

**[Webinar] transcript:** Almpact: Transforming Agencies in the digital age  
[Webinar Recording](#) - May 30, 2024

WEBVTT

**Lexi Mostek:**

Hello, and welcome to our May webinar on AI impact transforming agencies in the digital age. If you're new to our webinars. My name is Lexi, and I'm gonna be the eyes and ears behind this webinar. I'm running the tech support helping throw some links in chat and things like that. Of course we are going to record this webinar, but I am gonna give you my rookie mistake here that I did forget to click record at the beginning of the webinar. So I am just , post recording a, little bit of a blurb. You didn't miss any content, but I wanted to make sure you knew how we're joining and things like that? So just briefly, what's going on during this webinar? The webinar is going to consist of Andrew Jillions, who is our host, going through welcome and introductions, which is where the recording will start off. We then briefly talked about the current Wp engine AI landscaped. We then move into a panel discussion where we ask panelists and number of questions on how they're using AI, both in their jobs professionally and at their jobs as agency owners and agency workers.

We then move to Kellen Mace, who does an AI powered hybrid search for wordpress. Demo. This is one of our products that we offer at WP Engine. And then we conclude the webinar with the audience question and answer, now what you missed during my mishap. Where I didn't get recording is Andrew Jillions, our director of Technical Solutions, introduced himself and talked a little bit about why AI at WP engine.

As you know, we are a wordpress hosting company. We are not an AI company, and that is why we chose to bring together a panel of experts to talk about AI both in the agency world and in our own personal development. From there we had the panel introduce themselves. And this is where I'm going to put you back in the recording. We've got Andrew, who will be the host, and asking the questions and then Inna and Daniel, who have the opportunity to introduce themselves. I hope you enjoy the webinar, and sorry for the mishap.

**Daniel Quinn:**

My background with AI comes from having a particular need to solve, and it involves image generation. So that's the angle that I'm coming from here with stable diffusion. In particular.

And in terms of my personal use as a developer, I found AI with co-pilot and not co-pilot the particular program, but co-piloting. You know, your development with an LLM has been surprisingly helpful and interesting. In the sense that you suddenly have a partner who has essentially all the knowledge of stack overflow inside of its brain.

And that has changed the way we approach development. So I'm really excited to talk about AI, because I feel like it is huge part of how we have to proceed as creators. Now.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Thank you, Daniel, absolutely. We must embrace right. It's here to stay. So I'm really happy to have you here, Daniel. Thank you for joining us, and I don't know about you two. But I'm really jazzed about AI, because it's genuinely fun and exciting. You know, it feels like every day. There's this new, exciting use case that blows me away. So my 1st question for you is really kind of what gets you excited. What are emerging AI technologies that you're most excited about. And how do you plan to incorporate them into your services? Inna we'll start with you.

**Inna Zeyger:**

And this is a good one, because I think this is where Daniel and I have quite a lot of overlap in discussion, too. So really, it's coming down to creative generation. And ideation. Has been a huge consideration. So like for context you know, most of the major publishers like Google, ads, Meta, and various others are really pushing more visual formats. You know, with Meta, it's always been predominantly visual, right? You can live and die by the creative that you put out there, regardless of how good?

You know your audience targeting is. It's what's the creative strategy. What's the message? Is it the right message aligning with the right audience? And so, you know, just last week, during Google marketing live, they pushed out announcements around having more AI generated content. You know, on the media side, we've largely already been working with AI and large language models for creative. But it clearly is a much larger in focus. These days for Google and other platforms, too. So you know, from my perspective, you know, because of that push, like we've always had clients who had gaps with, you know, their creative abilities like whether they had it in house had other agencies. You know, creative development is a heavy undertaking. I'm sure Daniel would agree with me on that one. And so, you know, often enough there's not enough resources on the client side or not enough, you know. Dollars to be able to, you know, push out as much creative as needed. With, you know, as many different audiences as you're trying to target, but different messaging. So for me, that's something that's huge. And I think it's going to create for many of our clients, you know, means to perform and be in placements that they typically couldn't be in because of those creative limitations. But that being said, you know there are new. There's so much nuance, and there's so many gray areas with what that creation looks like. And I mean so many things like branding guidelines and brand safety like our big conversation. But I think it'll allow a lot more clients to be in places where they typically couldn't be before because of those limitations.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Thank you. No, yeah, it is. It is excited to see these barriers being broken down by AI. So so, Daniel, what excites you.

**Daniel Quinn:**

Yeah. So I think as an independent developer for the 1st time. You know, and I have some creative background, and that my my background of publishing and and and design. But I would

prefer to turn to an expert when we're working on a client's projects like an actual visual designer who had a career in the thing, but as an independent developer for the 1st time some of the tools that can generate some of the outcomes that only experts could do are in my hands. And so some of the things I'm excited about are on the video side of image generation. You know a couple of hosted platforms that are out right now can generate stuff that is comparable to studio quality video. So like runway ML, is one example. Pica labs.

But what's the most shocking and most exciting platform that hasn't been released yet, but an advertised is called Sora, and the video that they're generating. As this text to video, looks like Hollywood quality stuff.

So to have that at your disposal, you know, when you're creating products, whether that's you know an introductory video, or whether that's something that's incorporated. You know, into a larger creative product. Like, I, I've never seen that kind of power at your fingers before. So you know, on the local side stable fusion also has a version of that called Stable Diffusion video. And all this is happening suddenly all at once. So we literally don't have enough time to explore all of these tools. But I think we have to race to incorporate them, because. you know, they have the potential to either be industry destroying or industry transforming and I would hope that we can do the latter.

