DESIGNME

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Leave WordPress without losing a URL

Where to go, what comes with you, what to do with every plugin, and how to keep every page that ranks on its address.



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INSIDE

Nine chapters

01 **Should you leave WordPress at all?**
The honest test: when WordPress is still the right home, and the signs it’s time to go.

02 **Webflow, Framer, Astro or Next.js**
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03 **What moves, and what breaks**
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List every active plugin and decide its fate at the audit, not the week before launch.

05 **The redirect map**
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08 **Launch week, and after**
The switch-day plan, a way back, what to watch after, and the full checklist to print.

09 **Timeline and price**
How long a move from WordPress takes, what it costs with us, and what it costs to run.

SOUND FAMILIAR?

Every update is a small risk
Core, theme and plugins all need updating, and a bad update has taken the site down before.

A dozen plugins, one job each
Every one is a security surface and a speed cost, and some of them don’t get along.

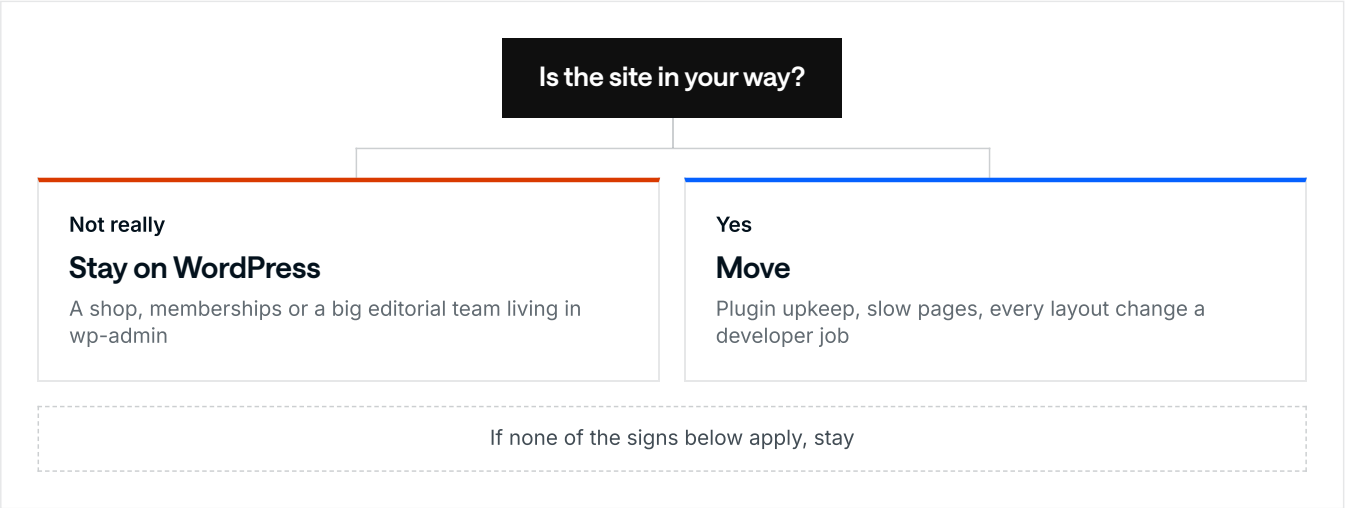
Marketing waits on a developer
Anything beyond body copy is a ticket, so a new landing page takes a sprint instead of an afternoon.

You’re scared of losing rankings
Years of posts bring in search traffic, and a move done badly can undo it. So the site stays where it is.

CHAPTER 01

Should you leave WordPress at all?

Not always. WordPress runs a huge part of the web for good reasons, and for some sites it’s still the right home. Here’s the test we use.



Stay on WordPress if

- WooCommerce or a membership plugin is the core of the business. Rebuilding that elsewhere is a bigger project than a website migration.
- You have tens of thousands of posts and a large editorial team in wp-admin every day.
- The site is fine and fast, and the real problem is the design. A redesign on WordPress may be enough.
- You depend on a plugin with no equivalent anywhere else.

