

**Request for Proposal**  
**Drupal.org Redesign**  
Presented by the Drupal Association  
June 25, 2008

Please direct responses or inquiries to:  
Tiffany Farriss  
e [drupal@palantir.net](mailto:drupal@palantir.net)  
p 773.645.4100 x307  
f 773.645.4105

## **project overview**

The Drupal community currently has a Web presence at drupal.org (d.o) that is outdated in appearance, structure and content presentation. The Drupal Association is sponsoring this project to re-engineer the site to better reflect the goals of the Drupal community and incorporate more useful features. A high five figure budget has been allocated to fund this portion of the redesign project, although the Association welcomes all thoughtful proposals.

The scope of this RFP is specifically focused on research-driven revision of the information architecture and design of a new concept and templates for drupal.org, which will be implemented on d.o by the community itself. All wireframes, designs, templates and any other deliverables created as a part of this project will become the sole property of the Drupal Association.

The Drupal.org Web site needs to serve the existing community of developers, as well as be approachable and intuitive for evaluators and beginners. The goal of this project is to redesign the site to deliver intuitive navigation, an improved graphical user interface, and easy-to-find content organization for both of those audiences.

To be effective, our Web site must be:

1. A fun and friendly community site
2. An easy way to find answers to questions
3. A way to keep track of projects of interest
4. A showcase of what can be done with Drupal
5. A guide to help you learn Drupal at your own pace
6. A guide to help you build your site

## **about drupal**

Drupal is an open source social publishing platform that allows an individual or a community of users to easily publish, manage and organize a wide variety of content on a website. Web site administrators use Drupal to customize their Web site through a configurable user interface, modular components, and an extensible framework design. Begun as a hobby project of Dries Buytaert, it was first released as an open source project in 2001 and has steadily grown in popularity ever since.

The existing drupal.org Web site was originally designed and produced in 2001 and revised slightly in 2005. The site is maintained with community resources.

Drupal powers sites for:

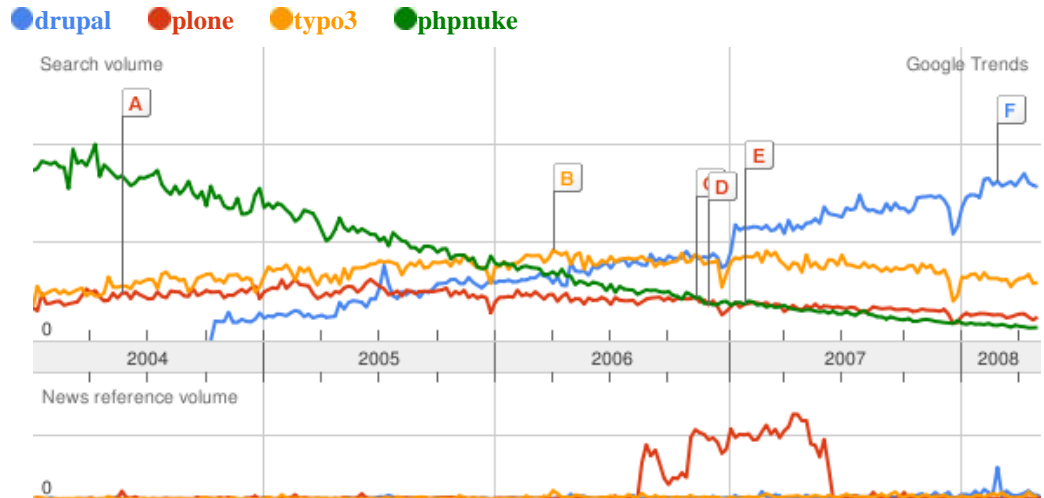
- magazines (Fast Company, Popular Science)
- newspapers (The Onion, Morris Digital, Seattle Times)
- entertainment (MTV UK, Sony BMG artists, Harmonix's Rock Band, Lifetime),
- museums (Art Institute of Chicago, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Science Museum of Minneapolis),
- government and politics (Belgium government, Mike Bloomberg),
- businesses (AOL corporate, Sun's OpenOffice extensions, Yahoo!, Adobe),
- projects (Ubuntu, Eclipse, jQuery)
- not-for-profits (United Nations, Amnesty International, Electronic Frontier Foundation, World Bank),
- universities (Harvard Science, Washington University in St. Louis Arts & Sciences)

With the current Drupal 6 release, Drupal:

- Increased the number of contributors to core by 57%
- Added key features to core including Open ID and internationalization
- Simplified administration backend
- Rebuilt the theme engine so custom design implementation is easier
- Improved its security with update notifications and password strength checking
- Focused on increased scalability

In its first month of release, Drupal 6 had 100,000 downloads (200% more than D5) and 20,000 installations. Each major release has attracted more attention, more users and more content on drupal.org.

