10 FileMaker themes

to speed up your interface design

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FM Designer 1.0

manual version: 1.0

Manual to FM Designer by Karsten Risseeuw
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FM Designer is a FileMaker file with 10 themes (designs) you can use for your FileMaker projects.

FM Designer

The manual.

Directory

Introduction

If you don't read manuals, read at least this introduction chapter. It covers some basics about the file. Then use the rest of the manual as a reference.

About

FM Designer is a commercial product and has been created by Karsten Risseeuw of Kursiv Software in Switzerland.

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What is FM Designer?

FM Designer is a set of 10 themes for FileMaker Pro, helping FileMaker developers to create better interfaces quicker. Each theme has the same set of styles for objects and layout parts, presented on several layouts. On layouts which have the styles assigned to all objects, one can instantly switch between themes with all settings taken into effect.

This is how you work

- Import themes to your project
- Apply styles quickly
- Rely on ready-to-go style sets

Use, design and redesign

This manual gives you a head-on start into designing your own solution. It also offers the perfect base to start creating your own themes. The simple structure and availability of full style sets with pages to display every single element makes it very easy to tweak, adapt or completely redesign any theme according to your needs.

What is not covered in this manual

This manual does not replace the FileMaker Help. Please consult the FileMaker manual and Help functions to learn about the basic handling of themes and styles.

10 Themes

FM Designer comes with 10 themes, 5 of which are general purpose themes and the remaining 5 aim at specialist usages.
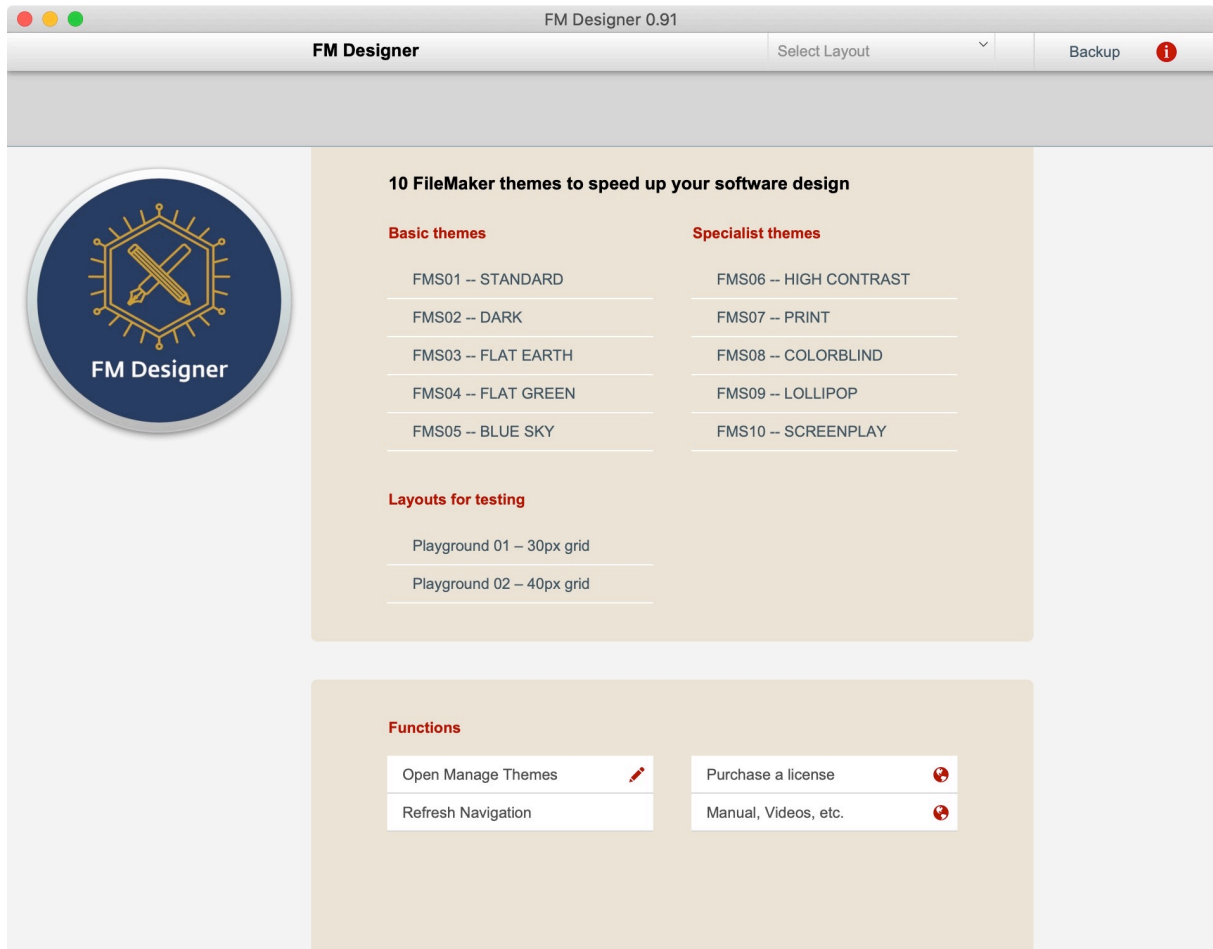
The codes refer to the product and the number of the theme.
FMD01 is FM Designer, Theme 1. The enhanced name points to the color impression or objective of that theme.

Basic style groups
FMD01 – STANDARD. The same theme as used in FM Starter.
FMD02 – DARK
FMD03 – FLAT EARTH
FMD04 – FLAT GREEN
FMD05 – BLUE SKY

Specialist themes
FMD06 – HIGH CONTRAST

FMD07 – PRINT
FMD08 – COLORBLIND
FMD09 – LOLLIPOP
FMD10 – SCREENPLAY

All themes have the same set of styles from the same original theme. This enables you to easily switch between themes.

Minimal requirements

FM Designer is a FileMaker file in FMP12-format. You need a full version of FileMaker in order to use this file.

You need:
1. A full version of FileMaker Pro 12 or higher to use the file
2. Developer access to your file or project in order to use it.

FM Designer is dependent on FileMaker Pro. If FileMaker Pro runs on your machine, you are good to go.

License

User License for FM Designer

The User License is part of the delivery and can be found as a text file. It also can be found on our websites.

Where to purchase?

FM Designer can be purchased through the following website:

kursiv-software.com/en/

Learning materials

FM Designer has full documentation and videos on the following website, including this manual:

fmstarter.com/en/

Basics

FM Designer is a set of 10 different themes to speed up your interface design. It perfectly blends in with our other product FM Starter, but can be used as a standalone solution to improve your interface design.

The chapter Basics gives you an introduction to the basics of interface design, as enabled through the use of themes. It will cover questions like "What are themes?" and show you how the FM Designer files is built. That will help you to get started quickly.

What are themes?

FileMaker themes are similar to Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), as are used for web design.

A FileMaker theme is set of styles used to define objects or layout parts within FileMaker. Stylesheets or themes have these descriptions in a central place, and they can be applied to any related object in your application. If you assign a style to an object, it is just a reference to a definition which is stored within the theme. To use the same definitions should be at the core of your approach to design:

1. Create a coherent look-and-feel (your "design")
2. Manage your object settings in a central place (the theme)
3. Reduce the size of single pages (especially useful for WebDirect)

While CSS usually appear as text files, within FileMaker you do not deal with text files, but rather with an interface. FileMaker manages the settings for you and you can edit the styles in the inspector. The inspector pops up at your right hand, once you switch a page to layout mode.

Click on an object and switch in the inspector to the "Tools" icon (for: Styles). In the screenshot below you see the following information:

- Name of the theme: FMD01 STANDARD
- Styles: all *text styles* (as a *text object* has been selected)
- The used style for the text object has been selected in the list.
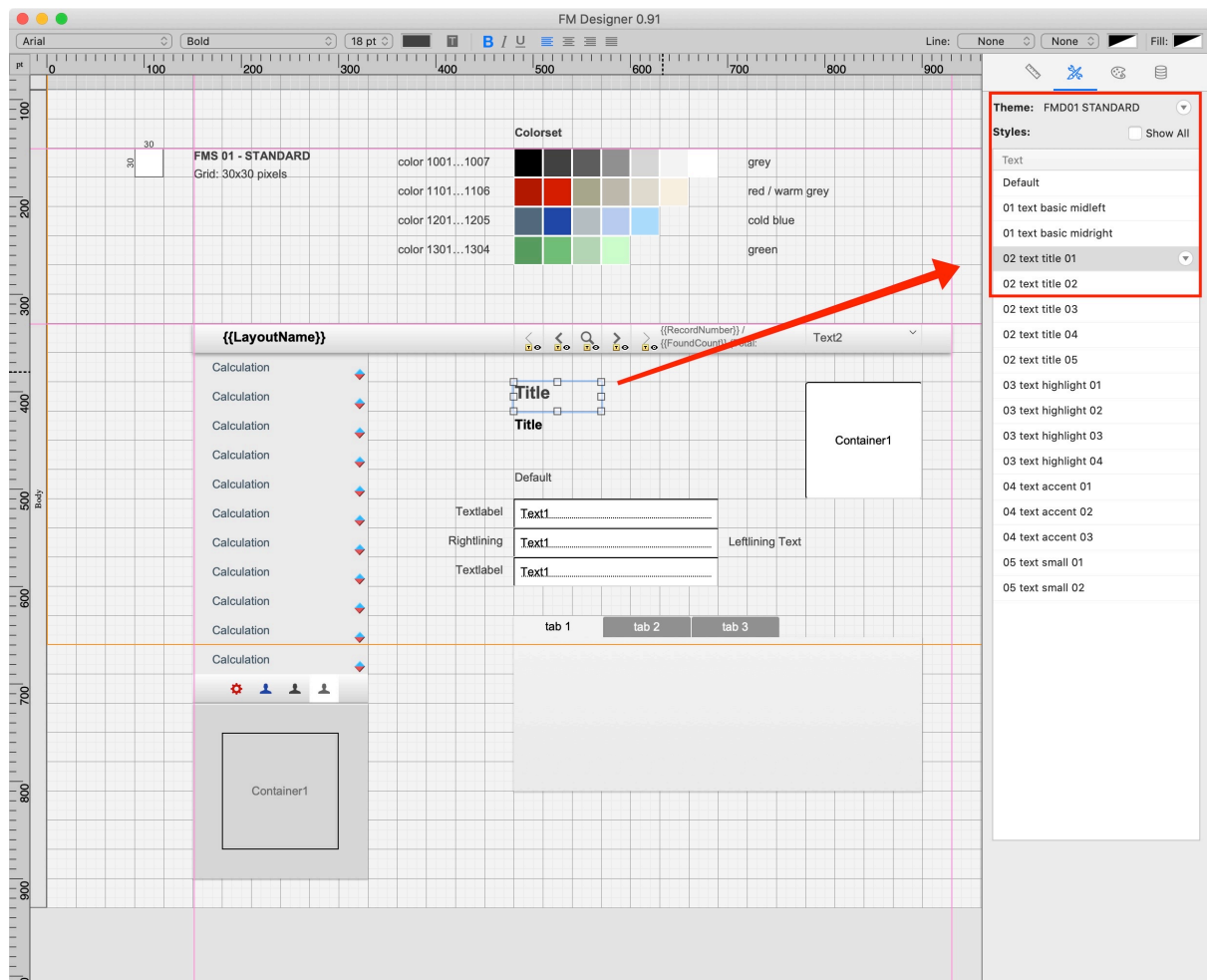
By selecting an object and clicking on any available style will apply that style to the object. As all styles have multiple settings, using styles simplify your work. Styles are an efficient and versatile help in the creation of user interfaces for FileMaker.

More about this topic in the chapter "Working with themes".

Themes are not everything

Design is not only about themes.

The styles used in FileMaker describe the look-and-feel of an object. Nothing more. When designing a user interface, much more is involved. Just as typography is not only limited to the font, size and color of a text, it also involves the positioning of the text on the paper. The same applies to the creation of an interface in FileMaker.

When using FM Designer, the goal is not to prettify your layouts, but to create a good user experience. Consider for example other important settings:

- Screen width
- Screen height
- White space between the objects
- Guiding the eye of the user with proper titles, highlights, etc.
- Reducing the number of items on a page to what is necessary
- Etc.

Themes are not everything, but they are a good start. One way to create a consistent design is to work with a layout grid. That is explained in the next paragraph.

Basic grid

FM Designer uses a grid for all themes. This grid is 30 x 30 pixels.

Working with a grid is both simple and reliable. All styles are made with this grid in mind. All objects are placed on this grid. If you need another grid, I suggest to duplicate a theme, then change the grid and adapt the theme to the new grid.

The grid can be changed in the Inspector, which shows when a page is in layout mode. In the inspector, click on the ruler tab (labeled Position). At the bottom of this tab you will find the grid settings:
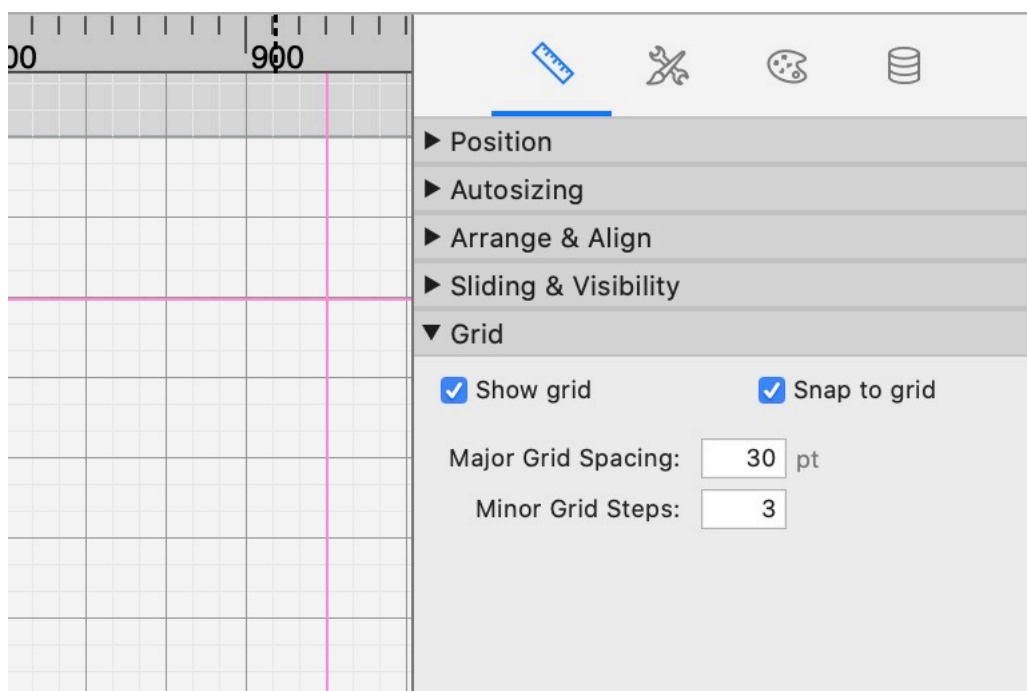
The grid is shown (active) and objects will snap to the grid (active). This is similar as in publishing programs.

Major Grid Spacing

There are two settings for the grid: The Major Grid Spacing is set to 30 pixels, while the Minor Grid Steps are set to 3. In the screenshot above you can see the Major Grid at the left side. The clear bigger squares make up the Major Grid Spacing, which have smaller grid steps in between – the Minor Grid Steps.

Minor Grid Steps

The Minor Grid Steps divide the Major Grid Spacing in 3 equal parts, both horizontally and vertically, resulting in 10 pixel distances, perfect for fine-tuning any layout.

How the grid works

All objects are created on the grid and exactly match the Major Grid Spacing. Only in rare cases, the Minor Grid Spacing will be used. Have a look at any of the themes in layout mode and you will see how the objects are placed on the grid. The same grid is also used to define the height (and width) of layout parts. The height of layout parts are a multiple of the grid spacing.

Sticking to the grid

By sticking to the grid, your layouts gain coherence and character. 30 pixels is not a law, but you will find that it is a simple approach and a good distance for desktop screens and even works quite well for most iOS and WebDirect appliances.

Changing the grid

If your Apps for iOS devices or WebDirect need a larger grid spacing you are free to do so, but we suggest that you duplicate a theme, before adapting this to another grid. We suggest not to use any smaller grids, as todays design is spacious.

How FM Designer is built up

FM Designer works with a consistent structure to replicate each theme with the same steps.

- All themes use the same table – the Themes table (in FileMaker each layout must have a table assigned to)
- All themes have 3 pages assigned:
    - Overview, to give an impression of a possible layout
    - Parts, to display styles for different layout parts
    - Objects, as a catalog for all styles. Each style is assigned to an object.
- Each theme has an own color set.
- Each theme is built on a grid of 30px.

Themes table

In FileMaker, each layout needs to be attached to a single table. To provide this table, we created a Themes table. All themes share this same table, which has a single record as well as some basic fields.

In the relationships graph, this table also has a link to a new table occurrence of itself. This was needed in order to create and define portal styles. Portals can only be displayed with a real relationship.
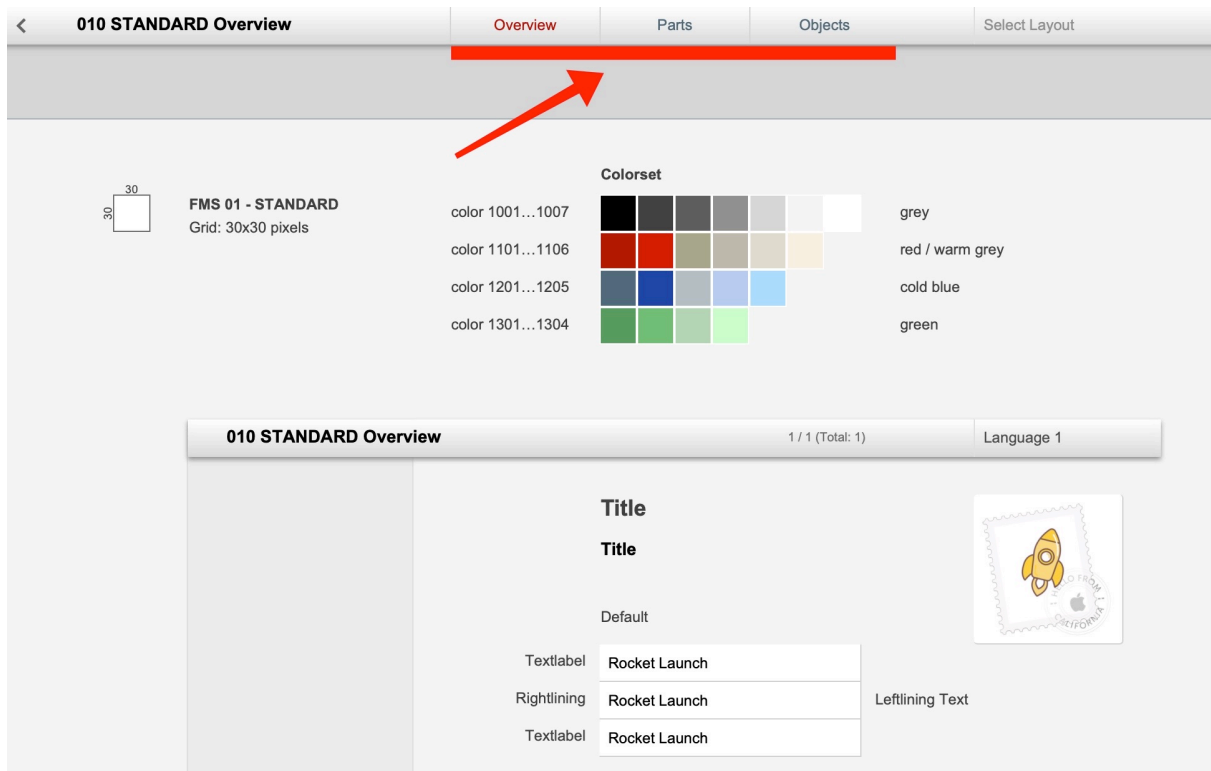
Trouble shooting:
If anything does not show up (and has not been deleted), ensure that the table Themes has 1 record.

Themes pages

Each theme comes with 3 pages. Each page fulfills a certain purpose.

1. Overview
2. Parts
3. Objects

Together, these pages give a full visual overview of all settings of a theme.

Overview

Each Overview page shows the same set of objects in a certain arrangement. This page aims to give you a comparable impression of the look-and-feel of a theme in something like a real-life situation. If you are looking for a direct comparison of different themes, switch between the Overview pages. There also is an easy way of comparing these pages > here.

