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Django Admin: Not Just for Developers (Anymore!)

Mahnoor Sarwat, Faqir Bilal / www.edly.io



Who's Here Today?

How often do you use Django Admin?

What is Django Admin?

- Powerful engine to drive the entire platform
- Controls all critical platform settings for Open edX.
- Typically used by technical teams to manage configurations, user roles, and more.

Site administration

AGREEMENTS

Integrity signatures	 Add	 Change
Ltipii signatures	 Add	 Change
Ltipii tools	 Add	 Change
Proctoring pii signatures	 Add	 Change

Recent actions

My actions

None available

API_ADMIN

Api access configs	 Add	 Change
Api access requests	 Add	 Change

ASSESSMENT

Assessment feedbacks	 Add	 Change
Assessments	 Add	 Change
Peer workflows	 Add	 Change
Rubrics	 Add	 Change
Shared file uploads	 Add	 Change
Staff workflows	 Add	 Change
Team staff workflows	 Add	 Change

AUTHENTICATION AND AUTHORIZATION

Groups	 Add	 Change
Users	 Add	 Change

Quick game: Never Have I Ever *(Django Admin Edition)*

Quick game: Never Have I Ever

Never have I ever wondered what a field in Django admin form is meant to do

Quick game: Never Have I Ever

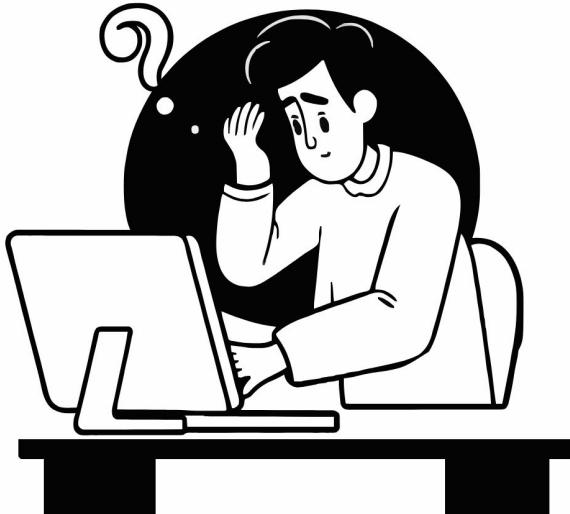
*Never have I ever copy-pasted JSON settings with
incorrect formatting*

Quick game: Never Have I Ever

Never have I ever searched the edx-platform code for setting names that are not mentioned in the official docs

Why Does It Feel Complicated?

- Capable of handling everything—but does that justify **complexity**?
- Current reality: Simple tasks feel daunting.
- Leads to heavy reliance on documentation, forums, and support teams



What They're Saying

Unable to create a new user. Receiving 500 error on lms server

Site Operators ■ Site Operations Help ■ how-to ■ tutor

Open edX admin panel theming

Site Operators ■ how-to ■ koa

What is the Django admin login

Site Operators ■ how-to

How to delete Waffle flag course override?

Disable Public Account Creation

Site Operators

What is the Django admin login

Site Operators ■ how-to

How to enable feature (ALLOW_PUBLIC_ACCOUNTS)

Site Operators ■ Tutor Help ■ tutor

Updating logo and favicon post Redwood upgrade

Site Operators ■ Tutor Help ■ how-to

Customizing Course Certificates on Open edX (Tutor

Site Operators ■ Tutor Help ■ how-to ■ certificates

How to manually delete certificates?

Site Operators ■ Site Operations Help

How to set the openedx site in french

Site Operators ■ how-to ■ tutor

Certificate template doesn't work

Site Operators ■ Tutor Help

The Big Question

- Should this **barrier** be removed?
- Can we make Django Admin **intuitive** enough without compromising its power?
- Spoiler Alert: We think yes!

Our Takeaways: The truth about the complexity

- Do most of these features exist?

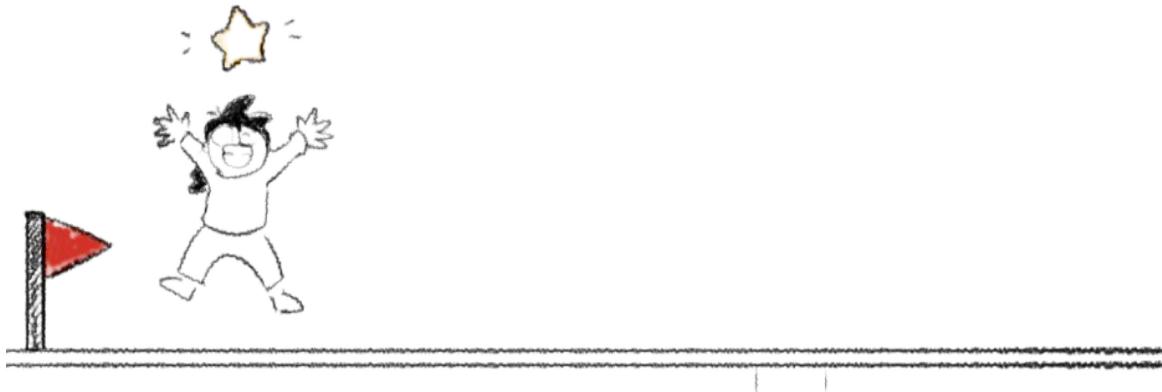


Yes!

Then why all the confusion...

