

The background of the top half of the page is a close-up photograph of three lit sparklers against a dark blue, textured background. The sparklers are angled upwards, and their bright orange and yellow sparks are visible, creating a dynamic and energetic feel.

Case Study

RS

Components

DesignSpark

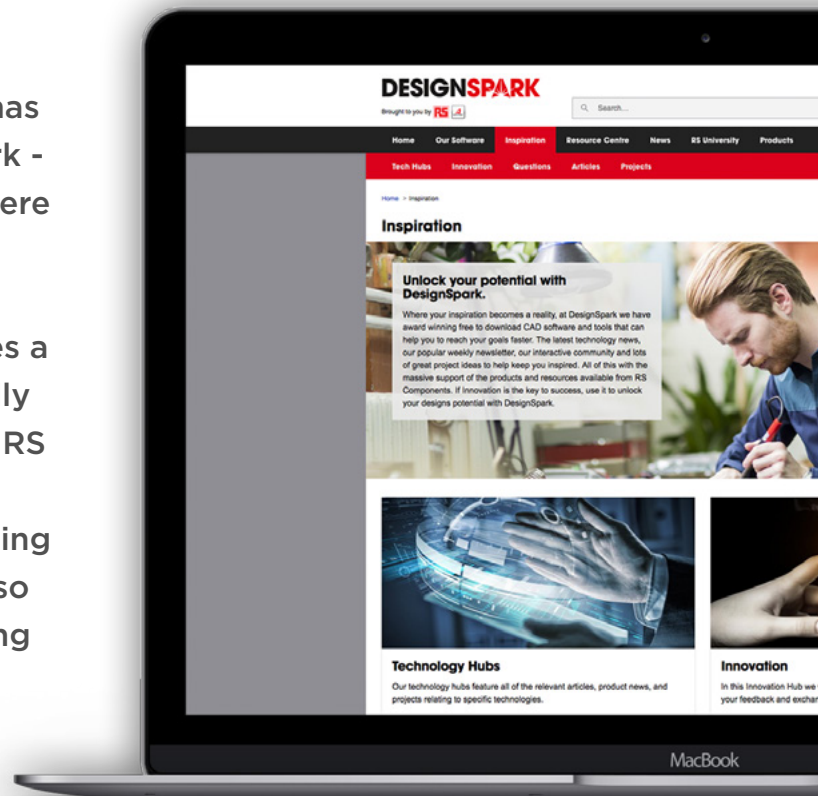
- ✓ Redevelopment of online community platform
- ✓ Providing free access to important tools and resources
- ✓ Supporting the institution's digital transformation strategy

Serving over **575,000** engineers worldwide more **efficiently** and **effectively** than ever before.

For engineers across the globe, RS Components is a one-stop shop serving all their technical needs. Not only does the electronics distributor offer over 500,000 products from 2,500 leading suppliers - shipping over 44,000 items each day - they also facilitate a lively, engaged community through their online DesignSpark platform.

And as the community has grown, so has RS Components' vision for DesignSpark - but to make this a reality they knew there was only one place to turn: Box UK.

The new platform we delivered features a wealth of functionality that substantially enhances the value being delivered to RS Components' community members, as well as increasing the revenue-generating potential of the platform. Work was also done to optimise the code underpinning the existing DesignSpark system, to address technical debt and ensure the new development work could be integrated smoothly - before it eventually replaces what's there entirely.



“ The Solutions Team were totally blown away with what we have achieved so far - it more than meets our expectations and takes us to a new level.”

- Dave Cole, DesignSpark Platform Manager, RS Components

With improved access to important tools, content and support, the DesignSpark community is stronger than ever - and RS Components have safeguarded their position at the very heart of it. The future of engineering is extremely bright.

A trusted partner

While improvement work had already started on the new DesignSpark platform, progress was being hindered by the volume and complexity of dependencies involving the existing system (a system suffering from high levels of technical debt built up over many years). RS Components knew that if these issues could be resolved then the project could deliver a whole lot more, and so - having enjoyed a successful long-term partnership with Box UK spanning numerous departments and projects - they approached our team to help them.

Bringing code up to code

Our first task was to investigate what was going on with both the old and new platforms as they stood, in order to gain a clear picture of the ‘as-is’ situation and inform the direction of future development. [We worked](#) to define the location and nature of any existing dependencies, identify potential security vulnerabilities and points of failure, and review the levels of test coverage in place - as well as highlighting where improvements could be made to enhance usability as part of a complementary [User Experience \(UX\)](#) review.

