

WordCamp Asia 2023

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

Hidekazu Ishikawa

@kurudrive / @kurudrive\_en



# Who am I ? - Self introduction -

---

## Hidekazu Ishikawa

 kurudrive / kurudrive\_en

 From Japan

 Theme developer / CEO



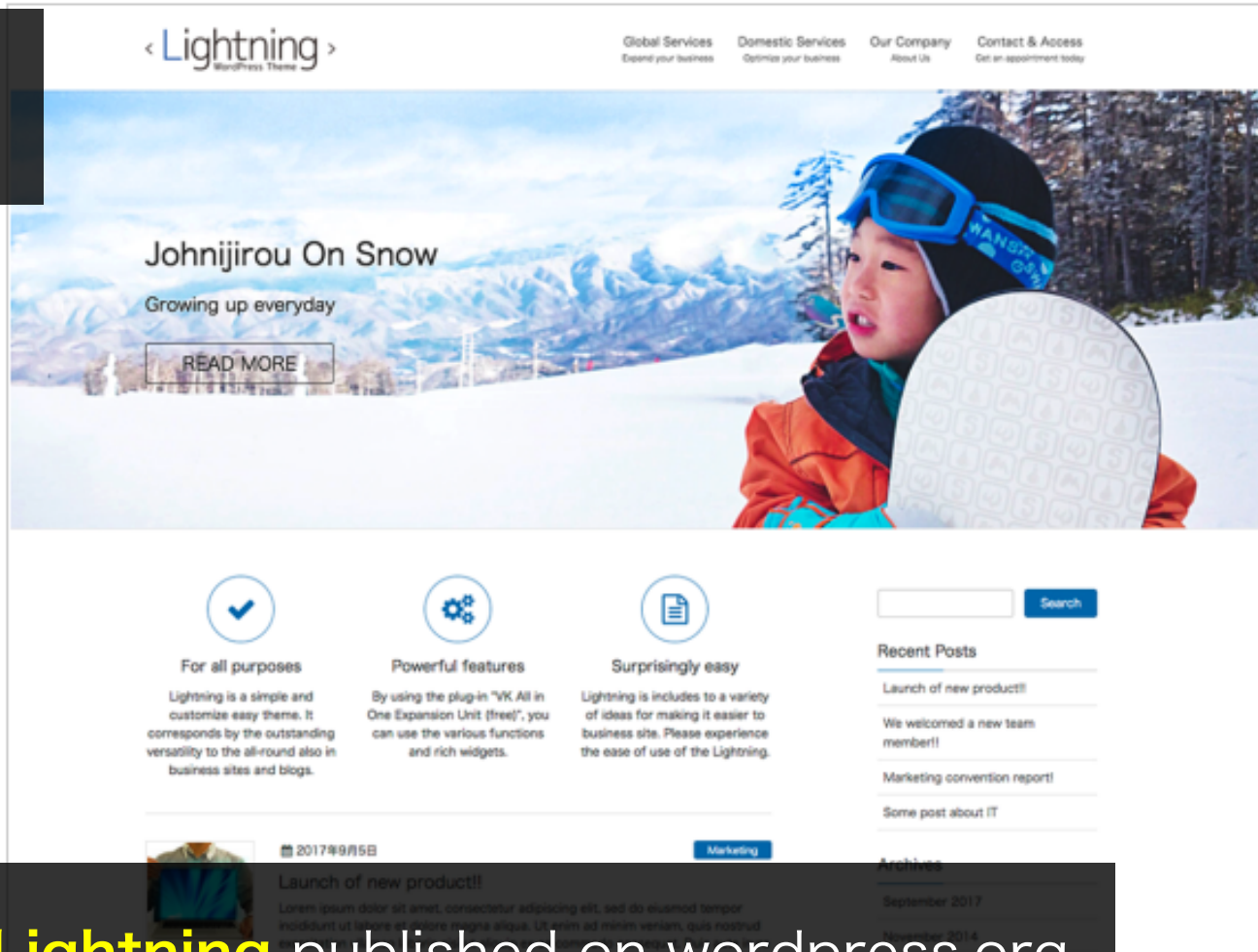
---

**2012** First business WordPress theme release

# Lightning By Hidekazu Ishikawa



2015



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.

