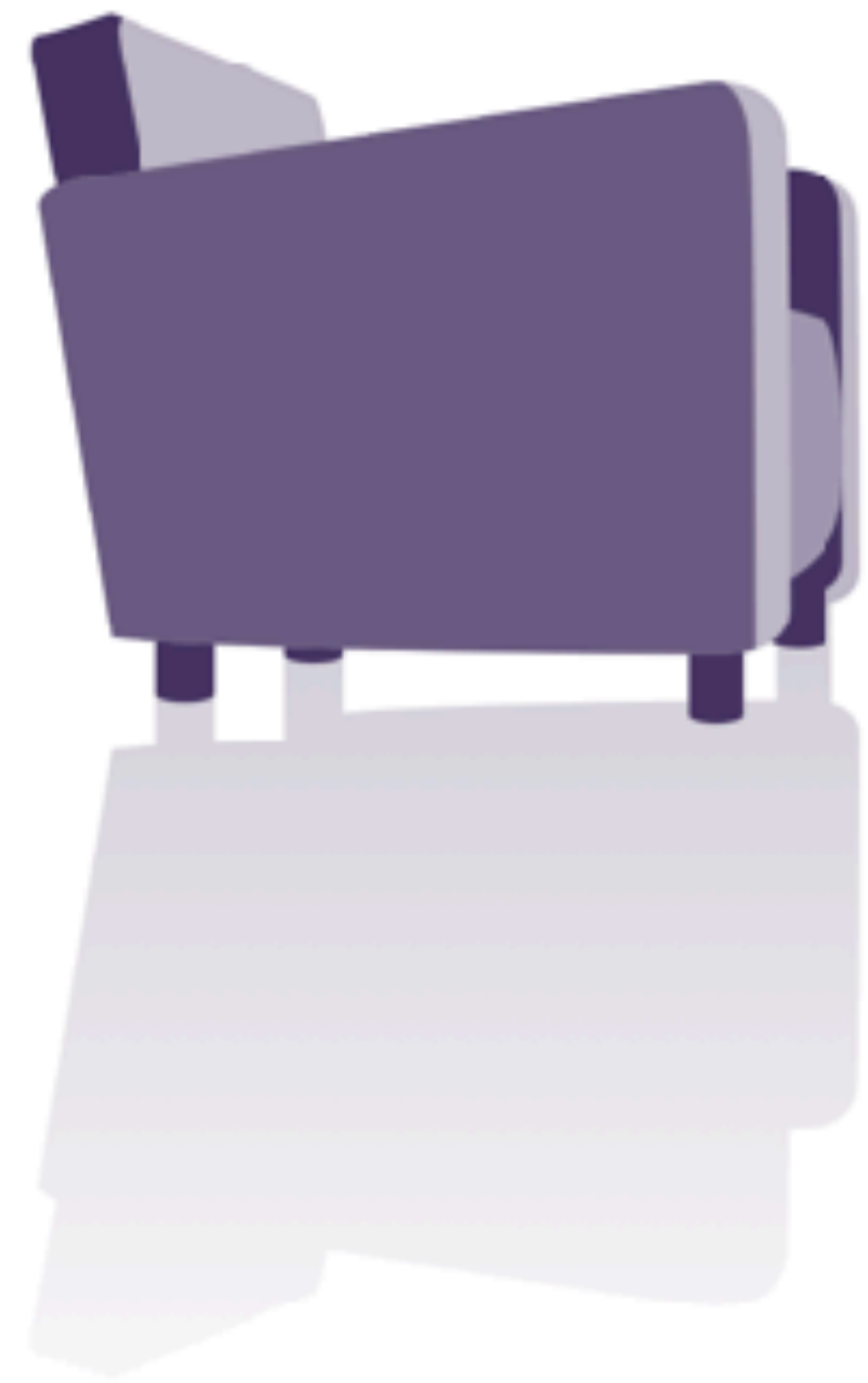# Turning a side project into a thriving business.

The story of Perch CMS.

Drew McLellan, edgeofmyseat.com.
The Product Owner, Oxford, 13 February 2014.

edgeofmyseat.com

Started by Rachel Andrew in 2001 as a web development services company.

edgeofmyseat.com

I joined the company in 2007, from Yahoo!.

