



EDITORIAL

Content management systems

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Received 3 December 2005
Revised 4 December 2005
Accepted 5 December 2005

Abstract

Purpose – To introduce the special theme issue on “Content management systems”.

Design/methodology/approach – Each of the articles in the theme are described in brief.

Findings – The articles cover a range of topics from implementation to interoperability, object-oriented database management systems, and research about meeting user needs.

Originality/value – Libraries have only just begun to realize that their web presence is potentially as rich and complex as their online catalogs, and that it needs an equal amount of management to keep it under control.

Keywords Content management, Libraries

Paper type General review

A content management system (CMS) offers a way to manage large amounts of web-based information that escapes the burden of coding all of the information into each page in HTML by hand. Content management systems are important to libraries because the sheer mass of their public web presence has reached the point where maintenance is a problem. Often the web pages grew out of the personal interests of staff members, who have since left for other jobs for other responsibilities or simply retired. These may not be mission-critical pages in the same sense as a library's front page, but often they have a dedicated set of users who regard them as part of the library's service mission.

Many libraries also want to customize their look and feel to emphasize consistency and branding. That can be very difficult when it requires multiple authors to agree on fonts, formats, logos, and other limitations on their creativity and individuality. A CMS assists conformity by providing a centrally managed system for displaying the content, which still remains under the control of library staff with appropriate subject expertise.

Dr Bradford Eden organized this *Library Hi Tech* theme issue to explore some of the key issues in implementing CMSs.

- Matt Benzing's article on “Luwak: a content management solution” describes an “XML-based application developed by the Communication & Collaborative Technologies division of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute . . .”
- Paul F. Bramscher and John T. Butler's article on “LibData to LibCMS: one library's evolutionary pathway to a content management system” describes the University of Minnesota's extension of an open-source special-purpose CMS that several libraries (my own included) have implemented: “the emphasis was to approach CMS design more as a source or version control system for web pages . . .”



- Doug Goans, Guy Leach and Teri M. Vogel's article on "Beyond HTML: developing and re-imagining library web guides in a content management system" offers a case study that describes Georgia State University Library's experience in moving to content management from "a FrontPage-based web site with minimal login security, site architecture planning, and administrative and editorial processes in place."
- Susan Goodwin, Nancy Burford, Martha Bedard, Esther Carrigan and Gale C. Hannigan's article "CMS/CMS: content management system/change management strategies" describes a systematic implementation of a CMS at Texas A&M Libraries. Compared to the generally well-structured implementation of an online catalog, they find "Website development is much more a journey through uncharted waters. The use of a content management system can help define the shorelines and smooth some rough waters..."
- Terry L. Huttenlock, Jeff W. Beaird and Ronald W. Fordham's article "Untangling a tangled web: a case study in choosing and implementing a CMS" is an implementation study from Wheaton College that looks at a commercial product, WebGUI, from a company called Plain Black.
- Rick Wiggins, Jeph Remley, and Tom Klingler's article "Building a local CMS at Kent State" provides a detailed description of the development of a home-grown CMS that offers both content-reuse and an "extensive metadata description that is created for every resource on the site."
- Tom Kmetz and Ray Bailey's article "Migrating a library's web site to a commercial CMS: within a campuswide implementation" describes implementing an Ektron CMS at Morehead State University, including a frank discussion about the costs of a commercial CMS and some problems they encountered.
- Regina Beach and Miqueas Dial's article "Building a collection development CMS on a shoe-string" discusses a collection-specific CMS project for the library of this comprehensive university of 5,000 students.

This same theme will continue in the next issue of Library Hi Tech, but the focus will shift from CMS implementation issues to studies involving public libraries, interoperability, object-oriented database management systems, and research about meeting user needs:

- Ian Baaske and Rob Zschernitz's article "Going on ten: community information grows up" offers a public library case study in a Chicago's north suburban library system CMS called "Community-in-a-box."
- Yan Han's article "A RDF-based Digital Library System" focuses on a particular issue in content management and looks at how to improve interoperability with "a semantic, standards-based, and content-neutral digital library system."
- Marilyn Lutz and Curtis Meadow's article "Evolving an in-house system to integrate the management of digital collections" discusses the use of a relational database to manage ordinary digital collections, and an object-oriented database management system to handle multimedia such as digital video.

- Sarah Robbins, Debra Engel and James Bierman’s article “Using the library intranet to manage web content” describes a study that was conducted at the University of Oklahoma about how “systems are actually used by the personnel and the extent to which personnel find these systems meeting their needs.”

CMS systems will continue to grow and evolve as more commercial products become available at costs that libraries can afford, and as more open-source systems gain adherents. Libraries have only just begun to realize that their web presence is potentially as rich and complex as their online catalogs, and that it needs an equal amount of management to keep it under control.