

Online Cycle Advocacy with Drupal

Glen Koorey and Axel Wilke (Spokes Core)

Jonathan Hunt and David Lane (Egressive & Spokes Core)

Paper: Putting the "E" into Advocate with Online Content Management Systems

Who is Spokes?

- Canterbury cycle advocacy group
- no membership fees
- 900ish members
- lots of successes
- most communication via clunky email lists and newsletters
- collaboration somewhat difficult
- website is labour intensive, not very dynamic
- **webmaster approaching burnout**

What would a better website do?

- simplify contributions
- allow webmaster to delegate responsibility
- self-managing membership database
- record of organisational history
- ease communication - offer new channels: email alerts, forums, comments, online submission forms, rss feeds, etc.

We need a CMS!

(Content Management System)

Criteria for CMS?

- cheap!
- easy to use
- extensible and customisable
- easy/inexpensive to host
- easy to maintain
- secure - member data is sacred
- complies with
 - accessibility guidelines
 - web standards



Drupal

Drupal: open source CMS

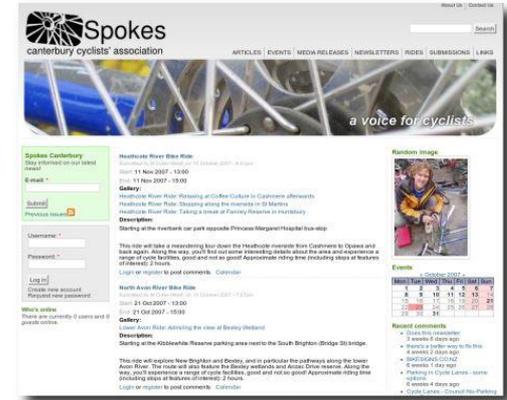
- built by a community to foster communities
- free of cost
- free from restriction: totally customisable
- our improvements help others and visa versa
- many developers in NZ and elsewhere
- leverage member skills: [Egressive](#) pro bono project



Drupal: community plumbing
(play on Dutch word for "water drop"...)

Screenshots?

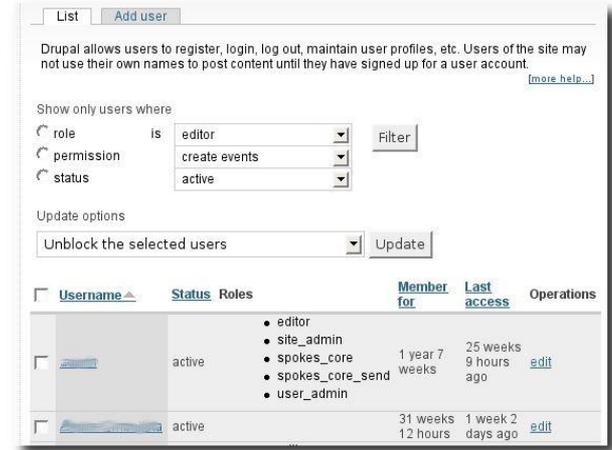
- clean layout
- randomly selected images
- easy login
- calendar of events, rides
- "dashboard" showing
 - recent articles, submissions
 - recent postings, comments
 - who's currently online
 - many other possibilities...



Membership Database

Members can keep their own details up to date

The Admin role can edit user details, build mailing lists, and compile statistics



List [Add user](#)

Drupal allows users to register, login, log out, maintain user profiles, etc. Users of the site may not use their own names to post content until they have signed up for a user account. [more help...](#)

Show only users where

role is

permission

status

Update options

<input type="checkbox"/>	Username	Status	Roles	Member for	Last access	Operations
<input type="checkbox"/>	[redacted]	active	<ul style="list-style-type: none">editorsite_adminspokes_corespokes_core_senduser_admin	1 year 7 weeks	25 weeks 9 hours ago	edit
<input type="checkbox"/>	[redacted]	active		31 weeks 12 hours	1 week 2 days ago	edit

Wiki: Online Collaboration

- authors work on *same* document
- each author's contributions in revisions

NZ Cycling Conference 2007 - Spokes paper

[View](#) [Edit](#) [Revisions](#) [Track](#)

Submitted by [dave](#) on 20 August 2007 - 11:11pm.

[conference paper](#)

NZ Cycling Conference 2007

PUTTING THE "E" INTO ADVOCATE WITH ONLINE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

by Glen Koorey & Axel Wilke (Spokes Canterbury), David Lane & Jonathan Hunt (Egressive Ltd).

