7 (Dirt Cheap or Free) Tech Tools I Use to Build an Online Business

TaylorTechStuff.com

- navigating the Tech Tangle

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Hi, I'm Dave Taylor and I'm the founder of TaylorTechStuff.com. Here, as promised for you, are my 7 (dirt cheap or free) tools* that I use to build an online business. These are the pieces I use to get to a workable state so I have something to build on.

I'm guessing that if you are looking at this report you are probably a budding young entrepreneur - you have your idea, your passion, your message... **you want to launch into an online business**.

The problem is, while you are abundant in enthusiasm...

- you only have a shoestring budget until you start making some money
- you see mention of lots of technical pieces everywhere you look and everything you read gives you lots of options but only adds to the Tech Tangle in your mind
- you don't know what the essential technical pieces are or where to even start in setting up your online presence - you need a step-by-step action plan to follow

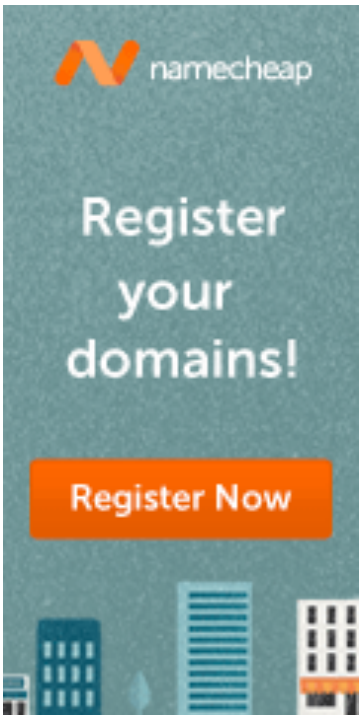
This report is going to give you those essential technical pieces that you'll need as you start.

So, let's get going...

* Just to be up front and open with you, some of the links in this report are affiliate links (for the tools that cost something), meaning that I may be recompensed in some way when you click on them - it doesn't cost you any more and it helps make my mission more sustainable. However, I will only recommend tools and products to you that I consider to be of good value and beneficial for your progress.

1 - Domain name

NameCheap: Cost - approximately $10 per year (for a .com domain)



This is your business address and should also tie up with your business identity. For example, www.google.com is the internet business address of Google.

For a long while now I've bought all my domain names (and I have a fair few of them) from NameCheap. The company you register your domain name through will be the place you also manage it from when you need to do things like renew the registration or specify where your hosting (see next tool) is for this domain. So, you want to settle on one company for buying your first (and subsequent) domains. I've never had any issues with NameCheap and as their name suggests you are paying minimum prices. At the time of writing and for as long as I can remember they throw in WhoIsGuard protection for free for the first year. It's a tiny cost for subsequent years anyway.

WhoIsGuard basically means that your personal details are not visible when people search for who owns a particular domain name. It will cut down on spam and potential identity theft.

2 - Hosting

HostGator: Cost - approximately $8 per month



You've got your business address (your domain name), now you need some premises where your business is going to reside (be hosted).

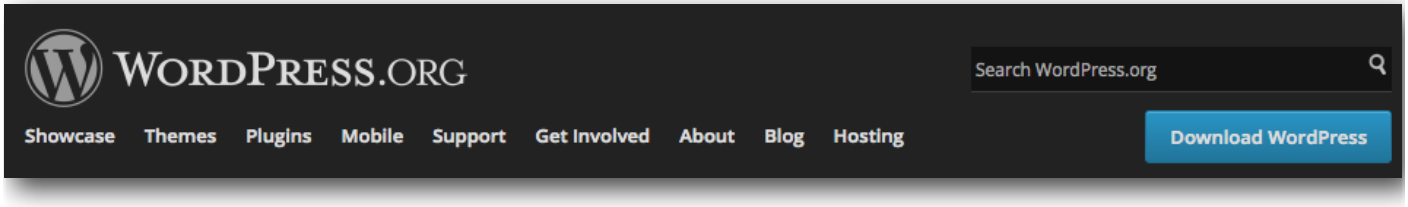
I tried at least one other hosting company that I can remember and finally settled on HostGator. They are inexpensive and a very popular hosting company. I have always found the support to be brilliant and the uptime (or availability) of my sites to be excellent. Actually, I can't remember ever having an issue with one of their servers being unavailable and, therefore, one of my sites being unavailable. I have switched around between different types of accounts on HostGator depending on my needs at the time.

