

Leading Publisher Reaps Major Cost Savings with MarkLogic

American Society of Agronomy is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars



American Society of Agronomy

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA) is a prominent international scientific community devoted to agronomy policy and research. ASA members are dedicated to the conservation and wise use of natural resources to produce food, feed, and fiber crops while maintaining and improving the environment. To this end, ASA writes and publishes several journals, publications, and books which are available in paper, online, and through mobile applications.

Highlights

- American Society of Agronomy selected MarkLogic as new platform for all publications.
- MarkLogic is saving ASA as much as \$150,000 per year.
- MarkLogic is enabling ASA to generate new sources of revenue and to develop new products such as mobile applications.
- More than a dozen ASA publications rely on MarkLogic for search and many more will follow.
- ASA is maintaining MarkLogic with one employee who only spends a portion of the workweek on maintenance.

Challenge

Every penny counts in any organization, but particularly in a non-profit. The American Society of Agronomy is a scientific society which helps its members advance the disciplines and practices of agronomy. It fulfills part of this mission by providing quality, research-based publications. Every dollar earned by ASA is spent on its mission, and its technology was devouring the budget.

ASA journals are the life blood of the organization's goal. They spread the message, but they also account for a large portion of ASA's income. ASA produces more than a dozen journals and magazines, as well as a handful of books each year. ASA had been hosting its journal websites and books on an ePublishing platform, but the monthly bill forced ASA to seek better alternatives.

ASA conducted a search for cheaper and faster technologies. Although it would consider other publishing-only content management systems, ASA liked the idea of regaining control by bringing the entire development process in-house.



Summary

Customer

American Society of Agronomy

Industry

Science, Technical and Medical
Publisher for Non-Profit Scientific Society

Challenge

Costly ePublishing platform and limited ability to add new products and features

Customer Use Case

Online Scientific Publications

Benefits

Lower costs, minimal maintenance, new revenue opportunities & new features

Solution

During the selection process, ASA gave open source technology a serious look. Despite the initial, enticing price tag, implementation would require an unpredictable and considerable amount of services and consulting. ASA also grew wary of the fact that support is a challenge for open source solutions. Like any business, ASA wanted the comfort of knowing it can reach a proven production support team at 2am if it needs assistance. In the end, the decision to buy MarkLogic came down to another MarkLogic customer whose professional recommendation was taken to heart.

Only six months after purchasing MarkLogic, ASA took the new platform live. By doing so, ASA generated newfound savings and revenue sources which helped to pay for significant, new offerings such as mobile applications.

MarkLogic is literally paying for itself. ASA is initially saving \$150,000 over the first five years, and an additional \$150,000 each year following. Over the life of the project, this will add up to as much as a 30% savings over its legacy technology. Additionally, only one person at ASA is charged with maintaining MarkLogic, and the maintenance is a small portion of that person's job description.

The MarkLogic implementation also enabled ASA to discover new revenue opportunities. The company can now sell individual articles from any of its journals, as opposed to forcing existing or new customers to purchase the entire journal. This not only opens the doors to countless new ways to generate revenue through custom publishing, but also allows ASA to lure new customers with enticing, new content package plans. For example, if a new customer buys a single article about soil pH balance, ASA can package it with a 3 month trial to Crops & Soils Magazine and/or a topically-related book.

ASA also developed 'Science Pubs', mobile applications for users to get the information they need on-the-go. Science Pubs opens the pages of ASA's research books to subscribers and non-subscribers alike. Science Pubs gives subscribers the freedom to download, search, read, and save abstracts from any journal as well. Science Pubs is also a new revenue opportunity, allowing non-subscribers to easily purchase content by the article, journal, or book. The mobile apps are available for iPad, iPhone, Android, and BlackBerry devices.

Next Steps

ASA is planning to move even more journals and books to MarkLogic in the immediate future. The following publications are currently stored in MarkLogic: Agronomy Journal, Crop Science, Crops & Soils, CSA News, Journal of Environmental Quality, Journal of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Education, Journal of Plant Registrations, The Plant Genome, Soil Science Society of America Journal, and the Vadose Zone Journal. ASA developers also plan to incorporate semantics into their vast content offerings.

(See what MarkLogic can do with semantics at www.marklogic.com/semantics)

Conclusion

MarkLogic was brought into the American Society of Agronomy to cut costs and to offer customers a faster, more user-friendly experience. In the end, ASA is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars, boosting revenue through new products and new technological opportunities, and is increasing user satisfaction with systems that make it easier for customers to find what they need.

"MarkLogic is going to save us \$150,000 per year. That is a lot of money for any publisher, especially a non-profit like the American Society of Agronomy."

Ian Popkewitz
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& Operations, American Society
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