A potential checklist for a good admin UX

- Minimal friction
- Immediate clarity (self-explanatory)
- Little-to-no reliance on external help or forums



Story Time

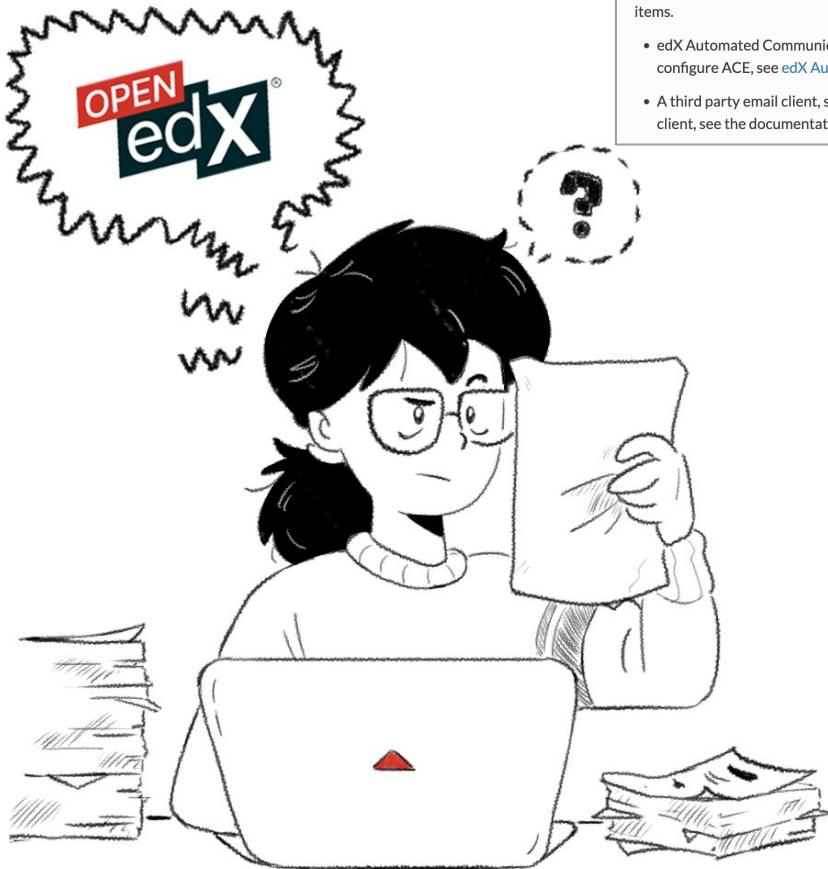




4.15.1. Requirements for Discussion Notifications

To create discussion notifications for your instance of the Open edX platform, you need the following items.

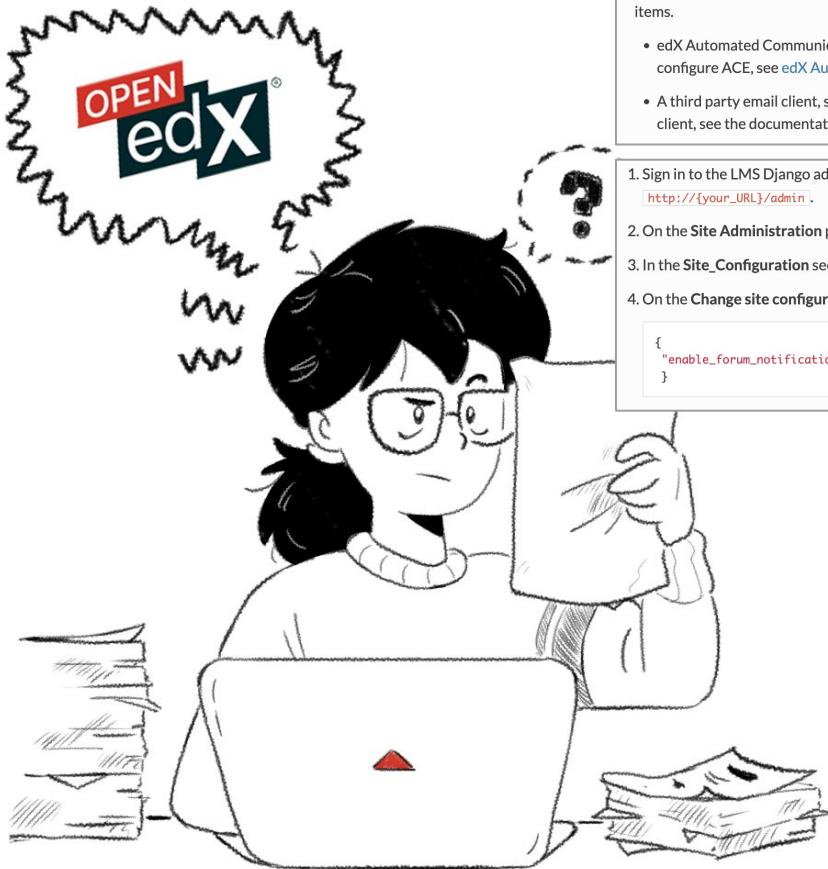
- edX Automated Communication Engine (ACE). For more information about how to install and configure ACE, see [edX Automated Communication Engine](#).
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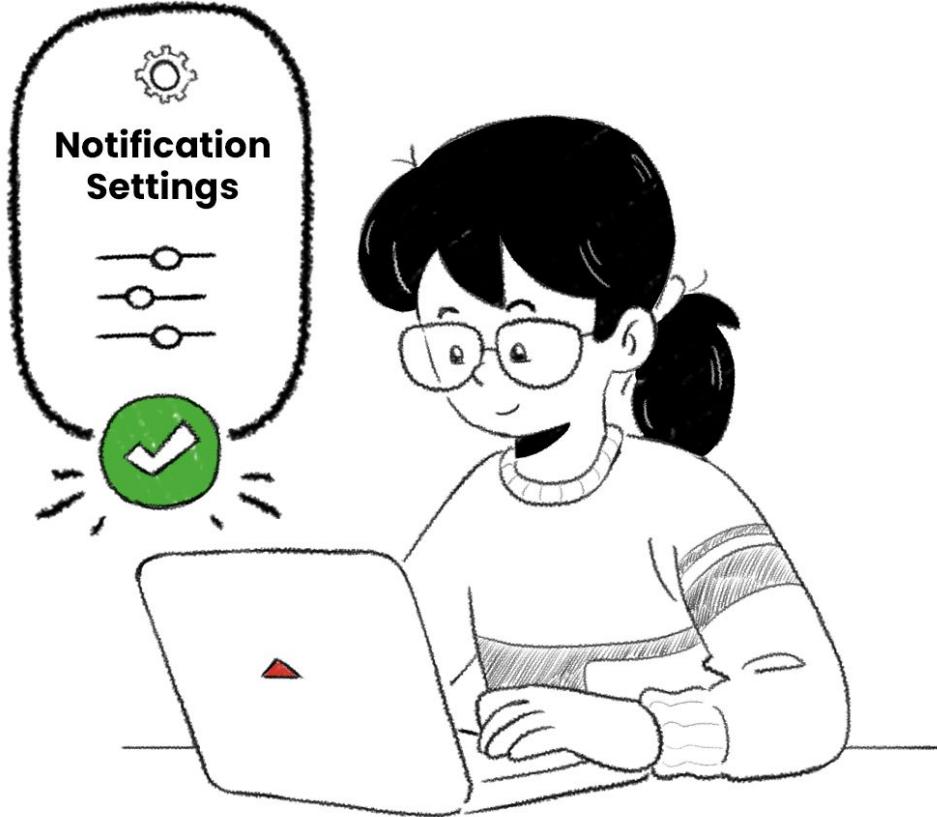
1. Sign in to the LMS Django administration console for your base URL. For example, http://{your_URL}/admin.

