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PUBLISHING SERVICES

Case Study



Taking Control of the Publishing Process

The Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for England and Wales (ICLR) is the leading publisher of law reports established by the legal profession in 1865 specifically to produce their official series *The Law Reports*. They are still the preferred choice of judges as citations in court: see *Practice Direction (Citation of Authorities)* [2012] 1 WLR 780. Other series published by ICLR include *The Weekly Law Reports*, *The Industrial Cases Reports*, *The Business Law Reports* and *The Public and Third Sector Law Reports*.

The ICLR have 34 Law Reporters (themselves barristers or solicitors) sitting in the higher and appellate courts and an archive of some 77,000 law reports dating back to 1865.

The Challenge: Control of Content and the Publishing Process

As the official law report publisher for England and Wales, the ICLR publishes around 700 law reports per annum over its 5 different series. The key issue for ICLR was that, although it had full editorial control over its content, it was heavily dependent on third party suppliers to manage the publishing process; this included provision of typeset content and page proofs at each stage of the publishing process, incorporating corrections to content, and generating front-of-part and annual volume indexes. It was also dependent on external suppliers to provide its published content in a basic electronic format for archiving and issue to licensees of the content.

So while the ICLR owned the content, without full control of the publishing process, there were constraints on how it could develop its content and its business going forward. The key challenges were therefore to:

- design content structures and publishing workflows which were extensible and scaleable
- create a more efficient and effective publishing process
- reduce dependency on external suppliers and regain control of the publishing process

The Solution

MintoGordon was commissioned to undertake an analysis of the ICLR content and publishing processes and implement its recommended changes to meet the challenge described above.

The key was to design content structures and workflows which were scaleable and extensible i.e. the design catered for any number of reports, any number of variations of report formats, and any new series of law reports which ICLR may wish to publish in the future. The content structures also catered for the requirements for future publishing via various digital channels. Following the analysis, the key stages were:

Stage 1: the design and implementation of extensible custom XML schemas for the ICLR content including the front-of-part and annual volume indexes.

Stage 2: the design and implementation of a publishing workflow including the choice of content authoring and management software. MintoGordon choose the *Arbortext XML Editor* as the authoring software and the *Arbortext Content Manager (ACM)* to help manage the publishing workflow.

Stage 3: system & training documentation; training of staff and managing the changes to the publishing process and interfaces with external suppliers

The Arbortext Editor is highly configurable and customisable and is an industry standard for XML (or SGML) authoring. The ACM is powered by the PTC Windchill software, also an industry standard for multiple authored

projects and especially technical content.

MintoGordon worked very closely with Pete Li of *Simonsoft* to design and configure the ACM.

Cloud-Based Workflow

MintoGordon managed the subsequent migration of the publishing workflow to a cloud-based environment.

“The transition from a word-processor based authoring environment to one based on XML has been to ensure a logical, consistent and reliable management of content from birth to publication.”

Paul Magrath, Head of Online Content

Adapting to the New Processes and Technology

For the staff of ICLR the move to an XML workflow meant significant changes to their way of working. To make the transition to the new workflow as smooth as possible, MintoGordon worked very closely with Reporters and Editorial staff at all stages of the development to ensure that their specific needs were being met.

As the primary authoring and editorial tool, the highly customisable nature of the Arbortext Editor enabled MintoGordon to build suitable templates, stylesheets and program 'macros' to smooth the transition to the new technology and assist the authoring and editorial process; and the Arbortext Styler software enabled the creation of complex stylesheets for on-screen and print output.

The Outcomes

The ICLR now have full control of their content and the publishing process and the 34 Court Reporters now author directly into XML; this XML is maintained throughout the editorial and remaining publishing process for both the print and online channels. Page proofs can be produced by ICLR at any point in the editorial process. The ICLR now:

- has far greater control over its content:
this has significantly reduced dependency on 3rd party suppliers for print publishing and licensing of the electronic content and eliminated dependency on specific suppliers

- leverages greater value from its core law reports content: through good design of the XML structures, ICLR can extract and mix any subcomponents of their reports to create new sub-products and index them in any number of ways
- has reduced risks to the integrity of its data: the law reports are now authored in XML and that XML is maintained throughout the publishing process
- has a much more efficient publishing process: tracking and metrics available for law reports in the publishing workflow via the ACM; subeditors and editors working directly on the XML case reports eliminates the exchange of proofs to and from typesetters with a corresponding reduction in direct costs and leadtimes from the reporting of a case to its publication
- development of the business: with control of its publishing process and its content structures, ICLR are now in a position to make strategic business decisions regarding the development of new products or delivery channels without the previous constraints arising through the dependency on suppliers.

about MintoGordon

With over 24 years' experience to draw on, MintoGordon can help organisations to develop and maintain a unified information strategy. We can help business leaders identify a role for information technology in value creation, undertake requirements capture and manage the actual implementation of, and training on, new systems and processes.

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