Digicon, building technology right, and first.

Leading IT solutions company is awarded more work by building superior solutions in unbeatable time using Adobe ColdFusion.

"Our ability to build applications in ColdFusion and quickly deliver them to customers gives us a huge advantage over competitors who use other development environments."

Mark DeLaney, senior application developer, Digicon

SOLUTION
Adobe ColdFusion

RESULTS

RAPID DEVELOPMENT
Rolled out prototypes in a few days, leading to completion of complex enterprise solutions in under 60 days

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION
Specialized in building modular components that more securely mesh with internal and external servers and systems

PAPER FREE
Transformed data-intensive paper processes into streamlined, interactive web applications

TIGHT SECURITY
Met stringent public-private standards with ease using prebuilt ColdFusion components

Digicon

Established in 1985

Employees: 250

Herndon, Virginia

www.digicon.com

CHALLENGES

· Win more contracts to create innovative web and multi-device applications

· Leverage existing developer skills at all levels

· Expand new business opportunities by repurposing existing modules as Software as a Service (SaaS) offerings

Synthesizing people and data

Digicon Corporation provides IT services to government agencies and private enterprises that solve business challenges with integration and innovation in mind. For more than 28 years, Digicon has deployed targeted and cost-effective systems that span the enterprise and the globe. The firm's core services—systems management, infrastructure management, and application solutions—have evolved to include cloud, mobility, and big data offerings. With more than 300 employee-owners nationwide, Digicon delivers cost-effective, web-based, multi-device solutions that synthesize people, data, and business requirements.

Primarily a contractor for U.S. government agencies that include the National Institute of Health, the Defense Logistics Agency, and the Federal Aviation Administration—as well as local government agencies and organizations, Digicon's team of Adobe ColdFusion specialists brings a unique advantage to the firm.

"Our ability to build applications in ColdFusion and quickly deliver them to customers gives us a huge advantage over competitors who use other development environments," says Mark DeLaney, senior application developer at Digicon. A particularly successful approach at Digicon is to use ColdFusion to build modules for internal implementation, then rapidly provision and host the results commercially.
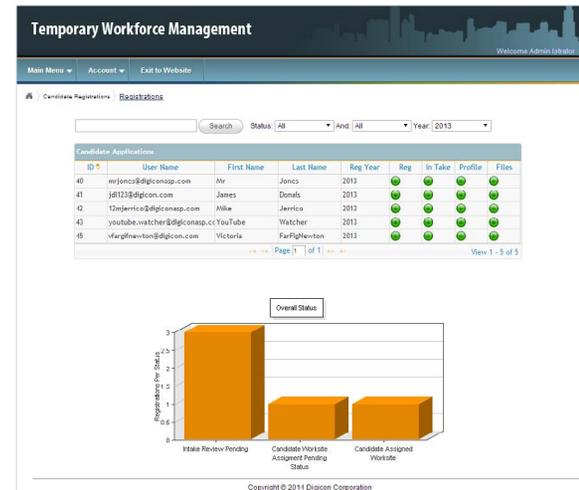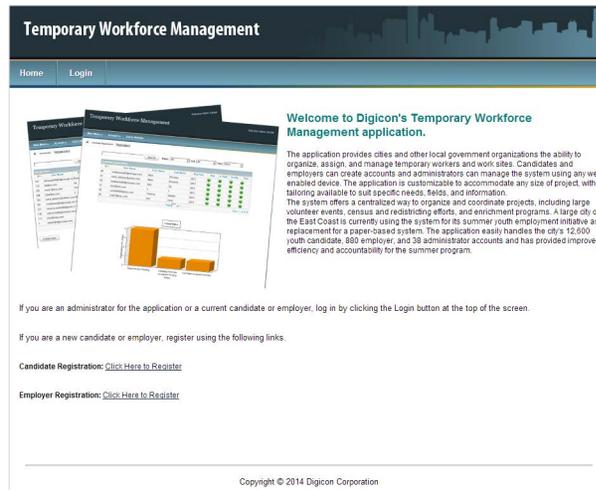
Having used ColdFusion for nearly two decades, Digicon has built a wide variety of systems that streamline core business processes and turn paper-based workflows into easy-to-use web applications. Some internal projects include a trouble-ticket management system that has been rewrapped for external use, an enterprise-level requisitioning and purchasing system, and a government-centric lead pipeline tool that enables organizations to capture and track requests for proposals (RFPs) and help turn them into contracts. Another useful module is a human resources tool that manages data associated with employees' technical certifications and validates resumes so Digicon can best match personnel with proposals and projects.

