Getting WordPress up and running

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Learning objectives

In this lesson, you'll learn:

- which things you should consider when selecting a hosting company and hosting plan for your site;
- what you should think about when choosing a domain name;
- what a top-level domain (TLD) is and which types of TLDs exist;
- how you can decide which type of TLD fits your site best.

1. Hosting

As we've discussed in the last lesson of the previous module, we'll focus on setting up a WordPress.org site in this course. This means you're going to have to get hosting and a domain name. In this lesson, we'll show you how to go about this and which things you should consider when going through this process.

When setting up a WordPress.org site, the first thing you'll have to decide is what **hosting company** and what **hosting plan** suits your needs. A hosting company makes sure your website is accessible through the internet. They

provide space on a server, and they also provide internet connectivity in a data center. This means they provide space for your website's data and they make sure other people can reach it through the internet!

Selecting the right hosting

These days, there are thousands of companies that offer to host your website. So how do you choose? To make sure you choose the right hosting company and the right hosting plan, you have to take two things into account:

- your **needs**
- your **skill level**

Before you do your research on possible hosting providers, it's smart to write down your needs and skill level. This makes it a lot easier to spot potential hosting candidates and ignore others. Below, we've provided a couple of questions you could answer to investigate what your needs and skill level are.

Where do I want my host to be located?

The **server location** of your host can be a very important factor when it comes to the speed of your website. Make sure you keep the distance between your audience and the location of the server your website is hosted on as small as possible. If your audience is located in the US, while your host is based in Singapore, that could really slow down your site for your visitors.

What type of site am I building?

A small blog needs far fewer resources than, for example, a big news site with thousands of posts. Consider how many pages your site has and how much content is on that page. Are you building a large site with a lot of large images and videos? Then you'll need more **storage space** than when your website just has blog posts with plain text and a few small images.

Also, try to estimate how many people will visit your site. Every time someone views a page on your site, it adds to the amount of **bandwidth** you use. All of the texts and images on that page need to be downloaded onto each visitor's computer before they can be displayed in their web browser.

What type of hosting do I need?

There are three types of hosting: shared hosting, dedicated hosting, and VPS hosting. In the advanced section below, we'll briefly explore what these different types of hosting entail.

Advanced: Types of hosting

As we've mentioned above, there are three types of hosting: shared hosting, dedicated hosting, and VPS hosting.

- **Shared hosting** means you share the same server resources with multiple customers. The resources of the server determine how much space, bandwidth, mailboxes, etc. you have available. Sharing these resources doesn't mean other customers can see or edit your data. However, it does mean that if you use shared hosting, there are resource limits on each hosting package. Shared hosting is the cheapest way to put your project online, but it's probably not the best option if you expect to need a lot of server space and bandwidth.

- **Dedicated hosting** means that there's a dedicated, fully allocated hardware server for your use only. You don't have to share the server with other customers. It's your own personal server with its own processors, hard disks, and memory. This makes dedicated hosting one of the more interesting choices for bigger websites like large online shops or corporate sites.

- **VPS hosting** stands for Virtual Private Server and it's similar to a dedicated server. A VPS is part of a physical server, which can be divided into different sections. With a VPS, you get your own space on the server, with access to a certain amount of resources, like memory and processors. These resources are for your use only. Furthermore, you can optimize your VPS server to your own preferences. You can determine which software runs on it, and you can adjust the settings to your liking.

Other questions that might help you

In addition to the questions listed above, you could also try to answer the following questions to find out what hosting company you should choose.

- Do I need help or support setting things up?
- What is my budget?
- Do I need the ability to add more websites?
- Does this hosting company have good reviews?

WordPress hosting

It's also good to know that there are a lot of hosting companies that offer **hosting plans specifically for WordPress sites**. These plans are completely optimized for hosting WordPress-based websites. They usually have WordPress automatically installed, so you don't have to take care of that anymore. Sometimes they also offer security and update services, which means you don't have to worry about the security of your site, or updating WordPress and the plugins you have installed. On our site, we've listed the [WordPress hosting companies that get the Yoast seal of approval](#).

Example: GoDaddy and EasyWP

On Yoast.com, we have featured around 30 hosting companies that offer specialized WordPress hosting. Since the list is too long, here, we will name only two: GoDaddy and Easy WP.

