Newsletter
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news

flax

The Open Source Search Specialists

Flax wins contract with NHS Wales

Flax has won a 3-year contract with the NHS Wales Informatics Service to support the Apache Lucene/Solr search engine used by the Welsh Clinical Portal, during which period we'll be backing up the in-house team with our deep experience of Solr.

The Welsh Clinical Portal is a classic example of how a search engine can be used to bring together huge amounts of data. Many records are still paper based and electronic records are created across different applications, hospitals and GP practices. The Welsh Clinical Portal allows hospital clinicians to easily find and view essential healthcare information such as medication details and referral notes.

The system itself has been designed to handle up to 300 million documents and will be constantly updated with the thousands of new items added every day. Solr provides powerful and accurate search and fast response times.

As their recent newsletter notes, *"this is considered to be the first time Solr has been applied to a health enterprise architecture on a national scale"*.

We're seeing increasing adoption of open source software in the healthcare domain, with a recent development being NHS England's creation of the Apperta Foundation to help manage the adoption of new open source applications that can easily be

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES — Gwasanaeth Gwybodeg Informatics Service

extended and re-used with no license fees payable. The Welsh Clinical Portal is a great example of what can be achieved with open source software while reducing costs – an essential consideration for a publicly-funded healthcare organisation.

If you need help designing, building or supporting applications based on Solr, for healthcare or any other application, do get in touch.

Flax announces partnership with Apache Kafka creators Confluent

We're very happy to announce our partnership with Confluent, which was founded by the creators of Apache Kafka, a stream data platform and the central component of their Confluent Platform. Flax has been aware of Kafka since its inception at LinkedIn, where it is used as the messaging backbone for a wide array of technical and business data, like click stream events, ad impressions, social network change events, systems monitoring, messaging, analytics and logging applications.

Kafka has been described as 'TiVo for data' – you can put pretty much any streaming data into Kafka, store it in a distributed and resilient way and then play it out again from any point. It's highly scalable and integrates well with other Big Data tools such as Apache Hadoop. We've used Kafka and its sister project Apache Samza to develop prototype high-performance media monitoring systems and we're also using it along with Elasticsearch, Logstash and Kibana (the ELK stack) to develop log monitoring and analysis systems. We're hearing about many other potential uses of Kafka in the Big Data and Internet of Things ecosystems.

"Kafka is creating a new paradigm for organizations and allowing businesses across industries to make informed, timely decisions from their data in real time" said Jabari Norton, VP Business Development at Confluent. *"We are excited to include Flax among the ranks of a growing landscape of diverse partners and systems integrators committed to unlocking the potential of streaming data for their customers."*

How to get started on improving Site Search Relevancy

Karen Renshaw, previously Head of On Site Search at RS Components, the world's largest electronic component distributor, is writing a series of blog posts for Flax on how to improve site search from a business perspective.

"You know your search experience isn't working – your customers, your colleagues, your bosses are telling you – you know you need to fix it, fix something but where do you start?"

"Understanding and improving search relevancy can often feel like a never ending journey and it's true – tuning search is not a one-off hit – it's an iterative ongoing process that needs investment. But the resources, companies and tools needed to support you are available."

Read more on the Flax blog www.flax.co.uk/blog

About Flax

Flax are independent specialists in open source search software with international clients from sectors including academia, public relations, media, e-commerce and government, including The Financial Times, NLA media access, The University of Cambridge and Reed Specialist Recruitment.

Flax uses the power of open source software to drive down costs and provide world beating search performance with no software licence fees.

Flax is an authorized partner of Lucidworks, the commercial company dedicated to Lucene & Solr.