

Project Two Individual Memo

Introduction

My role in our project was to develop communication systems within our Drupal site that would unify the web presence of our client. As explained in the group memo, our client wanted to move away from using email newsletters from Constant Contact to communicate with his clients, while at the same time retaining the ability to communicate with them via email. Also, our client wanted to incorporate his Facebook presence into his website.

Email

I researched different email systems and decided to utilize the Mass Contact module as the email client for goldenlegsrunning.com. Our client, Mark, had decided to retire his email communication system and attempt to entice his users to move to visiting goldenlegsrunning.com for information about group activities. As such, an email client with the same functionality as Constant Contact is unnecessary, as this type of email communication will be used to direct users back to the site and all of the community and interactive features contained therein. At first, I over-assessed the need for additional functionality in terms of email, but I scaled back goals during the project closing process of the design phase to meet the goals established in the project charter.

The Mass Contact module makes use of automatically reused content in the form of the replacement tokens (which are made possible through the Token module). The replacement tokens pull information from other parts of the Drupal site (for example, the logo from the site theme or the phone number from the Ubercart module) and place that information as either prepended or appended text in the email. This type of reuse eliminates the need for the administrator of the site to manually enter data or opportunistically copy and paste data from the site into the email. It also ensures that any changes to this critical information are automatically reflected in communication with customers. The content reused in the emails is locked in that the token pulls information directly from the source and cannot be altered when sending the email. However, tokens may be deleted or added in the configuration page of the module. Automatic locked reuse means that customers will always receive correct contact information in emails, and emails will always be branded with the most up to date logo.

Facebook

Our client was concerned that his Facebook presence was completely separate from his website, and wanted integration and single-sourced content to be made available on the website. At the time of the project charter, I thought that meant having him access Facebook through his website, but the more feasible solution was to put the Facebook content on his

website for two reasons: users who don't use Facebook will still have access to this aspect of Mark's web presence, and users who do use Facebook can interact with the website in an enhanced way through social plugins.

My role in the group was to make sure that social plugins were functioning and that they were correctly applied to the site in a sustainable way so that they will generate increased web traffic for the client. I decided to use the Drupal for Facebook module which involved a great deal of configuration and research on the design end, but is extremely simple for the client to use. I explained the specifics of how this module functions in the group memo, so I will discuss some of the theory behind the use of this module here.

When Mark updates content on Facebook, it will appear in real time on the home page of goldenlegsrunning.com. Since he frequently updates this content, it will give the front page of the site a dynamic feel and give users the impression that content is regularly being added to the page. When users become a fan of the page, they will see their Facebook profile images in the like box on the front page. Likewise, clicking on like buttons places a message in their news feed, alerting other (potentially new) users to their activity on the site; users also have the option to include a comment when they click on the like button (e.g. "check out this site!") which provides a customizable way to share the link directly from the website, without having to copy and paste links into Facebook. The single-sourced content is distributed across the Facebook SNS through the news feed, and Mark's updates are single-sourced with his website so that content he shares on Facebook is reused in a meaningful, highly visible way on his website.

A future improvement for this system would be to have a Facebook web application developer construct a customized application for Golden Legs Running. However, in our statement of scope, we specifically stated that we would not be responsible for any modification of third-party social networking sites. At the same time, our installation and configuration of Drupal for Facebook provided social plugins that have allowed both Mark and his users to generate content that sees reuse directly on goldenlegsrunning.com and on the Facebook SNS.