

KNOWLEDGE AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT

September 2009

Evolved Web Strategies, Part 1: The Web as a Vital Artery for Strategy and Growth

by Jim Murphy

In “Forget Web Content Management: New Requirements for Evolved Web Strategies,” we examined four streams of change on the web as well as how companies must consider them when devising a web strategy and choosing technology providers: strategic, pervasive, engaging, and responsive.

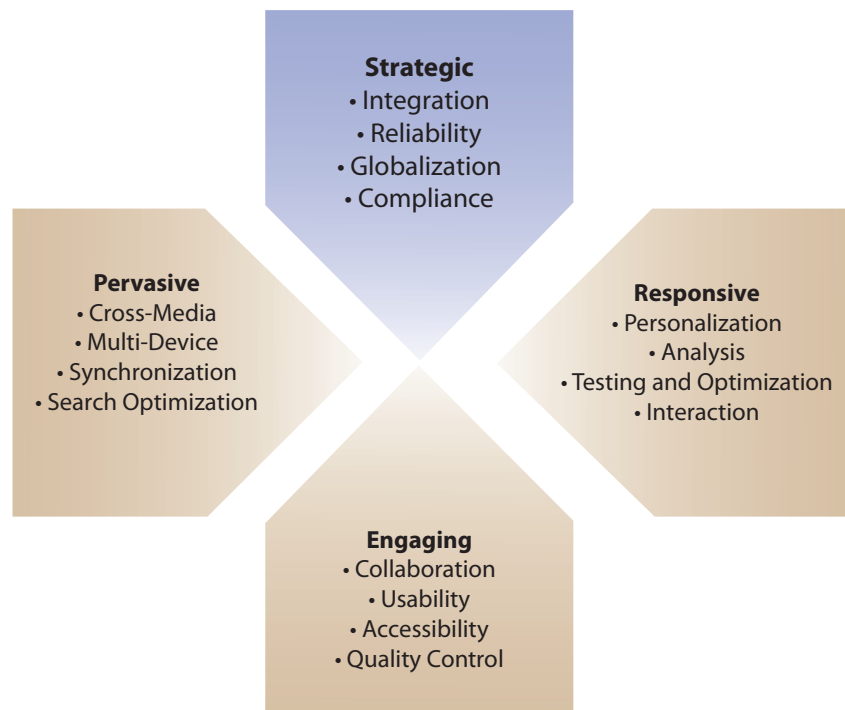
- **Strategic**—The web becomes a vital artery for business strategy and growth.
- **Pervasive**—The web is more than the web, and it’s more than your website.
- **Engaging**—The web is for everyone and by everyone.
- **Responsive**—The web is a hub for shaping, sensing, and responding to customer demand.

Changing demand

Web content management isn’t just about building and managing a website anymore. It’s about engaging customers and collaborating more efficiently with partners.

This first part of our series on the web will focus on the first point, strategic. We’ll examine the heightened requirements for a web-enabled business strategy and rank the web content management (WCM) vendors best equipped to meet these needs. We’ll provide similar assessments for pervasive, engaging, and responsive in the next editions of this series.

Figure 1: A balanced platform for an evolving web



Source: AMR Research, 2009

It's not just another channel through which to publish information or conduct business. It's the network that ties all the information, channels, and people together.

Businesses are steadily capturing a larger portion of their revenue on the web. While retail and B2C web efforts tend to capture the bulk of media and analyst attention, B2B organizations have come to rely on the web far more rapidly.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, B2B organizations, including manufacturers and merchant wholesalers, account for 93% of the e-commerce market as of 2007. In terms of their reliance on the web, manufacturers lead all industry sectors, with e-commerce accounting for 35% of total shipments (\$1,856B), up 5.8% from the prior year and up substantially for the sixth year straight. Retailer's e-commerce revenue grew 18.4% during the same period, accounting for 3.2% of overall retail revenue during the same period in 2007. (Note: The U.S. Census Bureau's report comparing B2B and B2C e-commerce was published in June 2009, but looks back to 2007. A recent study puts the current retail number, as of 2Q09, at 3.6%.)

Businesses of every type are, of course, using the web to save money, digitize products, provide self-service and community-supported applications, and automate a limitless variety of B2B and B2C processes.

In addition, web strategy isn't simply about websites. Rather, the fundamental technology that enables the web—from HTTP and XML to content management and search—is the very same technology that enables enterprise, inter-enterprise, and multi-channel coordination and collaboration. Content management systems, web or otherwise, must ensure the quality and integrity of information, no matter the destination, audience, or device.

