

WORDPRESS.COM VS SELF-HOSTED WORDPRESS: A COMPLETE GUIDE

1. WORDPRESS.COM (Recommended for Beginners & Small Businesses)

PROS:

- Managed hosting (WordPress handles technical aspects)
- Automatic updates and backups
- Built-in security features
- 24/7 support included
- No technical knowledge required
- Faster setup time
- Included SSL certificate
- Built-in CDN

CONS:

- Limited plugin options (unless on Business plan)
- Limited theme options on lower plans
- Less control over server settings
- Higher monthly costs for advanced features
- Limited monetization options on lower plans

Cost Structure:

- Free: \$0/month (limited features)
- Personal: \$4/month
- Premium: \$8/month (recommended)
- Business: \$25/month
- eCommerce: \$45/month

Best For:

- Local businesses
- Beginners
- Bloggers
- Small business owners
- Those who prefer hassle-free maintenance

2. SELF-HOSTED WORDPRESS.ORG

PROS:

- Complete control over your website
- Access to all plugins and themes
- Full customization capabilities
- Lower long-term costs
- Unlimited monetization options
- Complete data ownership
- Scalability options

CONS:

- Technical knowledge required
- Responsible for updates and backups
- Must handle security yourself
- Need to choose and manage hosting
- Additional costs for plugins/themes
- More maintenance required

Cost Breakdown:

- Domain: \$10-15/year
- Hosting: \$3-30/month
- SSL Certificate: \$0-100/year
- Premium Themes: \$30-100 (one-time)
- Premium Plugins: \$0-200/year
- Security: \$50-200/year

Best For:

- Tech-savvy users
- Large businesses
- E-commerce sites
- Custom web applications
- High-traffic websites

3. RECOMMENDED HOSTING PROVIDERS

FOR WORDPRESS.COM:

No additional hosting needed - all included in plans

FOR SELF-HOSTED WORDPRESS:

Top Tier Hosts:

1. SiteGround

- Price: \$3.99-\$10.99/month
- Features:
 - Managed WordPress hosting

- Free SSL
- Daily backups
- Superior performance
- 24/7 support

2. Bluehost

- Price: \$2.95-\$13.95/month
- Features:
 - WordPress recommended
 - Free domain
 - Free SSL
 - 24/7 support
 - 1-click WordPress install

3. WP Engine (Premium)

- Price: \$25-\$241/month
- Features:
 - Managed WordPress hosting
 - Premium support
 - Advanced security
 - Staging environments
 - Developer tools

4. DECISION MATRIX

Choose WordPress.com if you:

- Want a hassle-free experience

- Prefer managed services
- Have limited technical knowledge
- Need quick setup
- Have a small to medium budget
- Run a local business website
- Don't need extensive customization

Choose Self-Hosted WordPress if you:

- Need complete control
- Have technical knowledge
- Want to minimize costs
- Need specific plugins/themes
- Plan to heavily customize
- Run an e-commerce site
- Expect high traffic volumes

5. GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

WordPress.com Path:

1. Choose a plan
2. Register domain
3. Select theme
4. Add content
5. Launch

Self-Hosted Path:

1. Choose hosting provider

2. Purchase domain
3. Install WordPress
4. Configure security
5. Install essential plugins
6. Select theme
7. Add content
8. Launch

Remember: Your choice should align with your:

- Technical expertise
- Budget
- Time availability
- Customization needs
- Growth plans