Challenge

Seminole County is one of the largest and fastest-growing counties in Florida. With a population of nearly 500,000 residents, Seminole attracts new residents daily – as well as tens of thousands of visitors annually – thanks to its temperate climate, pristine natural beauty, and close proximity to the Orlando Metropolitan area. Seminole fuses a unique mix of rural, outdoor lifestyle with contemporary culture, bolstered by its close access to one of the country's largest airports, an abundance of attractions, and diverse business opportunities.

In an effort to better serve its communities, local businesses, and visitors – and compete for economic investment in a rapidly scaling region – Seminole needed a fresh, contemporary, mobile responsive website designed on a flexible platform that could keep pace with its unprecedented growth. The communications staff at Seminole County also required more control over the web experience, allowing a low code/no code team to manage department-based website content and facilitate the information needs of their constituents, including news, events, photos, press releases, videos, and documents for both internal and external use on their public facing website.

The new website would also require greater interactivity to serve diverse needs in a digital world, allowing website visitors to apply for anything from a library card to a business grant. The new website would also need to be ADA accessible to provide a digitally equitable experience to users with disabilities.

Finally, as a county situated in Florida, emergency readiness was key. To meet the unexpected threat of a hurricane or wildfire, the new website needed to be rapidly updated during critical periods, allowing their operations team to quickly provide up-to-the-minute information about closures, evacuations, shelters, and other pertinent information.

Solution

To meet these challenges, Seminole County selected Solodev, an Amazon Web Services APN Advanced Technology Partner. Built from the ground up for AWS, Solodev CMS had a proven track record of helping public sector organizations to create, deploy, and manage powerful websites that achieve high performance and availability on AWS.

From an experience perspective, Seminole County engaged Solodev's professional services arm – DigitalUs – to design and build their new website on the Solodev Platform and handle both the migration and turnkey implementation on AWS.

The new Seminole County Website would also incorporate custom modules and functionality that would make it easier for a non-technical communications staff to keep the website current with news, images, videos and key announcements – all with little or no coding.
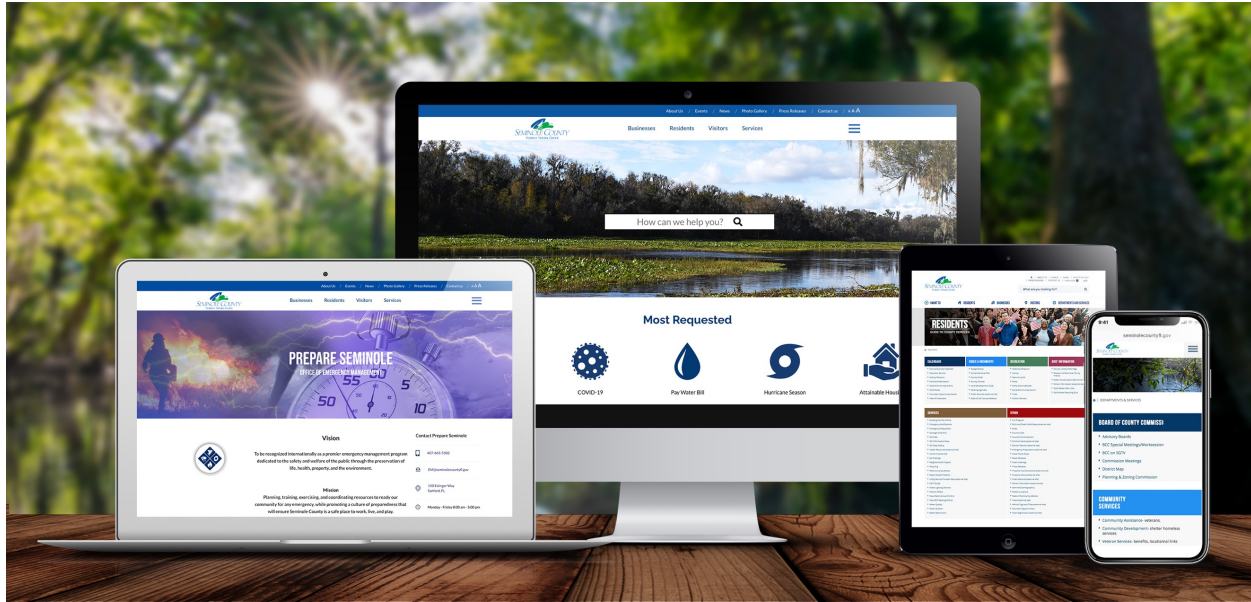
The new website would also feature advanced capabilities for responding to emergencies, including a customizable alert banner that could be activated or scheduled within seconds to prominently display critical, life-saving information. The website would also be engineered with ADA accessibility in mind, making it easier for users with disabilities to find content with tools like screen readers.

