



When Media and Entertainment Firms Go Digital

Section 1: Introduction / Overview

Nurturing Profitable Relationships

To thrive in the digital age, media and entertainment firms must nurture profitable relationships between content and customers. They build brand and buzz behind popular tunes, episodes, and entertaining personalities. Successful firms foster friction-free networks, channel valuable content that flows through them, and build engaging communities around them. Along the way, they squarely face the future and digitize their most promising revenue streams.

But costs matter. Established business models based on analog technologies no longer work. There are no physical barriers to the distribution of digital goods. Savvy firms attract audiences and delight fans by distributing free content, selling premium content, and delivering value-added services. They engage listeners and viewers wherever they are by smartly supporting both web and mobile applications, and then monetizing the results.

Needed is a cost-effective, flexible, and scalable platform for powering these content-centric experiences. This is Drupal. With Drupal, media and entertainment firms develop innovative solutions and profitable revenue streams.

How should media and entertainment firms manage and monetize their digital goods? How can these firms produce entertaining experiences for audiences and fans? What are the smart investments these firms should make to power the digital businesses for the artists, entertainers, and producers they represent?

This paper serves as a solution guide for how media and entertainment firms should promote and profit from the digital revolution by deploying Drupal.

Section 2: How Acquia Delivers Effective Solutions:

What Acquia Delivers

Acquia provides industry-leading software distributions, hosting capabilities, and deployment services for delivering Drupal-powered web solutions to media and entertainment firms. Thus Acquia:

- Develops and distributes expertly curated versions of Drupal for assembling content-centric applications, managing multiple web sites from a single source, distributing mobile content, and deploying social business solutions
- Hosts Drupal environments for large-scale deployments that support mission-critical applications, are optimized for high performance, and designed to adapt to highly variable network traffic
- Supports Drupal developers and web site builders with a hosted development environment and tools
- Delivers the management, professional, and learning services for end-to-end technical support, remote administration, site planning and development, technical knowledge-bases, and developer training

By leveraging the capabilities of an open source platform running within a managed cloud environment, many media and entertainment firms rely on Acquia to:

- Maintain multiple web sites from a single platform
- Assemble the content for promotional packages
- Ensure multi-channel content delivery
- Support digital revenue streams

Let's consider how each of these solutions works.

Section 3: Vertical Specific Use Cases

Section 3: Use Case 1

Maintaining Multiple Web Sites

A successful media and entertainment firm must cost effectively develop and manage the individual web sites for multiple artists and entertainers. While the firm promotes many bands and events over the web, each one has a distinct persona and appeals to a particular audience.

But maintaining a series of standalone web sites for individual stars and programs is not a scalable solution. A savvy firm must exploit an underlying web content management (WCM) platform to develop and manage many uniquely branded web sites.

Here's the problem. Fans care about their favorite performers and shows, and not the media company producing the content. When pop bands release new albums, their music, lyrics, national tour schedules, and fan club events should be immediately available on individually branded web sites. When a broadcasting network syndicates popular programs, each affiliate station wants to offer the syndicated shows on its own schedule, blend this content with information from other sources, and distribute the combined results to its own audiences. As a result:

- Every performer, show, and media property expects its own web site.
- Marketers working with the individual artists and entertainers must be able to produce rich media experiences on their own, without the assistance of an IT group.
- Editors and contributors need to quickly and easily update the content published on a particular site.

At the same time, a media and entertainment firm must economize on the multiple web sites it develops for each of its artists and performers. It must operate efficiently and effectively by pooling its underlying online resources. Doing things right requires a scalable platform, one capable of supporting many sites from a common core.

This is where Drupal makes a difference. As an extensible and flexible WCM platform, Drupal delivers state-of-the-art capabilities for capturing, organizing, producing, and monetizing digital content. Using Drupal, a media and entertainment firm can easily:

- Manage text, rich media, and other content types
- Optimize content delivery for search engines and syndication
- Distribute optimized content to mobile venues
- Publish content directly to social media sites

Thus National Public Radio (NPR) has launched a digital initiative to support affiliate stations across the country based on Drupal. NPR hosts and manages the platform within its own infrastructure, and then provides participating public radio stations with the ability to tailor web sites for their own local markets. There is strength in numbers and pooling resources across the Internet. Individual stations maintain up-to-date web experiences for their listeners without investing resources to develop their own web sites.

