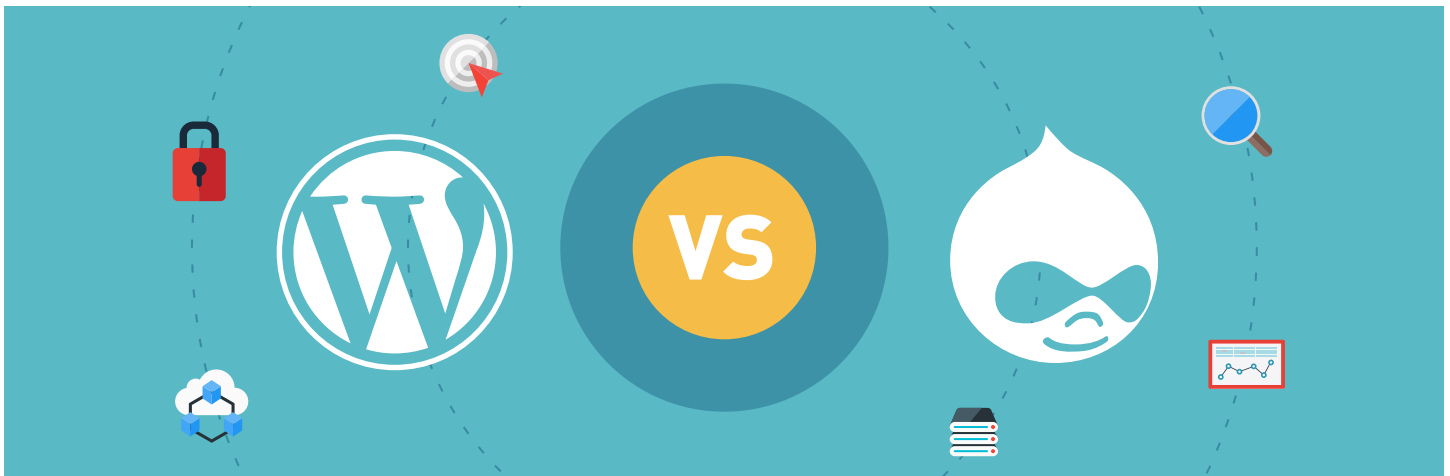




WORDPRESS VS. DRUPAL WHICH IS THE RIGHT CMS FOR YOU?

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WHITE PAPER



Little has revolutionized the internet as much as open source content management systems.

Thanks to them, these days literally anyone can build and maintain their own website, which has empowered users to jumpstart their careers, businesses, and blogs.

Of all available platforms, WordPress is by far the most popular and has positioned itself as the leader of the pack. It powers *more than half* of all websites that use a CMS and *a quarter of the entire internet*.

However, WordPress is not the only content management system out there. Drupal is another popular open source CMS, especially at the enterprise level.

Among the top 10,000 websites in the world, it is the *second most popular solution*, trailing WordPress by a wide margin. WordPress powers 39 percent of the top 10,000 sites, while Drupal powers 9 percent.

WordPress and Drupal have a lot in common — both are free, open source, community-driven, and PHP-based software solutions for building websites.

The two systems were also first released very close to one another, Drupal in 2001 and WordPress in 2003.

At the same time, the platforms are also very different. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages and are suitable for different kinds of projects.

In this white paper we will take a detailed look at both platforms, compare them on a number of markers, and examine their strengths and weaknesses.

The goal is to give you a better understanding of the differences between WordPress and Drupal and help you decide which CMS is right for your website or project.

It will be a long ride, so strap in.

Costs

We will start off with costs. Since both platforms are free and open source, you would think WordPress and Drupal are on equal footing here.

Both cost nothing, right? End of story.

This is only partially true. While setup costs very much the same (hosting and domain fees), the price tag of building and maintaining your website with these two systems can be very different down the line.

WordPress

One thing that WordPress has going for it is its large community that contributes a lot of free stuff to the platform like themes and plugins.

While not all available components are superb, there are thousands of *excellent plugins* that enable users to build and run feature-rich websites without paying a dime.

Add that to the hundreds of affordable premium plugins with even more features and you end up with a low-cost solution for creating powerful and dynamic websites.

Another advantage of the platform's position as front runner in the CMS industry is that professional help for WordPress websites is very easy to come by.

A bigger ecosystem means more fish in the pond. Platforms like Fiverr, Elance, Upwork, and others have loads of WordPress developers available for hire.