Amazon Web Services (AWS)

By leveraging the world-class cloud infrastructure of Amazon Web Services (AWS), Solodev was able to provide Seminole County with unparalleled levels of security, scalability, and reliability. Solodev utilized **AWS CloudFormation** to manage Seminole's servers, databases, and file systems. Solodev was able to quickly autoscale capacity up and down as Seminole County's computing requirements changed by leveraging the **Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2).**

AWS security services increased privacy with network firewalls, providing Seminole County with state-of-the-art security. Solodev employed **AWS OpsWorks**, a configuration management service that allowed Solodev to configure and operate Seminole County's applications and server components – including package installation, software configuration and resources such as storage. AWS OpsWorks also included automation to scale Seminole's applications based on time or load, and dynamically orchestrate changes as traffic demands shifted.

The scalability of the AWS Cloud has helped Seminole County keep their website operating 24x7x365. While the previous website had an average uptime of 94%, Seminole now achieves uptime of 99.97% with Solodev and AWS. In addition to CDN/SSL, enhanced security, backups, and disaster recovery, the Seminole County website can also scale to accommodate 100,000 concurrent users – which can be critical in the event of an emergency.

Results

The new Seminole County website features a stunning, mobile responsive design – and is focused on helping users find information quickly. Powered by Solodev's comprehensive software training and 24x7 support, the Seminole County staff can easily manage content with simple inline editing tools, modules for adding entries to their newsroom, events to their online calendar, and photos and videos throughout their entire website.

Backed by the rock-solid infrastructure of Amazon Web Services, Seminole County is now at the forefront of county websites. With enhanced performance and infrastructure support from Solodev, they have the confidence that their website can meet the demands of their future growth – as well as the unexpected challenges of an emergency event.

Hurricane Irma

The power of Seminole's website was put to the test during Hurricane Irma. While the storm knocked out major resources across Florida, Seminole's website never went down – enabling the county to continue posting information about evacuation routes, boil water alerts, shelter locations, tree removal schedules, and other pertinent information.

A "dark site" strategy is also part of their automated governance during emergency situations. Depending on the conditions, their website can automatically load an emergency message in place of the standard homepage content with little to no human interaction. Along with hosting the US East 1 Region of AWS, Seminole has enabled a continuity plan for their communications – so they can continue to keep people safe during and after a storm.

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About Seminole County

Seminole County, Florida – the Natural Choice® – is one of the state's fastest growing counties. Learn more about the county and its government services at **www.seminolecountyfl.gov**

About Solodev

Solodev, the Digital Customer Experience Platform for AWS, empowers individuals and teams to create amazing customer experiences in the cloud. Built from the ground up on Amazon Web Services (AWS), Solodev provides unparalleled security, scalability, and redundancy with 24/7/365 U.S. based support. Recognized as a leading "High Performer" on the **G2 Grid** for Web Content Management, Solodev has been featured on the Inc. 5000 for the last four consecutive years. An AWS Advanced Technology Partner with Competencies in Government, Education, and Digital Customer Experience, Solodev products can be purchased on-demand via the **AWS Marketplace**, through State and Federal Contracts, or online at **www.solodev.com**

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