



The chemistry with Ibexa was just right, and the site looks fantastic

TRADE ASSOCIATION

An industry trade association based in Washington, D.C. has members that contribute research to inform and advise state and federal policymakers. In 2015, its huge range of content was migrated to a CMS that proved too unergonomic for end-users and editors. Five years later, the Trade Association decided to rebuild the site on Ibexa DXP.

The American Trade Association, had a CMS that was less than optimal in assisting it in its mission to inform and advise on behalf of its members. A new site, developed on Ibexa DXP, replaced a “wall of text” with clear, concise pages that transformed the way that regulators and policymakers could access and share the latest research.

The time to upload or amend content has been cut dramatically, freeing up site administrators to concentrate on adding value through content strategy. Personalization has been built into the site structure, and the Trade Association will be leveraging this in the near future to create further opportunities to be relevant to its membership.

I’ve used pretty much every CMS solution out there and eZ (Ibexa’s earlier version) was always by far my favorite. So I never had any doubts, and the results with Ibexa have been phenomenal.



Challenges

- Inadequate CMS
- Rigid frontend architecture
- “Wall of text” content difficult to search and skim
- Content very slow to upload or amend
- No content preview.



Project Summary

- Three-month discovery phase
- Content had built up to 20,000 pages; this was cut down to 3,000 in the migration
- Extensive use of Ibexa Page Builder to make content more accessible to all interest groups
- Micro-sharing option and contextualized search part of complex six-month development
- Launch August 2020.



Business Benefits

- Site is much more intuitive and user-friendly
- Documents can be previewed, preventing hundreds of unnecessary downloads for non-experts
- Sharing content is much easier and more versatile
- Social media sharing is up ten-fold
- Embedded content makes it much easier to amend data
- Backend architecture is also much simpler to navigate, enabling a much more agile content approach.



Why Ibexa?

Determined not to repeat the mistakes of the past, the Trade Association needed a technology that could turn the content demands of multiple industry groups and topics into a site that was simple, clean, and purposeful. Only Ibexa DXP had this alchemy. Content is architected and presented in as many as 25 site blocks, developed by Ibexa Platinum Partner Aplyca. The result is a site with “phenomenal” clarity and variation that is simple to search thanks to the extensive use of custom tags. The inclusion of micro-sharing options has boosted social media sharing which is up ten-fold. Site managers also benefit from Ibexa DXP; content is much easier to find in the backend, and much quicker to change or amend, saving them untold hours a week.

Content to be presented in a clear and intuitive way

The Trade Association website is run by its digital communications team. It is an extensive operation. “There’s four of us doing the technical nitty-gritty,” says the Communications Director, “but there’s probably 30 or 40 different content creators who write and develop content for the website.”

This content, although scientific, is not intended for scientists, but for policymakers: the people who draft legislation that shapes regulations and safety recommendations. “Because our visitors are non-specialist, the content has to be presented to them in a clear and intuitive way. This was far from being the case before we relaunched the site on Ibexa,” explains the digital communications director. “Our visitors complained of a ‘wall of text’ that was difficult to skim and search.

“The problem was the CMS.”

In 2020, the Trade Association decided to start again – this time with Ibexa DXP and Ibexa Platinum Partner Aplyca. “Knowing the complexity of our site, I knew that Ibexa was the technology that we needed. I knew eZ Publish (Ibexa’s predecessor) from before. Managing content was simple, it was clean and purposeful. It was logical. It made sense. We did offer the opportunity for vendors to pitch other solutions that they thought might be viable. We went in saying, Ibexa is the one that we like, but please tell us if we’re wrong. That didn’t happen.”





The site is so much more user friendly

A three-month process of discovery led to the decision to massively leverage Ibexa’s block technology to simplify the content in what the Communications Director calls a “bite/ snack/ meal approach”. Aplyca had to develop as many as 25 blocks to break up the “wall of text” that had made the previous site so hard to navigate. “By default, the site has three or four blocks,” comments Jaramillo, “so this was a very ambitious technical implementation.”

It was worth it.

“If you look at the way that the website functions, the way that the blocks are laid out; it’s very compelling,” says the Communications Director. “There are high-impact visuals, the pages look clean, with clear and relevant stats and data visualizations. But it allows you to drive deeper quickly.”

Dropping elements via blocks onto a page through drag and drop makes it easier to manage the site. “Before Ibexa it would sometimes take weeks to change a single figure because you had to update every single instance of the data. Now we use a stat block that’s reusable and embeddable throughout the site. When a figure changes now, it takes less than five minutes to update it throughout the site.”

“Users have a one-stop shop to find anything that they need related to the group they’re looking for. There’s now the ability to embed a PDF, which gives you a preview of the actual document to make sure it is the document you need before you download it.”

This is proving to be a game-changer because visitors used to download 10 or 12 documents before giving up and contacting the Trade Association directly for the research. “We’re no longer getting a lot of those emails and or calls,” says the Communications Director. “And they used to run into the hundreds! Not anymore – because the site is so much more user-friendly.”

Search is contextualized through custom tags, and the accessed content can be shared in snippets. “If you see a compelling statistic, you don’t necessarily want to share the entire page,” says the Communications Director. The micro shareable option on the new site removes that barrier to sharing content.

Before Ibexa it would sometimes take weeks to change a single figure throughout the site. Now using stat blocks it takes less than 5 minutes.



Social share of our content has grown tenfold

“As a result, we have seen social sharing of our content grow tenfold. We regularly monitor this. In just a month of going live we are in the tens of thousands of users that have copied and shared content off our website.”

Visitors are taken to the right place much more intuitively, and editors can find content much more quickly in the backend too. “The related resources and content to find out where content is back-linked or placed is phenomenal,” says the Communications Director. “We can quickly find all the content that’s been placed and either remove that back-link or update it. It’s fantastic.”

This is saving the Digital Communications team a lot of time.

“The workload is much, much lighter,” he says. “Before Ibexa, it would take 10 to 12 minutes to upload a press release to the website. With everything now in one place under one content type this has become a matter of moments...so we’re allowed to get back to the fun stuff like doing SEO and making modifications to the website. Instead of focusing on site management we can now focus on site strategy.”

The Communications Director would like to push this even further by permissioning editors to upload their own blog posts and press releases.

The Trade Association is ready to roll out personalization features that are already included as a building block in the management system. “We do have it so we can identify members versus non-members and whether or not they’ve attended conferences in the past so we can promote upcoming events to them in a targeted way. That’s an opportunity that we’ll be leveraging over the coming months.”

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Aplyca specializes in providing digital agencies and development partners with expert DXP talent for client projects. Working with Aplyca enables agencies to streamline their development and operations capabilities and allows agencies to add value with Ibexa DXP through an expert nearshore DXP partner.

Aplyca has deep experience in sophisticated, multi-site and high-traffic solutions and has implemented dozens of projects for publicly traded companies, international business groups, media and retail giants.

Aplyca
 Cra 13A #89-38 Of. 214
 Bogotá, Colombia
 (+57) 1 704 5752
comercial@aplyca.com