



What you need to know about  
**Connections Customizer**

Stefano Pogliani  
TechSales Leader EMEA, Connections and Integration

# Today's agenda...

A mercifully quick (but understandable) overview of Customizer

Demo! Demo! Demo!

- Three examples of highly-modified Connections environments using Customizer (that you can use, too)

Details

- What's the difference between Customizer and ICEC?

Usage

- How do you set it up?
- How do you make changes?

Limitations

- What you can (and can't) do with Customizer
- What you probably *shouldn't* do with it



# The problem we're trying to solve...

Outside of ICEC, Connections is hard to modify, for either (or both)...

- Different look-and-feel (UI)
- Enhanced functionality

And, Connections has a dated interface

Customizer gives us a way to add...

- JavaScript
- CSS
- Images
- Other kinds of files...

...to change how Connections looks and works

A chalkboard filled with mathematical equations, diagrams, and formulas. The content includes:

- Calculus:  $\sqrt{16 \cdot x}$ ,  $I = \frac{(x+10)^2}{50\pi} = 20\pi$  (crossed out),  $\sum_N \frac{\alpha^2 C_1^3}{3\pi} (y+A) = \frac{2}{3} A$ ,  $\pi = 3.14$ .
- Physics:  $E=mc^2$ ,  $m+n$ ,  $M = \sqrt{\frac{3 \cdot 6 \cdot 10^3}{3 \cdot 18 \cdot 10^6}}$ ,  $\nabla \phi(x,y,z) = \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} i + \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} j$ .
- Geometry: A square with side length  $a$  and area  $b$ . A circle with radius  $r$  and area  $C = \pi r^2$ . A triangle with base  $c$  and height  $b$ , labeled  $\log b$ . A right-angled triangle with hypotenuse  $\sqrt{a^2+x^2}$  and angle  $90^\circ$ .
- Algebra:  $46 < X$ ,  $ax + bx + c = 0$ ,  $\Delta = b^2 - 4ac$ ,  $a \neq 0$ ,  $f(x) = a(x^2 + \frac{b}{a}x + \frac{c}{a})$ ,  $\{a \leq b\}$ ,  $y = uv$ .

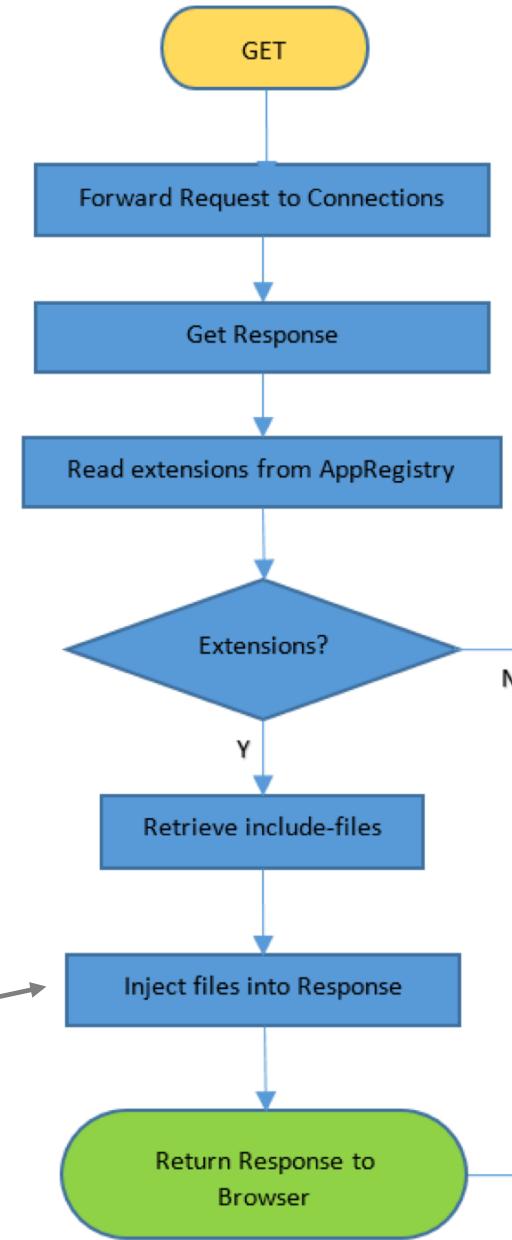
NOTE: Customizer does not work on ICEC pages (but doesn't really need to)

