

Nonprofit 911 – August 4, 2009
**The CMS Roundtable: Which Website Solution is
Right for You?**

with Michael Weiss
Sponsored by Network for Good

The MP3 audio transcript can be found at
www.fundraising123.org or www.nonprofit911.org

Rebecca Higman: I am happy to introduce our speaker Michael Weiss. According to his bio, which we are happy to share, Michael's business development and marketing prowess has really been a driving force in Imagistic's growth over the past 11 years. Imagistic is a web development firm.

His knowledge, vision, and ability to speak English, not tech, as we will get to experience here today, has helped turned top tier companies like Technicolor, Hollywood.com, and California Pizza Kitchen into long term clients.

As the director of sales and PR efforts, Michael's goal is to drive clients from the initial sales pitch to the eventual launch of their product. His objective is to work with the client to help them realize their vision and then create a website that inspires, educates, and engages end-users.

Along with his extensive management, marketing, and sales experience, Michael also has a background in education and counseling. He has a BA in psychology from Boston U and a Master's in Counseling Psychology from Loyola Marymount University.

So without further ado, I am happy to turn the floor over to Michael.

Michael Weiss: Great. Thank you so much. Welcome everybody. The topic is content management systems, which I will use the acronym CMS a lot. The idea for today is to talk about them at a high level, why you want one, why you need one, and really to look at different solutions.

The discussion of content management systems could be a day long seminar, so we only have an hour, so I am going to go a little quickly so that I cover a lot of ground. If you have downloaded the deck, there are 45 slides. I am going to not spend a lot of time on some of them and a little bit more time on others.

But really, just to tell you what we are going to talk about, we are going to talk about, again, some of the things you want to consider about a content management system. We are going to talk about the four different types of software platforms, meaning open source or commercial, and there are a couple of others. And then I am going to talk a little bit about four different types of content management systems solutions that you can purchase or open source so you get sort of a sense as to what they cad offer; what they offer, what they don't offer, and the pros and cons of each.

So let's move right into it. If you have the deck open we will just go real quickly to the slide that is me. There is a picture of me. In addition to the sites that Rebecca mentioned, we have been working the last 12 years with non-profits. And probably about 75% of our business right now is working with non-profits.

And as you can see, we have worked with the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation. We have worked with Network for Good, First 5 LA, the ACLU, tolerance.org, with the Southern Poverty Law Center, etc. So we understand budget constraints. I understand how to work with organizations that have a board that sort of dictates what they can and cannot do. And I also understand the passion for which you all have for the programs that you offer and the organizations that you work for.

Let's move forward. The real question always comes down to: Why do you want a CMS? The real reason why you want a content management system, in my eyes, is so that you don't have to be dependent on your IT staff, or an outside contractor, or someone who is technical to make changes to your website. That is really the basic reason.

A content management system allows you to have very simple tools to make updates, changes, and edits to your site. There are many other features that it offers, such as workflow, meaning different people who can have control of different pages, different areas of content.

You also want to have the ability to have anyone make content changes anytime and from anywhere. Again, you wake up at two o'clock in the morning and you say, "Oh no! I have forgotten to put this press release on the site." You can easily go to the web, go to your password protected area of your site, and sign into the content management system and make a change and push it live.

You also want to have a solution that ensures that all pages have consistent layouts. The beauty and the power of a content management system is that they are a template based system, meaning there are constraints set on what you can and cannot do on the different pages in terms of design layout and all those types of things, so that if you do relinquish power to other people within your organization to make changes to the site, you know that they only have a certain area of which they can edit content or make changes to an article. And really, the container which it sits in is not going to change. So they can't change colors. They can't change the header or the footer. It is a very tight presentation, so it enables you to have a consistent look and feel and a consistent brand experience.

And really, the good thing about a content management system is that it enables you to grow your site as your business or your organization grows. It allows you to create sections, creates pages, all sorts of things that you normally can't do if you don't have a content management system and you have a constrained budget.

If you want to make all of these changes but you have to go out of house to get a vendor to make changes and pay by the hour, that can cost you a lot of money and it kind of

leads you stranded and held hostage by the site that you have. Or, if you have to rely on the IT department, they may be overwhelmed and just don't have time to deal with it.

So there are a lot of reasons to have a CMS, but those are sort of the top ones. As we move along, there are considerations that you want to consider. That is a nice sentence. But anyway, you want to look at content. How much content do you have?

Now that is a question of what do you have currently? And you may say, "Well we only have 20-30 pages, but that is because we don't have a content management system." Where do you see yourself in a year? "Well we see ourselves probably having 100's of pages, many articles, all different types of documents to download," so you may be writing or publishing white papers, very interesting reports, or information on your organization or the people that you serve.

So let's say your organization deals with the homeless and there are a lot of reports coming out about the homeless. With a content management system you can continuously write articles or find different documents, and you can upload them to the system.

So you want to think about how much content do you have now and where do you see yourself in six months, 12 months, 18 months, and two years? So you want to think about those things.

And how often do you need to change your content? On a lot of sites, sometimes they just don't change their content. But if you see yourself changing your content on a weekly basis, meaning you are going to put up new press releases, or you do a lot of events and you are going to put up photos and image galleries. These are the types of things you want to think about, because if you are going to do a lot of that, a content management system may make sense.

I apologize for not saying which slide I am on. I am on slide number five now if you have it. And it is, again, about considerations and technical aspects. You want to think about preferred platforms or operating environments, hardware, and those types of things.