Connecting youth and employers

Digicon's recent flagship project built on the ColdFusion platform is a summer jobs program for youth living in a major metropolitan city on the East Coast. Replacing a paper-based process involving 50 forms, the new web application enables employers to post available jobs while enabling teen job seekers to land them. The system manages core personnel data, and tracks uploaded resumes and job descriptions— making it fast and easy to connect youth with employers.

"We know we can rapidly and confidently build more secure applications using prebuilt ColdFusion components."

Mark DeLaney, senior application developer, Digicon

Implementation has exceeded expectations, garnering more than 11,000 youth registrations the first active summer—more than double the anticipated turnout. The second summer netted a 20% increase in youth signups, and more than 500 employers posted jobs both summers. To date, nearly 5,200 jobs have been filled, which has had a significant impact on meeting community needs. The web-based system can be used on smartphones, tablets, and even video game consoles, which encourages greater participation from youth, as well as employers.

"Digicon is proud to leverage its expertise in Adobe ColdFusion to serve youth by providing better access to this vital and enriching summer jobs program," says John J. Wu, CEO at Digicon.

From the client's viewpoint, the new solution helps fulfill their primary goal of helping young people prepare for the future and for long-term careers. The Director of the youth program noted that the automated system eliminated internal redundancies and errors, saved the city time and money, and greatly increased public access to services.

Rapid development advantages

What cements Adobe ColdFusion as the development platform of choice at Digicon is that developers can work fast. DeLaney and his team can typically roll out a working prototype in a few days, and complete complex deployments in weeks not months, much faster than other teams working in .NET or other frameworks. Presenting ideas and concepts as working models helps keep projects moving forward, keeps customers excited, and helps ensure projects stay aligned with business requirements.

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

• Adobe ColdFusion

For more information
www.adobe.com/products/coldfusion-family.html

"We extend the ColdFusion language itself with our own way of coding, enabling us to build and store libraries of functions that we can cost-efficiently rewrap," says DeLaney. On the youth program project, the team brought in another developer that had never used ColdFusion before, who, because of the familiar, tag-based coding approach in ColdFusion, ramped up to speed quickly. "We build functional blocks and then assemble them into more complicated systems, so we can leverage not only the expert-level ColdFusion developer community, but also the novice and intermediate communities," he says.

Better securing web and mobile applications is always a top priority, particularly on government jobs. "We know we can rapidly and confidently build more secure applications using prebuilt ColdFusion components," says DeLaney. "Security can likely be achieved in other environments, but would take substantially longer to code, would require purchasing add-ons, and would raise licensing issues to accommodate wide-scale public facing systems—like the one required for the summer jobs project."

On the type of work Digicon does, business requirements typically include the need for applications to integrate with Microsoft Active Directory (AD) and talk to external email and LDAP servers. There are generally also requirements to generate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and documents in PDF. "Much of that functionality can be found in other languages, but you have to find and install it or buy it," says DeLaney. "With ColdFusion, system and server integration functionality is built in. I don't know of another development platform that includes such extensive capabilities. Adobe ColdFusion provides a comprehensive and complete environment."

Exploring new business opportunities

Moving forward, Digicon plans to package a series of its existing modules and offer them as integrated SaaS solutions. The advantages are clear—create additional revenue streams by capturing business in new sectors, increase hosting services, and establish ongoing relationships with more customers that can lead to further development and system integration opportunities. The team also plans to leverage the mobile development capability in ColdFusion Builder to create mobile apps as extensions of web systems.

"Our achievements on the ColdFusion platform afford Digicon the chance to target new business opportunities," says DeLaney. "In many cases, it's just a matter of polishing our already available offerings and successfully marketing them to new customers."