



Region

International

Industry

Journalism

Customer Profile

Reuters is the largest news service provider in the world. Its charitable arm, the Reuters Foundation, provides critical information to relief agencies and builds awareness among the general public of humanitarian crises through their AlertNet website.

Business Situation

Moving beyond a traditional textual interaction with news, Reuters Foundation sought the assistance of Microsoft and IDV Solutions to make the AlertNet user experience more visually compelling and contextual, specifically regarding the mapping capabilities of the site.

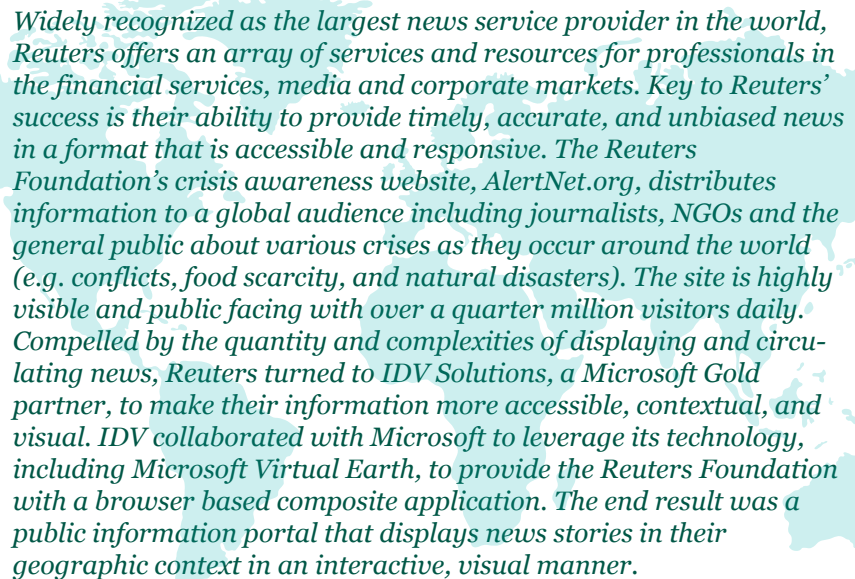
Solution

IDV worked with the Reuters Foundation team, leveraging Virtual Earth to deliver a rich, user-friendly interface to present news stories within the context of their corresponding geography.

Benefits

The new enhanced site offers a more aesthetically pleasing, interactive user experience, providing geographic context to news stories from around the world.

Case Study



Widely recognized as the largest news service provider in the world, Reuters offers an array of services and resources for professionals in the financial services, media and corporate markets. Key to Reuters' success is their ability to provide timely, accurate, and unbiased news in a format that is accessible and responsive. The Reuters Foundation's crisis awareness website, AlertNet.org, distributes information to a global audience including journalists, NGOs and the general public about various crises as they occur around the world (e.g. conflicts, food scarcity, and natural disasters). The site is highly visible and public facing with over a quarter million visitors daily. Compelled by the quantity and complexities of displaying and circulating news, Reuters turned to IDV Solutions, a Microsoft Gold partner, to make their information more accessible, contextual, and visual. IDV collaborated with Microsoft to leverage its technology, including Microsoft Virtual Earth, to provide the Reuters Foundation with a browser based composite application. The end result was a public information portal that displays news stories in their geographic context in an interactive, visual manner.

Situation

As AlertNet already attracted a large audience, the Reuters Foundation sought to facilitate the ongoing evolution of the site to enhance the user experience. Reuters wanted to make improvements in the usability of AlertNet as well as ease of search and visualization of key information. In particular, the Reuters Foundation wanted to make significant improvements in the performance, simplicity of use, and aesthetic qualities of its interactive maps within the site. With advancements in web map services, such as Virtual Earth, Reuters was able to offer a richer user experience. Based on user feedback, the Reuters Foundation uncovered the "where" component of information as a preferable context for displaying news events. It was apparent to Reuters that a



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purely textual interaction with news should be complimented by visual alternatives, allowing users to quickly and intuitively query large amounts of news in just a few clicks. The Reuters Foundation called on the demonstrated data visualization capabilities of IDV and Microsoft to create a solution.

Solution

As a result of Microsoft's collaboration with IDV and the Reuters Foundation, the new version of the site allows news articles concerning flooding, spread of disease, scarcity of food, and incidents of political unrest to be intuitively viewed in their geographic context. This Rich Internet Application (RIA) displays the news as thematically shaded regions on a map, enabling a highly engaging, easy to navigate interface. Alongside the enhanced aesthetic qualities, the site now has the ability to accommodate new data sources and real-time data feeds, such as GeoRSS. The solution leveraged IDV's composite application engine, Visual Fusion Server, with Microsoft's Virtual Earth and SharePoint 2007. IDV enhanced and updated the mapping component of AlertNet by interconnecting a group of web parts via SharePoint 2007 so that users can visually mine for news, rather than search through headlines. The news updates in real-time as the user zooms in to a country, regional, or state level. What were once complex textual queries have been simplified and visualized within a highly interactive and contextualized browser-based application. Shortly after the enhanced site was made publicly available, there was a 22% jump in traffic attributed specifically to the interactive map viewer. The Reuters Foundation's AlertNet is changing how the public, journalists, and NGOs access and become aware of global crises as they occur. In that light, the collaboration between IDV, the Reuters Foundation, and Microsoft continues in providing a critical, globally impacting service.

Visual Fusion Server (VFS) is a composite application engine enabling enterprises to quickly and visually consolidate organizational data. It integrates and optimizes multiple back end data sources for web-based interactive data visualization. Visual Fusion Client is a rich internet application developed for a standard web browser, displaying information in an interactive interface. By combining these elements, Visual Fusion Suite provides advanced mapping, information, and data display functionality.

