



Sitecore  
**Case Study:**

# AUDLEY

## Audley Travel – Sitecore Media Library Drives Image Handling Efficiencies at Audley Travel

### Summary

Audley Travel, based in Oxfordshire, UK, is a specialist in tailor-made holidays. Their team of 80 travel consultants work closely with customers to help them turn their dream vacation into reality and develop individual, highly personalised itineraries to suit their tastes. The customised travel business relies heavily on building a personal relationship with the customer – usually over the telephone. This is where the website is vital. Its role is to inspire visitors to make contact either by telephone or by completing a web enquiry form. Using Sitecore, Audley has been able to make significant improvements to the way different parts of the website are maintained. For example, Audley’s image-rich site takes full advantage of the Sitecore Media Library thereby making its extensive photographic library far easier to manage.

### Challenge

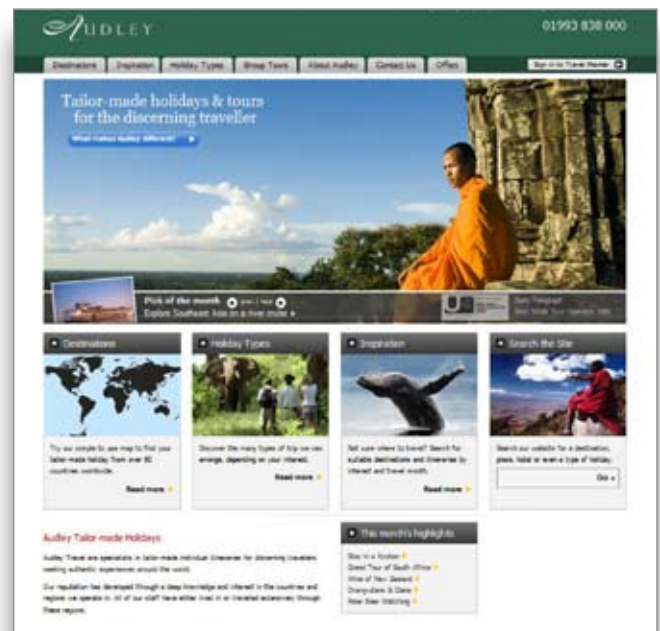
Historically, Audley’s website content was built and maintained in-house using Wordpress. Every page was individually coded and updated by hand. There was very little automation or cross-referencing of content. Online image assets were managed manually. Maintaining these assets required a degree of technical know-how and was extremely time-consuming. Over time, Audley had expanded its range of destinations across 85 countries. The visual appeal of the website was so important that the business was keeping a library with tens of thousands of photos along with 4,000 pages of content. At this stage, Audley realised they needed a better content management system (CMS)

to help manage the content, coordinate the relationship between different parts of the site and allow the day-to-day management to be handled by relatively non-technical people.

The company began to research various CMSs. Taking the Gartner CMS matrix as their guideline, they soon narrowed down their search to three choices. After approaching Sitecore directly they began trials with Sitecore Web CMS version 5. Not going through a Sitecore third party meant spending the first couple of

### Audley Travel Site

[www.audleytravel.com](http://www.audleytravel.com)





months on a steep learning curve. Having been used to doing all the development work themselves, this was not really a hurdle and at the end of the trial Audley declared themselves very impressed.

### Solution

At the core of Audley's image-rich solution lie three image systems – an in-house library where all image assets are stored, an externally hosted media library for online image assets and the Sitecore Media Library. Sitecore integrates with the hosted media library, allowing images to be accessed on the fly to generate pages as visitors browse the site. Sitecore manages how, when and where the photographs appear, allowing any of Audley's 180 staff to upload, label and rank images to the in-house system and eventually onto the online library where Sitecore accesses them to build the web pages. The image library is reasonably complex. Every photograph is graded, cropped, captioned and linked to the reservation system. Regardless of whether a photograph is hosted externally or resides on the in-house library images of places, hotels and excursions, Sitecore can bring them into the system to create a customised web page. With so many images in the library, Audley has integrated a bespoke button in the

media bar so that content editors can quickly search for a selection of appropriate images and pick the best one when creating bespoke content. Every night the in-house library updates the online library hosted on a cloud server. Sitecore is then able to use these images and ensure that any changes are reflected automatically on the website.

“Long-haul travel is a highly aspirational product with a strong reliance on imagery and up-to-date information” says Loic Robertson, eCommerce manager at Audley. “Sitecore has allowed us to quickly develop a unique website with an unparalleled depth of information.”

All images are hosted on Amazon S3 cloud servers and integrated on-the-fly with Sitecore web pages putting the in-house content editors in charge of which images appear when they create bespoke content.

Audley has developed several web services which are used to populate the dynamic areas of the site – including one for images, one for content held in their in-house reservation system, and one for live bookings data, allowing customers to view their itinerary on line. Links to third-party services are embedded into the Sitecore ribbon. The website continues to grow as more images and, increasingly video, are added. Today the

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website has reached over 12,000 pages, yet thanks to the efficiencies introduced by Sitecore, is still managed by the same team of three content editors and two web developers.

Sitecore's integrated image-handling capability can automatically generate and re-size relevant imagery on the fly as a user browses the site. It is also used to import data from the reservations system, to build special extension objects for use in template renders and to build custom reporting screens for content control. Numerous additional buttons have been added to the ribbon bar in Sitecore to integrate with other in-house systems. For instance, the ability to geo-locate an element of content (a hotel or a place, for example)

from within Sitecore as it is added by the content editors using web services like Geo Names.