Are you strictly a .net Microsoft shop? If that is the case that is fine. There are solutions that will meet your needs. Or if you are open source, maybe you want to use PHP or Drupal or Joomla. We are going to talk about those in a little bit. Those are different types of content management system solution platforms or frameworks.

Do you need to comply with government or accessibility requirements? The dreaded 508 compliancy, meaning that if you receive funding from the federal government...I don't think state, but if the federal government gives you any kind of money, there is a good chance that you have to follow 508 compliancy. This means that you have to create a website that is "viewable", and I have quotes because it is for the sight impaired, or even the hearing impaired, there are different things that you need to do in terms of how their

browsers and their hardware read your site. And a lot of content management systems, with a simple click of the button, make your site 508 compliant.

And things that you want to think about technically. Do you have the resources internal to implement and maintain the CMS? So there are reason maybe you go with a hosted solution, and I will talk about that in a little bit, so that you don't have to rely on technology people internally to maintain it because you are using a system that is hosted elsewhere.

And finally, do you need a search? Are you doing a lot of social media? Are you doing podcasts or video? These are things that you want to think about when it comes time to choose a content management system, because some do it better than others.

As we talk about social media, that is a whole other weeklong seminar about social media. There is a lot to talk about there. But a lot of content management systems can prepare you for social media initiatives: blogging, Facebook type of stuff, forums, and allowing users to create content or put comments on and that type of stuff.

So again, I am just going to continue to move through here. And then the last consideration is the hardest one for many non-profits, and that is time and money. You always have to ask the question, "What is your current budget?" I know the answer from most of you on the other end of the phone is, "We don't have a budget. We don't know what this is going to cost. We have no idea what we need to spend."

That is fine and that is OK. But I think what you need to have in mind are, what are numbers that sort of, and I always ask this. What are numbers that send you running for the hills? "Well if it is \$25,000, there is absolutely no way we can do it. We have \$5,000." But there are others who say, "We have an unlimited budget because we got a grant. We have \$75,000 for a content management system."

It all depends, but just kind of have that frame in mind, because if you really don't have any money or a very limited budget, you are going to want to look at open source solutions, and that is because they are open and they are free and you don't pay a license for the software. We will talk about that.

You want to look at your timeline. Do you have to launch in a week or do you have a few months? Again, that will help make some decisions. And when you are looking at your timeline, does it correspond with an event? Do you have a big event coming up in, say, December because it is the giving season and you have your annual gala, and you want to launch something now, you need to think about those sorts of things when you are looking at different technology and sort of figuring out what the best solution is for you. And do you have everything you need to get started? And that is sort of what we will talk about a little bit more here.

So the bottom line benefits of a CMS, and I am on slide seven now, is that it is more expedient for update to site content. You can really, really get into your site quickly and make updates in real time.

You don't need to know HTML to publish it. You can get to it anywhere you want. If you are on a business trip and you are in the hotel, you can get onto your laptop and you can get on there. If you are sitting at a Starbucks and somebody has a great idea and you want to put it on your website, you open up your laptop, you get on Wi-Fi, you log in, and you make changes.

There is one thing that content management systems allow, which is called workflow. And there are rolls that you can set. Say you have an organization of five people who are going to be editing or managing the site. Well you set one of them as the publisher. They are the only people who can publish content. And the other four are editors, reviewers, or writers.

So person number two writes an article, does the header, does the byline, writes the whole article, types it in, and hits submit. Well that will not go live because that editor does not have publishing capabilities. As soon as they hit submit, the publisher, person number one, gets an email that says, "Number two just wrote this article. You need to look at it and push it live." And then the publisher can then push it live if they choose.

So it protects your website in the sense that it protects your image just in case somebody writes something that is not correct or there are a lot of grammatical errors. There are a lot of different ways you can create workflow that allows certain content to make its way up to the top to be published.

And then there is version control so you can always go back in time. Your ED may wake up one morning and say, "I really liked the way the site looked in August. Can we roll back then, because a lot of the content that we have in September has just been no good?" So you can literally go in some of the systems and say, "Bring the site up as it was on August 10th," click a button, and it will do it.

So because a Content management system is database driven, all of your content is sitting in a database. And that does two things. One, it enables you to make changes quickly to the site, it enables everything to be searched, and it enables you to make quick and easy edits to the system because you are just making them right into a database and it generates those pages on the fly.

There is a lot of information. I know I am saying a lot now. So please, if you have questions, Rebecca gave you that email address. Please send them in, because I am sure, some people, your head is spinning and I understand that.

So Slide eight is the basic CMF features. Here are the basic features that most, if not all, Content management systems. They have what are called WYSIWYG. WYSIWYG stands for, "What you see is what you get."

And basically, that is an editor. So it enables you, when you are creating content, you are writing an article, you are editing the about us page, you are adding a news article, you are using a tool online that really looks like Microsoft Word.

So you highlight a word, you click bold, and it bolds it. You create a link, you click a button, you create a link. You want to center it? You center it. It looks very much like any word processing software that you have used before. And that is what makes it so easy. It is generating all the code in HTML in the background, but you don't need to know any of that. So that is one of the basic features.

It enables you to have templates, so you are going to create different templates. You will create a home page template. You will create maybe a donation page template. And you will create an article page template. And all of those article pages will be based on that template. You can have 1,000 of them. You can have 1,000 articles. They are all basically going to look the same because you choose that template when you write it.

