Artur Życzyński[1]

[1] *Politechnkia Opolska – Faculcy of Electrical Engineering Automatic Control and Informatics* Opole, Poland,
artur.zyczynski@student.po.edu.pl

Research and comparison of different Website builders in terms of designing websites

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
website builder, frontend tools, website design, website building tools, website creation tools	In this study three different popular website builders available with free program or free trial were compared and evaluated against four different categories. The researched website builders were WIX, GoDaddy and Weebly. The categories are: intuitiveness, which indicates how easy to use and navigate each website builder is, versatility, which indicates what types of websites can be made with each tool, time requirement, the time needed to create a simple website with each tool and customizability, which indicates to what extent does the builder allow to customize elements on the website. The research was conducted in two forms. The first one was to design a simple website with each tool as fast as possible and the second one was a test of the customization each tool provides. The final results for WIX are: intuitiveness 8, versatility 9, time requirement 6, customizability 8. The results for GoDaddy: intuitiveness 8, versatility 7, time requirement 3, customizability 3. The results for Weebly: intuitiveness 9, versatility 5, time requirement 4, customizability 4.

Nowadays, the internet is the most widely used and an effective tool for firms to reach their customers by their websites. Hence, effective design of websites helps firms to reach their aim [1]. The design of a quality website, as part of e-business strategy, has become a key element for success in the online market [2]. As Internet technology continues to advance, webpage design has transitioned from text and static images to dynamic interactions [3]. Websites with the highest quality produce the highest business performance [4]. Well designed and customizable websites increase the users' sense of agency and their intentions to recommend the website [5]. Design quality of websites is known to have a positive impact on user attention [6]. The study conducted by Alexandre N. Tuch [7] showed that vertical symmetry is an important factor in aesthetic website design. It has an impact on intuitive straightforward beauty appraisals whereas asymmetrically designed web pages were considered to be less beautiful. In a different study conducted by Iman Dianat [8] the results showed that the user satisfaction was mainly influenced by Web structure. Other findings conducted by Kholoud Al-Qeisi [9] indicate that the technical, general content and appearance dimensions of a website are most important for users. But building a well-designed and structured website for non-programmer might be an impossible task. Luckily, there are a special tools to help with that- a website builders. Such tools proved to increase efficiency of front-end website creation performance by 83.60% on average [10].

The aim of this article is to research and compare three most popular Website builders with free program or free trial for non-programmers. The tools that will be researched are: WIX, GoDaddy, Weebly. These tools will be tested and evaluated against four categories on a scale of 1 to 10: intuitiveness, versatility, time requirement, customizability.

Intuitiveness – How simple and beginner-friendly the tool is, whether it is easy to get around, and whether it has easy access to the most important functions.

Versatility – What type of websites can be created with the tool.

Time requirement – How much time, on average, it takes to construct a simple page, including the time it takes to learn and/or get used to a particular tool.

Customizability – To what extent a given tool allows you to fulfil your vision of the site's appearance, how much it allows you to modify individual elements and how easy it is to edit them.

I. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted on three most popular website builders: WIX, GoDaddy and

Weebly. The defining factor of choosing those tools was the amount of active users of each builder, that is the number of running websites using each tool (Fig. 1.). Each website builder was individually tested.
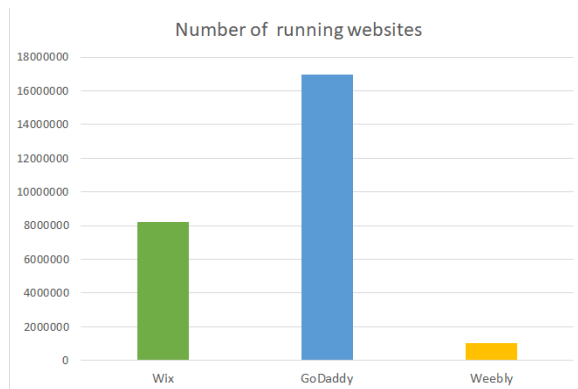

Figure 1. The number of running websites using given website building tool. WIX – 8204358, GoDaddy – 16988485, Weebly – 1005341. Source: builtwith.com

Figure 1. Shows the number of running websites using the given website building tool, according to builtwith.com. As of December 2022, the data is as following: WIX takes 2nd place having 8204358 running websites, GoDaddy is on the 1st place having twice as much as WIX which is 16988485, and finally on the 3rd place is Weebly with 1005341 running websites.