We set about turning common 'bespoke' solutions in to productised packages.

Something had to change.

By 2009, our business model needed rethinking.

Problems.

1. Web design had changed.

2. We were missing our audience.

3. Consultancy wasn't scalable.

Not every project is big.

Clients were looking for a lower cost option for their smaller projects.

Let's build small.

Set about creating something our clients could implement themselves.

What if we sold it to a broader audience?

Solving our problems.

1. Web designers handle the projects, we just provide the software.

2. We could sell to the audience we were already reaching.

3. Software sales are not charged T&M.

It's a very crowded market.

There are dozens of CMS options in the market, many are free.

It needed to be inexpensive.

Less than an hour of work.

Cheap enough to be expensed on a company card without prior sign-off.

Perch

a really little content management system

Hello

Perch is a **really little content management system** for when you (or your clients) need to edit content without the hassle of setting up a big CMS.

Perch costs £35 (+ VAT where applicable) as a one-off unrestricted license cost **per domain**. Perch runs on your own server and there are no ongoing monthly costs.

Buy a Perch license

Charity template

http://charity.swing.eoms/

Charitable Organization

Make a donation today and help 2000 children

Make a donation now !

Home   Who are we?   Make a donation   Our work   News & press   Contact us

Welcome to our organization

Don't forget to check free website templates every day, because we add a new free website template almost daily.

You can remove any link to our websites from this template you're free to use the template without linking back to us.

This is just a place holder so you can see how the site would look like.

This is a template designed by free website templates for you for free you can replace all the text by your own text.

Latest news

Just Web Templates

Even more websites all about website templates on Just Web Templates.

Template Beauty

If you're looking for beautiful and professionally made templates

Done

00:00 / 03:05

Welcome   About   Features   Buy   Account   Support

Quick Start

Managing content on a page is as simple as pasting in a PHP tag. You'll be up and running in minutes.

Simple to use

Perch has a clear, simple and smart interface, just right for handing over to your clients to use.

Low, one-off cost

Licensed per-domain at **£35+VAT** with all features, there are no on-going costs for you or your client.

What is Perch?

A content management system - software to enable non-technical users to change the content on their website.

For small websites.

All those sites for guest houses, restaurants, clubs, places of worship.

Bread-and-butter web design projects.

Freelancers and small agencies.

Our ideal target customer.

Tough decisions.

Simplicity over comprehensiveness.

UI over code.

Text over WYSIWYG.

Lightness over control.

Productising is hard.

Built from scratch, but used proven ideas and concepts learned from client work.

12 days to MVP.

6 days (3 weekends) coding.

6 days marketing and infrastructure.

We spent as little as we could.

Design and illustration costs.

Legal costs.

Payment fees.

Hosting was free.

We broke even inside 24 hours.

Our costs and time investment was low, so our exposure to risk was low.

We didn't stop there.

Perch

mclellan8424.perchdemo.com/perch/apps/content/

Perch

Content   Users

Settings   My Account   Log out

Content

My Site   Help

| Filter | ALL | New |

By page assignment

Shared
Home page
About
About → History
About → Mission statement
Contact
News
News → Story
People

By type

Article
Code Block
Contact
Downloads
Event
File
Google Analytics
Image
Job Vacancy
Map
Person
Sidebar Module
Slideshow Image
Text
Text Block

Page	Region	Type	
Shared	Address	Contact	Delete
-	Company name	Text	Delete
-	Strap line	Text	Delete
-	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Delete
Home page	Intro	Text Block	Delete
-	Slideshow	Slideshow Image	Delete
-	Job Vacancies	Job Vacancy	Delete
-	Events	Event	Delete
About	About us	Text Block	Delete
-	Downloads	Downloads	Delete
-	Sidebar items	Sidebar Module	Delete
History	Content	NEW	Delete
-	Downloads	NEW	Delete
-	Sidebar items	NEW	Delete
Mission statement	Content	NEW	Delete
-	Downloads	NEW	Delete

Perch

Content   Users

Settings   My Account   Log out

Content / Editing 'Intro' Region

My Site   Help

About this region

This region only has a single item. Required fields are marked with an asterisk *.

