



Founded in 1834, Tulane University is one of the most highly regarded and selective independent research universities in the United States. Recently, the School of Architecture needed to implement a stronger way for students and faculty to share information and route output to shared printers and plotters. They turned to Configment, a consulting firm. Progress® Rollbase®, which had already proven its value to Configment on other projects, was the natural choice to help them build a Web portal for the school. The project has yielded a highly flexible and reliable, Web-based interface that's saving the school time and money – and keeping students and faculty productive and happy.

SUPPORTING THE DEMANDING PRINTING NEEDS OF ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS

Several years ago, David Armentor, Digital Imaging Specialist at Tulane University's School of Architecture, set up an online system that allowed users to upload files for storage. In addition, students could download files and route them to printers. However, admits Armentor, the software used at the time was not up to the task. For example, jobs would frequently "crash" during uploads, especially with larger file sizes. The interface and controls were also not very user-friendly and it was completely inflexible. If a new printer became available, it took time and effort to make it accessible to users. Finally, the system had limited bandwidth in terms of accommodating users. It was not a formula for user satisfaction.

"We were hosting all the files for users even after updating the system in 2011; the results were disappointing and crashes continued," says Armentor.

WEB-BASED, CLOUD-FRIENDLY SELF-SERVICE PORTAL

In late 2013, Armentor spoke about the system's challenges to Ian Ayers, principal at Configment, a consultancy based in Charlottesville, VA, which had already completed other Web projects for the school using Drupal.

Ayers says he immediately saw that Drupal, a popular open-source content management framework, was not suitable for the type of workflows and functionality Tulane needed. And, he says, he instantly began to envision a solution for Tulane using Progress Rollbase. "We had worked on a wide range of projects for small business organizations and startups using Progress Rollbase and we were confident of the capabilities it provided," says Ayers.

"The way Rollbase gives me the ability to rapidly prototype with the client is totally awesome," he adds. Using Rollbase, the design process and the build process can start almost simultaneously, making it possible to work directly with clients and end users at



CHALLENGE

Tulane University's School of Architecture needed to deliver more reliable and accessible printing services to its students via the Web.

SOLUTION

Working with Configment, a consulting firm, Tulane was able to rapidly and cost-effectively expand its Web-based, self-service functionality for students and staff with Progress® Rollbase®.

BENEFIT

The strengths of Progress Rollbase made it possible to deliver initial functionality in hours instead of weeks, to easily update and expand the site and to integrate with other Web resources

the earliest stage of development, according to Ayers. "I don't have to waste time doing screen mockups because I can demo almost immediately, so it is even faster than typical agile web development," says Ayers.

Working with Armentor to understand the dimensions of the project, Ayers says he was able to showcase a demo within 12 hours. "That would be impossible if done natively with Drupal – it would have taken a minimum of weeks," Ayers notes. The bottom line: with Progress Rollbase, says Ayers, he shaved 50% off the cost of the project.

Initially, Armentor says, he had planned to continue storing files for users. Instead, though, the site is now set up to work seamlessly with cloud-based services. "Interfacing in this way gives the users more control over their files and it also means they can continue working until their files are actually scheduled to print," explains Armentor. The solution even permits users to schedule print jobs and check on the status of jobs via a mobile device.

Since first setting up the portal, Configment has updated the application with new modules to control plotters and computer-numerical-control (CNC) machining operations—for generating 3D models. "Even though the CNC process has a somewhat different workflow, thanks to Rollbase, instead of having to start from scratch we could clone portions of our original work and simply modify it to handle this," says Ayers.

"It was nice to know that Configment didn't have to build from scratch when we needed something new and fast," adds Armentor.

BENEFITS

For Configment and Tulane's School of Architecture, Progress Rollbase proved to be fast, easy to use, and lower cost – the key to delivering a flexible and reliable print management and print delivery portal. Furthermore, notes Ayers, its simple, per-user pricing is less complex than many competing offerings. "That makes it easier to estimate costs for the client," he adds. At the end of the day, Ayers says, he was able to deliver the finished project to Armentor and Tulane after just 70 hours of work. "Rollbase has to be at least 100% to 200% faster than working with competing technologies. With Rollbase, I knew I could meet and exceed Tulane's requirements," adds Ayers.

According to Armentor, Progress Rollbase has helped to ensure that the graphics laboratory stays organized and runs efficiently. With students able to reserve equipment and Rollbase managing multiple queues, it has become vastly more manageable to serve the high output demands of the student body. One of the strongest features, notes Armentor, was that Progress Rollbase was able to integrate with the rest of the Web infrastructure at Tulane's School of Architecture.

"Although our workload has stayed the same in terms of the number of students we support, Progress Rollbase is a better and more responsive experience for them. The efficiency Rollbase provides for our staff saves at least one or two hours per day of staff time," he adds.



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*David Armentor
Digital Imaging Specialist
Tulane University School of
Architecture*

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*Ian Ayers
Principal
Configment*

ABOUT TULANE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

The mission of the Tulane School of Architecture is to prepare students for leadership positions in the design professions and in their communities. This school aspires to provide the highest quality professional education in architecture, to develop and conserve knowledge, and to promote excellence and innovation in architecture, landscape urbanism, preservation, and urban and environmental design and development.

architecture.tulane.edu

ABOUT CONFIGMENT



Configment is an innovation consultancy with capability to deliver on digital projects. Their talent network is comprised of designers, engineers, business strategists, technologists, and artists. Every engagement starts with pure imagination—the natural enemy of practical constraint. Together with their clients we are configment, because if a figment lives in one’s imagination, then a configment must be that imaginations combined. Configment leverages cloud-based application platforms to configure web appliances designed to accomplish nearly any business process online. They specialize in Drupal and Progress Rollbase. configment.com

PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

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