You can change your navigation elements on some systems. So let's say you have a section called "About Us" and you are like, "You know, let's call it 'Who we are.'" You can go into the system, type in "Who we are" over "About us", hit submit, and it makes the change in your navigation.

Workflow, as I talked about, version control, as I talked about...And there is a lot of different things. You can have video. You can have photo galleries. You can have podcasts. There are a lot of different ways to put content on there.

Now I am not saying get a CMS and fill your site up with a bunch of content. If it doesn't make sense, don't do it. Don't put video up if it doesn't make sense. But if you have a bunch of videos, if you have a bunch of image galleries because you are always out in the field taking pictures of what is going on in your organization...

Again, let's say you are tree people and they are an organization here in Los Angeles and they plant trees all over Los Angeles. And they go to schools and they have events. Well maybe they are taking pictures of people doing all that and they have just never been able to put them up online. A good content management system is going to have the ability to upload pictures, put captions, and put those up there.

If you actually do do podcasts or things like I am doing right now, speaking to people online, and you have a recording, again, the content management system allows you to put it up there. So I am not saying just go get a CMS and fill your site up with a bunch of junk. You don't want to do that. You want to be thoughtful and you want to think about your content.

But again, there are the tools there that allow you to actually even have these thoughts, and to say, "Wow. We can do that?" Then you can go back to your organization and talk about it.

So now I am on slide nine, and there are four different types of CMS's, at least the way I look at it. There is open source, and I will get into that in a second. I am going to talk about each of these. There is open source. There is commercial, and it is called Software as a Service which means it is a hosted solution. There is commercial which is installed, meaning you buy a piece of software and you install it on your servers. Or there is custom, meaning you hire a firm, a technology firm or a web development firm, and they build you exactly what you want. Obviously that is the most expensive, and we will talk a little bit about that.

So open source. This is really free. A lot of people say, "Open source is great! We are going to use Drupal or Joomla. It is free!" Well it is free in the sense that there is no licensing fee for the source code. So as soon as you want to get Drupal, you just go to the site and you download the framework.

The fact is, if you downloaded it and you don't have IT or technology chops, you really can't do anything with it. So in the sense that it is free, you don't have to pay a license fee, but you really do have to pay somebody to customize it for you.

So you will pay somebody to customize it, integrate it, and program it. You are going to need hosting. So just like any website you are going to put Drupal somewhere on some sort of server.

You could spend as little as \$10,000 or \$20,000 on a Drupal site, depending on what you wanted to do. And in time it could be anywhere from two to four months. And that is just in the reality of things, of going through look and feel and the design process, and doing the wire frames, and all of that. I am not going to get into web development on this call because, again, that is a whole other discussion.

But you could really get a really solid site with \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$30,000 in Drupal. And again, is it really free? I would say yes and no. So there you go.

Drupal is not suitable for folks who don't have an internal IT staff or don't have a vendor that they can rely on. If you want like a totally 100% secure, although Drupal is secure, but a really, really robust platform, it is probably not for you.

It is not enterprise level. Or if you have really big customization needs, the amount that you may spend on dollars and time in customization of Drupal, you may just want to go to a customized version of a build your own site.

But it is actually good for smaller sites. To give you an idea, if you all know the website The Onion, that runs on Drupal. We did a massive install for First Five Los Angeles on Drupal. You can do very, very large scale sites on Drupal. It is just that once you get to that level, you might be doing a lot of customization and the cost will go up.

Now we are going to talk about commercial software as a service. Why is it popular? Because you do not need an internal IT staff to manage it, because you are renting software, so to speak. You are not buying it. You don't own it. You don't actually get a CD or a box and install it on a server. This is a company that has their software on other servers and you rent it. It is hosted solutions.

You don't have to install any hardware or software. Very little infrastructure is needed and it is lower cost. You are basically paying by the month. The good thing is you can get a site up very quickly with a software as a service solution, because you are basically going to say, "Oh, what do you have? OK. We are going to fit into that."

You are going to make some compromises here and there if you want to go fast. You can do some custom development with software as a service, but probably not a lot.

The other really good thing is that you have dedicated support, meaning you can pick up a phone and call and someone at the other end is going to say, "What can I do for you?" You don't have to rely on your internal IT department to make a change. Or if the site goes down, you don't have to pay a vendor. With your monthly payment of the service, you are getting dedicated help. And as soon as they make an upgrade to their solution, you get that upgrade.

So again, low risk because you are not buying anything. And the cost could be anywhere in the thousands with setup, monthly fees, and support. So with some of them there is a solution called Crown Peak, which we are going to talk about later if we have time. You can get set up with maybe \$5,000 or \$10,000 and then maybe pay \$1,000 or \$2,000 a month, depending on how big your site is. They look at how many editors you have and how many pages of content. But again, it is not that expensive. I know it sounds expensive, but if you look at it, if you are going to spend \$50,000 on a website custom, look at what you can do with \$50,000 over a couple of years with a system like Crown Peak, which is enterprise level, massively robust, and offers you a lot of stuff. So again, you can get up and running on a solution like that very, very quickly.

It is probably not a good choice for security. It is secure. Don't get me wrong. But everything sits outside of your firewall, meaning all of your content, everything, sits on someone else's server. And if that makes you nervous, because maybe you have very sensitive data or you are gathering very sensitive information from your users, you may think twice about it. I am not saying that they are not secure, but a lot of people will not feel comfortable going to bed at night knowing that all their data and information is sitting on someone else's server.

