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# Why I shifted focus from Drupal to MODx

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5 Posts

[Send PM](#)**ifthenelse** Reply #1, 9 years, 5 months ago

A few months ago, I was working with Drupal, trying to use it to implement a website for a volunteer group I work with. After looking at Joomla, I felt that Drupal was the best choice given its flexibility and more importantly, its ability (or so I thought) to meet certain delegated administration requirements.

But after peeling back the onion with Drupal, I came to the conclusion that while its core architecture has some good aspects, on the whole it is a software development train crash. There are too many cooks in the kitchen, and the developers have allowed (even encouraged) too many others to implement add-ons which define what should be basic functionality. So much so that Drupal now is very inconsistent in how it does things - especially regarding security. Things like implementing templates are more difficult/tricky than they should be. Also, there is so much going on inside Drupal that it uses an extraordinary amount of computing resources even to do simple things. For all it is capable of, Drupal is, in my opinion, collapsing under its own weight. Frankly, it is a mess.

(I know what I'm saying about Drupal is harsh, but I have over 25 years experience

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as a software developer, including Unix kernel development and years of major software system lead design/architecture experience.)

Then I ran into MODx. A bit less mature than other options, but it has a much better thought out core, and it hasn't spiraled out of control like Drupal has. It also is reasonably performant. In less than one day, I was able to put together a basic site together that took me two weeks fighting with Drupal to create. I was able to focus on getting the CSS and other elements right instead of dealing with all the wierd idiosyncracies of Drupal.

Security is a particular area where I think MODx can have a particular advantage - I have some security background, and while I do think there are areas where the MODx model can be improved (the existing role based implementation doesn't work well with certain use cases), at least it is built on a foundation that can actually work. The hierarchical document tree is key - enhance the system to include the appropriate container and document-level security (possibly one thing might be to add specific access controls to document groups, containers, and individual documents - for example, implement access control lists.). Throw in some specific inheritance features and MODx will have a document security capability that no other open source CMS I've worked with can handle (at least not easily).

The bottom line is that I'm quite impressed with MODx so far. To its core developers: please, please, please - don't let it get away from you like what happened with Drupal. Do make it easy for others to extend, but keep what should be in the core where it belongs. Make the core solid, focus on the glitches, document well - and MODx will succeed.

I do hope that Drupal can be turned around by its developers - at least in version 6 they are trying to fix some basic things (the menu stuff is being reworked for example). But I'm not hopeful it will be anytime soon. I think that Joomla is in far better shape than Drupal. If its core developers can get past some key limitations (security and tree depth, for example), then Joomla will be a winner - it is already very easy to set up a basic Joomla site with pretty good functionality. MODx is, in my mind, a bit more difficult to set up a basic site with than Joomla, but far easier to set up a site with anything approaching the flexibility of Drupal.

## Thank the People that Help

Remember, this is an Open Source project and the volunteers here assist out of love for the project and a desire to help others.

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## Who's talking

Posted in this thread:

1kenthomas, BobRay, Lammikko, Meristem, Photowebmax, Sylvaticus, TheWhippinpost, a7, bunk58, bwente, chucktrukk, crossroadbg, cyclismo, davidm, dev\_cw, dhilden, erunix, goldsky, goman, greg.harvey, gspark, ifthenelse, jbjones, jessay, johhan, jzigbe, kongondo, lossendae, luke.stokes, netdoctor, nyl auster, opengeek, patrickortman, rethrash, siux, sottwell, splittingred, stephenwh, tcochran, therebechips, timthesurfer, zaigham

Good work folks!



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**Ryan Thrash** Reply #2, 9 years, 5 months ago

Wow. 😊

**Ryan Thrash**, MODX Co-Founder

Follow me on Twitter at [@rthrash](https://twitter.com/rthrash) or catch my occasional unofficial thoughts at [thrash.me](http://thrash.me)



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**opengeek** Reply #3, 9 years, 5 months ago

Quote from: ifthenelse at Jun 06, 2007, 02:33 AM

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belongs. Make the core solid, focus on the glitches, document well - and MODx will succeed.

First, thanks for dropping by and providing some wonderfully insightful observations about the differences among these projects.

Second, do not worry about us losing control of the software. We are slowly and carefully crafting a (hopefully) sustainable vision with simplicity, flexibility, and performance foremost on our mind. I also think you'll like where we are heading, with new user management features, more flexible security models, and access control that can be applied to just about any core or custom object imaginable. These items are absolutely essential to our plans of providing a great content management framework. And we'll do our best at improving the documentation to make it easier for others to enjoy; I think you'll see a marked improvement in this aspect after the 0.9.7 release is rolled out.

