

Why migrate to *Drupal 8*?

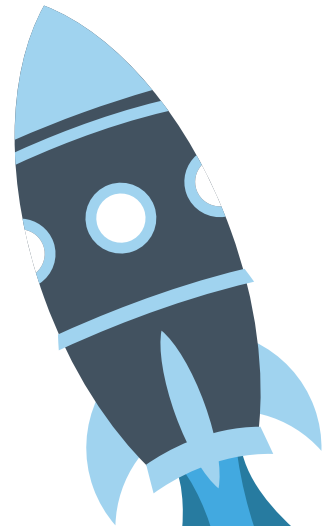
Drupal provides a strong foundation for enabling organizations to deliver better data-driven web, mobile, and social experiences. With great many new enhancements, and a familiar user interface for editing features, Drupal 8 is a user-friendly, responsive, flexible, and integral platform, for digital professionals and marketers who need to accelerate their digital strategies.



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Introduction

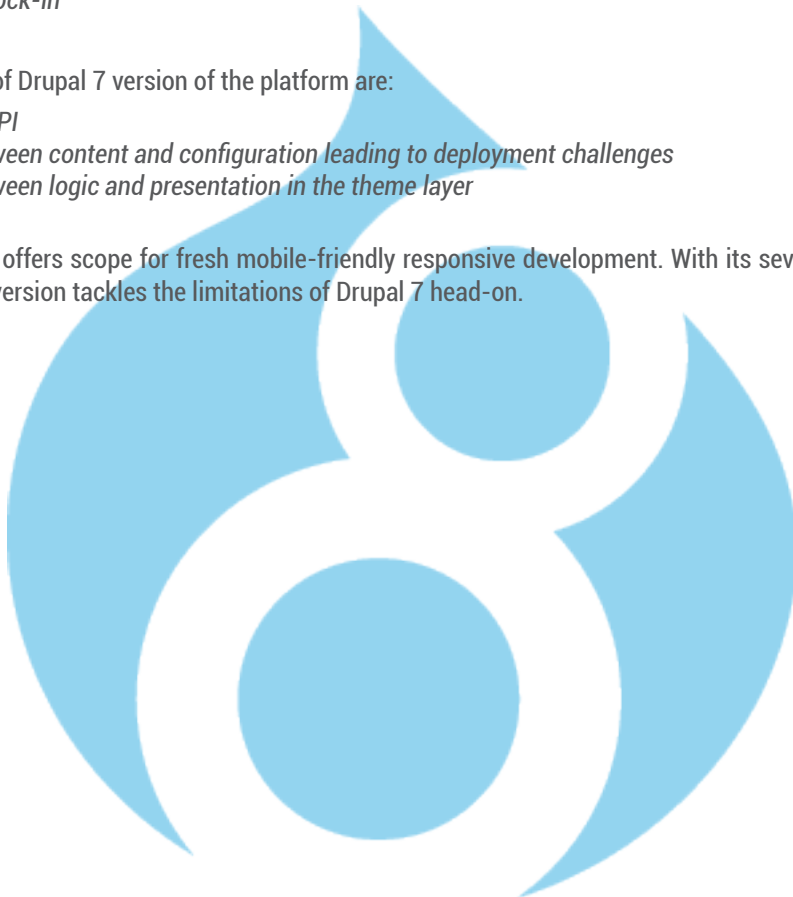
Drupal is a hugely popular open source CMS, with several intuitive features. The open source nature of the platform empowers users worldwide to monitor the underlying code for compliance and security issues, thereby making it robust and secure. Released under the GNU Public License, it offers:

- *cost benefits*
- *flexibility, and*
- *freedom from vendor lock-in*

Some of the limitations of Drupal 7 version of the platform are:

- *an incomplete Entity API*
- *lack of separation between content and configuration leading to deployment challenges*
- *lack of separation between logic and presentation in the theme layer*

An upgrade to Drupal 8 offers scope for fresh mobile-friendly responsive development. With its several intuitive features and improvements, the new version tackles the limitations of Drupal 7 head-on.



