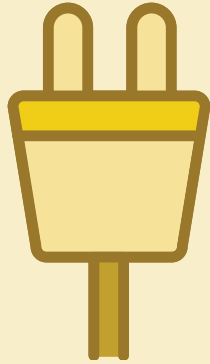# THE BEST WORDPRESS PLUGINS

FOR WEB DESIGNERS

These days, there's a plugin for just about everything. We've found all these plugins to be super simple to use, immensely useful when building sites, and just downright reliable!

The best WordPress plugins for web designers

Sifting through the WordPress Plugin Directory is a bit like scrolling through design inspiration on Pinterest – everything looks so exciting to try! And these days, there's a plugin for just about everything: portfolio management, client feedback, SEO optimization, and the list goes on and on.

So, how do you decide which WordPress plugins are essential for your business and your client sites?

While the answer is ultimately up to your specific needs, we've compiled a list of the top WordPress plugins for web designers to help you start sorting through the masses! We've found all of these plugins to be super simple to use, immensely useful when building sites, and just downright reliable.

In this ebook, you'll find:

- **The essential WordPress plugins every designer should install**

- **The best WordPress gallery and portfolio plugins for showing off your work**

- **Our favorite plugins for growing your business**

- **The top WordPress plugins for collaborating with clients**

- **And bonus: 3 types of plugins you'll want to avoid!**

Ready to install your new favorite plugin? Let's dive in!

Essential WordPress plugins every designer should install

Let's start with the basics! Whether you're looking at your own WordPress site or creating a client's, these plugins have a wide variety of benefits that most site owners are looking for.

AKISMET

This anti-spam plugin will keep your comments clean and free of malicious content. It checks every comment that your site receives to identify whether or not it's spam. Not sure if you want it to do all the work? You can still manually mark comments as spam, or approve comments that may have accidentally been flagged.

> " *A beautiful design starts with a beautiful experience for your visitors*

It also shows URLs in the comment, so you'll be able to catch "hidden" links right away (instead of site visitors accidentally clicking something they shouldn't).

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Nothing ruins your credibility (or your clients'!) faster than spam. Installing this plugin is a simple and straightforward way to help keep spammers away!
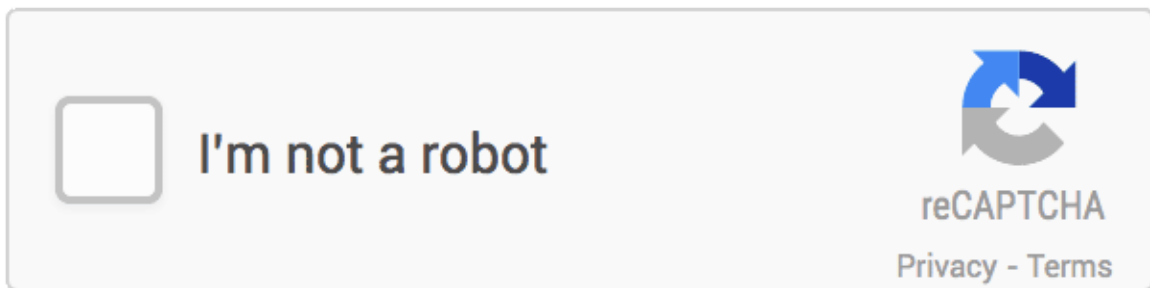
JETPACK

If you're familiar with WordPress, you've probably heard of Jetpack already, and for good reasons. All around, it's just a solid plugin with some great, basic functionality. From powerful tools that help you customize the design of your site to intuitive services that help boost your marketing efforts, it comes packed with options to optimize each and every WordPress site.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Sometimes it's just nice to have multiple features all in one place, instead of navigating several plugins. That's exactly what Jetpack provides, and it's a great way to simplify client sites!

GOOGLE CAPTCHA

Have you ever filled out a form and had to verify you're not a robot? That's what Google Captcha provides, as an added layer of security for your site forms. By adding this simple, extra check box, you have a much better chance at blocking attacks that try spamming your form.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

This WordPress plugin is outrageously simple to implement. If you're looking for some intuitive ways to boost security, it's a great place to start!