Preview

Download

Version: 15.2.4

Last updated: December 26, 2022

Active Installations: 80,000+

WordPress Version: 5.5 or higher

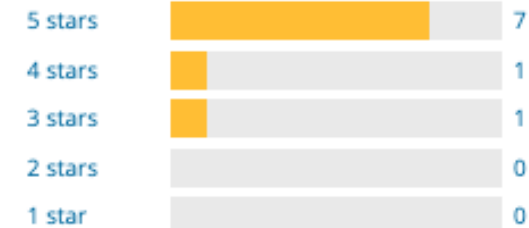
PHP Version: 5.6.0 or higher

[Theme Homepage](#) →

## Ratings

[See all >](#)

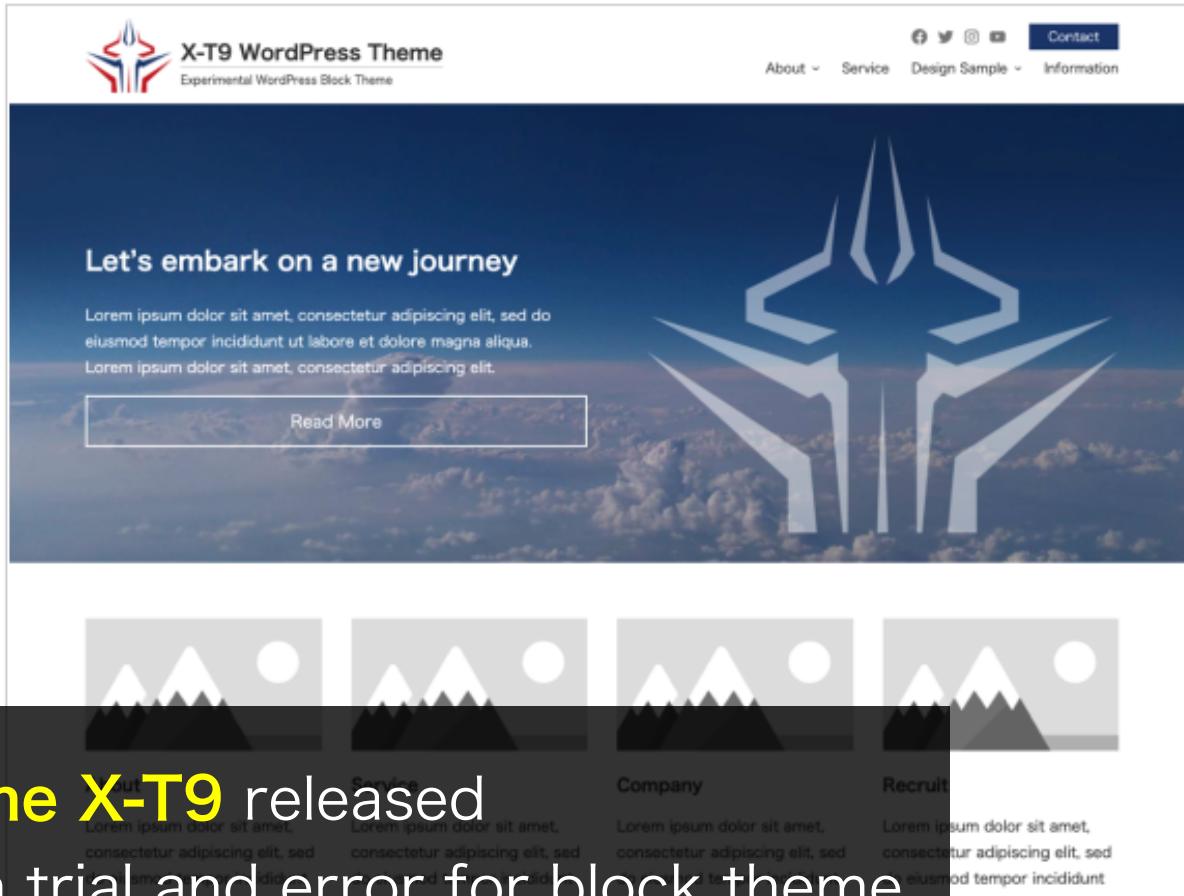
★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5 stars.



