

THE SEYBOLD INTERACTIVE REPORT

Making the Most of Interactive PDFs

by Don Fluckinger

Through the years we've called electronic publications a number of things, from multimedia to new media to e-pubs and many titles involving the word "digital."

Is It Time to Invest in PURLs?

by Heidi Tolliver-Nigro

Personalized uniform resource locaters (PURLS) take recipients to individual landing pages where the user is greeted by name and can present information based on the user's stated preferences or from a marketer's database.

Mobile Devices Present an Opportunity for Publishers

by Chuck Lenatti

Within the past few weeks, the battle for attention from mobile readers has heated up. Amazon introduced a larger Kindle, Apple upped the ante with a new iPhone, and Palm officially entered the fray with its Pre.

New! Sign up for the Seybold Report Mobile Publishing Update

We have started a new, free weekly newsletter about mobile publishing and advertising. Based on the same content as the Seybold Report Dispatch (info@sebold.com) and only a screen scroll or two, the Seybold Report Mobile Publishing Update is delivered every Wednesday. To subscribe, email molly@beard.com.

The Seybold Report on Mobile Publishing: A Buyer's Guide

Coming soon: a comprehensive guide to mobile publishing companies, resources, and services. Includes information on crafting a successful and profitable mobile publishing strategy. The report is available in July. The single copy price is \$1,295. For more information to reserve your copy, please send an email to molly@beard.com.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Digital Prepress and the Tale of Macmillan

The tale of Macmillan Publishing in the United Kingdom's most important publishers, is one of quite astounding success.

We invite you to join the Seybold Report on [LinkedIn!](#) There you will find more discussions, and more, all related to the content covered in the newsletter.

Corporate Office

Beard Group
P.O. Box 4250
Frederick, MD 21705-4250 USA

Phone: (240) 629-3300 extension 1

Web: www.seyboldreport.com

Publisher/Editor: Molly Joss
E-mail: molly@beard.com

Managing Editor: Chuck Lenatti
E-mail: chuck@beard.com

Laurel Brunner
Don Fluckinger
Heidi Tolliver-Nigro
Chuck Lenatti

Interactive Production: Bob Connolly
E-mail: bob@pdfpictures.com

© 2009 Beard Group. All rights reserved.

Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is strictly prohibited.

The Seybold Report ISSN: 1533-9211

Electronic subscriptions (PDF) are available for \$499. A print and PDF subscription is available for \$599 per year (24 issues mailed semi-monthly).

To subscribe or renew your subscription, send us an e-mail at seybold@beard.com

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:

Beard Group
P.O. Box 4250
Frederick, MD 21750-4250

We have gone interactive!

“The medium is

Upgrade to the latest version of the free Adobe Reader to fully experience the interactivity in this electronic PDF newsletter.

Table of Contents

3	Making the Most of Interactive PDFs	23	Digital Prepress the Tale of Mac
11	Is It Time to Invest in PURLs?	26	Questionnaire
20	Mobile Devices Present an Opportunity for Publishers		

Opportunities!

Follow the Seybold Report on Twitter!

It’s fun, it’s easy, and it’s free. There are not many things you can say that about these days. The Seybold Report is now tweeting on Twitter. We know some of you are already on Twitter because we follow you. Sign up to follow us and experience the latest phenomenon in social marketing for yourself. We promise not to bombard you with tweets (or is that tweets?). To sign up, visit www.twitter.com.

Tell a Friend! Win

Have a friend or colleague who doesn’t have a year’s subscription (24 issues) of the Seybold Report and tell us about it. We’ll give you an account number when they sign up. We’ll going to run the contest for a few months and then pick a winner who’ll get a virtual hat. The winner will win a Starbucks or Visa gift card. It’s that easy. All your friend needs to do is send an e-mail to seybold@beard.com and let us if they want an electronic subscription or electronic newsletter. We will send your friend a link to the subscription started. We will mention your name in the newsletter to be included in the draw.

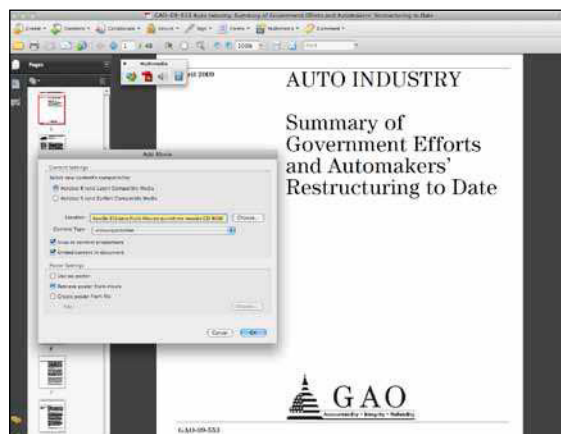
Making the Most of Interactive PDFs

By Don Fluckinger

Through the years we've called electronic publications a number of things, from multimedia to new media to e-pubs and many titles involving the word "digital."

A variant of the electronic publication genre is the interactive PDF, of particular interest to publishers and printers because they can transform basic digital publications created in Adobe InDesign or Quark XPress with only a few clicks in InDesign or Acrobat.

Publishers can easily give any magazine, newsletter, or brochure the basic interactive PDF treatment: navigation, internal links, external Web links, video, and audio. More complex interactive PDFs that enable e-commerce, data collection via forms, 3-D data rendering, and presentations stitched together in Flash make sense when they are suited to the budget and end result. Publications that benefit from such treatment include conference brochures



Web. The bridge building process starts with interactive PDFs. Connolly explains Adobe bought Flash so it could control where marketing dollars go. "If you can take that advertising standard and put that in a PDF file, they can all run exactly the same way."

such as the one featured in the case study in this article, a catalog, or magazine for which publishers want to use sophisticated advertising metrics-tracking.

The potential benefits of using interactive PDFs include: no printing costs; pass-along circulation via e-mail; lead generation through forms; Web traffic generation through links; presenting more in-depth content through audio, video, and 3-D images; and e-commerce. Publishers

worried about unlimited circulation can also restrict add expiration dates to PDFs.

Designers love interactive PDFs because their layout work is preserved in an electronic form that isn't as easily en route to repurposing or where strong design messages or, at best, muddled. Advertising PDFs to preserve their print onscreen graphics quality is hard to replicate on the Web. Publishers can capitalize on the Flash advantage Adobe has recently built into Acrobat to place trackable elements into digital publications.

"The world has gone Flash and that's what's now fueling the growth. They're putting more of their money on online ads instead of television," says Bob Connolly, founder of Bridge Builders, a Canadian production company that specializes in creating interactive PDFs. Connolly is convinced Flash is part of the solution for publishers (and printers) to bridge the gap between print and Web. The bridge building process starts with interactive PDFs. Co-

Adobe bought Flash so it could control where marketing dollars go. “If you can take that advertising standard and put that in a PDF file, they can all run exactly the same way.”

Measuring ROI: From Fuzzy Math to Web Traffic Metrics

Gauging the return on investment (ROI) for interactive PDFs is becoming less like fuzzy math and more like concrete Web traffic metrics. However, the concreteness has yet to solidify for some publishers. “When you start looking for the return-on-investment on rich PDF, it may be tough to find, unless advertisers have suddenly found a new enthusiasm for it in the last couple of years, which I doubt,” opines Dan Brill, a Toronto-based publishing consultant. Brill blazed the rich media PDF trail a few years ago for interactive editions of his Graphic Exchange magazine, developed in conjunction with Connolly.

