



Creating Nimble Drupal Systems for Government: Transforming MN's Dept of Health in 6 Months

Twin Cities Drupal Camp – September 14, 2023

Sessions off the “Drupal Island” – Ivan Stegic – Rm 324

Agenda

Hello!

An introduction

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It's often hard to do

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What is this story about?

6 Months of Transformation

What's the secret sauce?

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You have questions?

Hello!

An introduction

I'm Ivan Stegic, I live
in Minneapolis.

Background in
Physics, R&D at
Honeywell, Imation.

Been tinkering with
Drupal since 2007.
Started TEN7
inadvertently that
same year.

Serve as CEO of TEN7.



TEN 7

**We are a fully-remote,
values driven
web design and Drupal
development agency
headquartered in
Minneapolis, Minnesota.**

OUR MISSION

Make Things That Matter

Make Things That Matter Means...

- No One Should Go Hungry – **Second Harvest Heartland**
- Smarter, Greener Construction – **SageGlass**
- Inclusive, powerful engagement with history – **Minnesota Historical Society**
- Peaceful co-parenting – **Our Family Wizard**
- To help animals – **Animal Humane Society**
- To end wrongful convictions – **Innocence Project**
- To promote environmental stewardship – **Three Rivers Park District**

Why Are We Here?

What is this story about?

This is the story of how we helped a closely knit team inside a state government department transform their existing Drupal site and the things connected to it.

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we helped a
team inside
government
transform their
Drupal site

**we helped a
team**

**transform their
Drupal site**

**To protect,
maintain and
improve the
health of all
Minnesotans.**



**DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH**

For a Healthy Minnesota

[COVID-19](#)

[Air Quality](#)

[Equitable Health Care Task Force](#)



I am a...



GO

I want to...



GO

I am searching for...



CERTIFICATES & RECORDS

Getting a birth certificate is easier than ever.

If you need a birth certificate for someone born in Minnesota, you have options. Visit your county vital records office or send an application to us by fax or mail.

[Get a Birth Certificate](#)

**What does transform
mean to you?**

**What did it mean to
MDH?**

Did it mean...

- ... faster to load?
- ... easier to navigate?
- ... easier to update?
- ... more secure?
- ... better SEO?
- ... faster to deploy?
- ... nicer to look at?
- ... more accessible?
- ... something else?

Improvement is a
continuum and involves
conscious iteration.

Transformation is
improvement of **all the**
things.

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Nimble Drupal Systems

Say what?

**Let's define
things, shall we?**

nimble, adj., adv., & n.

Quick and light in movement or action; agile; active. Of persons, animals, or things. Also in extended use.

system, n.

A group or set of related or associated things perceived or thought of as a unity or complex whole.

Quick, light Drupal related things that work together as a whole.

They can be anything you want them to be.

6 Months of Transformation

What's the secret sauce?

**“We could use
some Drupal support.
Can you help us?”**



The first step is asking.

**And, for us, the second
step is always...**

Leading With Empathy

This is the secret sauce.

The First Month

Kick Off!

- Let's get started!
- Hit the ground running!!

The First Month

~~Kick Off!~~

- ~~→ Let's get started!~~
- ~~→ Hit the ground running!!~~

The First Month

A Contract and Statement of Work

- Legal things out of the way
- It always takes longer than you expect it to
- **Be Mindful.** Plan for the additional time.

Access to The Things

- Accounts, credentials, MFA, VPN, Ohhhh myyyyyy.

Kick Off!

- Finally, everyone is here. Let's get started!

This was their team's first
Drupal site 🎉

MDH migrated from Lucee
from Coldfusion. 😲

It **all** came over. Launch in
2022.

The Second Month, Or So...

Listening, learning, discovering

- We do a lot of listening. There are walkthroughs.
- They discover things they didn't know. As do we. **Be a Team.**

Audits

- Technical, User Experience, Accessibility. **Be Mindful.**

Access Issues

- There are always access issues! **Lead with Empathy**

Recommendations

- Reports, priorities, a roadmap and iteration



For the remaining four months, we **slowly improved** many little things.


We tried to use our secret sauce in every line of code, every meeting, every interaction.

Be Inclusive, At All Stages

Check-ins

- Regular check-ins, **don't miss them**, record them (if possible)
- Use the tools that work for everyone, **least amount of friction**
- Keep good notes that are easily accessible to everyone

Workflows, Security, Environments

- Internally managed, hosted at Amazon's AWS
- Strict security requirements, force best practices for DevOps 
- Ease and speed of use for multi-developer and multi-branch work
- These are still Drupal systems!

Nimble Drupal Systems, Go!

Technical Drupal Systems Implementation

- Updated build pipeline while keeping MNIT security requirements
- Retire the Bitnami image in favor of lighter, more performant containers
- Scale Drupal at AWS with local developer tooling in mind
- Reduce unused number of languages, scripts, general deep clean
- Major file migration of all PDFs from an old server into Drupal
- Documentation is critical. Write about everything you do. **Be Inclusive.**
- Fix urgent security risks

Quick, light systems working together for Drupal to shine

More Than Code

UX Systems Implementation

- Sticky search elements
- Created custom blocks to standardize CTAs globally
- Update and streamline accordion usage
- Align font usage across the site to brand standards
- Reviewed and improved text hierarchy and clarity

Content Moderation Strategy

- This is a human problem. That requires a human solution. **Be Inclusive**
- We build the Drupal System to solve the human problem
- We **don't change the problem** to fit a Drupal module

Workshops and Accessibility

Tag Strategy Workshop

- Inventory of tags. From 1000s to less than 100
- Optimize tags, use primary and secondary
- Moderate access
- Move away from a single basic content type, manual updates

Accessibility

- Audit of production site - **Be Mindful, Be Inclusive** for user, but admin too!
- Each issue categorized into Critical 🔥 and Non-Critical 🛑
- Tweak Drupal settings for better WCAG compliance, e.g. ALT tags
- Fine tune image size and clarity settings

Asking For Help

It's often hard to do

HALP



Asking For Help

“It didn’t even occur to me!”

→ Community! The more eyes we have on things, the better it becomes.

“I would be embarrassed to show my code.”

→ Lead with Empathy. We’ve been there too. It’ll be okay!

“It’s just hard.”

→ Yep. It is.

“Can I even afford it?”

→ Probably. Even if it’s just a short audit engagement.

“It’s so bad, we just need a new site.”

→ You probably don’t. There’s likely lots to do without starting from scratch

“Urgghhh, but bureaucracy. RFP. Competitive bid.”

→ There’s always a way to figure it out. Ask! You’re not alone.

Q & A

You have questions?

Thank you!

My **deepest gratitude** to all of you for attending, to the **volunteers** that make TCDC happen, and to the **Drupal Community** at large without which none of what we do is possible.

Ivan Stegic

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