



Case Study

Hey Kiki

An online community for activity sharing

Our client offers an online service wherein members can locate activity partners to practice with and also identify activities that they wish to learn or teach. There were several problems with the website that they wished to resolve and also build new value added features to it. For this purpose they teamed up with Icreon. As per the requirements, Icreon delivered the revamped website. The solution has been developed on the Ruby on Rails framework.

Customer Profile

Our client is a US based entrepreneur.

Business Requirements

Our client's existing website had several issues that were hampering the performance of the site. One of the major problems that needed resolution was that related to the integration of the Ferret search engine to retrieve the search results. Since the website was primarily built around the idea of people searching for activities, this problem needed immediate looking into.

Development of new features and maintenance of the website

The solution has been developed on the Ruby on Rails framework.

Challenges:

Some of the challenges we faced and overcame include:

- Identifying and including locations (in the search results) that are relative to or near the location entered by the user.
- Versioning of components used.
- Making use of search indexing to speed-up the retrieval of search results.

Solution:

Since we had to work on an existing website, our first priority was to study and understand the solution structure and code written, making it easy to rectify issues and integrate new features. Before working on

the new features, the team worked towards resolving all existing problems and bugs. One of the major problems that we resolved was the issues faced in the integration with the Ferret search engine.

The website provides a social networking environment with emphasis on activity sharing between its members. The aim is to bring together people, from different walks of life, who share similar interests and provide them with a platform to communicate with one another to find practice buddies or instructors who teach specific activities.

Within the website, search can be performed on the basis of activities, locations or both. The system will retrieve a listing of practice buddy, classes and instructor posts that have been submitted by members. The search results are shown based on the location specified and geo coding has been used to not only show posts from the location specified by the user but for nearby locations as well. All users can browse through the posts but they are required to sign-up to correspond with the members who made the post. Additional features such as the option to rate and post reviews, become a fan, e-mail to friends and the option to report the posting for abuse are provided to members.

Upon registration, each member is provided a personalized area wherein they can manage their profile, postings and account details. Members can post two types of requests, one to find practice buddies and the other to offer their services as instructors. In both cases members can detail out their schedules and also provide additional information about their requests. All such requests are available on the website for a period of 30 days after which they will be removed.

All regular social networking features, such as creating and managing a network of friends have been provided. Members can send friend requests to specific members and can also process similar requests that have been received. An internal communication system has been provided allowing members to communicate with one another. Additionally, the options to post public messages on member profiles have been provided. A new feature allowing members to import contacts (from multiple e-mail accounts), while sending invites to people to join the website has been provided.

With the successful delivery of the solution Icreon has provided a simple yet effective means for people to interact with one another and share activities.

Technical Details:

Technology Used



The solution follows MVC architecture, making it easy to maintain. Prototype framework has been used for JavaScript. SVN has been used for version control. We have made use of Capistrano deployment tool to ease the process of deploying websites on remote servers

Components Used

Various Ruby on Rails components have been integrated with the solution. These include:

Sitemap:	Has been used to enable dynamic sitemaps for the website. New pages added to the website are automatically reflected on the sitemap.
Contacts:	Contacts has been used to enable users to import their contacts stored in various e-mail accounts such as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo etc.
Auto Complete:	Has been used to provide suggestion lists when users type text into fields such as search box, category etc.
Act As Messagable:	This has been used to provide a private messaging system wherein members can send and receive messages from one another.
Ferret:	Ferret component enables a full text search.
Act as Taggable:	This component has been used to enable tagging of objects as well as searching for tagged objects.
Simple CAPTCHA	Has been used to implement CAPTCHA technology to prevent spamming from automated scripts.
Geokit-rails	Calculates the distance in miles or KM, with the entire trigonometry abstracted away by Geokit. For example, it allows the identification of points in the database within a 50-mile radius.
Attachement_fu	This component has been use to handle the uploading of image files to the server.