

CASE STUDY



www.continental.com

CHALLENGE

To efficiently manage and publish content for aircraft maintenance manuals and parts catalogues.

SOLUTION

An XML CMS system integrated with an XMetaL content authoring environment.

RESULT

- Immediate improvement in technical documentation process
- Easier access and retrieval with content management system
- Reusable text and personalized content for multiple purposes
- Ease of use led to quick adoption by authors

XML Improves Efficiency for Technical Publications Department at Continental Airlines

Profile

Continental Airlines celebrated its 65th Anniversary in July, 1999. Once known as “The Proud Bird with the Golden Tail,” Continental boasts a long and distinctive history that began on July 15, 1934 with single-engine Lockheed aircraft on dusty runways in the American Southwest. Continental relocated its headquarters to Houston, Texas, in October 1982 after merging with Texas International.

The Challenge

The Technical Publications department at Continental Airlines produces aircraft maintenance manuals, internal maintenance procedures, illustrated parts catalogs and maintenance training manuals. These manuals, procedures and parts catalogs are integral to both aircraft and passenger safety. Since some of the content produced by the Technical Publications department is used for maintenance training, it requires frequent updating to reflect current policy and procedures.

In addition, aircraft maintenance crews rely heavily upon the mission critical information in the aircraft maintenance manuals and parts catalogs. Accurate, up-to-date content ensures maintenance crews are using the correct parts and procedures, which helps ensure the integrity of Continental's aircraft.

Managing the reams of technical documentation and maintenance manuals was growing increasingly tedious and Continental investigated XML as a possible content management and publishing solution. They also decided that any possible solution should improve the efficiency of the Technical Publications department and provide their users with easy access to documents for content reuse.

The Selection Process

The airline enlisted the services of Creative Concepts Corporation (CCC) to help them exploit the power of XML for the Technical Publications department. A systems integrator for e-business solutions, CCC specializes in developing systems to produce document management and Web-based distribution systems for the airline industry. CCC airline documentation systems handle XML and SGML documents that range from individual aircraft modification documents to huge ATA-2100/2200 compliant manuals. CCC's FlightLine product integrates the Engineering, Technical Publications and Work Card production aspects of an airline's maintenance operation.

XML is an ideal document format for the airline industry because it allows companies to manage and digitally deliver the thousands of pages of mission critical technical documentation and maintenance manuals that must regularly be produced and revised. After both companies were satisfied that XML would address their needs, they started the search for a content management system.

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"We benefit from the cost-savings of the solution year after year by saving money on training, distribution and resources."

Dave Southern, Manager, Technical Publications – Continental Airlines

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About JustSystems

JustSystems is a leading global software provider with three decades of successful innovation in office productivity, information management, and consumer and enterprise software. With over 2,500 customers worldwide, the company is continuing a global expansion strategy based on its xfy enterprise software, XMetaL content lifecycle solutions, and its pioneering work in enabling XBRL financial reporting technologies. JustSystems is one of the 2008 KMWorld 100 Companies that Matter in Knowledge Management, a 2008 EContent 100 member, and was recognized on the 2008 KMWorld Trend-Setting Product list for XMetaL. Major strategic partnerships include IBM, Oracle and EMC.

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The Solution

To manage the reams of documentation produced by the Technical Publications department, CCC and Continental selected Documentum's 4i content management platform. Documentum is the leading provider of content management solutions, with the proven experience and superior technology that uniquely qualifies them as content management experts.

The next step was to select an XML content creation environment for their users. They decided that XMetaL® best suited their needs. "When we were choosing an XML content creation solution, we were really impressed with XMetaL's authoring environment," said Patrick Tourais, manager of systems and training, Continental Airlines. "After about a week or so of using the product, our technical writers were up to speed."

Now, the Technical Publications department is using a customized XMetaL integrated with Documentum's 4i content management platform to edit and manage the content and lifecycle of their documentation. "From a customization standpoint, it (XMetaL) allows us to do things that just aren't possible with any other application," said Paul Vanderveen, Senior Consultant, CCC.

"And for system integration, XMetaL is very powerful and easy to program," added Vanderveen. "We used XMetaL's rich API and easy-to-customize tag insertion methods to produce valid XML while keeping the individual authors' workload to a minimum. And we effectively integrated XMetaL with Documentum 4i to make it easy for users to retrieve documents and other content for editing, and save them back to the content repository."

The Benefits

The adoption of XML and XMetaL at Continental immediately improved the efficiency of their Technical Publications department by giving them the ability to reuse content for delivery to multiple output formats. "We can use our text in more than one place, cutting delivery time and ensuring the consistency of the information we produce," explained Tourais. The Documentum 4i platform provides easy document access, storage and retrieval.

In addition, the familiar authoring environment of XMetaL reduces the end user learning curve and lets content authors focus on what they do best – writing. "Because our technical writers are working directly in XML, they can now concentrate on the technical content rather than worrying about how it should be formatted," Tourais concluded.

Continental's quick transition to XML has dramatically shown that XMetaL is easily customized and integrated into a content management system, allowing people with no prior experience in either XML or structured content to quickly create valid XML content. They have been able to update thousands of documents, reaping the benefits of impressive productivity gains and repeated annual savings. "We benefit from the cost-savings of the solution year after year," explains Dave Southern, Manager of the Technical Publications department, "by saving money on training, distribution and resources. The savings have a perpetual snowball effect!"