

WordPress Implementation Plugin Review Process - Plugins and Extensibility

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Overview

The WordPress plugin review process will provide a means to maintain a curated collection of supported plugins for UWSP's WordPress service, for the purpose of meeting the following objective.

Objective

The objective of the plugin review process is to help ensure the quality of campus WordPress services in the following areas:

- **Integrity:** By preventing outages or compromises due to vulnerabilities introduced by plugins.
- **Availability:** By selecting efficient plugins that render functionality quickly, handle unexpected conditions gracefully, and degrade upon failure of external dependences gracefully without impacting service levels.
- **Maintainability:** By allowing efficient and timely upgrades to WordPress minor and major version upgrades by minimizing plugins that do not maintain compatibility with new versions of WordPress (WordPress.org releases a new version of WordPress every 3 to 4 months).
- **Usability:** By content editors and web developers (both technical and nontechnical) by maintaining a streamlined and understandable WordPress user interface and minimizing unnecessary duplication of functionality.
- **Learnability:** By emphasizing ease of use and quality of documentation in selected plugins, and by ensuring that the campus Plugin Catalog and WordPress training and professional development services stay current with available plugins as required to ensure service levels (especially for non-technical content editors).
- **Adaptability:** By providing a mechanism for campus WordPress content editors, administrators and core team members to continually enhance WordPress in response to evolving requirements and trends, and by providing a mechanism to retire plugins which have become obsolete or have been superseded by better plugins or enhancements to WordPress core functionality.

Plugin Review Criteria

No.	Criteria	Measure
1	The plugin is compatible with campus WordPress policies and procedures.	It does not violate campus WordPress policies and is in alignment with campus WordPress guidelines.
2	The plugin provides valuable functionality in a new or unique way and has broad use cases.	It does not duplicate functionality of an existing installed plugin available through campus WordPress services. It could benefit a substantial number of content editors or web developers and/or it will be of benefit to a smaller group but over a long time.

3	The plugin is compatible with the current version of WordPress and is actively maintained.	It is compatible with the current campus WordPress version, and has a history of maintaining version compatibility with new versions of WordPress prior to or shortly after release of a new WordPress version release.
4	The plugin is compatible with WordPress Multisite.	It supports use in WordPress Multisite (a single code base and database of WordPress, segmented into individual and independent sites) by allowing distributed content editors to use the plugin in their individuals websites without data, control (the ability to make changes) configuration settings or errors bleeding through the segmentation provided by the sites.
5	The plugin is compatible with web accessibility practices.	It is capable of producing web content and interactivity that is accessible by individuals of all abilities and disabilities.
6	The plugin has a substantial active user base and plugin usability and documentation are adequate for the target audience.	<p>It has substantial number of reviews, references and how-to articles on third party websites, lots of downloads,consistently over time.</p> <p>If the plugin is meant to be used by non-technical content editors, the functionality is intuitive and easy to learn and/or documentation and training materials are adequate.</p>
7	The plugin does not introduce security risks, does not introduce significant performance overhead and does not introduce external dependencies which could negatively affect performance and availability.	<p>It does not contain functionality or code vulnerabilities that could allow an attacker to steal data, delete data, change data, introduce “backdoors” or use www.uwsp.edu as an attack vector to affect UWSP IT services or other organizations’ IT services.</p> <p>It does not make inefficient SQL queries or vast numbers of SQL queries per page request and does not overwhelm www.uwsp.edu or other servers with HTTP requests.</p> <p>If it requires external dependencies (such as data retrieved via HTTP requests), it fails gracefully and does not slow down or completely take down uwsp.edu WordPress services.</p>
8	The plugin can be removed, replaced or retired if required.	If it becomes unsupported or must be disabled on short notice due to a security vulnerability or severe performance degradation, the university can accept the effort required to remove, replace and/or retire the plugin.

Request and Publication Process

Feedback and advisement on WordPress functionality enhancements (including recommendations for plugins) is the purview of the UWSP Web Development team, who is charged with making recommendations on functionality solutions, plugins, and priorities, based on campus feedback and their own research and testing.

Plugins are required to be reviewed against the criteria outlined within this document and are required to go through UWSP’s Web Development team, facilitated by UWSP Application Development, and in collaboration with the Information Security Office.

A summary of the Request and Publication Process is as follows:

1. Conduct review against plugin review criteria.
2. Gather feedback from WordPress administrators and content authors.
3. Install and verify on WordPress Test environment.
4. Announce pending availability on WordPress Development environment.
5. Install and verify on WordPress Development environment.
6. Gather feedback from campus units using the plugin on WordPress Development environment.
7. Make decision on feasibility and value of adding plugin to UWSP's catalog of supported plugins.
8. Catalog plugin & create any required learning materials.
9. Conduct support awareness & preparations activities for core support team.
10. Announce pending availability on WordPress Production environment.
11. Install and verify on WordPress Production environment.
12. Transition plugin to operational status (routine updates and support).

A typical plugin is expected to take an average of 10 person hours of work to complete the cycle and go into operational status. A typical is expected to take 15 to 20 person hours of work per year to maintain operational status (routine updates and support). Estimates may be higher for more sophisticated plugins, more complex use cases, and plugins that are widely utilized. The duration in days required to go through the Request and Publication Process is dependent on time required for review, feedback solicitation, preparation of support and learning materials, and execution of IT Change Management procedures.

Plugin Catalog

The Plugin Catalog is part of the UWSP Websites Confluence articles, located at <https://uwsp.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/UIAD/pages/71073793/WordPress+Plugins+on+WWW>