Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Medea / Faculty of Sciences
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

Graduation Project

Submitted for graduation in **Master of Computer Science**
Option: System Engineering and Web Technology

Creation a New e-Commerce Platform for Algerian Drop-shipping

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Proposed and directed by:
Dr. Ahmed Cherif Mazari

Prepared and presented by:
Mr. Abdelhak Ferhaoui Mr. Islem Maizi

2021/2022

Thanks

First of all, thank God for giving us the courage, the. Willingness and patience to carry this work to completion Then, it could not have been completed without the support, advice and help of some people we want to express our sincere thanks here.

Our sincere thanks go to Dr. Ahmed Cherif Mazari for his guidance. His encouragement and relevant remarks allowed us to better structure and describe this work. We also thank him for sharing his experiences, guidance and advice with us, which have helped us immensely.

The success of this project owes much to its contribution.

Special thanks to the jury members for agreeing to review our brief.

Our sincere thanks go to our parents, our brothers and sisters and the whole family for their moral support, their unconditional encouragement, and especially for the trust, they place in us.

Finally, We thank all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to the elaboration of this work, especially all our friends for their moral support and presence at our side.

Dedication

First of all, we must thank the God who gave us the strength and courage to succeed in carrying out this humble act.

We lead this humble act to: Our dearest parents neither dedication nor word expressing our gratitude and deep respect.

Your affection.

I pray to God Almighty to preserve and grant health, happiness and long life.

Our dear parents.

And to our brothers, too.

For all our family.

And to all our friends without mentioning the names.

By the way, we would like to say that we are lucky to have people who love us.

And those who are always there for us.

Abstract

This project investigates the workings of the Algerian e-commerce dropshipping sector. This e-commerce-supporting logistics and distribution paradigm has seen rapid expansion, particularly since the start of the financial crisis. It has grown in tandem with the expansion of e-commerce entrepreneurship and transactions; nonetheless, it is a business model that has not been scientifically investigated and is not very transparent, despite the benefits of direct distribution from producers to consumers.

The main purpose of this thesis report is to examine the ways and means that can be used to put a dropship business in place. To do this, it principally looks into the dropshipping supply chain management method.

It endeavors to describe the plans implemented to open a dropshipping e-commerce store using major e-commerce platforms like WordPress.

Keywords: Dropshipping, Dropshipper, Business Model, E-Commerce, Online Business.

الملخص

يبحث هذا المشروع في طريقة عمل قطاع دروبشيبينغ للتجارة الإلكترونية الجزائري. شهد نموذج التوزيع واللوجستيات الداعم للتجارة الإلكترونية هذا توسعًا سريعًا ، لا سيما منذ بداية الأزمة المالية. لقد نمت جنبًا إلى جنب مع التوسع في ريادة الأعمال والمعاملات في مجال التجارة الإلكترونية ؛ ومع ذلك ، فهو نموذج أعمال لم يتم التحقيق فيه علميًا وهو غير شفاف للغاية ، على الرغم من فوائد التوزيع المباشر من المنتجين إلى المستهلكين.

الغرض الرئيسي من تقرير الأطروحة هذا هو فحص الطرق والوسائل التي يمكن استخدامها لوضع شركة دروبشيب في مكانها الصحيح. للقيام بذلك ، فإنه ينظر بشكل أساسي في طريقة إدارة سلسلة التوريد دروبشيبينغ.

يسعى إلى وصف الخطط التي تم تنفيذها لفتح متجر للتجارة الإلكترونية على دروبشيبينغ باستخدام منصات التجارة الإلكترونية الرئيسية مثل WordPress.

الكلمات الرئيسية: دروبشيبينغ ، دروبشيبر ، نموذج الأعمال ، التجارة الإلكترونية ، الأعمال التجارية عبر الإنترنت.

Résumé

Ce projet étudie le fonctionnement du secteur du dropshipping e-commerce algérien. Ce paradigme de la logistique et de la distribution qui soutient le commerce électronique a connu une expansion rapide, en particulier depuis le début de la crise financière. Il s'est développé parallèlement à l'expansion de l'entrepreneuriat et des transactions de commerce électronique ; néanmoins, c'est un modèle commercial qui n'a pas été étudié scientifiquement et qui n'est pas très transparent, malgré les avantages de la distribution directe des producteurs aux consommateurs.

L'objectif principal de ce rapport de thèse est d'examiner les voies et moyens qui peuvent être utilisés pour mettre en place une entreprise de dropshipping. Pour ce faire, il se penche principalement sur la méthode de gestion de la chaîne d'approvisionnement du dropshipping.

Il s'attache à décrire les plans mis en place pour ouvrir une boutique e-commerce dropshipping en utilisant les principales plateformes e-commerce comme WordPress.

Mots-clés: Dropshipping, Dropshipper, Business Model, E-Commerce, Online Business.

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Introduction

Today, there is no doubt about the importance of e-commerce for consumers to satisfy their requirements to purchase goods and services. The increasing communications channels by which to carry out business allow companies to interact with their customers at anytime from anywhere in the world, facilitating commercial transactions online. In the dynamic environment that is e-commerce, dropshipping has emerged as a service designed to save warehousing and stockholding costs for e-commerce retailers.

The economic crisis which began in 2008 turned out to be a stimulant for this business model, since dropshipping has apparently grown in parallel with the increase in e-commerce transactions [1].

The triangulation of delivery services, or dropshipping, is a logistics and distribution strategy whereby orders placed by customers on e-commerce sites are delivered directly from dropshipping facilities.

In this new business model generally called " dropshipping", the expectations of retailers that entrust providers to offer this service, that is, dropshipping, are principally to undertake in both a secure and cost-effective way their e-commerce operations, taking responsibility for only the marketing and sales of the product or service, leaving the dropshipping in charge of logistics (shipping, warehousing etc.).

In this way, the retailer focuses on the marketing and development of their products and renounces his decision-making power in terms of inventory location, order delivery, transit times or even shipping costs for delivery to customer, with these being decisions for the dropshipping to take along with their associates.

On the other hand, dropshipping providers broaden potential distribution and sales channels with the model. It should be noted that the largest dropshipping is located in China rather than in Europe or the United States.

In Algeria this model has an emergent nature. Consequently, we find barely any information on dropshipping offering this type of service, neither details of how the model work nor its performance. Similarly, we wonder how the model works and what is looming for e-commerce retail supported by dropshipping in Algeria?

Through an exhaustive review of scientific literature, we failed to find empirical research on dropshipping in Algeria. However, still on a limited basis, references can be found on the workings of this business model in other countries.

Others turn their attention to the opposite problem, that is, the dangers of high demand coming from customers of the retailers that impact the dropshipping logistics decisions [2], [3]. More relevant to our study is research that highlights the profits of retailers, which concludes that their profits are lower than those of the dropshipper [4], [5].

And the main focus of this thesis is generating a profitable dropshipping e-commerce business using WordPress. This platform can be used to tackle a host of business ventures and also fits a variety of business models. Of these, the dropshipping stands out.

Next comes the case studies that make use of the theoretical components to generate a dropshipping business from scratch. Here, I will show the various social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to carry out marketing and product promotions. The overall goal of the study is to create a profitable dropshipping e-commerce business using Shopify with implement the most effective marketing strategies available.

Chapter 1

E-Commerce & Dropshipping

1.1 E-commerce

1.1.1 E-commerce definition

Ecommerce, also known as electronic commerce or internet commerce, refers to the buying and selling of goods or services using the internet, and the transfer of money and data to execute these transactions. Ecommerce is often used to refer to the sale of physical products online, but it can also describe any kind of commercial transaction that is facilitated through the internet [10].

Whereas e-business refers to all aspects of operating an online business, e-commerce refers specifically to the transaction of goods and services.

The history of e-commerce begins with the first-ever online sale: on August 11, 1994, a man sold a CD by the band Sting to his friend through his website Net Market, an American retail platform. This is the first example of a consumer purchasing a product from a business through the World Wide Web or "e-commerce" as we commonly know it today [10].

Since then, e-commerce has evolved to make products easier to discover and purchase through online retailers and marketplaces. Independent freelancers, small businesses, and large corporations have all benefited from e-commerce, which enables them to sell their goods and services at a scale that was not possible with traditional offline retail.

Global retail e-commerce sales are projected to reach $30 trillion by 2022.

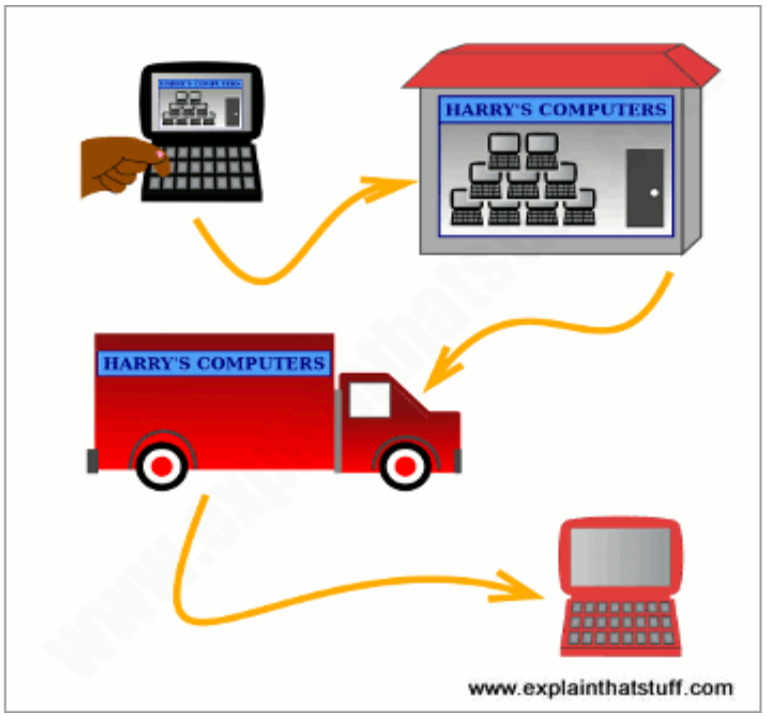


Figure 1. 1: E-commerce Structure.

Artwork: Shopping by computer is the basic concept of e-commerce, but it's a bit more subtle than that. Key parts of a retail transaction that once happened in a store (such as inspecting and comparing products and validating a payment card) now have to happen in your home, and fast, affordable, efficient delivery also plays a crucial part in the process. As this illustration shows, you can even buy a new computer with a computer!

The expansion of e-commerce has presented new opportunities for companies to compete and scale-up. Likewise, it contributed to reducing barriers to entry for new companies to launch into the market and compete with traditional companies. This has led to e-commerce becoming the main driver of economic growth and increased levels of employment across monde:

- There are an estimated 750 thousand businesses with e-commerce activity in Europe, with an annual 4.2 billion deliveries per year.

- 296 million people shop online (43%).
- E-commerce directly and indirectly employed 2.5 million people in 2016.
- E-commerce transactions in Europe amounted to €510 million in 2016, a 12% increase on the previous year.

Consequently, and without a doubt, it can be confirmed that e-commerce is one of the most dynamic and important sectors in the economy, characterized by the ease at which it overcomes physical, cultural and generational boundaries. Thanks to this, consumers can purchase online, even from the most remote corners of the earth [1].

Nevertheless, despite the ability to overcome boundaries, the vast majority of consumers who purchase online lean towards national online stores, although it is true that so-called cross-border e-commerce retailers are increasingly becoming more popular [7].

As for the rise of e-commerce in Algeria, it is important to note the sustained growth the sector has experienced in the past few years, which has given companies greater confidence to launch new initiatives to increase sales via virtual channels, and from which new models have emerged, such as dropshipping for e-commerce retailers.

Global e-commerce sales are expected to total $5.545 trillion worldwide in 2022. This number is expected to continue growing over the next few years, proving that e-commerce is becoming an increasingly lucrative option for businesses [9].

Plus, of the total global retail sales in 2022, 21 per cent is expected to come from online purchases. That is, $0.21 of every $1 spent on retail goods this year will be done over the internet.

Online sales are expected to continue rising and take a larger piece of the retail pie. By 2025, it’s estimated that world retail e-commerce sales will exceed $7.3 trillion and the overall e-commerce share of retail sales will hit 24.5 per cent [9].

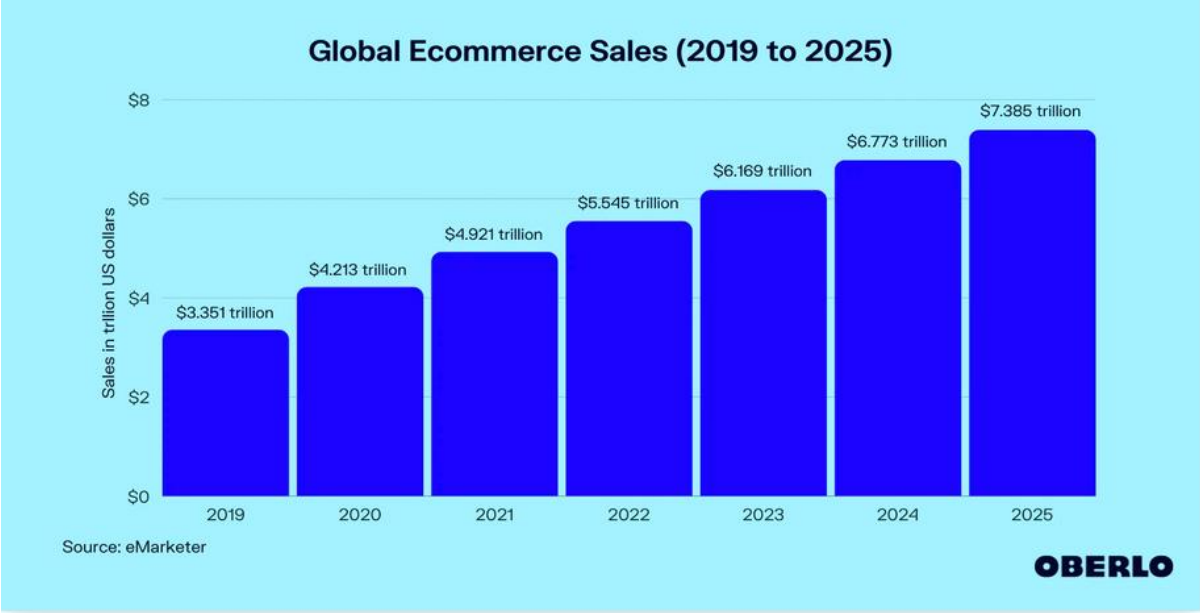


Figure 1. 2: Global E-Commerce Sales (2019 to 2025)

1.1.2 Example of e-commerce

- Retail: The sale of a product by a business directly to a customer without any intermediary.
- Wholesale: The sale of products in bulk, often to a retailer that then sells them directly to consumers.
- Dropshipping: The sale of a product, which is manufactured and shipped to the consumer by a third party.
- Crowdfunding: The collection of money from consumers in advance of a product being available to raise the startup capital necessary to bring it to market.
- Subscription: The automatic recurring purchase of a product or service regularly until the subscriber chooses to cancel.
- Physical products: Any tangible good that requires inventory to be replenished and orders to be physically shipped to customers as sales are made.

- Digital products: Downloadable digital goods, templates, courses, or media that must be purchased for consumption or licensed for use.

- Services: A skill or set of skills provided in exchange for compensation. The service provider's time can be purchased for a fee.

1.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of e-commerce

Although early reactions to online shopping websites were often mixed ("It takes too long to find what you want", "I'm not sure they're secure", "The things I want are never in stock", "You can't see what you're buying"), things have improved greatly over the last decade and online businesses have found ways round most of the drawbacks. (For example, some online clothing stores sensibly offer free returns if you don't like the clothes you've bought or if they turn out not to fit.) Many people now swear by online shopping and wouldn't dream of setting foot in a real-world store where prices are often higher, waiting lines are longer, and the doors open only during normal business hours [8].

For businesses too, e-commerce has opened up all kinds of new opportunities. Not many can compete with huge businesses like Amazon or eBay, but anyone can open an online store and start trading within a matter of minutes. Small local stores, long threatened by the growth of giant retailers like Wal-Mart and Tesco, have found a new lease of life by trading online and selling their products by mail order [8].

E-commerce has also threatened many traditional ways of doing business. When people flock to online shopping sites for the Christmas rush, they naturally spend less in real-world stores. Savvy existing businesses such as Wal-Mart have tried to offset the threat by seizing the opportunity: "bricks and clicks" (having real-world stores and a seamlessly integrated website) is now generally seen as the way to go. Shoppers have become equally savvy and are adept at inspecting products in real-world stores before buying online or using websites to locate local branches of stores where they can inspect and purchase exactly the goods they want. It's important to bear in mind that e-commerce still represents only a fraction of all the trade that we do (for the third quarter of 2020, the US Department of

Commerce reported e-commerce reaching about 14.3 per cent of total retail sales, as shown in the chart below)—but that fraction has been growing very steadily, and will keep doing so.

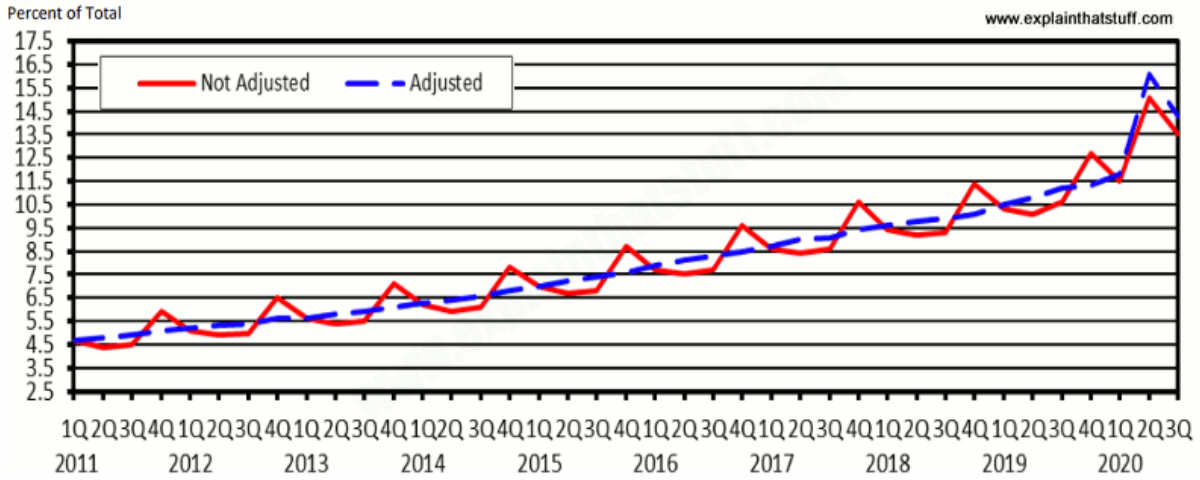


Figure 1. 3: Online Shopping Chart (2011 to 2020).

The steady growth of e-commerce: this chart shows how online shopping currently represents about 14 per cent of all retail sales three times as much as a decade ago. More formally, it shows "Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail E-commerce Sales as a Percent of Total Quarterly Retail Sales: 1st quarter 2011 to 3rd Quarter 2020". Of US Census Bureau [8].

As ever, customers call the shots and will continue to do so. While some traders (notably car dealers, opticians, and realtors) have tried to resist the threat of online shopping, protectionist tactics are bound to fail in the long term. It's all too easy now for customers to take their money and their spending power somewhere else even to retailers in another country. The customer, and their mouse, are always right. And always will be.

1.1.4 A brief history of e-commerce

- 1950s–1960s: IBM pioneers online transaction processing (OLTP): a way of handling money transactions instantly (in "real-time") using sophisticated computerized systems. With American Airlines, IBM develops an OLTP system called SABRE (Semi-Automatic Business Research Environment) that revolutionizes airline

reservations. In 1969, IBM's transaction-processing software evolves into CICS (Customer Information Control System), one of its least-known but most successful products [8].

- 1970: US company Docutel invents the ATM (automated teller machine, also known as the "cashpoint"), which works using online transactions made through bank computers. The popularity of ATMs leads to even more sophisticated forms of transaction processing.

- 1989: Tim Berners-Lee (1955–) invents the World Wide Web, unwittingly laying the foundations for an explosive growth of e-commerce in the years that follow.

- 1994: Jeff Bezos (1964–) founds Amazon.com, the iconic e-store.

- 1994: Marc Andreessen (1971–) develops the Netscape Navigator web browser, which ships with a feature called SSL (Secure Sockets Layer): built-in encryption that allows credit card transactions to be carried out securely online. There is a huge explosion in online shopping and business and the dot.com phenomenon begins [8].

- 2000/2001: The dot.com bubble bursts and over 750 online businesses go to the wall. At one point, Amazon.com share price plunges to less than 10 percent of its original value.

- 2008: E-commerce represents about 3.4 percent of total sales.

- 2017: Google begins to switch to a mobile-first index, a move that reflects the growing importance of mobile devices and also helps to accelerate that trend.

- 2020: The US Census Bureau reports that US e-commerce retail sales for the third quarter of 2020 are $209.5 billion (over 4 times the $51.2 billion for the same period of 2012, adjusted for seasonal variation). In 3Q 2020, e-commerce represents about 14.3 percent of total sales (more than three times the 4.7 percent in 2012).

1.2 Dropshipping

1.2.1 What is dropshipping

Dropshipping is a form of e-commerce by which the seller site does not have stocks and has the end customer delivered directly by its supplier without, most often, the customer knowing it.

Dropshipping, part of e-commerce, is a strategy in which an online seller presents and offers products without having to keep them in stock, so that when a buyer purchases, the orders are sent and delivered directly from the dropshipping facilities [6].

In other words, it is a management strategy whereby the retailer does not keep goods in stock but rather transfers the orders and delivery details they receive from customers to the manufacturer, or another retailer, or a wholesaler who then delivers the goods straight to the customer [6].

The distinctive feature is this connection between the dropshipping and the customer since their level of satisfaction with the e-commerce retailer from which they purchased is dependent on the satisfactory completion of the tasks undertaken by the dropshipping (delivery service, returns, complaints management etc.).

In addition, this e-commerce strategy might be considered an alternative business model, initiative or venture which requires very limited upfront investment and one that does not require a large sales team, intermediate warehousing, logistics or complex contractual agreements, amongst other things.

1.2.2 General scheme of dropshipping operations

The operations of this e-commerce alternative, in which traditional logistics have been reshaped, are rather simple (), even if it requires a higher level of coordination and coherence to achieve a good result on the consumer purchase process, a high level of satisfaction for the

retailer, the dropshipping and in particular for the customer. The most relevant interactions between participants in purchasing under this business strategy are the following [6]:

Interaction 1: E-commerce retailer, whose fundamental operations are the sale and promotion of the products - the object of the agreement - negotiates cooperation terms with the dropshipping. Within this agreement, the following aspects are set: existing guarantees for both parties, products – the service object, processes for communication and updates, agreed margins, customer order processes, shipment methods, delivery conditions, invoicing, refund and return policies...

Interaction 2: The e-commerce retailer develops and manages their online store which features descriptions and images of the products supplied by the dropshipping. The product offering must be kept up-to-date according to stock availability in the warehouse, therefore constant communication with the dropshipping is fundamental. Moreover, the retailer oversees the communications strategy, promotion and advertising for their online store.

Interaction 3: Customers buy goods and services through the retailer's online store. The retailer then transfers the orders to dropshipping. In such a way the retailer benefits from the difference between the revenue generated on the products minus the invoiced amount from the dropshipping.

Interaction 4: The dropshipping sends the goods which have already been paid for by the customer in the name of the online store to the customer's address and also deals with issues related to the guarantee of the products being sold. From a commercial point of view, this model reduces delivery times to the final customer (as the product moves from the dropshipping supplier to the consumer) and allows suppliers to place their products in any market within a short timeframe without additional costs.

In this model, we draw attention to two fundamental actors: the retailer and the dropshipping.

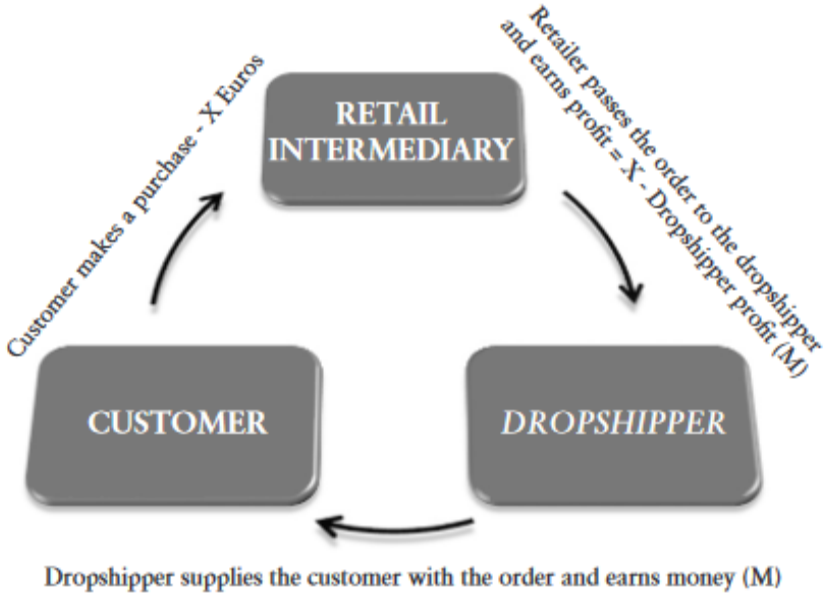


Figure 1. 4: Chart to Dropshipping model.

