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**(a) Introduction**

**(b) Code Cowboys with Gantt Charts**

A new way of thinking is spreading throughout the web development community. It's called "process," and it might be a sign that web professionals are finally growing up and adapting to a changing market environment.

The pioneering code cowboys that spurred the Internet forward are abandoning their fly-by-night mentality. What was once a single generalist working for a dot-com is now a diverse team of specialists working for a large enterprise. Customers are placing new demands on web professionals, and teams are struggling to effectively work together on multiple large-scale projects. In many cases, the process (or lack thereof) used to build web sites in the past is no longer acceptable.

In response, code cowboys are hanging up their hats, throwing out their sticky notes, and analyzing Gantt Charts as part of their detailed project plans.

"It's been a wild west, but now web development is growing up," said the CEO of one web design shop, noting his newfound belief in the importance of process and professionalism—a belief shared by many of his colleagues.

**(c) Why Process Has Become Important**

So why has process become so important? For one, it enables a team of web professionals to increase their efficiency and

productivity. One person working alone on a project can get by without having a clearly defined process. However, when you have a team that needs to work together and coordinate activities with dependencies, that internal process needs to be externalized and communicated. At the risk of sounding metaphysical, it enables the many to work as one.

Process has also become important because of the new demands of enterprise customers. Large enterprises usually take much longer than dot-coms to make a decision to buy a solution or service. They have a rigorous procedure for evaluating and deciding on solutions. To compete in this environment, web design companies must reflect that same level of professionalism and organization.

Enterprise customers want to see a comprehensive project plan. They want to see a clear road map for the project's deliverables, and they want to see skilled individuals who can work together as a team to meet deadlines. The last thing they want to see is a code cowboy with a do-it-yourself attitude kicking his (or her) boots up on the table!

### **(c)Where Does Sitespring Fit In?**

It was within this changing environment that Macromedia began working on a new product to complement a successful line of authoring tools and server software. Macromedia realized their customers were generating content and running their web sites quite well. Where they needed help, however, was in the process in which team members and clients worked together on projects. The result was Macromedia Sitespring, a software solution for team collaboration, client communication, and file management.

Whether you're part of a small web design shop or a large application development team, chances are that you'll benefit from Sitespring. Your team can immediately increase its productivity and efficiency by organizing work around projects and tasks. Client satisfaction can skyrocket by utilizing the communication and collaboration features of Sitespring's project sites. In addition, file-sharing headaches can disappear overnight by taking advantage of Sitespring's transparent file versioning system.

The most important benefit, however, is how Sitespring helps a web development team follow a process. The key to bringing about significant change in your organization and getting the most out of Sitespring is using the software to support a well-defined production process. If you already have a process, Sitespring can help your team members follow it more consistently on a regular basis. If you don't have a process, Sitespring can help your team members learn whatever process you create and foster long-term adoption.

### **(c)How to Use This Book**

The goal of *Inside Sitespring* is to show you how to successfully use Sitespring to manage your web production process and increase team productivity and client satisfaction. We cover Sitespring's functionality from a reference point of view, but we also suggest strategies to help you get the most out of the product. The last thing we want to do is reiterate the documentation!

In *Inside Sitespring*, we show you how to actually use the software to manage projects through a series of tutorials and exercises, and we present some real-world case studies so that you can learn from your peers. We also dig deep into the heart of Sitespring and show you how to customize and integrate the solution with your existing infrastructure. We even show you how to develop your own custom pages in the absence of a published Application Programming Interface (API).

There are many ways to use this book. If you're new to Sitespring, you can jump right in with the guided tutorials presented in the first part of the book. They introduce you to Sitespring's features at a high level, but more importantly, they show you how to tie all these features together into useable workflows. If you're familiar with Sitespring and want to learn more about a particular feature, you can jump ahead to a particular part or chapter and learn how to use Sitespring's functionality in depth.

### **(c)What Sitespring Versions We Cover**

After the initial Sitespring release, Macromedia released a 1.2 version that added some new features and fixed some bugs. What's new in Sitespring 1.2? The following list highlights some key improvements:

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- [1b] Microsoft Project 2000 Import.** Sitespring 1.2 contains a Microsoft Project 2000 template that makes it easier to export your tasks and import them into Sitespring. This is covered in depth in Chapter 6, "Leveraging Microsoft Project," and we've included the template files on the CD-ROM. See Appendix B, "What's on the CD-ROM?"
- [1b] Limited User Permissions.** Sitespring 1.2 has an additional permission level called Limited User Permissions that allows users to view and edit just their own projects and tasks. This is covered in depth in Chapter 1, "Introducing Sitespring."
- [1b] Auto-Login and Logout on Project Sites.** Client users and team members can choose to automatically login to project sites they use frequently, and project sites can now have a Logout link. See Chapter 14, "Working With Project Sites."

