

Opening an e-Commerce Store: *It's Easier (and Cheaper) Than You Think!*

The case for a small business website
integrated with an e-Commerce storefront.

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Access the slides for this presentation here:

<http://yourpresenceontheweb.com/wp219>

Agenda

- Introductions
- Our Focus Today
- Lots of Ways to Start Selling Over the Web
- An Example Small Business Website w/Storefront
- A New Era of Small Business e-Stores
- An Example Store Architecture
- Tool of Choice for Developing Small Business Websites
- Other Choices to Make
- Before You Start
- Once You Get Started
- Closing Remarks
- Q & A
- Wrap-up



Introductions

- Who am I?
 - Jonathan May, Founder and President, YourPresenceOnTheWeb.com
 - 30+ years of designing, developing and managing information technology solutions to organizations of all sizes and types
- What does YourPresenceOnTheWeb.com do?
 - Provide e-Marketing consulting services to small businesses
 - Specialty in designing and developing websites with e-Commerce storefronts
 - Also deliver training courses in website development
 - Website Development for Non-Techies Course
 - Creating Online Stores Workshop



Our Focus Today

- A business website with integrated online store
- And why it's easier and cheaper than you probably think



Lots of Choices to Start Selling Over the Web



SHOPPING



An Example Small Business Website w/Storefront

- Scandic Footwear @ scandicfootwear.com
 - A start-up business based in Bedford, NH
 - Launched in summer 2012
 - Manufactures and sells hand-made clogs
- A key requirement for the website: super fast time to market
 - Work on an initial prototype started in mid-August 2012
 - Prototype with limited products demo-ed in two weeks
 - Production site was up and running by mid-September
 - Company has continued to add more products and enhance the look of the site since then



A New Era of Small Business e-Stores

Then (Complex and Expensive)

VS.

Now (Greatly Simplified and Much Cheaper)

	Back in the Day	2013
Development effort	From-the-ground-up software development with lots of custom coding	Configuration of standardized off-the-shelf tools
Who can build it	A cadre of IT specialists	A non-programmer with good computer and Internet skills
Who can maintain and support it	A cadre of IT specialists	A non-programmer with good computer and Internet skills
Cost	\$\$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$\$	\$ to \$\$



