Rightmove

The UK's number one property website

Case Study

About Rightmove

It is the UK's number one property website, attracting over 29 million visits a month. They aim to be the first choice for UK home movers seeking details regarding all properties available to buy or rent.

Their website offers up-to-date property information, available for free, 24 hours a day to anyone with Internet access. Their database is far more complete in terms of number of properties and depth of detail on each property than listings available through other traditional advertising media. Rightmove.co.uk connects more people with more property than anyone else.

About Rightmove p1
Rightmove's Challenge p2
Selection Criteria p3
The Exalead Choice p3
Deployment p4
The Response p4

At-a-Glance

rightmove.co.uk
The UK's number one property website

Business Problem

- Extreme case for information retrieval listing 90% of properties for sale in the UK with 400 queries per second
- Needed a search solution that would allow them to implement their future vision as well as their current search needs
- Wanted to avoid a heavy capital investment

Solution Benefits

- Reduced cost of search from .06 pence to .01 pence per query
- Minimal hardware requirement
- Strong accessible support team
- Easy implementation with a range of search options
- The best technology, vision and ability to fulfill demands, as determined after a 3 month test

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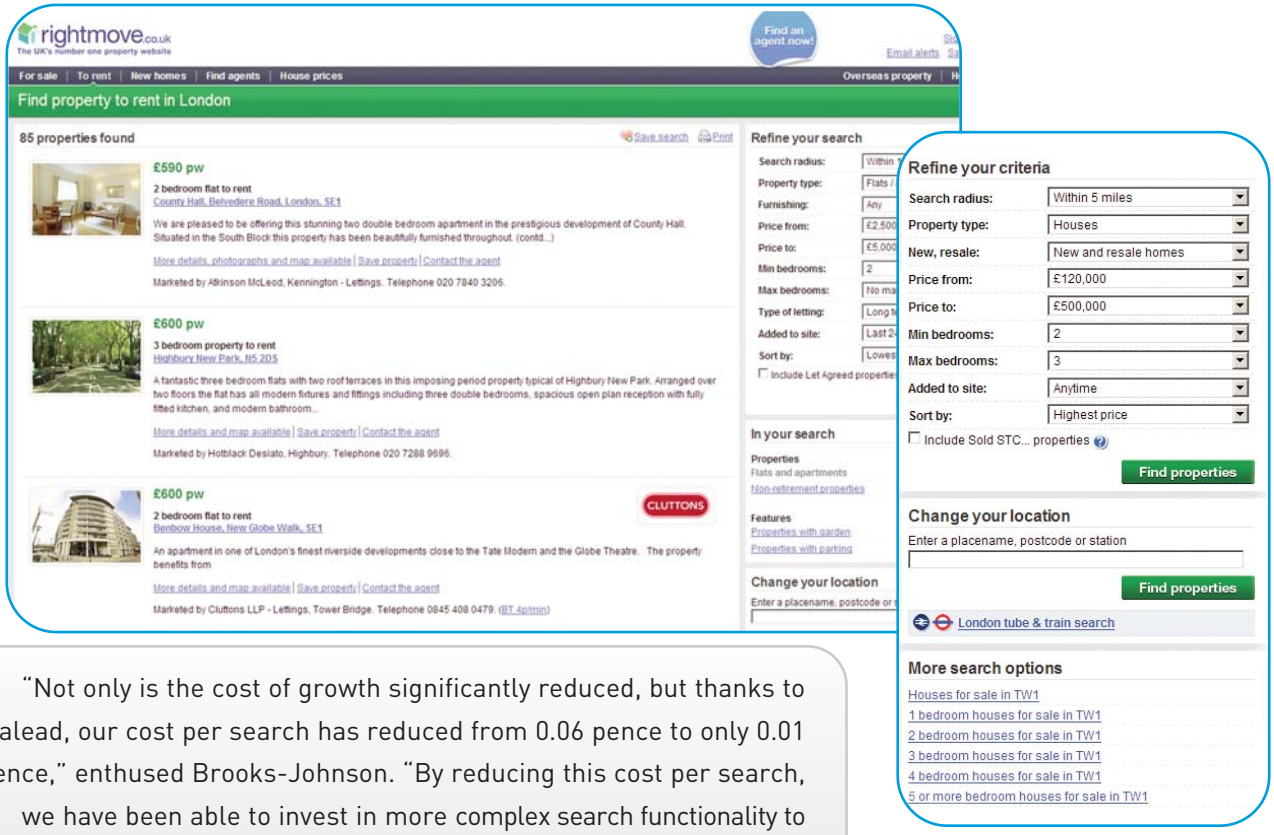
Rightmove UK



Rightmove's refinement options with Exalead CloudView™

"Not only is the cost of growth significantly reduced, but thanks to Exalead, our cost per search has reduced from 0.06 pence to only 0.01 pence," enthused Brooks-Johnson. "By reducing this cost per search, we have been able to invest in more complex search functionality to better improve the customer experience."

