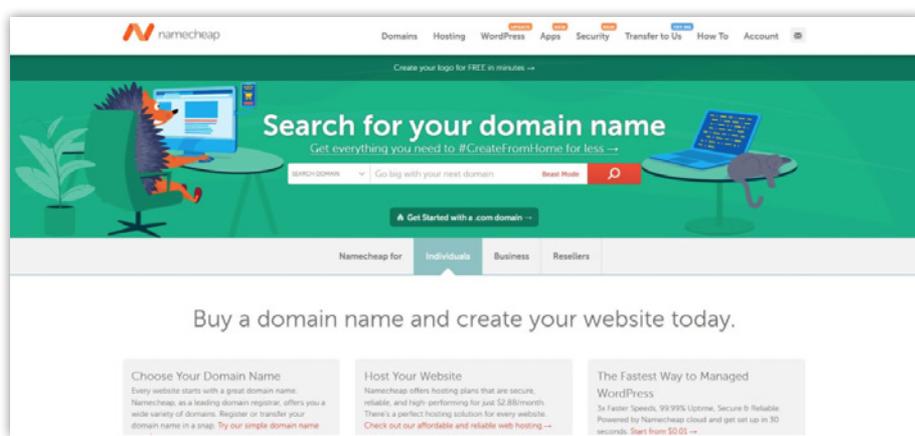
If your domain is already taken, change a word or letter around, add a dash, or drop the .com for something unique and catchy. No reason to overpay, especially if the point of starting your Wordpress eCommerce website is to save some money.

If your domain is available, you'll get a green checkmark or similar indicator and you will be able to add the domain to your cart.

HTTPS in the browser. If you are running any kind of online store, this step is essential. Not only is it a powerful metric of trust for your buyers, but it will also give you a palpable SEO boost.

Congrats, you've completed the first steps toward launching your own eCommerce website. Next, we will move on to installing Wordpress on your new domain.

Shared Hosting Plans (50% off 1st Year)

Datacenter Location
⦿ US (Free)   ○ UK (+$1.00/mo) ⓘ

[Monthly | **Yearly**]

| Stellar	POPULAR Stellar Plus	NEW FEATURE - ON CLOUD Stellar Business
$1.44/mo	$2.44/mo	$4.44/mo
$2.88	$4.88	$8.88
Save 50% on 1st Year	Save 50% on 1st Year	Save 50% on 1st Year
Get Started	**Get Started**	**Get Started**
You pay $17.28 — Renews at $33.88/year	You pay $29.28 — Renews at $57.88/year	You pay $52.88 — Renews at $104.88/year
✓ 20 GB SSD ✓ 3 Websites ✓ Domain Name ⓘ	✓ Unmetered SSD ✓ Unlimited Websites ✓ AutoBackup ✓ Domain Name ⓘ	✓ 50 GB SSD ✓ Unlimited Websites ✓ AutoBackup & Cloud Storage ✓ Domain Name ⓘ

Next, you'll need hosting. Most of these services have dedicated managed Wordpress hosting options, but they aren't necessary. These days you can choose the most affordable hosting package available and simply request your hosting provider to scale you up once you need more power, space, and resources.

When you head to checkout, make sure you purchase SSL for your domain. This will ensure that your store is secure and gets the green "lock" and

Step 2. Wordpress One-Click Install

Every Wordpress tutorial you see online gives you all these convoluted steps on how to download the Wordpress files manually and uploading them to your server via FTP, setting up child themes and all this other unnecessary and complicated fluff. There's no reason why you need to be doing any of this in 2020.

