Introduction to our new Web site

WeST
People and Knowledge Networks

west.uni-koblenz.de
Why was there a need for a new Web site?

- Drupal 7 will reach end-of-life in November of 2021
- PHP-based (ongoing maintenance required)
- About 130 third-party modules used
- Messy database / URLs

URL examples:
- /de/about-us/team/prof-dr-steffen-staab
- /de/ueber-uns/team/ruth-ehrenstein
- /de/dienstleistungen/software/kat
- /en/dienstleistungen/software/kat
- /de/research/systems/kat
- /en/research/systems/kat
- /de/research/software/strukt

wwwold.west.uni-koblenz.de
Technology

• Static page generator: Jekyll 3.8
• Written in Ruby

https://jekyllrb.com

• We only use 3 plugins
  • jekyll-polyglot
  • bibsonomy-jekyll
  • jekyll-redirect-from

Cool people use it:
Goals

• Enforce order

• Less need for maintenance ✓
• Rescue old content and messy links ✓
• Make content portable to another future system ✓
• Get rid of WeST-LDAP login, use Uni-LDAP, only ✓
• Allow protected access to lecture material ✓
• Bibsonomy integration though official plugin ✓
Benefits

Responsive design:
Benefits

Better personal pages:
• Projects
• Teaching
• Open Theses
• Publications

... are all automatically added
Benefits

Fancy buzzwords:

• Static Page Generation  
  Faster access. More secure.

• Cloud-based Architecture  
  Actually less cloudy than before.

• Continuous Integration (CI)  
  Web site is automatically updated.

• Agile Development  
  Issue tracker for collaborative work.

• Markdown  
  Easier than HTML.

• Git  
  We know who screwed up and can revert.

• Docker  
  Easy to deploy, easy to reproduce.
How does it work internally?

- More programmer-like approach (no WYSIWYG)
- Source files are either a .md or .html file
- Files are ordered into collections that define the URL
- Editing is performed in a Git repository
- Changes on master branch automatically trigger static page generation and changes are deployed to the Web server
- Both, editing via GitLab Web interface and editing a local clone are possible

Note: Even if Jekyll becomes deprecated, there is no security problem in using it. The pages are generated within a Docker container, output is pure HTML etc. ☺
Overview

Quote from Daniel: “Much simpler than before”

Cloud @ WeST

Runner VM

Can be used by us for any GitLab CI

at every push to master

Executes Jekyll

Web VM

Web Site Server

File Server

A bit of PHP for upload interface

Webmaster

Each static subpage has one repo and is also deployed to Web Site Server

GitLab Group “WeST”

Member

Webmaster

Students

Download

Member

Uni LDAP “group west”

up-/download

Uni LDAP

Public

access

Can be used by us for any GitLab CI

GitLab @ Uni

west-home

Edit

west-home-server

Edit

west-home-fileupload

west-home-robust

…
How can an employee edit content?

Topics of interest:
- Editing a lecture
- Uploading public content
- Uploading protected content
- Editing own information
- Editing project information
- Issue-Tracker

Rule of thumb: READ THE README’S FIRST!
Conclusion

• Introduced new Web site
• Future Challenges: Port to Jekyll 4.0 😊
• Call for action: Log into GitLab and join our group to edit the Web site: gitlab.uni-koblenz.de/WeST
• Any wishes? Design, content, semantics…
• Your support is highly appreciated!

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Thank you for your attention!