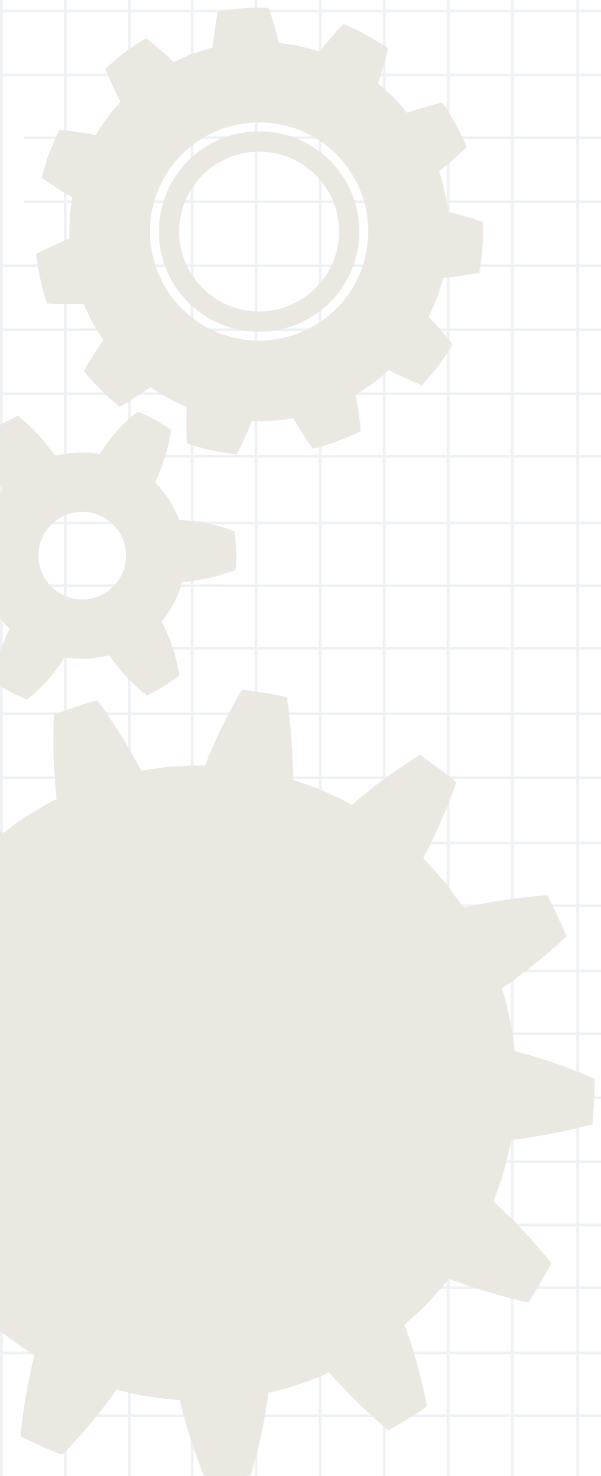# DESIGNING FOR DRUPAL

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DESIGNING FOR DRUPAL

(or designing for any other CMS, for that matter)

> Designing for a CMS is different than designing for static HTML sites.

> When writing content, keep in mind you are not writing a novel.

> The brand should drive the overall look, feel, and voice of the site.

> Usability is key and design should be intuitive.

  – Programmers and designers need to work in tandem and communicate.

CMS ≠ HTML

Before designing, have your content organized, and have a clear plan.

> Create a site map and know where your pages will be before you begin your design.

> If your site is just getting a face-lift, this is a great time to think about what pages you need and if you need to change their location.

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Unlike HTML sites, the main look of every page is based on which theme you are using. You cannot change each graphic within one file.

> To change the overall layout of a page your theme design might have to change. Or create options within in your theme to make different layouts (e.g. left and right blocks, full width).

> Each section of the site is separate from each other

CMS ≠ HTML

Design for a reactive environment:

Layout will change based on the platform and screen on which it is shown.

> Have an option to increase font size for readability — the largest growing population online is those over 65.

> The width of your website will vary if viewed on a monitor with 1024x768 resolution vs. a mobile device vs. a monitor with 1440x900 resolution.

– Make sure your theme is fluid and will move with the resolution proportionately.

> Use a grid to design. Design adhering to a grid system will create a more balanced theme layout for your users.

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No folders. No actual HTML files.

> The biggest issue for me going from HTML to CMS was, "Where are my HTML files, and how do I link to them?"

DON'T BE A TEAL DEER (TLDR*)

Edit, edit, and re-edit.

Chunk your text into easy-to-digest pieces.

Use bullet points and other visual cues to help the reader wade through content.

> Use subheaders and other tags to help search engines crawl your content

 – <strong>, <h1>, <h2>, <h3>

TLDR = Too long. Didn't read.

