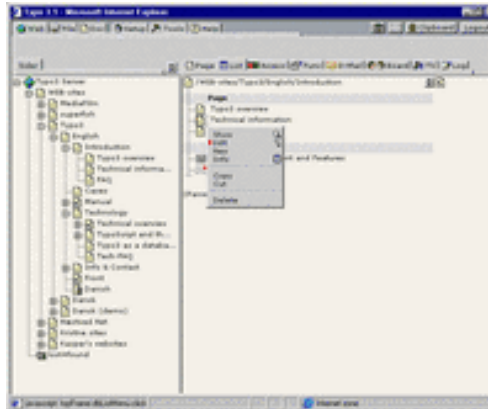


WHAT IS TYPO 3?

Typo3 is primarily a Content Management System (CMS). We could also call it a Website Management System - which is probably a more appropriate description. These fine words is the industry name of a system designed to manage form and content of websites.

Typo3 works - as many other CMS's - via the very webbrowser you're actually using to surf the pages! In other words you're adding, updating and deleting content directly online with Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. Of course you must have username/password access to the administration-system of a given website.



The interface of Typo3. Here you see the hierarcical structure of the website. Click the image to enlarge it!

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GENERAL WINS FROM USING A CMS

Typo3 offers you the following advantages:

- ✓ maintaining and updating webpages is done easily and quickly by your own webbrowser - anywhere! Everybody with a minimum of surfing experience can do it!
- ✓ every page is consistently layouted based on template-like configurations. No designers needed on a daily basis!
- ✓ the pages are systematically arranged in a hierarcical structure - like files and folders in a filesystem.
- ✓ you will almost never experience links pointing to "nothing".
- ✓ bottlenecks are removed from the technical issues of webtechnology to a question of, how often you (or your distributed content providers) have something to submit.
- ✓ expensive design- and programming-hours are not needed on a daily basis.

SPECIAL ANVANTAGES OF TYPO3

The above listed advantages goes for almost every CMS's you have probably heard of.

But Typo3 brings you more and even very unique features - especially with graphics!. These will emerge when you dive into the technical description of Typo3. Here I'll just mention the major topics:

- ✓ Navigational menus are automatically created - even if the menu is made graphically - perhaps even with background-images, dropshadows on text and roll-over effects!

- ✓ Images uploaded and used on pages are automatically scaled to the correct size (no HTML-scaling!) and stored on the server with a minimum filesize. Even non-web image-formats can be used! (TIF, AI, PDF, PCX and more). And you can without further knowledge just upload your digital-camera pictures and they'll be scaled automatically.
- ✓ Headlines and other graphical elements with shifting content is also automatically generated.
- ✓ You can differentiate the website-design by creating variations in the templates based on the client browser, IP-number or number-range, operating system, countrycodes, userchosen parameters eg. printing-friendly versions of no-frames versions.
- ✓ You can have multiple templates on a site.
- ✓ Pages can be timed to be shown on a certain date, be hidden on a certain date or just temporarily hidden.
- ✓ Typo3 has a build-in password-protecting option on the pages. Thereby protected pages are only visible for users from a certain usergroup.
- ✓ Typo3 supports search in SQL-databases.
- ✓ Redesigning of a website at once is a question of creating one single new template.

DRAWBACKS OF USING TYPO3

There are a few drawbacks from using Typo3. These are partly problems solved by time, but some are also due to the whole CMS-idea.

- Online: You are online when you create and edit pages. This means that you're probably paying for internet-access during your editing session. In addition you must accept the waiting time which may occur when data is sent to and from the server. Both problems is expected to be a problem solved by time.
Currently I would recommend ISDN-internet access or faster.
By the way: Normally you wouldn't create content directly in Typo3. Rather would you use your favourite text-editor and create and edit your content offline. When you're ready you would copy/paste the content into Typo3 during an online session.
- Coding: There are no wysiwyg-facilities. You paste in raw text and you must learn a few HTML-tags and Typo-specific tags in order to use bold, italic, underlining, tables and links. Anyway, you can actually copy raw HTML from a HTML-editor directly into Typo3 if you insist.
- Hierarchical order: The pages on your website is related to each other in a tree-like hierarchical structure. This is by many seen as an advantage though. Of course you can always make you're own HTML link-tags.
- Webserver: The majority of static websites is in HTML-documents. When you go with Typo3, you must be aware, that your website is not in static documents but in a SQL-database on the server instead. Therefore your website is not necessarily easy to move to another server, if you should like to. Certain criteria must be met. Read more under [Technology](#).
- Speed: As your website is dynamically generated, you can risk high CPU-loads as the computer must calculate some things. Normally this wait will not be noticable as Typo3 utilizes a caching system in multiple levels. This means, that Typo3 remembers, what the system already has calculated once.

