

# 5 Steps to Creating an Online Store

using **WordPress, WooCommerce,**  
and **Paypal**

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*YES! You can make money while you sleep.*

# INTRO

**HERE IS THE SET-UP WHICH ENABLES YOU TO SELL PRODUCTS IN YOUR VERY OWN ONLINE STORE — COST EFFECTIVELY. A “HOW TO” GUIDE TO COLLECT MONEY AND GET IT INTO THE BANK.**

This will step you through the pieces needed to get the store online. You should be familiar with using WordPress. This will help you to open an online store using WordPress, PayPal, and WooCommerce.


## ***THIS IS FOR ANYONE WHO...***

- **HAS A PRODUCT TO SELL.**
- **WANTS TO EARN EXTRA CASH**
- **USES WORDPRESS (OR PLANS TO LEARN)**
- **JUST WANTS TO KNOW HOW**

Anyone can have an online store if they so desire, with a little work and motivation.

This is not an instruction manual on how to use WordPress, WooCommerce, or the ins and outs of PayPal. I'll give you an overview on the process needed to enable a functional, cost-effective online store.

You can learn on Lynda.com or even YouTube. If you want to practice without investing any money go to <https://wordpress.com> and start a free site. If you want a store using WordPress, you will need to host your site somewhere to be able to add plugins.



This is just **ONE** way, to get started selling online.

## You'll need:

1. a product
2. a description
3. a picture

## GOALS:

1. A TECHNICALLY SOUND SITE
2. SEARCH-ABLE CONTENT
3. VISITOR ENGAGEMENT
4. A SHOPPING CART

Marketing is a big deal. Marketing needs to be address right from the beginning. From the name of the domain, the product name, to knowing your customers. Two page factors:

- what you see on the page
- what exists behind the page

*Before diving into the mechanics of building a site, think about what you're selling and who your selling it too.*

There are many options for a web store.

Use your judgment, do what's right for you.

Building a website requires time.

When the site is set-up up you'll want to jump in, so get some content created beforehand.

**Gather content.** Put together original copy or text. Start with one or two product descriptions and info about your company.

Don't steal content off someone else's site. Duplicate content can be found and lowers ranking. Write original copy for customers and robots alike. Do some research on how to write for web. Use simple readable headings that describe what's on the page.

**Collect images.** Use high-quality images with a little eye-wow. Images are searchable, give them sensible names. `printed-coffee-cup.jpg` is better than `photo3385.jpg`. Each image will need a caption, alt text, and a description.

# Make a Plan.

**Create an outline or sitemap.** Usually this looks like a flow chart. Include what content goes on each page. There's the usual: home, about, contact form, products. This can be simple or complex as need be.


Do you want to start a mailing list? Are you going to write news articles or have a blog? Link to other sites? FAQ's? How many pages? How many clicks to the cart?

This will determine what you need, how the site will look, and how visitors will interact.

*Now build the store.*

## 5 STEPS

- 1) Purchase hosting and domain*
- 2) Set-up an online bank account*
- 3) Create a PayPal account*
- 4) Install WordPress*
- 5) Install Plugins  
— WooCommerce and others*



It's better to get it done than to get it perfect.

Plan for change.

# STEP 1: HOSTING AND DOMAIN

Where your site is hosted is important. It will affect what you can do, how fast it will run, and what server files are accessible. Your content needs to be hosted. If you're all set with hosting skip this part.

Content needs to be in a file format that is readable over the Internet. WordPress does this beautifully with little or no coding experience. The files will reside on a server (a big storage computer). The domain (www.yourcompany.com) is a pointer to access the files.

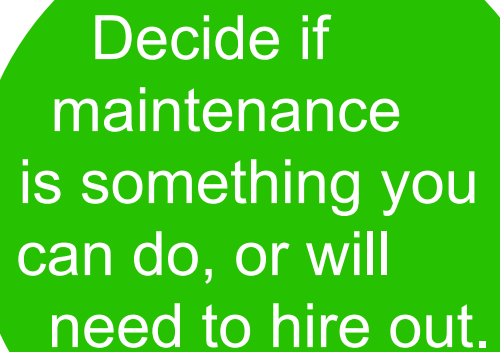
There are many hosting services. A hosting service is just a big giant hard drive — or many hard drives — supported by a bunch of services. The servers are usually duplicated, or mirrored in different locations. This allows for back-up and speed. When they say “out in the cloud” what they mean is (in website terms) that your website — a set of stored files — is being served up from one of those servers. When you buy hosting you are purchasing space on a server.

## WHICH HOSTING IS BEST?

There are many hosting services. I have used Blue Host, Site Ground, Host Gator and some others. There are different levels of service. A managed hosting service such as Siteground or WP engine, will help keep all the elements of your website up-to-date.

A mistake made by many new website owners is to build it and forget it. The framework, theme, and plugins need periodic updates, as does the PHP version used. The website needs to be maintained.

This ebook just covers the simplest and cost effective way to have a pro site. That is, do it yourself.



Decide if  
maintenance  
is something you  
can do, or will  
need to hire out.

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A HOST

Look for a hosting company with cPanel. Access to the files, root folders, the database and a quick install feature for WordPress.

Other things you'll want to do is to set-up an email account and add a SSL certificate. I'm not going to get into detail over this. Also, plan on a back-up service, usually offered through the host. (or use a plugin)

These features will give you a site that is well supported, scalable, editable, and reliable. The cost start about \$200/year. If you want to a managed service add another \$30/month or so.

Using a host that gives access to your files and the database is beneficial. You may want to duplicate your site, make a staging site, or keep a back-up. Most hosting services offer a plan for multiple sites.

