

Living with digital products and multiplatform e-deliverables - Market Transformation Equals Challenges and Opportunities

By Teri Tan

Last year, a major publisher of textbooks reference works, trade titles, and educational software selected Planman as a vendor of choice for a project to produce multiple programs for mobile and handheld devices. “This project required an understanding of educational products, as our team had to review the content and make decisions and recommendations relating to file formats that could be produced, such as reflowable EPub and fixed-layout EPub. Furthermore, the content had to be tested on multiple devices and platforms based on the client’s acceptance testing criteria and quality parameters,” says v-p for sales Amit Vohra.

Now that EPub 3 and DAISY standards are converging, the Ida-reader— a software application produced by Planman and Danish company xmltekst for dyslexic and visually impaired readers—“will be the first to have the ability to read aloud both DAISY and EPub 3 files across platforms.” The past eight months also saw Planman helping publishers to convert existing Flash based content into HTML5.

As for meeting tight deadlines and stringent quality control, no one beats Planman’s newspaper digitization team. Says v-p of operations P.S. Narang, “Our team has digitized more than five million pages of newspapers in the past three years using our state-of-the-art proprietary work-flow solution. We have also digitized more than two million contemporary newspaper pages in the past year. The challenge lies in delivering 50-plus titles (approximately 4,500 pages) on a daily basis within three hours upon receipt. A robust work-flow monitoring system plays a big role in making everything happen on time, every time.” (Planman works with national libraries worldwide and digitizes newspaper archives from microfilm.)

Vohra notes that American publishers are asking for more full-service packaging and digital technology solutions, often with simultaneous delivery. Planman’s full-service packaging model is focused on the k–16 market, and its team has just finished a big primary math project for a well-known educational publisher. “European and Asian clients have just started to ask for such services, and we see this market expanding.”

The goal for the coming year, adds Vohra, is to help clients make the transition from print to digital. “The idea is not only to produce content for digital devices but to help create an ‘ecosystem’ by developing e-reader applications that allow e-books to be read on different devices, producing those e-books, and then deploying the content in an e-bookstore where users can purchase the books for that ecosystem. One of the problems of developing an e-book is that it would not look the same on all e-readers, even within the same ecosystem.”