Incisive Media Ltd delivers design-rich content for print, Web, and mobile in real-time with a cost-effective editorial system based on QuarkXPress and Quark Publishing System

Incisive Media is a leading global provider of specialty business news and information, in print, in person, and online. The company’s principal markets include financial services, legal and accounting services, marketing services, technology, and risk management. Incisive Media’s market-leading brands include Accountancy Age, Search Engine Strategies, Computer Active, Investment Week, Legal Week, Post, Risk, and V3.co.uk.

Incisive Media has an unquestioned reputation for delivering high quality, timely information in various formats. With a dynamic publishing solution based on QuarkXPress and Quark Publishing System, Incisive Media is now able to improve collaboration among its authors and publish to different platforms seamlessly. Thanks to the versatility of Quark Publishing System, Incisive Media can decide which desktop publishing software best suits the needs of each publication and still have a single unified workflow system.

Publishing in the 21st century — the ‘evolve to survive’ mantra
Historically aggressive and fast-paced, in the past decades the publishing industry has experienced
even further pressure to keep up with the requirements and opportunities that new media offered. Advances in technology and the advent of new digital devices where readers can consume news at any time, anywhere, mean that traditional publishing has been forced to face the challenge of real-time delivery of content and has had to evolve to survive the competition. Innovative companies like Incisive Media decided to embrace the revolution and not only survived, but thrived.

David Worsfold, Group Editorial Services Director at Incisive Media, explains how the decision to build their editorial system around a dynamic publishing solution came about: “The primary driver was survival in the 21st century. Publishing is no longer what it used to be. Nowadays, even news published in a daily newspaper is old by the time you’ve woken up. We now have media where the delivery is instantaneous or minutes behind — such as TV, the internet and of course, on digital devices like iPhones and iPads.”

At Incisive Media, with such a diverse portfolio of publications, it wasn’t just the delivery of news that made them decide to look for an alternative workflow system, but also advertisement revenue. Recruitment advertising was one of the main revenue generators and weekly publications were becoming irrelevant in a market where the internet was driving the need for immediate, real-time response that also proved to be cheaper for advertisers. “For traditional publishing to be able to compete with these new forms of media consumption, it had to evolve. And for us at Incisive Media, this meant moving our content from a flat file server environment with no metadata to a database where you can find everything, search for anything, transform your content into any target format or system that you require” continues Worsfold.

The transition from a file server to a database-driven workflow

In 2004, VNU Business Publications, later acquired by Incisive Media, started the migration to a dynamic publishing solution – moving from a file server workflow to a database driven workflow to facilitate the reuse of content. Ron Doobay, Head of Business Systems, explains: “We were primarily producing magazines, but whenever we needed to get the content up onto the internet, we would literally do ‘copy-and-paste’ into the CMS system. And if we wanted the content to go out to licensees or syndicators we had to burn a DVD or CD, or even floppy disks, and send them off to those companies. That was all very time-consuming. The generation of PDFs both for print and re-use was also very labour-intensive.”

VNU wanted to create a status-based workflow where once something was ready for publishing, be it a whole page or magazine or an individual story, the editorial team could flag it and decide which format they wanted it to output in, whether they wanted it to be published in print or ready for Web upload. “We started off with Quark DMS in 2005 and it was running beautifully. With Quark Publishing System we are now able to automatically generate a high res PDF version for printing, a low version for Web and an XML version, the relevant format for syndicators and licensees, to flow directly into our Web CMS.”
QPS wins over the competition

When VNU Business Publications was acquired in 2007 by Incisive Media, a decision needed to be made on which system was best suited to meet the needs of the newly formed publishing venture. Incisive Media was using Adobe InDesign and VNU were QuarkXPress users.

Ron Doobay recounts: “Initially, we thought we might go 100% down the Adobe route to unify the platform into one system, but when we looked into what they and the workflow systems providers had to offer in terms of asset management, it was clear that Quark could offer a better way forward for us. One of our companies in the USA was using an Adobe option, so we were able to compare the two solutions hands-on and found there were much more benefits of going down the Quark route. The key aspect was for us that Quark’s solutions were versatile and could also handle InDesign assets. The competition wasn’t really delivering much more than a sort of workflow system, but it couldn’t really do all the transformation work that we were after. Anyone could see that Quark’s dynamic publishing solution was a more sensible route.”

Quark Publishing System soon ticked all the boxes for Incisive Media, as it enabled them to have a status-based workflow in a DTP neutral system, transform the data into the relevant required format, as well as addressing their Digital Rights Management needs. Ron Doobay explains: “With Quark Publishing System we are not restricted by the original file format. If, for example, we had a QuarkXPress file, we could send it out into PDF, transform it into XML or transform into anything that we needed to get the content out. Quark’s solution also has good DRM functionality”.

Multi-client support for a diverse portfolio

With such a diverse portfolio of publications, Incisive Media needed to be able to use a workflow system supporting QuarkXPress files, but also formats from other layout programmes. “At Incisive Media, we had a longstanding aim to be neutral in terms of desktop publishing solutions so that we could select the programmes most appropriate to the needs of our very varied product portfolio, but to do this within a top-class workflow system. We were already exploring the options for achieving this objective prior to the acquisition of VNU. Quark offered us the opportunity to achieve this, reducing our costs, improving productivity, and maximising revenues through syndication with Quark’s dynamic publishing solutions”, explains David Worsfold.

“We needed to work in an environment where we could combine high-quality graphic design using both QuarkXPress and InDesign with workflow collaboration and automation, so we chose Quark’s slick multi-channel publishing and easy XML extraction. Thanks to Quark Publishing System we now have a very cost-effective editorial system that also allows us to boost content syndication and therefore profit,” continues Worsfold.
Cost-savings and intelligent content
With Quark Publishing System, Incisive Media is able to produce intelligent content, so that it can be easily repurposed and re-used. This means that all the manual, error-prone work is a thing of the past and the company can fully reap the benefits of dynamic publishing — publish more with less.

Ron Doobay confirms: “We definitely require significantly fewer resources now to create more. Back in 2004 we were just creating print, now we are ready to deliver content in print, Web, produce eBooks and publish to the iPad. I can categorically say that QPS enables a company to deliver the 21st century requirements with a minimum cost base. With QPS Quark is delivering excellent value for money.”

Quark’s open door policy
Ron Doobay describes how it felt to work with Quark on their dynamic publishing journey: “We have such a great relationship with Quark and they are very responsive company. Quark is the kind of company that set up customer advisory boards to make sure we had a voice. And they would listen. Any enhancements that we wanted to put in place in the system, Quark would incorporate in the next version very quickly. We felt we almost co-developed the product because they were so open to our feedback.”

Matthew Wallis, Quark Senior Vice President of Sales in Europe and Africa: “Quark remains committed to providing solutions to streamline publishing processes and increase overall efficiency publishing to print and digital media - without compromising on design. In this case the combination of our flagship product, QuarkXPress, combined with Quark Publishing System, has produced an innovative dynamic publishing solution delivering great results for Incisive Media. We are delighted to have Incisive Media join the growing number of companies around the world embracing this next revolution in publishing.”

About Quark
Two decades ago, Quark drove the first revolution in publishing with QuarkXPress®, desktop software that rapidly became the cornerstone of the professional designer’s toolkit. Today, we’re driving the next revolution in publishing by extending the benefits of new technologies across the publishing process. Our enterprise solutions — built on our desktop foundation — combine the power of flexible layout and automated workflows for personalised communications across print, the Web, and digital media, helping you to communicate with your customers when and how they want.