Getting Started Guide - Lab Site (DLC Theme) in Drupal

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Introduction

In this Getting Started Guide, you can follow along as a website is built using the MIT DLC Theme. Whether you are building a site for your lab, event or department, this Guide will give you what you need to be up-and-running in a small amount of time without using any HTML or CSS code.

There are four sections in this Getting Started Guide. Each is a separate article. You can access the other articles from links at the top of each page. You can also download the full PDF version of the Guide here. Click here for a PDF version of this guide. Click here for the raw Components of the Site if you'd like to build this sample site as you read.

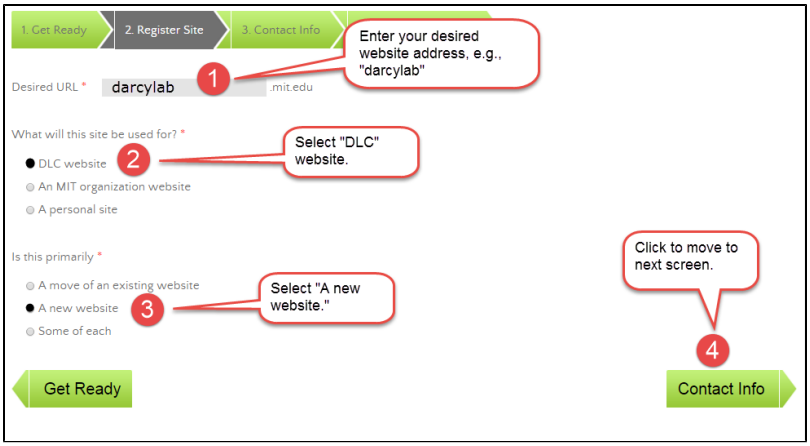
And there is a more complete set of Drupal Cloud documentation at this web address - Drupal Cloud Home Page.

Requesting Your Site

You can click the green button below to request a site which will be created for you within 24 hours. After you click you'll be sent to another web page where you'll need to login using Touchstone to proceed. Then you'll be asked to work through 4 Steps to complete and submit a form.

Don't forget to come back here. You can begin planning your site and reading through this Getting Started Guide while waiting for your site to be ready. When your site is ready, you can use this guide to build the sample site. Then that sample site can easily be turned into your personal, customized site using what you learn here.

Below is an image of the form you need to fill out to request your website. You will need to include a desired URL, or address. In this example, the lab requesting a site is named the Darcy Lab, so the requester adds the URL darcylab.mit.edu. Next, select “DLC site.” This will enable the MIT DLC Default theme for your site. Then, select “A new website” and click on the button labeled “Contact info.”



On another form, you will enter your name and email address and finish the request process by confirming your details. After completing the process, you will receive an email confirming that your request was received, and a second email telling you when your site is ready.

Planning Your Site

After clicking on the Create a Site button, Step 1 presents you with some helpful advice for getting started with your site. These steps are included here for your convenience.

1. Create a site map This is a road map that shows how all your pages connect. It will help you identify gaps you'll that need to fill.
2. Assign someone to start writing your content. Be sure to set a deadline because as soon as your request gets approved, you can start building your site — and you'll obviously need copy to fill it.
3. Gather and organize all your media and artwork. If you want to customize your site with more than just fonts and colors, make sure you have easy access your digital media files, such as logos, photos, illustrations and video.
4. For DLCs: Learn about the use of MIT's graphic identity. If you need assistance with branding for your DLC, contact the advisors at Communication Production Services. They can be reached through this web address - http://web.mit.edu/cps/.

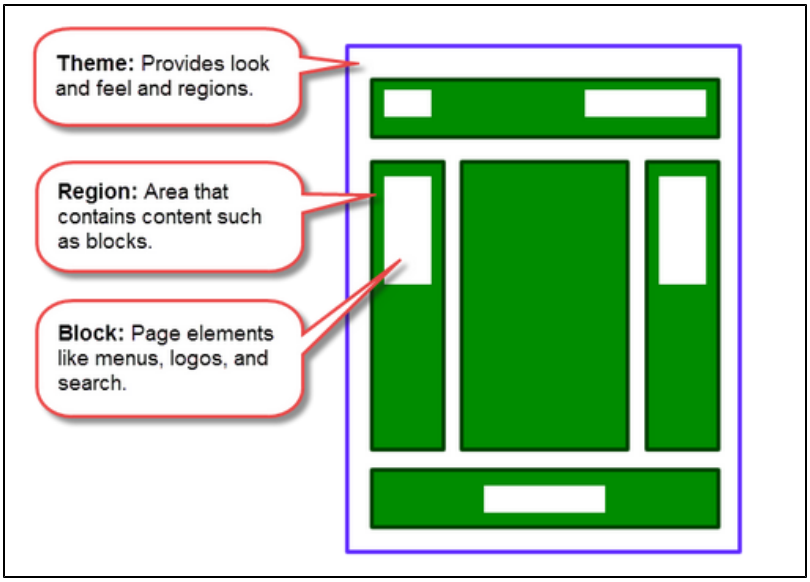
In the example given in this Getting Started Guide, the person building the website has all of their needed content in a document, including a sitemap, graphics, and text. It is a good idea to have some basic content to work with when setting up your site, including the pages you want to include. A file with the raw components for building this site can be accessed at this web address - http://kb.mit.edu/confluence/x/aARBCQ.

Anatomy of a Site

Before creating your site, you should have a basic understanding of how content is presented in Drupal using Themes, Regions, and Blocks.

A theme provides a default look and feel for your website that can be customized. You can change text and link colors, fonts, background colors, etc. A theme also provides a default content structure that can be customized. Pages are split into different regions such as a header, sidebars, a main content area, and a footer. Inside these regions are blocks like a main menu or a search bar.

