

# Editorial systems for newspapers – a system solution model

Which editorial system suits the needs of my media company best? That question is not easy to answer, says consultant David Best, since markets and business models are becoming more and more complex. Driven by trends such as Big Data, the unbundling of content and the need for efficient workflows in a disrupted newspaper industry, requirements keep reaching new heights.



David Best, the author of this article, is a consultant at Kirchner + Robrecht management consultants. He focuses on digital media strategy and publishing systems.

## Delivery, service and development – the application management

Application management includes the functionalities as well as the services of your system provider, service partner and/or IT department in order to deliver, maintain, and develop the system. Cloud services are certainly gaining importance, since they can generate economics of scale. However, the strategic fit to your IT strategy as a whole has to be ensured, and payment model and costs have to be evaluated. When looking for an editorial system, you should consider the release policy: While some system providers are continuously integrating new features, others prefer solely defined release cycles. One or the other might suit your needs better. Furthermore, you should ask for the development roadmap and the recent most important developments to estimate the supplier's development power and check the strategic fit. Looking at the number of IT developers as well as the service model is a must.

## No system is an island – API management

API management comprises the specific interfaces as well as the application programming interfaces (APIs). The editorial system regularly exchanges data with numerous other systems like publishing systems for subscriptions and advertisements, customer relationship management systems and print production systems. Beyond that, you should evaluate how to integrate e-commerce-solutions and further specific solutions, e.g. for marketing automation. Make sure to know how the sys-

tem provider deals with data interfaces in general - many are using web services for extensive interoperability.

## The need for efficiency – workflow management

Workflow management is about the establishment of system-supported processes. Workflow management modules can automate processes, e.g. via automated alerts for participants at a certain stage of the process. Of course, editorial production workflows have to be efficient in a media company, since they are the key for creating value. As market pressure increases, it is pushing newspaper companies to be even more efficient. When selecting a system, you should be clear about your organisational setup and the key processes. Don't try to reproduce all existent processes with the workflow management module – try to concentrate on the optimal system support for key publishing processes.

## Let's talk about the users – user management

User management is necessary to define the various roles and rights for editors, illustrators, product managers and further staff. When evaluating editorial systems, outline user concepts and roles and ensure sufficient flexibility of user and rights management: Is it possible to define user roles and rights individually? Can user interfaces be customised to a certain degree only? How does this correspond with your requirements?

## A lot more than product administration – product management

Product management is about planning, implementing, administering and optimising digital and print products. On one hand, it comprises administrative issues like master data management for your publications. On the other hand, it is a tool for implementing your digital strategy. An example of this is paywalls. To stay flexible and optimise your earnings, the system should provide the means to run various paywall models such as the metered model, a total lockdown, or the selling of selected con-

tent easily. Since the paywall market has greatly evolved, you have the choice between specialised solution providers and editorial systems with paywall functionality.

## The core of content production – content editor and layout editor

The content editor is of course a key module of editorial systems. You can find editorial systems with their own editors and editorial systems that integrate third-party editors. The strict separation of layout and content is one common, and important, requirement. Our experience shows that this is a common breaking point. Therefore, we recommend you thoroughly analyse and test the publishing process with the provided content and layout editors. You should test this in a "live" setting that comes as close as possible to the later process in order to test practicability, usability and performance. State-of-the-art publishing systems offer a well-thought-out solution for updating content across multiple channels, we also recommend you aim at automating such processes.

## Ideas and topics, collaboration & deadlines – the planning module

Planning is necessary both for creative outputs and efficient content production. When looking at this subject, one should consider the whole process and all requirements of planning. Is it possible to gather ideas, define topics and assign tasks to the editorial staff? Are resources and capacities displayed in the system and is it possible to integrate relevant third party systems in this

field? Furthermore, planning is not only about print planning and a live view of the production state. It is also about having all digital channels and the re-use and (re-) packaging of content throughout its lifecycle.

## You can't manage what you can't measure – analytics management

Analytics management is a broad subject. It can include analytics concerning production efficiency as well as analytics concerning web metrics or customer value. While many specialised third-party providers for those functions exist, analytics management and analytics functionalities implemented in editorial systems are getting more important in the age of "Big Data." You should look at the corresponding system dashboards to check the usability. And, first of all, it is a strategic question for publishers to define an analytics and data strategy as well as an organisational setup for "test and optimisation" and define a "landscape" of relevant systems. After that, you should analyse what the editorial system providers can offer you.

