

Boost Your Online Branding with a WordPress Blog

OPCUG/PATACS

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by

Gary Vaughan, Web Designer



DC Web Revolution

Agenda

1. Why a Blog for a PATACS Member?
2. General Website Planning Steps
3. Simple Social Media and Website Software Options
4. Moving up to a WordPress (WP) Website
5. WordPress.Com - a user-friendly WP Option
6. *WP as a tool/community to “do good”*

➤ Format: Slides, Demo, Q+A...see [this Slideshare link](#) for Slides copy

❖ **Special 10% Discount Offer!**: See Brochure for 3 Website Services!



Icons Source: [Iconmonstr](#)

About Me...



- 15 Years IT Contractor at State Dept until June 2022 (WP Support)
- Career Project Manager in int'l development (USAID, Peace Corps)
- MBA and PMP (*Project Management Professional*) – see [my LinkedIn](#).
- Volunteer Website coaching of non-profits since 2018 (see pro bono sites to offer your services: [Taproot Plus](#), or [Catchafire](#))
- *Launched my Website Design Consulting Fall 2022!*



A Website tells your Story!



- **Rationale for a Blog...**

- A digital “storefront” you control and “brand”
- A “hub” for other social media
- A broad and deep “container” for your content and story

- ***Website as a *space to hone, update your “value add”***

- for easy entry to **learn/experiment with WordPress software...**
- to launch a **personal blog or hobbyist site...**
- or your **solopreneur/non-profit services.**

*One Caveat!...Website as **just part** of your Marketing Message...*

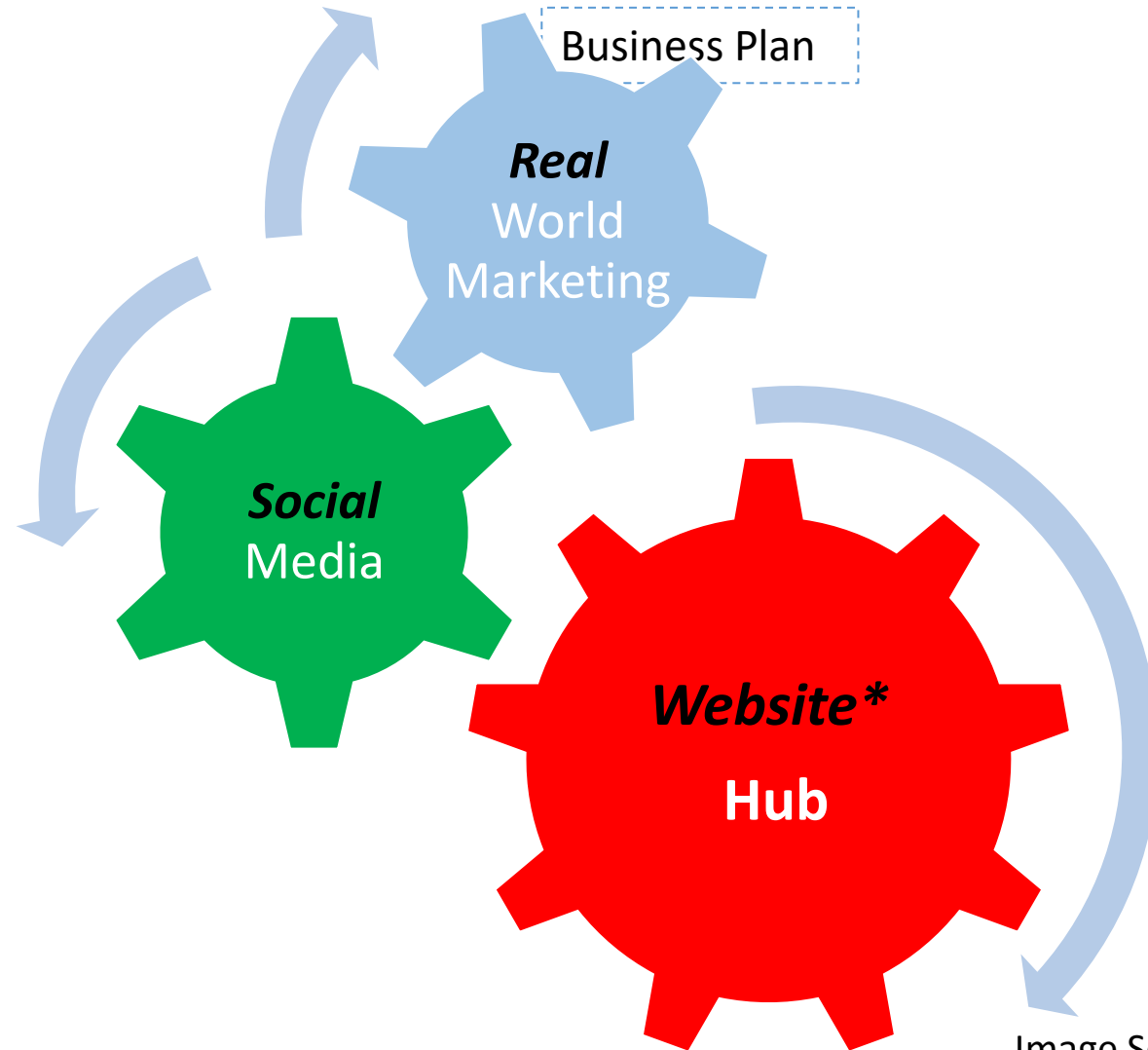
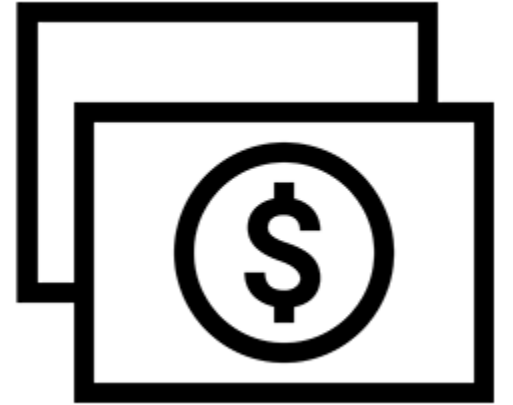


