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THE WEB APPLICATION FRAMEWORK

[www.farcrycore.org](http://www.farcrycore.org)

## FarCry CMS

### Product Features

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Daemon Internet Consultants

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<http://www.farcrycms.org/>

<http://www.daemon.com.au/>

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*The source of this FAQ is based on a list of questions presented in the book Content Management System © 2002 Glasshaus. The answers provided here were prepared by Geoff Bowers, Chief Architect of the FarCry CMS. The answers remain the property of Daemon Internet Consultants.*

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## Objects of Content

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### **What types of Content are managed by the CMS?**

FarCry manages all manner of content types. Out of the box FarCry ships with HTML web page, News, Events, and Facts just to name a few.

The FarCry Core framework allows developers to readily add additional custom types and even integrate external information and applications.

### **Is it possible to create lists (eg. a list of news items)?**

Yes, any content type can be used to create a list. Lists can be generated dynamically based on the categorisation or metadata associated with your content.

For example, News can be listed by publish date and categorisation.

There are also many other listing options including randomly pick an item from a pool of content, display a list of events in a calendar format, and so on.

### **Are there options to search, sort or filter a list automatically?**

Yes. The administration area provides comprehensive search and filter options for locating content.

In the presentation layer, authors can filter lists by any number of mechanisms. Plus a full text search is available for all content items in the FarCry system.

### **Is it possible to split large lists into several pages?**

Yes. Lists of objects can be split into multiple pages with intuitive pagination menus. In FarCry, this is sometimes known as a “list archive”.

### **Can I reuse a content source within several pages?**

Yes. You can reuse and repurpose content in all manner of ways. This can be done by a non-technical contributor on an item by item basis, or dynamically using the in-built content classification system.

## Authoring Interface

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### **Does the authoring interface make sense to non-technical users who are familiar with a particular word processor, such as Microsoft Word?**

Yes, we've invested a lot of time trying to build an intuitive authoring environment specifically for non-technical contributors.

Content is managed through a simple wizard interface that takes authors step by step through the content management process. Advanced options are also provided for more proficient authors to allow them to further increase their productivity.

Plus developers can quickly build their own wizards and authoring interfaces with the tools provided in the FarCry development framework.

Depending on your authors you can dumb down or enhance the authoring interfaces to suit your content team's skill sets and requirements.

### **Does the content interface provide WYSIWYG editing functionality?**

Yes, FarCry is bundled with a choice of the tinyMCE or XStandard rich text editors editors. Both editors are fully

configurable and provide deep integration with the CMS for linking, content, cross referencing and media management.

FarCry also provides the ability to integrate the WYSIWYG editor of your choice, however, only tinyMCE and XStandard are officially supported by Daemon.

### **Is the CMS compatible with HTML code as content?**

Yes. FarCry is compatible with both HTML and XML as content.

The authoring environment can be configured to assist contributors in the construction of valid HTML.

### **Is content previewed using the same template performed as published version?**

Yes, content can be previewed using the same template as the published version.

### **Is there a check-in/check-out mechanism to avoid modifying the same content simultaneously?**

Yes, FarCry automatically locks content items that are currently being edited. Content items that are actively being modified are highlighted as locked to other users in the system and cannot be edited simultaneously.

Users of an appropriate privilege in the system can unlock content items as needed.

## **Site Structure**

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### **How does the CMS allow the author to manage the site structure?**

FarCry has a comprehensive suite of site hierarchy tools. Contributors with appropriate privileges can change the site structure at will using a simple tree based folder structure. Branches can be cut/copied and pasted to new destinations.

Permissions can be applied to any section of the site to create restricted extranet areas or provide role based authoring privileges.

FarCry simply excels at site structure management.

### **Is a visual hierarchical view of the site structure available for the administration interface?**

Yes, administration tools go beyond those mentioned for contributors above. FarCry administration has a very strong focus on the site information hierarchy.

### **Can the CMS perform the site tree as a navigation system for my live site?**

Yes, of course! FarCry provides out-of-the-box tools, tag libraries and publishing rules to create dynamic menus, bread crumb paths and site maps in your web site.

The sample solution abounds with examples of how to put these tools into practice for both developers and non-technical users alike.

