

## Tools for Building Websites

WBEC-East has put together some information about website builders to help you find the right one for you. We are not recommending any specific tool over another and always recommend that you do your own research to make the right business decision for you.

### Gator by HostGator

Services: website hosting and building; email marketing, optional eCommerce platform,

- Interface is point-and-click
- Integrated stock photo library
- Free email marketing tools
- Plans include a free custom domain name
- Integrates with WordPress; easy to change providers
- eCommerce requires third-party payment processor
- No free or trial version
- No ability to bring in a developer

Pricing: Plans start at \$3.84/ month, \$5.99/month for premium, \$9.22/month for eCommerce

### GoDaddy Website Builder

Services: domain name, hosting, website builder, email marketing, online store

- Drag and drop block interface
- Use integrated Getty Images stock photo library or upload your own
- Can build a website on mobile or tablet
- Online store syncs with Square inventory management and accepts credit cards, PayPal, Apple Pay using Square or Stripe for payment processing.
- Built in SEO and email marketing
- No ability to bring in a developer
- Tough to migrate to a different provider
- Limited design options

Pricing: Free trial. Plans start at \$10/month for basic, \$15 for standard, \$20 for premium and \$25 for eCommerce

### Shopify

Services: built specifically for online stores and eCommerce

- All-in-one: domain name, hosting, logo maker, business card maker, invoice generator, etc.
- Use their integrated payment solution, Shopify Payments, or use a third-party
- Full inventory management, marketing solutions, powerful analytics tools and hundreds of designs.
- Difficult to migrate to another platform

Pricing: Basic \$29/month, Shopify \$79/month, Advanced Shopify \$299/month, Shopify Lite \$9/month

### Squarespace

Services: hosting and building, domain names, email marketing tools, online store

- Fully editable templates; can even use multiple templates at once
- Point-and-type to add content; interface is easy to use
- Has domain name and ecommerce options
- Limited integrations with third party payment systems. Only allows Stripe, Apple Pay, PayPal

Pricing: free trial, personal \$12/month, business \$18/month, basic store \$26/month, advanced store \$40/month

## UCRAFT

Services: website builder; sites hosted on Google Cloud

- Has a basic free version with UCRAFT branding
- Connect your domain or purchase a new one (one free domain included in paid plans)
- Drag and drop website builder
- All plans include SEO and Google Analytics
- Able to edit all elements so a web developer can work with this platform
- Pro plans include inventory management and integration with sites like ebay and facebook

Pricing: free version; \$10/month removes branding and supports up to 50 products; \$21/month for Pro Shop; \$39/month for BigCommerce

## Weebly

Services: fully hosted website builder and domain tool; optional online store and email marketing tools

- Mobile app lets you build, launch and edit your site on mobile or tablet
- Built in SEO and contact forms included in all plans, including basic free version
- eCommerce included in paid plans with inventory management and shipping at business level and above; does have a 3% third-party transaction rate at "Pro" price point.
- No ability to bring in a developer or designer

Pricing: basic free website w/ Weebly branding, \$5 to remove .weebly.com domain; \$12/month Pro site, \$25/month Business site, \$38 Business Plus

## Wix

Services: cloud based website builder, fully hosted. Uses free and paid apps to add functionality, some of which are third-party.

- Most popular tool (which is both a pro and a con – some professionals say they can spot a Wix site)
- Will design your site for you with tool called Wix Artificial Design Intelligence
- Free version includes Wix branded domain and ads
- Possible to bring in developer and design team.
- Online store includes inventory management, multiple payment methods and supports worldwide shipping.

Pricing: Basic free; \$11/month for Combo; \$14/month for Unlimited (cheapest business plan); \$19/month for Pro; \$29 for VIP; online stores start at \$20/month

## WordPress.org

WordPress.org is by far the most popular content management system. It's free for everyone to use.

- Does not include a domain name or web hosting.
- Has free templates ("themes") and over 54,000 free plugins.
- Many professional web designers work exclusively with WordPress content management system.
- Bluehost offers a free domain name and discounted hosting to WordPress users.
- WordPress offers you the most long-term flexibility and is a popular option for business owners who want to hire a designer but don't need a custom platform.

## Wordpress.com

A proprietary blogging platform, this tool does use the open-source WordPress platform but does not give you the flexibility of adding plugins or custom themes.

- Platform built for blogging, not business.
- Hosting and domain name is included; pay to remove the wordpress.com advertising.
- Often confused with WordPress.org and the WordPress Content Management System.

Pricing: Free version with WordPress branding. Paid accounts start at \$3/month.

**Before you start researching these tools, make a list of the features that matter to you.**

**Do you need a blog? Email marketing? An events calendar? An online store? What tools (e.g. Square for payments; QuickBooks for invoicing) are you already using that you would want your site to work with?**

**It's easy to be tempted by features you don't plan to use or to fall for a great looking platform that doesn't support a crucial tool you use every day.**