Taking the plunge

Why you should use new technology on client projects

Hello! 👋

WordPress Developer
@ Pragmatic - WordPress agency

Web Developer
@ Sharpmonkeys - Digital marketing

Lead Organiser
WordCamp Brighton 2019

@_tommyferry

Who’s installed the classic editor plugin on their site(s)?

Me too

Using new technology is scary!

What are new technologies?

...and why should we care about using them?

New technology examples

- New WordPress Features
  - Gutenberg Editor
  - Data & REST APIs
- New Architectural Approaches
  - Headless/decoupled CMS
  - JAMstack (e.g. Gatsby.js)
- New User Experiences
  - Progressive Web Apps (PWA)
  - Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP)

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  - Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP)
- New Frameworks and Libraries
  - React, Redux, and Next.js
  - Vue and Angular
  - GraphQL
- “New” Build Tools
  - Webpack, Gulp, and Grunt
  - Babel (ES6 transpiling)
  - NPM and Composer
  - Version Control

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New technologies can be overwhelming!

The benefits of using a new technology

- Better **end user experience**
  - Better front end performance
  - Better UI experience
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> It solves a problem <

✨ It can still be shiny and exciting! ✨

What are the risks?

(This is the scary bit...)

The risks of using a new technology

- We might not deliver what's expected
- We might take too long to deliver
- We might not know the downsides
- We might find it hard to maintain
- **We might fail!**

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> Expensive <

How do we minimise the risks?

...and make sure nothing blows up?

How to minimise the risks

- Choose the **right project** and the **right client**
- **Be transparent** about the risks
  - Sell the benefits but be open and honest about the risks
  - They might say no (and that’s okay)...

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- **Start small.** One feature at a time, not a whole project!
- Give yourself **more time**. No, more than that.
- **Prototype.** No need to be perfect, just enough to know more
- **Review often.** Is this right? Can we still do this?

What might that look like?

Time for a case study...

The Project: Lindy Electronics

An extensive site redevelopment

- Designs (existing brand guidelines)
- Site development
  - Multilingual site translations: **German, French, and Italian**
  - **Content cloning** between sites
  - Custom **Vimeo integration**
  - **Content animation**
- WP Multisite + Advanced Custom Fields + Starter Theme
- Bespoke templates with **modular components**

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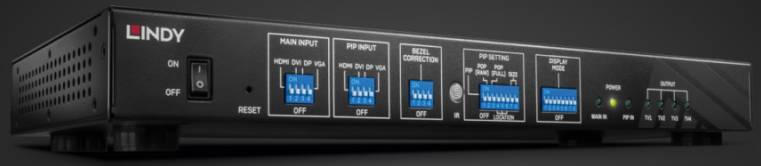
PRODUCT REVIEW

MARCH 20, 2018

HIGH QUALITY AUDIO FROM YOUR ANDROID SMARTPHONE

CREATIVITY ENGINE



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Build the most stunning video wall installations with up to 40 displays
and spectacular regular and irregular bespoke layouts.

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The standalone hardware solution for creating
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FLEXIBILITY

