

Migrating with Joomla!

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My name is Dinah Randall and I'm a geek. I am the web producer helping the Nature Conservation Council of NSW to migrate from an old proprietary CMS to Joomla! My background is in I.T., software design and database programming. I have been working in web design and development for the last 7 years and have produced a lot of sites!

Today I am going to be talking about the project at NCC to migrate between the two CMS's and some of the things we had to think about along the way.

How many geeks are here?
How many people have a CMS?
Is anyone in the process of migrating to a new CMS?
Is anyone thinking about it?

Intro

- migration from 'AIMS' to Joomla! [SCO, primitive, 7 yrs old - never upgraded, HTML coding, hard to find pages]
- open source CMS to last 5-10 years
- NcC and TEC plus 120 member groups [Total Environment Centre]
- Secure and reliable system, hosted externally [less exposure to error/failure/security issues]
- 3 month project [to launch Dec 12 at Parliament House]
- 3,500 pages on the old site! [5,500 files, team of 15 campaigners updating content]

Migration

- Finding all our existing pages!
- Decisions on archiving [Losing most of the content, back to 1998]
- Wrapper [ECO-Office, no longer funded]
- Migration scripts [Why we aren't using them - editing, re-structure, images, PDFs, internal/external links]
- Reworking for a new menu structure [dynamic menus, standard entries, no dead links, usability, clean and clear, visual sidebar]
- Editing and more editing [house style, brevity, blog, accessibility, more pix - dreamstime.com]

- Internal and external links
- Images, PDFs and others [library and searching, re-use, how to produce images for web]
- Blogs vv static content [what are they?]
- User access permissions [campaigners can only access their own content. No access to front page]
- No visitor content [articles, links, forum, comments - except web cards]
- public vv private content [public resource site]

Paypal

- Donations, 'Buy Now' and free online shop [reporting, refunds, email payments]
- Buyers do not need a Paypal account [unless you use their online shop]
- Paypal includes fraud protection [and supports resolution of disputed payments]
- Excellent market acceptance [less chance of public resistance to paying online, Paypal keeps up w technology]
- Extremely easy to install
- Reasonable fees [1.9-3.4% +40c/transaction but no refund fee, no monthly fee]

Features

- WYSIWYG editor - no more HTML coding!
 - reusable content
 - full control over menus (i.e. dynamic)
 - campaigners can only access their own content
 - sitemap and better search
 - donations and event subscriptions
 - mailing lists and 'email a pollie'
 - web cards
 - surveys, polls, photo gallery, video
 - more than 1 photo per page
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TIP SHEET

Some tips if you are considering migrating your site to an open source CMS like Joomla!

- 1. How much of your content will you migrate?**
Less is more! Our target was to relegate most of the old content (3,500 pages) to an online archive, then produce up to 15 pages for each of the 12 campaign areas, plus another 50 pages of resources and 'housekeeping'. That's still a lot of editing, cutting and pasting! Our 3 month timescale is fleeting – budget more if you can.
- 2. Who will move the content and how? Will your web team need training?**
Our team needed plenty of training and hand-holding in the use of the new CMS and how to produce images for the web (We use free PC image editor GIMP from www.gimp.org)
- 3. Will you need migration scripts?**
We did not use them, because our editing process was so large. Scripts look like a time-saver for big sites, but take in to consideration the following:-
 - You need a geek to produce migration scripts
 - They take an awful lot of tweaking! [the scripts, not the geeks]
- 4. How can you prepare your content for migration?**
 - All the links (within your content) to your own site will break when you move that content to a CMS (because CMSs use a different method of linking content). Flag them all and re-link them after migration
 - All images, PDF and DOC links will break too. You may even use a CMS document library, which produces a different kind of link again
 - If your links to other sites are sound, they will survive the move ☺
 - You may want to re-structure your navigation during the move. In fact, you will probably have to. So edit your content accordingly
 - Here's the cracker though... **Content should be migrated without HTML style tags**, as these are handled by the new CMS. So just copy headings and plain text – no images, no tables, no separator lines, no navigation elements. This will help you keep your new site working and clean, and will also help you meet web accessibility standards
- 5. Start small?**
We need a clean, clear, easy to use site with only the latest campaign issues. Small is beautiful, but it's a mental leap for campaigners. We keep pressing our team to edit tighter and tighter – it makes for a better user experience. And there is less content to keep updated. Bonus!
- 6. Customise your CMS?**
Very very tempting. We have. But bear in mind that when you upgrade your system (at least annually) you will have to re-install all your customisations. Will they all still work? Will upgraded versions be available? Might be expensive.
- 7. Will yours be a 'community' site?**
One of the advantages of a CMS is its ability to integrate user content in to the site – via memberships, forums, user-contributed articles and comments, user-submitted links, WIKIs [user-contributed knowledge base]. These tools can be a very powerful community-builder in the right hands.