WoodWing

The future of publishing: automated, atomic and channel-agnostic



Table of content

Introduction	3
Appealing and interacting with multiple content audiences	4
Monetizing content in a world where free content is the norm	9
Rethinking employee roles and partnerships	15
Taking advantage of emerging technologies	20
About WoodWing	25

Introduction

As a content specialist, you face a number of challenges in the new content landscape. You will need to create content that appeals to not one, but multiple content audiences. You will also have to provide new ways to monetize your content to compete with the increasing volume of information available for free online.

To thrive, you'll need to have a strong, reliable, and flexible content production core in place, so that you're optimally positioned to move ahead into the future of multi-channel content publishing.

To achieve this, you'll need to:

- Restructure your employees' roles and responsibilities, internally and externally
- Rethink your partnerships
- Strategically harness the power of emerging technologies
- Re-evaluate your current content creation and management business processes to ensure all your workflows run as efficiently and as costeffectively as possible

This eBook draws on in-depth conversations with WoodWing customers, partners and executives. We are sharing their thoughts, advice, and insights on four future trends, like:

- How to appeal to and interact with multiple content audiences
- How to monetize content in a world where free content is the norm
- How to rethink employee roles and partner relationships
- How to benefit from and take advantage of emerging technologies

As we look at these trends, we aim to provide guidance in two major areas:

- The current challenges you and your peers face
- What you need to start doing now to prepare for the future

We hope that this eBook will help fuel ongoing conversation between content and software specialists on how we, as a community, can meet all these future challenges together.

Appealing and interacting with multiple content audiences

Content companies have the ability to reach many more consumers than ever before, as distributing content across multiplying channels continues to become easier, faster, and cheaper.

This opportunity is due to factors such as: software solutions becoming more advanced; employees becoming more knowledgeable; and channels (like social media) becoming more competitive. The challenge you then face is how to capitalize on this access to new potential audiences while still continuing to satisfy the needs of your traditional content consumers.

Make the business case for new content ventures

Content companies will need to thoughtfully consider which audiences and channels they want to focus on in future. In part, this exercise will be a discussion of how you can make your content unique to differentiate it from what else is out there in the market, as well as how you plan to monetize that content.

Make a business case for your reasons for targeting a particular new audience and channel, the specific types of content you aim to provide, and how you'll measure the success of this endeavor.

You'll also want to investigate whether or not you need to invest in additional resources such as technology and staff to make your content as compelling as possible to new audiences.

When looking at emerging technologies, you'll be weighing up the merits of augmented and virtual reality, machine learning, AI, and behavioral analytics.



Reassess your current content resources

At the same time, assess your current content creation and management processes. You may need to overhaul workflows to make them more efficient and to rethink employee and partner roles and responsibilities. Your end goal is to have the capacity in place to allow you to rapidly scale up to produce more content, whether it's brand-new or repurposed, for new audiences and channels.

Aller Media is one example of a content company that uses WoodWing's software to increase workflow productivity. The Scandinavian magazine publisher is now able to increase the reuse and repurposing of its content as broadly as it needs across brands and countries. Read the full success story here.

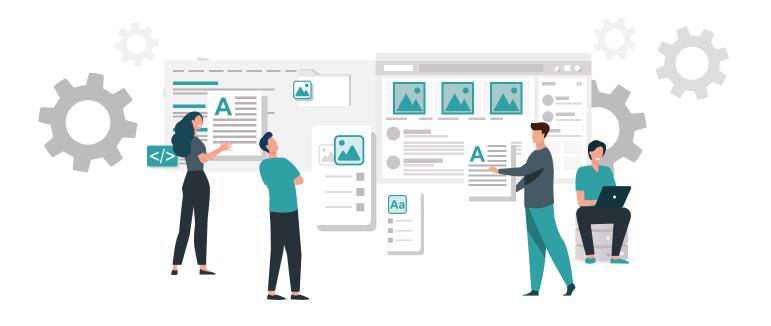
An often overlooked aspect of repurposing content is how you manage your content archive. If you plan to use content again you need it to be easy to find - not disappear if it is no longer

live on your website, for example. So, you'll need to centralize storage to your existing content and put effective tagging and taxonomies in place. This will ensure your content is quickly discoverable and accessible in just a few clicks.

