



Evaluating Base Themes

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(handout is already uploaded to the session page on the conference site)

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that's me!



that's my company
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Agenda

1. Define “base theme”.
2. Evaluate base themes.
3. Reframe the conversation about “themes” in Drupal.

Base themes are misunderstood.



Define “base”

base /bās/ ➦

Noun: The lowest part or edge of something, esp. the part on which it rests or is supported.

Verb: Have as the foundation for (something); use as a point from which (something) can develop: “the film is **based on a novel**”.

Adjective: Without moral principles; ignoble: “the electorate’s **baser** instincts of greed and selfishness”.

Synonyms: *noun.* basis - foundation - bottom - pedestal - ground
verb. found - ground - establish
adjective. mean - vile - low - ignoble - sordid - scurvy



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Define “theme”



theme /THēm/

Noun: The subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts, or an exhibition; a topic: "the theme of the sermon was reverence".

Verb: Give a particular setting or ambience to (a venue or activity): "themed menus".




Synonyms: topic - subject - text - motif - matter

More info » [Dictionary.com](#) - [Answers.com](#) - [Merriam-Webster](#) - [The Free Dictionary](#)

theme

noun /THĕm/ 

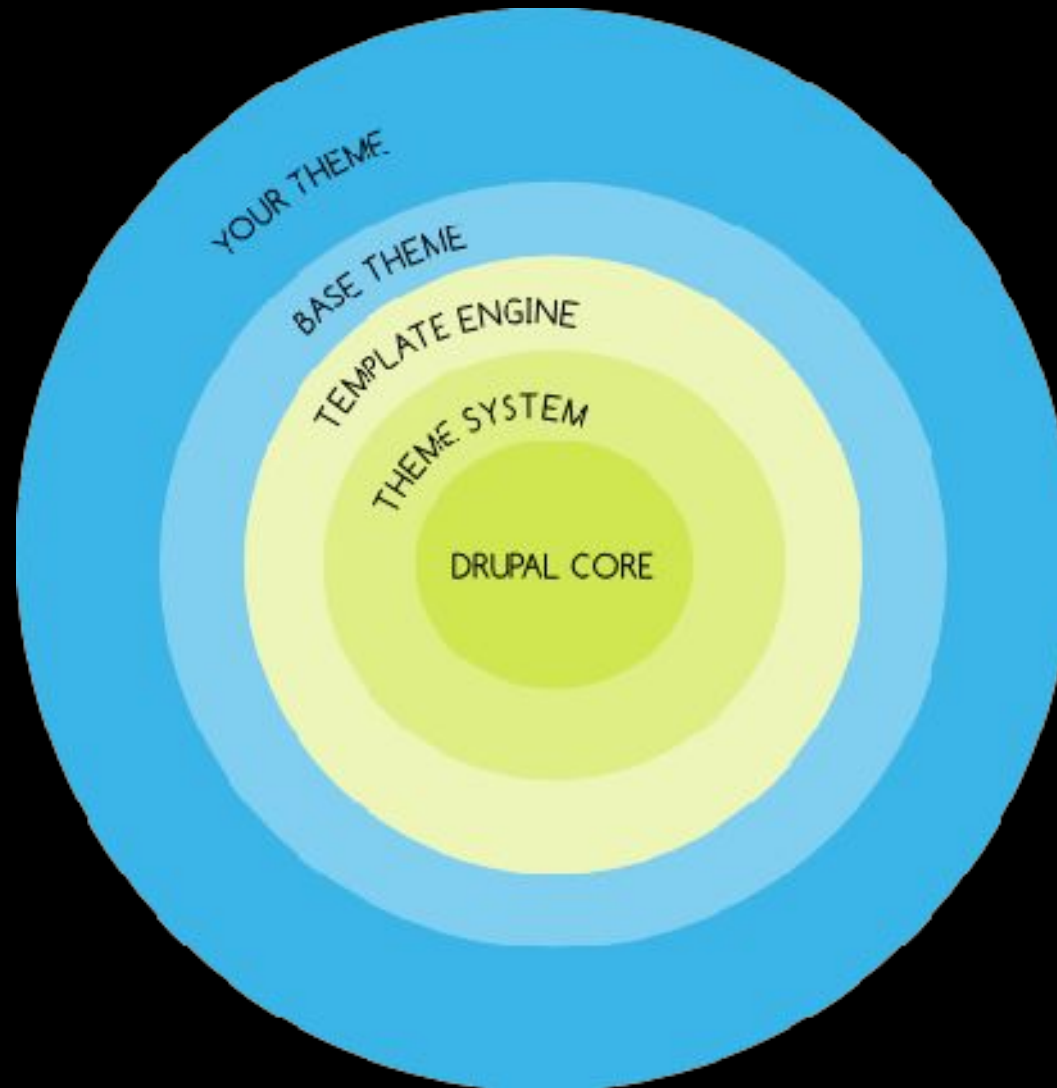
themes, plural

1. The subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts, or an exhibition; a topic
 - the **theme** of the sermon was reverence
 - a show **on the theme of** waste and recycling
2. The first major constituent of a clause, indicating the subject-matter, typically being the subject but optionally other constituents, as in "*poor* he is not."
3.  An idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature
4.  A prominent or frequently recurring melody or group of notes in a composition
5. (of music) Frequently recurring in or accompanying the beginning and end of a film, play, or musical
 - a **theme** song
6.  A setting or ambience given to a leisure venue or activity
 - a family fun park with a western **theme**
7. Denoting a restaurant or bar in which the decor and the food and drink served are intended to suggest a particular foreign country, historical period, or other ambience
 - a New Deal **theme** restaurant
8. (mainly in journalism) Characterized by a **theme** or pervasive influence
 - a golf-themed business park
9. An essay written by a student on an assigned subject
10. The stem of a noun or verb; the part to which inflections are added, esp. one composed of the root and an added vowel
11. Any of the twenty-nine provinces in the Byzantine empire

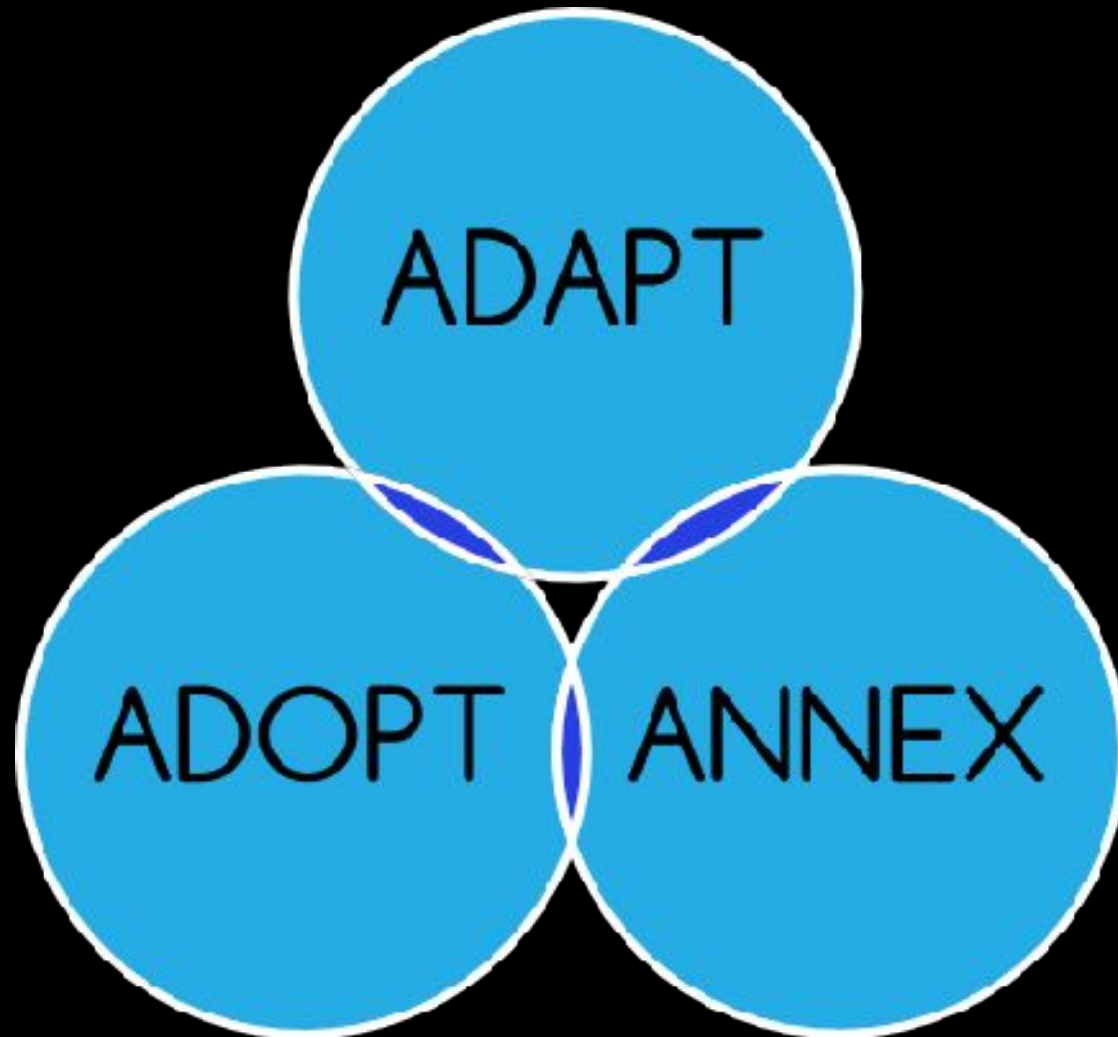
Base + Theme



The theme system enables us to override what is provided.

