# WordPress Kick-Off

## Whitepaper By TDH

www.thedigitalhacks.com

WORDPRESS KICK OFF WHITEPAPER

THE DIGITAL HACKS

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# INTRODUCTION

In this whitepaper, we will provide you with guidance on how we operate when we need to create a WordPress website for our clients. We will cover all the basic steps we take when we want to create a new site, be it a company website, blog or personal website. Take note that this is a general and free guide; we will not consider particular configurations coded ad hoc in specific cases.
This document can also be useful for more experienced web designers and marketers who would like to get some tips and best practice tricks.
I sincerely hope you will find it helpful and benefit from it.

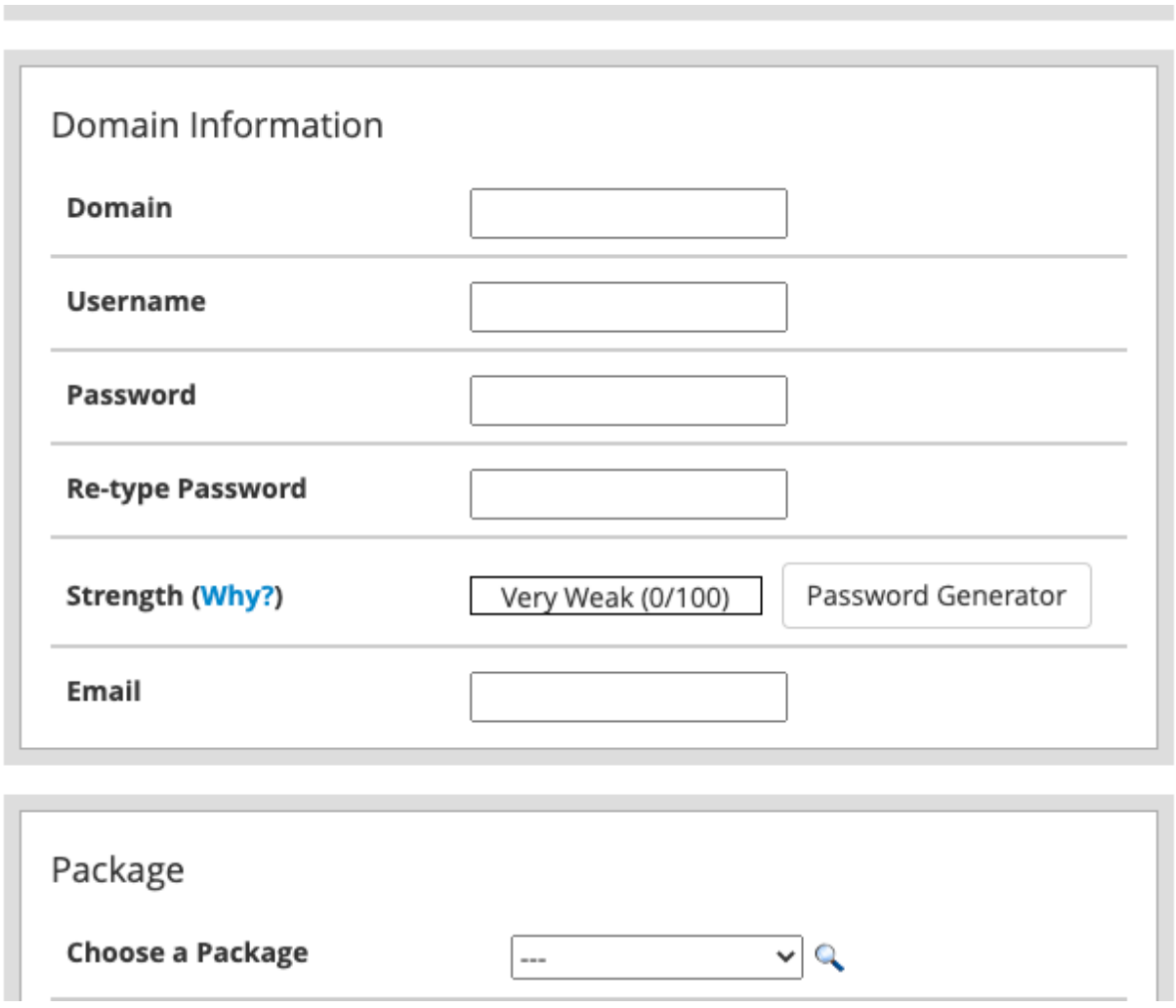
Who are we?
TDH is a Web Design and Marketing Agency that has been operating for several years in the digital landscape.
We have created many websites for clients from various sectors, obtaining awesome results. That's why with this document we would like to share the strategy used in this regard.

Let's start then, enjoy TDH WordPress Whitepaper!

# 1- ADD YOUR DOMAIN TO WHM

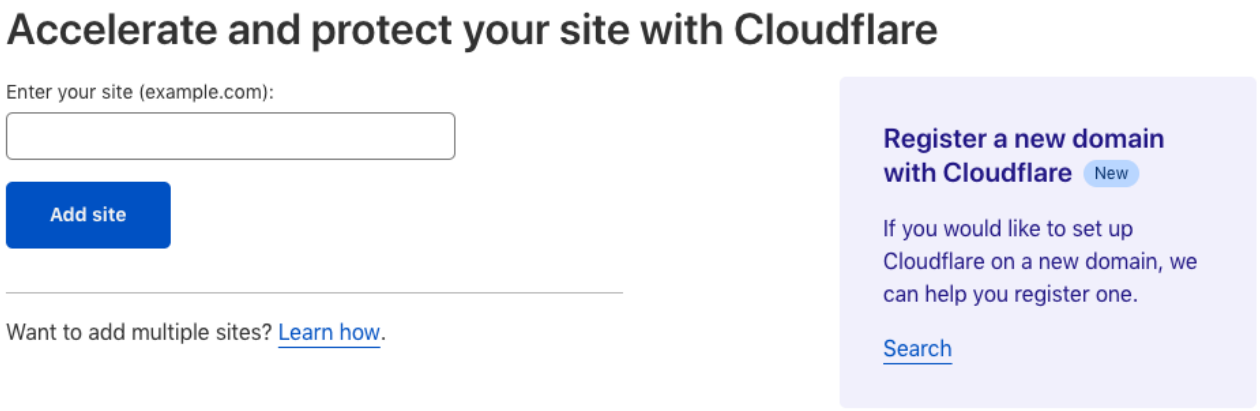
**WHM, CPanel's WebHost Manager is a web application that provides administrative control of your virtual private server (VPS) or dedicated server. You use WHM with cPanel to create individual accounts, add domains, manage hosting features, and perform basic maintenance.**

**In order to add your new domain to WHM login to your WHM and select create a new account. Add your domain in the domain name field.**



# 1.1- ADD DNS IN CLOUDFLARE

**Cloudflare is a secure content distribution network (CDN) that uses proxy servers and an edge-computing architecture to deliver content safely and quickly from the cloud.**
**A- Create a Cloudflare account.**
**B)- Add Domain.**