You're aiming for the ability to unlock the potential of every piece of content you produce, to extend its longevity and its usefulness across channels, audiences, and devices.

Software like a digital asset management (DAM) system can help as it automates elements such as taxonomies, tagging, and the management of content assets. Those content assets may include images, photos, design files, brand logos, PowerPoint and Keynote presentations, spreadsheets, video files, documents, and more.

By having a solid taxonomy and strong topic tags in place, a content company can easily resurface older articles or slideshows as they regain relevance. For instance, such content may be very helpful in explaining the historical context of trending news or events to audiences.



Serve up content where audiences gather

At the end of this process of reflection and assessment, you should have a plan for how you'll balance the needs of your existing content consumers with those of brand-new audiences. How different are their interests, what are their user needs, how can you keep them engaged? Look at how other providers have already transitioned their content to fresh markets. Typically, the path to success is to start small and experiment and then gradually build out a loyal audience.

What's already clear today is that simply distributing undifferentiated content to as many audiences and channels as possible isn't the right way to begin building meaningful and profitable relationships with new consumers. Typically, if you try to appeal to everyone, you end up appealing to no-one. So a one-size-fits-all approach isn't going to work.

Make sure the content you offer is an appropriate fit for each channel and audience group on that channel. For instance, a business-related article is the right topic and targets the right audience on a channel like LinkedIn. However, the same content (even if it's in a different format) might not have the same effect or impact on users browsing through content on Facebook.

Challenge your content audiences

Don't be afraid to experiment and mix up the type of content you present to your audiences. Using analytical tools, you can assess which types of content are most engaging for your different audiences, and use that knowledge to help guide your future content plans.

For example, just because some younger audiences may seem to gravitate to bite-sized pieces of content,

the path to success

is to start small and experiment and then gradually build out a loyal audience.



don't assume that's the only type of content that any young people will consume. You may find that more in-depth content on certain topics retains their interest for longer. This could lead to a whole new stream of content.

And remember, although content companies are investing heavily in digital content, print continues to be a strong source of revenue, so don't neglect tried-and-trusted channels in favor of new media.

Personalize your content

Some audiences will remain loyal to a long-time content provider no matter what happens in the market. However, underlying trends suggest the majority of consumers will be fickle, switching back and forth between content creators. In our convenience-obsessed culture, online audiences often read the content served up first by a search engine rather than navigating to a preferred site. So, how can you ensure your audiences keep coming back for more of your quality content?

Publishers of all sizes can learn a lesson from content giants like Netflix and Amazon. They use personalization to make their content hyper-relevant and convenient. In doing so, they increase customer loyalty and time spent viewing their content.

Think about the personalized recommendations you receive from Netflix (or any streaming service) based on your previous viewing. They use analytics to work out what your past viewing says about you and – looking at statistics from their millions of viewers – determine what else you might enjoy. If they get it right, it builds your trust in them and makes you more likely to return next time you need a boxset binge.

Next, consider Amazon. As well as being the masters of convenience, they're also experts in conversion. If you click on a product that isn't right for you, they provide numerous pathways to find something that is. Think about their 'Compare with similar items' 'You might also like' and 'Customers who viewed this item also viewed'.