**Andrew Jillions:**

For sure. Thank you, Daniel. Yeah, definitely exciting and overwhelming at the same time, for sure. And you know I actually have a follow up question for you just in the realm of of digital advertising. Can AI be used as a game changer in marketing in terms of gaining a competitive advantage, and if so, how?

**Inna Zeyger:**

Overwhelmingly, very aggressively. Yes, so I think one of the things that I noted is that you know again, with some of these tools that are available. For us to use. We can now much more easily take very large data sets and you know, uncover insights and ways that you know would be far too time consuming to do right like I mean, there's manpower. And then there's also, you know, the ability to streamline some of those operations. So what we've been finding is for our clients like leveraging AI has resulted in looking at larger data sets sometimes using, you know, more conversational models. So, for example, instead of, you know, kind of going through data having an idea of what you're looking for. You can, just, you know, ask the question, and it reduces, you know, some of those mistakes that could happen if you're looking at large data sets. Or it might even help us identify data data points that we might not have even been looking at because they were so buried. So really, it's like those. The ability to look at these trends in a much faster and conversational way has been quite helpful. But you know, competitively to like. You know. I'm on the media side, but on the SEO side. It's also streamlined. Quite a lot of operations of building out personas of, you know, building out larger keyword lists as well as

you know, creating ways to reduce some of those the time, and some of those heavier lifts by creating more space for us to focus on strategy, on the client relationship, and really like focusing in on what the clients larger business goals are.

So that's been a pretty big thing. And I think that's where that competitive advantage does come in.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Awesome Inna. Thank you for the insights, and I have to agree that the conversational nature of AI tools has been my favorite thing as well, it makes it much easier to use for sure. So I think the 2 of you know this. I believe I told you this, but for everyone else here. I was actually an agency partner of WP Engine for a long time before I join the team here, and I actually think some of my old colleagues are out in the audience there somewhere but if I can try to read their minds and put my agency hat back on, I start to think about how AI can be used to increase my margins and have a positive impact on my bottom line. So I'd love to dig into that, you know. Daniel will go to you first. Do you have a practical example of a problem solved by AI at your agency, and how it had a direct impact on your bottom line.

**Daniel Quinn:**

Yeah. So we were working on a product for a tabletop role playing game, called Osr plus and that kind of product requires a physical book and a website. And in our case, a character builder. So it requires a lot of visual design and art. And as an Indie, you know, project, it's not like we had an enormous budget to hire a bunch of designers to produce the hundreds and potentially thousands of pieces of art that we would need for this project.

And so this was about a year ago, when we were nearing completion of it as a product and we had a vision for the design, because in our team there's only a few people, and one of them is a designer. But we didn't have the manpower. So at the time, a year ago, mid journey, which is a hosted image generation platform was just producing these very blurry, dreamlike images. And there were other, you know, hosted platforms like Delle and you know we started toying with those. But then stable diffusion really came into the forefront. And this is a way to generate images locally on your own machine.

And so I worked with the visual designer, and we constructed a consistent prompt as well as you know, selected a certain set of artist tokens both that and alive to construct our style that we were envisioning. And then we got into fine tuning the base model to create what are called Laura's, and these are kind of like encompassing concepts that you can add on some base model

So that we essentially had our own kind of proprietary visual look that could be generated from and so you know, in a matter of days, after consolidating that we could generate like 18,000 images. Unique portraits for this builder. And then, in a matter of weeks after that, hundreds of images that could be used to populate the draft, and then the rest of the website. And that would

just be impossible like in terms of manpower and the length of time that we did it. And other than the cost of labor. It's not like there's licensing fees or costs to use the software because the locally installed you know, installation for it.

And I think if we can get tools like that in the hands of agencies or independent designers. You know, then we're able to speed up a lot of the grunt work that we deal with, you know, on the production side. And you know, as you know, Inna was pointing to the idea of I mass ideation, you know, instead of having one designer have to generate 4 comps. And that's really what we spend 20 hours on. And we could spit out 500 comps. And then from those, because they're probably all gonna be horrible. 2 or 3 might inspire ideas of how we would develop from there. So stable diffusion is an example where we're not beholden to a 3rd party. We're toasted. We can install it locally. We can put it in the hands of all of our team. So like in our case, working on this particular product, the designer myself, the production person, the video person, we all have it installed on our machines. So if we need to, for example, create promotional imagery for say, a video that we're putting out to advertise it, any of us can generate that because we understand how to produce the art from our generation tool, you know, using our model that has our branding literally built into it.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Awesome. Thank you, Daniel, and you know, Inna before we go to you, a quick follow up for you, Daniel. That's a great use case and beyond the generation. How is AI being used to assist you in content management and optimization?

**Daniel Quinn:**

So I don't necessarily use AI as much in you know, like my hosted content management tools, because I'm a really small, you know one or 2 person, you know, company but on the development side, I would say, LLMs are where it's extremely useful, because I could, for example, especially now that a lot of the LLMs are directly connect to the Internet can return results in real time. So you know, if I have a problem, and I don't necessarily have a network of developers to talk to, or other coworkers. I can actually deliberate with the LLM. To come to at least pointers the direction I should look into and solve the problem. Whereas before you know the average thing, a developer does, is Google to find their answers. So now you know, it's a combination of googling and also consulting your local LLM, and yeah, yes, it will generate wrong answers a lot of the times, and it will lie to you. But that's part of the job of understanding when it's lying to you and sorting that out. It's just a way of collaborating with it. So

I don't think I have as huge a need on the project management side to incorporate AI. But I would absolutely do that, as those platforms become more affordable because I could see, for example, I use Asana in particular. I could see, for example, Asana incorporating AI. And now I can search across the platform and say, Well, when does this one project do? What's the deadline for this? And it should be able to surface that information instantly which would save me time.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Excellent. Yeah, great, great use case and great thing there. So Inna you know, I'll pass it back to you for the same exact question, you know. Do you have a practical example of how AI is being used at your agency to directly impact your bottom line?