Add my review

2022

# X-T9 By Hidekazu Ishikawa



Preview

Download

Version: 1.3.4

Last updated: December 23, 2022

Active Installations: 200+

WordPress Version: 6.1 or higher

PHP Version: 7.2 or higher

[Theme Homepage](#) →

## Ratings

[See all >](#)

This theme has not been rated yet.

5 stars 0

4 stars 0

3 stars 0

2 stars 0

1 star 0

[Add my review](#)

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

In addition, development and sales of theme extension plugin and other plug-ins

# Business model of theme developers ( Before full site editing )

---

Create and Sale

- 👑 Premium Themes
- 🔌 Theme extension plugins
- 🔌 Block extension plugins ... etc.

💰 Relatively possible to sell and make money.



เวิร์ดแคมป์เอเชีย  
๒๐๒๓

# Points where monetization has become more difficult



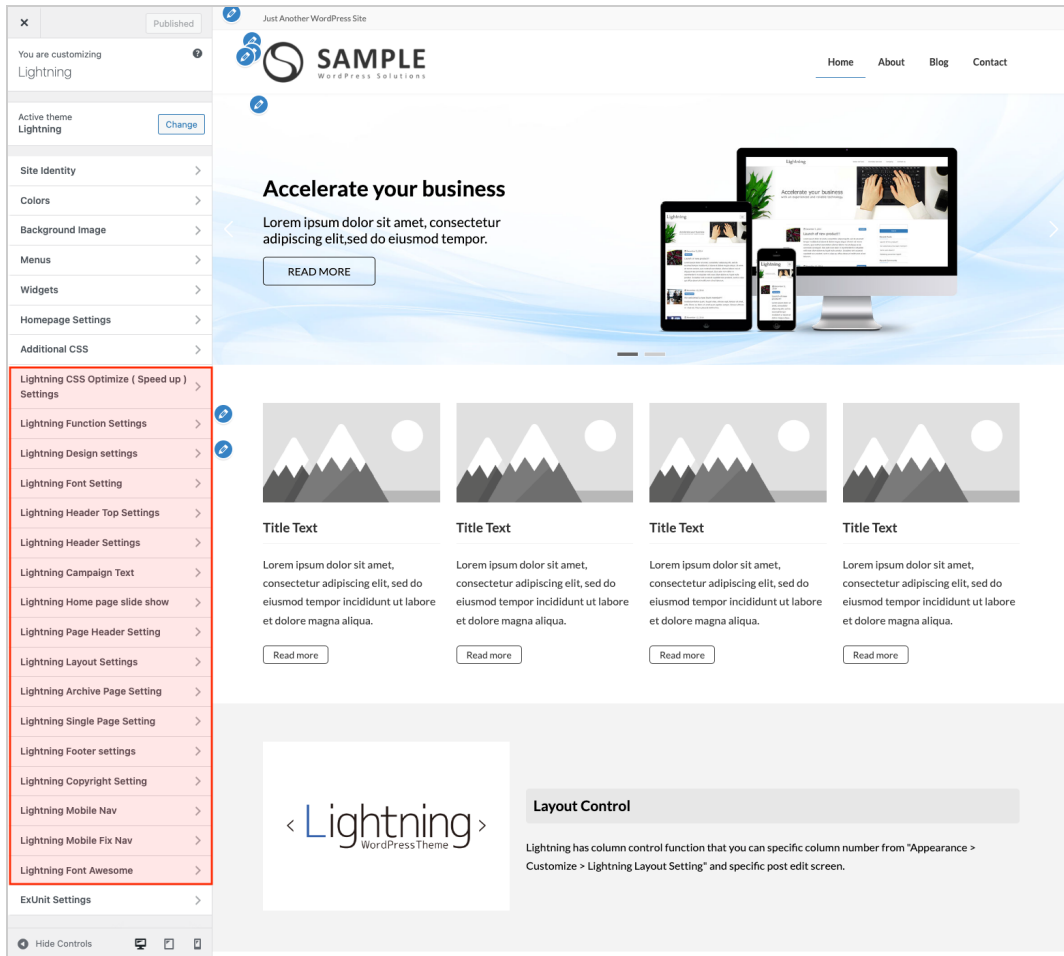
**# 01**

**Traditional monetization points  
become less effective**

( = W = )

# Before Full Site Editing

## Selling Premium theme



😊 User

↑ Easily edit    ↓ Reward 💰

😊 Theme developers



# 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.**

**I can do it !**



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

Monetization points  
disappeared...

( ' ;  $\omega$  ; ` )

# A matter of life and death



**# 02**

**Decreased monetization effect  
by original Block features.**


**( = W =**

# Early stage block editors

- ☹️ No margin setting
- ☹️ No border setting
- ☹️ Can't Advanced layout  
( need like Media Block ) ... etc

We have developed our original blocks


→ **Added value** ( monetization points ).

