

Press Computer Systems

- *High performance and scalability*
- *Rapid development environment*
- *Advanced integration technology*



Reinventing News Publishing with Caché and Ensemble

Shrinking readership and dwindling advertising revenues are just two of the challenges facing newspaper publishers today as more readers are opting for Web-based news sources. The Claverley Group, a major UK-based news publisher, understood this business threat. The company knew that to succeed when consumers expect news availability anywhere, anytime, on any device, it had to reinvent how it publishes its content. The key to this process was changing its content creation and publishing software. Near the end of 2007, the company challenged Press Computer Systems (PCS), an independent unit of Claverley, to develop a new publishing software platform that would:

- Empower journalists, editors, and production teams to publish news in multiple media formats simultaneously with maximum control and minimal effort
- Decouple all content from the media formats used to convey it
- Consolidate the functionality of the pagination, wire service management, picture desk, and digital archive management systems currently used for news publishing into a single system

- Embrace workforce mobility and flexibility by enabling a “work from anywhere, anytime” capability
- Provide intelligent workflow for easier, faster, and richer multimedia publication

For this challenging project PCS chose InterSystems’ software – including InterSystems Caché® high-performance object database and InterSystems Ensemble® rapid integration and development platform.

Deciding to Use Caché and Ensemble

“We wanted our software solution to help writers, editors, and designers work more efficiently by automatically associating related content, and creating intelligent workflows for simultaneous publication in multiple media,” says Philip Walker, managing director of PCS. Delivering these breakthrough features and developing the application quickly required an innovative approach to development.

“Early in our feasibility discussions we saw that if we could group all elements of a story together as an object in a database, instead of in different files like a traditional publishing system, we’d have a much easier time wrapping

intelligence around them,” notes Peter Cole, PCS product group manager. “We also expected development efficiency gains, and application performance advantages, from Caché’s ability to store and retrieve application objects without the mapping overhead of a relational database.”

After evaluating several object-oriented databases for this project, PCS chose Caché for its rapid development environment, high performance, SQL compatibility, and proven reliability and scalability. Because the new application is designed to manage and store many large and complex data files (such as video and sound) the evaluation process included stressing Caché to simulate such loads. The stress tests showed that Caché easily could handle loads well in excess of the largest projected need.

The result, “PCS Knowledge,” was developed in about 12 months. PCS Knowledge is a fully integrated multimedia publishing and digital

content-management system. It was first deployed at the Midland News Association, West Midlands, UK, in January 2009.

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Peter Cole, PCS product group manager

Integrating Intelligence into the Solution

“PCS Knowledge is built from the ground up to integrate some very smart technologies,” explains Walker, “many of which the newspaper industry has not seen before, and the way we have put them together offers completely new ways of working.”

The Knowledge product provides core collaboration and process management functionality that will be extended by using Ensemble for messaging, business rules engine, business process orchestration, workflow, and rapid integration with third-party systems. “Developers traditionally would have to code all these features directly into an application,” Cole explains. “But using Ensemble will enable us to focus our publishing domain expertise on system design and coding – and not on becoming BPL developers or integration specialists.”

The combination of Caché, Ensemble, and innovative developers at PCS has created a publishing system where stories remain dynamic long after first being published. Using state-of-

the-art semantic analysis technology from InterSystems’ partner iKnow, PCS Knowledge can associate related content (including text, sound, video, images, and sources) and store it together as “packages” in Caché. Elements of a story (or the whole story) can be retrieved based on meaningful queries and associations to other stories, making the publishing process easier and ensuring that material is always accessible for re-use.

Ambitious Goals + InterSystems Technology = Newsworthy Results

“We had ambitious goals,” notes Walker, “not least being the move away from the printed page as the paradigm for publishing software. InterSystems software has been absolutely essential to our achievement.” PCS customers are reducing their costs by replacing multiple publishing software packages with Knowledge. Writers, editors, and designers can work from anywhere with Knowledge’s Web browser-based functionality. Content finally has been freed from the printed page, giving publishers the ability to use whichever media is best suited to convey the information. And PCS is evaluating InterSystems DeepSee embedded real-time business intelligence software as a way to give managers immediate visibility into how their decisions affect publication profitability.

“We can’t be more pleased with our decision to work with InterSystems and its technology,” Walker concludes. “The result is a unique product that enables publishers to focus not on the mechanics of publishing, but instead on providing the most relevant and timely services to their consumers. And PCS has gained a distinct competitive advantage”.

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