Easily create regular, irregular and portrait video wall
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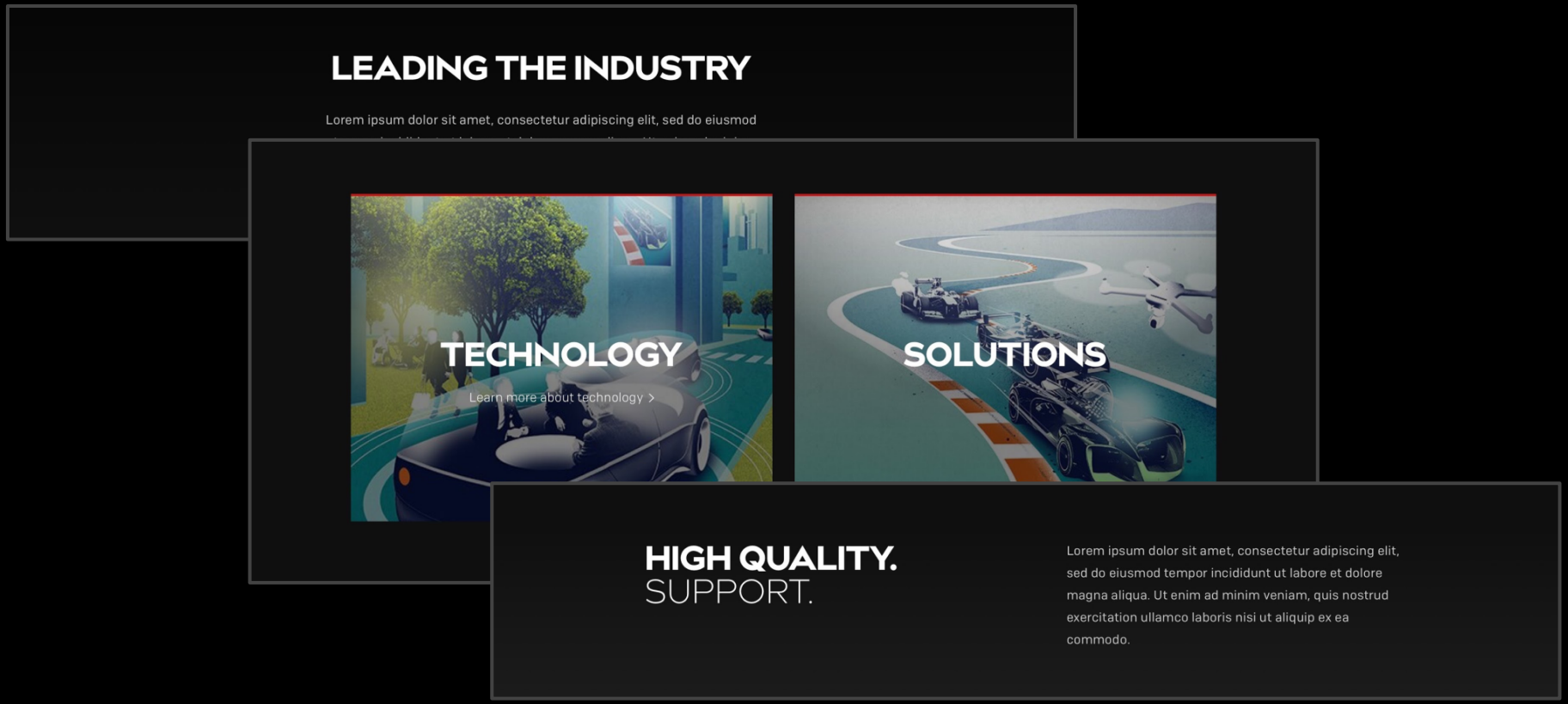
options.



Some modular components (or “blocks”)

LEADING THE INDUSTRY

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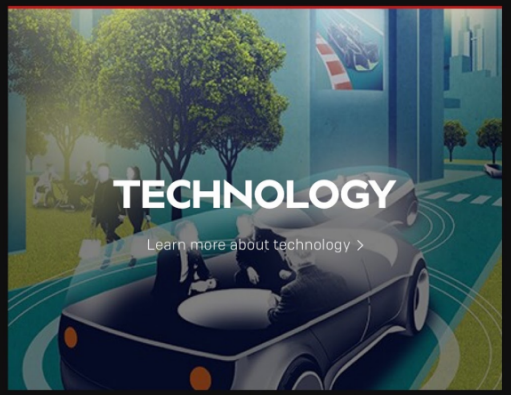

HIGH QUALITY.
SUPPORT.

