

What's the Best Way to Build Your Web Application?

A Story of Two Roads

Brought to you by Progress Kendo UI

This infographic explores one of the interesting crossroads developers find themselves at when building a web application: the approach we take to building the UI. This decision can impact our ability to meet deadlines, maintain the app and, on occasion, live a wholesome life.

The decision can be boiled down to two main approaches: building your own components or buying a third-party UI library. We'll explore the implications of each well-trodden path in eight reality-inspired categories:



I'LL BUILD IT MYSELF!
(Build as much of the code in-house as possible, sprinkle OSS)

I'LL SEE WHAT'S OUT THERE!
(Buy a complete third-party library to handle most of the UI)

01 Ticking Off All Project Checkboxes

Total control. You can customize every pixel if you so desire. Speed of development can fluctuate widely.

Professional components are very configurable and designed by UX experts. Easier to avoid delays and meet deadlines.

02 Documentation

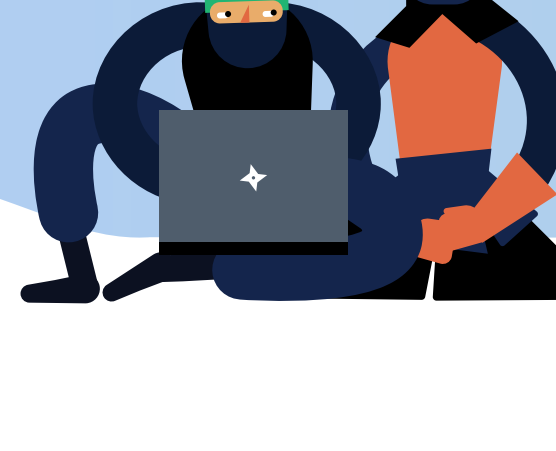
Your code—up to you to document it. OSS docs will vary (some are great, while others have none). Little to no video tutorials on exactly what you're trying to achieve.

Part of the deal. The more advanced the library, the more onboarding resources will be available. You may even find live demos on Twitch.

03 Support

It's just you and your team. You might find help on Stack Overflow or GitHub — and perhaps your therapist—but you're mostly on your own.

Paid libraries usually come with technical support who teach us good habits: for example, to put a tough issue in writing and discuss it with someone.



04 External Dependencies

As many as the OS libraries you implement. And all their dependencies. And the dependencies of their...

Dependencies are limited to the third-party library itself. Even if it's all proprietary code, some libraries give you access to the source code with a license.

Will you rejoice at the next version of React / Chrome / Gatsby or will you crawl into a cave hoping no one asks you to upgrade your app?

You've outsourced new version support to an external team. If you've chosen wisely, you get to upgrade as soon as new stuff gets released

05 Updates

Reusability is built into most open-source and all paid UI libraries—they're built to fit any scenario. Except, perhaps, for the very, very niche ones.

Do you plan to reuse the UI components you build? If not, the app price tag goes up. If yes, better start documenting.

06 Reusability

07 Money Matters

The bill starts with your per-hour wage multiplied by the project estimate. Add documenting code, testing, UX design, learning accessibility standards and tons of coffee.

Commercial UI libraries cost money. But consider this: what part of your app's UI would you build in exchange for \$999 ...for the whole year?

08 The Pleasure Factor

Work doesn't have to be a drag. Writing a React app, for example, can be great fun until your client asks for time zone support in your custom calendar.

It works for bikes and cars, and it works just as well for UI libraries: take it for a spin and you'll get a good idea if you enjoy it or not.

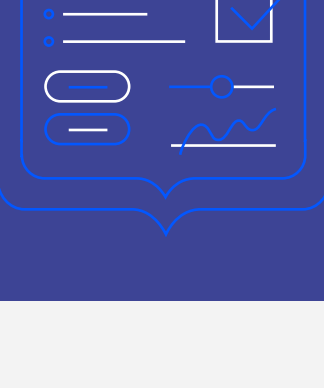
Oh, and by the way—since this is not a submarine trip, but a walk in the forest—we're always free to go check out the other route. Often, the two will converge. Isn't this part of the beauty of web development—all the flux and so much freedom!

A note from the author

I'm trivializing matters a bit to make sure the main ideas can fit in an infographic. For an in-depth discussion on deciding whether to build your UI in-house or implement an external solution, check out the article linked here.

Looking for a JavaScript UI library to help you tick off all boxes?

Treat yourself to a professionally built UI components library that will serve you well for many web projects on end. Kendo UI is the ultimate collection of UI libraries with feature-rich components for Angular, React, Vue and jQuery. With Kendo UI, you will quickly build eye-catching, high-performance, responsive web applications—regardless of your JavaScript framework choice. Check it out.



Enjoy the road ahead with our complete UI library

