How OmniUpdate Works

OmniUpdate is a Content Management System (CMS) used to create and manage websites, You may have heard of other popular CMS products used to create websites such as Wordpress, Drupal, or Expression Engine. What makes OmniUpdate unique (and our CMS of choice) is its inherent ability to produce "static" webpages.

Static Vs. Dynamic Webpages

Imagine that you've just walked into your favorite fast food restaurant to get a cheeseburger. The fast food restaurant knows that everyone wants a cheeseburger so they have them already made. When you want it, you can just go get it. Just like you can count on that cheeseburger being ready when you want it, websites that are static are sitting on a server just waiting for someone to view them. This is how OmniUpdate works.

Now imagine that you go to a sit down dining restaurant and order a cheeseburger (for the purposes of this analogy, both places serve exactly the same, tasty cheeseburgers). The sit down restaurant makes everything on demand. When you order the cheeseburger, it has to be cooked, garnished and placed on a bun, which takes more time. Dynamic webpages are handled in this manner, with a copy of the page being put together every time someone asks to view it. The end product is the same but it takes more time to be delivered. This is how most other CMS platforms work.
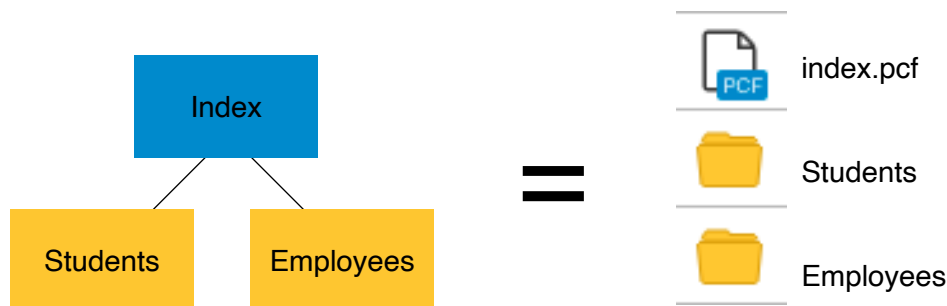
If thousands of people visit a dynamic website at once, the server has to individually build those pages to serve to each person. As you can guess, all of this building of pages behind the scenes can really slow things down. Having static webpages ensures that there's a finished copy of each page ready for whoever wants to view it, right when they ask for it.
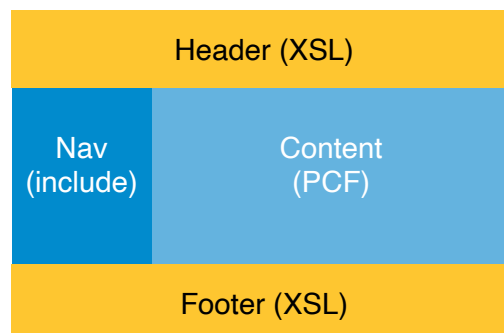
Construction of a Page

One of the primary advantages of using the OmniUpdate platform is the ease with which you can edit websites. This functionality is achieved by carefully breaking your existing website down into sections that can be easily edited.

Here is a brief overview of how your site was likely constructed to help you better understand how the finished product is achieved. Please note that websites are converted into OmniUpdate on a case by case basis. This overview details how *most* sites are formed.

1. EITS looks at the code for your website, noting the general construction of individual pages, your website layout, and its hierarchy as they exist in code form.