2. On the Site Administration page, locate Site_Configuration.

3. In the Site_Configuration section, next to Site configurations, select Change.

4. On the Change site configuration page, locate the Values field, and then add the following value.

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}
```



Reimagining Django Admin

Our Vision

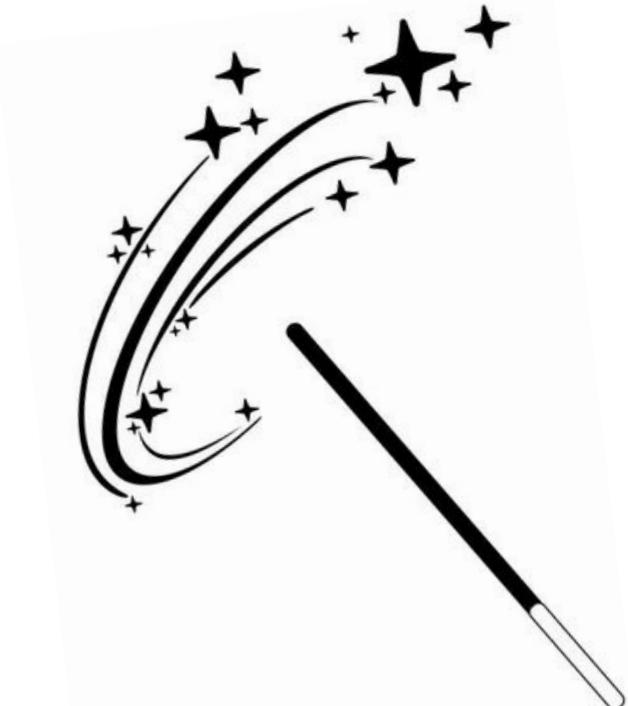
- Django Admin should be simple, intuitive, and safe.
- Non-technical users should be able to make changes confidently – no documentation diving, no fear of breaking things.
- It should empower all roles, not just developers.

Our approach

- Tutor Deck to enable administrative tasks with clicks not commands.
- Revamping everything at once is overwhelming – we're taking focused, incremental steps.
- Identify most commonly used settings
- Pinpoint moments where users leave the screen, reference docs, or get confused.
- Replace complexity with clarity

Before we dive in

- If you had a magic wand...
- What would you fix or improve in Django Admin?



Progress Check

Loading



Tutor Plugin Marketplace



Plugin Marketplace

Installed Plugins

Developer Mode

Apply changes

Run launch platform to save all changes.

Plugin Marketplace

Explore, search, and install plugins to extend your Open edX platform.

Search...

Refresh

Android

By Edly

Build an Android mobile application for your Open edX platform.

Enabled

Cairn

By Edly

Scalable, real-time analytics for Open edX. Analytics are an essential component of an online learning platform: you need to know whether your...

Disabled

Credentials

By Edly

Integrate the Credentials application, which supports course and program certificates. This plugin offers an admin panel where user can do...

Enabled

Discovery

By Edly

Integrate the Open edX Course Discovery application. This plugin makes it easy to install the course-discovery application...

Disabled

Ecommerce

By Edly

E-commerce plugin to sell course products on Open edX. This plugin makes it easy to install the ecommerce application...

Enabled

Forum

By Edly

Add discussion forum to your Open edX platform.

Disabled

Indigo

By Edly

A beautiful, blue theme for Open edX.

Enabled

Jupyter

By Edly

Run Jupyter notebooks right in your LMS. Launch a JupyterHub single-node cluster and install the Jupyter XBlock in the Open edX LMS/CMS. This...

Disabled

Mfe

By Edly

Easy integration of custom microfrontends with your Open edX platform. Microfrontends form the backbone of Open edX. Thus, this plugin is requir...

Enabled

Create User

USER PROFILE

User profile: #1

Name :

Meta:

Courseware: course.xml

Language :

Rental :

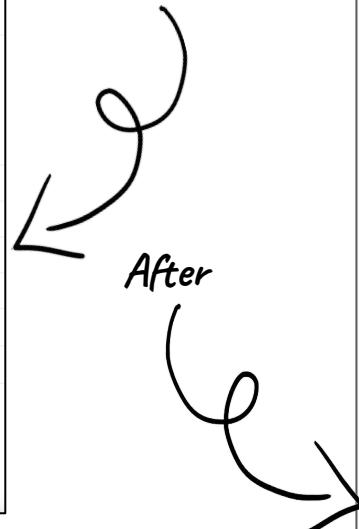
Year of birth :

Gender:

Level of education:

Mailing address:

Before



After

User Profile

Add profile details.

Name

Meta

275 characters left

Courseware
 course.xml

Language
 Normal text

Rental
 course.xml

Date of birth
 Select date Gender
 Normal text

Level of education
 Normal text

Goals

This is hint text to help the user.

Organic

Site Configuration

Editing site configuration
Site Configuration: sandbox.openedx.edly.io >

Site : sandbox.openedx.edly.io

Enabled

Site values:

