

Your Website Template

The setup guide for your site files: from zip file to live website, on your terms

You picked a look, and now it's yours. This guide walks you through everything it takes to put it online: buying a domain and hosting, uploading your files, setting up email, forms, and a newsletter, and keeping it all private and protected. No tech background needed.

Your template is **site files only**: you host it yourself, on an account in your name. That's a good thing. It means no monthly fee to us, and no one else holds the keys to your brand.

How to use this guide

Work through sections 1 to 9 in order the first time; that's your launch. Sections 10 onward are for keeping your site fresh and protected. Stuck, or rather hand something off? Email holla@courtesanmarketing.ca with the section number.

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1. What's in your package

A full small-business site built from the look you chose, not just a pretty homepage.

Page or feature	What it does
Home	Your first impression: who you are, your vibe, and what to do next.
About	Your story, in your words.
Contact	A working contact form, so inquiries land in your inbox (section 12).
Link in Bio	An on-brand landing page for your Instagram, TikTok, or X bio, linking to everything you do.
Terms of Service and Privacy Policy	The pages everyone forgets until they need them. They start as placeholders (see below).
404 page	A branded "page not found" page, so broken links don't look broken.
18+ age gate	Asks every first-time visitor to confirm they're 18 or older before your site can be seen. Its wording is yours to personalize (section 10).

You'll also find

- A `.zip` file of all your site files, ready to upload.
- An `assets` folder with your images, styles, and fonts.
- A sample settings file and a database file for your forms (section 7).
- `assets/age-gate.js`, your 18+ age gate, with its wording at the top of the file (section 10).

What you can change, and what's fixed

- **Make it yours:** logo, colours, photos, and every word.
- **Fixed:** the layout. Want extra pages or a different structure? That's a custom quote.

The demo photos are stock images

They're for show only. Replace every one with your own photos (or photos you have the rights to) before launch. Using images you don't own is one of the fastest ways to get a site taken down.

Your legal pages: don't skip these

- Replace the placeholder Terms of Service and Privacy Policy with real ones for your business. A lawyer or a reputable legal-template service is the safest route.
- Your Privacy Policy must say what you collect: at minimum, names, email addresses, and messages from your contact form, and emails from your newsletter signup.

- Booking policies (deposits, cancellations, screening) belong in your Terms. Our free Terms and Policies Generator can help: courtesanmarketing.ca/tools/policies-generator

This isn't legal advice

Laws about advertising adult services in Canada are complex and change. If your site advertises services, talk to a lawyer or a sex-worker-led legal resource before you launch.

2. Privacy first

Before you buy anything, decide how much of the real you connects to this site. It's much easier to set up privately than to untangle it later.

- ☐ **Use a separate email address** for every account in this guide (registrar, hosting, GitHub, newsletter). Create it first; Proton Mail is a good private choice (section 8).
- ☐ **Use your stage name** wherever a display name is public. Billing details may need your legal name; that part stays private.
- ☐ **Turn on domain privacy** so your name and address aren't published in public domain records (section 3).
- ☐ **Use a password manager** and turn on two-step sign-in (MFA) for every account as you create it.
- ☐ **Strip location data from photos** before uploading. Phone photos can carry the exact spot they were taken. Our free blog post on removing photo metadata shows how.
- ☐ **Check your files for your legal name** before uploading, including image file names and document properties.

3. Buy your domain

Your domain is your address online, like yourname.ca. You rent it yearly from a company called a registrar.

Choose a registrar that won't drop you

Some companies have policies against adult content or sex work. Registering a domain is usually lower risk than hosting a site, but it still matters. As of October 2026:

Registrar	Our take
Porkbun	Often recommended in creator communities; no specific adult-content exclusion. Free domain privacy.

Namecheap	Fine for registering your domain (it even sells adult domain endings). Its hosting bans adult content, so don't host there.
Hostinger	Convenient if you also host with Hostinger: one account for both. No blanket ban on adult content in its current policy.
Njalla	Privacy-focused: it registers the domain in its own name on your behalf. Maximum privacy, but read how ownership works before choosing.
Avoid: GoDaddy	Names escort and companion sites as ineligible for some of its services.

Policies change without much notice. Read the current terms of service yourself before you buy.

Steps

1. Search for your name. If your stage name is taken, try adding a word (yournamestudio.ca) or a different ending.
2. Pick the ending: **.ca** for a Canadian business (you'll need to confirm a Canadian presence), or **.com**.
3. Turn on **domain privacy** (often free).
4. Turn on **auto-renew**, keep the card on file current, and add a calendar reminder a month before renewal. If your domain lapses, your site and email stop, and someone else can buy your name.
5. Turn on **MFA** for your registrar account.

