

migrate from drupal 7 to drupal 9

in 7 steps.



On November 28, 2022, Drupal 7 will become end-of-life. Right now, many developers and content managers are worried about the big migration they have to prepare.

Ausy to the rescue! We made a simple step-by-step plan, which will allow you to migrate your D7 website to a D9 website in 7 easy steps. After reading this, November 2022 will no longer be a scary month for you. ;-)



1. audit your website.

You first have to focus on your current website. You should analyze the content, the features and the design.

the content.

A migration to Drupal 9 also implies a content migration. This is the ideal time to evaluate the content of your website. For each page, you should decide if:

- ✓ the page is still relevant, and can be taken over as-is
- ✓ the page is still relevant, but could use an update
- ✓ the page is no longer relevant and can be deleted

During this evaluation, it's good to use tools such as Google Analytics, so you'll have clear insights into which page gets the most visits.

the features.

Now, switch your focus to your website's features. Once again, you should determine what's still relevant, what needs to be updated and what's no longer relevant and can be deleted.

Since each feature has to be developed and thus implies costs, it's worth the trouble to check if some things that were developed in the past, can be replaced by existing (contrib) features or by microservices outside of Drupal.



Check every feature and decide together with your team:

- ✓ feature is still relevant and can be taken over as-is
- ✓ feature is still relevant, but needs some changes
- ✓ feature is no longer relevant, and is not necessary in the drupal 9 site
- ✓ feature can be replaced by a contrib module or by an existing microservice

the design.

Make sure the design isn't outdated, that it meets all the functional requirements (mobile-friendly), and that it's accessible. If this is not the case, you know what to do!



2. execute a functional analysis.

The migration of Drupal 7 to Drupal 9 is a good time to evaluate whether your website needs any changes, and maybe even to analyze the entire digital landscape of your environment.

If you decide your website needs to be renewed, consider an extensive strategy and analysis trajectory. You can start with an intake stage, in which you map out the current digital landscape of your organization as well as its entire ecosystem. Afterwards, you can evaluate the pain points and opportunities and define your stakeholders.

After the intake stage, the analysis becomes more concrete. This is the time to produce a functional analysis of the project and define the information architecture.



3. technical analysis.

In this stage, the functional requirements are translated into technical specifications.

This is also the moment in which you should define the technical approach of the content migration. Your migration strategy should depend on the amount of content and changes that you have determined in stage 1.



On average, there are 2 possibilities:

- ✓ Automatic migration: migration scripts that automatically copy the content from the old website to the new one are drawn up. This approach works really well as long as no or very few changes to the content are needed, and the data structure of the old type of content is very similar the structure of the new type of content.
- ✓ Manual migration: the content will be migrated by a content editor. This is the best approach when the content needs lots of changes, or the structure of the content is completely different on the new site. It's also often too much work to develop migration scripts when the site doesn't have a lot of content. In that scenario, it's more efficient to do the migration manually.

It's very likely you'll have to use a combination of these 2 possibilities.

The technical analysis is also the ideal moment to think about how to limit the impact of your migration on your SEO and your visitors. You can do this by generating a list of the old URLs and redirect them to the new URLs.



technical tip.

Use the migrate module as your starting point when migration scripts have to be foreseen and avoid the use of custom-built one-off scripts. Migrate has a few basic features that are always useful during a migration trajectory: mapping between old and new content, rollback feature and update feature. This feature is indispensable, even more so in an iterative process. Furthermore, there are many extra modules in the migrate ecosystem that are also useful, such as: `migrate_tools`, `migrate_plus` ...

4. build stage.

In this stage, you should look at your website's technical implementation. You'll redevelop features in Drupal 9 and start working on content migration scripts.

Use the information that you gathered during the functional and technical analysis to build the required features. It's best to work in sprints of 2 or 3 weeks, in which you develop and test.

Start each sprint with a sprint planning in which you determine what user stories you'll take on during that sprint. Make sure you have a test environment in which you can validate the results of each sprint.



5. content migration stage.

Your site is developed? Great! Now it's time to start the content migration. This is mostly an iterative process:

1. the migration scripts are executed
2. feedback is collected on the migrated content
3. based on this feedback, the migration scripts are adjusted and executed again

This process will be repeated a few times, until the content of your website is perfect.

Even if you've used scripts to automatically migrate your content, you'll still have to do some things manually. Content managers will have to fine-tune the content and adjust it to the possibilities of the new CMS. This is also the perfect moment to add entirely new content.

6. UAT.

Now that the development and migration work is done, it's important to test your entire site end-to-end before the go-live.



technical tip.

Create a test plan throughout the project. Every time a feature is delivered, you add the relevant test scenario to the test plan. This way, you'll end up with a test plan that covers your entire website.

7. go-live & follow-up.

Once your website is live, it's important to monitor it thoroughly. Tools such as Google Analytics offer insights into which older pages are no longer found. Following up on the search actions of users, shows you what exactly they are looking for.



technical tip.

Use a standardized go-live checklist that lists the manual actions and attention points during the go-live of a project. If manual actions come up during the building stage of the project that have to be executed at go-live, add these to the checklist.





conclusion.

Have you gone through all these steps during your migration? Congratulations, you are the owner of a great new Drupal 9 website!

So are you done now? No, definitely not! A website is a living thing, that always needs development and maintenance. Your developers and content managers can't take a holiday just yet... ;-)





need help with your website?

Do you, after going through these steps, still feel that you could use some help with your website? Or do you just not have the manpower to migrate your website yourself?

We would love to talk to you about the possibilities. Feel free to contact Mathias Henderick!

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tech with
personality.



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