WordCamp Asia 2023

How can theme developers monetize in the era of Block Themes?

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@kurudrive

Vektor,Inc.
WordPress Solutions

Who am I ? - Self introduction -

Hidekazu Ishikawa

From Japan

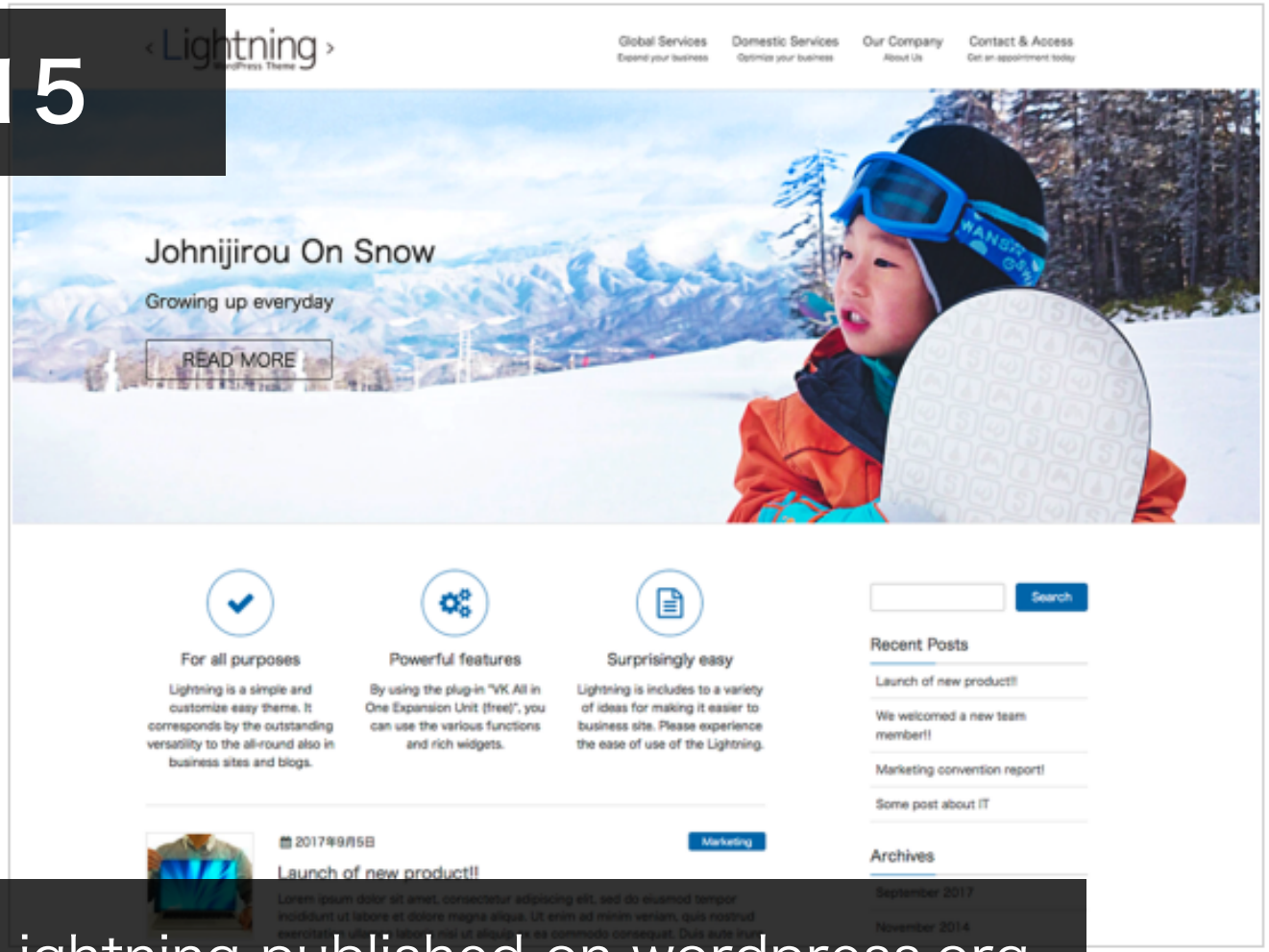
Theme developer /

CEO(Vektor,Inc.)

Since 2012, I have developed and distributed general-purpose WordPress themes for business in Japan.