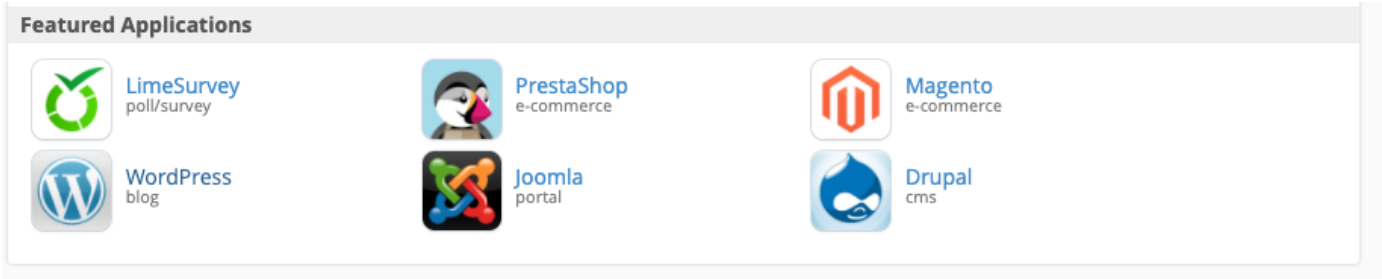



**C) Once the domain is added go back to your Domain Registrar account (Ex. GoDaddy) and in the DNS section select change NS (Name Server). Add cloudflare NS into the Domain Registrar account.**

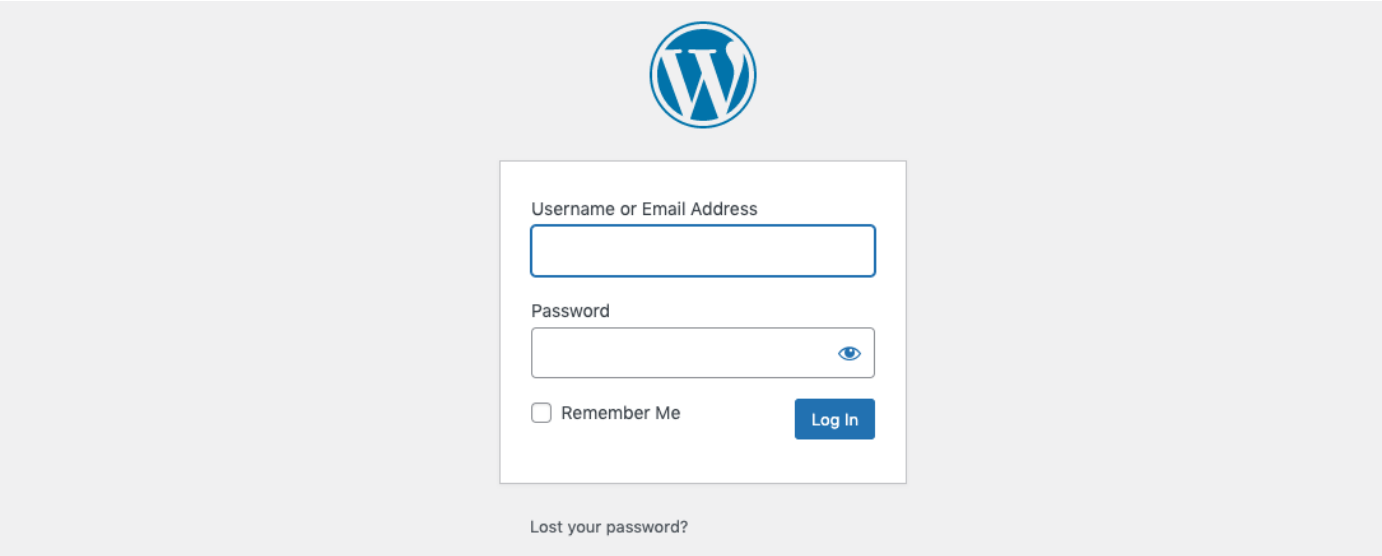
**D) Go back to Cloudflare and change the A record adding the IP address of your server.**

**E) This way your domain is connected to your hosting and protected by cloudflare, where you will be managing all DNS records.**

# 1.2- HOW TO INSTALL WORDPRESS IN CPANEL




**Once the domain is added and hosted on WHM it is time to download and install WordPress. So login to WHM. Click on the cPanel icon next to your domain. Scroll down to the applications section, click on the WordPress icon and install WordPress.**
**PS: You can avoid adding the directory and the auto-updates of themes and plugins.**
**Create your login username and password.**
**And you are settled!**
**Now when you click www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin it will go to the wordpress login page.**
**Login to WP with your username and password.**



# 1.3- INSTALL WORDPRESS MANUALLY

**It is also possible to install WordPress in your cPanel manually.**
**First, go to wordpress.org and download WordPress on your laptop.**
**Then follow these steps:**
**- Create database, db user and grant permissions**
**- Upload WordPress to your domain**
**- Create a MySQL Database and Database User**
**- Assign User to Database and Assign Permissions**
**- Edit wp-config.php file**
**- Run WP installation!**

**You can see the whole step-by-step procedure in one of the video-tutorial contained within → WP Kick-Off**

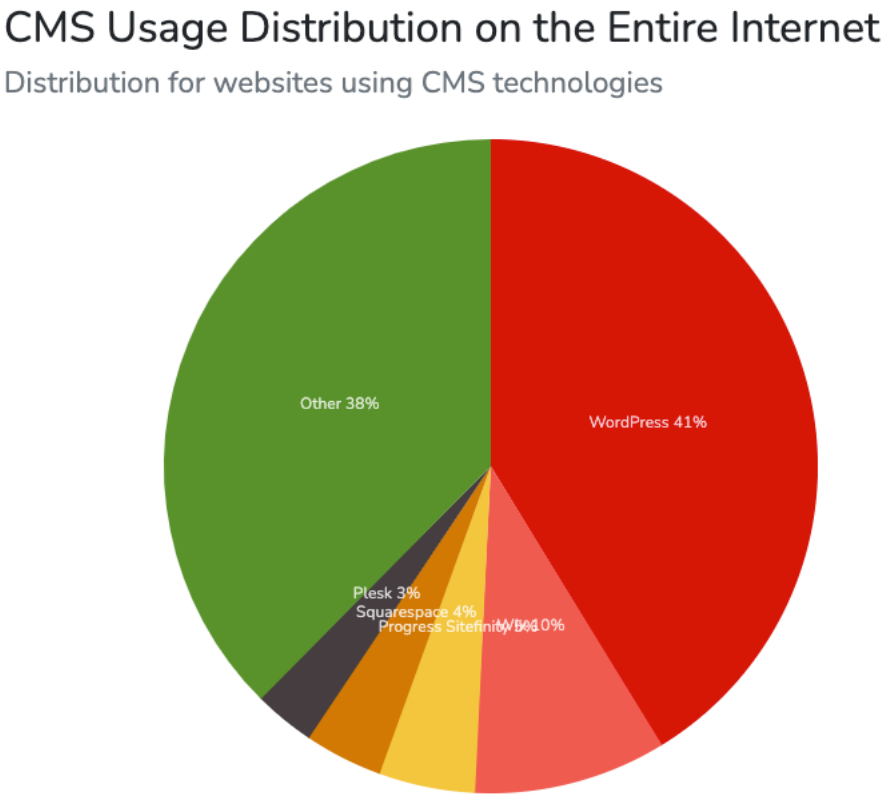
*(You will receive a notification in your inbox as soon as the Tutorial course will be published)*

