



# How to Turn Your **Drupal Upgrade** into an **Opportunity for Growth**

**ADK**

More than **100,000+** **savvy companies** have upgraded to Drupal 8 - and improved their digital experience with it.

We produced this report to **help our enterprise clients stay ahead of the curve**. Now we're giving it to you, **for free**.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drupal 7 isn't getting retired until November 2022. So why are Drupal developers talking about upgrading to Drupal 8 (or 9)? **And should you?**

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This report answers those questions (and more) for VPs, Directors, and Managers wondering about upgrading to Drupal 8. Even more importantly, it provides a strategic framework for approaching the upgrade that can flip it from a cost center to a driver of strategic growth.

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ARE

1

## YOU WILL NEED TO UPGRADE YOUR WEBSITE IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE USING IT.

When Drupal 7 gets "end of lifed" that means it will stop receiving security updates and patches, making it exponentially easier for hackers to exploit your website.

2

## THIS IS AN OVERHAUL, NOT AN UPDATE.

The transition from Drupal 7 to is nearly a complete overhaul of the underlying technology that powers your site. That means your speed, security, and UX can all greatly improve. But this is not an update you can just install like your phone's OS - it is a significant lift closer to building a new site.

3

## THE COMPLEXITY MAKES IT A GOOD TIME TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE.

Drupal 8 is essentially a site rebuild. Experienced developers can tackle backlogs of features or structural changes during the update. Batching big lifts like this is often the most efficient way to accomplish them, while changes before upgrading may mean repeating work.

Our **clients** faced similar challenges that you're grappling with right now. The answers below helped them turn this upgrade into a growth opportunity. **We hope they help you, too.**

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## WHY CAN'T WE JUST KEEP USING DRUPAL 7?

In November 2022, **Drupal 7 will no longer receive active support from the Drupal community**, resulting in no further security updates. This also means that integrating future modules and applications, and basic site maintenance initiatives **will be much more difficult as time passes**. To ensure your website remains secure, online, and healthy, you need to upgrade it to a more modern application.

*“Using obsolete software means... that high-impact security incidents become more likely to occur, including malware exploiting ‘wormable’ vulnerabilities, which can cause catastrophic impacts across an entire organisation.”*

THE NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTER OF THE UK





# DRUPAL 7 VS DRUPAL 8

## – WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Drupal remains a powerhouse in the Open Source CMS world (and can be **better than the popular WordPress** for certain applications). The structural limits of Drupal 7 were identified early, and powerful additions were made with the introduction of the more modern, scalable, and secure Drupal 8.

### KEY BENEFITS OF DRUPAL 8 INCLUDE:

- **Modern technology stack**, which results in more efficient development and lower day-to-day operating costs.
- **Improved security** from a new templating language that streamlines frontend development and increases application security. On a technical level, templates would be built using the new Twig template engine. This technology abstraction from PHP is just one way that D8 improves security.
- **Lower cost of management** as a result of the improved templating, more flexible modules, more modern practices, and newer technology powering it all.
- **Easier content management** that makes adding, removing, and editing content much easier.
- **Mobile-responsive admin interface** so site admins can modify content from their phones or tablets.
- **Speed and performance improvements** that result in improved user experience (UX), site engagement, and SEO performance. Drupal 8 uses improved caching mechanisms to substantially improve loading times for end users.
- **Future-proofing your website** with a direct upgrade path to Drupal 9 in 2022. Once you've upgraded to Drupal 8, the following updates are much less work.

## SHOULD WE WAIT AND UPGRADE FROM DRUPAL 7 TO DRUPAL 9?

No, if only it were that easy. The difference between previous versions and Drupal 8 is substantial, and that's where the benefits lie. **Drupal 9 is essentially cleaning up vestigial parts of Drupal 8:** it removes some legacy and deprecated code, without adding any new features.

**Upgrading to Drupal 8 now lets you get all the benefits without waiting.** And once you're on Drupal 8, getting onto Drupal 9 be negligible.