**Inna Zeyger:**

So many, and it's probably been one of my favorite things. So I mean there, there's a number of scenarios that I guess we wouldn't call as like sexy as using AI, for, you know, like content generation or things. We're very practical use cases, I would say, have been quite helpful. So we use a number of tools like fathom video, even Zoom's own, you know, recording and summaries are very, very helpful. And it puts us in a position where you know there are always these tasks that require quite a bit of time, right like whether it's note taking, or you know, summarizing findings from a meeting or like, let's say you have a meeting recorded and like you wanna go back. And you know, people weren't on that meeting and find out what happened. You know it. Tools like Fathom and mixed with Claude and ChatGpt, you can take that transcript, and then just like make it into a conversation.

And that saves so so so much time with, you know, that could be better spent, you know, doing something else, like, you know, working on the work that we need to be working on or really just having, you know, more conversations with our clients about. You know how we want to evolve their business goals or strategy. So that's been a pretty big one, so like, I would say, like if I were to do a laundry list. You know, like task creation for meeting transcripts like asking you know questions and getting more insight from the meetings that you had with Claud. And chat Gpt, you know, report insights and data analysis. And that's like, regardless of whether it's digital media to like Daniel's point, yeah, sometimes answers are not great. That's where you still need that human element to be able to review and say, okay, like this is not accurate. This is not working. But you know, like, we also use it for data organization. Where, you know, like, we have a lot of thoughts put together, and you know we want to tell a better narrative of what we have together, whether it's recommendations, whether it's, you know, next steps, and be able to put that out much more quickly. In a much more organized manner. So we never really use it to replace the you know, creativity or the ideation. But they're very good, for you know, thoughts for organizing your thoughts. And, you know. doing some of that data analysis that would typically be quite time consuming. You know, streamlined that end of it.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Great. Thank you. And yeah, it's really cool to see AI in action and in streamlining operations. And I would argue that I profit. Margins are pretty sexy. So I think that's a great example. We're in this Wild West phase right now of AI, where it often feels like the possibilities are limitless, and there really are no limitations. But that is not a realistic expectation to set for your clients. So the question I have for both of you is, how do you manage those client expectations regarding both the benefits and limitations of AI. And Inna we'll go back to you first.st



**Inna Zeyger:**

Super fun. So yeah, so I think this has been like the narrative we've all been talking about during this webinar, too like a key thing to remember about AI. You know, for paid media. And I think many other places that you know AI LLM is already deeply embedded in the ad tech stacks of, like all the major programs that we work with and has been for several years right? So like, whether it's algorithmic bidding or you know, you know, early in the last, like 2 years, AI aided ad creation and things like that. It's already been there. And you know, looking ahead, we can expect AI to just have an even larger impact as the technology advances. So like, for example, areas like automated media buying personalized video ads, predictive budget allocations will likely see AI integration.

But the key thing I, you know, when we have these conversations with our clients is, you know, we have to use AI ethically to enhance human expertise, not replace it. You know, overall AI should improve our ad results. It should free up strategist time and provide insights that humans could miss. But you know, with any AI tool we have to manage the expectation that we like with anything else we do, whether we're, you know, testing creative or you know, we're launching on a new platform. You have to validate its effectiveness at each step.

And we work with a lot of different verticals and industries. And I would say in 1 1 place that there might be a bit of a gap or delay in integrating AI, especially from a creative perspective, is going to be heavily regulated. Industries like you know, healthcare financial services.

Inna Zeyger: Anything of that sort where branding it brand safety brand guidelines are are huge, right? Like everything is, you know, has to go through numerous approval processes and big risk of, you know using AI is that you know the ads will not appear that you want them. The way that you want them to, and that could lead to, you know, legal consequences for the client, or, you know, just internal conversations with clients around how they want to make sure that their brand guidelines are enforced.

So there's a lot of talk. There's a lot of conversation about that but something to always keep in mind. Especially with leveraging AI like with AI or any other tool. If the data is good going in, you're probably gonna have a good output. The data is bad, that can lead to some really bad marketing decisions. And that's something that we want to avoid. So we always look at this as you know, how can we have this manual automation approach? Right? You can automate a lot of things you can use. AI, but still have that human element to, you know, prevent issues like that. So no, I don't think AI can replace us, but something to keep in mind when we're talking to, you know our clients and having those larger conversations about the impacts of AI.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Great insights, and that's a relief that we're not being replaced just yet, at least.

**Inna Zeyger:**

We're good we're good for now.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Daniel, I'll ask you the the same question. You know. How are you managing your client's expectations?

**Daniel Quinn:**

I think the biggest issue we're going to have with client expectations when it comes to the application of AI specifically, on the production side. Is the expectation of cost and speed. Because, you know, I don't think it's viable going forward to budget \$20,000 for 2 comps when you know, although the source of those coms may not be great. They can be generated in seconds, and this is going to become more pro more prevalent as these tools get into the hands of the client side.