◄◄ Undo

Options

This region is only available within:

/index.php

Set your options for this region.

Intro

Text
Textile

H1 H2 H3 H4 H5 H6 ¶   B I S   ≣ ≣   🖼 ⚭   👤 🔁

Perch & Perch is an _entirely fictitious_ company invented to demonstrate the capabilities of the "Perch content management system(Perch)":http://grabaperch.com/.

We're really glad you stopped by. Now why not have a click around, take a peek at "the source code":/index.phps and see how easy it is to get Perch up and running for your next project.

☐ Save as Draft   **Save**   or Cancel

Perch by edgeofmyseat.com

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Buy a Perch license
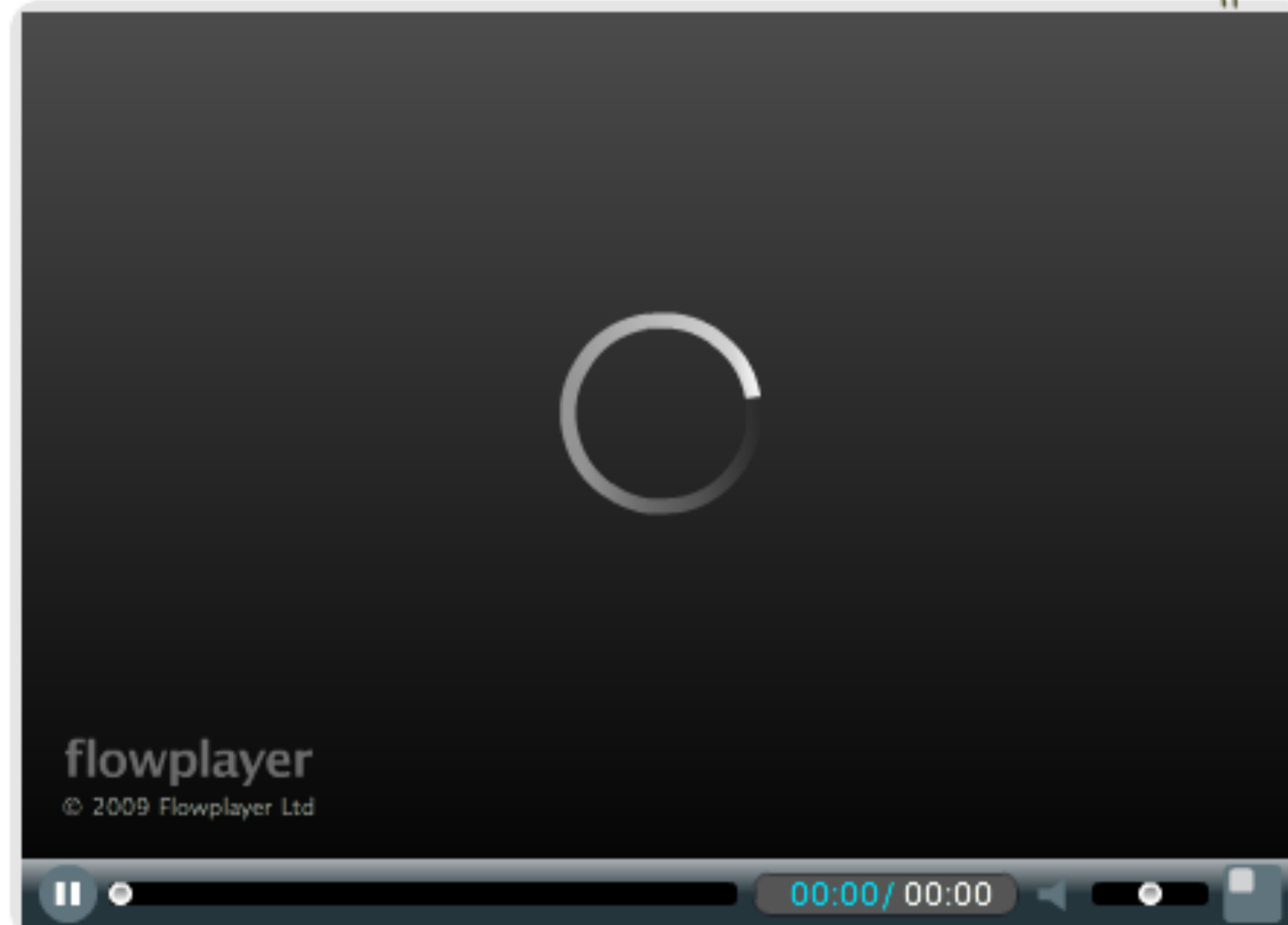
flowplayer
© 2009 Flowplayer Ltd

