

Chapter II

Methods and Tools for Managing Library Web Content

Johan Ragetli

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

In this chapter key methods and tools available to libraries to manage their Web content are identified. Content in libraries may include subject guides, calendars, hours of operation, and digital collections. Solutions to manage a wide variety of materials and contributors range from enterprise-wide content management systems to homegrown, open source solutions.

Introduction

“The networked information revolution has arrived but is still in its infancy. I believe that we will spend the next decade or two refining the technology and building up an ever-growing mass of content.” (Lynch, 2000, p. 67)

Digital content continues to grow at huge rates. As most organizations move from paper to electronic documents, it will become redundant even to say

digital content in the context of document creation. Clifford Lynch, Director of the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), is well known nationally and internationally, and speaks and writes widely on issues of technology and libraries. In describing the current state of libraries, he remarks that libraries find themselves today in a state of transformation. They are moving forward from the automation of existing library services and the provision of online access to internal print collections into a new phase of content creation and delivery. They have embraced information technology and are finding ways to innovate and experiment to deliver content that is in many cases external to the library, such as full-text databases. Information technology has profoundly affected the way that libraries conceive of and deliver services.

In the business world, *content management* (CM) likewise has become a juggernaut, applying to all applications and systems dealing with the organization of data, which is reflected in the number of companies and strategies and varying technologies competing in the content arena. *EContent* magazine creates an annual short list of 100 “excellent companies tackling the content space” and perhaps more significantly had difficulty in “defining what categories would prove most useful in attempting to define the space itself” (Manafy, 2002, p. 18).

Bob Boiko (2001), author of the *Content Management Bible*, states that CM is an overall process for collecting, organizing, managing, and publishing content to any outlet. Currently Web content management, or WCM, is mainly reflected in organizations where large-scale Web development projects have been initiated to combat the need to organize large numbers of disparate Web objects and to publish content to one significant outlet—namely the Web.

In contrast to large commercial sites, libraries typically are not dealing with large-scale Web sites, critical updates, huge amounts of content, or frequently updated information. Likewise they are not driven by commercial necessity to provide the latest in Web services. However they are dealing with a changing work environment, and there are increasing pressures to provide personalized services to their users. Libraries as a result are finding ways to reuse content and to repackage data in meaningful and personalized ways. Many organizations are struggling to deal with the challenge of selecting the right technology to address the diversity of tasks required by increasing client demands and changing workflows. Library Web managers too are increasingly faced with growing numbers of contributors and the demands of new functionality and increasingly sophisticated Web applications. A rise in staff and user demands to allow increased participation in and customization of library Web sites leads

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