> "Thanks to XMS' quick set-up and MarkLogic's capabilities, the ROI of a new product is very quick."
>
> — Mathieu Balzarini, Chief Executive Officer 4Dconcept

Streamlining Publication Production Processes at Reed Business Information France

Reed Business Information

4Dconcept

Corporate Overview:

Reed Elsevier is the world's leading publisher of professional content, with 37,000 employees across 200 offices worldwide, accounting for sales of nearly 8 billion euros. Its four principal industry divisions – Sciences & Medical, Legal, Education, and Business – produce more than 15,000 professional references, magazines, books, CD-ROMs, online information and business intelligence services annually.

Employing rich XML spurs creation of new services for customers and partners from dynamically updated custom content

As a subsidiary of Reed Elsevier, Reed Business Information (RBI) provides business professionals across five continents unrivaled access to a wide range of communication and information channels. With offerings from magazines to directories, conferences to market research, RBI's main objective is to become the undeniable reference in key business sectors across a diverse range of industries. The company's vision is that superior information and communication products help its customers gain competitive advantage in areas such as commerce, marketing and decision support.

Yet, just as important to its central mission, is to operate as a cost-efficient, high performing organization. When assessing any new technology, RBI strikes a constant balance between cost and the potential impact of effective, efficient, but substantial investment in new revenue streams. Driving this effort at its core is the utilization of the Internet as a key delivery channel. RBI's portfolio of leading prestige brands comprise powerful products and services that, thanks to Mark Logic OEM partner 4Dconcept's XMS product, leverage all forms of new media to adapt professional information to specific customer requirements.

RBI France Faces Publication Challenges

RBI France publishes a number of successful titles including the leading French weekly business magazine Stratégies, the monthly Direction(s), the #1 electronics review in Europe EPN, and its sister publications EPN France and EDN Europe. Last March RBI acquired Cosmedias, the leading French publisher in the beauty market with famous magazines like Cosmétique Mag, ICN and Coiffure de Paris. The office also publishes books, guides, CDs and databases in areas of interest as diverse as social services, education, human resources, public policy, self-help, and legal.

About RBI France

Reed Business Information is the business-to-business division of Reed Elsevier Group PLC, the world's leading publisher and information provider. Reed Business provides a range of communication and information channels – magazines, exhibitions, directories, online media, and marketing services – across five continents. With prestige brands in leading positions in key business sectors, it delivers unrivaled access to business professionals across a diverse range of industries. RBI France is one of nine international operations hubs, and stewards some of the company's most popular branded products in Europe.

RBI France was laboring under challenging content transformation and production processes. Such issues have even greater negative impact in the publishing industry, where content is a company's greatest asset. RBI France was already familiar with the power of XML to tag and index content, but reusing this content often proved quite difficult. Regarding its magazine content, RBI France remained tethered to use of an SQLServer database as its content repository. This meant that for reuse purposes, any existing content selected would be exported out into XML, reprocessed for publishing, and then new pages exported out of XML again for re-storage in the database. This laborious use of XML made the press composition process neither clean nor quick. The constant back and forth transformations required

to produce new content – first for print production and ultimately to the web – was proving too difficult to manage. Waiting for production to get print content first and then load it on the Internet had introduced latency into the update process as well.

It was becoming clear that RBI France's content production, storage and retrieval processes were interfering with fulfilling one of its central missions – understanding and exceeding customer expectations. RBI resells its professional content to business partners who aren't in the publishing business but rather leverage custom, industry-specific information published by RBI to better serve their own end customers. RBI France's partners include banks, consumer sites, retail outlets, and technology companies. Because of its sometimes laborious production processes, RBI France's wish to repurpose and realize more value from its digital content as new services was stymied, making the creation and delivery of added value to these indispensable partners both difficult and expensive.

Requirements for a Native XML Database Solution

Although RBI France's main technical challenge was in transforming content back and forth from XML, its solution requirements did not end simply at a database that could handle XML. It needed to be a fully realized enterprise content management system leveraging a single centralized XML repository as the main content source for all publishing operations. This required that the content platform selected offer workflow functionality to speed and ease production and content management of the French publisher's books, magazines, websites, applications, and partner offerings. The company also wanted to be sure that the solution selected was fully compatible with Adobe Framemaker, InDesign and the other design tools already in use and favored by its editors. Finally, RBI was seeking a partnership with its supplier that would be long-term and mutually beneficial.

