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LEXI MOSTEK:

Welcome to our webinar on Plugins, do's don'ts, and those to download. Now my name is Lexi, if you're not sick of me yet. I'm kind of the eyes and ears and technical support behind our webinars.

So excited to see everyone and just a few housekeeping items. As always, we are recording this webinar. If you've gotta jump out or you're coming in and watching at a later time. All of our webinars are recorded, as well as we will have the transcript available afterwards with links to all of these plugins that we mentioned, and these lovely panelists.

So keeping that in mind, there is the Webinar chat. Feel free to jump in there, join in the conversation. Tell us where you're viewing from today. And then we also have the question and answer in your Zoom Toolbar. If you have questions for our panelists, we are gonna take questions towards the later half of the webinar. Please use the question and answer to drop any questions that way. It makes it easier for us to kind of sort through that.

We're gonna go ahead and get going. If you didn't know this is part 2 of a 3 part Webinar series. Last week we were joined by some great panelists talking about plugins 101, kind of the basics. And then today we are here to talk about making the most out of e-commerce plugins specifically and [WooCommerce](#) plugins. We know there's a lot in that ecosystem.

And then next Tuesday, we're gonna tread into some water on artificial intelligence plugins. Talk about what we're seeing out there? Are we trusting them? What plugins are we loving? And just kind of riff on that topic.

Our agenda for today we're gonna go through welcome and introductions. We'll go over just a brief WooCommerce overview if you've never used it or you're interested in starting an e-commerce site. And then we're gonna introduce this great panel of guests and get through some questions. These are great e-commerce experts. And we wanna ask them some questions on e-commerce Plugins specifically.

So with that, I'm gonna hand this over to Enid Jimenez, who is a director of engineering here at WP Engine. And she's gonna take it away from here.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you so much. You know, Lexi, for the warm, warm welcome. I'm delighted to be here today. Like Lexi said, I'm gonna do a little bit of an intro and overview of WooCommerce. Introduce our panelists, and then we're gonna jump into the discussion. Our goal is to keep this

conversation informative and engaging. So, like Lexi, I just feel free to put your questions in the chat. I like to apologize for the video, my network connectivity. Technology is not cooperating today. And I'm having to call for my iPad, while I'm juggling monitors. But I'm very grateful that Lexi is my backup today. So with that, let's just get started.

So my name is Enid, like Lexi said, I'm a director of engineering for e-commerce initiatives here at WP Engine. And that means that I lead up from the technical side of the house. You know, the various things that we're doing in the e-commerce space. I work very closely with our product managers and other business functions on defining our vision, our strategy, and translating that into actionable initiatives and plans.

So to set the stage. Let's do a little bit of an intro of WooCommerce WP Engines offering and alternatives. Thank you, Lexi.

So, as many of you know, WooCommerce is the most popular ecommerce integration for WordPress. It transforms a WordPress site into a customizable e-commerce store. By transform, we mean that you can add the ability to, for example, add a shopping cart to a site, a checkout process. And essentially, you're turning that site into an online store that transacts.

WooCommerce is a free plugin, and like we said, if you could move up to the next slide Lexi. So WooCommerce is a free plugin, it's been around for a quite about a while from since 2011, if I'm not mistaken and it's widely used.

It was built for Wordpress, with the intent of adding commerce, functionality to a wordpress site. Again, turning them into online stores. WooCommerce preserves many of the core functions of standard wordpress, but it adds that ecommerce functionality and capability, configuration and customization.

Like wordpress WooCommerce is open source.

LEXI MOSTEK:

I'm gonna jump in here, Enid warned me that her connection is just a little bit shaky. So I'm just gonna jump in on the WooCommerce overview as we mentioned, WooCommerce is built as open source. So, although it is a free plugin, so that means that you can adapt.

Hey, Enid, just real quick. You are muted for some reason.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Yes, because I get frozen. I'm so sorry you're back. If you want to jump back. Okay, I'm not so sure where I left off, just bear with me if this happens again, Lexi, and feel free to make decisions.

So WooCommerce, like Wordpress, is open source, and that means that you can adapt it. You can build add-ons for it. And there's a huge worldwide community of users and developers,

including what it's known as the Woo experts. There are thousands of worldwide developers that create and sell Woo extensions. Some of them are among our panelists today, and you can download the plugin from WooCommerce.com, or from wordpress.org

WP Engine has a WooCommerce offering, in our offering we provide a number of features that are well integrated with WooCommerce. I'm not here to talk about the WP Engine offering, because this is a webinar. This is not a sales pitch. If you want to learn more, you can visit our [website](https://wpengine.com) or you can talk to our sales reps. You can do that directly from wpengine.com, and then just click on the products page.

