

ZEN

AND THE ART OF THEMING
AND THE POWER OF BASE THEMES

WHO IS THIS JOHNALBIN GUY ANYWAY?

■ I WAS BORN A POOR BLACK CHILD IN MISSISSIPPI.

■ DRUPAL NICK: JOHNALBIN
REAL NAME: JOHN ALBIN WILKINS



■ I'VE BEEN WRITING HTML SINCE 1994.

■ I'VE BEEN DEVELOPING CSS LAYOUTS SINCE 2001
ALA: A LIST APART ISSUE #99 (FEBRUARY 2001).

“TO HELL WITH BAD BROWSERS” BY JEFFREY ZELDMAN

■ SEP 2005. DRUPAL USER 32095.



■ OCT 2007. RELEASED ZEN 5.x-0.7.



CREATING
YOUR OWN THEME
AND HOW TO DO IT RIGHT IN D5 AND D6

CREATING A THEME

■ THE STANDARD DRUPAL 5 METHOD:

■ FIND A THEME YOU LIKE

■ HACK AWAY!!!
(I.E. FORK IT.)

■ PHPTEMPLATE_FUNCTION

■ THE STANDARD DRUPAL 6 METHOD:

■ FIND A THEME YOU LIKE

■ USE IT AS A BASE THEME

■ OVERRIDE AND MODIFY
ONLY WHAT YOU NEED TO

■ THEMENAME_FUNCTION

MODIFYING VARIABLES

■ IN DRUPAL 5:

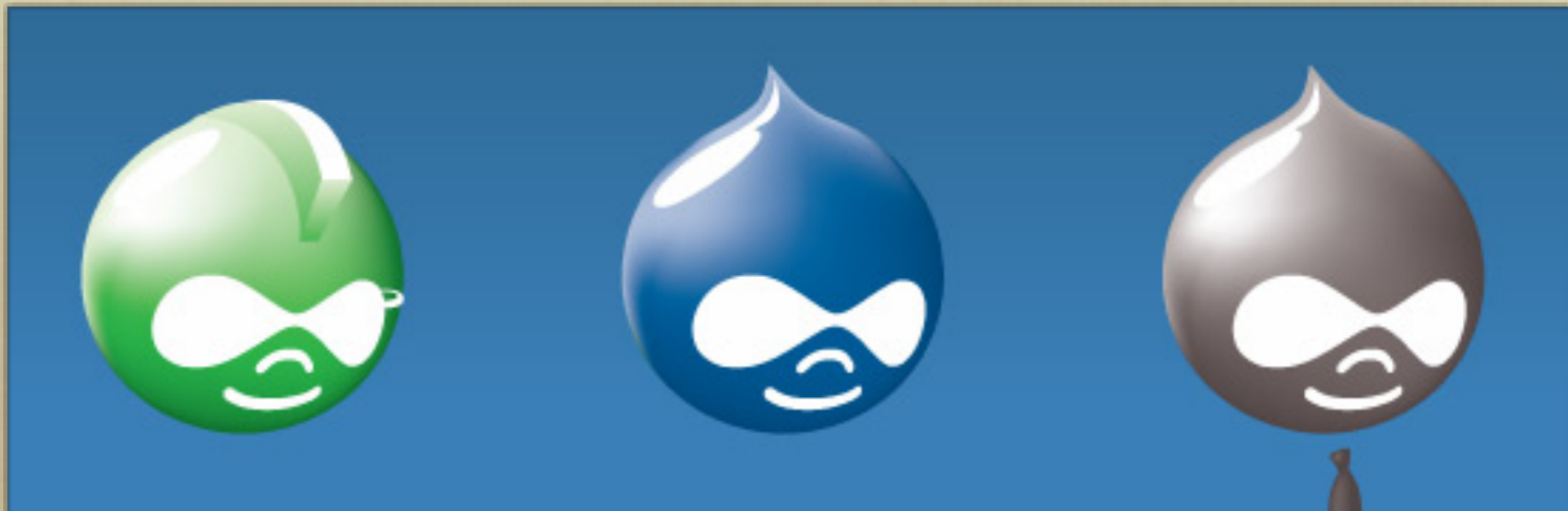
■ `_PHPTEMPLATE_VARIABLES()`

■ ONE FUNCTION FOR ALL
TEMPLATES

■ IN DRUPAL 6:

