

Customer Reference:

AUDI AG

Search solutions for Audi PartnerNet

Vorsprung durch Technik



The German car manufacturer, **AUDI AG**, with headquarters in Ingolstadt, Germany, employs more than 58,000 people in seven locations in Europe and Asia. With sales of more than Euro 35 billion (2010) Audi, the "brand with the four rings" and part of the Volkswagen Group, is one of the world's most successful automotive companies.

Starting Point

One of the objectives of the project was the replacement of the existing search in Audi PartnerNet (APN) with an easy-to-use search solution which provides the Audi partner with a clear, high quality and complete list of matches while considering his individual access rights.

Audi PartnerNet, which includes more than 10,000 documents, is AUDI AG's personalized distributor information portal and is used for dialogue throughout Germany between the manufacturer Audi and its distributors.

The desire of the customer Audi to optimize the quality of search results - searches would often not match the results that the user would have expected, was crucial to the replacement of the old APN search engine. Outdated or less relevant matches were ranked high, while the latest relevant information was not available on the first page of matches.

Solution

After an intensive evaluation phase, Audi decided to implement a search solution by IntraFind, which now supports Audi's distributors in the production business with their research processes in Audi PartnerNet.

An important requirement of the customer Audi was the consideration of the complex legal concept which is the basis of Audi PartnerNet. Thus, for example, users may never be offered suggestions for search terms in the auto-completion nor could they be shown matches for which they have no access authorization.

The controls of access rights also extend to search filters which are displayed to the user for an intuitive limitation of his search query.



Figure 1: Search support by displaying synonymous terms in the search for "cushion"

All filters show only content that the logged-on user is authorized to use. The filter content is presented here with the correct number of matches. This helps the user to use the search-related filters relevant to him.

Technical Implementation

IntraFind prevailed in the selection process preceding the award of the project with its trial phase mainly because of the completeness and relevance of matches, the linguistic quality of search results as well as the semantic search capabilities as compared with other providers.

For IntraFind Project Manager, Manuel Brunner, the particular challenges of the project lay in the support of a simple and intuitive search interface with iFinder and a complete and self-explanatory list of matches.

"For this we were allowed to seize a lot of great ideas from the project manager at Audi, Ms. Daniela Simonis, and were able to create significant added value with our iFinder modules and IntraFind linguistics compared to the old APN search. The results speak for themselves: especially the auto-completion function and the simple but effective search filters facilitate Audi partners to navigate through large numbers of matches", said Manuel Brunner.

The functions of the new APN search engine underwent extensive trials before its transition to the production operation, achieving consistently convincing results. The documents expected for each of the retrieval queries were among the top 5 results of the results list - a testimony of the excellence of the IntraFind search.

The Audi-specific design concept of the list of results and the highlighting of search terms directly in the found article also brought a significant usability advantage over a standard results list.

Furthermore, results are always outlined under a main article in the APN, which immensely favors the clarity of the list of results.

For example, if the search word entered by a user is contained in a pdf document that contains further information about a main article of the APN and is linked thereto, then the main article is displayed first in the list of matches, and then one can see the indented pdf document that contains the search term displayed under it.

Benefits

Not only the high quality and performance of the new APN search generate a positive feedback from the customer Audi but especially the very flexible and professional cooperation with IntraFind.

"IntraFind stands for technologically advanced products, reliability and customer service. The search specialists at IntraFind quickly understood our needs in terms of the functionalities of the new search

and were able to convey their understanding of the solution - that's how one feels ideally protected as a customer", concluded Thomas Müller, Head of Trade Marketing Germany for customer AUDI AG.

Summary

IntraFind could implement all the project requirements to the satisfaction of the client and the Audi APN users with the new search in Audi PartnerNet.

A few months after the project's completion, Audi participated in a study of the independent market research service provider, Psyma, which analyzed and compared the extranet offers of a group of major automobile manufacturers in the context of an online user survey.

The results showed that 74% of respondents expressed their satisfaction with Audi PartnerNet. The APN search function was evaluated as being the best by far in comparison with other extranet solutions in the automotive sector regarding ease of use, filter possibilities and presentation of results. Ease of use, speed and the wide variety of filter options of the APN search were rated as being particularly satisfactory.

In addition, Audi sales partners which participated in the survey provided valuable feedback and suggestions for additional search capabilities and optimization which will be implemented by Audi as part of a follow-up project along with IntraFind.