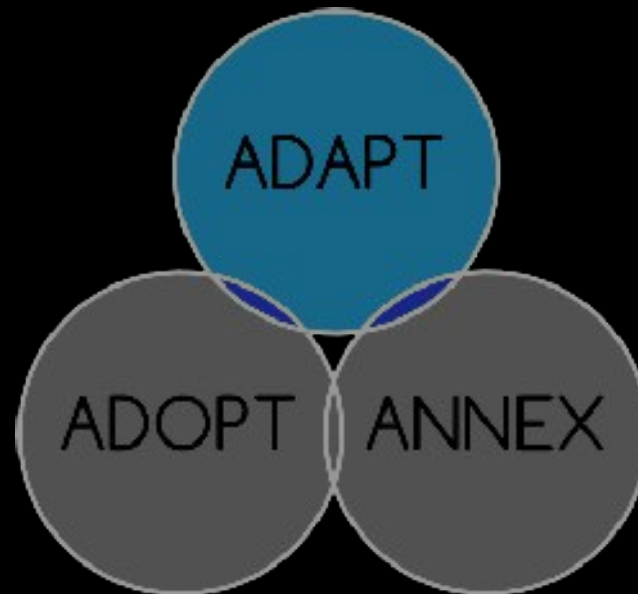


There are 3 different kinds of base themes.



Adapt Drupal core.

- Theme developers strive to improve Drupal core's markup and template variables.
- Base themes include: Zen, Boron, Mothership.

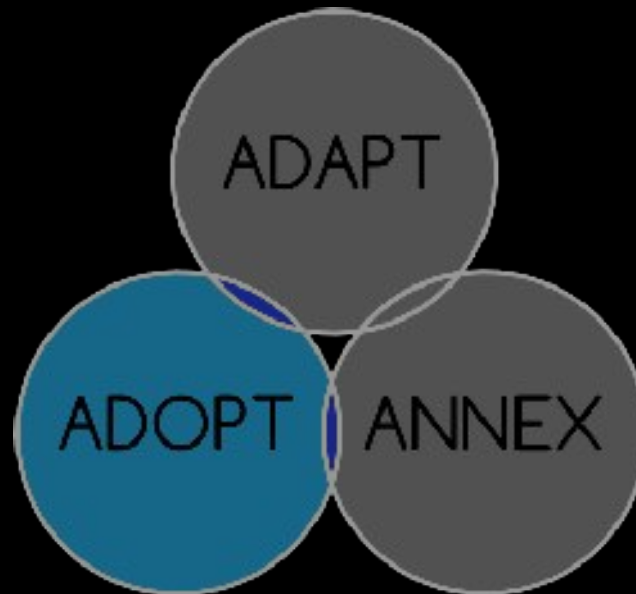


Adapting is like renovating a house.



Adopt non-Drupal frameworks into Drupal.

- Typically used for grid frameworks but always has an external-from-Drupal code “library”.
- Base themes include: NineSixty, Square Grid, Blueprint.

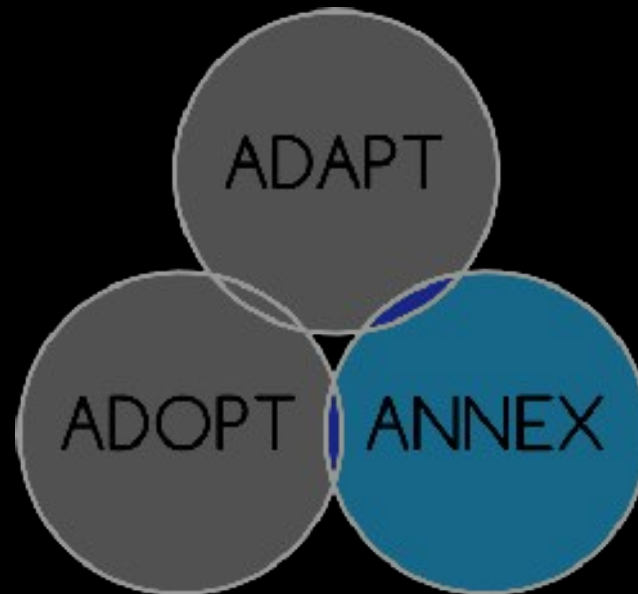


Adopting is like buying a house.



Annex components into a new mega system.

