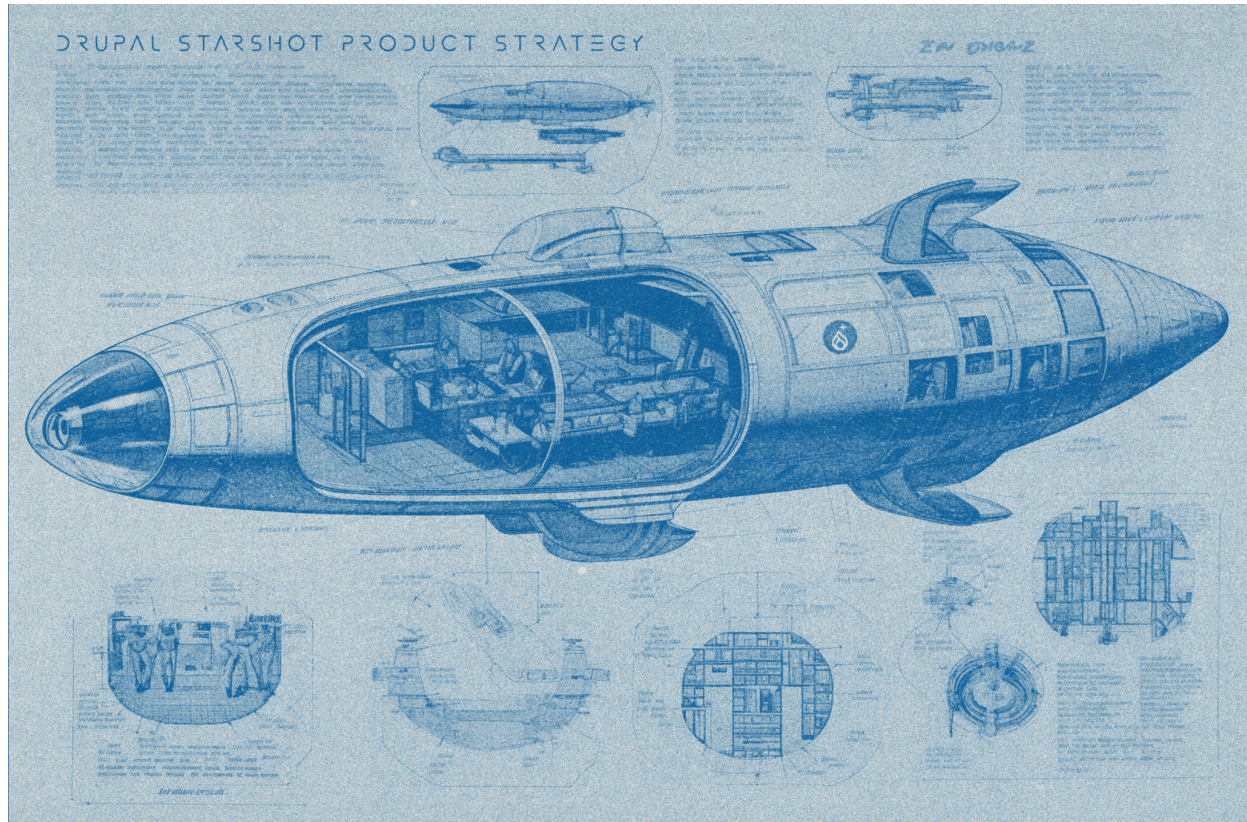# Drupal Starshot product strategy

Version 1.0 - August 2024

Summary

Drupal Starshot aims to empower marketers to create exceptional digital experiences without relying on developers, setting the gold standard for no-code website building.

Drupal Starshot is a code name for an initiative that aims to revolutionize the way we build and maintain websites using Drupal. The final name of the product is yet to be determined.

The initiative seeks to expand Drupal's reach by targeting content creators and marketers, as well as appealing to a wider range of budgets.

The ultimate goal is to increase adoption and solidify Drupal's position as a leading CMS solution while championing an open, accessible internet.

What is this document?

This document presents a three-year strategy for Drupal Starshot, with the expectation that the initial release will occur within the first year. Following the initial release, we will continue to iterate and improve the product over time to achieve our ultimate goals. We aim to get to our goals by June 2027.

