DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

How publishers such as Pearson, Cengage Learning, Taylor & Francis and Oxford University Press are managing digital transformation.
STANDING STILL IS NOT AN OPTION

The world is changing: the ways we read, learn and teach are hardly recognizable now when compared to the slates, chalkboards and even the textbooks of the past.

After years of price increases, industry print revenues are in permanent real decline with ebook and rental options undercutting textbook sales. With online courses such as MOOCs (massively open online courses) now accounting for around 14% of total enrolment in the US, the new landscape of learning is increasingly digital.¹

The effect which this is having upon the educational publishing industry is profound. With educators, students, parents, entrepreneurs and the government all seeking new ways to enable learning through technology, traditional publishers have found themselves under siege as barriers to entry decrease and new technology start-ups vie for a place in the educational ecosystem.

And as options increase, so too do the expectations of end-users: whether they be students, tutors or institutions. Accustomed to the slick UI and collaborative rich-media experience of sites such as Facebook and Amazon, users expect similar standards and capabilities from their educational content, driving forward experimentation with dynamic multimedia formats, adaptive or custom learning, and modular course design.

To compete in this new world, many educational publishers may not even think of themselves as “publishers” any longer, but instead define themselves in a wider sense: as educational providers and enablers of learning. This wider business proposition gives them the freedom to invest in new, innovative ways of delivering learning.

Working as consultants to many of the world’s largest publishers, particularly in the educational space, Ixxus has been able to develop a deep understanding of the challenges facing the industry.

In this brochure, we will focus on how forward-thinking publishers are tackling these challenges by investing in new technology, new ways of working and new ways of thinking about content.

As well as investigating how the digital era is impacting on the way that we teach and learn, we will look at four studies in strategic change along the way: Pearson, Oxford University Press, Cengage Learning and Taylor & Francis.

“Publishers are re-orientating around what their core function in life is. For example, we are seeing the educational publishers truly focusing on achieving successful learning for the student. That is their value; that is why they are in existence.”

STEVE ODART, CEO OF IXXUS

¹. https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/education_media_entertainment_digital_disruption_education_publishing/?chapter=2#chapter2
ROOT AND BRANCH CHANGE

A major change is needed in the way that educational publishers think about content, and in the processes and approaches to delivering that content.

While in many territories this means providing for the new, digitally-savvy learner, other territories with lesser degrees of technological-enablement will still be broadly print-oriented. Bolting on digital may be a natural and acceptable stop-gap in the first instance, but it does not allow for the innovation, flexibility and adaptability required to support an ever-changing market. If publishers are to invest in transforming their businesses, it is critical that they develop flexible ways of working that allow them to innovate, create and take risks.

This means that organizations – especially those with a presence in multiple territories - need to enable efficient, flexible publishing models which will allow for multi-format, multi-channel publishing.

Fundamentally the shift to this flexible publishing model means moving from a product-centric view to one that is content-centric. This shift has to happen both in terms of how the organization is structured (changes to departments, roles and skills), and in how content is thought of, generated and delivered.

The magnitude of that change means that it must come at an organizational level, and take into account people, process and platform.

“You can’t do a little bit of digital,” says Ernst Kallus, Digital Platform Director at Pearson, “I think some publishers feel we can add a digital workflow to what we do, but you can’t, it’s got to be a root-and-branch change. The whole organization has to accept that. There has to be a holistic wraparound of services, of analysis, of change management, that makes that thing viable. It’s a major business revision, a major upheaval and an overhaul of how business works.”

“There’s no point in getting hung up on what the world will look like in 5-10 years. You’ve got to stay nimble and adaptive and respond on a year-by-year basis.”

IAN BANNERMAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, TAYLOR & FRANCIS
For a publishing giant like Pearson, transitioning to a “digital-first” way of working is no simple task. It means a new focus on global collaboration, efficient workflows and being able to quicken time to market by enabling agile product development.

To support Pearson’s Transforming Product Development initiative, Ixxus developed an integrated digital platform built upon Alfresco’s powerful content management technology. The platform has been designed for Pearson’s English division, to meet its end-to-end editorial and production needs, and will act as a centralized global content management and collaboration system (CMS) across all of Pearson English.