- Incorporates “all the things”.
- Requires you to install at least one module.
- Base themes include: AdaptiveTheme, Fusion, Omega.

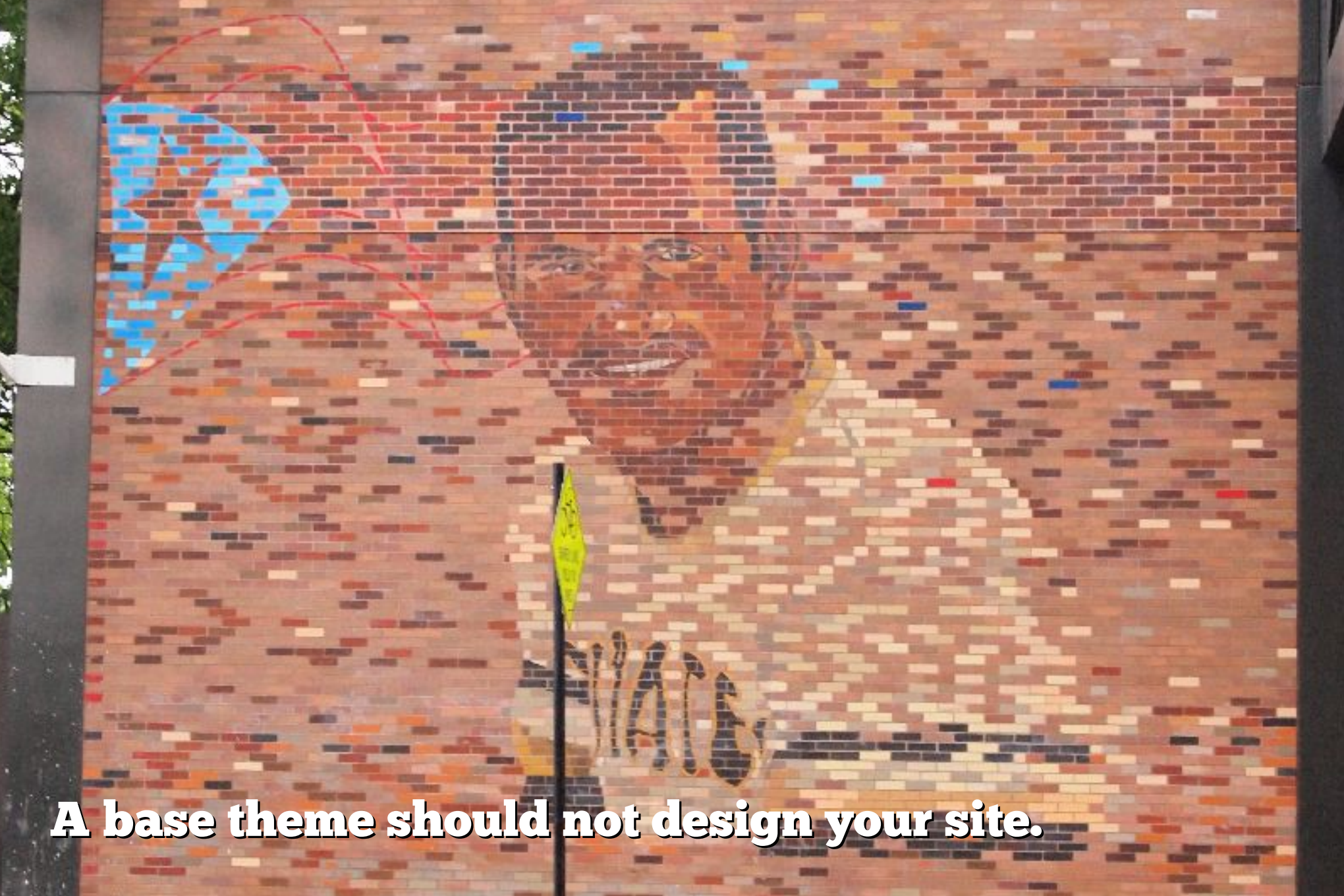




The Annex is a neighbourhood in Toronto.

source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Annex;

