

Features Module

Sharing building blocks - a better way to work together

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Features - a better way to work together

- 1 Features overview
 - Problem
 - What is Features
 - Do I need Features
- 2 Practical application
 - Best practices
 - What we learned from CNP
 - Practical demonstration
- 3 Questions (and hopefully answers)
 - Concepts to remember



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The problem and why features was created

Sharing building blocks

- How often do you do the same thing over and over?
- Do you want to easily share or sell what you've made?

A better way to work together

- Drupal does not have a clear separation of content and structure. So how can we work together, track and coordinate our changes with versioning and server staging?



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What is Features and does it solve our problems?

- A feature is a collection of Drupal entities that, taken together, satisfy a certain use-case.
- A feature is a module. This lets each feature get a great deal of Drupal core's infrastructure out of the box meant for managing, sharing, and updating modules.
- The scope of features is limited by design. The stuff that features is made of is exportables, and it is meant to deal strictly with site building structures.

Young Hahn, Development Seed, co-author of Features



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What is Features and does it solve our problems?

Does it solve our problems

Features operates at a meta level to modules and moves site structure into code. Being in code, it solves the problem that content and structure are both in a single database. It is based on definition, not state change



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When to start considering using features

If you want to

- take advantage of things other people have made
- make something once and reuse it
- work in a team and track who made what change (and who broke what)
- test your changes before putting on the production site
- be sure that your changes will integrate smoothly on the production server

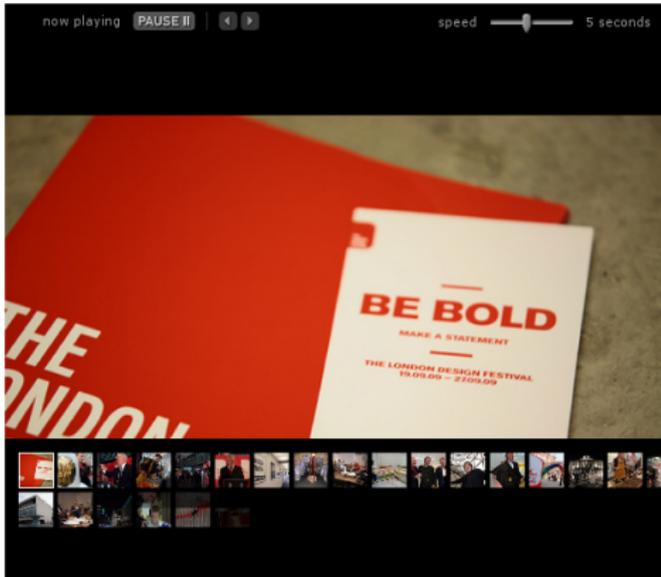


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Practical application

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Best Practices

- Version control - Distributed VCS have advantages
- The Development -> Staging -> Production Workflow
 - Adrian Rossouw,
<http://developmentseed.org/blog/2009/jul/09/development-staging-production-workflow-problem-drupal>
- Testing
 - Simpletest
 - Selenium
 - Hudson
 - Josh Koenig, <http://getpantheon.com/vulcan>



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What we learned from CNP

- Use the Feature name as a namespace prefix for all assets
- Use a name, including the namespace, for imagecache profiles
- Taxonomy and other non-exportables were best put in a base feature



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What we learned from CNP

- Make sure you update your database by refreshing features before outputting your changes - Don't wipe out others' work.
- When deleting a CCK field from the interface, you will see it coming back after the cache is cleared. Edit the defaults file and remove the field by hand there



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Practical demonstration

Lets make something.



Questions (and hopefully answers)

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Concepts to remember

To successfully use Features

- stop thinking about modules as the unit of site functionality
- start see modules as libraries, to be used by features to satisfy specific use cases
- refresh features before making changes when working in a team, don't just pushing your changes and breaking other people's work.



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Thank you!

- If you have any questions that aren't answered now or would like to talk to me, I'll be available now during lunch and through the rest of the DrupalCamp. Thanks for coming!
- Andrew Burcin, TechnoErgonomics
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Questions?



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Further resources

- <http://drupal.org/project/features>
- <http://drupal.org/project/context>
- <http://drupal.org/project/strongarm>
- <http://developmentseed.org/blog/2009/jan/30/easy-feature-building-spaces>
- <http://developmentseed.org/blog/2009/may/29/making-and-using-features-drupal>

