What Is a Content Management System (CMS)?

According to Kinsta (2023), A content management system (CMS) is software that helps users create, manage, and modify content on a website without the need for technical knowledge. In other words, a CMS lets you build a website without needing to write code from scratch (or even know how to code at all).

Why the need?

In our increasingly connected world, businesses need to have a strong online presence to reach consumers and sell more. But not everyone has the technical expertise to create and manage pages and content on the internet. This is where a Content Management System, can help many people and companies.

Instead of building your own system for creating web pages, storing images, and other functions, the content management system handles all that basic infrastructure stuff for you so that you can focus on more forward-facing parts of your website.

Beyond websites, you can also find content management systems for other functions – like document management.

How Does a Content Management System Work?

To give you an idea of how a content management system works, we’re going to take a brief tour of the WordPress interface (WordPress is a good example of a content management system).

Let’s start with creating a piece of content. Without a content management system, you’d need to write a static HTML file and upload it to your server (sounds complicated, right?).

With a content management system like WordPress, you can just write your content in an interface that looks a good bit like Microsoft Word:

The content management system isn’t just a backend management interface, though. It also makes all of the content that you create show up for your visitors exactly like you want it to.

What Makes up a Content Management System?

On a more technical level, a content management system is made up of two core parts:

A content management application (CMA) – this is the part that allows you to actually add and manage content on your site (like you saw above).

A content delivery application (CDA) – this is the backend, behind-the-scenes process that takes the content you input in the CMA, stores it properly, and makes it visible to your visitors.

Together, the two systems make it easy to maintain your website.

other popular content management systems include:

Joomla

Drupal

Magento (for eCommerce stores)

Squarespace

Wix

TYPO3

What Kinds of Websites Can You Build with Those Content Management Systems?

Most content management systems are pretty flexible nowadays. While there are some that focus on a specific use – like Magento and eCommerce – most of the popular content management systems can be used to create essentially any type of website.

How to Build a Website with a Content Management System

Want to build your own website with a content management system? If so, the general process looks something like this:

Purchase web hosting and a domain name

Install your content management system of choice on your web server

Configure the content management system to dictate how your site looks and functions

Start writing content using the content management system’s interface

It’s actually surprisingly simple. And hosts like Kinsta can even help install the content management system for you (WordPress, in this case), so you can jump straight into building your site without any technical setup.