

Polish and finesse: the essence of WordPress 6.6

New design tools take a major leap, so your best work takes center stage.

You probably know that better design leads to better engagement with your site—visitors trust your content more. They read more, explore more, and possibly even convert more.

To help you make all those good things happen, WordPress 6.6 is here with a few new tools—plus new flexibility, smoother flows and more ways to use them together.

New views in the Site Editor show all your options

The technical term is Data Views, but in the editor they're your Pages, Templates, and Patterns. Click on any of those, and you'll see all your choices at once. And if you need to do one thing to several? There's a checkbox so you can do it one time, as a bulk edit.

Edit Pages your way

A new side-by-side layout gives you a list of all your pages and a preview of the one you have selected. Start editing that page, and you have all the elements in the List view at left, and all your styles on the right!

Or, edit your pages from the Dashboard, as you always have.

Plus: when you add a new page from either place, 6.6 will give you an array of starter patterns you can choose, just as you're used to seeing with posts. So you never have to start with a blank page and a blinking cursor.

See all the blocks

Up to now, when you had a block selected and then opened the inserter, you only saw a few blocks—the ones immediately relevant to your selection. Where were all the other possibilities?

In 6.6, when you have a block selected, you get two lists. First, there's the list of blocks that work with your selection. Then you get a list with all the other blocks. Pick one of those, and it inserts below your block, to use in whatever you build next.

Shadows for all the blocks

Define lots of kinds of shadows for all kinds of blocks in Global Styles. Use them wherever you like.

And notice that in 6.6, Global Styles give you easy access not just to typography and colors—you also have shadows and layout in their own areas, with their own one-click access.

Overrides in synced patterns

What if you could keep a synced pattern's look and feel everywhere it appears—keeping it on brand—but have different content everywhere it appears?

For instance, maybe you're building a pattern for recipes. Ideally, you want the recipe card to *look* the same everywhere you show a recipe. But the recipe *content*—the ingredients, the steps, the notes on technique—will be different every time.

In a few years, someone else might need to change the look of the recipe pattern. It would be nice to know they can do that without

losing any of the content in the recipes your site has already published.

In version 6.6, you have all that power—with overrides in synced patterns.

A new publish flow helps you check all the boxes

Do you have a featured image? Do you have a category? Did you add tags? Did you write an excerpt?

There's a little more to publishing than just hitting the blue button. Up to now, those areas have been scattered up and down the Publish sidebar.

In 6.6, they're all in one place—no more scrolling!

A Grid layout for Groups

Grid is a new variation for the Group block that lets you arrange the blocks inside it as a grid—and control its look from the editor. If you've been using a plugin for this, now you can make your grids natively.

Better pattern management in Classic themes

You heard right: You can do everything with patterns in Classic themes that you can in a block theme. You can see all the patterns available to you in one view—and insert a pattern on the fly.

Negative margins

They're here! Negative margin values let you make things overlap. To make sure people set them intentionally, you can only set a negative margin by typing in an actual negative number, not by using the slider.

Site-wide background images

6.6 lets you set a site-wide background image in the Site Editor, just as you could in the Customizer.

Rollback auto-updates

Now you can set all your plugins to auto-update. In the rare case that an upgrade triggers an error, 6.6 will do a rollback. Automatically.

Performance

The editor in 6.6 loads 40% faster than in 6.5, and that's just one notable metric from a long list.

Do you build themes?

Or do you just like to add a little custom code here and there? Either way, WordPress 6.6 brings you a lot to love.

For starters, you can use that [checkbox in the Patterns view](#) to export your patterns in bulk as a JSON file.

Curated style variations

Do your themes come with style variations?

Now you can pull out your favorite color palettes and type combinations from those variations as curated type-only or color-only presets.

Your users will find them in the same space as your full style variations, to mix and match colors and type across the defaults.

Section styles

WordPress 6.6 lets you define (and control!) style options for separate sections of multiple blocks, including inner blocks.

Then your users can apply those block style variations to entire groups of blocks, effectively creating branded sections they can curate across a site.

A note about CSS specificity

To make it easier for your variations to override the global styles CSS, those styles now come wrapped in ``:root``. That limits their specificity. [For details, read the full discussion on GitHub.](#)

Switch style variations, but keep your custom CSS

Have you ever been in the flow of a new design and curiously clicked on a preset style variation, just to see it? And you lost a bunch of custom CSS you had written?

In 6.6, your carefully written custom CSS follows you to the new variation. You don't even have to remember to copy and paste!

Theme.json

Theme.json bumps up to version 3 in WordPress 6.6. And oh, the things you can do!

You can add your own presets for default type sizes, default spacing sizes, default aspect ratios, and so much more. For everything new you can do, check the [living Theme.json Version 3 Reference](#).

Are you a developer?

Whether you build for the platform or contribute to the project, or build out bespoke solutions as app platforms or enterprise integrations, 6.6 brings a host of improvements to make your days brighter and, hopefully, shorter.

Could you use some slots?

