

Why Weather.com moved to Drupal



The Weather Company™ is an American cable and satellite television channel that is owned by The Weather Company™. Weather.com is The Weather Company™'s online home, and is the highest trafficked Drupal site in existence, serving millions of pages to more than 100 million people each month.



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The website hosts The Weather Company™'s weather forecasts and weather-related news and analysis, along with other content and media related to weather. The Weather Company™ maintains an extensive online presence at weather.com and through a set of mobile applications for smartphones and tablet computers.

Weather.com's previous platform was difficult to make changes on. When adding new products, The Weather Company™ team had to involve three different vendors.

Additionally, the Weather.com team encountered numerous headaches with their website's editorial setup. All articles were modified by an app that could only have one version open at a time, making it difficult to edit multiple articles at once.

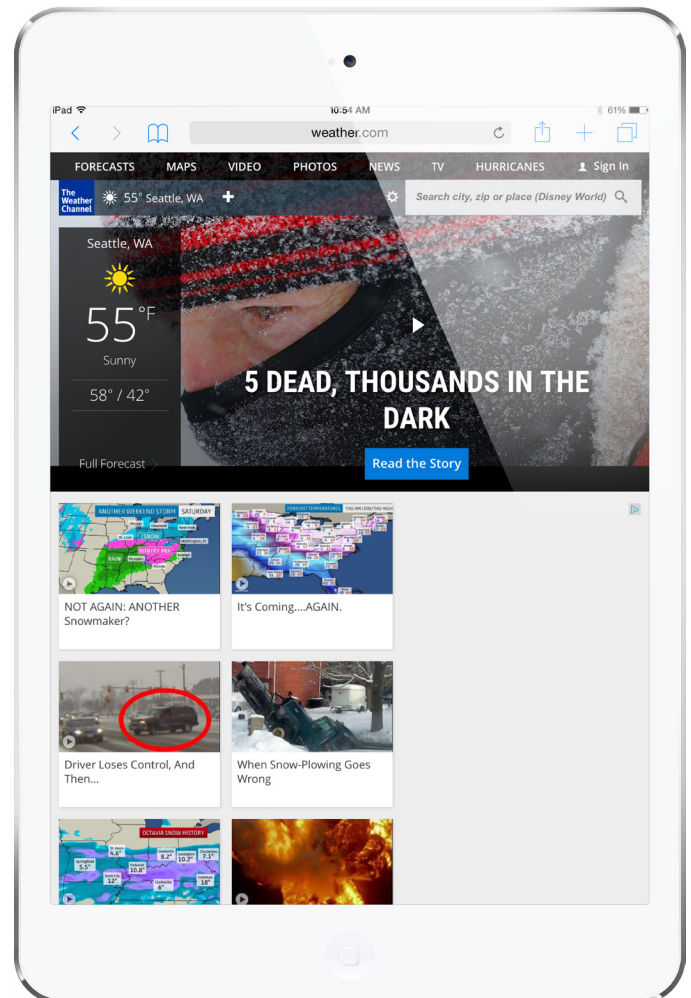
The Weather Company™ decided that they needed a website that met the following criteria:

Feature flexibility: the Weather.com team needed to be able to add, remove, and change features quickly and easily

Scalability: The Weather Company™ needed to be able to add and remove servers quickly depending on traffic, in response to unusual weather patterns across the country

Maintainability: the Weather.com team wanted to take advantage of products and features that other people had already built, and that other people maintained — ideally, with low or no licensing fees.

Availability of talent: The Weather Company™ needed access to a large pool of talented, reliable experts, and there was already a thriving and active Drupal community in their city.



Pain Points

"We needed a secure, responsive website that could be compartmentally edited by local branches, that could handle large amounts of traffic."

— Chris Hill, The Weather Company™

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Choosing Drupal

The Weather.com team was already aware of the numerous benefits of open source software, such as security, stability, and a large support base.

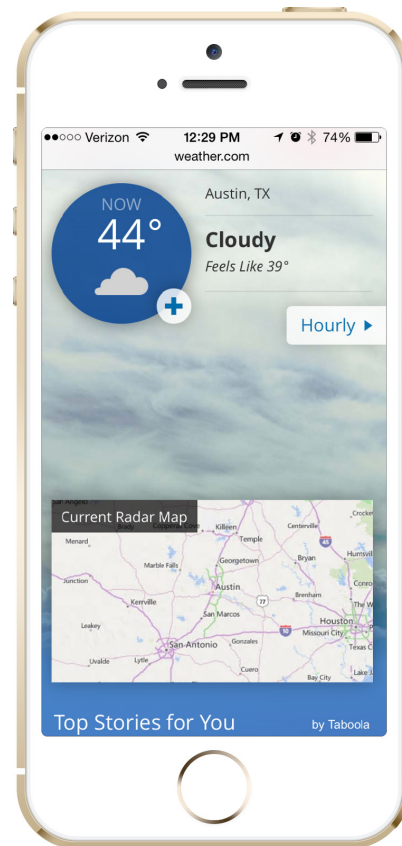
Because The Weather Company™ already had strong advocates for open source within their ranks, they decided to go with an open source solution. After evaluating multiple content management options, Drupal emerged as the obvious choice.

