

# Jakob Trost - Pagebuilders in a world of Full Site Editing & Blocks

[00:00:00] Hey, I'm Jakob from GREYD. I am gonna talk to you about page builders in a world of full site editing and blocks. A lot has changed in the last couple of years, we went from an experience that looked something like this inside the classic editor to the all new block editor with features like patterns, full set, editing, life editing, global styles of.

[00:01:16] That's not entirely true. That's not the whole story because most of you didn't switch from the classic editor straight to the block editor. I reckon many of you are using page builders or have used page builders. This is what Elementor, for example provides on their website. Page builders supplied

[00:01:38] one thing that the core didn't do for the last couple of years, and that is visual website building, they saw that need and provided it because for a techno technological standpoint, we were ready to build websites visually. And as of today, the block editor provides a way, finally provides a way to visually build websites.

[00:02:04] And those features are in some kind of competition to another. What does that mean for page builders? And this is the question I want to talk to you about today. First of all, let's go with the agenda. I want to give you a little wrap up of where we are today with work within block editor, the features of page builder builders.

[00:02:28] We want to compare those features to the block editor itself. And then take a look at how those page builders react to those new features and what that means for page builders in the future. And what lies ahead. Let me introduce myself quickly. I am Jakob Trost. I am a developer at greyd, and we focus on building professional websites faster and easier, and therefore we develop the greyd.suite, the first block based all in one solution for WordPress.

[00:03:01] And what is important is that we use the block editor on a professional basis. Our customers use it on a professional basis, so we know what we're talking about. And, but we still come from an agency background. We have used many page builders in the past. So we are aware of how that process works and we can quite compare those two different workflows.

[00:03:24] First of all, the status quo of Wordpress as of May, 2022. As you are aware with WordPress 5.9 earlier this year, we had some features arriving into WordPress that were called full site editing. One of those features included a template, edit, template editing mode, where you can edit a 404 template, a navigation head food or whatsoever.

[00:03:51] All your net bars, your post page, your archive page is now customizable inside the block editor and every block of imaginable can be inserted in those website parts. So the block editor is no longer just a content editors, actually a website editor app. And another feature arrive. Global styles enables you to yeah.

[00:04:15] Customize your color palette, your typography options and layouts, and many more globally, so that it affects your entire website with just one setting. And the latest release of WordPress includes switching between variations of different themes, style sheets. For example, we have more template choices, creating more specific page templates, for example, category archive, author, page, and many more improvements to the full site editing experience.

[00:04:47] But this is where we are today with the block editor. So now we take a look at the features that page builders actually offer. And I selected two page builders and Divi because they're very popular. If

not the most popular page builders out there. And I took a look at what features they actually offer and market out there.

[00:05:14] What features are they providing to their customers, to their. So let's take a look at Elementor. This is screenshot from their website and those are the core features they provide. And we quickly summarize. They are enabling a drag and drop editor, have a template library included that lets you import your entire website to start from there.

[00:05:37] You have a live editing interface. You have hundred plus widgets to build your websites. You can build the responsive layouts and screen sizes of your website and you have global settings. For example, colors and fonts, headers and foot. DV, for example, looks like this, those are pretty much the main and basic core features.

[00:06:00] We summarize them as well. We have drag drop again, the same buzzword. We have visual building. We have responsive editing, global elements of designs, which means colors typographies as well, website packs, which are pretty similar to the template library. Elementor offers. You can install websites and start from there.

[00:06:19] Or you can start from scratch. They have 40 plus modules to build your websites and they include so called theme builder to let you edit a header footer for four page. So let's compare those features to the one of the bucket. First of all, the passwords drag drop live editing visual. If you take a look at how the PA the block editor looks up as today, you can see you are building in a visual interface.

[00:06:49] You can see live what your changes are, how they affect your websites and how the website looks in the frontend. You can drag drop sizes and images around you can drag drop pretty much everything around, and you can build in a visual live interface. Yes, drag drop, live editing, visual. The block editor solves those issues, those problems.

[00:07:13] What about global colors? Global font, global style. This is what we've already seen with Gutenberg. At editing, you can edit those elements globally. You have a way to, to customize your color palette, your typography options and anymore. So yes, the block editor does this as well. Theme builder. Header builder footer builder.