- Capacity: Typo3 is currently tested with 1500+ pages. There are reasons to believe, that the system is able to handle even more. Future improvements will probably bring the capacity much higher.

When you decide to use Typo3, then your opinion should be, that you gain more than you loose. I can't promise that any of the mentioned drawbacks will be improved in the future.

TYPO3 COMPARED TO FRONTPAGE

Actually you can't just compared Typo3 with FrontPage or any other traditional webdesign program. Typo3 is server-scripts - FrontPage / GoLive / Homesite is programs on a desktop computer!

But we're are able to compare the concept of each:

(In the following "FrontPage" represents traditional design programs)

- Anytime, anywhere: Using Typo3 you're able to make changes to your website anytime, anywhere (with an internet-connection). With FrontPage you're bound to sit at home where your files are on your harddrive.
- Online: When you update pages with Typo3, you're online most of the time! Using FrontPage you only need to connect to the internet during upload of the changes.
- Users: Typo3 lets many people work together on maintaining a website. Each person has a unique login name and access to certain functions and pages. If you use FrontPage it's very hard to control this kind of teamwork.
- Automatics: With Typo3 pages may be temporarily hidden or timed to show up on a certain day. Pages may also be presented in printer-friendly layouts or in no-frame versions for eg. PDA's (pocket computers like Palm Pilots). Stuff like that is almost impossible with FrontPage.
- Users: Online products like Typo3 also lets you restrict access to certain pages for login-users. This is possible with FrontPage/.htaccess-files but not as smart as with Typo3. With Typo3 links and menuitems to "access-denied" pages are not even shown!
- Search: Searching pages on a whole website or just a section is a standard component in Typo3. FrontPage can't do stuff like that without special server extensions.
- Databases: Online database integration is right at your fingertips with Typo3. With FrontPage that requires special software on the server.

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EXPERIENCED WEBDESIGNERS

If you're already designing websites, then Typo3 brings both good and bad news. The bad one first:

If your assignment is to update pages via Typo3, then you're probably misplaced by a misunderstanding of your employee.

Typo3 was designed for people with no coding-eksperience at all and if you hoped to do a lot of nifty HTML-things yourself, then you'll probably be disappointed. The content-editor should also be the content-provider! If you're still the person in charge of updating the site, then you should do the following:

1. Support the CMS-idea and submit the content without small HTML-tricks like ugly colored headlines that spoils the template design.
2. The cases where it would actually strengthen the design, you can use your own HTML-code. Images and mediafiles can be uploaded to the server through the browser-ftp-module of Typo3.

The good news is, that you could actually learn something new and use your talents. If you're a visual designer then you could design the HTML-framework for templates in Typo3. These should be suitable for implementation in the structure of Typo3.

If you're more of a technical programmer and know of HTML-coding, then you should definitely expand your horizont and learn how to setup templates in Typo3.

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PLATFORM

As a piece of software, Typo3 is a collection of PHP4 server-scripts, HTML-documents and gif-files arranged in folders on a webserver. In addition Typo3 utilizes the MySQL database.

The demands on the webserver capacity is that it should have a very fast processor and lots of RAM in order to generate the website graphics on-the-fly. Also the serverload should probably be moderate, so that peakloads with graphics involved do not pull down the server. It should be noted that the performance of Typo3 has proven to be fine so far on fast Pentium-servers.

The webserver software:

OS: [Linux](#)

Webserver: [Apache](#) with [PHP4](#), [MySQL](#), Gdlib (gif) m/FreeType, [ImageMagick](#)

All these software products are free, most of them published under the GNU GPL - just like Typo3 is.

Other UNIX-platforms are expected to work as well. Although all server software used are also available on Windows, I do not expect Typo3 to work on a Windows-platform!

See [Info & Contact](#) for a list of Typo3 web hosting services and consultants.

DETAILED INFORMATION

You should take a look at the more detailed [technical overview](#) if you're interested in knowing, what Typo3 is technically based on and which wide perspectives that brings you, if you're a developer.

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QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE...

If the previous pages haven't given you answers to all of your questions, perhaps you'll find your answer on this page:

[Why do I need Content Management?](#)

[Which phases are you going through producing a Typo3-based website?](#)

[Are there any pitfalls?](#)

[Is there a very easy way to get a Typo3-site?](#)

[Who can help me?](#)

[How often will I need to pay a Typo3-skilled programmer?](#)

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Why do I need Content Management?