- **GoDaddy**
[GoDaddy](#) is the right choice for WordPress users who want everything in one place. In addition to hosting, they also offer domains, email, security, and marketing tools. GoDaddy's hosting offerings include Managed WordPress, web hosting (cPanel and Plesk), VPS, and Dedicated Servers for all WordPress needs. If you decide to go with this host, you will get a full WordPress onboarding wizard for beginners as well as a free set of Pro tools to manage large numbers of sites. GoDaddy primarily serves small businesses, freelancers, and small agencies with value-priced offerings.
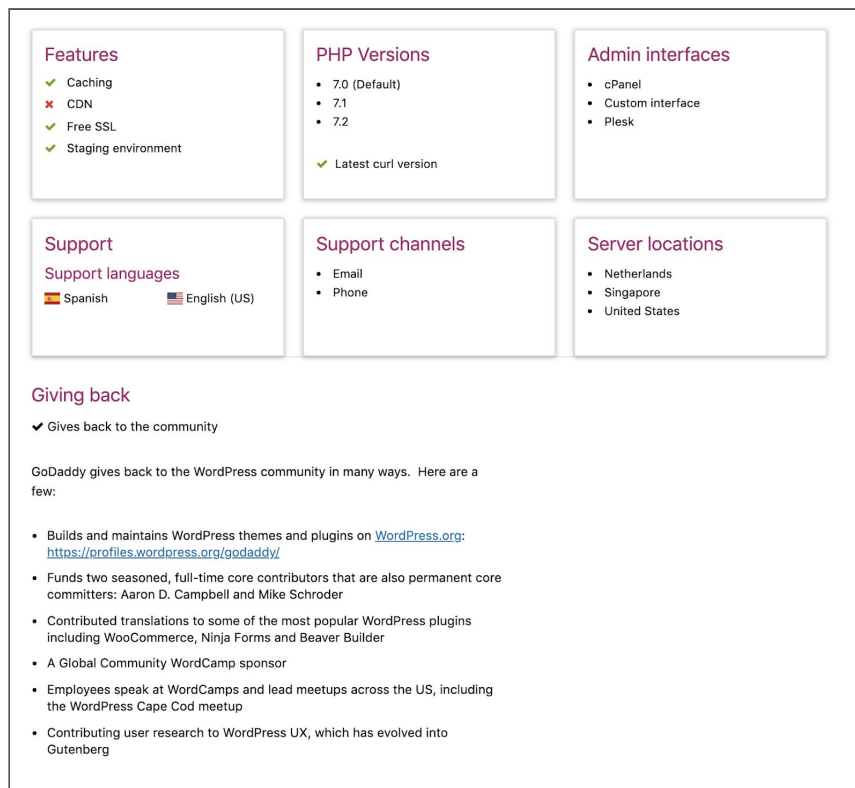
Image 1: The GoDaddy features, as presented on Yoast.com

- **EasyWp**

  EasyWP from Namecheap is different from a lot of Managed WordPress hosts. It's built on Namecheap's cloud hardware and stack, and it uses Docker + Kubernetes architecture. If you find this hard to understand, here's the simple version: each EasyWP subscriber has its own container within which WordPress sits. With EasyWP, you get easy to use package deals at affordable prices.
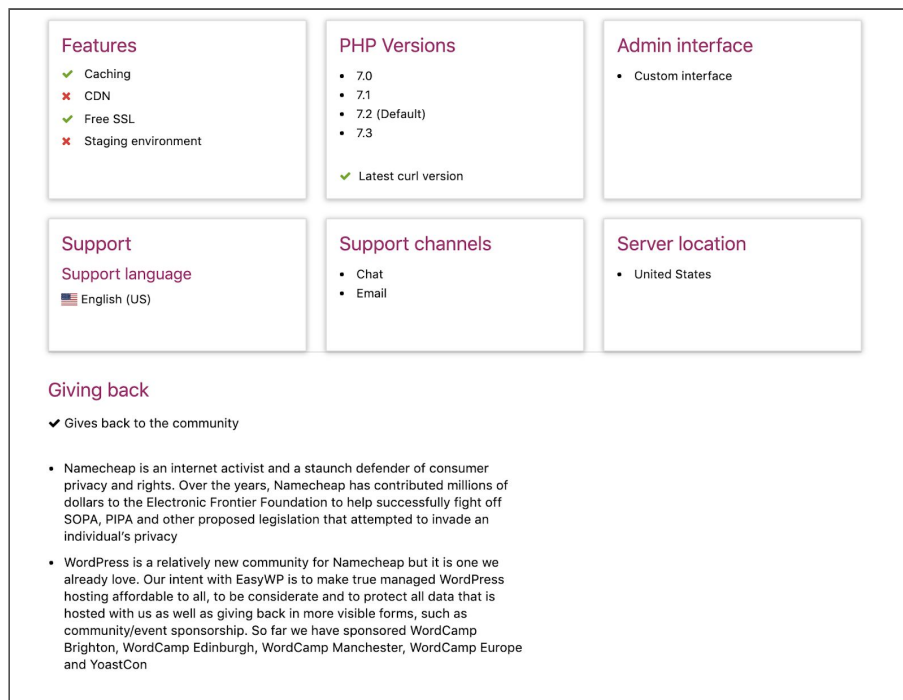
Image 2: The EasyWP features, as presented on Yoast.com

