SETTING UP YOUR WORDPRESS SITE

1. Install WordPress - the SAFEST installation is to manually install WordPress following the "Famous 5 Minute Install Instructions" here: http://codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress#Famous_5-Minute_Install. I find it takes more than 5 minutes but it's relatively painless and gives you better protection from hackers than using an install script from inside your CPanel dashboard.
    a. Leslie Bogaerts is a great source of information when it comes to WordPress. She has created two videos that demonstrate the Famous 5 Minute Install Instructions:
        i. http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=VLKfC35rows
        ii. http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=6YAIF2MLEdU
2. You can find additional information on strengthening WordPress security once you have installed WordPress here: http://codex.wordpress.org/Hardening_WordPress.Go through all WP settings options in dashboard and set preferences:
    a. Settings/General
        i. Site title = Should be your site name – this should show by default but, if not, put your site name in this box
        ii. Tagline – Enter a short description of the site (5-7 words). Make sure to include a reference to your niche (ie, Halloween costumes)
        iii. Change the time zone to your own.
        iv. Save the changes
    b. Settings/Reading
        i. Change "For each article in a feed, show" to Summary
        ii. Save the changes
    c. Settings/Discussion
        i. Check the box for "Comment author must have a previously approved comment."
        ii. Put a "1" in the box that says "Hold a comment in the queue if it contains X or more links."
        iii. Save the changes
    d. Settings/Permalinks
        i. Set to Post Name
        ii. Save the changes

3. Choose a WordPress theme. For a free option, go with Magazine Basic: https://wordpress.org/themes/magazine-basic/. I use it for all my non-review sites. It's mobile-friendly, simple, clean, runs fast and has good built-in SEO. If you prefer to choose or use your own favorite theme, be particular about your selection. Themes with bad on-page SEO or sneaky footer links can really hurt your site and your ability to rank. Do not use any that have a link in the footer to anyone other than the designer or WordPress although its best if the theme lets you remove the footer link entirely. Your theme should have good built in SEO and be easily customizable.
4. Load your WordPress theme
5. Add an anti-spam plug-in to your site. I use the Akismet plug-in (spam protection). The plugin is installed by default when you install WordPress. Go to your list of Installed Plugins in WordPress and activate the plugin. You'll need to click on the link to get an API Key which requires you sign up for a WordPress.com account. Once you register, you'll be asked to choose a pricing plan. You can slide the pay amount selector all the way to the left to choose a free Basic Account. Then put your provided API key into the settings for the plugin in WordPress and save the change. Another (also free) alternative that does a good job of reducing spam is Anti-Spam: http://wordpress.org/plugins/anti-spam/. If you have one you've used before and prefer to stick with feel free to use that instead.
6. Add the WordPress SEO by Yoast plugin and activate it: http://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo/. (A complete overview of that plug-in can be found here: http://yoast.com/articles/wordpress-seo/ if you're interested in learning more)
    a. Once installed, click on SEO in your WordPress left sidebar and then click on the Titles & Metas option. Fill in the Title Template boxes for these options:
        i. In the General tab:
        ii. Check the box that says Force Rewrite Titles (this makes sure that what you put in the SEO plugin settings overrides WordPress settings when there is a conflict)
        iii. Choose a title separator from the list – the separator will show up in between two separate pieces of a page's meta title. If you choose to have a post's meta title be the post title followed by the site name, for example, the separator will show up between the post title and the site name
        iv. Save the changes

