


Web development
Content management
TYPO3 CMS
Open source
Magento eCommerce
Interface design
Web hosting



Cast Iron Coding Guides Web Redesigns with Customized, Step-Driven Planning

 **CASE STUDY:** Carnegie Corporation of New York, site launched January 2010.

Redesigning large websites with an abundance of legacy content presents a number of distinct challenges. In addition to integrating existing systems and processes into a newly designed site, developers must ensure that the new design meets the needs of many different stakeholders. The best results come from a rigorous, step-driven approach—from discovery through implementation—guided by experts who understand the critical decisions stakeholders will need to make at each step along the way.

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Cast Iron Coding is a full-service web agency in Portland, Oregon, that specializes in building reliable, enterprise-class websites using the powerful, open-source content management system TYPO3. Because at Cast Iron Coding we believe that too many agencies focus on marketing and design concerns at the expense of the engineering process, our approach emphasizes the importance of including the development team from the start. Being involved in the discovery and planning process gives us the momentum to create web-based solutions that are thoughtfully aligned with the real-world processes of the client institution.

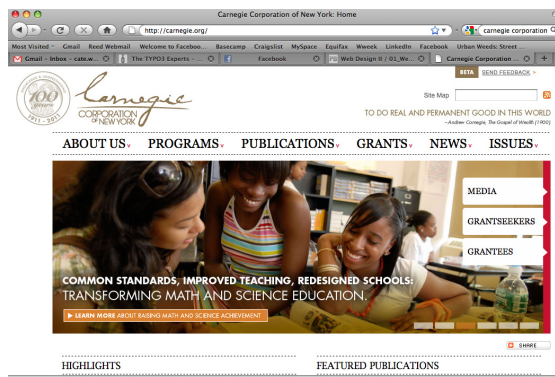
Benefits of TYPO3

The open-source content management system TYPO3 powers major and subsidiary websites of such large, diverse organizations as General Electric, Samsung, Luftansa, and 3M. TYPO3 allows for rapid development and reliable implementation, in addition to the following benefits:

- > A powerful yet intuitive backend user interface simplifies site administration.
- > Sites are implemented in PHP and MYSQL—a proven, stable environment.
- > Stable APIs and full backward compatibility ensure that updates will not interrupt your ability to publish on the web.

Beginning with the collection and articulation of user requirements and throughout prototype development, hosting, and maintenance, our developers know how to communicate with clients clearly and in nontechnical terms. This kind of strong developer-stakeholder communication yields not only an appropriate information infrastructure, but a straightforward roadmap to the questions that organizations need to ask themselves in a successful redesign.







In September 2009, the renowned philanthropic institution Carnegie Corporation of New York engaged Cast Iron Coding to re-envision their website: to take them from thousands of static HTML web pages to a cohesively-designed site built atop a fully-functioning enterprise content management system. We delivered a visually sophisticated TYPO3 website crafted in full consultation with Carnegie’s web advisory committee. The foundation’s new site (carnegie.org), which launched in January 2010, vastly improves the visitor’s experience by providing a new interface with a consistent look and feel and clear, hierarchical navigation. And for Carnegie’s staff members, the easy-to-use administrative tools on the backend allow the communications office rather than technical personnel or vendors to update and administer the site. This has significantly reduced the foundation’s annual web budget while increasing the overall timeliness and utility of the site.



Carnegie Corporation of New York’s web redesign: dynamic imagery and easy-to-navigate content provide a positive user experience.

STRATEGIC CONSULTATION WITH OUR CLIENTS

Here's how we worked with Carnegie to efficiently assess their needs, develop consensus at critical milestones, and deliver all the benefits of a TYPO3-powered website on time and for a fraction of the cost of maintaining their existing site.

 DISCOVERY	<p>Deliverables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Stakeholder Survey2. Peer Analysis3. Communication Brief <p>Overview:</p> <p>During the discovery phase, we carefully analyzed the websites of other major, national foundations and educational institutions, which informed the creation of a detailed peer analysis document describing the best practices and common pitfalls found on similar sites. The peer analysis, coupled with clearly articulated user personas, formed a solid foundation for the next stages.</p>
 PLANNING	<p>Deliverables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Final Project Plan2. Project Budget3. Hosting Plan <p>Overview:</p> <p>Findings from the discovery phase led to the creation of a final project plan that clearly outlined deliverables for both Cast Iron Coding and Carnegie Corporation. The final budget for the project was determined at this point, and the exact requirements were determined based on the user requirements outlined during the discovery phase.</p>
 DESIGN	<p>Deliverables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Exhaustive Wireframes2. Design Comps <p>Overview:</p> <p>Our design team worked closely with Carnegie Corporation stakeholders to produce a complete set of wireframes. These wireframes showed page layouts as well as content variations and interfaces for dynamic components. Multiple creative approaches were produced and presented to Carnegie. These concepts were refined into a final aesthetic approach, which formed the basis for a complete set of design comps.</p>
 DEVELOPMENT	<p>Deliverables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Standards-compliant XHTML Templates2. Complete TYPO3 Build-out3. Over 20 Custom TYPO3 Extensions <p>Overview:</p> <p>Our team of skilled web developers implemented all design comps with pixel-perfect accuracy as standards-compliant XHTML templates. These were then built out in TYPO3, along with numerous custom extensions for dynamic content. Content was imported from the old site onto the new site and each page was carefully reviewed.</p>
 QA	<p>Overview:</p> <p>Our dedicated quality assurance team reviewed the site carefully in all major browsers for display discrepancies and errors. The review process ensured that the site conformed to all documented requirements.</p>
 LAUNCH	<p>Overview:</p> <p>The site launched on schedule and with all requirements satisfied. We worked closely with Carnegie Corporation's IT staff to ensure zero-downtime during launch and to ensure that other IT assets were not negatively affected by the launch.</p>

CLIENT TESTIMONY

George Soule, Manager of Strategic Communications at Carnegie Corporation of New York, cites Cast Iron Coding's comprehensive peer research as one of the critical factors in the project's success, which presented clear choices with a range of best practices to Carnegie's internal committee of advisers. "This allowed us to arrive at the right look and feel quickly—and to draw upon the successes and failures of our peers."

"It was at every stage a thoughtful process. And the result was that we became process-oriented, as well."

He also attributes much of the project's success to a clearly communicated development strategy that kept the foundation involved and committed to the project. "It was at every stage a thoughtful process. And the result was that we became process-oriented, as well. It really helped us in building an organic consensus of what we needed and what we didn't need, and provided clear steps of what we needed to do to get there."

Soule's biggest concern about the old site was that it did not successfully convey Carnegie's mission and history to knowledge seekers and grantseekers. "Now our website is consistent, with a clear, navigable hierarchy that makes our site much more useful, and day to day maintenance is even easier than I thought it would be."

▶ To find out how Cast Iron Coding can help you plan your strategy for a new presence on the web, please contact us at sales@castironcoding.com or give us a call at 503-841-5669.

CAST IRON
coding

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