Image Source: MS PowerPoint SmartArt

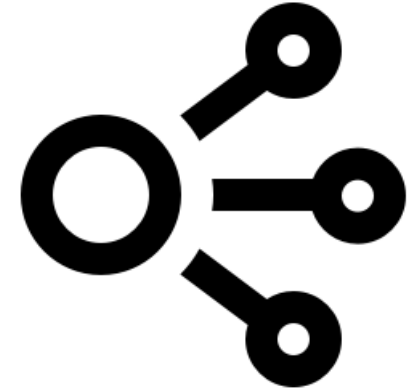
****Why Need a Website in 2024?: **Credibility, Control, Searchability*****

Do you really need a website?



- Is a site worth the “investment” (esp. up front cost)?
- More time than money to set up and maintain
- Easier alternatives to a website:
 - Engage on 1 or more social media platforms
 - Use a rich LinkedIn profile & network as a starting point on Web
 - Set up a simple “personal landing page” – [About.Me](#) or [better on WP.COM](#)

Start with Social Media

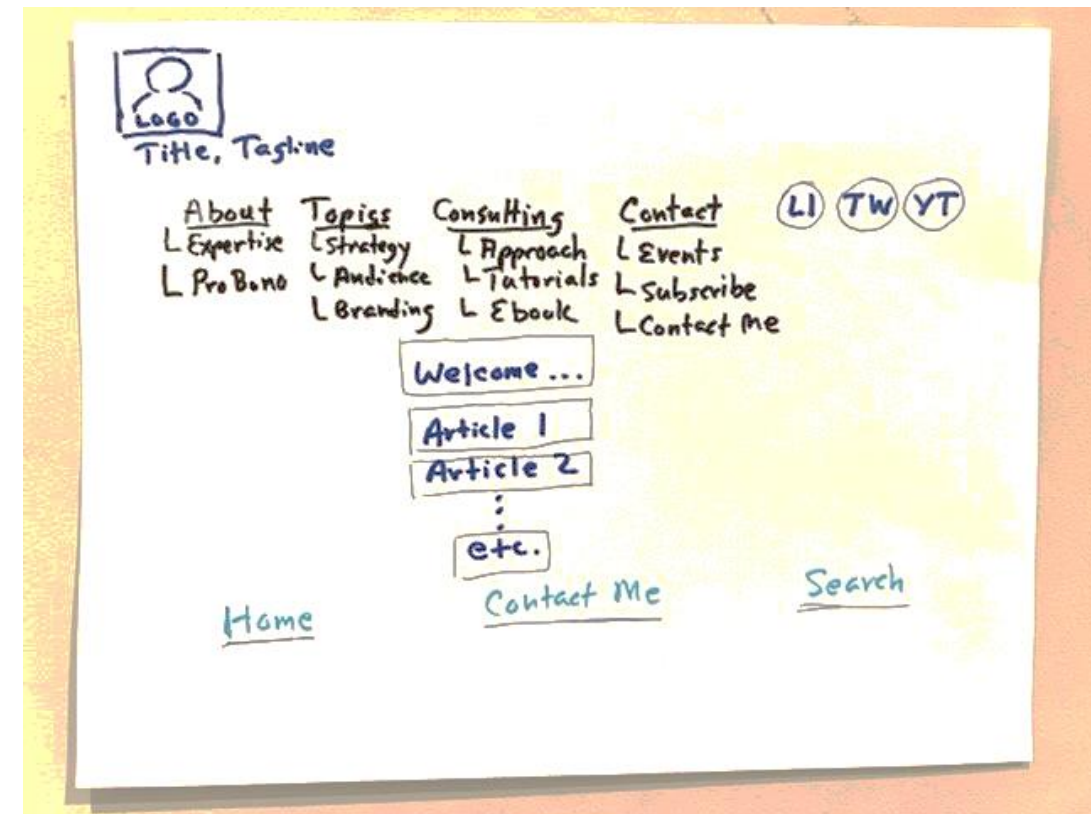


- Focus on 2-3 top Platforms
 - LinkedIn, Twitter (X), Facebook Business, Instagram (*dynamic!*)
 - Draft profile, engage with community
 - *Lay basis for future connection to website*
- Explore Freelancing sites (if “Solopreneur” option)
 - Examples: simple [Fiverr](#) (I plan to launch!), more complex [Upwork](#)
 - One-off sales – globally competitive!
 - *Sharpen your “value add” and website brand*

Website *Planning* Tips

- **Audience** (demographics)
- **Models** (inspirational websites)
- **Site Map** (your site sketch or outline)
- **Content** (text, images, logo...)
- **Team** (site Admin and support)
- **Design** (or redesign...migration?)

➤ *Draft a Project Plan* (✓ graphical [Trello](#)) or *Brainstorm Design* (✓ [Figma](#) tool)



My Drawn Site Map for "Marketing Maven" [Demo]

Website *Design* Best Practices



Image Source: Pexels [WP.COM]

- ***Layout:*** professional, brand-consistent, up-to-date Theme
- ***Scanability:*** Clean, Readable text... with a “call to action”
- ***Navigation:*** Easy-to-find info, Visual Hierarchy
- ***Images:*** Optimize size, photos, copyright...Quality!
- ***Engagement:*** Build for traffic on Web, [“SEO”](#)
- ***Testing:*** check browser/device compatibility



Blog *Drafting* Tips

- Practical: How tos, Top Tips, Best of...
 - Templates, Infographics, Icons
 - Story-telling (✓ *Selective Potential* lighthouse touring)
 - Apt Headline, engaging intro
 - Short points, break up text – blogs as a narrative form!
 - Cite sources, beware copyright (✓ free images – Pexels, Wikimedia)✓
- ❖ Check [Blog Writing Tips](#)

Try Simple Software to Build your Website

- Simple “Website Builders”? – software to build and host your site
- Easy, low cost... but limited ability to customize your site
- “Proprietary” – so decide on one (difficult to switch!)
- Examples: Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, GoDaddy (*free!*), etc.