It's important to note that if you're not tied to our Wordpress. There are other alternatives out there. These are some of the very well known names in the e-commerce space, and so you probably are very familiar with some of these names, and some of them have wordpress integrations, notably shopify and bigcommerce.

So now that we have that high level overview out of the way, I'd like to introduce our panelists. First and foremost on behalf of WP Engine. We thank you so much for making time today to be with us. We know that everybody's super busy. We have people all over the world. Kathy is just dealing with that tropical storm and dealing with technology, but issues. But we're all very grateful that you're here today.

So what I like to do is for each of you to introduce yourselves. If you can just stay the obvious like your name, where you work a little bit about your expert expertise in the WooCommerce space, and if you could share with the audience one actionable insight about WooCommerce. That would be very helpful.

So with that, I'm gonna start with Patrick.

Patrick Rauland:

I get to go first. Hi, everyone. I'm [Patrick](#). I like to joke that I've done every job in ecommerce. So I built sites for clients. I worked for WooCommerce as a support developer and then product manager. I've built courses for LinkedIn learning. I wrote a couple books and I sold my own physical product fry thief, which I should have on me. But I have a little board game called [Fry Thief](#), that I also sold in my own WooCommerce store, so I like to joke that I've done everything, and my one piece of advice I'd give to the audience is to start selling quickly because you you'll learn more if you build your store and launch it quickly than if you take 5 months to build a perfect store. So that's me. And that's my piece of advice.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you. Experimentation. That's my take away. So let's move on to Marcus. I'm just going in the order that I see my screen.

MARCUS BURKE:

Yeah, Thank you for having me today. I am [Marcus](#). I am WordPress user from the early years.

Let's say like that, in my teenage years, built my personal blog, built some websites. Nowadays. I'm CMO at [Inpsyde](#). We are Europe's biggest WordPress agency. We are more than 130 people worldwide. Building WooCommerce and wordpress projects. Some things we've done in the recent years in the WooCommerce space, is that we have developed some of the biggest payment gateways, Payoneer, [Paypal](#), [Mollie](#), to name some few.

And we have, besides, WooCommerce, specialized plugins, develop some of the most popular wordpress plugins, anyway, like [BackWPup](#), [MultilingualPress](#) or, let's say, [Central Stock](#), which we probably gonna talk about in context of that WooCommerce session today, but because they really can amplify your shop in going multilingual and synchronize your shop between different languages and so on. So yeah. Happy to be here.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you. Sorry

MARCUS BURKE:

Ah my favorite advice, I miss that. So my advice would be, test your backups, because, having a backup Plugin installed and running is one thing, feeling safe that you can actually restore that if something breaks is really a game changer.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you so much. Another good developer advice, backup your things. James, I'll go to you next.

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, hey. Thanks for having me so I'm [James](#). I'm in the UK. I started building plugins for WooCommerce back in 2011 as well. So it sounds like I was right there at the beginning and currently I run [iconicWp](#) and [Orderable](#) under the stellar brand and Stella WP which is owned by liquid web. And I also have a product called [Setary](#), which is kind of a personal passion, projects of bulk, editing WooCommerce products. So kind of touching many sides of WooCommerce. and have been for for many years.

And my piece of advice would be to use an SMTP plugin which basically is going to ensure that your e-commerce store is actually sending emails. You see, quite a lot of fresh WooCommerce users set their store up. And then they question why they're still not sending emails. And usually it's because they need an SMTP Plugin.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you. James. Emails again. Make sure that you're communicating with the buyers of the stores. Kathy, I like to go to you next.

KATHY DARLING:

Hi, thanks for having me. I'm [Kathy](#). I'm a developer based out the Us. Normally. And today I happen to be based out of the Dominican Republic. Because I'm with team U.S.A. competing here this weekend.

I have been a tiny, tiny, tiny developer shop for about tenish years, and I have developed and maintained about 3 premium commerce plugins. So, little bit more specialized and some of the other panelists, I like really stop on my plugin not gotten to not gotten to to do too many other tasks, but I think I do that part pretty well. What's my one piece of advice?

Test your upgrades, I guess, because like use in staging, I mean, a lot of hosts are now offering staging as a feature. But if you don't. There's a plugin that I love called [WP Staging](#), and I usually send it to all my customers to say like, Hey, go test this fix, go test literally anything you want to test over there and let me testing over in your staging, so that when something inevitably goes wrong like it's happened in staging a non-production site.

LEXI MOSTEK:

Nice. Thank you, Kathy, and thanks for joining and being able to be here. I know Kathy was nervous about internet connection, and and we're going on the fly with the internet.