1.2.3 How much can you make as a dropshipper?

Many dropshippers make up to $100,000 per year with a successful dropshipping store. So, if your idea of being a successful dropshipper is to make $100,000 per year, you'll need to choose the right suppliers and build a brand.

1.2.4 Is dropshipping profitable?

Yes, dropshipping can be a profitable business model for merchants because you are not responsible for shipping or manufacturing. It's a low-risk business model that doesn't incur huge costs like a wholesaler would normally have and you can earn a good profit margin with the right suppliers.

1.2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of Dropshipper

Advantages

- Potential to increase distribution channels, providing retailers with all kinds of logistics and distribution.

- Potential to cover to a greater extent production capacity surplus if it exists.
- Cost savings (maintenance, taxes, insurance, material handling, capital, storage, obsolescence etc.)
- Offers the specific products demanded by buyers, at the right time and place.
- Gains great opportunities to enter new markets.
- Improved control of margins and potential to influence sales price to the public.

Disadvantages

- No direct contact with the final customer.
- Cannot control and avoid breach of contractual obligations resulting from a retailer's abandonment of the business.
- Its marketing opportunities are limited because it is responsible for receiving unified logistics and order processing.
- Potential conflicts with the retailer when integrating into its distribution strategy.
- Responsible for covering costs due to excess production or failure to correctly forecast customer demand.

From this, we can conclude that this type of business is likely to be very suitable and successful if you pay special attention and consider in detail the following critical factors:

- Setting policies in terms of returns, packaging and payment.
- A return policy that describes who is responsible for the associated costs and how the returned products will be handled.

- Well-designed information systems with an uninterrupted online connection between dropshipping and the online store to report stock availability for each product.
- A close link between the dropshipping manufacturer/supplier and retailer to ensure good service rendered to the customer through an intuitive, clear, transparent and Omni channel website.
- Well-developed product distribution and delivery infrastructure, where fast, fluid and flexible deliveries are provided, adapted to the final customer's lifestyle and obligations.

Chapter 2

Requirements to start Dropshipping

2.1 How to start a dropshipping business

2.1.1 Eight steps to a profitable dropshipping business plan

Learning how to start a dropshipping business, like any type of venture, isn't easy. Nevertheless, it's a great first step into the world of entrepreneurship. You can sell to customers without holding any inventory. You don't need to pay for products upfront. And if you're serious about your new venture, you can build a sustainable source of income in the long run.

If you're contemplating dropshipping, consider taking the following business and financial steps [12].

1) Commit to starting a dropshipping business.

2) Choose a dropshipping business idea.

3) Do competitive research.

4) Choose a dropshipping supplier.

5) Build your e-commerce store.

6) Get your finances in order.

7) Market your dropshipping store.

8) Analyze and improve your offering.

Some are mandatory from the outset, while others are just a good idea. But dealing with them upfront will save you time and headaches down the road.

2.1.2 Commit to starting a dropshipping business

As with any other business, dropshipping takes significant commitment and a long-term perspective. If you're hoping for a six-figure income from six weeks of part-time work, you're going to be sadly disappointed. By approaching your business with realistic expectations about the investment required and your profit potential, you'll be much less likely to get discouraged and quit [12].

When starting a dropshipping business as a beginner, you'll need to invest heavily using one of the following two currencies: time or money.

2.1.2.1 Investing time in your dropshipping business

Bootstrapping and investing sweat equity to build your business is our recommended approach, especially for first-time dropshipping entrepreneurs. We favor this approach over investing a large sum of money for numerous reasons:

- You'll learn how the business operates inside and out, which will be crucial for managing others as your business grows and scales.
- You'll intimately know your customers and market, allowing you to make better decisions.
- You'll be less likely to spend large sums on vanity projects that aren't critical to success.

- You'll develop several new skills that will make you a better entrepreneur. Realistically, most people aren't able to quit their job to spend six months ramping up their new online store. It may be a bit more challenging, but it's possible to get started with dropshipping, even if you're still working a 9-to-5 position, assuming you set appropriate expectations regarding customer service and fulfilment times for your customers. When you start to grow, you can transition into working full-time on your business as much as cash flow and profitability allow.

All businesses and entrepreneurs are unique, but it's possible to generate a $1,000 to $2,000 monthly income stream within 12 months working approximately 10 to 15 hours per week building your business.

If you have the option to work on your business full time, that's the best choice to improve your profit potential and chance of dropshipping success. Focusing all your efforts on marketing is especially helpful in the early days when building momentum is crucial. It will usually take at least 12 months of full-time work with a strong emphasis on marketing for a dropshipping business to replace an average full-time income of $50,000.

That may seem like a lot of effort for a relatively small payoff, but keep these two things in mind:

- Once your dropshipping business is up and running, maintaining it will likely take significantly less time than a 40-hour-per-week job. Much of your investment pays off in terms of the efficiency and scalability offered by the dropshipping model.

- When you start a business, you're creating more than just an income stream you're also building an asset you can sell in the future. Make sure you consider the equity value you're accruing as well as the cash flow generated when looking at your true return.

2.1.2.2 Investing money in your dropshipping business

It's possible to create and grow a dropshipping business by investing a bunch of money, but we advise against it. We've tried both approaches to growing a business (bootstrapping it ourselves versus outsourcing the process) and have had the most success when we've been in the trenches doing most of the work [12].

In the early stages, it's crucial to have someone who is deeply invested in the success of the business building it from the ground up. Without understanding how your business works at every level, you'll be at the mercy of expensive programmers, developers, and marketers who will quickly eat up any profits you're generating. You don't need to do absolutely everything yourself, but we strongly recommend being the primary driving force at the outset of your venture.

You will, however, need a small cash cushion in the $1,000 range to get your business launched and operational. You'll need this for minor operating expenses (such as web hosting and dropshipping suppliers) and to pay any incorporation fees, which we'll discuss below.

2.1.3 Choose a dropshipping business idea

The second step in learning how to start a dropshipping business is performing the necessary market research. Just as if you were opening up a retail store and looking into the different locations, competitors, and trends, you want to investigate a niche you're interested in and make decisions based on how profitable it can be. But the truth is, coming up with product ideas to sell is tricky [12].

To help inspire your next dropshipping business idea, Shopify curates a list of trending products based on the top-selling product categories on the platform. By focusing on more niche and trending products, you can help get the attention of shoppers and gain traction without competing with larger, established businesses.

Niche products often have a more passionate customer base, which can make selling to specific crowds easier by raising awareness for your products. Fitness, fashion, beauty

products, electronics, phone accessories, and yoga-related items may be a good entry point to start dropshipping with no money.

Some examples of a niche dropshipping store could be:

- iPhone cases for iPhone owners.
- Camping gear for campers.
- Exercise equipment for fitness folks.

You can also use the following tools to test out your dropshipping business ideas:

Google Trends. Google Trends can help you determine if a product is trending upward or downward, as well as the seasons they tend to trend in. Note that Google Trends doesn't show search volume. So if you use it, be sure to cross-reference your data with a keyword tool like Keywords Everywhere to determine the product's popularity in search [13].

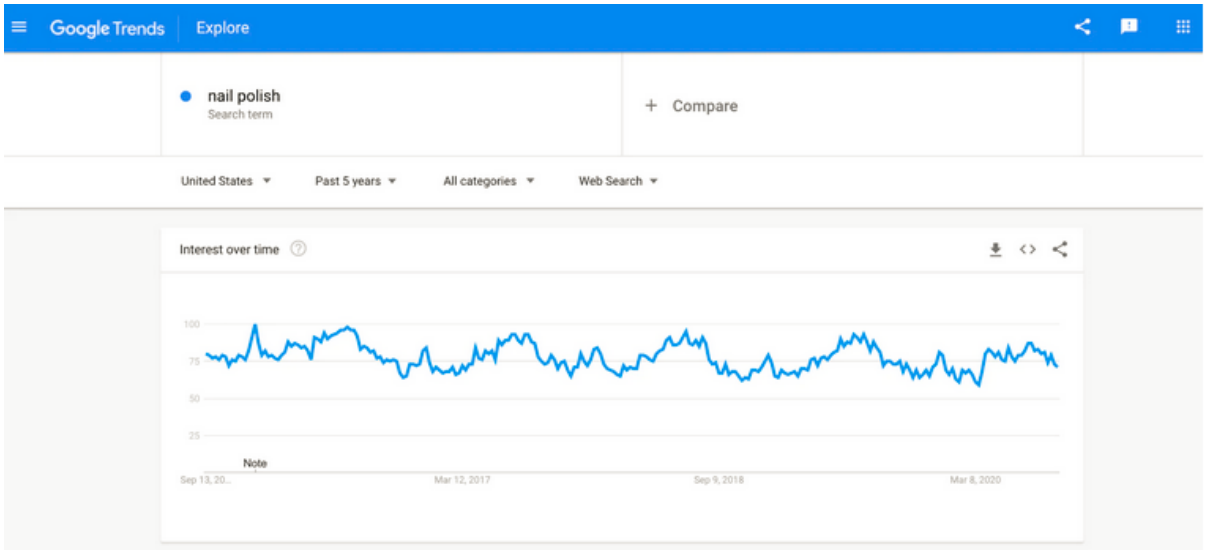


Figure 2. 1: Google Trends.

Keywords Everywhere. This keyword research tool shows you the monthly search volume for your product and how competitive it is. You can use this information to gauge the popularity of your dropshipping business idea and inspire new product ideas for the future.

DSers order volume. In DSers, you can search for products based on order volume to determine the potential of your business idea.

Although the growth in e-commerce is a great benefit for those looking to start a dropshipping business, it also creates a lot of competition. That means you'll want to do competitor research when putting together your dropshipping business plan to find success in selling your products.

2.1.4 Do competitive research

Now that you know what you're going to sell in your store, you want to look at who your competitors are and understand the way they work. Your competitors may hold great clues to success and can help you build a stronger marketing plan for your dropshipping business [12].

If your market has a lot of competitors (which is a good thing in dropshipping), limit your research to about five other dropshipping companies, including one or two big players like Walmart, eBay, or Amazon. It'll help you keep focused and plan your next steps.

2.1.5 Choose a dropshipping supplier

Choosing a dropshipping supplier is a critical step toward creating a successful dropshipping business. Without suppliers, a dropshipping business wouldn't have any products to ship to customers and, therefore, cease to exist [12].

At this point, you've vetted what dropshipping products you want to sell and know they can be profitable now you want to make sure you find a dropshipping supplier that gives you the high-quality service you need to grow. Ecommerce platforms like WooCommerce offer a plug-and-play style option for finding potential suppliers.

2.1.6 Build your e-commerce store

Build own e-commerce site by far the most effective way to sell merchandise to and interact with the targeted market is to construct own e-commerce site. Invest some time and energy to do so. Be sure to customize the site in such a way as to appeal to the unique emotions and expectations of the clients.

2.1.7 Get your finances in order

One common mistake entrepreneurs make when starting a business is blending their personal and business finances. This confuses, makes accounting more difficult, can lead to the personal assumption of business liabilities, and is a big red flag for the IRS if you're ever audited [12].

You'll want to keep your business and personal finances separate as much as possible. The best way to do that is by opening up new accounts in your business's name. You'll want to open the following:

1) Credit card: You should have a business credit card that is used for business expenses and dropshipping inventory purchases only. Because you'll be buying a lot of merchandise from suppliers, you can rack up some serious rewards with the right rewards travel cards. We've found that Capital One has the best travel rewards program and that Fidelity Visa/American Express offers the best cash-back program.

2) Collect sales tax: You'll need to collect sales tax only if both the following are true:

   • The state you operate from collects sales tax.

   • An order is placed by someone living in your state.

   For all orders placed by residents of other states, even if those states charge their own sales tax, you won't need to collect any tax. There's a good chance we'll see

changes to these laws in the coming years, but for now, the tax laws for small online merchants are very advantageous.

If your state does charge sales tax, be prepared to collect it on the limited number of orders from customers in your home state. You'll want to contact your state's department of commerce to register as an online retailer and find out how frequently you need to submit the tax you collect.

3) Local business licenses: Most cities and towns require businesses to get a business license that needs to be renewed regularly. However, this requirement may differ for dropshipping businesses, many of which likely will be operated from home offices. You'll want to look into your local laws and regulations to see what, if anything, is required.

2.1.8 Market your dropshipping store

Now that you know how to start a dropshipping business, it's time to talk about marketing your new store. To stand out in your market, you may want to put extra effort into your marketing and advertising efforts when building your dropshipping business plan.

2.1.9 Analyze and improve your offering

After you've been marketing and managing your dropshipping business for some time, you can start looking at the results of your hard work. Shopify analytics can help you answer some important questions about your online store, such as [12]:

- Sales: What are my best-performing channels? Where should I put more ad dollars? What are my bestselling products? Who are my best customers?
- Shopper behavior: Are people buying more on desktop or mobile? What's the conversion rate for each device?
- Profit margins: What products and variant SKUs are the most profitable? What are my sales and gross profits looking like month over month?

You can also use tools like Google Analytics and Search Console to measure search traffic over time and improve your search engine optimization (SEO) efforts. Plus, if you're using a third-party app for your social media or Messenger marketing, check the reports monthly to make sure your overall strategy is working for your business.

When creating a dropshipping e-commerce store, you want to create a data-informed analytics system. Remain consistent with what you analyze over time and measure your store's performance against clear KPIs. This will help you make smarter decisions for your store and take your small business to the next level over time.

2.2 How much do you need to start in dropshipping

2.2.1 The cost of starting a dropshipping business

Starting a business is great till you realize you've run out of budget. That's the second biggest reason why most startups fail. And it makes sense: you need money to make money, and if you don't have the right amount of money, well you're screwed. Luckily, here at Wholesale Ted, we've taken the guesswork out of expense budgeting for building a dropshipping store [14].

2.2.2 Dropshipping startup cost [Shopify vs WordPress]

The basic and undeniable fact about dropshipping or any e-commerce business is that you need an e-commerce platform to build your business. And for dropshipping, two of the most popular e-commerce platform that we're going to talk about is Shopify and WordPress (WooCommerce). Before we proceed, you should know, that getting the products to sell isn't going to cost you a dime. Also, shipping of products and working with suppliers are totally free. Since that's out of the cost of starting a dropshipping business, let's see what the actual cost is [14].

2.2.2.1 Cost of starting a dropshipping business: Shopify

First thing first, you need a web host to power your online store. This is one of the most important aspects of your e-commerce business. So, for this to work you need a Shopify account!

2.2.2.1.1 Shopify account: $29/month

Shopify is going to cover the store and hosting aspect of your website and as such, you can get started under five minutes. That's one of the beauties of the Shopify platform, it's done for you.

You just have to sign-up and create your account to have a fully functional e-commerce store. Equally interesting is that you can get started using their 14 days free trial.

2.2.2.1.2 Domain name $14/year

As part of having a standard professional e-commerce website, you're going to need a domain name for your store. From Shopify, you can easily get yours for around $14.

However, you can cut the cost by getting it for $10 or less with Name Cheap. But then you'll have to deal with the moving and pointing of name servers and stuff. So going with Shopify's $14 domain name might still be a good deal.

2.2.2.1.3 Dropshipping app $29 – $39/month

Getting a domain name with a store builder like Shopify will cover the basic aspect of your e-commerce website. To have a standard dropshipping store on Shopify you going to need other apps for scaling up.

As a result of this, you can easily choose from two of the top drop shipping app on the Shopify platform. Oberlo or Spocket.

Oberlo can integrate your Shopify store with AliExpress and allows you to have a semi-automated dropshipping store. The Oberlo app has a free plan with a 50-order cap per month and after that, their basic plan starts from $29.

Spocket on the other hand allows you to choose products to dropship from their huge marketplace of thousands of suppliers scatter all around the world across the US and EU.

One of the strong points of pocket is that it allows you to enjoy 2 – 5 days of shipping of your products, unlike AliExpress's long shipping time.

Sprocket equally has a free plan of 25 products import cap and a 7 days free trial for their paid plan. Starting at $39.

2.2.2.1.4 Store enhancement add-ons: $98/month (optional)

Still on the goal of having a standard e-commerce store that will boost conversion. For that, you going to need a few other apps to optimize your dropshipping store for specific functionalities.

Functions like bulk-discount, count-down timer, Sale POP-UP, cross-sell etc. you can install as many apps as you want based on your budget.

On Shopify, their apps are based on recurring fees and we're going to start with the basics that you need to get going:

- Discount Pricing: $19.99.
- Cross-sell: $19.99.
- Boost sales: $30.
- Exit intent Pop-Up: $29.
- Sale Pop-up: Free (marketing Apps).

To start with, it's not compulsory to install any of the add-ons. But if you so which that's the estimated cost you should be looking at for your store add-ons on Shopify.

2.2.2.2 Marketing cost (Shopify & WordPress/WooCommerce) $500

The marketing aspect is very important and at the same time can be a tricky one. The fact is, there's no accurate price tag for it. Various factors should be considered before we can name a price for the marketing cost.

The type of ad you run and your targeted location all have to do with the cost you're going to face. For new beginners, the ad platform that usually goes to mind is Facebook and trust me this may not be your best option.

Your best chance of making most of your adverts should be through Google ads.

But the downside to this is that they are usually expensive. So around $20/per day or less for the next 30 should be around $600. So, let's say 500 – $600 for your marketing budget.

Later on, you can then start trying out the social media ads influencers account for promoting your products and equally use the dropshipping product research tools.

You have total control over how you want your ads to be run and as such, you can still have an ad run lesser than that.

2.2.2.3 Summary of Shopify platform

You'll need $82 to set up your Shopify store ready to start selling without the marketing budget and store add-ons.

But to have a standard store fully optimized for conversion with the necessary apps. You should be looking at $180 for the first month plus the marketing budget of $500, lets round it up to $680.

Since Shopify runs on a monthly subscription, you should be looking at $180/month to keep your store running. But come to think of it the first 14 days won't cost you a dime until after your trial has lapsed.

Dropshipping startup cost for Shopify Platform = $680.

2.2.2.4 Cost of starting a dropshipping business: WordPress [WooCommerce]

WordPress has been a free CMS (content management system) that gives you more control over your website and invariably helps reduce the overall cost of starting your dropshipping business.

Let's look at a detailed WordPress cost for a standard dropshipping website.

2.2.2.4.1 Web hosting account $58/year

Even though WordPress and WooCommerce are free you still need to pay for your web hosting account. For this, there are several web hosting you can get started with.

But for a standard e-commerce website you need one of the best, and for this, I can recommend BlueHost. It's officially recommended by WordPress itself and with BlueHost, you can get started with $58 plus a free domain name.

You can refer to this article to set up your dropshipping website with WordPress.

2.2.2.4.2 Domain name $10/year

The domain name is usually around $10/year for most "dot com" on Name Cheap or even lesser. But you can save everything while using BlueHost because it comes with a free domain name for their hosting package.

2.2.2.4.3 Dropshipping plugin (AliDropship) $89

After you've set up your website with WordPress, you'll need the AliDropship plugin to integrate your website with AliExpress for seamless dropshipping.

The plugin will transform your WordPress/WooCommerce store into a semi-automated dropshipping website.

It will allow you to import products directly from AliExpress and at the same time fulfil orders automatically from your website.

The plugin works directly with WordPress and also with the WooCommerce plugin. It cost $89 for a one-time fee only.

2.2.2.4.4 Extra enhancement plugins & add-ons ($145 one-time fee)

Mind you, the add-ons are optional. But since we're working with a typical standard dropshipping website, the extra detail is only fair enough.

To cut the story short, the same AliDropship has a 6-in-1 add-on bundle that will save you the cost of buying every single plugin at the original price. The 6 add-on bundle include:

- Social rabbit plugin (for generation sales & traffic from social media).
- Countdown timer.
- Recent sales pop-Up.
- Facebook business.
- Google merchant.
- Upsell.

You could decide to only get one of the plugins or everything it's totally optional. But they help with store conversion.

2.2.2.5 Summary of WordPress platform

You'll need $157 to set up your drop shipping website ready to start selling. But for a standard website that's optimized with the add-ons and the marketing budget you should be looking at a one-time fee of $802

Looking at the bright side the cost is only a one-time fee compared to Shopify's monthly recurring.

Dropshipping startup cost for WordPress = $802.

2.2.2.6 To sum it all

Looking at the Shopify platform you can get started for free until two weeks before their fee starts rolling in.

But in the long run, it's going to be relatively costlier when the recurring fee starts setting in.

However, even though Shopify is costlier, it's relatively good for beginners. Because you don't necessarily have to have enough experience with web development.

WordPress, on the other hand, is more flexible, it gives you the freedom to try many things. This is because you're in total control over your store.

Browsing through their plugin area you'll see many free and paid plugins you can download for free to further optimize your store.

In our case, we will choose to build our website with the WordPress platform.

2.3 How to create your store

2.3.1 Plan for own store

This chapter dares to let you know how to create a personal e-commerce store via WordPress. Just to recap an earlier point, dropshipping is a fulfilment method in which a middleman arranges for the items to be shipped directly from a wholesaler to a client without keeping them in stock in the meantime.

To guarantee a competitive edge in this, the merchant has to maintain a properly functional website while at the same time keeping the product name and other details entirely secret.

2.3.2 What is WordPress

In nontechnical terms, WordPress is “open source software you can use to create a beautiful website, blog, or app. By being open-source, it is free to use, modify, and distribute the software according to the GNU General Public License (GPL). According to the GNU website, the GNU Public License “is a free, copy left license for software and other kinds of work. The GNU General Public License is intended to guarantee your freedom to share and change all versions of a program to make sure it remains free software for all its users. At the time of this book’s writing, the current version is GPL v3. Compared to proprietary software such as Microsoft Office whose source code is closed and only available to the original creators to modify, open-source software empowers users to freely make changes to the source code anytime and share them with anyone. If a feature is missing or needs to be added, technically astute users can add it by modifying the source code [17].

WordPress is a content management system. A content management system (CMS) is a software application that provides the capabilities for creating, organizing, editing, and publishing content to the Web. Instead of requiring multiple software applications, only one application is required. According to WordPress.org, WordPress is used by 30 per cent of the websites and blogs on the Web, ranging from hobbyist to mainstream online news sites.

Some of the companies that use WordPress to power their websites and blogs include:

- The Obama Foundation.
- Angry birds.
- TechCrunch.
- Pulse by the target.
- Bloomberg professional.
- Vogue India.

- BBC America.
- Tribune Media Group.
- Georgia state university (my alma mater).

Not only is it robust enough to work for a solopreneur, but it is also scalable enough to handle the needs of an enterprise organization.

Before WordPress, when a business wanted a website created, it either used a web designer within its company or hired a web designer consultant. Due to the lack of technical expertise in-house, most small businesses were either forced to hire an external consultant or freelancer or find a volunteer looking to gain some website design experience to create one. While already working with limited resources and budgets compared to bigger businesses, creating a small business website could quickly become an expensive undertaking depending on the website features. Once the website is launched, it will need to be maintained and modified, which is an additional expense. A simple informational website can quickly become expensive. How can WordPress help?

2.3.2.1 WordPress popularity

Googling the phrase "creating a blog," WordPress appears in many of the search results displayed on the first page of the search engine results page. With all the open-source and proprietary content management systems available, why is WordPress so popular? Since its release in 2003, WordPress has continually added new features to help entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized businesses, universities, and others successfully achieve their website goals. Here are just a few reasons why WordPress's popularity continues to grow [17].

2.3.2.2 Intuitive user interface

As mentioned previously, WordPress empowers average users with little to no web design or technical expertise to create beautiful websites and blogs. It is almost like having

your web designer in a box. With its very intuitive and easy-to-use dashboard, pages and posts can be easily created (Figure 2.2).

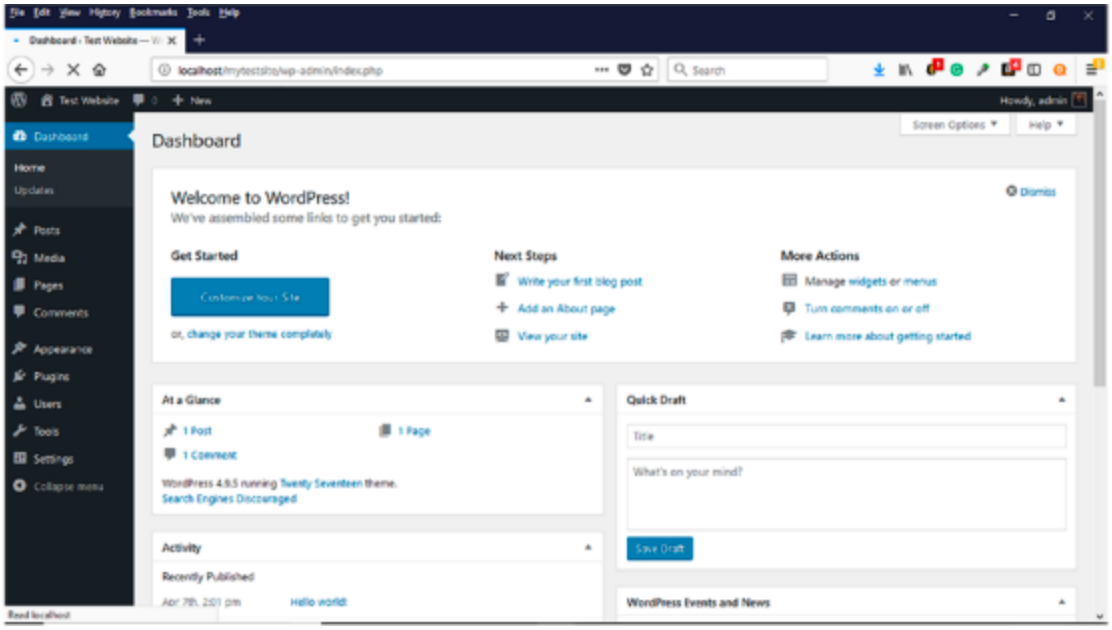


Figure 2. 2: WordPress Dashboard where users create and modify their websites.

