Oregon Public Broadcasting

Going digital first to streamline content operations and deliver powerful storytelling

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) is a member-supported public media organization serving the Pacific Northwest. Its journalism and programs are available at opb.org, on OPB Radio and OPB TV across the state of Oregon and southern Washington.

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Jan Boyd
Director of Digital Strategy and Community Engagement

For Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB), one of the country's largest public media stations and a dual licensed television and radio broadcaster, 2020 was a year of big change as they continued their transition to being digital first and their goal of being one of the most innovative media organizations and the premier news provider in the Pacific Northwest.

A key component to make OPB's digital first vision a reality was transitioning from their in-house built content management system (CMS) and website experience to Arc XP.

Challenged to Support Growing Content and Website Demands

Back in the 2000's, OPB saw early on the potential in building a website experience to support their already strong radio and TV audiences. With most of their content coming out of their radio and TV broadcasts, they built an in-house CMS to help them repurpose that content for use on the website. In the late 2000's/early 2010's, OPB began to grow its newsroom, which today features a science and environment unit, an arts and culture unit and a partnership with NPR to feature national and international news, leading to a substantial increase to their impact on the community, and subsequently, their website traffic.

"For many years our house-built CMS was able to meet our needs. But as our newsroom grew, and our impact on the community along with it, the demands on our team and the need for more digital content really began to change," said Morgan Holm, OPB's Chief Content Officer.

"While we had moved a lot of the work to the cloud, there was still some pretty hands-on site management because we were managing our own space and basically, more by guesswork than anything, figuring out how to scale for incoming traffic during events like election nights," Holm continued. "The special measures we had to take and the lift from the team made us realize we had outgrown the system and needed something to match our growing needs."

The increased website management and content demands, coupled with internal resource constraints, led OPB to explore the benefits to be had by moving fully to the cloud. Wanting to tap into best-in-class software and best-in-class vendors and technology, OPB started looking at a lot of different options, including Arc.

Taking OPB's Digital Game to the Next Level

With the backing of their board, OPB selected Arc as their new content management platform and to power their website experience.

"With Arc, we recognized a great opportunity to take our digital game to the next level, or really several levels in one step," said Holm. "In the midst of this decision we started a major remodeling campaign for our building and a complete remodeling of our technology stack and it worked out that we were able to fold the CMS project into that in terms of fundraising and budgeting so we were able to take advantage of that window."

For OPB, remodeling their tech stack included moving from 'having one foot on premise and one foot in the cloud' to being fully cloud-based and eliminating challenges such as the special measures taken for anticipated traffic surges to their site and increasing page load speeds by leveraging Arc's built-in content delivery network (CDN).

"For our reporters, I remember looking at Arc thinking, they're going to recognize things that are familiar to them and I think that comes from the DNA of Arc initially being built for a news organization," said Holm. "This is important because it is a big change and you're dealing with change management in parallel to moving to a new CMS. The initial impression we got from our people about Arc was that this was going to be a nice way to improve what we're doing, this is something I can work with and help facilitate some of the other change management we were dealing with at that point."

+139%

YOY increase in pageviews.

+140%

YOY increase in users.

+235%

YOY increase in search.

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With Arc, we can deliver a rich multimedia storytelling experience to our digital audience, showcasing the exceptional work that OPB's team produces each day. This site improves our ability to carry out our public service journalism mission.

Morgan Holm
Chief Content Officer

As OPB implemented Arc, they also opted to redesign their website to not only better meet the digital needs and content consumption habits of OPB's audience but to create a more accessible site in compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for color contrast, font size, and labeling of elements.

Designed to Deliver Critical News Coverage

OPB's new website went live in August 2020 amidst delivering critical coverage of some of the biggest stories in the country: the COVID-19 pandemic, local and national elections, wildfires across the state, and federal officers in unmarked cars taking protesters off the streets.

"We were covering story after story after story and Arc has given us the ability to deliver our journalism to our community much more efficiently. We also have so many more creative options," says Jan Boyd, Director of Digital Strategy and Community Engagement. "Because of Arc, we're looking at a story in a different way, not just as a completed video package or audio package, but as a collection of elements. We now have the flexibility to change the site to fit the story with multimedia elements that will really make it sing instead of trying to fit the story into the site."

In addition to delivering a more immersive digital storytelling experience, OPB experienced across the board site performance improvements including significant increases in page load speed and year-over-year increases of 139 percent in pageviews, 140 percent in users and 235 percent in search. And with an already strong mobile audience comprising roughly 65 percent of their users, OPB gained another five percent YOY increase with their new accelerated mobile pages (AMP).

"Our redesigned website supports OPB's growing role as a significant news source for audiences in Oregon and Washington," said Holm in a press release announcing the launch of the new OPB.org. "With Arc, we can deliver a rich multimedia storytelling experience to our digital audience, showcasing the exceptional work that OPB's team produces each day. This site improves our ability to carry out our public service journalism mission."

Want to learn more about OPB's success and Arc XP?
Contact **marketing@arcxp.com.**