

REDBACK'S CUSTOM WORDPRESS APPROACH + CMS OVERVIEW & FAQs

& SCOPE OF WORKS



redback
solutions

OUR WORDPRESS APPROACH

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

Building a solid foundation for your website is essential in ensuring a positive long term outcome. This is particularly important when it comes to technical performance, accessibility, customisation and scalability. WordPress is the **world's most popular CMS** (Content Management System) and is the platform we recommend for 95% of our clients' website projects.

There are some fantastic platforms available these days for building websites, and while we do recommend WordPress in most cases: it is not the only option.

Our team of 8 Australia-based web designers and developers has experience developing websites on a range of Content Management Systems. These include WordPress, Craft, SilverStripe, OnCourse, and October, as well as Ecommerce platforms such as Shopify and WooCommerce (WordPress' plugin for Ecommerce).

In this document, you'll learn about:

- Redback's unique approach to custom WordPress website design and development. We've included a brief overview of our recommended approach, along with a video demo in the following 2 pages.
- Being the world's most popular open-source CMS, there are many ways to build WordPress websites and some myths surrounding the platform that are important to understand.
- Choosing the right CMS platform is important, but the difference between a great outcome and a not-so-great outcome is how your website is built, hosted and supported – regardless of the platform.
- It is important to choose a web development partner that has the track record, skills and capacity to not only build your website but maintain it for the long term.

Of course, if you have further questions you can always reach out to our team via contact@rb.com.au, or learn more [about us here](#).

REDBACK'S APPROACH

A CUSTOM WORDPRESS FRAMEWORK

Building a solid foundation for your website is essential in ensuring a positive long term outcome, particularly regarding performance, customisation, accessibility, security and scalability. With this in mind, we prefer to develop WordPress websites with our **custom WordPress framework**.

Why not use a multipurpose page builder? – While “off the shelf” themes and page builders like Elementor, WP Bakery and Divi offer a large range of possibilities and provide fine-grained controls for every piece of content on the page, they can also be overwhelming to use and are extremely unforgiving as the smallest mistake can have a detrimental effect on the entire page.

With a page builder, you are responsible for every design aspect of a content block including its fonts, colours and even the spacing between various elements such as text and images. Page builders also include a large range of blocks and features that may never be used on a typical website. Due to the way WordPress (and websites in general) work, code for unused features are often still loaded when a user visits your site, significantly impacting page load speed.

A custom design system on WordPress – Redback's WordPress framework has been tailored specifically with performance and ease of use at the forefront, including only the features required for your website project.

What this means for you – Leveraging this technology and our experience, we are uniquely positioned to deliver high-end websites efficiently and cost-effectively. Websites that stand the test of time and can evolve as your business does. Advantages include:

- High quality, standards-compliant code
- No use of a page builder (therefore removal of 'bloat' code being added to the site which can affect web page load speed and performance)
- Delivery of a modular library of reusable, pre-styled responsive content blocks, with animations where appropriate for your brand. This approach means easier compatibility with new technologies, features and other integrations that may be required. It also means the look and feel of your site stays more consistent over time.
- Extremely simple content management, editing and publishing, even for those with zero technical or design skill. This means lower development and maintenance costs over time.
- More control over the overall user experience and accessibility across various devices.
- Better performance / faster page load speed which can help with SEO and make it easier to comply with Google's Core Web Vitals.
- Relational content compatibility, which allows for simple management of content across various content types eg. displaying featured services within a blog article, or relating your examples of your work to specific team member profiles.
- More flexible, durable, secure and scalable i.e. less fixes are required over time because there is no reliance on third party themes which inevitably cause bugs and security issues as your site evolves, so you don't have to rebuild every few years.

REDBACK'S APPROACH

A CUSTOM WORDPRESS FRAMEWORK

Unleashing the power of Flexible Content Blocks powered by Advanced Custom Fields (ACF) in WordPress.

We don't just deliver page templates.

