



One Europe or Several?

Economic and Social Research Council

About our client

“One Europe or Several?” is a five-year research programme, funded by the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It examines contemporary processes of political, security, economic, social and cultural change across the European continent, as well as issues of convergence and divergence and prospects for integration and fragmentation.

The programme is concerned with: (a) boundaries, affiliation and identities; (b) social adjustment, wealth creation and distribution; and (c) institutions, citizenship and governance. It aims to strengthen links with the research and practitioner communities in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. The ESRC has allocated £4 million to this programme, which lasts until April 2003.

Business requirements

The programme required a website that would strengthen links between its 26 different research projects and that would provide a vehicle for it to present to the wider world.

The existing “One Europe or Several?” website was not capable of dealing with the enormous volume of material that the project was producing. This led to the programme managers making certain requests regarding the build, and look and feel of the new site.

The programme requested functionality changes to ensure ease of use with dramatically increased volume of content. As well as considering the front end of the website, changes to the back end were needed too. They required the ability to make updates to the site internally due to the amount of information published online.

The new site also required a search facility, distinct areas within the site, and links to individual project sites. They also required hosting facilities.

Project Type

Website Design

CMS

Keywords

Search Facility

Bespoke functionality

Accessibility

Usability

Keymedia solution

To provide a website that was easy to use and yet could display a large amount of information clearly, we worked closely with the programme administration to understand their full requirements.

The design of the new site had to take into account usability and accessibility issues. Keymedia created a clean and simple site with a design that reflected the nature of the programme. We ensured that it was easy to drill down into the site by keeping the home page easy to navigate. Users are clearly presented with areas of the site to investigate without being crowded by images and un-necessary information.

We also built a sophisticated search facility into the site that helps the user in finding the required document or information from the site. Searches can be conducted by topic, author, keyword and free text.

Due to our understanding of the required end result, we created areas within the site to aid navigation through the content. These areas included publications, newsletters, and a graphical events calendar.

We provided the internal staff with a custom-built content management system to update and alter the website as and when required. Any changes that they cannot make themselves are actioned by Keymedia. We have moved the site to one of our servers so that we can provide a fast turn around on any alterations and maintenance.

Our experience with the “One Europe or Several?” site illustrates that creating websites is an evolutionary process. The scope of most sites changes over time and they need to be reviewed on a regular basis to see that they are still achieving organisational goals.

Business benefits

The “One Europe or Several?” website is the central information hub for the whole programme. It provides:

- A powerful Content Management System built around content specific databases
- Ease of use due to adhering to usability and accessibility standards
- Stronger links between the research projects and centralised resources
- A user-friendly interface taking the project to the wider world