### **Does each point on the site tree correspond to a page as well as a folder?**

Not exactly. FarCry represents this information to the contributor as a folder and page in the authoring environment, because we believe this is an intuitive metaphor. However, behind the scenes FarCry assembles content from content objects in a database backend.

Therefore, there is no need to map pages to specific files and folders on the file system.

Mapping files has a series of inherent management problems when it comes to moving content and the like.

The FarCry FriendlyURL module represents web pages in the system as files within folders for the presentation layer. This feature increases the usability

of the web addresses for humans and gets great results on search engines.

**Can pages or groups of pages easily be moved from one part of the site structure to another?**

Yes, indeed. Contributors can move whole sections of the web-site around. The links between pages are created dynamically and so the internal links to web pages are automatically adjusted, preventing "link rot".

**Can pages be copied from one part of the site structure to another?**

Yes, entire branches of content can be copied and pasted to new regions of the site information hierarchy.

It's worth noting that re-using or re-purposing content is possible in a variety of ways. So content copying is seen as a feature enhancement to aid in content authoring not necessarily for site structure maintenance.

**Does the site structure allow template creators to add bread crumbs (by displaying your current location in the site as a list of links backs up the site tree) and does the system map your site?**

Yes. In fact this is such a commonly used feature we provide developer API's,

tags and sample code to make bread crumb implementation as easy as possible. The out-of-the-box solution has bread crumbs by default.

Site maps can be generated in a number of formats. By default site maps are rendered as unordered lists.

## Search Engine

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**Is the CMS packaged with a search engine?**

Yes. FarCry leverages the high performance Verity K2 search engine bundled with the ColdFusion application server. The search index is fully configurable with a web browser for all content types in your FarCry applications, including external document libraries.

FarCry provides an API for the extraction of content for indexing, making it easy to integrate alternative search engines as required.

**Is it possible to search for information within files (Word; PDF)?**

Yes. The Verity K2 search engine includes document filters that support the indexing and viewing of more than 45 native document formats. Numerous

popular document suites and formats are supported, including Adobe PDF, Microsoft Office, Corel WordPerfect, and Lotus formats.

## Link Management

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**How does the system allow authors to create and edit links to other pages within their site and external URLs?**

Contributors can select an internal link directly from a visual representation of the site map. External links can be added manually by entering the URL through the editing wizard. Related and other links can also be implemented dynamically by the template system inside FarCry making things even easier for authors.

**What happens if an internal link is broken, for example if a page is deleted or expired?**

If the link is managed directly by FarCry it will be automatically updated or removed. However, if the link has been hard coded in a free text area, the author will have to remove the link manually.

**Does the system check availability of external links, and if it does, how does it notify the user of these broken links and their location in the site?**

No, the system does not conduct an automatic check on external broken links.

FarCry works well with several free and/or commercial third-party tools (such as Linklint, Linkchecker, and others) to validate external links.

**How does the CMS allow the linking of files (for example Word documents, Powerpoint presentations, PDFs) to the site?**

FarCry has an built-in document library that can be associated with any content item.

The file library allows contributors to upload files through the web browser and associate them with content as needed, including news, events and web pages.

**Can images be links?**

Yes, of course. Images can be linked dynamically or manually depending on the template configuration and the HTML authoring skills of the contributor.

**Does the CMS provide an interface for creating image maps?**

No, FarCry has no built-in image mapping tool. However, contributors can develop image maps and paste them into the content or template developers can build image maps into templates.

## Accessing the System

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**Does the system require installing custom software on an author's or template developer's workstation?**

No, FarCry only requires a web browser to enter content.

If the contributor wants to leverage the award winning XStandard WYSIWYG rich text editor, they would be required to perform a one-time plugin install in the web browser.

Templates are text files. Template developers can use any standard web authoring environment to develop templates from notepad to Dreamweaver.

**If the system is browser-based, what browsers and operating systems does it support?**

To the end user, FarCry will support any browser and operating system depending on the templates developed for the application.

The FarCry webtop supports most current web browsers including IE 6+, Firefox 2+, and Safari 2 on the relevant operating systems these browsers are available.

We've had favourable reports in other web browsers. Depending on the web browser some advanced administration functionality may not be accessible.

**Is remote access available to authors?**

Yes, contributors only require a standard HTTP or HTTPS connection to the FarCry administration site.

