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Project Two Individual Memo
Publication Management

My primary areas of responsibility for http://goldenlegsrunning.com were designing the user registration form and the training log form and calendars. These fell under Project Objective #3: "User profiles with customizable content and the ability to submit community accessible user-generated content" from our Project Charter.

User Registration Form

I patterned the user registration form after the existing sign-up form on the client's old website. I chose to keep all of the user's personal information (address, phone, etc.) private, so that the client is able to collect this information and use it in his database, but the users don't have to worry about their privacy. Users can upload a profile photo, which was enabled by installing the "Reg with Picture" module. Next, users can share information about their running preferences. To enable them to select more than one race distance they prefer to run, I installed the "Profile Checkboxes" module. The running information (other than the final question about new races in Lake County) is displayed on the users' profile pages, which are accessible only to authenticated users.

Training Log Form and Calendar

The client requested a way for participants in Golden Legs Running's Winter Training Program to record their training information. He directed us to a site that he liked, and I did my best to use Drupal to create similar functionality. I created a content type called "Training Log" and added fields for the users to fill out about their activity. To expand the field functionality, I installed several modules. The most significant ones were:

- Autocomplete Widget
  Used for fields like "Shoes" and "Route" that would often take the same value for the same individual, but different for different individuals, making a drop-down list somewhat impractical. With autocomplete, the system would be able to remember and suggest previous entries.

- Measured Value Field Module (and its companion modules)
  Used for fields like "Distance" and "Time" that need units. The "Currency" module populated the site-wide list of units, but there are still some units that are unavailable (such as seconds).

- Automatic Nodetitles Module
  Allows the title of a training log entry to be automatically created so users don't have to come up with what to call that particular workout. The module automatically generates unique URLs.

Being able to record training activity is only the first step. Next, the users needed to be able to view their activity. The client requested that users would be able to see their own training activity on a calendar. To do this, I first cloned the existing site event calendar (built by Ed) and set up a calendar view that was filtered to nodes of the content type “Training Log.” After a lot of tweaking, I was able to get the calendar to successfully display everyone's training activity. Finally, to personalize the calendar so users just saw their own activity, I cloned the training log calendar view and added another filter: “User: Current.”

The client wanted the training log to be available only to registered users and to be accessible through a menu link called “Winter Training Program.” I created a basic page with that title and installed the “Node Access” module so that I could make that node visible only to registered users. (I also made all of the nodes with the content type of “Training Log” accessible only to registered users.) On the basic page, I provided a link to the training log form so that users wouldn't have to navigate to “Create Content > Training Log”, which may be confusing to them if they're not familiar with Drupal. I also included the links to the personalized training log calendar and the calendar with everyone's training activity. The log entries allow comments, so that, as requested by the client, program participants can comment on each other's workouts.

Other Tasks

I also set up the forum by activating the built-in forum module and created the site's static basic pages that are featured in the navigation. (Many of these pages are placeholders as the client is still working on the content.) On the store pages, I generated Google Maps showing each store's location.

Learnings and Connections to Readings

As with my Project One, the concept of single-sourcing was expressed through the use of Views. The personalized and group training log calendars allow a visual display of the training log content, and I can foresee that other views may be helpful in the future, such as a report of one’s miles run or best times. Since all the content the user enters is saved in the database, it could be reconstructed in a myriad of ways that could help users see patterns or other helpful information about their training. (Of course, this would require additional custom views to be set up in the future.)

Unlike my first project, which relied on a taxonomy, there weren’t any immediate applications for metadata for what I was doing with this site, but I could imagine how a taxonomy might be used in the future, such as tagging forum posts, training log entries, and training events with the names of the different races being discussed or trained for.

Concerning project management, I found Basecamp a very convenient way to manage who was working on what and when. We didn't follow a formal project management plan as described in the textbook, but we were able to manage responsibilities and deadlines. Our project deviated from its charter a bit because the client’s requirements changed (e-commerce became a lower priority), but since we learned that fairly early in the project and had already planned on building the other functions that were now a higher priority (transferring old site content, the training log), it was not too difficult to switch gears.

We used Basecamp to set milestones for time management, but because most of our activities could overlap, activity sequencing wasn’t too much of a concern. Obviously, the client had to secure the URL and hosting before we could install Drupal on the server (a finish-to-start relationship), but once that happened, we were able to work on our areas simultaneously: Andrew on the Facebook and mass contact integration, Ed on the calendar and photos, me on the registration and training log areas, and Carmen on researching themes and Ubercart. The one sequencing issue we needed to monitor was that the Ubercart installation was easier for Carmen to work on in the Garland theme, so we had to delay switching over to the Analytic theme until that was finished (another finish-to-start relationship).

My learnings about Drupal are detailed more fully in my critique memo, but I continue to see both the positive side of its enormous capacity for customization and the negative side of its seemingly incessant need for customization in order for it to function as desired. I think our project was a fairly good fit for Drupal, especially with the need for the training log feature, although I'm still a bit concerned that our client may find Drupal too complex for maintenance. I hope our documentation (Project Three) will eliminate that concern.