```
{ "ENABLE_PROFILE_MICROFRONTEND": "true" }
```

SAVE Save and add new Save and continue editing DELETE

Before



tutor deck Powered by edly

General Settings > Site Values

Site Values

This is a hint text to help user.

Site

Select site

Enable

Site Values

This is a hint text to help user.

Site Values

Profile microfrontend Forum notifications

Forum notifications Optional hint text for user
 Profile microfrontend notifications Optional hint text for user
 Forum notifications
 Profile microfrontend notifications
 Forum notifications
 Profile microfrontend notifications
 Forum notifications
 Profile microfrontend notifications

add new Save changes

After

Bismah Azhar
bismah.azhar@arbisoft.com

Waffle Flags Page

Before

Added Waffle flag course override

Enter a valid course id and an existing waffle flag. The waffle flag name is not validated.

Waffle flag:

Course id:

Note :

eg why this exists and when/if it can be dropped

Override choice:

Enabled

After

tutor deck
Powered by edly

General Settings

Public Course Content

Waffle Flag Course Override

Enter a valid course ID and a waffle flag.

Waffle flag

example.enable_anonymous_course_access
seo.enable_anonymous_course_access
seo.another.example.enable_anonymous
seo.another.example
seo.another.example.enable_anonymous
seo.another.example.enable_anonymous
seo.another.example.enable_anonymous

Override choice

This is a hint text to help user.

Enable
This is a hint text to help user.

Enable Public Course Content Page