b. In the Homepage tab:
    i. Make sure the code in the Title Template box is: %%sitename%% %%page%%
    ii. Leave the description box blank as this will force the box to use the WordPress tagline description you entered in a previous assignment
    iii. Save your changes
c. In the Post Types tab:
    i. Make sure the code in the Title Template box for Posts is: %%title%% %%page%% %%sep%% %%sitename%%
    ii. Make sure the code in the Title Template box for Pages is: %%title%% %%page%% %%sep%% %%sitename%%
    iii. Make sure the code in the Title Template box for Media: %%title%% %%page%% %%sep%% %%sitename%%
    iv. Save any changes
d. In the Taxonomies tab:
    i. Click the box that says "noindex, follow" under the Categories box, under the Tags box, and under the Format box. We don't want Google to index these pages as they're of no use in search results. It's better on-site SEO to noindex these pages.
    ii. Save your changes
e. In the Archives tab:
    i. Scroll down to the section marked "Duplicate Content Prevention and **check the following boxes**:
    ii. Add noindex, follow to the author archives
    iii. Disable the author archives
    iv. Add noindex, follow to the date-based archives (may already be checked)
    v. Disable the date based archives
    vi. Leave any other fields at their default settings
    vii. Save your changes
f. In the Other tab:
    i. Check the box that says "Noindex subpages of archives"
    ii. Check the box that says "Add noodp to meta robots tag sitewide"
    iii. Check the box that says "Add noydir to meta robots tag sitewide"

iv. Make sure "Use meta keywords tag?" is UNCHECKED
v. Save your changes

g. Click on SEO/Advanced in the left sidebar and then click on the Permalinks tab:
i. Check the box that says "Strip the category base (usually /category/) from the category URL"
ii. Check the box to "Redirect attachment URL's to parent post URL."
iii. Under Clean Up Permalinks, check the box to "Remove the ?replytocom variables.
iv. In the section marked "Clean up the Head" check all the boxes
v. Save your changes

h. Click on SEO/XML Sitemaps
i. In the tab for User Sitemap, check the box to disable the User Sitemap
ii. In the tab for Post Types make sure all boxes are unchecked
iii. In the tab for Taxonomies, check all 3 boxes
iv. Save your changes

i. All other SEO options should be left at the default settings

7. Add a Privacy & Terms of Service page to your site
a. Install and activate this plug-in if you're uncomfortable creating your own terms of service & privacy page content: Auto Terms of Service and Privacy Policy http://wordpress.org/plugins/auto-terms-of-service-and-privacy-policy/
b. In your list of installed plug-ins, click the Settings link under the Auto Terms of Service & Privacy Policy plug-in
c. Enter the requested information in each empty box:
i. Full Name – enter your site's name
ii. Name – enter your site's name
iii. Possessive Name – enter your site's name followed by 's (ie, All Freaked Out's)
iv. Domain Name – enter your domain
v. Venue – enter your state/location and country
vi. Court Location – enter the location of your nearest court system
vii. Arbitration Location – enter the location of your nearest court system
viii. Scroll up to the On/Off box and change the drop down to On
ix. Save your changes

x. Create a new page on your site called Privacy and Terms of Service
xi. Paste the plug-in shortcode into that page: [my_terms_of_service_and_privacy_policy]

d. Publish the page
e. View your list of published pages, hover over the title of the new Privacy page, click the option to Quick Edit and UNCHECK the box to Allow Comments (you don't want to allow comments on this page of your site)
f. Click the Update button to save the change

8. Add and activate the Simple Sitemap plug in and use it to create a Sitemap page for your site: http://wordpress.org/plugins/simple-sitemap/
   a. Create a Page called Sitemap
   b. Enter the shortcode from the plug-in to your Sitemap Page: [simple-sitemap]
   c. Publish the Page
   d. View your list of published pages, hover over the title of the new Privacy page, click the option to Quick Edit and UNCHECK the box to Allow Comments (you don't want to allow comments on this page of your site)
   e. Click the Update button to save the change
9. Add and activate the iThemes Security plug-in (previously known as the Better WP Security plug-in): https://wordpress.org/plugins/better-wp-security/
   a. Once the plug-in is installed go to Security/Dashboard in your WordPress site
   b. You should see a pop up that says Important First Steps
   c. Click the X in the upper right corner to close the pop up box
   d. You'll see a list of tabs for the plugin and should be on the Dashboard tab – scroll down to the box that says Temporarily Whitelist my IP and click that box so you don't get kicked out of your site while making changes (Ignore the blue box ads for an API key and the iThemes secure now options)
   e. Click on the tab called Settings for the plugin
   f. Scroll through the (long) list of settings and use the following to make the necessary changes **WAIT UNTIL YOU GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST BEFORE CLICKING ANY OF THE SAVE ALL CHANGES BUTTONS**:
      i. Global Settings section