Drupal.org has 300,000+ users and gains on average 300 new users per day. There are 375,000 discussion threads between the forums, mailings lists, groups, etc. Our community is active with a 5:1 response rate on general discussions, 4:1 response rate on support discussions and 10:1 response rate on development discussions. Our community is large, engaged and growing.



Drupal has the mindshare and the momentum to enter the mainstream, but the key to achieving that goal will be the success of this project.

Sources: [Google Trends](#), [Dries Buytart, State of Drupal presentation](#), [DrupalCon Boston](#)

### about the drupal association

The Drupal Association is a not-for-profit association, registered in Belgium. Its purpose is to provide support to the Drupal project.

The Drupal Association has no say in either the planning or development of the Drupal open source project itself. (This is left solely in the very capable hands of the community.)

The Drupal Association does, however, do the following:

- \* Accept donations and grants.
- \* Organize and/or sponsor Drupal events, and represent the Drupal project at events.
- \* Engage in partnerships with other organizations.
- \* Acquire and manage infrastructure in support of the Drupal project.
- \* Support development by awarding grants or paying wages.
- \* Write and publish press releases and promotional materials.

DA is providing the financial support for this project.

## **background on the current site**

Drupal.org has 720 000 unique visitors per month. The Drupal.org front page is viewed 1 Million times per month with 16% of pages as exits.

Drupal does not have a show case to show off our best examples on the front page. Videos of showcase sites could help to demonstrate the power of Drupal. Many Drupal service providers complain that their clients are not impressed when they come to Drupal.org.

Drupal.org does not have messaging or a workflow that empowers users to engage the community.

- We do not encourage users to sign-up for a Drupal.org account
- We don't recommend where they can get good Drupal hosting
- We do not encourage them to sign up for the security list
- We don't show where they can get support for using Drupal
- We don't tell them where they can get paid support
- We don't introduce them to our documentation
- We don't inform them about books, training being available
- We do not let them know about events coming up in their area

As a result, we are probably letting many Drupal users who might have become part of the community slip away. Some of these deficiencies could be remedied navigationally, but a larger challenge for this project is to create a process funnel that connects users to appropriate information or tasks.

## **current site infrastructure**

The drupal.org main site and associated sub-sites (api.drupal.org, association.drupal.org, etc.) are under the formal responsibility of the Drupal Association. The sites were produced and continue to be managed and maintained by teams of volunteers.

The idea that drupal.org could benefit from a thorough redesign arises from a feeling that the Drupal project has in some senses outgrown the current site design and structure. The current site is an organic product of years of community-driven development. The main drupal.org site serves as the primary entry point for groups and individuals interested in Drupal and is visited by many people with different purposes and needs, not all of which may be fully addressed by the design alone.

(Note: see appendix a for summary of current site critique, preliminary redesign research, and additional links.)

## **business requirements**

These objectives were developed by Michael Meyers and Laura Scott of the Drupal Association. (<http://groups.drupal.org/node/12575>)

It's said that good business objective are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Agreeable, Realistic, and Trackable.

The objectives outlined below are more abstract than SMART and are meant to build consensus in the community. Also, note that any examples of HOW we might work to achieve objectives were provided only to provide context – they are not meant as recommendations or endorsements of any particular approach or solution.

Once we agree on the high level objectives we can then create more specific and measurable ones (i.e. “increase repeat visitors by 20%” vs. “make the site more sticky”, “sub 2 second page load times” vs. “make the site faster”) and THEN we can turn our focus to the how...

Note: not all of these business objectives will be addressed under the scope of this RFP. They are, however, provided for insight into the broader context of the project.

### **Modernize the Aesthetics and GUI, Leverage the Power of Drupal.**

The current site design is stale – Web aesthetics have come a long way and so the site does not inspire confidence in terms of professionalism. It also poorly represents the power and modern capabilities of Drupal – it barely takes advantage of the functionality Drupal has to offer.