LEXI MOSTEK:

Yes. Lastly, I'm gonna let out Adepeju. You can introduce yourself. Last but not least.

ADEPEJU ODUYE:

Thank you so much, Lexi. So my name is [Adepeju Oduye](#) I work at automatic, and I manage the marketplace vendor program so it's actually really cool to be on a panel with some of our vendor partners, like James and Kathy and Marcus. So with the vendor program that means I work very closely with many of our third party partners, their inventory and essentially help our partners sell and better serve like our mutual customers. Ie. Merchants and our developers. And I've been with automatic for 3, 3 years, which is crazy. It's gone by so quickly. I guess time flies when you're having fun.

So one of the kind of like insights or the FYIs or did you know's, is that the marketplace is currently just shy of 900 products. So this includes extensions, this includes themes, and this includes SAAS inventory. So not a not many people know that we are growing our inventory in the latter 2 categories, and kind of like a just a general FYI Best practice is to take advantage of being able to test. I think someone mentioned testing before. But take advantage of being able to test an extension or plugin that you purchase. You know, if you can return it. You can but just test it. Make sure it serves your purposes. And then, you know, if it's not working for you, go on to the next one.

There's definitely a lot of options for folks and merchants to test. Take advantage of it.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you so much. So that's a good segue into one of the first topics that I wanted to introduce in the panel. So we're just going to move into Q&A, so we've talked about WooCommerce being extensible. Right? So you know Adepeju you talked about the marketplace. That means plugins, plugins, and more plugins, and there are just so many out there, and you know there are just various ones for different use cases. So I'd like to ask the panelists, are there any favorite ones out there that you would like to recommend?

and you can double click on some of the ones that you already mentioned.

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, I can jump in. So in general. I wouldn't necessarily recommend any specific plugin, and my view would be, you know, you want to install plugins that are serving a purpose which I think you mentioned a second ago.

You can't. You know every plugin's not gonna suit every business. So you want to go out searching for plugins that solve a specific problem that you're having. I mean, there's gonna be more generic plugins that maybe offer backups and that kind of plugin you might have recommendations for.

Oftentimes your host will offer those anyway. But you you may have more general plugins like SEO plugins. and I know if you sell subscription products, then the WooCommerce subscriptions plugin is the best in his class at lab. and but generally. Yeah, you just want to make sure that any plugin you install is serving a purpose. And you know, solving some. Some need that you have.

Patrick Rauland:

Let me jump in and speak to one common need. James, I think I agree with you on all that. I think. One common thing is, it's really hard to get attention online. And once you get someone to your store, I'm all about, how do you install the right plugins to get people to have a big checkout increase your average order value.

That to me is one of the best things to make that I can think of, to make your business profitable. So I look at things that improve your carts like WooCommerce, has a couple like composite products. Product add-ons. James is too modest there's, [iconic sales booster](#), which is like a WooCommerce cross selling Plugin. And there's [woofunnels](#), which I think rebranded to funnel kits. But just any it doesn't matter which one you get, but get something that helps you go from a \$20 order to a \$50 order, and your business is going to be much healthier.

ENID JIMENEZ:

awesome. That's great advice. That's because ultimately, you know, that's the goal of having an online store, right? You know, transact and increase all the volume and value of those transactions. Anybody else that would like to chime in, Kathy?

KATHY DARLING:

I am muted. Yeah, I don't know that I wouldn't have anything in particular to recommend specifically. But yeah, just sort of following up with the gentleman ahead of me. Take stock of what you are selling and how you want to sell it like, how do you? How do you want your business to be? And then make sure that the plugins sort of match that because you can.

I think what we said, there's like 900 plugins in the marketplace and infinite number beyond that, like, you can online, make your site do anything, but then it gets like 80% away. And then that last 20, you can take it in any direction you kind of want to go that like sorry, blanking. You know. Make that 20% to you, I guess.

ENID JIMENEZ:

I'd like to double click a little bit on something that you know James was talking about. Use a plug-in to solve a specific problem. Right? You've got problems and things that you want to accomplish. That's how you know you're gonna be searching for plugins, I believe you know. Marcus and James, you know, both of you guys have developed, you know, plugins? So can you tell me a little bit more about, how did you get there? You know what were the problems that you were trying to solve. And you know what led you to, you know, creating a plugin?

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, So I, personally used to run a web agency. So we would work with customers mainly in the UK, who would want a website building and part of that would be solving these specific issues that those customers are trying to solve. So a good example of that would be our [WooThumbs](#) Plugin, which is an iconic plugin.

