Hacking Decidim

```
projects/Decidim/decidim (0.19-stable)$ bundle exec rake development_app
     create
     create README.md
     create Rakefile
     create .ruby-version
     create config.ru
     create .gitignore
     create Gemfile
        run git init from "."
S'ha inicialitzat un dipòsit buit del Git en /home/ivan/projects/Decidim/decidim/development_app/.git/
     create package.json
     create app
     create app/assets/config/manifest.js
     create app/assets/javascripts/application.js
     create app/assets/javascripts/cable.js
     create app/assets/stylesheets/application.css
     create app/channels/application_cable/channel.rb
     create app/channels/application_cable/connection.rb
     create app/controllers/application_controller.rb
     create app/helpers/application_helper.rb
     create app/jobs/application_job.rb
     create app/mailers/application_mailer.rb
     create app/models/application_record.rb
                                                                        Follo
     create app/views/layouts/application.html.erb
     create app/views/layouts/mailer.html.erb
     create app/views/layouts/mailer.text.erb
```

PRO-TIP! You're not a hacker if you don't have your terminal in black

About me: Ivan Vergés

- Telecommunication Engineering (ETSETB/UPC)
- Working as a freelance developer and system maintainer since 2004
- PHP/Python/Ruby/Javascript
- 100% Linux & Free Software
- Lead developer in Platoniq since 2018
- I play the guitar







https://meta.decidim.org/profiles/microstudi



Decidim experience

- The unofficial guide to install Decidim:

https://platonig.github.io/decidim-install/

- Adapting Decidim for organizations
- Custom modules (direct verifications)

https://github.com/Platoniq/

- Among the contributors to the Decidim Source Code
- In the Team of maintainers of the source code

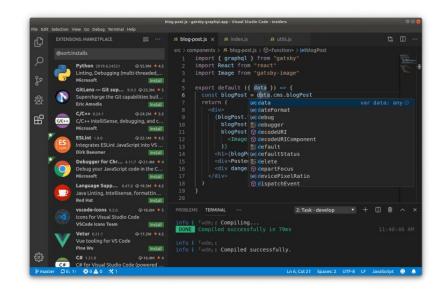
https://github.com/decidim/decidim/graphs/contributors

Requeriments: https://github.com/platoniq/decidim-hacks

Docker up & Running with the test site ready docker-compose up



A proper text editor https://code.visualstudio.com/



Install reminder

https://code.visualstudio.com/

https://github.com/Platonig/decidim-hacks/blob/master/docs/install-docker-on-windows-10-home.md

https://github.com/Platonig/decidim-hacks/blob/master/docs/install-docker-on-macos.md

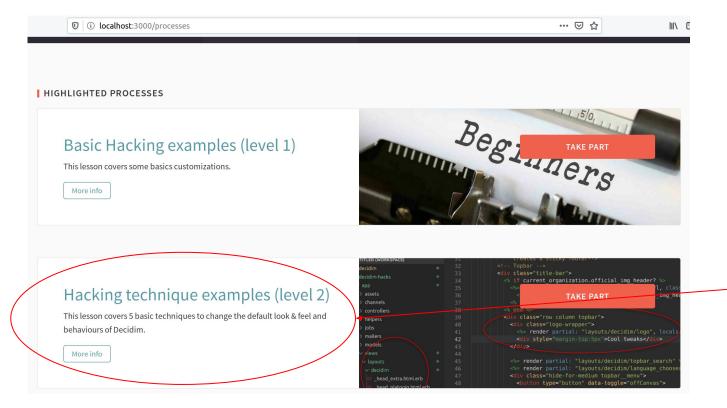
```
git clone https://github.com/Platoniq/decidim-hacks.git
```

git pull

docker-compose up



Decidim-hacks is self-contained: http://localhost:3000/processes



Find all the exercises here

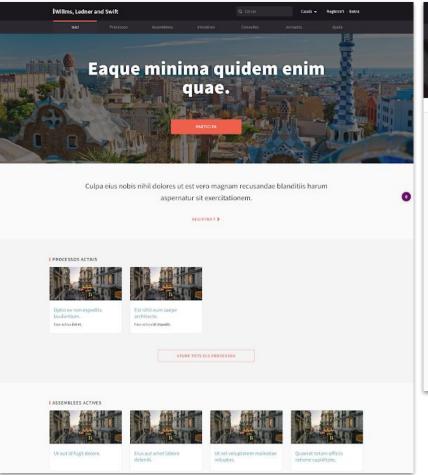
Prepare environment

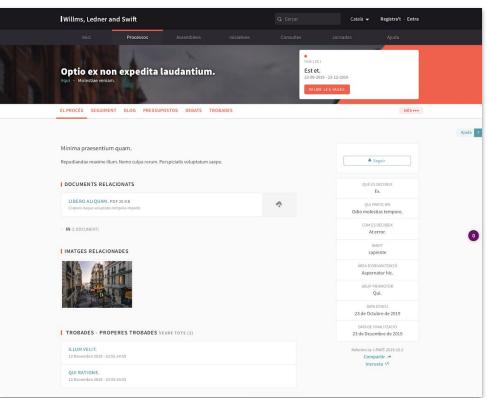
- A browser Tab with http://localhost:3000/
- A browser Tab with https://github.com/Platonig/decidim-hacks
- Visual Studio Code opened, open the folder where you downloaded Decidim-hacks

Goals: what are we going to learn

- Get to know Decidim internally:
 - Directory structure, modular structure
- How to personalize Decidim in the frontend:
 - Change html, css and javascript defaults by our own implementations
- How to interact with the database directly:
 - Access the rails console
- How to change some backend behaviours:
 - Monkeypatch classes (overwrite methods)

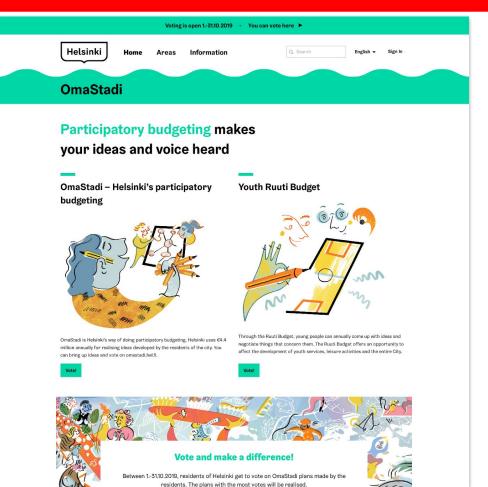
decidim

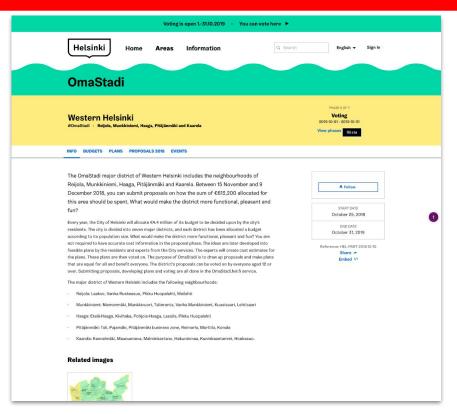




How to turn this?



