

DMD
Intergen
Solutionists
Zenago

the**new**webmasters

CREATIVE SHOWCASE

To help you avoid being run over by the second web revolution we profile four web developers and designers whose work with mainstream and traditional business clients has not just enhanced existing business, but added new and exciting fields of growth. How are you preparing for the second web revolution?

The new web masters

The Internet ain't new, but it's still opening up new opportunities as businesses tap into niche markets and clever websites make companies run more smoothly. Here's how some smart Kiwis are doing just that



About ten years ago, when the web was all shiny and new, most of us knew nothing about how it worked. It was simply new and exciting, and we wanted the best looking website.

As the web has evolved, so have our expectations of it. Now a website is not only judged on its look and feel, but also on how well it enables us, the user, to achieve what we want from a site—whether that's to be entertained, buy clothes or check our bank balance.

For businesses, a website has moved from being a fancy new add-on to being an essential part of the business. The most efficient businesses have learnt to plug their websites into the systems they use to run stock levels, accounting and customer management—a task that's easier said than done.

The following pages give the behind-the-scenes stories of a number of successful websites. It doesn't matter what industry they're from, websites need to do a lot in 2007 to satisfy customer demand. These case studies show the variety of skills needed to achieve that.

Key Trends Personalisation

The web offers the ability for companies to deal with a customer on an individual basis. Early adopter companies like Amazon.com did an amazing job of personalisation, setting a high standard which all other ecommerce websites are judged by, whether the user knows it or not.

In a report titled *It's All About Me and*

You: How Personalisation Can Build Better Customer Relationships, Lynn Harvey defines personalisation as a "ME-and-YOU" relationship-building activity that focuses on companies learning to recognise, understand and ultimately serve their customers.

Harvey, a senior consultant and analyst with the Patricia Seybold Group, says customers now expect personalisation. "Now that we've learned how efficient and effective it is, it will be expected in the future," she says.

Harvey's report says the future of personalisation has more to do with mindset than technology. It quotes Teresa McKinney, VP of marketing for software developer Macromedia, saying web personalisation will fully succeed when used in concert with a holistic sales approach. "[We need] an approach to e-commerce that moves beyond the current e-commerce viewpoint that every click that isn't a purchase is a failure," says McKinney. "With personalisation, every click is further insight into your customer's wants and needs."

Integration with back office

Another key trend is the integration of back-office systems into the operation of websites. This enables a customer to connect directly with the same systems they would interact with in a retail store.

A milestone in the development of back-office integration was the introduction of XML, or extensible markup language, in 1998. XML separates information from the

way it's presented. For example, a news story can be created as an XML file which can then be displayed on a computer screen, on a cellphone screen, and on a graphic publishing program. Similarly, financial data can be stored in XML format, meaning—in simplified terms—that it's easier for, say, your accounting software to understand what your web server is talking about.

Content management

Since the late 1990s, content management systems have put web publishing power into the hands of non-technical people. Generally content management systems are based on a design template, letting selected staff within an organisation add and edit content without worrying about the look and feel of a site.

The future

The future of the web is all about collaboration and community. Sites like Wikipedia, MySpace and YouTube all show the importance of people connecting online and using tools to share ideas.

In a business context, this means more websites are providing ways for customers to make a real connection, not only with the businesses they are buying from, but with other customers as well.

Gone in 60 seconds

Kiwi sites go niche for big returns

Why was Trade Me become such a roaring success when Ebay already existed? The answer is in niche sites and trusted communities. Which is good news for a tightly targeted business looking to run an auction site.

DMD Internet, New Zealand's leading producer of auction sites, has recently developed two niche sites (with five more in production) targeting niche markets. The first, for a North American client, provides a service on a city and town level, where traders know other traders are in the same geographical location, increasing the level of trust and willingness to participate.

Another site, speedbitz.com, a motorsport industry auction venue, has attracted great interest and many listings in a short time. "The advantage of doing auctions the niche way is that traders are more likely to feel comfortable buying and selling with people in their geographical

vicinity or their specialist area of interest," says Mariee Shaw, client manager at DMD. "Trust and community spirit is more readily forthcoming in communities made up of members who share something in common."

From the user's perspective, niche auctions are more efficient. Site visitors can zero-in on products much more quickly and with a much greater range of choice for their field than they would ever be able to do with the likes of Ebay. Questions that other buyers ask of the sellers are more likely to be relevant to the rest of the community. Features built-in to the site are more useful for the targeted group. For example, the geographically targeted site uses nearby towns and cities as a feature to highlight for prospective buyers. Sellers listing on the Speedbitz site looking for motorbikes can search among Dragster bikes, Moto X, Super Moto, Trail Bikes and more, bringing a tighter degree of focus to the user.

