

5 Top Tools For Starting a Membership Site



Introduction

Starting a membership site is a dream for everyone who believes that the professional services that they provide require a private access while making money through the paid memberships of their subscribers and the sale of their products. However, there are some times when people fail when choosing the tools to build their business. Once the decision is made to create a membership site, many struggle with the “how” of creating it. While this seems like it should be a relatively simple question to answer, the reality of how to create a membership site can be a bit of a minefield.

With so many different tools and plugins out there for starting a membership site, it can be extremely difficult to know which tool is right for your particular membership site plans. The first question that you need to ask yourself is whether you want to create your membership site with WordPress. The great thing about using WordPress to create your membership site is that it provides the most flexibility and customizability, which is why it has become the most popular product for membership sites.

If you’ve decided to use WordPress for your membership site, then you might have already done some research into the various membership plugins that are available, and you are probably aware that there are a lot of them. Trying to choose the right plugin for your site can be somewhat overwhelming, as there are over 50 WordPress membership plugins out there, not to mention all the non-WordPress plugins that you can choose from. To help you narrow your choices down a bit, here are the top five tools that can help you get started with building your membership site.

MemberPress

When it comes to content protection, there isn't much that you can't protect with MemberPress (<https://memberpress.com>). You can protect your pages, posts, categories, tags, files and custom post types with their easy to use Access Rules. The way the access rules are set up also means that it is easy for the same content to be used with different membership products.

MemberPress also allows you to have unlimited membership levels, as well as unlimited members. If you are selling multiple course or have multiple membership products available, you can set it up to allow your members to have access to more than one product at a time, which is something that isn't always possible with other membership plugins.

If you are going to offer multiple membership levels, MemberPress will allow you to group your products and use those groups to create paths to upgrade while auto creating pricing tables which you can insert directly onto your sales page.

When it comes to your content, you can drip content out starting on a fixed date, rather than based on the number of days since registration. This makes it an ideal plugin if you have courses that have a set start date but where you want members to be able to register as soon as they purchase. It will even allow you to set expiration dates for your content

for when you want members to lose access to certain material.

Another feature of MemberPress that is worth noting is it will automatically pro-rate upgrades if you check the box to allow this. This means that if a member joins at a lower membership level, then decides to upgrade to silver, any existing payment is taken into account and the upgrade cost adjusts respectively.

PayPal

PayPal is one of the most convenient ways to process payments for all online users. It is the most popular and widely used payment networks for membership sites, product launches, and other donations. PayPal has two options for integrating payment processing into your membership site.

- One-time payment
- Subscription type payment

Both of these options have different procedures for integrating into WordPress sites. With the one-time payment option your members will receive full access to the product or service immediately after the payment has processed. With the subscription type payment option you will need to go in and manually setup the recurring period and expiration time for the processing of the payments.

PayPal has an excellent record keeping system that will allow you to keep track of the transactions that happen on

your membership site. It provides your members with a secure payment method, so that their credit card information isn't visible to anyone, and accepting money through PayPal is easier than any of the other payment options out there.

With PayPal's Payment Pro, you can process membership payments from your customers and it provides a number of benefits to both you as the site owner and your customers. You don't need a separate gateway to process the payments from your members and is relatively inexpensive at just \$30 per month with no gateway fees.

The toughest part of any payment processing system in managing the separate merchant accounts, credit card processors, and payment gateways is fraud protection. When you integrate PayPal Pro with WordPress, you gain automatic fraud screening and address verification logs. The ability you gain to process recurring payments automatically makes PayPal Pro especially popular for membership sites.

OptimizePress

OptimizePress (<https://optimizepress.com>) allows you to create almost any kind of page for your business inside WordPress. It is ideal for building membership pages and landing pages when you add the OptimizeMember add-on to your purchase. The landing page functionality makes it quick and easy to capture members and quickly build your list. With easy to create opt-in forms, you can capture the data you want from your visitors, and their landing pages are tested and optimized to maximize your conversions.

This means that you will be able to turn more visitors into members.

OptimizePress makes it easy for you to customize everything on your pages, from copy to images to colors, and just about anything else you need to match with your brand and messaging. You can also integrate it with any of the leading email marketing programs and CRM systems so you can save your member data. The easy to use templates and integrated elements are perfect for whatever you're selling, whether you are selling digital products, online courses, or consulting services.