## Workflow

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**What does the interface for workflow creation look like?**

FarCry ships out of the box with a basic three stage workflow:

- Draft Mode (editing allowed)

- Pending Approval (comments only)
- Approved or Published (then automatically versioned and archived)

Alternative workflows can be built as required but do require programming changes.

### **Can authors create their own workflows?**

Contributors can initiate workflows and are offered a list of relevant approvers to request approval for publication (default is all). However, contributors cannot provide significant customisations of workflow without developer intervention.

### **Can authors update content and save the changes without submitting the content at the next stage of the workflow?**

Yes, this is the default “draft” state within FarCry.

### **Can comments be attached to a particular stage of the workflow?**

Yes, comments can be added at every stage of the workflow, even on the live content item.

### **Is it possible to send documents a stage back if not approved?**

Yes, unapproved pages are sent back to “draft” and the author notified of the rejection.

### **Can time limits be put on the different stages of the workflow with notification sent to administrators to flag documents delay?**

No, this is currently unavailable. However, it is possible to run reports that show how long an object has sat in a particular state. Such reports can be used to manually or programmatically escalate workflow tasks.

### **Can groups of pages be passed through the workflow as a grouped package?**

Yes, FarCry allows you to request approval and approve individual pages through to entire subsections of the site in one go.

## **Users and Their Rights**

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### **Can I create multiple users with different access rights?**

Yes, the FarCry security model is a sophisticated role based framework.

FarCry ships with a set of predefined roles within the system and these can be removed, modified or supplemented to suit the final deployment.

### **Can roles be created and assigned to users to facilitate the workflow management process?**

Yes. FarCry has a permission for each activity in the system. These permissions can be assigned to a role. These roles in turn can be given to a specific group of users. The workflow leverages the underlying permissions framework.

Furthermore, branches of the web site hierarchy can be assigned specific permissions -- this enables administrators to create roles for users allowing them to work only within specific sections of the site.

### **How are users and roles managed?**

FarCry users and roles are managed through the web based administration interface.

In addition, FarCry can leverage existing user directories such as NT Domain, Active Directory and LDAP. You can even use a mixture of all of these directories to achieve your preferred user management.



For example, you might be running a university web site where all students logon using credentials in a campus wide LDAP server but content authors log on using the in-built FarCry user directory option.

### **Can users be grouped?**

Yes, FarCry users are always grouped.

### **Can access rights to create / modify / delete pages in different areas of the site tree be limited by user / role?**

Yes. The FarCry site structure has its own permissions set that can be assigned to any section (or branch) right down to the page level. For example, you might create an intranet where the HR department have privileges to update only their subsection of the site and nothing else.

### **Can access to templates be limited by user / role?**

Not by default. If a contributor has access to edit a particular content type, then can select any of its registered templates. Templates themselves can only be installed by an administrator or developer with appropriate access to the application.

However, the behaviour of the template selection UI element can be modified

programmatically to respond to specific roles.

### **Is the CMS user access system compatible with my LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) or other directory servers?**

Yes, out of the box FarCry can leverage LDAP, NT Domain, Active Directory and its own JDBC user directory. In addition, JDBC/ODBC user directories that can express a view similar to the FarCry user directory can also be utilised.

There is a complete API available for the development of custom directory interfaces.

### **Does the CMS provide any information on authors' performance and content editing history?**

FarCry has an inbuilt auditing service that logs every action a contributor might make in the system. The audit log can be reviewed by object or user. Author performance is a fairly subjective term -- ie. it means something different to every client. Certainly FarCry can provide statistics on author contributions and the popularity of their content through the FarCry reporting engine.

### **Is the number of users supported by the system limited?**

No, the FarCry user interfaces were specifically created to support large numbers of contributors and users. In addition, FarCry was built to support very large numbers of content items.

### **Can users create other users? If they do, can their user creation rights be limited and controlled?**

Only users in a role with appropriate privileges in the system can create new users. The user creation rights of such a user are always at an administrator level. However, custom administration interfaces can be built to allow alternative user creation scenarios.

### **Is it possible to create GUI interfaces customized for certain group of users (e.g: the GUI would appear with different logos and colours according to a group)?**

The administration "webtop" is highly configurable and can be customised based on the permissions of the user accessing the application. For example, menus and sections appear dynamically based on whether or not the user has permission to view them.

