

CASE STUDY

# Connected Weddings: A first-of-its-kind Alfresco-based application for Facebook

Published: August 2008



## ConnectedWeddings.com Makes Planning Easier via Facebook Integration

As Facebook seeks to expand beyond purely social networking, New Gravity Ventures enters the market with ConnectedWeddings.com, a Facebook application that offers an innovative and easier way to plan weddings. The new application enables couples anywhere to use Facebook, an iPhone or the Web to manage planning tasks and create a customized, professional looking wedding page—all for free.

In May 2007, Facebook, the popular social utility tool for connecting people with friends and others around them, embarked on a strategy to make it easier for outside companies to provide their services on pages within the Facebook online community and enable them to interact with Facebook's users and their personal networks. For Facebook, the strategy marked a significant step toward taking the business beyond pure social utility and into broader commercial territory.

To grow the application ecosystem, Facebook established the fbFund in September 2007 and began accepting grant applications to support innovative development ideas. By helping remove the development barrier, Facebook sought to build compelling businesses on the platform and broaden the scope and utility of the tool.

### ConnectedWeddings.com—Developing a next-generation consumer application based on open source

Enter New Gravity Ventures. During a 2005 trip to India, Dan and Stacy Kerzner, co-founders of consumer application developer New Gravity Ventures, were struck by the rapid pace of change in India's retail and consumer markets. Inspired by that trip, Dan and Stacy launched Trendy.in, a free daily lifestyle newsletter designed to offer smart, fashion-conscious women—from the college-age teen to women in their 40s—the best of what's happening around India from a woman's point of view. The site is currently up and running with in three cities—Bombay, Delhi and Bangalore.

As a result of the attention New Gravity Ventures garnered from Trendy.in, the company received a commission to write *Wedding Belles: How to Make Your*

---

### CASE HIGHLIGHTS

Rivet Logic deploys an open source Alfresco content management solution to deliver a flexible and scalable social application for Facebook.

- **Organization** - New Gravity Ventures, creator of ConnectedWeddings.com and developer of Web-based consumer applications for the U.S. and India markets, was awarded a grant from Facebook's fbFund to develop the wedding application. Facebook is the leading social utility for connecting people with friends and others who work, study and live around them.
- **Challenge** - Leverage the power of social networking to make wedding planning easier, more interactive and less time consuming, and enable couples worldwide to use Facebook, via an iPhone or the Web, to manage planning tasks and create a customized, professional looking wedding site from which to interact.
- **Solution** - Developed a large-scale social networking application for the Facebook platform targeting domestic and international consumer markets. Deployed Alfresco's content management platform and other open source software to enable consumer end-users to manage wedding arrangements and shop for products.
- **Results** - The new, feature-rich ConnectedWeddings.com site eases the wedding planning process and helps consumers save time and gain productivity through Web 2.0 content services and social networking capability.



Figure 1. The ConnectedWeddings site interface enables users to easily create custom planning sites and take advantage of the user-generated social networking functionality of Facebook.

*Dream Wedding Come True*, a book about wedding planning scheduled to be published in the fall of 2008 by Random House. Having retained the Web publishing rights to the book, New Gravity Ventures began thinking about ways in which it might best leverage the book's content. It was at this time that the company turned to Facebook and applied for the company's fbFund grant in an effort to "make a wedding application that leverages social networking functionality in order to help couples organize their lives and gain productivity through use of the social networking tool," said Kerzner. Shortly thereafter, New Gravity Ventures became one of the first recipients of an fbFund grant and began architecting the application.

To launch a successful commercial social application for Facebook, Kerzner knew that he needed a development partner who could help address several key challenges, including: the ability to fully leverage the value of the existing content; the need to develop an easily scalable solution that would provide a foundation for additional Web 2.0 functionality, such as user-generated content capability; and the ability to integrate the Facebook platform's unique features. "With Web-based businesses, good monetization and the ability to make the most of the content assets require agility," said Kerzner. "We've seen that some of the existing players in the space are spending a lot of money on their CMS systems to make them as flexible as possible in order to respond to sales needs and not just view content in a static way."

"Rivet Logic's deep Alfresco expertise was a great fit for us; we now have a platform that will enable us to scale quickly and cost effectively."

