

Report from the Field

Seybold San Francisco/Publishing 98

A visit to this well-organized conference finds many new products

by Péter Jacsó

My whirlwind trip from Hawaii to San Francisco—and back—was a most gratifying experience. I had exit-row seating and no passenger next to me on the red-eye flight, got a single passenger shuttle for \$10 to the inexpensive but not cheap hotel that offered a 25 percent discount, was allowed to check-in at 6:30 in the morning, took a shower and a nap after enjoying a surreal sunrise, arrived at the Moscone Center for breakfast in the press room, and was at the exhibit hall door at opening time. Just 48 hours later I had dinner back home. In between, I spent two full days at the Seybold San Francisco/Publishing 98 Conference and Exposition (September 1-2, which was followed by a 2-day Publishing Systems Conference).

Nearly 50,000 people from the publishing industry attended the event that occupied both the northern and southern wings of the center. There was quite a large area taken by exhibitors that demonstrated products that I am not competent to discuss (nor expected to), as they are not in the focus of *Information Today* in general, and the Internet Publishing Today section in particular, even though they are certainly important parts of electronic publishing, such as digital printing, film imaging, computer-to-plate technology, prepress products, etc. Occasionally, I felt that I had strayed to another exhibit for guerrilla camp organizers and medevac nurses when I saw banners with words such as RIPping, color masking, aliasing, bleeding control, toner separation, anti-Newton spraying, off-base press prepping, and preflight checks. I took flight before I was asked to do pushups and fire automatic weapons. Fortunately, there was plenty to see in the narrower field of Internet/Web publishing. I will take the approach of starting with the most encompassing, end-to-end products, and then proceed to the component-level ones.

High-End Web-Site Tools

Apart from the large-format color printers that kept printing awesome color posters left and right, Web-site tools for content creation and workflow management represented the highest-priced category. From a corporate point of view, the \$30,000 to \$50,000 investment in software—which takes care of the entire recurring cycle of editorial content and process workflow management in getting a magazine, newspaper, company brochures, and product catalogs in print and onto the Web—would pay for itself in a rather short time. It is a crowded sellers' market, representing such stalwarts of the publishing industry as Reed and LEXIS-NEXIS (Editorial and Production System and NewsView Solutions), Inso (with the most expensive but time-honored DynaText), and relative newcomers, like ProIm-

age (NewsWay), or Softmagic (Project M: A Total Magazine Publishing Solution).

While sitting through a demo of FutureTense, I could not help visualizing how much such a product could reduce stress for the editors, copy editors, and specialists in the graphics department at Information Today, Inc. in dealing with contributors who submit their manuscripts belatedly and in the wrong word processor format, forget to convert their screenshots into TIFF format, and request a correction when the van pulls out for the print shop.

Document Management Systems

Just managing the document collection of an enterprise and bringing it to the Web (without the relentless pressure and unforgiving deadlines of publishing newspapers and magazines) is an enormous task. IntraNet Solutions' Intra.doc! Management System and Hynet Technologies, Inc.'s Hynet Directives can bring a method to that madness.

There were few software packages demonstrated for "merely" creating databases for the Web (and CD-ROM), but quality compensated for quantity. I was im-

pressed by the capabilities of Enigma's Insight 5 years ago, even at its then pretty high price of well over \$10,000. Today I am stunned by the power and grace that are packed in this software that now sells for \$7,000. For me, Insight was the best product of the show in the enterprise software category. For multimedia database publishers, Capella Computers, Ltd.'s Multimedia Database Software seemed very promising.

Web-Site, Document Creation Tools

The relative newcomer GoLive Systems, Inc. had a towering presence on the exhibit floor matched by a constant crowd. Its CyberStudio software was the darling of the show, offering ultimate control over page layout, cascading style sheets (CSS), dynamic HTML, and JavaScript actions. I wish it were also available for some of the Windows platforms.

Adobe and Quark have been slugging it out for years for market share in the desktop publishing and especially in the page layout business. Adobe's upcoming K2 product was demonstrated during Steve Jobs' keynote in the Yerba Buena Theater. The real theatrics went on around the water

coolers, in the lounges, on the exhibit floor, and in press briefings following Quark's release of the correspondence related to its offer to buy Adobe. It was the textbook example of hostile takeover, and many derided the attempt by Quark to buy a much larger company. The deal has since fallen through. I heard no words about the release date of the much-awaited Acrobat Exchange 4 and the enhanced PDF 1.3 version.

PDF Plug-Ins and Add-Ons

While there was no announcement of a product update from Adobe, there was an impressive group of at least 30 third-party developers with Acrobat plug-ins and PDF utilities/add-ons. It clearly showed the growing popularity of this file format. Many of these were prepress and preflight software programs that check the integrity of the files, the use of colors, availability of fonts and images, adding crop and registration marks, or making live text corrections.

