www.newsmax.com

Newsmax

1/0

NEWS
PUBLISHING

Newsmax Media is an American news media
organization founded by Christopher Ruddy
and based in West Palm Beach, Florida. It operates
a multiplatform network focused on conservative-
leaning media, including the news website
Newsmax.com, publishes the Franklin Prosperity
Report and Newsmax magazine, and the cable news
channel Newsmax TV.

Background

Newsmax realized that their flagship news site relied on Kentico 5.5 which was almost a decade old upon the release of the upgraded version in March 2017. Chris Ruddy, CEO and founder of Newsmax, was considering many options to replace their version of Kentico. Newsmax explored migrating to the latest versions of WordPress, Drupal, and Kentico to see what impact this would have on Newsmax's business. Ultimately, because their whole business relies on SEO, changing to a new system would drastically reduce their traffic (up to 50%). In addition, the cost to migrate the sites would be extremely costly. 1/0 came to Newsmax with the idea to upgrade the site to the latest version of Kentico, thereby eliminating the higher costs and retaining their friendly SEO article structure.

Goals

The goal of the project was simply to upgrade the system from Kentico 5.5 to Kentico 9.x (which was the most current when 1/0 completed its development work) and retain the current article structure of the system.

- Retain the current article structure for more than 300,000 articles
- Match the current functionality of the CMS
- Fix lingering bugs and issues not associated with the upgrade
- Launch the new site with an eye toward redeveloping the CMS

Challenges

Three factors made this project challenging:

- Upgrade from Kentico 5.5 to 9. 1/0 first approached Newsmax for work on their main site 18 months ago. After much discussion with Newsmax, Chris Ruddy asked 1/0 to see if they could upgrade the current system from Kentico 5.5 to Kentico 9.x. 1/0 approached Kentico regarding the possibility of upgrading the site from Kentico 5.5. Based on Kentico's knowledge of all the customization that Newsmax had made during the past decade, Kentico thought it would be impossible.
- Upgrading Version by Version. 1/0 initially tried upgrading the CMS from 5.5 to 9.0 and found that there were too many improvements to Kentico along the years for a clean upgrade. 1/0 would have to come up with another solution.

- Upgrading an Ongoing and Operational Web Site. In addition to all the custom workflow and development work to the CMS, Newsmax's staff was still publishing tens of articles each and every day. Furthermore, Newsmax's development team in Florida was continuing to add new modules and sections to the site periodically during the course of the year-long upgrade. 1/0 would have to work with Newsmax to carefully integrate their work as well as deliver the integrated work to Newsmax's QA servers.

Solution

- 1/0 chose to attempt the upgrade of the site rather than try and re-write it for Newsmax.
- 1/0 employed a sequential upgrade process that entailed upgrading to each version of the Kentico product. 1/0 upgraded from Kentico 5.5 to Kentico 6 to Kentico 7 to Kentico 8 and finally to Kentico 9. Along the way, the site had to be functional in each and every version or the upgrade would not work.
- 1/0 worked hand-in-hand with both Newsmax's and Kentico's development teams to work through exceedingly complex and difficult challenges.
- When 1/0 ran into seemingly insurmountable roadblocks, Kentico was there to troubleshoot and answer any questions 1/0 had in terms of the code.
- 1/0 was responsible for integrating changes made at Newsmax as it upgraded the site.

Results

As of 1/0's final delivery of code, the newsmax.com website has now been upgraded to the latest version of Kentico. Newsmax and 1/0 have plans to upgrade the site to Kentico 10 shortly.

- The site was launched on March 4, 2017.
- The site is much more stable and the feedback from the editors has been extremely positive.
- 1/0 fixed lingering legacy issues with the site as part of the upgrade, so there is less downtime and it is quicker to update the site for the editors.
- 1/0's actual coding time was three months. One month was spent for QA on the site.
- 1/0 achieved the impossible and successfully launched a multi-hundred-thousand article site from a decade-old version of Kentico to the current version.

Key Criteria for Choosing Kentico

- Newsmax has invested millions of dollars within the past decade customizing, supporting, and utilizing Kentico as its primary CMS
- Employees were familiar with the workflow and CMS processes, therefore, there would have been a large learning curve to move to a new CMS platform
- SEO is the lifeblood of online news sites, therefore, upgrading Kentico was the only way to ensure its URL structure remained the same
- By keeping the URL structure the same, Newsmax is able to retain all its SEO external references and "juice"

1/0

1/0 specializes in complex e-commerce, content managed sites. They focus on ASP.NET and PHP based sites as well as integrating various third-party software and services to create integrated and elegant solutions for their clients. Their core competencies include: ASP.NET C#, PHP, JavaScript and JQuery, HTML and HTML5, CSS, Third-Party API integration, mobile and responsive design, social media integration, data architecture and modeling, Google Analytics and AdWords, maintenance, and hosting.
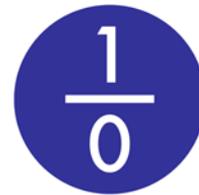
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