

FREE GUIDE

WpDesignerMag

THE DESIGN SIDE OF WORDPRESS

Guide to WP Engine

Managed WordPress hosting, explained for beginners: plans, limits, prices and getting started.

Covers: Essential, Core and Enterprise

Facts checked: October 12, 2026

Review type: Research review, not tested hands-on

See the disclosure inside.

A WpDesignerMag guide

Guide to WP Engine: Free Download from WpDesignerMag

Contents

• What WP Engine is	3
• Which plan to pick	4
• Getting-started checklist	5
• Key features, explained simply	6
• Good to know: the WP Engine and Automattic lawsuit	7
• Research-based rating	8
• Resource library	9
• Sources	12

Disclosure. WpDesignerMag may earn a commission if you buy through the link in this guide, at no extra cost to you. WpDesignerMag has not tested WP Engine hands-on. This guide uses WP Engine's official pages and credited creator content. Linked videos, tutorials and podcasts may carry their creators' own affiliate links, which have no connection to WpDesignerMag.

CHAPTER 1

What WP Engine is

WP Engine is managed WordPress hosting. It runs the servers, updates, backups and caching for your WordPress sites.

You manage your sites in the WP Engine User Portal. Each site can have up to three environments: production (live), staging and development.

Plans (official)	Essential, Core and Enterprise
Company (official)	WPEngine, Inc., Austin, Texas
Support (official)	24/7 technical support on Essential. Ask what support comes with higher plans.
Money-back guarantee	Not confirmed on official pages. The Terms of Service say fees are not refundable "except as expressly stated". Ask WP Engine before you buy.
Review type	Research review. Not tested hands-on.

CHAPTER 2

Which plan to pick

Official prices for the Essential plan, in USD, **checked October 12, 2026**. Taxes may apply.

Essential size	Sites	Visits a month	Storage	Monthly billing	Annual billing
1 site	1	25,000	10 GB	\$35/mo	\$336/yr (\$28/mo)
3 sites	Up to 3	75,000	15 GB	\$65/mo	\$624/yr
10 sites	Up to 10	100,000	20 GB	\$130/mo	\$1,248/yr
30 sites	Up to 30	400,000	50 GB	\$330/mo	\$3,168/yr

Core is \$400 a month, billed annually (\$4,800 a year), and you get in touch with WP Engine to buy. Enterprise has custom pricing. An extra site costs \$20 a month.

First year only. The annual price includes a promotional discount for new customers on Essential. WP Engine does not show the renewal price, so ask before you buy.

Know the plan limits. The 99.99% uptime SLA is **not included on Essential**. It comes with Core and Enterprise. The managed firewall (Advanced DDoS and managed WAF) is **not included on Essential**; it is a paid add-on. Enterprise lists it on its plan card.

Pick in three steps

1. **Count your sites.** One site? Start with the 1-site Essential size.
2. **Do you need an uptime guarantee in writing?** You need Core or Enterprise, not Essential.
3. **Do you want a managed firewall?** On Essential, budget for the Global Edge Security add-on (\$420 a year on the plans page).

[Check WP Engine plans →](#)

Link to the official site. Confirm current prices at checkout.

CHAPTER 3

Getting-started checklist

1. Pick monthly or annual billing. Remember the annual discount is for the first year.
2. Write down your renewal date. Plans renew on their own unless you give notice at least 30 days before the term ends.
3. Moving a site? Use the free WP Engine Site Migration plugin.
4. New site? Add it in the User Portal under Sites.
5. Add your domain and set it as the primary domain.
6. Make a staging copy before big changes, then push it live.
7. Check where your daily backups are, so you can restore quickly.
8. Decide if you need the paid add-ons: managed firewall, plugin auto-updates or uptime monitoring.

CHAPTER 4

Key features, explained simply

- **Environments:** Production is your live site. Staging and development are private copies for testing.
- **Backups:** Automatic daily backups plus on-demand backups. WP Engine keeps them for 30 to 60 days.
- **EverCache and CDN:** Ways to deliver your pages faster. The CDN is powered by Cloudflare.
- **SSL:** The padlock in the browser. It renews on its own.
- **Security:** Platform patching and Layer 3+4 DDoS protection on every plan. The managed firewall is an add-on on Essential.
- **Smart Plugin Manager:** Automatic plugin and theme updates. A \$120/yr add-on on Essential; included on Core and Enterprise.
- **Transferable sites:** Build a site, then hand it over to a client account.

