

17 WooCommerce

Today's to-do list

We will look at some of the options to add e-commerce functionality and we are going to install WooCommerce on our WordPress build, learn how to set it up and add products.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this session, you will

- Identify additional plugins to add value
- Know how to install and set up WooCommerce
- Understand how to add a product and categories

Non-retail selling

WooCommerce can be used to sell any product. **WooCommerce is great for retail products, but it's also great for non-retail selling. Things like services, maintenance contracts and subscriptions.**

WordPress is a better option if you want a more content-based site rather than a pure shop. You can add as many content pages as you like and run your shop alongside them. If SEO is going to be an important part of your marketing strategy, then the options available using plugins like Yoast or All-in-one-SEO are far superior to the options available in Shopify although it has recently added a paid Yoast plugin to its app store.

Functionality

WordPress allows you to apply all manner of functions to book dates, sell tickets, and create bundles. It means you can add so much more in the way of admin tools and selling tools to your site, in all my years as a WordPress designer and all the hundreds of things I've been asked to make them do, I have never found something that there isn't a plugin for. **I am a huge believer in making websites part of your team. They aren't there just to look pretty, they should have a job, a purpose. Selling products is great but there's so much more you can do.**

Virtual and downloads

You might be selling webinars, training courses or online subscriptions in which case a WordPress site will allow you to run subscription apps, create lots of lovely content pages and run your courses through the site itself.

This is Crafting Crime, it's an online crime writing course on a subscription basis. The site is predominantly text-based with only one single product, the course itself. The subscription is based on a six-month contract. To the viewer, the site looks much like a normal online shop. Add your course to the basket and check out in the usual way. On the admin side, it does some clever stuff. When the customer checks out and pays, they start a six-month subscription. The Plugin that runs it sends the customer a username and password so they can access specified content to do the course. A month from the end of the subscription period the plugin will contact the customer and let them know they only have a month left. It will offer them a chance to extend their subscription or let it lapse. At various points, the plugin will contact the customer with their status. If the subscription isn't renewed the username and password will expire and they will lose access to the course content. The

plugin WooCommerce Subscriptions is fully editable you control costs, subscription periods, content access and reminders so it can work around any format you specify.

You might want to do weekly content drops or full access, that's totally up to you. It's around £199 a year for the plugin however the cost of that is a lot less than paying for someone to manage all the subscriptions and keep on track of access logins.

This kind of plugin is great for any online learning content, webinar subscriptions, ebook downloads or podcasts. Anything where you want to sell content and restrict access to certain parts.

Donations

You might be a charity, or you might be taking donations for a charity you support. Just checking out through a standard e-commerce site isn't really appropriate. You aren't going to add to a cart and check out. You can take donations through a dedicated Paypal button, set up through Paypal and add to your site a line of code or use a plugin like Donorbox or WP Simple pay that collects one-time or recurring donations from your WordPress site using a stripe gateway.

Crowdfunding

If you are looking to crowdfund for a project or charity then plugins like WP crowdfunding plugins into WordPress, Stripe and PayPal and integrate with fundraising backer sites like Kickstarter or GoFundMe.

Services & Retainers

You might want to sell fixed-fee services online. You can do that through a straight shop site, which is fine if it's a one-off but can get annoying if you have to keep sending people back to check out every month. Or you can link to external sites like GoCardless to set up monthly retainers. Using a recurring debit card payment system, GoCardless lets you set up monthly 'packages' that your customers can then subscribe to. They add their card details securely to the GoCardless system and then take a recurring debit from the card to your specification, weekly, monthly, or annually. Their fees are very low and you get paid out 2-3 days after the amount is taken.

Bookings

There are several ways to take bookings for holidays, classes and sessions. You can create your own booking system with WordPress plugins like Easy Booking, or something more configurable like Booknetic that is ideal for any kind of booking service, for gyms, clinics, salons, education, consultations and more. Other good and well-established plugins are Timely and Pinpoint. External sites like Calendly are very popular and can integrate and link to most platforms. You can also integrate into good old Google, but you can't take payments.

WooCommerce

Although there are other options for WordPress, WooCommerce is undoubtedly the best and most integrated plugin for e-commerce. It is flexible and dynamic and like WordPress, it is open source which means there are thousands of plugins and add-ons to help you sell anything, beautifully.

WooCommerce has all the essentials you need for an online store, it is adaptable with inventory, tax, secure payment gateways and multiple shipping integrations. The new versions include detailed analytics about products, orders and customers.

It was originally created in 2011 as a standalone e-commerce plugin. In 2015, it was purchased by Automattic, the parent company of WordPress. Since then it has grown massively and before the perfect e-commerce solution being updated and developed around each WordPress update.

As a free plugin, any business can take advantage of the system and not have to worry about commission fees, support contracts and software licenses. The only cost to an e-commerce store using WordPress are the payment gateway fees which you would incur using any plugin.

As we mentioned, WooCommerce is open source, which means there are hundreds of extensions and add-ons that can add extra functionality, and because they all work in the same modular way, you can add multiple options that all work neatly together.

The beauty of WooCommerce is that you can use it to sell anything. Because we can tie into other plugins like the ones we mentioned earlier we can create custom checkout options for any product or service.

Demo & Task 1

Let's take a look at installing WooCommerce on our WordPress sites, we are going to run through all the setup basics we need to get our store running.

Task 1

Log in to your test site and install and set up WooCommerce. Work your way through the settings windows and add the appropriate information Don't worry about payment gateways. We don't want to add any as people can't actually buy anything on your site.

Creating products

Now we are going to take a look at creating a product in our store. We can add some categories and create some dummy products.

Task 2

Let's create some dummy products.

Coming up soon to extend these skills

Tomorrow we are going to look at some of the additional plugins we can add to our WooCommerce store to add extra functionality.

Don't forget

Today's session page in your learner dashboard has a useful links document that will cover all the tools, resources and articles we have discussed in the session and some useful guides and articles to take you further.

Make sure you revisit your FABs and set yourself some goals specific to today's session.

Extra help

If you need any help with anything from today's session feel free to message me in the WhatsApp group. If you have any other issues or problems related to the course or the tools speak to Andrew and Irfana, they are here to help you.

Up next

See you tomorrow for more WooCommerce.