

10 Reasons Why Drupal Is the Best CMS for SEO

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*This column was
originally published in
[SES Magazine](#) in
July 2010.*



Your website is the front door to your business - it provides a first impression of the organization, generates leads, and propagates your brand message. However, looking pretty will not get you to the top of the search engine results page (SERP). That's why we all use search engine optimization (SEO), which, for today's complex content sites, is very different from the HTML of yesteryear.

Drupal, the open source content management system (CMS) that runs WhiteHouse.gov, MTV Europe, and The Economist, is a very powerful system that can be used for large, complex sites, and it's the best platform that exists today for SEO. I've seen clients triple their traffic within a few weeks of switching from a lesser platform. Drupal's built-in tools for automating SEO on massive amounts of content, along with granular control that gives you absolute power over every single site element, put it head and shoulders above the rest, including Joomla and WordPress. Additionally, Drupal is the most scalable, configurable system, and major improvements in usability will soon shorten the learning curve for new users and developers.

Here's why Drupal is the best:

1. **Search engine optimized URLs.** Unlike WordPress, Drupal gives you complete control over URL structure. Each item of content created in Drupal (called a node) can be given a custom URL, called a URL alias. You can even set it to automatically generate user- and search engine-friendly URLs based on content type (blog post, page, user), title of the post, keyword, date, time, or any other information related to the node. In WordPress, you are generally limited to one type of permalink URL for all posts. You can override it, but it's much less specific than Drupal's URL aliases. For years, Joomla was lacking in search engine-friendly URLs and the ability to fix them. It now offers a built-in "search engine-friendly" functionality, but it lacks the functionality and control over the URL's parameters.
2. **Custom content types and views.** Without having to write any code, you can use the content construction kit (CCK) and view modules to create new content types and create advanced custom views for those types. Common examples include news stories, blog posts, albums, books, and tutorials, all of which can be created and displayed in a variety of ways. While most content management systems require additional written code for creating these types, no programming knowledge is required to do them in Drupal. To make it even more search engine-friendly, it's simple to create content silos using a free add-on called Views Attach. Create an automated query to create a list of relevant content and attach it to any other piece of content - all with a point-and-click interface.

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3. **Ease of editing and revisions.** Even the most professional companies make mistakes. Recently I found two spelling errors on CNN.com's home page, including the word "errors" (it was spelled "erros" for about an hour before the mistake was corrected). Drupal's built-in version control allows you to save new versions of your Web pages every time they are edited. This gives you the ability to revert back to old versions at any time. Want to try a new marketing message on your site? Type it in. Didn't work? Revert to the previous page. Snap.
4. **The organizational wizardry of taxonomy.** Drupal has a very powerful, built-in taxonomy (categorization) system that allows you to organize and tag content with keyword-rich terms. While care should be taken that each Drupal "vocabulary" be limited to certain content types, it is an infinitely flexible system. For example, you can use free tagging for types of content like blogs or products, while your news or tutorial sections might have a list of categories that can only be selected from a dropdown that is defined by the webmaster. You can also have hierarchical categories, with single or multiple parent categories. But don't get crazy and deep with it. It's a good rule of thumb that no page of content is more than three clicks from the home page. The closer the node is to the home page, the more important Google thinks it is, and the higher that individual page will rank. Drupal's advanced taxonomy features, combined with CCK and views, also allow you to rank for long-tailed keywords that make up a thorough SEO campaign.
5. **Multiple user management.** Drupal is almost as well-known for its community as it is for being easily optimized. That's because Drupal was designed for community-based websites, and has a strong user role and access control functionality. There are no limits to the user roles and access levels you can create and customize - for example, "anonymous visitor," "authenticated user," "editor," "webmaster," "admin," and "moderator." You can also keep the advanced user management features turned off - like if you have multiple blogs - and enable them later when your site grows.
6. **Page titles.** The page title is the single most important on-page thing you can do to improve the SEO of your website. Page titles, the line of text in the HTML of a Web page that summarizes what that page is about, act as the welcome mat for your website. Page titles:
 - Tell visitors that they are in the right place
 - Display in the browser title bar
 - Hold important keywords so that your page can be properly categorized by Google and other search engines
 - Display whenever someone bookmarks your site
 - Are often used by search engines as the heading of the search result

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Drupal can generate a page title automatically by using the site name and site slogan of the front page and the node title for individual nodes, but for more complex content, you may want to rearrange the automated page title for SEO purposes. Drupal's page title module gives you full control over your page titles throughout your site. You can define a pattern that will create search engine-optimized titles automatically as you create new content, or take control by writing your own page titles anywhere you can create content.

7. **Better integration with Google Analytics.** Have you ever wondered how much your own clicking around and working on your website skews your analytics data? Not if you have a properly configured Drupal site. Using the free Google Analytics module for Drupal, you can dynamically show and hide analytics code based on several factors, including if the user is logged in as an admin. You can even not track certain sections of your site, not track certain user types (like people logged in as company employees), and cache the Google Analytics code locally, which will speed up your page load times. All within Drupal. No programming required. For free.
8. **Passionate and active community.** Drupal has a large community of users and developers who are very active and passionate about the CMS. More than 650,000 user accounts have been created on Drupal.org, and more than 2,000 people have registered developer accounts. You can find hundreds of community-contributed modules that help make Drupal a better experience. Drupal forums offer support and you can find other Drupal users in Drupal Groups.
9. **Free as in beer.** Unlike other platforms, Drupal modules (what we call plug-ins, add-ins, or widgets - modular pieces of code that you can easily add to your site) are free. That's right. You don't need a license or even a credit card to install any of the functionality that I've mentioned in this article. Just go to Drupal.org, click on the "download" tab, and grab anything you need.
10. **Getting started with Drupal SEO is easy.** Just download the Drupal SEO checklist [module](#), drop it into your sites/all/modules folder on your server, and turn it on from the modules admin page. Go through the simple, step-by-step instructions, and you're well on your way to the best SEO experience you've ever had on a CMS.