



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND



Case Study | Tourism Northern Ireland

Tourism Northern Ireland: Moving into the future in unison with its regional partners

A step forward is a step in the right direction and as a National Tourism Organisation (NTO), Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) certainly knows a thing or two about journeys; after all, it delights in inviting visitors to uncover and explore the nation at their leisure.

But as fate would have it, its collaboration with Simpleview would put TNI on a journey of its very own, one that would see the NTO implement a transformation to become a cohesive and instantly recognisable digital presence. Thanks to Simpleview's powerful functionality, TNI and its regional partners are now moving into the future in unison, working closer than ever to show the world all that Northern Ireland has to offer.

Challenge

In the spring of 2020, Simpleview was appointed to develop the NTO's Discover Northern Ireland (DNI) website, the flagship site for Northern Ireland's national tourism board.

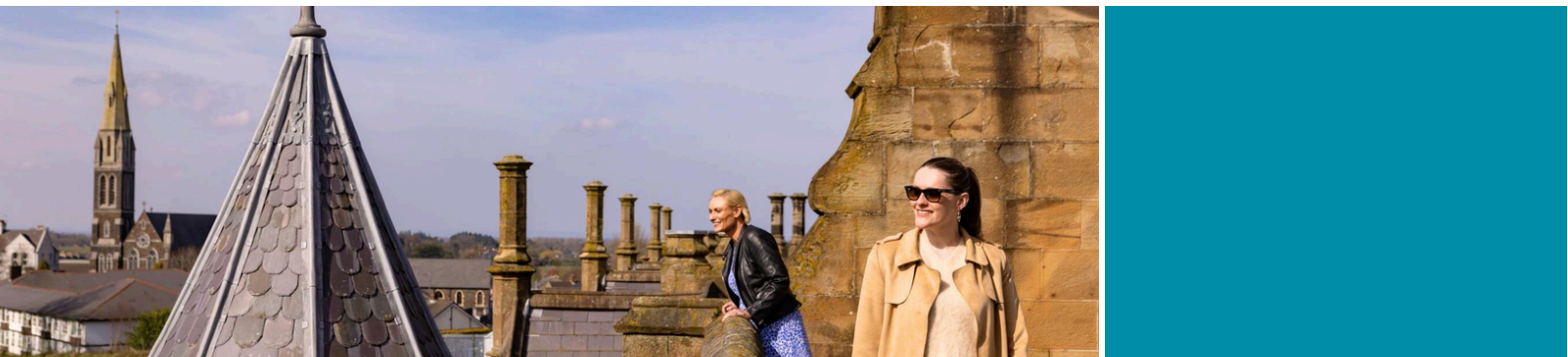


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Digital & Visitor Information
TNI



Additionally, **Simpleview was also tasked with simultaneously developing the websites of TNI's eight regional partners** — Visit Derry, Visit Causeway Coast & Glens, Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion, Fermanagh Lakelands, Visit Ards and North Down, Visit Mid Ulster, Visit Lisburn & Castlereagh and Mid & East Antrim. For Simpleview, the challenge was not only to build multiple new websites simultaneously but to do so alongside TNI as they worked to bring all of their internally generated data into one platform. Panning even further out, these changes were all taking place against the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Goal

The development of a new main website for TNI – along with the creation of separate sites for its regional partners – was to form part of a wider tourism strategy for Northern Ireland; this tactic was intended **to raise the international profile of the nation as a whole while highlighting the world-class attractions found throughout each of its very different regions**, from the Giant's Causeway to the Mountains of Mourne and everywhere in between.

The **ultimate goal was to utilise Simpleview's expertise to ensure that both the main DNI website – as well as the sites of TNI's regional partners – would have digital presences that truly celebrated their unique identities**. But most importantly, these new digital presences would need to effortlessly complement both each other and the wider TNI brand. What's more, by effectively deploying Simpleview technology throughout the build of all of these sites, it was envisioned that each individual destination would be given total autonomy in terms of how they received and shared their data, something that had not been possible prior to collaboration with Simpleview.

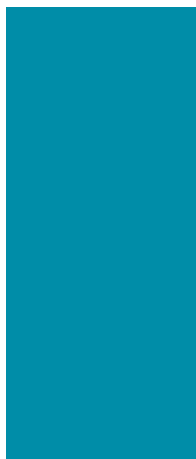
Solutions

In order to effect the digital changes that were needed, the **Simpleview DMS was deployed as a solution** to link into the NTO's internal databases. To deliver the digital autonomy desired to showcase TNI's regional partners, individual estates for each destination were also built inside the DMS. This tactic enabled each of these eight separate destinations to access the functionality of the Simpleview platform while also having the ability to share data with each other and the main DNI site.

In terms of complementary technology, the DNI site also benefited from a host of additional solutions, including **MailMinder**, the e-Marketing solution, and **CrowdRiff** – with the latter being implemented by the NTO on its main site when its previous user generated content (UGC) platform proved to be unsatisfactory.