The study was conducted in two forms. First was a test in a form of quick design of the website. The task was to design website in the shortest time possible. The website had to include 5 pages such as: home page, about page, contact page, media gallery, product page. Home and About pages were to test how each website builder handles a design process of simple text based pages with optional images as a background or a brand logo. Contact pages were a test of how each tool helps to create a contact form, which is more complex element that many websites require or add a location information in form of a map with pinned location. Media gallery tested how each website building tool handled a display of media such as videos or images form blog websites or images galleries advertising a product. Product page tested how the website builders help to create a product advertisement similarly to gallery page or whether they allow to create a page for buying the product.

The first form of study was to find the intuitiveness, versatility and time requirement of each website builder. The second form of research was to test a customizability. This took the form of creating

simple elements such as buttons, and trying to modify them. In addition this part of research tested how each builder supports changes in layout of the page.

What is important, every website builder is evaluated in a view of a non-programmer. Any potential function of each website builder, which would allow to create or modify the website via code will not be taken into consideration while generating the final results.

Every website builder was tested and evaluated against four categories. These categories process different data to generate a final score in each category on a scale of 1 to 10. The categories are as follows: intuitiveness, versatility, time requirement, customizability.

Intuitiveness indicates how simple and beginner friendly the tool is. It processes the time needed to learn and get used to each builder, without prior experience with them, and an objective observations on the topic of working with each tool. The main subject of those observations are accessibility to crucial functions such as adding new pages, adding new elements to the page, modifying those elements and readability of the user interface, whether it describes each functionality in sufficient detail and does not cause confusion.

Versatility describes what type of websites can be created with each website builder. It takes into consideration the amount of distinct templates each builder provides and the amount of tools and functionalities to create different types of websites.

Time requirement indicates how much time is required to design a simple website. It also includes the time needed to learn and get used to a particular tool. The measured results were compared to the maximum value of 10 hours.

Customizability indicates to what extent a given tool allows to fulfil the vision of the site appearance. To what extent does it allow to modify individual elements and how easy it is. Same as versatility, it processes the amount of available templates each builder provides. It also processes the amount of possible appearance changes to each element and the available storage space, which allows to upload custom images and videos to the website.

II. RESULTS

I. Intuitivness

During the research every website builder proved to be a very simple and intuitive tool. Starting with WIX, it has the most complex user

interface out of the researched website builders. Its main panel consists of 9 categories. Each category represents a different action e.g. add element – displays a list of different elements that can be added to the page, Pages & Menu – displays the list of pages on the website allowing to add a new one or edit the existing one. Clicking on the element opens a specific to this element edit panel as can be seen in Fig. 2. exhibit A. The panels are readable and contain the most important functionalities. The research found Weebly a little more intuitive than WIX. Similarly to WIX its main panel consists of categories which allow user to perform different actions e.g. build – displays list of elements that can be added to the page, theme – displays a list of options to change or modify the colour theme of the website or change fonts on the website. Clicking on the element also brings out the edit panel of that element as seen in Fig. 2. exhibit B. GoDaddy was found to be as intuitive as WIX. Its main panel consists of 3 categories which allow to add new page or remove an existing one or change the colour theme, fonts and buttons on the website. Similarly to previous website builders upon clicking on the element a specific edit menu is brought up on the main panel as seen in Fig. 2. exhibit C.
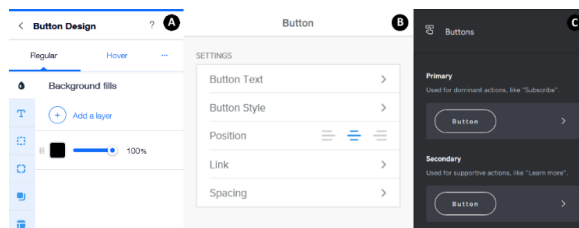

Figure 2. The main panels of each website builders.
A – WIX, B – Weebly, C – GoDaddy

