



How to Make a Website

Learning to build a website can be overwhelming, and many people pay designers to make a website. Paying a designer is an option, but it's easier than ever to make your own website.

Note: If you would prefer to hire a designer, you can contact us and tell us your ideas and we will make it a reality!

Most of our clients use the WordPress [CMS](#) for their websites. It doesn't require any advanced knowledge, it's easy to install, there are a large number of themes and plugins, a rich tutorial community, and as you learn you can tweak it even further:

- [WordPress](#)

However, WordPress may not be for you. In this article, we'll cover some of the most popular and easiest ways to make a website, and provide links to help get you started. We'll cover the following methods in order of complexity:

- [Website Templates](#)
- [WYSIWYG \(What You See is What You Get\) Site Builders](#)
- [CMS \(Content Management System\)](#)
- [From Scratch \(HTML/CSS/PHP\)](#)
- [Professional Web Designer](#)

No matter which method you choose, you'll want to know how to develop images and photos for your website to help make it look good, and how to easily upload and manage files to your server. JML recommends the following software solutions:

- FTP Client like FileZilla for uploading any images (free)
- Image editors like [GIMP](#) and [Inkscape](#) (both are free)

Many professionals use Adobe's Creative Suite products for touching up photos, and creating banners and logos. There are free and very good alternatives to make images for your web site, such as GIMP (Photoshop alternative) and Inkscape (Illustrator alternative).

We highly recommend that you learn a little HTML and CSS by reading tutorials online, as even with site builders or a good CMS you can still accomplish more by understanding how these work.

Methods for Developing Web Sites

The [Weebly Website Builder](#) that we provide is free with all Shared hosting plans and very simple to use. The whole process can be done in just minutes, and there's nothing to download or upload. Once you've set up your site, you can publish your changes directly to your website.

Pros: Quick & easy. No technical knowledge required. Good to get started with.

Cons: Limited design options, not able to customize, and advanced features are sparse.

Website Templates

JML provides 4,450+ [free website templates and designs](#). You can also find tons of other free templates online. Once you find a template that you like, you can download the template and edit it (fully customizable). After you edit the template using an HTML or text editor you can then upload the template through FTP to your HostGator account to publish your web page(s).

Pros: Tons of templates in many different categories with the ability to customize.

Cons: May require 'tweaking' to get the template to look the way you want.

WYSIWYG (What You See is What You Get) Site Builders

A WYSIWYG Editor is a web authoring program that can create a website for you, similar to creating a document in Microsoft Word. While the de facto standard is Adobe's Dreamweaver, you don't need to pay hundreds of dollars to get started. There are free and open source alternatives, such as [Mozilla's KompoZer](#).

You can make a website with KompoZer through by inserting elements, such as images, tables, paragraphs, headers, et cetera without having to mess with any HTML code. Should you feel inclined, however, you can easily edit the code as well. If you don't want to start from scratch, you can get templates online (see above: Website Templates) and open them with KompoZer to tweak the look and layout.

Pros: Free and easy to get started, no HTML needed.

Cons: May take time to learn the advanced features of the software (either Dreamweaver or KompoZer).

CMS (Content Management System)

Using a CMS for your website is a great option if you intend to constantly add content, or need advanced features. For the best CMS experience, consider a [Managed WordPress](#) environment, in which we will actively curate themes and plugins available, provide automatic caching, site security with SiteLock, and automatic backups with CodeGuard for a single low monthly cost.

The major CMS's available to install on our shared hosting are [WordPress](#) (also a blogging platform), [Joomla](#), and [Drupal](#). The most popular option on HostGator is definitely WordPress, and it can be installed with just a click through HostGator's QuickInstall feature (See video on: [How easy it is to install WordPress](#)). WordPress is very simple to use, and there are TONS of free WordPress themes and plugins out there to build almost any type of website.

Pros: Highly customizable, easy to install and get started. Easy to add new content and update pages. Keeps things organized.

Cons: Since a CMS is pre-built, it may require editing PHP/HTML/CSS code if the out-of-the-box options don't work for your website. Should be fine though in most cases.

From Scratch (HTML/CSS/PHP)

Creating a website from scratch used to be the only way to do it. Now we have tons of tools and scripts to help us. But if you're a do-it-yourself kind of person, this option

might appeal to you. To get started on this path, [W3Schools](#) has some good tutorials and more information covering: HTML, CSS, and PHP.

- HTML stands for hyper text markup language, and it's the code behind most websites. Your web browser reads this code and renders it into a document which becomes a viewable web page.
- CSS or cascading style sheets, is a way to define the way the look and design of different elements on your website. It gives your site it's own unique style.
- PHP or other server side scripting languages can add advanced functionality to your site like creating contact forms, and interacting with a database to store and retrieve information.

Pros: Complete control over the look and feel of your web pages.

Cons: Learning curve for beginners to get up-to-speed.