



## Managing Your Web Content

*You have a spectacular design for your website, and a resident genius who will oversee the technical issues of keeping the website up and running... so what have you forgotten?*

Content, that's what. People are coming to your website for information, and information is what you need to give them. But where does this information come from, who is going to keep it up to date, and how are those updates going to be performed? The answers to these questions fall under the umbrella of "Content Management".

A small brochure website with a handful of pages that are only updated sporadically does not create a heavy workload on those who maintain it. In this case, the content management can be done manually. In other words, someone edits the web pages and uploads them to your web server, as needed.

If your website has hundreds of pages, or pages that require editing on a daily basis, or general design changes that have to be implemented on all pages, manual content management quickly becomes tedious and time consuming, especially if you have other work that needs attention.



The typical solution is to hire a dedicated Webmaster to relieve you of this work. Since the Webmaster (presumably) has superior web skills and time specifically allocated to website maintenance, they can do the work more efficiently. However, the Webmaster approach breaks down in three ways:

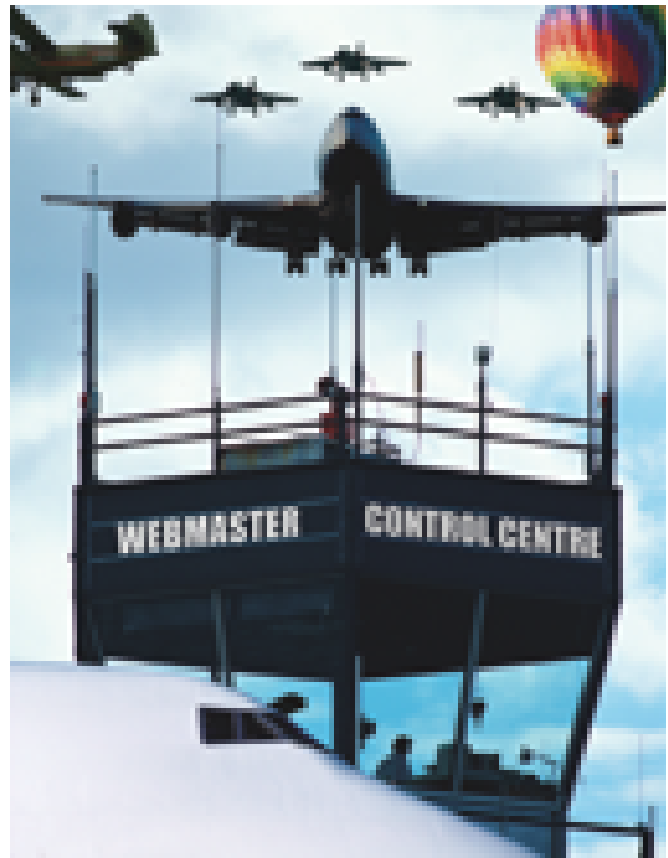
- 1) A Webmaster amounts to an extra staff person, which may be costly for small organizations.
- 2) Unless your Webmaster is also your resident expert on your business or organization, he or she will need to gather content from people in the same way a magazine editor gathers articles from authors. Even if these people are forthcoming with fresh content, it all has to pass through the bottleneck of an over-loaded webmaster before it goes public, which can create update delays and leave your live site with stale content.
- 3) A Webmaster can end up doing four very different jobs:
  - graphic design of the website
  - content authoring and editing
  - IT and web server management
  - web application programming

A given Webmaster's skill is likely in one or two of these areas, but rarely all of them. Especially for larger websites, you may need to hire multiple people to fill these roles. Not to mention, a manager to coordinate them, of course.

Content Management Systems (CMS's) are software applications that help alleviate the above problems, by:

- automating the process of website maintenance, reducing your reliance on technical experts;
- automating the generation of certain web pages, by generating them dynamically or republishing them on a schedule.
- providing content-update tools for your staff to feed their content directly to the site, instead of going through a single person.
- providing design and templating tools to allow for rapid redesign of pages or whole sites.
- providing permissions tools to protect designs or content from being updated by the wrong people.

There are many other features that you can find in Content Management Systems, depending on the price. Some CMS packages are free, and some can cost in excess



of a million dollars, with many systems occupying the middle ground. Some systems are paid for on a per-user basis, others are subscription-based (per month or per year fees), while others are treated like regular software applications with a one-time cost.

By the end of 2004, 95 percent of Global 2000 organizations will have purchased a CMS package. And, as the cost of such systems dramatically drops, with more flexible pricing options offered, these systems are now accessible to any sized organization.

The right Content Management System can make the job of website management easy, efficient, and even fun!

Need help? Ask Exware for a free, no obligation Needs Analysis. Call Aaron at (604) 684-9440 or email him at [aaron@exware.com](mailto:aaron@exware.com).



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