The Mysterious Art of the Content Inventory

Deane Barker
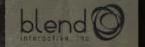Content Management Practice Director
Blend interactive

- The reasons for a content inventory
- The different types of inventory
- Getting a list of all your content
- The information to track
- Challenges you're going to encounter
- The Rolling Inventory

Why do a content inventory?

Why do a content inventory?

To evaluate, implement, and execute a content strategy

Why do a content inventory?

To guide a content governance or operations management initiative

What are the different flavors of inventory?

What are the different flavors of inventory?

Editorial.
Review content for editorial value.

How valuable is our content to the consumer?
How well does the content serve our goals?

What are the different flavors of inventory?

Census.

Identify content to better track or manage it,
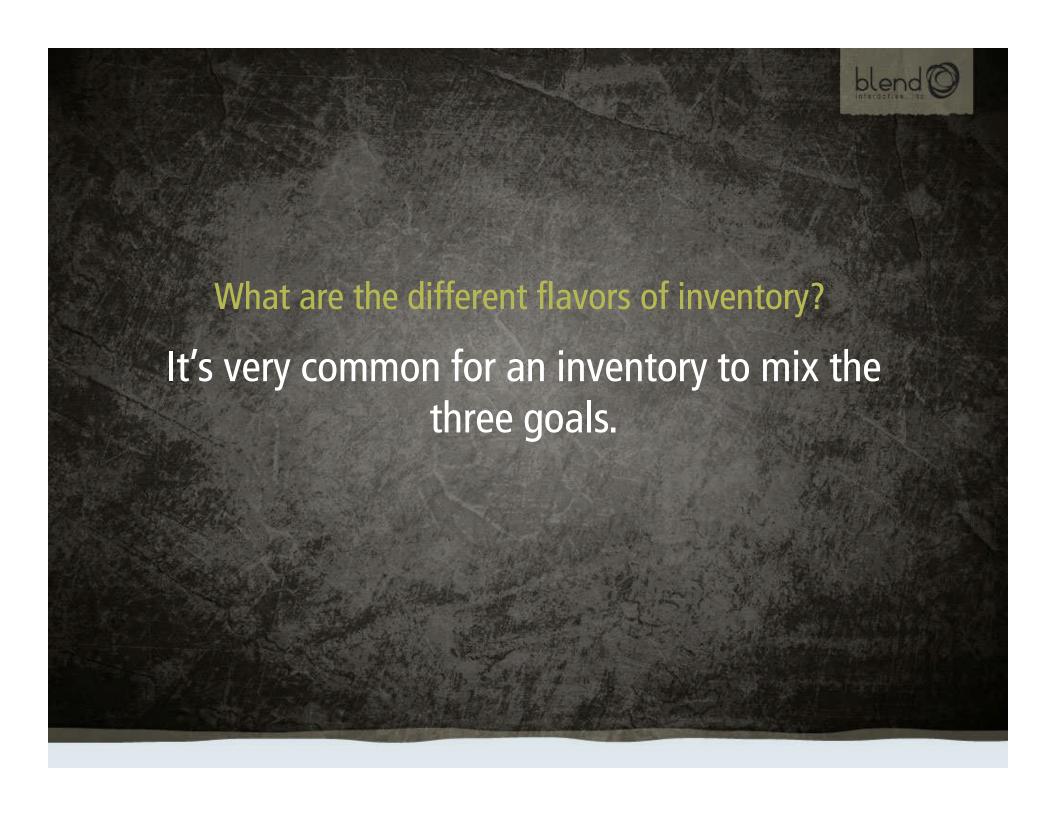or to scope a migration effort.
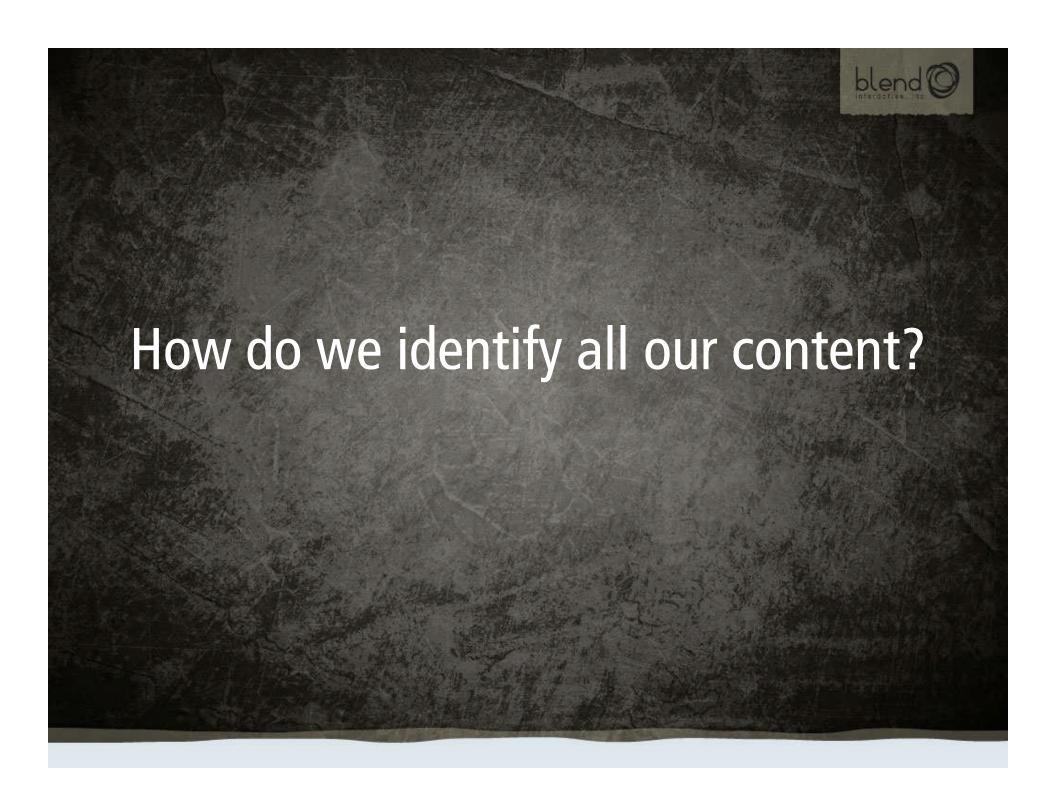
How much content do we have?
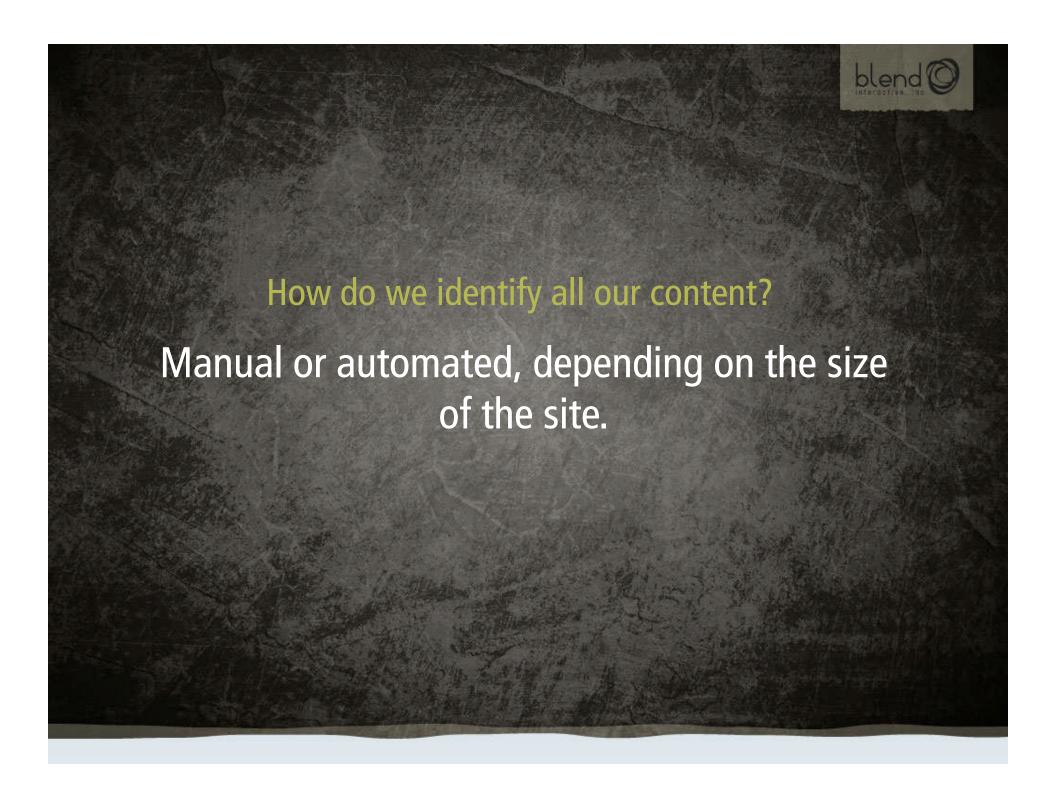
What are the different flavors of inventory?
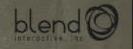
Functional.

