DRUPAL partners
A DIVISION OF INNOPPL

WHITEPAPER

How to upgrade to the latest Drupal without losing traffic, SEO rankings, or conversions

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Foreword

Are you looking to upgrade your website to the latest version of Drupal, but worried that it could cause a loss of traffic, SEO rankings, or content? Not to worry - upgrading is easier than you think. By following a few simple steps and taking some precautions, you can ensure that your upgrade goes smoothly and efficiently with minimal disruption or harm done. In this whitepaper, we'll explain how to get the most out of your Drupal upgrade without experiencing any losses in traffic or SEO ratings. Read on for more detailed advice on ensuring that everything stays safe during your subsequent migration!

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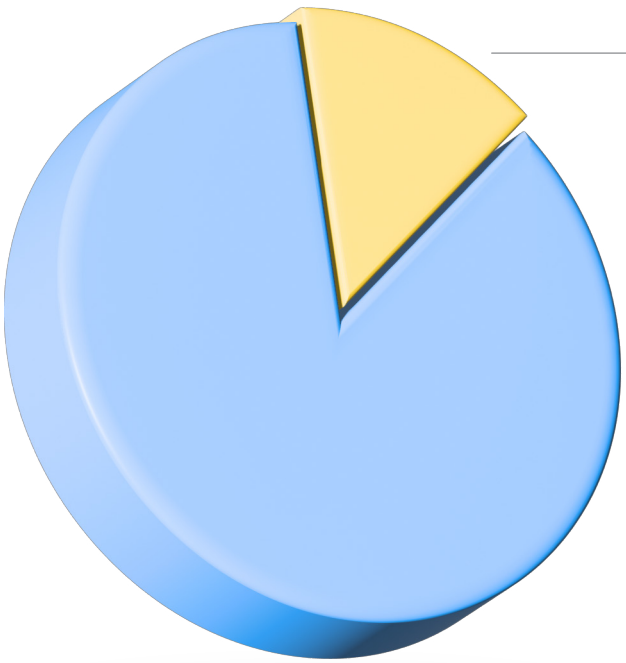
Introduction

In the software products world popularity is an indication of the quality of the software. Drupal, an open-source content management system is one of those software products that has been gaining traction within the web development space at an incredible rate. Ever since the rollout in 2001 to the latest launch of Drupal 10, the journey has been one of ever-evolving features, reliability, and scalability.

Today, the Drupal open-source back-end system is utilized by 14% of the world's top 10,000 websites and 1.2% of its top ten million sites - ranging from personal blogs to government and corporate arenas. Additionally, systems have also integrated Drupal for knowledge management as well as business collaboration purposes.



14% of the World Website Share

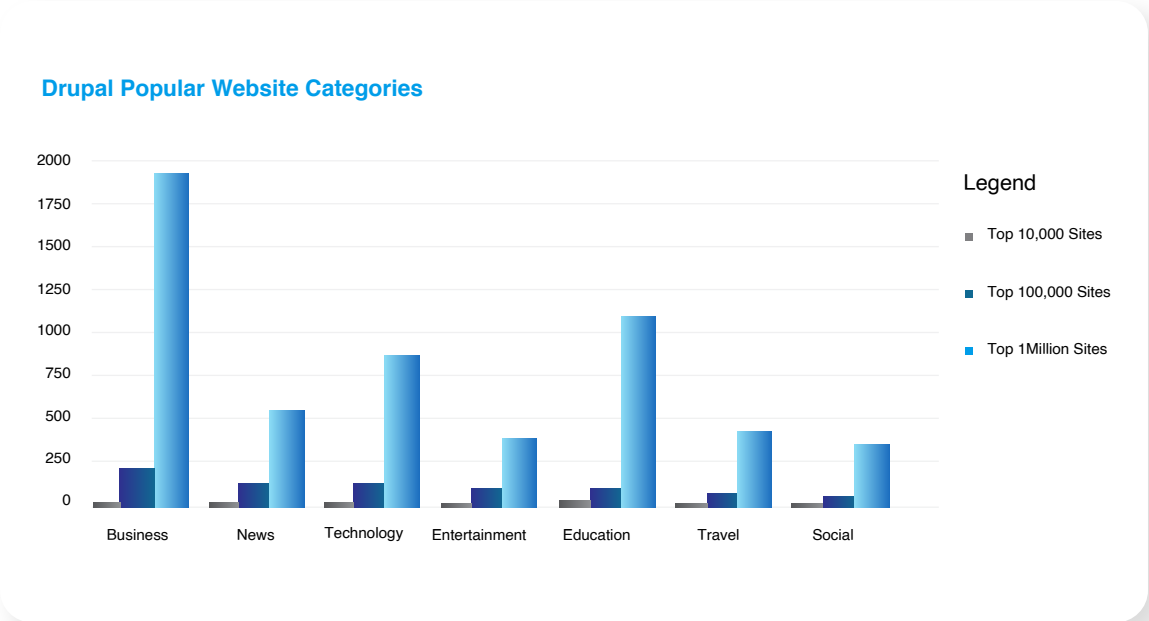
Why Upgrade To The Latest Drupal?

