

British Red Cross Keeps Employees and Volunteers Connected with Leading-Edge Intranet



British Red Cross
London, England
www.redcross.org.uk

Industry:
Healthcare

Annual Revenue:
\$101 million to \$500 million

Employees:
1,500

Oracle Products & Services:
Oracle Universal Content
Management

Key Benefits:

- Improved staff productivity by creating an easily navigable and centralized repository for critical organizational information
- Enhanced organizational communication and strengthened organizational cohesion
- Reduced burden on IT staff, freeing them for other priorities

“Oracle’s Web content management with conversion and transformation capabilities create a unique relationship with its customers, helping to educate them on the current market landscape.” – Miguel Fiallos, Head of Management Information Systems, British Red Cross

Charities are constantly looking for greater efficiency throughout their operations. In 2002, the British Red Cross--part of the network of International Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations--recognized that it was not effectively sharing information with its 1,500 employees. Maintaining its network of four intranets for its human resources (HR), finance, health and safety, and information technology (IT) departments was proving overly time-consuming for IT staff members, who were charged with publishing, managing, and updating the sites with materials on a daily basis.

A multi-disciplinary project team established a single, organization-wide intranet designed to improve communications and increase working efficiency. After examining the technical objectives and evaluating content management and publishing systems, the British Red Cross chose Oracle Universal Content Management, previously called Stellent Universal content Management.

The Design Question

With the launch of its organization-wide intranet in June 2002, the British Red Cross fulfilled a key objective of creating a brand identity. It recognized that it needed to create a new corporate culture if its employees were to derive the maximum benefit from a single intranet. It chose the name “RedRoom” to help promote the project to remote users as “their” intranet.

To fulfill its objectives, the capabilities of the British Red Cross’ content management system had to extend beyond simple Web page templates. The system had to be able to integrate new designs created by a multimedia design company.

The resulting RedRoom-branded intranet was a complete success. Not only did the British Red Cross enhance working efficiency and release IT personnel to perform other duties, it enabled users to embrace the intranet in their working practices. Today, staff members simply call the Intranet “The Redroom.”

Upgrading the System

In 2006, the British Red Cross decided it needed to refresh and modified its intranet to maintain its time-saving benefits and user loyalty. In a benchmarking exercise, the British Red Cross compared the site with those of other high-profile organizations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation and Ford Motor Company. The RedRoom was not holding its own on the design front or in usability studies. It also became clear that the British Red Cross was not taking advantage of new content management technology that had entered the market since 2002.

As part of the redesign phase, the British Red Cross took the opportunity to re-evaluate content management vendors. It once again selected the Oracle Universal Content Management platform, implementing a rebranded single intranet using the latest version of Oracle’s multisite Web content management solution.

The updated RedRoom, redesigned and live in just 3 months, has delivered greater time efficiencies, refined the publishing process, and improved usability over the legacy system. These upgrades are vital to maintaining and improving the reputation of the intranet among staff and to ensuring that the British Red Cross remains productive and efficient in the way it manages content.

Widening the Cultural Benefits

When launched in 2002, the RedRoom was available to wide-area network (WAN)-connected personnel across the United Kingdom. The newly rebranded site now allows secure external access via the internet, enabling 2,000 British Red Cross volunteers plus delegates working in remote locations across the world to access required information.

“Not only does internet log-in provide individuals with required information, such as donation activities, it also helps to ensure that all British Red Cross associates feel continually involved with the organization. For example, four volunteers are currently benefiting from the RedRoom in their work in Afghanistan,” said Miguel Fiallos, head of management information systems for the British Red Cross.

News items on the home page keep everyone up to date while stored information helps improve organizational understanding. Loading documents, spreadsheets, or graphics into the RedRoom could not be simpler, with new content in any native format swiftly checked into the Oracle Universal Content Management repository via a Web browser. Intranet administration is now even easier with improved features, such as Oracle’s multisite Web content management solution, in-context user contribution, and easily established rules that control the look and feel of site design and content.

There are 15,000 searchable documents and forms available with more added daily. The process is so easy and intuitive that, according to the British Red Cross, not one of the 70 administrators responsible for posting content has made a support call since the implementation of the platform in 2002.

“Administrators can easily store and publish the information they want. One click and it’s quickly published, and everyone knows where to look.” Fiallos said.

Extending Benefits

The upgraded RedRoom builds on the benefits established by the original Stellent platform deployment, including releasing IT staff from tedious publishing duties and fostering a widespread sense of organization and structure. It has also continued to enhance user productivity through features, such as improved site navigation. In addition, more intuitive and accurate search facilities significantly reduce the time staff members spend searching for documents.

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Miguel Fiallos
Head of Management
Information Systems
British Red Cross

Accurate searching is crucial for an organization the size of the British Red Cross. It now intends to extend its knowledge-sharing capability to benefit other aspects of the organization. The British Red Cross plans to integrate content management into its HR system so that it can quickly identify individuals across the organization with specialized skills, such as the ability to speak multiple languages.

Staff members have responded positively to the new site. Oracle’s multisite Web content management solution has widened the design possibilities through its easier integration capabilities, helping to enable the creation and deployment of a crisp and modern design. The improved toolset has simplified content uploading, allowing the introduction of a new calendar feature that all departments can update with events. This feature improves fundraising visibility and establishes a sense of community in the RedRoom.

Future Proofing the System

The British Red Cross plans to launch a new internet site in the next 12 months using content from the same central information repository as the intranet. It intends to improve interactivity by deploying the Oracle enterprise content management platform’s wiki, blogs and really simple syndication feed capabilities. The content on these multimedia services will be managed and updated using the same centralized content management system, but will allow employees to select which information they would like to receive. For example, the British Red Cross intends to create a subscription mechanism that will allow employees to receive RSS feeds alerting employees of when policy documents have been updated and providing a link to the relevant intranet page.

“Our Oracle Universal Content Management system has provided us with new ideas on how to improve our original deployment. By helping us to understand the developing content management market, we recognized that the time was right to update the RedRoom to take advantage of the greater flexibility and ease of use of Oracle’s technology,” Fiallos said. “We had always intended to create a stronger sense of community with the RedRoom through

multimedia facilities. Our new investment is future proofed to allow us to do this.”

Why Oracle?

“Our users looked at various presentations and demonstrations. They saw how the Oracle solution worked and how easy it was to publish information. It was a very impressive and value-oriented solution,” Fiallos said.

In addition to its ease of integration with other applications, it was also an out-of-the-box solution that, unlike other platforms, was faster to implement and maintain on a daily basis.

The 2006 upgrade project team drew the same conclusion as its predecessors. The financial stability, integration capabilities, new software developments, and ease-of-use of the Oracle Universal Content Management platform reinforced the decision made in 2002.

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Founded in 1870, the British Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, the world's largest independent humanitarian organization. Within the United Kingdom, it provides assistance in major emergencies as well as offering services to local communities.