Evolving web strategies drive new content management requirements

Web content strategies, and the various systems that support them, must rise and converge to support the strategic priorities of the business.

The rise of the web a dozen years ago led to some short-sighted approaches. The systems companies broadly associated with addressing the web problem, WCM systems, were designed for IT organizations to develop

and manage single websites. Many fed on dot-com era urgency and neglected long-term considerations for integrating with other information sources. That is, they were designed to help build and manage websites in their simplest form. Early WCM systems weren't designed to drive and extend the business, but to meet IT demand for building and maintaining a website.

The increased criticality of the web in enterprise strategy means companies should consider new criteria when selecting systems to support the evolving web:

- **Multi-site content management**—Large companies must manage content on many sites, especially as their interactions with customers span across brands, subsidiaries, and territories.
- **Internationalization, globalization, and localization**—Companies require more than just Unicode support and documentation in multi-language websites. They require integral means of dealing with complex translation and localization workflows.
- **Improved integration**—Companies need a cohesive, uniform means to integrate with transactional systems, business processes, as well as structured and unstructured information from both internal and external sources.
- **Product information management**—While the web is the vital artery for strategy and growth among manufacturers and retailers, product information is the lifeblood. Yet most WCM platforms have left the challenging issues of dealing with product management to other specialized providers.
- **Compliance and records management**—Most companies have concentrated compliance efforts on internal documentation, processes, and systems. Now the web is more strategic: It's the central means of communicating to customers and partners. In addition, more companies are employing Web 2.0 techniques to encourage contribution and interaction. As a result, compliance, accountability, and records management come to the forefront of concerns.
- **Performance, reliability, and scalability**—Websites and systems can hardly be strategic if they're not working, they bog down and frustrate the customer, or they require exponentially more resources (e.g., hardware, servers, and human resources) as they expand in scope, volume, and richness of content.

Web content strategy standouts

AMR Research examined the macro-dynamics of the WCM vendor landscape in “A Changing Content Management Marketplace for a Changed Web.” As we mentioned in this article, to say the WCM marketplace is “consolidating” is oversimplifying. Rather, web content management is at once expanding and dissipating, with WCM vendors expanding their business appeal;

vendors, from a wide range of other categories, gobbling up WCM vendors, entirely new, low-cost alternatives emerging; and the largest software vendors in the world, including **Microsoft**, **Oracle**, **IBM**, and **EMC**, getting into the business.

What follows is a ranked list detailing the vendors we believe are best equipped to serve strategic web needs, as well as an explanation of what makes them so.

Table 1: Evolving web balanced scorecard, part 1

Vendor	Strategic	Pervasive	Engaging	Responsive
FatWire	1	To be ranked in Part 2	To be ranked in Part 3	To be ranked in Part 4
Oracle	2			
Interwoven	3			
Open Text and Vignette	4			
Sitecore	5			
SDL Tridion	6			
Ektron	7			
EMC	8			
IBM	9			
Microsoft	10			

Source: AMR Research, 2009

A note on the ranking

The vendors included all deserve consideration as strategic WCM providers, depending on the specific requirements of the customer. In addition, there are dozens of vendors—large and small, proprietary and open source—serving the WCM market. We’ve made no attempt to include them all in our research.

The vendors included met the following requirements:

- They fit our definition of “strategic.”
- They have live deployments or appear on selection lists among AMR Research’s clients.
- They were willing and able to provide credible references, demos, and product and company information that allowed us to adequately assess and compare their products and services.

Rankings are AMR Research’s judgment, based primarily on information gathered in interviews and conversations with customers and systems integrators, many of which have worked with a variety of WCM systems. We also engaged with the vendors to gather product and customer information and witness demonstrations.

1. FatWire

FatWire is well equipped as a strategic web provider. The company's flagship product, Content Server, was designed from the outset to address the needs of large global businesses, with a flexible, Java-based architecture and security scheme that allows the management of numerous sites in many languages. Content Server distinguishes itself in its ability to handle product catalog information. It also provides a caching mechanism that helps synchronize content and ensures performance.

FatWire works primarily with large organizations; 60% of its customers have revenue over \$1B. **3M** manages the presentation and synchronization of more than a million highly attributed products across 200 locations and in 40 different languages. FatWire also counts **Barclays, Ford, Linksys, Kohler, and BusinessWeek** among its more than 500 customers.

2. Oracle

Oracle has been hard at work aligning its WCM capabilities with business priorities like providing self-service, differentiating products and services, and improving marketing. The guiding architectural principle is "open web content management," which allows for content and services to be delivered into any web environment, whether it's a website, portal, or dedicated web application.