I recommend you sign up for the **Web Hosting - Baby Plan** on the **1 month subscription**. I want you to get set up as quickly as possible for your online business with as little as possible initial monetary outlay. Don't lock yourself into a 3 year up front plan (though that's the cheapest price) but rather take it month by month. When you do that the comparative price of the Baby Plan versus the Hatchling plan is less than a dollar a month different. The big plus of the Baby Plan is that it allows you UNLIMITED domains to be hosted on your account rather than just ONE for the Hatchling Plan. It's flexibility that in my view is worth the extra cents. Also, when you purchase the Baby Plan uncheck all the additional services offered. The backup and security services might be good but I have no personal experience of these services to be able to recommend them. My recommendations on those two areas (backup and security) are covered below.

Once you have your hosting account you need to go back to your NameCheap account and connect your business name (your newly registered domain name) to your business premises (your hosting account servers at HostGator). Note: if you don't know how to do this I'll be emailing you more information in the coming days.

3 - Website Software

WordPress: Cost - FREE



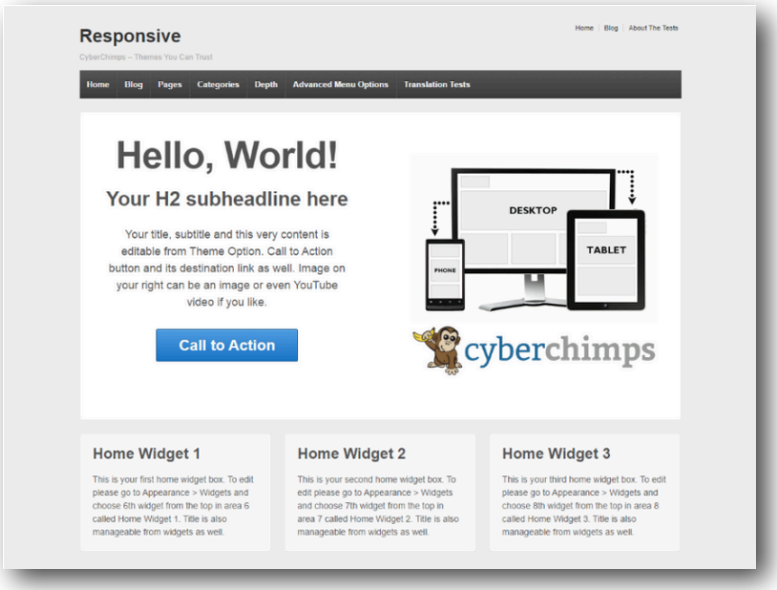
This is your main vehicle or platform for establishing your website (your online business presence). WordPress started out as software specifically to enable you to put up a blog but it has evolved to be much more than that. Don't confuse WordPress.org (the one you want) with WordPress.com which is the same software but hosted for you rather than on your own site. Going with WordPress.com would be like renting a desk in someone else's office and then they keep telling you there's certain things you can't do at your own desk. That's not the best approach you want for your *going-to-be* successful online business.

If you want an analogy for WordPress, it's like the structure of the building at your business address. It's what is going to house all your valuable content, it's where you're going to work, and where people are going to visit your business.

You need to go to your HostGator cpanel which is your dashboard for managing your hosting account (your business premises) and install WordPress on your new domain. Note: again, if this is the first time you're doing this I'll be emailing more information in the near future.

4 - Responsive Theme

Responsive by cyberchimps: Cost - FREE



So, you've got your business name (domain name), you've got your business address (your hosting account), and you've got a building at that address (your WordPress installation). It's time to get the decorators in (if you want to) 'cos at the moment the place is just as the builders left it in standard colors and design (the default 'theme' installed with WordPress)... and you may like to keep it that way. However, the 'theme' you install and select on your WordPress site will completely change the way it looks and to a certain degree, behaves. To a large extent you can swap between themes without having to change much at all and it 'redecorates' your whole site for you. The caveat here is that if your theme has a particular piece of functionality that you take advantage of and then you switch to another theme that doesn't have the same way of implementing that functionality you may have to do a little bit of fixing up. But don't worry about that too much at this stage.

