



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:

The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:

The Well Project

Summary

Offering HIV/AIDS information on the Internet has greatly benefited the patient and caregiver community but is also associated with some significant challenges. The opportunity to provide a broad audience of users with access to this information from the privacy and security of their homes or workplaces and on their own schedule is not to be underestimated. However, most information about HIV/AIDS treatments and research on the Web has historically been geared toward gay men. The ever-changing landscape of scientific knowledge means that state-of-the-art treatment and care is also rapidly evolving. And the information which does exist is usually complex and written for practitioners with highly skilled and technical infectious disease training. This problem is further compounded for women who traditionally have found there is a particularly scarce amount of published information available anywhere on women and HIV/AIDS. The challenge for people seeking this information is that even if they can find it, the information is often outdated and too technical to understand and it is served to them in a way they aren't comfortable with receiving.

In response, Dawn Averitt Bridge, an HIV patient who was frustrated by the lack of quality information available for women, founded The Well Project in 2003, a non-profit organization with a unique focus on women and HIV/AIDS. The overriding goal of The Well Project, an organization that today includes women with HIV/AIDS on its staff, is to save and improve the lives of all people living with HIV/AIDS. To achieve this goal, The Well Project provides HIV/AIDS patients, caregivers, healthcare providers and researchers with comprehensive online resources, conferences, support groups and other learning opportunities focused on improving patient care.

Central to The Well Project's mission to make information about women and HIV/AIDS more widely available in a safe and trusted environment was the development of an advanced Web-based resource. This Web portal, www.thewellproject.org, is based on a comprehensive document management solution designed to dramatically simplify and increase access to up-to-date information about HIV/AIDS research, treatment options and other resources available to women. Because this solution has increased the speed and efficiency of online publishing and user access, there is more extensive communication and collaboration about women with HIV/

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:
The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:
The Well Project

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC

AIDS than ever before.

Introductory Overview

Today, women are the fastest-growing community of the HIV/AIDS population and yet there is a void in available information related to their needs. Dawn Averitt Bridge, an HIV patient, personally and painfully experienced this gap, and, as a result, founded The Well Project, Inc. in 2003.

The Well Project is a non-profit organization with a unique and comprehensive focus on helping women diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The Well Project identifies, develops and publishes new online resources and educational fact sheets aimed at HIV+ women, caregivers, healthcare providers and researchers. These efforts are helping spur research for new treatments, improve quality of care and increase public awareness about women with HIV/AIDS. The Well Project also provides a supportive, caring community that allows HIV/AIDS patients and the people who care for them to easily and safely connect with others in similar circumstances.

The Well Project's editorial team consists of 18 of the most prominent writers and editors on the subject of HIV disease and women. In addition, a 15-member National Advisory Board consisting of physicians and AIDS healthcare specialists provides direction on editorial content as well as serves as a medical editing checkpoint. The Board reflects the population it serves with more than 60 percent women of color and more than 25 percent HIV+ women. Writers, editors and advisors are geographically dispersed throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

To ensure the information needs of the HIV/AIDS population were being met, The Well Project decided to develop a Web portal (www.thewellproject.org) that would provide women patients, their caregivers and healthcare providers with up-to-date information about available resources and recommended treatments for HIV/AIDS. The varied education levels of the HIV/AIDS patient population, lack of an organized community and inefficient sharing of research and treatment efforts among medical experts were key elements to be considered in the design. The Well Project also recognized the portal would need to serve caregivers who often were overloaded with cases or not trained in infectious diseases.

The objectives for the capabilities of The Well Project's Web portal were multi-dimensional. First, the Web portal needed to present complex, medical information in basic conversational language. Second, the Web site's medical information resources needed to be credible and accurate and include links to the original source. Third, users' experiences should be automatically tailored to their needs and the portal should dynamically serve information to them relative to the searches and inquiries they are performing on the site.

To launch the project, The Well Project hired Armedia, a business and technology consulting company that specializes in content management solutions, to help identify technical requirements for the Web portal. Together, they selected EMC Documentum content management software and BEA WebLogic Portal software as central elements of its new information infrastructure.

The Well Project utilizes the EMC Documentum sophisticated workflow and Web publishing capabilities to accelerate the creation of content and allow non-technical users to easily contribute content to the site. Once content is ready for publication, the BEA WebLogic Portal software manages the formatting of the content for display on the Web site. By streamlining the



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:
The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:
The Well Project

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC

Web publishing process, the amount of up-to-date HIV/AIDS information tailored for women – including those without medical training -- has dramatically increased. In only 2 ½ years, www.thewellproject.org has become widely regarded as a reputable, easy-to-use resource for women HIV/AIDS patients, as well as anyone involved in caring for them or researching new treatments.

In addition, the Web portal provides patients and other interested parties with the opportunities to participate in online discussions groups and points them to the growing number of conferences and other events in their communities. In doing so, it has facilitated the sharing of information and experiences about living with and treating HIV/AIDS among patients, caregivers and clinicians.

