

# Being Content with Content

**Stephen E. Arnold, President, Arnold Information Technology**

*Use of Web content management systems (CMS) has grown dramatically over the past few years. Accompanying the growth has been dissatisfaction with expensive, bloated systems. Businesses that buy into the promises of some CMS vendors realize that their systems fail to work as promised. Ektron customers feel otherwise. Ektron CMS products put businesses in control of their sites' content, regardless of the type of project or size of deployment.*

Commercial Web sites need CMS, and business owners and managers understand that. Eighty percent of businesses with more than \$10 million in annual revenues used Web content management software, according to a 2002 report by the Yankee Group. Significantly, so did 73% of businesses with revenue under \$10 million. Content management solutions can strengthen operations and save money. However, many of the companies that invested in content management are now struggling to see the payoff. Why?

CMS has emerged over the past decade as a much-hyped technology promising to simplify the way companies organize, create, publish, use and repurpose content. Yet many of the organizations that have invested in CMS—either buying a system or building their own—have been disappointed. Instead of finding simplicity, they have found complexity and frustration.

Deploying CMS from an IT perspective can be a massive undertaking. IT personnel face skeptical, hesitant end-users, high expectations, and an array of technical and business issues. This may set the stage for disappointment. A recent Jupiter Research study found that 61% of companies that have deployed CMS have reverted to manual processes for updating their sites. Jupiter also found that one in 20 companies surveyed planned to use another system after failing to achieve a return on investment (ROI) with the first.

Obviously, there is discrepancy between expectations for CMS and actual outcome.

"This is an area of technology in which people overspent and found themselves over-deployed," says Jupiter's Matthew Berk. "The need is still there, it's the question of how to meet that need cost effectively."

**Q:** Do you need content management software?

**A:** If you have a company Internet, intranet or extranet site, you would likely benefit from CMS. The challenge of managing text, graphics and multimedia content on sites with several dozen Web pages to thousands of pages can translate to lower costs and greater opportunity. Without CMS, sites can turn into black holes that absorb money and time. If you're looking to a future of XML, Web Services or RSS, a content management system will be a necessity.

**Q:** Have you been disappointed by enterprise software in the past?

**A:** Many types of enterprise software impose uncontrollable costs and outright project failure. According to Network World (July 14, 2003)\*, vendors' "ambitious promises" are at the root of these disappointments. Ektron differs from other vendors. Ektron keeps promises, and at the same time, costs less than its major competitors.

\*<http://www.nwfusion.com/columnists/2003/0714faceoffno.html>

## Improving Content Management System Selection

Selecting a CMS product can be overwhelming. Yet it does not need to be. One company, Ektron, Inc., now lets people see their own content in action in a CMS via a Personalized CMS Learning Session. Ektron invites anyone planning to buy or replace a content management system to participate in this one-to-one Web-based meeting. During the session, you will talk with an Ektron specialist about new CMS trends, issues and ideas, and will also see how content from your own site is managed in an Ektron CMS.

Analysts from Arnold IT participated in a session and found it to be very useful. The meeting was tailored to meet our level of expertise and included a lively dialogue of concepts and ideas. Following the meeting, we downloaded Ektron software for further evaluation.

Prior to each session, Ektron copies content from the participant's Web site. Nothing is required from the participant beyond a quick sign-up at Ektron's site. The demonstration shows Web content being edited, published, and managed by the Ektron application. The result? Advanced workflow, straightforward XML functions, and other features such as on-the-fly graphic manipulation, with an Ektron professional on the phone to answer questions and point out functions. Within an hour, Arnold IT analysts experienced the ease-of-use and smooth integration that gets Ektron CMS up and working in a matter of days—not months like most other CMS applications.

“Ektron is committed to helping people across various industries learn more about content management, to help them understand how CM can yield immediate, real-world results, and to remove barriers to entry. To that end, Ektron’s new learning sessions will serve the industry well.”

*Bill Rogers  
Ektron CEO*

For many people, CMS download and demonstration techniques are sometimes ineffective. For some, especially non-technical professionals, it is difficult to visualize how a CMS will handle their own content—rather than generic demo content. (Of course, Ektron can use demonstration content if a participant prefers.)

People want to see visible business value in any software application, and Ektron does just that. The company’s Personalized CMS Learning Sessions are a new, powerful and concrete way to approach demonstrations. During the learning sessions, a participant can see first hand how the Ektron system meets needs for:

- Simplifying how content is organized and accessed;
- Assigning permissions to work groups or individuals; and
- Defining workflow parameters for site sections.

Registration for an Ektron Personalized CMS Learning Session is available at [www.ektron.com/learning](http://www.ektron.com/learning).

## **No Time for Cumbersome, Confining Systems**

Many CMS vendors develop products with a bigger-is-better mentality. This results in a costly, time-consuming system that is more confining than anticipated. Ektron has found that organizations want a system without useless functions. Other vendors’ systems tend to be solutions in search of problems.

Whether your content management project has three or three thousand end-users, whether you want basic or sophisticated functions, look for a CMS that will improve your efficiency today . . .and grow with you for tomorrow.

