
FILMMAKER'S GUIDE TO LAUNCHING AN AUDIENCE- BUILDING WEBSITE IN A WEEKEND

*(THE DEFINITIVE
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS)*

Sawvy**Filmmakers**

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Introduction

Have you ever wished you could build a bigger audience for your film?

My name is Greg Koorhan and I can relate. As a filmmaker, I struggled to get people to see my work. I posted my projects on social media, took my films to festivals (even won a bunch), but attracting people to watch my films on a regular basis was hit or miss. I knew my work was good, but I really didn't know how to grow an audience.

After waiting (for far too long) for someone to 'discover' me, I started to realize I had to do something else.

I knew I needed a professional website. I'm a geek at heart so I studied the technology. I got really good at building websites. But not building an audience.

There was something more I needed to know.

I made a lot of mistakes. It wasn't until I started to examine how successful small businesses in other industries market themselves that I uncovered what to do. That is what this guide is about.

THE MINDSHIFT

It wasn't enough to use the website as a portfolio - a passive place to show my work. I needed to think of my film work as a business and not as an artist.

That was hard to separate. You may be at that point yourself. As an artist, it was hard not to focus on designing a clever business card, or fussing over a color scheme.

But I wanted to produce my films as a business. So I had to adopt a business mindset. And today, every good business realizes:

1. More people will find you through your website than anything else. It will be the first place they check when hearing about you. And you can only reach so many people handing out your business card.
2. A good business website works for you, helping you find your ideal audience and develop a fan base.
3. Because your website is the first place people look, it must be professional. Free website services are great for hobbyists but, if you want to be taken seriously, it's time to step up.

4. Doing it yourself doesn't have to be complicated or overwhelming. In fact, most of the time, simple and straightforward is best.

YOUR PLATFORM, NOT THEIRS

Now, a word about social media. Even though this is a guide about building a website, social media is still vitally important. It's just not the place to build your base of operations.

You could build a huge following on Twitter, or Facebook, but if the platform goes away (anyone remember MySpace?) then your followers go away too. That's why you should focus on your website as your home base.

It's a place where you control the "platform" for communicating with your fans. And a good platform will attract your audience so you can keep in touch with them no matter how the social landscape shifts.

WHAT'S INSIDE

In this guide, I'm going to show how to build such a website. One that isn't *just* pretty, but will work for you, 24 hours a day.

I wrote this guide because I know what it's like to watch your dream drifting by, knowing you are good enough if you just had a chance to be noticed. I want to help filmmakers like you reach your goal without going through the same hassle.

I'll be walking you through:

- The specific tools you'll need
- How to assemble a site that is designed to build you an audience
- The critical elements to put on each page
- And finally, how to avoid a ton of pain by maintaining it after launch.

By the time you finish this guide, you'll have everything you need.

But first, I want to talk to you about something really important: **Your Brand.**

Chapter One: Your Filmmaker Brand

This chapter is important.

Let me repeat... This Chapter is Important.

In fact, it covers the critical step you must take if you want any of your marketing to be successful.

In the Introduction, we talked about how being on social media is not enough, and why you need to build a professional website as your base for building an audience. Before we start building, we need to spend a little time and focus on how to develop your brand as a filmmaker.

We're going to talk about what a brand is and isn't, how to define it for yourself and how to communicate it successfully.

But you may be asking, *I make films, do I even need a "brand"?*

And the answer is Yes, you do. It's not enough to just say, "I'm an artist, I make cool stuff." A brand is what will help differentiate you from every other artist out there just making cool stuff.

Defining your brand is a strategic process. And most people don't take the time to think strategically when they build their website. You will. And in doing so, you'll already have a head start in finding an audience for your work.

Ready?

WHAT IS A BRAND, ANYWAY?

We'll start with getting an understanding what a brand really is.

A brand is so much more than a simple logo!

A brand is the entire perception of your company. And in your case, the company is probably you.

Often, your brand is synonymous with your reputation. It's all about who you are and how people feel when they interact with you. It's the way other people see you.

*Your Brand
is a Promise
to Your
Audience*

But another way to think about your brand is what you want to be known for. In that case, you could say a brand is your promise.

How does this apply to you as a filmmaker?

Let's say you or your friends are considering what movie to go see. When you see who's in it, or read the director's name, you probably get an image in your mind or form an opinion on what you can expect from the movie. That's *their* brand at work.

You, too, can use branding to build trust with your target audience. When people know you, what to expect from you, and they associate a positive experience with you or your face, it will be much easier get them to choose to watch your film, or even raise money for a new production!

DEFINE YOUR BRAND BEFORE IT'S DEFINED FOR YOU

The thing is, if you've been on social media at all, you probably already have a brand - whether it's one you want or not is another story!

It's always better for you to develop what you want it to be than to let others define it for you.

All good businesses have a strong brand. With a little focused effort, you can strengthen yours, too.

So now we know what a brand is, let's focus on How to Define Your Brand.

HOW TO DEFINE YOUR BRAND

There are 5 steps you need to go through to define a strong brand. It requires some strategic thinking. Now at this point, most artists start to roll their eyes and want to skip ahead.

Don't be that person.

Strategic thinking isn't sexy. But the outcome is so beneficial and critical to your success I can't stress it enough. So I'll say it again: **Don't skip this chapter.**

And if you get stuck, don't despair. You may want to hire a mentor to help differentiate yourself in a crowded marketplace. (That's what I did.)

So here goes. Grab a notebook and write down the answers in each of the following steps:

Step 1: Your Values

- What do you stand for?
- What do you stand against?
- What is your purpose, why do you do what you do (think about it, it's not just the money...)?

Step 2: Your Vision

- What do you get out of your art or your filmmaking?
- What do you want others to think about you?
- How do you want the audience to feel after viewing your work?

Step 3: Your Voice

- What makes you different than everyone else?
- How do others describe you?
- How do others describe your work?
- What feeling do others get when you show up in a room?

Step 4: Your Audience

Remember, your brand is formed in the eyes of your audience so this is important.

- Who is your ideal audience? Be specific. Age? Gender?
- What are they looking for in their entertainment or art?
- Where do they hang out online? Offline?
- Who do they already trust?

Step 5: Your Style

Now, look over and compare your thoughts from Step 1-4 and identify the qualities that you want your audience to associate with you. They may or may not already align. That's okay. Now's the time to make some choices.

You have the ability to choose which attributes you want to put forward, or promote, to others.

After figuring out your brand qualities, or attributes, THEN try to match a corresponding style. It can be expressed visually with your logo, colors, or images. Even in your tone of voice when you write or talk.

GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER

A couple of key points to think about here:

Your brand should be simple and memorable.

