Strong community, stronger software

DRUPAL CAMP 2008

Figure 1: John Resig offers practical advice on the use of jQuery.

Attracting both new and experienced Drupal users, Drupal Camp Toronto is home to a thriving community with global reach. **BY EMMA JANE HOGBIN**

There's a Canadian radio show called "The Vinyl Cafe" that features stories and music. The motto of the show is, "We May Not Be Big, But We're Small." Drupal Camp Toronto stays true to this ethos. A lot of new faces and new speakers appeared this year – an indication of the Drupal community's continued growth. From new Drupal administrators to General Assembly members of the Drupal Association, Drupal Camp Toronto is home to a strong community with global reach.

jQuery Keynote

This year, Drupal Camp Toronto featured a keynote presentation by John Resig on the jQuery JavaScript library (Figure 1). This library was integrated into the Drupal core in 2007. Resig's one-hour presentation included an overview of the project, as well as practical advice on the use of jQuery to manipulate HTML interfaces and web form submissions. By the end of the session, even the most JavaScript-phobic of audience members felt they could use the library in future web projects.

Conference Themes

The biggest question for the conference was: Have you upgraded to Drupal 6? Drupal comprises a core content man-

agement system and contributed modules. Almost every Drupal install requires at least a few additional contributed modules. Modules are designed to match specific versions of the Drupal core. With the release of Drupal 6 earlier this year, Drupal site administrators started to monitor the progress of key contributed modules. The changes from Drupal 4.7 to Drupal 5 significantly benefitted Drupal users and administrators, and the adoption of Drupal 5 was relatively fast. A number of the popular contributed modules still need your help to make the leap from Drupal 5 to Drupal 6. In the mean time, many conference attendees predicted they will skip Drupal 6 altogether and wait to upgrade their sites to Drupal 7, which is already in the works.

Popular sessions at Drupal Camp Toronto included: Drupal theming, working with clients and designers, site optimization (both the front end and server-side), and how to choose the right modules for your project. Session descriptions as well as slides and notes have been added to the conference site [1].

Choosing Modules

Many of the sessions gave a comparison of several modules with advice on choosing the best module for your project. Richard Weait gave his top suggestions in his presentation, "From 2500 to Ten: A beginner's guide to module selection." His list included both the popular CCK and Views modules, as well as Webform (a contact form with additional fields) and CCK facets and Faceted Search (a filter to browse by CCK fields).

Jocelyn Stretton gave a demonstration of how different image modules are good

in different situations. In her presentation, she featured Slideshow Pro [2] and the associated Drupal module (SSP Drupal), IMCE (an image upload and browsing utility that supports personal directories and quota), and Asset (a rich media file manager).

My own presentation demonstrated how users could migrate their websites into Drupal. Recommended modules included Import HTML, Node Import, and User Import. Participants also suggested twill [3] to automate point-and-click tasks from the command line.

Know Your Audience

In his presentation on site optimization, Newman Scott Hunter reminded participants to know their target audience. Hunter revealed that although 80 percent of the Canadian population use a high-speed Internet connection, over half of the visitors to one of his sites are limited to dial-up. Why the difference? The site is specific to the horse-racing industry and most of its visitors live on farms!

Looking Forward

This was the third year for Drupal Camp Toronto. The conference attracts a great mix of developers, designers, gurus, and users. People interested in helping out with the 2009 conference are encouraged to get in touch with the volunteer team of organizers [4]. ■

INFO

[1] Drupal Camp Toronto 2008 sessions: *http://2008.drupalcamptoronto.org/sessions/*

[2] Slideshow Pro: *http://slideshowpro.net/*

[3] twill: *http://twill.idyll.org/*

[4] Drupal Camp Toronto organizers: *http://2008.drupalcamptoronto.org/contact/*