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Jason Coward

Chief Architect @ MODX

<http://www.jasoncoward.com> | <http://twitter.com/drumshaman> | <https://github.com/opengeek>



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**davidm** Reply #4, 9 years, 5 months ago

This is the kind of testimony that just make me go "wow" just like Ryan 😊

Quote from: ifthenelse at Jun 06, 2007, 02:33 AM

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Just out of curiosity, since you're talking non-profit organisation and more particularly volunteer group, did you use Drupal along with [CiviCRM](#) ?

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MODx est l&#39;outil id



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**luke.stokes** Reply #5, 9 years, 5 months ago

Great post. If you're interested, we did some interesting custom things with MODx security back in 0.9.1 for [www.everynation.org](http://www.everynation.org). We had hundreds of security groups for all of the churches and campus groups. We created a filter system to display only the groups of security of interest for someone (like just NorthAmerica or NorthAmerica:USA, etc)

I also built a MassModifyDoc groups tool that was useful for adding a security group to an entire folder structure. I'm pretty sure I sent all this stuff back to the modx community. After we got the website off the ground they moved the day to day management out to the Philippines.

...and MODx has been so great, I haven't had to think about the site since 😊 It's great having sections of the site modified by people all over the world.

Though we do have an upgrade on our list of to-do's...

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**TheWhippinpost** Reply #6, 9 years, 5 months ago



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Yes, I (also coming from Drupal) echo entirely what ifthenelse said - Keep ModX's evolution managed - just as you have - and I think it will soon kick some serious ass 😊



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**goman** Reply #7, 9 years, 2 months ago

Just out of curiosity, since you're talking non-profit organisation and more particularly volunteer group, did you use Drupal along with CiviCRM ?

If CiviCRM supported MODx, we'd be all over it!

Chad



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**timthesurfer** Reply #8, 9 years, 2 months ago

I completely agree that MODx should aim to remain as nimble & unbloated as possible. Having looked at, and worked with, several cms systems, I would say that the vast bulk of them add far too many features & options that are rarely used. Yes, they might gain an extra 2% of functionality - but at the same, they become more convoluted & complex & bogged in code bloat for the 90% of users who are really only truly interested in the core features anyway.

I think there's a good metaphor that CMSs should be run like restaurants: Don't try & cook everything; focus on just doing a few dishes brilliantly. If you can succeed at that, you'll have hungry eaters lined up every single day you're in operation.



3 Posts

[Send PM](#)**a7** Reply #9, 8 years, 6 months ago

Just a short note on this - I am a fan of drupal, I think it is an awesome system and building websites with complex needs with drupal really feels like being able to do magic - ... once you get how it works.

So I know that Drupal has weak points, like that you need some time to learn how it works (and why it works the way it does). I don't know anything about MODx yet but will test and compare it along with a few other systems like silverstripe, CMS made simple, wordpress as CMS and TypoLight. All seem great systems to quickly build more or less simple websites - especially if the websites have a simple hierarchical structure and no esoteric needs in terms of content types as an example.

**However I must say the article by ifthenelse is pure FUD - He doesn't actually say anything. Therefor it is not worth anything until proven with facts.**

MODx probably is a great system, I can't tell weather it is or not yet, but I can tell you that Drupal is awesome and if you want to read a comparison of Drupal and MODx that has at least some facts in it I can recommend following page:  
<http://forums.digitalpoint.com/showthread.php?t=142492> Please send me a message if you know further quality comparisons.



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[Send PM](#)**BobRay** Reply #10, 8 years, 6 months ago

Quote from: a7 at May 12, 2008, 06:21 PM

**However I must say the article by ifthenelse is pure FUD - He doesn't actually say anything. Therefor it is not worth anything until proven with facts.**

I wonder if this comment is typical of the Drupal forums? I must say that we're used to much more polite and civil discourse around here. The OP raised some interesting questions about CMS architecture and development and spoke from his experience as a user with both Drupal and MODx.

I think you'll find that most of the people here are ready to admit that Drupal is a useful CMS and that, for some people, it might be a better fit than MODx.

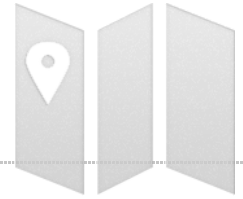
We would welcome your comments as well on how MODx and Drupal compare, but those opinions would carry more weight if you tried a little harder not to insult other forum members and if you actually installed MODx before posting your opinions.

Bob

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Bob's Guides is now hosted at [A2 MODX Hosting](#)

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