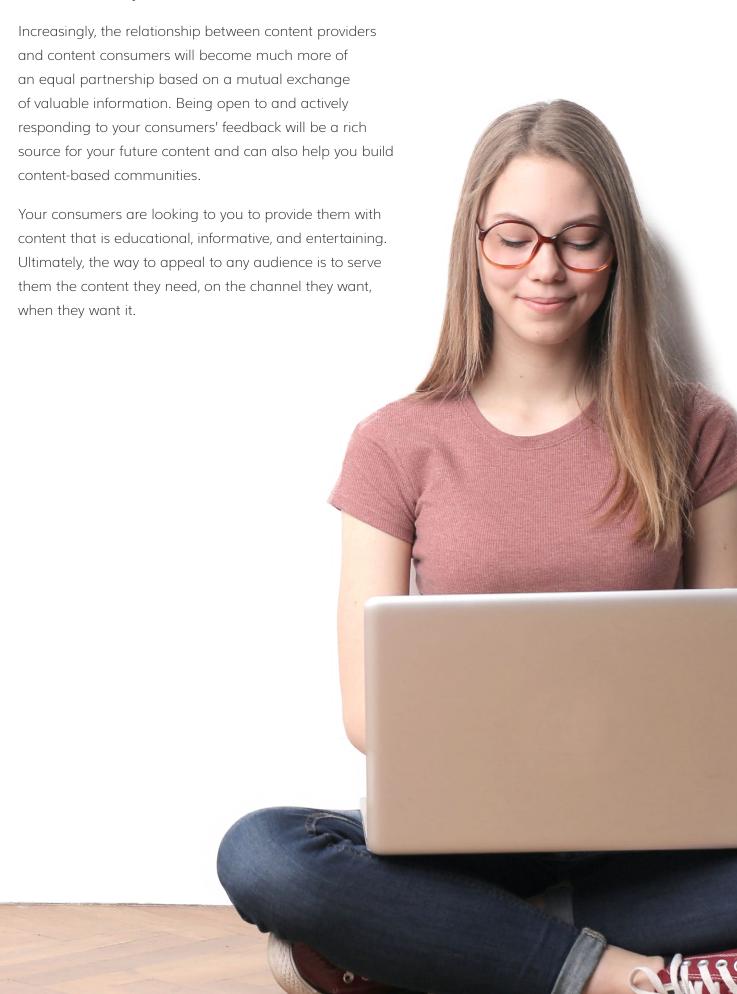
Even without the millions of data points and sophisticated algorithms of Netflix and Amazon, publishers can emulate this by providing additional related content to keep their audiences on-site. For example, intelligently pulling in content on the same theme or by the same author; providing more in-depth content on the same topic or in a different format.

The longer people spend on your site:

- the greater the sense of relevance and loyalty you can build
- the higher exposure they have to advertising, which can help revenue generation
- the lower your bounce rate, which is an integral part of search engine optimization

You can also use the opportunity to promote gated content, which can convert an anonymous reader into a known entity. For example, if a reader views an article on classic cars, you could offer a free downloadable ebook on the same topic, in exchange for their contact details. This lets you target them via email with future content that may interest them, increasing the relevance of your brand to their lives. This could even become the basis for offering a paid subscription so they receive the latest classic car news direct to their inbox each month. See more on paid subscription models below.

Interact with your content audiences





Monetizing content in a world where free content is the norm

Some companies involved in content creation and management face a major problem that will only worsen over time — how to compete with the increasing amounts of free content?

We're talking about free-of-charge content available on channels like blogs, websites, and video streaming services that already provides audiences with educational, informative, and entertaining content.

You might think that you need to join the race to deliver free content. But that isn't true. Strategize more creative ways to monetize your content in the future. Think about how you apply paywalls across your content and which type of paywall is likely to resonate with your audiences.

Put yourself in the position of the content consumer. If you were them, which content would you be willing to pay for and what types of content would you expect to be free? As you come up with answers, you could also cross-check your responses with those of your audience. Ask for their thoughts on paid versus free content via polls and surveys.

Counter free content with quality content

One way you can compete with free content is by differentiating your content based on its accuracy, timeliness, relevance, viewpoint, and insight. If you've not already identified ways in which your content can be more compelling than that of your competitors — especially when thinking in terms of free versus paid content — now is the time to do so. You may also look to partner with other content companies to provide captivating paid content that draws on your combined strengths.

