

## ***Crossing the Digital Divide (v100)***

“Freedom”

By Joseph Feigon  
For the Observer

This is my 100<sup>th</sup> column for the Observer, and in honor of my century mark, I'll talk Open Source. Open Source is the essence of the Internet; from the **Linux** kernel, **Apache** web server, **MySQL** database, and programmed using **PHP**, the **LAMP** stack represents the vast majority of website/web servers across the globe. All Free software.

Most of us can't take an Intel-based computer, install some variant of Linux, install Apache, MySQL, PHP, and all the supporting libraries, graphics tools, editors, compilers, and debuggers, THEN create a website by hand. It's not that long ago that an engineer would build a computer, install an operating system, applications and libraries, then engage a designer, a User Interface expert, a Quality Assurance expert, and fifteen accounting professionals before a new website would be launched.

Today, another fine example of the power of Open Source: **CMS** With a few clicks of a mouse, a valid credit card, an available domain name, and nearly anyone can publish their own website.

**WordPress** is a free and open-source content management system (CMS) based on PHP (a programming language) and MySQL (a database application). To function, WordPress has to be installed on a web server, which would either be part of an Internet hosting service or a network host in its own right. An example of the first scenario may be a service like Wordpress.com, for example, and the second case could be a computer running the software package WordPress.org. A local computer may be used for single-user testing and learning purposes. Features include a plugin architecture and a template system. WordPress was used by more than 29.4% of the top 10 million websites as of January 2018. WordPress is reportedly the most popular website management or blogging system in use on the Web, supporting more than 60 million websites.

WordPress was released on May 27, 2003, by its founders, Matt Mullenweg and Mike Little under GPLv2 (or later) license.

WordPress, is a content management system, extensible, customizable, and universally recognized as the preferred vehicle to build, launch and maintain a web presence.

LibreOffice, and Open Office, two Open Source alternatives to Microsoft's Office Suite are freely available, and include fully compatible (with MS Office) a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation tool, and personal database engine. Both Open Source suites also include PDF distillers (a program to create a PDF from Word/Spreadsheet/Presentation, etc. Great tools, easy to use, and available for the cost of a download.

The Power of Open Source – good code shared with a global community to make better code.

Control those things you can, and keep the surprises to a minimum!