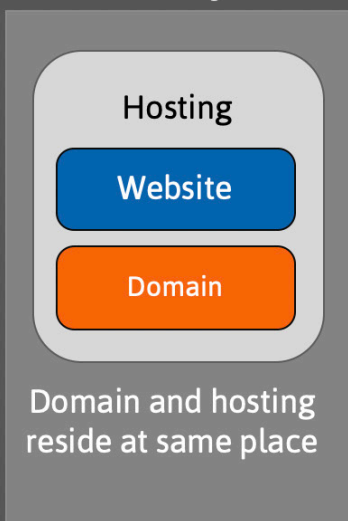
## Other Hosting Considerations

- Shared or dedicated IP
- PHP version 5.2.4 or greater (PHP 7.1 available at this writing)
- MySQL version 5.0 or greater (MySQL 5.6 or greater is recommended)
- Multiple domains (for multiple websites)

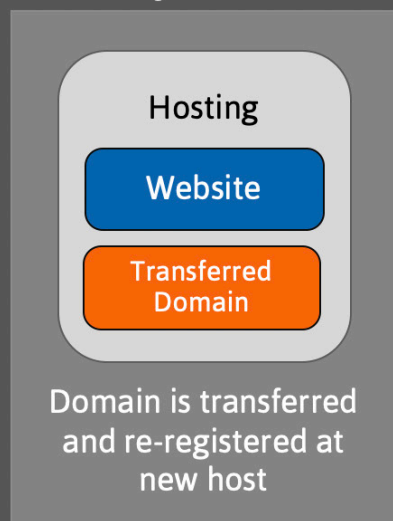
# THE DOMAIN

**BEST OPTION: BUY THE DOMAIN AT THE SAME TIME AS HOSTING**

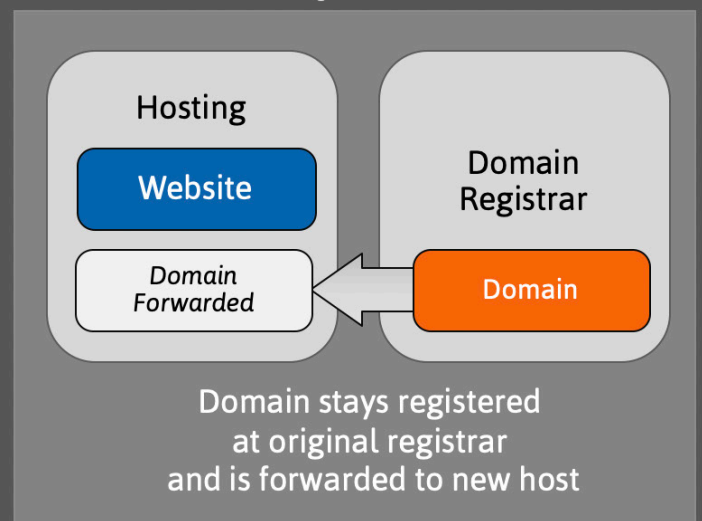
## Best Option



## Option 2



## Option 3



Just to make things easy, buy the domain at the hosting company — this will save time and frustration and eliminate the need to forward or transfer an existing domain. It puts everything into one place and makes it easy to manage. Some developers like to keep these separate.

If you already have your domain and want to change hosting the domain can be transferred or forwarded.

I've seen clients go out and buy their domains before they think about hosting services. Or they get a domain at a host which offers a “do-it-yourself in five minutes”. Later to find out, the site is not quite what they wanted.

## WHO OWNS YOUR DOMAIN?


Another scenario is your domain resides at a company that is hesitant to release the domain. These situations can get sticky. It can be frustrating to get back “ownership” of the domain you think you own. It happens.

### *A kidnapped domain*

This is when another entity has possession of your domain. Sometimes ownership is not realized till you want to take your business elsewhere.

There may be some legal hurdles to get back possession of the domain (unusual). I believe the domain is owned by the person who paid for it. Hopefully you won't need to hire a lawyer. Worse case, you may need a new domain.

If your domain is in an undesirable location it's best to transfer the domain to your new host, under your name. I set-up my clients on self-hosted sites under their name. I don't hold domains hostage.



Make  
sure you  
know who  
owns your  
domain.

Hosting companies are usually willing to help transfer or forward a domain.

You may also keep the domain where it is, and forward the domain to your new host. It's common for people buy their domain at Go Daddy and host their site elsewhere.

***Know where your domain resides and set a reminder of when to renew. Set the renewal on auto if possible.***

**Word of CAUTION.** Scammers may try to tricking you to “renew” your domain by sending you a letter in the mail or via email. Be careful your not transferring your domain to some unknown entity.

## ***Email***

Once you have your domain and hosting in place, **Set-up an email account specifically to use for your online store.** This email will connect your online store to PayPal and any inquiries for potential customers. An email that reads sales@mystore.com will appear more trustworthy than joe45@gmail.com.

Find out through your host how to set this up. Some hosts will happily do this for you. Otherwise check the online resources on how to do this.

***Once the email is set-up, test the email.***

This email can be routed through a gmail, or other email account if you prefer. Make sure the email is working before you leave this step.

Create an email account for your store.

