



Using WordPress as Your Website

By Ron King

WordPress is usually regarded as a blogging platform but it also makes an excellent website. It's being used increasingly by marketers to sell products. Advertisements and links on WordPress can lead to squeeze or sales pages.

A great advantage of using Wordpress as a website is that it has all the facilities you need made automatically as it's installed. With practice you can see when a website is based on WordPress, but it's not always immediately obvious as so many variations can be introduced.

To install Wordpress you first need a domain name and a host. If you don't already have one I recommend "Hostgator" [Click on this link to go there now](#) . Hostgator has three web hosting schemes. The one I use is 'Baby'; it gives excellent value for money and will fulfill all your needs unless you're a multi-level international company or something equally impressive. It has everything you need to install Wordpress. At the time of writing it costs \$7.95 a month, which is more than reasonable for the facilities it offers; check them out.

If this is to be your first website I recommend also buying your domain name from Hostgator as then they'll be very helpful in the case of problems.

Wordpress is usually installed as part of an existing website and would be installed in a directory (folder) which can be called up from your website's home page.

But this report assumes that you are starting a *new* domain and want to use Wordpress as your website. So create a folder on your hard drive with the name of your domain. For example if your domain is 'mysite.com' create a folder 'mysite', ready to take your WordPress files.

With this in mind, there are two main ways of installing Wordpress. Both ways have their advantages and disadvantages which I shall discuss later. Then you can choose which is best for you.

1) Installing WordPress the Conventional way

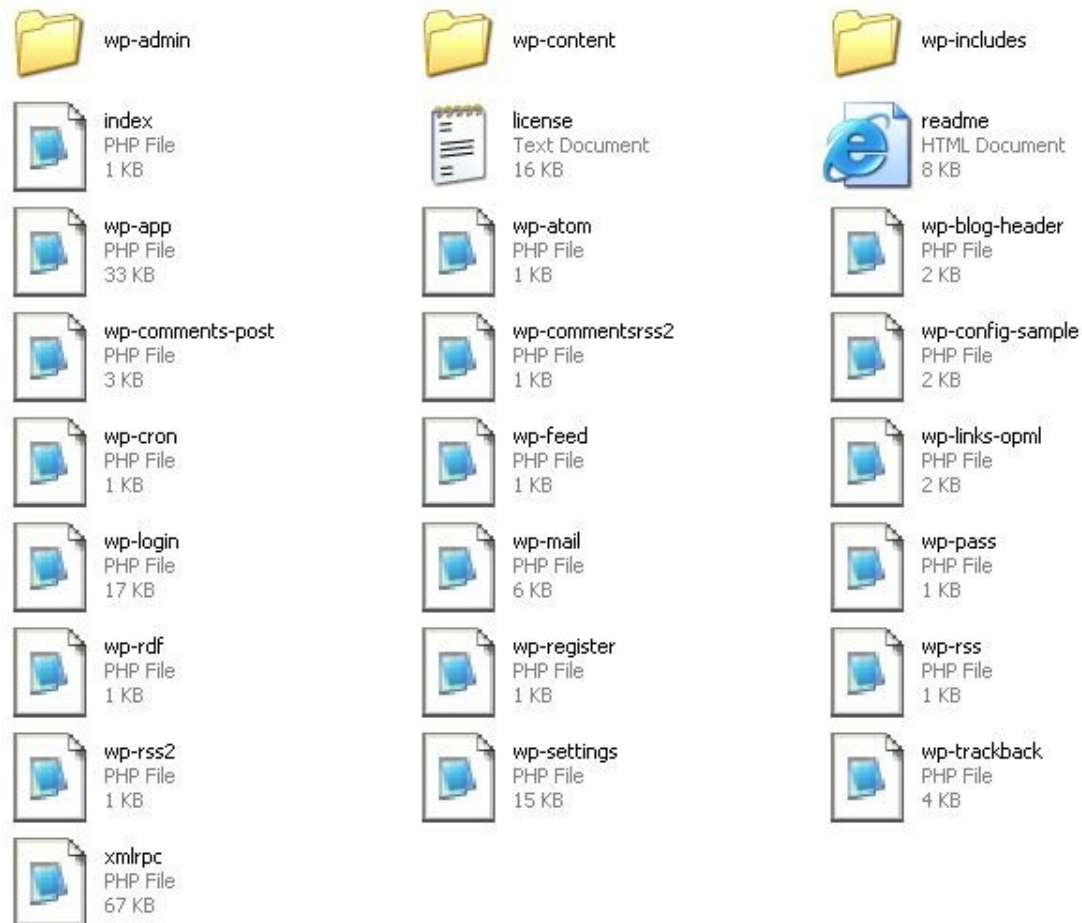
This way is the customary way recommended by WordPress and known as the '5-minute install'

