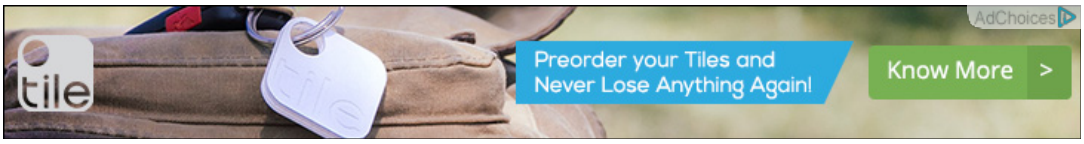

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Movable Type

By Ryan Goodrich

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Movable Type is a statuesque, all-in-one content management system software bundle that helps you build and operate an eCommerce site, create a social networking site, manage large volumes of content and run a blog, while also functioning as an intranet. With its small but loyal community, Moveable Type has developed into a force to be reckoned with in the CMS market.

With Movable Type, you have the option to upgrade to a Pro or Enterprise account that includes a wider array of built-in functionality, such as database reports, chat capability and an events calendar. These are typically offered for a single licensing fee that gives you free reign over the application's most popular features.

Some users criticize the way this CMS publishes content, since it republishes everything on your site whenever you make a design change. This approach to content management is called static publishing, which means that it has the ability to cache your content so that if your database server goes down, the static files still work online. Others consider Moveable Type a great application with wide flexibility because it is capable of static, dynamic and background publishing, with the default set to static.

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With Moveable Type's content management system, if a feature is not included in the built-in application, it's available as a free add-on. Extensions, as they are called in this system, are numerous and easily downloadable from the developer's site. Yet these add-ons are not available in high volumes due to the small size of the active community of developers. This isn't to say, however, that add-ons are in short supply. The community has steadily grown over the last few years and has helped create a sizeable database of several hundred add-ons for various purposes.

We found the plugin library for Movable Type much easier to locate and use than most other CMS applications. To install a plugin, all you need to do is download the necessary files from the library, locate the file with the PL file extension and then place it into your website's Plugins directory. You can then navigate to the Plugins page and activate the extension for immediate use. This involves a little bit of work, and the process might include more steps, depending on the plugin.

User management is a little more extensive here than it is with most other CMS services.

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Numerous roles have been defined here that offer varying levels of granular rights. For example, you can mark a user as a commenter, thus enabling them to comment on a blog entry. Or you can assign them as a designer, allowing them to change or manage the blog's templates and themes. You are not necessarily restricted to allow a user one role only. If a person fulfills multiple responsibilities on your site, you can check each role to which you want them to have access. One person can be a commenter, designer and a contributor.

SSL compatibility is a standard feature in CMS software, as are SSL logins and pages. This is important when you're dealing with confidential information such as personal information, credit card numbers and so forth used in eCommerce. You can find and use these security features, in addition to many more, as plugins.

The first thing we noticed about Moveable Type in comparison to other CMS applications is the amount of time it takes to install. This content management system took the longest amount of time to install because it requires database initialization that takes some time to complete. Whereas other products can have you working on your website within one or two minutes, this one took several minutes simply to complete the install.

Managing your website with Movable Type is quite easy through the administrator interface. When you set up your site, you are prompted to create a blog, which becomes a sub-directory on your overall site. From the blog administration page, you can manage entries, pages, assets, comments and even design. Each of these elements is easy to navigate and adjust depending on your needs.

Movable Type offers the same outlets for support as other top CMS applications, such as a knowledgebase, community forums and more. However, the downside is that the active community is significantly smaller than more popular content management systems, which means a slower response rate to any issues you might encounter.

This content management system is beloved by numerous industries, including media and publishing companies, power bloggers, design and development firms, and marketing and communications folks. It's highly versatile, yet comfortable and somehow familiar to use. Although **Movable Type** is a name that isn't commonly heard in the area of CMS software, it is one that deserves recognition and consideration.

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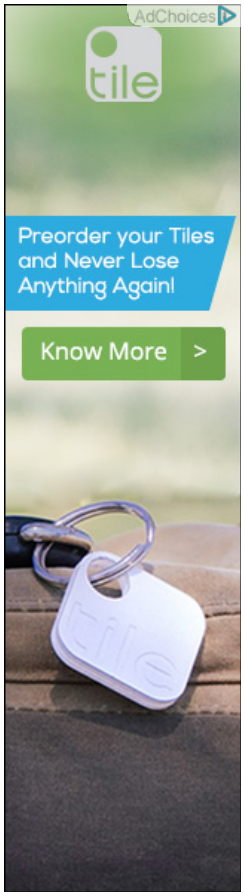

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