Building ArsDigita Portals #1

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Content

- Introduction
- ACS Architecture
- Case Study
- How to Build Your Portal
1. Introduction

Introduction

- Who are we and why do I give this lecture?
- What is a Portal?
- What is ACS?
- ACS Modules
- Online Demos
- What do we do with ACS?
Who are we and why do I give this lecture?

Who are we?
- The Cluster Competitiveness Group, S.A.
- Located in Barcelona (Cerdanyola)

Before
- During 7 year been a strategic consulting company for “Clusters”

Now
- Internet Startup with 60 employees
- Actively developing ACS as our development platform, creating a “Community”
What is Portal?

- Portal == Homepage + Starting Point

  Vertical
  - Everything about one subject

  Horizontal
  - General Access
What is ACS?

- It’s free
- It’s for building portals
- It works out of the box.
- It’s a “Toolkit”
  - Library of preconfigured elements
  - Defined way of working
  - Comes with “Philosophy”.

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ACS Modules

- /doc/address-book -- address book
- /doc/adserver -- banner ads
- /doc/bannerideas -- banner ideas
- /doc/bboard -- the discussion forum system
- /doc/bookmarks -- save Internet bookmarks
- /doc/calendar -- an online calendar
- /doc/chat -- online chat
- /doc/classifieds -- classified ads: announce your old motorcycle
- /doc/clickthrough -- statistics on ads
- /doc/contact-manager -- good for sites with an extranet-y flavor
- /doc/content-sections -- lets administrators add/manage different content sections of the site
- /doc/contest -- run give-away contests
- /doc/custom-sections -- allows group administrators add/manage custom sections of the site
- /doc/curriculum
- /doc/directory -- letting users find each other
- /doc/display -- lets administrators set display settings and upload logo of the site
- /doc/download -- offering versions of software or other stuff to people
- /doc/dw -- a toolkit for data warehouse-style queries
- /doc/ecommerce
- /doc/education
- /doc/events -- facilitates online registration for events
- /doc/faq
- /doc/file-manager -- simple content management tool
- /doc/file-storage -- users who don't know HTML can collaboratively maintain a set of files on the server
- /doc/glossary -- the ArsDigita Glossary, for creating an on-site dictionary of specialized terminology.
- /doc/homepage -- give your users personal homepages on your system
- /doc/intranet -- run your organization from this toolkit
- /doc/neighbor -- Neighbor to Neighbor (hard to explain; see example at http://photo.net/neighbor/)
- /doc/news
- /doc/partner -- site-wide cobranding
- /doc/poll -- opinion polls
- /doc/portals -- using only a Web browser, build some portals for different groups within your organization (or the public)
- /doc/press -- show press coverage about your site or company
- /doc/pull-down-menus -- create Macintosh-style menu bars
- /doc/spam -- send email to a group of users
- /doc/static -- support for collecting comments, links, and download statistics for static files
- /doc/survey-simple -- ask the users a series of questions
- /doc/ticket -- a project and bug tracking system
- /doc/wp -- WimpyPoint, a replacement for desktop bloatware like PowerPoint, allowing you to create and view presentations in your Web browsers
Online Demos

See Separate Online Demos:
- Chat Module
- Classified Ads Module
- User Management
2. ACS Architecture

ACS Architecture

- Windows Against Internet Programming
- ACS in its Context
- Java Against ACS Layer Cake
- Other Web Architectures
- Why ACS?
Windows Against Internet Programming

**Windows Programming**
- Event driven
- Program runs on local machine
- Very fast connection
- Single user
- Stateful connections

**Internet Programming**
- Page-Click-Page
- Program runs on remote server
- Slow Internet connection
- 10,000 concurrent users
- Stateless browser

**Summary**
- OO programming well suited to handle events
- Events are mapped to methods
- No events, no OO...

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Reliable Web Services

- Relational DB currently is the only reliable backend.
- Current OO database do not provide:
  - High performance (100 concurrent users)
  - Transaction isolation
  - High availability
  - Online backup
  - Online replication
  - Administration tools
  - Remote access
Control flow for a single Web page delivery
Java Against ACS Layer Cake

**OO (Java)**
- GUI
- GUI Components
- GUI Business Procs
- Business Procs
- Business Objects
- Persistence
- Data Model

**ACS**
- HTML
- Toolkit
- SQL
- Data Model

Website: Competitiveness.com
Other Web Architectures

- Apache + Java + Jserv (Jakarta)
- Apache + Perl
- Apache + PHP
- Application Servers
  - Oracle OAS
  - IBM Websphere
  - BEA Weblogic
  - Netscape NAS
  - ...

But none of the systems contains ready to use modules.
Why ACS?

• Comes with a large number of ready-to-use modules
• Highly efficient programming model:
  • “Page-Click-Page” interaction model
  • Database oriented (not object oriented)
  • SQL statements close to HTML code
• It works. Even with a large number of users.
• Comes with lots of documentation
• Comes with philosophy that makes producing results easy.
3. Case Study

Case Study
From a business idea to an ACS portal

- Driving School Portal
- Target Group
- Why Join the Portal?
- Additional Contents
- Which ACS Modules?
- Marketing
- Make Money
- Why didn´t I do it myself?
Driving School Portal

Idea

- Make a portal for all people who have to learn driving a car or motorcycle
Target Group

- 10,000 driving students in Barcelona every year
- Age between 18 and 22
- Both sexes equally
- From all social layers
- Students, young professionals, ...
Why Join the Portal?

- Compare driving school prices
- Compare failure rates
- Compare driving school quality
- Buy literature
- Talk about exercises
- Chat with driving school experts
- ...
Additional Contents

- Buy a used/new car
- Meet a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Look for a job
- Share apartments
- Party calendar
- Buy accessories
- . . .
Which ACS Modules?

ACS provides ready to use modules

- Static Contents
- Opinion Polls
- Bulletin Boards
- Chat
- Classified Ads
Marketing

- Tell your friends and tell them to tell others
- Publish articles in local press
- Setup posters in the University
- Let best rated driving school make publicity with the rating
- Get an entry in the Yellow Pages
- See http://www.gorillamarketing.com/
- ...
Make Money

- Sell ad space to local driving schools
- Sell ad space to general marketing agencies
- Ask for commission to sell used cars
- Partner with book store to sell literature
- Make homepages for driving schools
- . . .

But:

- The idea works in Belgium because driving school books cost 40,000pts each. People can sell this material to new students. However, the books are free in Barcelona.
- I have no friends who are in driving school
End