



# 10 Questions To Ask When Selecting a Website Content Management System (CMS) Package

## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

**A Very Quick Overview** - If you just want a quick taste of the top 10 CMS selection questions to consider, read on...

**1. Is it WYSIWYG?**

You need to be able to see how it will look on the web, so text entry boxes just don't hack it anymore.

**2. Do I have to pay for it?**

'Free' systems are never free. Commercial organisations need to earn money so watch out for the hidden costs.

**3. How easy is it to use?**

Don't just read the marketing literature, check it out - easy is a comparative term.

**4. "If you build it they will come" Or SEO?**

OK so it can put you in control but make sure it understands search engines requirements so you get promotion?

**5. Can you analyse your CMS success?**

Make sure you're able to analyse your visitors' interest so you can change the website to meet their demands.

**6. Is it Flexible?**

Make sure the CMS works for you and that you don't have to change your ideas to fit. And get a list of add-ons that are available now and planned.

**7. Was it designed for you?**

Make sure it can do what you need it to do in your market

for your customers.

**8. What about Social Media & Platforms?**

Social media and mobile browsers are now and growing. Test out sites created to make sure they work and feed.

**9. Can it work with my team?**

Don't forget the way you work is your way and your team interact in a set way, make sure the CMS supports your team operation and management.

**10. "Ah, yes, but can it...?"**

Finally, you won't have thought of everything, so make sure the CMS can be tailored/modified to whatever quirky thing you think of!

OK, that's the executive flying visit to the 10 questions. But if you're serious about CMS then take the time to read more detail on the following pages and enjoy - remember a CMS is for life - or at least it should be, if it can be expanded as your business grows!

*If you'd like to discuss CMS in more detail please contact the author: Mark Robson on 0845 643 6181 or email him at [markr@insightgroup.co.uk](mailto:markr@insightgroup.co.uk)*



*In a recent survey carried out by Econsultancy they found that the majority of companies (60%) use proprietary software as their CMS.*

*35% are spending at least £10,000 a year on their CMS licence, and this goes up to 70% for the largest organisations (more than 1,000 employees). Almost half (48%) of the largest companies are spending more than £50,000 annually and 5% are paying more than £1m.*

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or the bottom of the image because it 'doesn't follow the rules'. Commonly CMS systems with such tight rules can be identified easily, because they will have a series of 'data entry' areas which take text in a standard font such as courier and place images 'in the box' ready to be positioned in a template after you click submit.

## 2. Do I have to pay for it?

There are literally hundreds of CMS systems on the market ranging from free (and remember nothing is free) to systems costing hundreds of thousands of £/€/€ (enter your own currency here – the number of 0's will still be huge!). Are they overpriced or underpriced?

Well actually neither!

The systems that cost the 'trailing 0's' are normally implemented by large multinational corporations needing multi country, multi language, multi-user/administrator, back end system integration (CRM, ERM, HR, Accounting), legal audit trails etc. So they are getting what they want and paying for it.

The 'free' systems are never free (and here I make reference to a book on this subject which clearly outlines that nothing is actually free, but that free has become the norm because of the internet and that free now means a "sales leader" i.e. it seems free but to get what you want you then need to pay extra. (Free

by Chris Anderson, published by Random House in the UK and Hyperion in the US, both in 2009, ISBN 9781847940445. Copyright Chris Anderson©). They are never free because there is always a cost. The cost may be down the line with upgrades to provide the functionality you need, costing much more than you expect. Or it may be that they include adverts to pages you produce, which when you started creating your web was not a problem, but now, business has picked up and actually it's giving the wrong message to your audience, negatively affecting your sales because of the impression they make.

And take the free open source route, where a collective group of very talented and very clever people, using the Internet develop a CMS solution (these open source groups create all manner of solutions and CMS is just one of them). There are a number of these available and a lot of very powerful and very good ones. They are free, because no money changes hands. But to get some of these to run you need time and technical knowledge – and yes these are free – but is your time best spent configuring, installing, maintaining and administering a CMS? Do you have the knowledge to set up your own web server or identify a web server provider that can give you the correct configuration?



