

Trovo: Find a better way in IT

Here are some of the things we've done to help our customers improve their IT, focusing on automated user testing.

Automated web-user testing

Testing code as you write it is accepted as good practice. But proving that a website fulfils its requirements has always been trickier. The solution is to work with your customers to define a set of **User Acceptance Tests (UATs)** for a site's functions. Can you complete the tasks the site was made for? UATs should answer this "yes" or "no".

Defining UATs helps you check the spec and plan your work. Once the UATs all pass, the site is ready. But re-running UATs as new site functions are added used to be hard work. Fortunately, tools for automating UATs are now available, and many are free (see below).

Five benefits of automated user tests

1. **UATs define your work (and tell you when it is finished).** 'Feature creep' is less likely once you have a UAT in place for each function. And once the UAT passes, that function is ready.
2. **UATs help you to manage change:** every time a new function is added (even one that wasn't in the original spec) you can quickly check to see if including it has broken any of the others.
3. **Defining UATs encourages your customers to examine the site closely.** How often do customers say "it's fine" after what seems like a cursory glance, only to start finding problems later on?
4. **Computers make fewer mistakes when testing.** Testing can be fiddly, so even the most diligent human tester will make errors.
5. **Your developers will love you for it.** Testing by hand is dull – nobody ever went to University to repeat tests over and over.

Learn more about this at: <http://trovo.co.uk/TestingProducts.aspx>.

DMU researchers given a firmer footing

When a staff member left the Knowledge Media Design research team (KMD) at De Montfort University, they asked us for help.

The departing staff member administered the team's Linux servers and key knowledge of KMD's server set-up left with him.

Trovo was asked to consolidate all KMD's web applications and databases onto one server, ensure they were backed-up and create usable documentation of the new setup.

We used a tried and tested documentation method, developed initially by IBM, which has been used as the basis for the XML-based documentation language DITA (dita.xml.org).

Head of KMD, Professor Stephen Brown, said: "Trovo were a big help. They have a rare mixture of technical and communication skills, so the documentation they produced was really easy to follow. Our servers feel much safer now."

Visit kmd.dmu.ac.uk

Partnering with Trovo to improve your projects

Do your IT projects struggle? Is it hard to keep up with your clients' ever-changing requirements? Do you tend to spend more than you want getting the job done? Do you even know when your projects are finished?

Believe it or not, these problems are common to many IT projects. The partners section of our website describes our approach to solving them for you. Visit trovo.co.uk/partners.aspx.

Selenium: a tool for automating UATs

Trovo's Testing Toolkit includes Selenium (seleniumhq.org), an Open Source tool supported by Google and Thoughtworks. Tests are generated quickly by clicking links on the test site with Firefox, and it can also record input into forms and even some more complex JavaScript functions. The test records are then output as C#, PHP or Java for use within other testing frameworks such as N/JUnit. When such N/JUnit tests are run, the activities recorded in the Firefox browser are repeated automatically, so the site can be retested easily with every change.

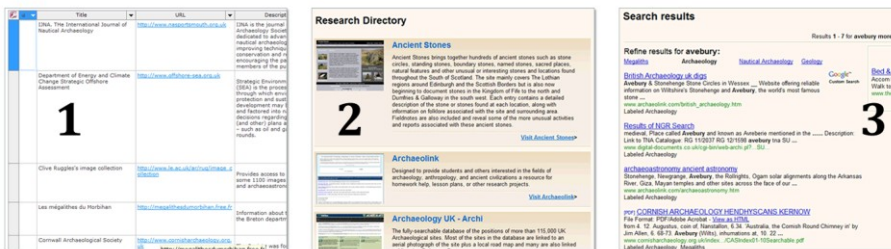
Find Trovo's Google expertise

Our Google expertise stretches further than the SEO / Google Adwords services provided by many web development companies. Here we describe some of the things we've done with Google's search tools.

Archaeological community search

Trovo was asked to create a website and research tool for a group of archaeologists to promote their research into the potential use of Megalithic monuments and standing stones as an aid to marine navigation.

As part of the site, we created a searchable research directory using a combination of Microsoft Office Live and Google Custom Search. This allows the researchers to add details of useful websites to an Office Live list (1). These websites are then added to their website's public research directory (2) and results from those sites are also included in their website's search (3).



So when visitors to the Megalithic Navigation website enter a keyword in the search box, they not only search the Megalithic Navigation site, they also search all the other sites in the research directory too, at the same time.

We also included a Google mapping function (also based on an Office Live list) to allow the researchers to pinpoint the locations of standing stones and beaches on the map, and indicate the journeys that Megalithic navigators may have taken. Find out more about how we set this up at trovo.co.uk, and visit the site itself at megalithicnavigation.co.uk.

Six things you never knew Google could do...

We all "Google" for things every day, but did you know that you can type more than just search queries into the Google box?

Use it as a calculator: try entering $29.876 + 356.8$, $4 \wedge 2$ or $\text{sqrt}(144)$.

Check flight times: enter a flight number (e.g. BA456) for its status.

Convert currency and other values: e.g. *15 USD in EUR* or *8 cm in inches*.

Track your Royal Mail, UPS or Fedex parcel: e.g. enter *DH182063118GB*.

Find road works: click the *Traffic* button on maps.google.co.uk.

Plan a movie: e.g. type *films Leicester*.

Trovo's Google history

The Trovo Team first worked together at Data Perspective Limited (DPL), a De Montfort University spin-out company that applied user personalisation to Internet search using Fuzzy Logic.

DPL chose Google's suite of enterprise and web search tools as the basis for their search personalisation solution. As part of this process, members of the team undertook Google Enterprise Search Professional certification. This certified Google expertise has been carried forward into Trovo.

Latest update

As part of our work with DPL, we helped Leicester City Council (LCC) replace their existing website search engine with a Google Mini Appliance (online at search.leicester.gov.uk).

We have recently been contracted by LCC to update their Google search after a CMS migration. We will also update their search maintenance procedures, train them and leave them with relevant, usable documentation so they can start to maintain their search themselves.

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