Project Title	Digital Library CMS Project 2007
Project Number	NF/PG/2007/002
Project Location	Colombo
Sector	Digital Archive
Implementing agency and contribution	Noolaham Foundation
Grant Agency and Contribution	N/A
Total Budgetand Expenditure	N/A
Project Period	2007
Responsible Stakeholders	Kopinath Thillainathan, Mauran Muralitharan, volunteers of Noolaham

Summary

The **Digital Library CMS Project 2007** was carried out by Noolaham Foundation to create an easily accessible Content Management System to host the Noolaham Digital Library. Prior to this project, Noolaham website was created by simple html links.   MS Frontage html editor was used for this purpose. This site was inadequate to search the content. Even browsing as all the information had to be inputted manually.

During this project, initially Joomla CMS was installed and around 100 pages were created. But the testing was unsuccessful as the contributors struggled to understand the CMS. Thus Mediawiki software was tested and it was quite successful. The Tamil Wikipedia approach was used as a number of volunteers contributed towards the project.

Introduction and Background

Noolaham Foundation was started in January 2005 as a volunteer initiative and was called Project Noolaham. At the beginning, it followed the Project Gutenberg approach of full volunteer contribution. Even the server space utilized was that of an external organization. By August 2005, a separate server was bought for Noolaham and the revamped site was publicly announced on the Pongal day in 2006.

Even though a separate server space was available, the website created was pretty basic with lists and html links. The MS FrontPage software, an html editor of Microsoft, was used to

create the web pages. Once the number of documents increased, the usability of the site decreased and the effort needed to maintain the pages was ever increasing. Not only searching but also browsing functions were poor. And during 2007, with the introduction of scanning as the preferred digitizing method, the number of documents increased dramatically and the need for a proper content management was felt by us to maintain the library.

Objectives and Achievements/Results

The main objective of **Digital Library CMS Project 2007** project was to create a library system which is both browse-able and searchable. Noolaham needed a platform which is suitable for a collaborative initiative as well.

Initially, Joomla CMS was selected to host the library. A template was created to input details and to categorize the documents. About 200 documents were indexed with individual pages for each document. The cover images were uploaded as well. But the volunteers found that CMS hard to use and it was quite tough to track the progress as well as Joomla lacked collaboration functionalities.

Thus Mediawiki software, which was the backbone of Wikipedia was selected as it was a proven easy-to use collaboration tool at that time. The data from Joomla was transferred to the Wikimedia site. Four templates were created to use for books, magazines, newspapers and other periodicals. The Dublin Core metadata system was adopted to suit our needs. Eight of the 15 Dublin Core elements were selected for this website. A number volunteers, not only from Sri Lanka but also from Australia and United States of America, contributed towards testing and implementing this project. And by late 2007, the Mediawiki based website was officially linked to the www.noolaham.org domain name and became the Digital Library of Noolaham Foundation.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Mediawiki software is perfect for open volunteer based collaboration projects. But it was a software developed towards an open encyclopedia project. Thus its features were not good enough to be used as a Library Management System.
- Even though Mediawiki is quite good to browse if the categories, inter-wiki links and lists are created with proper preplanning, the search function is quite basic. As the data is unstructured, it was not possible to enable advanced search.
- The Mediawiki based website will be quite useful as long as the number of entries is limited. Once the library grows substantially, more resources, such as dedicated server, will be needed to maintain it.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- A suitable digital library management system should be adopted or custom built to cater the needs of the Noolaham user community.
- The server performance should be reviewed periodically and the current server should be upgraded as needed.
- The staff should be trained to edit so that the delays can be minimized.