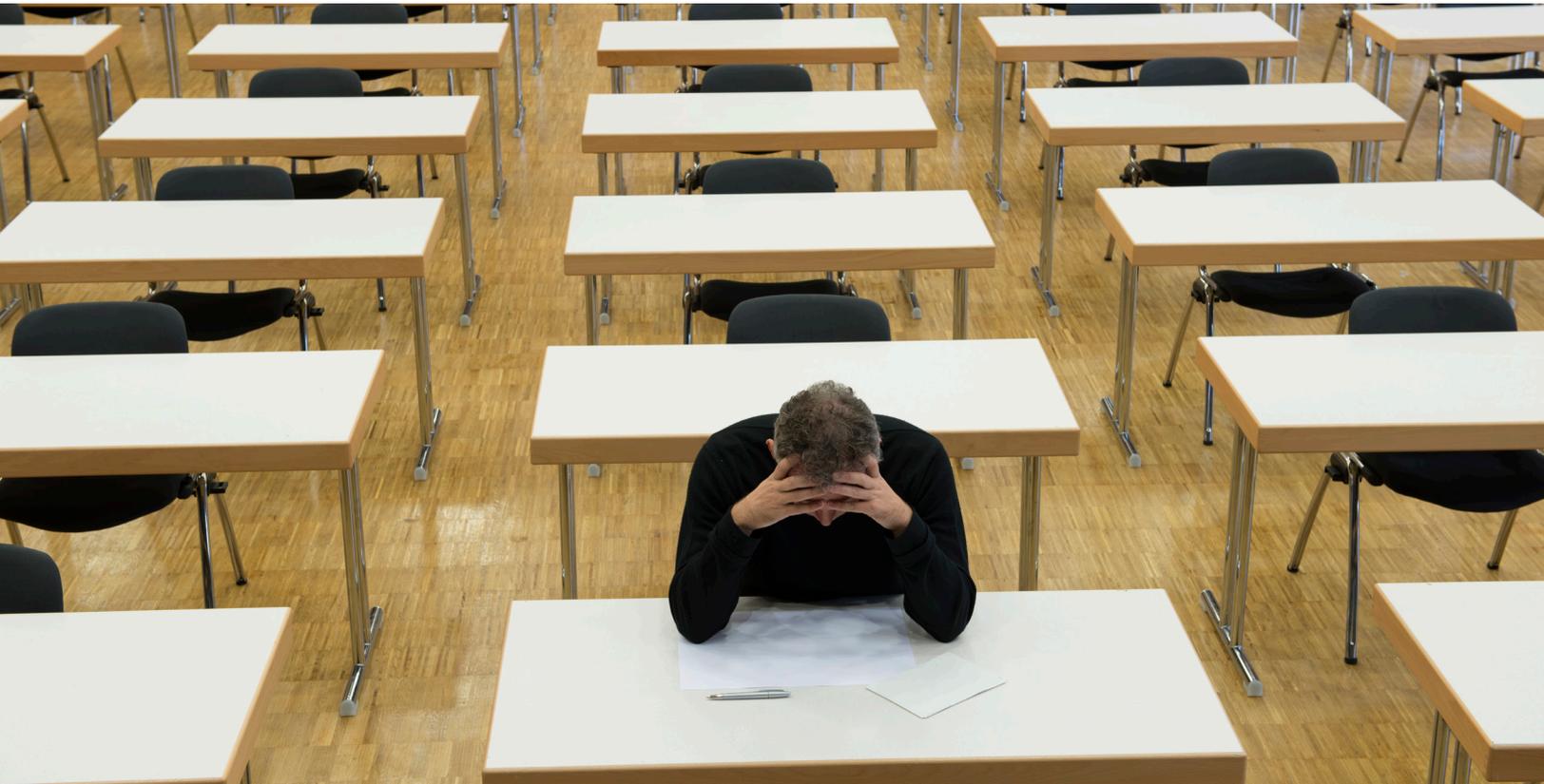


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Is it Time to Replace Your CMS?

7 Telltale Signs

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A content management system is often as critical to a higher education institution as a learning management system, a student information system or an ERP system. So it's a massive commitment to implement a new one. A commitment that involves a lot of resources, time and money. So the decision to pack it in and starting thinking about a new CMS isn't a small one.