It was hoped that this particular solution would help to paint an irresistible picture of Northern Ireland across social media, thereby attracting travellers and visitors to its shores from around the world.



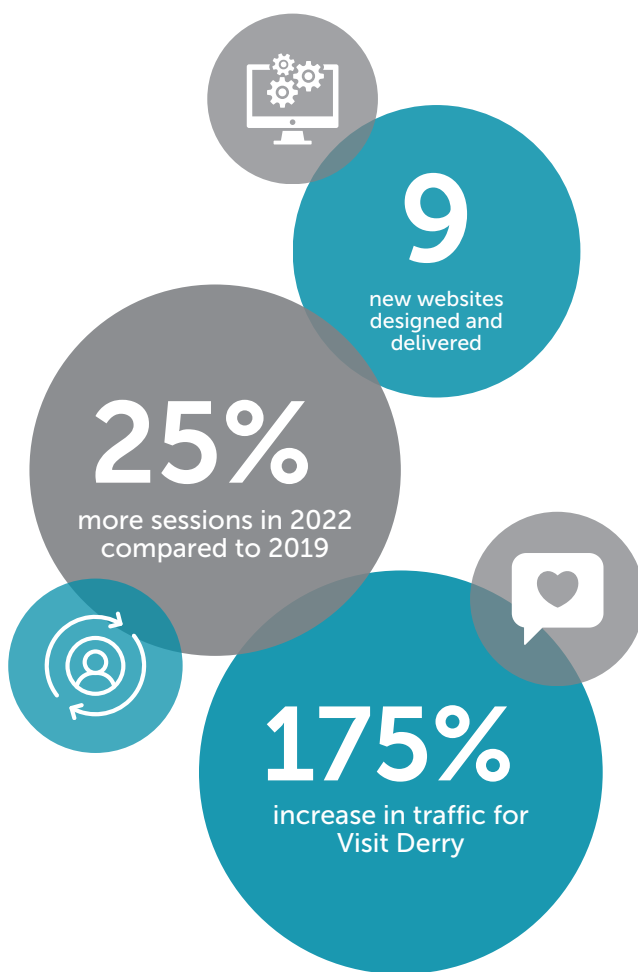


The RESULTS

Certainly a complex project, the implementation of Simpleview functionality – much of which was managed remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic – has brought **immediate and tangible results to both TNI and its regional partners.**

Bernadette Haughian, Digital & Visitor Information at TNI, succinctly acknowledged the circumstances surrounding the NTO's collaboration with Simpleview, saying, "There's been a lot of change in the time that we've been with Simpleview, but the process has been very seamless."

One immediate result of this collaboration has come directly via DNI's utilisation of the CrowdRiff platform, a tool that is now enabling this flagship site to capitalise on the power of imagery shared on social media by visitors on their travels throughout Northern Ireland. By making good use of these authentic images, TNI is collectively able to hold the eyes and minds of potential visitors from around the world, all without the need for a huge marketing budget.



In terms of growth in traffic to the main DNI site, there were 25% more sessions in 2022 compared with 2019. For the regional sites, this same period saw traffic increase by 127% for Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion and 175% for Visit Derry.



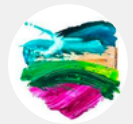
Additionally, Bernadette explained that **the deployment of Simpleview’s analytics, reporting, and SEO services is truly helping the destination to hone in on the products, services, and the kind of content that really resonates with both visitors and the wider travel sector.** “It’s great to be able to drill into different parts of the website and get data,” she added.

But one of the most remarkable features of this collaboration is the autonomy that has been allocated to the NTO’s regional partners. As Bernadette explains, these eight individual destinations, “... are absolutely so happy because most of their websites were actually taking data feeds from ourselves from our previous platforms, whereas **they now have more access into managing products on their own websites.**” Commenting on the changes implemented by these regional websites over the last few years, Bernadette adds, “... they have achieved such an amount in a short period of time and as an organisation, we’re still learning and we’re still growing.”



One of the biggest benefits we have had with the Simpleview platform coming across is that when the visitor lands onto Discover Northern Ireland and then goes out to the regional websites that are all using the Simpleview platform we are all branded in such a way that the visitor knows they are in Northern Ireland. It really has given us a strong lift and a good identity in the international markets.”

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And so for TNI, the journey — as a partnership of websites and a collective destination — is not yet complete. But for Bernadette, one of the things that has greatly eased the way forward through all of this change has been the assistance received from the Simpleview team over the last few years. “They were fantastic,” Bernadette says, adding, “One of the biggest benefits we have had with the Simpleview platform coming across is that when the visitor lands onto Discover Northern Ireland (DNI) and then goes out to the regional websites that are using the Simpleview platform, we are all branded in such a way that the visitor knows they’re in Northern Ireland ... it really has given us a strong lift and a good identity in the international markets.”