The independent theme developer's FIELD GUIDE to modern WordPress



HI, I'M MÍCHELLE.

@marktimemedia

Adorable badass. Carefully curated spontaneity. Meticulously organized chaos. The Anxious Alicorn.

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The Hero's Journey

Intro graphic background

The hero's journey

- 12 stages of transformation in 3 acts
- Our hero embraces a disruption, faces challenges, and comes out changed



The life of the independent theme developer

Ordinary World graphic background

The independent theme developer

- Client Service
- Creation and Building
- Support
- Consulting
- HR, Finance, Marketing, Janitorial

Ordinary World graphic background

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The independent theme developer

- Fine-tuned workflows
- A custom suite of tools
- Knows what to do
- Knows where to get help

Ordinary World graphic background

Call to Adventure

The release of the Block Editor, WP5.0 (Dec 2018)

The release of Full Site Editing, WP5.8 (July 2021)

Call To Adventure graphic background



The call

As a service provider:

- WYSIWYG interface
- Powerful content layout

As a developer:

- Faster page builds
- Easily register global styles
- More unified theming framework

Call To Adventure graphic background

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The inevitable journey

Call To Adventure graphic background

Refusal of the Call Resistance to adopting new tooling and workflows

Refusal of the call graphic background



The resistance

As a service provider:

- Glitchy interactions
- Missing features
- More support requests
- Too many options

As a developer:

- Inconsistent documentation
- New development tools
 and language
- Missing or obscured functionality
- Constant changes

Refusal of the call graphic background

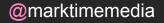
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The impossible journey

Refusal of the call graphic background

Meeting the Mentor Finding the support you need to move forward

Meeting the Mentor graphic background



Finding support

- social & slack communities
- tutorials & talks
- developer.wordpress.org
- learn.wordpress.org/
- fullsiteediting.com

Meeting the Mentor graphic background

Managing expectations

- changes, support, & updates
- learning new skills through paid projects
- take the journey at your own pace

Meeting the Mentor graphic background

Crossing the Threshold Get your bearings in the new editor interface

Crossing the Threshold graphic background

Navigate the post editor

- Block & Pattern Inserter
- Block Settings
- Post Settings
- Block Toolbar
- Screen Options
- Document Overview

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Create & copy blocks within the editor

- Visual Editor vs Code Editor
- Block locking

Several slides with screenshots of each (6.3+)

Navigate the FSE Editor

- View, Edit & Create Templates
- View, Edit & Create Synced & Unsynced Patterns (6.3+)
- View & Edit Styles
- Navigation & Pages (6.3+)

Several slides with screenshots of each (6.3+)



Benefits & Obstacles

Benefits

- Understand the new interface from a client perspective
- Understand the options available to us as a developer

Change Level: Low Time Level: Medium

Obstacles

Not many

"Stats page" design

Tests, Allies, Enemies Adapting your PHP/Classic Theme

Tests Allies Enemies graphic background

Block content support in traditional theme supports

- <u>https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/how-to-guides/them</u> <u>es/theme-support/</u>
- least amount of work, but also less modern/recommended



Block content support in traditional themesheme.json

- <u>https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/how-to-guides/them</u> <u>es/theme-json/</u>
- settings replaces add_theme_support for enable/disable of features, theme presets (color/spacing/fonts/sizing/etc), adds block-level controls
 - https://fullsiteediting.com/lessons/remove-settings-in-theme-json/
- styles appearance of elements, blocks, and variations
 - https://fullsiteediting.com/lessons/global-styles/
- custom any custom variables you need possibly several sides with screenshots, or just one as a synopsis

Block content support in traditional themes variables

- use the theme.json variables in your css as much as possible
 - --wp--preset--{category}--{slug}
 - --wp--custom--{nested}--{object-keys}
- variables/settings are automatically loaded in both editor and frontend
- enqueue_block_assets to show your css in the editor and frontend

Benefits & Obstacles

Benefits

- Opens up the block editor to client & developer use
- Provide branding control via theme styles and default controls (limiting options)

Change Level: Low Time Level: Medium

Obstacles

- Setting up theme.json
- Reworking CSS to use variables

"Stats page" design

Approach the Innermost Cave

Block Editor development (without Javascript)

Innermost cave graphic background

Expanded block options

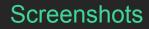
- Block Patterns (in code)
- Block Styles
- PHP Block Templates
- PHP Block Locking

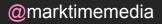
Probably several slides with screenshots of each



PHP Custom block tools

- ACF Custom Blocks (PHP)
- MB Blocks





Benefits & Obstacles

Benefits

- Additional customization options (bespoke needs)
- Additional controls and guided brand options (locking it down)

Obstacles

- Time to set up
- Learning new functions
- Block template PHP syntax

Change Level: Low Time Level: Medium

"Stats page" design

The Ordeal Building a Full Site Editing (FSE) theme

Ordeal graphics background

Building with "block grammar"

- <u>https://fullsiteediting.com/lessons/block-grammar-basics/</u>
- <u>https://wordpress.org/plugins/create-block-theme/</u>



Expanding on theme.json

- register all custom patterns/templates for your theme
- theme style presets
- https://fullsiteediting.com/lessons/global-styles/

look into registering template parts vs patterns, has this changed in 6.3?

Templates & template parts

- <u>https://fullsiteediting.com/lessons/templates-and-template</u>
- <u>https://fullsiteediting.com/how-to-lock-blocks-and-templat</u>
 <u>es</u>

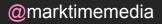


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PHP templates in FSE

 <u>https://fullsiteediting.com/lessons/how-to-use-php-templa</u> <u>tes-in-block-themes/</u>





Benefits & Obstacles

Benefits

 Fully take advantage of FSE

Obstacles

- Full rebuild
- Learning new, unsupported syntax
- Lack of error reporting (WSOD)

Change Level: High Time Level: High

"Stats page" design

Reward Becoming a FSE developer

Reward graphics background

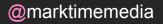
The (Long) Road Back Block Editor development (with Javascript)

Road back graphics background

Expanding core with JS

- https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/how-to-guid es/javascript/js-build-setup/
- Block Styles in JS
- Block Variations
- WordPress Scripts Package
 - https://developer.wordpress.org/news/2023/07/beyond-block-styl es-part-1-using-the-wordpress-scripts-package-with-themes/

Screenshots (possibly several slides)



Benefits & Obstacles

Benefits

Controls more seamlessly integrated with UI

Obstacles

- Familiarity with CLI
- Setting up build tools
- Package and dependency management
- JS syntax

Change Level: High Time Level: High

"Stats page" design

Resurrection/Success Building Custom Blocks

Resurrection graphics background

Custom Blocks

- https://developer.wordpress.org/news/2023/02/static-vsdynamic-blocks-whats-the-difference/
- Static Blocks
 - Content is known when saving a post (in the editor)
 - <u>https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/how-to-guides/block</u>
 <u>-tutorial/writing-your-first-block-type/</u>
- Dynamic Blocks
 - Content is calculated when the post is rendered (PHP)
 - <u>https://developer.wordpress.org/block-editor/how-to-guides/block</u>
 <u>-tutorial/creating-dynamic-blocks/</u>

Possibly broken into two slides?



Benefits & Obstacles

Benefits

- Fully custom functionality
- Fully custom UI

Obstacles

- Lack of documentation ("wild west")
- Setting up build tools
- React syntax

Change Level: High Time Level: High

"Stats page" design

Return with the Elixer A larger suite of tools

Elixer graphics background

The Hero You are a hero every step of the way

Back to hero graphics background

QUESTIONS ? Here's how to get in touch:

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