“Online advertising is much easier to understand and measure (at least, in theory). I only ever offered PDF ads as a bonus to print advertisers, hoping they would eventually catch on. But I never

succeeded in turning a profit on producing digital editions.”

PDF as Adjunct to Print

Publishers interested in calculating ROI for interactive PDFs as adjuncts to paper editions should take into account these factors:

- print cost savings,
- shipping/distribution cost savings,
- process automation savings (for example, data entry eliminated via fillable forms inside PDFs or traffic driven to Web forms)
- capturing subscribers not interested in print editions and favor a publication’s digital editions, extending advertisers’ exposure to those non-print subscribers, and
- “greenwashing” a publication’s image.

In addition, publishers gain the ability to track closely response and distribution and get hard data to replace educated guesses. To see an example of hard data in action, look at the real-time metrics on [Nxtbook Media’s PDF and Flash-driven interactive publications](#). Brill thinks the use of rich PDF will grow as PDF has grown overall, especially as design tools develop. “PDF is a natural choice to fill gaps in

the publishing spectrum covered by Web pages. He feels PDF is a remarkable for delivering this rich ex

Printers Can Benefit From PDF

Some printers are ambivalent about interactive PDFs. It can mean electronic editions steal presses and undermine a printer’s business model. On the other hand, interactive PDFs offer an opportunity to grab some customers are taking else

“Print, television and radio—aren’t going to go away. They have to still hold strong to be good at,” says Jeremy Fisher of Phoenix Creative, a design Web and print production. They have to expand, to be smart about how new forms of media fit their business model. Ju

have been buying up or adding interactive divisions to their companies, print companies need to look at it the same way. A Web site is a form of print, an interactive Flash piece is another form of print, the computer is another form of print.”

“A business trend in printers’ favor,” Jahn says, “is outsourcing. As more companies outsource everything, including the development of content suited to interactive PDFs, printers have an opportunity to jump into the game.”

Michael Jahn, a PDF-for-prepress workflow pioneer and conversion specialist for the e-book market, says it might seem printing companies that add interactive PDF development services to their service lines risk cannibalizing their core services. Getting into interactive PDFs and Web development, however, can be a survival route for printers whose print work is dwindling, he says.

The biggest asset printers, premedia firms, and print publishers is their extensive experience with production quality and all that goes into it, which gives these companies a competitive advantage over non-print content developers. “All the smart printing companies have already made this transition. They’ve figured it out,” Jahn says. “If we look at the smaller printers, what else are we going to do if nobody’s that interested in print? You could become more of a marketing company, get to know your clients better, what their pain points are, and how you can help them grow their business. A printer is a service organization. It just happens that before, we printed stuff and shipped it out the back end of our office.”

A business trend in printers’ favor, Jahn says, is outsourcing. As more companies outsource everything, including the development of content suited to interactive PDFs, printers have an opportunity to jump into the game.

Connolly says that publishers and printers that want to develop interactive PDFs—especially those enabling e-commerce, which involves more back-end support and logistics—need to hire people skilled

in building databases and putting them into them. Publications and forms have moved to the Web-based business, which is a change that started in the 2000s when e-pubs were rich media.

Connolly says not enough people understand [how to make interactive](#). “Those skills are very popular; that’s a hard skill to learn. The people building the content are able to make it look nice but they don’t understand the JavaScript needed to make it interactive. That’s a huge gap there in this whole system.”

In addition, any team that develops interactive PDFs must include an “integrator type,” a role that he describes as a manager who oversees the PDF and work out how the content flows in and out of it. This role needs to know which parts need to be developed by the database manager, programmer, and designer. It also needs to track the traffic the document generates. Companies that can put these people in line to accomplish these tasks are in demand.

Various Levels of Interactivity

Almost every PDF (except scanned pages that haven't been run through optical character recognition software) includes a basic level of interactivity: searchability. Other basic, 101-level interactive elements include bookmarks, Web links, buttons and transitions from page to page that make it easier for readers to navigate the document. Ali Hanyaloglu, Adobe Acrobat product marketing manager, says navigation aids help most in longer documents.

In addition to audio, the 202-level features include video and other Flash suitable content. For years, Acrobat offered embeddable QuickTime video and before that links to Web videos that would play inside the PDF. With the release of Version 9 last year, Acrobat Reader now plays Flash content inside PDFs, with no streaming Internet connection required. The Flash capabilities built into PDF make the format a viable container for all sorts of content and animations that were marooned on the Web or on CD-ROMs and DVDs.

"Instead of just having the marketing piece, the sales quote, or whatever it may be, as a document in PDF, [you can]

differentiate it from all the others out there by incorporating video," Hanyaloglu says. "It's being able to get someone engaged in the document so that they act on it in some way."

Acrobat Not Required

Printers and publishers don't even need Acrobat to build the basic interactive features into PDFs. They can be added within InDesign. Michael Ninness, InDesign senior product manager, says designers can begin creating interactive forms in InDesign, as well. The job can be finished in Acrobat.

InDesign users urged Adobe to add interactive PDF authoring features into the application, and they're demanding more.

Ninness says publishers want to deliver their content in multiple channels and print is just one of those channels. "Print's still a core offering, but that's not their only choice. They want digital formats as well, they want interactive formats, and, of course, they look to InDesign as their

authoring tool. They just... capabilities will be built... have to learn another tool... users urged Adobe to add... authoring features into the... they're demanding more.

Adding advanced, 303-level interactivity requires more support and pre-planning done. Some 303-level fe

- Maps. Adobe Acrobat and Reader support geospatial PDFs, complete with zoom and measurement tools.
- 3-D. PDF versions of manufacturing engineering documents, catalogs, instruction manuals, guides, can offer a wealth of crucial structures, which can be viewed at will.
- Virtual reality. This feature lets something out of science fiction worth exploring. Realtors might want to know the virtual prints their fliers can access in a PDF with a virtual walk-through of the property.

Best Practices

The fact that most interactive PDFs are still pretty basic should encourage publishers and printers that want to start using them. Experts offer several key pointers on creating usable interactive publications using PDF. First, make them small. One would think that since cable and DSL modems are used widely, file size wouldn't be a concern. No way, says Fishman. In the workplace, even fast Web connections bog down when everyone's sharing the service.

The following will happen to your interactive PDF when Windows users click to download a file bigger than roughly two megabytes. "They'll open it five or six different times and they'll try to close it five or six different times before it finishes loading," Fishman says. "Then you get people frustrated trying to open a PDF that 'won't work,' even though really it's not done loading."

Connolly and Fishman offer several production tips for reducing file size if you're starting with print-ready files and creating interactive PDFs:

- Explore InDesign and Acrobat's file-size reduction features.
- Make every image 150 dpi.
- Do as much production work as possible in InDesign—text, colors and blends, boxes—even if you're more accustomed to Illustrator or Photoshop. Importing Photoshop files instead of TIFFs or JPEGs also goes a long way toward preventing file bloat.
- For large Web-delivered files (as opposed to e-mail), enable "Fast Web View," which downloads a page at a time instead of forcing users to wait for the whole PDF to download before they can open it.