2. Selecting a domain name

When you've decided which hosting party is fit to take care of hosting your site, you should think about which **domain name** you want to have for your site. A domain name is a convenient way to point people to that specific spot on the internet where you've built your website. Domain names are, generally, used to identify one or more IP addresses. So for Yoast, that domain name is yoast.com.

Domain names are a very important aspect of building a brand and thus require some thinking. You want people to be able to recognize you and find you if they're looking for you. That's why it's often a good idea to have a short domain name. If it's catchy, that helps as well, of course. Ideally, you also want a domain name that's easy to spell. If you have a company, you'll probably want your company name as a domain name.

Example: Everydayimtravelling.com

The five friends of our example case have decided to go for the domain name *everydayimtravelling.com*. Although this is a quite difficult name, it's very catchy and it has a ring to it. Because of this, people will remember it easily. However, ideally, you would probably want a shorter domain name that's easier to spell.

3. Choosing a TLD

Another very important thing to consider is what **top-level domain (TLD)** you choose. A TLD is, to keep it simple, the last part of the domain name. So, for yoast.com, *Yoast* is obviously our brand, and *.com* is called a TLD. In the early days of the internet, these were the available domains:

- .com
- .org
- .edu
- .gov

TLD types

Nowadays, we distinguish between several types of TLDs:

- **Country code TLDs (ccTLDs)**
  Each country has its own TLD, which is called a country code TLD (ccTLD). Examples of ccTLDs are TLDs like *.nl* for the Netherlands, *.fr* for France, or *.de* for Germany.

- **Generic TLDs (gTLDs)**
  Generic TLDs (gTLDs) are basically all of the other domains, like *.com*, *.info*, *.net*, *.edu*, and *.gov*.

- **Infrastructure TLDs**
  Infrastructure TLDs are TLDs like *.arpa*. You can immediately forget about this kind of TLDs in the context of this course. You can't register a domain under *.arpa*, it's only used for infrastructure purposes.

Of course, *.com* is the most recognizable TLD and if you're going to operate internationally, it's really the only way to go. But good luck trying to find a good *.com* name that isn't already taken. If your audience exclusively consists of people within a specific country, you could pick a ccTLD as well, like *.nl* for the Netherlands.

4. Setting up your site

So, once you've picked a host and a domain name, what does the process usually look like after that? Well, there are different ways to go about this. For one, it's often cheaper to register a domain name and hosting separately. There are numerous sites that allow you to register a domain name hosting separately. However, it pays off to do proper research and compare prices, as prices vary a lot. If you don't think a couple of bucks is worth the hassle or you just want to pay a little more for convenience, you can get your domain name and hosting all at once.

When you get hosting, it really helps to check whether your hosting company makes it easy to set up WordPress. As we've mentioned before, most dedicated WordPress hosting parties make it very easy for you to set up WordPress. You simply visit their site, pick a plan, follow the instructions, and poof, you have a working WordPress installation.

Once you've selected a plan, most hosts will ask you to choose a domain or fill in the domain you already have. Then, it's just a matter of filling in your details and you've got your domain and hosting covered!

