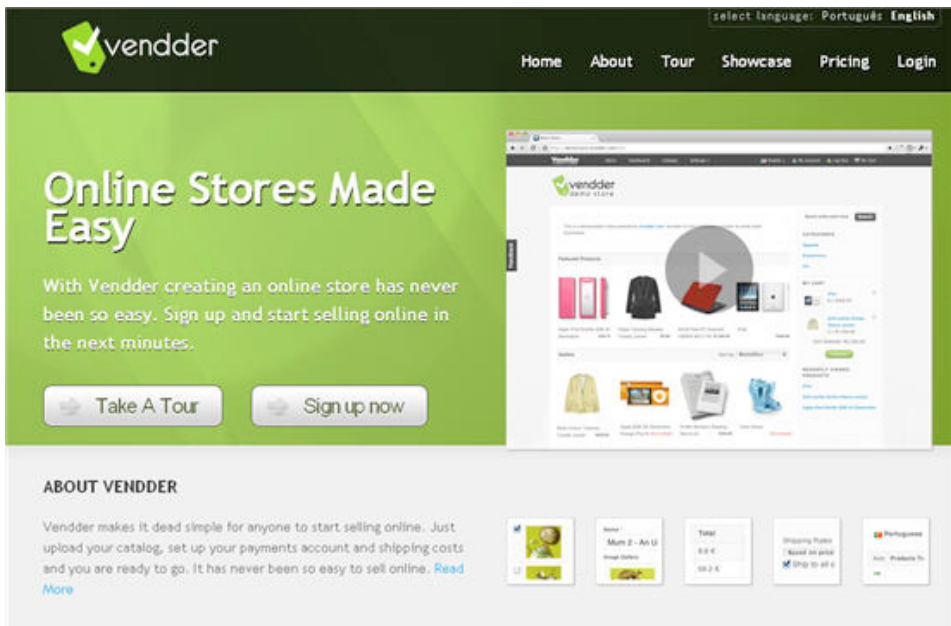




Written by Mike Sullivan | 23 October, 2010.

Filipe Gonçalves Co-founder of Widetail | Featured on MO.com

“The future of creating demand lies not at the head of the curve, on the big hits, but rather down the Long Tail of niches.”



online store instantly and lets users easily manage their store with an intuitive interface. The system operates on a small monthly fee, so there is no mandatory upfront fees or large system purchases. Vendder users do not need to worry about infrastructure, backups, updates, software development and security... Vendder does it all while providing an elegant and simple online store.

MO:

Tell me what differentiates Vendder from other shopping carts or online selling solutions?

Filipe:

When you want to create your online store you can either go with a shopping cart software, either commercial or open-source, that you install in your own server and customize or with an hosted cart like ours. In this case of a SaaS solution you don't need to worry about the infrastructure as everything is supported by the company providing the service. It's great for small merchants as they can have their store up and running in a short time frame and with a small budget. Apart from shopping carts you can also sell in marketplaces like Ebay or Etsy.

Compared to the competition in this hosted shopping cart field, our main advantage is in the multi-language field. We are probably one of the only hosted solutions supporting other languages than English, including the admin interface for the merchant, and that provide a turn-key solution to sell in multiple languages, currencies and tax systems. This is very important for merchants in a such fractionated EU, where you have 23 official languages and multiple currencies. We also have some other ideas on the way to help merchants promote their products in multiple e-commerce platforms but I would prefer to keep them secret as they are still under development.

MO:

How easy is it to integrate Vendder into an existing site? Is it challenging to match the look and feel of the millions of possible site designs that exist?

Filipe:

We provide a small widget for the user to embed the store inside their existing website. If they have access to the html they can just copy/paste a small snippet of code to the place where they want to insert the store and they will instantly get the store inside their existing site. After that they can set the colors in the theme to match the site colors.

