Physics Today's Website of Tomorrow

CASE STUDY

A new publishing platform integrates with WordPress and gives a redesigned magazine's editors and marketers control of their content.

Background

Since 1948, *Physics Today*, the flagship magazine of the American Institute of Physics (AIP), has been the most influential news, commentary, analysis, and research source in the physical sciences community. The magazine—run by AIP's nonprofit subsidiary, AIP Publishing—is housed on Scitation.org along with journals and conference proceedings.

Challenges

Physics Today's previous online publishing platform was designed to support only books and journals. And even the smallest style change, like moving an image or changing the font size on a webpage, had to be handled by the platform vendor—an inflexible, slow, and expensive process. Uploading daily content for the magazine was time-consuming and difficult, and required HTML editing skills.

AIP needed a nimbler, more flexible platform that would give the magazine's staff the autonomy to easily manage the website's user interface (UI) and user experience (UX), and the freedom to test new global and regional sales and subscription models. In addition, the magazine needed to modernize its websites to increase reader engagement—without disrupting current production methods or the customer experience.

Solutions

- **Design:** Scitation.org was migrated to Literatum, Atypon's online publishing platform. Atypon's in-house design team gave the entire site a new look and feel modeled on user-oriented consumer websites and feedback from the product stakeholders. In particular, *Physics Today's* site was enriched with vibrant imagery, high-resolution photos, and video. The new Scitation site, which is optimized for mobile and tablet display, was created using Page Builder, Literatum's drag-and-drop, widget-based tool for building websites.
- **Engagement:** "Most read," "most talked about," "most recent," and "related articles" features are populated dynamically throughout the site, and the *Physics Today* homepage includes "featured" and "editor's picks" callouts—all powered by Page Builder widgets. Structural page modifications that improve user engagement can be easily implemented, and every aspect of users' behavior can be tracked to help improve site stickiness. Site usage statistics can be calculated daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly.
- **Onsite discovery:** *Physics Today* makes use of AIP Publishing's taxonomy, which enables keyword and full-text search across the magazine alone or all of Scitation.org's hosted content simultaneously, as specified by the reader. The new interface includes topic- and publication-based navigation as well as enhanced search results that can be filtered by topic, date, article type, department, and author. A taxonomy-browsing widget allows users to examine the parent/child relationships within the taxonomy tree itself.

- **WordPress integration:** Atypon integrated Literatum with WordPress to enable *Physics Today's* editors to use their established workflow and familiar authoring environment. Articles written and copyedited on AIP's WordPress server are retrieved directly from the WordPress backend and published to Literatum automatically. No XML or HTML skills are required to publish the content, and all content receives a digital object identifier (DOI) for deposit with CrossRef.
- **Other third-party integrations:** Literatum was also integrated with Advantage, AIP Publishing's customer database; DotMailer, for marketing and customer email alerts; Disqus, which enables moderated comments on the *Physics Today* site; and AppNexus, an advertising platform that coordinates the display of advertisements on Literatum, DotMailer, and several other AIP websites.
- **Unlimited publication types:** Because Literatum supports any type of digital content and assigns it a DOI, *Physics Today* can bundle and curate both the print and daily content in preset category pages. All of Literatum's functionality—from access control and search to targeted marketing and eCommerce—applies to everything hosted on the platform.

Results

- Using Page Builder and Literatum's automation tools, the *Physics Today* staff can make adjustments specific to the magazine. For example, by experimenting with different sales models, *Physics Today* can offer subscriptions while the rest of the platform offers single-article sales; publication subscription prices can even be adjusted on the fly. And because no involvement from Atypon is required, the production process is significantly faster and less costly.
- Improved search engine optimization (SEO) attracts new visitors, and comprehensive search across all publications and content types on Scitation makes *Physics Today* content more discoverable.
- Literatum's support for unlimited content types gives *Physics Today* staff the freedom to augment the site with books, manuals, HTML-based interactive data sets, and online courses.
- The home page's "related articles" widget populates other full-text pages and automates the cross-promotion of magazine content with other journal products.
- *Physics Today's* new responsively designed site is giving researchers and readers a richer, more productive user experience, on any device.

With Literatum, *Physics Today* will also have numerous future opportunities for increasing traffic and deepening user engagement, including automatically linking journal or magazine content to related online news stories—on their own and third-party websites—and using Literatum's granular targeting capabilities to dynamically deliver relevant articles and advertising to each reader based on their user profile and prior site behavior.

> The ability to publish enriched, well-designed content daily helps Physics Today stay timely and relevant beyond its monthly print cycle. The new navigation options and ability to adjust and continually improve the look and feel of the site increases our engagement with readers and makes us more productive as a team. In addition, the new platform has helped us integrate and improve the effectiveness of our social media and marketing efforts. We look forward to a long relationship with Atypon.
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