Drupal has been providing its websites with the best of functionality and scalability with each upgraded version, so it is important to keep up to date in order to stay ahead of the competition.

However, when upgrading from one version of Drupal to another, there are certain risks associated with it that can have an adverse effect on your website. This could include a loss in traffic or search engine rankings, or even content. This is why it is important to be prepared and follow some guidelines while upgrading Drupal in order to ensure that the transition runs smoothly without any disruption. In this whitepaper, we will provide tips on how to boost your website with minimal loss of traffic, SEO rankings, or content.

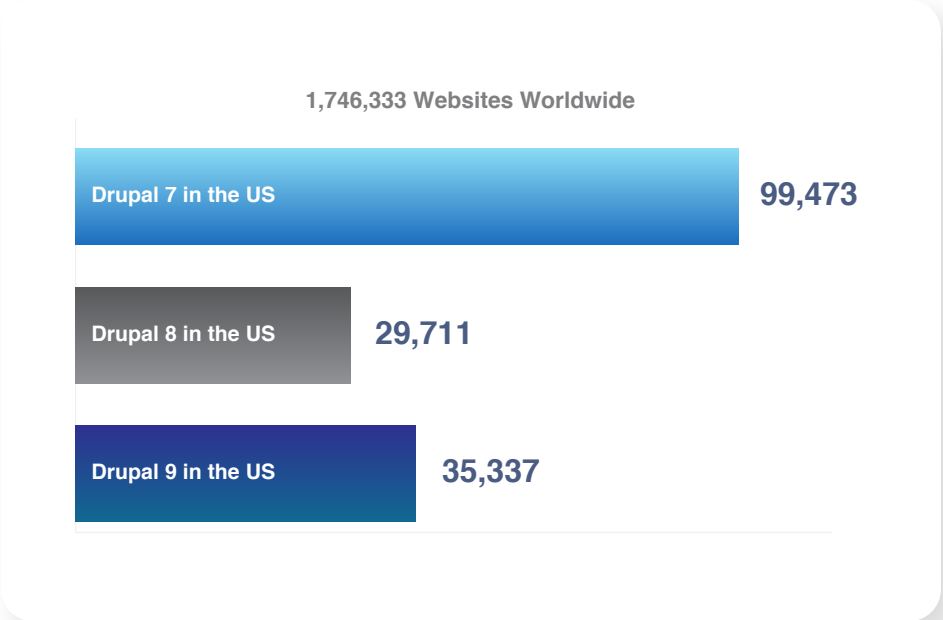
Industries That Use Drupal The Most

It's not surprising that Drupal is the go-to for many top business and education websites due to its flexible, powerful system and impressively scalable capabilities. These two sectors demand a reliable web experience with room for growth, which makes this platform an ideal choice.



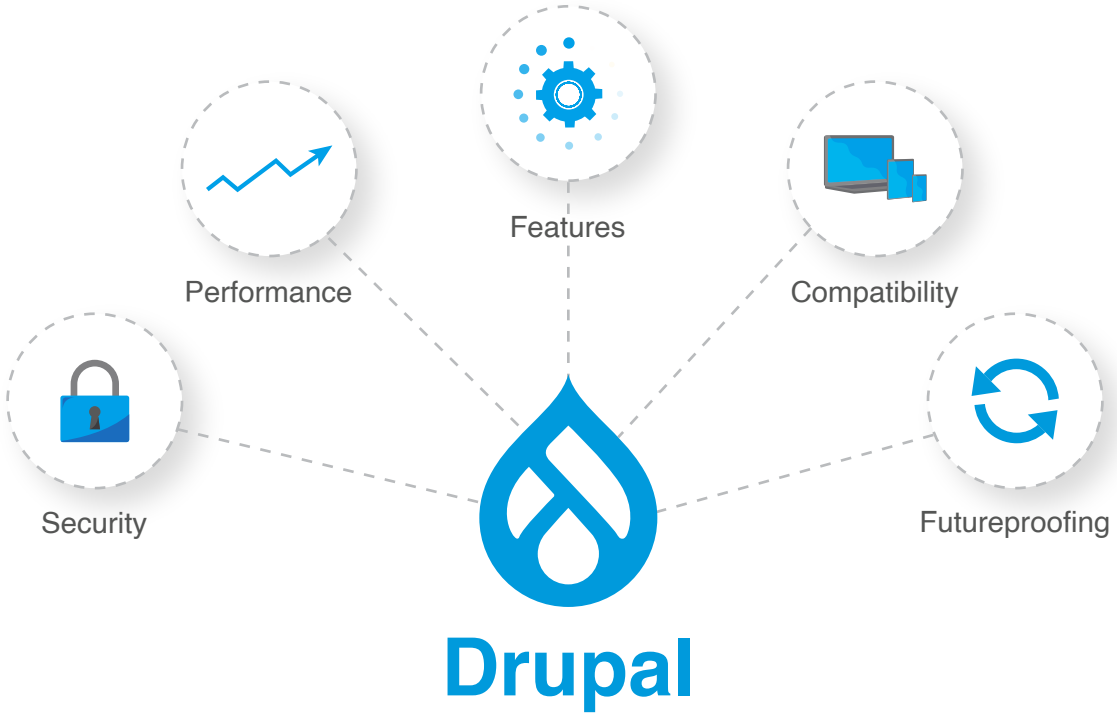
(Data From Builtwith.com, Nov 2022)

