



Microsoft delivers digital events

Microsoft needed to invent a reusable digital venue for its events and chose Intergen to provide a tailored solution.

About Microsoft

Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT” @microsoft) enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. Its mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

A unified user experience

In the pre-COVID-19 era, Microsoft regularly ran massive events such as Microsoft Ignite for customers, Microsoft Inspire for partners, and Microsoft Ready for employees. It supported these events with a website and mobile app that let attendees plan their event experience and access content. Each event had different attendee audiences and catered to various stakeholders, so Microsoft wanted each to have a digital experience that echoed its overall image while reflecting each event brand.

However, at the beginning of 2020, like most other organisations, Microsoft needed to rethink how it delivered events due to the risk of coronavirus transmission at in-person events. The business moved towards online-only delivery for all aspects of each event. This new challenge required a complete transformation, and it needed to happen in a few short months.

Before the pandemic, each event had a digital presence built as a companion to or at key points in the event experience. Registration websites were already built for each event. Apps to help attendees

navigate the in-person experience were also available but were not being used by all attendees.

These existing platforms needed an overhaul to provide the structure for a new digital venue. For example, the end-user experience of the websites lacked consistency because Microsoft partnered with different vendors to deliver various aspects of the platform from event to event. Additionally, the solutions for each event weren't being deployed efficiently, and vendors couldn't build on existing features, so a new solution had to be built for each event.

Microsoft needed a unified front-end experience to drive attendee engagement. It required the website to support digital events without an in-person component. It also needed a solution that would make creating a new site for each event faster and easier. With no off-the-shelf solution available, Microsoft required a bespoke solution.

Microsoft's Dave Chance, event digital experience director, explains, “We can't simply translate a live event into a digital format. The event must be reimaged from the ground up. Furthermore, it's important to be prepared for even more attendees at a virtual event.

In 2019, for example, 6,200 people attended Microsoft Build in Seattle. In 2020, the virtual event had 197,000 attendees. Microsoft Ignite had 266,000 attendees from all over the world¹. It was, therefore, essential to have a solution that was ready to scale accordingly.”

Microsoft



Intergen delivers a tailored solution

Microsoft approached Intergen to deliver a superior attendee web experience across flagship events. Using Microsoft Azure, Intergen built the Microsoft Digital Venue. The Microsoft team can customise each event with consistent Microsoft branding and a templated structure without compromising brand consistency.

Intergen built the solution using Azure PaaS offerings. These unified backend systems and a shared codebase make it easy for developers to build on top of existing features, adding functionality with each event. Intergen largely automated the deployment of the solution, maintaining quality and proactively fixing any website or availability issue before launch.

“By building the Microsoft Digital Venue using Azure PaaS offerings, we have been able to ensure a highly scalable, reliable, and resilient system which has evolved to meet changing business needs” said Gavin Barron, Principal Solution Architect, Intergen. Users benefited from this consistency as they could expect the Microsoft Ignite site to operate in the same way as the Microsoft Inspire site.

Dave Chance describes the benefits of feature flexibility:

“Once a feature is developed, it can be turned on or off depending on the event requirements. Because features are reused for each event, the same user experience is guaranteed. This delivers a higher return on investment as the budget is now used to develop new features, rather than redevelop existing ones.”

Since Microsoft first partnered with Intergen for its most significant events, Intergen has developed a checklist of features that can be used for any event, regardless of scale or delivery method. Intergen also works with Microsoft to plan, develop, and roll out additional features for upcoming events.

Dave Chance continues, “many of Microsoft’s events require a custom implementation approach to cater for the unique requirements. The implementation from Intergen was smooth and seamless. They understand the changing nature of events and

¹ <https://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2020/10/19/enabling-the-digital-transformation-of-ces-2021/>

“Intergen provides a single digital venue platform with a consistent attendee experience. The digital venue’s reusability lets Microsoft save time and budget. Intergen’s expertise and responsiveness made this project successful.”

Dave Chance
Event digital experience director

always are willing to collaborate, often extending their knowledge to other partners to help solve their challenges.”

Virtual future of events

With the future of events unpredictable, Intergen works with Microsoft to deliver a complete digitalised solution to cater for both physical and virtual attendance. This includes providing ways to engage virtual attendees in the same way as those in the room, facilitating networking and two-way communication, which was demonstrated successfully at the virtual events.

Dave Chance said, “With collateral developed as each event occurs, Intergen continues to deliver a tailored, resilient and scalable solution that facilitates repeatability and configurability for each event. With the nature of events changing, providing strong experiences for virtual guests is a priority for Microsoft.”

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Snapshot:

- + Microsoft needed a reusable solution to deliver a consistent user experience for its event platform.
- + Microsoft worked with Intergen to build a web application that provides a unified experience with configurable functionality, allowing Microsoft to tailor the digital experience for each event.
- + This increased Microsoft’s return on investment (ROI), as it could reuse previously built features, using the budget to increase overall capability.