Obviously, the look and feel of your business is very personal and you have some leeway here. There are many, many, very good themes available for FREE. I recommend you only install ones that are on the WordPress.org site itself otherwise you may find you are installing low quality or malicious software on your site. The only thing I will say is a 'must' is that you choose a 'responsive' theme. This is becoming more and more common in the themes, but that term means it has been designed so that no matter what device (desktop, laptop, notebook, tablet, smartphone) that your online business site is viewed on, the layout will be adjusted to give the best viewing experience. This is IMPORTANT.
I've recommended you pick the cyberchimps 'Responsive' theme which looks clean and professional. **Note:** 'responsive' is a general term that is used and it so happens that cyberchimps have given this particular theme the name 'Responsive'. So, the cyberchimps 'Responsive' theme happens to also be a 'responsive' theme - get it?

5 - Recoverability

BackWPUp: Cost - FREE



The next two tools cover areas that are very, very, very important to get right at the start of setting up your online business. Ignore these areas at your peril. This first area is that of making sure you are able to recover your site in the case of disasters such as...

a) you accidentally delete all or part of your site when you are working on it
b) someone hacks into your site and completely messes it up (like someone breaking into your business premises)
c) you install a new piece of software on your site that stops everything working.

A good analogy is if you had a real physical business somewhere and there was fire or flooding or a break-in, would you have a backup plan to be able to carry on doing business? Or would that be the end of your business?

BackWPUp is a free plugin (extra piece of functionality) you can install from your WordPress dashboard. Note: more info coming in future emails.

The analogy here is if you installed extra equipment in your business premises; a fancy coffee maker, or maybe a microwave oven, or an electric fan heater for cold days, or a copier machine - all specific extra pieces of functionality to make your life easier or more pleasant or to enable you to get your job done and run your business - that's what 'plugins' are.

This particular plugin would be equivalent to the copier and maybe a fireproof safe.

6 - Security

Wordfence: Cost - FREE



The second tool of crucial concern to the safety of your business provides a virtual alarmed protective fence. This free plugin is to protect you from intruders or at least let you know you have some. It's just like the alarm system at your business premises.

You have locks on your doors and windows (your login password) and that might be the subject of a future email but your locks are never going to be totally burglar-proof. So, you need a way to know if someone has got into your premises and wrecked the place or changed something (before your visitors for the day arrive and see the mess) or maybe they've installed a hidden webcam in your office to snoop on your confidential business deals (malicious software installed on your site). I've learned the hard way how important it is to have this software alerting you to unauthorized entry to your site or unexpected changes to your site itself.

I have found Wordfence to be a great plugin. And when you are actually receiving notifications of what's going on, you will be shocked at the number of people who are trying to break into your site and fail - this is the internet world we get to operate in, but Wordfence will keep you informed so that you are aware. Then if you notice a higher level of attacks than normal or if someone actually succeeds in breaking in to your site, you know about it and can do something about it.

7 - Measurement

Google Analyticator: Cost - FREE



The last tool is for analyzing how your site is doing. You've got your business name (registered domain at NameCheap) and your business address (hosting with HostGator). You have a building to operate from (WordPress installed). You've decorated it (chosen and installed a WordPress theme) and put in place some extra safekeeping and security; a disaster recovery plan with offsite storage of crucial details (BackWPUp) and your building is alarmed (Wordfence).

You're now open for business and telling people about your business by word of mouth or advertising (free or paid traffic - future email subject ;-)). But in a physical business you'd feel kinda stupid if someone asked how many visitors you'd had to your business office since you opened and you had no idea if there were zero or ten thousand. So, the last tool is a way of tracking how many visitors are coming to your site. And more than that, which pages they're visiting, where in the world they are visiting from, and how long they stayed.

Google Analyticator is a free plugin that will do this for you - like having a receptionist at the front reception desk in your building - tracking who comes in and who they are seeing and when they leave the building again.

Well that's it for this report. I hope you have found it useful.

Please email me to let me know subject areas you would like more information on as you set up your online business.

Here's to your successful online business building,

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