Websites Running On Drupal



Why Migrate To The Latest Version?

Is it customary or necessary to upgrade your Drupal website? Yes, and here's why:



Security:

To ensure your site is secure from any malicious viruses or bugs, it's important to keep up with the latest software releases. Outdated versions may be more vulnerable to security threats due to missing patches and updates.

Performance:

Newer versions of Drupal provide improved performance and speed, which is key for a better user experience (UX) and higher rankings in search results. This can help you attract more website visitors and potentially increase conversions.

Features:

Upgrading will give you access to the newest features released by Drupal, such as its drag-and-drop page builder or its new media library. You'll be able to use the latest technology and make your website stand out from the competition.

Compatibility:

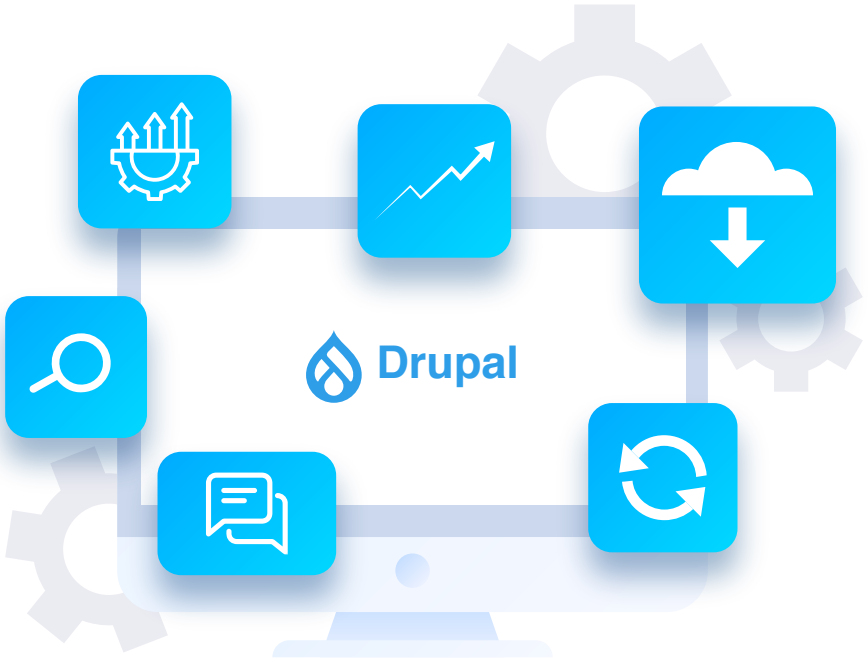
With each upgrade, Drupal also improves its compatibility with other software programs, such as databases and web servers, making integration easier.

Futureproofing:

Upgrading ensures that your site is prepared for any future changes or updates that Drupal releases, helping to protect your investment.

Overall, upgrading to the latest version of Drupal will help keep your website secure and up-to-date, while also providing you with access to the newest features and ensuring compatibility with other software programs. It's an important step in maintaining a successful website and staying ahead of the competition.

How to upgrade to the latest Drupal



Backup:

Before you upgrade, it's important to make sure that your website is backed up in case something goes wrong. This will keep your content and information safe if anything should happen during the upgrade process.

Update Your Modules:

Make sure all of your modules are updated before beginning the upgrade. Outdated modules can cause errors and disruption when upgrading.

