



the **LavaCon** Conference on

Advanced Technical Communication and Project Management

How To Save Big Bucks On Your CMS Implementation

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Overview

- **A Content Management System is a software system used primarily for storing, retrieving, controlling, and publishing materials from a potentially large number of contributors**
- **CMS tools have serious costs associated with them (not just cash value)**
- **Not only the software, but also service**
- **Down time must be factored in**
- **You can reduce costs by planning**

About the presenter

- **Worked in documentation and training fields since 1992**
- **Tool and vendor agnostic¹**
- **Consultant and trainer in CMS, XML, DITA, and publishing technologies**

1. Philosophical view that the truth or value of certain claims is unknown (for the purposes of this slideshow)



Before You Buy

Plan your implementation

- **Plan, plan, plan, or else it will take ten times¹ as long to fix your mistakes later**
- **Risk management is crucial**

1. Okay, maybe not ten times. It could be three, or five, or twenty. But it will be more time.

Open source?

- **Consider using an open source CMS to gauge your company's fit and to figure out the basics**
- **You don't need to implement it, but at least read supporting docs for ideas**

How much to spend

- **Shop around**
- **Expensive doesn't mean it's the best**
- **Low cost is not always the best**
- **Plan a realistic budget. Then add 50%.¹**

1. Okay, maybe not 50%. But expect your estimates and the actual costs to vary. Unless you really work at it, your cost estimate will be low.

Vendor track record

- **Find a vendor with a good track record**
- **Ask others in a related field**
- **Hire people with CMS backgrounds**
- **Talk to vendor-agnostic consultants**

Vendor client base

- **Pick a vendor who has other customers doing what you want to do**
- **Related companies likely do related work**

Internal stakeholders

- **Get key stakeholders on board and excited**
- **Prevent yourself from having to rationalize the CMS purchase over and over and over and over and over and over**

Test case

- **Do a test case with your own files before you buy**
- **Consider DITA (more on that in a minute) as a starting point**



If You Get DITA

DITA in a single slide

- **D is for Darwin**
- **IT is for Information Typing**
- **A is for Architecture**
- **DITA is primarily about Topic, Maps and Specialization**
- **Some specializations included for**
 - **concept, reference, task, glossary (topic based)**
 - **bookmap (map based)**
 - **various domains (software, programming)**

To specialize or not

- **Keep it simple, especially early**
- **Topic, Concept, Task, Reference and Glossary are there for a reason**
- **Specializing DITA means specializing everything that uses DITA**
- **This means hiring expensive outside help or getting custom solutions**

What writers need to do

- **Teach them topic-based writing**
- **Ease them into DITA**
- **Start with generic topic, task, concept, reference**

Tools to consider

- **Who cares?**
- **Seriously? Who cares?**
- **Tools become disposable**
- **Content is king and queen (and maybe court jester)**
- **Once it's in DITA, content is organized and software independent**

Reuse of content

- **DITA or not, a CMS provides this**
- **Reuse your topics, ad infinitum**
- **Reduce writing duplication**
- **Reduce error instances**
- **Reduce translation costs**
- **Reduce editing time**



After You Buy

Training

- **Don't skimp on CMS training**
- **It's an investment in your people**
- **Saves time and money later**

When to train

- **Train at the right time**
- **If not, then plan to train again**
- **Provide time for trainees to learn and test after the course**

Who to train

- **Don't train just one person per expertise**
- **They'll either be**
 - **A bottleneck**
 - **Offered another job elsewhere**
 - **Moving to another department**
- **It costs money to lose people so train more than you need**



Writers and CMS use

- **Ease your writers into CMS use**
- **Show them the end goal**
- **Failure to do so could cost you personnel, time, content**

Editing/writing software

- **Once you have a CMS, you get your pick of XML editors**
- **You can go as cheap as you want**
- **Some tools are bundled**
- **Specific tools for specific functions, but shared content**

Translation of content

- **A CMS means translating each word**
- **Once**
- **Ever**

Content management

- **The CM in CMS means something**
- **Let your CMS manage content as well as change control, versions, and workflow**
- **Don't just check files in and out**

Finding and tracking

- **A CMS means never losing content**
- **Being able to access any changes ever made**

Publishing content

- **Stop wasting time waiting for documents to publish**
- **Use your CMS to automate it and build overnight**
- **Programmatically develop output**
- **Focus on writing, not on creating PDF, help files and web pages**

Speed up your workflow

- **Shorten your time to market**
- **Less time spent manually managing content**
- **Writers can spend more time writing**



Conclusions

Summary

- **CMS tools have serious costs associated with them (not just cash value)**
- **Not only the software, but also service**
- **Down time must be factored in**
- **You can reduce costs by planning**

More information

- **Contact me**
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