10 TopTen REVIEWS

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2013 Best Content Management System Software Comparisons and Reviews

Rank		#1	#2	#3	#4
10-9 Excellent		ExpressionEngine	eZ Publish	Vivvo CMS	Squarespace
8-6 Good					
5-4 Average					
3-2 Poor					
1-0 Bad		ExpressionEngine	eZ	VIVVO	SQUARESPACE
Print/Email					
Reviewer Comments		Read Review	Read Review	Read Review	Read Review
Lowest Yearly Price		Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now
		$299.95	Get Quote	$295.00	$240.00
Ratings		9.28	7.75	6.83	5.50

Overall Rating	10					
Built-in Features	9					
Add-on Features	8					
Management	7					
Security	6					
Ease of Use	5					
Help & Support	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					

Built-in Features

Dashboard
Image Editing
Server Page Language
Contact Form
Search
Blogging Capabilities
Open Source Coding
WYSIWYG Editor   +

Add-on Features

Free Add-ons
Commercial Add-ons
eCommerce
Social Media

Social Media
Administration
Security
Multimedia
Site Management
Navigation
Themes/Skins

Management

Feature				
Image Manager				
Content Manager				
Add-on Manager			+	
User Manager		+	+	
Smoke Testing				
Visitor Statistics			+	
Granular Privileges				
Security				
SSL Capable				
Login History			limited	
Content Approval				
Sandbox Testing	limited		limited	
Help & Support				
Manuals				
Online Training				
FAQs				
Community Forums				
Versioning				
Email				
Phone				
System Requirements				
Application Server	PHP	Apache	Apache	Tomcat, Apache
Database	MySQL	MySQL, PostgreSQL, Oracle, SQL	MySQL	SQL, Oracle Coherence
License	Commercial, includes full source code	GNU GPL	Commercial, includes full source code	Software as a Service (SaaS)
Operating System	Any	Linux, Windows	Any	Any
Programming Language	PHP	PHP 5.2+, XHTML 1.0, XML 1.0	PHP	HTML, JavaScript

(+) Denotes that the feature is offered as a free plugin. (limited) Denotes that the feature is included but its functionality is limited.

Content Management System Software Review

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How Content Management System Software Will Change Your Online Life

Whatever your business, **content management system software** (CMS) is designed to store, organize, create, publish, process and power all your online endeavors. Based on our extensive experience utilizing these applications (yes, there are those of us who use these CMS systems off the clock for our own sites), we came to the understanding that a CMS is a natural, more powerful extension of the blog concept, and decided CMS systems require a separate site to explore and reveal these emerging and dynamic applications. We delve more into the subject with articles on content management system software.

There are literally hundreds of content management system software applications from which to choose. For this review, we've narrowed the field down to some of the most-used Open Source software. These applications are based on the PHP language and use a MySQL database, with the exception of the products that are proprietary. Our selections represent only a small cross-section of what's out there, though through our research we have defined three definite leading products that deserve your consideration: ExpressionEngine, eZ Publish and Vivvo CMS.

For anyone working and living online, a content management system will be your best friend. When it comes to online life, we all use content management systems in one way or another: blogging, building websites, maintaining websites, selling ⬈ products online, marketing and more. The refined notion of CMS in the 21st century involves creating a system that can separate the creation of design and content, and then work together to publish these two elements.

News articles, blogs, operators' manuals, technical manuals, sales guides and marketing brochures are just a sampling of the kind of content you can manage with a CMS. The content you manage might include computer files, images, media, audio files, video files, electronic documents and web content.

What Goes Into Content Management System Software?

Expression Engine, eZ Publish and Vivvo CMS are our top-ranked systems. Not only did these systems consistently finish at the top of our side-by-side comparisons, but in many cases the gap between these and the rest is significant. Begin here by narrowing the field based on your most-needed features. From there, move to a test phase and spend time on the demos. In the end, it will be up to you to determine the best CMS is for your specific project and skill set. Every potential user is searching for a unique set of features, however.