 **Group**  
A block that groups other blocks.

---


Color settings ^

Text Color



[Custom color](#)

Background Color



[Custom color](#)

---

Advanced ∨

# WordPress version upgrade...

- Advanced layouts are now possible with **Core blocks** and **Block Patterns**.
- The **similar function** is added to the **core blocks**

 Group  
Gather blocks in a container.

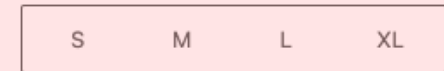


Color ⋮

- Text
- Background

Typography ⋮

SIZE DEFAULT ↕



Dimensions ⋮

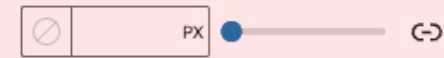
PADDING ↕ ↻



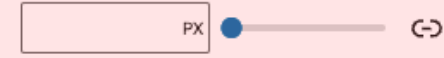
BLOCK SPACING ↕



Border ⋮



RADIUS



Advanced ∨

Monetization points  
disappeared...

( ' ;  $\omega$  ; ` )



## In addition ...

- Original blocks become an **ongoing maintenance burden**
- It became necessary to **keep a close watch on Gutenberg's developments.**
  - ⌘ to avoid unnecessary development.

# # 03

## CSS output by WordPress became quite complicated

( = W =

Many theme & custom block developers are facing this issue?

It is inevitable in the evolution of WordPress.

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

The area that theme developers have focused on for monetization is greatly influenced by FSE.

It has become difficult to monetize traditional "theme sales".



เวิร์ดแคมป์เอเชีย  
๒๐๒๓

# Future direction of theme-related business



**How add value and  
differentiate?**

( • W • ?

# Differentiation by block patterns

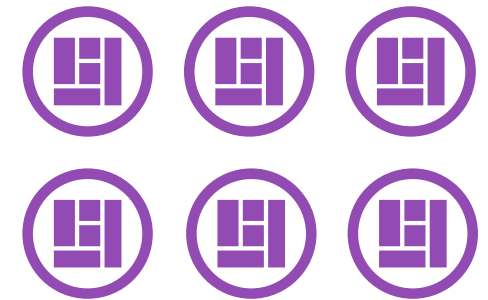
---

## 🔑 Easiest way

Includes various block patterns.

