



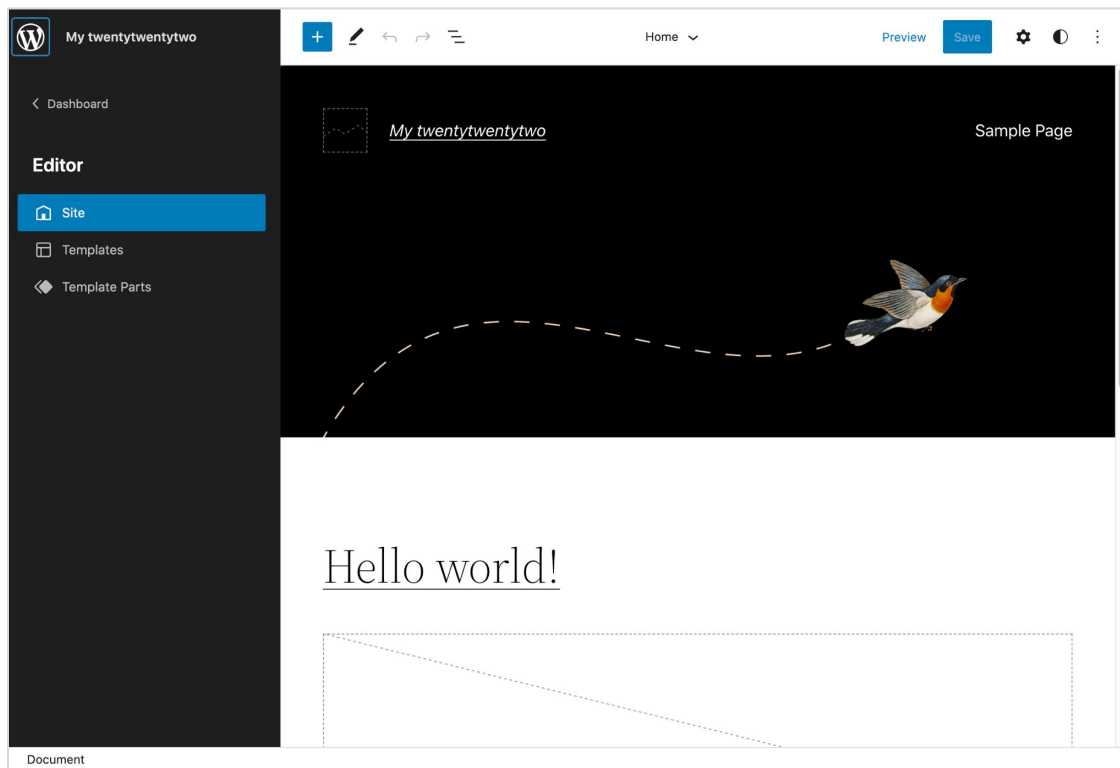
Human Factors Critique: WordPress Full Site Editing

Provided for the WordPress Design Team
February 21st, 2022

Cognitive and Social Psychology of User-Centered Design (2022)

Ashley Kolodziej
ashleykolodziej@brandeis.edu

What is Full Site Editing?



- New feature in WordPress
- Allows user to edit layout of website using a visual editor, similar to Squarespace or Google Sites
- Control over color, typography, layout

What this report covers

CARMEL guidelines

[A set of guidelines created by Eva Kaniasty](#)

based on Nielsen's usability heuristics, with updated guidelines for modern practices.

- Consistency
- Accessibility
- Recovery
- Memory
- Efficiency
- (Plain) Language

Status and severity of results



Successful / supportive of user



Likely impact on user



Significant impact on user

Takeaways for your team

- Demo video and steps to reproduce
- Recommendations

Overall Scorecard for Full Site Editing

1. Consistency

- ✓ 1. Consistent visual style
- ✗ 2. Design systems
- ⚠ 3. Naming conventions
- ✓ 4. Look & feel
- ⚠ 5. Interactions

2. Accessibility

- ⚠ 1. Font size
- ⚠ 2. Contrast
- ✓ 3. Double coding
- ✓ 4. Target size
- ✗ 5. Screen readers

3. Recovery

- ✗ 1. Confirmation dialogs
- ✗ 2. Undo
- ✗ 3. Error messages
- ✗ 4. Version control
- ✗ 5. Autosave/System recovery

4. Memory

- ✓ 1. Limited choices
- ✓ 2. Automatic calculations
- ✓ 3. Feedback
- ✓ 4. Chunking and masking
- ✗ 5. Security practices

5. Efficiency

- ✓ 1. Shallow navigation
- ✓ 2. Responsive layouts
- ✓ 3. Size and placement
- ⚠ 4. Navigation shortcuts
- ✓ 5. Accelerators

6. Plain Language

- ✓ 1. Internal language
- ⚠ 2. Technical jargon
- ✓ 3. Acronyms
- ✓ 4. Plain language
- ✓ 5. Readability level

Learn more about the specific criteria for achieving success in each guideline at [CARMEL UX Guidelines & Criteria](#).