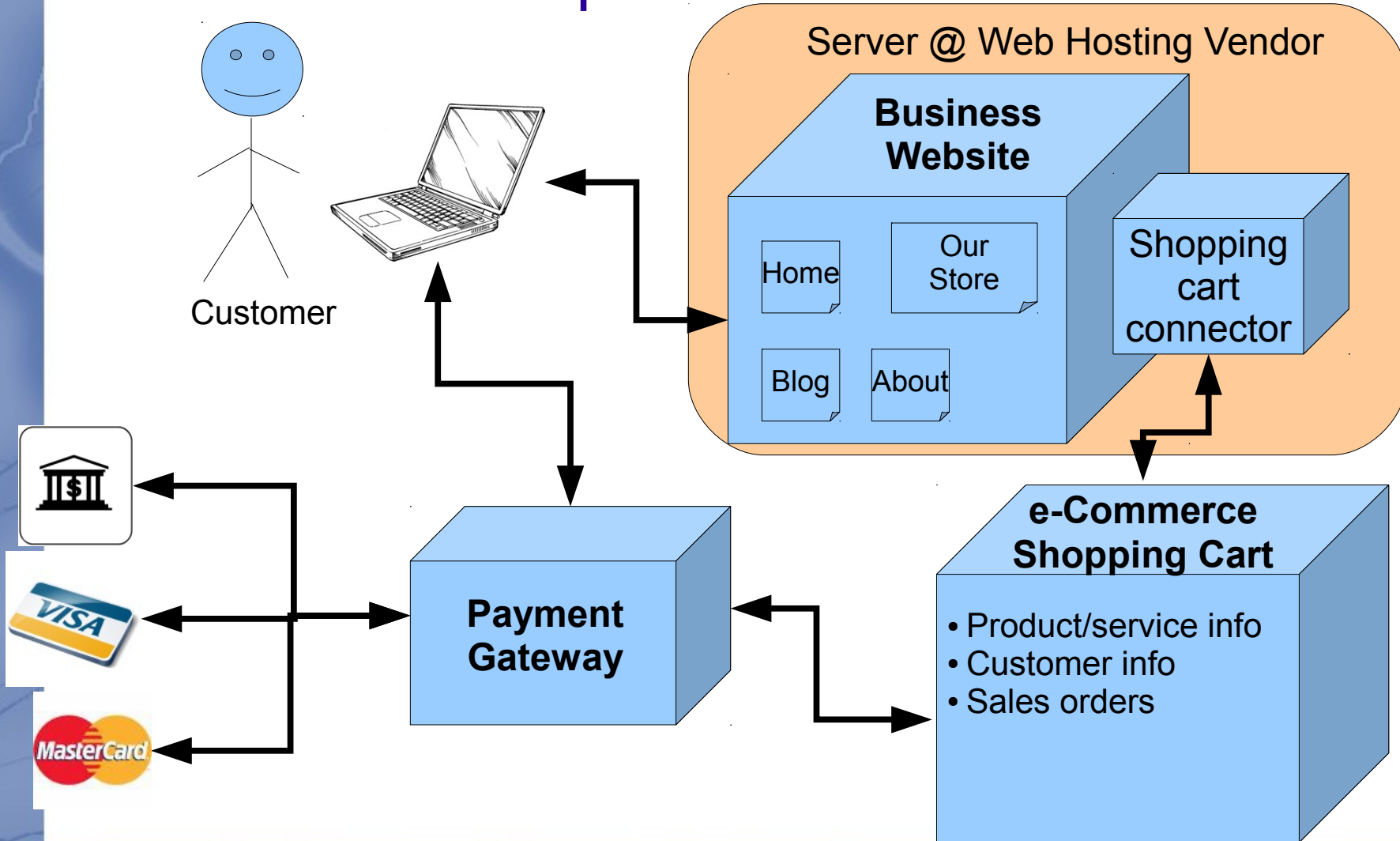
A New Era of Small Business e-Stores

Why is this now possible?

- The emergence of very powerful, flexible, inexpensive and user friendly tools
 - **Content Management Systems** for building websites
 - **e-Commerce Shopping Carts** for managing the product, customer and order information
 - **Payment Gateways** for processing credit card transactions quickly, reliably and inexpensively
 - **Web Hosting Services** to enable the website to be viewed and used reliably from visitors around the globe



An Example Store Architecture



The Tool of Choice for Developing Small Business Websites: **WordPress!**

- Open source software (hence, *free*)
- The **most** user friendly Content Management System
- Flexible and extensible via 1,000's of themes and plugins
- Complies with modern web standards
- Search engine friendly
- Extensive global support community
- Suitable for low- to moderate-traffic sites
- The **most** popular Content Management System on the planet – whose growth is *accelerating*



See: <http://herenextyear.com/35-reasons-why-wordpress-website-is-better-than-traditional-web-site-for-your-business.php>

