Welcome to Your New Drupal Site!

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Welcome to Your New Drupal Site!

This cookbook assumes you have successfully installed Drupal and are looking at a "Welcome to Drupal" screen. If you're not already to that point, the Installation Guide is for you!

Drupal's Welcome Screen (Drupal 6)

This guide will talk you through adding content to your site, setting up your homepage, working with menus, extending your site with common modules, configuring permissions, setting up blocks and making your site look different via themes.

Getting Started, Get to Know Drupal

Whether you're new to site building, new to content management systems, or just new to Drupal, you will run across several terms throughout your Drupal experience. These are the most common terms seen throughout this cookbook, much of the other documentation and handbooks across Drupal, and even as you look through Modules' (*there's one now*!) project pages, discussion forums, and help screens.

There is a glossary near the end of this cookbook that will go into more detail regarding these and other terms; however, before you get started with Drupal, it will be helpful if you have a basic understanding of what these most-commonly used terms mean to you.

Nodes

Collectively, nodes make up the content of your site. And while this sentence by itself doesn't seem to offer much help, you can think of it as the candy aisle at your local shopping center. Everything in that aisle is the "Candy", but there are several types of Candy – chocolate bars, fruit-flavored chews, licorice, jaw-breakers. The list goes on, but they are all Candy. Then, these basic types of candy get further divided into categories (Brand Names) and other further differences (sizes).

Nodes are a lot like your site's candies. Together, they make up the juicy parts of your site. They can then be categorized into different types of nodes: Pages, Reviews, Blog Entries, Polls and Surveys.

We'll go into more detail later on, but for now, know that whenever the word "node" is mentioned, we are referring to any singular piece of content on your site that holds at least a title and body.

Taxonomy

The word Taxonomy literally means the science of classification. Drupal uses this science to provide you with the tools you'll need to classify and categorize your site's content. There are two basic parts that together help make up Drupal's taxonomy system.

Terms are individual words or phrases that are used to categorize your content. There is no limit to the number of terms that you can use on your site, or the number of terms that you can assign to any piece of content. By assigning your terms to your content, you can easily come up with new ways to display information to your readers. For example, one reader might wish to read all your nodes that talk about Macadamia Nuts.

Vocabularies are large groups of similar terms that can be assigned to your content types. For example, you may want to create a group specifically for Blog Entries. You can create a vocabulary "Blog Categories" and assign this vocabulary to all blog entries. None of your other content types will show up under this vocabulary. And every time you write a new blog entry, you will be asked to choose a term from within this vocabulary. There is no limit to the number of vocabularies that you can create or the number of terms that can be assigned to each vocabulary.

Views

You'll probably run into the word "View" or "Views" several times as you make your way around Drupal. That's partially because of the extended power that the views modules can give your site. Views has become one of the most popular contributed modules available for Drupal because of its flexibility.

A View is a dynamic display of similar content filtered by your rules. For an example, have a look at your favorite blog. No doubt, along the front page, you'll see a long list of different entries, each with a title and a short introduction to what that entry is going to be about. When you click on the title, it brings you to a page where that blog entry is written in its entirety.

The chances that your favorite blogger wrote each entry and then created a new page to post an introduction to his new blog entry is very remote – especially within any content management system. Rather, that front page of his blog can be called a View.

Essentially, a View will tell your web site to display certain pieces of information from your different nodes. In the example of the blog, every time you visit that site, as the page loads, the View starts to run through filters looking for blogs, then pulling and displaying their titles and introduction and sorting those blogs by date. What you are left with is a display that looks like a page, but is really several nodes compiled together.

This is just one of many basic uses for the Views module. The same filtering system can be used for ecommerce stores, news headlines, and any other area of your site in which you might like to create your own unique way of displaying your information.

Core versus Contributed

Two words that you will come across often are the words "Core" and "Contributed".

Core entails anything that is included with your primary Drupal installation. When you first installed Drupal onto your server, you probably saw several basic features already set for you, such as the default theme and even a few modules and content types. These elements are considered "Core" elements because they come standard with every Drupal installation and do not need to be installed or updated separately.

There are currently two classes of Core modules that are included with every Drupal installation: Required and Optional. Required Core modules cannot be disabled or deleted; to turn them off will completely disable your site. Optional Core modules are those that are useful to a number of sites, but not required to keep your site running. Some examples of optional core modules include: Blog, Search, Forums, and Contact.

Contributed entails elements of Drupal that have been added over time either by developers, users, or members of Drupal. They do not come as standard with your Drupal installation, but can be downloaded and installed to help expand on what you are building.

Depending on how popular and universally useful a particular contributed module has become, Drupal will sometimes decide to begin incorporating that module into its standard installation – migrating the module from being contributed to becoming a core module.