4. Buy your hosting

Hosting is the computer that stores your site and shows it to visitors. You'll pay for it yearly, in your own name, and you're in full control.

What your plan needs

- ☐ **PHP 8 or newer** (it runs your contact form and newsletter signup).
- ☐ **At least one MySQL database.**
- ☐ **A free SSL certificate** (the padlock in the address bar).
- ☐ **A control panel** with a File Manager and phpMyAdmin (common names: hPanel, cPanel, Plesk).
- ☐ **Automatic backups.**
- ☐ **An email mailbox** included, or an easy add-on.
- ☐ **A content policy that allows your business.** This is the one most people forget.

Our recommendations

Host	Why	Watch for
Hostinger	What Courtesan Marketing uses itself. Affordable, beginner-friendly control panel, email included, and no blanket ban on adult content in its current policy.	Like any host, it removes content after copyright complaints, so only use photos you own.
OrangeWebsite	Iceland-based, privacy-focused, and openly welcomes adult-industry clients.	Pricier; its control panel is less hand-holding.

Hosts to avoid for adult or companion sites

GoDaddy, Namecheap hosting, Squarespace, WordPress.com, Blogger, and many drag-and-drop website builders either ban adult content or have removed sex-work sites. (Self-installed WordPress on your own hosting is different: it follows your host's rules, not WordPress.com's.)

How to buy it (Hostinger example)

1. Go to **hostinger.com** and choose **Web Hosting**. Pick the **Premium** or **Business** plan; both include PHP, MySQL, SSL, email, and backups. A longer term costs less per month; 12 months is a sensible start.
2. Create your account with your private business email (section 2), and turn on MFA straight away.
3. Pay, then open **hPanel**, Hostinger's control panel.
4. When hPanel asks what you're building, choose the option for an **empty website** (it may say Skip or Custom), not the website builder or WordPress, and enter your domain.

Using a different host? The same steps apply: buy a plan that ticks the list above, then find your control panel.

Read the content policy before you pay

Search the host's site for "acceptable use policy" or "prohibited content" and read it. A host that's fine today can change its mind, which is why backups (section 15) matter so much.

5. Connect your domain to your hosting

This tells the internet where your site lives. If you bought your domain and hosting from the same company, it's often done for you; check first.

1. In your hosting control panel, find your **nameservers** (in hPanel: Domains, then your domain, then DNS / Nameservers). They look like *ns1.dns-parking.com*.

2. Sign in to your registrar, open your domain's **Nameservers** setting, choose custom nameservers, and paste in your host's.
3. Wait. Changes can take a few minutes up to 48 hours to work everywhere. Your site loading for you but not a friend during that time is normal.

6. Upload your site files

Your files go into one special folder on your host, almost always called `public_html`. It's the only folder visitors can see.

The easy way: File Manager

1. In your control panel, open **File Manager** and go into `public_html`.
2. Delete any placeholder file your host put there, such as a default `index.html` or `default.php`.
3. Choose **Upload** and upload your site's `.zip` file.
4. Right-click the zip and choose **Extract**. Make sure the files end up **directly inside** `public_html`, not in a folder within it. (If they land in a subfolder, select everything in it and move it up one level.)
5. Delete the zip file once everything is extracted.

The other way: FileZilla

For big uploads or frequent updates, the free FileZilla app lets you drag files between your computer and your host like two folders side by side. Your host gives you the connection details; choose **SFTP** if it's offered, because it's encrypted.

Show hidden files

Your package includes files whose names start with a dot, like `.htaccess`. They protect private folders. Some File Managers hide them; turn on "show hidden files" in the settings and make sure they uploaded.

7. Set up your database and settings

Your contact form and newsletter signup save their entries to a small database. This is a one-time setup, about 15 minutes.

Create the database

1. In your control panel, open **MySQL Databases** and create a new database.

2. Write down the **database name**, **username**, and **password**. Keep them in your password manager.
3. Open **phpMyAdmin** (there's a button next to your new database), click your database on the left, and choose **Import**.
4. Upload the `schema.sql` file from your package and choose **Import** (or **Go**). It creates the empty tables your forms need, nothing else.

Fill in your settings file

Your package includes a sample settings file. Your real one is called `config.php` and holds your business details and database password.