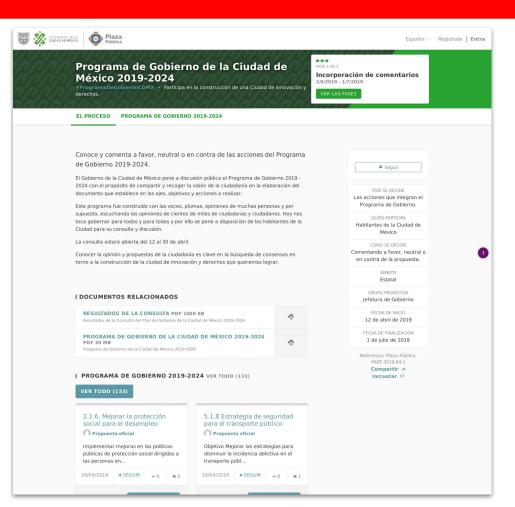




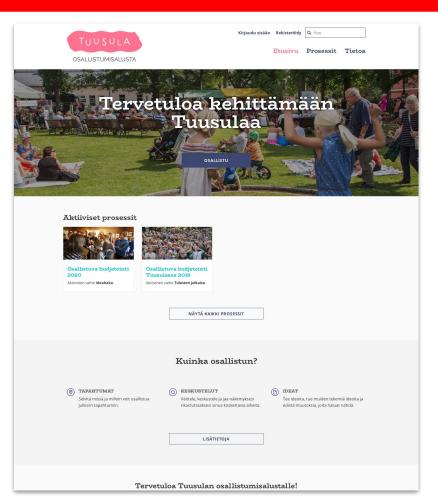
Into this...

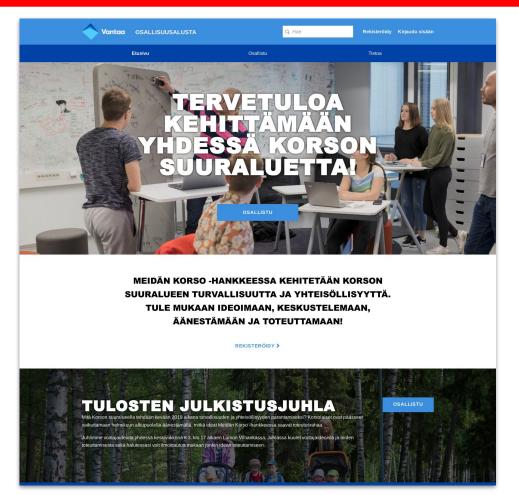
decidim





decidim





Goals: what are we NOT going to learn

- To code/program:
 - Ruby, Css, Javascript or Html
- Ruby & Rails
- To install Decidim

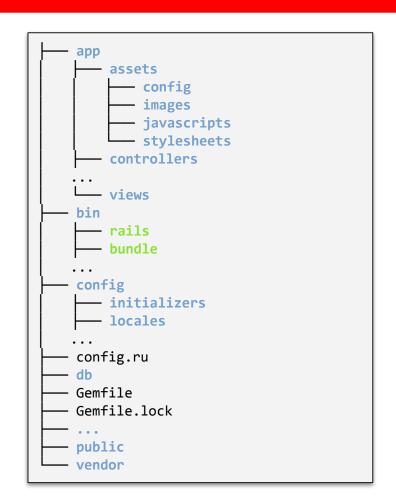
What is Decidim

- It's a **Gem** for the **Ruby and Rails** framework
- It is a **Generator** (like rails new).
- It generates our app.

```
decidim my_application
    create
    create    README.md
    create    Rakefile
    create    .ruby-version
    create    config.ru
    create    .gitignore
    create    Gemfile
        run    git init from "."
```

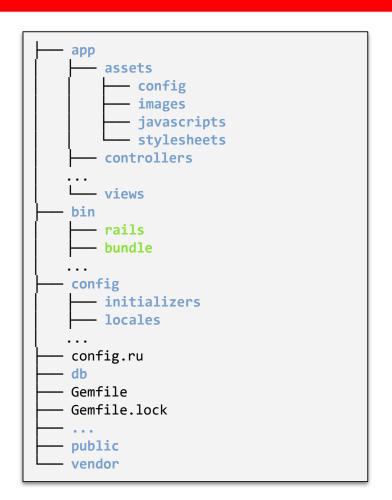
Decidim is Ruby & Rails

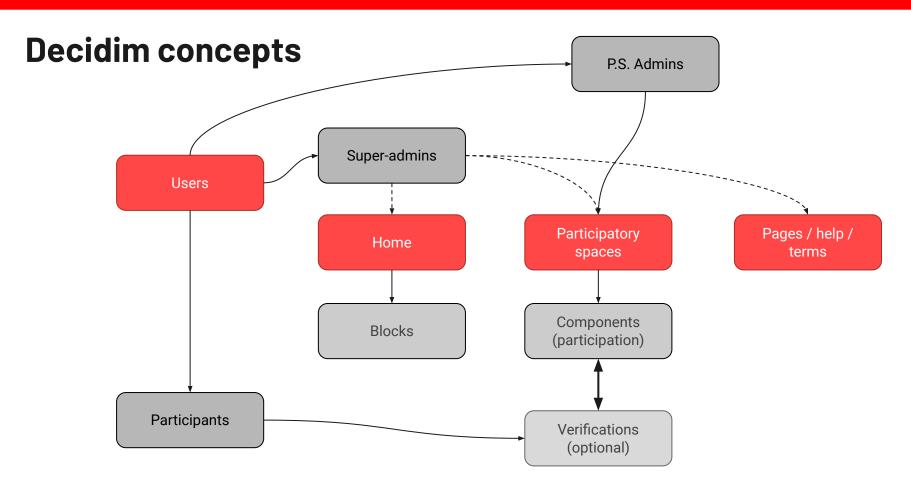
- Gemfile is the file used by Bundler to download all specified packages (gems) and its dependencies.
- Gemfile.lock contains all the gems installed with the exact version.
- bundle
 - installs Gems specified in the Gemfile
 - runs commands in the context of the Gemfile
- rails
 - Runs commands to manage Ruby & Rails:
 - o bin/rails server
 - o bin/rails console
 - bin/rails db:migrate



