



I Want To Maintain My Website[©]

Overview

When it comes to web design, we are very often requested: “I would like to do the updates myself.” Is this a realistic request? For the most part, the answer is **No** (for an explanation see our article “[The Business Community](#)”). It is simply faster and more cost-effective to have your webmaster to the updates.

In this article we will focus on the options that are available for maintaining your own website content.

Content Management Systems (CMS)

When a non web designer does updates to a website there is a real risk of the website being damaged, or as a minimum, messing up the page layout— which is a poor reflection on your company. However, a **content management system** makes it possible for a non designer to update a website with minimum risk.

A CMS-based website consists of a number of predesigned pages, each with a fixed layout. There are zones on each page where the text and images can go. The owner of the website is given a set of forms for each page on which he or she can enter the text or images that they would like to see on the pages. On submitting the forms, the text is entered into a database.

When a visitor to your website requests a particular page, the CMS program will fetch the corresponding text from the database, put it in the appropriate predetermined zones on the page and then send the completed page to the visitor.

The non-designer only has access to the forms used to enter text. The risk of damage to the website is minimized.

There are many CMS systems available, JOOMLA and DRUPAL are two popular examples. The choice will depend mostly what your webhost company makes available and which system your web designer is most comfortable with.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The main advantage is that as a website owner you are able to make updates yourself. Keep in mind that there still will be a steep learning curve for you.

A disadvantage is that the initial set up and monthly hosting costs for a CMS-based websites are higher than for standard websites.

For most of the CMS systems there is a wide range of predesigned pages to choose from, either from the original software developers or from third party sources. This can reduce development time and represents a cost-saving.

The response time of CMS-based websites can be slower as the CMS system has to access page content from the database.

If your business requires a special feature from your website that requires programming, it is easier and hence less expensive with a standard website.

Using Blogging Software

A Blog is a web page where the owner could enter “posts” on a regular basis on whatever topic. Once the need for this kind of service was realized, several developers made blogging systems available. There are many but popular systems include Blogger and WordPress both of which are free.

In essence the owner, or blogger, is given a form where the daily posting is entered. The blog system puts the post in a database. Well, this sounds very much like how a content management system works, and indeed it is.

Many people use blogging software as content management systems to design and maintain their websites. There are many, many templates available for these systems making the design process for simple websites fairly easy. For the most part the blogger systems are free, which is another incentive, although designers typically charge for the use of their templates.

Which Approach Is Right For You?

Discuss this with your web designer. Remember, as a business owner your first responsibility is running your business, not doing web design. A standard website is still cheaper, faster and more flexible.

CMS systems have advantages, not so much because you could maintain the content yourself, but because it is easy for your web designer to maintain your website.

While blogging systems are used successfully to build websites, unlike CMS systems they were not designed for this and are therefore limited. If running a blog is an important part of your organization's operations, then this might be a good approach for you.