



Building A CO2 Calculator for BAFTA

A SHAREPOINT CITY CASE STUDY



THE CONSTRAINTS OF TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Reducing the emission of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide is a big issue for organizations wishing to pursue good corporate social responsibility. How then does a whole industry benchmark its Co2 output? Media producers both large and small were sincere and keen to work towards sustainability but had nothing to focus their good intentions and commitment around.

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) had a vision. They wanted a browser based carbon data collection and analysis tool. It would raise awareness of the environmental impact of TV production, provoke action amongst the programme making community and help production teams to achieve real reductions in the amount of CO2 emissions from programme making.

“We had no point of comparison and no way to work out what a production cost is in carbon terms,” says Richard Smith, BBC Project Manager for Sustainable Productions and member of the BAFTA consortium. “There had been some work done by on a project by project basis to calculate the carbon footprint of a TV production, but the problem was it was done by consultants who used different methodologies and whose time was expensive.” Their ‘carbon calculators’ were often housed in spreadsheets, which were inflexible, difficult for users to understand and only measured fixed parameters like travel.



AN UNPRECEDENTED PROJECT

“Creating an industry wide Carbon Calculator would have been a very difficult project using a conventional methodology, coding from scratch. And it would literally have cost ten times as much. “

The project had no real precedent, neither were there existing organisational processes or workflows in place, which would have allowed an analysis and definition of requirements,” says Pauli Visuri, Consulting Director of Sharepoint City, “that’s why we were so well placed to do a great job of it.”

After looking at a range of potential technologies and approaches it soon became apparent to the BAFTA team that traditional development was out of the question. Instead, Microsoft SharePoint, with its associated InfoPath forms and SQL Server Reporting Services technologies promised to be by far the best fit across the whole range of requirements.

What’s more, basing the solution on the proven and respected SharePoint enterprise platform ensured that the solution would meet the strict security, compliance and technical standards of all user organisations