# 2- WHAT IS WORDPRESS

**WordPress is a CMS (Content Management System) a software used to easily manage content on the web.**

# 2.1- WEB LANDSCAPE

**Within the web you can find sites built on different CMS. Plesk, Wix, Squarespace and more...**
**Between these, WordPress is the most used CMS in the world. Nowadays, nearly 64 million websites are built on WordPress. Of these, 5+ million use the WooCommerce plugin to integrate their store. WordPress is adopted by nearly 41% of websites using CMS technologies.**
**Check the statistics in real time here.**



# 2.2- WHY WORDPRESS

We decided to rely on WordPress, and we believe you should too, for several reasons:

- Being the most used platform on the web means you will easily find people working with it.
- It is an open-source platform, so infinite customizations are available.
- You don't have monthly costs apart from hosting and website management from your agency partner.

# 2.3- ADVANTAGES RESPECT TO OTHER CMS

Compared to other CMS these are the main advantage:

- It is easy to use. With WordPress you can easily manage and share your content.
- It is scalable. You can start from a basic site and add different functions to it.
- It has the biggest community on the web.
- It is really SEO friendly. Search Engines love good WordPress sites.
- It is fully integrable. Through Plugins you can add any type of functionality to the site.
- It is open-source: No additional costs apart from hosting and website management / development from your web agency.

**This mini-course will help you visually get started with your WordPress site. It is designed as a tutorial, to guide you step by step in creating your WordPress website.**

*(You will receive a notification in your inbox as soon as the Tutorial course will be published)*

# 3- STRUCTURE OF THE PLATFORM

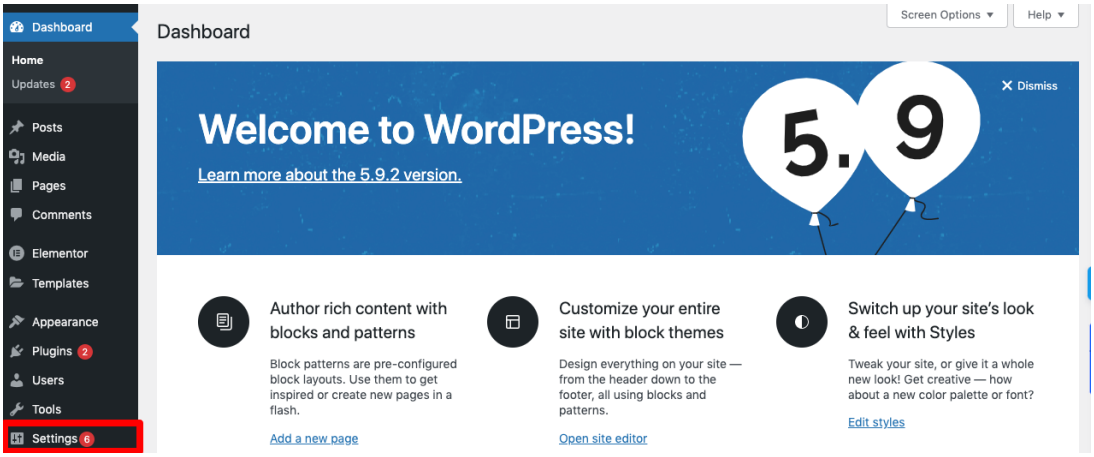
Once logged into WordPress, the dashboard will open. You will see the left sidebar with different options available.

- Post: To manage and create articles, categories and tags for your blog posts.
- Media: Where all the images and videos you upload will be stored.
- Pages: To manage and create new pages for your website.
- Comments: To check users' comments.
- Templates: Where templates will be stored.
- Appearance: Where you can see and edit Theme options.
- Plugins: Where to download new plugins.
- Users: Where to add new users.
- Toos: In this section is contained, in particular The SIte Health sub-section that will give you feedback about your website health. Also here you can find the Import option really useful if you need to import articles and contents from another blog.
- Settings: Where you will configure website configurations.

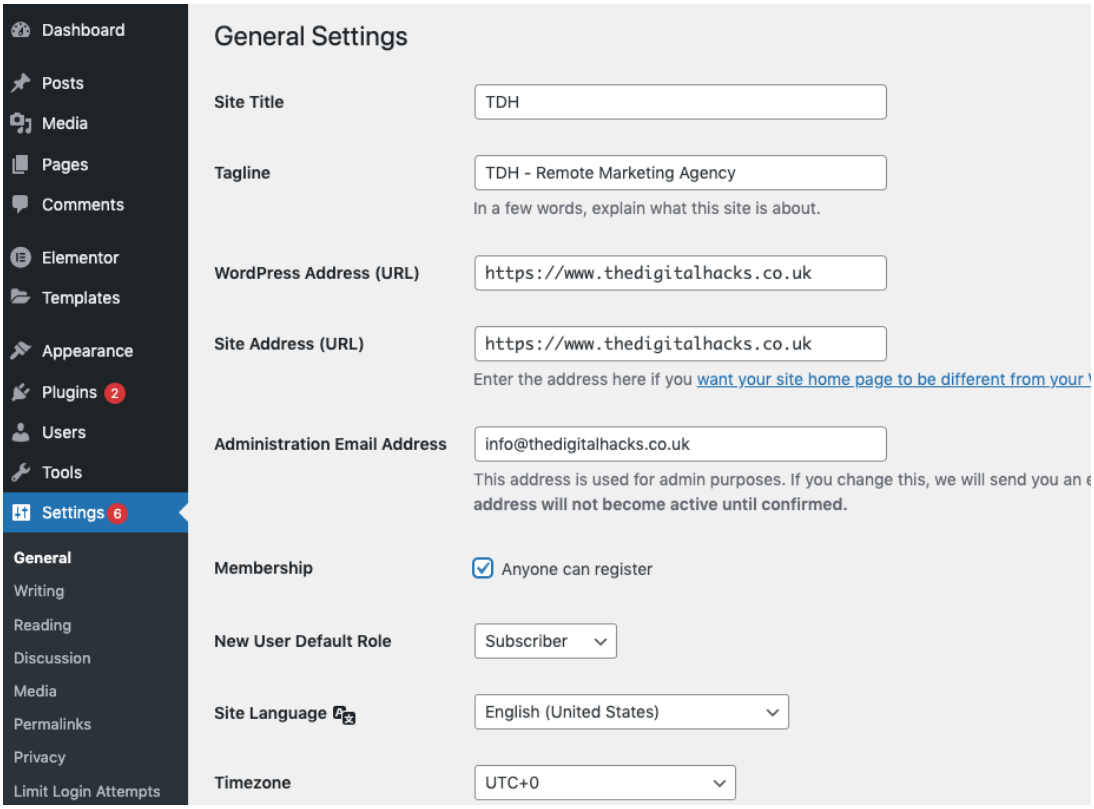
The WordPress dashboard has a drag and drop editor. That way you can organize the elements according to your needs.