Ajout de self paced relative dates config

Context

These define the context to enable this configuration on. If no values are set, then the configuration applies globally. If a single value is set, then the configuration applies to all courses within that context. At most one value can be set at a time.
If multiple contexts apply to a course (for example, if configuration is specified for the course specifically, and for the org that the course is in, then the more specific context overrides the more general context.

Site :

Configure values for all course runs associated with this site.

Org :

Configure values for all course runs associated with this Organization. This is the organization string (i.e. edX, MITx).

Course in Org :

Configure values for all course runs associated with this course. This should be formatted as 'org+course' (i.e. MITx+6.002x, HarvardX+CS50).

Course Run :

Configure values for this course run. This should be formatted as the CourseKey (i.e. course-v1/MITx+6.002x+2019_Q1)

Configuration

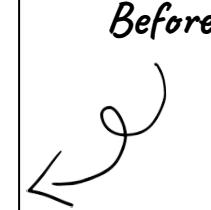
If any of these values are left empty or "Unknown", then their value at runtime will be retrieved from the next most specific context that applies. For example, if "Enabled" is left as "Unknown" in the course context, then that course will be Enabled only if the org that it is in is Enabled.

Enabled :

Actions

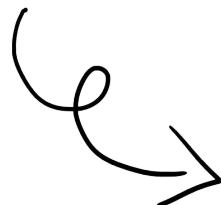
SAVE **Save and add new** **Save and continue editing**

Before



Enable Public Course Content Page