We'll provide you with a flexible, reusable library of custom-branded, pre-styled and mobile responsive "building blocks". This allows your team to create and manage website content without having to worry about managing excessive settings, breaking things or editing code.

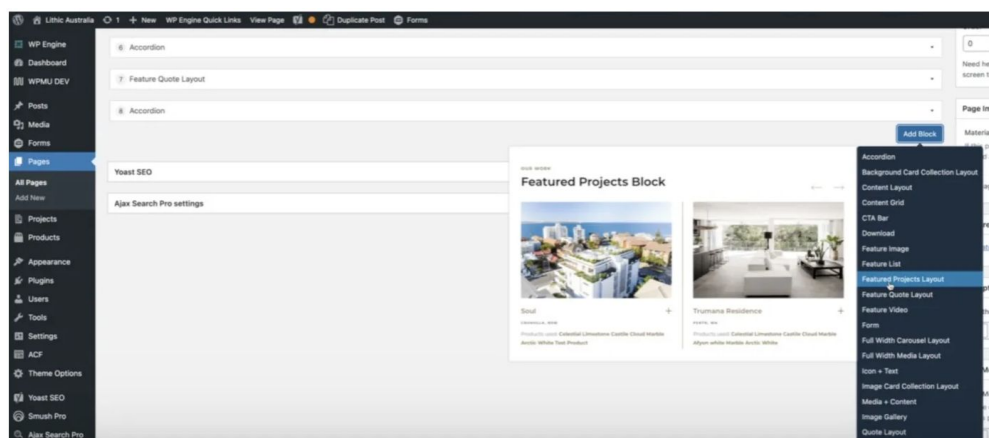
Flexible content blocks are modular, reusable layouts that can be added to a page in any order desired to create a beautiful and flowing page layout – without needing to worry about every aspect of the block's design and layout. For example; video features, calls to action, forms, image carousels, accordions for FAQs, featured services, related people, left/right text and images, etc.

Each block is hand-crafted by Redback during the site's development phase to accurately match the site's approved designs, and includes all of the required spacing, fonts, colours and responsive layout changes to ensure the section looks great on all modern mobile, tablet and desktop devices.

Adding a block to a page is as simple as choosing the one you want from the library supplied with your new site and then filling out a simple form to include any images, video, text or other content for the block. The block automatically takes care of everything else, greatly simplifying the process of adding new content and pages to your website.

Advanced Custom Fields only works in the back end of a website and adds no extra weight to the frontend (or user-facing part of the site). This allows us to have complete control over the site's performance and ensures that code is only loaded for features that are actively in use by the final site without any extra bloat for features not being used.

Click [this link](#) or the click on the image below to view a short video demo.



CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

WORDPRESS

WordPress powers more than **43% of the entire web** and holds almost 65% of the global CMS market. A flexible, open source platform, WordPress is trusted by some of the world's largest brands including Disney, Sony, NASA, Harvard, BBC, Facebook and Microsoft. Everything from simple content sites, to complex Ecommerce platforms and government assets are built on WordPress. Even the official website of [The White House](#) is on WordPress!

Redback has built over 600 WordPress websites and currently host and maintain around 800. This experience gives us a wealth of knowledge regarding website design, setup, content management, third party integrations, plugins, support and security.

Here are the key reasons why we recommend WordPress for 95% of our clients' websites:

Search Engine Friendly

WordPress partners with Google's engineers to ensure the platform is well optimised for modern SEO requirements, devices and website performance standards.

Easy to Use

When configured correctly, WordPress can be built so that non-technical admins can easily and quickly manage key site functions and content.

Flexible Publishing

WordPress makes it easy for you to manage your content eg. creating drafts, scheduling, password protection and revision history.

Easy Media Management

You're able to quickly and easily upload images and manage media file for your WordPress site. Drag and drop, no technical skills required.