2.3.2.3 Free and low-cost training resources

With many free and low-cost training resources available on the Web, anyone with a desire to learn WordPress can learn it. Regardless of a person's learning style, helpful resources are available. Some of these WordPress resources are available in the following forms:

- Online courses.
- Webinars.
- YouTube videos.
- Podcasts.

- Blog articles.
- WordPress.org codex (online WordPress manual).
- Books.

It is easy to learn anything about WordPress without breaking the bank. Many of these options will allow anyone to learn anytime, anywhere, and on any device. All that is needed is some free time, a computer that meets the recommended WordPress requirements for installing a WordPress website with administrator rights, and the ability to Google.

2.3.2.4 Cost-efficient

To get started using WordPress to create a commercial website, a domain name and web hosting are required. As stated earlier, most web hosting companies provide WordPress hosting via a one-click installation at affordable monthly and annual rates. WooCommerce will be discussed in the next chapter and used to create a sample online store in Chapter. Other needed items such as SSL Certificate and e-commerce themes will be discussed.

Let's face it. Depending on your website design needs, web designers can be expensive, especially for small businesses' budgets. Once you add an e-commerce component, it can become even more expensive. Don't believe me? According to an article on Elegantthemes.com, the average hourly rate for a WordPress Developer Chapter 3 Overview of WordPress 27 ranges from $20 to $100 per hour.5 if you consider that even a simple online store with 10 products can take 10–25 hours to set up, you can easily expect to pay between $200 to $2,500. WordPress can help businesses save money on their website needs [17].

2.3.2.5 Easy setup and maintenance

With its easy-to-use interface, a blog, website, or online store can be set up quickly. For creating online stores, the more information prepared ahead of time, the quicker a store can be up and running. Need to add more products or services? No problem! WordPress allows multiple user logins to be created with various permission levels that can be used, too.

It can also be manually updated to the latest version (Figure 2.3) or set to update automatically.

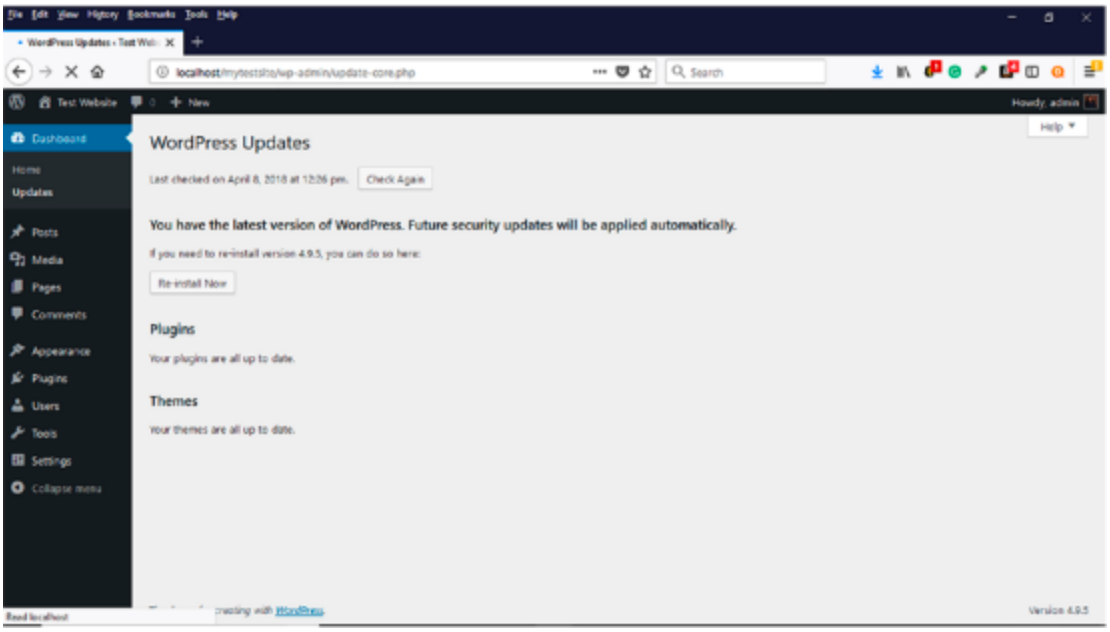


Figure 2. 3: WordPress Dashboard option for WordPress Updates.

2.3.2.6 Themes

What are WordPress themes? In simple terms, a theme is the outward appearance of your website that your target audience sees. It also helps make a good first impression. In other words, a template is a predefined file where you can insert images and other necessary web content into designated placeholders. WordPress.org's Codex defines a theme this way:

- A collection of files that work together to produce a graphical interface with an underlying unifying design for a weblog. These files are called template files. A Theme modifies the way the site is displayed, without modifying the underlying software.

Once installed, WordPress contains several free themes available to use (Figure 2.4). Not sure how a theme will look on your website, blog, or online store? You can preview a theme before activating it. However, there is one caveat concerning using the standard WordPress themes to keep in mind: someone else might use the same theme, which will not make your website unique. Once you know this and are fine with it, use it! You can still change the colors and other theme parts to customize it. Still, concerned? Don't fret! You can find other free WordPress themes at WordPress.org/themes to customize, purchase themes from third-party providers, or create your own. The beauty of WordPress is that you are never stuck with a theme. You can change your website's theme as often as you like. It's up to you.

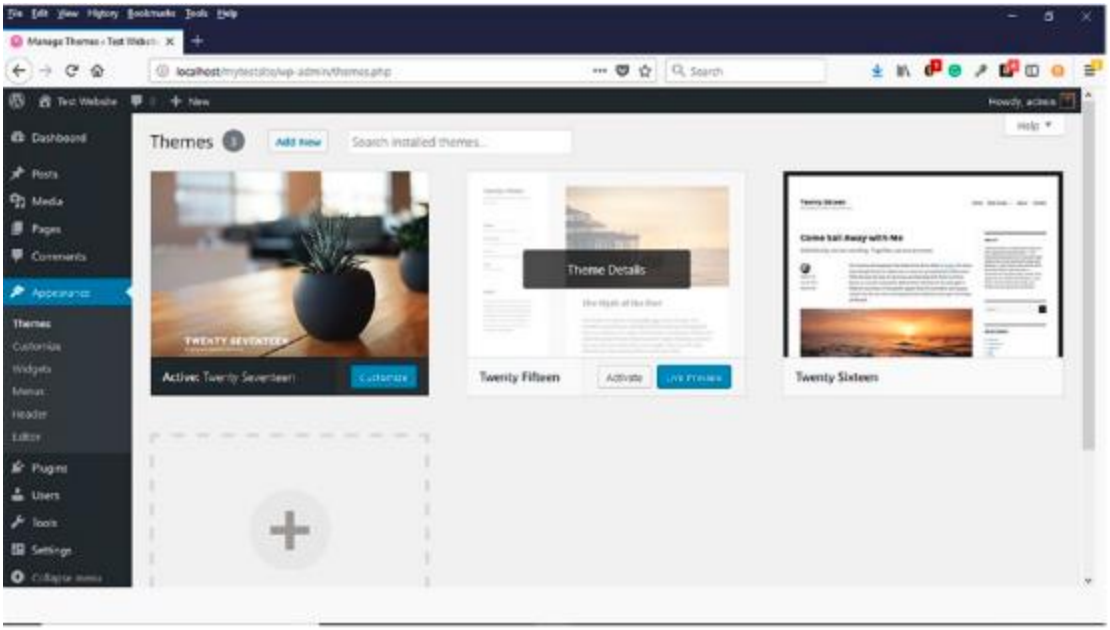


Figure 2. 4: WordPress themes can be selected or added on the Themes page.

2.3.2.7 Plugins

Ask any WordPress user or developer, and he or she will tell you that plugins are the heart and soul of WordPress; but what are they? Plugins are ways to extend and add to the functionality that already exists in WordPress (Figure 2.5). In other words, you don't have to re-create the wheel because more than likely someone has already created what you want to

do. For instance, if you want to add e-commerce to your website, you can add the WooCommerce plugin through the WordPress Dashboard. All you need to do is configure its settings. How simple is that?

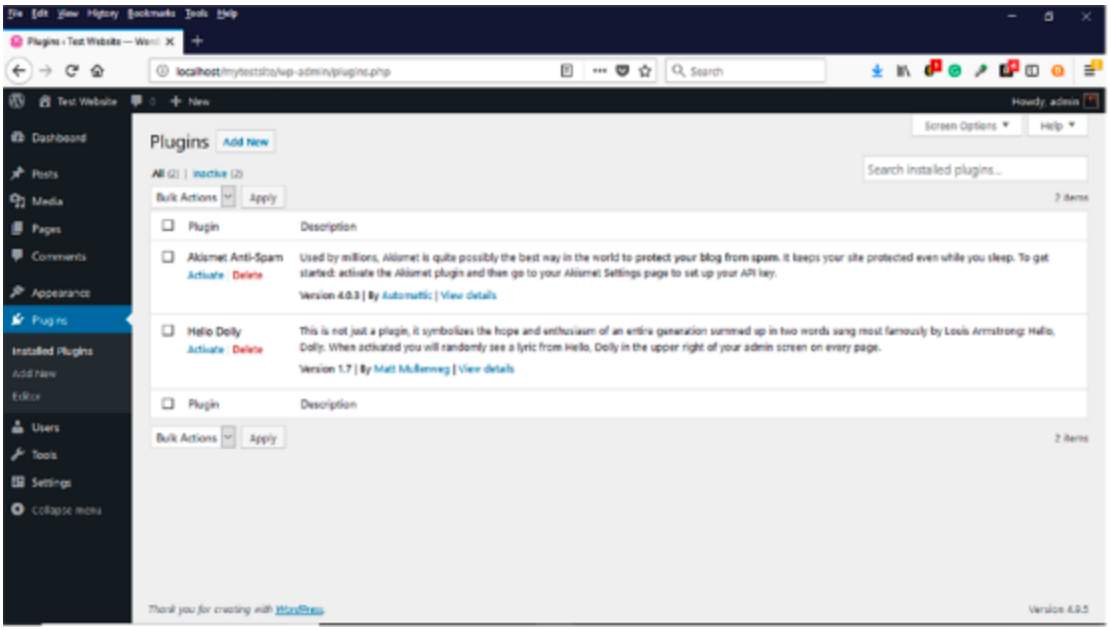


Figure 2. 5: WordPress Plugins that are installed and can be added.

WordPress empowers users to add needed functionality to their websites at their convenience... Not sure where to find plugins? Many free plugins are available at wordpress.org/plugins. As of the writing of this book, there are 54,860 plugins available from wordpress.org. This number will continue to increase. You'll become more familiar with installing the WooCommerce plugin and others when we start installing WooCommerce.

2.3.2.8 Where to get WordPress

WordPress is available for download to install on your web server or local computer from the official WordPress website, www.wordpress.org/download (Figure 2.6). It is a good idea to review the recommended WordPress requirements before downloading and installing it. Although PHP version 7.2 or greater and MySQL version 5.6 or greater or Maria DB version 10.0 or greater are recommended, WordPress can be installed on older environments. The WordPress.org website offers this advice about using "legacy environments."

If you are in a legacy environment where you only have older PHP or MySQL versions, WordPress also works with PHP 5.2.4+ and MySQL 5.0+, but these versions have reached the official End of Life and as such may expose your site to security vulnerabilities.

If using a web hosting provider, WordPress is already preinstalled on their web servers and ready to install with a single click using auto-installer scripts such as Softaculous or Fantastic. The auto-installer script varies by web hosting provider. WordPress is known for its "Famous 5-Minute Installation" which is documented on the WordPress Codex.8 If a development environment needs to be set up where certain features can be tested before implementing them on a live website, this version can be used for that.

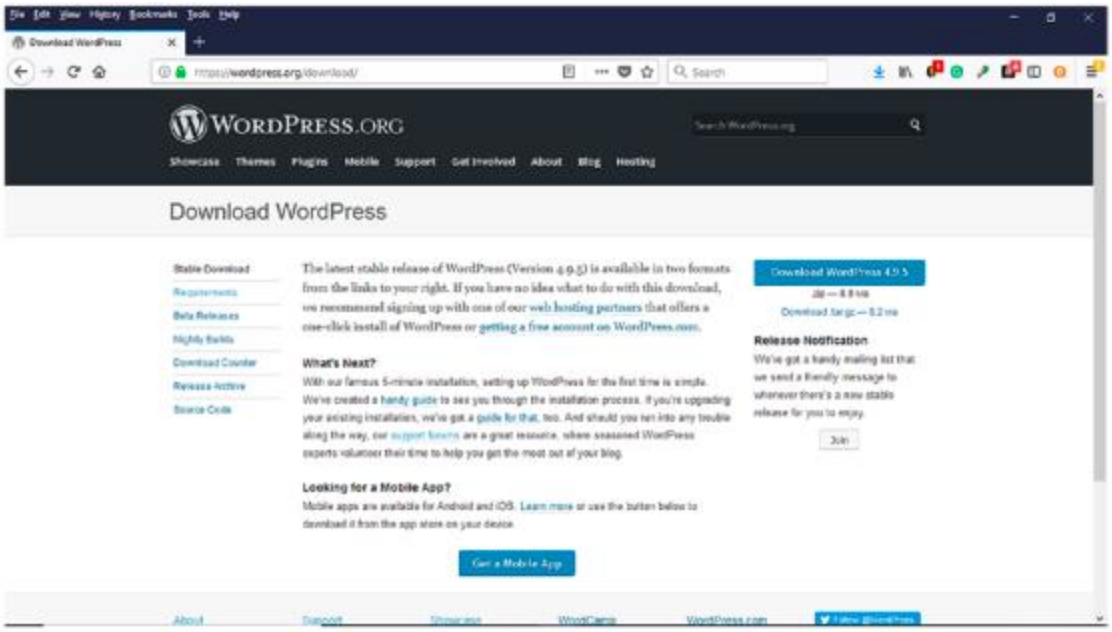


Figure 2. 6: WordPress is available for download from www.wordpress.org.

The main difference between wordpress.org and wordpress.com is that wordpress.com handles everything for you for a fee whereas wordpress.org does not. When you visit www.wordpress.com, you can sign up for one of four account types:

- Free.

- Personal.
- Business.

Many people choose the free option because once the account is created, they can immediately start blogging or creating a website. There is no better example of the saying, "Everything free isn't good and everything good is not free" than this for many reasons. First, your domain name will contain wordpress.com (i.e., yourwebsite123. wordpress.com) and will not allow a unique domain name until upgraded to one of the other options. Depending on your needs, this could be problematic because your target audience probably won't remember a long domain name. For creating an online store, it would be best to purchase your unique domain name from a domain registrar service such as Network Solutions, Name cheap, or through a web hosting provider who sometimes offers free domain names when signing up for web hosting. Another benefit of having a custom domain name is it presents a professional image and brand for a business and a website. First impressions are lasting impressions, and this is crucial for an online store [17].

With the WordPress.com free account, many features such as plugins, themes, and source code modification are limited, so you won't experience the full power of WordPress until you upgrade to another account. Plugins cannot be installed. You will also be subjected to ads and limited storage. If you are uncertain as to which account you should use, you can always choose the Compare Plans option (Figure 2.7) to review the differences.

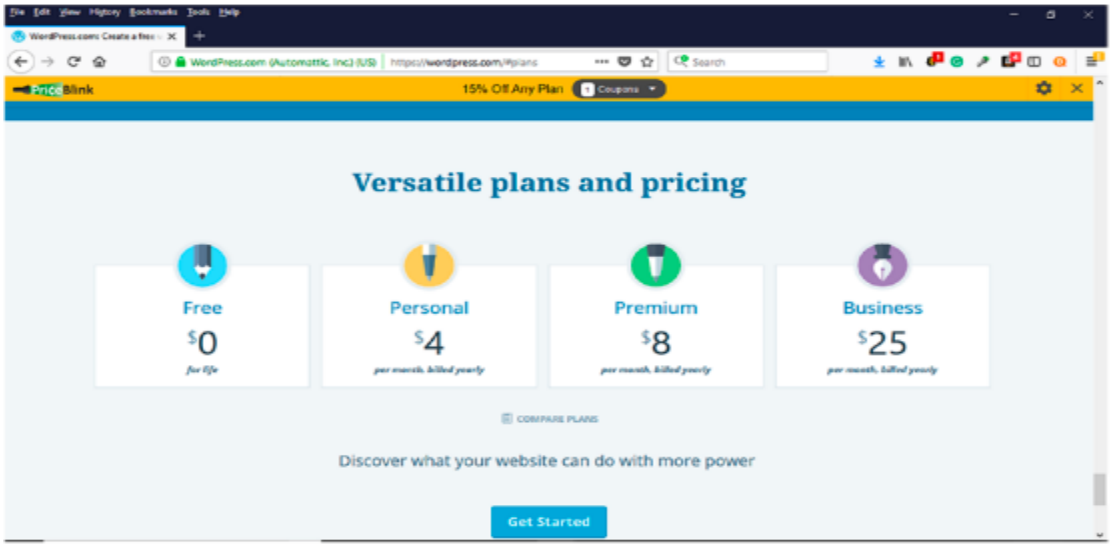


Figure 2. 7: WordPress Plans and Pricing from www.wordpresss.com.

2.3.2.9 WordPress requirements

While you are probably going to use an external web hosting company for your online store, some might want to host their online store themselves. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to know the WordPress requirements so that you can compare them when choosing web hosting. Compared to other applications, its requirements are simple. According to WordPress.org, the recommended requirements necessary to run WordPress are:

- PHP version 7.2 or greater.
- MySQL version 5.6 or greater or MariaDB version 10.0 or greater.
- HTTPS support.

The only other thing that you will need is a computer or mobile device to log in to the WordPress administration panel to work on your website or blog.

2.3.3 WooCommerce

WOOCOMMERCE is an open-source e-commerce plugin for WordPress. It is designed for small to large-sized online merchants using WordPress. In simple term,

WooCommerce is a WordPress plugin that can convert your WordPress website into an e-commerce store. It sells physical goods, and digital products, accepts payment online, manage to ship, offers discounts and the list goes on. WooCommerce turns a regular WordPress site into a fully functioning e-commerce store [18].

2.3.3.1 Concept of woocommerce

WooCommerce is a free e-commerce plugin that allows you to sell anything beautifully. Built to integrate seamlessly with WordPress, WooCommerce is the world's favorite solution that gives both store owners and developers complete control. With endless flexibility and access to hundreds of free and premium WordPress extensions. WooCommerce is for selling products and services. Specifically, it makes doing these things affordable and accessible. You can sell digital and physical products, manage inventory and shipping, take secure payments, and sort taxes automatically [18].

2.3.3.2 Why woocommerce

A successful sale starts long before someone clicks "buy". Create a store as unique as your brand and create a special experience for navigating your products, content and site.

- Countless themes: Pick the theme that works for you. WooCommerce is designed to work seamlessly with themes you know and love, including each year's default WordPress themes and many popular themes from around the web.

- Unrestricted customization: Edit any part of your site – from the homepage layout to the buy button – to stand out from the crowd.

- Built-in blogging: Publish great content and build a strong brand. Use WooCommerce to integrate e-commerce with the world's most popular content publishing platform.

- Embed products, checkout and more on any page: Use short codes to add your products to blog posts, or create landing pages that go straight to checkout.

- Categories, tags and attributes make products easier to find: Help customers find what they want by adding tags to describe a product. Add attributes like size so customers can search for items most relevant to them.

- Product ratings and reviews: Show customer feedback directly on the product page, including a 'Verified Owner' label.

- Customize for your location: Set the currency, language and measurement units (inches, centimeters or anything else) that are right for you.

- Product sorting and filtering: Let customers sort products by popularity, newness, rating, and price or attribute to find the right fit.

2.3.3.3 How much does woocommerce cost? Is woocommerce free?

Yes. It is absolutely free. It is 100% free to download and use it on our WordPress website. However, there are many add-ons you can purchase that will enhance your online store. In most cases, the free version of WooCommerce will not be enough to power our store. We'll likely need to purchase a few add-ons [19].

2.3.4 Elementor

Elementor is a drag-and-drop WordPress page builder. Using a visual editor, this plugin allows you to build stunning pages. It's made to let you easily create dynamic websites.

This WordPress plugin is an all-in-one solution that allows you to manage all aspects of your website's design from a single location. With motion effects, numerous fonts, and better background photos, you can tailor your website to meet your brand [20].

2.3.4.1 Why you should use elementor

Elementor works for all types of professionals on your team. If you're not tech-savvy, the visual editor gives you the flexibility to drag any of the 90+ widgets to create content, like

buttons, star ratings, and progress bars. For WordPress developers, it's still a top-choice platform with script optimization, custom attributes, and rollback versions.

Elementor is an effective tool for building anything from entire websites to specific landing pages. You can design sales pages, promotional pages, and even custom forms. If you can imagine it, this platform can help you design it [20].

2.3.4.2 How much does elementor cost? Is elementor free?

Elementor offers a free plan as well as multiple paid subscription plans. The free version comes with all the features you need to create a strong user experience on your site, including a drag-and-drop editor, 40+ basic widgets, and 30+ templates.

If you want to access more advanced functionality, such as the ability to add forms and custom CSS, you can upgrade to the pro version. Elementor price is tiered as follows:

- $49/year for 1 site.
- $99/year for 3 sites.
- $199/year for 25 sites.
- $499/year for 100 sites.
- $999/year for 1,000 sites.

Elementor has compiled a detailed, easy-to-scan list of pro versus free features.

Chapter 3

Online Store Construction

3.1 The architecture of the store

3.1.1 Unified Modeling Language (UML)

The Unified Modeling Language (UML) was created to forge a common, semantically and syntactically rich visual modeling language for the architecture, design, and implementation of complex software systems both structurally and behaviorally. UML has applications beyond software development, such as process flow in manufacturing.

It is analogous to the blueprints used in other fields, and consists of different types of diagrams. In the aggregate, UML diagrams describe the boundary, structure, and the behavior of the system and the objects within it.

UML is not a programming language but there are tools that can be used to generate code in various languages using UML diagrams. UML has a direct relation with object-oriented analysis and design.

There are many problem-solving paradigms or models in Computer Science, which is the study of algorithms and data. There are four problem-solving model categories: imperative, functional, declarative and object-oriented languages (OOP). In object-oriented languages, algorithms are expressed by defining ‘objects’ and having the objects interact with

each other. Those objects are things to be manipulated and they exist in the real world. They can be buildings, widgets on a desktop, or human beings.

Object-oriented languages dominate the programming world because they model real-world objects. UML is a combination of several object-oriented notations: Object-Oriented Design, Object Modeling Technique, and Object-Oriented Software Engineering.

UML uses the strengths of these three approaches to present a more consistent methodology that's easier to use. UML represents best practices for building and documenting different aspects of software and business system modeling.

The diagrams of the diagrams are illustrated in (Figure).

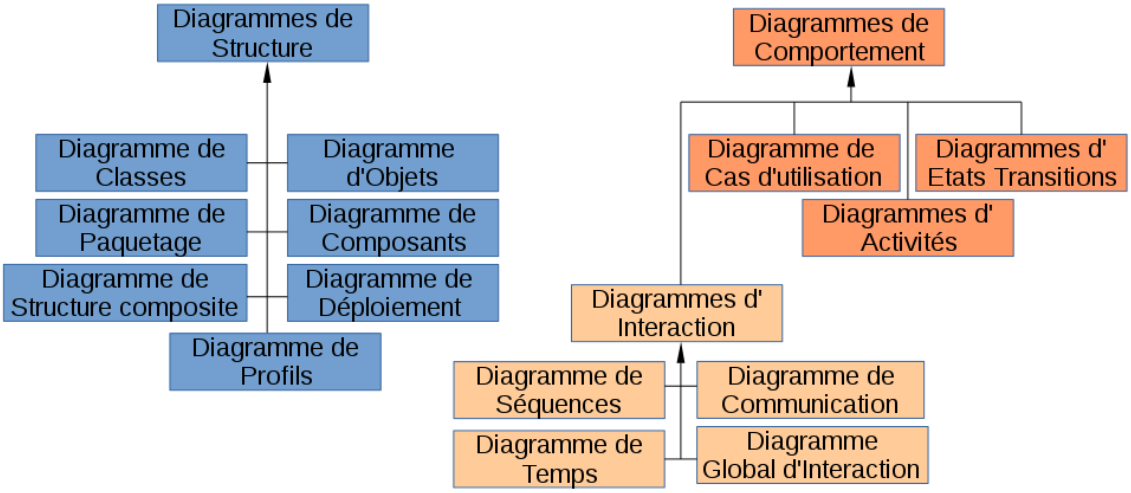


Figure 3. 1: Taxonomy of UML diagrams.

