The FREEDOM to DESIGN

Creative Websites With

Sparkle

The Freedom to Design by Franc Browne

What it's all About?

Welcome to the incredible world of **Sparkle Website Builder –** your ticket to effortless website creation on an Apple Mac. Whether you're a newcomer to **Sparkle** or diving into website design for the first time, this guide serves as your inviting introduction to both realms. Even if you're acquainted with **Sparkle** but haven't ventured far beyond the basics, there's something here to spark your interest and elevate your skills.

Designed for anyone considering Sparkle as their go-to website builder, this guide isn't just for beginners. It aims to offer valuable insights and fresh perspectives for users of all levels, urging you to unlock the full potential of this user-friendly builder.

Split into several broad sections, let's take a glimpse into what lies ahead. We start by walking you through some fundamental aspects of the application without overwhelming you with intricate details. From wire-framing your ideas to crafting custom colour swatches and breaking down web pages into manageable parts, this section familiarises you with **Sparkle's** unique tools while delving into the psychology of web design. Remember, this guide is as much about web design as it is about using **Sparkle**.

Moving on to '**The Tools of Sparkle Web Design,**' we explore each tool available in **Sparkle**, providing a practical reference to swiftly acquaint you with their functionalities. We continue our journey by showing you how to adapt your website for mobile devices. It's a simple guide to scaling your website for different devices, tackling font sizes, and steering clear of pitfalls in mobile layouts.

We then take a look at user interactivity where you will discover the variety of tools that allow you to engage with your site visitors in a more interactive way.

Then comes '**Advanced Features.**' Here, we delve deeper, unveiling the secrets behind stunning effects and useful features commonly seen in professional web pages. Think animation, pop-ups, alternative navigation, creative video use, and more.

Our goal is to immerse you in a hands-on experience right from the start. So, grab the app (*there's a free trial!*), fire it up, and dive into your next website project. Let's unleash your creativity and build something extraordinary together!

# Quick note about illustrations used in this guide.

Depending on the display preferences you set up on your Mac, **Sparkle's** interface elements may display in dark mode, or light mode. We've used a mix of these styles in our illustrations. Here is an example of the two styles you may encounter. Regardless of the mode, everything works in the same way.

Default Light Mode
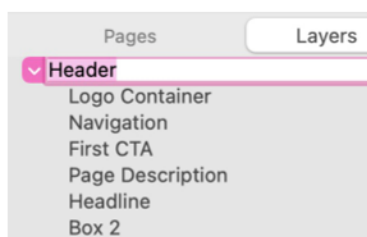
Optional Dark Mode
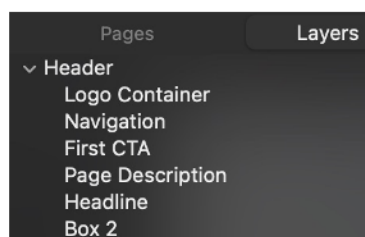
Introduction

So, lets start the journey and dive into a whole new world of website design – one that breaks free from the usual rules and lets your imagination run wild! Say hello to **Sparkle Website Builder**, a great website development tool that gives you the power to design web pages without the usual technical headaches.

In this guide, we'll explore how **Sparkle** is different. Instead of limiting your creativity, it empowers you to create web pages that stand out from the crowd. It's like having a blank canvas where you can paint your digital masterpiece without worrying about traditional design restrictions or complicated code.

But here's the secret to a successful website: while **Sparkle** lets you get super creative, it also reminds us about something crucial – the people who will visit your website. We'll show you how to strike the perfect balance between your awesome designs and what users expect to see and experience online.

"The Freedom to Design" is your guide to this exciting journey. We'll help you understand how to use **Sparkle's** great features to make your website look amazing while ensuring it's easy for everyone to use.

Join us on this adventure where you'll discover how to let your creativity soar while still creating websites that people will love to visit. With **Sparkle Website Builder**, the web becomes your playground for building fantastic, user-friendly websites that truly do sparkle!

It's essential to clarify that this guide isn't your typical user manual. For detailed instructions on navigating **Sparkle's** features, the developer's website hosts a comprehensive and well-documented user guide. What we've embarked upon here is more of a hands-on tutorial, a friendly roadmap designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of diving into the world of freeform web design. Our focus has been on merging your creative spark with meeting user expectations, ensuring your journey in crafting stunning web experiences begins on the right foot. Remember, as you explore and experiment, the developer's guide, along with **Sparkle's** great user community, remain your go-to resources for mastering the intricacies of **Sparkle's** functionalities.

Happy designing!
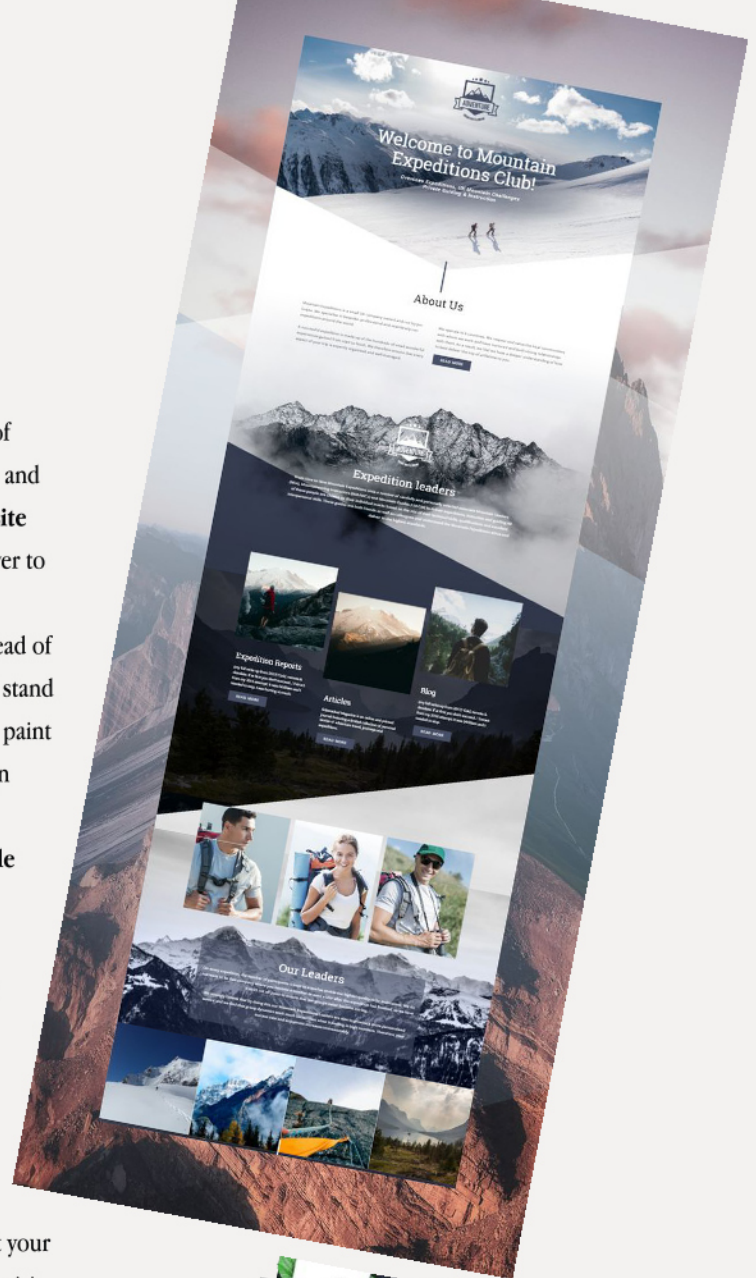
User
Expectations

Before we dive into the exciting world of creating web pages with **Sparkle**, let's chat about some important web design stuff. You've probably seen those websites that seem to have EVERYTHING on them – weird things following your mouse, hidden menus that need a secret handshake to find, and loads of flashy but not-so-useful animations. But here's the problem: these kinds of websites might annoy visitors more than they inform or help them.

If you're serious about making a website that actually works and isn't just for show, there are some key things to consider. Google says that when people land on a web page, they take about 10 seconds (*sometimes even less*) to decide if they're in the right place. That's a tiny window,

right? So, your page needs to quickly tell them: who you are, what you do, and why they should care. Mess this up, and poof! Your visitor might vanish forever!

So, let's talk about 'USER EXPECTATIONS' – it's a big deal in web design. It's not about being boring or typical; it's about giving visitors what they're used to. Think of it like designing a car – no matter how great the car looks, the steering wheel, the gear selector, the pedals, and dashboard are all where you expect them to be. It's the same with websites – people want things to work in a familiar way. So, while being creative is awesome, sticking to certain familiar patterns helps visitors feel at home on your site. Here is a typical hero section of a website that illustrates what users expect when they visit a website:
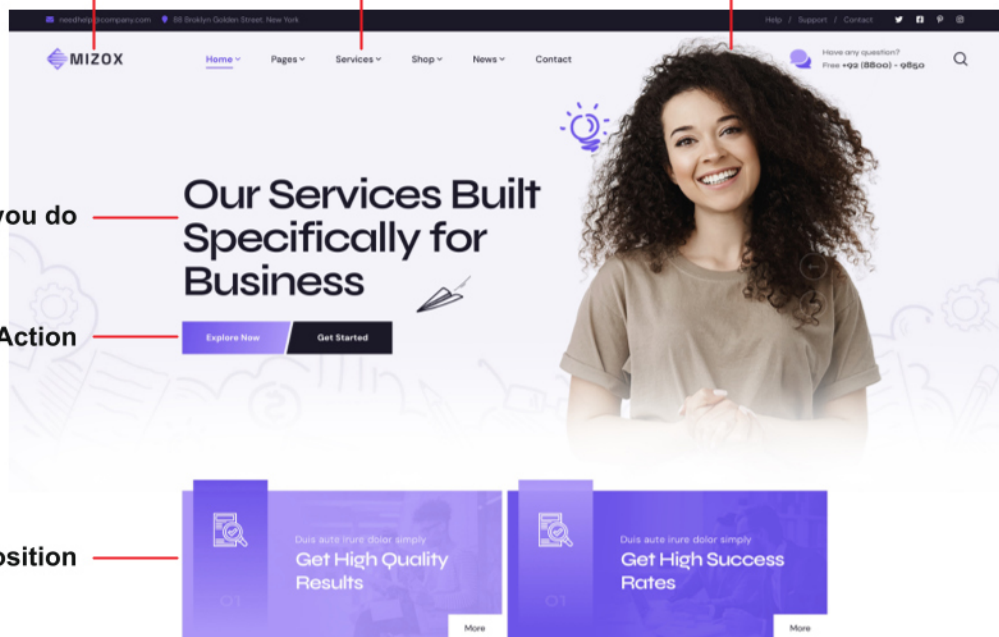

Company Name
Who You Are

Clear Navigation

Compelling Image

**What you do**

Call to Action

Value Proposition

Design by ThemeMascot - Envato Market

Different Device...
...Same Rules

Now, Let's see how this works when designing for mobile devices – it's still a big deal! Just like on a computer. The first screen of your mobile site needs to match what users expect. Mobile visitors want your site to feel like using their device – that's why it's totally okay to switch things up and use longer, vertical scrolling pages. You know, like how you scroll through your phone's apps? With **Sparkle**, you've got super flexibility for mobile design. You're not stuck keeping everything the same as on a computer screen. You can move stuff around, hide some things on certain devices, and show them on others. It's like giving your site a little makeover for mobile users!

And hey, there are other parts of your page that follow certain 'expectations.' We'll chat more about those as we go along in this guide. So get ready to make your mobile site awesome without getting stuck in a design rut!
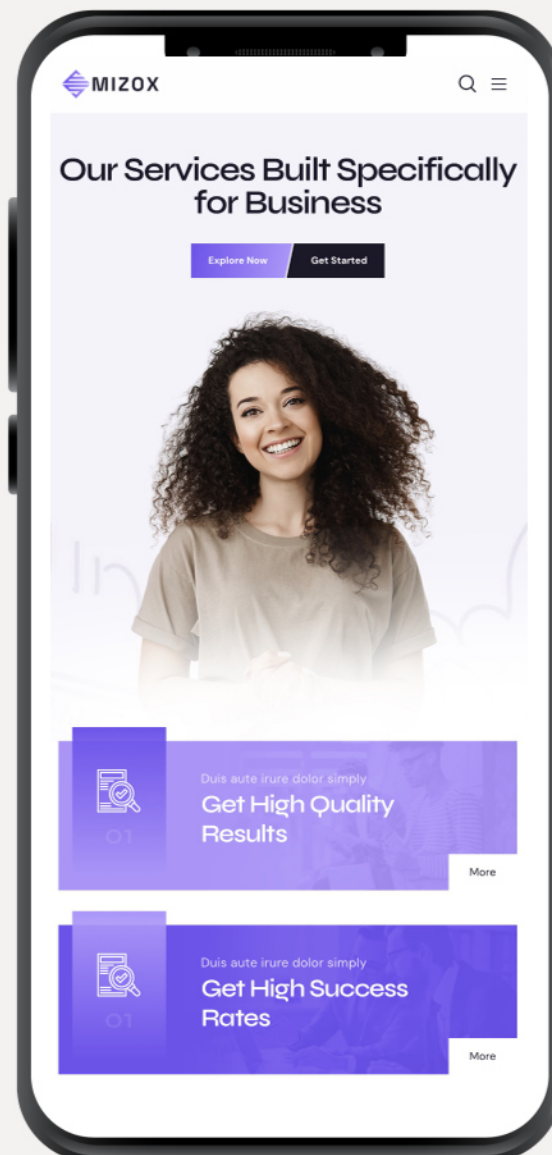
Design by ThemeMascot - Envato Market

The Importance
of **Structure**

Next, we'll take a look at structure - this is fundamental to good web design. You might've heard some designers complain that all websites look kinda similar these days – a bit 'blocky.' But hey, that's not a bad thing! There's a good reason behind this look.

Imagine reading a book or a magazine with content all over the place – you'd probably get dizzy! Most print stuff keeps things in nice, easy-to-read grids and straight lines, right? The reason for this is because no one wants to twist and turn just to read something. Same goes for websites – we want things easy to read without any acrobatics.

Now, here's where the designer in you kicks-in: just because a web page should be structured like blocks, it doesn't mean it has to look boring! Check out the illustration on the right showing a web design that seems all 'free and funky.' But guess what? It's still using that block structure, just jazzed up with some graphics. Look closer, and you'll see all the text is neatly lined up – that's the secret that keeps it comfortable to read.

In **Sparkle**, you've got some awesome tools for creating designs that pop while keeping that block structure everyone expects. There's the page grid, a set of columns that keep things tidy, and layout blocks that give you the space to tell your story. And guess what? Even if your page is made of these blocks, you can still add images and graphics that tie everything together in a really exiting way!" This is all possible because of Sparkle's simple to use layer structure.

Sparkle's grid can be set for between 2 and 24 columns with customisable gutter widths. In this screenshot you can clearly see the grid. Everything you see is contained within a layout block, with each element named for easy identification. The layout block can be moved around the page to suit your design aspirations, and all the content within the block goes along for the ride - simple!
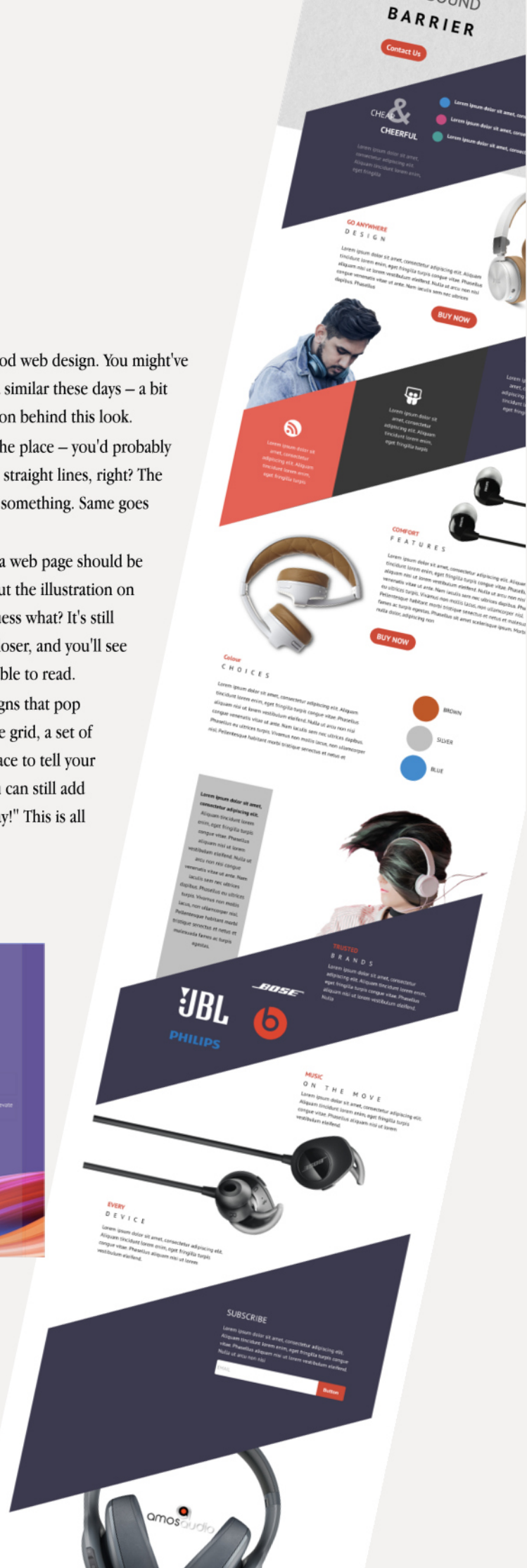
So, Let's Check
The **Toolbox**

Before we jump into **Sparkle's** features, let's set some ground rules for making awesome web pages. Okay, so everything you put on your page – like text boxes, images, forms, and galleries – are typically called 'elements' but you can call them whatever suits you, really. Here's an illustration showing all the elements you can add to your **Sparkle** web page.

Content

T Text Box	Image	Video
Map	Image Gallery	Audio
Lottie Animation	Image/Video Grid	Blog Tags

Structure

Box	Wide box	Popup
Layout Block	Layout Grid	

Navigation and Forms

Menu	Button	Login Form
Text Input	Checkbox	Radio button
Option Selection	Slider	File Attachment

Monetization

Payment	Property Booking	Calendar
Ad Unit	Table Booking	

Social

X X	Facebook	Instagram

Special

|		
Embed	Scroll location	Site Search

Now, when you add an element by simply clicking on it, first things first – give it a name, like an ID tag. Sounds techy, but it's super handy! Naming stuff makes finding things later way easier. Trust me, this habit will save you tons of time down the road. Click on an element, and it pops up as a placeholder on your page. After giving it a name, you're in control – resize, move, or put it wherever you want. Think of it as laying out the skeleton of your website, just with placeholders instead of actual content. It's a smart way to start building your site! Here is an illustration of how to name your elements:

1 Click the Arrange tab

2 Select the Element on the page

3 Enter a name for the element
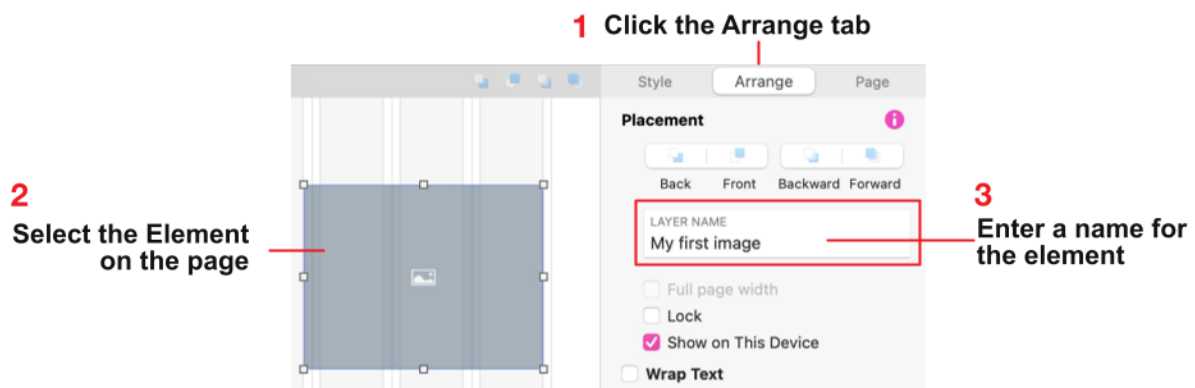
First Port of Call...
...Wireframing

O n the previous page we talked about using elements as placeholders to sketch out your web pages? Well, don't underestimate this trick – it's a real time-saver! Especially when you're crafting the visual vibe of your page as a whole, this feature is gold. **Sparkle** comes loaded with handy alignment tools to make sure everything sits just right and looks awesome.

Think of wire-framing as your springboard into the world of web design. It's like creating a blueprint that shows how your stuff will look on the page. To get the full picture, **Sparkle's** got a simple zoom tool - zoom out and voila! You can see how everything's coming together. It's like taking a step back to appreciate your masterpiece in the making!
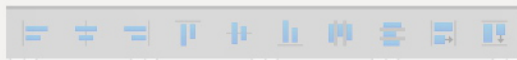
Sparkle's handy alignment tools. Just select the objects you want aligned, and click the alignment option you want.
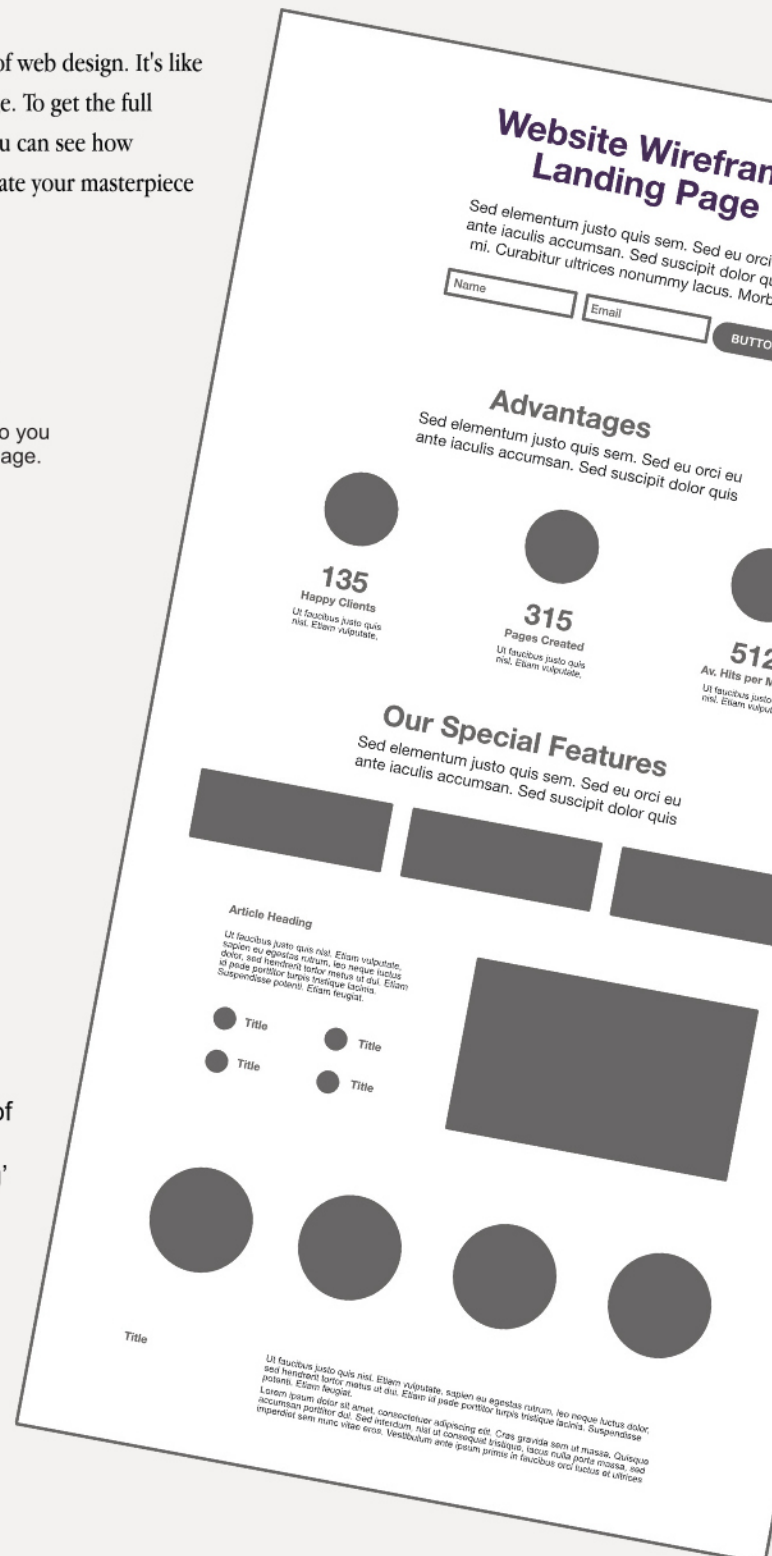
The zoom feature allows you to step back from your page design so you can get a bigger picture of how things look when arranged on the page. The Fit Entire Page option is a quick way to see how it's going.
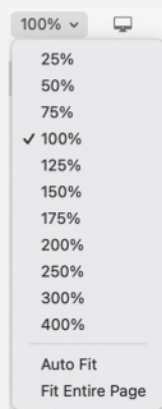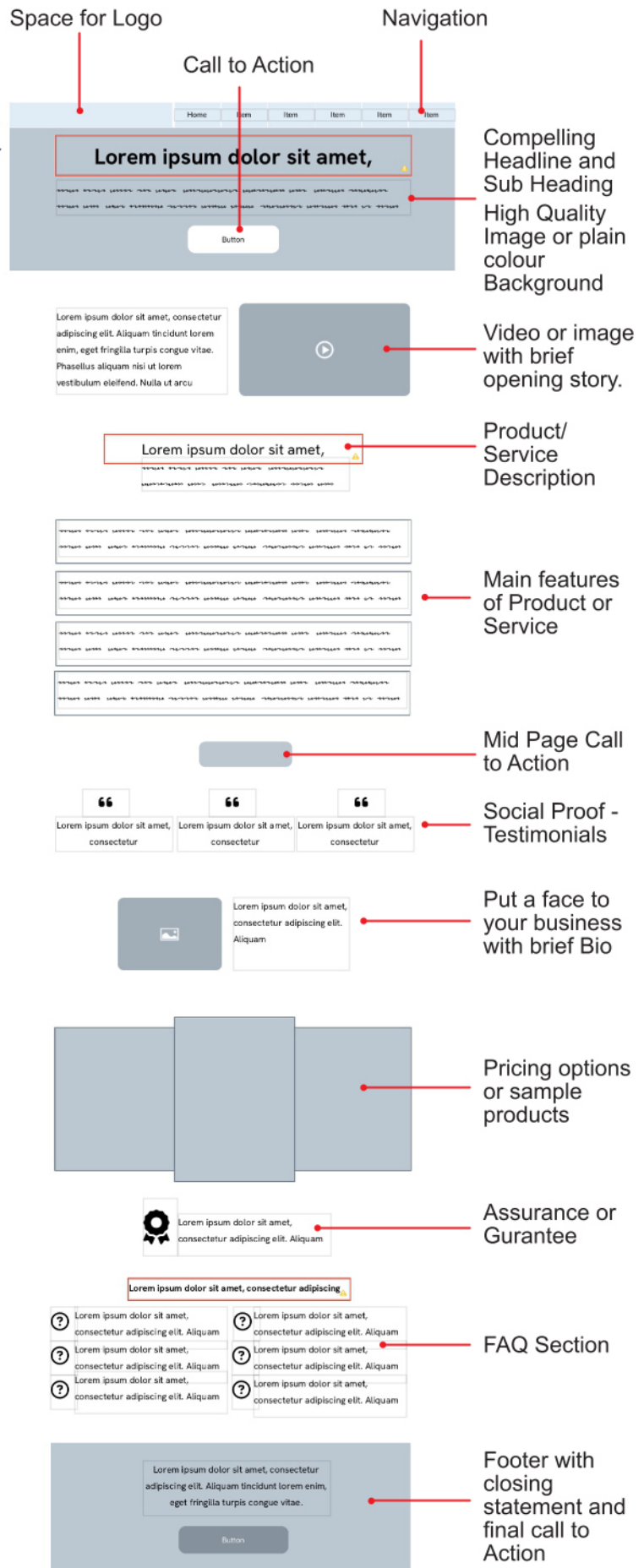
Some handy tips

When laying out your page, try to vary the width of various sections of the page. This helps to add interest to the page and stops it becoming 'boring' to look at.

Watch the line width for normal paragraphs of text - try to keep them to about half of the total page width so they are easy to read. Remember, there is a reason why newspapers and magazines arrange text in narrow columns!

Website Wireframe Landing Page

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Name

Email

BUTTO

Advantages

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Happy Clients
Ut faucibus justo quis nisl. Etiam vulputate,

315
Pages Created
Ut faucibus justo quis nisl. Etiam vulputate,

512
Av. Hits per M
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Our Special Features

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Article Heading

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Anatomy of a Landing Page

S o, let's talk landing pages! What exactly are they? Well, think of landing pages as the pages your site visitors land on after clicking a link – it could be from a search engine result or a social media link. Basically, it's the page that needs to deliver on the promise made by that link. Home pages are a common type of landing page, but they can be any page you choose as an entry point into your website.

The secret of landing pages? They need to give visitors a quick overview of what your business is all about. They're like a sneak peek into your world! Plus, they should have Calls to Action – you know, those buttons or links that prompt visitors to order products, sign up, or take any action you want them to. Check out the illustration on the right – it lays out the typical structure of a landing page and what it should include.