CHAPTER 5

Good to know: the WP Engine and Automattic lawsuit

Since September 2024, WP Engine and Automattic, the company led by WordPress co-founder Matt Mullenweg, have been in a public dispute. It is now a federal lawsuit in California. As of October 2026, the case is ongoing.

- **September 2024:** WordPress.org blocks WP Engine, which cuts off WordPress.org updates for its customers.
- **October 2024:** WP Engine sues Automattic and Mullenweg.
- **December 2024:** A court order (a preliminary injunction) restores WP Engine's WordPress.org access.
- **September 2026:** The court lets WP Engine's antitrust claims go ahead and dismisses its extortion claim. Automattic's trademark counterclaims mostly continue.
- **October 2026:** The court turns down Automattic's request for more time, so the first big written arguments (summary judgment) stay due in November 2026.
- **October 2027:** A 10-day jury trial is scheduled.

Automattic and Mullenweg deny WP Engine's claims. Nothing has been decided at trial.

Before you buy. Court dates can change. Check the latest news, and ask WP Engine how plugin and theme updates work for its customers today.

CHAPTER 6

Research-based rating

3.6_{/5}

Research review, not tested hands-on. Features 4.0 (50%), Ease of use 3.5 (25%), Value 3.0 (25%). Support is not rated, and its 20% weight was shared out across the other three.

CHAPTER 7

Resource library

Every image and title links to the original video, article or episode. Images belong to their creators.

Featured video



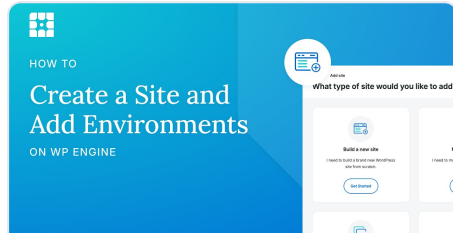
WP Engine Review 2026: Is this Managed WordPress Hosting Worth it?

DroidCrunch · Jan 2026, 19:01

The featured video in our review. A tour of the User Portal and environments. It's an affiliate review with no speed tests and no real cons. Its Essential price is out of date (its Core price matches), and it treats the 99.99% uptime and the firewall as standard, which they are not on Essential. We don't share its link.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)

Build-alongs



How to add Sites and Environments on WP Engine

WP Engine · Aug 2026, 4:11

Made by the vendor. Current portal. All plans.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)

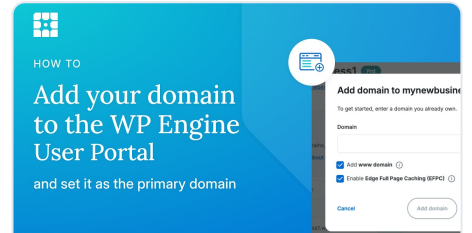


How to Migrate a WordPress Site to WP Engine using the Site Migration Plugin

WP Engine · Aug 2025, 2:24

Made by the vendor. Free migration plugin.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)



How to add your domain to the WP Engine User Portal and set it as the primary domain

WP Engine · Jul 2026, 2:30

Made by the vendor. All plans.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)

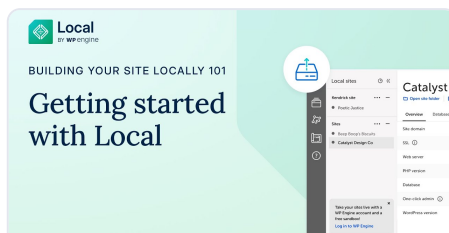


How to test plugin and theme updates on staging with Smart Plugin Manager

WP Engine · Jul 2025, 6:37

Made by the vendor. A paid add-on on Essential.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)



How to Set Up a Local WordPress Site in 30 Seconds (Full Walkthrough)

WP Engine · Jul 2025, 2:35

Made by the vendor. Local is a free tool; no plan needed.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)



How to Use WP Engine Staging + Backups to Safely Redesign a WordPress Site

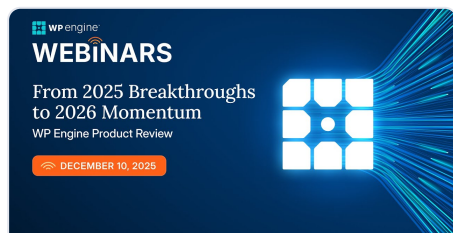
My First Website · Jan 2026, 8:08

Independent. Has an affiliate-style link and promo wording.

