

A black and white photograph of a young girl with braided hair, wearing a white ribbed sweater, sitting at a desk and raising her right hand. She is smiling and looking towards the right. In the background, other students are blurred, suggesting a classroom setting.

Education

Halifax Regional Centre for Education

Achieving Excellence for
Information Architecture and
User Experience.

Company Size: 10K employees

Location: Dartmouth, NS

About HRCE

Halifax Regional Centre for Education is the public-school district for Halifax Regional Municipality in Halifax County, Nova Scotia. Serving 52,000 students in 135 schools, the HRCE is the largest center for education in Atlantic Canada.

The Challenge

The HRCE uses its website to communicate with staff, students, and the community through hundreds of pages, forms, and news items. The old website had become difficult to navigate and equally challenging for administrators to maintain. HRCE was in desperate need of a modern content management system that could handle large volumes of data, frequent updates, and high traffic volumes.

The Solution

The primary goal for HRCE was to create a user-centric and intuitive navigation structure based on the information architecture for current and future content. Our information architect, digital marketing experts, and website designer worked closely with HRCE staff and administrators to understand the complex data hierarchies and navigation paths of the old Content Management System (CMS). We determined that the new website's most efficient navigation pathways would start with understanding user groups: Teachers, parents, and students. By providing clear pathways for each user type, we could recategorize the information into a simplified structure that quickly allows users to find relevant content.

The HRCE site must handle large volumes of traffic while still delivering excellent page load performance. During snowstorms and other inclement weather, the HRCE website can receive hundreds of page view requests per second. It was crucial to HRCE that the site continue to perform regardless of the number of users connected. Applying optimization techniques such as a cache server and content delivery network (CDN) to the database allows for peak demands of up to 7,000 page views per minute without losing website performance.

HRCE also needed each of the region's schools to have their own website with consistent navigation structures. Each school can customize color schemes in the new multi-site environment and add images to reflect their



own identity. Still, parents who have students in different schools benefit from a similar user experience. School administrators can easily set up a new website at the click of a button. The website can pull data from a central repository and fill in relevant data such as staff directories that include names, roles, phone numbers, email addresses, and online links.

The Results

Our website developers implemented a dynamic, high-performance website that easily allows the public to find and navigate categories of interest. The new content management system streamlined administrators' user experience, helping them locate and update content quickly and consistently. The website continuously delivers on performance during traffic spikes, and HRCE has since contracted Aptitude Digital for several other projects and initiatives.

Key Features:



Content Workflow
with Versioning



Security



Content
Migration