Drupal AI initiative 2026 roadmap

What is this document?

This document serves as an internal product strategy for 2026. It may be shared publicly, but it's not a marketing document.

It outlines what we should collaborate on, defines high-level priorities, and gives our AI contributors a shared understanding of what to focus on and why.

It connects directly to the overall Drupal AI strategy document and the Drupal CMS strategy document so we recommend reading these documents first.

Executive summary

The market opportunity

AI is changing how content gets created. The real shift isn't just speed or volume. It's the possibility of producing consistently high quality content at scale.

Many organizations don't produce excellent content today, and the reason isn't laziness or lack of effort. Excellent content requires a subject matter expert who actually knows the topic, a copywriter who can translate expertise into clear web language, someone who understands your audience and brand, someone who knows how to structure pages with your component library, good media, and an SEO specialist so people actually discover what you made.

Most organizations are missing at least some of these skillsets, and even when all the people exist, coordinating them is where everything breaks down. AI can fill these gaps.

For large organizations like Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, universities, healthcare systems, and NGOs, this means clearer writing, stronger brand consistency, better accessibility, and improved compliance across thousands of pages and dozens of sites.

For smaller organizations, it means access to skills that were previously out of reach: professional copywriting, SEO, accessibility compliance, and brand-consistent design without needing a specialist for each.

The end goal

Marketers, digital agencies, and IT teams are all under pressure to do more with less, while improving quality, compliance, and performance results. AI promises speed, but speed without

quality control creates risk. The real opportunity is AI that helps teams move faster while upgrading their website quality and content production.

Today, operations are fragmented. Analytics platforms hold performance data. The CMS stores content, and while it can connect to analytics, that data rarely feeds back into content creation, page building, or website creation.

You might know that a certain page layout converts better, but that knowledge lives in a report. It doesn't automatically shape the next page you build. So teams miss patterns, repeat mistakes, and struggle to improve systematically even as they produce more content.

The CMS is the natural place to close this loop. We will connect Drupal directly with analytics platforms and build AI agents that act on what they learn. A page that underperforms gets flagged. A layout that converts well gets applied to similar pages. Insights don't stay in a dashboard. They shape what gets built next.

Drupal AI won't replace your analytics or automation platforms. It connects to them. Those systems track performance and manage campaigns. Drupal AI makes that intelligence actionable by refining messages, updating pages, and improving content, all within brand and compliance boundaries.

For website owners, the value is faster site building, faster content delivery, smarter user journeys, higher conversions, and consistent brand quality at scale. For digital agencies, it means delivering higher quality websites in less time, a competitive advantage that is hard to match without these capabilities built into your platform. For IT teams, it means less risk and less overhead: automated compliance, auditable changes, and fewer ad hoc requests to fix what someone published.

For the Drupal AI Initiative, this vision gives direction. It means ensuring every AI-assisted change is governed, auditable, and reversible. It means building integrations with analytics, automation, and design systems. And it means creating extension points so developers and partners can build on these capabilities, adding specialized integrations, industry-specific solutions, or entirely new AI-powered features.

Focus for 2026

Strategic principles

Throughout 2026, the Drupal AI Initiative is guided by three principles:

1. **Drupal CMS as the delivery vehicle.** We want to ship AI capabilities that Drupal CMS users can turn on and get value from immediately. This shapes everything. We're not just building features. We're building features that are stable, documented, and feel good to use. The test for every capability we work on: can a Drupal CMS site owner enable this today and see results?

2. **Stability and adoption over prototypes.** Prototypes help us explore what's possible, but they are not the goal. A capability that ships in Drupal CMS and gets adopted by thousands of sites matters more than ten impressive demos that never leave the conference stage. This means investing in UX, reliability, testing, and documentation.

3. **Collaboration across Drupal teams.** Many AI capabilities will require changes to Drupal CMS, Drupal Core, and various contributed modules. Success depends on close collaboration with all these teams.

A note on scope

The Drupal AI Initiative brings together companies and individuals committed to advancing AI in Drupal. Organizations that contribute funding and dedicated staff are called AI Makers. The eight capabilities below represent what this group will focus on in 2026.

There are other things we want to build that didn't make this list. Some are already being tackled by community contributors. Some have dependencies that need to be resolved first. Some are valuable but not short-term priorities. We expect many of these to come into focus when we revisit this document in six months or a year.

Community contributions outside this scope are welcome. Work on migrations, chatbots, and other AI capabilities continues in the broader Drupal community, and that work matters. This document defines the priorities of the initiative. It does not define the boundaries of AI in Drupal.

Capability 1: Page Generation

Users should be able to describe what they need and get a usable page. Or point to an example and say "make it like this".

