

Case Study

Westminster Abbey

How MySource Matrix Open Source CMS brought increased functionality and sociability to Westminster Abbey's new website



The Organisation

Steeped in History

Westminster Abbey is steeped in over a thousand years of history and is one of the most important buildings in the country.

It has played host to some of the most historic occasions, religious ceremonies and ongoing daily worship. The coronation of Kings and Queens has taken place there since 1066, including Queen Elizabeth II whose coronation in 1953 was the first to be televised. Many of the nation's Kings and Queens are buried in the Abbey, and there are thousands of graves or memorials to great men and women from history, including: statesmen, politicians, lawyers, warriors, clerics, writers, artists and musicians.

As well as continuing its established traditions into the 21st century, it has successfully evolved to become one of London's principal visitor attractions. More than 1 million visitors flock there each year to explore the great building and to enjoy a well-orchestrated calendar of events. Special services, festivals, lectures and debates, concerts and exhibitions provide a rich and diverse experience for visiting patrons.



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Imogen Levy, Westminster Abbey



The Challenge

Control, Speed and Flexibility

In the past, all of the Abbey's website updates (no matter how small) had been done through an external company with no formal content management functionality. But with the Abbey's content changing on a daily basis, sometimes four or five times, the outsourcing of this activity was no longer a viable option for the business. Imogen Levy, Online Editor at the Abbey, said: "A change used to take up to a week to be implemented. So obviously we needed something more immediate."

The Abbey also wanted to improve the promotion of its services and content assets, such as the Abbey's extensive archives (which stretch back hundreds of years), its religious services, organised events, venue spaces and retail shop. They wanted a dynamic, engaging community platform to promote these assets, while also opening up new opportunities for greater customer engagement.

Imogen explained: "The Abbey is a significant tourist destination as well as a living and working church. We had to be mindful to provide the audience with a balance across all of these aspects when developing the new site."

In addition to these requirements, the new site needed to satisfy the needs of the Abbey's non-English speaking patrons and be able to flex with the needs of the business in the future.

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The Solution

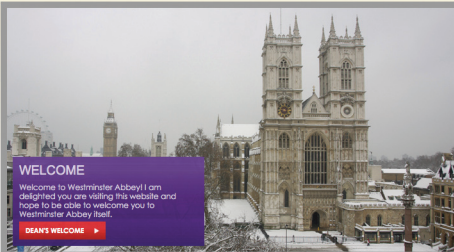
In Brief

Just six months after engaging Squiz, the Abbey has a fully redesigned website with exciting new functionality.

Imogen now manages content in-house and, for the first time, the Abbey has direct interaction online with its visitors. As a result, visitor numbers have increased by a whopping 30% and repeat visits are on the rise: clear approval from those who count.

The new site looks and feels 'Abbey' on all levels, evoking a sense of its history and tradition, but also delivering the message that the Abbey is up-to-date.

Opportunities for online visitors are now varied and provide real value. An updated set of archives, news section and online shop sit alongside a new events calendar, social bookmarking buttons, foreign language sections for overseas visitors, a Twitter plugin, regular podcasts and plenty more.



WELCOME

Welcome to Westminster Abbey! I am delighted you are visiting this website and hope to be able to welcome you to Westminster Abbey itself.

DEAN'S WELCOME >

WHAT'S ON

WELCOME

The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, welcomes you to Westminster Abbey as a worshipper and visitor.

SPECIAL SERVICES

ST MARGARET'S APPEAL

Worship

- Wednesday 10 February
- 7.30 am Morning Prayer
- 8.00 am Holy Communion
- 12.30 pm Holy Communion
- 5.00 pm Evening Prayer

Visit Us

Kings, queens, statesmen and soldiers; poets, priests, heroes and villains - the Abbey is a multi-use living pageant of British history.

VISIT THE ABBEY >

Visitor information is available in the following languages:
English, Español, Pycckий, Português, Polski, Nederlands, Italiano, Magyar, Deutsch, Français, 中文, 日本語

News

07 Feb 2010 Canon Robert Wright to leave Abbey

03 Feb 2010 A service to celebrate the 300th anniversary of St Edward's Church of England Primary School and St Edward's Church of England School and Sixth Form College in Romford.