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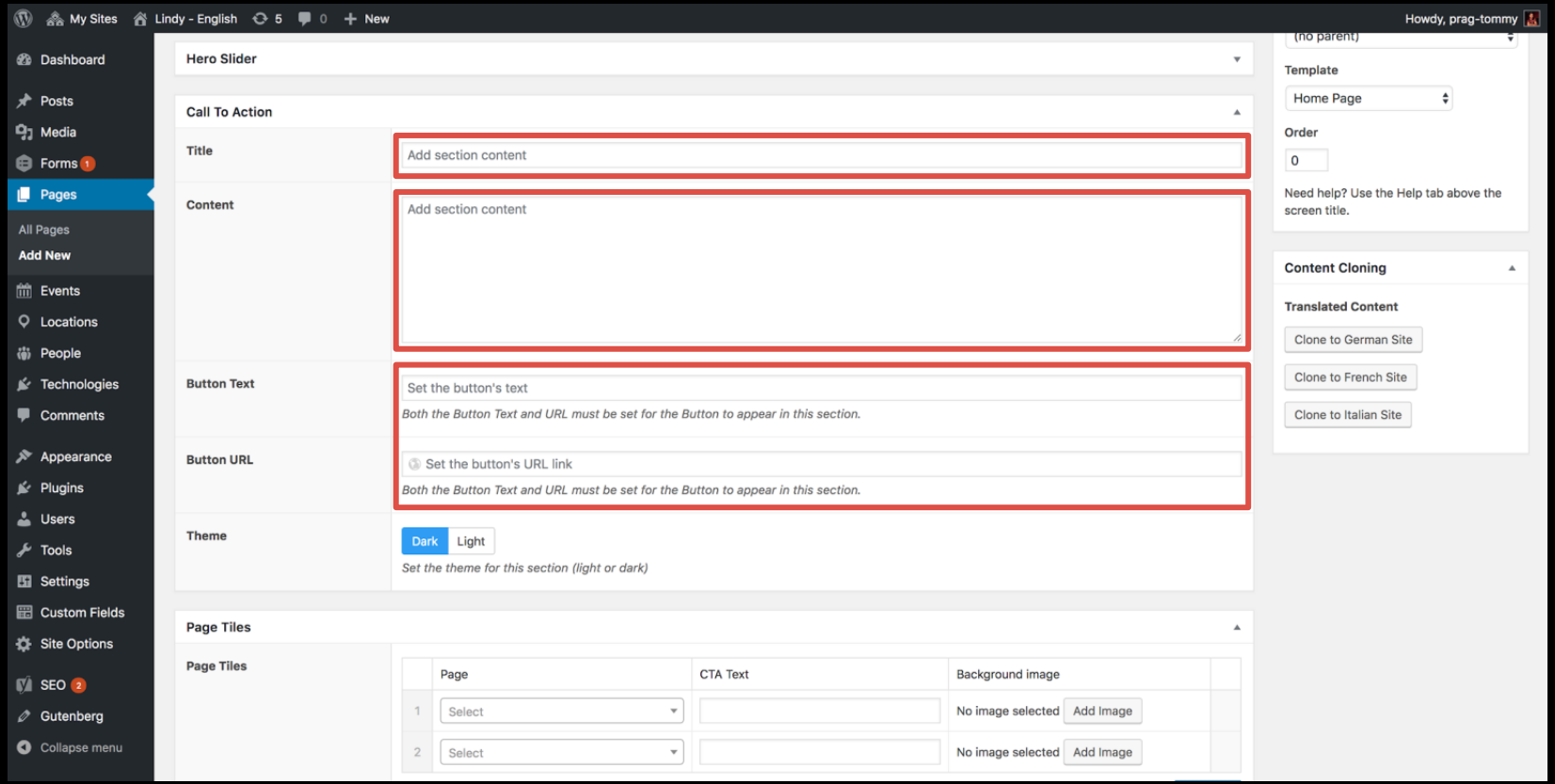

The ACF “editor”

The Problem

> Editing Experience <

- **Simple UI** but not wysiwyg
  - More immediate feedback needed
- Wanted more flexible layouts
- Flexible at a **component level**
- Inflexible at the **template level**

The Solution

> Gutenberg <

Benefits

- **Does what they want**
- Still a **modular** approach
- Industry & technology leading
- **Allows us to try Gutenberg**

Risks

- An **unknown** new technology
- More work = **more expensive**
- **Not 100% stable**

What we built

- **12 custom blocks** with multiple content fields
  - Able to **reuse markup** from existing components
- Created **modular settings panels** and reused across blocks
  - Theme color, fonts, alignment, etc
- **Custom block categories**
- Deactivated core blocks

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80 YEARS
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BLACK LINE. LIGHTNING FAST.

