



## Announcing SelectEdit: Affordable Content Management

[Web Smart Newsletter](#) originally published January 2004 - Updated July 2006. By Eric Holter.

### Announcing SelectEdit: Affordable Content Management

Newfangled's mission is to make content management a standard function of every website we build. Toward this end, every one of our clients receives a free user license to the [Newfangled CMS](#) (our content management system) regardless of the size of their project. We are pleased with our success to date, but we haven't yet been able to price our services so that the smallest companies, sole proprietors, or non profit organizations can afford them. SelectEdit was created to offer Newfangled content management through a simplified approach, at a price point within reach of the smallest companies.

Being able to control website content has obvious benefits, more than most people realize at first (see newsletter "[The overlooked advantages of database driven websites](#)"). Using a database driven content management system is by far the best, most efficient, and easiest way to control a website. Until now this approach has been limited to the large companies who can afford the price tag that comes with content management systems.

Newfangled's approach successfully eliminates this cost by giving away our software and only charging for our development time. Nevertheless, to many small businesses, sole proprietors, or non-profit organizations, even our development costs can be prohibitive.

### A Simple Website CMS

Not anymore! Newfangled's [SelectEdit](#) system is a simplified version of the NewfangledCMS bringing content management capabilities to the smallest of companies. SelectEdit gets its name from the incredibly simple NewfangledCMS interface. For those of you who are not familiar with how the NewfangledCMS works, once you've logged into your site "Select" buttons appear next to all website content. Selecting the "Edit" option under the Select button accesses an editing screen where changes can be made and then instantly saved to the site. SelectEdit is built upon the same NewfangledCMS software we use for other sites. A special set of SelectEdit tools simplifies the development process. Simplifying the development process lowers the costs enough to bring content management within reach of the smallest companies.

### How the SelectEdit process works

One of the biggest benefits of SelectEdit is that it can control both site content and site structure. SelectEdit sites can be dynamically expanded. Adding, deleting, moving, and renaming pages in a SelectEdit site is similar to managing folders within your computer's file system. Think of a SelectEdit site as a folder on your desktop. Just as you can add more folders inside this folder, you can add more main sections to your SelectEdit site.



Inside these main section "folders" you can add other folders or documents. Adding pages or sections to a SelectEdit site works much the same way. With this flexibility client's can easily add, move, rename, or delete main site sections, sub-sections and sub-pages. This makes SelectEdit sites extremely expandable and flexible. In fact, there is really no limit to the number of pages clients can add to their sites!

Because of the simplicity of the SelectEdit development process, SelectEdit sites can be built even more quickly than standard Newfangled sites. This is because during custom website development site structure, content and functionality must be established before development can commence. It takes time for the client and developer to work through the iterative process of defining these elements of a website. But due to the flexible structure of SelectEdit, development can commence without a final structural definition. Structural changes can easily be made during development, or after development is complete.

One of the most valuable benefits of SelectEdit compared to any other entry level content management approach is that rather than SelectEdit being the extent of capability, it represents just the beginning. SelectEdit sites are built upon the same NewfangledCMS technology as every other Newfangled website. This means that the upgrade path for SelectEdit sites is extremely wide. SelectEdit sites can integrate some NewfangledCMS applications like date sensitive content (built into all SelectEdit pages), calendar of events, and simple password protected content.

Additionally, SelectEdit uses the same search engine friendly structure as other NewfangledCMS sites giving the client page by page control over search engine Meta tags (title, keywords, and description).

## Simple Content Management Process

### So why don't we use SelectEdit for all our sites?

What's the downside? Why don't we use the [SelectEdit](#) approach for all of our sites? The basic limitation to SelectEdit sites is related to the flexibility of the approach. The SelectEdit tools allow clients to not only edit content but site structure as well. We accomplish this by using the same page content structure for every page in the site.

For example, a standard SelectEdit page typically includes a page title field, an abstract field, a content field for the body of the page, a couple images and document uploads with corresponding caption fields, and an optional "side bar" field for related information or related links. Every page of a SelectEdit site uses these same fields, albeit these fields would be used differently for different kinds of pages. A main section overview page would use the title field for the page's title, and the content field for the body of the page's text. An FAQ page would use the title as the question field and the content field as the answer. A press release page would use the title field for the press release title, and the abstract field would hold the date/by-line, and the content field would hold the body of the press release as well as the contact information of the press contact.

This is fairly simple and straightforward. However, it is one step removed from the utter simplicity of our more refined [NewfangledCMS](#) sites. For instance, a press release page, in a standard NewfangledCMS site, would have custom field definitions individually labeled according to their specific use. The press release date would have its own date field. The press release by-line would have its own by-line

field. The press contact information would be broken up into a contact name field, email field, phone number field, etc.). Based on these fields the customized press release template would display each part of the page with the appropriate formatting embedded. The press contact's email address, for example, would automatically display as a clickable email link. With a SelectEdit press release page the client would need to manually add the contact information within the main content field and use the NewfangledCMS built in formatting tools to apply formatting details such as adding a link to an email address.

This is the basic limitation to the SelectEdit approach. The significance of the limitation increases or decreases based on how detailed or complex the site's content needs to be. Because SelectEdit is intended as a starting site for small companies, this limitation should rarely be problematic.

## Content Management with CSS Styling

### Visual design structures and "site styling"

In contrast to a fully customized Newfangled site, [SelectEdit](#) sites use pre-developed site design structures. Working with a standard set of pre-designed structures helps to simplify the visual design process, further increasing efficiency and reducing development costs. These structures are not rigid templates. The client does not pick template B with color palette D. Rather they are general navigational approaches, and page formats that are common to most sites. They are based on our best navigation practices that we've discovered over the years.

Each structure can be designed or "stylized" according to each clients unique brand identity. They can be pulled, stretched, and stylized with various custom elements. Site styling focuses around general site elements such as color, navigation, typography, and general layout. The site styling process, in conjunction with our standard structures result in a very professional looking, clean, easily navigated site.

For example, we have built a standard top navigation, cascading menu, with side navigation structure. We also have a version with "bread crumb" navigation instead of side navigation to preserve more horizontal screen real estate. We have a structure for main navigation on the side, and a structure that is more fitting for a publication site with room for banner ads. Each of these general structures can be stylized, stretched, and embedded with background graphics, graphic navigation buttons, and custom headers. Additionally, custom design elements can be added to any page's content area using the standard image upload mechanisms. Even with the SelectEdit site style limitations, there is still a great deal of flexibility for design.

## Simple Content Management Hosting

### SelectEdit Hosting Costs

In addition to development costs there is the ongoing hosting. [SelectEdit](#) hosting options include standard hosting for \$75 per month (100MB of disc space and 1 GB of bandwidth) and Urchin traffic reports.

Because some clients are not familiar with the difference between application hosting (which is what is needed for a database driven content management site) and static hosting (simply FTPing HTML files to a server) we also offer SelectEdit static hosting for \$20 per month. Static hosting does not allow for real time content management using NewfangledCMS. We have found that once we explain the difference between static and application hosting and our clients see the value of being able to control content, the slightly higher application hosting cost is well worth it to them. For more information on the difference between static and application hosting see our [hosting pricing page](#).

The SelectEdit pricing model is designed to provide extensive content management capabilities at an extremely affordable price. While we could have gone the route of turning SelectEdit into one more "wizard" based system where you pay your \$49.95 and crazy-go-nuts with your website, we believe that providing a technology is simply not enough to help a client make effective use of a website. Proving technology does not mean that users will make good websites. So instead, we have simplified the development and design process so that the cost of a SelectEdit website goes in large part toward the personal interaction between the client and a skilled developer and designer.