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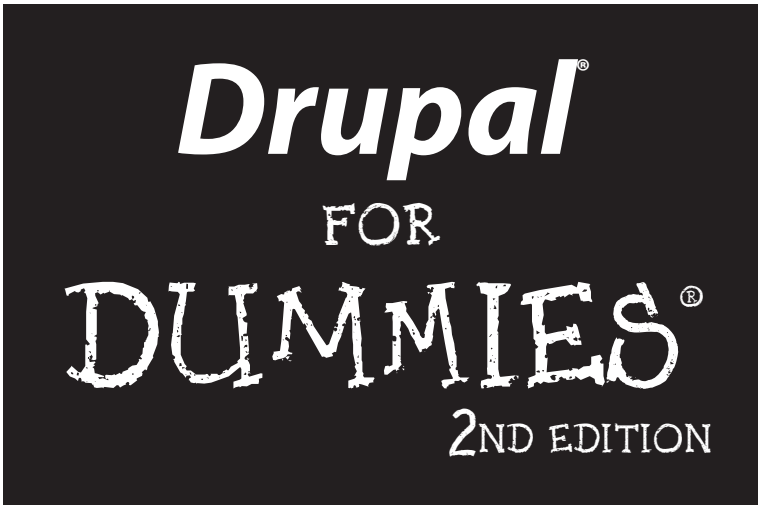
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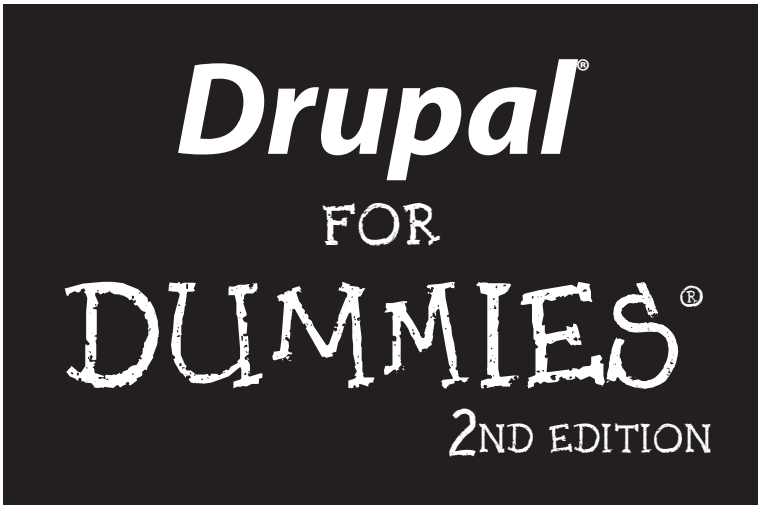

**by Lynn Beighley and
Seamus Bellamy**

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About the Authors

Lynn Beighley has been a computer book author for a very long time, and this is her twelfth book. She's written about SQL, PHP, Flash, Photoshop, and Dreamweaver, and finds that they all have connections to Drupal. In fact, it's like "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" — she thinks maybe everything is connected to Drupal. Or perhaps Drupal is connected to everything. Either way, she loves it.

Lynn lives in a sleepy New Jersey town, and doesn't know anyone named Tony. She shares her slightly off-kilter 1920s home with her husband, Drew, and an 80-pound lap dog named Wroxton.

Seamus Bellamy has written only one other computer book so far — *Joomla! For Dummies* — and feels humbled in the face of his coauthor's massive body of work. During the time that Seamus should have been writing books, he instead frittered away his days pursuing a number of tangents — working in the security intelligence community, as a pub musician, and as a music and tech journalist. Most recently, his work can be found on a regular basis in *Mac|Life Magazine,* and *Maximum PC,* as well as online.

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Dedication

Lynn: For Drew.

Seamus: For my father, Jack. I wish you could have lived long enough to see me make a living doing what I love.

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Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of *Drupal For Dummies,* a book written especially for people who want to have their own websites but haven't a clue about how to start or where to begin.

