**Title:**

Scaling a global COVID study site in seven days

**Standfirst:**

In part 3 we look at what we have learnt from this fast-paced site build and what we would do differently next time we are faced with a similar time-critical challenge.

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The Pfizer COVID vaccine study site - [www.covidvaccinestudy.com](https://word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/www.covidvaccinestudy.com) - underwent a dramatic and fast-paced transformation by DSE in the week leading up to launch. In **parts 1 and 2** of this serieswe looked at the challenges we faced and how we dealt with them, here we continue to look at this unique project and explore what we have learnt and the ideal architecture for future scenarios.

Despite this being an incredible challenge, **it was also a lesson** - a “good example” - of a site that didn’t have quite the right architecture at the start. Fixing this mistake was stressful, time-consuming, and resource-intensive - but there are lessons to be taken away from this experience, so it doesn’t have to happen again.

1. This was unprecedented, but high profile, high traffic sites will doubtless be a repeat occurrence and **we *must* use the right approach and architecture**
2. **DSE has that architecture**: our platforms are optimized to work together and solve unusual, intimidating digital problems like this, as well as more straightforward business needs
3. Every so often **you have to step up,** **individually and as a team**, and do what’s needed to make everyone successful. Globally distributed working means challenging timezones and working hours for people pulling superhuman efforts - but working together closely and flexibly can mitigate this
4. In addition, it’s an overwhelmingly **positive testament to the collaboration, skills and knowledge of the assorted DSE team** that pulled together to bring this project to where it needed to be - including those who didn’t work directly on it but kept everything ticking over smoothly in the background. With key people pulled off their usual demanding workloads to work 90 hour weeks on this COVID vaccine study site, the wider DSE team also stepped up and ensured nothing fell through the gaps

We’d love this event to be one-of-a-kind: this kind of reactionary fire-fighting is commendable but isn’t sustainable. DSE’s work has serious consequences, and part of DSE’s growth has to be from moving beyond events like these; making sure they don’t happen again, and not only being able to “pull it out of the bag” when it does happen. **This isn’t just about delivery - this is about keeping teams sane and also on track, finding problems ahead of time, being able to maneuver and respond in an agile way and a manageable timeframe.**

**What can be done differently in the future?**

* Build to scale, even if you might not need it
* Test frequently, and as part of the build process. Tests should go hand in hand with building, not retrofitted
* Use the architectural patterns and processes espoused by DSE - for instance, using a combination of the Edison platform’s Lite offering (simple, static webpage, no CMS infrastructure) interfacing with Stratus’s microservices would be the **perfect solution for a problem like the COVID vaccine study site**. Edison also offers encryption for database-stored data by default - another example of something that was missing before, and is critical.

Many thanks to Mike Lamb, Eric Silva, Dave Hall, Chad DeGroot and Al Nutile.

*Edison Lite plus microservices is only architecture that gives us the kind of flexibility we need to launch this type of site.* **Edison can be contacted via Teams or at** [**www.edison.sh**](https://www.edison.sh/)**.**