



System 7 Platform in a Nutshell

FAQ Document

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www.system7.com

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For System 7 information, please see <http://www.system7.com/>

What is System 7?

Put simply, System 7 is designed to be an operating system for interactive publishing. It enables publishers to rapidly build sophisticated new custom online publications, such as Web portals and sister sites for magazines, and then operate and manage them effectively using a variety of tools. The System 7 mission statement is "To enable highly custom interactive publications to be built faster and operated more effectively using innovative technology and services".

What is System 7 Hosting?

System 7 recognizes that site development and site management are only one of the challenges faced by interactive publishers. Therefore System 7 software products are also offered as fully hosted, managed and supported solutions. This means that the System 7 technology can be supplied as an application service to publishers, in which operation of the hosting infrastructure is handled by System 7. As part of the service, the servers are administered and maintained, the System 7 software is automatically upgraded and publisher content is backed up.

Because System 7 benefits from economies of scale, it can purchase more sophisticated hardware, greater amounts of bandwidth and reduce the work required to administer and manage systems. This is passed on to the publisher reducing the costs associated with operating cutting edge systems that are managed 24 hours a day.

What is System 7 CMS?

System 7 CMS is a "content management system" designed especially for next generation publishing businesses, which presents content rather like the folders and documents on a hard disk. Using System 7 CMS, you can effectively manage stores of media, XML documents, and media files that are associated with XML documents such as images and video (XML is a unique open standards document format that provides a means to author documents can be transformed into PDF, Word, Quark, InDesign, mobile Web, Web pages and also syndicated to partners and a variety of different systems for processing).

Using System 7 CMS you can treat XML documents any media assets that are bundled with them (such as the inline images inside an article) as a single document, and edit the combined visualization in a WYSIWYG format rather like a

Microsoft Word document. The ability to manage content taxonomies like folders on your hard drive, which you can drag and drop to rearrange, together with the ability to manage XML documents and their associated media files as a single entity, greatly increases productivity and simplifies content management without sacrificing flexibility. System 7 CMS also provides effective workflow procedures and enables the creation of separate content stores, rather like separate hard disk drives, which may be assigned independently to different publications, workgroups, organizational divisions, freelancers or even citizen journalists, which may be provided with their own unique access privileges. This allows clear separation of concerns, but the publisher can still use their special backend privileges to access content in any store that they have created.

What is System 7 PMS?

System 7 PMS is the world's first "publication management system". This provides a framework in which highly custom interactive publications can be rapidly created and managed effectively. Creating a new publication is simple: a conceptual publication structure is defined inside the PMS using its easy-to-use control panels, which look similar to Windows Explorer, and content residing inside System 7 CMS is included using a selection mechanism (which sets up syndication channels automatically). This enables the publisher to define the structure of their online magazine or Web portal, and the content that it contains. The control panels also make it possible to flexibly assign special configurable System 7 "publishing widgets" to the site, such as "link lists", which can be used to control the contents of menus for example.

The site structure, its content, and every concept belonging to the site, such as link lists (which might be used to control menu items) and feature lists (which might highlight the latest news items) and advertising distribution are defined completely virtually using the control panels, without any special technical skills being required. The site thus defined is finally displayed to end users of the site by special skin templates, which are industry-standard Microsoft ASP.NET pages. Because of the way the System 7 template system works, as few as four template pages can be sufficient for a portal containing tens of thousands of pages of content (for example a template for 1. the home page, 2. section pages containing sub-items, 3. content pages displaying articles and 4. pages displaying search results).

System 7 provides starter kits of templates whose visual appearance can be quickly and easily customized using CSS to quickly produce unique custom sites. Alternatively, a publisher can author their own templates, and benefit not only from the productivity and flexibility afforded by the System 7 skin template system, but also the full unfettered power of Microsoft ASP.NET. Once installed, no technical skills need be required to operate the sites, since aspects such as navigation trails are created dynamically to reflect the site structure, and content items such as link lists, feature lists, slots boxes and many other System 7 digital publishing widgets can be controlled directly from the control panels without any modification to the templates themselves.

Because the skin templates run within the System 7 ASP.NET publishing framework, the System 7 PMS control panels can be used to configure, examine, and manage a wide range of commercial and operational functionalities that the platform provides. These include:

- Management of registered site users and user membership groups

- Assignment of content access privileges to different membership groups
- Assignment of PPV (Pay-Per-View) tariffs to premium content
- Configuration of automatic content advertising using System 7 ContentSense
- Analysis of site visitor traffic according to the distribution of traffic over the conceptual site structure experienced by users (channels, sub-sections etc) rather than raw URLs.
- Analysis of the numbers of pages viewed by users from different referral sources, including specific search engine PPC referrals and their keywords, for better ROI-driven online marketing
- The assignment and management of online banner advertising according to whatever commercial scheme is appropriate for the publication
- Management of commercial systems such as classifieds and directories

What is System 7 ContentSense?

Increasingly, digital publishers are finding that site visitors are not first arriving at their homepages, and then browsing to content using their site navigation systems, but rather are arriving directly at articles after being referred through search listings on engines such as Google. Furthermore, when these visitors have finished reading the article to which they were referred by search results, they usually click straight back to the search engine from where they came, rather than navigating and consuming more content – as might be desired, for example, to increase online advertising revenues. This trend is now being extended by RSS, which is a system that enables users to add listings of content on publishing sites to their own personal homepages, for example a personalized Google or MyYahoo pages.