Notice all that 'white-space' in the wireframe? That's intentional! In today's fast-paced world, visitors don't have time to read your life story – they want the essentials and they want them fast. This layout shows the kind of structure visitors expect – a brief, concise snapshot that sparks their interest. It's like serving them a tantalising preview, inviting them to explore more if they're curious. The white-space enables the segregation of these small snippets of information into 'visual chunks'

You can visually segregate your page sections further by enclosing them in **Sparkle's** layout blocks. We'll be taking a look at those in the next section of this guide. For the time being, view layout blocks as containers for a single idea, concept or snippet of information. Layout blocks can be styled just like other elements of your page, so if you want each block to have a different background, or maybe some animation, it becomes a whole lot simpler with layout blocks.

Space for Logo

Navigation

Call to Action

Home · Item · Item · Item · Item · Item

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,

Button

Compelling Headline and Sub Heading

High Quality Image or plain colour Background

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla turpis congue vitae. Phasellus aliquam nisi ut lorem vestibulum eleifend. Nulla ut arcu

Video or image with brief opening story.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,

Product/ Service Description

Main features of Product or Service

Mid Page Call to Action

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Social Proof - Testimonials

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Put a face to your business with brief Bio

Pricing options or sample products

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Assurance or Gurantee

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FAQ Section

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Button

Footer with closing statement and final call to Action

Layout
Blocks

L et's dive deeper into **Sparkle's** magic – the layout block feature! Remember how we talked about creating segregated blocks of information on your page? That's where the layout blocks in **Sparkle** swoop in to save the day. These blocks aren't just for looks. Although you can give them a background colour, a gradient, or even throw in an image to make them stand out, they are also a really practical tool.

Once you create a layout block, it's like creating a magic container! All the elements inside it stay put. So, when you move the layout block, everything inside it moves along with it, like a group. Picture it as a container holding your content that you can move around without messing up what's inside.

Now, to create a layout block from your wireframe, it's a piece of cake. Just click and drag over the section of the page you want to contain within the block. Once you've selected all the elements, right-click and choose 'Move to Layout Block.' Boom! Your screen transforms to show the full-width block on your page. At first, it will show up with a standard wireframe colour, but don't worry – you can change that later. And here's a tip: notice those resize handles – a square one at the top and a diamond-shaped one at the bottom? That's how you spot your layout blocks easily amidst other elements on the page!" Here is how it will look:

It doesn't look very pretty at the moment, but we'll move on to styling on the next page. For the time being, make sure to give a name to your new Layout block - you can do this from the layers panel illustrated on the right, or move over to the right 'Arrange' tab and add the layer name there. In this example we've named the layout block 'Header'.
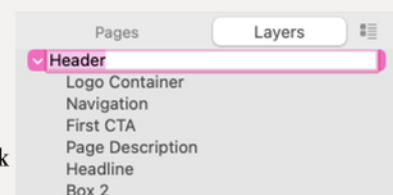
Styling Layout
Blocks & Elements

When styling elements, we're essentially replacing the standard styles of the wireframe element - lets start by getting rid of that wireframe box we set up to visualise where the header will be - we don't need it anymore - just select it and delete it. Next, we'll add an image to the background of the layout block. To do this, select the layout block and choose the Fill option on the right Style panel. Select fill with Stock Image and then select an appropriate image from the image pop-up. If the image doesn't look right, play with the positioning options to ensure it's placed exactly how you like it.

Options in Styling Panel

Positioning Options
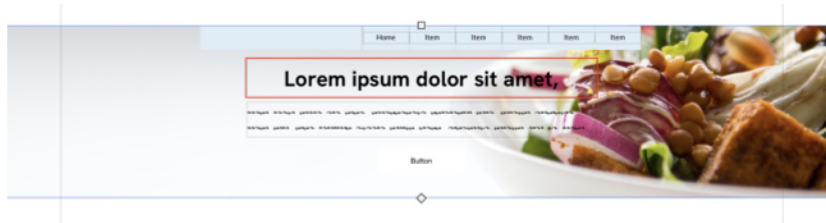
If you prefer a coloured background, or a gradient, just select the appropriate option from the style panel and apply it. In the example below, we've added a gradient background and styled all the text and the navigation links to be white.
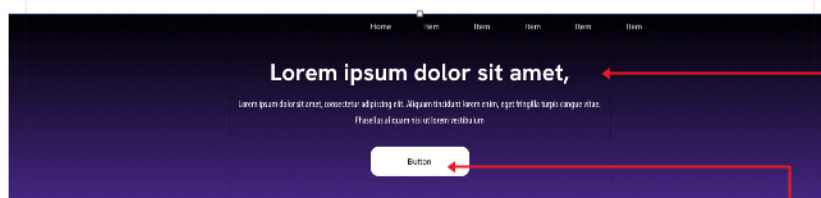
The one thing you may notice is that the layout block extends beyond the page boundaries. This is designed to extend background colour and images to the full width of a browser window, It's important to remember this when using images. You should use the positioning options to ensure that the focus of the image is where you want it to appear in the **PAGE**.

Once you're done styling your first Layout block, create additional blocks throughout your page - be sure to name the blocks and the elements contained within them. It will be a whole lot easier to locate and select all the various elements using **Sparkle's** layer panel on the left of the screen. When all your blocks are created, feel free to move them about to see how simple it is to change your page layout.

The Art
Of **Colour**

Choosing
Colours

When it comes to colours on websites – it's like painting a mood for your visitors. Different colours stir different feelings in people. Say you're making a website for a finance company – blue might be your go-to. It's all about trust and professionalism. But if you're aiming for something more elegant and feminine, maybe think pink! Now, imagine a lot of green – that's like a health or nature vibe. But here's the trick: whatever colours you choose, keep it simple and make sure they get along. Think of it like creating a team of colours that work together without any fights!

Now, imagine mixing up colours – like a deep midnight blue paired with a pop of orange. That's contrast! It's like making colours that really stand out from each other, adding that extra punch to your website's style.

Usually, a website sticks to one main colour and then adds another shade or a contrasting colour as a sidekick. Oh, and don't forget a couple more shades for backgrounds or text boxes. It's like giving each part of your page its own snazzy outfit. And remember, while picking your colours, don't leave out black and white – they're like the superheroes that bring it all together!

Take a peek at the mood boards on the right. They show how different colour schemes can totally change the vibe of a website. Now, making mood boards isn't a must, but they're a neat trick, especially when you're designing for a client. It gives them options to pick from.

And guess what? **Sparkle's** got your back if you're into making mood boards. You can whip them up right in the **Sparkle** interface! Just set up the basics – like the logo, swatch boxes, and text styles – then play with **Sparkle's** tools to give them different colours and font styles.

Quick tip: If you're using logos or icons, make sure they're in SVG format. That way, **Sparkle's** colour overlay option works like a charm to apply colours to these elements. It's like adding that extra splash of colour magic to your design.
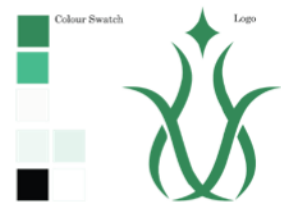
Colour Swatches In Sparkle

L et's move on to creating your own colour swatch in **Sparkle** – it's a breeze! Check out the default colour palette – it's got three basic sections, like you see on the right. Now, if you're up for a customised palette that matches your website's style, focus on changing just that first row of colours. Leave the other rows as they are.

The neutral colour row is pretty special – it's got your essentials like black and white, plus some other neutral shades that can be super handy. Think of it as your go-to for a clean, monochrome look.

And what about that wireframe row? Those colours automatically show up when you first add elements to your web pages. No need to change those – they're there to make things easy from the start!

Adjusting an element's colour on the page is straightforward. Just click on the element, and on the right styling sidebar of the interface you'll find options to change its colour. For some elements, you'd pick a fill colour or, for text elements, a font colour. You'll see colour selection options in various spots on the style sidebar, depending on what you're tweaking. But no matter the element you're styling, the same colour panel will always pop up, keeping things consistent and easy to manage. With the colour selector open, just click on the colour you want to use, and the element will change to use that colour.
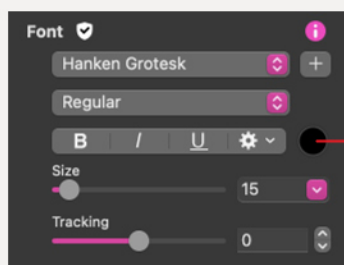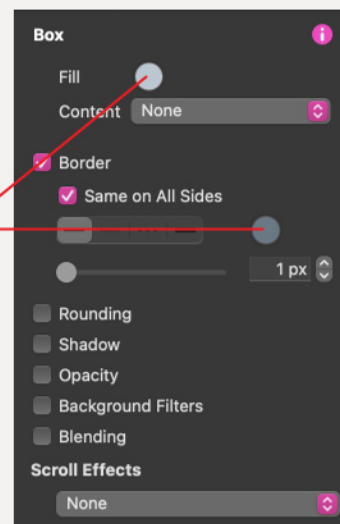
Creating a Custom
Swatch

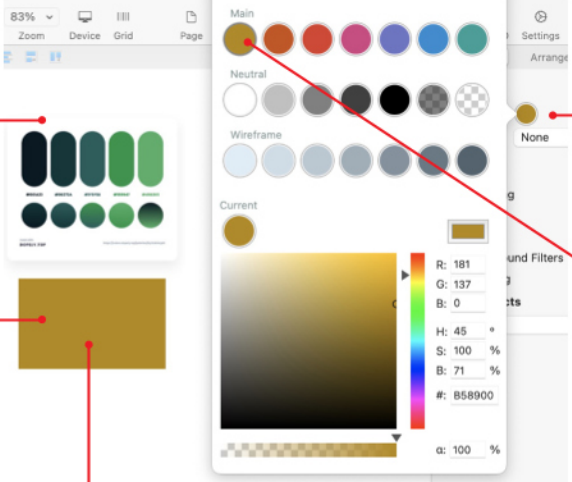## Step by Step to creating a custom swatch

First Step

1 Place an image containing your desired colours on the canvas

2 Add a standard box to the canvas

3 With the box selected, click on the fill option

4 The colour selector will now open. Select the first colour from the main line of colours

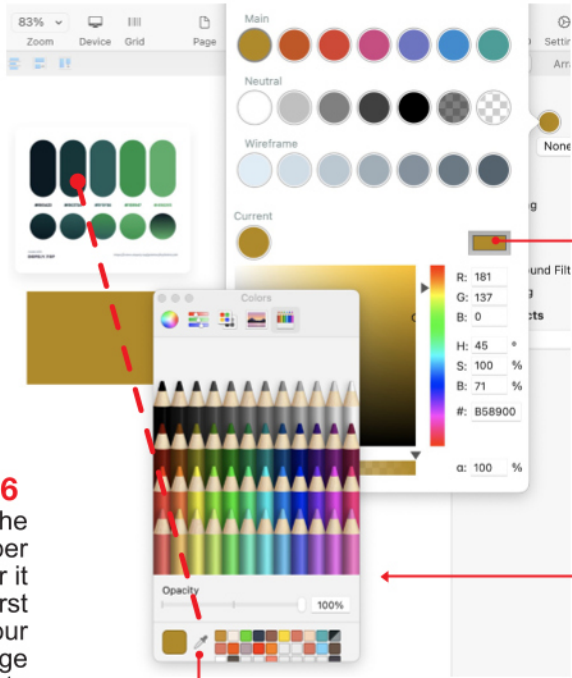Your box will now be filled with the selected colour

Second Step
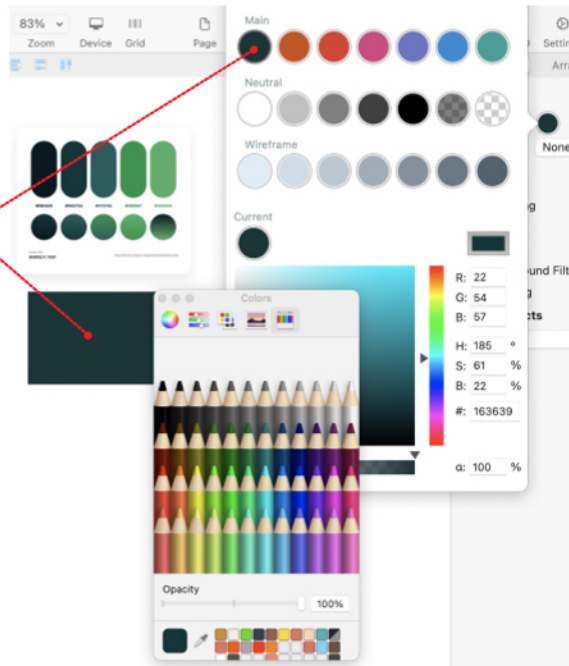
5 Click on the colour well to open the colour picker

6 Click on the eyedropper and hover it over the first colour of your palette image and click to select.

Your screen will now look something like this - your standard box will now be filled with your new colour, and it will replace the first colour of the standard colour palette.

At this point - while everything is still open on the canvas, you can select the next standard colour you want to replace, and repeat steps 4 through 6 from the previous page. When you're done, you will end up with a new palette that looks something like this. Your new palette will become part of your project file, so it will always be there when you next open the project. At this point, you can delete the standard box and your image from the canvas and start designing your brand new website.

Important Note: If you select the CURRENT swatch in the colour selector instead of one of the standard colours, and then change the colour, the change will only affect the selected object - a sort of one-off colour change. It will not be added to the standard colour swatch.
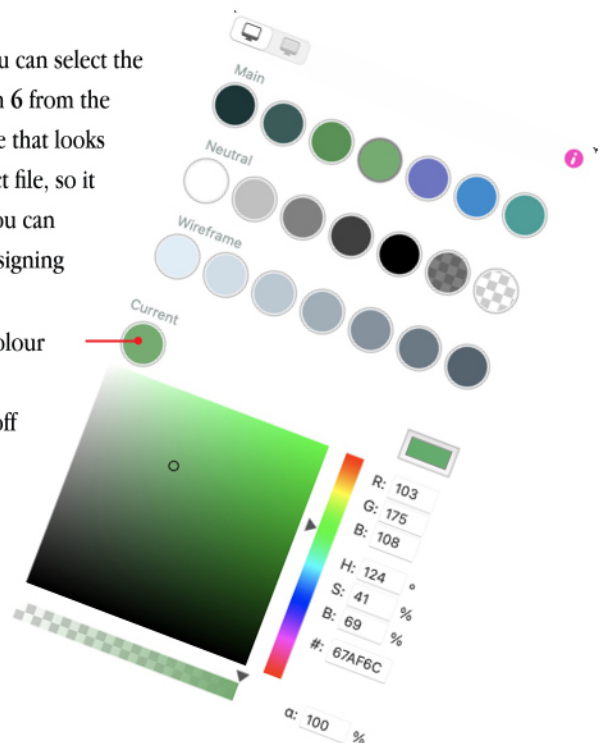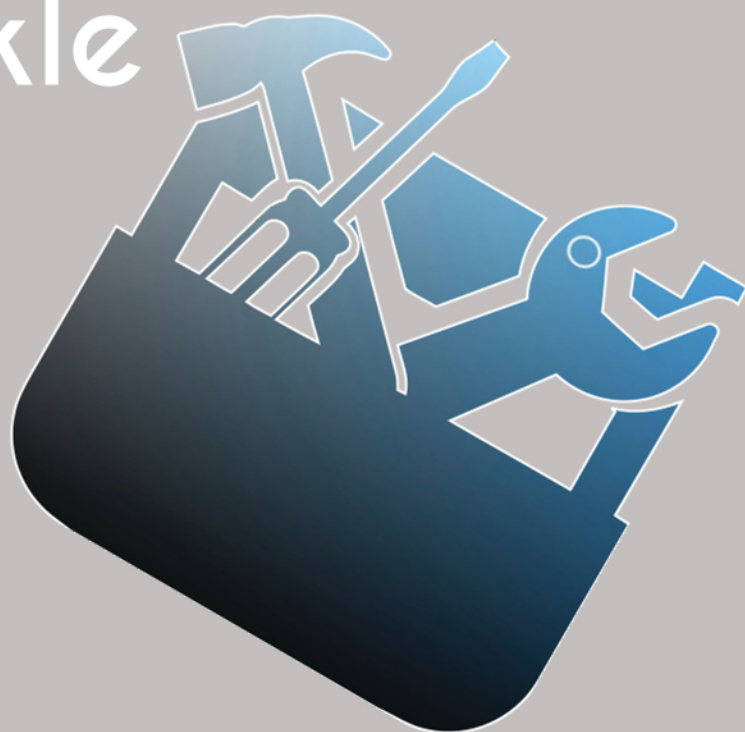
A Last Word about
Colour

L et's delve a bit deeper into the fascinating world of colour psychology. Remember how we mentioned that colours aren't just about looking pretty? They actually have the power to stir up emotions and set the mood for your website. Think about it – certain colours can evoke feelings of strength, reliability, or even bring a sense of calmness. It's like each colour has its own superpower in creating a special mood.

Check out the illustration on this page – it gives you a sneak peek into the basic mood traits associated with certain colours. Understanding this is crucial because the colours you choose should align with the subject matter of your website. See, if you pick the wrong colours, it's like sending out the wrong message entirely.

So, here's the deal – forget about choosing colours just because they're your favourites. Your visitors won't care much about that. What they really want is to feel confident that you know your stuff. And guess what? Colours play a big role in making that happen! They help you communicate without saying a word. So, when you're picking colours, choose wisely. It's like putting on the right outfit to make a great first impression!"

RED — LUST POWER EXCITEMENT LOVE

YELLOW — COMPETENCE HAPPINESS

GREEN — GOOD TASTE ENVY

BLUE — MASCULINE COMPETENCE HIGH QUALITY CORPORATE

PINK — SOPHISTICATION SINCERITY FEMININE

PURPLE — AUTHORITY SOPHISTICATION POWER

BROWN — RUGGEDNESS

BLACK — SOPHISTICATION EXPENSIVE

WHITE — HAPPINESS SINCERITY PURITY

MULTIPLE — DIVERSITY INCLUSION
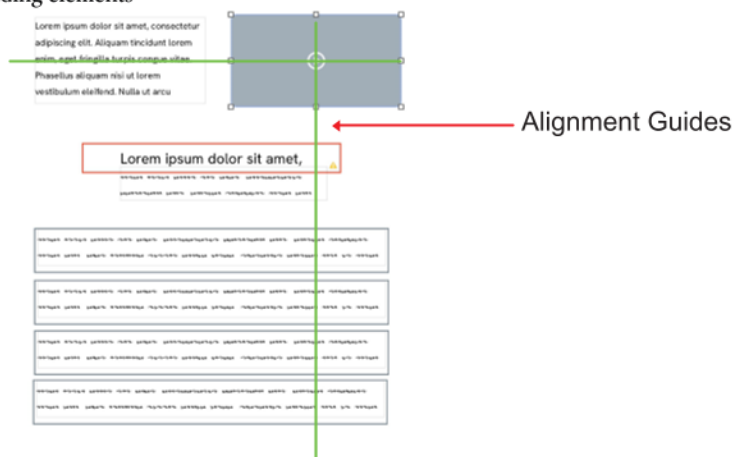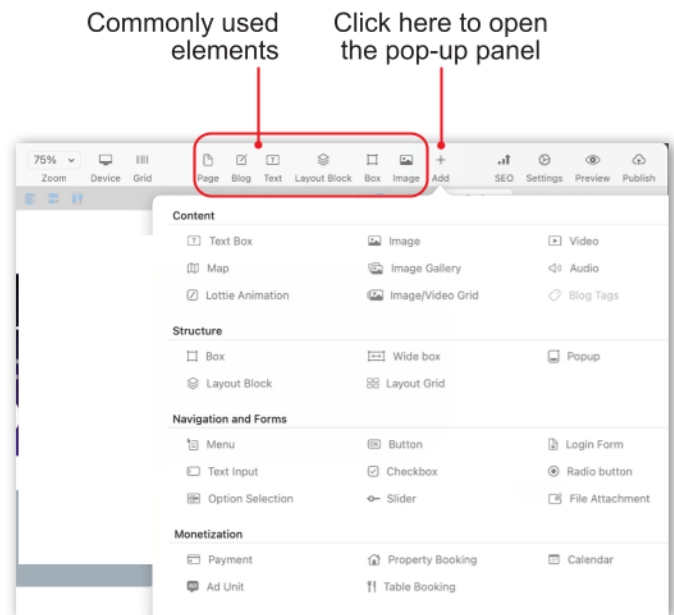
Your **Sparkle**

Toolbox

The Tools of
Sparkle
Web Design

I n this section, we're diving into the treasure trove of tools waiting for you in **Sparkle**. Picture this – almost everything you need to place on a page is neatly tucked into a convenient pop-up panel. Just click on the **Add (+)** icon at the top toolbar of the interface, and voila! This handy pop-up unveils a wealth of options. The top toolbar also includes some of the more commonly used elements like boxes, images, text, and more. No need to keep rummaging through multiple menus – it's all right there for quick access.
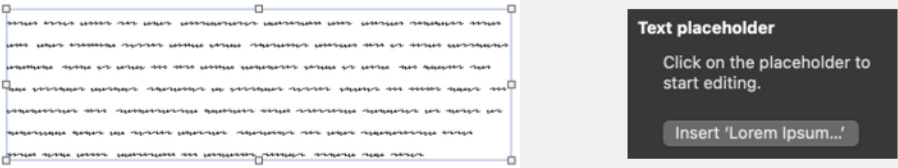
Placing an object onto your canvas is a breeze. A simple click adds it to your page at a default size and spot. Then comes the fun part – resizing and positioning! Move it around and resize until it's in just the right place. Oh, and don't forget to give your element a Layer Name in the 'Arrange' tab on the right sidebar. It's like giving each element its own identity!

Now, here's a tip – before diving into styling, focus on setting up the wireframe structure of your entire page using **Sparkle's** handy alignment and positioning tools. You can visually size and align elements, thanks to **Sparkle's** context alignment guides. These nifty lines pop up as you move elements, making it super easy to align everything swiftly with other elements on the page. It's like having a built-in assistant for quick and effortless alignment!

In summary, all your main tools for adding elements to your page are in the Top Toolbar. Your styling and positioning tools are in the right side panel, and your pages and layers are displayed in the left side panel.

Commonly used elements

Click here to open the pop-up panel

Alignment Guides

Objects
Overview

| Object	What it Does
Text Box	This is one of the commonly used tools in web page design. When it's first added to the canvas it will show simulated Paragraph text. Clicking in the box will clear the simulated text and allow you to replace it with your own text, which can be styled how you want. If you want to show actual text and style it before you have finalised your content, you can fill the text box with 'Lorum ipsum' text. Just click on the button illustrated above in the styles panel.
Image	This puts an image placeholder on the page. When the placeholder is selected you can add an image from the right style panel. An alternative way to add an image is to simply drag an image from your computer directly onto the canvas.
Video	This puts a video placeholder on the page. When the placeholder is selected you can add a video from the right style panel. Videos can be on your computer, or hosted on a remote server, such as video sharing sites like YouTube or Vimeo
Map	This puts a Google Map placeholder on the page. When the placeholder is selected you can add map coordinates from the right style panel. When first placed, you may see a standard message stating that you need an API key from Google. If you're making a wireframe page, simply change the map type in the right style panel to 'Placeholder' as illustrated above.

| Object	What it Does

Image Gallery

The image gallery allows you to add a number of images using the options in the right style panel. Your selected images will be displayed like a slide show/carousel. Optionally, images can be made to open in a 'Lightbox' when clicked. There is also an option for displaying an automatic slideshow
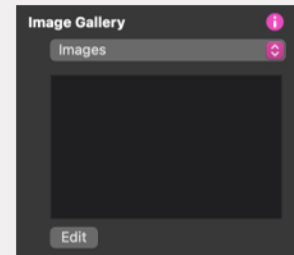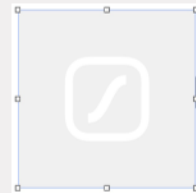
Audio
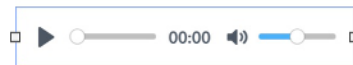
This puts an audio player on your page. When selected, you can add an audio file through the options in the right style panel.
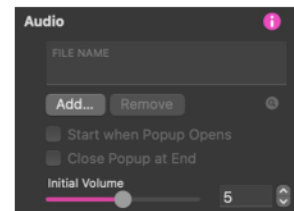
Lottie Animation

Lottie animations are animated graphics which are small in file size and can be scaled up and down in size without quality loss. Whilst Sparkle doesn't create the actual animations, it does allow for the inclusion of Lotties in your web pages by using this object placeholder.
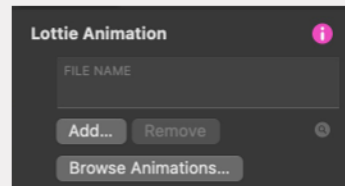
Image/Video Grid

This is a very versatile tool with lots of options. It's essentially a layout block containing placeholders for videos and images. You can add as many images/videos as needed using the options in the right style panel - the grid will automatically extend with more rows as required. This tool also gives you lots of styling options. Image content within the grid can be made to open in a lightbox when clicked. This is a great way to showcase a number of images in a single, simple to use container.

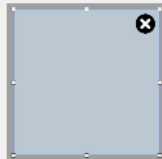| Object	What it Does
⬚ **Box**	 This is another commonly used tool. It creates a simple rectangle shape that can be positioned and styled however you like. In wire-framing, it can also be used to simulate page sections and background images. Its typical use in web design is to create coloured blocks as backgrounds for text or page sections. They can be filled with solid colours, gradients or images.
↔ **Wide box**	 This is much the same as a normal box except that it extends to the full width of the web browser. Typically, you would use such a box where you want a page section to extend beyond the width of the actual web page. Navigation, headers and footers are the sort of sections that will benefit from the use of wide boxes. They can be filled with solid colour, gradients or images.
▢ **Popup**	 **Popup** ⓘ ✓ Normal Modal / Lightbox Fixed In Window This tool creates a sort of mini web-page in which you can add any content you wish. However, unlike other objects, a pop-up is triggered by some other action, such as clicking a button on the page. When you create a popup, it remains visible on the canvas. When you're done creating, click any other page element from the layers panel to remove it from view. You can always go back to editing the popup by selecting it from the layers panel.
≋ **Layout Block**	 We've already touched on the subject of layout blocks. These are containers that look like wide boxes . The visual difference being the bottom resize handle being a diamond shape instead of a square. They can be used and styled in exactly the same way as wide boxes - the main difference being that everything you place in the box remains in place even if you move the block around on the page. This is one of our favourite tools in the line-up, so you should use it as much as possible.
⊞ **Layout Grid**	This looks and acts the same as the image/video grid, except that it can be used for text, or mixed content instead of just images and video. You can still add video and images as part of the content in the grid, but it will usually have a number of different element within each grid container. Because this is also a layout block, everything you place in the grid will remain in situ if you move the block.

Object	What it Does

Menu

This is your goto tool for creating navigation for your website. It can be set to add pages automatically from your website, or you can add page links manually. Adding menu items is done from the style panel on the right of the interface. Click the '+' icon to add more links, or click the folder icon to add sub-menu items.
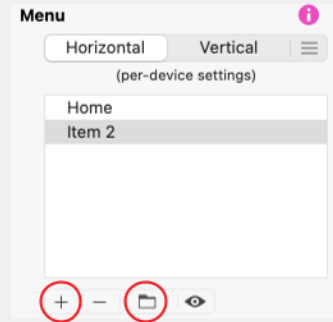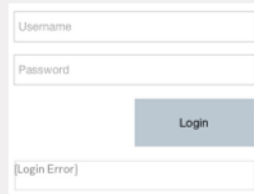
Button

Buttons are the life-blood of web pages. They are an essential feature that allow visitors to interact with your page. They can be set up to perform a wide range of functions - we'll delve into some of those functions in the advanced section of this guide. All you have to know for now is that buttons can be styled just like any other element in your web page from the styles panel.

Login Form

This is a quick and simple login form already created for you - we'll talk more about forms and how they work later in the guide.

Text Input
Checkbox
File Attachment
Option Selection
### Radio button
Slider

These are all elements used in the creation of forms for your website. We'll go into more specific details on how to use these elements in the section dealing with forms later in this guide.

Payment

This element allows to add a payment system to your website. You can choose from a variety of payment gateways from the styles panel on the right of the interface.
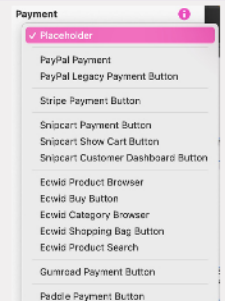
Object	What it Does
🏠 Property Booking 🍴 Table Booking 📅 Calendar AD Ad Unit	These elements create placeholders on your page in which information can be displayed from third-party, on-line service providers. In order to use these elements you will have to set up accounts with the relevant service providers. More information about this type of integration can be found in Sparkle's online documentation.
📷 Instagram 📘 Facebook 𝕏 X	These elements display placeholders that link to your social media accounts. They can be set up as links to your profile age, or be set to display specific content from your social media accounts.
⟨/⟩ Embed	This object allows you to add third-party embed code to your page. For example, if you use a third-party forms processor, they may give you some embed code to allow your forms to be displayed in your page. This is the tool you would use to get the code into your page.
Scroll location	This is a marker that can be set within your page to signify a location that you want visitors to scroll to when they click a button or other type of link. Essentially, clicking the link will scroll the page to the specified location. This is a handy feature for long, single page websites in which menu items can be linked to certain parts of the page. It saves your visitors having to scroll up and down long pages to find the information they want.
🔍 Site Search	This element is a simple search box that you can place on your page. It allows visitors to search for a specific word or phrase on your site

A Quick Tour Of **Sparkle's** Styling Panel

Now that we've glimpsed the array of elements that can be used in your page, let's dive into the art of styling them. This takes place on the right side of the interface within the Style panel. Here's the thing – the styling options you'll find here will vary depending on the element you're tinkering with, but some features will be common across multiple elements. So, let's kick off by dissecting a simple text box and exploring the available options.

