# Current Issues

## Designing a responsive website

As someone who is by no means an expert on website design, and who has never used WordPress before, creating websites is challenging and limited to my skill set in web technologies. Therefore, to create a responsive and interactive website, I need something to bridge this knowledge gap and allow me to still be creative with my designs.

This brings up the question of what elements I want to include in my website. As my concept revolves around creating a website for the Student Accelerator program, I think the following would be appropriate to have:

* A method to contact the Student Accelerator team
* A page housing information for users who may be interested in the program
* A way for me to monitor traffic on my website and identify my user demographic
* Relevant visual matter regarding Microsoft and the MSA program
* External links to relevant information

## A fast and fluid website

A slow website is a bad website. When users click on my URL, they will expect a load-time within milliseconds. Anything slower than that will result in a worse off user experience, making my website feel clunky and score poorly.

As such, it would be beneficial to have some method to quickly deliver content to my users easily and serve my webpages lightly.

## Security

Cybers security is an extremely prevalent topic, and for good reason. The threat of attackers sniffing traffic or manipulating data on my application is very real, and so it is my responsibility to do my best to prevent such things.

Therefore, I need some measures to ensure that users are secure and can safely navigate my website. Moreover, I will also require some protection against malicious behaviour such as SPAM or bots flooding traffic.

## Implementing features

Looking at what my website needs, I can assign common solutions to my desired features outlined above.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Desired Features** | **Common Solution** |
| Method of contact | Contact form |
| Page of information | Static page, FAQ |
| Monitor traffic | Analytics & Dashboard |
| Relevant visual matter | Images, videos |
| External links | Anchors, buttons |
| Quickly deliver content | Cache, CDN |
| Secure website | Encryption, Anti-spam |

## Why do I need plugins?

As mentioned previously, I do not have much experience developing websites – so I would not really know where to start implementing some of these things. Moreover, with the limited time to work on this project, it is much easier to spin up and configure a resource than it is to build these features from the ground up.

Thankfully, plugins fill the gap in knowledge that I require to implement many of these features, quickly resolving the problems that I have. Furthermore, using a trusted plugin will provide all the dependencies and ensure that my features are robust and thorough, enforcing proper standards in my design.

For example, security is a complex field that is hard to get right. So, it is much safer that I utilise a dedicated plugin for my purposes than to learn all about secure web practices in a month and stuff it up when trying to build it myself.

# Plugins that solve my issues

For each of these issues, WordPress has a plugin inside of its large library that I can use. For some aspects, I require more than one plugin or external services as shown in my findings below.

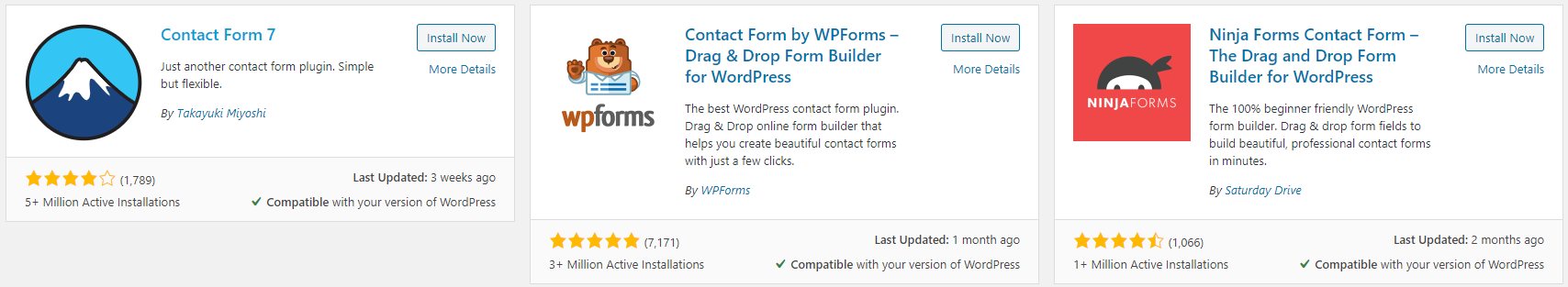
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Common Solution** | **Plugins** | **External service** |
| Contact form | Contact Form |  |
| Static page, FAQ | FAQ Builder |  |
| Analytics & Dashboard | WordPress Analytics | Google Analytics |
| Images, videos | Content editor |  |
| Anchors, buttons |  |
| Cache | Cache management | CDN |
| Encryption | SSL | SSL CA |
| Anti-spam | Anti-spam | CAPTCHA |

# Chosen plugins

## Contact Form

### Choosing a plugin

For the contact form, I went with the “[Contact Form by WPForms – Drag & Drop Form Builder for WordPress](https://aumsa.azurewebsites.net/wp-admin/plugin-install.php?tab=plugin-information&plugin=wpforms-lite&TB_iframe=true&width=600&height=550)” plugin. This decision was made after considering the top 3 options in the marketplace (as seen below) since all of them could be used to add the functionality I wanted.



The choices were weighted against each other based on the following factors:

* **Compatibility**
  + All three were compatible with my version of WordPress
* **Support**
  + Contact Form 7 seemed to have more up-to-date support (3 weeks ago) with Ninja forms being worse off at 2 months
* **Active installations**
  + Contact Form 7 had the most active users with 5+ million installations
* **Rating**
  + The deciding factor however came to WPForms having a higher gross score (5 stars with 7000 ratings) compared to Contact Form 7 (4 stars with 1800 ratings).

### Implementing the plugin

To implement the plugin, I did the following:

1. Install and activate the plugin
2. Create a new contact form
3. Start with the ‘Simple Contact Form’ template
4. Add some new fields and questions in the form
5. Change the email that responses are sent to
6. Save the form
7. Paste the shortcode into my desired webpage

### Benefits of the plugin

The benefits of having a contact form is that users can now easily send in questions and contact the owner without having to leave the website. This way, there is no confusion because they just need to fill out a simple form and they spend more time on my site (better for my traffic statistics).

Moreover, having a contact form does not expose my email address to the public, which can be a security vulnerability that leads to things like personal targeting, third-party attacks, phishing and more.

## FAQ Builder

### Choosing a plugin

### Implementing the plugin

### Benefits of the plugin

## Wordpress Analytics

## Content editor

Elementor vs Divi

+ Classic editor

* Allows HTML

## Cache management

## SSL

## Anti-spam

o What type of plugins will solve your issue and why? (Do not specify a name of a plugin provider, instead, specify the type of the plugin. For example, instead of stating “Elementor”, state “front-end page builder plugin”).

o Your choice of plugin provider and why you chose one plugin provider over the others (for example: Elementor vs Divi).

o the high-level steps of how you implemented each plugin

o the applicable benefits realized or expected to be realized after implementing each plugin

## Editing & Design Plugins

### SiteOrigin Widgets Bundle

### Shortcodes Ultimate

## Caching Plugin

### WP Super Cache

* Supported

## SEO Plugin

### Yoast SEO

* Simple AIO (all-in-one) SEO solution.
* Supported live content analysis
* Create XML sitemaps

## Contact Form Plugin

### Akismet Anti-Spam

## FAQ Plugin

### Ultimate FAQs

## Security Plugin

### Really Simple SSL

## Analytics Plugin

Google Analytics for Wordpress

Head, Footer and Post Injection