Peter Brooks-Johnson,
Product Director

Rightmove's Challenge

Launched seven years ago, Rightmove is the UK's largest and busiest property website, listing 90% of properties for sale in the UK. Rightmove's inventory holds details of over 2 million properties. The site processes 400 queries per second and attracts over 29 million visits from active home movers every month, who between them view over 523 million pages.

"Nearly half the Internet pages relevant to property in the UK are served by Rightmove," explains Product Director, Peter Brooks-Johnson. "To retain advertising revenues it is important that we maintain these high traffic volumes, which requires a large, constantly updated inventory."

Independent research from Comscore ranks Rightmove as the largest UK-based search website. "The growth we have seen in both visitors and property listings shows that the British public has well and truly embraced the concept of using the Internet as the best and fastest way of looking for a home," explains Brooks-Johnson. "This was also a key reason why it would not have been economical to continue with our original in-house search technology, so we began looking for an alternative solution."

When evaluating search solutions, Rightmove wanted a simple, accurate, effective and speedy solution that wouldn't require it to change the layout of the site itself. "Effective information retrieval is at our core so it is fundamental that we get the search function right the first time," says Brooks-Johnson. "We wanted to remove the technological barriers that historically limited online searches to only a fraction of their potential because they were too confusing for the average web user."

Selection Criteria

"After performing an extensive three month technical evaluation of the major enterprise search software vendors, we found that Exalead had the best technology, vision and ability to fulfill all of our demanding requirements," stated Brooks-Johnson. In order to better serve their customers, Rightmove wanted a solution that met the following requirements:

- A simple, accurate and effective search that is easy for all types of users
- A solution capable of handling extreme volumes of data
- A range of search facilities and the ability to customize them
- Ability to refine results with no impact on performance
- Removal of technological barriers that limit search results
- High performance reliability
- Ability to integrate into existing software infrastructure
- Rapid deployment and easy administration
- Integrate closely with their development environment
- Significantly reduced the cost of search
- No large capital investment

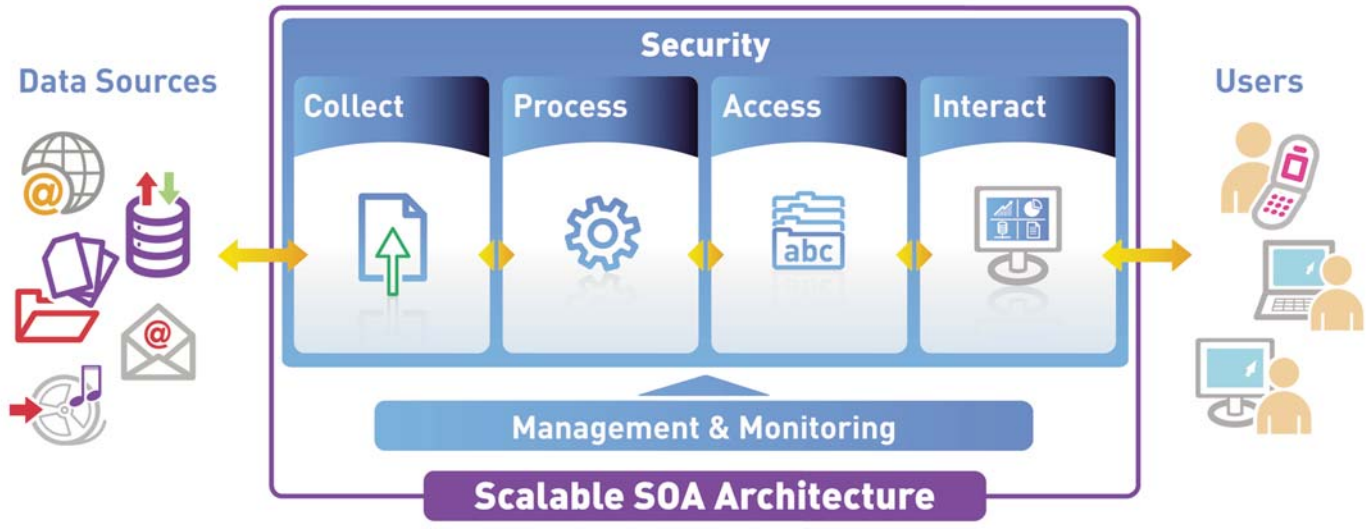
The Exalead Choice

Rightmove looked at two options. The first was to invest heavily in hardware to allow it to continue running its ever-expanding database of properties as the primary search mechanism. The second was to choose a proprietary search tool that would reduce pressure on the database and integrate directly into its software infrastructure.