Let's start configuring the Settings section.

# 3.1- GENERAL CONFIGURATIONS




**The first thing we recommend is to click on Setting → General. Here you can change the site title, tag, date format and language. Leave as default the website address.**
**If you have or you would like to implement an email marketing system on your site, select the "anyone can register" option.**



# 3.1- GENERAL CONFIGURATIONS

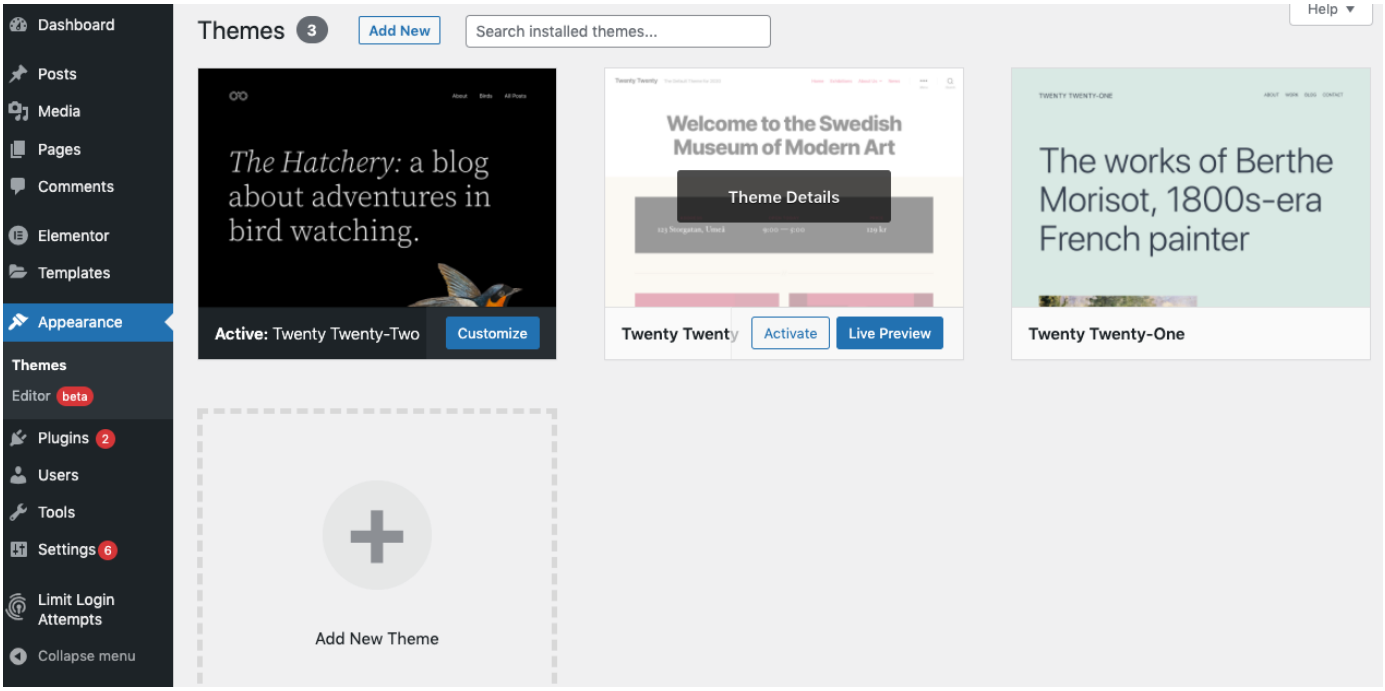
For now, leave as default settings in Writing, Discussion and Media.
Within the Reading section, flag the option “Discourage search engines from indexing this site” we will activate this once we go live.
Also in that regard while you are editing your site it is advisable to put it in Under Maintenance mode.
Jump on the permalinks section and select → Post Name, then save.
Leave the Privacy section as it is for now; we will get back to these configurations later.

# 4- DESIGN

After the general setting configuration, we are ready to enter one of the fundamental parts of our website, the design.

# 4.1- THEME

**By clicking on Appearance → Themes you will see the default active Theme of your site, plus normally other two themes included in this section.**
**By clicking on add new you will enter the WordPress library where you can download and install the theme that suits your needs.**
**WordPress offers several free themes, but it must be taken into consideration that they are often not fully optimized for search engines and in any case the choice also in terms of design is limited.**



# 4.2- FREE THEME VS PREMIUM THEME

If you don't find any themes you like in the WordPress library, I recommend that you buy one on ThemeForest. Here you can find hundreds of WordPress themes for various categories: travel blogs, various e-commerce, local businesses etc..

How to choose a theme?

- Date of creation.
- Last update.
- WP and plugins compatibility.
- If it's mobile responsive.
- Colours and fonts.
- If it provides good support.
- Has a Child theme included.

# 4.2- FREE THEME VS PREMIUM THEME

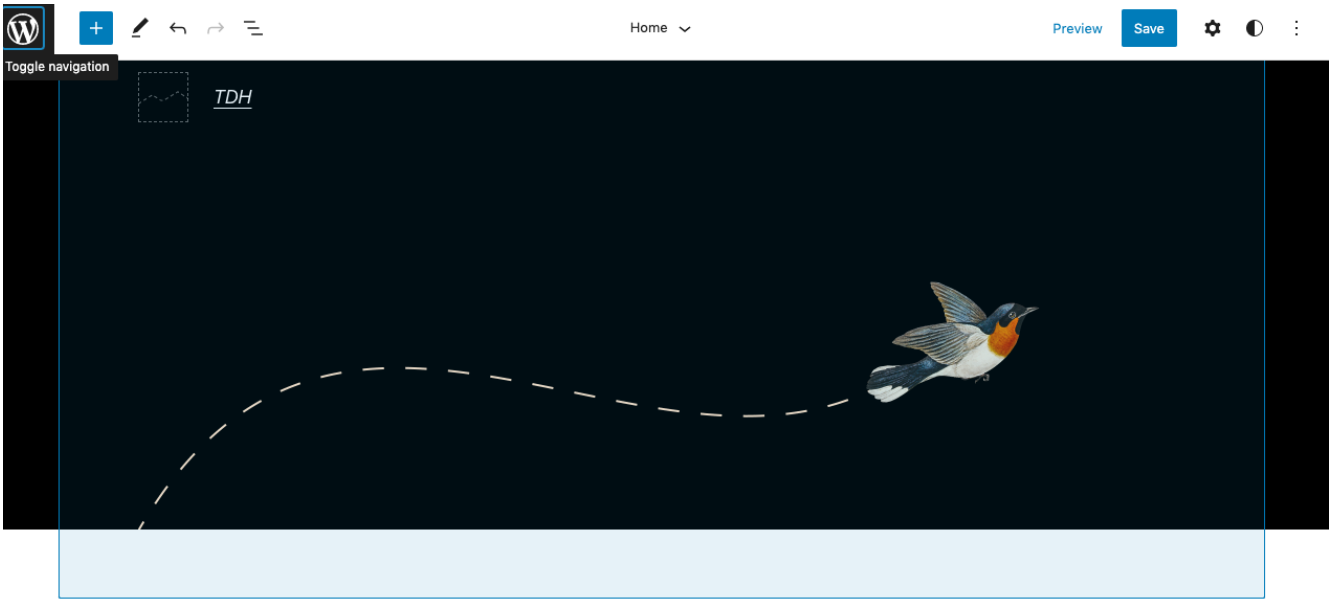
A child theme is a copy of your theme that you upload along with the main theme. It acts as a lifesaver in case there is any damage to the parent theme.

