

Alt text is provided on slides that have images or visuals. If a description is inaccurate or could be improved, please let me know [via email](#) or on [Twitter](#).

# *Prologue*

*WordCamp US*  
*Milwaukee*  
*2019*

*We're going to  
revolutionize  
the way people  
make content.*



# Support



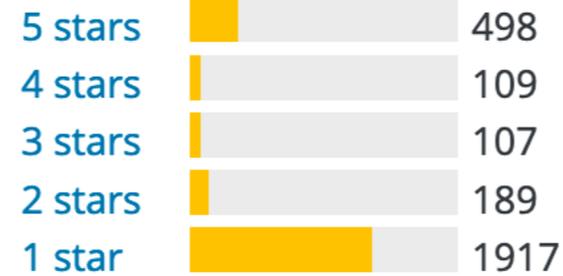
[Support](#) » [Plugin: Gutenberg](#) » [Reviews](#)

## Average Rating

 2 out of 5 stars

You must be [logged in](#) to submit a review.

2,820 reviews



[Gutenberg](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Support Threads](#)

Search this forum





# Support



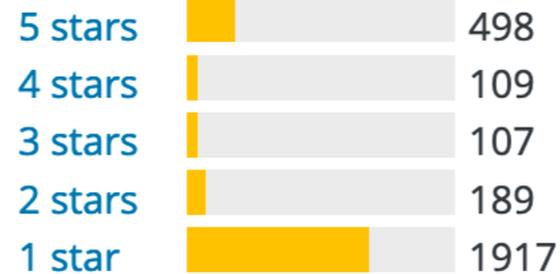
[Support](#) » [Plugin: Gutenberg](#) » [Reviews](#)

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2,820 reviews



[Gutenberg](#)

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Search this forum



Alt text: Screenshot of WordPress' Gutenberg plugin page, showing a two of five star rating for the plugin.

*Meet your new  
best friends.  
Blocks.*

[Support](#) » [Plugin: Gutenberg](#) » A soul destroying experience

## A soul destroying experience



[paulychilds](#) (@paulychilds)

1 week, 2 days ago

I've never in my life worked with a wysiwyg editor so horrible to use. Here are just a few of the "highlights"

[Support](#) » [Plugin: Gutenberg](#) » A soul destroying experience

## A soul destroying experience



[paulychilds](#) (@paulychilds)

1 week, 2 days ago

I've never in my life worked with a wysiwyg editor so horrible to use. Here are just a few of the "highlights"

Alt-text: An image of a review from user Pauly Childs, calling Gutenberg a “soul destroying experience.” He says “I’ve never in my life worked with a what-you-see-is-what-you-get editor so horrible to use. Here are just a few of the “highlights.”

*It's a whole  
new way to use  
WordPress.*



**Leisa Reichelt**

@leisa



Wordpress rolled out a fundamental change to the mental model of how to create content. Almost no change management. One tiny popup.

My 71yr old 'web master' dad went from feeling like a tech champion to feeling like an idiot overnight.

We web ppl still have a lot to learn...

1:01 PM · Dec 20, 2018 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

---

**97** Retweets   **304** Likes



**Leisa Reichelt**

@leisa



Wordpress rolled out a fundamental change to the mental model of how to create content. Almost no change management. One tiny popup.

My 71yr old 'web master' dad went from feeling like a tech champion to feeling like an idiot overnight.

We web ppl still have a lot to learn...

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**97** Retweets   **304** Likes

Alt text: Screenshot from Twitter user @leisa “Wordpress rolled out a fundamental change to the mental model of how to create content. Almost no change management. One tiny popup. My 71 year old ‘web master’ dad went from feeling like a tech champ to feeling like an idiot overnight. We web people still have a lot to learn”

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*Built with  
modern  
technology?*

# WP TAVERN

EST  2009

[Home](#) > [News](#) > WPCampus' Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds "Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems"

## WPCampus' Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds "Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems"

 [Sarah Gooding](#)  May 2, 2019  11

★ CURRENTLY ON TAP



[All-in-One WP Migration 7.0 Patches XSS Vulnerability](#)



[How To Create A Dropdown Menu Of WordPress Gutenberg](#)

# WP TAVERN

EST  2009

[Home](#) > [News](#) > WPCampus' Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds "Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems"

