

SWOT Assessment: dotCMS

dotCMS v2.5

Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

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Author: Sue Clarke

SUMMARY

Catalyst

Traditional web content management (WCM) products that provide functionality to develop largely static, information-based websites are fast disappearing. They are being replaced by products that enable organizations to offer website visitors a highly personalized, engaging experience. dotCMS is one of a healthy number of open source WCM vendors that provide cost-effective solutions to organizations. Its solution offers a core WCM system, with social, mobile, and some analytics capabilities, which can be complemented by Google Analytics or Adobe Site Catalyst. Being open source, the community edition can be downloaded for free, although Ovum recommends that organizations consider the paid-for Enterprise edition.

Key messages

- dotCMS supports responsive design and 13 cascading style sheet (CSS) frameworks to deliver content across multiple devices and through multiple channels.
- Organizations are able to run multiple sites, in a multitude of languages, on different servers. Thousands of sites can be hosted using a single instance of dotCMS.
- Remote publishing supports a variety of publishing architectures out of the box. Push publishing architectures supported include: authoring/delivery; enterprise deployments (stage, QA, and production); remote disaster recovery; geographic load balancing; and multi-server, shared-nothing scalability.
- dotCMS includes limited analytics to provide statistics about site visits and some profiling information. However, dotCMS currently does not offer the capability to monitor brand mentions on social media sites.

Ovum view

An organization's corporate website is a business-critical communication channel because it is usually the first port of call for customers, partners, suppliers, and stakeholders looking for information relating to products, services, and company news. There is therefore a clear requirement for the content and information presented by corporate websites to be dynamic, relevant, and accurate. dotCMS, a provider of open source, Java/J2EE WCM solutions, aims to offer organizations a cost-effective open-standards-based WCM system that can be used by enterprise web content authors. The Community Edition (licensed under GPL 3.0) of dotCMS offers a free route to high-functionality WCM. Commercial versions of dotCMS enable organizations to choose between in-house or cloud-based deployments.

Although open source products provide a more affordable solution than proprietary systems for smaller companies, the lack of support and maintenance will make it difficult for companies with few or no technical resources to manage the system. Ovum therefore recommends that organizations should always opt for the support option, which is provided as part of the license/enterprise offering.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENTERPRISES

Why consider dotCMS 2.5?

The product was designed with simplicity, flexibility, and usability as its core themes. dotCMS is targeted at the business-user base across functional departments and does not require content authors or website managers to have knowledge of HTML or scripting languages, even though these facilities are fully supported for advanced users or website developers. dotCMS incorporates a WYSIWYG editor that enables content authors across the organizations to create, edit, and modify content. dotCMS is an ideal solution for organizations that want a cost-effective WCM solution that is highly scalable with multi-level caching. The Enterprise edition will suit larger organizations that need extended features, with support and maintenance.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

A single instance of dotCMS supports thousands of sites

A single multi-tenant instance of dotCMS can run thousands of sites in multiple languages, including micro-sites and mega-sites. Content, templates, and assets can be shared across sites if required; and new sites can be developed quickly by copying an existing site, editing it, and then launching the new site.

Responsive design enables omni-channel delivery

dotCMS uses a responsive design and supports 13 CSS frameworks, including Twitter Bootstrap, Foundation, and Unsemantic. Custom themes can be developed that use native mobile device

capabilities, allowing content to be automatically rendered to the size of the screen of the device on which it will be displayed.

Extensive mobile support provided

dotCMS can make use of device capabilities, such as geo-location services, which are based on a standards-based database of device attributes (Wireless Universal Resource File [WURFL]). The product ships with JQuery Mobile Site, which allows users to deliver mobile apps for all popular mobile device platforms.

Some social capabilities are included

Content can easily be published to social channels including Twitter and Facebook through a single click. Content can also be pushed to social network sites using workflows.

Remote publishing is enabled through push processing

Push publishing provides a flexible remote publishing platform, which supports any publishing architecture. It uses browser-based administration that allows administrators to manage remote servers and publishing processes from a single user interface. Anything from a single piece of content to an entire website can be published.

Weaknesses

Limited analytics included

dotCMS includes limited analytics to provide statistics about site visits and some profiling information. However, there is currently no capability to monitor brand mentions on social media sites. This is a capability that would be useful for organizations attempting to keep abreast of content being written about them on social network sites. However, dotCMS is not the only vendor not to provide this capability, as it is one of the more advanced social functions, and is not the first social feature that most WCM vendors add to their portfolios.

Opportunities

dotCMS has the opportunity to sell to marketing departments

dotCMS is particularly applicable to marketing departments that need to provide publishers and content contributors with a unified web-authoring tool that integrates with third-party systems and data repositories. A clear pointer to the target market of this offering are the dotCMS "accelerators" that have been developed for public-sector information sites, higher education, and associations (".org" groups).



A key opportunity is an organization's need to eliminate the typical bottlenecks that occur in publishing content to the web

A key market opportunity for dotCMS is linked with an organization's need to eliminate the typical bottlenecks that occur in publishing content to the web. Like other WCM solutions on the market, dotCMS aims to address this by targeting the average business user or knowledge worker who needs to author and/or publish web content. dotCMS delivers strong functionality without being overly complex, making good use of open source technology and adhering to established and emerging web standards.

Threats

There are a high number of WCM products

The WCM market space is very competitive with a high number of products for organizations to choose from. These range from standalone products to WCM capabilities within ECM platforms. As a cost-effective open source solution, dotCMS should have an advantage over many of its competitors.

ECM vendors have the advantage of providing a single platform for all content management needs

Organizations that prefer a one-stop-shop approach and that have implemented ECM are unlikely to deploy a separate WCM system. Ovum would urge organizations to consider whether the WCM system within the ECM platform can deliver the full range of capabilities required. Specialist WCM vendors often provide more extensive features.

DATA SHEET

Key facts about the solution

Table 1: dotCMS data sheet

Product name	dotCMS	Product classification	Content management
Version number	2.5	Release date	September 2013
Industries covered	All	Geographies covered	All
Relevant company sizes	Any	Platforms supported	Windows, Linux, Solaris, AIX
Languages supported	English, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Dutch, Russian, and Chinese	Licensing options	Community Edition GPL 3.0, Enterprise Edition dotCMS Open License
Deployment options	On-premise, on-premise managed, SaaS	Route(s) to market	Direct and partners
URL	www.dotCMS.com	Company headquarters	Miami, Florida, US
European headquarters	Eindhoven, The Netherlands	North America headquarters	As above
Asia-Pacific headquarters	N/A		

Source: Ovum

APPENDIX

Methodology

Ovum SWOT Assessments are independent reviews carried out using Ovum's evaluation model for the relevant technology area, supported by conversations with vendors, users, and service providers of the solution concerned, and in-depth secondary research.

Further reading

Web Content Management 2012/2013 (Technology Evaluation Report), IT014-002685 (January 2013)

Author

Sue Clarke, Senior Analyst, Software – Information Management

sue.clarke@ovum.com

Ovum Consulting

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