■ `THEME_PREPROCESS_HOOK()`
`MYTHEME_PREPROCESS_PAGE()`,
`MYTHEME_PREPROCESS_NODE()`

■ ONE FUNCTION FOR EACH
TEMPLATE



DRUPAL 5'S

_PHPTEMPLATE_VARIABLE()

```
/**  
 * Intercept template variables  
 *  
 * @param $hook  
 *   The name of the theme function being called (name of the .tpl.php file.)  
 * @param $vars  
 *   A copy of the array containing the variables for the hook.  
 * @return  
 *   The array containing additional variables to merge with $vars.  
 */
```

```
function _phptemplate_variables($hook, $vars = array()) {
```



```
}
```

DRUPAL 6'S PREPROCESS FUNCTIONS

```
/**
 * Override or insert PHPTemplate variables into the page templates.
 *
 * @param $vars
 *   A sequential array of variables to pass to the theme template.
 * @param $hook
 *   The name of the theme function being called ("page" in this case.)
 */
function STARTERKIT_preprocess_page(&$vars, $hook) {
  $vars['title'] .= ', eh?'; // Canadian translation.
}
```

← PAGE VARIABLE
MODIFICATIONS

```
/**
 * Override or insert PHPTemplate variables into the node templates.
 *
 * @param $vars
 *   A sequential array of variables to pass to the theme template.
 * @param $hook
 *   The name of the theme function being called ("node" in this case.)
 */
function STARTERKIT_preprocess_node(&$vars, $hook) {
  $vars['new_variable'] = t('Lorem ipsum.');
```

← NODE VARIABLE
ADDITIONS

BENEFITS OF BASE THEMES

- **BUG FIXES.**

IF YOU HAVE MODIFIED ANY OF BASE THEME'S FILES, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO INCORPORATE ANY OF THOSE BUG FIXES INTO YOUR MODIFIED VERSION.

- **NEW FEATURES.**

FOR CONTRIB THEMES (LIKE ZEN), THERE WILL OCCASIONALLY BE NEW FEATURES (LIKE THE BLOCK EDITING LINKS.)

- **SUPPORT.**

IF YOU HAVE MODIFIED AN EXISTING THEME, SOMETIMES THE ONLY ANSWER YOU WILL GET TO YOUR SUPPORT QUESTION IS "WELL, IT WORKS FINE IN THE ORIGINAL THEME."

- **RAPID THEME DEVELOPMENT.**

MANY THINGS ARE BUILT FOR YOU.

- **JOHNALBIN WON'T GLARE AT YOU IN IRC OR IN THE ZEN QUEUE.**

A BRIEF LOOK AT A SUB-THEME'S .INFO FILE

- ; THE NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE THEME
; USED ON THE ADMIN/BUILD/THEMES PAGE.
NAME = A ROCKIN' SUB-THEME
DESCRIPTION = WHOSE YOUR DADDY?
- ; "CORE" SPECIFIES THE VERSION OF DRUPAL THAT
; THIS THEME IS COMPATIBLE WITH.
; "BASE THEME" SPECIFIES THAT THIS IS A THEME
; THAT USES THE "ZEN" THEME AS ITS BASE THEME.
CORE = 6.X
BASE THEME = ZEN
- STYLESHEETS[ALL][] = LAYOUT.CSS
STYLESHEETS[PRINT][] = PRINT.CSS
STYLESHEETS[ALL][] = ZEN.CSS

CREATING A SUB-THEME

- CREATE A MYTHEME.INFO FILE.
- COPY CSS FILES, OVERRIDE AND MODIFY.
- COPY TEMPLATE FILES, OVERRIDE AND MODIFY.
- COPY THEME FUNCTIONS, OVERRIDE AND MODIFY.
- COPY, OVERRIDE, AND MODIFY
- SERIOUSLY...
- COPY, OVERRIDE, AND MODIFY.



