

EASY E-COMMERCE

Using Laravel and Stripe

Selling Products and Subscriptions



Eric L. Barnes and W. Jason Gilmore

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I dedicate this book to my wife, Shannon. Thank you for all you do. - Eric

I dedicate this book to my grandparents for putting that Commodore 64 under the Christmas tree so many years ago. I miss you. - Jason

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Introduction

The excitement associated with building an online store with the potential to attract a global customer base can be truly palpable. Emotions can run even higher when the project is associated with a small business or startup given the real possibility of a life-changing outcome should the store be successful.

However, these sorts of projects present a double-edged sword in that the sense of adventure is typically accompanied by a great deal of stress. Is the product catalog accessible and presenting the products in the best possible light? Is the credit card processor working flawlessly not only right now but at 2am when the development team is sleeping? Will the store owner receive timely updates regarding purchases and relevant sales trends? These are just a few questions that tend to bestow the gift of insomnia upon newcomers to the world of e-commerce development.

Fortunately, the Laravel community is blessed with an incredibly powerful framework which can effectively put many of these concerns (along with exhausted developers) to bed. Offering a well-organized application structure, sane forms processing features, PHPUnit integration, and even an interface for selling products and subscriptions through the popular [Stripe](https://stripe.com/)¹ payment processing solution, you'll be able to create practical and maintainable e-commerce solutions under even the most demanding schedules.

In this book you'll learn how to use the Laravel framework and Stripe to create a fairly simple yet most certainly real-world online store. You'll learn by doing, following along with the creation of an e-commerce site for a fictitious lawn care company named We Dew Lawns, Inc. In addition to learning how the company website <http://wedewlawns.com>² was developed, we'll really try to inject a sense of realism into the example project by concluding each phase with an exit interview in which the surly company owner asks you key questions about the implementation, so you'd better be prepared!



Although we will be building a new Laravel site from the ground up, we do presume you are at least acquainted with Laravel 5 fundamentals. If you are new to Laravel or are in need of a refresher, consider purchasing a copy of Jason's bestselling book, *Easy Laravel 5*. Learn more about the book at <http://easylaravelbook.com>³.

¹<https://stripe.com/>

²<http://wedewlawns.com>

³<http://easylaravelbook.com>

About the Book Project

We Dew Lawns (<http://wedewlawns.com>⁴) is a fictional multi-generational family business who has historically promoted their services through traditional media, including the phone book, mailbox flyers, and local newspaper advertisements. Grandson Todd McDew has recently taken the reins, and although he's the first to admit being more comfortable wrenching on a lawn mower than typing on a keyboard, he's determined to bring the company into the 21st century.

After several meetings, Todd has concluded he would like to work with you on creating an official company website. However, in order to minimize risk and expense, he insists the project be completed in several phases. If after the completion of this first phase he declares satisfaction, you'll be hired on to complete the next phase.

Each chapter of this book guides you through a new project phase. At the conclusion of each chapter you'll be quizzed by Mr. McDew regarding various implementation decisions made throughout the phase, and if you can sufficiently respond to his questions you'll be invited to work on the next phase. Although we will provide example responses to his questions, we encourage you to think about these and other questions a potential client might ask you on a future project!

Below we'll introduce each phase by way of its corresponding chapter description.

Chapter 1. Creating the We Dew Lawns Website

In this opening phase you'll be tasked with the creation of a fairly simple Laravel-driven website that tells prospective customers more about the business, and offers a user-friendly contact form which sends inquiries to the company assistant, Patty Organo.

To suit this requirement, you'll work through the creation of a new Laravel 5 website complete with Less, Elixir, and Bootstrap integration. You'll also create a home and company bio pages, a site-wide layout, and a [Mandrill](https://mandrill.com/)⁵-backed contact form.

Chapter 2. Integrating User Accounts

Following a successful launch of the first phase, Mr. McDew would like to begin building a customer mailing list. To entice individuals into handing over their valuable e-mail addresses he would like to offer registered users access to downloadable coupons which they can apply to lawn care services. In this chapter you'll integrate and customize user registration and authentication features into the site, and create a restricted area of the site accessible only to authenticated users.