We need a cleaner, updated look and feel (design) in-line with current market trends, implemented consistently across all of the association properties (association, groups, d.o, etc.). A more appealing, modern, and usable set of sites will make for a much more marketable Drupal.

### **Re-think of the Information Architecture and Usability**

There is inconsistent architecture and it's hard to find information. We need to step back and look at our many properties and re-think the overall structure and organization of the individual sites and re-build from a solid, new foundation. The navigation and IA needs to be more intuitive and approachable, and the various sites or sections of sites need to be more tightly integrated and cross linked.

Important pages shouldn't be more than two clicks away, we need to leverage non hierarchical ways of organizing content (tagging and improved searching) and there should be consistency in the placement of user-centric navigation.

We need to cross link and integrate various aspects of the site – for example, when you view a module there should be blocks showing recent related activity on the forums, in docs, issues, etc., with a link to a full rundown (and not like the links we have on project nodes).

We need to introduce missing and important functionality that is found on most successful community sites (trust and credibility metrics, popularity and ratings, etc.).

[Update Drupal is researching cross-site searching options.]

### **Contain Expenses and Generate Revenue**

Revenue is essential for sustainability but the site does not exist first and foremost to generate revenue – that would change the purpose and tone of the site. We don't want to overly commercialize the site - we want to find palatable ways of monetizing our properties to generate necessary ongoing revenue that will help fund this redesign, the associations operating costs, and future initiatives.

### **Increase user participation throughout all aspects of the project (documentation, testing, design, development, etc.)**

The Drupal community makes use of social production, which relies on many users contributing to the project. In order to continue to make improvements, we need to continue to make it easier to contribute.

The size of the community activity makes highlighting and parsing that activity very difficult. Participation is easy in some areas, but hard in others. It's hard for people to know where to start, or how to best contribute. The only area where it seems to go well is in actual code contributions.

It's critical we continue to grow the community - we need to solicit (calls to action) and foster more participation, make it significantly easier for folks to contribute (lower the barriers to entry, provide starting points), etc. It also needs to be easier to follow what's going on day to day or month to month (in summary), and be more welcoming and transparent to newcomers, outsiders, and the more casual users or evaluators.

### **Empower and Leverage Drupal Community Members (Crowdsourcing)**

We need to empower our member base and leverage their input to improve the quality of, and to help organize the ever growing amount of content and contributions.

For example, we should be tracking the number of views or downloads, and have some type of rating system. We can then enable filtering and sorting based on these metrics, making it easier to find content. We also need to encourage people to add metadata like tags – helping to better organize things – we should encourage as much user editable content as possible.

### **Facilitate the Product Evaluation Process**

Most companies and individuals go through a similar evaluation process prior to adoption – there are common questions and concerns.

- Does Drupal have the features I need?
- How does it compare to other frameworks or CMS systems?
- Who else uses it? Will it scale?
- Will I be able to find development resources?
- etc.

We need to support and facilitate this process making it easier for the various constituents to evaluate our product.

### **Increase Downloads and Grow the Install-base**

Success is driven by our community and active successful installations of the product – we need to increase downloads, and more importantly increase our conversion rate (folks who just download vs. those who actually continue to use it and find success through it) to build our install base of active users.

### **Improved, Better Integrated, and More Comprehensive Documentation**

Great strides have been made in this area but we need to continue the progress on this critical front.

We need to improve the structure and organization: All docs should be versioned with the appropriate Drupal release. Taxonomy can be leveraged to organize content on more than one axis. Type of documentation, for example: tutorial, review, guidelines, introduction, etc.

We need to provide better integration (cross linking and referencing), for example help links in the Drupal install process should link users to specific help pages, not the documentation home page.

We need to increase the overall quality of the content, provide deeper and greater coverage of topics, establish and improve standards for all types of documentation, etc.

### **Make it Easier to Setup, Run, and Support Drupal Installations**

Whether you are looking for documentation, modules that best meet your needs, tips on tuning and scaling your configuring, testimonials and tutorials, etc. it needs to be much easier to find what you are looking for.

