

Keep It Fresh: Sustaining the University Web

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Keep It Fresh: Sustaining the University Web

- Background
- Discovery Project
- Deploying the System
- Sustaining the System
- How It Works
- System Features
- Keeping It Fresh

BACKGROUND

Fall 2002

- Dartmouth College
- Web Publishing
- Campus Web
- Content Management
- Projected Phases



Background: About Dartmouth College

- Ivy League school, founded in 1769
- Leader in academic computing: BASIC, timesharing, networking, wireless (featured in *Wired* magazine)



- “An urban island surrounded by the ‘green silence of wilderness’” — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Background:

About Web Publishing Services

- Web publishing team reorganized in February 2003



- Previous team hand-edited text on nearly 50 non-curricular sites based on client instructions
- Resources maximized and new client queue put on hold temporarily

Background:

About the Dartmouth Web

- Accessible Web development embraced by President, including support for screen readers, resizable fonts, and alternative input devices
- Multi-tiered branding system proposed to support distinct departments as well as Public Affairs identity design



Background:

Web Content Goals

- Goal: Help people improve their experience of campus life through *easy access* to *up-to-date* non-curricular information
- Principles: Usable, engaging, consistent, and accessible
- Stakeholders: Current clients, Computing Support, Network Services, Office of Public Affairs



Background:

Projected Phases

- Evaluate strategic context
- Conduct discovery project
- Plan workflow
- Develop or deploy new system
- Migrate existing sites
- Accept new clients



DISCOVERY PHASE

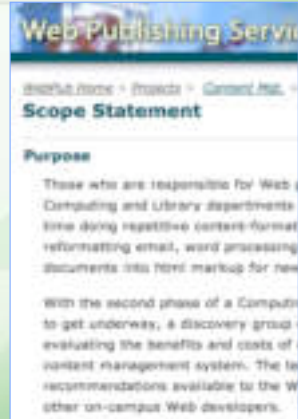
Winter 2003

- Scope and Purpose
- Objectives
- Evaluation Criteria
- Requested Features
- Develop or Deploy?
- Vendor Evaluation
- Recommendation



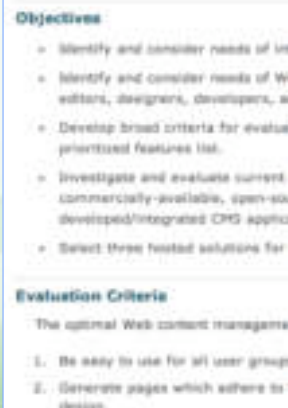
Discovery: Scope & Purpose

- Goal: Evaluate the benefits and costs of developing or deploying a light-weight Web content management system for WebPub clients
- Resources available: Less than \$20K per year for licenses plus 1 FTE for development/training
- Configuration: multiple, discrete sites and accounts on one Apache server.



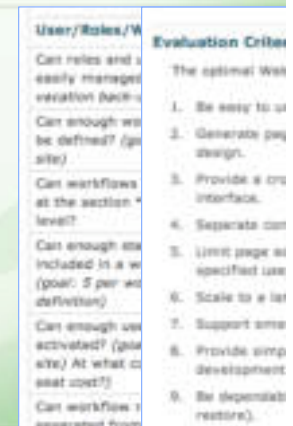
Discovery: Objectives

- Identify and consider needs of Web site users, novice editors, and expert production staff
- Investigate and evaluate current options and costs for deployment and development
- Select three solutions for demonstration
- Choose finalist



Discovery: Evaluation Criteria

- Uses a simple, intuitive interface
- Supports cross-platform W3C standards, including accessibility guidelines
- Provides customizable workflow for authors, editors, designers, administrators
- Scales to a large number of discrete sites using existing and emerging technologies
- Speedy implementation and dependable operation



Discovery:

Develop or Deploy?