❖ [PC Magazine Ranking of Websitebuilders for 2024](#)



Image Source: [Digital Branding Institute](#)

Move Up to WordPress



- WordPress a Leader on the Web
- Open Source Software + Thousands of Themes, Plugins
- 45% of Web is on WordPress – *Community Support!*
- Cost: small monthly charges typically for hosting and support

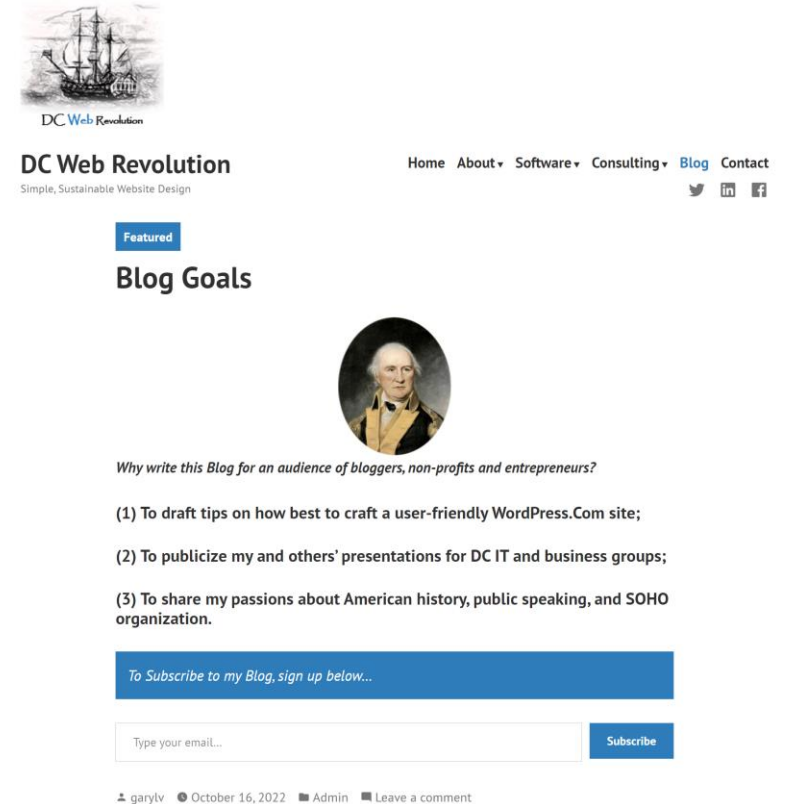
❖ WordPress.Org (*advanced*) vs. WordPress.Com (*simplified*)

A WP.COM Solution: Key Features

- A simplified, hosted WordPress service by *Automattic*
- Free or small fee (\$4-\$25/month), depending on Plan
- Built-in Updates, Security, Backup, Site Analytics (user traffic)
- Great Support!: FAQ knowledge base, webinars, classes, forums
- *Con:* most plans w/ limited add-ons (Plugins), can retire Themes

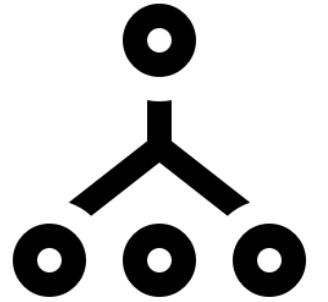
Sample Blog: DCWebRevolution.Com

- Try and post biweekly
- My Blog as a pro learning device
- Mostly tech topics, some personal (Reading...)
- Push out to Social Media – likes, etc.
- To promote Events, consulting services
- *TBD:* [MailChimp](#) to send emailed newsletter
- *TBD:* use AI ([Chat GBT](#)) to draft blog posts



The screenshot shows a blog post titled "Blog Goals" on the website "DC Web Revolution". The site's logo features a ship and the text "DC Web Revolution". The navigation menu includes "Home", "About", "Software", "Consulting", "Blog", and "Contact". The post is categorized as "Featured". The author's profile picture is a circular portrait of a man in a yellow coat. The post text reads: "Why write this Blog for an audience of bloggers, non-profits and entrepreneurs?" followed by three numbered goals: (1) To draft tips on how best to craft a user-friendly WordPress.Com site; (2) To publicize my and others' presentations for DC IT and business groups; (3) To share my passions about American history, public speaking, and SOHO organization. Below the text is a blue subscription box with the text "To Subscribe to my Blog, sign up below..." and a "Subscribe" button. At the bottom, the author's name "garylv" and the date "October 16, 2022" are visible, along with "Admin" and "Leave a comment" options.