### **Improve the Performance and Availability of our Properties**

The availability and performance of our properties directly reflect the viability of the product and form an indelible impression of our capabilities. If users or evaluators go to one of our sites and it's slow or down, they will wonder if Drupal can scale, if it's right for their business, etc. It also directly hampers community contributions, time spent on site, etc.



We also need to ensure critical information (api.drupal.org, handbook documentation, etc.) and product downloads (core, modules, themes, etc.) are /always/ available, that we set, track, and meet performance standards (i.e. sub 2 second page load times), and have the necessary tools to monitor and measure our performance.

#### **Internationalization**

Drupal caters to an international audience. Our web properties should be available in multiple languages.

#### **MarComm – Promoting the Product and Brand**

We need to maximize SEO and have an actionable marketing strategy to go along with this redesign – including supporting collateral to empower grass roots campaigns and viral promotion (buttons, banners, badges, broiler plate copy, etc.)

#### **Insight and Analysis**

We have limited insight into site usage. We need a modern real-time analytics solution in place to help us better understand how users navigate the site, what areas are important to them so that we can make informed decisions.

[Update: Google Analytics has been placed on Drupal.org]

## **deliverables**

The successful respondent will be expected to complete the following deliverables. During each phase of the project, it is expected that community input will be solicited and incorporated into the deliverables.

### Phase I – Research:

- competitive analysis of other project site structures
- refinement/finalization of personae and tasks

### Phase II – Information Architecture:

- revised information architecture and organizational framework guidelines
- marketing content audit and revised manuscript for drupal.org, excluding subdomains
- approved, finalized wireframes

### Phase III – Design:

- preliminary design concepts
- usability test report on design directions
- layered .psd for site templates
- .eps of logo/mark in CMYK
- brand style guideline documentation that includes articulation of the grid and font specifications

Firms may submit proposals for the research, IA and/or design portions of this RFP.

## **proposal requirements**

About your organization:

- company history
- personnel bios for those working on the project
- clear identification (name, address, URL) of any sub-contractors as well as the scope of the work each will perform. Note, the Drupal Association will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however, we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors proposed.

Approach and scope of work:

- approach, process and timeline (estimated) for deliverables
- budget breakdown for each phase of the project including estimates of out-of-pocket costs, if any and an hourly rate for each type of service

Experience:

- 3 case studies with references of projects completed of similar scope
- portfolio of recent sites with brief (30 word or less) description of services provided
- description of experience designing for sites that use a content management system, especially Drupal

Format:

- include a cover letter signed by individual authorized to negotiate and execute an agreement on behalf of the company
- must be delivered as a .pdf
- should be no longer than 20 pages in length, at least 10 point type
- submit via e-mail only by 5pm CDT on July 25, 2008 to Tiffany Farriss ([drupal@palantir.net](mailto:drupal@palantir.net)); confirmation will be sent immediately upon successful receipt

## **process and schedule**

Contract award schedule:

- June 25: RFP released
- July 7: Vendors express intent to bid, submit questions for clarification
- July 14: DA issues responses to questions
- July 25: Vendor responses due
- August 4: Notification to finalists (2-3 will be selected)
- August 4-8: Interviews with finalists
- August 12: Vendor selected
- Week of August 18: Project kickoff meeting

Selection criteria:

- Price/value quotient of the bid.
- Strength of design and research portfolio.
- Demonstrated experienced with the design of large-scale content management systems sites, especially Drupal.
- Professional stature of the creative team.
- Process methodologies and communication.
- Quality of RFP response itself.
- Quality of creative ideas in presentation.
- References/due diligence.

Provisions of this RFP and the contents of the successful responses are considered available for inclusion in final contractual obligations. The Drupal Association will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by Drupal Association legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget and other necessary items.

## **appendix a: analysis and research to date**

The following is a synopsis of some of the research posted on the [Groups.drupal.org: Drupal.org redesign plan for the Drupal Association](http://groups.drupal.org:Drupal.org%20redesign%20plan%20for%20the%20Drupal%20Association).

### **Audience definition/personae**

Source: <http://groups.drupal.org/node/9034>

Jeff Eaton, a Drupal contributor and DA Board member, defined a series of Drupal.org audience definitions to describe who uses the website, and what their likely focus on the site will be:

- Evaluator: seeking overview information about Drupal and what it can do.
- Manager: decision-maker, looking to be "sold" on Drupal.
- Site builder: looking to use Drupal to build a website; needs introductory information, tutorials, modules and themes, etc.
- Webmaster: has worked with other CMSes and needs to know more details about how Drupal compares.
- Developer: code-monkey who wants API-level details about Drupal as a content management framework.
- Designer: looking for themes, looking for information on how to make Drupal look beautiful.

