

Joomla! and Mambo Open-Source CMS

The Challenge

For many wishing to deploy a website without the cost of professional designers and programmers, software packages like Microsoft FrontPage and Macromedia Contribute seem like the ideal solution. Indeed I specialised in turnkey deployments based on those products, pioneering commercial work in FrontPage.

But the latest versions of FrontPage degenerated into "bloatware" overkill in bells and whistles that frustrate non-experts. And WYSIWYG web editors in general lack capacity for content management. As sites grow quickly beyond a few pages maintained by one person, off-the-shelf solutions can't keep up.

The Solution

All content management systems (CMS) take content stored in a database and display it in dynamically generated web pages via templates. Their user interfaces let content creators focus on adding and editing items visually without worrying about HTML code or other programming. Commercial systems from major vendors like Interwoven, Red Dot, Vignette and Documentum, though, can cost thousands of dollars to deploy and maintain.

There is, however, an active community of innovative open-source software developers supporting products like Mambo and Joomla!. Based on the PHP scripting language and the MySQL database standard, these CMS options are freely downloadable and can be supported on most commercial webhosting services.

The Results

Previously with FrontPage and Contribute, my clients merely loaded and edited pages on their sites. Mambo and Joomla! offer greater capabilities for professional site management: they permit management of multiple content owners, integrate features like automatic newsfeeds, event calendars and email newsletter subscriptions, and control the lifecycle of site documents all without any programming knowledge. And because the whole site design is based upon templating, site owners can alter the menus and even the entire look and feel on the fly.

My notable open source CMS deployments include the Chelsea Supporters Club Vancouver, running under Joomla!, and the Manchester United Supporters Club of Canada, operating first with Mambo and now ported over to Joomla!.

From there my portfolio of successful Joomla! and Mambo implementations grew rapidly.