You have to put together a budget, a project team that requires input from stakeholders across the institution (and there are many of them). You have to develop your list of requirements, do research, send out requests for information and conduct interviews and possibility pilots. That's what happens before you select your new Web CMS. What happens after you make the decision is even more in-depth and time-consuming.

You may know this story well; you likely went through it when you selected and implemented the CMS you have today. You remember the good times and the rough times. And that means you want to be really sure you need to go down that road.

A CMS for a higher education institution requires many of the same capabilities as a CMS for a business. But it also requires many capabilities unique to higher education. It's important to ensure that the CMS you select can support all your requirements. In some cases, you can get away with updating and customizing the CMS you have today. **But there are some obvious signs that it's time to move on and replace your Web CMS.**

Seven Telltale Signs

1 You Can't Create an Experience that Works Equally Well on Mobile

For years, you have focused on creating a great web experience. User experience design and testing has been a top priority to ensure that your prospective students, alumni and donors and other visitors can easily find the information they want. You've noticed that more visitors are looking at your website on mobile devices, and your team has started investigating other potential channels to deliver information to your key audiences.

You know you need to start making changes to your web experience to support these different channels and devices. Unfortunately, when your IT team starts

examining the changes that are required, they find your CMS can't support mobile very well, and other new channels will require massive customization of the CMS. And that means time and costs that you don't have.

What You Need: What you need is a CMS that supports mobile out of the box by integrating responsive design techniques into your templates and structure automatically. As a first step, your website should be viewable on desktop and mobile devices without any great effort. You should look for a CMS that provides backend decoupled from the presentation to make it easier to adopt new channels more easily.



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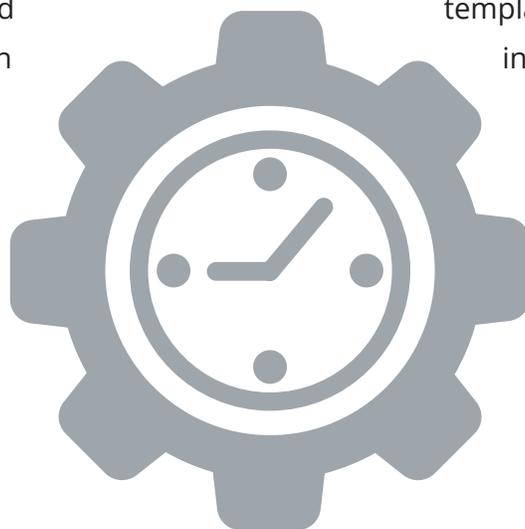
Your Production Schedule is Tied to Developer Availability

Understanding how website visitors use your website is a critical activity, and you consistently monitor traffic and engagement patterns to ensure you are presenting an optimal experience to each of your key audiences. During this analysis, you find that you need to make small tweaks to templates to add new content, functionality or to restructure layout. Other times you have content updates that affect large portions of a web page or series of web pages.

Once you know what needs to change, you submit a request to the development team to have the changes made in the CMS. The problem is the development team isn't exclusive you, and they are regularly tied up on other projects within the institution. Your request sits in a queue, and if it's not determined a priority compared to other projects, your changes must wait.

You think you can make the changes yourself until you look at your CMS and realize it's a development process that requires skills you and your team don't have. You may also share the CMS with other departments, and changes you want to make may potentially affect other departments. That requires investigation by developers and others to ensure your requests won't break anything.

What You Need: What you need is a CMS that empowers non-technical users to make smaller changes to the website. Give them visual tools that enable them to quickly make template adjustments without worrying about affecting other templates or websites. Provide in-context editing to quickly make content changes to existing webpages or to create new web pages using existing templates easily.



3

You Can't Connect Your Website with Your Marketing Campaigns

Your public website is one component of a larger marketing or communication strategy that engages prospective students and other audiences and drives conversions. In some campaigns, the website is a key element, whether it's driving prospective students to sections of the website for course information or providing landing pages for donor applications.

Your team is looking at how to deliver personalized experiences to your audiences using the website. This might include sending emails for specific programs or registration processes based on a prospective student's website traffic patterns, providing partially prefilled landing page forms using profile information gathered from a previous information request, or sending completed forms information directly to your ERP or marketing automation solution.

You have some great plans to delivered



personalized experiences, but when you start to implement these changes, you find your CMS won't integrate with your other backend administration tools. Your CMS doesn't provide any out-of-the-box integrations with your Student Information Systems, ERP, CRM or MA, and it doesn't offer an API that enables third-party applications to connect with your CMS and pull out content and other data.

