

Client



Company:
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

Partner:
Logica CMG

Headquarters:
London, UK

Industry:
UK Central Government

Solutions:
Alterian Content Manager

Results:

Alterian Content Manager enabled unification of hundreds of websites onto a single technology platform controlled and supported by four global business hubs. Putting contributors and website visitors first, the new web interface has enabled the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to respond faster to British citizens' needs, as well as enabling nearly 300 editors to contribute content locally in over 40 different languages. The solution has brought FCO web visitors greater interactivity with the introduction of new functionality including video, audio and social media technologies.

"With this new, highly resilient and secure web presence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is empowered to increase the effectiveness of its 255 web channels. We can now talk to all our offices in their local time zone, offering advice and technical support when they need it, which has a positive impact on the 'freshness' of the content available to British citizens wherever they are in the world."

Paul Hosking
Platform Manager, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Alterian Content Manager brings worldwide benefits to the FCO's global web strategy

Introduction

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office - 'the FCO' or 'the Foreign Office' for short - is responsible for promoting British interests overseas and British relations with other countries. An outward-looking organization which is focused on changing the world, not on administering itself, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office runs a global network of posts (Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and other offices) in more than 160 countries.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office employs 14,900 staff, supported by over 250 websites published locally in 40 different languages. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office aims to:

- promote the interests of Britain through the attraction of business to the UK and promotion of UK business worldwide
- support British nationals abroad
- protect Britain and her interests from terrorism
- stabilise conflict and develop human rights worldwide
- promote a low-carbon, high-growth global economy
- develop effective international institutions.

In February 2007 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office signed a five-year £11.5m contract to replace the existing web platform and improve its web presence. An extensive assessment of website management technology solutions led the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to select Alterian Content Manager for its resilience, scalability and proven track record operating hundreds of multi-lingual websites for organizations in the public sector and private industry.

The main corporate site, www.fco.gov.uk, is the first point of contact for British travellers seeking guidance before going overseas. It is a primary international diplomacy tool and resource for visitors to and investors in the UK. The main website handles several million visitors every year. At peak times, such as around the Mumbai bombings in September 2008, the global financial crisis in 2008-09 and the extremely high profile Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in late 2009, the site has provided real time updates, and coped with a tripling of its usual traffic. In 2008-9 the web platform as a whole handled 35m visitors.

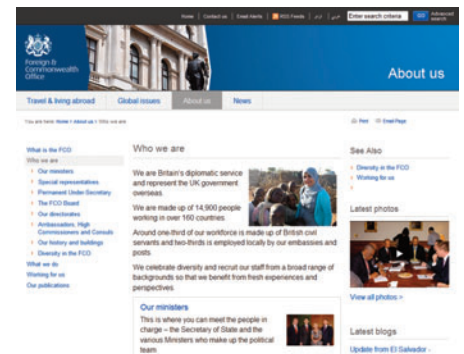
The Challenge

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's strategic priorities range from the promotion of UK business, the provision of consular assistance for nationals, UK border management and the pursuit of terrorists, to the

promotion of governance, law and Human Rights to stabilise conflict and the development of International Institutions. Delivering these diverse duties, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is required to meet the demands of multiple different enquiries every day.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office use the web to deliver a multi-faceted network for UK citizens, foreign visitors, diplomatic services, businesses and potential investors in the UK. The FCO's websites provide the primary interface for engagement with all these groups.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Digital Diplomacy Group leverage powerful, sophisticated technology to empower every part of the global Foreign and Commonwealth Office network. This enables the FCO to meet the challenge to understand, meet and exceed citizen, staff and visitor demands and thereby contribute to the strategic objective to protect and promote Britain and its interests.



Paul Hosking, Platform Manager, Foreign and Commonwealth, comments:

"The old website was out of date and unsupported. As part of the project we undertook a review of our entire way of working, taking steps to improve the structure of our business by introducing a number of business hubs around the globe. Like many

Alterian Case Study

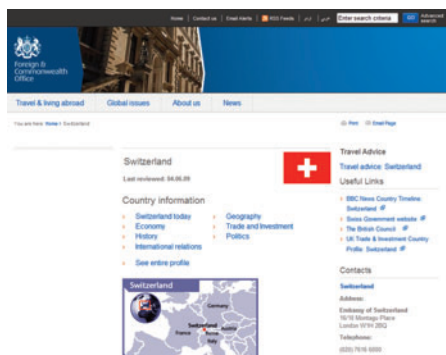
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)



organizations, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's network of websites provides an integral and tactical element of the communications strategy. We designed the new hubs to ensure a local support for field or post staff that would improve the speed and accuracy with which our websites were delivered. We wanted quicker support response times for local issues. We wanted to increase the resources available to editorial contributors so that we could better support them through IT to deliver the most up to date content on their website. Additionally we wanted to bring the websites up-to-date by introducing more dynamic interactive content, audio, video and social media."

The significant and rigorous procurement process that followed looked at over 30 providers, assessing the stability, reputation and capability of each solution. This challenge was made more difficult due to the global reach of the project. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office must be able to represent every local office or post abroad and carry the local language. The solution must also be sufficiently scalable and robust to support hundreds of online instances in a single solution but also operate those sites within tightly controlled guidelines.