Pearson’s globally-distributed presence meant that much existing content was stored in a series of siloes, making it difficult for the organization to derive the full value from its assets. The new platform enables Pearson to make content centralized, discoverable and readily available no matter where a user is based, simplifying collaboration and content reuse (such as creating derivative products for different markets).

The platform incorporates automated workflows and versioning, streamlining operations and making it easy to trace and audit day-to-day working processes. This allows for shorter, more efficient proofing and review cycles. Integrated tools for annotation and mark-up of media files mean that editors can collaborate on media online in real time, vastly improving cost and efficacy of working.

Pearson has now made the decision to roll out Alfresco as a content management system (CMS) globally across all divisions, reaping the benefits of enhanced collaboration and content discoverability.

“What appealed to me about Ixxus was the fact that they had industry-specific knowledge: they understood the publishing process and the challenges that modern publishers face going through their transformations.”

ERNST KALLUS, DIRECTOR OF PLATFORM STRATEGY, PEARSON

CASE STUDY: PEARSON

What? Custom content management and collaboration platform
How? Alfresco, MarkLogic, Ixxus Design Hub, Ixxus Digital Media Annotator
THINK CONTENT, NOT PRODUCTS

Content is a publisher’s most valuable asset; it’s what sits at the core of business, and what makes each publisher unique. In order to maximize the lifetime value of that content, agility needs to be built in from the very beginning.

Key to giving flexibility to content - and business - is moving away from seeing content as something static and single-use, and instead approaching it as something dynamic and flexible which can be enriched and enhanced to create multiple outputs.

Moving away from product-centric thinking does not mean that there are no end-products: rather, it means that content is endowed with the flexibility and agility to create myriad end-products.

Content agility means being able to manipulate and deliver content in any way and to meet any opportunity: maximizing resources, quickening time to market and empowering consumers.

More and more educational publishers are looking to use structured-content (typically XML or HTML) as early as possible in the production process. Once product has been separated from format and broken down into granular, reusable chunks, it is easier to store, find, scale and manage.

By removing format-based thinking and concentrating instead on delivering learning outcomes, the publisher is free to innovate and explore new revenue opportunities.
**CASE STUDY: TAYLOR & FRANCIS**

**What?**
Product store of an initial 350 titles

**How?**
Alfresco, Solr, Ixxus Faceted Search

The Books Online Product Platform (BOPP) is a sophisticated document management platform designed and developed by Ixxus, which delivers content to a public-facing online platform in granularized XML format, enriched with enhanced metadata for discoverability.

As part of its online program, T&F has an ongoing project to digitize and make discoverable the entirety of its print works. Part of this plan includes making content discoverable at a granular level, giving users the ability to not only locate the books they need but also search for specific chapters or sections within those books. Improved content discoverability also leads to enhanced revenue streams, giving back-list items a new lease of life.

By leveraging the document management and workflow capabilities of Alfresco as a CMS, BOPP allows editorial and production staff to ingest existing content chapters in XML and PDF formats and combine them with associated metadata to enhance discoverability, before delivering enriched content out to T&F’s online platforms for public consumption.

This powerful content discoverability empowers consumers to dive into any chapter they seek, which in turn:

- **Enhances and simplifies the process of reading and researching**
- **Improves user experience and retention, therefore**
- **Gives T&F competitive advantage in the fast-moving online marketplace**

T&F has invested in a three-year enterprise-wide Alfresco license to support potential development, with Ixxus providing ongoing application support.
AUTOMATION AND EFFICIENCY

Streamlining workflows and automating what can be automated gives new freedom and flexibility to users while realizing real efficiency gains for the organization.

Once content is being stored and managed at a granular level, and is discoverable across all organizational departments, it becomes easier to find and reuse, keep control of intellectual property and track rights usage across all digital assets. Collating and curating content to create new product becomes a lot easier and faster.

To speed time to market even further, workflows and approval can be streamlined and automated. Investing wisely in technology that can underpin the progression of content ensures that efficiency can be gained in automating or mechanizing many of the functions within the publishing process.

In addition, with content managed in a granular, structured and discoverable way, operational complexity is reduced and each role within the publishing chain is empowered to more easily achieve their goals. Simplifying and automating product preparation means the publisher can achieve more with less: less duplication, less re-working and less complexity.

