

CMS or Portal? Choosing the Right Technology

Dotcms CTO Will Ezell takes a look at trends driving change for content management

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Why do companies have trouble deciding between these systems?

There's a fair amount of overlap between a CMS and a portal—many portal tools contain rudimentary content management tools. But while companies may be able to use a portal in place of a CMS system, getting it to look and act the way you like might be difficult. You might end up trying to hammer a square peg into a round hole.



How so?

Companies often choose to use portals for their document libraries or content-rich intranets. The issue is that portals are really just frameworks intended to provide an aggregated view into multiple enterprise applications based on a user's profile. Think of the old My Yahoo pages, which contained a lot of customizable, lightweight widgets—it turns out that the widgets were too lightweight and users inevitably would leave for the fuller experience of the native sites.

The real problem is that today's business users expect any site—web, mobile, even intranets—to look and interact in ways that portals weren't designed for.

So it's a question of function not meeting need?

Portals are good at what they are designed for, but can be cumbersome to build in. They require your sites to function in a specific way, which makes it hard on your users. And these days, users are used to dealing with websites and apps that are flexible, intuitive, and very easy to use. Turns out, your workforce wants their work-related web experiences to be just as simple and easy as their consumer experiences.

So CMS systems like Dotcms are built to address ease of use?

Absolutely. If your team has ever wrestled with the look, feel or interactivity of your portal-driven site or intranet, you should consider Dotcms. Dotcms is designed from the ground up to manage and seamlessly deliver role-based content, sites, mobile sites, intranets and applications without impacting interactivity or imposing rigid look-and-feel requirements. It moves content and user experience to the center of the equation, where it belongs. We basically provide the development tools and get out of the way.

How do Java developers react to working with Dotcms?

When J2EE developers hear from a business unit, "I need ABC web site that does XYZ," they instinctively reach for a portal framework.

It turns out that a CMS might offer an easier, more flexible platform for delivering such sites and apps. Dotcms is based on familiar open standards such as OSGi, CMIS, Spring, Struts, Hibernate, Velocity and Elasticsearch, which also means that developers can take our code base and customize it to do whatever they need.

Our UI is very straightforward and easy to comprehend; we tried to make Dotcms as approachable and simple as possible. Plus, our use of loosely coupled RESTful APIs means that you can read/write content and apps to any 3rd-party web-based system, be it php, .NET or J2EE. It's just much easier to respond to changes and manage any given site or content.

And this may be the best part: it's a fraction of the price of most portal solutions in this space.

For more information visit dotcms.com