

2023 Spring Colloquium Workshop - Companion Resource

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The rundown on Wix vs Weebly vs WordPress

You can think of these three platforms as lying on a scale of customizability versus ease of use. I should emphasize that *they're all pretty easy to use*, just in different degrees:

- **Wix** offers you a lot of room to reshape and move elements around in your website, but that means you might have to fiddle with its website editor a little more. Another downside is the 'Created with Wix' banner it displays on the top of your site, if you have a free website.
- **Weebly** is still very customizable, but its templates are a little more restrictive than Wix's. Weebly also displays a 'Powered by Weebly' banner in free websites, but it is (imo) more discreet. Weebly is also cheaper than Wix if you decide on upgrading to a paid website.
- **WordPress.com** is even less customizable. Their design ethos seems to prefer a "set-and-forget" approach, where you pick a template and don't fiddle around with it much. Templates also vary in how much they let you customize them. All this makes WordPress potentially very easy to use, but it can also be really annoying when your theme doesn't allow you to change something that ought to be really easy. Since WordPress.com is really popular, and has been around for a long time, this might be the choice for you if you already have

What about WordPress.org?

WordPress.org is a very powerful tool, but it does require some more legwork. While WordPress.org is completely free to use, it does require you to deal with hosting and setting up domain names yourself. It also has a very rich plugin library that allows you to do some really cool things with your website, offering you great customizability. You don't necessarily need to know how to code to do all this, but if you do, you'll have even greater control over your site. As you can probably tell, though, compared to Wix, Weebly, and WordPress.com, it isn't as easy to just get a website up and running quickly.

Doesn't [TarHeels.live](https://tarheels.live) host a WordPress.org site for me though?

It does! And it also gives you a free tarheels.live/ domain. You would still need to spend some time learning WordPress.org, though. Also, as far as I can't tell, [you can't really connect a custom domain to TarHeels](#) unless you're representing a UNC department or organization.

What about those other website editors that you mentioned?

- **Squarespace.com** is the new kid on the block. From a usability standpoint, it seems to combine the best features of Wix and Weebly: it's very easy to customize, but also very easy to use, and its templates look great. However, Squarespace has no free options, only a 14-day trial.
- **Webflow** is like an in-between of a drag-and-drop, WYSIWYG editor, and something more advanced. It has your usual editor, with menus where you can visually create and edit your website, but these menus offer you way greater control about everything. They also use HTML/CSS lingo, so this is a great stepping stone if you want to get into basic web dev, but still have a visual editor to orient yourself. Webflow has an unlimited trial period, but

- [Carrd](#) is great if you need a simple landing page.

I actually know some programming, and would like to use a static website generator

Awesome! Static website generators typically work by converting Markdown files to HTML. This is likely especially helpful to you if you use notetaking apps like [Notion](#) or [Obsidian](#). Even if you don't, it's way easier to write the actual content of your pages using Markdown, and let a static site generator do the rest of the heavy lifting.

If you want to go this route, there are many options available, typically based on different programming languages. Some popular options are

- [Jekyll](#), which uses Ruby;
- [Hugo](#), which uses Go;
- [Gatsby](#), which uses the React JavaScript library.

Note that you don't actually have to be *proficient* in these programming languages to use these platforms, but you will need to, at the very least, have them installed, know how to install packages, and learn some of their syntax.

Whichever platform you use, you will need to host your website somewhere and potentially purchase a custom domain name. One option for this is [GitHub Pages](#), which lets you host and connect custom domains for free.

What did *you* use?

I built my first portfolio using Wix. I built this website using Jekyll (and GitHub Pages for hosting).

Other Resources

- These two in-depth comparisons between [Wix/Weebly](#) and [Wix/WordPress\(.org\)](#).
- Auburn University Writing has an [ePortfolio example gallery](#). This is a great way to see how other students setup their websites and to get a quick sense of what a finished product on Wix or Weebly may look like
- Also check out their [resources page](#)
- The Media and Design center here at UNC has a [helpful info page on ePortfolios](#), which includes example galleries from several other universities
- UNC has its own link shortener service: <https://go.unc.edu/>
- This great [series of videos](#) was how I learned to use Jekyll

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