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TOP TRENDS IN WEB CMS FOR 2015

Introduction

Web Content Management System ("Web CMS" or "WCM") is the backbone of your online presence. It's the primary tool used for engaging prospects and for converting prospects into customers. The WCM market emerged in response to the need for an easy way to publish content without relying on highly specialized technical skills. In their infancy, web content management systems were unwieldy, with a steep learning curve. They've come a long way over the years and are much more user friendly.

As technology evolves, so do the content management systems that businesses use to create and publish content. Market trends typically take their cues from a combination of the emerging technology landscape and the identification of user pain points. For instance, mobile, social, and integrated analytics tools were once bleeding-edge trends but are now commonplace in most of today's WCMs.

Let's take a look at the top trends in Web CMS for 2015.

1   IT'S TIME TO ADOPT THE CLOUD

Plummeting prices coupled with nearly infinite storage capacities make moving to the cloud quite attractive. While Web CMS has traditionally been delivered as on-premises software, today many vendors provide their WCM solution via the cloud.

2014 was a difficult year for cloud services, though, as reliability and security issues plagued the industry. As a result, cloud service providers will up their game to increase the reliability of cloud storage and associated enterprise-level security features.

Cloud-ready CMS deployments keep a company agile and adaptable in a changing marketplace without putting additional pressure on IT: a cloud-based Web CMS means that organizations no longer need to own and maintain hardware, infrastructure and network bandwidth.

The adoption of cloud-based WCM deployments will climb appreciably in 2015 as companies look for ways to stretch their capabilities without overtaxing their IT budgets and staff. Businesses will

2015 will be a strong year for cloud-based WCM deployments.

increasingly turn to the dependability and scalability of the cloud to reduce or eliminate the need for owning their own servers. In addition, organizations can choose to receive automated updates of the Web CMS software, if such an option is provided by their vendor.

Accordingly, a rise in cloud service adoption will be most visible in small- to medium-sized businesses with limited budgets. Young companies and startups will also look toward cloud-based deployments as a low-cost, extensible option that grows along with the organization.

2   ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

In 2015, WCMs that are easy to deploy, adaptable and scalable will become the go-to option for agile companies. Long-term extensibility will replace one-size-fits-all solutions.

The market is trending away from content management systems that contain a bevy of functionalities to cover every possible user scenario. While thoughtful on the part of the vendor, the reality is that many WCM solutions contain features that many users never touch, leading to unwieldy, code-heavy deployments. Altering one component leads to a cascade of events that break other things down the line.

When selecting a good WCM, it's important to choose a solution that makes sense for an organization's workflow and can be easily adapted when needs change. However, it's equally important to look at how well the product meets the company's long-range goals and not simply how well it handles a specific purpose.

When time and money are of the essence, companies will select WCMs with modular components that can be deployed in hours or days over tightly-knitted technology suites that may take weeks. While some WCM's provide a platform that enables third party modules and plugins, others provide a tightly controlled system with less flexibility. Customers looking for time and cost efficiency will increasingly opt for the more extensible platforms.

In 2015, customers decide that "one size fits all" no longer fits.
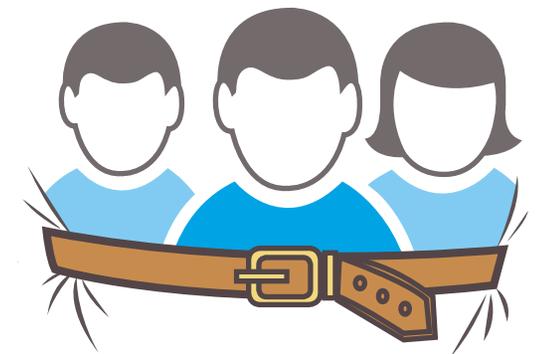
3 THE CONTINUED RISE OF PERSONALIZATION

A good user experience is no longer just about snappy page load times and an intuitive user interface. The trend in the coming year is a real-time, personalized experience that recognizes the individual customer and provides the right information at the right time, exactly when the user wants it.

For example, a prospect from the West Coast of the United States visits a B2B company's "Services" page. Real-time personalization could render a list of the company's implementation partners within 100 miles of the prospect.