-Dan Kerzner,  
CEO of New Gravity Ventures

### Developing a scalable and agile Alfresco content management solution to power ConnectedWeddings.com

Perhaps the two most important criteria for the Facebook application were scalability and the ability to derive optimal value from the book's content and present it to consumers in unique ways. New Gravity Ventures also required a solution that would empower end-users with the tools they need to fully take advantage of the application's social networking

## BENEFITS

- Delivered Facebook social media integration and functionality that enables fun and engaging interaction among end users
- Improved business end-user productivity with on-demand Web publishing that enables ConnectedWeddings.com editors to generate content quickly and easily
- Enhanced the customer experience through multiple templates and user-friendly interfaces
- Streamlined business operations by providing the ConnectedWeddings.com editorial team with complete control over the content authoring and publishing process
- Helped achieve optimal ROI due to zero licensing fees and enabling New Gravity Ventures to focus on content and innovation rather than software costs

capability. Understanding that he would need a development partner with deep open source expertise, Kerzner selected Rivet Logic, an Alfresco Certified Gold “Partner of the Year” and JBoss Certified Partner, to create a scalable and agile content delivery system based on an open source platform that would be flexible enough to address continued growth and additional features moving forward. “Rivet Logic’s ability to optimize the value of the content and build applications that scale easily made working with them a great fit,” said Kerzner.

Rivet Logic chose Alfresco as the content management platform for ConnectedWeddings.com because of its ability to support content-rich applications. Rivet deployed a solution based on two components: an Alfresco content management platform running on JBoss Enterprise Middleware. The Alfresco-based Web application also supports collaboration and community functionality, such as forums, discussion threads, photo galleries, polls, and other ways for brides and grooms to contact others and facilitate communication. In this

way, ConnectedWeddings.com serves as a model of the increasing significance of content services in the Web 2.0 environment and how content is connected to people in the context of social networking.

Rivet Logic led the overall architectural design of the platform. As shown in Figure 2, the solution design enables the Alfresco platform to publish content to an Alfresco and JBoss production Web site that integrates not only with Facebook for social network interaction, but also with an array of applications such as Web site analytics and advertising engines. The approach enables New Gravity Ventures to easily craft solutions around off-the-shelf applications, such as communication tools bundled with Apple’s iPhone.

Alfresco provided a robust back-end solution that features sophisticated workflows, rich metadata modeling, full-text and metadata search capability, and support for rich content, including audio and video. Alfresco also provided the flexibility and agility necessary to accommodate multiple end-users and templates. With the Alfresco solution, the

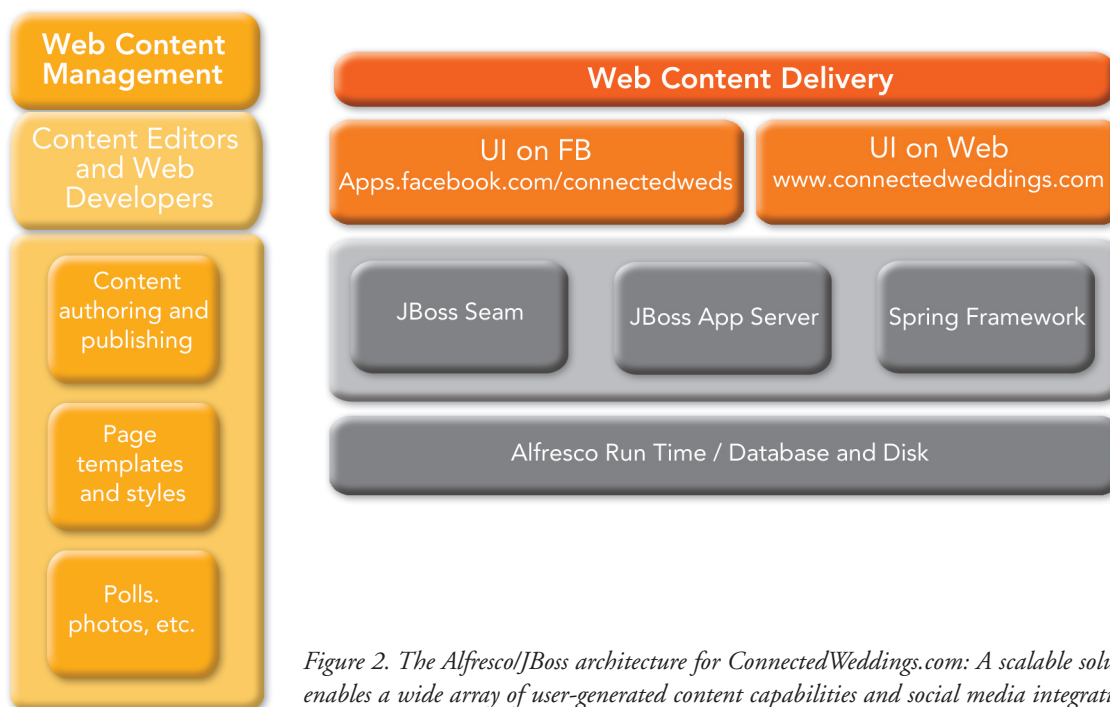


Figure 2. The Alfresco/JBoss architecture for ConnectedWeddings.com: A scalable solution that enables a wide array of user-generated content capabilities and social media integration.



