

Case Study:

Publishing content to the Web and mobile phones

Irish Farmers Journal

www.farmersjournal.ie
The Irish Farmers' Journal has been working with Irish farmers and the agricultural industry since 1948, to encourage and sustain a prosperous farm economy in Ireland. The paper is the unbiased voice for progress and development on Irish farms. The Farmers' Journal Interactive web site aims to be the best source of Irish agricultural and rural information on the Internet.

Background

In mid-2000, The Irish Farmers Journal initiated a joint project with Eircell to provide agricultural-related news and information services to mobile phone users, via the Eircell WAP portal site and text messages. As a weekly print-oriented publication, new processes and systems were required to enable the timely and efficient preparation and delivery of electronic news and information on a daily basis not only to Eircell customers, but also directly to the Journals' own website, which previously was updated primarily on a weekly basis in concert with the publication of the newspaper. Three delivery media for the information services were required, 'push' text messages containing daily news headlines, available on a subscription basis to mobile phones, and more detailed 'pull' information on daily livestock prices, available to both mobile phone and Internet browsers.

Solution

As the services are operating six and sometimes seven days a week, a pure web-based solution to adding new information was designed, so that Journal staff could update information from any location, office, home, or on the road, from a standard browser.

All information updates and service administration is carried out via HTML forms, and all content is stored in XML format so that it can be easily re-purposed for the different dissemination media, WML for mobile phone browsing, HTML for Internet browsing, and plain text for text messages.

A report for a livestock mart is written in a form text box, and the mart location and date selected from drop-down menus. Once the report is written and submitted, it is presented in preview form for confirmation, and then saved in an XML format. In general, a number of marts take place each day, so when a complete batch of reports is entered, the service administrator initiates a process to publish all the reports in both WML and HTML formats, and generate an index page to allow them to be navigated.

Mart Reports and Factory Prices can be viewed online under "Livestock Daily" on the Farmers Journal Interactive site, and under [Bank+Business], [Irish Farmer's Journal] on Eircell's WAP portal. Daily news headlines can be received on Eircell GSM mobile phones by sending the message "IFJ" to 1745.

Benefits

For the Farmers Journal, publishing content directly on electronic media delivers a number of benefits:

- Ability to deliver news daily, not just weekly.
- Minimal manual effort to publish news and reports.
- Consistent high quality presentation across different media.

