Alt text is provided on slides that have images or visuals. If a description is inaccurate or could be improved, please let me know via email or on Twitter.
Prologue
WordCamp US Milwaukee 2019
We’re going to revolutionize the way people make content.
Average Rating

★★★★★ 2 out of 5 stars

You must be logged in to submit a review.
Support » Plugin: Gutenberg » Reviews

Average Rating

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟  2 out of 5 stars

You must be logged in to submit a review.
Alt text: Screenshot of WordPress’ Gutenberg plugin page, showing a two of five star rating for the plugin.
Meet your new best friends. Blocks.
A soul destroying experience

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

paulychilda (@paulychilda)
1 week, 2 days ago

I've never in my life worked with a wysiwyg editor so horrible to use. Here are just a few of the “highlights”
A soul destroying experience

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**paulychilds** (@paulychilds)
1 week, 2 days ago

I've never in my life worked with a wysiwyg editor so horrible to use. Here are just a few of the “highlights”
Alt-text: An image of a review from user Pauly Childs, calling Gutenberg a “soul destroying experience.” He says “I’ve never in my life worked with a what-you-see-is-what-you-get editor so horrible to use. Here are just a few of the “highlights.”
It’s a whole new way to use WordPress.
Wordpress rolled out a fundamental change to the mental model of how to create content. Almost no change management. One tiny popup.

My 71yr old 'web master' dad went from feeling like a tech champion to feeling like an idiot overnight.

We web ppl still have a lot to learn...
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Built with modern technology?
WP Tavern

WPCampus’ Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds “Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems”

Sarah Gooding  May 2, 2019  11

Currently on Tap

- All-in-One WP Migration 7.0 Patches XSS Vulnerability
- How To Create A Dropdown Menu Of WordPress Environments
WPCampus’ Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds “Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems”
Alt text: Screenshot from WP Tavern with the title “WPCampus’ Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds ‘Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems’”
I have resigned as the WordPress accessibility team lead. Here is why.
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I have resigned as the WordPress accessibility team lead. Here is why
Nobody works this way, @wordpress! Not normal people... look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.
Nobody works this way, @wordpress! Not normal people... look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.
Alt text: A screenshot of a tweet from @cwodtke saying “Nobody works this way, wordpress! Not normal people.. look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.”
Ugh. We tried so hard to make it better, but we were stopped at every turn. Eventually I gave up. I didn’t want to be associated with it. I’m sorry.

Nobody works this way, @wordpress! Not normal people... look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.

Show this thread
Alt text: The speaker (@nicbertino) responding to @cwodtke on Twitter “Ugh. We tried so hard to make it better, but we were stopped at every turn. Eventually I gave up. I didn’t want to be associated with it. I’m sorry.”
My Tragic Design
Your Tragic Design
Your Tragic Design

Nic Bertino
Part I: What happened?
No one wants to make a bad product.
Blocks happened.
Blocks are a content layout concept.
The hill in which many people died for blocks
Alt text: A desert hill in the background.
Blocks are not content.
Literally every text editor ever created

This is a paragraph.

This is also a paragraph. I can select between two paragraphs.
Alt text: A screenshot of a heading and two paragraphs in Apple Notes, with a selection cursor encapsulating parts of both.
Your New Best Friend

Add title

This is a paragraph.

This is also a paragraph. Can I select text between the two without selecting their blocks?
Alt text: A title and two paragraphs in Gutenberg’s editor, with two blocks selected (you cannot select mid sentence content between two paragraphs, only their containing blocks).
People create content. Not blocks.
Simple elements, such as paragraphs, lists, and headings are blocks.
This breaks digital content publishing conventions and is generally considered a *poor decision*. 
Each block has a massive amount of UI
Alt text: A screenshot of Gutenberg’s UI with a number of controls around content and a styling drawer on the right side.
The amount of UI is then compounded by the amount of blocks.
Alt text: Two blog posts are shown, one with 11 blocks under the Gutenberg model, and one with 3 blocks under a more traditional authoring model.
... all of which needs to be conveyed to assistive technologies.
**SPOILER ALERT**

It is near impossible to make this design accessible.
The messy UI creates a lot of cognitive noise, but can mostly be ignored by sighted users.
When sighted users can make beautiful content but anyone using a screenreader can’t...
When you create better outcomes for people with certain abilities...
It’s Tragic Design
Tragic design is the product of solving the wrong problems and learning the wrong things.
How to Avoid Tragic Design

- Research
- Strategy
- Inclusive Design
- Launch Planning
Part II: Research
Given two solutions to a user problem:

**Solution A (MVP)**
- Creates a user outcome
- Is performant
- Not “pleasurable”
- Can be launched quickly

**Solution B**
- Creates a user outcome
- Performs exceptionally
- Easy to use and pleasurable
- Takes significantly longer to launch
Optimistic Experience Quality

- Pleasurable
- Usable
- Reliable
- Functional

Experience Quality

Solution A (MVP)
Solution B
Alt text: A graph shows two solutions plotted. The x-axis is Time, and the y-axis is Experience Quality. Solution A (MVP) is in the lane of “Functional” (bottom left of graph) while Solution B is in the top right of the graph in the “Pleasurable” lane.
The distance between \textit{A} and \textit{B} is UX debt.
Optimistic Experience Quality

