

WHITE PAPER

THE ADVANTAGES OF AN ASP-BASED WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Many companies already outsource the hosting of their website, and for good reasons: increased security, ensured uptime, and expert support. The same reasons apply to outsourcing a web content management system. After all, who better to manage the application that manages your content than the company who developed it? An ASP eliminates the time and cost associated with installing, administrating, and supporting applications. With its minimal TCO, lightning-quick deployment, rapidity of system updates and upgrades, round-the-clock support, and increased security, an ASP-based web content management solution is the obvious choice for small and medium-sized businesses.

You've decided you need a Web Content Management System (WCMS). You know that a standardized WCMS implemented across your organization is going to increase the speed with which your website content gets posted, guarantee your content's visibility and interoperability, and cut down on the resources necessary to manage and maintain it.

The question is: what type of WCMS is best?

This can be a difficult question, perhaps one with no single answer. Different companies have different needs, different resources, different goals. A better question is: what type of WCMS is best for my particular organization?

What is an ASP?

ASP stands for Application Service Provider, and is sometimes used interchangeably with the term Software as a Service (SaaS). In essence, an ASP remotely hosts and manages a software application. It may be helpful to think of an ASP as "renting" a piece of software to customers who access it remotely, most commonly over the Internet or a Wide Area Network (WAN).

If you are a small or mid-sized company, the ASP approach to web content management may make sense in a way that alternative approaches do not. Here are some of its advantages.

Reducing TCO

Most obviously, an ASP eliminates the time and cost associated with installing, administering, and supporting applications. Since the application is hosted remotely and supported by the developer, there will never be any additional hardware or software to purchase. Neither will you have to maintain databases or install upgrades as they become available. The total maintenance of your application is handled round-the-clock by your provider.

In addition to these initial savings, an ASP solution to web content management frees up your scarce and valuable technical personnel for other tasks. In some small-business scenarios, an ASP model may even allow you to avoid hiring expensive IT personnel altogether.

An **ASP** eliminates the **time** and **cost** associated with **installing**, **administrating**, and **supporting** applications

Not only is the technical side of maintaining your WCMS handled by your service provider, but so is the support side – helpdesk and support costs are therefore cut significantly. And with every user on the same latest version of the application, costs related to supporting outdated versions are entirely eliminated.

All in all, the total cost of operating a WCMS through an ASP is typically around 40% of comparable installed solutions. Though, again, depending on your establishment's demands, the overall savings may be even more dramatic. Therefore, an ASP gives many firms access to sophisticated, high-end applications that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Startups in particular may benefit greatly from ASPs. Since the cost of operation is based on subscription, staggering initial investments can be avoided, and, taking the long view, the complete cost of the application can be radically reduced. By keeping the implementation costs low, application providers can quickly deliver a ready-made web content management system that will help the new company launch that much faster – and help the established company get its WCMS underway just as fast.

Key Features and Benefits

Speed of Deployment

It's not hard to see how an ASP solution can be up and running well before an installed solution can be set-up, and long before a homemade solution can even get off the ground. There is nothing to install, no hardware to configure, and certainly no application to develop and test. The time-consuming and resource-intensive process of distributing, installing, and meticulously configuring an application on many computers becomes a thing of the past. An ASP can start being used by your employees literally within days, if not hours. Compare that to weeks or months for alternative solutions.

Speed of Software Development

With an ASP, there's no more waiting around for software patches or critical upgrades. Even better,

there's no need to find the time to install them, since all upgrades are performed instantly and seamlessly by your provider. And who better to handle those critical – or just incredibly useful – upgrades than the people who developed the application in the first place?

An ASP solution means that your content creators will never be working with different versions of the same application, so backwards-compatibility will never be an issue. Obsolescence becomes obsolete.

Not only will updates go through effortlessly and painlessly, they can go through much more rapidly. With your web content management application hosted remotely and managed by the people who know it best, the system is able to undergo changes much more quickly than an installed, on-site system could ever allow.

Innovations can be implemented virtually right away. The incorporation of improvements and the detection and elimination of bugs can be effected immediately. Your WCMS doesn't just change – it actually evolves.

And the end user can guide its evolution in a way previously unimagined. By making recommendations for the tailoring of the application to better meet your needs, you allow the developers and designers to make improvements they might not otherwise have made. And, since those improvements can be applied so rapidly under the ASP model, the feedback cycle is compressed. Only the fittest versions survive.

Worldwide Access

ASP solutions delivered over the Internet (e.g. Comspec's MediaClay) are, naturally, accessible round-the-clock from any Internet-enabled computer on earth. This means that your web content management system is at your users' fingertips no matter where they are, and no matter what time it is. Content can be added or updated immediately, when it needs to be.

Who better to **manage** the
application that manages your
content than the company
that **developed** it?

Obsolescence becomes obsolete

Of course, your content creators need not be attending a conference overseas to take advantage of this truly empowering feature of an ASP. Perhaps they're on vacation, checking into their hotel when they remember some revision they forgot to make. Maybe it's after-hours when a brilliant idea strikes them, but they haven't got a key to the office. Or maybe last night's snowstorm is preventing them from getting in to work to put the final touches on a critical, time-sensitive update.

The full communicative power of the Internet is yours when you use an ASP solution to web content management.

Security

Your application is guaranteed to be available 24/7/365. You never again have to worry about your IT professionals falling sick, going on vacation, or jumping ship, thereby rendering web content management impossible.

Your relationship with your ASP does not end once the deal is finalized. You subscribe to ongoing support and service, and you are guaranteed to receive it. In this way, you remain in much closer contact to your ASP, and therefore in better control of your WCMS, than customers of traditional, out-of-the-box solution vendors.

Many companies already outsource the hosting of their website, and for good reasons: increased security, ensured uptime, and expert support. The same reasons apply to outsourcing your web content management system. Outsourcing your web content management system to a third party provides you and your data with an extra level of security.

It only makes sense. After all, who better to manage the application that manages your content than the company that developed it?

Conclusion

With its minimal TCO, lightning-quick deployment, rapidity of system updates and upgrades, round-the-clock support, and increased security, an ASP is a

truly formidable option for managing your website's content. Even if it had none of these benefits, its convenience and accessibility would still make it a prime contender in the web content management arena.

But, with all of its advantages, an Application Service Provider solution rises well above what the competition can offer. For small and medium-sized businesses, it's the obvious choice.

An **ASP's** convenience and
accessibility make it a
prime contender in the
content management arena



For more information on this and many other topics, please contact Comspec or visit our Resource Center on the web.

Corporate Headquarters
74 Wingold Ave.
Toronto, ON M6B 1P5
CANADA

Tel: (416) 785-3553
Toll-Free: 866-785-3553
Email: info@comspec.com
Web: comspec.com