

Pro WordPress Theme Development



Adam Onishi

Apress®

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For my family, I hope this comes in handy.

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About the Author



Adam Onishi is a web developer working at the Architect digital agency in London, England. Starting as a developer at a small design agency in Oxford, Adam began developing custom WordPress themes for a variety of clients. He has produced hundreds of themes to varying degrees of client requirement, and over the years has learned how to get the best from the open source content management system that powers millions of web sites across the world.

Adam's previous experience has included working with clients from all areas, including brand names such as Tyrrells Crisps, Yeo Valley, Sting, and Unilever. Adam also plays an active role in the web community, running events and helping out with education initiatives such as 12 Devs and Code Club, and helping to promote education in technology and on the Web.

About the Technical Reviewer



Christopher Mitchell has spent the last 13 years working around the world in print design and web design and development. He loves all things to do with WordPress, developing custom themes and bespoke web sites for his clients. Christopher now lives and works from his office in Ledbury in Herefordshire, where he lives with his wife.

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I owe my colleagues a huge amount of thanks for how patient they've been with me, especially over the last couple of months of writing. It's not easy starting a new job, and doing so while also writing a book has been a struggle. You have all been fantastic and made it a pleasure joining your team. So thank you Tom, Hannah, Jon, Thomas, Stef, Kerry, Claire, Ant, Sam, and everyone else on the team for your constant encouragement and for putting up with me!

This book would not have been possible without the fantastic WordPress community, from all the work that is done creating and maintaining WordPress through to the detailed documentation that helps us all understand what's going on. The community around WordPress is probably the best thing about the platform, with so many people willing to share their knowledge and help others; it's a great group to be a part of.

Finally, thanks to all my friends in the web community. Your support has been excellent. I really hope that for those of you who will be reading this book that it's been worth the amount I go on about it.

Introduction

Welcome to *Pro WordPress Theme Development* and thank you for shelling out your hard-earned pennies to buy this book. From here on, you'll delve deep into the world of WordPress, looking at everything there is to know about WordPress theme development.

I'll cover every topic you can think of (and probably even a few you haven't), covering all aspects of WordPress theming. You'll learn the basic functionality of the core template files, how custom post types and taxonomies work, how to allow users to customize your theme, and even how to build your own plugins. This book really is your comprehensive guide to WordPress theme development.

I'll be covering everything in great depth so you can not only create this or that cool bit of functionality but also understand how the core concepts work inside of WordPress. With that level of knowledge, you should be well equipped to really be able to manipulate WordPress to create seriously advanced functionality and to know when something might be better served being built with a different system.

With WordPress, you're joining a huge community, which I'll be discussing throughout the book. Because WordPress is open source, the community is responsible for almost everything that goes along with it: from the development of the core code through the documentation in the WordPress Codex (<http://codex.wordpress.org/>), and including the plethora of available themes and plugins. If you really want to be involved in shaping the future of WordPress, joining this community allows you to do so. Whether you want to be part of the continued development of the core, to help out by reporting bugs, or by creating plugins for others to use with their system, it's all part of shaping the way we use WordPress today.

Besides the huge community, there is also a huge user base for WordPress that is always on the lookout for new themes and plugins. I'll show you how you can capitalize on that as well. Developing a business as a theme developer still has potential today; many people have made it a successful career.

Who This Book Is For

The *Pro* in the title refers more to the depth with which you will be learning WordPress, not the skill level required for the contents to be accessible. If you are a capable web developer and have used at least a couple of content management systems in the past, you should be able to keep up with the subjects discussed.

You should have at least a working knowledge of PHP. The code examples within will be explained in full, enabling you to get up to speed easily enough. If you don't know any PHP, I recommend that you begin by taking a few lessons on the server-side language before you delve deep into WordPress.

Working with WordPress means that you will be writing a lot of PHP. Unlike some content management systems that create their own tags for you to use, WordPress sticks with standard PHP functions, so understanding the core concepts is necessary. To get you started, there are plenty of resources online, as well as a couple of books I thoroughly recommend:

- *PHP Academy* (<https://phpacademy.org/>)
- *Codecademy PHP* (<http://www.codecademy.com/tracks/php>)
- *Treehouse PHP* (<http://teamtreehouse.com/library/topic:php>)
- *Beginning PHP and MySQL* (<http://www.apress.com/web-development/php/9781430231141>)
- *Essential PHP Fast* (<http://www.springer.com/computer/database+management+%26+information+retrieval/book/978-1-85233-578-6>)

WordPress Versions

This book has been predominately written using WordPress version 3.6 (and version 3.7 in some parts). Although most of the code contained within should be compatible with most future versions of WordPress, be careful when using the examples. If you are working with a more-advanced version of WordPress, make sure to check the Codex regularly for updates.

WordPress is constantly being updated with new features and bug fixes; it's important that you stay up to date, as you'll learn later on in the book. Updates will now be even more regular. Over the course of writing the book, WordPress has gone from version 3.5 to 3.7, with a major update in version 3.8 due by the end of 2013.

What You Will Need

Before you begin, you need a few things to work with and have set up on your computer:

- Your favorite text editor (Sublime Text 2 is my choice)
- A local server set up to run PHP and MySQL on your own machine (WAMP, MAMP, XAMPP, or other MySQL, and PHP solution)
- A working WordPress install

Installing WordPress

Once you have your server set up with one of the “AMPs” (or the built-in Apache server on a Mac), you have to install WordPress. Fortunately, this is pretty easy thanks to the “Famous 5-Minute Install” (http://codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress#Famous_5-Minute_Install).

Although you could follow this link, because you've gone to all the trouble of buying this book in the first place, I'll tell you how I install WordPress quickly whenever I work with the system.

Go to <http://wordpress.org/download/> to get the latest version of WordPress; you can also find the direct download of the latest version at (<http://wordpress.org/latest.zip>). Set up a folder for your site in your local development environment and extract the contents of the ZIP file inside.

Set up a database for WordPress to use on your local environment. You can do this through PHPMyAdmin if you have it set up or through a database program if you have one. Make sure that the database user has all the privileges to read and write to the database.

With your database set up, visit the address for your development folder. You'll receive a message letting you know that there is currently no configuration created and that you need to create one to set up WordPress. Select Create a Configuration File and follow the steps to install WordPress with the database details and the information for your new site.

You should be all set up and ready to start learning how to become a pro WordPress Theme developer.