Connolly's No. 1 design tip is to put all documents (print and interactive PDFs) in landscape orientation. Some designers hate this idea, a reaction he knows from personal experience, but he's convinced there's no way to make a publication look good onscreen in two-page spreads because readers are forced to enlarge such layouts to read the text. Using a 10-by-7.5 aspect ratio makes the printed version look and feel like its onscreen counterpart. "Try to think of everything as a single-page spread," Connolly says.

"But when it opens to a landscape magazine—a panorama."

He recommends using fonts at least 8 point and as large as possible. He also advises avoiding ink and toner-sucking backgrounds in deference to what might print out a page.

Flash or PDF?

Sometimes a project might be better served by a Flash application instead of a PDF. To decide, consider the client's needs. If the imagined end-result is a PowerPoint presentation with animations, Flash is the way to go. If they just want to capture an interactive PDF is definitely the way to go, Fishman says.

Our Take: Time to Get Off the Bench

The main barriers to making interactive PDFs even more effective are the back-end IT support and the collected data. Publi

persuade customers to trust third parties with contact data so the publishers can support more features in their PDFs.

Printers that overcome the barriers to development and information access can get more involved in creating and administering interactive PDF editions of print publications. First, they must overcome their fears of PDF replacing print jobs. In this economy, something's going to be taking away those print jobs, but developing interactive PDFs presents an opportunity to get a piece of what's next.

There are several approaches to accomplish this:

Farm it out. Establish relationships with developers in your region and work out agreements with them to subcontract their services. Fishman, who moves comfortably from design to print to interactive brochures and forms development, tells printer clients to "just pretend I work for you when selling jobs to customers. You don't have to use the name Phoenix Creative. I don't care, as long as I get paid." By working with local talent and representing it as your own to your customer base, you can give your

company a boost without having to create an in-house division.

Expand your business. Some printers have launched Web development divisions. Connolly has sometimes observed that print and Web folks in these shops are wary of each other. Getting staffers to drop turf issues is key to producing attractive digital publications whose interactive elements (tracking metrics, order-taking, flashy content) actually work.

An ideal place to begin showcasing your interactive division's new capabilities is creating a downloadable PDF marketing brochure for your business. Include a spoken message from the CEO, a video tour of the plant, samples of client work, trackable ads for certain specialty services, and, of course, lead generation.

If you're not ready for an interactive brochure yet, your company can offer conversion services that turn print-ready PDFs into download-friendly documents ready for handoff to interactive developers. Differentiating your service line from your competitor's can enhance your ability to hold on to the business you've got. At

least you can offer to manage the relationship between your shop and a developer. Consider interactive magazine development tools like [Texterity](#), [Zinio](#), or [Nxtbo](#). Do nothing. If you see your customers doing the above or things that make them feel good about the way they do business, choose for your business right now. Don't choose to stand pat. Not in the long run, but it's what printers will choose.

Use AIR to Pack

One more suggestion: invest in Adobe's platform for rich content. Interactive applications can wrap up into its own slick little package. Adobe's digital magazine publisher can download for offline viewing straight PDFs. But, since they are executable, they are blocked by all corporate firewalls, with the exception of right through most. So be sure to use the AIR development path to create an appropriate content-delivery system for your customers.

Printers that overcome the barriers to development and information access can get more involved in creating and administering interactive PDF editions of print publications.

Case Study: From interactive to Print

Most of us are feeling the belt-tightening budget reductions in one market or another. The Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres (OACCAC), a government-run healthcare business, is unfortunate enough to span two financially constrained market sectors: government and healthcare.

Thus, saving printing and production costs, as well as saving man-hours by automating as many processes as possible, was doubly important when the organization created its registration catalog and, later, the program for its 2009 annual conference in Toronto.

Connolly's company handled the creation of the brochure within the budget

constraints by reversing the customary print-to-interactive workflow. Instead, he started with an interactive PDF conference brochure to register attendees and built the printed show program from it.

Knowing a print brochure would be created from the PDF, the designers used high resolution images in the PDF. For the final version of the interactive PDF, the designers downsampled the interactive PDF to 150 dpi. For distribution, it was sent via e-mail and posted on the OACCAC site.

[OACCAC ebrochure can be downloaded here.](#)

Since the brochure included interactive forms, it was possible to sign up almost all of the estimated 1,000 healthcare workers for the event through the PDF. The form also made it possible to collect the fees online, handle reservations for seats at conference sessions, meals, a dinner cruise, and book rooms at the show hotel.

The interactive PDF included several complex interactive forms. For instance, it automatically chose between attendees' first and second choices for sessions in a given time slot as the more popular sessions sold out. Various healthcare facilities received different discounts, and

pdfPictures accommodated the interactive PDF embedding block-discounted versions of the PDF and distributed them via e-mail to the respective attendees.

The designers produced the interactive PDF conference program using the print version as a starting point and added interactive elements and ads to the print version. The interactive PDF was 12 pages longer than the print version, 24 pages in all. It included advertisements from the sponsors, such as Dell, Cross, Dell, and Adobe, and other content such as exhibit hall information, a sponsor list, and a direct response form.

Typical prepress work was required to convert the print version—adjusting the layout, changing it in spreads, stripping out unnecessary elements, menus and adding crop marks, and so on. The beauty of the interactive PDF, says, is the high resolution and the move from screen to print. The interactive PDF worked out so well every time. The brochure sold out. The brochures were left in the printer's hands, Connolly says. "Usually you have landscape brochures for the show. Usually they're thrown to

More Opportunities for Printers

Printers can attract more business, Connolly believes, by helping customers sidestep Web-development costs. For instance, he says, consider a customer with a \$100,000 budget for a publication: \$50,000 for print and \$50,000 for a companion Web site. If the printer can sell a dual interactive PDF and print scenario similar to the OACCAC program, the company might snag a \$50,000 print job and a \$5,000 interactive PDF job to go with it, thus preserving the print job revenue.

“The printer is getting his \$50,000, plus he’s getting another \$5,000, but he’s actually saving [the customer] \$45,000 because you don’t have to build the Web site,” Connolly says. “It can all be handled in the PDF file, either online or off, and it looks a lot more attractive. The products can be a lot bigger, and the PostScript font looks a thousand times better than the HTML font.” **TSR**

Don Fluckinger is a freelance writer in Nashua, NH. His business journalism experience includes writing and editing

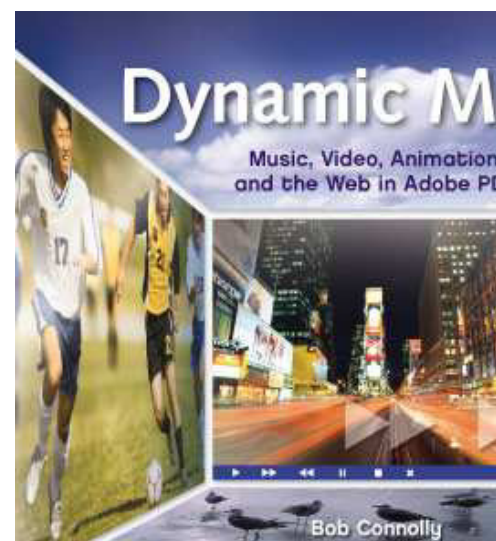
articles for **Desktop Publishers Journal**, developing and editing graphic-design books for Rockport Publishers, and covering the world of PDF technology for Ziff-Davis Enterprise’s PDFzone.com.