Other Pro Blog Examples



- [The Perimeter](#)
 - UK Photos, WP.COM site...**Tips:** ✓ Events focus, Media outreach, visual impact
- [Mind the Workplace](#)
 - US Law Prof, WP.COM site ...**Tips:** ✓ Simple blog layout, hi value blog articles
- [Selective Potential](#)
 - US Life Stylist, Squarespace site...**Tips:** ✓ use of Blog Categories for travels/services



Basic WordPress Concepts

- *Dashboard vs Site View* – internal controls vs external public site
- *Theme* – a type, or style of layout
- *Media* – place for images, photos, PDFs
- *Post* – changing content, like a Blog post
- *Page* – more static content, like an About page
- *Menu* – a place to organize and display your content on site
- *Block Editor* – modular blocks to build Pages and Posts
- *Site Editor* – updated flexible Editor + related Block Themes

WP.COM Demo (20 min.)

1. Demo a *Winery Blog* [“Libre 2”: Classic Theme]
 2. Show site’s “Dashboard”
 - Frontend (Public View): Blog Posts, Pages, Menu, Footer
 - Backend (Input Actions): Left sidebar, “Coming Soon”...Add sites
 - Add Content: Pages, Posts, Media
 - Navigation: Theme (layout), Menu (location, display)
 - Interaction: Feedback, Comments...Analytics
- ❖ *See Annexes 1-2 for WP.COM Start-up Tips*
- ✓ Quick Account/Bare Site Setup Steps (15 min)
 - ✓ My 3 Theme (layout) Suggestions



My Wine Journey *A Touring and Tasting Journal* [About](#) [Touring](#) [Wine](#) [Contact](#)

How to enjoy this
blog....

Featured
guyfr
Leave a comment
Edit

I hope you enjoy wine as much as I do!

