

RFP for Drupal Module Development

version 5.x

Southern Center for Human Rights

awillem@schr.org

Context

This module has utility in other contexts as well, but I would like to outline the specific need that we have here so as to help understand the specific context in which the need for this module came up.

SCHR has an intranet site that acts as a virtual office and also a database for various legal cases that we research and take on.

To house the case information, different content types were created and connected using the CCK node relativity module. The structure of the various content types with respect to one another is simple: there is a 'parent' content type called 'project', and various different other content types that relate to that 'project'.

When a user creates a 'child' content type, they have the opportunity to choose (boolean field) if the item should go on a 'docket'. This 'docket' is currently managed with a view that filters for all content types with 'docket' checked and which were published in the last 35 days. It is currently viewed as a 'Table' in which the first column is the 'project', and the subsequent columns have information about the 'child' like Title, author, etc.

The docket is printed out and used for monthly meetings as a synopsis of the work that has been done in the last month.

The issue is that the presentation of the docket in this way is cumbersome and ugly. What we would prefer is if the view 'grouped by' project, and then had an option to see a table with information for 'child' nodes below each project. In addition, if there could be a teaser associated with the below each 'project', and before the table, that would be ideal.

Example

In order to get the visual effect we want, we would have to create separate views (blocks) for each 'project' that display the information we need, and filter based on a category/taxonomy term that is created for each 'project'. These blocks are then configured to appear in the content block of a page.

In this scenario, although there is no teaser description of the 'project', there is the list of all things we would need to see on the docket based on the criteria we gave in the view.

The down side (aside from the repetitive work every time a new 'project' is added) is that it would require the existence of an administrator who would need to keep track of new projects, create a taxonomy for each project, create the view, and then configure the blocks. This will not be possible given the skill level and staff resources that we have.

Strategies

There are several modules that ALMOST do what we want, but that don't work for us. The 'Group by' module that extends view functionality is one of them. It is problematic for two reasons. The first is that it groups by taxonomy term, and at the present there is (to my knowledge) not a module that automatically

creates a taxonomy based on a field in a node type or on the results of a view.

There are many different strategies that might be taken in the creation of this module, a couple of them I will mention below.

Automate the Administrator

One strategy would be to automate the actions that an administrator would perform when a new 'project' is created. This kind of a module would automatically create a taxonomy term in a specific Category/ies for each node-title (or other field) of a specific content-type, create the view based on that category name, and then program for the block to populate in a specific area of the page on a specific page. The kinds of configurations for choosing the Category and for automating the configuration of the blocks, would have to have a user interface component that would allow for customizations between different instances of this on the site. This could potentially snowball into something much larger than needed.

Nested Views

Alternatively, if there were a nested views module where views results could be nested and grouped within one another, it would allow for broader set of possible customizations and choices, while at the same time not ballooning out of control into a major development project.

In our case specifically, we would create a view (the Uber-View) that would return teasers of each 'project' that was marked 'docket'. We would create a 'sub-view' that, for each result of the view above, would return it's own set of results. In this case, the results would be filtered to all be child content types of the 'project' content type – essentially modelling the argument: `$args[0] = arg(1); return $args;`. The sub-views module might allow for other arguments as well, but the default argument would be the above since the whole point is to return results relevant to each result returned by the Uber-View.

Estimates and Bids

We are happy to accept project bids, or looser estimates based on hourly rates. If you submit a loose estimate based on an hourly rate, you will need to guarantee the project within a 15% margin of the estimate.

The time line for this project will move fast. We will want to begin the contract before April 1st, and complete development (including testing) by the end of May.

In addition to the cost/bid, your proposal should also include in writing the approach to this problem that you will take. Please give enough detail so that we can understand, in addition to the general approach, the different ways that this module will allow for different types of configuration. We will be using these statements of approach as the main metric with which to evaluate your proposal.

**Please email your proposal no later than March 15th, 2009 to:
awillem@schr.org**