

The power of progressive enhancement

WP Chelt - 17.04.2019

Hi there, I'm Andy 🖐️

I'm a freelance
web designer

<https://andy-bell.design>

@andybelldesign

NHS



VICE

Clearleft

sky

ORACLE®

I'm an accessibility and progressive
enhancement super-fan 🚀

The main reason I care a lot about
these things...

People

People are who we build for

Why progressive enhancement, though?

Let's start with something
very important

Fast, reliable internet is a
LUXURY, not the standard

Average internet speeds: *Developed Countries*

 Italy: **9.2mbs**

 France: **10.8mbs**

 Australia: **11.1mbs**

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Internet_connection_speeds

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For context: **3G** is about **7mbs**

Surprised at how slow they are?

Average internet speeds: *Developing Countries*

 Paraguay: **1.4mbs**

 Nigeria: **3.9mbs**

 India: **6.5mbs**

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Internet_connection_speeds

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The average page weight
on desktop is **1526kb**

Source: <https://httparchive.org/reports/page-weight>

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This isn't a talk about
performance, though

Well, not directly

You can improve performance with
progressive enhancement

Let's have a chat about devices

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This might come as a surprise*

**(it shouldn't)*



Photo by Stephen Frank on Unsplash

Android has ~ 70% market share

Source: <http://gs.statcounter.com/os-market-share/mobile/europe>

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A lot of people browse the web
without JavaScript

Not necessarily because
“they don’t like it”

Some reasons

There was a runtime error

It's disabled as the
ultimate Ad Blocker

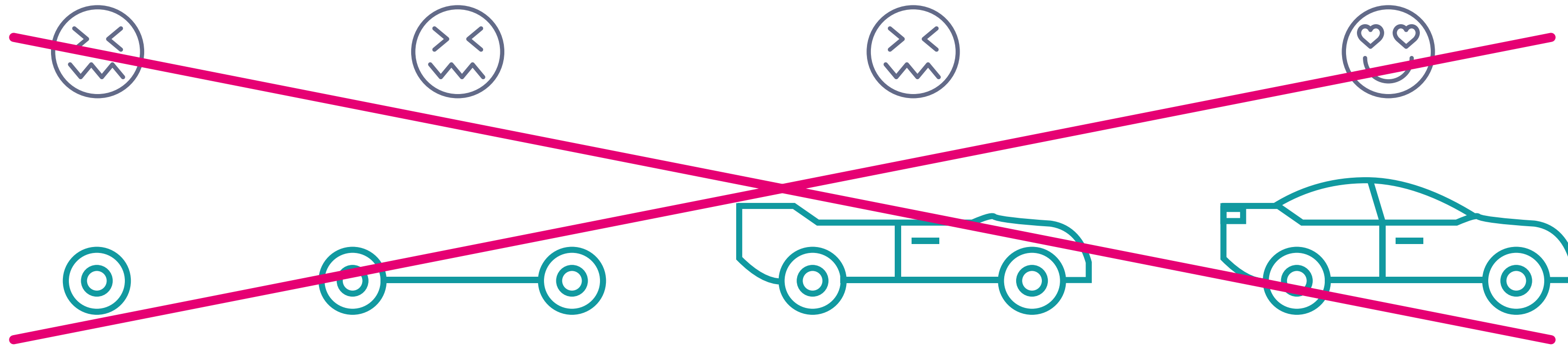
They run Android on 2G
with data-saver enabled

How does progressive enhancement work?

Minimum Viable Experience

What the heck is that?

Not like this



Like this!



Provide the most possible value
to a user with the least possible
technical capability

A quick example

Progressively enhanced toggle panel

By default, this is a heading and some paragraphs, but where web components are supported, a toggle panel is available.

A heading which toggle the collapsable panel

Cras mattis consectetur purus sit amet fermentum. Cras justo odio, dapibus ac facilisis in, egestas eget quam. Duis mollis, est non commodo luctus, nisi erat porttitor ligula, eget lacinia odio sem nec elit. Nullam quis risus eget urna mollis ornare vel eu leo. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum. Curabitur blandit tempus porttitor. Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit.

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The priority is the content, which is
delivered immediately

The fancy interaction doesn't have to
work for the user to get any value

The user will never know 🎉

Minimum Viable Experience

A common response as to why
progressive enhancement
can't be considered

“The users need the exact, same experience in every browser”

- *Someone in marketing, probably*

Another response

“I can’t possibly do that with my
complex JavaScript application”

- *Some tech bro, probably*

This one is probably true.

Progressive enhancement is a
mindset change

Progressive enhancement isn't necessarily *more work* and it certainly isn't a *non-JavaScript fallback*, it's a change in how we think about our projects. A complete mindset change is required here and it starts by remembering that you don't build websites for *yourself*, you build them for *others*.

Embrace the web platform 🧊

Simple setup = focus on what's
important

 Frameworks 



Frameworks



Progressive enhancement + Frameworks =



What *free* tools are these?

Web Components and CSS 🎉

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“But not all browsers support
Web Components”

- *That person on Twitter*

No fallbacks, thanks



Let's look back at our example

Progressively enhanced toggle panel

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A heading which toggle the collapsable panel

Cras mattis consectetur purus sit amet fermentum. Cras justo odio, dapibus ac facilisis in, egestas eget quam. Duis mollis, est non commodo luctus, nisi erat porttitor ligula, eget lacinia odio sem nec elit. Nullam quis risus eget urna mollis ornare vel eu leo. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum. Curabitur blandit tempus porttitor. Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit.