Things you should pay attention to

When setting up your site, there are a few things you should really pay special attention to. We'll list the most important things below.

Pick a strong username and password for the admin account

The **administrator** (also: **admin**) account in WordPress is the first account you set up. It's the most powerful user role, which is reserved for site owners and gives you full control of your WordPress site. We'll go into the different WordPress user roles later in this course.

What's very important is that you set up the admin account properly. You should never use 'admin' as the username. Always pick your own custom username and pick a strong password, preferably one that you save in a password manager. This will make it harder for hackers to get access to your site. We'll discuss this in more detail in the lesson on WordPress security later in this course.

Make sure your website is on HTTPS

Secondly, you should always make sure your website is on **HTTPS**. When users engage with your site, they do so over what's called an HTTP or HTTPS connection. The difference between these two connections is that, under HTTPS, all the connections between your site and the visitor are encrypted. This means no one else can read what's going on between the visitor and the website.

Thus, using HTTPS is a safer way of sending data than HTTP. This makes your site more secure, and the SSL certificates required for this are often included in your hosting plan. Some hosting parties will even set it up for you automatically. If they don't, make sure to put in the effort to configure it when setting up your site. How exactly you do this depends on your hosting company. They should have the proper tutorials to help you. If not, you'll be able to contact them for support.

🔗 Example: SiteGround

In this example, we'll explore SiteGround, one of the hosting companies with the [Yoast seal of approval](). For all the hosting companies, we have analyzed the essential features for websites that want to use WordPress. Image 3 shows what those features look like for SiteGround.

Features	PHP Versions	Admin interface
✔ Caching ✔ CDN ✔ Free SSL ✔ Staging environment	• 7.0 • 7.1 • 7.2 • 7.3 (Default) ✔ Latest curl version	• cPanel

Support
Support languages
Bulgarian   Italian
Spanish   English (US)

Support channels
• Chat
• Email
• Phone

Server locations
• Germany
• Singapore
• The Netherlands
• United Kingdom
• United States

Giving back
✔ Gives back to the community

SiteGround's mission to power awesome websites is furthered by their involvement in the WordPress community at a global scale:

• SiteGround sponsors more than 50 WordCamps annually.
• Their employees speak at WordCamps and meetups regularly.
• SiteGround has a WordPress Ambassadors program that supports members of the WordPress community to attend and speak at WordCamps.
• SiteGround employees regularly participate in Contributor Days and are active in the make.wordpress.org initiatives.
• Their employees organise meetups, WordCamps, or Do_action Hackathons in Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, and Canada.

Image 3: The SiteGround features, as presented on Yoast.com

When you are choosing a host, it is good to consider the speed and the safety of your website. SiteGround ensures your site runs smoothly by providing CDN, which improves the loading speed of your site. It also supports the latest versions of PHP, another factor for site speed, especially when using WordPress. Lastly, website speeds can be affected by the server location of the hosting company. With servers located in various places around the world, SiteGround should have you covered.

As a beginner, you might want to have easy access to support. In this case, there is support in multiple languages across different channels. When making a choice, you should check the support options of your preferred host.

When you go to the [SiteGround website](#), you will see that they offer different hosting packages. In this case, we are interested in WordPress hosting. For its specialized WordPress hosting, there are three plans you can choose from on SiteGround (Image 4). *Please note: this is just one example. There are thousands of hosting companies out there. They will all look and sound different. We use this example to give you a feeling of what it looks like to go through the steps of choosing a hosting plan.*

Image 4: SiteGround's WordPress hosting plans

Again, you will need to make a choice. Before deciding on which plan you want, do not look at the price tag. Instead, ask yourself: How many websites do I have? How much web space do I need? How many visitors do I expect? These questions will help you more easily decide on the right plan for you.

For the sake of the example, let's say that we chose the StartUp plan. What would the next step be? It's quite simple. First, you will need to register a new domain name or use an existing one (Image 5).

Image 5: Choosing a domain with SiteGround

Next, you will need to fill in some information and make the payment (Image 6). After you have completed that, you will be able to proceed to the WordPress installation.