[00:07:36] What about that? Can you customize your archive single page? Yes, you can. With full site editing, everything is fully customizable in the template editing mode. You can natively inside the block editor, adjust those templates to your liking include dynamic elements and previews, and many more features.

[00:07:57] So yet theme builder is included. Header footer can be customized, single archive, four or four templates are many. What about a template, library and website P. Inside the core block editor, we have patterns and we have a pattern library. We can actually explore that. And earlier this year, the public pattern library launched.

[00:08:22] So we can now contribute to the public pattern library can and contribute to your patterns. And if they are up to their standard, they will be included inside the pattern library. And you can include. Patterns, which are pretty much sections, but could be entire pages. You can include them in every page and every website you want.

[00:08:42] So when it comes to sections and parts of a webpage or a website, yes, the pattern library pretty much does the same. And what a template library of those other tools does. But what about full site? Full page website templates? We take a look at some third party solutions that provide template libraries as well inside the block.

[00:09:03] First of all extend a feature that comes, for example, with the plugin editor plus really well known, really? Yeah, really well known plugin when it comes to the block editor and there you can include entire page layouts or patterns and import them into your site and customize them to your like, Let's take a look at stackable blocks, another popular plugin for the block editor.

[00:09:29] And even there you can import sections patterns, wire frame, UI kit from their template library. Or we take a look at the greyd.suite. The greyd.suite enables a template library that lets you import entire website packages, or you can enter insert pages, templates, popups forms, or even patterns inside this template library.

[00:09:55] So yes, template library is actually included in the core with the pattern library. You can select presets, import them, customize them. And when it comes to website packs, now the core does not really offer that solution, but third party solutions, extendify, stackable or greyd offer features that let you import entire websites as well.

[00:10:17] So the next core features of page prints, responsive editing. What about that? Let me tell you when it comes to responsive editing the core lag behind it has some options yes. About, but not really a lot of them. So when it comes to responsive editing, I think this is not enough. And there we take a look at third party plugs again.

[00:10:40] First editor plus is a really popular plugin that lets you added pretty much every CSS property out there for every block. In a responsive manner, so you can edit it for tablet, mobile desktop separately. In this example, we adjust the headline font size stackable. For example, does something similar.

[00:11:01] You can adjust the headline font size in this example as well, you can customize it for every single break point separately without affecting the other break points. And one more advanced feature. If you want to adjust columns for different break points, width of columns, order of columns, you can do that example.

[00:11:21] For example, with the greyd.suite, we have included a 12 grade boots rep grid, and that is customizable for every break point. And you have lots of advanced layer options with that. So if it comes to more than just basic CSS properties and really complex layouts and adjust them for responsive layout, This is also possible.

[00:11:41] I want to just give you an example of how the greyd.suite looks in this and for this kind of complex layout. So response of editing now that well supported in the core lacks behind a bit, but third party solutions editable stackable grade. They do provide solutions for pretty much everything you want to yeah, you want to customize for different break points.

[00:12:08] What about those widgets? That page wheels offer 100 plus widgets 40 plus modules. The core block editor provides 90 plus blocks from columns, galleries, query blocks, flexbox containers, calendar, and many more dynamic blocks, embedded blocks whatsoever. But when it comes to some of these advanced blocks, that page footers also include yeah, the block, it doesn't really provide 'em.

[00:12:34] Those are, for example, accordions, tabs, focus bars, counters, sliders. But as well, Third party solutions come to the rescue. Editor Plus, Stackable, Greyd. They all provide solutions for every one of these blocks. You can just choose the tool you like, and you can build all those advanced more advanced blocks.

[00:12:56] That page builds also provide, so let's compare, let's wrap it up. Where does the editor lack? Advanced blocks. Yes. The core block editor doesn't really support all these advanced blocks. That page for those do animations and responses are some pain points as well. And you need the party tools to enable those features, but they are already out there and they enable every single one of those features.

[00:13:24] And one thing I would like to point out as well is the user experience inside the block. Editors might not be as well rounded as the page builder experience. Why that's logical is a young feature. I think the user experience is great, but it might not be as easy as to start in Elementor in the first couple of hours.

[00:13:44] But as soon as you get to hang of it it is a really good user experience in my opinion, but there's still room for improvement. Let's be honest, but. Those call disadvantages site. The block editor has some major advantages over the competition over page business. First of all, one really important thing is performance.

