

## **Free CMS Systems The Key to Building Search Engine Friendly Pages**

When building a content rich site, it is important that your pages are search engine friendly. Choosing the right script for your site is an extremely crucial aspect of your site development. There are many scripts on the market that can be used for Content Management. I highly recommend a free script called Drupal, but I'm going to highlight other scripts that are also freely available.

### **What Is Search Engine Friendly?**

Scripts by default usually have all kinds of odd characters and question marks that many search engines consider "foreign characters". Having odd characters such as question marks within your URL extension makes it difficult for your site to be indexed by the search engines. To counter this, script developers have started using what is called a rewrite technology that utilizes .htaccess file to create search engine friendly URLs.

### **What is .htaccess?**

It's a way to password protect, or re-direct users automatically to certain parts of your website. It's the re-direction feature that is utilized to create a search engine friendly URL.

### **Why choose Drupal?**

[www.drupal.org](http://www.drupal.org)

- 1)** Its 100% free
- 2)** Its fully open source. That means it can be edited to suit your needs without having to worry about copyrights.
- 3)** It uses what is called Apache mod\_rewrite to enable customizable search engine friendly URLs.
- 4)** Built in search engine that will allow users to search your site for content.
- 5)** Its pretty simple to setup, and can be easily customized, plus there are many themes available FREE.

If you are using Drupal, your web host should preferably be a Linux host that is using Apache with the mod\_rewrite function enabled. Before installing Drupal, contact your web host to ensure that they have mod\_rewrite installed. If you currently do not have a host for your site, then when shopping for a host, ensure that it is a Linux host using Apache with Mod\_rewrite.

### **Hosts you can use that have this feature see below:**

HostGator.com  
StarHoster.com

### **Making Your Job Easier**

Using a content management system for your site makes your job a whole lot easier when creating pages for your site. For example to create a new page in Drupal, all you need to do is log into the admin area, create new page and start writing, publish, and voila, you have a new page on your site. The page is automatically created, it is search engine friendly, and it's ready for indexing by the search engines.

**Link:** <http://www.drupal.org> (Home Page)

**Download Link:**

<http://ftp.osuosl.org/pub/drupal/files/projects/drupal-4.7.3.tar.gz>

If you're looking for alternatives to Drupal, I recommend that you take a look at the list that I've posted below. These are the more popular alternatives that are in use by many webmasters.

**1) Name:** Xoops

**URL:** <http://www.xoops.org>

**2) Name:** GeekLog

**URL:** <http://www.geeklog.net>

**3) Name:** PHPNuke

**URL:** <http://www.phpnuke.org>

**4) Name:** Joomla

**URL:** <http://www.joomla.org>

The CMS scripts that I'm about to list are not as popular or mainstream as the ones mentioned above, but are solid alternatives. I've personally used these two scripts because of the ease of use.

**Name:** EazyPortal

**URL:** <http://www.eazyportal.com>

**Name:** SNews

**URL:** <http://www.solucija.com/home/snews/> .

When reviewing each script the most important aspect for your search engine optimization is "Search Engine Friendly URLs". If it is not listed as a feature, then do not use the script, as the goal is to create your site in such a way that it is easy for the search engines to find and spider your website.

## **Hiring Programmers**

I know that some people may not be technical users and may not know how to create a database and install scripts, or may prefer that someone installs the script for them. If you fall into this category, then you can hire a programmer to install your script for a fee. I've listed below sites you can use to hire programmers to do the following:

Website Design

Script Installation

PHP Programming

When hiring a programmer to install your script, customize or design your site, always check for references. Specifically ask for any examples of sites they have created in the past, preferably relating to the script you need installed or re-designed. These sites allow you to post a project that will then allow programmers to compete by placing bids for the rights to complete your project.

**1) Name:** Scriptlance

**URL:** <http://www.scriptlance.com>

**2) Name:** GetAFreelancer

**URL:** <http://www.getafreelancer.com>

**3) Name:** RentAcoder

**URL:** <http://www.rentacoder.com>

**4) Name:** Guru

**URL:** <http://www.guru.com>

**5) Name:** E-Lance

**URL:** <http://www.elance.com>

The five sites above are very popular and you can easily find a programmer who can help you with the installation and design of your content management system. Please take note I am just providing the information in case you prefer to have someone install the script for you. If you can follow the instructions that each script provides, you should be able to install on your own without issues. It is also important to note that, if using Drupal as your content management script, help can be found in the forums. Also provided are help manuals to help guide you in the installation.

**Drupal Support:** <http://drupal.org/support>

**Drupal Forums:** <http://drupal.org/forum>

### **My Recommendation:**

Take a stab at installing the script yourself. If you have any issues, review the support forums and help manuals. If after that, you are still experiencing problems, then you can ask for help in the forums. You may get lucky and someone will help you for free. Otherwise, you can use the sites I have listed to have an experienced programmer install your script and perhaps even re-design it to give it a 100% original look.