



7 Ways to Monetize Your Plugin or Theme

Thomas Umstadd Jr



This talk is going to be mostly about the business side of plugin development.

<introduction>

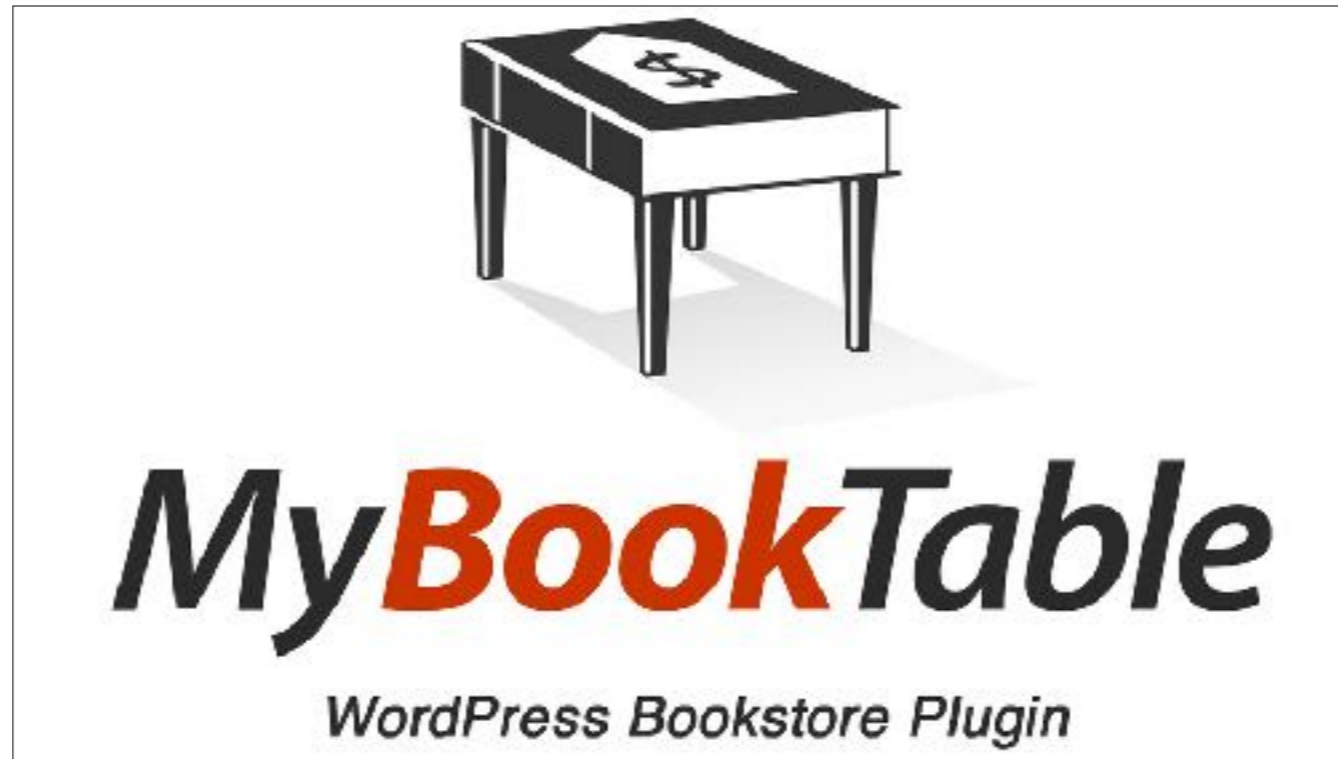
**Why should you
listen to me?**



Full disclosure: I'm not a developer.



I'm the CEO of Author Media a company that has been building WordPress websites since 2007. Or as we like to count time since WordPress 2.2.



We are best known for the MyBookTable plugin which is the #1 Bookstore Plugin on WordPress.



We've made half a dozen plugins and I would like to share **what I have learned the hard way** during this process.

Make Something Worth Selling



Lesson 1

Lesson 2



Launch with a Minimum Viable Product and then let your users tell you which features to add next.

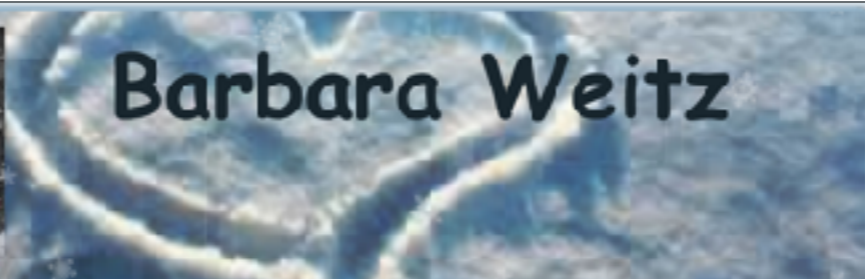


**Get to know
your users.**

Lesson 3



Barbara Weitz



Barb's Book Table

Home

About

Video - Cotton Mountain

Links

Contact Me

Connect with me



Barbara Weitz



Barb's Book Table

COMING SOON....."THE RIPPLE EFFECT" a two-part novel

One woman's struggle to rise above a deceitful marriage, sets the stage for murder. The fallout brings permanent change to the lives drawn into the drama.



Teed Up for Love

Author: Barbara Weitz

Genre: Contemporary Romance

0



1



Provide Support & Updates



Lesson 4

These lead to five star reviews and happy users.

