



**Website Creation Workshop  
With Christina Hills**

**“What Are Learning Management System Plug-ins and  
How Would You Use Them”**

Christina: Hello and welcome this is Christina Hills from the Website Creation Workshop and welcome to our special call on learning management systems with Chris Badgett.

Let me tell you a little bit about Chris. He is the co-founder of Lifter LMS, it is an all in one software for creating, selling, protecting and engaging online courses. Before launching Lifter LMS Chris’s company built online courses and membership for clients around the world.

He’s the host of the LMS podcast for online course creators, teachers and entrepreneurs. When not working with learning technology Chris is a devoted family man and enjoys travel and exploring wild places with his family.

Awesome!! Welcome Chris.

Chris: Thanks for having me on the show Christina I really appreciate it.

Christina: You’re welcome and I just want to say, just explain learning management systems. It’s a fancy word for building online classrooms and that’s something I’ve been doing for years. But Chris and his company has this plug-in called Lifter LMS so Chris will teach us about Lifter LMS his plug-in and mention maybe some other plug-ins and basically talk about the world of learning management



systems.

Do I have that right Chris?

Chris: That sounds good.

Christina: All right so I think I'll let you take it away and I'll switch control over to you.

Chris: Is that coming up for you?

Christina: Yes I can see your screen.

Chris: Perfect. One of the ways I like to start out is to get into the terms a little bit. One of the areas people when they're first trying to figure out this world of teaching online, one of the first forks in the road you come to is whether or not you're going to be building a membership site and in that case you're going to need a membership plug-in or a learning management system.

I can kind of demystify the difference there. Is that an okay place to start?

Christina: Yeah! Yes I never thought of them as separate and so thanks.

Chris: Yeah and it was really later even after I started creating Lifter LMS with my team that I really realized the nuances between...there's actually 3 levels there's a membership site, an online course and then there is a learning management system and Lifter actually kind of does all of them.

Let me explain what they are as a separate solution because if you were to go looking for a membership plug=in for your WordPress site you'd come up with



very different results than if you were looking for an LMS plug-in. Essentially a membership site plug-in's primary job is to just lock down and protect content so that only the people who are supposed to see it can see it.

An example of that would be...you can have like a certain member's only page on your website that had certain downloads that only paying members or even free members could have access to. Or even let's say certain blog posts were for members only.

So that's like a simple example of a membership site and something that a membership site plug-in would do. An online course...

Christina: Like Wish List Members which is what I use and basically all that does is it locks the site down.

Chris: Correct and so a Wish List Member, A Member and there's a bunch of them out there. And you can sort of create an online course with a membership site plug-in. You can lock down certain pages that are lessons but over time as you get into teaching and get into the online course world you're going to want more advanced things than just preventing and locking down content. You're going to want an intuitive syllabus kind of course structure for students to follow and also for the website creator craft and architect their course with. So more than just publishing pages and trying to figure out how to make them into lessons and that kind of thing.

Then you're going to want a lot more advanced stuff for the users. They're going to want a student dashboard where they can access their courses and pick up right where they left off if they happen to be at 20% through the course. Perhaps as they move through the material they're earning things like badges or



achievements as they're called and a gamification and perhaps if they complete the course they earn a certificate.

So there are all these kinds of things including quizzes and prerequisites and things like that. Now we're really far way from a membership site and now we're in the world of the online course and learning management system.

Christina: Let me clarify we're a gamification which I really love that word and it's something I do in my trainings. In my Website Creation Workshop I've gamified it and people get badges. They go through each module and complete a module and as they complete a module they get a badge and that makes it more fun. It makes the learning fun.

Chris: Yes it's a motivator.

Christina: Yeah!

Chris: So on the screen I'm pulling up the feature set of Lifter and there are really 4 key areas that make it do what it does. You can see we also have the membership capability that you'd expect from a membership plug-in which simply means lessons are protected by the course and that can be a free or paid course but no matter people can't get into the lessons unless they have the correct permissions and that sort of thing.

We also have advanced membership style functionality where you can protect content outside of the LMS like certain blog posts or other pages on the website. Or bundle groups of course for sale as a package deal through what we'd call a membership and so we kind of have the membership covered.



We were just talking about gamification and engagement and so in Lifter that's done in 3 ways where you can earn achievement badges for completing lessons or a course or passing a quiz, etc.

You can also do the certificates which is a quickly emerging trend in the world is certifications that are not just formally created but, for example, more uncertainty in the job market or things of that nature. People, if they find something that works, we're going to see more and more certification for careers that are popping up and evolving very fast where perhaps the traditional school system can't keep up with. There's a big opportunity for people to create trainings and certifications that help other people get jobs, etc.

Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> engagement piece is you may have heard of concepts around things like email marketing or emails that go out later or drip out after a certain event happens. So with Lifter LMS if you've ever heard of a follow up sequence, in the email world we've actually brought all that functionality right inside the WordPress website where you can send personalized emails based off behavior in the LMS.

So a simple example of that would be if someone completes a lesson you can have an email go out say one day later that encourages them to come back and there is a link to their student dashboard where they can pick up where they left off. So that's another way to encourage engagement.

Christina: And that's all inside of WordPress?

Chris: It is.

Christina: So it's not integrating with aWeber or I-Contact or Mail Chimp?



Chris: We do have integrations with those services but I actually have an episode on my podcast about all the different types of email that you can use when you have a learning management system.

For example, what I'm talking about is kind of an LMS behavioral email whereas if someone purchases a course that's a transactional email like just the receipt that comes in the mail. It's a completely different function. Then there's things like marketing emails. So you may also connect your course to something like Mail Chimp and let's say you roll out a new course and want to email your list about the new course that's available and that sort of thing that would be more email marketing you'd want to do with something like Mail Chimp.

Christina: I get it. This is more as they're working through the training triggering actions Lifter LMS is then sending them these little emails based on their behavior they've done in the course I've developed.

Chris: Correct.

Christina: That's very cool because we're doing that manually.

Chris: Yeah exactly and that's one of the problems we wanted to solve with Lifter LMS. There really is no such thing as an all in one solution, but like to integrate as many things as possible. For example, we have the LMS, we have the membership, the engagement and we also have the e-commerce so the ability to sell the course if you're not doing free courses or bundles of courses through memberships we also have our own built in e-commerce system designed specifically for selling courses.



