

From Websites to Web Applications



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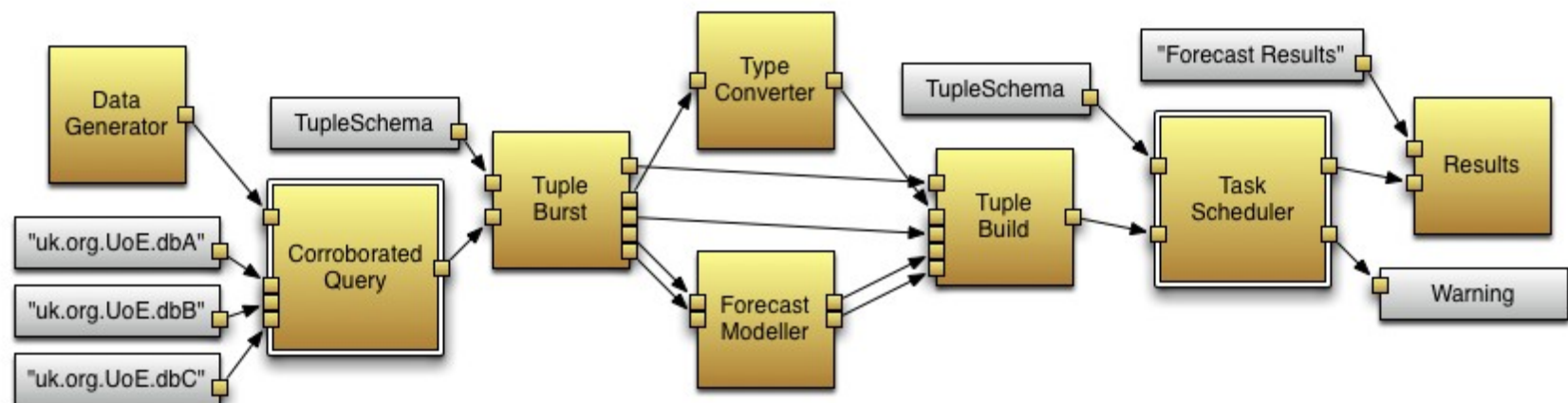
“Website”

- A set of 'pages' for publishing and consuming content optimized for human understanding.
- Buzzwords: Publishing Platform, Content Management, Marketing Site
- Delivery Format agnostic
- One-way or Two-way Communication
- Includes: Blogs, Forums, “Website Tonight,” Twitter



“Web Application”

- Software for collecting Structured Data from humans for processing and delivery optimized for Machines and Bureaucrats
- Buzzwords: SAAS, Apps, “Database”
- Input and Delivery Interface Agnostic
- Includes: Webform module, Shopping Cart, Rules, Salesforce



Lessons Learned

- Pick an Entity and stick with it.
- Use more modules with a clear division of labor. Split early and often. Eliminate Circular Dependencies.
- Don't let a person be a single point of failure.
- Be selective about Contrib
- Build the Data Interface first and the UI later.
- External Systems: Fix it before you connect to it if you can, but consistently weird is better than intermittently ideal. Middleware is OK.

Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- If you use the script more than once, make it a module with a Simpletest. If you edit it more than once, give it a UI.
- Know the Batch API.
- Regression Tests are not optional.
 - We haven't solved the problem until we've made sure it won't happen again.
 - Do you want to be someone who fixes bugs or someone who creates applications?

Why Drupal is Great for Applications

- Rapid Prototyping
- Contrib has awesome stuff
- UIs are almost free.
- Encourages reusable components.
- Configuration over code prevents mistakes.
- It can do anything and everything.

Why Drupal Sucks for Applications

- You never escape the prototype.
- Contrib has crappy stuff.
- UIs: You get what you pay for.
- Doesn't enforce reusable configuration.
- Configuration over code makes troubleshooting a PITA.
- It *can* do everything but probably shouldn't.
- PHP (type conversion, performance)

Read the Classics

- “The Pragmatic Programmer” - Thomas & Hunt
- “Getting Real” - 37 signals
<http://gettingreal.37signals.com/>
- “The Mythical Man Month” - Fred Brooks
- Drupal Core (RTFC!)