And when the Internet is down, so is your site. Or when they go down, your site goes down because they are hosted somewhere else. Again, that is something you will deal with with hosting anywhere. But again, your baby, so to speak, because you have worked so hard on it, is sitting on someone else's servers and that might make you feel a little uneasy. That is the only thing I can say. I am a big fan of software as a service.

Then you can move onto commercial installs, meaning you buy a piece of software and you install it on your servers. It is really great for high security applications. Again, it can be sitting on a box on a server in your building in a locked closet. It is yours. You own it.

With that comes higher costs. Basically you could spend anywhere from... We have a 50K range here listed, but you could spend anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000 on the software depending on the features, the functionality, and the company you go with. And chances are they are going to charge you 8-10% of the initial license fee every year. So if you spent \$100,000, you are going to spend \$8,000 a year just to be able to have the license. But again, you get your upgrades, etc. It is a very robust system. And the timing is probably, again, around 4-8 months.

If you don't have a lot of money and you have a limited budget, it is probably not a good idea just because of the high costs of the hardware and the software. You need a vendor or a very strong internal IT staff to maintain it, run it, and build it for you. And a lot of times when you buy these systems, there are a lot of features which may be overkill for smaller or simpler installations, or smaller organizations.

If you only have a 20 page site and you don't see yourself growing to more than 100 pages, then you are probably going to want to look at an open source solution because you are not going to want to spend a ton of dollars on a massive commercial installed system.

And then last but not least, there is custom. And the reason why custom is great is because you can build it to do whatever you want. So let's say you are running Razor's Edge, and you are running Email Now, and you are running all these different types of software, and you need a content management system to integrate with four different other types of platforms, and spit out data, and export all this stuff to all these other places, and it is going to be really confusing, and there is no system in the world you can buy that is going to fit right into it.

Well then you start looking at custom. And you are going to look at a lot of dollars. It is going to cost a lot because you are going to spend a lot of time tweaking it and fitting it into your needs. But then again, it gives you exactly what you want.

We have built a lot of custom. But I would say probably in the last four or five years we have slowed down from custom solutions because there are so many great off the shelf or open source platforms that we can choose from.

The thing about custom is it is going to take a longer time to get up and running. God forbid your vendor disappears. You are held hostage. It can have drain on your internal tech team, meaning the vendor is going to rely on your tech team or your tech team is going to have to learn it and support it after the vendor is gone.

It is not easy to upgrade. It may not be totally scalable, and you have to pay for further customization and integration expenses. Again, I will give you an example. When we

built the site for the Southern Poverty Law Center many years ago, they didn't want a hosted solution because their data was very sensitive and they had very exclusive content. They didn't want it sitting on someone else's servers. And they didn't really feel comfortable buying a proprietary system.

They basically said, "If it is our content, we want to build it and we want to own it." So we built them a custom made content management system. And it took 8-12 months to put it together, and it was well into the six figures by the time we were done. So these are just the things you need to think about, because the beauty and the curse of a custom solution is it can be whatever you want it to be, and that can be a dangerous thing as you go into brainstorming and try to figure out what you want. Enough said on that.

I am whipping through this stuff. I apologize. But again, if you don't have the deck, please download it. Feel free to call me with more questions if you have them.

So I was going to talk a little bit about Drupal, which is an open source solution, Crown Peak, which is a hosted solution, and Paper Thin and Ektron, which are installed solutions.

And the reason why I am talking about these is because we have worked with all four of them and I am comfortable talking about them. And you are probably saying, "What? What about Joomla? What about Plone? What about Word Press?"

Well again, there are 500 other Content management systems I haven't mentioned and I can't talk about all of them. Joomla is very strong. It is more about usability than features. MTV and Harvard use it, so it is used with larger sites. But it is really slimmed down in terms of its feature set. So from a usability standpoint, it is very easy to use.

Plone is a very complex system. It is written in a different language called Python that not a lot of people know. But it is still very strong. And Word Press, we all know Word Press. It is by far the easiest CMS to manage, but it is not as robust. And I really don't know if you would call it a CMS as much as a blogging tool with some cool features that allow you to do some different things, although there have been some very nice sites built by Word Press. But again, it may not have all the workflow. It may not have all the bells and whistles. Etc.

Let's talk about Drupal. I am on slide 20. Drupal is the number one open source web content management system on the planet. We have used it a number of times. We have built very large sites with it and very small sites with it.

It is free. The first time it came out was in 2001. We have built sites for 10K all the way up to, I will be honest with you, about \$300,000 using Drupal. If it is a small site, you can literally get up in days. But typically it is going to take you a few months to get a site up and going.

The great thing about Drupal, and what I just love to see, is there are 10's of thousands of users and organizations all over the world using it, and the developer community is extremely passionate. And Drupal themselves, the Drupal foundation, really spends time looking at all the different modules that are built or suggested, goes through rigorous testing so that when they get added to a new version... They are up to 6.0 now and I think 7 is coming out soon. They have tested it. They have put it through the mill to make sure it works.

At its core Drupal is a very basic content management system; not a lot of bells and whistles. But the way it is developed is you can plug different modules in. So you say, "Well we really want to poll. We want to ask people how they feel about certain things." Well there are probably 20 different poll modules, or even more, that have different features and functionalities that have been built by the community for free and put through a process to make sure they are robust enough to be even downloaded and used.