Installing Wordpress is effortless. Simply navigate
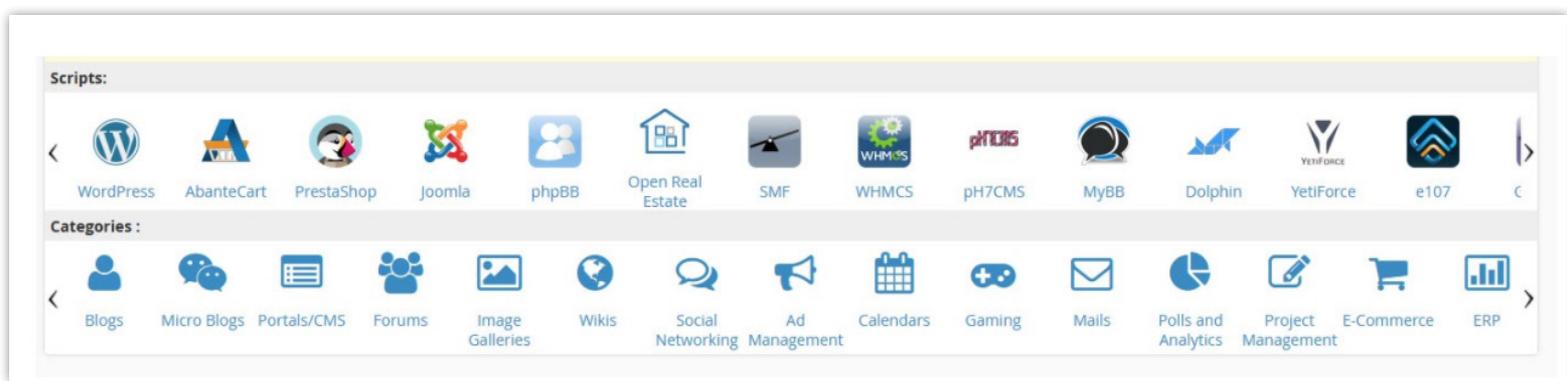
to your Cpanel dashboard (you will have received a link and a login from your hosting provider when you purchased your hosting plan), and once there, scroll down to the bottom where it says "scripts."

Here, click on Wordpress and fill in the information on the following page before continuing.

It's important to make sure that you select "HTTPS," assuming you purchased SSL and intend on running a secure website appropriate for eCommerce. While this can always be fixed later on, save yourself the trouble and do it now.

Once you have these settings in place and you choose a username and password for your Wordpress installation, scroll down and hit "install." Don't worry about selecting a theme just yet, we can handle that once we are inside the Wordpress dashboard.

You're already finished with the installation. One of the keys to getting your website off the ground is not to overcomplicate things and pick the method that gets solid results in the most efficient way possible.

Step 3. Theme and Plugins

Your Wordpress website is only as functional as the theme and plugins installed on it. The open-source nature of Wordpress means there are thousands of different features and tens of thousands of different styles for your website, but we will only be focusing on the essentials here.

You can easily get overwhelmed when constructing your Wordpress eCommerce website, which is what you want to avoid. If you want to launch your website quickly and with as little

hassle as possible, stick to the following essentials. You can always beef up your website later with additional plugins and features.

Begin by making sure you are logged into your new Wordpress installation, choose Appearance and then Themes from the sidebar menu, and click the "Add New" button. Here, you can search for a Theme that suits the look you are going for. There are several free options to get you started, and you can switch one theme out for another at any time. Ultimately you are going to want to select a theme that matches the feel and intent of your products and brand.

After you have installed your theme, navigate to the Plugins area so we can begin adding the proper functionality to your new website. Search for and install the following recommended plugins:

- Elementor
- WooCommerce
- All in One SEO (or Yoast)
- WP Optimize

At the moment, these are the four must-have plugins for any Wordpress eCommerce website. Elementor is your page builder which will enable you to easily construct custom pages like you would on any modern website builder, WooCommerce, of course, is your eCommerce functionality, All in One SEO will help you get your website ranking properly, and WP Optimize will ensure that your website is performing as smooth as possible.

While you may want to take the time to learn more about each of these plugins and how to properly configure them, you do not need to master them

in order to start your eCommerce website, other than WooCommerce, which we'll cover now.

Quick Guidex to WooCommerce

WooCommerce is the premier solution for building functional stores on Wordpress. The plugin is large and adds a lot of options to your Wordpress build, including a new type of post referred to appropriately enough as a "product." WooCommerce also adds such things as cart functionality and payment gateways, as well as a litany of internal options that mimic all of the functionality of an eCommerce platform such as Shopify.

When you first install WooCommerce, you will be sent through a small installation wizard that is highly recommended in order to get a few initial steps of your configuration out of the way.

