

# Multi Channel Publishing

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## Abstract

Microweb Technology N.V. started in "1995" as a regular print provider. During the first years, it became clear that in this area, it is difficult to maintain customer relations and secure a constant (or even growing print volume). In 1998, Microweb started to develop an end-to-end solution for the real estate market in the Netherlands. This solution was very effective and by the end of 2002, this solution drove 15% of the total market in real estate printing in the Netherlands. Due to this success, Microweb started to license the solution internationally.

The real-estate solution is a blue-print for a generic publishing workflow, based on content management using the internet. The output can be prepared fully automatically, securing a promised time to deliver.

## Microweb Publishing Workflow

The basis of this workflow is the customer responsibility. Microweb supplies their customers with their own software-front-end. From this front-end, the user can combine his own publication needs. For various vertical markets, Microweb has created individual frontends. The front-end connects over the internet to a central asset-database. The customer has therefore the possibility to manage his content online, place and time independant.

From this central database, content can be published to any medium. This the result of the medium-independant storage using XML technology. Channels like website, PDA and kiosks are common used. Naturally, paper output using digital print engines is possible.

A highly automated production process is the result of years of development. With a minimum of designer and operator interaction, the jobs flow throughout the system, resulting in a perfect one-to-one product.

## Real Estate Publishing

DocDirect Real Estate, a case study 80% of the realtors in the Netherlands are linked to each other through the NVM organization. This broker-organization wants to maintain a professional service-level. To bring high-quality printing-on-demand products to the NVM, Microweb developed the WebHome solution (Dutch brand of DocDirect Real Estate). Each individual broker uses the software to manage his objects and customers online. In the central database, text, images and object-characteristics are stored.

Before the production of the marketing material can start, a set of presentations have to be designed and approved by the broker. One the broker gives his final approval, the presentation templates are stored into the central production system. From this point on, the production is completely automated. The print operator monitors the current list of orders and decides what the batch size will be that he'll produce.

The production of the marketing materials consist of three steps. The first faze is to distill the needed data from the central database and prepare the images for the next phase. In the second stage, the system creates the image-data. These are the actual layout pages that will be sent to the output-device. For each individual object, multiple presentation formats can be produced at the same time. Depending on the device, the system produces a job-composition file, which is preferably in PPML. The final phase is the printing and finishing phase. Running on a regular 60 ppm engine, in 3 hours an order of about 100 different objects can be printed, finished and prepared for distribution.

The central database receives during the production phase information on what has been produced on what particular point in time. This information will be used for invoicing and management information. At every moment, marketers, controllers can see what the volume is that went through the system and can monitor the performance of each individual broker.

## Application Variants by Microweb

After Microweb had created one proven bussiness-case, it started to develop solutions for other more or less complex markets. This resulted in DocDirect Publish, DocDirect Car and DocDirect cards and DocDirect Commerce.

DocDirect Publish focusses on the complex process of book-publishing. With a central author-management tool, the publish can monitor and control its authors and force them to write their publications using a predefined document structure. These structured documents can be transformed for publication in any desired corporate identity. The level of automation of this process depends on the requirements of the customer. The customer can use the software only to manage the authoring process. If the documents are very structured and the output-template has been well defined, 100% automation can be reached.

DocDirect Commerce is a full feature product management system. Products can be managed online, published to an internet site for e-commerce purposes, sent out as a personalized email advertisement or

combined into a personal brochure. With this solution many catalogues have been created varying in size and appearance.

A new startup project is the DocDirect Ads solution. This solution allows end-users to easily create their own advertisements in PDF, based on pre-defined templates. The content and advertisement management will be done again using the internet. Retail-organizations and franchise-organization can create a central database of products (using DocDirect Commerce). With the advertisement templates in DocDirect Ads the franchisers can easily choose there own template and combine it with one or more products from the Commerce database and finalize their advertisement.

## **Conclusion**

Using the internet as transport, Microweb allows the end-user to have 100% control over their own data. This is very important, because in this way, the same user is responsible for the correctness of the same data. Defining a solution for a vertical market, results in a recurring volume. Having a customer-base that can generate a reliable volume over the time, gives a certain garanty for volume with which can be calculated. Each individual customer has its own corporate identity, but they are all driven using the same common workflow. Having one workflow in your company reduces costs and clarifies the process.