2015

Lightning By Hidekazu Ishikawa



Preview Download

Version: **15.2.4**

Last updated: **December 26, 2022**

Active Installations: **80,000+**

WordPress Version: **5.5 or higher**

PHP Version: **5.6.0 or higher**

Theme Homepage →

Ratings

See all ›

4.5 out of 5 stars.

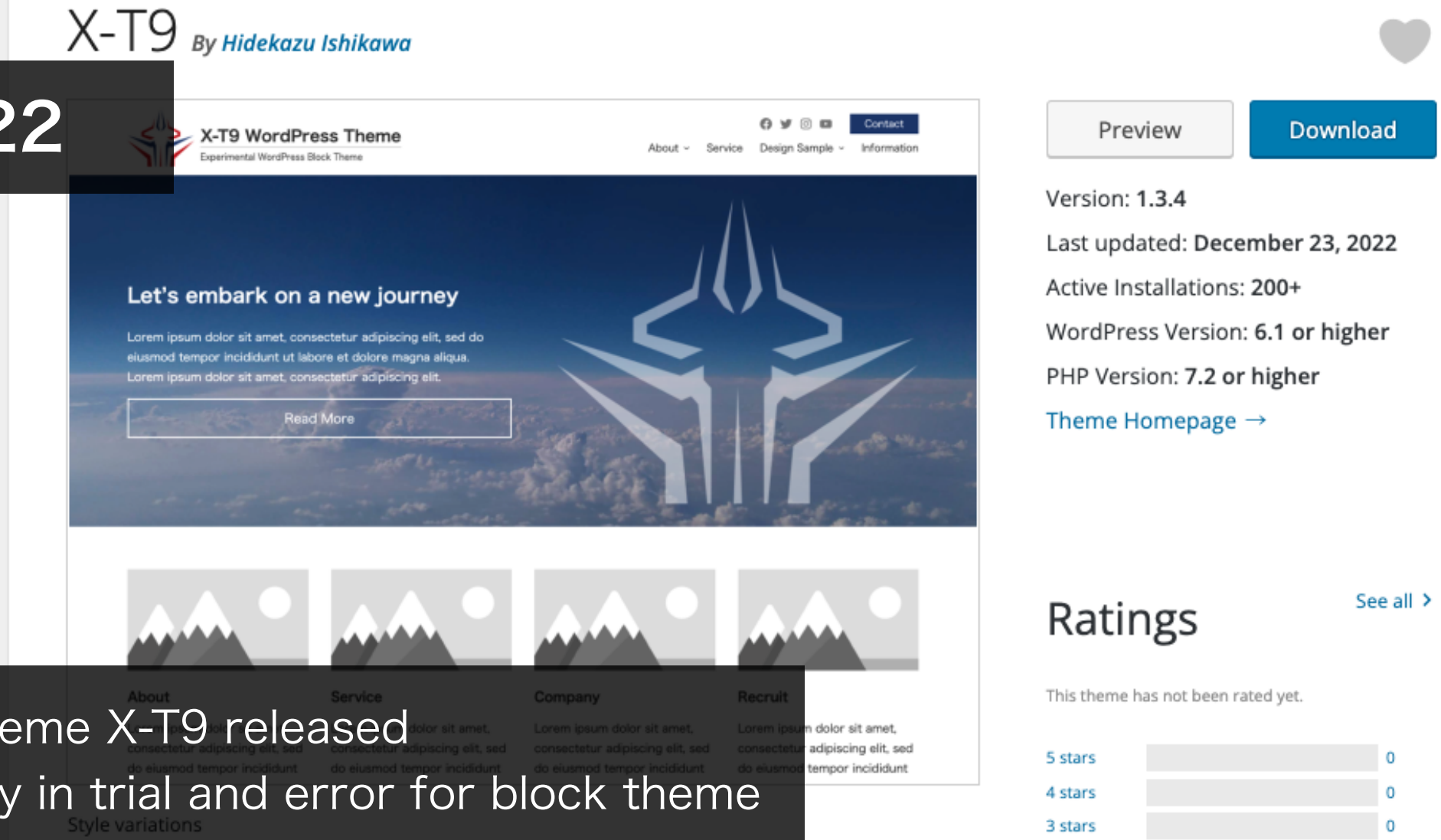
5 stars	7
4 stars	1
3 stars	1
2 stars	0
1 star	0

Add my review

Theme Lightning published on wordpress.org
Thanks to 80,000+ active installs

Lightning is a very simple & easy to customize theme which is based on the Bootstrap. It is also very friendly with custom post types and custom taxonomies. When you add a new one, the breadcrumbs will be adjusted and posts will look beautifully without editing or adding a template files.