The reason we built that originally is because WooCommerce out of the box didn't make it possible to assign multiple images to a product variation. And so WooThumbs was actually called multiple product images for variations when I first launched it, which is a ridiculous name. And that was back in 2011, so that that Plugin is one of our most popular plugins still, and we built it for this customer back then, and kind of asked their permission, you know. Would you mind if we, if we released this and sold it as a Plugin, because we think other people would use it.

And that that started my journey of building plugins and selling plugins. And a lot of our other plugins came from similar scenarios, like our delivery slots plugin was a customer that wanted to be able to offer delivery slots to their customers, so their customer could choose a date and a time to pick up an order or to have an order delivered.

So yeah, a lot of our plugins are kind of functional in that way they're solving a need that an actual customer had And yeah, we grew from there.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Great Marcus, I think you want to chime in?

MARCUS BURKE:

yeah, same for us, our agency basically evolved up, in that open source ecosystem or space. We have a lot of developers that started as freelancers, or just wordpress or WooCommerce enthusiasts and start building sites. And then seeing Ok, I need a plugin for a certain use case. I need to solve for problem. And this is where we have 2 different ways to proceed. Sometimes we just develop little plugins like search and replace or at minimize and contribute them to our open source community for free, so everybody can use them and to dub them and build up on them.

And sometimes we see a use case or a business case in it where we say okay, this makes sense to to make a product out of it, because the use case is so big that we actually need more resources, more developers and a whole team to maintain that, to market that plugin because we need some some kind of user base on it. And let's say, revenue stream to keep working on it because it's getting so big, actually.

And the most popular plugins. We have like [BackWPup](#) for backups. But there are other great ones out there, too, like it was that most hosts these days offer back-up plugins. Or if you want to check out updates plus, that's also a great plugin.

We have. We have some use cases we we're working on since many years. So backups. Multilinguality is a huge thing for us here, based in Europe, where we have 25 countries, at least in the European Union, which having a lot of different languages, of course, nowadays, most of our clients are global anyway. So having a shop in different languages, really something that can bring you quickly into different markets. And we have a not WooCommerce, exclusive plugin. That's also just working for any wordpress site. It's called [Multilingual press](#) for making your website multilingual.

Based on multi-site, which is something I really want to recommend to think of. If you want to reach different audiences with your shop, in different languages. Think of if you're going on a single site or on a multi-site version of it. There are great plugins for each case out there. Anyway, there are pros and cons how you synchronize your stock inventory later, and iif you're unto about that, but I reach out to some of the awesome freelance we have in the ecosystem, or to be to some agencies that can help you with deciding how you set up your shop because you want to scale.

So working with WooCommerce, self or WordPress self, or working with our clients is how we see, use cases and then develop a plugin, create a cool solution for that, and then move on and iterate and make it better

ENID JIMENEZ:

awesome. So when you're finding these use cases, you know. There, there's also, you know, there might be a solution out there. I may not have to you know, customize something, right?

But it's a huge, you know, ecosystem, right? You know the ecosystems of all the extensions, you know, that are out there, you know, for WooCommerce. So can you tell me and tell the audience

a little bit about, You know what are the things you know that you look for, to find those best of class, you know. Plugins are there? Is there a common list of things that you're looking for that leads you to believe that's a great Plugin.

ADEPEJU ODUYE:

And yeah, I mean, I'm happy to answer this from kind of like a marketplace perspective, because how I see it is with the marketplace. It's us (automatic) basically choosing on behalf of a merchant or an end user. So when you think about choosing the best, I wouldn't again, necessarily say it's the best, but it's, but it is this idea of in the world of ultimate optionality. How do you kind of like surface the ones or surface, or introduce kind of like a set of standards that anyone who's going into a certain environment choose again and again again what we prioritize in the marketplace.

You know, because there's that responsibility of managing the WooCommerce code base and the core merchant experience. You know, we take it seriously. You know what type of standards we try to introduce and implement on, just like a scaled and iterative basis. So our goal, with the marketplace surface options that incorporate, you know. Like when each, when any product is launched, it goes through kind of like a baseline code review process. Ux review business review like, how is it serving? What is it for? How's it serving? Merchants? What is it built for? What are kind of like some, you know, some supporting rationale behind it.

So that's kind of like at launch. But I think the biggest thing is, you know, the maintenance aspect of it once it's launched, how is it continuing to uphold those standards? And again, marketplace for us is about providing tools to our partners to help facilitate that. So, of course, that includes those actionable analytics like, refund reasons, feature requests, just general stats that can be helpful to figure out how to update, improve a product. But also we recently introduced this quality insights toolkit that is right now available to marketplace vendors, but eventually will be accessible will be available to everyone who is building an extension and that includes, you know, the ability to run automated tests for compatibility with the most recent versions of woocommerce and wordpress and to end test activation test security test.

