

Chapter X

Developing Committees to Create a Web Content Management System

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Abstract

This case study examines the use of committees to develop a Web content management system in an academic library. It explains the process undertaken at the University of Oklahoma Libraries (libraries.ou.edu) to move from an HTML to a database-driven Web site and the issues involved with using committees to steer such projects. Creating a framework where librarians use locally developed content management tools to control Web site content while the systems office retains control of the presentation of content is also discussed. Another aspect of the case study includes the evolution of Web committees in the organization, the development of a system-wide philosophy, and the gradual acceptance of the Web site as a service that demands continual attention. The authors hope readers will benefit from these experiences when implementing similar projects.

Introduction

The University of Oklahoma (OU) is a doctoral degree-granting research university serving the educational, cultural, economic, and health care needs of the state, region, and nation. OU enrolls more than 30,000 students and has 2,000 full-time faculty members in 19 colleges that offer 150 majors at the baccalaureate level, 142 majors at the master's level, 76 majors at the doctoral level, 30 majors at the first professional level, and five graduate certificates.

The University of Oklahoma Libraries, the largest research library system in the state, contains 4.2 million volumes, subscribes to 18,000 unique periodicals, and provides access to more than 170 databases. University Libraries (UL) includes Bizzell Memorial Library (main library), six branch libraries, and four special collections. UL is composed of three main administrative units: systems, public services, and technical services. UL employs approximately 55 professional staff members, 84 support staff members, and 61 FTE student workers. The organizational culture of UL combines a traditional hierarchical model of administrative organization with committees appointed based on need or functionality, such as committees for strategic planning or circulation services and search committees. The library budgets the salaries of all library staff including systems personnel, as well as materials and collections, and hardware and software applications. Although the University of Oklahoma does not prescribe specific style guidelines for the UL's Web site, they do provide basic guidelines on official OU colors for Web sites and strategies for ADA compliance. In addition, the university administration places a high priority on equitable services for all students served at three geographically distinct campuses, as well as distance education students, which has influenced the development of the UL Web site.

Setting the Stage

Trends in Library Web Site Development

Librarians have been content managers for centuries. With the rapid growth of the Internet, many organizations of every size are focusing on content management issues. Forrester Research defines content management as "a combination of well-defined roles, formal processes, and supporting systems architec-

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