It is important to understand that this document focuses exclusively on the Drupal Starshot initiative and does not encompass the strategy for Drupal Core. Drupal Core will have its own separate strategy document, and together, these two documents will form the comprehensive strategy for the entire Drupal project.

What is our winning aspiration?

Drupal Starshot is the gold standard for marketers seeking to turn great ideas into great digital experiences.

With its unparalleled flexibility, rock-solid security, and impressive scalability, Drupal ensures that businesses can grow and thrive without ever outgrowing their website. It's the ultimate platform for long-term success.

Drupal Starshot, built on top of Drupal Core, is the game-changer that Drupal needs. It puts the power of Drupal into the hands of marketers, web designers, content creators, and other non-technical users. No longer limited by their reliance on developers, these professionals can now unleash their creativity and build stunning, high-performing websites independently.

Drupal Starshot offers an intuitive user interface designed for marketers, along with smart defaults and best practices for common marketing tasks, such as SEO, social media sharing, event promotion, analytics, and newsletter sign-ups, while allowing flexibility to integrate third-party solutions.

One of the key advantages of Drupal Starshot is that it is Open Source, which provides marketers maximum flexibility and freedom. Unlike proprietary platforms that can limit marketers' options and lock them into their ecosystem, Drupal Starshot ensures marketers have complete control over their site, design, content, and data.

For marketers who already value the advantages of Open Source, WordPress is often the preferred choice due to its ease of use. However, this simplicity sometimes means fewer customization options and less architectural flexibility. Drupal Starshot provides the same

ease-of-use marketers need, along with superior built-in features, more flexibility, and more room to grow. In short, Drupal Starshot offers a solution for more ambitious marketers.

Finally, we believe it is crucial for marketers to recognize the importance of safeguarding the future of the web. With Drupal Starshot, we will help marketers worldwide understand how they can create digital experiences that prioritize user privacy, security, and freedom of information. In an era where data breaches and privacy concerns are increasingly common, supporting the Open Web is not just a noble cause – it's a responsibility.

Where will we play?

Two strategic shifts

We will expand our reach with two strategic shifts:

- **Shift 1:** Empower content creators, marketers, web managers, and web designers to build and manage websites independently, without relying on developers. While maintaining our leadership position with developers, we will focus on enabling these non-technical roles to leverage our platform's capabilities fully.
- **Shift 2:** Extend our presence in the mid-market segment, targeting projects with total budgets (including design, development, hosting, and maintenance) between €25,000 and €100,000 (roughly, $30,00 USD to $120,000 USD). We will continue to maintain our leadership in the enterprise market and high-budget projects.

Drupal is already established in these two segments, but we aim to strengthen our foothold significantly.

Focusing on **marketers** is crucial for a CMS to win because marketers are key decision-makers in selecting and implementing digital solutions. They are responsible for creating, managing, and optimizing digital content to engage audiences and drive business goals.

Focusing on the **mid-market segment** represents a growth opportunity because many organizations with mid-range budgets seek powerful, flexible, and cost-effective CMS solutions.

By diversifying our target audience and engaging in more lower-budget projects, Drupal Starshot aims to broaden its reach and solidify its position as a leading CMS solution. This strategy will also help us navigate towards a future where non-developers increasingly drive website and experience development.

Target organizations

1. Mid-market or a single department in enterprise, often served by digital agencies

2. Complex organizations with limited IT resources
3. Small businesses often served by freelancers and small agencies

User scenarios

- A marketer for a tech startup is tasked with creating the company website. There are many technical folks at the organization, but only marketing folks have time to do the website build, as well as set up other marketing tools. The expectation is that the marketing team will grow and the website needs to scale.
- A web manager at a University who runs a department website with assistance from a central web team needs to quickly launch a conference website. They are an experienced CMS user who also does marketing tasks.
- A web designer at a small agency is used to working with CMSs but has never used Drupal. They are now working with a client that has used Drupal in the past and ask whether the agency can use it for their new sub-brand.
- A developer who has experience creating WordPress themes wants to build a multilingual website and has heard that Drupal is better for multilingual websites. They want to start by prototyping a solution to see if it has all the features they're looking for.