00:00 / 00:00

Welcome   About   Features   Buy   Account   Support

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It sold well.

Dreamed we might sell one license per day.

We had some worries.

1. Piracy.

2. Support.

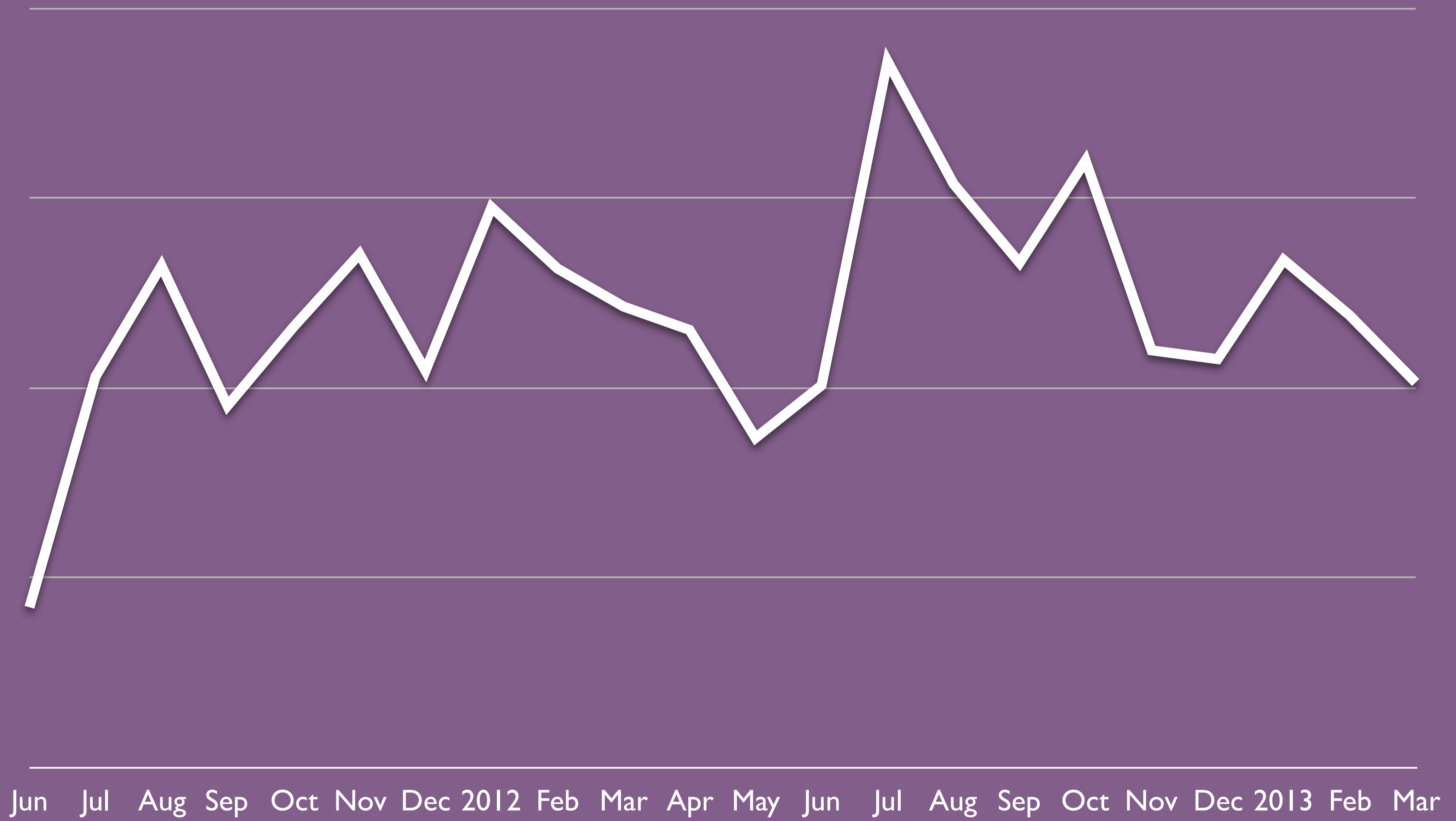3. Supporting pirates (yarrr!).