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★ CURRENTLY ON TAP



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[How To Create A Dropdown Menu Of WordPress](#)

Alt text: Screenshot from WP Tavern with the title “WPCampus’ Gutenberg Accessibility Audit Finds ‘Significant and Pervasive Accessibility Problems’”

**Rian Rietveld**

Web accessibility specialist

[Portfolio](#) [Meet](#) [Contact](#)

**I have resigned as the WordPress  
accessibility team lead. Here is  
why.**



**Rian Rietveld**

Web accessibility specialist

[Portfolio](#) [Meet](#) [Contact](#)

**I have resigned as the WordPress  
accessibility team lead. Here is  
why.**



Alt text: Screenshot from Rian Rietveld's blog "I have resigned as the WordPress accessibility team lead. Here is why"



**~c**  
@cwodtke



Nobody works this way, [@wordpress](#)! Not normal people... look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.

11:53 AM · Jul 12, 2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)

4 Likes





**~c**  
@cwodtke



Nobody works this way, [@wordpress](#)! Not normal people... look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.

11:53 AM · Jul 12, 2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)

4 Likes



Alt text: A screenshot of a tweet from @cwodtke saying “Nobody works this way, wordpress! Not normal people.. look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.”



**Nic Bertino**

@nicbertino



Ugh. We tried so hard to make it better, but we were stopped at every turn. Eventually I gave up. I didn't want to be associated with it. I'm sorry.



**~c** @cwodtke · Jul 12

Nobody works this way, @wordpress! Not normal people... look at every other writing platform: word, IA writer, Medium... this is some fucking unintuitive shit here! Why would you enforce a nonstandard approach on every single user? I can see it as a choice, but not as default.

[Show this thread](#)

9:24 PM · Jul 12, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Alt text: The speaker (@nicbertino) responding to @cwodtke on Twitter “Ugh. We tried so hard to make it better, but we were stopped at every turn. Eventually I gave up. I didn’t want to be associated with it. I’m sorry.”

My  
Tragic  
Design

Your

Tragic

Design

Your  
Tragic  
Design

Nic Bertino

*Part I: What  
happened?*

No one wants to  
make a bad  
product.

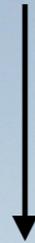
Blocks

happened.

Blocks are a  
**content layout**  
concept.



**The hill in which many people died for blocks**



Alt text: A desert hill in the background.

Blocks are not  
**content.**

# Traditional Content Editors

October 5, 2019 at 2:06 PM

## Literally every text editor ever created

This is a paragraph.

This is also a paragraph. I can select between two paragraphs.

Alt text: A screenshot of a heading and two paragraphs in Apple Notes, with a selection cursor encapsulating parts of both.

# Your New Best Friend

**Add title**

This is a paragraph.

This is also a paragraph. Can I select text between the two without selecting their blocks?

Alt text: A title and two paragraphs in Gutenberg's editor, with two blocks selected (you cannot select mid sentence content between two paragraphs, only their containing blocks).

People create  
content. Not  
blocks.

Simple elements,  
such as paragraphs,  
lists, and headings  
are blocks.

This breaks digital content publishing conventions and is generally considered a *poor decision*.

# Each block has a massive amount of UI

The screenshot displays the Gutenberg editor interface. At the top, there are navigation icons (add, undo, redo, info) and buttons for 'Switch to Draft', 'Preview', and 'Submit for Review'. A 'Document' sidebar is on the right, with the 'Block' tab selected, showing 'Paragraph' settings like 'Font Size' (Normal) and 'Drop Cap' (toggled on). The main editor area contains a text block with the following content:

Welcome to the wonderful world of blocks! Click the "+" ("Add block") button to add a new block. There are blocks available for all kinds of content: you can insert text, headings, images, lists, and lots more!

[See next tip](#)

## to the Gutenberg

Hello! This is frontenberg, a frontend instance of Gutenberg by Tom J Nowell with some restrictions so that anybody can test it out!

- You can edit this post, but you can't save
- No image uploading sadly
- Category blocks don't work yet

The rest is fair game! I've put the demo post content below. [Interested in](#)

Alt text: A screenshot of Gutenberg's UI with a number of controls around content and a styling drawer on the right side.

The amount of UI is  
then compounded by  
the amount of  
blocks.

