



Web Authoring

How do I get my own website?



What do you want to do with your website?

Do you want to sell a product?

Do you want to inform or share an opinion?

Do you want represent an organization or group?



Wix

www.wix.com

Wix is a popular cloud based website builder. It offers ease of use combined with a powerful set of features to easily build your website.



Wix.com

Wix is a fully hosted platform, so you will not have to pay for hosting. You get access to hundreds of templates to choose for your website's design. Each template is fully editable with their intuitive drag and drop site builder.

It also comes with dozens of free and paid apps that you can install on your website. These apps allow you to add new features and functionality to your website. Some of them are created by Wix, and others are created by third-party developers.

Wix offers a free plan with limited bandwidth and storage, no SSL, and no domain name. Free and Connect Domain plans will show Wix branded ads on your website. You'll need to upgrade to their Combo or Unlimited plan to remove those ads.

Weebly

www.weebly.com

Weebly is a fully hosted platform, so you don't need to install and manage any software. They take care of hosting your website and managing all the software that runs in the backend.



It comes with dozens of website designs to use as an starting point for your website. These designs are fully editable using Weebly's live page editor.

Weebly also comes with built-in support for ecommerce. This allows you to easily create an online store and start selling.

Each Weebly site comes with built in features for contact forms, photo galleries, sliders, and more. This allows you to easily add features to your website without any complicated setup process.

Couple notes to consider though, Weebly is a fully hosted platform so you are locked to the features they offer. You cannot hire a developer or designer to add new functionality of feature to your website.

Weebly charges 3% transaction fees on every purchase made through your ecommerce store. You can, however, upgrade to their business plan to avoid this fee.

Squarespace

www.squarespace.com

Squarespace is by far the most popular fully hosted website builder. Recognized for its modern designs and highly touted speed to launch a new website.



Squarespace comes with enterprise grade infrastructure for hosting your website. This secure and robust platform allows you to focus on growing your business without worrying about hosting.

Squarespace includes tons of website designs to get started. All of these designs are fully ready for all types of content. They are fully editable, and Squarespace even allows you to use multiple templates for the same website at once -- which sometimes does create rather disconnected feeling websites.

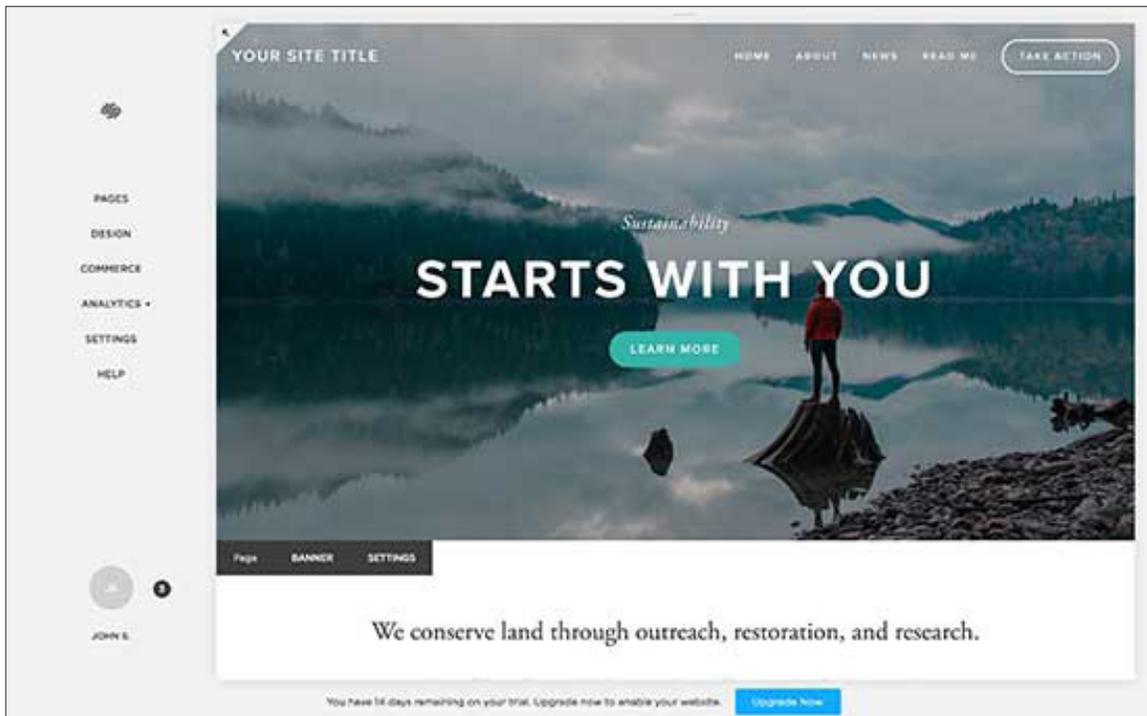
Squarespace has really taken the web builder technology to the next level. Adding content to your website is very easy -- just point anywhere on your website and start typing. You can easily drag and drop items on pages to create your own layouts as well.