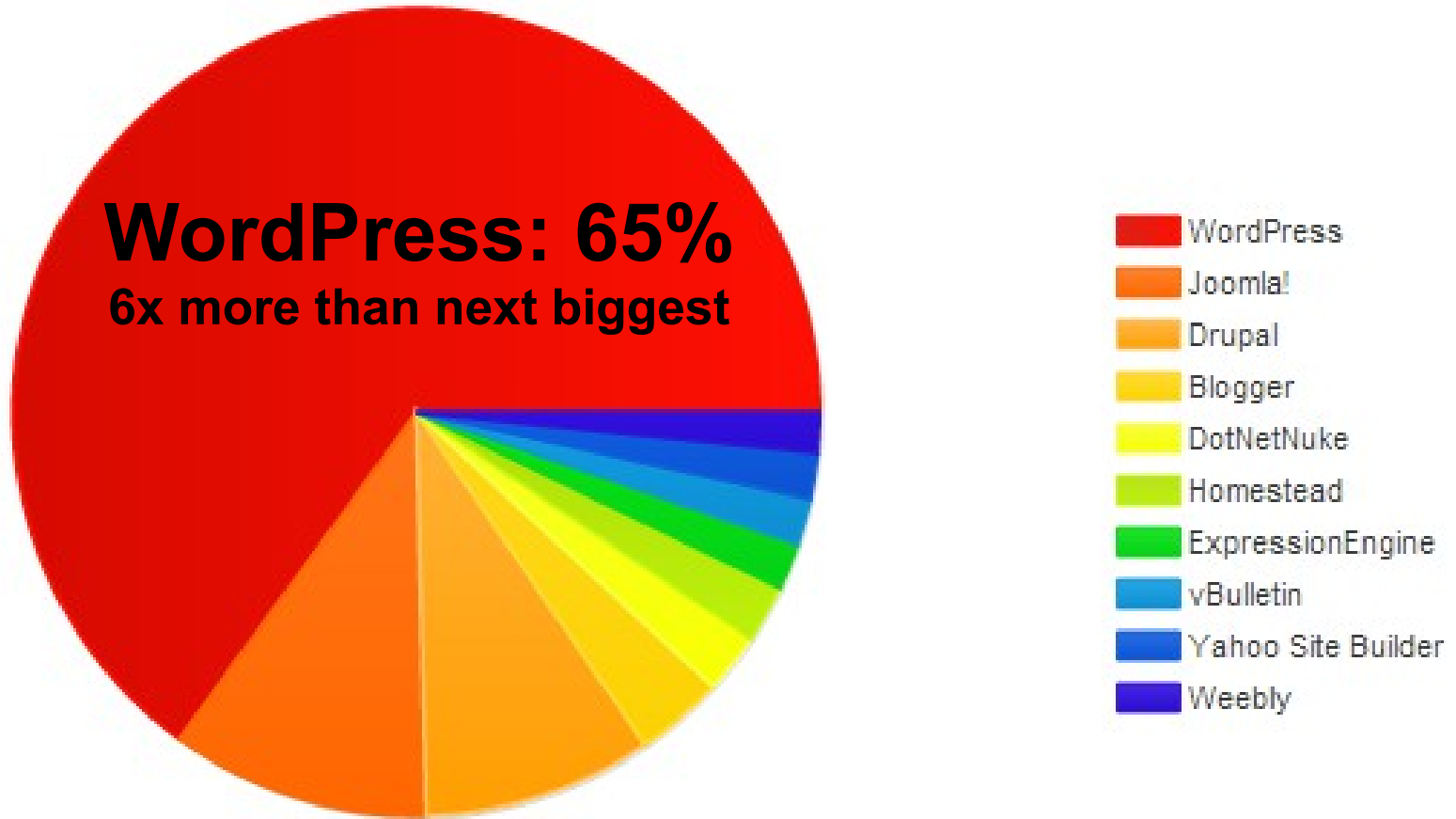


The World of WordPress

All Sizes and Types of Sites



CMS Market Share – Top 1 million sites



Other Choices to Make (not so straightforward)

* Components used
by example site

Component	Examples	Key Considerations
Payment Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paypal</i>* • Google Wallet • <i>Authorize.net</i>* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of payment to accept • Accept/store credit card info on your own site or on payment gateway • Sales geography (local vs. national vs. international) • Setup/transaction fees charged
e-Commerce Shopping Cart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eShop • Ecwid • <i>Woocommerce</i>* • Shopp • Shopify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of integration with main website • Number of products you are selling • Content required <i>besides</i> the store itself • Setup/transaction fees charged
Web Hosting Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>HostGator</i>* (my fave) • BlueHost • DreamHost • Go Daddy (ugh!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated vs. shared server • Cost (deals offered all the time!)



Before You Start...

- Know that selling online is different from selling through a brick-and-mortar store
 - Your competition is **global** and **intense**
 - Customers expect **service, delivery and support** in Internet time – which **right now**
 - **Technology is evolving** very quickly – you'll need to keep up
- Know what you are selling
 - The more **unique** and the **higher the quality**, the better
- Know who you are selling to
 - Unless you're Walmart, **niche markets** are where it's at
- **Research** your options, e.g, tools, service providers, costs



Once You Get Started...

- **Start small**, both geographically and in what your store sells. Have some success and then build from there.
- To attract repeat visitors and high search rankings, “**Content is king**”. Bill Gates said it back in 1996, and it's still true.
 - <http://www.forbes.com/sites/gyro/2012/09/05/is-content-king-for-business-marketers/>
- Enhance your site with **media** (photos, graphics, video)
 - But not to the exclusion of great marketing copy
 - Be sure to enter metadata for all media inserted



Once You Get Started...

- Make sure your site is **mobile device friendly**
 - No longer an option
- Build a **sense of community** around your website and storefront
 - **Include a blog** on your site
 - http://humanresources.about.com/od/businessblogs/a/business_blogs.htm
 - **Encourage user engagement** besides just buying stuff
 - Allow people to submit comments, take polls, rate items, like things on Facebook, etc.
 - **Place your website at the hub** of your social media efforts
 - <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/9-ways-to-transform-your-website-into-a-social-media-hub/>
- As you heard in the keynote this morning, **don't take security for granted** – on **any** website, e-Commerce or otherwise



In Closing...

- You **can** do this!
- Consider getting some **training** before you dive in
 - There are lots of resources out there – books, online videos, classes, etc.
 - See my website – <http://YourPresenceOnTheWeb.com> – for live, in-classroom training opportunities
 - *Website Development for Non-Techies: A First Course in WordPress*
 - *Advanced Topics in WordPress*
 - *Creating Online Stores with WordPress*



In Closing...

- To get a site up and running as quickly as possible, you may want to **enlist some outside help** (e.g., a consultant like myself) when planning or developing your site
 - But once it goes live, **aim to maintain it yourself**



Questions???



**Thank You for Listening,
and Good Luck!**

Feel free to contact me if you have further questions!
Jonathan W. May, President



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A Few Other Resources

- A video overview of selling online
 - <http://nhsbdc.org/course/sites-sell-building-your-e-commerce-business>
- An e-Commerce “checklist”
 - <http://www.boomtownig.com/ecommerce-web-development-service/ecommerce-checklist/>

