HASHOUT

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How Citrix created a simple, scalable Product Documentation experience—and cut costs 65%—with Hashout Tech

CASE STUDY

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Hashout is an integral part of our team and our success. They listen to our core requirements and use cases and make smart decisions about design and development that enable us to scale tremendously.

Everyone on Hashout's team is stellar and they do all they can to ensure they drive a great experience for our customers."

Beth Pollock,
Senior Principal Information Developer and Site Owner, Citrix Product Documentation

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"Partnering with Hashout has allowed us to drive innovations and deliver at a pace that we have not been able to before. They rebuilt our website and authoring backend in less time than it took our previous vendors to apply updates to the old infrastructure.

The gains we have made in site stability and publishing efficiency have increased customer and employee satisfaction—as well as trust."

Monica Leggoe,
Director, Information Development, Citrix

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65%
Reduction in costs

1.5 million
Page views a month

What We Provided

- Transformation from high-cost, high- maintenance legacy platform to simple, scalable, and affordable solution

- Site architecture and development

- Consultancy on leveraging the most effective tech stack for their unique needs

- Documentation site that makes authors more productive, increases customer satisfaction, and saves Citrix time, hassle and money

The Client

Industry/Category	Location
Software enterprise	US

Citrix Systems, Inc. is an American multinational software company that provides server, application and desktop virtualization, networking, software as a service, and cloud computing technologies.

Challenges

Slow and problematic Product Documentation website sends customer satisfaction tumbling

Since 2007, Citrix has hosted a documentation-dedicated website—docs.citrix.com. This online hub hosts business-critical, admin-facing content across 15 products and 80 document sets, and has grown to become one of Citrix's top-three sites for traffic, with more than 1.5 million page views a month.

The site is managed by a lean Product Documentation team, while its vast encyclopaedia of content is created by a global community of more than 60 content producers.

With thousands of pages of content to manage, and customers and authors to satisfy, the Product Documentation team needed the site to be fast, agile, and easy to use.

But in reality, their existing platform was slow, cumbersome, and problematic—and causing them challenges at every turn.

Problems really began to mount in 2015, when the team was compelled to migrate the site to a new enterprise-level web management system. It quickly became clear that the new infrastructure was wildly inappropriate for what they needed.

On the author side, the process for publishing content on the new system was brittle and complex. Consequently, the docs team's own admin was doing all the publishing himself, which added huge in-house workload and left authors unable to work to their own schedules. If something went wrong during publishing, as it regularly did, the entire website would go down. And because site code and content were intertwined, the docs team couldn't work on the website at the same time as content was being published.

On the customer side, the platform had no support for pdfs, which left customers who wanted to read documents offline frustrated. An ineffective search function fed more frustration, because finding what they needed was so onerous and time-consuming. When customers did finally find what they wanted, page load times were slow, leaving them with a very poor customer experience.

One major frustration for the docs team was that there was no adequate system of version control. This was a big issue, because with all their products warrantied, Citrix needed a clear audit trail in order to be able to stand by what they'd published and trace any errors back to the source. Exacerbating the problem further, the new platform was high-cost and high-maintenance. It required constant development for every new feature and content upload, adding extra cost and hassle for the busy team.

With a huge community of authors and customers to satisfy, Citrix's docs team needed to transform the site. To achieve that goal—and create an effective experience that improved customer satisfaction and boosted efficiency across the board—they needed to find a technology consultant: one with the expertise to help them find the right toolset, and the proven enterprise-level skills to develop and architect a standout site.

Enter Hashout Tech.

> "*Before Hashout, every day was just another set of emergencies that had to be dealt with. We couldn't do any long-range planning, because there was nothing beyond the emergency of the moment. We were always firefighting.*"
>
> **- Beth**

> "*We had recent experience with two other vendors that over-complicated projects and created tremendous overhead with little to show for it.*
>
> *With Hashout, they were able to deliver a framework that we could roll out and scale appropriately in a very short space of time. Whenever there was something that needed to be addressed, they responded immediately. They feel like a trusted member of our team where we have aligned priorities.*"
>
> **- Monica**

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The Solution

A stable, scalable, and affordable new platform

Site Owner Beth Pollock learned about Hashout Tech from a trusted peer who'd worked with the digital experience experts in a previous role. Beth felt doubly reassured, because Hashout already had significant experience driving digital transformation with enterprise-level clients.

While Beth and her team had a strong vision for the new site, including building it on a platform of more affordable, lighter weight tools, they needed Hashout to provide technical development advice, and deliver hands-on work on everything from site architecture to coding.

