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Seattle Publishing

Developers of FileMaker Pro-based tool assemble and organize content for a wide range of catalogs, directories and reference guides

Bringing years of expertise to the preparation and presentation of specialty publications to its clients, Seattle Publishing assembles a wide range of catalogs, directories and reference guides, all custom-designed to the clients' specifications. The tool that makes it all possible is Seattle Publishing's own creation – The Gutenberg Publishing System®, a powerful data management application built on a strong FileMaker Pro foundation.

Business Challenge

Seattle Publishing traces its roots back more than thirty years – to Bicycle Paper, a local journal devoted to the burgeoning popularity of recreational cycling around the Pacific Northwest. The publication attracted a strong local following for its detailed coverage of the regional cycling scene, and in 1988 it branched out and added an event calendar and two reference guides. Eventually, non-cycling-related clients saw the value in allowing the company that would soon become Seattle Publishing to handle their projects.

When new owners took over the company in the early 1990s, these publications began to demand more and more of the staff's time. They were assembling information, laying out pages and ensuring that all was accurate – and all the old-fashioned way. "We were using cut-and-paste hand entry into a desktop publishing layout program in order to put the calendars into the publications," recalls Sales and Marketing Director Jay Stilwell.

FileMaker Pro was already in use at the company, for conventional office applications. "It was our first choice because we're a Mac-based company," Jay continues, "and we were using it for content management, invoicing and reports. But our need to automate content flow for the paper led us to a centralized database that could use FileMaker Pro to feed data into PageMaker for the calendars. That was the beginning of what we now call The Gutenberg Publishing System®." And while PageMaker has long since been supplanted by more powerful layout applications, The Gutenberg Publishing System® continues to grow and evolve.

Overview

Publishers of the Bicycle Paper and various catalogs, directories and reference guides

Based in Seattle, WA

Approximately 7 employees

Industry

Printing/Publishing

Solutions

The Gutenberg Publishing System®, based on FileMaker Pro, allows easy assembly of calendars, guides, catalogs and directories by organizing and sorting a wide variety of client data.

Benefits

The system allows a highly personalized relationship between publisher and client by providing easy organization of large amounts of data.

Each client has ready access to his or her own information.

The database eases production flow by providing direct content interface to publishing software.

Successful Solution

The Gutenberg Publishing System® currently consists of one powerful FileMaker Pro 7 database supported by two data files. These files contain all of the data for all of the catalogs, directories and reference guides prepared by Seattle Publishing. With the expanded capabilities of FileMaker Pro 7, the database also contains photos and other illustrative matter, all of which may be edited and reviewed by the client through a web interface. For layout, the data is exported directly into Quark and InDesign where the material is prepared for the press.

"We probably have 20 to 25 clients of various sizes," Jay comments, "a lot of them are distributors who have catalogs, flyers and websites. Our clients like us to host the databases, and we provide them with what we call a data browser, which they can tie into their individually password-protected databases."

The system-wide upgrade to FileMaker Pro 7 is well underway, with help from the developers at Seattle's H4 Consulting. "I think from a hands-on user/developer's point of view there are a lot of benefits to FileMaker Pro 7," Jay continues. "For example, we're able to streamline multiple data files down to fewer."

Customer Benefits

Illustrations play a key role in many of the publications prepared using The Gutenberg Publishing System®, and FileMaker Pro 7's enhanced image-storage capabilities are a real plus. "You don't have to go in and convert high-resolution files to create thumbnails anymore," Jay notes. "It's easier to work with FileMaker Pro 7. When you're talking to a client that might have up to 15,000 photos, being able to upload directly without having to convert them is a real help!"

With a wide range of clients offering a wide range of publications, Seattle Publishing is proud of its one-on-one personalized service. And taking full advantage of the power of FileMaker Pro 7, The Gutenberg Publishing System® allows careful customization of data management to suit the needs of each individual client. "We're a service-oriented company," declares Jay. "Each of our clients is different, and we have a hands-on system for working with them and helping them to work with FileMaker Pro to ensure that the work matches the look of their existing publications. If a big client like Costco Wholesale wanted to build something like this, they could – but they prefer to have it maintained outside of their system. We have the system and the expertise to maintain it for them – and a lot of our clients are looking for that."

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Jay Stilwell, Sales and Marketing Director, Seattle Publishing

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