

" We've found that Percussion meets our needs by effectively managing content in a way that facilitates content reuse and consistency. The flexibility that it offers with regard to supporting the university's intellectual property and integration with other University applications is one of its major benefits. Percussion is playing an important role in our multi-year effort to align our enterprise IT strategy - driving content for multi-channel delivery to other strategic systems and integrating with applications campus-wide.

➤ Bruce Petryshak
Chief Information Officer
BGSU

Hundreds of Web Sites, 1,000 Authors, and an Audience of 50,000-Plus - Everything at BGSU is Large-Scale

Everything about BGSU's Web presence is large-scale. With 20,000 students, 4,000 faculty and staff, plus a large alumni base, and about 11,000 families of prospective students annually, the BGSU Web site audience easily exceeds 50,000 people at any point in time. The site itself consists of hundreds of Web sites for the many campus departments and organizations. These include some 120 different areas under the Arts & Science college alone. There are also 42 sororities and fraternities, the University alumni, development and marketing departments, and 30 different groups under Student Affairs. BGSU is well on its way to achieving its aggressive goals for both content management and authorship. The current 10,000 pages of content under management by its Percussion CM System is expected to grow to an estimated 40,000 Web pages, while the initial number of about 650 content contributors is expected to grow to about 1,000.

Percussion CM System Drives Large-Scale Content Management for Faculty, Students, Staff and Alumni at BGSU

CMS Plays a Central Role in University's IT Integration and Branding Efforts

Creating Continuity Across a Large-Scale Web Presence

Bowling Green State University, located in northwest Ohio, was founded in 1910. It is dedicated to providing a wide array of quality academic programs in a learning environment that promotes academic and personal excellence as well as an appreciation of intellectual, ethical and aesthetic values.

A state-assisted, residential institution, BGSU has an enrollment of approximately 20,000 students on two campuses and 840 full-time faculty members. More than 200 undergraduate majors and programs are offered, along with master's degree programs in 65 fields and doctoral programs in 16 areas. Like many other colleges and universities across the country, BGSU saw the value of using Web sites as a vital source of information for students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as a primary and powerful marketing and recruitment tool. The way Bowling Green State University presents itself online can also facilitate communications with important constituents beyond the university campus. But enabling the University's Web site - which is really a series of hundreds of Web sites - to fulfill its potential meant that BGSU needed a way to create continuity across the entire Web presence by centralizing the content environment. As a result, the University decided to purchase a Content Management System (CMS), and began an evaluation process late in 2002.

Major requirements for the CMS included the following: gaining a standardized workflow for content review and approval; reducing duplication of effort with automated content sharing; easy management to keep content current and accurate; maintaining look-and-feel and branding consistency on an institutional basis; ease-of-use for both technical and non-technical users; and improved recovery of lost data. "We looked at about a dozen competitors who had enterprise CMS tools, narrowed it down to five and then examined the pros and cons of each product and rated each vendor on a number of criteria," explained Dong Chen, BGSU's web developer and technical lead for content management. As result of the evaluation, BGSU selected the Percussion Content Management System (CM system), which was rolled out in 2003.

PERCUSSION CM SYSTEM: Playing a Key Role in the Enterprise Picture

"We have a very aggressive CIO here," says Deb Wells, BGSU's Manager of Web Development, in explaining BGSU's long-term strategic IT initiative that will tie together all its systems and applications. "He has a comprehensive vision, and wants to take this university places. It's really helped us to expand our horizons as we've planned the scope of our enterprise content management efforts."

The Office of the CIO is embarked on a multi-year effort to organize all of the

BGSU's Environment

- ▶ Server: Sun Solaris™
- ▶ Database: Oracle® 10G
- ▶ Web Environment: Apache running on UNIX application server with Tomcat
- ▶ Output formats: Primarily HTML; also JSP, PDF and others
- ▶ Languages: Java, JSP, HTML, JavaScript, CSS, XML, XSLT, C#, and Active Server Pages
- ▶ Planned Integrations Peoplesoft®, digital video, library system, Blackboard®, Oracle 10GAS enterprise portal, Portfolio® (based on .NET) and a master calendar based on Oracle talking to Microsoft® SQL Server and .NET

For more information, please contact:

Percussion Software
 T: +1 781.438.9900
 E: sales@percussion.com

university's application software, systems and hardware into a unified system that communicates well together. BGSU found that The Percussion CM System fit very well with what they were trying to do with their Oracle-based product lines, Sun systems and the platforms they were supporting. Because of this strategic initiative, BGSU at the outset wanted to roll out a content management system that could "not just assist what we're doing with the Web environment, but to create some continuity across campus with regard to all the information and data systems," according to Chen.