By providing intuitive tools for collaborative working, built into publishing workflows and integrated with familiar tools such as Microsoft Word and Adobe InDesign, publishers can ensure that teams as agile as content, – and free up extra time for them to spend on the specialist tasks that really matter,

For example:

- Structured content can be automatically transformed into multiple output formats (such as EPUB3, PDF, HTML), and progressed quickly through approval processes through to consumption.

- Conversion of media assets can be automated and regulated, making parallel, multi-channel and multi-format publishing into a reality.

- Translation of content, often a hugely time-consuming process, can be managed and measured from within the same environment.

- Archive or external content can be resurfaced alongside primary content, based upon reader and topic relevance (derived from user analytics and advanced semantic linking).
The new digital asset management (DAM) platform allows editors, publishers, designers and content workers to manage the entire editorial cycle; from initial concept and definition, through early research, to commissioning and creation of books and electronic interactive products. This speeds up product design and delivery, making working more efficient and economical, as well as making it easier to ensure that all specifications are fulfilled and quality checks and rights clearances carried out.

The platform allows OUP to store and access all of its digital assets securely in a way that makes them easily manageable and discoverable, aiding reuse and repurposing of content. This allows OUP to increase the value of its assets and reach audiences more quickly and efficiently.

From an organizational standpoint, communication and collaboration have been improved across departments, allowing for greater levels of cooperation and knowledge-sharing. Streamlined workflow and approval processes allow for more efficient and economical working, as well as ensuring accuracy and compliance with product specifications.

As a single source of truth, the platform provides a centralized hub for all discovery and editorial needs across the organization and takes into consideration immediate and future needs as it continues to evolve.

“I have been impressed by the professionalism of the Ixxus team. They have contributed greatly and will continue to be an important partner in our digital transformation program.”

KATE GRANVILLE, TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR OF OXFORD EDUCATION, OUP
INTERACTIVE AND ADAPTIVE

Users have different expectations of digital than they do of print. Digital learning content is expected to be immersive, dynamic, and tailored to specific learner requirements.

“An important element that's often forgotten during the process of automation is that content does need to change and adapt to the medium it's consumed upon," says Tom Morris, CTO at Ixxus, “It's not a case of a magic 'turn-the-handle' where the one article is pushed out to multiple targets without changes required. That could certainly happen - but it's a lifeless experience.”

Injecting more “life” into learning content means moving away from seeing it as something static and linear, and instead approaching it as something dynamic and flexible which can be enriched and enhanced. These enhancements can include things such as:

- Moveable 3D diagrams and elements
- Interactive, rich information visualizations and animations
- Interactive quizzes and activities
- Internal and external hyperlinking to related content
- Pop-ups, hot-spots and definitions
- Individual/group comments and annotations
- Context-related recommendations and feeds
- Constantly-curated (self-updating) content

“EdTech offers an opportunity for publishers, and seizing that opportunity is really key,” says Carl Robinson, Senior Educational Publishing Consultant at Ixxus, “That's where experimentation comes in.”

In the educational space, where adaptive learning and immersive experience is becoming ever more important, enhanced content has a particular resonance.

These last few years have seen a surge in digital learning adoption, with recent studies showing an ongoing rise in the use of mobile and tablet technologies to deliver learning – both at home and at school.2

And with recent research showing that babies learn faster using iPads than books, the trend towards mobile learning is one-directional.3

“We have spoken the language of learner-centricity for almost a decade: now the technology and tools are beginning to emerge. There are an increasing range of systems available to support learners who will benefit from learning at their own speed from content which is moulded around their needs and continuous assessments that diagnose and address their problems.”

DAVID WORLOCK, CO-CHAIR OF OUTSELL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Ixxus has designed and built a product archiving platform for Cengage Learning, encompassing the entirety of the company's higher education (HE) print content archive, representing some 85k products consisting of over a million assets. The new platform allows Cengage to fulfil content requests more readily, which minimizes the need to outsource, improves efficiency of working, and facilitates the discovery and reuse of content assets to create new products.

The new product archive delivers advanced search & discoverability capabilities, making it easy for editorial staff to find the content that they are seeking. Users can apply filters to their search, allowing them to search by ISBN, file format, file type (package, part, fragment, etc), date, author, etc.

The platform is integrated into Cengage's PIM (Product Information Management) system, ensuring that no ISBNs are duplicated and that data is consistent.

