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Web Content Management System

History

Sliced content management system

Sliced launched version 3 of our web content management system in February 2006, with version 4 close on its' heels. We initially began developing our CMS system in 2002 as a direct result of the needs of one of our clients' who wanted to be able to have a flexible and up-dateable website which didn't cost the earth to maintain or adjust.

Dr. Mark Dibley, our lead programmer at the time, was the original founder of this web content management system. Unfortunately the client (a film studio based in Sussex) went bankrupt before we could complete the development. However every cloud has a silver lining and now our web content management system has come on leaps and bounds, growing into a fully fledged, tried and tested web application being used by over 20 companies nationwide.

Sliced update our core CMS software approximately every year, introducing enhancements, taking on board customer feedback and adding new cms features each time. There are incremental updates throughout each year and our clients enjoy 2 years of free updates to their core system as a matter of course. Sliced are committed to developing our web content management system into the future, as we really do see it as the way forward for most website needs. Flexible, up-dateable and cost effective control of websites.

We are moving to XML coding of templates and increased use of CSS in 2006 - using cascading style sheets where possible. This will ensure that code is compliant and will be useable well into the future, as XML is the new standard web language.

CMS is it the right solution for your company?

There are many reasons for using a web content management system (CMS).

A web content management system allows the end user (you) to update content on your website without technical skills or expensive know how. It is widely accepted that a website is often the first exposure a potential customer gets to your company, so it is crucial to have the right content presently in keeping with your branding. It is also a common complaint that site content is out of date and a costly chore to maintain. Using Sliced CMS website ensures that you can keep your web content up to date and keep your customers informed with your news as it happens.

Browser based content editing

Sliced CMS solution is a web content management system. This means that your website content can be edited through most modern web browsers*, regardless of platform, from anywhere in the world, reflecting any changes on your website instantly. (* Currently we recommend using Microsoft® Explorer version 6 or above, Apple's Safari Browser, version 2 or above, Firefox Browser version 1.5 or above, Netscape Browser 8.1)

Content management outline

Once logged in to the administration area on your site, you have a varying degree of control (dependent on which CMS version you use) over content such as images, text, links, files and multimedia.

This may include adding new pages, administering site members, sending e-mail newsletters and changing website colours. The overall style of your site is pre-defined by Sliced specifically for you, with a custom website design. This means that if you add new pages or content, it will have the right 'look and feel' by default. We call this the 'template' design, and may create a style guide for you, but as mentioned we make only custom website designs. We do this by researching your company's needs and tailor making a design solution, rather than creating generic templates which you choose from. This makes updates to your website simple in terms of style, allowing your company to concentrate on the content rather than getting bogged down by design. You will also be able to have greater input into the design if you choose, with advanced editing features and the ability to add HTML into the CMS.

Regular website updates

Why update your website regularly?

In order to really gain the maximum benefit from having a website these days, a site must be regularly updated. For example, if you produce a company brochure, would you send out the same brochure, week in week out, with the same content and images to your customers? You may currently do this, but at some point the reader will wonder why nothing new has been introduced. Something new may include new business, new clients, new products, new pricing structures etc. The internet lends itself as a very strong marketing tool for making minor content adjustments without costing anywhere near the same as making adjustments in print. This is the main benefit of having a CMS system; making content updates to your website are cost effective and easy to achieve. So to summarise, by using a web content management system your site will become an

increasingly effective and efficient sales and marketing tool. You can even add European multilingual content to expand your market potential and coverage, as well as saving what could be potentially large sums of money on updates.

Be seen on the web through search engines with CMS.

These days many people wish to be found more easily through the major search engines. There are countless, many millions of websites around today about all manner of subjects, and one of the defining reasons why one website will do better than another is because the content appearing on it is regularly updated. Having a traditional website means creating your new content, then sending this over to your website designer and requesting this be updated on your site by manual coding. Naturally there will be a fee for this, and the update will be scheduled into the designers' workflow. With a web content management system, this process can be dramatically quicker, as content can be updated in house, and much more easily by a third party if not done in house. Not only are maintenance costs lowered, but your content will be fresh in both your customer's eyes, as well as demonstrating to the search engines that your site is topical and updated. Advanced meta data can be simply edited through Sliced CMS, so you can really keep control of advanced search engine elements.

How many updates should we make with a CMS system to gain maximum Value for money?

There is no fixed answer to this. Not every company has the time or resources to update web content every day. Nor would many companies have enough new to say every day. However we do recommend, as a rough guideline, that a minimum of 3-4 hours of updates are made each month. This equates to a cost of around £100-£200 of website design updates at industry standard fees. Dependent on the annual or monthly license fee, the cost savings alone speak for themselves. We have already mentioned some potential updates that can be made, such as specifically updating your new products and service offerings, however there are some useful and effective alternatives to trying to think up something new each month. These may include linking to industry related news feeds, adding articles which outline new industry legislation and so forth. You could link to exhibitions or events related to your business. In fact Sliced have good experience in web marketing, so please ask us to come up with a plan specifically for your company today, which will help you to get the most from your website.

Share your knowledge online

It may seem obvious, but most business users using the internet want to learn something, or to purchase something. Your skill and knowledge about your own particular product or service, is inevitably going to be much better than anyone else's knowledge on this product or service. So why not share your knowledge? Not only will your site be updated regularly, giving both existing and potential customers a reason to return to your site, but you will also find that your estimations will improve over that of your competitors. You could offer a sample of your services, or another hook to bring customers in.

Assess your requirements for our content management system

Any company can now buy into a CMS system as the costs are often as low as a traditional website, however there are definitely key factors which you should identify before committing to purchasing a CMS solution. To really get the most from your website generally you should consider:

1. A well structured plan should be put into place outlining which areas of your website will be updated regularly.
2. An estimated monthly time allocation should be calculated based on 1 above. This will define whether you have the resources to make these updates or if these should be outsourced. Sliced offer a monthly update scheme starting from 1 hour's work per month, which can maximise your website potential whilst keeping costs down.
3. A person, and / or group should be allocated to update elements of your site regularly. One person could be responsible for all updates, however multi level admin is available with Sliced CMS, which means that your staff could apply their specific knowledge to various sections of your site.
4. Do you have the resources to train and keep staff up to date with CMS functionality and features?
5. Website images are often the main stumbling point for a company. Is your company able to source and manipulate good quality images? This needs to be considered for both a traditional and web content management website.

The simple answer is that most companies are suitable for CMS systems. Many companies choose a content management product, then elect to have a third party update the content on their site. This does prove to be a cost effective solution as using CMS is far quicker than creating HTML pages by hand. It is your core website marketing strategy that is key. Using a CMS system allows for easy, cost effective and regular updates, as well as customer relation management and other benefits.