After



[Home](#) > General Settings > Enabling Self-Paced Courses

Enabling Self-Paced Courses

Context

Revised copy

Site

Select

v

Configure values for all course runs associated with this site.

Organisation

MITx

v

Configure values for all course runs associated with this organisation (e.g. MITx, edX).

Course in organisation

MITxCS100 MITxCS100

[Clear All](#)

MITxCS100

v

MITx+600

v

MITx+600

v

MITx+600

Configuration

Revised copy

Unknown

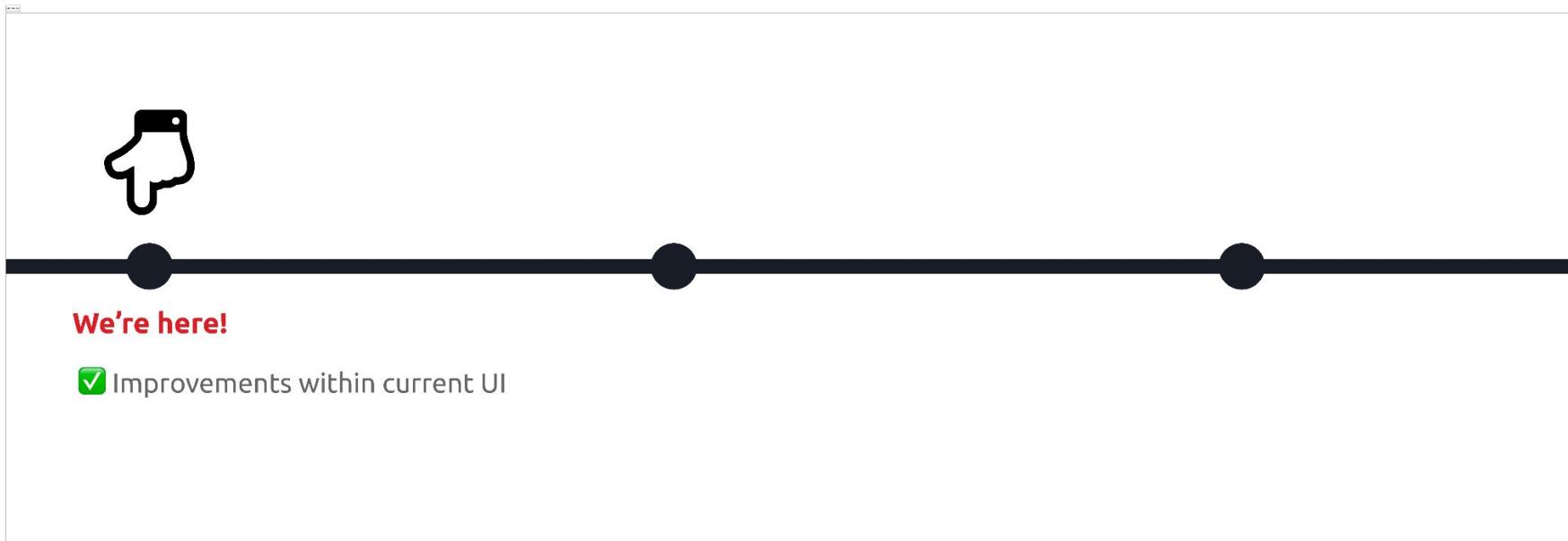
v

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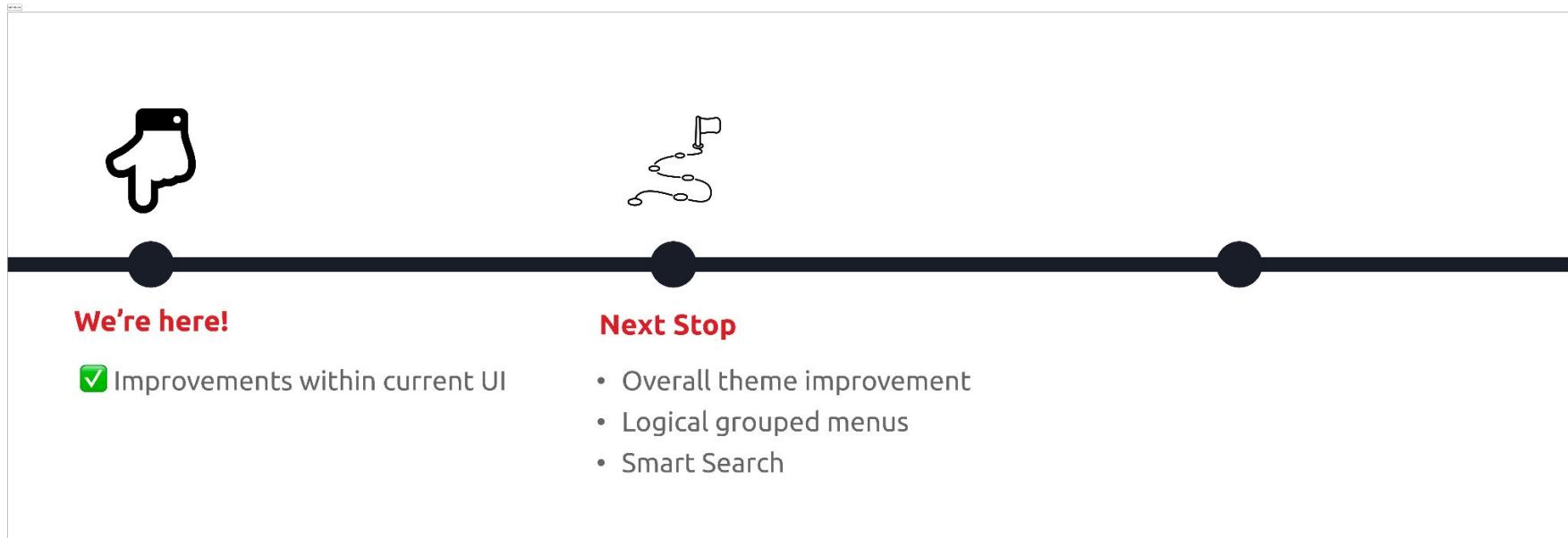
[Cancel](#)

[Save changes](#)

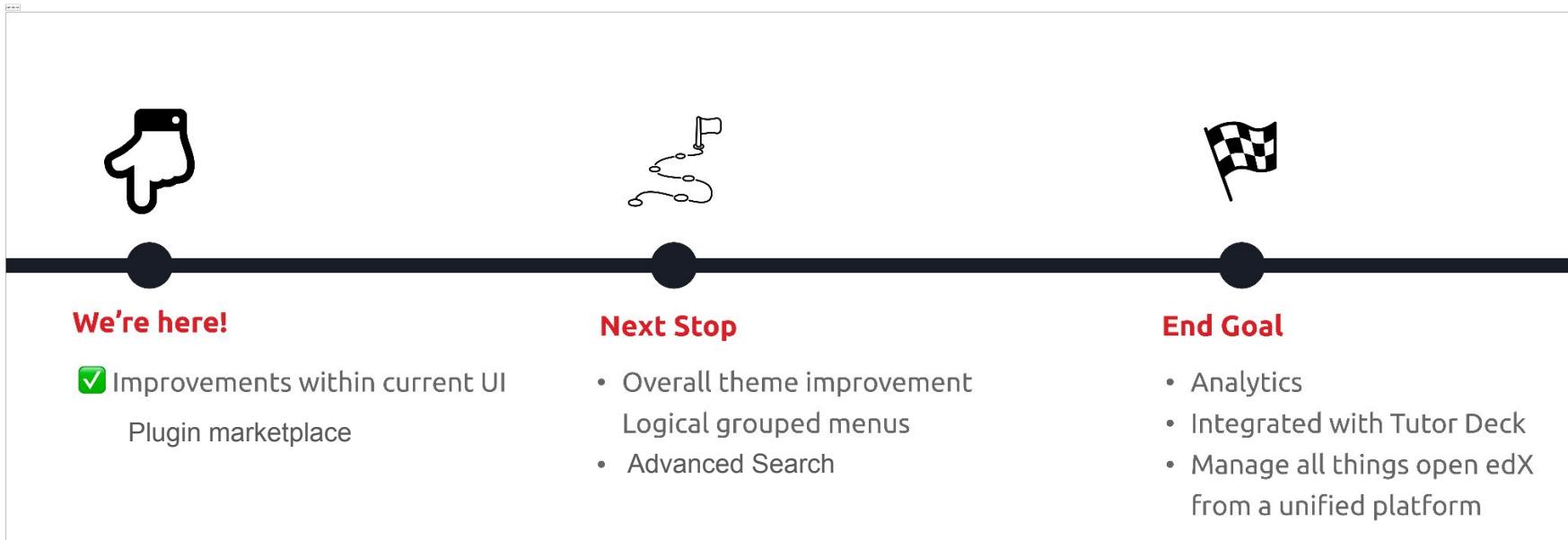
Next Steps



Next Steps

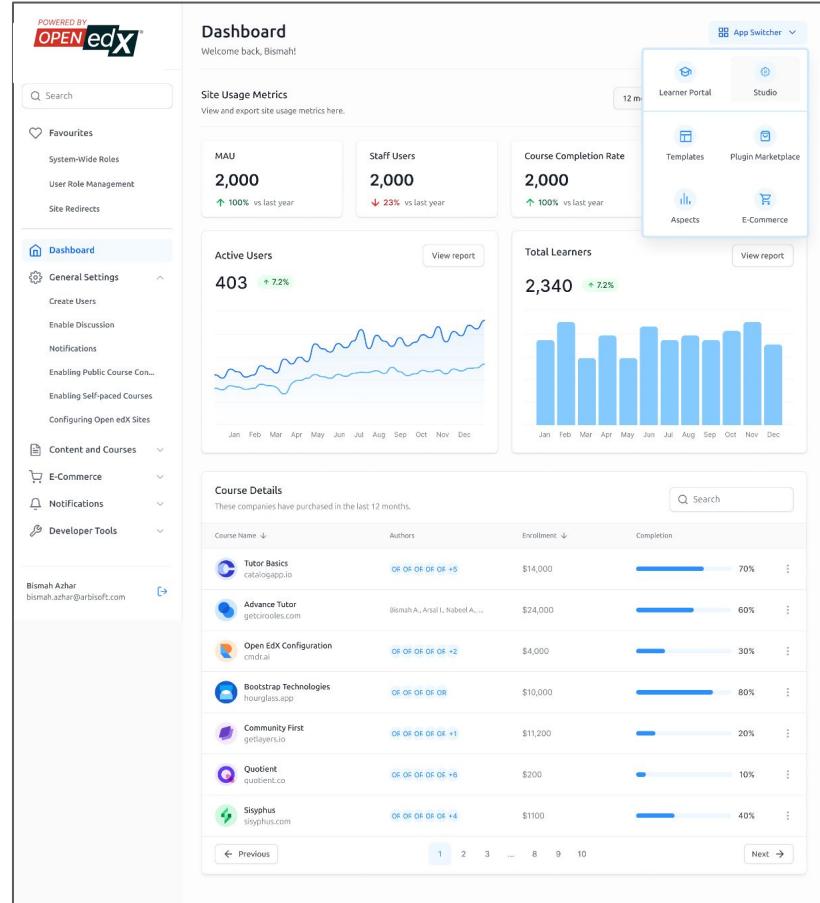


Next Steps



The Big Picture

- All the power of Django Admin – in an easily usable interface
- Reduced learning curve – system guides users instead of docs
- No more operational bottlenecks – non-tech teams can take action confidently
- AI does the routine work
 - “Hey, enroll these users into Course A.”
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Get involved

We can't do this alone!

- Share your ideas, pain points, and feature requests.
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Where Can You Start?

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Questions

A potential checklist for a good admin UX:

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Story Time

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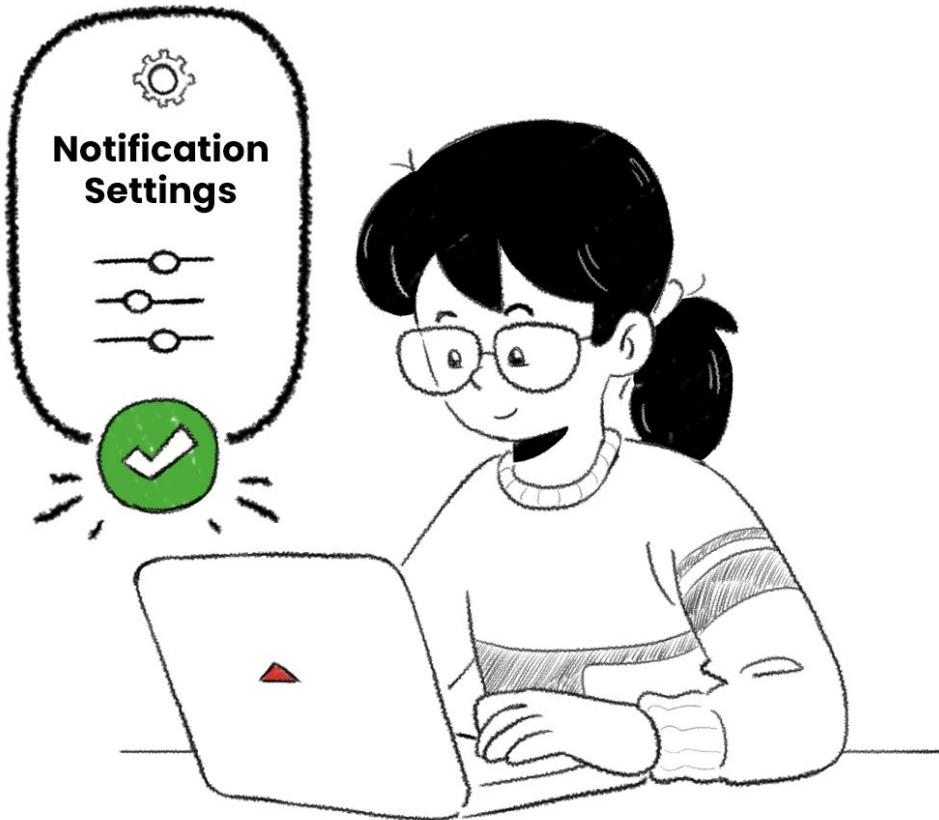