"My personal opinion is I still believe that if you have quality writing and content, you can get people to pay for it," says Sean Keefe, former CTO at publishing services provider PubWorX. "Retention is all about quality, not the volume."

Keefe recommends the use of free previews and timed access in combination with a paywall to give consumers a taste of the quality content your company is producing. This "soft paywall" approach may find more favor with audiences rather than a "hard paywall", where consumers have no access to your content unless they're willing to pay for it.

If you've decided that your strategy is to position yourself as a reliable source of up-to-date information, then your strategy must always be thoroughly executed as such. Errors can undermine your reputation and quickly attract unwanted attention from eagle-eyed readers.

Do you have the necessary checks and balances in place within your organization to result in the production of error-free and consistent content? Publications may confidently reply 'yes' thanks to their use of fact-checkers and sub-editors. However, it isn't the case that editorial resources grow as output does, and many publishers now find themselves creating more content but with the same number of people checking it. This represents a risk for publishers positioning themselves as an authority.

Technology does offer assistance. For example, DAM solutions can include Al-powered autotagging, which means that you can tag your images with the correct metadata, thus minimizing the risk of using the wrong images in your content. However, whilst Al is developing and growing in sophistication, a combination of human and artificial intelligence is still the most reliable approach.



Charge differently for must-have versus nice-to-have content

Think about how your audience will use your content. Is the content you provide must-have information or is it more of a nice-to-have? If the former, charging for your content, which may come with its own guarantees or certifications of quality, is likely to be an easier argument to make to your audience than the latter

Some companies may provide free news articles and information but they monetize research such as product reviews or other kinds of customer survey feedback. Product reviews are a good example of must-have information which subscribers can then use to help them make a purchasing decision.

That said, there are also audiences out there who will readily pay for an opinionated or entertaining take on a specific topic or a more general worldview.

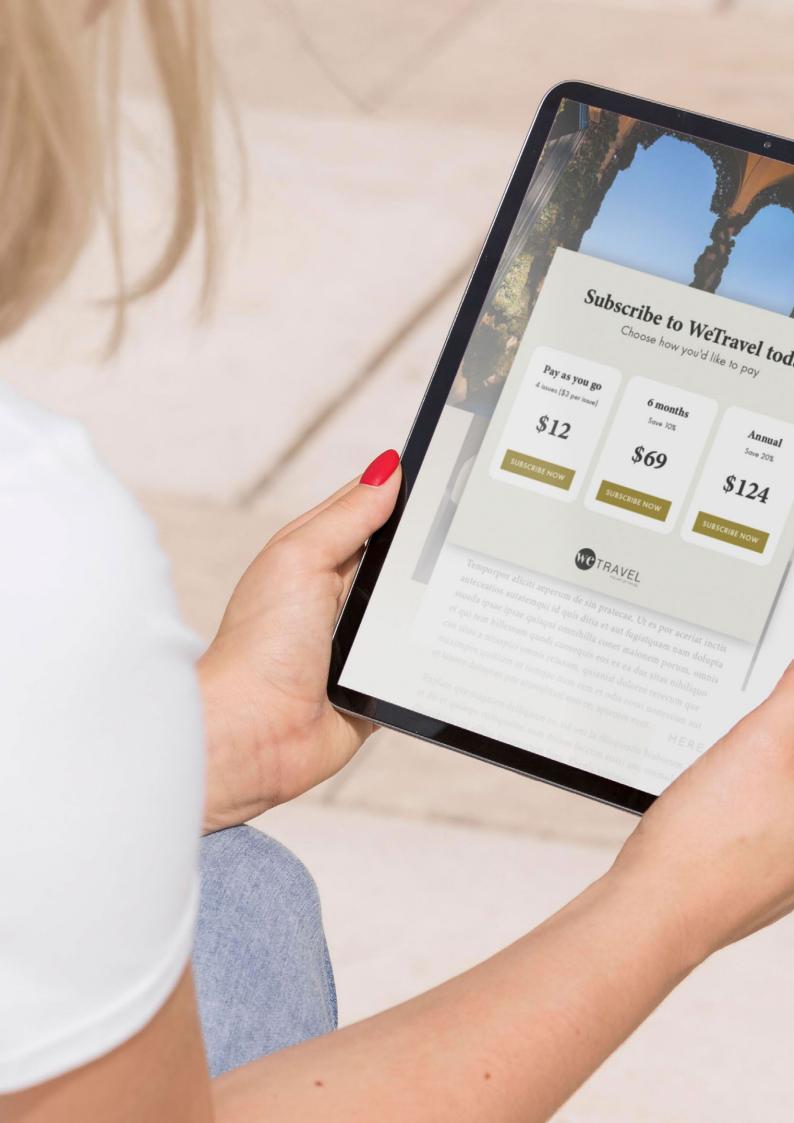
Paid subscriptions and voluntary financial contributions are an important part of many publishers' strategies in the age of free content. Interestingly, these don't just seek to appeal to audiences based on access to content, but also on custodianship. Both The New York Times (paid subscription) and The Guardian (voluntary contribution) - for example - appeal to readers' desire to support journalistic impartiality and integrity - a strong example of the importance of understanding your audience in building brand loyalty.

