

WORDPRESS



What's In It For Me?

by Suzanne Bird-Harris

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Introduction

This little e-book is born of the incessant question behind every question we all ask everyday:

What's in it for me?

The purpose of this little e-book is:

- **To answer, here in one place, the most common variations I get of that question as it relates to WordPress.** 'Cuz, you know, I'm beginning to repeat myself... and that gets old after awhile... even for me.
- **To introduce myself to you a little bit.**
- **To help you, should you decide to use WordPress, get the most bang for your buck,** whether you've hired me or someone else to get you

going. Shoot – maybe after reading this, you'll decide you can handle it yourself. That's cool. I'm all for DIY...when it doesn't make you crazy. (Or for some of us, crazier...)

So, how about we get some of the more basic questions out of the way now?

What Is WordPress, Anyway?

WordPress started out as a blogging platform. In the ten years since its inception, though, it's become much more than that. WordPress is becoming a full-blown content management system. What's that mean to you? It means that **not only can you use it to blog, but you can use it to create and**

manage your entire website.

That fact, alone, has some pretty interesting implications for you.

Ok, What is Blogging?

Blogging, in its purest form, is the addition of fresh content to a website on a regular basis, typically in a reverse chronological order, much like a journal.

I like to think of blogging as a way to provide great content that's easily navigated, allowing website visitors to zero in on... what's in it for them!

I'm pretty sure you've heard by now how blogging is all the rage, it's the way of the future online, it has so many benefits for you and your business, it's

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the best thing since sliced bread...

Really? How do you know for sure?

And, God help you, what if you decide in favor of blogging? What then? How do you get started and do it right, make it worth your investment of time, effort, energy and money without falling flat on your face a thousand times?

What if you don't consider yourself to be all that 'technically inclined'? Are you sunk before you start?

What if you don't consider yourself to be a good writer? Is there any point in blogging, then?

And if you say 'no, thank you' to blogging, what other reasons are there to consider using WordPress?

Read on...

To Get What You Want, You Gotta Know What You Want

Seems simple, doesn't it? And it applies whether you're looking at WordPress, or any other web presence solution.

But you would so *not believe* how many people I talk to who can't tell me what they want.

So, let me ask you...

Exactly what do you want a website for?

What is its purpose? Can you tell me in one or two sentences?

Do you know exactly who you are, what you have to offer and to whom?

Can you tell me in 100 words or less? (Hint: Don't take this lightly. This is probably the most important element to getting a website 'right'.)

Can you articulate how your website looks in your mind's eye?

If not, can you point to examples of sites online that you like and articulate what you like about them and why?

Are you willing to be taught a few new tricks?

Are you willing to be coached in the areas that are new to you? 'Cuz there's going to be some new stuff...

Are you willing to ask questions, (even if you fear they're dumb questions) and try the answers you get?

You won't get what you want unless you speak up, whether it's something you need from someone else, or something you don't know that you need

to find out. You've gotta be willing to help yourself...

If these are yes answers for you, read on. If there are some no answers for you, put this down and go address those first. Then come back and read on...

To Get What You Want, You Gotta Know What You Want

Ahh... so you're back. Excellent.

To Those Who Had 'No' Answers, But 'Read on...' Anyway

Here's what I have to say to you: You're making this harder than it has to be. (I won't mention any names – you know who you are...)

At some point in the process of putting together a website, in WordPress or any other way, you're going to realize why I said all those answers needed to be yeses before you moved ahead. The only thing I can't tell you is how many times you'll go 'back to the drawing board', how much time, effort, energy or money you'll have spent up to that point, or how far into

the process you'll be when it happens.

Anyone worth your hard-earned buck (and even your easy-earned ones) is going to ask you these questions in some form or fashion, so you might as well go on and get them answered now.

Because I'm a hardhead, and because I couldn't listen to the people (yes, there was more than one person, for me) who tried to get me to answer all those questions before plunging in – I understand. Really, I feel you on this one. Just don't tell me later I didn't warn you.

Ok, let's talk about WordPress now, shall we?

#1: WordPress Gives You Autonomy

The Times They Are A-Changin'

If you're in business for yourself, let's face it, you need a web presence. When my 65-year-old mother has ditched the phone book for looking up numbers online (and it's not just because the print in the phone book is so dang small), it's time to admit just how widespread the use of the Internet has become. It's time to get yourself a website and get found.

With the advent of blogging, social media, social networking and bookmarking, the way the web works has really changed. It's a lot prettier out there, too. And if you don't take online payments and are waiting on me, or my mom, for that matter, to write and mail you a

check, boy-oh-boy, are you backing up!