Move if

- Anything beyond body copy needs a developer, so marketing can’t ship a landing page on its own.
- The site runs a dozen plugins that each need updating, some of them conflict, and a bad update has broken it before.
- Pages are slow because of a heavy theme and stacked plugins, and nobody has time to manage it.
- The page builder decides what the design can look like, and the site is a big part of your brand.
- You want content in a structured shape that can feed the site, docs, a newsletter and AI tools.

If none of these apply, stay. Seriously.

CHAPTER 02

Webflow, Framer, Astro or Next.js

Once you've decided to leave, the next question is where to. We build on all four, so here's how we pick.

Pick Webflow when marketers need to build and publish pages themselves and the blog is big. The Premium site plan holds 20,000 CMS items.

Pick Framer for a startup marketing site that needs to look sharp and change every week, with a blog that fits the plan's limits.

Pick Astro when you want to own the site in code. Pages ship as plain HTML, content lives in files or a headless CMS, and your team and AI agents change it through reviewed pull requests. WordPress can even stay on as the CMS behind it.

Pick Next.js when the site behaves like part of your product: it shares components or sign-in with a React app, has logged-in areas, or builds pages per visitor. Your engineers will own it.

Where WordPress sites go

	Webflow	Framer	Astro	Next.js
Best for	Marketing teams that publish pages on their own	Startup sites that change every week	Sites you want to own in code	Sites that are part of your product
Editing	Visual editor inside a design system	Design canvas	Markdown, data files or a headless CMS	A headless CMS, or code
Content	CMS collections with reference fields	CMS collections, within plan limits	Typed content collections or a headless CMS	A headless CMS such as Sanity, or WordPress kept headless
Redirects	Built in, imported as a CSV	In site settings, on Pro and above	The host's redirect file, each line a 301	next.config.js, marked permanent
Typical move	6 to 8 weeks	4 to 6 weeks	Planned after the URL inventory	Planned after the URL inventory

Not sure yet? The rest of this guide works for all four. Where they differ, it says so.

CHAPTER 03

What moves, and what breaks

WordPress exports content, not design. Tools > Export gives you one XML file with posts, pages, custom post types, comments, custom fields, categories and tags. The theme, the page builder and the plugins don’t come with it.

So the move is a rebuild plus a content move. The writing comes with you. Everything you can see is rebuilt.

PART OF THE SITE	IN WORDPRESS	ON WEBFLOW OR FRAMER	ON ASTRO
Posts and pages	In the database, exported as one XML file	Cleaned and imported into CMS collections as CSV	Markdown with frontmatter, or entries in a headless CMS
Custom post types and fields	Registered by the theme, a plugin or ACF	One collection each, with typed fields	One content collection each, with a schema
Categories and tags	Taxonomies with their own archive pages	Linked collections with reference fields	Fields in the content, archive pages built from them
SEO titles and descriptions	Set in Yoast or Rank Math	Exported and set per page and per item	Frontmatter fields, sitemap generated
Images and files	Linked from the export, not inside it	Imported by URL or re-uploaded	Downloaded and served from your own host
Theme and layouts	A theme or a page builder	Rebuilt in the Designer or on the canvas	Rebuilt on a design system with tokens
Forms	Contact Form 7, Gravity Forms and the like	Native forms, connected to your CRM	A form service, your CRM or a serverless function