With OptimizePress, you can build powerful membership portals and deliver digital products and training with their easy to setup order forms. The templates that are included with OptimizePress will allow you to create beautiful membership websites while keeping your content secure with OptimizeMember. The OptimizeMember software allows you to secure your premium content so that only buyers can access the content you've assigned to them. It can be integrated with PayPal to take payments setting you up to start selling your content immediately.

MemberMouse

MemberMouse (<https://membermouse.com>) is an easy to use membership plugin that is compatible with WordPress. It allows you to easily sell products, subscriptions, and memberships, setup a password protected area for your members, offers 1-click upsells and downsells, and so much more. It doesn't matter where you are in the process,

MemberMouse has the power that you need to maximize your revenue and get your business running.

MemberMouse provides you with one system to manage your entire membership site. Whether you are selling digital products, subscription content, or software as a service, this plugin will provide you with a flexible platform that can quickly help you shape your business and you don't even have to know any programming. It will get you quickly up and running and will handle many of the common tasks in your business, helping to free up your time so you can focus on your value proposition.

MemberMouse provides you with customer management abilities so you can register new members and accept orders with their highly configurable and easy to use checkout pages. It also provides you with a variety of billing integrations and helps you to grow your mailing list.

You can easily protect your member's area with easily protected password pages, so you can deliver premium content to your members. The software will track and provide you with engagement statistics and allow you to auto-lock any shared accounts. It will allow you to drip content and setup an schedule for releasing new content. With its support automation features your members will be able to update their profiles, billing details, email address, and password. It will also allow them to cancel their subscriptions any time, with a click of the button, making customer maintenance a breeze.

One of the best parts of MemberMouse is the reporting and analytics that are integrated into the software. This will allow you to get a handle on critical metrics, including sales, retention, lifetime value by source and so much more. This

feature can provide you with the lifetime customer value, retention and refund rates, affiliate marketer tracking, and a member activity log.

Digital Access Pass for WordPress

Digital Access Pass, or DAP

(<https://digitalaccesspass.com>), is one of the most advanced membership plugin for WordPress available on the market today. The highly popular membership platform allows you to create fully automated, “buyers only” sites with one-time payments, recurring subscriptions, or no payments at all. It also has a built-in ContentResponder so you can set up drip content, an email autoresponder, and broadcast system, and allows you to set up a shopping cart with coupons.

DAP has a ton to offer membership site owners, including allowing you to sell an unlimited number of products and membership levels. It also boasts a built-in affiliate management and email management features that easily stacks up as one of the best among its users. One of the best features DAP offers is Smart Content Dripping. There are several WordPress membership site plugins that offer some version of content dripping, but, unlike DAP, many of them don't provide you with maximum control over how the process is setup. With DAP you can easily create drip feed pages, posts, categories, video, PDF's, images, and even zip files. The best part of this is that it is paired with two different layers of content security.

Digital Access Pass also stand out because it is one of the few membership plugins that you can leverage Amazon SES or SendReach to maximize your email deliverability. This is perfect because you don't have to sign up with a 3rd party email/ mailing list provider because you can handle everything within DAP. If you do decided that you want to integrate a 3rd party email provider into your membership site, then AWeber (<https://aweber.com>), Get Response (<https://getresponse.com>), and MailChimp (<https://mailchimp.com>) are all supported.

Conclusion

While the different membership plugins will all have slightly different functionality and features, their main purpose is to protect all your content by creating a private members' area within your membership site. As long as you have that, your membership site will work just fine, even if you feel you are missing one feature or another.

Once you know exactly what the shape of your membership site will be and the functionality that you will require, it will make it must easier for you to decide which software will work best for you when you browse the various company sales pages. You should be able to quickly eliminate certain plugins and will probably find a few options that you like. However, ultimately the choice will come down to which membership plugin feels right to you.

Moving forward, you want to make sure to do your due diligence and make the best choice possible for what you need because moving membership plugin is not a fun or easy experience. These five plugins have proven time and

again to be the best choices when starting your membership site, but again, you will need to do your research before you make your final decision because your monthly recurring income will depend on it.