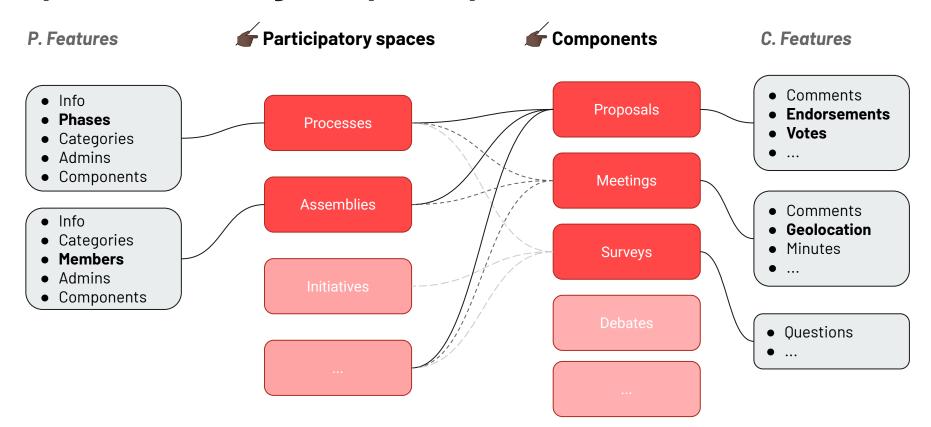
Decidim is Ruby & Rails

- Rails is (very) opinionated: it assumes there's one way to do most of the common things in the web.
- "It's magic": it wants you to write the minimum amount of code. It's ok to not understand what's going on.
- It's for the Web and it's REST.
- Folder structure is immediately recognizable:
- In this workshop:
 - o app/assets/images
 - o app/assets/javascripts
 - app/assets/stylesheets
 - o views
 - o config/initializers
 - o config/locales



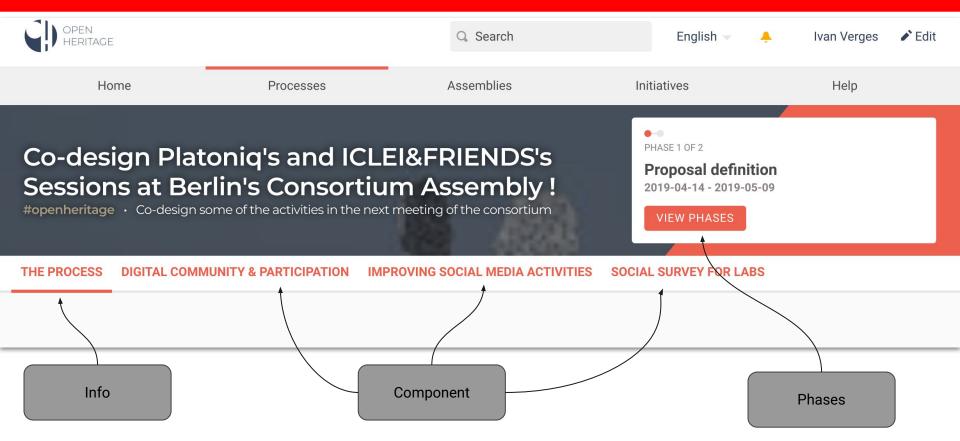


Operational design for participation



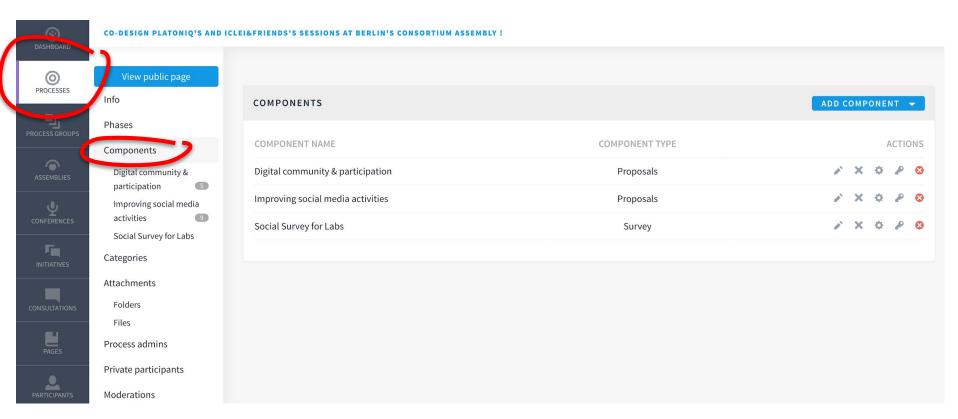


Platoniq



https://labs.openheritage.eu/processes/berlin-meeting



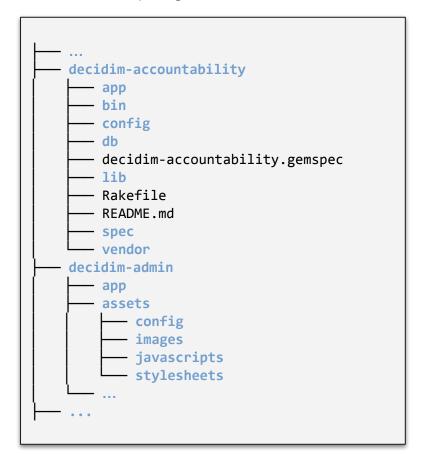


Process admin

Decidim modules

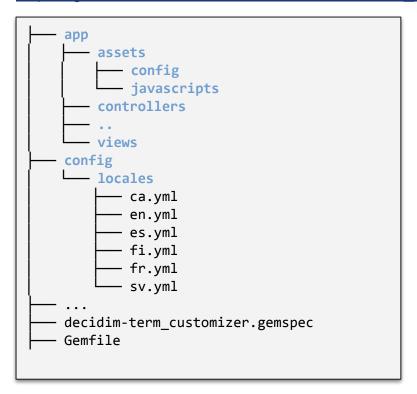
bin config decidim-accountability decidim-admin decidim-api decidim app-design decidim-assemblies decidim-blogs decidim-budgets decidim-comments decidim-conferences decidim-consultations decidim-core decidim-debates decidim-dev decidim-forms decidim.gemspec Gemfile

https://github.com/decidim/decidim

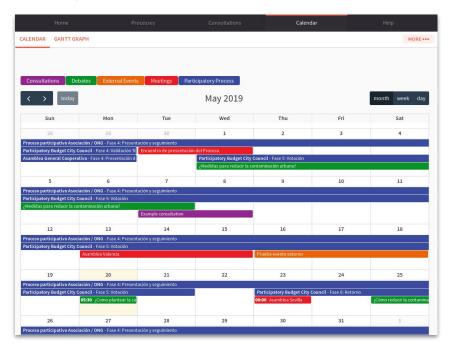


External modules

https://github.com/mainio/decidim-module-term customizer



https://github.com/alabs/decidim-module-calendar



Technique 1: Overwrite Decidim HTML

- Views end in *.erb
- Rails looks for files in order when rendering a view (gems1 -> gem2- > ... -> our app)
- We just need to replicate the exact path to overwrite in our **app/views** folder.
- Paths counts starting after the app/views part of any gem

