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STREAMLING YOUR DIGITAL WORKFLOW PROCEDURES

More and more, publishers are seeing the value in refining production workflows and finding easier, smarter solutions to create engaging digital magazines.

Publishers big and small are still challenged to make the most of a print magazine's production workflow while creating engaging digital editions with it. How can you produce multiple digital products on time and within a budget within the same timeframe you previously used for print-only and do it without burning out your staff?

The good news is that the workflow process software developed specifically for creating digital magazines is much better than it's ever been. In the short time since publishers began complaining about the limitations of creating digital magazines from single page PDF files, workflow software developers have found a few solutions to streamline digital production.

Most digital editions created using these solutions are formatted to view on any platform or device, whatever the screen size. Interactivity is easily applied, and style sheets can be applied to imported text and other design elements.

Integrating data sets (i.e. listings) into the digital workflow process may be possible in a file exchange with an internal database. When publishers allow internal systems to be included in a process improvement discussion, some of the bottlenecks in the process may be relieved as a result. Integrating a database or a cloud-based database, such as a Client Record Management (CRM) system into the production workflow can be very beneficial to improve efficiency and can reduce time spent on data entry or administration.

As every environment is different, existing processes and variables will be too. The goal is to create a solution that fits your production process, addressing the specific challenges identified by each department involved in it. Resolve what can be fixed, automating tasks wherever possible.

Don't overlook the tools that come with the new digital edition software. Some collect consumer data and generate analytics, or import HTML and CSV files to simplify data exchange.

Many print magazine publishers design and create their digital editions using [Adobe Digital Publishing Suite](#) and InDesign. If you're considering an upgrade to Adobe DPS for digital editions, here are some of the features that might make it worth adding to the process:

- Adobe DPS is able to design and preview layouts on multiple screen sizes
- It integrates interactive and animated elements with InDesign layouts
- It's customizable using multiple existing plug-ins and APIs
- It can track and provide insights and analytics on content engagement.

[Mag+](#) is a software-as-a-service that creates tablet and smartphone apps to deliver content to consumers. It's available as a plug-in for InDesign and can add interactivity to your layouts. Its features include...

- instant content previews on any device using a Mag+ Review app
- a web-based tool that assembles and builds content with no coding
- publishing to multiple app stores and newsstands
- enterprise subscription levels for services and users.

The goal of process improvement is to create reliable, better-looking digital editions of your publications more easily, while saving time and improving production process efficiency.
To help make sense of the variety of software and service solutions, and determine how they can work together, investigate multiple solutions promising to simplify any of the challenges or bottlenecks your magazine experiences during the production process.

Issuu is software-as-a-service for creating digital editions. Like Mag+, it is an InDesign plug-in, but its difference is Magma, a workflow management and pagination plug-in available to Issuu.com subscribers. It that can . . .

- create a flat plan to move content around easily
- keep track of the status of ads and articles
- allow collaborative workflow for multiple users and permissions
- create content for digital, print and web publishing.

Another type of digital edition software service provider is one that includes a newsstand to host digital editions in addition to creating them. There are several newsstand service providers to choose from, so finding the right one will take some consideration and involvement from your consumer marketing team.

Many of these offer distribution, subscription data management, and customer fulfillment services, as well as the ability to create digital editions.

Magzter is an example of a digital newsstand service that sells magazines by subscription and makes them accessible and viewable on multiple devices, regardless of platform. Magzter's advantages:

- It embeds interactive content
- It operates on a revenue-share model
- It provides real-time sales reporting and user-data.

This is only a small sampling of solutions available to publishers. Do your homework to determine the software solutions that will most improve the digital edition process for your magazine. Even small improvements in a process can make a noticeable difference to your digital workflow.