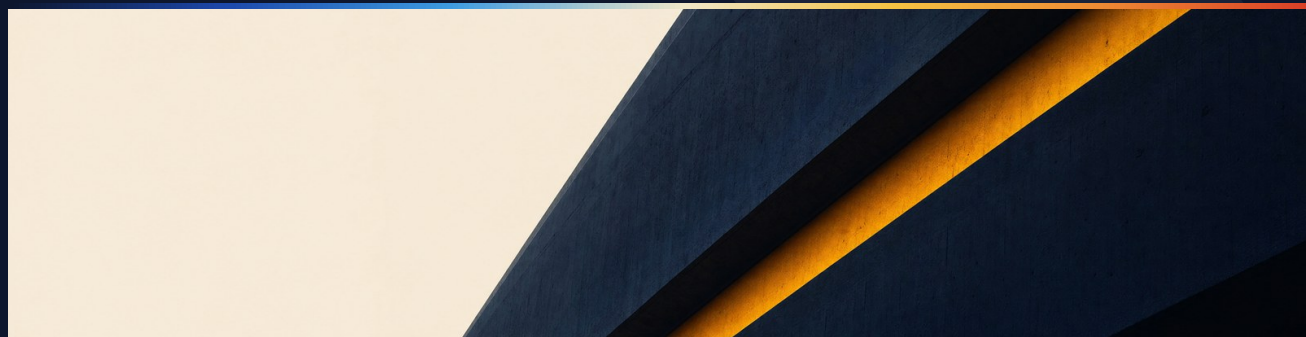




FREE GUIDE • WEBFLOW VS WORDPRESS • 2026 EDITION

The second number.

Every website has two prices. The one you pay to build it, and the one you pay every month for the rest of its life. Nobody quotes the second one. This guide is about the second one.



WHAT IS INSIDE

01 The bill you already pay

02 What actually breaks

03 What you actually own

04 Where WordPress still wins

05 The decision

06 If you move, move in this order

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TIME TO READ

About 20 minutes
Worksheet on page 5

How to read this.

The boxes and the blanks are live. Tick them and type in them in any PDF reader, save the file, and your answers stay put.

Page 5 is the point

Everything before it is argument. Page 5 is a worksheet with live fields where you put in your own numbers. Fill it in and the rest of this document stops being about websites and starts being about yours.

Page 11 argues against us

We build in Webflow. So we wrote the page that says when you should stay on WordPress, and we meant every line of it. A guide that only argues one way is an advert with page numbers.

Every number is sourced on the page it sits on

Thresholds and prices move. Each one here carries the source and the date we checked it, so you can check it again yourself in six months when it has changed.

You can finish this without us

There is one ask, on the last page, and it is optional. Everything you need to reach a decision comes before it.

WHAT THIS GUIDE DOES

- Puts a real number on what your current site costs to keep
- Names what each platform gives you and what it keeps
- Gives you a decision you can defend to a business partner

WHAT IT DOES NOT DO

- Pretend the answer is the same for every business
- Quote a build price without seeing your site
- Treat WordPress as a mistake, because for some firms it is not

BEFORE YOU START

Have last year's bank statements or card statements to hand. The worksheet on page 5 works far better with real figures than remembered ones, and the gap between the two is usually the most interesting thing on the page.

Fifteen minutes of looking things up will tell you more about your website than any agency proposal will.

If the numbers are not to hand, put the page down and come back. A guessed worksheet gives you a guessed decision.

The bill you already pay.

Ask what a website costs and you get a build price. That is the small number. The large number is what it takes to keep the thing running, and nobody quotes it because nobody can.



A website is not a purchase. It is a subscription to a set of obligations. Something has to be updated. Something has to be backed up. Something has to be watched. When you buy a car you know this. When you buy a website, somehow, you do not.

The number you were quoted

- Paid once, agreed in advance
- Appears in a proposal with a scope attached
- Stops the day the site goes live

The number nobody quoted

- Paid every month for as long as the site exists
- Arrives as an hour here, a retainer there, an emergency in March
- Grows quietly as the site ages

THE REFRAME THIS GUIDE IS BUILT ON

You are not choosing between a free platform and a paid one. You are choosing between a cost that arrives as an invoice and a cost that arrives as somebody's Tuesday.

