

A GUIDE TO MIGRATING YOUR CMS TO DRUPAL





It's not enough for organizations to have a simple online presence: That has long since become a prerequisite to reaching audiences in the modern era.

No, what website operators need is to offer a refined and rich online experience that engages users no matter how or where they're viewing content. Browsing behaviors have changed markedly in recent years, and digital content consumers increasingly demand more of the sites

they frequent, whether that's a better mobile presentation, visuals, site features or navigation tools. Audiences expect sites to not only present a high-quality experience, but to also keep up with their evolving tastes.

While organizations may understand this full and well, some rely on outdated content management systems that act more as an obstacle to realizing strategic goals than a capable solution. The demand for sites to be at once both aesthetically pleasing and fully functional places great pressure on such low-performance CMS systems. Many organizations know this and consider making a change, yet the question is always: to what?

Many options exist on the market - but Drupal, an open-source CMS solution, has been widely regarded as a leading combination of flexibility and function in recent times, thanks to its slate

of capabilities, ease of use and responsive features. Migration - even to Drupal - is no small task, however, and organizations transitioning from costly, legacy CMS platforms need to plan the process out - and work with an experienced partner. There are many considerations, but making comprehensive preparations for migration sets the organization up for success. To get started, here's a guide to Drupal migration, as well as the story of how one Paramount client made the change.

STEP 1: RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM

Before even directing focus toward the solution, organizations need to first identify their problems. Taking the time to define what holds the site back will provide a better foundation from which to initiate migration; doing so helps create benchmarks and objectives that will guide the move. A solid roadmap is invaluable, and begins with taking inventory of where the site comes up short:

- **Lack of responsive design:** A clear priority for any organization's website, responsive design is a must for capturing the attention of digital content

consumers. This not only means having mobile optimization, but also an intuitive layout and aesthetic appearance.

- **Burdensome infrastructure:** It's easy for CMS infrastructure to grow to unsustainable levels. Disparate solutions that can't communicate or integrate with one another beget more solutions to do just that, and before long, infrastructure becomes an expansive mess.
- **Basic feature set:** Website visitors want painless searching and easy navigation between pages. Yet if a CMS is not capable of delivering on these expectations, the organization may lose out on readers.
- **Costly to maintain:** In the end, much of the decision comes down to cost. Legacy CMS systems compound the bind users feel when they rely on outdated solutions: Not only are organizations able to do less, but they pay more for it.

These were the issues faced by a Tennessee health care marketing firm Paramount helped move to

Drupal. The client's legacy CMS was costing the organization \$700,000 annually to operate, as well as proving unwieldy to maintain (the client had to go between different content repositories because it couldn't sync with the legacy system). After identifying the problems the CMS posed, the client moved onto looking at what it wanted to accomplish in the move.

STEP 2: LIST WANTS AND NEEDS

Now that the drags have been identified, it's time to draw up a wishlist of sorts. However, this is not an exercise in recasting the already-defined problems as solutions. While organizations should include "wants" they discovered in the first step (like improving responsive design), they also need to take a look at the needs they have of any platform beyond what's been established as the reason for migrating. These considerations include :

- **Security:** The No. 1 concern for any organization overhauling its digital infrastructure is security. The cyberthreat landscape is increasingly dangerous and always evolving (from DDOS to ransomware), and site operators need to ensure they have adequate security measures in place during and after migration.



- **Usability:** It's no good for organizations to sign up for a high-tech solution only to encounter completely foreign and obtuse processes. Organizations need a CMS that is as intuitive as the page they want to present their users.
- **Customization:** Users need a CMS that works for them, and not the other way around. That is, organizations shouldn't have to build their sites around inflexible structures - they should have a solution that facilitates customization and offers them granular tools.

One need the healthcare marketing firm had was for its new solution to be brandable. It wanted to create an extensible platform that could be rebranded for landing pages—and not just any solution can do that. One solution, however, satisfied its needs and more.

STEP 3: LEARN MORE ABOUT DRUPAL

Drupal is an open-source CMS solution, meaning the original coding of the software can be used (and then further manipulated and customized) by any organization or user. With 1.3 million members worldwide and constituting 2.3 percent of all websites, Drupal is a leading open-source CMS that users like The Economist and the Australian federal government rely on to manage publications, articles and content.

Drupal can be used to build almost any kind of site, thanks to its range of capabilities and features which any user can take advantage of. Drupal, for instance:

- Is optimized for search engines.
- Is scalable to suit growing organizations.
- Leverages its community of users to support a world-class ecosystem.
- Focuses on security.
- Supports responsive design for mobile and desktop.
- Integrates with a host of different applications.

- Boasts numerous smart features and tools.
- Has a notably lower total cost of ownership than legacy systems.

All this made Drupal the perfect solution for the health care marketing firm - and, for the same reasons, makes it the ideal solution for many others. Yet the work was not finished. Before making the full move to the Drupal 7 Platform, a few final items needed to be crossed off the migration checklist.

STEP 4: TEST BEFORE SETTLING IN

Migrations can be tricky affairs. There are, after all, a lot of moving parts associated with such large-scale transitions between platforms, and organizations—even with the right solution (Drupal) in hand—need to be careful in the final stages of migration. Necessary actions to take include:

- **Inventory counts:** Make a record of all historical content, including text, images and metadata. Ensure everything is labeled and ready for transporting.
- **Staging systems:** Make sure everything is set



before going live by testing the site on a staging server. Catching any bugs is easier in this controlled environment and readies your final product to your exact standards and specs.

Having a partner to cover every base is important, and Paramount provided essential services to the healthcare marketing during this phase, like auditing and site hardening.

The totality of the Drupal migration effort resulted in the firm saving some \$500,000 annually with Drupal compared to its legacy CMS, while also benefitting from features that unified its search system and upgraded its responsive design, for instance.

Realizing the potential of a high-performing CMS is well within reach of organizations in every sector and of all sizes. Gaining the function and capability necessary to deliver an engaging and rich website can be achieved by migrating to better systems, like Drupal. However, the process is not so simple. The switch will become ever more inevitable for organizations that rely on outdated models. The time to start planning is now. Contact Paramount today to learn more about how we can help you engineer a successful Drupal migration (like the one enjoyed by our healthcare marketing client) and ultimately empower your website with the qualities and elements that content consumers crave.



SOURCING: <https://www.drupal.com/product/web-content-management>

paramountsoft.net