We use 2 diagrams:

- Use case diagram.
- Class diagram.

3.1.2 Use case diagram

A use case diagram is a way to summarize details of a system and the users within that system. It is generally shown as a graphic depiction of interactions among different elements in a system. Use case diagrams will specify the events in a system and how those events flow, however, use case diagram does not describe how those events are implemented.

A use case is a methodology used in system analysis to identify, clarify, and organize system requirements. In this context, the term "system" refers to something being developed or operated, such as a mail-order product sales and service Web site. Use case diagrams are employed in UML (Unified Modeling Language), a standard notation for the modelling of real-world objects and systems. There are a number of benefits to having a use case diagram over similar diagrams such as flowcharts.

The status of use case diagram for our store is shown in the following (Figure 3.2).

It shows the cases that representatives can perform in our store.

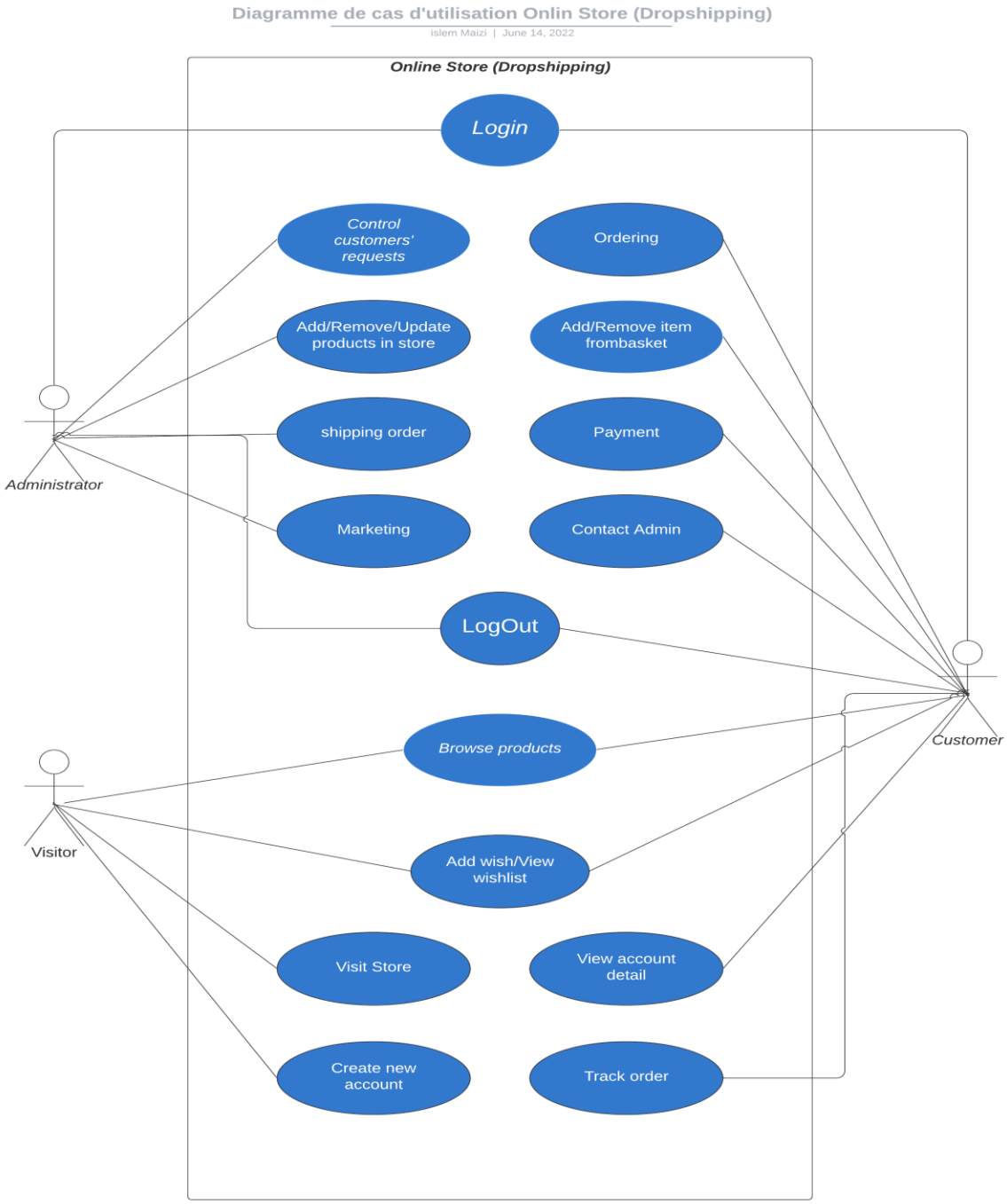


Figure 3. 2: Use case diagram for our online store.

3.1.3 Class diagram

A class diagram is a type of diagram and part of a unified modelling language (SysML) that defines and provides the overview and structure of a system in terms of classes, attributes and methods, and the relationships between different classes.

It is used to illustrate and create a functional diagram of the system classes and serves as a system development resource within the software development life cycle.

A class diagram is primarily designed for developers to provide the conceptual model and architecture of the system being developed. Typically, a class diagram consists of more than one class or all the created classes for a system.

The status of the class diagram for our store is shown in the following (Figure 3.3).

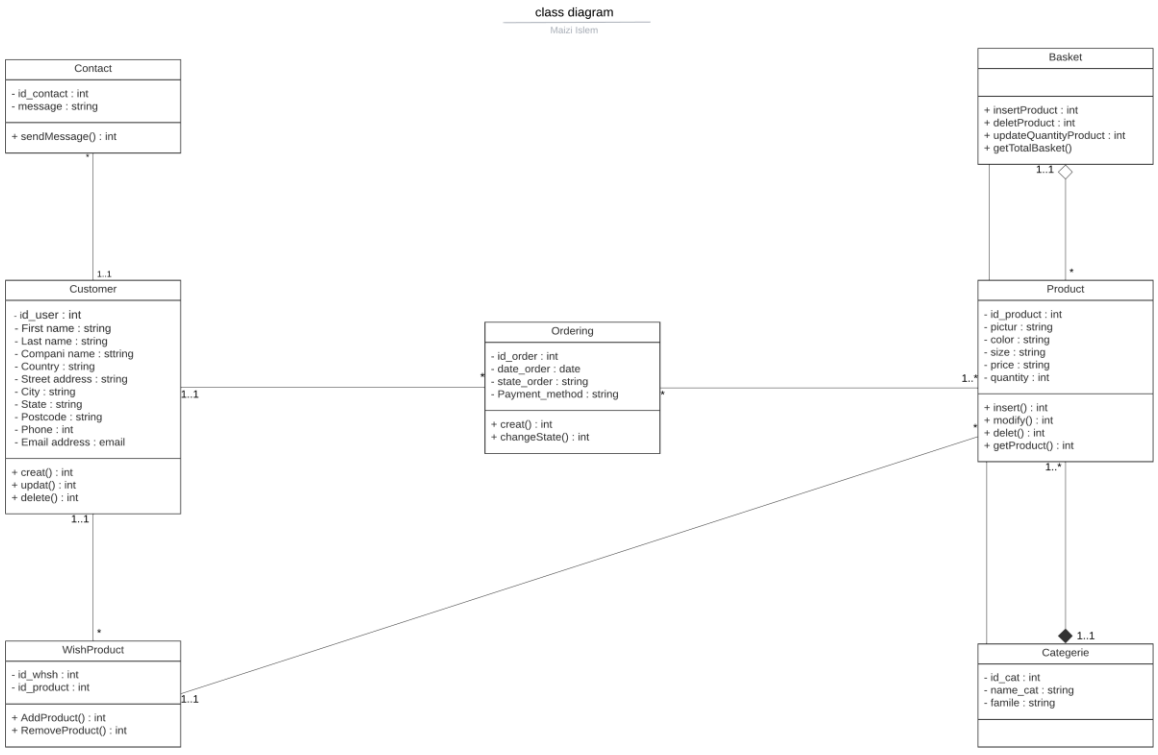


Figure 3. 3: Class diagram for our online store.

3.2 How to build and configure own website in WordPress

3.2.1 Back-end part

3.2.1.1 Choosing the best domain name and hosting

In any kind of website we need two basic things:

- Domain name: A domain name is a permanent address on the Internet that people type in their web browsers when they navigate to your website. For instance, if you are browsing for themeisle.com, your browser will automatically display its address bar. Users will find it much simpler to remember you if you purchase, register, and utilize a domain name for your website. When visitors type your domain name into their browsers, their computers submit a request to the Domain Name System, which is a collection of servers (DNS). You don't need to know what goes on behind the scenes in this place. All you need to know is that the DNS returns the IP address of your website's hosting server, which is how visitors can access your website using your domain name.

- Hosting: Your website is made up of a number of files, folders and data. For visitors to be able to view your website, that information needs to be put on a server (a computer) that visitors can access. For a modest cost, they will store your website files and provide visitors with access to them. To learn how to host a website, you need first to realize that a web server is comparable to a personal computer, except it is designed particularly to store webpages. It's constantly on and always linked to the internet.

Though domain names and web hosting are often purchased together, they are actually two different things.

Main differences between a domain name and web hosting:

- Web hosting is where your website files are physically stored, a domain name is the address of that storage location.

- You cannot create a website without first purchasing a domain name, though you can have a domain name without creating a website.

3.2.1.2 Where to get a domain name and hosting

Let's speak about where you can acquire both domain names and web hosting now that you know the difference. The simplest approach is to get a domain name and web hosting from the same company.

One of the reasons why people get confused between domain names and web hosting is because they are frequently provided by the same company.

This is beneficial practice because:

- That's the simplest method, especially if you're new to the internet.

- When your website is up and running, you may manage your domain and hosting from the same place.

- It's easier to connect your domain name to your host server if it's managed by the same firm.

Pantheon is one such company that offers a one-stop solution for all your web hosting requirements. For a special intro offer at 2.59$/mo. you'll get a free domain for one year, a free SSL certificate and a one-click WordPress install.

3.2.1.3 Installing WordPress and SSL

It's time to get started now that you know what we'll be developing (and why).

Pantheon's price policy is one of its best features: you only pay after your site is online, allowing you to test everything and even show your site to friends and clients before having to pay for your membership.

To begin, go to the Pantheon website and register for a free account.

You can register as an agency if your job entails producing websites for a number of clients or if you have a team of developers on staff. Agencies have the same price structure as individuals, but they also have access to additional services like multiday, which allows you to fork a site into numerous development environments. To facilitate cooperation as well as the development and demonstration of new features without needing to update the core environment if you're not sure which account type is best for you, just use the default. Later on, you can convert your account to an agency account.

Step 1: Create a new WordPress site

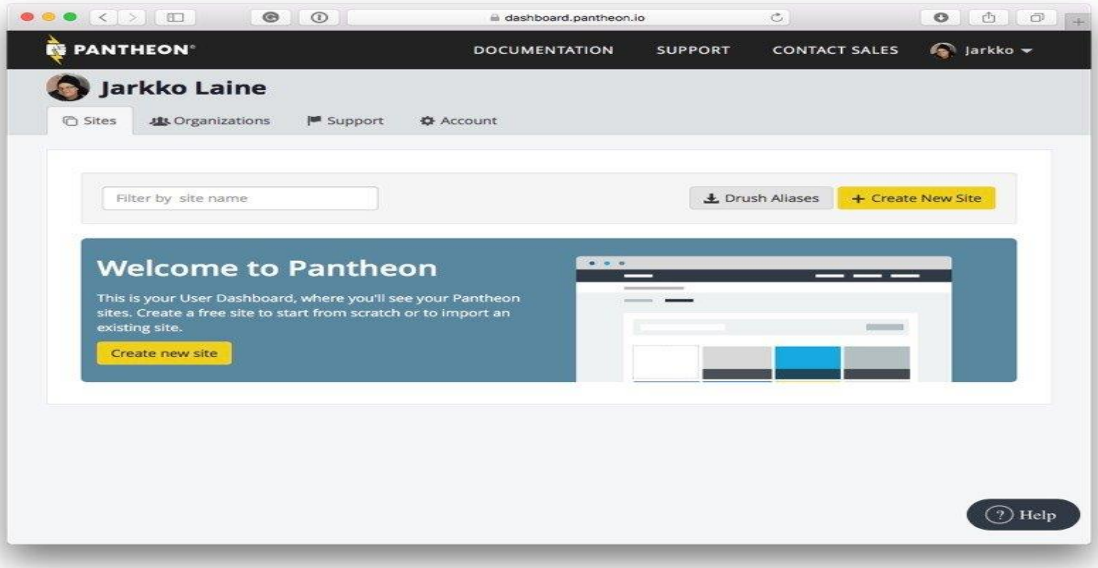


Figure 3. 4: Pantheon site.

Click on **Create New Site** to start building your first WordPress site on the pantheon

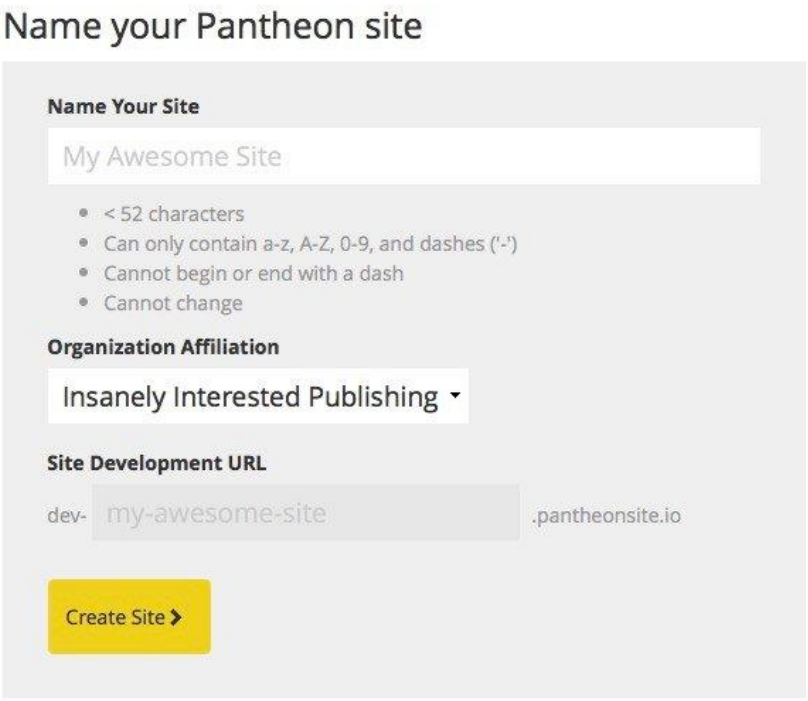


Figure 3. 5: Insert store name.

On this screen, choose a name for your site on Pantheon: the name is used in your Pantheon admin, and for generating your environments' URLs. You cannot change this name later, so it's good to give it some thought, but don't worry—it doesn't have to be the same as your WordPress site's final name.

The names are global across Pantheon, so selecting something very generic can lead to an error. In that case, try something else.

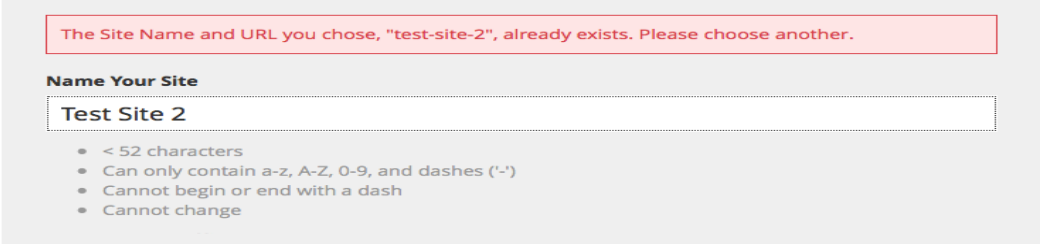


Figure 3. 6: The case when u insert a global name.

Click Create Site after you've chosen a name.

Following that, you'll be prompted to select a start state for your new site. You have the option of creating a new website from scratch or importing an existing Drupal or WordPress site.



Figure 3. 7: Configure your site.

Choose Start from Scratch.

Below the selection, you'll see a list of different starting packages or upstream, as they are called on Pantheon.

These default upstream are maintained by Pantheon so that when a new update becomes available to one that you are using (WordPress, in our case), you can easily update them to your site through the Pantheon Dashboard.

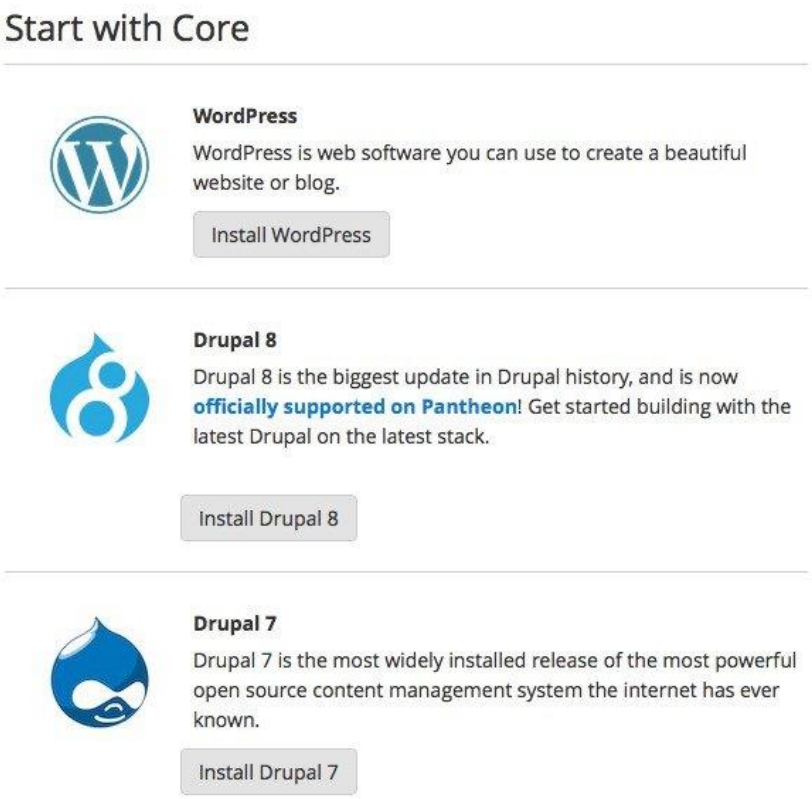


Figure 3. 8: Choose WordPress.

As we're creating a WordPress site, click on Install WordPress. The installation begins. And after a little while, it's ready.

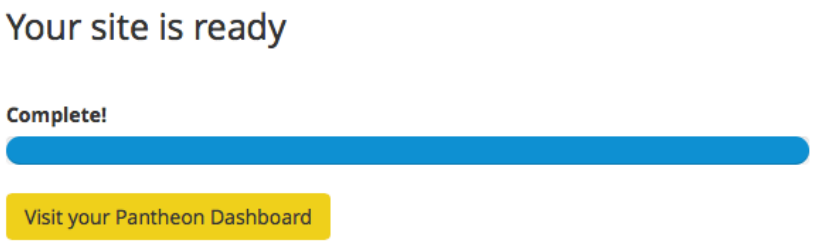


Figure 3. 9: Complete Install WordPress.

Click on the Visit your Pantheon Dashboard button.

Step 2: Complete the Setup and Visit Your Site

Click Create Site after you've chosen a name.

Following that, you'll be prompted to select a start state for your new site. You have the option of creating a new website from scratch or importing an existing Drupal or WordPress site.

On the top of the screen, you'll see three tabs for the different server environments: Dev, Test, and Live. Under each tab, you'll then find a similar menu structure for maintaining that server and deploying code and data between environments:

- **Code**: This shows the commit log of the underlying Get repository. On the Dev environment, as we'll soon see, this can also be used for committing code to version control.

- **Status**: Information about the environment's status such as database usage, cron jobs, required WordPress plugin updates, and caching.

- **Database** / **Files**: Tools for exporting, importing, and cloning databases and uploaded files.

- **Errors**: PHP Errors logged on the selected environment.

- **Domains** / HTTPS: Tools for setting up a custom domain and an SSL certificate for the environment. This feature is only available for paying customers.

- **Backups**: Tools for backing up the environment's database. Paying customers can also set up automatic backups.

- **Security**: An option for password-protecting the environment so that outsiders will not be able to see what you are working on before it goes live.

Click on the Site Admin button on the top-left part of the screen. That will lead you through your regular WordPress setup flow.

You can also click the Visit Development Site button to view the site.

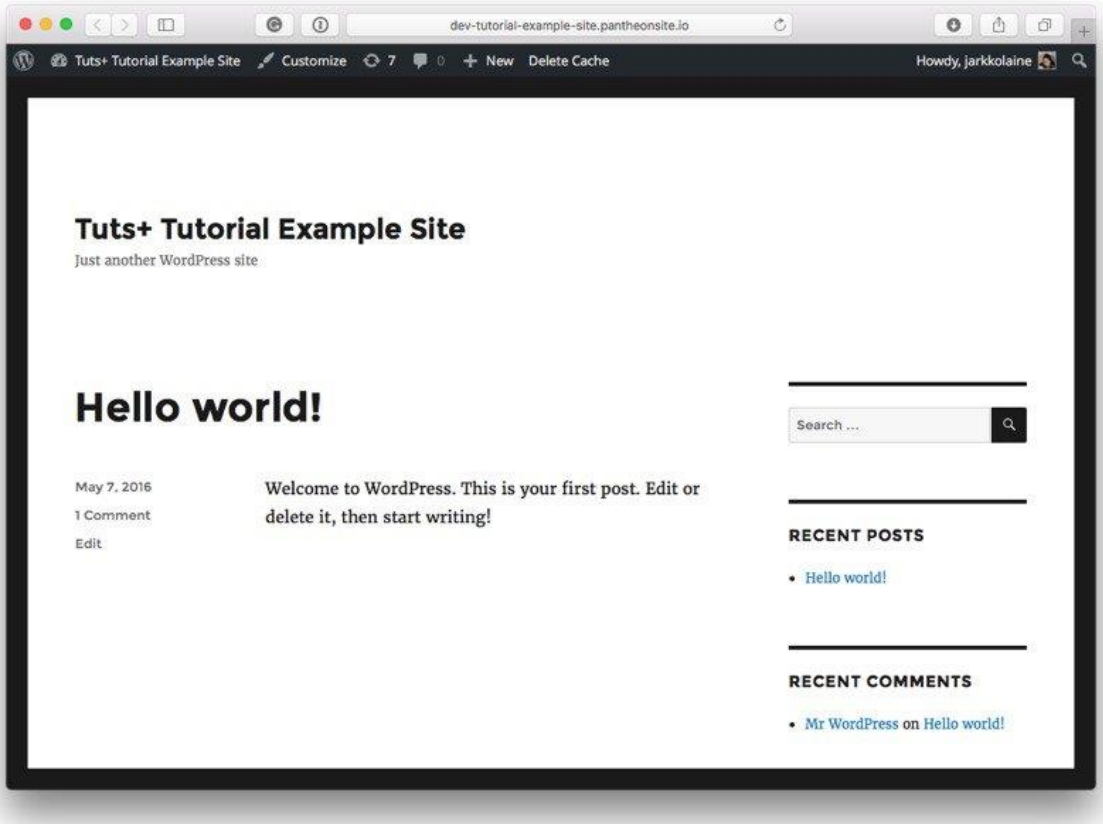


Figure 3. 10: Visite the site.

3.2.1.4 Installing theme and plugins

Installing Theme

A theme allows you to control the look and design of your WordPress website including colors, page layout, and fonts. You can get a free theme or you can pay for a premium one. In our guide, we will mainly focus on the free themes.

To manage WordPress themes, choose Appearance and Themes from the navigation section in your dashboard.

To install a new theme simply click the Add New button. It will take you to a directory of free themes. Use search or filters to find a theme you want to use. Once you have chosen the theme that you like, click on the Preview button to see how it looks on your site. If you're happy with the result, then press the Install button

In our case, we create our own theme for an e-commerce store like the "woolfy" theme, and the figure below show you the steps which we are talking about it.