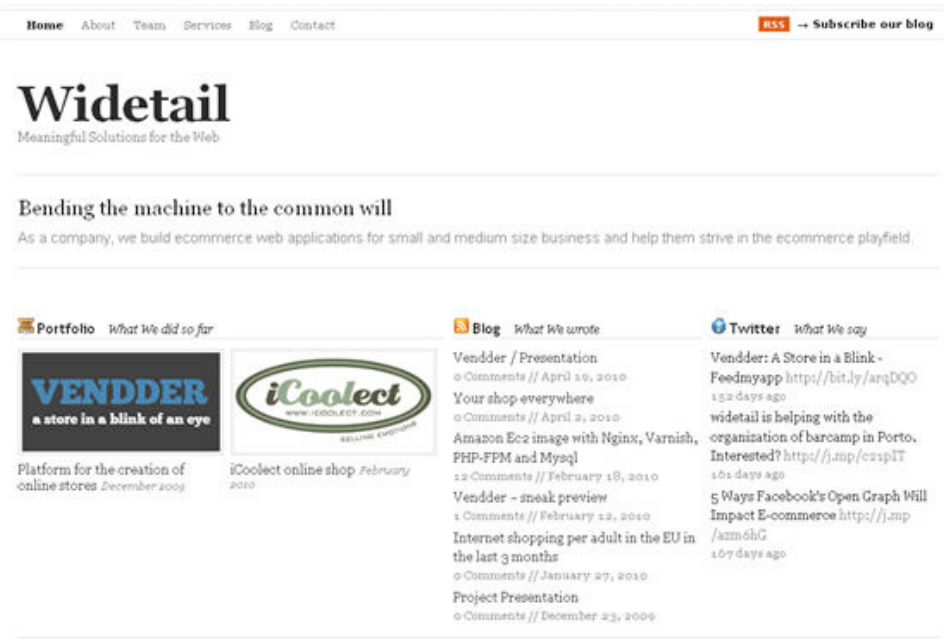
There are some limitations related with the size of the hosting site, as it needs at least 900 pixels width to make it work perfectly but it works for most of the cases.

MO:

The company was founded in Portugal and prices are shown in Euros. Will Vendder work for online stores in the United States as well?

Filipe:

Of course, you can easily set your prices in dollars or in any other currency. It was our option to show the prices of the subscription in euros as it better reflects our reality.



MO:

Widetail carries the philosophy: “The future of creating demand lies not at the head of the curve, on the big hits, but rather down the Long Tail of niches.” What exactly does this mean and how is Widetail staying true to this philosophy?

Filipe:

Well, that phrase is from Chris Anderson, author of the famous book “The Long Tail”. He makes plain how the blogosphere and online communities are creating an environment where a thousand points of light can outshine the largest of media and how that is replicated in different market verticals across the web.

Since the beginning that we have been working with small merchants and we truly believe this merchants to succeed have to focus and lead a “niche” market. On the Internet, it really doesn’t matter if you are physically located 1km away from your customer or live in the other side of the world. It always boils down to the product itself. Your customers will be able to quickly find and buy you items they are interested on and can not easily purchase them around their geographical location. But as quick as they can find you, they can also visit other websites in same business and buy there instead. That’s why small business need to dominate a “niche” market.

MO:

I have to ask about you time spent working for the European Space Agency. It just sounds like a “cool” place to work. Was the job as exciting as one would expect?

Filipe:

There are so many different projects going on there that is difficult to set expectations, but for people that always worked in an IT environment like me, it was very interesting to work with people from different engineering backgrounds. The work conditions are also very good, not like Googleplex, but much more amenities and perks than in an average company.

MO:

What factors led you to the decision to no longer work for an employer, but to take the entrepreneurial leap into co-founding a new startup? What risks did you consider when making the decision?

Filipe:

Since I left the University I have always had the idea of one day starting a company. I had been sharing some ideas with the other co-founder of Widetail, Tiago Matos, for a while. And in July 2009 the perfect time came, we had a strong idea of what we wanted to do, Tiago had just finished his contract in UK and it was time for me to decide either to renew with ESA or leave. I thought for some days about the risks and benefits and just decided to leave the company and start this new adventure.

MO:

All very interesting but what’s next for Vendder?

Filipe:

As I stated earlier, we are now developing new tools to better promote our merchants products in the Web and we are also slowly increasing our focus in customer development, as most of the merchants’ required features are live on Vendder.

A few days ago we launched a new package called Bundle, where a small merchant for a one year subscription can get a custom domain and a custom theme included. This is perfect for a merchant who wants to jump-start to the online commerce in one stroke.

If you plan to a open an online store in the near future, we hope to be one of your leading choices.