

The root problem in Web site management is fundamentally one of content and workflow. The content that appears on the Web typically comes from many different sources and appears in many different formats (HTML pages, PDF documents, etc.). Workflows are established to keep track of these source files and their Web displays while keeping the content consistent, accurate, and timely. However, these workflows usually comprise many redundant tasks as shown in Figure 2, and it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to ensure that all information is reliable and up-to-date.

Using XML for Web site management, on the other hand, attacks the root problem directly. Content is not stored in multiple formats and locations to be transformed by the Webmaster into formats suitable for the Web. Instead, XML maintains content in a single, standardized, non-proprietary source that is accessible to users in whatever format is required — for word processing, as an HTML page, PDF document, etc. Workflows are simplified and resources optimized since the redundant tasks associated with tracking and converting multiple source files are no longer needed as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 2. Workflow in Non-XML Based Web Site.

The diagram shows how much activity is spent passing documents back and forth while trying to keep them all consistent and up-to-date. Many of the tasks consist of manual reformatting of the content for the Web, while checking that it's still accurate.

Figure 3. Workflow in XML Based Web Site.

The diagram shows how the single XML source document at the center of the process eliminates much of the redundancy and checking activity associated with the non-XML based workflow. Many of the manual tasks are automated.