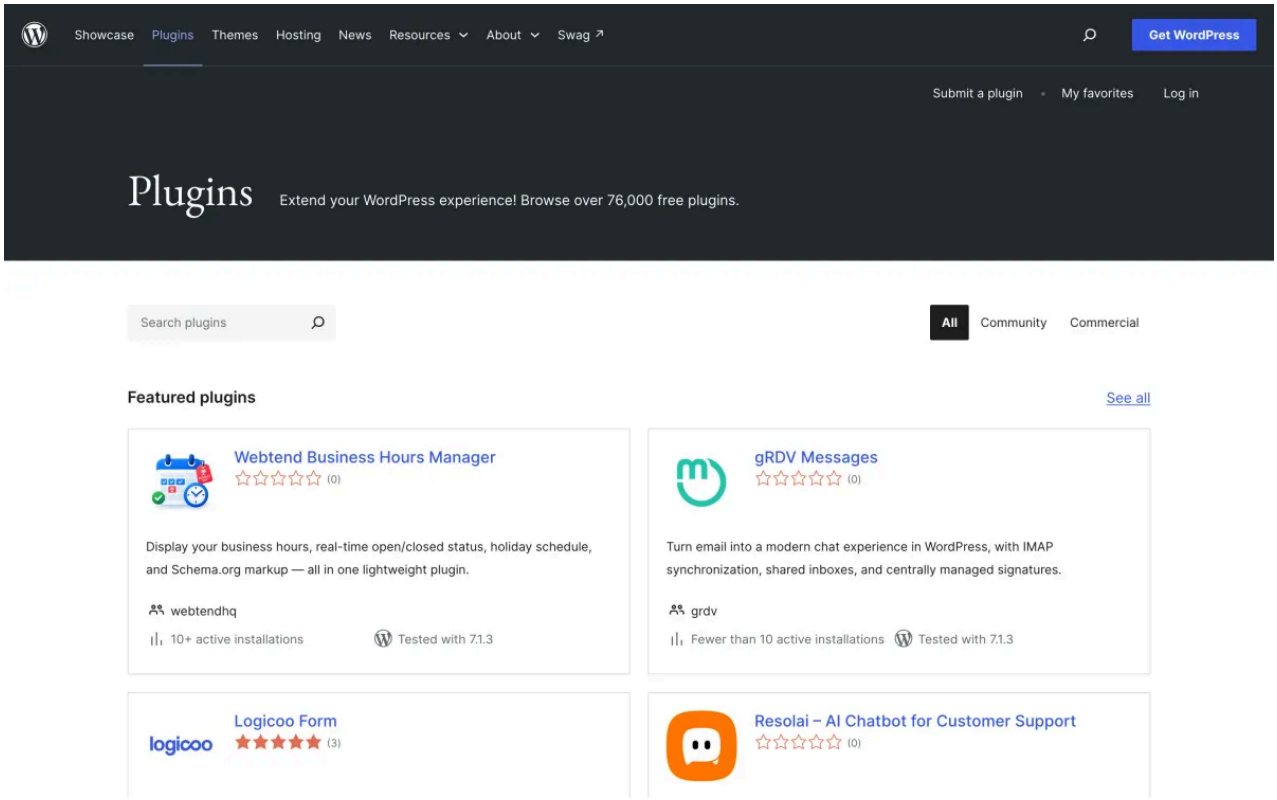
What breaks quietly

- **Shortcodes and page-builder markup.** They come out of the export as raw text and builder classes. Clean them out before the import, or they show up on the live page.
- **Images still on the old server.** The export links to files in wp-content instead of including them. Bring every file across, then search the new site for the old upload paths before launch.
- **Trailing slashes and dated URLs.** WordPress often ends URLs with a slash and files posts under /2024/05/ style paths. Each pattern needs a rule, or every post quietly changes address.
- **Category and tag archives.** WordPress makes a page for every category and tag on its own. The ones that rank need a home; thin ones redirect to the closest real page.
- **The redirects you already have.** Years of them often live in a plugin or the server config. Export them and fold them into the new map, or they stop working at launch.
- **Editing.** Everyone who lived in wp-admin needs a new place to work, decided before the build (chapter 6).

