Your first Replit website

Build & Beyond | Beginner walkthrough | Updated 3 November 2026

You will build a fictional dog-walking website, inspect it, ask for changes, publish a test version and learn how to connect your own domain. No coding experience is required.

What we tested

We built the Happy Paws demo in Replit, changed its heading, checked the desktop and phone previews, published it and tested its public contact-section link. We then unpublished the demo with the owner’s permission. Our screenshots show this real test.

What is documented but not tested

Connecting a custom domain, restoring a checkpoint and republishing changes are based on Replit documentation or general product guidance; we have not performed those actions in this example. Labels may differ on your account.

Before you start

You need an internet connection, a Replit account and a browser. This example uses fictional information. Review your plan, remaining credits and potential hosting costs before starting. You do not need to buy a domain for the first test.

1 | Understand the moving parts

Project, preview and published website

Your project is the editable workspace. Preview is your work-in-progress view inside Replit. A published website is a separate version that visitors can reach using a public address. Editing the preview does not automatically update a previously published version; check and republish when you are ready.

Domain and hosting

A domain is an address, such as yourbusiness.com. Hosting is the service that runs or serves the website. They are separate: Replit can provide a replit.app address, while a domain registrar manages a name you own. Publishing or hosting may use credits or incur costs, even if creating a project did not.

Why use Replit?

It brings the AI assistant, editing workspace and preview together in a browser. You can describe a page in everyday language and ask for revisions. The trade-off: AI can misunderstand or create broken links, so you must review its work; a conventional site builder can be simpler for a basic site.

2 | Start a new project

1. Go to replit.com and sign in. If asked, choose your personal workspace.

2. On the home screen, find the box inviting you to describe a task. If you are inside an old project, choose New in the left navigation to start a separate one.



Actual Replit home prompt area. The outline highlights where to start.

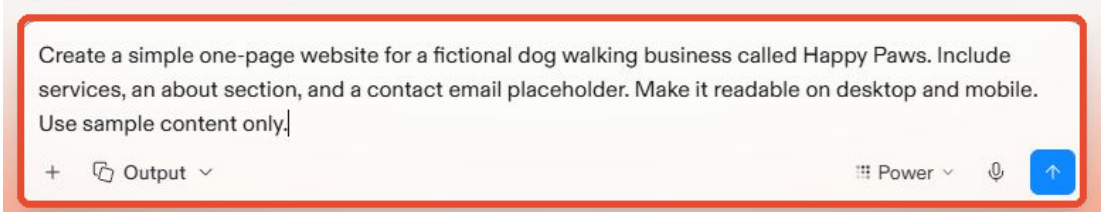
3. Before sending a request, open your account settings and check Usage. Read the amount available and any spending controls. Features and prices can change; do not assume all Agent modes or hosting are free.

4. If a mode selector is shown beside the message box, read its cost information before selecting it. Our test used the mode Replit labelled Free and the build reported no credits used; your screen or options may differ.

3 | Tell Replit what to build

1. Click inside the large prompt box. Paste or type the example below. It asks for a fictional page, so no real business details are exposed.

> Create a simple one-page website for a fictional dog walking business called Happy Paws. Include services, an about section, and a contact email placeholder. Make it readable on desktop and mobile. Use sample content only. Clearly label it as a fictional demo; do not publish it automatically.



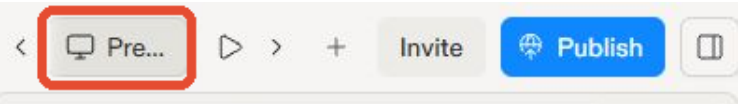
Actual prompt area from our Replit session; your layout can vary.

2. Read the prompt once more. Select the send arrow or Start. If Replit asks questions, answer them plainly. Wait until the build finishes; it can take several minutes.

3. Give the project a memorable name if prompted. Replit created our project as Happy Paws Demo. Its generated copy and layout may differ on another run.