WPTOUCH

You know it, your clients know it, we all know it…mobile web design matters. Luckily for us WordPress users, a lot of the work is already done thanks to the WordPress core. To create an exceptional mobile experience, however, we recommend WPtouch, a plugin all about optimizing for smaller screen sizes. It's even recommended by Google (which is good news, since they're ranking your site) and allows you to make simple customizations.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Having a mobile-friendly site is not only important for your own business, but your clients' also! By promising mobile-friendly designs (and having easy tools to help you build them), you won't fall behind this development learning curve.

YOAST SEO

Yoast SEO: the #1 WordPress SEO plugin **yoast**

SEO is incredibly important, both for you and your clients! And the Yoast SEO plugin can help you optimize every post and page for maximum exposure. While you're editing content, this plugin will help you preview how it'll display in search engine results and also make suggestions to increase rankings.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

It's no secret that there's a lot of competition in the world of web design. Yoast SEO will help you optimize your own site to out-rank other designers while also empowering you to offer SEO benefits for your clients. A win-win!

The best WordPress gallery and portfolio plugins

Next up: You'll want a few plugins at your disposal to help polish up your own portfolio site. From galleries to sliders to full-blown page builders, these plugins will help you customize your design portfolio, which will in turn help book new business.

Note: A few of these plugins have similar functions. We recommend experimenting in a [free local environment](#) or a staging site to see which one works best for you!

DIVI

Ok, we're cheating a little bit, because Divi is technically a WordPress theme instead of a plugin. It's so feature-packed, however, that the increased functionality deserves a place in this list! This drag-and-drop theme makes it easy to customize every single page of your website, and it's perfect for visual creatives.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

If you just want to focus on designing instead of worrying about functionality, Divi is a fantastic WordPress tool to speed up the site creation process and let you focus on how things look!
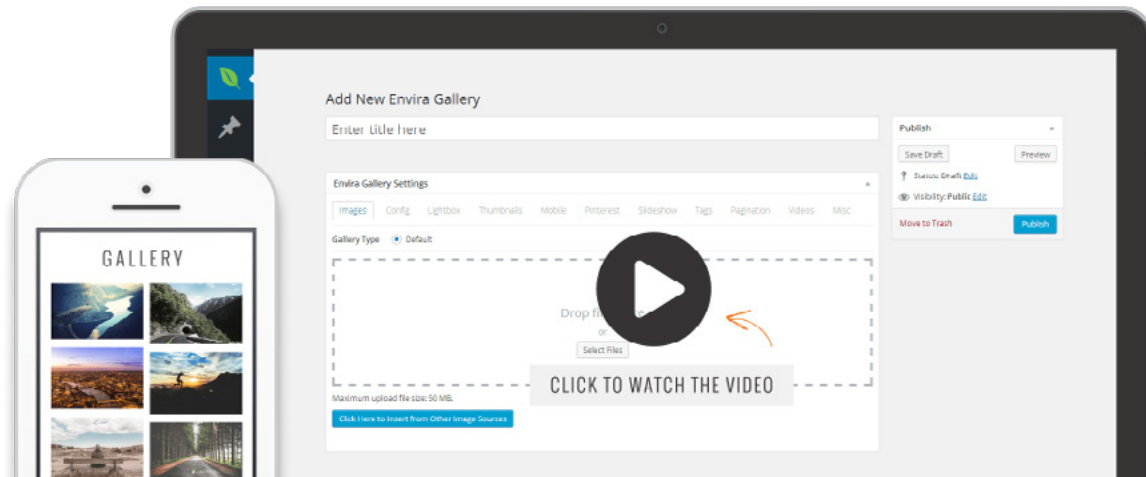
ELEMENTOR

This live page builder allows you to design WordPress sites in real-time and view the updates. With an easy-to-use, drag-and-drop interface, it's incredibly easy for you to quickly design sites for clients (or teach them how to make simple changes themselves!).

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

If you don't like dealing with code and just want to focus on designing WordPress sites, Elementor might be just what you're looking for!

