

Thomson Reuters Solcara Legal Search Customer success story

The Firm

In Ireland the Chief State Solicitor's Office (CSSO) is a constituent element of the Attorney General's Office (AGO), effectively acting as the AG's solicitor, providing advice and litigation support to Government clients. They share an IT infrastructure and, since 2011 have used the same Thomson Reuters Solcara Legal Search technology, sharing an operational interface.

The Goal

CSSO librarian, Jean Cassidy, explains that its users simply needed a system that could search for case law and legislation across all primary resources as quickly as possible. 'We wanted a system that was just for us and made better use of the technology we already had,' says Philomena Lyons, Knowledge Management Officer at the CSSO.

Staff expressed a desire for a simpler search interface, which led the CSSO to develop a single search interface with the Solcara Legal Search team. CSSO also wanted to improve the visibility of the search tool, making it easier to find on its intranet site.

'The bottom line was that we had a sophisticated search system that our users were not deriving enough benefit from. We felt there was a better way to connect them to the information we already had -- we needed to make the interface simpler and put it in a place where they could find it more easily,' says Jean. 'Our overriding objective was to give people easier access to what was already there.'

'We wanted a system that was just for us and made better use of the technology we already had,'

Philomena Lyons, Knowledge Management Officer, CSSO

The Solution

Essentially, CSSO wanted to create a simple and easy to find point of access to a single search interface for all knowledge and primary online information resources on its own intranet -- which was itself being redesigned -- and that felt seamlessly integrated with its internal system.

Philomena describes the 'light bulb' moment during a presentation at a user-forum demonstrating the application's flexibility, when she saw how simple and user-friendly the system could be. Explaining their requirements, Philomena, says: 'We asked the Solcara Legal Search team to provide our users with their own search user interface that would be embedded in our legal intranet homepage. This left open the possibility that we could later enhance the search experience.'

Once the Solcara Legal Search confirmed that it was possible to put the single search interface into CSSO's intranet, the transformation did not take long to come to fruition.

The solution enables CSSO's legal staff to access a simple search interface, which is on the homepage of its intranet, so they do not have to go to a separate location in order to search for information and knowledge.

It also enables them to search simultaneously across all of the preferred online and internal resources from the single search box, making research more comprehensive, faster and simpler.

'We also developed and deployed a WordPress search connector so that content that was uploaded to our WordPress intranet site was also readily searchable,' adds Philomena.

Jean believes this element is vital to encourage user buy-in. 'Everything is presented as a CSSO solution, sitting in a page on our intranet. It fits seamlessly into our intranet site and looks very well integrated. So it generates a sense of ownership, making people see it is relevant to them, so they will use it.'

Commenting on the process and engagement with the technical team, Philomena says: 'The support offered by the Solcara Legal Search team was second to none. No matter what your query was, they were always there to help and their patience was outstanding.'

'They were very generous with their knowledge and I have learned a lot from them.'

The Result

The simplified, integrated search system was rolled out at CSSO, together with its new intranet in December 2016, so while it is still early days, the informal feedback about the search interface has so far been positive and enthusiastic, says Philomena, and staff like the fact that they can search internal and external sources from a single location.

And the statistics speak for themselves -- since the new system launched, staff usage has almost quadrupled.

The CSSO will be seeking to gather more formal feedback once the new systems have bedded in and users have become more accustomed to them, but so far all the signs are good.

The Future

The current system is not the end of the journey and CSSO hopes to add elements to it, to increase its functionality, in collaboration with the Solcara Legal Search team. In particular, it will look more closely at the needs of individual practice groups and look for ways to make the search results even more targeted.

Linked to that CSSO is in the process of putting in another Thomson Reuters solution -- Bulletin Pro -- a system to gather, collate and distribute current awareness on key topics of interest.

Looking ahead, Philomena says: 'We want to re-engage with the existing AGO know-how search and ensure further material is included that is specific to the needs of the CSSO team. What we are seeking to do is repurpose the systems we had before so staff get more relevant results. It is really about making what we have fit our user group better.'



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