Christina: Cool.

Chris: So we created kind of an all in one solution. In the marketplace, especially 3 years ago when we first kind of came into this sphere people were doing and I call it kind of like a Frankenstein thing. You had to string together this thing over here to sell the course and had to do this thing to make the course work. You had to get this membership plug-in to lock down the content.

So that is part of our goal and what makes us unique in this space is just that level of integration.

Christina: Very cool.

Chris: I think yeah maybe I can go into some more demonstration on what it looks like and how it works. Does that sound good?

Christina: Yeah! I think a great place to start would be sort of the outside like what the student would see and then maybe go inside so people have an orientation of what we're seeing.

Chris: Absolutely! I have a couple of demo sites up here and this is the main Lifter LMS demo. What a student would see before they're a student, so a prospective student they'd come to a WordPress site which has content on it but now there's this new stuff these courses.

Let me open this up in an Incognito window because I'm not logged in. When you're working with LMS's and membership sites you always want to be looking at both experiences like you were directing a conversation. What is the student experience? So this person is not logged in and if I were to go to this course which



happens to be free I can get into the lessons, I've set a few lessons to be free here just as a free sample but all these others are locked down and I can't get into them and so I'd need to enroll.

So I come to a screen to enroll and then create my user and then I'm in the system. Once I'm in the system this is what my student dashboard looks like. So this particular student is enrolled in 3 different courses...

Christina: Interesting, let me pause you for a second to highlight what you're doing. In a way it's sort of like a university in a way and there's different courses a person could have. The way I run mine is I have completely different websites for each different course. But I see the benefit of this is you can have all your course in one place and people can add on new courses.

This is what we're seeing and I'm just explaining to everybody. Did I get this right Chris?

Chris: Absolutely. I like to say there's kind of 3 levels. You could have a website for this sole function is just one course. You could have a website that has multiple courses and then the next level up is you can have a website that has multiple courses and multiple teachers.

If you go to a site like WordPress 101 which is actually WP 101 I believe, this is a site powered by Lifter LMS and they have multiple teachers teaching different topics. Those are kind of like the 3 levels and it just depends on your needs.

But this is one of the big differences from a membership site is we're keeping track of all these things. I can jump right in and take right up where I left off on this course. I'm at 8%. If I earned a certificate I can see the certificate I got and I





can even print it and put it on my wall or give it to my employer or whatever I need to do. I can see which memberships I'm enrolled in.

Generally the course experience for the student is pretty intuitive. They are pretty much coming here to consume content. And what you can put in a lesson can be anything. The most common these days is sort of a combination between video, some text, maybe some images and you might have some downloadable things and so it's about learning content.

Really I like to say sometimes people do it a little backwards like they start looking for the technology before they have the content or community. But really before you wrap it all in technology it's important to build some kind of curriculum or training method and package that and then get that ready to install in the LMS. That seems to be an order to do things that seems to work well for people.

Christina: Could we look; can you go back to that other screen? Or maybe you're going to go do that...I was going to say yeah can we go into like one of the lessons?

Chris: This is just a simple sample video lesson and so I just have a video here. What a lot of people do is they embed video from a professional video host like Vimeo Pro or Wistia and in those video hosting platforms you can set the permission so the video will only be playable on your website and it's another protection layer.

But video hosting is kind of complex and complicated and it's a good thing to let the companies who have tons of employees and lots of funding and all that handle the bandwidth for the video and everything. You don't necessarily want to try to do that on your hosting account or website.



Christina: Right and that's the same thing that I recommend that you put your videos somewhere else.

Chris: Absolutely. If I were to edit this lesson you can see where I have a video in the WordPress Editor here but I could put all kinds of other stuff in here – text, images, links whatever you can think of...

Christina: Right it's just like a normal WordPress page.

Chris: Exactly. At the lesson level there are some more advanced things you can do. We have some video and audio options that just make it easy to stick the video or audio file at the top of the page. You can make a lesson free which is like a marketing thing where you want people to actually get in and see it to take a free sample that's something I recommend to make 1 or 2 of your lessons free to give people a free sample before they invest in either giving you their email address or purchasing your course.

Another thing about LMS is just prerequisites so you cannot let people go to Lesson 2 unless they completed Lesson 1. You can also do drip content which is where you may want to protect the learner's focus and not let them have access to all the lessons immediately after they enroll. You can set various lessons to drip out on a specific date or after a certain number of days instead of the day they started. That's really common in like a process driven or transformational style course where everything is step by step.

So let's say a module might actually be Week 1 and so you don't want the Week 2 content getting in the way of getting Week 1 done and that sort of thing. That is what drip content is.



Then quizzes, quizzes are basically right now with Lifter LMS we just have multiple choice but we're working to bring in new question types. But that allows you to reinforce the learning and have questions that you set up to add to your course. You can do that along the way or you can add...let's say you were doing some kind of certification program, you could put in a quiz at the end with a certain passing percentage of 80% to get the certificate that sort of thing. So they wouldn't be able to actually get the certificate unless they passed the quiz.

The quiz we have where you can put a time limit on it, you can limit the number of attempts, you can weigh certain questions to be more important than others and that sort of thing.

Christina: So this is cool you can have a quiz for your students going through and they can't get the next lesson until they pass the quiz. But it sounds like maybe a group is going through that will be certified, like some people want a certification but maybe other students don't.

Chris: That's a good one. What I'd probably do in that case is I'd probably make 2 courses...

Christina: Oh I see okay.

Chris: Where one was...

Christina: I get it.

Chris: Then the second one would have the...actually what I'm seeing a lot now that's pretty common is the course is free but you have to pay for the certification. So there are really tons of business models around that.



Christina: Right there's lots of different ways you can do it.

Chris: Absolutely. I have a blog post that goes over the various pricing models we can do for online courses and this is like 10 of them. If you go to the Lifter LMS blog you can find all the different ways you can...

Christina: Right.

Chris: And figure out how to do that piece.