Web content management systems are an important tool in building lifelong customers provided they help, not hinder, the relationship. Personalization delivers a more relevant user experience that helps consumers minimize the time they spend looking for what they need on a customer-facing website.

To make real-time personalization most effective, a Web CMS must draw from its entire portfolio of content. The market will see a shift toward liberating content and information housed within a CMS to make it searchable and accessible when and where it's needed most.

For example, a video on luxury homes may be hidden away in a Digital Asset Management (DAM) folder and never see the light of day. A Web CMS could utilize that asset and present it to visitors who previously visited the luxury homes area of the website.

Platforms that help companies deliver relevant content based on user profiles, demographics and psychographics will drive the WCM market forward in 2015. WCM vendors who do not provide real-time personalization will be left behind.

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4 THE SHIFT TOWARDS BRANDED ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Consumers are more social than ever, but aren't always comfortable sharing on popular networking sites as they continue to grow more complex and less private. In addition, consumers increasingly worry about data privacy, which has led some to close their accounts on some social network services.

Conversely, businesses are having a harder time being heard in the increasing din of voices in the social arena. Facebook changed its Newsfeed algorithm, for example, which made it more difficult for brands to reach their own fans (on Facebook).

According to Nate Elliott, Principal Analyst at Forrester Research, "Marketing leaders report they're significantly less satisfied with Facebook and Twitter marketing than with branded forums." Elliott's prediction for 2015: "As social media matures, branded communities will make a comeback."

The coming year will see companies shift toward branded online communities to give customers a personalized place to gather around their favorite products and services. Likewise, branded communities offer businesses a place to share their messages and deeply engage with customers and prospects.

Company resources are already stretched thin, so the prospect of building and maintaining a disparate website to house a branded community are unattractive and impractical. In 2015, look for WCMs with community management tools built directly into the platform for easy integration into a company's main website.

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Branded, online communities make a comeback in 2015.
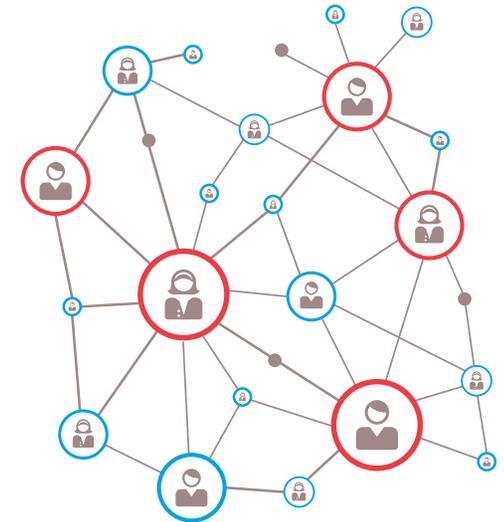
5 MOBILE IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL

With mobile transactions expected to hit the two billion mark by 2017[1], many companies will find success in 2015 with a mobile-first approach that optimizes their web content for the small screen. The WCM market will see a rise in platforms that help businesses incorporate strategies that are mobile-first or, at the very least, mobile-aware.

Past mobile trends focused on choosing content management systems that included tools for deploying websites on mobile devices. In 2015, we'll see a greater focus on serving mobile content assets. WCM's will curate and serve a wide variety of digital assets from video and images to searchable product manuals and shopping tools that look and work well when viewed on a mobile device. Function will be as important as form.

Mobile is no longer just about how a website looks, but also how it operates. The ubiquity of tablets and smartphones means companies need to address the nuances of each type of device. Tablet users may expect touch screen functionality or collateral apps while smartphone users want visually-rich content built with their devices in mind. Businesses will weigh user expectations with device capabilities to create mobile strategies accordingly.

Organizations will plan their visitor experience on a mobile-first strategy. Web CMS solutions must deliver on that.

6 THE NEED TO DELIVER OMNICHANNEL CONTENT

"Omnichannel" refers to the seamless experience provided to prospects and customers, whether they're on a desktop, mobile browser, mobile app or "in person" (i.e. at a bricks and mortar venue).

Customers want a predictable experience no matter how they access your content and information. Seamless content delivery across multiple channels is a key part of customer retention. To keep up with the desires of today's consumers, WCM customers will seek platforms that can help deliver omnichannel content.