## 2.6

## Proposal

**Block 1**

My Gutenberg Post

My Gutenberg Post

**Block 2**

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**Block 3**

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**Block 4**

- List Item
- List Item
- List Item

- List Item
- List Item
- List Item

**Block 5**

Another heading

Another heading

**Block 6**

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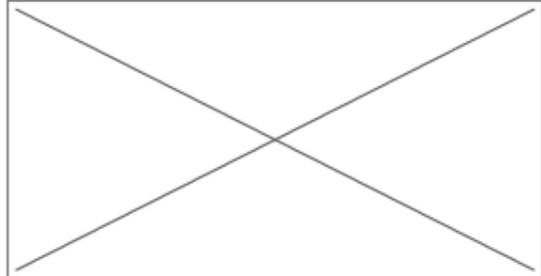
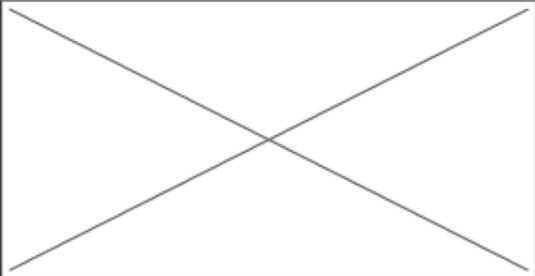
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**Block 7**

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**Block 8**



**Block 9**

Another heading

Another heading

**Block 10**

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**Block 11**

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**Block 1**

**Block 2**

**Block 3**

Alt text: Two blog posts are shown, one with 11 blocks under the Gutenberg model, and one with 3 blocks under a more traditional authoring model.

... all of which needs to  
be conveyed to  
assistive technologies.

# ***SPOILER ALERT***

It is near impossible to  
make this design  
accessible

The messy UI creates a lot of cognitive noise, but can mostly be ignored by sighted users.

The screenshot displays the Gutenberg editor interface. At the top, there are navigation buttons: a plus sign, a back arrow, a refresh arrow, and an information icon. On the right side, there are buttons for "Switch to Draft", "Preview", "Submit for Review", and a settings gear icon. A tip box on the left reads: "Welcome to the wonderful world of blocks! Click the '+' ('Add block') button to add a new block. There are blocks available for all kinds of content: you can insert text, headings, images, lists, and lots more!" with a "See next tip" link. The main content area shows a heading "Welcome to the Gutenberg" and a rich text editor with the text: "Hello! This is frontenberg, a frontend instance of Gutenberg by Tom J Nowell with some restrictions so that anybody can test it out!". Below the text is a list of bullet points: "• You can edit this post, but you can't save", "• No image uploading sadly", and "• Category blocks don't work yet". At the bottom, there is a paragraph: "The rest is fair game! I've put the demo post content below. [Interested in](#)". On the right side, there is a settings sidebar with tabs for "Document" and "Block". The "Block" tab is active, showing settings for a "Paragraph" block, including "Text Settings" (Font Size: Normal, Drop Cap: Toggle to show a large initial letter), "Color Settings", and "Advanced".

When sighted users  
can make beautiful  
content but anyone  
using a screenreader  
can't...

When you create  
better outcomes for  
people with certain  
abilities...

It's  
Tragic  
Design

Tragic design is the product of *solving the wrong problems* and *learning the wrong things.*

# How to Avoid Tragic Design

- Research
- Strategy
- Inclusive Design
- Launch Planning

*Part II:  
Research*

# Given two solutions to a user problem:

## **Solution A (MVP)**

- Creates a user outcome
- Is performant
- Not “pleasurable”
- Can be launched quickly

## **Solution B**

- Creates a user outcome
- Performs exceptionally
- Easy to use and pleasurable
- Takes significantly longer to launch