Photographer: simonp

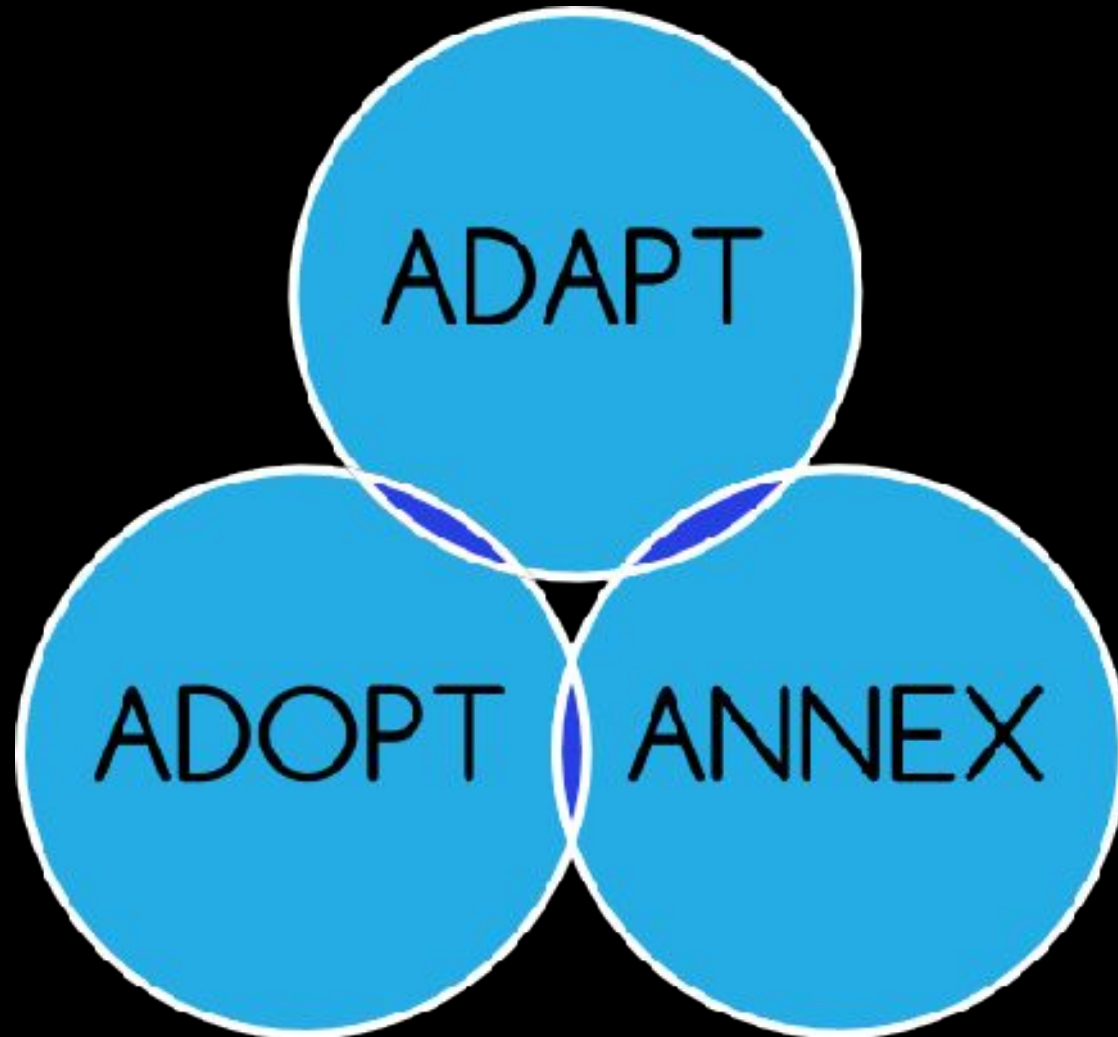


A base theme should not design your site.

For now, ignore all other work flows.

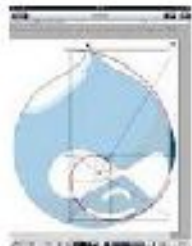


These differences tell us interesting things.



Core is flexible.

www.google.com/search?q=drupalcon+images&hl=en&client=ubuntu&hs=yvOQ&channel=cs&prmd=irwvsf&tbnm=scl&tbou=s&source=univ&sa=X&ei=Zt0wUOreCgLo



Core is broken.