One of those you can plan around. The other one decides when it happens.

Most owners have never added the second one up. That is not carelessness. It is that the cost was designed, by everyone involved, to be difficult to see.

What a website actually costs.

WordPress publishes a licence price of nothing. Webflow publishes a plan price. Those are answers to different questions, and the gap between them is where the money goes.

COST LINE	WORDPRESS	WEBFLOW
Software licence	Free	In the plan
Hosting	Bought separately	In the plan
SSL certificate	Host dependent	Included, auto renews
CDN and DDoS cover	Bought or configured	Included
Core and plugin updates	A recurring job	None to run
Premium plugin licences	Per plugin, per year	No licences
Backups	Plugin or host feature	Automatic, one click back
Repairing a bad update	Urgent and unbudgeted	Not a thing

Webflow hosting and security claims: webflow.com/hosting and webflow.com/security, retrieved 3 September 2026.

Seven of those eight lines are small. The eighth is not. A broken update is the only item on the list that sets its own price, picks its own date, and cannot be deferred. It is also the line nobody puts in a comparison, because you cannot forecast it.

THREE QUESTIONS A WEBSITE QUOTE ALMOST NEVER ANSWERS

- Who applies the updates, how often, and what happens when one breaks the site?
- What is the monthly figure in year three, once the plugins have renewed twice?
- If we leave, what exactly do we take with us, and in what format?

WHAT WEBFLOW CHARGES, FOR THE RECORD

A Basic site plan is 15 dollars a month billed yearly. Premium, which is the one with the CMS, is 25 dollars a month billed yearly and carries up to 20,000 CMS items.

That is the whole hosting and platform bill for most local businesses. Source: webflow.com/pricing, retrieved 3 September 2026. Prices change. Check before you budget.

Compare that against what you wrote on the next page, not against the price of your current hosting alone.

Your own number.

Eight lines. Put in what you actually pay, not what you were quoted. Guess where you have to, but guess out loud rather than leaving it blank.

PER MONTH

WHO DOES THIS

Hosting

Domain and SSL

Premium plugins and themes

Security or firewall service

Backup service

Someone to run the updates

Fixing what an update broke

Changes you wanted but never asked for

Total per month

Multiply by twelve

THEN THE LINE THAT IS NOT MONTHLY

Last full rebuild or redesign cost

Year it happened

THE LAST MONTHLY LINE IS THE EXPENSIVE ONE

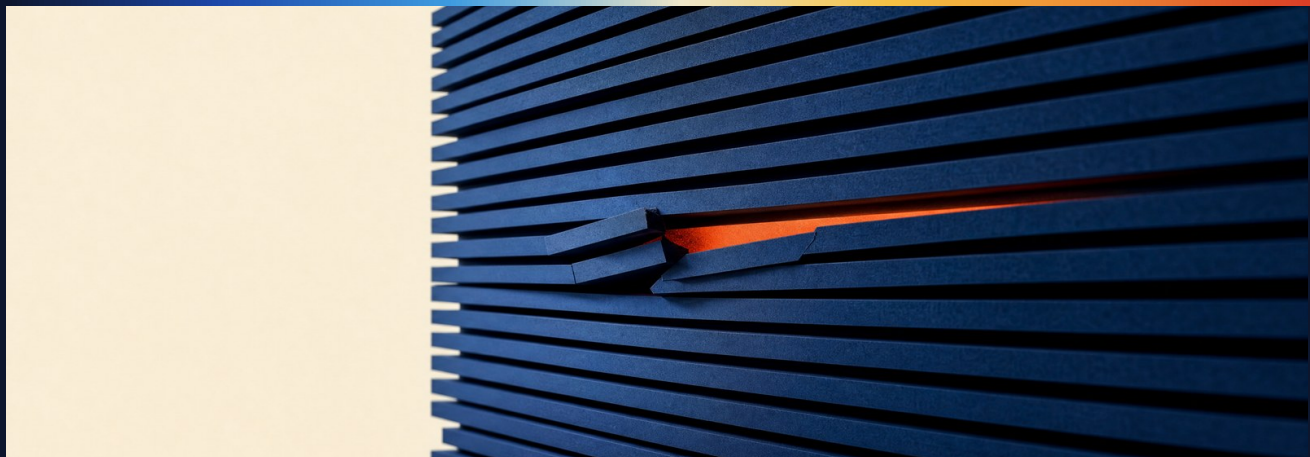
The eighth row has no invoice attached to it, which is exactly why it costs the most. It is the page you did not launch, the offer you did not test, the price you did not update, because changing the site meant emailing somebody and waiting.