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

Block Patterns



Theme

# 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.

View

Save

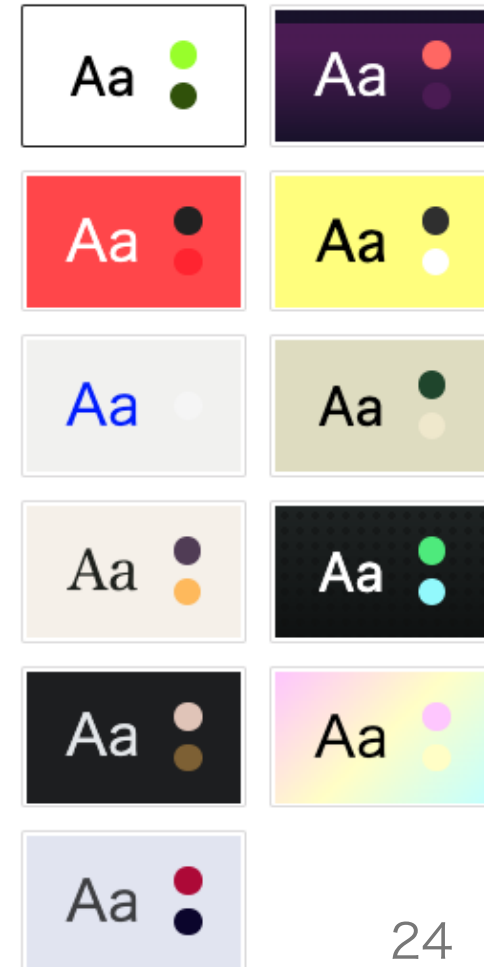


Styles



< Browse styles

Choose a different style combination for the theme styles





# Block Patterns / Global Style Variations

Even general users can make it, but...

High quality products created by professional

→ High added value of course





 **New extensibility** and **monetization points.**

# Our case

---

Before FSE




## Theme License Package

-  Theme ( Lightning / Classic / Free )
-  **Theme extension** plugins ( Lightning Pro Unit )
-  **Block extension** plugin ( VK Blocks Pro )
-  Support

- **Expected to taper off due to less reliance on the theme**
- **Even if sell only the pattern, it seems to be difficult**  
because even users have the impression that they can make them on their own
- We have to move to block themes too

# Current

## Passport License Package

-  **Theme** ( Classic Theme Lightning / Free )
-  **Theme extension** plugins ( Lightning Pro Unit )
-  **Block extension** plugin ( VK Blocks Pro )
-  Support
-  **Theme** ( Block Theme X-T9 / Free )
-  **Premium Patterns** ← **New!!**

This configuration is

- **User can use both**  
( **Classic theme** and **Block theme** )
- **Keep existing users by the value of the Premium Patterns**  
even if the value of the classic theme declines
- **Acquire new users**  
through the value of our Premium Patterns

 Block Patterns is extremely important

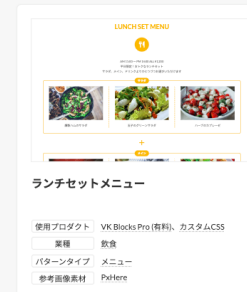
# Publish our own Block Pattern Directory

<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?**



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



## 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 adults



# 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枚の無料チケット

## ファミリー

特別展示をサポート。

- 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枚の無料チケット

### **3. Theme style affects**

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

# How to increase product value?

we need to make an effort to  
get users to continue to license  
even if the dependency of the theme decreases.  
( Acquisition of new users )



# 1. Premium patterns

- Available to only paying users
- The design and sample sentences are **more elaborate are ready to use.**



# Redy to use?

We provide stylish and common patterns but...

Many **non-profesional users**...

