

Source Interlink Media

Launching a workflow migration initiative aimed at integrating existing publishing technology into a new workflow to ensure consistency and organization across schema, and enable future content syndication.



A **SPRAWLING MEDIA** organization, Source Interlink Media (SIM) is constantly generating large amounts of print and digital content that includes articles, images, video, and other interactive elements. The quality and volume of content SIM produced presented an opportunity for content sales and syndication, but the organization's labyrinthine publication structure and processes made it difficult and cost-prohibitive to find, access, and reuse materials.

Source Interlink Media (SIM) is a leading provider of special-interest media for enthusiasts around the world. Boasting 78 publications, 101 websites, 800 branded products, 50 annual events, TV and radio programs, and mobile device applications, SIM generates more than \$1.1 billion in yearly revenue.

Technology for Publishing (TFP) is a professional services firm that provides process and technical consulting to publishers in the magazine, book, newspaper, and corporate industries. TFP is a recognized leader in helping companies transform their content publishing strategies, processes, and systems from traditional, resource-intensive, paper-based models to fluid, automated content flows.

Working with the experts at Technology for Publishing (TFP), SIM launched a workflow migration initiative aimed at integrating its existing publishing technology into a new workflow. The new process would enable SIM to tag, categorize, and convert content, and store it in an internal repository for easy access and reuse. This new workflow would ensure consistency and organization across schema, and enable future content syndication.

Project History

SIM is a leading provider of content for enthusiasts. Its media outlets and publications, which include titles such as Motor Trend, Stereophile, Bound by Ink, and Surfer, are aimed at niche audiences within the automotive,

SIM’s content had been available online for several years, the organization’s production processes made extracting print content from its desktop publishing software difficult. The inflexibility of its publishing formats made finding, accessing,

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action sports, lifestyle, and home technology categories.

SIM knew that “findability” and fast access to articles, images, and video across its many brands were a necessity in order to keep pace in a rapidly changing and increasingly content-driven industry. Though

and reusing content difficult and cost-prohibitive. Metadata and XML tagging conventions were fragmented across the organization, and disparate production processes limited the potential reach of the content SIM’s editorial teams developed.

Adopting a standard approach would allow content to be created and shared across channels more effectively and at a lower cost while maintaining the authoritative voice of SIM’s publications across brands.

Gregory Catsaros, SIM’s vice president of manufacturing and technology, was referred to TFP by a well-respected media industry contact. “I wanted to use Technology for Publishing because of their highly consultative approach,” says Catsaros. “Margot [Knorr Mancini, TFP’s founder and president] and her team do an

excellent job of articulating the value of these types of projects to internal teams, and then go on to manage both the technological and publishing logistics associated with these upstream changes. We needed a comprehensive consulting team, and Technology for Publishing was the answer we were looking for.”

TFP worked with project leaders at SIM to outline the scope of the initiative and the logistics associated with it. Together, they mapped out a new, more efficient workflow that would incorporate

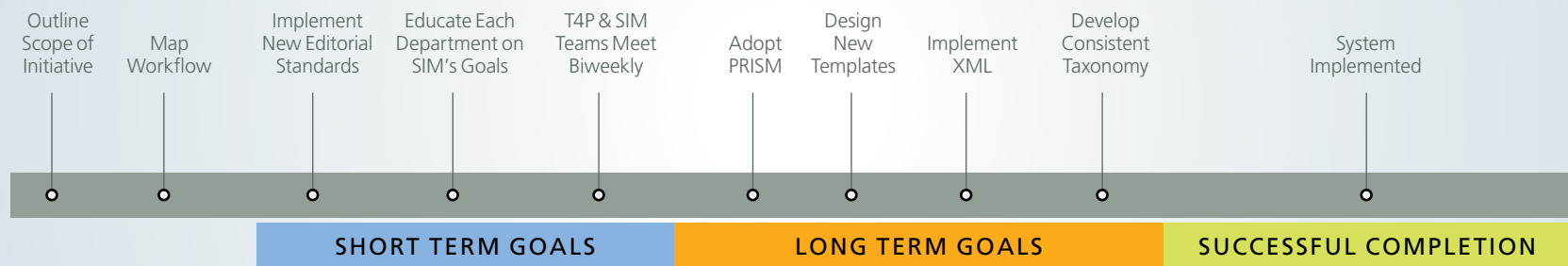
SIM’s existing publishing software while integrating new editorial standards and tasks designed to make content more flexible and accessible.

