

Add and Configure Themes

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What Is a Theme?

A theme is a collection of files (php/html, css, images) that you add to your deployment that alter the default look & feel. To use an analogy, if the Ushahidi Platform was your body, themes would be your clothes. Within the Ushahidi Platform, you can use themes to do things like change fonts and colors. You can also get fancy and change the layout of elements on your pages. Depending on your level of technical knowledge, you can do lots of other cool things too! Here are a few examples of what some people in the community have done with themes:

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Check out our [Deployment Flickr stream](#) and the [Community Site](#) for more examples of customized Ushahidi deployments.

Why Would I Want To Use A Theme?

As we mentioned earlier, themes allow you to do two main things:

Alter the Look and Feel: If you want to add your own logo and change the color scheme, use a theme.

Change the layout: For example, if you don't want to show news on the home page, use a theme.

For a more in-depth answer, skip to the "Why should I use a Theme instead of just editing core files directly?" section below.

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1. Alter the Look and Feel: If you want to add your own logo and change the color scheme, use a theme.
2. Change the layout: For example, if you don't want to show news on the home page, use a theme.

For a more in-depth answer, skip to the "Why should I use a Theme instead of just editing core files directly?" section below.

Where can I get new themes?

There are several themes developed by core developers that are included with the platform. Themes developed by community members and are available on our [community website](#).

How do I install a theme?

Assuming you've already downloaded theme files from the community site or some place else, installing a theme is a three-step process:

- Step 1: Place the theme folder inside the "themes" directory within your deployment.
- Step 2: login to the administrative control panel -> click "Addons" -> click "themes"
- Step 3: Click the "select theme" radio button on the theme that you put in the "themes" directory back in step 1, then click "Save Settings"

You have now installed your theme!

What is the difference between a theme and a plugin?

Themes mainly deal with the display and layout of your deployment. Plugins mainly deal with the functionality of your deployment. However, with plugins, you can also change display and layout. Plugins and Themes can be used separately or together. In the case where you simply need to change the look & and feel of a deployment, a theme would be all you need. In the case where you need to change the look and feel and add or change functionality, you would use a theme in conjunction with a plugin. Check out our [Plugin Docs](#) for more information on Plugins.

Why should I use a Theme instead of just editing core files directly?

When using a piece of software that is frequently updated with enhancements and bug fixes, as is the case of the Ushahidi platform, it is beneficial to make sure that any changes or additions you make to that software remain separate from the pieces of that software that are updated frequently. Using a Theme to alter your deployment's default look & feel rather than editing the default code files directly allows you seamlessly keep your deployment up-to-date with the latest and greatest features and enhancements.

How can I create my own Themes?

See the [Themes Developers Guide](#)