Summary of

Section 1: Consistency

- Excellent adherence to brand standards
- Consider undo button, sidebar interactions
- Review naming and design conventions in full site editing
- Review consistency of experience in shared components of full site editor and block editor

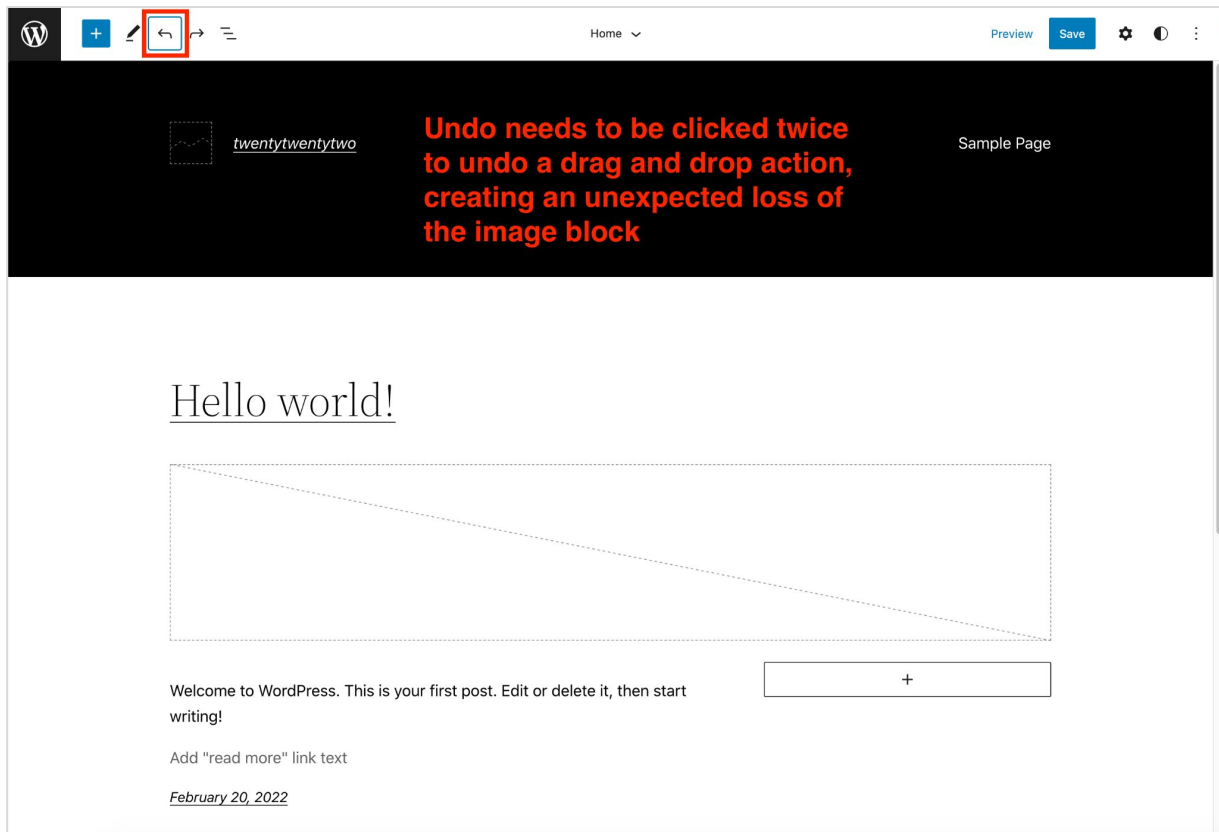
1.2 Consistency > Design systems

✘ Undo should process actions in the same manner that the user does.

[Play video demo](#)

To reproduce:

- View the Full Site Editor
- Rearrange the image block to sit between two other blocks
- Click undo
- The block unexpectedly disappears
- Click undo again
- The block shows in its original place



