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Assessing the Content Management System from Users perspective

S. Divya Meena

Student of Master of Engineering (Computer Science & Engineering),
Kingston Engineering College, Vellore – 632 059, India

Abstract: Content Management System as the name implies, is a system that manages the content and the overall components of the system. A CMS in general plays the role of managing user accounts. There are broad ranges of CMS existing under variety of platforms. Three most trendy and easily available on the internet are WordPress, Joomla and Drupal, but there have been a great confusion over which out of three is best. To discard the confusion, this paper presents a crystal clear difference among all three terms. In addition, we also focus on Text Pattern and Expression Engine.

Keywords: CMS, WordPress, Joomla, Drupal, Expression Engine, Text Pattern

I. Introduction

Content Management System as the name implies, is a system that manages the content and the overall components of the system. A CMS in general plays the role of managing user accounts. It is very essential in case of content rich sites. For all type of site you build, there will be some type of CMS available for your need. This is both advantage and disadvantage. It is advantageous because clients have the choice of choosing the best CMS of their choice. It is disadvantageous because developers will have to work with plenty of CMS before settling down on their final choice. Though this is powerful and gives us the flexibility, it is time-consuming too. Normally when we say CMS, three commonly heard terms are WordPress, Drupal and Joomla. These three hold the first three positions and it is clear. The remaining is biased and needs some attention. So in this paper, we will focus on the top three CMS and two more; Expression Engine and Text Pattern. We will try to sort out as which is best for which community of people. But at the end, it is the user's choice.

II. Content management system

WordPress is one of the most admired content management systems. It is exceptionally easy to use, instinctive, and extensible and it is free for use. It is actually a more of a blogging engine than a CMS. It is one of the tough competitors for other leading CMS like Drupal and Joomla. WordPress is mostly suited for naïve users and for those who want to start a website immediately without any investment. WordPress is wealthy in terms of free templates, themes and Plug-ins. In whole, WordPress is best suited for casual bloggers and naïve users.

Drupal, a fully fledged CMS is more than a blogging tool though most people use it for blogging purpose. Its learning curve is difficult but once you master it, you won't move to another CMS. Drupal can be greatly useful if we have some previous knowledge on CMS. Drupal's success lies in its strong developer community and the support they lend. Though Drupal has only limited themes, we can create our own designs and that's easy. Drupal supports blogs, larger websites of size 10k pages, web pages, shopping zones, multiple blogs, multiple sites, etc. But it is bit harder to setup than WordPress. It is technical in nature, so requires some regular maintenance.

Joomla is one other popular CMS that lies somewhere between WordPress and Drupal. It is not as flexible as Drupal but has better themes and easier to use. It is mostly suited if you are going to work within a set system. That is, it has only little flexibility, few themes and plug-ins and a restricted core. It is not as easy as WordPress and its dashboard is little complex too making it difficult to manage and customize. But it has a great developer community just like Drupal.

CMS	WP	JOOMLA	DRUPAL	EE	TP
POSITION	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
COST	FREE	FREE	FREE	\$99.95 - \$299.95	Free
BASED ON	PHP	PHP	PHP	PHP	PHP
TYPE OF USERS	Developers, bloggers and thinkers	Experienced developers	Developers	Front-end developers and designers	Web-designers and end-users.
BEST SUITED FOR	Simple blog	Large web sites, Multi-language websites	Complex websites	Enterprise-level	For blogging and News website.

Expression Engine is one other popular CMS that is highly technical and licensed. Though developers feel this is difficult because of its technical nature, it is highly flexible despite the fact that it has very few plug-ins and themes but requires regular maintenance. The support provided by the developer's community makes the learning curve a bit easier yet Expression Engine is only popular among designers and developers and not among regular users. This is best suited for widespread projects and for licensed commercial sites.

Text Pattern is a well-designed CMS that is both powerful and well sophisticated to support any type of web sites. It is also free and open source just like the rest of the discussed CMSs. It is highly flexible and extensible and this makes it popular among web designers, bloggers and developers. Clients have complete control over the contents of the system and this makes it simple and easy to use. Both developing and publishing part is simple in Text Pattern.