CHAPTER 04

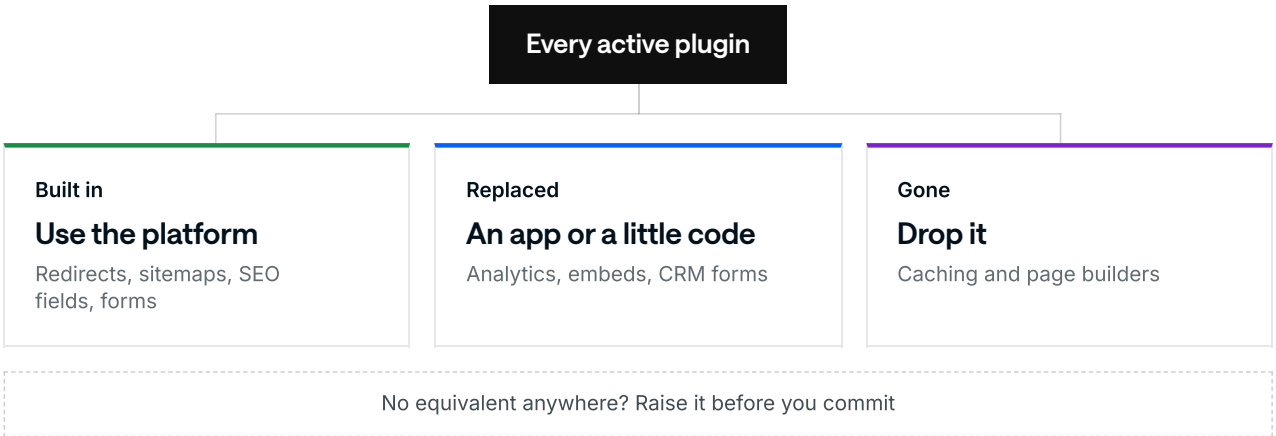
Every plugin, one decision

A few years in, most WordPress sites run a dozen plugins. None of them come with you, so each one needs a decision before anything is built.



The plugin directory, October 2026 wordpress.org

One decision per plugin



PLUGIN	WHAT IT DID	AFTER THE MOVE
Yoast or Rank Math	Titles, descriptions, the sitemap	Fields per page and per item. The sitemap is built in on Webflow and Framer, generated on Astro
A redirect plugin	Old URLs sent to new ones	Exported and merged into the new redirect map
Contact Form 7, Gravity Forms	Forms	Native forms or a form service, connected to your CRM and tested end to end
Caching and speed plugins	Keeping pages fast	Nothing. Hosted platforms and static HTML don’t need them
A page builder	Layouts	The design system the site is rebuilt on
WooCommerce or memberships	A shop, or gated content	A project of its own, and often a reason to stay (chapter 1)

