

[1] The Client

The Furniture Recycling Project

The Furniture Recycling Project (FRP) is a Gloucestershire based charity whose aim is to provide affordable recycled goods to disadvantaged groups, encourage recycling and provide voluntary and training opportunities to the wider community. The project has multiple offices in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury with an average of 12,000 items supplied to disadvantaged communities each year.



Launched: 01/11/2007
URL: N/A
Lead Developer: Robert Waggot
Lead Designer: Dave Johnston

[2] The Need

In February 2007 FRP approached Urban Element with the requirement to design and build a Collection and Delivery Web Application to manage all Customer, Sale, Collection, Van, Electronic Tracking and Administrative information as well as supply a series of exportable reports. Urban Element secured a £2000 grant for FRP to complete this work.

There was a three-fold need for the new Collection and Delivery Web Application,

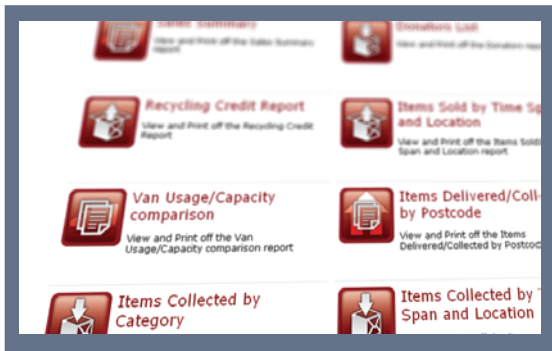
- The current system cannot be used by more than a single FRP office meaning duplicate data was being input in each office. The existing system was also hard to learn and wasn't designed in an intuitive manner.
- FRP's former processes needed to be consolidated in one central location, with van and report data being input on a manual basis.
- To comply with new government legislation in respect to the tracking of electronic items from the point of collection through to the end sale.

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[3] The Solution



Firstly Urban Element created a new database structure in SQL Server for the FRP database, using the existing Access database as a template, Urban Element restructured the database to make it more intuitive, faster to query and fully future-proofed.

Once the new database was in place Urban Element set about designing an intuitive and easy-to-learn User Interface for all users of any technical ability to use. Due to the nature of some confidential data and advanced functionality navigation is Role based so users can only use the functionality which is applicable to them.

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The FRP system was developed in the .NET framework which is the preferred programming language of Urban Element’s team of developers and over 2 million certified developers worldwide. There are a number of advantages to developing in .NET including the high level of security, the vast amount of functionality a developer can call upon and the support of Microsoft, the world’s largest software developer.

The new system is hosted on Urban Element’s dedicated servers in a secure data centre. Due to the secure and quickly changing nature of FRP’s data Urban Element have backup routines to restore all data in the case of a Disaster Recovery scenario. This means FRP’s data is forever secure and backed-up in case of emergency.

Due to the nature of FRP’s ever changing workforce FRP required the functionality for a Training system to be put in place for new users to use the system without affecting any “live” data. Now that this is in place it has become more secure and easier to train new members of staff.

Urban Element has also provided the functionality for members of the general public to submit an email query through the public facing website. This will provide a new avenue for FRP to gain more collections. This donor query form will be an integral part of the new website Urban Element’s team of designers will design and build for The Furniture Recycling Project, this secondary project was agreed in September 2007 and results are currently being measured.

[3] The Result

The new Collection and Delivery Web Application for The Furniture Recycling Project went live in September 2007; although results are still being collated there have already been a number of a number of recognizable benefits to FRP:

- All Customer, Collection, Delivery, Van and Management data can be accessed and reported from in one central place maintaining the integrity of all data.
 - Data input has been streamlined, helping to remove the potential for human error by implementing an intuitive and easy-to-learn system.
 - Invoices, Thank You letters and reports are now all handled through the system reducing manual paperwork and waste.
 - Electrical Items are now tracked from collection to sale in conjunction with new government legislation.
- The system has been built in a scaleable and easy to maintain fashion offering the potential for further developments such as online booking, new reports and management data.