ConnectedWeddings.com editorial team can generate content and upload it to the site quickly and easily. Further, with single sign-on support across the application, Web-based administration, and the ability to easily integrate dynamic Web pages and portlets, JBoss offered the scalable enterprise-grade solution that New Gravity Ventures needed moving forward.

A cost-effective, zero-license-fee approach based on open standards will enable New Gravity Ventures to scale the platform to meet user demand. As a result, the open source approach will also allow New Gravity Ventures to minimize upfront investment and focus efforts on customization and innovation. The open source model will establish a foundation from which to reduce operating costs and accommodate future extensions.

### Rivet Logic—Developing open source solutions for the next generation of social networking applications.

For New Gravity Ventures, Rivet Logic's combination of deep technical knowledge, and experience designing and implementing innovative open source applications proved to be a winning combination. "We were building a unique, socially-aware application so we needed a trusted development partner who had a proven track record of building rock-solid solutions," said Kerzner. The launch of ConnectedWeddings.com makes Alfresco the first platform of its kind to form the backbone of a content-intensive Facebook application.

Critical to the success of ConnectedWeddings.com is the ability to scale and integrate Web 2.0 functionality, such as

discussion threads, photo galleries, polls and other forms of user-generated content. Alfresco enables site editors to create and upload content quickly and easily, while allowing end-users to participate in community activities, reference site features easily, and communicate with other users through the power of social networking. Ultimately, Rivet Logic provided an objective view of the unique challenges faced by New Gravity Ventures and delivered a solution based on a set of proven best practices and an understanding of the unique needs of the ConnectedWeddings.com site.

For more information about Alfresco, JBoss and how they can help benefit your business, call Rivet Logic at 703.955.3480 or visit [rivetlogic.com](http://rivetlogic.com).

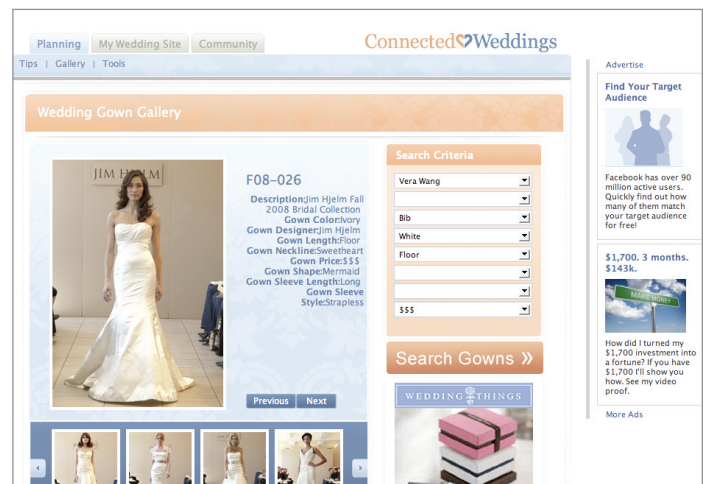


Figure 3. Among the many features of ConnectedWeddings.com is a wedding gown gallery that integrates information from a several designers and allows users to sort by a variety of criteria.

### ABOUT RIVET LOGIC

Rivet Logic is an award-winning consulting and systems integration firm that helps organizations better engage with customers, improve collaboration and streamline business operations. Through a full suite of solutions for content management, collaboration and community, Rivet Logic enables organizations to fully leverage the power of industry-leading open source software. With deep expertise in the

Alfresco Enterprise Content Management platform, Liferay Portal, and JBoss Enterprise Middleware, Rivet Logic crafts content-rich solutions that power next-generation Web properties, Enterprise 2.0 applications and collaborative communities. With offices in Reston, Virginia and Cambridge, Massachusetts, Rivet Logic serves clients across a wide range of industries. Rivet Logic—Artisans of Open Source.