I. Versatility

Fig. 3. Shows the approximate number of available templates for each website builder. The following numbers and the variety of the templates are the main contributor to the versatility score. For WIX the research found that it provides approximately 500 templates, providing vast variety in terms of their intended use. WIX also provides pre-defined page templates that include all the elements the user might need, organized in a sleek layout, that is easy to manage. Additionally, the templates are fully customizable allowing the user to add new elements and remove the unwanted ones The templates allow to create an about, services, project, contact, landing, store, booking, blog and pricing plans pages. One of the biggest advantages found, is that WIX allows to

create a blank page where the user can design the page from scratch. The amount of available templates provided by GoDaddy is approximately 100. Despite lower number than WIX, GoDaddy was found to be similarly versatile tool in terms of different types of websites that can be created with it. GoDaddy does not allow to create a bank page for user to design from scratch. After creating a new page the user can fill it with different pre-defined element templates for: audio and video, blog and newsletter, ecommerce, contact pages, files to view and download, image galleries, pricing and scheduling lists. Weebly provides around 50 templates. The research found that similarly to WIX, Weebly provides simple pre-defined page templates. In comparison to WIX, Weebly's pre-defined pages are limited and basic. Those pages allow to create an about, contact, blog, product pages. Weebly allows to create a blank page for user to design it from scratch.

II. Versatility

Figure 3. shows the approximate number of available templates for each website builder. The following numbers and the variety of the templates are the main contributor to the versatility score. For WIX the research found that it provides approximately 500 templates, providing vast variety in terms of their intended use. WIX also provides pre-defined page templates that include all the elements the user might need, organized in a sleek layout, that is easy to manage. Additionally, the templates are fully customizable allowing the user to add new elements and remove the unwanted ones The templates allow to create an about, services, project, contact, landing, store, booking, blog and pricing plans pages. One of the biggest advantages found, is that WIX allows to create a blank page where the user can design the page from scratch. The amount of available templates provided by GoDaddy is approximately 100. Despite lower number than WIX, GoDaddy was found to be similarly versatile tool in terms of different types of websites that can be created with it. GoDaddy does not allow to create a bank page for user to design from scratch. After creating a new page the user can fill it with different pre-defined element templates for: audio and video, blog and newsletter, ecommerce, contact pages, files to view and download, image galleries, pricing and scheduling lists. Weebly provides around 50 templates. The research found that similarly to WIX, Weebly provides simple pre-defined page

templates. In comparison to WIX, Weebly's pre-defined pages are limited and basic. Those pages allow to create an about, contact, blog, product pages. Weebly allows to create a blank page for user to design it from scratch.
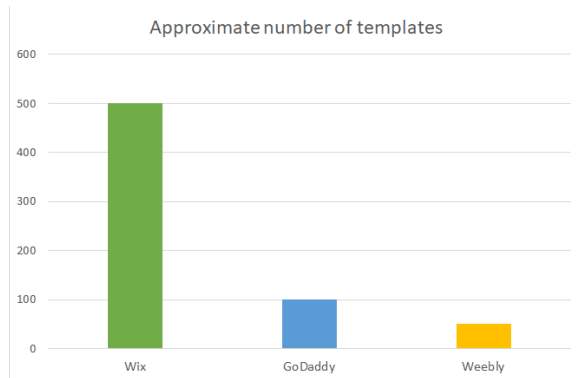

Figure 3. The approximate number of available templates for each website builder

III. Time requirment

Two main factors that influence the time requirement results are the amount of features each tool provides and the simplicity in use of each tool. As shown in Fig. 4. the least time consuming website builder is GoDaddy. In the conducted research it took around 2 hours and 45 minute to design a simple website with it. The reason for this is a very intuitive user interface which does not overwhelm the user with its functionalities and working process of choosing pre-defined templates and slightly adjusting them. Moving forward, it took 3 hours and 10 minutes to design a website with Weebly. Similarly to GoDaddy, Weebly provides very intuitive user interface and mostly consists of choosing pre-defined elements. But, considering it allows for slightly changing the elements to make them more personalized, it increases the time required to design a website. Lastly, it took 5 hours and 40 minutes to design a website with WIX. While being very simple in terms of the user interface, the amount of templates and freedom in customising each element significantly increased the time required to design a simple website.
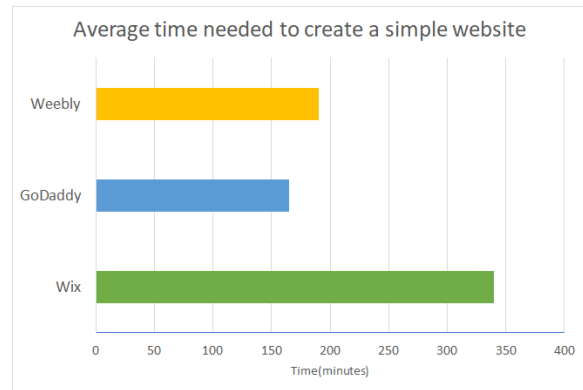