Test the email

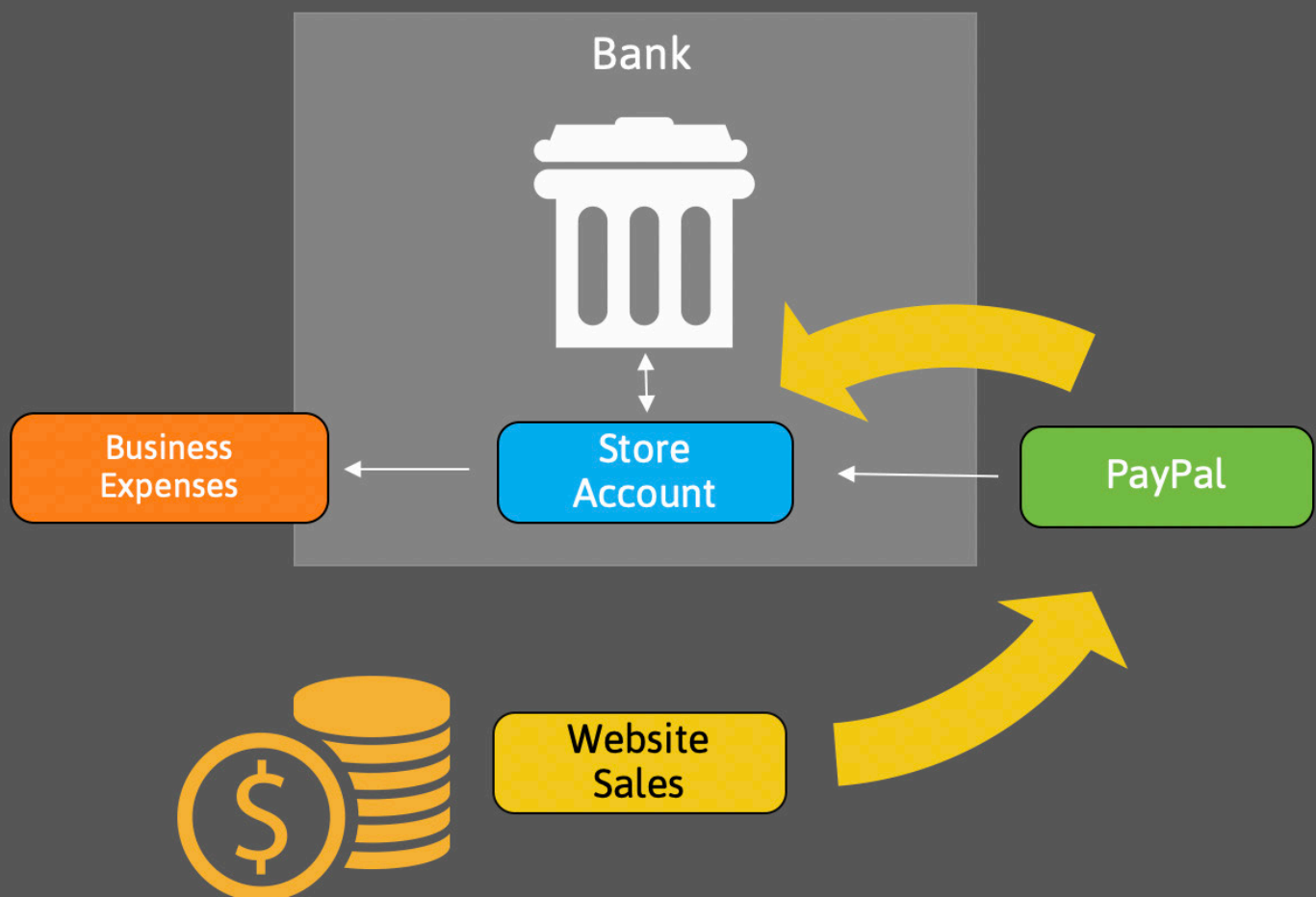


# STEP 2: BANKING

I know, now that hosting is set-up it's tempting to jump right into building the store. Since the content is (hopefully) started, you could go straight to STEP 4 and install WordPress. However, I would get all the background stuff done first. Once you're in WordPress, you'll want to stay with it, not be flip-flopping in and out.

**This is a short step.** Go to your bank of choice and get an online account for the sole purpose of your online store. As someone who has owned a business for over 30 years, keep your business account separate. This will help when the IRS comes knocking, believe me, they come for the little guys first.

It's possible to use bitcoin, but that's not covered here.



# STEP 3: SIGN-UP FOR PAYPAL

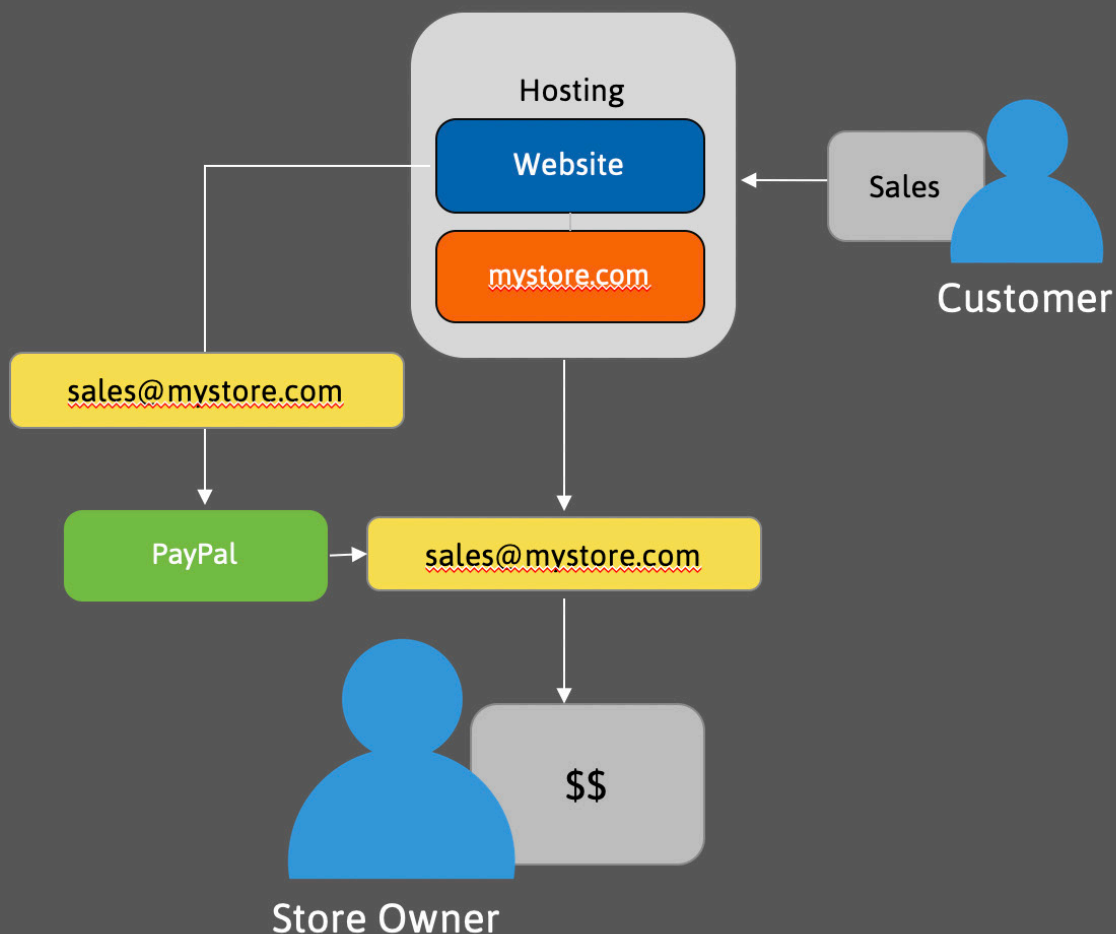
Go online to <https://www.paypal.com/> and open an account. You may choose a personal or business account. The business account will give you more features. Check out the resources available through PayPal.