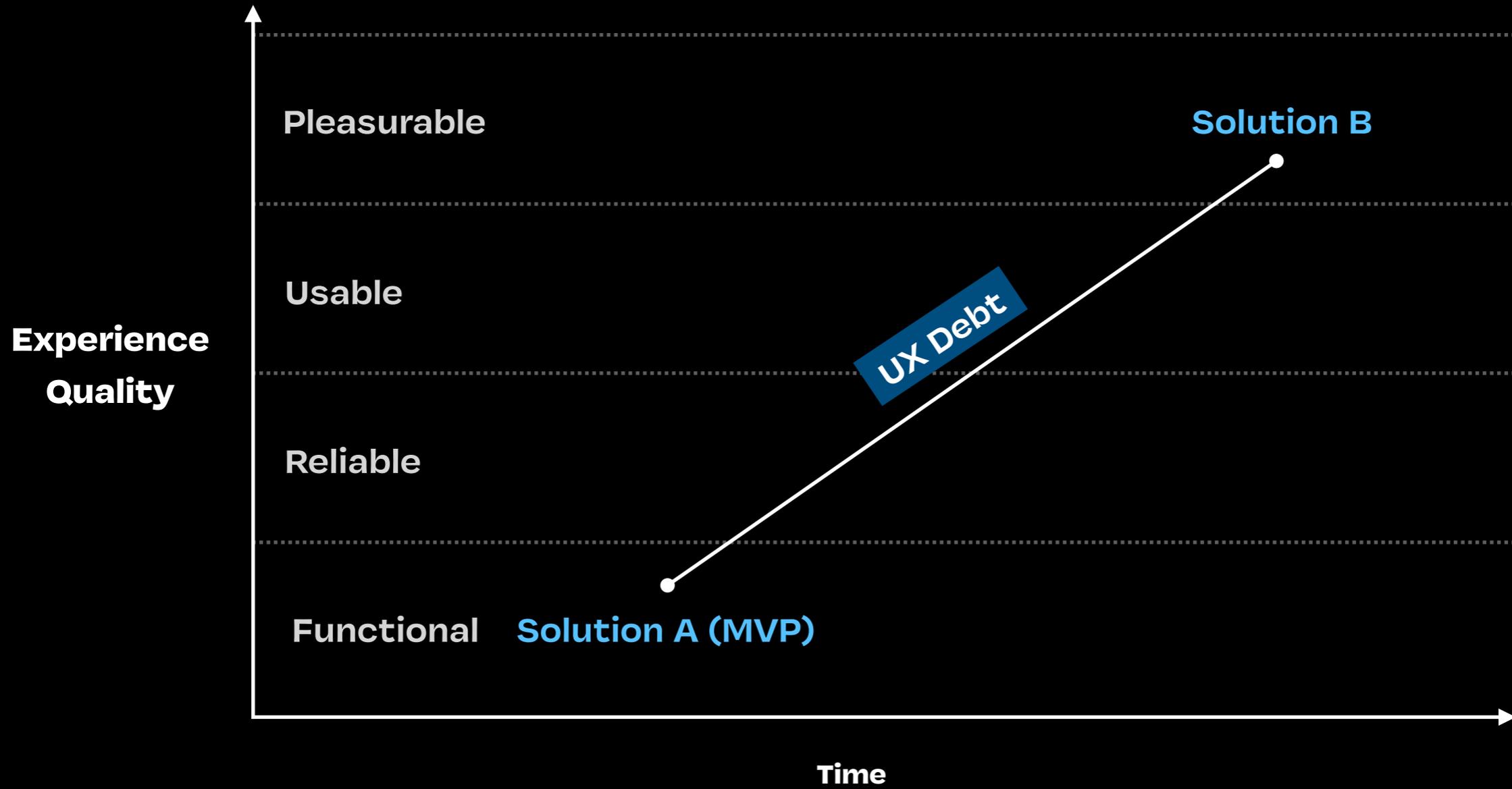
# Optimistic Experience Quality



Alt text: A graph shows two solutions plotted. The x-axis is Time, and the y-axis is Experience Quality. Solution A (MVP) is in the lane of “Functional” (bottom left of graph) while Solution B is in the top right of the graph in the “Pleasurable” lane.

The distance between  
**A** and **B** is UX debt.