ENVIRA GALLERY

Every designer needs an easy way to build a portfolio on WordPress and display the work you're proud of. With Envira Gallery, a photo gallery plugin, you'll have full control over the display with an easy drag-and-drop editor. Bonus: It's already optimized for mobile devices, so you don't have to worry about responsive design!

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

A great gallery plugin will make it super easy to update your portfolio in real-time, meaning potential clients will always see your best work!

NEXTGEN GALLERY

This gallery plugin is a powerful option for showing off your most impressive images. With the ability to batch upload photos, group galleries into albums, and more, this is a great option for any designer looking to overhaul their current portfolio.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

If you have an extensive portfolio, the functionality of NextGen Gallery will help speed up the work and display your projects beautifully!
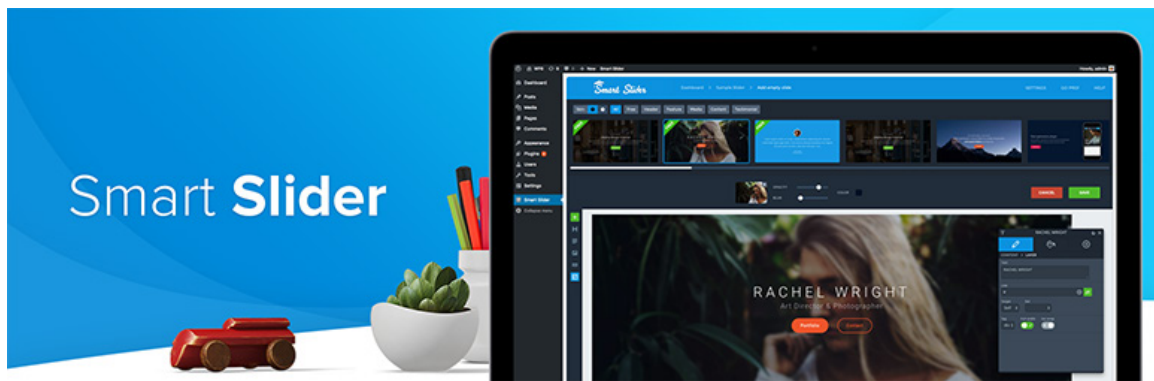
SOLILOQUY

Soliloquy is another slider plugin that will help you create impressive first-experiences on your website. It's optimized for mobile devices right out of the box, and also provides options for including videos. If you're creating webinars or video courses for your clients, give it a look!

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Like the other plugins in this section, Soliloquy is just easy. It'll help you quickly design the vision in your mind so you can focus on the next project instead of learning how to develop responsive sliders on your own.

SMART SLIDER 3

Grab your viewers' attention right away with a slider plugin! Smart Slider 3 makes it easy design a fully responsive, SEO-optimized slider that works with any WordPress theme. It's a great way to show your best work first, or maybe hook visitors in with a free offer.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

This plugin makes it incredibly easy to create dynamic sliders for your WordPress site, without ever worrying about the code. If you're trying to optimize your homepage, we highly recommend checking this one out!

Our favorite plugins for growing your business

Now that you've got your portfolio in order, let's take a look at a few WordPress plugins that can help you achieve your business goals! Whether it's collecting data so you can be more informed or collecting email addresses so you can nurture leads, these WordPress plugins are perfect for business owners and growing agencies.

ADDTOANY SHARE BUTTONS

If you're supplementing your design business with blog content or trying to increase traffic to your website, this plugin is perfect for encouraging social media engagement! AddToAnyShare Buttons can share your site content to over 100 different platforms and has plenty of display options to keep everything on brand.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Engaging with your favorite online communities is a great way to grow your business. By using the power of social media right on your personal website, you're sure to keep bringing in new visitors that might become customers!