Use the email address set-up previously from your domain at your hosting company (sales@mystore.com).

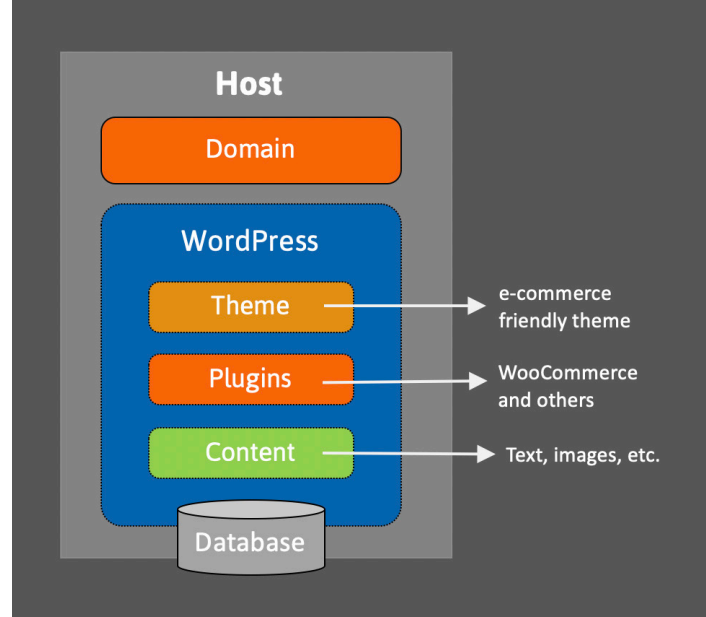
## ***Connect the PayPal account to your bank account.***

PayPal has many options. All that is needed is a way to collect money and deposit it into your bank account. PayPal charges about 3% of the sale.

Eventually you will connect WooCommerce to PayPal.



# STEP 4: INSTALL WORDPRESS



By now your domain and hosting is set-up, and, your bank account and PayPal account is in place. It's time to install WordPress. If you did your homework you're using a host that offers a quick install. You can either follow the directions and do it yourself or pay the host to do it, often the host will install it for you.

**You can use the new store email address with the install.** This will keep all the store business in one neat package, under one email address.

## Using WP Easy Install

**1** Log into host:  
Go to [cPanel](#) > Select WP Installer

The screenshot shows the cPanel interface with various tools listed under 'POPULAR LINKS'. The 'WordPress Installer' icon is circled in orange. An orange arrow points from this icon to the 'Select Domain For Installation' step in the next block.

[cPanel](#)

**2** Follow Instructions

Select Domain For Installation

Select your domain:  /

[www.yourdomain.com](#)  
Create "clean" directory (type name)  
NOTE: This directory (folder) will hold website files

The screenshot shows the 'Select Domain For Installation' screen. It has a dropdown menu for 'Select your domain' and a text input field for the directory name, which is 'directory'. A 'NEXT' button is to the right. Below the screenshot, the text 'www.yourdomain.com' is shown with an arrow pointing to the dropdown menu, and 'Create "clean" directory (type name)' is shown with an arrow pointing to the text input field. A note below states 'NOTE: This directory (folder) will hold website files'.

**3** After install is complete login to WP  
(a login link should be sent via email or will appear on install screen)

## SELECTING A THEME

**For Newbies:** After the install, you will be directed to a link to login to WordPress.

After login you will come to the dashboard. Look for “appearance” on the left side.

Choose an ecommerce-friendly theme. WordPress comes with a bunch of free theme choices — I use a third-party theme company called Themify. They have a couple of ecommerce-ready themes. Themify offers a great front-end builder tool which creates good looking sites with minimal coding.

In addition, their themes are mobile friendly and they have an excellent support forum.

There are many theme companies that work with WordPress and WooCommerce, choose one you’re comfortable with. Custom themes can be made as well by theme developers.