- Cost for development of system was estimated to be at least three times higher than deployment in first three years
- Deployment of hosted service would be acceptable if SFTP/VPN was supported, and if an in-house appliance was available for future consideration
- Considered Macromedia Contribute, but determined it was not robust enough for complex workgroups

Discovery:

Vendor Evaluation

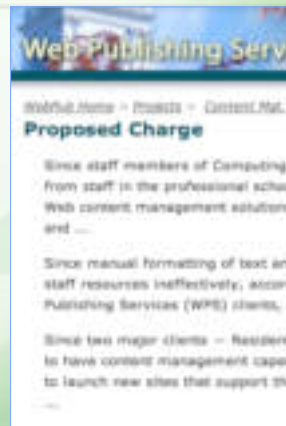
- Three types of system configurations
 - Co-authoring with design tools
 - Dynamic staging server with transfer to static publishing server
 - Dynamic page delivery systems
- Seek vendor with stable corporate history, more than 10 CMS clients
- Conduct on-line demos with four systems in range

WYSIWYG FTP Tools (lowest-prk)		
Macromedia	Contribute	SOE
Commercial Solutions (low-price)		
Ektron	CMS 200	SOE
Web site ASP	OmniUpdate Campus	SOE, I
RedDot Solutions	Content Management Server	SOE
Userland	Frontier	SOE
Application Service Providers (h)		
Atom2	Publish	SOE
Xenium Group	Electron CMS	SOE
Open-Source Solutions		

Discovery:

Recommendation

- OmniUpdate OUCampus determined to be the best match for evaluation criteria and top features
- Interviewed current OU clients
- Conducted trial with sample Dartmouth templates
- Recommended the solution to Computing directors
- Deployment plan approved



DEPLOYING THE SYSTEM

Spring 2003

- Planning & Outreach
- Develop Page Templates
- Develop New Site Features
- Fine-tune Web Editor Interface
- Test and Launch



Deployment: Planning

- Established complex model for Computing Services site:
 - Strategic advisors (6)
 - Web editor (1)
 - Editorial board (6)
 - Web authors (25)
- Developed introductory and advanced training sessions

Key to the success of the new venture will be maintenance across the breadth of Computing Services. The challenge will be to find and to be sure needed experts have been on workflow needs.

Recommendation: Create Two New Committees

Strategic Communications Oversight Group

Responsible for strategic oversight of the Web, meeting the overall needs and objectives of the

- Membership includes Director of Computing Services (4) and representatives from 4 support groups. Invited guests as appropriate (Development, etc.).
- Reviews and considers agenda items on Editorial Board (described below). Meets
- Required time allocation: One 90-minute correspondence.

Editorial Board

Deployment: Outreach

- Presentation to clients to identify early adopters
- Overview for Web Oversight Committee, Web developers group, Computing editors
- One-to-one coaching with early adopters to determine training needs
- Activate Content Developer User Group for clients

IV. Content Management –

- Costs are still quite high for content management systems.
- Our primary needs include an easy-to-use, standards-compliant, and easy to use, and easy to integrate.
- Macromedia Contribute seems and might be a good short-term solution.

General Discussion

- Q: When can clients use Contribute?
A: Navigation tool used here to do better in a couple of weeks.
- Q: How can Thayer School be part of the College's Web site?
A: Design of templates is in progress. Deliverable this spring.

Deployment: Develop Page Templates

- Standard layout and design was developed by Public Affairs



- Content was separated from presentation except for basic layout table and separate style sheet for older browsers

Deployment: Develop New Site Features

- Developed navigation system: top level universal links and section path “locators”

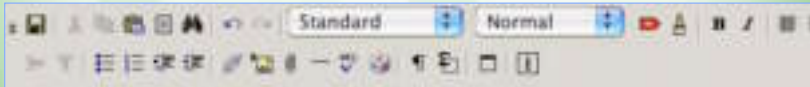


- Created new-page templates for new sections

Deployment:

Fine-tune Web Editor Interface

- Selected standard method to enter the system via browser
- Customized Java editing applet for cross-platform compatibility



- Decided on WYSIOTS editing – What You See Is Representative of the Structure
- Architected a drill-down navigation model

Deployment:

Test and Launch

- Tested with Web Publishing Services site
- Identified early adopters
- Launched Residential Life site
- Migrated ten sites in next two months
- Contracted with vendor to assist in ingest of 3,000 pages during first year