Key competitors

- WordPress
- Webflow
- Wix Studio
- Framer
- Kentico
- Craft CMS
- HubSpot CMS
- Shopify
- Contentful for content production and content modeling
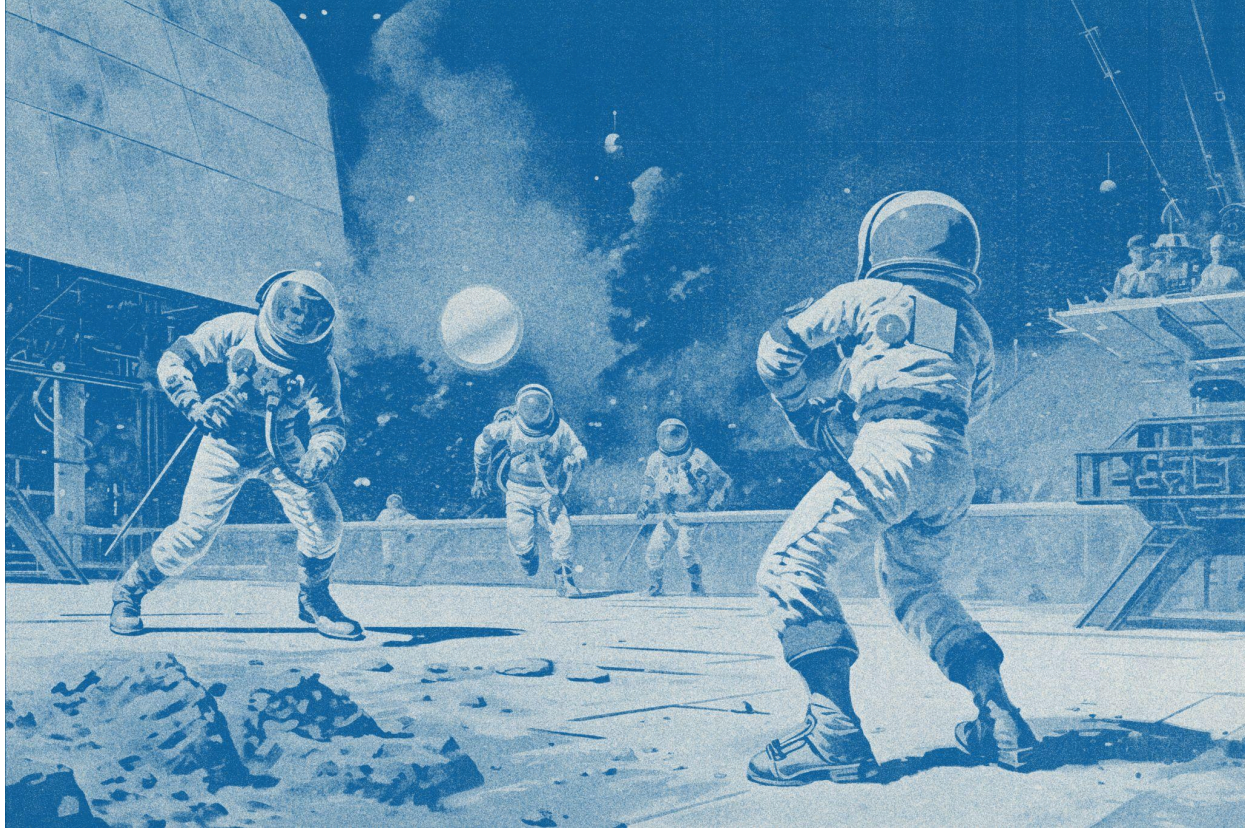
Where Drupal Starshot will *not* play

To maintain focus and effectively serve our target audience, Drupal Starshot will not actively pursue the following market segments and competitors:

1. **Developer-first approach:** While we value our developer community, our primary focus is on empowering non-developers, such as marketers and web managers. Drupal Core will focus more on developers.
2. **Entry-level website builders:** We will not directly compete with platforms like Wix and Squarespace, which primarily serve individuals and small businesses with limited website needs, brochure websites with less than 50 pages, etc.