Text styling typically involves picking a font, adjusting its size, and choosing a colour. Check out the illustration on the right for a quick look at these styling options. The first two sections – font and size – are pretty straightforward, much like what you'd encounter in any word processor.

Ever heard of the HTML tag option? It's a crucial part of web design, as it signals to search engines the importance of the text on your page. We'll delve deeper into this option on the next page, unlocking its significance.

At the top of the panel, there's a style dropdown (*shown here as 'Body'*). This nifty dropdown offers a range of pre-made styles ready to spruce up your text. Once you've selected a style, any tweaks you make within the panel trigger a couple of buttons at the top. They're like this:

Apply changes   Revert to style

These buttons offer you the choice to update the selected style with your modifications so you can use it again, or you can keep the original style unchanged

---

Select a font, its size, style and colour and its tracking (*the space between letters*)

Choose how to style the paragraph as a whole

Add an HTML Tag

Add special formatting

Transform your text box into a scrollable text box

| Style | Arrange | Page |

Body ▼

Font ✓   ⓘ

Hanken Grotesk ⬍ +
Regular ⬍
B | *I* | U | ⚙ ⌄   ⚫

Size
――――――●――――――――   15 ⬍

Tracking
―――――――――●――   0 ⬍

Paragraph

Alignment   ▤ ▤ ▤ ▤   ⇄
Line height   1,4 ⬍
First line   0 px ⬍
Space before   0 px ⬍
Space after   0 px ⬍
HTML tag   p ⬍
☐ Quote
☐ List
☐ Effect
☐ Scrollable

On Click
Do Nothing ⬍

Scroll Effects
None ⬍

The importance of
HTML Tags
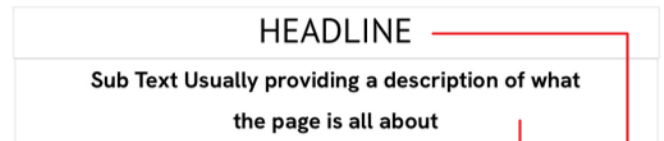
As highlighted earlier, HTML tags hold immense significance in web design by providing crucial clues to search engines, hinting at the importance and relevance of specific information within a page. These tags are assigned to text elements and serve as guideposts for search engines scouring through content.

Typically, most text on a page adopts the 'p' tag, denoting paragraph text. However, for headings and subheadings, different tags come into play, such as 'H1' or 'H2'. Here's the deal – the lower the number in the 'H' tag, the greater the importance or relevance attributed to that text.

When structuring a web page, you might fancy a catchy heading that doesn't entirely encapsulate the page's essence. On the flip side, a subheading could offer a more precise description of the page's content. Hence, assigning an 'H1' tag to the subheading and possibly an 'H2' tag to the larger heading is a smart move. This is where tag assignment becomes your secret weapon. In the styles panel, you can easily select the most pertinent text and assign it to any heading level you desire, enhancing the clarity and relevance of your content for search engines. Above is an illustrated example of tag assignment.

When assigning HTML tags its important to remember that you only want ONE H1 tag per page - you can have as many of the other tags as you wish.

Now lets look at legibility.

Font size isn't just a detail – it's a pivotal element in shaping your web page designs, particularly when crafting layouts for various devices. Luckily, **Sparkle** empowers you to tailor font sizes uniquely for each device variant. This flexibility ensures your content looks polished and legible across different screens.

Understanding the best practices for font sizing can significantly impact your design's effectiveness. On the upcoming page, we've compiled some helpful tips to guide you through this aspect. These tips encompass essential insights, including the optimal font sizes for different screen resolutions and device types. You'll discover how to maintain readability while ensuring your content remains visually appealing and user-friendly on various devices. Consider it your compass to navigate the intricate world of font sizing, helping you craft web pages that captivate and engage visitors effortlessly.

Text Legibility Guide

The ideal font size relies on the viewer's distance from the screen. While there are standard guidelines, it's crucial to test your design across various screen sizes to guarantee a delightful and easily readable experience. Tailoring font sizes based on different viewing distances and screen dimensions ensures an optimal reading experience, fostering comfort and readability for your audience across all devices.

15 - 19 pt

16 - 20 pt

12 - 16 pt
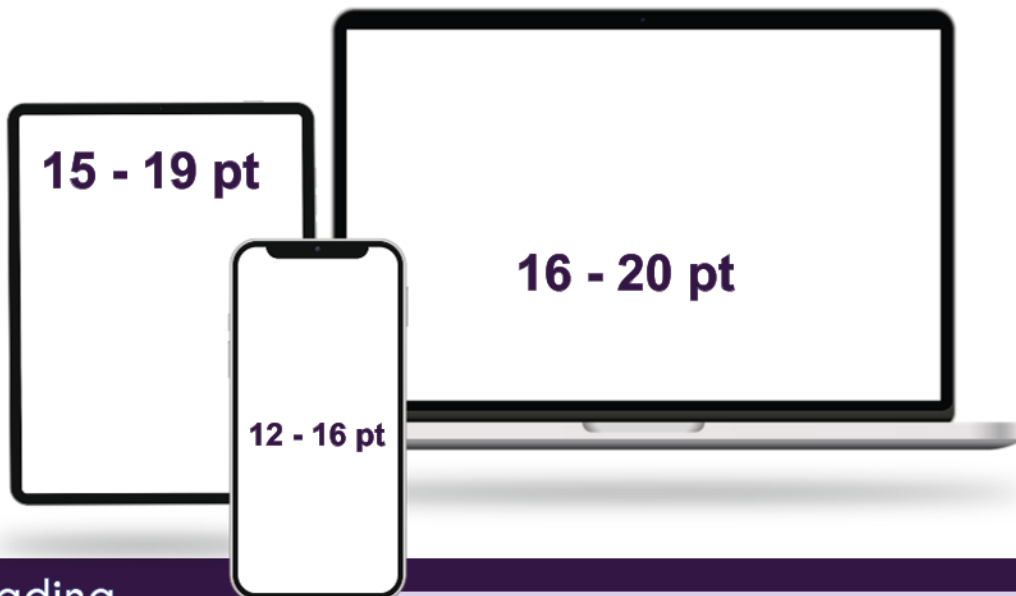
Leading

Leading is the amount of space between lines of text and it depends on the chosen typeface. The general rule is the smaller the typeface, the tighter the leading. In **Sparkle**, Line height is used instead of the term leading.

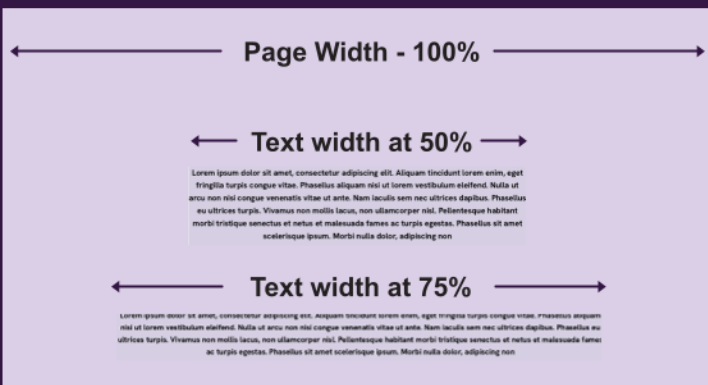**12 - 18pt Font Size**
Line Height 1.2 lines

20 - 26pt Font Size
Line Height 1.4 lines

For font sizes above 26 pt, the text is likely to be single line text. But, where you may use multi-line text with large fonts, adjust the line height visually.

Line Length

The number of letters on a line of text can contribute to reader fatigue, so keep the line length to 45 - 75 characters per line. As a rough guide, text boxes should not span more than 50% - 75% of page width.

← Page Width - 100% →

← Text width at 50% →

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla turpis congue vitae. Phasellus aliquam nisi ut lorem vestibulum eleifend. Nulla ut arcu non nisi congue venenatis vitae ut ante. Nam iaculis sem nec ultrices dapibus. Phasellus eu ultrices turpis. Vivamus non mollis lacus, non ullamcorper nisl. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Phasellus sit amet scelerisque ipsum. Morbi nulla dolor, adipiscing non

← Text width at 75% →

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla turpis congue vitae. Phasellus aliquam nisi ut lorem vestibulum eleifend. Nulla ut arcu non nisi congue venenatis vitae ut ante. Nam iaculis sem nec ultrices dapibus. Phasellus eu ultrices turpis. Vivamus non mollis lacus, non ullamcorper nisl. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Phasellus sit amet scelerisque ipsum. Morbi nulla dolor, adipiscing non

QUICK TIP: Use Sparkle's column guides to set text box width in a 12 column grid, 6 columns will be 50% and 9 columns will be 75%

Other **Styling** Options

Sparkle offers an array of styling options for virtually every element you add to your pages. Here, we showcase the spectrum of these options. In many traditional web design applications, achieving such styling would entail intricate CSS coding. Thankfully, **Sparkle** does the heavy lifting on the coding front, liberating us to focus on intuitive and creative styling. Say goodbye to coding complexities and embrace effortless design freedom with **Sparkle.**

Box

Fill

Content ✓ None
Gradient
Image
Vector (SVG)
Stock Image
Built-in pattern
Custom pattern

☑ Border

☑ Sam

| Style | Arrange | Page |

Box

Fill

Content   None

Deselect this Option
To style each side of
the border separately.

☑ Border

☑ Same on All Sides

1 px

Select this dropdown to
reveal all the various fill
options

☑ Rounding

4 px

☑ Border

Same on All Sides

1 px

1 px

1 px

1 px

☑ Shadow

Select shadow
colour here.

☑ Rounding

158 px

You can apply rounding to
all corners, or selected
corners only

Move this centre point to
apply shadow interactively.

Horizontal   0 px

Vertical   2 px

Blur   4 px

Spread   0 px

Use these settings to
apply precise shadow
options.

☑ Opacity

100 %

Extra Options For **Images**
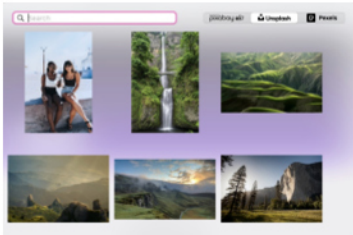
The Stock Image option reveals a pop-up for image selection from 3 popular image sites when the select button is clicked.

Placeholder
Bitmap (PNG, JPEG, GIF)
Vector (SVG)
Live Photo
✓ Stock Image
Instagram
From Network Location

Style	Arrange	Page

Image ⓘ

Stock Image ⬍

Select →

Unsplash photo by:
Qingbao Meng →

TITLE

DESCRIPTION

☑ Stretch Fill Fit

Images are copyright free, but the depicted content may be protected, for example people, objects, places or brands.

☐ Edit Background

Note: background removal is optimized for foreground subjects with a good contrast over the background.

☐ Border
☐ Rounding
☐ Shadow
☐ Opacity
☐ Filters

Click the select button to choose your image - either from your computer, an online service, or from a network location (URL).
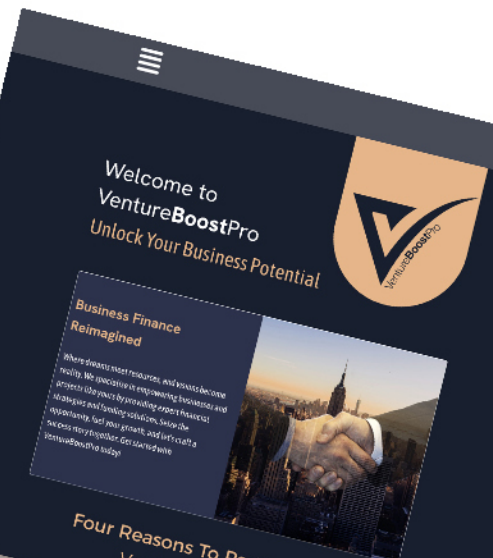
Choose how to align your image within the image box.

For images with a clear contrast between foreground and background, this option will attempt to remove the background from the image.

Select this dropdown to reveal all the various image options

You can force your image to stretch to fit or fill the image box

Same Website...
...Different **Styling**

Experience the true potential of **Sparkle's** styling prowess through a side-by-side comparison of the same site, each designed with distinct styling choices. Both versions, crafted within **Sparkle**, boast entirely different aesthetics, showcasing the diverse range of styling options available. One exudes a more subdued, monochromatic vibe, while the other radiates vibrancy and dynamism. Throughout both designs, we meticulously

adhered to fundamental text width rules, prioritising readability above all. The semi-rounded rectangles adorning the headers were simply fashioned using regular boxes, with specific corners artistically rounded. Additionally, those eye-catching hexagonal shapes featured in the blue-themed version were effortlessly created in Apple Pages and seamlessly integrated into the Sparkle page via a simple copy-paste manoeuvre.

Let's Talk
Arrangement

Within the right styling panel, you'll notice a couple of additional tabs – namely, 'Arrange' and 'Page'. For now, let's delve into the capabilities of the 'Arrange' tab. This tab serves as your got-to place for positioning options, offering control over the size, placement, and even rotation angles of individual elements. For most users, arranging and sizing elements visually is a breeze, thanks to **Sparkle's** underlying grid and its handy snapping options. However, for those seeking precise control, the 'Arrange' tab houses a number of precision tools.

Moreover, this tab determines where elements appear in your website. Suppose you wish to display an element exclusively on the device screen you're currently working on – a simple checkbox facilitates this customisation. Similarly, when designing essential components like navigation blocks or footer sections that deserve visibility across all pages, a straightforward checkbox simplifies this process, ensuring consistent display throughout the website.

Additionally, you can use this tab to ensure that elements are stacked correctly. Clearly, if you have text or a logo that you want displayed over a coloured text box - you need the text to be in front of that box - not behind it. The placement section of the arrange tab allows you to easily achieve the desired result without worrying about things called 'Z' indexes, if you don't know what 'Z' indexes are - don't worry - in **Sparkle** that all remains terminology that can stay in the 'technical' realms of website development, and shouldn't concern you at all.

Another way to stack the elements of a page in the correct order is by using the layers panel over on the left side of the interface (*illustrated at bottom-right*). In the layer panel you can drag any named element up and down the list to rearrange the layer order - that's one of the reasons why it's so important to name your elements - so you know what each one is, avoiding having to hunt them down on the canvas - simply click on an element name and it will highlight on the canvas.

These options allow you to place elements towards the front or back of the canvas.

Here you can choose to wrap text around an object

These settings give you precise control over the size position and rotation of the element.

Style	Arrange	Page

Placement ⓘ

| Back | Front | Backward | Forward |

LAYER NAME
Box 15

☐ Full page width
☐ Lock
☑ Show on This Device
☐ **Wrap Text**

Position and Size

HORIZONTAL
435 px

VERTICAL
1045 px

WIDTH
250 px

HEIGHT
150 px

ROTATION
0 °

Visibility
⦿ Show on this page only
○ Show on all pages in this section
○ Show on all pages
☐ Move with Page Bottom
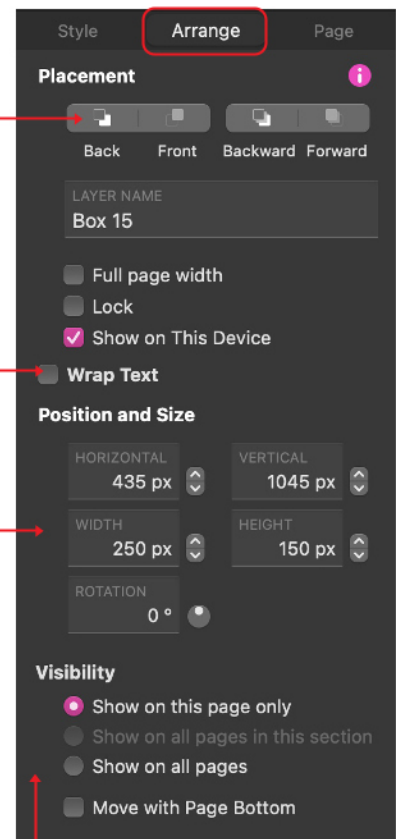
The visibility options let you decide on where an element should be displayed - on all pages, this page only or to have the element move with the bottom of the page (*useful for footer elements*)

Sparkle's Layers Panel

Pages	Layers

∨ Header
 Logo Container
 Navigation
 First CTA
 Page Description
 Headline
 Box 2
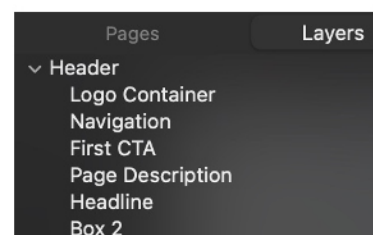
Time to Check The **Page** Tab

T he 'Page' tab located on the right-hand side of the interface is a space where you configure crucial page-specific details. These details are instrumental as search engines rely on them to furnish relevant results to users seeking information. Let's demystify each component of the 'Page' tab for better clarity.

Firstly, the 'Page Type' signifies what the specific page is, like the Home Page in our instance. It's automatically assigned the filename 'index.html'. This page serves as the default landing page when someone enters your website's URL into a browser. However, there are two other vital fields: 'Page Title' and 'Page Description'. These collectively shape what search engines show in search results about your page's content.

Consider a typical Google search result for 'Business Finance'. The blue line of text is actually the page title, while the smaller black text is the page description.

Universidad de Cádiz
https://economicas.uca.es › uploads › 2017/07 PDF ⋮

Introduction to business finance
3.6 Financial equilibrium and simple interest. Page 2. 1st year. Introduction to **Business Finance**. Semester 1. II. FINANCIAL INCOME. Lesson 4. Financial incomes ...
3 pages

This presentation aids searchers in determining the relevance of the page link, making these details critical. Therefore, providing accurate information within **Sparkle's** 'Page' tab holds immense significance. Neglecting this can prompt search engines to scour the page for relevant information, leading to potentially unhelpful results for users. For instance, if a site owner (*in this example using Wordpress*) overlooks page information, search results might appear incomplete, irrelevant or totally non-sensical, as in this example.

iro2b
Welcome to WordPress. This is your first post. Edit or delete it, then start writing! Continue ReadingHello world!

Page Title is where you enter a meaningful title for your page. It will also show up in the browser window of your website.
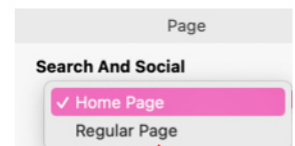
Here you can choose a Home page or a Regular page. If you are making a regular page, be sure to give it a meaningful Filename.
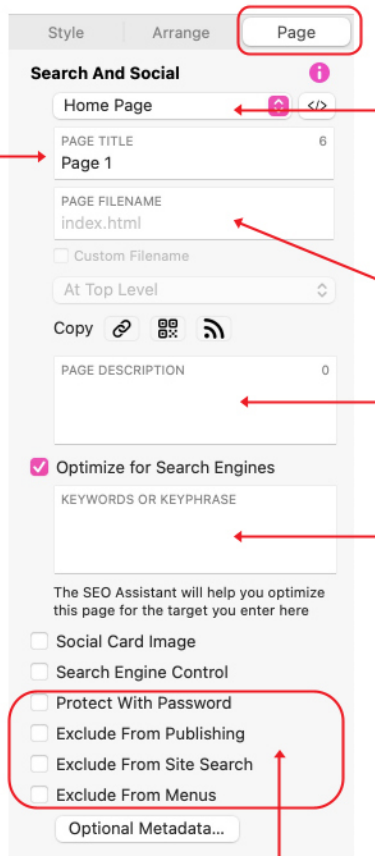
Enter your page description here.

Here you can enter keywords or phrases. These are the terms that people may use when searching for your type of website.

These options allow you to protect the page with a password - maybe a page for administrators or members only. You can also exclude a page from publishing - normally during site development. Another option is excluding the page from site searches, or from appearing in your navigation structure.

Responsive
Layouts

Designing for Different **Devices**

Approaching web page layouts for different device sizes encompasses varying methodologies. Some opt to begin with mobile design, progressively advancing to larger devices, while others adopt the reverse. While neither approach is inherently 'correct,' it's vital to acknowledge that element repositioning and resizing will likely be necessary for each device screen. Fortunately, **Sparkle** seamlessly accommodates both design directions with equal simplicity.

To initiate, click on the 'Device' icon situated on top of the interface. This action unveils a pop-up displaying the currently configured devices. To incorporate a new device, click 'Customise Device Layouts,' prompting a secondary pop-up where you can select and add the desired device to your project. Opt for 'Custom Layout' and voila! The selected device becomes available for utilisation. Additionally, you'll encounter two crucial options: one to synchronise text attributes across devices and the other to flag a layout review alert post-changes – it's advisable to keep both options checked for optimal design consistency.

As you switch to the selected device size, your page will scale accordingly. If you initially designed for desktop, elements will proportionally scale down. Conversely, if your initial design was for mobile, elements will scale upwards upon creating versions for larger screens. Don't worry about things like legibility at this stage - the important thing is to get ALL the elements transferred over to your new device layout. We will fix things as we progress through the following pages. In the example we show here, we will be designing a mobile site from a desktop site (*scaling downwards*).

The first thing that should be done is to set an appropriate grid for the device you intend designing for. For most projects, we like to design our sites based on a 12 column grid, regardless of the device size. However, **Sparkle** does allow you to set a different grid layout for each device variant if that's what you prefer. The grid setting can be accessed from the Grid Icon at the top of the interface.
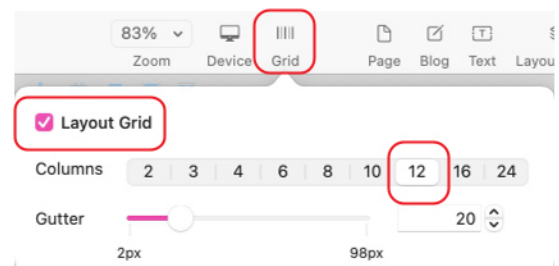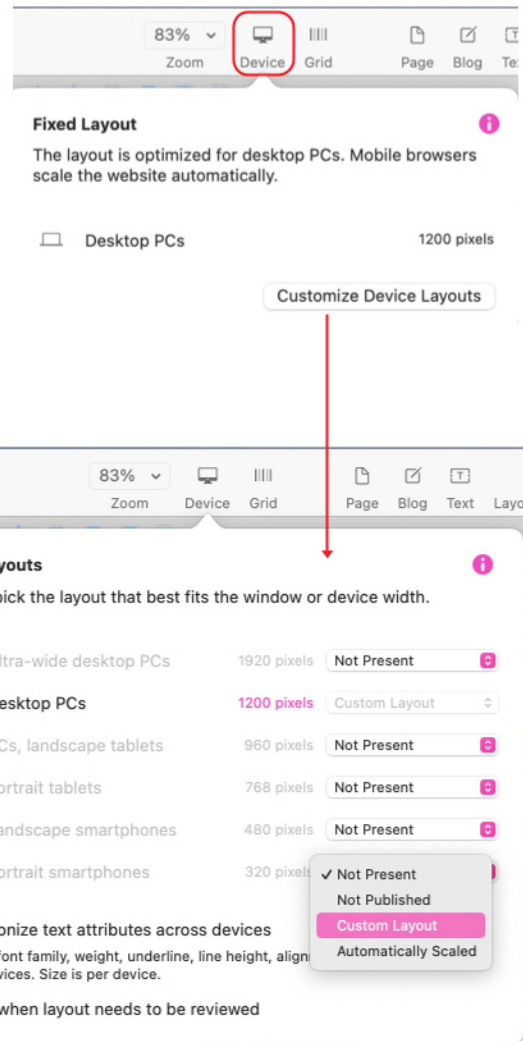
Setting Up The **Page**

The first thing you'll notice is that the text has been scaled down to a level that makes it difficult to read. This has to be corrected by enlarging fonts. However, to do this effectively, we have to resize and reposition the elements on the page. So, the first thing we need to do is extend the length of the whole page, to give us plenty of room to work. We do this by dragging the page resize handle at the bottom of the page. This is what it looks like.

Extend the page length by at least twice its current length. This should give you plenty of space to start with. Next, it's time to start moving things around. Notice on the layers panel on the left of the interface, we see all our layout blocks. Start by selecting all the blocks except the header and navigation. This will show the chosen blocks selected on the canvas. Simply grab the blocks and move them down the page, leaving just the navigation and header at the top of the canvas.

Select the blocks you want to move
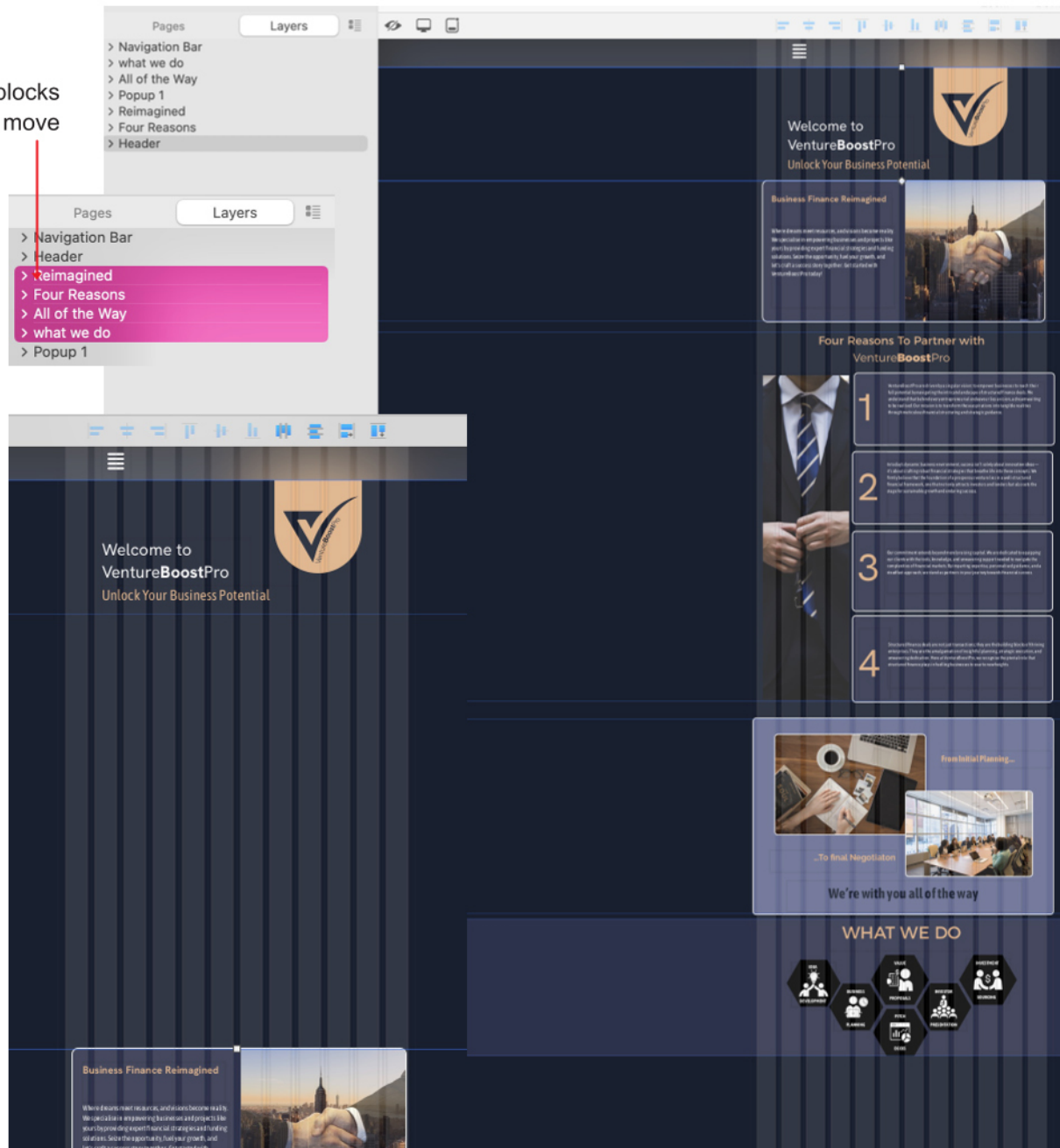
On the canvas, move the selected blocks down the page

You've now created a large space between the header block and everything below it. You can now extend the size of the header layout block by dragging its diamond-shape resize handle as illustrated on the right. At this point you can select the individual elements within the layout block and start changing font sizes and positions. This is what we end up with.

Sub Heading font size changed to 12pt. And moved to the top of the block

Logo and coloured box resized and positioned to better suit the space.