So that is the nice thing about Drupal. It is very, very robust. The core features are it has a content management system, it has a blog, it allows you to do collaborative authoring, which means there is some workflow, there are forums, and there are social networking tools. You can set up a social network with Drupal with user profiles, friends, and all that type of stuff. You can create newsletters and newsletter templates and send emails out using Drupal; sending out newsletter blasts. There is podcasting. There are picture galleries. There are file uploads and downloads. It is very, very robust.

And again, if you are a small organization and you have got 20 people in your entire organization, a Drupal site may be the best thing for you.

Where it is different: it is free. It is up and running in minutes. It is easy to use. They have an easy to use web installer. It has very strong built in functionality. It has dozens, if not 100's, of free plug-ins; so for podcasting, for blogs, etc. And it really is easy to use and customized.

The Onion uses it, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act at Recovery.gov uses it, MTV in the UK is built on Drupal, and as I said, First 5 LA, a site that we did is built on Drupal as well. I have these links in the deck if you want to see an example. I also have some before and after. I have some images of what Drupal looks like on the front-end and on the backend that are in there as well. I won't go into detail on those because we don't have them. We can't see them.

Crown Peak is a hosted solution. Their tagline, which is a brilliant tagline, is, "Manage content, not technology." So what they are saying is, "Let us take care of the technology. You can manage your content." They are the market leader on hosted solutions. They serve small to global size enterprises. They were founded in 2001 and you can get away from \$15,000 to \$50,000 depending on the size of your site.

They have more than 100 customers, and right now they are managing over 500 websites in multiple industries. We have done a lot of work with them. In fact, the current

ACLU.org site is running on Crown Peak and we helped them with that migration onto Crown Peak. And that site has 15,000 pages of content, if not more, and many, many editors, so it can handle very robust large sites.

The good thing about Crown Peak is that it has a very strong WYSIWYG editor. You can get free templates from them. They actually have templates that you can use. So you don't have to spend a lot of time in design if you see a template that you like, and then you apply your logo and your colors. They can do multiple languages. They have blogs and multimedia and they have slide shows. They have versioning of content and digital assets, so you can do a rollback, meaning, "Wow. We loved the way the site looked in July." Click a button, there it is.

It is real time auditing and reporting, which means you can get real live stats that are happening on your site. You can see how many people are coming to your site, where they are using it, etc. etc. It has an email and CRM integration capabilities. It has amazing workflow process. And again, you have web analytics built in. You can look at all of your statistics and that all that type of stuff.

Where it is different and much different than any others is that there is no software to install, no hardware to manage. Again, manage content, not technology. It empowers your business users to take control of your content. You can manage your content cost efficiently, and it is really, really easy to use. And you can do some customization. And it is fast.

And I know I am whipping through this stuff fast, but the good thing about Crown Peak is that if you needed to get a small site up in the next week, you call them. They will get it done for you because it is that easy to use with their templates and their system. So that's a hosted solution.

Again, right now the ACLU.org is using it. Population Action at populationaction.org, Defenders of Wildlife uses it, and actually Medicare.com is a Crown Peak site and you can get a sense. Defenders.org is a massive site with many different mini sites within it and they are all being managed by Crown Peak.

Again, the strength of Crown Peak is that it is a hosted solution. You pay by the month. You rent the software. You don't have to know much about technology because they take care of it for you.

Paper Thin, they are in Massachusetts. They have a solution called Common Spot. It actually came out a long, long time ago in 1998. I know that doesn't sound like a long time ago, but in this industry that is a long time ago. They have 300 implementations worldwide. They are built using...Let me step back. Drupal is PHP. Crown Peak is .NET. Paper Thin uses Cold Fusion.

Cold Fusion is a language that has been around for a long time and Adobe bought them many years ago, so it is the people who make Photoshop and the people who make

Acrobat make Cold Fusion, so it is well supported. It is not even a clunky language. It is a strong language. It is an old language and not a lot of people use it anymore, but we happen to use it here and Paper Thin is a very robust system.

Core features of Paper Thin: Has WYSIWYG editing. It is template driven again. It has good workflow, blogs, and wikis, and calendars. It has got basically the same things that Crown Peak has but this is an installed system. You buy Paper Thin, you get a CD, you install it on your server and you maintain it. So again, you are going to focus both on content and technology with something like Paper Thin.

Where it is different: it has got a template driven architecture and more than 50 standard elements, so it is very robust. There are a lot of different things you can do within your template and within the features. It is a very robust and mature product. It has been around a long time. It is very customizable. We have done things with Paper Thin that actually with Common Spot that the folks at Paper Thin said that nobody has ever done before with their system, because we know Cold Fusion very well. So we went into the actual core code and made changes.

And the way it is designed and the way it looks, and you will see some images in the deck, it is really designed for non-technical users. It uses a lot of popups, but that's not a bad thing. Sir Speedy uses it. The United Way of America uses it. The Mayo Clinic uses it. Kent State University uses it. So those are some examples of different sites that use it.

And last but not least is Ektron that I want to talk about. Again, their cost can range anywhere from five to 70 grand. They claim that they have 20,000 implementations. I don't know if that's accurate, but I talked to them and that's what they said, and I am just being honest. That means there are 20,000 websites out there using Ektron. That could be the case.

Their core features is that it is a very sophisticated content management system. They have a feature in there where you can check in and check out content. So if you are working on a document that has actually been uploaded to the site, you can check it out, make changes on it, and while you have it checked out, nobody else can touch it. And then you check it back in and then somebody else can take it and do their editing. So there is a little bit of document management included.

