

How to Create a Simple WordPress Store Online for Free

The Internet is one of the most fertile grounds on which you can build a business to sell your products or services. This is because of the fact that your customer base is potentially in the order of millions of prospective buyers who are not restricted by physical location.

The main issue most merchants face when setting up their online store is that at first it can appear very daunting when they are faced with the prospect of adding the eCommerce functionality they need into their website.

Most people would not know where to begin when faced with the task of setting up a shopping cart which is designed to complement their current website's theme and color scheme and which can handle the payment processing, and can deal with the security of credit cards and other sensitive information.

And on top of all of that a successful online store should also make the buying process a relatively painless and easy experience for the buyer with minimal or no confusion and with functionality flexible enough to cater for various scenarios and product types.

To achieve all of the things mentioned above on your own can be very complicated and expensive, and it may take you months to complete.

The good news is that you can do all of the above and much more, simply by installing the completely free **WP Shopping Cart** plugin onto your WordPress site.

There are of course other paid e-commerce solutions you can apply to your site, but if you're just starting with your online business and want a quick and reliable wordpress shopping cart plugin which is lightweight and free then the WP Shopping Cart plugin is the way to go.

Features of WP Shopping Cart Plugin

Now let's delve into some of the main functional features of the WP Shopping Cart plugin and we'll see why it's a great little plugin to get your online business off the ground as quickly as possible.

Easy To Install

If you've ever used WordPress before you will know first hand how easy it is to install a plugin. It literally takes seconds to do and once you have installed the WP Shopping Cart plugin, you can literally be ready to sell products online within minutes.

Display Your Products with an "Add To Cart" Button Anywhere on your blog

WP Shopping Cart offers you the ability to display your products easily and just about anywhere on your WordPress site, making your job easy as an online vendor and also helping your customers who land on your website easily find and buy the product they're looking for. The display of buttons is achieved by using a shortcode or some html code on your pages or posts or even sidebars.

For example with WP Shopping Cart you can display buttons for your products in a number of ways as shown in the example below.

Simple Product Display



Demo Product 2
Price: £10.70

Add to Cart

Basic add to cart button

Product Display with Variation Control



Product Name: Demo T-Shirt

Price: 15.00

Colour : Red

Size : Small

Add to Cart

Product Variations

Custom button image

The figure above demonstrates a couple of the ways in which WP Shopping Cart can be used to display Add To Cart buttons for your products.

The above 2 examples show that this plugin not only allows you to display a basic "Add to Cart" button, but you can also customize your button with any image of your choice. We also see from the second example that you can add product variations in addition to the add to cart buttons.

Display cart items in a shopping cart anywhere on your blog

WP Shopping Cart plugin allows for the display of the customer's cart items via a useful shopping cart display which can be shown on any page, post or sidebar.

The figure below shows what a typical cart output looks like when somebody adds an item to the cart. This is achieved by using either a shortcode when displaying in a post or page or a simple php code snippet inside a text widget for the sidebar.



Secure and Flexible Payment Processing Using PayPal

The WP Shopping Cart provides your customers and you with peace of mind knowing that all of your transactions are securely handled by PayPal.

Using PayPal to process all payments for your products ensures that any security doubts you might have regarding sensitive customer information can be dismissed because PayPal will handle the security part for you.

Another great benefit of using PayPal as a payment gateway is that you have the flexibility to accept credit card payments in addition to PayPal payments, which means that your customers do not have to have a PayPal account in order to purchase something from your site.

Ability to apply some basic shipping options

WP Shopping Cart allows for some basic but very useful shipping charge calculations to be applied to your products.

For instance, the plugin caters for the following basic shipping scenarios:

- Flat shipping charge per item
- Flat shipping charge at checkout time irrespective of number of items in the cart
- Shipping discounts based on the total number of items

Creating and Displaying Products on Your WordPress Site Using WP Shopping Cart

Let's now go through an example of how to set up a simple store on a WordPress blog using the WP Shopping Cart plugin.