What You Need: You need a modern, agile CMS, one that provides connectors to popular SIS and ERP systems, as well as CRMs such as Salesforce and marketing automation platforms such as Pardot and Marketo. These connectors provide two-way synchronization of information such as web pages a visitor viewed and forms they completed. This synchronization enables

a personalized website experience that provides content based on past traffic patterns, links clicked in an email or information requests.



4

You Can't Easily Manage the Content for Separate Web Applications

Your institution provides a public-facing website to attract prospective students and engage donors and alumni, but you also have one or more internally-focused web experiences for student, faculty and administration such as an Intranet and a student portal.

Although some of the information these different sites provide is very different, and the user experience is not the same, there is a need to share a certain amount of content between each type of site. For example, you provide listing of campus news and events in both the Intranet and the public website. Where possible you want the ability to create this content once and publish it to multiple channels, each with a potentially different presentation.

Unfortunately, your CMS tightly couples presentation with backend

content management and you aren't able to create content that can be shared among different channels, leaving you to create the content in several different places and struggle to manage it appropriately.

What You Need: What you need is a decoupled presentation from backend administration. This Web CMS manages the presentation of content separately from its management, allowing you to use the CMS to manage content for your website, Intranet and your Student Portal. An agile Web CMS offers the best of all worlds, supporting the creation of websites within the CMS completely and websites, mobile apps, and web applications that are built on different platforms or in a different

environment to connect to the CMS for their content management needs.



5 Your CMS Doesn't Support Your Accessibility and Compliance Requirements

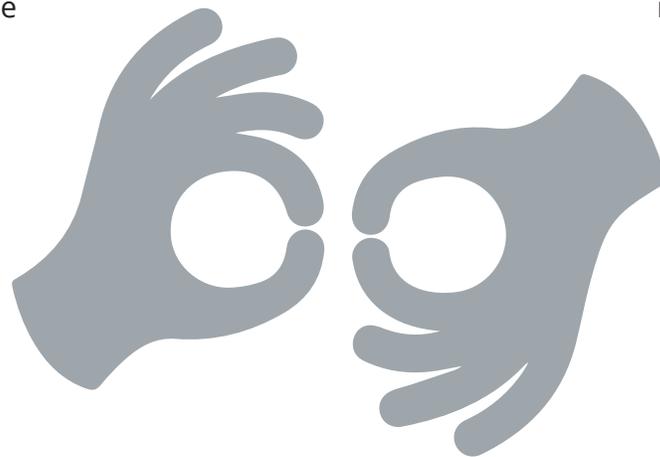
There are two situations where your CMS is causing you concern and great manual effort: accessibility and compliance.

First, your website must follow the standards set for accessibility, including Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 to ensure that all visitors can view your website. Accessibility standards affect how you create your templates, and you are currently following a manual process of examining templates against an accessibility coding checklist. Although it's a necessary requirement, you feel there must be a better way to manage accessibility.

You also have specific governance processes that must be followed to ensure the appropriate authors and editors can

manage and approve content, and that the right audiences can view it. In this case, your CMS does not offer the granular permissions necessary to ensure proper content management and auditing of your processes; you depend on your team to do the right thing. Your CMS also doesn't connect to external identity management systems and allow you to secure content to specific audiences or persons.

What You Need: What you need is a CMS that supports accessibility guidelines out-of-the-box and easily allows you to check your templates and web pages against accessibility standards. This CMS also integrates with several identity management providers and can leverage identity information to secure content for specific audiences on web pages and in search queries.



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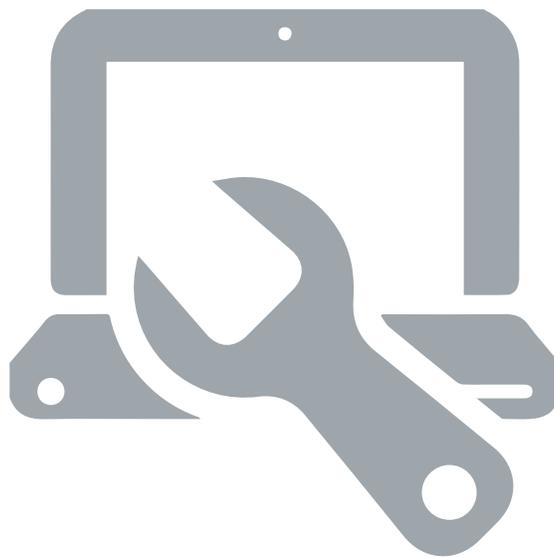
It Takes Too Long to Implement Upgrades or Make Simple Maintenance Updates

Every Web CMS provides regular updates, whether its smaller fixes or major enhancements and functionality. Most of these updates you need to apply to maintain service plans or support new features you want to adopt.