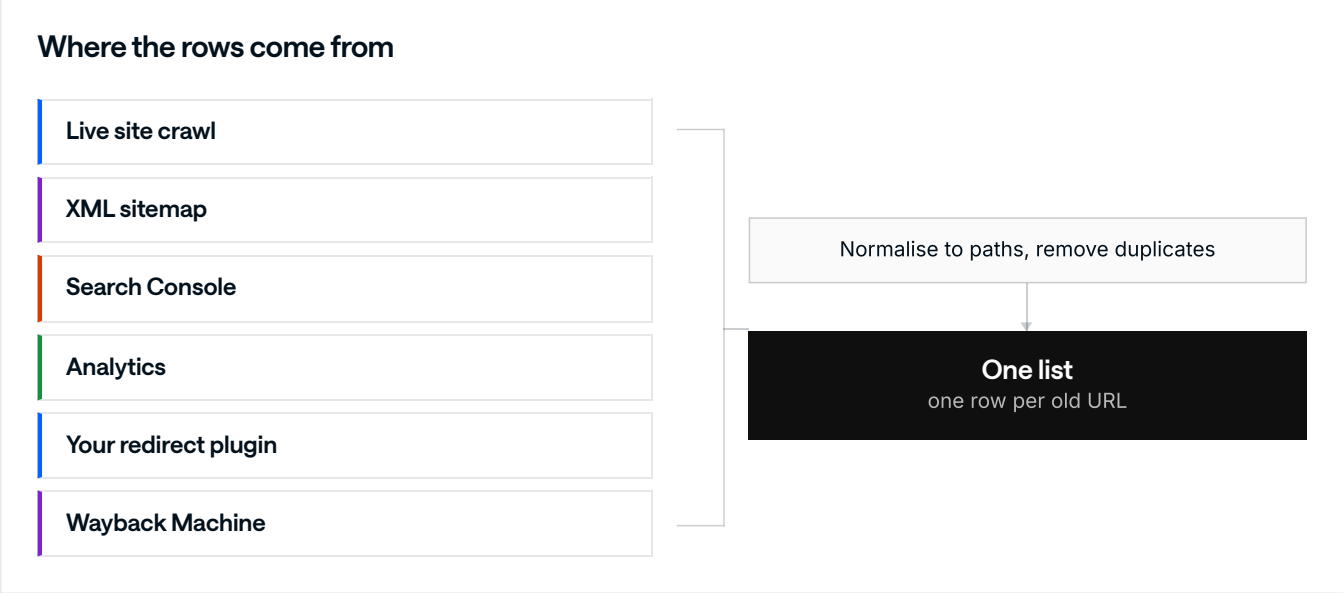
Do this at the audit. A membership plugin found the week before launch is a problem. Found in week one, it’s a line in the plan.