Christina: This is great. What I love going back in here and looking at the lesson I love...and if we can see the outside go back to the outside to continue to get through the orientation. What I love is that I love that progress bar so they know how far through...so I'm assuming that's the progress for the whole course?

Chris: That's correct.

Christina: So the course is comprised of different lessons. In this instance, we're on Lesson 2 and we're 22% through the whole course. We can see we've done Lesson 1 and Lesson 3.

Chris: Yeah and even if I wanted to be sneaky and come in here later as a teacher and add another lesson that I wanted my students to take my progress would drop back from 100 to 90% or whatever and so it adapts.

Christina: So that mark complete that's what the student would do. Basically they watched that lesson and they're clicking and marking that they've completed it.



Chris: Correct, so now you can see that I can still go back and look at it but I've completed this one and now I'm onto the next one.

Christina: Very cool. What if...can I ask you a question now or do you want me to wait and you keep going?

Chris: Go ahead.

Christina: What if your courses involved a live component? What if your courses involved a live teleseminar or webinar could that be put in here or would it be more once the teleseminar or webinar is done then you put the recording in here?

Chris: You can do both. There's not really a great way to embed a teleseminar or webinar tool, but inside the lesson content you can have the Go to Meeting details and...

Christina: And the link yeah, yeah the link and the details.

Chris: Yeah and running courses live that's one way you look at the concept of blended learning is some of the best training programs is a combination of live and passive training. I definitely recommend doing that whenever you can.

Also there's kind of like 2 views of the course, the main course page...I'm zoomed out a level up at the Course level and I could put my webinar schedule here in the description here. You have like 2 versions of this page, one version the non-enrolled student sees and so that would be like a sales page. Then you can have a completely different page that shows up as the course page if I'm enrolled and inside the course and so you can put it in a couple of different places.



Christina: This is cool and I see how you have your Introduction 1, 2 and 3 step by step system, Lesson 4, 5 and 6 after this program Lesson 7, 8 and 9 and us as the course creators can chunk things together the way we want. I would think of those as there is actually 3 modules, Module 1 is Introduction, Module 2 is Step by Step and then within a module there is the different lessons.

Chris: Absolutely and it really helps break it up and also help not only visually but conceptually create those various building blocks.

Christina: Right this is cool keep going.

Chris: One of the things I was going to show you was the back end. So if I'm the course teacher or the website owner I might want to see how my students are doing. If I look at this one it's at 55% and this again is more like a learning management system feature where membership sites don't necessarily do this.

I'm seeing this user, I can see their face, I can see when they came in and where they're at, I can see what their grade is and which courses they're enrolled in. I can see their progress. I can even drill into the individual course and see how they're doing.

This particular one doesn't have a quiz on it but if there was a quiz I could open it up and even see exactly what the student answered on all their quiz questions and if they're were in any memberships or earned any achievements or certificates...like you can see an achievement badge right here.

Christina: For that student?

Chris: Yeah for this student and when they earned it. So you have a lot of intelligence



into how you're people are doing which is very powerful because if I zoom back out to the course level there is usually going to be...if I were to sort this by progress I can see who my slackers were and who my over achievers are. So not everybody needs the same level of support and help.

**Christina:** So what Lifter LMS is doing and to clarify or state the obvious again this is a plug-in you add into WordPress. But what I'm liking about this is you thought through what would the teacher want to see? So Lifter LMS is showing me this different kind of reporting like which student is doing well and what are they up to. Then how are all my students doing over all?

**Chris:** Absolutely and let's look at the engagement system a little bit. If I were to look at this email this is where you can write a personalized email. So you create the email and later you set up what triggers this but I can also CC and BCC somebody. So I can set up an email that goes out and BCC's or CC's the tutor if a student fails the quiz and that's like a more advanced email engagement.

So it gets really personalized and when you set up an engagement you select the trigger points and so this is going to happen when somebody is brand new on the website and enrolls in a specific course, purchases a course or finishes a course or completes a lesson, completes a section or module, passes a quiz, fails a quiz, joins one of the membership programs then you can deliver either an email badge or certificate.

Really that opens up a whole world of learning experience you can craft with different strategies in place to encourage people to complete the course and also so you know or can help the people that are struggling.

**Christina:** This is cool because for a certain engagement you might want to blind CC email



to come to yourself maybe when they've completed the course or gotten to a certain level.

Chris: Absolutely and you're starting to touch on one of my favorite issues which is that membership sites are often about getting the sale and locking down content and putting up a pay wall. There's nothing wrong with making money from a website. But the dirty little secret of membership sites that I like to say is and I think a famous course marketplace like (Name – 31:14) publish their statistic that only 10% of people actually complete the courses they give on their platform.

So a lot of these features are designed around helping students and giving the teachers tools to give people to get through the program and training and get the results that they seek. I like to look at it this way that the launch of the website or online course is really just a beginning.

Christina: Right.

Chris: Now you have this amazing feedback loop and you can keep making it better and better always trying to work up to getting awesome completion rates and great results for your students.

Christina: And what you're doing is you're really highlighting the mind of the teacher, the mind of the teacher wants to watch their students and see their students go through and complete and be successful vs. the mind of the marketer and the mind of the marketer is let's sell this thing.

What you've done with Lifter LMS what you're doing which is hat's off to you this is amazing, you've got the mind of the teacher on what can I do to get engagement? How can I help people through? As you're talking I'm thinking





about courses I've taken.

So I'm a teacher and it's what I love to do but I also take courses. I've been in people's courses where I feel like I'm left deserted high and dry by that other course. There is nothing that the other course is doing to pull me in to get me engaged. And I've seen it with my students, sometimes people just need something tiny like that progress bar or the badge...

Chris: Or a little email.

Christina: Or a little email of okay you did this step and here's your next step. This is cool.

Chris: Right I mean that's really what it's all about. There are some more advanced features like if you're going to sell into a company and sell like 50, 100 or 1000 seats to a course we have this way and you get paid and can deliver these activation codes to a company so they can a bunch of people can activate their courses and stuff like that.

What else do we have? We have a coupon system; we have a full e-commerce engine...

Christina: Do you want me to start sprinkling questions in that are coming in or do you want to....

Chris: Sure go for it.