So I think what we have to do is position ourselves as sort of oversight, and this is what Inna was speaking to that we have to guide them through the use of these tools and provide our expertise, as far as you know, understanding their branding and generating outputs that match, you know the intention of their brand and what they need to accomplish from a business perspective. But those expectations of costs are going to shift. That I think that's gonna dramatically change how we budget and how we compete. Because if we're not utilizing these tools, there's going to be smaller organizations that are leaner that are willing to use these tools and be able to produce outputs faster and to a larger extent.

The other issue is, you know, rights. And I think a lot of agencies are, and their clients are reversed to unknowns when it comes to rights, especially IP, as it pertains to art. And we found that the copyright office in particular has already ruled that generations don't have a copyright and they can't be copywritten unless there's substantial human input involved. So meaning you substantially altered the outputs coming out of the image generation. So that means we have to be aware that we have to add value as an agency to that output in order for it to be something that can even be sold or licensed and used. By the client.

So I think the expectation from the client will be that we're educated about how these tools could be used. And we can't just dismiss them because our competitors will use them. And they're already becoming deeply integrated. And tools we use every day like the adobe suite. Every one of them is suddenly incorporated image generation in the software itself. So there's questions, you know, of ethics and of rights that we have to sort through and then we have to also reconsider. You know the costs involved in our offerings, because AI will become an expectation just a matter of time, like, I think we're in the honeymoon phase where a lot of things are happening and everyone's in an arms race to build these tools. But that will settle. Settle down eventually, you know, and it'll be everywhere.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Great, anyway. And yeah, that's a good point. It's so important for you to be that trusted advisor for your clients and maintain that open communication and realistic expectations. So I I suspect,



and it sounds like yours really perk up when you talk to clients about AI, and maybe they tend to be more engaged in these types of conversations. So Inna a question for you is, in what ways has AI helped maintain or even increase client engagement?

Inna Zeyger: Hmm. Yeah. And you know it. It's keeping that open conversation so like for us, it's important to be proactive. And also, you know. educate our clients on what's going on in the space, too. So you know that starting off, it's, you know, having our own Pops and testing a number of tools on our side. Across the different, you know. Teams that we, you know, have at our agency. So you know, I may be media. But we have SEO, we have no social media. We have creative. We have web dev. So really, you know, everybody on our side, there's, you know a task force of getting a better understanding of what tools are out there?

What problems do we have that we can solve for? And like 99% of the time. A lot of those same problems or challenges or challenges that clients are encountering and facing. So we definitely try to, you know, share the knowledge and share the results of our testing with our clients. But we also have clients who are coming to us and getting really, really excited about what the latest AI tool is because it's cool and it's fun. But at the same time, like, you know, managing that expectation around, you know like, is it actually going to benefit the client to use it at this time, or are they even able to use it? But what I'll say is you know the engagement comes from, you know, being able to use AI tools to provide more personalized recommendations to our clients, whether it's. you know, for their marketing efforts, or you know, just with our internal conversations, we've been able to provide our clients customers with more responsive and tailored experiences, using AI you know.

Ultimately, the goal is to help our clients have that increased you know, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and it's also enabled us to create more dynamic and interactive content. That, you know, really does push forward AI push forward Roi and various other key metrics that are important to clients. So you know, to distill it down. It's, you know. Make sure you're educating your clients about what's going on in the world of AI. It's very important. We, you know. I think everybody is excited about it.

but, you know, always approach it with a little bit of caution, because again, this whole place. This whole field is evolving very much to Daniel's point. We're in the honeymoon phase. So you know, I think the key is like, let's not lose track of the basics. You know, we still have to consistently deliver valuable and engaging experiences with our clients as well as our clients customers. So I think that's the key there, right to be able to strengthen our clients, relationships with us and with their customers, to drive those better business outcomes, regardless of AI.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Yeah, those are great insights. And it's so true. Right? I mean, everyone's so excited about AI, and I'm sure you have clients running to you with their ideas, and how they think AI should be used. And it's important to remind them, especially experts and rein them in a little bit so you

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know, I could sit here and talk to you both all day about this. But unfortunately, that's all the time I have for my questions. So thank you both for letting me pick your brains, and I've learned a time just from sitting with you 2 right now. But don't go anywhere, because we're going to open it up to questions at the end. But before we do that I'd like to welcome one more guest speaker

so please welcome Kellen Mace, who is here to talk about AI powered search for Wordpress. So we'll we'll wait for Kellen to join here. Kellen, are you out There?

There he is!

**Kellen Mace:**

Come on. Yep, yep.

**Kellen Mace:**

Thank you. So much. Happy to be here. Yeah. If you wanna give me screen share, control, and I will dive right in.

**Andrew Jillions:**

There you go, I'll turn.

**Kellen Mace:**

Alright great. So yeah. 1st off again. Welcome. Everybody like really thrilled to have you all here. I have a history myself in the workforce agency space. It's near and dear to my heart, so happy to to show off some some pretty cool features that we're excited about with Wp engine here, so for my portion of the event. Here. As a slide saddle show off our AI powered hybrid search solution. So I don't want to oversell this too much, but your mind might be blown. I don't. It stands to

chance to be seen, or roommates to be seen. So let's dive in. See if we can hit that high bar.

So why, search right? If you're all of you in the agency world. You don't really need convincing right? But I'll just state this, anyway, just as a reminder to you all and to myself like, why search is so critical.

Number one search is a hard problem. So those who solve it earn the right to charge for it right? If you put in the the effort to like really nail down, search, and deliver it to end users exactly what they're looking for. It's just better everything better. You know, user experience, better conversions, and so on.

