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The Key To Leveraging the Internet… Web Content Management for Non-Technical People
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There isn't a government executive alive today who shouldn't be heavily leveraging the power of the Internet and making it work for his or her organization. By having a Mobil First Responsive Website Design, it allows your message to be seen clearly on any size screen without frustration. By automating services on-line, a government can provide more to their constituents with shrinking resources. In fact, everyone is asking the same question: *I know I should be getting more out of the Internet. How do I do it? I really don't even know where to begin*.

What you should be aware of is that the power of the internet is allowing many governments to reduce internal costs as well as increasing communication with the residents. As an example, cities with a population as small as 8,000 have saved over $7,500.00 in printing and postage costs by putting updated forms on the web site for residents to download and fill out before they come to City Hall. Counties that change and update services and program information on their web site on a daily or weekly basis are realizing 25% reduced "foot traffic" into their department offices. Both municipalities and counties are experiencing a 23% drop in incoming phone calls after 4 months of deploying an eGov website.

What about eGov? The ability for residents to pay for parking tickets, property taxes, request marriage and birth certificates on-line is not only a great convenience but can also provide a new revenue steam back into the government.

Residents have easier access to television/radio and sometimes experience a one sided view of local and regional News items. Public Relations Managers, City Managers and County Officials need a way to inexpensively give the government's side of the story. Many governments change the News section of the government web site frequently which results in residents making the hometown government web site their "daily read". Government officials can send out email newsletters with hyperlinks to a web page, where they can post surveys and "test the waters" about some upcoming important legislation before making their final decision. Now more than ever governments have to keep the residents informed in a proper and quick manner. The Internet is the place for everyone to instantly find reliable current information.

Instantly finding news is also a major use of the Internet. Even in the best of circumstances news is about a half-day old from a newspaper but on the Internet it is up to the minute and potentially much wider in breadth and depth. Go to a bookstore or a library to get the same information in written form and you'll likely spend a great deal of time you simply don't have today. The Internet also opens the information door to governments, businesses and professional services. For instance, need to know more about your government services? Check them out on the Internet.

Social Media Marketing also helps residents' ages 23-49 keep abreast of city or county activities by using your *Facebook and Twitter* accounts to push information to these interested individuals as it happens.

Public Information Officers are responsible to market the city or county for many reasons. Sometimes it is to lure out-of-state businesses to hire services within the government boundaries, or to attract businesses to relocate there. Other times it is to market tourism. With reduced government budgets these tasks can be difficult. If many individuals visit the government web site regularly the PIO has a large captive audience.

Research shows that visitors go back to a website if it provides timely, fresh, useful and interesting, e.g. *stimulating*, content. By utilizing the power of the Internet, a government can actually save money and provide more services and convenience, from accepting applications

and purchasing permits to making facility reservations. But making it so, usually falls to the IT department personnel because it requires html programming or web development software.

Many content *providers*, the people who are the source of the content that must be posted on websites, are not familiar with these complicated tools and have little or no desire to learn them. As a result, content providers must go through a second party, the IT department, to put their content on the government web site, making it a sad fact that many websites are paradoxically not up-to-date and often show information that is over one-year old and events long gone by and the government's image is tarnished due to out-of-date information and a dull, non-stimulating site.
Or, worse yet, making their constituents drive to the government offices to avail themselves of services at a greater cost to both parties.

There is one more important aspect to government web sites that seems to always be overlooked, web site search engine optimization. The more the government employees change web site information and add links to other web sites, along with uploading documents, places the government web site higher on web site search engine report. This increases web site traffic to the government web site which results in a higher government visibility.

The way to leverage the Internet is to provide a means or a tool that empowers content providers to post their information without going through the IT department, thus freeing up the technical wizards for more mission critical work. What would the ideal tool be? It would be: simple to use – requiring no html knowledge; little or no training; and allow changes 7 x 24 from the desktop or on the road.

We have that tool today. **It's called a *content management system (CMS).***

By implementing a Web content management system with an email newsletter application, the information generating resource, i.e. the content providers, are empowered to make sure the Web Site is current, fresh and useful, thus becoming an instantaneous, information sharing and service resource. No IT department go-between required and no unwieldy tools required for making changes. 5% of most governments have only one website content editor, where the majority has 3 or more spread across various departments like the Clerk, Parks and Recreation, and the city or township manager's assistant.

Leveraging the Internet means getting timely information up for the right audience to process it and a web content management system is the means to achieving that goal.

Today, businesses and organizations are using the Internet for passing information online, e-commerce and online training. But the Internet is underutilized. That is because the technical people must spend time they don't have updating. We have yet to leverage this new dynamic technology and we can do so by empowering the people most interested in posting information and making it useful to customers, employees and other parties.

The keystone is the content management system because it places everyone within his or her respective roles and capabilities. Technologists are freed up from mundane, time-consuming chores and can move on to mission critical tasks and content providers are empowered within their expertise.

Finally, the content management systems helps management challenge the organization and make it do more to provide more useful and current information, as well as money and time saving services for clients and customers. Today, nothing is more important than an organization's website because it determines how the organization is perceived, its image. Large or small if an organization has a bad, out-of-date, information-poor website, it has a poor customer image. The Internet is a powerful tool for providing more services with shrinking resources.

Joseph J. Nagrant is Sales and Marketing Director of Revize Software Systems (Troy, MI). Revize is the first company to market a commercial off-the-shelf enterprise Web Content Management solution that is a cost-effective, user-friendly software package. In addition, the software has a unique technology marketed as Revize webSpaces^{TM} that makes the offering a product of choice for the enterprise who seeks to offer Web Content Management as a hosted solution (i.e., ASP/Service-based computing model) for their diverse computing needs.

Nagrant further explained, "We have built Revize with the pragmatic customer in mind. We understand that the purchasing decision for any enterprise, whether large or small must include flexible options that allow the customer to shop for the "best in class" suppliers of both software and Web development services. Revize has solved this problem with JAVA-based Revize CMS that is a deployment and developer independent solution with a cost in the thousands, not hundreds of thousands of dollars per Web Site."

Created in 1995, Revize CMS was one of the first pioneered web content management systems. Revize Software Systems develops and markets Revize CMS, an affordable, innovative web content management and delivery system for non-technical people, across multiple market sectors. Revize CMS is based on an intuitive user approach, it combines sound software architecture with similar state-of-the-art functionality, simplicity, rapid deployment, ease-of-use and scalability previously found only in more expensive, custom-designed software. For more information about Revize Software Systems or Revize CMS, contact the company at Revize Software Systems, 1890 Crooks, Suite 340, Troy, Michigan 48084. Phone: 248-269-9263 x16, Web Site: www.revize.com