Google Summer of Code 2009 Project Proposal

Boost Drupal Media Module Development

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Abstract

There are dozens of modules that handle multimedia in the Drupal ecosystem. This complexity has hindered module maintainers from coordinating more closely, creating duplicate work and maintenance overhead. The media module framework is an effort to unify the many existing projects. To help speed development, I will focus on the following two items from the Media module roadmap to bring the project closer to a beta release: Views integration and Token integration.

Project Proposal

At the present time, there are dozens of modules that handle multimedia in the Drupal ecosystem. This has led to an enormous amount of duplicate code and conflicting implementations. This complexity has hindered module maintainers from coordinating more closely, creating duplicate work and maintenance overhead[1].

The media module framework is an effort to unify the many existing projects. By removing low-level file handling implementation details and providing a single access point for all media assets, developers will be able to focus on other things. For example, a new revolutionary file management interface, or a new back-end to leverage the decreasing prices of content delivery networks will be possible.

A module such as this is only truly successful if it receives mass adoption from developers. Otherwise, it is just another multimedia module in the ecosystem—adding overhead and confusing end users. To this end, my proposal is not for an entirely new project, but rather to complete defined goals of a project already-in-progress. I believe this approach is much more valuable to the community as a whole.

To help speed development, I will focus on the following two items from the Media module roadmap[2] to bring the project closer to a beta release: Views

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[1] http://groups.drupal.org/node/19746#why-media

[2] http://groups.drupal.org/node/19799

integration and Token integration. These elements are necessary to provide basic functionality out-of-the-box. Documented implementation examples entice developers to use the unified framework rather than create yet another specialized module that may conflict with other implementations. These areas are also relatively isolated from the rest of the code base, allowing for better evaluation of my progress and performance throughout the summer.

Schedule of Deliverables

I will have two primary deliverables: beta-level implementations[3] of views and token integration. The code will most likely be in the form of sub-modules[4]. The Media module is at such an early stage of development that the landscape will be frequently changing. Development may be like trying to hit a moving target; however, I will maintain close communication with the core Media module developers throughout the summer. This collaborative approach means goals and expectations may need to be adjusted as new developments or roadblocks arise.

My participation will go beyond simply developing in these two areas. My project proposal is tightly coupled with core Media module development. As such, my involvement will extend to most aspects of the Media project. If there are areas of the Media module core that need work, I will make contributions whenever possible.

Open Source Development Experience

I have made a few patches to the Wordpress project as a result of tweaking my personal blog. I have also contributed to the iPod Linux project. My most recent open source development experience has been with Drupal (see Work/Internship Experience).

Work/Internship Experience

Last summer (2008) I was hired by the Union College (Lincoln, Neb.) Marketing Communications department as part of an internship to relaunch the Web site using an open source platform, Drupal. I spent the summer wading through Drupal code and community modules to tailor the CMS to the needs of the college. My responsibilities for the transition included writing conversion scripts to move data from the outdated, in-house system to Drupal, as well as finding, modifying, and writing modules to provide the functionality that the college's Web committee had decided on.

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[3] While probably not perfect, implementations will be of a level worthy of serious testing and fine-tuning for production release, subject to mentor approval.

[4] Actual implementation details to be discussed with Media module maintainers.

Since then, I have continued to work on the college's Web site, providing support, fixing bugs (and submitting fixes back to the community), keeping up with security updates, and continuing to tailor the system to the needs and expectations of the more than 30 area content managers on campus.

Academic Experience

I am currently wrapping up my third year of classes, working towards a degree in Computer Information Systems. I have participated in numerous projects, both individual and team based, involving a variety of technologies. Some notable classes that are pertinent to this project include Enterprise Web Development, SQL with MySQL, and Systems Analysis and Design.

Why Drupal?

Having worked on customizing Drupal for the past year, I am very familiar with the core concepts and the community. There is a positive feeling that I get after submitting a patch that I find useful, and that others in the community benefit from.

I have come to know the ups and downs of Drupal. I believe that one of the greatest roadblocks to usability and increased acceptance of Drupal is media management, and I want to help do something about that.

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See Also

This proposal can be downloaded in PDF from the following URL.
http://jonsview.com/projects/google-summer-of-code-2009

The results of my 2008 internship with Union College are visible at
http://www.ucollege.edu

There are several related resources to this proposal on the Drupal Web site:
Proposal discussion: http://groups.drupal.org/node/20742
Media module: http://drupal.org/project/media
Media group: http://groups.drupal.org/media

This application format is based on the Wordpress GSoC 2009 application template.

http://codex.wordpress.org/GSoC_2009_Application_Template.