Adding Interactive Elements to the Seybold Report (Electronic Version)

We have added several interactive elements to a special edition of the electronic version of this issue. We added bookmarks to the three articles from the cover page. We also added links at several places within articles. You can tell if a live link is present because the text is highlighted in **blue** in the PDF.

We have added a number of links for additional information. We also turned the image (at right) in this article into a button. Clicking on that button/image will launch a 17 minute video in which Bob Connolly talks about creating interactive PDFs.

We plan to add interactive future issues in order to the technology. Our aim, create the best experience as is possible while balancing fun with time and budget. It took about one day, for example, and check the interactive special version of this issue. The interactivity within A



You are using Reader version
Click the button below to play
(17 minutes, Flash Video)

[Play Video](#)

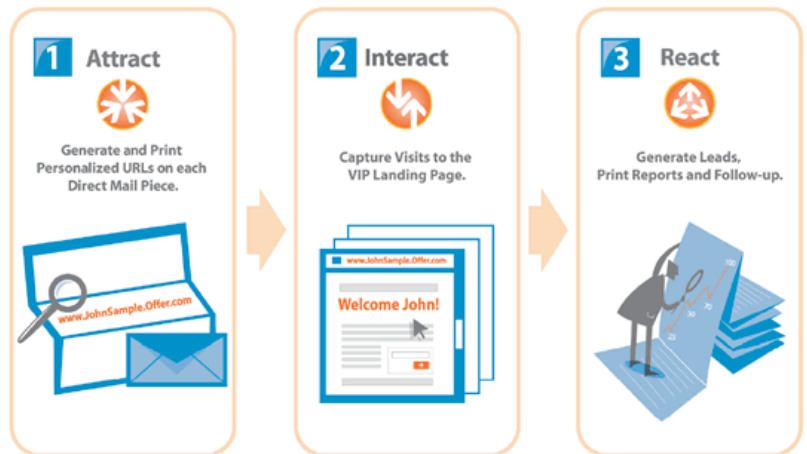
Is It Time to Invest in PURLs?

By Heidi Tolliver-Nigro

Personalized uniform resource locaters (PURLs) take recipients to individual landing pages where the user is greeted by name and can present information based on the user's stated preferences or from a marketer's database.

Personalized URLs also record site visitors' behavior, which can range from extremely simple to incredibly complex. Although in this article we focus on the use of print and URLs, Personalized URLs are not print-specific; they can be generated for print or e-mail.

While the software for producing Personalized URLs is available from more than a dozen manufacturers, Nimblefish claims the exclusive right to use the acronym "PURL." Therefore, these applications go by other names, such as "personalized URLs," "response URLs" (RURLs, trademarked by XMPie), "personalized landing pages," "personalized Web sites," "one-to-one



micro-Web sites," and even "customized Web sites," although the latter is technically inaccurate.

Most personalized URL campaigns have a similar structure: a site encourages someone who visits it to take a short survey (usually three to five questions) by clicking radio buttons. Recipients may be offered a response incentive, such as a gift or entry into a sweepstakes, to motivate them to provide personal or business information.

In some campaigns, the responses given on the survey trigger different messages, images, and offers on the subsequent pages. Information goes to the marketer in real time, so that they can track the

effectiveness of the campaign, generate sales leads, and act immediately on those leads. They can also use the data to update and append customer lists and better target future campaigns.

Appending databases is a key strategy, says Foley, president and CEO of Nimblefish. "An integrated marketing strategy is a company, because so many marketers think that "database" means their own else's database instead of a shared one." marketing departments are not always in general, what is the best database to acquire?" he asks. "Even the most favorites, like Accudata, the best database is the one that works best. That lends itself to personalization."

An im...
Mindf...
explai...
custo...
perso...
workfl...
Note:
intera...
the el...
of this...
it to s...
that u...

Most personalized URL solutions allow users to choose between two approaches for viewing results. First is a graphical snapshot that presents the data in top-line charts and graphs designed for marketers and other nontechnical users. Second is a detailed spreadsheet format for use by data miners and IT specialists.

Another benefit is that salespeople can typically watch responses and respond to hot leads in real time. For example, the survey might ask respondents if they plan to make a capital investment and if so, in what time frame. Many solutions give the option of providing leads by e-mail, PDA, or cell phone. Some will even auto-generate actionable leads in batch form. Many personalized URL solutions integrate into standard customer relationship management software, such as Salesforce.com or Constant Contact.

Personalized URLs Work, Depending

As with any marketing approach, the effectiveness of personalized URLs depends on implementation. Any campaign has an incredible number of variables

including the quality of the database (in-house, rented); the level of targeting (undifferentiated, segmented); and the type of campaign (customer loyalty, prospecting). Other variables include:

- the relevance of the message and offer to the recipient
- the quality and creativity of the message
- the offer, and
- the incentive

Three Typical Applications

Case studies provide an anecdotal perspective on the effectiveness of a well-implemented campaign. Here are three typical applications:

- Undifferentiated mailings based on a rented list
- Targeted lead generation or direct sales mailings based on a company's in-house list
- Customer surveys, event registrations, and other non-direct-sales mailings to in-house lists

Undifferentiated

The results for undifferentiated personalized URL campaigns usually be in the single digits, a good number compared to the results for undifferentiated mailings. PrintManagement of Cincinnati ran a six-month pilot (including a partnership with MarketMedia also of Cincinnati) for MarketPartners targeting new residential geographic region. The pilot had a response rate of more than 10% in the first five months. They were thrilled, partially because the response rate exceeded expectations, but also because the campaign had a conversion rate of 29%.

Targeted Lead Generation

By definition, these campaigns use a more targeted list (often consisting of prospects who have already had some kind of contact with the company). Response rates tend to be higher. It's not unusual to see response rates of campaigns using personalized URLs ranging from 8% to 13%.

One example from the PODi case study database is from Hewlett Packard, which created a campaign called “Print Play” to cross-sell and up-sell to existing customers. The company mailed 47,000 pieces in eight countries throughout Europe. The pieces were printed in the customers’ native languages and contained tailored upgrade options presented in a variety of customized content and images. Each piece contained a personalized URL directing recipients to their own Web site with more information on upgrade packages based on previous purchases. The sites also gave respondents an opportunity to register and qualify for a prize. The result was a relevant offer sent to each customer by name and in their own language, referencing their current business, product, and region and using imagery of personal and professional interest. A personalized URL and bar code were added for individual tracking and scanning of printed pieces. The campaign garnered a 12.6% response.

Customer Surveys

Personalized URLs used for customer surveys can be effective—especially when the desired response doesn’t involve cash

outlay (such as a customer survey or an invitation to attend a free seminar). In such cases, response rates around 30% are common. RT Associates, a printing service provider, achieved a phenomenal 93% response rate using personalized URLs. It uses this approach to conduct post-job customer feedback surveys. Once a week, they pull data on active print jobs and compose and mail variable card files. The surveys include incentives, such as dining gift cards. On average, the company produces 86 cards per week, which it uses to track the satisfaction of its clients and address areas for improvement, when necessary. An incidental benefit has been an increase in print jobs from some clients, which RT Associates attributes to the fact that the customers feel that the company cares about them and takes their comments seriously.

