University of Georgia enhances operations.
College and Extension programs improve online experiences, streamline web development with Adobe Experience Manager, and transform HR processes using eSign services.

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Brian Watson, Director of Information Technology, University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

SOLUTION
Adobe Experience Manager solution with Adobe Marketing Cloud
Adobe Document Cloud
  • eSign services (formerly Adobe EchoSign)

RESULTS

**CONTENT REUSE**
Helps eliminate information silos, making content reusable across multiple offices and departments

**COMPELLING EXPERIENCES**
Delivers higher-quality digital experiences for potential students, alumni, and Georgia citizens

**STREAMLINE HR**
New staffing requisitions are completed in days, not weeks or months, using e-signatures

**OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY**
IT department is now accomplishing more with a small staff
Small IT staff, many hats

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) for the University of Georgia (UGA) College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) is responsible for supporting numerous strategic initiatives. These include everything from creating and maintaining several web presences to providing solutions to help staffing operations, annual employee evaluations, and other administrative functions, run more efficiently.

Increasingly, the IT team for the College is achieving these aims using Adobe solutions, including the Adobe Experience Manager solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud, and Adobe Document Cloud eSign services.

"Adobe Experience Manager enables us to manage and publish timely, high-impact web content with much greater ease and efficiency," says Brian Watson, Director of Information Technology at the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. "From an operational perspective, eSign services are transforming our human resources processes creating more efficient and intuitive workflows. Adobe solutions used in several departments are adding far-reaching value and allowing our small IT team to fulfill more of the College's needs."

Reinventing web publishing

Watson and his team are jointly responsible for both the CAES and UGA Extension websites. These sites have tens of thousands of pages, hundreds of subsites, and showcase a wealth of content.

The CAES site contains information on academic programs, alumni, departments, research, internal communications, and more. The UGA Extension site provides research-based information and publications on agricultural, environmental, community, youth, and family-oriented topics for the people of Georgia. In addition to topical information, UGA Extension has approximately 159 offices across Georgia, each with content they need to provide online to local and statewide audiences.

In an effort to streamline management of these web presences, Watson and his team devised a strategic plan to completely revamp web development and publishing. A cornerstone of the plan was the selection of a new web content management solution. After extensive evaluation, the team chose Adobe Experience Manager.

"The biggest draw for us with Adobe Experience Manager is its ability to save structured content in one repository and allow users, including non-technical content managers around the state, to reuse and publish it for online visitors on a variety of desktop and mobile platforms," says Emily Pitts, Lead Web Developer and UX Architect for the Office of Information Technology at the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. "With Adobe Experience Manager, we can easily leverage content, resulting in a richer end-user experience."
Better ways to leverage content

Without Adobe Experience Manager, Watson and his team cannot easily save content centrally and reuse it on various sites. Content contributors within the organization are also limited in their ability to find and disseminate information online because content is contained in a variety of disparate information silos across the organization.

For example, the College distributes broad-brush information about its majors and offerings for students, while individual departments provide more targeted, detailed information for specific majors, such as course requirements, study abroad programs, internships, and other opportunities. Regardless of where a site visitor is in the decision-making process, the content must be presented optimally, consistently, and predictably.

Sharing and redistributing portions of content between the college and department sites will show a high correlation and help visitors move between the two sites. This will also allow content managers to collaborate to produce the best experience for site visitors and share common assets like images and PDF documents.

"We do not have a way to enter content once into a single back-end system and then extract and publish it in many different ways,” explains Pitts. “We know we need a flexible asset management solution that will allow us to start leveraging content across multiple sites with ease.”

An inaugural project and ongoing expansion

Because the CAES and UGA Extension flagship websites are so large and content-rich, the team embarked on an initial, smaller project first—a special site for the UGA Extension’s 100th anniversary celebration. The site (http://100years.extension.uga.edu/content/extension100.html) honors the UGA Extension’s legacy of disseminating information about new and innovative practices and trends to the people of Georgia. The site showcases historical events in the UGA Extension’s 100-year history and also invites visitors to submit their own stories about UGA Extension.

The centennial site took a few months to launch with the technical assistance and guidance from partner Digital Wave. From there, iterations have been streamlined and rapid. Using digital asset management capabilities within Adobe Experience Manager, the site’s content managers can easily upload assets and stories. The site redistributes structured content to different subpages using keywords in Experience Manager and a user-created page hierarchy.

"With Adobe Experience Manager, we can easily leverage content, resulting in a richer end-user experience.”

Emily Pitts, Lead Web Developer and UX Architect, Office of Information Technology, UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
“Adobe Document Cloud eSign services have been so successful that we hope to expand its use across departments, so that virtually anyone can initiate a form and accelerate processing time through e-signatures.”

Brian Watson, Director of Information Technology, University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE
- Adobe Document Cloud
- eSign services
- Adobe Marketing Cloud, including the Adobe Experience Manager solution.

Capabilities used include:
- Web content management
- Digital asset management

The built-in workflow features supported in the digital asset management capabilities make the process of updating and resizing images and submitting new stories intuitive. Today, having established standard, easy processes and centralized asset management with Adobe Experience Manager, the CAES IT office plans to begin updating the larger CAES and UGA Extension sites.

HR workflows streamlined with e-signatures

In addition to streamlining web publishing, Adobe solutions are boosting efficiency in administration and human resources (HR). With a workforce of 2,500 employees throughout the state, CAES sought to streamline the hiring process by employing an e-signature solution to reduce delays and improve collaboration. The first project focused on completing new position requisitions, which required multiple signatures across various departments to initiate the hiring process.

“Our goal was to eliminate delays in the hiring process,” said Watson. “eSign services provide a secure, yet simple, solution to reduce delays from the very beginning of the process.” Because new employee funding can come from various sources—research, instruction, and Extension—multiple deans typically need to sign off to commit funds to a position. Previously, everyone printed out forms and physically passed them along to different offices, which is particularly challenging in an academic environment where busy deans travel often. The combination of hectic travel schedules and manual routing could result in sign-offs for new positions being delayed by months.

“We needed a solution that would allow everyone to electronically and synchronously sign the requisition,” says Watson. “With eSign services we have increased operational efficiency. Today, with the e-signature solution, approving new positions takes days versus weeks or months—a huge advantage considering the volume of positions we need to fill.”

After a successful pilot involving the hiring form, CAES plans to expand the use of eSign services to make additional processes more efficient. For instance, employee evaluations could be digitally signed and immediately available. Ongoing, the team will continue to identify new uses for the solution, such as managing forms required for salary adjustments.

“Adobe Document Cloud eSign services have been so successful that we hope to expand use across departments, so that virtually anyone can initiate a form and accelerate processing time through e-signatures,” says Watson.

“We are expanding our use of Adobe solutions because they are versatile, cost-effective, and easy to implement,” says Watson. “They are transforming many processes—those that help us recruit students and reach the Georgia community with research-based information, and those that make us more productive in our everyday operations.”