We will also continue to see the growth of new types of media companies where a brand is built around a single person - as is the case with online influencers who are able to monetize their millions of loyal followers. Content, in this case, may be available free of charge, to drive the audience interested to buy branded products or to pay for branded events.

Product reviews

are a good example of musthave information





Mix up your content subscription models

Look at how you currently charge for your content and whether your audience is growing, showing no increase in numbers, or declining. Think about investigating additional payment models and research how your peers and those content companies in industries other than your own are approaching this issue.

For instance, consider micropayments, where consumers pay a few cents to read ad-free content. Are micropayments an interesting avenue to explore or is this option not yet user-friendly enough for your current audience groups?

Alternatively, perhaps your current "metered paywall" content model of 10 free articles per month before a subscription is required frustrates rather than excites your audience.

Consider, if not already available, whether offering an allencompassing subscription to your content makes sense – including access to historical as well as current content. This kind of monthly, annual, or multi-year subscription could cover all your publications rather than a single magazine.

Perhaps also consider providing a complete menu of content payment options so that your audience can choose which option best suits them.

Make the sign-up, cancellation, and re-subscribe processes as simple and painless as possible and also ensure it's easy for consumers to move from one type of paid offering to another and back again. No-one likes to feel trapped in an agreement and that could cause customers to resent your relationship.



Curate personalized content collections

Another approach your audience may respond positively to is a variation on the 'bookazine' concept, where the focus is on attractively packaging up existing content on specific topics. You may look to offer book/magazine hybrids as paid print publications and/or as paid online offerings.

In the online world, you could continue to add to or refine the bookazine as you create new content on that topic. Think of curating content across some or all of your publications or brands, not as a cannibalization of existing paid content subscriptions, but as a new avenue for revenue generation.

In targeting a particular audience, you may use your content to build a community where paying for content is the entry point to that group of people with the same interests. A content subscription to this community may also come with additional incentives, for instance, early access to tickets for an event of interest to that group.

With access to more sophisticated consumer analytics (reporting in Google Analytics or using alternative software systems to generate reports), you also have the opportunity to personalize your content to individuals.

This may open the door to targeting specific paid content to individuals. Knowing more about your audience can also give you actionable insight into which new types of content you may want to create for a broader audience to address any gaps in what you already provide.



Rethinking employee roles and partnerships

The content market is transforming, becoming more automated, personalized, and truly multichannel. At the same time, software giants such as Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google are taking a more active role across the entire content lifecycle, whether in creating their own content or actively curating third-party content.