Parts

Parts are an integral part of any FileMaker layout. They are positioned vertically below each other. In layout mode you can click on the part-handle and then select or define a
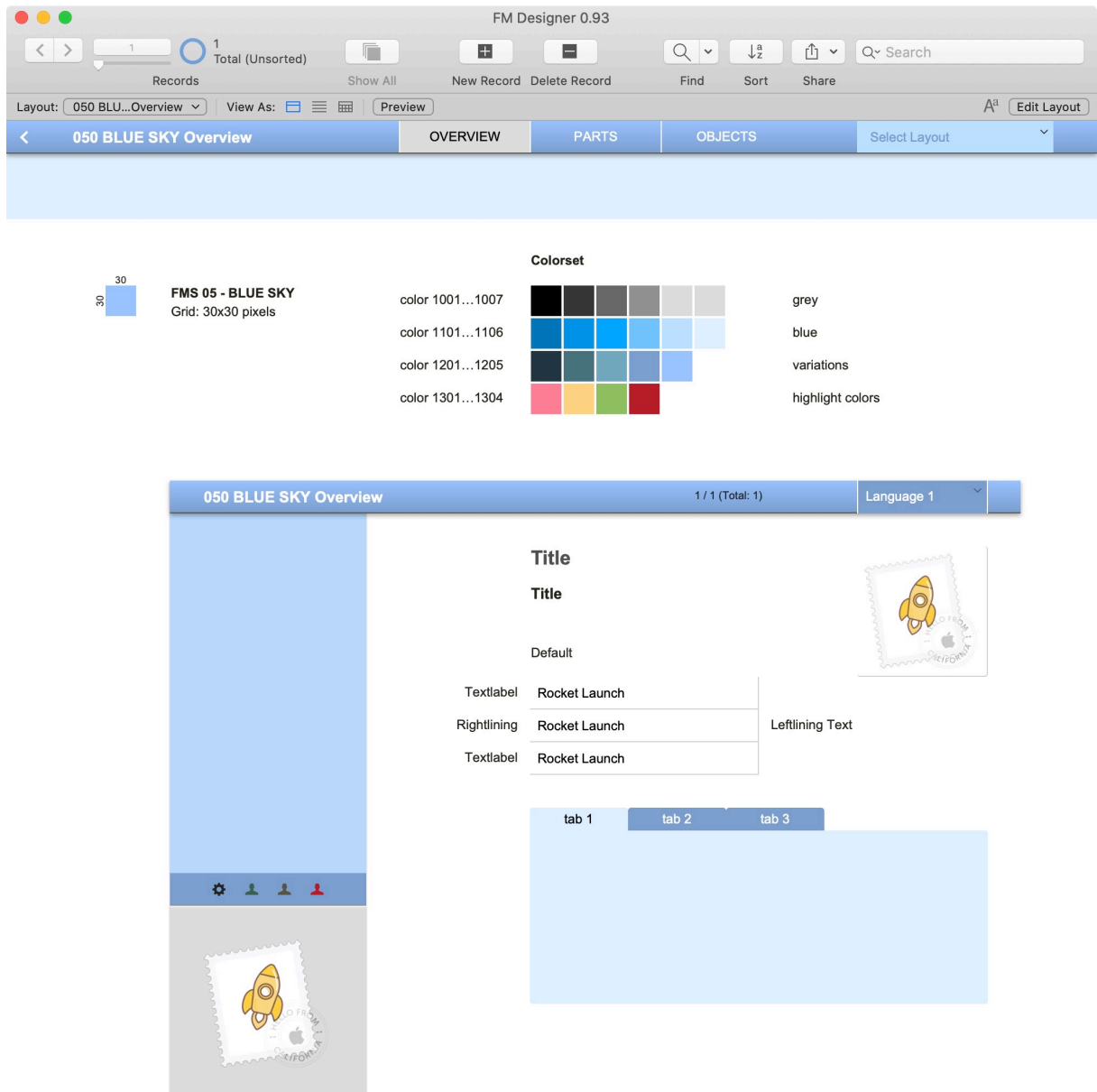
style for this part. As certain layouts might have multiple sub summaries, there are multiple styles for sub summaries (1...4).

Objects

On this page you will find an object for each object style. This is a complete index of all objects and their styles for the active theme.

Overview

The overview page of a theme is meant to give you a first impression of the theme.

Here you also find the color scheme (named: color set) as used for the definition of each style. Read more about Color Schemes.

Parts

The page called Parts has all the parts which are available for a FileMaker layout. Each part has been assigned a style. For sub summaries there are several styles available across all themes.
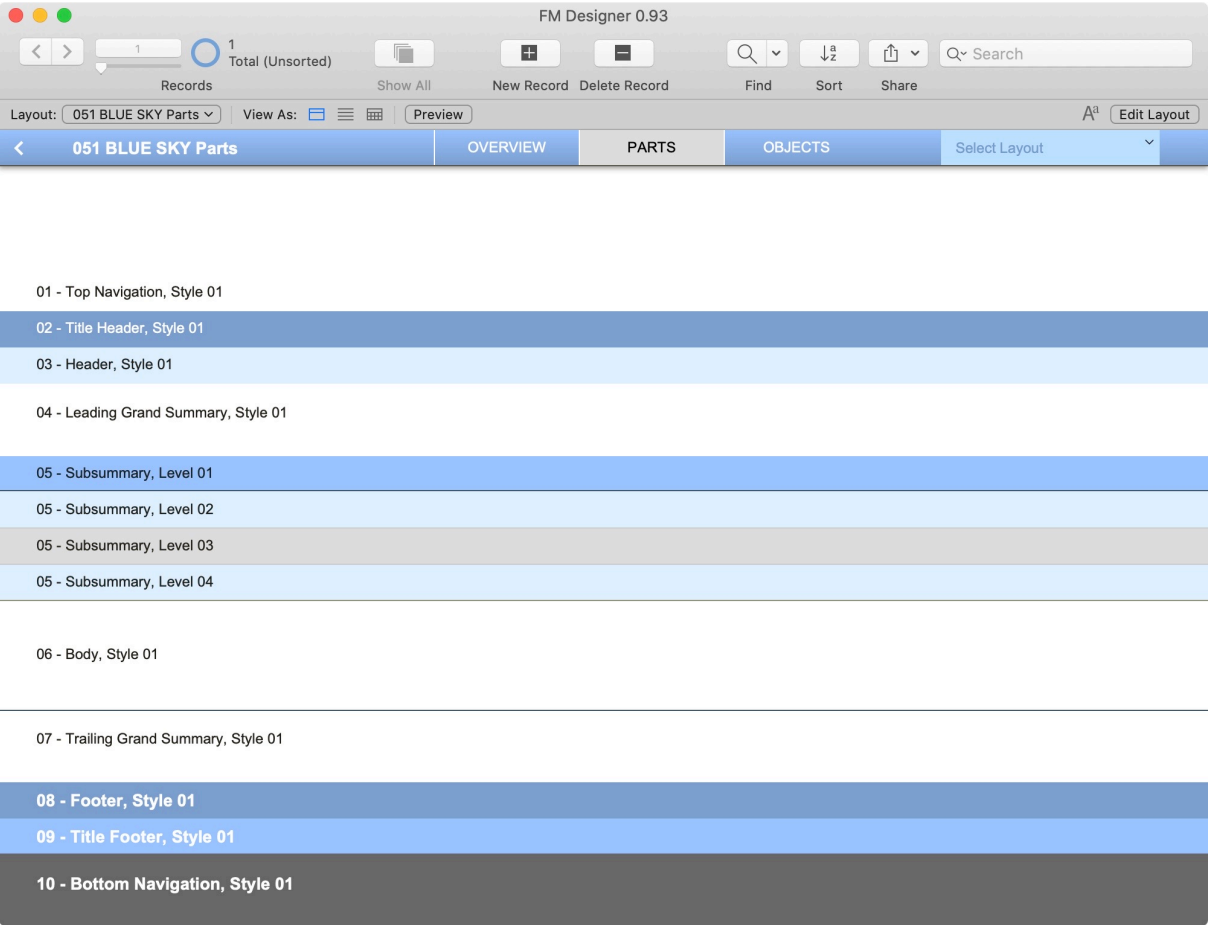
To assign a part with a style, switch to layout mode, then select the part by clicking on the part-handle, then click on the desired style.

Select the Part, then the Style
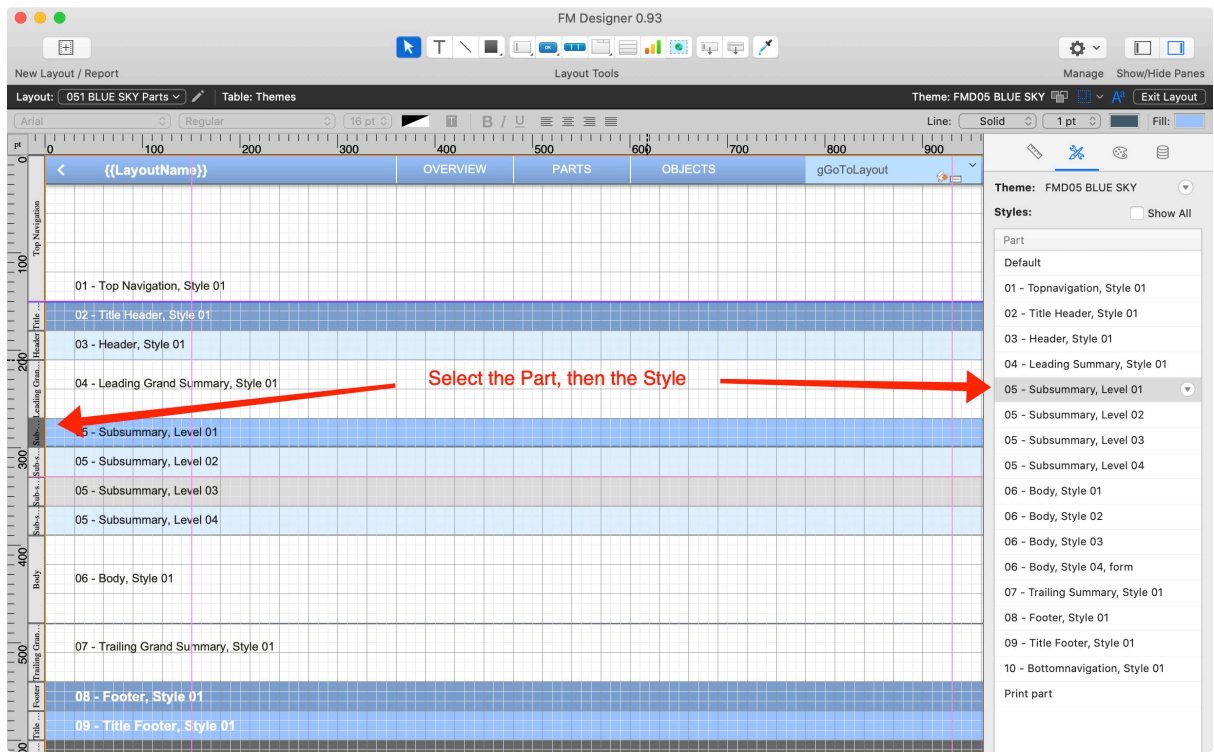
Objects

The Objects page has a full index of all styles, each displayed with an own object. The layout of the objects page summarizes styles in three categories:

- Basic Objects
- Content-related objects
- Design objects

Each category has its own tab object to display all styled objects. This compact approach makes it easy to navigate. Especially to develop your own variations or new themes, this page helps you to secure that each theme has all styles. See also the topic: Duplicating a Theme.

Basic Objects
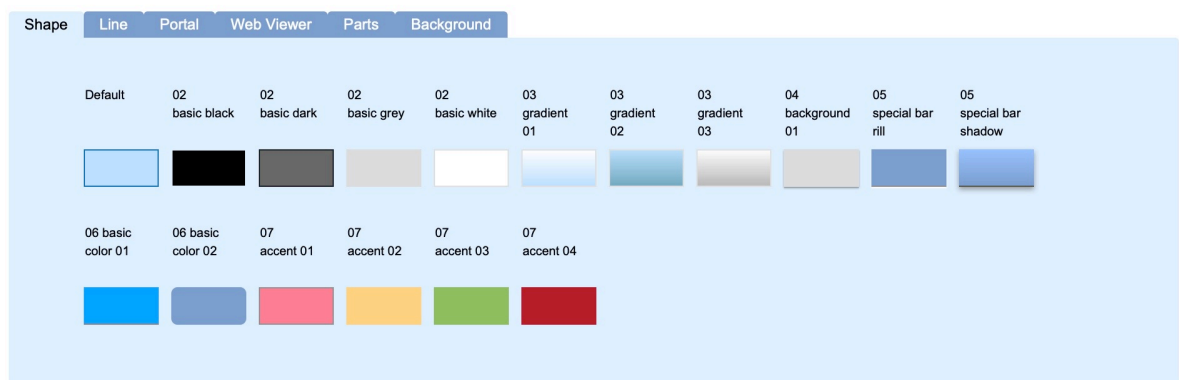
- Shape
- Line
- Portal
- WebViewer
- Parts (links to the Parts page)
- Background (explanation)

Content-related objects

Text	Edit Box 1	Edit Box 2	Container	Dropdown	Popup	Checkbox	Radio Button

Basic text formats	Titles	Highlighted on background	Accented text	Small text
Default	**02 text title 01**	03 text highlight 01	04 text accent 01	05 text small 01
01 text basic midleft	**02 text title 02**	03 text highlight 02	**04 text accent 02**	05 text small 02
01 text basic midright	**02 text title 03**	03 text highlight 03	04 text accent 03	
	02 text title 04	03 text highlight 04		
	02 text title 05			

- Content-related objects
  - Text
  - Edit Box
  - Container
  - Dropdown
  - Popup
  - Checkbox
  - Radio-Button

Design objects

Button 1	Button 2	Button 3	Bar 1	Bar 2	Tab	Popover	Slide

| Default	Basic styles		List styles		Styles without icons	
Button	**Button**	01 button standard 01	Button	02 button list 01	Button	03 button no icon 01
	Button	01 button standard 02	Button	02 button list 02	Button	03 button no icon 02
	Button	01 button standard 03	Button	02 button list 03	Button	03 button no icon 03
			Button	02 button list 04		

- Design objects
  - Button

- Button-bar
- Tab
- Popover
- Slide

Themes comparison

There are two ways to compare themes:

1. Next to each other

To compare several themes at once, switch to the start page of the file, click on the tab "Compare," select the layouts you want to compare and click on the button "Compare selected layouts". For each selected layout a new window will be created.
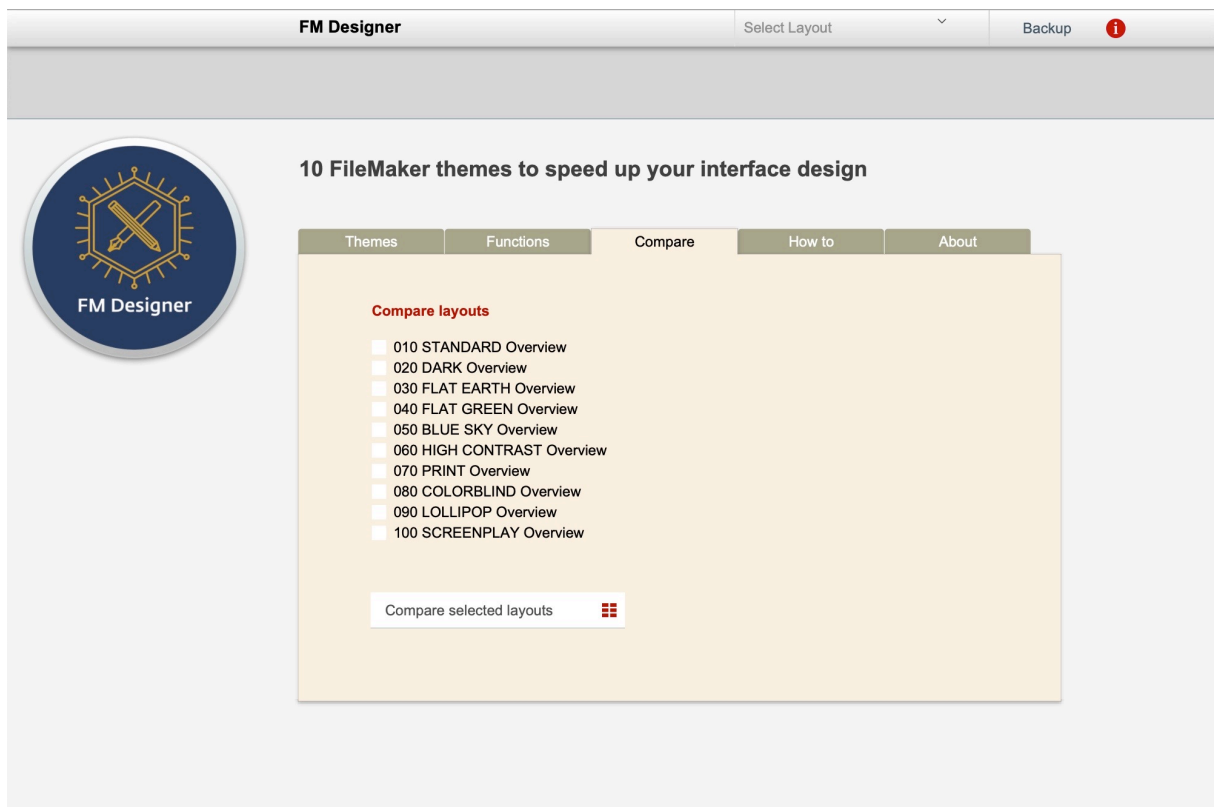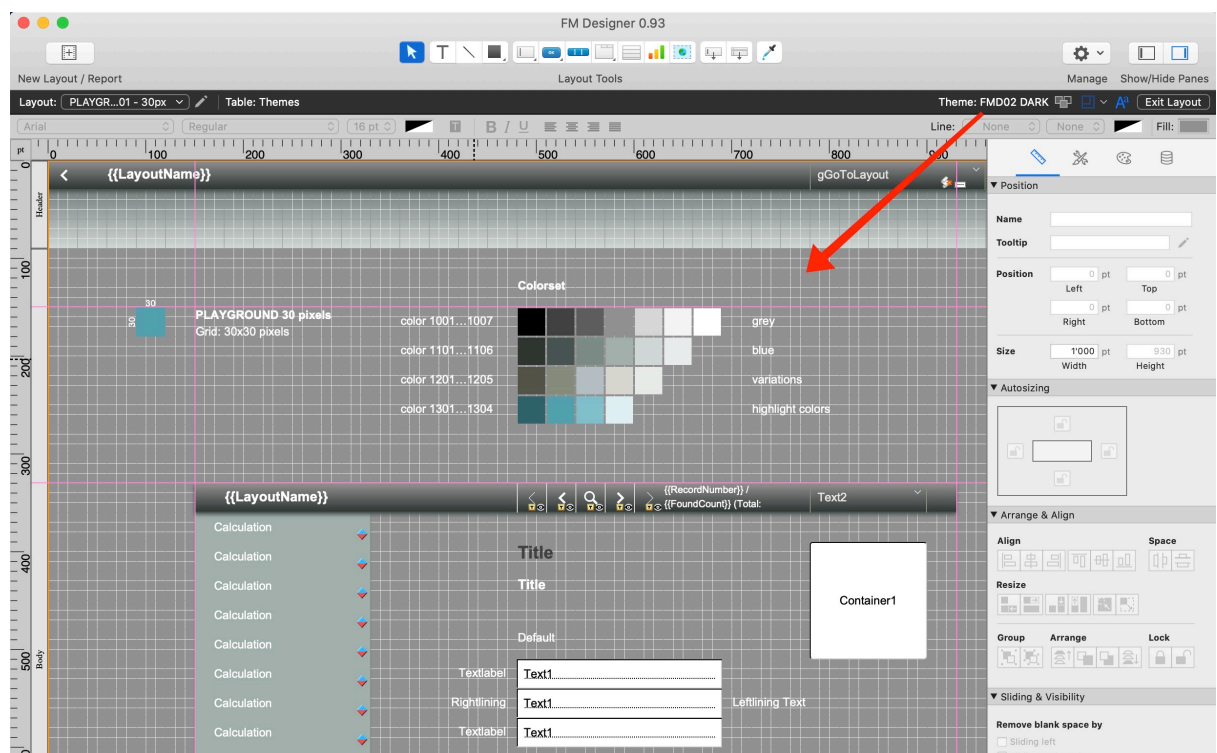

2. Changing themes on the Playground page

Head over to the playground pages. Create the layout you want or use the sample layout, then change the theme in the theme chooser.

In layout mode, choose another theme:
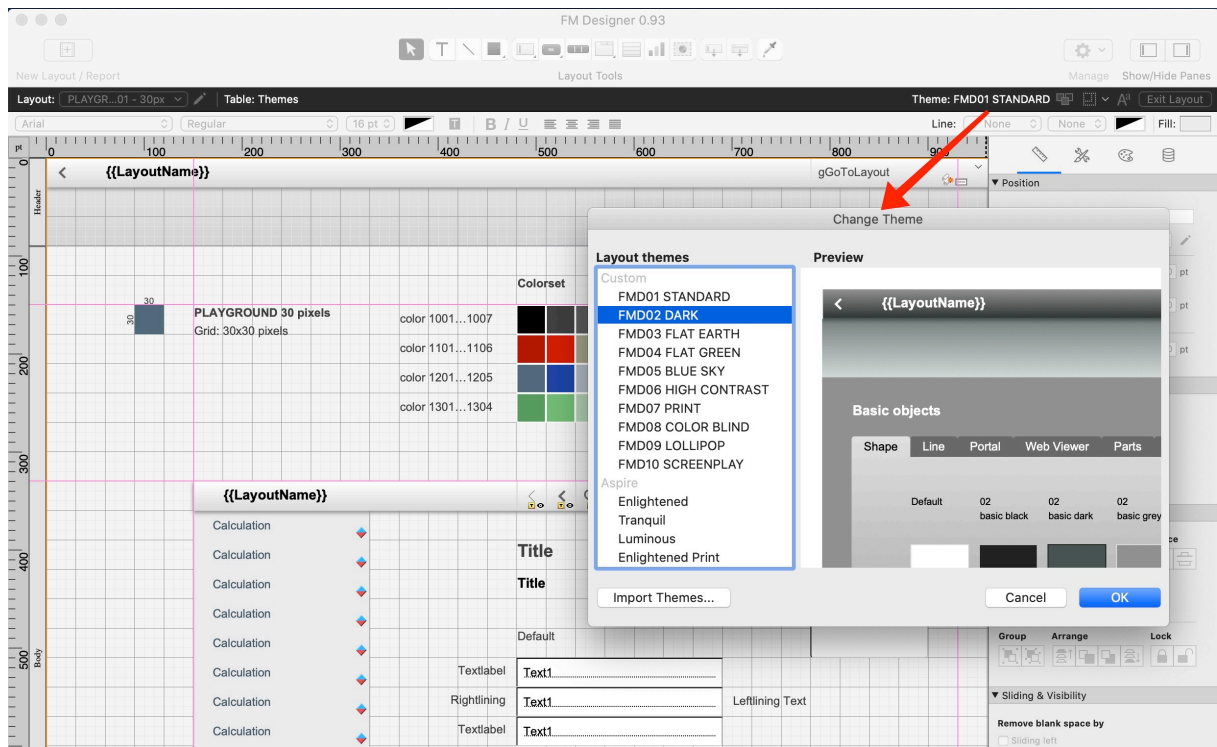
After the theme change:

Color Schemes

Color Schemes are at the very core of each theme. Each color scheme is unique and offers many options to create your very own interpretation.

Color scheme files

Each theme uses a color scheme. These color schemes are used for each theme and they will be explained in detail.
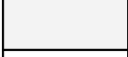
The color schemes used are also available as separate files for use in different programs. They can be used as a reference. Check the original delivery folder of FM Designer.