Ektron is the only company that has focused exclusively on developing content management systems that are easy to:

- Understand
- Afford
- Integrate
- Customize
- Use
- Scale

Ektron started its business by addressing the basic challenges of any CMS project – giving end-users a familiar, practical tool for authoring and editing Web content. Ektron eWebEditPro is the industry’s first full-featured, browser-based WYSIWYG editor. According to eWeek Labs reviewer Jim Rapoza, eWebEditPro leads the market in “in-page editing controls.” With the newer eWebEditPro+XML and WebImageFX, browser-based editing and content management can move in powerful new directions.

“[Ektron] CMS 300’s advantage over other content management systems is eWebEditPro+XML,” says Nick Wilkoff of Forrester Research in a recent article from Transform Magazine. “This XML editor [gives] Ektron a leg up in selling the content management system. It gives potential CMS 300 users a way of tagging their content in XML using a proven, user-friendly XML authoring tool.”

## **Beyond Editing . . . To Straightforward Content Management**

Thousands of developers bundle Ektron’s editing tools into packaged and custom-built CMS. In working with these developers, Ektron has seen a multitude of approaches to CMS. As a result of the experience, Ektron has created its own Web content management system. In doing so, Ektron went back to the basics. Its engineers identified the fundamentals of content management, and built a straightforward—yet flexible—system with a targeted set of essential features. Over time, Ektron has added options allowing users to go beyond the basics, if they choose. Ektron has systems for modest content management needs and larger businesses, in addition to highly specialized projects.

Mark Gilbert and James Lundy of Gartner Group have advice for businesses planning to invest in content management. In their June 2003 report *The Latest Trends in the Content Management Market*, they state:

“Start with two basic tasks. First, whatever your business goal for content management, you won’t win approval from upper management for a system purchase unless you can make a strong case that your enterprise will get a financial payoff. It’s critical to put together a tight case to prove ROI in two years or less. Second, develop a ‘content management architecture.’ Because content management is changing from a stand-alone application into an infrastructure integrated with other key applications, you must move toward uniformity and coherence, and you must fit your content management portfolio within your enterprise’s overall IT architecture.”

## **CMS: Your Way Is the Right Way**

Many vendors have moved into a competitive CMS environment by delivering gimmicks and unnecessary functions. Often, this bewilders users. Many vendors want customers to fit into a mold. A CMS should not force customers to restructure their IT environments or work processes. A CMS should not take control. Instead it should put you in control.

With Ektron, content management is added as a component into your Web infrastructure. In most cases, an Ektron system can be implemented in less than three days, including configuration to fit existing business processes. Over time, Ektron customers can modify the system to meet new processes or needs.

## Back to the Basics of Content

<b>CMS Feature</b>	<b>Ektron Delivers</b>
Version control	Yes, fully functional from a graphical administrative panel; unlimited roll back
Security	Yes, multilevel
Browser-based editor	Yes plus a built in image editing tool
Work flow	Yes with administrator defined roles and routing
Standards-based	Yes, Extensible Markup Language, Web standards, more
Infrastructure	Integrates with existing Web servers and popular databases. No additional hardware required
Implementation time	Usually two to five days
Training	Online and telephone support. Extensive materials (learning tools, in depth documentation and rich Developer's Section) at Ektron.com. Professional services available if customer chooses.
Multilingual support	Yes

Costly CMS does not necessarily equal superior CMS. For a 500-user setting, many products can cost \$100,000 to \$250,000 initially, followed by up to hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional expenses, including significant training requirements. Ektron delivers value. In a 500-user setting, Ektron costs about \$35,000 initially. Subsequent costs vary depending upon customizations, but most Ektron deployments fall under \$50,000 for total costs.

The ROI for an Ektron product is nearly always greater than—and realized faster than—other systems. Given Ektron's affordability, many customers find it unnecessary to perform in-depth ROI analysis.

Ektron delivers solid systems, plus advanced features, at a fair cost. Ektron will prove it to you via their Personalized CMS Learning Session. You will discover that content management can be a quick and affordable reality for your organization.

**NOTE:** Watch for a white paper from Ektron titled, *Content Management: Simplicity, Power and Agility Put You In Control*. To request a copy, visit: <http://www.ektron.com/whitepaper>

## About Ektron

Perhaps you haven't heard of Ektron? Since 1998, Ektron has quietly become a major player in content management, with its tools embedded into or recommended for applications from many other vendors (Microsoft, Documentum, Interwoven, Vignette and others.) Though Ektron has remained somewhat "behind the veil," the company has built and solidified its position as a top provider of Web content management solutions. In addition to nearly 10,000 customers using the market-leading eWebEditPro and eWebEditPro+XML, more than 1,000 customers current use Ektron's browser-based content management systems -- ranging from small Web design firms to government, healthcare and academic organizations, to major companies such as Penn National Insurance, Cerner, and the University of Colorado.

Registration for an Ektron Personalized CMS Learning Session is available at <http://www.ektron.com/learning>.

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