

Drupal Career Starter Program Success Story



Building a new career & professional confidence as a web developer, Doug Hercules' aerospace work ethic and commitment to mission have put him on a new path to success.

Just after the historic safe landing of America's last Shuttle mission, Doug Hercules received his layoff notice from United Space Alliance. His role as an engineering manager for assembling and testing solid rocket boosters and environmental control system during launches and landings was now obsolete. With no replacement jobs in sight, he prepared for challenges ahead.

The level of compensation for his aerospace position, especially after 20 years of continual advancement and higher pay grades, was incomparable on the Space Coast. He also had about 6,999 neighbors in this same quantry. But woe is not Doug's way; so instead of mourning his loss, he decided to look forward and embrace new opportunity. He registered with Brevard Workforce, the Workforce Investment Board for Florida's Space Coast, and put to work on finding and building a new career.

His redirection was set in the summer of 2012, as one of the 350 laid off aerospace workers to apply for the 2012 session of the Drupal Career Starter Program. Brevard Workforce provided scholarships.

Through the internship and afterwards I stayed active in the Drupal community, attending meet-ups, code-sprints and volunteering to help out at a Drupal Camp in Orlando. It's because of this community involvement that I credit getting my first website contract.

The DCSP is the first career training program ever developed for Drupal; a free, open source content management system used to build hundreds of thousands of small to huge web sites. Web developers are in high demand, Drupal is an extremely popular site framework, so Drupal talent is in high demand. It also offers a range of work options including traditional positions, virtual jobs and short- and long-term contracting opportunities.

After a rigorous selection process, Doug and 59 other applicants were invited to the day-long *Taste of Drupal* workshop, which is designed to introduce potential participants to the career and technical sides of Drupal, while providing DrupalEasy Academy with a platform to select the final 20 class participants. Several people left mid-session, realizing it was not for them. Doug was among the dozens who stayed – vying for one of the 20 open seats. He earned his slot by demonstrating technical abilities, a positive attitude and the sincere desire to learn. He also clearly had the chops to build his independence.

For Doug, like many successful DCSP grads, the 10-week course was more challenging than difficult. The intensive training, the lab hours, and the class community built over time gave Doug a solid foundation upon which to build his new career. He also cites his internship as critical in building his skills and "real work" experience, and key in giving him the know-how and confidence to prepare bids and go after Drupal jobs.

Interning was extremely helpful. We worked on converting a site from Drupal 6 to Drupal 7, which meant redesigning the site entirely from the ground up. I learned something new every day.

Doug is working as an independent web developer, enjoying a lifestyle that includes a lot of work, dedication to building his new expertise, as well as the freedoms of self-employment. He is building his portfolio and experience, related software skills to add to his marketability and is extremely active in the local and state Drupal Community; participating in the bi-weekly meetups on Florida's Space Coast and helping to organize and present the annual Florida DrupalCamp. He's looking forward to building his Drupal mastery and career with ongoing projects and experience that will in time bring his income up and above that of his former aerospace career.