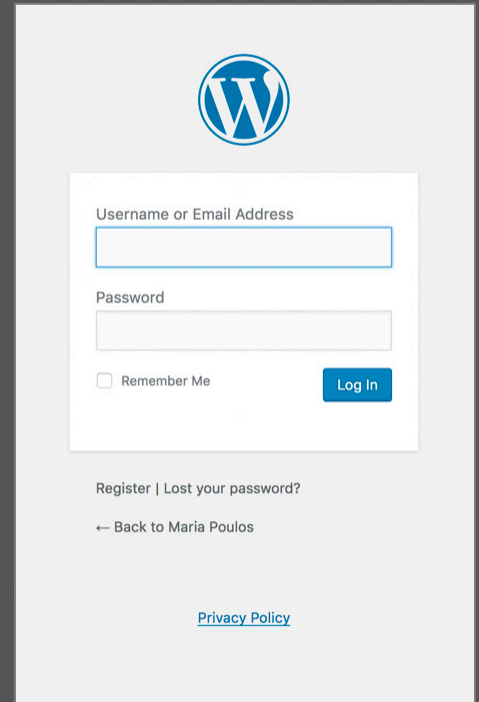
There are  
free and  
paid-for  
themes.

***Install the theme by going to appearance -> theme.***

Here you can upload a third-party theme, or, use a theme offered through WordPress.

***It’s best to select a theme designed for ecommerce and that works with WooCommerce.***

### WP Login Screen



WP Login Screen

Username or Email Address

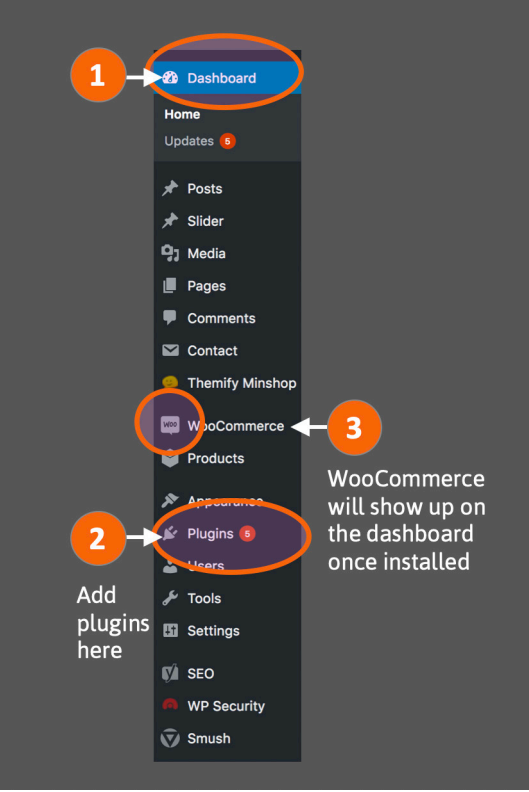
Password

Remember Me [Log In](#)

[Register | Lost your password?](#)

[← Back to Maria Poulos](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)



# STEP 5: INSTALL PLUGINS

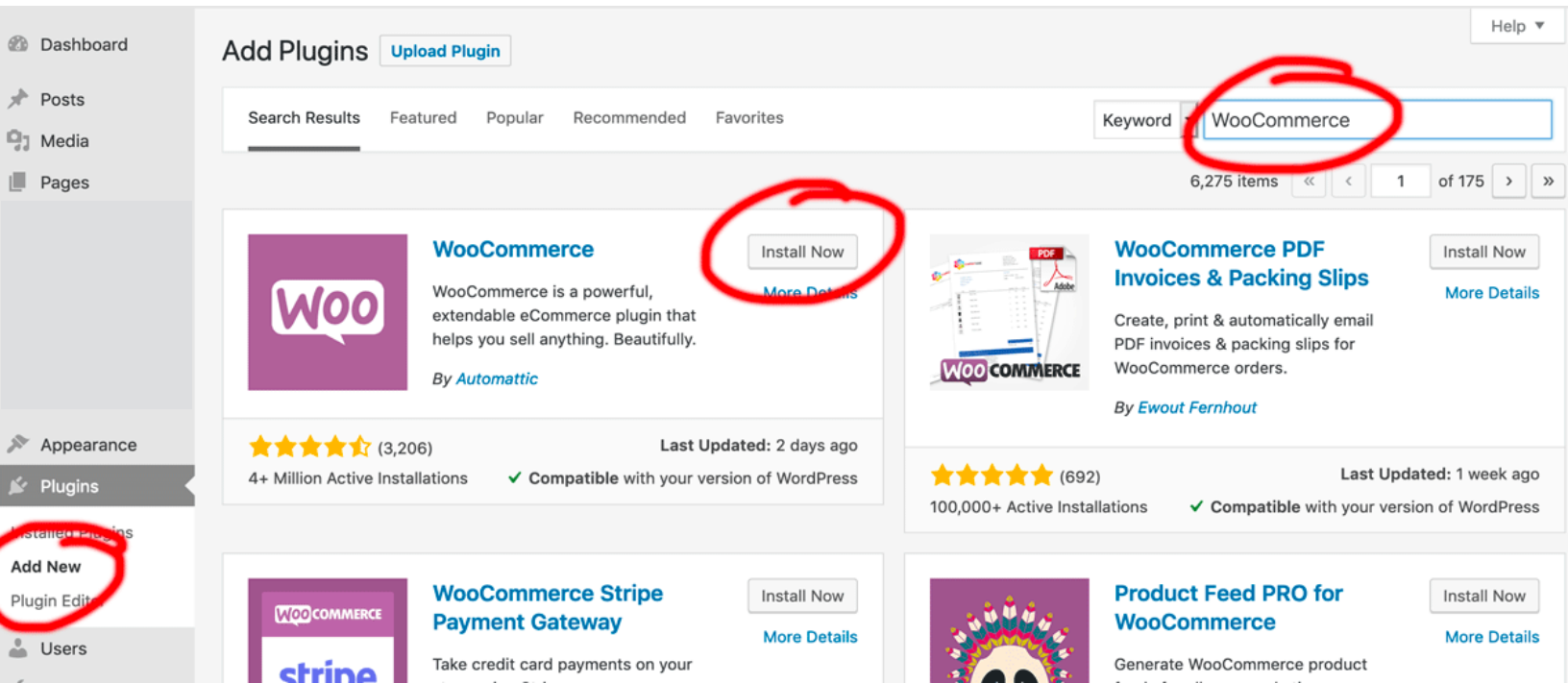
The WooCommerce plugin adds store features including a shopping cart. Woo offers free and paid-for plugins. Use the free version.