A chalkboard with the equation 1+1=2 written in white chalk. The numbers and symbols are hand-drawn and slightly irregular, giving it a personal, educational feel. The background is dark and textured.
$$1 + 1 = 2$$

Make Installation Easy

Lesson 5

WordPress.org

Search WordPress

Download WordPress

Plugins

My Favorites Beta Testing Developers Search plugins



MyBookTable

WordPress Bookstore Plugin



MyBookTable Bookstore by Author Media [Download](#)

By Author Media

[Details](#) [Reviews](#) [Installation](#) [Support](#) [Development](#)

Installation

REPOSITORY CROSSLOAD METHOD (RECOMMENDED)

Version:	3.0.9
Last updated:	4 months ago

Feel free to steal our instructions from MyBookTable.

Make a Tutorial Screencast

Lesson 6



Developer Center

Search Plugins

Popular Tags More »

widget (4914)

Post (3,378)

Plugin (3,122)

admin (2,528)

WordPress (2,490)

WordPress (1,892)

google (1,711)

twitter (1,680)

shortcode (1,670)

images (1,671)

comments (1,612)

page (1,606)

image (1,306)



MyBookTable

WordPress Bookstore Plugin

2.0

MyBookTable Bookstore by Author Media

A WordPress Bookstore Plugin to help authors boost book sales on sites like Amazon and Apple iBooks with great-looking book pages.

[Download Version 2.0.9](#)

[Description](#) [Installation](#) [FAQ](#) [Screenshots](#) [Changelog](#) [Stats](#) [Support](#) [Reviews](#) [Developers](#)



MyBookTable

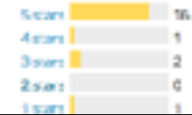
WordPress Bookstore Plugin

Requires: 3.5.0 or higher
Compatible up to: 4.1.1
Last Updated: 2015-03-27
Active Installs: 2,000+

Rating:



4.6 out of 5 stars





- Don't Be Evil
- Don't call home
- Opt in for anything fishy
- Don't sell cripple ware

Follow the WordPress Philosophy



Lesson 8

Out of the Box



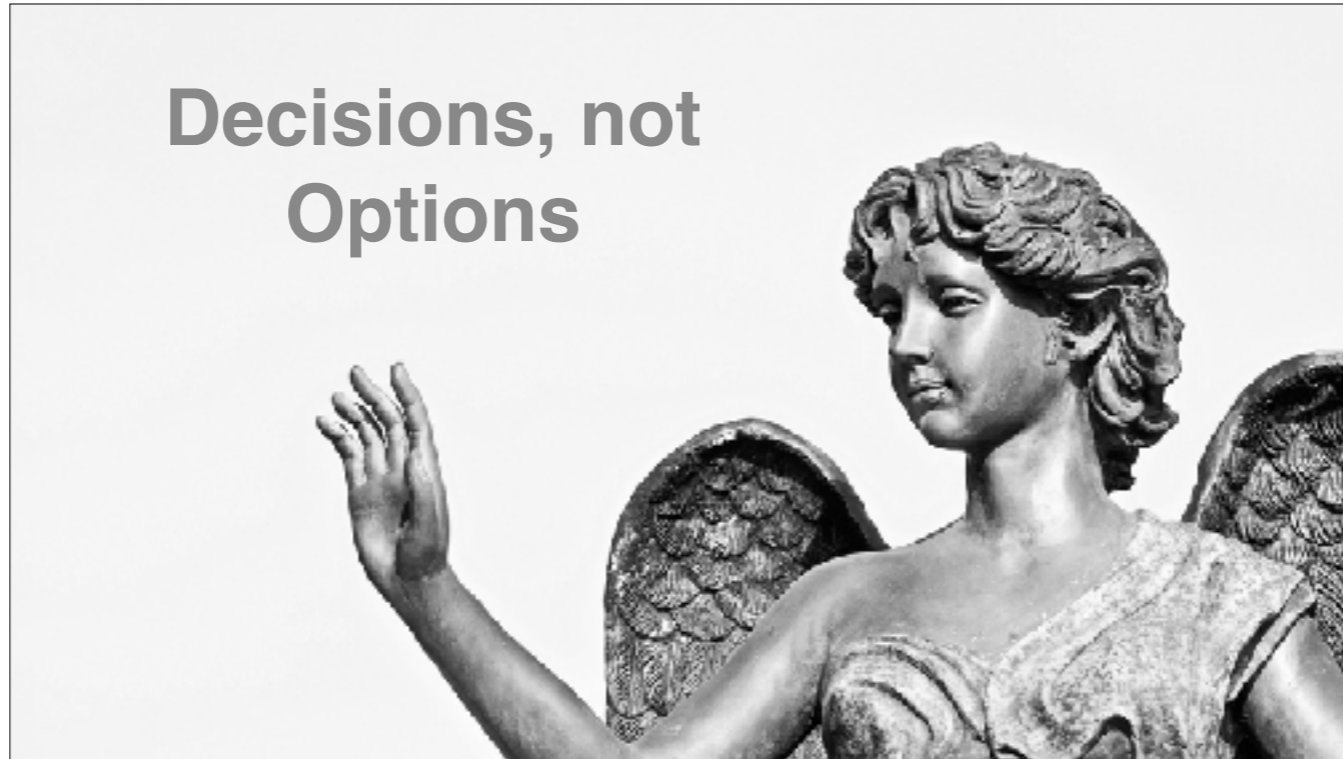
Great software should work with little configuration and setup. WordPress works hard to make sure that every release is in keeping with this philosophy. We ask for as few technical details as possible during the setup process as well as providing full explanations of anything we do ask.

Design for the Majority



Many end users of WordPress are non-technically minded. They don't know what AJAX is, nor do they care about which version of PHP they are using. The average WordPress user simply wants to be able to write without problems or interruption. These are the users that we design the software for as they are ultimately the ones who are going to spend the most time using it for what it was built for.

