

Using WordPress to Develop Your Event or Festival Website

For those of us just starting out with a new event or festival concept, creating the best possible website should be one of the most important initial goals. A user-friendly, persuasive, exciting website can increase buzz about your event, ticket sales, and overall fan engagement. Pairing this with a comprehensive social media strategy ([read our article about that here](#)) will all but ensure a strong online presence that should translate into real-world results.

Depending on your budget, you can choose to build this website yourself, hire a web design firm to do it for you, or some combination therein. Many new events will choose the former, often utilizing open source and free software such as [WordPress](#), but electing to bring in the pros if they can't quite get everything built the way they would like. Wordpress is what [FestivalandEventProduction.com](#) is built from, utilizing a lot of custom code and plug-ins.

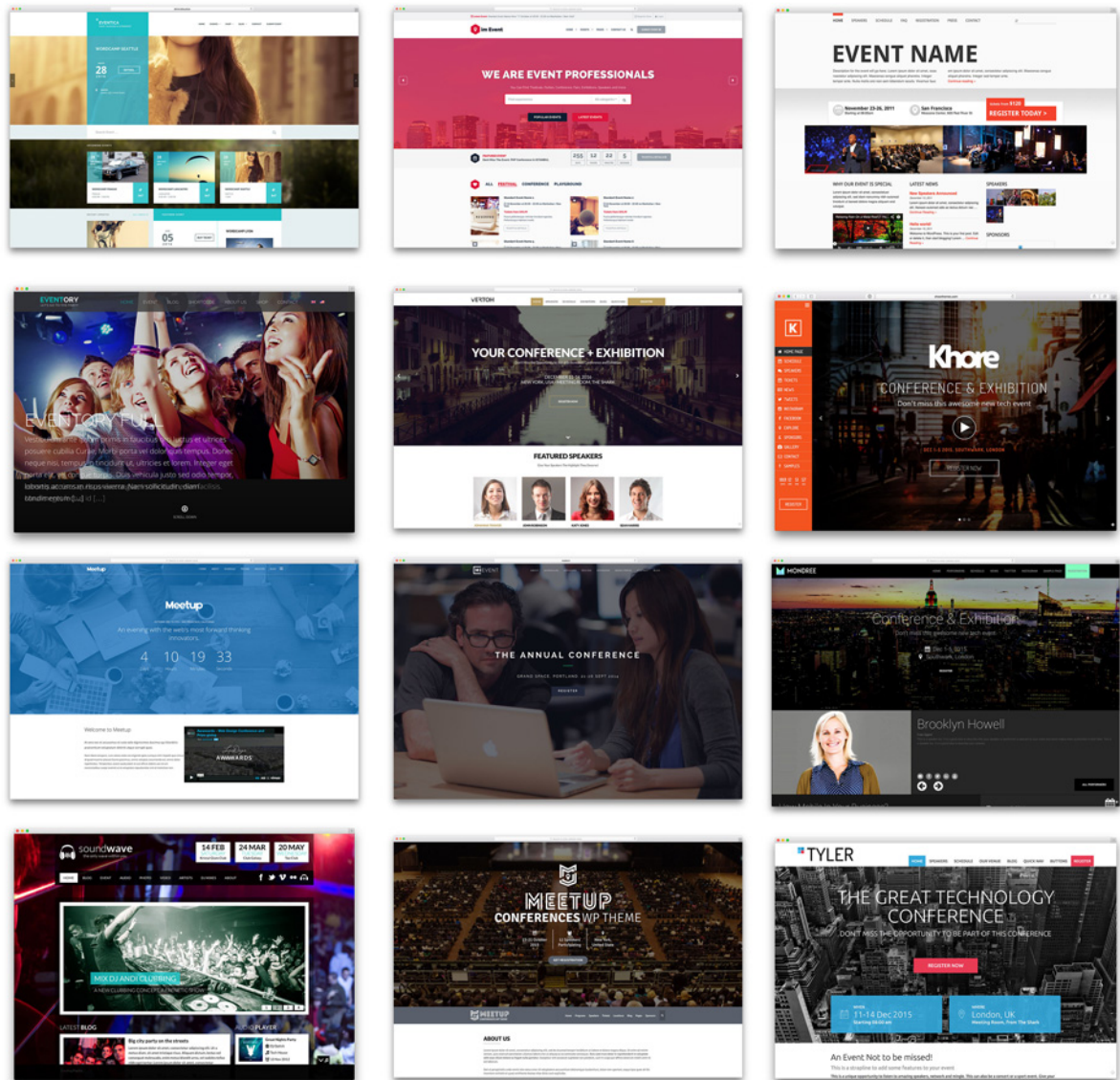
That's what this article will be focusing on – starting your event or festival website on your own, and what all that might entail. We will also focus on using WordPress, since it has become one of the most popular ways to build a website thanks to its intuitive dashboard, responsive layouts (your website will automatically adjust to the best viewing experience based on the device – laptop, tablet, phone – you're using), latest features like parallax scrolling, and constant updates and additions from the WP community.

