New content management resources

I'm finding that almost all my intranet consulting work is now being driven by clients seeing the implementation of content management software as a way of managing decentralised content contribution. One of the best sites for CMS information is http://www.cmsreview.com/ , the brainchild of Bob Doyle, with www.cmswatch.com from Tony Byrne as a joint leader. Bob has now launched three new web resources. The first is http://www.cms-forum.org/ which is a structured home for the information and intelligence that circulates on www.cms-list.org. The problem with cms-list is that there has been no accessible archive, and the threads are impossible to navigate. The combination of the two is quite inspirational.

The second development is the CMSWiki at http://www.cmswiki.com/. If you don't know what a wiki is then this is a good place to start. Again the aim is to provide access to the global knowledge base of CMS implementation issues, as well as enable vendors to get in on the act. Finally there is the CMS Blog which acts as an integrator for a range of other blogs, based on RSS feeds. (See http://www.eevl.ac.uk/rss_primer/ for an excellent introduction to RSS). Add to all these resources. Bob Doyle is also the Editor of the DMOS directory on CMS vendors, and has accumulated a list of links to around 900 vendors at http://dmoz.org/Computers/Software/Internet/Site_Management/Content_Management/

Personas

One of the neat methodologies that I have been using recently to develop the information architecture of intranets has been that of personas. For many years market researchers have concentrated on defining target groups of users, such as "Mothers under 25 with two or more children at school".

Alan Cooper, an American software designer, and the author of Visual Basic 1.0, realised that as technology enabled software companies to provide more functionality for the same price there was an increasing danger that the user experience would be so bad as they tried to cope with new releases that they would prefer to stay with the current version, which would have a huge impact on the sales of software. In his book The Inmates are Running the Asylum, published in 1997, Cooper used some of the outcomes of the market research industry, which was at that time starting to move towards personas.

A concise statement about personas has been developed by Alison Hunt in a seminal article in Online http://www.infotoday.com/online/jul03/head.shtml

To summarise what a persona is

- Personas are hypothetical archetypes, or "stand-ins" for actual users that drive the decision making for interface design projects.

- Personas are not real people, but they represent real people throughout the design process.

- Personas are not "made up"; they are discovered as a by-product of the investigative process.

- Although personas are imaginary, they are defined with significant rigour and precision.

- Names and personal details are made up for personas to make them more realistic.

- Personas are defined by their goals.

- Interfaces are built to satisfy personas' needs and goals.

It is well worth reading some other papers on this methodology at

http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/almstrum/cs373/general/personas.html

http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archives/print/003348.php (May 2003 edition)

http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archives/print/002343.php (March 2002 edition)

Reference Management
Column Editor: Tracy Kent; e-mail:
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(Editor's note: Tracy's column has been carried over from the final issue of the UKOLUG Newsletter as it is still current)

Managing references beyond the library walls….
Palm top access for Endnote 7

Managing references has always been carried out sitting down – whether in a library or a study or research centre. With the latest version of Endnote 7 you can now download references to your Palm top and be anywhere! The new Endnote application for Palm OS handheld devices allows you to search, enter and edit references and then hotsync the references when you return to your desktop.

WriteNote

Whilst we are on the subject of working outside, ISI research Software have added the WriteNote software to the CHEST licence. WriteNote is a bibliographic software package aimed at undergraduates with access via IP authentication. Over the next few months there are plans for authenticating via Athens making access to this software beyond the "library" walls. The CHEST licence, software for the academic community, research councils and selected associated organisations, runs until 31 December 2007 with the last sign up date of December 2004.

Managing the references retrieved….
RefVIZ

RefVIZ is a software package which seeks to analyse references retrieved to provide evidence of connections amongst them. RefVIZ, working with Endnote, Reference Manager and Procite, analyses and groups references according to the thematic content. In turn, this provides visual overviews of the main topics covered in the references. This visual representation seeks to demonstrate how topics are interrelated possibly prompting additional areas for further research.

This is done by either organising references conceptually or highlighting related terms by presenting a review of which subjects tend to be discussed together by term or by group.
Further details from Adept Scientific on 01462 480055; or email refviz@adeptscience.co.uk; or on the website at http://www.adeptscience.co.uk/

SciPROOF

Another package is that of SciPROOF which is a technical authoring toolkit. It integrates with Microsoft Word and expands the native spellchecker from databases within the scientific, biomedical and chemical area. The Style Checker proofreads and suggests term styles, such as upper case characters for acronyms such a DNA, PCR, PAGE, etc.

While the Symbol Checker will flag unique characters such as Greek words or letters, often preceded or followed by a hyphen, and suggests the corresponding Greek symbol. There is a glossary and a direct link to PubMed, allowing the writer to instantly access definitions and references without leaving the Word document. The aim of the tool is to make the production of manuscripts more efficient and with the highest degree of accuracy.

Further information about sciPROOF available from Adept Scientific on 01462 480055; or email sciproof@adeptscience.co.uk; or on the website at http://sciproof.adeptscience.co.uk/

Ensuring YOUR references are retrieved…

A recent article by Christina Desai in C&RL News provides a tongue in cheek look at how to ensure references are retrieved such as writing controversial articles so that other authors react to your work, either to bolster their arguments or to disagree with your conclusions, researching appropriate subject headings and, of course, writing good articles based on solid research and reasoning!
Further tips can be found in
C M Desai : Ten tips for practitioners of citation analysis in the Library. C&RL News. January 2003 p21-23.

Public Sector News
f**rom Penny Garrod**

2003 and all that

2004 - another new year dawns so will try to capture and encapsulate some of the newsworthy items from the end of what was another 'challenging' (to use the politically correct term) year for public sector folk. But first a quick look at the bigger picture.

'Unity' could be the watchword for libraries in 2004, as Resource – the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries aim to erode the barriers between academic, public, government, health, research libraries etc. to make way for 'joined up' thinking and services on a grand scale.

Policy-makers at national and local government level have to be convinced that libraries have a key role to play in the delivery of services which 21st century citizens will value and use, and which meet current national, regional and local agendas. Moreover, libraries have to improve the way in which they convey this message to local authority chiefs and politicians in order to raise their profile and ensure adequate funding is made available to sustain existing services as well as develop new services and content.

The Common Information Environment (CIE)
Unity is to be achieved through joint activity and the sharing of information between key organisations. Therefore the JISC has set up the Common Information Environment Working Group to "promote educational excellence through technology in the public sector". The members of the group are:

- The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee): http://www.jisc.ac.uk/
- The British Library: http://www.bl.uk/
- Grid: http://www.escience-grid.org.uk/
- NeLH – National Electronic Library for Health: http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/
- Resource: http://www.resource.gov.uk/