Review content to determine the level of functionality present.

How complicated is our content?

What are the different flavors of inventory?

It's very common for an inventory to mix the three goals.

How do we identify all our content?

How do we identify all our content?

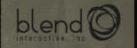Manual or automated, depending on the size of the site.

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How do we identify all our content?

Manual – start at the home page, and keeping surfing:

- Benefits
  - simplest
  - experience interacting with the content

- Drawbacks
  - time-consuming
  - easy to miss hard-to-find content
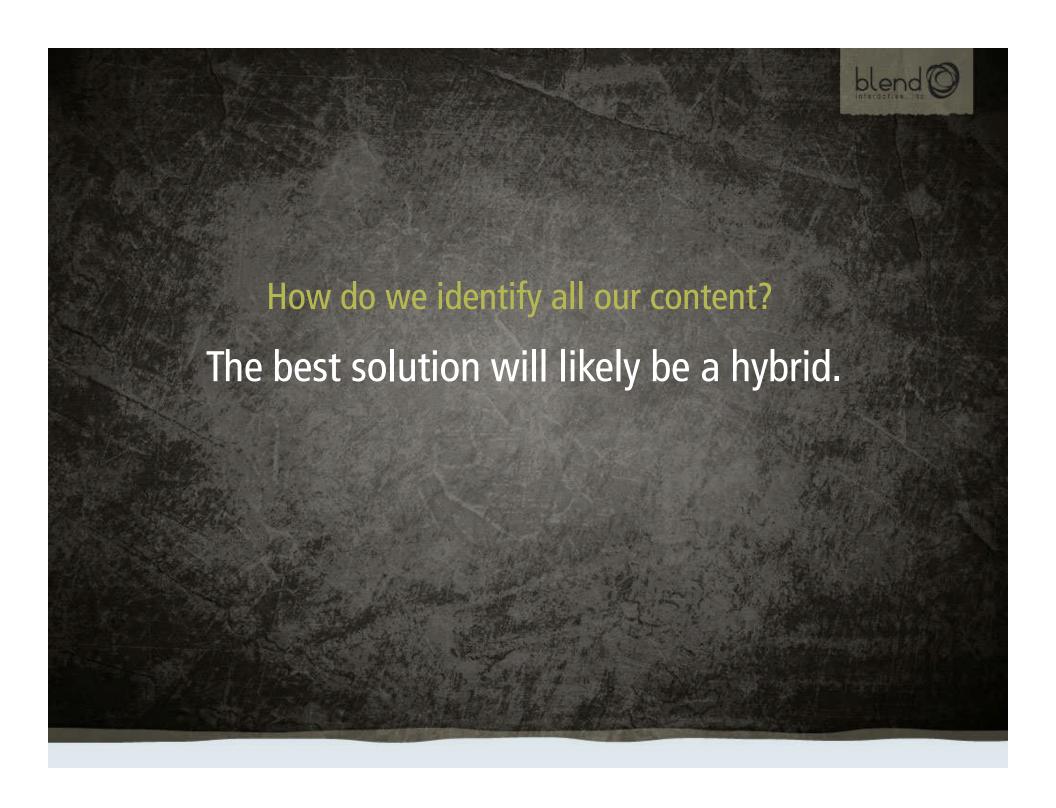
Export– get a list from your CMS

- Benefits
  - Can be simple and fast.

- Drawbacks
  - Requires a CMS
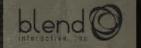 - What about content not in the CMS?

How do we identify all our content?

Crawl– get a list from a public or private spidering service

- Benefits
  - Nicely comprehensive

- Drawbacks
  - Won't catch authenticated, non-linked, or non-addressable content

How do we identify all our content?

The best solution will likely be a hybrid.