☹ **Can't think about page structure** in the first step

☹ **Can't think of the sentences to write**



職人が手がける  
ワンランク上の家

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観ランドオープン!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11日



ローンや土地などの家づくりの相談会  
2022年9月12日



不動産売却・土地探し相談会  
2022年9月10日

一覧ページへ

# Premium patterns

私たちサンプル工務店は時代にあわせたデザインを提案し、10年、20年、30年後も顧からず、子から孫へ、世代をなく住まいづくりを目指しています。世代を繋ぐ家は力強い家族の絆が生まれると考えております。

デザインはもちろん、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。

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

## サンプル工務店のこだわり

自社の職人による施工なので  
納得の価格

### 01 価格

REASONABLE PRICE

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。



創業〇〇年、  
磨き抜かれた確かな技術

### 02 技術

CRAFTSMANSHIP

創業〇〇年、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けてきました。豊富な経験と知識はどこにも負けません。

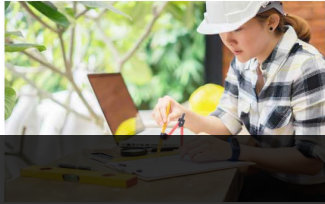


長年培われた  
安心安全なデザイン設計

### 03 設計

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

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

## 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たら、弊社にお任せください!

### ◆ リフォーム

お客さまのご要望のもとに材質・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たら、弊社にお任せください!

もっと見る



会社案内  
代表挨拶・概要・アクセス



家づくりの流れ  
相談から引き渡しまで



スタッフ紹介  
本店と支店



役立ちブログ  
家づくりお役立ちブログ

## 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

〇〇市・〇〇区

### 岐阜県

〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市

### 三重県

〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市・〇〇市

## 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。  
相談やお見積りは無料です。

☎ 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



## 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

---

- 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)

## Localized versions

No competition with English-speaking developers.

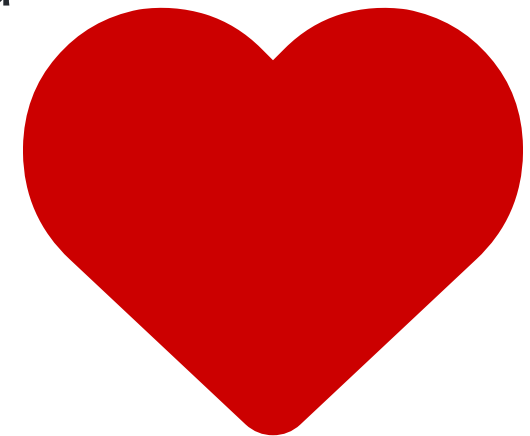
## 2. Favorite pattern registration function

Patterns are added one after another

→ **Hard to find**

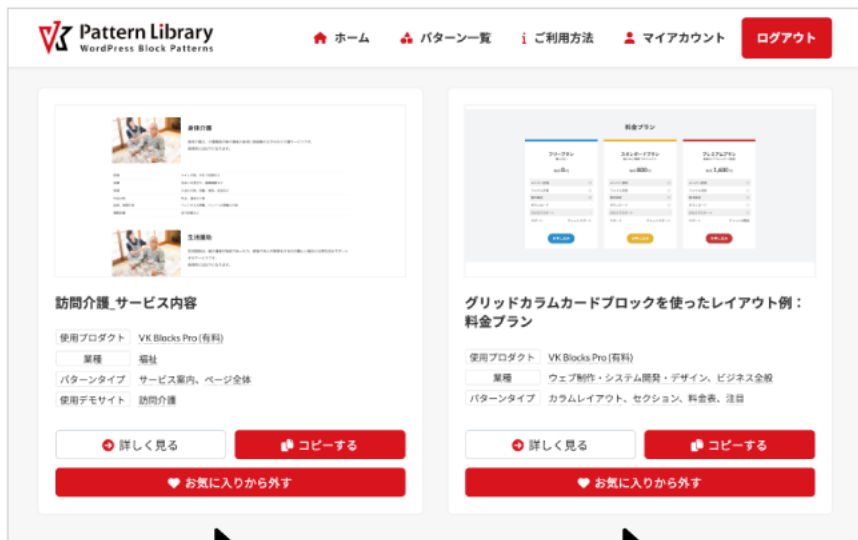
Users to register own favorite patterns and **easily recall them.**