"Never before has there been as much opportunity for ordinary people to make an extraordinary living as is being provided right now through the Internet," says Shaw. "As the Internet becomes part of the fabric of everyday life, communities are developing online at an astonishing rate and auction sites are among the best examples of this in action."

One CMS to rule them all How Hirepool manages multiple brands online

When iconic Kiwi brand Hirepool entered a rebranding programme, it included upgrading their website's design and functionality to a content managed site. They worked with DMD Internet to build the new site.

Hirepool is also regularly acquiring companies, adding to their portfolio of brands, including Portaloo, Henderson Rentals, PowerPlant Supplies

and Nationwide Equipment. Rather than bringing the new brands—some of them well-established—under an overall Hirepool brand, the acquired companies retained their own identity. To achieve efficiency without diluting the effectiveness of each brand, any web solution Hirepool adopted needed to be flexible enough to incorporate the branding of new companies as they were added to the Hirepool portfolio.

Using a modified version of DMD's Quicksite Pro, DMD Internet was able to supply Hirepool with a solution that allows the addition of sub-sites incorporating separate branding and navigation systems. Hirepool staff can update content using any web browser, without the need for advanced technical knowledge.

An additional challenge was tailoring both designs and content to ensure the sites were optimised for search engine performance. DMD's online marketing department continues to

work with Hirepool to provide online marketing programmes that drive targeted traffic to the site.

Choice site Catering company lets customers choose

Choice Catering Equipment offers thousands of catering products, from forks to fridges. It's the kind of business that almost demands an online outlet, with customers from around New Zealand bringing very detailed orders.

With thousands of products in many different categories, manually loading products on the site was out of the question. The site needed to interface with Accredo, Choice's existing backend, store-management system, to synchronise accounting and stock management.

From a usability perspective, the many product lines also offered challenges to easy navigation of the website. Choice Catering

Equipment's owner, Steven Preston, knew the challenge ahead: to create a robust and easy-to-navigate website, and encourage clients to adopt the new supply channel.

The results—with bespoke website architecture and a comprehensive Internet marketing campaign from DMD Internet—have been outstanding, according to Preston. The solution integrated quickly and easily within existing IT systems, customers flocked to the concept of buying online from day one—with 7,000 potential customers visiting in a month—and revenues are doubling month-on-month. "I'm absolutely delighted with the results," says Preston.

For more information contact: DMD Internet
Phone 0800 363 468 or visit www.dmd.co.nz



DMD



Hirepool



Choice



Auction



Relationship advice

AMP connects using the web (and Intergen)

As a company that is all about relationships, AMP needed a website that would reflect this people focus and engage the most important element of their business—the customer. The launch of AMP’s Life Stages branding campaign on television seemed the perfect time to translate the essence of this campaign into the online world, and refresh the stale site navigation while they were at it.

AMP sought advice from IT services firm Intergen on how to bring a plain, vanilla website to life and give it impact, improved functionality and a flavour that reflected the colour and vibe of the AMP brand. Intergen came back with a clear focus: the needs and wants of the user, the overall usability of the website.

It was just the lightbulb moment Henry Popplewell needed. As AMP’s marketing and communications manager, he knew AMP’s

website had all the required information, yet it failed to do what it set out to achieve: engage the customer and answer questions in a straightforward and intuitive way.

“Our website was based around product silos rather than a customer need and life stages, and while the information was there, it wasn’t engaging,” says Popplewell. “We wanted the look and feel of our message to be very inclusive for our market—for customers of all ages and stages.

“I had a firm view of what I wanted,” he continues, “but Intergen impressed by the way they listened, went away and applied their knowledge and came back and said: ‘Great, but hey, we can make it even better. Here’s some creative that’s clever for the right reasons and highly functional,’” Popplewell says.

For Sam Allen, Intergen’s project design

director, it was an opportunity to utilise new, industry-leading technology.

“There are a lot of options out there for how to create and deliver a solution. The biggest challenge is to make sure everyone, no matter what plug-ins, browsers or computers they are using, can interact with what you build. We combined Flash and the newer Javascript libraries to ensure that all website visitors would get a consistent, highly-engaging experience. You can’t just tell someone they don’t have what is needed to view a site’s content. You have to provide them with a solution so they can, no matter what,” Allen says. And by applying Intergen’s Usability methodology, AMP was able to place the user at the centre of the universe.

As the project progressed, it became increasingly obvious that the needs of the user needed to be researched and quantified many

times over if the new website was ever to meet its objectives. Significant user testing was carried out, with the results shattering preconceived ideas.

