THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES FOR SAFE AND SECURE DISCUSSION BETWEEN MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Communities.bma.org.uk uses Telligent 8.0 to drive collaboration, policy-making, and peer-to-peer communication.
Background
The British Medical Association (BMA), which was founded in 1832, is the trade union and professional body for doctors and medical students in the UK.

In a time of extraordinary change in the medical profession, it was necessary for the BMA to upgrade its digital properties to enable it to meet the changing needs of its membership.

4 Roads is a team of social business strategists and web developers that helps organisations optimise their online presence and build powerful digital relationships. With specialisms in consulting, building and maintaining online communities, 4 Roads was asked by digital agency Precedent to help develop the BMA’s community website so doctors and medical students could more easily connect with peers and share information in a safe and secure environment.

Solution
Integration and the upgrade of the BMA community platform helped establish new features and a roadmap for future development that the BMA could use to further its aims of encouraging transparency and democracy throughout its online groups, and increase the level of policy-forming discussion within its communities.

“For the upgrade, 4 Roads provided absolutely vital capacity and skills,” adds Donatella Huijts. “It was good to have that technical skill and knowledge on hand to help with the BMA’s planning. It was vital for our client to have a roadmap, to know what they could do with Telligent in the future.

Upgrade
The upgrade to Telligent 8.0 brought a series of enhancements to the BMA community site.

They included:
• A move to a responsive design that empowered mobile and tablet users
• A new theme to improve brand consistency across the two sites
• Improvements to the Single Sign On (SSO)
• Configuration of Analytics dashboards
• Supporting BMA’s ongoing strategy for full integration and a seamless user-experience

Responsive
The most significant improvement brought by upgrading to Telligent 8.0, says Stewart Atkins, the BMA’s head of digital communication strategy, was the move to responsive design.

Now, instead of directing mobile and tablet users to a mobile-optimised community site, the full site scales to suit the device on which it is being accessed.
Branding
Upgrading to Telligent 8.0 enabled the adoption of a new ‘theme’ on the community pages. This meant a redesign could take place bringing greater brand consistency as the look and feel of the site was aligned more closely with that of the main Sitecore website.

SSO
To enhance usability and engagement across both sites, access via a password-protected Single Sign On (SSO) was essential. The upgrade improved the user-experience by fixing bugs in the cookies-enabled sign-on system.

Analytics
Dashboards were introduced to deliver the latest data. Analytics allowed the BMA’s social media and communities teams a detailed understanding of users, visits, and site content performance, enabling them to make use of that information in their reporting.

Results
The BMA has seen impressive and significant growth in its community following the upgrade.

In the year to July 2015, the number of registered users has increased from 2,421 to 7,916 – growth of 227%. Unique monthly visitors have increased 100% from 11,093 to 22,215, with monthly referrals from social media up 186% from 4,555 to 13,029. By July 2015, the BMA had 57 groups on its community pages, up from 24 in the same month in 2014 – growth of 138%.

Improved engagement and a larger membership within the community means activity spills into other areas of the site and, more so, means the BMA is encouraged to continue the development of its communities.

The Vision
The Telligent Community platform allows the BMA to develop safe and secure peer-to-peer professional communication. Upgrading the technology brought greater functionality, responsive design, and the ability to enhance both the usability and the user-experience of the site in the future.

"Currently, we have a website supported by communities, but we are a membership organisation and must be responsive to our members' needs," adds Stewart Atkins. "Over time I can see a shift in the balance where we will have greater engagement through the communities supported by the core advice and information content within the website."

The BMA is already looking at ways to introduce wikis to its community pages, deepen levels of engagement, and enhance democratisation by devolving strategic control and ownership of some areas to sub-teams within the organisation.

In addition, the BMA will look to deepen integration between its two sites and introduce gamification and badging as well as using new analytical measures and CRM profiling to improve engagement.

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