ZEN 6.X-1.0-BETA2

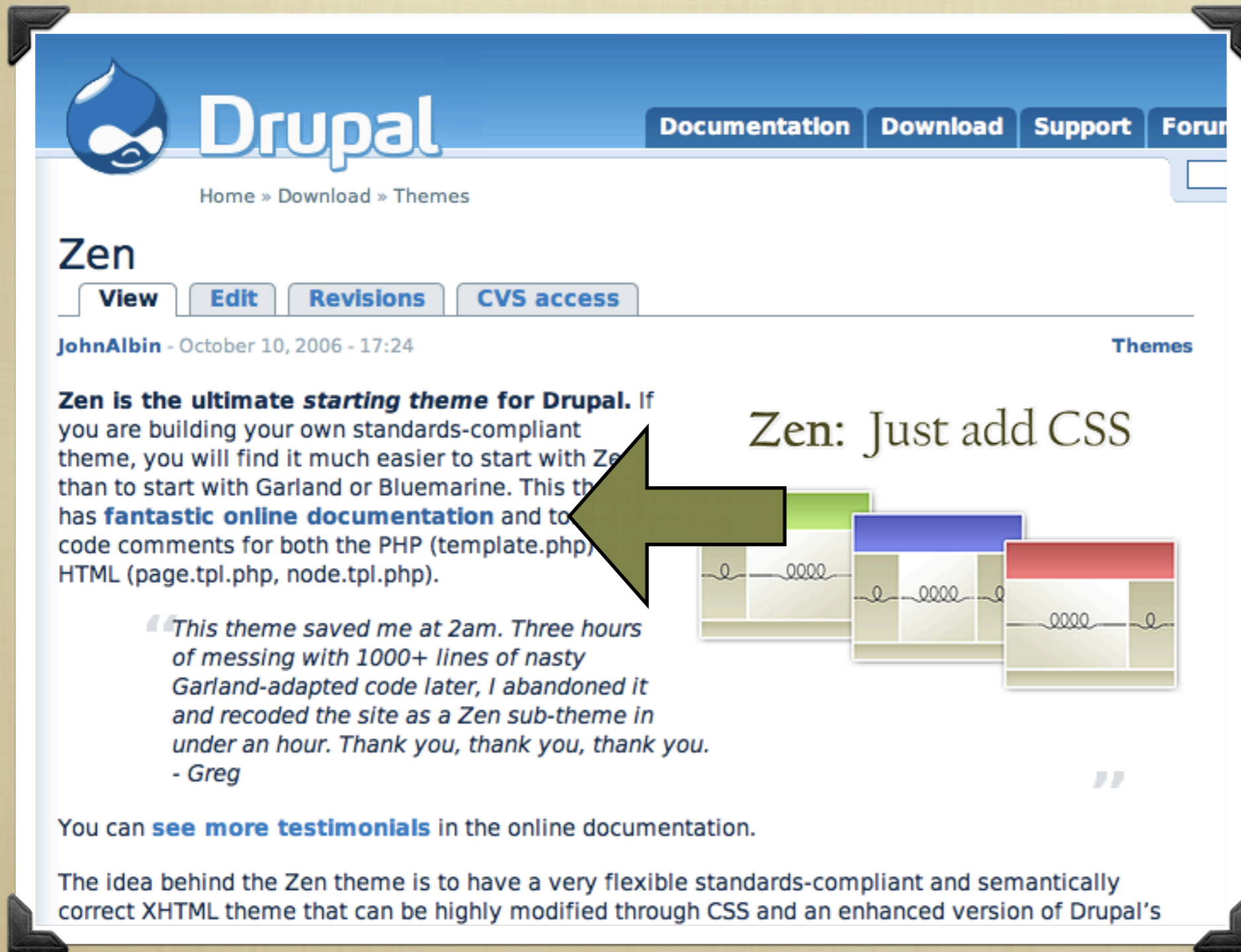
DON'T FEAR THE "BETA"

