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## Case Study: A CMS That Handled 21 Million Hits in One Day!

### Volvo Ocean Race 2001-2002

Formerly known as the Whitbread Round-the-World Race, Volvo bought the race in 1997; the 2001 race was the first sponsored by Volvo Ocean Race. The Race started at Southampton, England on September 23rd 2001. Eight professionally-crewed yachts covered 31,600 nautical miles in approximately ten months, circumnavigating the world with the prevailing winds. The nine-leg race visited 10 ports, racing through four oceans, and finishing in Kiel, Germany in June 2002.

### The Challenges

The four-member Volvo Ocean Race team took over the project a few months away from the start of the race. There were already several hundred press releases and news items on a pre-existing site. Plus, they had to rebuild 600 html pages in 90 days!

Most content would be originated by people with no knowledge of HTML. Editorial content (news, features, tactical analysis) was to be generated by an outside group (for reasons of editorial neutrality). The maintenance of the sailing teams' areas of the site was to be handled by the teams themselves so they could insert press releases and crew biographies into the workflow, with restricted editing permission and no publishing capability. And, the Volvo internal press team was to maintain its own areas of the website, again restricting the right to publish.

The team estimated that website would need to sustain nearly 20,000 server requests a second, or 140 million per day. Race telemetry, audio and video were to be beamed via satellite from the yachts as they race around the world. The Team needed to be able to produce a set of results pages, the most complex of which would include copy from multiple sources, periodically putting single pages together that contained text reports from Race Headquarters, weather reports from BBC, a weather maps, and photos showing conditions on board at the time of the report.

The most complex requirement was the insertion of graphics showing boat tracks and the like, from the 3D Race Viewer partner, including tabular telemetry readout of conditions on board each boat – air temp, wind, etc., and telemetry summaries depicting race positional data of each yacht.

**Through 6 May 2002, the first 7 1/2 months, Volvo reported the following statistics:**

**On average, over 96,000 unique visitors viewed the site each day.**

**Visitors viewed an average of 362,449 pages per day.**

**The highest number of hits in one day was 21 Million**

**Total hits through these 7-1/2 months were 1,400,462,578.**

## The Solution

A short but intense period of research was undertaken. When they contacted CyberTeams, one of three potential providers, they were given full access to a live, working version of WebSite Director hosted at CyberTeams. The more they looked into the WebSite Director solution, the more they liked it. They could buy a 20-user license and upgrade it on a user by user basis. They liked that it produced flat HTML content, updating all associated index pages automatically.

**“I was amazed at how easy it was to set the system up,” said Peter Dakin, Production Manager.**

**“Starting with the initial download from CyberTeams, through the installation (guided via telephone by a CyberTeams technician), and into the initial configuration of workflows.”**

They liked that it would allow them to permit restricted access to external users, and that the content they generated could be inserted into a fully customizable workflow designed to suit their needs. They liked that WebSite Director had an external API that provided the ability to build their own customized components and integrate them into WebSite Director. They liked the support package. And, the price fit well within their budget.

The Team found that from installation of the content management system, through workflow configuration and template design, to the first additions of new documents took about two weeks. They were easily able to port the pre-existing site into WebSite Director, and the ease of implementation meant they had enough time

to do some abstract thinking about who was to do what in the workflow, together with some careful planning of directory structures, permissions and so on.

When the team realized that they needed a more complex indexing system than WSD natively supported, they found that with a minimal amount of scripting, these indices could be integrated into the WSD system with ease. By the end of the fourth leg, CyberTeams had released an upgrade that did this for them!

## The Result

The new Volvo Ocean Race website, [www.volvooceanrace.org](http://www.volvooceanrace.org), contained 2800 files (600 html) in 300+ directories, and was completed and re-launched on 1 August 2001.

- All CMS configuration was done by one person, with unlimited online support from CyberTeams.
- Data entry was accomplished by two people: the site's producer and the project manager!

**Through all of this, WebSite Director remained steady.**