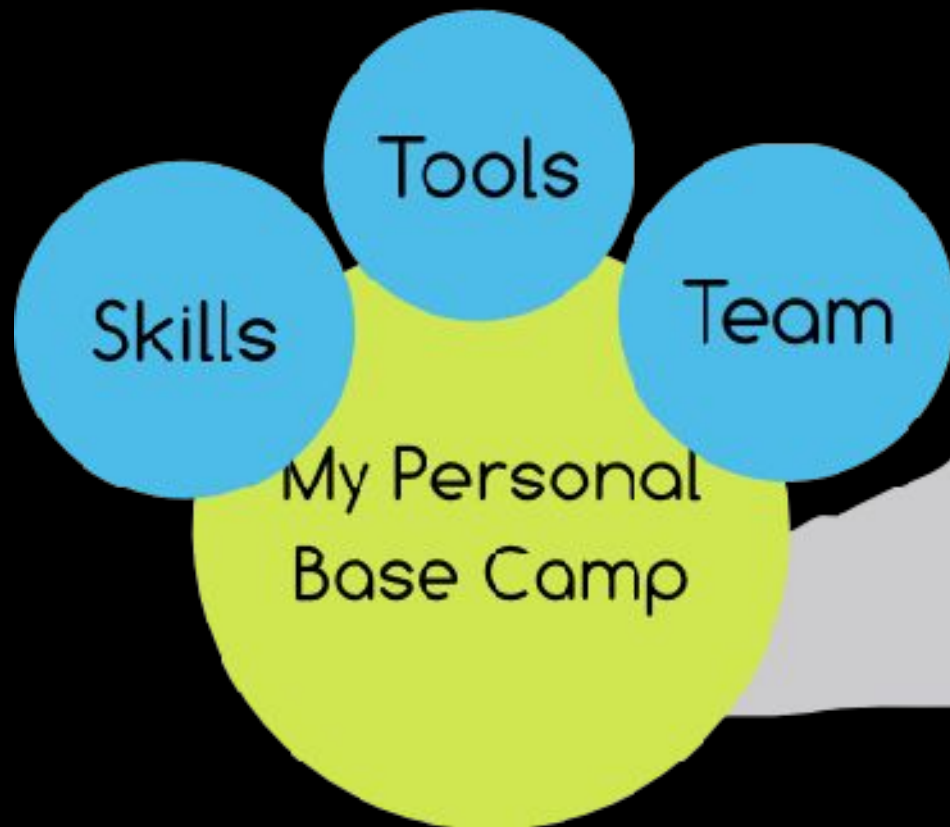
Source: <http://www.diesoft.net/blog/2012/04/10/first-aid-drupal>

What about me? Where do I start?

A photograph of three people in a desert landscape. On the left, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black jacket and brown pants, is looking at a map. In the center, a woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt and black pants, is holding a clipboard and looking at the map. On the right, a man wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, black pants, a tan baseball cap, and sunglasses is also looking at the map. They are standing on a dirt path with sparse desert vegetation. In the background, there are rocky hills under a clear blue sky.

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/9333548@N04/6868176493/>

Define your personal base camp.



Phase Two

Deliverables

Teaching (base) themes



There is no fixed criteria to evaluate base themes.

- # of installs
- lines of comments vs. lines of code
- buzzword compliance
- in-code documentation
- ease of installation
- UI help text
- online documentation
- support (community + professional)
- “cache-able”
- performance
- security

“A base theme should have nothing left to take away.”

A quote from

- Leonardo da Vinci
- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- John Albin Wilkins

Base Themes According to Their Developers

Hello!

At DrupalCon Munich I'm giving a talk on base themes.

As part of the presentation I'd like to highlight a few base themes. I'd like to include an honest evaluation of what the *developers* of the base theme think of their own theme's strengths and weaknesses. I'd love it if you'd take part!

Please email me back the answers to the following questions. Each answer should be not more than 140 characters. I will trim *at* 140 characters. ;)

Base themes contacted

Mothership

Zen

NineSixty

Blueprint

Square Grid Theme

Fusion

Omega

AdaptiveTheme

Genesis

Framework

Arctica

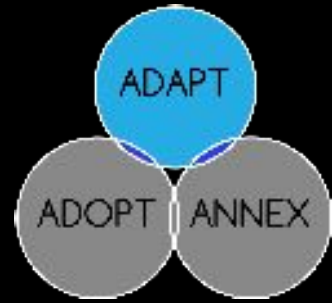
Layout Studio

Detamo

Four categories

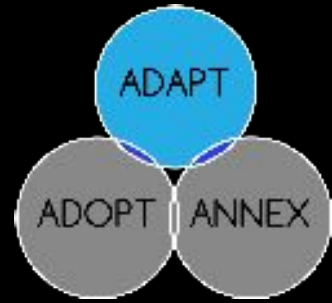
1. Your theme in a nutshell.
2. Best feature.
3. Worst thing about your base theme.
4. Notable difference from other themes.

drupal.org/project/zen



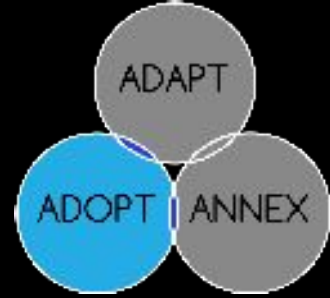
1. Zen is a Sass/Compass-powered, SMACSS-lovin', drush-buildable HTML5 Drupal starter theme with a responsive, mobile-first grid design.
2. All of Zen's components are concerned with performance: lean HTML5 markup, SMACSS-style CSS rules and organization, and light-weight PHP.
3. Its total lack of omniscience. If you don't know CSS well, Zen won't be able to build your sub-theme for you.
4. Zen gives you the Sass tools to easily build lean, custom designs with any responsive layout imaginable, not a giant configuration form.

