

Georgia.gov Finds Freedom, Flexibility in Drupal and Acquia Cloud

Replacing a Legacy Platform Gives Georgia.gov Room to Grow

It's not hard to understand why the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) decided to drop the outdated content management system (CMS) that supported Georgia.gov in favor of open source Drupal and Acquia Cloud. The 10 year old proprietary platform was becoming too costly to maintain and was chugging to keep pace with site traffic.

Georgia.gov is the official website of the State of Georgia and serves as the front door to more than 55 state agency websites. The site had been running two distinct versions of a proprietary CMS, one of which was no longer supported. The situation had gotten to the point where the technical team's entire efforts were spent making sure the sites were live and servers were not going down.

"We were in a situation where a couple of times it was extremely overwhelming to keep up with the traffic," said Nikhil Deshpande, the director of Georgia.gov Interactive, an office within the GTA. "We needed something that could sustain our multiple sites without multiplying the maintenance effort."

GTA engaged Phase2, a web strategy and enterprise content management firm and builder and maintainer of the OpenPublic distribution, to create a platform that would cut waste and provide better citizen access to information and services.

How They Did It

As part of an extensive search for a new platform for its websites, Georgia.gov put together a list of solid requirements. The agency wanted a cost-effective, enterprise-level system that wasn't going to require a lot of upkeep. "We were not going to move to something that was going to cost the same as our legacy system," Deshpande said.

Using the OpenPublic distribution as a starting point, Phase2 and the GTA team devised a strategy to migrate, rebuild, redesign, and support the State of Georgia's outdated content management system, and transform it into a single cohesive system. Together,



Georgia.gov

- Georgia Technical Authority
- www.georgia.gov
- Drupal user since 2012
- Acquia client since 2012

The Numbers

- More than 55 websites migrated from proprietary CMS to Drupal
- Site designed and launched within 12 months
- \$4.7 million projected cost savings over five years
- First state government with a full enterprise, Drupal implementation

DREAM IT. DRUPAL IT.



the team built a multi-site architecture that promotes consistency and flexibility across all agency sites. And through the use of open source software, they were able to migrate content efficiently, while creating a custom responsive, mobile-first search application.

The new platform also needed to be intuitive enough so content managers and users of all levels could easily manage their individual sites. "We wanted something that didn't require 20 clicks to publish something," Deshpande said.

Rather than host locally as it had in the past, Georgia.gov wanted to leverage the agility and elasticity of the cloud. Traffic to the sites varied according to regular calendar events throughout the year, and Georgia.gov needed to adjust to those changes rapidly. It also needed to be able to onboard additional websites without the hassle of having to provision new servers. Georgia.gov selected Acquia Cloud for its Drupal application lifecycle management.

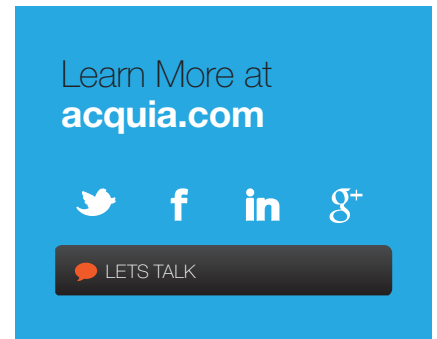
"Acquia did a great job even before we were done with the entire migration. They were very proactive in looking at the overall traffic and mitigating a lot of things before they hit us," Deshpande said.

The Results

In 12 months, Georgia.gov in partnership with Phase2 completed its design and migration of 55 sites to the Drupal platform, becoming the first state government to do a full enterprise, Drupal implementation. Georgia's new platform promotes consistency and flexibility across all agency sites; it's now faster and easier for agencies to add new online services and provide greater support for mobile devices. Georgia.gov has become the destination site for Georgia's citizens to quickly find state resources, and its responsive design makes it friendly for all types of devices.

Officials estimate that the move to Drupal and Acquia Cloud will generate savings of \$4.7 million over five years. In addition, the move to cloud hosting will allow Georgia.gov to free itself from managing at least 20 servers. Now Georgia.gov can respond to increased demand and unexpected traffic spikes seamlessly. "If we see something coming up, we just notify Acquia and they ramp up to accommodate the extra traffic," Deshpande said.

Phase2 created an intuitive user interface and provided training guidance for Georgia.gov, which gives their content administrators the power to spin up new sites easily, while Acquia Cloud allows Georgia.gov to add new sites without hassle. "Now that we have a solid product, we are getting a lot of interest from other agencies who want to onboard. In the last few months, we have already added 15 sites," Deshpande said. Drupal and Acquia Cloud have given Georgia.gov a springboard to the future. "We have come a long way, but this is just the beginning."



"The transition from an old-school design hosted on a proprietary CMS to a new, responsive design on an open source platform has been a great journey."

– Nikhil Deshpande, director of Georgia.gov Interactive



Success Enabled With...

- Acquia Cloud
- Acquia Network
- OpenPublic deployment by Phase2 Technology
- Content migration and installation development by Mediacurrent

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