

Engaging digitised textbooks

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Agency for Catholic schools uses Adobe Digital Publishing Suite to boost sales and enhance interactivity with digital textbooks.

THE CHALLENGE

The James Goold House Publications Religious Education Texts Project is an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. The agency was started in the late 1990s by then Archbishop of Melbourne George Pell to create textbooks for Catholic school students from prep to Year 12. When first published, the To Know, Worship and Love (KWL) textbooks were mandated for use by Melbourne Catholic schools and later mandated in Sydney when Pell moved to the city.

From the late 2000s, sales of the textbooks decreased as the second-hand market grew. There was interest to move to a digital platform that would allow easy updates to the delivery of the book content, while enabling interactivity.

According to Pat Sully, executive director, James Goold House

Publications Religious Education Texts Project, the project had several critical criteria for a digital solution. "We needed a solution that would allow us to easily update the content and boost sales," he says. "Digital was clearly the best path to take."

A move to digital editions would allow the project to increase the interactivity of and engagement with the textbooks, but it presented several challenges. The digital textbooks needed to be available for use on different devices used by schools, including on iPads and a traditional desktop web browser, but with restricted access. With specific textbooks available by year group, students should only be able to purchase and have access to their relevant text.

"We also wanted to continue to utilize our existing resellers, who have strong

relationships with schools," says Sully. "It was important for us to allow them access to sell any digital products."



"We're looking forward to transferring 100% of our textbooks to digital distribution with Adobe Digital Publishing Suite in the coming years."

Pat Sully

Executive Director,
James Goold House Publications
Religious Education Texts Project

AT A GLANCE

THE CHALLENGE

Boost flagging textbook sales, easily update textbook content, increase interactivity and engagement across multiple platforms.

THE SOLUTION

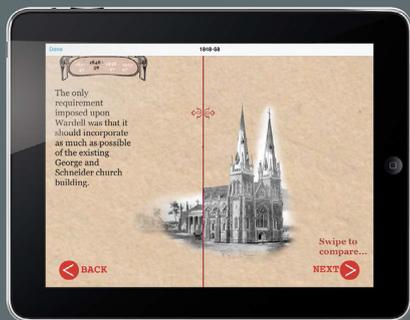
Mobile and web application built with Adobe Publishing Suite, an entitlement server to manage subscriber details and purchases.

THE BENEFITS

Doubling of best-ever print-based sales figures, more than 130 schools engaged in the program.

THE PRODUCTS

- Adobe Digital Publishing Suite
- CompNow DPS Entitlement Server



THE SOLUTION

After evaluating several options, in mid 2013 Sully and his team engaged partner CompNow to commence work with Adobe Digital Publishing Suite to build a mobile and web application for the KWL secondary school textbooks.

“Early in the project, we had some lengthy discussions with the team about their criteria, and we found that Adobe Digital Publishing Suite was able to tick every box,” said Scott Fraser, product specialist, digital publishing at CompNow.

To manage access and purchase rights, CompNow built an entitlement server that manages subscriber details and purchases. The company also developed a mechanism that allows coupons to be generated and sold through resellers. With the entitlement server and coupon functionality, students who purchase a coupon can log in to the KWL website and redeem the coupon for their relevant textbook.

“When students open the KWL mobile app, they’re automatically directed to a login screen instead of the traditional storefront, which helps ensure any purchases are applied and accessed via individual logins,” says Fraser. “We wanted to help ensure students couldn’t accidentally purchase a textbook from inside the app for which they already had a coupon.”

“The content is available on multiple mobile devices including iPad, iPhone, Android tablets and smartphones, and devices running Windows 8.1. The content can also be accessed through the latest desktop browsers.

“It was very simple to deliver the content across multiple platforms,” says Fraser. “Adobe Digital Publishing Suite allows you to create content once, and publish anywhere.”

ABOUT THE SOLUTION

The move to digital distribution for the KWL secondary school textbooks was a successful one, and continues to outperform original expectations. “In our best print distribution year we sold around 40,000 secondary textbooks, which fell to about 20,000 as the second-hand market grew,” says Sully. “With digital distribution we were able to reduce the price of each book, and in the first six months we’ve sold more than 70,000 digital units—almost double our best-ever annual print sales. Our goal was to sign on 40 to 50 schools in the first year, and we were thrilled to surpass that with 130 schools in the first six months.”

The project has received enquiries from schools where the textbooks aren’t mandated. The schools are considering KWL as an additional resource, evidence that it has already achieved significant exposure across key markets. “Distribution with Adobe Digital Publishing Suite has allowed us to increase the interactivity of and engagement with the content. We’ve received great feedback from teachers about the performance of students using the digital textbooks,” says Sully.

An unexpected benefit has been access to user data, providing valuable information back to the publishers and schools. “Adobe Digital Publishing Suite provides analytics we were never able to receive from print sales,” says Sully. “Now, we have more understanding of who the readers are, how the content is used, and how it is accessed. We’re able to provide a wealth of information back to the schools and to feed into future content refinement.”



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