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Using Elementor

Content, Themes & Plugins

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Using Elementor

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Elementor is a visual builder for WordPress: instead of writing code, you drag blocks onto the page and see the result as you drag them. It is the shortest route between an idea and a presentable page, which is why it is one of the most used *plugins* in the world.

The free version is in the official WordPress repository and is enough for most sites. There is a paid version, Elementor Pro, which **is bought from Elementor** and not from us: we neither sell nor resell it.

Getting started

1. **Pick a light theme.** Elementor draws the whole page, so a theme loaded with options only adds weight and conflicts. Elementor itself publishes a minimal theme made for this.

2. In the dashboard, **Plugins › Add New**, search for **Elementor**, install and activate.

3. Create a new page and click **Edit with Elementor**. A screen opens with the blocks on the left and the page on the right.

4. Build the page in sections. Each section has columns, and inside the columns you put text, images, buttons. Drag, drop, type over it.

5. **Before publishing, look at it on a phone.** There is a button at the bottom of the editor showing the page at three widths. Most of the problems with a site built this way appear only on a phone, and only after publishing if nobody looks.

Start from a template and change it.
Elementor ships ready-made page templates. Picking one that looks like what you want and swapping the text and images is much faster, and usually looks better, than starting from an empty page.

The PHP limits Elementor runs into

This is problem number one for anyone using visual builders, and it is not obvious at all, because **it does not always throw an error**. A builder submits a great many fields at once when saving, and uses more memory than an ordinary page.

The symptom	The limit
The page saves but half the settings are gone	`max_input_vars`. PHP throws the extra fields away **without saying anything**. It is the most treacherous of the lot.
The saving spinner never stops	Execution time, or memory. Check the error log.
The editor opens blank	Memory. See **giving WordPress more memory**.
You cannot upload a large image	Upload size. Changed in cPanel.

All of these you can fix yourself, in cPanel, and they are explained with the right values in **PHP limits: memory, time and upload size**. `max_input_vars` does not appear in the simple list: it is added through the direct PHP configuration editor.

What it costs in speed

A visual builder adds stylesheets and code to **every** page, including the ones it did not build. That does not mean you should not use it; it means you should measure.

1. Measure a page before and after installing it, with the same tool and at the same hour.
2. Turn on a page cache. With caching, the cost of building the page is paid once instead of on every visit: **installing and tuning a page cache**.
3. Do not stack builders. A site with Elementor plus another builder plus a theme with its own builder is three times the same weight.
4. Deal with the images, which on a visual-builder site are nearly always the biggest weight: **the site is slow**.

The decision you take before you start

> **The pages become tied to Elementor.**
> The content is stored in a format of its own. If you ever deactivate it, the pages built with it show code instead of content, and going back means rebuilding. That is not a reason not to use it: it is a reason to decide now rather than in two years.

If what you want is a simple site and you would rather not manage *plugins*, there is another route inside your plan, with no WordPress at all: **Sitejet Builder or WordPress: which one suits your site**.

Before touching a site that is live

Installing a visual builder on a site with visitors is not a small change. Take a backup (**how to restore your data**) and, if you can, rehearse elsewhere: **a test site before touching what is live**. If something breaks, the route is **common WordPress errors**.

NEED A HAND?

Editor will not open or will not save? Tell us the domain and what happens.

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