

TVNZ Ondemand

TVNZ builds flagship TVNZ Ondemand site with Gen-i's software testing, analysis and project management services.

TVNZ is New Zealand's largest free-to-air broadcaster and the nation's public service broadcaster, operating the TVONE and TV2 television channels, as well as providing an online news service via www.tvnz.co.nz.

TVNZ have recently launched TVNZ Ondemand to provide ondemand television to New Zealanders on their PCs via www.tvnzondemand.co.nz.

In an increasingly busy world it is easy to miss your favourite TV programme, so TVNZ is doing something about it. In March the broadcaster launched TVNZ Ondemand, a new online service that offers viewers a smorgasbord of visual content, from catch ups of Shortland Street, to favourites from the archives, to sneak previews of new shows.

Building confidence before going live

TVNZ re-launched its flagship tvnz.co.nz news service in 2005. To build on this, TVNZ decided to launch TVNZ Ondemand to provide viewers the chance to watch some of their favourite television shows on their PCs. Chief Executive Rick Ellis says the launch of TVNZ Ondemand is a further demonstration of TVNZ's determination to provide all New Zealanders with the benefits of the digital age.

"With New Zealand's broadband penetration and capability now growing, this is the time for TVNZ to demonstrate leadership in the video content online space."



The site is built to host periods of intense activity, often following the screening of major television events, and successfully illustrates TVNZ's commitment to innovation and the use of new technologies.

This is a first within New Zealand and to ensure that TVNZ was first to market with this offering, the initial Ondemand solution needed to be implemented within a tight timeframe.

Whilst TVNZ had a clear view of what the target offering would be, at the project inception, there were no detailed requirements to base a design on. TVNZ had a number of skilled architects, developers, infrastructure engineers and content producers to base the project team on. However, at that time, the company did not have the resources required for the project management, business analysis and testing needed.

TVNZ recognised that the Ondemand web site needed to be a well defined, well planned and thoroughly tested solution. The company decided to engage an independent team to supplement their internal resources. After reviewing several options, TVNZ decided to ask Gen-i to assist by providing Project Management, a Business Analyst and Testing resources.

With the help of Gen-i, TVNZ was able to implement the project five months after project launch, on schedule and under budget. The project was large and complex, using a wide range of technologies.

TVNZ Interactive Production Manager John Ferguson says that Gen-i project management, "has been pivotal to this project's success," and that

"The Gen-i project manager has handled the project management of this large and complex project extremely well."

"The project has had a tight deadline, a complex cast of internal and external stakeholders and a changing political landscape. All of these variables have been handled professionally and successfully."

John Ferguson added that, "without staff like this, and the strong partnership that we have with Gen-i, we would not be able to create the ground breaking platform that TVNZ Ondemand is."

Three other key factors to the successful implementation were that:

- The Gen-i testing and business analysis resources fitted in with the existing TVNZ resources, and drove project processes that were as simple as possible. The result was one project team that worked extremely well together, and were focused on delivering a high quality product in as short a timeframe as possible.
- A good team was brought together for testing, by supplementing experienced Gen-i testers with motivated TVNZ resources. The Test Manager and Test Analyst integrated well into the TVNZ team. They were involved in the project early so that the testing could be scoped and planned properly.

This meant that the testers were able to help ensure the high quality of the delivery. Bringing in experienced Test resources was critical for this complex, high profile project.

- With the significant volumes of users expected once the website went live, it was critical that TVNZ had prepared well. A key factor to TVNZ's success in handling these volumes was that a Gen-i business analyst (working closely with TVNZ team members) addressed both Support and Training at an early stage. This gave the team sufficient time to understand what was required and get it underway. This resulted in strong Support processes and solid Training for the key support resources.

Following the successful completion of the testing and training, the site went live in March 2007. TVNZ Ondemand achieved impressive early site traffic for the period 20–27 March 2007: TVNZ Ondemand served more than 330,000 page impressions to over 28,000 unique visitors.

Reaping the benefits

TVNZ was delighted with the performance of the Gen-i team. John Ferguson says, "The Gen-i team members fitted well into our team. The project team worked very hard, and worked very well together. They were very focussed on delivering the best quality for the viewer, but pragmatically within the tight schedule. The quality of the delivery was great". Through its partnership with the Gen-i team, TVNZ ensured that Ondemand website was delivered successfully.

The move into viewer-selected television on the PC is a first for New Zealand. TVNZ Chief Executive Rick Ellis describes Ondemand as tangible evidence of TVNZ's determination to provide all New Zealanders with the benefits of the digital age, and to make top quality content available on every screen. "This is how we are going to demonstrate both commercial and public value," says Ellis.

Part of its digital strategy involves TVNZ promoting and positioning its website, including the ondemand service, as their third channel. As John Ferguson says,

"This is an exciting new initiative that will transform TVNZ and change the way New Zealanders consume our content in the future".