Decisions, not Options



Every time you give a user an option, you are asking them to make a decision. When a user doesn't care or understand the option this ultimately leads to frustration. It's our duty as developers to make smart design decisions and avoid putting the weight of technical choices on our end users.

</introduction>

<monetization methods>

<method 1>

Bill Erickson Model



Bill Erickson built Advanced Custom Fields Plugin.
All Plugins are 100% free
Plugins don't get tech support (not even on the repository)

Plugins

[Genesis](#) [Developer](#) [CMS](#) [Social](#) [Media](#) [Widget](#) [Analytics](#)



Display Posts Shortcode
Easily display listings of posts without knowing PHP or writing shortcode files.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Integrate ConvertKit + WPForms
Connects forms on your website to ConvertKit for email marketing.

[LEARN MORE](#)



EA Share Count
A developer-friendly plugin to retrieve, cache, and display various social sharing counts and buttons.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Genesis Grid Loop



Genesis Title Toggle



BE Events Calendar

This repository Search Pull requests Issues Marketplace Explore

billerickson / display-posts-shortcode

Watch 33 Star 232 Fork 13

Code Issues 2 Pull requests 1 Projects 0 Wiki Insights

Display a listing of posts using the [display-posts] shortcode

171 commits 1 branches 6 releases 13 contributors GPL-3.0

Branch: master New pull request Create new file Upload files Find file Clone or download

billerickson update changelog with change Latest commit: c480c 21 days ago

CHANGELOG.md	update changelog with change	21 days ago
LICENSE.txt	add GPL license	a year ago
README.md	fix readme spacing	27 days ago
display-posts-shortcode.php	update changelog with change	21 days ago
readme.txt	prep 2.0.0 release	27 days ago

README.md

Display Posts Shortcode

Contributions

I have written **19** plugins, which have been downloaded **927,173** times.

Plugins are where I put pieces of functionality other WordPress users might also find useful. Whether it's the ability to easily view all the images attached to the current post or a simple shortcode for generating dynamic listings of content, these are all things I've developed for clients and released publicly.

By releasing them as plugins, I can easily reuse them on future projects, add bug fixes and enhancements which the client can easily apply (click "Update Plugin"), and receive help on those fixes and enhancements from the community.

[VIEW PLUGINS](#)

Most “white hat”
model.



In the early days of WordPress, all plugins were 100% free and there were no pro versions of anything. They were also **by developers for developers**. Regular users expect more support from plugins.

Great at Building Credibility



Doesn't Scale



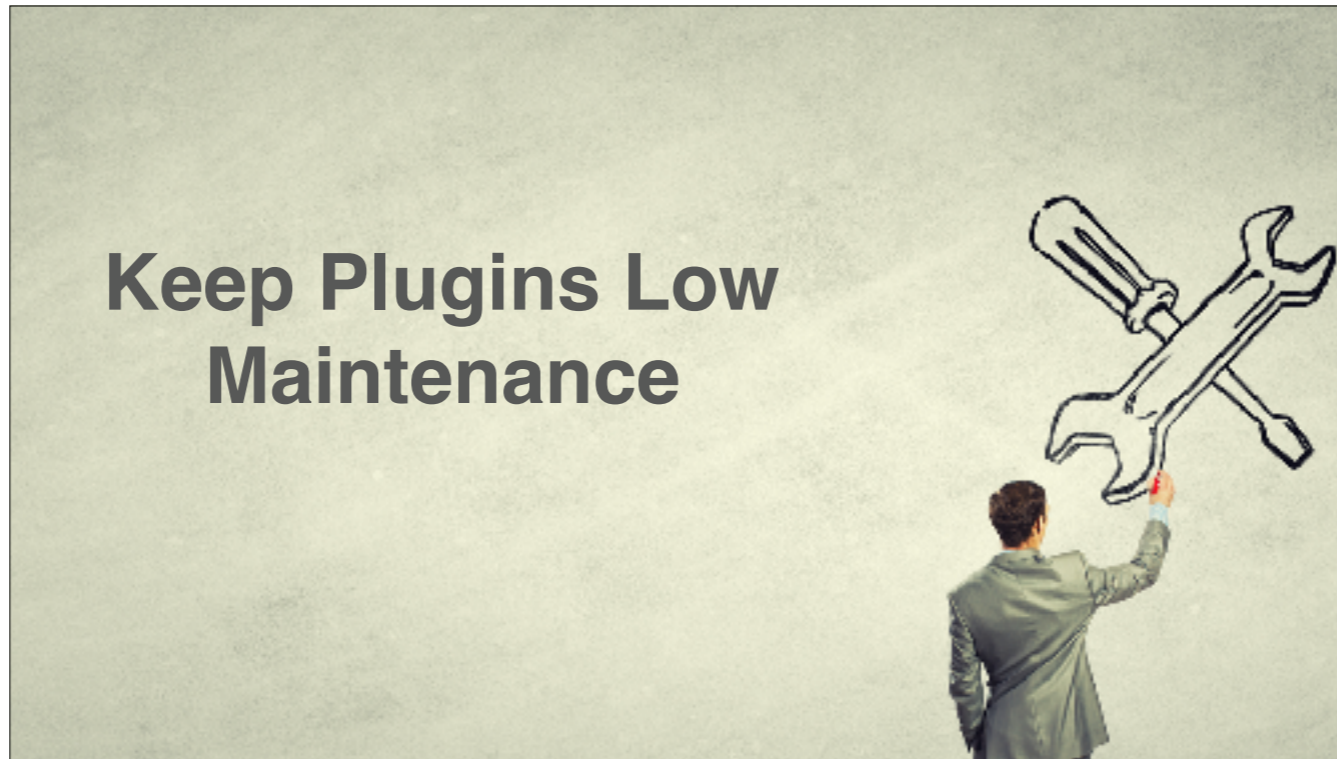
Giving away plugins for free and then selling your time doesn't scale. You are stuck trading hours for dollars

Not *that* Lucrative



At best, this model is a supplement to another revenue source. It is a great way to get a great job, but not a job itself.