CHAPTER 05

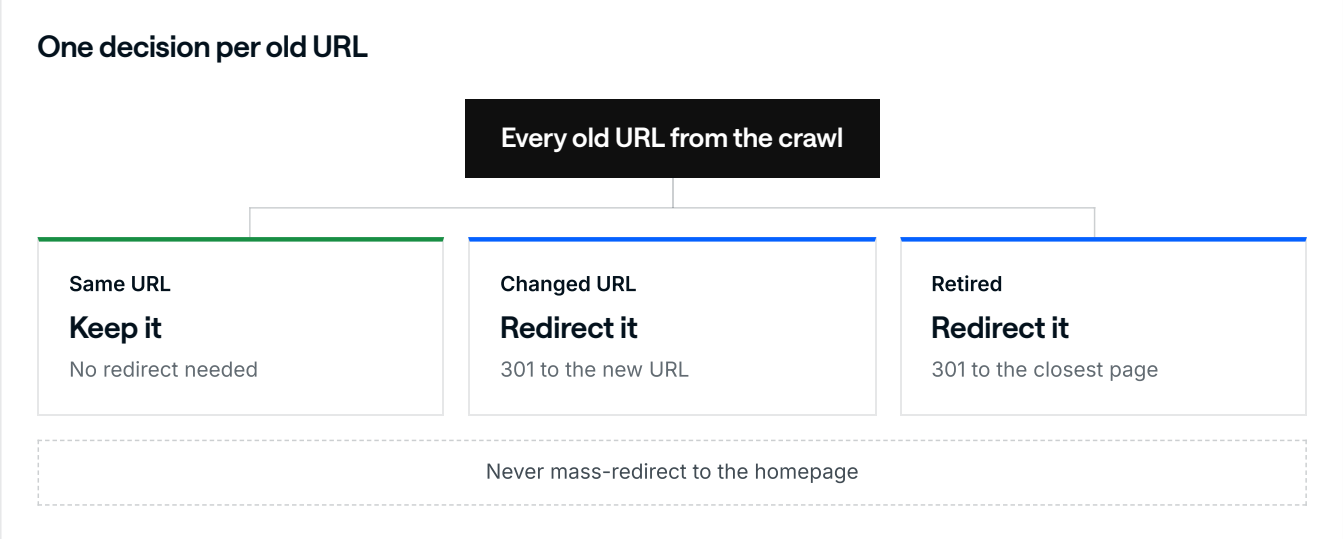
The redirect map

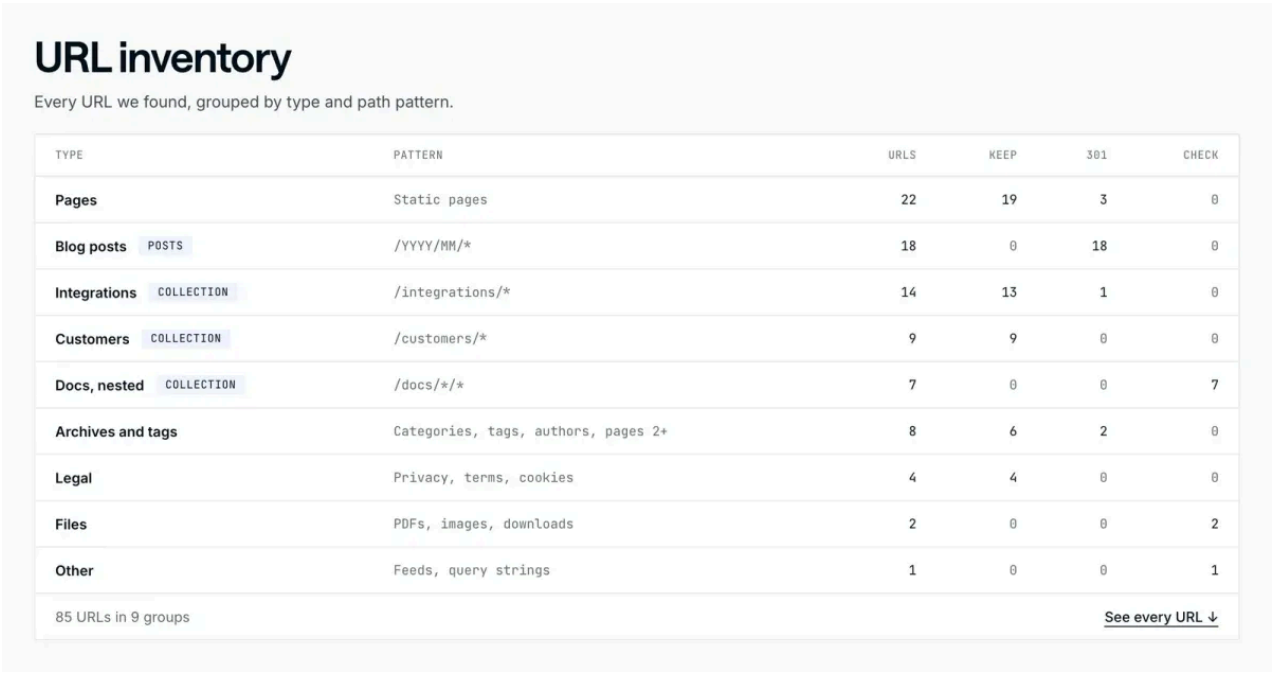
The redirect map is where WordPress moves lose rankings, so start there, before anyone designs anything.

A WordPress site has more URLs than anyone thinks: posts, pages, category and tag archives, author pages, paginated lists. When we moved our own site, 63 live pages became a map of 116 rows, because every source turns up pages the others miss:



Then every row gets one of three outcomes:





URL inventory

Migration planner

The free migration planner groups every URL by type, with what happens to it: keep, 301 or check by hand.

The patterns WordPress needs

- **Dated posts.** /2024/05/post-name/ style paths get a pattern rule instead of a row per post.
- **Trailing slashes.** Match the old rule on the new site, or add a rule for each pattern.
- **Specific rules before wildcards.** Webflow runs redirects oldest first, so a broad pattern added early catches URLs meant for a specific rule.
- **Blog paths.** Framer's CMS pages sit under a collection path, so posts at the root usually move to /blog/ and need a wildcard rule.
- **Archives that rank.** Keep them as collection pages, and send thin ones to the closest real page.
- **The redirects you already have.** Point each one straight at its final page, so nothing redirects twice.