If you buy a theme it should always be accompanied by the child theme; in case you opt for a theme from the WordPress library you can configure its child theme using this plugin.

# 4.4- FIRST CUSTOMIZATIONS

**By clicking on Appearance → Theme → Customise, the WP theme customizer will open.**

**You will see the famous WP "Hello World" statement. So, yes you are in the right place!**




**Here I suggest changing some common settings as follows.**

- **Global: Typography, Colours, Container, Buttons.**
- **Header → Site Identity: Favicon, Logo and colours.**
- **Blog: Blog Post settings.**
- **Sidebar: Sidebar configuration (if you want it).**
- **Footer: Footer Bar and Copyright section.**
- **Menu: Change Menu structure. (Once you have created your page you can come back here to configure this).**
- **Widgets: To add and edit widget areas.**
- **CSS Options: To add any particular HTML code.**

# 4.3- ELEMENTOR BUILDER

**During our experience on WordPress, we have worked with several Page Builders and found Elementor to be the best solution. It should be emphasised that as an Agency we don't always use a Page Builder, just as we don't always use a CMS on our clients' projects. In fact, on particular projects for the customer's request, there is a need to create a custom site programmed for the requested needs.**

**Page Builder vs Code:**
**Our Developer will tell you that by customising a website via code you will obtain a better result in terms of website performance. Nonetheless coding from scratch it's much more time consuming and therefore also more expensive. A good Page Builder is good in most projects cases, can save time and reduce the number of Plugins needed.**

**Elementor is compatible with most themes and plugins and has a free version that allows you to do 80% of the things.**

**Sign Up to Elementor → Here**

# 4.4- ELEMENTOR VS ELEMENTOR PRO

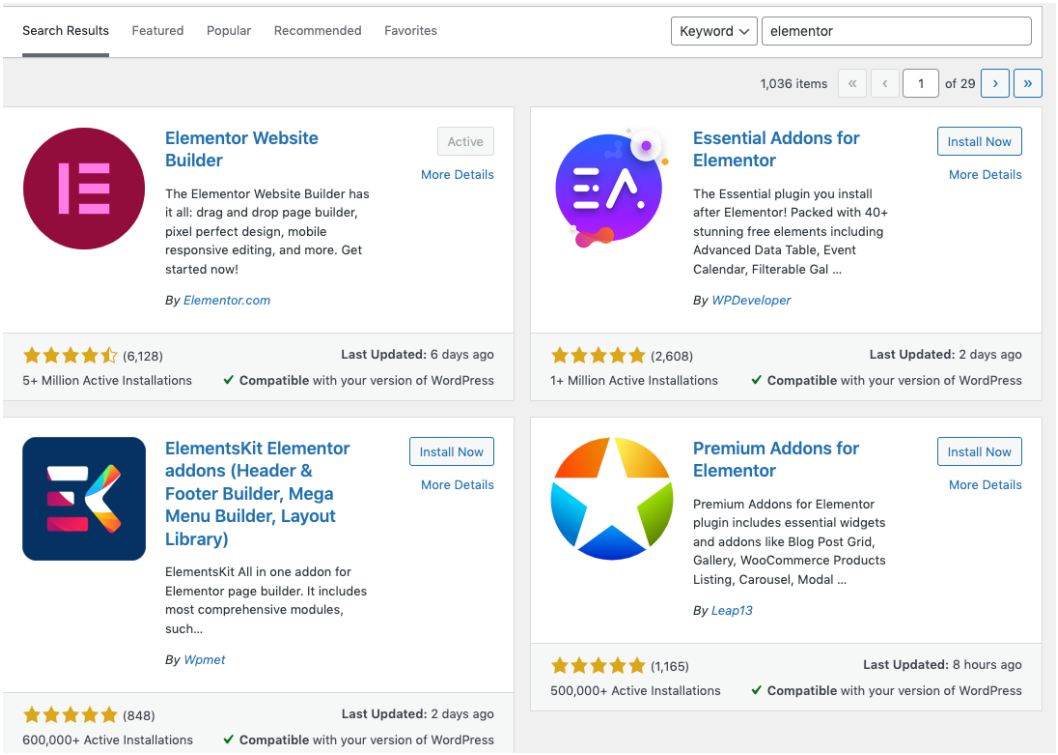
Elementor's Free version offers many design possibilities. But some functions are restricted to Pro version only. Elementor Pro, empowers you with all the professional tools that can speed up your workflow, and allow you to get more conversions and sales.

# 4.4- ELEMENTOR VS ELEMENTOR PRO

Design your first page with the Elementor drag and drop builder can be quite exciting. Here is where you feel your website is really coming to life. Through the Elementor builder you have three options:

- Import Pages: Free or Pro (the builder will directly import a full page that you can then edit).
- Import Bloks: Free or Pro (the builder will directly import a specific block section of the site that you can then edit).
- Building from scratch: Create sections and drag and drop elements into it.

If you are on a free version of Elementor it is possible that you will need to build from scratch because many blocks and pages will not be available.