Count it anyway. Put a figure against one change you wanted this year and did not make, and be honest about what it would have been worth.

Add the rebuild line divided by the years since, and you have the true monthly cost of the website you own today.

What actually breaks.

A website rarely fails all at once. It fails one plugin at a time, quietly, and you find out from a customer who could not send the form.



11,334

FLAWS IN 2025

91%

IN PLUGINS

46%

UNPATCHED

5 hrs

TO FIRST ATTACK

Those four numbers come from one report and describe one year. Read together they say something specific: the danger is not the software you chose. It is the software you added to it afterwards.

Patchstack, State of WordPress Security in 2026, covering calendar year 2025. Retrieved 3 September 2026.

WHY THIS IS A MARKETING PROBLEM, NOT AN IT PROBLEM

A site that is down is not an inconvenience. It is a day of advertising spend landing on an error page, a week of search visibility at risk, and a customer who now believes something about how you run your business.

The cost of a breach is almost never the repair invoice. It is the leads that did not arrive while somebody was fixing it.

Which is why this belongs on your desk and not somebody else's.

The security math.

WordPress core is not the problem. Six vulnerabilities were reported in it during 2025 and all were low priority. The problem is the 71,000 plugins standing next to it.

Ninety one percent of the year's 11,334 disclosures were in plugins and nine percent were in themes. Nearly half had no patch available on the day they were made public. Patchstack puts the weighted median time from disclosure to first exploitation at five hours.

Five hours is the number that should change how you think about this. It is shorter than a working day. Any maintenance plan built on somebody logging in weekly is not a security plan. It is a cleanup plan.

What WordPress asks of you

- Apply core, theme and plugin updates on a schedule you keep
- Test that the update did not break the site
- Track which of your plugins have been abandoned
- Pay for a firewall, or accept the exposure

What good upkeep looks like

- Updates applied within a day of release, not a month
- A staging copy to test them on before they touch the live site

What Webflow does instead

- No customer managed updates and no dependency drift
- Global CDN with DDoS protection and rate limiting on every site
- TLS 1.2 or better, with HSTS on by default
- SOC 2 Type II, ISO 27001, 27017, 27018 and PCI DSS

What most small firms have

- Updates applied when something has already broken
- No staging copy, and no way to undo

Vulnerability figures: Patchstack, State of WordPress Security in 2026. Plugin count: wordpress.org/plugins. Webflow claims: webflow.com/security. All retrieved 3 September 2026.

None of this makes WordPress reckless. It makes it open. An open platform with 71,000 extensions has more doors than a closed one, and somebody has to walk the corridor checking them.

THE FAIR VERSION OF THIS ARGUMENT

WordPress can be run securely. Thousands of firms do it well. It requires somebody competent doing an unglamorous job every single week, and that person costs money in the weeks when nothing happens as well as the weeks when something does.

So the real question is not whether WordPress is safe. It is whether you have that person, and whether you are paying them enough to still be there in year three.

If the answer is a nephew, a former web guy, or nobody, you do not have a maintenance plan. You have a delay.

Speed is a platform decision.

Google grades every site on three field measurements taken from real visitors. You do not get to argue with them, and you cannot plugin your way past them.

THE THREE THRESHOLDS, AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE OF VISITS

METRIC	WHAT IT MEASURES	GOOD
Largest Contentful Paint	How fast the main thing appears	2.5 seconds
Interaction to Next Paint	How fast the page answers a tap	200 ms
Cumulative Layout Shift	How much the page jumps about	0.1

web.dev/articles/vitals, retrieved 3 September 2026. Interaction to Next Paint replaced First Input Delay in 2024.

