

Drupal: “the drop is always moving”

Autogestión y gobernanza de infraestructuras digitales en comunidades de procomún

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LAB Metadecidim - Sesión 5 (19/07/2017)

Gobernanza democrática de infraestructuras digitales público-comunes



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Overview

- What is Drupal? Introducing the project and the community
- Study on self-organisation in Commons-Based Peer Production
 - Methodology
 - Findings:
 - Notion of contribution in peer-production
 - Formalisation and decentralisation in peer production
 - Emergence of polycentric governance
 - Conclusion & (tentative) implications for decidim.barcelona

What is Drupal?

- Drupal is a Free/Libre Open Source content management framework released in 2001.
- Provides a robust platform for the development of web applications.
- Powers more than 2% of the websites worldwide.



Drupal

The power of Drupal resides in its **extendibility**.

CORE

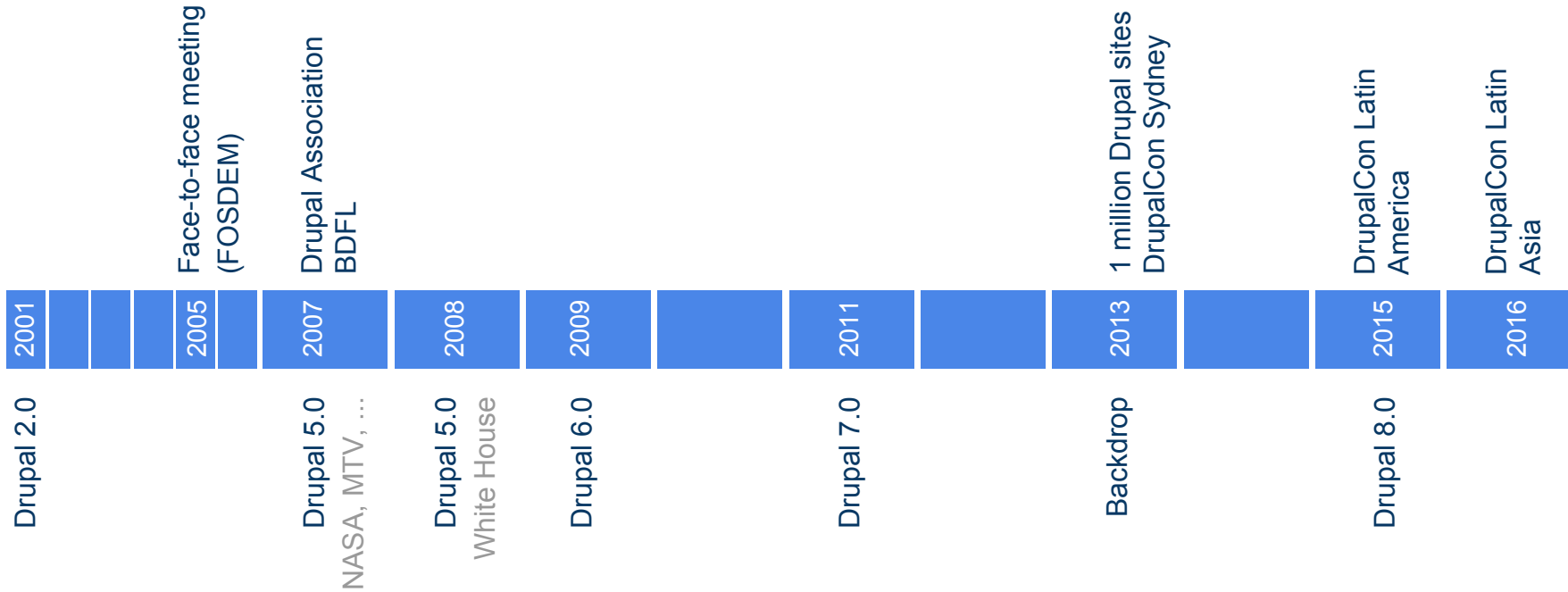
- Main code base with basic functionalities
- Few contributors

CONTRIBUTED MODULES AND THEMES

- Extend with new or improved functionalities (“plugins”)
- Contributed and maintained by the community
- Key success of Drupal
“There is a module for that”
- +20.000 modules, 2.500 themes (GPL licence)

Origins

Dries Buytaert launched Drupal 1.0
on 2001 after graduating.



