

Renewal.net

Introduction

In December 2001, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU), part of the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), commissioned a flagship internet-based knowledge management system – www.renewal.net. The aim was to support neighbourhood renewal activity by providing a resource of successful projects. Those embarking on a neighbourhood renewal scheme would visit renewal.net first to discover ‘what works’.

In April 2002, the contract to develop and manage the system was won by a consortium consisting of PA Consulting as lead partner, Geoff Fordham Associates to provide newly written content for the system and the IDOX Information Service to fulfil the content management role. The IDOX Information Service’s ownership of the most comprehensive information resource on urban renewal in the UK was ideal for supporting both the team of writers and the website.

The site went live on Monday 21 October 2002 and was launched in London by Barbara Roche MP, Minister for Neighbourhood Renewal at the time. The site operated for almost five years until it was wound down in the summer of 2008 and replaced by the IDeA’s Partnerships and Places Library, which the IDOX Information Service also helped to establish.

Site content

Renewal.net provided a general overview of the concepts and rationale behind neighbourhood renewal, dedicating a section to the techniques involved in regeneration and renewal planning.

It also brought together six key thematic strands:

- housing and the environment
- worklessness
- education
- crime
- health
- local economies

In turn, each of these themes were broken down into topics. For example, worklessness incorporated: ‘getting people into work’, ‘overcoming barriers to work’ and ‘improving employability and employers’ attitudes’. Each of these topics were broken down even further to provide a comprehensive information offering that covered all areas related to any neighbourhood renewal scheme. Topics at every level required overviews compiled from good practice, research and policy documents researched by the IDOX Information Service.

A significant number of the documents on the site were specially commissioned for renewal.net and great care was taken to ensure that they were succinct, easily understood and as free from jargon as possible. Looked at as a whole, the document collection on renewal.net was the most comprehensive ever brought together for the web in this subject area.

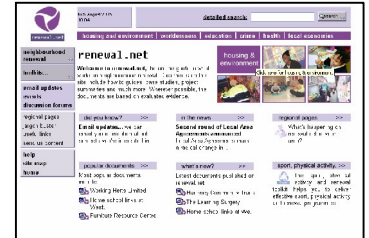
The IDOX Information Service fulfilled the vital role of managing the content, ensuring that users could locate and retrieve the information they required as easily as possible. This was achieved through effective indexing, classification and abstracting of documents.

In addition to managing the original material provided by Geoff Fordham Associates, the IDOX Information Service also collected documents for the site from its own large information resource, publicised events, moderated discussion forums and responded to user feedback.

All of this key content provided intelligence on what has been seen to work in regeneration and renewal in the past, including detailed information on successful projects and methods. This allowed any proposed activity to be planned for and implemented in an evidence-based way.

If you would like to discuss how we might help you or would like further information, please contact: marketing@IDOXgroup.com or call 0870 333 7101

www.IDOXgroup.com



“Nice to see a web site where good practice about regeneration can be shared.”

“Just got your email about renewal.net. It’s great – it should prove a real bonus to all of us working in the field.”

Case Study