2022



Block theme X-T9 released
Currently in trial and error for block theme

In addition, development and sales of other plug-ins

Business model of theme authors (Before full site editing)

- Theme sales (Classic)
- Selling plugins of theme function extension
- Selling plugins of extension block ... etc.

Simply create a theme → Sell zip file
Relatively possible to sell and make money.

Points where monetization has become more difficult than before

01

Traditional monetization points become less effective

Before Full Site Editting

User want to change

- 💬 Display element of the header
- 💬 Layout of my site
- 💬 Fonts and colors ... etc

☹ Users who don't understand code and CSS can't customize as desired.

Theme authors
develop themes with unique editing functions
and sell Premium themes

☺ Users

← Easily edit
💰 Paid →

☺ Theme authors

Era of Full Site Editing

The entire site can be customized with no code!

- Header and footer layout
- Specify color and font size
- Margin / Padding / Gap settings ...etc

→ Much less theme dependent.

Then as someone who made a living out of theme sales...

Monetization points disappeared!!!!

((((((((;゜ω゜))))))))

A matter of life and death

02

Decreased monetization effect by original Block features.

Early days when block editors were implemented,
WordPress blocks lacked a lot of features.

ex.

- Margin adjustment function
- Border setting
- Advanced layout Block(like Media Block) ... etc

→ We have developed our original blocks and
used them as added value (monetization points).

WordPress version upgrade...

- Advanced layouts are now possible with core blocks (Block Patterns).
- The similar function is added to the core block, etc.

Monetization points disappeared!!!!

((((((((;゜ω゜))))))))

In addition ...

- Released original blocks become an ongoing maintenance burden
- We have to keep checking Gutenberg's development closely (to avoid unnecessary development).

03

CSS output by WordPress becomes complicated

- The influence of CSS output by WordPress has increased
- It is difficult to deal with specification changes such as block CSS
- Apart from CSS knowledge, it became essential to understand WordPress's unique CSS method

Probably many theme & custom block developers are facing this issue?

However, it is inevitable in the evolution of WordPress.

| T −T) .oO (I know. I love WordPress...)

In this way,
The area that theme developers have focused on for monetization is greatly influenced by full site editing.

As a result, I feel that the conventional monetization of "theme sales" will be difficult.

(=w=

Future direction of theme-related business

How add value and differentiate?

Differentiation by block pattern

☞ Easiest way

Selling themes and plugins that include various block patterns

Header / Footer / Contents etc.

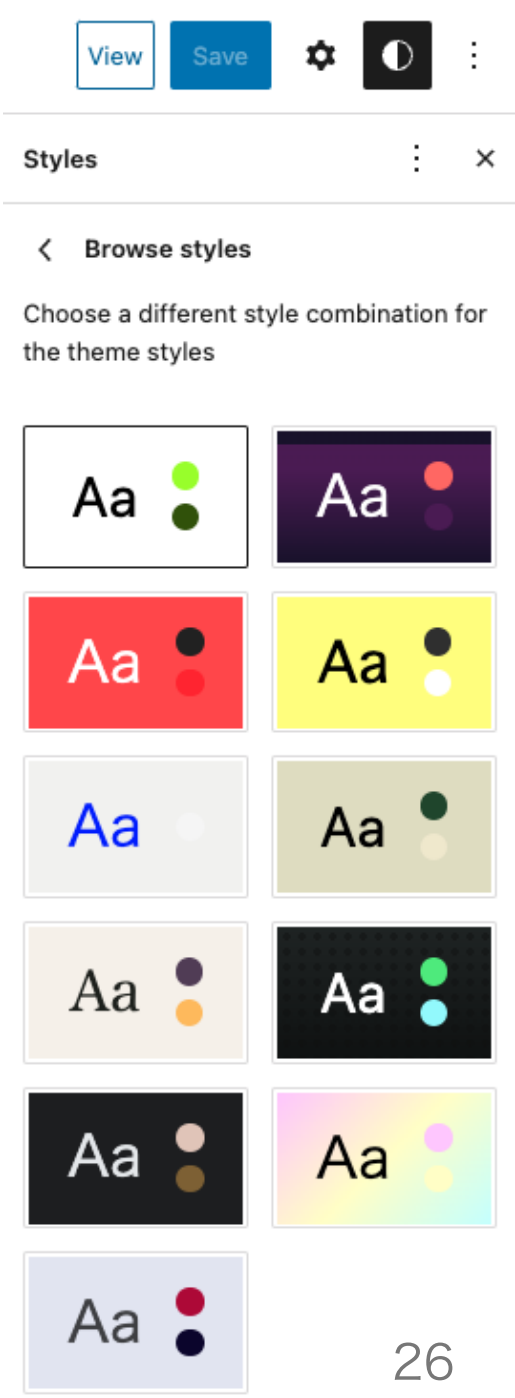
There is nothing that users cannot create on their own,
so it is weak as a point of monetization.

