

AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHING MARKETING CLASSES WITH THE WORDPRESS CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Blackboard and Moodle are the content management systems (CMS) that marketing educators choose to use most often, but these CMSs do not offer transparency to the outside world. There are many CMSs, such as WordPress, that are designed to share content with the world and are used by marketing practitioners. This paper examines how WordPress can be used by marketing educators as a CMS to teach marketing classes, describes how blogging marketing course content fosters interaction with a marketing educators' professional community, and reviews the contemporary marketing skills that blogging marketing course content teaches a marketing educator. This examination is based on a review of academic literature, Internet polls and rankings, the author's web traffic data, and the author's experiences using WordPress to teach marketing classes during the past two semesters.

WORDPRESS

WordPress's numbers on its Webpage wordpress.org/about are impressive: "In 2006 we had 1,545,703 downloads, in 2007 we had 3,816,965!" To install the WordPress software, users download it from WordPress.org. "As for plugins we had 191,567 downloads of 371 unique plugins in 2006. In 2007 there were 2,845,884 downloads (15x growth) of 1,384 plugins." Plugins are applications developed by programmers that can be downloaded and used for free. Just as iPhone apps have made the iPhone so popular, the proliferation of WordPress plugins has helped make WordPress popular. "2006 saw the introduction of the first WordCamp in San Francisco... There are now dozens of WordCamps around the world, from Vancouver to Dallas to Milan, Italy." WordCamp is a WordPress conference where WordPress developers and users get together. WordPress is hot--it is free, open source, and has a community of developers that support it.

WordPress receives high scores in Internet polls and is reviewed highly when content management systems are compared side-by-side. WordPress is becoming the CMS of choice to run many major Websites and blogs. In early 2008, the blog search engine Technorati analyzed its top 100 blogs and found WordPress to be the CMS that dominates the list.

USING WORDPRESS WITH BLACKBOARD OR MOODLE

Blackboard and Moodle are good for sharing private class content such as the class syllabus and student grades. WordPress is good for sharing course content such as links, books, videos, and podcasts.

WordPress allows users to publish pages and posts. Static course content such as the course calendar should be published as WordPress pages. Frequently-updated course content such as lectures should be published as WordPress posts.

LOCAL AND ONLINE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

If a marketing educator shares their class content and lectures online with WordPress, local and online marketing practitioners are more likely to notice what a marketing educator is doing in their classroom because communication occurs through links, pingbacks, and trackbacks.

MARKETING SKILLS

Using WordPress as a CMS encourages a marketing educator to learn marketing skills such as domain name registration, web hosting, file transfer protocol, database management, HTML, CSS, PHP, javascript, creating media, publishing media, Web analytics, search engine optimization, and social media.