

ODPA fast-tracks how it connects people, data and workflows with a digital portal that delivers a one-stop service experience for the community.

"Honest and representing true value for money, Serversys quickly became a trusted partner who played a key role in making this project work. Their flexible approach and friendly 'can-do' attitude transformed what could have been a hugely stressful project into one that was a pleasure to work on."

Tim Loveridge, Chief Operating Officer at the ODPA

WHO ARE ODPA?

The Data Protection Authority is the independent supervisory authority for the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2017. The Authority delegates its regulatory tasks to The Office of the Data Protection Authority (ODPA)

These include promoting excellence in data protection, empowering individuals to exercise their rights, and investigating complaints made by members of the public.

Each year, organisations that process personal information must register with the ODPA and pay an annual data protection levy. In total, around 21,000 companies and organisations – everyone from sole traders to SMEs and big multinationals – need to complete their annual registration within an eight-week timeframe.

THE CHALLENGE

"Our website is the first port of call for members of the public who want to understand how organisations use their data, learn about their data protection rights, or report a concern," explains Tim Loveridge, Chief Operating Officer at the ODPA.

"Similarly, it is where organisations go to access guidance on their obligations – including how to comply with the data protection legislation – to report a breach, or undertake their annual registration," he continues.

Making it easy to interact and responsively deliver information and online services in a scalable and cost-effective manner was just part of the challenge. Rigorous enterprise-grade security and integrated backend workflows would be essential to ensure the ODPA could fulfil all its duties in a compliant and efficient way.

"Big regulatory IT platforms tend to be expensive, overly complex and not particularly agile. As a Microsoft 365 house, we wanted to take full advantage of cloud-powered technologies to deploy a website - featuring customised Internet portals and integrations with our backend systems - that would facilitate all our information giving, reporting, and electronic registration activities in a highly adaptive, streamlined, and innovative way," confirms Tim.

With just months to get all these required capabilities in place and a new interactive and intuitive-to-use website up and running, Tim and his team turned to Serversys to make the ODPA vision a reality.

"We knew what we wanted to do – but not necessarily how to do it. And that's where Serversys came into play. They provided the insights and technical know-how we needed, configuring both the environment – including the registration system - and all user journeys in a manner that has enabled us to significantly improve our regulatory processes," says Tim.

THE SOLUTION

Having defined an RFP, the ODPA had a clear idea of what it was looking for in terms of a technology partner that could deliver its operational vision.

The initial project discussions began in March 2020, and Serversys was tasked with the creation of a solution containing multiple Internet portals to handle a variety of tasks.

"Within a matter of weeks, COVID-19 lockdowns meant all project management and delivery had to be undertaken remotely. The commitment and professionalism of all concerned meant that we still achieved our projected January 2021 launch of a fully functional website complete with portals. There was no slippage at all," says Tim.

All content and information giving documentation on the website is managed via Microsoft's Power Apps Portals Studio, which makes it easy to add and configure web pages, components, forms and lists. Meanwhile, the Microsoft Power Platform delivers the deep connectivity with Dynamics 365 and other Microsoft applications required to power end-to-end automation.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Delivery of modern web portal tightly integrated with CRM
- Facilitate payments
- Automate notification delivery
- Provide valuable information and resources to organisations and citizens
- Web forms for complaint and query management

THE IMPACT

"We now have a highly responsive, secure, future-proofed and scalable site that is capable of handling thousands of concurrent requests and transactions with no loss of performance for users," says Tim.

"Integration with Dynamics 365 automates key business processes, like registrations and payments, and enhances our productivity. For example, complaint information captured on our site's web forms is made instantly available to our case and compliance officers, who have to investigate and respond with 28 days." Alongside delivering a great user experience and connected processes, the ODPA is now able to draw on a rich trove of data-driven insights that enable it to continually refine its operational strategy.

"We know it takes an average of under 5 minutes for organisations to complete the online registration and payment process. And by using analytics to segment all reported complaints and breaches, we're able to identify sectors and target specific awareness initiatives and thematics - like GPs or Advertising Agencies etc. - to help them better understand their data protection obligations.

Today, the ODPA is able to update and refresh information resources at the touch of a button, capture every interaction and transaction in Microsoft Dynamics, and promote its programme of online and in-person awareness-raising initiatives.

Dynamic site acceleration, smart traffic direction and in-built DDoS security protections is all handled via Azure Front Door which also ensures that all web traffic, and underlying systems, are shielded from attack.

Because Portal and Dynamics 365 are completely integrated inside the cloud, whatever data is surfaced and changed in one is instantly reflected in the other - there's no need for clunky APIs, or dependency on unreliable synchronisation. As a result, the most up-to-date information is always available to the ODPA, businesses and members of the public. Plus, storing and managing all data is one unified location both elevates security and eliminates any need to maintain multiple data systems - effectively creating a single source of truth.

WHY SERVERSYS?

"In simple terms, we needed someone to create a portal that is tightly integrated with our Microsoft Dynamics CRM and SQL data base at the back end. When Serversys responded to our initial call for RFP submissions we did our homework and discovered that they are one of the UK leaders in this space."

Following a detailed evaluation of all potential providers, the decision to work with Serversys was taken.

"Serversys came out top thanks to their technical expertise and deep experience of navigating the challenges surrounding complex projects and organisational structures," explains Tim.

Serversys' capabilities as a leading provider of customised web portals powered by Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform that deliver optimised performance wasn't the only reason it was selected. As experts in GDPR compliance, data privacy and data protection, Serversys represented a truly value-add partner for the ODPA.

"Serversys demonstrated a deep understanding of our unique role and responsibilities as an independent supervisory body, including our commitment to serving the people who live and work in Guernsey," says Tim.

"Throughout the project they proactively consulted on direction and process design. Rather than simply reacting to instructions, they helped us reassess the challenges with the aim of improving our organisational effectiveness and constantly built consensus and commitment to cooperative actions between all the teams involved."

Tim outlines just one example of how important this approach was to the overall achievement of key project objectives through to final implementation.

"Serversys helped us design easy-to-use and digestible 'information' gathering online forms that minimise any risk of people being overwhelmed or confused by our registration or complaint processes. Collecting only the information that is needed and sending secure notifications to users as they proceed through the process, they also ensured the system gives users full visibility and control of their data," he says.

"Their truly consultative and can do approach meant we were able to work at speed to initiate a genuinely agile environment that evolves with us."