



# The Web is Round: Managing Content in a 2.0 World

| Weaving Communities into Your Products and Services |

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Collaborative, Listening Web.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Web 2.0, Social Media and the Changing Content Landscape.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CMS and the New Dynamic.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>How a Content Management System Can Help .....</b>	<b>6</b>

## Introduction.

The onset of a new era of social computing is re-defining how companies interact with consumers. The older unidirectional flow of information and its supporting architecture is making way for a much more participatory web experience. Needless to say, traditional modes of online content contribution, management, distribution and assimilation are beginning to witness the stirrings of a revolution.

Technology and market research analyst Forrester believes the key to thriving in this new reality lies in abandoning traditional management and communications tactics. It suggests instead that companies concern themselves with weaving communities into their products and services, using employees and partners as marketers in an evolving human tapestry of brand loyalists. Seen in context, it is a radically fresh vision that has a significant bearing on content creation, management and value.

## The Collaborative, Listening Web

Gerry McGovern, a content management author and consultant sees this as a completely natural evolution of the Internet's role in the content landscape. "The essence of the Web is about how multitudes of links create a vast, global brain; a teeming collaborative mass." He thinks the inherent instinct within organizations to own and control information engenders online content silos that often fail to optimize benefits for either the company or its Web customers.

The challenge to keep content relevant, effective and valuable can be largely surmounted by encouraging bi-directionality. An increasing number of companies are beginning to see that the most effective online presence they can have is one that is also sufficiently disposed to listening. The collaborative Web is and must necessarily be a listening web.

A listening organization recognizes some plain facts:

- ▶ Customers nearly always have something to say
- ▶ Customers are very interested in what other customers have to say
- ▶ What they say can significantly help improve value, service and invariably business profitability

## Web 2.0, Social Media and the Changing Content Landscape

Though the term 'web 2.0' represents a shift in user and company interactions rather than an actual upgrade of the Internet, it has become synonymous with an architecture of participation. Capabilities such as rich Internet applications, mashups, blogs, RSS feeds, wikis and discussion forums allow end users to contribute comments, reviews, votes, news stories, multimedia, links and more. And it's not just the web biggies (Google, Ebay, Amazon and their ilk) who seem to have perked up to the potential here. Even old school giant General Motors, has shown remarkable verve in embracing the blog space, podcasting, video mashups and customer conversations.

The consumer is increasingly acknowledged as a powerful force to augment, replace and amplify content; creating value for fellow end users and brand equity for the company. What this means for content management is a push towards personal, direct and minimally controlled systems. Chip Griffin, owner of Custom Scoop, believes the driving principles in this new landscape are "to have filter free communications, sustain participation in conversations and fearlessly experiment."

But let's be clear here, a single blog posting does not a "blog" make. Web 2.0 is a cycle of providing content that you think is relevant to your users, receiving feedback, and then reposting revised or new content or even retiring content based on that feedback.

## CMS and the New Dynamic

A CMS is already oriented to this new landscape because it is designed to allow interactive use across a potentially large number of contributors. Managing a Web site with a CMS allows remarkable flexibility in adding RSS feeds, publishing blogs and tweaking content based on user experience. It can make searching friendlier for the customer while driving more content to the Web site. A CMS can also seamlessly integrate Web analytics to move relevant content bi-directionally. Since users are also used to getting and giving information in different ways, a CMS is an extremely efficient way to create content once and distribute it in many different forms; whether that be RSS, email, HTML or PDF. What is important is that the CMS facilitates content generation and aggregates it into a centralized place, along definitions that embody a collaborative ethos.

Here are a few suggestions to ensure your CMS is a genuine enabler of company-consumer participation and engagement:

- ▶ Provide for open-ended content from consumers where appropriate. This could range from single line queries to consumer blogs, discussion forums and customer suggested FAQs.
- ▶ Allow for consumer-generated content to migrate into the CMS, so it can be edited, republished, analyzed and reported.
- ▶ Make it possible for consumers to rate and comment on content so you will know how valuable it actually is.
- ▶ Use content management solutions to raise the visibility of valuable content based on ratings and web analytics.

While the benefits of a “rounder” Web are real and compelling, it also presents some sizable challenges in the content management domain. Perhaps the most pressing of these is the trade-off between credible, authoritative information and minimal control. Under scrutiny, this concern may actually turn out to be less potent than it first seems, provided companies are able to maintain the integrity of the authentication process, the platform and authorship.

To maintain credibility, a company must try to ensure:

- ▶ People are who they say they are.
- ▶ Content cannot be mistakenly or maliciously changed.
- ▶ All opinions and advice is shared in good faith.

# How a Content Management System Can Help

In a rapidly changing environment where user experiences and expectations demand innovative solutions, an effective content management solution is a must. The Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model of content management provides a well-rounded and convenient alternative to a traditional CMS. It helps companies manage multiple digital assets from a centralized interface. A 'best-of-breed' approach can give a company far more latitude in customizing the system to what best meets its requirements while eliminating the risk of commitment to a component that doesn't work well. The SaaS model also squarely places responsibility on the service provider to upgrade and match technology to meet the latest challenges of a 2.0 world. With that covered, a company can focus on managing its content landscape to create value, engage consumers and ultimately maximize ROI.

The bottom line is simple: a round Web can help both companies and their customers win at the same time.

CrownPeak  
5880 W Jefferson Blvd  
Unit G  
Los Angeles, CA 90016

[sales@crowpeak.com](mailto:sales@crowpeak.com)  
[www.crowpeak.com](http://www.crowpeak.com)  
Toll Free: 800-887-1944  
Tel: 310-841-5920

CrownPeak™  
MANAGE CONTENT NOT TECHNOLOGY