Case Study

Drupal CMS Framework | ITV

Client / Project Name

ITV plc

Project Theme

Entirely new web platform for all ITV sites and subsites, creating new digital experiences for site visitors and editors

The Approach

Drupal CMS Multisite

Major Benefits

- Coherent content management
- Excellent content sharing
- Rapid sub-site building
- Powerful search
- Seamless integration with backend systems

Partners

Acquia

Market / Geography

Media & Entertainment / United Kingdom

The Challenge

ITV is the largest commercial television network in the UK. ITV Broadcasting's operations are made up of ITV's family of channels: ITV1, ITV2, ITV3, ITV4 and CITV, and their HD and +1 equivalents. ITV1 is the largest commercial channel in the UK, consistently attracting the largest audiences of any UK commercial broadcaster. ITV Online also delivers content across multiple platforms such as itv.com and ITV Player.

ITV was lacking a coherent website platform to manage its continuously-growing, rich media content. Content editors and technical staff were struggling every day to publish this content with the existing, outdated tools. Many new business requirements such as pay-per-view for online content could simply not be implemented, leading to several lost windows of opportunity for ITV.

Ausy Belgium and Acquia Inc. were awarded a large project to develop an advanced multisite platform for all ITV's websites. The platform needed to support the easy creation of individual feature sites for every TV program. The created sites needed to 'inherit' all relevant code and functionality from the (headless) Drupal platform and improve easy of maintenance, content and functionality sharing and cost reduction.

Drupal CMS Framework | ITV

The Solution

Client / Project Name

ITV plc

Project Theme

Entirely new web platform for all ITV sites and subsites, creating new digital experiences for site visitors and editors

The Approach

Drupal CMS Multisite

Major Benefits

- Coherent content management
- Excellent content sharing
- Rapid sub-site building
- Powerful search
- Seamless integration with backend systems

Partners

Acquia

Market / Geography

Media & Entertainment / United Kingdom

Site definition and planning

- A full content inventory and functional inventory of the AS IS situation was made, followed by a series of workshops to determine the TO BE situation. A gap analysis then led to a new site definition and planning.

Information architecture, UX, design

- Ausy Belgium developed new information architecture for all the ITV sites, focussing on content reuse, content sharing and usability.
- As a proof of concept, Ausy Belgium built the website for Downton Abbey, a British/American period drama television series on top of the platform. This show was the most watched television series on ITV at the time the site was launched. In total more than 80 programme websites would eventually be ported on to this new platform.

Creating and development of sites

- Ausy Belgium built the new platform according to a multilayered architecture with a 'headless' Drupal as base platform to allow content sharing and a common codebase. Due to this, common features are immediately available for newly created sites to make the setup and maintenance as easy as possible. Important custom-built features include image sliders, the ITV player integration, video pages, image galleries, asset management etc.
- The Sites module (similar to Organic Groups) was used to create sub-sites and allow them to be build and previewed on the production environment without being accessible for the general public. Once approved by different stakeholders, a sub-site can be published live with on click and without intervention for a developer or other technically trained user.

Drupal CMS Framework | ITV

Client / Project Name

ITV plc

Project Theme

Entirely new web platform for all ITV sites and subsites, creating new digital experiences for site visitors and editors

The Approach

Drupal CMS Multisite

Major Benefits

- Coherent content management
- Excellent content sharing
- Rapid sub-site building
- Powerful search
- Seamless integration with backend systems

Partners

Acquia

Market / Geography

Media & Entertainment / United Kingdom

The Solution

- A centralised Solr search engine is used to cross-promote content between websites. Based on the taxonomy tags assigned to a page, Solr is used to fetch and display "related content" from other ITV sites, both sites that already life on the platform, and sites that are still hosted on ITV's legacy custom build CMS platform.

Regular updating, evaluation/reviews and maintenance

- Ausy Belgium provided regular updating and maintenance of the platform (both pro-active and change requests) for an initial operational phase of the new platform, as well as periodical reviews based on an analysis of monitoring data.

Quality control of websites and tools

- An important aspect in this project was the quality assurance of the delivered code by using a Continuous Integration pipeline with large amounts of automated tests. During the development all code checked into the version control system (Mercurial in this case) was automatically checked out and tested on hardware resembling the production environment at ITV headquarters.
- All the quality aspects of the entire platform are verified on the staging environment, which is a mirror of the production environment.

Support to the technical coordination

- During the deployment phase and for an initial operational phase of the project, Ausy Belgium provided full technical coordination with and support to ITV. After a thorough training phase and as soon as the entire platform was hosted internally by ITV, latter had built up sufficient internal competence to manage its own platform.