What the file looks like

On Webflow you import the map as a CSV in the site settings, and on Framer you add it in the site settings. On an Astro site on Cloudflare Pages, where designme.agency runs, it's a plain text file called `_redirects`: old path, new path, status code, one row per line. An example for a blog with dated posts:

public/_redirects (an example)

```
# old path              new path        status
/2023/:month/:slug      /blog/:slug     301
/2024/:month/:slug      /blog/:slug     301
/category/news          /blog           301
/about-us               /about          301
```

One line per year covers every dated post: `:month` and `:slug` each stand for one part of the path. Write the `301`. Leave it off and Cloudflare Pages sends a 302, which tells Google the move is temporary.

On Next.js the same rows go in `next.config.js`, each with `permanent: true`, which sends a 308 that Google treats like a 301.

Keep the map itself in a spreadsheet (old URL, new URL, outcome) and generate the file from it, or import it on Webflow. Nobody should edit the live file by hand.

> Want a head start? The free migration planner lists every URL on your site and drafts the redirect map for you.

Rather hand the redirect map over?

Bring your URL to a 30-minute call. You'll leave knowing where your site should go, how long the move takes and what it costs, redirect map included.

Book a 30-minute call

CHAPTER 06

Getting the content out

The writing is the part you keep, so move it carefully.

From WordPress to the new CMS

01 Export
Tools > Export, all content: one XML file with posts, pages, custom post types, comments, custom fields and taxonomies.

02 Map the model
Every post type and field gets a home before anything is imported: a collection, a field, or nothing.

03 Clean it
Shortcodes, inline styles, page-builder markup and dead embeds come out.

04 Bring the media
The export links to images instead of including them. Pull every file across from wp-content.

05 Import, then check
CSV into Webflow or Framer, Markdown or a headless CMS for Astro. Then open items and images by hand.

IN WORDPRESS	ON WEBFLOW OR FRAMER	ON ASTRO
Posts	A blog posts collection	Markdown files in a content collection
Custom post types	One collection each	One content collection each
Categories and tags	Linked collections with reference fields	Fields, with archive pages built from them
ACF and custom fields	Typed collection fields	Frontmatter fields, checked by a schema
Pages	Static pages built from the design system	Pages built from shared components
Yoast or Rank Math fields	SEO title and description per page and item	Title and description fields

Who edits the site after launch

Decide this before the build, because it changes the build. On Webflow and Framer, marketers keep a visual editor. On Astro you choose: Markdown files changed through reviewed pull requests (by your team or an AI agent), a form-based editor like Keystatic on top of the files, or a headless CMS such as Sanity.

Or keep wp-admin. WordPress can stay on as the headless CMS while Astro serves the site, so your editors change nothing about how they write.

CHAPTER 07

The build, in order

This is the order we use for clients, and the one we used on our own site.

From inventory to staging

01 Before any design

Inventory every URL

Crawl every URL, export top pages, rankings and backlinks, and record each page's title, description and headings.

02 Before any design

Map URLs and content

Every URL's fate decided, and every post type and field given a home, before anything is designed.

03 Build

Design system first

Type, color and spacing as variables or tokens, then shared components. Templates and collection pages are built from those.

04 Build

Copy and SEO stay put

Every page that ranks keeps its words, title and description, even if the design changes in the same move.

05 Before launch

SEO on every page

Titles, descriptions, alt text, canonicals and structured data, plus a sitemap with only indexable pages.

06 Before launch

Staging, side by side

The full site on a private address, every form, link and redirect tested, compared with WordPress page by page.

WordPress stays live the whole time. Nothing changes for your visitors until launch day.