Contact: jonathan@egressive.com, ph. (03) 963 3733

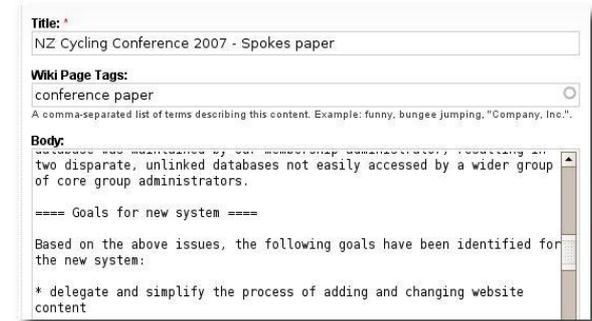
Abstract

Sparked by a desire to upgrade its existing email-list system, Spokes Canterbury has embarked on a project to develop a new online website and content management system. Using a freely available "open source" web site framework called "Drupal," a new site has been created that allows a wider group of people to contribute cycling-relevant information, rather than the traditional "webmaster as gatekeeper" approach.

Spokes members will be able to submit information on coming events, public submissions, ride photos, useful weblinks, discussions on topical items and more. Spokes will also be able to better manage its 900-strong membership by controlling access to different levels of information and allowing members to update their own personal details. The work has attracted the interest of CAN who are looking at developing a nationwide updated website and online community.

Editing

- edit simple [Wiki text](#).
- alternatively, use word processor-like interface



Title: *

NZ Cycling Conference 2007 - Spokes paper

Wiki Page Tags:

conference paper

A comma-separated list of terms describing this content. Example: funny, bungee jumping, "Company, Inc."

Body:

website was maintained by our membership database, resulting in two disparate, unlinked databases not easily accessed by a wider group of core group administrators.

==== Goals for new system ====

Based on the above issues, the following goals have been identified for the new system:

- * delegate and simplify the process of adding and changing website content

Document Revisions

- author changes stored as revisions
- versioning allows comparisons or "diffing"

The revisions let you track differences between multiple versions of a post.

Revision	Show diff	Operations
23 Sep 2007 - 21:54 by dave	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	current revision
23 Sep 2007 - 21:53 by dave	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
19 Sep 2007 - 22:46 by axel	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
19 Sep 2007 - 22:43 by axel	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
18 Sep 2007 - 22:01 by alen	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
18 Sep 2007 - 12:08 by dave	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
18 Sep 2007 - 11:46 by jonathan	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
Minor change to test suppression of TinyMCE on wiki		
18 Sep 2007 - 11:37 by jonathan	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
18 Sep 2007 - 10:50 by jonathan	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
18 Sep 2007 - 10:47 by jonathan	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
17 Sep 2007 - 22:49 by dave	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete
17 Sep 2007 - 22:43 by dave	<input type="radio"/>	revert delete

Comparing Revisions



Compare versions side-by-side. Revert to earlier revision if desired.

Printer Friendly

All pages have a "printer friendly" version

(link at bottom of article)

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Abstract

Sparked by a desire to upgrade its existing email-list system, Spokes Canterbury has embarked on a project to develop a new online website and content management system. Using a freely available "open source" web site framework called "Drupal", a new site has been created that allows a wider group of people to contribute cycling-relevant information, rather than the traditional "webmaster as gatekeeper" approach.

Spokes members will be able to submit information on coming events, public submissions, ride photos, useful weblinks, discussions on topical items and more. Spokes will also be able to better manage its 300-strong membership by controlling access to different levels of information and allowing members to update their own personal details. The work has attracted the interest of CAN who are looking at developing a nationwide updated website and online community.

As work has progressed, the exercise has raised awareness of other possible ways to use online systems such as this for advocacy, whether for cycling or other causes. For example, the technology allows for the use of maps to graphically indicate information such as problem locations. Issues requiring a response can be efficiently distributed to a wide audience and feedback collated. Information or submissions can be collaboratively compiled by a group of people through tools such as "wikis" or "blogs."

Contributed material can be categorised by different user-defined attributes, allowing for easy searching of similar relevant items. Group membership and organisational data can be maintained centrally online by a collection of widely-dispersed authorised administrators. The list of possible capabilities grows continuously as open source developers contribute new "modules" created to benefit specific online communities back to the greater Drupal community for all to use.

This presentation will summarise the work undertaken so far by Spokes and speculate on possible future initiatives in this brave new world of online advocacy.

Introduction

For most advocacy groups of any sort, keeping both the public and group members up to date with its various activities and issues is a constant challenge. It can be even harder to encourage people to get involved in these initiatives or contribute to any discussion.

Like many groups, Spokes Canterbury has maintained a website and email distribution system to provide much of the communication by the group. Sparked by a desire to upgrade its existing email-list system, Spokes Canterbury has embarked on a project to develop a new online website and content management system.

This paper summarises the work undertaken so far by Spokes and speculates on possible future initiatives in this brave new world of online advocacy.

Background

Future Steps

- user training - improve confidence
- geocoding - integrate [Google Maps](#)
- refine look and feel
- online submission system - increase quality and quantity
- Spokes site possible model for "CAN digital strategy"

Conclusions

- So far, so good! Expecting further evolution
- Success through community interest and user confidence
- A vibrant web site opens new channels of communication
- Getting something that works with MS Internet Explorer is hard
- The Drupal CMS: rich and flexible platform, supports web standards
- Hope others in NZ and abroad can benefit from our efforts

<http://spokes.org.nz>