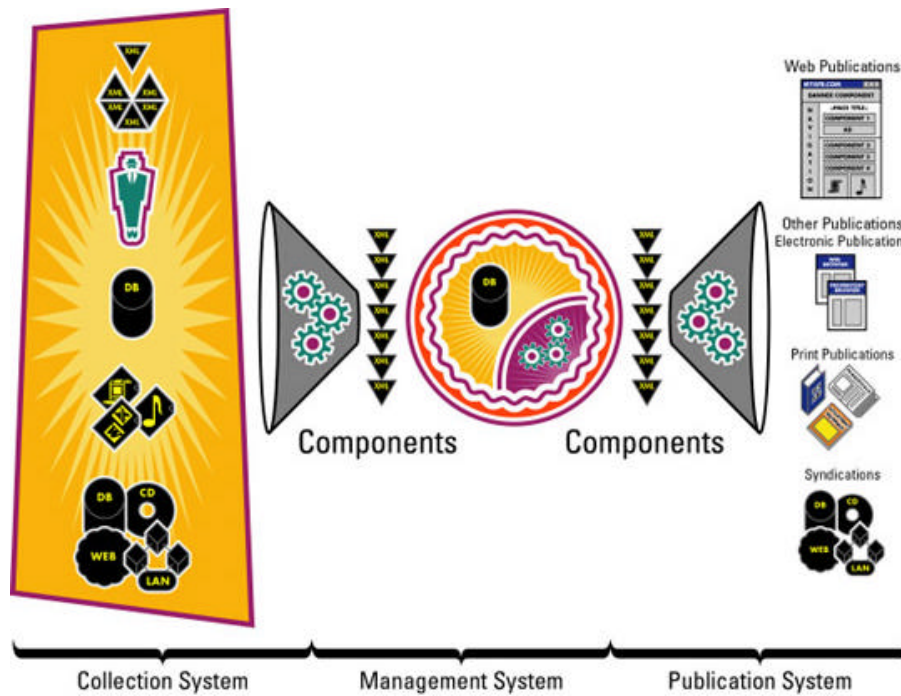


CM System Design Process.

A CM Domain White Paper

By Bob Boiko



This white paper is produced from the Content Management Domain which features the full text of the book "Content Management Bible," by Bob Boiko. Owners of the book may access the CM Domain at www.metatorial.com.

This paper presents the standard application design process and contrasts it with the process you might use in a CMS.

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Understanding the CMS Project Process

Any large development/integration project has these broad phases:

1. Business justification
2. Requirements gathering
3. Design
4. Implementation
5. Deployment
6. Maintenance

The process I propose for doing a CMS project is quite a bit like the general process, as shown in Figure 1.

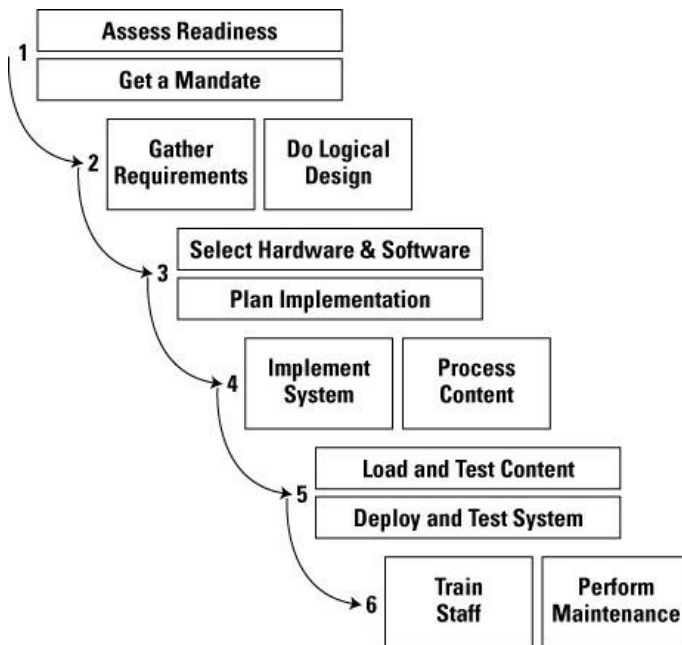


Figure 1: The CMS project process follows the same general process as any other large development project.

Even though I use some different names, the ideas are generally the same, as follows:

7. **Business justification:** This step is taken care of in my readiness assessment and mandate processes. In these two processes, you decide what the organization has accomplished so far and then build consensus around a plan of attack. The readiness assessment is discussed later in this chapter.
8. **Requirements gathering:** This is a specific step in my CMS process, but it is not as extensive as the standard process. I favor a short requirements-gathering phase, followed directly by what I call logical design. During logical design, you continue to gather requirements of a sort, but your real task is to fashion those requirements into a clear idea of what your system must accomplish.

9. **Design:** In my process, this step begins with logical design, but cannot conclude until you have selected a particular CMS system. In system selection, you use the requirements you have completed, and part of the design, to create an evaluation process for selecting a CMS product (or, possibly, concluding that you want to build your own). Before you select a system, you have to do enough requirements gathering and design to know what you want. Before you complete the design, you have to know what product you will be using to account for the product in the design. Between design and implementation, then, is a system selection stage that overlaps them both.
10. **Implementation:** In my model, this step includes the last part of what is often categorized as design - specifications. I call specifications the physical design of the system and include it as the first part of implementation. Following physical design, CMS implementation proceeds as usual - with a lot of programming. In addition to programming, though, in a CMS project, a lot of content processing might need to be done. To be accomplished by the time the system is ready, this preparation work needs to be started as soon as possible.
11. **Deployment:** As with other systems, during this step you install the system in its "production" environment and test it there. In a CMS project, however, loading and testing the content and publications that the CMS produces is also part of deployment.
12. **Maintenance:** In my model, as in other enterprise systems, a CMS project never ends - it just goes into maintenance mode. This is doubly true of a CMS, where you will be adding content continually and will also want to restructure the repository and publications on a regular basis.

The major difference between the CMS process I use and the standard software development cycle is that in the CMS process, you do enough design to fully understand what you want to have happen and to be able to select a product (or choose to build your own). Then you select a system that can achieve the design you have made. Next, you complete design by developing the specifications for your system. After that, you are back on the usual implementation, deployment, and maintenance mill. One other significant feature of a CMS project, over and above the usual kind, is the potential size of the content processing portion of implementation. In the standard development project, moving data into the system is not nearly the task that it can be in a CMS. Of course, a CMS project is a large-scale systems integration project, so it shares a lot with other projects where software must be purchased and integrated into the organization.