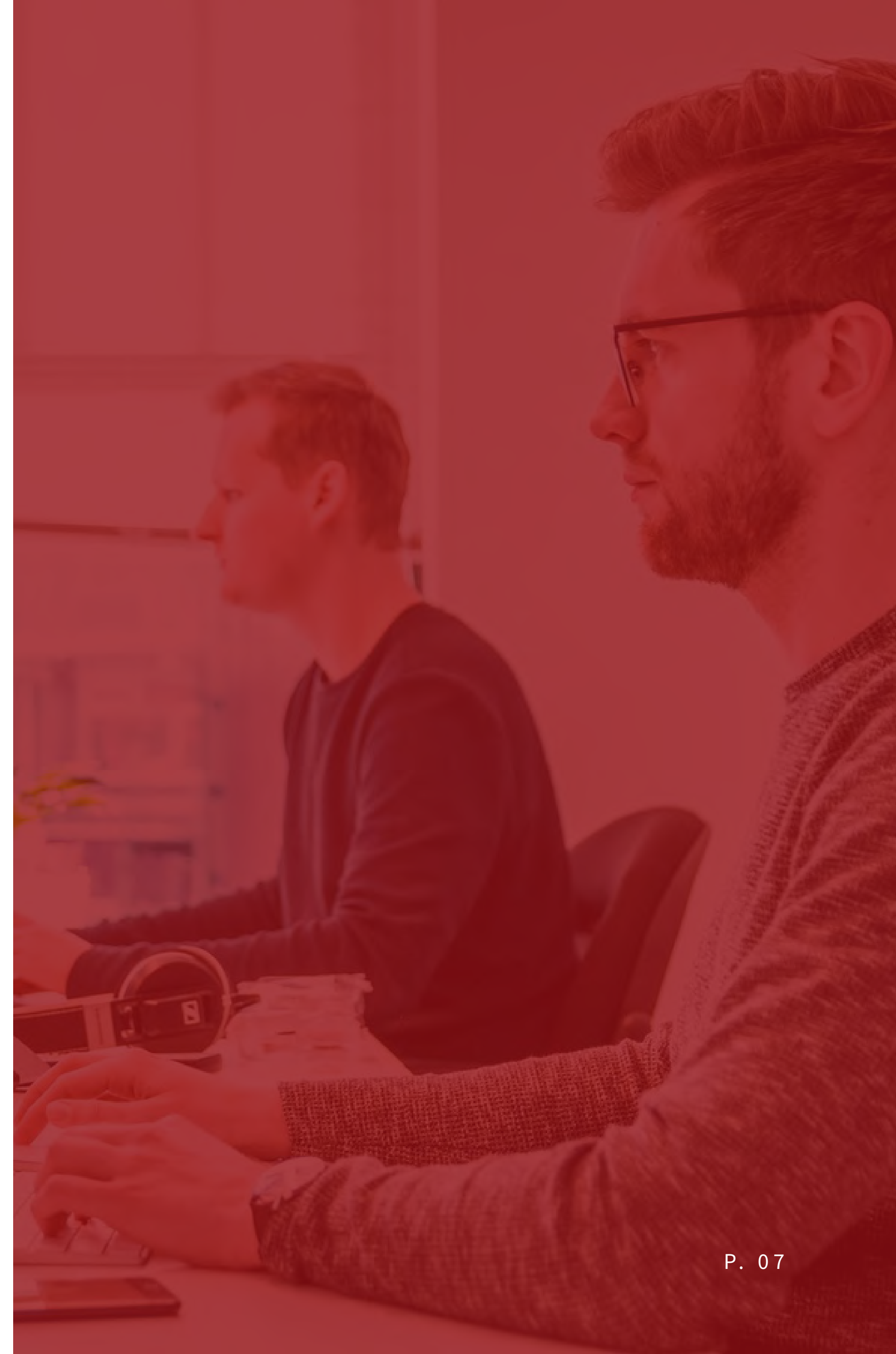


## WILL UPGRADING FROM DRUPAL 8 TO DRUPAL 9 BE AS MUCH WORK?

Also, no. Drupal's founder and project lead, who is the co-founder of Acquia, Dries Buytaert, has provided [his insight](#) and expertise around this exact topic. According to Buytaert, *“the big deal about Drupal 9 is...that it should not be a big deal. The best way to be ready for Drupal 9 is to keep up with Drupal 8 updates.”* He says “the upgrade to Drupal 9 will be easy. Because we are building Drupal 9 in Drupal 8, the technology in Drupal 9 will have been battle-tested in Drupal 8.”

Additionally, [Drupal.org confirmed](#) this by saying, “it’s made to be an upgrade from Drupal 8. All components from Drupal 8 will be working on day one of Drupal 9.”