Differentiation by Global Styles variations

☞ New Easiest way

“Global Styles variations” Feature Introduced in WordPress 6.0

We can create different variations within a single theme.



Block Patterns / Global Style Variations

Even general users can make it, but...

- High quality products created by professional designers
  → High added value of course

👍 New extensibility and monetization points.

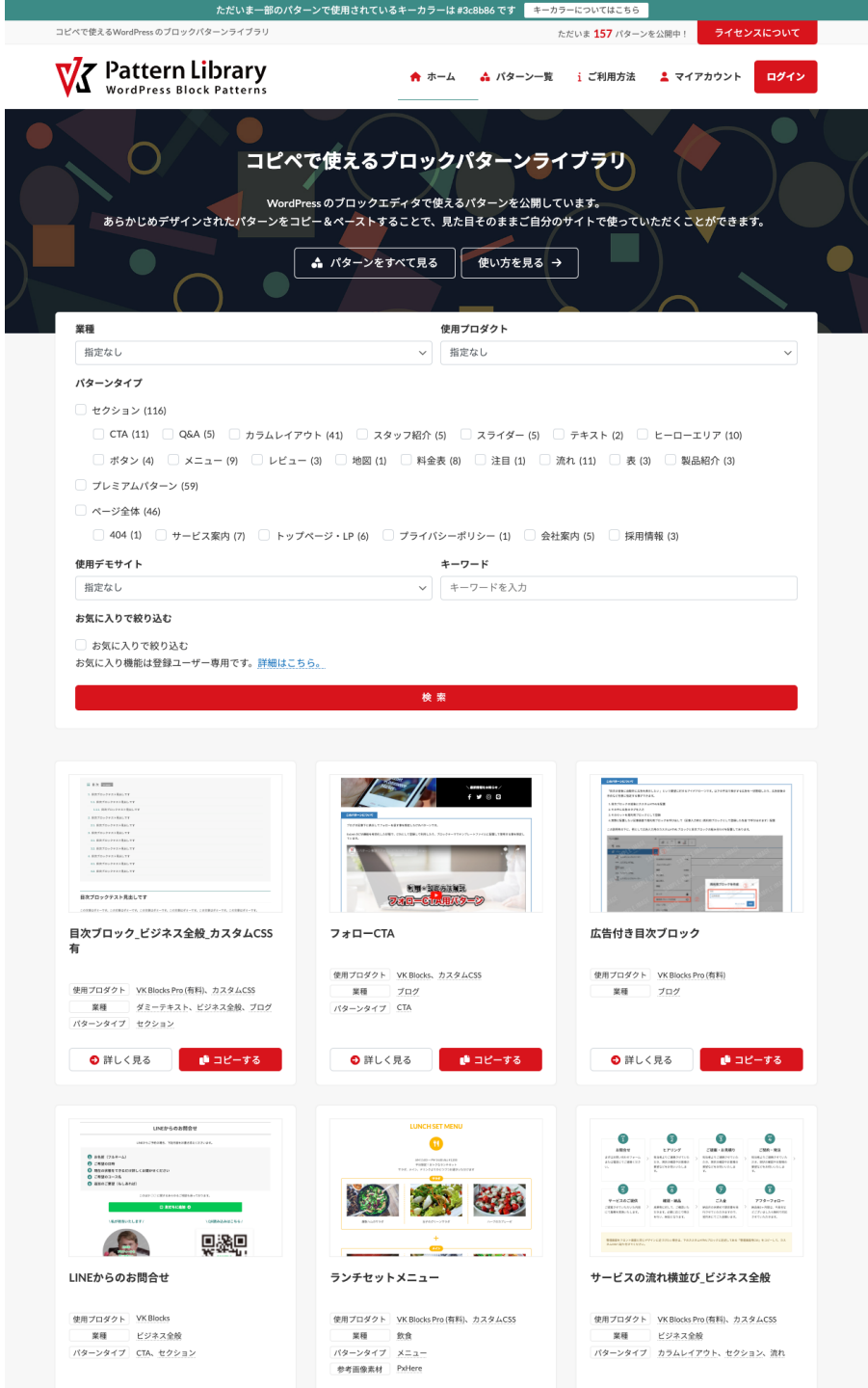
Our case

Publish our own Block Pattern Directory

https://patterns.vektor-inc.co.jp/

Only available in Japanese

(Inspired by the Org site: https://wordpress.org/patterns/)



Why we created our own pattern directory?

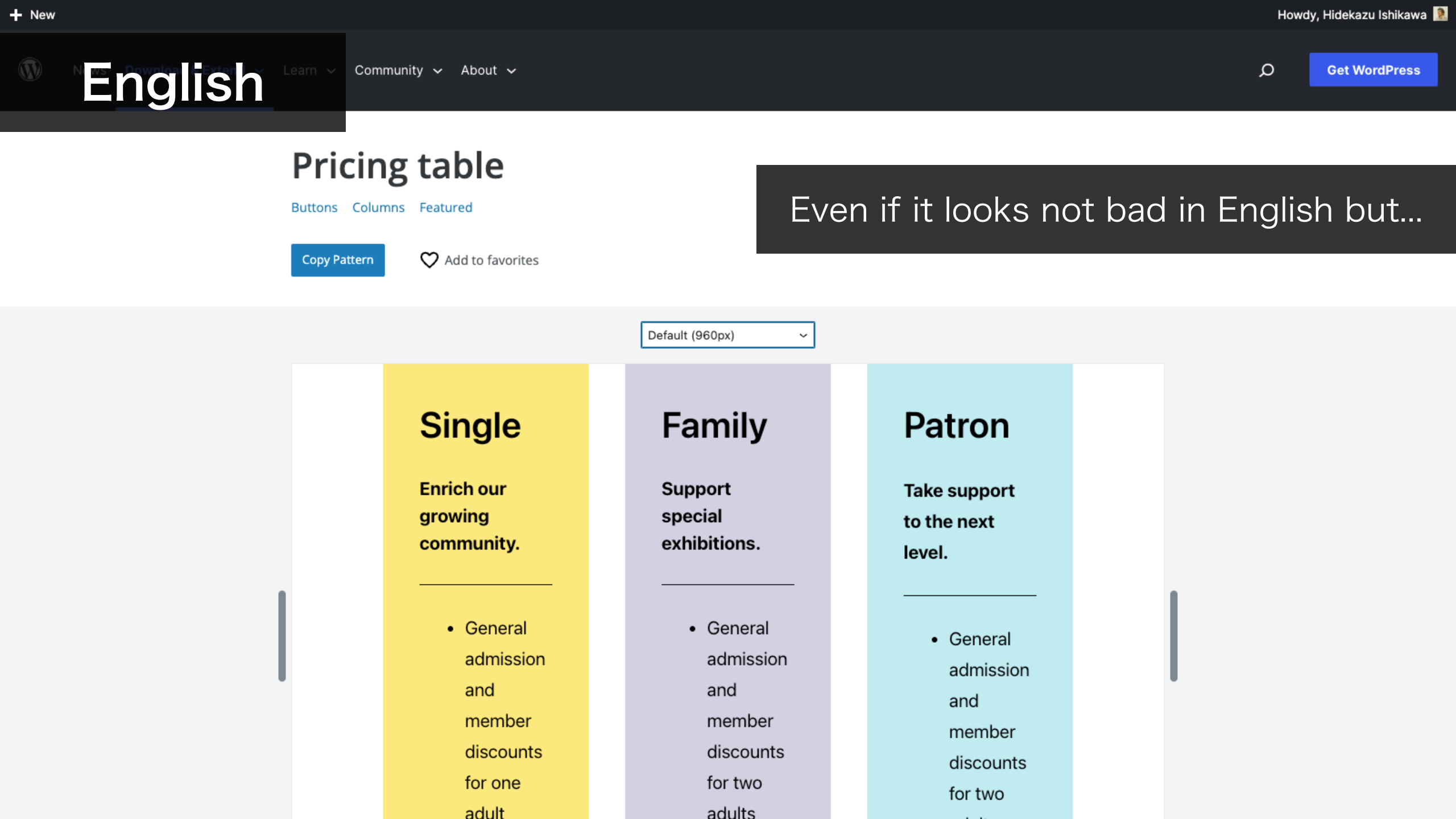
1. Still difficult only with core blocks