The search engines and RSS are changing forever the way that users navigate and consume content, and digital publishers must adapt to be effective. The main challenge that publishers must address, is how to prevent a user that has arrived directly from a search engine from clicking the back button, and leaving their content and sphere of influence. Here, a revolutionary technology called System 7 ContentSense™ that publishers using System 7 Platform can add to their Web pages provides a solution. The system works by analyzing the article of content that the site visitor is currently viewing, and sometimes even the search keywords they have used to arrive at the article. Using intelligent analysis, this information is used to create a list of content pages within the publisher's wider digital portfolio that the visitor is *most likely* to be interested.

The intelligently generated list of articles that the visitor is most likely to be interested in within the publisher's wider portfolio (or alternatively simply within the current site) are then displayed alongside the article, typically in a column down the side of the body text. This preempts the user's need to return to the search engine from where they came to perform another search, by automatically providing them with content listings that address their areas of interest, albeit results intelligently selected from the publisher's own content, rather than found by searching the whole Internet. ContentSense is a relatively new part of System 7 Platform, but studies have already shown that it dramatically increases site traffic.

How is System 7 a “Participatory Media Platform”

System 7 uses the term “participatory media” to describe a digital publishing model enabled by the platform. Publishers do not have to use the participatory publishing model when using System 7, but here are some of the participatory media functionalities it enables:

- Social networking, where site users get their own customizable profile pages, which they can link to other users’ profile pages
- Citizen journalism, where site users can add blogs to their profile pages, and where the user content thus generated can be combined and integrated with the main site content in a variety of ways.
- Interactive feedback, where users can post inline comments to articles, and vote for and rate articles.
- Editorial participation, where the featuring of articles is at least partly controlled by the users through commenting and voting – for example, a homepage might list news articles by “What’s Hot” (what has got the most comments), “What’s Cool” (what has got the most votes)
- Social linking, where users can submit links to external sites, which they can collaboratively rate since they appear within the overall site structure (somewhat counter intuitively, this can increase site traffic by helping make it the main resource at the centre of its niche or sector).

What is System 7 Express?

There are situations when creating a highly custom interactive publication is not necessary. In such cases, a publisher can elect to use System 7 Express. System 7 Express is actually just a locked down version of the full System 7 platform, where a number of complete digital publication templates have already been created by the System 7 team for use in rapid build and launch situations. In such cases, the publisher can simply select the appropriate template, add a site colour scheme and logo, and begin operations by importing content. Customization of the templates is possible as with the full platform, but the number of templates that may be used by a site is limited, and usually for the kind of projects where System 7 Express will be used the publisher will find it sufficient to simply apply visual styles to the templates supplied.

The templates available include facilities such as company directories and basic classified advertising systems. System 7 Express also comes with a fully functional version of the community technology, but the sites and community features are locked down to a maximum of 20,000 user accounts. System 7 Express installations can be unlocked at any time to become full System 7 platform installations, providing a straightforward upgrade path.

What is System 7 EPA?

The swing to interactive publishing creates new challenges for print publishers going online, because whereas content was rarely shared between print publications in the portfolio, content should often be automatically shared within the interactive portfolio to maximize ROI. This makes the management of the overall portfolio more difficult, because services and content authors may be creating an ROI outside of the primary publications on which they work.

System 7 EPA (Enterprise Publishing Architecture) is a system that assists publishers with managing this challenge, by tracking each piece of content from creation to eventual consumption. This means that, in addition to viewing the traffic statistics for specific websites, the publisher can also track the overall traffic – or rather the overall “consumption” by Web visitors – of pieces of content across their portfolio. Using this and related tools, profit and cost centers can be more effectively identified.

What community systems does System 7 offer?

The hosted versions of System 7 come with highly sophisticated community systems that can be closely integrated with the main interactive publication. These include user forums, user blogging and photo gallery systems that support class-leading functionality for both community members and administrators. There is complete integration, even where sub-domains are used to host community systems (for example www.mysite.com, forums.mysite.com, blogs.mysite.com, etc...), so that a user that has logged on to a community system is automatically logged on to the site, and vice versa.

How can System 7 generate revenue?

The System 7 PMS provides a range of functionalities that can be used out-of-the-box to generate revenues, such as the premium content feature that enables the publisher to instantly assign pay-per-view and other tariffs directly to their content. Furthermore, it supports the creation of a wide array of commercial services such as classified advertising systems, the assignment of intelligent access control rules that drive print and website subscriptions, and the delivery of next generation advertising and sponsorship agreements through features such as System 7 ContentSense.

Does System 7 lock me in?

No. Firstly all publisher content is stored inside System 7 using the XML document format, which is an open standard that makes it very easy to export, process and transform content in a platform and system independent manner. Secondly developers can extend publications they have built using System 7 using the full functionality of Microsoft ASP.NET, which provides the most productive Web development platform available. Of course, it is may be harder to replace the unique System 7 architecture, management tools and functionalities.

How is this a multi-platform architecture?

The storage and management of publisher content is handled by System 7 CMS completely independently of any digital publications, and if content is stored in the XML format, it may also be syndicated by other systems, such as those sending email newsletters, creating PDFs, or even imported into the Quark XPress or Adobe InDesign desktop publishing tools. The construction and management of digital site publications, such as online magazines or Web portals, is handled entirely by System 7 PMS, which syndicates content from System 7 CMS using a simple easy-to-use selection and inclusion mechanism that it provides.



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