

This is Huge

Michael Kuhlmann
mike.kuhlmann@thompson.com

The CMS Problem

Sheshunoff and *AHC Media* are powered by **Interspire**, which doesn't exist as a standalone application anymore; Interspire is now only offered as BigCommerce, which has transformed into a subscription service.

The **Drupal** content management system (CMS) powers *BioWorld*, which has been painstakingly built by Nagarro and takes a lot of effort to maintain and modify with the support ticketing system.

Pratt's Letter is powered by the **Joomla** CMS, which is lacking as a open source CMS; it had its day a few years ago, but the feature-richness and ease-of-use have dramatically declined.

Thompson is powered by an old, **custom-built CMS**, which runs on JSP – it's, in fact, our only JSP site – and can hardly be modified without any code hacking and jimmying. Then, there is the *Thompson Media Group* site and all of the *Thompson blogs*, which are powered by **WordPress**, the leading open source CMS.

All told, we have FIVE different platforms.

What if there is an easier way to manage
all of our websites?

Tracking & Integration Problems

From a Marketing/Analytics perspective, one of the **major pitfalls** we currently have is the ability to draw **100% accurate conclusions** about sales. That is, when a sale occurs, is it because our customers clicked on an email? Is it because they clicked on a Google Adwords ad? Or maybe through a social media/word-of-mouth marketing campaign? With our current systems in place, it's more like top-notch guesstimation based on shaky analytics. Sometimes, not all pages have specific tracking code. Other times, we're looking at analytics and making deductions on views vs. sales and doing some rough math to come up with a figure, so it's not very accurate. What if each product could have a unique traceable link that could shed some light on the medium, source and campaign that was utilized? Heaven! And yes, this is completely doable. We can add a product to a cart through a dynamic link that's tracked through **Google Analytics**. We can then add that link to an email campaign that's built in **Eloqua**. And because Eloqua ties directly into **Salesforce**, we now have the holy trinity of web transaction transparency. This will allow us to see what marketing initiatives are working and which ones just plain suck.

Enough teasing yet?

Evangelizing WordPress

There is a reason WordPress is so popular. As of today, WordPress, which is a free open-source CMS, powers nearly **one in five websites worldwide**. It is completely dominating the market share of all CMSs to date. *TIME*, *CNN*, *TED*, *UPS* and *TechCrunch* are just some of the major companies that utilize this system to power their web presence. And it's easy to find out why...

- It's free, highly extensible and has a large community surrounding the user-base (users and developers alike), unlike its open source competitors. Over the years, WordPress has become so huge that it has its own ecosystem.
- It's easy to use and there are a TON of tutorials (videos included) that help newcomers take advantage of this great system.
- It has become so ubiquitous that it integrates with all major social media sites, be it *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube* and *Google*.

Should we use WordPress for ALL of our sites?

Yes. Please, read on.

The WordPress Migration

WordPress is rooted in publishing. It started out as a blogging platform years ago and has now matured into a fully-fledged CMS powerhouse that is fully capable of providing e-commerce solutions.

With the **WooCommerce** addition to a regular WordPress installation, a our site can now sell, up-sell and cross-sell products, which can also be reviewed and rated. And, yes, there's more. Some other possibilities...

- Post-Purchase Follow-up Marketing for providing discounts/etc.
- Loyalty Rewards
- Wishlists
- Advanced Coupons (Store Credits/Gift Certificates)
- Account Funds
- Subscriptions (ie. recurring payments)
- Product-based Group Memberships
- Chained Products (used for upselling)
- Audio and Video previews for our webinars
- Quickbooks/Freshbooks/UPS/USPS/FedEX integration
- Facebook product pages with Buy Now buttons for maximum reach
- Quick/Bulk product editing for prices, SKUs, product titles, etc.

And now comes the best part...

It's Future-Proof!

What does that even mean? It means our WordPress-powered e-commerce site can be accessed via *any* device. **Any smartphone. Any tablet device. Any computer of any kind.** Period. With a responsive layout, the entire site shifts all of its contents based on the viewport. This means any “website apps” are unnecessary, as prospective customers only need to visit the site – be it via an email, word-of-mouth marketing campaign or social media marketing campaign. Everything is measurable and everything stays tracked, since there is no disconnect between an app or the site. Better yet, everything stays current! Any changes that get pushed to the site are immediately live regardless of what device you’re accessing the site from.

It’s important to highlight this feature, as portable devices are outselling desktop computers. Moreover, with other companies taking initiative on creating high-resolution/retina displays, the WordPress-powered site can automatically adapt to the changes ahead; this is a big advantage over conventional “apps” where images and icons need to be constantly resized to take full advantage of the crisp displays.

Here’s the kicker...

An Actual Live Example

Actions speak louder than words. You want **proof-of-concept**. You want to see it for yourself and you want to tinker around and play with it. Skepticism is human nature, so what better way to explain something than by example. Ready? Here we go...

<http://demo.michaelkuhlmann.com>

username: **johndoe**
password: **dem0dem0**

For the final touch, go ahead and resize your browser window. Cool, huh? **Future-Proof**. And I haven't even touched on building a social network on top of all this – Facebook in a box... *exclusively for Thompson's industry insiders*. What if we grouped all of our customers/subscribers so they could all congregate on our collection of TMG sites and connect with each other. Yep, we can do that, too.

Everything is achievable through WordPress