Go to the plugin link on the dash board which will open the plugin screen. Here you can 'add new' which will bring you to many available plugins. Use the search box to find the WooCommerce plugin.

After Installing Woo, it will appear on the dashboard. It's here that your will be adding products. You may need to play around. Products can be virtual (downloadable) or physical products.

It's somewhat intuitive, but there some areas that may be a bit confusing at first. You may need to hit YouTube for instruction, or visit the library (old school).

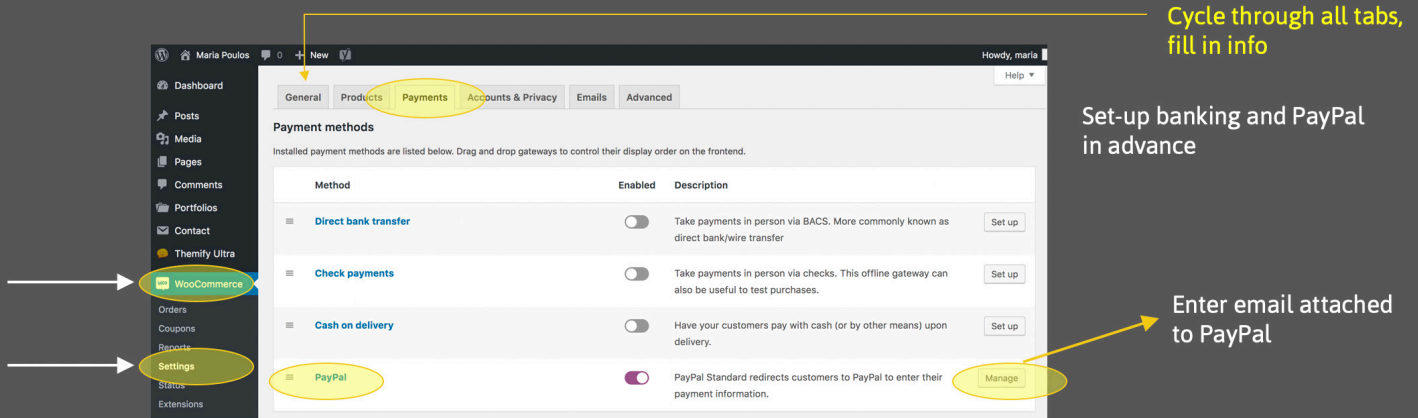
***WooCommerce is added through the plugin link on the dashboard. Plugins -> add new.***



# Set-up Payment Gateway

**Pro Tip:** Research how to use WooCommerce

- Set-up online bank account and PayPal account
- Log into WP > select WooCommerce > settings



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After Woo is installed, set-up the payment gateway (to direct sales through to your newly created PayPal account).

Cycle through all the tabs and sub menus in the Woo interface screen. The interface is intuitive. Familiarize yourself with the sandbox, the payment gateway testing ground. Where you want the notification to go when someone buys something.

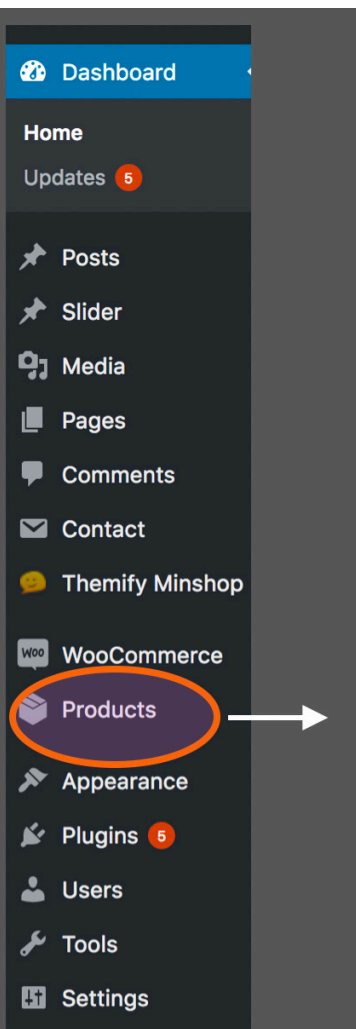
## **Use the email address set-up with PayPal.**

This directs the customer to PayPal and enables notifications. An email will be sent:

1. When an order was made on your site
2. When PayPal received funds

Log into PayPal to move the money from your PayPal account to the bank.

*Note: We're setting up for PayPal. There are other payment options available through WooCommerce. Go to: <https://woocommerce.com/> to find out more.*



## OTHER HANDY PLUGINS

When you install WordPress – the install may automatically add a few plugins. You will likely see askimet, hello world, and some others. Jet-pack is often automatically loaded. You can choose to use jet-pack or use alternatives.

WordPress being open source software — a collaboration of developers — offer their work for free.

Be aware, not all developers are reputable. Use plugins that have been tested through <https://wordpress.org> and are available through the dashboard links. Note if a plugin has been updated recently, or that it has been tested with the WordPress version you're using. At this writing WordPress is up to v5.1.

## OTHER RECOMMENDED PLUGINS

- ***Brute Protect (login security)***
- ***WordFence (security)***
- ***Super Cache (load time enhancer)***
- ***Contact Form 7, or other form***
- ***WP-DB Manager (back-up)***
- ***WordPress SEO (Yoast) or All in One SEO***

You can add plugins through the WordPress dashboard. There are other consideration depending on individual needs. I'm not going in detail on the plugins. Look on the developers site for in-depth explanations. Some offer a support forum.