Keep Plugins Low Maintenance



Bill develops for developers and savvy users. He does not develop for end users. End users do not hire plugin developers.

Be very careful about adding new features.

Keep the plugin as simple as possible.

Develop on Client Time



Be transparent with your clients about how their code will be re-used.

</method 1>

When I wrote this code,
only God & I understood what it did.



Now...
only God knows.

<method 2>



Pros:

- Full control over the plugin.
- Don't have to bother with the repository restrictions.

Cons:

- Can't be in the repository.
- Must find your own customers



This is the gravity forms model.

GRAVITY FEATURES ADD-ONS BUY GRAVITY FORMS SUPPORT THE BLOG TRY THE DEMO

Buy Gravity Forms for WordPress

Select A License that Best Fits Your Project

Developer License \$199*	Business License \$99*	Personal License \$39*
∞ Support for Unlimited Sites	Support for 3 Sites	Support for 1 Site
WordPress Multi-Site	∞ Unlimited Forms	∞ Unlimited Forms
∞ Unlimited Forms	∞ Unlimited Entries	∞ Unlimited Entries
∞ Unlimited Entries	Auto-responders	Auto-responders
Auto-responders	Export Entries	Export Entries
Export Entries	Spam Protection	Spam Protection

The only way to get Gravity Forms is from [GravityForms.com](https://www.gravityforms.com)



Promising an infinite amount of work for a finite amount of money is a bad business model.

Alternatives:

- 1 Year Updates & Support
- Monthly/Yearly Membership

Create a Plan to Acquire Customers



It costs money to acquire customers.



12%-37% (non exclusive)
50%-70% (exclusive)

CodeCanyon / Theme Forest

5 Million Users

SLIDER REVOLUTION
A PREMIUM WORDPRESS PLUGIN

VERSION **4.6**
SkyWood

- » **Responsive** with any dimension, Full-Width, Fullscreen
- » Huge Feature Update! [SEE FILE DESCRIPTION](#)
- » Now with Loop Animations & Parallax Layers
- » Multi Language Ready with WPML or QTranslate
- » **Brand-New Backend Functionality & Style**
- » **The Plugin of Choice for many Theme Authors!**

WordPress CSS3 Android WPML.ORG vimeo YouTube

The advertisement features a central list of features on the left, a list of device icons (WordPress, CSS3, Android, WPML, vimeo, YouTube) at the bottom, and a background image on the right showing a woman in a white dress holding a large orange sign that says 'over 25,000 Sales'.

\$25

\$3,000,000 in sales (net)



\$18 cost

41,000 sales

\$738,000 (gross)

\$369,000 (net)

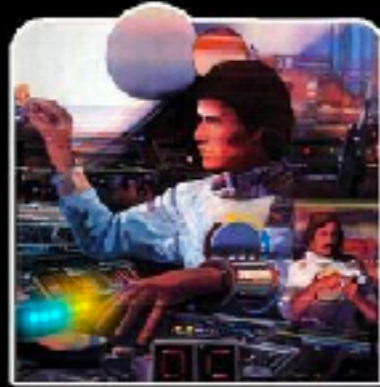


5% fee

No monthly fee. The simplest interface and they even handle EU VAT for you. The 5% includes credit card handling even for Amex. We happily pay the extra 2% for one million percent less hassle.

</method 2>

THE TWO STATES OF EVERY PROGRAMMER



I AM A GOD.



**I HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT I'M DOING.**

<method 3>

Freemium



Pros:

- In the repository.
- Marketing is cheaper & easier

Cons:

- Must support all those free users
- Must comply with repository guidelines.

