

CASE STUDIES

Optima Legal Online Case Study



In Focus IT (UK) Limited

Using Aspose.Words .NET to export Zimbabwe Legislation content for legal and court use.

Andrew Bates, Director, 14th June 2019

About In Focus IT (UK) Limited

InFocusIT has been incorporated since 2005 and provides enterprise development services and solutions to a variety of different markets.

We deliver enterprise solutions that once deployed just work. Many of the systems that we develop or work with generally have a large corpus of electronic content in a variety of file formats. Interchanging between these seamlessly can be a challenge.

Problem

We constantly have a need to convert electronic documents into other document file formats. We have used Apose.Words before and found it to be a very reliable and stable product. Many solutions automated Word which is slow and not recommended by Microsoft on a server.

Aspose.Words enables us to not have to deploy third party applications to have the ability to be able to convert our documents quickly and easily.

We also have other solutions that we are looking to develop in the automatic capture of updates for publishing. We envisage that Aspose.Words will allow us to apply corrections and styling to the documents prior to supply to editorial.

Solution

The publishing platform we developed holds the content in XHTML. This ensures that it can easily be published to various platforms easily and doesn't carry too much overhead. We recognised early on that allowing legal customers to only download XHTML wasn't going to deliver the value that our publishing platform required.

The publishing platform is built around a series of micro services that provide very focused functionality. One service is the export web API developed in C# and .NET Core.

We aggregate the document to publish as part of the export operation. This adds headers and such like to the content. This is built up in XHTML.

In order to convert the XHTML to our supported export file formats being DOCX and PDF we did the following.

Added a reference to Aspose.Words via Nuget to the web API service. Loaded the aggregated XHTML document into Aspose, add the required headers and footers using the DocumentBuilder class and then save the resultant document to the target file format.

All of this functionality was delivered in roughly a page of code which was pretty impressive.

The end user is unaware of this process as we obviously prepare the document on the server when the request is made to export content.