Back in the Day...

Not too long ago, to get a website (that didn't scream freebie-template) up and going would cost you a couple grand, at least, even though it didn't do much. And even if you had that kind of money to invest, then you were tied to that programmer person for what seemed like the rest of your life, unless you wanted to become a programmer, yourself. And you probably didn't want to do that, either.

Seriously, if you found a typo, you had to get hold of your programmer dude (or dudette) and have him (or her) fix it for you. That's a serious pain when

you notice the typo on the Sunday afternoon before your big promotion goes live on Monday morning. Particularly if the typo is... oh... something inconsequential like the price of your product or service. Even Calgon can't take you away from that nightmare.

WordPress puts the power of content creation and content management in your hands, without requiring you to know HTML, CSS, PHP or any other programming languages. No more Sunday afternoons freaking out because your programmer is unavailable. You just fix the typo yourself. Problem solved. Rest easy.

I've said it before and I'll keep on saying it, "If you can type

#1: WordPress Gives You Autonomy

and send an email, you can blog in WordPress. And if you can blog, you can manage your own site in WordPress, too.”

Granted, the more you know about HTML, CSS, PHP and other web-related things, the more tricks you can make your WordPress site do. But I’m telling you – WordPress is powerful in its simplicity.

WordPress Empowers You With Choices

Now, you may elect to delegate these responsibilities to someone else, or hire someone like me to handle them for you, and that’s fine. There’s no shame in not being interested in being your own webmaster.

But here’s the thing: What if that person you’ve delegated those responsibilities to quits all of a sudden? Or what if you’ve hired me and I get abducted by aliens tonight?

There’s a big difference between choosing to delegate your webmaster responsibilities and being held hostage by technology and your lack of knowledge thereof.

And really – do you want to have to wait on me or anyone else to fix that typo for you when you could take care of it in less than a minute? Doesn’t make much sense, does it?

Am I Talking Myself Out of My Livelihood?

You might think it strange that someone like me is sitting here telling you how you can create and manage your own website when that’s what I do for a living.

Well, my friend, there’s method to my madness and it has everything to do with **who I am, what I have to offer, and to whom.**

Oooohhh... those words, again, already?

Yeah.

I am someone who has turned down more jobs in the last six years than most people would think was sane, especially if they

#1: WordPress Gives You Autonomy

knew how tight money has been some of those years. What in the world would make me choose what looked, at times, like abject poverty over the so-called security of a paycheck every other Friday and health insurance?

The ability to make a difference for someone and actually see it up close and personal, that's what.

I kid you not.

So that's my quirky self. What about what I have to offer? How about 25 and counting years of experience figuring out new technology, making computers do what I want them to do and speaking and writing in a way

that people can understand and absorb.

When you think about it, that covers quite a lot of territory. But that's me, a pretty eclectic mixed bag of tricks, overall.

The best part is I get to choose the people to whom I offer these skills and talents of mine. And I choose other entrepreneurial souls out there who are great at what they do, who want to use the Internet to spread their message, sell their product or service or build their platform.

I'm interested in empowering them to do more than they thought they could do online themselves, and fill in the rest of

what they need with my services.

So, as great as I might be at correcting your typos, I'm pretty sure that's not the best use of someone like me in your world.

Given that, I don't worry about talking myself out of my livelihood. Better that I show you as much as you want to learn, and I handle the rest.

#2: WordPress Lets You Ease Into Webmastering

Most of the people I talk to who are looking to build a website and/or blog really like the idea of not being tied to a programmer-type for every little change they need to make to their sites. Being in control of their content and managing it themselves is really appealing to them.

But when they've thought about it for a minute, they start to freak out a little at the idea of being their own webmaster. Fixing typos is one thing, but surely there's more to managing a website than fixing typos, right? Isn't there a whole truckload of other acronyms involved?

Yes, and no.

Yes, initially, but day to day? No, not really. Or at least there doesn't have to be.

Nice pat answer, huh? Let me explain.

Once your site is installed and configured, it's pretty much write, save, and publish from there on out if you're blogging. If you're not blogging, then there's even less to do.

Granted, 'installed and configured' involves some activities you might not feel like taking on, but hey – that's what people like me are for.

I can't tell you how many times I've set up whole sites in an afternoon. Seriously. On the other hand, I've done projects

that took a month or more to complete. Just depends on how clear you are on what you want and how much customization you want done.