A Whole New Mobile World

In the US, **51% of online media** access is through mobile devices, whereas desktops are pushed to a distant second spot, with only 41% of people using it to access online media. The number of users browsing on mobile devices such as smartphones, and tablets is expected to rise further. By 2020, 90% of the world will be online, and 70% of them will be online on mobile devices.

A multi-device world, with fragmented screen size, is here to stay, and only websites that cater to such diversity will make the cut.

Given this scenario, Drupal 8 rightly adopts a mobile-first approach, which is quite helpful to the developers who are looking at designing primarily for the mobile. Here are the features of Drupal 8 that facilitates this approach:

- 🔗 **Responsive websites:** Drupal 8 allows developers to set up responsive websites that can gel in perfectly with whatever screen size the user chooses. A responsive design co-opts CSS media queries to ascertain device screen size and display page elements on the screen in a way that optimizes user experience.
- 🔗 **Web Services:** Responsive design technology generally works well, but small screens gets cramped when there is a surplus of content. To overcome such limitation, Drupal 8 offers web services that reflect the results of the responsive site in JSON/XML. Developers can access their website via browsers, and also connect to web service via an application for each platform, to ensure the best performance for each device. Services are now available in Drupal 8 core rather than as a third-party module.
- 🔗 **Responsive themes:** Drupal 8 also packs in a new PHP-based theming engine Twig. All built-in themes are responsive, offering developers the power to create highly attractive and functional mobile-optimized websites, and also change the look and feel of their website easily. Drupal 8 aims to change all existing themes from "desktop only" to mobile first, and provide a useful backend platform.
- 🔗 **Flexible tables:** Drupal 8 features built-in breakpoints, which allow websites to keep track of height, width, and resolution of the device in which the website loads, and respond appropriately. For instance, tablets shrink when the website is accessed on a small smartphone screen, and expand when the website is accessed in a wide 15" desktop LCD monitor. Also, when a user views the page from a narrow device viewport, the page's horizontal elements turn vertical automatically, and lesser important columns are removed from the main view, as set.
- 🔗 **Responsive Images:** Drupal 7 offers image styles in the core, making it possible to resize images automatically. Drupal 8 takes the concept a step further, by extending the responsiveness to images as well, making it possible to choose different styles for individual images. Now, web admins can add large photos to web pages, and with Drupal 8 engine's breakpoint mapping and image formatter capabilities, automatically resizes it using the HTML5 image tag.

All these features provide a big push towards Drupal becoming the leading mobile CMS platform.

Think Global, Act Local

The World Wide Web ensures a global reach for businesses, but no business, especially e-commerce business, can ignore localization. In the late 90's, **over 80%** of internet users were native English speakers, but by 2010, the number of native English speakers among those who use the internet is less than 30%. Drupal 8 blends in global and local considerations perfectly.

Website localization is not the reverse of website internationalization or globalization. It rather involves adapting the website interface to local communicative, cultural, demographic, and other considerations, to cater to a specific target market. Drupal 8 facilitates such a task seamlessly, and with ease.

- 🌀 Drupal's sophisticated translation manager makes it very easy to create localized Drupal 8 sites, as spin-off from the main website. Users may generate accurate translations for each specific demographic that require targeting. The translation covers not just content, but also all essential interface elements, including blocks, toolbars, menus, and other elements.
- 🌀 Drupal 7 already co-opted regional settings, language support, and usability attention for interface translation, but required adding several modules. If Drupal 8 is installed, web admins has the option to choose from 94+ prevalent languages across the world. It brings four essential modules into the core, making the task seamless, and improves browser-based language detection capabilities greatly, to automatically deliver the preferred language to users.
- 🌀 Drupal 8 also features built-in interfaces to deliver robust transliteration capabilities for even challenging scripts and types such as Czech, Hungarian, and Marathi, in situations when the characters have to be romanized.

Better SEO

The World Wide Web ensures a global reach for businesses, but no business, especially e-commerce business, can ignore localization. In the late 90's, **over 80%** of internet users were native English speakers, but by 2010, the number of native English speakers among those who use the internet is less than 30%. Drupal 8 blends in global and local considerations perfectly.

In addition to the mobility inspired SEO boost, Drupal 8 offers a host of other features that greatly boost SEO, which in turn improves accessibility.

