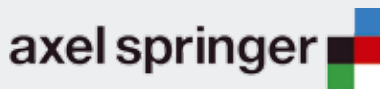


Case Study



Customer

Axel Springer AG
Berlin and Hamburg
www.axelspringer.com

Challenge

Axel Springer's magazine production processes were outdated and could benefit from efficiency improvements. The overall process should be stepped up significantly and the finishing stage should become more stress-free. Different workflows of individual titles should be taken into account. In addition, it should be possible to integrate offices in remote locations.

Solution

An editorial system, easy to manage and to master, supporting production of all titles, also at remote locations, on a single server platform.

Products

- = WoodWing Enterprise publishing system
- = Adobe Creative Suite

Business benefits

- = Speedy, reliable processes
- = Moderate infrastructure requirements
- = High acceptance among employees

Partners involved

A&F Computersysteme AG,
Sursee, Switzerland
www.a-f.ch

Successful transformation to the modern publishing era

Publishing company Axel Springer has been using WoodWing's Enterprise publishing system since early 2006. Today, about 650 publishing professionals rely on the system every day to produce some of the largest and most renowned magazines in Germany.

The firm was founded in 1946 in Hamburg by publisher Axel Springer. Today, Axel Springer AG is Germany's No. 1 newspaper publisher and the third largest magazine publisher, headquartered in both Hamburg and Berlin.

In times of crisis - like the year 2009 - Axel Springer AG has remained highly profitable, and even gained market share. Their 10,740 employees generated a total revenue of more than 2.61 billion euros over the financial year 2009. The company has continued to enhance its cross-media business model, enabling it to bypass competition.

Firmly established

The broad media portfolio includes well-established multimedia brand families like the BILD and WELT groups. Axel Springer is active in 35 countries with more than 170 newspapers and magazines, over 60 online publications targeting the most diverse interest groups and information professionals, and is also involved in TV and radio broadcasting. By any measure, Axel Springer AG is one of the leading European media enterprises.

In Germany, the company currently publishes 18 magazines covering TV guides, cars, sports, computers and women. Titles like ComputerBild, AutoBild, HÖRZU, FUNKUHR, and Bild der Frau have been successful for many years and are firmly established as part

of the German media landscape. Additional titles are produced by participating companies.



ComputerBild

Europe's largest computer magazine is being produced using Enterprise.

Improving efficiency

For a very long time, through the end of 2005, Axel Springer produced its magazine titles in a traditional DTP environment. Processes were no longer up-to-date and efficiency could be improved.

As a result, the company decided to opti-

"The excellent cooperation with the system integrator confirmed our decision for WoodWing Enterprise even more. They ensured our smooth transformation to the modern publishing era, which we started in the beginning of 2006."



AutoBild

Every week, AutoBild - Europe's largest car magazine - offers surprising and interesting facts around the theme of cars, backed by strong and high-quality images.

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mize magazine production by using an editorial system. ASmediaSystems, the publisher's internal IT service organization, was selected to implement this decision.

Workflows and performance

It was an extremely complex task, not only because of the large number of titles. Each and every magazine has special properties, which affect each accompanying workflow. Ralf Müller-Stüben, responsible for the magazines at ASmediaSystems, lists some examples: "ComputerBild contains many graphics and diagrams, while AutoBild thrives on high-quality photos with great emotional value. SportBild, on the other hand, is produced more or less in the same way as a newspaper, with a deadline at 2 AM." Furthermore, according to Müller-Stüben, the many SportBild tables lead to huge performance requirements for the editorial system.

On top of that, it was necessary to connect an external office location with the office in Schwabach, while the installation at Axel Springer Switzerland, which has its own WoodWing system, was also incorporated into the overall project.

Detailed requirements

Of course, before deciding on a system of this magnitude, several candidates were examined thoroughly and tested extensively. Ralf Müller-Stüben: "We planned to gradually but systematically convert all editorial teams to the new production process. To achieve this, we developed a precise and detailed procedure."

Specifications in seconds

First, a document with requirements was created for each individual magazine, engaging everyone concerned at all relevant locations. This document became part of the contract controlling the cooperation with the system integrator. The contract defined the scope of services and listed system performance expectations. It would, for example, specify the amount of seconds it could take to open or check in an item.