Figure 4. Average time needed to create a simple website. This chart takes only into account the time of designing the website

IV. Customizability

Figure 5 show the amount of available storage space for each website building tool. GoDaddy has a free trial instead of free program, thus its available storage space is not shown on the chart. Yet it is important to mention that the minimum available storage space which comes with the cheapest program for GoDaddy is 25GB. The storage space is important for the customizability, because it dictates how much custom media files can the user upload to the website. WIX despite having 500MB of storage space with free program it provides a vast library of stock images ready to use on the website. The same goas for GoDaddy, where the user can upload custom media files or use, smaller in comparison to WIX, stock media library. The storage space is very important in the case of Weebly. It does not provide a stock media library. The user is forced to upload custom files in order to e.g. create an image background for a home page.
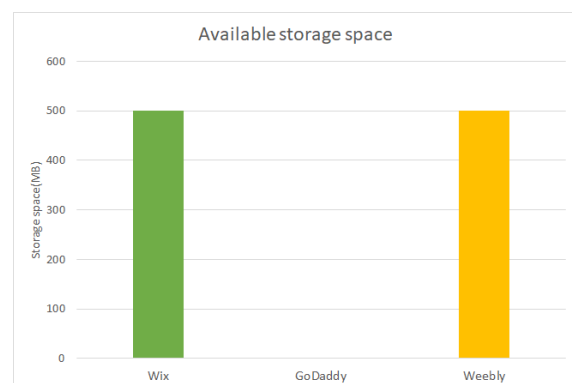

Figure 5. Available storage space for each website builder

For the purpose of assessing customizability, the research also compered website builders against each other in terms of modifying individual elements. Figures 6, 7, 8 show examples of different buttons that can be created using each tool.
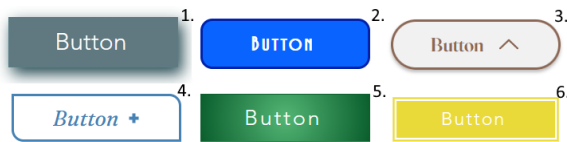

Figure 6. Sample buttons created with WIX

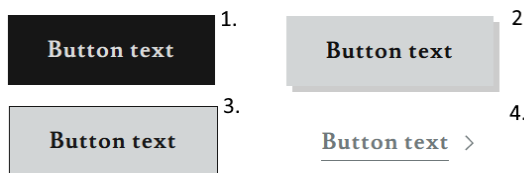
Figure 7. Sample buttons created with Weebly

Figure 8. Sample buttons created with GoDaddy

As seen in Fig. 6. WIX allows for a vast modification to personalise the elements. It allows for basic decorations such as borders or round corners as seen in exhibits 2–4. It also allows for more complex changes such as gradient background as seen in exhibit 5. What is the most important is that with WIX every element can be individually modified. In this example it means that every button can have a different font, size, behave differently on being hovered, have different animations.

Figure 7 shows an example of modified buttons in Weebly. In this field Weebly is very limited. It only allows to choose 1 out of 4 button styles, the colour of the buttons depends on the theme colour of the website, and the font of the buttons is set globally, changing it will change the font for all buttons. Weebly only allow to choose the style and change the margin and padding of the button.

Figure 8 shows buttons created with GoDaddy. Similarly to Weebly, the style can be chosen from a small list of pre-defined styles. The difference here is that the buttons are divided into two categories primary and secondary. The primary buttons have 9 styles to choose from and secondary buttons have 6 styles. The colour is also dependant on the theme colour.

V. Final results

Taking into consideration all the results in the 4 categories for each website builder the final statistics have been created.