The first thing to do is to download Wordpress and [you can do that here from the Wordpress website](#)

Unzip the download file and open the folder that's revealed. Now open the 'readme.html' file in your browser and read the installation instructions. All you need is the "Famous 5-minute install" I reproduce it below with my comments in red.

1. Unzip the package in an empty directory (folder)
Download the WordPress package (wordpress-2.5.1.zip or similar) to Desktop and unzip it. It then appears as a folder named wordpress-2.5.1.

Copy this folder into the domain folder 'mysite' that you created for it. Open the 'wordpress-2.5.1' and you will find 3 folders and a number of files as seen below.



2. Open up wp-config-sample.php with a text editor like Wordpad or similar and fill in your database connection details.

I prefer Notepad! The picture below shows a screenshot of wp-config-sample.php, with the changes to be made underlined in red.

You need to make a MySQL database on your server for WordPress. Most servers offer this facility. Hostgator offers unlimited MySQL databases. The data base requires an identifying name, a username and password and this is what is referred to above. Therefore make your database before uploading files.

You're also asked to provide a SECRET KEY. It's easiest to visit the suggested site to get it.

You can ignore the rest of wp-config-sample.php unless you're an advanced user. But make sure that the information you enter is 100% correct. Most script installations that fail, fail because of errors in config files.

3. Save the file as wp-config.php

4. Upload everything

To use WordPress as your website you need to upload the 3 folders and the files individually. I.E. discard the 'wordpress-2.5.1' folder; just upload the contents.

5. Open /wp-admin/install.php in your browser. This should set up the tables needed for your blog. If there is an error, double-check your wp-config.php file and try

again. If it fails again, please go to the support forums with as much data as you can gather.

Use this as a last resort; check and recheck your config file. The error's probably there. E.g. Database names and usernames you supply are often modified by the host. Check it!

6. Note the password given to you

7. The install script should then send you to the [login page](#). Sign in with the username admin and the password generated during the installation. You can then click on 'Profile' to change the password.


When you reach this point a screen appears to inform you that the installation has been successful and given the opportunity to log in with the password allocated. You will also receive an email confirming the installation and login details.

This should only take 5 minutes – if you've done it before. Don't hurry; allow yourself plenty of time and check every step. With care you'll get it right first time.

[2\) Installing WordPress with Fantastico](#)