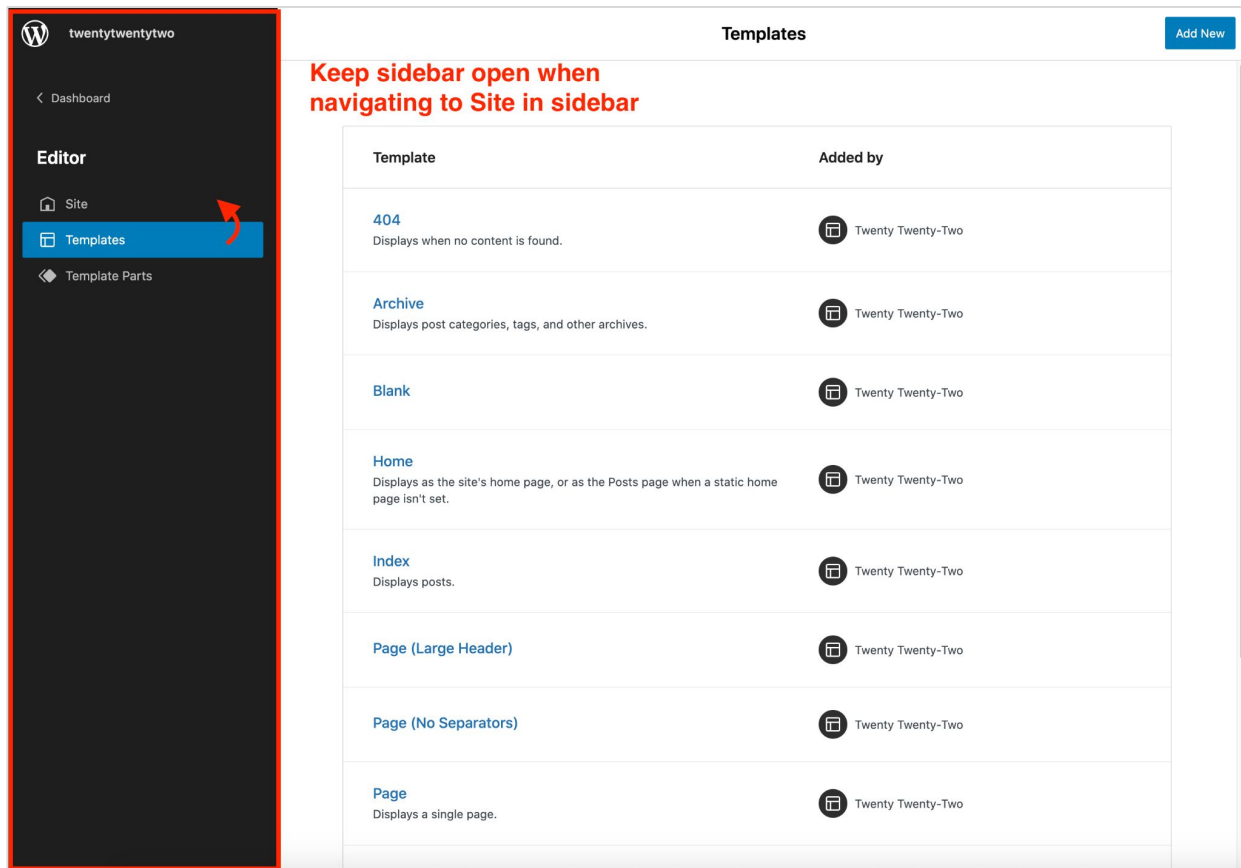
1.2 Consistency > Design systems

⚠ Keep the sidebar open when switching contexts to avoid jarring transitions.









[Play video demo](#)

To reproduce:

- View the Full Site Editor
- Open the sidebar menu
- Select Templates
- Select Site
- The sidebar closes unexpectedly



The screenshot shows the WordPress Full Site Editor interface. On the left is a dark sidebar with a red border. It contains the WordPress logo, the site name 'twentytwentytwo', and navigation links: 'Dashboard', 'Editor', 'Site', 'Templates' (highlighted in blue), and 'Template Parts'. A red arrow points to the 'Templates' link. The main content area is titled 'Templates' and has an 'Add New' button in the top right. Below the title is a red text instruction: 'Keep sidebar open when navigating to Site in sidebar'. The main area displays a list of templates with columns for 'Template' and 'Added by'.