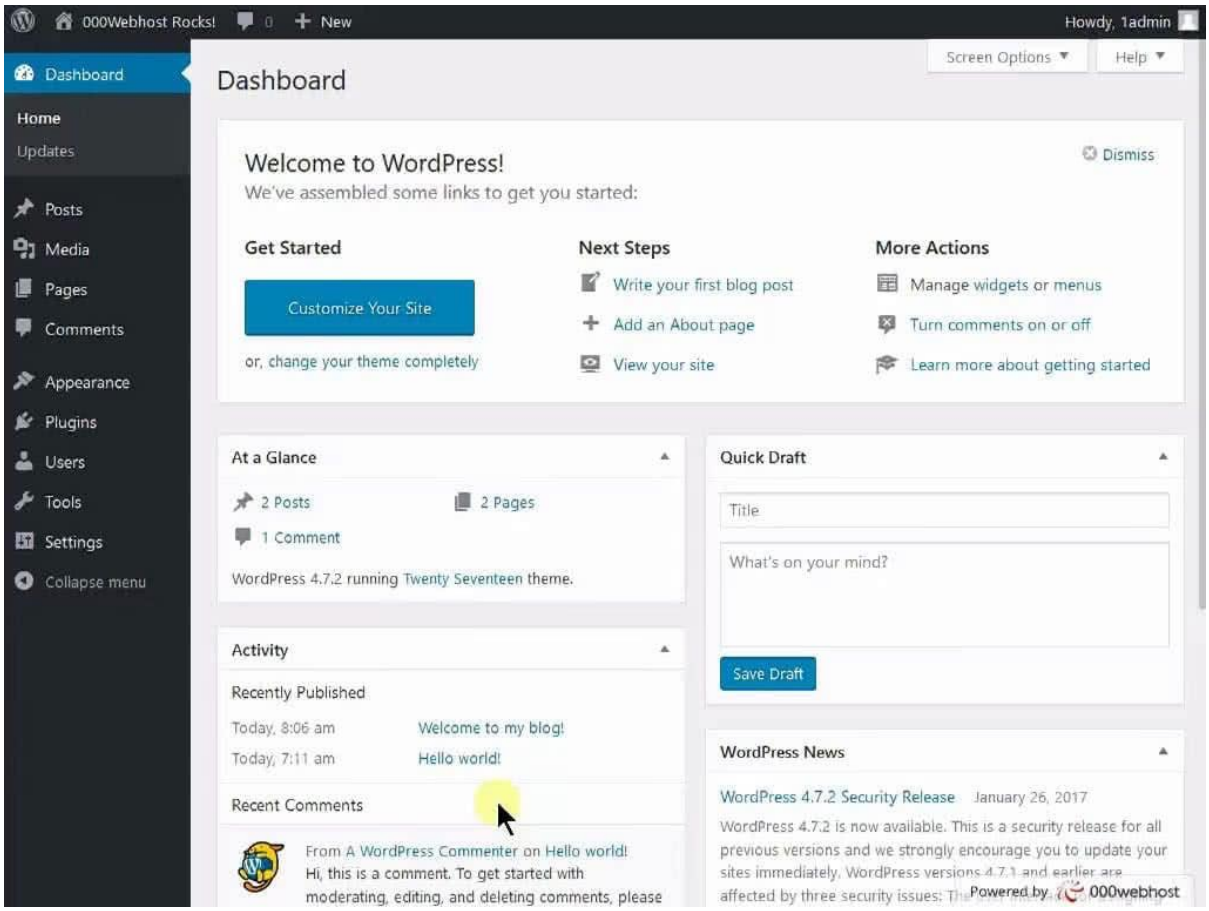


Figure 3. 11: Steps of installing a theme.

With the use of a theme modification tool in WordPress, you may further adjust your previously installed theme. Simply go to the left menu and select Appearance, then Customize. The existing theme may then be customized to suit your needs by altering the site's identity, colors, background picture, menus, widgets, and so on.

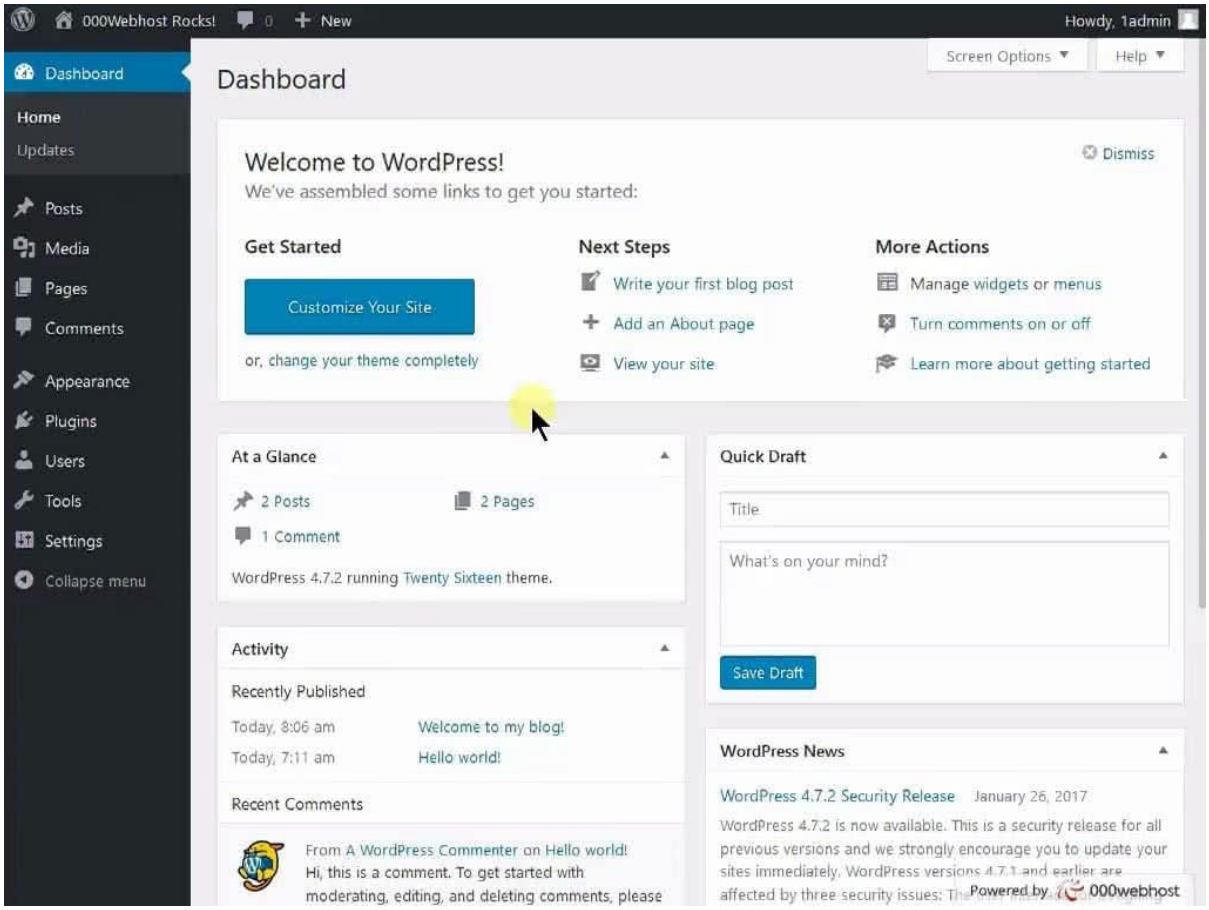


Figure 3. 12: Adjust your previously installed theme.

Installing plugins

Plugins are extensions that can be installed on WordPress to extend its functionality and add new features to your website.

There are plugins for almost everything. From social media sharing to improving the security of your site to giving you data about how the people visit your site and search engine optimization.

To add a new plugin, click on the Add new button under the Plugins section. Choose from Featured, Popular, Recommended, Favorites or enter a keyword in the search field to find the plugin you want. To install the plugin, press the Install Now and then Activate buttons.

The Upload Plugin button on top allows you to upload plugins that have been purchased.

Most plugins will give you a new item on your navigation menu: this is where you will control your plugin from.

We will show you the wish plugins we are using on our website you can make research anywhere u can know everyone's role

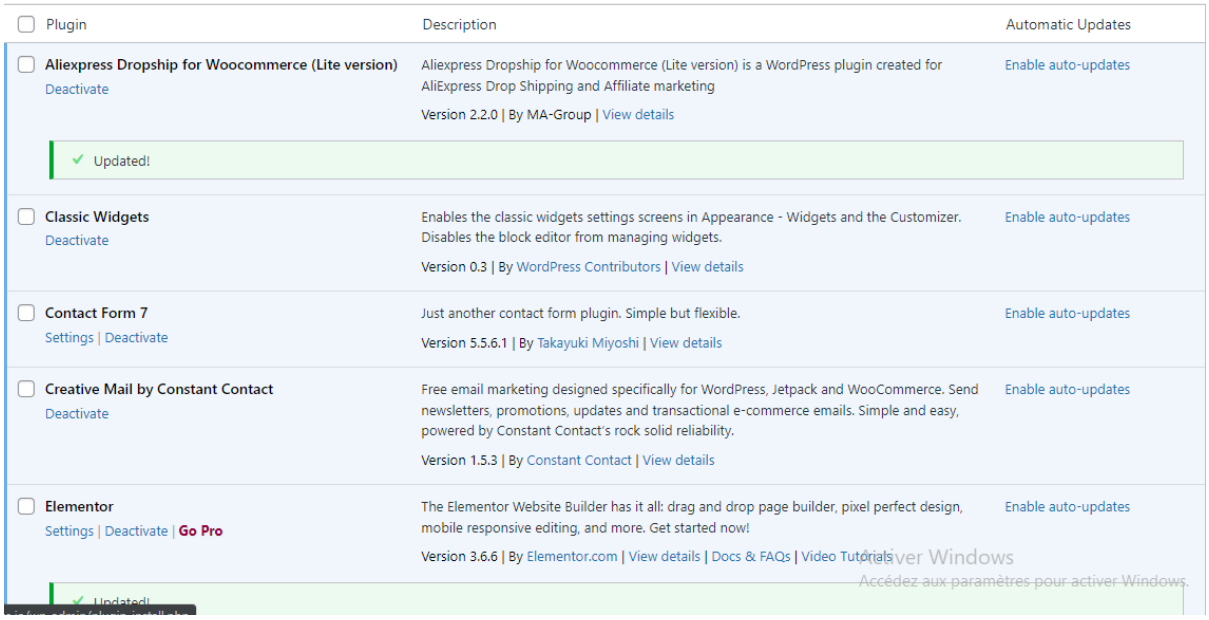


Figure 3. 13: Show Plugins.

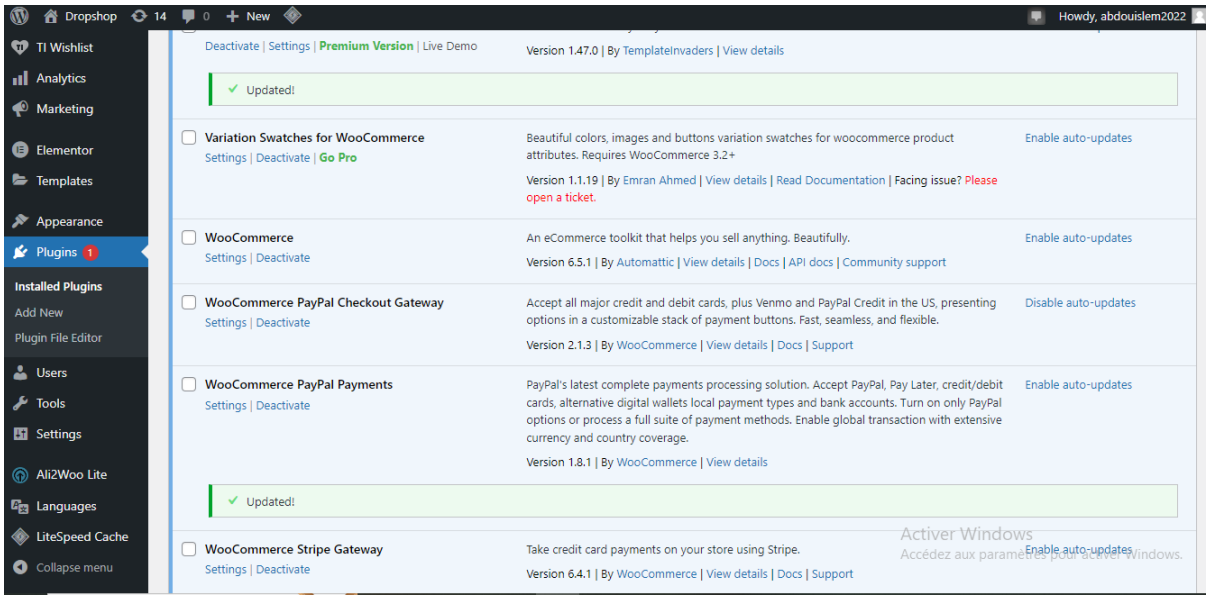


Figure 3. 14: Show Plugins 2.

PRO-TIP

When choosing a plugin, it is best to check if it's compatible with the latest WordPress version. This can be seen by checking the date it has been updated. Also, check how many ratings the plugin has. An out-of-date or a poor-quality plugin may cause problems with your site.

3.2.1.5 Installing woocommerce on WordPress

1) Prepare Your WordPress Site and Add the WooCommerce Plugin :

It's a good idea to make your WordPress website ready before you start learning how to install WooCommerce to begin, check sure your WordPress website is updated to the most recent version. This assures that your e-commerce site is compatible with WooCommerce's most recent version. The following step is to install a WooCommerce-compatible theme. Additional templates for important WooCommerce functionalities like WooCommerce products and checkout pages are included with these WooCommerce themes. They were also created to be

responsive for optimal viewing on mobile devices. This will make sure that your WordPress store is mobile-friendly. The WooCommerce plugin can then be added to your site. Here's a step-by-step guide on installing WooCommerce on WordPress.

2) How to add woocommerce to WordPress :

    1. Log in to your WordPress dashboard.
    2. Go to Plugins > Add New.
    3. Search for WooCommerce and press Install.
    4. When the plugin is done installing, click Activate.
    5. Set up and configure your store.

3) Set up woocommerce on WordPress and configure your store

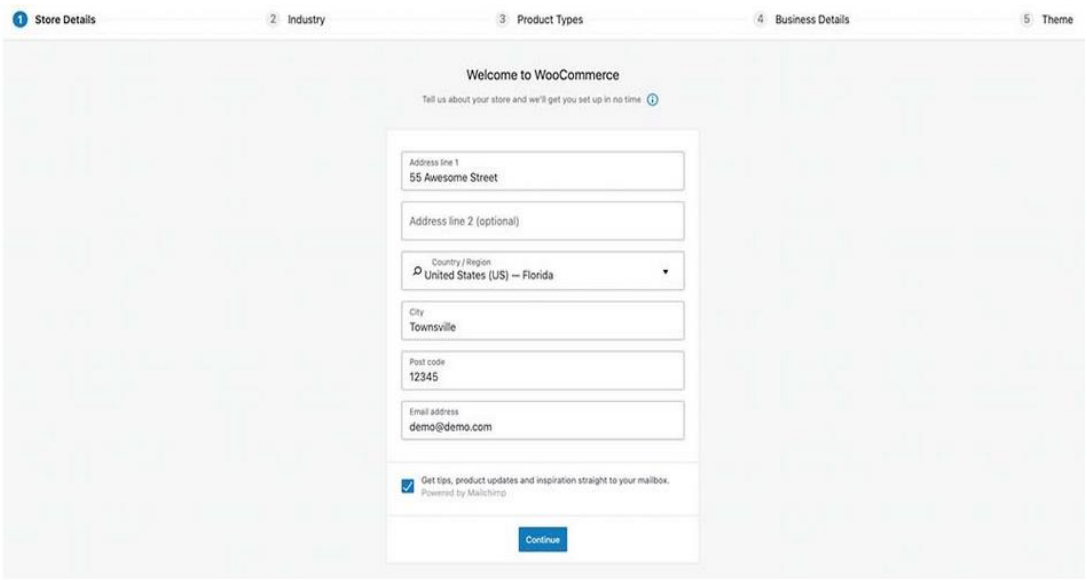


Figure 3. 15: Set up woocommerce.

You'll be brought to the WooCommerce setup process once you've activated WooCommerce. You can use the wizard to set up your store's major features. You'll be able to select options for the types of things you want to offer, the currencies that will be accepted, and the shipping methods that will be used. You'll also need to specify your store's business location and, if you haven't already, choose a theme for your store.

3.2.1.6 Configuring woocommerce settings

In this paragraph, we walk through all settings available in WooCommerce. Configuring General WooCommerce settings as well as Product, Tax, Payments, Shipping, Accounts, and Email.

- **General settings:** Defines your shop's address country and state, where you are based as a seller. And it determines default tax rates and customer locations. And options that affect how prices are displayed on the front.

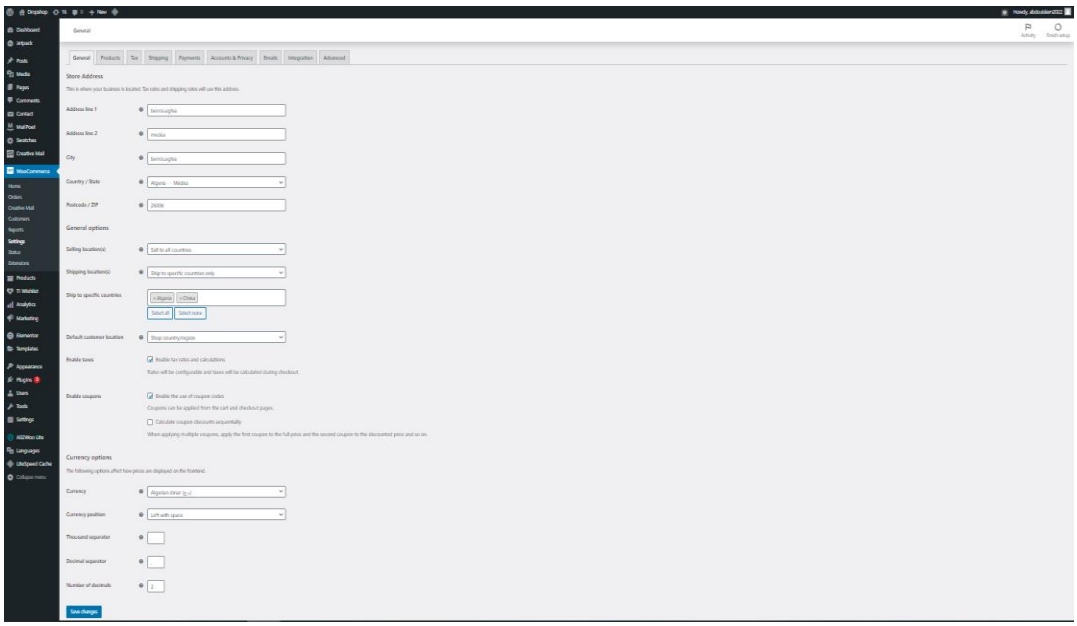


Figure 3. 16: Configuring general settings woocommerce.

- **Products settings:** Settings for products and how they are displayed, including image sizes, inventory and downloadable product settings.

  In the General section are Shop Pages, Measurements and Reviews, allowing you to control checkout settings, select units of measurement, and enable/disable product reviews and ratings.

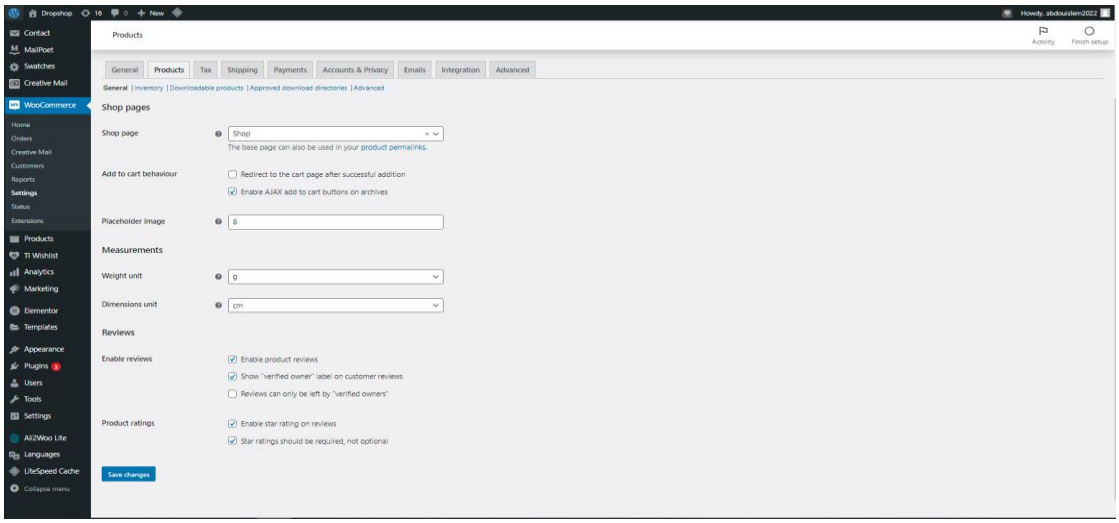


Figure 3. 17: Configuring Products settings in woocommerce.

- **Tax settings:** Taxes are very important and complex.

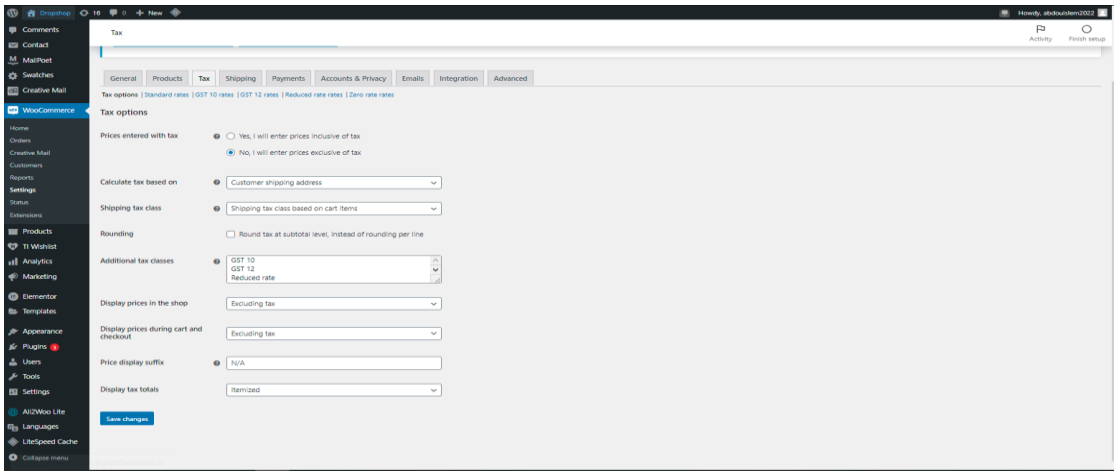


Figure 3. 18: Configuring Tax settings in woocommerce.

We have chosen I will enter prices exclusive of tax, And excluding tax.

- **Shipping settings: t**he main shipping settings screen is for Shipping Zones. Think of a shipping zone as a geographic region where a certain set of shipping methods and their rates apply.

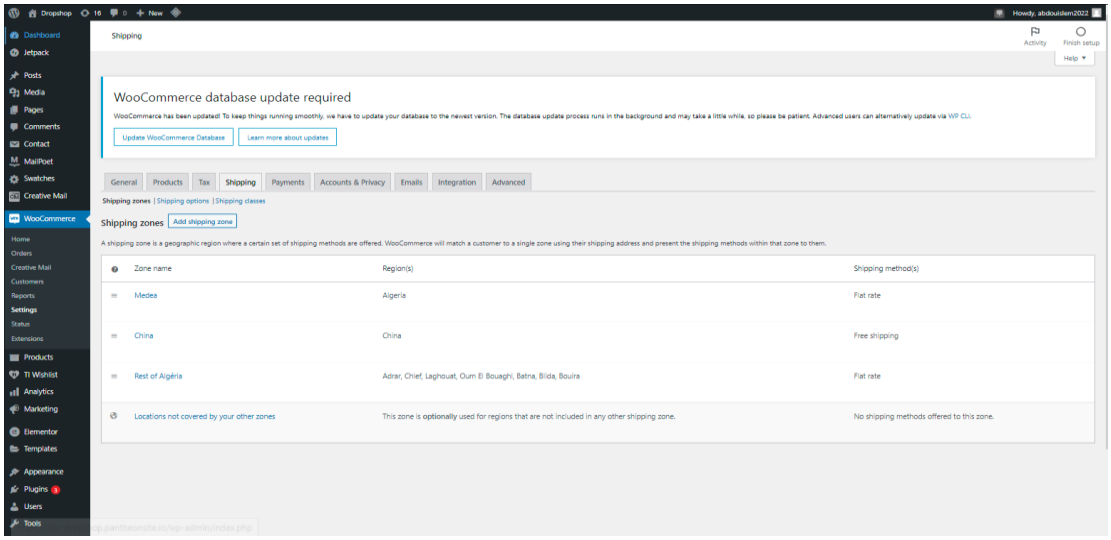


Figure 3. 19: Configuring Shipping settings in woocommerce.

- **Payments settings:** We have selected two options: Cash on delivery, and PayPal.