For traditional content companies, these represent potential new competitive threats as well as opportunities to forge fresh partnerships. Preparing for these challenges will require internal reorganization as well as rethinking third-party relationships.

Identify and magnify core content strengths

As new players enter the market, now is the time to reexamine whether or not content creation and publishing will remain your primary business. With analytics providing more insight into customers' interests and buying behavior, you can make this decision confidently, based on knowledge rather than intuition.

In some cases, content may end up being a key driver for consumer attachment to your newer business ventures, such as events or products, rather than the primary revenue generator.

In looking to serve up content to new audiences and via new channels you may also want to consider how best to present or reimagine your content, so it fits its new medium. You may also want to rationalize which channels and which audiences you aim to appeal to and focus on in the future and which markets you may choose either not to enter or to no longer play in.

Form short-term content partnerships

Partnerships will play a more prominent role for many content companies, particularly if you choose to narrow your scope or make your audience groups more granular and focused.

Teaming up with a community of like-minded content creators and managers is one way a single company can effectively compete with much larger entities moving into the market.

New alliances may well be formed on more of an ad-hoc basis, with companies joining forces on

particular projects for a matter of months, rather than years, and then going back to competing in other areas.

Reorganize staff to realize content automation benefits

Once you have determined whether or not to shift your core business and where partnerships make sense, ensure you have the right resources in place to meet your future needs. As traditional content creation and management tasks become more automated, companies can move employees to higher-value positions within their organization.

In the future, your employees' roles will focus more heavily on content creativity, storytelling, and active curation. There'll also be more time for two-way engagement with content consumers as you create more personalized content for communities or individuals. There'll also be more in-house analysis of content consumers' behavioral data and decision-making based on those insights.

By tracking how consumers use your content, and deploying a more streamlined automated process, you are well-placed to offer your audience a personalized end-user experience. To prepare for this reorganization, you will need to invest in training and retraining for employees' new roles and responsibilities.

Pool content resources internally

Sharing staff resources flexibly could form the basis for emerging business models. One approach companies are starting to take is to reorganize internal employees into specific groups or "hubs" aimed at meeting the content needs across multiple brands.

So, it's a move away from the traditional approach of individual publications each having its own separately assigned staff. For example, a publisher may have a hub dedicated to sourcing, indexing, and managing images or videos across all of its content publications. Hubs may also form around specific content areas such as beauty or sports.

Tap external subject matter experts

Another organizational approach sees a content company engaging outside specialists as subject matter experts to create content. As that outsourced content is delivered to the company's own staff, they ensure that all content adheres to the brand's look, feel and messaging. Effectively, the company's employees function as "brand guardians" or custodians. This can increase capacity for content production, while ensuring the content has a single brand voice and identity.

A textbook example is textbook production. In this industry, working with external subject matter experts has been the norm for decades already. For a typical textbook production, a few dozens of external contributors may be supplying different parts of the content, before the publisher merges it all into one final and consistent publication.

In the future, your employees' roles will focus more heavily on content creativity, storytelling, and active curation.



Sanoma Pro - Finland's leading educational publisher - use WoodWing technology to improve project management, communication and collaboration between the large number of external agencies, authors and freelancers involved in their content creation process.

Give content personality and purpose

Whether content remains your primary revenue generator or becomes a key driver to other offerings, remember this. Good content will attract and retain audiences while poor quality content may alienate consumers and harm your publications or brands.

Capitalize on your internal resources to create and manage high-quality and engaging content for all channels. At the same time, band together with more companies as new content ecosystems develop that rely on a strong spirit of partnership. In that way, you can feel and act less as an individual entity and more as part of a content community.







Taking advantage of emerging technologies

As you look to the future and strategize how to expand audiences for your content, you face some significant challenges. You must determine how best to create and manage rapidly increasing volumes of content, while at the same time delivering that content in context to an everwidening variety of consumers.

While the format of the content will be a mix of traditional and brand-new content types, target audiences will range in size from millions of consumers down to very specific groups and even individual customers.