> *Use online communities to grow your business and drive engagement*

GOOGLE ANALYTICS FOR WORDPRESS BY MONSTERINSIGHTS

Take the guesswork out of your business by displaying your Google Analytics data right in WordPress. By housing everything in the same spot, you'll be able to keep these stats front and center every time you log in to make a change, and in turn, monitor how those changes affect your site traffic.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

When you're focused on growing your business, having accessible data can make the difference between guessing what works and knowing what works. By pulling Google Analytics right into your site, you'll be able to keep it top of mind!
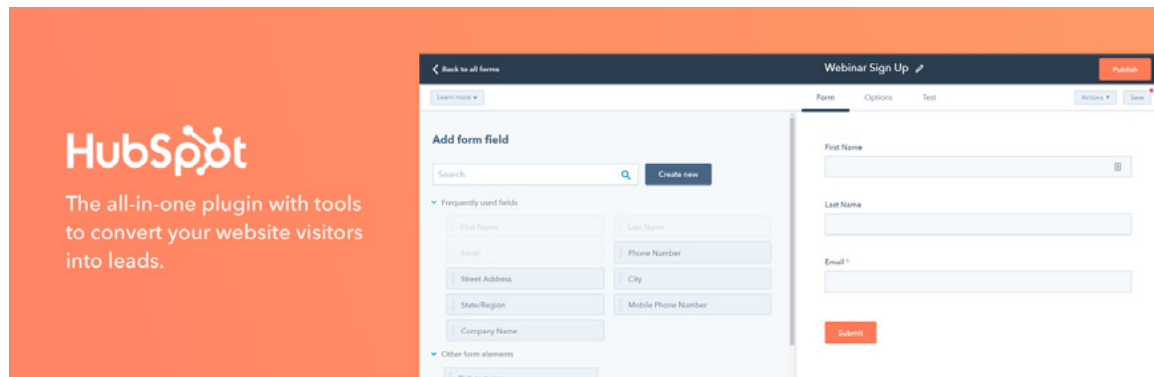

GRAVITY FORMS

In order to grow your business, you need a foolproof way for potential clients to contact you. And while you could just list an email address and phone number, using a form can be a more efficient way of weeding out the clients you want from those you don't. Gravity Forms makes it easy to customize forms on your WordPress site, plus it integrates with a bunch of other tools you might already be using, like Trello or Slack.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

In order to create a seamless experience on your website, you'll want a form plugin that's full of customizable options and can blend in with the rest of your brand. Gravity Forms is the perfect solution!

HUBSPOT

Whether you already use Hubspot or are just getting started with it, their plugin is an incredibly powerful tool for anyone growing a business on WordPress. It'll help you capture new leads with forms and pop-ups, build your email list, and track visitor behavior on your site. The best part? There's zero coding required, which makes this plugin easy to use and saves you time!

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Unless you really feel like becoming an expert in APIs, form authentication, and email list management, Hubspot takes care of all of this for you in one single plugin. We can't recommend it enough for anyone trying to grow their online business!

OPTINMONSTER

If you're interested in using pop-ups and content upgrades to grow your email list, OptinMonster is a great option for displaying those short forms. You'll be able to customize the look of each opt-in, plus it integrates well with email providers for seamless list building.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

OptinMonster features a wide variety of opt-in styles with plenty of customizable options, meaning it's pretty easy to make it fall in line with your brand. Plus, their dashboard provides plenty of data, so you'll always be informed about which design decisions matter!

The top WordPress plugins for collaborating with clients

With more business comes more clients, which means your processes need be streamlined and efficient. Luckily, there are WordPress plugins to help with collaboration and communication, and plugins that can make your clients lives easier. (Meaning less emergency phone calls to you, as the site designer!)

These plugins might not all be applicable for every designer's site, but hopefully they'll help solve some simple problems to help out when it comes to clients!

