

Racing WA Transforms the User Experience Consolidating 12 Websites into Two, Leveraging Progress Sitefinity Cloud and Next.js

CASE STUDY



COMPANY
Racing WA

INDUSTRY
Government
Entertainment

PRODUCT
Progress® Sitefinity®
Progress® Sitefinity® Cloud

COUNTRY
Australia

SUMMARY
Racing WA is the Principal Racing Authority and State-appointed regulator of thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing in Western Australia, serving as the premier source of racing information for the state. Over time, Racing WA's digital footprint expanded to 12 disparate websites, which posed multiple challenges, including a fragmented user experience and large maintenance overhead that comes with managing multiple sites. Partnering with The Brand Agency and Progress Sitefinity, Racing WA consolidated its 12 websites into a single, modern platform with Next.js as its frontend, utilizing their preferred technology.

Challenge

With 12 different WordPress websites and two standalone Next.js applications, Racing WA was looking to consolidate their web properties into a unified and engaging experience for its diverse user base. Their audiences sought a holistic view of racing information, news, events and content relating to the wider racing industry in Western Australia, all from a single location. Racing WA realized it needed a single, unified platform to deliver the superior digital experiences its users expected – and that was not something their existing CMS infrastructure could offer.

“We’ve got multiple platforms and multiple pieces of content sitting in different areas that are not particularly well documented,” explained Richard Quance, Head of Content for Racing WA. “The core at creating engagement in racing is the information that can be provided in advance of a race. That includes who’s running in the race, jockey information, horse information, trainer information, the type of conditions that the race might be running. And once the race has been run, making the historical data of that race available as well. Our goal was to connect our vast racing content with our extensive race data in a more meaningful way.”

From a technological standpoint, Racing WA sought to streamline their technology stack across the organization, with a focus on expanding the adoption of Next.js, a framework they embraced over ten years ago but had not yet extended to their content websites.

Solution

Racing WA conducted an extensive due diligence process to identify the best CMS for its requirements. The incumbent WordPress was re-evaluated, and Sitefinity, Sitecore, Kentico and Squiz were also included in the process. In the end, Sitefinity was chosen for a variety of attributes, including its ease of use and extendibility. Also important to Racing WA was Sitefinity's ease of integration with numerous external data sources including critical racing data, a favorable licensing fee structure and being a mature product with widespread industry adoption.

From an implementation standpoint, Racing WA utilized the hybrid/headless architecture of Progress® Sitefinity® Cloud with the REST API layer powering the new Next.js Sitefinity renderer and the Chakra UI component library to build widgets. Compared to the traditional headless solution without page building capabilities, Sitefinity gave Racing WA a full drag-and-drop/point-and-click WYSIWYG experience for business users. Through this architecture, frontend widget development, content development/migration and page assembly took place in parallel, resulting in a streamlined total time to market of eight months. Developers focused on development and marketers focused on content without depending on each other. Once widgets were ready, marketers could create pages.

“We found that we were able to empower and shift a lot more responsibility and ownership to the frontend team and then scale that out,” said Ross Whisson, Technical Project Lead for Racing WA, The Brand Agency. “That’s obviously one of the reasons why we were able to deliver components much quicker. The time taken to build a component was reduced by 30-50% compared to before, due to the rapid development practices and not needing to use both frontend and backend resources, plus compiling the solution for each component.”

“And we’re building new features on it relatively quickly as well, so integrating new rendering components in Next.js is proving to be a really powerful framework for building modern web apps,” he continued.

To create a seamless, integrated customer experience, implementation partner The Brand Agency designed a unified information architecture relying on shared taxonomies between Sitefinity and Racing WA’s race data application. Taxonomies facilitate proper content organization, which in turn supports contextual links between different content pieces, coherent presentation of related content and facilitates thematic cross-references between the content-rich web site and the race data application. The result is faster, more accurate searches for Racing WA’s user base.

“Integrating new rendering components in Next.js is proving to be a really powerful framework for building modern web apps.”

Ross Whisson,
Senior Developer, The Brand Agency

Results

From racing fans to content creators to developers, the enhancements to the digital experiences and the efficiencies brought to the business processes by their new Sitefinity-powered digital experience platform have been felt across Racing WA.

Thanks to the integration between Racing WA’s racing app and Sitefinity, race fans can seamlessly navigate from news articles to detailed race data, or conversely enjoy related news articles on a race data page, benefiting from consistent experience and the value of relevant content thanks to the integration and consistent styling enabled by using the same Chakra component library for the website and the racing app.

Aligning on Next.js as a single UI technology not only significantly improved development productivity, resulting in 30-50% time savings to build a component, but also brought about additional benefits like consistent styling.

“As far as development productivity, aligning on a single technology for web and apps is the optimal solution,” said Paul Hamilton, Head of Technology, The Brand Agency. “Plus, it enables Racing WA to combine the racing app and Sitefinity Next.js SDK solution into a single code repository.”

“Additionally,” he continued, “the Sitefinity Next.js frontend provides the flexibility of implementing a hybrid solution of server-side and client-side rendering, which better optimized the solution for SEO while allowing Racing WA to utilize components which only support CSR.”

When it comes to cost and time savings, Sitefinity delivers.

“Regarding time and cost saving elements, we don’t have to use development partners to create new pages, and content does not have to be posted three or four times on different sites,” Quance said.

Looking ahead, Racing WA plans to take advantage of Sitefinity’s personalization capabilities to further enhance the user experience and grow its audience.

“Great, individualized customer experiences ultimately will keep people engaged and coming back to the site,” Quance said. “And it will help us pull more people into the racing industry because the lifeblood of racing here is to keep people interested in and investing in the industry, which is the fourth largest employer in Western Australia.”

About

Racing WA is the Principal Racing Authority and State-appointed regulator of thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing in Western Australia.

“Great, individualized customer experiences ultimately will keep people engaged and coming back to the site.”

Richard Quance,
Head of Content, Racing WA



Learn how the digital experience capabilities of Sitefinity can engage users to grow your business.

About Progress

Progress (Nasdaq: PRGS) empowers organizations to achieve transformational success in the face of disruptive change. Our software enables our customers to develop, deploy and manage responsible AI-powered applications and experiences with agility and ease. Customers get a trusted provider in Progress, with the products, expertise and vision they need to succeed. Over 4 million developers and technologists at hundreds of thousands of enterprises depend on Progress. Learn more at www.progress.com

© 2024 Progress Software Corporation and/or its subsidiaries or affiliates. All rights reserved. Rev 2024/11 | RITM0264319

Worldwide Headquarters

Progress Software Corporation
15 Wayside Rd, Suite 400, Burlington, MA01803, USA
Tel: +1-800-477-6473

- facebook.com/progresssw
- twitter.com/progresssw
- youtube.com/progresssw
- linkedin.com/company/progress-software
- progress_sw_