WordPress.ORG

Showcase Themes **Plugins** Mobile Support Get Involved About Blog Hosting

Search WordPress.org

Download WordPress

Plugins My Favorites Beta Testing Developers Search plugins



BASIC	STANDARD	PRO
\$12	\$24	\$48
CAT FOOD	CAT FOOD	DELUXE CAT FOOD
	CATNIP	DELUXE CATNIP
		SCRATCHER
BUY	BUY	BUY

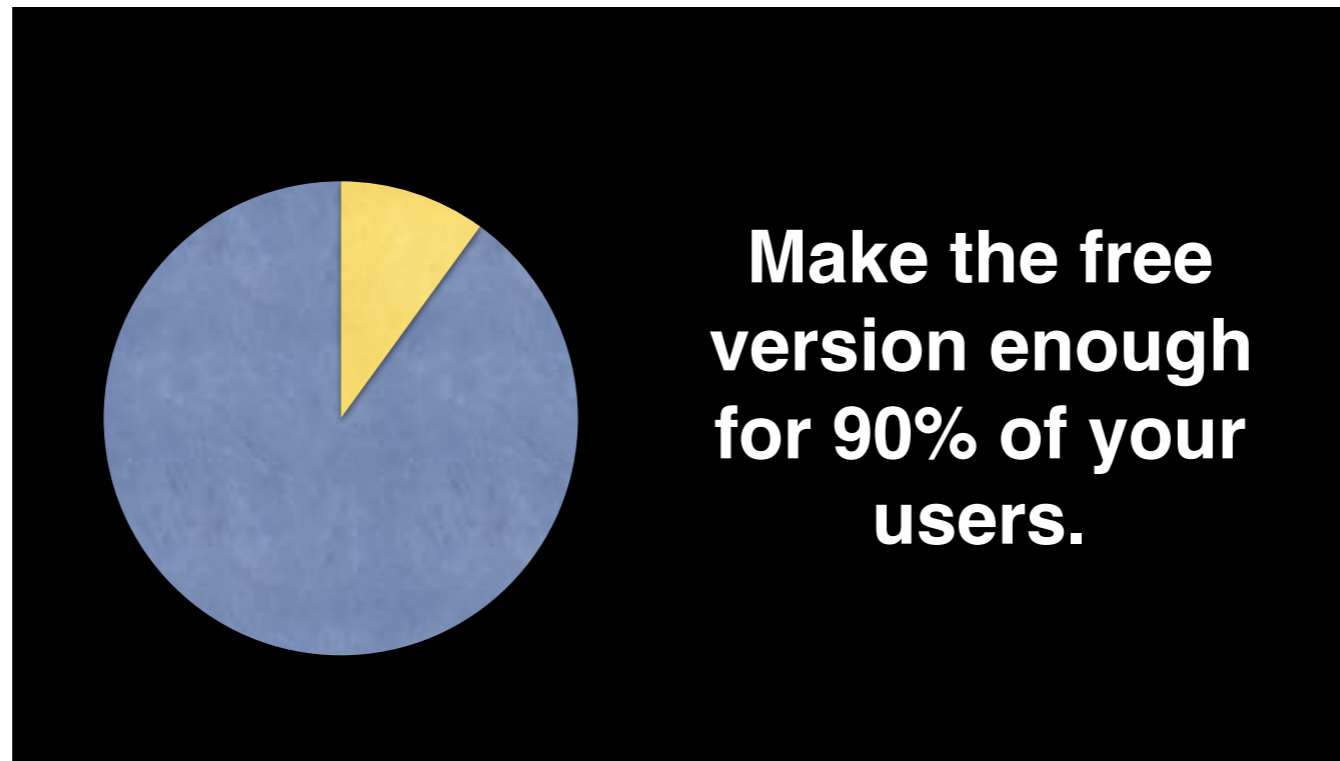
 Pricing Tables WordPress Plugin – Easy Pricing Tables [Download](#)

Model

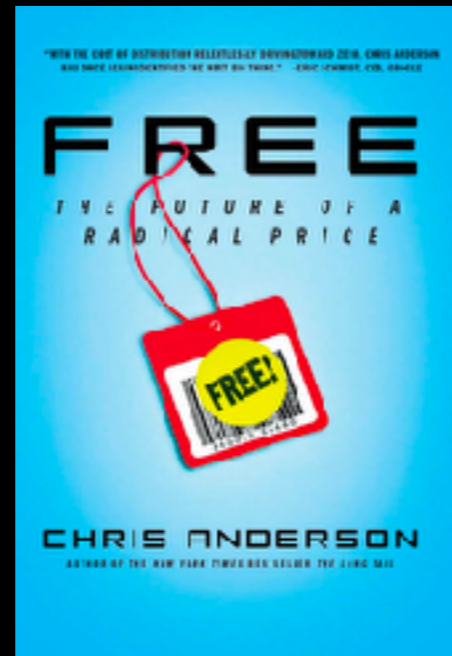
- Lite Version in the Repository.
- Pro version for sale.

The image shows a screenshot of the WordPress.org website's Plugins section. At the top, the WordPress logo and 'WORDPRESS.ORG' are visible. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for Showcase, Themes, Plugins, Mobile, Support, Get Involved, About, Blog, and Hosting. A search bar for 'search.wordpress.org' is located in the top right. A blue 'Download WordPress' button is also present. The main header for the Plugins section is 'Plugins', with sub-links for 'My Favorites', 'Beta Testing', and 'Developers', and a 'Search plugins' search bar. The featured plugin is WooCommerce, which is displayed with a large banner image. The banner shows a cartoon bee character interacting with a dashboard that includes a line graph and a table with numerical data. Below the banner, the text 'WooCommerce' is displayed in a large font, with 'By Automattic' underneath. A 'Download' button is located to the right of the text.

Main version for free.
Add ons cost money.



If the free version is too weak, it wont spread.



Read

</method 3>

GOOGLED "KING OF THE INTERNET"



WASN'T DISAPPOINTED

<method 4>



Sell Setup & Customization

Purchase

WFO website is available with both plans, low cost, fast delivery and comes with many features

BASIC
\$99
WFO website
Responsive design
Full features
10,000 hits
Support + Update 1 year
Purchase

DEVELOPER
\$149
WFO website
Responsive design
Full features
For multiple users
Support + Update Unlimited
Purchase

[Installation service](#)

**Can lead to premium
contract work**



as users hire you to add more features.

Tough to scale



**Setup is less
needed as
WordPress gets
easier.**



Outsource



</method 4>

**I HIT "UPDATE" WITHOUT
BACKING UP FILES OR DATABASE**

**I TOO LIKE TO LIVE
DANGEROUSLY**

made on imgur

<method 5>

Kickstart the Plugin



<story>



MyBookTable

WordPress Bookstore Plugin

Internal Use Only



Wanted to support
more themes.





The development was going to cost money and we were not sure if it was worth the investment.

MyBookTable WordPress Bookstore Plugin

by Author Media

Home Updates **17** Backers **234** Comments **4**

Austin, TX Open Software

Funded! This project was successfully funded on Apr 5, 2013.



MyBookTable



Danielle Renee Klossner,
Philip Hagen, and 2 more
people you follow are

\$2,500



Send out emails to our list announcing the list. And then people started to back the project. Then they started to promote the project.



Emailed The List we had been building for the last several years.



We also promoted it on social media.



But we still had a couple weeks to go.

Stretch Goals



Goal: \$2,500

Portable WordPress Bookstore Plugin

by Author Media

224

Comments 4

Austin, TX

Open Software

Funded! This project was successfully funded on Apr 5, 2013.