CMS	WORDPRESS	JOOMLA	DRUPAL	TP	EE
Developers			✓	✓	✓
Local developers	✓			✓	
Editor usability	✓				
Ability to handle 2k pages	✓		✓		✓
Ability to handle 10k pages			✓		
Plug-ins development	✓	✓			
Themes development	✓				
Out of box SEO	✓				✓
Plug-in SEO	✓	✓	✓		
Development needs	✓				

III. Analysis of CMS

In this section, we will try to evaluate the CMS of our choices based on their supporting features, strengths and weakness. On deep evaluation we will be able to find the right CMS for our concerns. The following table will discuss the features that are important for system managing contents.

FEATURES	WP	JOOMLA	DRUPAL	TP	EE
Simplicity	✓			✓	✓
Flexibility	✓	✓		✓	✓
User Management	✓	✓	✓		
Media Management	✓	✓			
Ease of Publishing	✓		✓	✓	
Themes	✓	✓	✓		
Plug-ins	✓				
Smart Search	✓	✓		✓	
Easy Updates		✓			
Stability			✓	✓	✓
Security				✓	✓
Developer Community	✓		✓	✓	✓
Multi database support		✓			
Commercial Support	✓		✓	✓	✓
Customizability			✓	✓	
Usability	✓				
Ease of use	✓				
Free of cost	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Templates	✓	✓			
Being Alive	✓	✓	✓		
User friendly	✓				
Scalability	✓		✓		✓
Extensibility	✓			✓	
Easier Learning Curve	✓			✓	

The following table will talk about the strengths and weakness of Content Management System. At the end of this discussion, we will make a distinguished analysis on type of users for each category of CMS.

CMS	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
WORD PRESS	- Vast number of developer with ample certifications and lectures. - Free and paid plug-in and specialized themes help create practically any sort of site with WordPress. - Comprehensible dashboard for administration of the content.	- Can be an overload for fundamental sites. - A standard installation has a bundle of security concerns - It is very vulnerable to attack devoid of

		security measures. • No official support outside of user forums.
DRUPAL	• Vigorous community support, including IRC channels and face-to-face meet-ups. • More than 6,000 modules make Drupal highly extensible. • A large number of companies offer business support for Drupal.	• Can be an overload for fundamental sites. • A lack of high-quality free and commercial themes. • Theme system is fairly complicated.
JOOMLA	• User authentication can be done with OpenID, Google, and LDAP, among others. • More than 7000 extensions. • Very active user community and tons of certification available.	• Back-end though useful is not as user-friendly as some other CMS. • Lack of high-quality themes • Can be an overload for fundamental sites.
TEXT PATTERN	• Really easy to use interface. • Well suited for sites of all sizes. • Really great documentation, including a full online manual.	• Smaller community. • Fewer plug-ins • Relatively few high-quality templates available.
EXPRESSION ENGINE	• Good commercial support. • Focus on security, with no major security breaches ever. • No restrictions on how a site can be designed.	• Cost is high, especially for commercial sites. • Can be an overload for simple or smaller sites. • No interactive demo to try it out before you purchase.

The below table indicates the possible options for various CMS. For clients using CMS for blogging, they can choose either WordPress or Text Pattern. But at the end, the choice is users among the two.

CMS	Blog	Magazine	Big corporate	Data-driven websites	e-commerce	Small Business	Developers
WordPress	✓	✓					
Drupal			✓	✓			✓
Joomla							
EE				✓	✓		
TP	✓	✓				✓	

IV. Conclusion

For a very large commercial project, I can see a good reason for choosing Drupal. Drupal is easier to use from clients perspective, but it is hard on developers and designers side. Moreover, it is more of code and markups than they are necessary. However, if you are designing a website for a not-so-technical client, or for creating a simple website, WordPress should be your preferred choice. WordPress is a massively prevailing CMS but still it faces several problems like some plug-in leave a trail even when uninstalled. Naïve users find it hard to cope with so many features of WordPress initially. WordPress is a healthier choice for beginners and small sites. Legacy is the only reason for choosing Joomla. Instead of searching a theme, you could code the template of your choice. Joomla is a very influential system with many vast extensions and a really easy to use admin system. Text Pattern is perhaps one of the more ignored CMSs. Text Pattern is an extremely flexible CMS, despite the fact that, that's easy to use out of the box and easy to customize by designers and developers. EE though has an easier learning curve, it does have some cost. Anything above free is a burden on client side. At the end of the day, it is the choice of the user to choose. Having skill with all five of these CMS can be awfully helpful to professionals and hobbyists. It can also help developer to easily identify which software solution is best. This paper has focused on some of the CMS, its advantages, disadvantages and features.

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