

CASE STUDY

**PHILIPS**

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CHALLENGE

To rapidly and cost-effectively publish product documentation to internal and external websites, without compromising accuracy or quality.

SOLUTION

An XML-driven content authoring and management system.

RESULT

- 70% reduction in publication costs
- 75% decrease in publishing cycle time
- Complete authoring system implemented in just a few months
- Minimal training required
- Elimination of manual HTML conversion
- More job satisfaction for authors and web team

Philips Business Communications

XMetaL Helps Philips Streamline Online Product Documentation

Profile

As Europe's leading provider of innovative voice and data communications solutions, Philips Business Communications have made it their mission to "give the new economy a voice". In real terms, this means offering customers a comprehensive suite of products – from IP-based telephony systems to next-generation call centre solutions and beyond.

As you would expect, each of these products comes with a large and varied set of documentation, from product specifications to training material to sales collateral. Recently, Philips management realized that the process of publishing this documentation to the web for distribution to internal stakeholders and partners needed to be improved. It was taking too long, costing too much and resulting in quality control issues.

There's Got to Be a Better Way

Looking across the room, Olivier Kil could see them at work. As the XML Projects Lead for Philips Business Communications, Kil shared office space with the pair of highly trained web developers who now found themselves spending most of their time manually converting product documentation to HTML.

Seeing these talented, high-value resources being systematically bored to tears, he was struck by two thoughts at once: "I'm glad it's not me," and "There's got to be a better way."

Knots in the Process

The old process began with the Product Managers, who would gather product content from various authors and compile it into a single MS Word document. Next, that document would be sent to the Web Development Team, who would convert it to HTML and post on the intranet—a process that took an average of 8 hours per document. After that, marketing would review and edit the content to make sure it was suitable for distribution to partners. And finally, the long-suffering Web Team would once again convert it to HTML – this time for posting on one or more of Philips' many partner-facing extranets. Constant enhancements and improvements to multiple products created an endless flow of documentation that required immediate attention to prevent bottlenecks.

Clearly, this process was broken. Too many resources were spending too much time on a relatively straightforward task. And long cycle times meant that online documentation was in danger of falling behind the fast-pace of product development. In short, it was taking too long and costing too much to create something that was nearly out-of-date by the time it was finally published.

Spurred by Kil's revelation and convinced there was a strong business case for change, Philips committed to addressing the problem immediately. Soon, Olivier Kil found himself leading a team charged with fixing the process.

C A S E S T U D Y



“ROI was remarkably rapid and well-defined. Web publication costs were cut by 70% and publication cycle time was cut by 75%.”

Olivier Kil, XML Projects Lead,
Philips Business Communications

In order to boost efficiency and develop a documentation strategy that matched Philips’ company-wide dedication to innovation, Kil and his team quickly decided to implement an XML-driven content authoring and management system.

Narrowing the Field

Kil and his team began with a vision. They imagined a new way of working that would cut down the length of the cycle dramatically by taking the burden entirely off the shoulders of the Product Managers and the Web Team from the process entirely. Content would now go directly from the creator’s desktop to the intranet without any obstacles to slow it down. It was this vision that defined the selection criteria for the solution.

First on their wish list was a user-friendly authoring interface. Their plans hinged on finding a tool that employees from different departments all over the company – some of them very non-technical – could use to author content directly in XML. For this reason, they knew they needed a user interface that was as familiar and easy-to-use as possible. This became the first and most important criteria in the selection process.

On the IT side, the priorities were also clear. They wanted a system that was built to last – one that embraced established open standards. They wanted a product that was robust enough to do the job, but flexible enough to do it their way. And they wanted a familiar development interface that would let their internal team hit the ground running and quickly put the product to work for them – their way.

Lastly, an overriding goal was to gain the most value for their budget. To this end, Philips demanded a cost-effective initial implementation, low ongoing cost of ownership, and above all rapid return on investment.

Why XMetaL?

After crossing off all of the options that didn’t meet their needs, the selection committee found a perfect fit in XMetaL. IT was impressed by the product’s emphasis on flexibility and ease of development. And content creators were enthusiastic about the authoring interface, which looks and acts very much like Microsoft Word.

XMetaL in Action

Once the decision to move ahead with XMetaL was approved, the ease of use, familiar Windows behavior and open architecture of XMetaL allowed for seamless deployment and customization.

“Within a few months we created a word processing solution for our document authors. The interface was so familiar to them that only minimal training was required” says Kil. “After roll-out, the average document conversion time dropped from 8 hours to just seconds. And we now had the ability to publish the same document in different formats and variants instantly, with no extra conversion or authoring work.”

CASE STUDY



Kil was also impressed by the flexibility his team had over the format of the XML output. “We wanted standards that matched our needs, which were focused exclusively on web publication. For example, we wanted to use XHTML tags to control the layout of our dynamically generated HTML”, explains Kil. “XMetaL allows us that control, and results have been outstanding.”

Today, the process is running smoothly. Project Managers have been removed from the process completely. And content creators from all over the company have the ability to publish content directly from their desktops.

Impressive ROI

To this day, Olivier Kil is a passionate XMetaL advocate. For an IT project of this scope, he says, the ROI was remarkably rapid and well-defined. Web publication costs were cut by 70% and publication cycle time was cut by 75%.

By Kil's calculation, XMetaL paid for itself inside of the first year.

And what about those two web developers who spent so many of their days on mindless document conversion work? Kil is happy to report that they have fully recovered and since gone on to contribute to many high-value, high-impact projects.

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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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