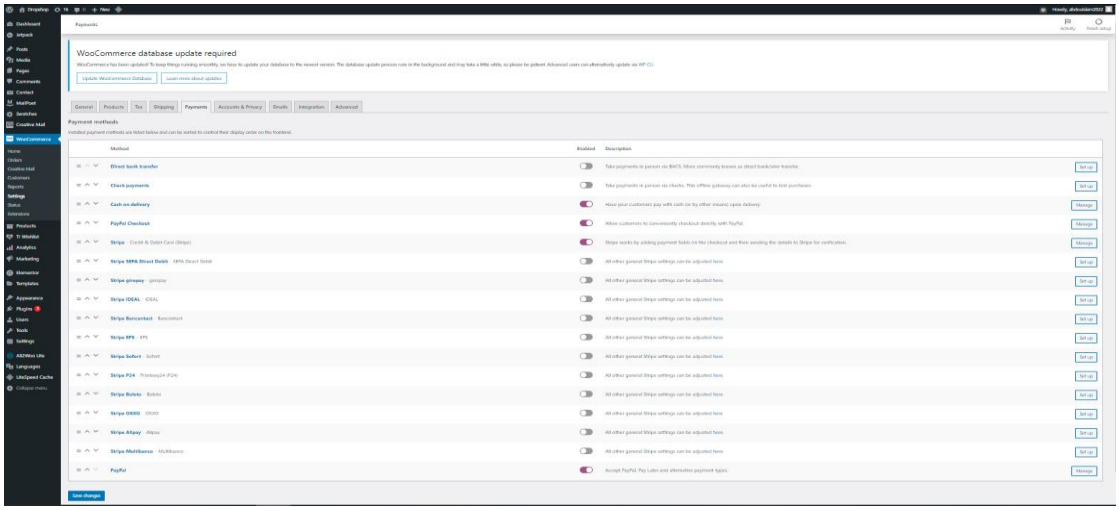


Figure 3. 20: Configuring Payments settings in woocommerce.

Cash on delivery: Cash on Delivery (COD) is a payment gateway that required no payment to be made online. Orders using Cash on Delivery are set to Processing until payment is made upon delivery of the order by you or your shipping method.

PayPal: PayPal, leader incontesté en matière de paiement en ligne, permet aux acheteurs et aux vendeurs d'envoyer et de recevoir des paiements en ligne. PayPal compte plus de 100 millions de comptes dans 202 pays et régions du monde [22].

- **Accounts and privacy settings :**

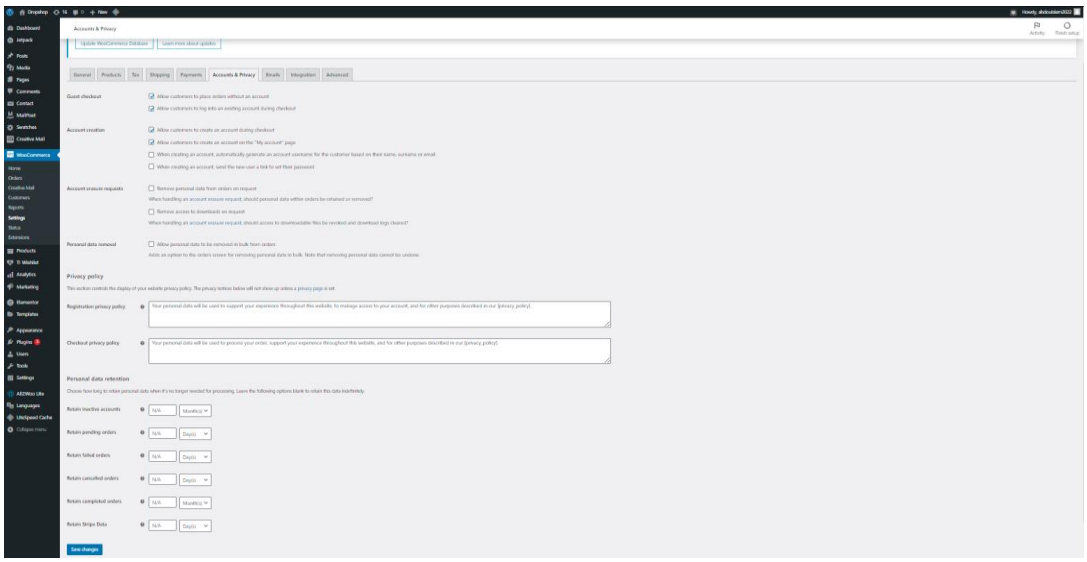


Figure 3. 21: Configuring Account & Privacy settings in woocommerce.

Guest checkout: Allow customers to place orders without an account, Allows customers to check out without creating an account. Orders will not be tied to a user account in WordPress.

Allow customers to log in to an existing account during checkout, this displays a login form and prompt on the checkout page if the customer is not already logged in.

Account creation: Allow customers to create an account during checkout.

Allow customers to create an account on the account page.

Automatically generate username from customer email, if this is disabled, there will be an input box for the user to create their own username.

Automatically generate customer password, if this is disabled, there will be an input box for the user to set their own password. Note that while the password strength notification will be displayed at Checkout, customers can choose any password to not limit conversions. On the My Account page, the password will need to meet certain complexity requirements (i.e. a combination of the number of characters and a mixture of uppercase/lowercase / numeric / symbol characters).

Account erasure requests: Remove personal data from orders, WordPress 4.9 allows you to remove personal data on request. When doing this, if you enable this option, user data will also be removed from your orders if they belong to the user being erased.

Remove access to downloads, WordPress 4.9 allows you to remove personal data on request. When doing this, if you enable this option, download data will also be removed if it belongs to the user being erased. The erased user will no longer have access to any purchased downloads if this happens.

Personal data removal: Allow personal data to be removed in bulk from orders, adds a new bulk action to remove personal data on the Orders page. Useful if you need to manually anonymize orders in bulk.

Privacy policy: This section lets you select a page for your privacy policy, and display privacy policy snippets on your account and checkout pages are shown to customers.

Personal data retention: This section allows you to decide how long to keep order data on your store. You should specify how long your site will retain data in your privacy policy; consider what makes sense for local laws such as the EU GDPR.

- **Email settings:** Options are available to edit email settings and templates.

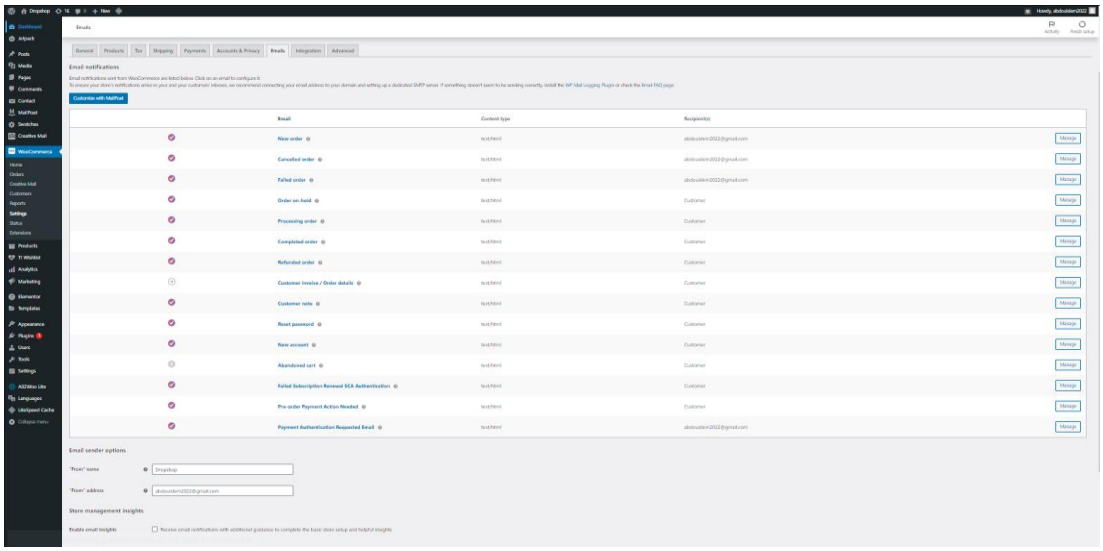


Figure 3. 22: Configuring Email settings in woocommerce.

Email notifications: For each WooCommerce email listed, it's possible to configure your settings (optional).

Email sender options: Set the 'From' name and email address for the sender.

3.2.2 Front-end part

3.2.2.1 Add elementor on WordPress

The Elementor WordPress page builder is highly regarded as the very best WordPress page builder available today. The Elementor page builder offers limitless design possibilities. And it's pretty easy to install Elementor in WordPress.

There are two options to do so. The first is directly from the Elementor website, and the second is to use the plugin.

We have chosen to install Elementor from WordPress Dashboard.

Then we go to the WordPress dashboard, and click Plugins > Add New.



Figure 3. 23: The first step to installing elementor.

In the Search field, enter Elementor and choose Elementor page builder to install. Install and activate the plugin.

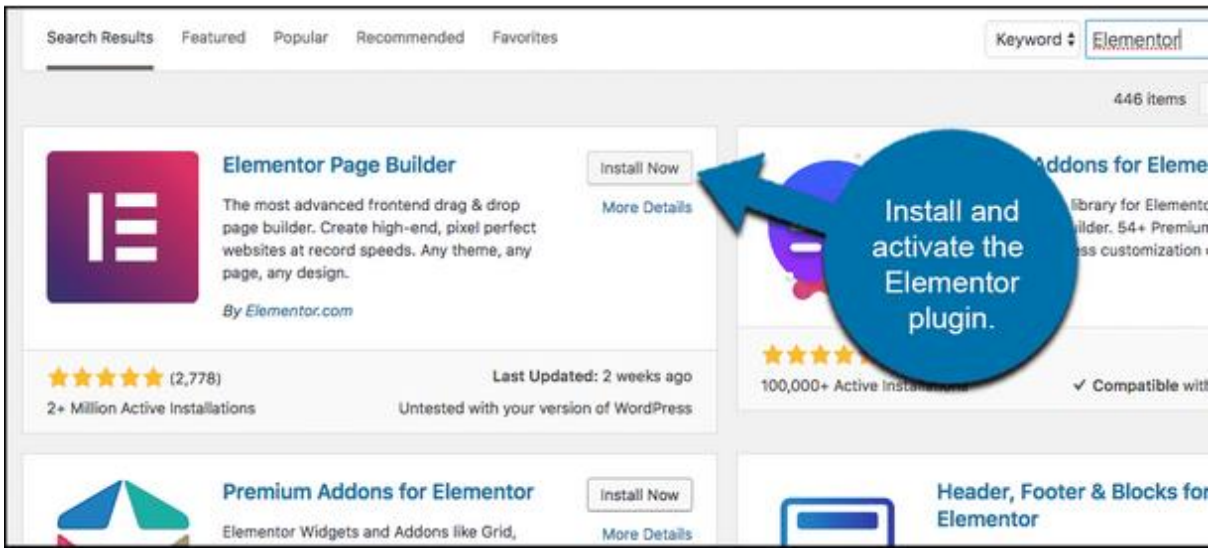


Figure 3. 24: Install elementor.

We can now build your site using the Elementor WordPress page builder.

3.2.2.2 Creating the home page

In the WordPress Dashboard, WordPress presents an option to create a homepage based on the Elementor as well as add example products.

We go to the WordPress dashboard, and click Pages > Add New. And add page home.



Figure 3. 25: Add a new page.

Then we go to the WordPress dashboard and click Pages > Edit Home.

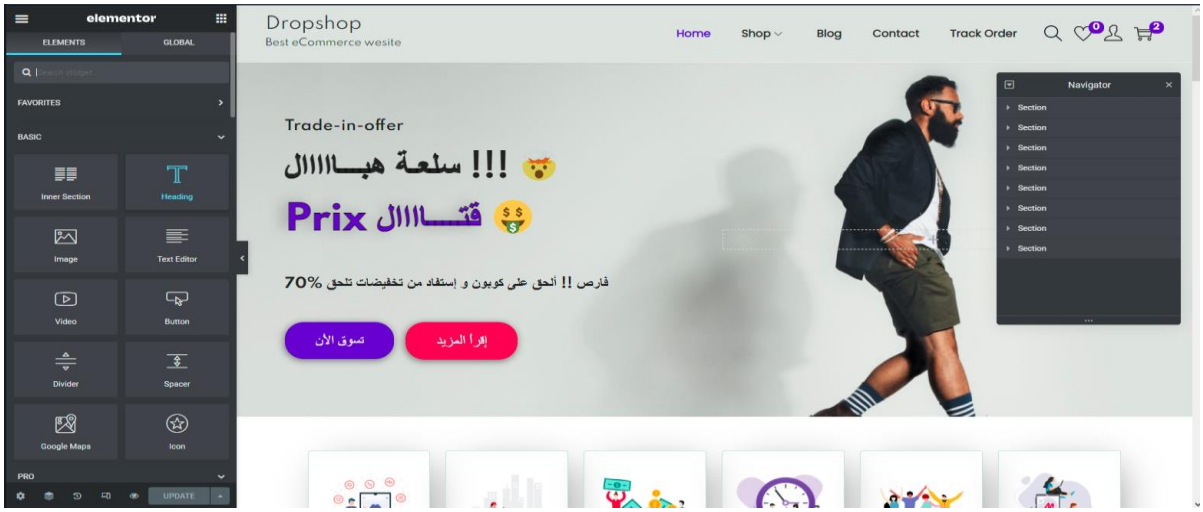


Figure 3. 26: Edit home page.

Then we can design a page home as we like.

3.2.2.2.1 Site identity

Establishing your store's identity or brand is a crucial first step when creating your online store (Figure). When potential customers visit your store for the first time, you want them to immediately know who you are and begin to recognize your logo. If you don't have a logo, you can use free tools such as Canva.com or the free open-source graphics program, GIMP, to create a logo. You can also hire a freelancer on Fiverr.com to create a logo starting at $5. WordPress recommends logo dimensions of 470 by 110 pixels. For the Site Title, use the name of your store. To give visitors a good idea of what your store is about, it is a good idea to provide a short descriptive tagline that will appear underneath the Site Title. It is also a good idea to provide a site icon for your store to help reinforce your store's identity and brand.



Figure 3. 27: Store identity.

3.2.2.2.2 Header

The header background image can also help to reinforce your brand to visitors and create a good first impression. The Elementor recommends a background image size of 1950 by 500 pixels. Once the header image is uploaded, you can either crop it or not. If you choose not to use a header image, you can choose a header background color instead along with changing the text and link color. You want to make sure that your color selections are pleasing to the eye and complement each other nicely. We chose not to use a header image.



Figure 3. 28: Header for the home page.

3.2.2.2.3 Footer

As it is appropriately named, the footer appears at the foot or bottom of the page. It contains the copyright and the information at the bottom of the page. The background and text color can also be customized.

3.2.2.2.4 Product page

On the Product Page, the Sticky-Add-To-Cart and Product Pagination options are selected by default. According to the WooCommerce website, a Sticky Add-To-Cart display a small content bar at the top of the browser window that includes relevant product information and an add-to-cart button. It slides into view once the standard add-to-cart button has scrolled out of view. Potential customers and customers need to be able to always add items to their cart.

Product pagination allows for previous and next buttons to be displayed when there are many products available instead of having visitors continuously scrolling. It is a good practice to keep these selected. If you feel that you will not need them, you can always deselect them later.

3.2.2.2.5 Menus

Menus are a great way to allow visitors to navigate our store. Since most visitors are already familiar with using menus to navigate online stores, they will not have much of a learning curve. To create a new menu.

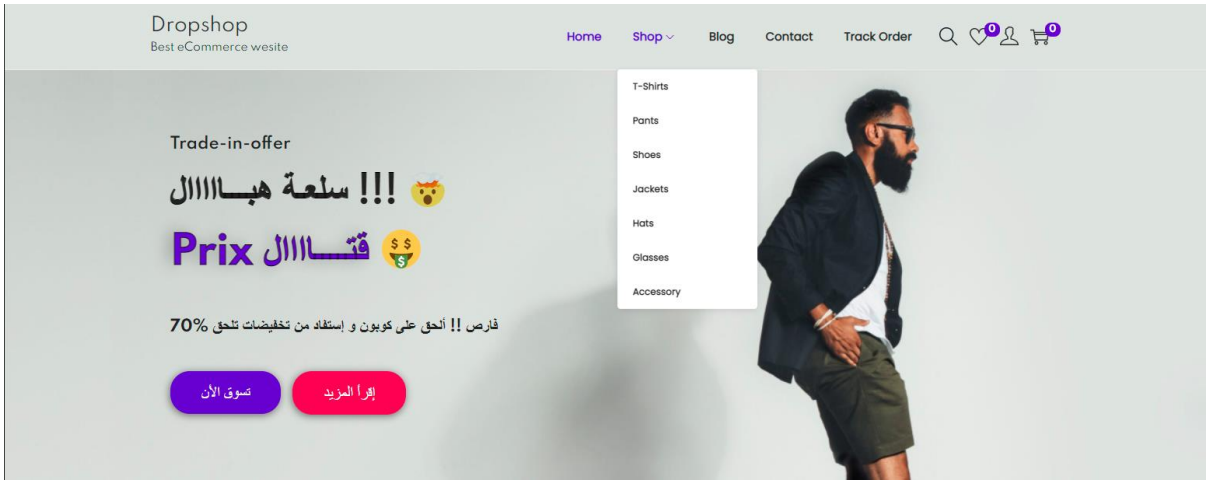


Figure 3. 29: Shop menu.

3.2.2.2.6 Homepage settings

First impressions are lasting impressions. Sometimes, you do not get a second chance to make a good first impression. Determining what visitors see upon arriving at we online store's homepage is vital. It can result in increased click hroughs of we store or an increased abandoned rate from visitors leaving the store. The homepage can be configured to display a static page or your recent blog posts.

3.2.2.2.7 Store notice

WooCommerce makes it easy to manage your online store. You can enable a custom store notice message to be displayed to visitors by selecting a checkbox. Examples of information that could be displayed include downtime for support, the addition of new products, and more.

3.2.2.3 WooCommerce pages

WooCommerce requires several essential pages:

- **Shop**: The shop page will display your products.

- **Cart**: The cart page will be where the customers go to view their cart and begin checkout.
- **Checkout:** The checkout page will be where the customers go to pay for their items.
- **My account**: Registered customers will be able to manage their account details and view past orders on this page.

Some of these pages might be duplicated if moving from another shopping cart, so it is a good idea to remove any previous shopping cart pages that might exist to avoid a potential conflict. For a first-time WooCommerce installation, these pages will not exist and will automatically be created. These pages can be managed from the admin dashboard on the pages screen.

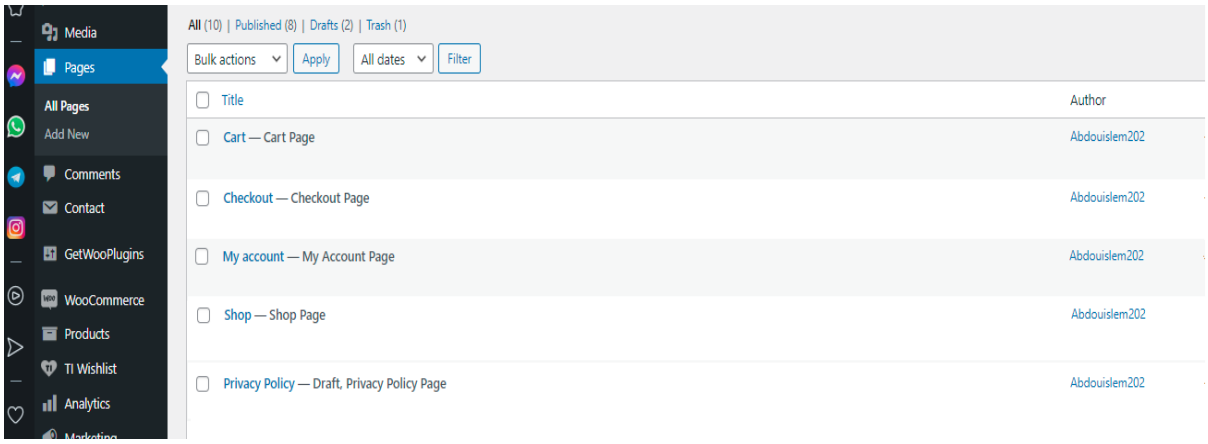


Figure 3. 30: Woocommerce pages.

3.3 Securing online store

3.3.1 Why we should secure the store?

Once products and services and other information have been added to an online store, many store owners are ready to launch. However, before launching it to the world, certain precautions must be done to make sure it is secure. Security must be a top priority.

With all the data breaches occurring in the news with brick-and-mortar and click-and-mortar stores as well as online stores lately, consumers are apprehensive whenever shopping in-store or online with their credit or debit cards. It is the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen to their personal and financial information once their transactions are completed. Not only does this affect consumers, but it also affects store owners because they are also consumers and experience similar concerns and feelings.

Consumers want to feel assured that a business has implemented the necessary security measures to protect and secure their personal and financial information from hackers and are constantly reviewing and updating them. Although some store owners might think that a security breach could not happen to their store, it could not be further from the truth. No one or any business is exempt. As the adage says, "Hope for the best but prepare for the worst." Murphy's Law states it this way: Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong. This title will present some best practices for not only securing an online store and reducing the chances of a lawsuit but also securing customers' information.

3.3.2 Security strategies

Security strategies are crucial for an online store's success. Many of these strategies should be considered early in the planning phase so that they can be properly planned and implemented. During the busyness of setting up an online store, it can be easy for certain security strategies to be overlooked. By having these security strategies readily available, online store owners can be more proactive rather than reactive when a security breach occurs.

3.3.3 SSL certificates

When shopping online, consumers feel that they can trust a company if they see any of these items on their website:

- Lock icon to the left of URL name.
- "HTTPS" in the browser address bar instead of "HTTP".

- Certificating Authority Trust seal.
- Green address bar (for an EV SSL Certificate).

These items represent that a website has an SSL Certificate or digital certificate. Certain browsers such as Google Chrome will display all websites as insecure when an SSL certificate is not used.1What is a Secure Socket Layer (SSL)? According to Verisign, 2one of the leaders in domain names and Internet Security describes SSL as follows:

A global standard security technology that enables encrypted communication between a web browser and a web server. It is utilized by millions1of online businesses and individuals to decrease the risk of sensitive information (e.g., credit card numbers, usernames, passwords, emails, etc.) from being stolen or tampered with by hackers and identity thieves. In essence, SSL allows for a private "conversation" just between the two intended parties.

Most people think that SSL is only used to secure online financial information, but it is also used to secure any confidential or sensitive information such as:

- Logins and passwords.
- Legal documents and contracts.
- Proprietary information.
- Personal data.

Typically, SSL certificates are issued by Certificate Authorities (CAs) who accept applications but can also be purchased from domain registrars and web hosting providers. Not all SSL Certificates are the same and depend on the number of domains or subdomains a company wants to secure. SSL consists of two components: SSL type and validation. Although there are many SSL types, Verisign describes the top three as:

- **Single:** secures one fully qualified domain name or subdomain name.

- **Wildcard:** secures one domain name and an unlimited number of its subdomains.
- **Multi-domain:** secures multiple domain names.

Most small businesses will utilize a single SSL type along with domain validation, but it depends on the business's needs. On the Checkout Tab in WooCommerce, there is an option to select whether to force secure checkout. WooCommerce recommends running an entire website/store with HTTPS and not just the checkout page. Once force secure checkout is selected, another option becomes available to force HTTP when the visitor leaves checkout. To enter an SSL Certificate or sign up for a free one, click on an SSL Certificate is required to hyperlink (Figure 3. 31).

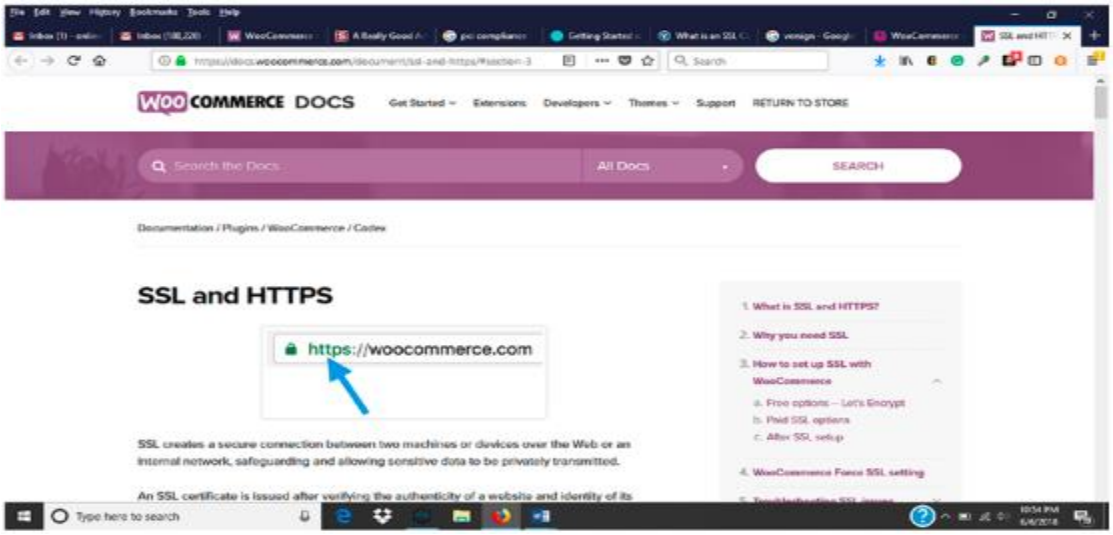


Figure 3. 31: how to set up a free and paid SSL and HTTPS.

Free SSL Certificates can be obtained from Let's Encrypt (https://letsencrypt.org/). "Let's Encrypt" is a certificate authority (CA) that issues SSL certificates. WooCommerce hosting partners such as BlueHost, Press able, and Site Ground provide free SSL certificates for WordPress users to install with a few clicks. These certificates are domain-based. If using another web hosting, it is a good idea to ask whether they offer free SSL certificates.

3.4 How to find and sell winning products

3.4.1 What is a winning product?

A successful product sells like hotcakes. It's something that your target market is genuinely interested in purchasing.