Plus, WordPress professionals tend to charge less for their services than developers for other platforms since it has a relatively low threshold and requires less time to become proficient.

As your WordPress site grows in size, you can add additional server power for an incremental cost.

Drupal

While Drupal is less hungry in terms of hardware, the bad news is that professional help for the system tends to be more expensive.

In addition, Drupal's complexity makes it more likely that you will need to hire someone or learn yourself how to wrestle with the platform, which can be a large time and financial commitment.

Time is an issue overall, since time is money and Drupal development often takes longer than building websites with WordPress.

Combined, these issues are some of the reasons people estimate that [Drupal websites cost up to 10 times more than WordPress](#).

On the other hand, prices for premium modules (the Drupal equivalent to plugins) and themes are similar to WordPress products, so there isn't much difference there.

Ease of Use

How easily people can control and make changes to their new website by themselves is often a deciding factor for choosing a platform, especially for less tech-savvy users.

Ease of use is therefore an important consideration for any content management system.

WordPress

User friendliness is one of WordPress' strongest suits. The platform is super easy to learn and use, starting from its famous [five-minute install](#).

As if that wasn't enough, many hosts now offer one-click WordPress installations, making it even more convenient to get started.

Even better, with [managed WordPress hosting](#), users don't have to deal with the technical details at all and can completely concentrate on creating content and running their business.

In addition, the WordPress back end is designed with beginners in mind. It makes creating content, posts, and pages as easy as working with a word processor and updating the system and its components a matter of one click.

This way, WordPress allows even non-coders to build and maintain websites with ease.

Drupal

Installing Drupal is similarly easy: [download](#), upload to your host, run the installation script, and you're done.

The platform also offers [distributions](#), which are pre-packaged with modules and extensions that let you create certain kinds of websites faster.

Also, Drupal includes many important customization options out of the box and sports a responsive admin interface that enables you to take care of your site from mobile devices.

On the other hand, the system is clearly not made for beginner users and demands a certain level of technical knowledge.

The back end is fairly complicated and users need basic proficiency in HTML, PHP, and other programming languages to make any meaningful changes outside of the content.

This includes upgrading the CMS, which needs to be done manually and requires developer skills.

For that reason, Drupal is less suitable for a layperson who likes to do things by themselves. You will either need to invest a lot of time in learning or pay someone for their help.

This also makes it harder to teach the system to clients, which is a big consideration for any agencies or freelancers who build websites for a living.

Support

Let's face it, any content management system comes with a learning curve. That's just how it is and it's fine as long as you can find help.

Yet, another aspect of support is that the system your site is based on stays up to date and continues to be developed.

Who wants to be left stranded with out-of-date software? Nobody, that's who. Just ask the poor souls who still run Flash websites.

WordPress

When it comes to the area of support, WordPress has two things going for it.

First, its regular update cycle of about three to four months for major updates makes sure its users constantly enjoy new features, code updates, and improvements.

Secondly, users have access to a strong support system they can turn to for help. The large and active WordPress community is happy to lend a hand and answer questions.

Besides the [official support forums](#), the [WordPress Codex](#), [docs](#) and [handbooks](#), you can also find thousands of free resources on all things WordPress online (for example [here](#)).

If that isn't enough, lots of paid help is also available as I already mentioned.

And if you choose a managed WordPress hosting solution, you'll have access to additional support.

Drupal

Drupal is also under active development and updated regularly, even if applying updates is more complicated than with WordPress.

The platform also offers similar community support options: [documentation](#), [support forums](#), [user groups](#), and more, all of which are run by an active and welcoming community.

Yet, due to the different usage levels of the two platforms, the Drupal community is naturally smaller and professional help harder to come by.

Customizability

Content management systems must enable their users to build a wide range of different websites both in terms of design and functionality. The ability to customize is therefore of central importance.

WordPress

Customizability is another area where WordPress shines and is a central pillar of its success.

[Thousands of WordPress themes](#) and [more than 40,000 free plugins](#) enable users to build almost any type of website they can think of.

Themes change the look and feel of your site instantly and can be installed from inside the WordPress back end with just a few clicks.

Similarly, plugins, which are just as easy to bring on board, can offer almost any functionality enhancement from [search engine optimization](#) to [event management](#).

This gives you a high level of flexibility for creating anything from a simple blog to [portfolio sites](#), business websites, and [online shops](#).