Built-in Features

These are the features and functionality that are standard with each CMS. Each content management system offers a standard series of features through which users can ultimately gain their footing and become comfortable using the application. Still, it is but a framework to greater and grander things. The framework comprising a CMS is not typically enough to create a full end product, and add-on features are necessary to improve the versatility of your website.

Add-on Features

The main defining feature of most CMS applications is the ability to extend the original framework into a more comprehensive web solution. Developer communities flock around Open Source software and create a flurry of new capabilities for content management systems. Most community developers do this for free, but some sell their extensions as add-ons to the CMS for a nominal fee. Add-ons are helpful little additions to a CMS that enable you to make use of new software to improve your website's offerings to visitors. Whether it is enabling your site to show social media feeds or adding eCommerce capabilities to your storefront, add-ons are a boon to be utilized.

Management

On our side-by-side matrix, management of the users, design and content assets ↗ within a CMS are all reviewed here. These management features describe the inherent or pluggable way the systems organize, schedule and deploy the information they contain. Advertising management, asset management ↗, clipboard, content scheduling, content staging, inline administration, package deployment, sub sites/roots, themes/skins, trash, web stats, a web-based template manager, a web-based translation manager and a workflow engine are all standards by which this category measures the products in our lineup.

Security

Security ↗ is a no-brainer on the web. If you want a CMS that your employees, customers and clients can trust, you could need a variety of security measures, many of which are reviewed here. Audit trail, Captcha, content approval, email verification, several different types of authentication protocols, login history, a sandbox, session management and SSL compatibility (logins and pages) are many features you might want in a CMS. Some of these content management system software applications build these features into the main offering, while others offer them as free plugins or for a small fee.

Ease of Use

When shopping for a CMS, whether you are a blogger, developer or designer, ease of use is probably the most desirable feature, second only to the actual publishing and performance components. If you aren't able to immediately pick up a software application and start building your site, odds are it isn't entirely user friendly. A CMS should enable both technical and non-technical users to create a truly comprehensive web presence with ease.

Help & Support

Support is another vital component of Open Source content management system software. Since the core and component code is updated and changed often, user forums, skeletons and comprehensible online documentation has to be readily available as an ongoing guidebook. Community forums also play a strong role in the support and continual progression of a CMS application.

Content creation, content management, publishing and presentation are the four main categories of CMS functionality. Here are just a few benefits your online business can gain by implementing a CMS:

- Reduce the cost of site maintenance
- Streamline the authoring process
- Increase security
- Greater consistency
- Reduce information duplication
- Improve site navigation
- Quick turnaround time for new pages and changes to your site
- Increase site flexibility
- Support remote authoring
- Increase growth capacity

Our trademark side-by-side comparison can only compare the types of features offered by each CMS, but it

doesn't really address the power or usability of those features. It is in this way that each of these systems distinguishes itself from another. Ratings and check marks fail to really capture the full worth of any CMS; only each specific user can determine which is the "best" CMS. Every one of the systems reviewed here has a demo version that gives a more accurate picture of its capabilities.

You might choose to explore these aspects individually by first reading our articles related to content management system software, or you can view them all on our side-by-side comparison of **content management system software**. Either way, let this site be a starting point to discovering the CMS of your dreams and how to make it work for you. Whatever system you choose, there are many online resources to aid you with installation, set up and use, and everything we've reviewed here offers a demonstration product so you can get a feel for it by actually using the system before you commit all your content and assets.

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ExpressionEngine

ExpressionEngine content management system software is proprietary software designed to create stunning websites and simplify the content creation process, thus earning our TopTenREVIEWS Gold Award.…

Joomla!

Joomla has become one of the most popular content management system software applications out there. This application has proven itself incredibly flexible in terms of configuration and customization,…

WordPress.org

You might not think of WordPress as content management system software, but it does indeed function as one and acts as the framework for more than 18 million websites worldwide, according to its site.…

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