For me the most appealing Acrobat plug-in was Redwing from Datawatch Corp. It allows the extraction of text and, more importantly, tables presented in PDF files. At \$995 it is not priced for casual consumer use, but it is a superb product that should be in the toolbox of anyone who mines the Web regularly for tabular data, company reports, and statistics. Redwing saves an enormous amount of the grunt work associated with re-entering data, and makes quality time for the brain work of analyzing and interpreting data. StampPDF from Digital Applications, Inc.—my other

Companies and Products Mentioned

Seybold Seminars	Seybold SF/Publishing 98	http://www.seyboldseminars.com/Events/sf98/index.html
Adobe Systems, Inc.	Acrobat Exchange	http://www.adobe.com
Artville	Artville	http://www.artville.com
Comstock	Comstock	http://www.comstock.com
Corbis Corp.	Corbis Images	http://www.corbisimages.com
Corbis Corp.	Digital Stock	http://www.digitalstock.com
GoLive Systems, Inc.	CyberStudio	http://www.golive.com
Inso Corporation	DynaText	http://www.inso.com
Reed Technology and Information Services, Inc.	Editorial and Production System	http://www.reedinfo.co.uk
Live Picture, Inc.	FlashPix	http://www.livepicture.com
Open Market, Inc.	Folio Views	http://www.folio.com
FutureTense, Inc.	FutureTense	http://www.futuretense.com
Hynet Technologies, Inc.	Hynet Directives	http://www.hynet.com
Enigma	Insight	http://www.enigmainc.com
IntraNet Solutions, Inc.	Intra.doc!	http://www.intranetsol.com
Digital Graffiti, Inc.	Mabango	http://www.digitalgraffiti.com
Capella Computers Ltd.	MultiMedia Database Software	http://www.capella-mm.com
LEXIS-NEXIS	NewsView Solutions	http://www.newsviewsolutions.com
ProImage Ltd.	NewsWay	http://www.newsway.com
PhotoDisc, Inc.	PhotoDisc	http://www.photodisc.com
PhotoSpin	PhotoSpin	http://www.photospin.com
Softmagic, Inc.	Project M	http://www.softmagic.co.kr
Quark, Inc.	Quark Xpress	http://www.quark.com/quarkxpress
Datawatch Corp.	Redwing	http://www.datawatch.com
Digital Applications, Inc.	StampPDF	http://www.DigApp.com
Stockbyte	Stockbyte	http://www.stockbyte.com
Virtual Press Office, Inc.	Virtual Press Office	http://virtualpressoffice.com

favorite—adds watermarks, page numbers, headers, and footers to a PDF document.

XML

Beyond PDF, the other acronym that flashed all over the place was XML, the eXtensible Markup Language that Eli Willner wrote about in a three-part series in *Information Today* (May, June, and July/August 1998). This methodology and proposed standard deserved the space, as it is going to be the *lingua franca* of Web developers. It combines the best of HTML and SGML in defining document content and structure in a non-proprietary format—without the complexity and stiffness of SGML and the limits of HTML. It is widely embraced by software developers in the various categories mentioned above. When I raved about Insight, it was not only because of its unparalleled customization of the user interface, numeric and data searching features, dynamic update option of delivered data, but also because of its strong PDF and XML support. These features are sorely missing from its competitors, such as Folio Views or Inso's DynaText (although DynaText at least has good XML support).

Images

Publishers can't live on text alone, especially not on the Web, where images and graphics are often more dominant than text. There was no shortage of exhibitors showing a great variety of image collections. Photodisc, Inc. still has the largest stock photography collection. It launched this

booming business of making stock images keyword searchable, previewable, and downloadable, and introduced techniques adopted by others, such as the light-box service that allows you to store your selection temporarily on PhotoDisc's site and give the password to your partners or clients to make the final choice. The Digital Stock collection, though smaller, is now part of Corbis, which has by far the largest royalty-based pool of digital photographs (over 1 million), including the much-coveted classics from the Bettmann Archive. PhotoSpin was the first to embrace the image format of the future, FlashPix, which I discussed in the July/August 1998 issue of *IT*. Comstock vowed 5 years ago that it would never sell royalty-free images. Now it does, and coyly admits that "we lied." Artville and Stockbyte have small but unique collections. In this arena, Web and CD-ROM perfectly complement each other, and the trend is ordering images on custom CDs. This is understandable, since you wouldn't want to download 24-bit images of your choice that take 30-40 MB a pop, even on a T-1 connection.