6.6 [unifies the editor experience](#) between the post and site editor. That push saves more than 7,000 lines of code in Core and opens several slots you can use to load your plugin code, wherever the call comes from in the Editor:

- [PluginSidebar](#)
- [PluginPostStatusInfo](#)
- [PluginMoreMenuItem](#)
- [PluginSidebarMoreMenuItem](#)
- [PluginDocumentSettingsPanel](#)
- [PluginBlockSettingsMenuItem](#)
- [PluginPostPublishPanel](#)
- [PluginPrePublishPanel](#)

New for 6.6: the Token Map

Here's a question: given a string and a byte offset into that string, does the next sequence of bytes match one of a known set of tokens? If so, what is the replacement for that token?

Now you can make a token map to help figure it out—in concert with other string-parsing logic. The announcement post in Make Core has all the details about this semantic utility.

More performance improvements

6.6 gets rid of extra calls to `WP_Theme_JSON::_construct`, disables autoload for large options (of course you can enable where you need to), and takes a giant pushbroom to unnecessary polyfill dependencies.

By default, version 6.6 lazy-loads embedded posts.

And a new ``data-wp-on-async`` directive gives you a speedy new asynchronous alternative to ``data-wp-on``.

Block Hooks: now technically better

6.6 gives Block Hooks several new tricks. Now you can see a toggle for hooked blocks that have come from a filter to an unmodified template. And you know this [harmonization for the ignoredHookedBlocks metadata injection logic](#)? It's fixed.

Easier interactivity. Now with easier debugging

The interactivity API simplified your life a few months ago by giving you a standard way to build interactivity into your blocks. In 6.6, you'll find easier debugging with better test coverage and code quality. All the details include [tool compatibility and key Make posts, Trac tickets and GH issues](#).

The HTML API gets a little more magical

New in 6.2, the HTML API parses markup without making you do gymnastics with regular expressions. That was pretty magical already.

But take a look now, at what the 6.6 wizards are calling a maintenance release:

- A brand-new text decoder helps you fix issues that `html_entity_decode()` and other PHP functions can't, so the API stays safe and reliable.
- A major internal refactor treats HTML documents [not as they are in the raw markup, but as they should be in the DOM](#).

Even more in 6.6 to simplify your life and help you build more elegant solutions:

Version 6.6 drops support for PHP 7.0 and 7.1, and makes changes to get you ready for React 19.

A new filter lets you add certain blocks to a list of editable ones in a locked template.

In 6.6, WordPress supports custom ports for multisites. You can also now load multiple network options with a single database request.

Learn more about WordPress 6.6

[Learn WordPress](#) is a free resource for new and experienced WordPress users. Learn is stocked with how-to videos on using various features in WordPress, [interactive workshops](#) for exploring topics in-depth, and lesson plans for diving deep into specific areas of WordPress.

Explore the [WordPress 6.6 Field Guide](#). Learn about the changes in this release with detailed developer notes to help you build with WordPress.

[Read the WordPress 6.6 Release Notes](#) for information on installation, enhancements, fixed issues, release contributors, learning resources, and the list of file changes.

About page references

This is the draft copy of the WordPress 6.6 About page.

Editing:

If you're here, you can suggest changes in comments.

Resources:

[The message strategy](#), where you can also suggest changes in comments.

[The WordPress Brand Style Guide](#)

[The 6.6 Source of Truth](#)

Feature descriptions from the Beta 1 post.

This year's second major release is focused on about polish and finesse. Features that landed in the last few releases have new flexibility and smoother flows—and a few new tricks. And of course there are a few brand-new features.

Data Views updates

Part of the groundwork for phase 3, Data Views get a new and improved experience of working with information in the Site Editor. A new layout consolidates patterns and template parts, gets you to general management views in fewer clicks, and packs in a wide range of refinements.

Overrides in synced patterns

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For instance, maybe you're building a pattern for recipes. Ideally, you want to keep the overall design of the recipe card consistent on every post that will have a recipe. But the recipe itself—the ingredients, the steps, special notes on technique—will be different every time.

And perhaps, in the future, other people might need to change the design of the recipe pattern. It would be nice to know they can do that, and that the content in existing recipes will stay right where it is.

In version 6.6, you can make all that happen, and overrides in synced patterns are the way you do it.

See all the blocks

Up to now, when you had a block selected and then opened the block inserter, you only saw the blocks you could add to your selected block. Where were all the others?

In 6.6, when you have a block selected, you get two lists. First, there's the list of blocks you can insert at your selected block. Then you get a list with all the other blocks. So you can get an idea of what you can use in your selected block, and what other blocks you could use in another area. In fact, if you select a block from that second list, WordPress 6.6 will add it below your block, to use in whatever you build next.

A new publish flow

Version 6.6 brings the post and site editors closer together than ever. So whether you're writing for a post in the post editor or a page in the Site Editor, your experience will be about the same.

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Rollback auto-updates

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Actual copy starts after the arrows ... repetitions are intentional, as
if copy were also poetry. ;-D

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