Your brand must quickly and clearly communicate who you are and what you value. People will only remember a few things about you so focus on the elements that really contribute to that clarity.

Your brand should be unique. But don't overthink how to be distinctive. You are, by definition, an individual, so the more you can identify your true voice, the more your brand will automatically be different!

Your brand should be inspiring. Keep your brand reflective of the vision you see for the world with your art in it. As long as that stays inspiring to you, it will come through to your audience.

Your brand should be authentic. There is no need to invent anything - it's so much easier to build a brand if you just stay true to yourself. Take a stance you believe in and stand strongly behind it. Don't apologize. Some people may not agree with you, but that's okay. The audience that does find you will stay fans because of it.

Are you starting to see why the exercises above are so important?

Your brand attributes will form the basis for all of your communication. And having a crystal clear vision of who you are and how you want to show up will make it easy for you to share it with everyone else. And your ideal audience will be attracted to that vision, like magic.

Once you've defined your brand, we get to focus on How to Communicate Your Brand Effectively.

CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY

The key to communicating your brand effectively is consistency. In person or online, think about your brand each time you interact with someone. Now that you are making conscious choices, take a look at what you post on social media, and adjust accordingly. If your brand attributes are authentic, this shouldn't be too hard.

Remember that with consistency, your brand will start to add value to each new project or film you create. It's a cumulative effect. You won't have to drum up an audience for each new film. You'll begin

to build a base of people that will follow your brand from project to project - but only if they feel they can count on it.

So be consistent in your brand communication - your actions, words, images and tone.

Ultimately this will mean applying the look and feel of your brand style that you are developing here to all your social media properties, but your website is your home base, so that's where we'll begin.

In this chapter, we learned how to develop your Filmmaker Brand by learning what a brand is, how to define it and how to communicate it effectively.

If you've been doing the work as we go along, good job! Keep the information you've just created off to the side, it will come into play soon. For now, we'll move on to the next chapter where we'll be covering the tools we are going to use to build your website.

Chapter Two

The Tools We'll Use

In the last chapter, we covered how to develop your Filmmaker Brand and why it's the basis for all of your communication. Before we begin applying that knowledge to your website, we'll need to take a moment and look at the tools we'll use.

There are several aspects to your website, so I've broken them into five key areas of focus: where it lives, what it looks like, how well it functions, displaying your work, and building your audience. I've broken it out this way so you can focus only on what you need to worry about and launch your website as quickly as possible.

As with any technology, this can get as complicated as you want to let it. Don't get too bogged down. follow along with these steps, in this order, and you'll be up and running in no time.

The first thing you need to focus on is where your website lives.

WEB HOSTING

All websites are made up of files that live on a server somewhere. This is called a web host.

Web hosting companies are companies that offer space on servers that house your website files. These servers run 24 hours a day and allow anyone on the Internet to access the files from anywhere with a web browser.

If you don't have a web hosting account already, I recommend you sign up with LiquidWeb.com.

The screenshot shows the Liquid Web website homepage for Managed WordPress Hosting. At the top, there is a light blue banner with the text "Introductory Offer for Monthly Plans: Get 33% Off 2 Months with Code PUMPKINSPICE33". Below this is a dark blue header with the main title "Liquid Web's Managed WordPress Hosting" and the subtitle "The Complete Solution for Your WordPress Websites". Two buttons, "Chat With Us" (orange) and "Schedule a Demo" (blue), are positioned below the subtitle. A navigation bar with links for "PRICING", "BLOG", "FAQS", and "NEED HELP?" is located below the header. The main content area features four columns of text, each with an icon and a title: "Enjoy the Benefits of a Fast Website", "Never Think About Plugin Updates Again", "Migrate Your Site For Free", and "Expert Support That Stays Up All Night". Each column contains a short paragraph of text. At the bottom right, there is a "CHAT WITH A HUMAN" button.

They are the hosting company I use and they offer great uptime reliability (so your website does not

crash and go down), excellent, US-based customer support and better page load speeds than most.

LiquidWeb will be the web hosting provider I refer to as we continue to build your website, but you should feel free to go with whatever company best suits you.

If you choose LiquidWeb, select their Managed Wordpress plan, which is \$29/month.

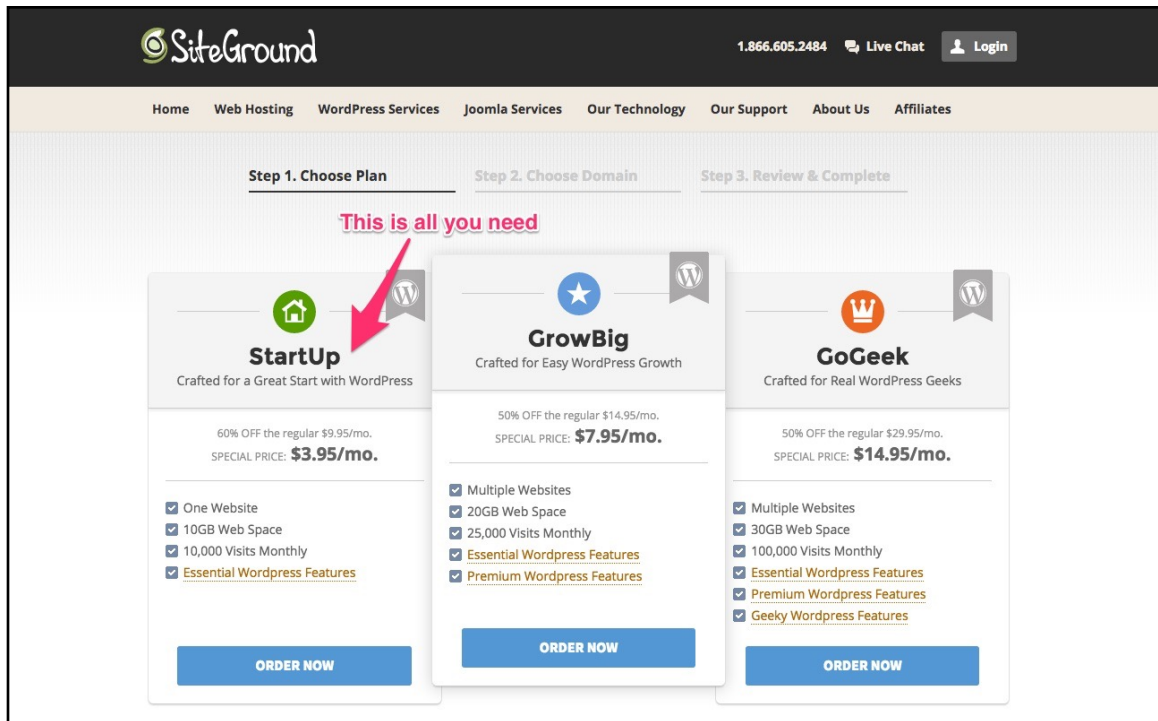
Considering this will serve as the centerpiece of your online business platform, that's an extremely reasonable cost.