In addition, there are premium solutions with even more features and priority support.

Plus, with some programming knowledge, you can easily create custom templates, [child themes](#), and more to make your site truly yours.

Drupal

The Drupal platform also has customizability chops. Its entire concept is aimed at the development of custom websites.

If you are a developer, there is very little you can't customize on a Drupal site, even core files. That way, the platform makes it possible to create truly one-of-a-kind websites.

At the same time, this very thing can be a deterrent for the non-developer crowd and turn away more casual users.

However, Drupal is not all hand coding. The platform offers loads of free themes and modules and even more commercial ones.

Plus, due to the coding practices enforced by the community, all modules work with one another, something that can't always be said for WordPress plugins.

However, again the range of available modules is much smaller than that of WordPress plugins, and the good ones often aren't free. Plus, you need to leave your site to find and install them and can't do it from inside the dashboard.

Performance

Website performance and page loading time matter both to visitors and search engines. Any content management system worth its salt is, therefore, well advised to optimize this area as much as possible.

WordPress

WordPress has evolved from its roots as a blogging platform to become a suitable business tool for high-volume enterprise websites. While it previously lagged in the performance category, WordPress is now trusted by many of the largest sites in the world due to the ability to build lightning-fast websites with page loading times under a second.

There are times, however, that WordPress can sometimes be bogged down with too many plugins and content and become resource hungry. Yet, as with many things, that's only true if you don't know what you are doing.

Through proper [site maintenance](#) and by taking measures to [speed up WordPress](#) (from caching to [managed hosting](#)) users have many possibilities to build high-performing websites.

The fact that behemoths like [The New York Times](#), [TechCrunch](#), and [TED](#) happily use WordPress should put any doubts about its performance capabilities to rest.

Drupal

Drupal is technically advanced and is less hungry for system resources than WordPress.

This helps keep costs down and also means Drupal can be used to create websites that support thousands of pages and simultaneous readers.

However, taking advantage of Drupal requires advanced knowledge to take full advantage of the platform's possibilities. The uninitiated will have a hard time getting things to work that way.

Security

The internet can be a security nightmare, making website safety a topic that's high on everyone's agenda. Let's see how the two platforms fare in this regard.

WordPress

Security is often cited as a weakness of the WordPress platform and a look at [past security problems](#) suggests this assessment could be true. However, this perspective is skewed.

First, due to its success, the WordPress platform is a much more lucrative target for hackers with many more potential sites to break into.

Secondly, security problems in the past were almost exclusively due to faulty WordPress components like plugins, not the WordPress core software.

The dedicated [WordPress security team](#) does an excellent job keeping the platform safe by working with leading experts and hosting companies, performing regular safety audits, and monitoring incoming issues.

In case a vulnerability is detected, they can also swiftly push out security updates that by now get applied automatically for all websites that don't explicitly turn this feature off.

Thus, most often users are the weak link in the security chain. By learning [how WordPress gets hacked](#) and how to avoid it, users can significantly minimize the risk of their site being compromised.

Keeping components up to date is just one step in that direction. There are also many WordPress plugins that can further tighten website security.

While nothing that is connected to the internet will ever be 100 percent secure, this is as close as you will get to it.

Drupal

Security is one of Drupal's strong suits.

Discovered vulnerabilities are posted on the [official Drupal website](#) and patched as quickly as possible. Individual users can also get detailed security reports to see how safe their site is.

There's a reason Drupal is the CMS of choice for [the White House](#) and [The Economist](#) and why the platform is sometimes represented as the more secure alternative of the two.

Yet, Drupal is not without its problems in this area.

In 2014 the community was rocked by what was dubbed "Drupalgeddon" after a [SQL injection vulnerability was discovered](#) that resulted in a number of websites getting hacked.

Still, the platform's reputation is well deserved.

SEO

Search engines don't really care about what CMS you use as long as you provide great content and they can understand your site.

However, SEO is an important topic for site owners who want to make their web presences as search-engine friendly as possible. It is therefore an important consideration in choosing a content management system.

WordPress

Matt Cutts, the former head of the Google webspam team, has publicly stated that [Google loves WordPress](#) and that just using the platform takes care of 80 percent to 90 percent of optimization.

In addition, WordPress users have access to many [plugins and extensions that further improve SEO capabilities](#), most famously [Yoast SEO](#) and [All-in-One SEO Pack](#).

