

COSMOPOLITAN: Interactive Media Portal for Women

Bitrix Site Manager / Bitrix Intranet Portal Case Studies 2010

[Independent Media Sanoma Magazines](#) (IMSM) is one of the world's leading publishers, originally founded by a group of Dutch investors in 1992. Since 2005, IMSM has been a part of Sanoma, a leading European media corporation. The company has firmly established itself as one of the largest players in the print media market segment of Russia and the CIS. The IMSM portfolio includes more than 50 magazines, newspapers and other print media issues. IMSM's most successful and well-known brands in European and Russian print media are *Cosmopolitan*, *Esquire*, *Harvard Business Review*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Men's Health*, *National Geographic Traveler*, and *The Moscow Times*. The number of web projects that run as additional sources of information and interactive extensions for the print media is now over 10 and it keeps growing.



Project Goals

[Cosmo.ru](#) was designed as an interactive web portal that combined websites previously developed for four different magazines: *Cosmopolitan*, *Cosmopolitan Shopping*, *Cosmo Magia*, and *Cosmopolitan Beauty*. The Cosmo.ru portal was originally launched in 2002, but 4 years later it became clear that a website that offers little more than a magazine cover was not enough for the portal visitors. *Cosmopolitan* readers are predominantly young successful women wanting to interact with the portal, its editors, authors and other readers.

IMSM started re-thinking the concept of its e-project to meet all the requirements of a young, beautiful and successful woman. According to the new concept, the portal should turn into a vivid and 100% interactive web resource rich in useful information. The new *Cosmopolitan* online portal concept included a number of requirements for a CMS to meet:

- Content management optimization for both dynamic and static data;
- Website themes that are easy to change and modify on Cosmo websites separately;
- Wider possibilities for interactive online communication with *Cosmopolitan* readers;
- Original online features and research tools for visitors;
- Stable platform that can handle intensive traffic;
- More reliability and security offered by a CMS that has 24/7 technical support.

The portal was thought of as of a modern fashion guide, a counselor, an astute stylist and a close friend for every *Cosmopolitan* reader. "*Interactive*" web resource meant for IMSM staff a lot of online socializing with their readers, as well as appropriate feedback and support on the *Cosmopolitan* portal:

- Web resource that allows interactive communication;
- Communities, forums and blogs with simple navigation and structure;
- Flexible access permissions for registered users and non-registered visitors;
- Feedback channels convenient for *Cosmopolitan* readers;
- Polls, surveys and questionnaires that are easy to update.

The Solution

Technological platform

The technological platform for the cosmo.ru web portal was [Bitrix Site Manager](#), a unique CMS product that allows content managers and web designers instantly to make any changes to the content both in the front end and at the back end of the website. Bitrix Site Manager provides a number of Web2.0 services that add interaction on the website and extend communication tools for project owners and project visitors. As an example of advanced CMS technologies available using the Bitrix Site Manager products, is that not only can you upload photos or videos, but also initiate a discussion of each item separately on the website, allow visitors to rate your pictures or vote for videos published on your web resource. Blogs, Forums and Helpdesk services are also perfect tools for interacting with visitors who crave for interaction.

The new *Cosmopolitan* portal has been developed by IMSM team and [Bitrix Site Manager: Enterprise Edition](#) (AD/LDAP) has been chosen as the project's platform. IMSM had been using the Bitrix products for their online projects for quite a long time. Back in 2002 IMSM decided to use this product for online version of *Cosmo* not only because the pricing was affordable, but also because it suited all needs of the publishing house at that time. For the renovation of the site, the IMSM team wanted to stick to their choice and develop a more advanced media resource using the reliable Bitrix platform.

"The Bitrix CMS included a number of modules that help solve a great number of problems. One of them is the Site Manager module that offers a number of tools for coping with massive dataflow on our websites. For example, using this module we could create interlinked clusters of articles with similar topics, making them much easier to be found. That is very helpful when you want to get more insights on a subject that you are interested in. Also, using this module, we grouped all articles according to their authors and linked them to different categories. The SEO tools provided by Bitrix solutions made it quite simple to define and insert the right key words, which had a positive effect on the highly targeted advertising used massively on the website, thus increasing the traffic of the resource very fast" - said Helen Shaggina, IMSM Project Manager

"The first two websites that became fully interactive were cosmoshopping.ru and cosmo-magia.ru, both of which were launched in the beginning of 2007. As they gained more and more attention from our readers, there was no doubt that we wanted to use the same platform offered by Bitrix and stick to the concept that we worked out a year earlier" - she added.