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The Web Component enables our
minimum viable experience

It works in IE8

Progressively enhanced toggle panel

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A heading which toggle the collapsable panel

Cras mattis consectetur purus sit amet fermentum. Cras justo odio, dapibus ac facilisis in, egestas eget quam. Duis mollis, est non commodo luctus, nisi erat porttitor ligula, eget lacinia odio sem nec elit. Nullam quis risus eget urna mollis ornare vel eu leo. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum. Curabitur blandit tempus porttitor. Nullam id dolor id nibh ultricies vehicula ut id elit.

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SWITCH

1440 x 798

Location

🐛 📄

⚙️ ❓

FEATURES

STOP

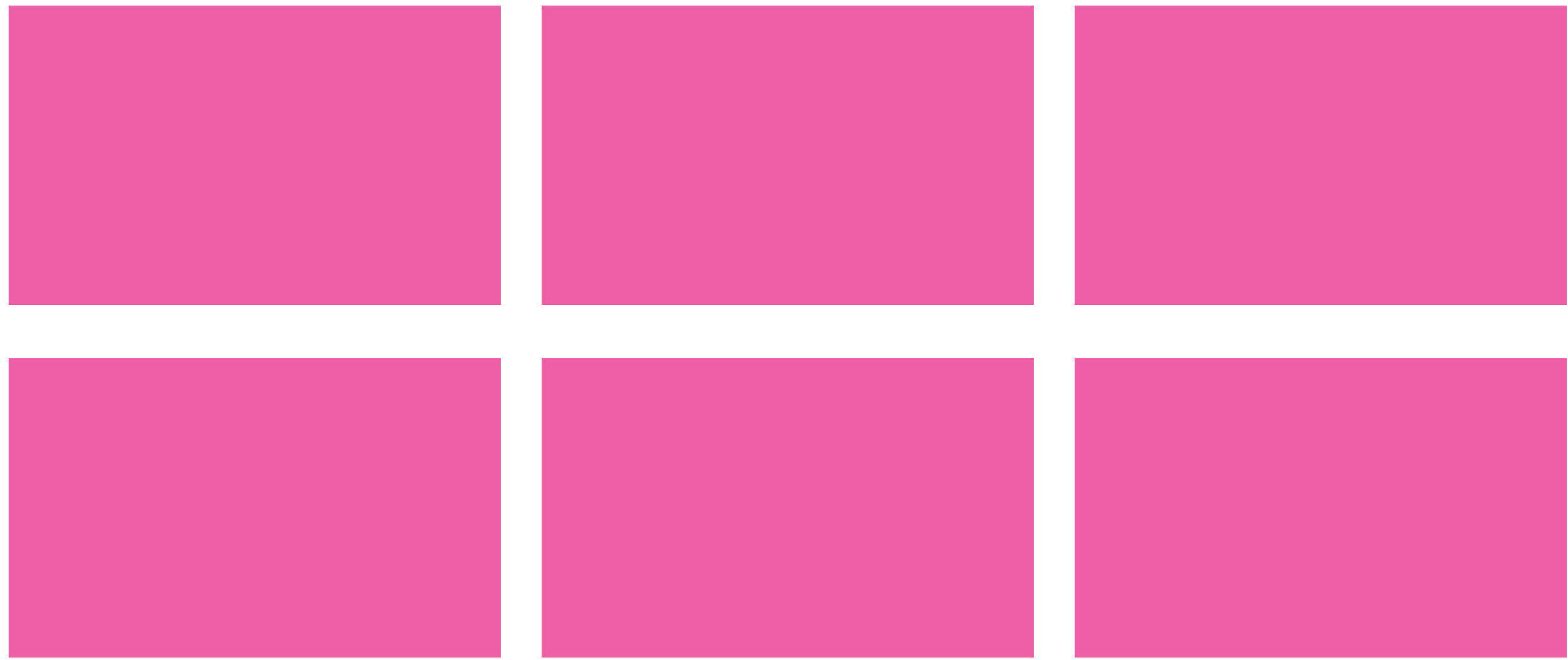
We're producing a resilient
front-end by default 🎉

How about CSS?

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Planning is your pal



What's the minimum
viable experience?



Easy to consume.
Easy to navigate.

Minimum Viable Experience

Job done for the 16% of
global users that don't have
CSS Grid support.

Source: <https://caniuse.com/#feat=css-grid>

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What about the other 84%?

```
display: grid;
grid-template-columns: repeat(auto-fill, minmax(16.5rem, 1fr));
grid-gap: 1rem;
```

That's the full-blown experience


```
.grid {  
  display: grid;  
  grid-template-columns: repeat(auto-fill, minmax(16.5rem, 1fr));  
  grid-gap: 1rem;  
}
```

```
.grid > * {  
  max-width: 400px;  
}
```

```
.grid > * + * {  
  margin-top: 20px;  
}
```

Let's put heavy duty CSS
frameworks away

Progressive enhancement means
tiny amounts of CSS

We should embrace that. *All of us.*

What else can we do?

Make progressive enhancement a part of every process in your team

- Planning
- UX
- Design
- Development
- Testing

“What is the minimum
viable experience and
how can we enhance it?”

Always remember, the priority is
the **people** that use our websites.

- Not ourselves.
- Not our Twitter peers.
- Not Dribbble.

Developer convenience is
important, only if it frees us up
to focus on our users

Focus on tools, frameworks &
hotness only: we fail to do our jobs

Tools are good, but happy
users are better

A user doesn't care how
your thing was built

Recap

People are our main priority

Ditch the fallbacks, hacks and heavy frameworks

Embrace a minimum
viable experience

Create a resilient, user-focused experience

Sleep easy knowing your website
or app *just* works

Thank you 🙌

Original article: <https://andy-bell.design/pe>

Twitter: [@andybelldesign](https://twitter.com/andybelldesign)

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