

Status of Themes: Skins and Dispatcher

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1. Skins

"Skins" is the term used to describe the current method for adding navigation and menu information to the content of a page and applying a consistent theme for layout, colours, etc. The ["pelt" skin](#) is the only one that the Forrest project is maintaining. It is configurable enough to meet many purposes. The main configuration file for skins is the `skinconf.xml` file. There is an ability for users to create their own skins, although we have not encouraged that.

For the Forrest-0.8 release, skins are still available and are still the main mechanism. No effort has been made to enhance skins.

2. Dispatcher

"Dispatcher" is the term used to describe a new method which aims to be a more flexible and complete solution to build a reliable common structure for documents, incorporate other content, and provide hooks for applying themes. Themes get configured by structurer definitions (a wee bit like the `skinconf.xml`). Although strong progress has been made, it is still under development. We encourage developers to use Dispatcher and contribute to its development. See the [plugin documentation](#) for more information.

3. Plan for future framework

The desired direction is to use `xhtml2` as the internal format, move the current "skins" into a plugin, and develop input plugins for `xdoc` and `html` sources. This would enable any theme engine to be used, whether that be Skins or Dispatcher or some other.

See the development discussion: [Re: status of skins and dispatcher](#). This is planned for immediately following the 0.8 release. New developers please help.