Are you frustrated because the kid next door has five websites to your none? Are you tired of trying to find someone to build your site for you for free? Do you hear stories about how much a website has picked up your dentist's business? You need Drupal!

Or maybe you already have a website, but you have one problem: The guy who built it isn't around to help when things break. And he built it in Javanese HRH or some other gibberish you can't even remember the name of, much less decipher. Makes you want to scream.

Either way, you've found the right book. Help is here, within these humble pages.

This book talks about building a website from scratch, using Drupal — in everyday language. It doesn't assume you know how to create web pages. You don't need to know code, either; in fact, you can create your site without writing a single line of computer code. The language is friendly; you don't need a graduate education to get through it. The goal is to show you how to build your own site with the features you want, without coding, without deciphering technical jargon, and without pulling a single hair from your head in frustration.

About This Book

There are a couple of ways to use this book, depending on your preferences and experience.

If you're a content management, website, or Drupal newbie, you can start reading and working with Chapter 1 and keep going until you reach the index. Everything falls in sequence as you build experience and knowledge. We explain the concepts and give you practical instructions. Each of the 17 chapters in this book covers a specific aspect of building a website with Drupal — such as installing Drupal, building a basic site with a blog and forum, using images and video on your site, or building an online store.

But you don't have to memorize anything in this book. It's a need-to-know book: You can pick it up when you need to know something. Need to know how to put a YouTube video on your Drupal site? Pick up the book. Need to know how to create a contact form for your customers? Pick up the book.

This book works like a reference. Start with the topic you want to find out about. Look for it in the table of contents or in the index to get going. The table of contents is detailed enough that you should be able to find most of the topics you're looking for. If not, turn to the index, where you can find even more detail.

After you find your topic in the table of contents or the index, turn to the area of interest and read as much as you need or want. Then close the book and get on with it.

Of course, this book is loaded with information, so if you want to take a brief excursion into your topic, you're more than welcome. If you want to know the ins and outs of building an online store, read the whole chapter on storefronts. If you just want to know how to post a product on your site, read just the section on adding products. You get the idea.

This book rarely directs you elsewhere for information — just about everything that you need to know about Drupal is right here. If you find the need for additional information on related topics, plenty of other *For Dummies* books can help.

Conventions Used in This Book

As with other *For Dummies* books, we use certain conventions to keep things consistent and make it easier for you to read this book. Here are some of the conventions you'll find throughout this book:

- *Italics* appear on new terms that we go on to define.
- **Bold** shows the text you need to type. Also, we use **bold** on the steps you take in numbered lists.
- `Monofont` indicates code or a URL (web address), such as `www.dummies.com`.

What You Don't Need to Read

Aside from the topics you can use right away, some of this book is skippable. We carefully marked technical information with the Technical Stuff icon and put somewhat off-topic information in self-contained sidebars so that you can steer clear of them if you wish. Don't read this stuff unless you're into technical explanations and want to know a little of what's going on behind the scenes. Don't worry; our feelings won't be hurt if you don't read every word.

Foolish Assumptions

We're making only one assumption about who you are: You're someone who wants to build a website and has heard that Drupal is a good choice.

Macintosh and Windows users can all use this book.

How This Book Is Organized

Inside this book, you find chapters arranged in five parts. Each chapter breaks down into sections that cover various aspects of the chapter's main subject. The chapters are in a logical sequence, so reading them in order (if you want to read the whole thing) makes sense. But the book is modular enough that you can pick it up and start reading at any point.

Here's the lowdown on what's in each of the five parts.

Part 1: Getting Started with Drupal

The chapters in this part present a layperson's introduction to what Drupal is all about, where to get it, and how to install it. This part is a good place to start if you don't have the Drupal software already installed for you. It's also a great place to start if you've looked at Drupal but have no idea what all those infernal links do.

The best thing about this part is that it starts at the very beginning and doesn't assume you know how to download and upload and extract and install software. It also suggests simple solutions on how to get started. In other words, this part is aimed at ordinary people who know almost nothing about how websites come to exist.