▶ PLAY

224

backers

\$12,316

pledged of \$2,500 goal

0

seconds to go

5+ Successful Campaigns



\$12,316



\$2,704



\$3,340

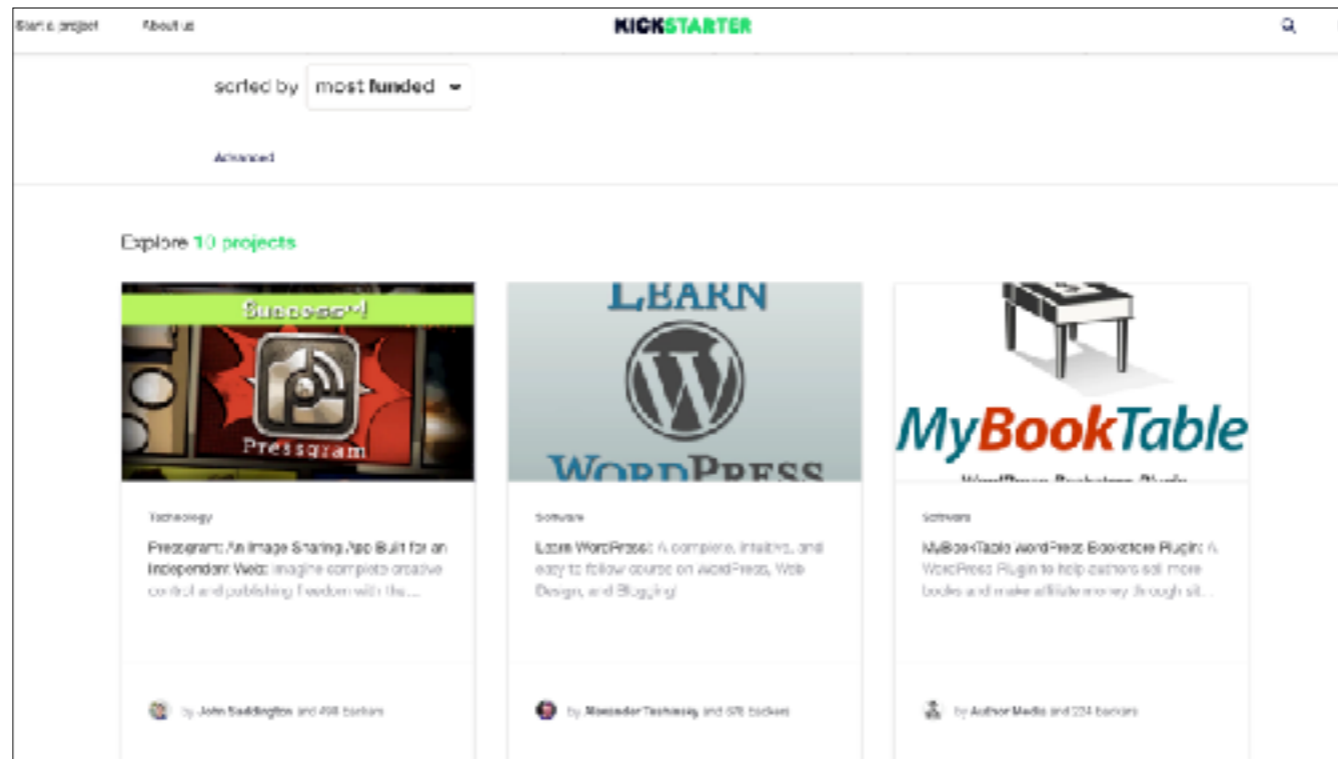


\$9,865

\$28,225

WordPress Crowdfunding Campaigns for a total of \$28,225

`</story>`



We are not the only ones using Kickstarter. PressGram raised \$56,000

Build Your Crowd First



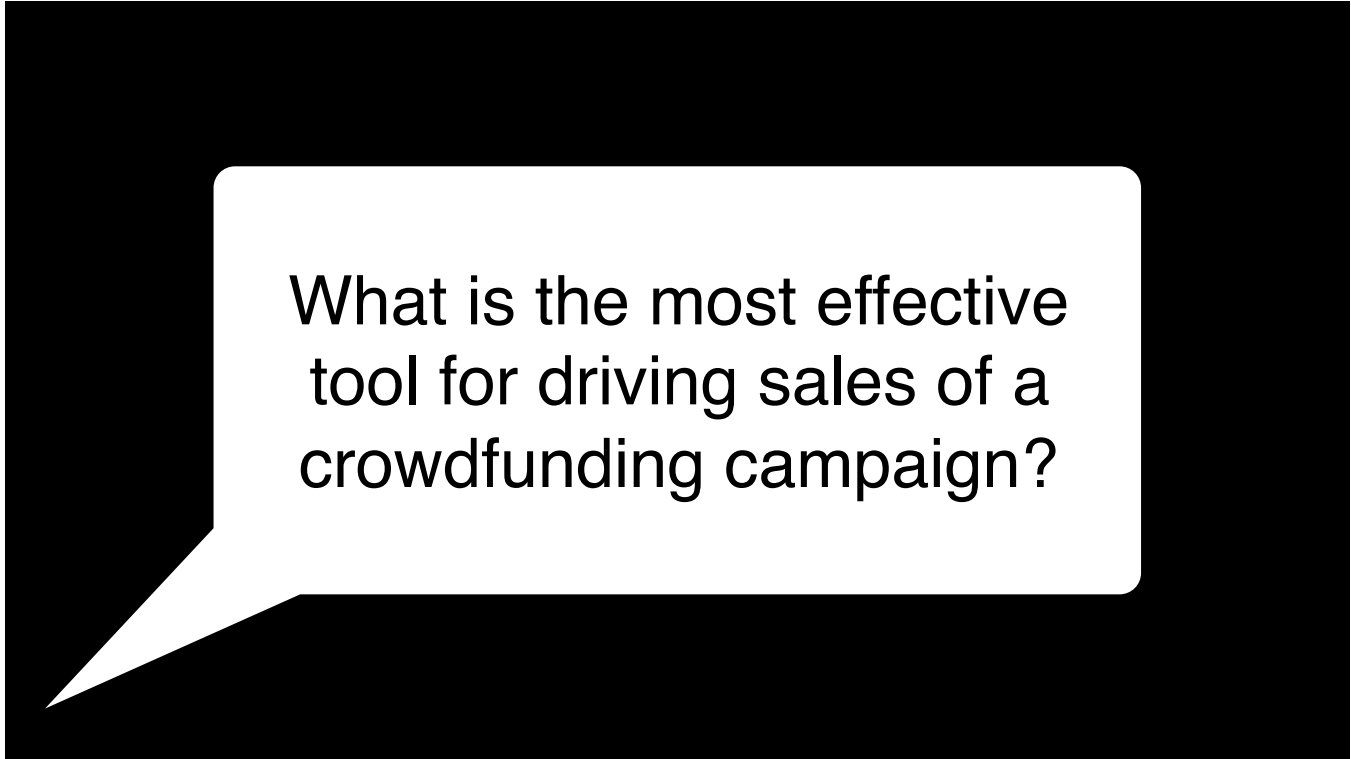
My other talks here at this conference will be on this topic.