Each color scheme is delivered in the following formats:

- Adobe Color Swatch (.aco)
- Adobe Swatch Exchange (.ase)
- MacOS color palette (.clr)
- PDF
- TXT

Example of a PDF file with description and RGB-values:

Color Scheme Report
Project Name : FMS01 STANDARD

	FMS01 STANDARD 1001	0, 0, 0
	FMS01 STANDARD 1002	66, 66, 66
	FMS01 STANDARD 1003	95, 95, 95
	FMS01 STANDARD 1004	146, 146, 146
	FMS01 STANDARD 1005	214, 214, 214
	FMS01 STANDARD 1006	245, 245, 245
	FMS01 STANDARD 1007	255, 255, 255
	FMS01 STANDARD 1101	181, 26, 2
	FMS01 STANDARD 1102	213, 31, 0

How do you create color schemes?
There are myriads of ways to create color schemes and great helps. There are online resources (for example: coolors.co) or applications for your desktop or mobile phone.

Design applications usually support color schemes, as does FileMaker. If you have Adobe Illustrator or Affinity Designer, you will find many options to create color palettes as well.

The goal of creating a color scheme is, to get a set of colors which fit well together. FM Designer uses a distinguished color scheme for each theme.

How to store colors in a document?

FileMaker has a color management which is linked to the application and your operating system. There is no way that colors can be assigned to a FileMaker file (which would be really beneficial).

Colors only can be saved within styles of a theme. As this is the only option, FM Designer has a series of color objects (shapes) which are assigned one of the colors of he color scheme. This is the color set on the Overview page.
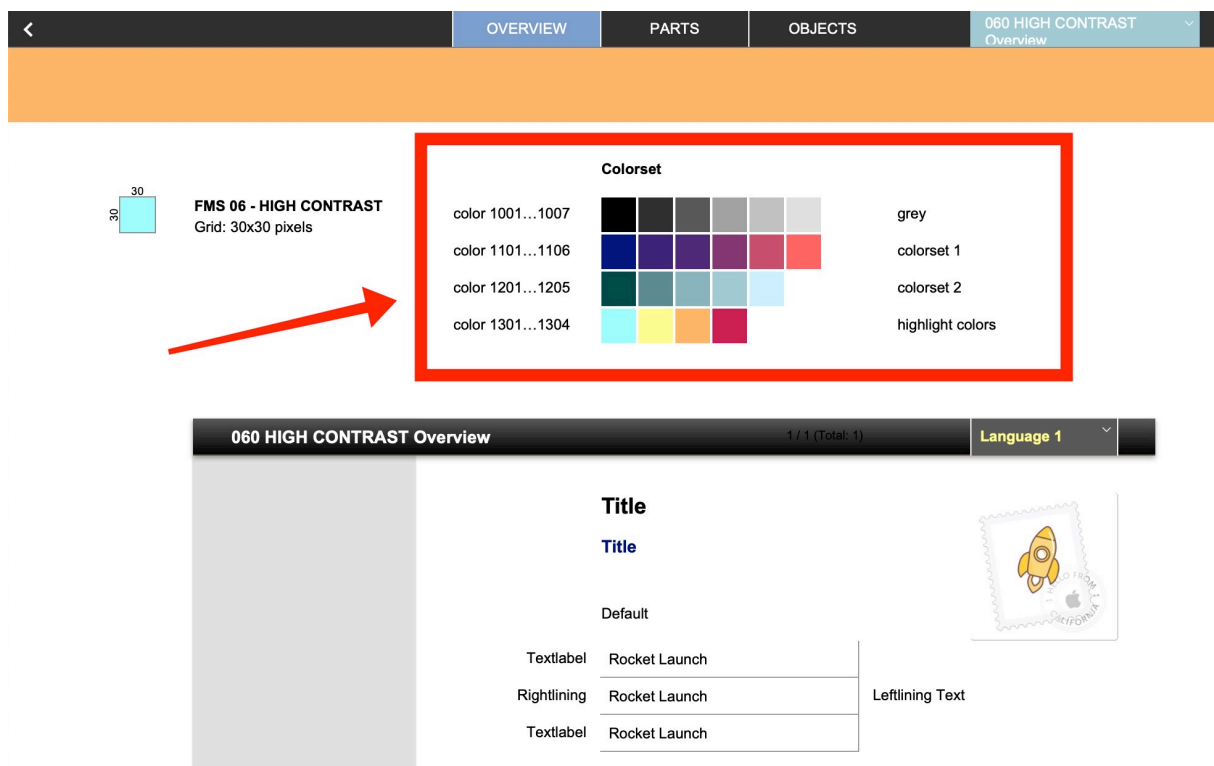
Each color set has 4 horizontal lines:
line 1 = 7 greyscale definitions
line 2 = 6 color definitions (first row)
line 3 = 5 color definitions (second row)
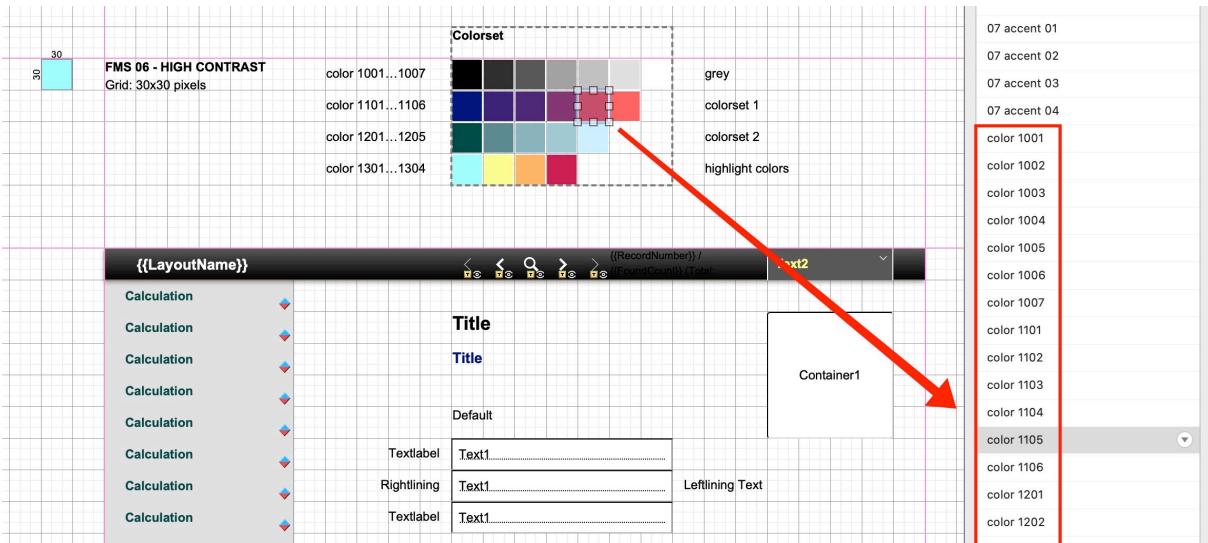line 4 = 4 highlight colors.

Each of these rectangles has a number:
line 1 = color 1001…1007
line 2 = color 1101…1106
line 3 = color 1201…1205
line 4 = color 1301…1304

The names of each of these definitions can be found in the theme, as the following screenshot shows.

This series of styles (color 1001...color 1304) is only meant to store the color information and are not meant to be used for regular formatting of objects. This is the only way, one can store information within the standard options of a FileMaker document.

How to load a color scheme

Color schemes or color palettes are delivered with FM Designer as external files. You can load these files for example to your system and you can use it within FileMaker to adjust the colors of any style.

This is how it works on Mac

Mac has an internal color scheme format (.clr). Once loaded into the system color palette, you can use the color scheme in multiple applications. To load a color scheme, you must have access to the Apple Color Picker. This is not a separate program you can just open, but it is integrated in other applications.

You will find it for example in Text applications like TextEdit. Click on the icon to color text, and a selection of colors will appear. At the bottom of this screen, click on "Show Colors" to open the full app.

Color Picker accessible in TextEdit.
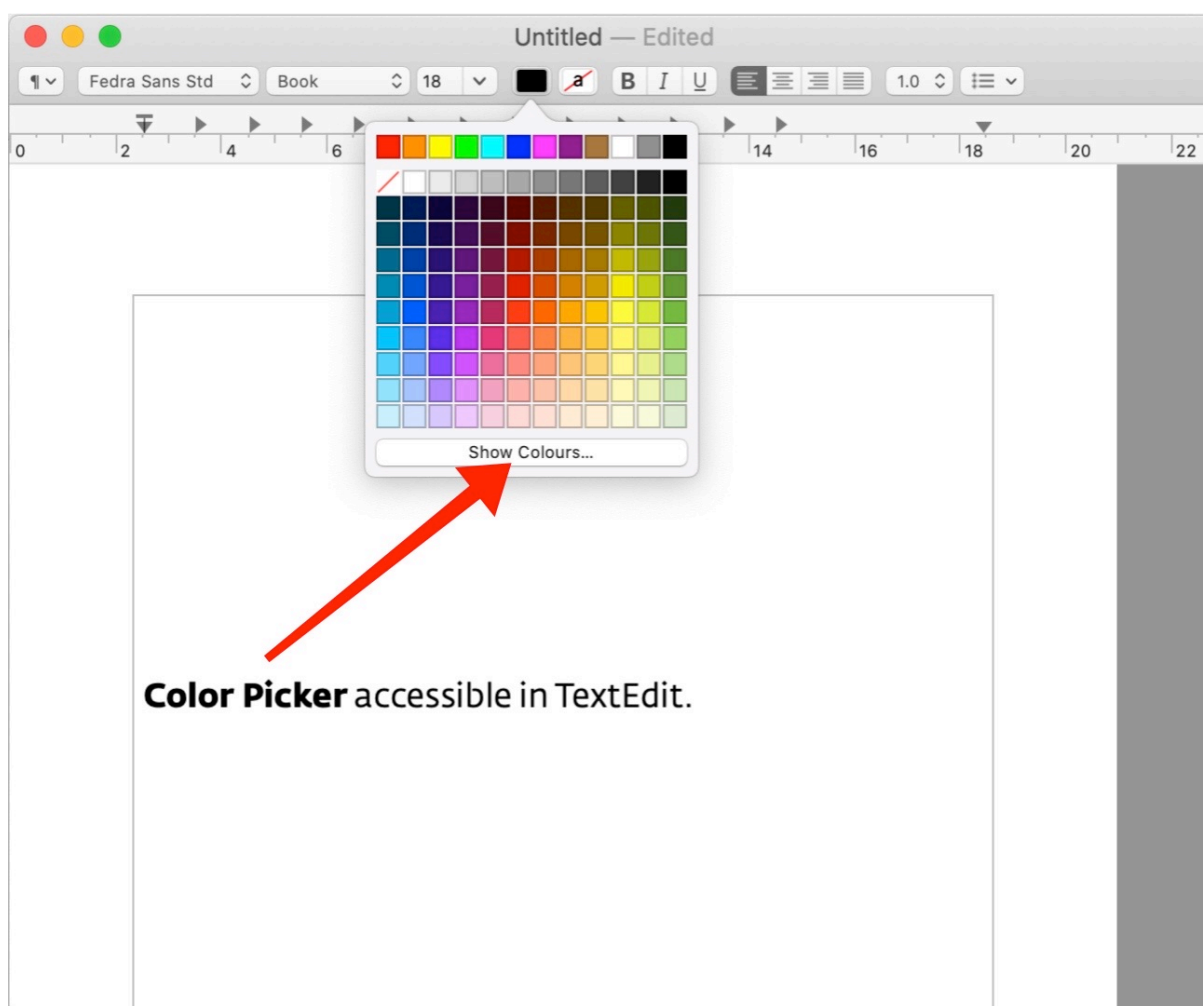
It works similarly in FileMaker, though it has a slight different implementation. Click on an object, then look in the Inspector under "Appearance". Any setting involving the color will call the Apple Color Picker. Then click on "Other color".
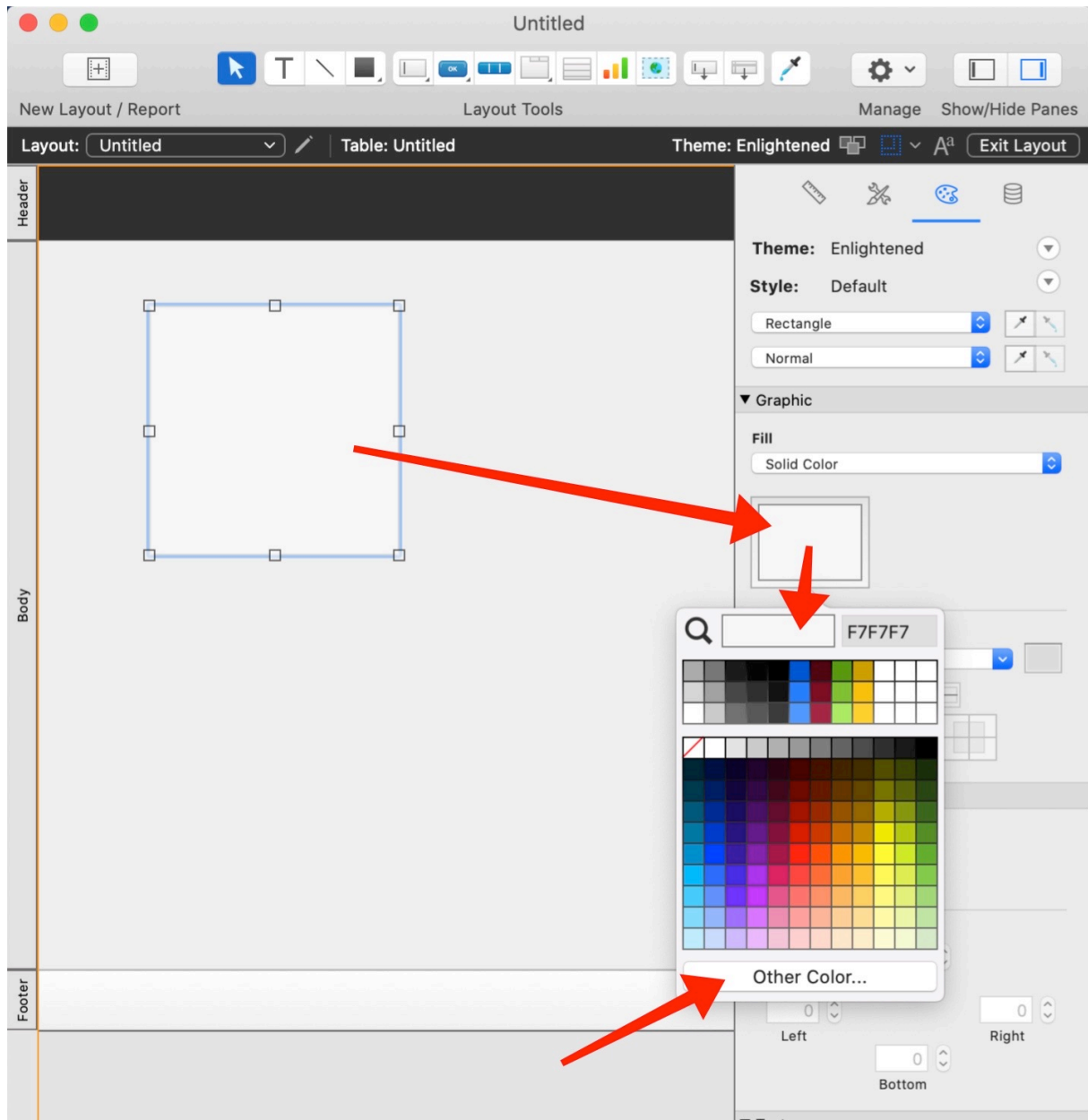
The Apple Color Picker Window appears, where I can use external color palettes (color schemes). In this screenshot it is the color scheme for the theme Lollipop.
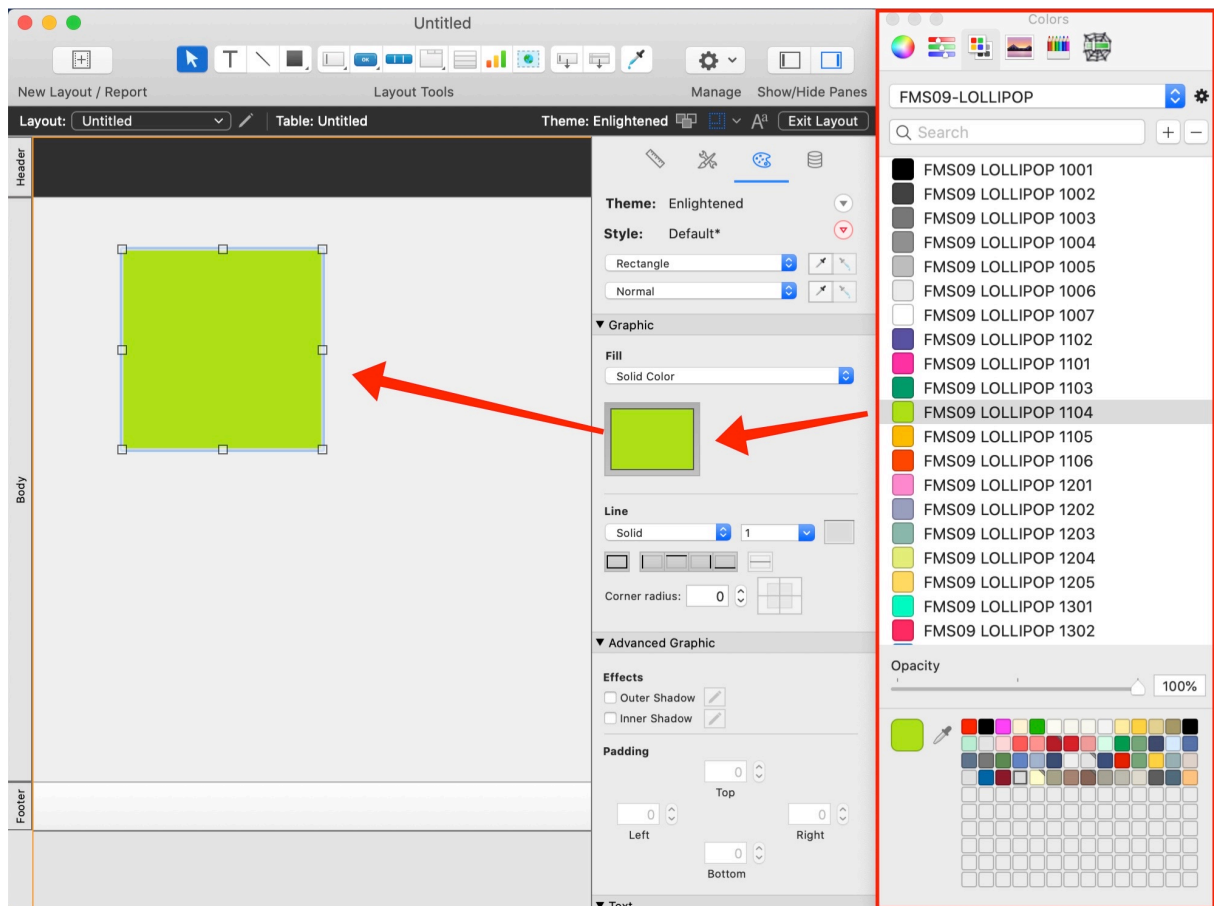
Managing color palettes

From the Apple Color Picker, you can load and save color palettes. On the top of the screen, next to the popup with the name of the current palette, click on the gear symbol. A popup menu will appear, from where you can load, save, rename color schemes.
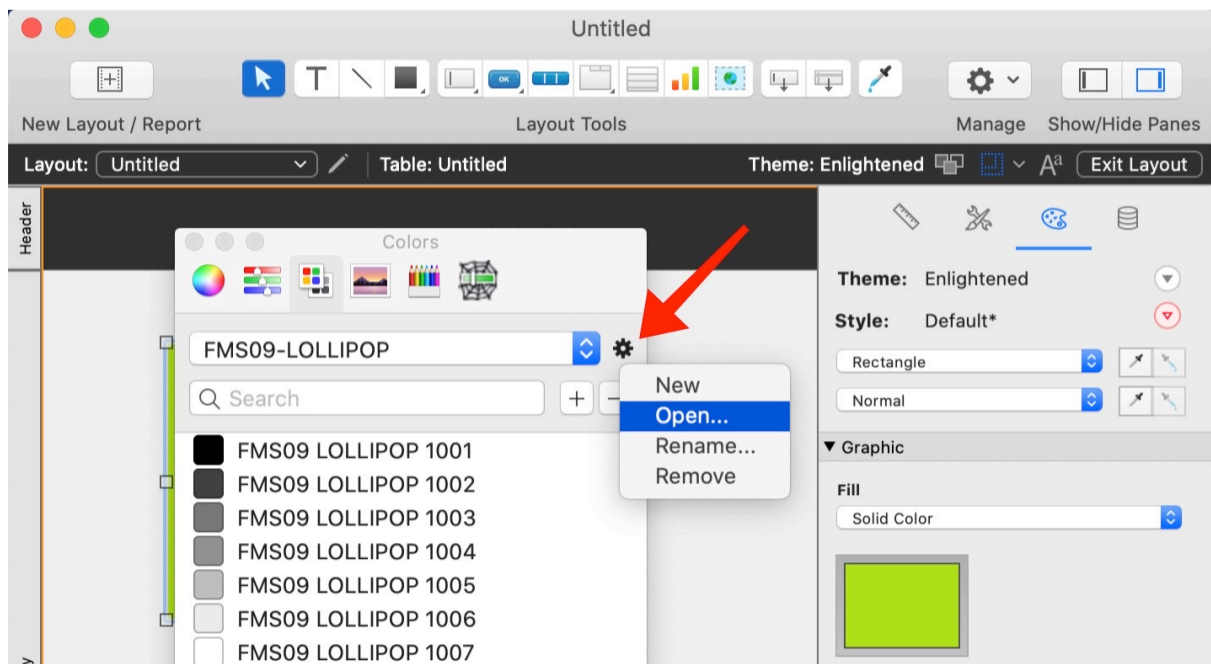
To load one of FM Designer's color schemes, click on "Open" and navigate to the folder with the color schemes, then select a theme and confirm to load it. You now have an additional color scheme available system-wide.