Want to use our original blocks and CSS
to provide higher quality patterns

⚠ .org allowed only core blocks and can't use Custom CSS.

2. language problem

Characters look different in English and double-byte characters


New
Howdy, Hidekazu Ishikawa
English
Learn
Community
About
Get WordPress
Pricing table
Buttons
Columns
Featured
Copy Pattern
Add to favorites
Even if it looks not bad in English but...
Default (960px)
Single
Enrich our growing community.
General admission and member discounts for one adult
Family
Support special exhibitions.
General admission and member discounts for two adults
Patron
Take support to the next level.
General admission and member discounts for two

Japanese

Register Log In

New Download & Extend Learn Community About Get WordPress

価格表

Buttons Columns Featured

Copy Pattern

The balance is bad.

Default (960px)

個人

成長するコミュニティをサポート。

- 大人1名の一般入場料と会員割引
- 特別展ごとに1枚の無料チケ

ファミリー

特別展示を支援。

- 大人2名の一般入場料と会員割引
- 特別展ごとに4枚の

後援者

次のレベルの支援。

- 大人2名の一般入場料と会員割引
- 特別展ごとに5枚の無料チケ

3. Theme style affects

Even if user paste the .org pattern,
user need to make adjustments.

4. Monetization

|＝w＝）.oO（ We can't monetize only with the .org pattern directory, so... ）

How we monetize?

Through our pattern directory, Offer premium features to paying users

Paid User Benefits

1. Premium patterns available
2. Favorite pattern registration function
3. Link function for favorite registered patterns

1. Premium patterns

- As the name suggests, the design and sample sentences are more elaborate are ready to use.
- Patterns available to only paying users
  (need logged in)

2. Favorite pattern registration function

Patterns are added one after another
→ hard to find

Function to register own favorite patterns

※ Same functionality as wordpress.org

3. Link function for favorite registered patterns

Call patterns registered in favorites from the user's site with API

Users can use it directly from the edit screen of their site

[image screen capture or fig]

What is a value-added pattern?

Creating and developing more patterns has become very important for developers who were in the theme sales business.

Where is the added value that is the key to monetization?

With many beautiful patterns, is it easy to make a page?

Of course we make and provide stylish and common patterns. But...

- Many non-professional users can't think about page structure in the first step
- They can't think of the sentences to write

お知らせ

一覧ページへ

2022年9月15日 お知らせ フリーペーパー「Vektor Style」に掲載されました

2022年9月12日 お知らせ 夏季休業のお知らせ

イベント情報
EVENTS

西区モデルハウス新規グランドオープン！完成見学会
2022年9月12日

西区モデルハウスプレオープン！見学会
2022年9月1日

ローンや土地などの家づくりの相談会
2022年8月12日

不動産売却・土地探し相談会
2022年8月10日

一覧ページへ

コンセプト
CONCEPT

家族と世代をつなぐ住まいづくり

私たちサンプル工務店のこだわり は、10年、30年後も家族から子、ら孫へと受け継がれる家づくりをしています。家族を繋ぐ家づくりを考えています。

デザイン性はもちろん、機能性・安全性を十分考慮した快適に暮らせる住まいを提案していきます。

もっと見る

サンプル工務店のこだわり

01 価格
REASONABLE PRICE

**自社の職人による施工なので
納得の価格**

自社スタッフによる施工で、下請け業者にかかる中間マージンが発生しないため、納得のいく価格をご提供できます。
高い技術力とお客さまのことを一番に考える専門スタッフが在籍しておりますので、安心してお任せください。

