Government Reporting Portal in Denmark Gets a Facelift

Collaboration with Capgemini ensures re-launch of Virk.dk portal and allows Danish companies to save time and money by filing reports electronically

The Situation

Virk.dk, managed by Erhvervs- og Selskabsstyrelsen (the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency), is a business Internet portal for the public sector in Denmark. The portal has a simple though ambitious goal: "*to make life easier for administrative employees in the Danish business community*".

The result of this ambition encompassed the shaping of Virk.dk as a corporate digital input provider to the public. The portal was designed to provide public access to approximately 1,300 forms. An overall aim was to position it as a one-stop shop for all individual business reporting needs of the public. It also provided vocational information from all public authorities.

The first iteration in 2003 met with little success. The stumbling block was that the portal was run in cooperation with commercial vendors. Users appeared confused that a site, where they should report information to

the public sector, was sponsored by banner ads.

The portal was adjusted several times afterwards, but could not address the two main issues in its entirety. "*The business model of corporate and government cooperation which was based on banner ads created a credibility problem. On top of this the private partner had trouble earning money in the partnership,*" explains the leader of Center for Virk.dk, Carsten Loesch from the Agency.

The Solution

Capgemini won the contract to implement the new Virk.dk portal, as well as taking ownership for general maintenance on the site over a three-year period.

"*The portal was built using Open Source software, not because the Danish*

> **"Capgemini's work for us has resulted in a strong portal for companies to use when communicating with the public sector."**
>
> **Carsten Loesch, Leader, Center for Virk.dk, Danish Commerce and Companies Agency**

government is focusing on the use of Open Standards, but because it was the best offer received in the tender. But the choice has made the job of the developers easier, having access to the source code and modifying for Virk.dk's unique demands. As an added bonus, it turns out we've had a much easier time than expected integrating the many governmental documents into the portal," explains Carsten Loesch.

The Result

Initial reactions from the users are very positive. But that does not mean that the Agency is resting on its laurels. The next step is to expand the functionality of the site to create even greater value for users.

"The portal is complete and I am certain that our new structure and technology will make Virk.dk well-known for being stable and functional. This will also counter the bad publicity Virk.dk has received throughout the years. Now we need to reach the last businesses, which haven't discovered the value of the portal and are still spending more time with their administrative tasks," says Carsten Loesch.

Since the launch of the new version of Virk.dk in March 2008 the number of forms sent through the portal has more than doubled. So the companies are catching on to the success.

How the Agency and Capgemini Worked Together

Since the portal had been modified several times in the past with little success, both the Agency and Capgemini knew that regaining user attention and trust was no easy task. Soft launches could not be afforded any more as they would only test user patience further; a completely new portal and underlying systems was the only option remaining.

Several things had to be changed on the portal. Usability issues had to be dealt with, as well as implementing a new search function, to make it easier for users to find relevant information. Furthermore, a single sign-on and user rights management system had to be implemented across the government sector. In addition, Virk.dk had to re-establish its credibility after the previous partially commercial model.

Working with an optimal mix of both proprietary as well as Open Standards made it easier for developers to suit the needs of Virk.dk. Even though the portal was built in part using Open Source, it was important not to compromise security protocols. In fact, because of access to source code, developers are able to identify and fix problems with the software themselves without relying on a third-party vendor for resolution. The advantage of Open Source is its huge worldwide community of developers who ensure that solutions released are made robust and secure through a rapid and continuous feedback process.

However, not all parts of Virk.dk use Open Source technologies. For instance, the user rights management system and the search engine are proprietary programs adapted for Virk.dk by Capgemini. *"We got the cheapest and most effective solution that lived up to our specifications. That the*

Danish government recommends the use of Open Standards was just a bonus," says Carsten Loesch.

Capgemini developed the new portal in such a way that Center for Virk.dk, which carries the responsibility for the portal, has the ability to make changes to the site without having to come back to the Capgemini team. The new portal now has a powerful search engine that allows visitors to find information that they are looking for.

The next milestone in the project is replacing the last PDF files with online forms, so businesses can file their reports online and sign them using their digital signature. Currently around 90% of all forms from the state level can be sent fully electronically, while the rest are PDF files. The goal for the end of 2009 is to reach 100% at both the state and local government level.

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In collaboration with

virk.dk

Virk.dk is a business Internet portal for the public sector in Denmark. Center for Virk.dk manages and controls the

portal on behalf of the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency. The center handles communication with parties interested in the portal, such as companies as well as both local and national authorities. For more information, please visit **http://virk.dk/About**