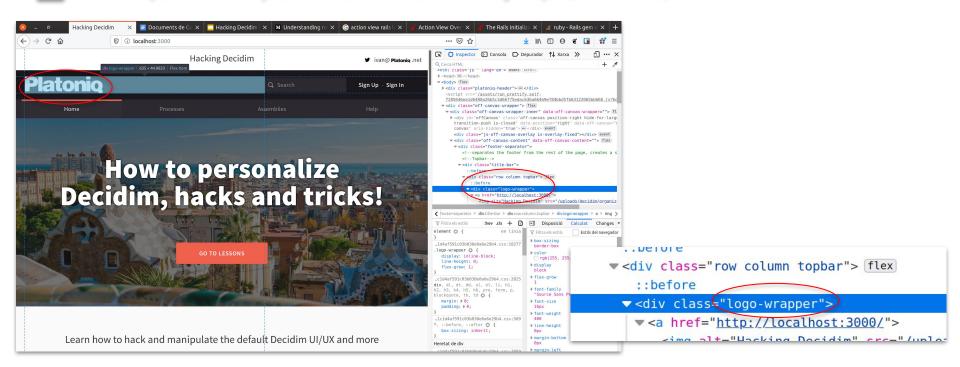
Is not always that simple:

- Some content is generated with custom classes (Cells, Presenters, Content renderers...)
- In this case we need more advanced techniques (monkey patching)

Example 1: Change something in the main layout

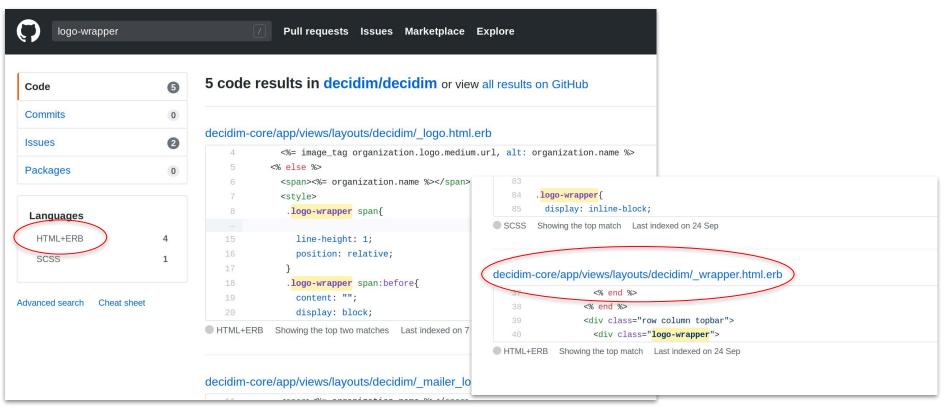
Step 1: Find the view to overwrite. It may be defined on any module!

TIP Use the inspector tools in your browser to locate something unique (more or less)



decidim

TIP Search in https://github.com/decidim/decidim for the located identifier



PRO-TIP! Download the source code of Decidim, Open Visual Studio Code and search for that identifier locally!

Step 2:

- 1. Copy the file decidim-core/app/views/layouts/decidim/_wrapper.html.erb in your editor.
- 2. Change what you need.
- 3. Save it in your own place replicating the folder structure (app/views/layouts/decidim/_wrapper.html.erb)

```
OPEN EDITORS 1 UNSAVED
                                decidim-hacks > app > views > layouts > decidim > ◆ _wrapper.html.erb
                                               <!--separates the footer from the rest of the page,
• wrapper.html.erb decidim-... U
                                                     creates a sticky footer-->
UNTITLED (WORKSPACE)
> decidim
                                               <div class="title-bar">

✓ decidim-hacks

                                                 <% if current organization.official img header? %>
 ∨ app
                                                    <%= link to current organization.official url, class: "logo-cityhall" do %>
  > assets
                                                      <%= image tag current organization.official img header.url.to s , alt: current organization.name %>
  > channels
  > controllers
                                                 <div class="row column topbar">
  > helpers
                                                    <div class="logo-wrapper">
  > jobs
                                                      <%= render partial: "layouts/decidim/logo", locals/ { organization: current organization } %>
  > mailers
                                                      <div style="margin-top:5px">Cool tweaks</div>
  > models

✓ views

                                                    <%= render partial: "layouts/decidim/topbar search" %>

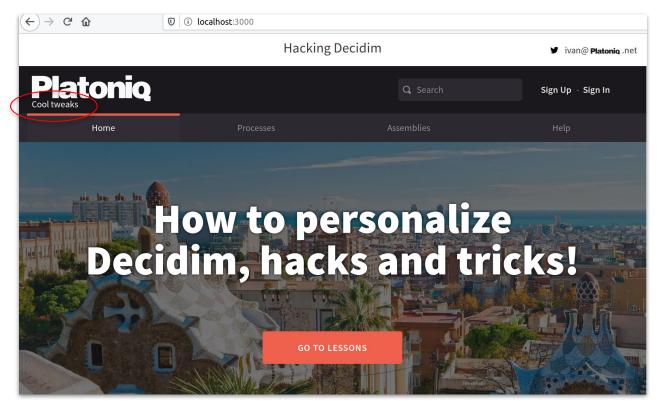
✓ layouts

                                                    <%= render partial: "layouts/decidim/language chooser" %>

√ decidim

                                                    <div class="hide-for-medium topbar menu">
     _head_extra.html.erb
                                                      <button type="button" data-toggle="offCanvas">
       head platonig.html.erb
                                                        <%= icon "menu", aria label: t("layouts.decidim.header.navigation"), role: "img" %>
                                                      </button>
    mailer.html.erb
```

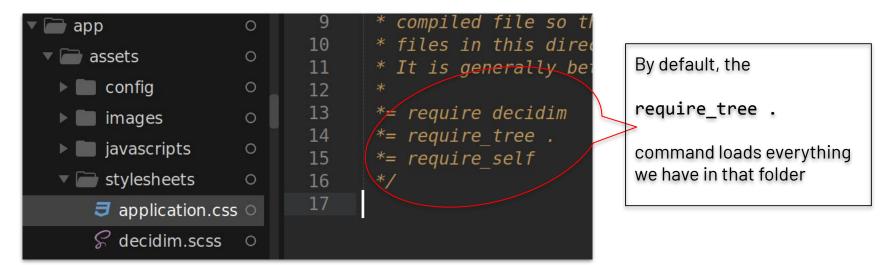
Step 3: Check in local!