Christina: I think that all makes sense. I know a couple of questions I have. Let's say you already have the e-commerce part solved and you don't want to use that with Lifter LMS can you not use that section of it?



Chris: Yeah that's where the vouchers would come in. I would go to Orders Vouchers here and there are a couple of ways to do it. So vouchers are designed for let's say you're selling in a store like offline in person or someone sends you a check in the mail and you want to send them a voucher. I mean you can send them a 100% off coupon but a voucher is a cleaner experience.

In this case, let's say you sold and I'll just do the bigger example like we sold to a company but you can also do it for just one person for one course if you wanted to. This company bought 20 seats and wanted their business to take the course and the health and fitness course. We wanted to give them 20 unique activation codes and there they are and let's say I wanted to go a step further and edit them and name them after the codes as the name of people or something more memorable I can do that.

So if you're selling through a different system you can then basically after successful checkout or you get the money you can then deliver these voucher codes and download them right from here and email them directly to yourself or someone else.

So that's one way if you're selling through a different system.

Christina: Cool. That makes sense and I like that you have the term voucher vs. coupon because in the real world they mean 2 different things and I like the fact you came up with that.

So to clarify about the audio and video because a question is coming in about that...the person would host the audio and video elsewhere and then embed it in to Lifter LMS?



Chris: That's correct. I mean you can self host video just like with...

Christina: So it's not really a Lifter question it's kind of a general how do you do WordPress question and your philosophy is the same as mine is that media that's large like video and audio should be hosted elsewhere even though you can't technically do it in there.

Chris: Yeah but images and texts and download PDFs and things like that all day long can be on your site.

Christina: Can you show how...let's go back out and can you demonstrate how to take an existing online course and add the LMS plug-in and integrate the 2 or maybe you can talk about that. Let me set the stage or I think I'm going to back my question up.

Correct me if I'm wrong, Lifter is looking like in a way it's designing this page. Is the design of this page we're looking at is that being controlled by the Lifter LMS plug-in or is the design of the page have to do with theme? We see on the right side we have a progress bar and then lessons and a picture. Is that the theme or Lifter?

Doug: It's both and this is a great question because this is a philosophical question in website creation and the tools you select. When we originally set out to build Lifter LMS we very intentionally made it a plug-in. there are LMS themes out there that have some functionality but in the WordPress world, in my opinion, and I think a lot of people would agree with me is that functionality belongs in a plug-in and design belongs in a theme.



There are some visual components with Lifter but the design is very plain and can work with any WordPress theme. That's the beauty of it if you spend all this time creating this perfect platform or course and then you want to change your design theme 2 years later no problem, just switch out your theme so the functionality isn't married to the design.

In this example, I'm actually using the...we make a theme called Launch Pad and so I'm using the Launch Pad theme but people use all kinds of themes. They use Divi, Generate Press, Free Themes you can use anything.

Christina: I use Divi.

Doug: Yeah we have a very large Divi community base in our Facebook community. There is a woman named Michelle Noonan who just built a Divi child theme for Lifter LMS and it works perfect and designed specifically for Lifter.

But to your question about the sidebars Lifter just comes with 2 widgets and so if you're a WordPress person you get this course sidebar area and a lesson sidebar area and with Lifter you get this course progress widget which creates the progress bar and then you get the syllabus widget which shows on the side of the screen that outline of the lessons.

Christina: Got it.

Chris: And you can add it...

Christina: To wherever you have a widget and so right now you put it on this sort of sidebar that's controlled by your theme but if you're using a different theme that had maybe a header widget or something or you could have your course progress up



in there.

Doug: There are more designed to stay with the course and lesson pages. This primary sidebar is like the normal blog sidebar.

Christina: I see.

Doug: So the website will know is it on a learning page or is it just on a regular page with a sidebar?

Christina: I hope I'm not getting too advanced for people but I know with Divi it lets you have sidebars in different places. This is cool you can have your course progress anywhere you want.

What area are we looking at now?

Doug: This is the Launch Pad theme we make. We bring in all kinds of design options and you can pick from over 600 fonts and go crazy with the design through all these theme options without having to write code. This is where a lot of the "design" happens like the colors you see and what fonts are being used and things like that.

Christina: Okay and does this theme come with Lifter when you...I think there is a free version and I hope I'm not getting too far ahead of myself but I know you have a free version of Lifter and a paid one. How would one get this theme that goes with it?

Doug: Lifter itself you can download it for free here or get it from...this is on the Lifter LMS website, [www.LifterLMS.com](http://www.LifterLMS.com). Or you can grab it from where you get free



plug-ins from WordPress. Then in our store we had these add ons here and this is the Launch Pad them we were just looking at.

Christina: Okay that is something you buy.

Chris: It's an app and yeah it's something you buy. I do want to note that we take really good care of our community and love having a free product. It's like the center and starting point and so even if you don't use our theme we have this thing called Lifter LMS Labs and it's a free plug-in where you can do some branding without having to write code.

Christina: How interesting.

Chris: And you can make it match your theme.

Christina: Got it okay.

Chris: There's lots of options.

Christina: Let me read through some of these other questions that have come in. Does Lifter LMS have step by step tutorials? Do you have video tutorials or written ones?

Doug: Yeah the demo right here and this course, How To Build A Learning Management System with Lifter LMS this goes over all the features and how everything works. So it's kind of...we have a course about how to build a course with Lifter. Also at the bottom of the Lifter LMS website there is this knowledge base and FAQ's. So we have all kinds of frequently asked questions and tutorials and things of that nature.



Christina: Okay great. I love software that's well documented. I think you answered this already but I'll ask it. Can you also edit existing courses you've designed in order to update it with new information? I think you've answered that if someone is...

Doug: Absolutley.

Christina: You can edit and update it.

Doug: Yeah, for example, in our course our software has been around for 3 years and recently we redid all the videos to match the current version of the software. I quickly edited all the lessons to have the new videos.

Christina: Okay cool.

Doug: So you can change it as you go.

Christina: Great! Here's a backing up to a big picture question. Lynette asks I understand that an LMS has to be a hosted platform is that correct? If so, is that something Lifter does?

I think I can answer this Chris. Lifter is a plug-in and you're already hosting your website so it doesn't require additional hosting you just install it like you would install any other plug-in. Is that correct?