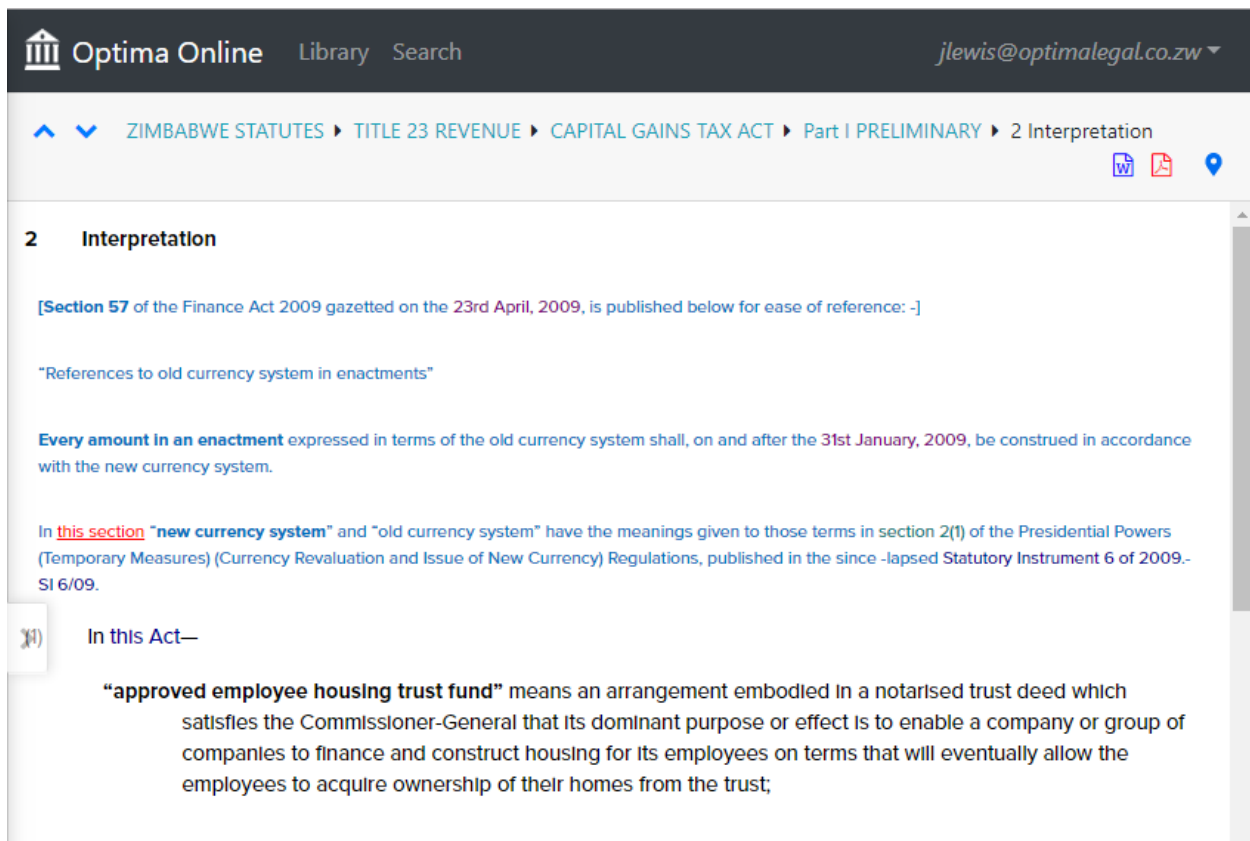


Figure 1 – Optima Legal Online with the export to DOCX and PDF links top right.

The first the users sees is a link to open the prepared document from.

Optima Legal (Pvt) Ltd (Jeremy Lewis)

ZIMBABWE STATUTES
CAPITAL GAINS TAX ACT
Part I PRELIMINARY

2 Interpretation

[Section 57 of the Finance Act 2009 gazetted on the 23rd April, 2009, is published below for ease of reference: -]

"References to old currency system in enactments"

Every amount in an enactment expressed in terms of the old currency system shall, on and after the 31st January, 2009, be construed in accordance with the new currency system.

In this section "**new currency system**" and "old currency system" have the meanings given to those terms in section 2(1) of the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) (Currency Revaluation and Issue of New Currency) Regulations, published in the since -lapsed **Statutory Instrument 6 of 2009**. - SI 6/09.

(1) In this Act—

"approved employee housing trust fund" means an arrangement embodied in a notarised trust deed which satisfies the Commissioner-General that its dominant purpose or effect is to enable a company or group of companies to finance and construct housing for its employees on terms that will eventually allow the employees to acquire ownership of their homes from the trust;

[inserted by Act 6 of 2006 with effect from the 1st September, 2006.]

Figure 2 – Zimbabwe Capital Gains Tax Act [Chapter 23:01], section 2 exported from Optima Legal Online in PDF using Apose.Words.

Experience

We looked at various other options which all came in around the same cost but nothing else afforded the same level of robustness and functionality.

iTextPro 7 had support for converting from HTML to PDF but no support for DOCX. We could have supplemented that by writing our own using DocumentFormat.OpenXml component but that would have taken a lot of effort to implement.

We wanted to get away from automating Word so that wasn't an option for us.

The implementation to convert from XHTML to DOCX and PDF literally took a days work to write the code and unit tests around it. The object model was intuitive and very simple to achieve that we wanted to do.

The current solution meets the current export functionality for Optima Legal Online and we'll be looking to utilise the other functionality in editorial systems and other systems that we'll be looking to develop.

Using Apose probably saved us several months development effort developing our own solution and good developers aren't cheap. Apose delivered the product requirements over and above what we could have written as a bespoke development.

Next Steps

We will be looking to take Aspose.Words back into our editorial systems to enhance their functionality.

We are also looking to use it for styling captured legislation so that it can be published faster.

Summary

It was so easy to implement the required functionality within our products saving us a lot of development time and money and also giving us functionality that we can enhance our products with going forward.

I've worked with Aspose at previous client sites and back then we did notice some niggles. We did raise these via the support forum and they were generally resolved with the next release which seems to be monthly and is good service.

I'd highly recommend using Aspose.Words for document conversion and processing. It's intuitive and simple to add powerful capabilities around document composition and conversion.