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.