Figure 9 shows statistics for WIX. While it is fairly easy to pick up, the amount of functionalities might be overwhelming at first. Due to the possible confusion caused by the complexity of different panels it scored 8 in intuitiveness. In versatility it scored 9, with many built in elements and addition of app store WIX provides wide range of tools to create any website imaginable. When it comes to time requirement WIX scored 6. Due to the amount of functionalities, elements and way to customise them it can take considerably a long time to finish designing a website. But with the amount of ways to customize the elements to one's liking and the vast range of predefined page themes and layouts on top of a large built-in stock media libraries, WIX allows to create a beautiful, functioning website with no need of external assets. This made WIX score 8 in customizability.
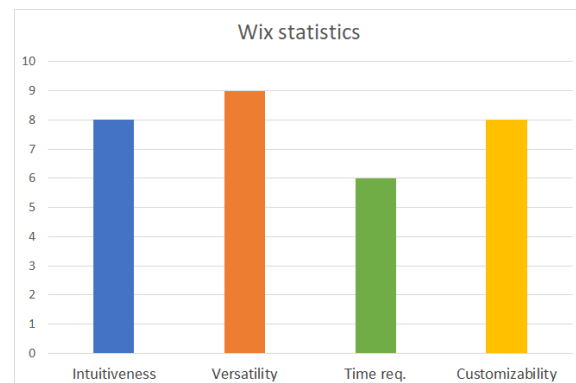

Figure 9. Final results for WIX

Figure 10 shows the final statistics for GoDaddy. The user interface is very easy and simple. Due to focusing mainly on choosing and slightly adjusting predefined page layouts, GoDaddy scored 8 in intuitiveness. Despite having far less templates than WIX, the ones that GoDaddy provides are various enough to create a many different websites, therefore GoDaddy scored 7 in versatility. GoDaddy is very fast when it comes to designing the website it scored 3 in time requirement due to its simplicity, lack of complex customisation of individual elements and having small amount of template to choose from. But for lacking in these areas GoDaddy scored 3 in customizability.
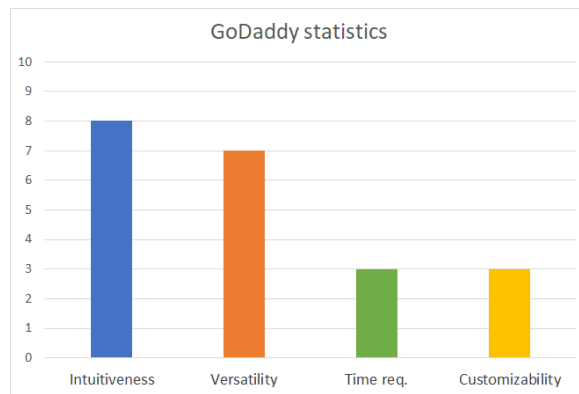
Figure 10. Final results for GoDaddy

Figure 11 shows the final statistics for Weebly. Having all essential elements on the main panel ready to be added to the website is why Weebly scored 9 in intuitiveness. While being very simple in use, Weebly lacks in template variety. It has small amount of available templates and those which are available are very specialised – being perfect for online shops or blogs and blog-like websites. This made Weebly score 5 in versatility and is the very reason why it scored 4 in time requirement. Being very intuitive and not having much complex customisation potential it takes little time to design a simple website. The customisation of each element is limited but Weebly allows to place different elements where one's pleases and allows for some slight modifications to them, therefore scoring 4 in customizability.
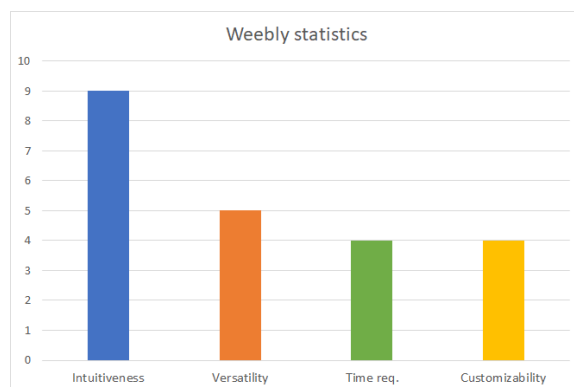

Figure 11. Final results for Weebly

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to research and assess the popular website builders available for free in some capacity. The studied website builders were WIX, GoDaddy and Weebly, those tools were evaluated against in four categories intuitiveness, versatility, time requirement, customizability in a scale of 1 to 10.