Ralf Müller-Stüben clarifies the pivotal position of the contract: "It is impossible to manage a project of this scale and of such critical importance without such a contract."

Commitment and skills

Ralf Müller-Stüben explains what criteria were important during the decision-making process: "Obviously, the technical system characteristics were crucial to our decision. But the companies and people involved are equally important. A project like this stretches across several years, and the start of daily operations should not mean the end of partner cooperation. It is essential that we are on the same wavelength, that we can trust the partner completely, in case difficult situations arise."



Hörzu

The editorial part of the RTV guides is being created with Enterprise. For the program information, a separate database-publishing solution has been developed, also based on Enterprise.

After comprehensive testing and exhaustive discussions with the respective system integrators, Axel Springer finally selected WoodWing Enterprise. Müller-Stüben: "Not just the system itself, also the commitment and the technical and social skills, both at A&F Computersysteme AG and at WoodWing, convinced us in the end that WoodWing Enterprise is the right system for us."

Realistic planning

Thanks to the detailed requirements and procedures, the actual introduction of the system was trouble-free, compared with the size and complexity of the operation. ASmediaSystems estimated a total of nine months for each title switch, from concept, through contract agree-

ment and conversion, up to the eight-week stabilization phase at the end.

Ralf Müller-Stüben explains: "A realistic planning schedule was important, because changes were anything but trivial due to the demanding workflows." To make things even more challenging, the layout program was also replaced while WoodWing Enterprise was being introduced.

Olaf Hillenkamp, duty editor of the TV guides HÖRZU, FUNKUHR, Bildwoche and TVneu, recalls: "Right from the outset, we asked all editorial teams what they would expect from their ideal editorial system, and we sorted out all comments and observations."

4 servers and a SAN

From a technical point of view, all titles run as instances on a Linux-based server platform consisting of four servers - an application and a database server, together with a backup and a test system. For storage purposes, a Storage Area Network (SAN) is used. To guarantee maximum availability at all times, the SAN is continuously synchronized with a second, similarly structured storage system. The team selected MySQL as their database system, which, according to Müller-Stüben, delivers more than sufficient performance capacity. The page-planning solution of choice is dataplan's Journal Designer, which has been integrated with Enterprise.

14 titles

At present, 650 employees access these servers. On the client side, Apple Macintosh systems under Mac OS X are used exclusively, observing Axel Springer's worldwide standardization decision.

At the beginning of 2006, the first title to be produced with WoodWing Enterprise was ComputerBild im Alltag. After that, 14 additional titles were switched to the new production process step by step. The editorial sections of the TV guides are also created using Enterprise. For the program sections, a technically very challenging database-publishing solution has been developed, also based on Enterprise. The contents for the program guide are retrieved from the database, placed

on the layout, and formatted according to pre-set rules, all completely automated.

High acceptance

The smooth introduction of the system also had a positive effect on employee acceptance. They had been longing for an innovative, fast and comfortable production process. Olaf Hillenkamp: "During trainings, we clearly noticed how much the teams were looking forward to using the new systems."

The training courses were also provided by A&F Computersysteme AG, covering both InDesign for layout work and InCopy for editing, as well as the Enterprise editorial system itself. They were presented in seminars of one or two days. The administrators were trained in separate special courses - they handled project management of the editorial teams.

The future: Content Station

Ralf Müller-Stüben is positive about the results throughout: "The way in which A&F handled all projects individually, and continues to look after them, confirmed our decision for WoodWing Enterprise completely. All systems run without any notable problems and clearly provide a more efficient, reliable and stress-free magazine production environment."

As a result, the introduction of WoodWing's editorial and workflow solution is saving time, lowering costs, and therefore has contributed to Axel Springer being well-prepared for the challenges that the publishing industry is currently facing.

About WoodWing

WoodWing creates the most progressive solutions available on the market for the production of print and online publications. Rapid growth worldwide and success across the full spectrum of small to large publishers demonstrate that WoodWing makes the best tools for the best price.

WoodWing Software is located in Zaandam, The Netherlands, and has regional sales companies for Europe, the USA, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. Customers are served through select partners.

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