So essentially, again. It's just providing those type of internally, in house building or understanding what those standards are creating tools, and then and then putting it out there for our partners to use to ensure that end users are getting are benefiting, and and know what they're getting whenever they whenever they purchase and download an extension from the marketplace.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you so much, you know, for that insight. Is there anything else that anybody would like to add to that? Patrick?

PATRICK RAULAND:

I'll jump in a little bit. So there's I can't tell you what makes the best plugin, but I can't give you 2 flags that come up for me when I see a bad plugin.

And those 2 flags are one. If there's like very infrequent updates, you know, if they haven't updated the plugin in 2 years, it's like there's an eCommerce. And in WordPress and an open source, there's infinite edge cases and developers are always fixing. Oh, we have to adjust this filter. We have to update this. We have to PHP compatibility.

If you're not updating frequently, there's either not many people are using the plugin, or they're probably just not catching these edge cases and not fixing them. So I would always look for, I would always trust someone who has more updates than someone who doesn't have an update in a whole year something like that.

The second one is in eCommerce. You're more locked in than you are in a brochure website. So like in a regular WordPress website, you can switch out your contact form really easy, no harm, no foul. But in eCommerce like, let's say you install a loyalty program Plugin. You can't easily switch that, if you don't like it, it's a pain in the butt to switch to a different plugin. So because there's so much more of a lock-in effect. I try to only buy from companies that pay for their time.

If a company says we have a \$10 lifetime deal for this loyalty Plugin, I know I'm gonna switch that Plugin in 2 years cause the company went out of business. I want to work with people that help, so they can keep doing the work for me every single year. That's why I'm building eCommerce stores. I'm trying to build a business, and I will only want to use tools that are not gonna evaporate in 2 years. So those are the 2 flags that I watch out for.

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, I think that's a good point. Actually, you know. Yeah, the the cheapest option isn't the best option. I think that comes down to I think it's worth mentioning as well with the WooCommerce marketplace and the WordPress repository, which is where you download the free plugins.

Both of them have processes in place that analyze the codes, WooCommerce more so. You know, as a an author uploads the plugin, it will analyze the code and it will. They've got a preset list of things that they're looking for. To check that a plugin is high quality. And you know, it is not gonna break things.

So specifically, the WooCommerce marketplace does a very strict job of that. And that's not just for the first upload as well. That's every update thereafter. And so you can usually trust that the code quality of plugins, particularly on the WooCommerce marketplace, is going to be pretty good, or at least following the rules of what makes good code.

But I think as well, kind of Patrick touched on it as well. One of the key things that you want to look for is reviews or feedback on the quality of support from the company you're buying from.

And you know, even if a Plugin doesn't do exactly what you want, I know as a team, at iconic we spend countless hours customizing our plugins so that they do do what a customer wants, and

that's why we've got so many good reviews for customer support. So I do think. looking at comments about customer support is a very valid thing to do.

And then finally, I mentioned to Joshua in the Chat and other places to look for quality plugins are the Facebook groups on the WooCommerce groups on Facebook and the Wordpress groups on Facebook. Both of them have pretty active communities that will recommend plugins and you know, give you honest feedback about if a plugin is good or not.

And but you kind of have to take everything with a pinch of salt, you know not every Plugin is going to be suitable for every person. But you can get a broad idea of what makes a good plugin from people.

ENID JIMENEZ:

awesome. That's great. So you know, to say, in general. You know there are technical things you know, to look for right, as well as that. Not so technical considerations. You know that you should take into account. You know, how often has the plugin being updated? You know the type of support and so forth. Because, you know, something happens. And it's software, right? You wanna make sure that you're getting the support you know that you need to solve problems that move forward.

So this kind of it's interesting to see that you've got, you know, the more solid technical things you know, to look for. And then there's the consideration of other actionable items of things that you need to keep an eye on.

The one thing that I didn't hear that I want to touch on is security. Right? Which probably falls in both aspects, too. But it's it's tough concern, you know, for merchants, right? You know, you're transacting right. And these merchants, you know you're getting access to personal information and so forth. So just keeping things, you know, secure is typically, you know top of mind for merchants and for developers. Right?

So my question is, are they things that you know people should be looking for, you know, when they're selecting a plugin from a security perspective and a business perspective just on that specific topic, any recommendations on what to look for and what to avoid as well? Super important. Marcus?

MARCUS BURKE:

I mean, what Patrick and James emphasized is basically that you're building a business and not just a website to sell things quickly. So you should be very thoughtful and very strategic in the plugins you choose, and you should not see it as a \$100 purchase for your first plugin to solve an issue.