## More channels, more options – digital publishing

Digital publishing is always about new channels in mobile and social media and their rising importance. Therefore, when selecting an editorial system you should clearly consider the efficiency and ease-of-use of the multichannel publishing process and whether or not new channels can be easily implemented. Another key issue in digital content publication is automating and personalising content delivery. For instance, content testing via A/B or mul-

tivariate tests and the automated output of "winning" content is a relevant functionality. Leading web solutions offer individual page creation for users based on content classification and targeting.

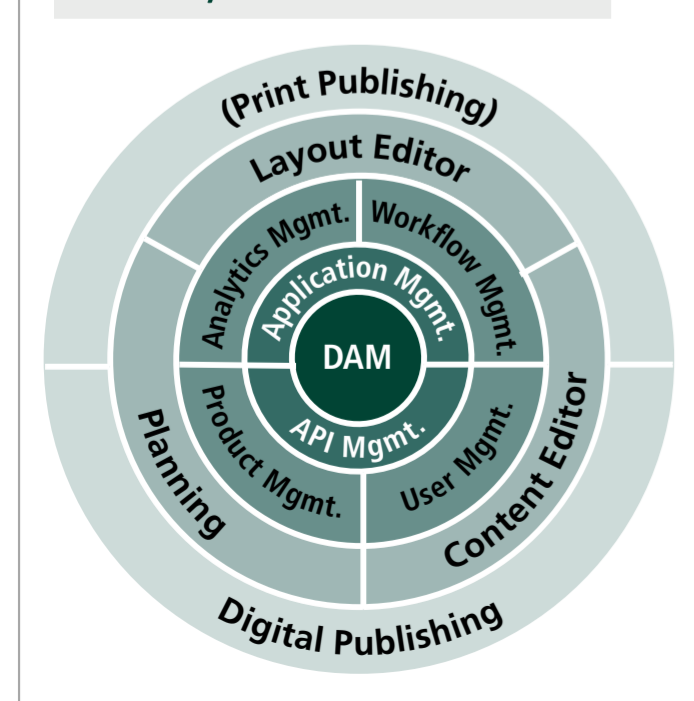
## Best of Breed vs. All-in-One

There is no general truth concerning an all-in-one versus a best of breed approach. When selecting a system, you need a clear view of your business and IT strategy. After defining requirements and use cases taking into account the publishing process from end to end, that is, from planning to production, screen the market. Start by asking: Does the editorial solution cover the core publishing processes for multichannel output efficiently? Afterwards, consider: Which advantages does the system offer besides the key publishing modules in special domains like e.g. analytics and paywalls? That is where special solutions are common; however, some market players offer interesting functionalities in this respect. Last but not least, since it's actually quite unrealistic to find a solution that suits all your current and future needs for publishing, it has to be ensured that your system is flexible by offering good API management and a modular architecture.

## Free Editorial Systems Guided Tours at Expo

WAN-IFRA Global Advisory Services is once again partnering with consulting firm Kirchner + Robrecht to organise the Editorial Systems Tours on-site at the Expo in Hamburg. David Best, Consultant at Kirchner + Robrecht, and author of this article, will lead the tours. For details, please contact WAN-IFRA's Nicole Frankenhauer at [nicole.frankenhauer@wan-ifra.org](mailto:nicole.frankenhauer@wan-ifra.org)

## Editorial system model



## Editorial system layers

- Publication layer:** Publication of content throughout various digital channels (print publishing via the print production system)
- Content creation layer:** Planning, layout, creation and editing of content
- Support layer:** Management of workflows, management of users and rights, analytics management and product management
- IT-Management layer:** Management of the system, APIs and interfaces
- Digital Asset Management / content repository core:** Management and storage of all content and metadata



Kirchner + Robrecht is going to publish a free white paper about "Editorial systems for newspapers" in October. To register to download the report, you can scan the QR code, or use this link: <http://qrtrack.de/?c=U5>

World Publishing Expo - October 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 - Hamburg - Hall 4 - Stand 4.420



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