

## THE CHALLENGE

Our development partner needed to create a sophisticated, highly branded and meticulously designed intranet portal for their client. While, Microsoft SharePoint 2007 is an ideal platform for a sophisticated portal/intranet, it is notoriously difficult to skin and brand precisely, and falls short as a CMS for creating and managing user created content. SP 2007 does a lot, but it's not always pretty!

## THE SOLUTION

First we built on the the native SharePoint CMS capability. We extended the “Publishing Feature” to support the notion of a hierarchical collection of pages. We also added the ability to automatically build up landing pages from the pages lower in the hierarchy (eliminating countless hours of manual work).

Creating features in SharePoint can be super easy, but getting them to look a certain way is very,very hard. We side-stepped styling difficulties by introducing the NVelocity template engine. We used this to render standard SharePoint content like lists of links as well as to support the custom applications required by an internet (“classifieds”, “news”, etc) . This approach eliminated the need to create many custom Webparts which must be compiled, deployed, and maintained.

Aside from that the application incorporate all kind of intranet goodness: ajax integration via jquery (including a replacement of the clunky SharePoint menus), many custom applications that leveraged SharePoints capabilities, and integration with numerous external data sources.

## RESULTS

The results are an internet portal that benefits from all the functional benefits of SharePoint, but you'd never know it was SharePoint.