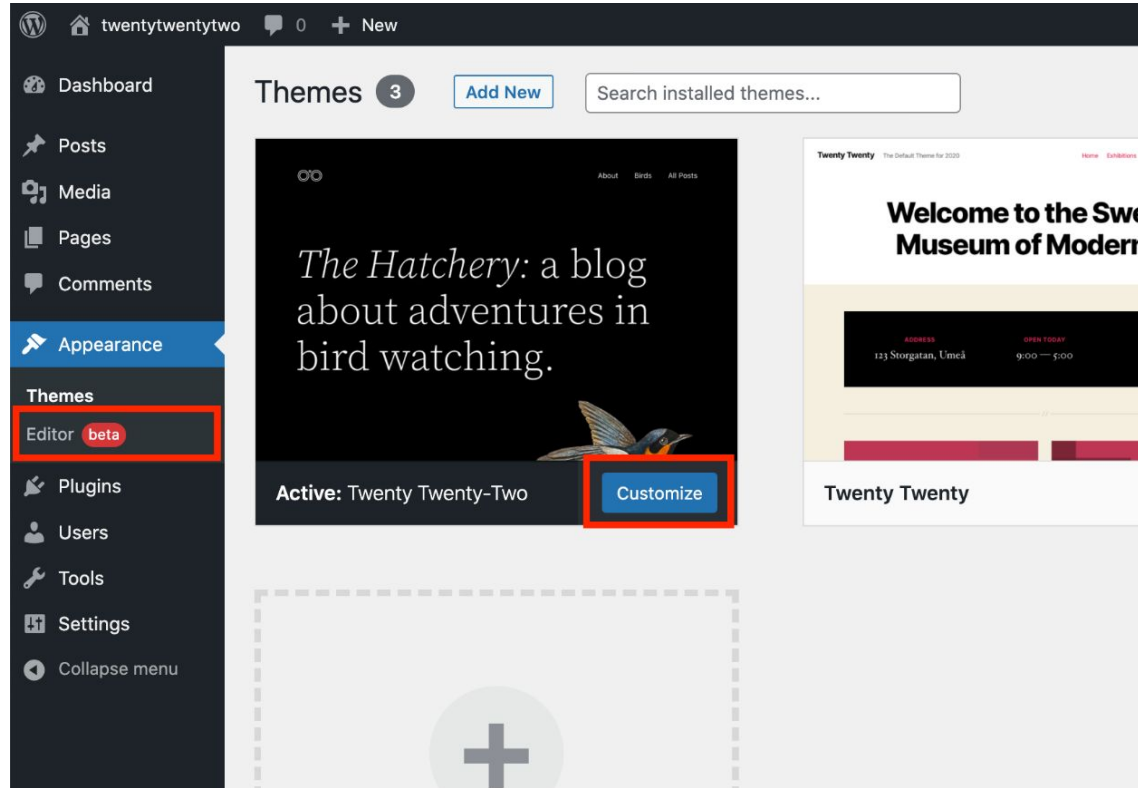
Template	Added by
404 Displays when no content is found.	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Archive Displays post categories, tags, and other archives.	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Blank	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Home Displays as the site's home page, or as the Posts page when a static home page isn't set.	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Index Displays posts.	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Page (Large Header)	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Page (No Separators)	 Twenty Twenty-Two
Page Displays a single page.	 Twenty Twenty-Two

1.2 Consistency > Design systems

⚠ Red typically indicates an error or emergency state in user interfaces.

1.3 Consistency > Naming conventions

⚠ The same language should be used for editing in the Themes screen and the Appearance menu.



Summary of

Section 2: Accessibility

- Good accessibility in base design choices
- Consider placement and presentation of accessibility feedback to users
- Consider error prevention in typography
- Continue to test and improve screen reader experience as components are built

2. Accessibility

✓ Basic accessibility works well out of the box. Google Lighthouse reports excellent code-based accessibility and keyboard navigation generally work well and as expected.

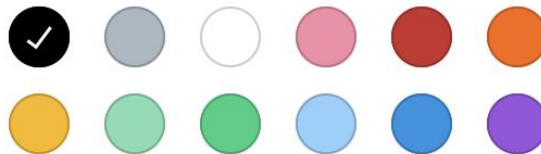
The full site editor also provides feedback on design decisions made by the user, and warns when a color combination is not accessible.



Accessibility

These checks highlight opportunities to [improve the accessibility of your web app](#). Only a subset of accessibility issues can be automatically detected so manual testing is also encouraged.

DEFAULT



Clear

This color combination may be hard for people to read. Try using a brighter background color and/or a darker text color.

2.1 Accessibility >

Font size

⚠ In the theme design, fonts are appropriately sized, but a user can still adjust the size of a font to an inaccessible size without warning.

This element prevents a user from setting the font size to 0, which is a good first step.

Consider adding a warning similar to the color contrast warning to educate editors on minimum font size requirements.

Typography

Size (Custom)

