

Alimarket's Magazines expands web presence with Xtent Publishing System

Case Study

Spanish publisher Alimarket's Magazines initially invested in Seinet's Xtent Publishing System to improve its editorial workflows for its printed products but has also been able to move seamlessly onto the Web through the Xtent Web Publisher Module.

Alimarket's Magazines publishes a diverse range of magazines, bulletins and annual reports, covering mainly the food, construction and tourism markets, as well as domestic appliances, electronics, packaging, transport, logistics and health care. It was established in 1982 and has more than a hundred employees, including 60 journalists.

At the start of 2007 Alimarket opted for Seinet's Xtent Publishing Suite in order to integrate content management within its editorial workflow and to bring the editorial and design teams closer together to make it easier to review articles with minimal staff.

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Initially the system was acquired just for the print magazines. But earlier this year, when Alimarket decided to launch a new Portal, the Xtent Publishing System meant that Alimarket could use a single editorial system to publish across print, web and mobile media.

Juan Carlos Matarubia, content director of Alimarket's Magazines, says: "The launch of the new Portal has been very quick and much easier than if we had chosen a different system. Having the same editorial environment for the reporters and layout team allows us to do both publications



without having to hire anyone else for the new media."

The Xtent Publishing Suite is built around a Digital Asset Management database, where the various elements from each page are stored, maintaining the relationships between objects and pages in each publication. All the content is stored in the XML format so that different elements can be brought together and dropped onto HTML templates to easily build web pages. The system incorporates Adobe's InDesign for page layout, which Alimarket was already using.

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Another advantage of the Xtent Publishing System is that it has been developed in JAVA (J2EE) making it easy to integrate into an existing system. In Alimarket's case this included a Linux Terminal Server with 70 client terminals, and an open source BB.DD (PostgreSQL) database.

This has also made it easy to add other modules to, as Jose Alberto Porras, technology director of Alimarket's Magazines, explains: "One of the biggest reasons that we choose the Xtent Web Publisher module is because the internal structure of the software means that it is very easy to add new functionality through Java Script, to integrated process or third party applications, with the advantage that these developments will not be affected for future releases of the tool. We



also guarantee that we are not limited and it is a tool that can grow in the future".

Having an integrated workflow means that the reporters can work through the web editor to access the Server or generate a PDF at any time during the process of publication, carrying out all the necessary corrections without interfering with the work of the layout team.

A journalist can catalogue the news to be published for the web, adding meta-data such as the web title, caption, and any related articles. Also he can choose a web image for the article and drag and drop this into the web editor, tagging it to choose the size and the position, and previewing the result before publishing.

The layout team works with InDesign but with all the layouts, text and image files saved in a centralised content repository. The production managers can see a graphical presentation of the state of the publication, showing in real time the progress of each page.

In addition, Matarubia notes that employees are better motivated because they find the editorial system easier to use, adding: "The training has been very quick and easy, with people saying that the Web Publishing Module for Xtent is very intuitive to use. The web editor is the same for both media with the advantage that there are tags that are only for online use, so that you can use different photos for different print and web media."

All of the print content is reused online, but the magazine articles with their pictures and tables are first adapted to make them more suitable for use on the web. Some news is written specifically for the websites, and some news is also taken from the print media and used as premium content for subscription customers. Alimarket has also been able to archive all of its past content on its website, which is easily searchable, giving subscribers extra value.

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The overall result is that the editorial workflow has moved from a manual approval process for print to a controlled and organized workflow for multiple media that reporters and designers can work on simultaneously, with the whole system logged so that anyone can see the progress of the production in real time.

Adding the Web Publishing module has given Alimarket's Magazines new business lines generating online advertising income, all from the same staff and using the same content and editorial system, producing multiple synergies.

Juan Navarro, president of Alimarket's Magazines, concludes: "In the process we started some years ago to integrate our content, we needed to do a strategic bet in new digital business lines or think about a resizing for the future. In this bet for new digital publications, Xtent has helped us by facilitating a real cross media environment that has allowed us to produce eight publications on the web, daily updated and with value-added services without increasing the news room staff"