4 | Find and inspect the preview

1. Inside the project, find Preview near the top of the workspace and select it if the page is not already visible. The Agent conversation and the preview may sit side by side.



Actual workspace toolbar: the highlighted control opens Preview.

2. Check the heading, services, about text, pictures and contact section. Scroll through the whole page. Look for the fictional-demo label and an obvious placeholder address.

3. Click each navigation link and button. In our test, “Let’s meet” took us to the contact section. A placeholder email is not a working inbox and must be replaced before a real launch.

4. If the preview is blank, first wait for the build to finish. Then select the preview refresh control. Our blank preview appeared after refreshing; your issue may have a different cause.

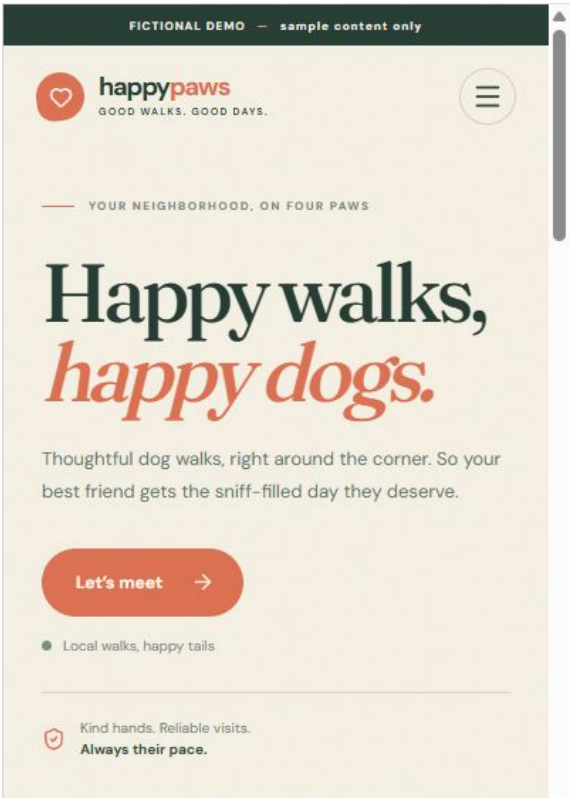
5 | Ask for a specific change

1. Return to the Agent conversation. Find the message box near the bottom. Name the exact item you want changed, say what to change it to, and say what should stay the same.

> Make the main heading shorter: change it to “Happy walks, happy dogs.” Keep the fictional demo notice and all other content unchanged.

2. Check the selected Agent mode and potential usage. Send the message. Wait for the assistant to finish, then open or refresh Preview.

3. Look for the new heading. Scroll through the other sections to make sure the rest remains sensible. In our test, the heading changed and the demo notice remained.



Actual updated preview from the Happy Paws test.

4. If the result is wrong, say exactly what happened and request one correction. Example: “The button still says Contact us. Change only that button to Say hello.” Review again.

6 | More examples of useful requests

Change wording

> In the About section, replace the first paragraph with: “We offer friendly local dog walks.” Keep the layout and other text unchanged.

Change a button

> Change the main button label to “View our walks” and make it scroll to the services section. Do not add a booking form.

Add another page - example only

> Add a separate About page with a short introduction and a link back to the home page. Add “About” to the navigation. Keep all existing sections and the fictional-demo notice.

