

Powering workplace productivity with energy-efficient solutions.

Distech Controls streamlines authoring and publishing workflows for building management system user guides and online help.



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SOLUTION

Adobe FrameMaker (2017 Release)

RESULTS



REDUCES design, template, and layout management time

20% Process efficiency **IMPROVEMENT**



Consolidated tools to **STREAMLINE** authoring



AUTOMATES online help generation



Distech Controls Inc.

Established in 1995

Employees: 150

Brossard, Quebec, Canada

www.distech-controls.com

Partner

Publishing Smarter

www.publishingsmarter.com

CHALLENGES

- Reducing the number of documentation authoring tools
- Keeping existing Microsoft HTML Help files available to customers
- Accelerating content workflows and enabling content reuse

"We replaced three tools that served different authoring purposes with the comprehensive 2017 release of Adobe FrameMaker, which supports both content and help authoring."

Isabella Adornato, Documentation Manager, Distech Controls Inc.

Putting well-being first

Employees are more productive when their workplace is not too hot, not too bright, and not too stuffy. In fact, besides pay or their immediate supervisors, environmental factors are the biggest influence on employees' attitudes about the quality of their workplace.

Many building management system (BMS) manufacturers have spent the past few years developing "green" initiatives to boost their energy efficiency credentials. Distech Controls Inc. takes those initiatives further and targets the broader concept of employee well-being. In addition to enhancing energy efficiency, Distech develops integrated, user-friendly systems that combine monitoring and control of light, heat, and humidity through a single interface. Distech systems also integrate easily with other workplace applications, such as room booking, concierge services, and catering, to meet growing demands from developers and large-building tenants who want employees to manage a wide range of services from a single solution.

Because its technology evolves quickly, the Distech document team is regularly challenged to keep materials current. Customers and partners rely on documentation—including data sheets, installation guides, user guides, technical diagrams, and online help—to cut the costs and complexity of installation, operation, and maintenance. To better meet their needs, Distech wanted to accelerate document production by eliminating duplicate technologies and workflows.

"The documentation department was using way too many tools to produce documents," says Isabella Adornato, Documentation Manager, Distech Controls Inc. "We replaced three tools that served different authoring purposes with the comprehensive 2017 release of Adobe FrameMaker, which supports both content and help authoring."

Stable tools provide consistent quality

To successfully transition to Adobe FrameMaker, Distech enlisted the help of publishing environment experts Publishing Smarter. Its consultants evaluated Distech's content strategy and workflows and provided training and support.

"Consolidating on Adobe FrameMaker lets Distech create quality content quickly and consistently," says Bernard Aschwanden, Founder and President, Publishing Smarter. "This means Distech can focus on content as a business asset by speeding time to market and using it to generate leads."

With Adobe FrameMaker, the three-person Distech documentation department has improved productivity by approximately 20%. The team spends more time creating content than correcting formatting errors, which is an important gain for the authors and editors who manage approximately 450 unique documents at any given time. Distech achieves additional performance gains by reusing content more efficiently and automating multi-language publishing in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

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SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe FrameMaker (2017 Release)

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Transitioning online help files

Distech plans to use Adobe FrameMaker for user guides and help files and its SCHEMA ST4 content management system (CMS) for other documentation. The CMS supports smaller documents, such as data sheets, for which the content remains fairly static. But more complex documents, such as user guides with multiple chapters and integrated graphics, which end users now access with a broader array of devices, need a more robust solution.

"We selected Adobe FrameMaker because it easily handles large documents and simplifies style, template, layout, and graphics management for print publishing," Adornato says. "Built-in responsive HTML5 publishing is another plus, allowing us to automate online help delivery to any device."

Distech also chose Adobe FrameMaker because the documentation department can continue publishing the vast amount of content the company previously created with Microsoft HTML Help. The online help file will still be available to customers using FrameMaker in the short term. However, over time Distech plans to use FrameMaker to convert the 1,500-page file to HTML5.

"It is essential that we keep the 'Press F1' option available for our clients because our online help is in high demand," says Adornato. "Adobe support and Publishing Smarter have helped us achieve our short-term goals for online help delivery and we look forward to their assistance with our conversion to HTML5."

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/framemaker.html