Buildup of a color scheme

Each color scheme has been built up to serve different purposes. There are probably more colors as you need, but all of the colors used have a purpose and a place within the color set. A color set in FM Designer has 22 colors.

Color Schemes

Each color set has 4 horizontal lines of color blocks:
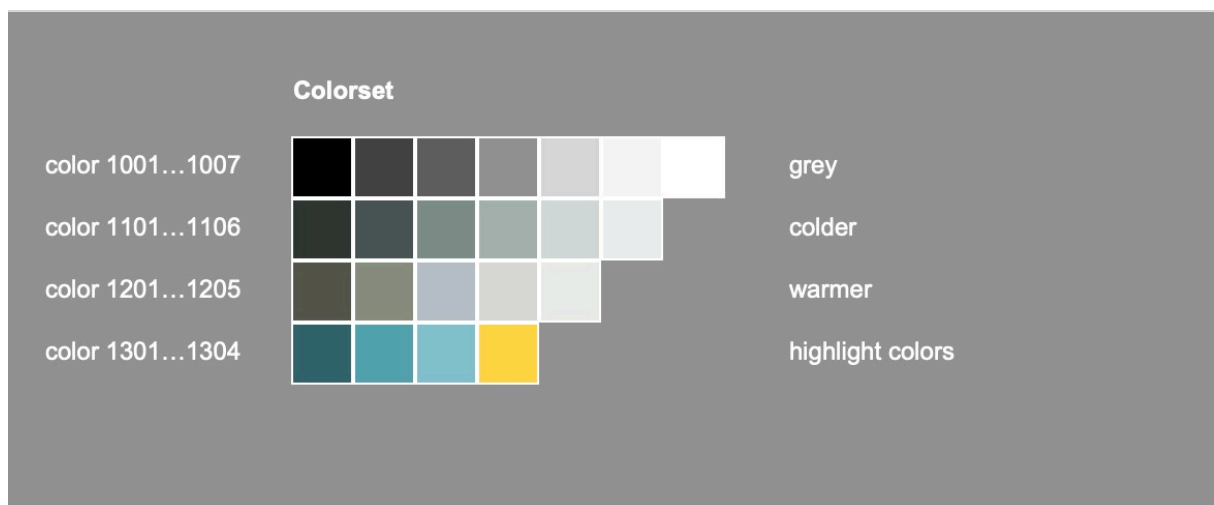line 1 = 7 greyscale definitions (black to white)
line 2 = 6 color definitions (first series of grades or shades of a color)
line 3 = 5 color definitions (second series of grades or shades of a color)
line 4 = 4 highlight colors. (contrasting colors for highlighting purposes)

Main set-up for color fields
This set-up works for themes 2–10. The following set is from the DARK theme.


The first line has 7 greyscale definitions. Most computer applications use the greyscale, as black and white (including) grey are considered non-colors. They form a neutral background for the real content of the application. Any images, illustrations or highlighting will work best if the surroundings are neutral. Content is king, not the interface. To make the interface work, black, grey and white make up perfect backgrounds.

As in this example, the second line gives a cold color impression (adding greenish-blue, while the third line has a warmer feeling (adding red and creating warmer earth tones). The last line has highlight colors, fitting to the colors of the previous two lines.

This simple set-up has been developed and proved to be very helpful in creating new color impressions and styles. It is used in themes 2–10.

The exception

The exception is the standard theme, which has a different approach:
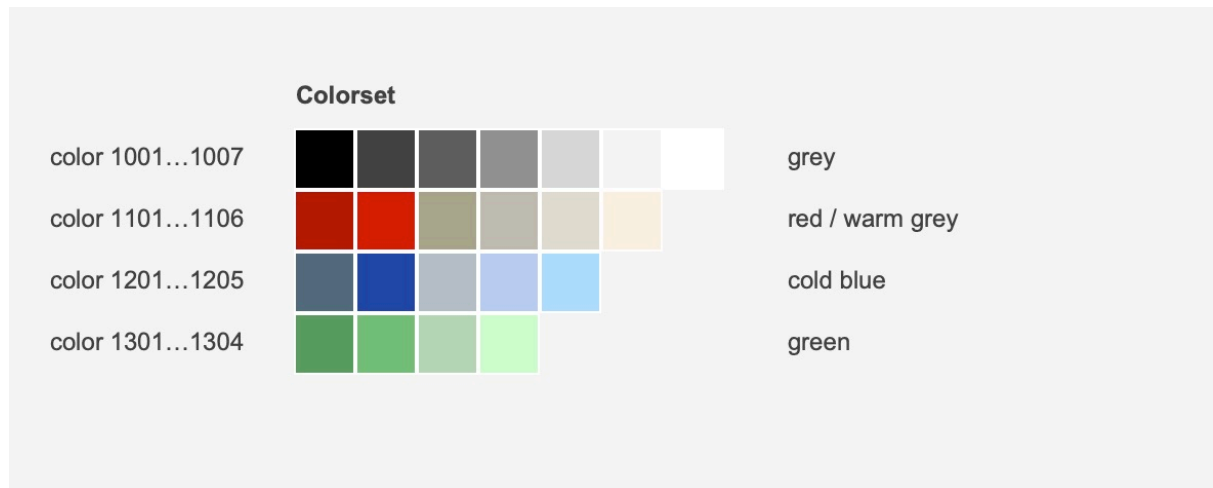
This is the same color set as used in FM Starter, our starter solution for new FileMaker projects. As a standard theme, it has a slightly different build-up, to make it more versatile, but less focussed. The standard theme is frequently used with a focus on shades of grey, with occasional color variations where it deems beneficial. It is a simple, yet versatile approach.

This is how it works:

line 1 = greyscale
line 2 = RED, from dark red to earthen/sandy kind of shades
line 3 = BLUE, in different cold tones
line 4 = GREEN, in different vibrant and matte variations.

While some of these colors can be used as highlights, the main purpose for this set-up was to enable different usages. Look at the color set and envision not the horizontal lines, but the vertical columns. Each column has a specific and harmonious impression across the 4 lines. You can choose dark tones or lighter ones. Also other groups can be chosen, to create different look-and-feels.

Learn more about colors in the paragraph about "The use of color".

10 color schemes

FM Designer comes with 10 color schemes, one for each theme. Each color scheme is comprehensive, yet limited. In real life, you will probably only use part of the colors and styles – it is meant that way!

Color schemes have their distinct emotions attached, like warm or cold, bright or dark, etc. The first 5 themes are general purpose themes. The second 5 themes are created for specific purposes.

List of color schemes

1. FMD01 STANDARD

This color set is identical with the color set in our product FM Starter. It is a versatile color set which allows for a variety of interpretations, from «light and fluffy» till «heavy and accented». This STANDARD theme is different from the other themes in its color set. More about this in the paragraph "Buildup of a color scheme".

2. FMD02 DARK

Dark themes are considered trendy. They are less fitted for text-heavy applications, as inverse text (white on dark) is harder to read. Image-heavy applications though might profit from it.
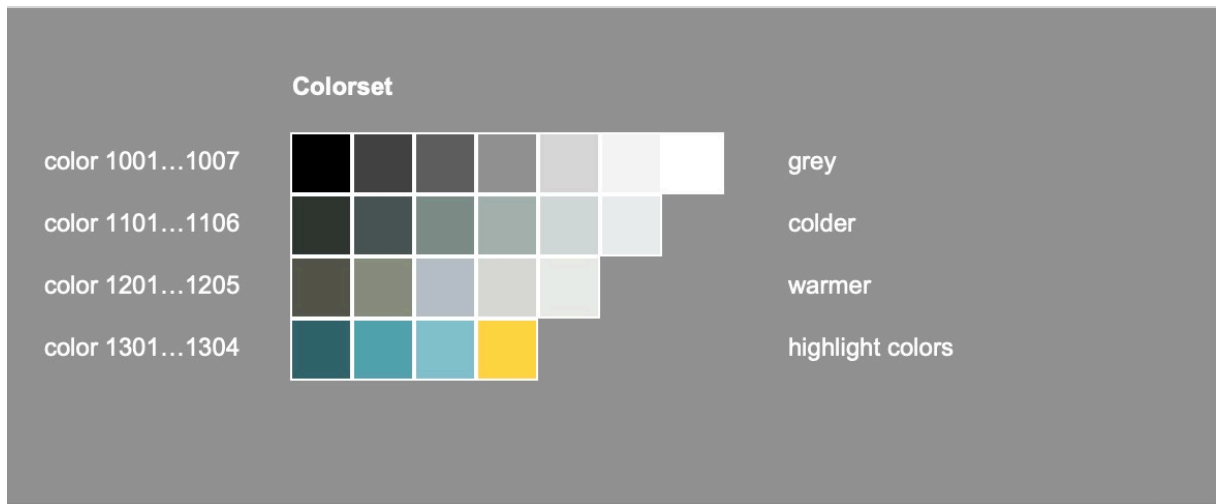
This Dark Theme is a good option for photography-layouts, where the colors of the images should not be dominated by the colors of the interface. By reducing the "light" of the interface, photos get the entire stage to present themselves. Check more considerations about choosing themes in the paragraph "Choosing a theme". Also check suggested usages as explained in the Theme description.

3. FMD03 FLAT EARTH

A general purpose theme with "flat" and "earthen" colors, so called tertiary colors as we find in nature. The name has nothing to do with a flat earth theory, just to be sure. The impression "flat" is the opposite of vibrant. These colors are *quiet* colors, thus staying in the background when the focus is on the *content* of your database.
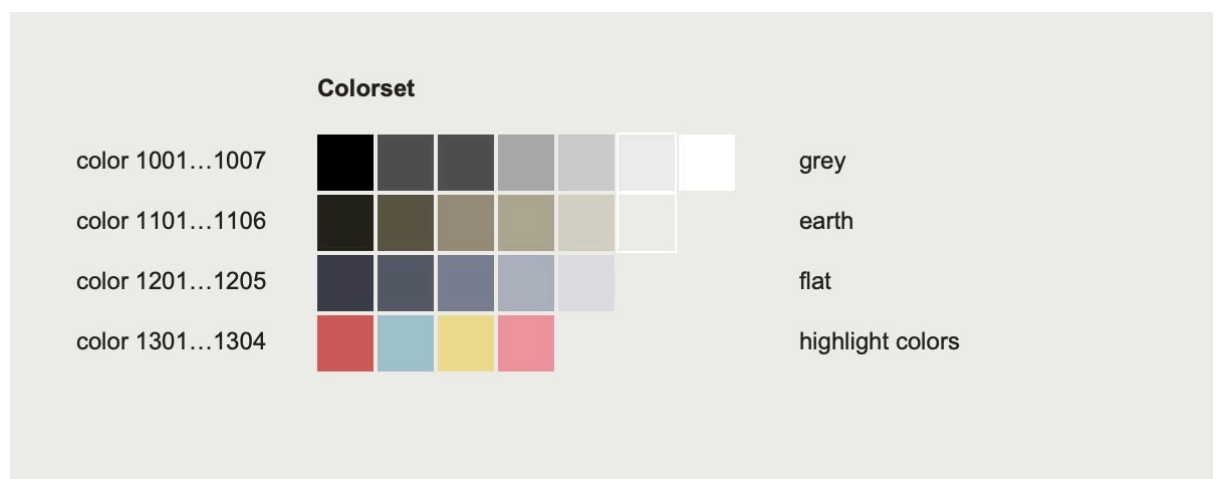
This is a perfect theme to get a neutral background with some warmer tones in it. Flat Earth has a luxurious feel to it.

4. FMD04 FLAT GREEN

A general purpose theme with "flat, green and natural" colors. The impression "flat" is the opposite of vibrant. These colors are *quiet* colors, thus staying in the background when the focus is on the *content* of your database.

Colorset

color 1001…1007		grey
color 1101…1106		green
color 1201…1205		flat green
color 1301…1304		highlight colors

Flat Green gives you a distinct identity, and might be well fitting for ecological topics, garden centers, service companies, etc.

5. FMD05 BLUE SKY

A general purpose theme with bright and blue colors, like on a fresh spring day. Blue is also considered to be "cold" and "technical". It is the color of the vast blue sea and wide horizons, where the sky is the limit.

Colorset

color 1001…1007		grey
color 1101…1106		blue
color 1201…1205		variations
color 1301…1304		highlight colors

In the Blue Sky theme, the first color row has bright blue colors (1101…1106), while the second color row has matte/flat blue colors (1201…1205). As with every theme, you can easily create several impressions from the same theme, for example by focussing on the bright colors, or more on the matte colors.

6. FMD06 HIGH CONTRAST

The first theme in the specialist sets is focussed on high contrast. This might be helpful for visually impaired people as well as in industrial settings, where interfaces must be reduced, clear and distinct.

Colorset

color 1001…1007		grey
color 1101…1106		colorset 1
color 1201…1205		colorset 2
color 1301…1304		highlight colors

The High Contrast theme has two different kinds of contrast. The color contrast is between the blue-to-red color range of the first color line (1101…1106) and the green colors of the second color line (1201…1205). Additionally, the colors used have tones in the dark and light area, thus allowing for several light/dark contrasts.

High contrasts can help to navigate quickly, perceive objects more clearly and to intuitively click on the right spots. In order for this to work, layouts should not be overloaded with features and informations. Learn more about how to create contrasts in the section "The use of contrast".

7. FMD07 PRINT

The Print theme is meant just for printing. If you have a print layout, simply switch to this theme, and you are good to go. The few highlight colors can be easily set to match your themes colors.

Colorset

color 1001…1007			grey
color 1101…1106			intense
color 1201…1205			backgrounds
color 1301…1304			highlight colors

b
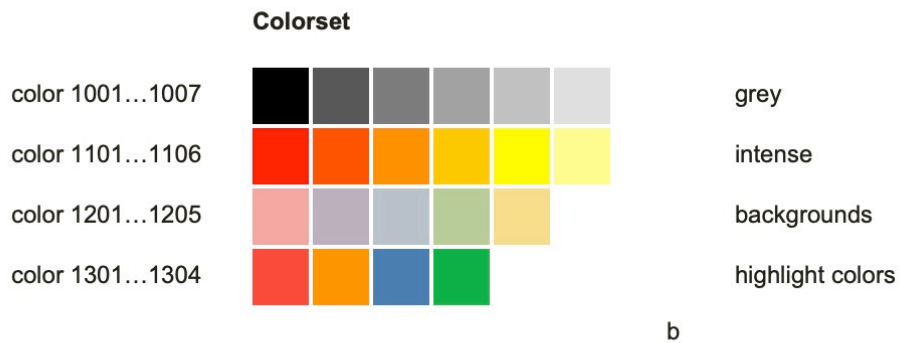
While the color set has bright colors, the main purpose of this theme is, to hide them wherever possible:

- White backgrounds
- Black texts
- Few outlines
- No fancy objects.

The colors are reserved for two usages:

1. Text highlights (titles, sub summaries, etc.)
2. Interface objects (buttons, etc.)

8. FMD08 COLOR BLIND

Color blindness is quite common. People can have color blindness in several degrees and with different colors they see well and others they don't see. To get a better understanding of the challenges someone with color blindness faces, the Color Blindness Simulator (Coblis) is a helpful tool:
https://www.color-blindness.com/coblis-color-blindness-simulator/

The Color Blind theme is focussed on colors which can be best distinguished by people dealing with red-green color blindness. Similar tones of red and green cannot be distinguished. While red and green are typical highlight colors, they have no special meaning if you are blind to these colors. For this situation, blue and yellow colors allow for better color contrasts. To optimize interface design, a light/dark contrast can also greatly improve the user experience. This theme gets you started.

Colorset

		grey
color 1001…1007		grey
color 1101…1106		blue
color 1201…1205		yellow
color 1301…1304		highlight colors
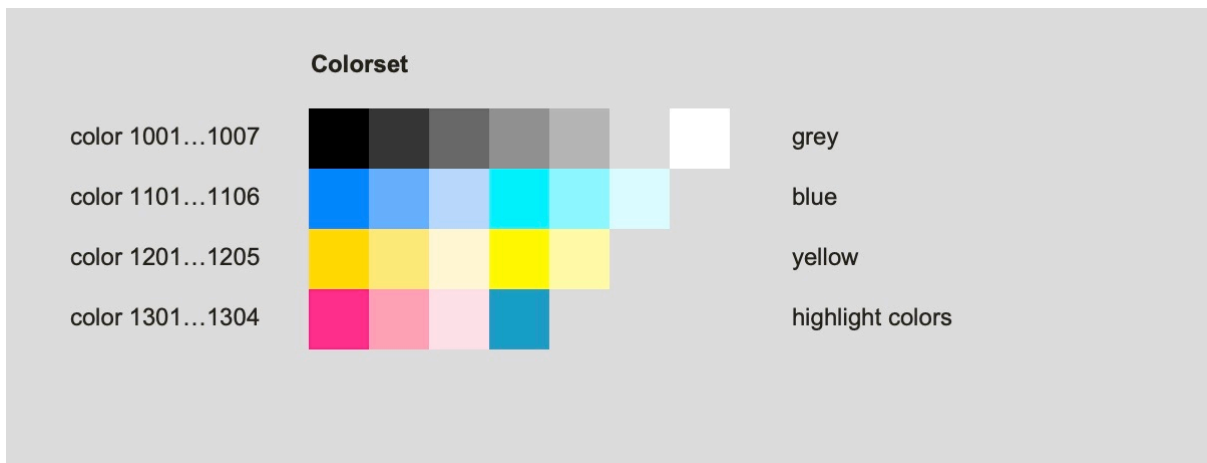
Be aware that there are several forms of color blindness. If you design a solution, always test with people dealing with color blindness themselves. They can give you valuable feedback. Adjust the theme where necessary.

9. FMD09 LOLLIPOP

The Lollipop theme is bright and colorful. This is not your average office solution theme. Rather, this theme aims at displays, kiosk-mode solutions, interactive databases for children, etc. The warm yellow and orange is inviting, while the green and grey give good contrasts to the warmer colors.

Colorset

		grey
color 1001…1007		grey
color 1101…1106		intensive
color 1201…1205		shades
color 1301…1304		highlight colors
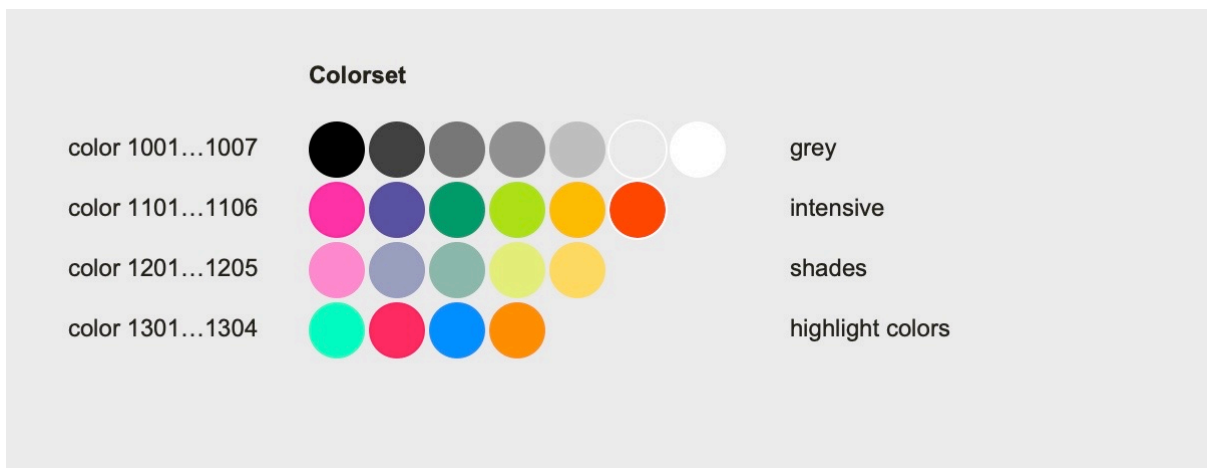
The first color line (1101…1106) have intensive colors, while the second color line has lighter pastel tones. The highlight colors should contrast especially well with the shades of the second color line and also fit well with the grey tones.

Check the paragraph "The use of color" for more information on colors.

10. FMD10 SCREENPLAY

The Screenplay theme is not a theme to use directly, but to use as a source of inspiration. Here you will find

- Gradients
- Background images
- Floating navigations
- etc.

The color scheme for this theme is rich, intensive and diverse.
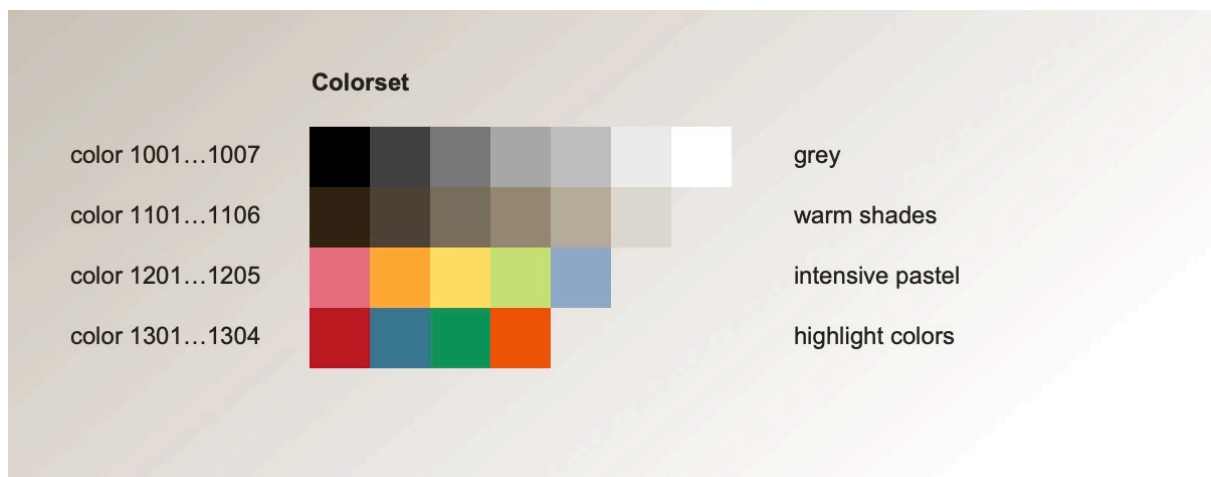
As with any theme, it is not wise to try and use every option you have. There is a variety of ideas and you pick the ones you deem interesting and useful. Interfaces are not meant to be made "pretty". The need to be clear, concise, guiding the user to the fields and functions of any specific layout. Nevertheless, there can be usages where buttons might be clearer if show with an image (for example: bills or credit cards on cashier displays), in web shops, etc.