1. Rename the sample file to `config.php` and open it in your File Manager's editor.
2. Fill in the values **between the quotation marks only**: your site name, your domain (written `https://yourname.ca`), the email address where form messages should go, the email your site sends from, and the four database details from above (the database host is almost always `localhost`).
3. **Move it one folder above** `public_html`, next to it rather than inside it. Your site already knows to look there.

Why `config.php` lives outside `public_html`

Anything inside `public_html` can be reached from a web address. Keeping your passwords one folder up means no address can ever show them, even by accident. Don't move it back in "to make it easier to find".

8. Email on your domain

An address like `hello@yourname.ca` looks professional, keeps your personal inbox private, and lets your site send its form emails reliably.

Recommended email providers

Provider	Good for	Notes
Proton Mail	Privacy	Encrypted and based in Switzerland. A custom domain needs a paid plan. Our top pick for this industry.
Your host's mailbox	Lowest cost	Included with most hosting plans (Hostinger included). Simple and works in your phone's mail app.
Zoho Mail	Budget, with a business feel	Low-cost paid plans; a limited free plan exists in some regions.

Google Workspace	If you live in Gmail	Familiar and reliable, but Google's policies on adult content are strict. Keep explicit material out of Drive and email.
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Prices and policies change often. Check each provider's website before you sign up.

Setting it up

1. Sign up and add your domain.
2. Your provider gives you a few **DNS records**. Add them in your registrar's or host's DNS settings, exactly as given.
3. Create your mailbox (hello@, bookings@, or your stage name) with a strong password and MFA.
4. Add it to your phone and computer using the provider's instructions.
5. Put the address in `config.php` (section 7) so your site's emails come from it.

Stop people faking your email address

Three DNS records prove your emails are really from you and keep them out of spam. Your provider tells you what to add:

- **SPF**: the list of services allowed to send email as your domain (your email provider, your host, your newsletter tool).
- **DKIM**: a digital signature your provider adds to every email.
- **DMARC**: tells other inboxes what to do with fakes. Start at "none" with reports on, check that all your real email passes, then move to "quarantine" and, eventually, "reject".

9. Turn on the padlock (SSL)

SSL encrypts everything between your visitors and your site, and shows the padlock in the address bar. Without it, browsers warn people away.

1. In your control panel, open **SSL** (in hPanel: Security, then SSL) and install the free certificate for your domain.
2. Turn on **Force HTTPS** if it's offered, so everyone lands on the secure version.
3. Give it up to an hour. If you see a warning straight away, wait and refresh before troubleshooting.

That's your launch setup done

Visit <https://yourname.ca>. You should see your site with the padlock. Next, make it yours (section 10), then run the launch checklist (section 16).

10. Make it yours: editing your files

Your words, colours, and photos live directly in your site's files. Editing them is safe as long as you follow one rule.

The one rule

Only change the words between the tags. Never change anything inside angle brackets `< >`, and never change anything between `<?php` and `?>`.

For example, in `<h1>Your evening, elevated</h1>`, you'd only change "Your evening, elevated".

Every edit, every time

1. **Download a copy** of the file before you change it. That's your undo button.
2. Open it in an editor (section 11). Never use Word, Pages, or Google Docs; they add hidden formatting that breaks pages.
3. Change only the words, and save.
4. Upload it and check the page on your phone and computer.
5. Something looks off? Upload your saved copy and you're back where you started.

Words

Your business name and contact email are set once in `config.php`. Everything else is in the page's own file, like `about.php` or `links.php`.

Logo and photos (no code)

1. Save your new image in the same file type as the old one.
2. Give it **exactly the same file name** as the image it replaces.
3. Upload it to the same folder, replacing the old one. Every page using it updates at once.

Resize photos to about 1,600 pixels wide before uploading so your site stays fast; free tools like Squoosh shrink files without losing quality. And remember to strip location data (section 2).

Colours (a small edit)

Your colours are set once near the top of your page styles, as a short, labelled list of colour codes (like #D9548A). Change one code, save, and check the site before changing the next. Make sure text is still easy to read on its background; free contrast checkers like WebAIM's can help.

Personalize your 18+ age gate

Your age gate lives in one file, `assets/age-gate.js`. Its wording sits in a short **SETTINGS** list at the very top, so you never touch the code below it.

