World Publications: A Passion for Perfection

Profile
World Publications was founded by Terry L. Snow in 1978 with the launch of WaterSkiing magazine. A second title, WindRider was launched in 1981 to capitalize on the growing popularity of wind surfing. Today, the company has 20 magazine titles, over 2.5 million subscribers and a wide variety of on-line sites produced by nearly 350 employees from its Winter Park, Florida, headquarters.

Challenge
The company was using a legacy, DOS-based mapping program to lay out its publications. As the number of publications and users continued to grow, the company outgrew its system and needed to find a better solution.

Solution
After a review of market options, World Publications chose to implement EFI Proteus®, which provides editors, art directors, sales managers, production managers and printers the ability to independently produce an issue, while working within a common software framework.

Results
World Publications was able to cut in half the time it took to create a publication storyboard, meaning less labor and shorter cycle times. Additionally, storyboards can be printed in color or exported to a PDF for use by remote employees. Proteus’ ability to integrate with third-party applications also means that it’s much easier for production managers to import ads and editorial from the company’s database.

Proteus Delivers a World of Difference at World Publications
Love to windsurf or boat or water ski? Have a passion for gourmet food, travel or fishing? Then you have probably read or subscribed to at least one of World Publications’ 20 magazines that reach well over 2.5 million enthusiasts in these niche markets and more. Over the past two decades, World Publications has grown from a single magazine title into one of America’s most successful special-interest multi-media companies. It currently employs nearly 350 professionals who produce 20 consumer magazine titles, more than a dozen Web sites, on-location participant events, three on-going television series, cable television specials and a variety of custom publications. The company’s headquarters are in Winter Park, Florida, and it maintains offices in New York; Newport, RI; Santa Barbara, CA; and a dozen other locations throughout the U.S. The company has grown from one magazine in 1978 to a leading force in selected lifestyle and recreational markets.
Growing Pains
World Publications had a DOS-based program for mapping publications and creating the storyboards used to determine final placement of ads and editorial in its various publications. As the company and the number of publications grew, it was rapidly outgrowing the DOS-based system, which became increasingly unstable and often crashed, sometimes resulting in lost data and lost work. World Publications was looking for a new solution that could scale with future growth. In addition, the company wanted to be able to print storyboards in color as well as share electronic files with its distributed work force to streamline the production process. And most importantly, World Publications needed a collaborative work process that could allow staff to balance the workload, as well as to import ad and editorial data from the company’s database.

Smoothing the Path with Proteus
After a review of market options, World Publications opted to install EFI Proteus two and a half years ago. According to Jeff Cassell, Production Director, “I worked with our EFI sales rep to install a trial version of Proteus as we were in the final stages of purchasing the product. This gave me the opportunity to get some hands-on experience prior to the formal installation.” After installing the software, reports Cassell, all it took was two days of on-site training and the team was up and running.

“The most obvious immediate benefit,” says Cassell, “was that it cut our time to produce a storyboard in half. That made a big difference in terms of the workload and cycle time to lay out a publication.” Now the first storyboard, or map, can usually be generated the day the initial materials are received. According to Cassell, “This map, or storyboard, builds a guideline of where the ad and editorial will lay out in the magazine. Our editorial and production staff and sales people can easily see where everything goes, where ads are placed to ensure satisfaction of our advertisers.”

With Proteus, it was much easier to share information and to make changes to the storyboard as new editorial and ads arrived or other changes needed to be made. “Like most publications, we need to be able to insert ads, even editorial, and make other changes right up to the point we send the publication off to RR Donnelley for printing,” said Cassell.

Cassell and the World Publications team were also delighted with their Proteus-enabled ability to print color storyboards, and to easily import ads and editorial from the company’s database. He adds, “Before, our printing had to be scripted to a specific printer. We are now able to select any printer from within the application, including our Adobe PDF server, and generate hardcopy or electronic color prints. One of our associates in California was particularly delighted with Proteus’ cross-platform support for both Mac and PC. That was a flexibility we didn’t have before.”

As World Publications adds new talent to the pool, ramp-up time is faster as well. Cassell says, “For a new production professional to become fully proficient in mapping, it now usually takes two magazine cycles. With our old system, it could take them four to five cycles to have the process down pat. That is an important productivity improvement as we continue to grow, adding people and titles to the mix.”

“EFI’s Proteus has changed our lives in a lot of ways,” adds Cassell. “We look forward to future enhancements that will increase our productivity and efficiency even more.”