

Case Study

The Sunday Times uses WoodWing's Tablet Publishing Solution

With the highest grossing iPad app in the UK every Sunday, production director Simon Regan-Edwards is confident they have achieved their goal to remain Britain's leading Sunday news outlet.

Driving innovation forward

The print version of The Sunday Times is a twelve section newspaper that includes three magazines and is distributed by Times Newspapers Ltd, which is owned by News Corporation. It occupies a dominant position in Britain's Sunday market with a 1.1m circulation, eclipsing its competitors combined circulation by a fair margin. However, like many companies in the publishing industry, it has seen circulation fall with the recent global economic downturn and with the rise of the Internet as a competing news source.



THE SUNDAY TIMES - a twelve-section newspaper with three included magazines. All content is present in the tablet version.

The company began seriously considering a tablet version of their product in December 2009, on the heels of rumors that Apple was planning a portable tablet device. After Steve Jobs announced the iPad in January 2010, The Sunday Times' parent company decided that they wanted to be there at the device's launch in the United Kingdom. The release date coincided nicely with The Times' plans to put their online content behind a paywall.

"From day one," says Regan-Edwards, "what we were looking for was to have this newspaper content moved into a digital world and that people would pay for it. This was seen as a subscription driver."

A full and rich solution

The company's first efforts involved writing their own app for sister daily paper The Times. "Because we wanted a full, rich, app-like experience, that ruled out all of the PDF

options," said Regan-Edwards. Nevertheless the company soon realized what a monumental undertaking it would be to take their flagship product down this road. "We're not a creator of publishing systems and here we were creating this app," he continued. "What became clear to us, at The Sunday Times, is that this stuff is really hard to do."

In June, they were motivated by a tablet-device aspirational video released by Sports Illustrated, showing an innovative "wheel" navigation component. Knowing that Sports Illustrated's parent company (Time Inc. of the US) had invested in a system from technology vendor WoodWing Software, they decided to look more closely at what they had to offer.

"WoodWing was on the cutting edge of the technology, releasing feature updates every few weeks."

Simon Regan-Edwards, Production Director for The Sunday Times



Customer
The Sunday Times (London, England)

Challenge
Publish all printed content in a tablet device format while maintaining a clear, efficient workflow.

Solution and products
A cross-platform tablet publishing solution that uses Adobe InDesign for layout and produces design-rich, interactive publications for publishing to the iPad, Android, WebOS and Blackberry platforms

Products used
= WoodWing Tablet Publishing Solution
= Adobe InDesign

Business benefits
= Maintain a design-rich product
= Increase productivity by using print designers for tablet design
= Reuse web design features in tablet product

Partners involved
= Media Systems Ltd.
London, England
www.mediasystems.co.uk





Simon Regan-Edwards is Production Director of The Sunday Times and managed the paper's tablet publishing project.



The Sunday Times allows each section to be downloaded individually so that readers can focus on their interests.

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Cutting edge software

"WoodWing was on the cutting edge of the technology, releasing feature updates every few weeks," says Regan-Edwards. "We had a room where we mocked up all of the things we wanted our tablet edition to do, and they were almost all in the Sports Illustrated video. We wondered why we were trying to reinvent the wheel." With help from WoodWing's systems integrator Media Systems Ltd, the company was ready to move forward in September. "They wanted something better, something that would grow," says Paul Driscoll, Director of Media Systems Ltd.

Not wanting to reinvent the brand, they started by mapping the newspaper experience to the iPad. The company broke down The Sunday Times product into 12 verticals, each corresponding to a section, with print designers involved from the start of the project. They analyzed the look and feel of each section and made decisions about how the product would work. Online designers were also present, helping to establish common rules across all sections to bring a unified approach to the user experience.

Print and online teams work together

"That was a really important decision for us, early on, to integrate the print and online teams," says Regan-Edwards. The workflow has designers work on the traditional newspaper design and then work on content for the tablet edition. With WoodWing's tablet publishing solution based in an InDesign environment, The Sunday Times was able to leverage its existing staff to produce both editions.

Twitter for CRM

When complete, the online team uploads designed content to a centralized server hosted by WoodWing. Meanwhile a specialized IT team handles the technical details of the iPad app, such as feature testing and development. The Sunday Times deals with any app issues via their existing customer relations operations but they've also found an invaluable resource for monitoring feedback from their tablet venture: Twitter.

"You can actually engage with the people on Twitter and find out what they like and what they don't like," says Regan-Edwards. "In a forum environment like iTunes you can't even address their concerns."

Achieving their goals

The Sunday Times has been enormously pleased with the results of their tablet initiative, which debuted on the iPad in December 2010. The product garnered a number one rating from iMonitor, an international survey

of newspaper and magazine apps sponsored by research and consulting firm McPheters & Company. The Sunday Times also consistently appears in the number one position in iTunes for the highest grossing iPad app in the UK on Sundays. Regan-Edwards states that WoodWing's Tablet Publishing solution has helped them achieve several specific goals:

== **Maintain a design-rich product.** The Sunday Times produces hundreds of pages a week for their printed products. While it might have been tempting to disregard formatting and publish as flat text, the company wanted to maintain their proudly wrought design skills and identity in the tablet version. "One of our aims was to have every piece of content that goes into the print product go into the tablet product. That design-rich experience that we were after was what we were trying to achieve," says Regan-Edwards.

== **Increase efficiency and productivity.** Being able to reuse print designers for the tablet product has brought greater efficiency to The Sunday Times operation. Print designers are involved in the design of interactive content, and those same designers are able to simultaneously envision treatments for print and tablet versions that are unified by a common design.

== **Reuse online features in the tablet product.** Due to WoodWing's Widgets functionality, content created specifically for The Sunday Times' website in HTML, CSS and Javascript can be seamlessly reused in the tablet version. "That became a hallelujah moment," says Regan-Edwards. "That was something that we thought would be very difficult and yet it became very simple."

The future

As for the future, Regan-Edwards says The Sunday Times is eyeing other platforms to branch out on, something made easy with tablet reader apps available from WoodWing for WebOS, Android, and the RIM tablet. Specifically, The Sunday Times is interested in Android, which he feels has the most sales potential. "It will evolve very quickly and mature," he states.

In terms of parting advice for those publishers looking to get onto tablet devices, Regan-Edwards has this to say: "The key is to plan out as much as possible; what you want to do. Plan out what you want a section to look like or how you want it to work and what experience you want the reader to have. If you can get that right, it saves so much time."