Moreover, Acquia delivers tailored Drupal distributions that support multiple stand-alone web sites. Drupal Gardens and Enterprise Drupal Gardens provide a centralized web platform for maintaining multiple web sites. Leveraging the capabilities of an Open SaaS environment, these Drupal distributions centralize the core IT infrastructure functions while distributing the content management activities that affect various performers' web sites.

The Warner Music Group (WMG), for example, relies on Enterprise Drupal Gardens to centrally create and manage large numbers of content-rich, social websites. Music promoters easily launch and update custom-designed sites for individual singers and bands. Each group features a unique web experience for its own fans, as shown in Illustration 1. At the same time, the IT staff centrally manages all of the sites and coordinates the development of the templates, themes, and content components used to assemble the multiple experiences.



Illustration 1. At Warner Music Group, each band has its own web site, complete with its distinctive look and feel.

Not surprising, media events are unpredictable in a fan-driven industry. A media and entertainment firm must anticipate spikes in web traffic. When a popular band has a new release, or a syndicated show produces a compelling episode, the web traffic to its branded site often suddenly spikes. The last thing a digitally-driven business can tolerate is a sluggish online experience when popularity peaks. To compete effectively on the web, a firm must be prepared to quickly satisfy these peak demands for branded content.

Fortunately, Acquia delivers a solution. WMG relies on the Acquia Managed Cloud to host their web presence. Jimmy Page (the Led Zeppelin guitar legend) and the BRIT Awards (an online entertainment awards site) also use this managed cloud to easily accommodate sudden increases in web traffic. Each organization no longer needs to be concerned about building and maintaining its own IT infrastructure (See Illustration 2).

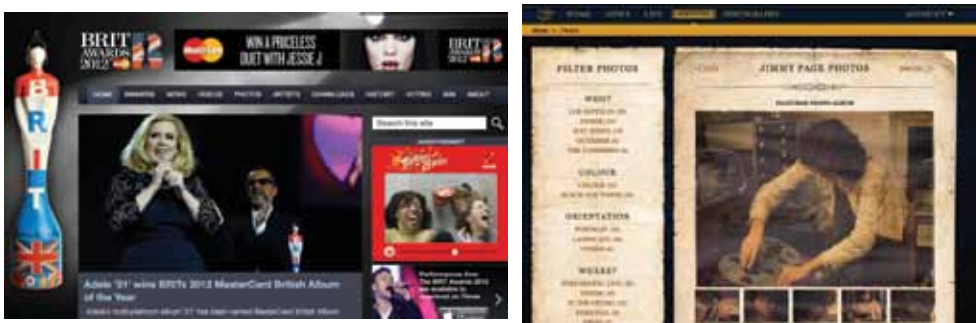


Illustration 2. When it comes to awards time and popular interest peaks, the BRIT Awards and Jimmy Page sites rely on the Acquia Managed Cloud to easily accommodate sudden increases in web traffic.

When the traffic for individual fan sites spikes, Acquia immediately adds bandwidth and other computing services needed to accommodate the sudden demand and then reduces resource allocations when the demand subsides. The Acquia Managed Cloud makes good business sense. The firm only pays for the IT resources it consumes.

Section 3: Use Case 2

Assembling Promotional Packages

Fans crave new content and engaging experiences. A media and entertainment firm can build fan (and brand) awareness by assembling ad hoc microsites and other promotional packages for special events. It helps a lot if the firm can repurpose the content that it already maintains, rather than creating new content for every new event.

Using such services as Drupal Gardens and Enterprise Drupal Gardens from Acquia, Drupal makes this easy. With Drupal, a media and entertainment firm can develop and produce short content components (or content chunks), rather than lengthy web pages. Then the firm can catalog, assemble, and reassemble these chunks in many different ways to produce engaging experiences and special features.

As a result, marketers and editors at a media and entertainment firm can easily create and promote new sections (or microsites) with little effort. To launch a new site, they simply access a predefined library of content components and select an appropriate template. With a modest up-front investment, the firm profits from a high-impact environment for launching specialized sites for promotional events.

For example, the publisher of Maxim Magazine maintains a multimedia web site with dynamic content powered by Drupal. Site editors easily produce a steady flow of new sections, combining photos with video clips into featured microsites and supported by online advertising. There is always more content for fans to enjoy. Maxim not only builds its branded experience, it also increases the number of pageviews with embedded banner ads, as well as the advertising revenue generated from the site (see Illustration 3).



