

The Story of This Web Site

Didn't you ever wonder what makes a web page appear on your screen? It's like wondering what makes a car go, or how a refrigerator keeps things cold. It doesn't seem like it should be beyond the capacity of a curious soul to understand. My curiosity took on a practical aspect when I started thinking about ways of sharing the music, video, writing, and other media I've created. I decided to try my hand at making a web site to bring together my creative efforts. I don't mean hiring a 'web designer' to make a site for me. I wanted to make the site entirely by myself.

After some internet research (of course) I decided to use something called [Wordpress](#) to build the web site. Wordpress is like a basic vehicle that can be used as the starting point for building an art car. It includes a database to hold the content I've created (like my music, videos, or writing), and a structure that retrieves the content from the database when I want to display it. But then the customizing begins: body, seats, transmission, controls....

And what I discovered was that, in order to build a custom body and connect custom controls, I had to have some real understanding of the structure of Wordpress, and a working familiarity with the languages HTML, CSS and PHP, of which Wordpress is made. These languages are the way to write instructions for generating web pages. As you might imagine, all this seemed a considerable task for a guy starting out with next to no knowledge of these things. On the other hand, thirty years ago I taught myself the Basic computer language, and then learned how to write instructions in Motorola 6502 assembly language so I could program a game on the Apple II (I called it Pacperson – it was my imitation of an arcade game of that era). I have really been a closet code geek all my life, and it seems inevitable to me now that I would wind up doing this project.

And the good news is that Wordpress is what is called “open source,” which means it is freely available and open for study, supported by a huge community of enthusiasts. Their motto is “Code is Poetry.” There is extensive [documentation](#), there are [forums](#) in which to find answers to questions, and even a thriving industry of people who have become so expert with Wordpress that other people hire them to create web sites using it. I also found [free internet sites for learning programming languages](#), at least learning them well enough to gain a halting familiarity that lets me figure out what is going on in the code. It took me a few months of plugging away, but after a while it all started to come together enough that I could actually make a web page of my own design appear on the screen. I may not be ready to hire out as a free lance web designer, but I was able to make this web site. I am really just starting to learn about all this, but the possibilities seem endless.

As with any other enthusiast, I'm always ready to talk with anyone about it, be they experts or newbies like me. Meanwhile, I hope knowing this background gives some additional dimension to your experience of the web site, and that you enjoy the media to be found here on **Elemee**.