2. Your website is then carefully broken down into the following components:
   1. Your website structure is recreated by **section**. These typically appear in OmniUpdate as folders. If your website has several named sections, you can expect to see folders with these same names in OmniUpdate. Each folder will contain the pages for that section.
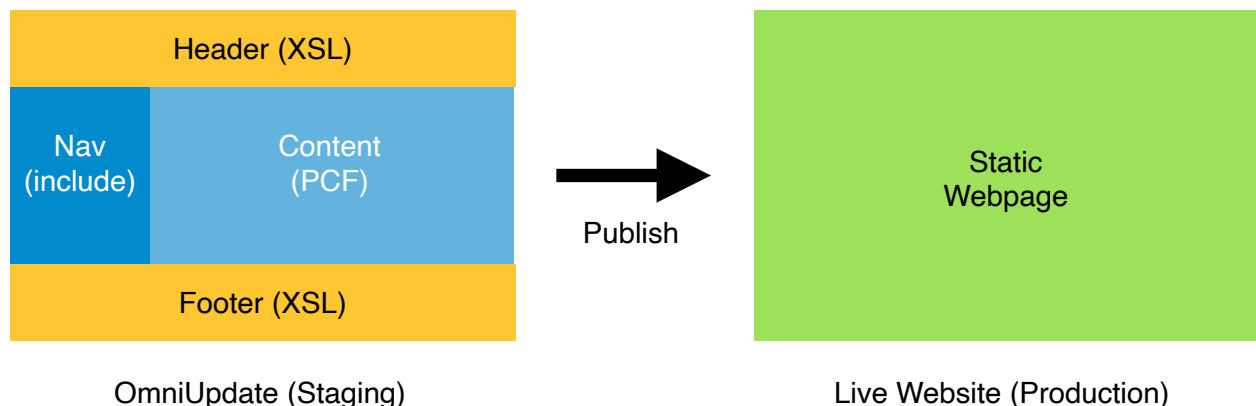

   2. Repetitive features that rarely change and are consistent throughout your *entire* website, such as the **header** and **footer**, are stored in a type of file known as an **XSL**. Because of

this, they are *not* editable by standard users. To edit content in these areas, please partner with an EITS administrator who can assist in implementing the change.

3. Elements that appear on several pages, but not all, are often stored in an **include** file. Making changes to an include file will often impact multiple pages at once. Some include files can only be edited by EITS administrators. Other include files, such as a navigational list of links to other pages and websites, may be stored in a _nav.inc file. Each section of your website may have its own _nav.inc file that can be found in its respective folder.

4. Templates are created for the site that allow you to quickly and easily create new content. When you create a new page or section, your content for that specific page is stored in a **PCF** file. Whether it's a new article, a blog post, or an official statement, the PCF contains the content you've added with references to the XSL and include files needed to create the final page.

5. Your website is tested to ensure that when you publish a PCF file, the XSL and include elements are successfully combined to form a static webpage!

Staging Vs. Production

OmniUpdate (Staging)   Live Website (Production)

In the top right corner of OmniUpdate's file browser, you'll see two tabs: one labeled 'Staging' and another labeled 'Production'. Simply put, Staging is where you will work on your website and Production is the live and publicly viewable version of your website.
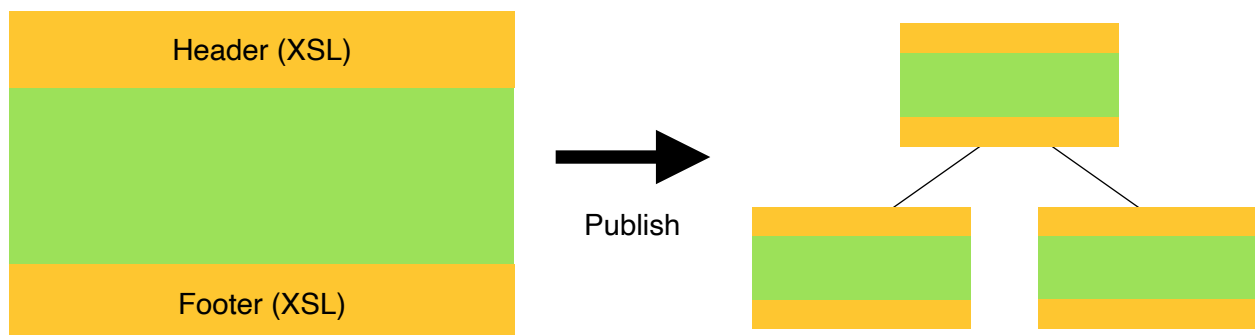
Think of the Staging area as the rehearsal for your webpages and Production as the actual performance. After you're done working on a page and hit Publish, a static version of your webpage is copied to Production for public viewing.

There's a physical separation between Staging and Production as well. The Staging version of your website lives on OmniUpdate servers. The Production version of your website lives on a server owned by a company that specializes in hosting websites.