Squarespace also has an ecommerce plan which allow you to add an online store to your website. It offers a nice interface to manage your products, inventory, orders,

coupon discounts, and more.

A major limiting factor of Squarespace is their limited integrations with third-party service which can be a hurdle in growing or personalizing your website.

A minor side note about ecommerce, their ecommerce plans only allow Stripe, Apple Pay, and PayPal for payment processing. You cannot add additional payment gateways - meaning if you don't use one of those gateways, you will need to setup and maintain an additional gateway.



The Squarespace Experience

Shopify

www.shopify.com

Shopify is a website builder designed specifically for online stores. It powers more than half a million businesses with 1 million active users. Over 40 Billion dollars worth of products have been sold on Shopify's platform.



Shopify is an all-in-one fully hosted solution, this means you don't have to worry about managing software, installing updates, or keeping backups. Shopify does all that for you.

It offers integrated payment solution called Shopify Payments. You can also add third-party payment gateways to accept payments.

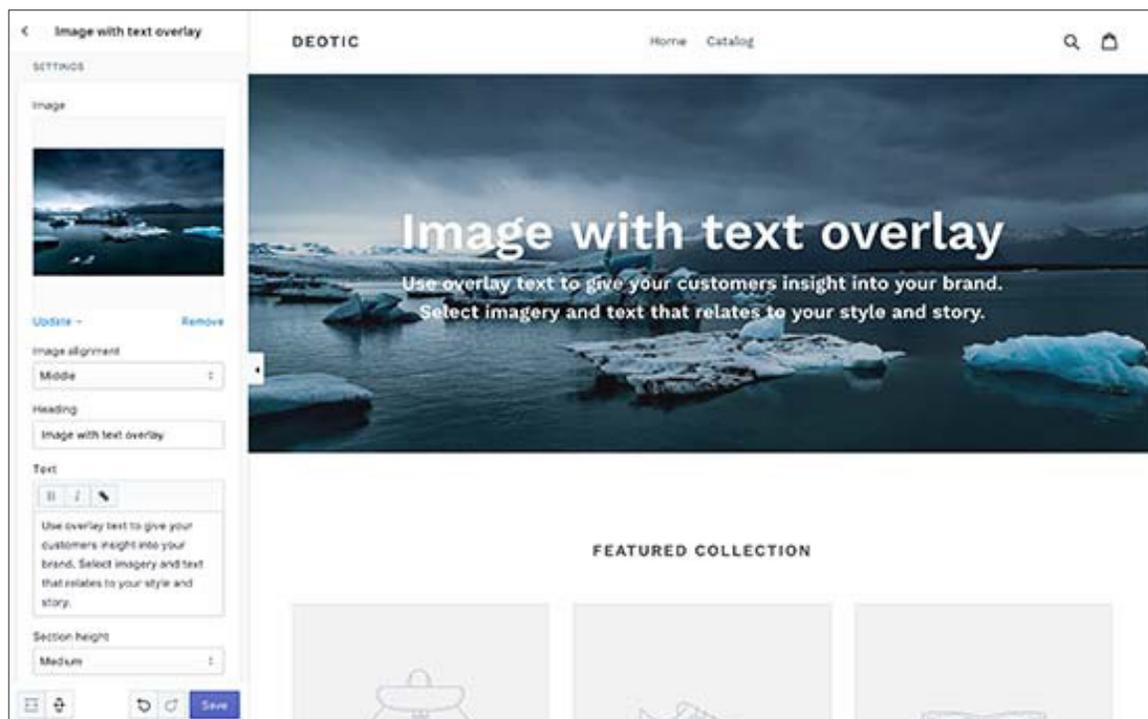
As an ecommerce website builder, Shopify comes with full inventory management, unlimited products, powerful stats, easy marketing solutions, all neatly wrapped under one roof. They have hundreds of designs to choose from. A very good friend of mine uses Shopify to power his entire ecommerce catalog for board games and geek pop culture items.