Popplewell says: “As a marketer, no matter how great you think your vision is, it is always coming from your perspective and it is the customer’s perspective that counts. The cost of getting it wrong is a mistake you can’t risk.”

Intergen used the test results to identify gaps in the project, sending the team back to the drawing board many times over to ensure the content, design and functionality married with user requirements.

Sam Allen recounts a key lesson learnt: “Test, test and test again. It’s all about the customer, and as much as you may think you know, you are not the customer.”

Users found the relaunched site to be

“punchy”, “informative”, “exciting but simple” and—Popplewell’s favourite comment, from a business colleague in an unrelated field: “It’s great to see a financial services company adopt such a customer focus.”

Usability doesn’t need to be applied on a grand scale in order to be successful. Intergen recently completed a small redevelopment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry’s homepage, resulting in improved user experience and impression of the organisation. Taking an incremental approach allows for testing, evaluation and an opportunity to improve website performance while the overall website strategy is developed.

As an alternative to a home page redesign, the Department of Conservation site was completely redesigned with the user as the focus of the project. The end result is that the

new site allows users the opportunity to find the information that pertains to them far more easily. With over 11,000 pages, the challenge was organising the information in a way that worked. As a result of a usability focus, users can now maximise the information the Department has available.

What do user-centred design and Web 2.0 actually denote? User-centred design encapsulates all aspects of a website that your customers experience first hand, and a successful user-centred design is one of the main reasons people will return to your website, hence its importance. Web 2.0 signifies a real change in the mindset we’re seeing online where the experience is interactive and collaborative and entirely user focused (think YouTube and wikis).

Intergen is a strong believer in and champion of user-centred design and Web 2.0 for online business. We have all heard the buzzwords, and although there’s often scepticism about the latest IT catch-phrases, Intergen believes that, behind the jargon, user-centred design and Web 2.0 offer genuine tools to help influence the way your web visitor behaves. Intergen believes it so much, in fact, that a number of their staff are speaking from experience at seminars and conferences nationwide (email events@intergen.co.nz for a seminar near you).



Brainstorming



Interaction prototype



Look and feel

For further information on Intergen-developed website projects, or to find out more about what Intergen does, visit www.intergen.co.nz/what-have-we-done

Fashioning exports

Ruby reaches further with smart web/office integration

Ruby is a forward-thinking vertical retailer specialising in stylish clothing for Kiwi girls who appreciate great design, fashion-forward colour and original prints.

Over the last eight years, Ruby has developed into a well-known New Zealand fashion brand with a huge following, thanks in part to the fabulous culture it has built, which is evident in its stores. Ruby now has three boutiques and has increased its wholesale accounts year on year.

The next step was to capture additional sales using the web. "So far in New Zealand a limited number of fashion brands are available on fully transactional websites," says company director Elizabeth Shand. "This is where we want to become a leader. We know that online sales are where the future is heading and we understand that we need to be a part of this."

Ruby wanted to extend the sales reach of its already-popular brands Ruby and Madame Hawke. With demand coming from all over

New Zealand and from expats abroad, Ruby approached Solutionists, through its marketing consultant Duncan Shand (Inside Out), to set up an online sales site. It was important that the software was easy for the staff in the office to use, could have a different look-and-feel for each of the labels and create communities of interest around each brand.

An additional challenge was minimising the impact of maintaining the site and inventory by the small head office team.

Solutionists created an interface to link its website with Counter Intelligence, Ruby's well-established point-of-sale management package. Provision was also made for auto-updating changes to Ruby Girls profiles and gift voucher information.

Once the hurdle of entering 60-plus products into the website became a reality, Solutionists were asked to additionally provide a custom up-loader to set up the look-book and garment display pages each season. Ruby

created a spreadsheet with all of the products including designer notes, long descriptions and image file names. All images are then uploaded into the website using the max:asset manager, automatically populating into the garment display page.

Design for a fashion website is crucial. Ruby wanted to change the look of the site so it coordinates with each new season's range. The max:presence system makes it easy to completely change the skin each season, without any need to change functionality or re-enter content.

Solutionists' max:presence system also allows for plug-in modules that can be customised for each individual client's needs. The Ruby website used a combination of max:presence modules—max:catalogue (a multi-category product management and display module), max:payments (real-time credit card transactions), max:membership (subscriber database and access control system), max:mail (e-newsletter

with reader statistics) and max:panels (image rotator, features panel and news panel). Max:presence is built on Microsoft .Net 2.0, with an SQL server 2005 database.