Piracy wasn't a big issue.

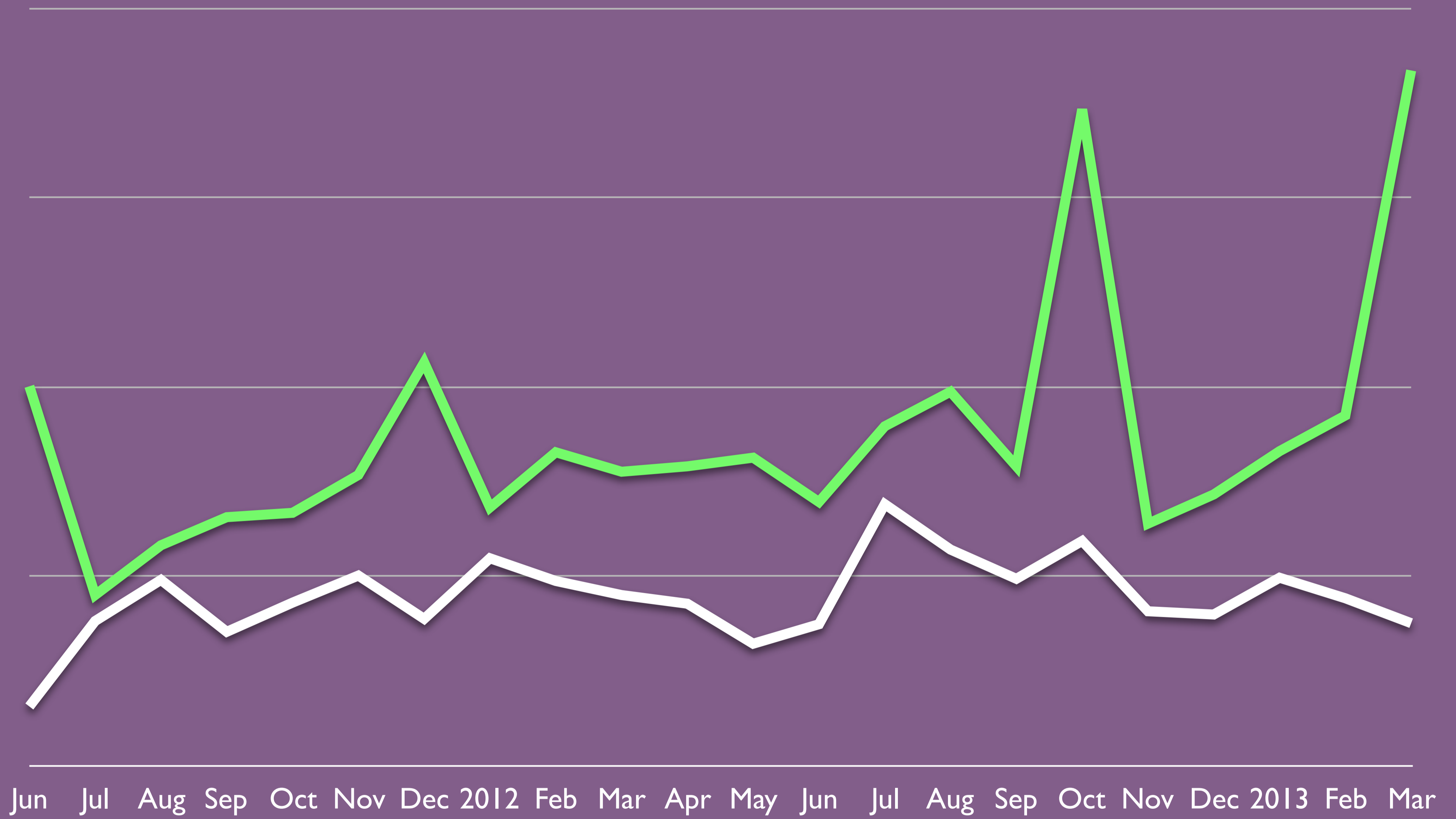People who didn't want to pay had plenty of free options already.

