

Team 2008



Official blog of Russian Olympic team for Beijing. We created it for Google and the Russian Olympic Committee. Everything was built using Google technology platform: Maps, Youtube, Blogger, iGoogle, Picasa and Google News.

Goals: "Team 2008" is a media center for Russian fans, athletes and the mass media. The website was to allow readers to follow the victories of the Russian team interactively, receiving fresh news in text, photo and video form, right from the place of action.

Task: tied to the opening of XXIX Olympic Games in Beijing was the requirement to create a unified online information resource, designed for high load, which had to be done quickly and at a low price.

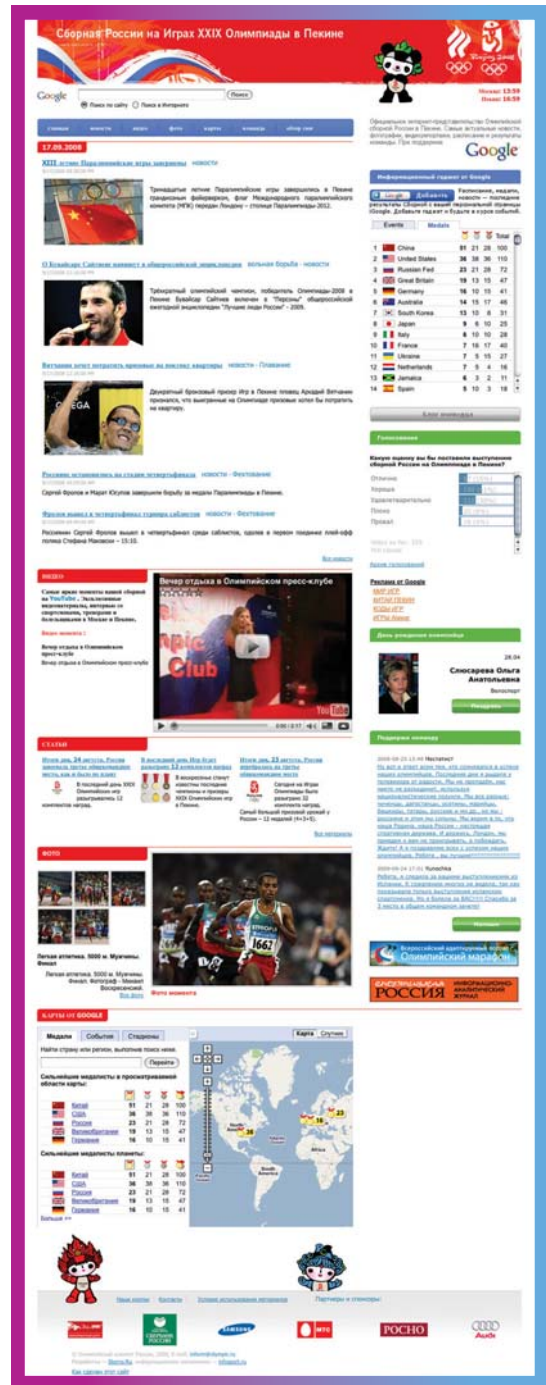
Solution: despite the limited time and budget we wanted to create a full-blown information agency. So we developed it utilizing only Google services.

The main part of the website was placed on Blogger. It's hard to imagine, but the front page is in fact a single Blogger post, in which we have created separately updated zones, using Javascript. Thus, site design resembled a traditional news website. News columns, articles, video and photo albums were split into blocks and updated separately. Each block update was presented on the main page. For the Blogger it was still only one post that was being edited continuously.

Video for the project was placed into a special Youtube channel. Users were provided clips on Moscow fans, interviews with athletes, managers of the Russian Olympic committee and reports directly from Beijing (from the competitions, about the athletes life there, Russian fan club in Beijing, etc). Journalists and Olympic committee employees uploaded their videos directly from the info-centre in Beijing. These clips appeared not only in Youtube channel, but also in the appropriate videogallery section of the website.

Photojournalists worked in the same way. They used a Picasa account to upload photo albums. Text and articles were put up as simple blog posts, and their headlines appeared on the front page, as they would on a traditional media website with a standard editorial process.

Additionally, we created a database on the Russian team. Data on more than 400 persons were cut up into lists by the discipline and also by male/female parameter. All of this was achieved without a dedicated database system! In fact those were 400 Blogger posts, one per athlete, and discipline/gender sorting was implemented using tags. You would never guess that though, viewing the Team section on the website and looking at a list of all field and track athletes, or all runners, or all 800 meter runners.



A special "Happy birthday to an athlete" block was created by smartly linking comments from an athlete's post to the front page.

День рождения олимпийца

28.04

**Слюсарева Ольга
Анатолевна**

Велоспорт

Поздравь

Расписание, медали, новости

События	Медали	Всего
1 Китай	51 21 28	100
2 США	36 38 36	110
3 Россия	23 21 28	72
4 Великобритания	19 13 15	47

Gadgets powered by Google

To add even more interesting content to the project, we used other Google capabilities:

- "Media review" section is a Google News integration. We didn't limit ourselves to a simple RSS feed, added to the blog stream. Instead, we designed a complete portal section based on such a feed. To start, we split the news stream by keywords (disciplines, general Olympic news, stories from Russian fan zone in Beijing). For each substream there was a separate Blogger post. A mechanism refreshing the post upon availability of new content in Google news search was implemented. Another post was created and used as a main page for the Media Review section. It had the index of fresh news by topic; technically implemented exactly as the front page. Using javascript, we refreshed every topical block separately, while the page remains a single Blogger post with static address. To view separate topical news streams we have created tag cloud navigation from the front page. Each tag leads to a Blogger post containing news selected by a set of keywords. E.g. for «field and track» tag one can see news preselected by a carefully crafted set of searches which result in field and track news from the Beijing Olympics.
- The website also uses iGoogle gadget created by the main Google especially for the Olympics. The gadget displayed realtime results and medals for each team.
- The «Maps» section displays an interactive map of Beijing Olympics, created by the Google office in China.

Results: efficiency: more than 500,000 unique visitors to the blog during the Olympics.