

Enabling Web 2.0 Features For one of the leading 50 online shopping Companies in the USA

Client Overview:

Client is one of the fast growing online shopping portal in the USA. They provide product information as well as product research information. The whole portal provides a totally different user experience to the buyers. The end client's shopping portal stores the information of over 25 million products and 5,000 stores with researches done over 5 billion shopping pages.

Custom Module Developed:

To increase the number of users and enable them to collaborate better, end client took an initiative to include Web 2.0 features to the shopping portal. These features extensively use AJAX to give the most pleasant user experience. The functionalities included for the engagement are:

1. User Registration
2. Management of customized lists for every user
3. Ratings on lists and items (e.g. most referred item etc.)
4. Sharing of profile with other users and community

Engagement Model and Process:

Softsmith Infotech executed the development project using total offshore model. The development team consisting of development lead and programmers carried out the activities from Softsmith office, Chennai, India. Actual servers were located in the USA at end client's data centers.

Softsmith team understood the existing portal functionality. Softsmith team arrived at class design, database design and XML API design for the module. Java/Ajax technology used to develop the module. The product underwent functional testing, performance testing and compatibility testing across multiple browsers.

Focus Areas:

The following list describes the key areas, the team focused to ensure the best quality.

- Optimization of the database design to ensure scalability for millions of user and product records
- Minimizing the requests between server and client
- Efficient handling of Ajax calls
- Testing the transaction using different bandwidth schemes provided by ISPs
- Provide tuning suggestions for database queries and web server settings for the best performance
- Ensure the product works on multiple browsers – IE, FireFox and multiple versions of these 2 browsers

Key Benefits:

- Softsmith's offshore model worked well for quick roll-over of the module and cost effectiveness
- Softsmith provided end to end development to client in this engagement, which eliminated many process gaps early in the cycle

Challenges Faced:

- Coding and applying java script and style sheets to ensure compatibility across browsers is a tough task though it appears to be simple
- Performance tuning every ajax call to respond within 200 milli-second was a challenging task