But don't sign up for hosting at the website!

I've negotiated a special deal to get you started. Contact Matt at mmatson@liquidweb.com and use give him the code "SAVVY" and you'll get 50% off your first two months!

You're welcome.

If you have absolutely no budget and need an even lower-cost option, I've still got you covered. You can save a few dollars by setting up your hosting on SiteGround (siteground.com).



If you choose SiteGround, select their StartUp plan and you can get hosting for as low as \$3.95/month. As you grow, you may want to build a website for each film project, at which point you can upgrade.

But if you can afford it, I prefer the added reliability and support of the managed plans at LiquidWeb.

What About Free Hosting Services?

A word about free hosting services: just don't use them.

A first glance, I'm sure sites like Wix and Squarespace seem attractive. But take it from me, no matter what

their pitch, they really aren't any easier than building your own site, you won't have the same flexibility - and frankly, they are not as professional.

This guide is about building a site that can act as a platform for you to grow your business. Just pay the few dollars a month.

Besides, when you figure the amount you've probably already spent on cameras or gear, your website will be one of the smallest business expenses you make.

DOMAIN NAME

So next, you also need to decide on what is called a domain name. A domain name what you type into the web browser, pointing you to a website.

At SavvyFilmmakers our domain name is *savvyfilmmakers.com* - pretty straight forward, huh?

A good domain name is essential to establishing a solid and professional website, and here are some tips in choosing one:

- **Shorter is usually better.** Shorter names are simply easier to type - but there is no right or wrong here.

- More important, they should make sense and be **easy to remember**
- Ideally, they **contain your brand name**
- **Don't use symbols** such as *, /, #, etc. on your domain names
- If possible, I'd recommend you **get a .com extension** rather than any of the other options available. People are still inclined to assume it's going to be .com, so why make it harder for anyone to find you?

So, what should your domain name be?

Well, that depends on your situation.

If you are building your site for your production company: A good domain name would be "*bigtimefilms.com*" or "*bigtimeproductions.com*"

If you are building your site for your movie: Let's say you're producing a film titled "Girl and a Gun." A good domain name would be "*girlandagunmovie.com*" or "*girlandagunthemovie.com*" or even "*girlandagunfilm.com*".

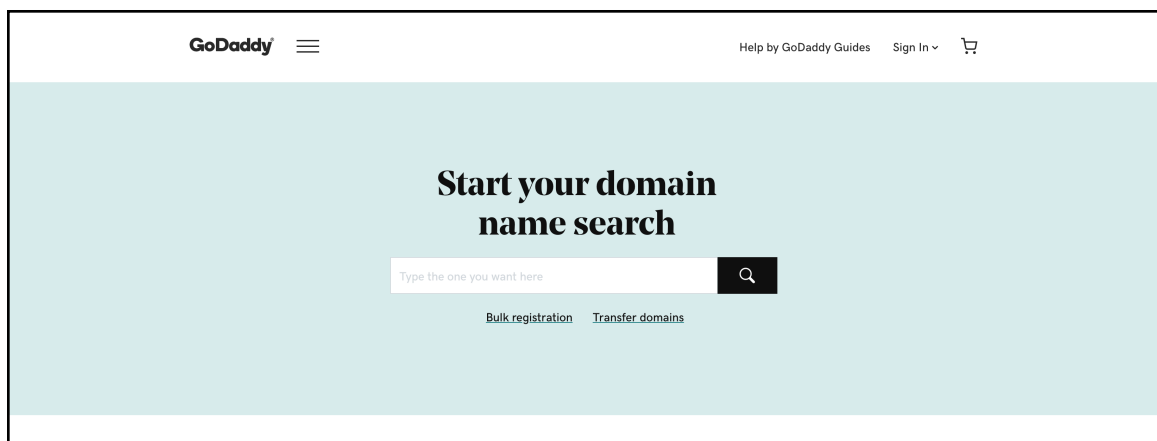
If you are building your site for yourself: A good domain name would be “*yourname.com*” or “*yournamedirector.com*” or whatever your specialty is.

Where Should You Get Your Domain Name?

If you decide to sign up with [SiteGround](#), they include a single domain name registration for free, which is a nice bonus. So, if money is tight, you can go that route, but I actually suggest you buy your domain name using an outside source.

I recommend [GoDaddy.com](#) for buying domain names. They also offer hosting, but I suggest you only use them for securing your domain names. I’ve been using them for years for domain names, they have great customer service, and I’ve bought and now manage so many domains with them it’s not even funny.

Plus, I got you a discount. [Use this link and save 30%](#).



The reason I recommend an outside domain name provider is so you have flexibility if you ever need to change your web host. You won't be locked into an one provider. It'll save you a hassle later - you just point the domain name to the new host.

Pointing your Domain Name to your Web Server

Once we've signed up for hosting and picked a domain name, we need to tie the two together. To do that, you need to add the web hosting provider's "Nameserver" to the records associated with your Domain Name.

Your web host will give you their internal name servers (there will be two). In the case of LiquidWeb, they are:

ns.liquidweb.com

ns1.liquidweb.com

Log back in to your account at your domain name registrar. (e.g., godaddy.com). Navigate to find your domain's DNS (Domain Name Servers) settings.

Adjust the domain's name servers to use the two names you just got from your web host.

That's it. Within 24 hours (sometimes it only takes a few minutes!) your website will show up when you type the domain name in your browser.

It isn't going to look very good yet, but we'll get to that. First we will focus on how to make sure your site has all the functionality we need.

WORDPRESS

Our filmmaker platform will be based on WordPress.

WordPress is free content management software that you can download and install on your website. It is, by far, the most popular of its kind.

As always, there are other options but I heartily recommend you use WordPress.

Please note: there is a difference between wordpress.com and wordpress.org and it can get confusing. *Wordpress.com* is one of those free hosting alternatives - don't sign up for an account there.

We'll be using the software and plugins distributed by *Wordpress.org*

But you don't even need to worry about it, because if you are using LiquidWeb, they install it for you when you sign up. Sweet!

If you are using SiteGround, they provide a wizard to pre-install Wordpress, right from your hosting control panel.

So pretty quickly, you'll have a domain name, and when you type it in the browser, a basic website shows up.

THE LOOK OF YOUR WEBSITE

Wordpress has two ways to design how your website looks: Themes and Page Builders.

There are thousands of themes to choose from, some free and some paid, and you can get bogged down for days looking through them, but that time spent searching won't help you build an audience.

