IBM

Uniq feeds employees' hunger for information with intranet from IBM.

Uniq has leveraged IBM Lotus Domino to create a corporate intranet that links its employees in five countries — and has reused the technology for its public Web site.

In 1959, when Unigate was formed from the merger of two leading British dairies, its founders could not have envisioned the journey that lay ahead. In the 30 years that followed, Unigate evolved into a diverse corporation, with businesses that included car auctions and dealerships, exhibition management and display equipment as well as restaurants in the United States.

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— Phil Wilkins, Intranet Manager, Uniq Group

Key Components

Software

- IBM Lotus® Domino™ R5
- IBM Lotus Notes®

In the early 1990s the company began to change direction and, by 2001, had specialized and consolidated its position as a leading European manufacturer and distributor of chilled, frozen and ambient food products and had changed its name to Uniq. With 9,000 employees, manufacturing and selling in 14 countries, Uniq needed a convenient way to keep its diverse workforce motivated and synchronized. The company also wanted its workers to be in touch with changes in critical corporate standards and procedures, as well as the company's evolving image and culture, according to Uniq Group Intranet Manager Phil Wilkins. "Things happen fast in our company, and our employees were feeling out of touch," he notes. "Our old, centrally managed intranet site was unwieldy—department heads could not update it with their breaking news. Our copious corporate documentation was organized in a folder-based resource that was hard for users to search and navigate. We needed a user-friendly intranet and content-management platform that would enable managers to enter their own content and make it immediately available across our entire business."

Searching for a solution, Uniq approached IBM, with which it enjoys a long-standing relationship. "IBM has been our prime IT vendor for well over a decade and has always gone the extra mile for us—both in its level of service and in the quality of its hardware and software solutions," Wilkins explains. "We have an IBM @server pSeries™ server supporting our SAP R/3 enterprise resource management software, and an IBM @server iSeries™ server as our line-of-business server. And our enterprise e-mail and messaging platform is Lotus Notes and Lotus Domino.

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— Ian Stewart, CEO, InfoSys Ltd.

IBM gave Uniq a list of IBM Business Partners that offer intranet and content-management solutions leveraging IBM e-business technology. Uniq's choice was InfoSys Ltd., an IBM and Lotus Business Partner based in the United Kingdom. InfoSys—specializing in e-business, groupware, Web application development and content-management solutions based on Lotus Notes and Domino software—proposed its Domisphere solution. Domisphere, a content-management system designed to help create and maintain dynamic Web sites, is based on Domino.

In just 2 months, InfoSys provided Uniq with a comprehensive enterprise intranet. Known as UNICOM, the site is saving Uniq over £100,000 (US$157,650) annually in costs associated with the ongoing compilation, production and dissemination of printed information. UNICOM saved an additional £60,000 (US$94,550) in printing costs in its first year of operation, because such costs are typically higher for the first print run than for reprints. Because documents can be updated and distributed online, employees are able to work more efficiently and conform faster to corporate standards and procedures. This ensures immediate compliance with all aspects of food safety, laboratory testing, engineering, water effluent and waste management. By reusing the intranet's Domisphere platform and underlying Lotus Domino infrastructure for its public Web site (*www.uniq.com*), Uniq has saved a further estimated £20,000 (US$31,500) in Web site development costs.

Cost-effective collaboration capabilities

"We were eager to implement a solution based on Domino," Wilkins explains. "We are quite impressed with its integrated application services—namely, security, workflow and content management—as well as with its Web server and replication capabilities. And InfoSys's Domisphere leverages all of these features."

InfoSys CEO Ian Stewart says: "In a single, cost-effective offering, Domino—the backbone of our Web content-management system—provides a broad range of collaborative e-business functionality, which enables us to offer our solution at a highly competitive price. Domino optimized the development environment and support for Internet messaging standards. This has enabled us to reduce our development costs and achieve a rapid time-to-market."

The UNICOM site links 1,300 users across the U.K., France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium and is currently logging more than 70,000 visits per month. Its 20 featured sections include a companywide phone directory, job-vacancy list, customer relationship management solution, discussion forums, company news, technical operating procedures and a library of digital assets, including logos and product photographs.

"IBM's proven e-business technologies can help us transform and improve our business processes. And we are very excited about the possibilities."

–Phil Wilkins

As the European market leader in salad distribution, Uniq supplies chilled, pre-packed salads to major food chains in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Immediate access to critical procedures

At the core of the Domisphere solution is InfoPool, a Lotus Notes database holding templates from which Web pages are created. Once installed, these templates define page presentation, workflow, security and archive-publishing duration. Domisphere leverages Domino's built-in security and workflow features, enabling specific templates to be used by particular users and user groups. "Now our managers can easily publish critical information directly to our intranet without having to rely on IT experts," Wilkins says. "This ensures immediate, universal access to up-to-date standards and procedures—an absolute necessity in the food industry."

Stewart notes he is pleased that IBM has integrated Java™ technology and open standards such as XML throughout its extensive family of e-business solutions. This, he says, will enable InfoSys to continue to leverage IBM e-business products and technologies to offer more powerful solutions. "We are now integrating Domisphere with IBM WebSphere® Portal, to offer a full content-managed portal solution," he remarks.

Wilkins agrees. "We intend to continue adding powerful new applications to our intranet, thanks to the extensibility and interoperability that Domino provides," he says. "In fact, we are just beginning to explore the ways in which IBM's proven e-business technologies can help us transform and improve our business processes. And we are very excited about the possibilities."

For more information

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