Setting	What it changes	Starts as
title	The heading	Age Verification
message	The sentence under the heading	This site contains adult content. You must be 18 or older to enter.
yesButton	The “enter” button	Yes, I’m 18+
noButton	The “leave” button	No, I’m under 18
leaveTo	Where the “leave” button sends people	https://www.google.com
rememberDays	How many days a “yes” is remembered	30

1. Download a copy of `age-gate.js` (your undo button), then open it in your editor.
2. Change only the words between the quotation marks. For example, change `message: 'This site contains adult content. You must be 18 or older to enter.'` to `message: 'Grown-ups only, darling. Confirm you\'re 18+ to come in.'`
3. **Apostrophes need a backslash** in front of them, like `you\'re`, or the gate will stop working. Leave **rememberDays** as a plain number, with no quotation marks.
4. Save, upload, and test in a private browser window (the gate remembers your own “yes”).

The gate’s colours and fonts come from your look’s styles, so it always matches your site. Every page that should be gated already has what it needs; if you add a new page, copy the `<div id="gate-content">` wrapper and the `age-gate.js` line from an existing page.

An age gate is a screen, not ID verification

Visitors confirm their own age, which is the common standard for adult-oriented sites. Some places now require stronger age checks for explicit content. If yours is one of them, or your site shows explicit material, you’ll need an age verification service as well; ask us or a lawyer.

Link in Bio page

Swap the placeholder buttons for your real links: your booking page, subscription platforms, wishlist, and socials. Then put yourname.ca/links (or wherever your page lives) in your social media bios. Our free Bio-Link Audit checks it: courtesanmarketing.ca/tools/bio-link-audit

11. Free tools for viewing and editing

You never need to buy software to edit your site. We recommend these free tools.

Tool	What it's for	Good to know
Visual Studio Code (VS Code)	Our top pick for editing your files	Free from Microsoft for Mac and Windows. Colours the code so it's easy to see which parts are words and which are tags.
Live Server (free VS Code add-on)	Previewing pages on your computer before uploading	Shows your changes as you make them. Forms and other PHP parts only work once uploaded to your host.
Your host's File Manager	Quick edits right on the server	Nothing to install. Changes go live the moment you save, so download a copy first.
vscode.dev and github.dev	Editing in your browser	The VS Code editor in a web page, great on a computer that isn't yours. Press the full stop (.) key on your GitHub repository to open it (section 14).
CodePen	Trying out a change safely	Paste a section of HTML or CSS to experiment before touching your real site. It doesn't run PHP, and free "pens" are public, so never paste your real name, address, or passwords.
FileZilla	Moving files to and from your host	Drag and drop between your computer and your host. Use SFTP.

12. Your contact form

Once your database and settings are in place (section 7), your contact form emails you every message and saves a copy, so nothing gets lost.

Test it

1. Send yourself a message from your live site.
2. Check it arrives, including your spam folder. In spam? Mark it "not spam" and check SPF and DKIM (section 8).
3. Reply, to check your reply goes to the sender.

See or export your messages

Open **phpMyAdmin**, click your database, then the contact messages table. Choose **Export** and pick **CSV** to download them as a spreadsheet.

Add Cloudflare Turnstile (free spam protection)

Turnstile is a free, mostly invisible “are you human?” check from Cloudflare. Real visitors rarely notice it; bots get stopped. It also works on your newsletter signup.

1. Create a free account at **cloudflare.com** with your private business email, and turn on MFA. You don’t need to move your domain to Cloudflare.
2. In the Cloudflare dashboard, open **Turnstile** and choose **Add widget** (or Add site).
3. Give it a name, add your domain (yourname.ca), and choose the **Managed** mode.
4. Cloudflare shows you two keys: a **site key** (public) and a **secret key** (private). Save both in your password manager.
5. If your `config.php` has Turnstile lines, paste the two keys between their quotation marks and save. If it doesn’t, email us and we’ll add Turnstile to your forms.
6. Send yourself a test message to check the form still works.

The secret key stays secret

Only ever put the secret key in `config.php`, never in a page file or on GitHub. The site key is fine to be public.

Keep inquiries safe

- Inquiries can include sensitive details. Delete old messages you no longer need, from both your inbox and the database.
- Never click links in an inquiry without checking who it’s really from. “Check out my proposal” links are a classic phishing trick.
- Screen before you share anything personal. Your booking and screening rules belong in your Terms.

13. Your newsletter and subscriptions

Your followers live on platforms that can ban you overnight. Your email list is the one audience nobody can take away, as long as you keep your own copy.

What’s already working

Your newsletter signup saves every subscriber, with their consent, to your database. Export it any time from phpMyAdmin, just like your contact messages (section 12).

