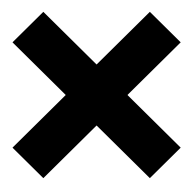
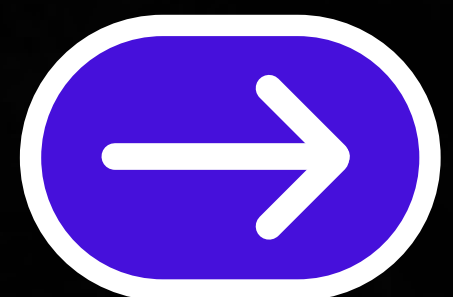


Are you sure you want to install this plugin?

8 Tips for staying safe.



SECURITY

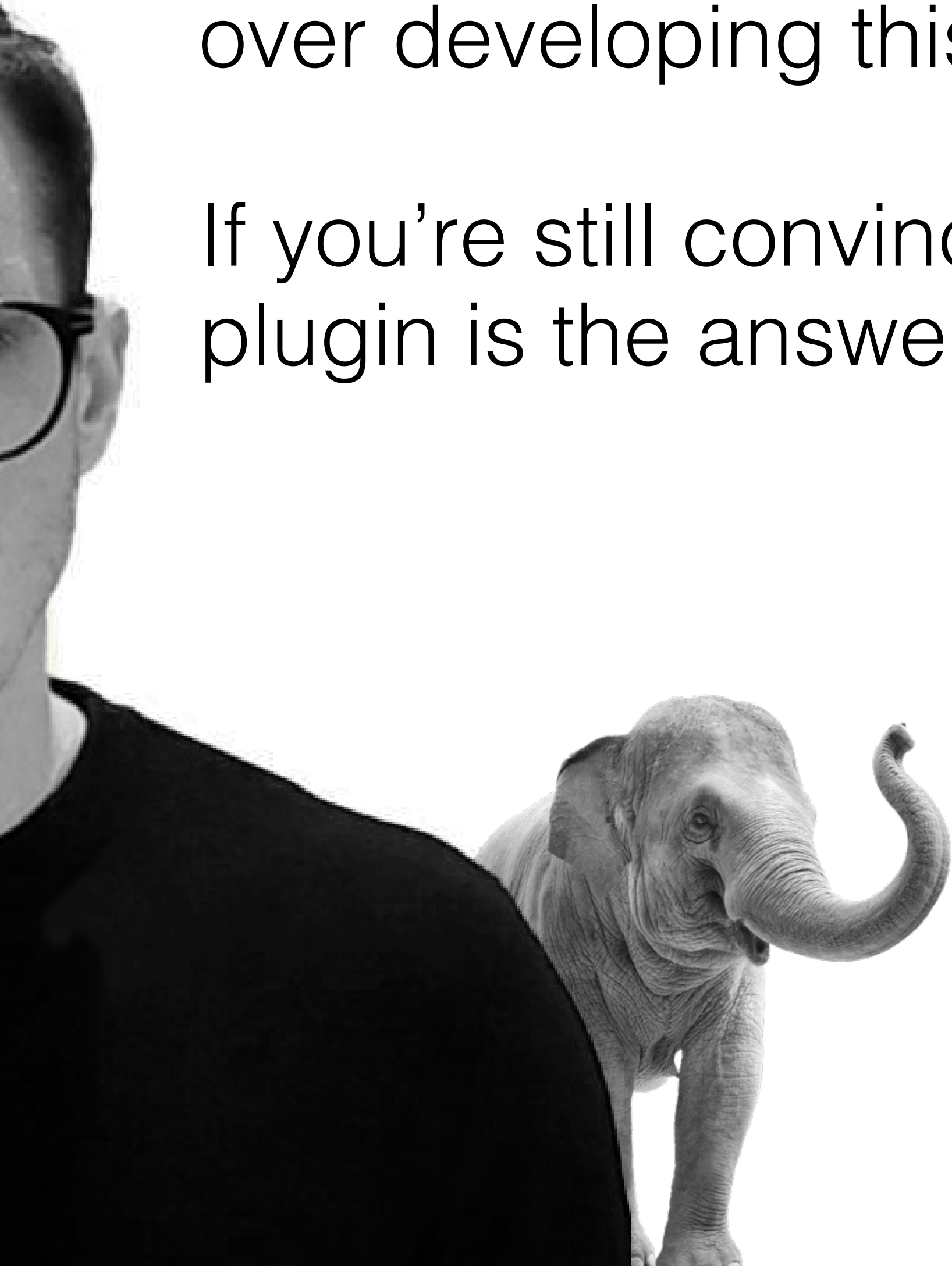


THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Is a plugin the right choice for what you need?

