Content Management Systems

A content management system is a software application that is used to create and manage digital content. The features of these applications can vary from the different CMSs but the main functions are:

* Indexing, search and retrieval - users have easy access to search keyword, categories, authors, publications dates, etc.
* Format management - this give the ability to turn scanned papers into HTML or PDF documents
* Revision - admins have access to update and edit content after publication and revision control keeps track of changes made.
* Publishing - content can be created or modified using templates or tools to produce content on the site

When choosing a CMS that's right for you, there are a few things to consider such as user-friendly interface, diversity of features, and ease of installation. This blog will explore five popular content management systems and address those user concerns.

**WordPress**

[WordPress](https://wordpress.org/" \t "_blank) was started in 2003 as a blogging system. It is open source meaning there are many people all over the world working on it and it is free to use. It has evolved to become the most popular full content management system with even more expansion through plugins, widgets, and themes.

I found the installation to be a breeze with the ability to link it directly to my own web page. It only took about 5-10 minutes. The administrator's control panel is very user-friendly with everything organized by categories. Adding content is as simple as clicking the "Add" button and writing your article. You can jazz up your site by adding a theme and WordPress makes your site mobile-ready. Another benefit of WordPress is that search engines love this CMS. The biggest advantage is probably the fact that there is no HTML or FTP required which can be a huge bonus for users with little to no experience in that area.

### Drupal

While WordPress is the most popular CMS, [Drupal](https://www.drupal.org/" \t "_blank) is becoming one of the most used by Fortune 500 companies. Like WordPress, it is open source and supported by a large community through forums, chat, and mailing lists. Drupal is a great step up for more advanced users who want to explore how they can further upgrade their pages.

Drupal has a long list of pros but one of the cons is that the installation is a bit longer and more difficult than other CMSs like WordPress or Joomla. First I downloaded the [Acquia Dev Desktop](https://dev.acquia.com/downloads" \t "_blank) app, which includes a server that allows you to locally host your Drupal site on your computer before hosting it live. After you have this application running, you can start a new Drupal site, import a Drupal project, or add an Acquia cloud site. However, once you get past the installation, the functionality, page content management, and variety of content types are a significant payoff. There is a bit of a learning curve to Drupal that could be daunting for less experienced users but advanced users will be happy with the power and performance of this CMS.

### Joomla

Where Drupal is a more complicated CMS, [Joomla](https://www.joomla.org/" \t "_blank) is more similar to WordPress. Joomla was started in 2005 as the result of a fork of [Mambo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mambo_(software)" \t "_blank), another content management system. Joomla, like Drupal and WordPress, is also open source with the ability to add extensions.

The installation process for live hosting a Joomla site is a little more extensive than WordPress but I've provided a handy guide to get started [here](https://hraemoore.wordpress.com/2017/08/31/installing-and-using-joomla/" \t "_blank). Joomla's administrator control panel is easy to navigate with everything grouped by categories. There are thousands of free plugins, however not as many as WordPress. While this is a simpler CMS, it does come with some disadvantages. There are limited adjustment options, some of the plugins are paid, and out-of-the-box Joomla is not very SEO friendly although that can be enhanced with the SEF plugin installed.

### Magento

[Magento](https://magento.com/" \t "_blank) is an open-source e-commerce platform. It is supported by an active global community of more than 150,00 developers. It is geared more for online businesses than bloggers. Users are able to build their online store from the ground up. Magento has a mobile-friendly configuration with responsive shopping carts and provides easy third-party integration allowing connections with eBay, Paypal, Google Shopping, etc. Magento gives users the capability to manage multiple stores from a single administrative panel and also provides market tools like coupons, promotional pricing, and bundled products.

The main disadvantage that I found is in the installation. In the readiness check, Magento didn't accept my version of PHP, although it is the most recent version. I spent too long trying to fix that and finally gave up. This is definitely not software for the novice. Some other disadvantages are that some users complain of Magento's "sluggishness" since it requires a strong host set up and that it also takes up too much memory. However, if you have the capabilities, Magento is a powerful e-commerce tool.

### Showit

[Showit](http://showit.co/" \t "_blank) is a CMS specialized just for professional photographers. It is different from WordPress, Drupal, and Joomla in the fact that it is completely drag-and-drop. This is absolutely geared towards users with no coding experience. Although this is not a free application, the pricing for a standard site is only $19/month with the option of upgrading to a site with a WordPress blog for $24/month.

I created my studio's mobile website and maintain the [desktop site](http://geneho.com/" \t "_blank) using this app. It is very straightforward and visual appealing. The themes are very eye-catching. It does, however, have its limits. At times I find that the structure of the templates are restricting and don't allow for very much wiggle room in changing the design. I also had issue with getting the mobile site live in the beginning but I do have to say that their support team is top notch!

### Conclusion

There are many different content management systems that you can choose from. Depending on your type of content and coding experience, you might have to try a few to figure out the best one for you. Dive in and find your favorite!

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*COMMENTS\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

This was a great opportunity to look at some of the other content management systems. It took a bit of research and time to try them out and gather up the pros and cons for each one. I’m enjoying the blog writing assignments.

Live link to blog post:

<https://hraemoore.wordpress.com/2017/09/01/content-management-systems/>