



Figure 1: Jeff Eaton and Earl Miles bring puppet theater to DrupalCon. (Photo by Greg Dunlap)

This community report starts with a disclaimer. I am a Drupal nerd. This FOSS community looks inward at its own code as much as it looks outward to the clients it serves. Conversations at Drupal events range from database APIs to plotting crime statistics using geomapping tools to help people get home safely. This mix of code and humanity makes it easy to see why so many people are drawn to Drupal.

Dubbed “the event for Drupal developers,” DrupalCon DC [1] was an overwhelming success. More than 1,400 Drupal fanatics gathered in Washington, D.C. to learn and share and have some fun. The organizing committee, led by Bonnie Bogle, did an outstanding job securing sponsors and turned a profit of nearly US\$ 180,000. Yes, profit.

During the three-day conference, there were puppets (Figure 1), tree houses, [2] and fuse ball [3]. The usual suspects fired up ye olde Git vs. Bazaar debate. Sam Boyer and I had some newcomers this time, with author Victor Kane [4]

Fun, games, and serious funding

DRUPALCON WASHINGTON, D.C. 2009

Drupal community leaves its semi-annual conference more than US\$ 650,000 richer. **BY EMMA JANE HOGBIN**

weighing in, too. It wasn't all fun and games, though.

During the three-day conference, the community made a formal commitment to improve the visual design of Drupal. In his presentation on Drupal 7 themes, John Albin Wilkins talked about the need for Drupal to speak to designers in their own language. He gave the analogy of a middle school dance with everyone standing awkwardly around the outer edges of the room. Drupal needs to learn how to engage designers using language they understand instead of trying to force its own

vocabulary on designers. A new group is now looking at ways to attract professional designers without succumbing to amateur tactics, such as design competitions. Morten.dk has taken on the challenge of organizing an attractive package for designers at DrupalCon Paris (September 2009).

Knighted

At DrupalCon DC it was announced that Knight Drupal Initiative (KDI) granted almost US\$ 500,000 to six Drupal community projects. These projects include documentation sprints, microblogging, Facebook integration, shared community news, and geotagging [5]. The Knight Foundation looks to support projects that are making online publishing easier. These grants are in addition to the US\$ 5 million the Knight Foundation distributes annually through its Knight News Challenge [6].

Documentation continues to shine in the Drupal community. The KDI awarded the community's efforts, led by

Addison Berry, with more than US\$ 50,000 to support documentation sprints around the world. In addition to the sprints, Addison is preparing a best practices guide on how to run a documentation sprint. At DrupalCon DC more than 70 participants sprinted to improve the style guide and reduce the number of identified documentation-related bugs on Drupal.org.

Self-selected cat herders [7] at the doc sprint made sure everyone had something to work on. One of the neatest code-related additions that came out of the sprint is a context-sensitive CVS tab for project web pages. This tab is now available on the Drupal.org website and offers module-specific instructions on how to use the Drupal CVS system for each project hosted by Drupal.org.

Videos for all sessions are available through the DrupalCon website. More than half were available by the end of the third and final day of the conference. Check out the DrupalCon website session pages for a comment leading to the uploaded videos. ■

INFO

- [1] DrupalCon DC: <http://dc2009.drupalcon.org>
- [2] Tree houses: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/emmajane/3352391569>
- [3] Fuse ball: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/emmajane/3352391251>
- [4] Victor Kane: <http://awebfactory.com.ar/>
- [5] KDI projects: <http://drupal.org/node/393554>
- [6] Knight News Challenge: <http://www.newschallenge.org>
- [7] Cat herder buttons: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/add1sun/3338990689>