### ***Blogs***

A blog with comments needs spam filters such as askimet.

## Contact Forms

Contact forms are in a class by themselves. Use a plugin for the form.

Using a plugin such as the free Contact Form 7 may cause robot spam. There are robots out on the Internet looking for certain plugins to spam SEO offers, web app development, and more.

Unfortunately there are sick hacks out there with nothing better to do than to be creepy. Recently, I changed a simple contact form (email and message) to include entries for company, address, and phone number. This collects information which is search-able about the person contacting you.

**Avoiding spam.** If you use Contact Form 7, add the plugin called “Contact Form 7 Honeypot”, add recaptcha, and add a quiz to the form. The exact details on creating a form are not covered in this ebook, but are easily available online.

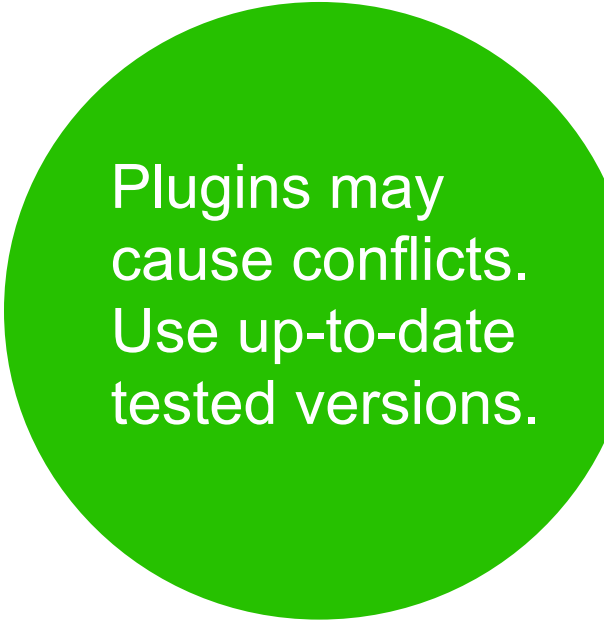
Another Option would be WP Forms (free), Gravity Forms (paid-for).

## Yoast

Just about everyone uses a SEO enhancer. Yoast is one of the most popular plugins. It’s user friendly and very well supported. They offer a pro version and send out periodic useful tips. There are other options you can try.

***Don’t use too many plugins. As you add plugins look for when it was last updated, how many installs, and the author.***

***Donate to free plugins if the author requests a donation. This helps the developer.***



Plugins may  
cause conflicts.  
Use up-to-date  
tested versions.



# NEXT STEPS

Now your store is ready to go. I have a few hints and suggestions as you create pages. Here's a few pointers.

## ADDING PRODUCTS

Most of WooCommerce is intuitive. An area to add text, images, and price out the products. Use the inventory numbering system. Each product will be assigned a unique number. As you add new products the product pages can be duplicated making each entry easier as you go along.

There's really a lot to get to know, variables, attributes, inventory, etc.

You may find you need more functionality than the free version of Woo offers. Extensions to the plugin may help with marketing, shipping, subscriptions and memberships to name a few.

*The interface can be a little confusing at first.*

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots. The left screenshot is the 'Content Editor' for a product titled 'Logo Design - The Quick Guide'. The right screenshot is the 'Page Layout' of the same product page on a website. Red arrows indicate the mapping of content from the editor to the live page:

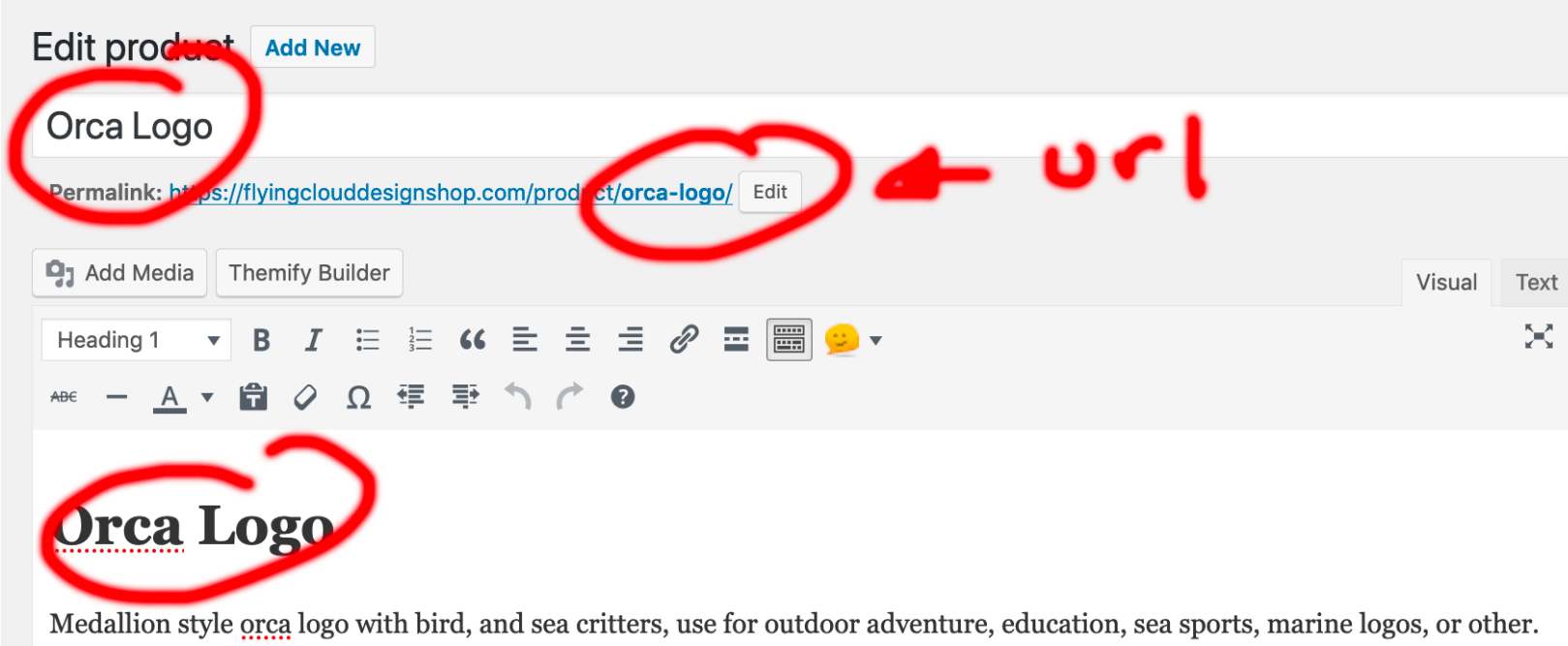
- Name/Title:** An arrow points from the product title in the editor to the product title on the page.
- Description:** An arrow points from the main text block in the editor to the product description on the page.
- Product Data:** An arrow points from the 'Product data' section in the editor to the 'ADD TO CART' button on the page.
- Short Description:** An arrow points from the 'Short description' field in the editor to the 'Who this book is for:' section on the page.

