Chapter III

Developing a Distributed Web Publishing System at CSU Sacramento Library:
A Case Study of Coordinated Decentralization

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Abstract

This chapter introduces the steps that were undertaken at the California State University, Sacramento Library in moving from a centrally managed, static, and disjointed Web site to an efficient, collaboratively managed, database-driven Web site utilizing an easy-to-use customized Web content management system developed by the library. It discusses the
decisions and actions taken during the various stages throughout the
design and implementation of this Web publishing system. The authors
introduce the methods and some of the Web-based technologies used, and
present the issues encountered and how they were addressed during the
development and implementation of the locally created Web publishing
system.

Introduction

Just after 3:00 p.m., a member from the Reference Department called the
Systems Department complaining that she was unable to get her Web page to
look right. After the Web developer looked at the HTML code, he realized that
the problem was that there was a missing “>” in one of the HTML tags. At that
moment, another reference librarian walked into the Systems Department
looking for someone to help him create several Web pages. The librarian was
familiar with MS Word, but the process of creating Web pages seemed
daunting. Shortly thereafter, he received another call came from the Circulation
Department Head, informing him that the hours on the Web site were incorrect
and that one of her newly hired staff members was not listed on the staff
directory. Once the hours had been updated and the staff member was added
to the online directory, he remembered that he had several dozen e-mail
messages and phone calls reminding him of tasks that needed to be completed
by the end of the day. It was almost time for him to go home for the day, and
there appeared to be no end in sight.

The Web developer had only been working for the library for several weeks
and he had quickly realized that the current model of Web site maintenance
would not work in the long run, especially if he wanted to keep his sanity.
Something had to be done. Wouldn’t it be great if those involved in the creation
of the content could also develop and maintain their own Web pages without
the need to know HTML, thought the Web developer. He had remembered
discussing this issue with some of his colleagues on several online discussion
lists. Many had shared their experiences on using databases to manage the
creation and maintenance of Web pages. The process didn’t seem too difficult.
He already possessed the experience in developing databases, and extending
this to the Web seemed fairly straightforward. He also realized that there had
been several librarians who had been involved with the library Web site from
Use of E-Resources by Social Scientists in Tamil Nadu, India
www.igi-global.com/chapter/use-of-e-resources-by-social-scientists-in-tamil-nadu-india/214357?camid=4v1a