Welcome Message increased font size to 28pt and repositioned to better fit the space

At this point, you can reduce the height of the layout block by dragging the diamond-shaped resize handle back up the page. You can now move onto the next layout block - simply move it up the page directly under the header block. Make this layout block bigger and apply changes to the elements within it. Repeat the process until all the blocks have been changed. This is how our mobile page looks after all the changes have been applied.
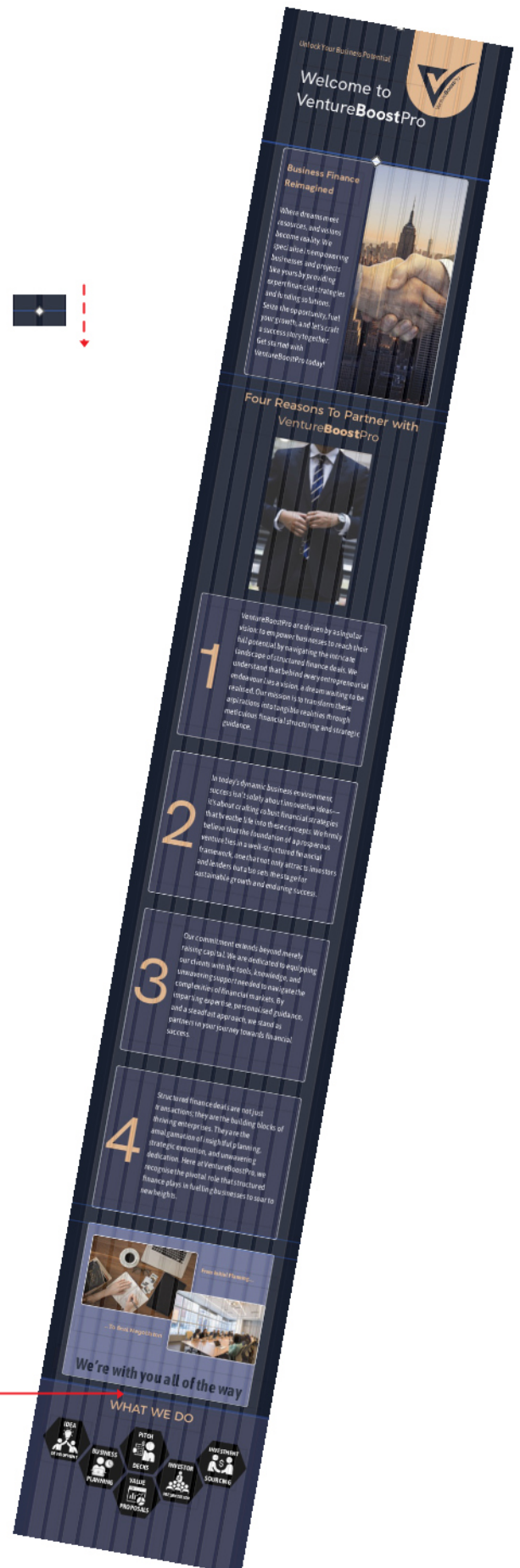
Navigation
And Menus
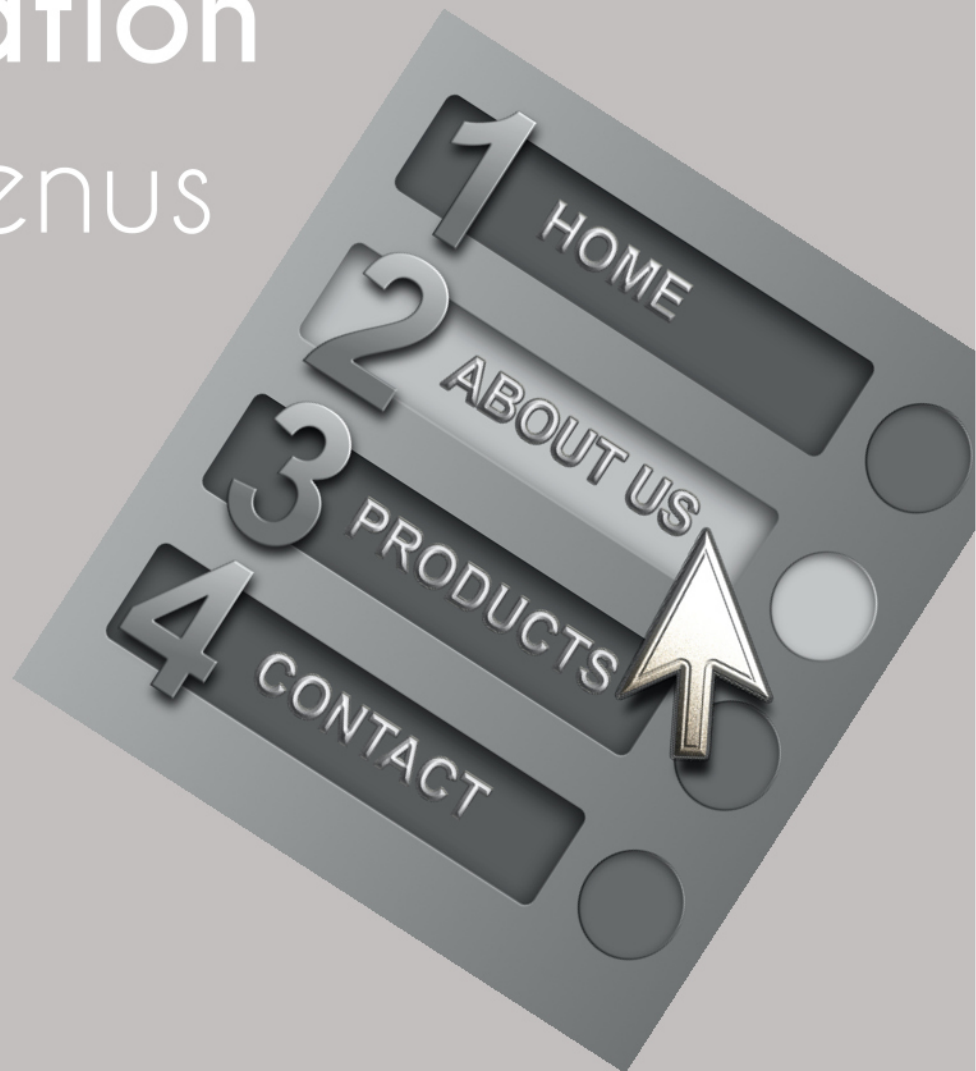
First, some words of wisdom

" *Having too many choices can lead to indecision, paralysis, and even anxiety. People can become overwhelmed by too many options and unable to make a decision.*

Barry Schwartz
Author of 'The Paradox of Choice'

While crafting menus in **Sparkle** is incredibly user-friendly, adhering to some fundamental principles is essential. These guidelines transcend **Sparkle** and apply universally to all websites. Essentially, modern menus fall into two primary categories: traditional text menus, as discussed previously, and icon-based or hamburger menus, which reveal their choices upon a user's click.

Hamburger menus are particularly suitable for mobile devices due to their limited screen real estate. However, it's worth noting that while hamburger menus can

be used on larger screens like desktops or laptops, user expectations often favour a horizontal text menu on these devices. Fortunately, **Sparkle** seamlessly integrates both menu types into your web design with remarkable ease.

In the forthcoming pages, we'll delve into creating hamburger menus, and explore additional menu creation options in the 'Advanced Techniques' section of this guide. However, before we proceed, understanding some basic rules will help you sidestep the potential pitfalls of constructing overly complex navigation structures.

More, or less?

A good menu should keep things simple for users by offering only a few main choices, ideally around five or six. If you have more options to share, it's better to group them into sub-menus that appear when users click on a main menu item.

For sites focused on selling or achieving specific objectives, use your menu to guide visitors through a preferred journey toward your site's goal. Ensure your main menu sets them on this path, using additional buttons and links on different pages to help them navigate further.

On the other hand, for content-heavy websites like, for example, informative cooking sites, a mega-menu might

work well. For instance, a single 'recipe' link can open a mega-menu with choices based on ingredients or dish types. These links lead to landing pages with various recipes, organising information logically and keeping navigation simple for users. This type of structure is also great for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) as each recipe group will have its own page with its own title and description.

Decide how you want users to move through your website - whether in pursuit of goals or to explore information - and design your menu structure accordingly. We'll give you some additional ideas on this topic as we progress through the upcoming pages.

Dealing with
Navigation

N avigation is the heartbeat of any successful website, guiding visitors through an immersive digital journey. Just as maps are crucial for travellers exploring new territories, seamless navigation serves as a roadmap, steering online users to their desired destinations. The importance of efficient website navigation cannot be overstated - it's the linchpin that ensures visitors find what they seek, fostering engagement, enhancing user experience, and ultimately achieving website objectives.

In this digital landscape inundated with information, users expect an intuitive pathway to traverse websites seamlessly. Join us as we unravel the pivotal role of effective navigation in your **Sparkle** website, uncovering strategies and insights that pave the way for an enriched user journey and a thriving online presence.

While users traditionally expect a horizontal text menu as the foundation of navigation systems, particularly on larger screen devices, **Sparkle** ventures beyond convention, offering a range of alternative options to enhance the user experience. At its core, **Sparkle** presents a pre-made menu object that serves as the fundamental building block of navigation. Here's a glimpse of it.

It doesn't look particularly inspiring at this stage, but a few tweaks over in the style panel will work like magic in transforming your basic menu into an engaging navigation. On the right you will see a sneak peek of the whole style panel for the menu. But, for now, most of the options will be familiar, and some may even be self explanatory. However, We'll delve deeper into each section as we progress through the following pages.
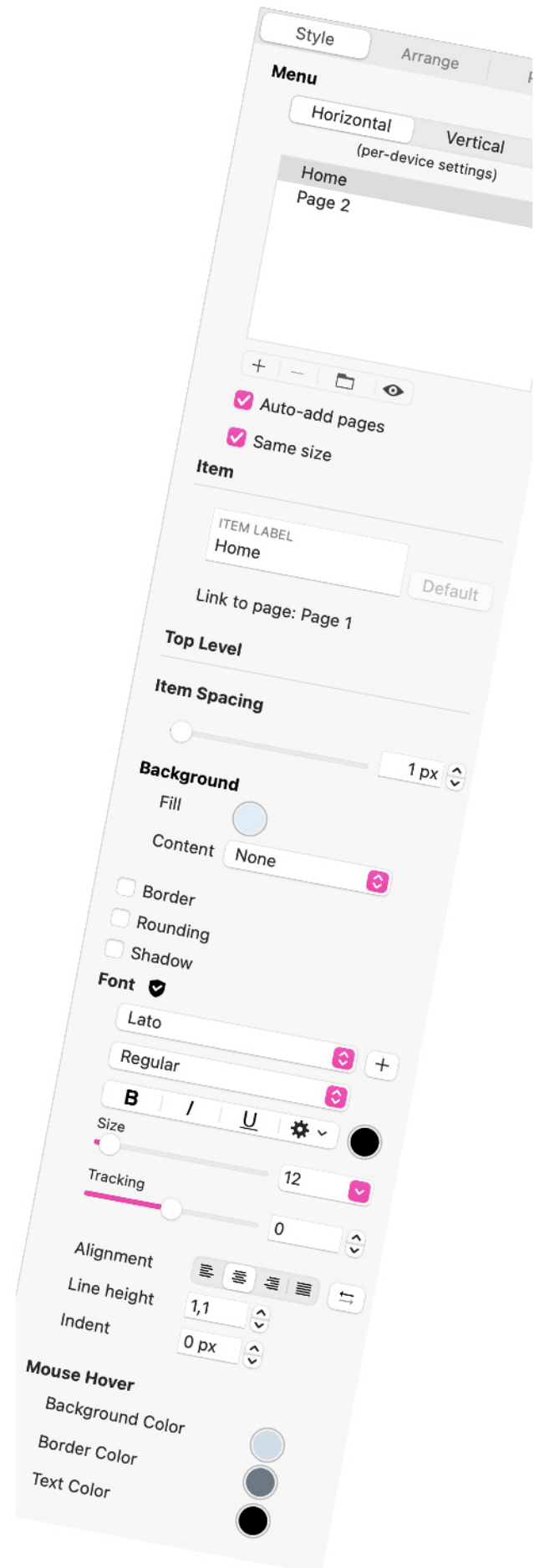
Adding
Menu Items

Creating menu items in **Sparkle** is really simple. Opting for automatic page addition ensures that any existing or forthcoming pages seamlessly integrate into your menu structure. By default, each page's name becomes its corresponding menu label. However, should these labels prove too lengthy for your menu, fear not - customisation is at your fingertips. You have the liberty to override defaults and craft personalised, succinct labels.

If you haven't yet created additional pages? No worries! Take the reins and craft your menu structure manually; adding links can come later at your convenience.

This is where you can choose between a horizontal or vertical menu structure

Style	Arrange	Page

Menu   ℹ️

Horizontal	Vertical	☰
(per-device settings)

Home
Page 2

This is where you will see a representation of the menu as you create it.
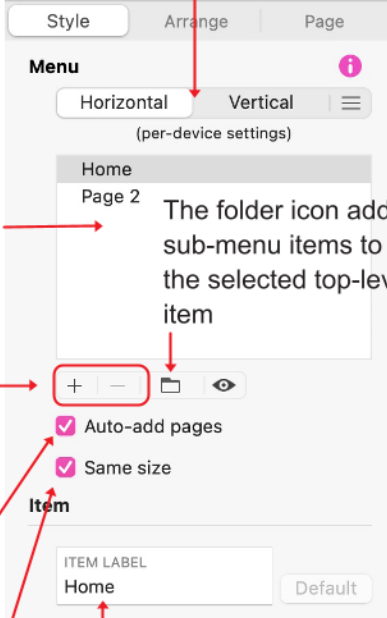
The folder icon adds sub-menu items to the selected top-level item

This is where you can add or remove items in the menu.

+ −   📁 👁

☑ Auto-add pages
☑ Same size

Item

ITEM LABEL
Home   Default

Selecting this option will automatically add pages to your menu as you create them

This is where you add a name to appear as a label on the selected menu item

The same size option keeps your menu items all the same size.

And here's our menu with a few
Extra items added

Home	About	⌄ What We Do	Get in Touch	Our Partners
		Products		
		Services		
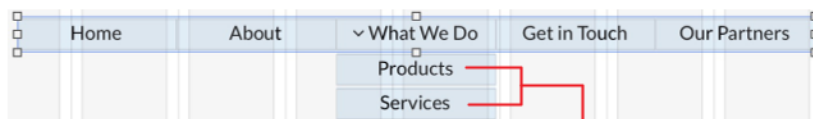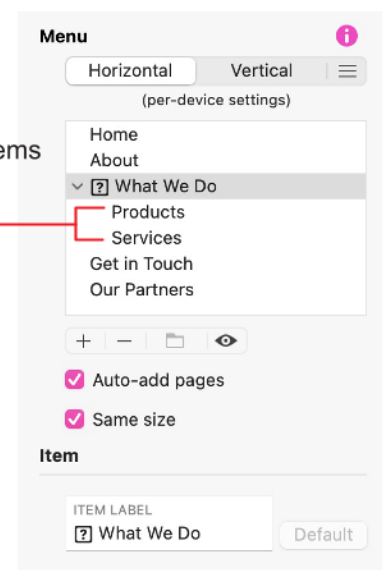
Sub-menu items

appear as a drop-down

Menu   ℹ️

Horizontal	Vertical	☰
(per-device settings)

Home
About
⌄ ? What We Do
   — Products
   — Services
Get in Touch
Our Partners

+ −   📁 👁

☑ Auto-add pages
☑ Same size

Item

ITEM LABEL
? What We Do   Default

A little trick!

Have you spotted that subtle down-arrow icon beside the 'What We Do' menu item? We've incorporated this in a rather sneaky manner. Initially, we placed a temporary text box on the page and inserted an icon within it. Afterward, we copied the icon and pasted it alongside the item name within the Label box.

Although it displays as a question mark in the menu structure, upon site preview, the downward arrow elegantly appears in the navigation link, signalling to visitors that this link unfolds into additional drop-down options.

Styling
The Menu

Top Level

Item Spacing

Here you can add a little space between the menu items →

10 px

Background

Fill

You can add a background color, a gradient or an image background here. →

Content | None

☑ Border

☐ Same on All Sides

This where you can create a border around the menu items. If you create the same on all sides, you end up with something that resembles a set of buttons. In our example, we've chosen to add a bottom border only.

0 px

0 px

4 px

0 px

Rounding and shadow options are available for button or tab-type designs. →

☐ Rounding

☐ Shadow

Font

Lato | +

Regular

B *I* U ⚙ ⌄

These are your font settings for the menu

Size

18

Tracking

0

When you select the menu on the page, you will be presented with the styling options as shown in the illustration at the right. These options will be applied to all top level items in the menu.

If you select the drop-down menu item on the canvas, you will be presented with styling options for the sub-menu as shown below. You will find additional options when you select the 'Custom Style' checkbox.

Set the alignment, width and height of the drop-down menu items.

Submenu

| Horizontal | Vertical |

(per-device settings)

Item Spacing

1 px

Size

Width

149 px

Item Height

36 px

☐ Custom Style

This is where you can align the menu labels and indent them if necessary

Alignment

Line height | 1,1

Indent | 0 px

These options allow you to add a hover effect- In this example, the border colour will change on mouse hover. →

Mouse Hover

Background Color

Border Color

Text Color
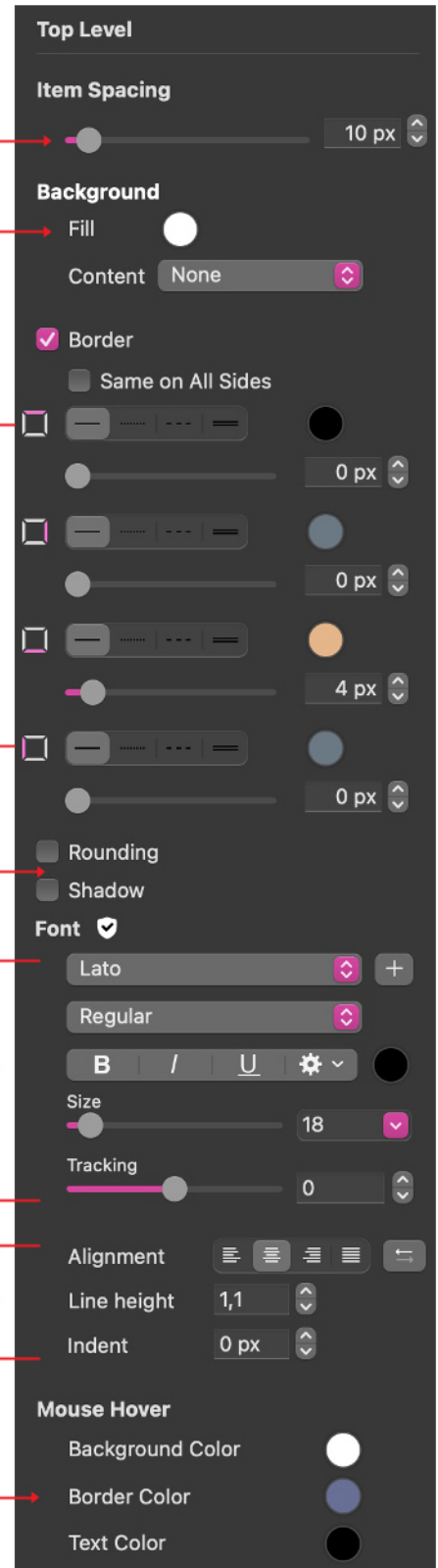
And here is the end result

Home   About   ⌄ What We Do   Get in Touch   Our Partners

Products

Services

Hamburger
Menus

After creating your desktop site menu, adapting it into a 'hamburger' menu for mobile devices is a simple process. Just switch to the mobile layout and switch the menu type from horizontal to the hamburger option. You'll find it at the top of the styling panel on the right side of your screen; it looks like this.

Now, customise the styling options to your preference. In our example, we wanted a full-width drop-down menu when users click the hamburger icon. We adjusted the width option for the top-level items to 310px, nearly spanning the full page width. We also set the item height to 25px. Then, for the sub-menu items (*like 'Products' in our case*), we matched the width and height to be the same as the top-level items.

Selecting submenu alignment comes next. This determines whether your submenu appears beside, above, or below the hamburger icon. In our case, since we opted for a full-width drop-down, we chose the 'right-aligned - under' option shown on the right. This allows our hamburger menu to be placed neatly at the top right of the mobile screen. Additionally, we applied a white background to the menu items. This ensures readability when the drop-down covers other page content. Feel free to experiment with colours, gradients, or even image backgrounds.

When you've finished styling the actual menu items, you may wish to change the 'hamburger' icon to one that better reflects the colour scheme of your site. By default, Sparkle adds a neutral grey icon. If you do want to change the icon, just select the icon on the canvas to reveal a slightly different set of styling options. One of those options will be to replace the icon. The option looks like this.
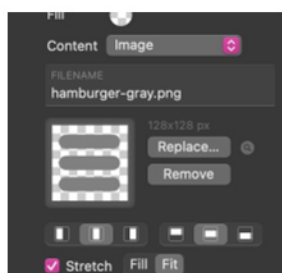
Keeps menu items the same size →

Edit the item label here →

This is where you choose the 'on-click' action →

Choose menu alignment here →

Add optional space between your menu items →

Set the width and height of your menu items →

Set the background fill here. →

The End
Result

Let's take a look at our menu on a smartphone screen. When users tap the hamburger icon, the menu items will show up. Remember, touch-screen devices don't have 'mouse hover,' so you don't need to set up hover styling unless your hamburger menu is also to be used on desktops or laptops.

Tapping the 'What We Do' item reveals two more links to our Products and Services pages, which is why we add a small down arrow next to the label - to indicate there are more links.

For styling, you can make the items look like buttons by adding borders and rounding the corners - it's your choice. Sometimes, you might want a completely different style for your mobile menu compared to the one on desktops. To do this, you can create two menus - one specifically for mobile and another for desktops or laptops. **Sparkle** gives you that flexibility.

When you see the menu styling options for the first time, it might seem like a lot of detail, but don't worry. Focus on the styling options you need and leave the other options as they are. There are, as you would expect, other creative ways to make a navigation structure for your site - we'll be looking at some of those when we get to the 'Advanced Techniques' section of this guide. For the time being, the menu tool in **Sparkle** is a quick and easy starting point for most websites.

QUICK TIP: *It's good practice to place your navigation menu inside its own layout block. Not only will this allow you to add some extra styling options to the block itself, but also gives you the option of adding things like your site name and logo. You will also be able to make the whole block 'Sticky' which means it will always stick to the top of the screen, avoiding users having to scroll back up the screen to get to your menu. On your mobile version of the menu, you could even add a prominent phone number link in the same block, giving site visitors the one-tap option of calling you without having to enter your number.*

User
Interactions

The Magic Of The **Click**
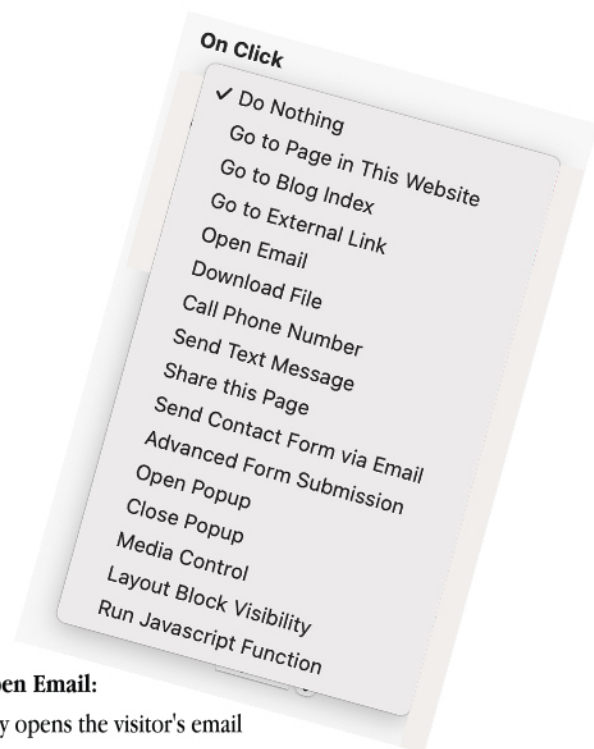
A website needs user interaction to be effective. It's not just about navigation; there are many ways to engage visitors on your site. User interaction needs to be noticeable - users should know when something is clickable or interactive. **Sparkle** can make almost every element on your page interactive, allowing your creativity to shine.

Buttons are the most common way to prompt user interaction. When people see a button, they know it's clickable—it's what we call a 'Call to Action' or CTA. Videos have a play button, and galleries may have arrows or magnifier icons to encourage interaction with images.

In this section, we'll explore how **Sparkle's** tools can help you engage visitors. Let's start by diving into the 'On Click' options that can be applied to many elements on your page.

Most options available are straightforward, but some might need further explanation. Let's break a few down:

Share this Page: It conveniently links to users' accounts on Facebook, Twitter (now X), or LinkedIn. Users can share your page URL on their social media platforms.

Call Phone Number and **Send Text Message:** These options are for smartphone layouts. Users can tap to call or text you. Ensure your phone number format includes the country code preceded by a + symbol for international callers.

Open Email: This quickly opens the visitor's email client, pre-filling your email address, subject line, and a predetermined body text for a new email.

Media Control: Allows users to control media elements - play, stop, pause, mute, or unmute. Useful for activating background music or creating custom video interfaces.

Open/Close Popup: Activates a popup window, great for features like a contact form that pops up when a link is clicked.

Layout Block Visibility: Makes a hidden layout block visible when the link is clicked.

Run JavaScript: Links to a JavaScript function, useful for advanced web design.

These options offer diverse interactivity. Your only task is to choose how they'll best serve your website.

Let's Talk
Buttons

Buttons stand as the pillars of website interactivity - enticing and irresistible to users. **Sparkle's** button designer elevates your design freedom beyond bounds. The array of designs you can craft is as vast as your imagination allows.

Here we showcase just a few button designs crafted using **Sparkle's** styling panel, a tool you should now be familiar with. These examples aim to inspire and illustrate the endless possibilities at your fingertips. Beyond mere buttons, consider creating a cohesive set, forming a navigation bar. This personalised navigation can seamlessly replace **Sparkle's** standard menu object. By assembling your unique navigation bar within a layout block at the top of your pages, you introduce a distinctive and functional touch to your site's navigation.

Of course, various objects, including text and images, can function as interactive elements. However, the recommended approach is to style your interactive elements to resemble buttons. As poet James Whitcomb Riley aptly noted - *if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and swims like a duck, it probably is a duck*. Likewise, in the realm of interactive website design, creating elements that resemble buttons tend to attract more clicks from users because they know what they are.

While **Sparkle** isn't primarily a graphics design tool, it provides the capability to craft buttons aligned with contemporary 'flat' designs within the application. However, for more intricate and three-dimensional button designs, it's simpler to produce them using a vector graphics application and export the outcome as PNG images. For enhanced interactivity, generate slight colour variations to distinguish between different button states (*such as hover and clicked*). These image files can subsequently serve as background images for your buttons within **Sparkle**. Here are a couple of examples.

Standard button - straight out of the toolbox
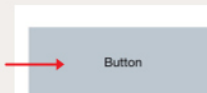
Styled with a background colour

Rounded Corners with and without a border

Fully rounded square buttons with Icons

Fully Rounded - on the right of the button with an image background

A Row of buttons styled as tabs - top corners rounded

Styled with an outline and rounded at opposite corners

Sights & Sounds
Of your website

Your website's interactive components aren't limited to just buttons; audio and video elements play a significant role in engaging site visitors today. **Sparkle** conveniently offers dedicated video and audio elements within its toolbox. By default, these elements come equipped with user-friendly controls like play, pause, and stop buttons, making them intuitive to use. Simply add these elements to your page, and the familiar controls will be readily available.

Sometimes, you might prefer media files to start playing automatically when visitors land on your web page. For instance, you might want a video as a background element in a layout block. In such cases, you wouldn't want visitors to click a play button or see a range of video controls. **Sparkle** allows you to set your video content to autoplay and remove player controls for these specific situations. Additionally, you can set your video to loop continuously. However, there are some considerations when using autoplay.

Audio files cannot autoplay and must have player controls. Similarly, if a video file is set to autoplay, its sound will be muted. This isn't a limitation of **Sparkle**; it's a common practice on the web - avoiding unexpected sound disruptions for site visitors. Here, we'll explore some of the features offered by **Sparkle's** video player.

Select the source of your video - online video platforms or from your disk

Select where to store the video file - within the document or keep it in it's original location

Choose which part of the video should act as your poster image

These options allow the video to start automatically, to loop, and allows you to mute the sound

These options allow you to choose which controls you want to display and choose the colours of the contols.

Select this option if you want to use your own poster image

Sparkle's Standard Video Interface

Image
Creativity

I t's often said that images communicate more effectively than words, particularly in the realm of web design. Images aren't solely static; they can infuse a sense of interactivity or breathe life into an otherwise static webpage. For instance, incorporating a full-width image gallery can transform your page header into an engaging visual experience.

For optimal impact, aim to include no more than three to five images in such a header. It's also recommended that the images change at a moderate pace, ideally every few seconds. Integrating such a header into your page is effortless with **Sparkle**. Simply add the image gallery element into your header layout block. Set its width to full page width in the Arrange tab (*illustrated below*). Then, in the Style tab, configure your playback controls to automatically advance the images. Enabling the Wrap Around option ensures a seamless, continuous slideshow. Customise other settings based on your preferences.

685shots_so.png 2876 x 1618

315shots_so.png 2876 x 1618

125shots_so.png

540shots_so.png

Add   Remove
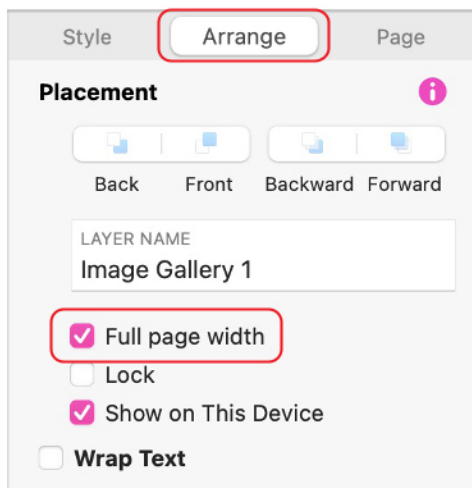
Click Edit to open an image selection panel. Click the Add button to add images.

| Style | Arrange | Page |

Image Gallery ⓘ

Images

Edit

Selected Image

☐ Show Label

IMAGE DESCRIPTION

Do Nothing

Letterbox

Stretch Fill Fit

Letterbox Color

Transition

Set the transition speed and transition type. →

● Cross-fade
○ Slide

Transition speed   0,3 s

☐ Thumbnails
☐ Left/Right Arrows
☐ Dots

Choose Automatic Slideshow and Wrap Around →

☑ Wrap Around
☑ Automatic Slideshow

Pause   2,5 s

☐ Pause on mouse hover

| Style | Arrange | Page |

Placement ⓘ

Back Front Backward Forward

LAYER NAME
Image Gallery 1

☑ Full page width
☐ Lock
☑ Show on This Device
☐ **Wrap Text**

Here's how it appears on a web page: The image transitions every few seconds, stretching to fill the entire width of the browser window. The dashed red lines indicate the actual page width.