Emerging technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality, machine learning, AI, and behavioral analytics, stand ready to help you take advantage of these multi-channel content publishing opportunities.

Begin piloting new technologies

How can you best prepare for the broadening array of targeted content you need to begin offering? Start experimenting with new technologies now. In that way, you can gain insight early on about what works well (and what doesn't) in appealing to the current and future audiences for your content.

For instance, if you've already attracted a loyal audience for video content, it's time to explore how your company might effectively use personalized, augmented, mixed, and/or virtual reality to help provide consumers with even more immersive video content experiences.

You may also want to consider the use of facial recognition software like artificial intelligence to help in automating the classification and retrieval of images.

As the visual components of content become as important as the text - whether it's a photo, a composite image, an infographic, a video, or all of those image types - managing those strategically is increasingly important. All integrated into a DAM system can, for example, facilitate auto-tagging to enrich your images with metadata tags like food, celebrities, landmarks, and more.

Dig into data for dynamic content experiences

Context is going to be a major driver in how multi-channel content publishing evolves between now and 2027, according to Mike Ram, former vice president of business development at media technology company MAZ. 'Context is essentially the interplay between content and where it hits the user across mobile, desktop and connected TV' he says.

One goal for an organization may be working to connect the fragmented interactions a consumer has with its content across different devices in order to curate a better overall experience. 'Brands can begin looking at people as individuals rather than a collection of devices, if you understand more of someone's day and how they're actually engaging with the content across various devices and channels,' Ram adds.

Through the use of increasingly sophisticated



content intelligence — a combination of technologies including: Al and machine learning; behavioral, marketing, and predictive analytics; and sentiment analysis — you can more accurately gauge the effectiveness of content and then tailor it to specific groups or individuals.

Returning to our previous example of Netflix, here's some more lessons you can learn from the streaming giant:

- It starts with personalization All users are asked to select their favourite shows when they sign up, meaning personalization can start immediately
- 2. It is device-specific It knows when you use different devices and serves up content accordingly
- 3. It knows your day Clock off work at 5pm and start streaming at 6pm? Expect a mobile push notification from Netflix nudging you towards its latest recommendations
- **4. It uses atomic personalization** Users see different thumbnail images for the same show, based on their genre preferences (eg romance, drama, action)
- **5. It tests** Netflix uses A/B testing to discover the most effective content for different audiences

All of this requires technology for analytics, as well as the ability to store and retrieve content at an atomic level, to build highly personalized content. The investment is great but the rewards are greater - turning Netflix into one of the world's largest content publishers.

Even without Netflix's budget or tech, start

digging into your data. Do you - or could you - collect data to drive more dynamic, contextual content experiences? Could you ask users to register for more personalized content suggestions? Can you time your communications for higher engagement? Can you deliver different imagery for different user profiles? What technology will you need?

Remember, greater personalization of content comes with its own issues too, particularly around privacy. You will need to continue to walk the line between mining the personal data a consumer opts to share while not giving that individual the sense that they're being specifically targeted. An example from retail is when combining a range of data points about purchases can indicate someone is pregnant - a sensitive and highly personal piece of information.

Pursue a complete content lifecycle

Given the huge demand for content, content production can no longer be seen as a linear process. Strategic creators no longer create content, publish it and move on. They archive and retain content in such a way that they can easily resurface it, repurpose it and extend the ROI.

For example, an article about the Royal family may have taken considerable time and research to create. Given that the public is always interested in the royals, reusing some or all of that content as the basis of a future article – or video or magazine supplement – will save considerable time to market next time.

To facilitate this, creators need a quick and effective way to access their content archive. Storing it on file servers, or even just looking for

previously published content on your website, isn't the best way to do it. Having a dedicated centralized storage system - where tagging, taxonomy and quality metadata are applied – means your rich library of content will be better structured and more easily searchable. This means being able to quickly respond with the right content at the right time via the right channel.