# What is Customizer?

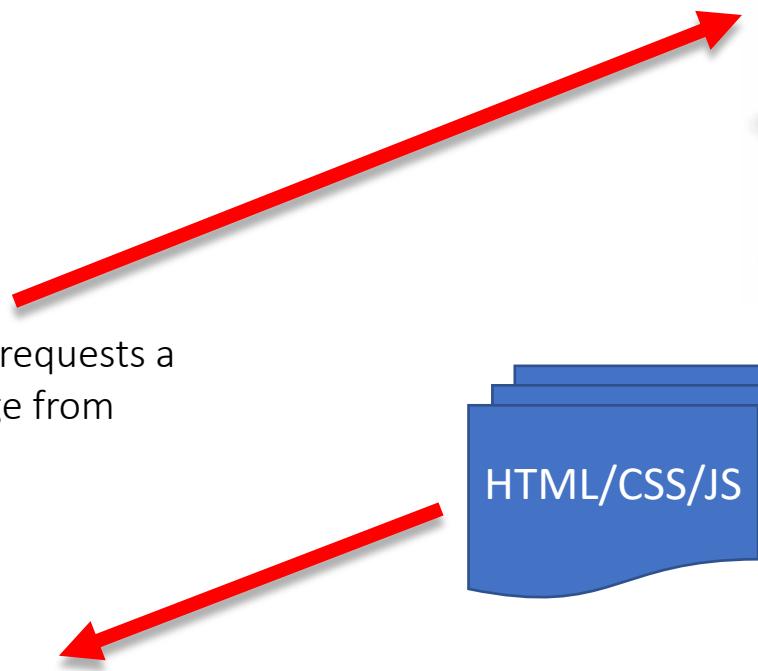


- A new capability in Connections
- Based on...
  - Who the user is
  - Or what the web page is
  - (Or combinations of both)
- Customizer adds one or more JavaScript files to the page as it is being sent back to your browser

(this is the part that matters)



# How it works



Diane's browser requests a Connections page from the server

Diane's browser uses those files to organize, format, and display all the things she sees on the web page

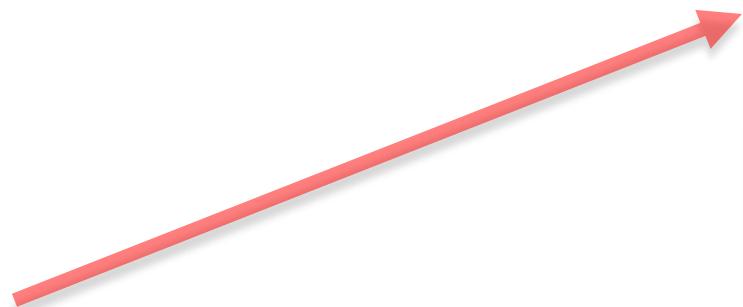


The server figures out what files are required for that page and sends them back (html, css, javascript, etc)

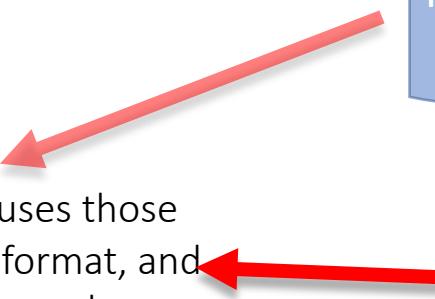
# How it works



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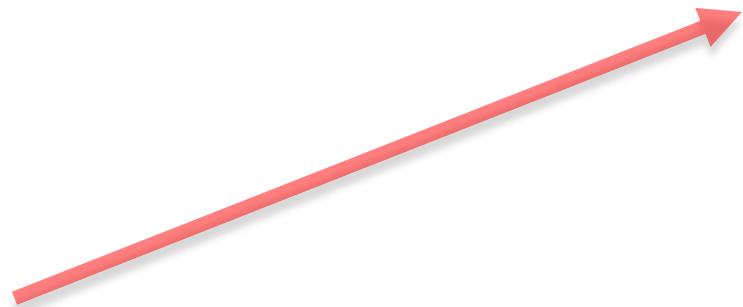
The server also says "hey, this is Diane...I have a special rule for her" and sends one or more extra JavaScript and/or CSS files to the browser