Our findings were summarised in a series of clear and comprehensive reports, supported by visual representations of the DesignSpark codebase that made it easy to gain an instant, overarching understanding of quality. Armed with these outputs we could launch immediately into a programme of stabilisation, confident that our efforts were being targeted where they were most needed,

and comfortable about being able to quantify the positive impact this activity was making. We also put in place tests that would help us identify and resolve any on-going issues - increasing the number of tests within the existing application by over 150%, and almost doubling total test coverage.

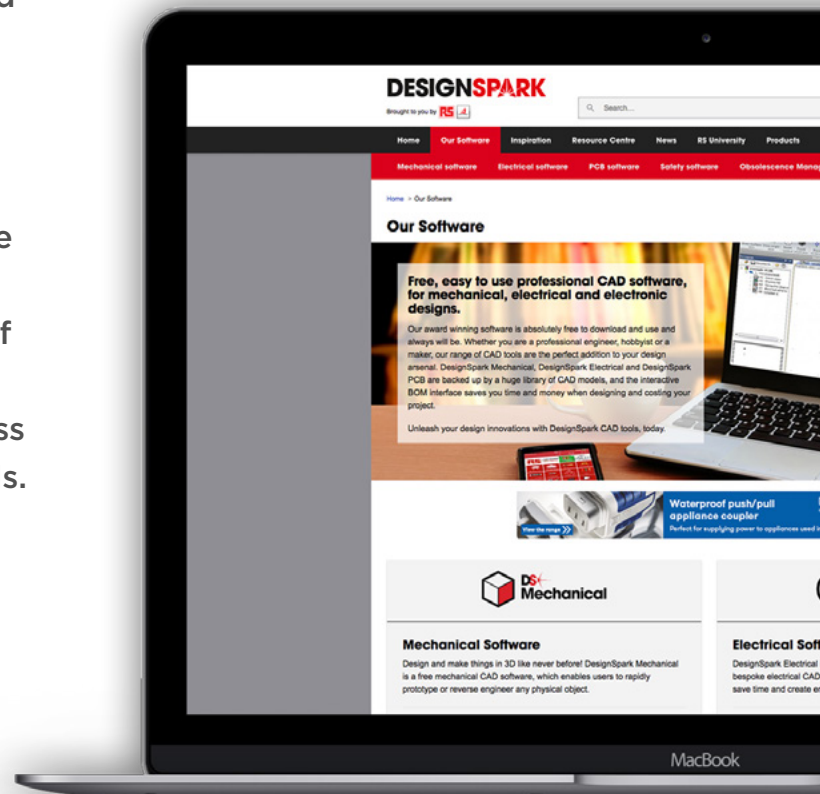
The tools to succeed

Once both platforms were stable, work began on **adding valuable features** and functionality to help RS Components achieve their core business goals. And with increasing acquisition, engagement and click-through rates among DesignSpark's key performance indicators, the front-end elements of the platform were an important area of focus - in particular the section of the site that provides engineers with access to a range of free design software tools.

By implementing a standardised and simplified approach to the look, feel and behaviour of these tools, introducing a new streamlined support channel, and providing RS Components with access to usage data and insight we are helping to make this service a much more cohesive and compelling offering for the DesignSpark community - encouraging increased uptake, engagement and loyalty at all levels.

Serving the community

Work was also done to improve the knowledge-sharing processes at the heart of the DesignSpark platform, to help support a vibrant and engaged community at the same time as driving down total cost of ownership. It's now much easier for community members to find the information they need quickly, thanks to a comprehensive review and audit of content prior to its migration to



the new platform, while UX improvements to the solution's information architecture, navigation and search capability have further increased findability.

Additionally, workflows and role-based permissions have been put in place to streamline the publication of content without compromising on quality - meaning that this community site can now be much more effectively opened up to the community itself.

Bottom-line benefits

Thanks to the improvements that have been made, DesignSpark is now a more attractive and useful destination for engineers than ever before - and this popularity has also increased the platform's revenue-generating capabilities, helping it progress along the path to self-sustainability.

For example, our development team have implemented a third-party advertising solution, with our UX consultants advising on the placement of these ads so that they appear where users will both expect and accept them. Additional initiatives have included the introduction of links to relevant products from the RS Online catalogue, and the gating of especially valuable rich content, to provide direct attribution from DesignSpark community engagement to RS Components' ultimate bottom line.

If you too want to enhance your software both inside and out, let RS Components be a guiding light - and [get in touch](#) with a member of our team today.

Skills

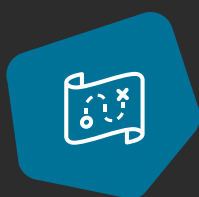
- › Software Consultancy
- › Software Development
- › Code Review
- › Expert Usability Review
- › User Experience (UX)
- › Roadmap Planning

Similar Projects

- › BCS SFI*Aplus*
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& Design**



**Software
Consultancy**



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Development**

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