



## Jacksonville University Takes Their Web Site to the Next Level Using OpenText Web Site Management

OpenText Web Site Management gives Jacksonville University the tools to develop an enhanced online presence

### Industry

Higher Education

### Customer

**JACKSONVILLE**  
UNIVERSITY

### Business Challenges

- Slow and inefficient Web content management system
- Low user adoption
- Inefficient workflow process for content edits
- Outdated Web information and online features

### Business Solution

OpenText Web Site Management

### Business Benefits

- Improved system to manage Web content updates
- Brand consistency implemented
- Widespread user adoption
- Enhanced online offering and scope of information

Jacksonville University (JU) is a comprehensive university located on the banks of the St. Johns River, just minutes from downtown Jacksonville, Florida. The University offers more than 70 majors, programs, and concentrations and has a student base that is represented by over 45 U.S. states and 50 foreign countries.

Jacksonville University's Web site ([www.ju.edu](http://www.ju.edu)) is recognized as an important communications channel for both current and prospective students. Around 80 percent of the Web site content is focused around recruitment while the remaining content offers current students, employees, and faculty updated information and the tools they need to succeed and feel a part of the student community. To manage a Web site that helps drive recruitment and best serves the needs of current students, JU turned to OpenText Web Site Management.

### Business challenges

Before implementing Web Site Management, the JU Web site was extremely difficult to maintain and was described as having a very scattered design with a confusing layout and an inadequate appearance. To manage site content, JU used their own Content Management System (CMS) built by the IT department. Maintaining content was extremely difficult using this system. As Harley Ferris, Web Manager at JU describes, "We had a crude CMS that involved a convoluted three- or four-step process that most users simply refused to use. There were approximately 60 active stakeholders in the previous site, but only about five of them were actually doing their own edits."

As a result, most site edits had to be done by the IT department, creating a huge time burden for the department and making the process of keeping up-to-date online information extremely difficult. Most staff at JU lost interest in their Web site, and the result was an online offering that provided little value to visitors, whether they were new prospects or current members of the JU community.

### Comprehensive software solution

Jacksonville University wanted a Web content management system that would help them to better manage their Web content, create a more consistent site appearance, and improve user experience. With Web Site Management, they found a powerful and comprehensive tool that provided the flexibility and ease of use they desired. "OpenText Web Site Management provides a complete package," says Ferris. "It solved all of our needs, so we do not have to buy one software solution for one thing and another software solution for something else; it is all there with the OpenText solution."





***“With OpenText Web Site Management , there just always seems to be a way to accomplish what it is we need to do. Whether we are building a five-page site for our Center for Teaching & Learning or a 2,000-page Web site for our whole campus, OpenText provides the solutions we need.”***

Harley Ferris,  
Web Manager, Jacksonville University

Web Site Management also integrated well with all of the University's existing systems, exemplified primarily by the fact that JU did not need to purchase any additional hardware, accomplishing everything with a straight software purchase. The solution also provided a great deal of flexibility to give administrators a number of different options to solve their problems. “With Web Site Management, there just always seems to be a way to accomplish what it is we need to do. Whether we are building a five-page site for our Center for Teaching & Learning or a 2,000-page Web site for our whole campus, OpenText provides the solutions we need,” says Ferris.

### Widespread user adoption

With Web Site Management, the number of users who are comfortably making their own Web edits has increased exponentially. Under the previous system, most of the staff at JU sent their required content updates to the IT department. This was primarily because the vast majority of JU staff did not feel comfortable using the old CMS system. There were only about five people actually using the old system and, as a result, the IT department became overloaded with the task of managing almost all required Web site updates.

Web Site Management allowed JU to open up the process of making online content edits to all staff members, empowering users and creating a more active overall interest in the Web site. “People now have the ability to make all their own updates, and each department is free to set up their own workflow processes to manage Web information,” says Ferris. “We now have over 60 users actively making content updates.”

Of these 60 users, there are about 30 “heavy users” making content updates on a daily basis. These are departments such as Human Resources and Public Safety that require daily updates to their Web information. The remaining 30 users make periodic updates. There is also a broader range of people using the new system—every department is represented, and everyone from VPs to regular faculty and staff.

### Quick implementation and ease of use

The widespread adoption of Web Site Management was due primarily to the ease of use and flexibility of the Web content management solution. JU administrators have been able to set up templates that make editing Web content a very simple and straightforward process. Ferris was able to remove many of the formatting options and label things clearly to make editing Web content very easy. “My training literally takes only five to ten minutes. User permissions are set up ahead of time, and I am able to sit down with them and show them how to edit a page. Everything is labeled clearly and is intuitive enough for new users to adopt the system quickly. The feedback has been extremely positive. Web Site Management has given us the ability to tell people they no longer need to worry about finding people who can update the site or build new sites. We have created a process that makes this easy for them to do on their own,” explains Ferris.

