



CMS Buying Considerations

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Version: 1.1

18th January 2010

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1 Introduction

1.1 Target audience

This document is written for people who are considering purchasing a Content Management System (CMS) based website. This document is aimed to assist people working in SMEs, whether they are commercial, non-profit or governmental.

1.2 Background

Exadium provides independent advice concerning Online Marketing and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). In this role Exadium has seen many CMS based websites implemented by inexperienced web developers.

It is not always initially obvious from the outside, but after Exadium's review, we recommend content changes only to have clients reply with: "Our CMS doesn't allow us to add a page." or "We can't change page titles ourselves".

There are two issues at the root of these problems:


1. The client has bought a proprietary CMS from a vendor, and their CMS lacks basic features due to a small customer base and/or lack of development effort available.
2. The vendor uses a well thought-out CMS but their implementation of the templates restricts its use. We have seen this most with implementations by design based companies.

Thinking they purchased a real CMS, the clients still have to go through their web developer for changes. This not only costs extra money, but it often takes a long time to complete.

To avoid these issues for your new website Exadium has provided a quick check list. The checklist shows those basic changes that you should be able to make in any CMS implementation.

2 Checklist

Ask the following very basic questions to your shortlist of web developers to ensure you are getting a true CMS. If they answer “yes, that is all standard stuff” they are a good potential candidate.

				
1. Can I change all key aspects of my website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A. Navigation / pages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I add pages to the website myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I remove pages from the website myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I move pages within the website myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B. Content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I change the content of the page myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I change the title of the page myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I change the meta description of the page myself? ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I change images in the content myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can I upload images to the site myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. If possible request to view the administration area of one of the sites they developed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is the demo error free?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Can they work with their own CMS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does it look easy to maintain?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This list only contains the most basic features any CMS should include; a good implementation will be tailored to your specific requirements.

Of course all websites developed by Exadium check these boxes! Get in touch for a quote today: call 02920 008 699 or e-mail info@exadium.com.

¹ The meta description is a summary used by search engines in their result pages.

3 Glossary

CMS / WCMS	A Web Content Management System is designed to simplify the publication of web sites, in particular, allowing content creators to submit content without requiring technical knowledge of HTML or the uploading of files.
(X)HTML	Stands for (Extensible) HyperText Markup Language, is the predominant language used to create web pages.
meta description	Short summary of a webpage used by search engines on their results pages.
SEO	Search Engine Optimisation is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a website from search engines via natural or un-paid (organic or algorithmic) search results.
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
Page title	The title displayed in the browser window title bar, which is an important factor in optimisation of keywords.

3.1 Sources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_management_system

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTML>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization

http://www.contentmanager.net/magazine/article_257_open_source_commercial_cms.html

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