PRO-TIP! Now is a good time to: git commit -a -m "add cool tweaks text"

Technique 2: Overwrite Decidim CSS

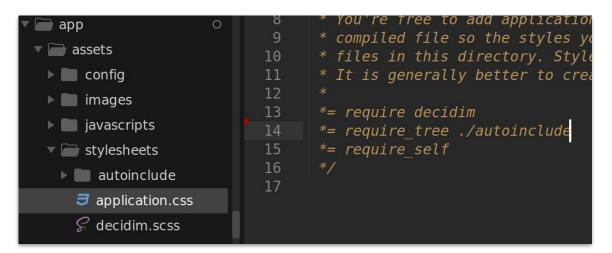
- Most CSS is SASS formatted (*.scss)
- Usually, we can overwrite partials the same way as HTML, the base route is now:
 app/assets/stylesheets
- How CSS is loaded is defined in the main application.css file:



Technique 2: Don't mess everything!

- Some colors are changed in settings!
- Most of the time we can just put our CSS on top of whatever exists
- We want to be able to mix our overwrites with our custom CSS

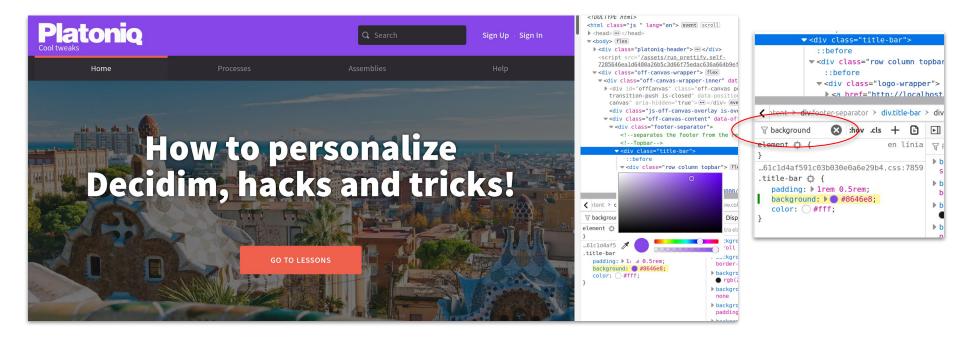
TIP: Modify the require_tree to a custom folder. Anything we will put there will be loaded automatically. We still have the chance to overwrite some specific view by using the duplicate path technique.



Example 2: Change some styles in the main layout

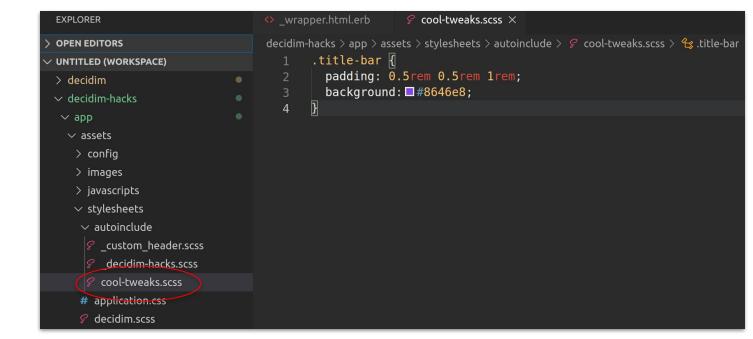
Step 1: Find the CSS-style to overwrite. It may be defined on any module!

TIP Use the inspector tools in your browser to locate and manipulate the css class(es) implicated



Step 2: Copy the changed CSS into a new file in our custom autoloading folder

```
padding: ▶ 0.5rem 0.5rem 1rem;
background: ▶ ● #8646e8;
```



Step 3: Check in local!



PRO-TIP! You're not a hacker if you don't git commit -a -m "add 90's background"

Technique 3: Overwrite Decidim Javascript

- You can write in traditional Javascript or ES6 (*.js and *.js.es6)
- Javascript works similar as CSS, main route is now: app/assets/javascripts
- How Javascript is loaded is defined in the main **application.js** file:

```
∨ app
                                        // vendor/assets/javascripts di

√ assets

 > config
                                        // It's not advisable to add cod
                                                                              By default, the
                                        // compiled file. JavaScript cod
 > images

√ javascripts

                                        // Read Sprockets README (https
  > channels
                                        // about supported directives.
  JS application.js
                                  12
  JS cable.js
                                  13
                                        //= require rails-ujs
 > stylesheets
                                       //= require activestorage
                                  14
                                       //= require tree .
> channels
                                       //= require decidim
> controllers
```

require tree . command loads everything we have in that folder and is located BEFORE the Decidim javascript

Technique 3: Preparation

- If we add a new behaviour, we just add some additional javascript
- If we want to modify already existing scripts, we need to overwrite that file
- If we want to make sure that any custom script is applied AFTER Decidim, we need to change the loading order (add a custom autoloader folder for the sake of organization)

```
Any JavaScript/Corree rite wit
∨ app
                                      // vendor/assets/javascripts dire
assets
 > config
                                      // It's not advisable to add code
                                      // compiled file. JavaScript code
 > images

√ iavascripts

                                      // Read Sprockets README (https:/
  > autoinclude
                                      // about supported directives.
  > channels
  JS application.js
                                    //= require rails-ujs
  JS cable.js
                                    //= require activestorage
                                      //= require decidim
 > stylesheets
                                      //= require tree ./autoinclude
> channels
> controllers
> helpers
> jobs
```

Example 3: Add some Javascript

In this example we will apply also changes in CSS and HTML.

We will change the default behaviour of the main Hero's text image by:

- 1. Adding an external jQuery plugin
- 2. Overwriting the html view to show a custom text instead of the text from admin settings
- 3. Add a custom JS file

Super Customizable Text Rotator with Style

PRO-TIP! Bad taste is a must for a hacker!

Step 1: Add the jQuery plugin to the system.

1. Download the jQuery plugin from:

https://github.com/peachananr/simple-text-rotator

- a. JS file: vendor/assets/javascripts/jquery.simple-text-rotator.js
- b. CSS file: vendor/assets/stylesheets/simpletextrotator.css
- 2. Edit application.css & application.js and tell them to require the downloaded files.

```
* You're free to add application
stylesheets
                                                                        javascripts
                                                                                                                  // Read Sprockets README (https://githu
                                                                                                                  // about supported directives.

✓ autoinclude

∨ autoinclude

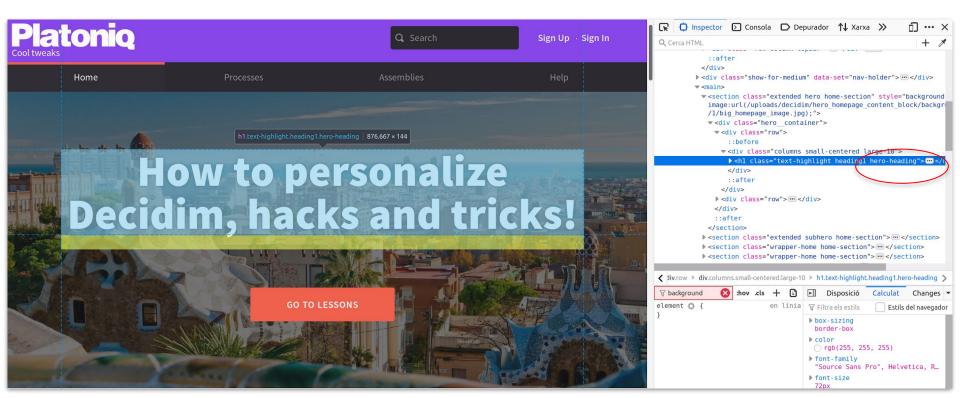
                                        * files in this directory. Sty
   _custom_header.scss
                                        * It is generally better to cre
                                                                          JS hero-fx.is
                                                                                                                  //= require activestorage
> channels
                                        *= require decidim
                                                                                                                  //= require decidim
  cool-tweaks.scss
                                 24
                                                                         JS application.js
# application.css
                                                                         JS cable.js
  decidim.scss
```

