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**Case Study**


ROCKETLEVEL

**SMART**
PLUGIN MANAGER

# Putting an end to tedious plugin maintenance.

**Using Smart Plugin Manager, RocketLevel keeps WordPress plugins updated automatically so their developers can get back to work.**

**Industry**
Marketing Automation/
Digital Marketing

**Site**
rocketlevel.com/about-us/

**Challenge**
Tedious (but necessary) plugin maintenance was taking developers' time away from core business projects.

**Solution**
WP Engine's Smart Plugin Manager.

**Results**
Automated, nightly plugin updates have allowed full-time developers to move away from maintenance-related tasks and into business-critical R&D roles.

*RocketLevel helps companies grow by leveraging the power of digital marketing to engage new prospects, nurture leads, and continue the connection with them. Their cutting edge marketing automation platform, coupled with insightful data and analytics, maximizes their clients' success in converting leads.*

## The Challenge.

One of the greatest things about WordPress is the vast ecosystem of plugins it has to offer. Plugins are uploadable bits of software that allow users to easily add features and functionality to their websites, and the WordPress Plugin Repository currently offers nearly 55,000 of them for free (there are also many paid, premium plugins that add to this overall list).

Plugins are a huge benefit of using WordPress, but they also require regular maintenance. Neglecting plugin maintenance, even briefly, can bring on a slew of security vulnerabilities, which are often prime targets for hackers. Patching those vulnerabilities is one of the major reasons plugins require regular updates, but when a site has multiple plugins installed (some sites have dozens of plugins running at once) that level of ongoing maintenance—while necessary—can become extremely time-consuming.

This was precisely the case for RocketLevel, a customer acquisition platform that manages numerous WordPress installs and multisites. As RocketLevel's WordPress environments continued to expand, maintaining the various plugins used across those installs started to become a creeping burden for their developers.

"When you're dealing with sizeable installs and 20-30 different multisites, updating a single plugin, not to mention multiple plugins, can become a real chore," said Montana Pham, RocketLevel's Senior IT Manager and IT Support Lead.

> **"What I really like about Smart Plugin Manager is that it's seamless. I like how it's just simple. It's not over-complex, it gets to the core of what it needs to do and it does it well."**
>
> **Montana Pham,**
> Senior IT Manager, IT Support Lead at RocketLevel

"We got to a point where we had full-time developers spending the majority of their time on plugin maintenance, which was obviously not ideal."

Pham knew the arrangement wasn't sustainable long-term, but without another way forward, he also didn't have much of a choice.

"Not keeping our plugins up-to-date wasn't an option," Pham said, "so we had to keep doing our plugin maintenance the hard way—manually."

## The Solution.

All of that started to change, however, when Pham and his team attended WP Engine's 2019 U.S. Summit. While they were there, WP Engine announced the launch of Smart Plugin Manager to help WordPress site owners and developers deal with the headache of plugin maintenance.

Smart Plugin Manager is the only comprehensive WordPress plugin manager on the market, and it's the only plugin manager that automatically updates plugins from both the WordPress Repository as well as premium plugins. The solution automatically performs plugin updates on a scheduled interval that is customizable by the user, and it runs a Visual Regression Test (VRT) using machine learning to identify if those updates passed or failed. If a VRT fails, updates are rolled back with messaging to the user about which plugin(s) contributed to the failure.



*Smart Plugin Manager lets you schedule automatic updates for your WordPress plugins so you can get back to work.*

When Pham and his team heard about the solution, it was being released as an open beta, and they signed up right away.

"We immediately jumped on it," he said. "We activated it for our most heavily trafficked multisite installs and honestly, it's become one of our most-relied upon tools. It's helped us put plugin maintenance on auto-pilot."

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Pham added that the set-up process was clear and straightforward and that within a day of signing up for the open beta, Smart Plugin Manager was auto-updating dozens of RocketLevel's most critical plugins.

"What I really like about Smart Plugin Manager is that it's seamless," Pham said. "I like how it's just simple. It's not over-complex, it gets to the core of what it needs to do and it does it well."

## The Results.

Since setting up Smart Plugin Manager, Pham said the most impressive result has been the developer time he's been able to save and redirect from constant plugin maintenance to more important, business-oriented tasks.

"We've been able to take two full-time developers and move them over to mission-critical R&D roles that are helping move our business forward," he said. "That's hard to put a price on, but beyond saving us time and money, I think Smart Plugin Manager has helped us add new energy to our engineering and product efforts, and in that regard, it's helped us strengthen the core of our business."

Additionally, Pham said Smart Plugin Manager has helped take the guesswork and potential for human error out of RocketLevel's previous plugin maintenance routine.

"We know our plugins are being updated correctly," he said. "And when something isn't right, Smart Plugin Manager sends us a detailed message that lets us get the right people on it immediately, instead of spending a ton of time looking to see what went wrong where."

Moving forward, Pham said he's excited to see new Smart Plugin Manager features roll out, including an updated user dashboard, the ability to update individual plugins, and more.

"I can't wait to see this tool get even more powerful," he said. "In the meantime, we'll be using it for more and more of our installs and sites."

*Visit WP Engine today to find out more about Smart Plugin Manager and our other solutions for building amazing digital experiences with WordPress!*

## About WP Engine.

WP Engine is the world's leading WordPress digital experience platform that gives companies of all sizes the agility, performance, intelligence, and integrations they need to drive their business forward faster. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas, and has offices in San Francisco, California; San Antonio, Texas; London, England; Limerick, Ireland, and Brisbane, Australia.