

How to choose open source CMS

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What is a CMS

Content Management System

A Software to manage large number of documents and contents on a website.

What Cms can do

lots of things like

- Create/Edit/Publish documents on Web
- Define workflow for managing content
- Maintain a repository of changes
- Metadata/Tagging of content
- Define roles and responsibilities for sections of website/content types

Where a CMS is used

Internet

- For publishing contents on website
- Regular products update
- Integration with e-commerce engine.
- Publishing Manuals
- Job postings

Where to use a CMS

Intranet

- Internal reports/whitepapers
- Applications like leave request form, asset requirement forms etc.
- News Board
- Bulletin board

How CMS is used

- To serve simple pages
- To serve content pulled from database
- To publish Manuals
- To serve content of audio/video content
- To publish metadata!!

Problems

Change

- Learning curve
- Unlearning curve

Identifying the needs

- What are the business goals and needs?
- No single list. Every organisation has unique needs.
- Identify all the stakeholders and involve them from the outset.
- Identify authors and understand their needs
- Identify the content itself
- Make an Information Design .

Information design

- Flow of information and organization of content.
- Identify all the navigational elements.
- Steps required to do specific actions such as downloading a file.
- Define workflow.
- Define user hierarchy.
- Reduce the number of clicks.

Understand the workflow

- Identify the contributors/authors and editors
- Identify the states for a content publishing.
- Identify the action associated with each workflow state.
- Make a transition diagram and get approval on the same.

CMS, Blog and wiki

Do you really need a cms?

CMS = Multiple speaker and one
multidimensional talk

Blog = One speaker, one dimension

Wiki = Multiple speakers, one talk

Some generalization

What is the type of your client

- Community portal
- Corporate
- Publishing House
- NGO/NPO
- SMB
- SOHO/Individual

Community portals

One stop for all your needs :-)

- Require multiple features.
- Publishing news.
- Forum for discussion.
- Events listing.
- Indian communities normally need multilingual websites.
- www.linux-india.org, creativedot.org
(creative.linux-delhi.org)

Corporate

- Brochure website
- Publishing new products/services
- Publishing updates about products
- Publishing manuals/whitepapers/case studies/help pages
- Forms for gathering information
- General business documents

Publishing House

The epaper edition

- They are capable of producing huge amount of data
- Content updates are frequent
- Multiple type of content
- Number of hits is normally very high

SMB, Individual/SOHO

- Might not need a CMS
- Wiki, dynamic websites are the other options
- No database, no web application
Exhibit under project smiles ; MIT
<http://simile.mit.edu/exhibit/>

Evaluating a CMS

This is how we evaluate

- Default Capabilities.
- Extensibility .
- Ease of integrating template.
- Ease of use to end user.
- Access levels and control possible.
- Community support.

Some open source cms

In order of my personal preferences

- Drupal
- Plone
- Typo3
- Jhoomla
- Metadot
- And several others

www.opensourcecms.com

Drupal

www.drupal.org

- Pages, images and files
- Easy templating. Loads of skins available
- Navigation features like menubar, side bars and blocks
- User management and user roles. Module level access control.
- Version control

Drupal

- Good community support
- Caching support tested under real high availability
- Friendly urls
- News agregation, syndication

Drupal modules

- Module developers guide at <http://drupal.org/node/508>
- Different guides for different drupal versions
- Hooks = well defined function name
- Block modules
- Node modules (full page content)

Drupal Themes

- Theme developers guide
<http://drupal.org/node/509>
- Php template based themes
- X template based themes
- Smarty template based themes
- Plain php based thmes (just override them functions)

Plone

<http://plone.org/about/movies>

Plone

- Written in python
- Runs on top of Zope application server
- Uses ZODB by default but can work from postgresql too.
- Works from a non standard port.

Plone

- Page
- File
- Inbuilt image resizing using PIL
- Live search
- Really easy to theme
- Content aggregation, syndication etc.
- Content types and portlets
- Zope page templates is used extensively to create presentation layer.

Plone

- Very powerful and very fine grained access control system.
- Powerful workflow engine.
- W3C WAI-WW and US governments Section 508 compliant
- Friendly URL's only.
- One of the best support (personal experience).

Plone products

- Write products without ever having to look at the plone code
- <http://plone.org/products>
- Easy to create new content types
- Archetypes and Atcontent types define the framework for writing new content types
- Generate new products directly from UML.
(include content type workflow)

Plone themes

- Just learn CSS and ZPT

Typo3

- www.typo3.org
- Written in php
- Page, Image.File
- Seperate frontend and backend cding
- Revision management
- Internal shortcuts in backend
- Wizards for form. images and table manipulation
- Task center for collaborative content creation

Typo3

- Online repository for installing extensions
- Sandbox
- Good caching support
- Visitor tracking system
- Typo3Script is powerful system to extend typo3.
- CSS styled content

Implementing CMS

- Identify the goals and needs
- Identify the stakeholders and authors
- Identify the content and content types
- Create Information design
- Compare multiple cms to identify the which comes closest
- Select the first two from the list.
- Calculate the effort required to implement.

Implementation

- Cost of running CMS includes not only development cost but skills and resources inside the organization
- Choose a CMS which has lowest development time or least user learning required.

Thank you.
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