ZEN'S ONLINE DOCS

- [HTTP://DRUPAL.ORG/PROJECT/ZEN](http://drupal.org/project/zen)
- [HTTP://DRUPAL.ORG/NODE/193318](http://drupal.org/node/193318)

ZEN'S ONLINE DOCS

■ [HTTP://DRUPAL.ORG/PROJECT/ZEN](http://drupal.org/project/zen)



The screenshot shows the Drupal.org website interface for the Zen theme. At the top is the Drupal logo and navigation links for Documentation, Download, Support, and Forums. Below the logo is a breadcrumb trail: Home » Download » Themes. The main heading is "Zen", with sub-links for View, Edit, Revisions, and CVS access. The page is dated "JohnAlbin - October 10, 2006 - 17:24" and is categorized under "Themes". The main text describes Zen as the ultimate starting theme for Drupal, highlighting its standards-compliance and documentation. A testimonial from Greg is included, along with a diagram showing three theme variations (green, blue, red) and the text "Zen: Just add CSS".

Drupal

Documentation Download Support Forums

Home » Download » Themes

Zen

View Edit Revisions CVS access

JohnAlbin - October 10, 2006 - 17:24 Themes

Zen is the ultimate starting theme for Drupal. If you are building your own standards-compliant theme, you will find it much easier to start with Zen than to start with Garland or Bluemarine. This theme has **fantastic online documentation** and tons of code comments for both the PHP (template.php) and HTML (page.tpl.php, node.tpl.php).

*"This theme saved me at 2am. Three hours of messing with 1000+ lines of nasty Garland-adapted code later, I abandoned it and recoded the site as a Zen sub-theme in under an hour. Thank you, thank you, thank you."
- Greg*

You can [see more testimonials](#) in the online documentation.

The idea behind the Zen theme is to have a very flexible standards-compliant and semantically correct XHTML theme that can be highly modified through CSS and an enhanced version of Drupal's

Zen: Just add CSS



ZEN'S ONLINE DOCS

■ [HTTP://DRUPAL.ORG/PROJECT/ZEN](http://drupal.org/project/zen)

The image shows a screenshot of the Zen theme documentation page on Drupal.org. The page is displayed in a browser window with a blue header. The header contains the Drupal logo and the word "Drupal" in a large, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the logo, there are navigation links: "Documentation", "Download", "Support", and "Forum". Below the header, the breadcrumb trail reads "Home » Beyond the basics » Contributed themes". The main content area is titled "Zen" and has a sub-header "View Edit Revisions CVS ac". The text below the sub-header reads "JohnAlbin - October 10, 2006 - 17:24". The main text starts with "Zen is the ultimate starting theme for D" and continues with "you are building your own standards-complia theme, you will find it much easier to start w than to start with Garland or Bluemarine. This has fantastic online documentation and t code comments for both the PHP (template.p HTML (page.tpl.php, node.tpl.php)).". There is a quote from Greg: "This theme saved me at 2am. Thre of messing with 1000+ lines of nas Garland-adapted code later, I aban and recoded the site as a Zen sub-t under an hour. Thank you, thank yo - Greg". Below the quote, it says "You can see more testimonials in the onlin". At the bottom, it says "The idea behind the Zen theme is to have a correct XHTML theme that can be highly modified through CSS and an enhanced version of Drupal's". On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar titled "Beyond the basics" with a list of links: "Tutorials", "HowTos", "Comparisons of contributed modules", "Contributed modules", and "Contributed themes". Under "Contributed themes", there is a sub-list: "Zen", "Feature list (5.x)", "Getting started (5.x)", "Getting started (6.x)", "How to build your own sub-theme (5.x)", and "How to build your own sub-theme (5.x)". On the right side of the page, there is a sub-header "About the Zen theme" and a paragraph of text: "Zen is the ultimate starting theme for Drupal. If you are building your own standards-compliant theme, you will find it much easier to start with Zen than to start with Garland or Bluemarine. This theme has LOTS of documentation in the form of code comments for both the PHP (template.php) and HTML (page.tpl.php, node.tpl.php)". Below this, there is a section titled "Why should you use Zen?" and a paragraph: "And why should you create your theme as a Zen sub-theme as opposed to just modifying an existing theme? Lots of reasons. You can also read several themer's testimonials." At the bottom of the page, there is a list of links: "Feature list (5.x)", "Getting started (5.x)", "Getting started (6.x)", and "How to build your own sub-theme (5.x)".

