



CASE STUDY



Agency
Making Waves

Site
fnugg.no

Challenge
Design a web and iOS app enabling all 208 Norwegian ski resorts to upload content in real time

Results
Real-time content uploads through managed WordPress solution

“We can push one button and off we go. We can start developing instantly.”

- Håkon Stillingen,
Making Waves

Real-Time Content Keeps Skiers Informed, On The Slopes

MAKING WAVES, WP ENGINE DELIVER MANAGED WORDPRESS-POWERED SKI RESORT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Company

Making Waves is a full service digital agency that applies strategy, design, and technology services to help bold enterprises transform into successful digital businesses.

The Site

Fnugg.no (www.fnugg.no). Making Waves (www.makingwaves.com) designed and developed Fnugg.no, a web application and native iOS app that provides real-time information about skiing conditions, including lift status, weather condition, slope status, general status updates and more, for all 208 ski resorts in Norway.



The Challenge

Fnugg, Norwegian for “snowflake”, is the association for alpine skiing resorts in Norway. Fnugg hired Making Waves to build a web and mobile information service for alpine ski resorts in Norway. According to Håkon Stillingen of Making Waves, the goal for Fnugg was to inspire people to get on the ski slopes with real-time information about the conditions of each of Norway’s 208 ski resorts.

The service was divided into two parts: a backend through which the resorts could enter their content and their data, and a front end where skiers consume the content. It required a scalable system through which each resort could input data, and a stunning user interface for visitors. Making Waves needed a platform that would allow for both, which also integrated seamlessly with APIs and other solutions.



The Solution

Making Waves built the Fnugg product using WP Engine’s managed WordPress platform. On top of it, it layered Elasticsearch to make the site easily searchable, custom middleware built with nodeJS, and the WordPress REST API to integrate other systems into WordPress. One of the key integration points was the Google Maps directions API, which allowed Making Waves to integrate the ability to calculate distance between users and resorts and between the resorts themselves. To be able to serve the users with current and long term weather conditions, nodeJS also integrates with a third-party weather API, fallback to this data when the resort admins haven’t posted any weather reports.

The solution works like this: every time there's an update from the WordPress backend, it sends a notification to Elasticsearch. That notification contains information about what has been updated, and that points to the correct endpoint in the REST API. Then Elasticsearch and nodeJS fetch that information. There are integration points with the Google Maps directions API and the Instagram API that allows Elasticsearch to present data to site visitors. Stillingen called it a "hybrid solution," because some of the data also comes directly from WordPress backend, while Google Maps and nodeJS provide map info, and WP Engine's platform serves static assets through its CDN.

"We wanted a setup that allowed us to distribute content across different channels and different clients. That's why we chose an API driven approach," Stillingen said.

Using APIs ensures integration with tools outside of WordPress that gives Fnugg a major performance and functionality upgrade.



The Results

Stillingen said the solution makes it super easy for the resorts to input their data. The backend that the resorts access uses a reskinned WP Admin. The solution also leverages a multisite installation, whereby each ski resort has its own subsite. This allows each subsite to have its own separate database tables while also sharing some of the same data. Making Waves also created a customized automated setup for subsites by hooking into the new blog action hook. In addition, they used an Advanced Custom Fields setting file for sharing of the custom field groups between all the resorts.

In the first six months, the Fnugg website has driven more than 1.7 million page views, and has been able to scale to roughly 5,000 users per second during a major campaign that lasted several days in January. And page load speeds are lightning fast, coming in at around five seconds (with server response times of around 0.69 seconds) from click to completion, which for a data and image-heavy site is fast.

Overall, Stillingen said, working with WP Engine empowered Making Waves to use WordPress as the hub of a multichannel solution. WP Engine drives major business benefits for Making Waves, mainly because it allows the agency to focus on what it does best and work quickly.

"We can push one button and off we go," he said of WP Engine's platform. "We can start developing instantly. Our customers know that we don't spend time on things we don't have to spend time on."

And Making Waves customers can be confident that Making Waves is working hard on their solution and not on fussing with WordPress or hosting.

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About WP Engine

WP Engine powers amazing digital experiences for websites and applications built on WordPress. The company's premium managed hosting platform provides the performance, reliability and security required by the biggest brands in the world, while remaining affordable and intuitive for smaller businesses and individuals. Companies of all sizes rely on WP Engine's award-winning customer service team to quickly solve technical problems, and create a world-class customer experience. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas, and London, England.