Benefits

The Well Project's Web portal empowers women with HIV/AIDS with information regarding potential treatment regimens, as well as connects them to a female-focused HIV/AIDS community in a safe and secure online environment. The Well Project's Web site benefits women HIV/AIDS patients, caregivers and medical professionals by providing:

- Fast and efficient publishing of up-to-date and accurate medical information, including daily news feeds, allowing users to keep up with timely topics and issues. Access to this information, which previously was not available, allows women diagnosed with HIV/AIDS to be proactive advocates for their own health by learning about and choosing the best treatment options in consultation with their doctors and caregivers.
- Complex medical information presented in a format that users without medical training can understand. The information is presented in conversational English and at an average eighth-grade reading level, allowing women from 36 countries to utilize these resources.
- Delivery of information customized to patients' specific circumstances. For example, users can request information on their situation (e.g. pregnancy, other medications) and how certain drugs and conditions might influence their choice of treatment.
- A Web site that was designed with women's preferences for color, layout and navigational techniques, making the portal more user-friendly for its target audience. This is in marked contrast to traditional HIV/AIDS Web sites with content, design and navigation characteristics more appealing to a male audience.
- Stable and secure technology environment, ensuring women diagnosed with HIV/AIDS have 24x7 access to critical information.
- Scaleable and easy-to-manage technology infrastructure, allowing The Well Project to support its rapidly growing population of users. Today, 25,000-35,000 users log onto www.thewellproject.org each month.
- Expanded resources and reference tools, including HIV/AIDS presentations, articles, Webcasts, templates, How-To Guides (e.g. how to become your own health advocate), and access to other HIV Web sites.
- News about upcoming conferences, including those hosted by The Well Project. For example, The Well Project's annual Thought Leadership Conference -- which is part of its Women's



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:
The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:
The Well Project

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC

Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS -- brings together chief medical officers and scientists from pharmaceutical companies, key people from the National Institute of Health, the U.S. Federal Drug Administration, Office of Women's Health, and the Office of AIDS Research, as well as academicians and top researchers. At the conference, these top experts and influencers collaborate on how to accelerate research more efficiently and effectively and provide direction for The Well Project's web portal.

Underscoring the impact of The Well Project on the lives of women living with HIV/AIDS, Veronica Miller, PhD - Director, Forum for Collaborative HIV Research, said, "The Well Project team has been able to document impressive productivity within the short period of the organization's existence. We are very pleased to be a partner in The Well Project Think Tank (aka Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS). The Well Project team has discovered a unique and very productive mechanism to address issues for HIV+ women. It is the only source of comprehensive, substantial information for women, providers, the community, and policy makers on issues of importance to women affected by HIV/AIDS."

The Importance of Technology

The Well Project's Web portal required technology that would provide a global and often non-technical community with easy access to information, and yet was sophisticated enough to support the needs of medical professionals using a dynamic and layered content scheme. The EMC Documentum and BEA WebLogic software solutions allowed The Well Project to address these dual requirements.

With Documentum, The Well Project has created a repository that stores many forms of media including video, complex charts, as well as basic text and ensures new content is published in a timely manner. The Well Project makes full use of the Documentum sophisticated workflow and web publishing capabilities to accelerate the creation of content, allowing non-technical users to easily contribute content to the site. Content creators are connected to the Documentum repository, which tracks and manages all phases of content development, from initial concept, writer assignment, editing, medical review, and finally, to Advisory Board approval. Once content is approved for publication, the system places it in the publisher queue for posting twice each week.

This rigorous process ensures the content posted on www.thewellproject.org is up to date and accurate. The Documentum solution also provides automated information checking and document and version controls to further ensure relevancy and accuracy.

The Well Project depends on BEA WebLogic to assemble and change information on the fly, providing users with a customized experience on the Web site that gives information tailored to their specific needs or circumstances (e.g. other co-infection, medication conflicts).

The Well Project staff and contributors use Documentum eRoom for online collaboration to enable geographically dispersed teams to work together more effectively. By lowering travel costs and streamlining communications, eRoom allows The Well Project's staff and outside writers to more efficiently generate the information and support infrastructure the women's HIV/AIDS community needs.

Two robust Dell servers at The Well Project are solely dedicated to running the Documentum and BEA WebLogic applications. Together, the server and application environment has pro-



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:
The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:
The Well Project

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC

vided stability and high data availability to The Well Project's user community.

Originality

In 2001, 50 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases were found in women. Prior to The Well Project, the majority of online information on HIV/AIDS was targeted toward men. In addition, the gay men's community provided an established infrastructure of Web sites, publications and conferences for communicating this information. What little information was available to women consisted of static library resources with articles by medical experts. This complex medical information was difficult for those who lacked infectious disease training or higher education to understand. In addition, the design, color and layout of Web sites for men were not considered user-friendly or appealing to women.