[00:14:08] Block editor pages have an incredibly good page feed. It is pretty standard to have a 99 mobile ranking. If you use the block it to build your website, that is not something you need Caching tools on plugins for this is out of the box page feed. Why? because the block editor has one really good idea in its core.

[00:14:29] It writes clean HTML code. The block editor actually saves HTML code and all those properties and attributes that are used to edit it later on, are safe in an HTML comment. So those comments are ignored by the frontend anyway, the amount of things that are needed to be parsed to display something in the front that is kept at an absolute minimum.

[00:14:52] Of course, there are always dynamic things like the latest post, for example, this has to be dynamically fetched on page load, but those static things, for example, the headline you've typed in individually for your page. This is static. This is already HTML. It does not need to be processed. So this is the groundwork for absolute maximum.

[00:15:13] Another thing is the locked in effect. Page builders do have an issue with locked in effect. As soon as you disable the page builder, you've used to build your website. Your content is lost, probably the entire content. At least it does not look at all as how you build it with the block editor. The block editor is integrated into the core of WordPress.

[00:15:35] You pretty much cannot really disable it unless you use another tool to enable it, but it is the core itself. So it will always be supported. But if you use, what about if you use those third party solutions, I've just talked about. Because the block editor writes HTML codes. You don't lose your contents as soon as you disable one of those tools.

[00:15:58] For example, if I've built my content with the greyd.suite and I now disable the greyd.suite and use another theme, another plugin out there, I of course lose some kind of functionality. Some custom JavaScript functionality, some hover effects maybe yet, because the global CSS and JavaScript of those plugins is no longer available, but the basic content, your headlines, your text, your images.

[00:16:21] Those are all clean HTML elements and they can be easily converted back into block editor elements. So you don't lose those. Of course you have some kind of locked in effect, but that's not really huge problem anymore. And one last thing, compatibility. If you are a page builder, two out there, if you are Elementor, you are pretty large, pretty huge.

[00:16:49] And most of those popular plugins will be in some kind of way compatible with you because they actually build a compatibility solution for your page builder. Yes. If you're it's smaller. Those things will be harder. You might not be able to use this next cool plugin. This is out there because it doesn't provide a compatibility with your page builder.

[00:17:12] And this will increase in the future because all of those core elements, all of those visually editing interfaces and all those features are available for every developer out there for free. So it is easy

to build upon the block editor for. But to be compatible with every single third party solution out there will be harder.

[00:17:30] And if you are the core itself, a block, it editor itself, those other developers will make sure to be compatible with you instead of the other way, round, like with third party page builders and those advantages or disadvantages to page with us cannot be surmounted. Why first of all, performance will be very hard.

[00:17:51] It is not impossible of course, but very hard to be smart. I think the core idea of the block editor is really good, and it will be hard to generate an even better performance and you are not built into the core. You always load your custom code as well. So you still have more code, more assets to belong mode.

[00:18:10] and for enough, in effect, page builders will always have some kind of in effect unless they are built upon the block editor, but then are there page builders anymore? And for compatibility, I think you got the idea. This is a page builder problem. As soon as you are a third party solution, you have to deal with comparability issues.

[00:18:33] So how do page builders react to this situation? To those new features? Let's take a look at deviant Elementor again, first of all, Elementor says it is block compatible. Good, very compatible. And it also has a plugin called elemental blocks, which enables, and we take a look at this and this enables you to include Elementor assets you built with Elementor into your block, your page.

[00:19:03] This is pretty much all it does. You can select the mentor asset and include it into your blocked page. You cannot edit it from there on, or the other way around. This is what it does. On the other hand, Divi is also compatible with the block editor. You can write your post inside the block editor, but as soon as you build something in the Divi builder, you still have to use the Divi builder to edit it again.

[00:19:27] You cannot go back into the block editor and add some contents there. This is not possible. So both these tools and actually most page pillars out there, market themselves as Gutenberg block editor ready and compatible. And that's not wrong. That's true. Your page doesn't crash. As soon as you, you activate Elementor or go into the block editor, but this means it usually just includes your block pages into the page builder

[00:19:52] so the page builder can display posts that are built with the block editor and the other way around, like we've seen with Elementor, you can display some Elementor assets inside the block editor that also possible. but you are always have to switch between those interfaces and they actually use the block editors as a content editor before full site editing.

