Elementor or Gutenberg? Which Editor to Choose for Designing a WordPress Site

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In shortGutenberg is WordPress's built-in block editor: light, integrated and needing no plugin. **Elementor** is a drag-and-drop page builder that gives more design freedom quickly, but it is a plugin your site depends on and it adds weight to pages. For a simple company site you update yourself: Gutenberg with a good block theme. For many custom marketing pages: Elementor. What matters most is choosing one and sticking to it.

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When you start a WordPress site, an early question shapes everything after it: do we design pages with the native WordPress editor, or with a page builder such as Elementor? It is not only a matter of taste. It affects how fast the site is, who can edit it later, and what happens if you decide to change the design one day.

This guide compares the two from the site owner's point of view, not the developer's: what each option means for you after handover, and in the second and third year of the site's life.

Before you start

- Both run on any WordPress hosting, and neither needs a special server.
- They can be used together on one site, but it is better to design every page with a single tool.
- The theme you choose determines much of what you can do with each editor.



What is Gutenberg?

Gutenberg is the name of the **block editor** that became WordPress's default editor. Every element on the page is a block: a paragraph, heading, image, button, columns or a group. With modern themes that support **full site editing**, you can design the header, footer and page templates in the same editor, without plugins.

- **Built in:** part of WordPress itself, improving with each release.
- **Light:** it usually produces simpler code, so pages are lighter.
- **Patterns:** ready-made groups of blocks inserted with one click and then edited.
- **Limits:** some complex layouts need a strong theme, a blocks plugin or a little CSS.

For the basics of writing with blocks, see adding a new post in WordPress and adding a new page.

What is Elementor?

Elementor is a **page builder plugin** with drag and drop. You open the page in a visual interface, drag elements into place, control spacing, colours, fonts and motion for each element, and see the result instantly as visitors will. It has a free version and a paid version with more features, such as

header and footer design and advanced forms.

- **Lots of freedom:** custom layouts without writing code.
- **Fast to build:** an experienced designer can build a full marketing page quickly.
- **Template library:** ready pages and sections to start from.
- **Limits:** it adds files and code to the page, the site depends on it, and the paid version is a renewing subscription.

Point-by-point comparison

Criterion	Gutenberg	Elementor
How it works	Blocks inside the WordPress editor	Drag and drop in a separate visual interface
Design freedom	Good, and better with the right theme	Very high
Page weight	Usually lighter	Usually heavier, needs tuning and caching
Cost	Free, part of WordPress	Free version; paid version is a yearly subscription
Owner editing text	Simple and direct	Simple once you learn the interface
Plugin dependency	No	Yes; disabling it breaks page layouts
Changing design later	Easier, content is standard blocks	Harder, content is tied to the plugin

What if you want to switch later?

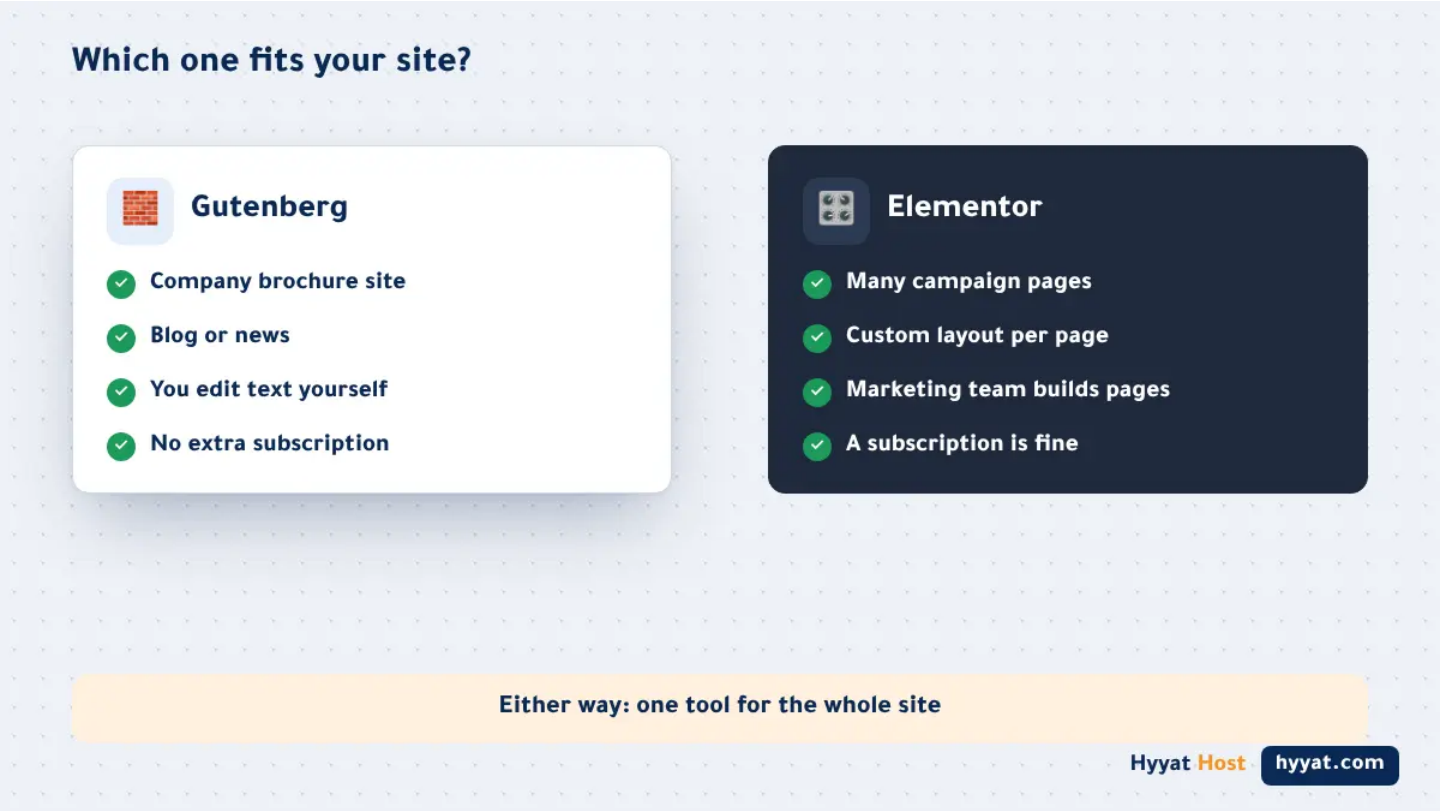
Many people overlook this. Pages built with Elementor are stored in its own format. If you disable the plugin one day, the text will not vanish, but the entire layout turns into unstructured content and the pages need rebuilding. Gutenberg content is standard blocks that WordPress itself understands, so it stays readable even if you change theme.