SUSTAINING THE PROGRAM

2003-04

- 2003: Establishing the Program
- 2004: Expanding the Program



Sustainability:

Establishing the Program

- May 2003 - Setup begins
- June 2003 - First sites migrated
- July 2003 - Training begins
- September 2003 - Computing Editorial Board established
- November 2003 - Content Developers User Group established



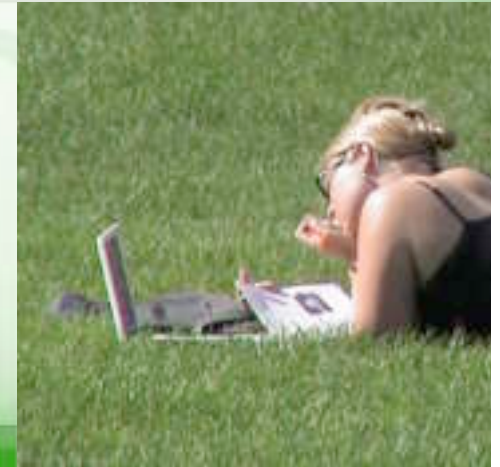
Sustainability: Expanding the Program

- February 2004 - 30 sites migrated, 15 in transition, 38 active editors, 32 more expected by mid-year
- February 2004 - New clients queue restarted, license increased
- March 2004 - Staff trained for roles as master administrators

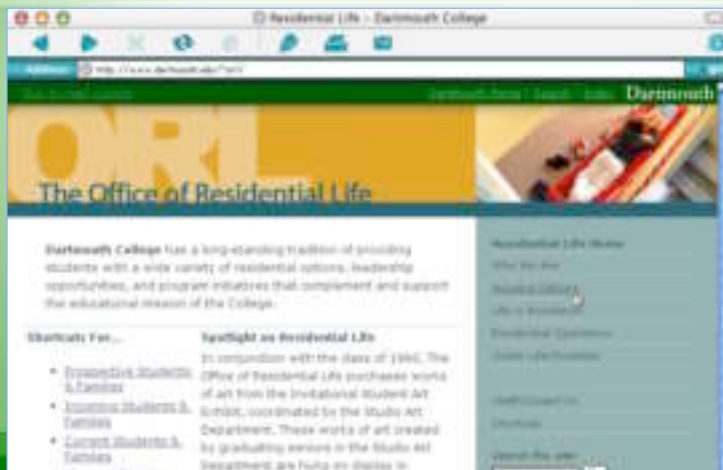


HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Browse to page
- Log-in
- Edit page
- Approve
- Publish
- Add functions