# Optimistic Experience Quality

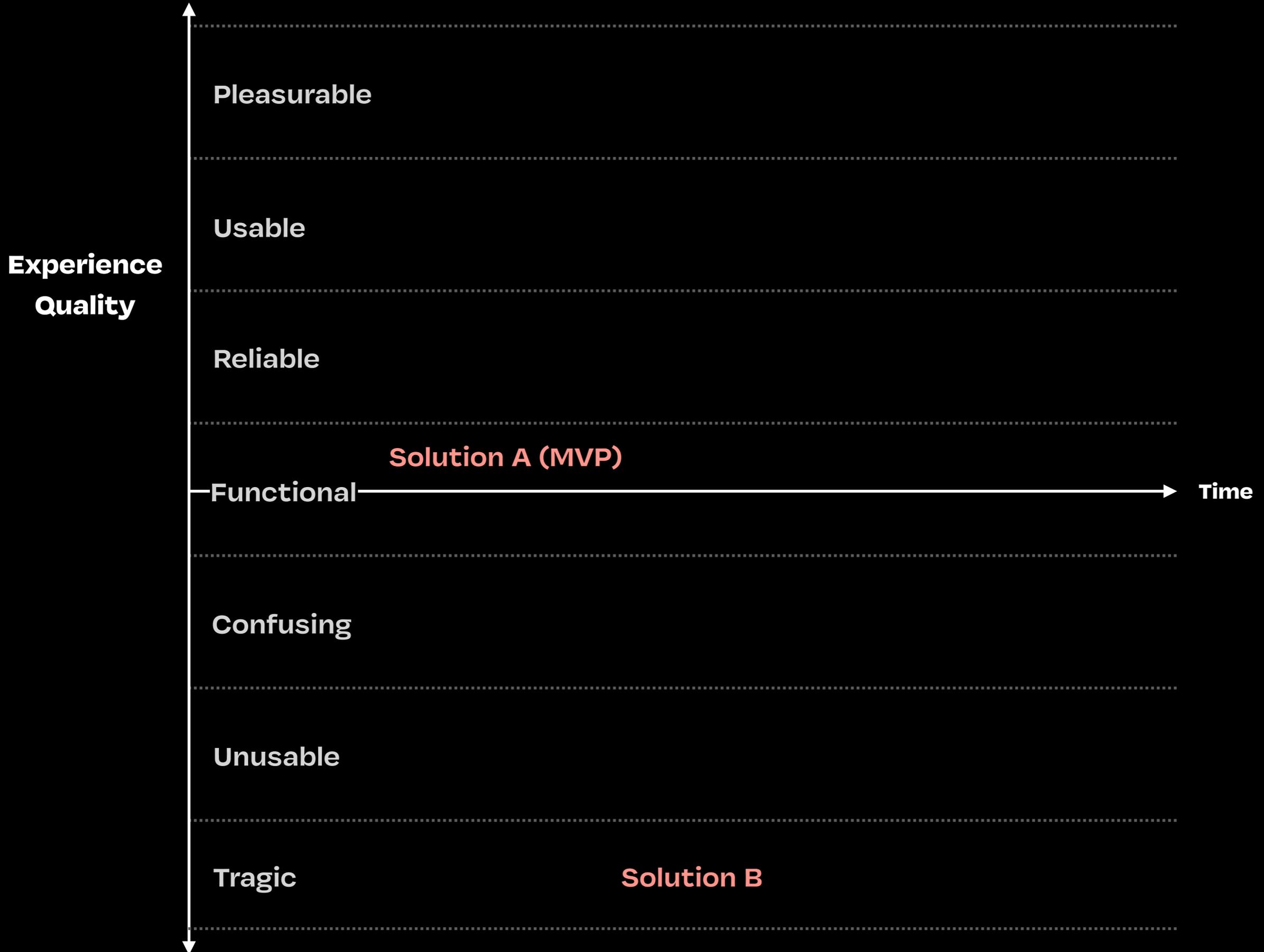


Alt text: A graph shows the same two solutions plotted with a line between Solution A (MVP) and Solution B, with the line being labeled “UX Debt.”

This assumes that  
*functional* is the floor.

Meet *UX Hell*, where  
your product is  
functional but it  
sucks.

# Realistic Experience Quality



Alt text: A graph titled “Realistic Experience Quality” shows Time on the X axis and Experience Quality on the Y axis. Lanes on the Y axis include Pleasurable, Usable, Reliable, Functional, Confusing, Unusable, Tragic. Solution A (MVP) is in the Functional lane (middle left) and Solution B is in the Tragic lane (middle bottom).

UX Rot is what happens when you don't address UX debt.