Not all results are as spectacular, of course. The Salt River Project, a large public utility in Arizona, received a more typical response rate when it used personalized URLs to solicit feedback on a publicity event. After its annual economic forecast breakfast, the utility sent attendees a personalized mailer that included a picture of the customer with

his or her account manager (and a complimentary breakfast), along with a request for feedback survey. Instead of the 30% it expected, the response

It’s not unusual to see response rates of campaigns using personalized URLs ranging from 8

A Word of Caution

Case studies such as the ones above are the best practices sources are often cited because they were implemented successfully. Many programs are implemented without success. “Folks only hear the good news and don’t hear about the test results, the re-testing, and the budget overruns,” says Wrich Printz, president of RT Associates. L2, which sells Fuse, a content management design engine for building personalized URLs and direct mail campaigns. “While that’s a great marketing tool, it sets unrealistic expectations in the market and hides the true cost needed to make personalized mailings work for the client and the end user.”

As discussed at length in the marketer's primer Personalized URLs: Beyond the Hype [editor's note: the author of this article is the author of this report] from Digital Printing Reports (which includes an entire section on why personalized URL campaigns fail), personalized URLs are merely a response mechanism. You could use a reply form, a toll-free number, or any of a number of vehicles for response. What makes the campaign succeed is not the personalized URL itself, but the quality of the larger campaign and whether a personalized URL is the best response mechanism.

...marketing expertise, including knowledge of recipient demographics and psychographics, plays a critical role in the success of a campaign.

In the Mercy Healthcare Partners campaign, for example, the program included two response mechanisms: the personalized URL and a printed form.

Both channels asked the same questions

and led to the same end result, but the organization allowed recipients to choose the response channel with which they felt more comfortable. Two-thirds of the nearly 1,300 responses received by MHP came in through business reply envelopes (BREs) and only one-third through personalized URLs. This doesn't necessarily mean that BREs were more successful, however. While the overall conversion rate for the campaign was 29%, the conversion rate of those responding by personalized URL was 50%. This is why marketing expertise, including knowledge of recipient demographics and psychographics, plays a critical role in the success of a campaign.

How to Choose a Personalized URL Solution

If you are in the market for a personalized URL solution, you should look for several features. First, it's important to recognize that at their most basic, these campaigns have two components: the personalized URL itself and the mini-site to which the respondent is directed. The technology for creating the URL itself is very simple, and there is little if anything to differentiate the personalized URLs. The differences in the

solution come from the service used, the efficiency with which the solution is accomplished, and the level of integration into a larger marketing suite) that the client has around it.

Pricing Model

There are essentially two pricing models for personalized URLs. The first is Software as a Service (SaaS), such as Printable Personalized URLs. This model is a hosted solution. If a solution is Web-based, it reduces the cost of deployment, and development is amortized over hundreds of clients. There is no hardware or maintain, as the application provider hosts the software. Start-up cost are minimal, and ongoing fees are low.

The second model includes solutions (XMPie, interline) that are delivered on a per-client basis. On one hand, once the solution is in-house and hosted by the client, the client takes on the liability

Web pages. On the other hand, once it is purchased, there are no recurring click or other charges. Ongoing costs include such things as hardware maintenance, IT staff training, and a secure IT infrastructure that allows for daily backup and redundant Internet connections. While the initial outlay is larger, this model can be highly cost-effective for high-volume and ongoing campaigns.

Point Solutions Versus Integrated Marketing

Another way to slice and dice the personalized URL software alternatives is to look at them from the perspective of point solutions vs. Web-to-print, multichannel marketing, or workflow integration solutions.

Point solutions are designed for one thing—personalized URLs—and little more. Multichannel marketing and workflow integration solutions are designed to manage multichannel workflows and marketing programs, often with common, integrated databases and business rules. Some allow all of the elements to be monitored from a central dashboard.

interlinkONE is a good example of an integrated marketing solution. The software consists of six modules (marketing, orders, Web-to-print, sales/CRM, warehouse management, project management) that typically deliver the same results as more than nine fully integrated individual solutions. Its fully integrated software platform works off the same database and provides a holistic view of all activity performed in the system.

Historically, integrated solutions have been server-based and cost tens of thousands of dollars. But the emergence of SaaS models has brought down the prices considerably. XMPie is one of the big players in the server-based space. Because of the significant number of configurations and pricing options available, XMPie does not disclose its pricing publicly. However, its entry-level e-media solution starts at around \$30,000, with prices climbing up considerably as capabilities such as 1:1 printing and Web-to-print are added. Additional IT-related functionality, such as increased bandwidth and fail-over, as well as additional service fees, can also increase costs. Other server-based solutions can be quoted in the \$25,000 to \$65,000 range,

plus attending fees.

Pricing for a SaaS solution settles around \$2,500 per month plus additional fees. Pricing for a server-based solution, for example, starts at \$25,000 (an entry-level solution starts at \$25,000 with transactions that scale with volume). OnDialog offers a solution at \$2,500 per month for up to 100,000 active records at one time. Easy personalized URL.com offers a solution at \$2,500 up front, plus a one-time fee of \$25,000 for one million active records or more. Easy personalized URL.com also offers separate business support packages, as well as a solution fee priced on a custom basis.

Personalized URLs are also being integrated into traditional solutions such as PrintableWeb.com, which now offers its Fusion Pro solution (with unlimited personalized URLs) for a one-time fee of \$500 plus a \$500 maintenance fee per year of service). A less-famous solution, Gluon offers personalized

its HyperPublishing solution (a rendering tool for a variety of publishing needs, from Quark files to personalized URLs), which is priced on a custom basis.

Prices of design engines such as L2's Fuse are also more complicated to estimate. L2 sells an applications model (to support specific marketing applications) as well as a general license (starting at \$10,000 per year) for organizations with significant in-house expertise that want to be trained to plan, design, and launch multichannel, cross-media campaigns (direct mail, e-mail, personalized URLs, and SMS) on their own.

Differentiating Personalized URL Solutions

There are many options for investing in an in-house solution. First, though, it's important to reiterate that what makes or breaks personalized URL campaigns is not the software, but the non-technical aspects including the marketing expertise that supports the campaign. As with any marketing campaign, it's about the creative, the marketing copy, the hook, the incentive, and the product or service being sold.

Companies that don't have the expertise

to understand and develop multichannel marketing campaigns shouldn't purchase personalized URL-generation software. They should be working with a marketing firm or another marketing partner to learn the basics. For organizations ready to purchase, the differentiators are not only the functionality of the software and its pricing structure, but its level of integration into other components of the marketing campaign or production workflow. In this case, it is more about the kinds of marketing campaigns an organization wants to create and the level of integration, flexibility, and multichannel functionality required.

Not knowing basic goals can result in focusing too much energy on basic feature sets and pricing, which is the wrong way to choose any software.

Organizations unsure exactly how many channels need to be integrated or what the broader campaigns will look like should refrain from purchasing until they know. Not knowing basic goals can result in focusing too much energy on basic feature

sets and pricing, which is why you should choose any software.