Oracle's 2007 acquisition of **Stellent** serves as the basis of Oracle Universal Content Management (UCM), and it was one of the first to support multi-site content management. Content Integration Suite offers a thorough and flexible approach to integration. Customers and integrators appreciate UCM's combined digital asset management (DAM) and WCM capabilities, as well as its handling of metadata, auditability, and high performance under huge loads of content and data.

MeadWestvaco, a provider of packaging solutions for companies in consumer products, healthcare, food and beverage, and other industries, offers one of the better examples of the shift from the tactical to the strategic web. The company used Oracle UCM to reach into new foreign markets, improve process efficiencies, and create and sustain relationships with customers and partners. Oracle also counts **ConAgra Foods, Chick-fil-A, Costco, The Home Depot, Land O' Lakes, Marvel, Orbitz, Monster, and Tele Atlas** among its many premier UCM customers.

3. Interwoven (Autonomy)

Rarely do AMR Research's enterprise customers choose a WCM system without considering Interwoven. Its long history of serving large customers has brought it substantial expertise in supporting the evolving priorities of global businesses. Its TeamSite and surrounding suite of WCM products have been responsible for managing multi-language sites that require integration with enterprise systems and data.

Companies express some concern with Interwoven as a strategic web provider: a need to update the product's architecture. Interwoven made a conscious decision not to rearchitect, which could have forced many customers to rewrite and migrate sites and assets. This turned out to be a good move, as prime competitor **Vignette** took the opposite path and appears to have suffered, at least in the short term. Customers note additional concern over whether **Autonomy**, Interwoven's March 2009 acquirer and enterprise search and e-discovery leader, would put investments toward a TeamSite update when it seems preoccupied with another aspect of Interwoven's business, helping law firms and legal groups through litigation readiness and e-discovery.

Autonomy has been busy addressing these concerns over the months since the March 2009 acquisition. Its answer to the architecture problem is what it calls a next-generation architecture based on integrating TeamSite with Autonomy's IDOL meaning-based computing platform. Among numerous other advancements that demonstrate its commitment to WCM, it's wisely making compliance part of the WCM proposition, with an ability to automatically archive dynamic web content. While we have yet to see the implications of the platform and the experience for customers, we think the Autonomy-Interwoven connection could result in the preferred Web platform for the most advanced brands and the customers with the most valuable content.

Interwoven's impressive customer list includes **Avaya**, which, after its 2000 spinoff from **Lucent Technologies**, found itself with nearly 900 websites on dozens of technology platforms. In part, the company credits Interwoven for turning the various systems into a coordinated whole. Avaya also realized a 90% reduction in publishing costs, and the new platform allows it to launch marketing campaigns simultaneously in all regions.

Chrysler deploys Interwoven to unify brands and build out more than 4,200 dealer sites. Other premier clients include **British Telecom (BT)**, **LexisNexis**, and **Rohm & Haas**.

4. Open Text and Vignette

Open Text's inherited product lines for web content management—Open Text Web Solutions (formerly called **RedDot**) and the recently acquired Vignette Content Management and Vignette Portal—support the strategic aspect of the emerging web. Roughly half of Open Text Web Solutions customers are in the EMEA region, so its primary attributes in this regard are allowing multi-site and multi-language deployments. Still, Vignette's long heritage in demanding customer-facing web markets, including media and entertainment and financial services, have made it the stronger of the two when considering the strategic aspect of the web.

Like Autonomy with Interwoven, Open Text put a wealth of resources toward the strategic web challenge. Open Text Web Solutions could prove quite complementary, with its strength in adjacent markets like manufacturing, its strong presence in Europe, and its .NET-based architecture. The Open Text Digital Media group, which is centered on the former **Artesia** DAM product, along with Open Text's strong basis as a provider of compliance and records management, makes the company a compelling contender for a strategic web strategy.

On its own, Vignette uses sharing and templates to allow content reuse across many sites. The QuickSite offering allows customers to create or clone websites, individual pages, and content elements. A recently released content and transfer capability allows Vignette to clone entire environments and help with testing, quality assurance, and design across staging and production environments.

The company's long-ago acquisition of integration specialist **OnDisplay** as well as its customers' frequent needs to integrate with existing enterprise systems has brought Vignette adapters to integrate with **SAP** as well as the various Oracle business applications, including PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, and Siebel.