From here, you will also be prompted to install Storefront, which is a basic theme provided by WooCommerce. If you are interested in getting

an eCommerce store off the ground as quickly as possible, this is a solid option. You can always move on to a theme that has better functionality at a later time.

To make your site come alive, you will need to get acquainted with all of the options that Wordpress and WooCommerce make available for you right out of the box. Here are a few points of interest.

Under the Appearance section:

- **Themes:** Displays your installed theme and allows you to upload and change your theme.

- **Customize:** Takes you to the customizer, which has different options depending on your theme. We'll discuss the customizer in more detail down below, but it's here where you will set the styling and rules for much of your website.

- **Widgets:** Controls the functionality of your blog sidebars and footer.

- **Menus:** Control what items appear in your navigation menu. Create other menus for places like the footer, which can be added via the Widgets area.

Under the WooCommerce section:

- **Dashboard:** General statistics and information related to your store's performance.

- **Customers:** Provides you with a list of all current customers and their information.

- **Reports:** Offers information on all aspects of your store.

- **Settings:** Comprehensive options for tailoring every aspect of your store. Here you can change location, shipping parameters, your payment gateway, your automated emails, the name of your checkout page, and much more. Take plenty of time to review all of these settings and familiarize yourself with everything your software can do.
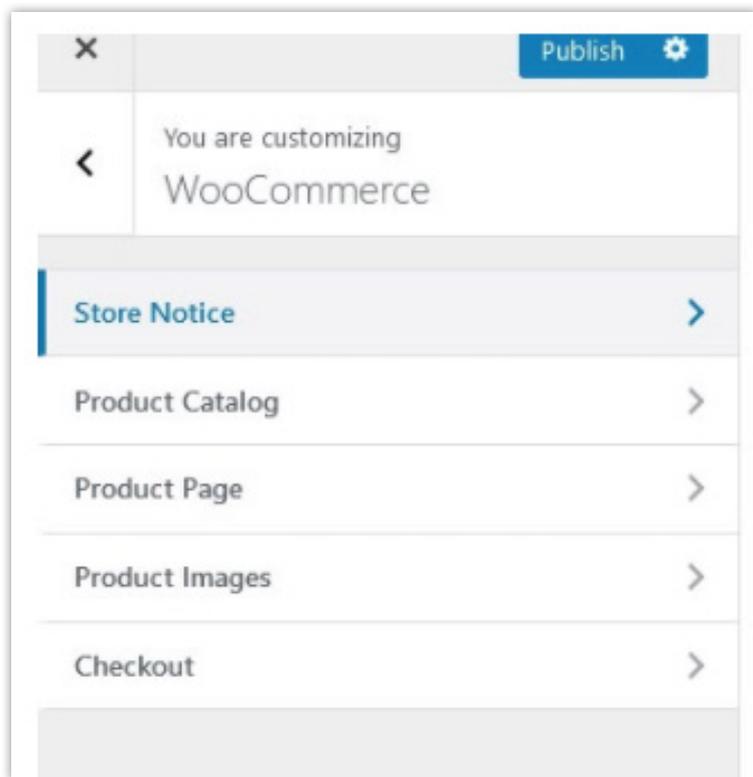
Under the Analytics section:

- **Revenue:** Displays comprehensive information about your store revenue and transactions.

- **Orders:** Shows current and past orders and all associated data.

- **Products:** Displays info by product.

- **Categories:** Displays info by product category.

- **Taxes:** Displays relevant tax information on all processed orders.

- **Downloads:** Functions like Orders but for digital products.

- **Settings:** Set certain rules for how WooCommerce tracks information.

You can also find other useful options under the Settings and Tools sections of the Wordpress sidebar. These areas offer access to options related to the overall functionality of the website itself. Here you can change the behavior of how your blog works, how your permalinks appear, and so on.