Test the New Version:

Once you have updated your modules, it's time to test out the new version of Drupal. This will help you identify any potential problems or issues before proceeding with the full upgrade.

Communicate With Your Users:

Make sure that your users are aware of the changes taking place. Let them know why you are upgrading, what to expect, and how it might affect their experience on your website.

Monitor Performance:

After the upgrade is complete, keep an eye on your website's performance and make sure that everything is running smoothly. Pay particular attention to analytics such as traffic, SEO rankings, and conversions.

How to upgrade without losing traffic, SEO rankings, and conversions

Eventually, we all come to the conclusion at some point in time that a website migration is necessary. Not only does upgrading to the latest version open up an array of possibilities for further improvements, but it can also rectify any potential risks caused by outdated and new technologies gradually accumulating on your website.

Here's the steps you'll have to go through to maintain rankings while upgrading your site to Drupal:

301's

Writing 301 redirects is the most critical step in your site migration. If neglected, this can lead to broken links, frustrated users, and a devastating drop in search engine rankings - making it important to be meticulous about writing these redirects.

Canonicalized Tag Changes

Google follows a standard protocol for understanding which content should be indexed and crawled. Canonical tags are the best way to ensure that your main domain name is being used in search engine algorithms, and any duplicate content is duly recognized. A few common issues with tags:

- Pointing to non-relevant pages.
- Programming issues (example: trailing slash missing).
- Pointing to old URLs that no longer exist

Robots.txt Update

When you upgrade to the latest version, it's important to make sure that robots.txt is updated to prevent any crawling errors or issues. This should be done before the migration process begins in order for search engine spiders and crawlers to access your website correctly.

Google Search Console

If you have already registered with Google Search Console, this is a great way to double-check that everything is running smoothly after the upgrade. Submitting a "Fetch as Google" request will help you identify any potential crawl errors or issues with your new website.

Internal Links Issues

Make sure that all of your internal links are working after the upgrade. This can be done by using Google Search Console's "Crawl Error" report. It's important to fix any broken links as soon as possible in order to maintain good user experience and rankings.

Lost External Links

If you have lost any external links, it's important to try to regain them. You can contact the websites that are linking to your site and ask if they could update the URL so that it points to your new page. This will help with SEO rankings and traffic over time.

Platform/Hosting Issues

When you're upgrading to a new version, it's also important to make sure that your hosting is compatible with the latest version of Drupal. If you are not sure, contact your hosting provider and confirm that everything is working as expected before proceeding.

- Firewalls blocking search engine bots.
- Platforms using JS, which is harder for bots to crawl.
- Slow speeds and poor performance.
- Country restrictions.

Title tags & meta descriptions

Title tags and meta descriptions are an integral part of your website's SEO. Take the time to optimize each page for better traffic, rankings, and conversions.

Keywords

Make sure you update your keywords to match the new content on the site. This will help ensure that your pages still rank for relevant search terms when visitors look for your website.

Content

Make sure that all content is relevant and up-to-date with the latest industry trends. This will help to generate more interest in your site and keep visitors coming back for more.

Update site map

Make sure that your new website is properly indexed by Google. This can be done by submitting an updated XML sitemap to the search engine.

Analyze your website

Once you've completed all of these steps, take some time to analyze how your website is performing. Monitor traffic and SEO rankings to ensure that everything went smoothly and that everything is running as expected.

Utilize illustrative URLs to boost search engine visibility

URLs are a key factor in your website's SEO. Utilize illustrative URLs with targeted keywords to help boost your search engine visibility and rankings.
By following these steps, you can ensure that your Drupal upgrade is successful without sacrificing traffic, SEO rankings, or conversion rates.

Optimize page load speed

Page load speed is a major factor for your website's visibility on search engines, as well as its user experience. Google PageSpeed Insights can give you the insights to perfect your page loading time and build an even better online presence. With it, you'll be able to identify areas of improvement with ease so that you can increase performance in no time!

Update plugins and modules regularly

Plugins and modules are great for adding new features to your website, but they can also be a source of errors and disruption when upgrading. To avoid this, make sure you check for updates regularly so that all parts of your website remain up-to-date.

Test the new version

Once you have everything in place, it's time for the most important part - testing. Make sure that all of your code runs as expected and that you can anticipate any problems before they become a major issue.

By following these steps, you can ensure that your website upgrade is successful without sacrificing traffic, SEO rankings, or conversions. Keep an eye on website performance over the coming weeks and make sure to use a reliable hosting provider for optimal results.