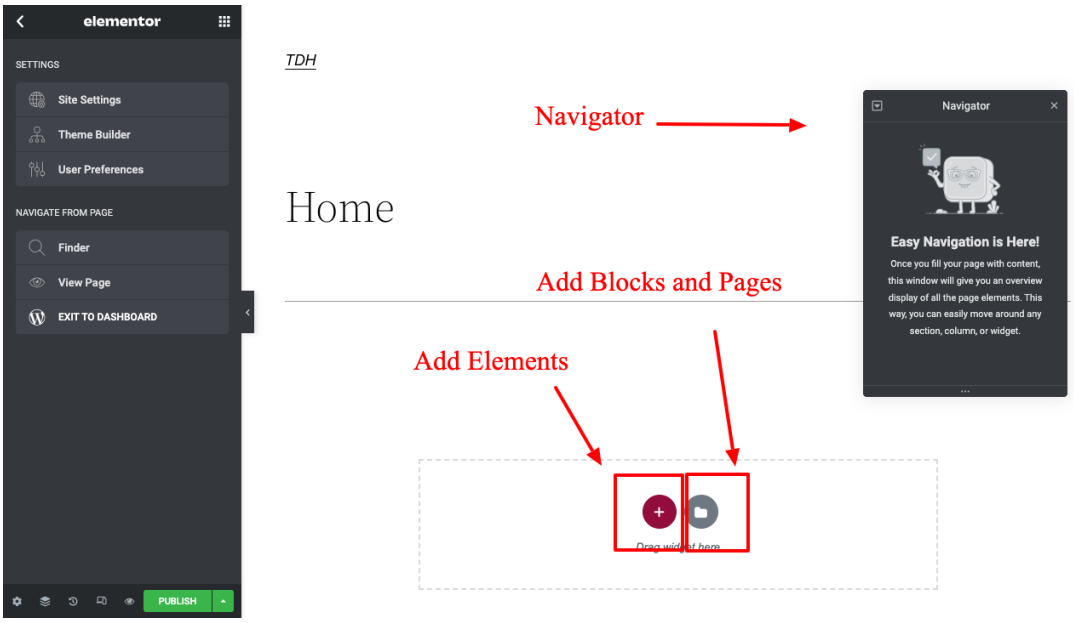

**If you would like to import pages but can't find any with elementor, I suggest you download the Templately Plugin (compatible with Elementor) where you will find more free templates.**

**Furthermore, always talking about the free version of Elementor you will find many limitations even when selecting specific elements to add in drag and drop. To remedy this problem, I recommend that you download the plugin Essential Addons for Elementor**

**In a free version these plugins will help you tremendously in expanding the design possibilities of your website.**

**You are now ready to change the design of your front page.**
**Let's start with the Home Page.**
**Go to Pages → Create One**
**Put the page name and slag (which will be the same)**
**Select the page and click on → Edit with elementor**

## EHere is how it will look like:




**You can now indulge yourself in the thousands of design possibilities offered.**
**If you want more tips on this, we explored this topic step by step in the WordPress Kick Off tutorial course; get in now!**

# 5- CREATE YOUR SHOP

**For projects with a small budget and a limited number of products, WordPress + WooCommerce is an optimal solution to build your web shop.**

# 5.1- WOOCOMMERCE CONFIGURATION

**WooCommerce is a free plugin that allows you to add a shop section to your site. Remember that for design customizations on WooCommerce you will need the Pro version of the Elementor plugin. Also, this topic is quite vast and requires more detailed attention, therefore we dedicate a specific tutorial to it in the WP Kick-Off mini-course.**
**Moreover, creating a webshop requires greater skills and if you do not have them we recommend that you rely on a web agency.**

Would you like to build a web shop?
Book a first free consultation → ***Here***!

# 6- SEO & BACKEND

**This is a fundamental subject that is too often overlooked. SEO (Search Engine Optimization) meaning optimising your website for Search Engine like google and others it is vital to increase traffic and website notoriety.**
**Best SEO practices include:**

- **Update of theme & plugins**
- **Fixing Bugs and broken links**
- **Provide a sensational website user experience**
- **User Friendly Design**
- **Optimising Images**
- **SEO Content**
- **Optimising Page Speed**
- **Make use of website sitemap**

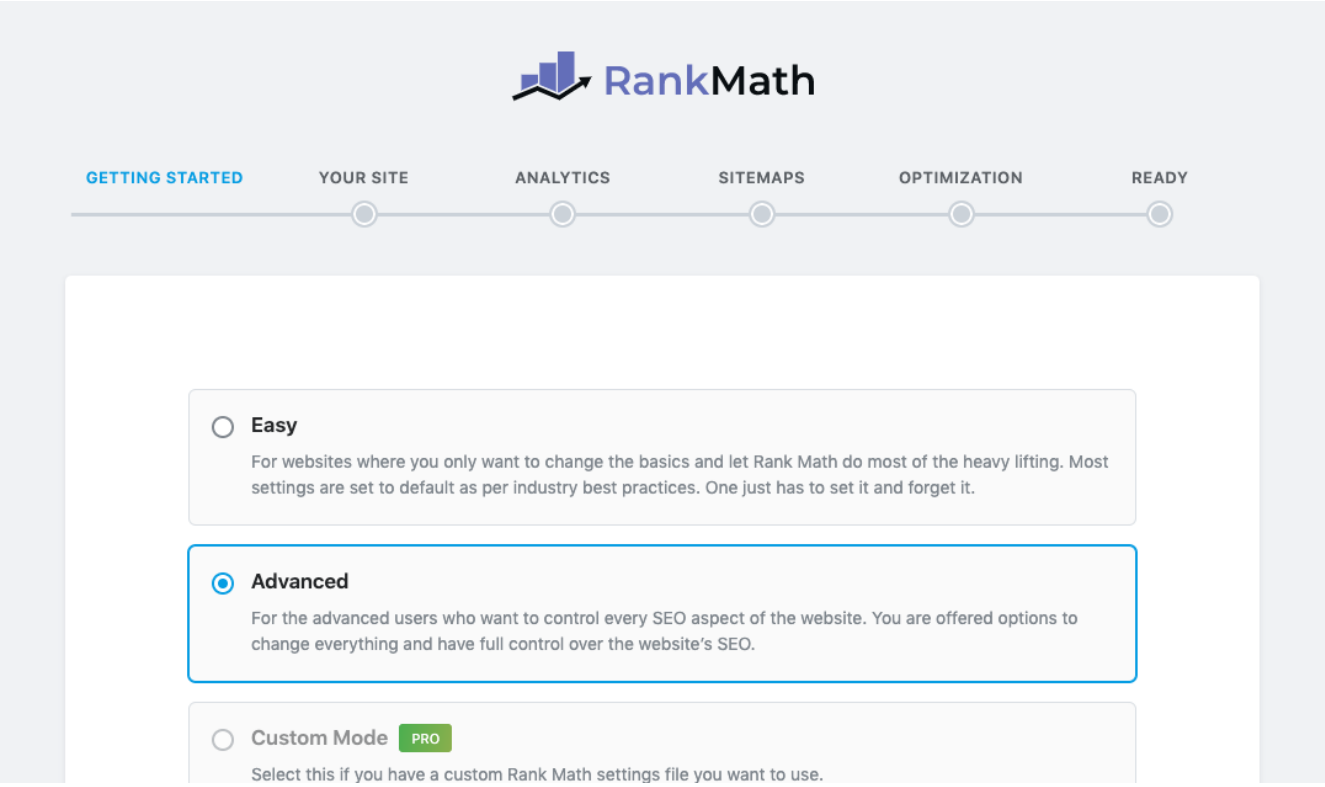
# 6.1- SEO CONFIGURATION

**TIn order to start with the optimization of your site I suggest you to download the Rank Math SEO Plugin**

**These are some of the features within Rank Math**
**→ Use Artificial Intelligence to write SEO optimized content**
**→ Dynamic Suggestions**
**→ Intelligent Recommendations**
**→ Dynamic Keywords**
**→ Intelligent Questions (With Schema Markup)**
**→ Smart Link Suggestions**
**→ Extra Keyword Info**
**→ Related Keywords**
**→ Full Control via Role Manager**