Which leads to number 2. That's I. Search is critical for website owners to get right and a couple of stats stats here just to drive that point home. You can see on this slide. It says, many retailers find it difficult to understand user intent, right? What a user meant by a certain keyword they're searching for. They also find it difficult to personalize and surface the right products and content

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to shoppers. If you get negative results kind of precipitate from those things. So those are listed at the bottom here. So 2 trillion dollars lost each year from search abandonment globally. 78% of consumers view a brand differently after experiencing search difficulties right after experiencing some of that friction. The last one, 82% of consumers avoid websites where they've experienced search difficulties in the past.

So all you know, compelling reasons to really nail, search or do the best we can. In, you know, in effort to do so. So next we'll talk about what default Wordpress search gives you and where it might fall short. So the work, you know, the flow their user goes through typically looks like this. Right? So let's say the agency has you know, run and add campaigns as leverage. Their email list, you know, done SEO everything they can to get these leads to their site right? That's kind of the blue step here, and they've nailed it. They've th. That user has made it all the way through to their site right? And now, by performing a search, this user is literally telling us this is the exact thing that I want, right just by the act of searching for it.

This leads to the purple one here oftentimes right through a typo or synonym. Use the results are irrelevant or empty. Right the next kind of teal step. Here the user leaves the brand site brand is harmed. you know, potentially, permanently due to this poor experience. And then the last one. Here the yellow crucial piece is Site owner has 0 awareness of the reason this user bounced what they searched for, what? What their intent really was, you know. So how do we? How do they then rectify this problem? To make sure it doesn't happen to other users in the future.

So this is really where WP Engine smart search comes in. And then, in particular, our new AI powered, hybrid search features. It aims to solve, You know, issues like this. These are not minor problems, either, just to drive a home, you know, one last time here, users that search are 2 times more likely to convert or just to stay engaged. Half of them are typing with thumbs right these days in a mobile phone 1st world.

Many of us, as you all know, it's you know. Users are typing with 2 thumbs on the mobile devices. It's so easy to make typos right and last one these visitors are having a terrible time. 20% of people who use search then went on to refine their search. That means that they weren't pleased with, you know, the 1st the 1st set of results, and had to try again. Right? So the question is really at that point comes down to how far can we push this person? You know? How far can we test their patience? Really, until they're like.

I can't find anything on the site. I'm out right. And they and they bounce. That's what we want to avoid. So with default. Wordpress search, you know. Perhaps you or many of your clients rely on that right now. Yeah, some shortcomings right? First, it doesn't tolerate any misspellings at all it has to be, you know, exact. The keyword has to match the full text of the post title or content.

Really, no custom data outside of that by default is indexed. So that includes, like acf advanced custom fields, data or custom post type data. None of that is indexed right. You would have to

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write custom code to try to add that to wordpress. But then, in doing so now you made your spent. You know your searches more expensive? Right? So that kind of comes at a cost

Default Wordpress search has no support for arbitrary data. So if one of your clients comes to you inside and says, I want users to, you know, be able to search for the Content on my wordpress site but also pull in matching results from shopify or from, you know our Youtube channel, you know, matching videos or whatever it may be right. No support for that. You'd have to, you know, write all kinds of custom code to try to shoehorn. You know that into the search results that people are seeing.

As I mentioned, worse performance as the site grows. So if you accommodate all these needs, you say, alright, you're good. We're gonna give you the search you're looking for. We're gonna write a mountain of custom code and try to get wordpress data and shopify data. And you know your Youtube, you know video, all of that's gonna show up. We're gonna hit all these Apis.

Ouch! Now, performance, you know, takes a hit, not to mention just as the site grows, right. If a site has hundreds of thousands of posts, if all we press search is just going to struggle with that, even if you don't have the, you know, arbitrary other sources of data as well.

So lots of shortcomings, and the last one I have for you is no support for semantic search. Right? If somebody in the Uk. Searches, if they're looking for shoes and somebody in the Uk searches for trainers and somebody in New York searches for sneakers. Somebody from the Midwest in the Us. Searches for tennis shoes, right? These people, like or or or several of them at least may be searching for the same exact word, but unless that exact, you know phrase the keyword that they typed in matches when the full text search is performed. Matches, you know, terms in your wordpress database. They might get nothing back, even though they're really, you know, referring to the same thing right ideally, we'd be able to infer the users intent and figure out what they need and then deliver them the right thing, no matter what they had typed right? So that's where we're headed next here so WP Engine smart search to the rescue. So that list I just went through. No misspellings, only oh, searches title and content, all of the stuff on you see on the left. Here

The arrows lead to the solution to that right. So smart search really, comes to the rescue. It provides fuzzy search. All those misspelling issues go away right? We can still resolve that and correct return the correct responses. We have custom data into index. By default. If you add a custom post type, add a field group with acf to that. It's already searchable.

It's already in the index. You are, you can already, you know, get high performance. Search from that. With 0 custom, you know, work on your part.

Arbitrary data. It's already supported. There's a, you know, an easy Api just add in the shopify data. I mentioned Youtube data, any 3rd party data you want to include without taking, you know, additional performance hit, supported out of the box with smart search the item about

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worst performance. As the site grows it's scalable. Luke, our product manager, was just telling me yesterday that we have a client at Wp. Engine has. I believe it was somewhere in their 200,000, you know. Posts range on their wordpress site, their smart search customer. And they're seeing 5 ms, you know, responses from our optimized mySQL database, you know, that's used on the back end to pro to serve up these search results. So it's, you know, built for that purpose to be scalable.

and then the last one. Ha! We have semantic search. Remember my example about the trainers versus sneakers versus tennis shoes. All of that goes away with our AI powered hybrid search feature right? It infers the intent and or the meaning of the search query and then finds the right results right, no matter what the person had typed.

