

Connecting Kids Online to a Brighter Future

For more than a century, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America has provided at-risk kids a safe, nurturing place to belong. Its national network of clubs offers a wide variety of programs, including academic support, and programs in athletics, recreation, the arts, health, career, and character and leadership. Each club offers a physical space, hands-on activities, and direct interaction with adults and other youth.

In response to the growing importance of technology in the lives of children, The Boys and Girls Clubs developed the My.Future digital initiative. It's a safe, fun online showcase where kids can interact, learn valuable skills, and build a positive self-image. Kids earn project badges as well as recognition from others online. My.Future cultivates the digital skills kids need to succeed in school, and confidence for technology career choices of tomorrow.

GOAL

Create an online experience that “takes the club beyond its walls” and builds digital mastery.

CHALLENGES

After initially launching My.Future on the Sitecore platform with another partner, Boys and Girls Clubs of America tapped Arke to resolve technical challenges and ensure its content was



INDUSTRY

Non-profit

SERVICES

Arke website strategy, Sitecore architecture and development, quality assurance testing

STRATEGY

Provide an online experience that keeps kids involved and on the right path, even when they're away from a club.

TECHNOLOGY

Sitecore, CRM

Boys & Girls Clubs of America is an Atlanta-based nonprofit that operates more than 1100 independently and locally governed organizations. These serve young people in about 4,400 club locations in all fifty states as well as in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and on US military bases. BGCA serve children from 6 to 18 from all communities and income groups. They provide young people with a safe place to go after school and during the summer.

connecting with club members. Arke was selected because of its elite designation as a Sitecore Platinum Partner. The firm's experience includes projects for more than three hundred Fortune 500 clients. In 2017, Forrester recognized Arke as one of "the most important" digital experience service providers in the U.S.

Before Arke got involved, My.Future was plagued by site crashes, especially during peak hours. As a result, user drop off was high, and it was difficult to assess fairly the success of the program. Arke was tasked with increasing stability in all platforms: desktop, tablet, and mobile. Another goal was confirming the site's content was appropriate and engaging.

SOLUTION

Following a defined onboarding process, Arke first identified what was working, and where infrastructure and content needed adjustments. The team examined every aspect of My.Future, including:

- **Site architecture:** My.Future utilizes Sitecore and six other major subsystems, including a CRM system, APIs, front-end applications, and a multi-platform mobile app. Arke linked these technologies and checked that they all worked together.
- **Technology:** There were multiple elements to consider: databases, system integration, background jobs, cloud hosting infrastructure, DevOps, security, test sites, and documentation. Both performance and integration were affecting My.Future operations.
- **Process:** Arke evaluated elements such as end user support, marketing tie-ins, content publishing, regression testing, and system administration.
- **Content:** The Arke team reviewed information architecture, design, media libraries, and course content to make sure it was effective and easy for kids to digest. We also evaluated business processes, and site partnerships that are important to sourcing and managing content.
- **Tracking:** Arke took over an existing issue tracking system for My.Future, including an Agile backlog of user stories, tasks, and bugs.



The new generation of kids must succeed in a digital world. The Boys and Girls Clubs of America is meeting them where they live – online – so we can remain relevant and accomplish our goal of giving kids a safe place to belong.

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It was important that My.Future be adaptable so new functionality could be added as the program matured. New features were already on the drawing board. Accordingly, Arke prioritized clean source code, and a regression test site.

After Arke's work, My.Future was positioned for a robust and successful expansion, including a national rollout. Today the system is stable, scalable, and adaptable. Infrastructure is in place so new requirements and features can be easily added, and emerging needs can be addressed quickly.

SAFE ONLINE EXPERIENCES AND A COMMUNITY FOR KIDS

Club members joining the My.Future website set up their own user name, password, avatar and member profile. Members and clubs are connected, and members can "follow" both other members and other clubs. In addition to managing the social features of My.Future, the Sitecore content engine serves dynamic lessons and activities in areas such as computer science, digital media, visual arts, and leadership.

Members complete activities and projects to earn recognition badges which display on their profile pages. Completed projects become shareable content, managed by Sitecore, providing kids a wider audience for positive feedback and encouragement.

Behind the scenes, adult staff members approve signups, review and approve uploaded projects, award recognition badges, and select high caliber projects to showcase. Dashboards track the success of the program for both regional and national BGCA staff. These features are enabled by additional technologies that integrate with Sitecore, including a CRM and mobile app.



RESULTS AND FUTURE GROWTH

Within days of the relaunch, My.Future saw greatly increased site traffic and longer session length per member. The site is now prepared for greater growth as it reaches even more members of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

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