1. Write to Files - Check the box to "Allow iThemes Security to write to wp-config.php and .htaccess."
2. Notification Email - enter an email address to which you'd like the plug-in to send you notifications of any security issues
3. Send Digest Email – leave unchecked
4. Backup Delivery Email – leave blank
5. Host Lockout Message – leave as-is
6. User Lockout Message – leave as-is
7. Blacklist Repeat Offender - check the box to "Enable Blacklist Repeat Offender"
8. Blacklist Threshold - 3 Lockouts
9. Blacklist Lookback Period - 7 days
10. Lockout Period - 15 minutes
11. Lockout White List – click the blue button at the bottom of that box that says "Add my current IP to Whitelist" (this will keep you from being locked out of your site by this plugin in the future)
12. Email Lockout Notifications - check the box to "Enable Email Lockout Notifications" (if someone gets locked out of your site you'll receive an email notification – no need to do anything with these notifications but they do make you aware of any possible hacking attempts – the hacker's IP address will be blocked by the plugin)
13. Log Type – Database Only
14. Days to Keep Database Logs - 14 days
15. Path to Log Files - leave as-is
16. Allow Data Tracking - leave unchecked
17. Disable File Locking - leave unchecked
18. Override proxy detection – leave unchecked
19. Hide Security Menu in Admin Bar – leave unchecked

ii. 404 Detection Section
1. 404 Detection - check the box to "Enable 404 detection"
2. Minutes to Remember 404 Error (Check Period) - 5 minutes

3. Error Threshold - 20 errors
4. 404 File/Folder White List - leave default list of files in place
5. Ignored File Types – leave default list of files in place

iii. Away Mode Section
1. Check the box to "Enable Away Mode" **IF** you are always sleeping or working at the same set period of time. This will lock your login screen down (even you won't be able to access it during this time) for the hours you set in the scheduler. If, however, you work an odd schedule or may log in at all hours of the day or not then leave this disabled. The benefit of this feature is that your login screen cannot be accessed by anyone – particularly hackers – during hours when you know you'll never be logging into your site. It's just an extra level of anti-hacking protection.

iv. Banned Users Section
1. Default Blacklist - Check the box to "Enable HackRepair.com's blacklist feature"
2. Ban Users - check the box to "Enable ban users"
3. Ban Hosts - leave blank
4. Ban User Agents - leave blank

v. Brute Force Protection Section
1. For the section called Get your iThemes Brute Force Protection API Key, leave the box blank and uncheck the box to receive emails
2. Brute Force Protection - check the box to "Enable brute force protection"
3. Max Login Attempts Per Host - 5 attempts
4. Max Login Attempts Per User - 10 attempts
5. Minutes to Remember Bad Login - 5 minutes
6. Automatically ban "admin" user – check the box AS LONG AS you did not use "admin" as your site username. If you

did use "admin" you need to go to Users in your WordPress sidebar, create a new administrative user with a different username, test that new username to make sure you can log into your site and then delete the admin user in the Users section of WordPress. Once that's done you can check the box to Automatically ban "admin" user. What this feature will do is automatically ban anyone who attempts to log into your site with the username "admin" because anyone doing so is likely a hacker.