Motorola uses Vignette's V7 to support major businesses in 60 countries and 30 languages. **Mercedes-**

Benz uses it to manage its primary MBUSA.com, as well as to delegate administration of more than 350 dealer and marketing micro-sites. **National Instruments'** ni.com is a sophisticated e-commerce site, published in nine languages across 40 countries. It allows users to configure products, create parts lists, obtain quotes, and purchase online or via telephone.

As for Open Text Web Solutions, **B. Braun**, a global provider of products and services to the healthcare industry, used it in conjunction with SAP NetWeaver Portal to reinforce its Sharing Expertise slogan. Bringing a wide range of information into a single, seamless view for staff brought numerous technical challenges, including connecting SAP material master with data from 800,000 components and 166,000 saleable items with descriptive text, images and other intranet content. Other Open Text Web Solutions customers include **United Auto Parts**, **Tupperware UK**, **Healthplus**, and **Bank of New York**.

5. Sitecore

Based in Copenhagen, Sitecore is another European WCM vendor making headway in the United States. Based on .NET, the company has proved a popular choice for companies seeking to create a strategic, global, scalable web experience on a Microsoft platform.

Sitecore Foundry allows companies to manage up to thousands of sites with a single, centralized console. The company supports the creation of "Sitecore templates" via its branch template technology, as well as the ability to repurpose content across many sites via references or content duplication.

Sitecore supports multi-language sites with its own translation management and workflow, while it points to partner **Clay Tablet** to integrate and coordinate with major translation service providers. Sitecore's core architecture is built on a data integration framework called the Data Provider Abstraction Layer. This lets the product connect to third-party repositories or applications, allowing Sitecore to repurpose all content from those systems as if it were native content.

Sitecore's big upsurge among enterprises includes deals with **Starbucks**, **General Mills**, **Hershey's**, **McCormick & Company**, **Sharp Electronics**, and **PepsiCo**.

6. SDL Tridion

SDL Tridion has been one of the most successful WCM providers over the past couple years, adding more than 200 customers to its installed base of 600 in the last year. Much of the growth has come from U.S. companies interested in SDL Tridion's ability to support global, multi-language efforts; parent company SDL is a leader in translation products and services. SDL Tridion's Blueprinting Technology and architecture is widely valued by customers and service providers as a cohesive approach to managing content across languages, internal and external sites, and media types, including web and print.

Our primary caveats regarding SDL Tridion are two. One is that all the customers we spoke with had more trouble than expected implementing it. That's largely because global, multi-language and multi-channel efforts require a great deal of forethought for defining document structures, information architecture, and publishing and organizational processes. Second, a few customers reported problems with customer service, especially with SDL Tridion's sudden growth spurt in the United States just as it was acquired by SDL. Despite the difficulties, every customer we've spoken with is confident they've made the right choice to support their strategic, global, and multi-channel content strategy.

A new branding and consolidation effort was the strategic purpose for **Unilever's** SDL Tridion selection and implementation. The consumer products conglomerate had created a new logo to help unify its 150 separate brands, including Knorr, Birds Eye, Lipton, and Dove. Product images and collateral had to be distributed to numerous brand websites as well as channel partners and external agencies. Long-time customer **Yamaha** is using SDL Tridion to roll out a renewed marketing initiative across 29 countries, running 45 websites in more than 30 languages. Other customers include **ABN AMRO, Canon, KLM, Renault, Ricoh,** and **Lexus**.

7. Ektron

Early in its 11-year heritage, Ektron focused on providing an in-context web authoring tool to customers and technology providers, but it's steadily gaining significance as a premier provider for the enterprise web. Its CMS400.net product works well in Microsoft environments and also as a complement to Java-based

efforts. The company's product suite stands out for its flexibility and ease of deployment and integration with internal and external content sources and applications. Unlike many other vendors hampered by a legacy of older-generation technology, Ektron is taking full advantage of its modern architecture, wholeheartedly using web services and standardized portlets to make the WCM job seem a lot easier.

It has more than 7,500 customers. Even though most of them are small and midsize businesses—more than 60% have revenue less than \$1B, and 45% have revenue under \$250M—the company is still quickly finding an audience among large organizations, whether it's extending its reach alongside other WCM and portal systems, or replacing them entirely. Marquee customers include **Sony, Mitsubishi,** and **Del Monte**.

8. EMC

EMC labels its web efforts as "Web Experience Management," encompassing a product line that offers many of the features and qualities companies should look for in a strategic web platform. A big part of the vendor's current push comes from transforming and synchronizing content over widespread, global networks of sites and sub-sites. Its Documentum Interactive Delivery Services supports multi-tiered global environments, high-speed content delivery, and personalization in global deployments. It also boasts a solid back end and continual attention to compliance and records management with EMC Documentum Federated Records Services. A new XML repository, acquired via specialist **X-Hive**, shows promise as a means of deeper integration with enterprise systems and data, better handling of multi-site topologies and multiple languages, and a solid way to support multi-channel publishing.

