

## A P P R A I S A L

### Macromedia Contribute v1.0

Macromedia Contribute is a very reasonably priced software solution for editing and managing content on any existing HTML based website and can be used by anyone with a basic understanding of word processing software.

- **General information**

1. £67.99 + VAT (£85.49) per user license. Very good price for the quality and backup you will get from a reputable 'web' company as Macromedia.
2. It will only "edit" static elements on websites. No parts of a site that need dynamic updating or the actual HTML code to be altered.
3. A basic knowledge of how pages are linked together and an understanding of the structure and layout principals of the website that is going to be worked on is also necessary – but over time administrators will start to feel 'at home' with their own website anyway.

- **Necessary requirements**

1. A Broadband connection would be almost essential for any regular editing – mainly to avoid the frustration and break in work flow of having to wait for various checks, uploads and downloads to occur before you can edit a certain page.
2. To be able to 'lock' certain areas of the page from being edited the site must be built (or converted to use) Macromedia DreamWeaver MX Templates. These are created by the web designer.

- **+ points (good)**

1. The system is very user friendly. No specific technical knowledge is required. A simple interface lets you navigate the site to the page you want to edit and then simply press a button to go into 'edit mode'. Changes can be previewed (by other personnel too) before being published.
2. Any CSS Style Sheets (for font styles etc) set by the designer are transferred to Contribute and can be selected from a drop down list. This ensures a consistent style. Other fonts, sizes and colours can be selected but these cannot be added to the CSS style sheet. You need to ask the designer to do this and also for any major updates to the font styles.
3. The contents of Microsoft Word documents can easily be added to a template page. Fonts, colours and pictures are brought in at the right size.
4. Microsoft Excel documents can also be added. A HTML table is created to contain the files data layout. This can then be tweaked within Contribute to format it to the style you want.
5. Multiple users can edit the same website without fear of overwriting each other's work. Pages are 'locked' whilst being worked on by another user.
6. Contribute requires no server-side software or any changes to be made to the original files so it can be used with ANY website. This includes sites built in Macromedia DreamWeaver, Adobe GoLive, Microsoft FrontPage, HotMetal or hand coded sites, as well as any other authoring software. This ensures very easy deployment of Macromedia Contribute at any level – and ensures easy future scalability.
7. User permissions can be set for each administrator. These are very advanced and easily customised. You can allow different users to have different rights when it comes to editing the website. For example, you can allow full create/delete privileges or limit various tasks (such as do not allow certain administrators to create new pages) all the way to only allowing the text to be changed on existing pages.

- **- points (bad)**

1. A 'Library object' cannot be changed automatically site-wide. Administrators would instead need to go in to each page that the element update is required and paste in the new version over the top of the old one. This is time-consuming! However the logic behind this decision is that if you make a mistake, you can create terminal problems for the website so this sort of major edit is best left to the designer.
2. If the site is being designed with Contribute in mind, from the outset, then more planning is involved in the initial stages of the job (before the site is actually built in HTML) to make sure the templates are as appropriate as possible.
3. Content in any Word documents you want to import must not be in text boxes to retain the correct order of layout. Also, text within overlapping text boxes next to a picture, is output as an image.