Key capabilities to implement:

- **Component awareness:** AI understands your component library: what exists, what each component does, how they combine. When AI builds a page, it uses real components from your design system, not custom one-offs that break consistency. It knows which components work well together and which combinations to avoid.

- **Design pattern understanding:** AI knows how to structure different page types. A landing page needs a hero, clear value proposition, and call to action. A product page needs specifications, images, and pricing. A blog post needs readable typography and related content. AI follows patterns that work, not just fills slots with content.

  Multiple input types users can start from different places:
  - A text description: "create a landing page for our summer campaign"
  - An existing page: "make something like our best-performing product page"
  - An image or PDF: "recreate this layout in Drupal"
  - A Figma file: "build this design"
  - A text document: "here's my press release, turn this into a page"

  The last option is important because it reflects how many marketers actually work. They have the content first, not the design. AI interprets the text, selects appropriate components, and structures the page. It might take a few turns to get the structure right, but this is often faster than starting from a blank layout.

- **Brand and context:** Pages follow brand guidelines, style rules, design system constraints, and accessibility requirements automatically. Colors, typography, spacing, tone of voice, alt text, heading hierarchy, and color contrast. Users don't have to specify these every time. See capability 2.

- **Iterative refinement:** The first version is rarely perfect. Users describe changes in plain language: "make the hero bigger," "add a testimonial section," "try a different layout," "make it feel more energetic." AI updates the page and learns from the feedback.

Capability 2: Context Management

The Context Control Center shown at DrupalCon Vienna was a basic prototype, but it proved the core idea: a central place to define and manage context.

Context architecture will vary by organization. A single-site team might store everything in Drupal. An enterprise with dozens of sites might keep brand guidelines in a central system that all properties pull from. Real-time data like analytics, CRM records, and inventory levels typically stays in source systems and is fetched when needed.

The Context Control Center should support all of these patterns. It is a configuration and orchestration layer that knows where context lives and how to retrieve it, not a requirement that everything be stored in Drupal.

For organizations with complex martech stacks and multi-site deployments, context management becomes significantly more powerful and more complex. Context may need to be shared across sites, inherited from parent organizations, or scoped to specific brands or regions. We expect context graphs to emerge as an important pattern here, mapping relationships between brand rules, audience segments, content assets, and performance signals. This allows AI agents to understand not just individual pieces of context but how they connect and where they apply.

Context is everything AI needs to know to make good decisions. Beyond what's already in the CMS, that context comes from three areas:

1. **Brand and governance** - How we communicate and what rules we follow.
    - Brand voice and tone
    - Style guides
    - Editorial standards
    - Design systems and templates
    - Regulatory requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, GDPR)
    - Accessibility standards

2. **Audience and customers** - Who we're talking to and what we know about them.
    - Personas
    - CRM data (customer profiles, segments)
    - POS data (purchases, transactions)
    - Personalization data
    - Audience behavior (clicks, journeys)

3. **Performance and external signals** - What's working and what's happening outside.
    - Analytics (page views, time on page)
    - Conversion data
    - A/B test results
    - Competitor information
    - Industry benchmarks
    - Market trends
    - Partner data (feeds, catalogs)

Capability 3: Background Agents

AI agents should be able to work in the background without being manually prompted. They should be updating content, responding to changes, optimizing based on performance. But they need to operate safely and transparently.

Core capabilities to implement:

1. **Operating within Drupal's governance rules:** Every agent action creates a revision, respects permissions, and follows editorial workflows. Agents propose changes; humans approve them. Every proposed change can be rolled back individually.

2. **Responding to triggers and schedules:** Agents react to events: a brand guideline changes, analytics show a page underperforming, a product feed updates. They can also run on schedules: hourly, daily, or during off-peak windows. Teams need to be able to control which agents run, when, and within what limits.

3. **Operational safeguards:** Agents operating autonomously need guardrails beyond permissions. Rate limiting prevents runaway agents from flooding editorial queues. Error handling ensures a failing agent stops gracefully rather than silently corrupting content.

Capability 4: Design System Integration

AI enables digital agencies, front end developers, and marketers to design and style faster while staying aligned with a shared design system.

Design systems encode brand, accessibility, and consistency. When used well, they accelerate teams. AI should operate within those constraints instead of around them.

Core capabilities to implement:

1. **Creation of new themes:** AI generates and evolves Drupal themes based on design systems, layouts, and brand rules. Teams can spin up new branded experiences quickly while preserving consistency across properties.

2. **Creation of new components:** AI assembles pages using existing components. When a component doesn't exist, it can be built with AI, structured to match brand guidelines, accessibility rules, and established design patterns.