BLOG POST

INCREASING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

READ

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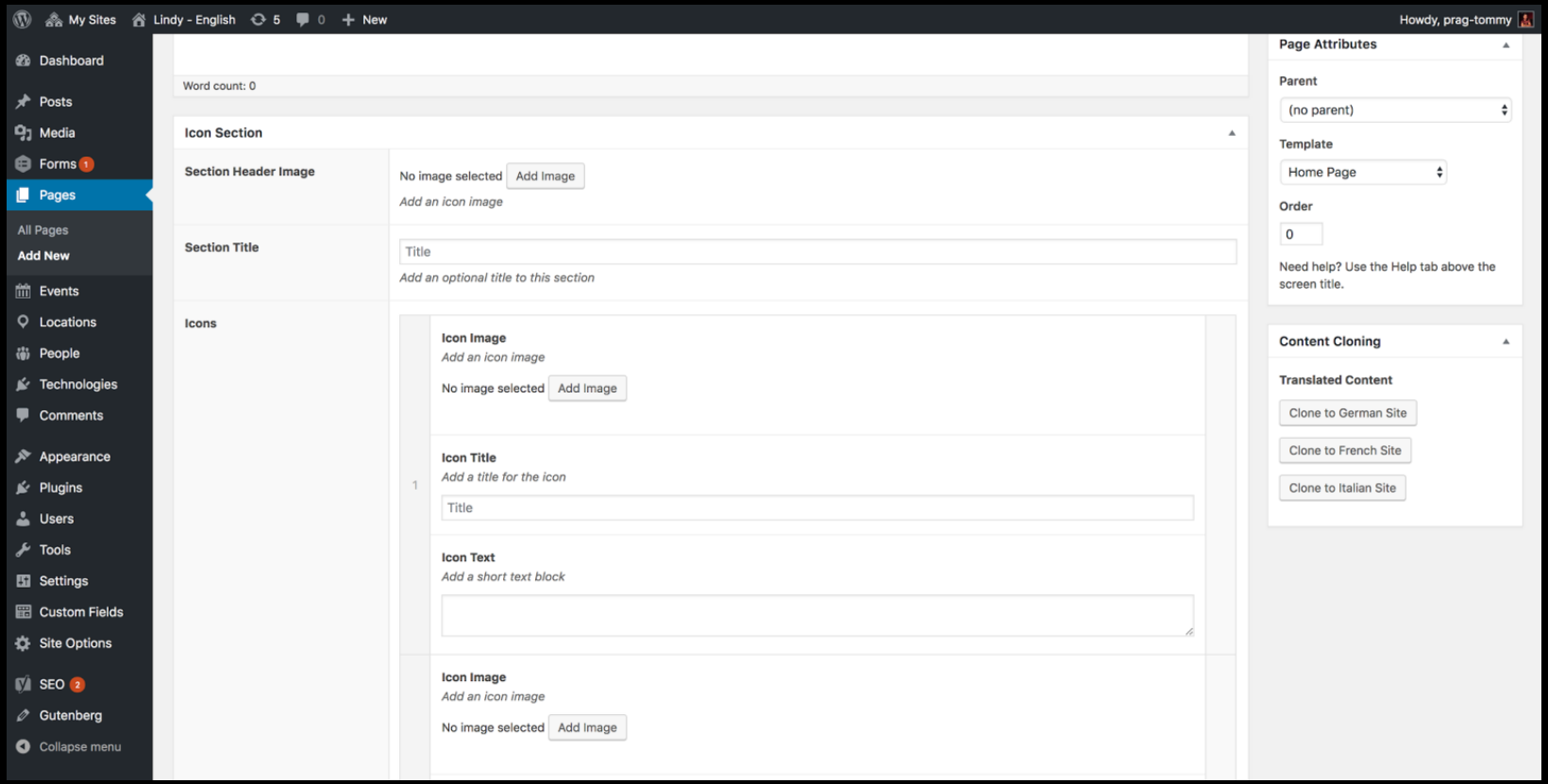
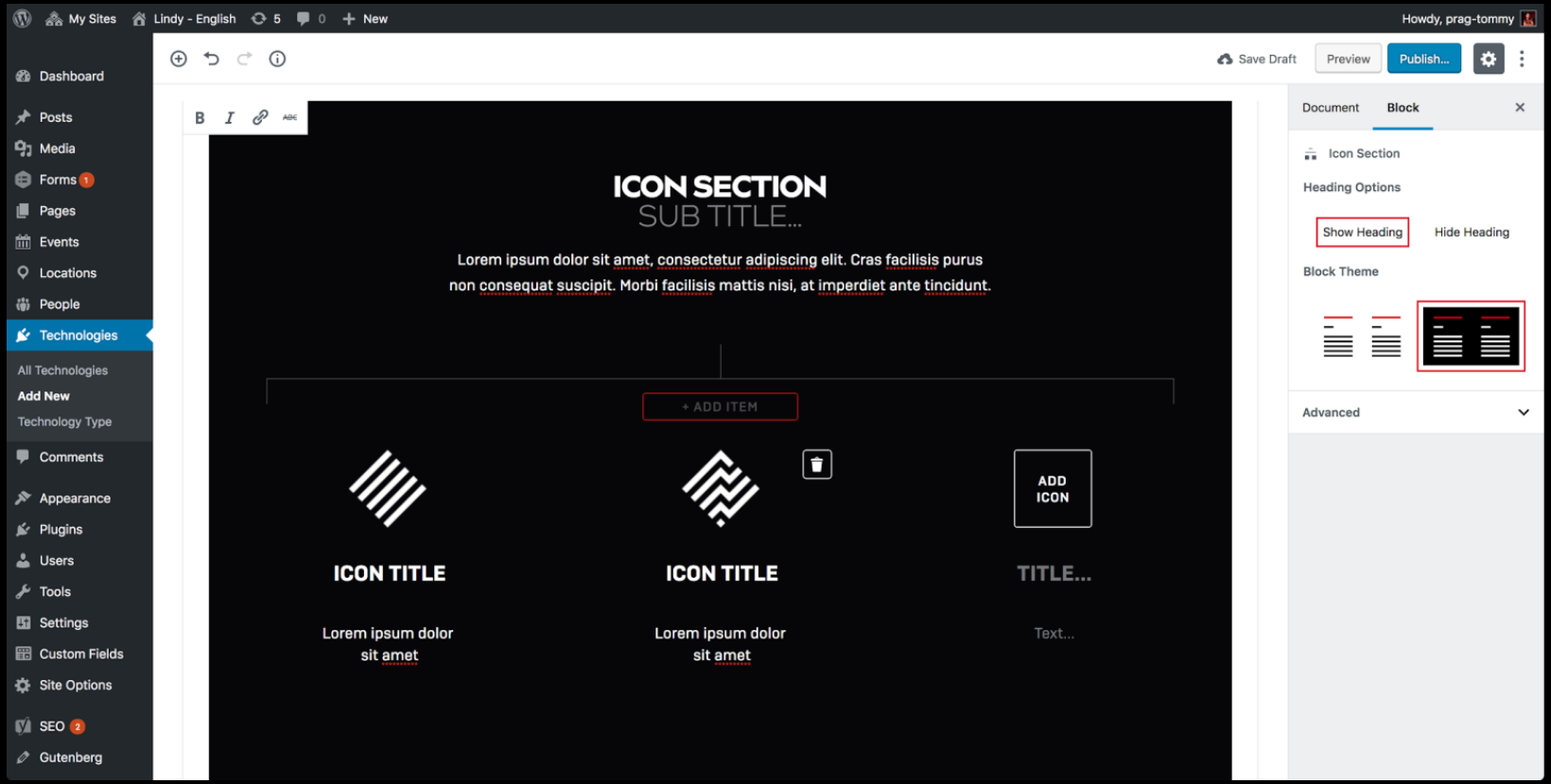
LINDY AT ELECTRONICS TRADER SHOW 2018



