

uemis DiveWorld Launches an International Diving Community Website Based on eZ Publish

Background

uemis DiveWorld (<http://www.uemis.org>) is an international community website for divers, sponsored by uemis. uemis (Underwater Equipment Made in Switzerland) is in the process of developing revolutionary underwater equipment, to be brought to the market in early 2009.

uemis founders approached Webmanufaktur Fritschy & Cie. AG, a full-service web development agency and eZ Partner in Berne, Switzerland, to develop a concept and technical solution that would help with the online promotion, sale and support of its future products. The solution was uemis DiveWorld, which runs on eZ Publish.

The logo for uemis DiveWorld features the text "uemis DiveWorld" in a blue, sans-serif font. The text is set against a dark blue background that includes a faint, glowing blue sphere, possibly representing a globe or a planet. The logo is centered within a horizontal rectangular frame.

DiveWorld overview

uemis DiveWorld aims to be the “world’s most exciting community site for divers”, delivering the most complete information on worldwide dive sites and facilities as well as top editorial content.

DiveWorld is currently available in five languages: German, English, French, Italian and Spanish; there are plans to add Japanese in 2009.

DiveWorld’s unique concept is centered around geo-tagging all content. Every single object, be it a dive spot, magazine article, blog post, photo, or member, is geographically identified by its coordinates (latitude and longitude). Visitors can interact with a world map that acts as a primary navigation tool and facilitates the grouping of content by location.

Challenges

Maintaining a high level of content quality is a key challenge for a community site. The information presented needs to be relevant, reliable and trustworthy. DiveWorld takes a two-part approach to this: there is a magazine section with editorial content provided by renowned authors and supplemented by high quality photos; all other content – dive spots, dive facilities, emergency addresses and accommodation, as well as blog and forum posts – is contributed by the community using front-end editing tools. Every registered member can edit and/or translate any information. To maintain quality, every article is clearly marked with the original author and identifies who made the latest modification.

One other aspect needed to be dealt with very carefully. In order to build trust with visitors, the relationship between the website and the sponsor, uemis, is made fully transparent. The most important statement is that the community area and front page will remain free of ads.

Why eZ Publish was chosen

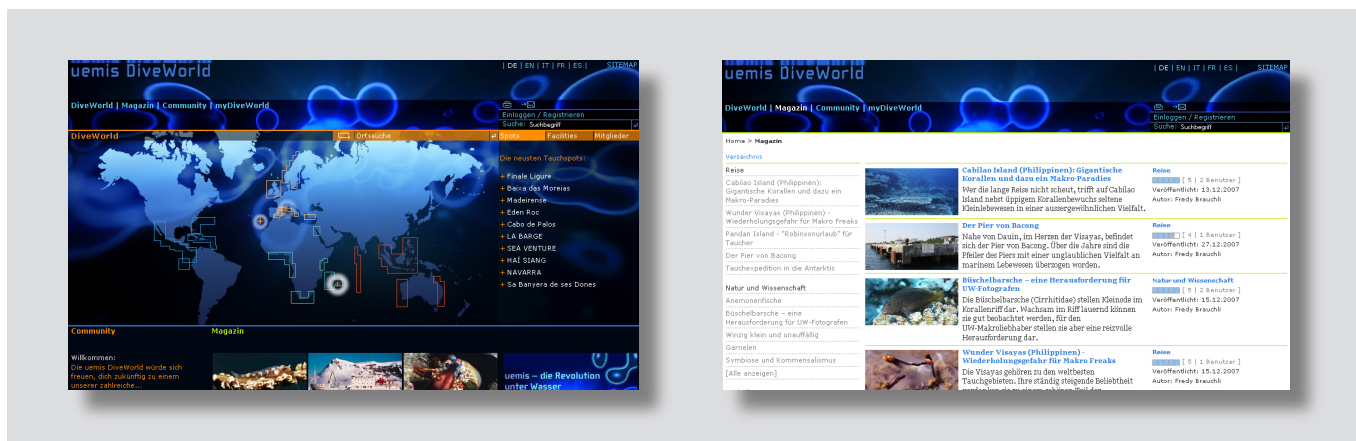
eZ Publish was chosen as the platform for DiveWorld for several reasons.

Dealing with data from all over the world, often with ambiguous place names or ones translated into western languages, was one of the biggest challenges; however, eZ Publish is known for its built-in multi-language features.

eZ Publish's powerful object model and role-based permission system provides an ideal framework for any complex website or community portal. It enables the easy implementation of custom objects with highly granular access rights. Each role, such as for community members, moderators, or editors, has specific rights defined. New roles and rights can be assigned at any time.

Scalability was another key consideration. When building up a new community, the growth rate can be unpredictable. Starting with a small server infrastructure and being able to scale up when necessary is a big cost advantage.

The extension architecture of eZ Publish allowed for the seamless integration of some complex extensions, more than 20 in total, without even touching the eZ Publish kernel.



Technical features

DiveWorld was developed using eZ Publish version 3.10 and has since been smoothly upgraded to 4.0.1. Some of the most notable features of the site include:

- > A Flash map, integrating Google Maps with eZ Publish content objects, that serves as the main search and navigation tool (<http://www.uemis.org/en/diveworld>)
- > Reverse geo-coding of all objects, generating virtual geo-folders, a hierarchical geographical index (<http://www.uemis.org/en/geofolder/list>) and automatic breadcrumb navigation (thanks to <http://www.geonames.org>)
- > Front-end editing and translation is made easier with context-sensitive help at the class and attribute level with an extension that was made public on the eZ projects site (http://projects.ez.no/cjw_contexthelp).

> Popular community features, such as comments, ratings, social bookmarks, and tip-a-friend are complemented with advanced features such as stacking ("I was here"), public bookmarks and notifications.

> Integration of YouTube videos and extensive photo galleries

Result

Although it has only recently been publicly released, the number of visits, new members, and information posted on uemis DiveWorld has been growing steadily. Having site content in five languages attracts people from all over the world, and the feedback has been extremely positive regarding the features, site stability, and the reliability and versatility of eZ Publish.

DiveWorld was developed by Webmanufaktur Fritschy & Cie. AG (<http://www.webmanufaktur.ch>), supported by a team of eZ Partners specialists: JAC Systeme GmbH, Rostock und Stralsund, Germany (<http://www.jac-systeme.de/>) and coolscreen.de, Hamburg, Germany (<http://www.coolscreen.de>).

The screenshot shows the uemis DiveWorld website. At the top left is the logo 'uemis UNDERWATER EQUIPMENT MADE IN SWITZERLAND'. To the right are language links 'DE | EN' and social media icons. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Karriere bei uemis?**: A section with the text 'Wir suchen Spezialisten mit Begeisterung für die Unterwasserwelt'.
- uemis DiveWorld**: A section with the text 'Das einzigartige Community-Portal für Taucher und Unterwasserfans'.
- uemis.com sponsert uemis.org**: A section with an underwater image and the text 'uemis.com sponsert uemis.org – für eine gemeinsame Unterwasserwelt.' Below this is a news item dated '01.06.2008 | 08:00 MEZ' with the headline 'Willkommen auf uemis.com' and a short paragraph.
- News-Ticker**: A vertical list of news items with dates and times, such as '15.08.2008 | 09:30 MEZ' and '04.08.2008 | 13:00 MEZ'.

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