When incorporating images, it's crucial to ensure that the main focus of your visuals aligns within the page width, especially when accommodating various devices. It's often preferable to use images devoid of embedded text to ensure your important messages don't get lost outside the boundaries of the web page.

The BIGGER picture

To enhance the interactivity of your standard images, consider enabling a lightbox feature that activates when users click on the image. This is achieved by applying an 'onclick' function to your image in the Style panel and selecting the 'Zoom Image in Lightbox' option. Once chosen, you can include an icon Action Overlay on the image, signalling to visitors that the image is zoomable. These options are displayed in the illustration on the right.

Upon clicking the image, it will overlay a dim effect on the webpage background and display an enlarged view of the image in a lightbox. This feature works exceptionally well for e-commerce websites, providing visitors with the choice to view product images in greater detail. Here's what the thumbnail image would look like on the web page.

This option allows you to limit the size of the lightbox

On Click

Zoom Image in Lightbox

unlimited

Lightbox

Background   Dark   Light

Opacity   80 %
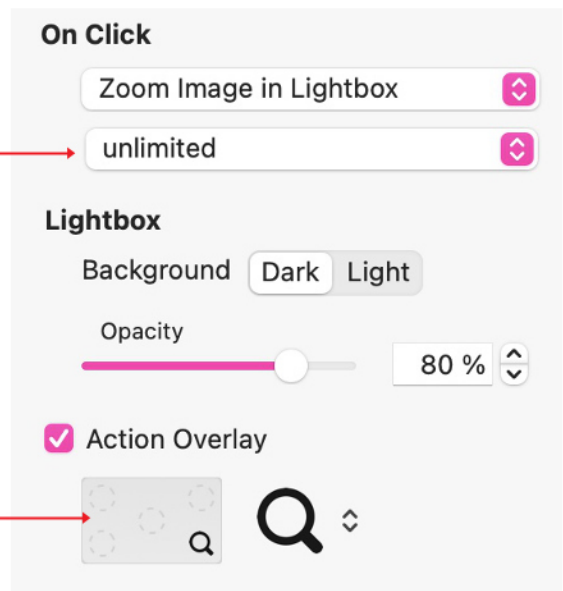
☑ Action Overlay

Here you can click on the area of the image you want your action overlay to appear.

Information
Gathering

Forms are a vital interactive aspect of web design, facilitating seamless communication between you and your website visitors. Without forms, relying solely on phone calls or emails may limit interaction. Offering a quick and user-friendly way for visitors to contact you, place orders, or make inquiries significantly enhances your website's engagement.

Sparkle equips you with versatile tools to effortlessly craft various forms and tailor them to your website's aesthetics. However, simplicity is key. Avoid asking for unnecessary or excessive information. Typically, requesting a name, email address, and a message suffices. Overcomplicating the form might deter users from engaging.

For e-commerce sites, a streamlined order process might require additional information. In such cases, it's prudent to delegate these details to your chosen e-commerce platform or payment processor, all seamlessly integrable with your **Sparkle** website.

For now, let's take a look at how to create a form in **Sparkle.** The 'Navigation and Forms' section of the toolbox is your first port of call. It contains all the form elements you're likely to need when creating a form. This is what it looks like.
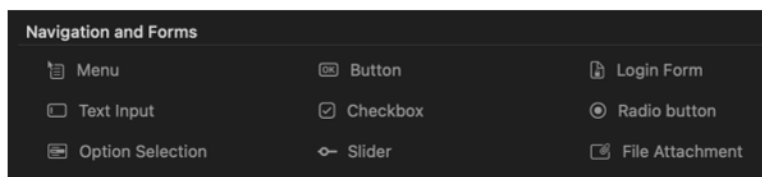
The fundamental form elements commonly used include Text Input, Checkbox, Radio Button, Option Select, and Button. To add any of these elements to your canvas, simply click on the desired element. Arrange these elements as needed on your canvas, then utilise the Style panel to customise their appearance and functionality according to your preferences. Just like other parts of your web page, it's best to keep forms within a layout block for easy page arrangement later on.

A simple form made by adding three text input elements to the page and resizing them accordingly.
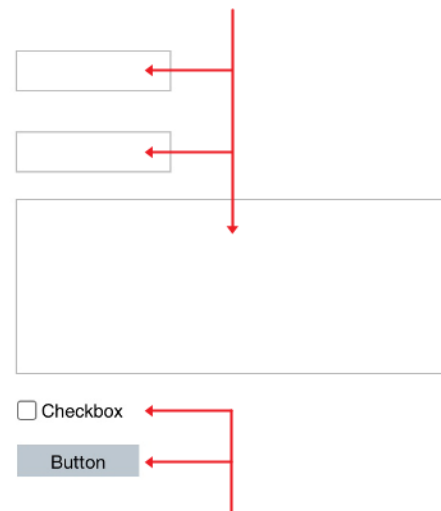
We've also added a checkbox and a button, to be used for submitting the form details.

At this stage, you might notice the absence of labels indicating which field is intended for specific information. Not to worry, we'll address that in the following page. Currently, all text input fields appear identical, differing only in size. In our form, the initial field will serve as an input for a name, the second field for an email address, and the third field will function as a message box. The checkbox field will be used to obtain visitor consent to contact them, while the button will be used to forward the information to our chosen email address.

Start by selecting the first text field and use the options shown in the illustration on the right. These will set up a 'Name' field. Note we have used placeholder text to indicate to the visitor what information is required. This placeholder text will be replaced when the visitor starts typing in the field.

Select the next text field on the canvas and add the placeholder text 'Email', Change the validation options to 'Require an email address'. This will ensure that only a correctly formatted email address can be entered into the field.

Select the large text field and deselect the Single line option in the style panel - this makes it a multi-line message field. Change the placeholder text to 'Your Message' Don't forget to give both of these additional fields unique ID's. In the Form Variable box.

Finally, select the checkbox field. Here you can add a label to appear next to the checkbox. Again, you can give the field a unique ID and make it a required field. This is what the final form looks like on the canvas.

Enter some placeholder text to indicate what information is required.

Give the form field an ID so you can identify it

Check to make this a single line field

Check to make this a required field

Choose an appropriate option depending on the data required.

For most text fields, keep these options checked

	Style	Arrange	Page

Text Input ⓘ

INITIAL CONTENT

PLACEHOLDER
Your Name

FORM VARIABLE
name

☑ Single Line
☐ Password Field

Validation
☑ Required

◉ Any content
○ Require email address
○ Require date
○ Require number

Formatting
☑ Automatic capitalization
☑ Spelling checker
☑ Allow browser auto-fill

	Style	Arrange	Page

Checkbox

LABEL
May we contact you by email?

FORM VARIABLE NAME
consent

Default
Off On

Enabled
No Yes

Validation
☑ Required

Look
System Custom

Your Name

Your Email

Your Message

☐ May we contact you by email?

Send

Select the button on the canvas to change its label to 'Send' in the style panel

Delivering The Results

Having created your form, you now have to specify what happens when the 'Send' button is clicked. Like most things in **Sparkle**, it's super simple thanks to the Style Panel. Select the send button on the canvas and set the options illustrated on the right. Here is a quick summary of the options.

On Click Action: The normal option is Send Contact Form via Email. As an alternative, you can choose Advanced Form Submission. we'll explain more on that in the advanced section of this guide.

Email Heading: This is the text that will show up in the list of messages within your email client. It can serve as a quick way of differentiating website form enquiries from other emails that you may receive.

From Email Address: This is the email address you add to indicate which email address is sending the message. In this example we have a no-reply email address. This address may also be needed by some web-servers before they will handle the forwarding of messages.

To Email Address: This is the email address to where you want your form results sent.

Subject: This is where you can add a subject line to the emails you receive from the form. You can use this to help you identify which form on your website sent the message.

Email via web server: is the default send option. It can be changed to send via custom SMTP - we'll look at that option in the advanced section of this guide.

Form Elements Collected: This is a list of all the form elements that Sparkle find's on your page. In most cases you will select all the form elements, but in some cases you may only want some of them. Typically, this only happens if you have more than one form on a page. Under those circumstances, you will tell the appropriate send button which form elements are sent when the send button is clicked.

Thank You Page: This is a page in your website that confirms to visitors a successful form submission. You can add the page after creating your forms, but you will need to add the page information here before your site goes live.

Add a Button Label

Choose an On Click Action

Add a From Email address

Add the Email address to where you want your form results sent

Select how you want your form sent

Check all the form fields you want included in the response

Select the field containing the sender's email address

Style	Arrange	Page

Button ⓘ

BUTTON LABEL
Send

On Click

Send Contact Form via Email

EMAIL HEADING
Request:

FROM EMAIL ADDRESS
noreply@example.com

TO EMAIL ADDRESS
your-email@example.com

SUBJECT
Mail form

Email via web server

Form Elements Collected
- ☑ Your Name (Text Input)
- ☑ Your Email (Text Input)
- ☑ Your Message (Text Input)
- ☑ May we contact you by email? (...

Reply Address

Your Email (Text Input)

The form field where the site visitor is expected to type their Email address

Thank you page

Select the page in your website to which visitors will be directed after submitting the form

(**Important:** *This page must be created before the form can be used*)
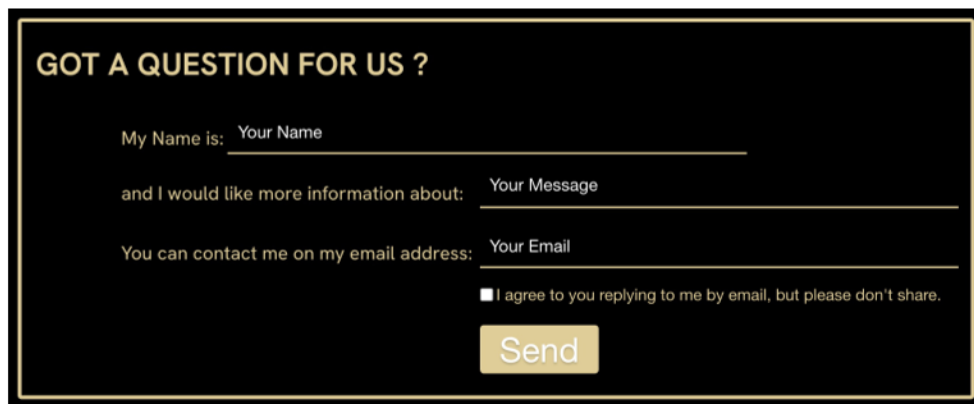
Styling
Your Forms

Effective form styling can significantly enhance visitor engagement on your website. Typically, web forms tend to be mundane and follow a standardised pattern, asking for conventional information through standard field labels. However, with a touch of creativity and thoughtful design, your forms can establish a more engaging and amicable interaction with your visitors.

Consider the form displayed below as an illustration. While it employs the same fields as previously set up, the arrangement creates an inviting layout, fostering a conversational feel, almost as if the visitor is engaged in a friendly chat. Additionally, it goes the extra mile by assuring visitors that their email addresses are kept confidential. These seemingly simple adjustments deviate from the monotonous form-filling experience, aiming to create a more positive impact on our audience.

GOT A QUESTION FOR US ?

My Name is: Your Name

and I would like more information about: Your Message

You can contact me on my email address: Your Email

�–ᴵ agree to you replying to me by email, but please don't share.

[Send]

Enhancing the appearance of your forms follows the same process as customising any other element on your web pages. Within the, now familiar, styling panel, all the design options necessary for refining your forms are readily available.

When considering the collection of information from your site visitors, it's advantageous to explore a more conversational tone. Where feasible, adopt an approach that feels less formal and more welcoming when prompting individuals to provide information. The appearance and language used in your forms play a significant role in encouraging engagement. The more approachable, friendly, and less rigid your forms appear, the higher the likelihood that visitors will feel comfortable and inclined to interact with them.

Now it's
Your Turn

A quick
Tutorial

B y this point, you should have a good grasp of several tools within **Sparkle**, including familiarity with the Style panel located on the right side of the **Sparkle** interface. Now, let's apply what we've learned by crafting a straightforward heading section for a homepage. This exercise allows you to put our previous explanations into action. Additionally, as we work on this header, you'll encounter a few new features not yet covered in this guide.

Demonstrating these extra functions within an actual design project will provide a clearer understanding of their functionality and purpose.

Displayed below is an example of what we aim to create. While you're encouraged to use your own images, text, and colour schemes, following this simple tutorial will significantly contribute to your comprehension of **Sparkle's** capabilities.
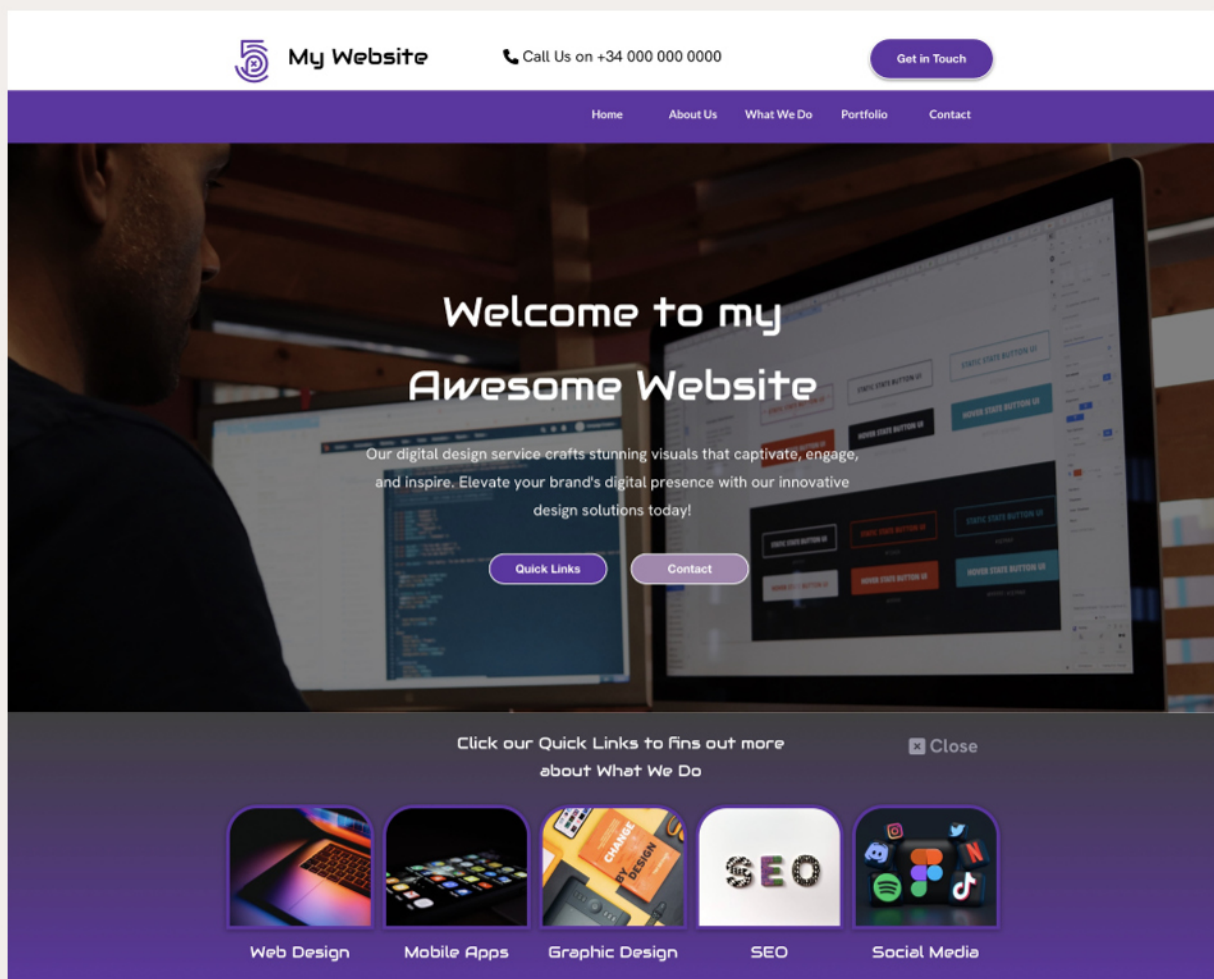
Features of
The **Header**

At first glance, everything seems straightforward. But let's delve into what happens when this screen loads. Initially, a site visitor sees the navigation and the hero section (*outlined in Red*). The Quick Links section of the page (*outlined in Green*) remains hidden until the 'Quick Links' button is clicked. Another notable feature is the contact form, which appears in a pop-up window (*illustrated below*) upon clicking either the 'Contact' or 'Get in Touch' buttons. Furthermore, as the page is scrolled, the main header image remains fixed, providing a parallax effect as the rest of the page scrolls over it.

Additionally, the navigation section at the top of the screen stays visible while scrolling - known as a 'Sticky' navigation. This ensures that the site menu and essential site information are always accessible to visitors, regardless of their position on the page.
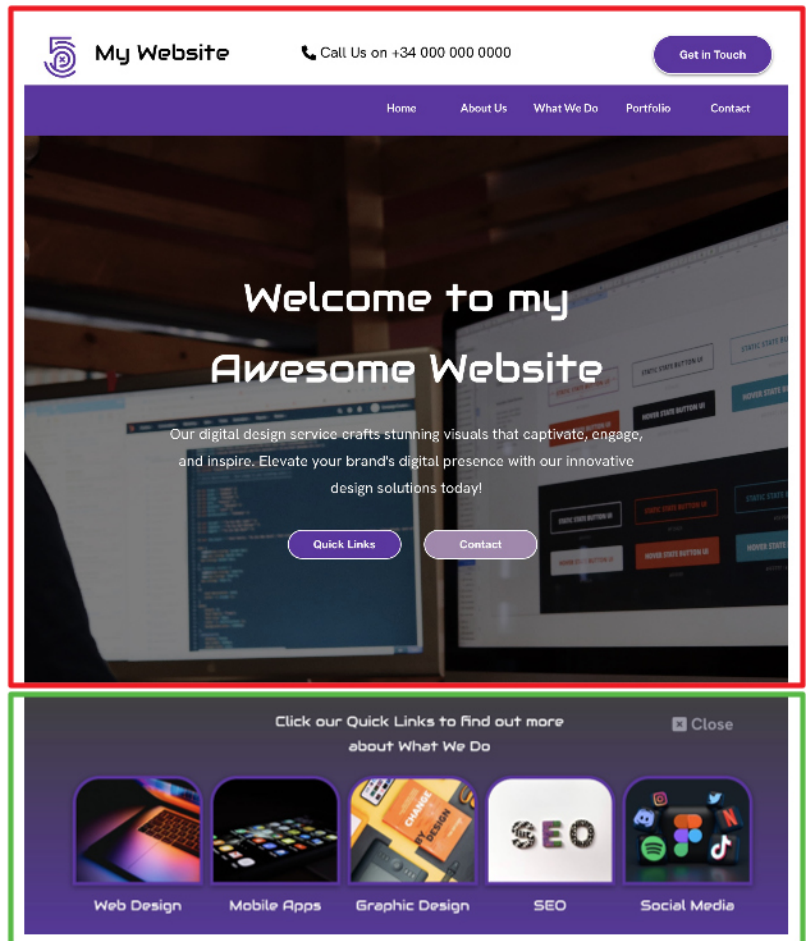
This is how the contact form looks when the contact links are clicked.
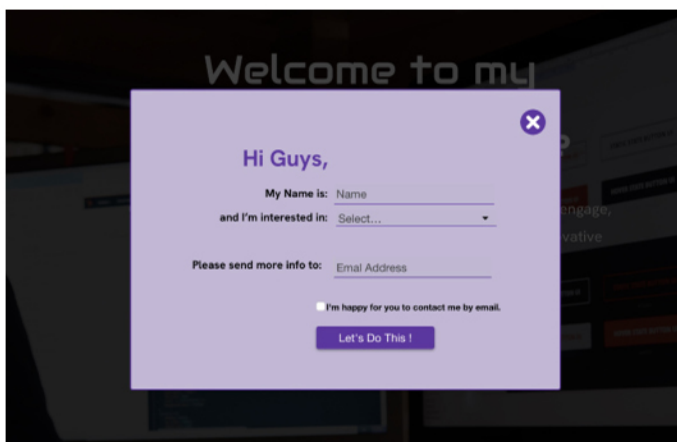
Basic
Structure

To begin, let's establish a foundational structure. The visual guide on the right provides an overview of the structure once you've incorporated your fundamental layout blocks. Start by integrating these layout blocks onto your canvas. We've specified the heights of each block in the illustration to help you replicate a similar layout. There's no need to concern yourself with widths because layout blocks automatically span the entire browser window. You can adjust the heights of these blocks using the 'Arrange' tab, depicted below.

Position and Size

HORIZONTAL	VERTICAL
	0 px
WIDTH	HEIGHT
	175 px
ROTATION	
Rotation	○
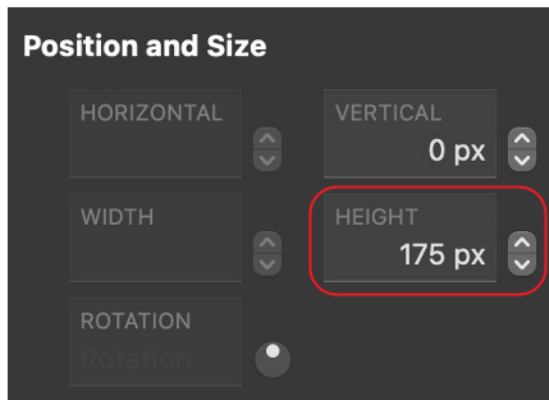
After creating your layout blocks on the canvas, arrange them by stacking one below the other. In the 'Layers' panel located on the left side of the screen, ensure that all the blocks are arranged in the sequence shown above. If the order isn't correct, you can easily reposition them by clicking and dragging the blocks up or down the list.

Pages   **Layers**

> Navigation Block
> Hero
> Quick Links
> Contact Popup
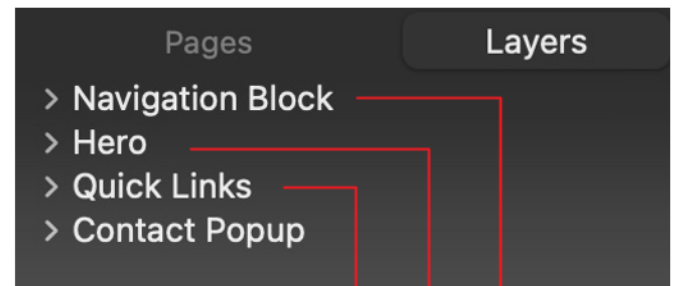
Height of the **Quick Links** Layout block is **350px**

Height of the **Hero** Layout block is **885px**

Height of the **Navigation** Layout block is **175px**

The **Contact Popup** isn't a typical layout block. Instead, you add the Popup directly to your canvas. However, it functions similarly to a layout block in that you can add elements inside it, which will stay in position even if you move the popup around. In our example, we adjusted the popup size to be **678px** wide and **473px** in height.

Styling the
Navigation Block

These are the elements that are placed inside the navigation layout block. It's important to ensure all elements are within the block. If any elements remain outside the block, they won't be moved along with the entire block when you rearrange items later. Also, ensure that each element, including the Layout Block itself, has been given a name, which is very important.
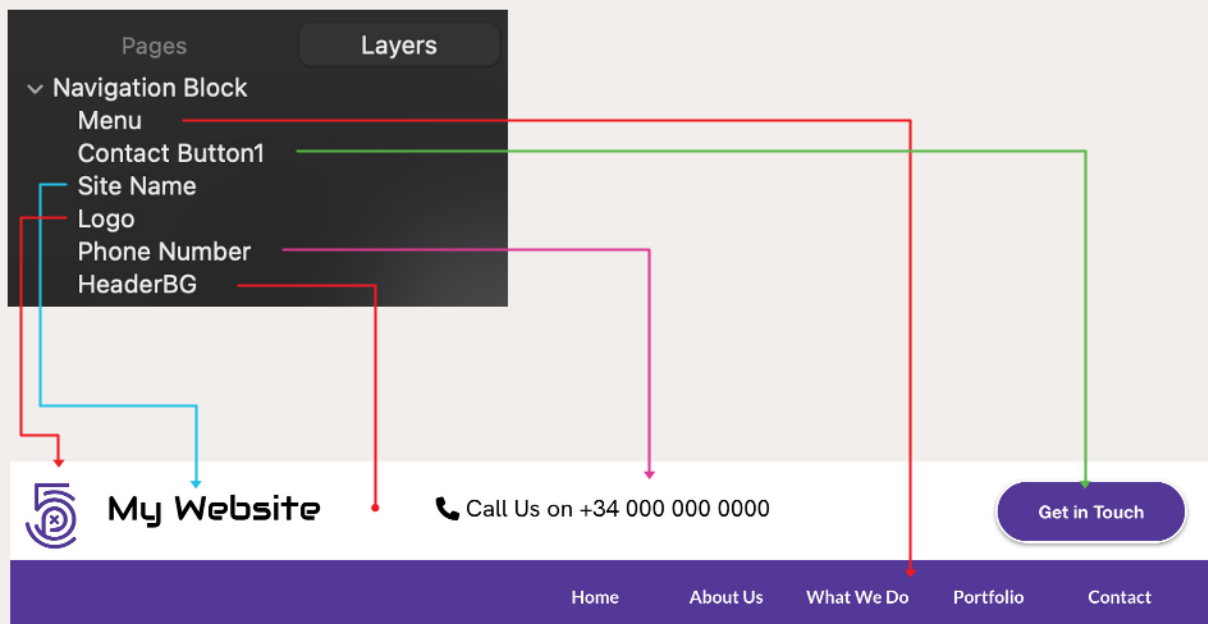
The **Layout Block** itself has a background colour of Purple

The **Header BG** is a **Wide Box element** with a White Background. It's resized to be about half the height of the Navigation Block.

The **Menu** is a standard **Menu element** placed above the lower half of the Navigation block and styled to be white text.

The **Contact Button** is a standard **Button Element** styled with rounded corners, a purple background and white label text. It has a white border and a shadow applied. It's **on-click action** is set to open the **Contact Popup**.

The **Logo** is a standard **Image element**, sized and positioned within the **Header BG**. It has an **on-click action** to go to the Home page of the website.

The **Site Name** is a standard **Text Box** with font styling as preferred. Again, it's positioned over the **Header BG**.

The **Phone Number** is a standard **Text Box** that includes an **Icon**, as well as the phone number text - it's positioned over the **Header BG**. This text box has an **on-click action** that calls the number when the link is clicked or tapped.

Styling the
Hero Block

The Hero layout block includes several elements that you should be familiar with by now. The distinguishing factor in this block is the use of a background image rather than a solid colour. However, due to the brightness of the image, making the white text easily readable became a challenge. To address this, we incorporated an overlay to darken the background. This overlay is essentially a wide box adjusted to match the layout block's full height, filled with a semi-transparent black colour at 50% opacity.