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Reimagining Django Admin



Reimagining Django Admin



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Before We Dive In

If you had a **magic wand...**

What would you fix or improve in Django Admin?



Progress Check

Loading ...



Progress Check

Loading



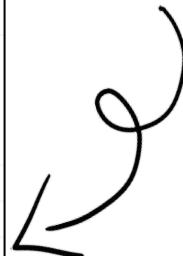
Create User

USER PROFILE

User profile: #1

Name :	<input type="text"/>
Meta:	<input type="text"/>
Courseware:	<input type="text"/> course.xml
Language :	<input type="text"/>
Rental :	<input type="text"/>
Year of birth :	<input type="text"/>
Gender:	<input type="text"/> -----
Level of education:	<input type="text"/> -----
Mailing address:	<input type="text"/>

Before

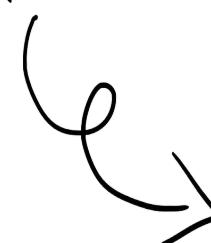


User Profile

Add profile details.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Meta	<input type="text"/> This is hint text to help the user. 275 characters left
Courseware	<input type="text"/> course.xml
Language	<input type="text"/> Normal text
Rental	<input type="text"/> course.xml
Date of birth	<input type="button"/> Select date
Gender	<input type="text"/> Normal text
Level of education	<input type="text"/> Normal text
Goals	<input type="text"/> This is hint text to help the user. 275 characters left
Organic	<input type="text"/>

After



Site Configuration

Editing site configuration

<SiteConfiguration: sandbox.openedx.edly.io >

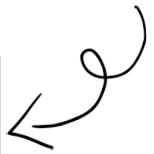
Site :

Enabled

Site values:

