Overview of Ensemble. This presentation is part of the online training resources intended to help you learn and use Ensemble CMS to develop your VCE unit office websites. Links to the training resources are at the end of this presentation.
This Presentation Explains…

- What Ensemble CMS is and why we are using it for the new VCE website.
- Basic concepts you should remember as you work in Ensemble.
- Training resources and how to use them.

The purposes of this presentation are to explain:
- what Ensemble CMS is and why we are using it for the new VCE website.
- the basic concepts you should remember as you work in Ensemble.
- what training resources are available, where to find them and recommendations on how to use them.
Common Website Problems

- Inexperienced with web design and coding / poorly written code
- Inaccessibility of content
- Inconsistent look and feel
- Duplication of effort
- Out–of–date content
- Broken links
- Poor search results

There are some common general problems with websites that you may have experienced with the unit office websites or others that you have worked with. Some of the more common include:

- Inexperienced with web design and coding and poorly written code
- Inaccessibility of content
- Inconsistent look and feel
- Duplication of effort: creating essentially the same content multiple times
- Out–of–date content
- Broken links
- Poor search results
There are many, many web content management systems on the market. CMS Matrix (http://www.cmsmatrix.org/) is an organization that lists and provides comparisons for the over 1000 applications that are listed on their website (January 2009).

In the simplest terms, a web content management system (CMS for short) is an application that helps you create, organize and display content for the web. However, it is very different from Dreamweaver, FrontPage, Contribute, and other webpage creation applications you may have used.
Ensemble is the University’s version of a web content management system (CMS) called Percussion Rhythmyx. Percussion Rhythmyx was a joint acquisition of the University and our college, in an attempt to standardize applications and assure more support. The web address to the Percussion website is linked on this slide if you are interested in exploring further. (http://www.percussion.com/)

Ensemble is a web-based software application that you can use on most computers that have Internet access and permissions to access the Ensemble domain.
Benefits

- Contributors do not need to know how to understand or develop code.
- Web-based, so no software to download.
- Updates, patches, etc. handled centrally
- Consistent look, feel, and functionality.
- Better management of broken links and improved accuracy of information.

There are a number of benefits to using a web CMS for managing web content of organizations. Some of the more common benefits include:

- simplifying content creation. Contributors do not need to know how to understand or develop code.
- using a Web-based system, so you do not have to download and maintain software on your computer.
- websites have more consistent look, feel, and functionality, especially for your target audience.
- CMS software maintenance like updates and patches can be handled centrally. You don’t have to worry about software.
- web links can be better managed so that pages have fewer broken links and accuracy of information improves.
More benefits include:

• you can create and edit content in a secure location before publishing, keeping your existing “live” web pages intact.

• more compliance with W3C and 508 standards improves web visitor’s usability and accessibility of your content. W3C and Section 508 are industry standards in the web development world and we could teach a year-long course on these subjects. For now, see www.w3.org/ and www.section508.gov for more information.

• style and content of a website can be handled separately.

• content is created once and shared by many.

• you can schedule publishing and expiration of content. This may come in particularly handy if you want to create content ahead of time but don’t want it to publish and show up on your web pages until a certain date. Likewise, you can expire content so that it “disappears” on your web pages after a certain date.
There are a few basic system concepts you need to remember as you work in Ensemble.

**Community** is your work group within Ensemble that has access to a common set of areas like sites, templates, and content items. Our community is called Extension_Offices.

**Roles** in each community include Author, Editor, and Web Administrator. Most of us in VCE have the Author role. Unit Coordinators and Unit Administrative Assistants have the Editor role.

Web pages are “assembled” from **Content Items**. Each content item is “an instance” of a **Content Type**.

Assembling content creates an association among content items called a **Relationship**.

Each content item progresses through a set of states in a **Workflow**.
There are several main concepts you should remember about your Ensemble content: creation, organization, display and permissions

Content Creation
New content is created by entering information on a form. Most of us in VCE will be involved with content creation.

Content Organization
Content is organized within folders in your community. Content can be searched for based on criteria such as filename, date, author, ID or keywords.

