



VARNISH
SOFTWARE



allenta

"South American media giant La Nación & Spanish partner Allenta use Varnish API & Web Acceleration to build a robust Advanced Paywall solution."

Case Study:

La Nación

La Nación & Allenta use Varnish to build a robust advanced paywall solution

Who is La Nación?

La Nación is an Argentine morning newspaper, founded in 1870. In 2016, the digital edition of La Nación, lanación.com.ar, became the fourth most visited digital newspaper in Spanish in the world, with more than 7 million unique users in a month.

La Nación is a bastion of independent, rigorous and high quality journalism with a focus on innovation in the formats and platforms that best serve society. Its aim is to help its audience stay informed and better understand reality, make decisions and discover facts and issues that are relevant to their lives or are of interest or have entertainment value.

What challenges did La Nación face? How did Allenta help them solve these challenges?

The media and publishing industry has been adapting to the evolution of consumer models, increasingly oriented to digital channels where the number of readers is constantly increasing - both in terms of new readers and those moving from more traditional channels. In addition to this, the reduction of advertising revenue in the last decade has meant that new sources of income generation were required; media outlets needed to find new revenue to sustain themselves while continuing to provide quality content to its readers.

With a growing volume of users in the digital channel and a commitment to personalized content, La Nación came to Allenta with the following challenges:

- Deliver content faster
- Integrate content access control with pre-existing user management systems
- Provide a flexible control framework for the implementation of complex signwall and paywall models.



“Varnish API & Web Acceleration is not only a good product, the support of Allenta is impeccable. Allenta is one of the best support providers we have in technology. It’s the key to getting the most out of the product and meeting expectations.”

-José Luis Falvo, Manager of Infrastructure and Operations of Digital Media, La Nación

What was the solution proposed by Allenta based on Varnish API & Web Acceleration?

After initial analysis of La Nación's requirement, carried out between the La Nación's and Allenta's technical teams, a plan was made to execute the tasks assigned to each team and to implement the proposed solution.

From the outset it became clear that Varnish's well-known and proven capabilities would provide a solid foundation upon which the access control layer can be built. Using the flexible framework that Varnish offers, the Allenta team integrated the Advanced Paywall toolkit. This combination allowed an approach that combines features essential for a complex and demanding scenario:

- High performance and peace of mind, provided by Varnish Cache Plus, during times of maximum traffic.
- Powerful and flexible integration of the Advanced Paywall component with pre-existing users, subscriptions and content management services to provide access control.

In addition to the functionality of the standard components of the Varnish API & Web Acceleration solution, such as SSL / TLS support, the Advanced Paywall component developed by Allenta provides all the logic required for a high-performance access control layer implemented by specific VMODs, VCL configuration fragments and other control services.

One of the major challenges addressed by this combination was to make sure to protect performance while adding access control logic or, in simple terms, ensure that custom content delivery performance was as fast as usual without delivery delays.

"Implementation was very simple. The platform is very versatile when making changes and adapting it to SSO, web services, etc. Unlike in other applications where everything is more proprietary and closed."

-José Luis Falvo, Manager of Infrastructure and Operations of Digital Media, La Nación

How does Varnish API & Web Acceleration's Advanced Paywall solution work?

The basic requirements for a successful implementation of Varnish API & Web Acceleration with Advanced Paywall are as simple as defining a caching strategy, a content categorization policy, and some API services. In general, the backend should provide the answer to a set of simple questions:

- Is this content protected?
- Is the current user authenticated?
- Is the user allowed to access this content?

Working with digitally signed cookies and a high-performance key-value storage system, the full power of the caching layer is leveraged to resolve, at a high speed, whether the user is entitled to the content and what to do next (e.g., evaluate how good it would be to have a subscription).

Results

The deployment of Varnish API & Web Acceleration with Advanced Paywall as a cache layer with storage in memory for La Nación resulted in seamless integration with pre-existing backend systems. This has allowed for high-performance operations in the delivery of content that is subject to access control.

The future

A dynamic environment, such as the publication of digital media, requires a flexible product approach that adapts to new challenges. Varnish API & Web Acceleration with Advanced Paywall forms a framework that allows for future-oriented adaptations as needed.

The enhancements and new features in Varnish API & Web Acceleration with Advanced Paywall are driven by the needs of large organizations such as La Nación. Among these novelties for the immediate future are alternative mechanisms for content labeling, execution of access control logic in different points of the process and fraud detection mechanisms, among others.

Other existing functionalities have been gaining ground in solving situations such as managing large volumes of data or objects with persistence using Varnish's Massive Storage Engine.

In summary, new features and improvements will be implemented, maintaining a very demanding standard in terms of product capabilities and excellence in interaction with the end customer.

About Varnish Software

Varnish Software's mission is to significantly enhance web performance for businesses online. Varnish powers major sites across all industry types - for businesses such as Tesco, Nikon, Boozt, Eurosport and Tesla as well as more than 2.8 million websites worldwide. Varnish Software's web performance and content delivery solutions offer scalability, customization, monitoring and expert support services.

About Allenta

Allenta Consulting specialises in the design and administration of Linux and Unix systems infrastructure. The Allenta team consists of highly skilled technical professionals with experience working with top level organisations. For several years they have been working with Varnish Cache as part of their catalogue of customer solutions. At some point, Allenta started to work with Varnish Software and became Integration Partner. Since then, there's has been a close partnership that has allowed Allenta to lead projects where deep skills in Varnish configuration and development of modules are necessary. Some of those projects focus in the access control to assets in the caching edge (e.g. paywall systems). Allenta is currently working in several access control/paywall projects for top media companies in Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Ireland and Argentina.



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