# Realistic Experience Quality

Experience  
Quality



Functional

Solution A (MVP)

Time

Confusing

UX Rot

Unusable

Tragic

Solution B

Experience  
Quality

# Realistic Experience Quality

Pleasurable

Usable

Reliable

Functional

Confusing

Unusable

Tragic

Time

Solution A (MVP)

UX Rot

Solution B

**UX  
HELL**



Alt text: A line is added to the Realistic Experience Quality graph between Solution A (MVP) and Solution B with a label of UX Rot.

The area on the graph under Functional is labeled “UX Hell.”

Or, you're actually solving the wrong problems and learning the wrong things.

If you stay idle, you  
can also fall into UX  
Rot as user behaviors  
evolve.

## **Before Solution A (MVP):**

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Behavioral data
- Contextual inquiries
- Mental model mapping
- Competitive analysis

## **Which should yield:**

- User outcomes
- Health and performance indicators
- Contextual information
- Where the landmines are

## **That you can share with:**

- Your project team
- Stakeholders and leadership
- Users

## **So you can accomplish:**

- Shared understanding
- Inclusion
- A path toward strategy

*Part III:  
Strategy*

Destroy all  
visionaries and  
idols.

Big problems and projects are not successful because of one person.

One visionary can  
completely derail a  
project.

Take your learnings  
from research and  
duke it the heck out  
with your project  
team.

*Good Strategy/Bad Strategy* (Rumelt) is an incredible resource for creating a product strategy.

Most importantly, it  
will allow your team to  
say **no.**

Defining strong  
boundaries keeps  
teams from  
sabotaging the project.

## **Before Solution A (MVP):**

- A strong problem statement
- Guiding policies
- Coherent actions

## **Which should yield:**

- A guiding strategy document

## **That you can share with:**

- Your project team
- Stakeholders and leadership
- Users

*Part IV:  
Inclusive  
Design*



**Léonie**  
@LeonieWatson



Replying to [@cswordpress](#) [@afercia](#) and [@HugoGiraudel](#)

This is certainly true. Gutenberg is so inaccessible to screen reader users that neither [@SinaBarham](#) nor I could use it, so goodness knows how awful it must be for people who spend less of their time debugging screen reader related things.

1:36 PM · Apr 3, 2018 · [Chicken Nugget](#)

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4 Retweets 5 Likes

Alt text: Tweet from @LeonieWatson “This is certainly true. Gutenberg is so inaccessible to screen reader users that neither @SinaBarham nor I could use it, so goodness knows how awful it must be for people who spend less of their time debugging screen reader related things.”

# ***SPOILER ALERT***

It is near impossible to  
make this design  
accessible

You cannot, under any  
circumstances, bolt  
on accessibility.

# ***SPOILER ALERT***

Making something  
WCAG 2.x/AA doesn't  
mean it's *accessible*.

“The editor will endeavour to create a new page and post building experience that makes writing rich posts effortless”

–Matt Mullenweg  
January 4, 2017

The editor will create a new page and post building experience that makes writing rich posts effortless **regardless of ability.**

Using a vendor? Ask them how they've made a product accessible. Then ask their reference clients.

Bring users with  
assistive devices onto  
your project team.

Partner with  
Disabilities Resources  
or your digital a11y  
team early on.

Build in budget for an  
accessibility  
consultant.

## **Before Solution A (MVP):**

- Include assistive technologies in strategy and design
- Test user outcomes in a number of different contexts
- Hire external accessibility consultants