**Rank Math, requires a gmail login to connect Google Search Console, Google Analytics and it will guide you in a step by step configuration once installed the plugin.**

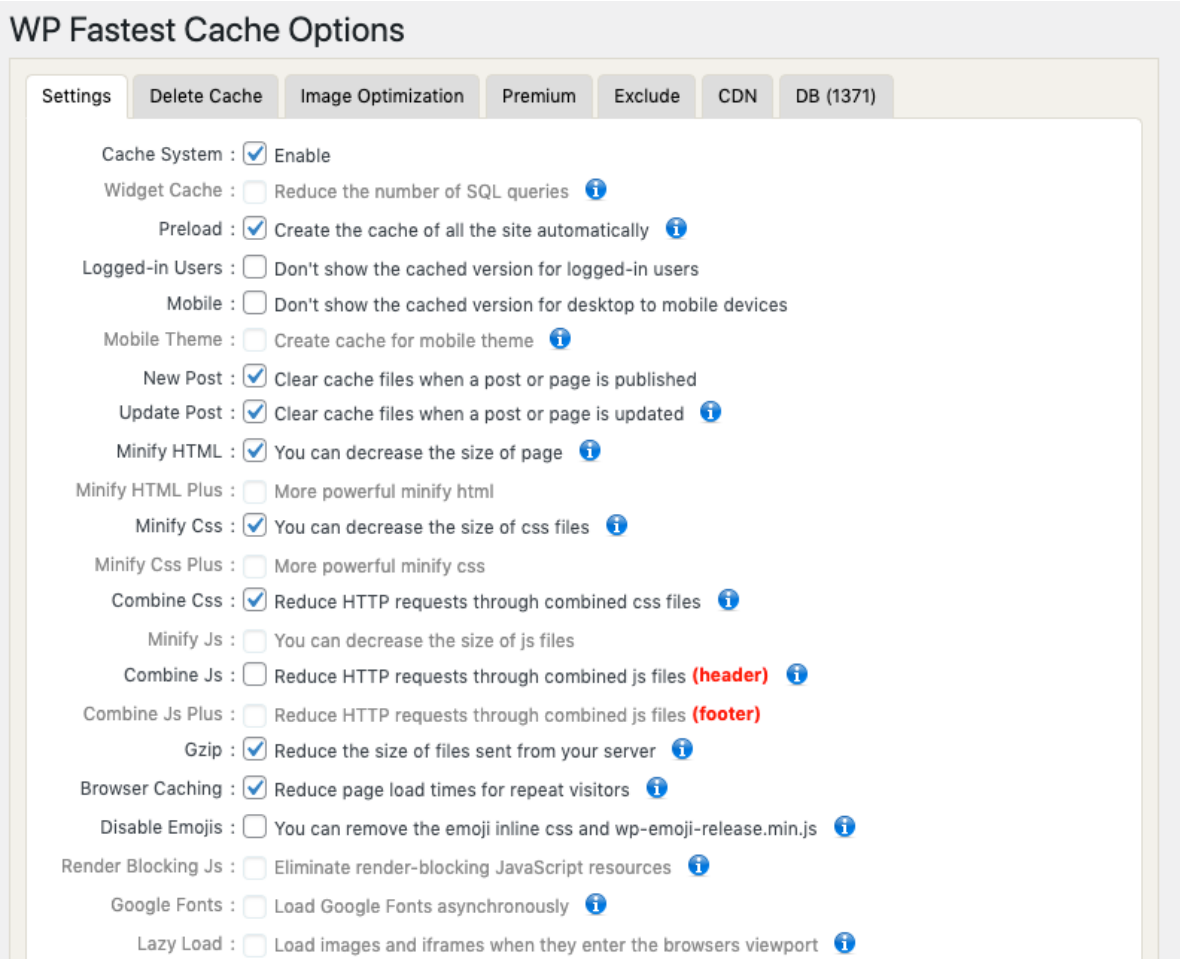
# 6- SEO & BACKEND




**Once you close the Setup Wizard you can drive to the dashboard, see analytics and change the general SEO setting for your website.**

**Then now all the time you create new pages and articles for your blog a Rank Math section will appear to help you optimise that page / content with keywords and tags.**

# 6.2- CLEAN CACHE




**Like stated in WP Fastest Cache page when a page is rendered, php and mysql are used. Therefore, the system needs RAM and CPU.**
**If many visitors come to a site, the system uses lots of RAM and CPU so the page is rendered so slowly. In this case, you need a cache system not to render pages again and again. Cache system generates a static html file and saves. Other users reach the static html page.**

**We recommend downloading the WP Fastest Cache Plugin, following their setup process to clear your website cache and thereby speed it up.**

# 6.3- ASSET CLEAN UP

Another plugin I would like to recommend is Asset Clean Up.
As explained by the developers there are often times when you are using a theme and a number of plugins which are enabled and run on the same page. However, you don't need to use all of them and to improve the speed of your website and make the HTML source code cleaner (convenient for debugging purposes), it's better to prevent those styles and scripts from loading.

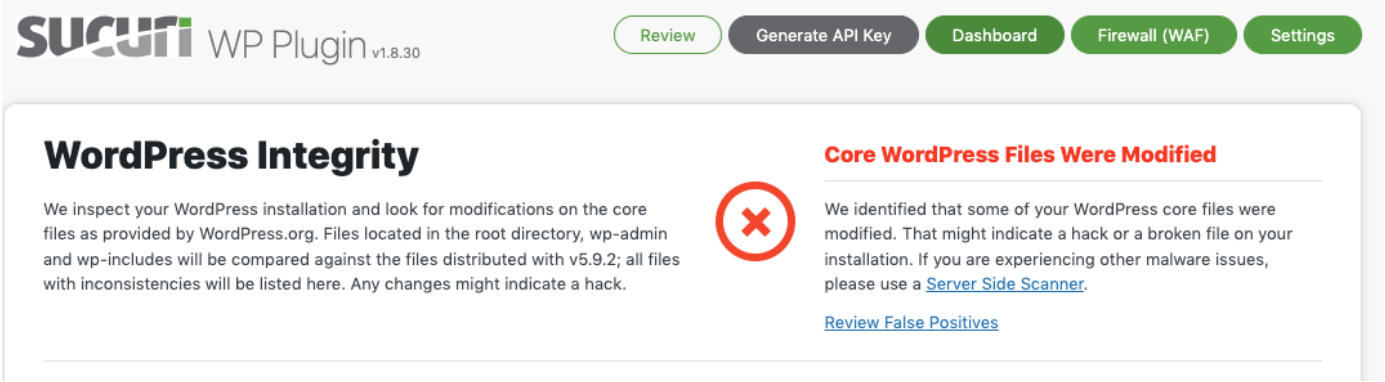
# 6.4- UPGRADES AND BACKUPS

One of the most important things when it comes to website optimization is security. And in order to have a secure website, you often need to update its theme and plugins. The problem is that sometimes plugins or theme updates can create bugs in the design and visual part of the site. That's why before any update you should operate a website backup. Regarding website backups, I would suggest using the UpdraftPlus Plugin. You can connect it to your Google Drive to directly store a backup zip file there.

