

Figma Feature Secondary Research

Summarizing main points

Plugins

There are a host of plugins for components, ranging from replacing selections with existing components, cloning, replacing, alternate creation methods, relinking, organizing, migrating between files, etc.

Surprisingly there was only one plugin that specifically addressed editing a component “in-place”, with visual context. It is called “Edit in Place”, by Tom Lowry; design advocate at Figma.

Edit in Place

Tom Lowry

<https://www.figma.com/community/plugin/754704266165393093/Edit-in-place>

This plugin is addressing the exact use case for the problem I am designing for.

Description

- Enables you to select any instance of a local component and edit the master component in place from the context of wherever you are using the instance.
- This is handy if your master components are on another page!

Notes

- Works only on the top level, not any nested instances of other components
- Does not show the design system in context, which you may want to access for various reasons.

Master

Gleb

<https://www.figma.com/community/plugin/767721682134156281/Master>

Description

- Create new component from a set of any objects (and save all overrides)
- Link objects of any kind to the existing Component, in any location
- Selection can include Frames, Groups and Instances of other components, but all need to have similar sets of elements - different structures are ignored
- Allows a process to move a master component and easily link instances

Notes

- Completed the guide demo and it works exactly as described
- It doesn't explicitly open a component editor or "edit in place" function
- You could use a combination of the utilities it has to iterate on a component and swap with the desired master
- This could serve as an all-in-one master component utility, ranging from organization, creation, and iteration.

Designers

Micah Weinman:

DL Student
(regarding component organization)

"The way I approach this is to just separate everything by pages within the same file. This allows for all my masters to exist in their own space and every other stage exist in theirs."

Aaron Cecchini-Butler:

DL mentor
Product Designer at Grubhub

"you can copy and paste master components into new docs"

"you can also just duplicate your file and keep what you want to keep"

Articles

The articles I came across focused heavily on design system organization and explaining native master component editing workflows. Nothing was found that mentioned native support or even workarounds for editing a master component “in place”.

Make Changes to Main Components

<https://help.figma.com/hc/en-us/articles/360038665934>

Explains how instances are updated and when you would need to publish updates for instances in other files. It also states that you can only edit the main component in the file where it currently lives.

Component Library Best Practices

<https://www.figma.com/best-practices/components-styles-and-shared-libraries/>

Comprehensive guide to creating libraries in an organized, scalable manner.

While it does not touch on editing in place, it does give good advice on how to make your master component to be edited easier to find, aside from using the “Go to main component” button.

Select all with same instance

- Native utility that lets you change all instances to a new component

10 tips on using components in Figma

Jake Tsacudakis

<https://medium.com/design-with-figma/10-tips-on-using-components-in-figma-c7db9c5e7fe1>

General guide explaining component behavior, structure, organization, and use cases.

One aspect covered that could help for allowing a master to be flexible is to utilize constraints and layout grids on the component itself. It could work well in the case where all you want to change is the overall frame size and keep one component. It does not solve for editing in place.

- Applied to the component frame
- Helps with responsive behavior
- Only necessary complex components that are distributed to many sizes

Figma Feature Highlight: Component Overrides

Figma Medium Article

<https://www.figma.com/blog/figma-feature-highlight-component-overrides/>

Covers generally how overrides work.

Contains an FAQ that explains a few concepts:

- It isn't possible to duplicate a component in a single file
- You can copy/paste from one file to another but it will not retain links
- Editing a master does not change instance overrides
- Overrides don't work across files
- Size, position, point & bezier positions, constraints can be overridden

Master Component

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2019/06/building-component-library-figma/>

Basically covers the atomic method of creating a master "building block" component with all possible elements in it, that serves as a basis for the sub-components.

Forums

Edit components in place

Spectrum forum post

<https://spectrum.chat/figma/general/edit-components-in-place~06dc9f56-1a8b-402b-8ec0-c5e2198a7d5c>

Post main points:

- Would like a function to edit components in place with visual context
- Cites the "Symbol editing view" in Illustrator

Quotes

- "unless I move the component, I also can't see how the edits I'm making to the component affect the component in the visual context."
- "I would love some kind of "Edit Component in Place" for Figma."
- "Adobe xd does exactly that!"
- "I will need to switch back to Sketch now because of this "aggravating dance".."
- "Am quite surprised that this is not there."
- "it's hard to do in abstract from the page that contains symbols"
- "this is driving me mad, there definitely used to be a plugin that did this but I can't find it anywhere haha"

January 9, 2018 at 10:51pm



Mamoon Tayih @mamoon-tayih

This will be a great addition. I am currently trying out sketch, xd and figma. For me figma is heading in an interesting direction waiting to see what invasion studio is going to offer. As for this feature, I saw that Adobe xd does exactly that!

January 22, 2019 at 9:15am



Corinne Ferreira @corinne-ferreira

This is the biggest time-zapper that seems to be the breaking point for me. I've been using Figma for high level concepts over the past few months. Now that it's time to build the application and design system "for real" I'm now at a crossroads: I think I will need to switch back to Sketch now because of this "aggravating dance" as Chris mentioned above and a few other itchy drawbacks (paste in place issues as well as Right Click > Select Layer doesn't actually call up that layer in the layers area... still have to hunt for it)

Edited

January 23, 2019 at 7:27am



Jikku Jose @jikkujose

Am quite surprised that this is not there. In addition, I am wondering how you would edit a component's master if the master was deleted & only the instances of it remain?



Ian Brewer @ianbrewer

Great idea, yes please! I keep having to move my components into current page of layouts and back to see how my edits affect the instance I'm working on. it's hard to do in abstract from the page that contains symbols and yes I'm aware that for some systems where you want more of a lock down on symbols this would be bad so maybe a toggle option in preferences for those that maintain more strict libraries.

February 7, 2019 at 12:24pm



Arena @rena

This is an option but only for overridable properties

I think a way to do this could be to let you edit the child and then propagate the changes up to the master explicitly. Similar to the way Illustrator lets up update a master style from a child instance of that style.



12:24pm

This adds a little bit of complexity and learning curve for users, but I think the time savings and reduction in frustration would be worth it.

February 8, 2019 at 5:00pm



Travis @reat

I haven't found this to be an issue, and I like it being semi removed in a large design system, in my opinion it makes me respect the component more and to design more consistently which in turn makes less similar components for developers to develop. However I could see the usefulness in having the ability to push the local overrides to the master component in a workflow similar to library updates when clicking "review".

Edited

June 10, 2019 at 1:51pm



Daniel Reeves @danielreeves

i just came here to make the same suggestion. +1!!!

July 10, 2020 at 9:27am



charliedavies11 @charliedavies11

this is driving me mad, there definitely used to be a plugin that did this but I can't find it anywhere haha