

Providing A Digital Launchpad:

Webvision V3 At Emap Inform



EMAP Inform publishes ten weekly titles, more than a dozen monthly business to business magazines, organises forty-five awards each year and runs eight major recruitment boards. In July 2008, EMAP Inform chose Webvision v3 from Abacus e-Media as the digital publishing solution for ten of its major titles. By May 2009, eight of the titles had gone live – all of them on time and on budget – with the remaining two on schedule for completion within the agreed timescales.

Graham Ruddick, Digital Marketing Director, EMAP Inform: “It is extraordinary that eight such sophisticated sites have gone live, to the day, in such a short timescale. We have developed a great partnership with Abacus e-Media and they have done an excellent job from start to finish.”

↘ An unsatisfactory legacy

Early in 2008 Emap Inform recognised that their content management system did not put them in the best place to handle the company’s growing digital presence. Jeff Leslie, Digital Technology Director at EMAP Inform: “Regrettably, although the product had interesting functionality that allowed sites to be replicated, it was difficult to make changes and there was little additional off-the-shelf functionality that we could benefit from.”

EMAP Inform began the search for an alternative, Graham Ruddick: “In addition, a new management had taken over and EMAP’s focus on online or digital had moved up the agenda. From being an important aspect of the business, it was now being regarded as a crucial element in our overall corporate strategy. It was evident that the existing content management platform would not be able to support us in our digital objectives.”

↘ Finding a solution

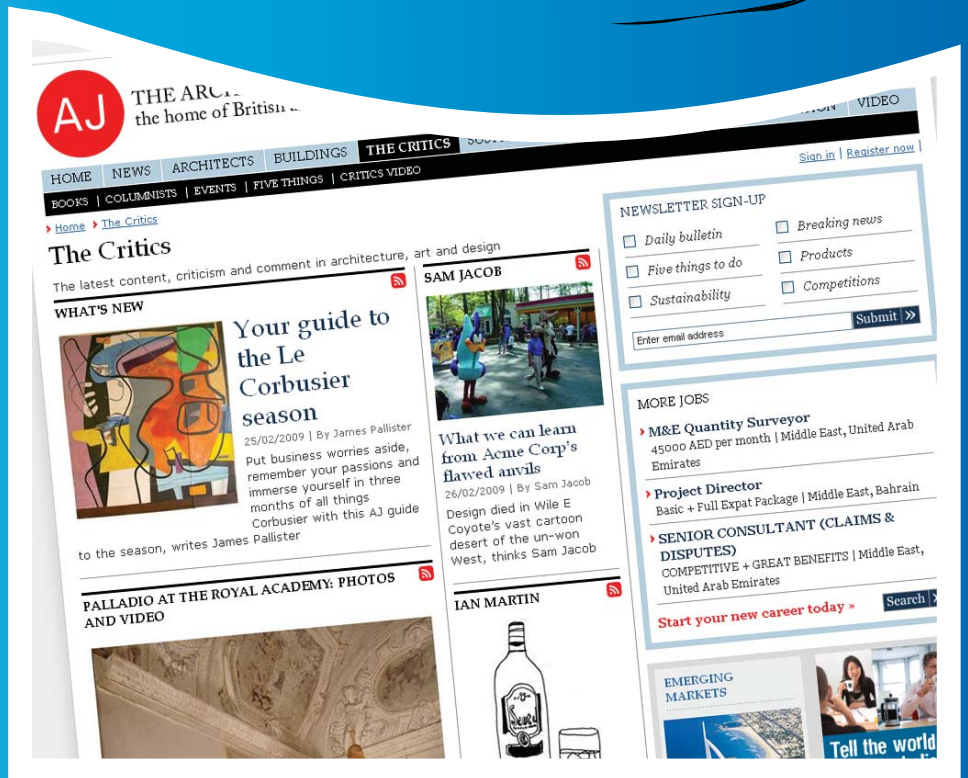
With strong industry contacts and a very clear idea of what needed to be achieved, Jeff Leslie saw no advantage in preparing a lengthy RFP (request for proposal) for suppliers. He and his team researched the systems used by their competitors and sister companies and by May 2008 had drawn up a shortlist based on reference sites, workshops and product roadmaps. A small number of companies made it to the short-list and Jeff Leslie concentrated on finding a partner who would work well with Emap Inform, to find the right supplier, with the right product and the right attitude.

Jeff Leslie: “The decision was taken in July 2008 that EMAP Inform would adopt the Webvision v3 product from Abacus e-Media. Abacus had a really good knowledge of B2B publishing – in terms of both the products and the people working for the company. Our editorial staff could talk to Abacus, and they were all speaking the same language, without need for translation which for us represented a huge plus. Added to this, Webvision v3 just worked out of the box, could be integrated with other products, and it did almost exactly what we wanted it to do.”

For EMAP Inform, Webvision 3 has been integrated with the Autonomy IDOL product to provide powerful and intelligent search functionality, whilst recruitment services are powered by Madgex. Each of the sites has been designed by Abacus e-Media’s designers to promote the individual brands and to complement the printed magazines. The sites contain a wealth of features, targeted towards

their specific industry. For example Architects Journal (www.architectsjournal.co.uk) is rich with buildings imagery, and includes video powered by Brightcove and a range of social networking tools, such as Twitter and Flickr for an engaging user experience.

For Drapers, user involvement is being encouraged with blogs and a community section integrating Drapers' Facebook user group and Twitter feed, plus the opportunity to subscribe to regular email newsletters with content which is specific to different sectors of the industry. The design produced by Abacus features a contemporary modern approach, allowing the use of bold graphics, full-length images, video, and picture galleries as Drapers track the new catwalk trends from all the leading industry fashion shows.



Assessing the benefits



According to Graham Ruddick, the implementation of Webvision v3 and the launch of the new sites have resulted in a “lot of differences. Workflow has improved out of all recognition because of the strong publishing slant of Webvision. We are now able to ensure that pages are created in a logical manner, with a logical architecture, which has in turn impacted significantly on our ability to accurately measure the commercial opportunities for individual pages. We are able to do this better than ever before.

“We have about fifty staff using Webvision. Routine work can be done much easier and much faster, which leaves them with time to really use their creativity and, for example, consider how they can introduce more video or blogging.”

Some startling changes have taken place. For example in the first month of the new Construction News site (www.cnplus.co.uk), EMAP Inform saw a 71% growth in the number of pages. Across the board, they now have four to five times as many pages being indexed by Google. “For those titles where images are of particular importance, the ‘out of the box’ functionality of Webvision v3 ensures that it is a simple matter to display images to their best advantage, with complete ease.”

Jeff Leslie: *“Without exception each site that has launched to date has done better in terms of search, traffic and return visitors.”*

Once the ten major titles have been launched on Webvision v3, EMAP Inform will consider whether the same platform can be used for some of the company’s smaller sites. “Webvision has changed our view of what digital can do for the business. It has provided us with launch pad from which we can exploit the full potential of the online environment.”