



Ars Logica Helps Yale University Resolve a CMS Vendor-Selection Stalemate

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BACKGROUND

The Yale School of Medicine's (YSM) decentralized institutional structure had led its many departments, sections, programs and centers to create websites that were diverse in both design and content. The YSM Office of Institutional Planning and Communications, charged with the responsibility of creating a world-class web presence for the School, tasked the School's Web Planning Group to develop a strategic plan that would ultimately lead to an institutional YSM-branded web template and a method for site owners and content contributors to update and maintain their sites easily, while using the latest technologies and incorporating the newest forms of digital media.

CHALLENGE

Prior to Ars Logica's involvement with YSM, the first major step in the Web Planning Group's plan, the Web Template Initiative, had gained significant momentum in the YSM community. Indeed, more entities within the School were demanding updated websites than production capacity would allow. To address the worst bottlenecks, the Web Planning Group collaborated with Yale's Information Technology Services (ITS) to evaluate Web Content Management



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(WCM) systems. Initial plans to implement the WCM product purchased by the University for institutional use were abandoned when it became clear that the product did not meet YSM's basic content management requirements. As the group identified functionality requirements, it became apparent that YSM's needs were different from those of other campus users: YSM's technical needs were more advanced, and its timeline for implementing a WCM system was significantly more aggressive than elsewhere on campus. The Web Planning Group began a detailed evaluation of 13 best-of-breed WCM products, meeting approximately 40 times over three months to evaluate products, participate in demos and review market research. The group ultimately short-listed three leading vendors for further consideration.

ENGAGEMENT OF ARS LOGICA

After investing a significant amount of time and energy in the selection process and arriving essentially at a tie between two WCM vendor finalists, YSM engaged Ars Logica to recommend the WCM platform that would best satisfy the School's requirements. Before the project began, the Web Planning Group had purchased and reviewed a number of industry reports, including The Web CMS Report (Real Story Group), The Forrester Wave™: Web Content Management For External Sites (Forrester Research), and the MarketScope for Web Content Management (Gartner Group). In YSM's words, "To make the best decision for both the School of Medicine and the larger Yale community," the Web Planning Group engaged Ars Logica to review its decision process and to validate or challenge its findings. During Ars Logica's onsite engagement with YSM in New Haven, we interviewed all those involved in the selection process, reviewed all of the information they had used leading to the two-way vendor tie, and made a strong recommendation for one platform over the other, supported by a comprehensive vendor scoring and ranking system developed over the course of more than a decade.

RESULTS

After an additional round of vendor demos and further consultations, the Web Planning Group followed Ars Logica's advice by selecting, purchasing, and implementing the WCM platform that was clearly the best fit. The implementation began immediately following our engagement with YSM, and the recommended WCM platform now serves as the School's content management system of reference.