Only 20% of backers come from
Kickstarter.

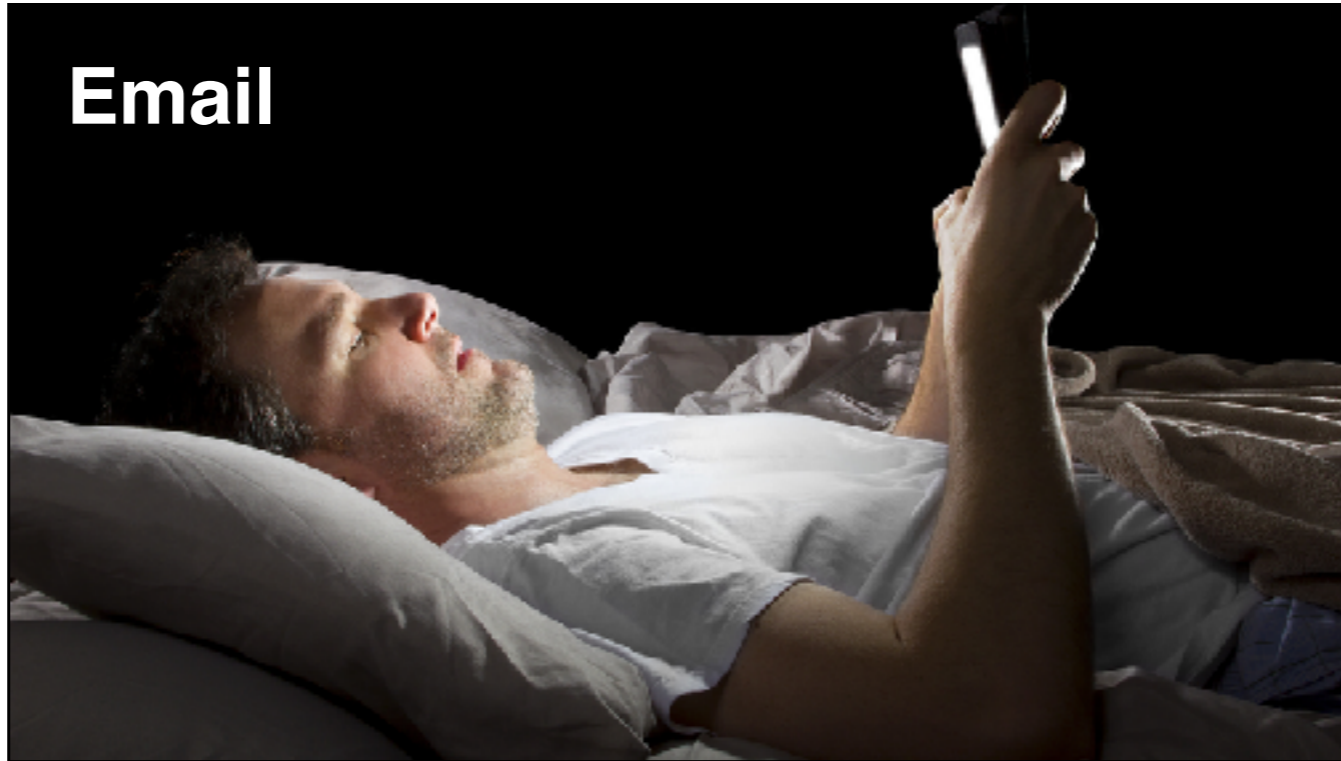
Dig your well before you're thirsty.





What is the most effective tool for driving sales of a crowdfunding campaign?

Email



Come to my email talk later

**Create a Lead
Magnet**



</method 5>

**WHEN EVERY CSS STYLE
IS !IMPORTANT**



NO ONE IS

<method 6>

Sell Training



WordPress SEO by Yoast



Ycast WordPress SEO: General Settings

General

Introduction Tour:

[Start Tour](#)

Take this tour to quickly learn about the use of this plugin

Default Settings:

[Reset Default Settings](#)

If you want to restore a site to the default WordPress SEO settings, press this button.

Tracking

Allow tracking of this WordPress install's anonymous data.

To maintain a plugin as big as WordPress SEO, we need to know what we're dealing with: what kinds of other plugins our users are using, what themes, etc. Please allow us to track that data from your install. It will not track any user details, so your security and privacy are safe with us.

