
African Excellence Award

2023 Questions & Answers

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Brief overview of LightSpeed and our services

LightSpeed WordPress Development, founded in 2003 by Ashley Shaw, specialises in creating WordPress website solutions. Endorsed by and associated with the WordPress community, the company is among the few WooExperts and Mailchimp Experts worldwide. With a focus on the future, LightSpeed strives to continuously improve its solutions and services.

Our solutions include WordPress websites, WooCommerce stores, Tour Operator websites, and eLearning websites. The company offers a variety of web design and development services, such as discovery phase, web design, web development, WordPress migrations, support & maintenance, WordPress hosting, WordPress security, and Mailchimp email marketing. LightSpeed is dedicated to delivering online success for businesses by understanding their needs, providing expert guidance, and creating fast, secure, and reliable websites.

What is LightSpeed's flagship product or service?

LightSpeed's flagship products are open-source and available for free download via WordPress.org theme and plugin repositories. They include:

- **LSX Theme:** A custom-developed, versatile, and flexible theme for building custom solutions for customers.
- **LSX Extensions:** A collection of extensions, including LSX Blocks, LSX Customizer, LSX Blog Customizer, LSX Mega Menus, LSX Team, LSX Testimonials, LSX Search, and LSX Sharing, which enhance the functionality and customization of websites built on the LSX Theme.
- **Tour Operator:** A WordPress plugin specifically designed for the LSX theme, allowing tour operators to build comprehensive websites showcasing tour itineraries, accommodations, and destinations.
- **Tour Operator Extensions:** Additional plugins, such as Tour Operator Special Offers, Tour Operator Reviews, and Tour Operator Team, which enhance the functionality of the Tour Operator plugin.
- **WETU Importer for LSX Tour Operator:** A WordPress plugin that enables the import and synchronisation of tour itineraries, destinations, and accommodations from the wetu.com dashboard, requiring the LSX Tour Operator and LSX Theme for storage and display of imported content.

What makes LightSpeed stand out above its competitors within the African region?

LightSpeed WordPress Development stands out above its competitors within the African region for several reasons:

- **Community involvement:** LightSpeed has been an active participant in the WordPress community since 2008, organising local WordCamp Cape Town events in 2011 and 2012. This involvement demonstrates our commitment to the growth and development of the WordPress ecosystem within Cape Town and South Africa at large.
- **Global insights:** By attending international WordCamps and other events, LightSpeed brings back valuable insights and learnings to the African region. This allows us to stay ahead of the curve and implement cutting-edge technologies and methodologies in our work.
- **Local focus:** While LightSpeed had team members in other countries before the COVID-19 pandemic, our current focus on having a team based solely in

South Africa allows us to provide a more dedicated service to our clients in the African region.

- **Reliable service:** LightSpeed is committed to providing high-quality, dependable services to our clients. We pride ourselves on our ability to deliver projects on time and within budget, ensuring that our clients receive the best possible solutions for their needs.

These factors have helped LightSpeed stand out as a leading WordPress development agency in the African region, offering exceptional service and expertise to our clients.

Have you experienced any business milestones or achievements over the past 12 months?

Over the past 12 months, our WordPress agency has achieved significant milestones and accomplishments:

- **WordCamp Europe Conference in June 2022:**
 - Ash Shaw journeyed to Porto and discovered incredible new WordPress block theme technologies that had not been present at the previous event in 2019. Eager to implement block themes, LightSpeed began working with them immediately, despite facing a steep learning curve and limited resources on the subject.
- **Isdev.biz Redesign Project - Nov 2022 to Feb 2023:**
 - Between November 2022 and February 2023, we revamped the Isdev.biz website, embracing a block theme that required minimal custom coding. Our design team mastered the WordPress Full Site Editor, gaining a thorough understanding of the crucial building blocks needed to create any website. This expertise has enabled us to develop more efficient designs that not only streamline implementation but also enhance overall performance.
- **Upskilling Developers - Nov 2022 to Apr 2023:**
 - To enhance our developers' skills, we engaged a consultant from one of the world's leading WordPress agencies to provide training on cutting-edge technology. This collaboration enabled our team to tackle intricate challenges and substantially broaden their knowledge, aligning them with the design and coding methodologies practised by top-tier agencies worldwide.
- **Upskilling Designers - Nov 2022 to Apr 2023:**

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- Embracing Figma as our primary design tool has had a remarkable impact on our workflow. We can now collaborate on designs simultaneously, accelerating our design process. This groundbreaking collaboration tool, employed by major tech companies like Uber, Airbnb, and Microsoft, is widely used to develop their design systems.
 - **LSX Block Theme Development Project - Feb to Apr 2023:**
 - In just two months, we successfully developed our new LSX theme, a significant improvement over the previous version that took years to perfect for effortless website building. The contrast between the old and new versions is like comparing chalk and cheese. Our developers overcame numerous obstacles, thanks to the invaluable support of the international consultant we hired. The consultant conducted a thorough code review of our new LSX theme and offered crucial advice, instilling us with a renewed sense of confidence in our latest product.
 - **NOTE:** See explanation of block theme in the FAQ section at the end of this section.
 - **LSX Design System Project - Feb to Apr 2023:**
 - Redeveloping LightSpeed's website gave us a clear understanding of what needed to go into the design system. We researched public design systems from major tech companies and created our own version, which allows us to rapidly design new projects and save time. It took us 2 months of dedicated work between Feb to April 2023 to complete the first version of the design system. While the developers code the new LSX block theme, the designers designed our new LSX design system. The designers and developers needed to collaborate on designs to ensure the design system's success.
 - **NOTE:** See explanation of design system in the FAQ section at the end of this section.

Outcomes

- **World-class skills & products:** These achievements have elevated our team to a level on par with the best international agencies in the WordPress space, and we are proud of our progress and growth.
- **Enhanced team synergy:** Our creative and technical team members now have a deeper understanding of each other's roles, resulting in quicker project completion and more user-friendly websites for our customers.
- **Empowering clients:** This new technology can be daunting. We have started training our clients on how to take control of their websites, providing them with simple and effective website solutions that they have full control over.

FAQ

- **What is a block theme?** A block theme is a type of WordPress theme that fully supports and integrates with the WordPress block editor, also known as Gutenberg. Block themes enable website creators to design and customise their website's appearance using WordPress' visual, drag-and-drop block editor via the backend. This approach allows for easier and more flexible website building, even for users without extensive coding knowledge.
- **What is a design system?** A design system is a comprehensive collection of reusable components, guidelines, patterns, and principles that provide a consistent framework for designing and developing digital products, such as websites, applications, and user interfaces. A design system helps maintain visual and functional consistency across different platforms and devices. A well-implemented design system streamlines the design and development process, improves collaboration between teams, reduces design inconsistencies, and creates a more cohesive user experience.

Do you have any client/customer testimonials that you would like to link us to?

- <https://www.lsdev.biz/testimonials/>