Rule of thumb: Do not mix tools. A site with half its pages in Elementor and half in Gutenberg is hard to maintain and hard to keep consistent. Choose one tool for the whole site, and make

exceptions only for clear reasons.

How each option affects speed

Speed does not depend on the editor alone, but on the theme, plugins, images and hosting. In general, though, drag-and-drop builders add CSS and JavaScript files and extra layers of elements to the code. This can be reduced with Elementor's own performance settings, caching and file minification. On our hosting, AccelerateWP helps speed up WordPress sites whichever editor you use.



When to choose each one

Gutenberg fits ifA company brochure site or blog, you want speed and simplicity, you will edit text yourself, and you do not want another subscription.

Elementor fits if Many marketing and campaign pages with custom layouts, you want to edit visually without a developer, and a subscription is fine.

Either wayA good compatible theme, compressed images, fast hosting and one tool for the whole site.

Questions to ask your designer

- Which tool will you build the pages with, and why is it right for my site?
- Do I need a paid subscription for any plugin, and in whose name will it be?
- Will I be able to edit text and images myself after delivery, and will you show me how?
- What happens if I decide to change the theme or tool in two years?

Remember that any paid plugin licence should be in your name and come from the official source, not a modified copy, as explained in choosing a safe WordPress plugin or theme.

Example: An accounting office wanted a five-page site where they would post news themselves. We chose Gutenberg with a block theme, so a staff member adds news just as they would in any text editor. Another company launches an ad campaign every month with a different page, so Elementor suited them better because their marketing team builds the page themselves.

Editing after handover

Whichever editor you use, ask your designer for a short session showing you how to edit text, replace an image and add a new page in the same design. It also helps if the designer creates **saved, reusable sections**, such as a service block or a question-and-answer block, that you can repeat on new pages without breaking the layout. In Gutenberg these are synced patterns; in Elementor, saved templates.

Summary

- Gutenberg: built in, light and free, and suits most company sites.
- Elementor: more design freedom, at the cost of plugin dependency and extra weight.
- Pick one tool for the whole site, and ask about editing and switching later.

We build WordPress sites with the tool that suits your project and show you how to edit them. See WordPress website design, and WordPress hosting to run your site.

Frequently asked questions

What is the difference between Elementor and Gutenberg?

Gutenberg is WordPress's built-in block editor; Elementor is a drag-and-drop page builder plugin with more design freedom.

Which is faster?
Gutenberg is usually lighter because it produces simpler code, but speed also depends on the theme, images, hosting and caching.

Is Elementor free?
It has a free version and a paid version with a yearly subscription and extra features.

What happens if I disable Elementor?
The text stays, but page layouts fall apart and the pages need rebuilding.

Can I use both on one site?
Technically yes, but it is better to use one tool for the whole site to simplify maintenance and keep the look consistent.

Related guides

- How to Choose a WordPress Theme for Your Company Site: Design, Speed and Language Support
- WordPress Staging Sites: Change Your Site’s Design Without Visitors Seeing It
- How to Choose a Safe WordPress Plugin or Theme Before Installing It: 8 Checks
- Speeding Up WordPress with AccelerateWP in cPanel: What It Is, Requirements, and Turning It On Step by Step
- Adding a New Post in WordPress: Writing with Blocks, Categories and Tags, the Featured Image and Scheduling

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