Illustration 3. Editors at Maxim produce a steady stream of microsites, combining existing photos and video clips to create more experiences for viewers and more ad revenues for the firm.

Section 3: Use Case 3

Multi-channel Delivery

Fans are both mobile and social. They want branded content, anywhere and anytime. They want to cue up their favorite music and stream popular broadcasts while on the go. They expect to access branded content across any number of popular social venues — including Facebook, Yelp, and online radio stations.

For a media and entertainment firm, it is essential to focus on the capabilities of the underlying WCM platform. Thus NBC Universal relies on Drupal to easily handle video, text, and community features, and to combine these content streams into a cohesive web site (see Illustration 4).



Illustration 4. NBC Universal combines video, text, and community features into a cohesive web site.

Moreover, Drupal delivers the foundations to support both mobile web sites and mobile applications. Many local broadcasters rely on a Drupal-powered solution to produce, provision, and manage the mobile radio experiences running on their listeners' smartphones. As shown in Illustration 5, this solution manages both the broadcast stream and the associated programming content, as well as supports and tracks mobile advertising campaigns. Radio stations not only reach new audiences through mobile devices, they can also capture additional revenue streams.



Illustration 5. Local broadcasters can rely on a Drupal-powered solution to produce content for mobile devices.

In short, Drupal provides the essential capabilities for multi-channel content delivery. As a development platform, Drupal makes it easy for developers to produce both native mobile apps and deliver content to mobile web browsers. Drupal serves as the content repository of record for supporting all kinds of digital experiences that are syndicated to social venues across the web.

Section 3: Use Case 4

Developing Digital Revenue Streams

For artists and performers, their individual web sites have value. Beyond building brand and buzz, a successful media and entertainment firm must develop digital revenue streams for the performers and entertainers it represents.

Of course there are many ways to do business on the web, engage fans, and transform browsers to buyers. These include:

- Providing access to premium content, such as a song or video stream, for a fee
- Selling subscription services to fan clubs
- Advertising special offers
- Linking to real-time events such as concert tours

A savvy firm provides the vital (and viral) resources for promoting fan awareness while also increasing revenues and reducing costs across multiple delivery channels. As an affordable open source platform, Drupal makes a difference.

With Drupal, a media and entertainment firm can tailor content delivery to support various commercial relationships. The firm can easily offer:

- Subscription-based services
- Premium pay content
- Time-based trials
- Fees for delivery to mobile devices
- Access to fan clubs
- Merchandising fan tee shirts, caps, and other catalog items
- Concert ticket sales

Thus WMG encourages band managers and promoters to set up fan clubs and add links to upcoming performances, leveraging the value-added capabilities of Enterprise Drupal Gardens. For example, the Kid Rock fan club (see Illustration 1).

In short, entertainers and performers have many options for making money over the web. For a media and entertainment firm representing media talent, it's important to first identify the most profitable business models for engaging fans. The firm can then rely on Drupal to easily provide the e-commerce services that monetize the results.

Section 4: Summary / Wrap Up

Producing Digital Experiences

Using Drupal and relying on the capabilities of this open source platform, a media and entertainment firm can go digital and deliver compelling results at an affordable cost. Acquia, in turn, provides enterprise-grade development, hosting, and support services to ensure successful Drupal deployments.

- Acquia delivers curated Drupal distributions for assembling web experiences, distributing rich media content, and engaging audiences and fans across the web. With such distributions as Acquia Drupal, Drupal Gardens, and Enterprise Drupal Gardens, media and entertainment firms have the content-centric platforms they need to best serve the artists and entertainers they represent.
- Acquia knows how to deploy Drupal for mission-critical applications. Acquia provides a Managed Cloud hosting service for running web-wide scale Drupal sites and adapting quickly to spikes in demand for services.
- Acquia provides a range of management, professional, and educational services to design and deploy Drupal sites, to make Drupal developers more effective, and to maintain Drupal-powered web sites on an ongoing basis.

Using Drupal, a media and entertainment firm is now able to deliver on the promise of friction-free networks, connect artists and entertainers with knowing audiences and fans, and monetize the results. In short, there are many ways for a media and entertainment firm to go digital, profitably, with Drupal.

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Acquia, Inc.
25 Corporate Drive, 4th Floor
Burlington, MA 01803
USA

www.acquia.com
sales@acquia.com

+1.781.238.8600