Doug: That's true and to clarify there are hosted LMS solutions out there and many of them are very expensive and have monthly fees or metered pricing where you pay based on the number of students. That is what I call a hosted solution.

But where Lifter LMS lives it lives in the world of you own your own website, you



own your own platform and you're in control and so it's a self hosted solution that you bought a domain name and some hosting from Go Daddy, WP Engine, Blue Host or whatever and then you installed WordPress and added the Lifter LMS plug-in and so you own it.

Christina: Right it's like I own Wish List and I'm not paying any extra I just install Wish List. But Lifter LMS sound like it will do what Wish List does which means it'll do that locking part as well so I wouldn't need Wish List. Is that correct?

Doug: Yeah there is no membership plug-in required. We've got it covered.

Christina: But if we or I wanted to integrate Lifter LMS into my existing Frankenstein system as I get used to the new system could I have Lifter and Wish List if I wanted to?

Chris: Possibly but like most things when you bring 2 tools together that are kind of doing similar things it's ripe for some conflict. The way I recommend it and a lot of people aren't starting from zero it's like a new version of what they've been working on for years. I recommend doing it either on a staging environment and so some web hosting companies allow you this place where you can try new things.

Christina: Right like a practice site yeah.

Chris: Exactly or even if it's not the domain name you're going to use put up a new blank website and start over. But if you want to add it to your existing website you're probably going to need to pull out the membership plug-in and install Lifter and start moving content inside of Lifter LMS lessons.





And while you're doing all that it might get a bit messy and so there are different ways to do it is kind of the overview.

Christina: Okay. Let me keep going with questions cause each question triggers a new idea. In terms of the emails that Lifter LMS sends out, does Lifter have the ability to do an email blast to all the participants or only one at a time? Is it more something you sort of design ahead of time meaning when they finish this quiz it automatically generates an email? Is it more like that or could you on a Monday morning say I want to email everyone in this particular course?

Doug: That would be more of what I would consider an email marketing function. That is why you can connect in Mail Chimp and we have a Mail Chimp add on and you can even group people, by which course they're enrolled in, in your Mail Chimp. That is where I'd do that kind of thing.

There's also another company who makes this product called WP Fusion which allows you to connect with your LMS to active campaign in Fusion Soft or Drip if you happen to be using one of those for email marketing.

Christina: Got it. I like this and what you're saying in your answers is the philosophy of let's design a system, let's design...I think of it like a conveyor belt right and people are traveling down the conveyor belt and as certain things happen things are triggered or new lessons are opened up but that is sort of they're going down this conveyor belt path of the course. Then that makes sense to have when an action happens a little email goes out and that makes sense to me to keep that separate from hey it's Monday and now I'm going to blast everybody because I'm going to be in Dallas and that's more of email marketing.

Doug: Right.



Christina: Yeah so that's a great answer.

Chris: I like your conveyor belt analogy that's really good. I like to call it like creating a learning experience and that's kind of the conveyor belt. And before getting into the tools it's really good, in my experience anyway, at least in how my brain works I like to map out that conveyor belt or learning experience on paper before I start getting into the tools. If you do a big mind map or really sketch out the learning then you come to the tools and make it happen.

Christina: Yeah and actually better than conveyor belt would be like a ride at Disneyland.

Chris: There you go!

Christina: Somebody gets on the ride at Disneyland and what happens? They get strapped in and now they're moving into this space and this space and then some Disney character pops up and they go up and down. Yeah that's the idea behind the email.

This is quite sophisticated what you've designed. This is practically like an Infusion level type of sophistication.

Chris: I appreciate that. We're trying to integrate some of the best thinking around things like email marketing, e-commerce, user management, user experience design but make the tool simple, understandable and powerful enough that it can do some pretty amazing things.

Christina: For those of you who don't know what Infusion Soft is it's a very expensive email marketing, shopping cart affiliate system that costs I think at least \$300 a month.



Chris: With a \$2,000 set up fee.

Christina: With a \$2,000 set up fee. But what you've done is you've kind of put that sort of brain power of let's send people through this Disneyland ride or conveyor belt and have things happen to them which then takes the work off me the course creator. Right now when someone submits a badge I have a VA manually doing these things that your plug-in has solved.

All right I'm going to go through these questions. Since we're talking about pricing can we address that now so people have a sense of the pricing for Lifter LMS and what do you get with the free versus the paid version of your program.

Doug: I think it takes a moment to wrap your head around the pricing because there is like 3 layers but the course software is free. It was important for us to make a tool where people could launch courses and sell courses without spending \$1 with us both to server other markets in the world and we really are on a mission to democratize education in the digital classroom and that's what I like to say.

You can do a lot for free. Basically where things start costing money is for our add ons. We talked a little bit about adding Mail Chimp or maybe using the Launch Pad theme...the free version of Lifter LMS to sell the courses has what is called a Manual Payment Gateway, so people can check out and get through the check out but then it hangs up in this processing state and it's a good user experience.

You can then say okay thanks I'll send you an invoice shortly and you always send them a Fresh Books or PayPal invoice or you can get a check in the mail. Then with One Click once you get paid you activate them and now they're able to get into the course. That is what comes in the free version.



In the paid version or the paid add ons you want Stripe which allows you to take credit cards and PayPal which allows people to use PayPal and you can offer both and people can choose which one they want. Those are some popular add ons.

Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> level we have is just to get all our add ons and there are 8 of them I believe for \$299. Then if we add new add ons to the bundle you'll get that as well. So that's all the add ons we make in what we call the Universe Bundle.

Christina: Wait go back up to that screen and I'm a little confused about the difference between an add on and a universe.

Doug: The Universe simply means all the add ons.

Christina: All the add ons? Okay.

Doug: That's like a bundle. Yeah the 2 columns...basically there is that and we also have for like an individual add on if you want to be able to use it on 5 websites you'd need the Developer license which costs \$299 for it and if you wanted the Universe bundle to use on 5 sites that's \$499 and so there is kind of another layer there.

Christina: Okay so when you say sites do you mean WordPress installs or do you mean domain names?

Doug: WordPress installs.

Christina: Okay. These are annual fees?