```
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Before



After

tutor deck
Powered by edly

General Settings

- Create Users
- Discussion Notifications
- Public Course Content
- Self-Paced Courses
- Open edX Sites Configuration

Content and Courses

E-Commerce

Notifications

Developer Tools

Site Values

This is a hint text to help user.

Site

Select site

Enable

Site Values

This is a hint text to help user.

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Waffle flag:

Course id:

Note :

eg why this exists and when/if it can be dropped

Override choice: Force On

Enabled



After

tutor deck Powered by edly

Search

Favourites

System-Wide Roles

User Role Management

Site Redirects

Dashboard

General Settings

Create Users

Discussion Notifications

Public Course Content

Self-Paced Courses

Open edX Sites Configuration

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Ajout de self paced relative dates config

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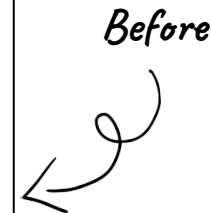
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Enabled :

Buttons

Before



Enable Public Course Content

Page

After

The screenshot shows a configuration interface for enabling self-paced courses. At the top, there's a breadcrumb navigation: Home > General Settings > Enabling Self-Paced Courses. The main title is "Enabling Self-Paced Courses".

The interface is divided into two main sections: "Context" and "Configuration".

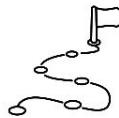
In the "Context" section, there are dropdown menus for "Site" (set to "Select") and "Organisation" (set to "MITx"). Below these are sections for "Configure values for all course runs associated with this site" and "Configure values for all course runs associated with this organisation (e.g. MITx, edX)".

The "Configuration" section contains a "Course in organisation" field with a search bar and a "Clear All" button. It lists several course runs:

- MITxCS100 (selected)
- MITx+600
- MITx+600
- MITx+600
- MITx+600
- MITx+600
- MITx+600
- Unknown

A note below the list says, "This is a hint text to help user." At the bottom right of the configuration area are "Cancel" and "Save changes" buttons.

Next Steps



We're here!

Improvements within current UI

Next Stop

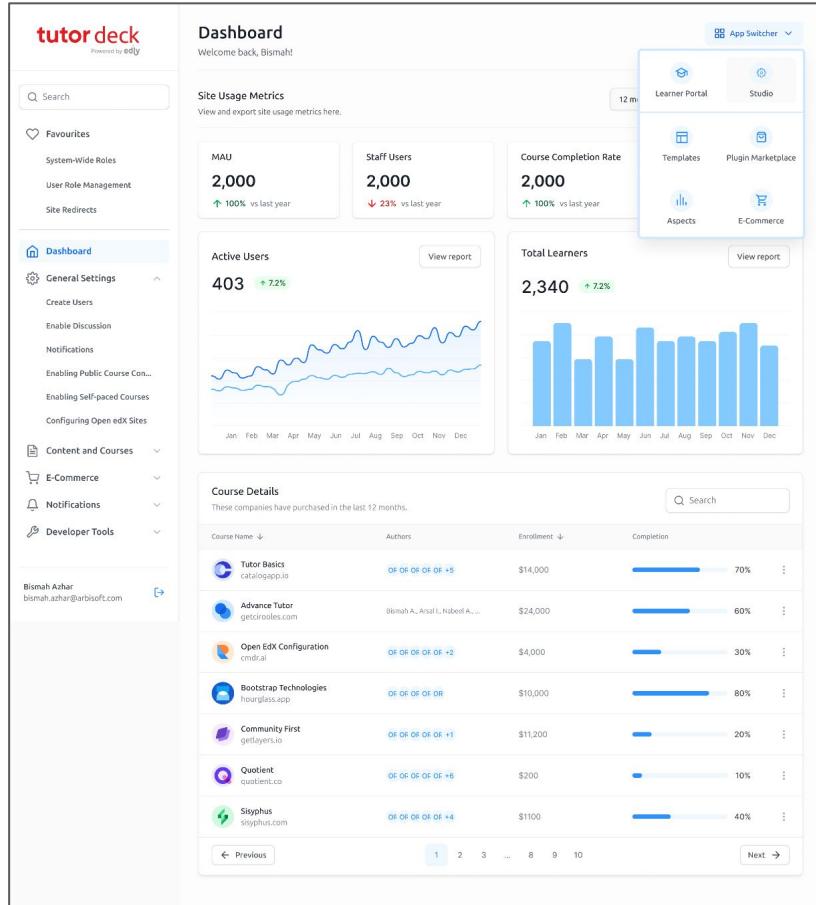
- Overall theme improvement
- Logical grouped menus
- Smart Search

End Goal

- Analytics
- Integrated with Tutor Deck
- Manage all things open edX from a unified platform

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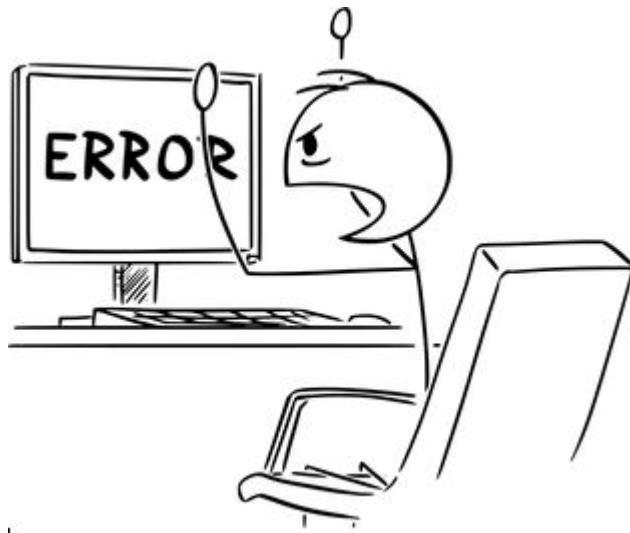
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