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Topic: CMS

How to Chose an Open Source CMS: Step 1

Comparison of PHPnuke, CPGNuke and Open Site Manager

Choosing an Open Source CMS (Content Management System) is one of the most important steps to creating a web site. [PHPNuke](#) is the most popular so I will use that as a base of my discussion. PHPNuke has spawned many spinoffs (OK they're actually forks). I'm looking at the recent ones because they have the most in common with PHPNuke so I'm most familiar with them. They are [CPGNuke](#) and [Open Site Manager](#).

Here is my initial thoughts:

Most people consider features first before chosing a CMS, that is wrong! If the CMS is not supported and has no future there is no point of using it unless you dont plan on changing your site and can fix all bugs and security holes yourself.

When looking at a CMS a user's biggest concern should be if that software will be around in the future or is this just a fly by night operation. Here are the base criteria before considering any CMS:

Size of the community

This is simple. The bigger the community the more donations, support and new development takes place. PHPNuke has a huge advantage.

Community Activity

The best CMSes have active communities that will help you if you need it and continue the project. PHPNuke has support in many areas including its own site (but we dont know its development direction). CPGNuke seems to be gaining momentum. Unfortunately, Open Site Manager doesn't seem to have a lot of activity (not many new news items and little forum activity). I would suggest that a CMS has module news etc included on it's homepage, so the homepage constantly changes (CGPNuke doesn't do this).

What makes a CMS different

The CMS should quickly show what makes it different from the growing list of projects. This should be easily seen in the feature list and through other dialog on the home page. (CPGNuke does a great job of this.) This will show you that they are thinking about what they have and are probably planning for the future.

Can the CMS attract new users

It is important that a CMS grows because the more users the more possibility that people will donate time and money to continue it's core and create modules. Most Open Source CMSs do not offer an easy way for a visiting user to get started. Suggestion to CMSes offer a block on your home page "Are you new to this CMS- find out more." This area should answer the

questions: Why is this CMS the best? What is the CMS features? How do i get started? How do i get help? This should all be done in the friendliest and simplest manor, not to scare away anyone- because today's newbie maybe tomorrow's module developer.

So which CMS is the best? None are perfect all are improving. If any of the above points scared you about the CMS then stay away from it. Otherwise each CMS will need to improve. PHPNuke will be around and the other will probably be there to- but they should be monitored closely. I'll continue to explore this topic in future articles.

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