

Case Study: Hosted Document, Project & Team Collaboration Portal

The Customer

[Huddle](#) is the first product from Ninian Solutions, a company dedicated to building solutions that enable organisations and individuals to work more successfully together. Ninian Solutions is a venture-backed business that aims to capitalise on its management team's experience in the marketing, document management and web services – and deliver innovative solutions for the networked e-economy.

The Brief

The core concept behind Huddle is to give people access to enterprise-level collaboration tools within a social-network framework – bringing the best of MySpace into the business world.

Built as an interconnected network of online spaces, the pivot-point of Huddle is not the features or functionality (although these are robust enough for the enterprise), but the network that surrounds them, allowing true collaboration to take place. It is this which distinguishes it from potential competitors, who tend to be clunky, costly, or limited in the amount of participants that can easily be involved.



Using Huddle enables teams to; post and edit documents in the filing cabinet, whilst retaining full version control; discuss ideas on the whiteboard; post milestones; assign events and tasks to huddle members; provide presence and biography information, and view all of this from a central, intuitive dashboard. Huddle teams can also be expanded at will.

Our Solution

Our role in the development of Huddle began with a phase of close collaboration with Ninian Solutions to develop the functional requirements of the Huddle application from their initial concept and vision for the business. Our key inputs were recommendations for the most appropriate development technologies and services required to realise the application and resource and cost estimates for the build phase. This information enabled Ninian Solutions to manage their budget and to engage with potential customers and coordinate launch marketing activities in parallel with the application build.

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The key goals for the build phase were to deliver a robust and extensible application within a short timeframe. The custom application is built on the Microsoft .NET 2.0 platform, making use of the ASP.NET application framework. The user interface design of the application was especially challenging, because of the inherent complexity of some of the functionality and the expectations of the intended audience. We made extensive use of technologies such as jQuery to develop a powerful and intuitive user interface to the application.

Success

<http://www.huddle.net>

The resulting network of linked workspaces enables teams to seamlessly collaborate inside and outside the organisation:

- Security: SSL log-in, server-side data encryption
- Scalability: Users can sign-up for a free huddle, then purchase packages of extra huddles to work with other teams – all managed through the same interface.
- Manageability: Huddle managers invite users into huddles and set see/view/edit permissions on documents. Huddles can be customised with the company's logo & colour scheme.
- Core Tools: Enterprise DMS, Whiteboards, Calendar, Team Manager, Document Workflows, Automated alerts, Online management/admin interface
- Cross-Platform, hosted zero footprint solution, Safari (Mac), IE & Firefox compatible

Customer Feedback

Huddle has already been taken up by several high-profile companies and is receiving great feedback.

"We use huddle to work with our distributors across Europe, Asia and Africa, our key suppliers and our marketing agencies nationally. It's easy to use, automatically notifies everyone when new information is available and reminds people when they need to do things. I wish every system we had was this good!"

Kate Moore, Firefly Tonics

"huddle is more reliable than FTP, a lot less messy than email, and has very quickly become an important part of how we conduct our day-to-day business. Anyone who's ever tried to keep track of a million document changes, tried to unite a group across different companies in different time zones, or simply wished they hadn't left that file on their desktop at home should be using it. huddle is like MySpace for people who actually want to get stuff done..."

Jess Greenwood, Contagious Magazine

“huddle is central to our business and critical to the delivery of high-quality client service. It has significantly reduced resource overheads and enabled our teams to focus on value-adding work. Thank you huddle!”

Sue Evans, DSC Recruitment

“This is the future of work – it’s so liberating!”

Juliet Agg-Manning, Classic Representation