# 6.5- SECURITY

**As we said, safety first of all. So to monitor the security of our webiste I recommend relying on one of the best plugins in this regard, Sucuri.**
**These are the bunch of features offered for free by the Plugin:**

- **Security Activity Auditing**
- **File Integrity Monitoring**
- **Remote Malware Scanning**
- **Blocklist Monitoring**
- **Effective Security Hardening**
- **Post-Hack Security Actions**
- **Security Notifications**
- **Website Firewall (premium)**

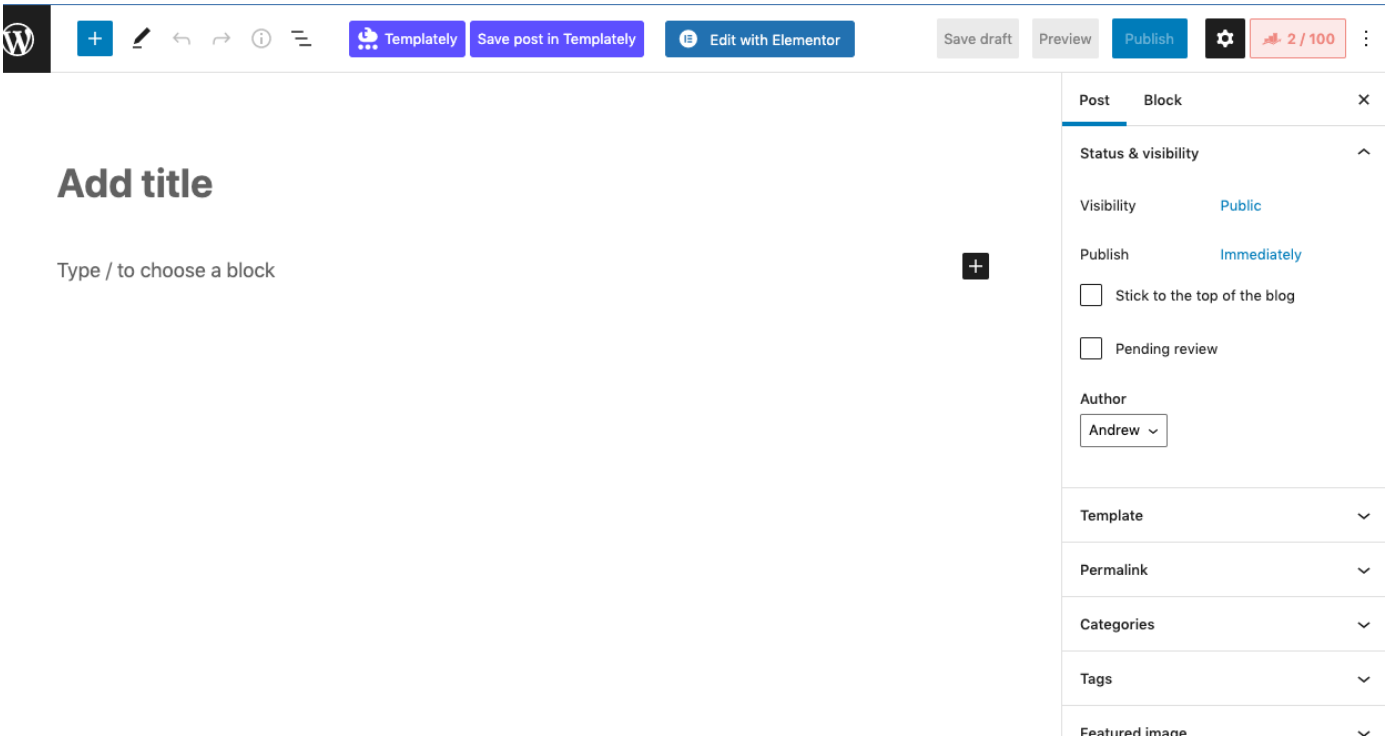


# 7- CONTENT MANAGEMENT

**Now it comes the time to write your first articles.**
**Heading to the Posts section you will see, Add New Post, Categories and Tags.**
**When editing a post you can configure:**

- **status: draft or pending review.**
- **visibility: public, password protected or private.**
- **publishing actions: you can schedule the publication of your article or even backdate it.**

**When you are creating a new article you can add images, videos and various graphics. Also remember to add the category and tags following the best SEO procedure.**



# 8- ADDITIONAL PLUGINS, FINAL STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Check out here a full list of plugins for any relative action objective.**

- **Design: Elementor, Essential Addons for Elementor, Templately.**
- **Shop: WooCommerce**
- **Checkout: Stripe, PayPal**
- **SEO: Rank Math**
- **Security: Sucuri, iTheme Security, Wordfence**
- **Backups: UpdraftPlus**
- **Clean Cache: WP Fastest Cache**
- **Website Page Speed: Asset Clean Up**
- **Child Theme: Child Theme Configurator**
- **SSL: Really Simple SSL**
- **Forms: Fluent Forms, SMTP Fluent Forms**
- **Email Marketing: Sendinblue**
- **Live Chats: ManyChat, Chaty**
- **Analytics: Monster Insight**
- **Cookies Policy: Cookie Notice**

**The recommendation is to use only plugins that are really needed. Remember that many un update plugins can slow down your site and increase vulnerability.**

# 8.1- PRIVACY & COOKIES

We suggest using this plugin to configure cookies and GDPR policy.

# 8.2- GO LIVE

Now that you have covered all the above aspects of your website is time to go live.

- Add the privacy page.
- Take off maintenance mode.
- Ask Search Engine to index the site.

# 9- CONCLUSIONS

We have come to the end of this WP Kick-Off whitepaper.
This was just a basic overview to help you get started managing your WP site.
In the dedicated video course, you will find an in-depth analysis of these passages on a visual level.
The tutorials present in WP Kick-Off will allow you to see step by step all the general mechanisms explained in this whitepaper.
These tools are useful to our customers who want to acquire knowledge for the management of their site, to freelancers or workers in the sector to collect further suggestions on the subject.

I hope this document will be useful to you.
If you would like to start with the realisation of your online project, and you feel you do not have the necessary skills, I recommend that you still rely on an agency like TDH to guide you in your digital adventure.

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