

planetmaggie

*unleashing the power of IT*

## CASE STUDY

# innvo labs

*How PleoWorld's Ecommerce Runs Itself*

*Robotic Dinosaur Manufacturer Automates Sales & Shipping  
with Miva Merchant and Webgistix*

Innvo Labs is the US distributor for the Pleo robotic dinosaur. Innvo Labs is also responsible for research & development, hardware/software updates to Pleo, and for worldwide promotion of the consumer robotic pet.



## BACKGROUND

If you haven't heard of Pleo, you may be living in a cave. "Pleo" is the cute little robot dinosaur originally made & sold by Ugobe. The robotic pets are hugely popular with both kids and adults.

But Ugobe closed in 2008. The PleoWorld website, which sold thousands of Pleo dinosaurs and hosted owner discussions daily, was shut down. For almost a year, Pleo owners languished without their favorite forum. No more Pleo software updates! No showing off their Pleo's cuteness!

Until Innvo Labs Corporation was formed. They wanted to bring Pleo back. But in order to do that, they needed a new website.

Most importantly, one that could manage sales and order fulfillment on its own.



*PLEO, the robot dinosaur.*

## THE CHALLENGE

**When you order a cute Pleo dinosaur, you want it right away.**

Previously, the website had processed orders through an ecommerce engine, with order fulfillment done through the main office—packing Pleos by hand, shipping them one by one, etc. This slowed deliveries down. Delivery time was an issue with Ugobe customers before...one Innvo wanted to avoid!

Also, the existing customer base was international. Shipping had to be too, if Innvo wanted to continue selling to their full customer base.

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*The challenge was:*

**How do we get Pleos and accessories from factory to customers as fast & as easily as possible?**

The answer? Build a new PleoWorld.com with an all-new membership framework, international shipping, and integrated ecommerce software.

## THE SOLUTION

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This was trickier than it sounded. While discussing plans with Derek Dotson (new Innvo Labs COO and one of the original Pleo creators), we recommended 2 things to make it easier:

- A. **Develop the site in Sitefinity CMS, so it will integrate well with third-party apps. (And it's easy to update.)**
- B. **Use Miva Merchant 5.5 for running the ecommerce.**

Sure, Derek said. But what about order fulfillment?

We contacted Miva about this. They had a partner with an automated order fulfillment process: Webgistix.

Webgistix packages and ships orders for customers who buy online. The company had a beta module for collecting shipping information from Miva, so Webgistix would know where to ship.

But this project called for more.

“This was the first site where we were deeply involved in the Webgistix integration,” said Rick Wilson, Executive Vice President of Miva Merchant. “One of the critical features for making the PleoWorld site function as designed was an automated end-to-end process that allowed the owners (of the product) to have as close to a hands-off process as possible. From accepting an order, all the way through shipment.”

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## *Step 1 – Arranging the PleoWorld Store*

Derek wanted to maintain the original site's branding. Since we had the original design files, this was easy to do in Sitefinity. But a new membership framework was needed.

One of PleoWorld.com's biggest lures was the ability for Pleo owners to register their Pleo, create a My Profile page and interact with other Pleo owners. We used Sitefinity's registration module to create a new framework for this.

The registration module handles both user and Pleo product registrations, which are kept separate from the CMS login accounts, to protect PleoWorld.com from unauthorized access.

We also integrated Constant Contact, a third-party email marketing tool, to maintain PleoWorld's 50,000-member mailing list. Derek planned to use the new membership framework and email marketing to draw back a large percentage of the old customer base.

With membership and mailing list addressed, we turned to the ecommerce solution itself.

## *Step 2 – Building the Ecommerce Solution*

There isn't an ecommerce solution that fully integrates into Sitefinity yet. So we developed Miva Merchant to run side-by-side with the PleoWorld site.

This presented a navigation challenge. To complete an order, Miva draws you into its interface (and out of Sitefinity's). This creates a "bounce" effect for the user. Many buyers get frustrated at being thrown from one interface to another—and they often decide not to buy as a result.

