

Manchester Evening News: Scooping the competition with an IBM digital asset management solution



A broad readership for an established newspaper

Established in 1868, *Manchester Evening News* (MEN) is one of Britain's largest regional evening newspapers with a daily circulation of over 160,000 and a total readership of approximately 405,000

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– Rodger Clark, Systems Editor, *Manchester Evening News*

Overview

■ Challenge

Create an integrated library solution that can link a modern front-end editorial system, picture desk production system and large syndication operation, and that requires minimal maintenance

■ Solution

An end-to-end digital asset management and content-centric workflow solution based on IBM Networked Interactive Content Access (NICA)

■ Key Benefits

Full archive capabilities; savings in production costs and resources; increased productivity and performance; maximize reuse of digital content; conduct highly customized and more precise searches

throughout the Greater Manchester region. With three daily editions, it easily outsells all other news media in the area, and successfully combines local with national and international news—consequently acquiring a well-balanced, responsive readership. The newspaper also produces a number of magazines and specialized publications as well as Britain's largest free newspaper.

Enabling integrated production and archiving

In 2000, MEN was finding that its aging editorial and production system could no longer meet its growing needs. The newspaper wanted to implement an editorial solution on a UNIX® platform and preferably on an IBM AIX® operating system. Only IBM Networked Interactive Content Access (NICA) had the tight integration with CCI Europe's NewsDesk system, which *Manchester Evening News* had purchased as its new front-end production system, to enable a completely cohesive production and archive environment. So the newspaper decided to move to the CCI/NICA-based system, for an end-to-end digital asset management and content-centric workflow solution.

MEN's relationship with IBM began with its first pagination system in 1996 using IBM RS/6000® servers and Power PC® systems. "We have a large in-house experience with AIX and are very comfortable with it,

having used it for over eight years," says Rodger Clark, Systems Editor, *Manchester Evening News*.

The newspaper—whose past relationship with IBM and experience with the company's servers ultimately instilled confidence in moving to an IBM archive solution—has ported mission-critical, Windows®-based applications onto IBM servers as well. "We have quite a lot of IBM hardware. And we were therefore happy for CCI to implement an IBM AIX installation."

IBM NICA: An enterprise solution for managing digital assets

NICA offers organizations such as *Manchester Evening News* the ability to archive, retrieve and reuse content, including graphics, text, images/photographs, pages, audio and video clips, and PDFs. Through its open architecture and workflow management, NICA has been seamlessly integrated with the newspaper's production workflows, editorial creation applications and front-end content-creation systems.

Furthermore, NICA can handle multiple storage repositories and is designed to preserve historical media, increase productivity and reduce production times all while allowing reuse of content for new revenue streams. NICA—which supports IBM DB2® and Oracle databases; IBM AIX, Solaris and Linux operating systems; and IBM @server® pSeries, xSeries™ systems—has enabled MEN to create an interactive electronic library to consolidate and manage digital content from different sources.

What especially attracted MEN to NICA was the easy-to-use interface with CCI, allowing automatic archiving of pages. "It works very, very well," notes Clark.

MEN found that its previous library system lacked the ability to link pictures, pages and text—the "golden triangle" of newspaper publishing—without the implementation of a proprietary picture desk solution. NICA provided a way to do this—a tremendous advantage for those conducting research, giving them the ability to access and use the database any way they want to, and find and retrieve just the right piece quickly and easily. This was also especially beneficial for the newspaper's small staff of librarians.

