



Extensis Portfolio Server Quenches Direct Wines Ltd.'s Thirst for Easier Access to their Image Library

Company Profile:

Direct Wines Ltd, better known as Laithwaites or The Sunday Times Wine Club, is the world's leading independent wine merchant.

Direct Wines are responsible for many well known wine clubs in the UK, including HSBC's, Richard & Judy's and Barclaycard's.

Industry:

Retail

Project Goals:

- To provide internal access to the company's image catalogue
- To facilitate user-friendly search/find access to images
- To control access to images through the company's Intranet
- To maximize the use of the wide range of images the company has available

Solution Implemented:

- Portfolio Server
- Portfolio NetPublish

Overview

In 2006, Direct Wines Ltd identified a need for a solution that would manage the thousands of wine-related images they had collected. The main use of the images, which range from images of wineries and wine makers to those of grapes, is inclusion in the company's direct mail campaigns and on the Direct Wines website. Traditionally, the company's images were printed and stored in lever arch files, which were then used for searching purposes. The images were also stored electronically in both high- and low-resolution formats.

This archaic system caused many issues for Direct Wines. Firstly, it was only possible for Macintosh users to obtain images, which caused obvious problems for PC users. The result was that the design team, who were amongst the few Mac users in the company, received a continuous string of image requests. This proved to be a strain on the department's resources, as they received requests on a daily basis. Secondly, the searching process involved the need to search through all the images until a particular image was found. In addition, images were organized by the country in which they were taken. This made it very difficult and time-consuming for individuals who did not know exactly which image they were looking for and which country that image was shot in.

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Challenge

- To provide a self-service “portal” (via the Direct Wines intranet) where other departments can easily find and access approved images
- To ensure that the keyword searching facility in the system is suitable for individuals with differing levels of knowledge of the images available
- To ensure that the solution facilitates the use of all of Direct Wines images to avoid over/under use

Solution

Direct Wines recognized the need for a system that removed pressure from their design department, who previously dealt with the daily requests for images from other employees. After consultation with Rubicon Workflow Solutions Ltd., Portfolio Server and Portfolio NetPublish were identified as the solution to Direct Wines’ problem.

Since the installation of Portfolio Server and Portfolio NetPublish, the issues that Direct Wines had experienced with their previous outdated system have been resolved and the company now has a more efficient process in place. This process begins when a photographer tags new images with the winery and country in which they were taken and saves them on to a DVD. A small team is then responsible for uploading the images on to the Portfolio Server. During the uploading of the images, additional keywords and metadata are added. This allows for image searching based on any number of criteria or descriptors, for instance "pouring" or “tasting.” This new process allows individuals with no knowledge of what images are available to easily search for images based on their specific need.

Results:

- An approved image library that is searchable and accessible to all employees
- Significant reduction in the amount of “down time” that the design team spends searching for images
- Improved quality of work due to easier access to more images
- More justification for photography funding as the use of all images is now maximized

"Coming from a paper-based cataloguing system where all images were lever arch filed, Extensis has revolutionized the way in which we catalogue and search through photographs. We now work smarter, quicker and ultimately with greater efficiency." --Nick Jones, Design Manager, Direct Wines Ltd.

“Now all our photographs have become instantly accessible, can to be viewed by anyone in the business and, more importantly, these images can be searched for and downloaded with ease. Before we dreaded the prospect of adding to and flicking through all our files hunting for the 'right kind' of image. Now it's a pleasure which has seen a broader range of photographs being used in all our literature and an increase in originality and creative stand out." --Nick Jones, Design Manager, Direct Wines Ltd.

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