

**re.web at the College of William and Mary**  
**Transcript of: “Do You Want the Good News or the Bad News?”**

Hello, this is Susan Evans, chair of the re.web project at William and Mary and it's Thursday again - November 8, 2007.

Today I'm starting the podcast with a question that is a cliché. The question is, “Do you want the good news or the bad news?” I ask because when it comes to evaluating and ultimately selecting a web content management system for W&M, there's both. Now, I'm the eternal optimist so I'm not inclined to start this recording with bad news. Then again, I don't want to end with bad news either. So my solution is to start and finish with something good and sandwich the bad news in the middle.

The good news is that the College is making the purchase of a web content management system a priority. As part of the re.web project, we will evaluate and purchase browser-based software that W&M web editors will use to create and maintain their departmental web sites. This type of system is affectionately called a CMS. We'll be regularly blogging about the selection process and we'll need to call on many faculty and staff at the College to help us determine which system will suit us best.

And that leads me to the bad news. The decision about which CMS to buy is really, really complex. It's getting ugly over here – there are spreadsheets, lists of features, notes on legal pads, and a team of folks who've spent hours in small, window-less conference rooms, listening to a voice on the phone describing how the typical web editor will add a photo to a web page using the best and easiest CMS known to man. Every time we narrow our list of ten options to a shorter list of eight, we find out about another CMS that we haven't considered yet. Good grief, we're even considering a system developed in Ireland. Good grief, vendors at a recent conference cringed when we approached their booth. In case I'm being too subtle, systematically evaluating products against a growing list of required and nice-to-have features is making our heads explode.

Okay, on to the good news that wraps up this podcast. We're convinced that researching the options and talking with web teams at other colleges and universities is the best way to whittle down the list. By the time we host on campus presentations for some of the CMS products we're considering, we hope to be down to only three options. If we're lucky, any of the options on the much-anticipated short list will make the web at W&M infinitely easier to create and edit.

Thanks for listening. Until next week.