WHAT IS CONTENT MANAGEMENT?

"Content management" has emerged as a term now found in most IT strategies, ensuring its place in RFPs, vendor literature, and analyst forecasts. This circular chain reaction guarantees its continued popularity for at least a couple of years. We think it has even longer legs. Its meaning may be vague and it may be overused, but unlike most buzz-terms we think it will remain useful even though its meaning, or use, will doubtless change. In spite of its rising popularity, there is no question we hear as often as "What is content management?" People may not know what it means, but they sure know that it is mainstream.

The interest in content management arose as businesses moved from simple low-volume to complex high-volume web publishing, whether e-catalogs or portals. Today, content management looks more like the messy result of web publishing meets enterprise e-business. The integration, scale, and velocity requirements of e-commerce mean content management has to keep up with transaction management. It also means there are a lot more ways you have to process and reuse different types of content. All this means more products to do all the "managing".

This month we look at various views of content management and describe its evolution, its use, and why we think it is a useful term that has staying power. Our objective is to help you understand enough to know how vendors and consultants are using the term, and to help you think about which technologies are relevant to your business needs. In future issues we'll explore individual segments of the content management market.