So, I'm going to help you narrow your choices.

First of all, skip trying to find a theme that exactly matches what you want, and use a Page Builder instead. Page Builders (or sometimes called Visual Editors) allow you to layout each page the way you want it, without needing to learn programming.

But they will still need a basic theme to build on.

I recommend starting with one of these two themes: [GeneratePress](#), or [Astra](#).

Both of these themes are fast, fully responsive (meaning they look good on phones, tablets or desktops), full of features and filled tons of flexibility.

Here is how easy it is to [install GeneratePress](#).

Both have free versions you can start with, and then, if and when you need the extra functionality of the paid version, neither is very expensive.

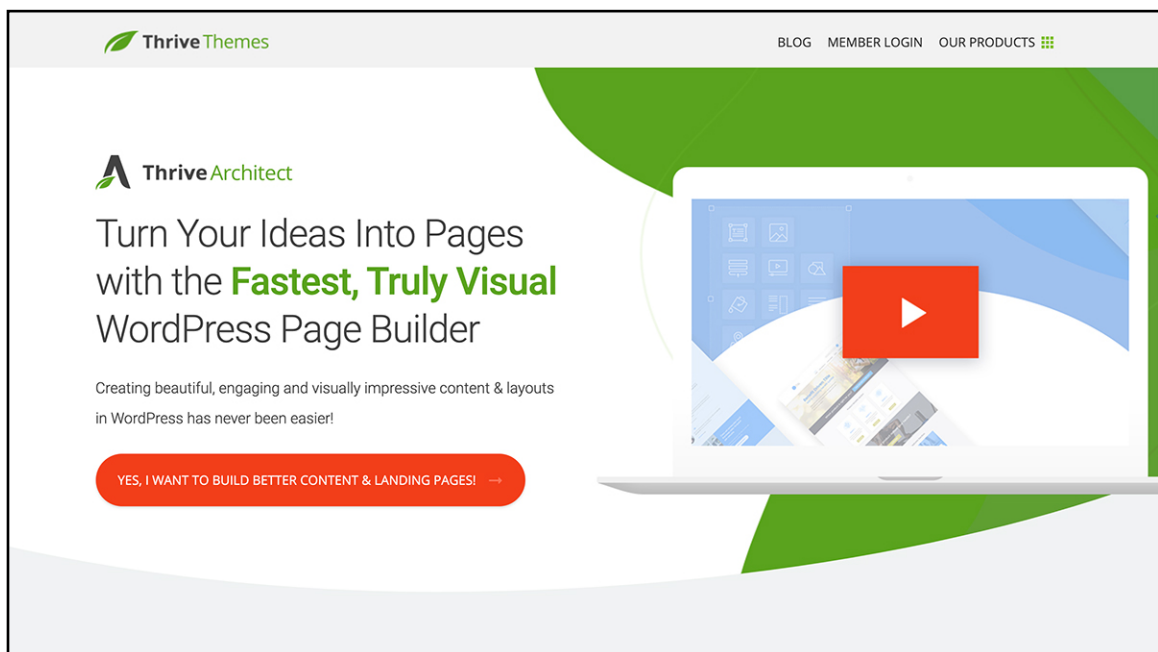
Once installed, there are plenty of things, like colors and fonts that you can customize with each of these themes. So if you want to upload your logo or make some of those choices now go ahead.

But don't go crazy, we have more to do.

Next, install one of these two Page Builders:

1. [Elementor](#) - Like the two themes mentioned above, Elementor has a free and a "Pro" version. You can test it out and upgrade when you need it.
2. [Thrive Architect](#) - Thrive Architect does not have a free version, and while it is a little more

expensive than the paid versions of other visual editors out there, you'll quickly find it allows you to do a lot more as well. The makers of Thrive Architect are "conversion-focused" - meaning they put a lot of thought into helping you make sales. And that's what we want after all, isn't it?



If you can afford it, I recommend signing up for the [Thrive Membership](#). With it you get all of their plugins, not just the page builder - saving you a ton over buying each of them separately. And there is at least one must-have plugin of theirs that we'll talk about below.

Members also get access to training in their [Thrive University](#).

I've been a Thrive Member for years and I consider it a solid investment. ThriveThemes.com

Thrive Themes

BLOG MEMBER LOGIN OUR PRODUCTS

The Thrive Membership

Your All-In-One Online Business Toolbox

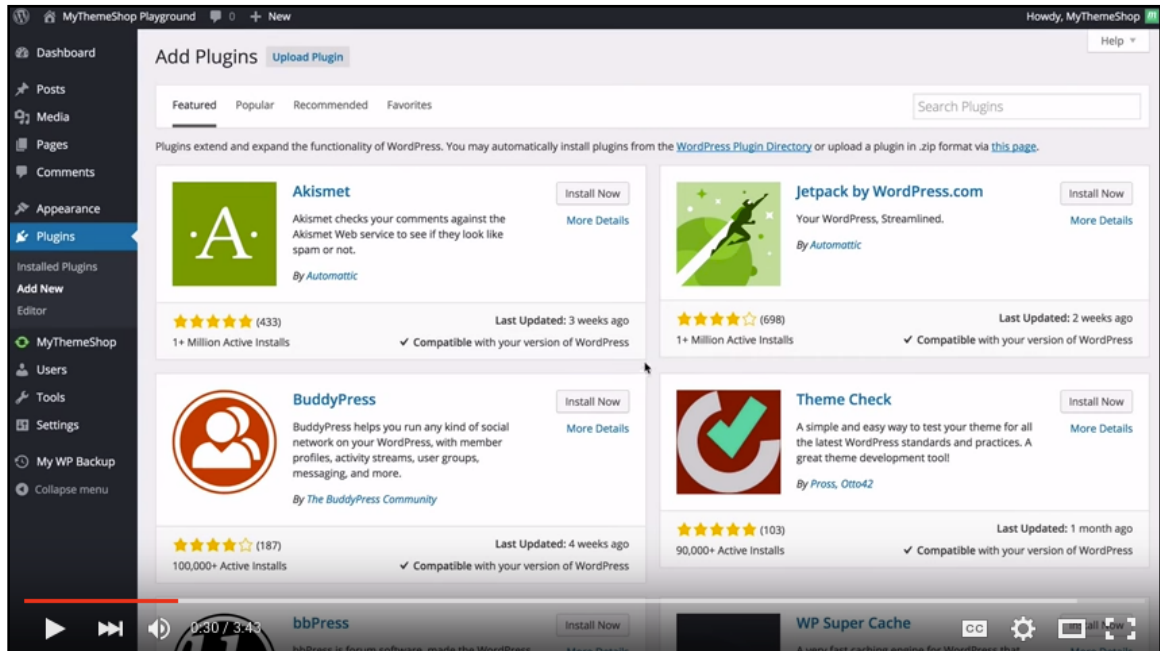
Get It Now

Imagine a world with...

