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▶ Gary Smith
IS Project Office Manager
NSPCC

The NSPCC Upgrades “First Stop” Intranet with Percussion

Leading UK Childrens’ Charity Deploys Percussion Software’s Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Solution to Improve Flexibility and Usability of Critical Information Tool

About the NSPCC

The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) is the UK’s leading children’s charity specializing in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. Founded in 1884, it is the only UK childrens’ charity with statutory powers that enable it to take action to safeguard children at risk of abuse.

Improving the Flexibility and Usability of a Critical Information Tool

The NSPCC decided to implement an enterprise content management (ECM) system in its bid to upgrade the Society’s “First Stop” intranet. FirstStop is an information tool that enables 2000 staff members throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland to access information critical to the charity’s mission. The Society wanted to improve both the flexibility and usability of this key resource.

By its nature, the Society’s work demands efficient access to sensitive records that must be accurate and timely. A key requirement in the upgrade of FirstStop was, therefore, a flexible and efficient workflow system for the 100 content authors who contribute to over 5,000 pages of content. In addition, the intranet had to offer a de-centralized publishing process to improve speed of access to information for users and to place ownership within the relevant departments.

Other goals included enhancing the usability of FirstStop to improve the structure and look of the site and developing shared content between NSPCC Web sites, extranets and FirstStop. Ultimately, the FirstStop upgrade had to save the NSPCC money through shared technology, efficient content creation and management and simple training for authors of multiple sites. The NSPCC needed the ECM solution used in this extensive intranet upgrade to help it meet all these goals.

Selecting an Enterprise Content Management Solution

The NSPCC conducted a project feasibility study for the intranet upgrade during which “buy versus build” comparisons were made for key aspects of content authoring and production. From these investigations, it was clear that integrating a commercial enterprise content management system to manage FirstStop would be the most effective solution.

Following an extensive selection and ECM procurement process, the Percussion Content Management System (CM System) was chosen for implementation for use on all of the Society’s Web sites.

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Major Reasons for Choosing Percussion

According to Gary Smith, IS Project Office Manager at the NSPCC: “Following the evaluation, it was clear that the Percussion CM System’s capabilities were best suited to our goals. We selected it for its ability to meet current and projected requirements, the stability and quality of its software architecture and its ability to integrate with our in-house Web-based applications and administrative tools.”

Other important factors cited by the NSPCC in selecting Percussion included:

- › Speedy Migration
The NSPCC wanted as speedy and efficient a transition to the upgraded First Stop as possible. Percussion’s Web Services Interface (which enabled the swift conversion of all hyperlinks into CMS-managed links) allowed the processing and migration of the entire site in about nine hours during non-business hours.
- › Seamless Content Authoring
The extensibility mechanisms of the Percussion CM System allowed the NSPCC to integrate its in-house Taxonomy/Metadata application directly into the CM System authoring environment; as a result, content authoring and metadata administration became seamless tasks.
- › Stable Links to Managed Content
The NSPCC was keen to retain as much content as possible when moving to the managed site. The CM System’s Database Publishing feature, which ensured that existing in-house applications could be linked to managed content without links breaking, therefore proved very attractive.

Rolling Out the Percussion Content Management System

Percussion and the NSPCC decided to pursue a single-step migration, incorporating as much automation as possible to implement the Percussion CM System on the entire site at once. The project successfully delivered a seamless migration that took only five working days - migration began on a Monday, the old site was switched off that Friday and the entire new site and its embedded applications were operational on the following Monday.

Benefits of NSPCC’S Percussion Implementation

Having experienced a number of problems with the first version of the intranet site (non-Rhythmx based) the charity now has a site that is more technologically mature and useful than those of many commercial organizations.

Percussion has enabled the NSPCC to overcome the issue of a lack of automated approval process for adding content. With over 100 people across the organization updating the intranet site and submitting content through one intranet content manager for manual publishing, the need for greater automation was pressing. The Percussion CM System now enables all content to be posted on the intranet site through an agreed set of approval processes. The workflow capability ensures that information is now delivered to the intranet site in a much more streamlined and timely manner. This ensures that the most up-to-date version of intranet content is available to NSPCC staff at all times, improving decision-making and reducing the risk of acting upon poor information.

The intranet site now also has a uniform look and feel that is in line with the charity’s brand. All materials are submitted for approval in agreed templates and structure, saving the NSPCC money by reducing time spent by authors in creating their own styles and by the intranet content manager implementing style standards manually. Intranet users now enjoy a consistent experience as they navigate through the site.

Overall management of the intranet site has also improved; Percussion's Impact Analysis capability alerts the NSPCC intranet content manager when and where any broken links appear on the site, allowing these to be fixed. It provides a full audit trail of activity for content, a crucial feature when multiple authors are responsible for updating site content. It also maintains an archive of content versions, enabling the NSPCC to roll content back to previous versions as required.

Communication has improved, not only between staff who are updating and sharing information, but also between the NSPCC management team and staff who now receive email messages featuring direct links to relevant pages.

"We have realized a host of major benefits since implementing Percussion and are delighted to have achieved our core goals of improving the flexibility and usability of First Stop," concluded Gary Smith. "Our organization is now in an excellent position to put information at the very heart of our work to end cruelty to children."

Future Direction at the NSPCC

Thanks to the implementation of Percussion, the NSPCC is now better prepared for the future and for decisions that it may make in the way it uses and provides information. Improving access to information for NSPCC staff will contribute to the Society's strategy for ending cruelty to children. Current plans include making improved information available through the Internet site and also via mobile delivery. Percussion will enable NSPCC content to be made available in all of the key delivery platforms that the Society may choose to use.

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