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**TITLE: WCMS versus Portals – Evaluating your relationship with CMS**

Ok, so you've attended all the latest Exec/Tech conferences, and you've seen all the snazzy demos you can bear. Or rather, you've seen just enough to further complicate the "It's Complicated" relationship status that has transpired between you and your organization's current content management system. What started out as a very simple, straight-forward situation, has quite possibly transformed into an unruly accumulation of content, scattered across a variety of portals that you may or may not have intended to invest in. Conditions have changed, and despite your technical skills and experience, you have started to question everything you *thought* you knew about the CMS technology that lies at the core of your company's central nervous system.

Maybe some sexy new SaaS has come along, beautifully bundled in a freshly upgraded modular web application. It does things your current system doesn't do. Or, maybe the synergy between you two has been so good for business that a well-endowed "mothership" enterprise has decided to move in and take over! The sacred space where you and your beloved WCMS have been happily cohabitating has been invaded and, suddenly, you are not calling the shots anymore. Your current system is just not good enough for Corporate's "new baby". It could even be that you have simply outgrown each other. Despite your loyalties, it's just time to go your separate ways. The fact of the matter is, the Theory of Evolution (whether you endorse it or not) does not discriminate when it comes to technology and business. Technology evolves, and businesses get dissolved and divided into new "hybrid" entities with their own special needs.

So how do you go about selecting and *maintaining* the right CMS for you and your Stakeholders? First and foremost, simplify your situation. Step *away* from your computer, ignore your Google search results, and allow yourself an opportunity to assess your needs based on what you genuinely know...instead of what has been pitched to you. Often times, the best way to address complex issues is to ask simple questions. Approach your spiral notebook or dry-erase board with these two things: 1) the reminder that Integration & Aggregation capabilities are the fundamental differentiating factors when it comes to portal technology; and 2) usage and end-user focus are the essential variables to consider when tackling your "WCMS-versus-Portals" equation.

Next week's installment, "What is the reality of my CMS situation, and where do I stand in it?" will delve into actual case scenarios, industry conditions, and how they apply to you. Are you the VP of a global enterprise on track for acquisition, or a CIO needing to train a remote team of Programmers and mid-level Managers on how to survive the shift from WCMS and ERP to PLM? Heck, even if you are the DJ/Event Promoter/Bartender who has been managing your boss's website for the past eight years, thus... /Content Manager, as well? Tune in!