

Some comments on Static Site Generator available in 2018

Why yet another static site generator? Pandoc provides nearly everything and gives the desired functionality (code in Haskell, markdown as primary text input, backup with git).

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Constructing a simple homepage, perhaps with a blog and some images can be done in a few hours, possibly days with a tool like wordpress. To make a homepage satisfying some special requirements takes a bit of planning of content and how it can be served.

I have tried a few tools to produce an homepage for an university researcher, but I observed in late 2018 some limitations where I desired simpler handling or more flexibility for my use:

- Not easily (i.e. out of the box) to make work with `markdown` (e.g. the often used WordPress),
- Hard to exclude commercial interests¹ and connections to unwanted services²,
- Missing integration with BibTeX to produce references and a list of publications from BibTeX files,

I prefer to work in the language I know already and not to learn a new set of obscure quirks (e.g. WordPress, Sprinkles), and shy away from approaches “batteries included” (e.g. Jekyll or Hakyll; a similar [comment](#)) by the author of an Haskell based approach, forcing users to learn lots of detail, and look for *extensible* and *composable* tools, following the initial Unix philosophy³.

I was very impressed with static site generators, e.g. [SitePipe](#) which demonstrated how much functionality is available in packages (e.g. from Hackage)⁴.

I later learned of the [Multimarkdown-CMS](#), which seems also to show how much can be achieved with current, existing packages. Unfortunately, it converted into a closed system for the Mac.

¹ especially from the companies and agencies which are trying to convince us that they constantly improve their service “to serve us better” and force us to change our code accordingly

² (for example, WordPress seems to link Google Analytics and similar by default

³ whatever *composable* means for a site generator?

⁴ The predecessor [SitePipe](#) provided some inspiration for SSG.

In searching for how to adapt the Tufte style to the design of a home page I found [Jekyll](#), which uses the Ruby environment but includes pandoc and Tufte packages adapted to pandoc. It demonstrated that a webpage *Tufte style* is possible.