19 Jan 2010 Abbey focuses on the future for women bishops

14 Jan 2010 Women Bishops: Where does the Church of England go from here?

Wobby on twitter

wabby: Special Service: A Service to mark the 30th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Oscar Romero <http://bit.ly/3dZwFyY> Tue, 08 Feb 2010 03:24:29 +0000

wabby: wabby news: Canon Robert Wright to leave Abbey <http://bit.ly/Rd3KJUA> Mon, 08 Feb 2010 03:39:51 +0000

FOLLOW US

Media

Keeping you up to date with what's going on in the Abbey through weblogs, management, posters and publications, as well as handling film & TV production requests and media enquiries.
More about Media

RSS and Podcasts

Keep up-to-date with details on our daily services, events, concerts, lectures, sermons and podcasts by subscribing to our RSS feeds.
More about RSS and Podcasts

Special Events

Join our mailing list to hear about special events taking place at the Abbey.
Email us to be added to the list

Support The Abbey

Find out more about how the Abbey is funded and how you can help sustain one of Britain's most iconic, and important historical buildings.
More about Support the Abbey

Home
Worship at the Abbey
Visit Us
Music and the Choir
What's On
History
Shop
St Margaret's Church
Choir School

Terms and Conditions
Annual Report & Financial Statement
Privacy Policy
2000 Vision and Strategy PDF
Job Vacancies
Text Larger / Smaller

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London SW1P 3PA
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Contact Us

Help
For help with RSS click below:
RSS feed help/Podcast help

The Solution

In Detail

Imogen explained the team's achievements in more detail:

“As well as improving the fundamentals, and bringing in some new functionality, we wanted to develop social elements and portable content to create interactivity. For example, we've introduced RSS feeds so people can receive updates about services, sermons, news and events.”

A Twitter account, embedded on the homepage, has already been very successful. Over 1,500 Twitterers are following the Abbey's Tweets after just 2 months. The Abbey tweets about services and events, allowing people to keep up-to-date with what's going on wherever they are in the world.

Imogen continued: “MySource Matrix will allow us to do so much more. I'm looking into new activities, like podcasting and streaming video, for the future. They could be used in all sorts of ways; maybe covering events and special services.”

The new website has caused a ripple effect across the Abbey. “Content owners are now focusing on the opportunities the new CMS brings,” Imogen said. “Because they are now able to make their own content changes quickly and easily, they no longer need to spend time worrying about little things. They are much more focused on the bigger picture. It's a real cultural change.”

The transition to the new site was relatively easy, despite having to migrate thousands of pieces of archived information: “There was such a lot of historical data to be migrated to the new system. It was all done by Squiz and I was impressed with the way they handled it. It was all very straightforward, I just left them to it and they kept me informed of progress on a regular basis.”

She continued: “In fact I was impressed with Squiz all the way through. As well as providing a great product in MySource Matrix, they also delivered great service. What I liked initially was that I knew who my contact was and they remained my contact throughout the project. It provided consistency all the way through. And when we went into the testing phase, they actively involved me at every stage. They didn’t just go away and do things, it was a constant two-way conversation.”

The new site’s functionality and design, and opportunities for interactivity, have successfully converged to meet the diverse needs and characteristics of such a unique establishment. “It confirms the reasons why MySource Matrix and Squiz were the right decision for the Abbey,” said Imogen.

“I’m really happy with the system. It has made my life much easier and I enjoy using it. MySource Matrix has a lot in the box. It provides superb functionality, it’s so easy to use and has great support. As there’s only really me in the web team, my time is fairly limited so the Supported Open Source environment is a huge bonus.”

She continued: “Now I can take more control over the design and development work instead of spending all my time managing the outsourcing of the content management. That can all be done in-house now, by the department owners, and if I do need to get involved it takes me five minutes rather than five weeks. Sometimes if I’m asked to make a change over the phone I can say ‘it’s done’ before they’ve even put the phone down.”

Imogen is equally impressed with the backend. “MySource Matrix makes life much easier. I have more control and can manage all activities internally,” she said. “For example, with the simple edit interface I can create a mini editing area for my content contributors. They don’t have to see the complexity of the system and admin tools that I see on a daily basis, they just see their area of the site. I also really like the editing in context function which enables you to see the final result as you type.”

“Plus, although you don’t pay commercial license fees, you get technology that’s plugged into an Open Source community of developers. For me it is a win win situation.”

The Future

Further Development

The increased functionality and sociability of the site has had a positive impact in encouraging visitors to the site. The team plans to continue building on this in the future.

“The system has been really well received and has made such a difference to daily web tasks, but we have lots of development ideas to take us well into the future. We have an ever increasing events and services diary and we’re currently building an education centre here too so we’d like to do more in that area. And as we have a lot of visitors from overseas, I’d love to eventually start streaming live services as well. The technology can handle it so it’s up to us now.”



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