Image 6: Completing your order in SiteGround

📎 Example: Installing WordPress with SiteGround

Once you've completed your purchase, it's time to install WordPress. We need to connect our domain to an actual WordPress installation. The first thing you need to do is click on 'Websites' in the navigation bar (Image 7).
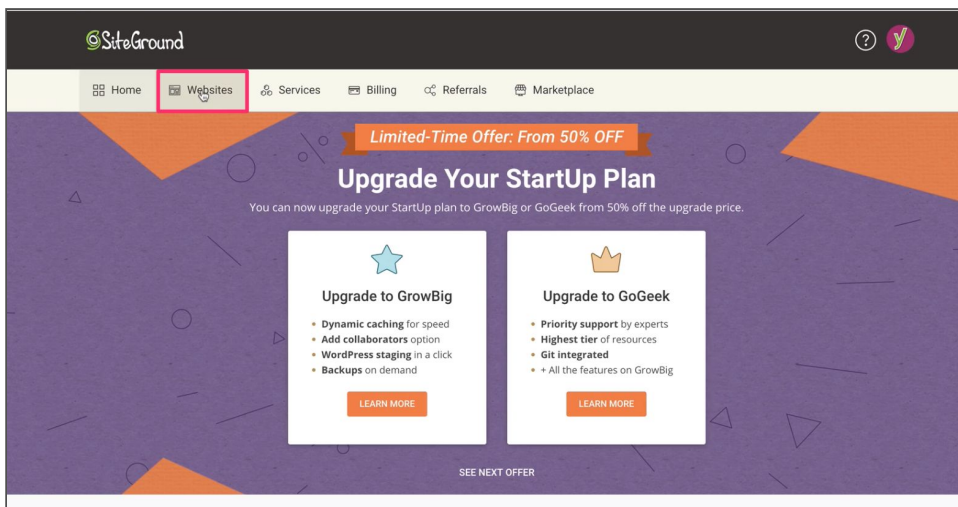
Image 7: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (1)

You'll then be taken to an overview of all the websites in your SiteGround hosting account. To add a new website, click 'New website' in the upper-right corner, or click 'Create website' in the middle of the screen (Image 8).
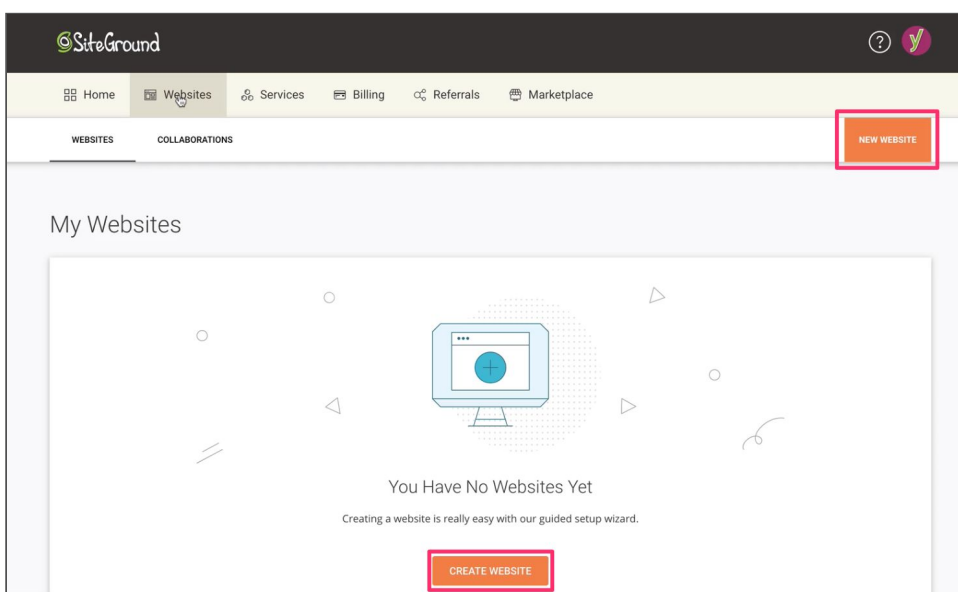
Image 8: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (2)

