



Case Study



Industry
Entertainment

Site
riverdance.com

Challenge
Build a scalable website that could integrate with ticketing solutions while serving as a destination for Riverdance fans to find out more about the world-famous show.

Solution
WP Engine Digital Experience Platform.

Results
Riverdance continues to enjoy global fame and sold-out shows—in its native Ireland as well as when it tours in cities around the world.

Keeping Riverdance in the Spotlight

Riverdance relies on WP Engine to power its website, where fans keep up with the latest news, see footage from recent performances and get event and ticket listings for upcoming shows.

Riverdance is an international Irish dance stage spectacular that has been seen live by an audience of more than 25 million across six continents. The global TV audience for the show exceeds 3 billion viewers. For over two decades, Riverdance has toured the world continuing to set new box office records in packed theatres and arenas and returns home to Dublin, Ireland each summer. Riverdance.com the first website was launched in 1996 and soon received over 14 million hits per month.

Riverdance: The 25th Anniversary Tour will tour internationally from 2020.



The challenge.

Riverdance took the world by storm in the mid-1990s, dazzling audiences with its hybrid mix of traditional Irish and international dance music and its cast of highly-skilled dancers and musicians. It began as the interval act at the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest in Dublin, and it was soon developed into a full-length stage show that continues to play to sold-out audiences around the world today.



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“Since moving to WP Engine, we’ve seen improvements in our SEO, our speed and uptime, and for our local and international tours, we’ve found fans are able to easily find relevant information on and video footage of the show.”

Mary O’Donnell,
Manager, Riverdance Marketing

But keeping Riverdance in the spotlight for more than two decades has also been the result of a formidable marketing effort, a core part of which is a website where fans can learn more about the show, search for tour dates, and buy tickets for upcoming performances.

Building a site where all of this could take place, and keeping it up and running in the face of traffic spikes was no easy task. The marketing team at Riverdance built a WordPress site to streamline these processes, however, they soon found that stretching beyond their day-to-day capabilities would require a partner to help them get more out of their WordPress digital experience.

“Our website was initially built as an events platform to advertise for upcoming shows, either here in Ireland or abroad,” said Riverdance Marketing Manager Mary O’Donnell. “And for that functionality, it was great.”

But when the producers of Riverdance decided to run an online contest that would choose new dancers for their new international dance show Heartbeat of Home, O’Donnell and her team decided against taking on the potentially high-traffic event all alone.

“We wanted help setting up a site where dancers in the competition could upload videos of their performances, and where visitors could vote on which dancers they liked the best,” O’Donnell said. “We also needed someone to help us manage the traffic as the contest had huge international interest.”



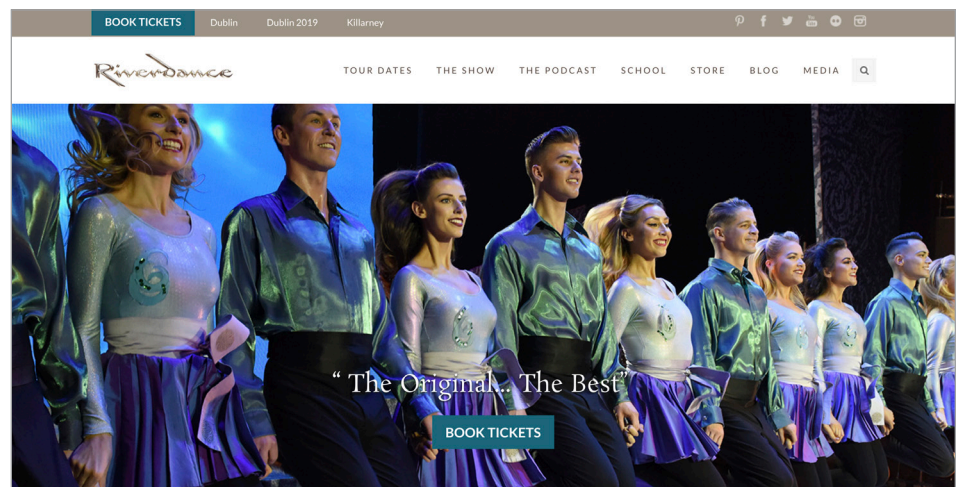
The solution.

After evaluating their options, Riverdance enlisted WP Engine to help optimise and add on to their existing site as well as build a second site and help manage traffic during the online event.

“We ended up getting millions of hits during the contest and thankfully didn’t have any trouble at all,” O’Donnell said.

Using WP Engine’s Digital Experience Platform, Riverdance was also able to add to its main site and integrate with all the major international ticketing services.

“Overall the solution was very good, and easy for my team to adapt to and begin using immediately,” O’Donnell said.





The results.

After they began using WP Engine's Digital Experience Platform, Riverdance has experienced better page load times and improved SEO—features that have helped Riverdance's website keep up with the show's ever-growing fanbase and remain a global sensation with new and old fans alike.

"Since moving to WP Engine, we've seen improvements in our SEO, our speed and uptime, and for our local and international tours, when we go on tour outside of Ireland, we've found fans are able to easily find relevant information on and video footage of the show," O'Donnell said.

O'Donnell added that the ease-of-use offered by WordPress makes it convenient for her staff to create new content on their site without always needing a developer.

The Riverdance team is relaunching the site for its 25th Anniversary Production. From 2020 and beyond there will be two companies extensively touring territories including Europe, North America, China, and Australia. The new platform must be flexible and scalable to integrate the tour listings and ticketing for these diverse markets as well as catering for its home market and the tours in Dublin and cities throughout Ireland.

As well as expanding the site, O'Donnell said there would be regional versions of the site translated into different languages.

"We certainly have plans to keep growing in the future," O'Donnell said. "And we plan to continue working with WP Engine."

About WP Engine.

WP Engine is the world's leading WordPress digital experience platform that gives companies of all sizes the agility, performance, intelligence, and integrations they need to drive their business forward faster. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas, and has offices in San Francisco, California; San Antonio, Texas; London, England; Limerick, Ireland, and Brisbane, Australia.