Alright. So with that, all that out of the way I wanted to go through 3 demos, talk is cheap. Right? Let's see this thing in action. So I have 3 for you here. Time permits that 1st one is basic search. So I'll show you how to install And then and then sync your data with the Plugin. We'll see how we can use acf and custom post type data, fuzzy search waiting the different results.

We'll go to the front end and see some of our custom post types included in the results. And then a few advanced operators.

Demo 2 will be the AI powered hybrid search, though. So that's the one in the example for trainers versus tennis shoes versus, you know, speakers, whatever else inferring the users intent and then returning the results, that's really the the mind blowing one right? That will show off in Demo 2.

Then Demo 3 is the user portal analytics. This one is huge for knowing exactly what people are searching for on the site and then going even deeper, knowing what results, what are people searching for, and that they're getting a 4 0 4. No results. For how can I correct that? So that they're finding you know everything that they're looking for all the time on my site or on my client site.

It's a pretty huge deal here.

So with that. Let's dive into the 1st one I mentioned. So demo number one, see if we can check out the basic search functionality here.

Alright. So for this, we'll use our fun demo site. We built here. Swift search, right? So this is a wordpress site. It's been loaded up with all kinds of data about Taylor swift albums, and then in songs as well.

You can search by song, name, album, name, lyrics within the song release date. You know all kinds of stuff here, where perform a search, though, and let's head over to the wordpress back

end, and I'll kind of show you what this would look like for yourself or your client if you were to set this up.

So after installing and activating the the plugin you can head over to the settings page here by just paste in your particular, URL, and then access token you were given right? So you save that. Then you're up and running, and can configure this plugin and sync it for the 1st time.

Alright, so, I'll head over to the search. Config page here. So this option between stemming, which refers to like the word run, or running, or runs with, would all be different versions of of the same root word right? So you can optimize for for stemming, or really for fuzziness, which I think is what most clients appreciate most. And then the fuzzy distance like how, how far off, you know, did user how far off was user from the word that they meant? Did they really mash the keyboard? Or are they somewhat close? You have some control there

And then the model is listed here. Control, what is searchable, and you can even include weights for these, which is huge. So you can say, you can say that I want, you know, people to be able to search albums on my wordpress site. For each of these, you know, post title post name, for example, I'm gonna toggle these on. So those are searchable. And then you can even individually dial in weights for these right? So somebody searching for a song by its title would probably be the most important thing, even if that keyword happened to match one of the lines in the lyrics, for example. Probably the title is, you know, viewed as the most important thing. Right? You might weight that more heavily. Something else, you know, may weight a little a little lower, for example. You can like adjust these at any point to really dial in exactly. You know what results in the best search results for your site.

So if you take your time to do this, as we have here for album, and then for songs, right. Set up a few and with weights here you can then save that configuration. And then there's just a 1 time Sync and that's it. Then you're up and running right so you just click this button to index. Now. I won't do this right right now, just so we can keep the demo rolling. We only have to pause for a moment. But what this button basically does is kicks off a background process where all the data you told smart search to pay attention to to index. It is then fired off to this, you know. High performance database that meant meant for scalable searches right as soon as that one time indexing is done, then you're good to go.

So with that. Let's see if we can. We can demo this so I'm not. I'm not the most fervent swifty in the world. But let's see if we can find a few things. So I know folk folklore is one of her albums, right? So you can search for that, right and get back what we would expect for the album right? That's not very impressive, because I spelled it right. What if we do?

Spell something incorrectly, as a user might? Right? So I'll do like wildest dreams with a with a Z right? There's a misspelling it work. A search would just joke on this. This. Would you know 4 or 4? No results if I search for this. No problem right while the streams pops right up. It's very forgiving of the of this with the fuzzy search functionality that that we have.



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You could also do compound search. So let's say, it matches 2 things. So if the user were to search like foolish, which might search, you know, might match a few songs or albums, but then they also type wonderland, which might match other. So, songs or albums. Right? You search for those you both of them back. Here's here's Wonderland, because that searched, you know, part of your query, a fragment of your query. And then here's foolish, because that matched another part of it.

Right? You can see here we're doing everything in our power to like, get the person the result that they might have meant, you know, by this search? Query, here.

So let's see. We saw fuzziness. We saw compound search a for some of that fanciness. I think we can add some custom data. So this will be a fun part. So advanced custom fields. Of course, we're huge fans of it over here. Wp. Engine, and as if you don't know it's recently added support for custom post types as well. So along with albums and songs, I can quickly click, add. And let's say we want to add a new custom post types. I'll do projects. Project and leave these other settings alone save changes.

Let's see? Oh, yeah, I had registered, registered, registered this before the demo. Yeah. Sorry that projects exist there. So let's see. Want to show you, how real time. This can be so let's say, on this site, we've had a new post type that didn't exist prior projects, right? And this is going to be. we'll say, like Q2 planning. I don't. I don't know. Youtube, planning summit, or something, is is a new project on this particular word wordpress site. Right? This data is synced to our high performance search database in real time. So now I've published this this post. That data has has now been synced already, so I should be able to head to the front end and search for it already, and let's see if it comes up now before thinking.