Choosing a newsletter tool: the honest version

Most mainstream newsletter tools ban sexually explicit content, and some have closed sex-work newsletters even when nothing explicit was sent. Your options:

Option	How it works
1. Mainstream tool, safe-for-work newsletter	Use an easy tool like MailerLite or Kit for brand news, new photos (non-explicit), schedule updates, and links back to your site. Read the tool's acceptable use policy first; Kit's, for example, only allows adult content that's educational or artistic. Expect that an account could still be closed, and export your list monthly.
2. Adult-friendly email service	Some services, such as YNOT Mail, say they welcome legal adult businesses. They're less polished but less likely to drop you. Ask for written confirmation that your business type is allowed.
3. Your own list, sent by hand	Keep collecting signups on your site and email small batches yourself, using BCC so subscribers can't see each other. Fine for a small list; switch to a tool as you grow.

Free plans got smaller in 2026

Mailchimp and MailerLite both cut their free plans this year, to around 250 contacts. Budget for a paid plan as your list grows, and check current limits before choosing.

Moving your signups into a tool

1. Export your subscribers as a CSV from phpMyAdmin.
2. In your tool, choose **Import contacts**, upload the file, and confirm they gave consent (they did, on your site).
3. Repeat monthly, and keep every export somewhere safe. That's your backup if a tool ever drops you.

Canada's anti-spam law (CASL)

Every newsletter needs your business name, a way to contact you, and an easy unsubscribe link; most tools add these to the footer automatically. Your signup form already asks for consent, so please keep that checkbox. A business mailing address is required: a PO box or virtual mailbox protects your home address.

Paid fan subscriptions

Your site doesn't take payments itself. Link your subscription platforms from your Link in Bio page, so your site stays the hub that points to everything. Note that most payment processors, including Stripe and PayPal, restrict adult services, so check their terms before connecting one anywhere.

14. Keep a copy on GitHub

GitHub is a free, private online home for your site files that remembers every version. If your host ever drops you, or an edit goes wrong, your site is safe and you can see exactly what changed.

Set it up (no command line needed)

1. Create a free account at **github.com** with your private business email, and use a username that isn't your legal name. Turn on MFA right away.
2. In **Settings** → **Emails**, tick **Keep my email addresses private**.
3. Choose **New repository**, name it something like *my-website*, and set it to **Private**.
4. Unzip your site files on your computer. On the repository page, choose **Add file** → **Upload files**, drag them in, write a note like "Site at launch", and choose **Commit changes** (GitHub's word for save).
5. Each time you change your site, upload the changed files the same way, with a note.

Keep two things off GitHub

- **config.php**, which holds your passwords. If it's ever uploaded by mistake, change every password in it.
- **Explicit images**. GitHub's rules don't allow pornographic or sexually obscene content, even in private repositories. Keep that media in a separate private backup (section 15).

Turn on Dependabot alerts

Dependabot is a free GitHub tool that watches the building blocks your site uses and emails you if one has a known security problem.

1. In your repository, open **Settings**.
2. Choose **Code security** (called **Advanced Security** on some accounts).
3. Next to **Dependabot alerts**, choose **Enable**. Turn on **Dependabot security updates** too, if offered.

Your site is built with very few outside parts, so alerts will be rare. If one arrives and you're not sure what to do, forward it to us.

15. Security and backups

In this industry, the question isn't whether a platform will make a bad call someday. It's whether a bad call can erase your work. Backups make sure it can't.

Already built in (please leave these alone)

- **config.php outside public_html**, so no web address can show your passwords.
- **Hidden .htaccess files** that block private folders. They may look empty; don't delete them.
- **Forms that check and store entries safely**, so harmful input can't damage your database.
- **Your 18+ age gate** on every page. Keep it on.

Your backup routine (monthly)

- ☐ Turn on your host's **automatic backups** (in hPanel: Files, then Backups).
- ☐ Download a full copy of your **site files and database** to your own computer or a private cloud drive. A backup that only lives on your host doesn't help if your host locks you out.
- ☐ Export your **newsletter subscribers** and **contact messages**.
- ☐ Keep your **original photos and designs** somewhere other than the site, too.
- ☐ Upload any changed files to **GitHub**.

