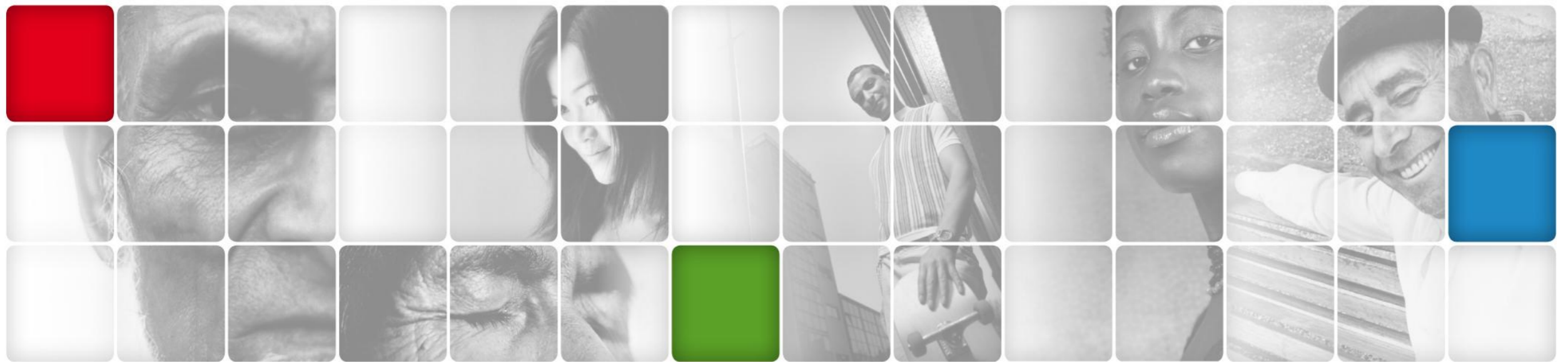


# Six Best Practices in a Web Content Management Project



12/2011

Mikko Mustakallio

# Definitions

**Web Content Management Systems (WCMS)** facilitate collaboration among those responsible for website content, i.e., the process of creating, approving, publishing and updating content purposed for an online information system.

”A **best practice** is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark.” - Wikipedia

During the past 10+ years, we have refined the following principles in a **wide range of WCM projects**, scaling from

- 10.000 visitors a year... to 1.000.000.000 visitors a year
- 1 content manager... to 200 content managers
- 1 language... to 47 languages
- Intranet... Extranet... Public Web Sites

Most systems claiming to be WCMS include the basic functionalities → the differentiating factor is not usually *what* a solution can do *but how well* a solution fulfills the needs of an organization.

*“We have shortlisted three options to choose from”*

*“SDL Tridion is probably the best”*

*“We have used **Sharepoint** for years”*

*“We have developed an **in-house** solution for WCM”* *“I heard **Liferay** is really good for an extranet”*

*“We will invest in **Documentum**”*

*“We are going for **Open CMS** to save money”*

*“We bought ours from **IBM**”*

*“Our IT Department has selected **Vignette**”*

*“Our web publishing platform needs to be renewed”*

# Applying (Web) Content Management Best Practices

- I. Understand your content managers
- II. Describe the content management scenarios
- III. Set the target for workflow automation
- IV. Model your content and metadata
- V. Follow standards
- VI. Buy a product, not a framework



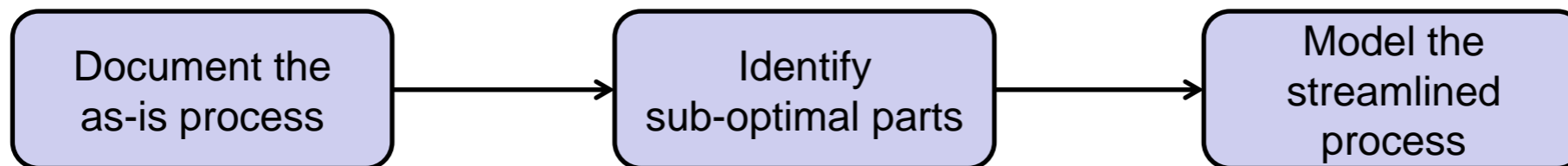
# Principle #1: Understand your content managers

- **Who are your Content Managers?** Typically they are NOT
  - Developers, system administrators, webmasters
  - IT Managers, CTO, CEO, CFO...
  - End-users, such as consumers
- Instead, they are primarily non-technical business users acting in different roles of managing digital content assets of an organization
- Example: "Jaana, a marketing manager of the Nordic area, is acting as the *Regional Content Manager* responsible for managing the web contents of four different Nordic country websites..."



## Principle #2: Describe the content management scenarios

- How do your Content Managers operate and how would they like to operate if it was possible?



- In an RFP phase, instead of traditional, elaborate use cases, you should write down the ideal key scenarios
- Example: "Jaana, a Regional Content Manager, has received new rich media files related to the new product launch. She uploads the files to the system and sends the related textual contents to translation..."

## Principle #3: Set the target for workflow automation

- Which tasks should be automated?
- Automate processes by following the “80-20 rule” to get rid of the biggest volume of repetitive manual tasks
- Integrate to automatically retrieve/feed information from/to systems providing relevant content/functionality, e.g.
  - Product Master, E-Commerce, CRM, etc.
- Define the localization scope; number of languages
  - Translation management
- Less manual work = less error-prone



## Principle #4: Model your content and metadata

- **What types does your content consist of?**
- Product, Service, Article, News, Event, Rich Media Presentations...
- Model the content types and their relationships so that they can be managed efficiently yet flexibly
- Content Model  $\neq$  UI templates, site navigation /structure
- With proper metadata, you enable
  - Dynamic content for automatic views/updates
  - Content sharing e.g. in social networks
  - In- and outbound content syndication (e.g. RSS Feeds)



## Principle #5: Follow standards

- **What are the standards you should follow?**
- Embrace industry standards such as XML and its derivatives
  - Higher integratability, smaller risk for vendor lock-in
- Separate content from presentation (!)
  - Maximize content reuse and flexibility
- Standardize also within your own content model
  - Faster time-to-market, less migration work
- Lay solid foundation first, build on top of it
  - Extensibility (function-wise, or channel-wise; web, mobile)



## Principle #6: Buy a WCM product, not a framework

- **Are the features really supported by your product?**

Either they are supported out-of-the-box, by configuration, by developing via product's API, or by ~~customizing~~

→ If something is not supported out-of-the-box, make sure the API support is there as you do not want to customize

beyond the product's API that could prevent product upgrades in the future

- You won't probably find a product that fulfills 100% of your requirements → prioritize and weight your selection criteria



# Summary

- Best practices can help you to identify and reach your goals
- The best practices mentioned here are just a 30-minute-scratch on the surface
- Though they may deliver the biggest benefits in the early phases of a solution's lifespan, they can also be very useful in the later phases
- When holistically applying best practices there are other aspects too that need to be taken into consideration: data security for an example...

Mikko Mustakallio  
Partner, Talent Base Ltd.  
[mikko.mustakallio@talentbase.fi](mailto:mikko.mustakallio@talentbase.fi)  
p. +358 40 861 9254



**THANK YOU**

# Talent Base Offering for Content Management