Doug: Yes. In our world the annual subscription it's for access to updates and support.



We're constantly improving and adding features to Lifter and our add ons and why there is this annual license model.

Christina: And that's reasonable.

Chris: If you decide not to renew it's not going to stop working.

Christina: Right.

Chris: You'll just lose access to the next version.

Christina: It's the basic WordPress pricing is you pay for a year and get a year of support and after the year you can stay with your version of the plug-in or sign on again and get updates and get more support. And I'm assuming that support is like email or forum support right? It's not phone support.

Doug: Correct we don't have phone support but even the free plug-in we do have some forum support on the WordPress but and let me show you that.

Christina: Let's back up because I like to do things in phases. Phase 1 I could get the plug-in and be designing my course, so like I'm not even ready to sell it yet. I'm not even ready for students yet. I could get the free version and be creating my course and my conveyor belt or Disneyland ride.

Then I would get the add ons when I wanted to add on these selling from it and integrating more advanced stuff. I'm assuming if I want to integrate Gravity forms that's an add on.

Doug: Correct.



Christina: So is each add on \$99?

Doug: That's correct and there are a few in the store that aren't made by us and have some different pricing.

Christina: Oh I see...

Chris: Like WP Fusion I think is actually more.

Christina: Okay so that's what the Universal bundle is if I just want all your add ons...if I'm going to buy 3 or more add ons I might as well buy the Universal bundle.

Chris: That's correct.

Christina: Okay that makes sense. But I love this because it's a very much grow with you meaning all right I'm going to design this course and install WordPress, install Lifter LMS, design my conveyor belt and okay now I'm ready I want to sell from it.

If you think of the pricing \$99 for the year is so much cheaper than what you pay with a typical shopping cart system like Infusion Soft. All right I think...

Chris: Absolutely and I think it's...

Christina: Go ahead and let me read through... I think I just answered Lynette's question and so if she installs Lifter today can she start building her courses? I think the answer is yes...

Chris: 100%.



Christina: Yeah you can start building it and then...so the add ons would be is the membership lock down an add on or part of the basic core?

Chris: Our philosophy is we're not trying to make features like core features as add ons. The things you pay for are more like integrations and so if you want to talk to Mail Chimp or you want to bring in this credit card processor those are add ons. But a core functionality like membership or all the learning management system features they're not going to, we're not going to nickel and dime you with add ons for core features.

Christina: That's awesome! Let me see another question. Where do you have a list of who you integrate with like aWeber, Constant Contact and different people use different systems?

Chris: Probably just going to the add ons and looking through. The add ons we built for email marketing are Mail Chimp and Convert Kit and WP Fusion has these other 4 and so we don't have everybody covered. But even before WP Fusion existed I actually used something called Active Campaign and I'd send the stuff to our Mail Chimp plug-in and then I'd use Zapier to send it to my active campaigns and so there is always a way but we don't have every single one covered.

Christina: Okay and that's reasonable you can't expect a company to cover every single integration but it looks like you've got the main ones in there.

Shana is asking...

Chris: I was going to add also that there are other WordPress plug-ins that can sync users on your website to email marketing. There are different ways and that's one



of the beauties of WordPress like I see a lot of people add all kinds of interesting plug-ins to go with their courses like some kind of event calendar or some recipe plug-in cause it's like a cooking course and all kinds of interesting things.

Christina: Yeah and the way I'm doing it it's I wouldn't even call it an integration, its part of the buying process. After they buy they get to a page that says okay now enter your name and email. So it's not fully integrated but the person after they've taken action gets to another page and it asks them to opt in and so there is always that, you can always have someone do that.

Let me keep reading these questions. Shana says I'm starting with a fresh website and I'd like to build an email list as people visit and later have a membership site. Would I add in Lifter LMS now or later?

I think I can answer that Chris and let me know if I have this right or wrong. Shana if you're building a site and you want to build an email list that's part of your promotional email marketing. Lifter is the membership site part. So now that I'm answering this question I'm going to turn to you...can you have Lifter integrated with your free public site but part of it is a course and part is your blog and your main public site. Could it be all one thing or would you recommend Lifter as a separate domain name separate site?

Chris: That's a great question. In most cases I recommend adding it to the main site. You can if you want to create a sub domain like YourSchool.website.com or even put YourWebsiteAcademy.com as a separate website and then link the 2 sites together.

But in most cases it makes sense to have a one stop shop and the blog is freely accessible, the Home page is there and you may have other things you offer other





things on the website and the courses are just an aspect of what you do. The way I like to...if people are interested in taking a journey into building out an online course site but starting from zero I recommend this as like a template.

The first thing to do is publish at least 5 blog posts around your topic and then in the sidebar have an opt in to your newsletter or your emails list. From there you can build a free course which will further help build your email list and so it's like a deeper dive than the blog posts. Then you'd do a paid course and perhaps in the future you add even more courses which you'd sell individually but are also available as a bundle through your membership.

So that's how you can start and slowly work up to a full on training site.

Christina: Right a strategy. Now I know we were going to talk about comparing this to some other systems. Can we talk about how Lifter is different from some other systems out there? You and I talked about that ahead of time.

Chris: Absolutely. Like we mentioned, you're in the self hosted world when you have your own site, which then makes the LMS market a lot smaller. Then you're in the WordPress world which makes it even smaller. So within the WordPress eco-solutions I think there are about 5 or 6 solutions and I'll name them off.

There is something called Learn Dash, WP Courseware, Sensei, there is another called Learn Press and there are 1 or 2 more. I'd say one of the things that makes us the most unique has to do with our focus on engagement and building features around the concept of engagement and the Disneyland ride we talked about and also being an all in one solution.

I'd say the question I get most is...how do you compare to Learn Dash? Learn



Dash was around a little before us and they have a little more advanced features around the multi-teacher platform than we do; whereas, we're more an integrated solution where you don't need additional plug-ins made by different companies to make it all happen.

That would be if I was going to compare the Top 4 it would be Lifter LMS, Learn Dash, Sensei and WP Courseware. We're also free to get started. There's another called Learn Press that's free but it is one of our other differentiators is the free stuff.

