



“Every time we receive a request, I seem to be able to say yes. WebGUI’s functionality and the WebGUI development team seem to be a step ahead of Kemin’s requirements and wishes.”

Jarrod Igou
Developer, Kemin Industries, Inc.

At a Glance

Kemin Industries, Inc.

Location

Des Moines, Iowa

Industry

Business - Nutritional Ingredient
Manufacturer

Challenge

Kemin Industries needed a solution that would allow them to build both a public facing website and Intranet, with the ability to set up a secure permission-based system.

Results

Kemin Industries’ website sees about 9000 unique visitors a month, and a number of related sites see similar activity.

Kemin Industries, Inc.

Kemin Industries, Inc. is a privately held corporation headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa. Kemin’s roots are founded in manufacturing nutritional ingredients for use in agricultural and pet foods. More recently, they have expanded into the areas of pharmaceuticals and human food, as well as specialty crop improvement. Along with this expansion has come an increased focus on science and technology leading to the acquirement of several state of the art laboratories. Their website lists about thirty areas of scientific expertise related to chemistry, biology and botany.

Since 1961, Kemin has grown to include 11 independent companies in over 60 countries serving the industries of Foods, Petfoods, Agrifoods, Pharmaceuticals and Nutraceuticals. While they are still headquartered in Iowa, they currently operate facilities in China, Singapore, Thailand, India, South Africa, Belgium, Brazil, and various other locations throughout the United States and the world.

Search for a Solution

Kemin Industries began searching for a new website solution in 2002. Kemin has multiple websites geared primarily towards marketing. They were looking for software that would allow them to build public facing websites as well as an Intranet. Most important on their list of requirements was a full suite of security features that include group based permissions. They also looked for the ability to assign permissions to individual pieces of content on the site.

When they first began researching possible solutions, the IT staff at Kemin began their search by looking at a number of PHP based options and then expanded outward to other systems. They were looking for something that was secure and easy to use so HR staff could manage items on the Intranet side, and marketing could easily create content on the public facing website.



“The framework provides the tools to develop and integrate new functionality quickly and easily.”

Results

Kemin selected WebGUI because it had all the features they wanted. Jarrod Igou, a developer with Kemin, says that one of the largest benefits of using WebGUI is being able to rapidly deploy a site, and points out that Kemin was able to launch their site in only three months. He likes that WebGUI allows him to convert a generic HTML template into something that's WebGUI-ready, and then hand the site over to non-technical staff to start building out content in a short amount of time.

Today, WebGUI powers Kemin Industries' public websites and corporate Intranet. The Intranet is primarily used to store and disseminate HR forms. The HR department also uses it as a location to conduct additional HR related training tasks by storing and distributing recorded presentations. Kemin also has its own help desk system built in WebGUI in which staff can submit a request for assistance. Forms are also submitted through the Intranet for requests for research or information.

Kemin Industries finds WebGUI's Collaboration System asset useful for posting news releases and job postings on their public websites. They also appreciate WebGUI's flexibility and the ease with which they can customize the appearance of the sites. In WebGUI, everything that is viewed is generated by a template. Jarrod was able to take advantage of that by creating a custom user-defined form field in the Collaboration System used to post job opportunities. All the technical components generating the job posting are hidden from the non-technical staff responsible for publishing job opportunities. The end result is a simple and streamlined form used by staff to post jobs, which generates a lightbox effect when site visitors select a job post to view on the site.

Kemin has taken advantage of WebGUI's API by integrating with a third-party document management system that scientists and legal personnel use. The documents often contain very sensitive information and require that strict control be maintained. Approved documents are exported from the document management system and then imported into Kemin's WebGUI site using the file import script functionality. The entire process is set to run automatically once a week, saving Kemin's IT staff time in the process.

Kemin has also worked with the development team at Plain Black to develop new or extend existing functionality in WebGUI. Jarrod says that they have always been, “pleased with the end product, the time line, and the price tag.”



Kemin is, “pleased with the end product, the time line, and the price tag.”

Knowing that the prices will be reasonable helps Kemin’s staff plan ahead with the reassurance that WebGUI’s framework will allow the new functionality to be added quickly and easily.

Since adopting WebGUI over seven years ago, Kemin Industries has undergone continuous growth. WebGUI has been able to meet their needs throughout the entire process. Jarrod says that the overall experience has been great, and has found that his involvement in the WebGUI community has helped keep him focused and energized. He has attended five WebGUI Conferences in a six year span, and says that he always learns something new and comes away full of ideas to share with his colleagues. As Kemin’s needs continue to evolve, so does WebGUI, continuously striving to stay one step ahead in anticipation of their next request.