

The Hindu: Leveraging digital media assets with NICA



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Overview

■ Challenge

Consolidate the infrastructure and production media library via a platform enabling tight integration with its front-end editorial system; streamline the search process for and access to photographic and archive material

■ Solution

An end-to-end digital asset management and content-centric workflow solution based on IBM Networked Interactive Content Access (NICA), implemented by IBM Business Consulting Services and IBM Digital Media teams

■ Key benefits

Streamlined management of and access to digital media assets; enhanced search processes; reduced operational, research and production costs; accelerated production processes and productivity; optimized ability to leverage valuable content

Leading the market with a widely read publication

One of the largest newspaper groups in India, Kasturi and Sons Ltd. leads the market with a publishing portfolio that includes a business daily, two magazines, a number of specialized publications and an English daily: *The Hindu*. Established in 1878 as a weekly, *The Hindu* grew appreciably into a premier newspaper with a 1,000,000-plus circulation and a readership of more than three million. The Chennai-based newspaper is also printed in 11 nationwide locations connected with high-speed data lines.

Ensuring the speedy delivery of news that fits readers' needs, *The Hindu* must often access and reuse appropriate archive material to enhance a story. News correspondents file their stories and photographs via several field locations. The newspaper also receives other content via satellite transmission, wire services such as the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters, or locally based correspondents and photographers. This information load equates to hundreds of incoming reports and images daily that average 400 KB of data per item, challenging *The Hindu* to effectively manage this material and make it usable for editors and production teams.

Searching for a superior archiving solution

Previously, the newspaper had upgraded its pagination system to the CCI NewsDesk platform, a front-end editorial system provided by IBM Business Partner CCI. It also integrated its imaging archive system, Associated Press (AP) Preserver, with CCI NewsDesk for sourcing and archiving photos. AP Preserver, however, could archive images only, and did not support text, graphics and pages.

As AP discontinued support for AP Preserver, and the volume of content from such sources as the AP and Reuters increased, *The Hindu* went looking for a comprehensive, fully supported archiving solution. It needed to consolidate its infrastructure and production media library by streamlining the search process for and access to photographic and archive material.

After comparing archive systems in the market, the newspaper decided to implement IBM Networked Interactive Content Access (NICA)—an end-to-end digital asset management and content-centric workflow solution. “NICA was, for us, the better solution,” says K. Balaji, Director, Kasturi and Sons. “We were impressed with its search capabilities and functionalities on images and pages, and it offered tight integration with CCI, which influenced our decision making.”

IBM also demonstrated industry experience, supported by IBM Business Consulting Services India and an IBM Digital Media solution team from Rome, Italy, where NICA is developed and supported. Says Balaji, “The explanation and demonstration from IBM in Rome convinced us that the NICA product was as close to what we were looking for in terms of features and scalability.”

The project unfolds

IBM Business Consulting Services provided initial consultation services, specifying requirements for and providing implementation of the solution. The consulting team also led the deployment and migration of existing archives—ingesting nearly 70,000 images from AP Preserver—onto the NICA platform. The entire project was completed in only six months.

“The outstanding feature of working with IBM has been the support from IBM Rome labs,” says Balaji. “IBM was able to resolve quite professionally the issues that arose during implementation, helping to improve search performance considerably and taking prompt action to ensure the database was available.”

The NICA solution currently supports hundreds of users—including editors, librarians and production—which *The Hindu* expects to increase further still. NICA users are connected to the system via two Citrix servers over a wide area network (WAN), which facilitate

the management of remotely located users across the newspaper's 12 sites. The IBM team also developed a customized workflow for exporting images to the Web, ensuring that content is easily reusable.

Backed by an IBM TotalStorage® Ultrium Scalable Tape Library, the newspaper's NICA platform also supports IBM Netfinity® servers running IBM WebSphere® Application Server and IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for AIX®, and IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager. What's more, NICA supports highly available, fast, scalable IBM @server® pSeries® systems that interface easily with large-format storage and provide enhanced processing power—helping *The Hindu* speed production times.

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NICA: Effectively managing digital media assets

The NICA solution from IBM is a first-of-its-kind solution in India. NICA provides the ability to manage, archive, retrieve and reuse publishing content such as text, images, graphics, PDF files, QuarkXPress or InDesign pages and video/audio clips. A highly scalable platform with a modular, distributed architecture, NICA is seamlessly integrated with the newspaper's production workflows, editorial applications and front-end content creation systems—all accomplished via a simple browser over the newspaper's intranet.

The solution is enabling the newspaper to:

- *Improve the management of and access to its images, text, photographs and pages, leveraging the reuse of these valuable digital media assets*
- *Equip reporters, editors and production staff with fast, streamlined search processes, giving access to previously inaccessible archives and the ability to find and reuse exactly the right piece to produce new articles*
- *Reduce the resources it needs to search for, retrieve and reuse content—accelerating production processes and enhancing productivity*

- *Reduce operational, research and production costs through a collaborative, more efficient environment*
- *Archive, manage and enforce copyrights for each individual object*

The system is now archiving nearly four million objects (images, graphics, text documents and PDF pages) and the current project envisages the ingesting of almost 1.8 million digitized legacy pages, which will all be searchable. Says Balaji, “What NICA has done is to simplify to a great extent, especially for the end user, the way content is received, processed and stored. Search is now extremely fast and versatile, a feature highly valued by all users.”

NICA has enabled the newspaper to explore new business models such as digital media commerce. “Being a 127-year-old newspaper,” remarks Balaji, “*The Hindu* obviously has valuable legacy content, which we're digitizing so that NICA can ingest it. We will then be able to offer this content out of NICA in whatever way suits our business needs.”

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Read all about it: In the digital edition

The newspaper is now in the process of migrating to NICA version 5.6 from version 5.2, and plans to implement an e-paper solution soon thereafter. Digital editions that replicate the look and feel of the print edition, the e-paper solution will be sourced from NICA. It will allow users to search for a specific publication date, newspaper, edition and zone, and browse the retrieved newspaper in an e-paper mode. The newspaper has also selected IBM to implement the e-paper solution.

One of the first NICA-based e-paper implementations in the world, this solution will enable three-way integration between digital asset management, editorial and print media publishing, and e-paper publishing. Currently using the image export option to host a separate site to sell images, *The Hindu* is also successfully leveraging NICA to tap newer revenue streams.

Says Balaji, "We are planning to implement the Outtakes module, offering additional storage with database support, to help us manage the work of our staff photographers. It will enable us to ingest all images captured by the photographers, giving us the ability to evaluate actual output."

For more information

To learn more about IBM Digital Media Solutions, contact your IBM representative or visit:

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