The **old** editing experience



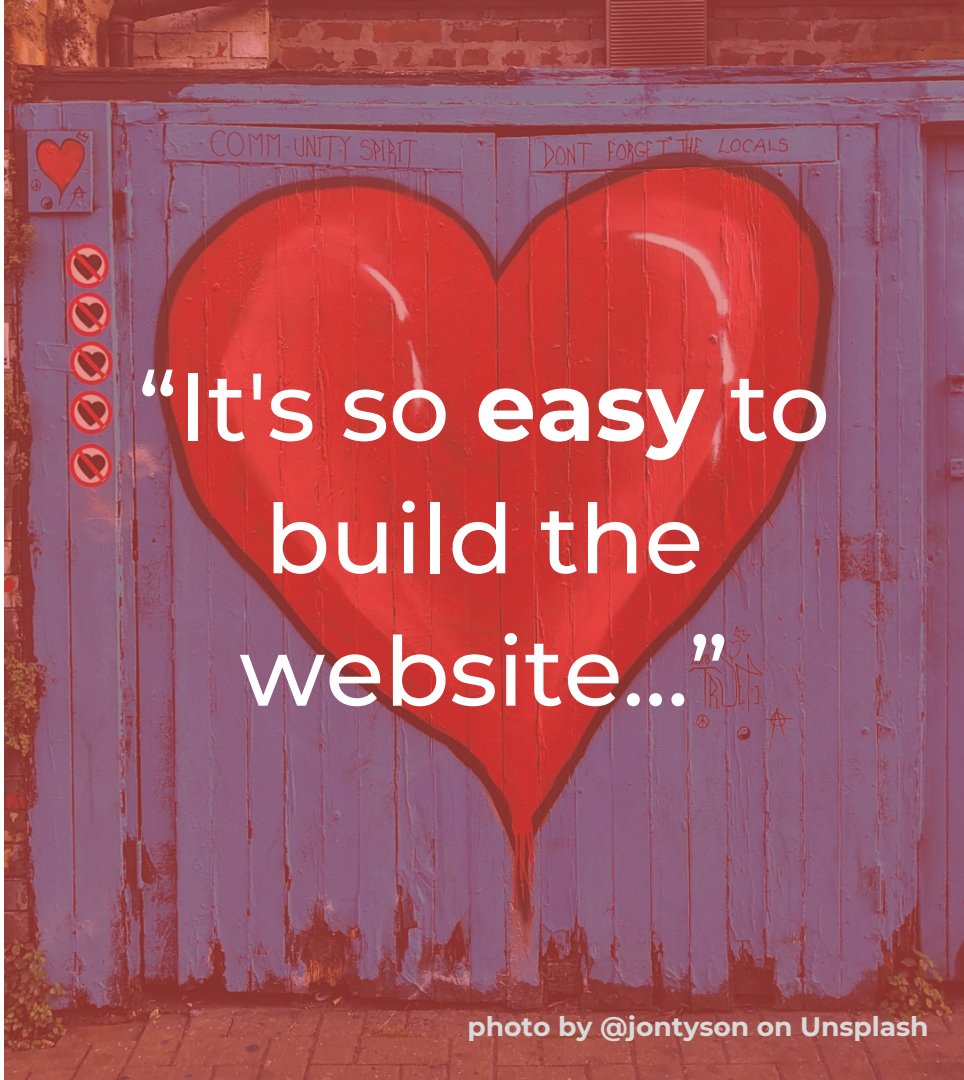
The **new** editing experience

Where did we end up?