WHY ELSE WOULD I WANT TO USE ZEN?

- BESIDES THE ADVANTAGES OF BASE THEMES?
- BESIDES THE EXTENSIVE ON-LINE DOCUMENTATION?
- IT'S ALSO GOT A LAUNDRY LIST OF FEATURES. (WHICH ARE EXCITING TO USE, BUT BORING TO LIST.)
- EXTENSIVE IN-LINE COMMENTS IN PHP AND CSS FILES.

WHY ELSE WOULD I WANT TO

USE Z

■ BESIDES

■ BESIDES

■ IT'S ALSO
EXCITING

■ EXTENSIVE

```
.block h2.title /* Block title */
{
}

.block .content /* Block's content wrapper */
{
}

#block-aggregator-category-1 /* Block for the latest news items in the
first category */
{
}

#block-aggregator-feed-1 /* Block for the latest news items in the first
feed */
{
}

#block-block-1 /* First administrator-defined block */
{
}

#block-blog-0 /* "Recent blog posts" block */
{
}

#block-book-0 /* "Book navigation" block for the current book's table of
contents */
{
}

#block-comments-0 /* "Recent comments" block */
{
}
```

```
}
}
#block-comments-0 /* "Recent comments" block */
{
}
```

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ILES.

WHY ELSE WOULD I WANT TO USE ZEN?

- BESIDES THE ADVANTAGES OF BASE THEMES?
- BESIDES THE EXTENSIVE ON-LINE DOCUMENTATION?
- IT'S ALSO GOT A LAUNDRY LIST OF FEATURES. (WHICH ARE EXCITING TO USE, BUT BORING TO LIST.)
- EXTENSIVE IN-LINE COMMENTS IN PHP AND CSS FILES.
- A FANTASTICALLY FLEXIBLE CSS LAYOUT METHOD.
 - WHICH I'VE RUN OUT OF TIME TO DISCUSS IN DETAIL. :-)
 - BUT I WILL WRITE ABOUT IT ON PLANET DRUPAL.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ZEN'S LAYOUT METHOD

- **SOURCE-ORDERED HTML: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PIECES OF CONTENT DETERMINES THE ORDER IN HTML, AND NOT THE GRAPHIC DESIGN.**
- **FLEXIBLE LAYOUT OPTIONS:**
 - **FLUID (100% WIDTH) OR FIXED-WIDTH LAYOUT**
 - **OPTIONAL HORIZONTAL NAVBAR**
 - **1-3 COLUMNS BUILT-IN. MORE COLUMNS ARE POSSIBLE WITHOUT MIND-BENDING CONTORTIONS.**
- **ZEN'S DEFAULT LAYOUT METHOD IS COMPLETELY PLUGGABLE. IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, JUST REPLACE THE LAYOUT.CSS FILE WITH YOUR OWN LAYOUT METHOD: YUI, YAML, JELLO MOLD, HOLY GRAIL, ETC.**

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ZEN'S LAYOUT METHOD

- SOURCE-ORDERED HTML • THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PIECES OF CONTENT AND NOT THE ORDER OF THEM

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- LAYOUT.CSS FILE WITH YOUR OWN LAYOUT METHOD: YUI, YAML, JELLO MOLD, HOLY GRAIL, ETC.