Niveles de organización

LOCAL- meetups



meetup



- 10-40
- Informal events
- Budget: 0-500€

Niveles de organización

NACIONAL/REGIONAL - DrupalCamps



ASOCIACIÓN
ESPAÑOLA
DE DRUPAL



- 100-300
- Structured events, no-professional organizers
- Budget: 5-20.000€

Niveles de organización

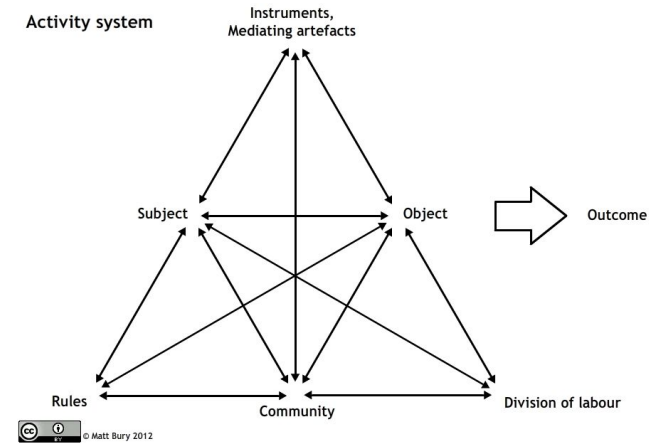
Global - DrupalCon



- 2000-4000
- Professional organized
- > 500.000€

Methodology and theoretical framework

- [Contribution] activity as main unit of analysis. Activity Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 1987)
- Qualitative study, (virtual) ethnographic perspective (Hine, 2000)
- Data collection methods (multi-modal)
 - Participant observation, 3 years. Online (main platforms) & offline (32 events, 53 days)
 - Documentary analysis. Drupal Planet as starting point. 8,613 documents from [archive](#)
 - 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews



Retrieved 2nd December 2015 from <https://www.meetup.com/London-Drupal-Pub-Meet/photos/26552590/>. Chandeeep Khosa.

#F1: Contribution beyond source code

- What does it mean to contribute? Talk is silver, code is gold?
- Two main categories:
 - “Object-oriented”,
 - “Community-oriented”
- The latter underrepresented, less visible, but relevant!

Organisation and participation in F2F events (SG _{2.5})		Local events (SG _{2.5.1})	Organisation of the event (e.g. logistics) Give talks, run workshops, etc. Attendance to the event
		DrupalCamps / Drupal Dev Days / Frontend United and other regional or role-specific events (SG _{2.5.2})	Organisation of the event (e.g. logistics, selection of presentations, etc.) Creation of the website, social media management, etc. Prepare a presentation Run a BoF (Birds Of a Feather) Attendance to the event
			Organisation of the event (e.g. logistics, selection of presentations, etc.) Creation of the website, social media management, etc.
			Coordination of the local community with the Drupal Association Volunteering in the event (e.g. provide assistance to find rooms, registration desks, etc.) Prepare a presentation Run a BoF Participate in Code Sprints
		DrupalCon (SG _{2.5.3})	

#F1: Relevance of “community-oriented” contributions

“[...] attending these meetups was really good. Because you realise there are people behind the source code, right? [...] And you meet people that can tell you a kind of personal story. [...] And then, it [the community] stops being something anonymous, it becomes something yours.”

I₁, Drupal developer and devop, M, 1 year

- Other outcomes: scaling up sense of community, reciprocity, etc.

#F1: Community is devising ways



Spain

[LinkedIn](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Drupal Answers](#)
[GitHub](#)

Current Role(s):
PhD student
University of Surrey

IRC: drozas

Professional Info

Companies Worked For
Educatic, Infosys, Norwegian
University of Science and
Technology, Solusoft

<http://davidrozas.cc>
http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/people/phd/david_rozas/index.htm

Personal Info

Gender: male

Languages spoken: English
Spanish

Bio:

I am a free software enthusiast and I have been learning and having fun with Drupal and its community since 2010.

I am currently doing some work as Drupal freelancer while doing a PhD on the "social side" of Free Software communities. My research concerns individual involvement and group dynamics of Commons-Based Peer Production communities, focussing on the Drupal community as a case study. More info: http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/people/phd/david_rozas/index.htm

History

Member for 7 years 4 months

Documentation Over 100 edits

Areas of Expertise:

Site builder
Developer
project manager,

Drupal Events:

DrupalCon Copenhagen 2010
DrupalCon Amsterdam 2014
DrupalCon Barcelona 2015

Projects

[Facebook Page Plugin](#) (83 commits)

[QScience](#) (51 commits)

[Patterns](#) (47 commits)

[Patterns Installation Profile](#) (41 commits)

[Patterns Client](#) (16 commits)

[Patterns Server](#) (15 commits)

[Integrity](#) (1 commit)

Total: 254 commits



drozas helps support and grow the Drupal community with the Drupal Association.

My mentors:



2 people list drozas as a mentor

I contributed Drupal patches
I contributed Drupal modules

profiles
I contributed to Drupal issue queues
I contributed Drupal documentation
I contributed Drupal translations
I provide Drupal-related services

My mentors:



2 people list drozas as a mentor

Projects

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#F2: Life in a do-ocracy: a model of governance?

“The Drupal community uses a do-ocracy model, meaning people work on what they want to work on, instead of being told what to work on. Decisions are usually made through consensus building and based on technical merit, trust and respect.”

Buytaert (Bacon, 2012, p. 514),

“[...] Doocracy refers to the idea that there is no external body or hierarchy that decides how actions should be carried out. [...] authority over an action is held directly by those developing it. Furthermore, participants gain influence and authority in the process according to their merits and the resources for ‘doing’ that they mobilize (such as time or attention).”

