| CASE STUDY

Aspect Capital

Website redevelopment using Magnolia CMS

BACKGROUND

Aspect Capital is a UK-based investment manager with 7.4 billion USD under management and a philosophy built on their scientific approach to identifying predictable trends in market prices.

Aspect use their website to present key information about the company, but more importantly to distribute documentation and statistics related to Aspect's funds to current and potential investors.

In late 2013, Aspect undertook a refresh of its brand identity and engaged Priocept to undertake the redevelopment of their website and the underlying content management system (CMS) using Magnolia CMS.

INITIAL ANALYSIS

Priocept met with the marketing and communications team at Aspect to discuss the new brand identity and how this was to be incorporated into the website. It became clear during this analysis that the current website implementation suffered from a number of technical issues which should also be addressed as part of the redesign and redevelopment. These included:

- Laborious updating of links when documents were updated

- Pages were duplicated to present different navigation options to users who had freshly arrived on the site versus those that had accepted a "beaded curtain" of terms and conditions or logged in as recognised investors

Priocept also met with the Aspect technical team who would eventually be supporting the website and its underlying code. Further issues and requirements were identified including:

- Reuse of existing sources of live fund data from within Magnolia

- A need to integrate custom built user management tools from the existing site into Magnolia

- A complex, non-standard configuration where Magnolia's features had previously been misused

DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Priocept worked alongside Aspect's design agency to define the new look and feel of the website. Using a version of the existing codebase Priocept developed the necessary new components in Magnolia CMS.

The issue of duplicated pages was tackled by reimplementing the site's navigation using the standard security framework provided by Magnolia. This meant the editors would only need to update content in one location rather than chase the same piece of content across the multiple site paths.

THE SOLUTION

Throughout the implementation process the latest site was deployed to password-protected Priocept servers so that Aspect could demonstrate progress to project stakeholders and test that the experience of editors and end users was as expected.

Aspect were already familiar with the Magnolia platform so did not request any formal training when the site was delivered but occasionally encountered problems – Priocept therefore made an experienced Magnolia consultant available for support sessions, helping Aspect content mangers to achieve what they needed. During these sessions Aspect noticed an oversight in their designs and that some crucial components were missing. Priocept were able to quickly create these components based on the existing styling and deploy them as an update, allowing Aspect to continue building the rest of the site without disruption.

TECHNOLOGY

Aspect Capital's website uses the Magnolia CMS platform for content editing, review and approval. Editors can preview changes and new pages and send them for approval before they are pushed out for public viewing.

Customisation of the freely-available Magnolia Public User Registration module allows users to request access pending approval by an administrator.

Magnolia's digital asset management tools allow for fund performance reports to be updated via a web interface with the public-facing website automatically updating to present the latest documents.

Integration with various open-source tools allows for the generation of fund performance charts on pages without the need for an editor to create and upload static images of the graphs.

A summary of technologies used in the project:

- Magnolia CMS 4.5 (using STK – Standard Templating Kit)

- Magnolia CMS modules: Workflow, Public User Registration

- Apache Tomcat

- jFreeChart (provides the graphs by generating images on demand)

- Development tools: Eclipse

RESULTS

Priocept completed the development in just six weeks and well ahead of the target website launch date. The content produced on the Priocept server was exported for immediate re-use on the production server and the system was deployed to deliver the following benefits:

- A simpler website structure for editors to manage

- A navigation system compatible with touch screens (tablet devices)

- Automatically updating document lists

- Removal of non-standard code and techniques for simpler maintenance

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