It has RSS feeds out of the box. It has a very sophisticated and strong search. It has a very nice customizable workflow and task assignment features, so you can set tasks to other people who are editors, or publishers, or reviewers on the site.

So you could say, "Hey Mary..." You send her an email through the system, so you can assign her different tasks. "I need you to review this. I need you to publish this. I need you to edit this." And it is all managed within the system. So if you have multiple offices and people all over the country who are maintaining the site, that's a nice feature because it enables you to set tasks and workflow within the system. So you don't have to rely on email.

They key differentiators. They have been around a long time. They have a very easy user interface. It looks a lot like Outlook. It is very Microsoft based. So if you are used to that directory structure of folders and that type of look and feel, you will be comfortable there. It has got a very, very easy to use HTML editor. It is more like Microsoft Word than any I have seen. It allows you to sync the whole site, and I am not going to go into detail on that, but that really basically allows you to sync your staging and your live site together with a click of a button to make sure that both sites are exactly the same.

And last but not least, Fuller Theological Seminary uses it. BMW is using Ektron. Ticket Master uses Ektron. Ringling Brothers use it. If the circus uses Ektron, then you know it has got to be good, because if those clowns can do anything...All right sorry.

Anyway, that is basically it in a nutshell. I went through it extremely quickly and I wanted to open it up for questions. I mean, Rebecca, is that a good time to do this now?

Rebecca: Sure. Absolutely. We have a question here from Kelly. And Kelly says, “We recently upgraded our website in CMS for about \$30,000. Our CMS is Joomla. Now we want to do some customization using one of Joomla’s extensions and an external vendor has quoted 6,000 for a single project. Does this seem reasonable?”

Michael: That was a good question. You know it is hard. You spend \$30,000 and then someone comes in with almost 20% of your budget to make one change. Without knowing exactly what the change is and knowing what their hourly rate is, it seems kind of high considering, again, Joomla is more focused on usability than it is features, so I would imagine an edition to Joomla isn’t going to be that sophisticated.

But if it is going to be pretty sophisticated, again, not knowing what it is, I will happily talk to you afterwards if you want. And you got my email address on here if you want to talk about it, because I have to know more of the details. But it does sound...If you have a \$30,000 implementation and if it is the same vendor that comes back and says, “It is \$6000 to do it”, that seems a little off. So if you could give me more information I could help you.

Rebecca: Excellent. Okay, let’s see. We have a question, “So if we are a tiny nonprofit, we are all volunteer, what’s the main takeaway for us? Like which type should we consider looking out first? We want to be able to update every week or every other week and we are just starting to think about our content and how much we would like to have on our website.”

Michael: That’s a good question and I am glad that you are actually thinking about the present and the future because so many people don’t think about where they are going to be. And it is actually good that you know that you are going to make changes on a weekly basis or even about every two weeks. The fact is that you are going to make changes to your site and you are small.

I would look at Drupal. I would look at Joomla. I would look at open source. There are so many vendors out there who are not super, super expensive, who are qualified and talented who can do this for you. And I think what you want to look at is you want to be realistic with your feature set and your objective.

So if you are updates are going to be sort of to your home page with maybe a press release here or an announcement, it is just not going to be that robust to start. So you kind of look at a Drupal site or a Joomla site that doesn't have content management on every page. You are going to look at, maybe three or four different areas of the site that you are going to make changes to.

And sort of start small and kind of step back before you do this and do a content strategy, which basically says, "Okay what's on our site now? Where do we see our site going in terms of sections, amount of pages, etc?" And kind of outline, if you can, over the next 6 to 12 months where you think content is going to be changed, added, created, deleted, and kind of put a strategy together.

And then a vendor can look at that and say, "OK. You are going to do X, Y and Z. You don't need Crown Peak. You don't need Ektron because you are going to blow all your money. You don't need anything that feature rich. A Drupal or a Joomla open source solution will probably fit to start."

And if it is Drupal, it is very robust and scalable, so you can really grow your business. As you grow your organization, that site can grow with you. I hope that answers your question.

Rebecca: This question might be a good one to follow up with because you mentioned kind of a partial implementation, I think.

"I know you mentioned that you worked with a lot of small organizations and obviously cost is a major factor for us. Is there a way to incorporate a content management system in baby steps, maybe not the whole site at one time or something?"

Michael: Yeah. I mean there are different ways to do it. And really, if it comes down to one person that is going to make changes to your site, you don't really need a very robust system because you have no workflow. But you may grow into that someday which is why you may want to sort of bite the bullet and put something like Drupal in place. But if you see yourself over the next year or two of adding little things here and there or maybe we are just going to add new articles or new press releases or new announcements, you actually could go custom. And again, I know I said custom is expensive, but it doesn't have to be that expensive.

And basically what you are going to build are publishing tools that enable you to create new pages based on a template. So it is almost like you are going to go to a system and fill out a form. You are going to fill out the title, who it is written by, and then the body text. And you are going to be able to do some bolding, and some italicizing and

underlining and that type of stuff. And then you hit publish and it goes live. It is a very simple publishing tool.

It is not really a content management system because you are not really managing content; you are just able to publish. Yes you can add, edit and delete with it, and it might not cost you so much, but if you are a small organization and you see yourself, your current site has 10 sections but we never see the “about us” section changing or we are not going to move for 5 years, then you don’t make the “contacts” page contented managed. So you don’t have to spend the time to integrate that into the site.