vi. Database Backups Section – skip this entire section. Using this plugin to do backups will slow down your site speed. Instead, use options available through your host (your CPanel should have a section of available backup tools) to back up your site on a regular basis (I suggest weekly backups)

vii. File Change Detection Section
    1. File Change Detection - check the box to "Enable File Change detection" this will open a set of additional boxes – **leave all the other boxes in this section at their default settings**. Using the File Change Detection feature will result in you receiving occasional emails informing you that some files have been changed. Most of these emails will be standard and will show you file changes that were likely the result of your hosting company making changes. However, you want to review those emails when they come through and just check your site to make sure it looks okay. If you're hacked at any point, any such email received prior to the attack can help you or your host chase down the location of the attack.
    2. Split File Scanning – check the box to "Split file checking into chunks."
    3. Include/Exclude Files and Folders – set to "Exclude Selected"
    4. Files and Folders List – leave as-is

5. Ignore File Types – leave as-is
6. Email File Change Notifications – check the box to "Email file change notifications"
7. Display File Change Admin Warning – check the box to "Display file change admin warning"

viii. Hide Login Area Section
1. Hide Backend - check the box to "Enable the hide backend feature" – this will open another set of boxes:
2. Login Slug - enter a NEW slug for your login screen. A slug is the part of the URL that comes after .com/. Whatever you enter in this box will be your new login screen URL. You can enter your initials and a codeword or a word you'll remember. This makes it hard for hackers to find your log in screen. **REMEMBER TO MAKE A NOTE OF YOUR NEW LOGIN URL!!!**
3. Enable Theme Compatibility - Check the box to "Enable theme compatibility"
4. Theme Compatibility Slug - not_found
5. Custom Login Action - leave blank

ix. Secure Socket Layers (SSL) - skip this section – leave it off

x. Strong Passwords Section
1. Strong Passwords - check the box to "Enable strong password enforcement"
2. Select Role for Strong Passwords – Subscriber

xi. System Tweaks Section
1. System Files - check the box to "Protect System Files"
2. Directory Browsing - check the box to "Disable Directory Browsing"
3. Request Methods – check the box to "Filter Request Methods"
4. Suspicious Query Strings - check the box to "Filter Suspicious Query Strings in the URL"
5. Non-English Characters - check the box to "Filter Non-English Characters"

6. Long URL Strings - check the box to "Filter Long URL Strings"
7. File Writing Permissions - leave unchecked
8. Uploads - check the box to "Disable PHP in Uploads"

xii. WordPress Tweaks Section:
1. Generator Meta Tag – check the box to "Remove WordPress Generator Meta Tag"
2. Windows Live Writer Header – check the box to "Remove the Windows Live Writer header."
3. EditURI Header – check the box to "Remove the RSD (Really Simple Discovery) header."
4. Comment Spam – check the box to "Reduce comment spam"
5. Display Random Version – check the box to "Display Random Version"
6. File Editor – leave the box unchecked
7. Set XML-RPC to COMPLETELY DISABLE XMLRPC
8. Skip the Replace JQuery with a Safe Version section
9. Login Error Messages – check the box to "Disable login error messages"
10. Force Unique Nickname – check the box to "Force users to choose a unique nickname"
11. Disable Extra User Archives – check the box to "Disables a user's author page if their post count is 0."

xiii. Click the Save All Changes button

xiv. You should be back at the top of the screen with the plugin tabs showing – click on the Advanced tab
1. In the Admin User section of the Advanced tab click the box to "Enable Admin User Change"
2. Check the box to "Change User ID 1"
3. Click the Save Admin User button - this may log you out of your site. If so, remember to use your new login URL to log back in