"For a university, we think we're on the leading edge," says Chen. "We're using Percussion to push content to multiple sources. Our goal in moving to a CMS is to use it as a central content system, so that content that is capable of multi-channel delivery can be published to our enterprise portal, or online learning solution, or any of our enterprise-wide applications that need it."

Creating the unified system involves a number of integration issues. For example, BGSU's enterprise portal is based on Oracle Application Server 10G. "In our new enterprise portal, we'll have a couple of portlets that hold the content, like a news release, for example, so we'll be able to pour the content directly from the CMS into the portal," said Chen. "So there are database issues involving dynamic content flowing, workflows and publishing, just to name a few. There are multiple things we are working through to make it all play together." Other enterprise-wide applications BGSU wants to integrate with Percussion include its Oracle 10G database; Peoplesoft; its Blackboard online learning system; digital video; its library system; ePortfolio (which is based on .NET) and a new master calendar based on SQL Server and .NET.

THE Percussion IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

As at many universities, BGSU's various colleges, departments and university groups had launched into Internet applications long before the university administration started paying attention. So BGSU had a lot of servers across the university, running many different applications, and various people with differing levels of knowledge and expertise working with many product lines. But there was no centralized Web environment.

"We wanted to get control of the management of content and eliminate the duplication of effort," said Chen. "We also wanted a similar look and feel across the Web presence; consistency in the content, and more importantly, we wanted each of the areas of the university, like departments or administrative offices, to have the ability to look the same but to present their own content in their own way. In other words, we wanted to give them the freedom to develop their own content, but always within the context of the university's branding."

As part of the planning process for the Content Management System, BGSU's Office of the CIO and the Office of Marketing and Communications worked together to gather all of the user requirements and determine the specific needs to customize the system. As part of the new CMS's introduction, BGSU held training sessions to provide instruction on using the new Web site design. The training included an overview of the new branding as well as guidelines on how best to present their content within this new design. It was attended primarily by content administrators and delegates from each department or group who coordinate the department's content efforts in creating, producing and managing the Web pages using the Percussion CM System.

Percussion's success at Bowling Green State University is due to the many benefits the system has delivered, including:

- » Ease of use for both technical and non-technical users
- » Reduced duplication of effort by providing an automated system for sharing and easily reusing content
- » Increased ability for shared support
- » Improved capacity to recover lost data
- » Flexible workflow for approval of changes to content
- » Reduced dependence on IT technical staff to implement simple content changes
- » Reduced training time for the hundreds of end-user content contributors
- » A way to ensure that information on BGSU Web sites is timely, accurate and consistent

Beyond all these key benefits lies a single, overarching theme: that of vastly improving the university's primary means of communicating its brand - the Web site.

"As we've rolled out the Percussion CM System, we were very careful how we designed the elements that we were making available to the campus community," explains Fred Connor, BGSU's Marketing Director. "We structured our templates to be very consistent with what we're doing with our collateral, direct mail, our mass media advertising, and with our public relations efforts. One of the primary places we're communicating our graphic standards and university design guide is on the Web site. It's really going to help the university to broaden our branding efforts. That's another key reason why we did this. When you're talking about both cost savings and improving the reputation of the institution, we see a lot of value in that."

Chen noted that BGSU particularly likes Percussion's flexibility, its ease of content reuse for end users and support for multi-channel De-Coupled Delivery. "From a technical standpoint, the Percussion CM System CMS offers us a very easy process," he continued. "We like that we can manage content centrally, which is particularly important in supporting our other enterprise initiatives we are doing across campus. We also like its support for multi-channel delivery, so we can use the content management system to publish to multiple delivery environments - a PDF, Web site, cell phone, or PDA, for example. In addition, Percussion's De-Coupled Delivery approach gave us the ability to separate content creation and production from delivery, enabling BGSU to scale up the number of Percussion users cost-effectively."

