

Squiz

Ten years ago three forward thinking Australians founded a company named Squiz to develop an open source content management system for websites. “An open what?” you might ask!

Open source software is freely distributed with its source code. Anyone can download the software for free and develop it further. The Open Source Initiative (www.opensource.org) sets standards and defines how open software should be managed and distributed.

Content Management Systems (CMS) help websites publish, distribute and manage large and often dynamic content inventories, such as text, images and data files. The more advanced can also act as glue between the website and back-office or third party systems, such as reservations, document management and CRM. **MySource Matrix** is the open source CMS that Squiz developed.

Squiz believes open source is good for business and really benefits from widespread distribution and customer feedback. The free licence ensures volume usage and encourages invaluable input and ideas from the user community. Customers know more about their business than suppliers and soon identify product improvements and new functionality. This philosophy clearly works, as Squiz operates a very successful business model with over 1,200 revenue generating customers worldwide, is debt free and employs over 140 people in offices throughout Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Squiz makes its money by helping enterprises to implement and develop MySource Matrix and create content and functionally rich websites.

So what has this to do with the travel industry?

Squiz UK was setup in 2003 and soon gained Future Publishing as a customer. The following year Mark Warner and U.S. Airtours were using MySource. Squiz recognised that travel was not unlike publishing and needed to manage and distribute dynamic content, including price and availability as well as product descriptions and images. The content was often stored in disparate systems which had to be collated and represented to respond to the visitor’s specific requirements.

More recent travel customers include Transun, David Urquhart Travel and Premier Holidays. Most travel customers operate reservation systems from different suppliers and MySource easily integrates with these, combining price and availability with traditional brochure content. MySource is more than a CMS. It provides the hub that collates data, handles workflow and underpins the website.

Squiz UK employs 30 people in London and has doubled annual revenue, year on year. The original business philosophy was obviously sound and MySource is still available on a free licence. Today website operators are moving away from legacy CMS solutions which haven’t benefitted from the MySource community that is continually developing new functionality and improvements. Increasingly they are turning to Squiz.

Interestingly Squiz appears in an Australian phrase “take a squiz” meaning “take a look at”. So if you need to upgrade your travel website to benefit from a well proven and future proofed CMS, Squiz might be the one to look at?