Here are a few steps to best check out DC area wineries

Check out a Map of local Wineries

Pick a nice day for a drive

Tour the winery grounds and tasting room

WP.COM Support Resources

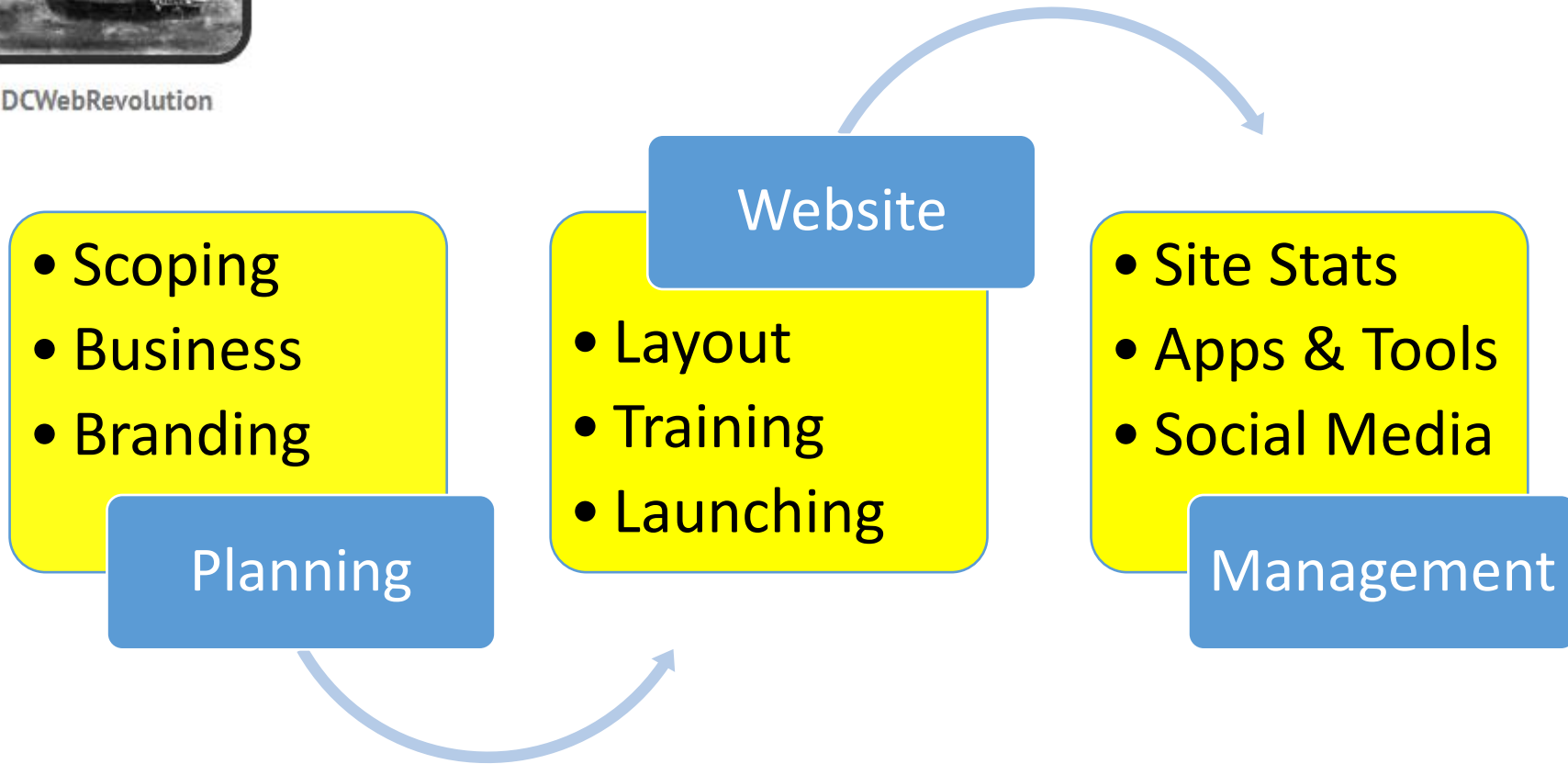


- Get WP Answers on [Support](#) (or “?” on your Dashboard, or Google it)
- Sign up for free Webinar or see past Webinars (see [Webinars](#)).
- Learn from WordPress Community: [WordCamps](#), [Wordpresstv](#)
- [My Notes](#) from attending WC US at National Harbor last August
- Upcoming “WordCamps”:
 - [Montclair, NJ](#): 6/1/24
 - [WC Canada – Ottawa](#): 7/11-13/24
 - [WC US – Portland, OR](#): 9/17-20/24



DCWebRevolution

My Project Management Consulting Approach





DC Web Revolution

My Conclusions

- A Blog/Website can enhance your “brand” and traffic
- A site as a “hub” for social media interaction with your Audience
- WordPress dominates Web, and WP.COM - an easy entrée
- WP.COM offers a wealth of self-help resources and support
- Check out my WP.COM account set-up steps...*and DIY Option* – see my [Resources link!](#)

Explore [WordPress.Com](#) today!

Contact Me

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- Cell: 703-899-9940
- Website: <https://dcwebrevolution.com>



Slideshare link:

<https://www.slideshare.net/slideshows/patacswpcomslidesmarch162024finalzpptx/266818148>

❖ ***Free PATACS-Only Offer: An added 10% off my Brochure prices!***

- ✓ Brochure prices: *New Website \$100, Website Check \$50, Online Business Plan \$200*
- ✓ Call or Email me with any questions.
- ✓ Coming Soon: *Launch of my Web Design services on Fiverr!*