Security

Disable the Advanced part of the WordPress SEO meta box

Unchecking this box allows authors and editors to redirect posts, include them, and do other things you might not want if you don't trust your authors.

Webmaster Tools

You can use the boxes below to verify with the different Webmaster Tools, if your site is already verified, you can just forget about these. Enter the verify meta values for:

Get more visitors!

Our SEO Website Review will tell you what to improve.



[Order now >](#)



SEO Premium Plugin

Extra features, more support

[Buy new from \\$49 >](#)



News SEO Plugin

Improve your Google News traffic

[Buy new from \\$49 >](#)

Remove these ads!

[Upgrade to WordPress SEO Premium >](#)



eBooks by Yoast

Optimize your WordPress site eBook

This eBook guides you through optimizing the following subjects:

- ✓ Social Media
- ✓ Google Analytics



Content SEO eBook

After the success of our first eBook *Optimize your WordPress site*, we've decided to write another one called *Content SEO!* This eBook contains information on the following sections:



Sell Services

The image shows a screenshot of the WordPress.org website, specifically the Plugins section. At the top, the WordPress logo and "WORDPRESS.ORG" are visible. Below this, there is a navigation menu with links for "Choose a Theme", "Plugins", "Mobile", "Support", "Get Involved", "About", "Blog", and "Hosting". A search bar is present with the text "Search WordPress.org" and a "Download WordPress" button. The main content area features a large blue header for "PowerPress" with the tagline "The #1 Podcast Plugin". Below this, there is a list of features: "full iTunes support | multiple players | multiple formats | migration tools | website / feed SEO tools | by blubrry.com". A smaller version of the PowerPress logo is shown next to the text "PowerPress Podcasting plugin by Blubrry" and a "Download" button. At the bottom, there are tabs for "Details", "Reviews", "Installation", "Support", and "Development".

Advertises for Blubrry podcasting.

Works with competing hosting platforms.

</method 6>

<method 7>



Chris Wiegman



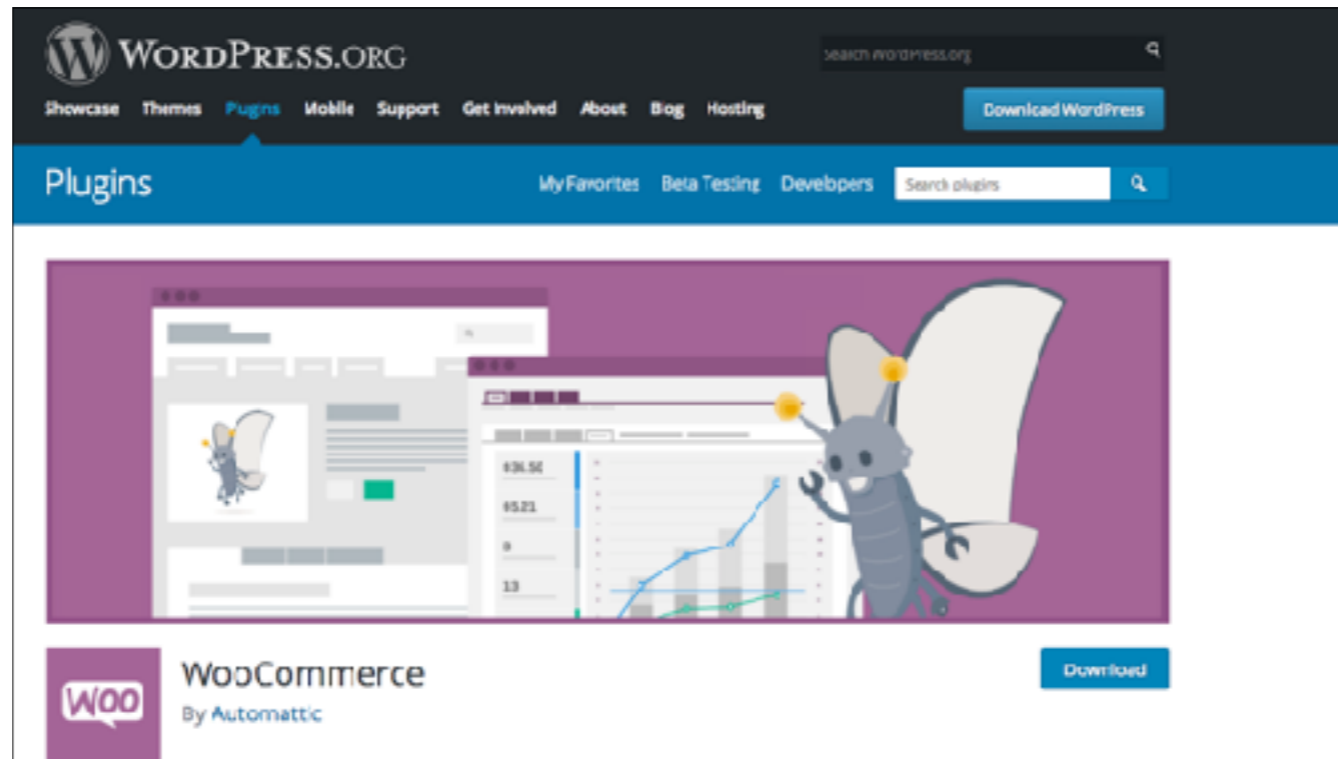
Better WP Security is now
iThemes Security

More than 30 ways to protect your site from attacks.



iThemes Security (formerly Better WP Security)
By Themes

Download



Purchased by Automatic in 2015

</method 7>

</ monetization methods >

Questions

Q: What about donations? A: No one donates. Tragedy of the commons.