drupal.org/project/mothership



1. Cleans up the fucking markup & gimme wtf i want
2. looks like stark & you have to know wtf you doing ;)
3. you get to swear like a pirate & wear little white sailor hats

drupal.org/project/detamo



1. Detamo is a responsive base theme featuring 3 separate grids. Grids are fluid; based on a 960px desktop, a 640px tablet and a 320px Mobile.
2. It's easy use Detamo to make an existing 960-based theme responsive. Just add the grid classes for tablet and mobile to your template.
3. It won't appeal to those who don't like (non-semantic) grid classes. (And you'll have them for the desktop, tablet and mobile grids).
4. The responsive layout is in the template file so you don't need to write css to control the layout.

drupal.org/project/ninesixty



1. NineSixty is a Drupal implementation of the 960 Grid System. It's a CSS framework rather than a true "base theme."
2. It's very lightweight, flexible, and makes no assumptions about the look and feel.
3. With the rise of Sass/Compass and responsive design, the 960 Grid System is no longer the best starting point for grid-based design.
4. As a CSS framework, it can be "stacked" with other frameworks or base themes. Or you can simply copy the grid CSS file into your theme.

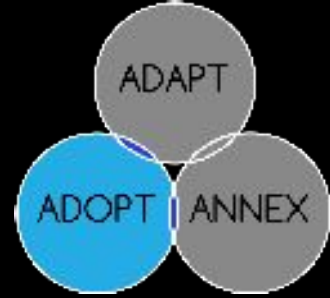
drupal.org/project/squaregrid



1. A lightweight base theme leveraging The Square Grid thesquaregrid.com framework for rapid, lightweight theming.
2. Square Grid is lightweight and flexible, and otherwise stays out of your way. A child theme could be done in 2-400 lines of (commented) CSS.
3. Lightweight = few configurable settings. If themer wants to change layouts, comfort w light php in template.php and .tpl files is needed.
4. This is not a theme that tries to make your coffee. Settings are minimal. The power is in the Square Grid css.

exactly 140 chars

drupal.org/project/blueprint



Thanks for contacting me about Blueprint. Unfortunately at this point, I will have to back down from this opportunity to answer questions about Blueprint. Since I took over the development, my interests have moved beyond what Blueprint provides and I am no longer able to maintain or develop it. At this time, I would, however, love to find another developer who can take over the theme and really make it shine.

Blueprint is great, but as I have started to use responsive design techniques in my designs, I have moved beyond the limits of blueprint and begun using SCSS.

drupal.org/project/adaptivetheme

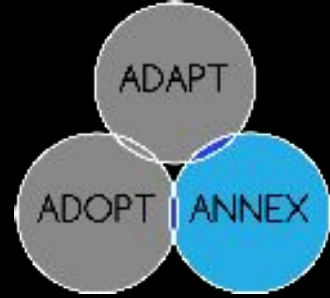


1. Responsive, HTML5, uses responsive plugins to support Panels, Panelizer and Display Suite, uses SASS, normalize, focus on accessibility
2. Tools for mobile: Browscap integration, responsive JS, responsive layout, integration with Panels & Display Suite, extensive theme settings
3. Layout plugins more complex than standard Panels plugins, necessity to abstract from Drupal to gain performance, undocumented Easter eggs ;)
4. Pluggable layout system, Responsive JavaScript, Browscap integration (move blocks, unset regions, use `$is_mobile` to test for mobile context)

