

World Vision

www.worldvision.org



“Today, 85% of our information assets are accessible through Liferay Portal in a number of ways. It’s really revolutionized the way that we communicate.”

WAYNE NISSLY,
Strategic Capabilities,
International Programs Group

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by their faith in Jesus Christ, World Vision serves alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God’s unconditional love for all people. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

World Vision provides emergency and hunger relief, long-term community development programs, agricultural development assistance, and leadership training. The organization also educates the public on poverty- and justice-related issues, and advocates on behalf of the poor and children in crisis.

CHALLENGE

World Vision United States’ International Programs Group (IPG), located in Washington, DC, is responsible for the management of grants, projects, and community development programs across the globe. As these teams of IPG workers required regular interfacing with fundraising headquarters in the United States and with one another, the operations of each local project hinged upon access to dependable and fluid means of communication. Unfortunately, basic e-mail drove 85% to 90% of all communication, and the lack of more dynamic collaboration tools quickly became an issue.

IPG needed a technology that would pull together sets of data and human resources in a way that would be easy to understand and manage. Beyond IPG, there were thousands of other employees for whom communication was crucial. For example, 1,400 Area Development Programs (ADPs) around the world necessitated constant and secure exchange of financial and logistical data. A number of privately funded projects were also in need of a more sophisticated means of sharing information categorized by region, purpose, or activity. Taking all these needs into account, World Vision drafted a list of criteria.

Key requirements included:

- **Content management and data retrieval** – World Vision had disparate sets of data in various forms from its many programs all over the world.
- **Intuitive UI** – The technology had to be easy to use for all of World Vision's staff, which represented a wide range of technical experience.
- **Simple administrative maintenance** – The technology had to be easy to maintain in the long run for the international non-profit.
- **Flexible and adaptable technology** – The technology had to be easy to integrate with the organization's existing IT as well as provide the flexibility of working with other applications as needed in the future.

RESOLUTION

A number of portal solutions were evaluated, including IBM WebSphere, Sharepoint, eXo, Uportal, and Jetspeed. While cost savings made the open source products very attractive, World Vision IPG ultimately chose Liferay Portal for the flexibility of its architecture, award-winning UI, ease of maintenance, and system interoperability.

In particular, ease of integration with other technologies played a major part in its selection. As the operations model revolved around supporting collaboration efforts with real-time access to online information, integration with Oracle Universal Content Management (formerly Stellent) for enterprise content management was key to the project. Thanks to Liferay Portal's flexible framework, system integrator S & K Ventures painlessly implemented custom Oracle UCM portlets

into Liferay that allowed portal users to see and edit documents focused on their areas of interest. Typical user-specific information was exposed, such as lists of documents currently being edited and lists of items waiting in the user workflow queue. It also leveraged other Oracle UCM functionality that allowed for lists of documents and document collaboration folders to be filtered based on user interest or the information's relevance to that particular community. World Vision also integrated ESRI's ArcIMS technology to provide maps that change dynamically based on user input and also enable navigation by geography and searching based on geographically-specific information.

The resulting product was *Knowledge Space*, a collaboration portal with tools for workflows, alerts, and discussion around documents and dynamic mapping tools. Today, not only do these things far exceed the capabilities of e-mail, they revolutionized World Vision's entire system of communication, empowering its global community of humanitarian workers to better serve their communities. In an emergency response situation, for example, each emergency site assessment team has the power to enter and edit data for which they are specifically responsible. This data is then automatically updated on a map, providing immediate feedback and real-time access to online data to colleagues across the world. Hence, the portal was also able to introduce World Vision's many geographically dispersed teams to a greater sense of ownership and connection to the larger organization.

"Liferay Portal has really revolutionized the way that we are able to communicate with each other and the world," said Wayne Nissly, Strategic Capabilities, International Programs Group. "It has been and will continue to be an integral tool for streamlining and advancing our operations and mission statement!"

Looking forward, World Vision plans to write custom portlets and applications within Liferay Portal to raise the level of interactivity that users have with maps and allow them to run reports and queries. World Vision also plans on incorporating Liferay's system of communities and social networking features into a donor-facing site that offers videos and media for financial donors to see and more tangibly relate to the communities that they are contributing to.

TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT: STELLENT INTEGRATION

The integration of Liferay with Oracle UCM was accomplished with standard JSR-168 portlets that remotely called a standard Oracle UCM socket-based API. For the API connection, a custom java client was used, built to be lightweight and to avoid dependency on a separate Oracle UCM library that was not at that point freely available. This API allowed World Vision to execute Oracle UCM service calls in the security context of the current portal user without having to present their password as a SOAP/Web Services integration would have required. The Oracle UCM architecture around service definitions made the integration fairly straightforward—all actions and data available in the UI can also be exposed via Portlets.