

# Solution for newsroom management

*Intetics creates and supports a newsroom management solution.*

## CLIENT

Xalmiento web-services, headquartered in Hamburg, Germany, is a company rendering website development and management services for publishing houses.

## CHALLENGE

Specializing in news website concepts and design, Xalmiento has rich experience in providing solutions for publishing industry in Germany. Their new project “Desk-Net” was aimed at helping publishing houses to plan work of their editorial departments: arrange appointments, manage stories and coordinate staff. Xalmiento was going to sell this application using the Application Service Provider (ASP) model, implying that all customer organizations would use one dedicated web server.

The client realized that they needed an IT partner to outsource the solution to. They turned to Intetics to assemble a dedicated development team at one of their Offshore Development Centers.

The project objectives were as follows:

Objective 1: Developing a browser-based secure web application that would allow users plan their everyday work.

Objective 2: Continuous system enhancement.

Objective 3: Production server support.

## SOLUTION

Xalmiento and Intetics started their collaboration with the development of the main application. Major processes taking up much time in any newsroom include:

- Appointment planning
- Staff co-ordination
- Storyboard management

These problems are now easily handled with the Desk-Net solution which makes the whole range of publishing processes less time-consuming and therefore a lot more productive. The software allows managing appointments of reporters, photographers, etc. efficiently thanks to the following functionality:

- Import of external appointment data feeds (e.g. from Reuters, AP, etc.) or from internal appointment databases;
- Easy-to-use and fast entry of appointments;
- Express Entry – a mechanism for quick entering of stories/appointments using a special set of commands;
- Detailed Entry – a panel used for entering detailed information related to a story/appointment, which includes: responsible persons, formats of story content, info about when & where the appointment will be held, story/appointment-related files, etc.
- Enter appointments once into Desk-Net – no double work;
- Assignment of staff to appointments;
- Daily, weekly and long-term appointment overviews;
- Special templates for print-outs;
- Alert page displaying all unassigned appointments;
- Reminders for repeating appointments.

Stories and appointments can be easily assigned to employees. Every Desk-Net user has his/her own personal site where his/her assignments can be tracked. A simple and easy-to-use “Notes” function enables managers to inform their staff. Specific days and sections can be selected for targeted communication. Personnel – internal or external – can get access to certain sections only, thus being restricted in viewing information that is not directly related to their work. Automated email notifications are sent out to inform Desk-Net users about new entries or changes in existing ones.

Editing a story for print is not an easy task as it is. Nowadays, a story must be also produced for online and mobile platforms. Cross-Media Story Management provided in the solution allows doing this on the basis of the customer’s editorial processes. Other Desk-Net features for story management involve:

- Personal story repository;
- Idea list;
- Story search;
- Series planning.

Sure enough, such a large-scale system has a well thought out and rich administrator part. It gives the possibility to create the organizational structure from scratch including hierarchical departments, publishing objects, pages, and page elements. User management is based on access rights to different editorial departments.

We apply an iterative agile-based approach to development. The project is divided into milestones which in turn are divided into short development iterations. There is a constantly updated list of requirements

assigned to every iteration. In seeking to improve quality and accelerate the development process we use a test-driven development technique and continuous integration which provide us with the following benefits:

- A scheduled build process which checks out all of the code, builds the entire application, runs all unit tests, checks code style and reports the results to the developers. If there are any problems in the build, they can be immediately found and corrected;
- At any time QA engineers have the last application version for testing.

Almost all functionality requirements are covered by test cases, with some of them being fully automated.

## **TECHNOLOGIES UTILIZED**

- Java Enterprise Edition;
- GWT;
- Spring, Hibernate;
- XDoclet, XSLT;
- Oracle XE;
- My SQL, Tomcat 5;
- Amazon EC2, Amazon S3;
- CruiseControl, Ant, Checkstyle, Cobertura.

## **RESULTS**

The project was successfully launched for pilot customers. It allowed publishing houses to migrate from outdated paper planning to productive and reliable automatic planning. Nowadays the service is used by about 8 companies which are not only Germany-located. The number of customers continues to expand.

Development of the application continues. Almost every month another version with new features and clients' requests is delivered to the production server. No technical department is required to support this system on the client side.

**Further information and other case studies can be found on our website at [www.intetics.com](http://www.intetics.com)**