10. Install and activate the Contact Form plug-in to your site: http://wordpress.org/plugins/contact-form-plugin/
    a. Click on the Settings option for the plug-in and in the New Form section click the option to "Use this email address" and enter the email address you established for the site
    b. Save your changes
    c. Create a new Page called Contact and insert the shortcode for the plug-in: [bestwebsoft_contact_form]
    d. Publish the Page
    e. View your list of published Pages, hover over the title for the new Contact page, and click the Quick Edit option
    f. Uncheck the box to Allow Comments (you don't want people to add comments to this Page)
    g. Click the Update button to save the change
11. Go through your theme settings and make any final choices for theme width, colors, layout, and fonts
    a. If you're using the free Magazine Basic theme use these settings:
    b. Click on Appearance/Customize in your WordPress sidebar:
    c. Click on the Layout tab
        i. Main content width: 75%
        ii. Site width: 1200px
        iii. Site layout: 1 sidebar right
        iv. First sidebar width: 17%
        v. Display categories on inner pages – box should be checked
        vi. Display author on inner pages – box should be unchecked
        vii. Display date on inner pages – box should be unchecked
        viii. Display comment count on inner pages – box should be unchecked
    d. Click on the Front Page tab
        i. Post content display: Teaser excerpt
        ii. Grid layout: single 2 columns
        iii. Number of posts: 9
        iv. Display categories: uncheck the box
        v. Display author: uncheck the box
        vi. Display date: uncheck the box
        vii. Display comment count: uncheck the box
        viii. 1 Column Image Width (pixels): 150
        ix. 2 Column Image Width (pixels): 150
        x. 3 Column Image Width (pixels): 150

xi. If you want to use a custom header image, you can create one using the free tools in http://canva.com. Then, click on Header Image in this Customize screen and upload your new header image. I suggest a header image with dimensions of 1200px by 120px for the Magazine Basic theme. If you use a header image and put the title of your site and the tagline on the image then you need to ALSO click on the Site Title & Tagline tab in the Customize screen and UNCHECK the boxes to show the title and tagline. If you don't do this you'll have the site title showing both above the header image and on the header image and your header image will be shoved further down from the top of the page.

xii. Click on the Background Image tab – by default, a grey background image comes installed on the theme. Click the Remove box to remove the grey background.

xiii. Click on the Colors tab and choose your Background and Page colors (I use white to keep the site clean and simple)

xiv. Choose a blue link color

e. Click the Save & Publish button at the top left of the Customize screen to save all of your changes

f. Click the X in the upper left corner to leave the Customize screen

g. Check the home page of your site and make sure it looks as you expect (you can always go back into the Customize tab to make changes if you want to try new colors, etc.). NOTE: your sidebar may appear to be falling below the site – this will correct itself once you start adding posts.

12. Remove the default post on WordPress:
    a. Click on Posts in your WordPress dashboard to view all published posts
    b. Hover over the title of the Hello World default post and click the option to move the post to Trash
13. Remove the default sample page on WordPress:
    a. Click on Pages in your WordPress dashboard to view all published posts
    b. Hover over the title of the Sample Page page and click the option to move the post to Trash
14. Remove any default widgets, posts, pages and comments that came with the WordPress installation or theme. This includes any

blogroll or admin links. If you're using the Magazine Basic theme you can do this by following these steps:

a. Go to Appearance/Widgets in your WordPress dashboard
b. You should see a box called First Sidebar towards the right – that's the sidebar for your site
c. Click on the drop down arrow for the Archives Widget in the First Sidebar and then click the Delete button inside that box
d. Click on the drop down arrow for the Categories Widget in the First Sidebar and then click the Delete button inside that box
e. Click on the drop down arrow for the Meta Widget in the First Sidebar and then click the Delete button inside that box

15. Add a Pages Widget to your sidebar:
    a. Scroll through the list of Available Widgets in the list on the left, find the Pages widget and drag it over to the bottom of the First Sidebar (just under the Recent Comments Widget) – it should fall into place under the Recent Comments widget
    b. Put the word "Pages" in the title field for the Pages Widget
    c. Click the Save button inside the Widget
16. Add the Amazon Disclosure to your sidebar:
    a. Scroll through the list of Available Widgets in the list on the left, find the Text widget and drag it over to the bottom of the First Sidebar (just under the Pages Widget)
    b. Enter the word "Disclosure" in the title field for the Text Widget
    c. In the open box under the title field, enter your required Amazon Associates disclosure/disclaimer. The current verbiage is "[Insert your name] is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to [insert the applicable site name (amazon.com, amazonsupply.com, or myhabit.com)]." – I do use my site name in the [Insert your name] field although I do not have confirmation from Amazon that doing so is acceptable.
    d. Click the Save button inside the Widget
17. Double check the sidebar showing on the home page of your site. You should see (in this order): Search, Recent Posts (won't show if you don't have published posts), Recent Comments, Pages, and Disclosure

