

Ed's Project 1 Memo

Project 1 Evaluation

My project was to create a professional/personal website for myself that would (1) introduce users to my professional and academic work, (2) give users a way to contact me, and (3) market my editing and indexing services. I anticipated users would be professional and personal contacts and that the site would have mostly static content to start: a description of who I am, what I do, how to hire me for freelancing, a resume, and an attractive gallery of book covers of some of the books I copyedited.

Drupal Site "Ed Scott"

Content Types and Fields

My Drupal site is using three content types: Basic Page, Gallery, and Homepage. I am using Basic Page for the majority of my content (3 out of 5 pages). I created the Gallery content type so that I could create a View to display my book covers in a grid. And the Homepage content type holds the content of my homepage, which I may want to style separately from the rest of the pages.

I used the Basic Page content type for the majority of my pages because my site hosts static content and doesn't require much user interactivity. I found the Basic Page suited my needs, especially when I added three fields: image, attachments, and tags. These fields allow me to upload images and file attachments as well as tag my content.

Taxonomy

My site doesn't contain much content, so I focused on creating a basic taxonomic structure, which is as follows:

- Portfolio
 - Graduate Coursework and Research
 - Writings
 - Projects
 - Professional Services
 - Editing Projects
 - Indexing Projects
 - Resume

This structure allows me to tag my content with specific terms (e.g., "writings," "editing projects") and provides a framework for adding additional terms. For example, if I wanted to add a resume specific to my indexing work I could add subterms underneath the term "resume" such as "editing resume" and "indexing resume" and then tag my content appropriately.

Appearance

My goal for the appearance of my site was to create a clean, well-structured look, with an attractive gallery that displays the book covers of some of the books I copyedited. Initially I planned on using a Zen subtheme for my site's appearance. However, after a few weeks of trying to get the style I wanted using CSS, I realized I could achieve the look much easier using an existing theme (I'm using Bartik). Using the Bartik theme allowed me to focus on other aspects of my site's appearance, including creating my book cover gallery using Views.

To create my View I first created a new content type, Gallery. I then treated each cover as a separate node, each of which contains the title of the book, the image of the cover uploaded using the "image" field, and the alternate and title text. Once all my nodes were in place, I created the View, which finds fields of type "image," filters for node type "gallery," and then arranges the content in a three-column grid. Finally, I changed the number of nodes that could be displayed to twelve so that all of my nodes would fit on one page and then created the path to the content ("bookcovers").

Other minor tweaks I made to the appearance include changing the color scheme, adding a logo (my smiling face), and adding a favicon (same as the logo). I used filtered HTML to structure and display my page content (especially for the "resume" page). I also changed the default homepage (a list of the most recent nodes) to my "about me" page.

Relation to Readings

In Ann Rockley's book, *Managing Enterprise Content*, she describes ways to structure and reuse content and relates the topic of content management to how to appropriately manage content within an organization. In creating my Drupal site I found the topics of information modeling and reuse most helpful and relevant.

According to Rockley, information modeling is closely related to information architecture, which she describes as "the blueprint that defines how content will be organized and structured to make up the various 'information products' in your organization" (160). The goal is to have a unified content strategy, which uses an information model to "identify all the knowledge within an organization, and to capture and reuse it effectively" while also considering "audiences and their information needs" (161).

The benefit of Drupal is that it does much of this back end work for you and provides the content creator with a structure based on content types and their respective fields. (A drawback is that Drupal can be overkill for simple sites or for sites that won't be hosting much dynamic content.) The content creator is forced by Drupal's information model to consider the purpose of the content (is it a basic page, an article, or something else?) and whether the content will need fields to add structure to the content type.

In my Drupal site I've focused so far mainly on using fields to structure images and files. My "attachments" field allowed me to upload examples of my graduate coursework to my "Graduate Coursework and Research" page. My "image" field allowed me to upload

images of book covers of books I've copyedited and then create a View to structure that content. I've also added a "tags" field to my Basic Page that allows me to tag content, and also helps me think about how I want to structure my site's taxonomy.

Because of the structure provided by Drupal and added to by the content creator, the site content should be ripe for systematic reuse, which Rockley discusses in chapter 2. As she states, systematic reuse is simply planned reuse (31). The content management system uses the site's information model to determine how to reuse content. Although requiring much up front work to create the information model, systematic reuse offers the greatest return on investment because it guarantees the reuse of content (31).

The best example of systematic reuse of content in my Drupal site is the View I created to display book covers. The View required a heavy investment of time up front: I had to create a new content type, upload each image as a separate node, and then create a View that would find those nodes and style them appropriately and attractively. However, now that the content type and View have been created, anytime I want to add a new cover to my gallery I just have to add the content to my Gallery content type and the View automatically populates my gallery with the correct image. This saves me time since I do not have to spend time trying to style the images using CSS.

Assessment of Progress

I believe I have progressed significantly in my understanding of the benefits of using a CMS to manage a website as well as my understanding of the Drupal CMS. I have experienced how costly (in terms of time) it is to plan for systematic reuse by using a CMS such as Drupal: there is a significant investment of time required to become familiar with the CMS, understand how it "thinks," and troubleshoot problems. However, once you've acquired some knowledge of how the system operates it becomes easier to manage your content since the content is already "prestructured." The CMS also forces you to plan your site architecture and the information model you will use *before* you create content. This helps tremendously to structure the site and make content easy to reuse and retrieve, as well as ensure consistency and efficiency.

I'm looking forward to seeing how Drupal operates as a CMS for an ecommerce site (my group project is Golden Legs running). I'm interested to see if our client will be able to effectively navigate Drupal for the purposes of his site, once we have created an appropriate information model.