These have been expanded into working personas at <http://groups.drupal.org/node/3761>.

### **Existing sub-domains**

An important piece of the initial analysis was to catalog what all is actually at Drupal.org, and how it all fits together. The current structure relies on a series of subdomains that each segregate specific channels of Drupal information:

- Drupal.org – the catchall for marketing, documentation, forum, core and contrib. module downloads
- Groups.drupal.org – a place for groups to organize, plan, work on projects
- Lists.drupal.org – access to the public mailing lists
- Association.drupal.org – information by and about the association
- Api.drupal.org – developer's documentation

### Draft IA revision

The Drupal community has drafted an IA that both catalogs the functionality of drupal.org and reorganizes it according to general audience into audience-specific sub-domains:

#### Drupal.org (What is drupal?)

- Audience: primarily new Drupal.org visitors
- News – aggregated from other subdomains
- Roll-up of promoted items from other sites
- Featured site of the week
- About Drupal
- Features
- Marketing information
- Newsletter

#### projects.drupal.org (Sourceforge)

- Core
- Modules
- Themes
- Profiles
- Translations
- Latest, highest-rated project releases
- Security announcements
- Issue queues

#### Groups.drupal.org

- Local user groups
- Developer focus groups

#### My.drupal.org (Personalized site)

- Designer section
- Developer section (originally developer.drupal.org see Appendix)
- Planet blog aggregation

#### Docs.drupal.org

- Documentation (install/configure docs, upgrading docs, site recipes)
- API

#### Association.drupal.org

- Activities and blogs of the board

#### drop.drupal.org

- Hosts information about the DROP

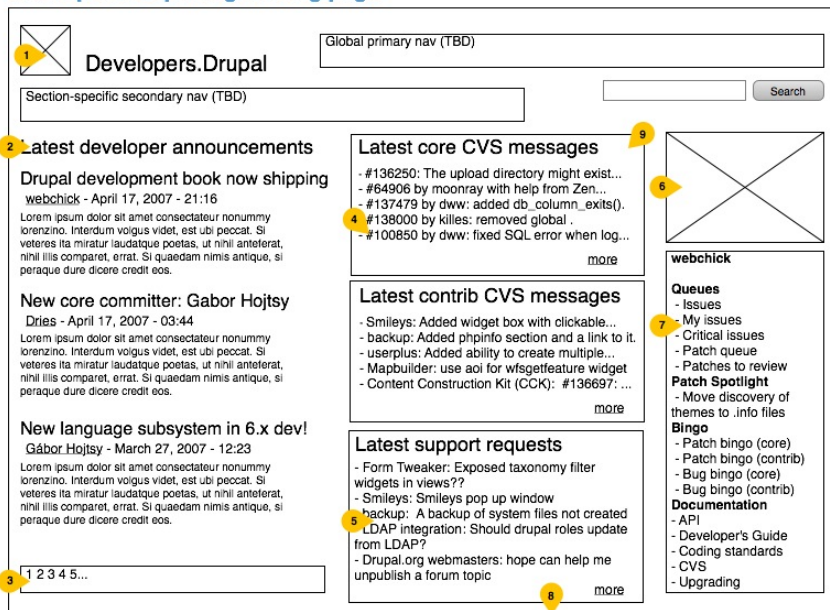
This approach could form the basis of individual sub-sites which each specialize on their particular aspects of Drupal. This would have the following advantages:

1. Use modules that fit the use case. This would open up the doors to using specialized contributed modules for different sub-sites without threatening the stability of the "main" drupal.org website. For example, Diff module on the Documentation site, Project/Project issue tracking on downloads.drupal.org.
2. Drupal.org can stay current. It wouldn't be necessary for Drupal.org to wait on one or two contributed modules that are only used by some of the sub-sites in order to update to the latest version.
3. More flexibility with sub-sites' access permissions. For example, turn on the ability to post images for normal users on documentation.drupal.org.

