Developing an e-Commerce Website for Images

Client is a renowned name in the field of photography with over 20 years of experience in the US.

The Vision

The client wanted to take the business to the next level by developing an e-commerce website. Additionally, they also found it difficult to procure quality high-resolution images and sought a solution to this as well.

The clients wanted a fresh, new e-commerce website which would be different from competitors and create an enjoyable online shopping experience for the end user. They wanted a website where users, apart from dabbling with essentials such as viewing and purchasing photographs, could also connect with each other through forums. In essence, a complete solution for photography enthusiasts from around the globe was desired.

Application Overview

While the basic idea was to develop an e-commerce website, the end-product had to be a notch above the competitor websites. The client wanted an inspiring UI/UX design. The entire purchase flow had to be intuitive and easy for users to find the photographs they were looking for. Through the forums, they wanted to give the users a platform where they could collaborate on certain projects and share knowledge with each other. Another must-have was a responsive design – a website which would delight the user on a desktop as much as it would on a tablet or a mobile phone.

e-Zest was chosen because of the sheer number of successful projects in its kitty. Having already built over a dozen e-commerce platforms, the team from e-Zest was best suited to develop this project. The expertise and experience packed in the project team could ensure that all the features desired by the client seamlessly fit into the website.

Technologies and Tools:

The image web store was developed on an open-source technology stack with Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP (LAMP). Open-source e-commerce engine based on LAMP stack was customized as per the business needs of the client.

The following technologies and tools were used for the development of this website:

• Magento CE (Community edition 1.7.2)
• LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP)
• Image magick6.3 (PHP image processing library)
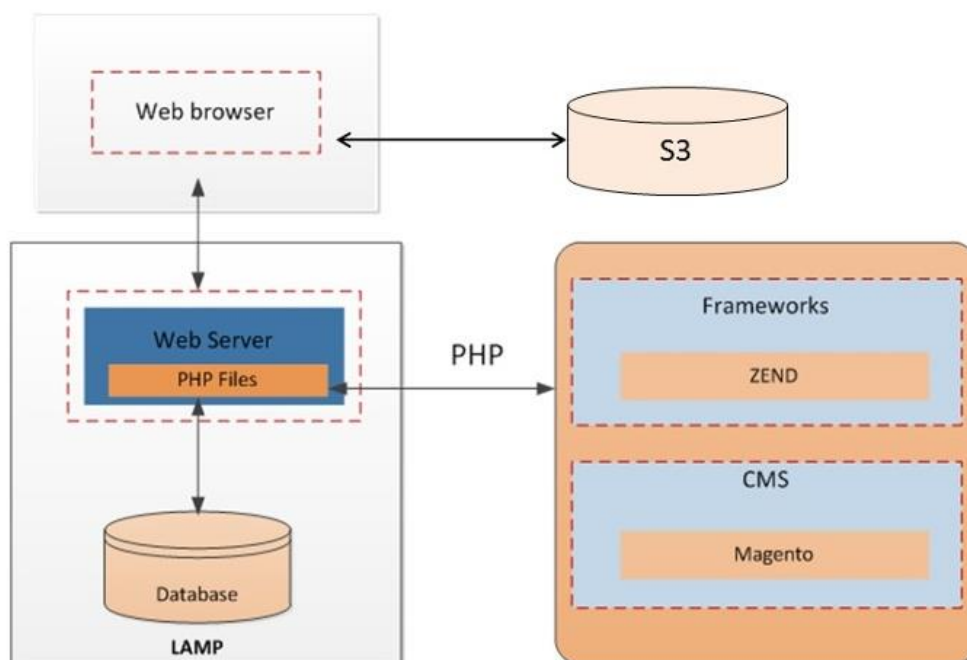• Design – HTML5, CSS3, Responsive design with Bootstrap

Challenges and Solutions

After considering all the requirements, the project team at e-Zest pushed for the Magento Framework, one of the best e-commerce platforms available at the moment. A popular and function-rich platform, Magento is preferred by 26% of the top e-commerce sites in the world. The PHP-based platform is easily upgradeable and provides the ability to add multiple stores. In addition, the SEO-friendly features allowed the client a better search engine ranking. The client was assured of this technology being the right choice.

Apart from the great functionalities Magento offered, the talented e-Zest team added some tweaks of its own to better suit the client requirements. As per the client's requirements, the website had to effectively render very large images. The technical team was a step ahead and took precautionary steps to make sure that the higher resolution images do not affect the speed of loading.

Solution Architecture

Keeping in mind all the features and technology requirement, the project team proposed the following robust architecture:

The team used two separate servers for the website. The images were drawn from the S3 server whereas the site was hosted on the EC2 server. HTML5 and bootstrap were used to make the website more responsive. The LAMP stack was used. The resulting proposition delivered the requirements within time with the intended functionality.

Technical Breakthroughs

- The e-Zest project team developed its own module for downloadable products compatible with Magento. This enabled the client to provide a number of download options for the users.
- The watermark feature proposed by Magento was not working well for this product. The proficient project team integrated the Image Magick library to process images and enable watermark functionality.

Business Benefits

The new website made sure that the client has gained a dynamic web presence. For the first-time users, the website offers an immersive online experience. The content is kept fresh and exciting for returning users. The website enabled the client to generate 25% more revenues than before.

Bottom Line

With an innovative way of storing and displaying hi-resolution images developed by e-Zest, the client can now host much larger images as compared to its competitors. Thus, the product exceeded the expectations set forth by the client by creating a unique selling proposition for him.

e-Zest