Content Display
The CMS displays content using design templates. The design templates aren’t anything you will see or work with, but know that your content can be displayed differently depending on the design template that is referenced. So for example, your unit office homepage uses a unique design template—the layout that you see on your homepage.

Content Permissions
The web administrator(s) for your community set permissions for who has access to various functions of your site. University and college IT staff are assigned as web administrators.
Content Types of the VCE Community

- **Ext Bio**: The bio content type is used for entering and displaying information about a person. A biography.
- **Ext Brief**: A short, concise piece of content, for example, a conference announcement or a short summary of a news article. Briefs are never published by themselves on a webpage, but rather are included with other content.
- **Ext Feed Reader**: The Feed Reader content type is used for displaying a web feed. Web feed formats supported are Atom, RSS, and VT Calendar.
- **Ext File**: The file content type is used for uploading non-image files. Allowed file types include: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .ppt, .pptx, .rtf, .txt, .xls, and .xlsx.
- **Ext General Content**: A generic page content type. It should be the first option to consider when entering content.
- **Ext Image**: The content type for uploading image files. Allowed file types include .jpg, .jpeg, .gif, and .png.
- **Ext URL**: The URL content type is used to create links to sites not currently managed within the CMS.

**NOTE**: Ext is an abbreviation for Extension.

Remember that web pages are “assembled” from **Content Items** and that each content item is an instance of a **Content Type**. Our VCE community has unique content types that you will see listed next to each content item when you are in the Content Explorer. More about the Content Explorer later...

**Ext** is an abbreviation for **Extension** and is the prefix for all of our content types.

**Ext Bio**: The bio content type is used for entering and displaying information about a person. A biography.

**Ext Brief**: A short, concise piece of content, for example, a conference announcement or a short summary of a news article. Briefs are never published by themselves on a webpage, but rather are included with other content.

**Ext Feed Reader**: The Feed Reader content type is used for displaying a web feed. Web feed formats supported are Atom, RSS, and VT Calendar.

**Ext File**: The file content type is used for uploading non-image files. Allowed file types include most of the Microsoft Office formats including: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .ppt, .pptx, .rtf, .txt, .xls, and .xlsx.

**Ext General Content**: A generic page content type. It should be the first option to consider when creating a new webpage.

**Ext Image**: The content type for uploading image files. Allowed file types include .jpg, .jpeg, .gif, and .png.

**Ext URL**: The URL content type is used to create links to sites not currently managed within the CMS.
The Content Explorer

The interface through which you create, modify, and process content items.

Content Explorer sections (nodes):
- **Sites**: displays websites in your community.
- **Folders**: another way to store and organize content items. Unit office websites do not use the Folder node.
- **Views**: displays content sorted by predefined parameters.
- **Searches**: Use default searches or customize and save your own personalized searches.

The Content Explorer is what you see when you log into Ensemble. It is the starting point for creating, modifying and processing all of your content items.

The four main sections (also called nodes) of the Content Explorer are sites, folders, views and searches.

**Sites**: displays websites in your community. Note that each unit office has its own folder. While all folders are accessible through the Content Explorer, you should work within the folder exclusive to your unit or those where you have programming responsibilities and permission from the unit coordinator of those units.

**Folders**: another way to store and organize content items. Unit office websites do not use the Folder node. Note that is different from the folders you will see and use within your unit folder.

**Views**: displays content sorted by predefined parameters.

**Searches**: use default searches or customize and save your own personalized searches.

You will work within the **Sites** and **Searches** nodes frequently.
This slide shows a screen capture of what the Content Explorer looks like when you log in. There is an entire training module (linked from the training resources homepage) about getting familiar with the Content Explorer. This is a critical module that you should review before attempting to log into the system, as it goes into detail about how to navigate in the interface.
Now, finally let’s switch gears for a short discussion of the workflow. Remember that each content item progresses through different stages or “states” in a Workflow. The chart on the slide shows these states and their relationship with one another.

**Draft**: initial state when a content item is created.

**Public**: an item can be moved to the Public State, at which point, it is ready to “go live” on your website during the next publishing cycle.

