



WHITE PAPER



Your Website: Using a CMS for True Extensibility

A modern up to date website is a crucial asset for a company to stay competitive. Picking the right website content management system (WCMS) can make the difference between a website that stands the test of time or one that needs to be rebuilt over and over. The key to success is to choose a WCMS that has true extensibility.

An extensible WCMS presents a number of key benefits to stakeholders across many different departments in an organization. An extensible WCMS should be a requirement when making the short list of WCMS providers you are choosing from when looking to build a new website. This paper provides an overview on how true WCMS extensibility can deliver undeniable benefits for all parts of the organization.

WCMS Challenges and Opportunities

A content management system is essential to website administrators and marketing teams alike. The fact that the responsibility of maintaining and upgrading a corporate site typically falls on both the IT and Marketing departments means that the WCMS must meet a number of business and IT requirements including ease of use for non-technical users, wide variety of modules and applications, simplified deployment of add-on modules, and an easy path for upgrades to keep the technology up to date.

A good WCMS might be able to meet 70-80% of the business requirements for all departments involved

with the corporate site. However, no single WCMS platform will necessarily meet all of the needs of every organization without substantial tradeoffs in functionality. This is why an extensible WCMS is the best choice. A truly extensible WCMS allows stakeholders and developers to add new functionality through the use of modules and applications. Today, many providers claim that their solutions are extensible but, in reality, not all WCMS platforms are created equal.

A truly extensible WCMS platform can accommodate a wide variety of add-ons to extend website capabilities and provide additional benefits. Ease of use for non-technical users is increasingly important so that everyone can participate in the process by understanding the options and implement the changes. So, providing a wide variety of modules and choices is equally important because modules are the mechanism for actually extending capabilities. And finally, all of those add-on modules should be simple to deploy which ultimately leads to less reliance on valuable and often limited IT resources.

Improving Business with WCMS Extensibility

True extensibility benefits developers and IT departments by allowing them to concentrate on core business problems rather than spending time building functionality and features to augment the website. With extensibility, developers can choose from among many pre-built modules and applications to solve real business problems. Instead of an internal

IT team working on a single project and taking up valuable work hours, with an extensible WCMS there is a shadow team of hundreds of developers working on that project. An additional benefit of choosing an existing module or application, rather than building the functionality from scratch, is that the module will have been tested and tried in the marketplace by many other business users. By leveraging ready-made applications and modules, extensibility provides a much faster time to market for new development which in turn lowers costs.

For example, say a developer wanted to add a new photo viewing module to the website. Many times, the answer is to build the module from scratch which costs money to develop and comes with limitations as the custom work is often difficult to upgrade. Extensibility provides more choices which make it possible for other developers to create many different types of modules so organizations don't have to do all of the development and innovation themselves. Extensibility also means that the applications are constantly evolving and won't ever be "stale", which provides tremendous security for current and future technology investments. External developers are constantly innovating on their extensions, which helps ensure that a platform purchased today will continue to be cutting edge in the future.

As the responsibility of updating content usually resides in the marketing department, the WCMS should be simple to use with an intuitive user interface for the non-technical marketing users. Often times content updates fall behind as marketing must rely on the IT department to make the changes on the

site, creating a bottleneck to update the website. With an intuitive user interface, marketing can push content on the site without reliance on IT resources.

Extensibility also makes websites easier to maintain and upgrade over time. When functionality is integrated through an extensibility model the path to upgrade is clearly defined. Since extensibility allows for the use of modules and applications, there is less customization and fewer "brittle" points in an application. An extensible WCMS allows for seamless updates to new versions of the software without fear of losing functionality or breaking customized work on the website. This allows the website to grow with the business and take advantage of new technology trends. Most importantly, however, is the need for a WCMS that is scalable enough to seamlessly adapt and evolve without the need to rip and replace a site because it no longer meets the needs of the organization.

DNN Provides True WCMS Extensibility

Evoq Content from DNN is a web content management system built using the platform model so it can easily extend to provide the functionality that customers need as well as the ability to scale as the business changes and grows. Evoq Content has thousands of modules available in the DNN Store that fulfill the needs of most if not all organizations.

Evoq Content empowers everyone, including non-technical users, to be able to choose new modules, update content, and easily keep websites up to date.

An increasingly large portion of WCMS users are looking for turnkey functionality because they are not developers. With DNN, business users can visit the DNN store, search for a module – for instance, a photo viewer – and download, install, and deploy the module without IT hours or any coding. As a result, businesses can leverage their website more effectively.

There generally isn't any vendor support behind what amounts to ad hoc add-on modules. In contrast, Evoq Content comes with the features business users need today, but also has the extensibility points to continue to build out functionality which is the best way to future-proof current investments.

Conclusion

A typical WCMS will fit 70-80% of an organization's website requirements, but getting that last 20-30% out of the system may require a lot of customization and time. By using a highly extensible WCMS like Evoq Content, you can get the 70-80% functionality out of the box, and choose from thousands of existing add-ons that will close that 20-30% gap for delivering the project in a timely and cost effective manner. An additional benefit of a platform based model is the ability to future proof your website with new functionality provided through upgrades to the platform and to the add-ons, without having to start developing your website over from scratch.

When looking for a truly extensible WCMS look for functionality both included in the platform, as well as third party vendor add-ons for the ultimate flexibility.

About DNN

DNN provides a suite of solutions for creating rich, rewarding online experiences for customers, partners and employees. Our technology is the foundation for 750,000+ websites worldwide and our customers include True Value Hardware, Bose, Cornell University, Glacier Water, Dannon, Delphi, USAA, NASCAR, Northern Health and the City of Denver. In addition to our commercial solutions, DNN is the steward of the DotNetNuke Open Source Project.

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