Support has been an issue.

Our primary cost associated with each sale.

No frequently asked questions.

We made positive changes to prevent questions being asked repeatedly.

Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec 2012 Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec 2013 Feb Mar

Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec 2012 Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec 2013 Feb Mar

We ran the stats.

26% of customers contact support.

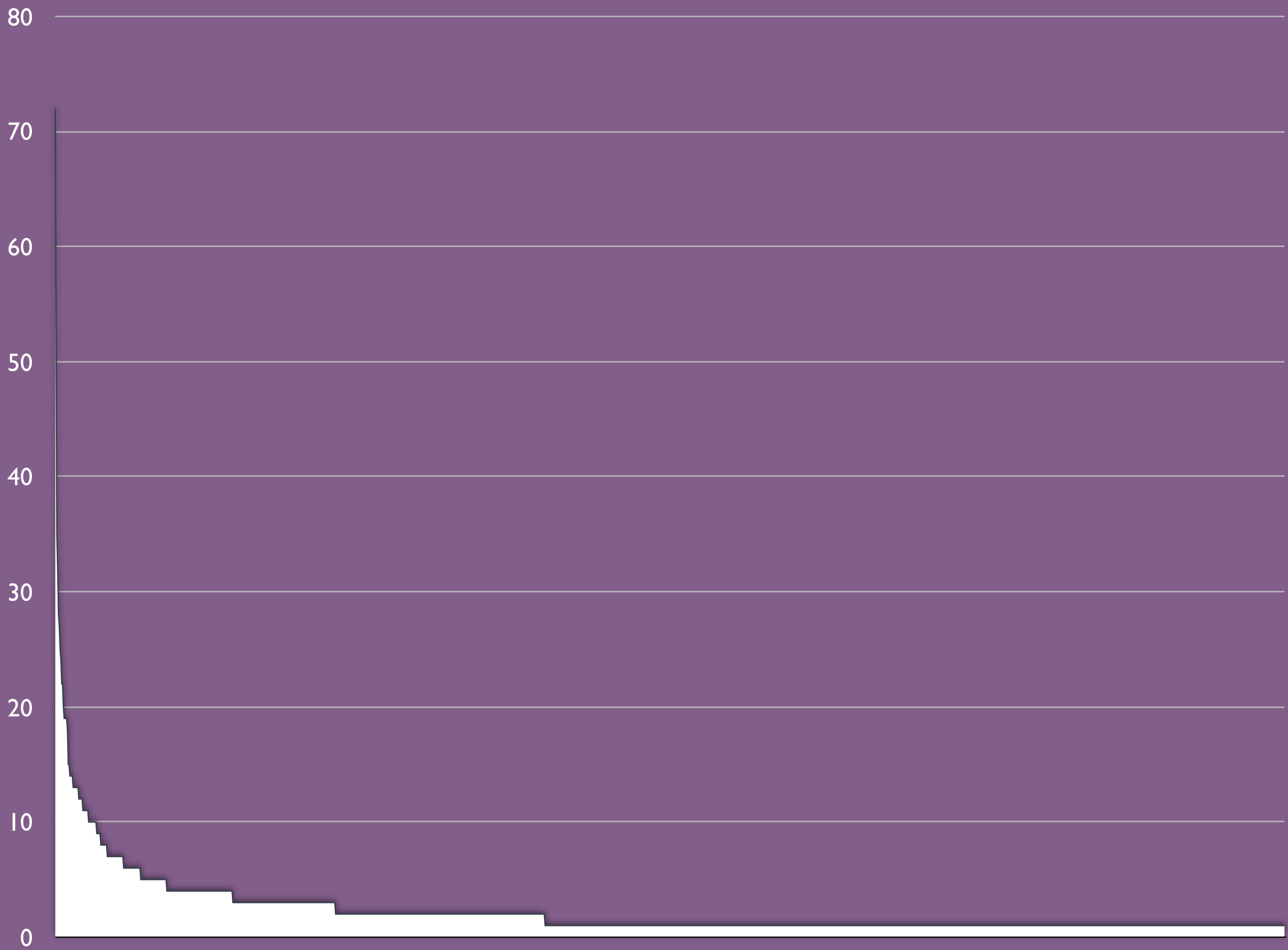10% come back more than once.