How Does It Work?: Navigate to the Page



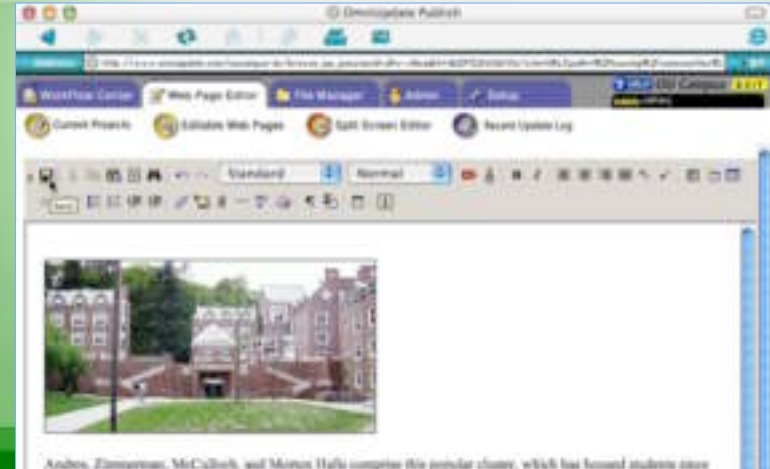
How Does It Work?: Log into the System



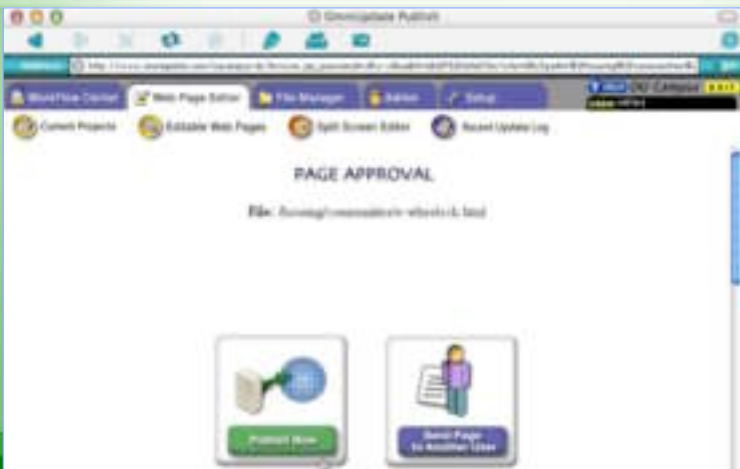
How Does It Work?:
Check Out and Edit the Content



How Does It Work?:
Save Draft & Forward for Approval



How Does It Work?:
Publish Page to the Web

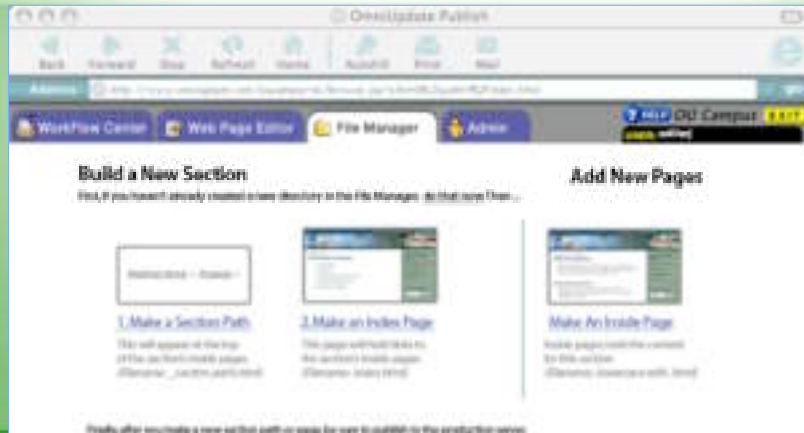


How Does It Work?:
The Updated Page is Live!



How Does It Work?:

Add Services for Advanced Users



SYSTEM FEATURES

- The new system has successfully integrated and delivered dozens of top requested features



System Features:

Support for Standard Templates

- Native American Program */-nap/*



System Features:

Fluid Layout

- Commencement */-commence/*



System Features: Structured Content

- English Department */-english/*

The screenshot shows a webpage for Woon-Ping Chin, a Visiting Professor of English. The page is structured with a header, a navigation menu, a main content area with a profile picture, and a sidebar with a search box. The main content area includes her name, title, education, and contact information, followed by a section on her teaching and research interests.

System Features: Consistent Font Treatment

- Walking Tour */-tour/*

The screenshot shows a webpage for the William Jewett Tucker Foundation. The page features a consistent font treatment throughout, including the header, navigation, main content, and sidebar. The main content area includes a title, a paragraph about the foundation, a photograph of a building, and a sidebar with a map and navigation links.

System Features: Resizable Text

- English Department */-english/*

The screenshot shows a webpage for the Dartmouth English Department. The text is large and clear, demonstrating the feature of resizable text. The page includes a welcome message and a list of links for navigation.

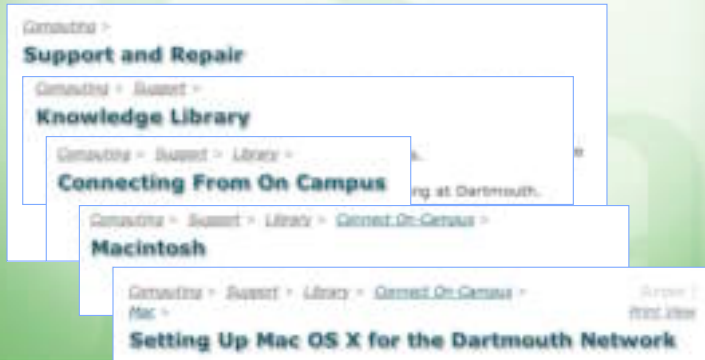
System Features: Consistent Menu Pages

- Dean of the College */-deancoll/*

The screenshot shows a webpage for the Dean of the College. The page features a consistent menu structure with a title, a list of links, and a sidebar. The links are clearly displayed and easy to navigate.

