

## Newspaper

# Postmedia Network Inc., Canada



## Facts & Figures

Postmedia Network Inc. is, with eleven newspapers, the largest publisher by circulation of paid English-language daily newspapers in Canada, representing some of the country's oldest and best known media brands.

Reaching millions of Canadians every week, Postmedia Network engages readers and offers advertisers and marketers integrated solutions to effectively attract audiences through a variety of print, online, digital and mobile platforms.

Create content for a new world – with this in mind, Postmedia Network Inc. started its Content Management Project to meet the requirements of a changing media environment. With the growing impact of internet and mobile, the concept of news has changed for many people. The new Postmedia strategy is to turn the business from producing ink on paper to an information-first, medium-second approach.

To fulfill the transition from print-centric to digital workflows and to centralize the production workflow from eleven sites, tangible systems were required. When the Content Management Project officially started in 2007, ppi Media was on the list of suppliers for the central production backbone with consolidated layout, pagination and output.

“To revolutionize Postmedia means to optimize a market leader without losing speed, to break existing chains in order to unlock even more efficiency and to free publications from geographical traps with a production backbone that provides an integrated, end-to-end production system,” says Markus Feldenkirchen, CEO of ppi Media US, Inc.

ppi Media faced these challenges, and in the end, the project was an immense success for Postmedia and all its partners.

“The integration of components from planning to plate production – made possible by ppi Media’s solutions – not only offers the highest degree of automation possible, but has also enabled us to build a centralized production hub that provides services for

multiple newspapers,” said Marty Cramer, Production Manager at Calgary Herald.

### The Challenge

ppi Media’s task in the Content Management Project was clearly defined to take print planning and production to a new level within a centralized and highly scalable infrastructure. In addition to Saxotech’s content management system and solutions from Binuscan and Tansa, ppi Media’s Plan-Pag, ProPag (PDF assembly) and printnet OM were the chosen tools to automate the workflow.

Nothing less than to build a solid foundation for growth and to guarantee smooth integration and efficient transition was expected from this project. With its open



“ppi Media turned out to be an ideal partner. We sought to create a content management solution for the business that took into consideration not only our front end content creation to multiple platform requirements, but a modernization of our labor intensive legacy processes to our print channel. We needed a consolidated national production backbone on which to hang the entire workflow, and ppi Media delivered.”

Ed Brouwer, former Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Postmedia Network, Inc.

solutions, ppi Media is a leading global systems integrator. Its PlanPag solution forms the core component of the new, centralized production environment. It provides a bi-directional interface between the paper layout and page output, which ensures that production errors are caught well in advance and late changes are updated automatically.

With this new planning approach, a team of specialized planners in one location, producing an average of twelve editions a day, provide a preliminary layout for each daily newspaper across the nation, revise and then release the final layout to the editorial system.

“With enterprise systems from ppi Media and Binuscan, we have developed regional production centers to drive print production at local and commercial sites. The technical footprint at local sites can therefore be reduced or eliminated,” Cramer said.

### The Milestones

As the production backbone, the entire ppi Media system runs on centralized servers in Winnipeg, Manitoba. All the components of the new production workflow were installed during the first phase of the Content Man-

agement Project in June 2008. Following an accelerated configuration and training timeframe, the Calgary Herald was the first Canwest\* site to go live in October 2008, followed by their Northern Alberta neighbor, the Edmonton Journal, in May 2009.

The Vancouver Sun and The Province changed their systems in January 2010 just before the start of the XXI Olympic Winter Games. Both Vancouver newspapers were therefore produced using ppi Media’s workflow products. The Montreal Gazette, Ottawa Citizen and Windsor Star, too, changed their centralized systems in the same year, followed by Regina Leader-Post and Saskatoon StarPhoenix in 2011.

All users/clients access ppi Media servers and applications via a centralized Citrix farm residing in Winnipeg.

### The Benefits

The new, optimized workflow, with all the outlined solutions installed, allows Postmedia to take advantage of industry-leading print channel innovations both immediately and in the future. Later deadlines for ad and editorial content are just some of the advantages of the integrated company-wide planning system. The consolidated page

production and availability of layout-based workflow tools means more time for editors to spend on content creation. Which in turn creates greater reader satisfaction, one of the main goals of the Content Management Project.

“Because of the attention paid to page elements prior to the output cycle, page errors and problems are minimal. On average we experience 1.3 pages per paper every day that require some form of manual intervention. This is a significant improvement in performance and reliability. In the ppi Media environment, one staff member routinely manages the output of two papers and often works on three papers simultaneously. The focus is more on the timely release to the various print sites,” Cramer stated.

The project started with the keyword ‘bi-directional’, meaning the ability to exchange rather than just deliver, to start a conversation instead of a monolog, to be connected to the community. What was a vision then is now a reality. And with this came one of the most modern newspaper production workflows worldwide. A benchmark best prepared for all future requirements!

\* Canwest Global Communications Corporation was a major Canadian media company. After entering bankruptcy in late 2009, the company assets were sold. In 2010, Postmedia Network took over the newspaper arm.

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