Experience Quality

- Pleasurable
- Usable
- Reliable
- Functional

Solution A (MVP)

UX Debt

Solution B

Time
Alt text: A graph shows the same two solutions plotted with a line between Solution A (MVP) and Solution B, with the line being labeled “UX Debt.”
This assumes that \textit{functional} is the floor.
Meet UX Hell, where your product is functional but it sucks.
Realistic Experience Quality

Experience Quality

- Pleasurable
- Usable
- Reliable
- Functional
- Confusing
- Unusable
- Tragic

Solution A (MVP)

Solution B
Alt text: A graph titled “Realistic Experience Quality” shows Time on the X axis and Experience Quality on the Y axis. Lanes on the Y axis include Pleasurable, Usable, Reliable, Functional, Confusing, Unusable, Tragic. Solution A (MVP) is in the Functional lane (middle left) and Solution B is in the Tragic lane (middle bottom).
UX Rot is what happens when you don’t address UX debt.
Alt text: A line is added to the Realistic Experience Quality graph between Solution A (MVP) and Solution B with a label of UX Rot.

The area on the graph under Functional is labeled “UX Hell.”
Or, you’re actually solving the wrong problems and learning the wrong things.
If you stay idle, you can also fall into UX Rot as user behaviors evolve.
Before Solution A (MVP):

• Surveys
• Interviews
• Behavioral data
• Contextual inquiries
• Mental model mapping
• Competitive analysis
Which should yield:

• User outcomes
• Health and performance indicators
• Contextual information
• Where the landmines are
That you can share with:

- Your project team
- Stakeholders and leadership
- Users
So you can accomplish:

• Shared understanding
• Inclusion
• A path toward strategy
Part III: Strategy
Destroy all visionaries and idols.
Big problems and projects are not successful because of one person.
One visionary can completely derail a project.
Take your learnings from research and duke it the heck out with your project team.
Good Strategy/Bad Strategy (Rumelt) is an incredible resource for creating a product strategy.
Most importantly, it will allow your team to say no.
Defining strong boundaries keeps teams from sabotaging the project.
Before Solution A (MVP):

- A strong problem statement
- Guiding policies
- Coherent actions
Which should yield:

- A guiding strategy document
That you can share with:

• Your project team
• Stakeholders and leadership
• Users
Part IV: Inclusive Design
This is certainly true. Gutenberg is so inaccessible to screen reader users that neither @SinaBarham nor I could use it, so goodness knows how awful it must be for people who spend less of their time debugging screen reader related things.
Alt text: Tweet from @LeonieWatson “This is certainly true. Gutenberg is so inaccessible to screen reader users that neither @SinaBarham nor I could use it, so goodness knows how awful it must be for people who spend less of their time debugging screen reader related things.”
SPOILER ALERT

It is near impossible to make this design accessible
You cannot, under any circumstances, bolt on accessibility.
SPOILER ALERT

Making something WCAG 2.x/AA doesn’t mean it’s accessible.
“The editor will endeavour to create a new page and post building experience that makes writing rich posts effortless”

–Matt Mullenweg

January 4, 2017
The editor will create a new page and post building experience that makes writing rich posts effortless regardless of ability.
Using a vendor? Ask them how they’ve made a product accessible. Then ask their reference clients.
Bring users with assistive devices onto your project team.
Partner with Disabilities Resources or your digital a11y team early on.
Build in budget for an accessibility consultant.
Before Solution A (MVP):

- Include assistive technologies in strategy and design
- Test user outcomes in a number of different contexts
- Hire external accessibility consultants
Part V: Launch Plan
You have as much information as you need to deploy Solution A.
It's time to create a Launch Plan.
LAUNCH 'N LEARN
Control risk so you are able to learn quickly and safely.
Redesigning a critical task, released to a subset of users: High Risk, Low Exposure

Releasing a new undergraduate admission application: High Risk, High Exposure

Releasing a site redesign to an opt-in group: Low Risk, Low Exposure

 Updating your site’s CSS: Low Risk, High Exposure
A Johari’s window shows escalating risk and exposure. Each window is labeled with an example:

- Low Risk, Low Exposure (Releasing a site redesign to an opt-in group)
- Low Risk, High Exposure (Updating your site’s CSS)
- High Risk, Low Exposure (Redesigning a critical task, released to a subset of users)
- High Risk, High Exposure (Releasing a new undergraduate admission application)
Cut a release plan with clear learning objectives for each risk increase.
Alt text: A graph shows exposure over time with releases titled A/B/C/D along the plotline.
Create dead simple feedback channels and agree on a triage plan.
AKA: Don’t make it difficult for people to talk to you.
Acknowledge feedback (but don’t be afraid to say no).
Everyone remembers a bad launch. Don’t guess the readiness.
Epilogue: Your Good Design
Next time you launch:
- Do all of the research
- Have a strong strategy document
- Design for all contexts
- Launch to learn
Expect these things.
If you don’t get them, run.
Acknowledgements

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Amanda Rush and Adrian Roselli for constantly challenging inaccessible products in open source.