Drupal CMS

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For this paper I chose Drupal 8. Created by Drupal, this is the newest version of the platform. Drupal is a free and open-source CMS platform. Drupal was initially released on January 15, 2000. The latest stable version, Drupal 8, was released March 18, 2020. According to the usage statistics released by [w3techs.com](https://w3techs.com/technologies/details/cm-drupal), 1.6% of all websites use some version of Drupal.

Drupal is based on the LAMP stack, which consists of Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP. Drupal is designed to be modular and scalable. Users add or remove features from their website by using modules and can install themes to change the overall look and feel of their website. Drupal is designed to balance simplicity and flexibility for both experienced and inexperienced users. With built-in accessibility features and responsive design, it is easy to build, design, and publish a small static website using Drupal.

While there are clear similarities between the two platforms, WordPress and Drupal both have benefits and disadvantages. WordPress is the clear winner in terms of beginner-friendly setup. While WordPress offers the block system for adding and updating content, Drupal requires more knowledge and “tinkering” with HTML and PHP. Popularity is another factor to consider when choosing a CMS platform. WordPress, the overall favorite, is used on 35% of all websites. The increased popularity also means WordPress will have an edge on smaller platforms. While WordPress has thousands of professional-quality themes for free, there are significantly less available for Drupal. The same applies to available extensions. While there are many available plugins and extensions available for both platforms, WordPress maintains an edge because of its wider popularity. One area in which Drupal overtakes WordPress is speed. Lightweight and less resource-consuming, Drupal generally allows for faster loading and higher performance than WordPress. One of the biggest concerns these days is website security. Drupal outperforms WordPress in this area. This platform features monthly security updates to combat threats.

Instead of using only the Drupal CMS platform, I would rather use Drupal as a decoupled Content Management System with the Gatsby JS library. In doing so, I would be able to use the back-end functions of Drupal as a data source, while utilizing the front-end capabilities of Gatsby and the JAMstack technology. Using Gatsby as a static site generator and maximizing the use of JAMstack to pull data from the Drupal back-end dataset would establish a site that is fast, secure, and completely customizable. While this is not a preferred method for the novice user, I would much rather use this method for content creation of pages. I am currently creating a web site in Gatsby for a band. Using Drupal as a data source means I can tie in a customized API in conjunction with a CRUD (Create, Update, and Delete) UI to pull data from and write data to, the Drupal database.

The basic use of a decoupled CMS platform gives you the CRUD UI and a way to display data. The CMS itself does not care HOW that data is displayed and using it this way provides much more leniency and allows greater customization than is possible with only using the CMS tools. Additionally, it offers the ability to use specific plugins available from the Content Management System.

There are tons of options available when choosing a Content Management System. All have their pros and cons, and each needs to be measured against your needs for the website. Not all platforms offer the content or plugins you may need. If headless or decoupled is the approach you want to take for your website, then focus must be given to available plugins and the API customization. I would consider using Drupal since I am more familiar with the tools needed to make the most of the platform, but I would be interested in creating content with Gatsby as the front-end functionality.

References