System Features:
Drill Down Architecture

- Computing Services /comp/



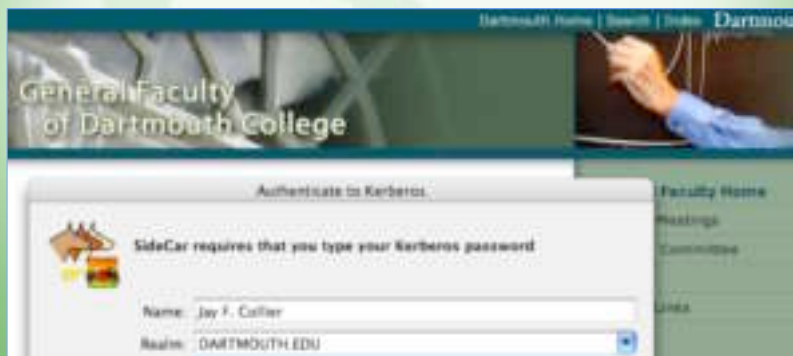
System Features:
Print Preview with CSS

- Computing at Dartmouth /comp/



System Features:
User Authentication Support

- General Faculty /-genfac/



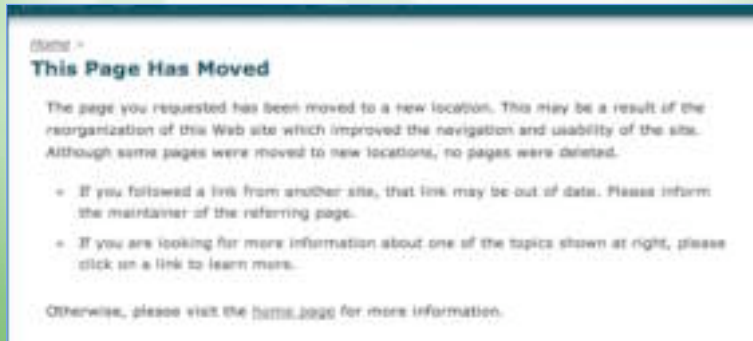
System Features:
Support for Video Playback

- Computing /comp/



System Features: Site-by-Site Error Pages

- Commencement */-commence/*



System Features: Custom Graphics and Colors

- Residential Life */-orl/*



System Features: Identical Code for Manual Sites

- Dartmouth Maps */-maps/*



KEEPING IT FRESH

- Support Standards
- Empower Users
- Iterate



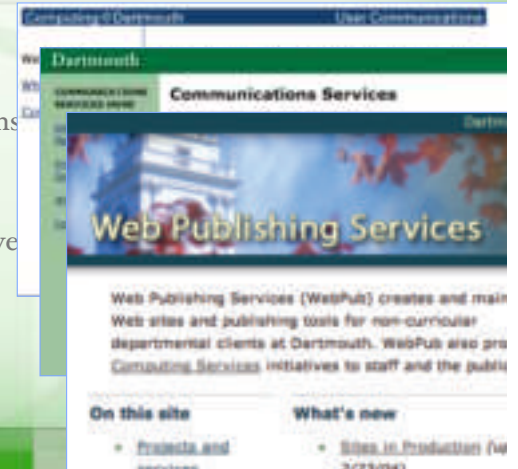
Keeping It Fresh: Support Standards

- Deliver consistent design and navigation to improve the user experience
- Leverage existing campus systems and infrastructure
- Support W₃C standards to improve longevity



Keeping It Fresh: Empower Users and Iterate

- Provide a simple update tool for content experts
- Encourage communications department to control graphical environment
- Listen to users and improve the system
- Do it all over again!



Thank You!

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Presentation and resource links:
<<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~webpub/>>