Part II: Your First Drupal Site

The goal of the chapters in this part is to show you how to build your first website quickly and easily. And it takes you beyond simply building a site, into fun stuff such as changing the appearance and building a site with a blog, forum, and user comments.

Part III: Bending Drupal to Your Will

After you get a basic website up and running, the chapters in this part show you how to add on to it and really control it. You find out all about safely allowing others to use your site and controlling what they can and can't do. You also spend time making your site even more your own by customizing colors, logos, and artwork.

Part IV: Taking Drupal to the Next Level

This part really takes your site to a whole new level. You discover how to pull content and data from other websites, and how to build a storefront. Those are just a few of the many new features you can add to your site using Drupal's modular design. You also discover how to use Drupal Gardens to create a site in minutes — without having to worry about web hosting or software installation.

Part V: The Part of Tens

This wouldn't be a *For Dummies* book without a collection of lists of interesting snippets: ten modules (or add-ons) for your Drupal site and ten sites you can visit to find out even more about Drupal.

Icons Used in This Book

Those nifty little pictures in the margin aren't there just to pretty up the place. They have practical functions:

Pay special attention to this icon; it lets you know that some particularly useful tidbit is at hand — perhaps a shortcut or a little-used command that pays off big.

Did we tell you about the memory course we took?

Hold it — technical details lurk just around the corner. Read on only if you have a pocket protector.

Danger, Will Robinson! This icon highlights information that may help you avert disaster.

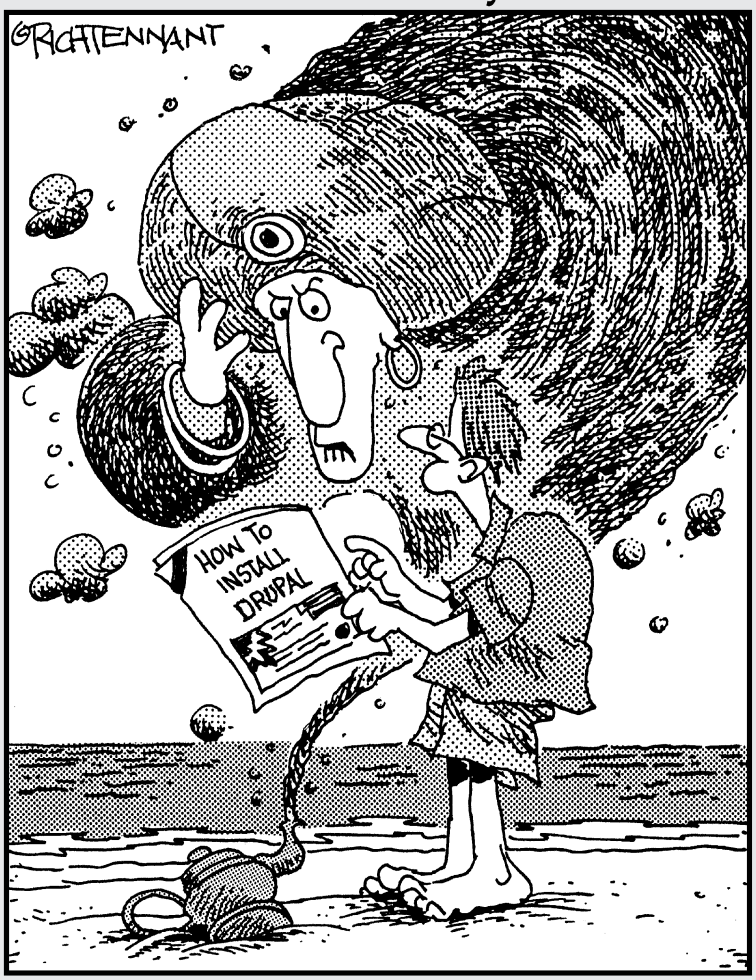
Where to Go from Here

Yes, you can get there from here. With this book in hand, you're ready to build your own robust and useful website with Drupal. Browse through the table of contents and decide where you want to start. Be bold! Be courageous! Be adventurous! Above all, have fun!

