Chapter 18

Functional Requirements – Web Content Management

OVERVIEW

When we looked at the characteristics of document and Web content management in Chapter 3, we noted that there could be many limitations with how enterprises manage content published to Web sites. In Chapter 4, we demonstrated that subsystems exist within the IDCM framework to address these types of limitations.

The importance of relevant and timely content cannot be understated. Its presence has a significant impact on the quality, effectiveness, and popularity of a Web site, with some observers (Chatelain & Yen, 2000) jesting that “content is the next frontier” on the Internet. If visitors to a site are not satisfied with its content, the “one click” factor applies — these visitors are one click away from moving from one Web site to another site.

Depending on the nature of the Web site, the effectiveness of content might be measurable using a range of performance criteria. For example, transactional logs stored on Web servers may provide an indication of how much navigation is carried out within a site. There has also been a great deal of analysis of how the content may best be structured in an information architecture (Rosenfeld & Morville, 1998), and development of evaluation schemes that establish qualitative criteria for evaluation of various factors, such as how the functionality, design, authority, and validity of a site influence the substance of the content (Auer, 2002).

In this chapter, we extend our discussion on the capabilities of IDCM systems to manage Web content, irrespective of whether the content is targeted for Internet or intranet sites. We review the functional requirements for a managed IDCM environment that provides cohesive end-to-end management of processes associated with the development and management of Web content.

Our objectives are as follows:

- Review the types of functionality offered by IDCM solutions for implementing management services over the Web content life-cycle.
• Provide a checklist of functionality that provides a primer for organizations when considering their specific requirements for managing Web content.

REQUIREMENTS ANALYSIS

Scope
In Chapter 4, we noted that while CMS differ in purpose and capacity and intent, they have evolved to the extent that we can summarize their capabilities within the context of:

• Content creation, relating to the development of content using a wide range of authoring tools, including text editors, word processors, spreadsheets (and other office tools), tools such as HTML/XML editors, and specific Web authoring tools. This includes the application of effective tools to convert content from paper-based and other physical media into the digital environment.
• Content management, relating to managing the life-cycle of content from content creation through to publication of content to Web servers.
• Content presentation, which relates to the publication of content as static, dynamic, or transactional content. They allow flexibility in reusing information effectively.

The essence of our approach has been to develop an integrative model for managing document and Web content, and take the view that our frame of reference is confined to the first two items of CMS capabilities, covering the creation and management of Web content.

We leave aside the presentation of content by application servers (such as ATG Dynamo, BEA Weblogic, and IBM WebSphere, to name a few). These applications assimilate content from multiple sources (including business databases, HTML pages, rendered documents, such as PDF, or fragments) and publish the content to the Web in real time. The functionality of how Web servers assimilate and present content to Web sites is covered in a wide variety of books and journals, and it is beyond our frame of reference.

Approach
The selection and implementation of appropriate software is but one component of the organization’s requirement to manage Web content and should not be viewed in isolation from other business requirements. These requirements include the need to develop policies and procedures, analyze and redesign business processes, review standards, and develop guidelines, within a project approach that epitomizes quality and risk management. This type of approach will enable businesses to develop and implement successful Web content management solutions, regardless of size and complexity.

The structured approach offered by the IDCM management framework provides enterprises with a model by which to address the business and technology solution options for the deployment of enterprise content management functionality. This approach includes planning (Chapter 6), policy development (Chapter 7), and requirements analysis and definition (Chapter 10), with specific emphasis on defining user
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