Content Manager was selected as the technology platform to manage all 255 websites in multiple hub locations without incurring technological tie-ups or prohibitive costs.



needs. Whilst we had spent time testing and re-testing the scalability, resilience and control of a number of solutions during the assessment phase of the procurement process and were confident in our decision, the challenge was always going to be the roll out. Happily, using Alterian Content Manager, we were able to develop the site structures as content editors migrated content so everyone was working on the sites at the same time. This ability to use templates to roll out new sites is something we are still enjoying from the Alterian solution."

The new web platform has four main hubs in London, Washington, Singapore and New Delhi. The hubs serve over 160 embassies, consulates and high commissions across the globe, providing geographically based maintenance and management of individual websites including the provision of editorial control. Using the scalability of Content Manager to hang sites off www.fco.gov.uk, additional websites are created, approved and published in minutes.

The Content Manager platform currently supports;

- 150 countries
- 255 websites
- 40 different languages
- 250-300 editorial contributors globally.

"Previously we had been pushing our content through IT which not only resulted in slow time to publish, but meant our technical people were overstretched doing two jobs. Alterian Content Manager gave us the power to separate the way we managed the global websites. Using www.fco.gov.uk as a foundation for our other websites, we use the 'hubs' to administer all our websites. Not only has this meant significant savings in time but we have seen massive benefits for our personnel. From the content users' perspective, it has been so intuitive and simple to use that we now have around 300 content contributors providing up-to-date, relevant content particular to their locality. It's when you consider the massive range in skills, language, technical understanding and abilities amongst our global editing staff that the real power of Alterian Content Manager really comes into focus", commented Paul Hosking.



The Solution

Content Manager's single robust CMS technology was introduced to act as a unified repository for both the content provision and technical management of all the Foreign and Commonwealth Office websites. As Paul Hosking comments, the use of Content Manager meant the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were able to divide the IT performance, functionality control and security maintenance from the contributors' content interface for even greater control and flexibility for users:

"Strategically this was a complex project. We were changing how we operated technologically, strategically and structurally. The new solution had to scale a global solution, support multiple languages, thousands of users, hundreds of contributors and still have the capacity to grow with our

Technically the new solution has increased the speed of the platform performance and its stability, establishing an uptime of 99.95%. Additionally, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has become more confident in its content control. With 40% of content, mostly on visa and passport information, shared globally, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is able to store everything centrally where it is kept within branding and communication guidelines. This confidence was further extended in a recent re-branding of the websites, made simpler by implementing changes to core templates which could be rolled out to other Foreign and Commonwealth Office websites in a matter of just a few clicks.

The implementation of Content Manager has also freed IT to give greater attention to strengthening the security and performance of the websites for greater availability during high demand peaks.

The Future

Looking to the future, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has ambitions to achieve more with the web than simple communication. The new web platform provides an ideal launch pad for engaging with civil society on the FCO's strategic priorities, and really making a difference to foreign policy outcomes using digital channels.

As Paul Hosking concludes;

"With this new, highly resilient and secure web presence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is empowered to increase the effectiveness of its web channels. We can better serve and interact with the public to help meet the public diplomacy objectives and help improve the efficiency and flexibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's web publishing now and in the future."

About the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Through the continued development and improvement (both technological and environmentally) of the FCO global network of embassies and posts, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office aims to:

- promote UK business around the world and to attract business into the UK
- support and inform British nationals abroad through consular assistance
- ensure that our borders are open to those that may benefit our economy (as well as those with genuine asylum claims), but closed to those that may bring us harm
- pursue terrorists and the causes of terrorism, as well as protecting the UK from terrorist attacks
- stabilise conflict around the world and promote and develop human rights, law and good governance
- promote a low-carbon, high-growth global economy
- develop effective international institutions, especially the United Nations and the European Union.

Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) empowers marketers with an integrated marketing software platform combining database, online and operational marketing applications on a shared data infrastructure. The Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform makes it practical and cost effective for marketers to use actionable insight to execute an integrated marketing strategy across online and offline channels.

It is the unique integration of analytics, content and execution through our industry leading tools, such as the Alterian Messenger email platform, and the award winning Content Management solutions, which enables marketers to drive a seamless, multi-channel customer experience.

Alterian's analytically-led software is delivered to approximately 1,000 marketing departments, across 26 countries, and an international network of more than 100 business partners, including marketing services providers, agencies and systems integrators. Its partners, such as Accenture, Acxiom, Allant Group, Cap Gemini, Carlson Marketing, Experian, Epsilon, InfoUSA, LogicaCMG, Merkle, Ogilvy One and Euro RSCG Worldwide, deliver Alterian software alongside their own domain and services expertise to help market leaders such as Princess Cruises, General Motors, Zurich, Astra Zeneca, HSBC, Limited Too, AEGON, Avis, Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment, Dell, Amnesty International and Vodafone integrate marketing processes and drive competitive advantage. For more information about Alterian, products within the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform or our Partner Network, please visit www.alterian.com.

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