

Customer Overview

Founded in 1991, MBC Group was the first pan-Arab free-to-air satellite broadcasting company. Based in Dubai, MBC Group includes six television channels: MBC1 (family entertainment), MBC2 (24-hour movies), MBC3 (children's entertainment), MBC4 (entertainment for Arab women), MBC Action (action and movies), MBC Persia (24-hour movies with Farsi subtitles) and Al Arabiya (the 24-hour Arabic language news channel); two radio stations: mbc FM (Gulf music), and panorama fm (contemporary Arabic music); as well as O3 productions, a specialised documentary production unit. It has also several online platforms: www.mbc.net, www.alarabiya.net and www.alaswaq.net.

Based in Dubai, the Middle East Broadcasting Company (MBC) comprises the longest running free-to-air multi-channel media group in the region. For over 17 years, MBC has built a diverse portfolio of TV and radio channels to enrich people's lives through information, interaction and entertainment across the Arabic-speaking world. The company's main website, MBC.net, is accessed by users across the world to check broadcast schedules and find information on popular programs.

The Challenge

MBC wanted to enhance the services available on its website and develop a single online gateway for all its users' entertainment needs. It recognized that there was a gap in the market for a high quality entertainment website in Arabic and so tasked itself with delivering diverse content and program information via MBC.net.

MBC needed a web content management solution that would streamline and simplify the process of creating and delivering content, in new formats like video and audio as well as text. Most important was enabling nontechnical employees to make updates directly to the site, reducing reliance on the web team. As well as adding new content, MBC wanted a solution that would enable the quick and easy creation of new microsites and communities.

The solution also needed to enhance consumption and relevance of content for the end user. The ability to offer communities and feedback opportunities was considered as essential to making customers feel valued and thereby enhancing their loyalty to the MBC brand.

The chosen solution would need to meet these technological requirements with sufficient scalability and stability to support further growth of the website and its new media features for the next five to ten years.

The Solution

Ammar Bakkar - MBC's Group Director New Media - and his team chose to implement a web content management platform based on Vignette technology.

Vignette Content Management is used by non-technical employees of MBC with responsibility for developing new content to support programming. Used in conjunction with Vignette Dynamic Portal Management, users can build new pages and add content in context by seeing how the final page will look to the customer on the website. End users view the site using Vignette Portal, which makes the handling of user-generated content simple and enables microsites to be built quickly.

"We chose Vignette due to the huge range of tools it featured for building websites," says Bakkar. "It is simple to use, with a focus on the communications, media and entertainment space, which made it perfect for our needs. The strong support offered locally in the Middle East was an advantage too. When we realized that all this also came at a compelling price, we were convinced we'd found the right solution."

The Results

Since deploying the Vignette platform, MBC has been able to transform its online presence. With four television channels in its portfolio, the group launches at least one new program every week and is now able to build dedicated sites for each of them in just ten days, which with the previous platform would have been impossible. The most popular soap operas also have daily online updates. Mohammed Ammar Kurabi, Web Development Manager, MBC comments:

"The more efficient publishing method gives us a valuable opportunity to innovate in online content delivery. For the first time we're also able to integrate user-generated content into the mix, and this is a huge bonus for us and our customers."

Audiences are now given the opportunity to add their own comments to any of the news stories posted on MBC.net, making them feel more valued as part of a community. With between 50 and 2,000 comments per story, this feature is clearly proving popular, providing the company with a wealth of consumer feedback with which to inform future programming decisions. Kurabi continues: "The simplicity of the platform is a strong point too. Templates can be cloned and reused easily so even non-technical users can build new microsites. Combined with its strong scalability, we're confident that the Vignette platform will enable us to continue growing and diversifying in line with customer demand for years to come."

About Vignette

Vignette provides software and services that deliver the Web's most dynamic user experiences. The Vignette Web Experience brings rich media and engaging content to life for the world's greatest brands. Vignette is headquartered in Austin, Texas with operations worldwide. Visit www.vignette.com.

"We're very excited about the possibilities here. With Vignette we're able to bring content to life for our customers and give them a truly engaging online experience that is unique in our market at the moment."

—Ammar Bakkar, Group Director New Media, MBC