IMPORTANT! RELOAD THE SERVER NOW:

~ \$ docker-compose exec app bin/rails restart

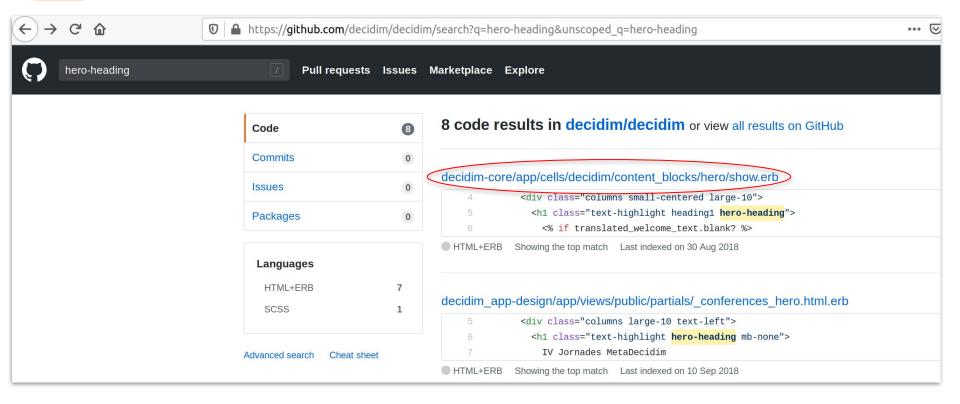
Step 2: Find the view to overwrite.

TIP Use the inspector tools in your browser to locate a useful identifier (ie: hero-heading)



decidim

hero-heading seems reasonably unique *NOTE:* It is not a regular **html.erb** file!



Step 3: Overwrite the original view by creating a new one.

 Replicate folder structure and copy the original file: decidim-core/app/cells/decidim/content_blocks/hero/show.erb



2. In our folder: app/cells/decidim/content_blocks/hero/show.erb

Step 4: Edit the file. app/cells/decidim/content_blocks/hero/show.erb
We will remove any string coming from the database (sorry admins, no more Hero editing for you) and put a fixed phrase:

```
EXPLORER
                                                   ♦ show.erb ×
                                                                                    JS application.js
                              decidim-hacks > app > cells > decidim > content_blocks > hero > ♦ show.erb
OPEN EDITORS
                                     <section class="extended hero home-section" style="background-image:url(<%= background image %>);">
UNTITLED (WORKSPACE)
                                       <div class="hero container">
 decidim
                                         <div class="row">
 decidim-hacks
                                         <div class="columns small-centered large-10">

✓ app

                                              <h1 class="text-highlight heading1 hero-heading">
 > assets
                                                Decidim Hacks is a <span class="rotate">cool, sexy, awesome, amazing, massive, terrible</span><br/>br>place
 > cells
                                              </h1>
 > channels
                                            </div>
 controllers

∨ concerns

                                         <div class="row">
   ≣ .keep
                                         <div class="columns small-centered small-6 medium-4 mediumlarge-3">
  application_controller.rb
                                              <%= cta button %>
                                           </div>
  decidim_controller.rb
                                          </div>

√ helpers

                                       </div>
  application_helper.rb
                                     </section>
```

Decidim Hacks is a cool, sexy, awesome, amazing, massive, terrible
place



Step 5: Create your own javascript that initializes everything, for instance: app/assets/javascripts/autoinclude/hero-fx.js

```
File Edit Selection View Go Debug Terminal Help
         EXPLORER
                                                                                                                                                     JS hero-fx.js ×
 C
                                                                                                            JS application.js
                                                                                                                                # application.css
       > OPEN EDITORS
                                            decidim-hacks > app > assets > javascripts > autoinclude > JS hero-fx.js > ♀ $() callback
                                                    $(function() {

✓ UNTITLED (WORKSPACE)

                                                      $(".hero-heading .rotate").textrotator({
         > decidim
                                                        animation: "spin", // dissolve, fade, flip, flipUp, flipCube, flipCubeUp, spin.
                                                       speed: 1000

√ assets

 邀

∨ confiq

            JS manifest.js
 品
            > images

√ javascripts

√ autoinclude

             JS hero-fx.js
             > channels
            JS application.js
            JS cable.js

√ stylesheets

✓ autoinclude

              _custom_header.scss

    decidim-hacks.scss

              # application.css

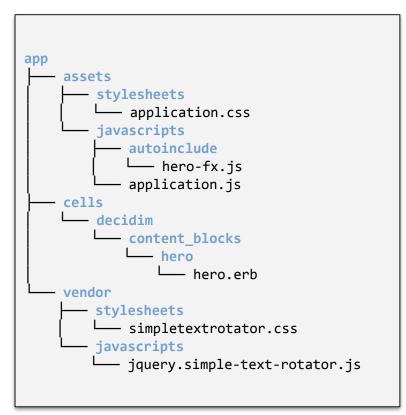
decidim.scss

           ∨ cells
```

• decidim

Recapitulation:

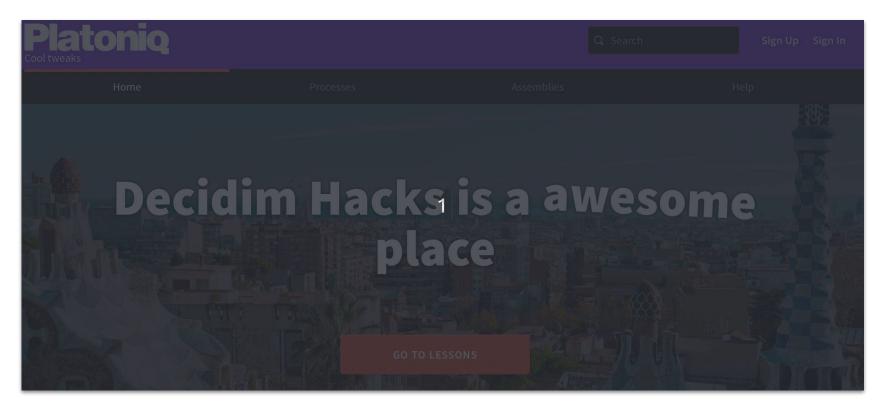
Files changed:



Steps:

- Added external (vendor) javascript/css to the project
- 2. Configured Rails to load those files
- 3. Restarted Rails
- 4. Overwritten the Hero view.
- 5. Applied some custom javascript (activate the plugin)

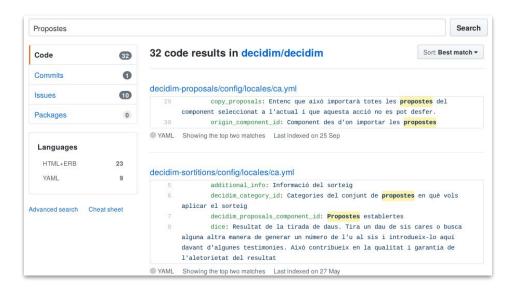
Step 6: Enjoy!