What questions should we be asking about our content?

What questions should be asking about every page?

Because, eventually, you get down to columns on a spreadsheet.

What questions should be asking about every page?

Identifier

URL

Title

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What questions should be asking about every page?

Try to re-use the identifier out of your CMS, if feasible.

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What questions should be asking about every page?

What type of content is it? What "bucket" does it fit into?

What questions should be asking about every page?

Who is the stakeholder behind this content?
Who owns it?

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What questions should be asking about every page?

What format is the content in? HTML or PDF?
Free-form or structured?

What questions should be asking about every page?

Where does the *source* content live? In what repository?

What questions should be asking about every page?

What is the velocity of this content – how often does it change from both a creation and update standpoint?

What questions should be asking about every page?

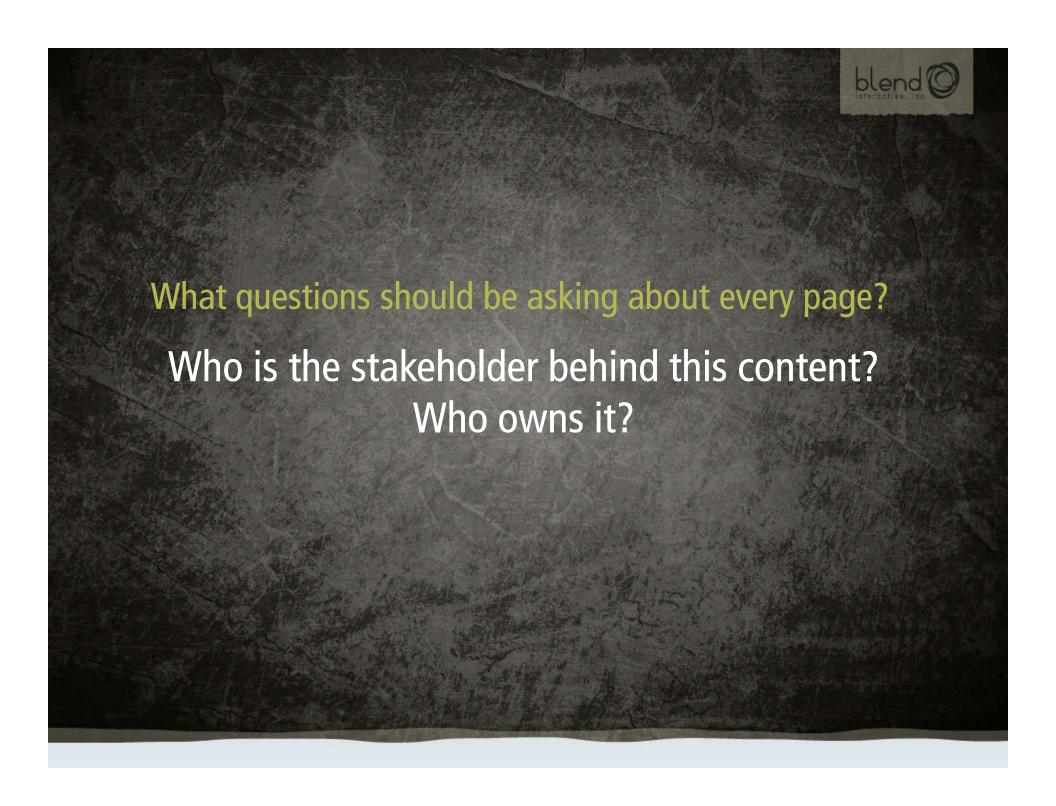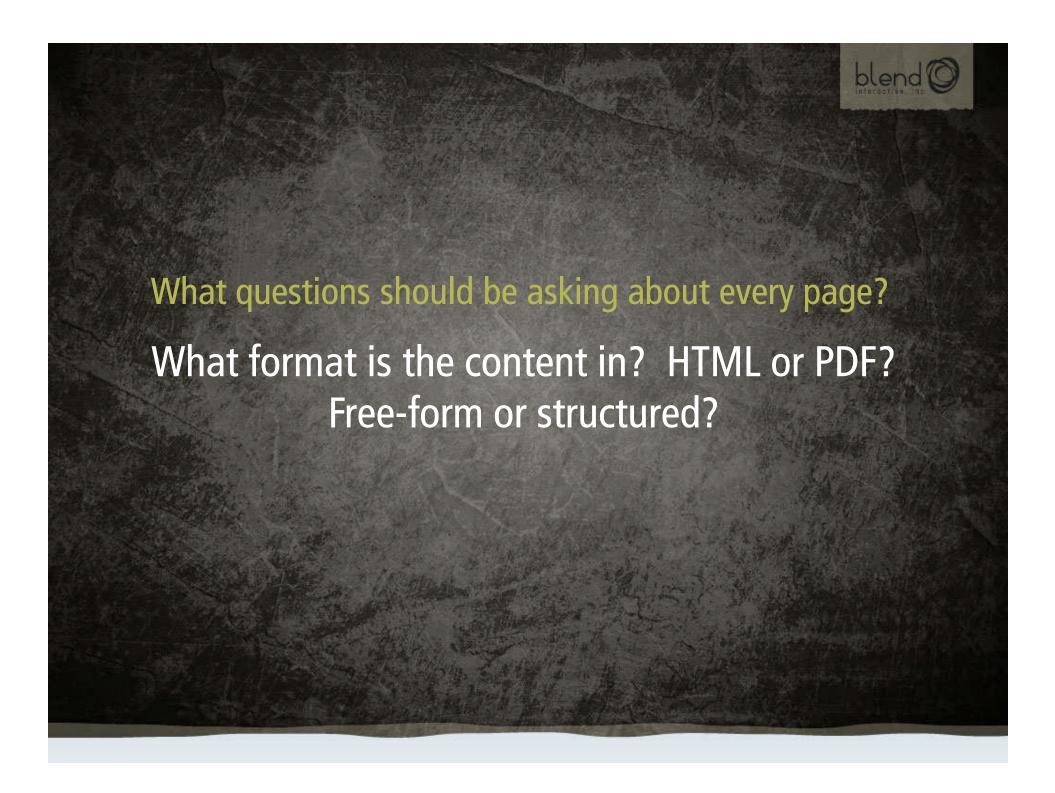Why does it change? What is the trigger that caused an update of this specific content, or more content of this type?

