

CASE STUDY

Penn Mutual: Crafter CMS Enables Modern Digital Experiences for Life Insurance Leader

For Penn Mutual, a new headless+ content management system empowers the freedom to innovate.

As one of the oldest mutual life insurers in the United States, The Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, commonly referred to as Penn Mutual, was established in 1847 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Penn Mutual is a leader in life insurance, helping generations of individuals, families, and businesses realize their financial goals.

With a proven track record of dedication to its policyholders, Penn Mutual stays at the forefront of technology, leading to many industry firsts, such as its Accelerated Client Experience (ACE). ACE provides a secure, end-to-end digital experience that accelerates the application process for financial professionals and qualified clients so that new policies can often be issued in under 24 hours. With this kind of innovation in mind, Penn Mutual wanted to retire its legacy content management system (CMS) and migrate to a modern, future-proof CMS so that, no matter the century, Penn Mutual could continue to put its policyholders' needs first.

CHALLENGE

Penn Mutual's legacy CMS for its corporate public facing website, PennMutual.com, was costly and difficult to maintain. Additionally, its older tech stack was not compelling for modern Java and Javascript developers, making it hard to attract talent. To address these issues, and to cater to the marketing team's desire to enhance the end-user experience, Penn Mutual searched for a modern CMS to provide them with a powerful solution for both headless and traditional CMS use cases (i.e., a headless+ CMS). They wanted the flexibility to leverage a React-based UI framework, and were interested in finding a product built on a tech stack they approved. Penn Mutual also wanted a CMS that could serve as the platform for many digital channels — not just the corporate website, but also other internal and external websites and digital apps. Finally, as they were moving to the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud, Penn Mutual was looking for an elastically-scalable, serverless and cloud-native CMS that worked well with AWS.

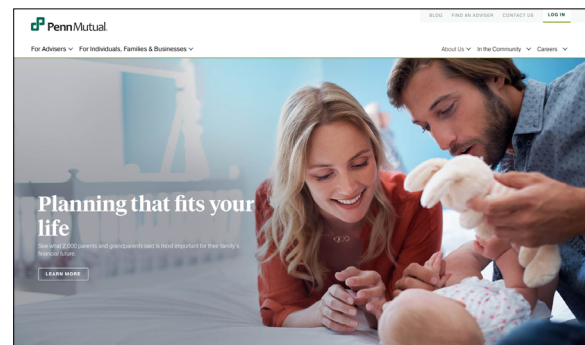
SOLUTION

Penn Mutual chose Crafter CMS as its new content management platform. The combination of Crafter CMS on AWS makes it much easier for Penn Mutual IT operations to securely configure their infrastructure in the cloud and to scale effortlessly when needs change. For the Crafter CMS deployment, Penn Mutual leveraged several AWS services including EC2 for compute, API Gateway, SNS, Lambda, and S3 services.

AT A GLANCE



- Mutual company offering comprehensive portfolio of life insurance and annuity products
- Founded 1847 in Philadelphia, PA
- A.M. Best financial strength rating of "A" or higher over 90 years
- www.pennmutual.com



Penn Mutual previously ran a static React-based Single Page Application (SPA) website and had existing code that needed to operate with Crafter CMS. To do so, a content model was created to mimic the data structures employed by the existing SPA to enable this code to continue to run more or less as-is, with little to no development effort. Using Crafter's extensible APIs, Penn Mutual developers created additional REST APIs to meet the headless content API requirements of the SPA, which made the transition path to Crafter CMS easy to perform. Once the easy transition was made, Crafter CMS provided in-context preview and WYSIWYG editing for content authors to easily create and publish new content and experiences with the SPA.

Penn Mutual now makes use of Crafter CMS's headless+ capabilities in which the digital experience platform satisfies all the needs of both content authors and software developers. Headless+ allows content authors to have access to a developer-supplied, front-end delivery layer to support easy to use preview and in-context editing, enabling them to more easily create experiences on their own, with little to no technical experience. The API-driven architecture of the Crafter CMS allows Penn Mutual developers to extract content from the content repository and push it to any device or touchpoint via a number of RESTful options.

RESULTS

Penn Mutual now benefits from true ease-of-use for its content authors, who now can more efficiently manage site content and create product promotions. They also benefit from the freedom to create entirely new digital experiences with a modern CMS platform that doesn't restrict their creativity. The software development team can now quickly and easily implement new site designs and features exactly as described and desired from the marketing team, decreasing time to market. Penn Mutual now avoids lost time and work as Crafter CMS supports their already existing CI/CD practices, and operates seamlessly in the AWS cloud.

Migration to Crafter CMS was straightforward, as it provided Penn Mutual with a flexible headless+ backend that mimicked the APIs needed by the React app that was built prior to the transition to Crafter CMS.

BENEFITS

- Headless+ CMS for both modern web development and powerful content authoring capabilities
- Easy to use content management for the marketing team, quickening publishing and unleashing creativity
- AWS cloud-native solution that enables elastic capabilities and simplifies IT management
- Faster software development cycles and native support for modern CI/CD DevOps tools and processes



As a Java/Spring developer, I feel empowered by Crafter's extensible API; we can create what our sites need using technologies we know. — Michael Oryl,
Director Web Development, Penn Mutual