



informa

The organisation:

Informa is a leading international provider of specialist information and services for the academic, scientific, professional and commercial business communities. The company is the largest publicly-owned organiser of conferences and courses in the world with an output of over 10,000 events annually. It publishes over 2,000 subscription-based information services including academic journals, real-time news and structured databases of commercial intelligence and its book business has more than 40,000 academic and business titles in print. The Informa range of products are founded on high value content in a wide variety of subject areas, from arts and humanities through social sciences, technology, finance and law, to telecommunications, maritime, energy and agriculture.

With over 150 offices in more than 40 countries and a staff of some 8,000 people, Informa's intranet has a vital role to play in joining together its workforce in all corners of the world and providing a central-point for its people-focused resources.

The challenge:

"Simplify and engage our workforce"

When Informa first contacted Squiz, they needed a new intranet because no-one was using the old one. The site was proven difficult to manage and administer, un-engaging and was missing essential functionality. It had been custom built from scratch, entirely in Java. While it worked, it proved to be inflexible.

With just four weeks in which to turnaround the project and deliver an effective new content managed intranet, timescales were tight and Informa needed a supplier that could deliver.

Jonathan Ferro, Global Web Specialist at Informa, is responsible for the company's intranet and corporate website. He said: "We were impressed by Squiz' history of delivering web projects in short timescales and were won over by the capability and flexibility of their technology," he explained. "We needed something that was functionally flexible and scaleable enough to allow for future development if and when we needed it, as well as a system that could be content managed with relative ease. MySource Matrix Content Management System (CMS) with Open Source technology certainly fit the bill. Plus their pricing was very competitive," he added.

Open Source.

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The solution: **A whole lot of improvement!**

For the first stage of the project, Squiz set about redesigning Informa's intranet, using MySource Matrix as the foundation stone. The team developed a new look and feel for the site and went on to migrate the existing functionality and vast wealth of content (originally more than 2,000 pages) across to the new system; simplifying the complex structure and reorganising the data as priority.

The second phase was about improving and developing the functionality. Jon sited a number of examples where improvements have been made: "A few examples include the enhanced job advertisements we now have and an improved resource area. We also have better search facilities thanks to improved weighting options on the metadata. More fundamentally, it is now a lot easier and quicker to administer the site. Currently I am the sole administrator, and I can add pages, create menus, and change the structure within just a few clicks. Before, if I wanted to do anything, I sometimes needed the help of our developers, but now I can make changes myself as and when I need to."

The Squiz approach: **Impressive product, efficiently delivered**

As Informa had hoped, Squiz delivered the first wave of the project in the agreed time limits; implementing the MySource Matrix platform and migrating the vast majority of content over from the legacy system in just four weeks. "We had a few glitches, but they were due to our existing systems and not Squiz' capabilities. They were able to deliver pretty much everything they'd agreed to in the timescales," Jon explained.

Equally impressed by MySource Matrix, Jon shared his thoughts: "It's very intuitive technology. Although my training with Squiz was unavoidably cut short, I was still able to grasp most of it in the short time I had and then I've picked up the rest as I went along."

He went on to say: "The technology is both powerful and flexible and it can do pretty much anything you ask of it. The idea that you can create a page one day and then remove it or change it the next as you require is very attractive. It provides the flexibility to be able to respond quickly to your business environment and needs."

The result: Like a ripple effect, **engagement is spreading...**

Although it is early days for the company's new intranet, having only been live for just one month, the general feeling among its 8,000 users is so far positive. Jon explained the situation: "Right now we're still developing new functionality and facilities, so the work is still ongoing, but people seem genuinely impressed and happy with the site up to now."

In fact, Informa's new intranet is already starting to engage people and create a real buzz across the organisation. "We have definitely seen an increase in the number of articles which are being sent for posting on the intranet," explained Jon.

Using MySource Matrix Open Source CMS, Informa is able to tap directly into years of ongoing development of the product and benefit from the system's flexibility and functionality without additional costs.

Jon continued: "We have plans to introduce a new eCards service on the site soon, so fellow staff can reward or congratulate one another on their work or projects by sending an electronic card. "We are looking into creating a Myspace-style service," said Jon. "Employees would be able to add their details, such as information on current projects they're working on or personal details. So, if someone speaks Mandarin for example they can add it in and it becomes searchable information for the rest of the organisation. This is just an idea at the moment, but it's an idea that could easily be reality with this new system. "

The future:

"There are so many opportunities now," said Jon. "As well as redesigning the corporate website with Squiz we have further ideas for the intranet. I have plans to roll-out departmental admin access, devolving responsibility to each area. This will help us to drive more timely and relevant content."

He continued: "We would also like to start customising our content according to, for example, users' location. At the moment we're cleaning up all our user profiles but once we have these, we can start targeting content; so if you're in the US, you'd see the US homepage rather than the UK one. That's the good thing about the technology - anything it possible, so watch this space."