A web hosting company provides space for the website on a secure server that is running 24/7. You can think of the benefits of using this service a bit like the benefits a store owner gets from leasing space in a mall. The store owner gets round the clock protection from a security staff in a space designed to accommodate lots of customers. If the store owner decided to build their own space, all of those benefits become additional responsibilities the store owner has to accommodate.

In addition, using an "offsite" web host ensures that your website will be available no matter what the status of OmniUpdate networks are.
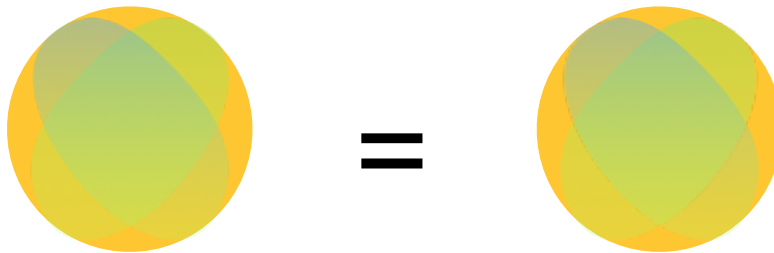
Publish Once

In traditional website development, updating one element that appears on multiple pages can be an incredibly tedious process of copying and pasting to ensure that every page gets the new change. The issue becomes an even bigger problem on websites that have lots and lots of pages. OmniUpdate avoids these issues through the use of Includes and XSL.

You may remember that OmniUpdate stores common elements in XSL and Include files. Rather than needing to repeat common elements on every single page of your site, the pages are instead coded to refer to the XSL or Include files when common elements are needed. Making a change to a single XSL or Include file can update multiple pages or the entire site.

WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) Editing

OmniUpdate is considered to be a WYSIWYG website development tool. Unless the design of your website specifies otherwise, images and text will appear exactly as they do in editing once they are published to your live website.

While this is generally a good thing, it does mean that an improperly formatted piece of content will look just the same on the finished website. Often these issues are introduced by attempting to copy and paste content from another website or a word processing program directly into the WYSIWYG editor. These issues can typically be resolved by using the formatting options available in the grey toolbar above the editing window.

Browser Based

You might be asking yourself, "All of this sounds great. How do I get the software?" OmniUpdate is an entirely browser based website creation platform, so there is no software and nothing to download. All you need to start working is an internet connection and a device with a modern web browser. Just visit the link, login and you're good to go.
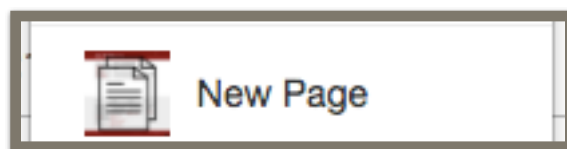
Simple Links

You may remember, in the days before everyone had a cell phone in their pocket, the tedious process of hauling out your address book every time a friend or family member moved. Failure to update your address book would probably result in you mailing a birthday card to the wrong house.

Even in this day and age, working with traditional website links is similar to working with that old address book. Traditional links on pages don't automatically update when the link page is changed or moved. Instead, the link would simply stop working and become known as a "broken link", which would result in an error when users click on it. This can create plenty of headaches as you try to track down any pages that may need updating.

OmniUpdate circumvents this issue with a unique kind of link. Instead of a standard HREF link () an OmniUpdate link might look like {{f:26444}}. OmniUpdate identifies the page by the number inside the brackets. Even if you change the name or move the page, these links will continue to work and won't need updating.

Simple Page Parameters

When you create a new page, you'll be presented with a set of text fields. These fields drastically simplify adding pages in OmniUpdate. Here's a brief overview of each field and its purpose.

> **Page Title** - Appears as the name of your page at the top of the users web browser. If they were to bookmark that specific page, the bookmark would be given this name by default. Depending on how your page is configured, the Page Title may also automatically appear somewhere on the page itself.

Filename - Used to identify your page and calculate the simple links created inside OmniUpdate. Filenames can only use lowercase letters, underscores, or dashes.