[00:20:13] They use the block editor, for example, to write their posts in Elementor, you can write your post in the block editor and then add your entire website in Elementor. So in my opinion, this is more of a marketing feature instead of really being a profitable feature to their users. Of course you can choose the block editor to yeah.

[00:20:34] Write your posts, but then you have to switch between two different interfaces all the time, write your posts there. And the block editor, you have to master the block editor as well, and then edit your website inside Elementor. So you switch between two different interface, maybe three, if you have a form plug and that has a custom interface.

[00:20:52] And so this, in my opinion is not really a a good feature for the user. It's just an option of basic comparability, but not really an inclusion of those tools. It's not really included into the block or build upon it. And those well known page builder problems like performance, like in effects, those still remain.

[00:21:14] This doesn't change anything,

[00:21:18] but as I've told you. The block editors used as a content editor. What about those new fault editing features, global styles, template, editing mode. None of those page there is really compatible with those features and it'll be very hard for them to be compatible if not impossible, to be compatible with those features, because those are really standing in competition of what page footers offer in their core.

[00:21:45] What does all that mean for the future of page builders? Most page building features are now offered by the code for free as you've just learned. And even those last missing features, responsive layout editing, for example, are already offered by various block tools, whatever tool like you can selected.

[00:22:10] And. Customize all those responsive layers, for example. So there are all the solutions out there already. Maybe page Googles might still be ahead in some parts, for example, the usability and maybe in all those design featured advanced blocks and those animations, for example, page Googles might still be ahead, but block tools are accelerating and closing the gap more and more.

[00:22:38] And if we take a look at the current customers of page builders. I think they will probably stay for a while. If you are now building a website with a page builder, you probably got used to it. You are an expert inside the page builder, and this will be hard to just shift to an entire different solution.

[00:22:57] So I don't think really, as of now, all of the users from page builders are going to the block editor. No, I don't think that would be true, but let me ask the question. How can page builders generate more and more customers in the future? If what they offer is less and less of an advantage and more of a competition to what the core offers and those deficits are insurmountable and they actually come at a higher cost.

[00:23:25] How can they generate more and more customers in the future? So our opinion is that tools that only offer page building features will become more and more obsolete as block editors grow further, and to stay relevant, you have to adapt and offer new advantages. The core just doesn't offer so forth. So features that extend the core will be more relevant because they're built upon it and features that are in competition to the core, which page builders actually are, will be less and less relevant in the future.

[00:23:59] This is our opinion. So when we talk about what does that mean? Let me talk about the greyd.suite. because we've developed the grade speed based on the block editor itself, because we saw those flaws of page builders, those issues that they really cannot surmount. And on the other hand, we saw the block editor and it was ready to build complex website.

[00:24:22] As soon as you fix those last couple missing features. and we were convinced we wanted to provide an all in one solution because if the user can edit every single part of the website in one tool and doesn't have to worry about comparability. He can edit the global colors and styles of the website in the block editor, the header, the filterer, the page, the post, and we've included popups.

[00:24:49] You can edit your popups, their forms, integrations, custom post type, everything compatible with the block editor. You only have to master one interface and are compatible with the core. Or alone, and this is what we call an all in one solution. You have everything in one tool and don't have to worry about all those issues

[00:25:08] page builders bring along. And that's why we build the greyd with all those elements included. And we have used page builders in the past as well. And as soon as we develop the grayd.suite on the blocker, based on the block editor, we had the question. What about all those old pages we use to.

[00:25:29] Because before we built with the bucket editor, we actually built an early version of the greyd.suite with WP bakery, because it was really easy to customize and build upon. So what about

those old sides? And let's give you an example of how we build a solution to convert those old pages in two block editor pages.

[00:25:51] This is the website filled with an early WP bakery version of the. If you click edit page, WP bakery. This is what the website looks like in the backend. You can now go to settings and enable the block editor. You switch to the good block editor. And as soon as you go back into the page, you see what the locked in effect really looks like.

[00:26:14] Those are short codes, and this is horrible to read. You cannot really use it. You click on convert to blocks. And there it is. The whole page is converted to a block page, and this is one solution we built for the base WP bakery version, as well as the greyd.suite WP bakery version. So you can convert those pages into the block with just one click.