Our solution was to use a Sitefinity Web Control as a conduit. It shows up on PleoWorld.com as the "Buy Now" button. The control loads Miva's ecommerce process inside PleoWorld. So the buyer isn't bounced from one interface to another.

Next came shipping.

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## Step 2 –Building the Ecommerce Solution

Originally Derek wanted to sell Pleo in the US, Canada, and the UK. But he also wanted to roll out delivery to other countries over time. Miva and Webgistix handled this easily.

Adding a new delivery country to Miva Merchant stores requires one simple configuration change. International payments? The payment gateway we selected in Miva could handle any type of international currency.

The snag came from processing certain orders afterward.

The beta Webgistix module struggled to process some orders. Those orders (domestic and international) were sending data that had different XML encoding in Miva Merchant from others. The module couldn't read them correctly.

PlanetMagpie, Miva and Webgistix worked together to identify and fix the encoding issue. After all, Pleo had demonstrated a market-readiness bug. It would show up for other Miva clients if it wasn't fixed now!

"The most successful ecommerce stores follow a conservative approach to design. The PleoWorld site does that, and allows for shoppers to have a seamless, simple and secure shopping process that promotes a high conversion rate."

–Miva Merchant EVP Rick Wilson

## THE RESULTS

PleoWorld.com's new ordering process goes like this:

- 1. A customer visits PleoWorld.com to make a purchase.**
- 2. The customer adds a product to the shopping cart.**
- 3. Miva processes the order and bills them. *The customer stays on PleoWorld.com the whole time.***
  - a. The customer also has a choice of payment method: PayPal or credit card.
- 4. The order information is automatically sent to Webgistix.**
- 5. Webgistix fulfills the order by:**
  - a. Boxing the product and shipping it out directly from their warehouses.
  - b. Sending the customer a confirmation number.
  - c. Sending tracking information.

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The new Sitefinity-based PleoWorld.com

To address fraud concerns, PlanetMaggie implemented buyer authentication and foreign currency acceptance behind-the-scenes. That way international fraudsters can't complete an order, but someone who just wants a new Pleo has no trouble.

The new Sitefinity-based, ecommerce-equipped PleoWorld.com is already luring back its old customer base. An email survey asking for customer preferences on Pleo's skin color received 6,422 responses. Almost 20,000 member registrations have occurred. And nearly 7,500 Pleo owners have re-registered.

## A "Big Step Forward" in Ecommerce Automation

By making the ordering/shipping process virtually hands-free, we've essentially reduced ecommerce to its simplest possible version. Pleo sells and ships on his own.

Miva helped out by featuring the new PleoWorld site in their Featured Site Gallery for November 2009. View the current feature here (changes monthly): [Miva Merchant Galleria](#)

Past features are listed here: [Miva Merchant Galleria Archive](#)

Visit Pleo at [www.PleoWorld.com](http://www.PleoWorld.com).

### PLANETMAGPIE

Owner & President: Robert Douglas

Fremont Tech Center | 2762 Bayview Drive | Fremont | CA | 94538

T 1 877 magpie1 [624 7431] P 408 341 8770 F 408 341 8775

[info@planetmaggie.com](mailto:info@planetmaggie.com)

### INDUSTRY

Consumer Robotics

### WHY SITEFINITY

Inno agreed with PlanetMaggie's recommendation of Sitefinity CMS for several reasons. Developing in Sitefinity meant Inno could use an existing site layout. The CMS made updating easy. Plus it allowed for video uploads & social media connectivity. And it would work side-by-side with the needed ecommerce solution.

### TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- » Ecommerce Platform: Miva Merchant 5.5
- » Web Analytics: Google Analytics
- » Database Platform: MySQL
- » Technologies used: ASP.NET, JavaScript, Adobe Flash
- » Order Fulfillment Platform: Webgixit
- » Email Marketing Solution: Constant Contact
- » Deployment Highlights: Flash-based video, social media plugins, permission-based access, "Tell a Friend" function