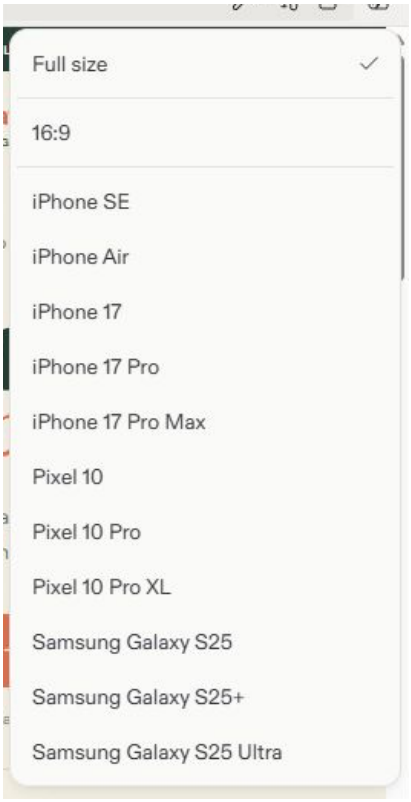
After any request, inspect the preview and click the affected links. We tested the heading change and adding an About page with Home and About links. The button example is a suggested prompt.

Replace placeholder details

For a real site, provide only information you are comfortable publishing: a real contact email, accurate opening hours and approved copy. Ask Replit to replace each placeholder, then independently verify it. Do not paste passwords or secret keys into the chat.

7 | Check desktop and phone

1. Open Preview. Use the Screen size or device control in the preview toolbar. In our session, its menu included an iPhone SE option; labels can change.



Actual device-size menu captured during our test.

2. Select a phone size. Scroll from top to bottom. Check that headings fit, buttons are easy to tap, images are visible and no content disappears off the side.

3. Return to a desktop-size view and test the same links. For the closest check, also open the public address on a real phone after publishing.

> The heading is cut off on a narrow phone screen. Adjust the mobile layout so the full heading is readable, without changing the desktop design.

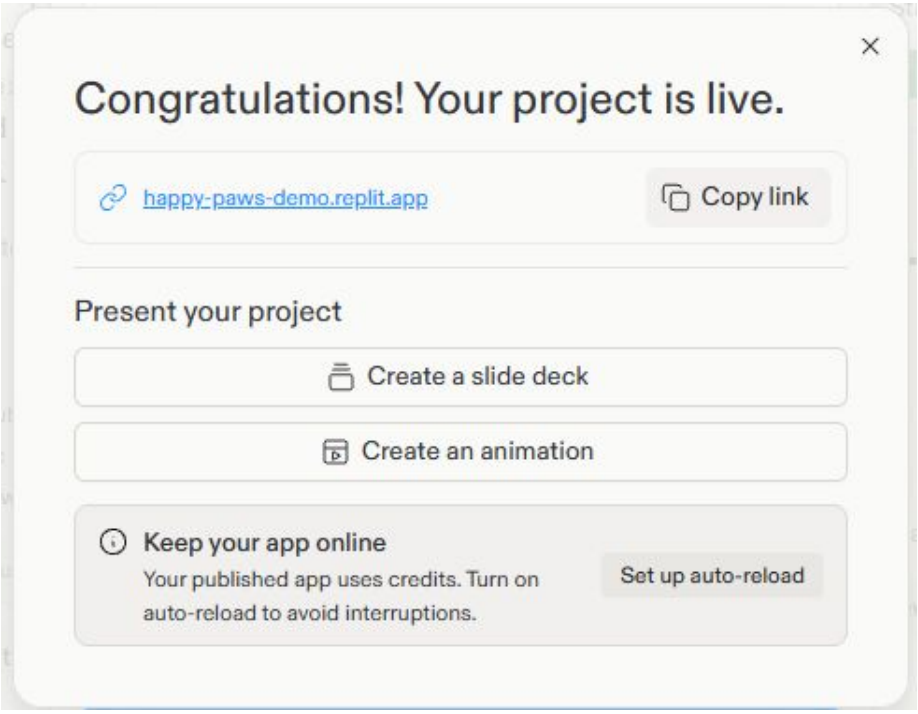
4. Send a specific request like this only if you actually see the issue. Recheck the result yourself; an AI-generated fix still needs testing.

8 | Publish a first public version

1. Finish checking your preview. Select Publish near the top of the project. Review the proposed replit.app address, public visibility and any optional add-ons. Anyone with a public address can visit the page.