The more involved your site is, the more webmastering there is to do, most likely, but how involved your site is from day one is largely up to you.

#3: WordPress Saves You Money and Time

One of the reasons building your online ‘home’ in WordPress is so great is that it’s much like buying a manufactured home. Most of what makes a home a home is present and doesn’t have to be coded from scratch.

The Structure Is Already Present

When buying a manufactured home, you expect it to have plumbing, electrical, heating, a roof, floors, walls, doors, etc. In other words, you expect the structure of a home. With WordPress, you get the structure of a website: pages, database connectivity, all the building blocks required for a website.

WordPress Themes Are Like Floor Plans and Decor

With a manufactured home, the options you have are floor plans, paint colors, cabinetry, flooring... all the things that help you personalize your house to make it feel like ‘home’. You don’t have endless choices, but you do usually have several “packages” to choose from.

WordPress themes determine not only the floor plan of your site, but also the décor. If you go with a theme as it stands, getting your site up and going is a snap. The more you want to change about your theme, the longer it takes, the more involved it is, and usually the more it costs. Colors and font sizes aren’t typically very involved changes to make, but

start asking to change the floor plan, and you might be better off looking for a different theme.

WordPress Plugins Are the Bells and Whistles

With a manufactured home, you can sometimes opt to have ceiling fans installed or not, a security system installed or not, a central vacuum system or not... you know, the really cool ‘extras’.

In the world of WordPress, these ‘extras’ are called plugins. They add functionality – bells and whistles – to your site.

Just like you save money purchasing a manufactured home, so do you save money building your site in WordPress.

#3: WordPress Saves You Money and Time

First of all, unlike a manufactured home, WordPress is free to install and use. How cool is that? And just like it's a whole lot less expensive to paint your house green than it is to go build a whole new green house, when it comes to having customizations to your site done, that's a whole lot less expensive than coding an entire site from scratch

So, yes, you probably will still need a programmer to get your site looking and behaving the way you want it to, but you'll get a whole lot more bang for your total buck spent! And faster, too.

Final Thoughts

Hopefully, you now have a much better idea of whether building a site in WordPress will meet your needs, or not. I don't propose WordPress as the end-all-be-all in the online world, but I have yet to want to do something with a website that WordPress couldn't do, and do well. But I don't know everything, either. (No, it's true... I don't.)

What I do know is this: WordPress allows me to provide great looking, SEO-friendly, easily maintained websites to the small businesses and solo-preneurs out there who need to be able to compete with the 'big guys' online.

It's about time we leveled the playing field like that, don't you think?

Yeah, I think so, too.

You probably know me a little better by now, too. I love being able to positively impact your success online with the knowledge and experience I have to offer.

There is such a fine line between work and play for me these days, and trust me – I KNOW how blessed I am to be able to say that. I remember the days when I dreaded the alarm clock because it signaled the start of yet another day at a job I really didn't like. If I can help you make the same transition,

well... it just doesn't get much better than that.

Have a freakishly spectacular day!

- Suzann

About the Author



My name is **Suzanne Bird-Harris** and I'm the coach / web designer behind vAssistant Services and the @SuzanneBHarris Twitter account. **I help entrepreneurs like you create or improve your web presence so you can use the web to make money doing your thing – in this lifetime!**

You can read the history of vAssistant Services, but let me give you the gist of it in one line: ***Be careful what you wish for, because you just might get it!***

The Mom / Grandma



I'm a single mom of three, two boys and a girl born in 1987, 1993 and 1999 respectively, and a grandma of one sweet little girl born August of 2008. Trust me, when your kids are 6 years apart in age, it's almost like having 3 separate families to take care of and having to show up 5 days a week to do the 8-5 thing just does not work for me. There's just not enough me to go around.

That last year I was employed I had a kid in high school, a kid in elementary school and a toddler. If having a job in the face of all that isn't a recipe for insanity, I don't know what is!

I've been in business for myself since December 2002, and I'm blessed to earn my living doing what I love!

The Coach/Web Designer

Coaching and web design seem like opposite ends of the spectrum to many people, but they're the perfect blend for me. **So, when you work with me, you get someone who is just as interested in helping you understand the 'whys' as the 'whats' when it comes to your online presence.**

I am the other half of your brain that knows how to do all that technical stuff you need done online, available to you virtually (because you know, it's very likely we're not neighbors.)

I blog how-tos, recommendations, and plain-English explanations for those interested in doing these things themselves, and offer my time and talents in a consulting and design & implementation capacity for those who are not.

Tweet Me @SuzanneBHarris