In this example we'll set up a scenario where somebody is selling hats from their WordPress website using the WP Shopping Cart plugin and where they will be charging a base shipping cost of \$9.00.

Pre-requisites:

- You will need to have a WordPress website. For this tutorial I am using the standard TwentyEleven theme which comes with WP but you may also want to use any good premium theme of your choice.
- You have installed the [WP Shopping Cart plugin](#).
- You have a PayPal account. If you don't have one you can get one from www.paypal.com

Step 1 (optional): Upload Some Button (and product) Images To Your WP site

The WP Shopping Cart plugin makes it very easy to add buttons to suit your site's theme, styling and color scheme.

Actually when I say button, I really mean image because you can upload any image to represent your "add to cart" button.

(Note: This step is optional because if you choose not to upload a custom button image, then the plugin will insert a default button)

So let's now upload a button image to our WordPress site.

I'll be uploading a button which looks like this:



1. From your WP admin panel go to **Media** → **Add New** as shown in the figure below:



2. Upload a button image file from your computer to your WP site by dragging the image into the media uploader (or alternatively select the file from your filesystem)

3. After your button image has uploaded successfully take note of the "File URL" because we'll need that for later.

Hint: You can repeat 1 and 2 to upload some of your product images too.

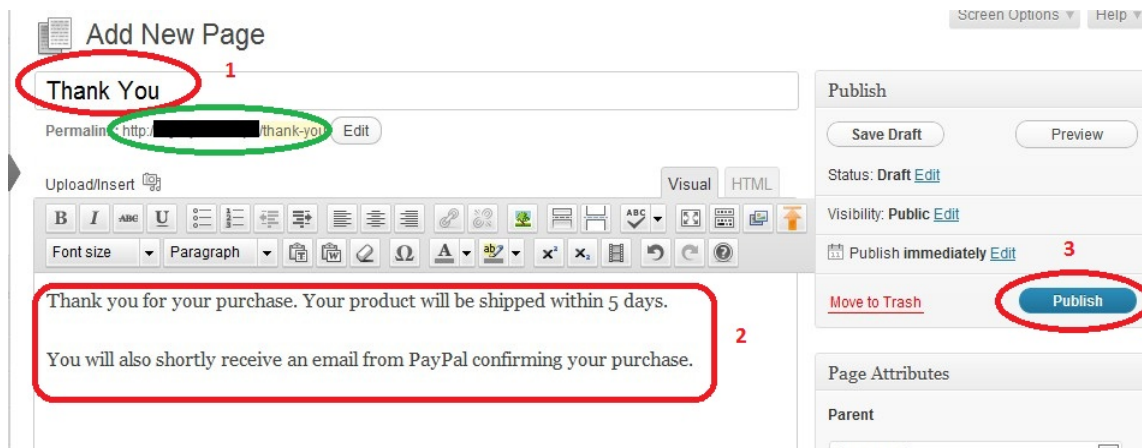
Step 2: Create a "Thank You" Page

In this step we will create a page which is where our customers will be redirected to after they've paid for their product using PayPal.

From your WordPress administration panel select **Pages** → **Add New** (as shown in the figure below)



Then you will be taken to a screen where you can fill in your page details as follows:



Fill in the Thank You page details as follows:

1) Add a page title

In this case I've just called it "Thank You"

2) Add some text in the body

From the figure above you can see that the second circled item simply contains a couple of lines of text thanking the customer for the purchase and explaining some other details.

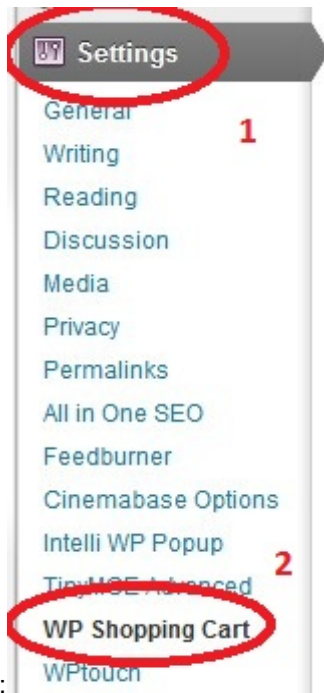
3) Publish the page

After you've entered the details publish the page by clicking the button shown in circled item 3 above.