Part I

Getting Started with Drupal

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant



"Can't I just give you riches or something?"

In this part . . .

You want a website. But the kid next door doesn't know enough to build what you need — and the web design company wants to charge you an arm and a leg. Just when you're about to give in and pay too much, you overhear a conversation about Drupal, and how you can build a website with it.

But when you try it, you don't find it easy. The documentation is hard to follow, and you can't find anything in the Drupal interface.

If this has happened to you, you'll appreciate the chapters in this part. They provide a gentle introduction to building your first website with Drupal.

What if you don't even have Drupal and need to install it? Then the chapters in this part take you to the very beginning. That way your site will be up and ready to be enhanced by the great stuff in the chapters in Parts II and beyond.

Chapter 1

The Big Picture

In This Chapter

- Understanding open source software
- Comparing Content Management Systems
- Developing a website with Drupal
- Knowing Drupal's potential

At the dawn of time, if you wanted to create a fully featured website with forms, a blog, and a message board, you practically had to be a computer programmer — or at least have enough dirt on a programmer to bribe him into building a website for you. You needed to know how to write HTML (and possibly JavaScript and CSS), and to accomplish anything dynamic, you needed to know yet another language such as PHP or ASP. You probably would have needed to know SQL, the language that allows websites to store and retrieve information.

As the waters receded and the years wore on, web developers grew weary of having to build each and every site from scratch and began freely sharing code. If you knew some HTML and a few other things, you could use the work of other people to knit your site together. No longer did you need to write code every time you wanted a contact form or poll or image library on your website.

Today, we have entire robust and powerful web applications, supported by communities of web developers. Enter Drupal. Drupal is one of a class of web applications that do nearly all the work for you. You can build a site with Drupal without ever writing a single line of code. Indeed, that's the ultimate goal of Drupal: to free you from the inner workings of the code and instead let you focus on the layout and content of your site. There are other, similar applications you can use that also accomplish this, but Drupal is one of the best open source applications for quick, code-free website creation. In short, Drupal, just like RuPaul, makes looking good look easy.

Before we get into the installation and use of Drupal, we think it's helpful to start by introducing the features of Drupal. After all, there's no sense in installing it if you don't know what it does, right? The more you understand about what Drupal is, the better you can plan and use it to your advantage.

What Drupal Is

The official Drupal website, `http://drupal.org`, describes Drupal as "a free software package that allows an individual or a community of users to easily publish, manage and organize a wide variety of content on a website." This is a great description of this application. It's free, as long as you follow certain rules that we mention later in this chapter. Drupal allows for a wide variety of content, making it extremely flexible and customizable. The fact that more than one individual can publish and manage content makes it a Content Management System (CMS). We explain each of these important characteristics of Drupal in more detail a little bit later on.

Free

Drupal is distributed as *open source* software. This means that you can get a copy of the program and install it on your web server, modify the appearance of the pages and layout to suit your needs, and add your content to it without paying for the program. It seems too good to be true!

Software designated as open source essentially means it's "free," but it does have certain legal obligations associated with it. For example, if you were a programmer and made changes to the code itself and then provided the new code to other people, there would be certain rules you would have to follow under Drupal's license. You can learn more about open source licensing here: `www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html`.

If you really like Drupal, or the great Drupal site you build helps your company make lots of money, you can contribute to the efforts of the many great programmers who have created this software by visiting `http://drupal.org/contribute`.

Flexible

Drupal sites are completely flexible. This means you can do things like

- **Modify the layout of your pages:** With the use of blocks, you can move your navigation links to anywhere else on your pages you wish. You can put all your content in one column or choose multiple-column layouts.
- **Remove or replace the default Drupal logo:** By default, your Drupal site will be branded with the official Drupal logo. You can easily remove it or replace it with your own logo.