Rightmove chose the Exalead software option so as to avoid a large hardware capital outlay and the potentially long development times associated with implementing a hardware solution.

"Not only does Exalead CloudView™ require minimal hardware to work effectively, but Exalead has a strong, accessible support team and a culture that seems to truly care about its customer implementations."

Peter Brooks-Johnson, Product Director



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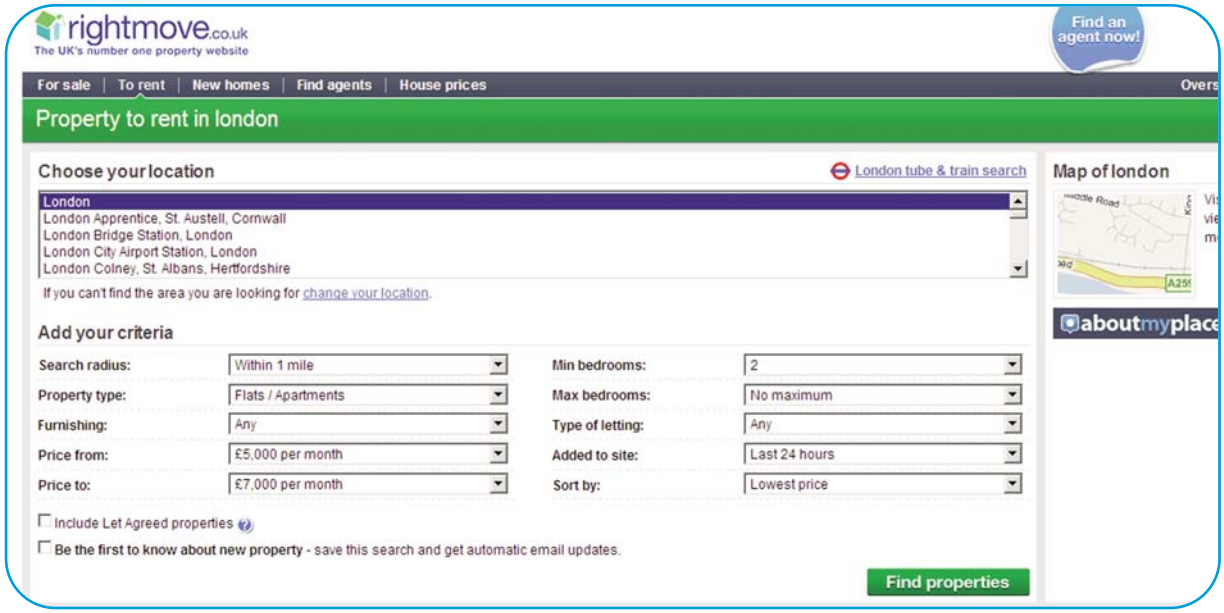

Rightmove's Search Interface with Exalead CloudView™

Deployment

The evaluation team set out stringent criteria that included a solution able to handle the size and growth of the site, perform to 99.99% reliability, offer a range of advanced search features and be easy to implement.

In January 2008, Rightmove subjected Exalead CloudView to an intense volume test to ensure reliability and scope for expansion before rolling it out to the Rightmove site in June. "We have been very impressed with Exalead and the company's tight focus on its core search solutions which are feature rich and extremely easy to implement," comments Product Director, Peter Brooks-Johnson. "Installing CloudView has provided us with the perfect mix of reduced administration costs and a better search experience for our customers, enabling them to quickly and easily find their ideal property."

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The Response

The strength of the Exalead CloudView platform means that despite the size of the property inventory, navigating around the site to find the perfect property is quick and intuitive, avoiding the potential for users to become discouraged and abandon their search.

The natural desire of the home-hunter is to leave no stone unturned; therefore a long list of results is preferable to the user. However, alpha users then want to filter the list to get to the matching properties quickly. "Alpha web users, who have more sophisticated search requirements, make up a smaller proportion of visitors to the site. However, the core functionality needs to be built with all levels of visitors in mind," adds Brooks-Johnson. Exalead's unique patented assisted navigation system removes the last barrier to unifying sources of information. Exalead CloudView automatically creates a customized table of contents based on each search results page, allowing alpha users to further refine results and explore related topics.

"Rightmove has already found that Exalead CloudView has allowed the speedy development of advanced search functionality whilst reducing search costs by 83%."

Peter Brooks-Johnson, Product Director