PRO-TIP! Hackers like to git commit -a -m "add the coolest fx ever"

Technique 4: Overwrite locales

- Locales are the multi-language systems texts
- Written in YAML format.
- Inside app/config/locales/*.yml (every module/gem has its owns).
- To overwrite, just create the same key with different content (for each language active!)



Example 4: Add custom locales

In this example we will create a new FX like the previous example to use multi-language texts.

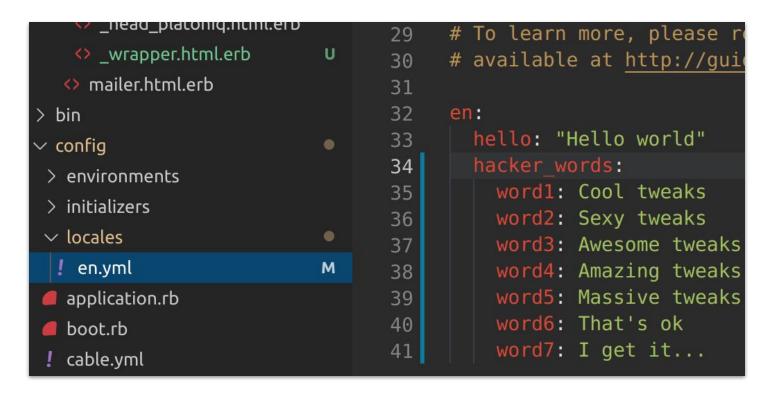
We will:

- 1. Create the list of words that rotate as independent text entries in the app locales folder.
- 2. Create a "helper" ruby method that will list the words for us in the view.
- 3. Add a new javascript file to take care of this case.

NOTE: Helpers cannot be defined this way in the previous example (it is not a regular rails **html.erb** file).

Step 1: Edit the locales file: config/locales/en.yml

Add some content in the YAML format:



Step 2: Edit the layout file: app/views/layouts/decidim/_wrapper.html.erb

Change the previous "Cool tweaks" for the method we are going to use:

```
neipers
application helper.rb
                                                <div class="row column topbar">
> jobs
                                                  <div class="logo-wrapper">
                                                    <%= render partial: "layouts/decidim/logo", locals: { organization: cu</pre>
> mailers
                                                    <div class="rotate" style="margin-top:5px"><%= fancy words %></div>
                                42
> models
                                                  </div>

√ views

√ layouts

                                                  <%= render partial: "layouts/decidim/topbar search" %>

√ decidim

                                                  <%= render partial: "layouts/decidim/language chooser" %>
     head extra.html.erb
                                                  <div class="hide-for-medium topbar menu">
                                47
    head platonig.html.erb
                                                    <button type="button" data-toggle="offCanvas">
                                                       <%= icon "menu", aria label: t("layouts.decidim.header.navigation");</pre>
  _wrapper.html.erb
                                                    </button>
 mailer.html.erb
                                                  </div>
```

Step 3: Edit the helper's file: app/helpers/application_helpers.rb

Create the method fancy_words:

```
XPLORER
                                  show.erb
                                                   wrapper.html.erb
                                                                            head extra.html.erb
                                                                                                      application_helper.rb ×
DPEN EDITORS
                                   decidim-hacks > app > helpers > application helper.rb
                                           module ApplicationHelper
JNTITLED (WORKSPACE)
   CHarmers
                                             def fancy words

∨ controllers

                                               words = (1..7).map do |number|

∨ concerns

                                                  I18n.t("hacker words.word#{number}")
                                               end

    .keep
                                               words.join(', ')
  application controller.rb
  decidim controller.rb
                                           end
 helpers
  application_helper.rb
                             M
 > jobs
```

Step 4: Create the javascript associated file to initialize the plugin: app/assets/javascripts/autoinclude/header-fx.js:

```
JS header-fx.js ●
                                                                                                                           application helper.rb
EXPLORER
                                                                             head extra.html.erb
DPEN EDITORS 1 UNSAVED
                                   decidim-hacks > app > assets > javascripts > autoinclude > JS header-fx.js > ...
                                           $(function() {
JNTITLED (WORKSPACE)
                                              $(".logo-wrapper .rotate").textrotator({
 assets
                                                animation: "flip", // dissolve, fade, flip, flipUp, flipCube, flipCubeUp, spin.

√ config

                                                speed: 1000
   JS manifest.js
                                             });
                                           });
  > images

√ javascripts

✓ autoinclude

    JS header-fx.js
    Js hero-fx.js
```

Step 5: Check and recapitulate

```
config
  - locales
   └─ en.yml
app
   assets
   ___ javascripts
      — autoinclude
          └── header-fx.js
   views
   layouts
      ___ decidim
          helpers
   — application_helper.rb
```



PRO-TIP! Hackers are humans too... git commit -a -m "@ please no more effects..."

Technique 5: Monkey Patching

Metaprogramming

- Ruby is an extremely manipulable programming language
- Almost everything can be redefined.
- We will use this capability to redefine methods defined in the Decidim core without having to touch it

Hooks

- Ruby (as a language) has hooks when certain events happen
- **class_eval** for creating instance methods
- **instance_eval** for creating class methods



What is monkey patching?

From the Decidim gem, loaded first

```
Decidim
def say_hello
mend
end
end
```

In our app, loaded after Decidim

```
Decidim
def say_hello
def say_hello
end
end
end
```

Where to monkey patch in Decidim

PROBLEM: Most of the classes are already instantiated when Rails load our app.