You should see it as you are getting in touch with a business partner, with which you probably will stick with for many, many years, because you have that login effect when you choose a payment gateway or a subscription Plugin, or whatever you do on an e-commerce store really is

hard to migrate. So that was a very big tip. And if you have doubts about security issues, I'm not a technical person. I'm not a developer. So this is maybe like what qualifies me to say that, go to a developer or an agency? If you have security issues, you cannot check that as a user, you can rely on the audit that the WooCommerce store is doing on the plugins. This is really really a good audit, an extensive code review of the Plugins you have in the official shop.

But if you have doubts of security and want to check which data is processed. Where is it going? If it is GDPR compliant or getting you into any trouble, let someone look at the code or the implementation you have done, and let's just double check it. Invest in that.

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, there's a good service, called [Patchstack](#), and they're pretty active with and kind of live tracking vulnerabilities in plugins. And so, if security is of concern, I definitely recommend checking them out.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you so much.

So there's all kinds of plugins out there for various use cases, and you know it's very likely that you know you will end up using plugins right, to extend and customize. You know your store.

It is not uncommon for developers to worry about plugin bloat right? I got too many. It's slowing my side down, and so forth. So do you have any recommendations? Do you use some threshold that you say, you know at this point, you know you've got too many, any common mistakes that you see people make, and recommendations that. You would like to give the audience to avoid those situations.

Patrick Rauland:

I'll go ahead and start.

I think it all depends on speed, mostly matters for the customer. So as long as your website is loading quickly for the customer, you're generally good. I know some WooCommerce store owners who have hundreds of thousands of orders, and the admin's a little bit slow, and that's fine. That's like, that's a manageable problem because they're your employees, and you can. You can work with them on that.

But really the thing that you need to watch the most is the speed for the customer, and you can. You can test this, both logged in and logged out, so are they a guest, or are they logged in? There's some little bits of differences there. But just make sure that as long as they're adding products to the cart, and you add a product to the cart, and if it spins and spins and spins and spins. You're gonna get people dropping out of your site. And I don't think there's a magical number of plugins. It is all it all comes down to as long as page loads. What is it? I think the rule of thumb is 3 seconds or less, as long as page loads are 3 seconds or less.

You're generally good. So I just, you know, as soon as you start getting towards 7 seconds page loads, you know, tons of people are dropping out of your website, and you gotta fix something, and it may be one plug and maybe 10. You know, there's some sleuthing to do but focus on the user. Both logged in, logged out. Add a couple products to the cart and go to the checkout and see how long it takes you.

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, I don't think the number of plugins is necessarily an issue. You know, you could have a hundred high quality plugins that that all run perfectly without affecting pagespeed.

The issue you will face with having too many plugins is probably compatibility.

You know, between those plugins there's a lot more, a lot more to maintain in that respect. I personally don't think there's any limit on number of plugins that you install like. It's it's all just codes that runs at a certain point. If the if the Plugin is coded well, you know, it's not going to be interfering with general day to day stuff. It's gonna be specifically targeted at doing one thing well, in theory. But you know, there's outliers that don't follow that practice, and maybe load scripts where they shouldn't be loading.

Say, it comes down to choosing the right plugins and making sure, like, Patrick was saying. You know, pay attention to if something is slowing the site down dramatically, reach out to their support if it is. If they say you know, it's meant to do that, then probably move on to find a different plugin. And but yeah, in terms of the volume of Plugins, I don't think it is necessarily an issue. How many you have. and I see quite a lot of people will. They'll say, you know I need. I need my store to do this, but I don't want to use a plugin. What code snippet can I use?

And to me that's exactly the same thing. Just that they're not clicking an activate button.

And so, yeah, there's no real difference to using a plugin versus putting a code snippet into your theme, you know, is the same, the code that's running is the same in theory.

ADEPEJU ODUYE:

Yeah, one thing I do so much, Kathy. I've seen. No, no, a little delay, no one thing I did want to add was, I agree that there is no kind of like magic number in terms of number of plugins.

What I have seen is that the mix of type? It's evolving right? I think. I think some folks that's why you have some merchants, some larger merchants who are testing, you know, more more with sas mixing kind of like their fully functional extensions of plugins with with Saas products so that maybe they can lighten some of that code and improve performance but either. But we've definitely seen high performing sites with dozens and hundreds of plugins that work. Well, so it is about maintenance. And it can be about the mix plugins or power types.

KATHY DARLING:

Let me jump in to to just sort of say,

I think one of the 2 gentlemen mentioned this, but, like obviously the more plugins you have is not necessarily an issue of performance, and if they're all done reasonably well, but like the more moving parts you start to get, obviously the more chance for something to go wrong.