Christina: In terms of the shopping cart integration are all the orders stored inside the back end?

Chris: They are. The credit card processing if you're using our Stripe add on is PCI compliant and you're not taking any unnecessary risk and that's what Stripe does for you. They take 3% of the transaction for providing that service. But all the order data or have to process a refund or...we have all kinds of e-commerce analytics built right in.

What we also do is from the beginning we wanted to integrate with the popular WordPress shopping cart system called Woo Commerce which is separate and not made by us, but some people really like Woo Commerce. For example, Lifter is used in something like 180 different countries and certain countries have payment gateways people prefer to use that we don't have but Woo Commerce might.

So we have an integration with Woo Commerce so if a course is a Woo Commerce product you can check out through the Woo Commerce eco-system or use some kind of Woo Commerce advanced tax rules plug-in or something. But in terms of



the Lifter e-commerce system the order data is all here.

Christina: Let's come back to courses and we could spend a whole conversation on the e-commerce part and I think I want to bring it back to the courses. Let's say we're going to add, a course would be the big level and let's say we want to add a lesson. Can you show how to add a lesson assuming we already have the course set up how would we add a lesson?

Chris: I'm just adding a new lesson right now. I'm going to title it What To Do Now and I'll add it to that Module 4 there. You can see I added a lesson and if I wanted to edit the content I can go here and I have a blank starting point and you can see the lesson tree on the right. I can put in my video, put in my sound cloud thing if I have an audio I can have words and exercises I want people to do.

Christina: Let's say you want to link to a PDF so in that lesson they'd get a video and PDF.

Chris: Yeah you can do that too. You can download the worksheet. A lot of people don't realize if they're new to WordPress that you can add PDF's like you can add PDFs like you can add pictures to the Media Library.

Christina: Right okay and so it wouldn't be anything different.

Chris: Right and that's it you're off to the races building a course.

Christina: This is great. We're in the...where are we now? We're in editing a course I see and you're going to your other tab which is editing the lesson. So this is the lesson that fits into the course and on the right hand side where you have that course outline that's part of the...



Chris: Yes I can jump around if I want to.

Christina: I see so that's a menu for me to jump to a different area after I've saved.

Chris: I found there are 2 types of people, there are people who are top down or big picture and they spend a lot of time over here getting all this straight and then they fill in the details. But there's others who prefer like I don't even know what the course will be and I'm just going to start with Lesson 1 and see where I end up.

Christina: Right!

Chris: And you can do that too and so it just depends on your preference of how you like to build things and construct curriculum.

Christina: And I like that you've thought through that philosophy of some people, some teachers think one way and some think another way. I like to think in terms of the lessons and let me build all my lessons and then let me group them together. But sometimes I approach things of okay what will be the different courses and so sometimes I go in either direction.

Some of these questions we may have already answered. Angie asks when I build one or more Lifter LMS course can I just add one item to my main menu called Courses and when the user clicks they're taken to the LMS main page where they can enroll and access multiple courses?

Chris: Yes and this is the course catalog page right here. This particular user is enrolled and so there is a progress bar here. Lifter when you install it creates 4 pages by default...it creates the Courses page, the Membership page, the Student



Dashboard which is a log in screen if you're not logged in and then it creates the page that handles the e-commerce transaction or free enrollment if it's a free course.

So there are 4 pages and most people put...some people don't use memberships at all but every page and almost every side of these in Lifter has courses on the menu and then they have the dashboard/log in page on the menu. Then also let me show you something here.

You can put other stuff on the menu too but we have a lot of short codes if you're familiar with that where let's say I want to embed my course catalog or courses from a certain course category I want them to display in the middle of this web page right here. You can also publish them through short codes too if you want a more advanced layout than the plain catalog.

Christina: Okay to reiterate what we said before your theme integrates well with Lifter LMS so people don't have to think much. Or if we have a theme like Divi that we really like we can use an existing one. But some people starting fresh might want to use your theme since it's already been designed to work well.

Now does Lifter LMS if we're selling thorough it does it also handle the affiliate program part or would that be an integration?

Chris: Lifter LMS is affiliate ready but you still need a separate affiliate system. We recommend either Affiliate WP which is a WordPress plug-in. It's a great affiliate system and lots of people use it or (Name – 77:42) affiliate and those are add ons. We had those in our store but they're not made by us and are actually like...in Woo Commerce it's called an affiliate product or external product. So if you buy this Affiliate WP you're going to the Affiliate WP website to get it.



Christina: And that makes sense because the affiliate part is really external to this conveyor belt the student experiences. I'm assuming this is mobile responsive.

Chris: 100% well that's the store. Yeah Lifter and depending upon your theme it will handle it slightly different or look different but yeah the Lifter pieces are 100% mobile.

Christina: The time is flying by and there are still more questions but they're all great questions. Let's come back to the quizzes. I guess a quiz would go with a lesson right? So each lesson would have a quiz.

Chris: Yes and I can demo that.

Christina: Yeah why don't you demo that.

Chris: By the way, there's a trend emerging that I'd call Micro Quizzing and so instead of doing like giant quizzes at the end of each section just little quizzes here and there and you can also make them fun.

Let me find my quiz...

Christina: And while you're looking at that could a quiz be something written that would then trigger an email the teacher and here's the written answer?

Chris: Right now we only have multiple choice but if you use our Gravity forms add on you could collect information through a form but it's operating outside the LMS. But eventually we'll have more advanced quizzes.



Christina: What I like about the multiple choice is it stays easier and more automated and easier for the teacher. We have to think how are we...if we're designing courses how can we scale it so we can have hundreds of students potentially? So that's the benefit of the multiple choice then the system can know if they get it right or wrong.

Here is your quiz sample this is cool.

Chris: Yeah I was and I'm on a lesson that has a quiz assigned to it and you can see this is a fancier lesson that has a video and some links. If I take this quiz, I've already taken it so I can see what I got before and the best score and who took it the fastest.

I'm going to start the quiz and this is a really simple quiz and you can be much more elaborate and the question could be a video and the answers could be images. You can get as creative as you want but this is a simple example.

I'll go to the next question and complete the quiz. I had a time limit on that one and then I can see how I did. That's it and you can have a giant 100 question quiz and you get a certificate if you pass it. It's scalable to your imagination.

