



## Case study: Non-profit

# breastcancer.org

Personalizing the visitor experience

**Breastcancer.org has been online since 1999 when it first populated its site with content straight from the book 'Living Beyond Breast Cancer'. It fast became an important online resource for its visitors. Today, with more than four thousand pages and eight million visitors a year, the highly popular site offers a wealth of information and interaction for and with its visitors giving them a personalized online experience.**

The necessity to install a new Web Content Management (WCM) system was due to the cost inefficiencies of running a large site based on bespoke html that had been pieced together in patches. As Michele Zwiebel, Managing Editor at breastcancer.org explains, "Updating became a nightmare, sending Word documents with new headlines and copy to a third party was both a lengthy and expensive process. It certainly was not an ideal way to operate a Web site."

Together with its Web developers, Foraker Design, breastcancer.org set about selecting a WCM solution and, following a rigorous evaluation process, chose SDL Tridion R5. "We like how R5 handles publications, its flexible architecture and personalization tools were particularly influential in our final decision," Derek Olson, Vice President Foraker Design explains.

"Not only did we want an editorial rein over the Web site, but we also wanted a better grasp on traffic analysis of how visitors reach our site and what they do there. We realize that because of the nature of information we have, and that people coming to the site have very specific queries for information, they can land very deep in the site. In fact only 25 percent of all visitors come in via the home page," continues Zwiebel. A nice feature on every Web page is a very visible breadcrumb trail so people can at a glance see where they are in the site and easily navigate to other relevant information.

"We had strict criteria evaluating nearly a dozen vendors, and SDL Tridion ticked all the boxes – it was a no-brainer!"

Michele Zwiebel, Managing Editor at  
breastcancer.org

### Behavioral targeting

Chosen in the main for its Content Management capabilities, the ability that R5 has to couple both implicit and explicit personalization was also an important consideration. "We would like people who come to the site at a certain stage in their cancer treatment to get information that is pertinent to them. Once we have captured information about where they are in the treatment continuum we can, for example, offer relevant pages on a topic such as chemotherapy and then show in a sidebar a spotlight on wigs," says Zwiebel.

Implicit profiling from tracking a visitor's pathway through the site will also give the visitor other relevant information about a specific subject. "The Personalization module in R5 comes into play here and we will adapt the rules if necessary, depending on what content people do respond to," says Olson.

Visitors to the site are very vocal and the community knowledge exchange was developed as a discussion board. It more or less operates like a blog, there are a couple of moderators acting as behavior police. "It's a highly charged time in these women's lives so they may need reminding of the sensitivities of others. They are very forthright about what they want on the site and there's many dedicated members, in fact, it is a recognized fact that we have more members and threads than any other breast cancer site," says Zwiebel.

### Separation of concerns

Using R5 the editorial team has found that life is much easier and that the site is more consistent in look and feel. Editors do not make design changes as they only have to deal with the content in terms of copy and images, which means the presentation is consistent. The separation of content from the design made the rebrand exercise an easier task.

"The logo and the templates are being given a thorough redesign, and this accessible and standards compliant design takes special care to reinforce the quality and breadth of the site's content," says Olson, "The audience for the site is generally for an older age group, 40-60 year olds, and we were aware they may have cognitive disabilities due to their chemotherapy treatment as well as visual impairments due to their age. We have ensured that the type size for all the content is large by default, and re-sizeable to meet the unique needs of each individual."

"With SDL Tridion R5, we are now much sharper in what we do online and we have taken great pains to change the copy so it is less wordy and more relevant to our visitors as we know that people tend to scan rather than read information in depth when looking at a Web site. We are definitely more Web savvy, for example, our linking strategy is much improved. We have scaled back the amount of inline links and will only provide them now if the content is linked to further information on the same subject," comments Zwiebel.

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