Although the site presents all content in English, the language functionality of Sitecore is able to produce geography-specific versions of Audley's contact details dependent on the incoming URL. So a visitor in the USA will see a US freephone number and contact details. This is set up for the USA, Norway, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Sitecore's ability to keep content separate from its presentation (technical environment) allows Audley to quickly add special promotions to the site. New features and additions can be implemented much more quickly and easily.

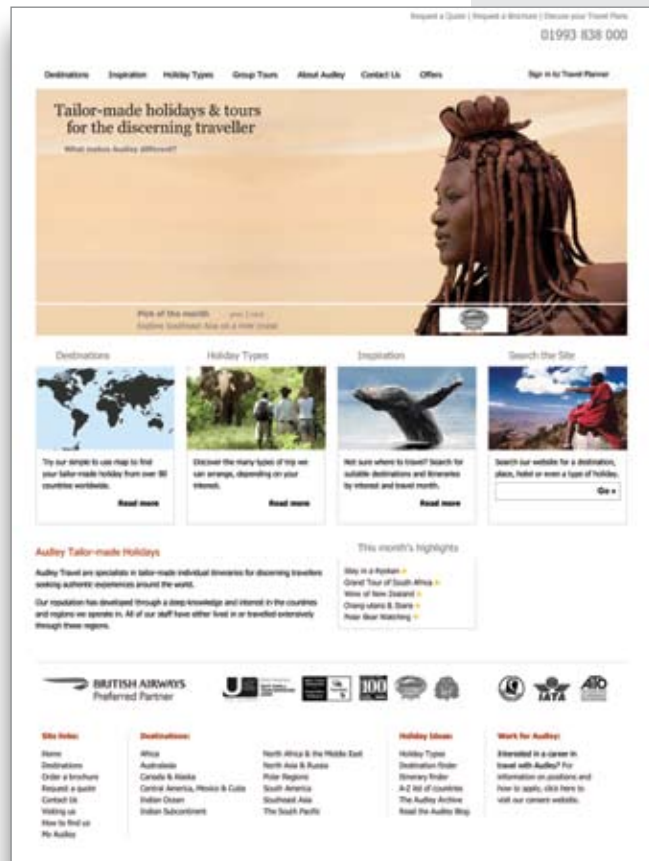
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*“We selected Sitecore for its ability to easily manage content relationships. Its flexibility allows us to re-use content in different places in the site and manage that through an easy-to-use interface. Overall we believe the Sitecore essential features of a powerful API, ease of use, .NET framework and its continuous development and improvement have resulted in tremendous value for money for us.”*

**— Loic Robertson**  
**e-Commerce manager**  
**Audley Travel**

## Result

Since going live with Sitecore, the number of visitors to the website has doubled. The website is now fulfilling Audley’s objective of allowing them to process a lot more inquiries without increasing their resources. The website content is managed by a reasonably small team, half of whom are not technical.

Audley’s search engine partner was given access to Sitecore to work with the content editors to update page descriptions and content to maximise search engine performance.

Since launching the new site in 2008, Audley has won 8 awards including:

- “Wanderlust Best Website 2009”
- New Zealand Tourist Board “Best Tour Operator Website 2008”
- Canada Tourism Commission “Best Use of Online 2008” and
- Travelmole Asia “Best Website 2008”
- Traffic and enquiry levels have risen sharply year on year - partly due to the ability to turn around new content in a much shorter timescale than ever before.

Audley also attributed the awards to the amount of effort they put into providing high quality content on the site. To differentiate themselves from competitor sites they try to steer away from having lengthy vanilla descriptions, opting instead for an interactive magazine style with features on subjects of interest to clients such as how to plan a self-drive trip through New Zealand.

“The ability to have a depth of content would not be possible without a brilliant CMS,” adds Loic Robertson. “In page terms our site is roughly 12,000 pages but the simplicity of the Sitecore CMS makes managing and maintaining even this amount of content quite straightforward – even for our small team.”

## Technology Description

### Solution Special Ingredients:

*Microsoft .Net* development environment

*Microsoft SQL Server* database for the customer reservation system

*SharePoint* intranet

*Sitecore CMS 6* content management system

*Sitecore Media Library* for managing and coordinating library of internal and externally hosted images

*Geographic Geo Names* database with *Google Maps* interface for providing longitude and latitude details of 5000 destinations

*Amazon S3* server for hosting part of the image library externally

In-house developed web services

Some PHP forms and legacy systems



Sitecore’s Web Content Management System (CMS) and portal software solutions enable companies to deliver compelling web experiences. Sitecore’s award-winning CMS software makes it easy for businesses to create and update dynamic, full-featured websites of all types. Sitecore’s industry leading flexibility and scalability allows companies to better leverage their content, improve customer experience and drive business growth.

Thousands of public and private organizations, including national governments and Fortune 500 companies utilize Sitecore solutions for their websites. These organizations have created and now manage more than 20,000 dynamic websites with Sitecore including Microsoft, Sara Lee, Siemens, Toshiba, Omni Hotels, Computer Associates, ISS and Atlanta Falcons. Sitecore has offices and representatives in more than 50 countries around the world.

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