Should you be choosing a plugin over developing this feature?

If you're still convinced that a plugin is the answer... ***read on.***



We only recommend using plugins when absolutely necessary or in scenarios where you wouldn't dream of developing a feature due to the task being too time intensive or costly.

GravityForms & Yoast (Great examples of this)

But, if you're looking at plugins here's **8 tips to consider before installing.**





Where are you installing the plugin from?

Firstly if you are installing from the **WordPress** repository then chances are the plugin has already been vetted, if you are installing from Envato or a similar platform be cautious and read all the reviews and release notes before installing.





Is it free or a paid plugin?

Free sounds great, paid can sometimes put people off purchasing. However it's hard to make a living giving away free work. Usually rock solid free plugins will have a premium counterpart (Yoast as an example) where people can use the plugin for free and upgrade to get more features.



Premium plugins can have more reactive support and faster maintenance updates.

Some free plugins can become unsupported after time and eventually might be vulnerable for attack.

If you choose free, ensure that there's a history of reactive support should you encounter any problems.





Is it going to be compatible?

Check to see if this plugin is compatible with the version of WordPress your website is running. Bear in mind that not all plugins will get along and work in harmony together, so although it displays compatibility with WordPress, is it compatible with other third-party plugins?





Is it made by a reputable developer or agency?

Imagine you have a great idea for a plugin that will be revolutionary and you're a single person development team. The plugin is free and gets a million downloads. You then become so busy that you cannot respond to the support tickets or find the time to provide crucial security and bug updates.



By exploring the plugin developer and installing from development teams you are hedging your bet that there's a team of people handling the above issues. Some of the developers again will have paid plugins and therefore have a higher interest in ensuring that support tickets are met and customer service (although free) is still delivered.





Is the plugin well supported?

Downloading on WordPress.org, check the 'Support' tab and see the date of the most recent communication from the provider. I.e. If a ticket was raised how quickly did the developer respond and when was it resolved?

Would you wait that long?





When was it last updated?

On WordPress.org the plugin will have 'last updated' depending on the plugin some might say 4 weeks, 2 months, 3 days or even 2 years. The later is the concern. If the plugin hasn't been updated in a while, it could be a risky install. However some plugins are simple and don't need much tlc, so it's always



best to check the compatibility to ensure that even though it could be 2 years old, it's compatible with the latest version of WordPress.

Please note - WordPress actually display messages where plugins are not compatible, so look out for these warning banners too.





How many active installations?

Now popularity is no sign of a great plugin but looking at how many installs a plugin has does provide a way to say it's tried and tested. Seeing too few installs becomes a risky move - so check the number of installs and then check the reviews.





Has it got positive reviews or ratings?

Lastly, check reviews and ratings. Read what issues people have had with the plugin and what compliments it has received.

Be mindful, too few reviews could be the developers friends or family. Thanks Mum.



BONUS

Install and test first on your staging environment

If you've ticked all the boxes, then test it first before rolling it out on your production or live environment.

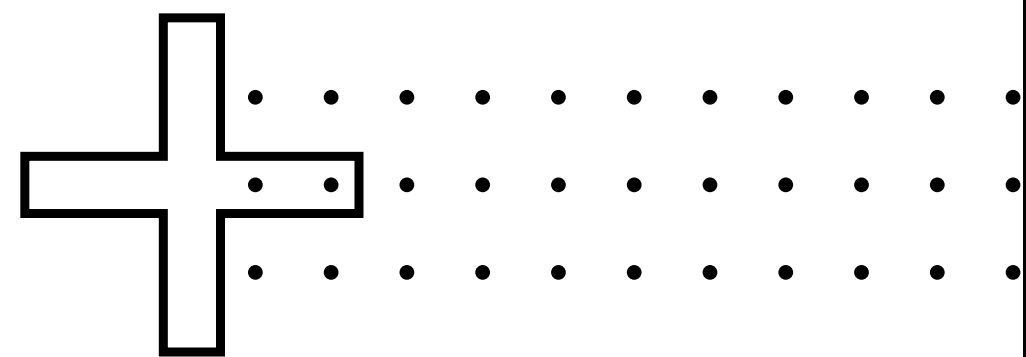


Plugins can be very hit and miss, we prefer to avoid them as much as we can, but appreciate that there are instances where they are needed.

Even if you follow the above tips, you might still encounter issues.

If the **feature is critical** and can be developed, **then it should.**





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