As well as now being able to fulfil content requests, the increased discoverability of particular assets also facilitates powerful content reuse; a business-critical capability which enables Cengage to easily create multi-volume textbooks with multiple iterations, composites, versions, and digital solutions.

This is particularly important for the world of textbooks, where content may be subject to content differences across territories, or sudden changes to governmental or educational mandates.

“The Cengage Content Management System (CCMS) brought together a strong and talented team of internal experts and key Ixxus partners to deliver a world-class solution in less than six months.”

ANDREA KUDZIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL DATA MANAGEMENT SERVICES, CENGAGE LEARNING
ONE HOLISTIC CONTENT PLATFORM

Ensuring that all your content is managed and maintained centrally in a scalable, accessible platform is critical to maximizing its value.

While educational publishers are increasingly investing in innovation to keep up with the multitude of digital start-ups, a common mistake is to develop these new programs and products away from existing content and processes.

This forgoes the very advantage which older, more established organizations have over green new up-starts: years of tested, credible learning materials and data. The key thing is to leverage what makes you unique – your content – while allowing yourself the flexibility to experiment quickly and easily with that content in a way that is low risk.

Content can be pushed from one centralized platform to become part of multiple outputs; whether those be print books, ebooks, constantly-curated online content, learning management solutions, consumer apps, or new innovative learning products.

- Multi-format, multi-channel publishing becomes a reality.
- By allowing for seamless, real-time, ongoing updates and constantly-curated content, you enable dynamic digital product that is always up-to-date and can be tailored specifically to different audiences.
- Management of versioning for different territories is streamlined.

- Editorial, production and design teams can collaborate together in one dedicated space.
- Content, content rights and metadata can be stored and viewed centrally.
- Usage can be tracked to see how, where and how often a particular asset has been used.

To make innovative product development a reality, you need the tools and the technology that will enable true content agility.

Managing all of your content within one holistic content environment enables agile, low-risk repurposing of existing content into innovative new product, while maximizing the value of every content asset and streamlining workflow processes.

“The new platform will serve as the springboard for a suite of content creation, management, workflow and enrichment functions that will increasingly support our publishing strategy and operations.”

ANDREA KUDZIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL DATA MANAGEMENT SERVICES, CENGAGE

Ensuring that all your content is managed and maintained centrally in a scalable, accessible platform is critical to maximizing its value.
THE IXXUS OFFERING

A truly effective publishing solution should underpin all business and content: enabling the core pillars of your day-to-day business, while supporting your cross-cutting concerns.

PILLARS

QC/QA  WORK IN PROGRESS  AUTO CLASSIFICATION  PRODUCT PLANNING  RIGHTS MANAGEMENT  INFORMATION MODELING  DELIVERY  DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT  METADATA ENRICHMENT  PRODUCT INFO MANAGEMENT

CROSS CUTTING

STORAGE | DISCOVERY | MODEL | SECURITY | TRANSFORMATION | WORKFLOW | MESSAGING | REPORTING

KEY TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

inkling
Redefining digital media. Used by 50% of the world’s top publishers.

Alfresco
Managing over 7 billion documents. Used by 40% of the world’s top publishers

MarkLogic
Voted KMWorld’s #1 Company in Knowledge Management for 7 years running.

START YOUR JOURNEY HERE.
THE IXXUS OFFERING

Our solutions have been chosen by many of the world’s largest educational publishers, learning providers and institutions, including:

Oxford University Press
Cambridge University Press
Sanoma Learning
Institute of Physics
Partnerships for Schools
University for Creative Arts
University of Westminster
Pearson Education

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Cengage Learning
Taylor & Francis
Ascend Learning
Mintel
Bedford/St Martin’s
Renaissance Learning
Wiley
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
FOR EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHERS

FOUR STUDIES IN STRATEGIC CHANGE

ABOUT IXXUS

Ixxus is a leading global provider of publishing solutions that reinvent the way organizations work with content to drive new revenues and enhance market agility. Ixxus has roots in both traditional and digital publishing, delivering award-winning, collaborative solutions that are uniquely tailored to customer needs.

Ixxus has expertise gained working with some of the world’s biggest names in publishing and media, including Pearson, FOX, Penguin Random House, Bedford/St Martin’s and Oxford University Press. The company is headquartered in London and Boston.

START YOUR JOURNEY HERE.

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