The Wordpress Theme Customizer:

When you access the customize menu, your viewport will shift and display the homepage of your website. This area of Wordpress is where,
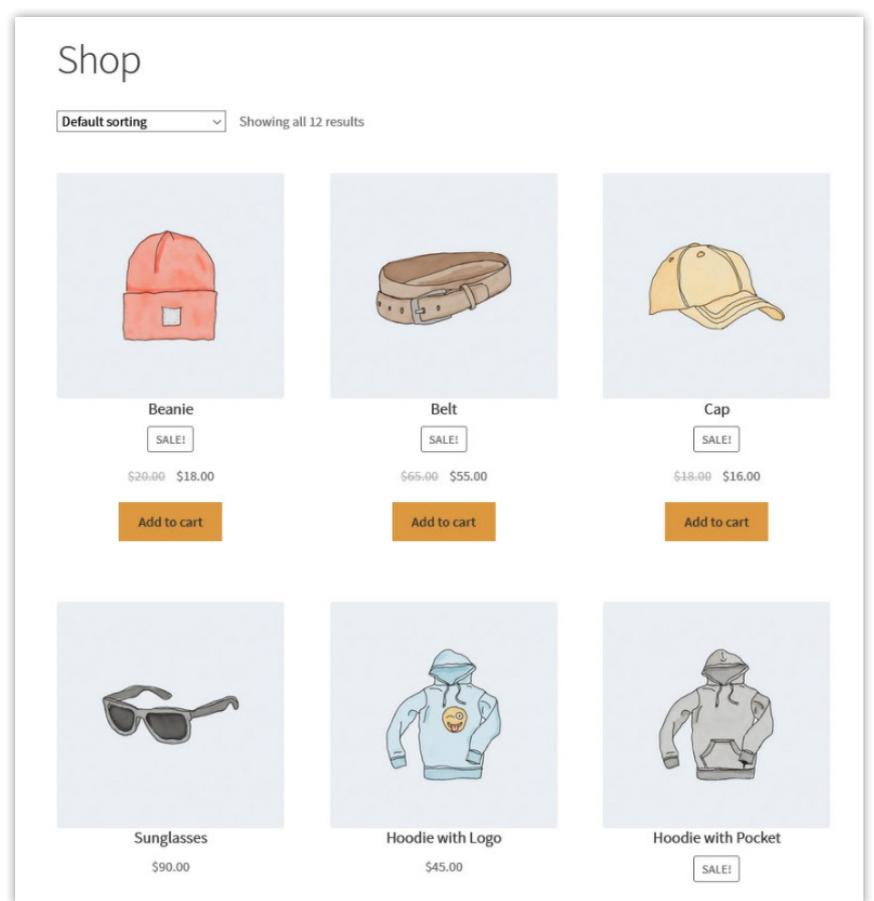
on many basic themes, you will change how the styling looks all over your website, as well as a wide variety of other options.

If you installed Storefront, it is here where you will also be able to toggle how the theme behaves and how the elements of your store will appear to users. Basic options like color, font style, store notices, and footer appearance, can all be decided here.

While you don't need to get too involved with many of these options on the outset, the more you familiarize yourself with what's available to you, the better able you will be able to manage your store and get it operating the way you want it.

Adding a Product to Your Store:

WooCommerce makes it easy to add products to your store with minimal hassle. Because the platform utilizes Wordpress's native blogging features to format the way your product will appear and behave, creating a product from scratch is almost no different than making a new blog post.

