



Sitecore  
**Case Study:**



# Brooklyn Law School

## Brooklyn Law School – Integrating with several technologies to provide a seamless experience and to attract new students

### Summary

Brooklyn Law School was seeking to improve its online presence to better represent itself, while integrating with diverse back-end technologies, including Microsoft Sharepoint. Working with Sitecore partner Weymouth Design, they chose Sitecore to rebuild their site from the ground up.

### Challenge

The primary audience for Brooklyn Law School's web site includes students, prospective students, alumni, donors, parents, and the community. Previously, there were some challenges with the site that they wanted to improve:

- **The website needed to more accurately represent – and promote – the school.** Brooklyn Law School offers academic excellence in a great location. However, their current website did not adequately convey this image. Competing schools had a better online presence, and Brooklyn Law School needed to stay competitive.
- **They needed a better way to manage online content.** For site editors, managing content on the site was too difficult and complex.
- **Layout and navigation needed improvement.** For site visitors, information was difficult to find, and the site navigation and overall content layout needed an overhaul. Brooklyn Law School wanted to improve the admissions process – from the school's overall appeal to guiding people through the application process to finally accepting admission.
- **Content redundancy was a problem.** The content on many pages was found elsewhere, causing unnecessary repetition of content throughout the site.

Brooklyn Law School  
Site

[www.brooklaw.edu](http://www.brooklaw.edu)



## Solution

Weymouth Design, a Sitecore partner, was selected to redesign the site thanks to a wide range of experience with site design and content management integration. They were also selected for their unique creative approach – in photography and easy-to-navigate web interfaces, as well as development.

Weymouth Design evaluated the current site to find out what essential information needed to be retained. They also did an internal peer review and conducted focus groups with prospective students, in order to explore insights on design options. The information gathered proved to be helpful for the redesign, but there were still architecture hurdles to overcome: The site content wasn't dynamic, hundreds of pages were outdated, and much of the content was cross-linked. The current site architecture needed an overhaul.

According to Tom Kraft, Weymouth Design's Director of Interactive Media: "Having selected the Sitecore CMS to manage the new site content, BLS made a wise choice considering the project scope. As a certified Sitecore technology partner, we have implemented Sitecore on a number of websites. The Sitecore CMS features an intuitive, hierarchical management interface, a straightforward page template editor – and perhaps most importantly – a .NET platform allowing our engineers to easily write code to extract data from external sources."

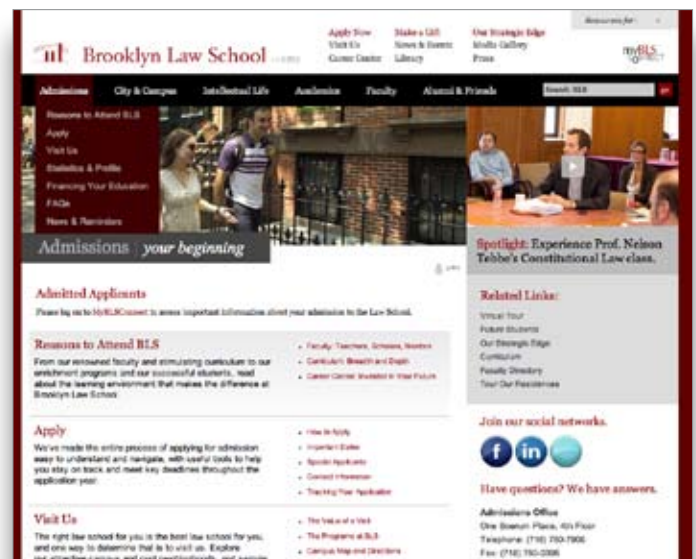
Weymouth Design decided to start with the architecture and reorganize the site completely from the ground up, which allowed for a more efficient, organized development process.

The site also had to integrate transparently with several other technologies, and display data from several different back-end systems:

- **Microsoft Sharepoint:** The school had invested significantly in a Microsoft Sharepoint intranet serving the campus community - publishing campus announcements, important documents, and a comprehensive faculty database, tightly coupled with the internal campus directory.
- **Colleague:** The course database lived in a separate system called Colleague, and the new online course listing needed to be dynamically linked to Biographical faculty information (and vice-versa).
- **MySQL Database:** Alumni news bulletins rested in an internal MySQL database and were slated to be displayed online in a decade-based class notes directory.
- **Third-party Hosting Provider:** Streaming videos of symposia and lectures were hosted by a third-party media hosting company.

## Brooklyn Law School Site

[www.brooklaw.edu](http://www.brooklaw.edu)





**sitecore**<sup>®</sup>  
compelling web experiences<sup>®</sup>

- **Media Library:** A library of media gallery-destined digital photography was catalogued on various file systems and DVDs. Weymouth Design assembled the diverse array of information into a single management interface.

The location of the school is a huge advantage for the students – it's centrally located, yet less expensive than comparable schools in NYC, and housing is significantly more available and affordable. A full-service photography and video studio, Weymouth Design employed its visual resources to convey the school's attractive location and fertile learning environment: They photographed the school and surrounding neighborhood, produced video of live classroom settings, and interviewed professors and students for firsthand accounts of life on campus. Many of these photos and videos are now featured in the site's Media Gallery and Virtual Tour sections – and are managed completely within Sitecore.