1

PX

Appearance

Default

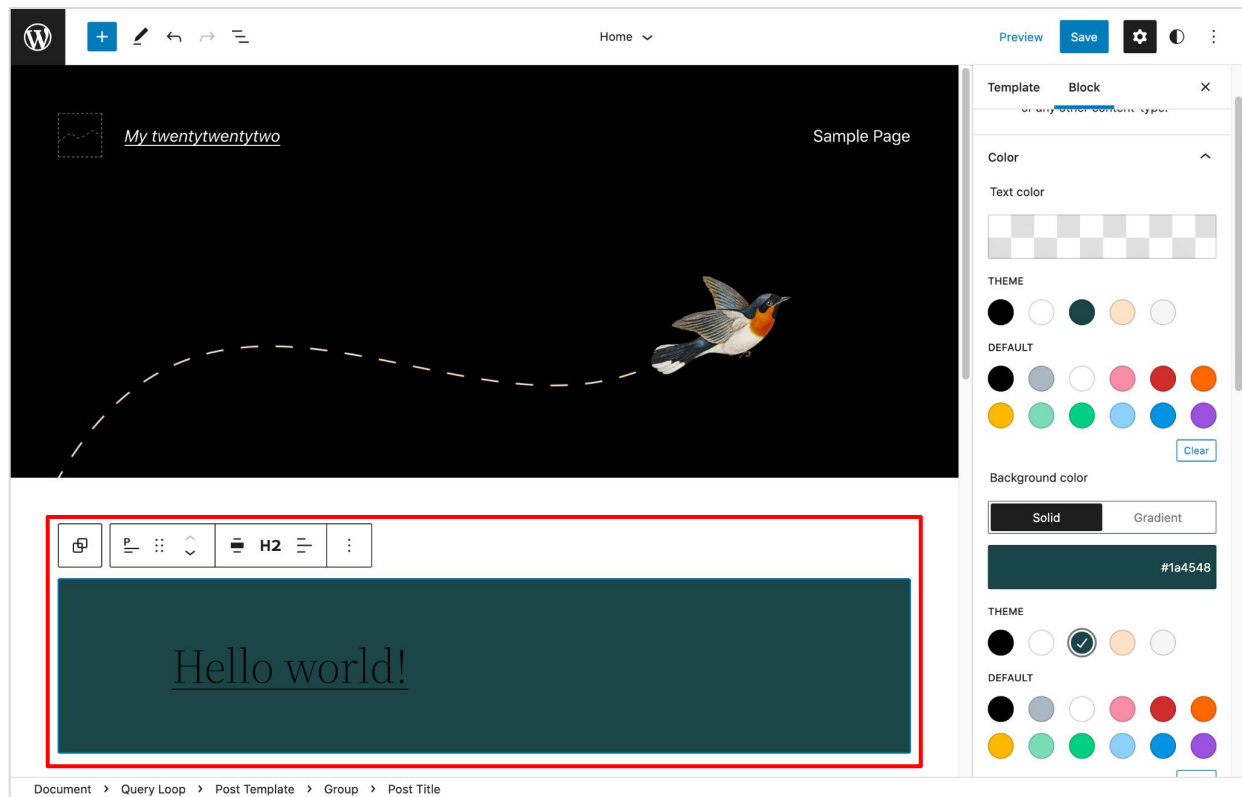
Letter case

AB ab Ab

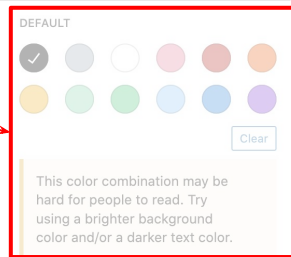
2.2 Accessibility > Contrast

⚠ While the interface has a warning about color contrast, it is not always visible while a user is editing the block.

Consider placing accessibility warnings in a place where they are guaranteed to be visible and are more closely associated with the full context of the design, such as on top or or near the current block.