So, I mean, that's the single most difficult thing I deal with in supporting my current plugins is like eventually, like they will just not work with somebody else's plugin. And it's like, it's, it's completely unavoidable. But it's not a great experience for the user. And it's not, I mean, like said, it's the most difficult thing for me to solve, because I literally have to say, Okay, I can't. I can't fix it with. Can't fix my plugin working with Plugin X. Because if I did, that's all I would literally do. So there's, I guess if I had to put a I you can't put a number limit, but the limit would definitely be, don't use any more than you absolutely need like. Can you get away? Use the lowest need to make your site work the way you need it, to work and audit that every now and then.

ENID JIMENEZ:

great. Thank you so much. We wanna make sure that we have time for some to address some of the questions that are being put on the chat. Lexi has been helping me with that, you know, just keeping track of them. So I'll just jump into that. If we're all okay with that.

I'm just gonna go in order that Lexie has been collecting them for us.

So question is, what emerging trends do you foresee in the realm of WooCommerce bloggings that businesses and developers should prepare for more forward looking

JAMES KEMP:

well, I mean the obvious answer, here is AI, you know. That's a massive trend that's emerging at the moment. And very early days. I would say you're seeing a lot of plugins that aren't necessarily going to be around, and that long.

But there's definitely some great innovation coming out in that space as well, and I think your next webinar is on AI right.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Mmmhmmm

JAMES KEMP:

there you go.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Yeah, there you go. Yeah, such a huge, you know, trend, it is the thing you know nowadays, you know, AI, so I do encourage, you know. All of you to attend, you know. Tomorrow's AI Webinar. Anything else? Any other trend or next Tuesday? Thank you, Lexie. All right.

Next question, analytics are so important. We'd love to hear what you are using to track revenue, etc., WooCommerce Google Ads. Ga4 tracking the realm of analytics

JAMES KEMP:

[Metorik](#), I would say, is the best. That 's it's a sas solution. And built by a guy called Bryce, who used to work at WooCommerce. And it's just a really great solution.

So you connect your store to it and it gives you so much reporting that you know you'd struggle to find something that you can't do in it. And so, yeah, definitely definitely worth checking out

ENID JIMENEZ:

awesome. Any other ones that anybody would like to.

Patrick Rauland:

I'll just add some Metorik by Bryce is fantastic, A/C excellent recommendations.

I used to be a huge fan of Google analytics. And I always wanted Google analytics to have, like every piece of data that I could send into it into it cause it. You know, you can see this user did this. And they landed a landing page and they bought in 5 s. Wow! That's crazy. You get you get to see really cool stats with Google analytics.

But it's GA4 has been rough to implement. I've implemented on a couple different sites. And it's not intuitive, and I have to keep watching the same Youtube tutorials. I'm like, how do I? Oh, right that thing?

So I for a beginner, I don't know if I'd go ahead and set up GA. 4. But if you don't get e-commerce tracking to work right away, don't stress about it. It's just a little bit complex.

But I think you want one source of truth. And so maybe it's WooCommerce. Maybe it's Metorik, but I think you want a source of truth that does track all the revenue coming into your store. And maybe it's a CRM. So then you can message individual people based on what they've purchased, or an email marketing tool like [Klaviyo](#) again. Because then you can see this person purchased a thing 3 months ago. Let's email them again today.

But I think you really want to work with those systems that have all the data as much data as possible. And it used to be Google analytics for me, and if you're an experienced store owner, go ahead and do that. But it's a little too hard for newbies, is what I'd say now.

JAMES KEMP:

I think, even if you're experienced, it's not. It's not easy. Now I am. Am I right in saying that metaric doesn't track, It doesn't track users. It's more for reporting on orders.

PATRICK RAULAND:

Correct.

JAMES KEMP:

So you won't necessarily know where a user's come from. You know why they've purchased ,which Google analytics was the best for. But even now like for for iconic, we struggle with actually tracking that data now, especially with GDPR and all that kind of stuff like you say, Klaviyo and and the Crm tools, like [activecampaign](#) are pretty good at doing that kind of stuff.

And there's a few other privacy-focused analytics tools like [plausible](#) Hq, [use fathom](#), that, that you get less data from them, I guess. But as a starting point they're easy to configure and they're not Google.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Fantastic. So I think the next question is really really important. it has to do with the high performance orders. I forget what the instance for advocate. Adepeju, you have to help me here, table but we know that Automattic has been working on this and the question is, are there any specific type of plugins that are having issues with the new high performance table (HPOS) or any tips for making the migration for existing stores.