An aspiration for many content producers - and the next logical step after adopting a content repurposing strategy - is to structure content for hyper-personalized repurposing. This is something Gartner refers to as 'atomic content'.

Atomic content is about breaking down existing content into even smaller 'atoms' - images, text, products, calls-to-action - that can be intelligently combined to create dynamic, personalized content for individuals. It harnesses the power of consumer analytics, automation and logic to serve up unique content based on past behaviour, down to a granular level such as device use at different times of day.

As well as challenging linear production processes, it's important to challenge siloed processes as well. In the multichannel environment, it doesn't make sense to restrict staff to print or digital roles. By implementing a channel-neutral workflow that lets staff work on content for multiple channels simultaneously, they can focus on great storytelling, not specific publishing formats.

Since teams working together on content are now often geographically dispersed, cloud-based technology gives publishers the edge by allowing them to create a content workflow that works wherever their staff do.

Technology alone is not enough

While emerging technologies can provide an extra lift to multichannel content publishing, technology by itself isn't the answer. Simply automating and streamlining existing processes won't deliver the best ROI. Publishers need to audit and review their current processes to make sure they're fit for purpose in a changed landscape.

Many modern publishers have emerged from a formerly print-based business model. Their workflows, staff structure - and even company culture – were optimized to produce high-quality printed publications. To thrive in the multichannel environment, they've had to move away from their print-centric roots and find new ways to publish effectively across print, digital and social media.

One way to think about the difference between the two approaches is the 'ready, aim, fire' analogy.

In print publishing, the artwork that goes to press has to be final and error-free. There's considerable risk and cost involved if errors sneak into print, so accuracy is paramount. With web publishing, errors can be corrected immediately, so whilst there's still risk attached, it is lower. That's why print publishing has a 'ready, aim, fire' culture that focuses on accuracy, whereas digital publishing has a 'ready, fire, aim' culture that focuses on speed. A publisher that simply automated existing print-based processes to support digital content creation would still be considerably behind the curve.

Global publisher Hearst Magazines turned to WoodWing's software to help streamline its

production workflow for print and digital issues, something which was not easily possible with its previous legacy publishing system. They developed a roadmap to transform their business with technology – but it also involved changing their culture, staff model, internal workflows, and more. By moving to a cost-effective environment for creating, publishing, and archiving content, Hearst can efficiently publish media-rich content across multiple channels including print, tablets, mobile and social media.

For modern content companies to compete effectively with competitors - as well as the tsunami of free content online - a channel-neutral approach is essential.

This means crafting engaging, value-adding content that can be deployed easily across any relevant channel for your audience.

This approach strips away historic workflows and print-centric processes that are no longer fit-for-purpose. It also reimagines editorial and production roles to focus on content and quality, not channel-specific tasks.

Once you've mapped your channel-neutral staff structure, workflow and culture, that's the time to investigate the transformative technology that can deliver more efficiency, productivity and scalability to your operations.

Let's talk more about how we can meet future content challenges together!

Contact us



About WoodWing

WoodWing provides the technology for leading brands, agencies and publishers to tell their stories. We help our customers create and manage content across teams and publish across channels. We build solutions for large teams to work together efficiently on creative processes, within systems that are easy to manage.

WoodWing Assets, a Digital Asset Management (DAM) solution, and WoodWing Studio, a content creation, workflow, and publishing solution.

Together these solutions enable organizations to orchestrate their content processes, shorten time to market, and achieve a greater ROI on storytelling.

WoodWing serves 800+ customers across 60+ countries through direct sales and an extensive and growing global network of more than 70 channel partners. Customers include Hearst, Meredith, BuzzFeed, Coca Cola European Partners, Yamaha, and Cipla.

Learn more at www.woodwing.com



WoodWing

The Netherlands (HQ), USA & Malaysia

info@woodwing.com www.woodwing.com

WoodWing Software reserves the right to change at any time, without notice, the products, the features and functionality described in this document. © 2022