

Introduction to Drake's Content Management System

Ver 1.0, prepared by Paul Morris, 10/10/06

1. Purpose of the CMS

A content management system (CMS) is a data-storage system with several functions. It allows users to: collect, maintain, and publish information; to manage content lifecycles (versions, archives); to manage access to content by appropriate users; and to route tasks such as content creation or approval) among users as appropriate.

When used for a website, it allows users to publish a single piece of web content to all the pages where it should appear, eliminating duplicated effort and inconsistent information. It also provides customizable templates, which control consistency in look-and-feel and navigation, and also eliminate the need for users to create pages from scratch.

The CMS we are implementing is the Luminis product from SunGard. This is designed to make it easy for non-technical people to perform the tasks described above, after brief and straightforward training.

2. Using the CMS for Drake's website

The overall Drake website contains many sub-sites, e.g. one for each school or major division. For each of these smaller sites, there are several user roles, none of them requiring technical expertise. The Content Contributors create content using what in Luminis is called the "Site Studio". The Content Manager(s) can approve the content before it is published if they wish. (There is an automatic routing and approval procedure within the CMS to do this.) Content Managers can also themselves create content, of course. Finally there is the Site Manager, who has overall control and responsibility for the site. This may be a Dean, VP, etc or (much more likely) someone to whom they have delegated that responsibility; the important point is that there is a specified person who is responsible for the accuracy and currency of the site.

In addition to these roles, at Drake the Director of Web Communication is responsible for Template Development and acts as overall Site Manager, while OIT is responsible for System Administration.

Within the CMS there is a "Work-In-Progress" area (WIP) for each sub-site. Here content is created, edited, revised and approved within the unit, as described in the previous paragraph. Content is created within templates which are designed to give the whole Drake site a consistent look-and-feel and the same means for navigation between pages, individualized as appropriate for each sub-site. Content is only "published" to the Drake website when it is approved and ready.

3. Policies governing Drake's website

"Drake Web Site Policy and Procedures" at http://www.drake.edu/it/help/documents/webpolicy_v2_8.pdf has a number of important elements which content creators need to observe. Some pages are defined as "official" pages, which means that they contain information about Drake on which a visitor can rely (programs and services offered, fees, etc). These pages must conform to the relevant policies, and the goal is to move them all into the CMS. Other pages may be "unofficial" (personal pages, student organizations, etc.) and are subject to less prescriptive policies described in the document cited.

At the time of writing (October 10, 2006) some units have moved their web site content into the CMS, and have the same look-and-feel, with a blue page header, some permanent links at the top of the page, and side-bar navigation specific to the unit. Each page also has a footer which contains, among other things, a last-reviewed date. The CMS will automatically remind the page owner when a page needs to be

reviewed for currency and accuracy. The review cycle may vary from a week to a year, depending on the page.

4. The CMS, the Drake website and the BlueView Portal

The content put into the CMS and published to the Drake website is typically information which Drake wishes to make available to the public. There is also information which Drake wishes to restrict to members of the Drake community (e.g. student information such as grades, or employee information). Drake has implemented a companion product to the CMS: this is a portal product, which Drake is calling BlueView, described in "Introduction to Drake's Portal". Content in the CMS can also be sent to the portal.

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