18. Create an About Page for your site:
    a. Go to Pages/Add New in your WordPress dashboard
    b. Use the word "About" as the title for the new page
    c. Write a paragraph or two describing what your site is about and why you created it. This doesn't have to be more than a paragraph or two but it's a great way to connect with your visitors.
    d. Publish the page
    e. View your list of published Pages, hover over the title for your new About page and click the option to Quick Edit – then UNCHECK the box to Allow Comments (we don't want comments on the About Page)
19. If you are allowed, remove any outbound links that may be in your theme footer that point to links outside your site. In Magazine Basic you can do this by following these steps:
    a. Go to Appearance/Editor in your WordPress dashboard
    b. Click on the file called footer.php in the list on the right
    c. Find this line of code and DELETE it:
        i. Magazine Basic created by c.bavota.
    d. Click the Update File button
    e. Check the home page of your site and the footer link to the theme name and creator should be gone
20. Add the site to your Google Webmaster Tools account (now referred to as Google Search Console)
    a. Log into Google Webmaster Tools
    b. Click the Add A Property button
    c. Put the URL for your site's home page in the URL field and click the Continue button
    d. Click the Alternate Methods tab
    e. Click the button for the HTML tag option
    f. Copy the string of provided code
    g. In your WordPress dashboard click on SEO in the left sidebar and then choose the Webmaster Tools tab
    h. Paste the entire string of code from Google into the box marked Google Search Console
    i. Click the Save Changes button (the code will be shortened to show only the verification value)
    j. Back in Google Webmaster Tools, click the red Verify button (you should then see a green checkmark and a Congratulations message – if not, you may need to check your code and try verifying again)

k. Click the Continue link and you'll be taken to the Google Search Console dashboard for this site
l. Click the Crawl link in the left sidebar and then click the Sitemaps option
m. Click the Add/Test Sitemap button to the right of the dashboard
n. Go to the SEO/XML Sitemaps tab in your WordPress dashboard, click on the link to see your XML Sitemap, and copy the URL for your sitemap
o. Go back to Google Webmaster Tools and paste your sitemap URL in the URL field (the URL is probably yourdomain.com/sitemap_index.xml) – you will need to erase the duplicate beginning part of the URL string since Google has already added the http://domain information to the front of that field
p. Click the Submit Sitemap button
q. Refresh the page

21. Set up Google Analytics
    a. Log into Google Analytics
    b. Click the Admin tab in the navigation menu
    c. In the Account section, use the drop down to Create New Account or click + New Account if this is your first site
    d. Enter a name for this account (I use the site name)
    e. In the Website Name field enter your domain name (ie, All Freaked Out)
    f. Enter the URL for your home page in the URL field
    g. Select a category and time zone
    h. Click Get Tracking ID
    i. Read and accept the Terms of Service
    j. You should see a screen showing you a GA tracking ID (looks like UA-xxxxxxxx-xx). You need to get the tracking script on every page of your site for which you'd like to gather data. Some themes have an option inside the dashboard for saving your GA tracking ID and the theme will insert the code on every page on your behalf. If you do not have this option, copy the tracking code and go to Appearance/Editor in WordPress. Click on the header.php file in the list on the right. Find the line in that file that says </head>. Paste the tracking code into the file right above </head>. Save the changes.
22. Add your new website to your Amazon Associates account
    a. Log into your Amazon Associates dashboard
    b. Click on Account Settings

c. Click the Edit Your Website List link in the Account Information section
d. Add your new website URL and save any changes