So maybe you just look at the “homepage,” the article pages, and “our programs and services” pages as the ones that are going to begin to have the content management now. And as you grow and maybe you start hiring more people or getting more offices, then you bring in the “about us” and the “contacts” page into the system.

So you can start with baby steps. It might make it a little bit more work down the line to bring pages in; I am going to be honest. But if cost and time are critical right now, then you take the baby steps and you can do that.

Rebecca: Our next question comes from Kristi. And Kristi says, “We have a web host who is willing to build the basic template. Will any of the CMS's work for us to fill in the content?”

Michael: That’s a good question. So your hosting company is going to build the template. I am assuming that means that they are going to, for all intents and purposes, design your site. So they are going to say, “Here are your templates. So here is your home page, here is your landing page, here is your article page templates. Give us your logo. Here are some colors,” blah, blah, blah. And they build it for you.

The question I have is...I think you need to ask them, “What is the final delivery?” Is it an HTML built site? Or maybe they actually do have their own publishing tools or a content management system that they are offering as well. You may want to ask that, because if they are templates, that always leads me to believe that there is some sort of database behind it that is going to generate pages based on those templates, which means there may be some sort of content management system.

If what they are delivering you is a hard coded HTML site at the end and there is no database and no content management system, you can take a content management system and lay it on top or behind, or whatever metaphor you want to use, to manage it. A different vendor may come in and make some tweaks to the templates to make it work, but it is always possible.

The first My 5 LA site that we did in Drupal, they had a static HTML site that had no database. And we took their site, redesigned it, and then we put Drupal behind it. So it can be done. It could be a multi-step process, but I would step back and ask that host if they actually do have tools that allow you to do it if they are using the Word template.

Rebecca: We have a question from Paula, and Paula says, “What is your recommendation in the case where the web development vendor has their own home grown CMS versus a non-profit client insisting on other CMS options?”

Michael: If a vendor says they have their own, the only thing I can say is just be very careful of the contract, because they may say it is propriety and you don’t own the code, and they may actually have some line in their that they actually own your content as well.

So you want to be very careful with a web vendor who says, “We have a proprietary system.” A couple things can happen. If they go belly up, who is going to support your system? What actually happens to your system? How do they handle upgrades? How do they handle bugs and software issues?

There is a lot of debate going on right now. I have been doing a lot of reading about the consumer software bill of rights and where your right stands in terms of bugs. They shouldn’t charge you for a bug in their software and a lot of firms are charging for bugs.

So I think you want to be careful with proprietary systems, because propriety means someone owns it. And then what was the second part of the question, Rebecca?

Rebecca: What is your recommendation where the web development has their own home grown versus the non-profit client insisting on other CMS options? So I think just where you stand on that debate. How you make your case one way or the other.

Michael: The beauty and the curse of the Internet is that it can always be changed, it can always be edited, and it can always grow. And that is a great thing and it is also a curse because it runs up costs and all those sorts of things.

And with that comes all these different companies with many different solutions of content management systems. There are hundreds. You just want to make sure that you...There is a great site called the CMS matrix (CMSmatrix.org). They break down many different systems and sort of show their features and functionality. So that might be a good place to start to see what the best solution for you is.

Rebecca: We have a question from Jennifer, and Jennifer says, “Michael, if you use a commercial SaaS, what happens if you decide to no longer use the system? What happens to your content if it is all contained on the vendor’s server?”

Michael: That is always an excellent question. I can tell you how Crown Peak works. The interesting thing about Crown Peak is it is a database system. It is very robust. But when they publish your site, they publish it out as HTML. So every page actually exists versus a dynamic site that when you click a link, it goes to the database, says, “What template?”, grabs that data, and then builds that page on the fly. There is a little bit of a lag, a little bit of time.

By publishing out every page, it is a very fast solution. What that does is, if they go away or if you want to leave them, you can take your entire site because you have a fully HTML site. Five pages or 5,000 pages; it doesn't matter. It is all there and it is yours.

Crown Peak and the other hosted solutions like Clickability are very, very sensitive when it comes to that question, because they know if they go away, or if something happens, or if you want to leave that you own your content and you get it.

The question then is, when you do get it and you have it, what are you going to do with it? The good thing is that with Crown Peak's system, your site exists as it does. If you leave them you have your site up and running. Making changes means you have got to go into the code now and make changes or you migrate it onto another solution. So they are very honest and upfront of how they deal with that situation.

Rebecca: We have a question from Cynthia. Cynthia says, "Can you talk about Drupal and estimate what a low end CMS based site might cost? Could you talk also about the longevity with Drupal?"

Michael: Sure. Well you never know what is going to happen with anything in terms of Longevity, but Drupal has been along for a long time. The fact that they are thinking of launching version 7 very soon shows that they have been making a lot of different revisions and working on the product.

There are thousands of vendors out there and thousands of developers out there who use Drupal. Drupal is built on PHP, an extremely robust language. PHP is up there with .NET in terms of its robustness and it is not going anywhere. MySQL is the database. It is not going anywhere. If it is not Microsoft, chances are it is open source and it is PHP. So from a language standpoint, it is around. It is around for a long time and I think Drupal is going to be around a long time as well. It is gaining more and more popularity as the days go.

In terms of a small site, I have no idea what your organization is or how big you are looking at, but all said and done, looking at design, looking at content strategy, looking at content management, doing information architecture, doing development, building the site, putting the content in, testing it, and launching it, you can get a very robust site with a lot of different features in the \$15,000 to \$30,000 range. That is with a firm like ours.