※ Same functionality as [wordpress.org](https://wordpress.org)



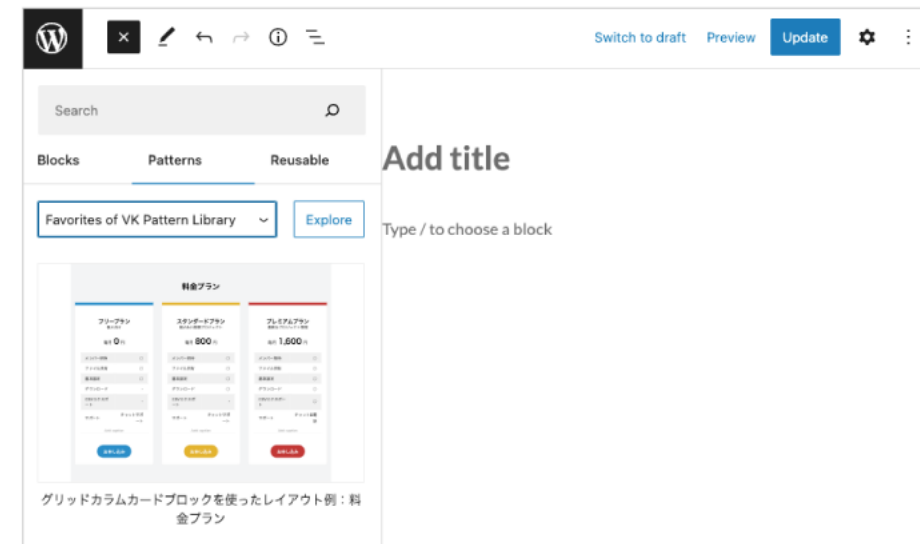
# 3. Link function for favorite registered patterns