Once you've clicked one of the buttons, you'll be prompted with the next option. Do you want to add a new domain, an existing domain, or a temporary domain? If you've already purchased a domain, as we did in the previous step, you should click 'Existing Domain' (Image 9). You'll then get the option to enter your existing domain name. Once you've filled this in, click 'Continue'.
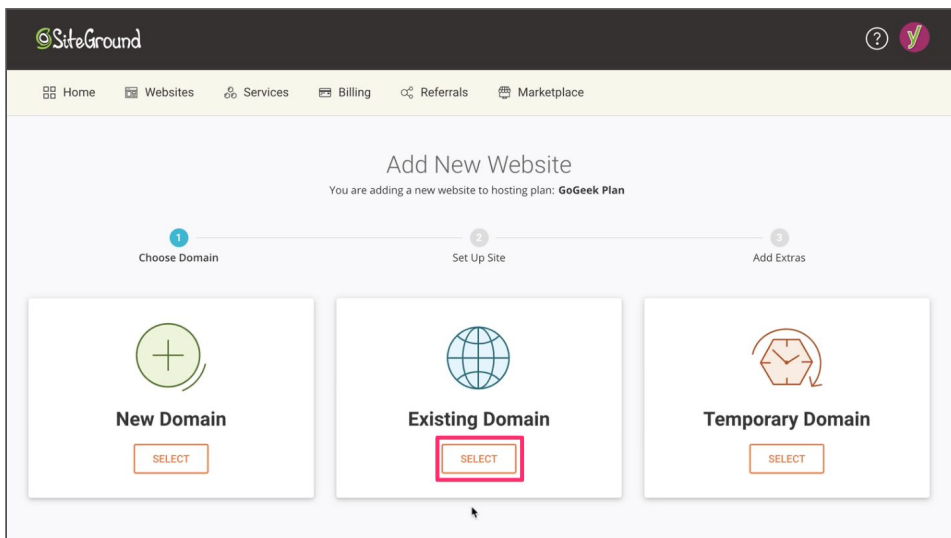
Image 9: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (3)

The next step is choosing between whether you want to start a new website or migrate an existing site to your domain. In this case, we want to start a new website (Image 10).
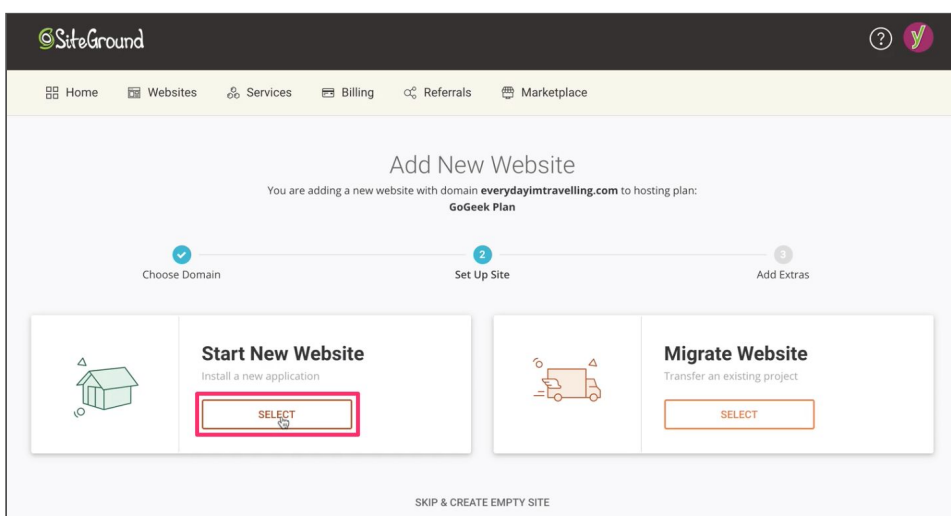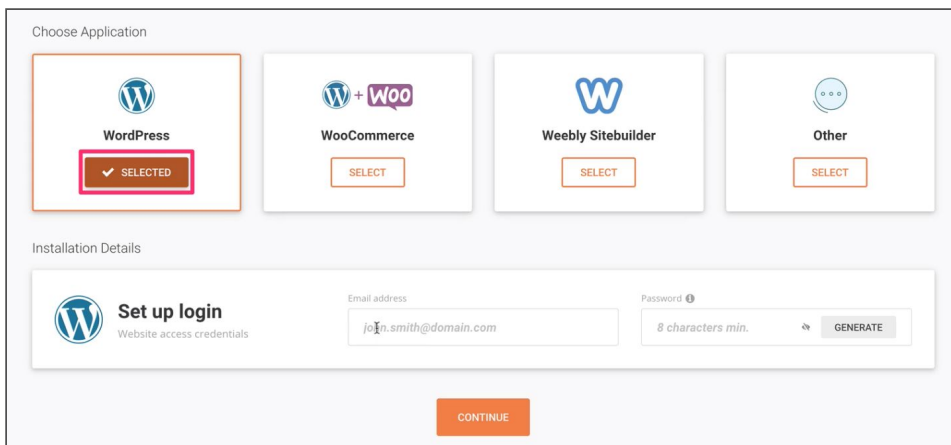

