Why Drupal?

It's difficult to explain how and why we use Drupal for building most websites. It's such a complex subject. We've spent years learning the system and continue to learn something new nearly every day. But this document provides an overview of some of the features that make Drupal a great platform for just about any site.

Drupal (http://drupal.org) is among the premeire open source content management frameworks on the Internet. It is being used by hundreds of thousands of sites worldwide. These include everything from small business sites to large enterprise and commercial ventures as well as non-profit and governent sites. Whitehouse.gov was recently redesigned using Drupal, and the entire House of Representative will be standarizing on the Drupal platform. The system is robust and flexible and allows site owners and managers to update and create new content with ease.

Drupal scales very well. It can be appropriate for relatively small sites yet easily accomodates large, very active sites. Additionally, with thousands of core and contributed modules, expanding the number of services on a Drupal site can be relatively easy. Properly configured, Drupal, unlike many other database driven systems, is very search engine friendly enabling people to find your site easily.

Whereas many systems come preconfigured making it easy to get up and running quickly with a pre-determined set of features, Durpal is often comparted to a Lego kit. You open the box and out fall a lot of little pieces that you put together in just the way you want. This can take more time and perhaps help from a Drupal expert, but the results can be very powerful, tailored exactly to your specifications, flexible and stunning.

Here is a list of some basic things you can do with Drupal that many sites would find useful:

• Dynamic and reusable content allows you to place time sensitive material in front of people on the home page without manually editing html files.

• Drupal allows you to integrate social media with the website. For example you could have a blog that when you post a new article it automatically posts to Twitter and/or Facebook. You can have a like button on every page so people could like a piece of content which gets posted to their news stream on Facebook. You can include your Twitter stream in to an area of your site like in a block in a column on your home page. These are just examples of using content in different ways to reach people in different locations.

• You can easily embed video from YouTube and other sources in to your site e.

• Drupal has excellent search engine optimization modules that, properly used, would help drive traffic from search engines.

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- You could pull news stories related to your organization or intrests in to your site from other sources automatically.

- You could allow other people within your organization to be responsible for updating sections of the website. New content could be reviewed in an editorial process if so desired.

- Interactive features such as comments, voting, and forums can encourage user involvement in your organization.

- You can create and manage many different types of content and display that content in many different ways.

- You can create multiple photo galleries on a variety of subjects and categories.

- You can create multiple mini-sites within an overall site structure, each with its own template or design elements.

In truth, the list of features is endless. Everything mentioned above can be done without programming. With a little added PHP scripting you can further customize your feature set or build new modules that do something no one has even thought of yet!

The Drupal Community
Finally, we have found the Drupal community one of the most powerful assets to working with the platform. The thousand of developers are constantly improving the software and contributing new modules and documentation. And when questions arise there always seems to be a helping hand available to get us through tricky issues.

A Few Other Answers to the Questions
http://sonspring.com/journal/why-drupal
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4gfqu_introduction-to-drupal_tech (video)
http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/1733049/reasons-why-drupal-is-best-cms-seo
http://chrisshattuck.com/blog/video-presentation-why-drupal-kicks-other-cmss (video)
http://www.freshnetworks.com/blog/2010/03/why-drupal-is-a-great-social-media-platform-in-laymans-terms/

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