How will we win?

1. Easy to use for marketers, yet flexible
   - Intuitive user interface designed with marketers in mind, enabling them to manage and customize their websites without relying on developers
   - Smart defaults out-of-the-box along with recommended best practices for common marketing tasks, such as SEO, social media sharing, event promotion, analytics, and newsletter sign-ups

- ○ Flexibility to easily install and integrate third-party solutions when needed, empowering marketers to tailor the platform to their unique requirements and preferred marketing stack

2. Ability to grow with Drupal Starshot - for *ambitious marketers* who refuse to be limited by their current CMS:
   - ○ Robust design tools for maintaining consistency and governance across their ever-expanding digital presence
   - ○ Advanced content modeling and governance features
   - ○ Efficient content reuse across multiple channels, enabling marketers to scale your reach without duplicating efforts
   - ○ Streamlined content creation and management at scale, empowering content creators and editors to handle growth with ease

3. While AI is already transforming content creation, we see a game-changing opportunity to apply it to site building. Imagine AI-powered tools that simplify creating content types, Drupal Views, and other site elements for everyone. This approach aims to empower non-developers, reduce the learning curve for newcomers, and cut implementation costs and time. The use of AI for experience building directly aligns with our goals for Drupal Starshot.

   However, we're committed to implementing AI responsibly. This means:

   - ● "Bring Your Own LLM": We'll design our AI features to work with various Language Learning Models (LLMs), allowing users to choose or provide their preferred AI engine. This approach respects data privacy and gives users more control.
   - ● Human-in-the-Loop: While AI will suggest and assist, humans will always have the final say. This ensures that critical decisions about site structure and functionality remain in the hands of the site builders.
   - ● Lastly, we'll take a careful, step-by-step approach to integrating AI. Each new AI capability will be thoroughly tested and refined before we label it as stable and ready for widespread use. This methodical process will help us stay true to Drupal's reputation for reliability while pushing the boundaries of what is possible in experience creation.

   By embracing AI in this thoughtful way, we're positioning Drupal at the cutting edge of web development technology, all while staying true to our core values.

4. Drupal Starshot is differentiated from other Open Source solutions:
   - ○ Greater no-code extensibility in functionality
   - ○ Better localization and translation capabilities
   - ○ More robust integrations with enterprise-level tools and services
   - ○ More robust content management workflows
   - ○ More accessible and flexible

- Better accessibility out-of-the-box
- Superior scalability for high-traffic and complex sites
- Better security track record and more secure automated updates

5. Drupal Starshot is differentiated from proprietary CMS solutions:
   - Open source / no vendor lock-in / no data lock-in / no content lock-in
   - No digital agency or hosting vendor lock-in
   - Size of the community: supported by 100,000s of experts
   - Alignment with organizational goals to improve diversity and inclusion
   - More and faster innovation thanks to a community-driven innovation model
   - Better ability to experiment with marketing technologies
   - Unparalleled extensibility and customization options
   - Diverse community with diverse perspectives on marketing

