Why I Don't Build on WordPress

TLDR

Almost every client I work with at some point and time asks if I build on WordPress. I have built on WordPress in the past and have sworn never to do it again. Granted, it does power more websites than any other. However, that doesn't make it a wise choice.

- It's slow
- Its not secure
- It's one of the most expensive solutions.
- It's not easy to update or manage yourself.
- It provides the least amount of flexibility for a unique design.

If you don't want to take my word for it, read on as I outline what WordPress is, who it is for, why I don't use it, and why you I don't think you should either.

What is WordPress and who is it for?

WordPress, at its core, is a content management system (cms) created for bloggers. In its origin, it was clouted as a free/inexpensive way to get a blog online. Because it is open-source software it has morphed into an extensive platform that can be built on and added to through plugins and other add-ons. You may be thinking, "That sounds great! An inexpensive solution that is infinitely expandable and open source!". It's okay. I was there at one time, too. The adage stands, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is."

Why I don't recommend WordPress

One of the significant problems with the WordPress Ecosystem is its vulnerability. The fact that it is open-source has allowed for its massive and rapid development but also left it open, vulnerable, and slow. Think of WordPress as a foundation for a house. It's a good start, but you can't live there yet. First, you must add themes, site builders (unless you still code from scratch), and many plugins. It is like creating a home out of a hodgepodge of materials. You may get the job done, but it doesn't take much for it to all come crashing down.

Because of its vulnerabilities, WordPress is continuously updated and tweaked to maintain security and stability. When WordPress updates, plugins and site builders have to update. When these updates go wrong, it can be a nightmare, taking days or weeks to sort through the mess.

Common Misconceptions about WordPress

Let's debunk some common myths about WordPress.

1. WordPress sites are cheaper. False. Yes, you may be tempted by hosting companies offering hosting for as low as 99 cents a month, but trust me, you get what you pay. If you pay for hosting that will perform how you want it to, you are looking at $15 to $30 a month. You will also need a theme to allow you to style your website. These cost anywhere from $30 to $100+. Don't be tricked into thinking these are one-time expenses. Remember, everything has to be updated when WordPress updates. Most themes and plugins come with one year of updates, essentially making them an ongoing annual expense. You will also need a site builder that allows you to edit your theme to your liking. These will run you around $50 to $100 a year. Finally, don't forget about the plugins. On average, a WordPress site will need 10 to 15 plugins ranging from $10 to $100+ each, depending on the job. Here is the final breakdown:

Annual Costs

Hosting: $300

Theme and Builder: $150

Plugins: $150- $500+

Total: $600 - $1,100

 2. I don't want to rent my site. I want to be able to host it anywhere. You may indeed be able to take your WordPress site anywhere, but it is not easy. And you are still trapped in building your website on WordPress without a complete remake. Moving a site is no small task regardless of what you build on.

3. WordPress has great free e-commerce options. They do have some free e-commerce options. But I wouldn't call them great. It is still freemium software that you will eventually have to pay annual fees toward to make work correctly.

4. I want to be able to update my site on my own. Good luck. I have yet to meet a designer who doesn't want their client to be able to update their website. We like designing, not copying and pasting blog posts for the rest of our lives. It takes a ton of time to learn WordPress. It is like the control panel of a rocket: numerous buttons and dials, and it only takes one wrong setting to mess the whole thing up. I have had more website clients come to me asking me to save them from WordPress than any other platform.

Better Options

There is a saying that the best tool for the job is the right tool for the job. There is no one size fits all solution. I have tested almost all of the tools.

My preferred option is to build and host your site for you. It allows for endless design possibilities, all the functions you could want on a website like e-commerce, blogs, portfolios, forms, membership areas, SSL, to name a few, for one simple monthly price ($25/month Standard and $35/month E-commerce at the time of writing this). I want to spend more time designing your site than fixing it. You want to spend more time running your business than worrying about becoming a computer programmer.

I evaluate my decisions and tools through the following three criteria.

1. Is it Simple?
2. Is it Scalable?
3. Is it Sustainable?

WordPress is only 1/3 of those. The options I use are all 3/3 and cheaper too. There is no competition. I have arrived at this position after years of research and building on every platform under the sun. Trust me.