Be extremely careful with using background images, as these will influence the loading times of your layout. Pretty can be pesky! Optimize images to make them as small as possible. Use specialist tools to reduce the size of your images.

The use of color

To work with colors needs practice, just as to create a good and useful design. One of the first things to realize is, that it is not about being creative or about creating pretty interfaces. The prettiness factor quickly wears off, while the usability is what keeps the client happy.

Each theme comes with a predefined color scheme. This is on purpose. Limit yourself to these colors. If need be, change a color in the set, then check all objects and parts to replace any of the old color definitions with the new color. Do not freely add colors to your pages, if you want to avoid the design apocalypse.

Do not freely add colors to your pages, if you want to avoid the design apocalypse.

Color is your servant

Color is here for a purpose. It is your servant. Color should serve your design in order to create a good user experience for the user.

Color can help

- to structure a page or text
- to highlight a topic or function
- to guide the eye to the important parts

Make a simple start

Color can be applied to backgrounds, outlines and objects or even text. That creates endless options. If this is overwhelming, start here:

- Start using one of the general purpose FM Designer themes (1...5)
- Use rather neutral color backgrounds, preferably light
- Avoid highlight colors unless you are indeed highlighting something

The use of contrast

Contrast is an important design element, along with form and color.

Types of contrast

There are several types of contrast you can use:

- color contrasts (like: red/green)
- color/non-color contrasts (like: color/black or white)
- light contrasts (like: light/dark)
- space contrasts (like: using empty space against used space)

Why contrast is important

Contrast helps to find and interpret the important parts on the page.

It's hard to read a black text on a dark background. Contrast helps. You achieve the contrast by making the text white. Similarly, a bright yellow text on a white background has no contrast at all. Use dark colors or black for the font, if working on a light background.

Reduced contrast

While contrast is important, a strong contrast can be tiring for the eye, especially if you are designing a screen solution.

A full white background for a software interface is like forcing the user to look straight into a lamp. If the text is small, the bright background will outshine the text and possibly even make it unreadable, thus adding to the tiring effect. To solve this problem use a slightly reduced contrast. Instead of black and white, you can choose a dark grey (graphite) text against a light-grey background. The text still has excellent readability, but it is more pleasing to the eye.

Avoid color contrast

Color contrasts are hard to distinguish. A dark blue text on a light-orange background might work, but only if there is a good light/dark contrast. If both colors have the same intensity, the contrast does not really help.

As a rule of thumb, one can choose a color/non-color contrast, which usually works much better. Most styles in FM Designer use this type of contrast. A button might be colored, but the text or symbol on the button is either black (on a light background) or white (on a dark colored background). By managing contrasts like this, you have both color and good contrast.

Do not overdo

Limit the use of strong colors, unless it fits your audience and application. There are always exceptions to any rule, but for an average data processing application, it's more about the data and the processing as about catchy colors on the buttons.

Fewer highlights help to focus the attention of a user. If all items have a warning color, there is no guidance. If only a single important button has a warning or highlight color, it is easy to find your way on the layout.

Guiding the user

A sober approach to colors helps the user to find its way. Conditional formatting, hovering effects and other interactive treats help the user to interact with the layout, while the feedback guides him to the right spots.

Design basics

It's not about art

There is art to express yourself, but interface design is not such an art. Designing interfaces is art-with-a-purpose. Your taste is not that purpose.

Let's make a comparison: Typography for example is not about creating fancy typefaces, but rather about readability. The best text is such a text that is extremely well readable. An easy-to-read book is a book in which typography is used so professionally, that the reader effortlessly reads through the pages. The typography doesn't catch the eye, but rather vanishes into the background. As soon as a reader stumbles over the readability, typography needs an overhaul.

The same applies to interface design.

- **It's not about fancy colors, but colors can help**

- **It's not about creative looks, but about form that follows function**

It's about usability

Consistent design

If every page looks different, users have a hard time to find their way around the software. Consistency in design greatly improves usability. Use the same grid, the same size of headers, the same size of buttons, which can be found in the exactly the same places on every page. These considerations help to create a coherent look and this improves usability.

A lot of what is considered "Good Design" evolves over time. There is something like "Zeitgeist" in design. There are trends and design and colors are interpreted differently across culture zones. What works in one place, does not need to work in another place. Consistency therefore always needs a context of which you should be aware.

Claris is an American company. Its looks and feels very America. The basic themes of FileMaker are based on American design. In Europe these designs might look outdated and different from the countries own visual identity. There are huge differences even

between Europeans countries. For example, both Holland and Switzerland have an outspoken culture in typography, yet the design culture and its values completely differ (tip: check the newspapers in different countries). Asian countries, especially Japan, have a complete different approach to design and also attach different meanings to colors as people do in Europe or in the States. Would you compare South America with Scandinavia, not only the climate differences will popup, but also the different design cultures.

Be aware of your design culture.

Usability is also linked to what people already know. Creating a stunning new type of interface might be showing off what you can, yet the simplest interface, based on known examples, usually is the best interface for the user. To stick to known usage principles, you can use the Apple Human Interface Guidelines or other basics.

Usability is the goal for any design.

Every color, form and placement of objects must serve a purpose. That is not a purpose for each object, but rather a purpose for the page and the workflow. Important is not if buttons are round, but if the usage, form and color of the buttons help the user to perform the task at hand. To make this clear, the button must follow the overall purpose and design.

Tips for better interfaces:

- Lean and clean interface
- Reduce to the max
- Focus on a single task
- Guide the eye to the important fields and functions

Top-down approach

If you are working on a first design, many people choose a bottom-up approach. The first thing to do is to design a button or field. The direct is from a single element to a single page to multiple pages and last but not least to the entire application. This approach comes naturally to us, but it is not helpful. A top-down approach, from the general to the specific, can help to put everything in context.

A top-down approach to design would be to define the purpose of the application, then the physical requirements of the interface for the user (for which platform do you design? Desktop? Tablet? Web?), and finally the different basic views and tasks. Smaller parts can

be edit-windows and list-windows, for example, along with dashboards, print views, etc. Standardize and simplify these basic approaches. At the very end of this process stand the single elements on your page. Form follows function.

Less is more

Each theme in FM Designer comes with loads of styles and colors. You are not forced to use them all and you should not do it. Choose the styles you like and let the other styles be.

- Use few main styles
- Use few main colors
- Other styles and colors might be used as occasional highlights.

Do not delete unwanted styles either, as you might need them later. Only existing styles can be matched when switching themes (!). If you need a new style, you preferably change an existing style, to maintain integrity with other themes.

Good design is not the result of a theme

Good themes help to create good design, but using a theme does not automatically result in good design. A theme is only here to *support* your design. If you are unsure how to properly create good design, do not only look at other software products (as many are very dull), but also have a look at typography, web-design and things like that. Read some books, go and listen to lectures about design, make some tests, get the basics, then move on.

Good places to start:
- Your local library
- Your local design schools (check the internet)
- Your local bookshop
- Your local newspaper kiosk.

Choosing a theme

There is no theme that fits all usages. What theme you choose does not depend on your personal preferences, but it should be a decision in favor of the project. Therefor: Know your project, know your customer, ask for any design guidelines (Corporate Identity) they might have. Work from there.

If the customer has no corporate identity guidelines, nor colors or logos, one can ask for the type of emotion the want to communicate. Luxurious goods frequently use dark red in text, while supermarkets have orange logos and tech companies frequently use blue. Colors have meaning which you can try to understand, and vice versa, if the customer can explain the meaning of the company and what should be communicated, a color can be chosen to reflect that intent.

Creating your own theme

FM Designer comes with 10 ready-to-go themes. If you want to make changes to an existing theme or even want to create a complete new design, the best way to do so is to copy an existing theme, then change the definitions of each style.

Here are the steps:

1. Duplicate a set of layouts for a theme

In the Layouts window, each theme has its own folder and in that folder the same 3 layouts. Duplicate and rename a folder with all layouts.
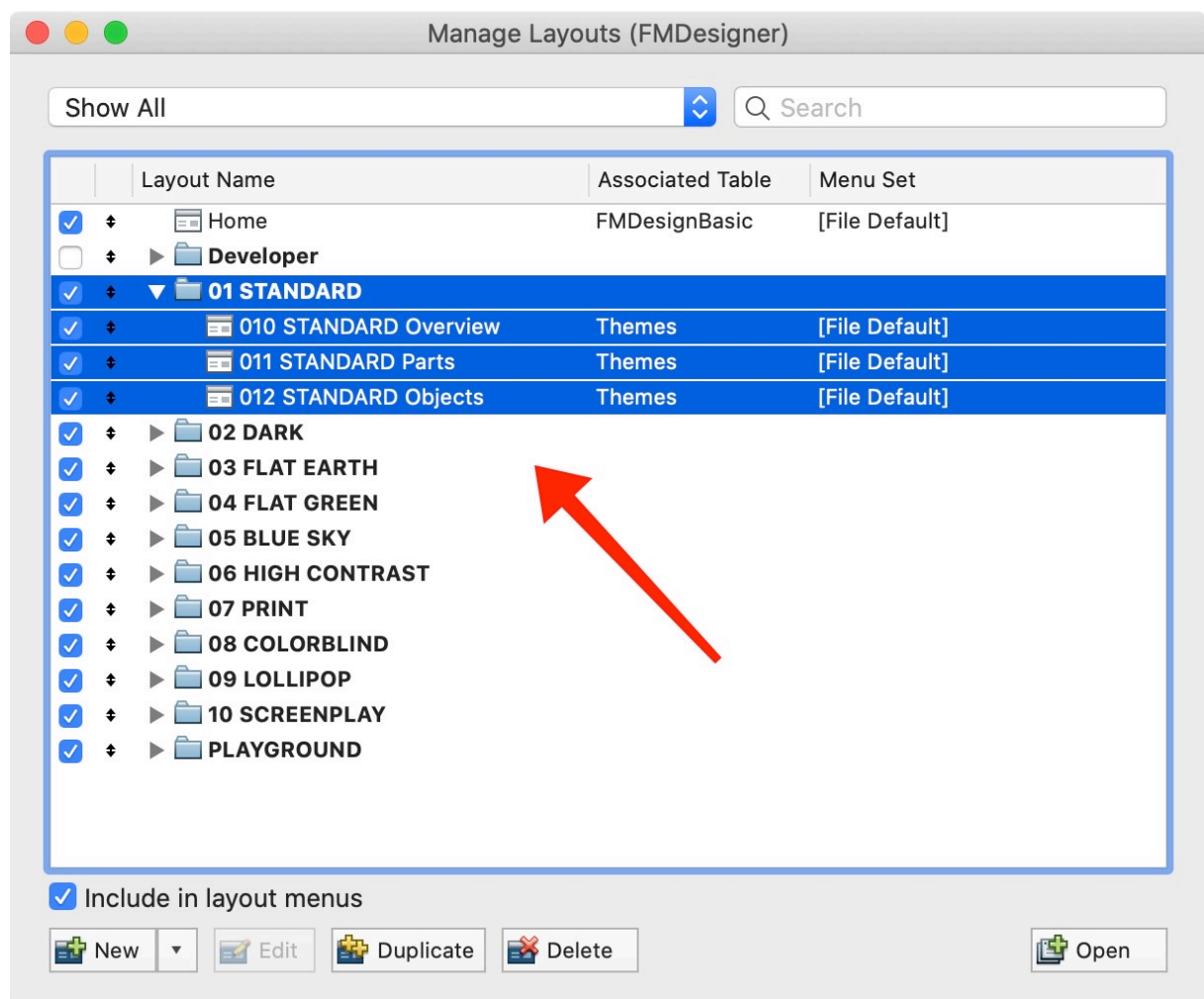
2. Duplicate a theme

Go to File > Manage > Themes.

Click on a theme and click on duplicate. You now have a new theme.
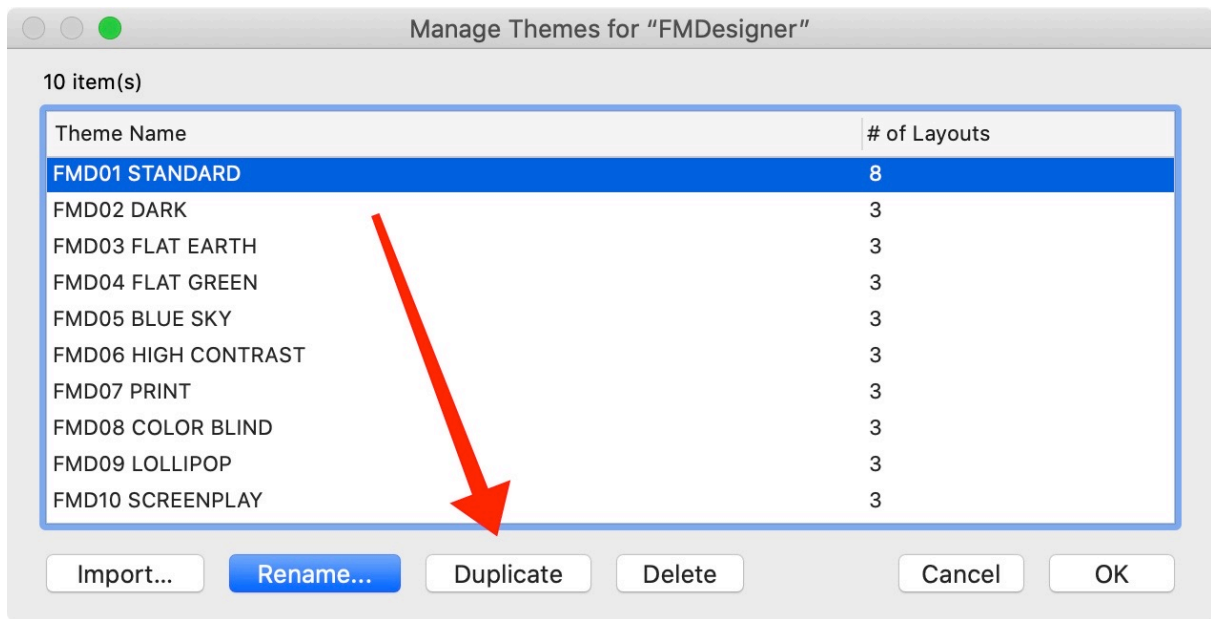
3. Assign the previously created duplicate pages the new theme

Go back to the few new layouts you created just before. Each of these layouts already have a theme assigned, but that needs to change to the new duplicated theme. Only then, these new pages have their own theme, ready for development.

At each page, switch to layout mode. In layout mode click on the "Change the theme applied to this layout" button:
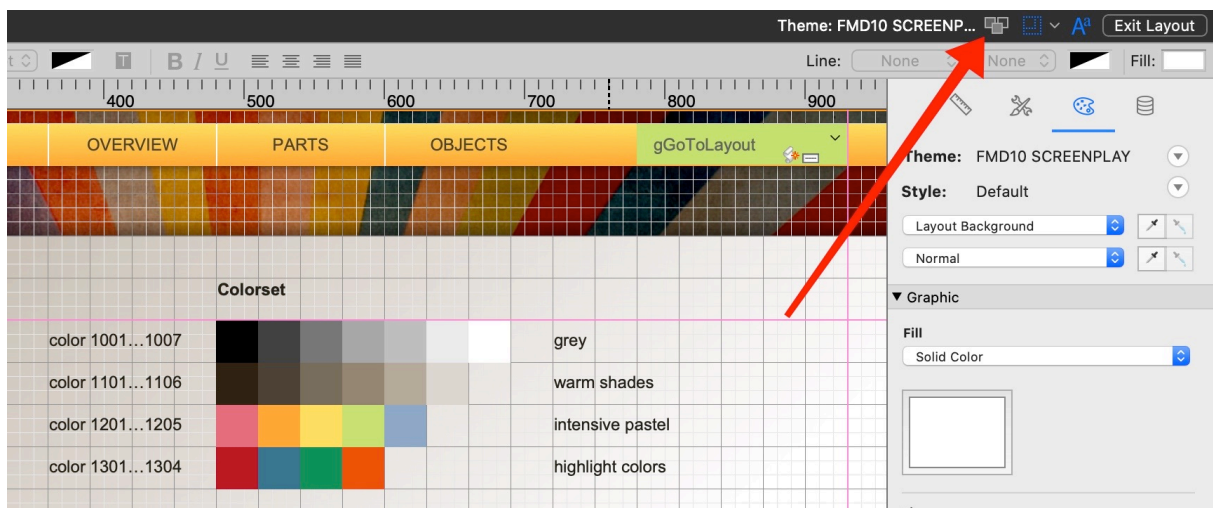
Select the new theme and confirm.

4. Start adapting all styles

Now follows the real work and it is not to be underestimated. Each object can have a myriad of settings, but now you work through the 3 layouts, click on each object, change the settings in the inspector and save the changes. This takes quite some time and is prone to trial and error.

Check the FileMaker Help on how to work with themes and change styles. Also check our videos, as it is sometimes easier to grasp a workflow if you see it.

Playground

The Playground is a set of layouts to experiment with. Instead of using one of the original theme pages, it's better to create a separate page for testing new ideas.

There are two Playground pages, one with a grid set to 30x30 pixels, like on all other layouts, and one created with a 40x40 pixel grid. You can add as many test pages as you like, if you find that helpful.

How you can use the Playground

- Use the standard layout or create your own
- Switch themes quickly to see how looks change
- Experiment with different grids
- Create basic pages for your own design, using one of the themes of FM Designer
- Attention: As long as you use one of the existing themes and make changes to the styles, these will be applied to the theme itself (consider creating a new theme).

Best practice for creating new themes

If you start to make changes to style settings, it is suggested to duplicate an existing theme and to create their own pages (as described > here). This will allow to develop an all-new look-and-feel, even if based on an existing theme.

For example: If you take the FMD05 BLUE SKY theme, you can create several blue impressions (rather bright and light, or darker). To use the same theme, but in a different way, duplicate the theme and theme pages and adjust the new theme (objects, parts, etc.), based on the same colors.

Working with themes

Understanding themes.

Themes are based on the same original

All themes of FM Designer are duplicates of the first Theme. For this reason, each style has the same ID across the Themes. As all themes of FM Designer are based upon the same original style set or theme, these themes "work together". You can switch a layout from one theme to another, and all styles will be matched with the new theme.

> All themes of FM Designer are based upon the same original style set or theme.

You cannot see nor edit this hidden ID of a style. Just be aware that all themes have secret information, which makes it possible to simply switch between themes of FM Designer. Any *new* styles though will *not* be recognized when switching a theme and thus be discarded and set to the default style.

See also "Style names must be unique" and "Creating new styles".

What is a theme?

A theme is a set of styles. Each theme represents a specific look-and-feel and all styles of that theme work together towards that goal.

In FileMaker, any page is linked to a theme, which will then provide a set of styles for objects. When creating a new page, a standard theme will be applied and all new objects will receive the default style of the chosen theme for each specific kind of object.

In the Inspector, in the third tab "Appearance" you will find the theme named, along with the style name and settings for the currently selected object.
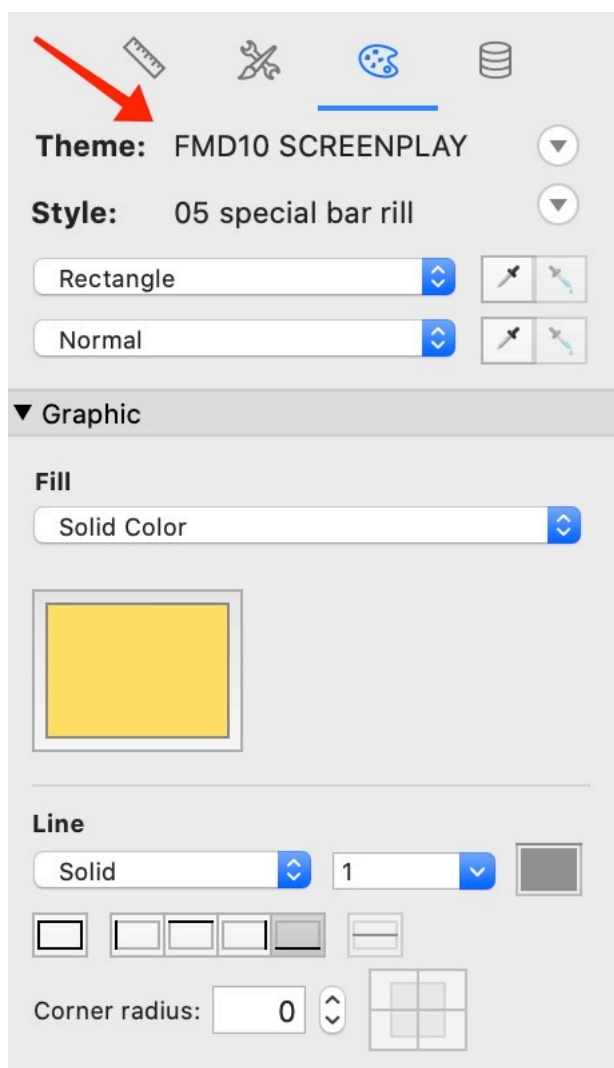
It is possible to switch to a different theme. In Layout mode, click on "Change the theme applied to this layout" to choose a different theme. Try this to see and understand what a theme is.
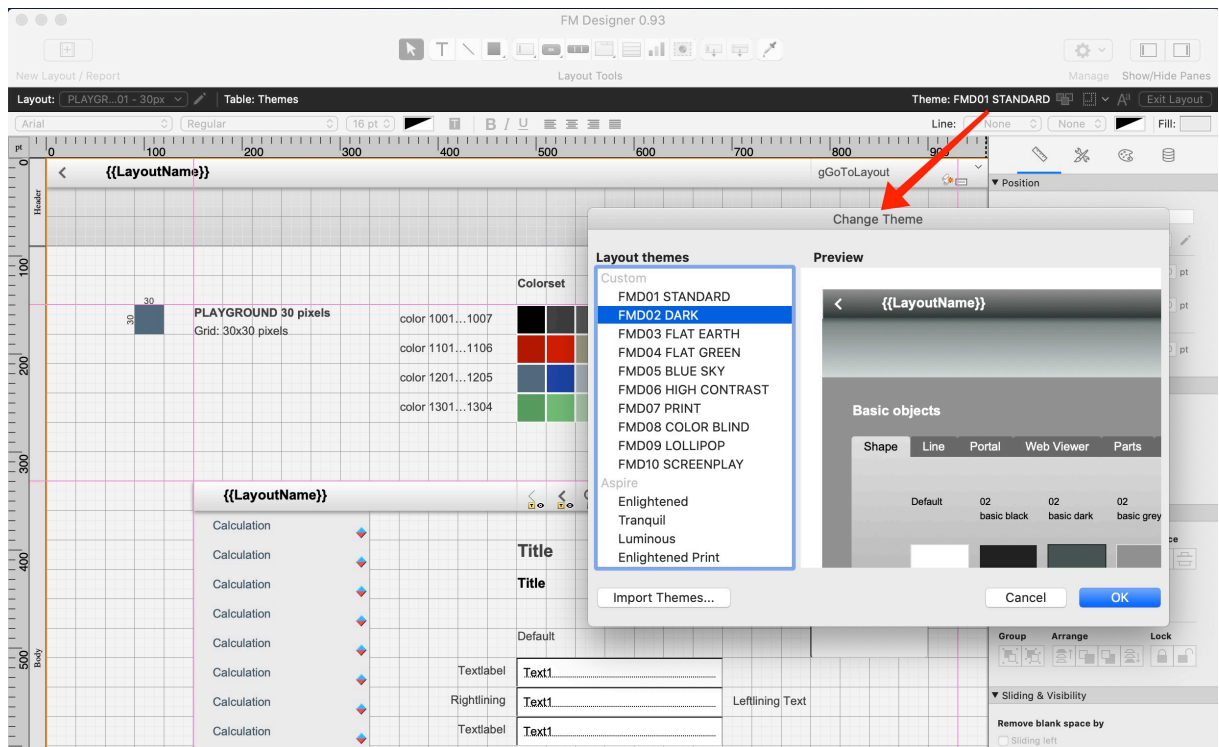
What is a stylesheet?