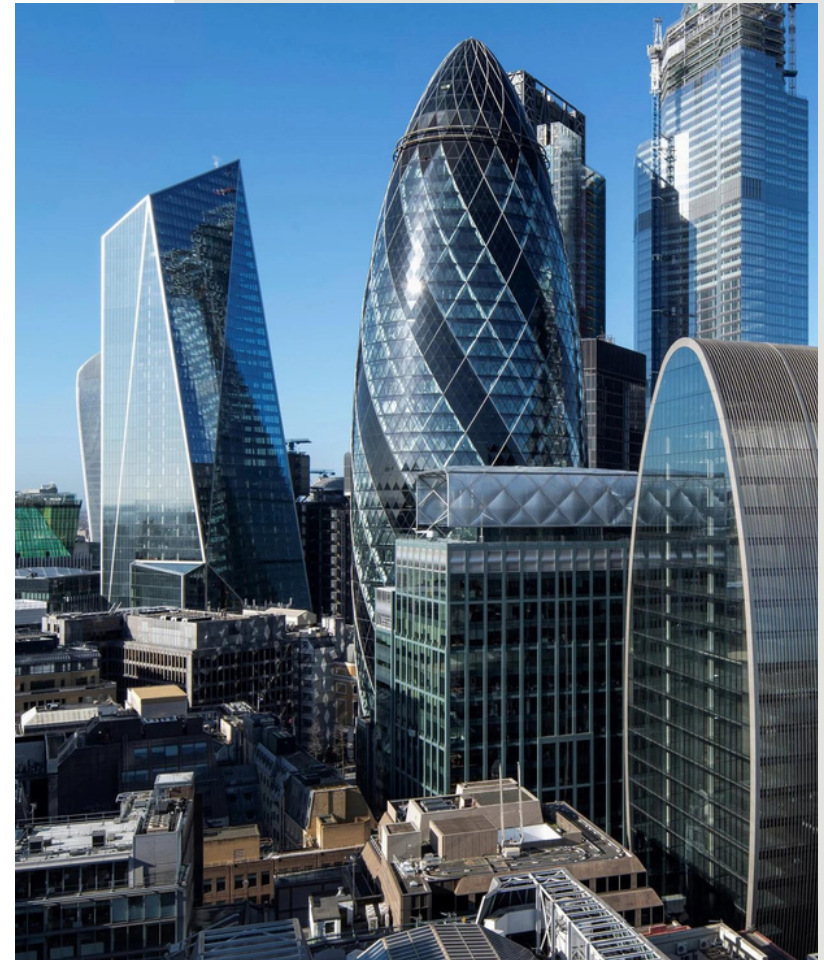


RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING

But what about the specification? The industry presented a widely dispersed and varied user group, a nightmare in terms of locking down a spec using a traditional process, even with a technology as right as SharePoint. Sharepoint City's 'Developing Together' process solved this problem by quickly iterating solutions in a rapid cycle of 'discover-build-change'.

"Discovering specification together in an ongoing manner is a foundation of our Developing Together methodology, and it was perfect for this kind of complexity" says Pauli. "We built iterations live in Sharepoint and tested it out with users. The feedback we got enabled us to make important changes. Iterations were easy to modify so we moved it along quickly through different users."

These feedback cycles from users also helped greatly with usability, another key characteristic of the Developing together process. "Particularly we are working with Production Managers; these are not technical people" says Pauli, "as we built a version and tested it with them it soon became apparent which parts of the application were confusing. We could easily redesign those to make more sense and flow more smoothly. Now the application, named 'Albert' is fully rolled out we've been getting great feedback on how useable it is."



The brief was for Albert not just to collect data but to shape thinking in the industry about CO2 emissions. "When you work closely with users it's possible to get down to issues of user behaviour in very powerful ways," says Pauli. "In Albert we added a 'show the maths' function. Once users are comfortable with Albert they can see how the CO2 total is calculated and find the highest leverage points for change."

Production companies have used this to change practice from altering the types of transport and accommodation, to changing bulbs in their studio lighting rigs. Ongoing development is incorporated into the Developing Together process. "Rolling development is very important on a project like Albert as so many new users are joining, and existing users are expecting more sophistication. 'Developing Together' allows us to do that.

One of our biggest changes has come from a major broadcaster who wants to jointly own the Co2 footprint of all their programmes along with the companies they commission to make them. SharePoint's architecture and our process allow us to absorb these changes readily."

"Sharepoint City understood the project from start, giving strong guidance and significant creative input." Albert", our TV production carbon emissions calculator, was completed on schedule and budget. Excellent throughout!" Richard Smith, BBC Manager for Sustainable Productions and member of the BAFTA consortium.



BAFTA LEADS THE WAY

From BAFTA's point of view the UK film and TV industry now leads the world in acting on sustainability. Albert has within its first year been adopted by 28 broadcasters and production companies including 4 of the 5 main UK broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky) and around half of the top-20 independent production companies, including the 3 largest ones (Shine, Endemol and All3Media) as well as a number of the smaller producers. Between them they've already started over 400 carbon 'footprints'.

Mark Smith, Managing Director of independent production company TwoFour, and BAFTA consortium member explains how well Albert is serving his needs: "we've already seen a financial benefit in cost reduction, and a Co2 reduction which helps us safeguard the environment. But we also know that this tool is helping us to enact our corporate social responsibility policy and will help us protect us from future legislation."

Current legislation does not demand anything as specific as the carbon footprint of a TV production, but if and when that happens, it's more likely that the legislators will be coming to BAFTA and the Albert Consortium for consultation rather than the industry having to cope with whatever legislation is developed without their input.



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There is no doubt that Albert has established the UK as a world leader in this field – no-one else has footprinted so many productions using the same methodology.” Richard Smith, BBC Manager for Sustainable Productions and member of the BAFTA consortium. . BAFTA has a standard in ‘Albert’; it has already been recognised internationally at the International Broadcasting Conference (IBC) and European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and received several expressions of interest from media companies and sustainability organisations for the sector globally.

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