How to Set Up a Demo Site for Your WooCommerce Addon

https://wpdemo.net/woocommerce/set-up-demo-site-woocommerce-addon-p1709

When you're building a WooCommerce extension, offering a live demo can significantly boost credibility and conversions. Potential customers want to experience how your addon works — both on the frontend (shop, cart, checkout) and backend (admin settings).

But building a solid demo site isn't as easy as spinning up a basic install. Let's break down the main approaches and what you should know.

Manual Setup (The Old-School Way)

The most straightforward approach is to manually set up a WordPress + WooCommerce installation and configure your plugin or addon.

Typical steps include:

- Install WordPress on a subdomain (e.g., demo.youraddon.com) or in a folder /demo-shop/
- Install and configure WooCommerce
- Upload and activate your addon
- Add demo products, orders, and settings or import WooCommerce Sample Products
- Expose both frontend and wp-admin with a shared admin login

This method works — but comes with major limitations:

- The demo site will quickly get messy. Public access invites spam, junk data, and potential abuse.
- There's no reset mechanism. Manual cleanup becomes a recurring burden.
- It's not scalable. One user can change a configuration setting and that change will affect everyone who wants to try the addon/extension on that demo site.
- There's a serious security risk. If hosted on the same server as your production or client sites, one vulnerable demo could open the door to wider damage, attacks, stolen customer data etc.

Build a Resettable Demo Site

A more robust solution is a resettable demo site that periodically restores itself to a clean state — typically every 30 minutes or few hours.

You'll need:

- A cron job or scheduled task
- WP-CLI scripts to reset the database and optionally files

WPDemo - Hosted WordPress demo sites with full admin access, private, temp, Have

- A default snapshot (database + wp-content folder)
- Full site isolation — ideally a dedicated cPanel, VPS, or separate hosting account

While this gives more control, it still requires:

- Scripting knowledge and automation management
- Constant monitoring in case of script failures
- Regular updates to maintain compatibility
- Isolation to avoid shared server risks

Even with automation, visitors may catch the demo site mid-reset, causing a poor user experience. And any time spent maintaining the setup is time not spent on product development.

The Problem with Self-Hosting WooCommerce Demos

Self-hosted demo sites are risky, especially for eCommerce addons that touch sensitive functionality like orders, checkout flows, or payment gateways.

Here's what you're risking:

- **Security exposure**. A vulnerable demo site is an entry point for attackers who could try lateral movement across your hosting environment.
- **Stale software**. If you forget to update WooCommerce, WordPress, or your addon, you're not just risking bugs — you're advertising them.
- **Maintenance overhead**. Managing a custom demo site is a devops job in itself. That's not where your time is best spent.

At the very least, WooCommerce demo sites should be isolated in their own hosting account. Better yet, consider using a sandbox service built for exactly this use case.

Use a Hosted Demo Site Solution like WPDemo.net

Instead of reinventing the wheel, you can use a specialized platform like WPDemo.net that handles all of this for you.

Here's what WPDemo offers:

- Fully isolated/sandbox WordPress/WooCommerce demo sites per user
- Time-limited access — sites expire after certain time and get deleted automatically without your intervention
- Supports custom themes, plugins, preconfigured products, and Woo settings
- Password protected access. No one other that the user who has created the site can access with the demo site (unless they know the access code)

[WPDemo - Hosted WordPress demo sites with full admin access, private, temp, Have](#)

- Code security - users trying the addon can't install new plugins or access your addon's code, so your work is safe.
- Fast, scalable deployment — ideal for plugin marketplaces, documentation links, or onboarding flows
- Each demo site can have Buy now and Support links that you configure.

This approach is ideal if:

- You want demo sites that are clean and secure
- You need minimal maintenance overhead
- You care about professionalism and user trust
- You'd rather build your business than manage demo site infrastructure

Conclusion: Choose a Smarter Demo Site Setup for Your WooCommerce Addon

Live demo sites can dramatically improve how potential customers perceive your WooCommerce addon — but only if they're done right.

While DIY approaches might work temporarily, they come with scaling, maintenance, and security challenges. Services like WPDemo.net let you deliver polished, safe, and scalable demo sites without the headache.

Let your users explore your addon confidently — without putting your infrastructure, time, or reputation at risk.

[WPDemo - Hosted WordPress demo sites with full admin access, private, temp, Have](#)