Christina: And can the terminology that label of Quiz be changed if we want to call them Reflections or...

Chris: Challenges.

Christina: Challenges or whatever word us as the course creator is that label something we can change that the user would see not the inside?



Chris: Everything is possible within the scale of time or money. What I mean is in this case it'd be a skill thing. In our documentation there is an FAQ on how to change the buttons or what certain words say. Some people use it for translating into different languages but some use it for changing words like Quiz to Challenges or something else. So it's there and more of a technical step.

Christina: Right and in general with WordPress anything is possible. It's what is built in and not built in and then we have to decide for ourselves do we want to take the time to go to the next level of complexity or just work within the boundaries of how something is designed.

I still have more questions. Are you game for more?

Chris: I'm good I have about 30 minutes.

Christina: No I don't like to go over we have about 6 more minutes. Do you have...let's say my people want to get Lifter LMS but they want to hire you help build it or phone support. Do you have that level of service? Do you have a service side of your business as well? I know some people like phone support and I know for the low price you're charging there'd be no way it would include phone support, but possibly you help people build courses or know of others.

Chris: Right and the answer is both. We do have a done for you set up service which has different options to it. Let me pull it up and it's in our store and called the Lifter LMS Done For You.

Christina: Okay so you have that option.

Chris: It's not a custom...yeah it's not like custom anything under the sun but we have a





form that helps me figure out which level of package might be a fit.

Christina: Got it.

Chris: What the done for you service is it creates speed. Our done for you set ups take 1 to 2 weeks depending on the package and also avoids mistakes because my team is doing it.

Christina: Right.

Chris: Then we also have a short list of developers or agencies that have experience working with Lifter LMS if you need a customer, the red phone to the developer or trying to do something that Lifter doesn't do out of the box. There are these 4 recommendations we have for you.

Christina: What I always like to do is look at what comes in the box and try to design my business around what comes in the box to keep my costs down. I know there are some owners who really want this other thing and that's great you have that solution.

And that cool certificate is that something Lifter LMS designer that pretty looking certificate? Or would I make my own certificate?

Chris: That comes with the free Lifter LMS. Also we have something called Lifter LMS Pro which isn't another version of the software and let me pull that up. This is another reason people get the Universe bundle. We have more certificate backgrounds and graphic design like badge packs you can use. It's one of the benefits of Lifter LMS Pro.



The one you saw in my example is the one that comes with the free Lifter LMS.

Christina: Right. When you think about the cost of hiring a graphic designer it then becomes not expensive to get your package if you have to go out and buy all these other things.

I've been doing my best to answer as many questions that have come in but if there was a question that didn't get answered today now is the time to type it in again.

While people are doing that Marcy and I'm not sure I understand this question. Once you take the course can you repeat it and pay a repeat lower amount? I think what Marcy is asking is once you buy Lifter LMS what is the annual renewal fee is it the same or different when people renew?

Chris: Let me answer both cause I'm not sure...the first question I think is about the software itself and if you get a paid add on with the Universe bundle we don't have a discounted renewal rate because we reinvest heavily in the product and use it all to continually make the product better.

Then the question about if you're building a course and someone wants to come back and take it again there is something called a Lifter LMS Access Plan. So these pricing models here not only can you sell a course or have recurring payments or free trial you can set all this up but you can also have it so people are removed from the course automatically after a certain number of days.

Then I'd consider that more of a marketing function where I'd email my past students and say if you want to take it again you're welcome to and here is a 50% off coupon code.



Christina: Yeah and I think that's great. You triggered my brain and there is the marketing part and the selling and renewal part of the course and then the actual what happens inside the course. And so people can make those decisions as they go.

Can you limit the number of computers that can access the course? I know some software has where if you logged in you can't log in again. I don't know if this is too sophisticated but does it limit the number of different computers? Maybe you have a laptop and desktop and so maybe you are a legit one person wanting to access the course from different devices.

Chris: Piracy in the world of digital products and courses, etc. is a real issue. I recommend people don't focus on it too much because the 2 or 5% that abuse the system and don't forget about the 95% that are behaving.

Christina: Right.

Chris: Lifter's user system people could share logs ins but there are other WordPress plug-ins out there that do things like more advanced security and eliminating concurrent log ins. That is more in the world of what I'd consider a security plug-in.

Christina: Right. As we're talking and I'm asking these questions I'm realizing based on your answers which I'm loving is Lifter LMS is focused on that course experience. People always want these other things and one plug-on can't really do everything and you don't want it to do everything. You want it to do its core design well which is what is the experience our students are having and how can we enhance their learning.



So as we're talking and I'm talking to everyone listening put that into your brain of staying focused on Lifter LMS is enhancing the learning experience and it gives you these add ons so you can integrate it and don't need Wish List Member or one of the other membership plug-ins.

Chris this has been awesome and it's opened my brain up and other people are like wow my eyes have been opened up to a different way of thinking.

Chris: I appreciate that. It's been an honor and a lot of fun. I'm also a course creator myself and I run into the same problems and issues. When we approach building Lifter LMS we're not just building software we also use it ourselves. We try to be in sync and know it can get complex and so hang in there.

Christina: Yeah that's great. I love that you've got a free version, the paid version is still incredibly affordable and if someone really wants more hand holding from you, you have the services too and so that's awesome.

Chris: Yes.

Christina: I'm going to email out to everybody all your info so they can get started and start building their courses or if they want help from you guys they can contact you.

Chris: Thank you for having me it's been a pleasure and honor. I love talking about this and can do it all day long. If you ever want to do it again let me know.

Christina: Yeah this is great! I know I'll collect questions and circle back with you again Chris. Thank you so much Chris for coming and presenting about Lifter LMS. There is so much it can do and it's opening my eyes and making me realize wow the way I've been doing my courses I've been doing all this manual labor that I



don't need to do if I start using this plug-in.

Thank you and you've now demystified what learning management systems; the very corporate sound actually is then a trip to Disneyland.

Chris:       Awesome I love it!

Christina:   All right and thank you Chris and everybody else I'll get this recording up and we'll get a transcript in case you missed something. I will see you all next time bye everybody.