`#page (container)`

`#header`

`#main (container)`

`#content`

`#navbar`

`#sidebar-left`

`#sidebar-right`

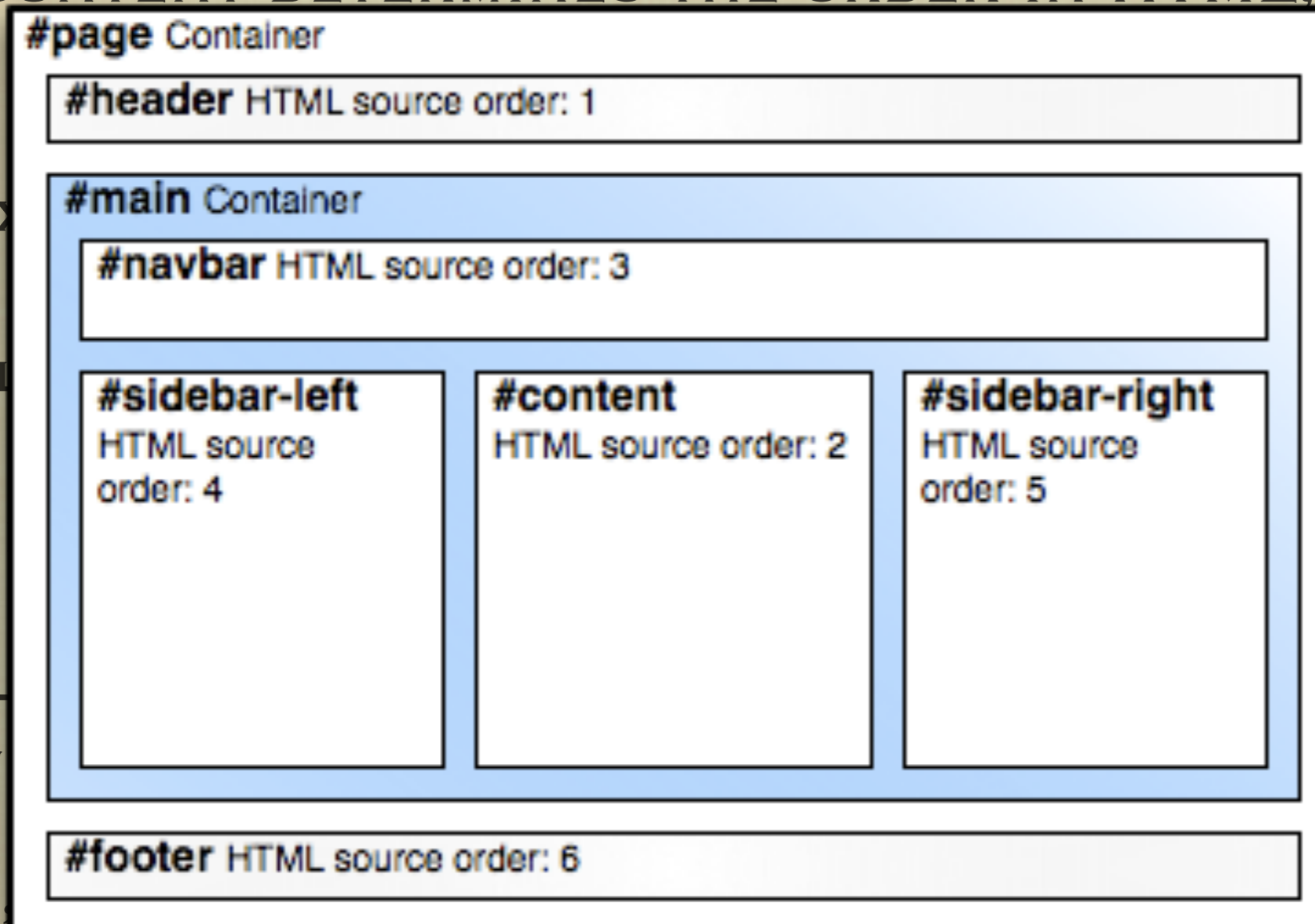
`#footer`

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BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ZEN'S LAYOUT METHOD

- SOURCE-ORDERED HTML: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PIECES OF CONTENT DETERMINES THE ORDER IN HTML, AND NOT THE



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- ZEN'S DEFAULT LAYOUT METHOD IS COMPLETELY PLUGGABLE. IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, JUST REPLACE THE LAYOUT.CSS FILE WITH YOUR OWN LAYOUT METHOD: YUI, YAML, JELLO MOLD, HOLY GRAIL, ETC.