In 2015, companies will take stock of content, messaging, social data and marketing collateral, then determine its "big picture" presentation. Only then can businesses create an omnichannel strategy that ensures consistency across tablets, smartphones, and desktop computers.

Companies will be challenged to meet consumer expectations that online experiences be consistent and relevant without being intrusive. Tools that track user behavior, collect data, and gather analytics are important to providing the omnichannel experience. In response to user concerns about privacy and responsible data collection, companies should expect to be tasked with making sure the information gathered is secure.

Omnichannel experiences are important for engaging customers wherever they are.
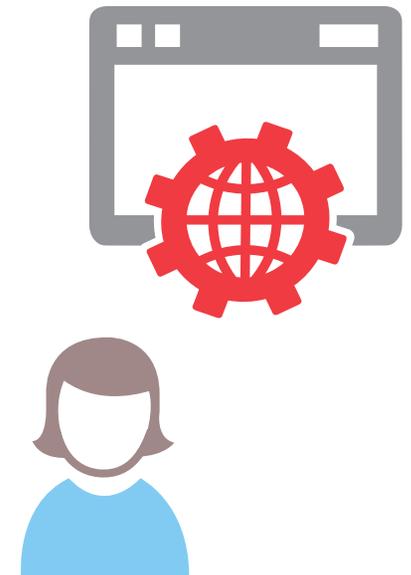
7 THE WCM BUYER SHIFTS FROM IT TO MARKETING

In 2015, Marketing will play a bigger role in the selection and use of WCMs to reach prospects, engage customers, and meet strategic company goals.

Marketing teams are often responsible for the entire lifecycle of customer-facing content, from creation to execution. Social media, blogging, brand messaging, and several other elements of customer engagement can be easily handled by a WCM.

In keeping with this trend, businesses will look for WCMs that include tools of maximum usefulness to the marketing team. Social media integration, web analytics features and SEO tools are mission-critical to marketers and play a vital role in the sales process.

As the breadth and depth of Marketing teams expand (e.g. with freelance writers, design agencies, SEO agencies, content marketing agencies and more), customers will look for a Web CMS that provide granular permissions and workflow to manage these extended and external teams.

Conclusion

Given that Web CMS is a mature market, we don't anticipate major surprises in 2015. We'll see some acquisitions (i.e. enterprise-level software companies acquiring CMS vendors to supplement a portfolio of offerings) and we'll see brand new entrants into the space.

In this white paper, we've outlined some fairly common sense trends: Web CMS solutions are following the behaviors and tendencies of their visitors. Those visitors are likely to be "on the go," consuming content on a mobile device. They expect their mobile experience to be as visually rich and functional as visiting from a desktop. And, they'll expect their sites to give them what they want, without venturing too deep into private or sensitive information about them.

All in all, 2015 should be a transitional year in Web CMS. And we can't wait to find out what's in store for 2016. Thanks for reading.

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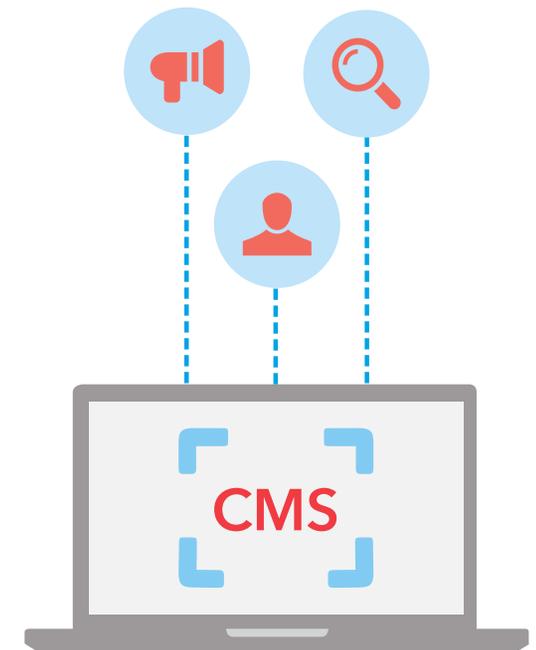
About DNN

DNN provides a suite of solutions for creating rich, rewarding online experiences for customers, partners and employees. DNN products and technology are the foundation for 750,000+ websites worldwide. In addition to our commercial CMS and social community solutions, DNN is the steward of the DNN Platform Open Source Project.

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