[Watch on YouTube →](#)

Webinars and replays

All three feature WP Engine. The third is a sponsored livestream on a community channel.



WP Engine Product Showcase: 2025 Breakthroughs & 2026 Momentum

WP Engine · Dec 2025, 40:53

Vendor webinar. Product roadmap.

[Watch the replay →](#)



You're Creating Great Content. Here's Why You Can't Prove It.

WP Engine · Sep 2026, 47:16

Vendor webinar on content strategy, not hosting how-to.

[Watch the replay →](#)



Designing Accessibility into WordPress Products with WP Engine

WP Accessibility Day · Sep 2026, 49:49

Sponsored by WP Engine. About its Newsroom product.

[Watch the replay →](#)

Podcasts

All four are independent of WP Engine and cover the start of the dispute in 2024 and 2025. Automattic is the other party, so the WP Minute episode includes one side directly.



636: W Hot Drama Week (WordPress, WP Engine, and Web Components, Oh My!)

ShopTalk Show · Oct 7, 2024

Independent. Explains the block and its effect on customers.

[Listen to the episode →](#)



Automattic vs WP Engine

The WP Minute · Sep 27, 2024, 1:07:45

Independent hosts. Matt Mullenweg joins for about 5 minutes.

[Listen to the episode →](#)



398: What just happened? Episode 2. An uneventful 3 months

WP Builds · Nov 14, 2024, 1:18:00

Independent. A three-month recap with Rae Morey.

[Listen to the episode →](#)



409: What just happened? Episode 3. Funding, acquisitions, legal and events

WP Builds · Feb 13, 2025, 1:22:32

Independent. Covers the legal developments at that time.

[Listen to the episode →](#)

CHAPTER 8

Sources

1. **WP Engine plans and pricing:** <https://wpengine.com/plans/>. Plans, Essential prices and limits, features by plan, add-ons, SLA and firewall by plan, first-year offer terms.
2. **WP Engine Service Level Agreement (updated May 12, 2021):** <https://wpengine.com/legal/sla/>. Uptime targets and credits.
3. **WP Engine Terms of Service (updated Jan 1, 2026):** <https://wpengine.com/legal/terms-of-service/>. Refund wording, auto-renewal and 30-day notice, company details.
4. **WP Engine support home:** <https://wpengine.com/support/>. 24/7 support by chat after login.
5. **Manage Sites and Environments:** <https://wpengine.com/support/environments/>. Up to three environments per site.
6. **How to Backup and Restore Your Site:** <https://wpengine.com/support/restore/>. Backups and restores.
7. **How to Migrate Sites with the Plugin:** <https://wpengine.com/support/wp-engine-site-migration/>. Free migration plugin.
8. **WP Engine, Inc. v. Automattic Inc. (court docket):** <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69221176/wpengine-inc-v-automattic-inc/>. Case number 4:24-cv-06917, N.D. Cal., filed October 2, 2024.
9. **The Repository: WP Engine v. Automattic, Two Years On (Oct 2, 2026):** <https://www.therepository.email/wp-engine-v-automattic-two-years-on-where-the-wordpress-drama-stands>. Independent news: timeline, injunction, September 2026 ruling, trial date.
10. **The Repository: Automattic's New Lawyers Lose Bid for More Time (Oct 16, 2026):** <https://www.therepository.email/automattics-new-lawyers-lose-bid-for-more-time-in-legal-fight-with-wp-engine>. Independent news: extension denied; November 2026 deadlines and the October 19, 2027 trial date stand.
11. **Automattic: Response to WP Engine's Meritless Lawsuit (Oct 3, 2024):** <https://automattic.com/2024/10/03/meritless/>. Automattic's denial.
12. **ShopTalk Show 636:** <https://shoptalkshow.com/636/>. Independent coverage of the 2024 dispute.
13. **WP Builds 409:** <https://wpbuilds.com/2025/02/13/409-what-just-happened-episode-3-funding-acquisitions-legal-and-events/>. Independent coverage of later legal developments.

Checked on: October 12, 2026. Prices and features change, so confirm them at checkout.



Thumb Test Master Checklist

Try it Free!