Contrast feedback is hidden due to other elements in the panel

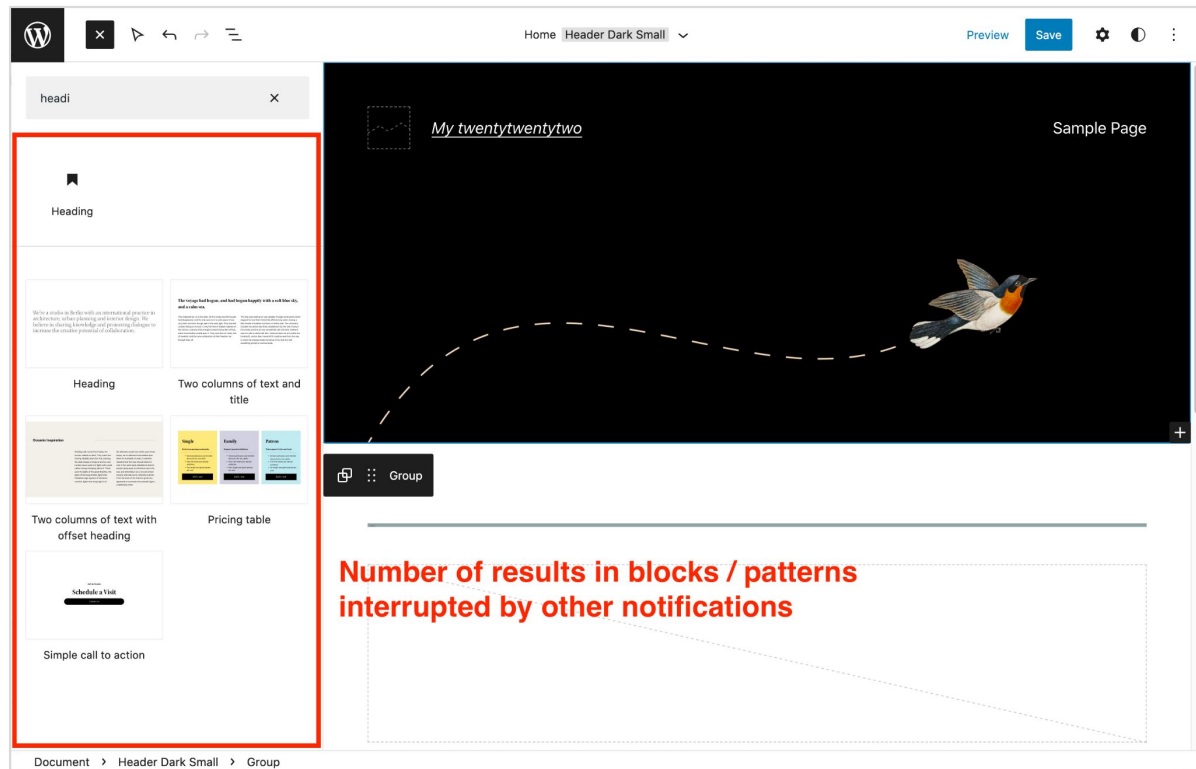


2.2 Accessibility > Screen readers

✖ Searching in the block inserter does not consistently read off number of results.

Results are interrupted by buffering and it is not clear when results are finished loading.

[Full video demo](#)



**Number of results in blocks / patterns
interrupted by other notifications**



[Listen to VoiceOver reading search results off as I finish typing](#)

2.2 Accessibility > Screen readers

✗ Block patterns announce placeholder text when tabbed through, sometimes at great length. The title and description of color and layout of the block pattern is last.

[Full video demo](#)

The screenshot displays the WordPress Gutenberg editor. On the left, the 'Block Patterns' panel is open, showing a grid of patterns. A red rectangle highlights a section containing several patterns, including one titled 'Pricing table' which is also highlighted with a blue border. Below the grid, the 'Available to install' section shows a pattern titled 'Table of Contents by Achal Jain'. On the right, the 'Sample Page' preview is visible, featuring a dark background with a bird image and a dashed line. A red text overlay is positioned over the bottom right of the preview area.

Block patterns announce placeholder text of content when selected, not the title or design purpose of the block pattern



[Listen to VoiceOver reading this area when tabbed](#)

Summary of

Section 3: Recovery

- In general, both WordPress and Full Site Editing have good support for undo, clear status of publishing, and revisions
- One **critical** issue emerged: error recovery in creating new templates

Recovery (All):

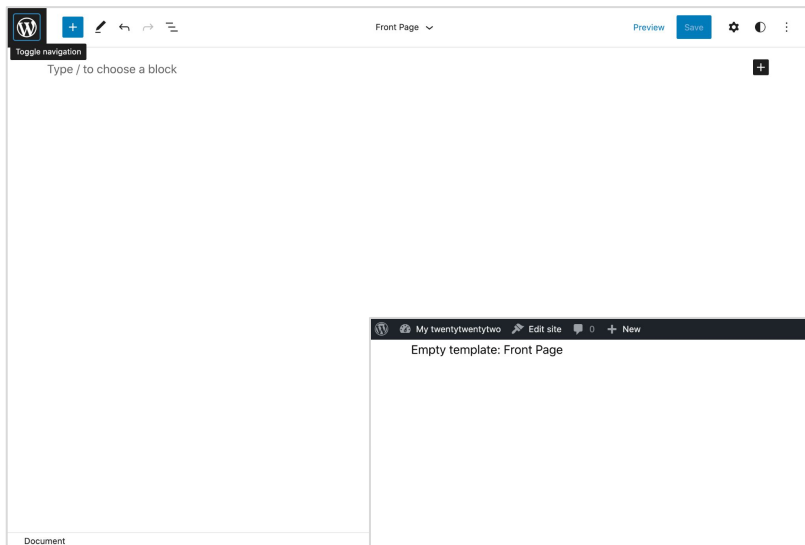
Create a new template

Creating a front page template immediately removes the home page template and replaces it.