3. **Building from examples:** AI can look at an existing page, screenshot, or reference site and recreate it in Drupal.

This makes building new websites and migrating existing sites faster.

This can work in two ways:

- **Outside-in:** External tools generate designs and components that Drupal consumes.
- **Inside-out:** AI capabilities embedded directly within Drupal's authoring experience to make visual changes.

Capability 5: Content Creation and Discovery

Content teams should be able to create content faster, help visitors find what they need, and improve content performance without specialized expertise.

Key capabilities to implement:

- **Search and discovery:** Search that understands meaning, not just keywords. Chatbots that answer visitor questions using site content without requiring visitors to navigate through pages.

- **Content performance:** AI-powered optimization suggestions for search engines and AI answer engines. Actionable recommendations that help content rank better and get surfaced in AI-generated answers.

- **Content creation assistance:** AI generation for meta descriptions, summaries, alt text, media management and other fields. AI-assisted drafting to accelerate content creation.

Many of these features exist as prototypes. The focus is on stabilizing them, improving the user experience, and shipping them in Drupal CMS.

Capability 6: Advanced governance and AI oversight

Organizations need confidence that AI will not damage their brand, break compliance, or silently change site behavior. Drupal already provides workflows, revisions, and moderation, but these systems were designed for human-scale publishing. AI introduces a new challenge: large volumes of automated updates that must remain transparent, reviewable, and reversible. Drupal needs even stronger governance tools so teams can manage AI safely at scale: seeing what changed, understanding why, and controlling what goes live.

Core capabilities to implement:

1. **Batch and rolled-up approvals:** Group AI-generated updates into meaningful sets rather than thousands of isolated edits. Editors can approve, modify, or reject entire batches at once. The system summarizes what changed, flags outliers, and provides quick previews to speed decision-making.

2. **Branch-based versioning for content:** Extend Drupal's revision system to support branch-like workflows. AI changes live in separate branches that teams can merge, edit, or reject independently. Editors can accept certain AI contributions, refine others, and discard the rest without overwriting ongoing human work.

3. **Configuration versioning and rollback:** AI will modify more than content. It will propose updates to configuration, content models, layouts, and more. These changes must also be versioned, reviewed, and reversible just like content. Introduce Git-like tracking for configuration updates so AI can assist with complex site management safely and transparently.

4. **Comprehensive audit trails:** Record every AI action, decision, and approval with full logging or observability. Each change should trace back to its source context, the model or agent involved, and the human reviewer. These records provide accountability, support compliance, and build long-term trust. High-volume logs should be shipped to external observability platforms (Langfuse, OpenTelemetry, Datadog, or similar) rather than stored in Drupal's database. Drupal provides the hooks to emit logs; it does not need to be the log analytics platform.

Capability 7: Intelligent website improvements

Websites should improve over time based on what's actually working. Most organizations have performance data, but it's trapped in analytics tools, disconnected from where decisions happen.

Content gets published and forgotten. Updates happen when someone complains or remembers to check analytics. Performance data exists but doesn't reach the people making decisions.

The goal is a website that learns: surfaces what's working, flags what isn't, and recommends what to do next.

Drupal connects to analytics tools like Google Analytics or Matomo. Those tools process the data. Drupal receives insights: what's working, what's declining, what's changing.

AI agents act on those insights. They don't just flag problems or suggest fixes. They propose concrete changes: a revised headline, a shorter intro, a different layout. Changes go through the same review and approval process as any other edit.

Over time, the system tracks what worked. That learning makes future changes smarter.

Capability 8: Multi-channel campaign creation & orchestration

Marketing campaigns span websites, social media, email, and automation tools. Each channel has its own format, pace, and requirements. Coordinating this manually is slow and error-prone.

AI can take a campaign goal and create the right content for each channel, all within brand and governance boundaries.

Core capabilities to create:

1. **Simple campaigns:** orchestration inside Drupal for straightforward programs, orchestration runs inside Drupal using ECA (Events, Conditions, Actions). This requires improving ECA's usability.

2. **Complex campaigns with external orchestration:** For enterprise environments, Drupal connects to automation platforms like n8n or Activepieces. This requires strong JSON:API support with connector modules so that these external tools can coordinate publishing, localization, personalization, and campaign rollouts.

   This also requires strong support for Model Context Protocol (MCP). By exposing Drupal as an MCP Server, external agents can create content types, generate content, manage configurations, and orchestrate workflows. This makes Drupal a first-class citizen in the broader AI ecosystem, not just a consumer of AI but a target for it.

In both cases, Drupal remains the source of truth for content, context, and brand governance. Orchestration tools handle timing and delivery.