



Success Story

Fast Facts

Customer Profile

- CityReach International Ltd provides and manages Internet infrastructures
- Its customers are telecommunications providers, banks, governments, Internet service providers and ASPs

Challenge

- Set up a website with a logical navigation structure
- Overcome delays in downloading pages
- Provide relevant information and graphics
- Set up a future-proof, scaleable system so that new systems could be added at a later date

Solution

- A website built on Microsoft's .NET Framework

Benefits

- CityReach has a future proof website
- Fast loading graphics
- Downloads the whole page in seconds
- Cost savings through reuse of code because of COM+
- Ease of integration with XML

Technology

- Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Advanced Server
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft Internet Information Server 5.5
- Microsoft Visual Basic® 6

Partner

- Razorfish

CityReach International



State-of-the-art web service

CityReach International Ltd provides and manages Internet infrastructures for large telecommunications providers, banks, governments and Internet service providers (ISPs). It has eight European data centres and was founded in 1999. It is partly funded by Vulcan Ventures, the venture capital company set up by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. To match its state-of-the-art Internet hosting, managed services and world-class security, it needed a website which reflected its expertise. Razorfish, a digital solutions provider specialising in Internet-based applications and multimedia, created, designed and implemented a website.

Background

CityReach International Ltd was founded in 1999 and is partly funded by venture capitalists Vulcan Ventures, which was set up by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen to support innovative companies. Its chief executive officer is Dr Sanjaya Addanki, a former IBM vice president responsible for e-hosting services in Europe, Middle East and Africa. Dr Addanki spent 16 years at IBM prior to joining CityReach and was responsible for advanced technology projects in artificial intelligence, multimedia and the Internet. He is head of a management team which includes senior staff who have worked for the US, UK and European military.

The company currently has eight data centres which are based in Dublin, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Munich, Berlin, Stockholm and Budapest. CityReach serves the business Internet needs of service providers (ISPs), ASPs, telecommunications carriers and mobile operators. Customers include BT Ignite, USInternetworking, Sphera and Universal Access. Typically, these companies are providing services to other organisations and need the highest level of resilient, scaleable, secure facilities and services to underpin their Internet-based business offerings.

The challenge

Customers who enter the CityReach website expect to get the information they need with a few clicks of the mouse. They need to navigate around the site quickly and not spend time waiting for web pages to download.

An inter-departmental team at CityReach reviewed the company's existing website and decided that it had six main failings:

The Microsoft logo, consisting of the word "Microsoft" in a bold, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol.



"Using the .NET Framework, developers can use C++, Visual Basic or C# to write code instead of just one language. We like to write applications in Visual Basic rather than C++ code for enterprise applications because of the ease of creating COM+ objects. It means that the web pages can be easily updated."

Dr Simon Carlino, web content manager, CityReach International

- It lacked some information for clients;
- The navigation structure was illogical;
- It was unlikely to meet needs as demand for services increased;
- It had no electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) features;
- It was slow to download;
- It had irrelevant graphics.

The team realised that it needed a new website built on the latest tools and platform to meet these demands for improvement. Dr Simon Carlino, web content manager, CityReach, says: "Our image is of strength and stability and we wanted a website to reflect that."

CityReach's customers hold vast amounts of sensitive data. Customers sometimes visit the data centres of CityReach to see where their data is stored and maintained on the servers. By choosing CityReach as an outsourcer, customers are stating their confidence in its state-of-the-art security systems. So it is imperative that the website reflects the same level of security and stability.

Talking about a visit to a CityReach hosted data centre, Carlino says: "Each customer has to go through seven layers of security when physically entering the data centre. This is essential as we deal with the data of large corporate companies or governments. Obviously such organisations do not want anyone else to have access to their data. For starters there is 24 hour security personnel/CCTV watching everyone's move.

"As well as a proximity card which lets people into certain areas, there is also scramble keypad access control to all zones within the facility. This means that the code for access to a certain area is constantly changing. Even if somebody left their code behind by mistake, the next person couldn't get access because the code would already have changed."