Important: Before leaving this step record the URL of the thank you page by noting the value shown in the item circled in green in a notepad document. We will need this for the next step.

Step 3: Configure WP PayPal Shopping Cart Options

From your WP administration page go to **Settings** → **WP Shopping Cart** menu item as shown



below:

You will then be taken to the configuration page as shown in the figures below.

WP Paypal Shopping Cart Options

Simple Paypal Shopping Cart Settings v 3.2.9

For information, updates and detailed documentation, please visit:
<http://www.tipsandtricks-hq.com/?p=768>

Usage:

1. To add the 'Add to Cart' button simply add the trigger text `[wp_cart:PRODUCT-NAME:price:PRODUCT-PRICE:end]` to a post or page next to the product. Replace PRODUCT-NAME and PRODUCT-PRICE with the actual name and price. For example: `[wp_cart:Test Product:price:15.00:end]`

2. To add the shopping cart to a post or page (eg. checkout page) simply add the shortcode `[show_wp_shopping_cart]` to a post or page or use the sidebar widget to add the shopping cart to the sidebar.

PayPal and Shopping Cart Settings

Paypal Email Address	<input type="text" value="████@████.com"/>	1
Shopping Cart title	<input type="text" value="Items in Your Cart"/>	
Text/Image to Show When Cart Empty	<input type="text" value="Your cart is empty"/> <small>You can either enter plain text or the URL of an image that you want to show when the shopping cart is empty</small>	
Currency	<input type="text" value="USD"/> (e.g. USD, EUR, GBP, AUD)	
Currency Symbol	<input type="text" value="\$"/> (e.g. \$, £, €)	
Base Shipping Cost	<input type="text" value="9.00"/>	2
	<small>This is the base shipping cost that will be added to the total of individual products shipping cost. Put 0 if you do not want to charge shipping cost or use base shipping cost. Learn More on Shipping Calculation</small>	
Free Shipping for Orders Over	<input type="text"/>	
	<small>When a customer orders more than this amount he/she will get free shipping. Leave empty if you do not want to use it.</small>	
Must Collect Shipping Address on PayPal	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<small>If checked the customer will be forced to enter a shipping address on PayPal when checking out.</small>	
Use PayPal Profile Based Shipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<small>Check this if you want to use PayPal profile based shipping. Using this will ignore any other</small>	

Add to Cart button text or Image **3**
 To use a customized image as the button simply enter the URL of the image file. e.g.
 http://www.your-domain.com/wp-content/plugins/wordpress-paypal-shopping-cart/images/buy_now_button.png

Return URL **4**
 This is the URL the customer will be redirected to after a successful payment

Products Page URL
 This is the URL of your products page if you have any. If used, the shopping cart widget will display a link to this page when cart is empty

Automatic redirection to checkout page Checkout Page URL:
 If checked the visitor will be redirected to the Checkout page after a product is added to the cart. You must enter a URL in the Checkout Page URL field for this to work.

Reset Cart After Redirection to Return Page
 If checked the shopping cart will be reset when the customer lands on the return URL (Thank You) page.

Hide Shopping Cart Image
 If ticked the shopping cart image will not be shown.

Use WP Affiliate Platform
 Check this if using with the [WP Affiliate Platform plugin](#). This plugin lets you run your own affiliate campaign/program and allows you to reward (pay commission) your affiliates for referred sales

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The basic settings we will configure in the options page are the following items and we'll leave everything else as default:

- 1) **PayPal Email Address** - enter the email address of your PayPal account
- 2) **Base Shipping Cost** - enter a value for the base shipping cost
- 3) **Add to Cart button text or Image** - enter the URL of the button image from step 1.
- 4) **Return URL** - enter the URL of the Thank You page you created in step 2.

