

A Window Into Managing Your Website



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As I awoke this morning and began to emerge from my fog of slumber, I was surprised by the number, volume and variety of noises that greeted me. You see, because of a break in the weather, my wife Laura decided she'd take the opportunity to open up the windows in the house and let in some fresh air. While, normally, I'm somewhat of an addict when it comes to temperature-controlled environments, the difference in what I heard as I opened my eyes to another day was shocking. Birds chirping. Trucks rumbling. Cars swishing. Even a train whistle in the distance. What a difference a portal can make between us and the outside world.

By the time you read this, the Women's Journals will have launched their new website at <http://www.Womens-Journals.com>. I'm

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proud to say that through nothing less than perseverance, Kristin Pendleton and I were able to put together a deal that would help her wonderful organization open a portal to their audience, just as Laura did for me this morning. The web foundation that we at SteadyRain have built for the Women's Journals is an open-source framework called DotNetNuke, a web portal software.

In the same way that my bedroom window has kept those wonderful sounds of morning out of earshot of late, so too, may your current web technology be limiting what you can share with your audiences and/or what they can share with you.

One of the aspects of the Women's Journals' project which has excited me the most is that by providing the power of content management to the team there, they have been able to gain a control over the content that comprises their site in a way they've never had before. Until now, there was a gatekeeper, an almost invisible enemy, preventing them from expressing themselves the way they wanted to on their website—technology. By limiting their ability to interact with content only through the use of an agent of change, a web developer, content updates are not as frequent, nor as timely as they should be.

What's important to understand about the next generation of content management systems, like DotNetNuke (<http://www.dotnetnuke.com>), is that they are altogether different than what many people thought of as content management over the past decade. Here are a few examples:

- I can add a page to my site whenever I would like and not only will it be added into the main navigation of the website, but it will also be automatically added to the site map.

- When I'm editing content, I have the ability to create free-form content, leveraging a set of pre-determined styles (to avoid a visual mess) and place that content into layouts, not unlike building a word processing document.

web-based software and a simple photo-editing tool.

- I can restrict access to a blurb of content on a page or an entire page to a specific audience of people who are required to log in before they can access it.

- I can have as many of these roles and users within these roles as I might like, without limitation.

- I can add links within my content, on text or images, to other pages on my site, to documents for download or to anything available on the Internet without any coding.

- I can time the launch of or the removal of a blurb of copy or a full page of content from my site well into the future, so I don't have stay up until midnight to launch important updates.

All of the above are incredible benefits that come with many of the newest content management systems, but most important of all, these tools give me the freedom to create, expand and maintain the portal through which people see my organization through the delivery of timely, poignant information. I'm using technology the way it was meant to be used, to increase efficiencies, and not allowing it to become an inhibitor of dialogue (one-way or two-way) with my audience. I have control of my content and can update it whenever I want to—not when it's convenient for my developer to do so.

It's amazing what happens when you open up a portal. There's a whole world out there waiting to be discovered and looking to discover something new—you.



- Content updates don't require proprietary software on my local system. In fact, I can login from anywhere and manage the content on my site through