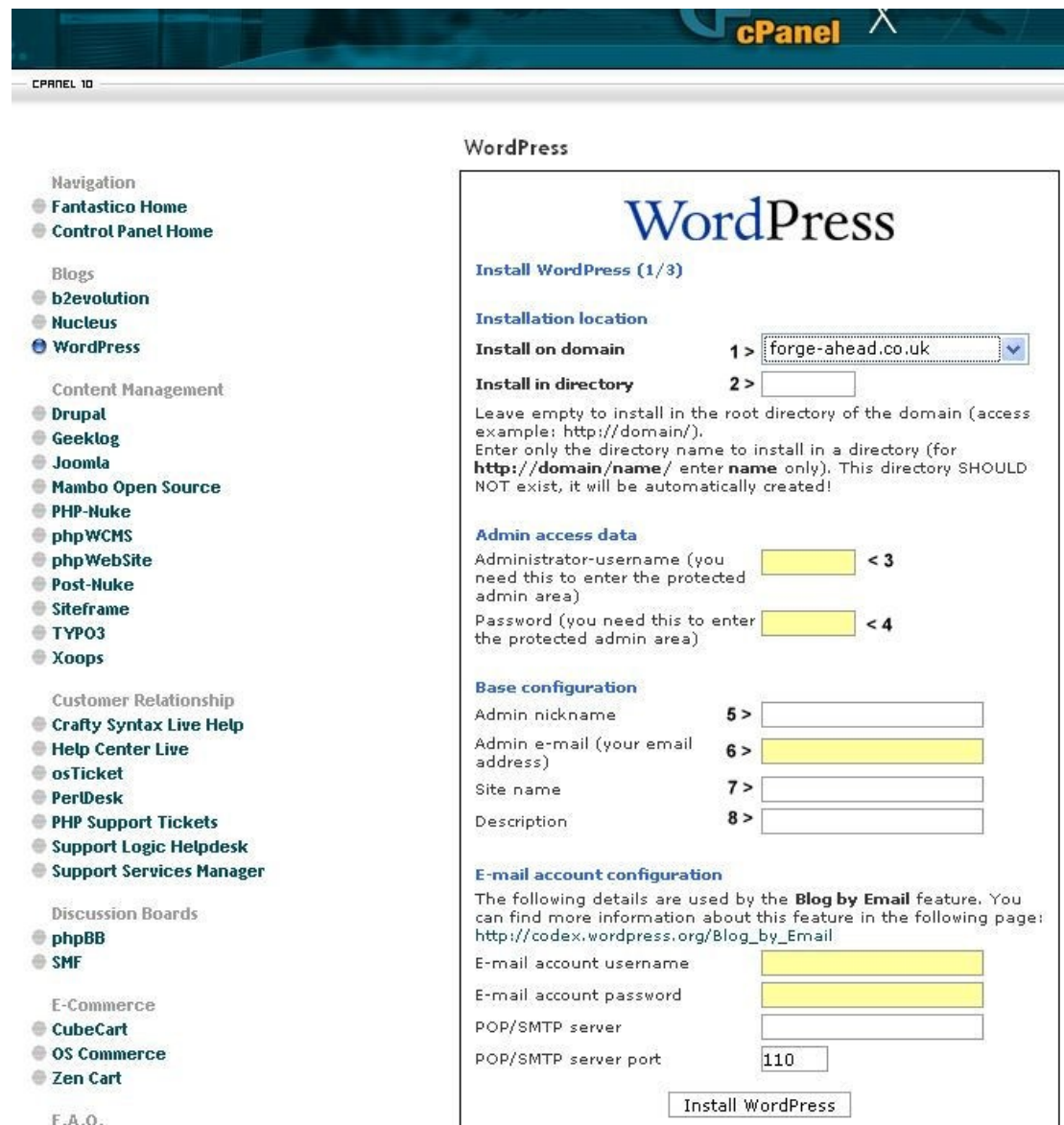
If you've taken my advice and have chosen Hostgator as your hosting company you're on easy street. Hostgator uses a system called [cPanel](#) that make many complicated issues easy. To be fair so do other hosting companies.

If your hosting company uses cPanel, to log in you simply add '/cpanel' e.g 'mysite/cpanel'

Near the bottom you'll find a logo like this  it's Fantastico deluxe. Fantastico is a utility that installs

scripts on your website really easily. When you click on the logo a page opens. On the left-hand side are listed the many scripts that Fantastico can install.

The screenshot below shows Fantastico opened, WordPress and 'New Installation' selected.