02 技術
CRAFTSMANSHIP

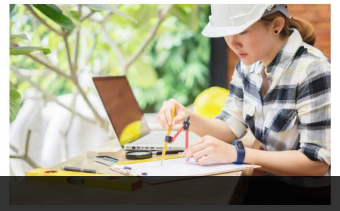
**創業○○年、
磨き抜かれた確かな技術**

創業○○年、年月と共に経験と技術を積み重ねてきました。
20XX年現在、30,000棟以上の住まいを施工し高い評価をいただいてきました。豊富な経験と知識はどこにも負けません。

03 設計
DESIFN & CONSTRUCTION

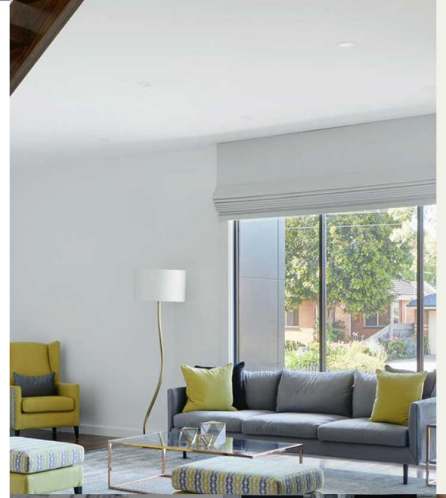
**長年培われた
安心安全なデザイン設計**

安心して暮らせるために、全ての現場の地盤調査を実施しています。調査したデータをもとに最適な仕様をご提案させていただきます。
施工後の定期点検も実施しております。



施工事例
WORKS

サンプル工務店のこだわり



サービス紹介
WORKS

◆ 注文住宅

理想通りのこだわりのマイホームを建てるなら、弊社にお任せください！

◆ リフォーム

お客さまのご要望をもとに材質・デザイン性にこだわった快適な住まいをご提供します。

◆ 店舗・オフィス

理想通りのこだわりのマイホームを建てるなら、弊社にお任せください！

もっと見る

対応エリア
AREA

本店を拠点とした以下のエリアを対象エリアとしています。
ご不明な場合はお気軽にお問い合わせください。

愛知県	○○市（○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区・○○区）、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町
岐阜県	○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町、○○町
三重県	○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、○○市、

お問い合わせ
CONTACT

住まいに関するお悩みや相談など、なんでもお気軽にご相談ください。
相談やお見積もりは無料です。

お電話のお問い合わせ 000-0000-0000
営業時間：10:00～18:00

メールのお問い合わせ お問い合わせ

採用情報
RECRUIT

もっと見る

Premium patterns

Provide a block pattern to create whole page of a specific page for a specific industry.

For the End-user (Business owner)

Just rewrite the text to suit their business.

Commissioned creation

By using a pattern as a draft of the page,
the meeting with the client becomes smooth

