

# Seamless Member Experience Drives 95% Increase in Users for the Association for Institutional Research

CASE STUDY



INDUSTRY  
Association

PRODUCT  
Sitefinity

## SUMMARY

When an outdated CMS disrupted the Association for Institutional Research's ability to engage its member community, the organization tapped Sitefinity to rebuild its digital experience.

## Challenge

Innovation is often viewed as a force of disruption. But for the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), disruption played an equally important role in driving innovation.

AIR empowers higher education professionals to leverage data to improve student success and institutional effectiveness. Serving more than 3,000 members, AIR's website is vital to both engaging its audience and enabling them to manage their membership.

Unfortunately, managing the website had become a major source of disruption. The AIR website was unwieldy, built using Microsoft SharePoint with a custom-made network of databases to handle membership information. Ashley Ivey, Designer & Media Specialist at AIR, summed up the experience of managing the site into one word: pain.

"The website was held together with chewing gum and rubber bands," she recalled. "It could only be edited in Internet Explorer, couldn't display dynamic content, didn't support mobile and didn't comply with accessibility best practices."

## Solution

AIR knew it needed to embrace innovation and rethink its digital presence to better fit the needs of its members.

Working with digital agency Americaneagle.com, AIR decided to create a brand-new digital platform. This new platform was designed to be easy to manage on the backend while robust enough to deliver value-driven, member-centric experiences that people expect.

The new platform consisted of three tightly integrated systems:

- Progress® Sitefinity® CMS for managing website content
- ACGI Association Anywhere AMS for managing customer and membership data
- Higher Logic Member and Customer Engagement Platform to keep community engaged

"Focusing on user-friendliness, flexibility and scalability for future projects, Sitefinity was our immediate recommendation," said Will Levenson, Director of Sales, Americaneagle.com. "It was just ideal for wrapping the different components into a single seamless journey."

**"If we had been where we were 24 months ago, before Sitefinity, we wouldn't have been poised to achieve the same level of success."**

**Jenny Chu**  
Senior Director of  
Marketing & Community  
Engagement, AIR

Sitefinity gave AIR greater control of its digital experience. With a drag-and-drop interface, anyone could create and manage content in a timely fashion. This was helpful both for onboarding new staff and quickly disseminating information to members.

Additionally, Sitefinity helped deliver a value-packed member experience. The new site is much easier to navigate, especially with mobile support. Additionally, integration with Association Anywhere enables people to seamlessly manage their membership while integration with Higher Logic enables members to communicate with each other online.

## Results

Just looking at the numbers on paper, it's easy to see the success of the new AIR platform. Usage and engagement metrics are up, with results like:

- Increase in user count from 220,000 in 2017 to 430,000 in 2019
- Growth in number of sessions from 460,000 in 2017 to 750,000 in 2019
- Lift in page views from 1.3 million in 2017 to 1.5 million in 2019
- Decrease in bounce rate by 8.3% to date

More importantly, however, is how the new digital experience platform enabled AIR be more innovative in response to shifting business conditions. This was particularly evident during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

In fact, the association's annual conference went virtual in May 2020 due to the pandemic. Just minutes before the opening

keynote, the conference platform crashed. AIR's marketing team was able to largely recreate the conference platform experience in Sitefinity within minutes, redirecting attendees to the website rather than the platform. This ultimate flexibility would not have been possible with the old systems.

"Our members had new conundrums and limited means of accessing their network," said Jenny Chu, Senior Director of Marketing & Community Engagement, AIR. "In just a few weeks, we were able to create a new connected community, with resources, job openings and other critical content."

"If we had been where we were 24 months ago, before Sitefinity, we wouldn't have been poised to achieve the same level of success," she added.

## About AIR

AIR is a global association that empowers higher education professionals at all levels to utilize data, analytics, information, and evidence to make decisions and take actions that benefit students and institutions and improve higher education. Learn more at [airweb.org](http://airweb.org).

## About Americaneagle.com

[Americaneagle.com](http://Americaneagle.com) is a one-stop shop offering a full range of solutions for anyone looking to succeed in their online endeavors. Since 1995, Americaneagle.com has completed more than 12,000 web projects.



Engage and Retain Your Members  
with Sitefinity

## About Progress

Progress (NASDAQ: PRGS) provides the leading products to develop, deploy and manage high-impact business applications. Our comprehensive product stack is designed to make technology teams more productive and enable organizations to accelerate the creation and delivery of strategic business applications, automate the process by which apps are configured, deployed and scaled, and make critical data and content more accessible and secure—leading to competitive differentiation and business success. Learn about Progress at [www.progress.com](http://www.progress.com) or +1-800-477-6473.

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