Plus, WordPress developers obviously stay up to date on this topic as can be seen from the switch to responsive themes to accommodate mobile traffic and, more recently, the release of the [AMP plugin](#) for implementing [Google's accelerated mobile pages](#).

Thus, in terms of search engine optimization, investing in WordPress is an investment into a future-proof technology.

Drupal

Same as WordPress, Drupal was very much built to play nice with Google and its competitors and adhere to SEO best practices.

For example, it comes with built-in caching for quick page loading times, which is something search engines now care about.

Drupal also has its own set of SEO tools. Funny enough, Yoast SEO is [also available for this platform](#).

Plenty of responsive Drupal themes also make sure sites look good on mobile devices even if some of them require you to move your mobile presence to a separate domain.

Collaboration

Let's face it, very few websites these days are one-person jobs. Especially in the commercial sector, we often have large teams or whole departments in charge of running a site and filling it with content.

Naturally, a good content management system has to be able to accommodate this reality.

WordPress

WordPress comes with loads of tools that enable a smooth collaborative workflow.

First of all, the platform offers a wide range of [user roles](#) with clearly defined capabilities to accommodate different levels of contributors.

Plugins like [User Role Editor](#) allow you even more fine-grained controls in this area so you can give exactly as little or as much site access to contributors.

The revision system also allows users to track changes and work on articles and other content together.

Furthermore, you can choose from a number of plugins that further enhance your editorial workflow, from [content checklists](#) to [editorial calendars](#) and [all-in-one solutions](#).

Altogether, WordPress is a flexible collaboration tool for teams and departments.

Drupal

Drupal also allows collaboration.

The platform doesn't have a lot of predefined user roles out of the box but allows you to add your own and gives you control over the different permissions you want to grant to particular roles.

While not necessarily made for blogging, Drupal also has a revision functionality that makes it possible to work with with several authors on the same content.

And the Winner is...

Content management systems are excellent tools for creating and maintaining websites and WordPress and Drupal deservedly lead the field.

Both are feature-rich, state-of-the-art platforms that are well supported by thriving communities and capable of powering modern and sophisticated websites.

Since they are built for slightly different purposes, it is difficult to determine which one is the "better" CMS as this will depend on your needs, goals, and the type of website you are trying to build.

Drupal offers a lot of features out of the box. The platform is super flexible with highly advanced technology and top-notch security features. It is also customizable and enables users to build truly unique websites. It offers developers loads of possibilities and actively encourages designing your own solutions.

However, the platform's complexity is a double-edged sword, creating a steeper learning curve and increasing the need for professional help and time and money investment.

In contrast, WordPress is much more mass compatible and accessible. Even non-developers can get started right away and can create and customize websites quickly and easily.

This saves money down the line with less need for professional help and more affordable prices when you do need assistance.

This mix of powerful features and accessibility is in large part responsible for WordPress' status as the most successful CMS and the reason many businesses and websites use it as their system of choice.

In addition, WordPress has proven to be capable of powering everything from small blogs to large-scale, content-intensive and high-traffic websites like news organizations with large editorial teams.

Both platforms have clear advantages and disadvantages. In the end, WordPress offers more powerful capabilities to a wider audience, and has built the reputation as the most widely trusted CMS in the market today. **Therefore, WordPress is the winner.**



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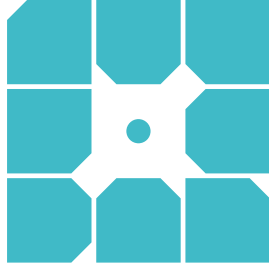
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About Torque

Torque is a news site featuring all things WordPress. We are dedicated to informing new and advanced WordPress professionals, users, and enthusiasts about the industry. Torque focuses primarily on WordPress News, Business, and Development, but also covers topics relating to open source and break-through technology. Torque made its debut in July 2013, at WordCamp San Francisco, and has since produced valuable content that reflects the evolution of WordPress, both as a platform and a community. Torque is a WP Engine publication, though maintains complete editorial independence.

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About WP Engine

WP Engine powers amazing digital experiences for websites and applications built on WordPress. The company's premium managed hosting platform provides the performance, reliability and security required by the biggest brands in the world, while remaining affordable and intuitive enough for smaller businesses and individuals. Companies of all sizes rely on WP Engine's award-winning customer service team to quickly solve technical problems and create a world-class customer experience. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas, and London, England.

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