Themes are style sheets

FileMaker themes are similar to Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) as used for websites. Cascading stylesheets for websites are extremely versatile. The adaption for FileMaker is not quite as versatile (yet), but is extremely simple to work with. While CSS usually are simple text files, FileMaker has a user-friendly interface to it, as can be found in the Inspector.

Themes are assigned to pages

In FileMaker, themes are assigned to layouts (pages). Each layout must have a theme assigned. One page = one theme. It is not possible to assign multiple themes to a page.

Themes are made up of styles

Within a theme (or: stylesheet), there can be unlimited definitions or styles. Styles are defined for objects. For a text object, it can describe the font, the font-size, the font color, the line space, the background and many more things. Each object has different settings and options, and frequently also has settings for the status (active, non-active, hover, pressed, focus).

Styles can be referred to by its name

This whole set of definitions for an object is a single style. Each style has a name. Instead of repeating all settings for all objects, it is easier to reference an object to the theme (or: stylesheet), by assigning a name to the object. This not only reduces the settings (and size) of a layout, but also simplifies the maintenance of settings. When using a stylesheet, the settings of any object can be adjusted in the stylesheet itself, with an affect on all related objects.

Cascading stylesheets

What's the "cascading" in the CSS?

Stylesheets are called "cascading" as they are applied in a hierarchical way:

1. Style for a single object
2. Style for that object for a single layout
3. Style for that object for the theme itself (and thus for any object anywhere in the file)

It is possible to make changes for just a single object, or for a single page. You also can save the information to the theme itself. By doing so, it automatically applies to all objects using that same style from the same theme.

The cascading is: object > page > file (or: theme)

Stylenames must be unique

Why style names must be unique

A theme or stylesheet is a long list of styles, and each style must have a unique name. There are no different stylesheets or themes for object types, but all object types, parts, etc. find a place in the same theme and list of styles. This fact requires that style names must be unique. Except for the default definitions, all styles must have unique names across the entire list.

How FM Designer names styles

There is no standard for defining styles. The only rule is, that names must be unique. While working on FM Designer, all kinds of ideas have been evaluated, like number only solutions, or descriptive names. At the end, a combination of both seemed to fit best.

In FM Designer, each style is (more or less) a combination of 3 elements:
1. group number
2. text
3. item number

These style names are unique. To take mere numbers would be the simplest method of gaining unique style names. These however are hard to read. Descriptions are important. As in the example above, the group numbers keep styles together, while the numbering at the end allows for variety.

There are no rules. If you want to change the names, just go ahead. It should not afflict the compatibility between the themes.

Don't...

Suggestion: Do not delete any styles. If you do, you loose the connection to the other themes.

Showing the complete style list

In the screenshot below, a standard FileMaker theme is shown. When clicking on an object, only the styles of that object type are shown. In this screenshot, you see the Shape styles:
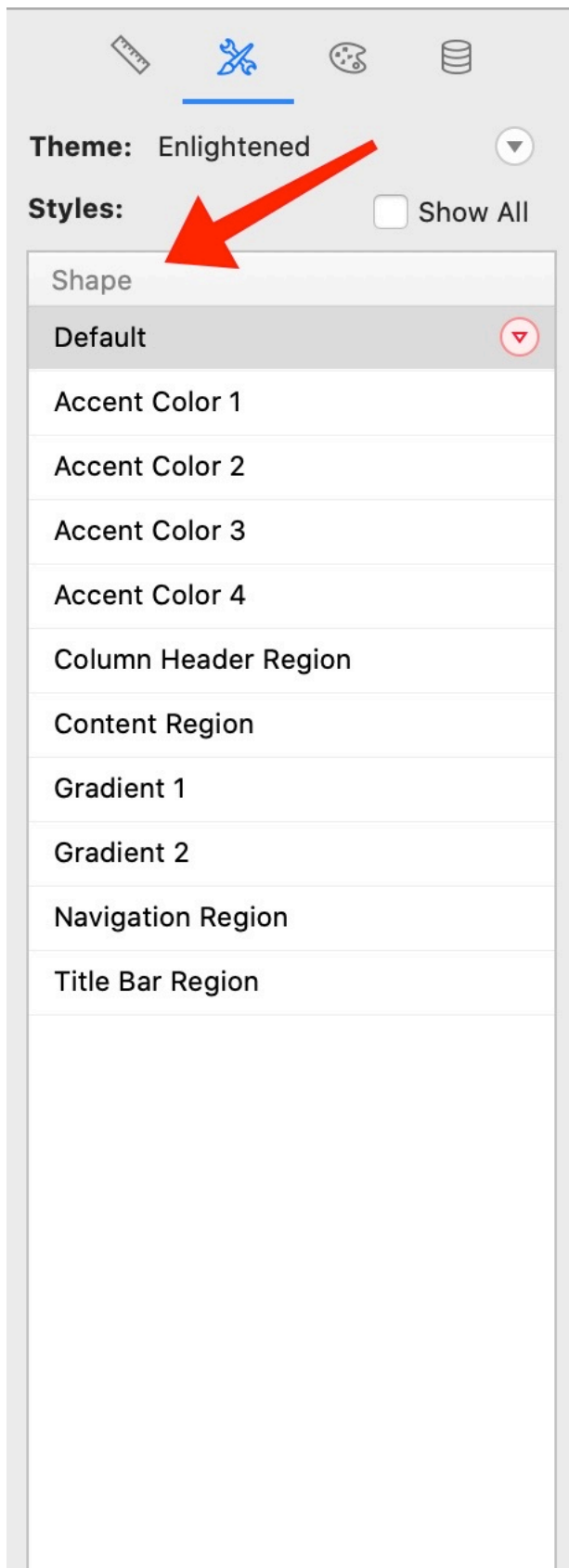
It is possible to show the entire list of styles, across all object types. Set the check at "Show All" and FileMaker will display the entire list of styles, for all object types and parts. You can now scroll through the list to see all entries:

Theme: Enlightened

Styles: ✓ Show All

Part
Default
Form Body
Navigation Part
Shape
Default
Accent Color 1
Accent Color 2
Accent Color 3
Accent Color 4
Column Header Region
Content Region
Gradient 1
Gradient 2
Navigation Region
Title Bar Region
Edit Box
Default
Minimal Edit Box
Navigation Edit Box
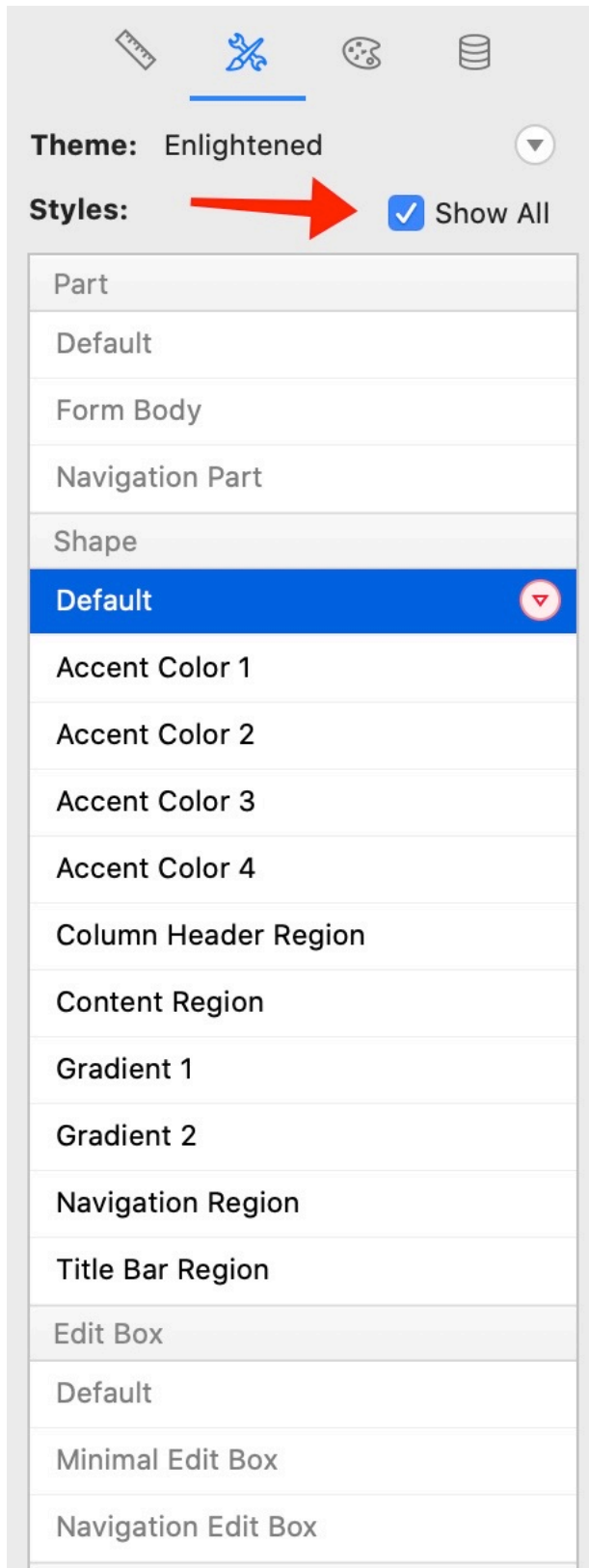
Applying a style to an object

To apply a style to an object, click on the object, then open the Inspector. In the Styles tab, click on a style to apply that style to the object.

Object list

FileMaker lists all objects of a layout in an object list. This list is shown in the left margin of the active window (in layout mode). Instead of click on objects in the layout itself, you also can click on any object in the object list, in order to change or edit the style of that object.

Grouped objects

In the list of objects, you might also see grouped objects. You might have grouped several objects on purpose. Sometimes FileMaker groups objects automatically. This is the case when you have a regular object, to which you create a button action. In that case, there will be a "Grouped Button" folder, which you have to open, before you can click on any specific object and change the style.

Also, if you try to click on an object and nothing happens, or you do not get the expected results in the Inspector, that object might be grouped. The easiest is to have a look in the object list, and to make sure that you click on the right object in that list. Then edit as usual.

In the screenshot below, the TimestampCreated field was assigned a button action. FileMaker created a "Grouped Button" entry (something like a folder, which you can open). Within that folder, you will find the edit box as used for the field TimestampCreated.
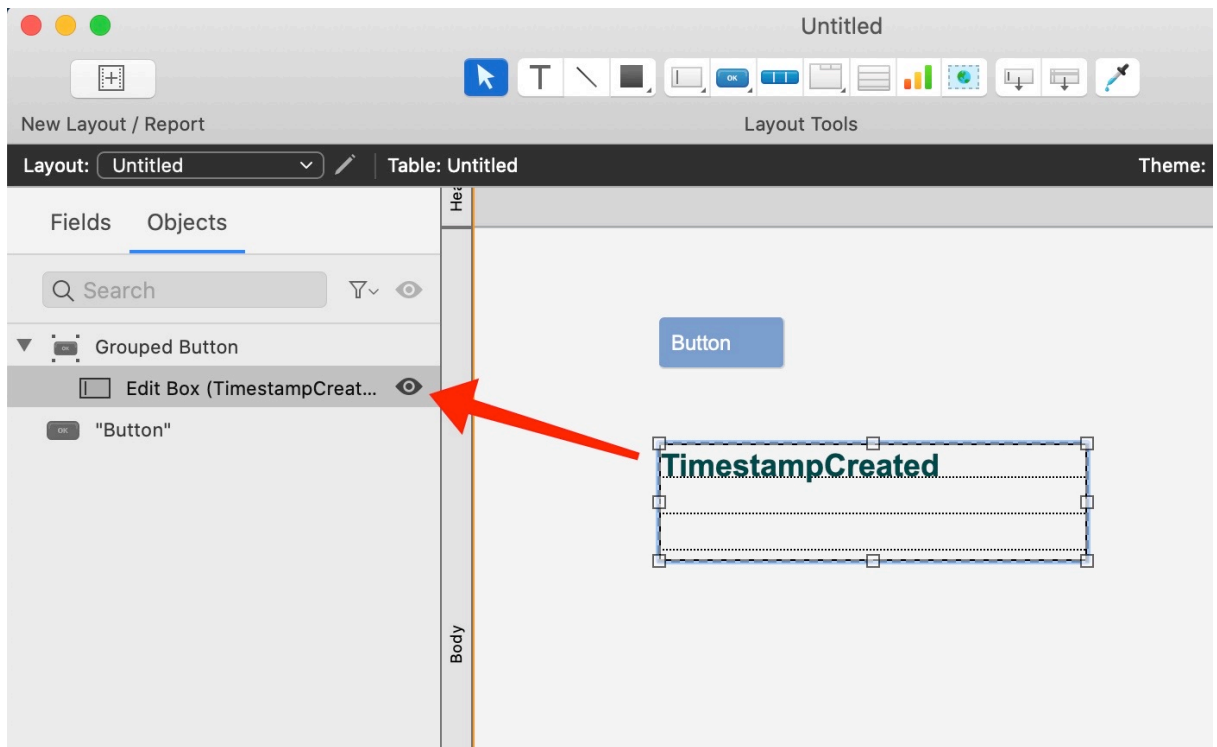
Editing a style

How to find settings of any style

In the screenshot below, a popup menu is selected in the layout, and in the Inspector at the right side, the name of the style can be found, along with all settings.
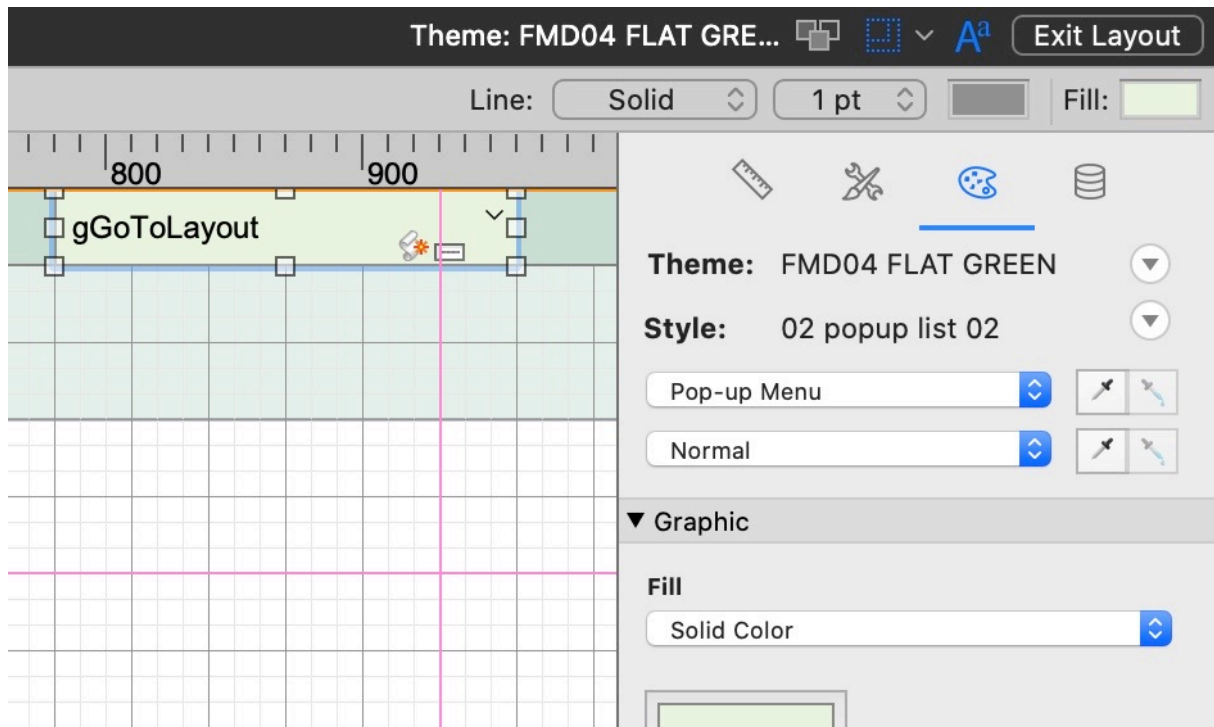
Once you found the settings for this object, you can start to change it. Any change is a local change on that specific object first. Only if you save the changes to the style or eventually to the theme, other objects will get the same settings applied.

Here is how this works:

Single object

In the screenshot below you see some settings for a selected object.
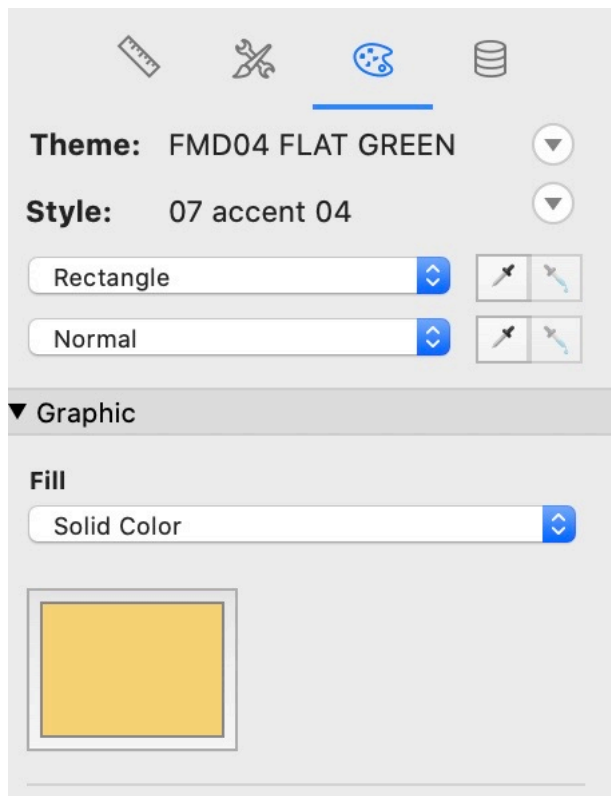
As soon as you change a setting for that object, you get a feedback in the Inspector. In the next screenshot the color has been changed to purple. Behind the name of the style, the "triangle in a circle" (a popup menu) turned red. This indicates a change and means, that the change has not been saved yet. The change therefor afflicts only the object which has been changed.
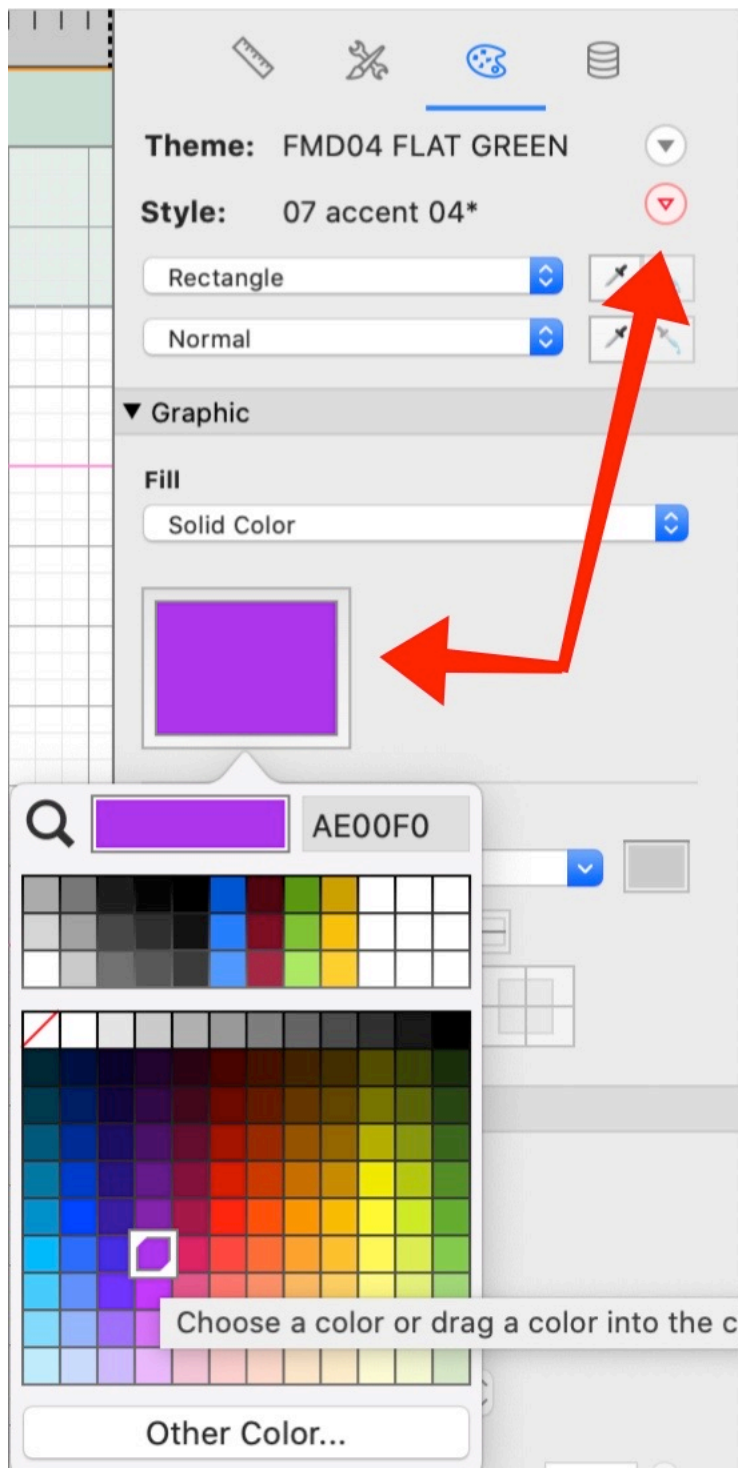
Save the change to the style