Conclusion

When it comes to website upgrades, there are a lot of steps that need to be taken in order to ensure success. From keyword optimization to updating plugins and modules regularly, it's important to take the time necessary to make sure every aspect of your upgrade is done correctly. By following these steps and using Google PageSpeed Insights for page load speed optimization, you can help ensure that your website upgrade is successful without sacrificing traffic, SEO rankings, or conversions. Good luck!

Useful References:

- Google PageSpeed Insights (https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/)
- Drupal Upgrade Basics (https://www.ostraining.com/blog/drupal/drupal-upgrades/)
- Search engine optimization (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization)
- URLs and SEO (https://www.rankranger.com/url-seo)

Content Optimization Tools

Once you have completed the steps listed above, you can use several tools to help further optimize your website. These include content optimization tools like Yoast SEO and Moz's On Page Analyzer. These tools will help you ensure that your website is optimized for search engine visibility and ranking. Additionally, they can also provide insights into how users are interacting with your website, allowing you to make improvements for a better user experience.

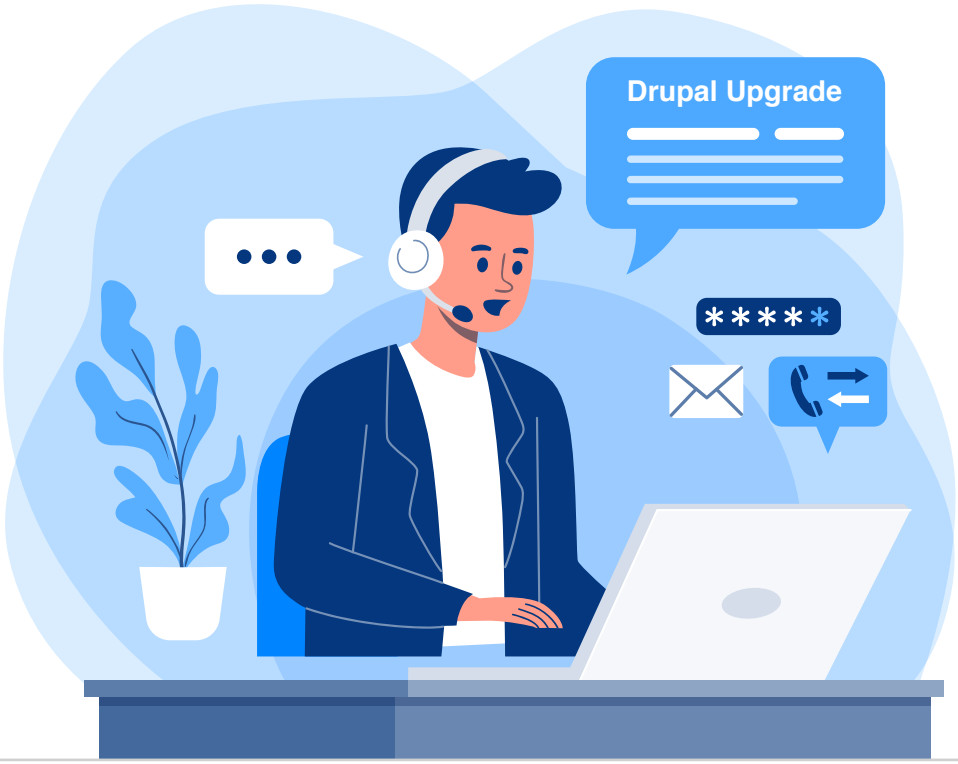
#Get Help

It is not an easy task to migrate without any hazards, and the process of doing it can be daunting and time-consuming. For this reason, there is a wide range of professional web development services you can leverage from us in order to ensure that your migration is smooth and successful.

With our help, you can rest assured that all the steps mentioned above will be carried out properly, thus giving you peace of mind and enabling you to focus on other important aspects of your website.

We are here to assist you every step of the way so that your Drupal upgrade is successful without compromising the SEO rankings, traffic, or conversion rates.

Contact us today for more information!



About Us

DrupalPartners with 12+ years of experience in the Drupal migration, upgrade, and development space, is the go-to partner for your Drupal website. Our team of certified professionals are trained to handle complex migrations and upgrades without compromising the performance or security of your website. We understand how important it is to have a robust website that functions optimally and efficiently, which is why we offer high-quality services with quick turnarounds so that you can continue to get the best results.

We are proud of our track record, having worked with more than 300 clients in the US in migrating and upgrading their Drupal websites. Our vast experience allows us to provide an unrivalled level of service that is tailored to your specific needs and goals. Get in touch with us today for a one-time free consultation and find out how we can help you with your Drupal upgrade.

Contact us now to learn more about our migration and upgrade services!

ATLANTA

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