

# **Drupal 8: Agency Adoption Experiences**

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# Who am I?

- **Robert Phair, COSD**
  - Systems integrator, computer consultant & CMS designer in Dublin
- **My Drupal 8 story**
  - D8 maintainer of Menu Breadcrumb
- **My goals for Drupal 8**
  - How to bring Drupal to new Irish clients?
  - How to position relative to WP in SME market?

# Where is this information from?

- **Ben Wilding survey from DrupalCon Dublin 2016**
  - How is Drupal 8 working out for agencies?  
A survey of the marketplace
  - [youtube.com/watch?v=2EU3p3wv-w4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=2EU3p3wv-w4)
- **Size / scale / difficulty of D8 adoption**
- **More data in since that presentation**
  - Yet most “stories” told by early responders

# What is *this* presentation about?

- **More to agency stories than statistics!**
  - Though excellent stats & charts in Ben's video
  - Raw data becomes spreadsheet, with some text boxes much bigger than others
- **Focus on:**
  - The longest & most impassioned answers
  - Of these, the most useful to D8 providers
    - Especially what's useful to both agencies and independents

# Challenges: common short answers

- **Difficulties selling Drupal 8 by agencies**
  - D8 modules are not ready
  - Lack of commerce stability for large projects
  - Negative experiences upgrading from D7
  - Migration from D7 is expensive (especially multilingual)
  - Slow release of D8 modules slows down development of D8 itself (?)

# Challenges: common short answers

- **Difficulties adjusting to D8 standard in agencies**
  - Developers don't feel confident with D8
  - Cannot include adjustment cost in selling price
  - Difficult to estimate projects
  - No professional documentation or case studies
  - Theming “takes longer” and “needs custom code”

# References (for following slides)

- **Following are literal agency responses**
  - only cleaned up spelling
  - added punctuation for clarity
  - sometimes underlining a unique point or conclusion
- **Legend**
  - (#) = row in results spreadsheet – one per agency response
  - LETTER = column - one per question

# Short Answers: Greatest Hits

- **Challenges**

- (5) No unique selling points compared to WordPress, bad admin UI
- (11) Leak (*sic*) of good support. Is not ready for large projects at the moment.
- (12) Only selling it to people who ask for it!

- **Should we give up (“move away”)?**

- (15) No, it is still the best CMS option out there.

# Challenges Selling Drupal 8

## Question N:

**Do you currently face any challenges selling Drupal 8?**

**If yes, please give further details.**

# Challenges Selling Drupal 8

- **(2) Drupal 8 is seen as not ready; people who use it are early adopters.**
  - Most people do not want to be early adopters. Drupal 8 is seen as a risk thus making many clients re evaluate the platform they are using.
  - The catastrophic upgrade process from D7 to D8 is a deal killer for many customers.
  - All in all its a pain in the ass to close deals with.

# Challenges Selling Drupal 8

- **(25) It's not ready for commercial sales.**
  - Whilst Core may be, there are too few contrib modules for it to be useful. Furthermore, with it being such a big shift from D7, it's impossible to sell in the learning costs to a client
- **(29) Yes, estimations are really hard.**
  - It's hard to tell up front how much extra it will cost to build the website in D8 instead of D7. Clients want D8, but the dev's don't always feel confident yet.

# Challenges Selling Drupal 8

- **(30) need:**

- better case studies
- collateral/content that compares the strengths of D8 v. proprietary platforms
- a full baked demo site that shows modules or Drupal's capabilities in a professional manner (i.e. graphics, voice-over, etc.)
- more sessions at DrupalCon on selling / marketing Drupal services from the industry leaders.

# Challenges Selling Drupal 8

- **(36) We are having some good successes with Drupal 8 now but:**
  - early adoption was incredibly tough on our small team. From what we can tell, recommending Drupal 8 for a project right now relies on a project needing to have the right timelines, the right client and appropriate project features.
  - Perception is a big challenge. From the client feedback we've received, difficulties around the author and site builder experience have created perceptions that other platforms are 'simpler' to use or more capable. Especially when many decision makers and authors are familiar with using WordPress or Umbraco. This is such a shame when capability is the one thing that Drupal 8 excels in.
  - Drupal 8 maturity is still a challenge, particularly around core media handling and the contrib space. That's a challenge when our clients are comparing Drupal 8 with other platforms that are ready to use today. Obviously the wait for Drupal 8 has compounded this, further delaying many Drupal 6 or 7 upgrades to frustration point.
  - We have projects that we're tendering on right now and Drupal 8 would be ideal for them but the contrib required for specific features still feels a way off. There's no easy solution to that. Budgets may well allow for contrib support but timelines and client buy-in is a real challenge.

