

Usability of CMS(Content Management System) and the importance of a CMS!

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The success of a CMS depends entirely on how much it is used and how. It can be either the users accessing the published site or the authors who wanted to create contents for the site.

It is these two challenges that place usability as a central issue to be raised and addressed. Introducing usability to your website

Loosely, usability can be equated with "ease of use". Beyond this, usability also includes:

- How quickly and easily a CMS can be learned
- How efficient it is for regular users
- whether users will remember how to use the system after a break
- How user errors are managed (and ideally prevented).

Usability is a major factor in your website project, it analysis whether your staff will be able to make use of a new technology, such as a content management system. How challenging is your CMS usability?

After you successfully deploy a CMS solution in your website, and ensuring its long-term viability, is not easy:

- Your CMS must be quick & easy for your staff to create or update contents in your website.
- If your CMS involves huge technicalities, authors end up not using CMS to create contents, then the content quickly becomes outdated and the purpose of creating your website may fail.
- Your editors and reviewers should be also able to manage the CMS work quickly around their existing responsibilities.
- Your system administrators also must be able to manage your CMS without taking constant help from the vendor.
- Your published site must be well structured and easy to use. (Easy for content updates, including images in your website, tables, graphs, etc)

You just need to remember a simple rule, the more people using a system, the simpler and easier it needs to be. Success of your website depends entirely on your staff being able to use the CMS quickly & easily and also your clients who can access to their information very easily. Usability of editing tools must be simpler and faster

Your website should place a special emphasis on the usability of the authoring tools like, blogs, forum, product review forms, article section etc. These sections should provide your customer an easier interface like word pad editor, note pad etc with the overall design being both simple and intuitive.

Your CMS should not expose underlying technical details, or use complex jargon or concepts which make the life difficult to your staff who updates your website periodically and for your client who wants to access the information a lot more simpler way. Benefits of usability

Ensuring a content management system is usable delivers many benefits:

There are many benefits of having your CMS more usable, what are they?

Find them listed here…

- If your CMS is more usable then the deployment is lot simpler and quicker.
- You need not spend lot of time in training your staff on the usage of CMS.
- The resistance to change is lessened
- You content can be updated frequently and can keep your content fresh & appealing which will make your site visitor to stay longer in your website.
- Your ability to conduct in-house maintenance and management reduces cost of ownership.
- Your published site is used more frequently, and more successfully. How can you ensure usability of CMS?

There are few practical steps that you can take to ensure a usable content management system, including:

- Firstly, to involve all your stake holders in your CMS project to identify their issues and needs, and listing them.
- You can also include this criterion in your website requirement document and ask your vendor to demonstrate this in detail.
- You need to rigorously access the usability of the potential solutions your vendor proposes to you, including the quality of training materials, documentation, and also a sample user guide they might provide you for your reference
- And also make sure your vendor designs and implements the CMS with usability principles (and simplicity) in their mind.
- You can also do a simple usability check or testing for all aspects of the CMS and the published pages.
- You can also ask your vendor to include an interface designer, or usability specialist, in the CMS team for your website project.

We have talked much on the usability of CMS, and now it is the time to analyze if you need CMS for your website. Do

you think every small website needs a content management system?

If you had answered 'Yes' for the above question then you are right on the track ahead with your competitors.

If you had answered 'No' then you might seriously consider reading this article which can help you bring in more business to you. Every business, however small, should consider using the Content management system-why?

You are about to get a website built for your business, you have found a good web design agency whom you believe they are the best. You are looking forward to seeing the results of their creative efforts, so far so good...

Once your website has been setup, your customers will start rolling in; this is the time you will want to make ongoing changes. These could be very minor changes like changing your phone number, updating your product prices, or adding a news item. There might also be case where you would want to shift your business into a new direction, or change in your business model, or you might want to add new products to your website which necessitates a larger part of the updates to your site. Chances are, though, you will still be happy with the design, and it's just the text that needs to be changed.

While your web design agency did a great job in your website deployment, you need not go to them for every small change that you need to carry on in your site. A hundred small changes in a year will leave you both frustrated, and is not economic for either party.

This is where a content management system (CMS) comes in. Sitting behind the scenes, it gives you the ability to maintain your own site.

No website larger than a few pages should be without a CMS to manage it. What is a Content Management System?

We had discussed all way through about the benefits and usability of CMS.

If you ever wonder what this CMS is all about, it is just a software package specifically designed to manage a website. It is installed by your web designers, but intended to be used by you.

CMS provides you with a simple way of updating your content. This is typically done via a web-based interface that works much like Word doc does. And the best part of this is this process is just non-technical.

It's just like how you write contents in your Word document, point-and-click, type in the new words, and hit save. Your site is instantly updated.

Equally easy is adding new pages, deleting old ones, or restructuring the site to match your new business model.

The CMS also automates menial tasks, such as applying the same page layout and appearance across the site. Menus and other navigation are also automatically produced.

You can also automate many features using CMS like applying the same page layout and appearance across the site. Even menus and other navigation are also automatically produced.

Just to put it very simpler, along with the many other administrative tools, this CMS leaves you to concentrate on the words, and not on the technology. We could notice a big smile on your face :) What are the benefits of CMS?

It makes your web life much easier than you imagined,

- You are no longer dependent on the web designers making changes for you.
- Your website is a great tool for your business which works for 24/7; changes can be made any time they are needed, day or night. This is increasingly important as your business comes to rely on the website as a communications channel.
- Your website can be managed and updated by anyone even with no technical knowledge; instead all the technical details are simply handled by your CMS itself.
- You can also multiple staff to keep the site up to date, instead of being restricted to just one person. The CMS will track who is doing what, avoiding potential confusion.
- You can also split the sections to different staff and can even ensure that each staff can only update the sections of the site they are responsible for.
- You can also automate many features using CMS like applying the same page layout and appearance across the site. Even menus and other navigation are also automatically produced.

Apart from the above mentioned benefits, the many other powerful features of the CMS allow your site to grow in sync with your business. And the cost? - Don't worry!

The good news is that a simple CMS, suitable for a small/middle-sized website, is not expensive. It can cost only few hundred pounds.

Of course, if your site is larger, or has complex requirements, the cost of a matching CMS will also grow. There is a saying; you get what you pay for. Next steps – are you ready?

If you are already working with a web design agency, talk to them about what they can provide you in terms of a content management solution.

If you would like to implement CMS to your website, we can provide a comprehensive range of consultancy services relating to content management, including:

- Determining your business and your technical requirements
- Reviewing CMS requirements and implementing a CMS for your site.

Of course, if you would rather not commit your time and resources to managing content yourself, we are happy to work out an ongoing maintenance program for us to make any changes / maintain fresh content on your behalf.

Contact us to help you in providing content management solution to meet your needs and budget.