User experience studies: Putting Drupal to the test

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DrupalCamp New Jersey
February 4, 2012
The scene:

2009
University of Baltimore

Drupal 6 (mostly)
Experienced CMS user and developer

(but not Drupal)
His task was to add some content to the website.
This is what happened.
Drupal 7.0

**Content**

- **Show only items where**
  - status: any
  - type: any

- **Update options**
  - Publish selected content
  - Update

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>UPDATED</th>
<th>OPERATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No content available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drupal 7.0

Welcome to My Site

No front page content has been created yet.

- Add new content
User experience testing is powerful and important...

and you can do it too!
I am a developer
(not a usability specialist)
I used to be a scientist
User experience testing is like science.
The basic procedure
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- Find some people (usually 4-8)
  - Really only 4-8? Yup.
**The basic procedure**

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  - Often: People who have built sites, but not with Drupal
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- Write up results
You can do this informally (and we need you to)

"Conducting usability studies on your own"
Lisa Rex and Dharmesh Mistry
3:00pm, this room
Formal tests (mostly donated)

- U. Minnesota 2008 (Drupal 6 + CCK)
- U. Baltimore 2008 (Drupal 6 core)
- U. Baltimore 2009 (early Drupal 7 core)
- U. Minnesota 2011 (Drupal 7 core)
- Ideup! 2011 (Drupal 7 end users)
- Google Feb. 2012! (Drupal 7 core/contrib)
U. Minnesota
What have we learned, and where are we going?

drupal.org/community-initiatives/drupal-core/usability
Welcome to your new Drupal website!

Please follow these steps to set up and start using your website:

1. **Configure your website**
   Once logged in, visit the administration section, where you can customize and configure all aspects of your website.

2. **Enable additional functionality**
   Next, visit the module list and enable features which suit your specific needs. You can find additional modules in the Drupal modules download section.

3. **Customize your website design**
   To change the "look and feel" of your website, visit the themes section. You may choose from one of the included themes or download additional themes from the Drupal themes download section.

4. **Start posting content**
   Finally, you can create content for your website. This message will disappear once you have promoted a post to the front page.

For more information, please refer to the help section, or the online Drupal handbooks. You may also post at the Drupal forum, or view the wide range of other support options available.
Admin vs. front-end confusion
Improved in Drupal 7
Improved in Drupal 7
Still needs work: terminology vs. mental model
Still needs work: terminology vs. mental model
Still needs work: Communicating that Drupal is extensible

(module page redesign)
We thought we were testing this.

You can find modules and themes on drupal.org. The following file extensions are supported: zip tar tgz gz bz2.

**Install from a URL**

For example: http://ftp.drupal.org/files/projects/name.tar.gz

**Or**

**Upload a module or theme archive to install**

For example: name.tar.gz from your local computer

Install
But discovered deeper issues

- Consistent lack of realization that Drupal can be extended

- Drupal initially comes across as limited. We fail to inform new users about one of Drupal's biggest strengths.
Contributed modules are add-ons for Drupal, allowing you to extend, build, and customize Drupal’s core functionality. These modules are not part of the core files and may not have optimized code/functionality for your purposes. If there isn’t a module to solve your needs, you can create one for the rest of the community to use, or consider joining forces and helping the maintainer. You can also view a full index of modules listing only their titles. See the handbook page for help on installing modules.

Views

Posted by merlinofchaos on November 25, 2005 at 4:34pm
Last changed: 1 week 2 hours ago
What am I supposed to download?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Downloads</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.x-3.11</td>
<td>tar.gz (114.52 KB)</td>
<td>2011-May-18</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zip (145.39 KB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.x-3.11</td>
<td>tar.gz (119.27 KB)</td>
<td>2011-May-18</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zip (150.7 KB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

View all releases
So where do you come in?
Eye tracking and other fancy things can be very helpful.
But we don't have the resources to do that for everything.
And we need to start testing more things.
The scientific method

Test Drupal 6

Design improved user interface based on identified problems

Add it to Drupal 7 and release

Test Drupal 7
The scientific method

Test Drupal 6

Design improved user interface based on identified problems

Test?! Add it to Drupal 7 and release

Test Drupal 7
"Usability testing is an important tool for determining the benefit of a proposed change to the user interface. For major changes it is required to verify the user experience of your solution with users."
This can be very powerful when put into practice.

Here's an example...
My favorite drupal.org issue
...and a bit more
My favorite drupal.org issue

Arguing and debating
Arguing and debating...continued
Let's do some user testing.

Arguing and debating...continued
Let's do some user testing

First test (my wife)

Arguing and debating...continued
Arguing and debating
Let's do some user testing
First test (my wife)
Other people did 3 more tests!
...and a bit more
... agreed on approach ... ready to be committed ... and a bit more ... and a bit more
Agreed on approach... ready to be committed... and a bit more

webchick points out things we missed :)

...and a bit more
Agreed on approach... ready to be committed

Smaller tweaks

webchick points out things we missed :)

...and a bit more

Added to Drupal 7
Resources

- "Drupal usability test results" (drupal.org/node/1162000)
- "Conducting usability studies on your own" (3:00 pm in this room)
- Usability group (groups.drupal.org/usability)
- Meetings in #drupal-usability in IRC chat (next is Feb 6 at 4:00pm)
- "UMN 2011" issue queue tag