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800.407.3540 | www.hannonhill.com | info@hannonhill.com

Makers of the Award-Winning Cascade Server content management software

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

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Gaining its current moniker in 1974, Southwestern Oklahoma State University traces its roots back to 1901, when it was founded as the Southwestern Normal School. Located in Weatherford, OK, with a branch campus in Sayre, OK, SWOSU is Oklahoma's premier regional university. Enrolling over 4,500 full and part-time students from 35 states and 33 countries, SWOSU has more than 210 faculty, 56% of whom hold doctorates, and offers over 50 majors, 40 minors, 4 Masters programs, and a Doctorate of Pharmacy. 15 of SWOSU's academic programs are nationally accredited, the most among Oklahoma's seven regional universities.

SWOSU's website content management staff consists of a web services manager, seven contributors that provide daily, department-specific updates for specified pages (athletics, public relations, human resources, distance learning, and information technology), and a student employee that handles publishing updates for all other departments. The staff houses Cascade Server on one server, and publishes to two web servers for replication.

ChallengePrior to utilizing Cascade Server, SWOSU's entire website was updated manually, with content posted in multiple places. While manageable in the early stages, the locations of the pages where content was posted became increasingly untenable as the site grew, with broken links and outdated information becoming more and more frequent. Additionally, the website's content management staff was cut from two employees to one. At this point, a consulting firm was hired to determine whether or not the university would benefit from using a CMS program. Their answer? A resounding 'yes.'SolutionA comprehensive research process was conducted in order to select a CMS program; ultimately, Cascade Server was selected for a variety of reasons. According to SWOSU Web Services Manager Karen Wilson, "We liked the fact that it was push technology. The majority of (our) web pages are static pages, and this functionality worked well for us." The Web Services Department is currently in the process of migrating content, and in the near future, the entire site will be published through Cascade. When templates, links, or pieces of content are changed, the related web pages are updated automatically, which reduces the amount of overall errors.Results

Instituting Cascade has enabled SWOSU's Web Services Department to use resources more wisely as the majority of their contributors come from other University departments. Although the workload and amount of content constantly grows, the Department has been able manage it efficiently without the addition of staff. Additionally, Wilson says "...being able to allow contributors certain rights regarding

editing, deleting, and publishing has been wonderful. I feel they can't 'mess up' the website. Prior to purchasing Cascade Server, we used Dreamweaver to edit the website, so we couldn't allow users to make updates due to the fact they could have access to code we didn't want them to have access to." Cascade Server's customizable access rights, workflows, and other types of user permissions allowed Wilson to grant SWOSU contributors easy, personalized access to the system without sacrificing control and security.

As SWOSU's website begins its transition to full dependence on Cascade Server, there are certain features that will become even more valuable as the move progresses. Wilson predicts "...when migration of pages is complete, I'll be able to really look at what Cascade can do for us." In the meantime, however, Southwestern Oklahoma State University's decision to use Cascade Server has provided a solution that, even without full implementation, enables them to manage vast amounts of content in an organized, efficient way, and effectively utilize their limited resources.

<http://www.swosu.edu/>

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