The Greatest Coldfusion Product Ever

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I'd like to take a moment to recommend a product. If you need a CMS system that is full featured, scales well, has a great community and cost nothing - then do not hesitate to try **Farcry** from daemon. We are in the midst of a project using Farcry to support a major medical center. To put it mildly, Farcry is the best Coldfusion product available. I have tested or used other CMS systems like Red Dot, Paper Thin, Hot-Banana something (singularly unappealing), but Farcry makes them all eat dust. If you want to know more - both pros and cons - read on.

Pros

- **Extensible -** Farcry has an ingenious method of allowing extensibility. You have folders and then you have project folders. The core folders contain core components and the project folders contain components specific to your site. To extend a core component you can simply add custom versions of the core components into your project. You can even extend the web top and add new tabs to the menu.
- **Containers -** By adding containers to your webskin templates you can control the content of multiple or individual pages. Design mode makes it easy. Simply add a "rule" for the item you want to display. The rule could be flash, images, news, events, static html and probably other stuff.
- **Site Builder -** You can build your content tree in a single step using the site builder.
- **Cut and Paste Navigation -** You can move your site tree nodes around using cut and paste.
- **CF Application Wrapping -** You can wrap an existing application into Farcry using includes. This is great for existing sites where editors and publishers want to be able to edit content items on application pages.
- **Webskinning -** If you are using CSS for layout, this process will open your eyes to the possibilities of farcry. Do yourself a favor and install the default skin (mollio) and just play around with the templates and containers for a while.
- **Multiple DB support -** No Access (that's a PRO not a CON) but MySQL, MSSQL and Oracle. These are all supported through a brokering approach that makes it work seamlessly. You can even have multiple sites using the same core classes pointed to different DBs. So you could have 1 site that is Oracle and another that is MSSQL.
- **Mollio -** this is the web skin that comes with the CMS. It's really excellent and has a complete set of views and display templates. You can use mollio to discover what you need to know about templates, containers and the like.
- **Outstanding Community** - the Google group is especially good. I have had responses to most of my questions and been able to resolve pretty much any problem I have run into.
- **Friendly URLs** - Using ISAPI rewrite or Mod_Rewrite you can easily retool your entire site to use friendly URLs. Seriously - a single rule is all it took.

CONs

- **Open Source** - To be fair this is a "pro" as well, but there are things about open source I don't like. For one thing the documentation tends to be poor. It's not that there isn't a great deal of documentation. It's just that open source projects depend on developers to write it. Developers, when they can be cajoled into writing, tend to leave all the simple explanations and assume that you know the basics. They focus on examples. Examples are great - paramount in fact - but all the simple stuff needs to be explained and there needs to be more quick start information. In addition, the manuals and docs always lag behind the current version.
- **Complex** - This is the nature of a full fledged CMS. Farcry is immensely complex and involves importing tag libraries and lots of abstract concepts (containers, mirrors, brokering and the like).
- **Skinning the Webtop** - retooling your site is straightforward. Retooling the web top however was a bear. Unlike the site content the web top has lots of files buried in odd places with tables and inconsistent properties. I have no doubt this is due to the evolution of Farcry over time.
- **Australian User Base -** I hope I don't offend my Aussie friends but the email list is much more active in the early morning and evening. This can be an issue when you are trying to solve a problem and need a reasonably fast answer. Don't get me wrong - the list is very responsive. It's just in a different time zone. Being an American I would naturally prefer that all products as excellent as Farcry were based in the US. I am therefore starting a letter writing campaign to the Bush Administration to send troops to free all Aussies from their oppressive parliamentary system and make them the fifty first US state :)

I hope you can tell I really love this product. If you have a customer needing a CMS, whatever you do, don't sell them on some 75,000 dollar a year system until you have checked it out.