The rest of the book is concerned with creating and managing blogs. As the title of the book states, this is aimed at libraries but many of the technical, implementation and management issues apply to any type of blog. There is a review of weblogs created by libraries, which is best read as a snapshot of the state of the art in the last quarter of 2003. Blogging has progressed well beyond what is described here, as evidenced by the proceedings of more recent conferences such as Internet Librarian International and Online 2005.

The final two chapters deal with creating and managing a blog. These cover in very general terms what one needs to consider: whether to host the blog locally or on a blog hosting service, the questions that might be included in the decision-making process, and tables comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the main "blogging path" options. The section on hosting services and software can be "skim-read" as so many of those mentioned have changed significantly, have been acquired by other services, or have disappeared altogether.

Disappointingly, the section on RSS feeds is very short and gives the impression that it was included as an afterthought. Managing the library weblog gives an overview of the management issues: planning for implementation, making technical decisions, identifying potential users, making decisions about content and features, interactivity, staff time for development and maintenance, budgeting and promotion.

What this book does **not** do is take you through the actual process of setting up a blog step by step. Indeed, it would have been foolish to attempt to do so as there are so many different approaches to blogging, and the technology evolves and changes so quickly. In any case, there are plenty of resources on the web that will help you do this (or you could attend the UKeiG workshop on Blogs and RSS!). Overall, this is a good introduction to the subject and one that I recommend to anyone starting out on their blogging "career".
Karen Blakeman

The Content Management Bible

Bob Boiko. New York: Hungry Minds, 2002. 966pp. ISBN 0-7645-4862-X.

What year was that? 2002? Surely there can't be a computing book published in 2002 that retains any relevance today? Even PCs built in 2002 are frequently obsolete by now.

But I make no apology for reviewing a book published in what is, in computing terms, the classical era. Boiko's book remains as relevant today as when it was first written.

The Content Management Bible is a comprehensive guide to the process of understanding, selecting, specifying, and implementing a content management

system. It requires little technical understanding, but it communicates very clearly the principles of content management: the separation of format from content, the benefits of content reuse, and so on. Combined with the theory is remarkable awareness of the process of putting together a CMS, right down to (for example) an excellent understanding of how corporations reach a collective decision to proceed with a major investment such as the purchase of a CMS, and how a consensus can best be achieved.

Starting with a definition of content, the book examines content management, then content management systems, to specifying a system, then to its design and implementation. Typical of the author's determination to assess the subject from scratch is an original definition of content management system that is still relevant today: "a system that harvests valuable information and functionality from the organization and delivers it to a known set of audiences whenever and however they want it."

How does a computing title achieve such longevity? Partly because the author cleverly wrote the book to be independent of platform, code base, and operating system. Although there are examples of code in the book, they are generic rather than specific. You can get to the end and not be sure if the author has a Mac or a PC, and that's rare.

That generic approach is typical of the author. He has uncannily managed to extract the essential from the transitory, so that his checklists remain valid today. Boiko's determination to approach everything and start by analyzing it is always readable even in those areas where the reader would expect to have a reasonable knowledge in advance.

Most importantly, despite the author's experience and passion for his theme, he is not so evangelical that he recommends content management systems for every situation. One of his most useful chapters is Chapter 8, Knowing When You Need a CMS – and he gives a checklist to determine if you do or not. Reviewing a book of well-nigh a thousand pages is not easy. Although I have used the book for three years, I'm not sure I have read every word of it. It is a book to be consulted rather than read from end to end. One of the drawbacks of the book is its sheer bulk. While the index is impressively detailed, the author gets a little lost in the detail at times, mostly noticeable if you read the book from end to end. Some minor quibbles include:
- Some sections repeat others, and some don't fit very well in the published sequence: for example, Part III, Doing Content Management Projects, requires an understanding of Part IV, The Logical Design of a CMS, to be understood fully. Since the book is designed to be consulted rather than read, this is not so much of a problem.
- The book has no bibliography, although when the book was written, there can have been few books on content management.

- The laudable attempt to use diagrams to depict information visually fails at times, for example, the strange figure 15.2, which looks like a diagram of the parts of a primitive cell. It doesn't assist the reader's interpretation of the topic.
- Figures 22-2 and 22-6 are identical, but have different titles.
- Figure 22-7 replicates a part of figure 22-6 and is labelled "close-up" – but it's shown at the same scale as the original from which it was taken. Figure 22-8 takes another part of 22-6 and shows it at the same scale.
- "Body elements" and "management elements" are used on p.591, but are only defined on p.593.
- The same anecdote is repeated on pages 226 and 270.
- Staffing needs – p.299 replicates ch 11, and is then repeated on p.236.
- I can just about forgive the occasional word inventions, such as the curious term "metator", the person who creates the metadata. Presumably, taxonomies should for the same reason be created by a taxor.

These are minor quibbles compared to the service Boiko has done for anyone implementing a CMS. The book distils the experience and knowledge that author can only have gained by repeating the process many, many times. Those lengthy checklists for every conceivable step of the CMS process may at times be exhaustingly long, but you welcome the lists when you use the book as it was designed to be used – as an aide-memoire to make sure you haven't forgotten a vital feature or component at any stage in the process.
If there were a list of the top ten books on content management, Boiko's book would certainly head it.
Michael Upshall

Press Releases & News

OCLC PICA acquires Fretwell-Downing Informatics

3 November 2005—OCLC PICA, the European library systems and service provider, has acquired Fretwell-Downing Informatics, an information discovery, library management and knowledge delivery organization, to extend their combined worldwide network for information delivery to libraries.
OCLC PICA, based in Leiden, the Netherlands, and Fretwell-Downing Informatics, based in Sheffield, United Kingdom, will continue to offer their current product lines while they develop new services that take full advantage of an expanded information delivery network.
"By enlarging the scale of our operations, we can make the necessary investments in infrastructure and development to remain leaders in service to the international library community," said Rein van Charldorp, Managing Director, OCLC PICA. "Economies of scale make it possible to ensure the continuity that our customers require and deserve from us."
As a result of this acquisition, OCLC PICA and Fretwell-Downing Informatics will share technologies, capabilities and skills to offer more and faster service enhancements and updates.