



ProLogis Research Center Improves Usability with Ajax without Sacrificing Search Engine Visibility



ProLogis is a leading provider of distribution facilities and services, with more than 2,406 facilities owned, managed and under development in 81 markets throughout North America, Europe and Asia.

Challenge

In January 2006 ProLogis hired 90octane to help bolster its reputation as an industry thought leader through promotion of its supply chain management reports. 90octane designed and developed an online microsite called the ProLogis Research Center and promoted the site with targeted online advertising and pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. With the 12-month pilot achieving over 5,000 research report downloads by targeted individuals at a low cost-per-download, the ProLogis team set a new goal: expand the ProLogis Research Center into an inclusive, user-friendly library, adding reports in addition to those on supply chain management that were originally scoped.

Through preliminary content and design meetings, 90octane and ProLogis determined that the greatest challenge would be adding multiple reports while keeping users focused on registering to download. The team identified Ajax (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML) as the tool that could accomplish both. However, this presented a potential obstacle. Ajax has the reputation as a search engine killer among search engine optimization (SEO) experts. 90octane was faced with making a trade-off between conversion and visibility – with a site that otherwise should do well in the search engines, given the volume of content in reports – or coming up with an approach that trumped what the experts were saying.

Solution

90octane approached the task with a development methodology that focused on solid design principles and graceful degradation of JavaScript. The site was built with an Ajax library that leveraged the strengths of HTML, CSS and JavaScript, allowing accessibility to the content needed for high visibility in the search engines.

Results

Within the first month, Google, Yahoo and MSN indexed multiple pages of the ProLogis Research Center, and the site gained visibility for 17 competitive, industry-related keywords such as 'import driven warehousing' and 'import supply chain.' The program now receives site visitors originating from organic searches and converts them into registrants.

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