

### Client



### Alterian Partner:



### Company:

Stockport Metropolitan  
Borough Council

### Website:

[www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk)

### Headquarters:

Stockport, England

### Industry:

Local Government

### Solution:

Alterian Content Manager

### Alterian Partner:

J2 Interactive Ltd

## Stockport Council goes interactive and puts its citizens at the heart of its communications

### Synopsis

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council wanted to improve the performance, functionality and scalability of [www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk). Working with Alterian partner J2 Interactive Ltd, Stockport MBC have recently launched the new website using Alterian Content Manager (Enterprise Edition) to deliver a customer centric website with transactional facilities for online.

### The challenge

[www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk) is the primary online communications system between the citizens of Stockport and the council. Inhibited by a number of issues around usability, functionality and performance the website was failing to accommodate the requirements of its citizens, businesses and visitors to Stockport. In response to increasing demand from the people of Stockport to transact with the council services online, Stockport looked to improve the functionality of the existing website to better meet the needs of the public.

Andrew Kirkham of Stockport Council explains, "The website was initially set up as an information portal. Everything visitors might need was there, but it was difficult to find, understand and in reality, often only served as an instigator to further enquiries either via telephone or email."

The citizen's use of the website was hampered by the internally focused nature of the website. Primarily designed to reflect the infrastructure of Stockport Council, [www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk) did not consider how its customers searched and interacted with information. Even the language of the website served as a barrier to customers, referring to services in council terminology that better communicated what the council wanted to say, rather than what its customers wanted to know. The result was a website which could be confusing to navigate and as such was off putting for site visitors.

At the same time as reviewing the lack of usability Stockport with the aid of J2 Interactive, re-assessed the technical capacity and overall goals of the website.

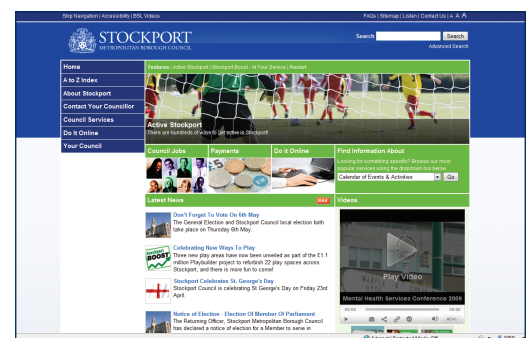
On a performance level the website suffered some variability in service delivery that, at extreme peaks of demand, had left the council struggling to keep the website running. In attending to the issues of performance, the core objective of the website also came under review. Originally established as a sign posting facility that served as the primary gateway for information seekers [www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk) needed to grow into an immediate self-service point of interest for Stockport's customers, the citizens, businesses and visitors.

In addition to customer focused improvements, there were a number of internal technical issues that would benefit from attention of the J2 Interactive and Alterian team. Specifically, a disconnect between the website and the back office systems would provide an opportunity to streamline the publication process for significant gains in time saving within Stockport Council, as Andrew Kirkham explains, "Although there wasn't a particular issue from the perspective of the citizen using the website, internally the lack of interoperability meant that Stockport Council was taking longer to process transactional requests. This was creating a resource drain we were keen to resolve as part of the website project."

### The solution

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council engaged experienced Alterian partner J2 Interactive to assist in the consultation and implementation of a new website strategy solution that would provide greater levels of self-service, usability, technical functionality and scalability.

The project took a holistic approach to the configuration, management, availability, security and scalability of the internet services. With J2 Interactive providing essential direction and consultation support, Stockport Council selected Alterian Content Manager Enterprise Edition to deliver a cost effective solution that would help Stockport put its customer requirements at the heart of its website.



Andrew Kirkham of Stockport Council states, "The primary objective of the website improvements was to ensure that through a number of different ways of working, Stockport Council provided an outstanding level of service to its customers. The key was remembering at every stage that the technology was serving the individual needs of Stockport's citizens, rather than just the communication needs of council."

To develop [www.stockport.gov.uk](http://www.stockport.gov.uk) into the primary communications channel, Stockport drew on the flexibility of Alterian Content Manager. Publishing

"The website was originally an information portal. As demand increased for online services, Stockport extended the existing website to cope, but it soon became apparent that the best way to successfully meet the needs of our customers, both now and in the future, was to introduce greater scalability with a more functional solution. Working with J2 Interactive we have recently upgraded to the latest multi-site functionality of the Alterian CMS which means that we can now deliver a number of websites from a single shared platform. Alterian Content Manager was the best solution to fulfill our objectives for a self service website which would enable us to communicate with our customer more directly, help us save money and increase the efficiency of all our online communications."

Andrew Kirkham, Head of ICT  
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

# Alterian Case Study

## Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

within Alterian Content Manager Stockport can deliver a variety of content types from images, document, pdfs, media files etc, for multiple users on the website, from a simple navigational menu.

Stockport was able to migrate thousands of critical informational resources into a single CMS framework which enabled content to be stored and searched using the terminology expected by Stockport's customers rather than the preferred council terminology.

Andrew Kirkam continues, "Previously visitors might have given up online and contacted the council direct for information, now the new website provides a clear and straightforward navigation that is customer centric and presents vital information in a manner which the citizens expect. Our website now talks the customer's language and puts information where they expect to find it; bin collection in refuse section etc. Internally, the change has created a mindset shift, making our whole organization more keenly interested in understanding our customers. This change is reflected in our adherence to accessibility standards and use of Alterian for content enrichment that makes it both more relevant for visitors, but also easier to find through the use of intelligent searching."



With further improvements underway to increase the robustness of the website, Stockport is looking forward to eradicating legacy resilience issues. The planned introduction of new hardware combined with the scalability of Alterian Content Manager architecture, will provide the capability to handle new peaks in traffic which have recently reached up to 100,000 page requests in a few hours.

Stockport MBC is also expecting to benefit from a new transactional approach to services. Working jointly with J2 Interactive, the Council has already moved further towards satisfying its objectives to become a self-service website. Using the interoperability of Alterian Content Manager, combined with the functional capability of ecommerce solutions means Stockport's citizens will be able to confidently use the website to make payments for essential council services, such as council tax and bills. As Andrew explains, "Alterian Content Manager has the technical scalability to provide integration with additional services from J2 Interactive that included streamlining the transactional capability of the website to enable immediate interaction with service specific ecommerce systems. This means our citizens can simply visit the

website and make a direct payment for a number of different services including parking and Council tax bills."

Stockport MBC is also developing further solutions for delivering services with Social Media and Smart Phone technology.

"Working with Alterian Content Manager at the core of the Stockport's website, the council is already providing great customer usability and access to interactive council services. More importantly, the scalability of Alterian means that we can continue to develop the website from this point onwards to ensure Stockport Council keeps its citizens, businesses and visitors at the heart of their communications strategy" concludes Andrew Kirkham.

### 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 Marketing Services 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 Alterian's industry leading tools, such as the Dynamic Messenger email platform, and the award winning Morello and Immediacy Web 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](http://www.alterian.com)

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