

A SiteLeads.net **White Paper**



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Why use a Web Content Management System? (instead of a HTML Editor)

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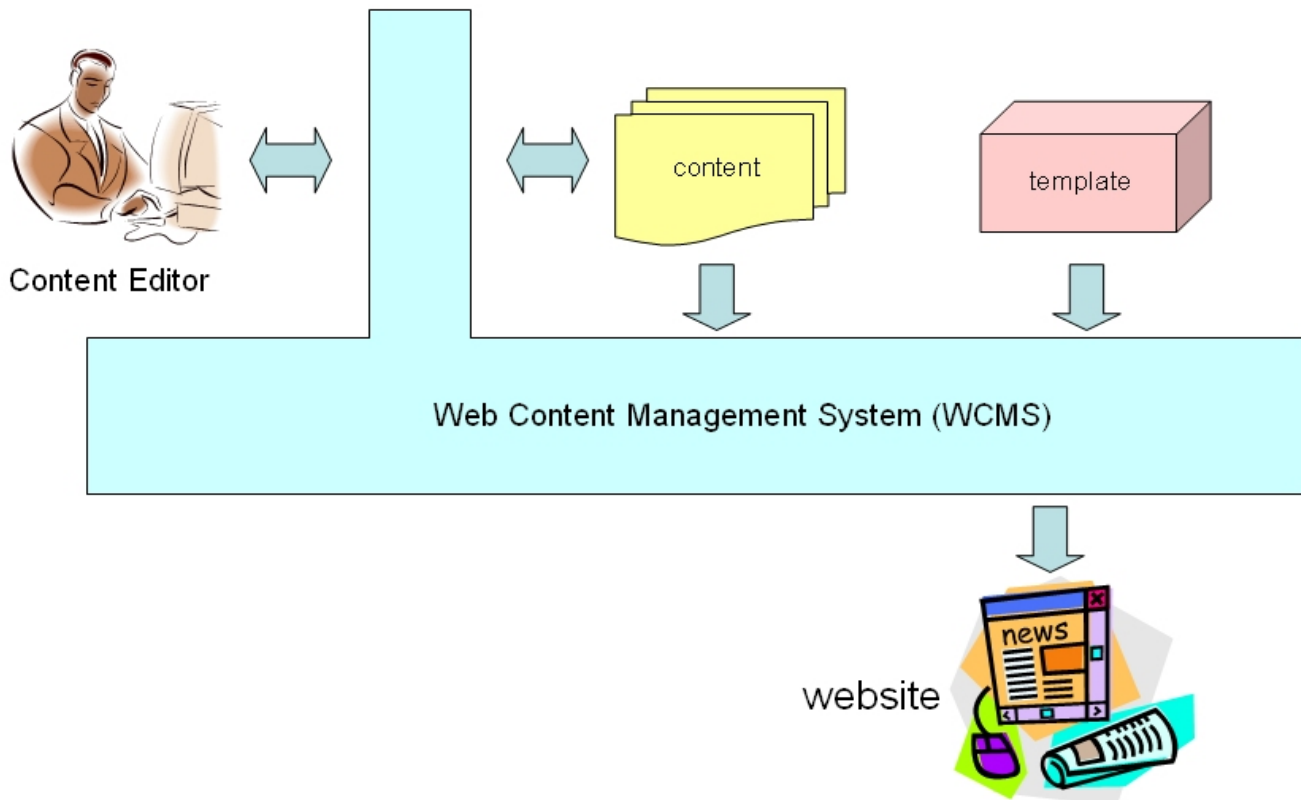
Introduction

A Content Management System (CMS) is a computer program used to create, edit, manage, and publish content in a consistently organized fashion. CMSs are frequently used for storing, controlling, versioning, and publishing documentation such as news articles, operators' manuals, technical manuals, sales guides, and marketing brochures.

Today, they are most often used to control the contents of a website. Such a CMS is called a *Web Content Management System* (WCMS).

The key characteristic of a WCMS:

The website content and structure, called the "template", are stored



separately. The Content Editor (a person) changes the content and saves it. The WCMS then rebuilds the website using the new content and the template.

In addition, any given addition (or additions) to the website can be scheduled for publication at a specific time and date in the future. (They can also be timed for deletion).

The entire website can be changed by adjusting or replacing the template, making the website appear as if it had been rebuilt from scratch. In actuality, only the appearance changed; the content is 100% preserved!