SHARE OF REAL SITES PASSING ALL THREE, BY PLATFORM

PLATFORM	DESKTOP	MOBILE
Wix	87.1%	80.1%
Duda	86.7%	85.5%
Webflow	81.0%	68.1%
Shopify	78.8%	76.5%
Squarespace	71.1%	70.1%
WordPress	53.3%	48.8%

Chrome User Experience Report field data for June 2026, compiled by HostingStep across 4.47 million WordPress origins. Secondary source, retrieved 3 September 2026.

You can check your own site in about a minute. Open PageSpeed Insights, put your address in, and read the field data at the top rather than the lab score underneath it. The field data is what Google actually uses.

READ THAT TABLE CAREFULLY

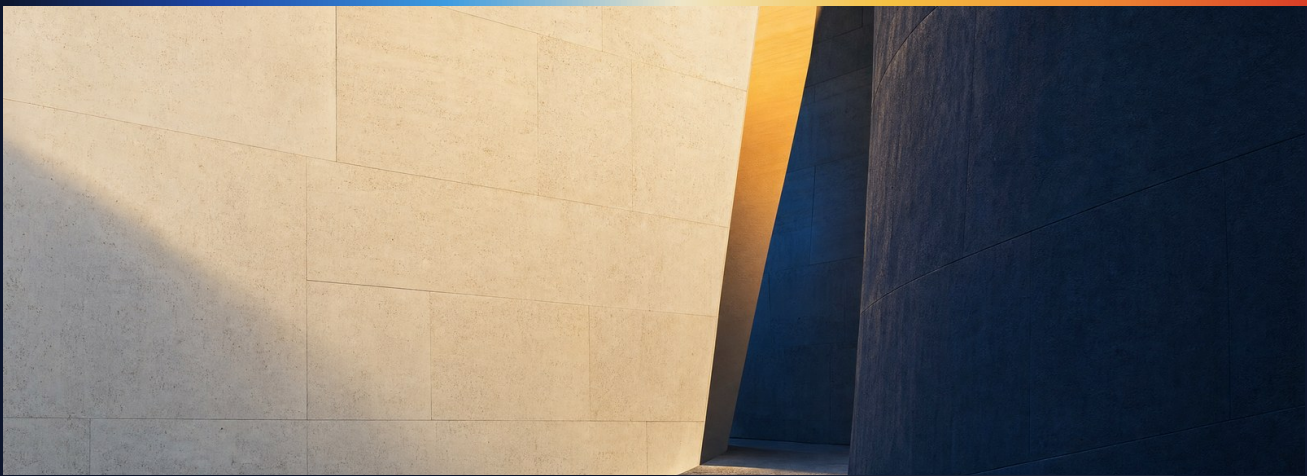
Roughly half of WordPress sites fail on mobile. That is an average, not a verdict on yours. A well built WordPress site beats a lazy Webflow one every time.

What the average tells you is which platform makes the good outcome the default and which one makes it an achievement. Defaults matter more than intentions, because defaults are what survive the year you are too busy to care.

Check your own field data before you accept anybody's summary of it, including ours.

What you actually own.

This is the page most comparisons skip, including the ones written by people who sell Webflow. Ask it before you sign anything, in either direction.



Every platform is easy to join. The question worth asking on the way in is what happens on the way out. Not because you plan to leave, but because the answer tells you how much of your business you are handing over.

What WordPress hands you

- The database and the files, in full
- A move to another host without asking permission

What that is worth

- Real bargaining power in any pricing conversation
- A genuine advantage, and it belongs in the comparison

THE QUESTION TO ASK ANY WEB COMPANY

If we stopped working with you tomorrow, what exactly would we walk away with, and in what format? Ask for the list in writing, before the build starts.

A company that cannot answer that plainly has already told you something useful.

Ask it of us too. The answer is on the next page, in full, including the parts that are inconvenient.

The exit test.

Webflow publishes exactly what a code export contains and what it leaves behind. Most people never read it. It is the most useful page on their help site.

COMES WITH YOU

- HTML, CSS and JavaScript for every page
- Images from the assets panel
- CMS content as CSV, with rich text exported as HTML

STAYS BEHIND

- CMS functionality and collection lists
- Ecommerce products and checkout
- User accounts and access groups
- Form submission handling and reCAPTCHA
- Site search and page password protection
- Localised content and code components

There is a smaller trap inside the CMS export. Image and file links in the CSV point back at the site you exported from. Delete that site and the links break, including images inside rich text. Code export also needs a paid Workspace plan, not just a site plan.

