

# 10 Steps to understanding CMS

If you own a website, your designer should have discussed Content Management Systems with you. If you aren't sure what a CMS is, why you need one, or where to get one, then this article is for you.

---

## 1. Content Management Systems give YOU the control.

A Content Management System is software that provides you the ability to maintain your website without needing any HTML or other coding knowledge. You can update your content whenever you need to without waiting on your designer's schedule or paying for their time. If you can use Microsoft Word and include an attachment with an e-mail, you can use a CMS.

## 2. Having up-to-date content and a standard design will increase your business.

If your website is shamefully out of date in the information it presents, or if your design is amateur or archaic, then a CMS is for you. Having a friend or family member design your website may save you money, but it will also likely stall your success. A professional designer can bring your website's style and design to a current standard, and a CMS enables you to keep your information and messaging current.

## 3. Maintaining your own website will improve your website's success.

You know your business better than anyone, especially more than whoever is maintaining it right now. When it comes to new articles, relevant information, frequently asked questions, and ideas that will attract visitors and result in sales, you need to be in the driver's seat. You take responsibility for turning your website into a profit centre and a CMS gives you the tools to make it happen.

## 4. A Content Management System will save you money.

Paying for every update you make to your website is counter-productive for success. With a CMS you can educate your customers in their purchase decision, inform them about your business and products, highlight your expertise, feature your success stories, and compare your product to your competition's. And you don't need to pay for each update, saving you money.

## 5. Free scripts and open-source may cost more than you think.

When website designers or business owners opt for free or open-source solutions to their problems in the hopes of avoiding cost, what they may end up with is headache and in fact, financial expense. In my experience with these products, a significant amount of time is spent just researching options. Then, the free script or open-source product needs to be integrated with existing features in a client's website, and modifications are necessary to create continuity with design elements and functionality. In addition, these free solutions don't offer personal support. In the end, the "free" solution costs more in hourly rates for integration than a CMS would have, which would be preferable for the support that comes with a CMS package.

## 10 Steps to understanding CMS cont'd..

### 6. Content Management Systems aren't just for enterprise companies.

Many Content Management Systems cost hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars and are meant for enterprise companies and websites. If you're a small or medium sized business with or without e-commerce, there are Content Management Systems specially made for you at small to medium sized prices. If you're serious about your website's success then you need to do what the big sites do: get a CMS.

### 7. A Content Management System should be all-encompassing.

Content Management Systems vary in the features they offer. Make sure to consider your needs and look for a CMS that matches. I've listed some of the possible services, content module types, and tools below

Services:	Content Modules for:	Tools:
Website Hosting	Static Pages	Mailing Lists
Email	Photo Galleries	Shopping Carts
Website Statistics	Catalogues	Customer Relationship
Certificates	Blogs	Management
	Forums	

### 8. Your website designer should embrace CMS not despise it.

I've met website owners who wanted control of their website but were denied it by their website designer. Who is the designer trying to help - you or themselves? A website designer should help their clients find the right products and services for their needs. I recommend that they find a Content Management System in conjunction with providing their website design services. Many companies offer an affiliate or referral fee. A CMS can make the graphic designer and the customer happy.

### 9. A Content Management System should make your site findable.

People will only visit your site if they can find it. Being found requires your site to have content that's relevant, interesting and compelling for your potential customers. A Content Management System ensures each page on your site is created correctly and attractively. Your site should be easily spidered by the search engines and submitted to their databases for inclusion. Each page on your site should engage the visitor, answer the basic questions about your company, and direct them for more information elsewhere on your site. It should be found through all the major search engines for relevant searches and load fast when visitors arrive.

### 10. Growing your business means growing your content.

If you are serious about having your website grow your business then you have to get serious about growing the amount and quality of content. Whether you sell products online or provide services to a small community, your website can be a valuable marketing tool. A Content Management System provides the means for you to grow your website and ultimately grow your business.

*Credit to James Roy of Linear Design.*

For more information on Content Management Systems, please contact [jeff@designalt.co.nz](mailto:jeff@designalt.co.nz).