

# 5F CMS; Features and Philosophy

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## Preface

5F CMS (Flawed but Functional Free Flat-File CMS) is an XML-based flat-file content management system (CMS). There are many web-based applications that facilitate the creation, publication and modification of digital content. Why pick 5F CMS over one of the alternatives? This two-page document explains the philosophy and rationale underlying the software, and describes its features in the process.

5F CMS is *imperfect*. Articles can not (yet) be tagged, off-site images included in submissions are not being copied and stored locally, it does not have fancy themes nor plug-in capabilities. Everything, including its official website and logo, appears to be as basic as it gets. However, once you start comparing the features it *does* deliver with what competitors bring to the table, you will realize that most other (flat-file) CMSs fall short. 5F CMS was written from scratch because other CMSs lack crucial functionalities.

## Basic Features

Let's start with how 5F CMS is similar to most other CMSs. It is free and open source software (GPL3+), uses hashed passwords (with random salts) and a responsive design (@media defines style rules based on the page width), is HTML5 compliant, uses SEO-friendly article URLs (including hyphens to separate words for readability) and headings (h1 for headlines, h2 for sections), compresses content before it is delivered to clients, and is easy to set up. Also, like other flat-file CMSs, it stores content in XML files, which means (paying for and) setting up a database such as MySQL is not necessary, and a backup via FTP includes *all* content.

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## **Advanced Features**

Let's look at features that other CMSs have not implemented properly or lack completely. First of all, 5F CMS requires users to provide working email addresses to register, never emails passwords (MITM), and emails URLs with temporary tokens to (re)set passwords. Registered users can not only modify their profiles (avatar, social media, website) and comment on articles, but also submit their own articles for approval. Users can preview their comments and article submissions, add BBCode (bold/italic/underline, images, URLs, YouTube, code, quotes, spoilers, Steam, headings, various smilies), and can set whether they want to be automatically notified via email when articles they have written receive comments. Users who are not logged in need to solve a CAPTCHA to submit forms. 5F CMS does not rely on CAPTCHA software from corporations, such as Google's reCAPTCHA, but uses the PHP GD module. This addresses privacy concerns: businesses won't track your users across websites. In fact, 5F CMS relies on just one included library; Swift Mailer. (And - only if necessary - password\_compat.)

An RSS feed is automatically created and updated. The contact page includes both a form and a visible email address that is unparsable by spambot crawlers. Exact article publication dates are shown on mouseover on 'human readable' descriptions of the amount of time passed since publication. Visitors can easily browse to and from previous and next pages with article previews. A special "XXX" article type can be used to present visitors with a mature content warning, and visibility of this content is toggable. (Always accessible by search engine bots.)

The 5F CMS administrator account has unique privileges and functionalities. The account owner receives email notifications about new comments and submissions. The administrator can view and edit and enable/disable comments, view and assess submissions (publish, decline, publish and disable), view and edit and ban (by IP, nick) users, view and edit and enable/disable articles.

## **Conclusion**

If you are looking for a flat-file CMS that does not just provide basic features but also properly deals with users and passwords, allows visitors to register and submit articles for approval, and provides the administrator with proper tools to juggle users and content, 5F CMS may deliver what you are looking for. You won't get the best looking website out-of-the-box, but you'll have the core functionality required to get work done. Even its procedural - non object-oriented - source code should be easy to understand and fine-tune, if you'd ever feel like studying it.