[00:26:38] Of course, it's not 100% entirely proof. If you build some custom CSS in there and made something really. Yeah. That should not be built like this. Then maybe you have to go into that section and just check it. If it's converted correctly, of course, it's not always a hundred percent, but that is a really good starting point to close that blocked in.

[00:27:01] And we support almost all WP bakery modules, columns, call action, slider galleries, many more. There are some like line charts, for example, bar pie charts that are not really have a good block out there. So this was hard to be make compatible and be, and to make it convertible. But most of almost all of the WP bakery modules are actually convertible easily into.

[00:27:28] If you want to find out how that works, what is all included inside the greyd.suite, we have lots of more features inside the greyd.suite that is not it's not gonna fit in this presentation. Take a look@grades.de and there you can go to get started click on there and you can just type in your email and easily download the greyd.suite.

[00:27:53] It is entirely free to use. Every feature is included and you can just download it and use it and test it. The only thing is that this little bottom, right at the bottom, this will be included on your site as, as long as you don't have a license. Insight at bot inside our workshop. Yes, but you can test it for free.

[00:28:15] You can download it. Everything is included. All those features inside the greyd.suite are included. So feel free to download. I will be happy if you, I would be happy if you download the greyd.suite today or the next couple of days, check it out. It has a lot to offer, but now let's come to our last point.

[00:28:36] What lies ahead? To summarize in our opinion tools that only offer page BI features will become obsolete to stay relevant. You have to adapt and offer new advantages. And now let's take a look at the four phases of Berg. This is what the roadmap is described on the wordpress website. The first step, the first phase is easy editing.

[00:29:02] So the new block editor was created. We are already past that phase. The second phase, customization, with features like full site editing, block patterns, block based themes. This is the phase we're in right now and maybe will be over soon because if you read those features, those are actually been around for a bit and are improved right now.

[00:29:23] There are, but there are already developed. Maybe we come to a close with this phase sometime soon. The third phase, collaboration, a more intuitive way of co-author content will be very interesting and very interesting feature to co-author content. If you use a graphic design tools, for example, like Figma, they've shown a way how to really intuitively co-author content or if you

[00:29:49] edit your document in whatever your Google document, or whatever you can coauthor those content as well. And wordpress will provide a feature for that. I think that is really interesting. And the

last fourth phase is multilingual core implementation of multilingual website, and this will be a really important feature.

[00:30:09] And a lot of the market really wants that feature. So let's take a look how page builders are as of today, including those phases and those features into the tools. So just for the sake of it, let's say with easy editing with the block editor they're compatible, this is true BC they're compatible they're in competition to another, in some kind of way, but at the base, they are compatible the second phase customization full at.

[00:30:40] This will be very hard to be, make made compatible for page builders because those full set editing features those global style features that are actually features that are the core of page builders and to be compatible with them with that means they're pretty much losing a huge part of their identity in their core features.

[00:31:00] So I don't think that most page views will be really compatible with this second phase that, that, that makes you. What about the next couple of phases? Will page builders really find a way to be compatible with those next phases? Won't they won't WordPress as they shown in the last couple years, just build upon the block editor and build upon the solution, the foundation they built in the last couple of years, I think they will.

[00:31:27] I think it will be very hard for page building conflicting solutions, a competition out there to be compatible with those features. So let's talk about the conclusion of all this. I don't think that page builder will disappear completely, at least not anytime soon, because as I've told you, they have customers that are used to it.

[00:31:56] They have good solutions and in some kind of way, they're still ahead. And maybe they will be ahead when it comes to design features and animation feature. But they need to adapt and offer new values. The future will be about more complex features. That is what we think. Page building features will be given, they will be expected, because the core offers them why shouldn't elementor whoever, whatever solution you're using offer them.

[00:32:28] And as soon as the core implements new features, as soon as the page building solution you're using is not offering a feature similar to this. Why should you then choose a page biller with such a huge disadvantage? We believe in the all in one approach, we believe that everything should be editable inside the block and turn everything should come in one tool and you don't have to worry about compatibility.

[00:32:54] You don't have to worry about all those third party plugins, combining them with each other, and just leave that headache out of there. And that's why we've developed the greyd.suite the way we did. And that's why we've developed the block converter. So feel free to test the greyd.suite you download it, feel free to discuss those points I've made and those opinions I have.

[00:33:20] And thank you for your attention.