Additionally, the contact button within this section triggers an on-click action to display the Contact Popup. We'll cover the on-click action for the Quick Links button in a later discussion. Both the Welcome Headline Text and the Paragraph text are conventional text boxes, allowing font customisation and styling according to your preferences.
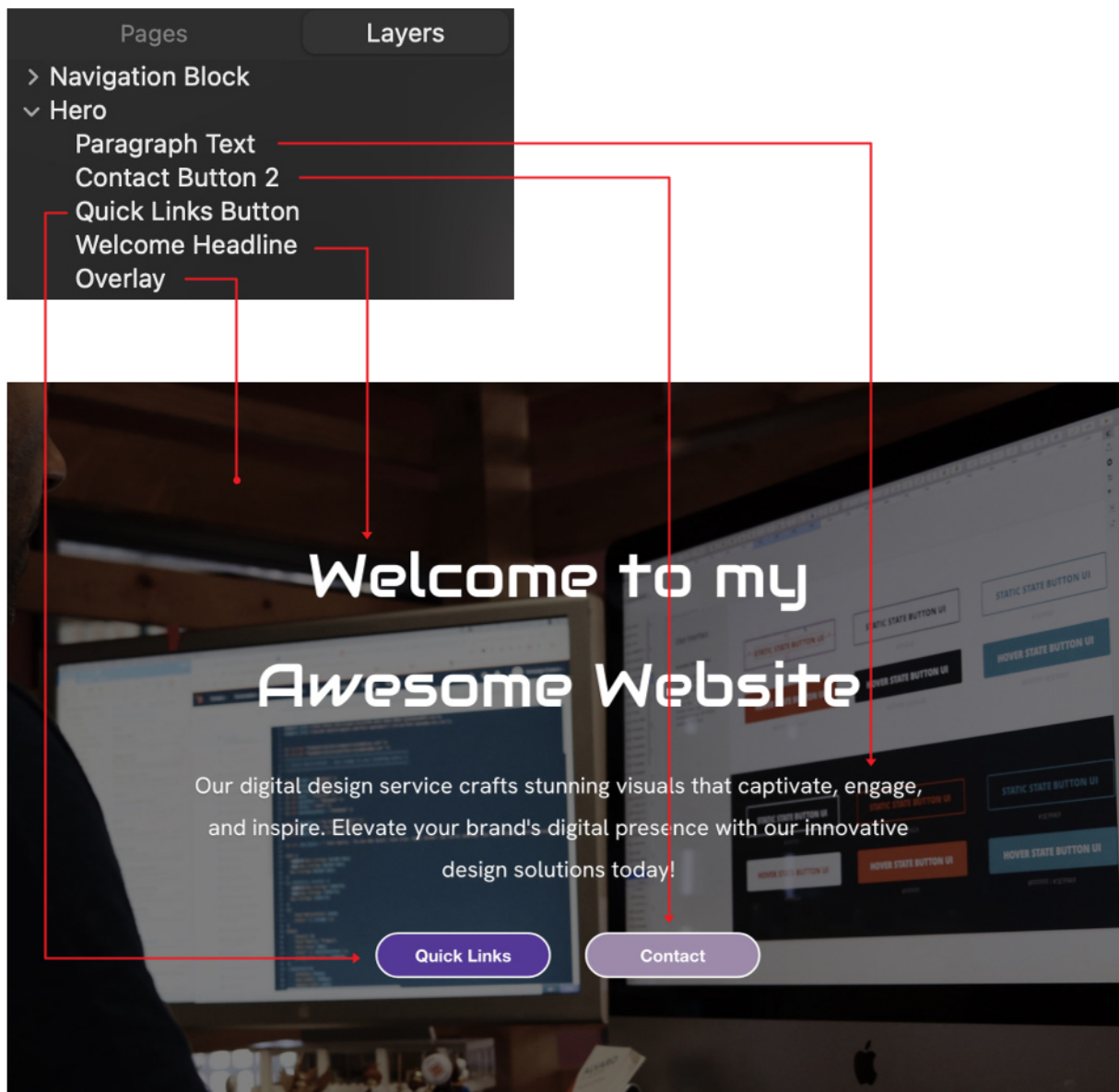
Styling the
Quick Links Block

T hese are the elements included within the Quick Links layout block. Although it might seem like there are many, creating similar elements, like the image and text links, is quite straightforward. Start by creating and styling one image. To duplicate it, hold down the Option key on your keyboard while dragging the image on the canvas. Once duplicated, you can easily change the image in the Style Panel while preserving the styling. Repeat this process for the other images.

Pages	Layers

> Navigation Block
> Hero
∨ Quick Links
    Close Link
    Quick Links Text
    Social Media
    SEO
    Graphic Design
    Mobile Apps
    Web Design
    Social Media Image
    SEO Image
    Graphic Design Image
    Mobile Apps Image
    Web Design Image

These elements are the five images and text descriptions

Click our Quick Links to find out more about What We Do

⊠ Close

Web Design   Mobile Apps   Graphic Design   SEO   Social Media
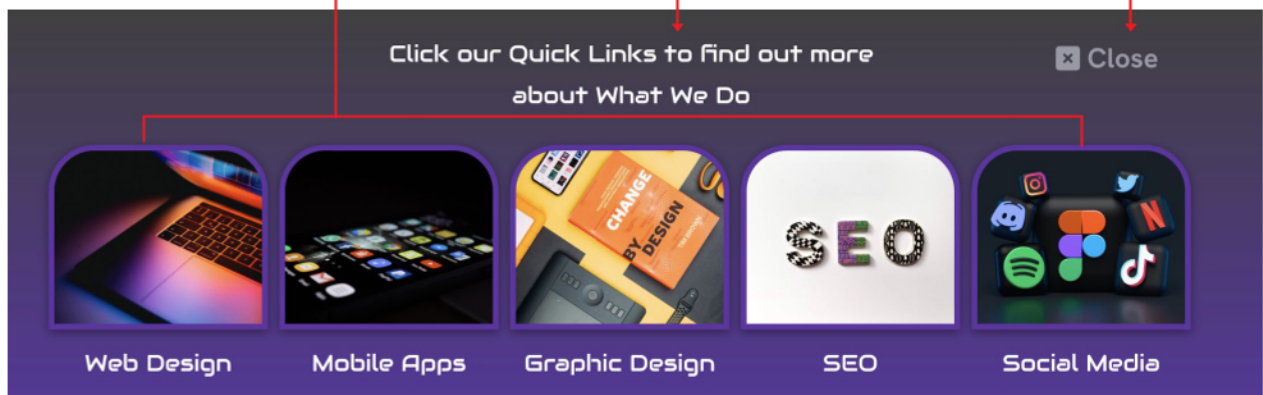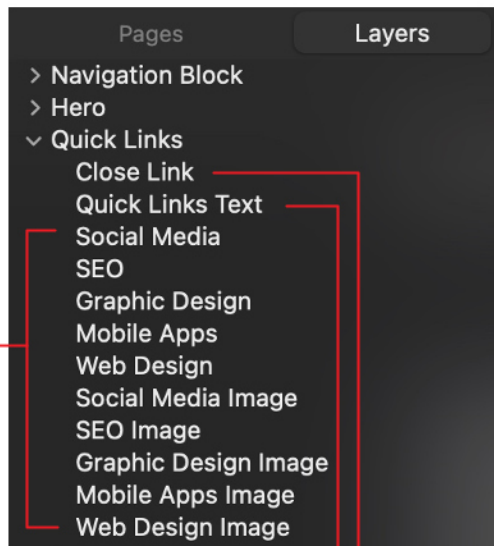
The Layout Block itself has been given a **Gradient Background fill**. All text is **Standard Text Elements**. The **Close Link** is also a **Standard Text Element** with the addition of an Icon. All the images are **Standard Image Elements** with top-rounded corners and a purple outline. The images would typically have on-click actions to link to other web pages in the website.

Styling the
Contact Popup

Dealing with the contact popup is straightforward, but you won't be able to add any content until you select the Contact Popup element from the LEFT LAYERS Panel. This is because popups are initially hidden on the canvas until you specifically select them. Think of them as hidden layout blocks that can be resized to any dimension you prefer.

For demonstration purposes, we've chosen a simple design to showcase how the popup functions. Upon adding a popup, it automatically includes a Close button, which can be customised and resized to suit your design preferences.

Our form consists of five form elements: a text input field for the name, an option select element, a text input field configured to accept only email addresses, a checkbox to obtain the user's consent for email communication, and a button programmed with an on-click action 'Send Contact Form Via Email'.

We've incorporated text boxes to label the fields and greet users, and applied a background colour to the entire popup. All these elements can be styled as desired.

The option select element allows you to configure various options for users to choose from. In our example, we created a list of options related to graphic arts, web design, and internet marketing (refer to the illustration below). Additionally, we adjusted our popup size to be **678px** wide and **474px** high. Using the style panel, we set the popup to display at the canvas's height and width, centred on the screen, ensuring the popup appears as sized and positioned above.

Add the options you want in the Options Select element here →
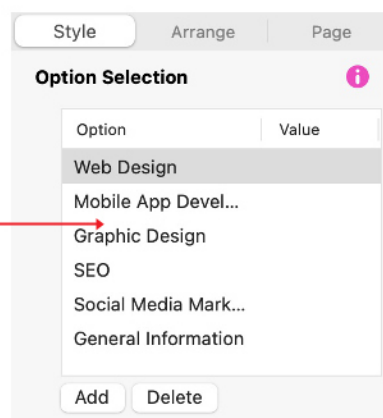
Adding Some
Sparkle Magic

N ow that you've styled your layout blocks and popup, it's time to add some **Sparkle** magic. Before diving in, ensure the navigation block is positioned at the top of your page, followed by the hero block directly underneath it, and finally, place the quick links block below the hero block. Once arranged, preview the layout in a browser to ensure no gaps between the blocks.

Begin by selecting the quick links layout block. Refer to the Style Panel adjustments illustrated on the right. Enabling this option initially hides the quick links block when viewed in a browser, while it remains visible on your Sparkle canvas.

Next, focus on the hero layout block and apply changes in the style panel as depicted on the bottom-right. This adjustment fixes the hero image in the browser window, allowing the remaining page content to glide over the image as users scroll - a classic parallax effect. While still in the Hero block settings, set the on-click actions for the two buttons. Configure the quick link button using the instructions provided below.

Quick Link Style Panel

Style	Arrange	Page

Layout Block ⓘ

☐ Custom Scrolling

→ ☑ Initially Hidden

When initially hidden, an "on click" action will expand this block in the page

Group ID `1` ⇅

Groups are used with "On click" actions, to only close specific Layout Blocks

Check this box to hide the quick link layout block →

Hero Style Panel

Style	Arrange	Page

Layout Block ⓘ

☐ Custom Scrolling

☐ Initially Hidden

Group ID `0` ⇅

Groups are used with "On click" actions, to only close specific Layout Blocks

☐ Mask Contained Elements

Contained elements that animate or change shape will be clipped at the boundaries of this element

Background

Fill ⬤

Content `Stock Image` ⇅

Select ⊕

Unsplash photo by:

Campaign Creators ⊕

☑ Stretch   Fill Fit

Images are copyright free, but the depicted content may be protected, for example people, objects, places or brands.

→ ☑ Fixed in window

Check this box to fix the hero image in the browser window →

Quick Link Button Settings

Style	Arrange	Page

Button ⓘ

BUTTON LABEL
Quick Links

On Click

This is the action → `Layout Block Visibility` ⇅

This is the target Block Name → `Quick Links` ⇅

This should be set to toggle → `Toggle` ⇅

☐ Close other Layout Blocks

`Rotate` ⇅

Easing

`Ease In Out Quintic` ⇅

Duration

━━●━━━━ `1 s` ⇅

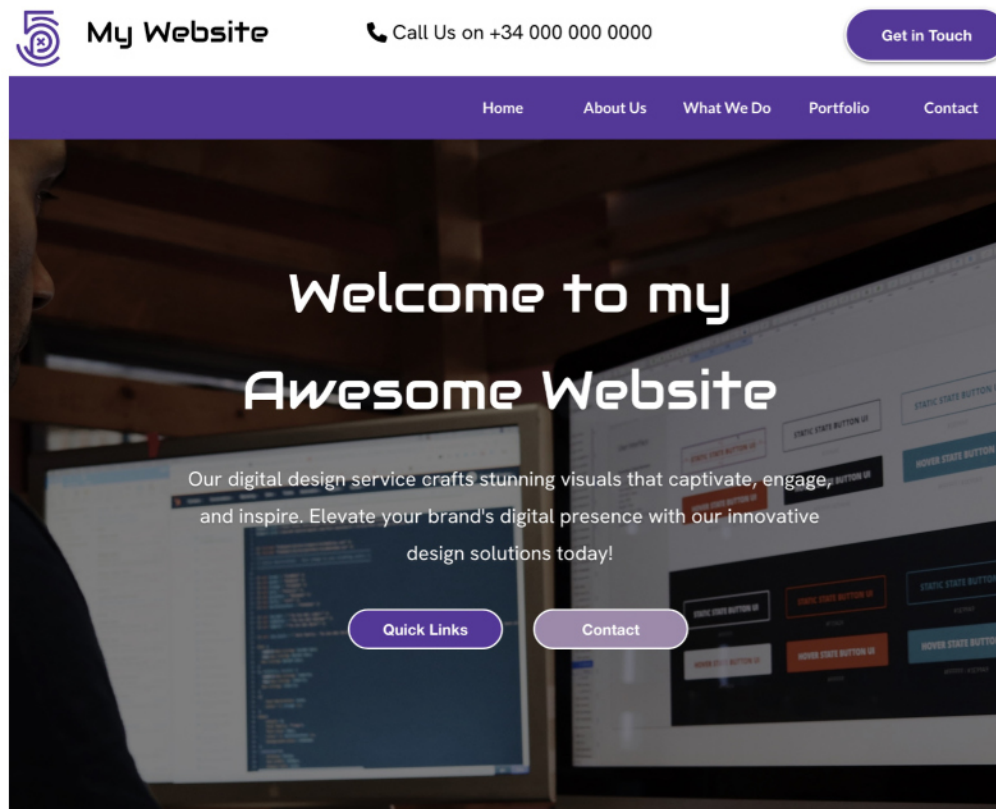These are optional animation settings →

For the contact button, select 'Open Popup' as the action and designate the 'Contact Popup' as the target.

Next, let's enable the 'Sticky' option for the navigation block. With the block selected, navigate to the style panel and check the 'Custom Scrolling' option. This action will unveil the 'Stick to page top' feature. Enabling this final option ensures the navigation block remains fixed at the top of browser windows. During the preview in a browser, the page content should scroll behind the navigation. If the page content appears to scroll over the navigation block, it might be due to an incorrect layer order. Always ensure the navigation block is placed at the top in the Layer Panel

Time to Test

The image below illustrates how the page should look when previewed in a browser. The navigation block should remain fixed at the top, allowing the page content to scroll behind it. Meanwhile, the hero image should remain static in the window. Upon clicking the 'Quick Links' button, the quick links block should appear directly beneath the hero block. Similarly, clicking the contact buttons should trigger the appearance of your contact form, displayed in the centre of the screen.

Navigation Style Panel

| Style | Arrange | Page |

Layout Block

☑ Custom Scrolling
   ⦿ Stick to page top

Multiple groups...
   ⦿ Stack
   ◯ Overlap
   ◯ Last one pushes previous

◯ Fix to browser bottom

My Website
📞 Call Us on +34 000 000 0000
Get in Touch

Home   About Us   What We Do   Portfolio   Contact

Welcome to my
Awesome Website

Our digital design service crafts stunning visuals that captivate, engage, and inspire. Elevate your brand's digital presence with our innovative design solutions today!

Quick Links   Contact

Advanced
Features

Going a
Step **Further**

In today's digital world, there's a strong inclination to elevate web presence beyond the basics. Elements like animations, unique design layouts, and scrolling effects can significantly influence how you and your website are perceived. However, it's important to recognise that these additional features, though alluring, can potentially create hurdles in delivering a seamless user experience.

Consider this: the frustration of inconsistent scroll behaviour, the intrusion of an overly aggressive web design, or encountering animated elements that hinder navigation. As a rule of thumb, incorporating features beyond the standard should have a purpose and be employed judiciously. When people visit websites, their primary goal is to gather information or make purchases, not to witness the technical prowess of a web designer. This principle is evident in some of the world's most successful websites like Amazon and Wikipedia, which maintain simplicity and user-friendliness.

This isn't to say these extra features have no place at all - they certainly do, but they should serve a specific purpose. For instance, using subtle animations to highlight interactive elements or introducing fluidity to enhance engagement. However, it's important not to overwhelm the page with excessive elements. Instead, view them as a part of your visual storytelling rather than obligatory additions just because they're available.

In this section of the guide, we'll explore some of the advanced features integrated into Sparkle - features you can seamlessly integrate into your web design projects without needing to resort to code. Understanding and thoughtfully implementing these features will serve your website effectively. Let's explore what's possible and how these features can be leveraged wisely.

The topics we'll be covering include:

Page Backgrounds

Video Backgrounds

Text Clipping

Embedding

Mega Menus

Popup Menus

Fixed in Window Effects

SMTP Form Submission

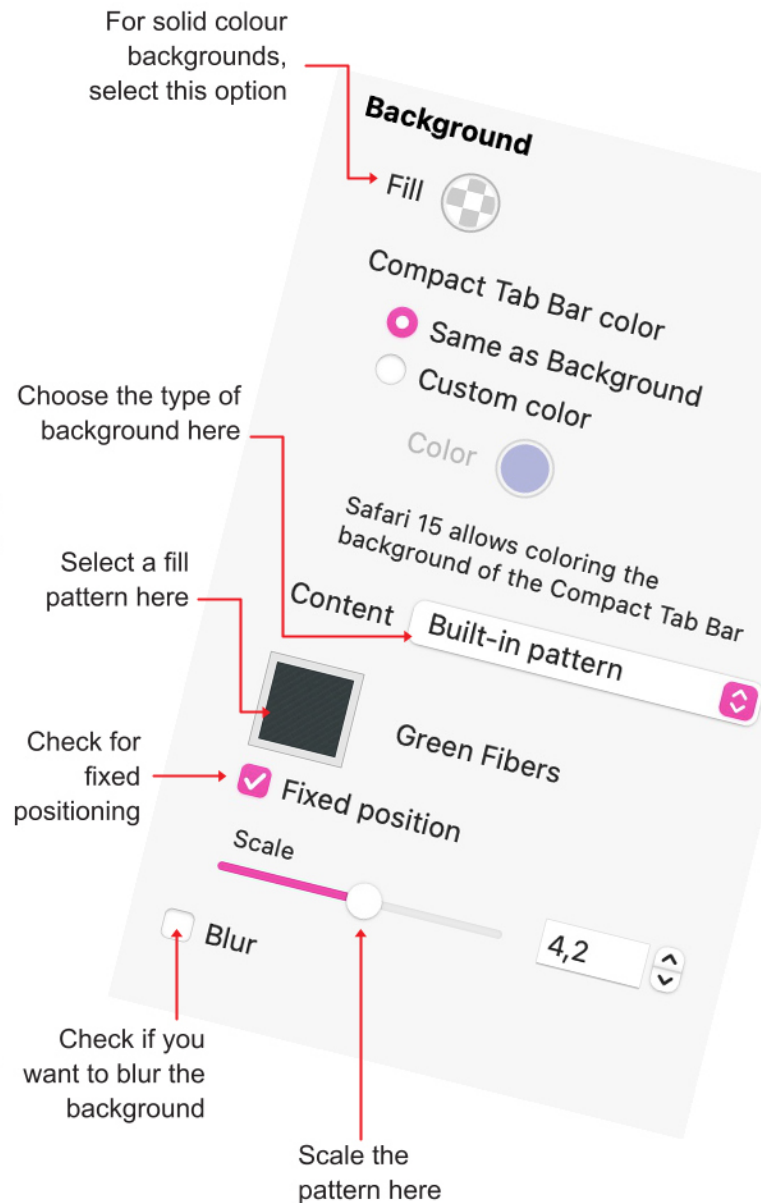Advance Form Submission

Sparkle Animation

Page
Backgrounds

In web design, the expanse of 'white space' on most pages often yearns for a touch of decorative background to infuse interest into the otherwise plain canvas. **Sparkle** offers some fantastic tools to transform your pages and add some extra visual interest. These tools are conveniently accessible via the Page tab situated on the right side of **Sparkle's** interface.

If you navigate to the bottom of the Pages panel, you'll find various background options as illustrated on the right. You're presented with choices to fill your page background with a solid colour, a pattern, or even a video. While the solid colour option is straightforward, let's delve a bit deeper into the pattern options.

For page background patterns, you have two routes to explore. Firstly, there are pre-designed patterns nestled within **Sparkle**, aptly named 'Built-in patterns.' Secondly, there's the option to utilise a custom pattern where you can incorporate your own unique design. Both options operate similarly, but the custom pattern feature allows for personalised patterns to be added. Once a pattern is selected, it spans across the entire screen, not confined solely to the webpage.

Moreover, you have control over the pattern's size and behaviour - it can be fixed within the window or scroll along with the page. Opting for a fixed position will let your webpage content glide seamlessly over the background, whereas disabling this setting will make the background scroll as part of the webpage. If the pattern you choose has very sharp definition, you can choose to blur it slightly so it doesn't distract from your all-important page content.

For solid colour backgrounds, select this option

Choose the type of background here

Select a fill pattern here

Check for fixed positioning

Check if you want to blur the background

Scale the pattern here

Background

Fill

Compact Tab Bar color

Same as Background
Custom color

Color

Safari 15 allows coloring the background of the Compact Tab Bar

Content   Built-in pattern

Green Fibers

Fixed position

Scale

Blur   4,2

You may have noticed the 'Compact Tab Bar colour option' This allows you to add a colour to the Tab Bar on Safari browsers that better matches your website. Unfortunately, this option is ignored in other browsers, including Chrome.
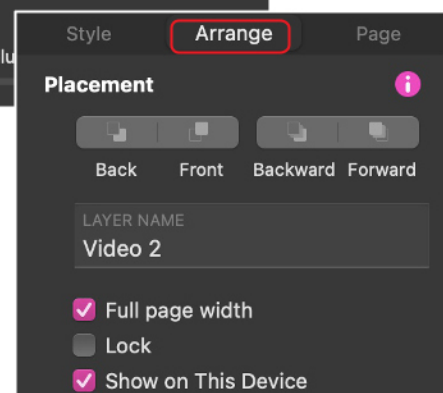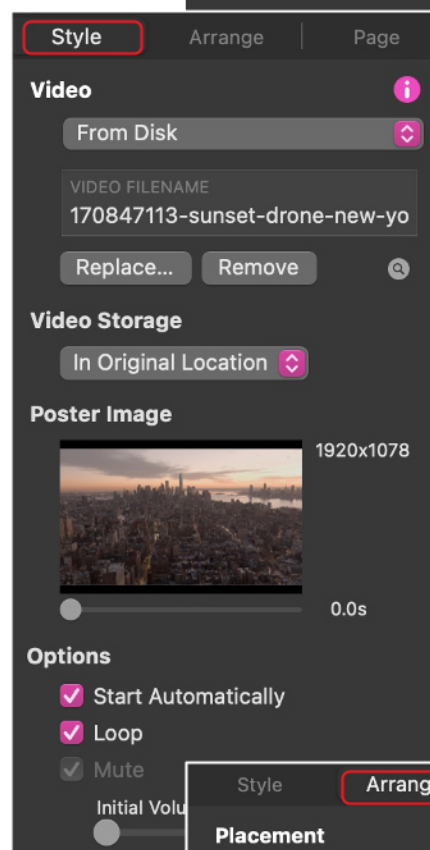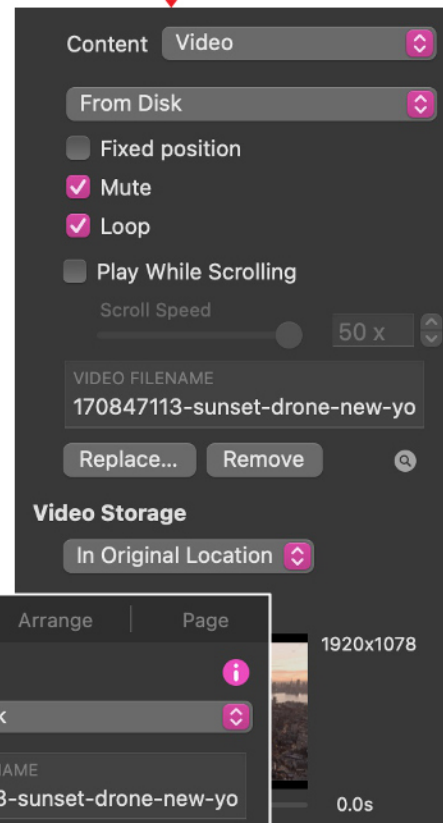
Video
Backgrounds

Layout Block Video
Backgrounds in Style and
Arrange Panels

I n **Sparkle**, you can incorporate video backgrounds into your web pages using two distinct methods, each serving its specific purpose.

The first method involves using the video-background option within the **Page panel** as previously discussed. This places a single video that spans the entire screen space visible in a web browser. It's ideal for creating a captivating hero section on your webpage. Regardless of the user's browser window size, the video dynamically occupies the full height and width upon loading. When scrolling the page, the video background moves upward alongside other page content. If set as 'Fixed position,' the video remains static as other elements smoothly glide over it during scrolling. However, be mindful that narrower browsers may crop the video's sides, so it's best to use video where the primary focus is in the centre of the video.

The second method entails adding a background video within a layout block. Simply insert a video element into the block. With the video element selected on the canvas, navigate to the 'Arrange' tab and choose the 'Full page width' option. Adjust the height of the video element to fill the layout block. Here, the video's displayed size is confined to the height of the block, not occupying the entire screen unless the layout block is sufficiently large. This method is excellent for creating captivating video-based headers for pages. We illustrate on the right the respective sets of options for each method - just set the options as shown, or just experiment with them to see what they do.

Important Notes About Video
Backgrounds

Video files tend to be large in size, so it's beneficial to keep their file sizes as small as possible, even though file size may be less of a concern nowadays. When using background videos, keep in mind that they don't require soundtracks. Since they won't play audio, it's best to remove the audio altogether. Also, these videos don't need to be ultra-sharp like standard entertainment content. In fact, for video backgrounds, a resolution of 720p is sufficient, as higher resolutions can make overlaid text difficult to read. A slightly 'grainy' appearance can actually help separate foreground text from the background imagery.

Select videos for backgrounds that depict more static scenes like ocean waves or cityscapes, avoiding action-oriented sequences. These clips loop more smoothly without being overly distracting to site visitors. Keep the clip short, around 5 seconds, and aim for a video size between 5 to 10 MB.

To make your video files suitable for the web, compress them using tools like 'Handbrake,' a free application. Use the '720p Fast' output setting, enable 'Web Optimise,' set audio to 'none,' and video to 'Fast Decode.' These adjustments significantly reduce video size while preserving quality. We compressed a 117 MB 4k video to just 9 MB using this app, and there was no discernible loss of quality. For brightness and contrast adjustments, overlay a black box at about 50% opacity over the video in a layout block. Unfortunately, this option isn't available for page background videos, so you'll need a video editing app. For newbies to the video editing world, we recommend 'CapCut,' which offers a simple to use, free version for beginners.

In summary, keep your videos small, simple, and relevant to your website for an optimal user experience.

Video Background in a Page

This is a description of the page

THIS IS A HEADING
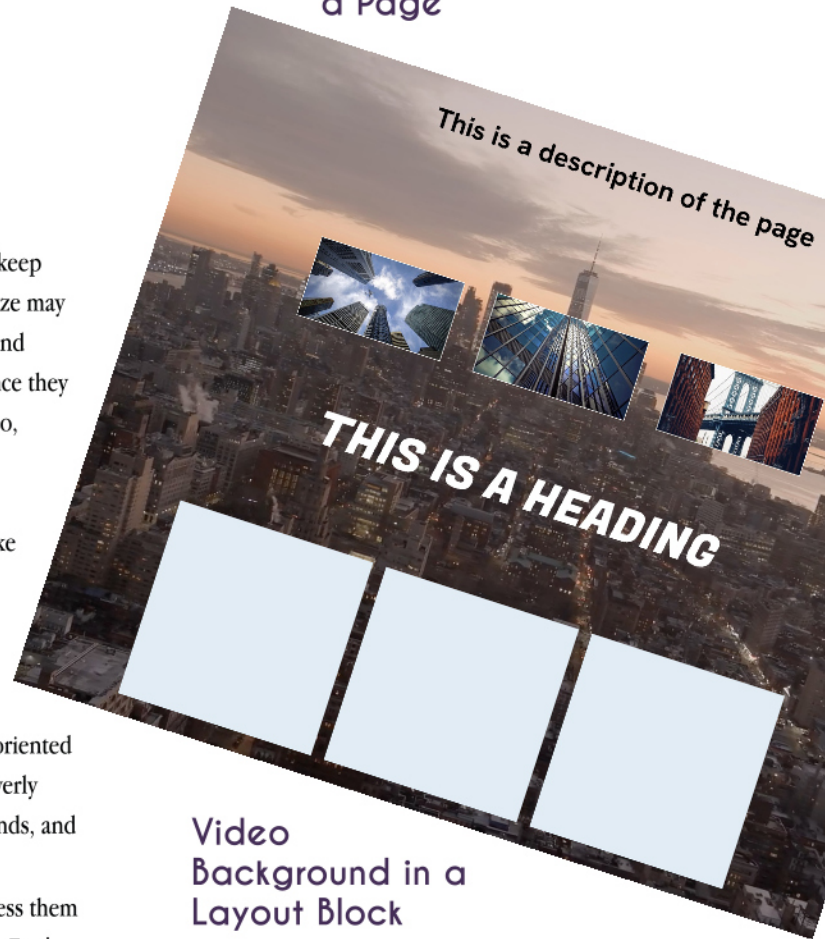
Video Background in a Layout Block

This is a description of the page

THIS IS A HEADING

Text
Clipping

This option is found in the effects section of the style panel

This is an interesting feature that allows you to fill text with an image or pattern instead of a solid colour. It works best with large, bold headings, or even large single characters to create an interesting graphic. Here are a couple of examples.

Check this option

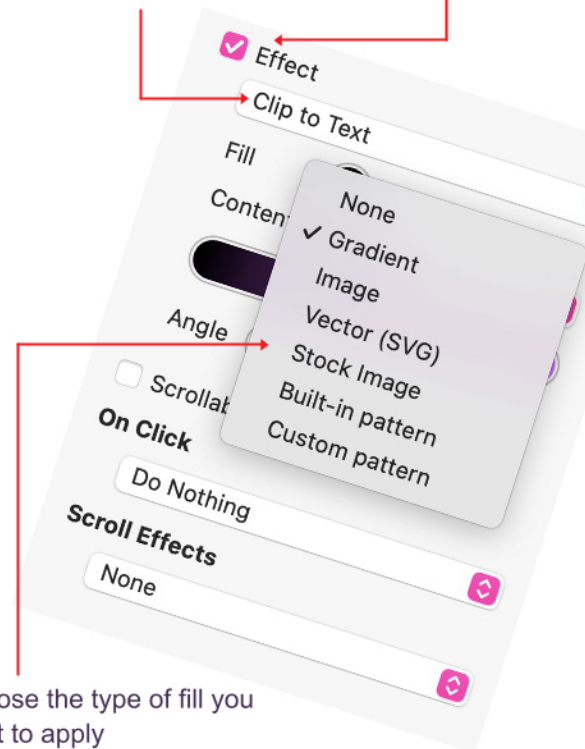Select Clip To Text as the effect

Image Clipped to Text

Gradient Clipped to Text

Choose the type of fill you want to apply

The **Embed** Element

While **Sparkle** primarily aims to facilitate website creation without code, the developers recognise instances where users might need to add more specific or personalised content. To accommodate this need, **Sparkle** includes an 'Embed' element in its toolbox.

