

# IABC Regina Website Design Project Plugin Justifications

The Mandalorians - ENSE 271 Winter 2021

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## Astra Theme

**Rating:** 5/5 by 4910 users

**Last Updated:** April 7, 2021

**Active Installations:** 1+ million

### Experiences and Features:

- Extremely lightweight (<50KB on frontend)
- Template layouts and themes
- Easily configured header and footers
- Customizable menus and navigation
- Fast performance

### Alternatives

Site layout and themes can be designed using custom CSS and the standard WordPress template. This approach is more difficult to update going forward for administrators that aren't well-versed in website design and coding.

As well, Astra Pro is available with more functionality and customization, and it is priced at \$47 a year. If administrators are interested in adding more customized components to the site, then this may be a worthwhile upgrade.

### Justification

The Astra dashboard allows users to easily change site themes to customize a wide variety of settings across the site without using custom code. An easy-to-use interface on the administrative side of a website will accommodate the IABC professionals' lack of technological prowess.

The current version of our site uses the free version of Astra, which means that its design can be upheld at no additional cost to IABC/Regina unless the service's content categorization is overhauled significantly.

## WPForms Plugin

**Rating:** 5/5 by 8000+ users

**Last Updated:** March 30, 2021

**Active Installations:** 4+ million

### Experiences and Features:

- Drag & drop form builder
- Numerous pre-existing form templates
- Options for customization
- Mobile-friendly responsiveness
- Built-in conditional logic for high-performance forms
- Built-in Captcha system for spam protection

### Alternatives

Our site currently uses the free version of WPForms, but the software can also be purchased at four different rates in order to unlock additional features. For example, WPForms Basic (\$79 USD annually) provides access to advanced fields such as dates and hidden passwords, as well as the application's built-in conditional logic, on one WordPress site. WPForms Plus (\$199 USD annually) provides access to everything in Basic and additional functionalities, such as newsletter forms and a Mailchimp plugin, on three WordPress sites. WPForms Pro (\$399 USD annually) provides access to everything in Plus, and additional functionalities including PayPal, Stripe, and Zapier plugins and signature form elements, on five WordPress sites. Finally, WPForms Elite (\$599 USD annually) provides access to everything in Pro along with ActiveCampaign, Salesforce, and webhooks on an unlimited number of sites.

Other comparable alternatives include Gravity Forms, which contains a similarly straightforward UI and numerous third-party integrations, and Formidable Forms, which provides several advanced form types and is excellent at analyzing data.

### Justification

We chose to implement the forms on the IABC/Regina site with WPForms for two reasons. First, it is extremely straightforward to create and format custom forms, and second, we knew from previous experience in the lab that the free version contained nearly all of the elements that the site's forms would need. The only element that could not be adequately included with the free version of WPForms was the Date element, which would have been ideal for the "Deadline" field on the job submission form. However, this element can be easily unlocked with any of the subscription plans described above.

## **Gutenberg Editor**

**Rating:** 2/5 by 3300+ users

**Last Updated:** April 15, 2021

**Active Installations:** 300,000+

### **Experiences and Features:**

- Block-based editor for content display (21 different types of blocks; our current site uses eight)
- Code-free implementation of different styles and elements
- Considerable room for customization and rearrangement of blocks
- Mobile-friendly responsiveness
- Third-party block directory in addition to its built-in block types

### Alternatives

Gutenberg was originally developed as a standalone plugin, but was introduced as the default editing system in WordPress 5.0. The original content management system was the WordPress Classic Editor. In lieu of the drag-and-drop block formatting of Gutenberg, the WordPress Classic Editor involves use of a text editor. The user must manually configure each line of text in this editor using the various tools in the menu; these tools include font customization, hyperlinking, and file uploads.

The Classic Editor is still available as a downloadable plugin for individuals who prefer it to Gutenberg. However, it must be noted that the WordPress team intends to discontinue this plugin in 2022.

### Justification

We chose to use the Gutenberg system for our WordPress site because we found formatting to be straightforward, and the UI to be easily navigable. Determining the ideal block to use for the different types of content on the site was generally trivial, in large part due to effective signifiers within the UI's list of blocks. As well, the drag-and-drop style of formatting and rearranging blocks was extremely easy to learn and perform effectively. Consequently, we felt that the Gutenberg system would be a low-maintenance content display solution for the IABC/Regina site administrators, whose lack of technical knowledge is likely to impede their understanding of more complex options.

## **Additional Plugins**

Note that any additional installed plugins are not utilized on the site and can be ignored. The group chose to implement all pages using as simple an approach as possible to reduce the site size and improve speed.