- NO** endless back and forth with developers
- NO** internet marketing fluff
- NO** mix and matching your WordPress back-end together

Just value-based actionable content, and the tools you need to implement it.

Page Builders are installed as Wordpress plugins. The installation process is similar to installing a theme.



Here is a tutorial on [how to install the plugins](#).

With a visual editor installed it's easy, as an artist, to get distracted at this point and start worrying about the design of the pages and making it look cool, but there are a few things we need to add first to make your site function as we need it.

So stay with me.

Adding the Functionality You Will Need

We only need a few critical plugins to do what we need to do.

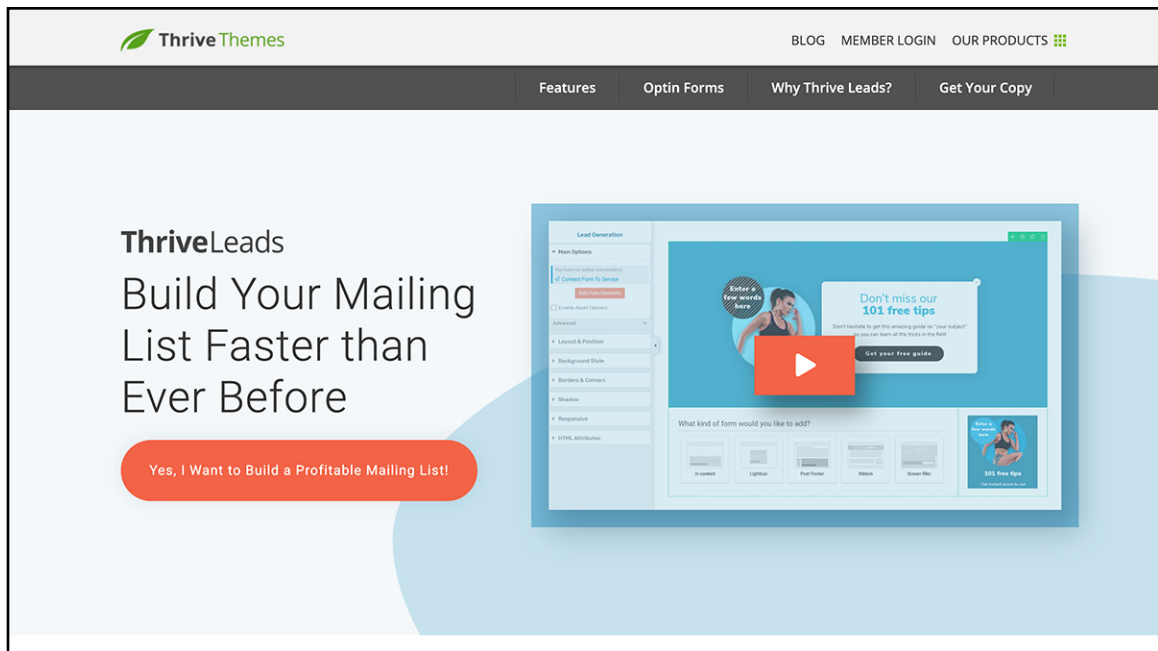
To be an effective audience-building platform, we need to accomplish a couple of things:

1. Help people to find our site
2. Easily allow people to share our work
3. Collect email addresses of fans, so you can contact them later

So these are the plugins we'll be using:

1. [Yoast SEO](#) - this free plugin makes it easy to optimize each page of your site so it is search engine friendly
2. [WP Social Sharing](#) - this free plugin makes it super simple to add share buttons wherever you want
3. [Thrive Leads](#) - this plugin will allow you to add little forms in several key places, to capture the email addresses of your site visitors

Note: Thrive Leads is a paid plugin. But if you picked up the [Thrive Membership](#) like I suggested above, you're all set, because it is included in your membership. If not, it is available separately.



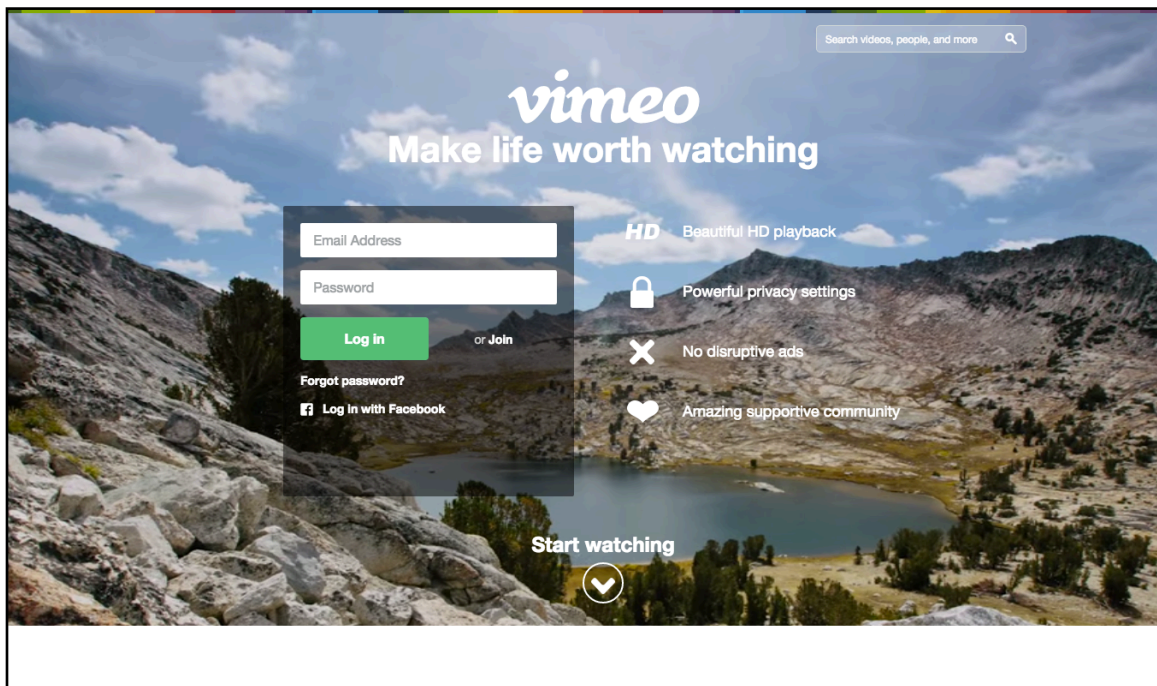
As a budget alternative to Thrive Leads, look at SumoMe (sumome.com). They give you some free tools to capture emails, so you can get started now, and upgrade to their paid option if you want to take advantage of their more advanced features at some point, after you have a chance to try out the way it works.

