BOOK REVIEW

Professional Content Management Systems: Handling Digital Media Assets

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Professional Content Management Systems: Handling Digital Media Assets
Andreas Mauthe and Peter Thomas
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One of the most demanding areas in content management is the handling of high-quality audiovisual content in a production and broadcast environment.

Professional Content Management Systems concentrates on various aspects related to content and CMS in a professional media production, exploitation, and content delivery (particularly broadcasting). It also offers a brief overview of research and standardization efforts in the area of content management.

Content and content management are core topics in the IT and broadcast industry. However, these terms have not been defined clearly for those who are learning the field. The topic is complex, and users from different industries have different backgrounds and a varied understanding of content issues. Multimedia content management helps to clarify the subject area, define problematic issues, and establish a universal understanding of content and its management. (About the book)

Obviously, Professional Content Management Systems covers the entire workflow from the introduction of the media into the system to the production stages to archiving. The author’s claim to draw experience from both the broadcast environment and the IT domain seems to be relevant; however, the book does not introduce the authors, their areas of work, or their experience.

While the title is broad, the text does not reflect such a breadth. The book, in short, does not deal with document management or aspects of content management for Web applications. However, Web pages, as one of the media types that has to be handled by a professional CMS, is discussed briefly. The core area of the book is limited to audiovisual assets. This area is conceptually dealt with in the frame of reference of
the architecture that goes into integrating a content management system (CMS), as required for an enterprise-based computing infrastructure.

In order to get a feel of the coverage of CMS, it is appropriate to have a look at the details in some of the chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the concepts of content, content management systems, and their requirements. Chapter 2 discusses the individuals/groups who deal with content. It also details content-related workflows in broadcast and other content-rich organizations. Chapter 3 elaborates on the different forms of essence. Chapter 4 elaborates on essence, a term given to the content itself, and the way it is represented (metadata). Further, the main media formats and encoding principles are detailed. Chapter 5 discusses in detail the various media file formats.

Chapters 6 and 7 form the core of the book concerning the architecture, functionality, and design of a CMS and the infrastructure for a content-rich organization. The entire workflow, from the introduction of the media into the system to the production stages and to the final archiving is covered.

Chapter 6 (CMS Architecture) presents architectural layout and system components of a CMS. The key user requirements of a modern content-rich organization are considered, and its basic design principles are discussed in detail. Different system components and their characteristics/features also are discussed.

Chapter 7 gives a good description of the physical components and the communication subsystems required to build a CMS. Design considerations for various hardware components of CMS are discussed. Operational considerations along with cost are discussed; a case study is noteworthy.

Chapter 8 provides the integration principles and types of integration systems in a content-rich, multichannel CMS infrastructure.

The visual and graphical illustrations in the penultimate chapter (Chapter 9, Applications) offer a very good feel of the set of applications that users employ in order to interact with the CMS.

Finally, Professional Content Management Systems tries to give a brief glimpse of the future trends in CMS. The book enables the reader to get a good overview of the current scenario and potential pitfalls involved in executing content management projects. All of the previously mentioned comments are its strengths.

Digital asset management as an area of study and research is evolving slowly and steadily. However, the book is neither an exclusive tool for practitioners nor a handy guide for learners. The focus and approach of the book lies in between. It targets information and media professionals in general and broadcasting and IT engineers, archivists, cataloguers, and media and content managers in particular. Although the book is presumed to be beneficial for students, it actually is useful only for graduate students and not undergraduates.

Similarly, since it is set in a European background, the book has an extensive catalog of the audiovisual content management as it is dealt with in that continent. But for North American and other readers, there is considerably less content and context. The previous comments are the weaknesses of this book. The good news is that the appendices and bibliographic citations will interest global practitioners. In this approach, there is some geographic balance.

Nevertheless, the coverage in Professional Content Management Systems is very inclusive and pertinent to the topic.
of content management. Because most of
the information in the book is valuable for
reference and research and because of its
high price, it is hoped that libraries will
acquire a copy and make it available to all
concerned.

Overall, the content and layout of this
book would satisfy the readers, and hence,
it is recommended to anyone who is aware
and wants to know more or is dealing with
any aspect of CMS.

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ing roles in USA for past 5 years. Presently he is working as a software analyst at HP,
Canada. He also finds interest in literary and community work.