> **Integrate your client feedback process with your sites with these plugins**

BUDDYPRESS

Have you ever thought about creating a group or forum for your clients? Whether it's a place they can connect to each other or a streamlined way to contact you for help, a membership plugin like BuddyPress is a great way to create an "exclusive" experience for your clients.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Scaling client communication is one of the most difficult tasks for any creative business owner, but a plugin like BuddyPress might be just what you need to keep it easy!
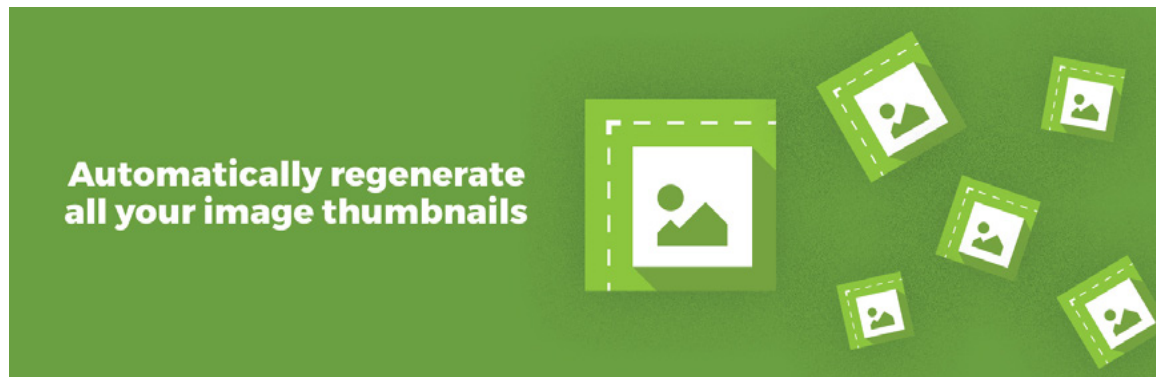

ENABLE MEDIA REPLACE

If your clients aren't the most tech-savvy, the Enable Media Replace plugin will be your new best friend! Instead of deleting, uploading, and renaming new files, you can simply replace them. Instead of contacting you to replace the feature on their homepage, they'll be totally empowered to replace it themselves.

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

By taking advantage of plugins like this that make life easier for your clients, you'll save yourself tons of billable time in the long-run.

REGENERATE THUMBNAILS

In a similar theme, Regenerate Thumbnails solves a simple task that your clients will greatly appreciate. Let's say you're rebranding an existing WordPress site. The client wants a new site design, but also wants to reuse and resize some of the existing images. This plugin will automatically regenerate the thumbnail sizes for images already in the media library. That means neither you nor your client have to do that work manually!

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

Revamping old sites for clients can always be a challenge, but Regenerate Thumbnails can help solve one piece of the puzzle in a quick and efficient way.

SHOW CURRENT TEMPLATE

This is another plugin that's great for redesigning WordPress sites. It has one simple function: to show the name of the current theme file being used by the site in the toolbar. If you're not quite sure what theme is being used (and your client doesn't know either) this plugin has your back!

WHY IT'S GREAT FOR WEB DESIGNERS

When you're redesigning a site for a client, the last thing you want to do is waste time trying to figure out what WordPress theme you're actually working with. This plugin will remove any uncertainty, so you can focus on solutions, not questions!

Bonus: 4 types of WordPress plugins to be cautious of

As you're looking at different plugins, there are a few types that we encourage you to use with an extra note of caution. These include:

- **Backup plugins**

- **Caching plugins**

- **Performance plugins**

- **Security plugins**

Why?

> **"** *Talk to your hosting provider to see if these plugins are really necessary*

Your hosting provider might have settings in place around these topics already. For example, designers hosting their websites on Flywheel get free nightly site backups, server-level custom caching and performance rules, and websites optimized for the latest security practices.

While there's nothing inherently bad about backup, caching, performance, or security plugins, sometimes their settings are redundant to how the WordPress site is hosted, which can negatively impact site performance.

Moral of the story: If you're concerned about site backups, caching/performance, and security, talk to your hosting provider first, to see if these types of plugins are actually necessary, or if your site is already optimized for all these awesome features!

Simplify your plugin needs with Flywheel

Flywheel is a delightful platform that empowers designers to focus on what they do best — building beautiful, functional sites for clients. We make it a breeze to create WordPress sites, collaborate with clients, and seamlessly offload the finished product, all from the same place — no plugins required.

Stop wasting time on server management, security plugins, caching, and all those other repetitive tasks that take your focus away from growing your business. Get Flywheel and get back to doing your best (and favorite) work.

LEARN MORE

Or, sign up at getflywheel.com

FLYWHEEL