*Part V: Launch  
Plan*

You have as much  
information as you  
need to deploy  
**Solution A.**

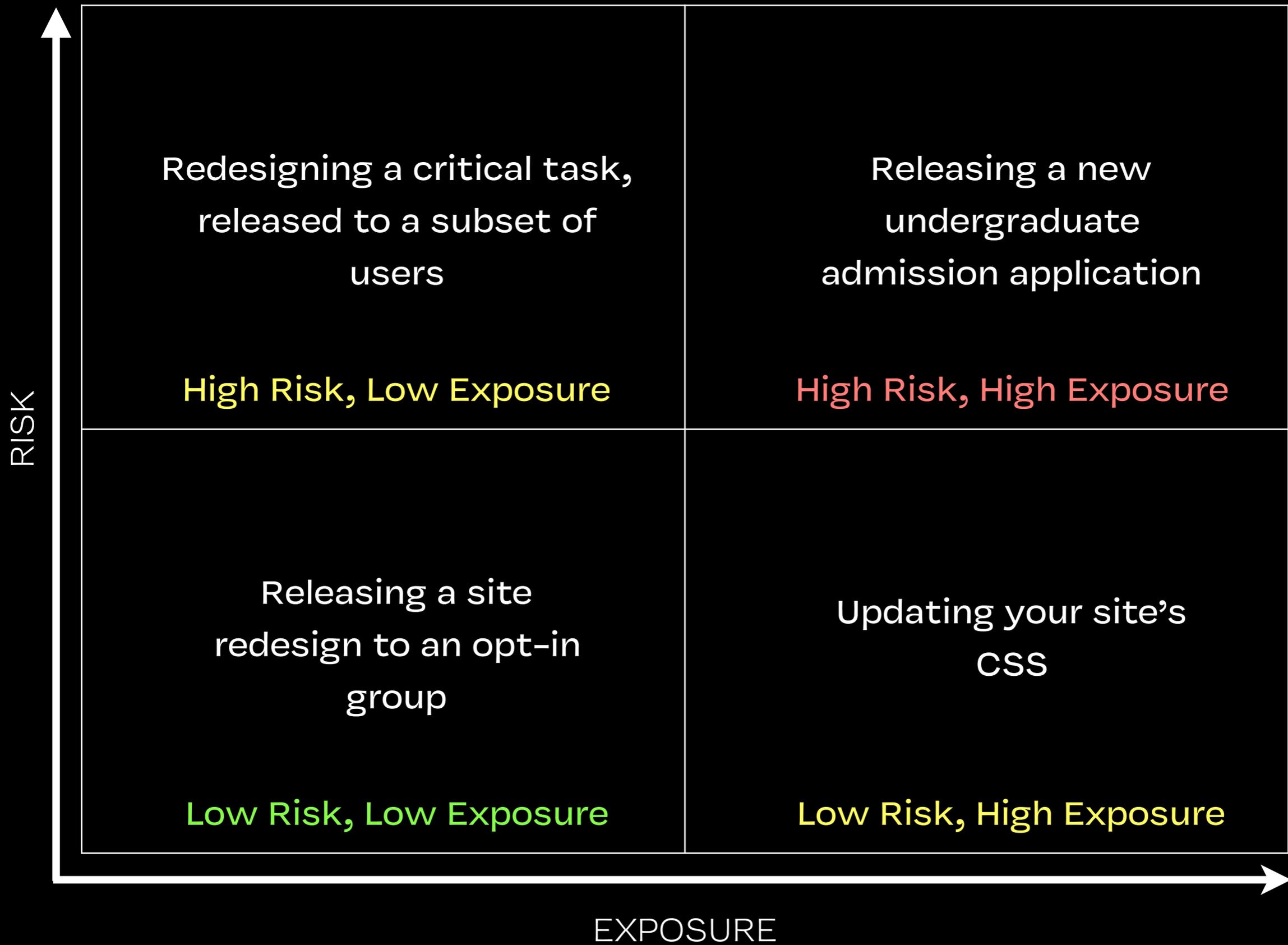
It's time to create a  
Launch Plan.