Now click on the red triangle and a popup appears, through which you have several options. Choose "Save Changes to Current Style".
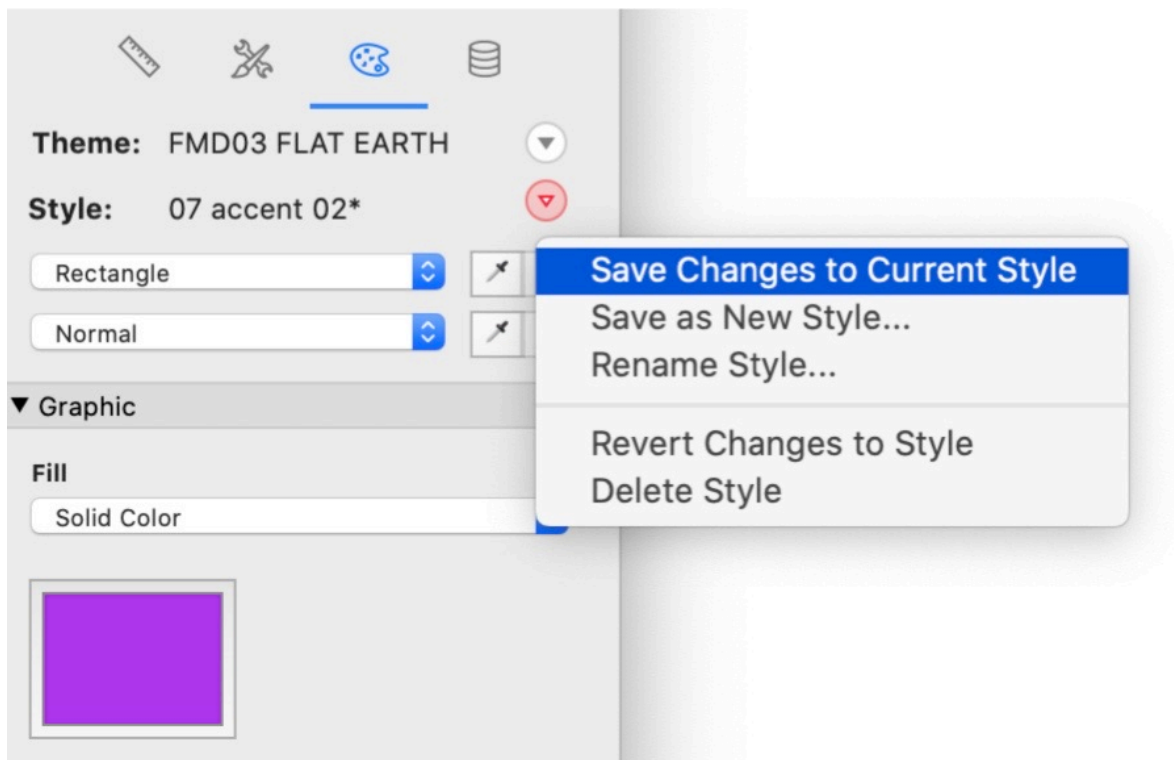
Saving the change to the style means, that the style now applies to every object with the same style on the same layout. The scope broadened, but it is still limited.

Save the change to the theme

To make it a truly universal correction, the style setting must be saved back to the theme itself. It works similarly to the change on the object. If the style has been changed, the triangle behind the Theme name turns red. This means a style has been changed, but it has not yet been saved to the theme itself.
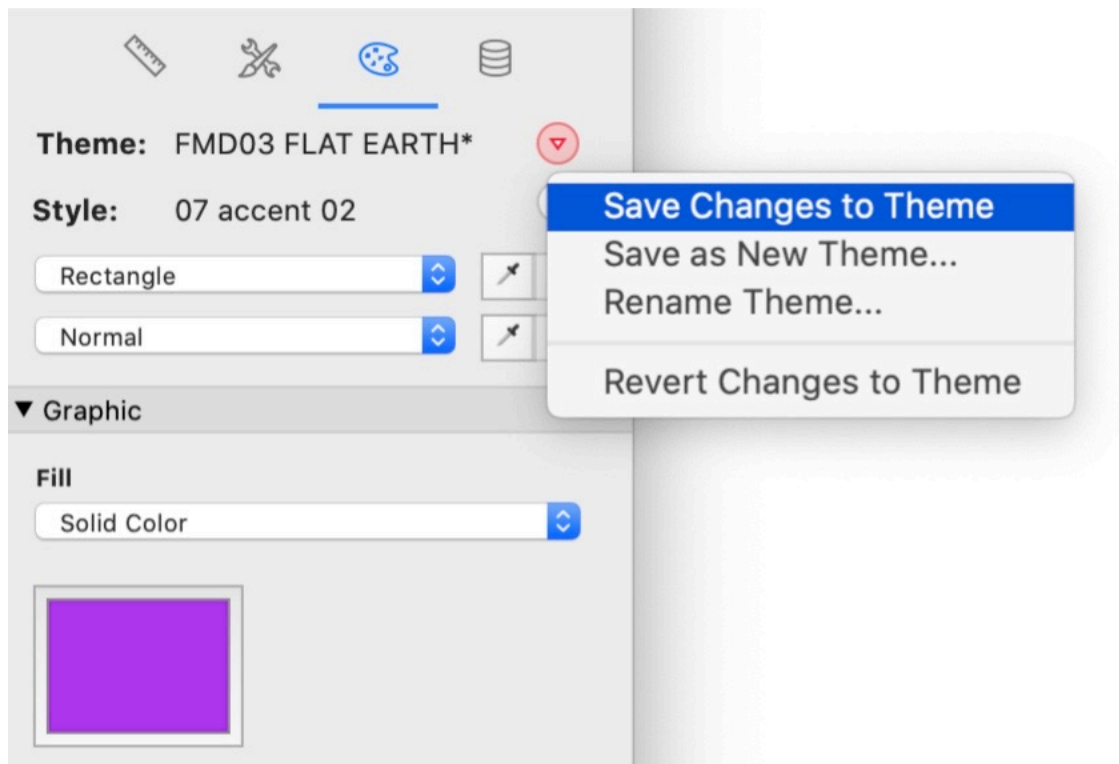
Once a style has been saved in the theme itself, it automatically applies to all objects in the same file – those, which had the same theme and style applied.

Manage style status

Many objects have different settings for each status that object can have. This is an important thing to know, as the status changes are feedback for the user.

For example: If you hover over a button, that button can change its color. This gives you as a user an important feedback. Status settings include:

- Normal
- Hover
- Pressed
- In Focus
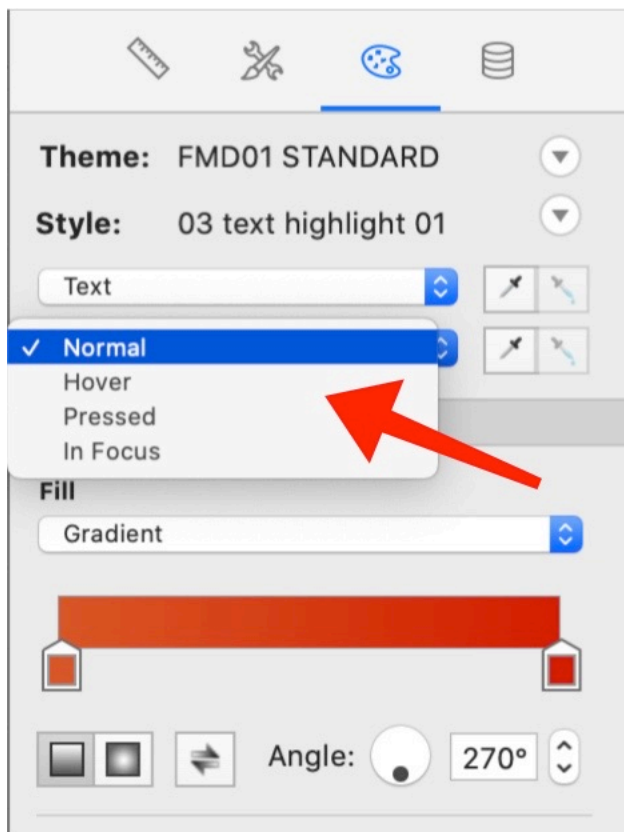
For other objects, the status options might slightly differ. Each status has its own design settings. A single object therefor easily can have a dozen settings.

Pro tip:
When changing or adapting an object, you have to harmonize the settings of each status. That actually is quite a job if you start creating your own theme!

Updating a style

To update a style means to change a parameter, then save that parameter to the style and eventually to the theme. The basic description can be found in "Cascading stylesheets".

Updating a theme

Updating a theme is the last step in updating styles of that theme. Once a change on any object has been saved to its style, you can update the theme (or create a new one).

Duplicating a theme

Duplicating the theme is the quickest way to start with an own theme. More about duplicating a theme and how to proceed in the section "Creating your own theme".

Creating new styles

It is very easy to create a new style. Keep in mind however, that new styles do not sync with other themes. Even if you create a style with the same name in another theme, there will be no syncing between the styles if you change the theme. Read more about this in the section "Themes are based on the same original".

Example

Let's assume you work with Theme A, but also have a second Theme B.

If you create a new style in Theme A, called "highlighted text" and then create a same new style in Theme B, also named "highlighted text", these will have different internal IDs.

Thus, when you defined an object in Theme B with the style "highlighted text" and changed the theme to Theme B, the object defined as "highlighted text" will not be synced with the style of the same name in Theme B. When changing your stylesheet to Theme B, all new styles will be set to "default". You will have to manually adapt them to the new style.

Importing themes

How to get a theme into your own application?

How to import a theme

Themes can be imported from other FileMaker files. Assuming that you have your own solution file and now purchased FM Designer, you can import a theme from the FM Designer file into your own solution.

This is how it works:

Open your solution file and click on File > Manage > Themes. A new window appears:
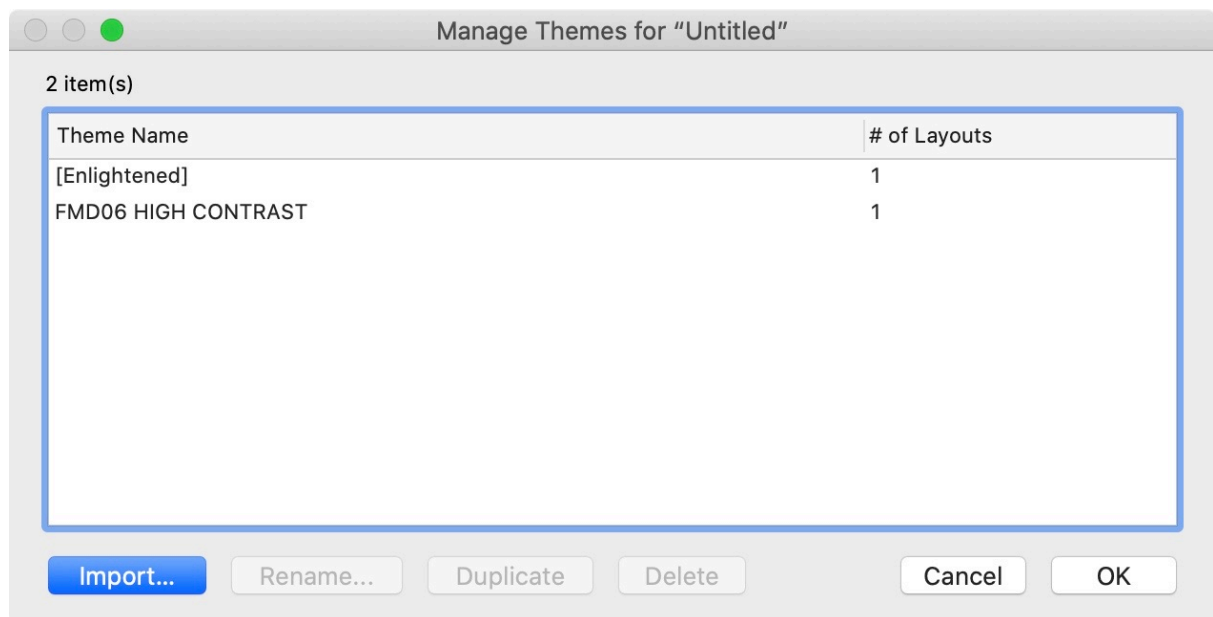
Click on Import and select FM Designer, the file. The next window will display all themes of that file. Select the themes you want to import and click "OK".
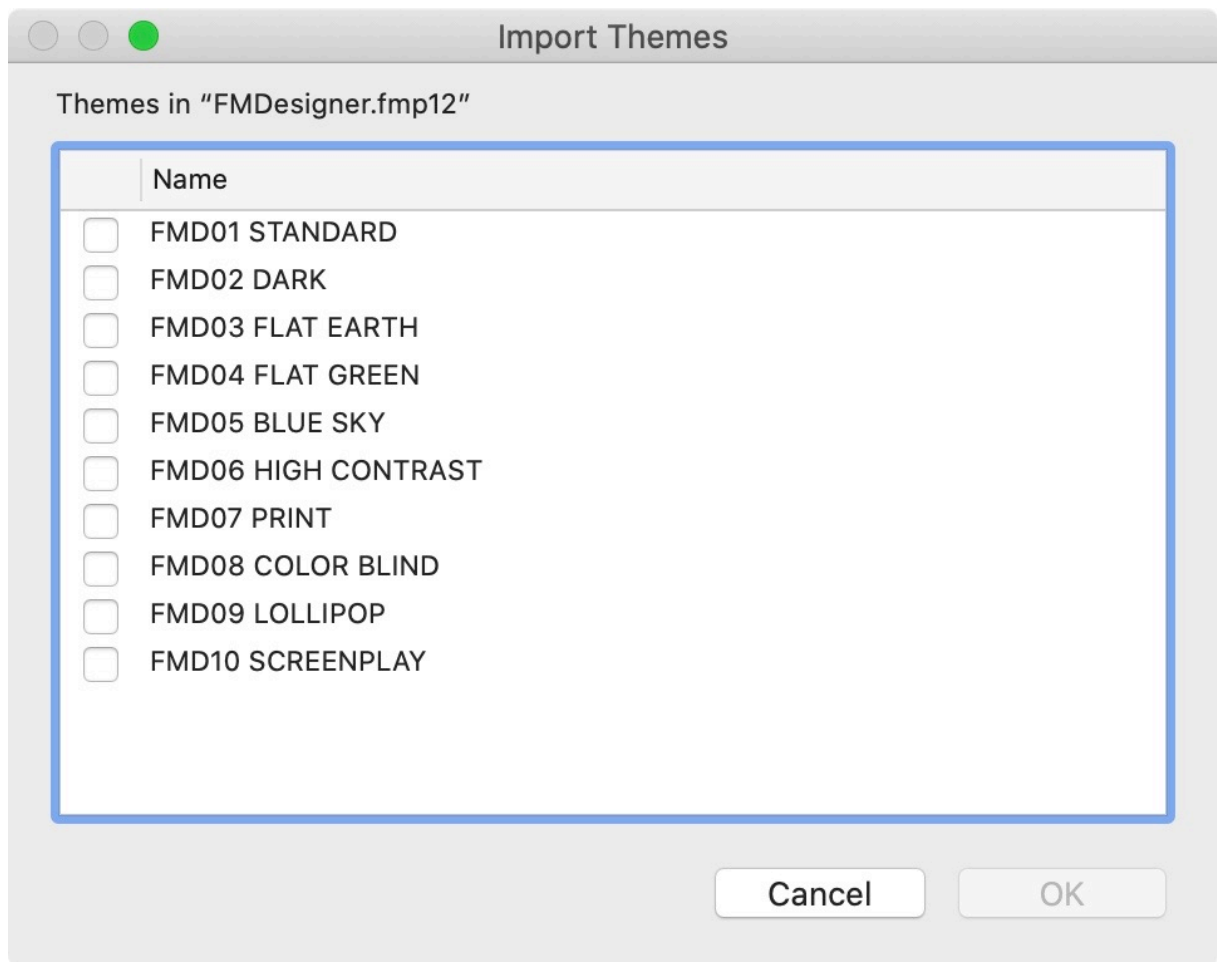
That's all! You can now apply the themes you imported to any layout.

If you want the theme to have a visible representation with your solution file, please look at the steps suggested in the next section about "FM Designer and FM Starter". This will discuss how you can integrate a visual representation of the theme in your own solution – basically by copy and pasting FM Designer layouts, table and settings to your file.

FM Designer and FM Starter

FM Designer has been designed as a companion to our other product FM Starter.

- FM Designer is a help to design your layouts
- FM Starter is a start file for new FileMaker projects

Starting up a new project with a distinct look-and-feel is now a breeze. In combination these products give you a head-on start for any FileMaker project.

1. Apart from a simple import of a theme into your solution, you can decide to keep that nice representation of the theme (as in FM Designer) and copy that to your file. In order to do that, there are few steps involved:
2. Import the theme into your solution
3. Import the table into your solution (available in FM Starter)
4. Create all layouts as in FM Designer (available in FM Starter)

5. Assign the theme to these layouts

6. Copy-and-paste the layouts from FM Designer to your solution (available in FM Starter)

FM Starter already has some of these elements included, thus simplifying and speeding up the process.

How to implement a theme in FM Starter

Open FM Starter and switch to the Developer Dashboard. At the left side you find a section "Themes/Design". Click here.

Developer Dashboard

Maintenance	Modules	How to start

Maintenance

Reset all settings

Delete registration (FM Registrations)

Create backup / Snapshot dump

Delete error log (JKE ErrorLog module)

Create standard Admin Account (delete other accounts)
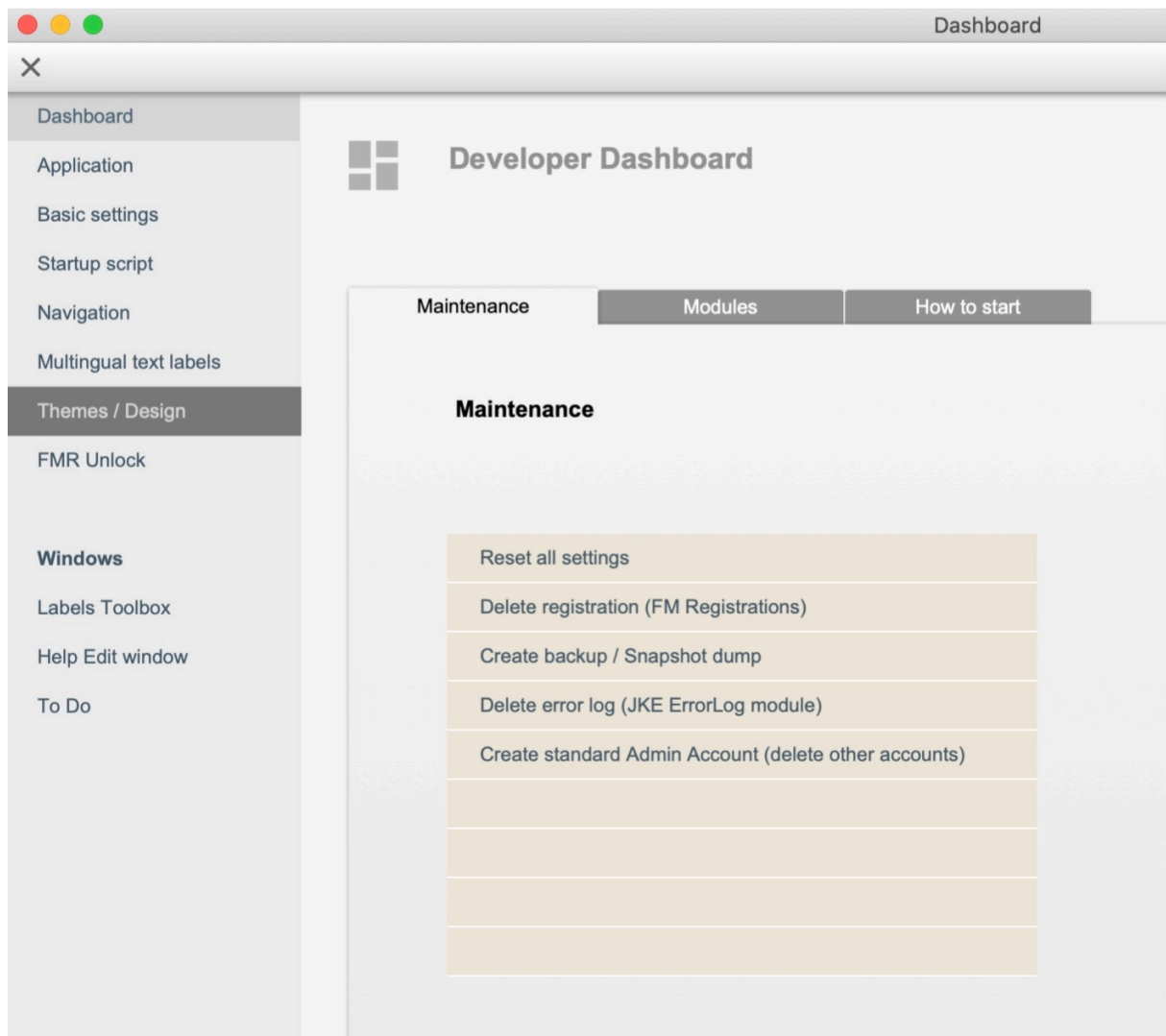
The section "Themes/Design" looks similar to FM Designer.