Again, a good Drupal site is probably a 200 hour project. So if you find someone who is \$50 an hour, that is \$10,000. If you find someone who is \$25 an hour it is five grand. I always have this argument that hours are hours and rates are where you can barter.

So basically, you always look at a project and say, "OK. This is probably a 200-300 hour project," and then you get your different vendors to bid on it. And based on their rate is where your cost is going to come in. But if they all come in around the same couple hundred hour mark, you know that you have been clear as to what you want, they all

understand what you need, and then they bid accordingly based on their rate. I hope that answers your question Cynthia.

Rebecca: Another Drupal question just for clarification. When you were talking about Drupal you mentioned that it wasn't an "enterprise" solution. What does that mean?

Michael: Enterprise meaning like a large organization is going to run 10 different sites off of it. It would be like if ABC decided to run Disney, ESPN, and ABC, all their sites, off of one solution.

Chances are they are not going to use Drupal for that. They are going to spend the money and use something like Vignette, which is a million dollars to begin with. So that is what I mean, like really, really large systems that manage many sites over many different properties across the world.

Rebecca: Makes sense. "When deciding if a CMS is a good fit for our organization, you mentioned considering how often we would update our content and how much content we would have. Where do you think the line is? Is it a particular number of pages? Is it the type of pages?" I think they are just looking for some clarification on really how to look at what they have got.

Michael: Sure. If you are making changes to your site once a month, chances are you don't need a CMS. To me, if it is a simple adding of a page here or there, why not hire, and not to sound trite, but hire a college kid who understands HTML and can go in and make those changes at \$25 an hour, because it is only going to take him four hours, so you are looking at \$100 for changes? There is no sense to have technology behind your site.

If you are going to be making changes on a weekly basis, and some get down to daily basis, then you are going to want a content management system because you don't want to rely on a resource to get it done.

There have been so many times when we have dealt with clients who come in and say, "We have all these changes we want to make, but our vendor disappeared. Our vendor never calls us back, or IT just doesn't have the time to do it. I wish we had a tool that would enable me to do it." And that is what a content management system gives you.

You could have a five page site and have a content management system. I think that is a little overload, but again, if what you are doing is...Let's say you have many programs and services all over the country and there is stuff happening on a weekly basis with all of them, and you want to upload pictures or updates and all that type of stuff. Again, a content management system is going to allow you to do that and your site is going to grow from five pages to 50 pages in a matter of a week because you have the capability to do it.

Another reason to have a content management system is you can have a password protected area for maybe your board, or maybe for your internal staff, so there are meeting notes or minutes, or all these things that need to go up. And you just don't want to email them. You want a place to put them.

So you could have a password protected area that they go to the site, they click log in, they go there, and there is just a list or a page with different areas of the site that only those people can see.

So again, maybe your public site is only 10 pages and you are not doing a lot with it in terms of content management, but for your stuff, you board members, and anybody else who has access to the password protected area, maybe there are documents and changes and stuff happening back there. So that is another consideration.

Rebecca: We have a great question from Richard. "At my organization we felt like we were being held hostage by our web guys. So over the past four weeks I have built an entirely new site for our agency in Word Press and will launch in the next week. Mind you, four weeks ago I didn't know anything about building a site. I was a bit discouraged by slide 19 which is critical of Word Press's robustness. Could you point out some of Word Press's weaknesses that I should be mindful of as we move ahead?"

Michael: That is a really good question. I am 100% transparent and honest. I don't know Word Press all that well. I don't know Word Press all that well. But I don't know if there is like a number to call to get someone on the other end.

I know I had a problem. I was doing a Word Press blog because I went away to Red Sox fantasy camp for my 40th. And I put up a blog and I wanted to put pictures up. And I was having a problem with it.

I couldn't find a phone number to call. And that kind of drove me a little nuts. I know it is free, because I did the free version and I didn't download it. And that kind of drove me nuts.

But I did find an email and I sent someone an email. And they came back within about 48 hours and helped me. So I know there is support. So I think you are OK there.

In terms of workflow, I don't know if it fully exists there. I don't know if you can have the editors and all that type of stuff and a different hierarchy and permissions based area. And I think when it comes to templates and some of their widgets, I don't know if they offer as much as other systems.

So if you are going to keep it simple and you are not going to do a lot of crazy stuff or anything that is complicated, or having to die in donations. Like let's say you brought Network for Good in to handle your donations and some of that data needed to go back into your CMS, or filling out a form and creating a newsletter database. I don't know if Word Press offers all of that. I could be wrong, but to me Word Press is kind of like a

very robust sexy blog that allows you to change look and feel and put some features in there, but it may not be as robust as other systems. Rebecca do you have any inkling on that?

Rebecca: To be honest, I am not an expert on Word Press either. I did just find that they have the whole forum section on their website, so wordpress.org/support. And they have thousands upon thousands of posts related to their different things. But like you said, I couldn't find a phone number front and center. They probably want you to poke around a little first.

So I guess that would go back to your personal preference for customer support and what you would be looking for out of a contact for you.

Rebecca: We are going to wrap up for today. But first of all, Michael I just want to thank you for leading the call for us today.

Michael: Great. Thank you. It was fun.

Rebecca: That is it for us today. So thank you Michael and thank you everyone for joining us today. Hope you have a great afternoon!

Michael: Great. Thank you.

Rebecca: Thanks. Bye-bye.