WPengine®

FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT ON YOUR TERMS

SECURELY, CONFIDENTLY DEVELOP WORDPRESS SITES WITH WP ENGINE

WHITE PAPER
Taylor McCaslin, Technical Product Manager
August 2015

FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT ON YOUR TERMS

As a developer, you want flexibility. You have a job to do, and you want to do it effectively and as efficiently as possible; and you want a platform that empowers you.

WordPress delivers the ideal framework on which to build killer websites—it's flexible, it's open source, and it's highly customizable. It's kept up to date by a vast community, and new features, bug fixes, and security patches are rolled out frequently. It's also the most widely used CMS on the web—WordPress has more than 60 percent of the CMS market share.

At WP Engine, we aspire to be the WordPress platform of choice for developers. We've assembled a suite of best-of-breed development tools that help you work quickly and efficiently—tools that make your life as a developer easier and save you time at each stage of the development process. And we don't try to pigeonhole you into our workflow, we offer tools and services you can use in your workflow, so you can develop on your terms and how you're comfortable. That, coupled with our managed platform, help save you time and work more efficiently.

Here, we'll talk about some of the common WordPress development workflows and highlight the tools WP Engine offers developers to make their lives easier throughout the development process.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP?

Every developer's workflow is unique. Some prefer to develop a site locally, others like to work in staging, while others dig the thrill of developing in production. At WP Engine, we give you the choice to develop where you want.

Surprise-Free Local Development

When it comes to development, the fewer surprises you encounter the better. For many developers, that means you're more at home developing locally (on your own computer) before moving a site to a live hosted environment. Developing a site locally gives you the speed and the flexibility you need to work how you want, and the only person who can see the in-development site is you. You can push the site to staging or to production when you're good and ready, and if you have to make a fix, you can go back to your local server to make changes, then push them back into staging or production.

Many developers prefer local development because it's fast, private, and secure.

If developing locally is for you, we offer the WP Engine Mercury Vagrant environment, or HGV, which lets you build a site locally and move that site into production without breaking the balance— the site will look and behave the same way when moved from local to live. And we're working on a vagrant that will allow you to work locally and push directly to the WP Engine platform. Stay tuned for more details on that.

Test And Share Your Work With Staging Sites

No good has ever come from launching a site before it's finished. You want to test your progress before pushing a site live. If that sounds like you, you're probably most comfortable working in a staging environment. A staging site lets you build and test a site in a staging environment before pushing it to the world. Think about it as dress rehearsal—a testing ground where you can play with plugins, themes, and custom code to work out any kinks before lifting the curtain on opening night. You can share that staging site with your clients—they're password protected so only authorized people can view them. Once the site in the staging area is approved, you can push it live.

Now, there are some limitations when developing in a staging area: there's no server side caching in place on staging sites and there are no backup points or daily backup checkpoints in the staging area.

If you're comfortable working in a staging environment. WP Engine offers staging sites. From your WordPress dashboard, click on the WP Engine logo, select the "staging" tab, and click "copy site from live to staging." And once you're ready, you can easily copy your site from staging to live.

Go For It: Develop In Production

Are you a risk taker? Sure you are. You're confident in your work and developing on a live or production site is the only way to fly. Proponents of live development will tell you it's no big deal since the site won't see much traffic anyway because it hasn't been announced or marketed, or because they work during off-peak hours, like late at night or very early morning. Others will argue developing in production is really the only way to show the true environment and how it will behave in the wild. Plus, a live site is accessible from anywhere, giving you the ability to check it out on different devices, screen sizes, form factors, what have you, to see how it looks.

But there are drawbacks to developing in production: it requires a web connection, so you can't work offline; and if you make a mistake, that mistake happens for possibly all to see. Still, the best way to know how a site will perform is to run it in a live environment. And, if you make a huge mistake, you can always revert it back to staging to fix it.

If developing in production is your thing, go for it. With WP Engine, you can develop in production with the same confidence of developing in a staging environment. We give you the power to password protect the sites you're developing in production, so the whole web can't see what you're working on. You can share the password-protected site with whomever you choose.

Ultimately, it comes down to choice and flexibility, and WP Engine's got you covered.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

The Flexibility You Demand

Now that you've determined whether you're going to develop locally, in a staging environment, or in production, there are a host of tools available to make your work easier, and that give you the flexibility, confidence, and security you need so you can work the way you want.

