

Race Corporation website adds instant SMS updates with Xara Online's Sports Reporter application



Website: Race Corporation
<http://www.racecorporation.co.uk>

Industry: Sport and leisure

Type of Application: SMS Sports Reporter

Benefits Summary:

- The application was installed and running in minutes
- Race meeting results on website are now always up to date
- Time-critical information can be sent to subscribers almost instantaneously
- Updates to the website can be made from anywhere — no Internet access is required
- Send only one SMS message to trigger instant update of website content and also an SMS update to the database of fans
- Easy to approve members who wish to receive SMS updates
- Cost-effective solution as no specialist programming was required

Website background

Designed and run by Clive McNeil, the Race Corporation website is popular with Super Bike fans across the UK and Europe.

The site covers the latest news about teams and riders, a calendar of events and the latest results from the World Motorcycle Endurance Championships.

During the racing season Clive provides commentary on the Championships for Eurosport, and so travels all over the world to race meetings. He needs to communicate the news and results back to the fans.

Challenges

Whilst abroad commentating for Eurosport, it is often difficult for Clive to update the Race Corporation website with the most up to date information from the meetings. At the track there are many journalists and only limited access to computers and the Internet. Where time zones are compatible, journalists normally communicate the results back to their companies via fax or telephone. The company then updates the website with the information.

However, this could mean that there are many hours in between the finish of the event and the results appearing on the website. Clive and the Race Corporation website weren't happy with these delays and wanted to find a faster method. Even at events where access to the Internet was very good and websites could be updated remotely via laptops and dial-up connections, the delays in getting information from trackside to the media centers would mean that critical events could easily be missed. A solution enabling time-critical information to be communicated within seconds of events happening was needed.

"Sports results are time-relevant, and it was frustrating that there was no way we could update our website or keep our users informed whilst we were on the move," said Clive McNeil. "Xara Online offered the solution, incorporating SMS functionality that we could never have achieved on our own. We can now update our website and communicate with our users wherever we are, whatever the time. We are pleased to have an enviable service — without having to spend lots of money, or waiting months for it to be developed."

Furthermore Race Corporation wanted to find a way of informing fans of results and the latest news wherever they were. Many are not based in an office, or don't have 24 hour access to an internet connection, so getting the results via the Race Corporation website might not always be possible for these fans.

So the challenges facing Race Corporation were how to update their website from race meetings, and how to inform fans of results when they don't have access to the Race Corporation website.

Solution

The solution that Race Corporation chose was to use SMS (short messaging service) and the Internet to create a slick, fast transfer of information from the journalist at a race meeting to the Super Bike fans.

To enable them to do this Race Corporation used Xara Online's modular SMS and database technology to create their "SMS Sports Reporter" application. Quick and easy to install, the application is extremely simple to use for the journalist and fans.

The website application is triggered by the journalist sending an SMS message from wherever they are, whenever they have the time. The SMS message contains the latest news or results that the journalist wishes to report. This message automatically updates a specified location within the Race Corporation website so that fans can view the news and results instantly.

The Xara Online Sports Reporter application also enables fans to register via a simple form on the Race Corporation website to receive instant SMS result messages to their mobile phones. Whenever a new fan registers for the results service an email is sent to the Race Corporation with the fan's details. From this email Race Corporation can decide whether to add the fan to the SMS results database — this gives Race Corporation control over which fans they send SMS messages to.

When the journalist sends their SMS message from the race meeting the application will update the contents of the website, and at the same time will send the SMS message to the group of members who are in the SMS results database.

The Xara Online Sports Reporter application has enabled the Race Corporation to achieve their aim of keeping their website up to date from wherever they are in the world, even when they don't have access to the Internet. In addition to this the application has given them a new means of communicating with their fans in the form of instant SMS messages.

The application was installed and running on the Race Corporation website in minutes and has been further extended so that fans can also receive the results via email.