Some of the features and capabilities mentioned above are already part of Drupal's existing strengths, which Drupal Starshot will leverage and help improve. Others are new features that will be added to Drupal Starshot to create a more marketer-friendly CMS.
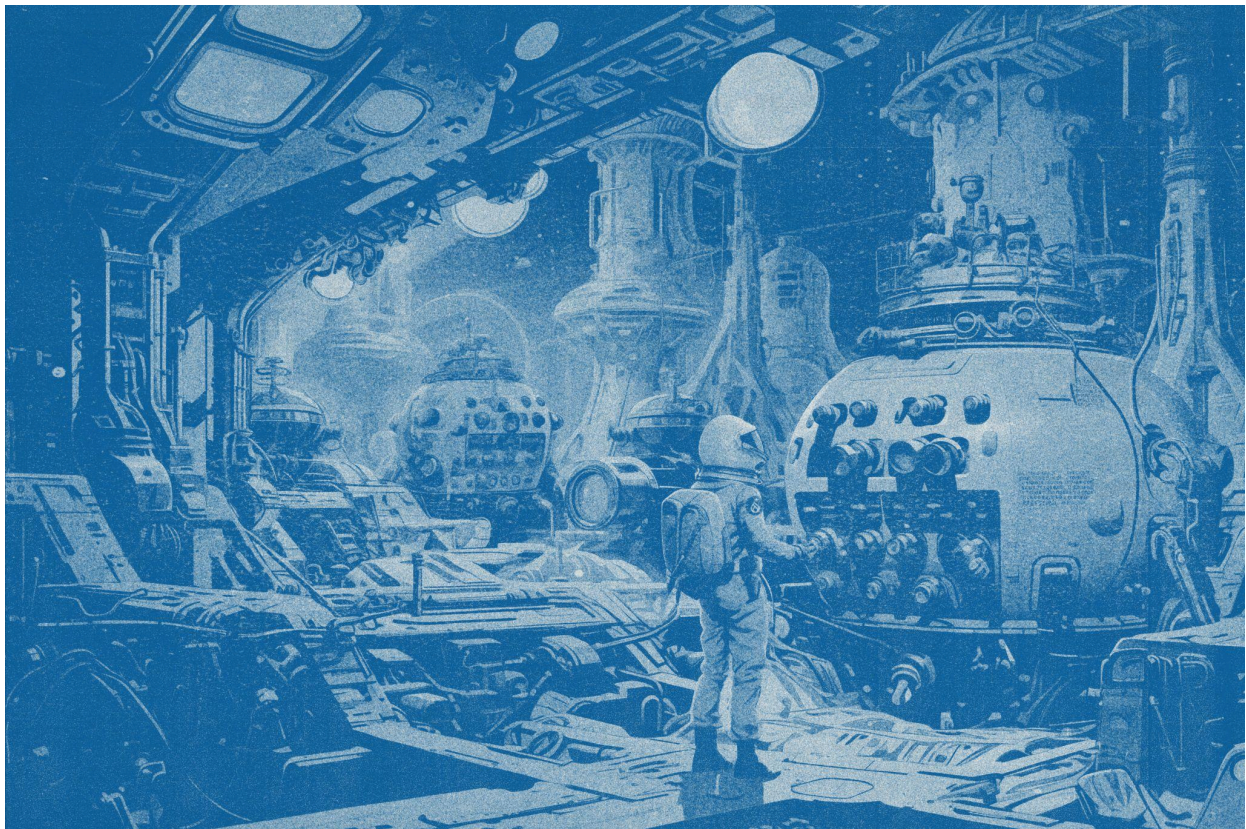
What capabilities must we have?

1. Marketer-friendly experience:
   - Great trial experience
   - Marketer-friendly product documentation
   - Easy installation and easy customization
   - Maintenance without developers
   - Intuitive content creation and management tools
   - Support for design systems and brand guidelines
   - Comprehensive documentation and learning resources

2. Market-leading, out-of-the-box marketing capabilities (recipes):
   - SEO optimization
   - Lead generation forms
   - Newsletter integration
   - Event management
   - Social media sharing
   - A/B testing
   - Personalization
   - Content translation
   - Content analytics
   - Blogging
   - Product/service listing
   - Accessibility checking
   - Compliance with privacy regulations (GDPR, CCPA)
   - Common marketing technology integrations
     - Mid-market analytics: Google Analytics
     - Mid-market SEO tools: Yoast, Semrush, Google Search Console
     - Mid-market advertising: Google Ads, Facebook Ads
     - Mid-market social media: Hootsuite, Buffer
     - Mid-market video: YouTube, Vimeo
     - Mid-market commerce: Magento, Shopify, Drupal Commerce
   - Content import capability
   - AI-powered content creation and optimization tools

3. Easy to implement custom brand and design

4. Community and support:
   - Marketplace for finding digital agencies
   - Community of marketers for knowledge sharing (evolve DrupalCon)

5. Weaknesses to address:
   - Develop more intuitive user experience for non-technical users
   - Improve documentation to reduce learning curve
   - Implement easier maintenance and update processes
   - Improve the ability to create themes and templates

- Simplify module/recipe discovery and installation
- Redesign Drupal.org for better user experience and resource accessibility