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—Rodger Clark, Systems Editor,
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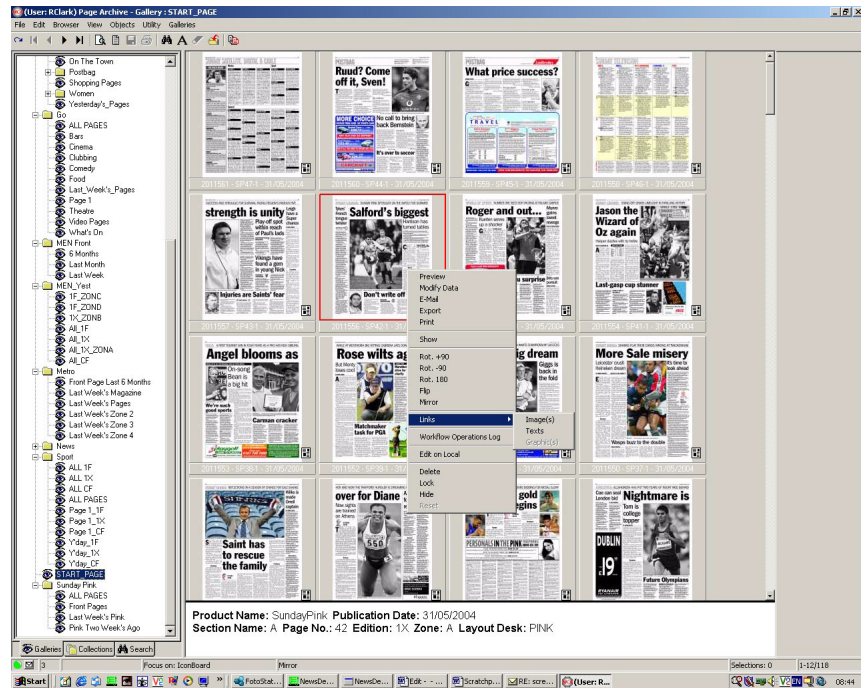
All photos courtesy of Manchester Evening News

A thoroughly archived environment

CCI initially handled maintenance of the newspaper's NICA solution. However, within the last year MEN moved these services to IBM, which upgraded the system from version 4 to 5, adding supplementary functionality. "When IBM installed version 5, it made a tremendous difference," says Clark. "And it was done efficiently."

Deploying a full, scalable archive has enabled *Manchester Evening News* to produce a new magazine about the history of Manchester – sourced entirely from NICA – a great example of how the newspaper was able to reuse its library of digital assets. The NICA library now also allows *Manchester Evening News* to:

- Archive over 1.25 million pictures – a number that is constantly increasing
- Allow its 106 journalists, as well as staff from the newspaper's advertising, marketing and magazine publishing departments, to access the archive on a daily basis
- Improve performance in retrieval of information – enabling it to produce articles closer to production deadlines, and to assemble late-breaking stories more quickly and easily
- Conduct highly customized and more precise searches – with a powerful search engine allowing Boolean, concept, pattern, full-text and natural and multi-language query
- Save considerably in production costs and resources, and streamline production processes
- Archive fully, with links built between objects – making it easier to find, retrieve and reuse information



System screen shot showing linkage of text, images and pages at Manchester Evening News.

Says Clark, "Another huge benefit to us is that because NICA talks so well to CCI and understands International Press Telecommunications Council [IPTC] header information, we've been able to construct a system whereby wherever you are in the organization, or whichever application you're in, you can get the same information about a picture."

The solution thus enables the newspaper to know whether or not it holds a particular copyright. Plus, every image in the library that attracts a fee is marked with a pound sign (£) giving an instant warning that its use will incur a cost. "We can't syndicate pictures without knowing if we own them. NICA makes it extremely easy to have access to that information."

"...we can go home at night, come in the next morning, and all our publications are completely archived."

– Rodger Clark, Systems Editor,
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*“ [IBM is] there
when we need them.
And that’s what
I want in support.”*

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On the way to a total IBM installation

The original implementation began in 2002, and is ongoing as the archive expands, and MEN makes additional functionality available to its users. For instance, the newspaper will soon introduce a thin client to allow journalists in branch offices to use the system remotely – allowing the organization to extend its capabilities significantly, while enhancing security.

“Because the interface and integration between CCI and NICA is so strong, we can go home at night, come in the next morning, and all our publications are completely archived. Having spent years trying to get bits of text and pictures into libraries, this is much appreciated.”

Since its library is growing continually, *Manchester Evening News* is about to move to an IBM technology-based disk farm, which it found would be more cost-effective than its current non-IBM installation. In the meantime, the newspaper can continue to rely on IBM support, which Clark cites as “excellent.”

Says Clark, “IBM has been very prompt and responsive. We’ve had no problems at all. To be honest, we don’t have a daily relationship because NICA just chugs along most of the time. But it’s good to know that when there is a problem, we can get the response that we want. They’re there when we need them. And that’s what I want in support.”

For more information

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

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