A new module created for Ruby is max:blog. This allows Ruby to create blog entries for news, press releases and style notes. To further integrate the community, Ruby will post images, colours or designs for Ruby Girls to vote for their favourite.

Along with the standard max modules, a custom function built for the Ruby site allows a customer to purchase some or all of the items that make up an outfit with a single click, when viewing the collection through the look book.

The max:presence integration module provides a framework for data to be auto-loaded into the website through XML or CSV files. For Ruby the stock levels, gift voucher information and Ruby Girls details are updated overnight. Ruby can decide on the limit of total stock that the website can sell, ensuring that

stock is always available in its retail branches. Solutionists have made provision for the stock levels and Internet sales to be updated in real time. This development will happen later in the year when the latest version of their POS software is installed.

Linking the past

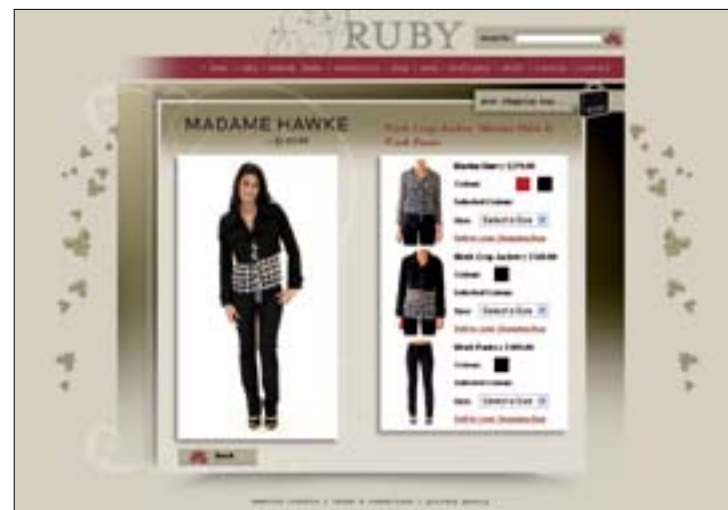
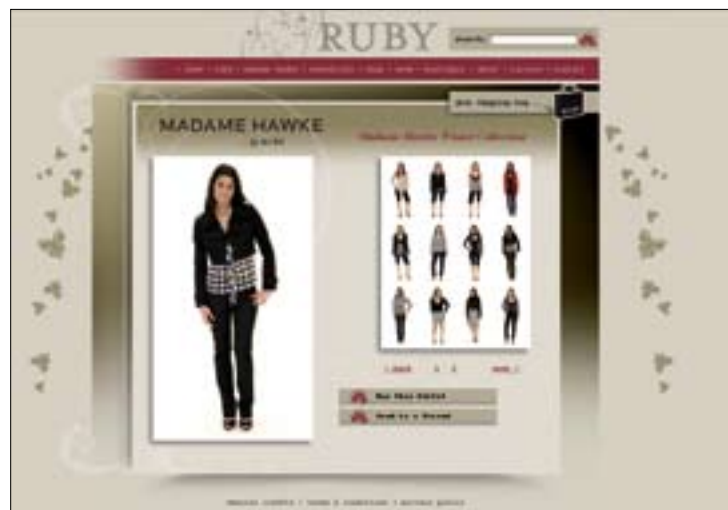
While Ruby uses batch updating, there's an alternative that's the ultimate expression of business systems integration: a live connection between the website and other company systems. Solutionists developed a website for the New Zealand Society of Genealogists (NZSG) using this technology. A number of services are only available to current members of the society. For instance, while the public can search the entire library database of the society through the website, only members can order books online and reserve titles that are currently out. Registration and subscriptions are handled online, and a live update to the NZSG's own

membership database ensures details are kept in sync. When a member of the society wants to use the member-only facilities of the site, the software checks their financial status before allowing access to the library or members' interests.

While it's too early to see the bottom-line impact of Ruby's e-commerce site, it's proven a hit with some very important people—Ruby's customers. Elizabeth Shand reports "very positive feedback and comments" from customers exploring the new site.

www.solutionists.co.nz
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Share genius

Zenago paves sharemyNZ's way to the world

In the age of social networking sites like MySpace and Digg, a website is no longer simply about one-way communication. Ben Crawford, the founder of sharemyNZ, had a vision for a Kiwi-centric social networking portal that put the tools of content creation in the hands of its users.

SharemyNZ brings a uniquely Kiwi perspective on social networking, allowing Kiwis (and wannabe Kiwis!) to share photos, videos, opinions and experiences in their own online space.

