

7/13/2020

## **Hope IT WordPress course**

### **Instructor's Notes:**

#### **Summary:**

These notes are meant for other instructors that may run a similar WordPress course for kids. We wanted to share the lessons we have learned, and what we found to be helpful.

#### **Notes:**

- 1) Mainly this course was very appropriate in an on-line format.
  - a) WordPress is very much on-line. Work done by the students can be saved in their individual web sites/domains.
  - b) We could easily monitor their progress by just checking on these web sites, without needing to ask to see their screens.
  - c) We kept the number of students intentionally small, so we could provide enough attention to the students, when problems occurred or when they had questions.
  - d) There were times when a problem took 10 minutes to resolve, which would take about 1 minute if done in-person. That's one of the only unfortunate parts of the online format. The other is there can only be one conversation going on at a time, rather than many conversations when students work on their own.
- 2) **We keep this course almost at no cost.** We used the free WordPress install, and used free Themes and plugins. The only part where we had "costs" was in 3b below, using domains, but that was because we have a tech savvy team with resources.
- 3) **Domains:**
  - a) WordPress allows free web sites, to use to learn, see the link below.

<https://wordpress.com/free>

- i) We decided to not go this direction for a number of reasons:
  - (1) With this free offering, the [Terms of Agreement to have kids being older than 13](#). That wasn't going to work for us, as we would have kids younger than that...some were 10 years old.
  - (2) [Plugins cannot be installed in this free site](#). (One would have to upgrade to the paid business plan.) We thought if students couldn't learn about plugins, we did not think the course was worth the time. We had to find a way to get free domains for WordPress so plugins could be used.

- b) **Azure web sites:** We explored many options, and were fortunate to have a team member that could create 10 Azure web site domains from his work account (with work funding). WordPress was installed on each of them, and students could work on these for the entire month, in-between Saturdays, saving their work and having individualized web sites. Yes, these web sites are not permanent, as we closed them down after a month, but it was a great environment to learn and work online. Our domains used URLs like below:

<http://hopeit1.azurewebsites.net/>

4) **Tools:** We decided on the following in our course:

- a) **Themes: Astra:** It worked out great, using the free Themes. Next time, we would explore a theme that has a better free blog page format. Still looking for that.
- b) **Plugins:**
- i) **Page builder: Elementor:** It is used so widely, and there are so many other videos using this, we felt this was a safe and good introduction to show kids how easy creating a web site is with this tool.
  - ii) **Stats: WP Power Stats:** This plugin is a good introduction to gathering visitor stats. The others seem way to involved to get a quick introduction for kids.
  - iii) **Search Engine Optimization (SEO): All in One SEO:** We decided on this as it is again, simple for kids to get to see how it works, and go over a few items. Yoast SEO is probably best, but it's so involved, and would be a class to itself.
  - iv) We planned to show more plugins like Security, eCommerce, Backups, and others, but we just ran out of time.

5) **Hiccups:** There were a few hiccups as the course went on:

- a) **Cookies:** We had a few students get caught up with cookies, and using the “/wp-admin” logging, and switching back and forth between the Site and Dashboard menus. We had to have a dad resolve the issues, clearing out cookies.
- b) **Elementor:** There were 4 times Elementor went into a weird non-editable mode. The components were not able to be draped onto the web page. The green “Update” button no longer was enabled.
- i) *Solution:* Cached pages. We used the Chrome “Incognito” window, and able to log into the WordPress dashboard, and Elementor worked again.
  - ii) *Unsuccessful attempt:* Some web pages said this issue may be some plugins are incompatible with each other. We uninstalled all plugins and reinstalled Elementor, and that didn't help.