Ease of use from an end-user's perspective was also key. "In the other products we evaluated, the functionality for the end user seemed to be more complicated than the equivalent functionality in the Percussion CM System. That was one of the things we were charged with as a team - to find a CMS that would allow a secretary to sit at his or her desk and maintain the content for their department. This is important because we have a diverse population at the university. Some are highly skilled; some are basic beginners using the simplest office applications. We have enabled those beginners to open a Web browser to enter content, so they don't have to start

using Dreamweaver or Front Page or any other third-party utilities to do it."

BGSU also looked for a CMS built on industry and W3C standards. "The Percussion CM System is Java-based and XML-based, and when we compared it with a couple of other products, they were not really a complete J2EE-based platform. So that's another reason we selected Percussion," he added.

Percussion ROI

For BGSU, the overall long-term return-on-investment of implementing the Percussion CM System will come from a wide range of benefits, each of which falls into one of three main categories:

» Cost savings

Empowering end users down to the admin support staff to be content contributors saves staff time and cost, as does reduced training time and cost for end users and reduced reliance on IT and technical staff to explicitly manage routine content changes.

» Enhanced quality of information

The Percussion CM System fosters better consistency, accuracy and timeliness of content, as well as the flexibility to quickly and easily modify university-wide content such as names, logos or other intellectual property (IP) globally and instantaneously, throughout the hundreds of BGSU Web sites.

» Improved content and communication capabilities

The system brings ease of content reuse; the ability to better manage and protect university IP; informational "transparency" (e.g., the ability of various university groups to have easier, quicker awareness of what others in the community are doing from a content perspective); and better support and implementation of institutional branding.

"Being able to ask a non-technical person to maintain the content for their department's Web site, as opposed to having to hire a technical person, represents a significant cost savings, especially when you factor it times the number of colleges, departments and organizations on campus," said Wells. "That's one of the ROI factors we've looked at. So we know there are cost savings. It's also allowing us to improve centralized control over our content, improve our ability to track content, reduce duplication, improve training and reduce some of the future training of employees. We won't have to hire as many high-level technical experts because we've centralized the CMS. That way we've got people throughout the campus with a certain set of skills that are sufficient for them to contribute, control, maintain and update information."

Connor commented, "It's hard to put hard core numbers on these things. For lack of a better term, we're looking at modernizing the university system. We're moving away from a system where information is exchanged in very cumbersome ways, and where we've got IT people wrapped up in writing code to make applications talk to other applications and making sure that the data returned is the right data. We had to do an awful lot of work because there was inconsistency in how the information was handled or how it

was put into the system. There's also a training benefit, because how we'll be able to cross-train the entire university. Everyone will be familiar with the system and how to use the CM System. Then if they move from one area to another at the university, they're still trained in Percussion CM System - they can still manage content. That's one thing that makes Percussion a key, enterprise level application at the university. That's what makes it strategic."

The flexibility that Percussion offers the university with regard to branding and supporting the university's intellectual property represents another major ROI factor. "For example, if we change our logo, or our marketing message, or the way we represent ourselves, our centralized IT group can make that change simply by modifying global links for us via the CMS, and the whole university environment changes at once," Connor added. "That's another big plus for us in branding the institution and marketing the university and all of our sub-groups to our 50,000-plus Web site visitors."

Deploying the Percussion CM System as an integral part of the campus IT strategy is a work-in-progress that eventually will involve all of the University's enterprise-wide applications and systems. As such, it is not only ambitious, but also strategic. Asked about the long-range goals, Connor, BGSU's Marketing Director, commented, "We're looking at it as a complete, university-wide data communications tool to help support all these different channels and environments for our information."

"Our ideal is to do as much as possible through the central system managed by Percussion," explains Wells. "Because once we've get all our content managed by the Percussion CM System, and we're driving all our content through Percussion to our other enterprise applications, then the payback will be tremendous."

» » »

Copyright © 2005 by Percussion Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Percussion is a registered trademark and Percussion Content Management System (CM System) is a trademark of Percussion Software, Inc. All other product names mentioned in this publication are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

Percussion Software, Inc. » 600 Unicorn Park Drive, Woburn, MA 01801
Toll Free: 800.283.0800 » Tel. 781.438.9900 » Fax 781.438.9955

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS

Percussion Software, Ltd. » 7 Swallow Place, London W1B 2AG » United Kingdom
Tel. +44 (0)20.7850.0200 » Fax +44 (0)20.7850.0201