The 'Content Editor' shows the following sections:

- Name/Title:** Logo Design - The Quick Guide
- Description:** Who this book is for: Business People. Those who have a business and need a logo thinking about revising an old logo.
- Product Data:** Price: \$4.99, Stock: 1,000, Add to cart button.
- Short Description:** Who this book is for: Business People. Those who have a business and need a logo thinking about revising an old logo.

The 'Page Layout' shows the following sections:

- Name/Title:** Logo Design - The Quick Guide
- Description:** Quick Guide to Basic Logo Design, Illustrated, 14 pages. PDF version this website only.
- Product Data:** Price: \$4.99, Add to cart button.
- Short Description:** Who this book is for: Business People. Those who have a business and need a logo thinking about revising an old logo.



When adding a product, all entries counts. Think about search-able keywords as you type in product names, titles, and descriptions.

Be aware of naming conventions at the url level. As the page name is entered, it will automatically create a unique url. (This can be edited). If you're using Yoast, it helps to use the same key word as in the URL. This will help in searches.

## SEO

If you build your site in an organized manner, making use of sitemaps, being aware of naming conventions, using good product descriptions, and displaying valuable content, you'll have a better chance of being found in search engines. Everything counts.

When you upload images, the same is true. Each image should have a name that makes sense, and a search-able description.

***On a higher level, make use of Google's Webmaster tools. This is a great resource to explore.***

I found Aaron Wall's SEObook (<http://www.seobook.com/>) helpful.

***You may get offers from "SEO experts" be careful who is allowed access to your website.***

# CREATE ENGAGING PAGES

See this page? There's nothing on it but type. How boring. Creating tons of text may be good for a highly technical site, but not so good for selling stuff. We are a consumer society. We like to buy stuff. We are conditioned to buy stuff.

Designing a beautiful page could be more important than the product itself. Think of it as packaging of the product. The product needs to look beautiful on the page with an awesome description.

Style pages with images, color and animation. Limit the number of fonts and create a standard color palette. Give your site a professional edge.

***Most of us are visual learners and like to be entertained.***

The images on the page — whether good or bad — will evoke a feeling. The page presentation should leave the viewer with a feeling of belonging.

Sentences should be short and to the point with clear headings and sub heading. Write in a way that appeals to your clientele.

# BUILD TRUST

Using a good ecommerce WordPress theme will help build attractive pages. Select a look that goes with our industry, or visit a competitors site and see what they're doing. If a site is way off standard — if the page design is so different from what people are used to — it may create a feeling that something's fishy. Remember you're asking for personal information along with credit card info.

***If a customer doesn't trust the site, they won't buy.***

# CREATE VALUABLE CONTENT

Good copy writing and stellar images will help create an elegant experience. Sometimes a great image with minimal text will be enough to engage a visitor to click-through to the cart.

## Copy Writing

As you type in product descriptions keep in mind there is a person reading. People scan over text. Keep simple paragraphs with simple descriptive, eye catching headers.

Also remember web crawlers are scanning your site as well. Using words that describe whats on the page will help in searches. **Think about what gets typed into a search query** when looking for your product product online. Add those words to the page.

*Creating valuable (original) content is key. Offer hints, help, and advice.*

*Write something that your customers want to read about.*

## Images

I can't stress enough about good page design. One visit to a site is enough to cause someone to stay or to bounce off.

Lagging load times are detrimental to any site. Images should be large enough to be crisp and clear, and small enough to load fast.

Use original images. Not only will they give your site a unique look, but will keep you out of trouble. Images are easy to search and sites such as <https://www.pixsy.com/> is in business ready to collect monies for copyright infringements. Be careful about using images that are not owned by you.



# SUMMARY

Being involved with web development for 20+ years I hope I transferred what I have learned. I did a lot of hit-and-miss, hopefully this will save you some time and avoid the mistakes I made.

To some, this may be new, and to some redundant. I tried to piece together the building blocks to create an online store. A way to become your own boss, at a reasonable cost. This combination of framework and plugins tied into a payment gateway should sustain you for a while.

Be aware new technologies are coming out every year. There are ways to tie into your social media accounts and to market product.

Technology changes over time. Things may have changed since this writing. I'm sure I may have skipped a point or two (hopefully nothing serious). If you want to send a note, please feel free to email me.

Good luck and have fun,  
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## 5-Step Summary