One of the big issues with the previous process was the inefficient and cumbersome workflow system that contributed to a backlog of required site updates. Suggested changes were not always clearly identified and involved a convoluted process of sending a document back and forth until the changes were approved and final sign-off was obtained, at which point it would then be sent to the IT department for final implementation. As a result, often these changes would not be completed.

Web Site Management enabled JU to implement a customized workflow system tailored to their needs, applying a fast and transparent review-and-release process to online content. The redlining function with Web Site Management clearly highlights the requested changes to the Web pages and, combined with automated escalation rules, changes are routed to the designated review person. The system is completely automated, with email notifications sent to reviewers who are able to simply click Preview to see the marked site changes and indicate their acceptance. This



new process allows for a far simpler method to implement content changes and has drastically decreased the amount of time required to make changes to Web site information.

The ease of use of Web Site Management has also meant a great deal of time saved for the University's Web administrators and IT staff. "As a Web administrator, a frustration I have had with other Web content management systems is that editing templates was far too difficult whereas Web Site Management from OpenText makes this process painless," explains Ferris.

Ferris can respond to change requests very quickly, sometimes getting a site skeleton up in only 20 to 30 minutes. "It just absolutely blows people away because they are thinking they're in for a three-month process," says Ferris. "In addition to the ease of use, there is very little that I can't do as an administrator. Depending on how creative we want to get, there is almost always a solution when using Web Site Management."

### **Brand consistency maintained**

Web Site Management also ensures that there is a more consistent overall appearance across the site. Previously, JU had little control over the appearance or branding on their site due to the lack of buy-in for the former CMS system that resulted in departments using their own tools to build Web pages. A number of "rogue" sites developed that had their own unique appearance and site structure, creating a lack of overall brand consistency.

With the widespread use of Web Site Management to build and maintain online information, these rogue sites have drastically decreased in number, allowing for a more consistent overall appearance. The new solution allows administrators to create templates that lock in images and site structure requirements on Web pages to ensure a consistent brand appearance is always maintained. As Ferris points out, "Users still have some customization options and are able to swap out some headers, change some background colors, or rearrange menus. I'm able to ensure, however, that our branding and site structure remains consistent."

### **Improvement in the quality and scope of online information**

With an efficient and automated Web content management system in place, JU has realized a lot of improvements in the quality and scope of online information. "It is a much rarer thing to find outdated information; it is definitely the exception now instead of the norm," says Ferris. "We can respond to problems immediately, meaning that in the time it takes to hit "reply" to an email, I've already fixed the problem. We've definitely been able to keep content more consistent from a proactive standpoint, but our response time to fix out-of-date information has also significantly improved."



One of the major initiatives JU has undertaken is to implement an online course catalog. This is a project they hope to have fully completed for next year's catalog release. Currently, the course catalog is posted online as a PDF file and the process of making changes is fairly tedious and time consuming. The PDF file is posted in a shared drive and all change requests are submitted in Microsoft® Word documents. Changes are compiled by one person managing the shared drive and the entire process can often go through 13–15 rounds of edits before the course catalog is ready for official release.

With Web Site Management, JU can create a Web-based course catalog to dramatically improve the updating process and add more value for visitors searching for course information. Web Site Management allows JU to create an automated collaboration tool to help consolidate and implement changes much more quickly. The IT team can set permission levels and have updates completed using a system that functions much like a Wiki page. "A Web site-based catalog that uses Web Site Management to manage it will be simple to update. Our department will basically be able to get out of the way completely and have individual stakeholders collaborate and manage the information that they want to present in a simple Web content management system," says Ferris.

Jacksonville University is also able to add dynamic features to the online course catalog, such as an interactive menu and hyperlinks that can help lead visitors to other areas of the Web site if they require more information. In all, the new online course catalog will add significant value for site visitors and remove many of the previous headaches for the JU staff who maintain course information.

### **Future developments**

With Web Site Management in place to manage online information, Web administrators and IT staff no longer need to spend the vast majority of their time focused solely on keeping content accurate





and up to date; now they can shift their focus towards building a university Web site that provides more value to visitors.

Ferris is particularly interested in implementing more Web 2.0 technology to take the JU Web site to the next level of interactivity. Web Site Management can provide the tools to implement an engaging Web 2.0 experience on their site. These features will help with recruitment efforts by allowing prospective students to get a better sense of what it is like to attend JU. Visitors will have

the ability to chat live with an admissions counselor, and a blog feature will allow freshmen students to communicate their first-year experiences. Additionally, through interactive features like JU-tube, students can submit photos and videos to build a gallery that gives site visitors a first-hand view of what it is like to be a student at JU. These site features have the added value of reinforcing the views of current students, helping them to stay connected and positive about the school they have chosen to attend.

Overall, Ferris is pleased with what Web Site Management has meant to their Web site and the experience they have been able to create for site visitors. As Ferris explains, "Our Web site is not only the front door but is often the most common point of contact. It is important for the Web site to meet the needs of all visitors, whether a prospective student or a current student finishing a term paper at three o'clock in the morning."

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