Every tool was found to be very simple to use and get used to. WIX and GoDaddy scored 8 points

in intuitiveness, while Weebly got slightly better score of 9 in this category for its simple, strait to the point design. In Versatility the result were more distinct. WIX for providing wide range of templates scored 9 in this category. GoDaddy for providing less yet various templates scored 7 in versatility and Weebly, scored 5 due to allowing to create the least amount of different types of websites. In the category of time requirement both GoDaddy and Weebly were found to be fast to work with. Their scores in this category are respectively 3 and 4. WIX for being more versatile and allowing form more customization scored 6 int time requirement. Finally, for customizability, WIX allowed the most options to modify and adjust elements on the website, therefore its score in this category is 8. Meanwhile both GoDaddy and Weebly were very limited in terms of modifying and customizing the website elements. Because Weebly allowed for slight changes in this area, it scored 4 in this category, while GoDaddy only scored 3.

Summing up, every research website builder proved to be useful tools. The choice between those three is driven mostly by the amount of time the user have or is willing to spend on design the website. If the time is not the issue WIX is the most versatile and allows for the most amount of customization, being the best choice in this scenario. But if the time is limited the choice between GoDaddy and Weebly is more of a personal preference. If the user wants to have more control over how the individual elements look and were are located then Weebly is a better choice, but if the user wants to have a more versatile website than GoDaddy is a better tool to use.

REFERENCES

[1] Cebi S.: *Determining importance degrees of website design parameters based on interactions and types of websites*, Decis Support Syst, vol. 54/2, 2013, pp. 1030–1043, doi: 10.1016/J.DSS.2012.10.036.J,

[2] Hernández B., Jiménez J., and Martín M.J.: *Key website factors in e-business strategy*, Int J Inf Manage, vol. 29/5, 2009, pp. 362–371, Oct. 2009, doi: 10.1016/J.IJINFOMGT.2008.12.006,

[3] Kuo L., Chang T., and Lai C.C.: *Affective psychology and color display of interactive website design*, Displays, vol. 71, 2022, p. 102134, doi: 10.1016/-J.DISPLA.2021.102134,

[4] Lee Y., and Kozar K.A.: *Investigating the effect of website quality on e-business success: An analytic hierarchy process (AHP) approach*, Decis Support Syst, vol. 42/3, 2006, pp. 1383–1401, doi: 10.-1016/J.DSS.2005.11.005,

[5] Ahn J., Park J.M., Lee W.H., and Noh G.Y.: *Website interactivity and processing: Menu customization and sense of agency are keys to better interaction design*, Int J Hum Comput Stud, vol. 147, 2021, p. 102581, doi: 10.1016/J.IJHCS.2020.102581,

[6] Cebi S.: *A quality evaluation model for the design quality of online shopping websites*, Electron Commer Res Appl, vol. 12/2, 2013, pp. 124–135, doi: 10.1016/J.ELERAP.2012.12.001,

[7] Tuch A.N., Bargas-Avila J.A., and Opwis K.: *Symmetry and aesthetics in website design: It's a man's business,* Comput Human Behav, vol. 26/6, 2010, pp. 1831–1837, doi: 10.1016/J.CHB.2010.-07.016,

[8] Dianat I., Adeli P., Asgari Jafarabadi M., and Karimi M.A.: *User-centred web design, usability and user satisfaction: The case of online banking websites in Iran*, Appl Ergon, vol. 81, 2019, p. 102892, doi: 10.1016/J.APERGO.2019.102892,

[9] Al-Qeisi K., Dennis C., Alamanos E., and Jayawardhena C.: *Website design quality and usage behavior: Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology*, J Bus Res, vol. 67/11, 2014, pp. 2282–2290, doi: 10.1016/J.JBUSRES.2014.06.016,

[10] Udjaja Y.: *EKSPANPIXEL BLADSY STRANICA: Performance Efficiency Improvement of Making Front-End Website Using Computer Aided Software Engineering Tool*, Procedia Comput Sci, vol. 135, 2018, pp. 292–301, doi: 10.1016/j.procs.2018.08.177.