The Well Project has emerged as a pioneer and leader by addressing women -- a traditionally overlooked segment of the HIV/AIDS patient population -- and providing them with a vast array of tailored resources. No other organization follows more rigorous content creation processes and maintains as high standards for accuracy of complex information for women with HIV/AIDS. The Web portal is comprehensive and easy to use, regardless of the users' education or professional experience.

By using Documentum workflow triggers to keep information current, The Well Project portal differentiates itself from other HIV/AIDS-related websites, which are primarily online archives of past research developments. As each article is posted for the first time, The Well Project portal assigns it an expiration date. As this date approaches, the system prompts reviewers to re-read and update the material if any significant changes have occurred.

The Well Project is unique in the HIV/AIDS community by providing easy access to timely HIV/AIDS information for women in clear, simplified language and via a Web site designed to address their needs and preferences.

According to Richard Averitt, The Well Project's Chief Operating Officer, the flexibility of Documentum has been a key factor in the success of www.thewellproject.org.

Success

The Well Project has achieved its goal of providing a comprehensive, high-quality source of HIV/AIDS information for women, and in the process, has become a leader in this community. The Well Project's portal provides simplified access to complex medical information in a format that is easy to comprehend by women of various education levels. At the same time, this information meets the highest scientific and academic standards, assuring users that the information they are accessing is reliable, accurate and up to date. Allowing users to customize their output, women are able to take full advantage of this information to improve individual cases.

As The Well Project's popularity surges, its Web site traffic has increased by 300 percent in 2005 alone. User demographics indicate that a large percentage of these users are professional care providers which means that the actual patient reach is some multiple of the monthly users. With 25,000 to 35,000 users logging onto the site every month, The Well Project is reaching large and growing numbers of people in the HIV/AIDS community, further extending the tremendous value of its resources and network.



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:
The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:
The Well Project

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC

Initially designed as a domestic resource, The Well Project now responds to requests for information from patients, caregivers and other medical professionals in 36 counties. By presenting information in simple conversational English—as opposed to complex medical language, The Well Project’s portal has been widely embraced by users in the U.S. and around the world. The Well Project is also reaching Spanish-speaking users by offering links to outside Spanish-language resources (<http://www.thewellproject.org/Espanol/>).

The Well Project has created new opportunities for learning, collaboration and sharing of experiences across communities worldwide. For example, caregivers are often asked to speak at local meetings or conferences. The Well Project’s Web site provides speakers with tools, such as standard PowerPoint presentations that can be customized and include links to many HIV/AIDS resources. These open, public exchanges have helped de-stigmatize HIV/AIDS and contribute to greater public awareness. As a result, patients are able to find support and information in a safe environment and HIV/AIDS healthcare professionals and researchers can collaborate more easily to build on each other’s work and experience.

Cathy Olufs, Education Director, The Corrections HIV Education and Law Project (CorrectHELP), said, “The Well Project is an amazingly comprehensive and useful tool for HIV infected women, and the providers who care for them. As the Education Director for a non-profit organization serving inmates with HIV, the Web site provides me with a vast array of information, including slide sets I can use in my HIV 101 and Treatment Education classes. As an HIV positive woman myself, The Well Project helps me to connect with the stories of other women, and link to resources that can help me manage my own medical care and emotional health.”

The initial scope of the project has focused on the Web portal serving as a comprehensive information resource and community building tool. However, future initiatives planned include providing full functionality of the Web portal in Spanish to address the growing community of Spanish-speaking women with HIV/AIDS. Multi-language support also will be extended to French to serve the large population of HIV+, French-speaking women in Africa. The Well Project also plans to provide a clinical trial search database that would help women identify and participate in appropriate clinical trails.

Difficulty

As a non-profit with limited funds, The Well Project needed supplementary financial support to accomplish its Web portal project goals. Securing funding has been a challenge for two primary reasons. One, the needs of the female HIV/AIDS community are often ignored because HIV/AIDS is incorrectly regarded as an illness largely affecting male homosexuals or disenfranchised sex workers and IV drug users. Two, HIV/AIDS is a controversial, sensitive and politically charged topic, making it more challenging to attract supporters who do not have a personal connection to the illness.

The Well Project overcame these challenges and was able to justify the critical role of the Web portal in its mission. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), seven pharmaceutical companies, and a small number of individual philanthropists have contributed funding to The Well Project’s Web portal.

Because of the public stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, The Well Project found that women often preferred to manage this complex disease on their own. To address this, the Web portal



THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

ORGANIZATION:
The Well Project

PROJECT NAME:
The Well Project

LOCATION:
*Nellysford, Virginia,
United States*

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
*Government and
Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:
EMC

was designed to assure privacy of registered users and allow women to anonymously participate in their own healthcare. As a result, they have been able to become more effective and educated advocates for their own health. The Well Project also discovered that as women gain experience with the online resources and forums, many become more open about their illness and comfortable with attending meetings and support groups in person. Openness, information and support are all key factors in providing a path to improved health and quality of life for women living with HIV/AIDS.