Collaborate And Maintain Control With Git Push

Say you want to collaborate on a project, but maintain version control throughout development. Git Push gives you that. Git is open source software that allows groups of people to work on the same code at the same time (it's a distributed system for version control). You can collaborate on a client site in real time with your team. Did you know that WP Engine was the first managed WordPress hosting provider to fully integrate Git Push into a hosted application? You can set up Git Push in your User Portal and use Git to push to your production and staging area.

Swift, Simple, And Free Automated Site Migration

If you've ever migrated a WordPress site from one platform to another, you know what a major headache it can be. It's often complex, time consuming, and expensive. And there's a lot that can go wrong. We recently launched WP Engine Automated Migration, a new solution that eliminates the hardest, most complicated steps typically required to fully migrate a site to our managed WordPress hosting platform. WP Engine Automated Migration is available as a plugin and also through our User Portal. WP Engine Automated Migration is free, and it empowers you to migrate your WordPress site to our platform in just minutes by following a few simple steps. It's never been faster, easier, or more affordable to migrate your site to our platform.

Save Money With Free Transferrable Installs

Free transferrable installs release you from the shackles of paying for WordPress installs for testing and development purposes. You eliminate hosting costs that can be a financial drain when you pay out of pocket for development and testing sites. With transferrable installs from WP Engine, you can create an unlimited number of free installs for test and dev, and transfer those installs to your client's WP Engine account when the site is ready to go live or back to your own account if you decide to keep control of a site later on. These installs don't count against the number of installs available via your WP Engine account. They're also password protected to help you keep the site private while you develop it. And, if you wish, you can maintain access to those transferred installs for continued collaboration and development when you transfer them. Once you transfer the install, the hosting bill is also transferred to your client, meaning you no longer have to mess with hosting invoices or tracking down a customer to recoup fees you paid out of pocket. This saves you additional time and money.

Develop With Confidence

Mistakes happen, and there are tools available to ensure that they don't sideline your work or your progress. You want to develop with confidence and know that a minor slip-up won't turn into a catastrophic event. Here are some tools that help you develop with confidence and ensure you can keep your cool.

Turn Back Time With During Development Backups

Do you want to revert back to the version of the site that you showed last week? No problem—during development backups will help you with that. These backups can help you turn back the clock in a snap—go back to an earlier version to eliminate a mistake or design

mishap. Access to easy backups and one-click restores during the development process can turn a massive mistake into a minor hiccup.

When disaster strikes or something goes awry, there's no need to worry. With WP Engine, all of your data is preserved with backup and disaster recovery. It only takes seconds to create a snapshot backup of your WP Engine WordPress site so you can make changes, like updating a plugin, without the fear of making a costly mistake. You can restore to that snapshot to undo the changes with just a single click. WP Engine also takes daily automatic snapshots that contain your media library and large files like videos, and we always take snapshots before making a major update to sites. And when you want to roll back to a previous version of your site, we also offer one-click restore. These automatic daily backups that are stored in separate locations from your site and are replicated three times in the cloud for a redundant backup system that contains everything you need in the event that your data is destroyed.

Work Faster With Copy Site

Copy site capabilities make your work easier and save you a ton of time by letting you create multiple copies of your existing production sites. Your can copy one site over to another existing site, or create a new install that is a replica of an existing site. You're extremely proud of the sites you've built, and you want to replicate that awesomeness.

With WP Engine Copy Site, you can turn a site you developed into a template so you can reuse it across multiple projects. Think of it as instant repeatability for your most successful sites. Instead of starting a new site from scratch, you can start a project from a copy of an already proven site.

The Platform

Development tools are great—but they can only get you so far. You need a secure and flexible platform upon which to launch the sites you build. At WP Engine, we deliver on the promise of a secure, managed WordPress hosting platform that is backed by 24/7 support and fortified with features to ensure the sites you create are secure, reliable, and perform their best.

Here are some of the features that make the WP Engine platform the most developer-friendly:

Serve Content Swiftly With One-Click CDN

Speed is a major measurement of site performance. You want content to load faster. To enable that, we offer a single-click CDN (content delivery network) that stores a site's static content locally on servers all over the world and serves that content from the ones closest to your visitors. This means content loads faster, and sites can scale more effectively. Do you anticipate a lot of international visitors? The CDN makes sure a site is speedy no matter where a visitor comes from. CDN is available via one-click through the WP Engine User Portal.