ADEPEJU ODUYE:

So, like I can answer this from kind of like the Plugin extension perspective. I mean in terms of I don't. I can't necessarily say which ones are struggling within the within the context of the marketplace. But I can say that that again, because it's woocommerce we take on the responsibility of ensuring and working with our partners to to ensure that their products listed are compatible with HPOS.

So that has been an ongoing effort for the last few months. And it will continue to be so for probably the next few weeks, and I think we'll switch it on as the default setting, originally going to be in July, and now it's going to be probably later on this year, might be later October. If I'm not mistaken.

So from just kind of like inventory you know, the inventory that's in marketplace, and what and how we're preparing those products. That's what's top of mind. On our end. To make sure everyone is compatible there.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Fantastic. I think this is super super important topic that all developers, you know, should be following.

So this is probably a good question for Marcus. This is kind of like an agency related type questions for small shops and small stores. At what point does it make sense to use an agency to help with the implementation and maintenance of the store? How do you find? How do you go about finding the right agency/consultant?

MARCUS BURKE:

Yeah. The right agency is the key word. There are WooCommerce agencies or freelancers for every size of business, I would say.

If you are running a business, if you are running a shop, and your goal is to not just being a hobbyist bit with it. But you want to take it serious. I would highly recommend to go immediately to some technical expert that can help you working on that because you basically as a non technical person or someone who has so little abilities there cannot see certain things you have, maybe within your website on regards of technical depth or security issues, we, we have talked about, or just identifying the right plugins and implemented in the right way.

If you are really small and making a little revenue. I would maybe recommend looking for experience freelancers, not going on cheap platforms, but there are good communities. There are bigger sites that recommend real experts. Next step would be going to a small agency. And then there's basically no limit. If you run a multi \$1 million dollar shop. There are enterprise agencies ready for you, and each one will step you up another level and bring your shop forward.

I think it's important to find the right partner and not to commit something that is above your budget. The sky's the limit. If you go to an Enterprise agency, they can build you shop \$4 million dollars. Is that reasonable for you if you, if you're not having the revenue of it? No, so don't fall for pursuing something which is not in your budget, or or not fitting your project.

Very, vague answer. Maybe the other panelists have some tips here, too, as agency owners.

Patrick Rauland:

Yeah, I'd like to jump in quick. So from the [ecommerce fuel forum](#), which is all a million dollar or more stores. They. I think there's a bias towards either hiring someone in-house like a programmer in-house once you get to a certain size because you want someone who can keep the website like, if your website's down for 5 days, you've lost a lot of money and or they use an agency.

I think the least used option is a freelancer, and I think sometimes freelancers can ghost you. So when you're thinking about like what you want with your business, you want them either a very trusted freelancer that you've used for a long time, or is hire someone in house or an agency that has SLAs that agree. They'll respond to your issue in 20 hours whatever

ENID JIMENEZ:

Okay, fantastic, I think we're coming up on time. So I wanted to open the floor for any closing thoughts, you know from anyone, from any one of our speakers today.

JAMES KEMP:

Yeah, I can add some thoughts. I think one of the best things about wordpress. And we come, as in general, is the community is so open with all of this stuff, so definitely seek out those

groups on Facebook and on Twitter. Ask your questions. Do your research as well, you know. Make sure. Make sure you do your own research. And you're not just relying on other people to answer things for you.

But yeah, speak, speak to the community and yeah, they they will be sure to help you

KATHY DARLING:

Could I? Could I tag on to what James said there, in in that part of what makes that community so awesome is that there are so many people in it, so that when you come and engage and ask some questions, the next time someone else is asking the question. You know the answer to be ready to pay that energy forward. That's that's that's part of what is making the wordpress and WooCommerce specifically communities so great for so long.

ENID JIMENEZ:

Thank you so much.

Alright with that, I'm gonna pass it. You pass it to Lexi.

LEXI MOSTEK:

Yeah, thank you. And thank you again, to all of our panelists. This is a community.

These people aren't necessarily WP Engine customers. We just wanna create a community to talk about plugins and to talk about topics. And that's really what we did. So thank you to the panelists and thank you to those of you that joined. We really appreciate it. This is part 2 of our 3 part series, as we mentioned next Tuesday. Same time, same place. We will be back to talk about artificial plugins.

I think there's a lot in that space. We're not necessarily experts. I don't think anyone can say they're experts at this point, but we've got some interesting thoughts on the topic and some interesting panelists to join. So if you're registered for this webinar, you'll get the reminder for next week's

Other than that we have relaunched our ultimate guide to Plugins again, not WP Engine salesy, but more just putting together a list of plugins on various different topics. I know there were several people in here that ask questions on themes and on, you know, image optimization. There's a lot out there. Use the community and use your resources to continue to learn about plugins and thank you for joining. We'll see all next time.