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Drupal is much more than a CMS – It is a CMS building platform [by bluebound](#)

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Drupal is obviously one of the most competent content management platforms and thus, it is also one of the most popular Open Source systems in the world at present. However, we get to hear the common criticism from clients quite often that, Drupal in spite of being the best CMS does not offer a simple news or event system. It can be said that it is a justified criticism as well. A content management system, apart from being efficient at what it does, should actually include some definition of what content to manage.

Now to give the justification from Drupal's side; Drupal is not a Content Management System (CMS), as it been something more than that. Drupal is a Content Management Framework (CMF), which allows you to build a CMS customized specifically for your individual business requirements.

Drupal has a rather long meandering history. It was created as a piece of forum software. "The Drop", as it is often lovingly called by some, thanks to its droplet logo, quickly evolved into a reasonably flexible content management system, which was centered around chunks of content called "nodes". That was fine for Drupal, as it worked really well, but it didn't stop there, it just kept on evolving and growing into something more and more powerful. Drupal soon became very flexible, so much so that some people started to think of it as a framework, and not as an application for managing pages on a web site. The application or framework debate was persisted for a long time, and has been discussed quite regularly.

When Drupal was in its 4.6 version or so, it could still be spoken of as a system for managing the content of your website. The core system was all about nodes. The community contributed some great modules that added "news nodes" or "event nodes" or "recipe nodes", along with some related functionality came packed along like "recent news items", "upcoming events", and such things. Now, this is where most of the content management systems actually conclude there work.

However, Drupal didn't stop here. Beginning from around Drupal 4.7, key developments such as the Form API, Content Construction Kit (CCK), and Views changed the way Drupal worked; not the Drupal core but Drupal the meta-project. "News nodes", "event nodes", and "recipe nodes" got replaced by "text fields", "date fields", and "image fields", with the help of which you could now use to build your own news, events, and recipes to suite your specifications precisely. The "recent news items" block got replaced by "build your own news list however you want," customized to fit your exact specification.

This continuous process of evolving kept on gaining momentum, and by Drupal 7 it is almost entirely complete. It is a known fact that no one writes recipe modules anymore. They simply don't exist anymore. The notion of Drupal now is that you can build your own recipe out of the smaller, the tiny building blocks that Drupal provides, and then use those same building blocks to also create your news and event content.

Thus, it's really great if you want your own recipe site. However, it may not be so exciting if you're expecting to just download a recipe module and stay happy with that. To put things simply, Drupal is not meant for that and it will never work like that ever again, it's simply meant for much more than that.

Drupal has now evolved as an amazing tool for building a content management system for a variety of different requirements. This is a very important distinction to understand for someone who is looking to build a Drupal site. Drupal is actually not a CMS, not anymore. It is the platform on which

you can build your own CMS according to your own specifications to suit your individual requirements. It is a Content Management Framework.

Maybe many times the CMS that you need has already been built. Drupal calls these "distributions", and they are actually readymade content management systems built with Drupal. Open Atrium (a project case tracker) was one of the first to do these, but recently there has been an explosion in Drupal distributions such as Managing News, Drupal Commons, and Open Academy to name a few well-known examples. Not all are fully capable at any given time, but many are pretty powerful if they suit your requirements.

So, what if those Drupal-based content management systems don't suit your particular needs? Then Drupal gives you the option of building your own CMS. The flexibility of Drupal lies in the fact that it allows building your own content management system by, usually as simply as pressing buttons. Drupal lets you do everything, from defining your own data model by using Content Types and Fields to defining your own displays using Views and Panels. You can define your own administrative workflows using Workbench and define the site hierarchy and structure using menus, Workbench Access, Organic Groups, Domain Access, and various such other apparatus.

When you are finally finished, then you have your own Drupal-based CMS, as customized perfectly according to your specific requirements as you care to make it. However, the main advantage of using Drupal is that even though you create your own specific CMS, you can still be able to get the benefit of sharing the same platform as others, as all of the building blocks that Drupal has provided you are the same as the others are using. This facilitates access to the open source support network, ready availability of Drupal based knowledge, freely available documentation, and the ability to collaborate with others, contribute and to push the Drupal platform itself forward for even further evolution. As a custom Drupal-based CMS is not a proprietary custom CMS, if it's built using established best practices, it provides the best of both the worlds.

Although it's good to keep in mind that building your own CMS, even with Drupal, is not always a really easy task. Yes, for some cases it is easy, but for most institutions it's a bit more of hard work, and requires careful planning and professionalism. That's where Drupal consulting firms like Valuebound come in for help. We've the experience of building Drupal-based content management systems for numerous Clients, and depending on what you require, we can also build one to your specifications, help you figure out your individual requirements and business goals, or assist you and work with you to build it yourself.

However, the final word remains the same; no matter what your approach is, or what your requirements are, it's important to realize the fact that Drupal is not a CMS. But it is a Content Management Framework. Drupal is a platform for building your own dream CMS, depending on your own specifications that is customized for the needs of your business. Care to remember this whenever you consider Drupal.

Valuebound is a leading Drupal Development Company providing Enterprise Drupal web solutions. For more information on Drupal Development, contact us at info@valuebound.com

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