With its intuitive drag and drop interface, Shopify makes it super-easy to create a full-fledged ecommerce store. They also offer in-store POS, which allows you to sell

products at your location, while accepting all credit cards and taking advantage of Shopify's inventory, shipping, marketing, and stats management tools.

If you are just starting out, then you may find Shopify's pricing a bit higher than some other website builders in this list.

If you ever want to move your website away from Shopify, you will find it quite difficult to do so.



The Shopify Drag-and-drop Editor

WordPress (self-hosted)

www.wordpress.org

The self-hosted WordPress is in my opinion, the best website builder due to its popularity, powerful features, scalability, and ease of use.



WordPress is a free and open source website builder. This means that you have maximum control over your website compared to any other builder we've talked about.

Unlike other website builders, you will need a web server to host your own website (this is a lot easier than it sounds), and there are many companies like my own that offer those services.

WordPress gives you complete control on every aspect of your website. It can be used to build any kind of website. For example, an eCommerce Store, community forms, a social network, a membership website, and more.

WordPress powers 28% of the web. 41.7 Million new posts per month, over 100 Billion spam comments blocked natively, almost 60% market share amongst CMS -- and yet, all 100% open-source, and free.

There are thousands of pre-made WordPress themes that you can use for your website's design. Or you can hire a developer to help you make your design come to life.



You'll also get access to more than 50,000 plugins. These are like apps for WordPress that adds additional features and functionality to your website.

WordPress itself is fully translated into 62 languages and can be easily used to create multilingual websites.

The biggest thing to keep in mind is you will have to manage your own website, which means you will need to familiarize yourself with the system. This slight learning curve is easily overcome by most users, but it does feel a bit difficult in the beginning.

You will also have to keep up with WordPress updates, plugin updates, and create backups. About one-third of all WordPress websites are on the current version of WordPress. There are constant attacks and exploits that people try to take advantage of, and you need to stay up-to-date to protect yourself.

Some hosting services, like mine, do offer a complete package that not only hosts your site for you, but keeps backups, updates your WordPress and plugins, and makes sure updates don't break your site.

Maintenance packages like these usually run about the same price as the web-builder sites, however, WordPress sites do have the initial development cost if you don't use a free template.

What's the trend in 2018?

The Hot List.

1. Minimal & Comfort

- ➔ Less is More: Minimalism trend continues with even more blank spaces. Especially white spaces for a clean, multipurpose versatile design.



2. Custom Illustrations and Videos

- ➔ Engagement per follower is 58 times higher on Instagram than on Facebook. The old adage seems to be true, an image conveys a message worth a thousand words.



3. Shadows for Extra Depth

- Shadows create depth illusion, this makes them favorite in the design community. With it, you can convert your flat design into semi-flat.
 - You can use shadows and colors (with slight variation) for the following:
 - 1) To make Calls To Action appear raised as they are ready to be clicked.
 - 2) To establish a visual hierarchy between elements.
 - Caution: Don't use shadows excessively.

4. Responsive Web & Logos

- "Mobile-first" used to be a debated design style and trend. Now it's the standard. Google has moved to Mobile first searching. Web Developers are now able to utilize deeper Responsive Web Designs. The newest trend is to use a responsive logo in your design design too.



5. Even More Negative Spaces

- Negative spaces are the empty spaces around or between the content. It can be in any color and Designers use dramatic negative spaces to create Focal Points

6. Animations, Gifs and Cinemagraphs Bright Gradients & Vibrant Colors Big Bold & Creative Typography

- Motion catches a user's attention faster than anything else. Users love to see stories, don't want to read. The reason behind Instagram's success.
- Use animation, Gifs and cinemagraphs to create eye-catching landing pages, banners, newsletters and more.