Fuster-Morell (2010, p. 282)

#F2: Formalisation and decentralisation

[...] procedures have to be more formalised in order for it to be welcoming for new contributors. Because people need to know how we do things, who to talk to, and why. Otherwise, it looks like... like you have to be part of the in-crowd, or you have to know certain people, or you have to be in a backchannel, and that stuff is really bad. It will drive away new contributors. So the formalisation has definitely increased [...] we talk about how to do them [decisions], and we come to some kind of agreement and plan. [...]

I₉, Drupal core developer and mentoring organiser, F, 8 years.

#F2: Formalisation and decentralisation in peer production

- Formalisation and decentralisation in peer production: intertwined, and despite main medium / type of activity; and counter-intuitiveness with hacker ethic and do-ocratic values
- Partial explanation according to Ostrom's principles (Ostrom, 1990):
 - Clearly defined community boundaries: institutions, PAP
 - Congruence between rules and local conditions
 - Conflict resolution mechanisms: DCWG
 - ...
- Also in other large and global CBPP communities:
 - Viégas et al. (2007): The *hidden* order of Wikipedia
 - Forte et al. (2009): Decentralization in Wikipedia Governance

#F3: Polycentric governance, organic and mechanistic organisation

- Emergence of polycentric governance (Ostrom, Tiebout & Warren, 1961): variant numbers of centres of decision-making
- Organisational changes in cases discussed by Cristina are all illustrative examples of this emergence:
 - Core, contributed modules, organisation of DrupalCons, DrupalCamps, local events, etc.
- Counterbalancing and complementary co-existence of socio-technical systems of contribution varying in their degree of organicity (Burns & Stalker, 1961), in which Drupalistas have developed multiple governing authorities

#F3: Different degrees of *organicity*

- **Rules:** from social norms to gates and codes of conduct
- **Division of labour:** from blurred to high degrees of explicit specialisation
- **Legitimacy:** from lower levels to participate/organise, to formal institutions
- **Centralisation and autonomy:** from fully decentralised spaces loosely interconnected, to the most centralised and rigid structure
- ...

Characteristics of organisational processes	Degree of <i>organicity</i>		
	d ₁ : High	d ₂ : Mezzo	d ₃ : Low
Rules	Some implicit rules. For example, 'writing good code' or 'avoiding promotional talks'.	Intermediate amount of rules partially affecting areas (e.g. quality assurance). For example, coding standards or selection criteria for presentations.	Large amount of explicit rules affecting most decision-making: governance, quality assurance, division of labour. For example, Core Gates or conflict of interest regulation.
Specialisation	Implicit and blurred division of labour. For example, contributor, or presenter.	Intermediate levels of division of labour. Partially explicit in some cases. For example, maintainers of contributed projects, or organisers in DrupalCamps	Explicit and large division of labour. High degree of specialisation. For example, product owners of core or track chairs.
Degree of formality	Low degree of formality. For example, social life organised around implicit social rules.	Intermediate degree of formality. Emergence of some formal organisational structures and institutions in some cases. For example, the Spanish Drupal Association.	High degree of formality. Organised around formal organisational structures, with bureaucratic processes for most of the decision-making. For example, the Drupal Association.
Centralisation and autonomy	Fully decentralised spaces and loosely interconnected: vast amount of small centres of decision-making almost completely independent of each other.	Considerable amount of medium-sized autonomous distributed spaces with low degrees of dependence on others. For example, contributed projects working groups, or the Spanish Drupal Association.	The most centralised and rigid structures, several centres of decision-making with stronger interdependence. For example, the Core Governance or committees in the Drupal Association.
Complexity and amount of required coordination	Low degree of required coordination. Low levels of complexity.	Intermediate degree of required coordination. Medium complexity.	Largest amounts of required coordination. Main focus of action highly complex.

Conclusion & *implications* (#F1)

- **[!] Careful: Extreme case study, focussed on production of digital commons**
- Contribution as meanings under constant negotiation between participants in peer production communities according to their internal logics of value
 - *Provision of indicators that measure and aggregate these forms of value*
 - *Avoid “one-fits-all” indicators, such as “likes”: mechanisms that enable communities to dynamically define these indicators*
 - *For the platform, or the meta-platform for decision making, on decidim.barcelona?*

Conclusion & *implications* (#F2&3)

- Organisational dynamics: formalisation and decentralisation, despite main medium / type of activity
 - *These dynamics, or reverse, may be considered for the governance of decidim.barcelona?*
- Resulted in emergence of polycentric governance and organisational forms with different degrees of *organicity* (interacting)
 - *Counterbalancing co-existence of organisational forms in decidim.barcelona?*
 - *May the concept of Polycentric governance be useful for the platform?*

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Any questions/feedback?

Thanks!

¡Gracias!

Ευχαριστώ!

Danke!

¡Gràcies!

Slides: <http://bit.ly/2u5EUVN>

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