

WebGui –A library Content Management System

Madison, WI, Oct. 15th-16th, 2007

By Mary Carrington, M.A, Ms.Ed.

Buswell Memorial Library

Wheaton College

Illinois

Many libraries are adding web tools such as interactive forums, database reports, news areas, RSS feeds, link lists and FAQ's to their websites. The management of a library website with such tools and with different library departments can be cumbersome. However, website tools can be managed within a flexible content management system such as WebGui. WebGui is a constantly evolving, open source content management system with twenty-five built in applications.

The Content Managers workshop at WebGui's 2007 conference examined many WebGui features and explained how to add content using the different WebGui assets. WebGui contains three types of assets, utility, container, and regular assets. Utility assets such as the Rich Text Editor have other uses. The Rich Text Editor, for instance, has a number of formatting features, like bolding, similar to MS Word and is used to manually edit article content in WebGui. Container assets contain other assets. For example, the Page Layout asset contains assets such as articles and polls. Regular assets, such as articles, are assets used to add content to a page.

Assets are the building blocks of WebGui and content can be added to the article asset by clicking on any of the asset tabs such as the properties tab. Text can be added to the article asset, for instance, by clicking the properties tab and typing text in the description area. No knowledge of HTML is needed to type text in the description area. In this type of environment, content creation can be distributed to non-programmers while site consistency can still be maintained.

One of WebGui's most versatile assets is its Collaboration System. With a collaboration system, forums can be added as well as a request tracker, a photo gallery, FAQ's, RSS feeds and other tools. In our library computer lab in Wheaton College, for instance, the request tracker could be used for tracking requests from computer lab users. Request trackers are used in

software companies to track software bugs. A photo gallery could be used for staff photos. During the conference, this participant was able to add an RSS feed from CNN to a WebGui demo page.

The Designer's Workshop demonstrated how to create templates for WebGui and outlined a ten step process to add templates to the WebGui content management system. A WebGui template is similar to a standard HTML or web page but also integrates its own macros and variables to create dynamic content. Participants were advised to "think in steps" when adding templates as it would make the process more manageable.

The process of creating a WebGui template was also outlined. Template code can be created outside of the WebGui system in a code editor like Notepad. In WebGui's asset manger, the user can select a new template and paste the template code into the template field. This template can then be used throughout the website. If a change is made in the template, then the change will be implemented wherever the template is used in the website.

Both workshops provided an excellent training model for future WebGui training in the Wheaton College library. Participants were able to use an online demo of WebGui while PowerPoint presentations outlined the material. The participants were allowed sufficient time to practice creating templates or completing other processes while the presenters were readily available to help participants with problems.

Robbins, Engel and Bierman (2006) who evaluated usage of a content management system at University of Oklahoma Libraries, suggested that the main challenge in building an intranet that is vital to employees within an organization "requires an organizational commitment to developing tools that are easy to use and vital for the development of the website." WebGui is a tool that can readily be adapted for use by library staff .

References

Robbins, S., Engel, D. , & Bierman, J. (2006). Using the library intranet to manage web content. *Library Hi Tech*, 24(2), 261. Retrieved November 7, 2007, from ABI/INFORM Global database. (Document ID: 1073443301).