DISPLAYING YOUR WORK

The next thing we need to turn our attention to is making sure your video work displays in the best possible way.

Great news. Both of the page builders we talked about understand the value of adding video to your pages, so you are all set. No extra plugins needed.

But while your video will display on your web pages, it needs to live, or be hosted, somewhere else. The reason is that your web server is not designed for streaming media like a video.



I recommend setting up an account at Vimeo (vimeo.com) and housing your reel there. You may be asking, why not YouTube?

Well, you should upload your work to YouTube as well, at least your trailers, but for showcasing your work on your web pages, many filmmakers like the

compression and playback of Vimeo a little better, and it gives you a far more professional image.

Their video player is just as mobile friendly as YouTube, plus you'll have the ability to customize it when it's time to embed it into your web page. If you plan on uploading a high volume of videos, you may want to upgrade to Vimeo Plus or Vimeo Pro.

And when the time comes, Vimeo has tools to help you charge for watching your films. Very nice.

Even better, you can [save 25% on Vimeo Plus or Pro](#) by using my link.

So now we have almost all our platform tools together. The final tool we need to talk about is for building your audience.

BUILDING YOUR AUDIENCE

Aside from displaying your film or your reel, the most important thing your website can do for you is to help you collect the email addresses of visitors, so you can build a list.

Why is an email list important?

Think about it. Posting on Facebook is a crapshoot that someone will see it. Same with Twitter. But if you collect the emails of people who visit your site or have, at some point, indicated they were interested in your film, you are building a base of people that you can reach out to at any time.

Not in a spammy, promotional way, of course. But with a little bit of thought, you can keep in touch on a regular basis, building a relationship with them by sending them things they care about, so when the time comes, they will return the favor with their loyalty.

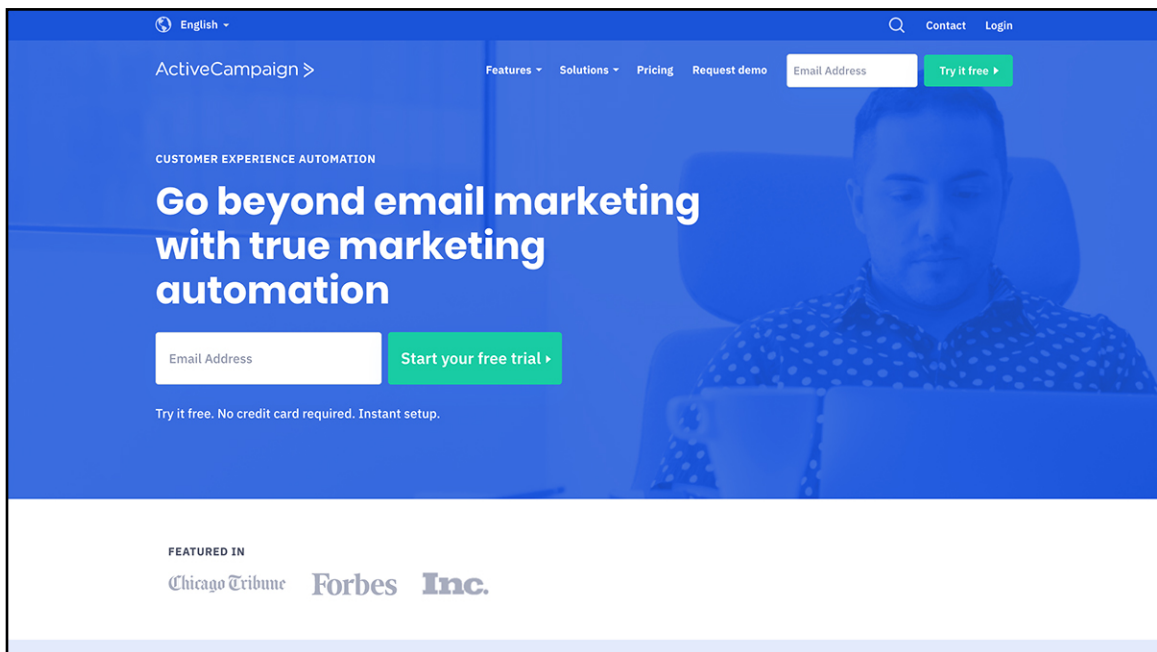
It will have a cumulative effect, too. Each project you produce will have a larger base of fans to start from than the last. And soon your list will be filled with people eagerly waiting for your next release (pre-sold because you've been consistently building your brand over time, see how that works?)

Autoresponders

The tool we are going to use to build and communicate with our list is called an autoresponder. Simply, an autoresponder is an email manager that collects the list of emails and has the ability to send

out responses automatically, each time someone is added.

I've used almost every autoresponder out there, and while there are a lot of decent options, I only regularly recommend one. There are both cheaper and more expensive options out there, but for reliability, ease of use and having the features you need to grow, I suggest you use [ActiveCampaign](#).



After you've signed up for an account, you'll create a list for collecting your film fans from the website, and then you'll connect it to the opt-in form builder you chose (in our case, SumoMe or [ThriveLeads](#)).

Here is a video on how to [connect Thrive Leads to ActiveCampaign](#).

Then each time someone enters their name or email in the form, it gets added to the list, and you can send them an email automatically.

You now have a way to communicate with your list regularly, so you can nurture fans and stay top of mind. Treat your list well, and over time you'll build an audience eager to support you on your filmmaking journey.

Phew!

In this chapter, we learned all the tools we'll need, looking at where to host your site, the software for optimal functionality, managing the look and feel, hosting your video, and building your audience.

In the next chapter, we'll be covering how to create the framework, or the structure of your site, as well as the design.

Chapter Three

Structure and Design

In the last chapter we covered the tools you need to build a site that looks great, functions properly and will collect emails so you can build an audience.

The hard part is over! Now we can start to focus on its structure and design.

YOUR SITE STRUCTURE

There are only a few pages that you really need for your business-building website. But they are must haves, as each plays a critical role.

So let's look at them, one by one:

- **A page to show your Film Trailer or Reel**
This is the main focus of your site, so in many cases, this will be your Home page.
- **An About page**
Fans want to know your story, and future collaborators will want to know if you are a good fit. This is the page where you can satisfy both. Statistically, this is the second most visited page on your site, so don't ignore it.

- **A Contact page**

It's shocking how hard it is to get in touch with many artists. Make it easy with a central listing of all the ways to do so.

- **A page for Media**

When the press want more background information on you or more details on your film, your job is to make it easy for them to find it. This is where it goes.

