Cellesche Zeitung, Germany

Facts and figures

Cellesche Zeitung, a regional newspaper, sells just over 30,000 copies a day. It is published by Schweiger & Pick Verlag. The Madsack media group, located in nearby Hanover, has a stake in the Cellesche Zeitung.

Cellesche Zeitung has an editorial office that produces local desks as well as national politics, business and sports pages.

CELLE. It's Monday, May 9, 2011. At 11.07 p.m. the big moment has finally come: Cellesche Zeitung has successfully produced its full-run pages with the new editorial solution Content-X. An exemplary go-live, a great success for the local paper and a long story full of accuracy, preparation and pride.

The history
In 2008, the Madsack media group, which has a stake in Cellesche Zeitung, decided to change the working environment at the editorial office from Mac and Quark to PC and InDesign, a decision requiring a new workflow and software. In Hanover, a quick decision was reached in favor of a new editorial system. In Celle, this took a little longer. Finally, in January 2011, after a thorough examination of the market and many discussions with providers, the management chose Content-X, the joint editorial solution by Digital Collections and ppi Media.

The editorial workflow
March 2011: not everything had to be implemented again, but many new things had to be integrated, such as the administration tool for topics and deadlines, iDater by Desatec, that was already in place in Celle. "The workflow is at the center of everything. The software is adapted to it. It perfects and automates the individual processes and system components," said Volker Franke, deputy editor-in-chief and managing editor at Cellesche Zeitung.

And this is how it works: iDater is at the center of the workflow for the local desk. Using the administration tool, freelance staff and editors in the field are informed about orders, including lengths and deadlines. After the order has been accepted and texts and images transferred, the articles are stored in DC-X, the Content Management System, and revised by an editor. When the article has been completed, it is forwarded to the layout editor. The article is placed in InDesign and later released for production.

"We work with just a few template pages. The handling of Content-X is very intuitive and the page layout is so quick that a lot of articles can be designed using text modules from the InDesign library, making them more appealing. Our pages are vivid and unique," said Franke, describing how simple it is to work with Content-X.

Preparation is everything

Despite the conscious decision to avoid too many template pages, one thing is very clear: nothing is more important than sound preparation. This impression is reinforced by the comic hanging behind the desk of the managing editor, which states in large print: "It pays to be organized."

Using this credo as a guiding principle, the staff in Celle took part in several short workshops and learned the basic editing functions in InDesign. Step by step, they built up libraries of articles in InDesign. Three weeks after this meticulous preparation, templates for news, comments, pictures, teasers etc. are now available. Editors just have to drag and drop them to the designated position on the page, arrange them in content groups and transfer them to the Content Management System DC-X.

Content-X: InDesign and CMS

DC-X by Digital Collections is an integral element of the editorial solution Content-X. It is the CMS that offers possibilities for innovative research and content capture. It merges with ppi Media's InDesign plug-in ContentLink to form a novel editorial solution. "A solution that is beyond comparison with competitive products. Content-X is self-explanatory, easy to handle, fast and flexible. It's in a class of its own," said Franke, describing the editorial software.

So just a few days after going live, the editors at the newspaper feel confident working with InDesign and DC-X. Research for background information is a matter of course in DC-X, as are searches for editors' own articles, deliveries from freelance journalists or the latest reports from news agencies. They are moved to content groups and continuously repositioned on the InDesign pages as required. The editors' work is in a constant state of flux, just like the news.

Cross-media: online with just one click

Nor is cross-media publishing a problem in Celle. Desatec's web CMS is supplied with news directly via DC-X. Just one click and all of the articles are also available online. The priority of an article and how up-to-date it is automatically determine its position on the website.

Step-by-step implementation

Before Content-X went live in the editorial office, the solution was implemented and tested step by step in other departments. It was the PR department at Cellesche Zeitung that first produced single pages using the new system. In a second step, the advertiser Celler Markt was produced with Content-X. Just a short while later, the production department at Cellesche Zeitung switched all its processes for full-run production to Content-X, followed by the local desk one week later. The production of Cellesche Zeitung changed within only one week from QuarkXPress 3.32 on Mac OS 9 to Content-X with InDesign CS5 on Windows 7.

Next steps

Shortly after going live, there are of course still a few things here and there that need optimizing. But on the whole, the fact that the software implementation was so successful outweighs everything else. "Everything worked out just fine: no emergency production, all the pages were produced without errors, and the deadlines were always met," said Volker Franke, summing up the first days of using Content-X.