



## **Websites, Blogs, and Content Management Systems: What is the difference and which one is right for you?**

**By Linda Lee**

(The following is an excerpt from Linda's forthcoming book  
*Smart Women, Stupid Computers, The Savvy Guide to Using the Internet.*)

**You have many choices on how to start your website.**

- Hire a professional to create your site, and help you with updates and changes.
- Use a web builder program like Go Daddy or others, but many of these have been phased out in the last few years and you never know if they are going to stick around.
- Learn how to create a website using a program like Dreamweaver or Adobe, or a free HTML page builder such as Nvu. This is the most difficult option because these programs are quite complicated to learn.
- Create a WordPress blog website, which has templates to choose from or hire a professional to custom create a WordPress theme. **This is the best choice if you want to run your own site with relative ease.** There are tons of free training online and many great support forums.
- Use a CMS (content management system), such as Drupal or Joomla. You can learn how to set it up or hire someone to do it. WordPress has also evolved into a full content management system.

**What is the difference between a website, website builder, CMS (content management system), and a blog?**

- **Website** (or "web site")--a collection of related web pages, images, videos, or other files that are hosted on a web server, usually accessible via the Internet.
- **Website Builder Programs**--a set of tools available online to help build your own website. Usually these are included in some form with your web hosting or may cost extra. They use templates and guide you through set up; you usually just add the content and photos. You can run this through your web hosting control panel. The drawback on using these templates and services like Go Daddy and others is they can be dropped at any time. You are at the mercy of others when you use these web building programs. I have seen so many of them come and go over the years.
- **Content Management System (CMS)**--a type of website set up that allows the owner to run their site without a webmaster. There are many options available, and most people will still need to hire a professional for the initial set up. Once it is ready, you will learn how to login, add content, and use the system you have selected. WordPress has evolved into a content management system website builder and is one of the easiest systems to use and learn. Content management systems also include Drupal, and Joomla.

- **WordPress** is now the number one CMS on the internet. Why? Because there is so much support for it, lots of free training, and it works!
- **Blog** (short for web log) is a type of website, usually maintained by the owner who can login to the site and add content and photos and other things. The blog style website features all the posts the author writes and publishes. It is a website but the blog section is the content vs. sales pages, book pages, and the other types of pages and sections you add to a full content management system style website.  
  
Blog websites are becoming more common, since the days of using a blog as just an online journal are over. Many people still use Google's Blogger as their free blog site, especially if they are not trying to run a business. Blogger is meant to be phased out at some point. Google is notorious for just dropping programs like this.
- There are many free templates to choose from. Often it is easier to have a professional set it up. WordPress is my favorite CMS and is the most widely used blogging/website platform in the world. You can also set up a website for free in five minutes with WordPress if you have no budget for a website. I have a video on how to do that [here](#).
- This is a great way to become familiar with the system and get comfortable with using WordPress before you install your own website on your own hosting.
- If you are serious about running a business or professional website, I recommend you get your own self-hosted WordPress site where you use your own hosting and domain name.
- Most hosting companies offer free installation of WordPress on your own hosting account. Then you need to install the theme and add the content to the site or have your web designer/webmaster do that for you.

### *Which type of site is right for you?*

#### **The “Brochure or Business Card” style website.**

This is a site that basically stays static (not changing very often) and serves as more of a brochure or a business card. A brochure style site functions as a place online where potential customers can find you and learn more about your business.

This is a good fit if you want a website that you do not need to update very often, or you don't want to worry about maintaining or updating the site yourself. Any type of changes or updates can easily be handled by your web designer/webmaster for minimal cost. This is like having a yellow page online. If you have nothing about your business online at this time I highly recommend you get something up. This is an easy option.

#### **The WordPress Website or Content Management/ Website.**

This type of website is very versatile. Once it is set up, you can write and post and interact with your readers. You can pump it up and sell products and run e-commerce, run promotions, run ads, use google AdSense or other ads networks you may want to use, add videos, and audio and

basically you can do just about anything on this type of website. I have set up several WNBA chapter websites on WordPress.

You can pay your web person to run it for you or you can learn how to run it yourself. This kind of site is set up to allow the owner to learn how to login and make changes and updates themselves. This type of site also will require you to spend some time learning how to use it.

I train many of my clients from age 18-93, (yes I have a 93 year old who is blogging!) on how to use this type of site. You will find deep satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment when you spend some time learning how to run your own site. Most people have their web designer do the initial set up of the site and then they take it from there.

You will always have your web designer/webmaster to help you if you get stuck or need to make any changes that require a higher skill level. I usually take care of slideshows, and any form building and design changes for my clients, while they find adding content and images and even videos and audio easy to manage after they have some basic training.

This type of website is for people willing to learn and get training on how to run their own site and also have the desire to run and work with their own website. This is the type of website over 95 percent of my clients are selecting.

I also have seen a huge shift in the nonprofit world to WordPress. It saves money in the long run, since most nonprofits will not have to pay a webmaster to update everything anymore because so many people now know how to update and add articles, posts, or pages in WordPress that finding volunteers to help you with your website has gotten much easier. Most of these sites are also set up to use mobile display now, too.

No matter what kind of site you select, you will benefit from having an online presence. Did you know that over 70 percent of people now use the Internet instead of the yellow page to find a business or a phone number? That number is sure to increase. Don't miss out by not getting online. Everyone needs a website in today's computer savvy world. No matter if you are an author trying to build your platform, or you run a business, you must be online to get found.

**Linda Lee is a writer, speaker, educator, and website designer who demystifies the online experience. Linda specializes in WordPress and teaching WordPress. This is a chapter from her forthcoming book, *Smart Women, Stupid Computers, The Savvy Guide to Using the Internet*.**

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