Once organizations understand their marketing campaigns the better, here are some of the other factors to keep in mind:

- pricing model (SaaS or one-time)
- click charges (generally based on volume)
- whether you are charged for URL creation or number of URLs created one time
- flexibility of template customization, including
- channels integrated
- existence of a centralized dashboard for monitoring the results
- availability of a central repository for cross-media rules
- mailing options (such as dynamic content coding)
- available training and support resources
- ease of use (speed and accuracy) and how templates can be designed, added or changed, and

- popular applications like Adobe InDesign)
- data handling (is the data gathered in the campaign held in the software and must it be exported into other programs, or does the solution manage all of the customer data from a centralized location?), and
- point solution versus integrated marketing suite

Point Solutions

For limited marketing budgets, point solutions will meet a company's marketing goals, especially in the short term. But recognizing that today's marketing strategies are increasingly multichannel is also important. For printers looking to sell themselves as marketing services providers, it is becoming critical to offer not just multichannel production capabilities but also a comprehensive multichannel marketing strategy.

The choice of a solution needs to be guided by the intended applications. For example, if you plan to provide marketing services, you might want to look at an integrated marketing solution such as L2, interlinkONE,

or XMPie. If you are looking to invest in a Web-to-print solution for smaller marketers with simpler marketing strategies and budgets, you might want to look at solutions such as Printable.

If you only want a personalized URL solution, but for higher volumes (into the millions), you might look at a solution such as OnDialog, which scales from \$2,500 to \$25,000 per year based on volume.

If you are looking for an all-around solution primarily for graphic arts applications such as personalized URLs, direct mail, and e-mail, you might look at MindFire. On the other hand, if you have extensive publishing systems in place, you will want to look at very publishing-intensive solutions like Gluon. Then there are other companies that offer personalized URL solutions for marketing, such as Nimblefish, Naehas, and Bluetree.

User Interfaces Versus Design Engines

Another area of differentiation is whether the solution is primarily a user interface or a design engine. A user interface is

optimized for easy and intuitive use with the user (common with Web-to-print URL capabilities integrated into Web-to-print solutions), and a design engine is designed to offer a high level of customization.

A design engine can build a solution from scratch and allows you to do anything you want to do. User interfaces might not be as flexible as design engines. Purchasers need to ask the following questions:

- How complex are my current marketing needs?
- Will customizing a template be sufficient?
- Will I need to add or delete content?
- Will I need to change the layout?
- Will I need additional functionality, such as building charts or hypertext links?
- Or, will I need to integrate the solution with other elements in a multi-channel marketing strategy? Or not support?

Half Marketing, Half IT

If you want more than the standard design elements and navigation, you might need someone on staff to handle the programming. “A lot of companies are buying the software without putting enough thought into who will be developing the campaigns, developing the database, and who will provide the creativity and the brains behind these campaigns,” says interlinkONE’s Foley. “They need someone who is half marketing person and half IT. [Unless you are working only with provided templates], you need to dedicate resources there as well.”

Core Competency and Channels

It all comes down to the core competency you need and the channels you intend to pursue. “If you’re serious about using the software to its greatest ability, you need a centralized database,” Foley continues. “When you do direct mail and print ads, that’s a channel and media type. If you do e-mail and personalized URLs, that’s a channel and a response mechanism. All those databases should be fed off the

same master database that does your direct mail, e-mail, SMS text messaging, and QR codes. That’s why unifying marketing communications can only be achieved with an integrated marketing solution.”

The need for an integrated solution is also why personalized URL, Web-to-print, and 1:1 capabilities are converging. Marketers and software suppliers are recognizing that, especially for marketers actively pursuing multichannel marketing, these campaigns cannot stand alone. They must be integrated so they can be tracked, monitored, and measured so they function together as an integrated unit.

“It’s hard to fairly characterize the success of the overall campaign or even characterize channel differences if the measurement rules and reports are spread across multiple systems,” says Phil Rose, Product Marketing Manager for XMPie. “That’s why our uProduce Marketing Console allows external systems to push data into XMPie—to bring a single dashboard solution to marketers regardless of what channels were used in the campaign.”

Increasingly, personalized URL software providers are working to incorporate multiple

channels beyond print. And in the not-too-distant future, personalized URL solutions will incorporate at least e-mail and other marketing channels.

Likewise, most (if not all) 1:1 printing, and multichannel solutions will likely include URL capability by default. It’s important to remember that to generate a personalized print scenario is not exactly the ability to serve the Web. Rose. “Most software today does the printed URL, but if it’s not linked, all sorts of issues with tracking and reporting, consistency

[EasypersonalizedURL.com](#) offers a unique twist on integration with the Universal Service’s intelligent bar code. Its proprietary e-mail program sends automatic e-mail triggered by follow-ups to campaign e-mail reminders to nonresponders as early as the day that the ad is at the recipient’s house.

This is an exciting market

the software is evolving quickly. The more anecdotal evidence we compile, the more it becomes clear that personalized URLs should be included for consideration in the mix of any multichannel marketing campaign.

Personalized URLs As Marketing Solution

But despite the heavy technology focus, it's important to remember that personalized URLs are a marketing solution and not a technology solution. "This is really a critical point," concludes XMPie's Rose. "Without a good offer, it doesn't really matter which channel or mix of channels you employ. On the other hand, it is evident that with a good offer, adding personalized URLs adds another avenue of approach not only for the marketer to the prospect, but for the prospect to the company. After all, people have preferred methods of interaction. Just as in a foreign country, if you can speak their language you'll get a lot further with the conversation." **TSR**

To learn more about Tolliver-Nigro's report on personalized URLs, visit:
www.digitalprintingreports.com/marketer_primers_purls.htm

DIGITAL PRINTING REPORTS

SPECIAL REPORTS AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS FROM HEIDI TOLLIVER-NIGRO

DIGITAL PRINTING, 1:1 (PERSONALIZED) PRINTING, WEB-TO-PRINT, PERSONALIZED URLS, DIGITAL SOFTWARE COMPARISON CHARTS

[View Cart](#)

Subscribe to the "From the Cheap Seats" mailing list!

Personalized URLs: Beyond the Hype

Overview, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices for PURLs, RURLs, and Other -URLs

Most Recent Report Update: April 2009

Target Audience:

- * Marketers, creatives, ad agencies
- * Digital print shops and marketing services providers
- * Digital press, software, and other vendors
- * Research firms

There is a lot of hype surrounding Personalized URLs these days, but what is the reality behind the hype? Do these applications deliver on the promise? "Personalized URLs: Beyond the Hype" addresses this question. The answer is one that every marketer and 1:1 print provider should take to heart.

Personalized URL applications have a wide variety of uses, including sales prospecting, customer surveying, event registrations, information dissemination, and obtaining customer and user feedback. But while they have generated a lot of success, they have generated a lot of disappointment, too—primarily because of a lack of realistic expectations.

This reports provides a no-nonsense look at the role of personalized URLs and 1:1 printing in increasing the effectiveness of companies' marketing programs. It looks at key application categories, "best in class" case studies, lessons learned over time, and best practices for optimizing their use. Printers and marketers can optimize the value of this report by purchasing an enterprise license for broader marketing and education.

Mobile Devices Present an Opportunity for Publishers

By Chuck Lenatti

Within the past few weeks, the battle for attention from mobile readers has heated up. Amazon introduced a larger Kindle, Apple upped the ante with a new iPhone, and Palm officially entered the fray with its Pre.

