

A Powerful Digital Experience Provides Essential Services and Information for Citizens, Businesses and State Employees

Scalable: supports 3000% traffic increase

Streamlined citizen journeys

Empowered agencies

Company: State of Ohio
Industry: Government
Products: Digital Experience
Partner: Base22

Challenge

To make it even easier for citizens to access public services — especially in times of crisis — and for companies to do business with government agencies and departments, the State of Ohio knew it had to overhaul and enhance its digital channels.

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Solution

Using a stack of HCL solutions, the state created the Ohio Digital Experience (ODX) — creating better user experiences for the state’s own workforce as well as citizens and businesses.

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Business Director
Base22

Results

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Business Challenge

Whether it’s helping a citizen get assistance with their health insurance or showing a company where to bid for a government contract, the State of Ohio aims to make every interaction as straightforward as possible. To offer a higher level of self-service, the organization is pulling together its varied and disparate systems and building a central online portal with HCL Digital Experience.

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Using a stack of HCL solutions, the state created the Ohio Digital Experience (ODX) — creating better user experiences for the state’s own workforce as well as citizens and businesses. The objectives of ODX are to:

- **Provide a Scalable** platform, proven to support a 3000% increase in site messaging traffic
- **Streamline** citizen journeys and enable faster access to crucial information and public services
- **Empower** agencies to publish real-time updates, boosting transparency and effectiveness

Targeting Transformation

Every year, online services become more tightly woven into daily life. As consumers and businesses alike increasingly choose digital channels to communicate, collaborate, and purchase, the pressure is on for government organizations like the State of Ohio to meet growing demand for online services.

The State of Ohio learned that citizens have higher expectations of digital services from governments than they do from retailers. Despite this, public-sector IT departments are typically less prepared to deliver online services than their counterparts in the business world.

Like many US state governments, Ohio enables citizens to access critical public services online. In the past, each state government department was responsible for delivering its own digital services. However, citizens often need to access services that span multiple departments to accomplish their goals. As a result, citizens had to register multiple user accounts, which added friction to their journeys. For example, unemployed constituents would need to register in four separate sites to access support with healthcare, food, childcare, and employment.

To solve the challenge, the State of Ohio decided to create a central identity and access management platform and deliver single-sign-on (SSO) capabilities. Building on the foundation of a robust SSO platform, the organization aimed to create a portal that empowered citizens and businesses to access all the services they needed through a single user account.

They also knew that it’s in the public’s interest to make every interaction with the government as easy as possible. For citizens, digital self-service does more than save people the inconvenience of driving to an office and waiting in line. It also improves operational cost-efficiency, which helps deliver greater value for the taxpayer dollar. Similarly, making it straightforward for companies to access critical State services and information means they could attract more businesses to Ohio and strengthen employment across the state.

They chose HCL business partner Base22 to help make the transformation a reality. With over 10 years of experience in adapting technologies and solutions to meet an organization’s needs, Base22 brought a unique blend of technology, design, and strategy expertise to successfully drive this project, where strengthening the relationships between the government agencies and citizens was key.

Building a New Digital Experience

To achieve its goals, the State of Ohio, with help from Base22, created a statewide employee portal, myOhio and a new multidisciplinary, citizen-facing portal called Ohio.gov based on the Ohio Digital Experience (ODX) with SSO capabilities. At the same time, the State deployed its identity management platform to all 88 counties and every local government entity in Ohio.

With more than 100 different entities providing services across the state, the ODX team was keen to encourage government programs, agencies and departments to embrace the new portal. To reduce internal barriers to adoption, the state built a set of accelerators on the HCL Digital Experience platform.

Kevin Armstrong, Lead Architect for the State of Ohio at the time, says “The State of Ohio wanted to keep the technical work required to migrate a legacy intranet site to their platform to a minimum,” and adds “By creating portal templates on top of their technical tools, they can now offer an integrated package of technology and change-management solutions that reduces the time spent on technical work to as little as three percent of the total migration project. The results have been extremely positive. They recently onboarded one of the state’s largest agencies to My Ohio in under two months — and most of that work was knowledge-transfer around data governance and ownership.”

By experiencing the speed with which the platform was deployed and the associated time and cost savings, combined with word-of-mouth endorsement, it was an easy progression for state entities to adopt and move to the ODX. The State of Ohio is now achieving its goal of driving internal engagement.

Armstrong adds: “At the start of their deployment, they decided they didn’t want to mandate their users to move to ODX, which wasn’t the norm for projects of this scale. They were confident that inspiring people to come to us because they’d heard about the benefits of our platform would be a more powerful way to drive adoption than mandating everyone to use the portal from day one — and their approach is definitely paying off. Even before the team finished testing, departments were lining up to get on the ODX platform.”

Results

By offering its internal stakeholders the tools they need to rapidly onboard to ODX, the ODX team is now delivering seamless digital services to citizens and businesses across the state.

With current global pandemic conditions in effect, the State of Ohio team has been analyzing the type and volume of incoming requests to their ODX site instances so that they can adjust services as needed and be as responsive as possible to the needs of their citizens. As part of their analysis the team has seen the incoming rate of business-critical request traffic increase from 200k per hour, in the pre-pandemic period, to 6 million requests per hour, which is approximately a 3000% increase — without any interruption. This demonstrates the remarkable power of HCL Digital Experience’s ability to scale, its reliability, as well as its ability to provide the operations team with the information they need to best serve the state.

“Whether an entity wants to replace their legacy intranet or build one from scratch, they now have everything they need to move quickly,” continues Armstrong. “Using ODX avoids costly infrastructure investments, and their accelerators eliminate the need for months of technical work. As a result, they’ve already achieved cost avoidance in the region of US\$18 million — enabling them to enhance their digital services while delivering value to the taxpayer.”

As more agencies move to ODX, the team is hearing success stories from across the organization. The Department of Agriculture was one of the first entities to move to ODX. In the past, the Department of Agriculture relied heavily on its IT team to make updates to its public-facing website, which made it extremely difficult to respond in a timely manner to incidents affecting the public. Before the Department of Agriculture began using ODX, most content updates required a subject-matter expert to raise a ticket with the IT department. Since deploying HCL Digital Experience, no one in the department has needed to raise a single support ticket for website updates. The Department of Agriculture has empowered its communications team to take full ownership of content. In fact, during the last Ohio State Fair, members of the Department were publishing updates to the website from their mobiles in real time — faster than members of the Associated Press at the same event!

By enhancing its approach to content management with the HCL solution, one division of the Department of Agriculture has reported an 80% reduction in calls for help finding content on its site. Similarly, by using HCL Digital Experience to deliver self-service capabilities, the Department of Health has cut helpdesk calls for issues such as password resets by 40% — predicted to deliver an annual cost-saving of US\$75,000. This success is an example of how other divisions are creating self-service opportunities and gaining operational cost-efficiencies along the way.

With a digital experience powered by HCL, the State of Ohio is well placed to realize the goals of its transformation.

Because the state is now able to bring together content in a centralized way where pertinent information can be delivered across different agency websites and tailored to each user’s mission rather than by department, it’s now easier than ever to connect people with the information they need — helping to meet high expectations for digital services.

Armstrong concludes: “As more government programs, agencies and departments embrace the ODX program, the State of Ohio is seeing that it’s easier than ever for people across the state to access the services they need.— and they look forward to continuing our collaboration with HCL and Base22.”

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About the company

Headquartered in Columbus, the State of Ohio is responsible for providing public services including education, health and transportation to its citizens.

About the Business Partner:

Base22 is a powerful digital firm that helps global brands and companies build and cement their platforms and solutions.

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