Keeping the copy and SEO the same is the rule people want to skip. Don't. If traffic moves after launch, you'll know it wasn't the words.

CHAPTER 08

Launch week, and after

Launch early in the week, so someone is around when Google starts re-crawling.

Around the switch

Before DNS moves

- **Redirects tested**
  Every row of the map, on staging.
- **No staging noindex**
  Checked on every template.
- **No wp-content links**
  In images, files, OG tags or CSS.

Launch day

- **A way back**
  WordPress still running, one DNS change away.
- **Sitemap submitted**
  The new one, in Search Console.
- **Forms and analytics**
  Tested on the live domain, with cookie consent set up.

The first weeks

- **404s and indexing**
  Watched daily until the numbers settle.
- **The old hosting kept**
  Until every file is off it.

The launch checklist

Every step in this guide as one list. Print it, or copy it into your project tool.

BEFORE THE BUILD

- [ ] Every old URL collected: crawl, sitemap, Search Console, analytics, the redirect plugin, Wayback Machine
- [ ] Every URL has an outcome: keep it, redirect it, or redirect it to the closest page
- [ ] Every active plugin listed, each with a decision
- [ ] The XML export taken and every media file pulled from wp-content
- [ ] Who edits what after launch decided, and the CMS picked

BEFORE DNS MOVES

- [ ] Shortcodes and page-builder markup cleaned out of every item
- [ ] Every page that ranks keeps its copy, title and description
- [ ] Titles, descriptions, alt text, canonicals and structured data on every page
- [ ] A sitemap with only indexable pages
- [ ] Every redirect row tested on staging: one hop, 301, never the homepage
- [ ] No staging noindex left on any template
- [ ] No links to wp-content or the old server in images, files, OG tags or CSS

LAUNCH DAY, EARLY IN THE WEEK

- [ ] A way back ready: WordPress still running, one DNS change away
- [ ] The new sitemap submitted in Search Console
- [ ] Forms and analytics tested on the live domain, cookie consent set up

THE FIRST WEEKS

- [ ] 404s and indexing checked daily until the numbers settle
- [ ] New 404s added to the redirect map
- [ ] The old hosting kept until every file is off it
- [ ] Redirects kept for at least a year

CHAPTER 09

Timeline and price

It depends on where you're going and how much content comes with you. For a typical marketing site with a blog, this is what we plan:

6 to 8 weeks
WordPress to Webflow, for a typical SaaS marketing site

4 to 6 weeks
WordPress to Framer, for a typical startup marketing site

$10,000
the starting fixed price for a landing page sized site

$15,000
the starting fixed price for a full site or a headless CMS build

Hundreds of posts, complex plugins or gated content add time. A move to Astro or Next.js is planned after the URL inventory, because it depends most on how your team wants to edit.

You get the scope and the price on a call, before anything starts, and the platform you pick doesn't change it.

Running costs usually drop. No plugins to license or patch, hosting and security included on Webflow and Framer, and little or nothing to host for a mostly static Astro site. A CMS like Sanity has its own plans, so price it for your team.

Want a number for your site? Book a 30-minute call and bring your URL. You'll leave knowing where it should go, roughly how long it takes and what it costs. And if the honest answer is "stay on WordPress", I'll tell you that too.

RATHER TALK IT THROUGH?

Want a plan for your own site?

Bring your URL to a 30-minute call with Adrian. You'll leave knowing where your site should go, how long the move takes and what it costs.

Book a 30-minute call at designme.agency/intro

01

Where it should go

Webflow, Framer, Astro, Next.js, or staying on WordPress. We'll say so if it's the last one.

02

How long it takes

A timeline for your page count, content and plugins.

03

What it costs

A fixed price from $10,000, confirmed before anything starts.

DESIGNME

DesignMe designs and builds websites for funded startups and B2B teams, in Framer, Webflow, Astro and Next.js.