



Student Information Portal



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Danny O'Donnell, December 2009

Product Background / Overview

Our client, a local school district vocational center, was seeking to streamline their business process and web presence. A new state mandate required a new way of tracking students, and with this came a need to retool many of their system processes, fundamentally changing the way they do business with their students. One of the aims was to reduce the amount of staff interaction with a student's records before enrollment and allow the prospective student to provide their information to the school in a form-specific manner. Given the district's financial limitations, we needed to use a component driven solution, with as little custom coding done as possible. Requirements included PDF and Word output, with the ability to do Excel pivot table based data manipulation.

Requirements Scenario

We had a need to give the school the ability to collect and store student demographic, financial aid, and grading information, provide teachers with on-demand student reports, and provide administrators the ability to track both overall program progress both academically and financially. We also needed to collect information from dynamic forms. Aspose Forms in conjunction with InfoPath seemed like our best option, as we could design the forms easily using InfoPath, and host them in aspx pages with the Forms component. Once this information was collected, we would give the teachers the ability to print out forms, in both .doc and .pdf format with this info formatted precisely as the principal approved them. This can be accomplished quickly and easily with Aspose Words and Pdf. Finally, a number of grade and enrollment progression reports would be needed using Excel pivot tables. Here, Aspose Cells was a natural and good fit.

Solution Implementation

We used Visual Studio 2008, with Aspose for document generation and a third party component suite for the presentation layer, on top of a DotNetNuke portal. We collect student entered information using InfoPath form generation, backed up with an Aspose XmlFormView component in a simple .NET user control converted to a DNN module. It took us longer to create the form using InfoPath than it took to write the code consuming it with the XmlFormView. Countless hours were saved on this step alone.

Many of the forms collected by the school have been approved by the School Board and are not easily changed, such as report cards. When a printed record of this information is needed, it must be in the original form. Using mail merge fields in Aspose Word, we were able to take the original Word documents, populate them with

the data from the InfoPath form or student database, and generate both Word and PDF versions easily.

Benefits

In a tightly cost driven environment, the Aspose products gave our company a tremendous boost. Being able to use the existing forms was key, and having on-demand student based reports outputted in Excel, Word, or PDF with little coding really saved the day. We've created many dynamic Word and Excel documents using hand created templates, WordML, and RTF generation, and wish that we had discovered Aspose many years earlier. The benefit of using an Aspose Word template probably saved hundreds of hours messing around with WordML formatting and outputting alone. The ability to output these as PDF was critical, and again Aspose could not be beaten.

Future Implementations

We intend to implement more student reporting using Aspose Cells and Aspose Pdf, and to extend the number of camera ready documents generated using Aspose Words. Our company also will be looking to bid (and win!) other government contracts using the cost savings projected by using this suite.

Conclusion

In a highly cost sensitive environment, we were able to create reports and collect data quickly, efficiently, and with very little code. The Aspose suite of products will now be a large part of our consulting business, and will give us a leg up on our bigger competitors.

Screen shot of the Aspose.Form document progression:

1. Original Word Document

Pre-Enrollment Form

DIRECTIONS: Please print and use legal names. Complete all items since each is required by Florida Statutes and or Florida Administrative Code.

NOTE: If you feel you need assistance to complete this form, or for persons with a disability to succeed in the course, you may call 850-487-7555.

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (Apt. or Box)
(City) (State) (Zip)

Home Phone: _____
Mailing Address (if different): _____
Email Address: _____
Emergency Contact: _____
(Name) (Relationship) (Phone)

High School Diploma/GED Received? ☐ YES ☐ NO Year Received: _____
Location: _____

I hereby certify that the information on this pre-enrollment form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. By signing, I am giving my permission for the use of this data included herein in the managing of the program in which I enroll.

Student Name: _____ Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

2. Converted to InfoPath document, and reformatted

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3. Shown in ASP.NET page, using AsposeWeb:XmlFormView component.

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At this point, we traversed the XmlNode of the XmlFormView and inserted the inputted data into the DB. This entire process was completed in a matter of hours.

Thank you, Aspose!