[Full video demo](#)

In Full Site Editing:

- View the Full Site Editor
- Open the sidebar menu
- Select Templates
- Select Create New
- Select Front Page
- The home page appears to be destroyed/lost
- Visit the homepage to confirm



Summary of

Section 4: Memory

- Choices and information are generally chunked well in interface
- Good automatic calculations of accessibility adherence as noted earlier
- Security practices too difficult to realistically evaluate; highly dependent on installation

Summary of

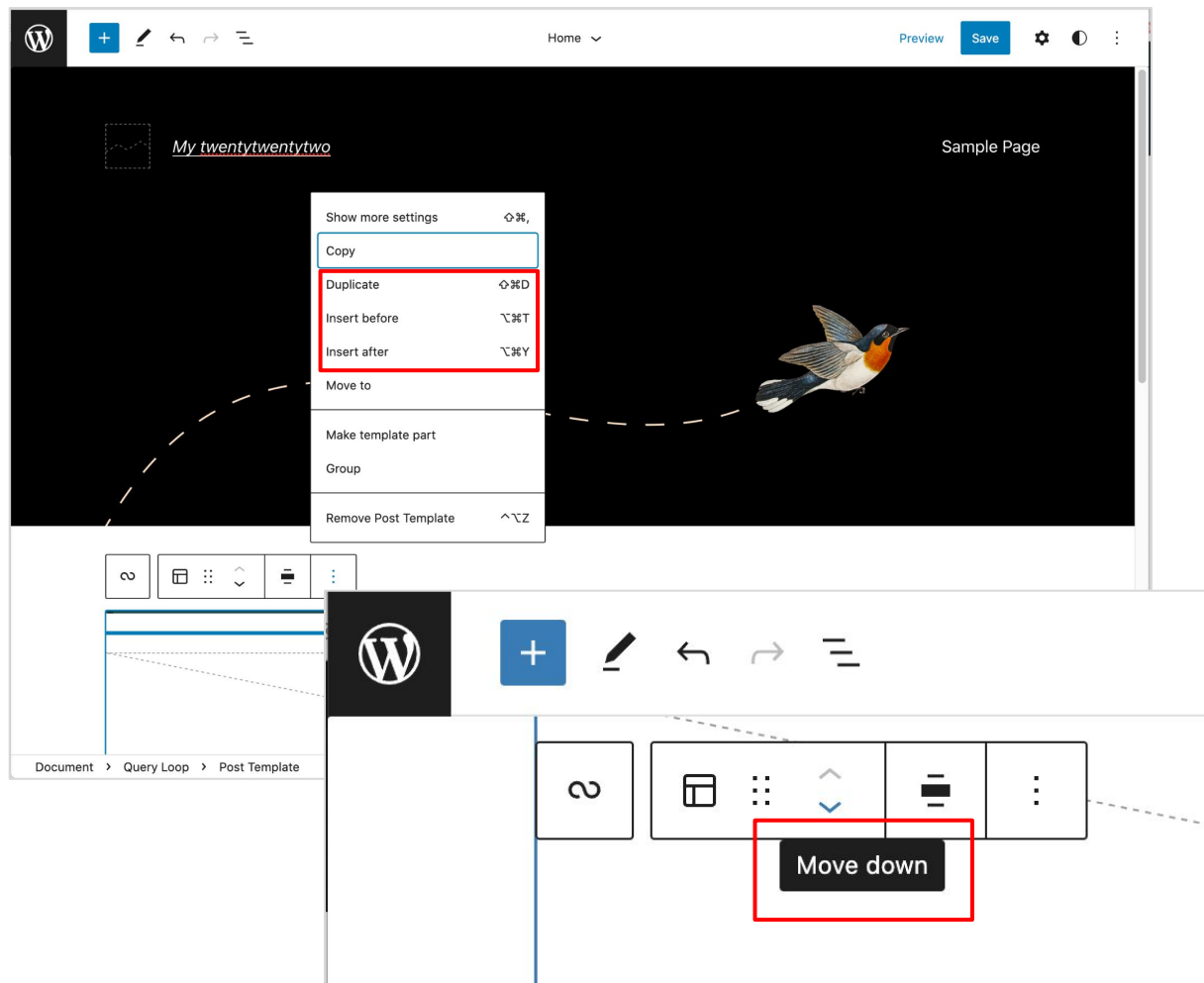
Section 5: Efficiency

- Excellent use of keyboard navigation shortcuts and accelerators
- Full site editing user interface is responsive, fully supports mobile to desktop
- Make sure critical shortcuts are easily discoverable

2.4 Efficiency > Navigation shortcuts

✓ ⚠ A variety of [navigation shortcuts](#) are provided for the block and full site editor, but not all are currently discoverable in the interface.

Consider showing key combinations on focus or hover of critical actions for keyboard users, such as moving blocks.



Summary of

Section 6: Plain Language

- Excellent use of plain language, concepts are explained clearly
- Good hints in microcopy throughout sample website copy and user interface
- Bring this simplicity to complex blocks such as the Query Loop block

6.4 Plain Language > Technical jargon

✔️ ⚠️ Technical jargon is near-absent from the WordPress admin, with the exception of the Query Loop block.

