

FILNET CASE STUDY

District of Columbia Portal Redesign 2003 (Push to Win)

eGovernment Portal Website Redesign

CLIENT	District of Columbia Office of the Chief Technology Officer for the District of Columbia
PROJECT	District of Columbia Portal Redesign 2003 (Push to Win)
WEBSITE	http://www.dc.gov/
TECHNOLOGY	Content Management System (CMS), Database Interactivity, Design, Information Architecture, Centers Sub-Portals, Custom Online Applications
DURATION	10.2002 – 06.2003

The screenshot shows the District of Columbia website homepage with a red navigation bar at the top containing links for DC HOME, DC GUIDE, RESIDENTS, BUSINESS, VISITORS, DC GOVERNMENT, and Kids. Below the navigation bar is a banner with the text 'WELCOME TO WASHINGTON District of Columbia' and a photo of Mayor Anthony A. Williams. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Welcome to DC.Gov:** Includes a login/register prompt and a search bar with the text 'What Can We Help You Find?' and an example query 'How do I register to vote?'.
- DC Guide:** A sidebar section with links for 'Living and Working in DC', 'Doing Business in DC', 'Visiting DC', and 'Government Services in DC'.
- Popular Online Services:** A list of 10 services including DMV Renewals, Request City Services, Find DC Government Agencies, Pay Parking Tickets, Visit Taxpayer Service Center, Find a DC Government Job, Search Real Property Databases, Locate a Towed Vehicle, Apply for a Higher Education Grant, and Search for Unclaimed Property.
- Featured Sites:** A list of links to various government services like the Emergency Information Center, Social Services Center, and Tax Refund status.
- Mayor's Corner:** A section for Mayor Williams with links to his welcome message, accomplishments, contact info, schedule, photo gallery, press briefings, and newsletter.
- DC Webcasts:** A section for live streaming events, including a national forum for Black Public Administrator THM.
- Citywide Calendar:** A section for viewing city events.

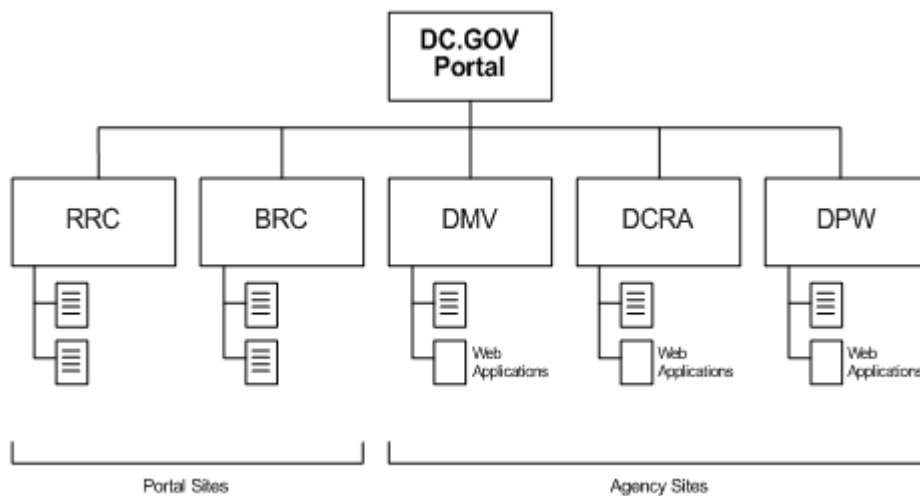
At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with contact information for the Government of the District of Columbia, including the Citywide Call Center (202) 727-1000 and the TTY/TDD Directory. There are also links for Telephone Directory by Topic, Agencies, DC Council, Search, Elected Officials, Feedback, Translations, Accessibility, Privacy & Security, and Terms & Conditions.

Overview

The District of Columbia Office of the Chief Technology Officer developed a program to improve upon the web successes of the first Williams administration by expanding the City's online services and refining them to make them more accessible and beneficial to the District's citizens, businesses and visitors.

Challenge

The Chief Technology Officer asked Filnet to create a more dynamic portal without re-architecting the entire dc.gov website. For Filnet this meant developing an enhanced visual identity and a new look and feel without jeopardizing the integrity of the existing "Move to Blue" sites by requiring a major page by page overhaul involving the participation of all the City's agencies. Therefore, Filnet set about the tasks of redesigning portal navigation, resource centers and dc.gov's more than 100,000 pages to accommodate the ever growing requirements of e-Government such as foreign language translation, credit card transaction, webcasts, and personalization. The District also requested that Filnet highlight the online applications that would provide the City with the most return on investment.



Solution

Filnet added new portal functionality and usability features to the web site and further refined the City's web identity. Filnet began by creating new protocols and standards to ensure that the site was compliant with new federal laws and regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 508, emergency response and preparedness protocols and real-time language translation capabilities brought about after September 11. Filnet also developed pages with the supporting functionality to put the District Government in better contact with its constituents. Some of these pages included posting the Mayor's agenda, daily musings of federal judicial, congressional and executive branches and their effect on District residents.

Filnet also gave prominence to the City's online applications that benefited citizens the most and created the most return on investment. Prior to Push to Win, the city had 47 online applications that were under-utilized. The development team identified the applications with the greatest appeal to web site visitors and made them one-click accessible through the city's homepage.

To depict the District of Columbia as a community of diverse people who live in neighborhoods and build communities, Filnet proposed a visual identity that focused on people and places unique to the District. Filnet deliberately steered the look and feel away from federal buildings or national monuments that are more closely associated with Beltway politics or national celebrations. Filnet also contracted with market researchers to carry out focus groups to gather citizen feedback and analyzed web trends on the existing site to develop a core set of popular functions most often used by the public. In response to this feedback, Filnet ranked citizen services by popularity and made them easy to find from the homepage.

A seminal project involved restructuring the Business Resource Center's excess of 250 pages.

The work done on this part of dc.gov would become the building blocks of the District of Columbia's 21st century identity. This entailed developing a standards document and a consistent look and feel to be replicated on all other parts of this sub-portal. In order to support the content throughout the site, the development team developed and designed custom content applications to manage content on the main portal. Filnet incorporated the site's future expansion plans that involved deploying the new design components and content management applications to even more agency web sites.

Results

In the program launched in May 2003, Filnet successfully redesigned and gave increased prominence to more than 40 online applications based upon the standards, protocols and visual identity developed by Filnet without requiring a complete site overhaul. It also created a unique look and feel for each of the site's sub-portals. Filnet also implemented multiple content management systems, provided the capability for translation into seven different languages, and a mechanism to communicate special alerts such as closures and emergencies to citizens automatically. The company's work accomplished the City's objective of increasing the ease with which citizens businesses and visitors interact with the City online. Filnet accomplished this by designing the site for citizens based upon how they wanted to use it.