Integrated

WordPress has far more integrations / plugins than any other CMS, which heavily reduces your costs if third party API integrations or enhanced functionality is required for your website.

Scalable

WordPress caters for everything from small content sites to large interactive platforms and comes packed full of features via the industry-leading WordPress plugin directory.

Fully Standards Compliant

Every piece of WordPress generated code is in full compliance with the standards set by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Community

As the most popular open source CMS on the web, WordPress has a vibrant and supportive community. This means site owners can rest easy knowing that as web technology advances, WordPress advances with it.

Portability

WordPress is Open Source and can be easily set up and moved from one host to another.

Cost-Effective

Vast functionality out-of-the-box and an unrivalled plugin ecosystem reduces software development time significantly, making WordPress extremely cost-effective.

WORDPRESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"Someone told me WordPress is not secure. Is that true?"

This is a common myth. The reason you may have heard this is simply because WordPress powers such a large percentage of websites on the internet. So even though most WordPress sites never experience security issues, the sheer number of WordPress sites that exist make them a popular target for hackers and bots.

As a platform, WordPress is constantly updated and maintained by a large network of contributors to make sure that it is always secure and protected against threats.

Naturally, no software is immune from attacks. However, WordPress is incredibly safe, even for sites that deal with sensitive data. This is due to a number of reasons, including:

- The core platform is designed by a large team committed to making it secure.
- Frequent platform updates address the latest threats.
- There's a tonne of excellent security tools for WordPress that add additional protections to your site.

As with any website platform, the level of security depends on how well the website is developed and maintained by your web development / hosting provider. The vast majority of security breaches with WordPress are caused by things like easily guessable passwords, poorly coded websites and outdated / unreliable plugins. All of which are avoidable.

Redback Solutions takes security seriously.

We currently host and maintain over 800 websites on a range of CMS platforms, so we understand the critical importance of hosting security and data privacy compliance. Our clients' websites are hosted on Australian servers trusted by companies of all sizes, including large Ecommerce sites, universities and NSW government organisations.

We've hosted websites for almost 25 years and our servers **have never been compromised**.

Our preferred WordPress server provider is WP Engine, which holds an ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification for its Information Security Management System (ISMS). Our higher tier hosting plans come with enterprise-grade servers (built on Google Cloud Platform) with additional security inclusions such as managed web application firewall, DDOS mitigation, Cloudflare CDN, SSL and New Relic application monitoring. See the WP Engine SLA [here](#).

We also implement additional security tools within every WordPress site we build. You can learn more about Redback's website care plans and security inclusions [here](#).

WORDPRESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Isn't WordPress a bit old now? Should I consider a newer platform?"

WordPress was founded wayyy back in 2003 as a free and open-source blogging platform. Since then, it has evolved to become the world's most powerful and flexible website content management system. Due to its age, some people believe that the future of WordPress is not clear and it could just suddenly disappear. There are hundreds of thousands of WordPress frameworks, themes, plugins, integrations, etc available for anybody to use, which is why WordPress is always the first to adapt with each new website technology that comes along. In short, WordPress is not going anywhere, and its future is bright.

Most of WordPress' detractors seem to be web developers. Why is that?

The foundation of WordPress is built on a coding language called PHP. There are definitely newer and more fancy coding languages / frameworks out there these days, which is why some web developers prefer to build on other platforms. Keep in mind that web developers are generally more concerned with what makes their jobs easier and more fun, which may not necessarily be the best solution for end-users / clients (i.e. non-web developers).

Don't get us wrong - there are circumstances in which we will recommend a different platform for a client's website. A trade-off with WordPress' vast benefits can sometimes make sense. For example, if a client has an internal system that just happens to have a more suitable "out of the box" integration with another website CMS, then it may be easier or less costly to roll with that CMS. For example, Shopify made sense for [this site](#) and OnCourse made sense for [this site](#). Most of the time, WordPress is the clear best choice for our clients.

