

Case Study



SOCIAL NETWORKING PORTAL FOR URBAN GROUPS



“Idhasoft is a global world-class organization providing best-of-breed localized business and technology solutions, with continuous innovation and quality backed by best-in-class people”

Client Requirement

The site will be a fully comprehensive social networking portal for urbanites, capable of connecting people through cities, metros and common interest places like restaurants, theatres etc.

The site will offer an exhaustive online community experience through a host of convenient features like customization of profile, access to instant messenger & mail, managing favorites and ranking & blocking of members.

The site will promote users to stay active in the community by providing them with through the ability to upload pictures, write blogs and create blurbs.

The site will also be expected to offer search options and creation of groups, forums & events to encourage user participation.

Challenges

Developing a robust framework for the site which is capable of managing millions of users at the same time without slowing the site down.

Developing and incorporating an extensive list of features designed for enhancing the users' community networking experience.

Synchronizing the integrated features and options to function smoothly while being executed simultaneously.

Ensuring easy navigation through the implementation of web usability principles in the website design.

Enabling the site to operate at top speed even in peak traffic hours and maintaining good load balance.

Ensuring safe and secure transfer of data.

Technologies Used

PHP (Server-side Language)	<p>Most appropriately suited to create dynamic web pages.</p> <p>Enables fast extraction of data out of a database for presenting it on the web page.</p>
JavaScript and AJAX (Client-side Language)	<p>Crossover browser support & faster loading time with light web pages that require no plug-in downloads.</p> <p>Scalable Javascript based controls to provide flexibility and enhance user experience and involvement.</p>
MySQL Engine	<p>Versatile, low-maintenance database management system.</p> <p>Cross-platform compatible database component of the LAMP platform.</p>
Red Hat Linux	<p>License-free, sturdy platform with powerful multitasking abilities.</p> <p>Open source code allowing for extensive customization.</p>
Apache Web Server	<p>Ideal for serving static as well as dynamic content on the web in a safe and secure manner.</p> <p>Supports a variety of features while offering extendable core functionality.</p>

Manpower

Project Leader	1
Developers	4
Designers	2
Quality Assurance Testers	2

Planning

With prior experience in developing full-fledged community portals, GMI followed a four-layered approach towards development, starting with:

- o The Database layer containing MySQL Server Database, Tables, stored procedures and so on.
- o The Data Access layer containing the libraries responsible for accessing data from database.
- o The Business Logic layer consisting of all business logic procedures for modules like User Profiles, Forums and Blogs etc.
- o The User Interface Layer which forms the Graphical User Interface of the website.

Architecture

PHP and MySQL Server formed the basis of development as the site was a social networking portal with extensive features. User Profiles, Invitations, Forums, Blogs and other modules were developed in PHP such that they can be executed directly from the UI layer. These PHP files consisted of all Business logics used for respective modules like Save (Add/Update), Delete, Get single object, get multiple objects for listing and were designed to be capable of handling many more logics which were not related to the database. The Data Access layer contained the libraries responsible for accessing data from database and built a generic query for insert, update, delete and select, depending on the business class. All business layer components were coded to use this library for data accessing process from database. Stored procedures were used only for complex retrieval of data from multiple tables and were entirely avoided with conditional syntax to ensure smooth performance of the website. The UI layer was kept free of any business logic with images, applications and data being called from their respective servers. Sub-domains were used for the different areas of the website to guarantee scalability.

Development Highlights

The design was targeted to provide greater ease for users while dealing with user statistics and other user-related validations, with greater accuracy in handling user status. The implementation and development of the site architecture was planned to assist the 'faster to market' transition of such concepts. Optimized query features offered greater freedom through comprehensive search & browse options. The entire framework was kept highly scalable in order to provide adaptability & ease while incorporating new features. Web usability guidelines were strictly followed during development and the interface was made easily navigable through judicious use of AJAX, CSS and HTML controls. The site was developed and fully functional within a span of 5 months.

Client Feedback

“In my experience, GMI has mastered the challenges facing outsourcing today. Specifically, their communication and availability are amazing. After having done this many times, I can tell you that this is the key to a good outsourcing relationship. In terms of technical ability, GMI was great. From mobile to social networking to advanced search features, they did it all for us. In every case they gave me a list of examples of previous work, so I knew they knew what they were doing. Most importantly, management at GMI works with honesty and integrity, the kinds of people I'd hire in my own organization if it wasn't for the commute. They really went above and beyond. Thanks GMI.”