Besides creating new sub sites, a complimentary or alternative approach would be to present logged in users radically different views of the main drupal.org site based on their roles:

- Enable users to select their own role or roles (with some roles reserved for admins to assign).
- Present content and blocks based on role.
- Possibly, allow users to select a primary role for a session, or assign a role only for a session. E.g., user follows a link to evaluate drupal and is assigned an 'evaluator' role for that session.

### developers.drupal.org landing page



#### NOTES

1. Druplicon + binary? :)
2. This is basically the same as the drupal.org front page, but is news specific to developers. Highlights from the dev list make it here.
3. In reality, we'll want about 10 listed here; have to abbreviate for space.
4. These link off to drupal.org/cvs?commit-###
5. Support requests?!? EWW! But seriously, we need to do our part to turn Drupal into a palace. :)
6. Developer-focused spotlights: Ex: countdown to code freeze, bug/patch bingo, "How secure is YOUR code?" links to "how to handle text securely" doc...
7. developers.drupal.org-specific nav... cherry-pick stuff from the current contributor's block.
8. Some 'below the fold' ideas... planet aggregator, latest groups.drupal.org "working group" posts...
9. Idea from jeff eaton: these blocks get populated out of blocks you select from your user profile. hmmm...!

Example [developer sub-site home page](#). See also [Handbook landing page redesign](#).

### User interviews

In April 2007, Kieran Lal, a Drupal Association board member, conducted a series of ten interviews, which asked the following seven questions:

1. How would you describe yourself as a Drupal.org user?
2. How often do you visit Drupal.org?
3. When you visit Drupal.org, how long do you spend on the site?
4. What are your goals when visiting Drupal.org?
5. What is easy to do on Drupal.org?

6. What's hard on Drupal.org?

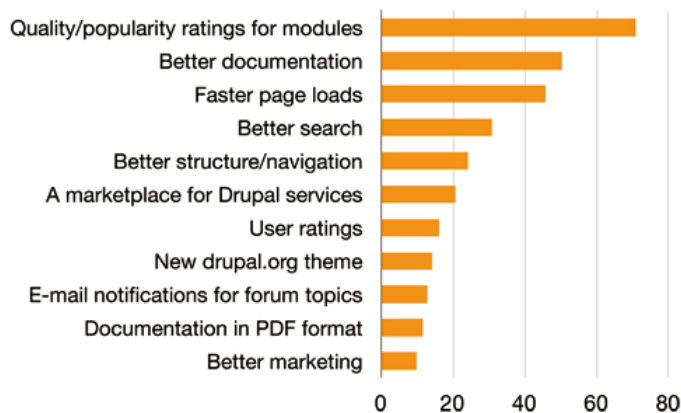
7. Is there anything else important about Drupal.org that we haven't discussed?

You can view a summary of the interview results online (<http://groups.drupal.org/node/3679>). It should be noted that these interviews were conducted over IRC, therefore each individual is a) already familiar with Drupal and drupal.org, b) relatively tech-savvy.

### Community-wide survey

Then, in early Fall 2007, just prior to Drupalcon Barcelona, Dries Buytaert posted a survey which asked a number of questions, including one about drupal.org improvements, which resulted in a drupal.org wishlist.

This bears a lot in common with the feedback from the interviews. Again, this survey was completed by people who already use Drupal.org. Of the goals identified in this survey, this project will focus specifically on better structure/navigation, new drupal.org theme and better marketing.



See also:

Competitor home page analysis – <http://groups.drupal.org/node/3762>

### Site usage summary

Page	Views/mo
Home – <a href="http://drupal.org">http://drupal.org</a>	1,000,000
About - <a href="http://drupal.org/about">http://drupal.org/about</a>	37,000
Features – <a href="http://drupal.org/features">http://drupal.org/features</a>	45,000
Screenshots – <a href="http://drupal.org/image">http://drupal.org/image</a>	48,000
5.2 Core – <a href="http://drupal.org/drupal-5.2">http://drupal.org/drupal-5.2</a>	22,000
Modules – <a href="http://drupal.org/project/Modules">http://drupal.org/project/Modules</a>	250,000
Themes – <a href="http://drupal.org/project/Themes">http://drupal.org/project/Themes</a>	17,000
Translations – <a href="http://drupal.org/project/Translations">http://drupal.org/project/Translations</a>	24,000