Since the launch of sharemyNZ, members have embraced the ability to create their own blogs. Subjects range from travel to property, opinion, lifestyle, health, fitness—in fact anything worth writing about!

“There are estimated to be nearly 100 million blogs worldwide but Kiwis have been pretty slow on the uptake,” says Crawford. “One of the goals of sharemyNZ was to provide a platform for New Zealanders to easily create their own blogs and share them with whoever they choose. I think we have achieved that.”

Another thing that makes sharemyNZ different from other social networking websites is the ability to ‘plugg’ or review other users’ content, and businesses. This gives every user a vital role to play in the overall site, otherwise known as non-hierarchical editorial control. It also makes plugging fun, topical and less corporate than a standard review.

A site on the scale of sharemyNZ requires a significant amount of coordination and expertise. Crawford approached several Auckland web development firms, eventually choosing Zenago. “Zenago responded to my enquiry immediately and approached me with professionalism and enthusiasm,” says Crawford.

Zenago teamed up with an external creative team to produce a new website to take sharemyNZ to the world. Zenago managed this three-way relationship and provided sharemyNZ with a fully-functional, self-managed website using Zenago's ZSM Maestro content management system. This system features easy-to-use and simple functionality and navigation, letting users create and edit their own personalised content, and giving the administrator the capability to moderate all content.

Members can define the topic of their page or create a new topic for the system, choose whether the page will accept comments and search the system for keywords or topics.

The Zenago team faced several challenges as the brief grew and developed. Crawford says he appreciated the strong communication link maintained by Zenago. “That was the great thing. Anytime something popped up we’d get together and discuss it and they’d go away and build it.”

As the vision for sharemyNZ developed, the team realised just how big a project they were creating. Zenago was attempting to build

the first site of its kind in New Zealand. It was a testing time for Zenago's guarantee, which founder and chief executive Danny Sunkel says is to “deliver the website you want on time and on budget, or we'll pay someone else to do it.”

While skilled project management played a significant role in the eventual success of sharemyNZ, there was one ingredient that was absolutely essential to the project: enthusiasm. Crawford is anticipating a bright future for sharemyNZ. “I look forward to working with Danny and the rest of the Zenago team in the future as sharemyNZ builds and grows,” he says.

The Haka challenge

When you're taking a premium New Zealand brand to the world, credibility is everything. Haka Clothing's quality had to be reflected in the user experience of its e-commerce site.

Until recently, Haka New Zealand's focus has been on importing sporting goods and general merchandise for major New Zealand and Australian retailers. Haka Clothing is a new, export-focused venture for the company, creating high quality, sports-inspired casual wear.

The Haka Clothing brand has been designed with the support and guidance of the Auckland iwi Ngati Whatua, which has lent authority and credibility to Haka's unique fusion of sport, mateship and Maori symbolism. There's also been crucial input from rugby greats like Buck Shelford, Frank Bunce, Todd

Blackadder, Ian Jones and Alan Whetton.

With such a prestigious product, Haka director Bob Mills wanted to ensure the brand's web presence would be world-class. After all, for a small exporter, a website is often the only opportunity to make an impression on overseas customers.

Mills approached Zenago after hearing the firm recommended as a market leader. “We were happy with their professional approach,” says Mills. Zenago was now faced with developing an online retail website to take Haka Clothing to the world.

The site needed to allow visitors to see, sort and purchase Haka Clothing. As well as direct sales, the site needed to build Haka's brand through imagery and well-written content.

Zenago consulted with an external design team to produce the site's look and feel, freeing up Zenago's resources to focus on the vitally important back end of the site. The result was a professional website that Haka's staff could update and maintain themselves, without advanced technical knowledge. Built on Zenago's ZSM Maestro content management system, the site also features additional custom web-based solutions.

Now Haka's staff can easily update products and information systems in-house, using the content management system. The system allows Haka to store information on seasonal stock in the back-end of the site, publishing the information when stock is available. This flexibility allows Haka to run promotions based on stock demand and supply.

Haka was also able to incorporate email marketing and community involvement into the infrastructure of its site. Haka provides two educational scholarships a year for young Maori to advance their studies. Zenago designed the application system for scholarships and incorporated it into the site design.



Former All Blacks Todd Blackadder, Alan Whetton, Ian Jones, Wayne Shelford and Frank Bunce

“Danny was excellent to deal with,” says Mills. “He understands our needs and approach. He's got passion, and wants the client to do well.”

As for the site design, Mills is ecstatic. “For the money we spent we received a really good site that we're happy with,” he says.

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Haka has the credibility and endorsement.
It needed a website to match: www.hakanz.co.nz



Zenago pioneered the new blog site sharemyNZ