



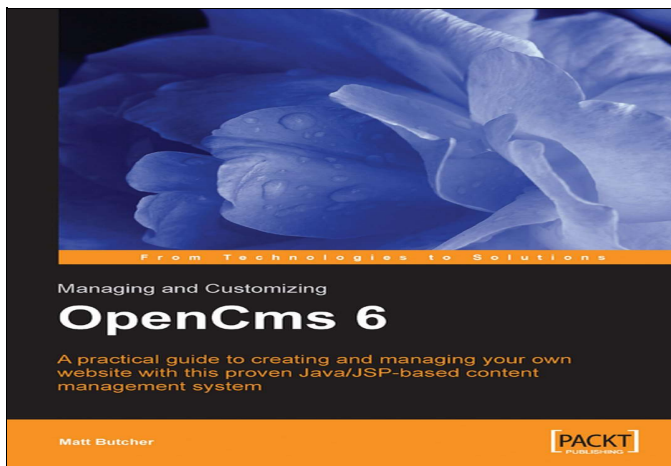
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Book review: Managing and Customizing OpenCMS 6 Websites by *Matt Butcher*

Straight to the point

By Alan Berg

If you want to create a free software content management server fast and starting with zero knowledge, and then vigorously and systematically play with a Java based web application, then the book *Managing and Customizing OpenCMS 6* by Matt Butcher is the accurate, project orientated and a pragmatic book that you are looking for.



The book's cover

Mid-sized organizations are well supported by OpenCMS. Having such features as online and offline publishing, templating, workflow and a virtual file system. OpenCMS represents a mature and thus safe product to choose for the content management market. The features find use at Application Service Providers, schools, online magazines, websites or anywhere that content needs to be actively managed with a fine degree of online participation. Matt Butcher's book captures the essential details to understand the suite of features that compose a viable CMS, in the particular form of OpenCMS. The book, being purely practical in purpose, has many screen grabs and visual walkthroughs.

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The contents

The author has written this book in a systematic and rigorous project orientated manner. What I mean to say by this is that, if I knew nothing of the product and wished to implement it quickly, I would be asking the questions answered in the book. Personally, as I worked my way through my own little project, I found that the book's 240 pages were exactly the right number of pages required to achieve my objectives, not one page too much or too few.

The contents

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Starting with a 1km high view and then descending chapter by chapter from installation, through to the use in the workplace, administration, workflow and customization, one can imagine starting with no knowledge being able to build a fully web enabled CMS within a few brief hours. Being a developer myself, I particularly found comfort in Chapter 6 the customizing the site. In this chapter, Java scriplets are briefly mentioned and a few solid examples give hints to the power of the `org.opencms` tag libraries.

If you just like to play around with new software then extending OpenCMS via uploading modules (p127-138) is easy and straightforward even for my clumsy fingers.

Who's this book for?

If your company or personal interest has led you to looking seriously at OpenCMS, then this book represents a lightening fast shortcut to practical learning. The book is strong enough to lead you all the way through the project cycle to deployment.

This book represents a lightening fast shortcut to practical learning

Relevance to free software

The free software community is composed of many sub communities mostly centering around particular atoms of software. The OpenCMS community is a hybrid example where the company Alkacon controls the software roadmap and provides supporting services. This type of structure is sometimes required for free software to be taken seriously by—how should I say this politely—conventionally minded management, in stereotypical commercial organizations.

Another point worth noting is that the publisher PACKT places emphasis on free software communities. In fact, the company donates a part the royalties of any free software book back to the relevant community. Thus, publicly showing that it gets the point.

Pros

If you are a doer, then this fast-learning, practical, visual and direct to the point book is an efficient means to training for OpenCMS version 6. The book simply does the job of getting you up to speed, no more no less.

Cons

OpenCMS is bound to evolve relatively quickly as it is already in its 6 incarnation. Therefore, you may need to update this book periodically.

Title	Managing and Customizing OpenCms 6 Websites
Author	Matt Butcher
Publisher	PACKT
ISBN	1904811760
Year	2006
Pages	240
CD included	No

FS Oriented 8

Over all score 8

In short

Biography

[Alan Berg](#) (/user/8" title="View user profile.):

Alan Berg Bsc. MSc. PGCE, has been a lead developer at the Central Computer Services at the University of Amsterdam for the last eight years. In his spare time, he writes computer articles. He has a degree, two masters and a teaching qualification. In previous incarnations, he was a technical writer, an Internet/Linux course writer, and a science teacher. He likes to get his hands dirty with the building and gluing of systems. He remains agile by playing computer games with his kids who (sadly) consistently beat him physically, mentally and morally.

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