# How it works

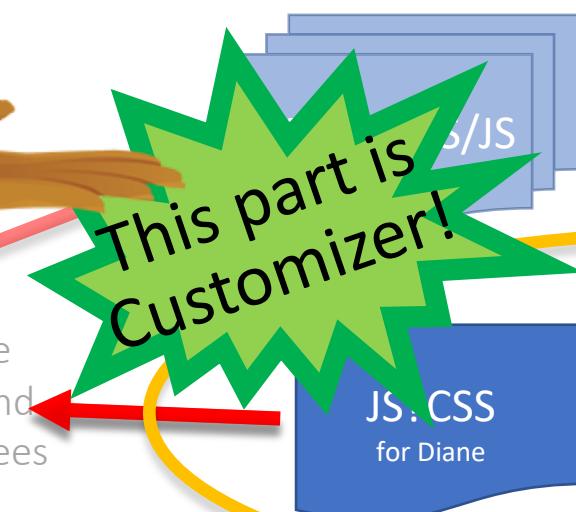


Diane's browser requests a Connections page from the server

Diane's browser uses those files to customize, format, and display the things she sees on the web page



The server figures out what files are required for that page and sends them back (html, css, javascript, etc)



The server also says "hey, this is Diane...I have a special rule for her" and sends one or more extra JavaScript and/or CSS files to the browser

# That's all...?

- Yes. And...well...no.
- The JavaScript and CSS added to the page by Customizer can do all kinds of things
  - Make minor or major changes to the overall look and feel of (most parts of) Connections
  - Modify or hide existing page elements
  - Add new elements to the page
  - Retrieve data from elsewhere...even outside Connections for...
    - Addition of outside content
    - Personalization information/instructions
    - Whatever else you can dream up
- *Someday* Customizer may be able to make server-side modifications...but not today



# Resources!

- Custom Guest Model
  - Article :  
<https://www.ibm.com/developerworks/collaboration/library/customizer-guest-model/index.html>
  - Code: <https://github.com/OpenCode4Connections/customizer-guest-model>
- Library of public scripts:
  - OpenCode4Connections : <https://github.com/OpenCode4Connections>
- Github repository associated with the lab :
  - <https://github.com/stefanopog/CustomizerThinkLab>

# Connections vs ICEC: what's the difference?

This screenshot shows the IBM Connections interface. At the top, there's a search bar and a navigation menu with links like 'Showcase', 'Home', 'Mail', 'Calendar', 'People', 'Communities', 'Files', 'Box', 'Meetings', 'Host a Meeting', 'Activities', 'Engagement Center', and 'More'. Below the menu, there's a 'Share Something' input field and a 'Meetings' section with a 'Join' button. The main area displays a news feed with various posts from users like Earl Holly, Jasmine Haj, and Terry Lyons. Each post includes a thumbnail, a brief description, and interaction buttons for 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Report'. There are also sections for 'Events' and 'Recommendations'.

**Connections** is its own data source,  
and presents its own content in a  
standardized UI

This screenshot shows the ICEC interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'HOME', 'NEWS', 'COMPANY', 'CAREER', 'COLLABORATION', 'APP CENTER', 'CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS', 'HUMAN RESOURCES', 'MARKETING TEAM', and 'NEW HIRE'. Below the navigation, there's a large banner with the text 'Human Resources' and an image of a person's legs in red sneakers. The main area is divided into several sections: 'PERSONALIZED NEWS' (with a 'Vacation Planner' card), 'HUMAN RESOURCES WALL' (with a 'Create News' button), 'CORPORATE TOP NEWS' (with a 'Your Learning Express' card), 'HUMAN RESOURCES FILES' (listing a document titled 'Greenville Business Conduct guidelines.docx'), 'NEWS FEEDS' (listing 'CNN', 'NY Times', and 'Wall Street Journal'), and 'MY ACTIVITIES' (showing a 'Talent Matrix - Performance By Potential' grid with data for 'Workers', 'Contributors', 'Consistent Star', 'Blocker', 'Key Performer', 'Emergers', 'Detractors', 'Placeholders', and 'Latents').

