Drupal™ Association

RFQ: User Research, Analysis, and Persona Development for Drupal.org

Background

Drupal is an open source Web content management platform that is built, used, and supported by a large, active, and diverse community of people from around the world. The Drupal.org website acts as a virtual home for the Drupal project and community. Drupal.org is the place where people come to learn about Drupal, download the software, connect with other Drupal users and developers, and work collaboratively to build the software.

Drupal.org is supported and maintained by the Drupal Association, a non-profit organization whose mission is to foster and support the Drupal software project, the community and its growth. The Association employs several technical staff members dedicated to Drupal.org; their work is supplemented by community volunteers.

Drupal.org is an active revenue source for the Drupal Association via paid sponsorship and advertising on select areas of the site. The Association has developed several sections (targeted landing pages, job board, etc.) designed to help provide different audiences with useful and relevant information, as well as increase traffic and enhance revenue.

Outside of these specific sections, the rest of the site's content is almost entirely user-generated, with no editorial oversight. The site has grown organically for more than a decade and includes lots of outdated and "historical" content. There have been no editorial resources dedicated to the site, and it has no coherent or consistent message, plan, or structure.

The site's current design is based on branding and design work done in 2008 by Mark Boulton Design that was subsequently implemented and extended by a combination of contractors, community volunteers, and Association staff.

On average, Drupal.org receives between 4 and 6 million visitors per month, and has tens of thousands of active authenticated users who participate in the site's discussion forums and issue queues.

The mission of Drupal.org is to empower, connect, and engage individuals who work with or evaluate Drupal:
- Empowering means equipping people with the resources they need to accomplish their tasks. These tasks include:

- ○ Downloading Drupal and its various add-on modules
- ○ Learning more about the Drupal project and its community
- ○ Collaborating with others to develop the software
- ○ Publishing code for add-on modules
- ○ Reading software documentation
- ○ Asking questions and filing bug reports
- ○ Getting support and providing support
- ○ Finding partners to work with on Drupal projects
- Connecting means giving people effective ways to meet and work together.
- Engaging means providing enough value that people want to return.

Right now, we are only partially meeting our goals for Drupal.org. Overall traffic to the site has been slowly declining since its peak two years ago, and noticeably fewer authenticated users have been logging into the site over the last year. However, people who visit Drupal.org are highly engaged and tend to spend lots of time on the site.

In order to address these challenges and to better serve the Drupal community, the Drupal Association would like to launch a redesigned and improved Drupal.org in 2015. This RFQ is for the initial user research and analysis that will guide and inform the remainder of that project.

Scope

The Drupal Association is seeking an experienced partner to identify the target audiences for Drupal.org, and to conduct user research that will help the Association better understand the needs and motivations of existing and target users in order to serve them better and to grow the Drupal community.

Our expectation is that this will be accomplished through a combination of stakeholder interviews and workshops, user interviews, Web metrics and traffic pattern analysis, analysis of competitive platforms, and more; however, we are looking to the firms that respond to this RFQ to advocate for the approach that they feel best meets the goals and constraints of the project.

Anticipated deliverables would include personas, user scenarios, and a prioritized feature set and/or product roadmap that would inform subsequent brand and content strategy development. Drupal Association staff and the Drupal.org Content Working Group will be the primary points of contact for this project and will work directly with the selected partner to help define these deliverables as necessary.

We are primarily concerned with Drupal.org and its top-level pages for this project, though there are other Drupal Web properties that may come into play.

Desired Outcomes

Our primary desired outcome from this project is to develop the foundational knowledge that will guide and inform subsequent branding, design, and content strategy development throughout 2014 and 2015 and help us better achieve our goals of empowering, connecting, and engaging individuals who work with or evaluate Drupal.

This project will also inform ongoing site monetization efforts and development of a long term engagement ladder for Drupal users and contributors. We are interested in recommendations and insights that will enable us to better monetize the site in a way that's respectful of our community and our open source values.

Some of the specific questions we'd like to answer include:
- Who's coming to Drupal.org?
- What is the demographic makeup of our different audiences?
- Are we adequately serving our international visitors?
- What is their technical skill level?
- What motivates visitors to come to Drupal.org?
- What content are visitors looking for and in what format do they want it in?
- Why do people leave Drupal.org? What are they not finding? Where do they go instead?
- What do people desire in the Web sites of CMS platforms they are researching and what are the qualities of the Web sites that appeal to them?
- What role does a content management system's website play in their search and evaluation process?
- What other sites do they go to? How does Drupal.org compare to those sites?
- Specifically beyond Drupal.org, what secondary Web presence elements, such as blogs, social media platforms, etc., do our visitors reference, and what information are they seeking there? Do they interact with this secondary Web presence or are they passive consumers?

We also expect that vendor will provide guidance on how to continue to evolve these personas over time to reflect changes in the site's audience.

After the user research and persona development work is complete, the next step will be for us to work with an outside firm or consultant to develop a comprehensive content strategy for the site. While it is our expectation that user research and persona development will inform the content strategy work in the second half of 2014, that work is not part of the scope of this RFQ.

Timeline

Date RFQ is issued: March 19, 2014
Deadline for RFQ responses from vendor: April 9, 2014
Vendor chosen by: April 30, 2014

We expect this project to start in Spring 2014 and be completed by mid-summer. DrupalCon will be held in Austin, TX, from June 2-6, 2014 and is a fantastic opportunity to conduct in-person interviews with a broad range of Drupal users, developers, and evaluators. Because our community spans the globe, additional interviews may need to be conducted remotely (e.g., via Skype, Google Hangout, etc.)

It is our intention to share the findings of this project with the Drupal community. In addition to releasing the research online, we will also present the results in-person at DrupalCon Amsterdam (September 29 - October 3, 2014).

Budget

Our budget for this project is $45,000 USD. Drupal Association staff, along with a group of motivated community volunteers are willing and able to provide whatever assistance and support may be required for the success of this project. Quotes should include both professional fees and anticipated expenses (including travel).

Contact information

Please direct all responses to this RFQ and/or any questions to:

Tatiana Ugriumova
Drupal.org Project Manager
Drupal Association
tatiana@association.drupal.org

In your response to this RFP, please include:
- When you will be able to start this project
- How long you estimate the project to take
- What you will need from the Drupal Association to successfully complete this project
- Brief overview of any work similar to our RFQ that you or staff completed
- Links to and a short description of your work that is similar to our RFQ