

Coworking innovator – Platform Audit and Enhancements

Location: New Zealand

Industry: Coworking

Services Provided: Infrastructure analysis, code audit, software QA testing, search engine optimisation analysis. Enhancements to infrastructure, code, website functionality and performance.

Tech Stack: AWS, Ruby on Rails

OVERVIEW

For digital businesses like coworking innovator CoLo, everything relies on a web platform that can be trusted to perform. With an investment round and further growth in prospect, CoLo commissioned DSS to review its technology stack in detail and then to enhance it. The result was a series of improvements that has set the platform up for the future, all completed on time and with what CoLo describes as exceptional value for money.

CHALLENGES

CoLo was at an inflection point. The New Zealand-based coworking hub was in talks for a funding round with a venture capital partner and, as part of its preparation, it wanted to be sure its code base and web platform was fit for purpose.

“We had a lot of questions,” says co-founder Lachlan Sloan. “Was the code up to spec? Was the platform robust? Did we have proper production servers? They were the kind of questions we couldn’t address on our own because at the time we didn’t have an in-house developer.”

HOW DSS HELPED

CoLo selected DSS, in part because of its ability to marry technical and business objectives, to lift the hood on the company’s platform. The audit had four components: Infrastructure analysis, code audit, software QA testing, and search engine optimisation analysis.

The project began in October 2019. Working remotely, the DSS team assessed each component in turn, spotting areas for improvement and reporting back with recommendations. The assessment, Sloan says, was largely positive. “A lot of niggly things weren’t perfect, but there was nothing that was inherently broken. We asked for a proposal to improve the platform by fixing errors and ensuring all the modules were working properly, and then commissioned DSS to do that work as well.”

TECHNOLOGY USED

CoLo’s website was built on Ruby on Rails and is hosted on AWS. DSS used the GitHub development platform on this project.



RESULTS & PLANS

The audit and follow-up enhancements were completed on schedule by the end of January 2020, and Sloan says he was impressed with the team allocated to the project. “They were diligent, worked without a lot of technical direction, and we were always very confident that they were getting the job done,” he says. “Working remotely didn’t hamper the project in any way. In fact, it worked in our favour. We’d review every morning the work done overnight, and have the afternoon to sort out the next steps. That way we’d get quite a lot done in 24 hours.”

Another upside: exceptional value for money. Sloan, who had commissioned local agencies to develop the original platform, says there’s no way CoLo could have got what it did for the same money in NZ. “It could easily have been 100 to 150 percent more,” he says. “For us, moving forward, our next step is to commission DSS for a wide range of support and marketing functions – process roles that involve working with digital tools. There’s just no logic to building those skills in a high cost market.”