This block requires a user to understand:

- The loop
- What a query is
- What parameters are
- What a visual configuration is

The screenshot shows the WordPress block editor interface. At the top, there's a header with the WordPress logo, a toolbar with icons for adding, editing, undo, redo, and a menu, and a 'Home' dropdown. On the right, there are buttons for 'Preview', 'Save', and settings icons. The main content area shows a large dashed box representing the block's dimensions. Below it, a toolbar contains icons for adding, the Query Loop icon (highlighted with a red box), and other block controls. The 'Query Loop' block is selected, and its configuration panel is open on the right. The panel has tabs for 'Template' and 'Block'. The 'Block' tab is active, showing a description of the Query Loop block: 'An advanced block that allows displaying post types based on different query parameters and visual configurations.' Below this is a link to 'Create a new post for this feed.' The 'Layout' section has a toggle for 'Inherit default layout'. The 'Content' and 'Wide' sections have input fields for width in pixels. A 'Reset' button is at the bottom right of the layout section. The 'Color' and 'Advanced' sections are collapsed. The main content area below the block shows a sample post with the text 'Welcome to WordPress. This is your first post. Edit or delete it, then start writing!', a 'read more' link, and a date 'February 20, 2022'. At the bottom, there's a breadcrumb trail: 'Document > Query Loop > Post Template > Group > Query Loop'.

WordPress logo | + | [Icons] | Home | Preview | Save | [Settings] | [Moon] | [More]

Template | **Block** | X

Query Loop

An advanced block that allows displaying post types based on different query parameters and visual configurations.

[Create a new post](#) for this feed.

Layout

☒ Inherit default layout

Content Wide

[Reset](#)

Customize the width for all elements that are assigned to the center or wide columns.

Color

Advanced

Document > Query Loop > Post Template > Group > Query Loop

6.4 Plain Language > Technical jargon

✓ Consider names which do not rely on development knowledge of WordPress, such as Content Collection.

Update microcopy throughout this block to describe functionality in plain language.

The screenshot shows the WordPress Gutenberg editor interface. At the top, there's a header with the WordPress logo, a plus icon, and navigation links like 'Home'. The main editing area contains a large dashed box representing a placeholder for a new block. Below this box is a toolbar with icons for adding, deleting, and other block actions. A 'Content Collection' block is being added, highlighted with a red box. The block's title 'Content Collection' is also highlighted with a red box. Below the title, it says 'Select a layout to start with.' and shows four layout options: 'Title & Date', 'Title & Excerpt', 'Title, Date, & Excerpt', and 'Image, Date, & Title'. To the right of the editor is a sidebar with settings for the 'Content Collection' block. The sidebar has tabs for 'Template' and 'Block'. The 'Block' tab is active, showing a description: 'A powerful block which displays content dynamically based on criteria such as author, category, and keyword.' Below this is a link 'Create a new post for this feed.' and a 'Layout' section with a toggle for 'Inherit default layout'. There are also 'Content' and 'Wide' width settings with 'PX' input fields and a 'Reset' button. At the bottom of the sidebar are 'Color' and 'Advanced' sections. The bottom of the editor shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Document > Query Loop > Post Template > Group > Query Loop'.

WordPress Gutenberg editor interface showing the 'Content Collection' block being added to a post template.

The block is titled **Content Collection** and is described as: "A powerful block which displays content dynamically based on criteria such as author, category, and keyword." Below the title, it says "Select a layout to start with." and shows four layout options: "Title & Date", "Title & Excerpt", "Title, Date, & Excerpt", and "Image, Date, & Title".

The sidebar on the right shows settings for the block, including a "Layout" section with a toggle for "Inherit default layout", and "Content" and "Wide" width settings with "PX" input fields and a "Reset" button. The "Color" and "Advanced" sections are also visible.

The bottom of the editor shows a breadcrumb trail: Document > Query Loop > Post Template > Group > Query Loop.

Next Steps

Sources

In addition to the following sources, this presentation demonstrates knowledge of user experience built through collaboration with students in RUCD 120, Cognitive and Social Psychology of User-Centered Design at Brandeis University, Spring 2022.

Sources and tools which informed this presentation:

- [CARMEL UX Guidelines](#)
- [Progressive reduction: a brief UX study](#)
- [WPCampus 2019 Gutenberg Accessibility Audit results](#)
- [WPCampus 2020 Session: Update on Gutenberg accessibility audit](#)
- [Mindful Design: How and Why to Make Design Decisions for the Good of Those Using Your Product](#) by Scott Riley
- "People make errors when they are under stress" in *100 things every designer needs to know about people* by Susan Weinschenk
- [Google Lighthouse](#)
- [Evaluating Accessibility in VoiceOver by WebAIM](#)
- Icons provided by [FontAwesome Free](#)