After completing the above, click the "Update Options" button which is shown circled in the figure above as number 5.

Step 4: Create a Page To Display The Add To Cart button and Product

Now we will create our store or product page where our customers will be able to buy our products from. To create our store page we will follow steps similar to what we did in "Step 2" for the thank you page, ie, From your WordPress administration panel select **Pages** → **Add New** (as shown in the figure below)



Then we will fill our page details as shown in the figure below:

The screenshot shows the WordPress 'Add New Page' editor. The page title is 'Store' (1). The permalink is 'http://e-jelly.com/wp2/store'. The page content includes the text 'Product Name: Blinged Hat' and 'Product Price: \$39.99' (2), followed by an image of a black hat with gold studs. Below the image are two shortcodes: '[wp_cart:BlingedHat:price:39.99:end]' (3) and '[show_wp_shopping_cart]' (4). The 'Publish' button is circled in red (5). The right sidebar shows 'Page Attributes' and 'Featured Image' sections.

The details we will enter for our store page will be as follows:

1) Add a page title

In this case I've just called it "Store".

2) Add some text and image describing your product

From the figure above you can see that the second circled item simply contains a couple of lines about my product and also I have inserted my product's image which I uploaded in Step 1 of this tutorial.

3) Add the shortcode which will display the shopping cart for your product

This is the most important step.

In the page body you will have to add the shortcode for the "Add to Cart" button for the product you want to sell (see circled item number 3 in the figure above).

The shortcode template looks like the following:

```
[wp_cart:PRODUCT-NAME:price:PRODUCT-PRICE:end]
```

You'll note that the bits which are in upper case are the portions which you need to fill in for each product that you want to sell.

In my case I had the following:

PRODUCT-NAME = BlingedHat

PRODUCT-PRICE = 39.99

Note: you can add as many products as you wish on the same page simply by repeating the 1 and 2 above. Be sure to enter the relevant details and price in the shortcode for your different products.

4) Add the shortcode for the cart

We will need to add a second shortcode (see circled item number 4 in the figure) in order to display a shopping cart whenever somebody adds items to their cart.

To achieve that we simply use the following shortcode:

[show_wp_shopping_cart]

5) Publish the page

Then lastly publish the store page by clicking the publish button.

We're now finished with the setup and as you can see it wasn't very difficult to set up a simple online store.

So with the setup for our store done, let's take a look at what somebody visiting our website will see. For example if someone arrives on our website and clicks on the "Store" page they'll see the following:

The screenshot shows a WordPress website titled "Hip Hop Fashion Blog" with a navigation menu (Home, About, Store) and a sidebar with "Random Posts", "Archives", and "Meta" sections. The main content area displays a product titled "Store" with the name "Blinged Hat" and a price of "\$39.99". Below the text is an image of a black baseball cap with a grid of small, shiny studs. A green "ADD TO CART" button with a shopping cart icon is positioned below the product image.

The figure above demonstrates how our visitors will see our product details and the add to cart button.


If they click on the add to cart button they will see the following:

Store


Product Name: Blinged Hat


Product Price: \$39.99






Items in Your Cart

Item Name	Quantity	Price	
BlingedHat	1	\$39.99	
Total:		\$39.99	



Check out with **PayPal**



The portion circled in red shows the shopping cart item which they added to their cart.

If you had more than one product listed on the page, they could also add those to the shopping cart too and the cart shown above will automatically update itself to reflect this.

The customer can then simply checkout and pay for the product by clicking the “Checkout with PayPal” button shown in the figure above.

The beauty of the PayPal payment gateway is that it allows your customers to pay securely either with their own Paypal account or if they don’t have an account they can use their credit cards.

And that concludes this tutorial.

You can find more detailed information about setting up the WP Shopping Cart plugin here:

<http://www.tipsandtricks-hq.com/ecommerce/wp-shopping-cart>