The new iPhone 3GS supposedly will be faster on AT&T's 3G network. Palm's new Pre will only be available on Sprint for the next six months. The new Kindle DX, meanwhile, seems to be aimed squarely at the textbook market, which is overdue for an overhaul.

What do these new devices and the many others that will follow mean for publishers? We asked Cimarron Buser, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Business Development at Texterity and an avid gadget geek. Texterity specializes in formatting print magazines for the Web and optimizing magazine content for digital media.

Below the Surface

Over the years, Buser has seen a lot of devices come and go, many of them well designed. What's different now, he says, is that more publishers are involved and more content is available and more is being converted to digital. Also, publishers are building digital applications of print content into their workflow. While the devices seem to get most of the attention, it's really what's going on unnoticed that makes the difference.

"People see the tip of the iceberg, but not what's below the surface," Buser says. "People see the Kindle, but what they don't understand is that there's a whole infrastructure underneath that supports how the content is converted, uploaded, provided to Amazon, and distributed from the publishers, and that's a lot better now," he says. Why have some other excellent e-book devices never caught on? The device is about one-tenth of the problem, and the other 90% is everything else: content, ease of use, distribution model, service.

Where the Kindle

The Kindle isn't necessarily an e-reader, but Amazon makes books from its vast inventory easy from almost anywhere in the States via its Whispernet service, while you don't get that service from the Kindle, some readers say they're reading on an e-reader.

Adapting newspapers and magazines to mobile media might be more difficult than books. For content creators, layout becomes a variable. Magazines generally contain more text than books. But, magazines present a different "[Magazine] layout compared to something you can't get on a screen. That area has not yet been explored," says Buser.

The larger Kindle DX might attract newspaper publishers, but it still doesn't solve newspaper publishers' marketing conundrum: digital advertising. While Amazon has a good market, the company's content model doesn't really lend itself to magazine subscriptions. Amazon doesn't currently

and requires magazines to charge end users to be in the Kindle magazine catalog. “If you’re a free magazine, for example, a controlled publication, there’s no place for you,” Buser says. “The DX could be decent, but Amazon has to resolve some of the business model issues around magazines.”

Adapting newspapers and magazines to mobile media might be more difficult than books. For content other than books, layout becomes a variable.

Instead, Amazon is focusing its larger device on the academic book market. The production and development expense of textbooks makes it difficult to understand how Amazon can develop a workable business model in this market, and students also dislike the cost involved in the device. “The holy grail is a business model that has digital rights management built into it, which the Kindle does, and is a vertical delivery platform.”

Using the iPhone for Magazine Mobile Content

Since the black and white electrophoretic technology that powers Amazon’s Kindle can’t support high-resolution color, the iPhone might work better for magazines. With high resolution and good display quality, Buser prefers the iPhone to almost any other device, although he would love to see a larger version.

The layout and look of consumer publications is often what sets them apart, and many publishers are developing specialized digital plans for mobile as well as the desktop. “Although an opportunity exists for the Kindle, Blackberry, and other newer devices, the iPhone is amazingly good already and we’re focusing on the iPhone because it has a decent penetration—14-15 million, depending on who you talk to, for the iPhone and iPod Touch—and is holding its own,” Buser says.

According to a Texterity survey, more digital magazine subscribers want content on the iPhone and the Blackberry than on other devices. “The Kindle and Sony eReader have nowhere near that level of interest yet,” Buser says. Based on the interests of

both end-users and publishers, the first mobile solution is a Kindle-style iPhone application that allows publishers to leverage their digital editing and design skills to enter the mobile market at a very small scale. Amazon will support other devices in the future, but currently its focus remains on the Kindle.

New Roads to Profit

Developing content for mobile devices opens new roads to profit. “People get addicted to their devices, like the iPhone, and they want everything on them,” Buser says. “People are willing to pay for content that normally get free, “you know, like going on,” he says. Being on a cool, popular device is a badge of honor for publishers, allowing them to build a relationship with their readers. “It’s a device important to the reader, and the issue is to get promoted on that device. You’re in the App Store, the Kindle, you’ll have visibility, and they’ll find you. That’s an audience activity.”

Texterity believes mobile devices will be as important as print in the future. Buser doesn’t expect print

anytime soon. Someone could read an article at home in the print version and then look at it again at the gym or on the road using their mobile device, making mobile applications an additional value for subscribers.

Social Media is Important

The ability to share content on social media like Facebook and Twitter is also a very large opportunity for publishers, Buser says. “Being able to share content with people is a way to be nice to the reader, but also to get your brand out there,” he says. “We have all the social networks integrated into our digital editions and we’re developing our Facebook app that will make it a lot easier for people to share with their group. All of the social networks are valuable for publishers because they get their links out there and get them relevance on Google and other search engines.”

Publishers aren’t immediately concerned with making money from mobile, says Buser. They know that a paid [content] app will not generate much revenue up front. A free app provides more visibility but not much direct revenue. “Publishers like Premier Guitar say audience and lots of eyeballs are good:

‘We have a print product, a digital edition, a Web site, newsletters, video, a whole selection of stuff, and one of the channels is mobile.’ If you can get people to spend 15 minutes a day or an hour a week with your branded content, that’s worth a lot to a publisher.”

Texterity has found value in merely replicating the print magazine, but that is not enough. The company plans to make other embedded apps, and it is already making designed-for-digital editions on the platform. They intend to put these capabilities on the iPhone also. Smart phones will have additional features like geographical sensitivity and click-and-dial for phone numbers, which computers typically do not have. Making iPhone- or handset-specific features easy to use is key.

“Long-term, the digital edition today as a replica will evolve, and we are working with publishers to make these things more relevant to the medium they’re on. It’s a challenge because of the layout. For example, you can see a magazine like Spin doing significant enhancements of their existing replica edition. It starts as a replica. They have enhanced it with hundreds of links that are relevant to what they do. For example,

show me a video of this band, go buy this stuff, say Amazon, go to the band Web site. Amazon has integrated rich media into its digital edition on every page, where it’s quite a difference from the printed edition,” Buser says.

That’s not to say that every publisher should follow that model. Publishers could build a Flash presentation that does amazing things, but it’s not economically feasible to update every week or every month. We need something exciting and engaging that is a good fit for the device, but the time not cost an arm and a leg.

Opportunities for Publishers

Mobile platforms also present opportunities for advertisers who can sponsor content, participate in multimedia advertising in the B2B market, sometimes through Web site. Publishers should have the best information on their Web site. A publication’s Web site can’t just mirror its print version, and it can’t be only readers. Doing so would be a waste and agencies more leveraged. Publishers should buy and additional reach.

Digital Prepress and Books: the Tale of Macmillan Publishing

By Laurel Brunner

The tale of Macmillan Publishing, one of the United Kingdom's most important book publishers, is one of quite astonishing success.

Founded in 1843, this privately held company has thrived on the basis of astute business management and a commitment to high standards in literature and academic publishing. And also Macmillan is one of the world's biggest fans of digital production techniques.