[1b] **Project and Task Status Filters.** You can now filter your view on the Show All Tasks and Show All Projects pages by Active, Inactive, or All. See Chapter 5, "Working With Projects," and Chapter 9, "Working With Tasks."

[1b] **Lower Server Memory Requirements.** Sitespring now only requires a minimum of 128 MB of RAM on the server. See Chapter 18, "Custom Installations," for more on installing and setting up Sitespring.

Throughout this book, we cover Sitespring's features from both a 1.0 and 1.2 perspective. So although we go over the improved Microsoft Project 2000 import procedure that was introduced in Sitespring 1.2, we still show you how to do it with a third-party conversion utility in case you're using Sitespring 1.0. Sitespring 1.2 is a free upgrade, so you should definitely download it if you don't have it! Full instructions are provided in Chapter 18.

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#### **(c)How This Book is Organized**

Unlike authoring tools such as Dreamweaver or Fireworks, Sitespring is a cross-functional solution that spans many team roles from the project manager creating the schedule to the client reviewing the deliverables. There are many different users of Sitespring, and *Inside Sitespring* tries to address these different audiences by organizing the book by function and role.

#### **(d)Part I: Spring into Action**

The first part of this book is designed to get you familiar with Sitespring as quickly as possible. We present some basic Sitespring concepts in Chapter 1, "Introducing Sitespring," and then guide you through two tutorials Chapter 2, "Tutorial: Small Team Site Building," and Chapter 3, "Tutorial: Large Team Application Development." They show how different organizations might use Sitespring to work on their projects. We top the section off with our first case study, which is in Chapter 4, "Case Study: Oxclose Workshop."

#### **(d)Part II: Project Management**

The second part of this book focuses on how to use Sitespring to manage projects. We cover the basics of working with projects and provide some useful strategies in Chapter 5, "Working with Projects." In Chapter 6, "Leveraging Microsoft Project," we show you how to use Microsoft Project 98 or 2000 in conjunction with Sitespring. We then show you how to use Sitespring's reporting features, access the data in Microsoft Access, and do some additional analysis with Microsoft Excel in Chapter 7, "Reporting and Data Analysis." We then close this part with another case study, which is in Chapter 8, "Case Study: PLANiT Design."

#### **(d)Part III: Team Collaboration**

The third part of this book shows team members how to work together on projects. We cover the basics of tasks in Chapter 9, "Working with Tasks," and then take a close look at files in Chapter 10, "File Management and Versioning." Discussions are a very useful feature of Sitespring and important to team collaboration, so we cover them in Chapter 11, "Effective Discussions." Again, we close out with another case study, which is in Chapter 12, "Case Study: Web Teks."

#### **(d)Part IV: Client Communication**

The fourth part of this book shows how to best work with clients and project sites. We cover the basics of client management in Chapter 13, "Client Management," and the basics of project sites in Chapter 14, "Working with Project Sites." We then show you how to make the most of project sites through customization in Chapter 15, "Customizing Project Sites." Finally, we present yet another case study in Chapter 16, "Case Study: Glen Eytchison Design."

#### **(d)Part V: Setup and Administration**

The fifth part of this book shows how to successfully deploy Sitespring within your particular environment and then maintain it over time. We present the requirements for a successful rollout and team adoption in Chapter 17, "Keys to a Successful Deployment." We then cover various installation scenarios in Chapter 18, "Custom Installations." Chapter 19, "Software Integration," shows you how to integrate Sitespring with other applications and services. Chapter 20, "Administering Sitespring," shows you how to use Sitespring's administration pages to manage the software.

#### **(d)Part VI: Integration and Development**

The sixth part of this book dives deep into the heart of Sitespring and shows you how to integrate your existing applications with it and develop custom pages. We first take you under the hood and examine Sitespring's components in Chapter 21, "Sitespring Under the Hood." We then show you how to extend Sitespring's functionality and develop your own custom pages in Chapter 22, "Developing Custom Pages." Finally, Chapter 23, "Going Apey For An API," shows how to customize the Sitespring application in the absence of a documented API.

#### **(c)What You Should Take Away**

After you've read *Inside Sitespring*, you can proclaim yourself a Sitespring expert! You should have all the information you need to realize the following benefits:

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- [1b] You will understand the requirements for success that should be in place for a team to get the most out of Sitespring. These requirements include a well-defined process and an implementation plan.
- [1b] You will have a thorough understanding of Sitespring's functionality, but most importantly, you'll know how to best apply this functionality toward the successful accomplishment of tasks on a daily basis.
- [1b] You will become more productive individually and as a team as you learn how to use Sitespring to organize and prioritize shared work and to collaborate and communicate with team members and clients.
- [1b] You will learn the best strategies for deploying Sitespring in your environment, based on explorations of real-world case studies showing what works and what doesn't.
- [1b] You will know how to integrate with Sitespring and extend its functionality as we take you under the hood and show you how to develop your own custom pages based on Sitespring's application server and database system.

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