Reed Elsevier, the parent company of RBI, has a stated value that pervades the company system-wide: innovation. Management encourages workers to welcome and push change, challenge the status quo, take risks and be entrepreneurial. Reed Elsevier's U.S. and U.K. offices first started working with Mark Logic's XML server back in 2006. Certainly, going with a new solution called an XML Database at that time was a new idea and a bold move indicative of 'out-of-the-box' thinking. By the time their counterparts in France were ready for a similar solution, Elsevier's corporate IT department had already completed 2 projects. The result: MarkLogic had a leg up on the competition in solving the problems of RBI France.

"At the time, there were not a lot of full XML databases on the market from which to choose. But MarkLogic has proven itself to be one of the best – certainly superior to Oracle or other relational databases in serving the unique requirements of repurposing XML content into new custom services."

— Sébastien Chelin, Director of Information Systems
Reed Business Information France

Piloting MarkLogic Sparks 4Dconcept's XMS, an Editorial CMS

After the selection of MarkLogic Server, RBI France launched its implementation project at the end of 2006. It started small, with a pilot based on only one of its professional electronics magazines, EPN (Europe-wide edition), EPN France, and one of its books, Le Guide Familial – the leading French family law guide used by half of the country's social workers. Why? Because sales efforts were already aligned behind these products, and success with their high profile brands could be used as a compelling business case to help IT push a larger goal – the ultimate move to a true enterprise-wide editorial content management system.

To succeed in this challenge, RBI France turned to one of its trusted local IT solution providers, 4Dconcept. 4Dconcept would provide critical know-how in multi-channel publication for the press and publishing industries. After having learned to integrate Mark Logic in a matter of weeks, 4Dconcept managed the 6-month pilot program to a successful conclusion and also set the foundation for the future editorial content management system. This solution, called XMS, would drive the production of other RBI France content.

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However, it didn't take RBI France very long to understand the distinct advantages of an editorial content management system relying on a database specialized in handling full XML content. This is how RBI France got involved in the development of XMS. XML simply made sense for a wider solution that would anticipate all RBI France's future needs. First, XMS places no limitations on the original structure of the content, meaning it can be tagged and indexed from any source just as efficiently. RBI France is able to repurpose content without any constraint from the media itself. Changes anywhere, even to a single word in a single story, ripple out to be reflected in all citations automatically without IT intervention. Finally, editors were able to keep in place all of their preferred publication layout and design tools such as Adobe InDesign, Framemaker and Bridge.

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"Our XMS product, powered by MarkLogic, allows our clients to centralize the production, management and cross-media publishing of editorial content in a rich and persistent way. It reduces the time to market and allows the reuse of content to build new brands, transverse publications or event-related products as RBI France has done with XMS."

— Mathieu Balzarini, Chief Executive Officer
  4Dconcept

After the pilot project was completed, RBI France conducted three to four months of analysis to measure its success. This process yielded some best practices to optimize the massive rollout of XMS across RBI France. EPN and Le Guide Familial are not large publications. Hence, it was critical that the success of the future XMS be demonstrated and proven in action here before moving on to larger, more prestigious brands.
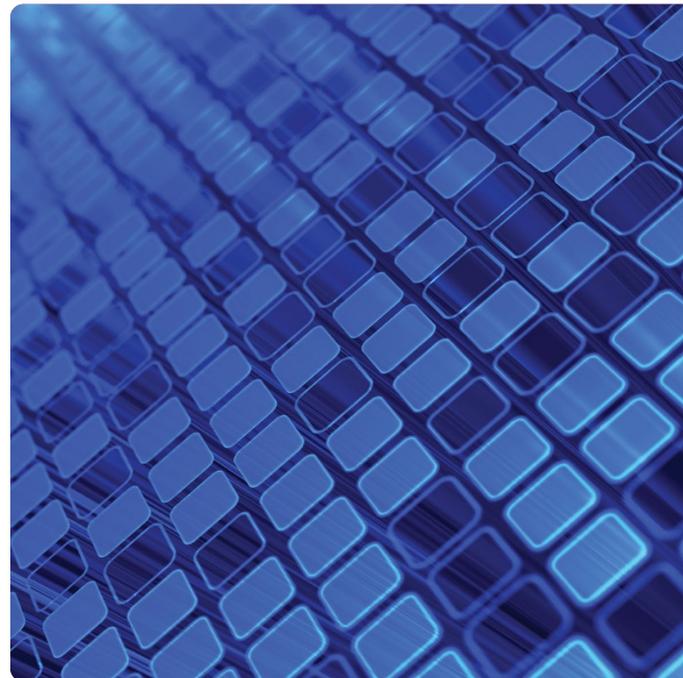
RBI France's Use of XMS Spurs New Services for Customers

As a result of the successful implementation of XMS, RBI France was actually able to reverse its original production process of new content from web to print, versus print to web. Changing this workflow allows editors to publish in XML without media constraint, to launch new material on the web in seconds when ready, and to provide new value-added services for customers and partners. The content lives in XML without needless transformations, streamlining a process that's cleaner, quicker and always up-to-date. The print production team now consistently leverages the latest information to churn out RBI France's magazines weekly and monthly, or its new book editions on a quarterly basis.