Image 10: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (4)

When you click the button for starting a new website, you'll be prompted with a couple of applications to choose from (Image 11). One of them is WordPress, so of course, that's what you'll want to select! Then, you'll get the option to fill in your website access credentials. Enter your email address and a password, and click 'Continue'.

Please note: if you haven't registered your domain through your hosting company, you might have to update your domain's DNS settings after
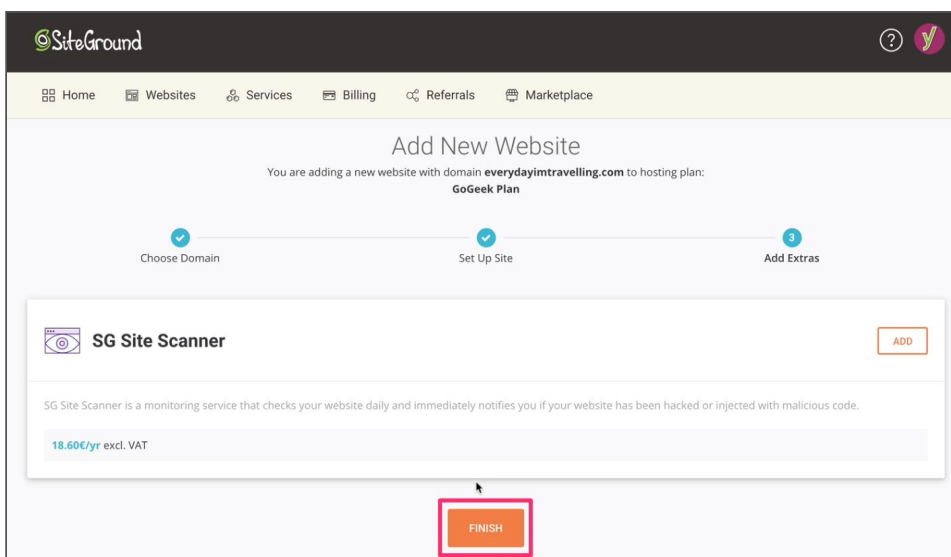
connecting it to the host. Please contact your host or domain provider if you want to know how to go about this.

Image 11: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (5)

The last step of the 'Adding a new website' wizard presents you with the option to install an additional SiteGround Site Scanner. The Site Scanner is a security service that monitors your site daily and immediately notifies you if your website has been hacked or injected with malicious code. Decide for yourself if your site needs this service. Then, you click 'Finish' to finish the installation of your WordPress site (Image 12).

Image 12: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (6)

Once you click 'Finish', SiteGround will create a fully installed WordPress site for you. When the installation is finished, you can find your site in the website overview, which you can access by clicking 'Websites' in the navigation bar.
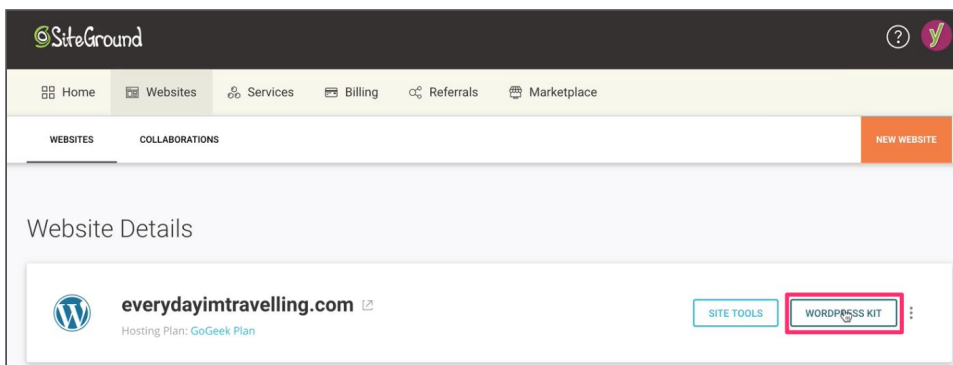
Image 13: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (7)

