

Peterson's increases productivity by 25-percent within the first year with Ictect's Intelligent Content software and Microsoft Word

SITUATION

Peterson's has been providing educational materials to students, parents, and educators since 1966. Considered the world's leading educational services company, Peterson's focus is on furthering education after high school. Additionally, Peterson's website www.petersons.com is the premier portal for information regarding colleges, universities, graduate programs, test preparation, scholarship programs, and financial aid.

Peterson's reference guides are a significant resource for thousands of educational institutions and students in North America and across the globe. Content for the reference guides is contributed by more than 5,000 institutions. The content is edited and used to create in-depth descriptions (IDDs) for each institution. Add to that the need to include more than 2,000 institution-specific announcements, institutional crests and logos, and 10,000 photographs, all within tight publication deadlines, and one can appreciate the scope and scale of the project coordination and management challenges faced by Peterson's.

To update the large volume of content provided by contributing institutions, Peterson's used an editing software which was nearly a decade old and no longer supported by its vendor. The software was coding intensive and not user-friendly. The proofreading process and other quality control processes were labor and time intensive.

Another challenge was the need to transition toward XML-based content. Peterson's project managers were faced with a daunting dilemma: locate and utilize an offshore firm to manually code their vast pool of legacy content to an XML format, and/or to purchase and utilize an XML editing software system.

Both options created additional challenges for Peterson's. An offshore content coding service would outsource the XML work, but would have a financial impact. The purchase and use of an XML editing system would be beneficial for the Peterson's editing and production staff, but would not meet the institutional client's needs, which predominantly provided information in a Microsoft Word rich text format, and not in XML.



...editorial deadlines were always met. The staff has been a pleasure to work with."

Jill Schwartz
Editor

Peterson's Publishing





SOLUTION

The company selected Intelligent Content software to use with Microsoft Word, creating a user-friendly environment for editors. The software was an ideal solution to the two-fold problem of replacing an unsupported, difficult-to-use product and the need to generate XML on the content.

Utilizing a common text editing tool in Microsoft Word, the information providers are able to contribute, review, and edit their specific content with ease. Then Peterson's editors are also able to use Microsoft Word to review and edit the content.

To generate the XML, the Intelligent Content software uses a proprietary and patented process to create XML directly from the Microsoft Word content provided. The use of XML within Microsoft Word significantly improved the internal and external communications, editing, and production processes.

In addition to improved productivity and quality control benefits, Peterson's found the software provided reduction in time needed to train new and temporary copy editors. This is due to the seamless, Microsoft Word-based functioning of the software.

Significant benefits were produced for a range of Peterson's staff:

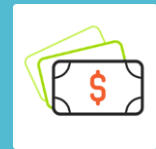
- Provides user friendly, Microsoft Word-based data contribution, and editing tool
- Embedded XML software enhances publisher's data management, editing, formatting, and composition capabilities
- Requires no new hardware
- Reduces need for composition intervention with copy editors
- Provides a structured, valid XML document
- Text and data changes easily tracked and verified by Peterson's production staff, as well as by their clients.
- Improves Peterson's reference guide publishing productivity by an estimated 25% in the first year

The selection of Ictect's Intelligent Content software and Microsoft Word provided positive impacts for the Peterson's organization.

RESULTS



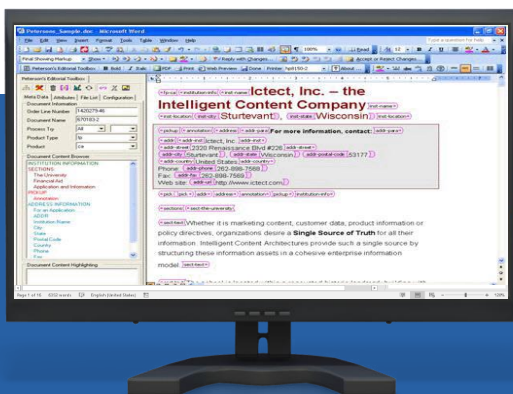
Provides user-friendly Microsoft Word-based editing tool



Reduces cost by providing XML directly from Microsoft Word



Supports multiple outputs



“The software improved Peterson's reference guide publishing productivity by an estimated 25% in the first year.”

Gary Rozmierski, Director, Composition Services and Technology