Because of 4Dconcept and Mark Logic's success with some of the most high profile brands at RBI France, the division was able to rollout a true enterprise-wide editorial content management system – a live, fully functional solution with direct connections to and from in-house

"With its support of common tools such as Adobe FrameMaker, InDesign, and Bridge as well as its rich and easy-to-use web authoring screens, XMS has readily found user acceptance. XMS is a very flexible solution matching clients' needs perfectly."

— Arnaud Dumont, XMS Product Manager
4Dconcept

layout and design tools. Seven different RBI brands now have their content fully loaded as XML in XMS, including numerous leaflet books and some of the larger, more prestigious magazines published by RBI France such as Stratégies. The high level of scalability and reliability of XMS ensures work can continue until all of RBI France's products live in the XML database. The amount of upfront index definition completed during XMS' conception means little additional development investment is necessary to integrate new brands or products into XMS quickly and cleanly.

In summary, RBI France's investment in XMS is indeed paying off. Streamlined production has lead to the company's ability to repurpose its digital content and to deliver more value offering new resale services to partners. Rich XML allows innovative products to be introduced easily and less expensively, whether internal or external. One example of dynamically updated custom content resulting in a new service includes the case of one of RBI France's major bank customers. This content resale partner was able to rapidly produce a new audit guide on their own website, completely powered by RBI content. Mark Logic and 4Dconcept have thereby helped RBI France to fulfill another one of its core corporate objectives: to be highly valued and respected by its customers.

The official introduction of XMS to the market occurred in October 2008 in Paris. RBI France, 4Dconcept and Mark Logic continue to partner for ongoing development and evolution of XMS.

About 4Dconcept

4Dconcept provides leading organizations with services to drive, define, design and deploy documentary and editorial information systems in the aeronautics, defense, construction, manufacturing, telecommunication, transport, publishing, media and administration sectors. 4Dconcept addresses matters such as content and knowledge management, editorial content enrichment and publishing, after-sale market and maintenance engineering, and cross-media publishing. It offers a range of services to advise customers on best practices, develops custom-made solutions, and produces graphical (2D/3D) and text content applications. 4Dconcept also offers a set of modular and adaptable turnkey solutions to help customers produce and manage their information in multiple sectors. The implementation of technologies such as XML enables 4Dconcept to bring relevant information to the people who need it, when they need it. To learn more about 4Dconcept, visit www.4dconcept.fr.
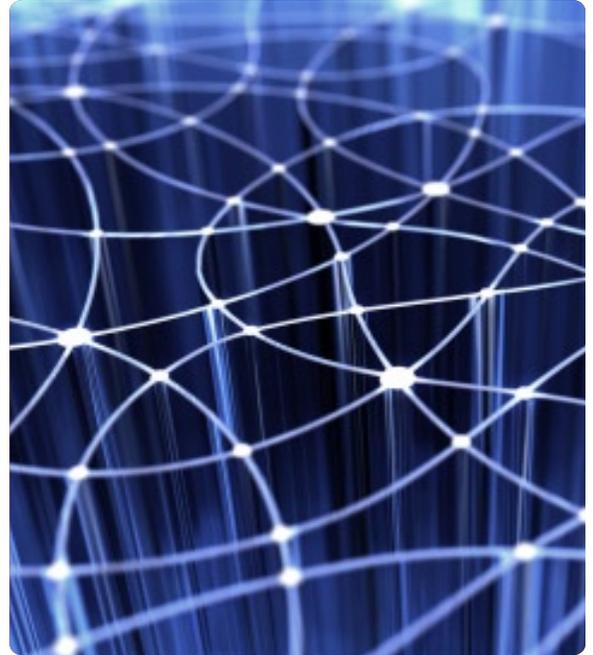
About Mark Logic

Mark Logic Corporation is the provider of the industry's leading XML server. The company's flagship product, MarkLogic Server includes a unique set of capabilities to store, manage, search and dynamically deliver content. The company has two patents on its innovative technology and is privately held with Sequoia Capital as its lead investor. To read the Mark Logic CEO Blog, visit marklogic. blogspot.com. To learn more about Mark Logic, or to download a free community or trial edition of MarkLogic Server, go to www.marklogic.com.