**Quick Edit**: content items in the Public State can only be edited by forwarding them to the Quick Edit State. Once an item is edited in Quick Edit, it can be returned to the Public State. Moving an item to Quick Edit does not remove it from your live website.

**Archive**: once a content item is expired, either manually or through use of the expiration date field in the Content Editor, it enters the Archive State. From there, it can be “revived” to Draft State at any time.
There are a few minimum computer software requirements to use Ensemble.

1. Ensemble is web-based, so it works on both PCs and Macs. The following browsers are supported:
   - Internet Explorer V6.0+ (Windows platforms)
   - Firefox 1.5+ (Windows, Mac and Linux)
   - Safari 1.02 (OS X)

2. Java JRE 1.5.0_08 or higher. New name is Java 6.
   - www.java.com

3. JavaScript must be enabled.

4. Pop-ups must be allowed, including Google/Yahoo/MSN toolbars, and Norton.

5. Security certificates must be accepted.

There is additional information in the FAQ section.
Content that you make public is updated or “published” on a schedule set by the University. Because of the volume of content created across the University’s Ensemble communities, each community has a publishing schedule. Schedules allow content publishing in manageable chunks for the Ensemble server to process more efficiently.

As you update your content, you can preview what it will look like before you make it public, however, it won’t be published until the next publishing run for the VCE community. That means that your changes won’t show up on your webpage until after a scheduled publishing run. Our publishing schedule as of January 2009:

Full site publishing: **Sunday 08:15 PM**
Refreshes every page on a site regardless of the last time it was published. Full publishing guarantees that the navigation elements are consistent across an entire site.

Incremental publishing: **Monday - Saturday, every three hours, starting at 02:50 AM**
An “incremental publish” of a site only affects those pages with content updates.

* (as of January 2009)
Training Resources for VCE Unit Offices

- All online resources are located on the page: 
  [Public Website CMS Project: Training Resources](http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/computing/cms_training/training.html)

- University Relations has additional materials that may be helpful but are not necessary to use for the unit office websites. See their [Ensemble CMS](http://www.ensemble.vt.edu) site. www.ensemble.vt.edu

All online resources are located on the page: 
[Ensemble CMS System for Unit Office Websites](http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/computing/cms_training/training.html)

University Relations has additional materials that may be helpful but are not necessary to use for the unit office websites. See their [Ensemble CMS](http://www.ensemble.vt.edu) site.

[www.ensemble.vt.edu](http://www.ensemble.vt.edu)

Select the links on this slide to get to these websites.
There are a few recommendations that you can follow to help you work through the online training and enter the initial content of your website.

1. The training modules are grouped in sections based on the main pages of your unit office website. If you review the modules within these sections, it may be easier to understand what pieces you need to know to create particular pages (for example, the staff biography page).

2. Update your Flash Player to 10.x--some people may still have Flash 9.x. Updating will help you view the presentations and allow you to participate in the weekly Connect Meetings related to the CMS.

http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/

3. A PDF file of the Powerpoint slides for each module is linked so that you can print it. Some people find that making written notes while listening to the audio helps.
A significant portion of this presentation was adapted from the University Relations presentation
Intro to Ensemble CMS: An Overview, Updated June 27, 2008
www.ensemble.cms.vt.edu/migration-guide/training/intro-overview.pdf

Likewise, University Relations has an extensive website devoted to Ensemble CMS for the University community. The site is also linked on this slide.

www.ensemble.vt.edu

Additional information was referenced from the other training modules on your training resources homepage titled Public Website CMS Project: Training Resources, which is linked here. http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/computing/cms_training/training.html
The online training modules are your source for learning the Ensemble CMS. Review the modules, log into Ensemble and try to enter some content. If you have trouble understanding some of the concepts or terms once you are working in the Ensemble interface, refer back to *Overview of Ensemble* and *Getting Familiar with the Content Explorer*.

Please use the modules and Frequently Asked Questions as the first line of defense for answering your questions. If you still have questions after using the training resources, please contact your district Area Information Technologist (AIT). If you cannot reach your AIT, please contact the Ag Help Desk, (540) 231-4865, aghelp@vt.edu

This ends the *Overview of Ensemble* presentation. Thank you for your time.