With your current CMS, these updates – regardless of size – are problematic to implement. You need to examine each fix or update to ensure it doesn't break something you have in place. Then you must set up planned outages to make the upgrades because they can't be done in a live environment. You have to arrange for developer and system administrator time, plan the outage, perform the updates,

test the updates and the entire website and then put your environment live again. This effort takes time and resources and can cost you more money than the update is worth.

What You Need: What you need is a CMS that supports easy maintenance and upgrades that don't disrupt your web experience. With a decoupled CMS, your backend content management is separate from your presentation, so you can keep your website alive and functioning while you apply updates to the CMS backend. You can also test upgrades in a test environment before you launch them live on your public website.



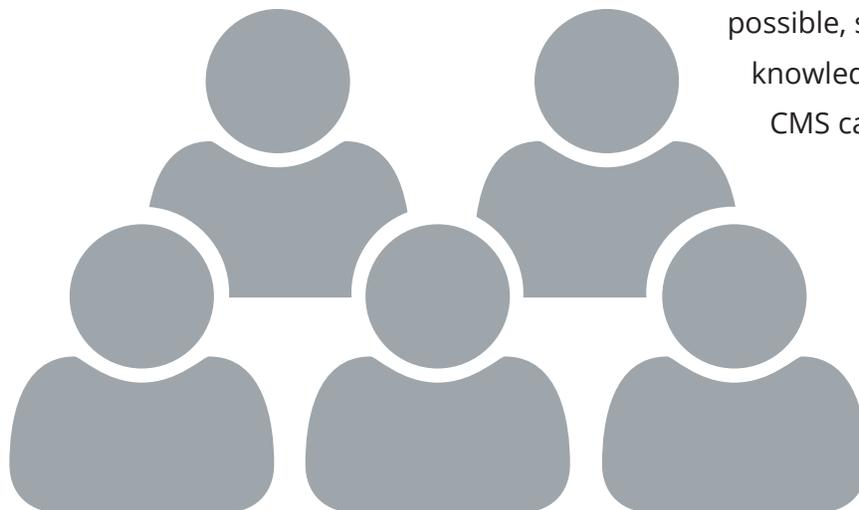
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Your CMS Environment Can't Support your Growing Audience

When you started your website, your audience was small. But the Marketing and Communication teams have done great work and traffic is growing significantly. Unfortunately, as you improve your website experience and traffic continues to grow, you are facing growing pains. Your CMS wasn't set up to support heavy traffic, and as your IT team investigates potential upgrades to the environment, you are facing significant costs in hardware and software licenses. To make matters worse, you find your traffic spikes even higher at particular points in time.

What You Need: The best approach to providing the scalability you need is to invest in a cloud-based CMS that can easily scale as your needs grow. With a cloud-based CMS, you can quickly scale your environment up and down as your traffic grows. You also don't need a dedicated IT team to support your CMS as the hosting provider does this for you. Along with the ability to scale your traffic grows, hosted CMS solutions also provide regular content backups, fully managed software upgrades (when you want them) and 24/7 monitoring and support. Working with a cloud-based CMS means you can focus on delivering

the best web experience possible, safe in the knowledge that your CMS can support it.



When You See the Signs, It's Time to Act

Whether you see only one of these telltale signs or all of them, it's time to step back and think strategically about your content management system. In the not too recent past, many higher education institutions looked at their CMS as a tool for managing a basic read-only public website. Today, it provides so many more capabilities.

From managing your public web experience, including desktop, mobile, and other

channels, to Intranets, student and parent communities and student portals your CMS needs to be agile, flexible and ready to support all your content management needs securely and with the appropriate governance in place.

When you think about your current and planned roadmap, you'll likely see many other reasons it's time to move to a new CMS, but these seven are particularly critical signs.

To help understand what to look for in a new Web CMS, check out our Web CMS Buyer's Guide.

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