**LAUNCH**

**'N**

**LEARN**

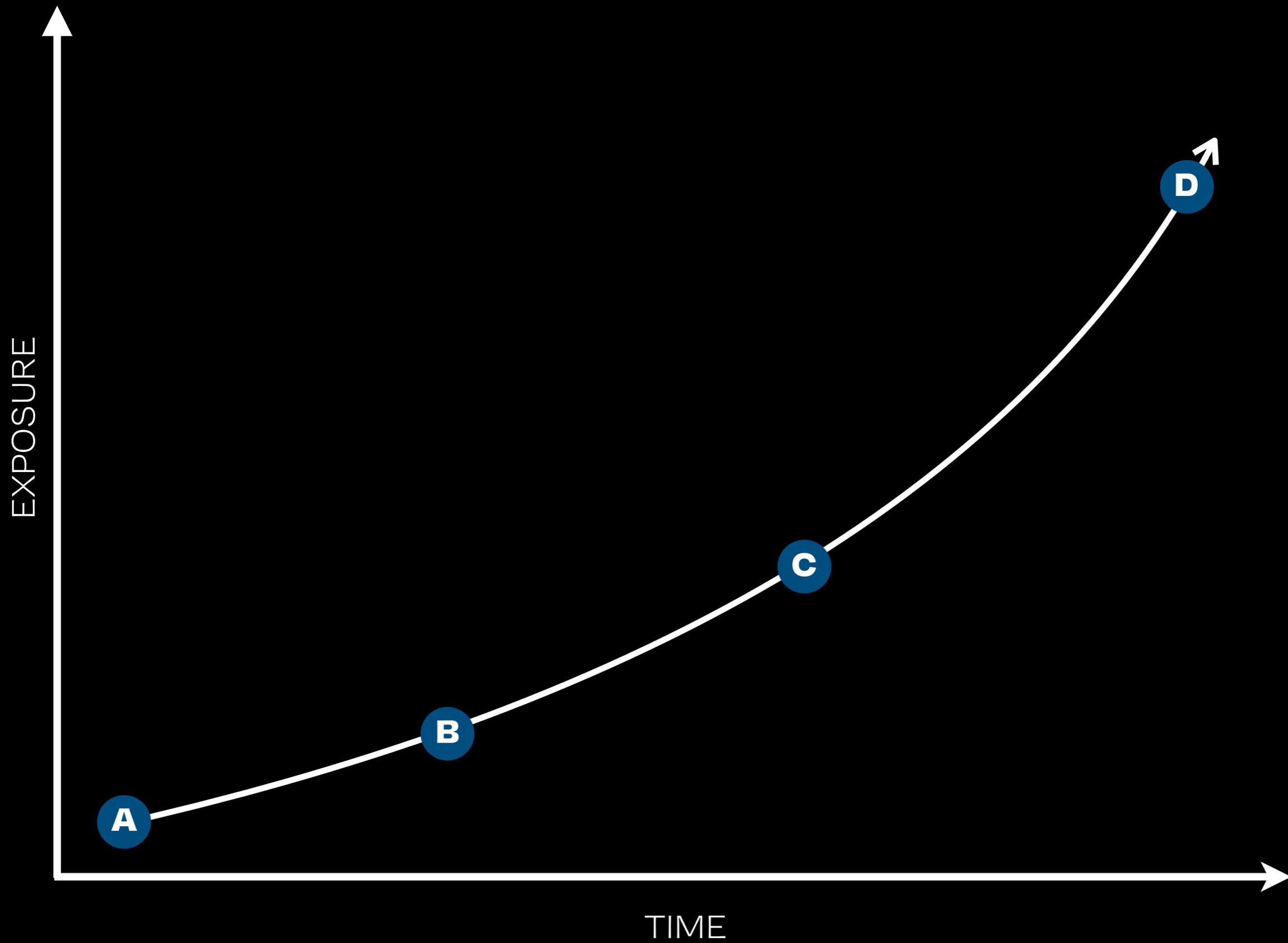
Control risk so you are  
able to learn quickly  
and safely.



Alt text: A Johari's window shows escalating risk and exposure. Each window is labeled with an example:

- Low Risk, Low Exposure (Releasing a site redesign to an opt-in group)
- Low Risk, High Exposure (Updating your site's CSS)
- High Risk, Low Exposure (Redesigning a critical task, released to a subset of users)
- High Risk, High Exposure (Releasing a new undergraduate admission application)

Cut a release plan  
with clear learning  
objectives for each  
risk increase.



Alt text: A graph shows exposure over time with releases titled A/B/C/D along the plotline.

Create dead simple  
feedback channels  
and agree on a triage  
plan.

AKA: Don't make it  
difficult for people to  
talk to you.

Acknowledge  
feedback (but don't be  
afraid to say no).

Everyone remembers  
a bad launch. Don't  
guess the readiness.

*Epilogue: Your  
Good Design*

## **Next time you launch:**

- Do all of the research
- Have a strong strategy document
- Design for all contexts
- Launch to learn

Expect these things.

If you don't get them,  
run.

# Acknowledgements

**The entire community A11y team, with special thanks to:**

Rachel Cherry, Rian Rietveld, Andrea Fercia, Joe Dolson, Morten Rand-Hendriksen

**For their help with UX Debt/Rot Visualizations:**

Kevin Hsieh, Julien Pierret

**Amanda Rush** and **Adrian Roselli** for constantly challenging inaccessible products in open source.

**Cynthia Savard Saucier** and **Jonathan Shariat** who wrote the book on *Tragic Design* (2017).