However, just because people brush their teeth every day does not indicate that selling toothbrushes is a good way to start an e-commerce business. Consider how much competition there is already in the toothbrush market. Why should a typical consumer purchase a toothbrush from you rather than the nearest drugstore?

A guide to identifying a winning product is provided below.

1. **You can't easily find it selling elsewhere:**

   You'll need to locate dropshipping products that aren't available in a typical department shop. The products should be one-of-a-kind, entice impulse shoppers, and still be useful.

2. **It has no advertising restrictions:**

   If you're just getting started with your shop, chances are you'll make the majority of your sales from advertising. Make sure you're not selling something that can't be advertised on the major ad networks.

   On Facebook and Google, for example, you can't advertise cigarette items, pornographic material, or face masks. Examine what Facebook and Google have in place to keep their ad policies current and avoid unpleasant surprises.

3. **The product has a wow factor:**

   Potential purchasers should be pleasantly surprised by winning items. Consider the last Instagram apparel ad you saw and immediately clicked on that’s a wow factor.

4. The product is just different:

Selling unique goods can earn you a good side income. Dropship items like this brush that imitates licking your cat, for example. Yes, it exists, and it is even listed as an Amazon's Choice product.

Despite the fact that the Licki Brush may raise some eyes, it sells! It's gotten a lot of attention from the media. Customers are having a great time submitting funny reviews, which makes this pet brush an ideal joke present.



Mavin Johnson

★★★★★ **Lick Those Cats Right Off Your Lawn**

Reviewed in the United States on December 17, 2017

Color: Classic Pink Color

I use this to chase cats away from my yard, or rather, the owners of said cats know not to let their cats loose in our neighborhood unattended. It turns out that there are ordinances in my city against indecent exposure, so I do need to wear a banana hammock while using this product outside of my home. I also think that the initial impression of a 280# man bearing down on an animal at top speed, mewling and slobbering, with a slab of silicone dangling from his mouth may initially be off-putting for some cats. But, once I have wrestled them to the ground and the clawing and biting has subsided, I can begin licking the cat until its horrified owner returns home from work to ask what I am doing. Obviously, the cat was on my property, and I can lick anything that I want on my property. Plus, I am using protection, as this silicone barrier prevents the spread of disease. I'm often told, "Well, that's MY cat!" To which I say, "Then get your own Licki brush, because this is obviously the reason that YOUR cat keeps wandering onto MY lawn." I rarely see the cat again. In fact, my neighbors make a conscious effort to avoid eye contact, which is an added bonus.

539 people found this helpful

Figure 3. 32: Customer reviews.

5. A winning product usually solves a problem:

People are also drawn to products that can make their lives easier. It could be anything from a water bottle that tracks your water intake and helps you stay healthy to a dog travel bag that's airline compliant.

3.4.2 How do I find winning products?

The key to building a successful dropshipping store is selling niche products that are trending.

Once you have a shortlist of popular items, see if they fit the qualities of the winning products we discussed, and put the biggest focus on the ones that do. A single product doesn't need to meet all the five criteria defined. Though we strongly advise it meets the second one it has no advertising restrictions.

1. Examine the Amazon best-sellers list

In the e-commerce world, Amazon is Google. According to e-Marketer data, Jeff Bezos' empire owns about 40% of US e-commerce, therefore it only makes sense to start with this platform when looking for product trends.



Figure 3. 33: Top 10 E-commerce retailers in us in 2020.

2. Find more winning products on AliExpress

In the image below, we can see over 1,200 results for "microfiber hair towel for women." But we've got even better news coming your way!

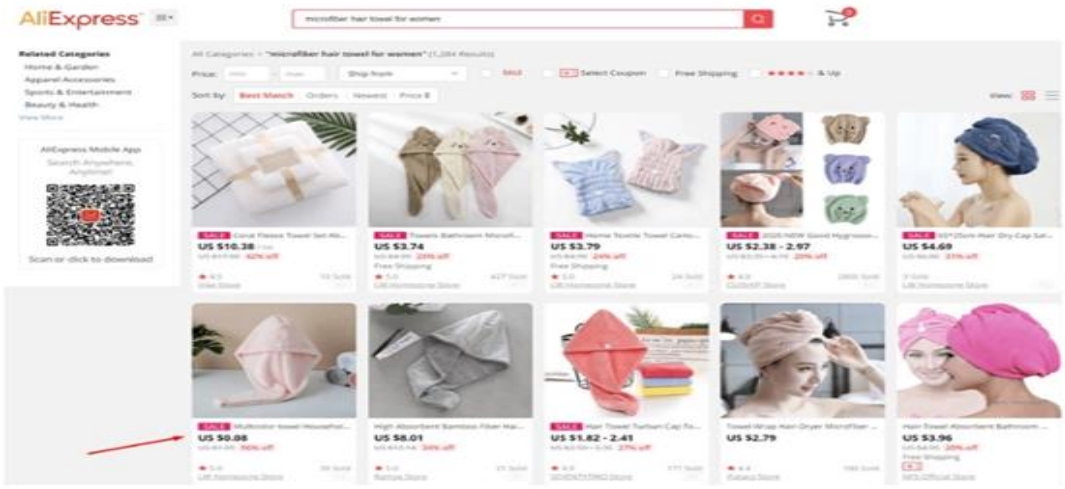


Figure 3. 34: AliExpress Store.

One towel may be purchased for as low as $0.08!

It remember that a microfiber towel costs around $11 on Amazon! Consider how much money you might make if you sold microfiber hair towels to women in your shop.

All you need is a good marketing approach and pricing that is somewhat lower than Amazon's. We'll let you fantasize for a moment...

PRO TIP: Use the AliExpress Dropshipping Center to filter suppliers for your winning products.

This new AliExpress tool's Trusted Supplier Rank feature selects suppliers based on their time on the site, dependability, and sales. So, without a doubt, you buy things from the finest in their field!

If you're still not convinced, use tools like Dropship Spy to run your winning dropshipping items through. Simply enter the AliExpress product into this tool, and it will provide the order rate for the last seven days.

3. **Check google trends for a more detailed view**

Use Google's knowledge of what consumers desire to help you. With Google Trends, you can see what goods are popular right now. It's a tool that illustrates how popular search phrases are in relation to one another. Let's take another look at that Amazon Best Sellers microfiber towel.

We can see that "microfiber hair towel" has grown in popularity over the previous 12 months all over the world. It even reached or came close to reaching a number of 100 on multiple occasions.

4. **Keep an eye on your competitors' ads**

You aim to locate advertising with a high rate of engagement. Look for favorable feedback and those who have tagged their friends and relatives. Make a mental note of whatever goods pique your curiosity the most.

Here are a few ideas on how you may help.

- **Get to their marketing funnel:** Start visiting your competitors' websites often. Add a couple of products to your cart and abandon it. Soon enough, you should start seeing your competitors' ads on your social media accounts. Make sure to save them or make print screens for later analysis.

- **Use tools:** Get a toolkit like Pixel. It's one of the many tools available to analyze your competitors. This tool allows you to see the best-performing ads of your competitors and track them.

You can also use Facebook's Ad Library. Simply enter your competitor's name, and you will find all the ads that are currently running. You won't see the overall engagement, but you'll know what products your competitors are pushing and how.

Chapter 4

Experimentation & Marketing

4.1 Design and specification

4.1.1 Store content

The store specializes in the sale of clothing, accessories, shows and things related to fashion for men and women. Such as t-shirts, trousers, shoes, glasses...etc.

4.1.2 Store layout and specifications

Our store consists of a visible homepage for all users, where there are some products, each product has a class, sale price, product description, size, color and shipping specifications. It also consists of a login and registration page (the form is filled out by the user and client), it also contains a shop menu where all products in the store are in an orderly manner, It consists of a contact page for the user to communicate with us, as well as a tracking order page for the user to track his request, a wish list page, and a basket where the products chosen by the customer are placed.

First, when we go to our store, first, we have a homepage that is the first interface of our app. The home page has a head, the head consists of buttons that move us to the pages we mentioned earlier, and it consists of a button of a search component that allows you to enter a character series to search for a product that the user wants.

- **“Shop”:** The user can access all the products in-store by clicking on this menu, where he will find everything organized and tidy, and in each product, he will find his qualities, quantity and all his information.

- **"Contact":** on this page, the user can communicate with us, by texting us, provided he is registered in the store.

- **"Trace order":** on this page, the user can track his order, so he must enter the user request id in the box below and press the "Track" button. This was provided to you in your receipt and the confirmation email, you should have received.

- **“Wishlist”:** this page can be accessed by clicking on the heart button, where the user on this page finds all the products on which a heart is placed.

- **“Login” & “Register”:** that is the connection field where the user authenticates if the user has an account he will login, if not he will sign up with a username, email and a password. Users' personal data will be used to support the user experience throughout this website, to manage access to the user account and for other purposes described in our privacy policy, where it can place purchase orders from our site.

- **“Basket button”:** Here the customer finds the products he identified to buy, and from there he makes his order.

4.2 Experimentation environment

4.2.1 Hardware environment

All the experiments were carried out with an Intel Core i5 CPU with a frequency of 2.49 GHz and 8 GB of memory running under the Windows 10 platform.

4.2.2 Software environment

As we discussed earlier, this shop was built by WordPress and using the most popular accessories for WordPress, which is called WooCommerce, and also uses Elementor for design.

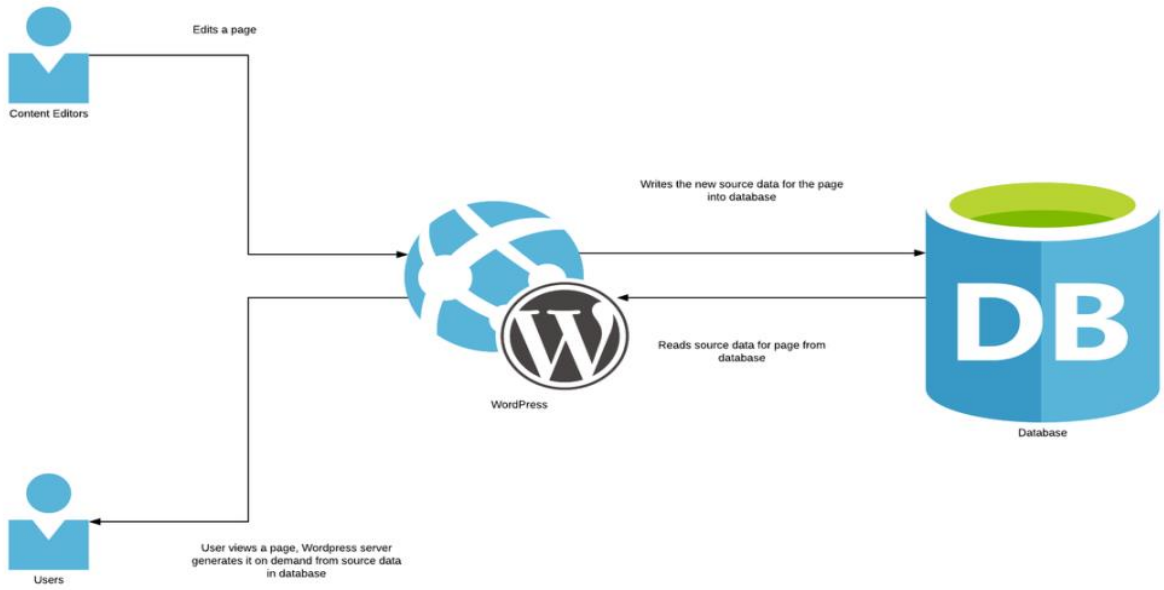


Figure 4. 1: WordPress structure.

WordPress uses PHP and MySQL Databases to dynamically serve up pages from a server to a browser just as custom websites built from scratch use technologies like ASP.Net, C# and SQL Server to do the same.

WooCommerce stores customer data in the database. WooCommerce uses a combination of WordPress database tables and tables dedicated to storing its data. However, WooCommerce does not have a dedicated customer data storage table. Customer data is stored in different database tables, which can sometimes make retrieving this data difficult.

WooCommerce by default stores the customer data as part of each order. Regardless of whether the customer is a registered user or a guest customer, there will be always a record of the customer data attached to the order.

This means that if one customer makes multiple orders without changing their personal details, there will be a copy of their customer details for each order. While this can create lots of duplicated data, it also allows for providing different personal details (such as billing address or contact number) for each order separately.

4.2.3 Dataset

In our system, we used Lite Ali2Woo (a plugging on WordPress) where we can import unlimited products with variables from AliExpress, and we can also place unlimited orders on AliExpress automatically, Moreover, Ali2Woo Lite is integrated with AliExpress Affiliate Program! So you can earn more if you sell affiliate products.

We also publish products for Algerian companies or shops.

4.2.3.1 What is Ali2Woo

Ali2Woo is a projection solution to manage the projection business successfully. Don't worry about price and stock sync, the addition Ali2Woo control them!

For convenient work with Ali2Woo, Ali2Woo has created a special Chrome extension that allows you to import products directly from the AliExpress website. However, all supplement functions are available without using the extension. You can use the extension if you prefer [29].

For those who want to use regular search, Ali2Woo has also provided the ability to search for and import goods directly from the WordPress dashboard [29].

The projection solution for Ali2Woo is better than competitive applications, so you don't need to sync the product to keep your Chrome browser running. Synchronization of the supplement will occur in the background without you [29].

4.3 Implementation

This section describes the different part implemented in the store, and explain each part of our application. We will also present a different interface, Home page, and login and register page...etc.

4.3.1 Home page

This page allows you to view the first interface of our application and a space where we found our latest products and offers. We have too a header that consists of the buttons you transfer us to the other pages, and in the last, we can find the footer.



Figure 4. 2: Home page.

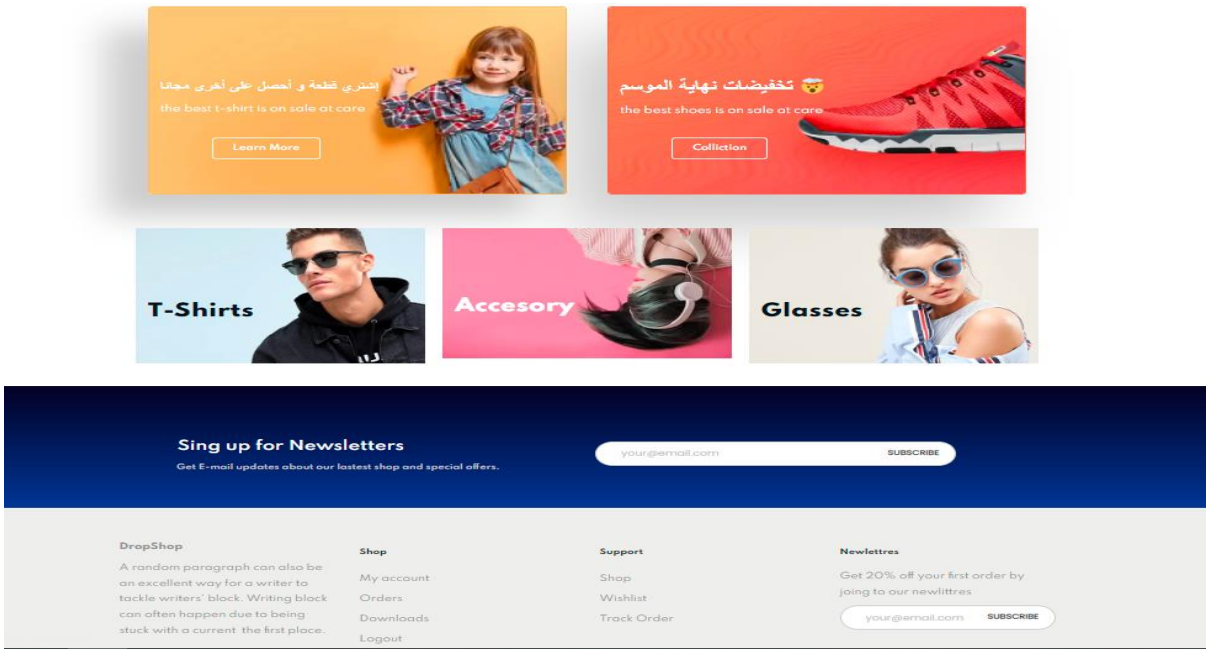


Figure 4. 3: Footer home page.

SEARCH

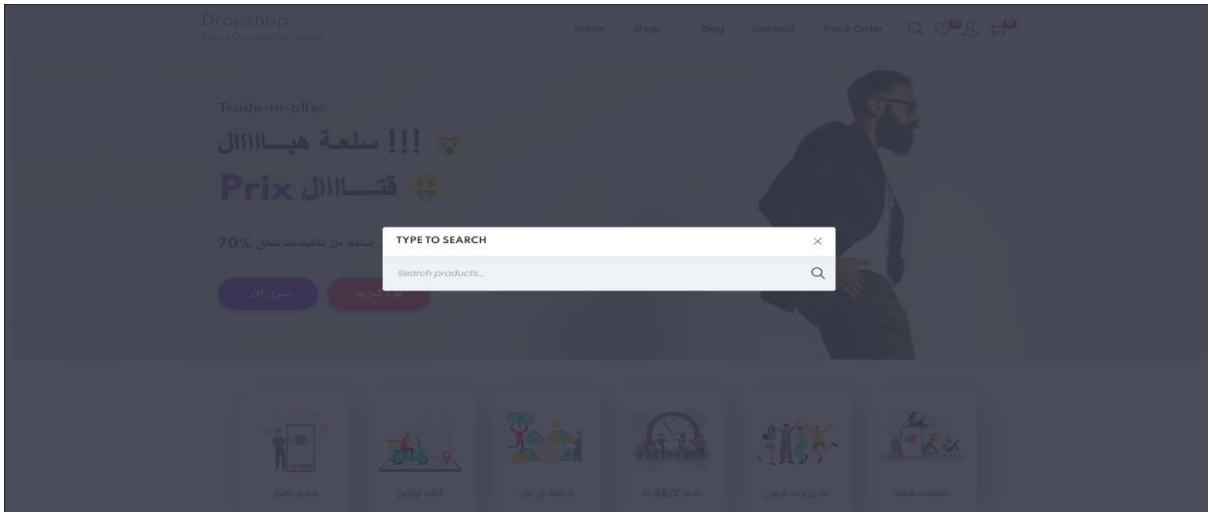


Figure 4. 4: Search Product.

4.3.2 Shop

This menu consists of all products and facilitates access to any product.

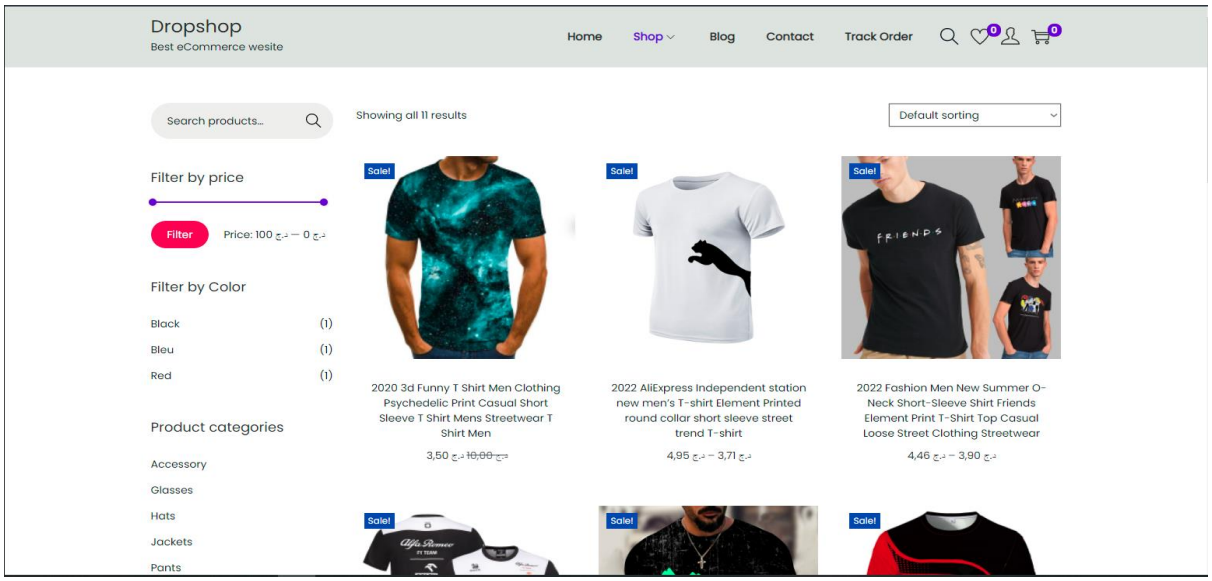


Figure 4. 5: Shop page example.

4.3.3 Contact page

This page is for communicating with the user with us.

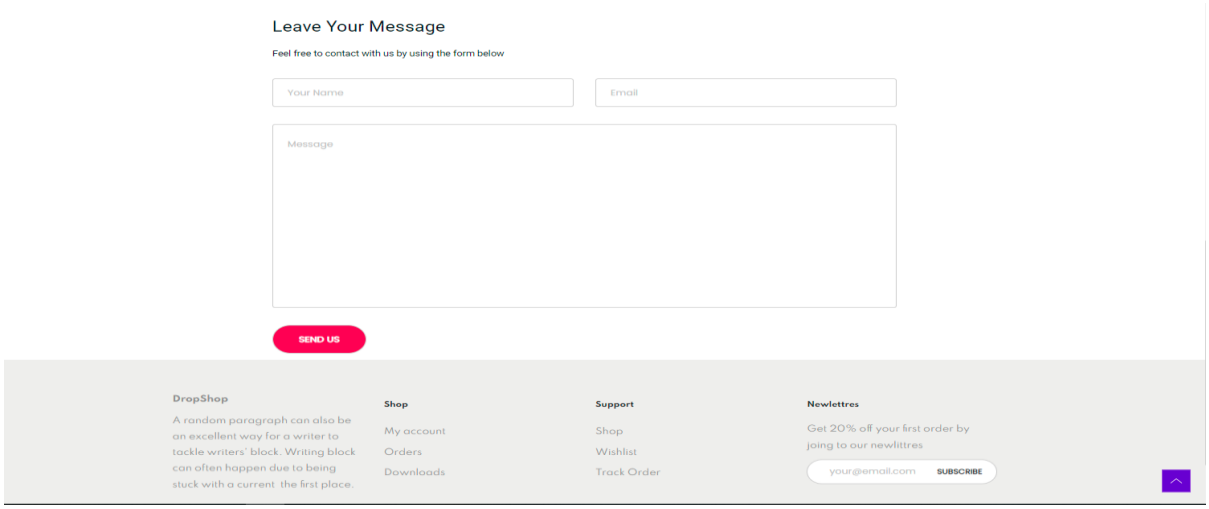


Figure 4. 6: Contact page.

4.3.4 Track order page

This page tracks the user's request.

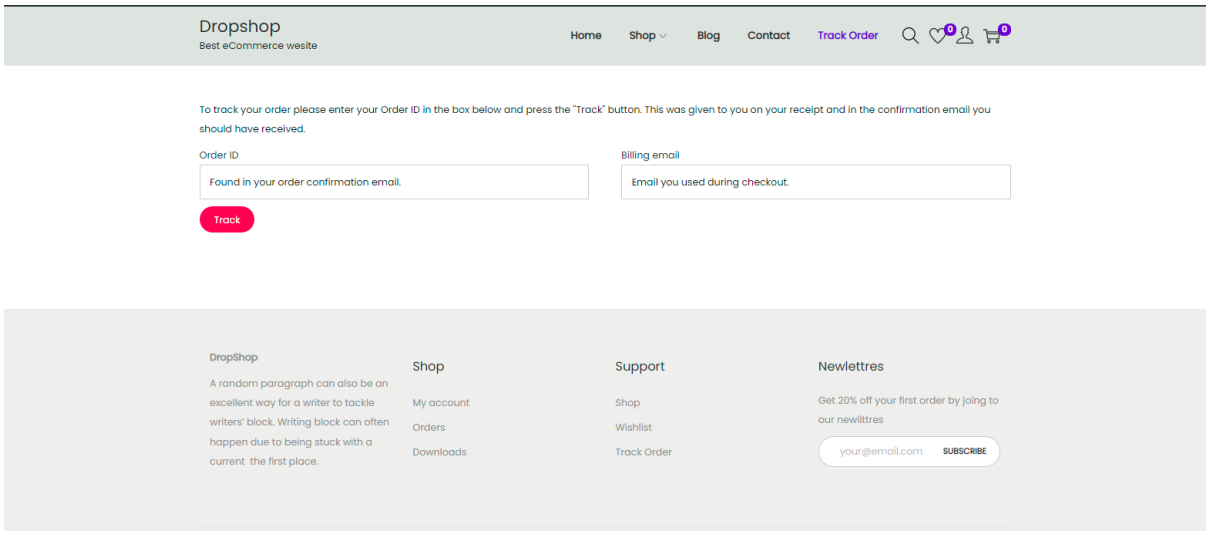


Figure 4. 7: Track order page.

4.3.5 Wishlist page

On this page, there are products on which the user places a heart.