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Remember, text on the web can be continuously changed and updated, so one large story could be broken into a series or recurring theme.

> Don't date content that isn't event-related. It makes an infrequently updated site look like it has old information.

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PUT YOUR BRAND IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

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The voice of your website should match the voice of your brand.

> Be consistent — a press release should sound like a press release and a story should sound like a story.

BE THE MAN WITH THE PLAN.

Define all aspects of your site plan up front: process, timeline, roles, etc. Stick to the original plan. (design brief)

> Have structured deadlines for milestones and stick to them

> Learn to work on a priority basis, sometimes client reprioritizes their needs or requests additional features along the way.

– If this happens, be clear about which features will not be done by original deadline based on your new information added and adjust the timeline accordingly.

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Communicate.

> Designers and programmers should have a close relationship — if the roles belong to two different people.

> Communicate with potential end users to find red flag problems early on in the process.

> Take your personal feelings out of the process. The goal is to have a site that is easy to use, fills the need of the company, and promotes the company's brand.

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> promotes the company's brand.

Test. Test. And test again.

> Try a focus group of randomly selected individuals (not your
> usual suspects). Keep participants to a maximum of 10.

– Your goal in testing is to get all the bugs before the
site goes live and all hell breaks loose.

– Use a WISYWG option to test the usability of the design
before programming begins (see resources page).

RESOURCES / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Adobe Browser Lab

> www.browserlab.adobe.com.com

Balsamiq

> www.balsamiq.com

Fogbugz

> www.fogcreek.com/fogbugz

How to Design with Grids

> www.smashingmagazine.com/2007/04/14/
> designing-with-grid-based-approach

Site Improve

> www.siteimprove.com

Word 2 Clean HTML

> www.word2cleanhtml.com

Gear vector graphics are fair use images and from www.bittbox.com.
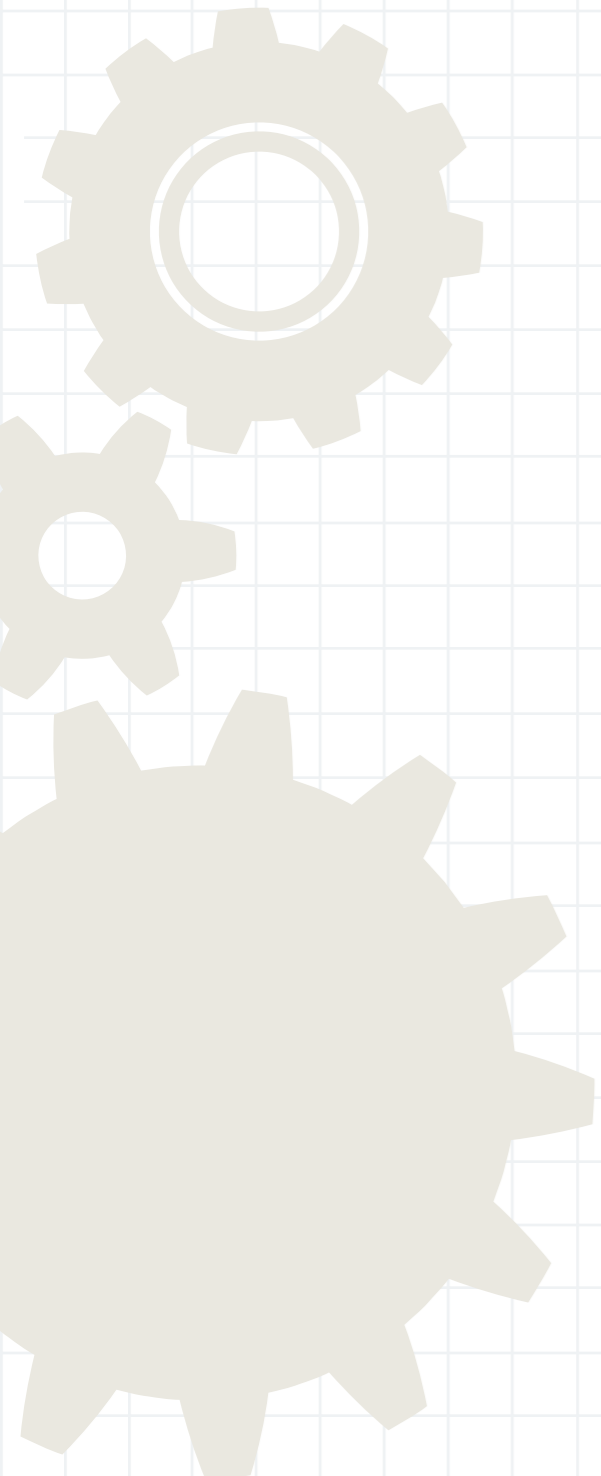
QUESTIONS?

Thank you for joining us.