Themes

Themes define the look-and-feel of your application. Themes are like style sheets.
You assign a theme to a layout, then define the fields and objects with a style from
the style sheet. This secures a consistent layout and greatly improves the usability
of your solution.

There is a single standard theme included. Duplicate the theme and its pages to
create your own style.

FM Starter 01, standard

(create your own themes…)

Open Manage Themes ✏

Click on FM Starter 01, standard. You will see that this is the basic approach as in FM
Designer. The standard theme of FM Starter is the standard theme of FM Designer. You
will also see that the same pages exist: Overview, Parts and Objects.
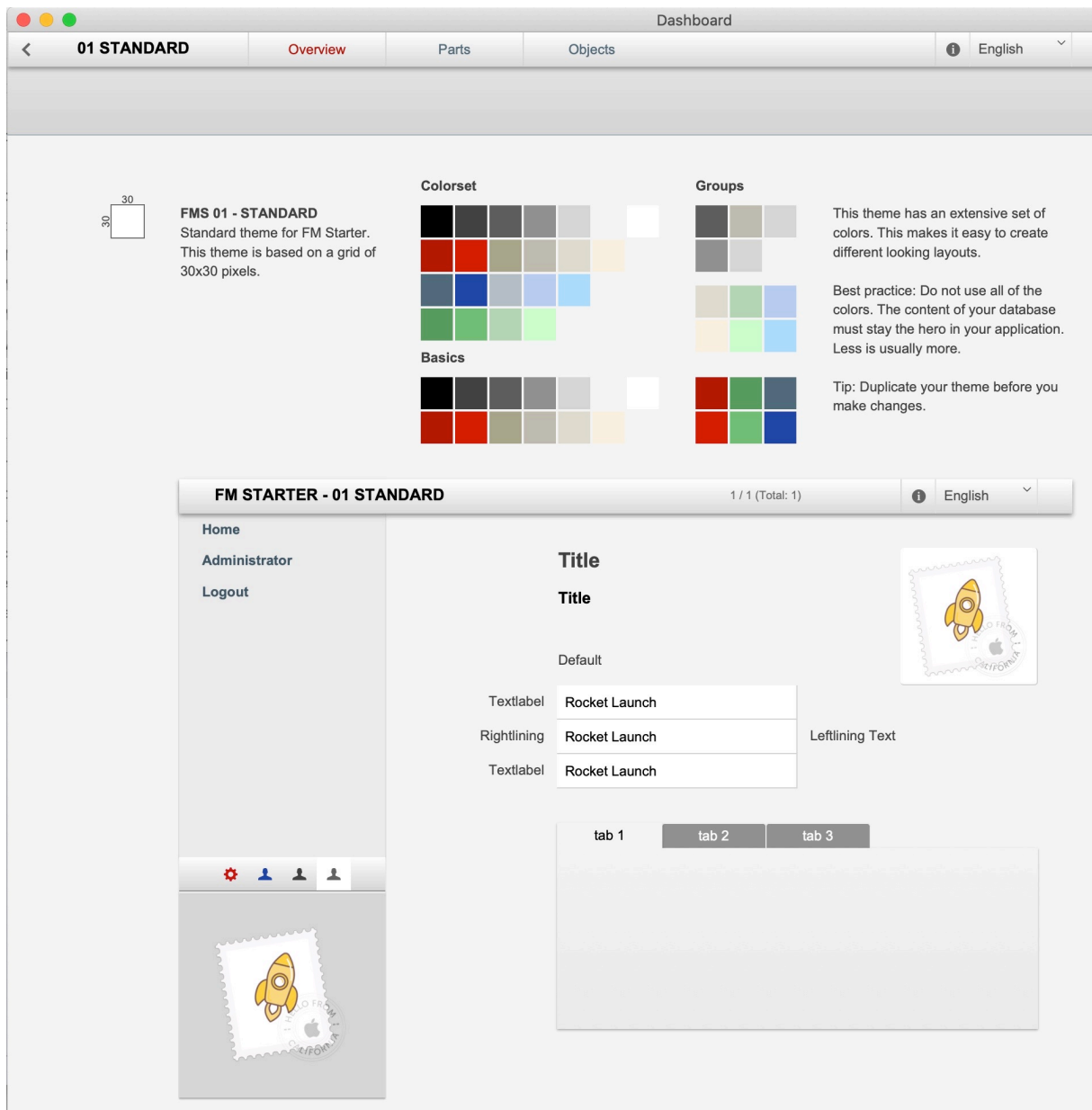
If you import other themes from FM Designer, it is suggested that you replicate these pages for the new theme you want to import. This is not a must, but doing so gives you a visual feedback and control on the entire theme.

1. Import the themes you like (File > Manage > Themes).
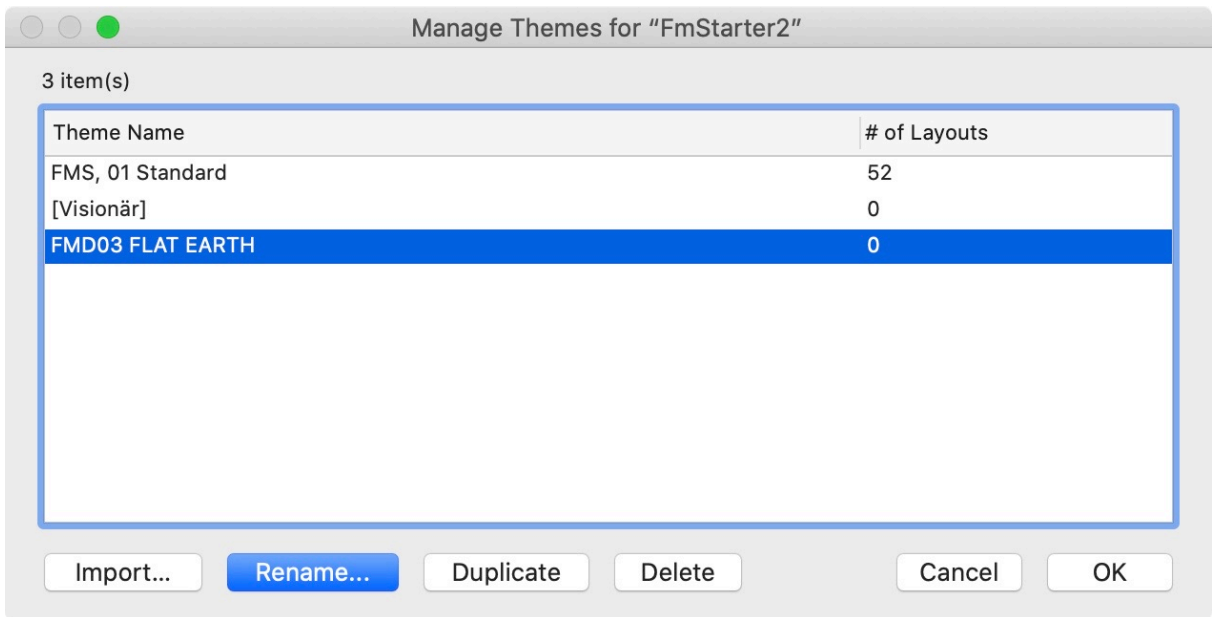
2. Duplicate the layouts of the standard theme (File > Manage > Layouts) and rename the duplicated set. You might take, for example, the same names as FM Designer has, to make it simpler.
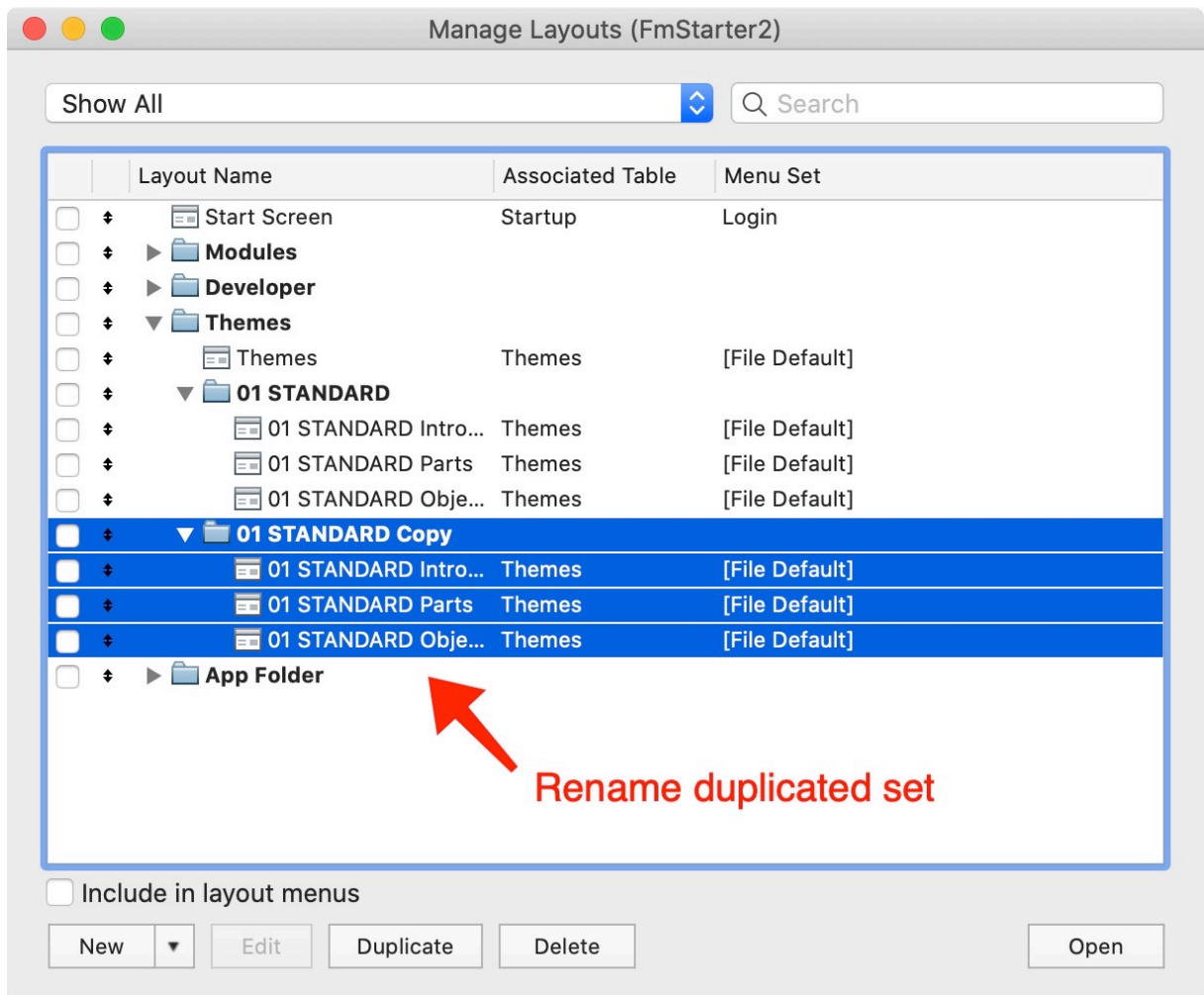
3. Apply the imported theme to the duplicated layouts

In layout mode, change the Standard theme to the newly imported theme. You will see that all objects are automatically changed. Why this is so, can be read in the section "Themes are based on the same original". As FM Designer is based on FM Starter, this is unique behavior and its what makes FM Designer such a good companion to FM Starter (and vice versa).

Repeat this for all 3 layouts. Readjust the navigation bar links for each page.
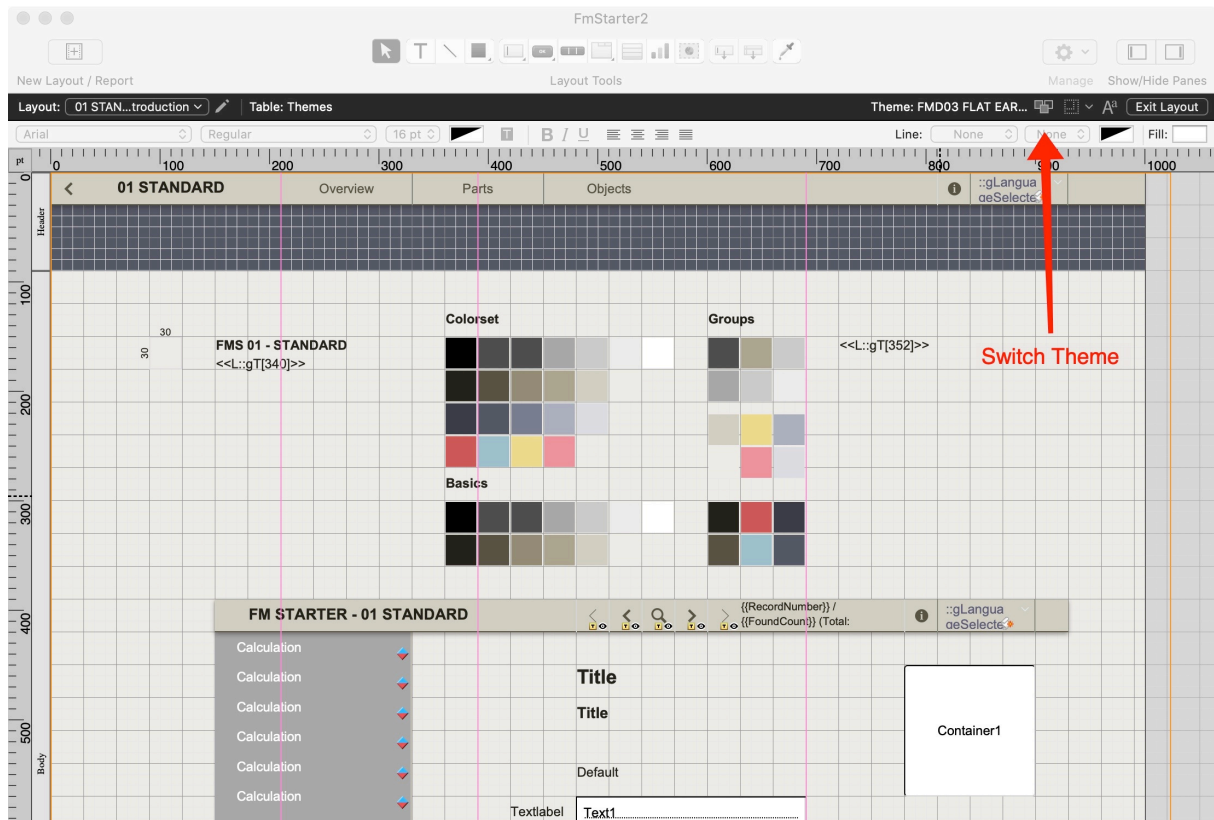
4. Add the new theme page ("Overview") to the navigation on the theme page (see second screenshot above). You now have easy access to a complete overview of the theme, just as with the FM Starter standard theme.

Themes define the look-and-feel of your application. Themes are like style sheets. You assign a theme to a layout, then define the fields and objects with a style from the style sheet. This secures a consistent layout and greatly improves the usability of your solution.

There is a single standard theme included. Duplicate the theme and its pages to create your own style.

FM Starter 01, standard

FMD03 Flat Earth

Open Manage Themes ✏

5. Congratulations! You now have a new theme plus a visual guide in your FM Starter file!

Themes

Basic themes

5 Basic themes for general purposes.

FMD01 STANDARD

1. FMD01 STANDARD

The standard theme is just what it says to be: A standard. It is a no-fuss approach to interfaces, based on grey tones, just like most software solutions, accompanied by a few highlight colors.

Check the color scheme.

FMD02 DARK

2. FMD02 DARK

Excellent usage for this theme is, where photos are on display. Photos really pop-out if shown on a darker background. Possible usages are photography based applications, kiosk systems or environments with little light, where a theme which is too bright can be a burden to the eye.

About inverted text

In a dark theme, white text becomes the standard. Text however is more difficult to read when it is inverted, negative. Only short text and larger titles can easily be read on dark backgrounds. For this reason, the dark theme is not a theme for every type of application, but it might be a proper theme for certain usages, as well as for some iOS solutions. You decide!

Check the color scheme.

FMD03 FLAT EARTH

3. FMD03 FLAT EARTH

Flat Earth is a quiet theme with a focus on earthy tones. In combination with grey and few highlight colors it is pleasing to the eye yet versatile. This theme has a classy look, ideal to create that own identity your customer might look for. It is not just grey, but has this distinctive extra flavor.

Check the color scheme.

FMD04 FLAT GREEN

4. FMD04 FLAT GREEN

Looking for a green and natural-looking theme? Look no further. Flat Green is the all-green solution. As in the Flat Earth theme, you have two color series you can use to create your very own look-and-feel. The first series has bright and more intensive colors, while the second series has more flat and matte colors. You can also mix-and-match these color impressions to create your own style. As with all other styles, start by simply using it, then adjust when you deem that necessary.

Check the color scheme.

FMD05 BLUE SKY

5. FMD05 BLUE SKY

Blue Sky is another general purpose theme, with a blue and bright approach to design. It is clean and clear and fits well to all kinds of businesses. It's look-and-feel is uncomplicated and hassle-free.

Check the color scheme.

Special themes

5 specialist themes for specific needs

FMD06 HIGH CONTRAST

6. FMD06 HIGH CONTRAST

We all need contrast in user interfaces. Not too harsh contrasts fit usually best. However, in some situations, a high contrast could be desirable. High contrast design is helpful in several scenarios:

- dark or very bright environments
- visually impaired users
- small screens.

The theme High Contrast has just a single goal in view: Make it visible. And to make something visible, the focus must be clear. Creating a high contrast will help to achieve that goal.

There are several ways of creating contrast and this theme supports it all:

- light/dark contrast
- color/color contrast
- color/no-color contrast

The color/color contrast can be perceived different, related to the users sight. Users with color blindness might have troubles to discern certain colors. It is better to rely on light/dark contrasts and color/no-color contrasts, and not to rely too strongly on a color/color contrast.

Also check the theme FMD08 COLORBLIND.

Check the color scheme.

FMD07 PRINT

7. FMD07 PRINT

This is a universal theme for a specific purpose. Whenever you create a print layout, use a different theme. While ordinary layouts in screen design will have all shades of color and grey, print layouts should be built upon a white sheet with printing in view. That is why you need this print theme as a second option for your project.

Printing

A print theme is used for printing and PDF layouts (invoices, lists, tickets, ...). Simply assign the print theme to your layouts and you are ready to go. The print theme has basic fonts in print sizes (not: screen sizes) and comes with several highlight colors for lists, summaries, etc. This makes it extremely easy to set-up print layouts. As you might have non-printable objects on your print layouts, like buttons, navigation elements, etc. styles are available in a simplified looks.

Personalizing

By differentiating a print theme from the interface theme, it will be easy to adapt the print layouts to the visual identity of the client, allowing for different fonts, sizes and colors for the interface and printable documents. Use a print theme to optimize the output in line with your clients corporate identity guidelines.

Check the color scheme.

FMD08 COLORBLIND

8. FMD08 COLORBLIND

Colorblindness reduces the set of colors you can use, as not all colors are recognizable. This theme has some special adaptions to fit the most widely found color blindness, which is in the red/green range of colors.

The Colorblind theme uses the colors blue and yellow as major colors, with some additional support of other basic colors. Additionally, the dark tones are really dark and the lighter tones are all kept light – thus allowing for good light/dark contrasts as well.

Check the color scheme.

FMD09 LOLLIPOP

9. FMD09 LOLLIPOP

The Lollipop theme comes with bright colors and contrasts. This is a great theme if you work with applications for young kids, for Kiosk solutions, etc.

The Lollipop theme has a colorful interface to get people to interact (exciting interface). This is a different approach as in the basic themes, where all colors are reduced, to let the content be king (dull interface)

Check the color scheme.

FMD10 SCREENPLAY

10. FMD10 SCREENPLAY

Screenplay is a theme for inspiration. Beyond the regular shape, outline, font, etc. there are more options to play with. Some of these options are shown in this theme:

- images as background motives
- gradients with different angles
- floating objects (shadows)
- detached navigation bars

The options shown are not a comprehensive overview. This theme shows you how to include certain settings in themes, and thus to start using them. Ideas of this theme might help to create your very own theme.

Using images

Not everything which is possible should to be used. Fancy can be frightening. Design is not about gimmicks, but about clarification. For each usage you must have a good reason. Adding images might be nice, but it immediately increases the size of data used, which can be a burden over networks, especially in web-viewer environments. If you choose to use images, speak with a graphic designer to make these as small as possible. Consider tiling small images instead of embedding larger files. Use images sparsely. Reduce to the max.

Creating design

Design is not just about the theme, grid or colors. Design is about the best interface for your application. It's always about a concept.

While standard applications profit from familiar looks, this is not the case for all solutions. Rethinking design is especially important if you create standalone software solutions for iOS, Web or Kiosk solutions. Adapt your theme to those special purposes. If you dare, ask a designer to create a concept. Show your designer FM Designer to let him know how FileMaker can be used. The result can be stunning.

See the color scheme.

It's only the beginning

Thank you for reading so far! If you use FM Designer, it will benefit you. If you never worked with styles or themes before, it will be a jumpstart for your design.

Nevertheless, it is only the beginning. Design evolves over time, just as FileMaker does. Not only technology changes, and the options you have, but also the way we perceive our world. Design itself changes. We get and create new viewing habits, best example of which is the entry of smartphones in our universe.

Just as your application needs updates, so does your design over time. If you are a developer, it is not just about code. Recognize your strengths, add other skills from other people to the project, whenever that is needed.

That makes it so rewarding.