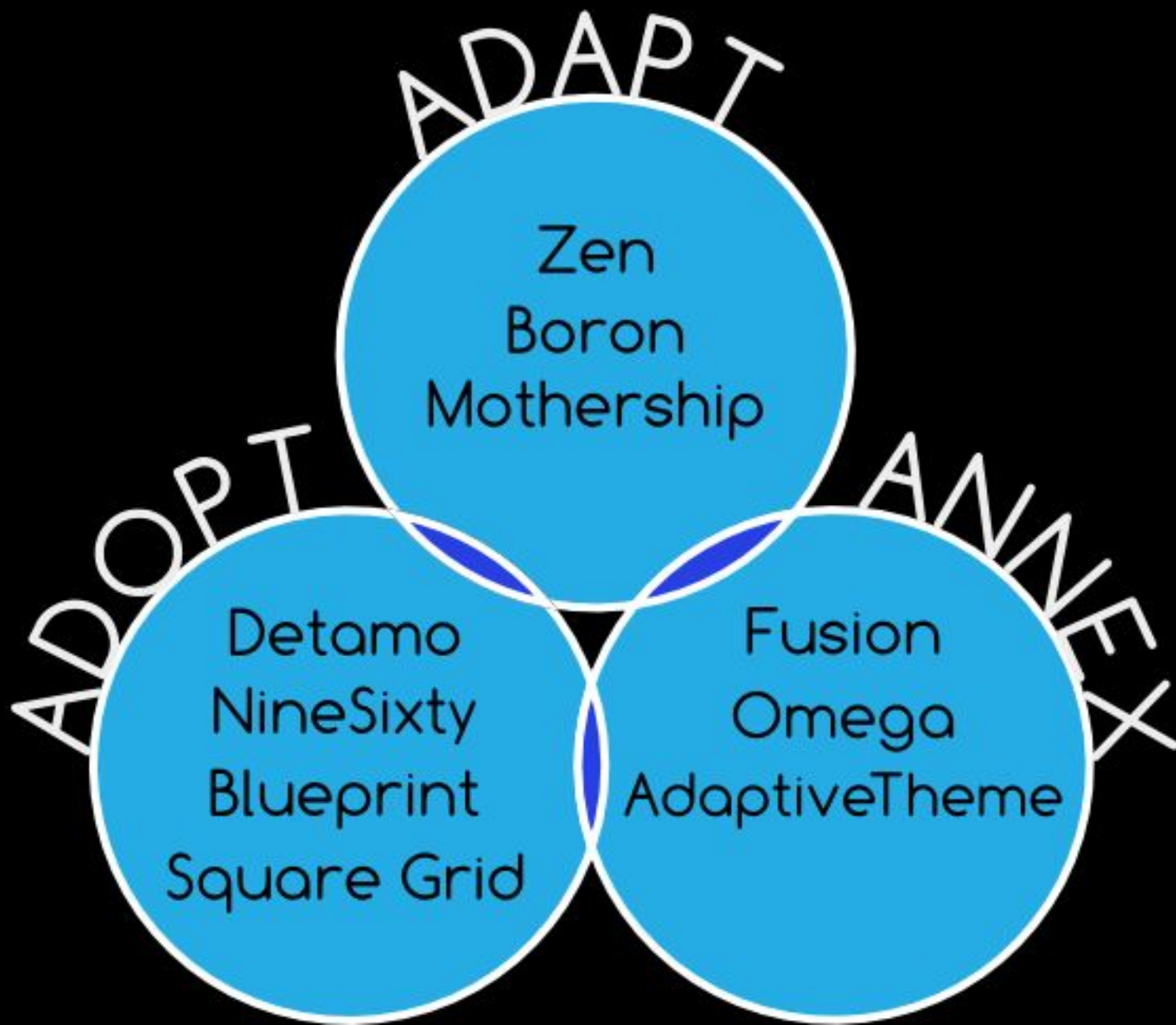
exactly 140 chars

A yellow arrow originates from the text 'exactly 140 chars' and points diagonally upwards and to the left, ending at the third list item: 'Layout plugins more complex than standard Panels plugins, necessity to abstract from Drupal to gain performance, undocumented Easter eggs ;)'.

drupal.org/project/omega



1. Base theme for developing mobile friendly themes.
Currently 3rd highest used theme on Drupal.org
2. Responsive out of the box, adapting to today's and tomorrow's devices.
3. That it fails to make my coffee or clean my house.
4. One of the most passionate communities I've ever seen surround Omega, and support the documentation and improvement of the code base.
It's a [trimmed at 140]



And the winner is...



**Mummy lied.
No one gets to
win at base
themes.**

Seriously.



**“Once the issue is framed,
if you accept the framing,
if you accept the language,
it's all over.”**

George Lakoff.

**Putting a hat on the moose
doesn't mean it's suddenly not a moose.**



insert. rant. here.

Drupal the Product

**We know
there's a
problem.**



“That’s a theming issue.”

Drupal the Product

**Eaton told
us last year**



“That’s a theming issue.”



**Fixing themes will take
more than a single step.**

**Work is happening in Drupal 8
to fix the theme system.**

(stand up if you're working on this)

(if you're not standing, please clap for those who are)

The Theming Pledge.

I promise to help make theming ~~suck less~~ rock in Drupal 8.



“Fix it in 8” Sessions to Attend at DrupalCon.

- Designer-friendly theme system in D8
Tuesday; 17:00-18:00 in the (Sheraton) Asam room.
<http://munich2012.drupal.org/program/sessions/designer-friendly-theme-system-drupal-8>
- A new theme layer in D8
Wednesday; 15:45-16:45 in the (Westin) Barcelona room.
<http://munich2012.drupal.org/content/new-theme-layer-drupal-8>



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<http://drupal.org/user/1773>

Now, go fill out the freaking form...bitte. :)

<http://munich2012.drupal.org/program>

danke

