



Digital transformation of
web offerings for leading
media organisation

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The client

In the world of online news the margins for success are small. Continually increasing online traffic while controlling costs is critical to the success of media organisations in the digital age and these factors have a significant impact on the profitability of the organisation.

Saratoga partnered with the second-largest news site in South Africa to provide a solution to their ageing content management system. In the highly competitive online news environment, where publications often solely rely on advertising revenue, factors such as website design, optimisation and page loading speeds are key to the success of the news site.

The overall experience of the news site also determines how long users spend on the website, and if they return regularly. Site performance has become even more important of late as people move to mobile browsers often using slower, less reliable networks.

The challenge

Saratoga has been developing and managing several public-facing news websites for the leading media organisation for a number of years.

The challenge for Saratoga has been to take the client's primary online news portal through a transformation from an ageing content management system, to a modern, search and mobile optimised web offering with 5.5 million unique visitors a month.

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The solution

The initial phase of the partnership with the multi-platform publisher saw the Saratoga team migrating a massive content database into Baobab, a new content management system that was more efficient, scalable and easier to maintain. From there the front-end CSS was re-skinned for the first phase of the design overhaul.

A second phase involved delivering a new mobile site using Angular JS and CSS to give an optimised mobile experience. This lighter, faster code base resulted in significant page speed increases across mobile devices.

Phase three produced a fully responsive design framework for all devices (desktop, mobile and tablet) off of a single code base. This was an important step forward for the streamlined development and maintenance of sites, and included an attractive new design and good page-speed improvements.

To bolster these speed gains, Saratoga also developed middleware to improve caching of the content. This had a two-fold benefit: increasing browser speed, and also reducing the load on the servers which made them perform better at peak times.



New content
management system



Optimised mobile
experience



Fully responsive design

Progressive Web Applications

Several of the client's publications' websites were migrated to Progressive Web Apps (PWA) using Google's Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMPs) to improve the visibility and search engine rankings of the sites.

One of the publications has shown a 113% increase in user sessions in the six months after implementation, while the web traffic for a Western Cape focused news site has grown from 6.9 million to 9.8 million in the same comparative period.

The results

- Building brand value through increased audience exposure.
- Increased revenue through increased click-through volume on advertising.
- Improved customer user experience both on the desktop and mobile phones.
- Increasing accessibility to the online audience which is the primary revenue channel.
- The leading multi-media organisation continues to secure their position as one of the top providers of online news and content in South Africa.

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