



## Considerations in Web Content Management

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## Intro to Content Management

Your website is crucial for communicating to customers, employees, and other stakeholders. A website that is kept up-to-date with useful and important information can be extremely helpful, in creating business, supporting previous business, and improving operations. However, all too often websites become outdated and stale with either a lack of content or content that has been rendered useless. Instead of helping your organization, this can become a serious liability.

Rather than relying on overworked technical staff, empower the individuals who are producing the content to have a hand in its posting. A content management system (CMS) can help you achieve automation in the flow of content into your internet and intranet sites while ensuring site look and feel, integrity, and security.



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PG. 2



## Why use a CMS?

A content management system (CMS) can bring your organization many benefits.

These include:

- ▶ Dramatically reduce the time it takes to post new information to your internet and intranet sites.
- ▶ Avoid reliance on specific technical staff for website changes.
- ▶ Instill confidence in your staff that the website is there to serve their needs.
- ▶ Avoid hiring a web firm or using expensive technical staff to implement site-wide modifications or structural changes.
- ▶ Eliminate the possibility of broken links or images.
- ▶ And much more!



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## Manual Updates

Manual updates are still the most common method of updating an internet or intranet website. This involves having your technical staff or a web company implement changes by directly coding site pages through an editor of some kind. The content is passed on to them by content creators, who are staff from throughout the organization.

### Advantages

- ▶ Low initial costs.

### Disadvantages

- ▶ Expensive ongoing costs.
- ▶ Inefficiency resulting in long delays until changes are completed.
- ▶ A mundane task for technical staff.
- ▶ Prone to human errors and thus requires extensive and expensive testing for each new page or change.
- ▶ Redesign of website more difficult since content and presentation layer are not separated.



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## Server-Based Software

This option involves the purchase of a licensed content management system (CMS) product to install and run on your organization's own servers and infrastructure. Employees will be able to access the system from within the organization's intranet or from outside through an extranet.

### Advantages

- ▶ Harness CMS advantages dependent on the chosen product; these may include page consistency, workflow, etc.
- ▶ Retain admin and security in-house.
- ▶ Take advantage of customization using the CMS API if offered.
- ▶ Integration with other back-end systems running in-house.

### Disadvantages

- ▶ Higher initial costs for CMS licencing, server, and server software.
- ▶ Requires system administration staff when changes are completed.
- ▶ Longer deployment time on average, depending on the vendor.



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## Hosted ASP Solution

A variety of content management systems (CMS) are currently available as hosted solutions. In this form, the software is offered to your organization through the vendor's web servers. When employees login to use the system, they are actually logging in to the vendor's systems, even though the live website being changed may be hosted elsewhere.

### Advantages

- ▶ CMS featureset (vendor dependant) can be as rich as any server-based solution.
- ▶ Low initial costs and no infrastructure needed.
- ▶ No in-house administration needed.
- ▶ Predictable ongoing incremental costs.
- ▶ Management of content from any location.

### Disadvantages

- ▶ Reliance on vendor's web infrastructure (thus important to be sure of this aspect).
- ▶ Custom programming required to integrate with other internal systems.
- ▶ Degree of "trust" necessary in the vendor.



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## Custom CMS Solution

Some organizations may be tempted to opt for a custom content management system (CMS). This could be developed either by in-house technical staff or by an outside firm. This option, if implemented correctly, will usually result in a system that fits the organization's needs. However, it has several distinct disadvantages.

### Advantages

- ▶ In an ideal situation will result in solution that meets organizational needs.
- ▶ Features and integration with existing systems can be custom-tailored.

### Disadvantages

- ▶ Final costs can be extremely high.
- ▶ Proprietary system tying organization to a single vendor or specific internal staff.
- ▶ Long deployment time especially if CMS is not a core competency.
- ▶ Lack of experience in content management may result in a subpar system.



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## Conclusions

Content management is fast becoming a critical issue for many organizations today. Luckily, the industry has matured greatly in the past years and a variety of options are available.

In most cases, any medium to large sized organization will opt for content management software of some kind. With the vast number of options available in today's market, the development of a custom solution is usually avoided. The choice will usually rest between a server-based or hosted solution.

The decision may rest solely on your organization's infrastructure. A sophisticated infrastructure may be more suitable for a server-based solution, or vice-versa.

However, it is important to also consider your business objectives, available vendors, ROI, and TCO. Most important of all, contact a firm experienced with content management issues today to begin the decision making process before it's too late.



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