Macmillan's best known titles, Nature, Groves Dictionary of Music, and Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy, are well established multi-channel content brands. An army of printers worldwide produces their printed versions, using an array of technologies from gravure to conventional offset and digital printing. So how has digital prepress influenced Macmillan's business? We recently had the chance to put this, plus a number of other questions, to Macmillan's deputy chairman, Mike Barnard.

According to Mike it comes down to economics: "Undoubtedly the economics of book publishing changed completely when it became possible to take digital files produced by authors and convert them easily to typesetting files. It is difficult to remember now how cumbersome the process used to be in the days before DTP or sophisticated word processing programs, but as late as the 1980s keying and typesetting was costing book publishers around £10 a page for 'straight' text (in 1980 £s) and £20 or more per page for anything complicated. A 300-page book with straight text and no pictures was therefore costing £3,000 before it got anywhere near a printer. The printer then had to shoot film and make plates for a conventional litho press which anyway needed a long a messy set-up. The resulting prepress cost was prohibitive in the case of a short-run book unless it could justify a very high selling price."

Low cost prepress has done much to make publishing processes more accessible. This has benefited printers who have responded to new opportunities as well as to print buyers. For Mike "...it is interesting that what has secured the future of book

publishing in the graduate market, is the move from one media to others, is that digital prepress has reduced the relative cost of lower hard copy runs as well as the emphasis over to alternative media. We looked forward a few years ago, always an anxiety that the high costs of reduced print runs would wipe away margin before we could realise sales revenue from ebook, audio product, website sales and other new outlets."

Lower cost prepress has opened up opportunities for different types of publishing in markets such as book clubs. It didn't change workflows, but it did, says Mike, "When the way of doing things for a workflow which produces digital files rather than mounted plates was an immediate beneficiary was the book because the prepress cost was reduced dramatically as a percentage of investment. When digital prepress was introduced, the cycle was broken. As we all know it is now possible to produce even a single copy cost effectively."

Falling Runlengths, Improving Economics

This drastic reduction in runlength economics is probably the most significant gain, but it's also given publishers and book designers more scope for color and graphics-rich print media projects. Mike explains that "a similar transition occurred with digital graphics. At about the time that DTP and WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) were creating a revolution in the world of text manipulation, pictures were still being sent to 'process houses' for scanning, proofing and film-making and a single colour picture could easily cost £80 in 1980 £s to process into film. Add the extended make-ready and high paper wastage on litho presses of those days and it is clear that short run books with colour pictures were impossible to print economically...it's difficult to remember a day when the editor or author couldn't actually see a picture in place, on the page, in a program he can access on his own computer—but it wasn't that long ago."

New Media

There has been a downside to digitisation, not least the loss of many traditional graphic arts system suppliers and developers, but for Macmillan "...digital workflows have revolutionised the economics of book publishing at the same time as alternative media have challenged the market, leading to shorter and shorter runs and more frequent reprints. It should be added that computer tracking of workflow has enabled this to be controlled. It would be impossible to manage all these short runs and print on demand orders other than through automated systems between the publisher and printer." Companies supplying this sort of technology include all the big names in graphic arts workflows such as Agfa, Fujifilm, Kodak and Screen. However companies such as Xerox, Creo, EFI, Océ, Canon and Ricoh are all actively building technologies to develop hybrid workflows for offset and digital print, and to support multi-channel production.

For Macmillan, some bits of its business have done better than others. According to Mike, "Palgrave, the academic imprint has been a major beneficiary. All academic

monographs now revert to traditional printing after the initial period of facilitating constant supply of selling titles." This is a fact that's why commercial printers are seeing opportunities in the book market. Talking to the workflow system developers to create the support hybrid output packages.

Macmillan New Writing

One of the most exciting examples of digital technology has been Macmillan's New Writing. Mike Barnard's idea revolutionised traditional book publishing by applying the principles of on-demand to trade publishing. He explained "MNW was launched in 2002 as a way of discovering new novelists and going on to have a long-term relationship. Macmillan's 'mainstream' publishing decided that contracts would be non-negotiable: authors would get no advance but would earn 50% on net receipts; rights would be split 50/50. Macmillan would own world rights and the option to buy the author's second novel.

terms. The imprint continues to operate on these terms, and remains unique amongst major publishers' imprints in encouraging unsolicited submissions—but only as digital submissions: no paper mess.”

It's been a resounding success and since 2006, “We have received, to date, more than 11,000 complete novels, of which we have published 36. In the past, mountains of paper would have been involved, but for MNW the workflow from author to finished books is entirely electronic.” Mike says that “All MNW titles are now also published in mass market paperback, under the appropriate Pan Macmillan paperback imprint—Pan, Picador or Tor.”

MNW novels have been short- and long-listed for several major prizes, including the Orange Prize, the Orange New Writer's Award, the Crime Writer's Association New Blood Dagger, and others. And they have gained considerable attention in the market with titles long-listed for Richard & Judy's Summer Read, short-listed for the World Book Day “Books to Talk About” promotion, and selected as BBC 5 Live's Book of the Week. Mike says that “Rights have sold in sixteen international territories

and so far four authors have gone on to sign multi-book deals with Macmillan, with an advance, on conventional terms. More will follow this year.”

This is of as much importance to printers planning their futures as it is to publishers. The market for new short run, on demand books is clearly vibrant and it is changing conventional book publishing models. The economics of traditional book publishing is driving a shift to shorter runs: “The ‘returns’ of MNW books (the copies returned as unsold) are far lower than in conventional fiction publishing because the initial print runs are shorter.”

Change Means Opportunity

This market is increasingly accessible to jobbing printers with the right technology. For Macmillan “from magazines through to educational material, multi-channel publishing is now the norm. For e-books and digital downloads, the original digital files can be converted and of course much material can be re-used in digital form on websites, but there is also a lot of new material produced specifically for new media and one of the lessons we are

having to learn is that new publishing and prepress techniques, so staff must and there are new techniques joining the conventional of suppliers.” This opportunity should not be overlooked

For Macmillan “it's still a challenge to manage but a combination of the continuing resilience of the book and the cost-effective technology for both traditional and innovative media is so far ahead of the curve.” **TSR**

This article was reprinted with permission from Digital Dots, an independent group located in the United Kingdom. Director Laurel Brunner founded Digital Dots once worked for Seybold Semantics and is a long time friend and supporter of the industry.

Digital Dots is a collection of freelance and professional journalists specialising in prepress, printing and publishing. Digital Dots provides exclusive market research and evaluation services for digital publishing relating to these industries. www.digitaldots.co.uk

If you would like to read more coverage about publishing companies outside the UK, please send us an e-mail molly@digitaldots.co.uk

Tell Us What You Think!

[Click here to have some fun!](#)

Seybold Interactive Magazine - Questionnaire

1. What type of computer do you use?
 Mac PC
2. Do you print an electronic version of this newsletter?
 Yes No
3. What would you like to see in future editions of Seybold?

4. What do you think about the length of Seybold Interactive magazine?
 Too long Just right Too short
5. What is your particular area of Interest?

6. Please tell us the role in your organization:
 Printer Sales Marketing Programmer
 Producer Writer Designer Interactive

7. How would you rate the quality of the writing?
 Excellent Good Average
8. What topics would you like see covered in S

9. Do you like the landscape orientation of the
 Yes No

Personal Information

Name: _____
Company: _____
Position: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

[Submit Online](#)