

# Contributing to Drupal: A Critique

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## Introduction

An important aspect of any open-source project is making sure that there is always a fresh source of new contributors. Therefore, it is critical that we are able to train excited new Drupallers as rapidly as possible. The Contribute tab is currently the major entry point for Drupal contributions, as it links to all possible methods for contributing. This report will attempt to review our current tab, give some suggestions, and compare to other projects.

## Review

To click the Contribute tab, a potential contributor must first be at any drupal.org page. Let's assume they are coming from the front-page, as that is probably the most viewed page on drupal.org. There are six sections to the front page- the tabs at the top (including the contribute tab), a rotating image on the left that switches between things such as donation images and security announcements, the description of what Drupal is, the download links on the right, the news on the left, and the blocks on the right.

First of all, we should add a contribution image to that rotating queue. As I said earlier, attracting new contributors is vital and we should work on that from the first time someone lays eyes on drupal.org.

Second, there is no contribution link in the middle section that describes what Drupal is, and links to various areas of drupal.org. We should fix that.

The tab at the top is not very visible, but there isn't much we can do about that. When a potential contributor actually does click the tab, they see a well organized but plain page describing the various areas of Drupal contribution. The content of this page is mostly on par, but the presentation is not. As Drupal 6 has just been released, I was amazed at the release article, which was beautiful in comparison to the previous release article. It seems to me that this page is also a place we can let beauty grow.

First of all, the bottom right section of the page is a general resources section- we should move that next to the introduction text, and draw attention to it through some sort of borders. I imagine that list can be expanded to include things such as DROP and Planet Drupal, too.

Second, this page is just plain unappealing. I recommend that we move from this:

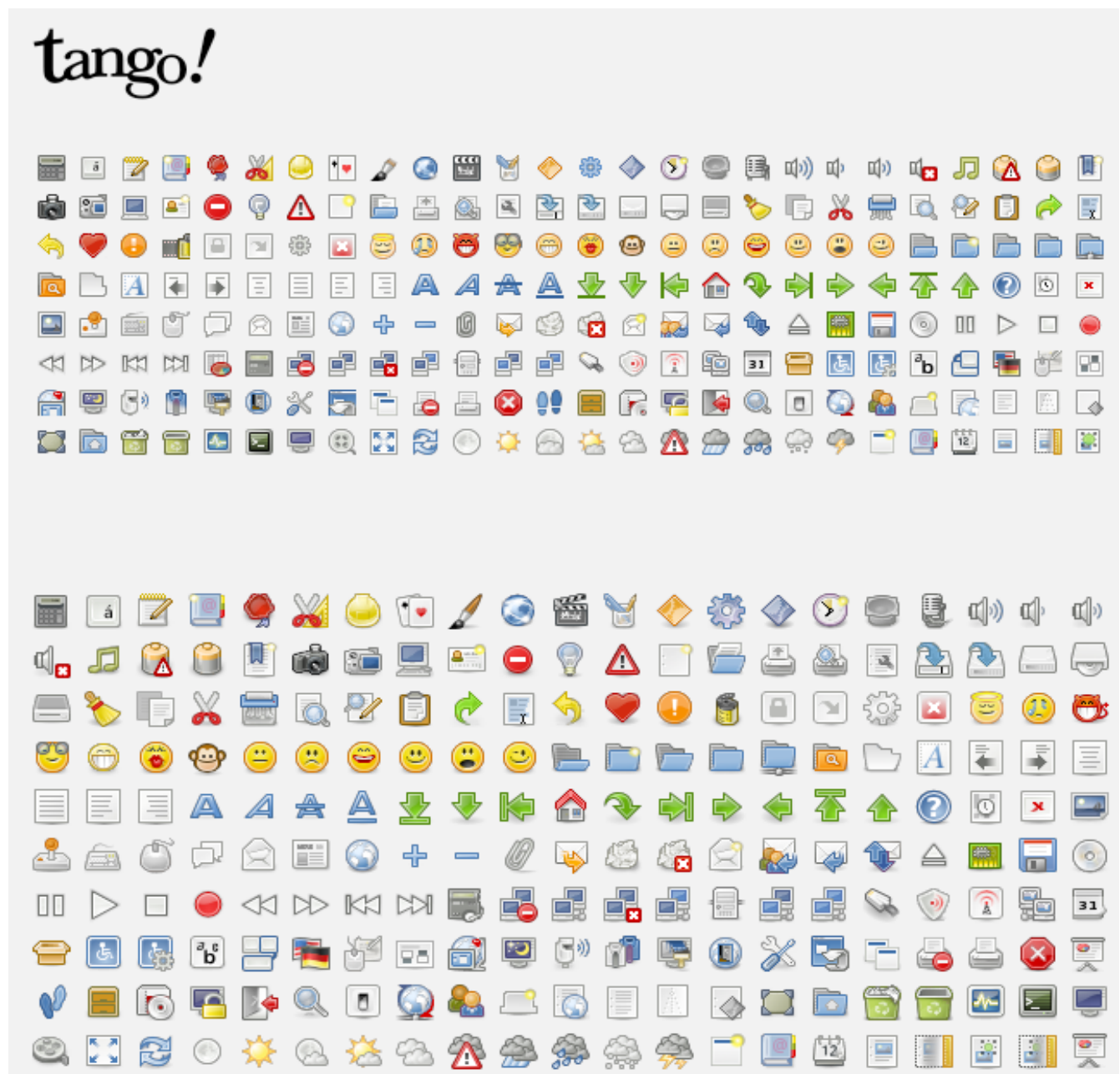
|                   |
|-------------------|
| Title             |
| Description/Links |

to this:

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| Icon | Title             |
|      | Description/Links |

As far as what Icons to use, we could go with two options. We could either use pre-made icons, such as those from the Tango library, or make our own. Both sides have their advantages, and I won't suggest one or the other, but I do think we should have some kind of icon or image next to each area of the contribute tab.

Each of the pages linked to on the Contribute page are also just as bland, however, that is probably more unavoidable. Also, some of the content is just not completed (Testing -> Usability Testing shows a big fat // TODO: they could link to Bevan Rudge's [recent post](#) on starting to learn usability). However, most of the provided information is accurate and usable, so I think the first thing to concentrate on is the *presentation* of the contribute page, and the *marketing* of that page.



## **Comparison to Python**

Python's front page is much simpler than drupal.org's, and the tabs are on the left. They use the term “Core Development” for their contribute tab. They split the page into two areas: Links and Explanations. I like this format- it gets to the point and is simple. D.o. currently doesn't use explanations at all, and that might be something to examine: finding an answer to why? or an explanation of culture is sometimes difficult.

## **Comparison to Joomla**

Joomla calls their Contribute page “Development”. They have one long, winding page with each section, although they do have less sections than us. Under each area, they have suggestions for best practices, tips, and guidelines.