Yep, it does. You can see without any, without ever heading back to the search page to hit that sync button. Our search results are are already, you know, popping up here. Of course I'm missing in an image here, right since it's not an album. This is a new data type that hadn't existed before. So on a production side, you'd, you know, probably want to style this this differently right? But you can see the point I'm making here of the data coming through already.

Let me. I'm gonna pause for a sec just to check the chat. Lexi. I wanna make sure I'm doing okay on time. Here. let me know if I'm not. I got the chat open on the side.

Lexi Mostek: Hey Kellen, like 2 minutes.

### **Kellen Mace:**

2 min. Okay, yeah. I'll see how much damage we can do. So basic search we made it through. You've seen all of that.

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Get to the good stuff here, AI powered hybrid search. So this is one page where you can configure and sync this, and then go ahead and run semantic searches. so I'll see if we can show that oftentimes.

Let's see my networks going a little slow at the moment. Sorry.Come on.

Alright, take my local connections also. So here. Sorry about that. But for this last one which is arguably the you know, the fanciest, most demoable, most impressive part of the presentation is, is located here. AI powered hybrid. Search right? So you can dial this in. However you want. This is in Beta right now. This is how it how it exists in its current iteration. So there's a search bias here. We can say, I only want full text search for some sites. This might be appropriate, right? If you had, like user manuals, you wanted the person to be able to search for exactly the right model number you wanted, you know. No, no wiggle room. Basically full text search might make sense.

Otherwise you can go only semantic search, meaning we're going to trust AI completely with what it comes back with, you know, when it thinks is the right results for some sites that might have not be ideal either. Right? We've all encountered AI like hallucinating right and returning results sometimes. That aren't aren't ideal right? So best practice has shown typically that a mix of both is actually the best right? So the person searches based on the actual test text versus, we're gonna infer what they meant.

Let's just do both of those, and show you know the best of both worlds by by doing mix of both and then on our settings, Page. You can also tell it which fields to include. So right now you can see I've done song info dot lyrics. So this is indexed all the lyrics and Taylor swift songs. In the future. I believe that you know the team plans to add support for additional fields, but for the Beta. Right now you choose the one field you want to index on, and that's the one that it uses.

So to show this off, let me head back to my, to my front end. Search here, and see what we can do. Let's see. So Taylor Spectre have a few, has a few songs that are you know, got nothing in my brain, I think, is one lyric, for example, right? Let's say somebody instead of nothing.

Type nothing instead of brain. They type in mind, right? Got nothing in my mind right? Then. Maybe they're like in the ballpark kind of kind of got it wrong? Right? Search for this. You fire off that search. Sure enough, still results or loads come up the one I was thinking of as listed here, shake. Shake it off right with that particular line. Item relationship struggles, right? This is way far off from anything that the lyrics say. Any any. You know literal strings that they say. However, we're gonna infer the meaning. Here. We're gonna say, I want to find Taylor some songs that where the lyrics, you know, refer to relationship struggles.

I'm gonna fire off search for that without a problem. Right? The songs relevant to to that particular search, pop up. So it's hugely powerful. Right? If you want access to this. I think, lexi can share a link to a form in the chat. You can sign up if you're interested in getting into the beta

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and like getting your hands on this and trying it out. You can do that or talk to your account manager as well, and they can set you up for the beta. We would love to get as many users, you know, trying this out as possible, and, you know, would really value your feedback.

Last thing I have before we'll before we get out here, and I turn it over is a demo. 3 user Portal analytics. This one will be very quick. I just wanted to show off how powerful it is just to capture this stuff. So imagine this on one of your clients sites right? They've used users. They're driving traffic to the site. Users are making all kinds of searches and then WP engine on the user portal. You meant navigate to that site.

Then the sidebar head over to WP Engine smart search. If I click on that it'll send me over to the smart search page you can manage the add on, if you need to. But we're most interested in is this section here? Search rankings. Look how cool this is!

Here's the search term right that people are searching for, and then total searches. So you can see. You know what most people are searching for. On the site and getting results for those will be listed here.

What's hugely helpful is the no result. Searches. Right? Let's say we've done all these back flips like the fuzziness and waiting and support for compound searches and arbitrary data, you know, that we're bringing in. And this inference that we're doing to infer the the users intent giving them results via AI for doing all that stuff still getting a few, you know. No result searches.

They would show up right here, you would know. Okay, users are actively searching for this thing and we're not serving that need. They're not finding what they're looking for. How can we, you know, tweak some of those waiting settings or the other settings we saw in the config on the config screens to make this a non issue, so that even those people are, you know, start to find the searches that they're looking for. So these kind of analytics are huge. Right? You can see exactly how people are using search on the site and then know what you need to change, to optimize that experience for folks.

Alright. So that was it for me. That was the last demo before we turn it over. Lexi. Tell me what's what's next? If we're heading to the this slide slide here on the Ap. Or when questions come but that's it for me. Thanks for listening everybody.

**Andrew Jillions:** Awesome. Well, thank you. Kellen. .

Andrew Jillions:

No, you're you're good, Kellen. Thanks for the demo, and it's so cool to see how we're innovating AI, and seeing it in action. So look, as you all know, our agency partners are incredibly important to us, which is exactly where we have events like these. You know, we succeed when our agency partners succeed. And this mantra is top of mind for us, as we're building our product roadmap and thinking of tools and products, we can deliver to benefit you

or agency partners. So when we show off new stuff like this like AI search, it's specifically because we want your feedback, and even more so for you to test it out and and try it and make sure we are solving real problems for you. So please, I encourage you to sign up for the Beta of AI. Smart search. There should be a link in the chat or you can talk to your account manager, if you're interested.