But there's more.

25% of requests are from the same 50 customers.

15% of requests are from the same 20 customers.

10% of requests are from the same 10 customers.

2% of requests are from one single customer.

Support has been an issue.

... but not that big an issue.

We found the limitations.

After 18 months, we started working on Perch 2.

Needed to address design decisions we made early on.

People like to create new pages.

And manage navigation.

And unreasonable things like that.

People love using Perch for big sites.

The user interface only really worked well for smaller sites.

Perch 2.

Launched July 2011, two years after Perch 1.

Chargable upgrade from Perch 1.

We took on too much.

New major product version.
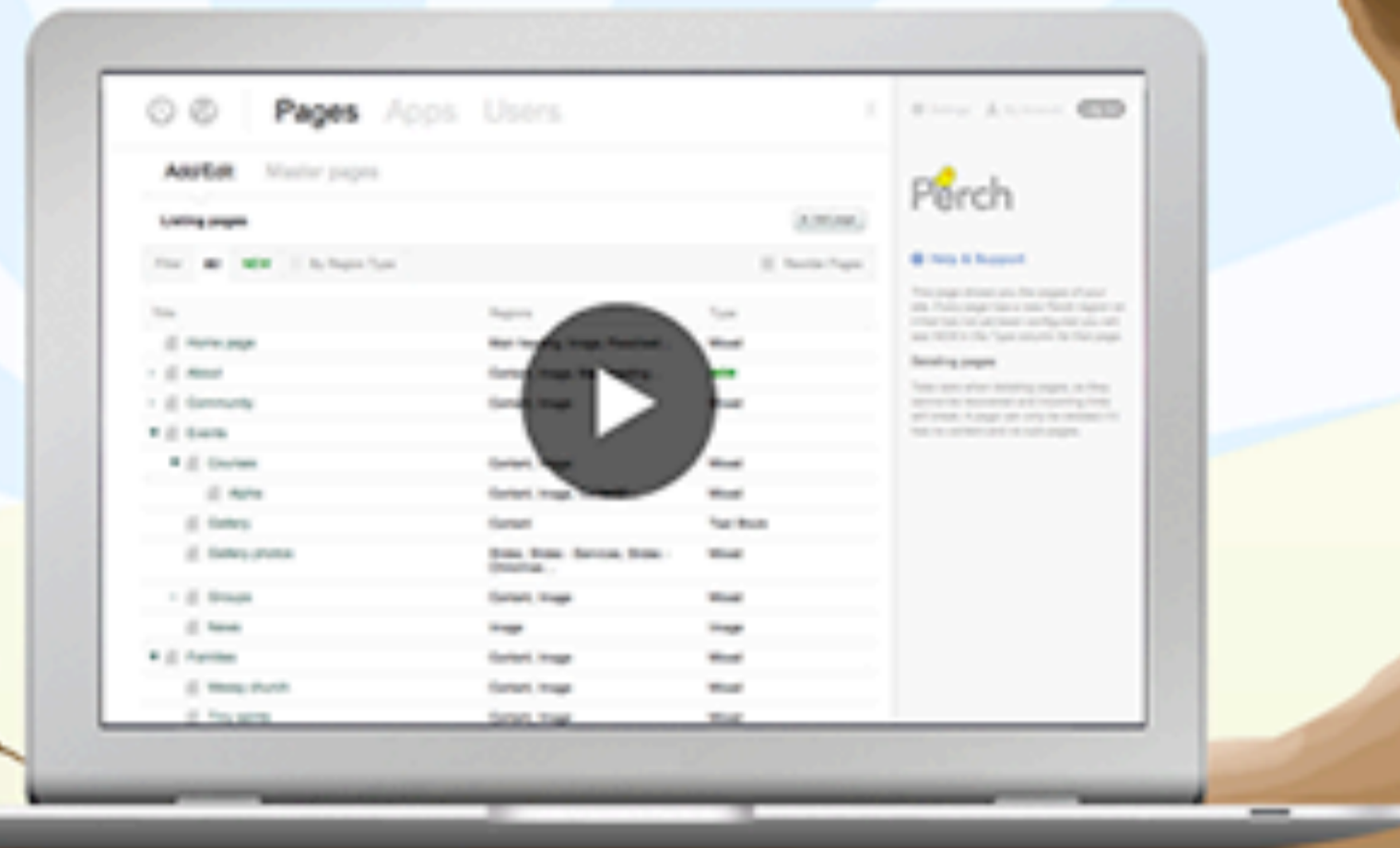
Updated add-ons.