When you look at these options the answer may well be "Yes, this is the right solution for me", but it's not free - the





Three search engines providers dominate 91% the market of the market:

- Google 64.6%
- Yahoo 16%
- Microsoft 10.7%

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make sure that you get the visitors you need. The various Search Engines use different aspects of your website and underlying code held within the pages to list and rank your website. So it is really, really important to make sure that the CMS you choose lets you manage these. The major websites reported by Nielsen™ in Q3 2009 showed three search engines providers accounting for just over 91% of the market - Google© with major dominance at 64.6%, Yahoo© at 16% and Microsoft© at 10.7%. And each of these search engines uses a different methodology (ranking algorithm), a different weighting of how they rank websites and a different approach to website page content relationship.

There is a whole science to SEO, but the basics such as meta tags, meta descriptions and friendly page names should be easily accessible and modifiable for every page on your web site. If the CMS you are looking at doesn't give you SEO control, then move on, because it might answer yes to the other nine questions, but 'So what?' because you will build it and no-one will come!

| Search Provider      | Searches (000)    |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>10,812,734</b> |
| Google               | 6,986,580         |
| Yahoo                | 1,726,060         |
| MSN/WindowsLive/Bing | 1,156,415         |
| AOL                  | 333,231           |

Source: Nielsen MegaView Search

## 5. Can you analyse your CMS success?

With the availability of very good, free website analytics applications like Google Analytics, it's crucial that your chosen

CMS is set up in such a way that you can collect and analyse visitor statistics to maximise your website traffic.

Which begs the question, 'If I have created a website and I have a Google Analytics account, why wouldn't it work?' And, without getting too technical on this, it's all down to how the CMS works.



Google Analytics (as do all analytic packages) needs to be able to identify activity by page identifier. Some CMS systems don't allocate unique names (URLs) for each page and the end result is that the browser displays new information but doesn't change the page name. Google Analytics then logs that the same page has been displayed again.... and again.... and again. So your reports are skewed and any actions you take are skewed. To illustrate this point if you had a products page with products 1-10 listed with links to display more information, the CMS treats all products on that page as the same page name (e.g. products). Every time you click on the products page or a product click through, you will see a report saying that your products page is very popular, but the products listed (1-10) got no interest at all. The reality could be that product 1 is the most popular product you have, but you could view the stats. and drop all products on that page.

## 6. Is it Flexible? Will it play to your tune?

Before you select a CMS, you need to get a rough site layout in your head of what you are looking to have on the site. It doesn't need to be complete but you do need to get a feeling











## A BIT ABOUT INSIGHT

Insight group is a PR and Marketing Consultancy with online marketing experience stretching over two decades, run by marketing professionals for marketing professionals

So what does that mean for you? Well, we've seen the Internet grow and integrate into our every day lives. We've worked with organisations large and small in the UK, Europe and Worldwide. And we can bring that experience and design creativity to bear on your web site. To make sure that it delivers what your visitors want to see, make it easy and enjoyable for them to find what they need and to make it exactly what you need to grow your business.

Simple when you know how. .... and we do.  
Founded in 1988 to focus solely on the technology sector, our long history has given us a wealth of experience in business-to-business and business-to-consumer IT markets. With significant experience of harnessing technology for online marketing results.

The marketing campaigns we have delivered have propelled numerous clients to market leading positions. We have extensive experience in launching new companies, promoting leading organisations in new markets, managing mergers and

acquisitions and providing marketing activity that is designed based on a solid understanding of business.

Insight provides comprehensive campaign implementation when required for ad-hoc and ongoing campaigns. Our major specialisms are:

- Email Marketing
- Cms Website Design And Development
- Outsourced Marketing & Marketing Consultancy
- Lead Generation Marketing Campaigns
- Public Relations For The IT & Telecoms Industries
- Graphics Design

**For more information on how Insight can help you, please contact us.**

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