**ICEC** presents content from other  
sources, including Connections; has  
no content of its own; easily modified

# Customizer vs ICEC: what's the difference?

## Connections Customizer

- **Cannot change ICEC pages**
  - Also doesn't work on Meetings, Calendar, Mail, Administration, or mobile app
- Modifies (many) standard Connections pages
  - Change look and feel
  - Add / remove functionality
  - Interact with content / systems outside Connections
- Enabled by user and/or URL
  - Different users can have different experiences
  - Or different areas of the site can vary
- Requires developer skills
  - Not as easy to use as ICEC
  - Not for the casual user
- Requires a process to upload new files
- Is *much* easier than any other alternative
  - But still requires a developer

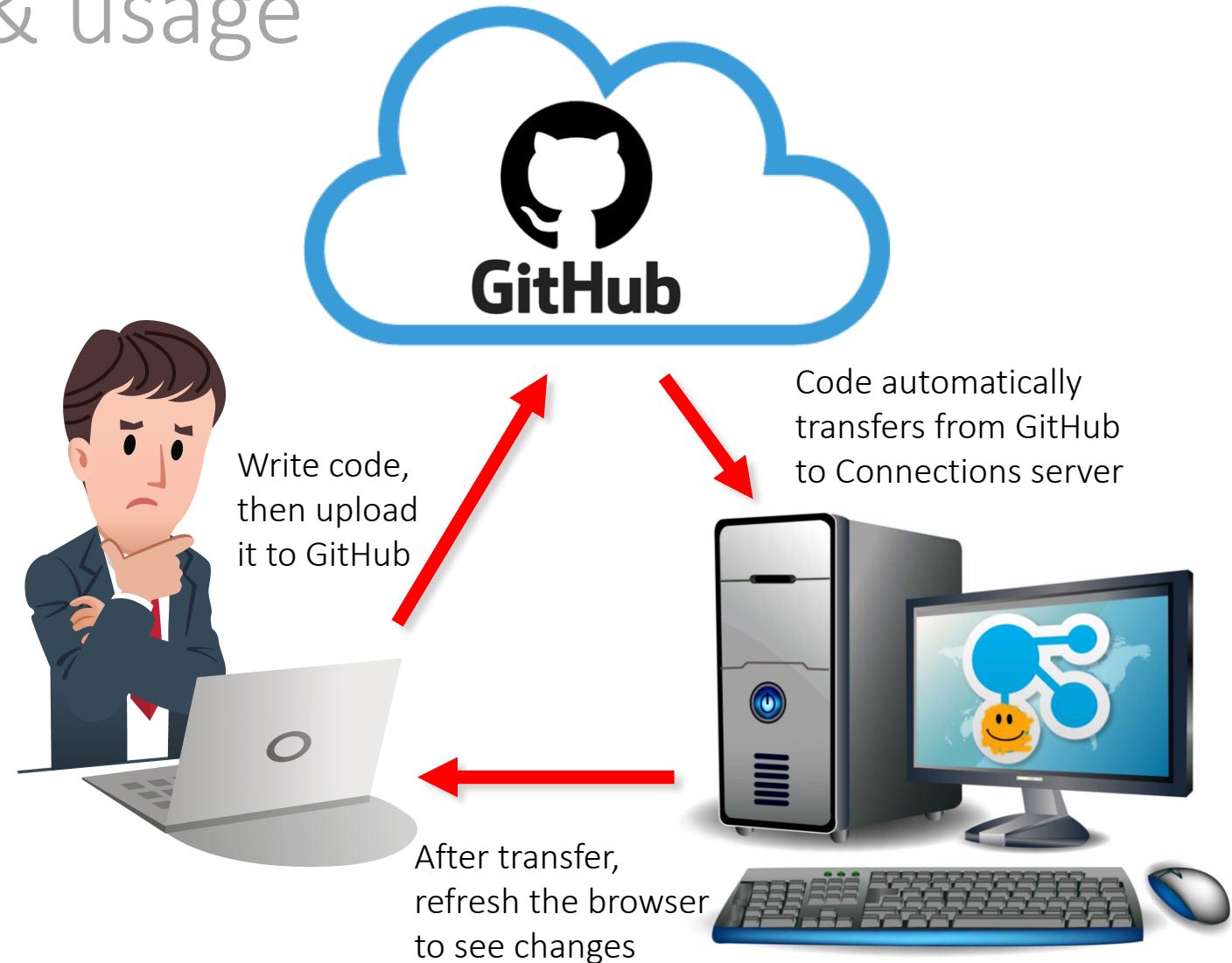
## IBM Connections Engagement Center (ICEC)