What questions should be asking about every page?

What are the security implications of this content? Is it public? If not, who can view it and why?

What questions should be asking about every page?

Who can edit or delete this content, or add new content of this type?

Evaluate this *both organizationally and technically*.

What questions should be asking about every page?

Who can edit or delete this content, or add new content of this type?

What questions should be asking about every page?

Does this content have any value? If it doesn't have value, why is it here?

ROT

Redundant

Obsolete

Trivial

What questions should be asking about every page?

If this content went away tomorrow, would anyone care?

What challenges are we going to face?

Getting a comprehensive inventory

What challenges are we going to face?

Collaboration between multiple parties

What challenges are we going to face?

Keeping up with additions throughout the inventory process.

What challenges are we going to face?

Getting information about content from the organization.

What challenges are we going to face?

Making decisions about content at the individual or type level

What challenges are we going to face?

Not all content has a URL

The End Product

The End Product

Invariably a matrix of some sort.

Often supplemented by some analysis document.

The End Product

If multiple parties are involved, consider a single-source tool.

The End Product

Can you use metadata in your CMS to store content inventory data?

The Rolling Inventory

Or, how to keep it going…

The End Product

At least once per quarter, take some time to inventory new content.
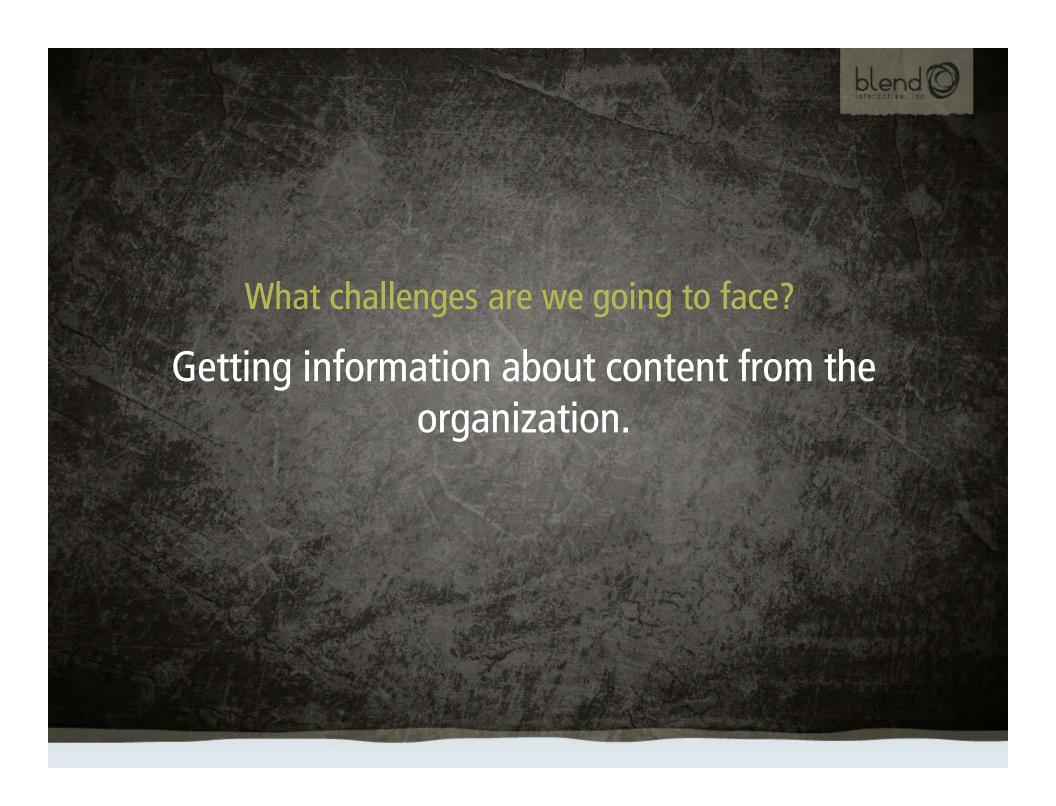
The End Product

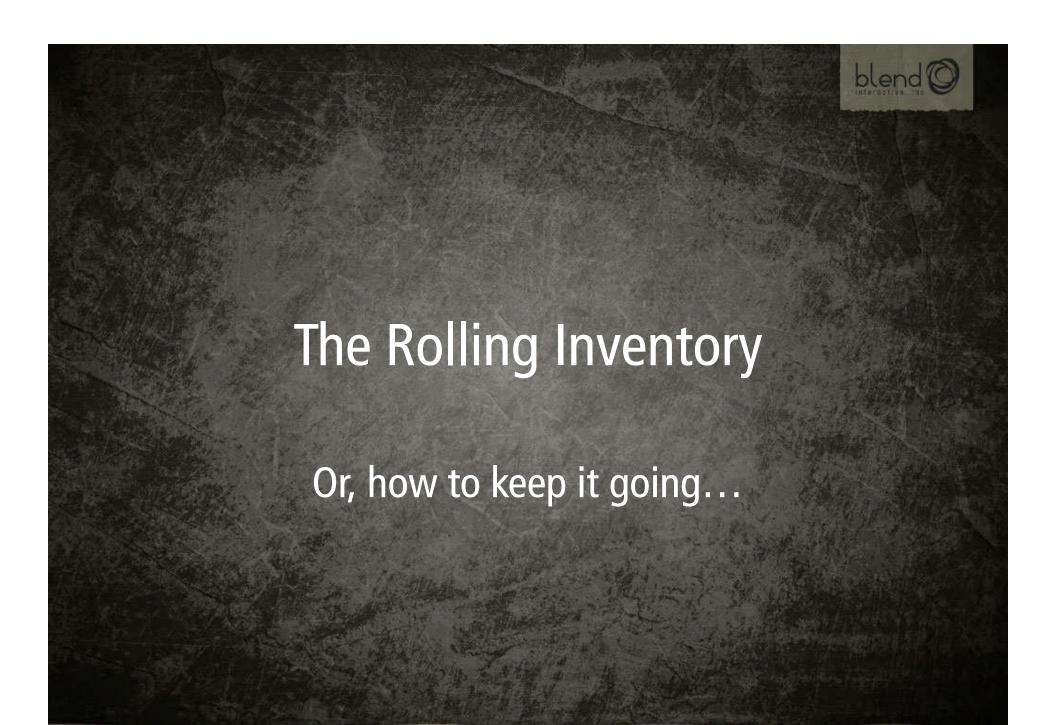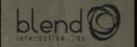Set policy-based review dates on all new content.

About Me

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