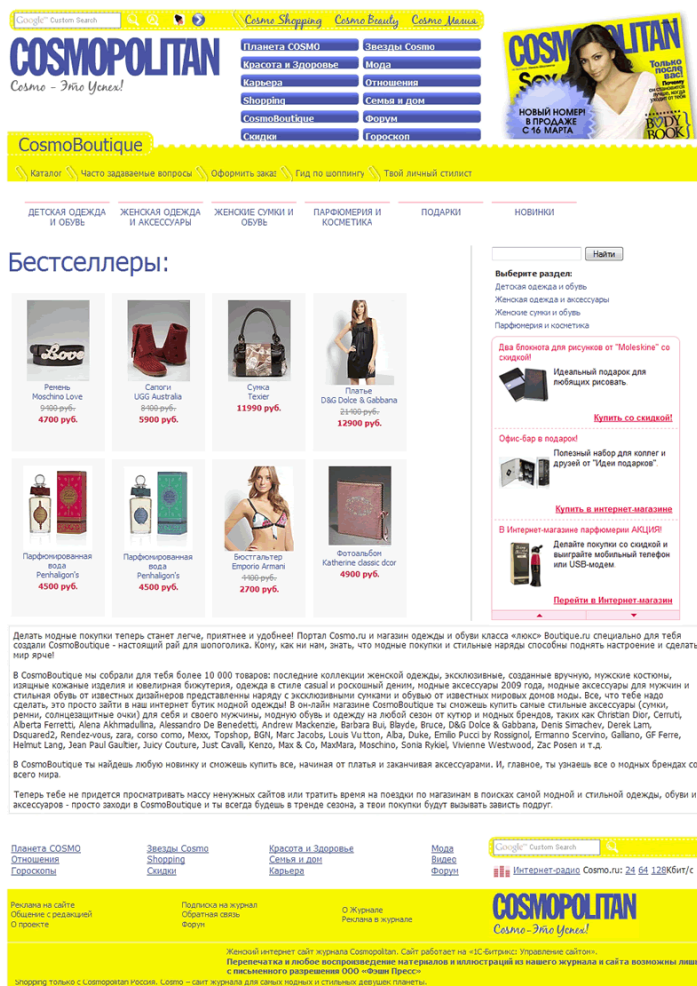


Wide possibilities for interactive communication

Interactive communication with the magazine's loyal readers and other Internet comers is now easy and fun because Bitrix Site Manager allows creation of web communities, forums and blogs that have flexible access permissions and moderation settings. Polls, rating systems and questionnaires help receive reliable feedback channels from the visitors. A special questionnaire schedule and a poll result form have been introduced for a more convenient way of displaying the results.

Fresh solutions for interacting with website visitors

One of the most successful and innovative services that was created using the Bitrix platform was the "Fitting Room" section at cosmoshopping.ru. Any visitor could "try on" a blouse or boots, or any other piece of cloths, add them to the shopping cart, and even print out a map with locations where these products could be purchased.



Content management optimization

Using the Site Manager module the portal content editors can easily access permissions for any page on the website, and the built-in visual HTML-editor offers a very intuitive and efficient way of editing the content of each page, including the text, graphics, or multimedia elements.

"The Bitrix visual editor enables content editors to check spelling, insert or change web links instantly and directly through a web browser, and change the settings of each and every visual component used on a page. Time-consuming and boring routine tasks are in the past! It's always important for our clients like IMSM who have to add and modify the content of their web projects constantly. With Bitrix Site Manager editing content is always easier, more efficient and much fun!" - said Denis Zenkin, Bitrix, Inc. Marketing Director.

High performance and dependable technical support

"There were only around 6 or 7 unique visitors per month in early 2007. Now we estimate more than two million unique users each month. And in one or two years we want to double this number! For that, we need a very reliable and stable platform to handle this huge traffic. Although the product is easy to learn and use, sometimes

we do need extra help and support from the developers. Bitrix, Inc. offers its customers not only web solutions but also technical support and professional help 24/7 that come with Bitrix products. Here at Cosmo.ru, we appreciate the responsiveness of the Bitrix team" - said Helen Shaggina, IMSM Project Manager

Dynamic structure of the website

The cosmo.ru website themes change almost every week depending largely on topics discussed in each new print issue. One can compare it to Lego blocks: just the same way can you build an independent website theme for each block of the portal (*Cosmopolitan*, *Cosmopolitan Shopping*, *Cosmo-Magia*, and *Cosmopolitan Beauty*). Each portal block is designed as a dynamic indicator which navigates the portal visitors using them to certain web services or information in an intuitive manner.

Strategic thinking

"The Bitrix solutions used for developing *cosmo.ru* help diversify and distribute mixed media content that we cannot offer inside our print media. Along with articles, reviews and any other text or graphic materials we can supply our Internet visitors with video and audio content, including online radio streaming. That's why we think it is crucial for our company to use this media to attract our magazine readers through interaction with the magazines creators and authors online. It is the social involvement and closer interaction between us and our readers that gives benefits to both sides" - said Helen Shaggina, IMSM Project Manager

"The *cosmo.ru* portal was planned to become an extended version of our print magazines available online. I'd say we have achieved this goal: the project turned out to be very popular and very successful!" - said Helen Shaggina, IMSM Project Manager - "We learned to utilize Bitrix Site Manager in the right way and now we can solve almost all technical problems on our own, and it's all being done prompt without wasting any time that can be spent on more creative tasks for the Web. *Cosmo.ru* has become the largest information resource for women in Russia and the CIS, offering them interesting and adaptable content, full interaction, and the comfort of availability. Of course, we'd never have done this without a reliable and professional CMS. Fortunately, Bitrix solutions were there to deliver exactly what we needed!" - concluded Helen.