*Thank
You!**



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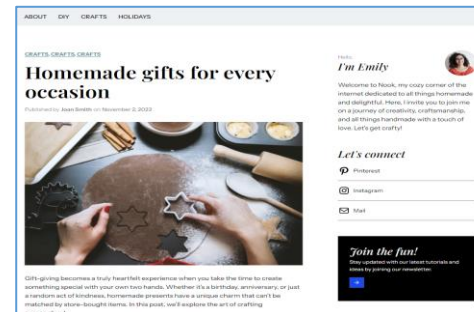
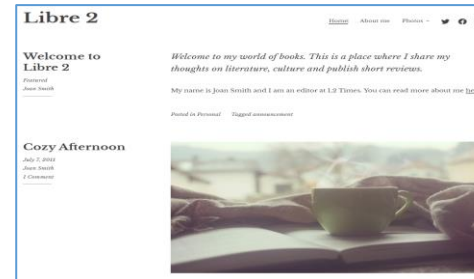
ANNEXES

1. How to Get Started on WP.COM

- **First**, [“Get Started” Button](#), “Create your account”: Enter Email/PW...Validate
- **Next, *6 Steps to build a starter site (15 min!)***
 1. Choose your domain (type a URL...pick a free domain!)
 2. Select your Plan (also check “free”)
 3. What are your Goals: check one
 4. Let’s Give your blog a name: type in Name, Tagline
 5. Nice job...get creative: *rather* - go upper right, Skip to Dashboard
 6. Select a Theme (layout – go to Appearance/Theme...Activate)
- ❖ Then start drafting initial content: *Pages, Posts, and adding to Menu*

2. Suggested Free Themes

- [Libre 2](#) (Blog - Classic Theme... ***my Recommendation!**)
 - Minimal format + Header/Color/Font options
 - Learn to use blocks for content
 - Theme updated by WP.COM
- [Nook](#) (Blog – Block Theme)
 - Simple, two-column layout
 - Block Editor Styles
 - Access to Full Site Editor to add complexity
- [Twenty Twenty-Four](#) (Website – Block Theme)
 - Full fledged website
 - Built-in demo content to edit
 - Latest default Theme by WP.ORG



3. Resources to Grow your Site – *Tools*



Harness additional [online tools and apps](#).....

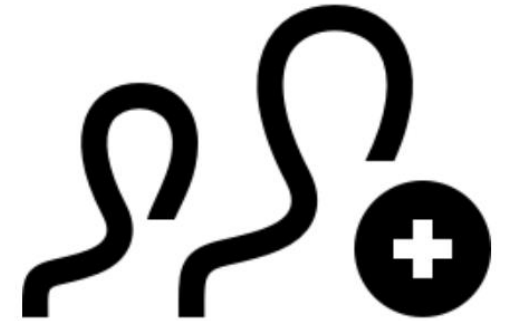
- Design Logos or Infographics ([free Canva tool](#), [DIY Infographics](#))
- Try Podcasting ([How to Article](#), [Software Options](#))
- Produce Videos ([Infographic](#), [Software Options](#) - [Capcut](#))
- Link to Appointment App ([6 Top Appointment Apps for Your Business](#))
- Automate Emailed Newsletters (for ex., [MailChimp](#))

4. Complementary Print Collateral

- *Why Use Print Media?* See [my blog article link](#)
- **The trusty Business Card:**
 - ❑ Basic, initial branding step
 - ❑ Name/title, Logo, Tag line, Audience, Services, Contact, Affiliation
 - ❑ ✓ [Vistaprint business card templates](#)
- **Marketing Brochure:**
 - ❑ Content like a condensed website; longer form than business card
 - ❑ Tag line, Logo/Images, Bio, Testimonials, Services, Pricing, Contact
 - ❑ ✓ [Vistaprint brochure templates](#)



Use WP to Help Your Community!



WP as a tool to promote and help your local cause

- Inspiring story of *Shambi Broome* in Columbia, SC
 - She is a full-time WP Web Developer and cancer survivor
 - Founded a non-profit to train girls in coding: [Webgyrlz Code](#)
 - Mobilized girls to build a website vs local food insecurity: [Cancel Hunger](#)
 - [Video of her talk](#) at WP US in DC last August.
- Another example: [WP.ORG](#) supports [“Kids Camps”](#) to teach WP

❖ *WP is a great way to mobilize local talent and resources **to do good!***