New upgrade tool.

New documentation.

New website, with license upgrades.

Still doing client work.

the really
little
content management system

try a demo   buy a license

Perch is a small, lightweight yet powerful CMS.
It's great for web designers looking for a simple way to
make site content editable by their clients.

For Web Designers...

Perch lets you design and build your way, then provides powerful content management tools to
take your site to the next level.

perch2dev.rocker.eoms/perch/core/apps/content/?ex=55#sc0

Pages Apps Users

Settings My Account Log out

Add/Edit Master pages Navigation groups

Listing pages ✚ Add page

Filter **All** NEW ⋮⋮⋮ By Region Type Republish ☰ Reorder Pages

Title	Regions
🌐 Shared	Example Shared Region
📄 Home page	Main heading
📄 agenda	**NEW** Main heading, Intro
▼ 📄 Venues	Main heading, Intro
▼ 📄 Zoo	**NEW** Main heading
▼ 📄 Animals	**NEW** Main heading, Intro
📄 Elephant	**NEW** Main heading
▶ 📄 Lion	**NEW** Main heading
📄 Zebra	**NEW** Main heading
📄 Rhino	**NEW** Main heading
▶ 📄 Park	**NEW** Main heading
▶ 📄 Blog	

Perch

? **Help & Support**

This page shows you the pages of your site. If any page has a new editable region on it that has not yet been configured you will see NEW in the Type column for that page.

Deleting pages

Take care when deleting pages, as they cannot be recovered and incoming links will break. A page can only be deleted if it has no content and no sub-pages.

We were still doing client work.

And it was beginning to take its toll.

50/50 was the pain point.

We couldn't work solidly on client projects *and* provide responsive support.

In 2012 we turned down most projects.

We started being very selective on what we worked on.

Perch sales took up the slack.

In 2013 we stopped taking new projects.

Wound down all existing client relationships by December 2013.

Time is money.

The more time we spent improving Perch, the more sales increased.

No overnight success.

4 years from launch to ending all client work.

What we would we do differently?

1. Switched harder sooner.

2. Understand the limitations of a two-person company.

3. Is it really so little?

A little issue.

Does our strap line give the wrong perception and limit growth?

From little to faster.

Perch works well for small sites because it's quick to use.

It works well for bigger sites too, and is fast under heavy load.

Perch

what is Perch? | feature tour | add-ons | buy

keywords

blog | support | log in

make great websites

Faster

try a demo   buy a license

Pages Apps Users

Aa/Edit   Master pages

Listing pages

Filter   All   NEW   By Region Type

Perch

Help & Support

You care about good design, and providing fast, easy-to-edit sites to your clients. Meet Perch - a content

grabaperch.com/#video

What would we do again?

1. Keep costs low.

2. Listen to customers.

3. By proactive in reducing support load.

4. Defend core ideas and use-cases.

What's next?

We don't want to make the product more complex.

Customers demand more capability as they tire of other larger systems.

Questions?

Perch

Questions?

Thank you.

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@drewm