The “look and feel” of the webtop can be customised by modifying the webtop style sheets.

## Multi-Lingual Content

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### Is CMS content authoring multilingual?

FarCry is unicode compliant and can accept multilingual content in all content types.

FarCry has full support for multi-language application development, letting you specify translation strings and providing hooks for language-specific functionality.

The content authoring environment is localised to English (Australian) by default. Several translations are currently ongoing.

### How can a multilingual site be generated?

Contributors would create separate branches in the site hierarchy and provide content for each branch in a specific language.

### Does the CMS support non-western character sets / Unicode editing?

Yes, FarCry is fully Unicode/UTF-8 compatible.

## Version Control

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### Does the CMS save previous versions of pages?

Yes, FarCry automatically versions web page content when it is sent live. The entire data-record for the content item is archived.

### Is the number of saved content versions limited?

No, the only versioning limit is the storage capacity of the database.

### Can versions of pages be compared?

Contributors can review the content of individual versions separately.

There is currently no way to dynamically highlight differences between versions. However, this is planned for a future release.

### Are deleted pages saved for rollback?

No, deleted pages are removed from the database. However, versioned content is archived by default for record keeping

purposes.

Content in the site tree can optionally be “sent to trash”. Content in the trash can be recovered directly. Once the trash is emptied the content is gone.

### Does the CMS provide versioning and rollback for non-text assets (images, PDFs etc.)?

Media assets can be dynamically archived for record keeping purposes. The media archive has no specific option for recovering and “rolling back” media assets, however, this can be accomplished manually.

### Can the audit history of the site be viewed?

The audit history can be reviewed on a content item basis, by user and a variety of other reports (for example, failed logons and more).

### Can a snapshot of the entire site be taken and used for rollback in the future?

Yes, the entire site is database driven so restoring a backup of the database and any non-text assets (images, PDFs, etc) will allow a complete recovery of the entire site.

## Metadata

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### **What metadata can be saved at a page level keywords, description, live / expiry,...?**

FarCry has its own internal metadata categorisation system which can be applied to any object in the system, including custom objects. In addition, each content type has a set of properties that could also be utilised to provide metadata, although available properties of this nature would vary between content types.

### **How is the entry of metadata presented to users at the authoring interface?**

A category tree for pre-defined application categories or as form fields for data entry. An appropriate UI widget is used for the relevant metadata to make things as intuitive as possible for contributors.

There are several extensions available to accommodate more advanced metadata requirements; for example, keyword dictionary management, dynamic keyword abstraction, keyword suggestion and folksonomy tools.

### **Can metadata be made mandatory for a given page?**

By default metadata is optional. However, any content property can be configured to be mandatory.

## Templates Authoring

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### **How does the CMS present a wide variety of templates to the author?**

The contributor is given a drop down list of templates relevant for the content type they are authoring.

### **Is the author provided with visual previews of templates?**

No preview or template thumbnail is available by default. However, the contributor can preview the content in the selected template prior to approving the content.

### **How does the CMS handle paragraph templates within a page?**

Each content type can have any number of paragraph or content templates. These can be blocks of text, HTML formatting, or whatever content is deemed appropriate. The primary body editing step of the content has a drop down menu of content templates

available and selecting one simply appends the template content to the current body content.

These templates can also be used in combination with other related content. For example to provide an image insert with caption, or a link to a file complete with file type and file size.

### **Does the CMS place a limit on the number of paragraph styles on a page or their positioning on a page?**

No, the development of templates is limited only by any inherent restrictions of HTML, CSS, CFML and or JSP specifications.

### **Is it possible to swap content from one template to another?**

Yes, contributors can swap between any templates nominated for the specific content type they are working on.

## Template Creation

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### **What languages can be used for template creation?**

Templates are written in the ColdFusion language.

However, for the development of templates no specific programming

knowledge is required beyond that of the templates final output; for example HTML, CSS and Javascript for web pages.

### **Do the skills required for template creation match those within my company?**

Anyone confident with coding HTML or even using Dreamweaver or an equivalent web design IDE can create and edit templates.

