



YOU SHOULDN'T NEED A PHD TO EDIT DRUPAL CONTENT

ENVIVENT INTERACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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Challenge

A client asked us to add a slide to their Slideshow, a task we have done dozens of time. We carefully read through the scope and begin the process of estimating the work. A quick copy and paste have me into the back-end of the Drupal site. However, a quick glance at the screen made my stomach drop and I knew I was going to have to put on a pot of coffee.

Before our eyes is a stream of symbols in a garbled mess. Trying to make heads or tails from what was in front of us was going to take some time because the folks who developed the site, took a shortcut and pasted the code directly into a single Drupal field.

This is a hypothetical situation, but one that we face all too often. Developers do not have to resort to halfheartedly architected solutions when creating beautiful and intuitive interfaces in Drupal is not difficult and can save a lot of heartache and pain for the poor soul who has to make updates to the site in the future.

The Solution

The trick to creating intuitive interfaces for content editors is to break things down into small and understandable pieces.

ICON	LABEL	MACHINE NAME	DESCRIPTION	OPERATIONS
	Slide	slide	A slide inside of the Slideshow	Manage fields ▼
	Slideshow	slideshow	A slideshow that container slides.	Manage fields ▼

For the above slideshow, we would use Paragraphs and break the slideshow down into two pieces; a container we will call **slideshow** and **slide** that will go inside the slideshow.

Which Paragraph types should be allowed?

Exclude the selected below

Include the selected below

Paragraph types

[Show row weights](#)

TYPE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slide
<input type="checkbox"/> Slideshow

The simpler, the better.

So the slideshow will only have one type of content--slides.

Manage form display ☆

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FIELD	WIDGET		
<input type="checkbox"/> Heading	<input type="text" value="Textfield"/>	Textfield size: 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Background Image	<input type="text" value="Image"/>	Preview image style: Thumbnail (100x100) Progress indicator: throbber	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Body	<input type="text" value="Text area (multiple rows)"/>	Number of rows: 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Link	<input type="text" value="Link"/>	No placeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>

The slide will contain all of the content in the form of clearly defined field. The fields should be easy to understand and should not make any assumptions about the users coding ability.


No code please!

Slide Remove







Heading
Slide 2

Background Image


Alternative text*
rolling hills
Short description of the image used by screen readers and displayed when the image is not loaded. This is important for accessibility.

 PLNU_img1.jpg (879.54 KB) Remove

Body

B I       Format Source

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

Text format Basic HTML About text formats ?

LINK

URL

Start typing the title of a piece of content to select it. You can also enter an internal path such as `/node/add` or an external URL such as `http://example.com`. Enter `<front>` to link to the front page.

Link text

Add Slide

We let Drupal do the rest!

The end result is an intuitive interface where adding, removing, reordering a slide is clear and updating content is no more difficult than writing an email.

The Conclusion

Drupal sometimes gets a bad wrap as a hard to use CMS, but the reality is Drupal is just a tool and it is up to the software developers to create useful interfaces for content editors.

As we demonstrated, with a little bit of forethought we can craft some really customizable backends that users of all levels are able to understand and use.

There really is no excuse for having to write code directly in Drupal.