- 🌀 It produces automatically customizable meta-tags and creates title based URL nodes for the website. It integrates with RDF metadata model.
- 🌀 It allows co-opting tools such as Yoast and Goalgorilla to develop a site's SEO in all aspects.
- 🌀 It integrates easily with Google Analytics, boosting the website's analytic capabilities.
- 🌀 Drupal 8 requires <alt> attributes by default for all images. The <alt> attribute is a description appearing when the user cannot access the image on the browser, and goes a long way in boosting both accessibility and SEO.
- 🌀 Drupal 8 comes packed with WAI-ARIA markup to ensure that the pages are semantically correct out of the box. ARIA Roles allows accessibility tools to support interaction with the object in a manner consistent with user expectations.
- 🌀 Drupal 8 improves content loading speed, and also offers features to help web admins overcome page load issues. For instance, Drupal 8 caches all entities and loads JavaScript only when necessary, doing away with reloading of viewed content. Page load times are a big factor in ensuring both the global and local rank of a website.

Improved Developer Experience (DX)

Drupal 8 enhances developer experience (DX). Drupal 7 continued with procedural programming, and made excessive use of structural arrays, making the task of setting up websites complex, especially for newcomers. Drupal 8 offers a paradigm shift, by introducing the latest object-oriented programming, PHP concepts, and Symfony framework, making the entire process much simpler. Drupal 8 is more in lines with industry accepted frameworks, thereby requiring lesser Drupal-specific knowledge, and addressing the talent crunch to a great extent. The legacy Drupal concepts such as Fields, Views, Entities, Nodes continue to exist in Drupal 8 but are now implemented using object-oriented programming design patterns.

Drupal 8 also offers several new features that add to user convenience, and makes the platform even more powerful.

- ⚙ The new "Quick Edit" module allows developers and web admins to edit text directly from the front-end of the website, improving productivity, increasing convenience, and furthering the cause of WYSIWYG (What You See is What You get) greatly.
- ⚙ Drupal 8 come with CKEditor, among the best and most widely accepted text editor available in the market. Previous versions of Drupal did not co-opt a text editor.
- ⚙ The new Configuration Manager module makes it easy to export and import the required features. For example, it is now very easy to export a new content type from the test site to the live site, without redoing the work all over again, or opting for complicated transfer procedures.
- ⚙ The new "Tour" module offer pop-ups that explain how Drupal works.
- ⚙ Drupal 8 enables on-the-go administration, making it very easy to manage content from mobile devices as well. Moreover, the revamped admin layer is now simpler, straight-forward, and light.
The new PHP-based Twig engine is secure by default, easier to read, and front-end developer-friendly.
- ⚙ "Views", a near-indispensable module in Drupal, is now in the core, and available by default, improving both performance and flexibility.
- ⚙ The "Context" module, which makes it possible to create various instances of the same block, and configure each such instance individually, is now available as a built-in feature.
- ⚙ A key change is improved color contrast, which goes a long way in helping the multitudes who have low vision, or the 8% of men in the world who are color blind.

Drupal leverages the power of simplicity. True to form, Drupal 8 makes things even simpler, without compromising the power or the robustness of the platform in any way. A very simple backend now allows users to develop small to medium websites without coding knowledge.

Drupal has always made big, forward-looking changes, and Drupal 8 is a step in this direction. A mobile ready responsive global website is an indispensable requirement. Even if the business does not find many of the features relevant at present, migrating to Drupal 8 may lead to a business path that is future-proof.

About Suyati

Suyati is a fast-growing, digital transformation solutions company that helps you rebuild your customer experience for the digital consumer. We collaborate with businesses to strategize and implement impactful digital initiatives that position our clients ahead of the competition. We are digital-first and we focus on delivering digital transformation solutions that support your various engagement strategies. With our niche and rich expertise in a wide range of technologies and services- CMS, CRM, e-commerce, Cloud, IoT, Data Analytics, and Product Engineering- we help companies leverage their best on web/cloud/mobile platforms.

We enable you to create insights driven customer engagement across all touch points to build a unified marketing approach. Our custom technology solutions have been deployed successfully in companies across the globe, especially in the US, UK, Europe and Australia.



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