# Move Away from Drupal?

**Question Q:**

**Have you considered  
not offering Drupal any more  
and moving to other technology?**

**If so, why  
and what would you change to?**

# Move Away from Drupal?

- **(2) If the Drupal drought continues:**
  - ... we will be forced to adopt different technologies.
  - We would adopt WordPress, Sitecore and [Adobe] Experience Manager.
  - Fact is that our agency has supported Drupal 8 development heavily and if that does not pay off in positive sales we will not be happy.

# Move Away from Drupal?

- **(3) Not so much not offering Drupal...**
  - but we've spent the last 2 years diversifying.
  - Drupal isn't always the answer, and we have worked hard not to be pigeonholed as a pure-play Drupal agency. We're a creative agency first and foremost.
- **(12) No, we have heavily committed to Drupal already, and...**
  - it is a solid platform to build a large corporate website on, very extendable and customisable.
  - If we had to move it would be to WordPress and we would lose a USP of our agency vs. others.

# Move Away from Drupal?

- **(28) We have not considered to move out but expand our technology expertise:**
  - and therefore the services into more technologies around web, apps, and mobiles.
  - I don't see many competitors to Drupal 8 but I still think frameworks like Laravel are going to give some competition.
  - However, in terms of our customers, they are pretty satisfied with Drupal and have not thought of moving to other technologies.

# Implementation Problems with D8

## Question R:

**Can you share any gotchas  
(things that were surprise problems)  
with your Drupal 8 projects?**

# Implementation Problems with D8

- **(2) Drupal 8 development slowed down our development times by 25% or more...**
  - due to how raw Drupal 8 still is and the way its been rearchitected is very complex to master even with long time senior devs working on it.
  - Twig was a great addition but everyone has to relearn basically everything and that is hard and slow.
  - Modules have been really slow to port especially critical ones so we have to create workarounds and or just port modules for free - which we have been doing a lot of with out customer support.
  - Drupal 8 in general is one big gotcha that firms like ours have been paying for dearly for the last 12 months.

# Implementation Problems with D8

- **(6) The migration path for D6 to D8 isn't as smooth for complex sites:**
  - much easier for D7 to D8, mainly because there's too many modules in use on D6 sites that were abandoned during the D7 cycle.
- **(7) Theming takes a lot longer (and):**
  - a lot of problems have multiple answers in the contrib sphere and even using them you end up writing much more custom code....

# Implementation Problems with D8

- **(36) Drupal core has [added] key features...**
  - such as WYSIWYG, media handling and preview that other CMS platforms are mature on.
  - It became apparent that these fundamental CMS features remain only basic or incomplete implementations of them.
  - For example, moving menu block into core is great but excluding basic and critical features that menu block has provided for years....

# Keeping Drupal 8 Thriving

## Question 5:

**What must Drupal do in the coming 24 months to stay highly relevant?**

# Keeping Drupal 8 Thriving

- **(8) We are loving the experimental modules and the focused initiatives; these are the most needed:**
  - Media: Must have first-class media handling and reuse management (media library)
  - Layout: Must have easy layout management that non-technical content editors can understand and use with minimal training
- **We also are happy there is a focused UX initiative that spans all of Drupal.**

# Keeping Drupal 8 Thriving

- **(12) Put Drupal on the map as an affordable and easy to use web platform in direct competition with WordPress.**
  - WordPress users must want Drupal 8.
  - It should also be presented as being much easier for designers / front end development than 7.
  - Many of our designers and front end devs do not like 7 due to the complex integration process which eats up budget.
- **(18) Somehow kick-butt of “Adobe Experience Manager”:**
  - Too many enterprises are choosing between AEM and Drupal, and then take the AEM route.
- **(31) Drupal must market itself more effectively**
  - as the open source choice for large enterprise and WHY.
  - We have to all commit to being the educators and showing the value vs. other proprietary systems.

# Keeping Drupal 8 Thriving

- **(36) Provide a great experience around:**
  - media handling
  - plough support into contrib
  - do everything we can to promote Drupal 8's strengths, benefits and capabilities.
- **With fixes for basic site building features in place, onboarding new users seems highly critical.**
  - New Drupal users need to hear that Drupal is relevant for their world. We're doing just enough work using WordPress for a comparison to see that Drupal 8 core is rich in features that WordPress lacks, unless you turn to paid-for plugins.
  - There must be frustrated WordPress site builders out there struggling with its limitations but Drupal must appear impenetrable....