Maybe you don't. That depends on the degree to which you can relate to the coming scenery; Let me just outline a case for you which will show the reason why such a product was ever invented:

As a webdesigner (that's me...) you start out designing nice webpages for people just to see them fall apart, because they are not being properly updated. Here the problem actually consist of to aspects; My client doesn't take time to create content and I don't like wasting my design-talents and precious time on updating simple text. I know that with as less as 10 clients that could otherwise feed me. But then again, updating is not my idea of a dream-job.

The reason why my client does not update the pages with eg. FrontPage is that FrontPage and my client in combination will soon ruin the carefully designed pages. I can't allow that! There was a reason that they hired me in the first place!

Clients problem is often updating the pages. This task is solved partly by the CMS. Let me tell you why it's only partly solved:

The clients problem has first and foremost nothing to do with technical or economical issues; The client simple underestimates how great resources it takes to develop new content. And Content Management is not "automatic" updating pages! It just makes it easier. So you should buy yourself a calender and insist on taking the time to keep the site alive.

But lets say this is not a problem. Then the clients problem is updating the website. This costs money - if you can find somebody who wants to do the job. And even if you're willing to do it yourself, then it often ends up the wrong place. In the end everything is scattered around and nobody knows the trouble they would be in, when somebody new was to take over the job. Links points to nothing and the visual difference between the oldest and newest page on the website is like actually looking at two different websites.

You need help. Seriously. Just ask somebody who has been around in webbusiness for a while. They know.

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Which phases are you going through producing a Typo3-based website?

You're going through many of the same phases as you are producing an

ordinary website. But many things are more non-linear than usual. This case is based on the assumption that you use some kind of standard template with the standard database:

1: Planning and structure:

First you must consider very carefully what and how you will communicate on your pages. Don't think you're have nature's gift in this area. Get a book on the subject or seek assistance at a professional consultant. Personally I can recommend the book of David Siegel "[Secrets of successful websites](#)". Read Part-II from this book - filled with great tips and points clearly from an experience pro in net-communication.

All this should hopefully result in a "sitemap" - the hierarchical system your website has - the information-design. The website navigation will reflect this structure.

2: Design:

Find a webdesigner. His or hers task is to design and nothing more. Now your message (content) is getting a form visually.

Navigation is also the designers job. Navigation is the menus that brings you around on the website.

The designer is in many ways free to design as he or she feels like. But there are some "rules" which the design must comply to if the implementation with Typo3 on a later time should go fine. Consult the TypoScript-programmer to check that things are OK.

3: TypoScript

Finally the design must be transferred (implemented) to a TypoScript-template. If the design is has been done according to the programmers directions, this work will take like a day or two. Of course adjustments will be made after that.

Content?

Content could be the forth item in this list, but you can actually submit content from day one after the first step of structuring information is done. All it takes is written content and a sitemap. Then you can begin building your site. Clearly the looks of the content cannot be viewed as webpages in the final layout as this is concurrently being developed. But the information is ready when the design is.

This is the non-linear aspect of Typo3.

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Are there any pitfalls?

Yes there is, my child ;-)

As outlined Typo3 makes the technical stuff simple when everything is running. This means that 90% of what it takes to make a website is in your hands; You are the chosen one to populate the pages with sparkling words of joy - or whatever...

Creating content has been underestimated by everyone customer I have ever worked with. The surprise is that it takes time both creating and submitting. This is all your task if you're in charge of creating and managing the content.

Actually you might call yourself Contentmaster (as opposed to webmaster - which everyone seems to be these days...)

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Is there a very easy way to get a Typo3-site?

Yep.
Typo3 comes with some standard templates. These are fixed layouts of websites, but lets you alter fonts, colors, logo-files and so on.
Check out demo.typo3.com for an online tryout of these standard templates.

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Who can help me?

See [Info & Contact](#)

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How often will I need to pay a Typo3-skilled programmer?

Remember the daily maintenance of your website is totally in your own hands. Also remember that even graphical menus and elements, the scaling and compression of images is done for you! This is a very unique and unseen feature!

You will only be in the need of a programmer, when your website as a whole needs a change in appearance, eg. you want the menu to be in the other side of the screen and have another color on it. Or if the font-size of a headline has to change site-wide.

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Why is it called Typo?

"3" is the version-code. Version 2.5 was very different than version 3. There are no reasons for a version 4 in a while. If a version 4 is suddently available it will be due to some major changes in the technical design.

"Typo" referes to this: "I made a typo..." which means that I hit a wrong button on the keyboard resulting in a misspaelling of a word. I guess I chose it after hitting Delete and confirming the deletion of a whole week of programming. Stupid was I ;-)

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