To better understand what embedding is, **Sparkle's** video element automates the display of videos from platforms like YouTube or Vimeo, eliminating the need to handle the underlying embed code. This is feasible because incorporating popular features like YouTube videos is a common requirement. However, when users have unique, specific needs for a website feature, creating a simple, predefined element within **Sparkle** becomes impractical due to the diverse variables involved. This is where the 'Embed' element becomes valuable.

Consider scenarios like using an online form processor or a membership service for newsletter sign-ups, which often provide embed codes. To include such codes in your **Sparkle** webpage, add the 'Embed' element and position it as desired. Then, in the Style Panel, locate the code box where you can paste the embed code. After pasting the code, click the refresh button. If the embedded content might alter the page's dimensions, check the 'Content expands vertically' checkbox.

The 'Embed' element isn't limited to third-party website code; it also supports adding your own custom code if you prefer. For example, the tabbed FAQ section illustrated on the previous page of this guide was crafted as HTML code and integrated into the page using the 'Embed' element. Therefore, the possibilities are endless.

Style   Arrange   Page

Embedded Content ⓘ

If you have an embed code provided by a website, paste it here to add it to the page.

Paste code here →

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
  <meta charset="UTF-8">
  <title>Tabbed Box</title>
  <style>
    .tab-container {
      width: 540px; /* Adjust total width
to accommodate three tabs */
    }