A key consideration for The Weather Company™ was being able to partner with one of the top Drupal agencies in the world, Mediacurrent— especially as The Weather Company™ and Mediacurrent are both based in Atlanta. The team at Mediacurrent was able to provide on-site assistance and local collaboration.

Because of Drupal's flexibility, the developers were able to expand the Weather.com website's functionality, and easily meet new requirements from The Weather Company™ team as they arose. Some of the features that came out of this process include:

Flexible Page Layouts: This gives The Weather.com team complete control over content placement on the page. Because of Drupal's flexibility and power, the Mediacurrent team was able to build The Weather Company™ a framework that allowed the team's developers to rapidly deploy javascript and java widgets, giving them the ability to modify pages without having to touch the Drupal back end.

Improved Layout Previews: Editors can make quick previews early in the content creation process, allowing them to review the work without having to publish the content publicly or work with a content server.



“The Weather Company™’s move to Drupal shows how complex, content-rich sites benefit from an open, agile platform to deliver an amazing experience for every site visitor.

— Dries Buytaert,
Acquia CTO and
Drupal project creator

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Results

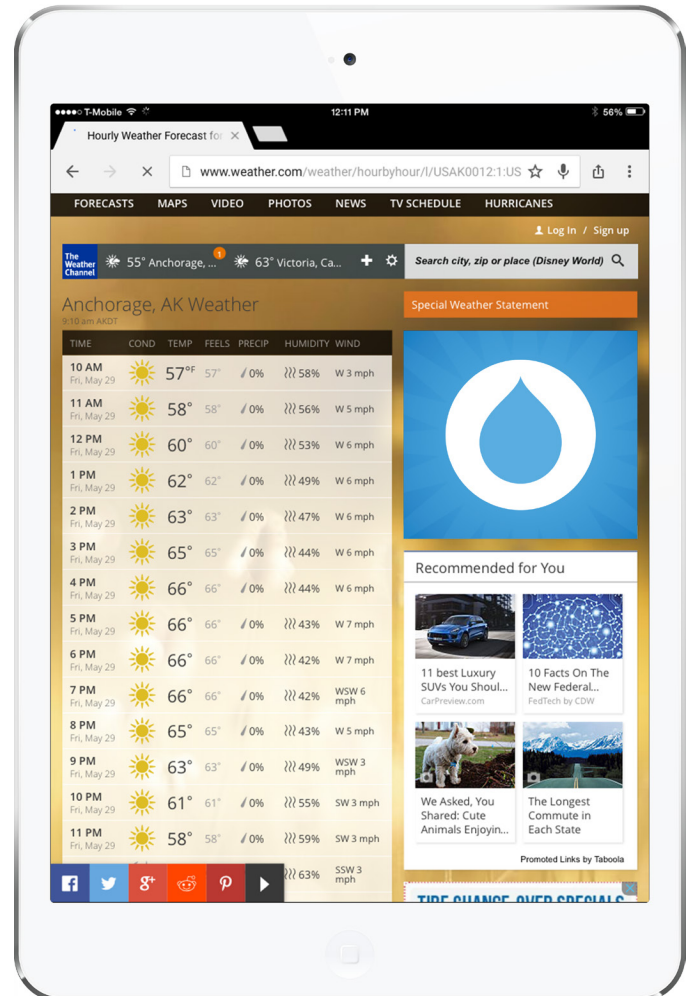
After migration, the Weather.com team saw tremendous improvements in the following areas:

Increased scalability and performance: The Weather Company™'s website previously required a lot of resources to be able to function. With Drupal, the team was able to reduce server footprint from 133 servers across three data centers to 15 servers in a single center (Acquia).

Total cost of ownership: Before switching to Drupal, The Weather Company™ was paying over \$1,000,000 each year to support their incumbent platform. Drupal's lack of licensing fees dramatically decreased the costs of maintenance and ownership.

Content creation workflow: The simplified the editorial experience lead to a dramatic increase in "official" and user-generated content on the site.

Reduced support requests: immediately after the migration member support request tickets dropped from from 100 a week to two a week, and then down to virtually none within a month.



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