The Gute, the Berg, and the Ugly

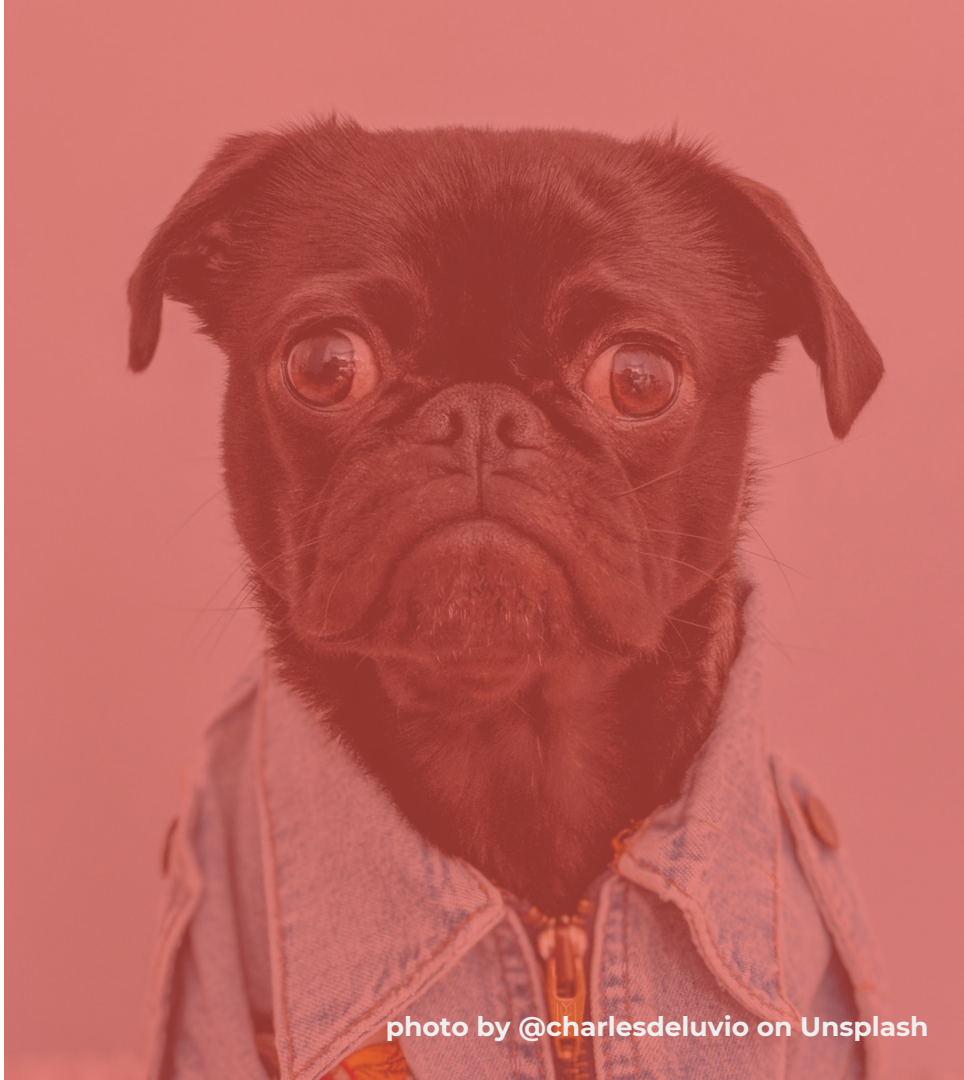
The Gute

- **The client loves using it!**
- Wysiwyg interface gives immediate editor feedback
- Plenty of editor freedom… but not ***too*** much
- We've since enabled **Gutenberg** on other content



The Berg

- **Core blocks** were added with similar functionality
- **No defined best practice** so we had to dig deep into Gutenberg
- We **wasted effort** - some blocks weren't used



The Ugly

- **The documentation** was patchy in areas
- Refactoring custom blocks is **hard** and really slowed us down
- We could have worked more with core blocks

How did we benefit?

What do we actually get after all this stress?

Benefits

For us

- Continued **strong relationship** with the client
- Successful project to use as a **case study for pitches**
- **Starting point** for future work with Gutenberg

Benefits

For me

- **Better understanding of Gutenberg**
- Improved JavaScript
- Starting point for **React focussed learning**
- Get to do presentations

What did we learn?

We made it!

Takeaways

- **Make sure the technology solves the problem**
- Get the client invested in the journey
- **It’s okay to not know everything**
- Learn what can be applied elsewhere
- **Consolidate your new knowledge**

Thank you

Any questions?

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