Panels: Today, and the Future

• Sam Boyer (sdboyer)

• or...PSFEM (Poor Substitute for Earl Miles)
So what *is* Panels, anyway?

- A *way to make nodes look nicer*.
  - Sure! Obviously not the whole picture, though.

- A *GUI for laying out content*.
  - Yep. But that's still just one piece.

- An *expansion/improvement of Drupal core's Block system*.
  - Closer, but still really just scratching the surface.

When I think about Panels, I (largely) think: *Content 'Marshalling' System*
Content 'Marshalling'

- Content marshalling means...what?
- So now content doesn't just need managing – it needs *marshalling*, too?
  - Consider raw node output – it often isn't sufficient to just output all node fields in order.
  - Or, even better: think about a typical website front page.
    - *Content pulled from many sources*
    - *Numerous conceptually different elements*
  - Synthesis of elements is a major factor in UX
Coulee Region ONLINE is a community discussion and information site for La Crosse, Wisconsin and surrounding communities including Onalaska, Holmen, West Salem, and more.

While we offer general information about the Coulee Region like other local sites, our focus is the people of the community. With forums, blogs, chats, and other interactive features, our goal is to move beyond just giving information and provide a gathering place where people can interact with their neighbors whether they be next door or across the Coulee Region.

Welcome back, sdboyer. Glad you could join us.

What we're talking about:

A while back, I did a search to find local people on Twitter. At the time, I just added them to my main account. Today, someone mentioned TwitterLocal and, even though his comment was that it "blows", I was curious and checked it out. I found a bunch more local people that way.

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Row 1, Column 1

- No title

Row 2, Column 1

- What we're talking about:
  - What we're talking about:

Row 2, Column 2

- Welcome Back!

- User login

- Connect

- Explore

- Calendar

- Upcoming Events

Row 3, Column 1

- Coulee Region Businesses and Organizations:

Row 3, Column 2

- Where We Live:

Row 4, Column 1

Row 4, Column 2

Save  Cancel
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- Google CSE

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Getting & Organizing Content – 'Context'

- Defining 'Context.'
  - I dare not write down many details, but...
  - Page requests as 'building a house'
  - Context as the 'shared supply closet'

- Panels has a pre-defined mechanisms for creating contexts
  - Arguments (a Panels plugin type)
  - Relationships (another Panels plugin type)
  - ALL of them, however, are just wrappers around 
    panel s_cont ext_cr eat e().

- It's a basic notion, but very powerful and extensible.
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Are you climbing the Drupal learning curve? Do you want to write your own modules or themes? Have a vision of running a killer Drupal-based site? If you’ve got big-D dreams, then this is the group for you. We’ll make you skilled like a ninja. If you’ve got skills to share, or are tired of being told to “clone yourself,” join up and lend a hand!

Looking for video screencasts? Check out drupaldojo.com, our library of lessons and quick tips.

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Contribute!

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Submit a mini-lesson! Choose an aspect of Drupal you’re familiar with, be it installing/configuring a module, information about your favorite hook, or how you built your last Drupal site, and tell us about it!

Reasons this is awesome:

- You help your fellow drupalist
- You build massive karma
- Become known and adored in the community!

If you have any questions or need help getting started, drop by the IRC channel (#drupal-dojo), and one of us (jessell, magdelaine, webavant, serpentai, addiasum, josh_kc, dmitryegol) will be around to walk you through it.

DrupalCampLA 2008 - September 13-14

Start: 2008-09-13 10:00 America/Los_Angeles - 2008-09-14 16:00 America/Los_Angeles
Organizers: Crystal Williams
Chariton
Groups: Bay Area Community Designers and Information Architects
Drupal Dojo Drupal Event Organization Drupal for Activists and Campaigns Internship and Exchange programs Los Angeles Orange County Southern California
DrupalCamp Los Angeles 2008, this September 13-14 (2 days) at the Los Angeles Convention Center

We think Drupal is the best open source content management system period and we’re not the only ones. Faced with a bigger demand for Drupal developers than even last year, the Los Angeles Drupal Users Group has decided to throw our second annual free community training session to improve the level of Drupal development in Los Angeles. Plus it’s a geeky good time!

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Registration
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Registration is now open. Please also attend code sprint sponsored by Los Angeles...
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Wrapping up the Today bit

- Everything covered thus far is old news. Even so, it's useful to keep in mind. *For some people, anyway.*

- **A quick review:**
  - The Panels engine will fetch and organize the disparate data needed for any given page request.
  - It frees you – arguably even encourages you – to think about that overall synthesis instead.
And on to the Future!

- **In two parts:**
  - **Panels2:** new/improved implementations of the current Panels API
  - **Panels3:** or, Panels2 coked up and rollin' on meth.

- Further divvied up by the changes first from the perspective of the interface, then from the perspective of the API.
I CAN HAS PANLS

FOR D6? plz
Panels 2: New Implementations

- Node add/edit forms, via CCK integration (tentative)
- Panels Profiles. Next-gen of Advanced Profile Kit, integration with MySite, and could act as a unified backend for profile/acct management (D6)
- Genericization of OG Blueprints (D5/D6)
- Panels admin interface...done in Panels(tentative)
- Panelize project* suite (tentative, D6)
- Panelize API module (very tentative, D6) — see http://drupal.org/node/256963
Panels3: From the Interface

• Interactive, informative feedback throughout editing operations
  – 'Peek' into the underlying data structure
  – Show which plugins are being used
  – Advanced Help, everywhere!

• Much less clutter!
  – No more modals! Probably...
  – Hierarchical Select used for pane selection (and potentially other things)
  – Views2-style AJAX-based interface
Panels3: From the Interface (cont)

- Obsoleting the 'admin backend' of Panels
  - Drag-'n'-Drop while viewing; no going to 'edit'
  - In-place AJAX-driven editing of fields
- Panels terminology will be 53.4% less crazy!
- **In Sum:** Our goal with Panels3 is to allow razor-fine control over the entire UX with Panels.
  - In other words, users will see exactly what they should and need to see – no more, no less.
Panels3: From the API

- Data structure stays pretty much the same. That's not where the problem is.
- Again, the theme: very fine-grained control.
  - The widgets your Panels-related forms use
  - The strings/helpertext in Panels-related interfaces
  - The options your users will see on Panels configuration forms
- In Sum: you'll be able to leverage the full power of Panels without ever having to expose your users to unneeded, potentially confusing options.
Questions?

• I CAN HAS PANLS D6? Plz
  – Yes. Soon.
• Other questions?

Remember – 13:30-14:30 on Aug 30th in the Acquia Room if you want to learn more about using the Panels API!