### **What is the template creation interface / IDE (Integrated Development Environment)?**

Any standard HTML coding environment including Homesite and Dreamweaver can be used to develop templates.

FarCry comes packaged with its own "webskin" tag library that encapsulates many advanced features in simple HTML-like tags. For example, bread crumbs, site maps, and navigation structures.

More complex templates may require an understanding of the FarCry programming API. However, developers can readily build additional tags to simplify template creation for non-programmers.

### **Can several template creators work on the templates?**

Templates are treated like any other part of the code base. If suitable precautions are taken (for example the implementation of code versioning) then any number of template creators can work on the code base simultaneously.

### **Does the IDE provide template check-in and check-out to manage multiple template developers working on templates at the same time?**

FarCry does not have a specific template IDE. Templates are simply scripts that can be edited using any number of authoring environments.

We recommend the implementation of appropriate code management measures to provide checkin/checkout functionality for template creators.

## **Modules & Plugins**

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### **Are there any existing template modules that have been previously created?**

The FarCry community is working on an ever growing library of plugins and extensions for use with the FarCry Framework.

Some of these plugins include Google Maps integration, image manipulation tools, search engine integration, blogging, image galleries and more.

In addition, several commercial plugins are available for purchase from various development teams, including user interface options, customer relationship management, event management and others.

## **Graphics and Multimedia**

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### **Can uploaded images, or images in media libraries, be manipulated and resized without any graphics editing tools such as Photoshop?**

Yes, images can be configured to meet pre-defined requirements with respect to size and dimension. For example, you can enforce a style guide that ensures no image is wider than a certain value.

FarCry provides automated generation of thumbnails.

Several plugins exist that extend image management to include special effects and integration with external services such as Picnik.

**Does the CMS make provision for a shared library of media items?**

Yes, contributors can leverage a shared image library managed by FarCry. This might be for convenience or it might be part of a corporate requirement to only use approved imagery. FarCry is designed to handle these and a variety of other situations.

**How do Flash movies created by authors and designers function within CMS?**

There is a specific Flash content type in the system that captures the standard flash parameters required. Contributors can upload and embed references to Flash content directly within their content.

Developers can integrate flash within the template's themselves for navigation and the like. Flash is a readily integrated content type for the FarCry environment and has been implemented by many users of FarCry in any number of different ways.

**Can the CMS update content within Flash movie templates?**

Yes. Provided the movie can be updated using external parameters, FarCry can deliver content as PARAM vars, delimited vars in a text string, XML, web

services or through the Flash Remoting gateway that ships with the underlying ColdFusion engine. FarCry likes Flash :)

## Publishing Process

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**How does the CMS transfer content from the author environment to the live environment?**

The author and live environment are essentially the same. Content is dynamically "staged" in the production environment.

Content in draft or pending status is not shown to site visitors but appropriately privileged contributors can view the draft content in situ right along with the live content. We call this the FarCry Virtual Staging Environment.

Although both authoring and publishing can be done on the single server many clients prefer to have a clustered environment where a single server is dedicated to administrative tasks and other servers to delivering content to visitors. There are many recommended and supported configurations to suit budget, security, scalability and/or redundancy.

**Can content be published from one author environment to multiple live environments?**

Yes. FarCry works in a variety of clustered environments. As the content is served from a database, any live server that can see the database will automatically be updated when new content goes live.

Non-text assets stored on the file system (for example images and PDFs) need to be replicated to other servers. Typically in a clustered environment we recommend nominating a single server for administration and having file synchronisation in place to replicate all non-text assets to other servers. Alternatively, assets can be served from a central storage area (eg. SAN) depending on the enterprise configuration.

## Multiple Targets

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**Can content be published with multiple devices and targets?**

Yes. The FarCry presentation layer is separate from the underlying data storage. Templates can be built to service any output including WML, XML, web services and so on. Interestingly,

FarCry has a specific xmlExport content type that simplifies the syndication of content to XML format -- for example, we provide RSS syndication by default.

**Can the CMS create different versions of the same content (for example, a print version or a version for visually impaired users)?**

Yes, see above. FarCry ships out-of-the-box with a "print friendly" template as an example. Also, FarCry's CSS integration makes it easy to write presentation layers that rely upon style sheets to provide print friendly and accessible content.