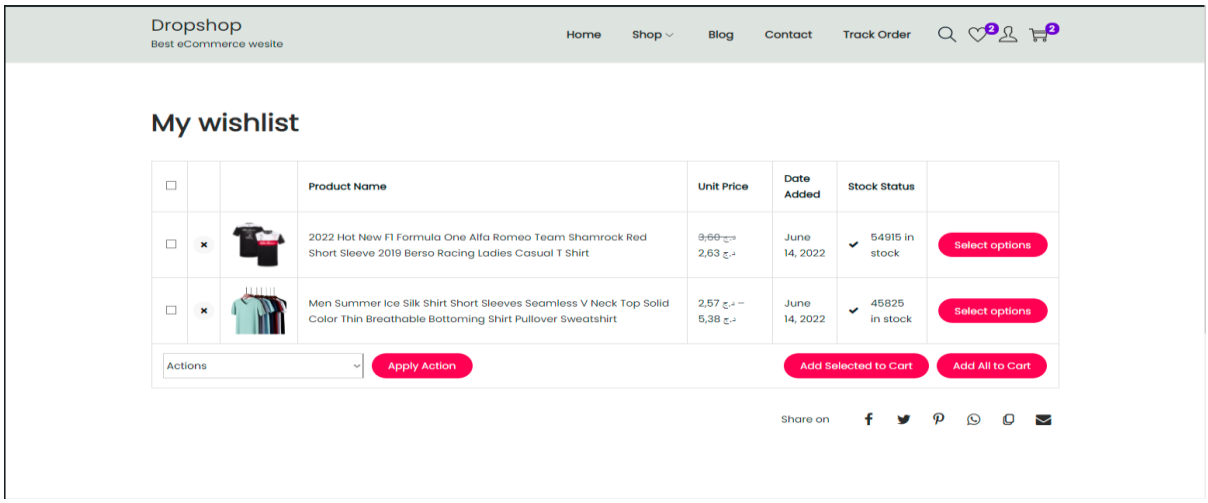


Figure 4. 8: Wishlist page.

4.3.6 Login & Register

As we explained earlier, this page is dedicated to user registration or the area of communication where the user authenticates.

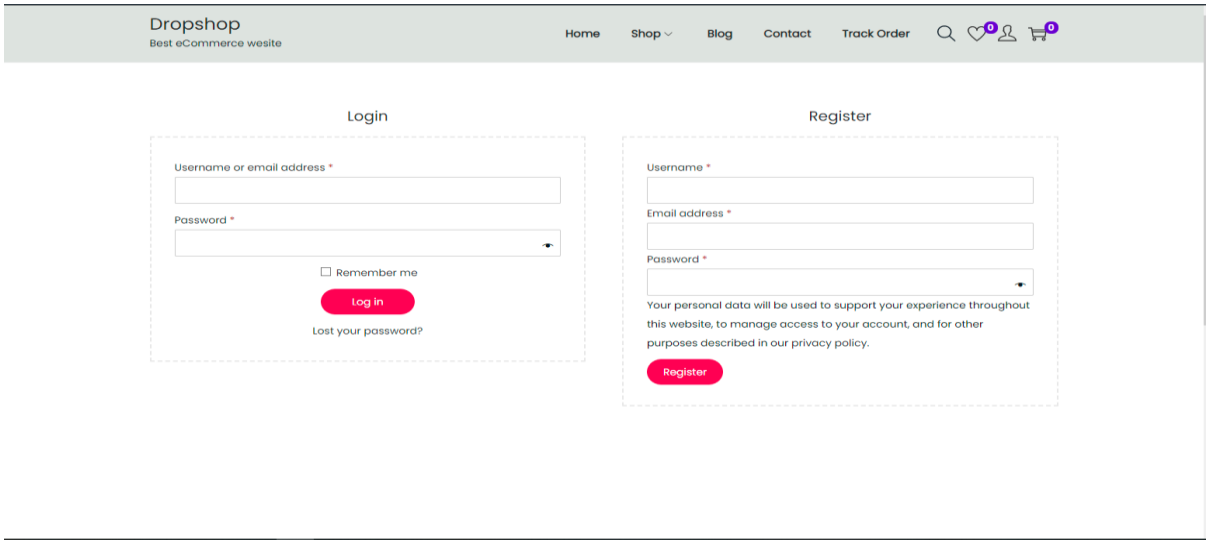


Figure 4. 9: Login & Register page.

After logging in the user can do some steps including:

Payment methods

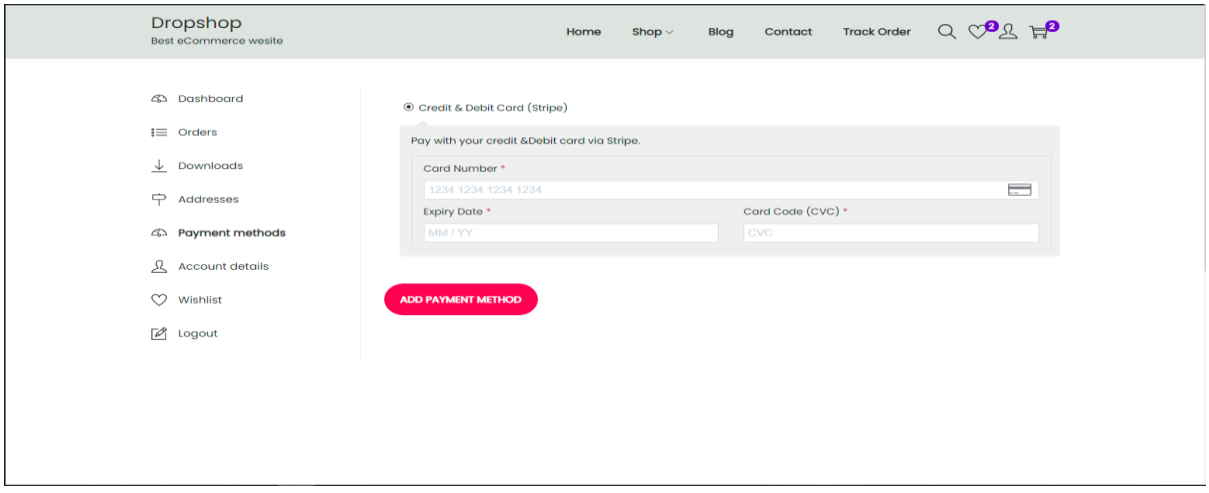


Figure 4. 10: Payment methods.

Change information account

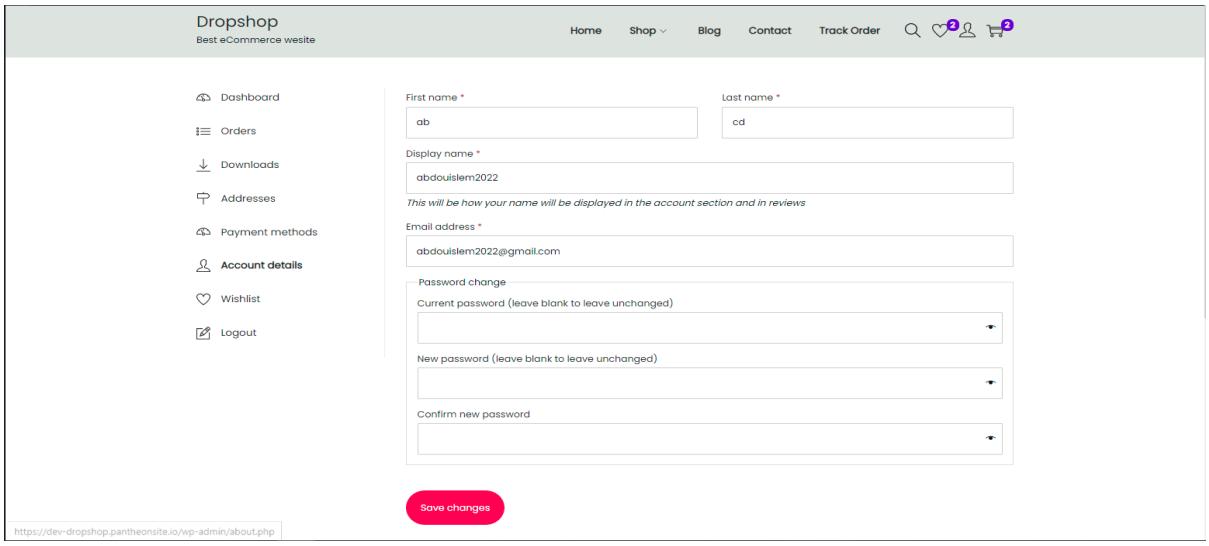


Figure 4. 11: Change information account.

4.3.7 Basket button

Here the customer finds the products he identified to buy, and from there he makes his order.

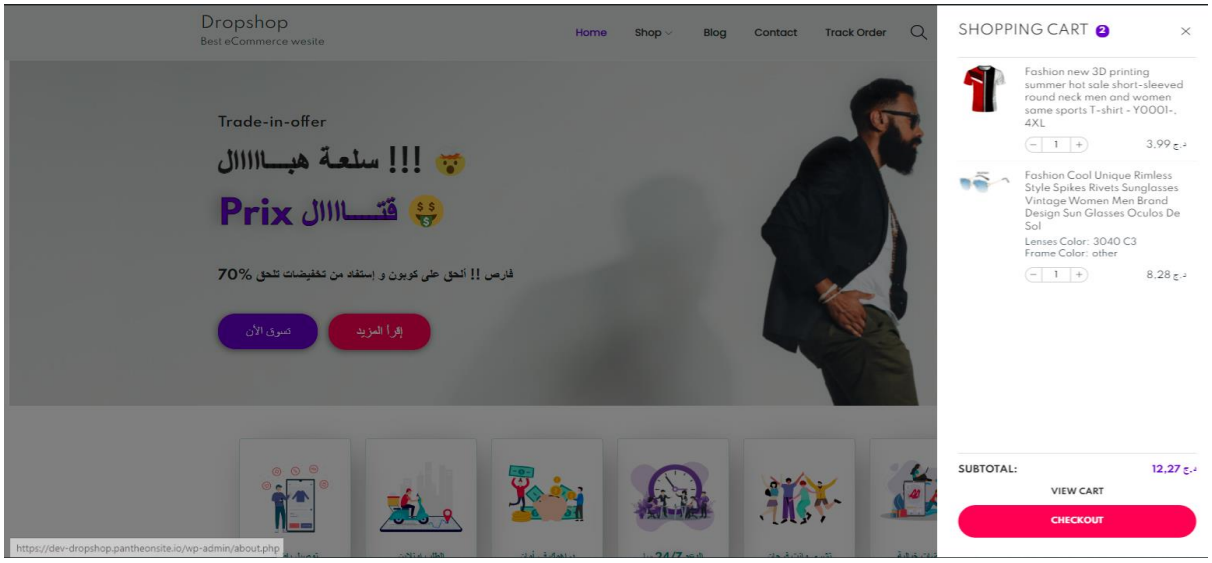


Figure 4. 12: Basket Product.

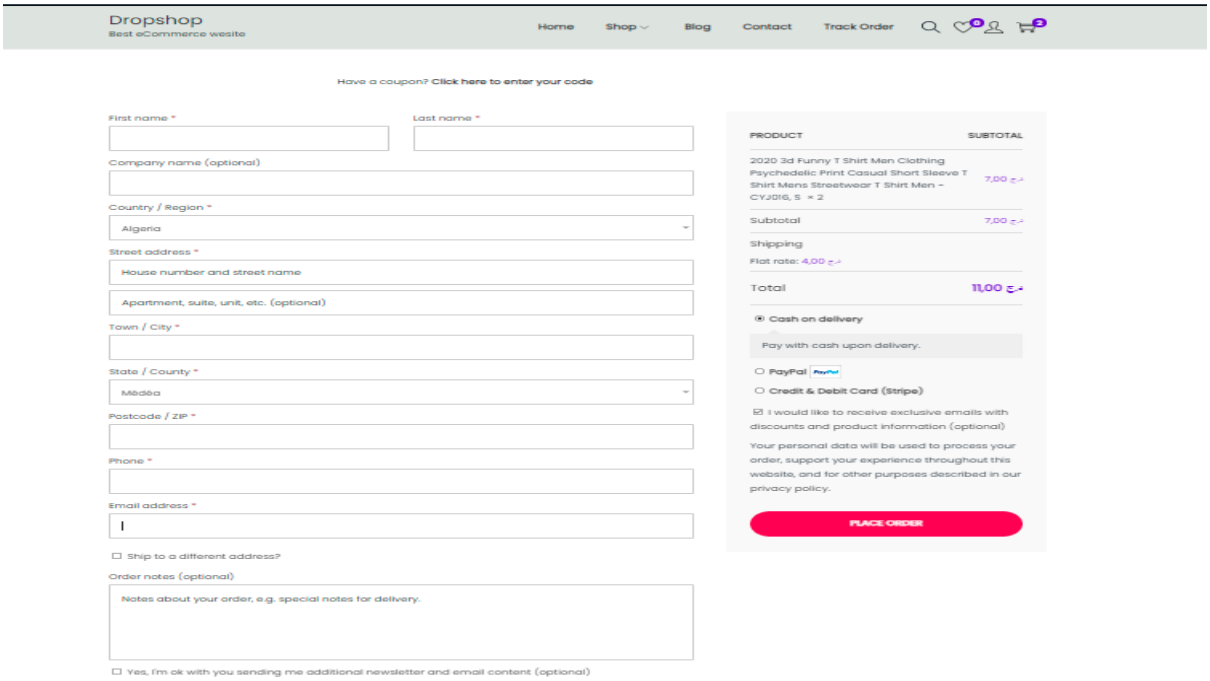


Figure 4. 13: Form filling out for order.

4.4 Marketing your online store

Many E-business owners believe that once an online store is up and running, they can relax and wait for orders to come in because the hard work has already been done. Some people have a vision similar to Kevin Costner's in the movie Field of Dreams: If you build it, they will come. They imagine a flood of customers flocking to their online storefronts to buy their goods or services. This, on the other hand, could not be further from the truth. How will the target audience know the shop exists if there is no promotion before the store opens? They are not going to do so. The key to telling the world that any sort of store exists is marketing. Without a well-thought-out and regularly evaluated marketing strategy, it is possible to go out of business sooner rather than later.

4.4.1 What is a marketing strategy

A marketing strategy is a company's overall plan for reaching out to potential customers and converting them into paying clients for its goods or services. The company's value proposition, core brand message, statistics on target consumer demographics, and other high-level aspects are all included in a marketing plan. The "four Ps" of marketing product, pricing, place, and promotion are all covered in a comprehensive marketing plan. How much should a business budget for marketing? A standard rule of thumb is to spend 5% of a company's total sales on marketing, but if you're starting a new E-business, there's a good possibility you won't have any money yet. In this instance, it is preferable to concentrate on free promotion/marketing resources until sufficient money has been generated to budget for paid resources with a proven and good return on investment.

4.4.2 Free and inexpressive marketing resources

Saving money should be a primary concern until your online shop becomes lucrative. There are some numerous excellent and low-cost marketing options available let's talk about it

4.4.2.1 Social media

The way the world interacts and collaborates has altered as a result of social media. According to Spredfast.com, social media is used by 37 per cent of the world's population, or 2.8 billion people, as of 2018. It only makes sense to take advantage of the many various social media sites that are accessible to you for free with only a small commitment of time and effort. Which ones, though, should a company pick? Adults in the United States mostly use Facebook (68 per cent) online or on their cellphones, according to a 2018 Pew Research Center poll (35 per cent) What about the rest of the social media sites?

- **Facebook**
  Millennials and Generation X are the most active Facebook users, closely followed by YouTube users. According to Facebook, there were 1.4 billion daily active users as of December 2017. People use the Facebook suggestion tool to not just share images, videos, and other information, but also to seek recommendations. A business or fan page is a typical free way for businesses to use Facebook to promote their products or

services. A company may add a shop now button to their website, which will send users straight to their online store, by creating a business page. A company may also use the page to market its products or services by using photographs, videos, and other media. Facebook Live is another useful function for promoting your business on Facebook. Facebook Live allows users to stream real-time video sessions from any Internet-connected mobile device and interact with their audience in real-time. These live broadcasts, which may run up to four hours, can be shot from anywhere and at any time. After the broadcasts are finished, they can be stored on a Facebook Page or Profile for those watching who weren't able to see the live session. Facebook Live is a low-cost approach to boosting a company's followers while simultaneously promoting new products, services, and offers.

- **Instagram**
  Another social media site that might aid in the marketing of an internet business is Instagram.
  Once a company account has been set up, postings containing photographs or videos that may be shared with potential purchasers can be generated. Instagram also gives you information about your followers and allows you to run promotions to help your business expand. A URL can be added to a user's account profile to assist potential purchasers to find their online business.

- **Snapchat**
  Snapchat might be a useful social media platform to employ to market your online business, depending on the target audience. A Snapchat story can be a photo or video that is shared with the rest of the globe. These tales are only visible for 24 hours before being erased from a user's Snapchat feed. Using Snapchat stories to promote special deals and coupons is an effective approach to getting customers into the business.

- **LinkedIn**
  LinkedIn allows companies and professionals to connect with other businesses and professionals. Why would a business professional or firm not use LinkedIn, which is owned by Microsoft and claims to have over 810 million users? LinkedIn's newsfeed, posts, adverts, and groups, which are comparable to Facebook's, may help a company's brand, as well as its followers, grow. Companies may build a free LinkedIn corporate page, similar to a Facebook page, to inform LinkedIn members about their organization, goods, and services (Figure). Companies may use a LinkedIn corporate page to add a logo and header picture, a company description, a URL to their website, post and share content, and more.

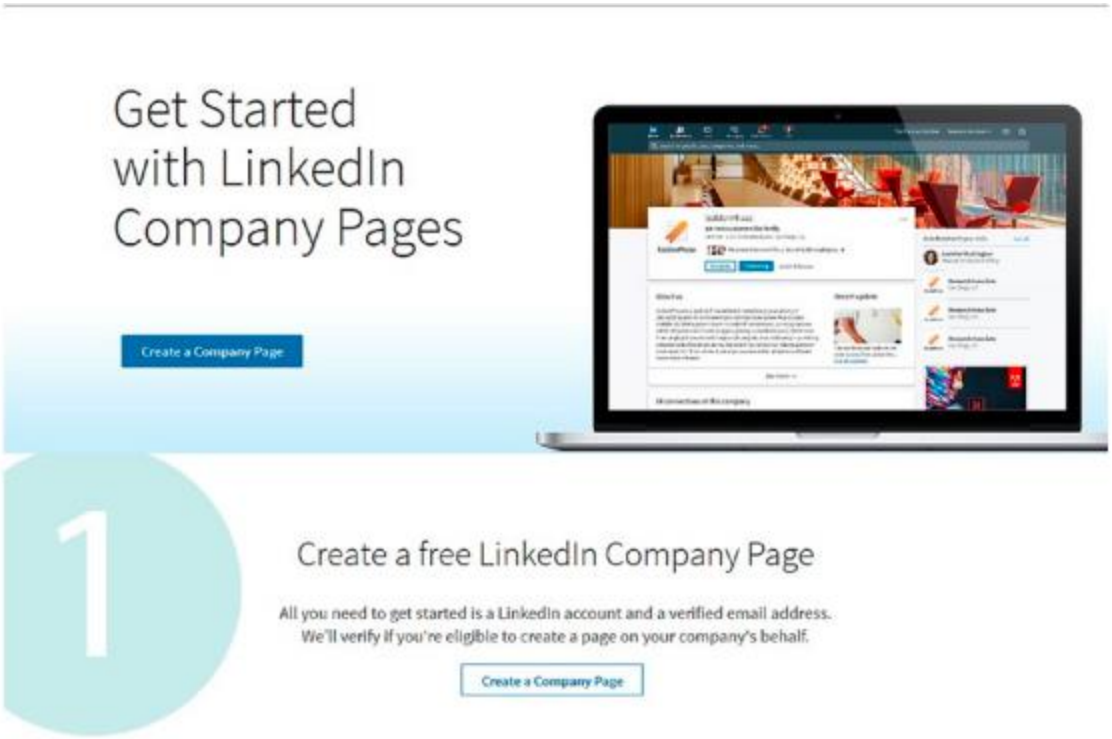


Figure 4. 14: LinkedIn.

- **Twitter**
  How much information can be conveyed in only 140 characters? Quite a bit. Tweets on the debut of a new firm, new products or services, or any other useful relationship-building information may be sent out via Twitter. URL shorteners, such as bit.ly, may be used to shorten a URL so that it stays under the 140-character restriction while also providing additional analytic information about who engaged with the tweet. Twitter, like Facebook, allows users to make live videos that are then posted on Twitter and searched on Periscope. Twitter's live-streaming website is called Periscope.

4.4.2.2 E-newsletter

E-newsletters are a cost-effective method to keep clients up to date on a company's newest events, new goods or services, specials, and more. It's a smart idea for a new firm to allow potential consumers to sign up for its e-newsletter on its website. Email sign-up forms may be created using free email marketing software like Mail Chimp and posted on a website or blog. Among the other paid email marketing software options are:

- Constant Contact
- Drip
- Aweber
- Get Response

4.4.2.3 Interviews

Anyone may create an internet radio program or podcast thanks to technological advancements. Companies may use these tools to not only promote their brands to their target audience but also to introduce their online storefronts with their products and services to the rest of the globe. Audio files may be created with software like Audacity and other audio production mobile applications and then published to websites like Soundcloud.com, libsyn.com, and others.

Paid Internet radio programs, such as Blogtalkradio.com, can also be utilized to launch a radio show and boost a company's brand and visibility. It's not only a good idea to start a radio program, but it's also a good idea to reach out to various internet shows whose themes align well with a company's products or services and have a sizable following.

4.4.2.4 Coupons and discount

Who doesn't enjoy saving money? Everyone, especially potential consumers, enjoys saving money. Begin creating promo codes if they were not produced during the initial setup of the online business. These promo codes may be shared on a variety of social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram. Coupons incentivize customers to acquire a product or service while also saving money.

4.4.2.5 Company phone message

With all of the focus on social media and videos, it's easy to overlook something as basic as a company's phone greeting. The phone greeting is an excellent place to inform callers about the newly opened online business and it’s URL.

4.4.3 Paid social media ads

Paid advertising is available on all social media networks, depending on which ones a company employs. These adverts may be tailored to a company's demographic requirements as well as its budget. For example, Facebook lets users develop and purchase sponsored advertisements based on a budget as well as demographic data. After you've input the ad's details, Facebook will tell you how many people the ad will reach. It also enables the duration of the ad campaign to be tracked. This option is also available on other social networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and others. Which one you select is determined by your target demographic and budget.

4.4.4 Summary

Marketing an online shop is a never-ending task that must be examined regularly. Consistent marketing methods must be implemented to be genuinely effective and achieve solid, positive outcomes. It's also a good idea to look over the marketing budget to determine how much money is set aside for marketing. If you don't have a budget, free marketing materials are an excellent place to start. A strong return on investment may be attained when a solid combination of marketing methods is used.

Conclusion

Dropshipping is a challenging process, to begin with, but once set up, it takes little to no effort after that. As a result, a seller should perform extensive due diligence as outlined. He may want to make every effort to ensure that the theme and look are appropriate for the role.

Next, the individual wants to devise a strategy that will ensure that he enters the market successfully and completes all of the tasks associated with the acquisition of products and services. By far the most effective method to approach the problem is to do extensive market research and get advice from the target market.

On the other hand, because it is still in its infancy, this type of marketing has a lot of promise. As a result, it follows that the type of satisfaction has a lot of untapped potentials. Early entry into the market is thus a wonderful method to position oneself strategically to enjoy the rewards.

As a result, there is never a good moment to enter the market. This is the ideal moment to do so. Begin by identifying a suitable niche that would provide us with higher returns on our investments. Then do exhaustive market studies before putting together a solid company entrance plan. Despite the fact that the industry is still in its infancy, it is nonetheless subject to competition because so many people want to test it out. This is also something to keep in mind. A seller should check to determine whether there are any tactics in place to fight off any future competition.

Seminars, investment portfolios, and other types of preparation are also beneficial since they increase one's chances of success in this sector. Attending them from time to time is the same thing; just make sure he's up to date on what's going on.

As with the previous point, one must ensure that he complies as closely as possible with the applicable government requirements. This can only be accomplished by reviewing current laws, rules, and regulations and modifying them to match their needs. One must, in particular, comply with taxes regulations and make necessary arrangements for remittance to the proper authorities.

Considerations

Dropshipping is a large business strategy that entails various duties such as product research, supplier research, website development, and marketing to get a favorable outcome. It's impossible to comprehend only by reading some resources, such as this thesis. The materials will provide the foundational information for beginning a business, but it will be after the shop has been established that solid and proven expertise will emerge. As a result, we believe it is critical to begin a single-product business after learning the fundamentals.

Obviously, this thesis will be quite useful to newcomers, since it covers all of the fundamental information and standards in detail. We based the approach and steps on professional lessons, resources, and my own personal experience. We hope that this thesis would be useful to those who are just getting started with dropshipping.

Dropshipping is a legitimate business approach that thousands of individuals use, therefore it's something that anyone can accomplish. However, we believe it will be a viable business model for people interested in e-commerce, marketing, and working directly with customers.

This thesis is like a guideline for the beginner dropshipper and for us to establish new stores. There has millions of resources, tutorials, and article about this business but those are made for specific parts like marketing or product research. So, it is also important to check some of those resources before starting the business. We have listed most important resources end of this thesis, hope those will also helpful.

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