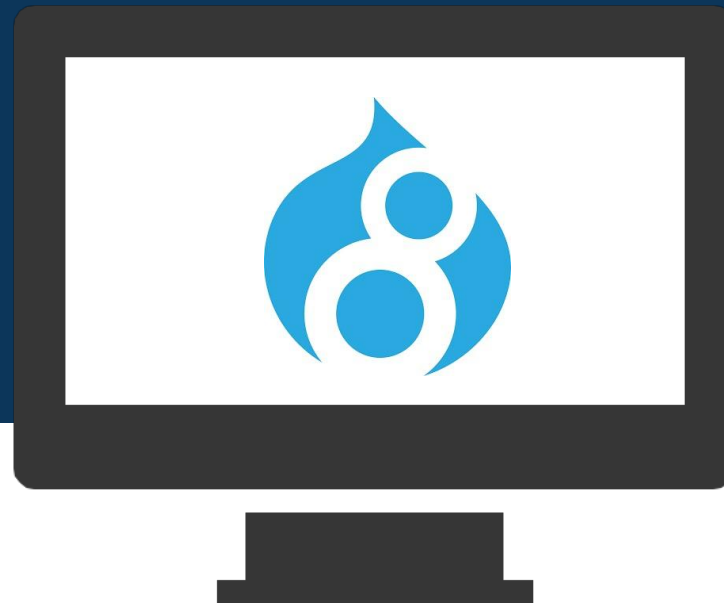




How to prepare your

Website For Drupal 8



Preparing your website for Drupal 8

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Kevin Basarab, specializes in the media industry and Drupal. Kevin brings vast knowledge of newsroom and media environments to the Drupal landscape and helps corporations to streamline processes for the digital age. Kevin began working with Drupal 5.



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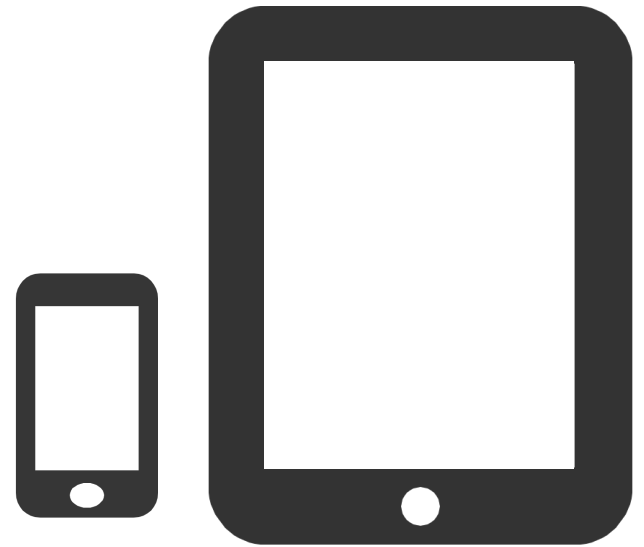
Introduction

Drupal 8 may seem like it is a long way off, but we are approximately 6 months from its target release date, Spring of 2014. Though Drupal 8 won't be released until all critical issues have been worked out, (Are you helping?*) there are things you can do now to prepare for Drupal 8's release.

* Get started contributing to Drupal 8 in [core contribution mentoring](#)

Audit Your Site

What parts of your site do you use the most?
What parts are no longer used? Do you have dead links or bad workflows? Start a document logging all of these details, and continue to update it as you come up with ideas, problems, or workflows that you can't live without. When you are in the process of building a site these tiny details can easily get lost in the shuffle.



Use Version Control

It might mean switching technology platforms...

While Drupal is excellent for making quick configuration changes on a site via point and click, this can easily break a site as well. In the past Drupal has struggled with moving configurations and GUI changes between different environments. The Configuration Management Initiative (CMI) in Drupal 8 is working to help alleviate these issues. Now is the time to start using version control and Drupal 7 modules such as features or configuration management. Learn to capture updates via code and roll the updates into your production site. By doing this now, your Drupal 8 workflow will be more streamlined, and you can always roll back changes when something breaks.



Audit Modules for Support

What modules on your site are being utilized versus not? Are there any taking up space that aren't needed? Audit each module by looking at each module's page on Drupal.org to see which ones are up to date, deprecated, have lost interest, or have developed a more preferred way of executing the task. Things to look for include: the activity in the issue queue, last commits to the module, and module usage. Many modules may not have a Drupal 8 version yet, but check to see that the Drupal 7 version is being maintained and active.

Apply Security Updates

Preparing for a new core version of Drupal shouldn't be the time to start looking at security updates. Core and module security updates should be part of your regular site maintenance. Leaving core or contributed modules unsecure can cause your site to be vulnerable to attacks. In order to update Drupal, you'll need to be sure that your site is running on the most current version, prior to the upgrade you are trying to perform. Essentially this means that first, you'll need to upgrade Drupal 7 to the most recent version before transitioning your site to 8. Why not save some time by completing these updates regularly? This way you can reap the benefits and security as they become available. If time is the issue that your company faces when it comes to updating regularly, there are companies, such as Medicurrent, who provide Drupal website support agreements to solve this issue.



Check Best Practices

Is custom code in your site adhering to best practices and coding standards? Are calls to fields wrapped with a `field_get_items` or `entity_metadata_wrapper` to avoid “und” in your code? Ensure that you are adhering to coding standards and API functions. By using standard API functions, any changes needed to upgrade to D8 will be documented, making the upgrade that much easier. As the release of Drupal 8 appears on the horizon, third party websites may test your modules, and help guide you through the upgrade process.

Additionally, you should check your site for best practices in configuration. Are you still using nodes for data that isn't content? Think about switching these to entities or a contributed module solution such as Beans.. In Drupal 6, for example, many sites used an image content type to create images with metadata associated with them. A node reference field would be used to pull this into an article. For Drupal 7 and 8, a simpler way to do this would be to add the metadata fields to the file entity. These issues are especially prevalent for sites that have been around since Drupal 5 or 6 that have upgraded to 7.

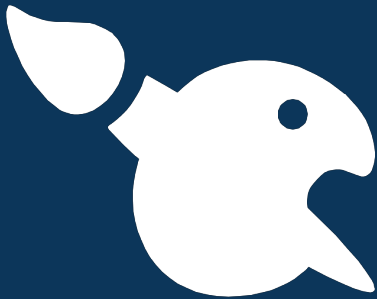


Conclusion

Whether you are planning to upgrade to Drupal 8 as soon as it's released, or wait a few months, following these five steps will not only make the upgrade process easier, but will help with day-to-day maintenance making the usability of your site that much easier. If you'd like to get into the specific details, and talk about your personal Drupal support needs please feel free to contact us.

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