**Does the CMS allow you to flag the content as being appropriate for a particular purpose?**

Any content item can be categorised using the underlying category engine. Flagging content is as simple as creating a specific category and assigning that to the content item in question.

In addition, content types can be extended to add additional properties to flag content for a specific purpose.

## Integration

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**What experience does the CMS company have in integrating its system into other software and hardware used in my company? Are there examples of successful integration?**

FarCry is written to leverage the underlying ColdFusion application server. The plethora of integration technologies available for this incredible platform are immediately available to FarCry including, Java libraries, web services, XML, SMTP, POP, LDAP, COM, Corba -- the list goes on.

ColdFusion is a Sun Certified Java application and so FarCry will run on any Sun Certified J2EE platform, including JBoss, Adobe JRUN, IBM Websphere, SunOne, and BEA Weblogics.

There are lots of real world implementations across a host of vertical industries -- please ask for examples of successful integrations that match your preferred environment.

**What access does the CMS give to its content storage database?**

Content storage can be accessed directly via the database -- though we recommend this be kept to read-only

access without a thorough understanding of the FarCry system.

The FarCry component API provides hooks into all facets of the FarCry system, its underlying data layer and application services -- just consult the developer documentation and open code base.

## Servers

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**Has the CMS company experience in implementing its system at the server / platform / database combination used in my company?**

FarCry's only dependence is the underlying ColdFusion application server. FarCry should run within any environment that is supported by the ColdFusion platform.

The FarCry database abstraction layer makes it easy to provide support for multiple database platforms. Currently, support has been developed for MS SQL Server, MySQL, Postgres and Oracle.

**Is the CMS server compatible with systems in my company?**

By leveraging the underlying ColdFusion technology, support for a multitude of

systems and protocols is inherently available in any FarCry system.

The list of supported protocols and services is too long to mention here, review the Adobe ColdFusion feature list for a more comprehensive overview.

### **Can the CMS vendor provide performance statistics for their CMS from a live, high-load implementation?**

FarCry works well in both single server and clustered server environments. There are many enterprise-level FarCry users who would be happy to discuss their implementations. Please contact Daemon for references.

### **Does the CMS provide a generic HTML cache proxy to increase performance in read only mode?**

Yes, FarCry has a comprehensive HTML caching layer. Caches are held in memory and can be administered from the administration environment. The cache service is sophisticated enough to provide different cache periods for different page regions, page specific caches, section wide or site wide caches, browser specific caches, personalised caches by group or user and more.

In addition, FarCry is well suited to traditional HTTP acceleration configurations with proxy services such as Squid.

### **Is the CMS multithreaded, and does it support multiprocessors?**

Yes, FarCry leverages the underlying J2EE server for multiprocessor support. In ColdFusion Standard this is Adobe JRUN, on ColdFusion Enterprise this can be any supported J2EE platform. Please review the various ColdFusion performance briefs.

### **What IT skills are required in my organization to support CMS?**

Your organisation requires a working knowledge of your chosen database platform and administration skills for the relevant operating system and server of your server platform. Managing the FarCry application itself requires an understanding of how things work but no particular qualifications beyond "common sense" are required.

Skills in ColdFusion development would be a plus to extend and customise the environment -- it is very compelling that ColdFusion is so easy to learn.

Commercial support and training are available for all aspects of the FarCry solution.

## **Think About the Future**

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### **Does the current license cover version upgrades? Does this cover both major and minor releases?**

FarCry is a dual licensed, open source solution released under the GNU Public License and FarCry Commercial License.

Standard and Site Commercial licenses are available for purchase from Daemon.

Commercial support for FarCry is available if you would prefer for patches and upgrades to be professionally managed.

### **What is the CMS vendor's product roadmap for the system?**

FarCry is an open source solution and so feature development tends to be driven by client demand and the various interests of those companies actively extending and building on the FarCry framework.

Daemon runs and maintains the FarCry common code libraries ensuring providing quality assurance and direction. The current FarCry development road-map is publicly available from the FarCry web site

**Are there opportunities for my organization to influence future development of the system?**

Absolutely! The FarCry code base is open source and supports a thriving development community. You can influence the code base by simply giving feedback on the product, bug reporting, contributing code and features of your own for inclusion or paying to fast-track functionality you require.