- **A Blog**

Posting regularly provides a reason for fans to keep coming back, and Google loves it as well. Also, don't rely on Facebook events - list your upcoming events and important news here.

- **An Offer page**

Most people won't just give you their email address for free, so you'll need to give something of value in return. It doesn't need to be complicated. It could be a behind the scenes video, an interview, or a gear list. But you will need an offer and a place to offer it.

- **A Thank You page**

This is where you would deliver the offer for which your audience just signed up.

That's all you need for your business-building site. You can have more, of course, and over time you will add more pages. But to launch, and launch quickly, start with these pages.

But as you add pages, pay attention to keeping your navigation menu simple. Easy to understand navigation is vitally important, because if your site visitors can't find what they are looking for quickly, they will leave and never come back. Enough said.

Now that we have a structure, we will focus on what the pages actually look like.

YOUR WEBSITE DESIGN

Here's where we review the work you did on your filmmaker brand elements and go ahead and start Customizing the theme options keeping the goal in mind of best supporting your brand message.

Here's an important tip:

Always picture your ideal audience when making design decisions. It's easy to get distracted by all the

flexible features or get all precious about your design or what looks cool to you. But if your potential fan can't get to what they want quickly because you are being clever, it's all wasted effort.

In the vast majority of cases, clean, simple and easy to use is a better bet than clever but confusing.

Keep your focus on what's important.

In this chapter, we learned how to structure your website, and what to focus on in design. In the next chapter, we'll be covering the elements you must have on your site.

Chapter Four

Populating the Pages

In the last chapter, we covered the key pages you must have on your filmmaker website and things to keep in mind when customizing the design. Now we can start to focus on how to populate the pages.

In addition to your reel, there are six must-have elements you need to make sure are on your site.

1. Your Brand promise
2. Film Artwork
3. Testimonials or Reviews
4. Social Connections
5. Press Details
6. Call to Action

Nobody talks about this stuff that much, but each forms a critical piece in the audience-building puzzle.

We'll talk about them one at a time.

YOUR BRAND PROMISE

The first thing we need to focus on is your attention grabbing headline or positioning. Most filmmaker websites look the same. But now that you've done the work on defining your filmmaker brand, you have a way to differentiate yourself.

One of the best ways to do that is to create a large headline with your brand promise in it, as one of the first things people see. Don't be afraid to put it front and center.

Doing so will make sure your audience knows, in the first few seconds of landing on your home page, what you stand for, and what to expect from you. Your ideal audience will be intrigued and want to stay.

FILM ARTWORK

Next, decide on what imagery from your film or poster artwork you can show. Don't rely on visitors watching your video to see the important frames from your work. If you don't have poster art, use impressive stills from your film that set the mood.

TESTIMONIALS OR REVIEWS

If people are discovering you for the first time, they may need some help to start trusting you with their time. Testimonials and reviews serve as third party proof to those visitors that your work will be worth the risk.

Don't collect all your reviews and testimonials and squirrel them away on a single page. Spread them out, placing a few of them on every page of your site (where applicable), so that a new visitor won't miss them.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

As a general rule, you want to use your social media channels - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or whatever you use - to drive visitors to your website, not the other way around.

But once a visitor lands on your site, they may want to keep tabs on you via some other way. So make sure you have links to find any social media channel where you are active.

And while this guide is centered on your website as your home base, it's worth mentioning that you

should be active on at least one social media channel. Hopefully, the same platform on which your ideal audience members congregate.

Because once you have your website ready to collect email addresses, that channel will be a primary part of your campaign to drive traffic to your website and build your email list.

PRESS DETAILS

Press (and some fans) want more detail than most filmmakers provide. Having that information ready shows professionalism; another clue that your work is worth the time.

If your website is for your film, for instance, your Media page will need an EPK, or Electronic Press Kit, with cast and crew information. Add images to the bios of the main members of your team. Then make a copy of the same information in a downloadable PDF and put a link to it on the same page.

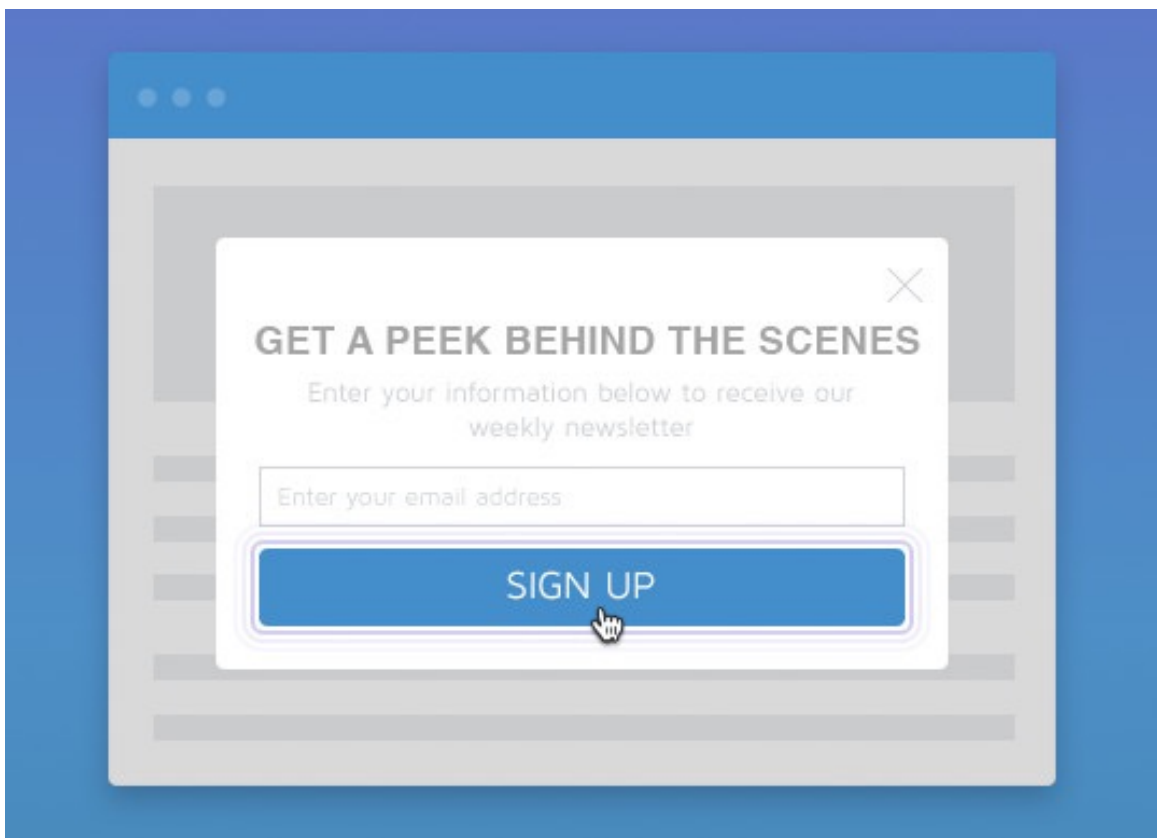
The goal is to make it easier for the media to get more information on you and your film, if they want it.