Do note that, with any software like this, there are security risks of having your login hacked – much like your email address – but so long as you take reasonable precautions like

choosing a hard to guess password, and as long as your web hosting company offers daily backups in case you have to restore your website, you should be fine.

- First off, you'll need a domain name and a hosting account. One of the more popular companies to purchase a domain name from is Godaddy.com – they have competitive rates (around \$15 / year for a dot com domain name) and they also offer web hosting, WordPress installation, and many other add-ons. *Full disclosure:* I own a [web design and hosting company](#) and can provide this service for you as well, for as little as \$50 / year.
- Secondly, you'll want to browse the various web layout options available to you through WordPress. Called Themes, many companies have built “free” and “paid” versions to entice you to try them, and then eventually pay them a fee, usually anywhere from \$25 to \$100, to unlock the full paid version of their theme. This works well as it allows you to test drive many themes before you have to commit and pay for one (and depending on your needs, you may be fine with keeping the free version).

Below is a grid of 12 various event and festival themes as examples, courtesy of [ColorLib](#) (click on the link to look into downloading / purchasing).




- Third, you'll want to look at what sort of features you'd like on your website, and then look to find the best one in WordPress – called Plug-Ins – and install / customize them. Examples of these include calendars, slideshows, glossaries, contact forms, and PDF makers. Here are a couple of plug-in examples – the [Events Calendar](#) (left) and [Contact Form Builder](#) (right) – you can click on the links for either to learn more.

EVENTS		SEARCH		FIND EVENTS		VIEW AS		
Date		Search				Month		
Events for July 2013								
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY		
	2 Highland Developer Meetup		4 South Florida WordPress Meetup Group					
8	9	10 Portland WordPress Meetup Monthly Fiscal Council Meeting Rob's Birthday	11 Victoria WordPress User Group	12	13 WordCamp Windsor	14 WordCamp Windsor		
15	16 WordPress NYC Meetup	17	18	19	20	21		
22	23	24	25	26 WordCamp Columbus	27 WordCamp Columbus WordCamp Fayetteville	28 WordCamp Fayetteville		
29	30	31						
◀ June								August ▶

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- Now that you have your desired theme and plug-ins, it's time to create the content. While WordPress is pretty easy to learn, especially if you're familiar with programs like Microsoft Word, some specific elements may require coding that's beyond your ability – if that's the case, it's time to get some quotes from WordPress developers (like [these guys](#), based in Austin, as one example) to see how much it may cost for them to jump in and help out. I'm always happy to give free quotes or point you in the right direction of someone that can help you better than I can.
- Finally, when your website is ready for launch, you'll want to coordinate the announcement with all of your

social media platforms as well as email blasts, posting on message boards, posting on other event listing websites, and perhaps even a press release to local / national media. And you'll always want to work to keep your website fresh and as updated as possible – the more the website is updated, the better it will do in search engine rankings. That and having your top keywords in your title tags as well as having other websites link back to you will go a long way in getting good search results.

Questions? Please feel free to comment below.