By clicking 'WordPress Kit' (Image 13), you'll see a number of tools that you can use for your WordPress site (Image 14). For now, the most important step is to know how to get to your WordPress back end. To do this, simply click the button under 'WordPress Admin'.
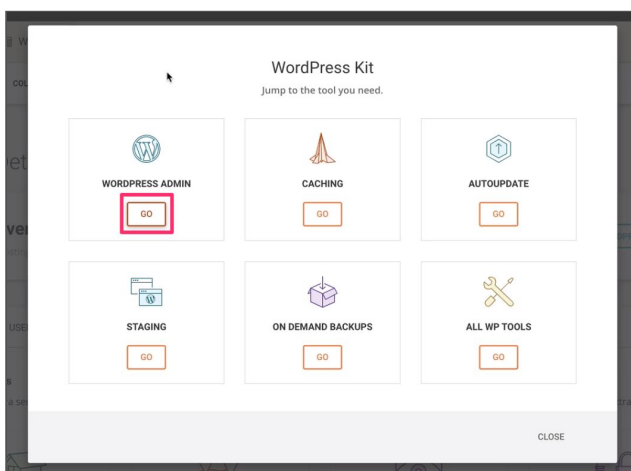

Image 14: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (8)

What you'll then see is the WordPress login screen (Image 15). Here, you can enter the login credentials that you've created in an earlier step. Once you click 'Log In', you'll be taken to the SiteGround WordPress Starter wizard. This wizard will guide you through a few steps, to welcome you to a WordPress website. When you complete this wizard, your site is ready! In the next lesson, we'll explore the WordPress back end.
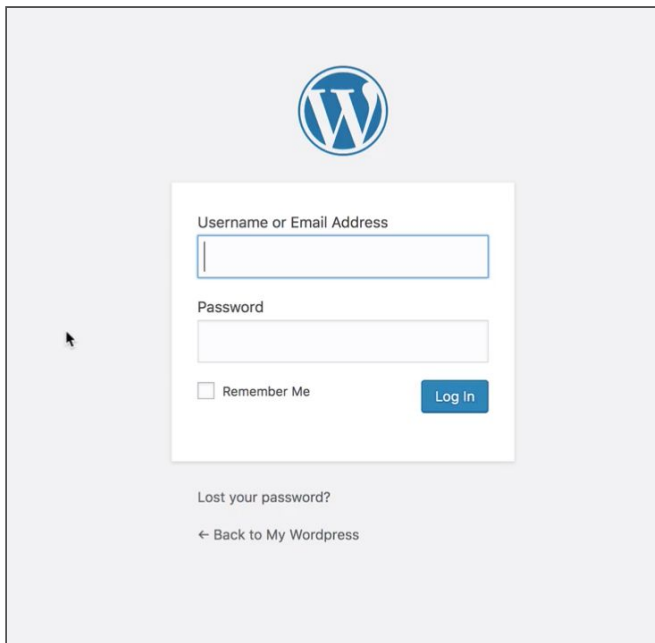
Image 15: Connecting your domain to a WordPress installation (9)

Key takeaways

- When selecting a hosting company and plan, you have to consider your **needs and skill level**. To find out your needs and skill level, you have to think of:
    - the server location;
    - the type of site you're building;
    - how much storage space and bandwidth you need;
    - what type of hosting you need (shared, dedicated or VPS), etc.
- There are hosting companies that offer **dedicated WordPress hosting plans**, which are optimized for WordPress-based sites.
- A **domain name** is an important aspect of building a brand. Ideally, your domain name should be short, easy to type, and catchy.
- The two most important **types of TLDs** are:
    - ccTLDs (country code TLDs, like *.nl, .fr,* and *.de*);
    - gTLDs (generic TLDs, like *.com, .info,* and *.net*).
- When **selecting a TLD**, you have to take (the location of) your audience into account.
- When **setting up your site**, you have to pay attention to picking a strong username and password for the admin account, and you have to make sure your website is on HTTPS.