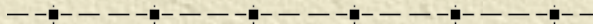




*Blazing a Web CMS Trail
at the University of
Delaware*

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University of Delaware

- ✦ A state-assisted institution in Newark, DE:
Land Grant, Sea Grant, Space Grant, Urban
Grant, Carnegie Research.
- ✦ 3,800 faculty and staff members.
- ✦ 20,300 students.

Introduction

- ✦ June 2007: Committee formed to identify a Web Content Management System for UD.
- ✦ Current state of the web: thousands of pages maintained by hundreds of users.
- ✦ Goal: to automate some aspects of page creation, management, and delivery.

Introduction, continued

✦ Ultimate Goals:

1. To provide a University website with
 - clear organizational branding
 - consistency
 - attractive, effective pages
2. To support and promote the goals of the University.

Our Process

- ✦ Governed by a user-centered approach.
- ✦ First, we sent e-mail to 3 listservs:
 - SIGUCCS general
 - SIGUCCS members
 - HighEdWeb
- ✦ Next, we surveyed UD's web server administrators.

Process, continued

- ✦ Finally, we surveyed University web content providers:
 - Number of people authoring web pages in their departments.
 - Platforms and tools in use.
 - Whether they'd be willing to participate in a focus group to discuss their process.

Find Out What Your Users Need

- ✦ Focus groups: 40 participants in four groups
 - Two academic department groups.
 - One administrative departments group.
 - One special programs group.
- ✦ Groups held at lunchtime.

Focus Group Results

- ✦ Important that site visitors recognize immediately that they are at a UD site.
- ✦ Top levels of the web should be consistent, attractive, and exhibit clear University branding.
- ✦ Beyond this, departmental pages should be unique.

Evaluate CMS Products

✦ Resources:

– Other schools' websites

- Brandeis
- UC Davis

– Commercial products

- Vasont Systems' free *CMS Starter Kit* website
- Ann Rockley's *Managing Enterprise Content*
- JoAnn Hackos' *Content Management for Dynamic Web Delivery*
- Scott Abel's *The Content Wrangler* website

Evaluate CMS Products, continued

✦ CMS Watch website

✦ CMS Matrix

- Describes over 900 CMS programs.
- Covers commercial and open source.
- Allows you to compare up to 10 programs.
- Allows you to search on features you need.

Commercial or Open Source?

✦ Commercial

- Arrives as a package, ready to be installed.
- Often installed by the company that owns it.
- Up and running quickly.
- Company there to answer questions.

Commercial or Open Source?

✦ Open source

- To adopt it, you must have:
 - Technical staff to install and maintain the system.
 - Database administrator.
 - People to decide what features to include.
 - Staff to support the program and train others.
- Paid consultants are available to help implement the system if staff is lacking.

Drawbacks of Each Type

✦ Commercial

- Only as good as the vendor.
- Dependent on the vendor for installation and upgrades.
- Training and implementation fees can be expensive.

Drawbacks of Each Type

✦ Open Source

- Help might be difficult to find if there are problems with installation.
- Changes to the code might make upgrades difficult.
- Hidden costs: development and implementation, migration to a new system, training, keeping current with upgrades.

Overall considerations

- ✦ Make sure system scales to your needs.
- ✦ Choose a system that is flexible and easy for content providers to use.
- ✦ Ensure buy-in from your administration for funding and staffing the CMS.

A CMS for UD

- ✦ We established a timeline.
- ✦ Scheduled demonstrations.
- ✦ We were on schedule!

Changes from above

- ✦ New university administrative team.
 - New President and Exec. Vice-President
 - V.P. for IT announced her retirement
- ✦ New regime felt University web pages lacked branding.
- ✦ A CMS could include consistent branding!
- ✦ More justification for our efforts.

A Curveball

- ✦ December 2007 – IT administration told us to look at only Open Source products.
- ✦ Frustration.
 - Committee couldn't do the thorough evaluation we had planned.
 - We had lost control - steered from above.
 - Decided to make the best of it.
 - Assured we could look at commercial options in the future if needed.

Open Source Options

✦ Narrowed our search to:

- Plone
- Joomla
- Drupal

Plone

- ✦ Decided not to pursue.

- ✦ Didn't work with our existing server technology.

Joomla & Drupal

- ✦ Committee and some users on campus came together.
- ✦ Eliminated Joomla.
 - Didn't have the capability to meet our needs as defined by the focus groups.
- ✦ Positive uses of Drupal on campus.

Evaluating Drupal

- ✦ In-depth evaluation began.
- ✦ What would be needed to offer a user-friendly installation?
 - Appropriate modules.
 - Themes.
 - WYSIWYG Editors.

Another Curveball

- ✦ Was Drupal good enough?
- ✦ If it was good enough, go with Drupal.
- ✦ Frustration again...
 - Not enough time to evaluate appropriately.
 - Heard of some implementation problems at other institutions.
 - Needed lots of customization.

Drupal Recommended

- ✦ Reluctantly recommended Drupal with appropriate caveats (staffing, etc.).
- ✦ Assured that IT would provide resources.

Did I Mention?

- ✦ Assured that additional IT resources would be provided.

What the heck?

- ✦ Told no additional IT help available.
 - Needed programmers.
 - People dedicated full-time to the project.

No Resources!?! New Plan

- ✦ Bring the user community together.
- ✦ Call on Drupal experience of others.

Establish Communication

- ✦ Work on project together.
- ✦ Improve view of IT on campus.

Win – Win!

Collaboration

- ✦ Group met and developed a plan.
- ✦ Evaluate and customize modules.
- ✦ Make recommendations for a standard offering.

The UD Drupal Package

- ✦ Standard modules & themes (templates).
- ✦ Windows Sandbox server – develop here.
- ✦ Central UNIX Server – move to here.

The UD Drupal Package Goal

- ✦ Central UNIX server for anyone on campus.
- ✦ UNIX package for departments to use on their own servers.
- ✦ Also, a Windows package for departments.

The UD Drupal Package Goal, continued

- ✦ Standard installations will be easier to support.
- ✦ Consistent documentation and training.
- ✦ Get people to move from other CMS's they may be using.

Current Status

- ✦ Community users invited to pilot sites.
- ✦ Meet weekly to discuss progress/needs.
- ✦ Commitment of MIS Programming help and promise of additional help as needed.
- ✦ Add Modules and customize as needed.



Latest news

January 15th, 2009 Rollout!

Central UNIX Server

- ✦ Move pilot sites to central server.
- ✦ Expedite our work to meet deadline.
- ✦ Technical Writers working with the team so they can document the package.

Project Manager

- ✦ Keep project on track.
- ✦ Keep group together.
- ✦ Invite new users to create pilot sites.
- ✦ Coordinate documentation/training efforts.

UD Branding

- ✦ Concurrently, Office of Communication and Marketing has released new mandatory web page headers and footers.
- ✦ We are installing these in Drupal.
- ✦ Will be available at rollout.