Keep Data Private With Easy SSL

SSL (secure sockets layer) technology protects your clients' and your site visitors' private data. SSL also gives you the added benefit of improved Google rankings (Google ranks websites protected with SSL slightly higher than those that are not). WP Engine makes purchasing an SSL certificate for your sites and your clients' sites quick and easy through the User Portal. Building an ecommerce site that accepts credit card information? SSL makes sure that data stays secure. WP Engine offers SSL protection across all of our plans so you can keep data private.

Keep Your Clients' Sites Safe With Advanced Security

Have a potential client that wants to ensure their site is secure? Of course you do. The WP Engine platform meets the demanding security requirements of some of the world's largest brands. From physical security at the datacenter to protection against sophisticated exploits and customer separation at the kernel level, we provide a highly secure WordPress experience to every customer through real-time security threat detection, security audits, code reviews, and more.

Always Be Up-To-Date With Managed Patching And Updates

We'll never make you look bad by sending an upgrade that kills your site or one of your customers' sites. At WP Engine, you get the assurance that we automatically upgrade installs whenever minor patches are released. And when a major update is released, we put it through rigorous testing before we recommend an upgrade. WordPress is extremely secure; when it's kept up-to-date. And we recently made core upgrades even easier by integrating it more tightly into the User Portal—now you can upgrade core with the push of a button!

Rest Easy With 24/7 Support

Now that your development work is done, the onus is on us to ensure the site is running smoothly. We're the single point of contact for all non-development-related questions, concerns, and issues. And as a developer, you can call us on your customers' behalf, as well, as long as you're authorized to access their installs. We're available through ticket, by phone, and by chat. Our team of WordPress experts is available 24/7 and always ready to help. It's white glove support at its finest.

Faster, More Accurate WordPress Search

WP Engine Search is a new site search engine powered by Elasticsearch. Currently in Alpha, it is more accurate and less bulky than the search capabilities that are native to WordPress. WP Engine Search is lightning fast and returns results ranked by relevance, and is much less demanding on your database server. It uses autosuggest to guess what visitors are searching for and fuzzy matching to catch misspellings and queries that are slightly off.

And because it's included in our platform, you won't have to contract with yet another vendor to get awesome search capabilities.

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Site Stickiness With Related Posts

WP Engine Related Posts is another new tool, currently in Alpha, that presents your own relevant and related content at the bottom of each content page. Showcasing related posts in this fashion has been proven to increase pageviews by 10 percent or more, drive additional revenue for ad-driven sites, and keep visitors on your pages longer. WP Engine Related Posts gives your sites new levels of stickiness.
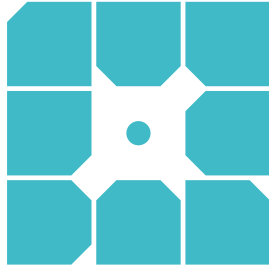
Go Global With GeoIP

The WP Engine GeoIP plugin enables global brands to use a site visitor's location to serve them relevant, targeted content based on their country, state, city, and even zipcode. This empowers brands, marketers, developers, legal departments, and site owners to show site visitors pricing in their national currency, sites in their language, and share content that is most relevant based on geography. WP Engine GeoIP also now comes with built in shortcode functionality to assist with displaying specific content to visitors in different locations and new testing functionality that lets you test visiting the page from a specified location to see how it will appear to different visitors.

Looking Ahead

And we're not stopping here. We're continuously updating our platform and our toolset to deliver the most flexible, developer-friendly environment on which to build WordPress sites. It's our mission to be the WordPress platform of choice for developers, and we'll continue to innovate to add capabilities and powerful development tools and services to make our platform flexible and to ultimately make your life and your work easier.

Don't waste time playing around with platforms that aren't tailor-made for you. Work with WP Engine and develop faster and more efficiently on a platform designed to let you work and develop how you want to, on your own terms.

For more information and to get started developing WordPress sites on the WP Engine platform, contact us at info@wpengine.com. We'll help you get started. We can't wait to see what you create.

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About WP Engine

WP Engine is a leading SaaS content management platform for websites and applications built on WordPress. The company powers thousands of websites and apps built on the WordPress platform delivering a fast, reliable and secure web experience. All levels of users including bloggers, marketers, SMBs and large corporations rely on WP Engine's platform to keep their websites up and running. The company's exceptional customer service team specializes in quickly solving technical problems, and creating a world-class customer experience ensuring that each user's WordPress site continues to perform at its full potential. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas and London, England.