# How Can We Help?

## Question T:

**How do you think we (as agency directors) can help with that?**

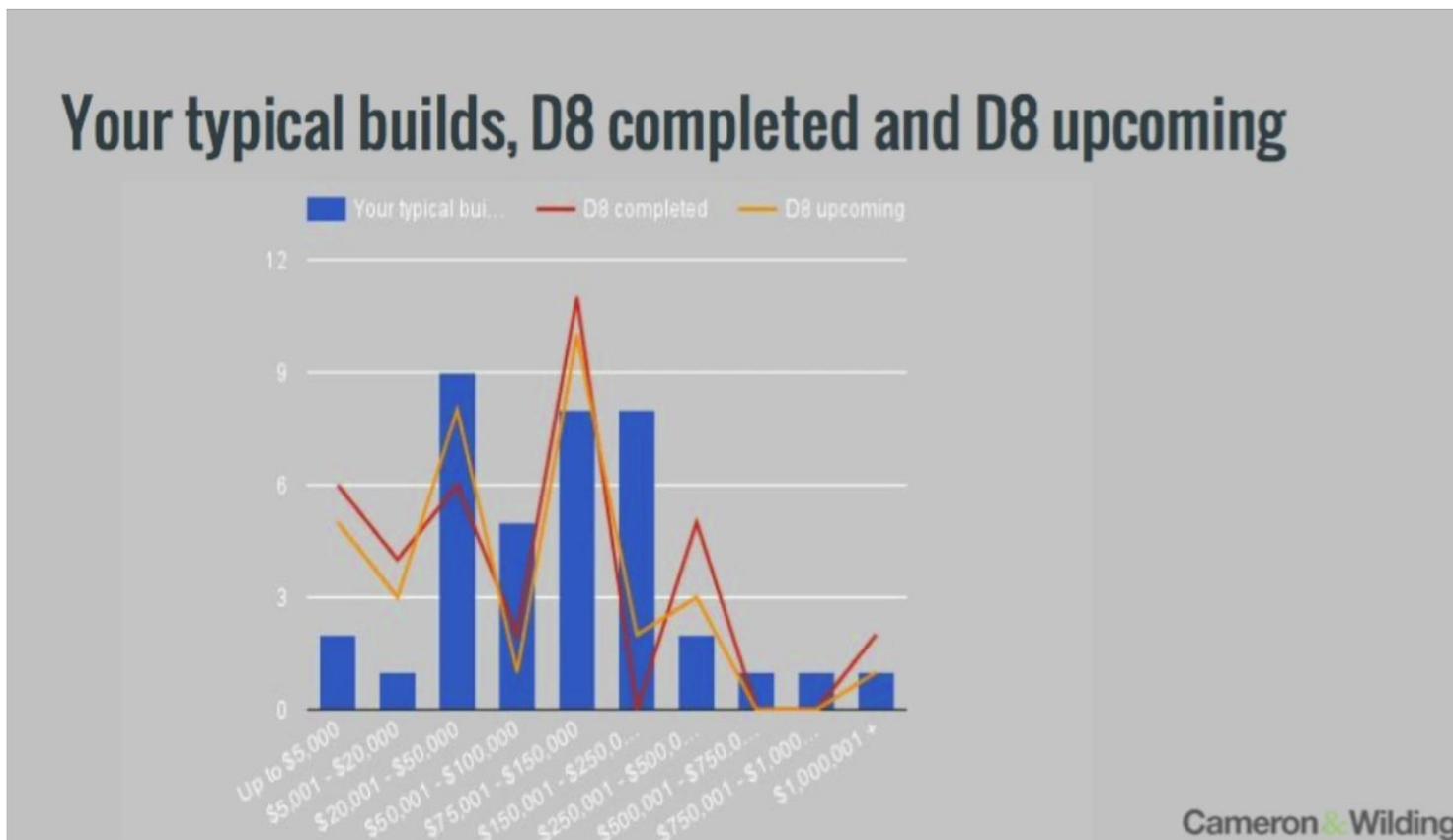
# How Can We Help?

- **(13) Collaborate.**

- Lead with our business commercial heads rather than let the developer community define what the customer needs. They are somewhat isolated from that.
- Also don't let the objectives of any one organisation skew innovation towards their specific objectives.
  - [Can anyone think of examples?]

# A Question for Independents

**Does this graph reveal an opportunity for small Drupal providers in Ireland?**



# Thank You & Questions

- **Any questions now should be for group discussion, not for me!**
- **Email to follow up:**
  - [rphair@cosd.com](mailto:rphair@cosd.com)
  - Will be regularly at Drupal Meetup Dublin