

You may have heard that we were developing a content management system designed for government called ChimeCMS. We've recently decided to stop development of ChimeCMS.

Background: Why Chime?

Since founding Code for America (CfA) in 2011, we've heard about the problems cities face keeping their websites current for residents who need and expect to do business with their city online. Last year, we started Digital Front Door, a pilot project from our technology team to assess and improve how cities communicate and serve residents via their website.

The most significant result from the Digital Front Door Initiative was that a simple, modern CMS designed for the work of government is the best way to make City websites work for resident needs, including the traditionally underserved. Nine months ago, after reviewing available content management systems for government websites, we didn't find any that met our Design Principles or Practices. This helped us decide to develop a content management system designed for government: ChimeCMS.

Our recent research and work with 5 bootcamp cities confirmed that there's a real need for a CMS that meets the needs of local governments. There's also a real need for tools that improve content creation, practical and effective content migration strategies and template-driven options for building and managing government websites.

What's happening now?

- We're not building ChimeCMS, or any related content management system (CMS) product.
- All of the ChimeCMS work is available on GitHub on an [FOSS/CC whatever license name] license
- The Digital Front Door Team will keep developing and delivering software through service engagements
- We'll keep providing guidance and help to our partners in government on designing websites that are mobile-ready, services-oriented, and inclusive.

Why was the decision made to stop work on ChimeCMS?

We made this decision for two reasons:

Developing a CMS product requires long-term commitment that Code for America can't make right now.

Developing and supporting a complex product requires long-term resources. After our research phase, we felt that it would take longer to deliver a good, meaningful product than could be supported by Code for America at this time, compared to other important work we're doing.

As a non-profit, we're set up to:

- work with governments to better understand the needs of their citizens, and create software to address those needs;
- advocate for best practices for government services and citizen engagement;
- create and manage productive environments for community action (brigades); and
- provide specific issue-focused services to individual cities and counties through the Fellowship program (on-site Fellows).

Delivering ChimeCMS would take resources that Code for America doesn't have.

There are CMS options available now that further many of the practices we were designing in to ChimeCMS.

During our research, we discovered new options for government focused content management systems. These CMSs can be adapted to meet our design principles and practices more quickly than we could develop ChimeCMS. We can now recommend vendors and products that can help governments meet their website needs.

We are not organized to properly support product development. We don't have (and don't currently have plans to add) a business support team. Without a team doing product marketing, sales (direct or channel), business development, customer success and support, we wouldn't be successfully set up to bring a CMS (or any other large-scale product) to market.