Based on these reputable sources, we are confident that **the upgrade effort for transitioning from Drupal 8 to Drupal 9 will be minimal.** That upgrade will likely take days—or even hours—depending on the complexity of your site. *Upgrading from Drupal 7 is a much more involved process.*



## HOW MUCH WORK IS IT TO UPGRADE FROM DRUPAL 7?

It depends on **the complexity of your website**, but it can be quite involved and take multiple months. There are substantial technical differences between Drupal 7 and Drupal 8+. These differences are significant enough that Drupal 8+ is often considered an entirely different type of technology. As such, Drupal 7 cannot be "upgraded" to Drupal 8. **A Drupal 8 application needs to be built from the ground up**, with careful migrations conducted with individual parts of your platform.

“*The **best way** to be ready for Drupal 9 is to keep up with Drupal 8 updates.*”

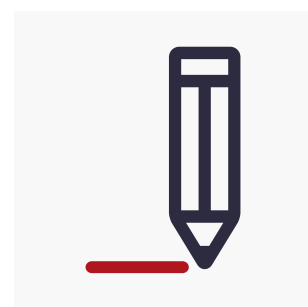
DRIES BUYTAERT  
FOUNDER, DRUPAL



## WHAT SORT OF PROJECTS SHOULD I CONSIDER DURING THE UPGRADE TO DRUPAL 8?

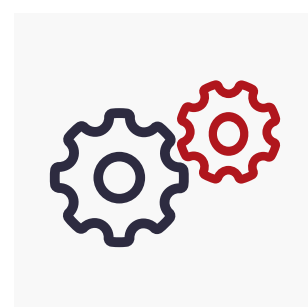
Drupal 8 unlocks advanced functionality that **lets your website perform better than before**. How can you best take advantage of this?

*Here are some areas you should think about:*



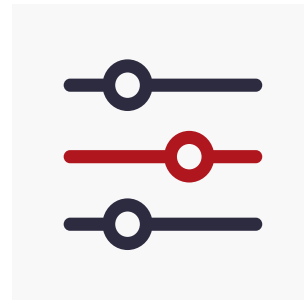
### IMPROVE YOUR UX AND DESIGN

If you've been auditing your user experiences or working on improving conversion rates you likely have a backlog of improvements to make. This update could be a great time for the implementation of design refinements and new features based on the results of Conversion Rate Optimization or **User Experience Audit**.



### SERVE AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE

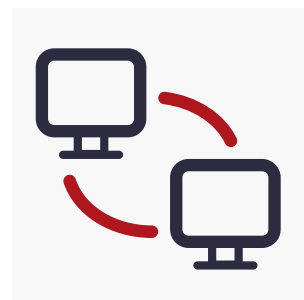
Drupal 8 has **extensive support for multilingual capabilities**. Capabilities allow for native language support for the administrative interface in addition to the public site, and how this information is presented and managed to users. This—along with thoughtful SEO—can help your company **establish a digital foothold abroad**.



### STREAMLINE SITE MANAGEMENT

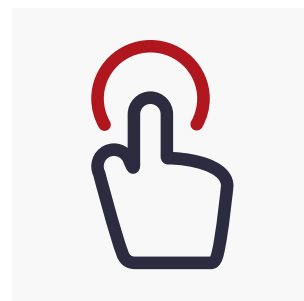
Many people complain about the administrative side of Drupal 7. And oftentimes resources aren't devoted to that. But upgrading to Drupal 8 is a great time to take advantage of the improved UX and flexibility by making customizations.

These could allow for **faster data searches, improved permission controls, and easier content management.**



### AUGMENT YOUR DATA MIGRATION

Drupal is at its best when it's handling large sets of complex data. The newer Drupal 8 Migrate API allows for finer-grained controls of the frequency, resiliency, and notifications for data imports.



### AUGMENT YOUR DATA MIGRATION

Being **ADA compliant in 2020** is table stakes. From the administrative interface to the semantic HTML5 output by the Twig template engine, **Drupal 8 applications support a larger audience than ever.**

# GET *ANY* DRUPAL QUESTION *ANSWERED*.

If you want to make sure you continue to get the most from Drupal—and potentially more—**you need a strategy to update with minimal disruption.**

**We'd love to help** you make that strategy and ensure that it's customized to the unique opportunities your website has.

[SCHEDULE A FREE CALL WITH AN EXPERT](#)