

Get Your Photography on the Web

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The only reason you need this book is if you're looking for a quick, inexpensive and easy way for people to see your photos on the Internet. If you prefer time-consuming, difficult and costly you need to keep looking. This book was a complete revelation to me and inspired me to revamp our long-neglected (cob)web site kamper.com. Instead of working in HTML and Dreamweaver, I simply downloaded and installed a free program – WordPress. Following the guidelines in the book, I literally had my new site up and running in minutes.

Completely finished? No! No website is ever “finished,” they're always (read: should be) in transition. But was it ready for viewing? Yes. *Get Your Photography on the Web* targets photographers who want to showcase their work. While WordPress is primarily a blogging software, as the author, Raphael (RC) Concepción shows you, it can be so much more.

With this book, an Internet connection and basic computer skills you can literally create a showcase website in a matter of hours for next to no cost – totally free, if you don't want a domain name and in less than an hour if you have all your ducks in a row ahead of time. And RC tells you exactly what those ducks are and how to line them up.

He quickly discusses that all-important “Getting a Domain Name,” and then moves into hosting. He recommends GoDaddy.com and walks you through the procedure. As with most Kelby Training books, this is done very clearly with screen-shots on the outside margins and brief descriptive text to the inside.

Since our website has been active since 1992, hosted locally through dakotacom.net (with whom we're incredibly pleased), I skipped this chapter. However, from reading I did outside this book I discovered a WordPress site must be hosted on servers supporting PHP and MySQL. So if you have your own domain and are thinking about revamping it using WordPress, check that first.

What good is a website without content? The next chapters are “Getting Your Images Ready” which encompasses a lot more than retouching. Color Space, Sharpening, Size, Watermarks, Copyright – all in 27 pages.

Then we really start to rock, setting up your first pages and adding content. More than images, even slide shows, right off the bat! Then RC moves us into how to get our site looking the way we want it to. After all, it's important that it be the proper frame for our work. To that end, he introduces us to Themes and Plugins.

It turns out WordPress is a bit of a blank slate, ready for anyone to write over it. “Themes” are overlays, if you will, for the basic WordPress installation. By changing the Theme the entire look of a site can change just by clicking “Activate.”

If a global rework isn’t sufficient there are Plugins, little applets that nestle inside your WordPress installation ready to spring to action. These can do anything from popping out an image in a shadowbox to creating custom menus for your site navigation. There are literally hundreds of these, and the list keeps growing. Oh, and they’re all free. See my WordPress note at end of this review.*

The more I read the more I was inspired by what could be done. Then I discovered WordPress can be used for more than blogging. That’s when I really snapped to attention. Blogging is not for me. I was never a diarist, I never kept a journal, and I will not keep to a blogging schedule.

But WordPress is so plastic, so malleable, so pliable that it can be used as a content management system (CMS), meaning it can hold static pages that don’t change regularly if at all, and pages with other content. In fact, with a little judicious juggling and a friendly Plugin, it’s even possible to run an e-store right out of my website. Oh really!?

All those years of writing materials for front-of-class instruction have left me with manuals and workbooks. Coupling that with Camtasia’s on-screen recording, and I just may create a little business niche for myself. All I have to do is get it done.

This is a great book. Clearly written, visually-assisted step-by-step instructions and an attainable result. What’s not to like. Now, back to my WordPress Dashboard. There are edits to be made!

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*What’s this about free? WordPress is Open Source Software, as are its Themes and Plugins. These are created by users and uploaded for people to use. WordPress itself is free for the download. Thousands of Themes are also freely available, and there are also multiple sites devoted to custom or for-pay Themes. As of the writing of this review there are 19,064 free Plugins available at WordPress.org.

There are two WordPress sites: WordPress.org is where you download the WordPress software, its Themes and Plugins and learn how to use the software. WordPress.com is a free hosting service begun by some of the original WordPress developers. It’s “a hosted version of the open source package where you can start a blog in seconds

without any technical knowledge.” [<http://en.WordPress.com/about/>] It is “financially supported via paid upgrades, “VIP” services and advertising.” [Wikipedia.com]