⁴<http://wedewlawns.com>

⁵<https://mandrill.com/>

Chapter 3. Integrating Stripe and Creating a Product Catalog

With the site launched and the mailing list expanding, Mr. McDew's ambitions have now turned to online sales. He would like to create a simple online store for selling products such as lawn mowers and gardening tools. In this chapter you'll integrate Stripe and [Laravel Cashier](#)⁶ to easily and securely accept credit card payments. You'll also learn how to create a restricted administration console complete with a product catalog manager so Mr. McDew and his team can easily add and update products.

Chapter 4. Selling Electronic and Physical Products

With Stripe and Laravel Cashier integrated, and your product catalog created, it's time to begin selling products! In this chapter you'll learn how to sell both electronic (downloadable) and physical products through your website. We'll show you how to integrate the secure Stripe "Buy" button and modal, complete transactions using Cashier, and generate one-time URLs for automated product downloads. We'll also talk a bit about shipping and sales tax complexities, and identify a few popular associated resources.

Chapter 5. Selling Lawn Care Service Subscriptions

In this project phase, Mr. McDew sets his sights on selling lawn care subscriptions. In this chapter you'll learn how to integrate Stripe's recurring billing service into the We Dew Lawns website, and sell a number of lawn care service tiers to area customers. You'll also learn how to configure webhooks to autonomously receive and respond to various subscription-related events.

Chapter 6. Integrating a Shopping Cart

While the site is operational and customers can purchase a variety of products and services, the biggest drawback is the lack of a shopping cart which prevents customers from purchasing multiple products at once. This outcome wasn't accidental, because we've preferred to focus on fundamental Laravel- and Stripe-related features so as to ensure everything is working flawlessly before introducing more complicated capabilities. In this chapter we'll change that by adding a shopping cart to the site. By the conclusion of this chapter you'll have successfully integrated a shopping cart into the site, allowing customers to truly shop the site, and conveniently purchase more than one product during a single session.

Downloading the We Dew Lawns Project

The very same code used to power the WeDewLawns.com website is included with your Leanpub purchase. Be sure to carefully read the README for installation instructions. As we inevitably fix bugs and improve the code, we'll distribute updates through Leanpub and notify you whenever significant improvements are available.

⁶<http://laravel.com/docs/master/billing>

About the Authors

Authors Eric L. Barnes and W. Jason Gilmore had a lot of fun collaborating on this book over several months. They are both well-regarded figures in the PHP and Laravel Community and have more than 30 years of combined experience working with the PHP language.

Eric L. Barnes

[Eric L. Barnes](http://ericlbarnes.com)⁷ runs and operates [Laravel News](https://laravel-news.com)⁸, a site bringing the Laravel community all the latest news and information about the framework, and is a full time product engineer. He has worked with PHP for the past 14 years.

Eric has been writing almost daily on both the Laravel News site and newsletter since January, 2014 and he loves both the Laravel community and ecosystem. In his spare time he enjoys his family, playing golf, and inspires to constantly be learning new things.

W. Jason Gilmore

[W. Jason Gilmore](http://www.wjgilmore.com)⁹ is author of the bestselling book, [Easy Laravel 5](http://easylaravelbook.com)¹⁰. He's a software developer and consultant who has spent much of the past 17 years helping companies of all sizes build amazing solutions. Recent projects include a Stripe-powered SaaS for the interior design industry, an e-commerce analytics application for a globally recognized publisher, a Linux-powered autonomous environmental monitoring buoy, and a 10,000+ product online store.

Over the years Jason has authored eight books on web development, published more than 300 articles within popular publications such as Developer.com, JSMag, and Linux Magazine, and instructed hundreds of students in the United States and Europe. Jason is co-founder of the wildly popular [CodeMash Conference](http://www.codemash.org)¹¹, the largest multi-day developer event in the Midwest.

Away from the keyboard, you'll often find Jason hanging out with his family, hunched over a chess board, and having fun with DIY electronics.

Contact the Authors

Nobody is perfect, particularly when it comes to writing about technology. We've probably made a few mistakes in both code and grammar, and strive to correct issues almost immediately upon notification. If you would like to report an error, ask a question or offer a suggestion, please e-mail us at support@easye-commercebook.com.

⁷<http://ericlbarnes.com>

⁸<https://laravel-news.com>

⁹<http://www.wjgilmore.com>

¹⁰<http://easylaravelbook.com>

¹¹<http://www.codemash.org>