Asset Management Software

Low-res images for compositing (shorthand for compositing, using low-quality images during layout design) are available for free downloading from a dozen vendors, but keeping track of your digital image assets is no small feat. Among the hundreds of image-management programs, Mabango (formerly Cura) from Digital Graffiti impressed

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I have to admit that I reported here very selectively on the impressive products that I saw. From a journalist's perspective, this was the best-organized show that I have attended. The catalog listed exhibitors not only alphabetically and by categories but also by booth number, which I usually have to do for myself to optimize my route at such large exhibits. Virtual Press Office, Inc. set up a digital collection of press kits that

helped me not to look like a Nepalese Sherpa on my flight back, and I still had access to verify data when I wrote about the event. Next year I will extend my trip by one day and spend 72 hours at the conference.

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Hynet Technologies Debuts Hynet Directive 2.0

Hynet Technologies—developer of a dynamic solution for managing information and publishing customized views to the Internet, intranet, and CD-ROM—has announced the next version of its product, Directive 2.0 (formerly Digital Library System). According to the company, with Directive users can do more than simply manage or publish files. Directive turns static documents into dynamic

information by allowing users to define the level of granularity at which information is managed. This ability to manage documents by units of information, rather than as files, enables users to reuse information as well as edit and view documents from within multiple word processing applications—without jeopardizing formatting, character and paragraph styles, or hyperlinks.

Directive also publishes information to any medium—such as the Internet, intranets or extranets, and CD-ROM—from one source file. And unlike other document management or electronic publishing systems, Directive will convert information from multiple word processing formats to XML and back again, allowing users to edit and repurpose information from within

their favorite applications. Directive supports multiple languages, platforms, input formats, and media outputs, making it a flexible, open solution for managing, publishing, and converting information.

Directive's dynamic viewing capabilities give anyone with a Web browser the ability to create personalized, private knowledge libraries. End users can organize and combine information from within

(continued on page 42)

GoLive

(continued from page 35)

Live Web Publishing system puts the ability to update a site directly into the hands of those who control the content.”

The GoLive Web Publishing System separates and automates the tasks of designing, updating, and administering a site. This allows those people creating the content to update the text and graphics on the pages—without ever touching HTML. The system also gives Web designers the visual tools for complete control over the look and feel of the site. At the same time, it provides Webmasters with sophisticated database tools for managing and serving HTML content, according to the company.

A client/server solution, the GoLive Web Publishing System has three components: GoLive CyberWriter Publishing Edition, GoLive CyberStudio Publishing Edition, and GoLive CyberServer Publishing Edition.

GoLive CyberWriter is the editorial client software. Browser-based, it features

a user-friendly interface that enables users on virtually any computing platform to enter content easily and update their Web sites quickly. From a secure Internet connection, authorized users can type up-to-the-minute content directly into the GoLive CyberWriter for immediate or controlled posting on their sites. GoLive CyberWriter users can also access content stored in the GoLive CyberServer, including images, for illustrating an online story.

GoLive CyberStudio is the design component. This specially enabled version of GoLive CyberStudio (the Web design and site management tool) provides everything users need to create page templates and sites within the GoLive Web Publishing System. Because page templates are independent from the specific content of a site, a Web designer can quickly and easily redesign and update a single page layout or an entire site. And with the proper security privileges, a designer can use GoLive CyberStudio to directly access via http the data objects within the GoLive CyberServer. This means that regardless of the location of the GoLive Cy-

berServer, a designer can visually create and change template pages that will then be administered by the server.

GoLive CyberServer is the server component. Driven by a multiplatform high-end SQL database specifically created for publishing applications, the GoLive CyberServer can dynamically or statically publish Web sites with up-to-date content. The GoLive CyberServer manages and serves up the content of a Web site to a Web server. Working with template pages designed in GoLive CyberStudio, GoLive CyberServer produces HTML pages from the editorial content that was entered into GoLive CyberWriter clients. GoLive CyberServer also provides complete content administration capabilities, including security. It runs on a wide variety of server platforms, including the Macintosh Server G3 running the new MacOS X Server.

According to the company, the GoLive Web Publishing System enables a seamless workflow throughout the entire Web-publishing process. Straight out of the box, it delivers easy-to-use interfaces for all aspects

of Web site design, creation, maintenance, and administration. The system is driven by a scalable, easy-to-administer SQL database that supports from two to hundreds of users on any platform who access the system from their browsers. The system will ship with pre-designed site templates for small and mid-sized Web sites.

The GoLive Web Publishing System is expected to be available during the fourth quarter of 1998. Pricing will start at less than \$1,000 for a two-user configuration. GoLive CyberWriter runs in version 4.0 or above of Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator on any platform supported by these browsers. GoLive CyberStudio requires a Power Mac or 100-percent compatible clone running MacOS System 8 or later and a minimum of 16 MB of free memory (20 MB preferred). GoLive CyberServer runs on Linux, AIX, Sun Solaris, Windows 98, Windows NT, MacOS, and MacOS X Server.

Source: GoLive Systems, Inc., Menlo Park, CA, 800/554-6638; <http://www.golive.com>.