A proper WCMS supports blogging, built right into the website, and different levels of access, from webmaster to content editor to read-only visitor.

The small company's challenge

Working in a small company requires everyone to wear many different hats. The smaller the company, the more hats you get to wear.

For many business owners, creating and managing a website is yet another distraction; something to worry about and pay for. Bigger companies can throw money at the problem by hiring experts until the problem goes away, but the management team in a small company must roll up its sleeves and understand the challenge first hand.

Previously on Mission Impossible...

At some point in the 1990s, each in our own time, we were introduced to the Internet. A wave of websites appeared when each business published its first website for the world to see.

These websites were created using a HTML Editor. A HTML Editor allows you to create a web page piece by piece, usually in a graphical environment that helps generate some of the HTML code for you. Another common way was to type the entire HTML for the page using a program like Windows Notepad or the popular vi editor. When all pages were painstakingly created, they were published together as a complete, interlinked website.

That was how it worked in the 1990s. You stuffed each page with content and used FTP¹ to push the whole concoction up to your website.

There were many problems associated with using HTML editors:

- Links didn't always work. A single typo might break a link. A visitor would receive a "Page Not Found" message and you might never know.
- Images and other objects were awkward to manage. Often, you needed expertise in an image editor like Adobe PhotoShop™ to make images fit.
- Turnaround was slow. Your HTML expert was not always available or didn't understand what you needed, even when you did.

¹ FTP = File Transfer Protocol, a way to move files around a network like the Internet.

- Website maintenance was costly. Often, you just didn't bother making changes because of the cost, risk, complexity and distraction.
- After a year or two, the typical website looked like a ransom note. Pages were inconsistent, fonts and colors were a mish-mash and your website looked cheap.

The WCMS

If you've ever used a GPS/Navigation system to find your way around town, you are familiar too with the feeling of not having it when you needed it. You're driving your partner's car and you have an address or directions to a house you've never visited before. You don't know how long it will take, and when you make a mistake, you have to call for help.

A GPS system, when you take a wrong turn, puts you back on track automatically.

A GPS system allows you to focus on the purpose of your trip and not the technical details of how to get there.

A Web Content Management System (WCMS) allows you to focus on the business purpose of your website and not on the technical details of how it works.

Benefits of a WCMS

Quadruples your productivity

A WCMS lets you add content to your website in seconds.

In less time than it takes to order a book on Amazon.com, you can add a brand new section to your website, including content if you have it at hand.

Controls publication schedule

You can decide when a given web page is to be published and de-published from your website.

Controls who can do what

Different contributors can be given different levels of access to your website. For example, you personally might have webmaster rights, allowing you to add and modify whole sections and look-and-feel of the website, while your marketing employees might be limited to article creation.

Supports SEO automatically

A proper WCMS system will build pages that are readily indexed by search engines and optimized for best keyword matching. Not all WCMSs do this, so check that the one you select is SEO friendly.

Implementation

A WCMS can be installed anywhere, as long as it can push the web pages it creates to the website location.

Ideally, it provides a way to manage the content via a web interface. This means that you can use your browser to add and change content on your website.



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Imagine using your Blackberry to add an announcement to your website while you are waiting to board a plane! That's what a WCMS allows you to do.

Typically, a WCMS keeps content and structure separate from one another. When the content is changed, the program rebuilds the necessary pages based on the new content.

A proper WCMS:

- Produces search engine friendly web pages automatically.
- Provides a web interface to manage website content, structure and look-and-feel.
- Delivers web pages that behave consistently across all browser types. (E.g. Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, etc.).
- Delivers web pages that behave consistently to one another.
- Automates the publication of images, audio, video and other media.
- Eliminates your day-to-day dependence on technical web staff.
- Delivers faster websites.

Summary

Those companies that compete successfully on the web today use a Web Content Management System, particularly in high tech

markets where web savvy companies are more common.

There are dozens of WCMS systems on the market. At SiteLeads.net, we use the Big Medium product from [Global Moxie](#) because of the extraordinary increase in productivity it provides to us and to our clients.

Want to know more?

For more information on Web Content Management Systems and Search Engine Optimization, visit our website: www.siteleads.net, call us at USA 425-985-4464 or email info@siteleads.net. Tell us what your goals are and we will show you how we can help.



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