- **Cannot change standard Connections pages**
- Displays content from elsewhere
  - Can display Connections content but also that from elsewhere
  - Many existing widgets and page layouts to choose from...and you can make more
  - Separate mobile UI from Connections phone app
- Easily customizable UI
  - Some can be done by non-developers
  - Upload and use your own CSS and images for themes
    - Custom JavaScript can be added, too
  - End-user customization of pages is quite possible
- “Open in Community” links take you right into unmodified Connections
  - Can be confusing to users
- Allows some personalization of content
- Has its own mobile browser interface



# Customizer setup & usage

- 1 Your code (CSS, JS, etc) is written locally but tested from the server
  - Tampermonkey or GreaseMonkey can be used (up to a point) to build locally
- 2 Code is uploaded to GitHub
- 3 Code is transferred from GitHub to the server
  - Either automatically or via pull request
- 4 Server then sends the specified files to users
  - As defined in Organization Extensions
- 5 Transferred files (JavaScript) are handled by the browser



# What you can and can't do with Customizer

## Can

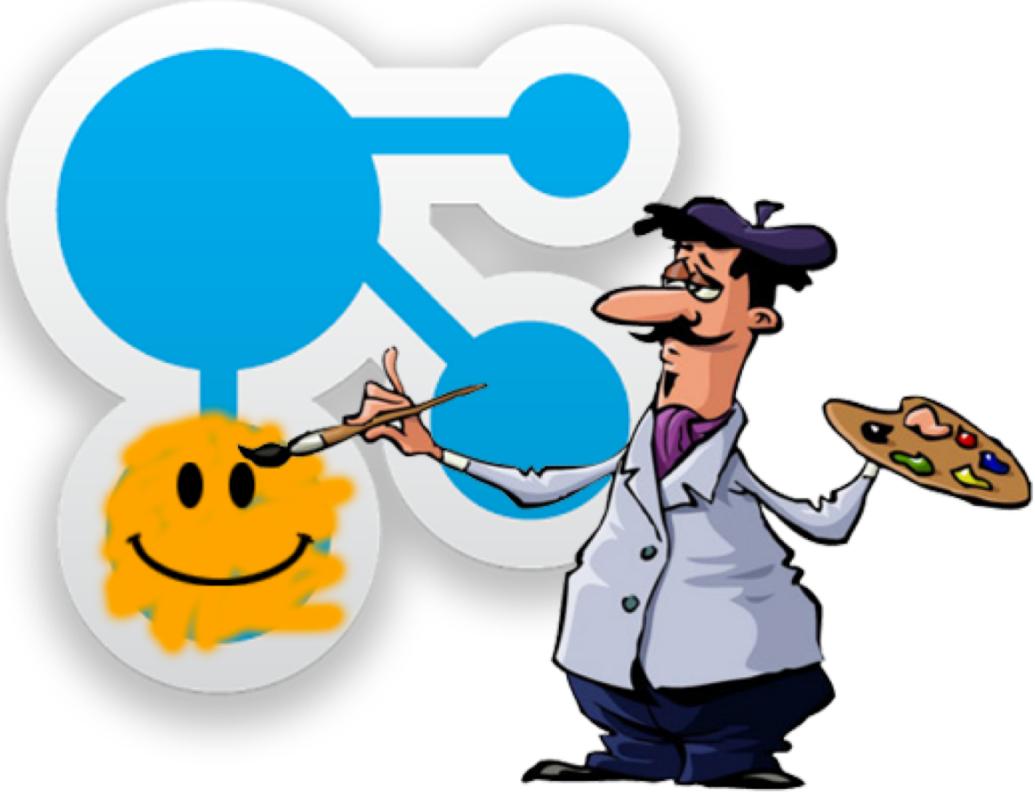
- Can add new functionality; hide or alter existing elements
- Can add new elements to the page
- Can access outside content (via AJAX, SOAP, etc.)
- Can retrieve Connections content (e.g., my Communities, my Files)
- Can access browser data (cookies, localStorage, sessionStorage)
- Can add CSS and JS libraries from Org Extensions settings

## Cannot

- Doesn't work in the Connections mobile app
- Doesn't work on Meetings, Mail, Calendar, or Admin pages
- Doesn't work in ICEC



Questions?



# Thank you!

Stefano Pogliani

TechSales Leader EMEA, Connections and Integration  
[Stefano.Pogliani@fr.ibm.com](mailto:Stefano.Pogliani@fr.ibm.com)