On the rare occasion that we feel a different platform could be more suitable, it is important for us to be mindful of the risks involved with choosing another platform for a client's website. Here are just a few:

- **Portability:** Let's say we build your website on a less popular platform such as Craft, October or Umbraco. If for some reason the relationship breaks down (let's hope that never happens!), our client then finds themselves in a position where it's very difficult to find another developer who knows that platform. With WordPress, there are thousands of developers out there who can inherit and manage your website cost-effectively.
- **Ease of use:** When built correctly, WordPress websites are extremely simple and easy for non-technical users to manage content – without having to edit code.
- **Functionality, compatibility & integrations:** No other platform comes close to WordPress' vast selection of free open source plugins and third party integrations.
- **Technology advancements:** Due to the scale of the WordPress developer community, when a new technology or trend comes along it is WordPress that adapts first.

WORDPRESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“Is WordPress suitable for large / custom / high traffic websites?”

Absolutely. This is one of the most common WordPress myths and it does not reflect the full potential of the platform. WordPress powers some of the largest and most popular websites on the internet, such as [Techcrunch](#), [NASA](#), [The White House](#), [Vogue](#), [Meta \(Facebook\)](#), [New York Times](#), [Microsoft](#), [news.com.au](#), [Mercedes-Benz](#) and [The Rolling Stones](#).

Unfortunately, a by-product of WordPress' popularity is that there are many ways you can build a WordPress website – and lots of these ways are... well, a bit 🤪!

Since WordPress is an open-source platform, your web developer and/or web hosting provider is responsible for managing its performance and ensuring your website is coded well. High website traffic levels should not have a direct impact on your choice of CMS.

WordPress can handle any level of traffic demand. If you are expecting to attract high volumes of traffic, then it is important to consider the following:

- Ensure your site is hosted with a quality hosting provider, with adequate server resources and appropriate infrastructure in place to support your growth.
- Ensure your website code follows best practices. Avoid installing excessive (or poorly coded) plugins and bloated WordPress themes.
- Be cautious of building WordPress websites using “off the shelf” [themes/templates](#), plugins and page builders like [Elementor](#). Whilst many of these website building tools look [beautiful](#) to the naked eye, they come with a range of potential issues once you “pop the hood”. Potential issues to be aware of:
 - Significant code bloat, making your site slower and more prone to issues.
 - Reliance on anonymous (mostly overseas) theme and plugin developers for support and theme maintenance.
 - Less flexibility, less unique aesthetics, and inherent design limitations (especially on mobile / tablet devices).
 - More time-intensive / messy / expensive to customise or add functionality.
 - Less durable and less secure. i.e. Theme-based WordPress sites generally don't last as long as custom developed WordPress sites. It is not uncommon for the theme software to quickly become outdated, or for the theme developer (often overseas and anonymous) to discontinue support for your chosen theme – which inevitably leads to technical bugs and security issues.

Don't get us wrong - there are circumstances where it makes perfect sense to build with a WordPress theme or page builder tool. We have built hundreds. However, this approach is generally only suited for small/simple sites.

WORDPRESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is WordPress difficult to use?

This may be the most inaccurate of all WordPress myths.

In reality, the ease-of-use of your WordPress website (or any type of website) really comes down to how the website has been developed. We've inherited plenty of WordPress sites over the years that have been built in a way that makes content management confusing, overly complicated and expensive for the client due to poor coding practices and a lack of planning by the original developer.

Despite being a highly powerful tool, your WordPress Content Management System should not be complex. The most important functions should be appropriately labeled, with simple configurations that reduce manual effort and negate the need for non-technical users to have to worry about things like editing code, adjusting padding/spacing, or adjusting your content so it presents well on mobile devices.

Redback's recommended approach to WordPress website development (covered earlier in this document) is specifically designed to make content management easy and efficient for our clients.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Our team is available to answer any questions you have about WordPress or websites in general.

Email contact@rb.com.au and we'll be in touch :)