Your habits

- ☐ MFA on every account: email, registrar, host, GitHub, newsletter tool, payment platforms, and socials.
- ☐ A password manager, with a different password everywhere, and your MFA backup codes stored in it.
- ☐ Keep your site's software updated when your host or Dependabot tells you to.
- ☐ Remove anyone who no longer needs access, like a past assistant or designer, and change shared passwords.
- ☐ Keep Cloudflare Turnstile on your forms (section 12).

16. Launch checklist

- ☐ Your site opens at <https://yourname.ca> with the padlock showing.
- ☐ Every demo photo is replaced with your own, with location data stripped.
- ☐ Every page has your real words: no placeholder text anywhere.
- ☐ Your Terms of Service and Privacy Policy are real and final.
- ☐ Your 18+ age gate appears on first visit (test in a private window), with your wording.

- ☐ A test contact message arrived, and your reply worked. Cloudflare Turnstile is on (section 12).
- ☐ A test newsletter signup appears in phpMyAdmin.
- ☐ Your Link in Bio page has your real links, and its address is in your bios.
- ☐ You've checked the site on a real phone.
- ☐ Email on your domain sends and receives, with SPF, DKIM, and DMARC set.
- ☐ Domain on auto-renew, with a calendar reminder a month ahead.
- ☐ MFA on for your registrar, host, email, and GitHub.
- ☐ Automatic backups on, and your first copy downloaded.
- ☐ Your files are on GitHub (without config.php), with Dependabot alerts on.

Now go show it off

Your site, your name, your rules. Add the link everywhere you're allowed to.

17. Getting help

Try these first

- **Site not showing after connecting your domain?** Wait up to 48 hours (section 5), and make sure your files are directly inside public_html (section 6).
- **A page looks broken after an edit?** Upload your saved copy (section 10). A missing bracket or quote mark is the usual cause.
- **Forms not working?** Check the four database values in config.php, and that config.php is one folder above public_html (section 7).
- **Emails landing in spam?** Check SPF and DKIM (section 8).
- **Padlock missing?** Give SSL up to an hour, then check Force HTTPS is on (section 9).

Hand it off

Email holla@courtesanmarketing.ca with the section number and what you're seeing; a screenshot helps. We can quote any step as a one-off, from setup to newsletter templates to extra pages.

18. Hostinger quick reference

If you host with Hostinger, here's where everything in this guide lives in hPanel. Menu names change from time to time; Hostinger's help centre has the latest.

To do this	Go here in hPanel
Buy or manage a domain	Domains
Find your nameservers	Domains → your domain → DNS / Nameservers
Upload site files	Files → File Manager → public_html → Upload, then Extract
Create a database	Databases → MySQL Databases
Open phpMyAdmin	Databases → MySQL Databases → phpMyAdmin (next to your database)
Set up email	Emails → Email Accounts → Create
Add DNS records (SPF, DKIM, DMARC)	Domains → your domain → DNS / Nameservers → DNS records
Turn on SSL	Security → SSL
Backups	Files → Backups
Edit a file	Files → File Manager → select the file → Edit

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Domain	Your web address, like yourname.ca. Rented yearly from a registrar.
Registrar	The company you buy and renew your domain from.
Hosting	The computer that stores your site and shows it to visitors.
Acceptable use policy	A company's rules about what you're allowed to put on its service. Read it before you buy.
DNS, nameservers	The internet's address book: settings that connect your domain to your host and your email.
SSL, HTTPS	Encryption that protects visitors and shows the padlock.
public_html	The one folder on your host visitors can see.
config.php	Your private settings file, with your database password. Kept outside public_html and off GitHub.

Database, MySQL	Where your contact messages and newsletter signups are stored.
phpMyAdmin	A tool your host provides to view and export your database without code.
CSV	A simple spreadsheet file that opens in Excel, Numbers, or Google Sheets.
SFTP	A secure way to move files between your computer and your host.
GitHub, repository	A free online home for your files with full version history. A repository is one project's folder.
Dependabot	GitHub's free tool that alerts you to security problems in your site's building blocks.
MFA	Multi-factor authentication: a code from your phone as well as your password.
Cloudflare Turnstile	A free, mostly invisible check that stops bots from using your forms.
Age gate	The screen that asks visitors to confirm they're 18 or older before entering.
Metadata	Hidden information in a file, such as where and when a photo was taken.
SPF, DKIM, DMARC	DNS records that prove your emails are really from you.
CASL	Canada's anti-spam law for marketing email.
PIPEDA	Canada's privacy law for personal information you collect, such as form messages.

Guide current as of October 2026. Company policies, prices, and features change; always read the current terms before you buy. This guide is general information, not legal advice.