

Hyperlocal Publishing using Content-X

Nordkurier, Germany



Facts and figures

The *Nordkurier* is published Mondays to Saturdays in 15 local editions. It is read by 230,000 people in Western Pomerania, the Mecklenburg Lake District and the Uckermark district – both as a print version and online.

The paper is published by Kurierverlags GmbH & Co KG. Apart from daily newspapers, the publishing house's fields of business include giveaway papers, magazines, television, online portals, apps, print, logistics and communication services. The "Nordkurier-Briefdienst", a letter service, delivers 150,000 letters every day, making it the largest private postal service provider in north-eastern Germany. During the past years, this corporate group has invested more than ten million euros in its printing site, developing it into one of the most modern service providers.

More local impact for readers. Using this strategy, *Nordkurier* has positioned itself extremely well for just over a year now.

More local impact means being closer to your market, on site, focusing on the stories and the people in the communities, cities and villages. "That is exactly what our readers want," said Marica Verjaal, Head of Media Services at Kurierverlags GmbH & Co KG. What makes her so sure? In 2012, those responsible at the publisher's carried out an in-depth reader survey together with the Editorial Department in which readers' habits were investigated. Which topics are interesting? What do readers want? What do they really read? Where do they stop? Which headings work? The results were clear: *Nordkurier's*

readers are interested in local topics that go as far as hyperlocal stories.

In a sparsely populated region such as eastern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, more local impact also means radical reorganization. Apart from staffing, this also concerns the selection of a suitable tool.

Content-X for the Editorial Department
Nordkurier decided to use Content-X, the editorial system developed jointly by ppi Media and Digital Collections. Its management was especially convinced by the diversity of the workflow for texts and text variations for all media channels. The fact that it is easy to use, has a more simple system and integrates Adobe

InDesign, the layout program already being used by *Nordkurier*, were further arguments in favor of Content-X. "It is easy to install and learn. It is also wonderfully lean. No unnecessary trimmings," said Marica Verjaal, summing up Content-X.

Reporters for the region

In order to be on site quickly, always and everywhere, *Nordkurier* consistently implements the principle of using desk reporters. In the distribution area, there is a central desk located at headquarters in the city of Neubrandenburg as well as four regional desks. The entire production is carried out exclusively at these desks, which are equipped with a desk editor-in-chief, an appropriate number of editors



"I am very satisfied with Content-X. We at *Nordkurier* find the system very easy to operate, easy to understand, fast and efficient. In my opinion, while the effort it took to set up the program was high, it was still much less than for the previous system. Since InDesign is a standard program that many employees know and can operate, it is possible to split the set-up process between several people."

Marica Verjaal, Head of Media Services, Kurierverlags GmbH & Co. KG

and two producers for each desk. Generally, the producers are trained media designers who do the layout for pages, design the graphics and process images. The people missing at the desk are those doing the research: the reporters.

Each regional desk has several reporters. They travel throughout the region, reporting, delivering stories, pictures and videos. "In the beginning, this was a very unusual situation for our colleagues. Many of them were very attached to 'their' page. Meanwhile, however, many of them have recognized that this new organizational structure offers advantages," stated Marica Verjaal, reporting on the day-to-day editorial work at the *Nordkurier*.

The reporters enter their content in the reporter tool, the Digital Asset Management DC-X, and then send it to the desk. The desk makes a general decision on publishing content in the various channels. To this end, variations of the reporters' stories are created, the content of which can then be adjusted for the specific channel. Since stories in Content-X are completely media-neutral and kept

in a central system for all channels, there are no disruptive breaks between system limits nor is there any need to adjust formats.

Changes for success

Some great changes have been made at *Nordkurier*: a lot of cost-effective, web-based editorial workplaces have replaced the more expensive traditional ones which, apart from reducing costs, actually made it possible for reporters to be highly mobile. Distributing assignments between reporters, editors and producers has increased the overall quality of reporting, because those involved can concentrate on their core capabilities and their special talents are fostered.

When it comes to such massive changes, there are always sceptics – and *Nordkurier* is no exception. In the end, however, the desire to tackle something new swung the balance among all those involved. Ultimately, the satisfaction that comes from using Content-X, the measurable success of the daily newspaper and highly motivated employees showed that those responsible were right. "We are very satisfied. Users find the system very easy to

operate, easy to understand, fast and efficient. The effort it took to set it up must not be underestimated, but nevertheless it was significantly less than for our previous editorial system. InDesign makes a lot of things much simpler here," Marica Verjaal said, summing up the project.

One system for all products

There is a further advantage to using InDesign as a layout tool: Content-X can create more than just the daily newspaper. All of the publications can be produced in the same system. This makes the often encountered split between "normal" publications produced in the editorial system and other publications with a high standard of design, which must be created using supplementary solutions or even completely outside of all the systems, entirely superfluous. This also greatly reduces the number of systems to be operated and creates a homogeneous production environment for all departments. By using DC-X as a tool for creating content, the publishing house automatically gets a single central archive for all of the content that is created.

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