Add to Navigation? - If you select 'Add' from the dropdown menu, a link with the title of your page will automatically appear in the navigational list of links that appears on your site. Depending on the design of your site, this option may not be available.

Overwrite Existing - If you're creating a page with the same filename, checking this box will replace the old page with the new one.

Access Group - This particular option is primarily useful if you are listed as an editor on several different OmniUpdate websites. The feature is used to restrict access to editing a specific page. By default, (Inherit from Parent) will set the new page to the same access level as the folder or the site that the page resides in.

MultiEdit

MultiEdit is a unique feature that may be incorporated into your site to allow quick updating to featured elements on your site, without the need to edit any code. This may contain an image or links that may be featured in the header or front page of your website. If a page is configured to use it, a yellow button with the word MultiEdit will appear near the top of your page editor. Click it to update a set of custom options unique to your site.

Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are an easy way for users to navigate the structure of your website with simple links noting how they arrived at the current page in your website hierarchy. Breadcrumbs are typically included either at the top or bottom of a page and are automatically generated through code. To navigate back, the user only needs to click on the appropriate link in the Breadcrumb.

If your template specifies their use, publishing a page will ensure the links are added by default. Please note, the inclusion of this feature is dependent upon your departments specifications and site design.

Navigational Includes

The list of navigational links that may appear on your webpages is typically stored in a file with the name of _nav.inc. Updating the links in this file will update the links on your pages. We know this file is used for the design of the site because it begins with an underscore. Depending on the design of your website, every folder may have it's own _nav.inc file for that specific section of your site.

Section Properties

Similar to a navigational include, every folder on your site may have its own _props.pcf file. This file is where you will typically change the name for that section of your website or add an image that represents that specific section. Again, we know this file is used for the design of the site because it begins with an underscore.

Access Levels

0	**Reviewer** - User designated to review content only. Not able to create content or pages.
1 - 4	**Contributor** - A user who can edit existing pages, but cannot create or delete them.
5 - 7	**Editor** - Can create and edit pages (this is where most users fall)
8	**Designer** - Often designated to approve lower level user content. User can delete pages.

Every user in OmniUpdate is assigned an access level from 0 to 8. Your access level determines what you have the ability to see and do in OmniUpdate. These levels are customized based on the needs of your department.
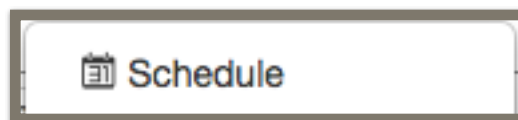
A level 0 "Reviewer" designation allows access to a user who only needs to look at content before it goes live, but who will not create, edit, or approve pages. Users from level 1-5 are considered "Contributors" and have access to edit existing pages. Users between the levels of 5 and 7 are considered "Editors" and can both edit and create new pages. They may also be able to upload files. Finally, level 8 is reserved for the "Designer" title. These users typically have the added abilities to both delete and approve pages for publishing.

Approvers

OmniUpdate allows the use of "Approvers" who can screen content and pages for any issues or errors before they go live on the website. Users who have a designated approver will see the option to "Submit" their changes to pages. Approvers are notified via e-mail of the request. The approver can then either publish the page without further comment, or reject it with specific feedback.

Scheduling Posts

Planning a big upgrade or announcement? Get your content ready ahead of time and schedule the page to publish at a date and time of your choosing. OmniUpdate can even notify you via e-mail once the content has gone live on your site.

Versions

We all make mistakes. For that reason, OmniUpdate allows you to quickly and easily revert to prior versions of a page. Partner with an administrator or an appointed designer in your department with source editing access to make these changes.

Page Check

Even if you don't have an approver, OmniUpdate is ready to ensure that no embarrassing technical issues or spelling errors make their way to your live site. On publishing, OmniUpdate gives you the option to scan your page for any and all spelling, coding, link or accessibility problems.

Google Analytics Integration

Google Analytics tools help you quickly and easily keep track of who is visiting your site, and when and where they are visiting from. To institute Google Analytics tracking on your site, partner with EITS administrators. If your existing website already has Google Analytics tracking, the functionality can be imported into OmniUpdate along with the rest of your site with no additional changes necessary.