2. Review your balance and the current pricing information. Our publish screen did not show a cost estimate; it later said the published app uses credits. Do not enable auto-reload, buy a plan or agree to extra costs unless you intend to.

3. If you accept the terms and costs shown in your own account, select Publish. Wait through the build and deployment stages; do not assume the site is live until Replit confirms it.



Actual success message from our published test. We later unpublished the demo.

4. Open the displayed public link in a new browser tab. Read the page, click its buttons and check it on a phone. Our published page and its contact-section link worked; the sample email remained a placeholder.

9 | Update a live website

1. Reopen your project in Replit. Describe the desired change to Agent in its message box, or use the editing tools if you know how. Example: “Change the services heading to Our dog walks and keep everything else unchanged.”

2. Wait for the change, then open Preview. Read the changed section and check the rest of the site. Test both desktop and phone sizes.

3. A preview change is not the same as updating the live version. When satisfied, use Republish in the project and follow the current on-screen steps. Reopen the public address and refresh it to check the new version.

4. If a change is wrong, ask Agent for a targeted correction. Replit also documents checkpoints and version history, but inspect what a restore would change before confirming; restoring may remove later edits.

The heading edit was tested in preview. Republish and restoring a checkpoint were not separately tested in our session.

10 | Connect your own domain

These are documentation-based instructions; we did not connect a custom domain to the demo. A custom domain is optional and usually has its own registration or renewal cost.

1. Publish and check your site on its replit.app address first. In the project, open Publishing or Domains, then select Add a domain / Link a domain. If prompted, choose the option for a domain registered elsewhere.

2. Enter the exact name you intend to use, such as www.example.com, and continue. Replit will show the DNS records needed for that particular name. Leave this screen open.

3. In a separate browser tab, sign in to the company that manages the domain’s DNS. Open the domain and its DNS management page. Copy the record type, host/name and value exactly as Replit provides; save each record. Replit’s instructions commonly use A and TXT records, but follow the values shown for your own connection.

4. Return to Replit and check verification status. DNS changes can take time; Replit says up to 48 hours. Once verified, open the exact address in a browser and check HTTPS and page links.

Do not replace existing records for a domain already in use without understanding the impact: changes can take a website or email offline. The main domain and www can require separate configuration. Do not guess IP addresses or copy another project’s DNS values.

11 | Troubleshoot and stop hosting

Website does not look right

Check the preview first. If the public site is older, confirm you republished after editing, then refresh the public page. If a button fails, tell Agent which one, what you expected and what actually happened.

Domain is not working

Check that the name you entered in Replit matches the address in your browser. Compare every DNS field against the values Replit gives you. Wait for propagation and verification; consult your DNS provider if records conflict.

Stop a test site

For our demo we opened Publishing, chose Adjust settings, and under Manage your app selected Unpublish. Replit warned that the published deployment, its saved address and its history would be removed. The editable project remains available to publish again. We confirmed the public address no longer served our demo.

Replit indicated that Pause can leave billing running, whereas Unpublish cancels the published app’s billing. Read the current warning before taking either action. Never delete a project or production deployment you need without checking its consequences.

12 | Your launch checklist

Check that your website clearly explains what it offers. Replace sample details with your own accurate information and check spelling, contact details and links.

Preview your site on desktop and phone. Click the navigation and buttons, review the public address and access settings, and check your plan and any hosting costs before publishing.

After publishing, open the public address and check the site again. If using your own domain, follow the records Replit provides for that domain and check verification.

Sources and test scope

Test performed 3 November 2026 on a fictional Happy Paws project. Screens, plan features and pricing can change. Replit guides: docs.replit.com/features/publishing/custom-domains ; docs.replit.com/features/publishing/monitoring-a-deployment ; docs.replit.com/learn/projects-and-artifacts/version-control .

For more guidance, visit buildandbeyond.net/tools/replit/.