None of this is hidden. Webflow documents all of it. But it means a Webflow site is a running service rather than a folder you own, and that is a thing to decide deliberately rather than discover later.

help.webflow.com, Export site code and Import content into the Webflow CMS. Retrieved 3 September 2026.

DO THIS ON EITHER PLATFORM, THIS WEEK

- Make sure the domain is registered in your name, not your agency's
- Get your own login to the platform, at owner level, not editor
- Take one export today and put it somewhere you control

HOW TO HOLD BOTH IDEAS AT ONCE

WordPress gives you more to walk away with. Webflow gives you less to look after. Most local businesses have nobody to look after it, which is why the second trade tends to win.

If you do have that person, the first trade is worth more than this guide will admit anywhere else.

Either way, own the domain and hold your own logins. That part is not a platform question.

Where WordPress still wins.

We build in Webflow. That is a reason to read this page carefully, not a reason to skip it. If two or more of these describe your business, stay where you are.

Complicated selling

- Thousands of products, odd tax rules, wholesale pricing tiers
- Subscriptions, bookings and stock logic that already work

You want the database

- You hold the files and the data and can change host at will
- No plan tier decides what you may export

You already have the person

- Somebody in-house patches, tests and monitors it every week
- That habit is worth more than any platform choice

Your team already knows it

- Editors trained, workflows built, plugins configured the way you like
- Switching costs are real, and they are not only money

Memberships and gated content

- Courses, member directories, paid archives
- Anything where the login is the product

You want a deep hiring pool

- More than 71,000 free plugins in the directory
- A WordPress developer in every city, at every price

The honest limits on our side

- Webflow's Basic plan has no CMS at all
- Premium caps CMS items at 20,000 and bandwidth at up to 2.5 TB a month

You just paid for a rebuild

- The worst moment to change platform is a year after the last change
- Run what you have until it has earned its keep

Plugin count: wordpress.org/plugins. Plan limits: webflow.com/pricing. Both retrieved 3 September 2026.

THE TEST THAT SETTLES IT

Is your website mostly a shop window, or mostly a machine? Shop windows want low upkeep and fast pages. Machines want depth and control.

Almost every local service business is a shop window, and almost every one of them was sold a machine.

Machines are more impressive to buy and more expensive to keep. Shop windows just have to be clean, fast and open.

The decision.

Ten statements. Tick the ones that are true of your business today, not the ones you intend to fix. Count the ticks.

- ☐ 1. Somebody outside your business has to be paid before a word on the site can change
- ☐ 2. A change you wanted has waited more than three months
- ☐ 3. You could not say who applies your updates, or when
- ☐ 4. The site has gone down or visibly broken in the last two years
- ☐ 5. You pay for plugin licences and could not say what two of them do
- ☐ 6. The site fails Google's mobile thresholds and nobody has fixed it
- ☐ 7. You have fewer than 300 pages and no complicated checkout
- ☐ 8. Marketing needs a new page more than twice a year
- ☐ 9. Nobody on your team is a developer, and nobody is going to be
- ☐ 10. The website is a real source of customers, not a brochure

SCORE OUT OF 10



0 to 3 Stay put

Your setup is working and somebody competent is looking after it. Spend the money on content instead of on a rebuild.

4 to 6 Worth pricing

You are paying the second number without seeing it. Get a real quote for both options and compare the five year total, not the build.

7 to 10 Move

The platform is now the thing holding the business back. Every month you wait is another month of changes you will not make.