EMC Documentum is best known and most widely used for document management. Still, because of the company's versatility and its relationship to EMC's massive storage business, numerous enterprise IT organizations have chosen it as the corporate standard for every kind of content management. Unfortunately, despite the vendor's worthy efforts, web content management, on its own, is not a strong point.

On the other hand, other paths through the confusing EMC Documentum portfolio may lead to better results. For example, Interactive Content Management,

which includes a media repository and archive, creative process automation, and multi-channel publishing, is geared for companies pursuing strategic initiatives, including ensuring brand integrity, speeding product introduction, streamlining transactional processes, and addressing compliance concerns. **Brown-Forman** uses the suite to consolidate its 37 brands, streamline collaboration with agencies, reduce time to market, and reduce invoicing costs in 135 countries. Other premier customers include **Eastman Kodak, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Wells Fargo, Harley-Davidson, Cisco,** and **Pfizer**.

9. IBM

IBM is a standout on the strategic web, not only because of its products, but also for its enterprise influence, ability to deliver products and services worldwide, and continual attention to openness, interoperability, and integration.

IBM's approach to web strategy is not solely dependent on its WCM product, Lotus Web Content Management. Rather, the company offers a seemingly endless array of products and services to meet emerging web demands. Most prominent among these are assets like WebSphere Application Server, WebSphere Portal, and WebSphere Commerce. But other products, like IBM Lotus Connections (for Web-2.0-style collaboration) and IBM Mashup Center can quickly be put to use.

Interoperability is IBM's as well as Lotus Web Content Management's strength. The product includes shared libraries and a new site wizard that lets business users create and maintain virtual portals under IT's careful governance. The product also provides access to a broad range of enterprise applications through connectors, packaged adaptors, and standards support and development tools.

IBM's weakness as a strategic web provider isn't lack of functionality or scalability. In fact, IBM can certainly provide every feature, function, and accommodation a company can think of—and many that they can't—to

suit current and future web strategy needs. The problem is these features and functions are strewn across different products, like Lotus Web Content Management, WebSphere Portal, Lotus Connections, Lotus Quickr, WebSphere Product Center, and too many more. No company can afford them all, which necessitates a tactical approach.

To its credit, IBM is working on this problem. The company's openness and interoperability as well as its earnest efforts among its product groups could help. But we believe the conversation must move from being focused on integrating products to consolidating them.

Many of IBM's strategic web-minded customers use WebSphere Portal and its other capabilities, in addition to other third-party content management systems, to support their enterprise goals. In the meantime, IBM has seen portal demands merging with those for web content management (just as we have), so expect the company to tie them together more comprehensively in the future.

10. Microsoft

The factors that make Microsoft an interesting option for enterprise web strategy have less to do with product features and performance than with the sheer popularity of Microsoft SharePoint 2007. Most of its strength comes from its business-level accessibility and ability to handle ad-hoc tasks and processes on the road to a more programmatic, solidified, and measurable approach.

Competing WCM vendors harp on SharePoint's failings when compared to focused WCM systems, and many customers have come against obstacles along the path to their intended WCM use: Users report confusion over how to customize page and site design, weakness dealing with multi-site and multi-language topographies, and licensing/security complications when facing external audiences. Our sense is that SharePoint offers good overall WCM capability, but it's not always easy to find.

Nevertheless, SharePoint's ubiquity has destined it for websites of all shapes, sizes, and degrees of importance. Strategic web content management is clearly an important target for Microsoft, and the company is accordingly gearing efforts toward vital business audiences that care about ensuring brand integrity and engaging customers through campaigns. And even if the company didn't extend SharePoint's strategic, enterprise-size web use, its thousands of customers, systems integrators, and hungry third-party vendors with complementary technologies are sure to do so.

Microsoft's premier WCM customers are beginning to demonstrate business impact. **Continental Airlines** has used SharePoint to manage partner promotions on its frequent flyer site, while **Ferrari** has used it to build a stronger and more engaging brand on the web.

Up next

Our look at vendors is only 25% done. Strategy, performance, reliability, scalability, accommodations for global sites, and multiple sites are important parts of a balanced web diet, but they're not nearly the whole story on the evolving web. Next, we'll look at the pervasive web and the providers that help companies meet its challenges.