You can see that in addition to offering fields for title and description, you can input all of the necessary product data, including price, variations,
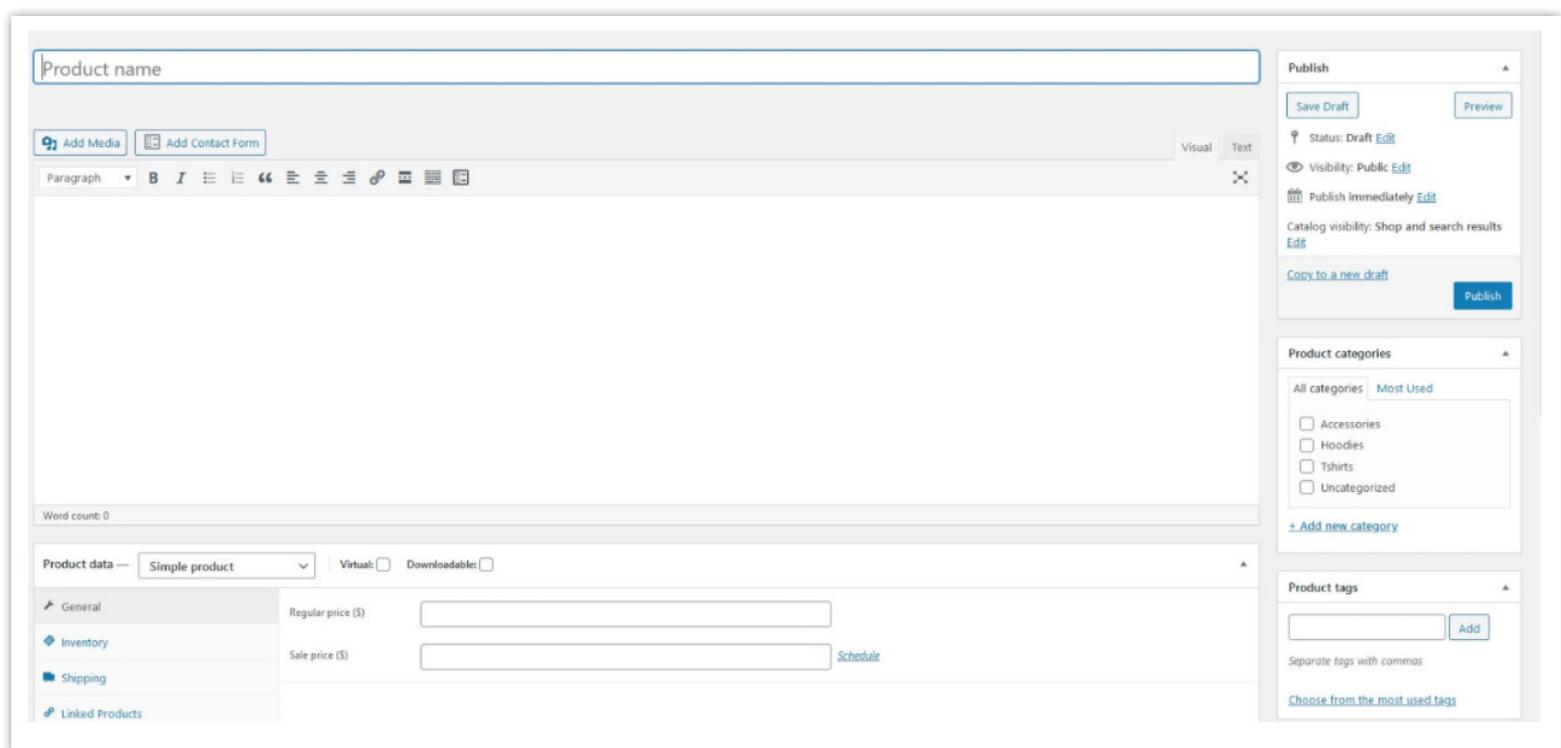
availability, and shipping information. Like any page or post on Wordpress, you can include a featured image, which in this case will act as the primary image of the product itself when it's displayed in your store. You can also opt to create a product gallery, which is an effective way to showcase all aspects of your product.

Once you are satisfied with all of the information you provided for your product, you can simply click the "Publish" button like any post on Wordpress and your product will be live. Don't worry about integrating it with your cart or anything else, WooCommerce takes care of all of the "behind the scenes" stuff. As long as everything is filled out correctly in your settings, your users will experience a seamless process from start to finish. And remember, you can edit your product at any time by navigating to the Products area and clicking on the item of choice that you would like to edit.

WooCommerce may appear complex at first, but only a few hours of introducing yourself to the platform will go a long way. You can very easily have a simple store up and running in less than a day by following the steps outlined above. Jumping into the eCommerce arena may be simple, but if you really want to give your store an edge, there are a few other important aspects of building an online store you should be aware of.

SEO Checklist

Finding success online is largely determined by how optimized your website is for search engines. A website that doesn't have the proper SEO will not be ranked high in Google and therefore will not generate enough traffic and sales to remain sustainable as a business. Unless you plan on sinking a hefty amount of money into paid ads, SEO should be your top priority.

