

ish Case Study

ish hires ObjectStyle to modernise its student management platform, grows business by 300% in the course of 5 years

Company:	
Company name:	ish
Industry:	Education
Year founded:	2002
Location:	Australia
Website:	http://ish.com.au

ish is the company behind onCourse™, a widely-used software platform that allows colleges and short course providers to manage enrolments, curricula, student grades, and other aspects of the learning/teaching process.

The platform serves dozens of educational entities in Australia (including such heavyweights as The University of Sydney, Sydney Community College, NIDA, Coffee School, Power Training Services WA...), and is one of the most popular solutions in the market.

Challenge

In the year 2011, the onCourse platform was 5 years old and needed major refactoring to modernise the code, improve performance and set a new direction for future development.

ish wanted to revamp the content management system and the student/tutor portal components as well as make it easy to add new features. ish had originally chosen WebObjects as a web platform and that tool had been largely abandoned, so a change of technology was needed.

ish was also picking up big new customers, including universities, that required the production servers to be able to scale with increased volume.

Solution

1. Apache Tapestry-based custom CMS.

Colleges received an improved, more feature-rich and flexible content management system (CMS) which they could use for publishing catalogues, individual courses, promotions, and other CMS elements.

The revamped CMS provided additional space for customizing the look-and-feel as well as the layout of the materials that colleges put up on their websites.

2. New signup / enrollment forms.

A new enrollment engine was released that also contained integrations with several third-party payment gateways. Hence, course providers could start accepting credit cards (MasterCard, AmEx, VISA) and charge for the courses online.

3. The Portal.

An essential part of the upgrade was the introduction of a new online portal for students and tutors. Upon logging into the portal, teachers could mark student-attendance and give grades to students, while pupils could see their courses, time-tables, grades, and other information.

4. **A new billing application for ish managers.**

Another important addition was a new billing system which ish managers could use to keep track of and bill colleges that incorporate the onCourse system into their websites, and other properties.

5. **A new billing application for ish managers.**

ish wanted to improve the search functionality of the onCourse platform.

ObjectStyle built a new Solr-based search engine, which was easy to scale and very flexible to cope with new requirements. The Objectstyle team added location based distance searching, faceted search, and complex search combinations to support a wide variety of customer needs. At all times, search responses were kept under 100ms.

Results

With the newly rebuilt platform at hand, ish could not only better serve existing clients, but also to attract new course providers with the increased arsenal of features.

During the first year since the new platform's launch, ish saw a 64% increase of its client base. In the following five years, the number of corporate entities using onCourse grew by 300% (compared to their number before the redesign).

*«Thanks to ObjectStyle, we successfully completed the rebuild of our platform and released many new features that keep us ahead of the competition. We've had an excellent relationship with ObjectStyle that goes beyond technical implementation: the team there has understood *why* and *what* we are building to become part of crafting solutions rather than just blindly implementing a brief.»*

Aristedes Maniatis, ish CEO

Technology stack

Java: Apache Cayenne, Apache Tapestry, Apache CXF, Google Guice, ActiveMQ, EhCache

JavaScript: JQuery, Google API, Backbone, Bootstrap

Time Span and Resources

Duration: 12 months

Effort: 42 man-months / 6300 man-hours