How Wordpress powered Forbes?

Boris Kolev, Founder of JT Design

Personal Context

- ▶ Started with Macromedia Flash and Action Script in 2001 (but first... Fortran, Basic, Visual Basic, SQL, C++, C#)
- ▶ Switched to PHP in 2003 + some early Java Script.
- > Started web development with Flash and Joomla & Drupal.
- ▶ Founded my Web Studio JT Design (jtdsn.com) in 2004
- Got in love with Networks and Communication (CCNA, CCNP)
- ▶ Founded JT International Group in 2007
- ▶ Founded DigiMark in 2012
- ▶ Founded DigiMark Ventures in 2017, micro-VC which invested in 10+ digital and biotech startups in Bulgaria.

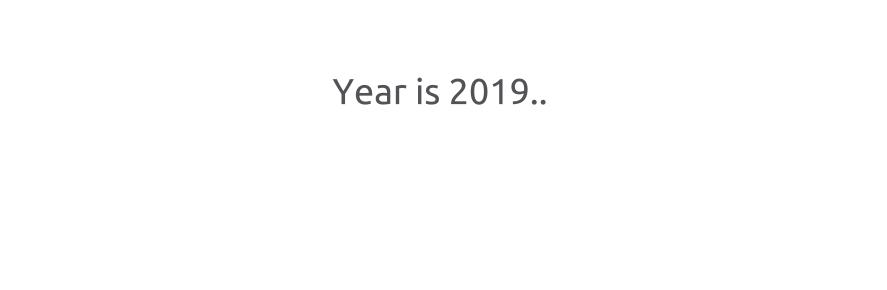
Professional Context (Web)

- ▶ Build our first websites in Macromedia Flash 2004
- Adopted Drupal and Joomla in 2005 (Our first hosting provider was SiteGround :D)
- Mainly built on Bootstrap Frameworks, Angular & React
- Switched generally to Wordpress in 2010
- Many websites on Squarespace, Wix, Magento, OpenCart, Webflow, Framer, Shopify, CloudCart
- Over 600+ projects for 20 years.





How our **Forbes** story begins...



Forbes grants license in Bulgaria

We have been approached to help with the local website...

The beginning

- License for Online Media Pending
- Minimal budget, almost 0
- No defined strategy
- No requirements
- ▶ Let's take this challenge...
- First call with Forbes HQ scheduled



150M+ registered users 200M+ unique users

1,5B+ pageviews

30M+ concurrent users during peak times

Top 50 websites in US

2800+ content writers

400K+ news articles



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running on



Their setup:

- Large internal web team
- WordPress VIP
- Multiple WP Instances
- ▶ Centralized Custom Theme
- Custom Plugins
- Premium partnerships with plugin developers
- Partnership with CDNetwork

Our Requrements:

- Very simple website
- ▶ Follow on Forbes branding (pending approval)
- ▶ HQ owns the domains, DNS and the analytics
- Convenient and simple editor
- Custom permissions accounts
- Extended Author profiles
- Very flexible in terms of new content types and ideas

Forbes HQ didn't help with Code, Template, Settings or Configuration advices.
▶ So, we decided to go with WordPress. ☺

▶ We researched the top Bulgarian medias ~ 1M max monthly visitors ~ 10-15M pageviews.

Connected with Forbes Russia, Brazil, Portugal... they were all on WordPress

We have never built a media website for large audience

Challenge 1: The Theme

- Quick loading time
- ▶ Less resources and memory
- Minimum bloatware
- Code Quality
- Dynamic Layouts
- ▶ Easy and light Editor with options to limit features per user type
- ▶ Drag-Drop Builder
- ▶ Good SEO
- Fully Responsive
- Good Support + Regular Updates + Community Support
- ▶ Infinite Scroll...

We went for **Themify Ultra**

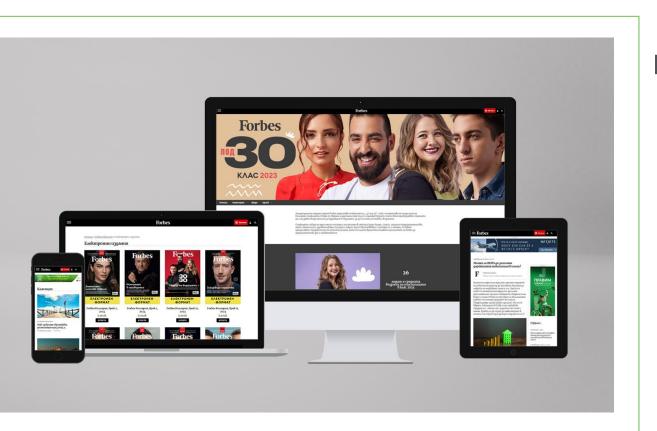
- On top of thousands of articles and advertising a shop
- Online subscription view of PDF Magazines
- Subscription to receive the latest magazine
- Membership to view library of magazines

Challenge 2: Online Store

Challenge 3: Event Tickets System

Challenge 4: Custom User Profiles

Challenge 5: Caching & Speed



Forbes Bulgaria Web Platform

300k+ unique users

2M+ pageviews

5000+ articles

Current VPS Configuration

- Ubuntu 20,04 LTS
- ▶ Apache, PHP, MariaDB
- ▶ 6 CPU Cores
- ▶ 10GB RAM
- ▶ 250GB SSD
- ▶ PHP Opcache
- Nitropack