WHAT DOES ZEN LOOK LIKE?

- RECENT IRC CHAT ON #DRUPAL-THEMES:
- MIKEY_P: WHAT EXACTLY DOES ZEN LOOK LIKE? ISN'T ZEN JUST SEMANTIC STRUCTURE?
- JOHNALBIN: MY HOPE IS THAT NO ZEN SUB-THEME LOOKS LIKE ZEN.
- JOHNALBIN: ZEN IS PLAIN. BY DESIGN.
- NIKLP: ZEN LOOKS LIKE NOTHING - AND EVERYTHING.

WHAT DOES ZEN LOOK LIKE?

[Home](#)[Blogs](#)[Books](#)[Forums](#)[Polls](#)[News aggregator](#)[Contact](#)

Drupal Community Plumbing

[Home](#)

Donec felis eros, blandit non

[View](#)[Edit](#)[Outline](#)

Tue, 11/27/2007 - 20:36 — [admin](#)

Morbi id lacus. Etiam malesuada diam ut libero. Sed blandit, justo nec euismod laoreet, nunc nulla iaculis elit, vitae. Donec dolor. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos. Vivamus vestibulum felis [nec libero](#). [Duis lobortis](#). Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Nunc venenatis pretium magna. Donec dictum ultrices massa. Donec vestibulum porttitor purus. Mauris nibh ligula, porta non, porttitor sed, fermentum id, dolor. Donec eu lectus et elit porttitor rutrum. Aenean justo. Phasellus augue tortor, mattis nonummy, aliquam euismod, cursus eget, ipsum. Sed ultricies bibendum ante. Maecenas rhoncus tincidunt eros.

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- [Create content](#)
- [Recent posts](#)
- [Test view](#)
- [My account](#)
- [Administer](#)
- [Log out](#)

Poll

What's up?:

- Nothing.
- Wouldn't you like to know?
- Whatever.
- A little of this. A little of that.
- Baking cookies.

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WHAT DOES ZEN LOOK LIKE?



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- [gabruchos](#)
- [uehosh](#)

[Home](#) > Donec felis eros, blandit non

Donec felis eros, blandit non

Submitted by [admin](#) on Tue, 11/27/2007 - 20:36.

Morbi id lacus. Etiam malesuada diam ut libero. Sed blandit, justo nec euismod laoreet, nunc nulla iaculis elit, vitae. Donec dolor. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos. Vivamus vestibulum felis [nec libero](#). [Duis lobortis](#). Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Nunc venenatis pretium magna. Donec dictum ultrices massa. Donec vestibulum porttitor purus. Mauris nibh ligula, porta non, porttitor sed, fermentum id, dolor. Donec eu lectus et elit porttitor rutrum. Aenean justo. Phasellus augue tortor, mattis nonummy, aliquam euismod, cursus eget, ipsum. Sed ultricies bibendum ante. Maecenas rhoncus tincidunt eros.

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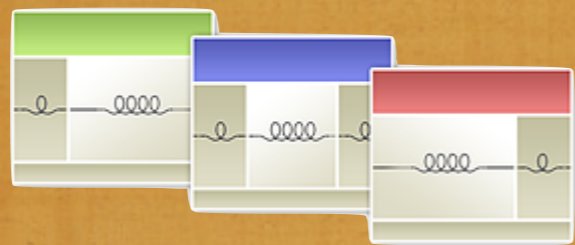
Poll

What's up?:

- Nothing.
- Wouldn't you like to know?
- Whatever.
- A little of this. A little of that.
- Baking cookies.

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ZEN

THE ULTIMATE STARTING THEME FOR DRUPAL