CALL TO ACTION

Most people don't take action without a nudge in the right direction. Think about what you want a visitor to do after watching your video and ask them to do it.

Do the same for each page.

If your film is for sale, put a big, clear, Buy button right where they can't miss it.



To build your list, add a pop up opt-in form (using SumoMe or ThriveLeads) right on the home page.

Don't be obnoxious, but don't be shy, either. Ask.

In this chapter, we learned the vital components to populate the pages by learning the importance of your Attention Getting Brand Promise, Film Artwork, Reviews Social Connect buttons, Press Details and the vitally important Call to Action.

With these things in place, your site is ready to launch. Congratulations!

In the next chapter, we'll be covering how to keep your site operating safe and sound.

Chapter Five

Keeping Safe and Sound

In the last chapter, we covered the important details to have on your audience-building website. And while it's now ready for fans and friends to see your work, the reality of the internet today is that you also need to be ready for unfriendly visits as well. But don't worry, I'm going to show you how to keep your website operating smoothly.

The things you need to focus on are file security, defense against spammers, and keeping a backup. Regular attention to these three areas will save you a world of headache in the future.

WEBSITE SECURITY

It's just a fact, all software needs updates. Your editing software, your laptop software. Even the software that runs your website.

So the first and most important thing to focus on is keeping the software that runs your website up to date. Log into your website once a week or so and check for update notifications. Most of the work of securing your website is being done by the developers

who created the plugins. Apply the upgrades regularly. Only takes a minute.

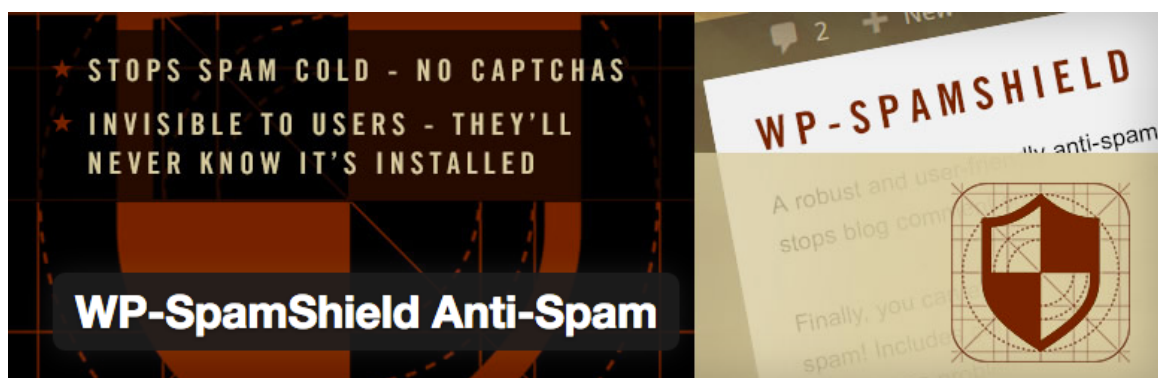


The next thing you need to do is install a plugin called Wordfence Security. It applies some additional safeguards against random robots and hackers, working in the background to keep your files safe.

Use the same process you learned earlier for installing the plugin.

SPAM DEFENSE

There are other evil robots out there, filling in any form they can find, looking for vulnerabilities.



To block them, install a plugin called WP-SpamShield.

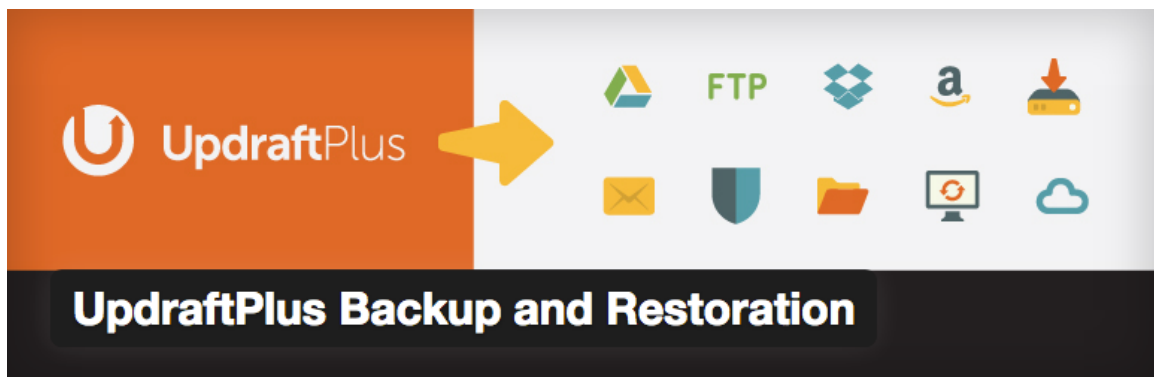
And then just let it do its thing.

BACKUP

Finally, we need to focus on keeping a regular backup of your site in case something does happen.

And let me be clear: *something will happen*.

This is the most labor-intensive of the maintenance tasks. Luckily, there are Wordpress plugins that will help us do this, too.



There is a plugin called UpdraftPlus - Backup/Restore. Follow the instructions and set it so that you create a backup of your website, *saved in a separate location*. This is key. If something happens on your web server, you don't want the backup to be in the same place.

That way, when something does happen, you can restore your website from the back file that was stored safely off-site. And you'll be back up and running in minutes, instead of days and days later.

In this chapter, we learned about the regular maintenance needed to keep your website safe and sound by learning about file security, defense against spammers, and keeping a backup. In the next chapter, we'll be talking about what to do next.

What's Next

You've been on quite the journey in the last few pages of the book.

We covered how to develop your brand as a filmmaker. Then we went through the tools you need to create your website. From there we covered how to assemble the website structure, populate the pages, and finally keep your new website safe and sound.

You now have a framework for how to create an audience-building website for your business as a filmmaker.

The only thing left to do now is take action on what you just picked up. With everything we included inside (and all the shortcuts) you should be able to start tomorrow and launch your filmmaker website within the next weekend.

I've armed you with everything you need, but I can't do the work for you. *The rest is up to you.*

One more thing:

I want to hear your Success Story.

If you are not a member already, join us in the [SavvyFilmmakers Facebook group](#).

Then share your new website in the group after using the information from this guide. I can't wait to hear from you.



Greg Koorhan
Savvy Filmmakers