    .tab {
      display: none;
      border: 1px solid white;
      padding: 5px;
      font-family: 'HankenGrotesk',
```

Click Refresh →

Refresh

☑ Content expands vertically

↑ Check here for expanding content

Mega
Menus

Instead of conventional drop-down menus, considering a mega menu structure might offer a more attractive and functional option for your website. Mega menus often boast a cleaner and more sophisticated appearance compared to simple drop-downs, and they're remarkably easy to create using **Sparkle**.

If you followed our brief tutorial earlier in this guide, you've already been introduced to the tools for crafting mega menus. Essentially, a mega menu unfolds upon clicking a general site link within a navigation bar. In the illustration below, we demonstrate a mega menu that activates when site visitors click on the 'Recipes' link in the main navigation. The screen changes noticeably before and after clicking the link, showcasing the versatility of this feature.

Before clicking the recipes link

After clicking the recipes link

Meat and Poultry	Fish and Seafood	Vegetables	Course Type
Beef	Cod	Root Vegetables	Starters
Chicken	Prawns	Leaf Vegetables	Main Courses
Duck	Sea bass	Broccoli and Cauliflower	Sides
Lamb	Hake	Peas and Legumes	Deserts
Pork	Salmon	Miscellaneous	BBQ

Close X

To craft a mega menu, start by designing it as a layout block. Incorporate images, text, or a blend of both to function as links directing users to specific web pages within your site. Initially, set the layout block's visibility to hidden and position it directly beneath your primary navigation block. Then, configure the primary navigation link to toggle the visibility of the mega-menu layout block - it's a simple process.

For consistent navigation across all your site pages, ensure both the navigation block and the mega-menu block are set to 'Show on All Pages.' You can find this option in the 'Arrange' tab

The **Popup** Menu Option

Expanding beyond traditional menus and site navigation, **Sparkle's** popup element holds remarkable potential. It presents a sophisticated means to create an elegant navigation feature for web pages, especially suited to mobile device screens. No longer restricted to mere lists of links, you can utilise an entire canvas to fashion a distinctive design while ensuring its recognisable function as a menu.

On the right, we illustrate a sample mobile menu design achievable with **Sparkle**. In this example, we aimed for an interface resembling a typical app screen, featuring prominent image links leading to product groups, a 'Tap to Call' option, links to various social media pages, and an obligatory close button for easy concealment. The popup itself can be activated via a link within your main navigation (*for larger screens*) or via a hamburger icon strategically positioned at the page's top (*for mobile devices*). In sparkle you do have the option of creating menu structures that are different on each device you may be designing for, you simply choose to display a menu on specific devices only, or display the same menu across all devices. This is all done by selecting a check box over in the 'Arrange' panel on the left of the screen. Just select the element on the appropriate device screen, and decide if you want to show it on that device variant or not. So, you could have two, or maybe three different navigation structures set up on your page, but you would only have one of them display on each device.
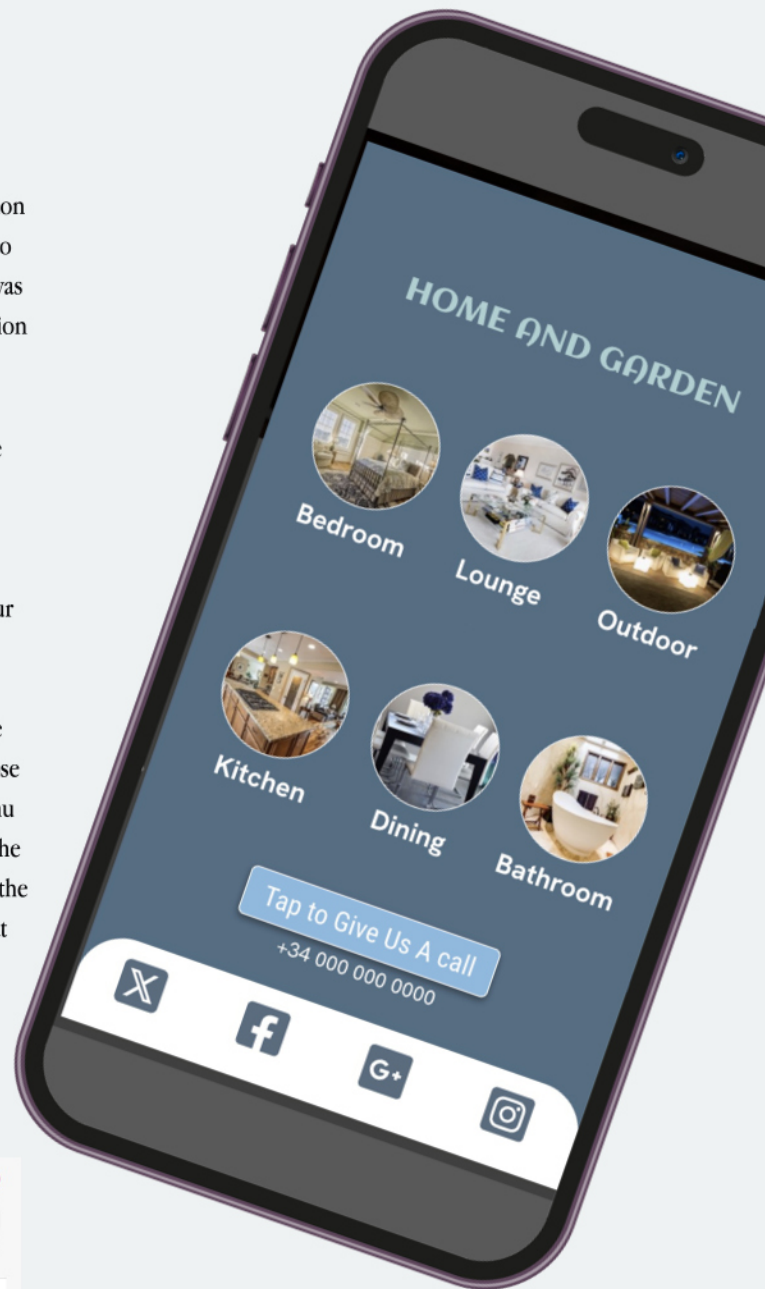
Check here to have the selected element display on the current device

Fixed in **Window** Effects

We've already seen how the fixed in window option creates a parallax effect in a hero layout block - we showed you how it was done in the earlier tutorial section. But did you know this effect can be used to create engaging split screen effects on your pages? If you don't understand what these effects are, take a look at this example.

Here, the images have been set as background images to two layout blocks and both have been set to be fixed in window. Furthermore, the images AND the coloured backgrounds extend to the full browser width on each side of the page. The image portion of the blocks act like windows that reveal different parts of the images as the page scrolls up and down. It's a nice effect that can add significant impact to an otherwise dull page.

Since the images are set as background images in layout blocks, they naturally extend to cover the full browser width. However, when it comes to those coloured boxes, simply adding standard box elements will confine them within the webpage's edges. To achieve a seamless effect, we utilise a wide box within each layout block, extending the colour across the entire browser window. We then use, a feature in the style panel called Background Shift, depicted below.
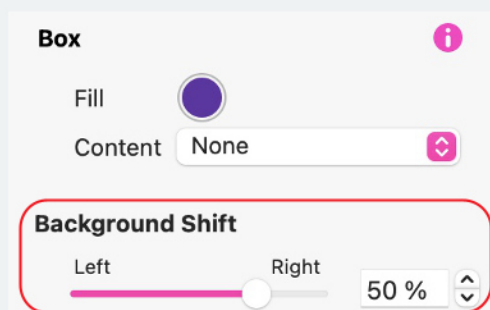
To accomplish this effect, select each wide box on the canvas and shift the background by 50% on one box and -50% on the other. This will create the 'windows,' allowing you to overlay content on the coloured background.

It's important to note that in the above example, we used different images in each layout block. However, if you use the same image, the final result will give the impression of a single image, with each 'window' revealing a different part of it. You can stack multiple layout blocks one beneath the other, using either the same image or different images. The resulting effect is both straightforward and visually striking.

SMTP
Form Submission

Form submissions from a website might seem complex, but the process is more straightforward than many believe. By default, **Sparkle** offers the '**Email via a Web server option**' in its style panel. This utilises **Sparkle's** built-in processing script, employing the sendmail function provided by most web hosting servers.

However, some web hosts are now requiring form results to be sent through a properly configured email account on your server. This change is to prevent web servers from being used as potential 'spam gateways.' With this method, your form results are sent much like an email from your computer's email application. You provide the username and password of your email account so that your web host's email server can receive and forward your form submissions.

To utilise this feature, it's advisable to set up a dedicated email account solely for this purpose. Although you can use any email account you own, having one specifically dedicated to this task is preferable. Once you've setup an account, select the '**Use custom SMTP server**' option in **Sparkle's** style panel. Then, enter the server name, username, and password as you would in your email application.

The illustration on the right demonstrates typical settings, but these settings may vary among hosting providers. Therefore, it's best to confirm the correct information, especially the Server Name and Port number, with your hosting company. Everything else in the style panel setup remains the same as for a standard form submission via a web server.

Remember, setting up a Thank You page on your site is required for proper form submissions. This page not only allows the sending of the form, but also confirms to your site visitor that their form submission was successful . The Thank You page typically includes a prominent link allowing users to return to the page they were on when they submitted the form,

Add a Button Label →

Choose an On Click Action →

Add a From Email address →

Add the Email address to where you want your form results sent →

Choose SMTP option →

Enter you email server →

Enter the Port No. →

Enter the email username (*usually the full email address*) →

Enter the password →

Check all the form fields you want included in the response →

Select the field containing the sender's email address →

Style	Arrange	Page

Button ⓘ

BUTTON LABEL
Let's Do This !

On Click

Send Contact Form via Email ⌄

EMAIL HEADING
Request:

FROM EMAIL ADDRESS
noreply@example.com

TO EMAIL ADDRESS

SUBJECT
Mail form

Use custom SMTP server ⌄

SERVER
mail.mydomain.com

PORT (USUALLY 25, 465, 587)
25

USERNAME
form-email@mydomain.com

PASSWORD
●●●●●●●●

Form Elements Collected
☑ I'm happy for you to contact me...
☑ Name (Text Input)
☑ option (Option Selection)
☑ Emal Address (Text Input)

Reply Address
Emal Address (Text Input) ⌄
The form field where the site visitor is expected to type their Email address

Thank you page
Thank You ⌄

Select the page in your website to which visitors will be directed after submitting the form

Advanced
Form Submission

I n certain cases, you might prefer to process your form results through a third-party service provider or utilise your own form script on your server. **Sparkle** accommodates this by offering the '**Advanced Form Submission**' option in the style panel. Enabling this option alters the information required in the style panel. You'll still select the form fields to be included in the response, but everything else narrows down to just two pieces of information: the method of sending your form results (GET or POST) and the URL of your service provider or your form script.

Determining the method of submission - whether it's through the service provider or your form script - will require the relevant details from them before you finalise these options.

The reason such a small amount of information is needed with this option is because your service provider or form script will allow you to setup all the other configuration options that may be needed. All **Sparkle** will do is send the form results to your form processor via the chosen method. It will then be a matter between you, your service provider or script developer to make things work.

*NOTE Some service providers or form processing scripts provide their own form design interface where you can create your forms. In those circumstance you would typically embed their forms into your web page using **Sparkle's** embed element. This would remove the need for you to create any **Sparkle** forms at all, or to set up any form submission instructions.*

Choose the Advanced
option here

Style
Arrange
Page

Button

BUTTON LABEL
Let's Do This !

On Click

Advanced Form Submission

Form Elements Collected
☑ I'm happy for you to contact me...
☑ Name (Text Input)
☑ option (Option Selection)
☑ Emal Address (Text Input)

Reply Address

Emal Address (Text Input)
The form field where the site visitor is expected to type their Email address

Advanced Settings

FORM VARIABLE
button

GET   POST

URL

Obtain this information
from your service provider
or Script developer

Sparkle's
Animations

Web design has embraced animation as a modern trend. Yet, designers have learned from the era of 'Flash' animations, where websites were overloaded with unnecessary flashy elements. While some sites still use animations purely for their visual appeal, it's essential to have a purpose behind adding movement to a page. The key idea is that animations should support your website's message and engage visitors effectively.

Animations serve as an excellent tool to highlight important elements, especially interactive ones that might go unnoticed otherwise. For instance, hover effects, commonly used for interactive elements on non-touch devices, don't work the same way on touchscreens. Thus, a small animation signalling interactivity can be beneficial. A practical example could involve applying a gentle bouncing effect to a call-to-action button. Upon coming into view, the button bounces a few times, attracting attention.

To prevent the animation from being overly intrusive, it's advisable to make it start after a couple of seconds and limit its repetition, to maybe 3 or 4 times. In **Sparkle**, you can achieve this using the Scroll Effect section in the style panel, as illustrated below.

The page bottom offset is an important aspect of scroll effect settings. This setting ensures that the animated object triggers only when it approaches a certain distance from the bottom of the page, preventing unwanted early triggering.

Animations triggered by scrolling are generally straightforward to understand and apply. However, '**Animate while scrolling**' effects offer more complexity but remain easily attainable in **Sparkle**. The challenge lies in the multitude of options and variations available, making it impractical to cover them extensively in this guide. However, on the next few pages, we'll explain the fundamentals of animations triggered by scrolling. Thankfully, the developers at **Sparkle** have made it really simple and intuitive, and present the options in a clean, easy to understand interface. You also have access to **Sparkle's** online user guide if you need further clarification, and if you're unsure how to create a specific type of animation, nip over to the **Sparkle** community for quick answers.
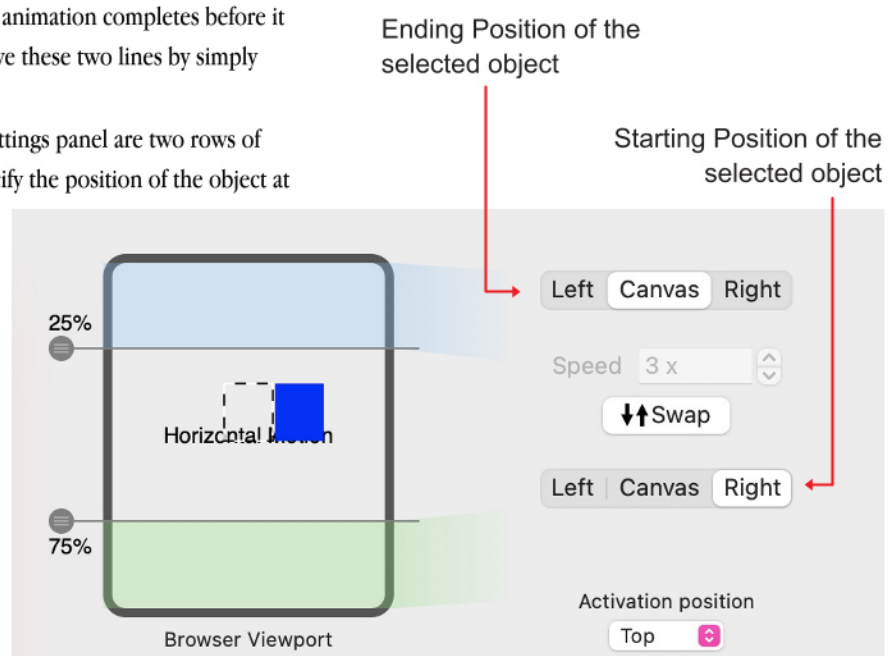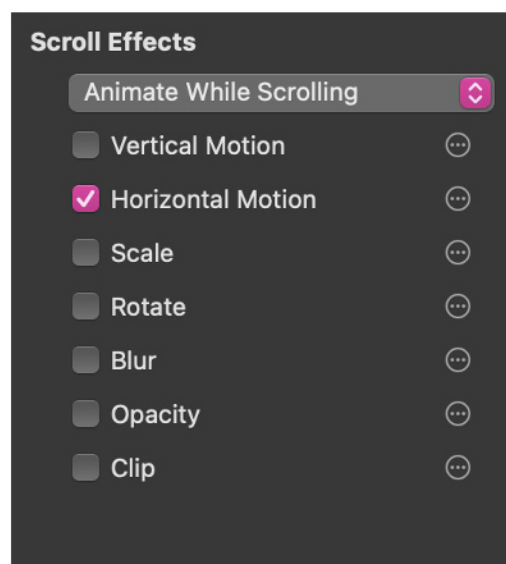
Scrolling Effects
Fundamentals

All of the available scrolling animations can be found in the style panel under the section 'Scroll Effects'. By selecting the 'Animate While Scrolling' option, you'll be presented with seven different effects that can be applied to just about any object on your canvas. In this example, we've selected 'Horizontal Motion' This essentially moves an object horizontally on the canvas as the page is scrolled.

Notice on the right of each effect there is a small icon (*3 dots in a circle*). This signifies there are more settings for the animation. Clicking the icon will pop up a small setting panel that looks similar to the one illustrated below. It comprise of two parts - the browser viewport on the left and the settings on the right. The browser viewport is a graphic representation of where the animation action takes place. It will also show a small animation showing what the effect will do. In the example below. The blue square represent the object you're animating, and the dotted square represent the scroll position of the page. This gives you a quick glimpse of what to expect.

The two lines, shown here as 25% and 75% represent where the animation effect will begin and end. In most cases, the animation starts when the object crosses the lower portion of the screen, and stops animating when it crosses over the top portion. This allows you to make sure your animation completes before it disappears from view. You can move these two lines by simply clicking and dragging.

Over on the right of the settings panel are two rows of buttons. The top row lets you specify the position of the object at the end of the animation, whereas the lower set of buttons let you specify the position of the object at the start of the animation. In this example, the object starts at it's position on the right, and moves to the left of the screen when scrolling. If you want to reverse the action, just click on the Swap button.


Scroll Effects

Animate While Scrolling

Vertical Motion ⋯

✓ Horizontal Motion ⋯

Scale ⋯

Rotate ⋯

Blur ⋯

Opacity ⋯

Clip ⋯

Ending Position of the selected object

Starting Position of the selected object

25%

75%

Horizontal Motion

Browser Viewport

| Left | Canvas | Right |

Speed 3 x

⬇⬆Swap

| Left | Canvas | Right |

Activation position

Top

A Worked
Example

A ssume we have a layout block containing two elements - a rectangle and a text box. We want these to slide into view as the page is scrolled. The rectangle from the left of the screen, and the text box from the right of the screen. The scrolling animation stops when

the two objects reach their placed position on the canvas. This is how it looks on the **Sparkle** canvas. The red dotted lines show the direction of movement we want for each object.
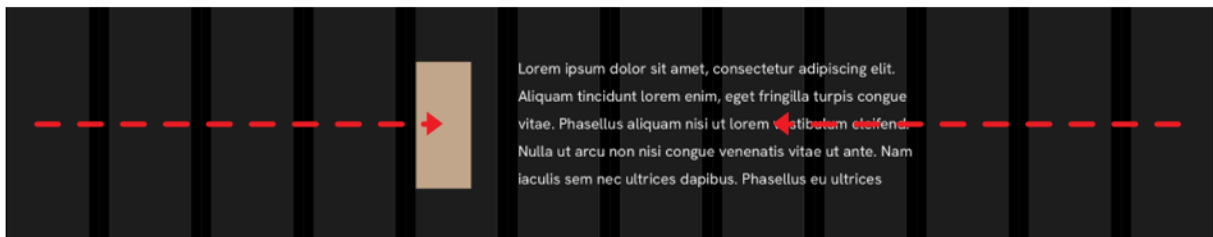
Start by selecting the rectangle object, and then select the Horizontal Motion effect from the styles panel. Set the **end** position of the animation to be the **Canvas** (*it's current location*) and set the **starting** point of the animation to be at the '**Left**' of the screen.
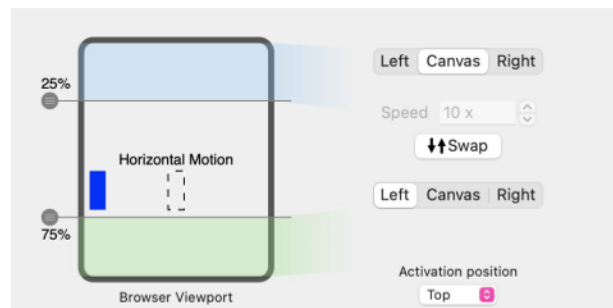

Next, select the text box. Again, select the Horizontal Motion Effect from the styles panel. Set the **end** position of the animation to be the **Canvas**, but this time set the **starting** position to be on the '**Right**' of the screen.
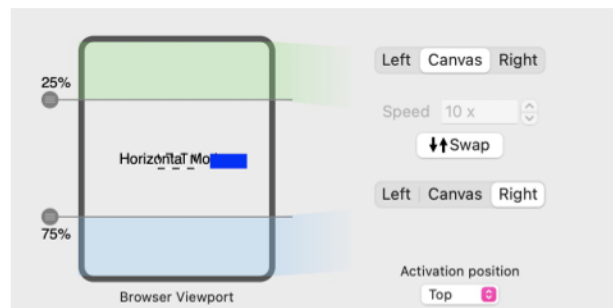
And here's how it looks as the animation starts during scrolling. The two objects glide in from each side of the screen to meet in the middle, which is where the

animation stops. Reversing the scrolling direction will cause the objects to separate again, disappearing off the right and left of the page.
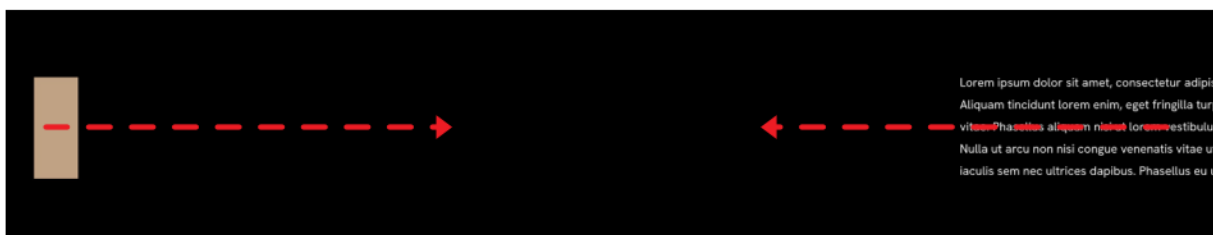
A Look at
Vertical Motion

Vertical motion is a little easier to deal with. Essentially, almost all web pages scroll vertically, so any object placed on the canvas can only be made to move up or down when vertical motion is set. The object can either move upwards FROM it's Canvas position, or it can move upwards TO it's canvas position when the page is scrolled down. This means fewer options in the settings panel, as can be seen below

The assumption here is that the object's **Canvas** position is wherever you placed it on the canvas, so your only choice is to decide if that position is to be the **Start** of the animation, or the **End** - there is no left or right positions to consider. Your only other choice is **Speed** - basically, how fast will the movement be. This is expressed as a multiple of the scroll speed - in this example, 1.5 times the scroll speed.
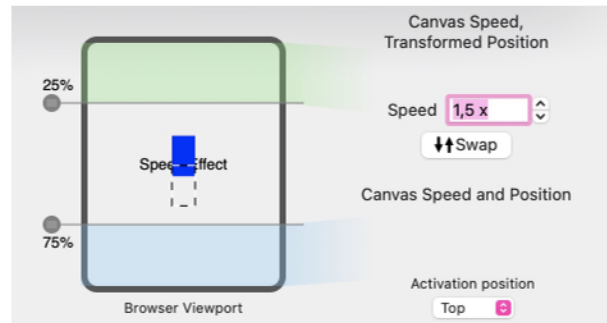
This is our starting situation, all the objects are set inside the black layout block. During page scrolling we want them to move in an upward direction into the orange layout block area. (*indicated by the dotted arrows*). To do this, select each rectangle in turn and apply the Vertical Motion Effect. When you preview in a browser, you will see the rectangles move upwards as you scroll down the page. If you then scroll back up the page, the rectangles will return to their starting position. For added interest, set a different speed for each rectangle.
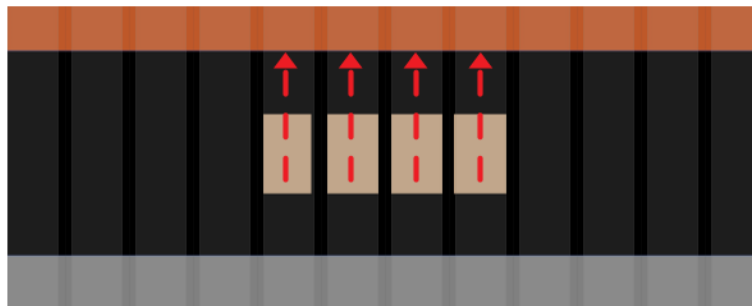
And, this is what it looks like during scrolling. Each rectangle starts moving upwards as the page is scrolled downwards. The reason they are all at different positions is because we've set different speeds on each object - the lowest speed on the left rectangle, and the highest speed on the right rectangle.

Vertical Motion
...continued

Now lets see what happens when that '**Swap**' button is clicked. This will tell the animation to set the current Canvas position to be the **End** position of the animation. Therefore, the objects must start their journey from somewhere lower down the page. This is decided by the viewport setting - basically, the objects will start to appear when the web page reaches the viewport. This how things will look in a browser as the page enters the viewport during scrolling. All the objects start appearing and continue their upward journey until they reach their canvas position inside the black layout block. The animation then stops.

Clearly, you have a lot of scope for creativity with animations. We've only touched on two of the options available to you. We urge you to check out the other effects available - remember, they all have a very similar settings panel - the only difference will be the actual settings to control the effect. Experiment and have fun - get to know how these features work and put them to good use. You can even go a step further by combining effects on a single object. But, don't go crazy - think of your site visitors. Use scrolling effects to highlight importance rather than distract attention.

When you combine scroll animations with with special effects applied to your animated objects, you can create some stunning visuals. For example, using translucent objects with a slight background blur can give a three dimensional appearance to the page with objects seemingly floating over the page background. We'll explain how to do that a little later on.
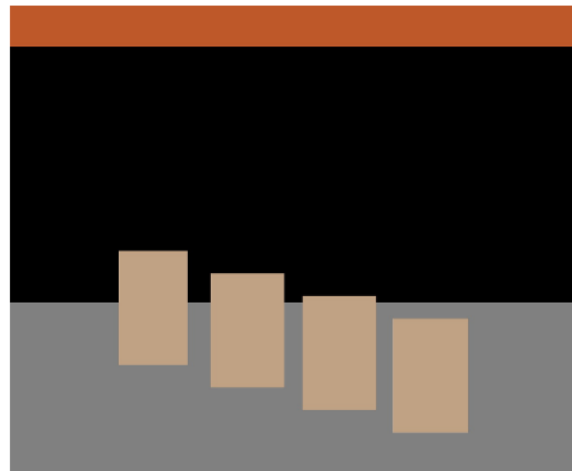
Important
Animation Rules

Give Animations Some Breathing Room: Let your animations have their space! They work best when they don't clutter or block important content that users want to read.

Purposeful Animation Magic: Make your animations count! Use them to add that special touch to your site, but remember, too much of a good thing can sometimes distract visitors from the main message.

Keep Things Subtle and Steady: Think of animations like seasoning – a sprinkle, not a downpour. Keep them subtle and consistent throughout your site for a smoother experience.

Think about Load Times: Keep an eye on load times! Large, elaborate animations might slow things down, and we wouldn't want your visitors tapping their fingers waiting.

Mobile-Friendly Magic: Animations should look good on any device, big or small. Don't let them cause trouble for our mobile buddies – they want to enjoy the show too!

No Overdoing It: Less can be more! A few well-placed animations are better than an army of them. Too much movement can make it tough to focus.

Strategically Place Them: Guide attention with care! Put your animations where they count the most – they're like the highlighter for your important bits.

Test, Improve, Repeat: Check and double-check! Make sure your animations work like a charm across different browsers and devices. And don't forget to ask for feedback!

Everyone Should Be Included: Make sure everyone feels welcome! Ensure your animations don't leave anyone out – consider those who might see things a bit differently.

Remember, animations can be like a little bit of magic on your website, so sprinkle them in wisely to make the whole experience sparkle!

RULES OF THE GAME
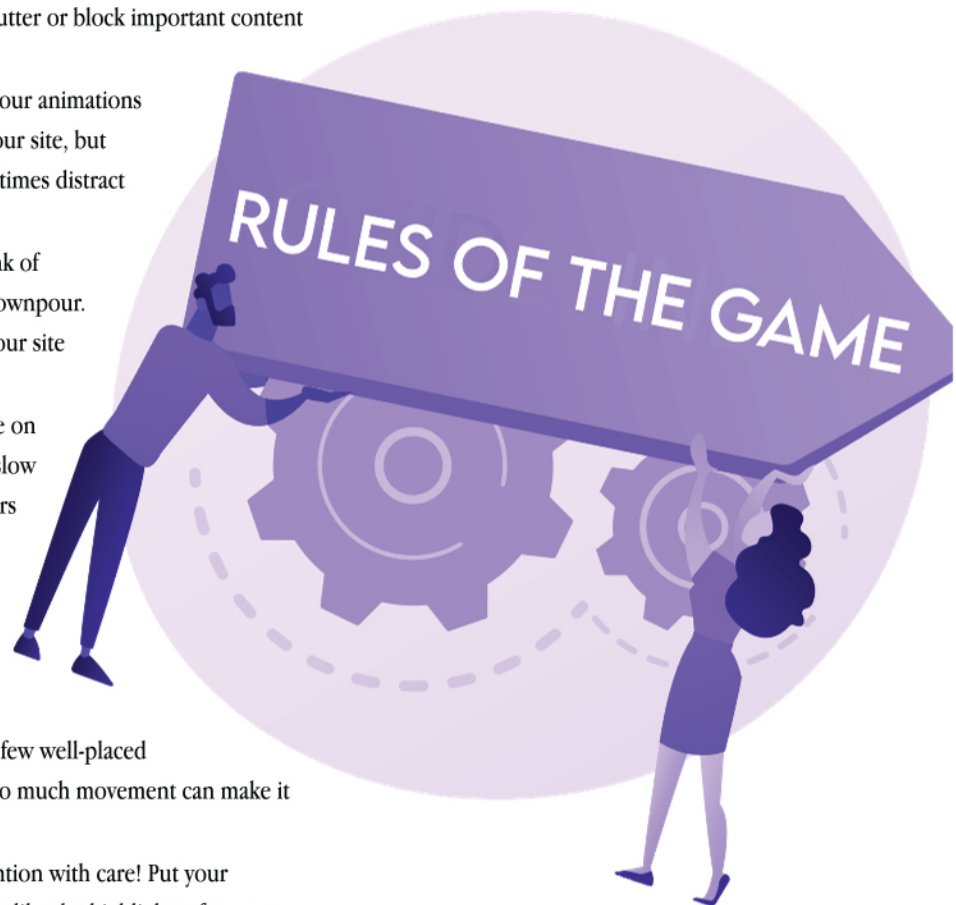
Special
Effects

When using some of the features in **Sparkle**, particularly when adding scrolling animation effects, there are a few styling attributes that you can deploy to enhance the sense of depth of your web page. One of these is the Blur feature. Lets take an example. Assume a header block as illustrated here. It includes an image of a tablet device and we've set scrolling animation to move the image horizontally as the page is scrolled. The illustration below shows what the header looks like mid-scroll. The content behind the image is blurred, giving the illusion that the tablet screen is translucent frosted glass. The red dotted line indicates the direction of movement.
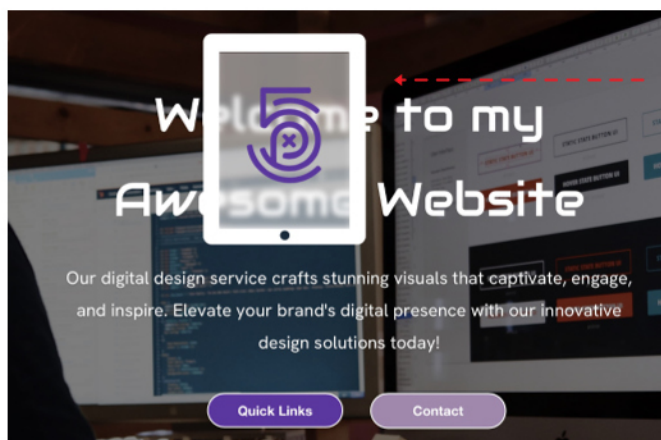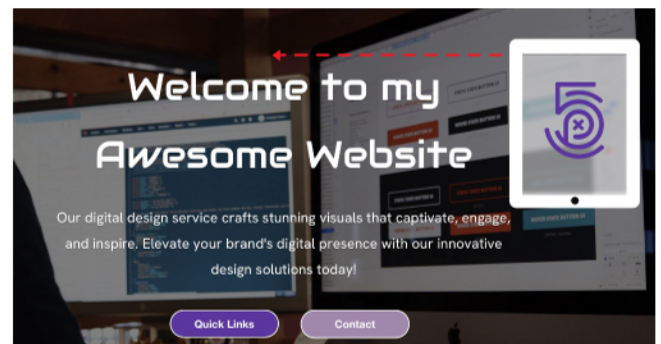
To achieve the effect, we created three objects on the canvas. An image of the tablet device with a transparent screen and background, a normal box element sized to fit over the tablet screen, and a logo positioned over the box. The box was styled with a white fill at 50% opacity. Next we added the background blur to the box. All the objets were grouped together and the whole group had the animation applied to it. This effect can also be applied to static objects, such as the background of sticky navigation blocks. This would display a blurred version of page content as it scrolls under the navigation block.
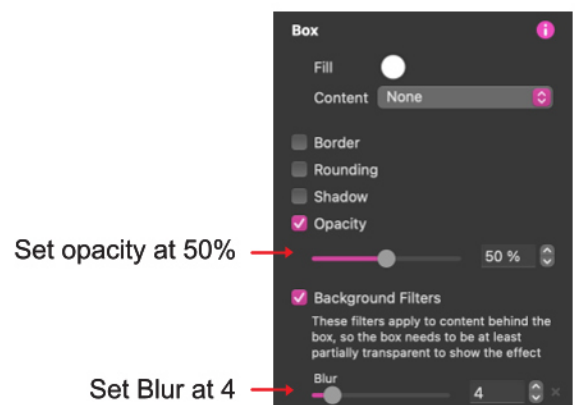
A note of caution: As at the time of producing this guide, blur effects will display on most browsers just fine. However, if a blurred item is included in a GROUP of objects, the blur effect won't be shown on Chrome browsers. For single elements this won't be an issue, but for animations where a number of items have to be grouped before they can be animated, check in a chrome browser to ensure that everything displays as expected.

Something
For you
Graphic
Artists

Creating Block
Dividers

B lock dividers serve as an excellent solution to counter the 'boxy' appearance often seen in web page designs. Essentially, they create a seamless visual element spanning two layout blocks, giving the impression of a more fluid and interconnected page layout. Below is a simplified example illustrating this concept.

In this instance, we've created a simple slanted divider to disguise the normally straight layout blocks. Effectively, this setup comprises two layout blocks, with one
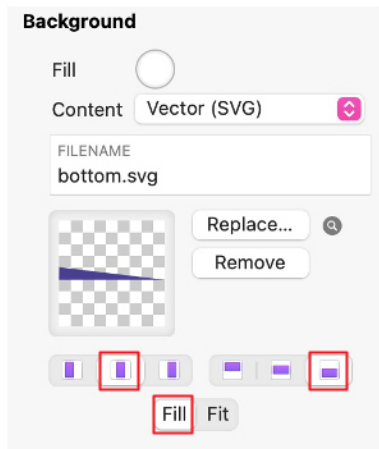
positioned above the other on the page. The dotted line shows the join between these blocks. Regardless of the height of each block, the divider graphic maintains its illusion seamlessly without distortion. The illustration on the right showcases an effective application of edge dividers on a web page, utilising a smart blend of dividers and background colour to enhance the visual effect.
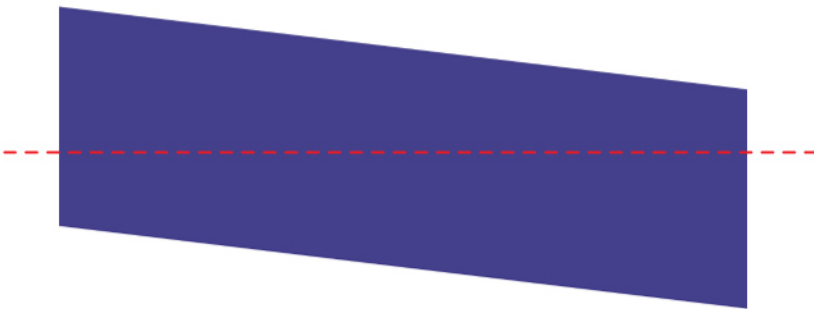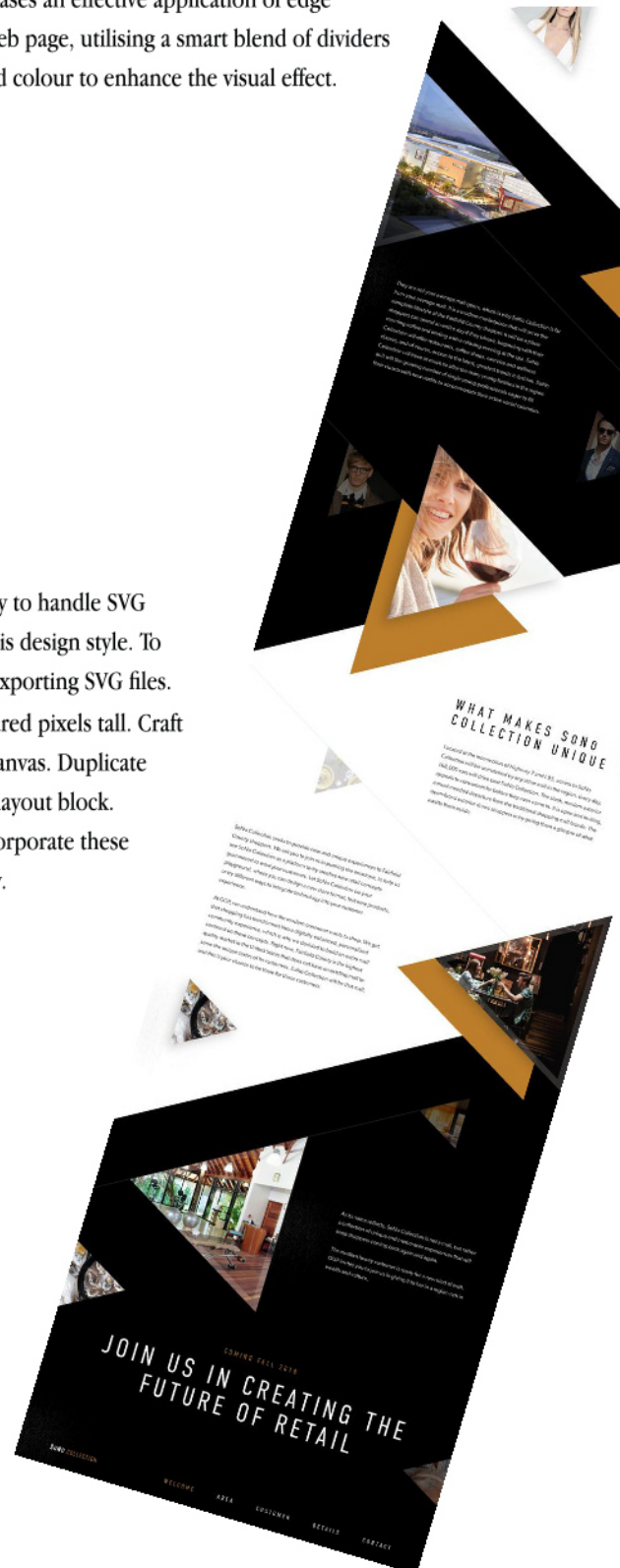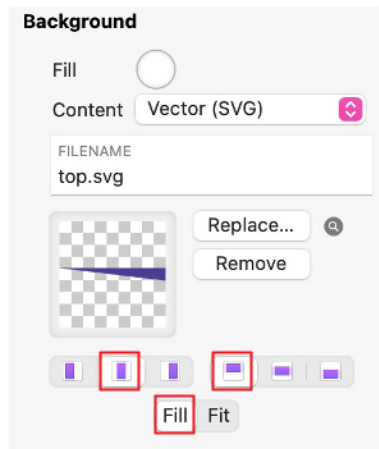

While **Sparkle** doesn't directly generate such graphic elements, its capability to handle SVG graphics and use them as background elements in layout blocks greatly facilitates this design style. To create these elements, you'll require a basic vector graphics application capable of exporting SVG files.

Start by creating a canvas, approximately 2500 pixels wide and several hundred pixels tall. Craft a straightforward design for the BOTTOM segment of the TOPMOST block on the canvas. Duplicate this canvas and reflect the graphic to form the TOP segment of the BOTTOMMOST layout block. Export these designs as SVG files with a transparent background. Subsequently, incorporate these SVG files as background images in your blocks, positioning them as indicated below.

Top Layout Block

Background

Fill ⬤

Content Vector (SVG) ⬍

FILENAME
bottom.svg

Replace... 🔍
Remove

Fill Fit

Lower Layout Block

Background

Fill ⬤

Content Vector (SVG) ⬍

FILENAME
top.svg

Replace... 🔍
Remove

Fill Fit

MoreAbout Block
Dividers

While block dividers can enhance the visual appeal of a webpage, there are certain considerations to grasp regarding their functionality in **Sparkle**. Background images within layout blocks are typically set to extend across the entire browser width, surpassing the webpage's actual width. Yet, in specific designs, this extension beyond the page borders might not be desirable. For instance, certain geometric shapes may appear awkward if they protrude outside the page boundaries. Take a look the example below for a clearer understanding.
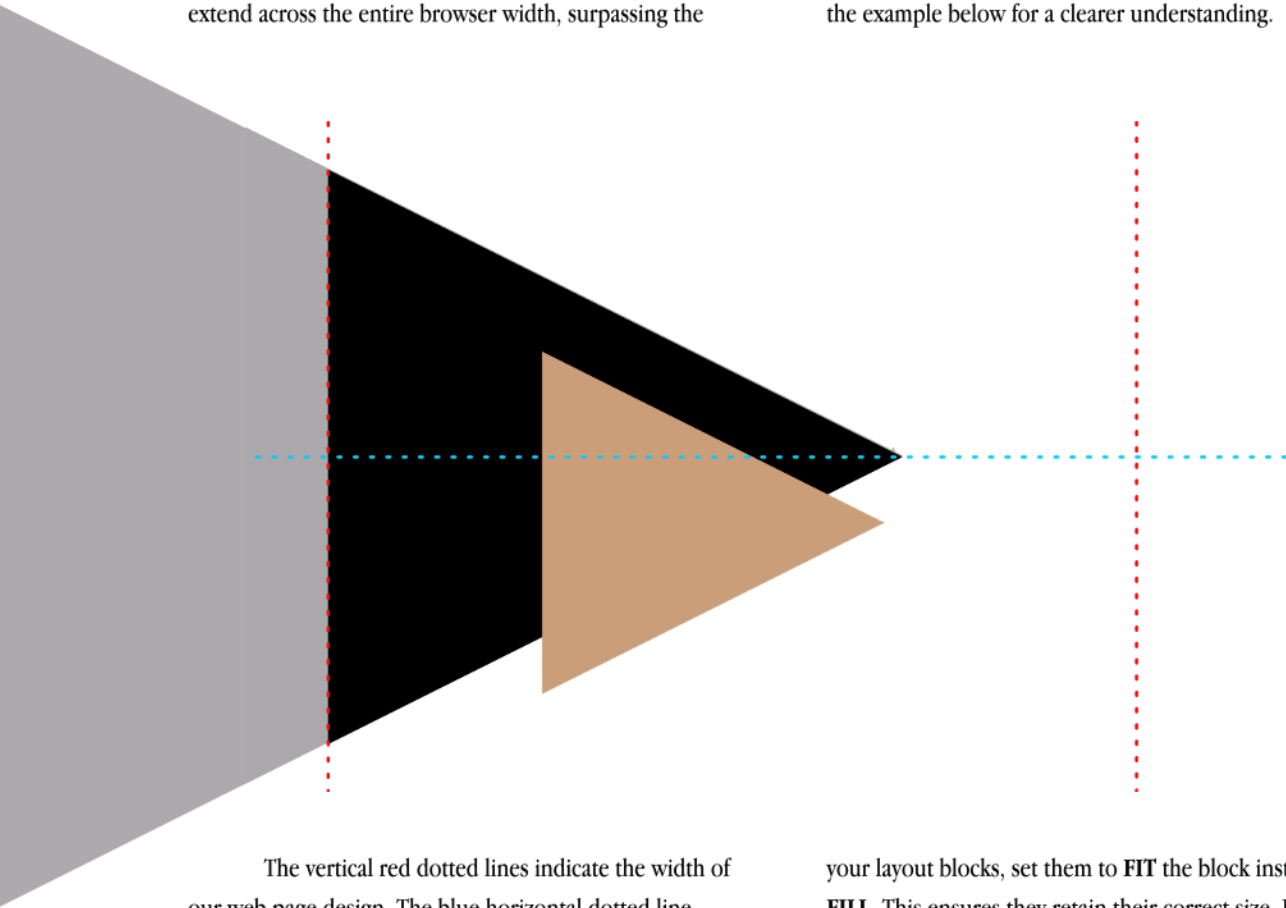
The vertical red dotted lines indicate the width of our web page design. The blue horizontal dotted line signifies the boundary between the layout blocks. The graphic placed above the blue line is tailored for the top block, while the one below represents the design for the lower block. The shaded grey area on the left demonstrates how the black triangle would overflow into the web browser window when designed as a FULL WIDTH background image, which might not look good on larger browser windows.

To address this issue, it would be best to design your block dividers within the width constraints of your working page, such as 1200px. Ensure your design remains within this limit to prevent any overflow. Then, export both images as SVG files. When incorporating these images into your layout blocks, set them to **FIT** the block instead of **FILL**. This ensures they retain their correct size. Both images will be centred within their respective blocks, with the top image aligning to the bottom part of the block and the bottom image aligning to the top of the block. Below are the recommended settings.

Creating layout block dividers requires some basic understanding of graphic design tools, particularly vector graphics applications. To craft these dividers, design a single graphic and utilise your application's 'Slice' tool to split the graphic into its two segments, which will ensure a seamless transition between the layout blocks when assembled on your web page.

When exporting the images, we recommend choosing the SVG option due to their small file sizes, typically around 1 - 2 KB. This makes them highly efficient for web design projects.

Keep in mind the canvas size when designing the graphics. If the graphic extends beyond the page into the browser window, set your graphic app canvas to around 2500px (*suitable for most large screen devices*). Conversely, if designing for the web page width only, match the canvas width accordingly (*e.g., 1200px*). Ensure that upon export, the image retains its canvas width, even if it seems like there's excess white space. This precision is important for flawless alignment at the block division.

Moreover, if your graphics tool includes a 'slice tool', you can even integrate photographic images to span across your layout blocks, as demonstrated in the example below.


Top Layout Block Image

+

Bottom Layout Block Image

=

Result on Webpage
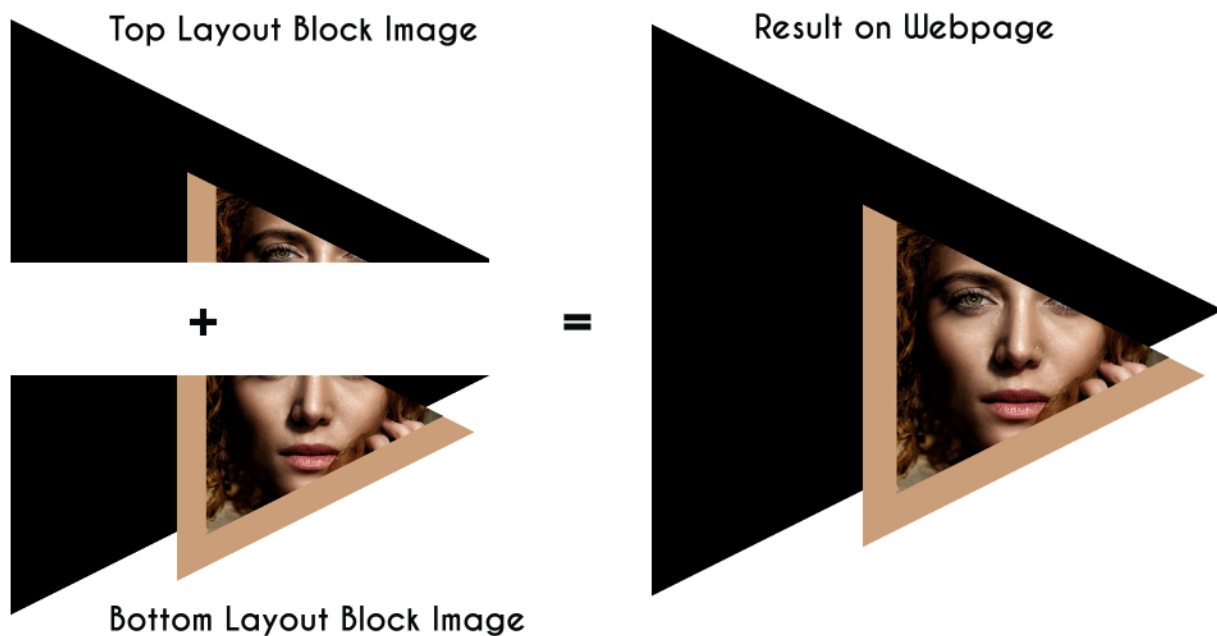
Special
Shapes

A set of 5 triangle shapes filled with colours and an image - grouped and copied as a single shape.

A standard symbol filled with a gradient
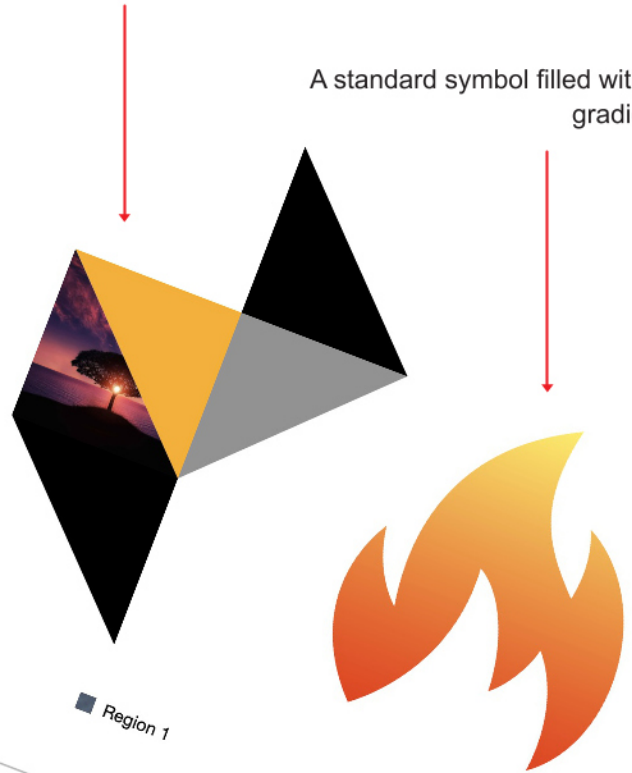
There is often a need to create special shapes for use in website designs, Fortunately, as an Apple Mac owner, you have access to Apple's standard productivity suite of applications, Pages, Numbers and Keynote. Everything that can be created in these apps can be added to your Sparkle web page with a simple copy and paste function. Take, for example, the shape element in all of the apps. You can create a variety of shapes and fill them with colour, gradients or images. By simply selecting the finished shape and copying to your clipboard, the shape becomes an element that can be pasted right into your **Sparkle** canvas. But it's not only shapes - you can also add tables and charts. Furthermore, everything gets copied over with a transparent background, ready to sit over your web page background colour or pattern. Here are a few examples.

■ Region 1

■ Region 2

200

150

100

50

0

April

May

June

July
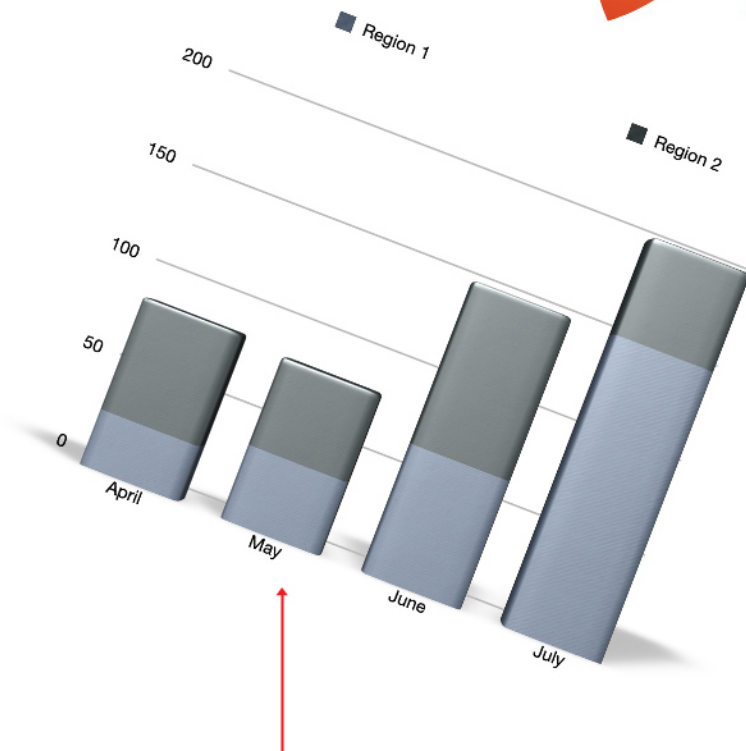
A 3-D bar chart

Don't Forget
Keynote

Did you know that you can use Apple's keynote app to create animated presentations and backgrounds for use in **Sparkle**? No? Well stick around.

Although keynote was primarily designed for making presentations for large audiences, It can also be deployed for making smaller, animated features that can be embedded into your Sparkle website. You can create custom canvas sizes (*maybe one of those square formats that are so popular on social media sites*). You can then create short animated ads, and presentations using all the tools that Keynote has to offer. When your done, just export the presentation as a video file. Open it in something like the Handbrake app and optimise it for use on the web. Add the resulting video to your web page using the video element. Set it to automatically start and loop, and you're good to go.

While you're exploring keynote, don't forget to check out the Dynamic Presentation options. Simply open one of the dynamic templates and customise the look of the animated background. Remove all other content from the slide and export it as a video file. Set the video to play the slide for about 10 seconds when exporting. Again, open the video file in Handbrake and optimise it for the web. What you'll end up with as a video that you can use as a background to a layout bloc. Here is what one of Keynoteis Dynamic backgrounds look like. When opened on your webpage, the image slowly undulates like waves.
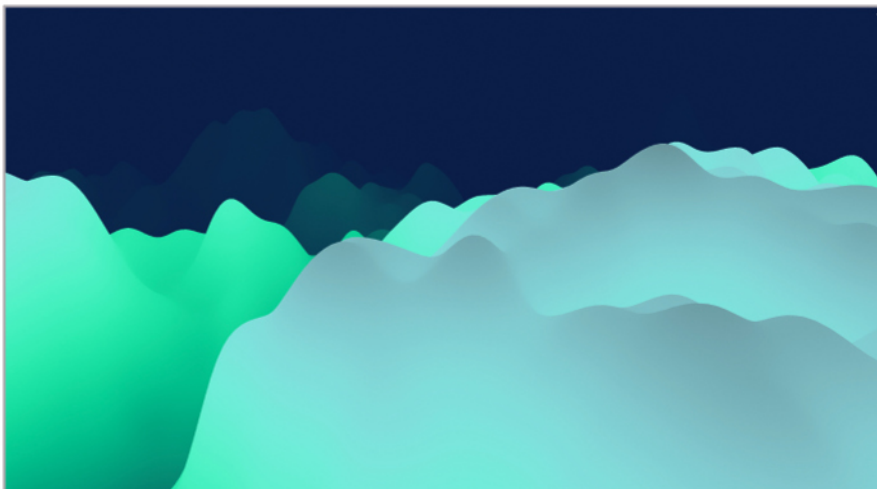
Final
Words

Congratulations on reaching the end of this **Sparkle** user guide! Although we've only offered a brief glimpse into **Sparkle's** capabilities, we hope this resource has provided you with some valuable insights, guidance, and inspiration to craft stunning websites using **Sparkle**.

Throughout this guide, we've explored various features, techniques, and best practices that empower you to create visually appealing, responsive, and user-friendly websites. From mastering layout blocks and designing navigation menus to utilising animations and handling form submissions, you've gained a wealth of knowledge to establish you on your **Sparkle** web design journey. Of course, we've only really explored the surface of the broader range of facilities **Sparkle** offers, there is so much more for you to discover yourself.

Remember, **Sparkle** offers an array of powerful tools and functionalities, enabling you to bring your creative vision to life without the need for complex coding. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced web designer, **Sparkle's** intuitive interface and versatile capabilities offer endless possibilities for your projects.

As you continue your journey with **Sparkle**, keep experimenting, exploring, and pushing the boundaries of your creativity. The dynamic world of web design is ever-evolving, and **Sparkle** equips you with the tools to adapt and thrive in this landscape.

Should you have further questions or need additional assistance, don't hesitate to refer back to this guide or explore **Sparkle's** excellent online resources, user community, and tutorials. Watch out for future supplements to this guide when we'll be taking a closer look at features such as creating blogs, SEO tools and using using **Sparkle's** automated page creation tools Embrace your creativity, enjoy the process, and keep building beautiful websites with **Sparkle**!

Thank you for choosing **Sparkle**. Wishing you success in all your web design endeavours!

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