Wordpress has the advantage of being optimized and streamlined for SEO. Where many web builders and platforms fail on this front, Wordpress excels. While Wordpress is indeed quite SEO friendly right out of the gate, it can benefit even further through the installation of an SEO plugin like All in One SEO or Yoast.

Which plugin you use is a matter of preference, as each provides similar functionality and options. All in One SEO is a bit lighter in terms of code, and has a more intuitive interface, especially on individual pages and posts. Yoast, on the other hand, is a bit more comprehensive but has a somewhat jarring interface. Whichever you choose, however, you should dive into their respective settings and options menus and explore all that they have to offer.

Here are just a few important tasks to take care of to ensure you give your new website the proper SEO foundation:

- Connect your website to Google Search Console and Google Analytics

- Make sure your permalinks are custom and contain no dates or other superfluous numbers and letters

- Generate a sitemap and upload it to Google Search Console.

- Set title and description for your website homepage, which is what will appear in Google search results.

- Include meta titles and descriptions for every post, page, and product on your website.

- Include titles and descriptions in the appropriate locations on each post, page, and product for Facebook and Twitter, so everything is displayed properly when users share your content.

- Include alt tags and descriptions with every photo you upload, and make sure the file name of every product photo you upload is coherent and descriptive. Random strings of numbers and letters don't do anything for your search results.

- Practice strong interlinking between pages, blog posts, and your products. You should have logical and frequent navigation that pushes users toward solutions to their problems, answers to their questions, or your mailing list.

- Try to include keywords that you want to rank for in the URLs of your products, blog posts, pages, and descriptions.

This cursory checklist will get you started, but you should invest some time in learning your SEO plugin of choice as well as all of the options that Wordpress itself offers to help get your site noticed in the search engines.

Final Tips For Launching Your Wordpress Store

It's important to always keep in mind that building a successful online store is not about launching a website, putting it on metaphorical autopilot, and then somehow expecting results. Once you get your website off the ground, that is only the beginning of your eCommerce journey.

Your Wordpress eCommerce website should grow alongside your business. As you increase your inventory or take on new customers, your website will reflect this with the appropriate updates and changes. You will discover new keywords and incorporate them into your products and blogs, you will take better quality product photos and upload them periodically, and you will redesign your homepage a dozen times just to maximize engagement.

In the meantime, there are a few other points to take note of as you are first launching your website and getting it off the ground.

First off, don't feel compelled to add every last product in your inventory as soon as you install WooCommerce. Focus on a handful of your best performing and most popular products, or ones that you suspect will perform best based on customer research or prior experience. In fact, as far as eCommerce platforms go, Wordpress works best with a smaller, more manageable inventory. Not only will this ensure a fast and smooth website without the need for investing in a powerhouse server right off the bat, but it's also a whole lot easier to manage from a store owner standpoint.

Next, make sure you are taking advantage of Wordpress's blogging capabilities. It doesn't make sense to use Wordpress and not blog with it, and creating informative and topical pieces of content centered around your products and helping your prospective customers with their questions and needs will help get your website the traction it

needs to rank well in Google and get noticed. For small eCommerce websites, a strong blog will give you an edge over your competitors.

One final word on creating an eCommerce website from scratch, it can certainly be a daunting endeavor, especially if you are strapped for time and want actionable solutions right now. This is where we can step in and help. As a leading digital marketing agency specializing in eCommerce, we know how crucial it is to have a website that can perform well up and running with minimal hassle.

If you have a Wordpress site that you've been working on but just can't seem to get the hang of, or if you need to generate better performance and get your products ranking higher in Google, 1Digital® can help you get to this point and beyond. Our skilled team has years of experience cultivating the finest eCommerce websites and can help you find your way around Wordpress and can get you the results you're looking for.

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Award-Winning
Digital Marketing Agency

1DIGITAL® MARKETING AGENCY
20 NORTH 3RD STREET
SUITE 301 (DANIEL BUILDING)
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106

INFO@1DIGITALAGENCY.COM
888. 982. 8269 | 215. 809. 1567

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