## Pattern library



Add to Favorites

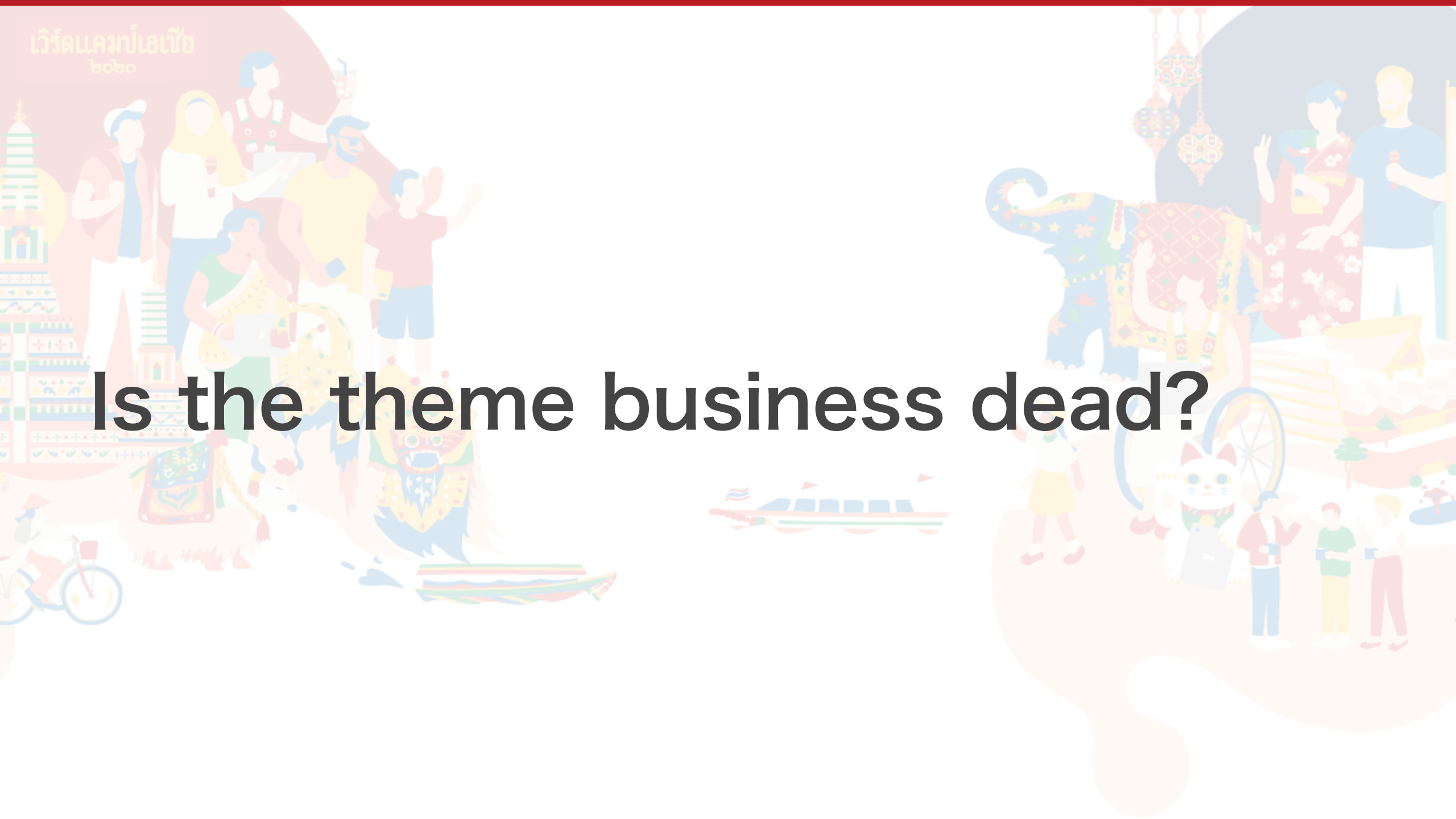
## User's WordPress



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

เวิร์ดแคมป์เอเชีย  
๒๐๒๓

**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  
→ **Problem with the uniformity of the design.**

**The importance of the theme is high.**

# Users need good themes and highly practical patterns

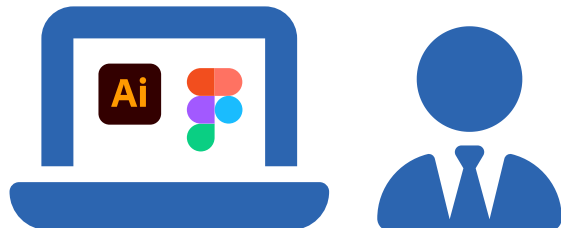
---

FSE is highly configurable and customizable but...

→ **Too much configuration work**

It's **quite cumbersome** to make from scratch

**Know how to use**



**Can create designs**



**Same for WordPress**

# Responsive design compatibility

---

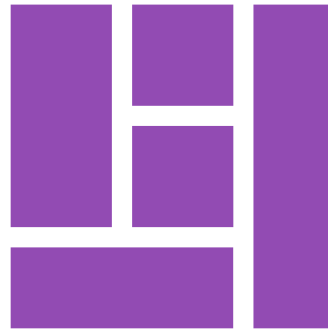
How to control display elements according to screen size?

- With a single screen width,  
it might be possible to lay out well somehow.
- **Layout on multiple widths are actually not that easy**



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

A set with a **Value-added patterns** are  
there will be **many business opportunities**.



**Value-added  
Patterns**

# At the end

---

What do you think about future theme business?

Please share your opinion

🐦 Twitter #WCAAsia @kurudrive

💬 Talk to me! ( with simple words and short sentence )

**Thank you**