

Enterprise Ireland

Case Study

Microsoft Partner 
Gold Portals and Collaboration
Gold Content Management
Silver Web development
Silver Application Lifecycle Management


storm
technology

Overview

We were faced with a complex technical challenge – migrating from SharePoint 2001 directly to 2007 while ensuring seamless integration with our custom built CRM system. To get there we needed a partner with a deep understanding of SharePoint. We found it in Storm Technology –specialists with great technical skills and an extensive knowledge of the intricacies of how SharePoint works.

Pat Moriarty, Enterprise Ireland.

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish businesses in worldwide markets. The agency has a network of 9 regional and over 30 international offices focused on helping thousands of Irish companies achieve business success in world markets.

Fundamental to the smooth running of day-to-day operations within Enterprise Ireland is the organisation's custom built customer relationship management (CRM) solution. The solution - used by all employees in all locations - is the "hub" from which client interactions are managed and recorded. A core component of the system is its underlying document management repository – built and designed using Microsoft SharePoint 2001. The repository houses all documents, files and records relating to clients and their engagement with Enterprise Ireland.

The challenge faced by the Enterprise Ireland IT team was that SharePoint 2001 - on which the document management repository was built - had become an outdated technology and was no longer supported by Microsoft. The company needed to move to the platform's latest release which involved migrating from ASP.com to Microsoft .NET technology.

The complexity surrounding the migration path was intensified by two factors. One, the new version of SharePoint needed to integrate seamlessly with Enterprise Ireland's custom built CRM solution. Two, the migration involved the leap-frogging of several SharePoint releases - moving from the legacy 2001 version directly to the 2007 platform.



A technically challenging project, Enterprise Ireland needed to complement its own in-house IT expertise with a partner deeply skilled in SharePoint. Following a competitive tendering process Enterprise Ireland selected Storm Technology as its partner of choice.

Today, Enterprise Ireland has successfully completed the migration directly to SharePoint 2007 - and seamlessly integrated this with the organisation's business critical CRM solution.

The team at Storm did a great job.– migrating us across two generations of SharePoint to a new stable technology platform while maintaining seamless integration with our bespoke CRM system. They are experts in their field and have an understanding of the SharePoint platform that is exemplary.

Pat Moriarty, Enterprise Ireland.

Situation

Enterprise Ireland's remit is to help Irish organisations grow exports and succeed in international markets. It works with Irish indigenous businesses providing them with financial supports, training and international market development services.

As a government organisation Enterprise Ireland had a legal and regulatory responsibility to keep accurate, comprehensive and relevant records and documentation on its interactions and engagement with clients. To this end the organisation's in-house IT department had invested in designing and building a bespoke customer relationship management (CRM) solution to ensure full compliance and – at the same time - provide end-users with an intuitive and friendly solution to work within. The solution was underpinned by a robust document management repository - designed and built in SharePoint 2001 - which integrated seamlessly with the front-end CRM solution. At the time the repository was the central store for over fifty thousand documents and records relating to clients and was used daily by employees working from national and international locations.

A key challenge faced by the Enterprise Ireland IT department was that the SharePoint 2001 server had long since become outdated and was no longer supported by Microsoft. The organisation needed to migrate to a newer version of the server and a more stable technology platform. There were three key challenges that made the migration path complex:-

1. Migrating directly from SharePoint 2001 to SharePoint 2007 involved moving from an ASP.com technical environment to Microsoft .NET. This pain staking move was further complicated by skipping the intermediate SharePoint 2005 release – a technical challenge difficult to resolve.
2. The new environment had to link seamlessly with Enterprise Ireland's bespoke CRM solution and do so without impacting the front-end solution.
3. The magnitude of data that had to be migrated - in a very tight timeframe - in order to ensure there was no disruption to the organisations' internal processes or users' access to the CRM system.



We had a complex technical challenge on our hands. Storm's expertise and deep knowledge of SharePoint enabled us to achieve our goal – with the budget and resources we had available. It was an impressive display of great technical talent.