The screenshot shows the Fantastico control panel interface for installing WordPress. The page is titled "WordPress" and "Install WordPress (1/3)". On the left, there is a navigation menu with categories like Navigation, Blogs, Content Management, Customer Relationship, Discussion Boards, E-Commerce, and F.A.Q. The main content area is a form for configuring the installation. The "Installation location" section includes a dropdown for "Install on domain" (set to "forge-ahead.co.uk") and a text field for "Install in directory". The "Admin access data" section has fields for "Administrator-username" (labeled 3) and "Password" (labeled 4). The "Base configuration" section has fields for "Admin nickname" (labeled 5), "Admin e-mail" (labeled 6), "Site name" (labeled 7), and "Description" (labeled 8). The "E-mail account configuration" section has fields for "E-mail account username", "E-mail account password", "POP/SMTP server", and "POP/SMTP server port" (set to 110). An "Install WordPress" button is at the bottom right.

When the page above opens there may be some information already entered, but you should check it to make sure it's what you want. I've deleted some personal data. I have numbered some of the fields; here is the data to be entered.

- 1> Your domain name. If you have several domains, select the appropriate one from the drop-down menu.
- 2> If you want to make WordPress open as your home page leave this blank. Otherwise enter a suitable folder name (not an existing one) such as 'mylog'. Fantastico will create the folder and install Wordpress in it. With Fantastico you don't download anything. Fantastico does it all! What a timesaver.
- 3> Enter a user-name and make a note of it. If you can't think of anything else just enter 'admin'.
- 4> Enter a password and make a note of it.
- 5> Make up a nickname
- 6> Put in a valid email address
- 7> This is the wording that will appear in your header, so consider it carefully. It could be just your domain name or something like 'Thoughts from Mysite'
- 8> Brief description of the domain.

The remaining fields may be already filled in. If not they can be ignored.

When you've completed the form I recommend that you print it for future reference.

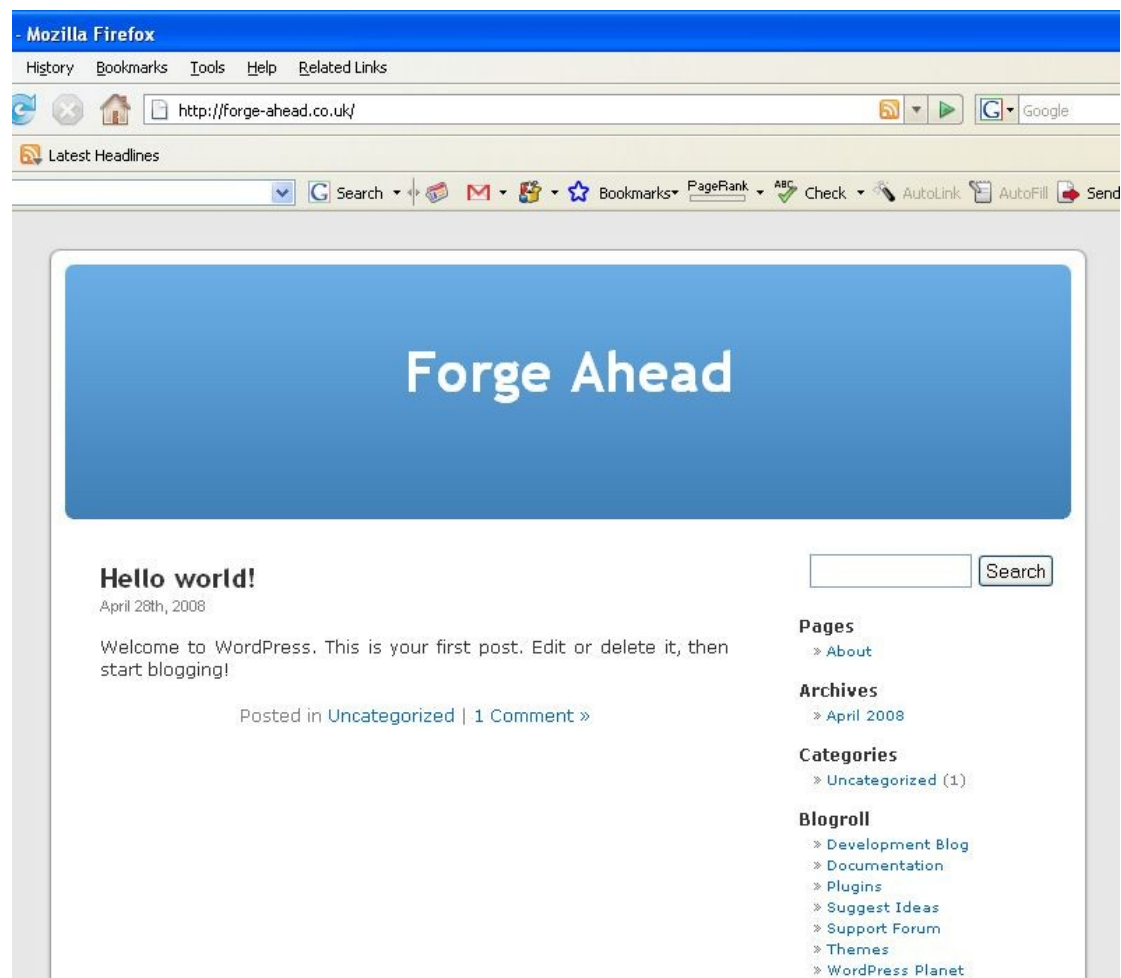
At the top of the page illustrated above you'll see it's the first of three. Click on 'Install WordPress' to proceed to the second step. In the interim, Fantastico will have created a database automatically. This cuts out another possible cause of error and complication; plus a huge saving in time, particularly if you already have several other databases.

