

Iceland-based, wholesale supplier of data center space achieves global recognition as green IT leader using Curata's content curation tool

The Situation

Verne Global is a wholesale supplier of data center space based in Keflavik, Iceland, and Washington, D.C., that aims to solve the energy consumption problems facing most companies today. A joint venture between Novator and General Catalyst Partners, Verne Global's mission is to create data centers that are strategically located in geographic areas that feature 100% renewable power without a price premium. Company executives know that the best way to persuade prospective customers about the business value of their data centers is to educate them about green IT. However, being in start-up mode, there are limited marketing dollars and even more limited staff. To ensure their message gets out to the global IT community, Verne Global uses HiveFire's content curation tool, Curata, to easily create a robust website, featuring aggregated content and original content, that informs visitors about green IT and establishes Verne Global as an industry thought leader.

The Challenge

Top of mind for most corporations today is how to bring down their data center energy costs and make their IT operations more eco-friendly. Verne Global plans to unveil a data center solution by year-end to do just that. However, since the data center campus is based in Iceland where they can take advantage of total renewable energy, the start-up's U.S.-based team has to be creative in trying to build a customer base.

Lisa Rhodes, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Verne Global, says she's trying to make the most of a shoestring budget as she tries to generate interest in her product. Typically, when a company is getting set to launch its first product, a marketing team will buy space at trade shows, develop ads, and generate a lot of press releases in the hopes of getting a few leads. "These strategies are exhaustive, expensive and don't always hit the mark," Rhodes says. In fact, she estimates that many companies spend upwards of \$100,000 on outbound marketing and other outreach efforts – a budget that she just doesn't have.

She adds that a lot of marketing teams are taking advantage of the free buzz they can generate from FaceBook and Twitter. While she thinks that these social marketing tools can be helpful, the only place they send interested followers is back to a corporate Web site and she calls that "too self-serving." Instead, she wants to offer something tangible to readers: an education about the importance of renewable energy.

Rhodes also had the added challenge that in the early days of the start-up there wasn't much on the website to show customers. "We knew our data center campus was going to be green and in Iceland but we didn't have pictures or marketing materials yet," she says.

The Solution

Rhodes chose Curata to help her build a robust news and opinion site that would establish Verne Global as the leader in green data centers. Green Data Center News (www.greendatacenternews.org) has quickly become the hub for up-to-the-minute IT energy efficiency information from around the world.

"Curata makes it easy to stay on top of variety of news in the Green IT space. By using the information gathered on Curata, I'm able to produce a newsletter for customers that positions Verne Global as an industry thought leader."

— Lisa Rhodes, Vice President of Marketing, Verne Global



At-A-Glance

Company

Verne Global www.verneglobal.com

Challenge

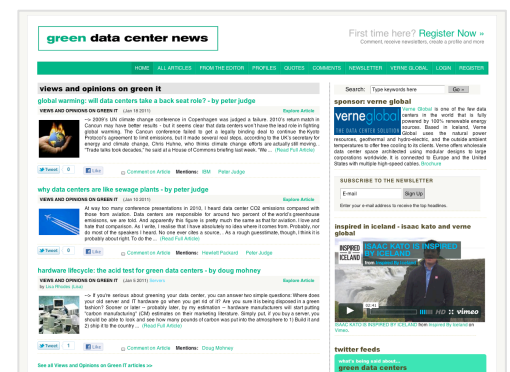
Establish start-up as a thought leader in green IT industry

Solution

Used Curata to create a niche destination site around the topic of green data centers: www.greendatacenternews.org

Benefits

- Create Green Data Center News and populate it with relevant and current news and opinions as well as original content
- Connect with potential customers on a daily basis
- Quoted in global press as thought leader in green IT without having to send out frequent press releases
- Saved \$100,000 in expenses for outbound marketing, staff and website



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The Solutions Continued

Featuring dozens of articles daily and three original blogs, Green Data Center News has thousands of hits each week and is considered the site to keep companies in the know. In fact, the BBC and other large news organizations have created feature stories about Verne Global thanks to information they found on Green Data Center News.

"We've only been around for a year. I never could have gotten this much media and customer attention without Curata. I haven't had to do any outbound press or major marketing to try to get name recognition," Rhodes says. Even more important, Rhodes only has to spend an hour a day updating the site and can do so from anywhere, including her mobile phone.

HiveFire, founded in Cambridge, Mass., by a group of MIT engineers, delivers Curata's web-based solution that enables Rhodes to deploy a customized site template and populate it regularly with highly relevant, industry content. Curata automatically analyzes and culls links from sites Rhodes has selected and allows her to tick off which ones she wants published to the site. The software also enables her to easily post original blogs she has commissioned from industry experts. She did not need a team of developers to create the site or specialized skills to keep it refreshed.

To start, she monitored dozens of websites over several weeks to make sure they generated appropriate content. Then she entered those sites into Curata's aggregation engine. She also developed a list of terms that would return targeted articles – a list she continuously hones as the industry evolves. Each day, Rhodes logs into the Curata portal to approve a group of articles. Curata's solution automatically places these links into their relevant categories and then automatically publishes them to Green Data Center News.

She also uses Curata to match photos with stories, which she feels makes them more compelling, and to post rich, interactive features such as polls, video and even Twitter feeds. The site's audience, which she's gained mostly through word of mouth, can sign up for RSS feeds and email newsletters about new content. Rhodes says Green Data Center News, which draws news and opinion from more than 40 sites, is "95% automated" despite its unique look and feel.

The Results

HiveFire's interactive and automated content curation software has had an incredibly positive impact on Verne Global, which plans to open the doors of its first 100% renewable energy data center in Iceland by year-end. The best outcome has been that Verne Global, which is listed as the sponsor of Green Data Center News, is seen by media and prospective customers alike as a destination site for current information about energy-efficient data centers. Verne Global executives, including Rhodes, point business partners and sales leads to the site to help educate them about the need for these types of data centers and the total cost of ownership benefits. Also, Green Data Center News, and in turn Verne Global, are often at the top of searches in the major search engines, including Google, Bing, and Yahoo.

About Verne Global

Verne Global is a wholesale supplier of data center space based in Keflavik, Iceland, and Washington, D.C. The company is a joint venture between Novator and General Catalyst Partners. The company's mission is to develop data centers in optimized geographic areas that offer the best total cost of ownership (TCO) and 100% renewable power without a price premium. Verne Global is led by an experienced team with proven success in the data center industry, and is ready to lead the way toward dramatically greener, more cost-effective data center facilities.

About Curata from HiveFire, Inc.

HiveFire, launched by a team of MIT engineers, enables companies to automate the organization and the curation of relevant industry content for internet marketing and social media marketing. HiveFire specializes in leveraging advanced technology to provide powerful means of managing information for corporate marketing executives. HiveFire engineers and scientists work with machine learning, natural language processing, and information retrieval. HiveFire's team consists of engineers and researchers with experience from MIT, Google, Microsoft, Veritas, NetApp, Sun, Compete and other search-related technology companies. For more information, please visit www.GetCurata.com. To learn more about content curation, visit www.contentcurationmarketing.com.