Pat Moriarty, Enterprise Ireland.

Solution

Working in partnership with Enterprise Ireland's internal IT department, Storm successfully upgraded the document management repository from SharePoint 2001 to 2007, migrating tens of thousands of documents and creating custom code to enable the bespoke CRM solution to integrate effortlessly with the new repository.

There were three key pillars to the project:-

1. CRM integration

A fundamental requirement of the migration project was that the new repository would integrate with the organisation's bespoke CRM solution with minimum impact to the front end interfaces. These interfaces evoked different business workflows which drove document submission and archiving processes across the business. These front end ASP web pages communicated with a custom VB COM business layer and accessed the SharePoint 2001 repository using the standard distributed COM interface exposed by the platform with the "calls" for documents encapsulated in the business layer.

To ensure no disruption to the end user interfaces Storm Technology created new custom code that enabled the CRM solution to communicate with the new document repository seamlessly. This migration approach maintained the existing ASP layer and replaced the SharePoint 2001 COM layer with an interface to a new repository. This involved refactoring the existing business layer but did not impact the front end interfaces. Furthermore to minimize changes and improve the scalability of the overall solution; the new repository was hosted on a different server. This required a new Windows Communication Framework (WCF) layer that encapsulated access to the repository and exposed a backend agnostic interface to the business layer.

To facilitate a smooth migration path the technical team at Storm mirrored the Enterprise Ireland technical environment and tested the new code to ensure the front end interfaces behaved as expected and that there was "no noticeable" change from an end user perspective.



2. Data migration

The migration of over fifty thousand documents from the old repository to the new was a mammoth task. However Storm Technology, in conjunction with the Enterprise Ireland IT team was able to achieve this with ease. The exceptional design of the solution coupled with thorough testing in the non-production environment enabled data migration to be completed over a full weekend.

3. Knowledge transfer

with an experienced and talented in-house IT department, Enterprise Ireland wanted a partner that would not just "do the job" but who would also transfer its knowledge and expertise in SharePoint best practices.

With Storm Enterprise Ireland found that partner; the SharePoint experts within Storm worked directly with Enterprise Ireland's IT team departing knowledge and "know how" at each step of the project - ultimately enabling the in-house team to take full ownership of the new repository.

 *We were very impressed by the technical skill and knowledge of the Storm team. It was their in-depth understanding of SharePoint that made the project a success. What's more they were really proactive about transferring that knowledge to our own team – it was collaboration at its best.* 

Pat Moriarty, Enterprise Ireland.

The Benefits

Today Enterprise Ireland has a robust, reliable and stable document management repository that is the backbone of its CRM solution. The project and partnership with Storm has brought the organisation many benefits:-

- The smooth, successful migration from an unsupported out-dated document management repository to a stable technical environment built on SharePoint 2007
- A seamless migration that negated the need to invest in building a totally new solution from the ground up
- A flexible migration that enabled the organisation to leap frog several versions of SharePoint saving time, money and effort
- A non-disruptive migration that had no impact on the end user or the critical day-to-day operations of the organisation
- A knowledge sharing migration which enabled the Enterprise Ireland team to learn and leverage the SharePoint expertise within Storm to build out its own skill set
- A solid, technical partnership with an organisation that is professional and quick to resolve issues.

 *Put simply – the team at Storm are smart, technically savvy and complete experts in the field of SharePoint development and implementation. I would recommend them to any organisation embarking on a similar SharePoint upgrade project.* 

Pat Moriarty, Enterprise Ireland.

About Storm Technology

Storm Technology is a leading business technology consultancy - and Microsoft Certified Gold Partner - that specialises in building solutions to help clients gain better value faster from the investments they have made in Microsoft technologies.

For more information visit www.storm.ie or contact us at:

Dublin Office:

Capel Building,
Marys Abbey,
Dublin 7

Telephone: +353 1 416 1226

Galway Office:

Galway Business Park,
Upper Newcastle Road,
Galway

Telephone: +353 91 509770

Email: info@storm.ie