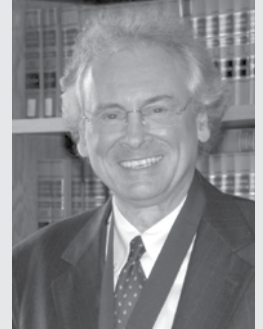
"We chose Weymouth Design because of their visual branding skills and experience beyond higher education," said Henry Haverstick III, Dean of

Admissions at Brooklyn Law School. "They also were a development partner with Sitecore, our Content Management System choice. We are really pleased with the end-result - a website that captures the culture and spirit of BLS."

## Results

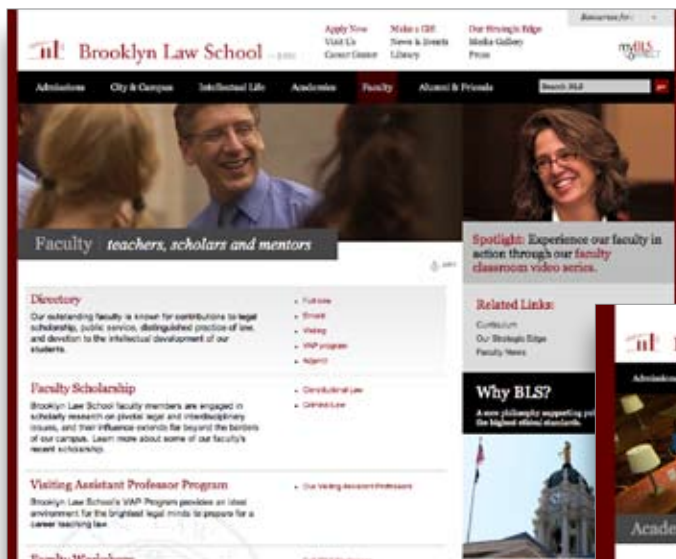
The end result: Website content is easier to update, admissions applications have increased, and the Housing and Virtual Tour sections of the site have proved very popular with prospective students.

"A dynamic Sitecore platform allowed our designers to be creative, while enabling our programmers to efficiently triage and display information from a variety of sources," says Stephen Schadt, Weymouth's Project Manager for the redesign. "The redesigned Brooklyn Law School web site communicates a clean, tasteful design atop a significant effort of back-end integration, which would not have been possible without Sitecore's open programming environment."



*"We are really pleased with the end-result – a website that captures the culture and spirit of BLS."*

**—Henry Haverstick III,  
Dean of Admissions at  
Brooklyn Law School**



## Brooklyn Law School Site

[www.brooklaw.edu](http://www.brooklaw.edu)

## Brooklyn Law School Site

[www.brooklaw.edu](http://www.brooklaw.edu)





*“The Sitecore CMS features an intuitive, hierarchical management interface, a straightforward page template editor – and perhaps most importantly – a .NET programming core which allowed our engineers to easily write code to extract data from external sources.”*

**– Stephen Schadt,  
Weymouth Design's  
Project Manager**

## Technology Description

### *Microsoft Sharepoint Integration*

During the project's discovery and production phases, Weymouth Design worked with Brooklyn Law School's IT communications teams to develop the optimal solution for several data integration challenges. Weymouth Design's engineers created a custom .NET programming interface built on the Microsoft-documented Sharepoint web service and .NET object APIs. Using these libraries, they were able to build a robust object-oriented interface containing both business logic and data retrieval classes. High-level functions assimilated course and publication information from external sources. Next, those functions called lower-level functions responsible for the scheduled extraction of data from its respective web service or database source. Since the redesigned faculty section needed to be linked to course information residing in Colleague, Weymouth's developers wrote data retrieval logic matching each faculty profile with its appropriate course information. (This logic queried middle-tier SQL views via unique Sharepoint record identifiers). Separating the front-end code from such complex back-end logic enabled efficient data management, and avoided the too-often found pitfall in programming: “spaghetti code.” The end result was well-engineered effort of data integration.

### *Video and photo media content*

Weymouth Design was able to quickly produce a streaming video player consistent with the new design. Having developed a Sitecore template with a field for the streaming video URL, Weymouth Design engineers wrote a custom .NET page dynamically fed the video link to the Flash player. As for the online photo galleries, Weymouth's designers created a Flash slideshow, while developers built a dynamic XML feed of photo gallery content. Managed entirely in the Sitecore content tree, images, thumbnails, and captions were transformed into XML on the fly, and displayed via the Flash-based photo gallery. Online class notes comprised a manageable amount of data which lived in a database eventually being phased out; this content was migrated to Sitecore.

### **Solution Special Ingredients:**

*Microsoft Sharepoint  
Colleague  
Google Custom Search  
MySQL  
Streaming FLV Video  
SOAP Web Services*



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.

**Sitecore**  
[www.sitecore.net](http://www.sitecore.net)

**Brooklyn Law School**  
[www.brooklaw.edu](http://www.brooklaw.edu)

**Weymouth Design**  
[www.weymouthdesign.com](http://www.weymouthdesign.com)