Fingerprint verification and other biometric access controls give access to ultra-sensitive areas such as the operations room and there are movement sensors and alarms, internally and externally. This is in addition to

razorwire on the perimeter fence, anti-crash posts and vehicle holding areas.

The website

Razorfish is a digital solutions provider specialising in Internet and multimedia applications and has offices in 15 countries worldwide including New York, London, Oslo and Tokyo. Warren Midgely, technical architect, Razorfish, says: "There have been a lot of companies offering Internet services and many have fallen by the wayside but we are one of the ones which has come to the fore."

Carlino says: "We put the contract out to tender and the proposal put forward by IT consultancy Razorfish seemed most appropriate for our needs at the time."

The Razorfish solution was to build a new website based on Microsoft's .NET Framework. This provides a managed, stable, secure environment and platform for web-based services and applications. The framework includes a common language runtime engine, based on eXtensible Markup Language (XML), so that files and attributes in code can be exchanged easily.

Midgely says: "CityReach needed a website that was modular. As business increases, it wants to add functionality without having to rewrite lines of code. The website built on Microsoft technology will enable it to do this. In addition, it is so easy to use that it could even be managed by people without the traditional technical skills needed to look after such a project."

Razorfish started talking to CityReach in March 2001 and developed the site in just over two months. After testing and changes, it went live in June 2001. The website was built using Microsoft Windows 2000 Advanced Server, Microsoft SQL Server 2000, Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS) 5.5 as well as eXtensible Style Language Transformation (XSLT), XML, Microsoft Visual Basic 6.0 and component object model (COM+) objects.

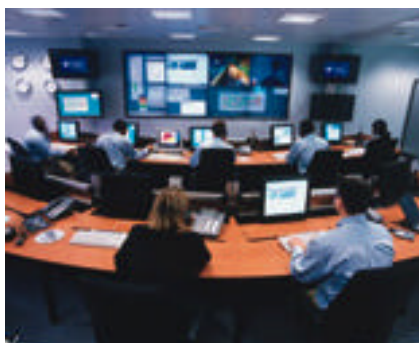
Microsoft®

Microsoft
**Windows 2000
Advanced Server**

Microsoft
**Internet
Information
Server**

Benefits

The website offers several benefits. Specialist programmers are not required for changes to be made to the website. Midgley says: "CityReach can make changes themselves to anything on the website into any language supported, including Acrobat files. There is also a secure area on the website which an authorised author can make changes to but an authorised editor has to approve the changes. The CityReach system was developed from a previous solution we had worked on. There is no way that we could have developed it so quickly on any other platform."



Global Management Centre – London Facility

Carlino is impressed by the website's multi-language capability. "Using the .NET Framework, developers can use C++, Visual Basic or C# to write code instead of just one language. We like to write applications in Visual Basic for enterprise applications, rather than C++ code, because of the ease of creating COM+ objects. It means that the web pages can be easily updated when needed."

Ease of integration

Midgley says that the component-based, three-tier structure will enable the company to easily integrate other applications into the website.

This was one of the reasons that the solution appealed to Carlino. He says: "We needed a solution which would be scalable as we plan to integrate an e-CRM package into the website in the future."

The use of Microsoft's technology has another advantage. Carlino says: "We can foresee a time in the not too distant future where we will be able to personalise each page for individual customers, so that they don't have to wait minutes to access the information that they need and we can also send them the news that they want to have."

"We also needed to integrate a savings calculator that we had developed independently in-house into the new website. Now prospects can access this powerful online calculator in seconds to assess whether it would be cheaper to outsource their Internet requirements to CityReach or to build a data centre themselves. Because we developed this application in-house using Microsoft technologies, it was relatively easy to seamlessly integrate it into the .NET framework of the new site."

Live news updates

Midgley highlights the versatility of the website: "If the company wishes, it could add a news channel – even offering live news updates. The traffic to the website is split between a cluster of servers, using Windows 2000's network load balancing services (NLBS), which means that the website offers 9.99999 availability. This is essential to a company like CityReach which is providing services to ISPs and ASPs as well as high-profile banks and telecoms carriers."



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