



Only a short 10 years ago, a website request for a full CMS (Content Management System) with social media implementations (barely starting out as they were) with great SEO capabilities (simple as they were at the time compared to now) would have carried a hefty price tag. Most companies and individuals would have, and did have, to stay with hard-coded websites or far less functionality than even the simplest CMS offers today. In many ways, the trend has followed the same arc as the tech industry in general - get more for less - and then continue doing so indefinitely.

The common misconception this has caused in the programming and website world is that now all website functionality implementations should have dropped at the same rate, which simply isn't true in many cases. Sure there's no need to re-invent the wheel when it comes to adding a website function, but quite often a client will make a request that any currently available packages only get so close to covering. How to make up what the available system lacks, great as it may be, becomes the key problem to solve.

The deciding factor often comes down to custom requests vs. what is already available.

2. Which package comes closest to the client's immediate requirements?
3. Weigh that conclusion against any differing, long-term requirements.
4. Determine how customizable the selected package is and how long it will take to modify.

The beauty of modern day code packages such as Joomla and Wordpress is they they're based on frameworks which have taken countless individuals countless hours to produce. Similar to any coding language, operating system, or technical hardware, these code packages are constantly being revised as bugs are found and new additions seem useful. This collaborative, open-source effort yields incredibly convenient features to the masses that a single individual would have to charge tens of thousands of dollars to implement for a client if started from the ground up. The collaborative results is the good.

CMS Bang for Your Company Buck

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This effort continues to expand as more and more extensions and features are added to the worldwide library. eCommerce extensions, forum systems, online helpdesks, website membership systems, and downloadable file libraries are just to name a few. In most cases, for each needed capability there are multiple systems to choose from, each with its unique pros and cons. That's also still good, but now we're getting to where the rule of 'always more for less' starts to break down.

Where the misconception ends is when truly custom features are needed to a base package or an extension. Its easy to look at the features of any base package and say "well if it started with all that, how hard could it be to add this one extra feature?" Whether a large or seemingly small request is made to modify one of these systems, the unfortunate truth is that it can take a pretty decent amount of time to do so. There's generally not a one-button-click solution. At this point, what often happens is the opposite - it's now a matter of breaking down all that code that took countless individuals countless hours to create, make sense of it, and then devise the best way to modify only what's needed and still keep the rest of the hundreds of thousands of lines of code functioning as they should.

There's why its ever more important to choose professionals from the start. How all the code and features work and play together is not always an easy task, but at Majestic Imaging, it's yet one more service we perform on a regular basis.