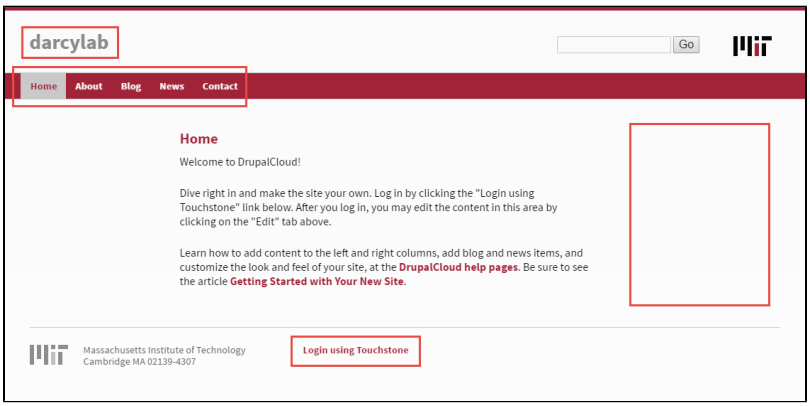
Blocks contain content for your site. You can customize the layout of your site by adding, removing, or moving Blocks to different regions. For example, the DLC theme has a blank left-hand sidebar, but you could add a block with content to that sidebar.

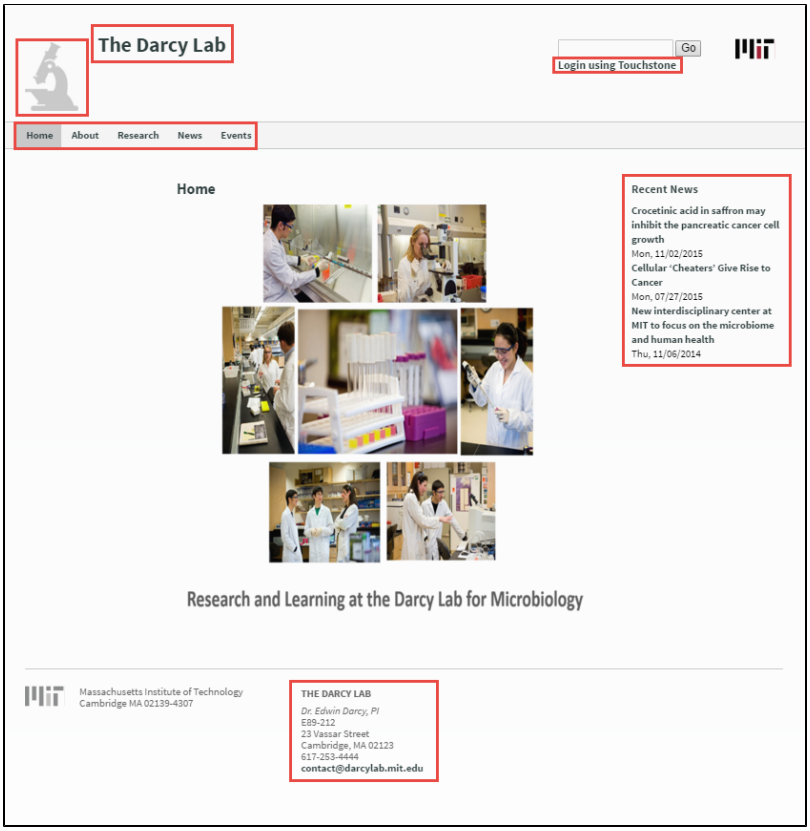


Before and After - Customizing the default MIT DLC Theme

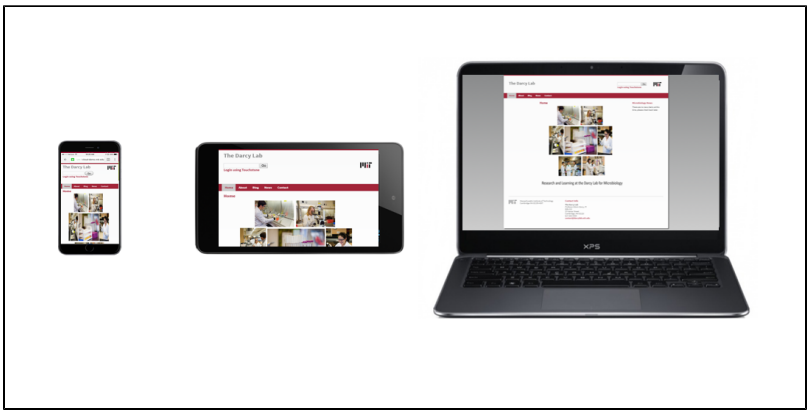
Your initial website will look very similar to the one shown in the image below. The sections that will be modified are highlighted in red. This is the default MIT DLC theme which contains a Home page, an About page, a Contact page, a Blog, and a News section.

The second image below shows the customized website we will be building throughout the rest of this Getting Started Guide. Even without using HTML or CSS, you can customize your website in many ways to make it unique.





The MIT DLC theme is responsive, meaning that it will look good and function properly on large monitors and laptops as well as tablets and smartphones. It also includes the MIT logo by default. The image below illustrates how Drupal Cloud sites built using the MIT DLC theme respond to the size of the screen.



Getting Started!

The rest of the articles in this Getting Started Guide cover customizing the MIT DLC theme. Specifically, you will learn how to:

- Edit the display of your site name.
- Add a site logo.
- Change the location of your Touchstone login link.
- Modify content on an existing page.
- Add a new page.
- Change the links in your main menu.
- Add an image.
- Add news posts.
- Change your color scheme.

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