

Case Study

Reliable International Support Makes the Difference for John Cabot University

Key Takeaways:

- Web content management plays a key role in influencing prospective students
- OmniUpdate provides high quality customer support domestically and abroad
- The OmniUpdate Community Network and annual user training conference help keep OmniUpdate customers connected with their peers worldwide

John Cabot University (JCU), founded in 1972, is a private, four-year American university offering undergraduate degrees and study abroad opportunities in Rome, Italy. JCU draws in approximately 1,100 English-speaking students annually from more than 60 different countries. JCU's small, interactive classes are taught by an international group of professors who are dedicated teachers, scholars, and mentors. Located in Rome's vibrant Trastevere neighborhood, John Cabot University combines the best qualities of an American liberal arts education with the rich history and cultural heritage of Rome.



Before OU Campus—A Poor Reflection

It's a well-known fact that an institution's website influences prospective students' views of the institution and, ultimately, whether they decide to apply or attend. For JCU, this notion was certainly troublesome. Although JCU takes great pride in its academics and international student body, that pride was not easily reflected through the website due to the limitations of the web content management system (CMS) that was in place at the time. The CMS did not provide the necessary control JCU needed over its site. In addition, the CMS vendor was not focused on higher education, so it didn't completely understand JCU's web needs.

For website fixes that seemed fairly straightforward (and necessary for any college or university), Berenice Coccilillo, Coordinator of Web Communications at JCU, would have to contact the vendor. This was a very frustrating process that took a lot of time and energy, so JCU started looking for a new CMS.

Professional Help to the Rescue

Because of its location, it was sometimes a challenge for JCU to keep in touch with best practices in the U.S. higher education web community. But in 2010, JCU met OmniUpdate's Vice President of Sales at a conference in the States, which set a good precedent for their relationship. JCU quickly realized that the people at OmniUpdate really understand what a university is about and know what kind of features a university's website needs. The decision was made; JCU was switching to OmniUpdate's OU Campus web CMS.

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Additional Support

The web CMS switch definitely paid off. JCU is now able to find out what's happening in and shaping the higher education community thanks to the OmniUpdate team, who provides them with several ways to connect. There is a constant influx of valuable information from sources including the OmniUpdate Community Network, OU Campus support site, Training Tuesday webinars, and OmniUpdate's annual user training conference. At the 2013 conference, Cocciolillo actually connected with OmniUpdate business partner Higher Education Marketing, which is now providing JCU with professional services including web analytics and Search Engine Optimization.

In addition, OmniUpdate's staff is always available, even with the staggering nine hour time difference between their California headquarters and the university's in Rome. During the implementation process, the OmniUpdate team even scheduled calls that went on through the night—a true testament to their remarkable support.

Already Ahead of the Curve

John Cabot University never has to worry about the website sending the wrong message to prospective students ever again. All the excellent tools that the JCU team is able to use in OU Campus allow them to manage the website the way they want and need. They have even implemented a mobile website thanks to OmniUpdate's expert staff. Their CMS searching days are over.

According to Cocciolillo, "Managing the website is so much simpler and more efficient now. The workflow control and approval process in OU Campus has encouraged people in the JCU community to take ownership of their pages, and this helps us keep content fresh and accurate. Now that we have an excellent CMS in place, we are beginning to think about a future redesign."

