



Jerry Bates 5 minutes ago



User Interview 7

Jerry Bates: First off, before we get into the media library, how long have you been a WordPress user?

User 7: I've been doing in-depth (dare I say "hardcore?") WordPress programming as my career focus since 2010. I have had a WordPress blog since I think 2003 but I know it was version 2.3.

Jerry Bates: Very cool, so I'm curious other than developing sites for others, do you also have personal sites of your own that you use frequently?

User 7: Somewhat, but I wouldn't say "Frequently."

Jerry Bates: Gotcha. So turning to media... How often do you find yourself on the Media Library page in your dashboard? Frequently, occasionally, almost never, or not at all?

Note: I have reason to believe these comments are about the in-post media modal, and not the Media Library page in wp-admin, as was addressed later in our conversation.

User 7: Frequently, at least lately. For the past 9 months I've been building an Intranet for [name removed] and it's a glorified document, image and video show-and-tell platform. So I've been in there a lot for testing.

User 7: I've felt like "Wow, the users will never figure this out because I'm struggling with it."

Jerry Bates: That sounds a bit out of the ordinary (but very cool) but what is your usual average for how often you find yourself there?

User 7: Depends on what I'm working on. Sometimes I can be there 50 times in a week. Other times, none.

Jerry Bates: Makes sense, so it's really about the task you need to perform, yes?

Jerry Bates: When you do visit the Media Library, what are you trying to accomplish typically?

User 7: Yes. I'm trying to upload a document and associate it with a post.

User 7: I can also be trying to associate documents with a post.

User 7: But mostly it's about uploading documents and associating with a post. And my "documents" I mean any file types, images, pdfs, word, excel, videos (yes, videos), etc.

Jerry Bates: But is it an even mix, or heavier in one or the other?

User 7: Mostly it's about uploading documents for use with the current post.

User 7: So the default opening in the media library is VERY disorienting.

Jerry Bates: When you add media, you do that using the Add Media page typically?

User 7: So in the media library also slows down the interaction.

User 7: By "page" do you mean the popup?

Note: At this point, we return to talking about the Media Library

Jerry Bates: No, not the "Add Media" button in the post editor, but specifically the Media>Add New page in wp admin

Jerry Bates: How often do you use that?

User 7: I rarely ever go to Media>Add New page unless there is no other way to accomplish something (after having tried other ways and gotten stuck.)

Jerry Bates: I see, so mostly you work with media directly in the post editor modal window?

User 7: Yes. Going to Media>Add New page changes context. I don't want to change context.

Jerry Bates: So then with this in mind, you also try not to go to Media > Library too much either?

User 7: Other people may use the media library frequently but in my use-cases — at least given WordPress' current attachment architecture — I rarely find it useful.

Jerry Bates: I see. When you do find it useful, what for?

User 7: The Media > Library is an overwhelming glob of too much stuff.

User 7: Me personally? Deleting all attachments so I can start over with a clean slate.

Jerry Bates: Makes sense. Anything else, or really you try to stay in the post editor modal?

User 7: The thing is I don't want to change contexts. I'm working on a post, why would I want to leave it? (that's a rhetorical question.)

Jerry Bates: Gotcha. So are there any tasks you wish the Media Library would allow you to do currently?

User 7: As in "that Media>Library would allow me to do currently?"

Jerry Bates: Yes, specifically that page in the admin

User 7: Yes. For one, I'd like to be able to take items that are the same photo uploaded multiple times and merge them into one. And I'd like a mode where you can show me groups of candidates that are likely the same to streamline the process. This would of course mean fixing up all the links and adding into the database 301 redirects for the URLs for the deleted image files so you don't lose google juice.

User 7: The 2nd thing would be to add a lot more filters such as by file type, sort by size, by author, groups by attached post, group by date, and so on.

User 7: The 3rd thing requires an architecture enhancement that is badly needed IMO. We need image types so that people building themes could specify the image types they have the and sizes of each type and then images uploaded could be tagged with their image type and only those sizes would get generated. How this related to the Media Library is that I would then want to be able to filter by image types.

Jerry Bates: Type? What is an example?

User 7: That's all that I can think of now. For the media library.

User 7: Type: Headshot. Top of Page Hero. Search Avatar. etc. etc. One only need talk to a designer creating a theme for a large corporate site to find out they have a list of image types and then for each image type a set of different valid sizes. For example, we might

only need 300×400 (and smaller) for headshots but we need 1278×300 (and non smaller) for Heros. Why generate every size for every image? Not having image types makes managing images both as a developer and as a user much more difficult than it needs to be.

Jerry Bates: I see. So something much more specific than just tags

Jerry Bates: For example

User 7: Tags don't really work because they are controlled by the user. Instead I'm talking about images types and sizes that are set in stone by the theme designer. They don't need to change so they should be added in code, i.e. `add_image_type('headshot', array('large' => '300×400', 'tiny' => '100×125'));`

Jerry Bates: Right. I also noticed that you mention images a lot. Do you deal in images mostly, even though you say you have all types of media represented in your library?

User 7: Then images could use an image type taxonomy to associate with "headshot", and then those images should only be generated in the associated sizes.

User 7: So before the [name removed] we built a product that an agency has sold to over 10 large firms, based on WordPress. For each client they would define a set of image types and sizes for each type. We used a lot of images there. But in all my uses of WordPress I've used a lot of images, more than any other file type.

Jerry Bates: Gotcha. In terms of scale, how many files (total) are we talking about?

Jerry Bates: Say on an "average" site

User 7: In terms of scale, given how WordPress likes to replicate every image those law firms would probably end up with 25,000 files when they probably only had about 5000 media items.

User 7: For [name removed], I'm expecting over 50,000 media items or more?

User 7: For [name removed] there's a lot of non-image documents, but they don't represent the challenges that images represent.

Jerry Bates: Cool, that helps to know