



Roularta Media Group automates ad page lay-out

Shorter deadlines thanks to new way of working

Roularta Media Group (RMG) is a Belgian publish and print concern with more than 3000 employees and a total turnover of 750 million. It publishes free newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines and participates in national TV, radio and internet. For the automated ad page lay-out Roularta uses the Vit2Print solution of NSS.

Roularta is specialized in free newspapers with lots of big and small ads. Next to this, this publisher owns a website – www.vlan.be – for job ads, car ads, real estate ads, etc. There is a synergy between both activities, however not enough.

Erwin Danis, Director Premedia of Roularta: "The demand for automation came from the production side. Our real estate ads are all ads received from real estate agents. Posting their real estate on the web brings along the opportunity to also place it in our newspapers. For the moment this is still limited. We want to expand this in a manner that we can offer real estate agents the possibility to create small and big ads. Those ads retrieve their basic information out of the website database. When we were looking at this, we told ourselves: there also should be the possibility to create ads that are not fed by our database, like obituaries. We have offices all over the country who sell the ad space. Sales people hit the streets and receive their material from the customers. Those orders are administratively worked out in their office, there is made a drawing of the ad, the material is gathered in this is send to Roularta. It would be nice that the administrative people in those offices also enter the ads; in this manner Roularta immediately receives the lay-out version. Then we do two things in one action: text input and lay-out. Finally, we are looking for possibilities for the internal production for our several problems and we ran up against NSS and their AdVit Server and FormVit."

Working with templates

NSS (Net & Storage Solutions) started in 1987 and since then it delivers solutions for prepress optimization. With Roularta the AdVit Server, an engine built around the Indesign CS2 Server, was installed in a multi-functional way for several different productions and that is expandable with other modules for different solutions. Roularta uses FormVit, making it possible to create ads via a web interface. Filip Desseyn, director NSS, stresses the flexibility and the scalability of the AdVit Server: "With the AdVit Server, we offer an open architecture, based on the Indesign server, with webservices on top so a company can easily connect the front-end of his website. As a result, this solution can easily be integrated into their own website."

“FormVit is a template based way of working, used e.g. for business cards, announcements, flyers, brochures and off course advertisements – everything that is template based-. For FormVit you do not need any IT knowledge to create templates. A big issue for a lot of companies is the scripting of templates. Using FormVit does not require knowledge of scripting. Creating a template is very easy because the intelligence is added by the AdVit Server. The AdVit server is scalable. This means that you can expand the functionalities of the system. Moreover, increasing the server capacity is an easy procedure of placing extra machinery. Without the Indesign Server this solution would not have been possible. You have to serve hundreds of users simultaneously and this is -off course- not possible with a desktop version.”

It is important for Roularta that the same templates can be used in different publications and that for this purpose he does not need to address the system integrator. “We shall create ourselves the templates for our customers” says Erwin Danis. “We shall do this in a centralized manner, as an extra service to our customers. Before we used Vit2Print, we had a system where you almost had to be an engineer in computer programming to create a template. That did not work for us. It has to be basic; a template has to be created by a graphic designer who is able to add functionalities to the template himself.

Implementation in phases.

Roularta implements the different possibilities of this way of automated publishing in phases.

Erwin Danis: “We start with our internal production. We are now testing the system. The second phase is to start using this system in our different offices in the country, because then we also realize the integration with our order system. The third phase is the lay-out by the customers, such as real estate agents and car dealers. The fourth phase is making the connection with the online database. NSS made this already possible; we should integrate it with our vln website.”

“The heart of the system is already there; we can now start testing it and see how it works. This new way of working shall save us much time because we can create our ads much faster. The customer can send us his material much later. For an edition we close tomorrow and that we print tomorrow night the sales representative has to collect the material today; this is then send to us by night and the day after we start the production for the newspaper that is printed that night. In the future, our customers will have the time to send us their material right up to publishing deadline. He wins time, the deadlines become sharper and thereby the customers creates his own ad. The customer has more control over the content. For the customer this does not mean that they have to work harder: now he also has to collect his information. This means an enormous saving of time for our customers and for ourselves: a double win/win situation, win/win square!”

Advantages

Erwin Danis enumerates the advantages for Roularta Media Group and its customers once again: “This way of working shortens our deadlines. We shall save much time, but this also holds true for our customers. You should see for yourself what we receive from our customers – texts, copy/pastes – and this is just for proof printing. It is the end of that story with Vit2Print. The customer immediately sees the result and with one click a standardized PDF for our lay-out is generated.”