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Makers of the Award-Winning Cascade Server content management software

Northeastern University - School of Law

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Northeastern University's School of Law (NUSL) provides both real world experience through its signature Cooperative Legal Education Program and top-notch education while fostering a sense of social responsibility.

ChallengePrior to implementing Cascade Server, the majority of Northeastern University's sites were managed in Serena Collage. However, the university faced many limitations with the Collage product. In specific regard to the law school site (the university's largest college/school site), challenges included the inability to implement automated features such as news and event feeds, as well as difficulty for end-users in how to use the product. Since much of the responsibility for content management was in the hands of non-technical users, NU needed a very intuitive and robust system that would allow them to quickly and easily update content without involving the university's top-level web team. Prompted by Serena's decision to discontinue support and development for the Collage product, NU began searching for a new content management system.**Solution**After reviewing several other content management systems, including RedDot, OmniUpdate, Vingette and Sitecore, NU selected Cascade Server for several reasons. First, it was concluded that the transition from Serena Collage to Cascade Server would be the most seamless as the Hannon Hill team had developed a Serena migration tool that would significantly expedite the content migration process. Second, Cascade Server's Sites model made the product an ideal match for NU, as it provided the administrator with the ability to set up site-specific permissions within the overall NU architecture. Finally, the NU web team felt that Cascade Server would make it easier to add more modern functionality to the school's web sites while offering a simple interface for non-technical site editors to update their sites.**Results**

In the case of the law school, staff worked with Hannon Hill's Professional Services Team to integrate their site into Cascade Server and migrate all of the Serena Collage content into the new CMS. The new NUSL site is primarily managed and updated by non-technical users, leaving the university's web developers more time to focus on development work instead of content updates and fixes.

Since implementing Cascade Server, the web management processes at NU have become much more efficient. According to Roger Donaghy, Senior Web Strategist for the university, "Cascade has had a positive effect on several of my work processes. First, it is easier to provide dynamic functionality on my sites using index blocks and XSLT as opposed to Serena Collage's 'asset factory' feature. Second, many of our Collage sites required that I maintain HTML and CSS on separate editing and

publishing layouts for pages. This is unnecessary in Cascade because the data definition builder handles editing layouts so I only have to worry about how pages look when they're published to the server."

With the NUSL site integrated in Cascade, content reuse has been streamlined, so that updates can be done much more quickly and easily, with less chances of having "orphaned" content. The site continues to improve and the law school plans to continue a direct relationship with Hannon Hill, expanding site functionality and honing user interface. NUSL Director of Communications Deborah Feldman is currently working with the Hannon Hill Professional Services team on multimedia and photo gallery pages, which include automated features.

<http://www.northeastern.edu/law//>

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