

A new vision for an old tradition: Burke's Peerage & Baronetage partners with Content DSI to deliver genealogy information to the Internet... and to researchers around the world.



Burke's Goals

- Publish genealogical information to the Web
- Convert all hard copy into electronic format
- Create a central database
- Develop a customized Web site for researchers to access and purchase information

The Solution

- Data conversion of all the content in the published books
- Development of an editorial database system to collect, standardize, and organize content
- Development and deployment of customized and e-commerce-enabled Web sites
- 24x7 hosting of Burke's Landed Gentry Genealogy Portal at www.burkes-peerage.net

BACKGROUND

Burke's Landed Gentry is the fruit of nearly two centuries of research by the Burke family and others: it is an unparalleled collection of books of genealogical and heraldic interest. This detailed listing of key families and other influential figures in the United Kingdom was first published in 1826.

Until 2001, these valuable reference sources were available only in hard copy. But just as society has moved into the 21st Century, so too, must Burke's. The goal of Burke's Peerage & Gentry when partnering with Content Data Solutions, Inc. was to develop a state-of-the-art electronic publishing and content management system that would provide new opportunities for genealogical researchers worldwide on the Internet.

THE CHALLENGE

The main challenge Burke's faced was how to convert and organize the hard copy data. The content had to be categorized into geographical regions so that the first of the regions to be published, The Kingdom in Scotland, could be updated and published in hard copy and electronically from one source. This edition includes the histories of more than 650 families, embracing more than 20,000 living people along with biographies of 1,000 prominent individuals.

Another challenge was determining how to update the content—which had not been revised since the 1970s. Non-technical freelance editors would need to research and amend individual records and return them to Burke's offices. Complicating matters further was the need for a Web site with various regional sub-sites, all driven by the same core database. For example, users would be able to access a Scottish Web site with Scottish links and resources from the core Scottish family entries,

or an English Web site with English links and resources from the core English family entries, and so on.

THE SOLUTION

Due to the volume of hard copy material, a phased approach was needed to achieve Burke's goals. Phases recommended by Content DSI included data conversion, editorial database development, and Web site development. In addition, Content DSI was engaged for hosting services and ongoing enhancements.

Data Conversion

Content DSI performed a detailed analysis on the structure of the entries and created a Document Tag Definition (DTD) for the keyboarding staff. When defining the DTD, we took into account what the publishers wished to do with the information in the future and how varying levels of subscriptions would be introduced. Content DSI also recommended that additional data be included to facilitate the electronic publication of the entries. The content of the books was manually keyed into electronic format.

Editorial Database Systems

While the content was being converted, Content DSI developed an editorial database system to store the records. Each entry was tagged and macros were developed to read the tagged entries and convert them to Microsoft® Word. Each tag was converted to an equivalent Word style so that an editor could easily see and update the content.

Burke's staff then used the editorial system to either check out entries for external updates, or to update the records internally. The editorial process involved

Technology Employed

Dynamic HTML
CSS
ASP
JavaScript
ActiveX
MS IIS 4
MS SQL 7
MS Transaction Server 2
WebBoard

Content DSI Company Overview

Content Data Solutions, Inc., a software and systems integrator, provides custom content management, cross-media publishing and e-business solutions to leading commercial publishers, industrial manufacturers and other content centric companies.

We apply proven methodologies and processes to help enable our clients to author, store and manage information from a central data repository, publish that information in multiple formats and import and export data to and from internal business systems. Our solutions help companies efficiently manage and publish their information.

Content DSI has the experience and expertise to develop a clear understanding of our clients' goals, requirements and business issues. We then recommend, design and implement an effective solution to satisfy their needs.

We highly value the relationships we establish with our clients and are dedicated to delivering the highest level of service.

amending old records, adding new ones and, if necessary, removing old ones. This was a massive editorial task that has been streamlined by the editorial database system. With the new system, updating records will be easier. The database system is currently used to create the print publication as well as feed content to the new Web site.

Web Site Development

Content DSI developed a database-driven Web site that enables Burke's to reach new clients all over the world. The site incorporates a full subscriber database, which the publisher is able to update remotely. This site promises to become the key genealogy portal for researchers worldwide, covering the histories of both titled and untitled members of the British establishment.

Central to the site is the *Burke's Landed Gentry* content database enabling the delivery of a wealth of information on British history, culture, and genealogy. Each family within *Burke's Landed Gentry* has been allocated its own home page and community discussion area where users can find additional information about important families, as well as meet, discuss, and research pertinent issues with other like-minded individuals.

The Web site provides e-commerce capabilities that allow users to purchase timed access to information with their credit cards. Using the integrated tools within the site, Burke's staff can distribute e-marketing campaigns and distribute regular e-newsletters.

Hosting

Burke's is one of a growing number of clients who choose Content DSI to provide the set-up and hosting of their business-critical Web sites. Staff at the hosting center in Horsham, PA, are on hand 24x7 to ensure the site remains functional.

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✓ SUCCESSFUL RESULTS

"This significant innovation made possible by the partnership with Content DSI means that, for the first time, readers and researchers anywhere in the world will be able to benefit from the wealth of information and scholarship for which Burke's publications are renowned," comments Mike Cross, CEO, Burke's Peerage & Gentry. "They will also be able to locate this information instantly, at the touch of a keyboard, using the family names of those listed, or key search terms provided."

Ongoing Enhancements

Following the success of *Burkes Landed Gentry*, Burke's asked Content DSI to add another of their flagship publications, *Burkes Peerage*, to the existing Web site. This involved integrating the content from a separate publication into the database, thus making the two searchable simultaneously.

To support the effort, Content DSI conducted an extensive programmatic data conversion process to convert content from PDF format and bring it into the database system. Users are now able to subscribe to and search one or both publications and view results. The system checks the subscription status and only displays results from the appropriate publication database(s). The user is then prompted to purchase a subscription to the other one. These and similar up-sell/cross-sell capabilities are made possible by the utilization of a single integrated database containing multiple sources of information.

Launched in January 2002, The Burke's Peerage & Gentry database contains detailed records of some 5,000 families, including almost 250,000 living people, complete with historical lineages, some as far back as the 13th Century. The breadth and authenticity of these records provides an unrivaled guide to significant families within the British Isles.