Once the short- and long-term goals were determined, the next step for SIM’s project managers and the TFP team was to introduce and roll out the new processes across the organization.

End-User Education

SIM and TFP began by educating each department within the organization about the goals and

Source Interlink Media Project Timeline



anticipated benefits of the project.

“We worked to educate Editorial, Edit Operations, Digital, and Corporate IT about the overall importance of this migration,” says Catsaros. “We wanted everyone to fully understand and embrace the corporate vision, the opportunity to capitalize on new markets, and the need to change.

“Moving from a print-centric approach to one focused on content neutrality, and adopting processes to facilitate that change, is a lot of work,” Catsaros acknowledges. “But we wanted our editorial teams to realize that with this change came the competitive advantage needed to support SIM’s objectives—specifically, to harness investments in content to support SIM’s lines of businesses, products, and marketing channels, and to standardize content creation, access, and delivery processes across brands.”

Content Structure

Next, SIM formally adopted the Publishing Requirements for Industry Standard Metadata (PRISM) specification and began adapting its Adobe InDesign and Microsoft Word document

support XML exporting. Working with external XML experts, SIM’s teams reviewed the template structures to ensure their adherence to XML requirements.

SIM’s internal support team subsequently helped to facilitate

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templates accordingly. TFP had submitted content structure recommendations to guide SIM in formatting its new templates to

the adoption process by working with each editorial group to implement the new templates and content structure. Meanwhile,

SIM and TFP team members met meet bi-weekly to assess progress and ensure that the project was hitting its targets.

Taxonomy

The second phase of SIM's workflow transition focused on the implementation of common taxonomies organization-wide. Subject matter experts (SME) were identified on each publishing team to contribute to the effort. The Automotive group was selected to make the transition first. Its SMEs worked with a TFP taxonomy specialist to develop a common approach to classifying metadata and content across groups, to enable search and retrieval capabilities for internal (and eventually external) clients. TFP and SIM held weekly conference calls to discuss the taxonomies being developed by individual groups at SIM. In addition, TFP prepared taxonomy guidelines for SIM, for

SIM By The Numbers



the implementation as well as future maintenance.

This process of analyzing and establishing the taxonomy was—not unexpectedly—time-consuming. But the end result—a scalable, comprehensive method for organizing content across the organization—has proved to be an enormous advantage for SIM.

Catsaros explains, “As one might imagine, with the sheer amount of media under management at SIM, this process took time, [but it] was ultimately very successful. That success is a result of the dedicated efforts of team members here at Source Interlink Media and our team members at Technology for Publishing.”

During this transition phase, project managers were selected to help drive the shift to a content-neutral organization and support the project in its entirety. SMEs at each publication helped to develop and refine the taxonomies to be used moving forward. Editors were told to reimagine themselves as “content producers,” an approach intended to help them to expand their responsibilities beyond print to encompass all media channels. Finally, a content services team was established in order to centralize support for content

producers and various user groups across the organization. This team supports and trains staff as needed and manages templates, quality assurance, governance policies, and evolving taxonomies across brands, with the primary objective of maintaining the integrity and increasing the value of the content produced at SIM.

Conclusion

As the project comes to a close, the teams at Source Interlink Media are proud of what has been accomplished. All SIM content is now PRISM-compliant, and Automotive-specific content has a consistent taxonomy. As a result, the internal repository is now live, and Automotive print, web, and blog content can be searched and thus accessed more easily. Images and video will also be searchable by end of August, as will all non-Automotive content.

Ultimately, this initiative will

enable SIM to create more dynamic content, and the organization can pursue syndication if and when it chooses to. "These are big accomplishments for SIM," says Catsaros. "We were able to navigate and implement significant change across a broad organization. Our content processes are now more efficient, and the content we are producing is of higher value. We are all proud of what was accomplished with the help of the team at Technology for Publishing."

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