Localization is essential

When providing as a pattern for the entire page including sentences

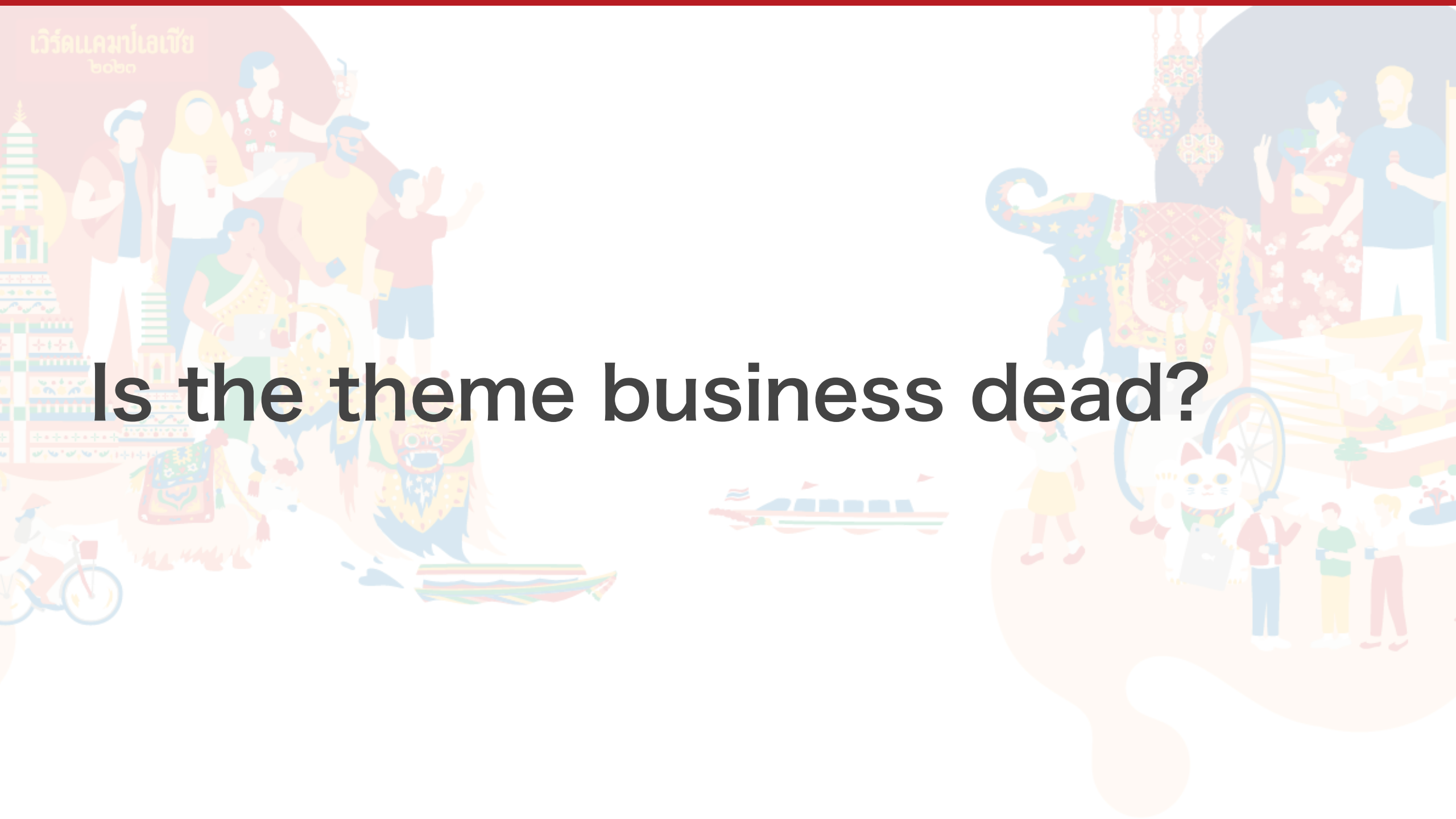
- Must be in the language of the country
- A design optimized for each language (characters/typefaces) is better
- Content and design trends vary by region (country)

☞ With localized versions, no competition with English-speaking developers.

Demerit

- Non-English = fewer targets
- Industry limited = fewer targets
- Hard to make properly

(=w=;



Is the theme business dead?

Theme is important after all

Themes and patterns are closely related to the global styles

Bring in a partial pattern from outside and use it
→ There is a problem with the uniformity of the design.

Having said that "full site editing reduces theme dependency", **the importance of the theme is high.**

Has the barrier to entry been lowered?

Designers who are not good at programming

- Designers can a variety of products without programming skills.

- It is necessary to understand WordPress-unique specifications such as theme.json
- Need to make and provide a lot of patterns

Users need good themes and highly practical patterns

FES is highly configurable and customizable but...
→ Too much configuration work

It's quite cumbersome to make from scratch

Adobe Illustrator ≠ Anyone can create high-quality designs to meet their purpose

Responsive design compatibility

How to control display elements according to screen size?

With a single screen width, it might be possible to lay out well somehow.
However, when it comes to layout on multiple widths, it's actually not that easy.

If a theme/pattern to meet your purpose is available, you can have website faster by purchasing it.

It will be difficult to monetize the theme alone, but...

Considering it as a set with a value-added patterns and global styles,
there will be many business opportunities.

If a theme/pattern to meet your purpose is available, you can have website faster by purchasing it.

At the end

What do you think about future theme business?

Please share your opinion

- Twitter #WCAsia @kurudrive
- Talk to me! (with simple words and short sentence)

Thank you