To move the partnership forward, Citrix's docs team shared their core requirements for the new site with Hashout. They included:

- Fix the user experience
- Lower cost of ownership
- Improve the content development experience for authors and translators
- Automate quality assurance (QA) and publishing, so authors could work more efficiently
- Provide multi-channel output, so customers could view documentation how and when they wanted
- Separate site code from content, so writers could create and publish, and Citrix and Hashout could continue developing the site, simultaneously
- Support ongoing scalability

Unlike some development firms who push their own priorities first, Hashout listened carefully to the team's challenges and pain points. Then, diving into their strong experience in solving enterprise-grade problems, Hashout formulated a solution to meet everyone's needs.

First, they developed a pilot site as proof of concept. Hashout utilized its expertise in the latest technology approaches and solutions to build out greater automation, and give the Citrix team the simple, yet scalable site they desired. To achieve this, Hashout leveraged a carefully-considered toolset, including Visual Studio Code (for authoring), Markdown (for mark-up), Bitbucket (for version control), Jekyll (for static site development), and Netlify (for hosting).

Authors who were asked to test the new site were blown away, because it enabled them to build and publish content faster and streamline workflow. With improved search and navigation, it was also more agile and faster for customers to use.

Having seen that the new toolset delivered from end-to-end, the docs team moved forward with a full migration and decommissioning of the legacy system. With Hashout working closely alongside them, the docs team successfully migrated every piece of web property—that's 150,000+ files!—and delivered full deployment of the new site in just 8 months.

The site continues to evolve and improve, with Hashout providing ongoing development of new features that drive even better customer experience and authoring efficiency.

As word quickly spread around Citrix about the success of the docs team's collaboration with Hashout, other teams wanted in. As a result, Hashout is now working with three further divisions within Citrix to meet their individual needs for digital transformation.

"*Hashout has been instrumental in our site transition and their team is always super accessible and tremendously thorough.*

"With some of the development groups that we had worked with on other projects, they weren't listening to our requirements. But Hashout really listens to what we need and the direction we need to go. They make sure they understand and then they act on that by providing solutions and designs that precisely meet our needs."

- Beth

"*Hashout understood the impact of the project and dependencies on providing an enterprise-grade site. They were able to think through our business requirements with future growth in mind.*

We needed to move fast, so iterative development was key. Hashout provided clear, daily communication and demonstrated progress, enabling us to have authors and our ops team involved in testing and support."

- Monica

The Results

65% reduction in costs, super-productive authors, and army of happy customers

Citrix Product Documention's partnership with Hashout in transitioning from a cumbersome legacy site, to something more affordable, lightweight and agile has improved customer satisfaction and experience, positively transformed authors' productivity, and delivered major time and cost savings.

Compared to the legacy platform, **the new site developed by Hashout has cut fully-loaded costs by 65%**. The new tool stack eliminates numerous licensing costs, automates processes that used to require expensive development, and reduces the need for IT support.

Because the new solution automates publishing and QA, **author productivity has improved dramatically, increasing business efficiency**.

Authors' publishing times have dropped from an average of 20 minutes to just 5. That's four times faster! Even better, writers don't have to wait for Citrix's admin to publish the new copy. Authors can easily do it themselves, precisely to their schedule, meaning they can finally focus on writing content, instead of wrestling with ineffective tools.

The newly developed site has delivered major improvements to the user experience. With improved navigation and search—combined with pages loading at least 7% faster—customers can find exactly what they need, when they need it. As a result, **customer satisfaction is sky-high**, jumping almost four points in the site's first year, and rising a further 3.2 points in the second year as more features were rolled out.

Thanks to their new tech stack and more agile site, **Citrix's docs team has the vital capability to scale without friction**. As a result, they now have 400,000 customers visiting the site a month and one and a half million page views—with no issues or downtime, because the site and infrastructure are so stable and resilient.

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"Hashout are very agile and make sensible decisions about design and scalability, which was one of our core requirements. It's one thing to talk about scalability and to say that what you built will scale—it's a completely different thing for it to actually scale.

"Everyone we've worked with on Hashout's team has been stellar. They're an integral part of my team and they add more value with the development leadership they provide. If they see something we could improve on, or they think a different direction would make sense for customers, they explain it and give me enough information to make a good decision. They're fully vested in protecting our customers."

- Beth

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"Hashout are truly committed to your success and providing value to your business. They are agile and work with us as new business requirements arise or there's a change in priorities. They are also very conscious about quality and testing to prevent issues or introduce regressions.

They have experience working with support, service and product organizations and can provide best practice recommendations on customer experience and reporting metrics. Hashout delivers and will become a highly valued member of any team."

- Monica

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Hashout Tech delivers enterprise-grade digital transformations that boost productivity and cut costs

Schedule a consultation now →