And just as a teaser AI, smart search will be released to the general public this summer. So we do have a few minutes left. Thank you for joining back Inna and Daniel. We might have time for a couple of questions here. So I'm gonna roll right in the 1st one I have for you, which has been a popular question you've been getting is, you know, we have all these free tools of AI available, and everyone's been playing with them and using them in their day to days. But what investments have you made thus far? And AI meaning beyond the free versions of these AI tools.

And Inna will go to you first.

**Inna Zeyger:**

Yeah, so for productivity. And just to do more broad use cases. I'd say, like, fathom video chat, gpt, claude AI and then there's a lot of platforms now that just have inherently like, built in tools that, you know, serve a lot of purposes like the publishers like Google that are really pushing more AI tool usage from the creative side. Like, definitely, you know, Photoshop has been a pretty big one and I think there's a couple of others, but it could probably like shoot out a list in the interest of time to the chat.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Great. Thank you, Daniel.

**Daniel Quinn:**

Yeah, to reflect the same definitely chat gpt on the image side, though there's a lot more that I've been using. So mid journey, despite having stable fusion locally, which is software you can install and it's free. I also pay for mid journey because it has its own kind of proprietary model pica and runwayML, for video generation in particular. And then which is not mentioned a lot hardware, because video consumer power and having a powerful consumer video card lets you do the local generations of images with table diffusion. As well as need the need for more cloud storage and physical storage. So there's hardware requirements to it. If you really want to get into it.

**Andrew Jillions:**

Great. Thank you, and speed around. One more question just related to cost and pricing. Do you have any pricing recommendations on how to price AI enabled solutions for the agencies here and if you do, or how are you? Or are you disclosing that you're using AI to your clients?

**Inna Zeyger:**

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Oh, this one's a good one. Because I think it depends on the use case. I saw this question come up, and I I think this follow up was, you know, like, well, do clients think that you're, you know, not spending as much time on them because you're using AI, which is, you know, consideration. Some might have. I would say, a lot of agencies from pricing, you know, do like a technology fee. That's sort of, you know, a flat fee, that's you know, inclusive of all of the tools. So it covers off on that. We're very transparent, you know if we're using something, or if we're testing something, you know, that's something that our clients are going to know about, because they're probably going to be excited about it. But I think, like that question around whether you know, like we're doing less work that would definitely position it in a way where you know, there's a lot of tedious work that requires a lot of time from people, and I think our clients would prefer that. You know, we spend more of our time and free up some of that time on some of that more tedious work, you know, actually focusing in on strategies, tactics and you know, conversations with the client that'll help grow their business. I think we, the agency side, are always quite busy. There's always a lot going on. So you know anything we can do to shift the conversation and strategies to focusing in on. You know, growth.

And you know, efficiency is is a huge boon for our clients. So where we may be spending less time on some of those more tedious tasks like maybe note taking, or, you know, sending some of those like emails. It creates a lot more time for us to just work with our clients and service them at a higher level.

Andrew Jillions:

Great. Thank you, Daniel?

Daniel Quinn:

So on. And when I'm usually working with their hard deliverables like a design and a wordpress installation. You know, and if we have AI incorporated into that. I think we absolutely have to disclose it only because right now the question of rights is a big question. Mark. You know, generations that come right out of you know, model without any alterations. Don't pull the copyright according to the copyright office. So unless we invest human effort into changing it. Then. You know, there's a question for the client or for the agency as to how they're going to transfer the rights.

I think that will change in the future as these tools become way more integrated. And we have legal cases that answer some of these questions. But it. It's a great area, because we're seeing. Like we said before, Photoshop incorporating generations into its basic software. So if you're using that to say extended images, background? Does that count as the whole image now being AI generated? And these are questions that are difficult to answer. So I think the best approach is to absolutely disclose

And then to answer the other half of that question, will that impact how you price things absolutely like? Absolutely. I don't think you can get away with charging the same thing. You know, for the the same output, when you could generate far more. And so I don't think our

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clients are dumb.. I think they're gonna understand that. So we have to then figure out, okay, well, where are we going to move that budget. And what else can we do? Instead? And you know, if we could save time great, that means we could do other things that enhance the value. We're adding.

So we have to really be specific about what value we're adding as an agency. It doesn't. It doesn't matter to the client, you know how we're doing the grunt work. It matters the outcome. And so if we are transparent about the tools we're using and showing them where we can add value instead of in this boring space that they didn't care about before. Then, you know, I think they'll be on board with the use of the tools.

### **Andrew Jillions:**

Amazing. Well, thank you. We're out of time here, Ena and Daniel. I just wanna thank you. From the bottom of my heart, you know. Thank you for joining today and sharing your knowledge and your experiences. Your insets have been invaluable. And I really appreciate you taking the time. So for our agency partners out there. Please be on the lookout for more opportunities to test and try out our new add products as we expand the offerings in this space. There are more alphas and betas on the way.

So please talk to your account manager. To make sure you're in the know about each of them. If you aren't part of the agency partner program already, I highly recommend registering because we offer a ton of benefits to our agencies. We offer different tiers of benefits. So if you're already a member, please make sure you're taking full advantage of the different tiers and benefits within your tier. So thank you all for joining today on behalf of WP engine. My name is Andrew Jillions and I look forward to seeing you all at our next event, or webinar, so long.