ONE CAVEAT ON YOUR SCORE

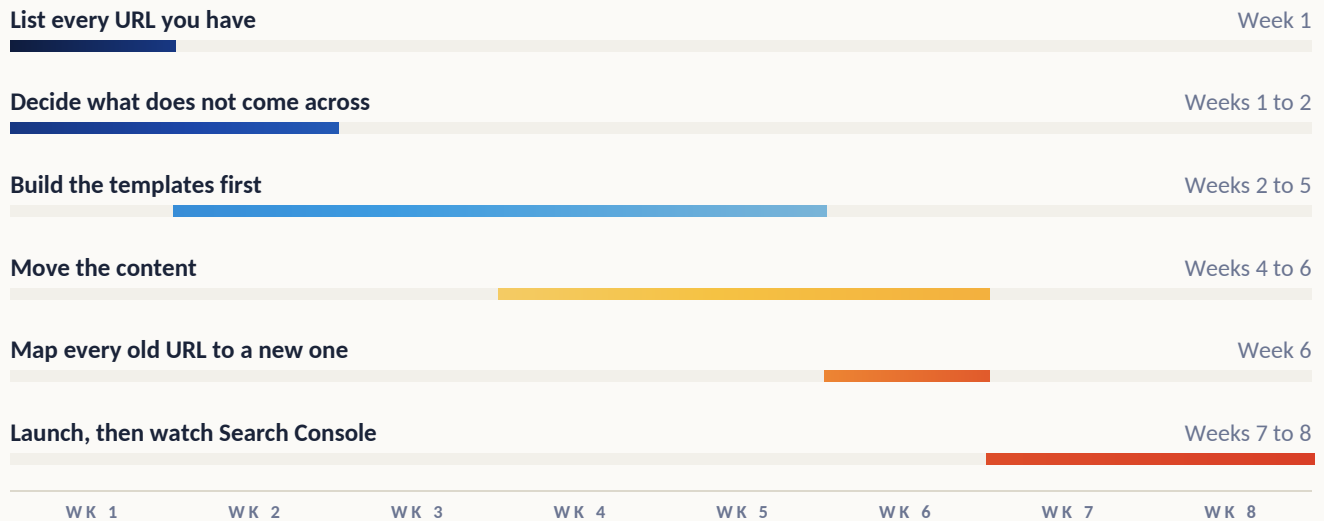
A high score is a reason to price a move, not a reason to start one on Friday. Rebuilds fail when they are started in a bad week rather than planned in a good one.

Take the score to whoever looks after the site now and ask them to argue with it. If they cannot, you have your answer.

And if they can, you have saved yourself a rebuild, which is a better outcome than most of these documents admit.

If you move, move in this order.

Most replatforming damage is not caused by the new site. It is caused by forgetting the old one. Eight weeks is a realistic run for a small business site.



Step five is the whole thing. Every address that exists today needs to point somewhere sensible tomorrow, in one hop, with no chains. Sites that lose rankings in a move almost always lost them here, and almost always found out six weeks later.

Step two is the one people skip. A rebuild is the only moment you are allowed to delete things. Pages nobody reads, services you stopped selling, three versions of the same location page. Carry less across and the rebuild gets cheaper and the site gets better.

CHECK THESE IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER LAUNCH

- Search Console coverage report, for pages that fell out of the index
- Every form on the site, submitted once, by a human
- Your top twenty landing pages, each one loaded on a phone

KEEP THE OLD SITE ALIVE FOR A FORTNIGHT

Do not cancel the old hosting on launch day. Keep it running, unlinked and unindexed, for two weeks.

If a redirect turns out to be wrong you will want somewhere to look, and a live copy answers in minutes what a backup answers in a day.

Two weeks of duplicate hosting is the cheapest insurance in this entire document.

Want your second number?

You can finish this guide, fill in page five and never speak to us. That is the point of it. If you would rather have someone else do the arithmetic, that is what this is.

Free website health audit

Send your domain. You get a written read out: what your site scores on Google's three speed thresholds, what it is running underneath, and the three things costing you the most. No call required.

What we will not do

We will not send a proposal you did not ask for, put you on a mailing list you did not join, or telephone you because you downloaded a PDF.

Where the numbers came from

Webflow's own product and help pages, wordpress.org, web.dev, and Patchstack's 2026 security report. Every one is named on the page it appears on, with the date we checked it.

A migration estimate, if you want one

If the audit says move, we price the move on fixed scope with the URL map included. If it says stay, we tell you that instead, and it happens more often than you would think.

Who we are

A Houston studio building Webflow sites and running search and paid media for local and professional services firms. We have opinions, and this document contains most of them.

Pass it on

Send this to anyone deciding the same thing. It is free, there is no form in front of it, and nothing in it stops working if you never write to us.

SEND US YOUR DOMAIN

Email the address of your site and we will send the read out back inside two working days.

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