Page 2 will tell you if you've left any information out or if there's other problems. If so go back and remedy them then return to page 2. This will give details of of the database installed.

If all is well carry on to page three where you are given more information. Again, I suggest that you print out this page for reference. You can email yourself details of the installation if you wish.

If you go back to Fantastico and click on WordPress you'll see that the installation is noted. Click on 'Visit site' to see how it looks.

Below is a WordPress installation I've just made, using Fantastico on one of my new websites <http://www.forge-ahead.co.uk/>



As you will see, it's all ready to go but it isn't inspiring as a website. Maybe OK as a blog but not as a website.

But this can be changed. WordPress is based on themes and themes are cleverly designed to be interchangeable and can be swapped at any time.

A number of themes are provided free, designed as a hobby by some very clever and dedicated people. Other themes are sold commercially and can cost very little or a great deal, depending on a number of factors. Exclusive or custom designs are expensive.

Alternative themes are placed in a subfolder with a suitable name. The subfolder is placed inside the “themes” folder (which is inside the “wp-content” folder of the blog folder). Themes can be changed by logging in to “Site admin” and selecting “Presentation”

“Comparison between the customary and Fantastico methods of installing WordPress”

It may seem that using Fantastico to install WordPress wins all hands down, but there are some snags.

- The version of WordPress that Fantastico installs may not be the very latest. Downloading Wordpress from site ensures you get the latest version. This may not matter to you as some upgrades are minimal.
- Installing WordPress the conventional way allows you access to all the PHP files. To install WordPress as intended you have to enter your details into wp-config.php. If you're a php geek you can modify other files to your needs. Not possible (as far as I know) with Fantastico installs. Updating to a new version of Wordpress isn't difficult, whereas it may not be possible using Fantastico.

- Installing Wordpress the conventional way makes it easy to add and upload new themes; almost a must unless you're happy with one of the two standard themes supplied. Fantastico stores the files so that they can only be accessed from within cPanel, from 'File Manager'. To install a new theme into the 'theme' folder involved creating a new folder in 'themes' then inserting files one by one into the new folder. Not as bad as it seems once you've found your way around File Manager.
- Using Fantastico to install a basic WordPress saves a lot of time in that WordPress files don't have to be downloaded and a MySQL database is made automatically. The latter is of interest to me because, although it's straightforward enough it can be confusing if you have a number of databases.

So there they are; two methods to install. You choose!
If you have any comments please [contact me here](#).

Best wishes - Ron King

Blog Theme Generator



“Blog Theme Generator” is a program with which you can easily produce your own personal custom WordPress themes.

[Find out more here](#)