- We will use Ruby hooks to append our code in a custom Rails initializer, usually class_eval
- A Rails initializer is just a Ruby file inside config/initializers/something.rb. It's evaluated when the application starts (once only)
- Changing a initializer requires Rails reload

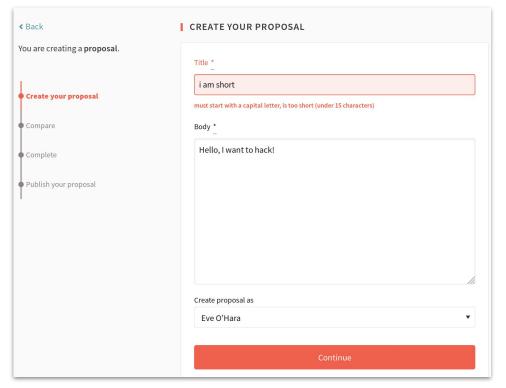
Example 5: Overwrite non-configurable settings

In this example we will monkey-patch the Proposals method that check the titles of the proposals

We will:

1. Identify the Proposal validation method

Create a new initializer and overwrite the method to allow more flexible titles in proposals



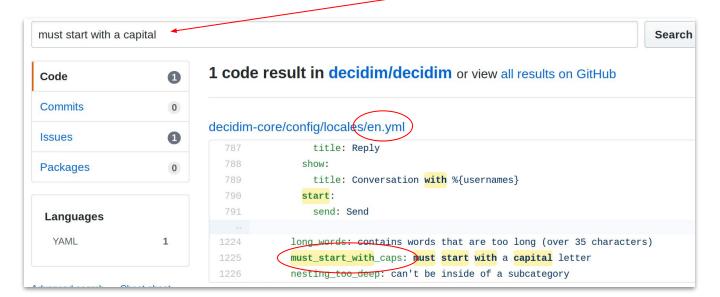
• decidim

Step 1: Find the class with the method.

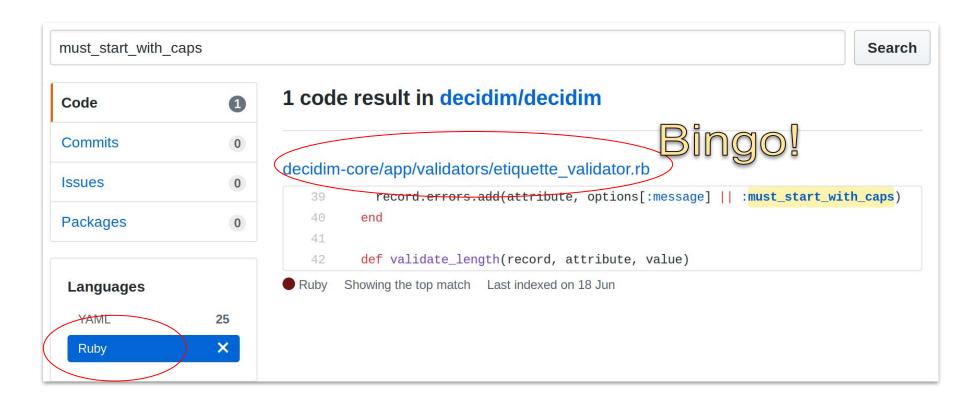
This can be difficult and requires time to study the code to do it properly. But... we're feeling brave!

TIP: start to search for the locale key and then where is it placed in the code:





Search where the locale key is used



1 decidim

Step 2: Create a new initializer file. It will be used to monkey-patch the method found.

For instance: config/initializers/bananas_for_proposals.rb

Also: open the original file to copy and analize what we need.

This validator takes care of ensuring the validated content is
respectful, doesn't use caps, and overall is meaningful.
class EtiquetteValidator < ActiveModel::EachValidator</pre>

```
def validate_length(record, attribute, value)
  return if value.length > 15
  record.errors.add(attribute, options[:message] | :too_short)
end
```

```
https://github.com/decidim/decidim/blob/cc44574a14f7935dc6195de0c43486f69d824830/decidi
        # This validator takes care of ensuring the validated content is
        # respectful, doesn't use caps, and overall is meaningful.
       class EtiquetteValidator < ActiveModel::EachValidator</pre>
          def validate_each(record, attribute, value)
           return if value.blank?
           validate_caps(record, attribute, value)
           validate_marks(record, attribute, value)
           validate_long_words(record, attribute, value)
           validate_caps_first(record, attribute, value)
           validate length(record, attribute, value)
          private
          def validate caps(record, attribute, value)
           return if value.scan(/[A-Z]/).length < value.length / 4
           record.errors.add(attribute, options[:message] | :too_much_caps)
          def validate_marks(record, attribute, value)
           return if value.scan(/[!?¡¿]{2,}/).empty?
           record.errors.add(attribute, options[:message] || :too_many_marks)
          end
          def validate_long_words(record, attribute, value)
           return if value.scan(/[A-z]{35,}/).empty?
           record.errors.add(attribute, options[:message] | :long_words)
          def validate caps first(record, attribute, value)
           return if value.scan(/\A[a-z]{1}/).empty?
           record.errors.add(attribute, options[:message] || :must_start_with_caps)
```

Step 3: Edit the file and and register our hook for the class we want to monkeypatch.

Copy the method exactly as it is. Then modify what you want.

```
\blacksquare bananas for proposals.rb 	imes
EXPLORER
                                    decidim-hacks > config > initializers > / bananas_for_proposals.rb
OPEN EDITORS
                                            EtiquetteValidator.class eval do
UNTITLED (WORKSP... 🖰 🛅 💍
                                               def validate length(record, attribute, value)
> decidim
                                                 return if value.length(> 5

✓ decidim-hacks

 > app
                                                 record.errors.add(attribute, options[:message] || :too short)
 > bin

✓ config

  > environments

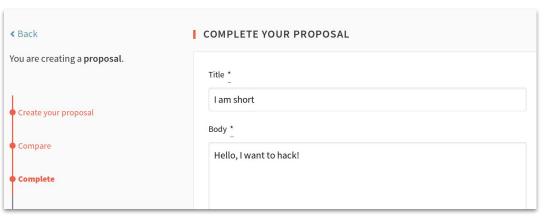
√ initializers

   application controller rendere...
   assets.rb
   backtrace silencers.rb
   bananas_for_proposals.rb
```

Step 4: Reload the server. Everything modified inside initializers requires a server reload.









Inspire yourself: real examples

https://omastadi.hel.fi/

https://plazapublica.cdmx.gob.mx/

https://dddc.decodeproject.eu/

https://labs.openheritage.eu/

https://github.com/City-of-Helsinki/decidim-helsinki

https://github.com/ponentesincausa/PlazaPublicaCDMX

https://github.com/DECODEproject/DDDC-instance

https://github.com/Platoniq/decidim-openheritage

https://github.com/decidim/decidim/network/dependents

Conclusions

- 1. Don't do it!
- 2. Be aware of upgrades!
- 3. Touch the minimum possible.
- 4. Test extensively in local before deploying in production



Leave your comments in

https://github.com/Platoniq/decidim-hacks/issues

or just write me:

ivan@platoniq.net







https://meta.decidim.org/profiles/microstudi

