

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Xyleme improves product development times for Informa by converging learning and ECM

The Client

Informa is the largest, privately-owned information provider to global academic, scientific, professional, and commercial markets via publishing, events, and performance improvement. The company has 10,000 employees with offices in 80 countries. Informa publishes 2,500 subscription-based products and services, delivered electronically and in hard-copy, and 45,000 books. Each year Informa produces over 12,000 events, including thousands of training events, around the world. The company is the parent of several well-known performance improvement companies including Achieve Global, ESI International, Huthwaite, Omega Performance, The Forum Corporation, and Robbins Gioia.

The Goal

At Informa, content in the form of source material, lesson plans, workbooks, textbooks, PowerPoint, e-learning courses, video, etc. previously existed in many locations within the company, including silos on individual desktops, shared network drives, content and media servers, or other systems as required by the businesses of the company. Informa's courses were created based on this content, but each time a customized or multilingual version was created, it required making a copy of the previous file and adapting it for its new use. This led to problems in updating multiple versions of the content and in publishing it through different channels.

To address this issue, Informa decided to adopt Xyleme's Learning Content Management System (LCMS) to create granular XML based-content and repurpose it based on the unique requirements and variables of each of the company's businesses. With this project Informa's goals were to:

1. Create a scalable, single source environment to enable content reuse across Informa's print-based learning, e-learning courses and knowledge portals.

2. Enable rapid and cost efficient customization and localization of learning content.
3. Create an environment for external and globally dispersed subject matter experts (SME) to easily contribute their critical knowledge.

The Challenge

Each of Informa's branded, performance improvement companies was independently experiencing the challenges of managing vast amounts of training content, including versioning and archiving reusable content. The Informa businesses were experiencing varying levels of difficulty adapting to new requirements around digital delivery of learning content. In addition, they were encountering severe production delays and quality issues delivering localized training and customized courses to global clients, which account for a significant portion of annual revenues. From the parent company level, the prospect of working on point-solutions for each line of business was extremely daunting and inefficient. So, the company determined that participating businesses should work synergistically to create a content management strategy and implement a common technology that could be adapted to support variable conditions in each brand.

The Solution

The parent company and stakeholders representing each of the brands formed a team to conduct a common needs analysis of business and technical requirements. The team was responsible for (1) analyzing output formats currently created by each of the companies, (2) walking through workflow and customization requirements, (3) looking at lifecycle management of company products, (4) assessing the feasibility of single-source development in support of multiple product outputs, and (5) making a preliminary plan for the migration of legacy content. During planning sessions, the team mapped work-

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Bob Hecht, Informa’s VP of Content Strategies

flow commonalities and documented “use cases” to determine a content sharing strategy.

The solution that was implemented based on that strategy included three main subsystems:

1. **Team space:** Beyond a simple document management system, it was important to the team to have a virtual community of practice. This was a place to collaboratively work on new projects where each project team member can log into and instantly have access to all project materials and resources through an extended search engine. Documentum was selected to fulfill this part of the system.
2. **Document/digital asset management system:** Underlying the team space had to be a robust document management repository containing all source documents, master files, and production-ready content organized and partitioned by project and company. By centralizing all master documents, Informa wanted to pool valuable company assets so that they wouldn’t be lost, misplaced, or overwritten. Documentum was selected as the technology base for this part of the system as well.
3. **Publishing center:** To support advanced reusability by creating and repurposing granular content, the solution also needed a system for creating XML-based content. This system had to be directly accessible from the team space environment and responsible for single-source development of content that can simultaneously publish output to lesson plans, student guides, e-learning, synchronized PowerPoint and many other formats. The technology selected for this part of the project was Xyleme LCMS, supporting reusability 2.0.

The Results

One of the most significant contributions of the new system is the movement toward non-linear product development. Sections of course development can be independently created and reviewed without

having to send around copies of individual documents. Reviews take place using the same technology as the authoring process. Early estimates of impact to ROI and time-to-market indicate that there is a likely improvement of 75% for small custom projects with a much lower percentage for large projects, however, the revenue impact will be significantly higher in these large contracts.

Through the proof-of-concept phase of the project, many of the desired benefits have been achieved including:

- **Decreased overall development time** (once working through change management that occurs when moving from a linear design process to working at a granular level).
- **Single-source production** in support of multiple output formats.
- **Elimination of content silos** (especially for content that exists only on someone’s desktop).
- **Exposing existing content** held in the central repository to designers and authors through metadata and full-text searching tools.
- **On-demand publishing** through external print publishers.
- **Future proofing content:** by creating content in XML, content remains separate from presentation and can be easily adapted as new technologies come along.
- **Reduction in engineering support:** any tools and utilities created in this project benefit all stakeholder companies, minimizing the need to re-create the same solutions for use by different groups.
- **Facilitation of language translations:** XML is an ideal format for isolating language assets, having them translated (through outsourcing), then reapplying the new version to an output template.
- **Substantial reduction in time-to-market** of custom versions of courses for customers by mixing and matching modules, adding or editing content, changing the look and feel, then republishing a new version.

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