

Mcgraw-hill: primis custom publishing essay



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McGraw-Hill: Primis Custom Publishing Francesca Jackson Dr. Albert Cruz INF 620: Management of Information Systems March 25, 2013 McGraw-Hill: Primis Custom Publishing McGraw-Hill Education is a unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies, a worldwide information services provider that boasts over 350 offices in 33 nations. Headquartered in New York City, New York, its revenue topped 4.5 billion back in fiscal year 2001. In 1989, with the creation of Primis Custom Publishing, the company set out to address the problem college professors encounter when they search out supplemental materials to use with traditional textbooks.

McGraw-Hill's lengthy history of catering to the academic needs of educators and students along with the desire to improve its offerings to professors, in particular, was what led to this system of customizing college textbooks (Adobe Systems, Inc., 2002). According to McGraw-Hill, the traditional route to publishing textbooks to be utilized in higher education is one that is a long, linear process that involves authors who must write content prior to a panel of instructors reviewing it. Then a layout is created by a designer, which highlights methods of instruction.

Along the way photos are researched, permissions to use information is then requested, and art programs are set up. The material is further scrutinized to insure its accurateness before the final content is approved. Thereafter, the compositor is able to produce the book, one page after the other.

Subsequent to a second proofing of material to be published, printing must take place. Presses roll at the printing plant while publishing officials make contact with faculty to inform them of the latest which the company provides

in traditional textbooks, as well as to bring finality to the text adoption process for the upcoming term.

At the plant, the completed texts are cataloged, stored in warehouses and ultimately shipped. This is essentially the way textbooks were produced before Primis (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). The problem with the traditional model is that text organization and content could not be modified or made specific for each course. It was an editor at McGraw-Hill back in 1988, which first got the idea to delve into custom publishing. The fact that the company failed to make predictions as to the content many professors may require, the editor decided the time had come to do something about it.

Thus, he came up with the concept of custom publishing textbooks that allowed professors to tailor content according to their individual course needs. By this time, McGraw-Hill had been in the publishing business for years and had accumulated a great deal of experience. With much textbook content to work with, the only issue that was before the company was what form the output should take. After consideration of custom publishing, approval and funding were granted. As a direct result, Primis, the custom publishing division of McGraw-Hill was started (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005).

After it had been decided that Primis would be funded, the project team began detailing those things that would be necessary to bring the custom publishing idea to fruition. Cathleen Mattura, Manager of Custom Publishing who has been a part of the McGraw-Hill since 1987, states that some considerations included questions surrounding sufficient funding, the

technological means, and the justification of such a new kind of project. It was evident that arriving at a wonderful idea and seeing it through to the end were two separate things.

Other considerations included ways to keep content fresh and whether the company would be successful at printing whole textbooks on demand. Pricing and the overall quality of custom published textbooks were other concerns. Hence, the Primis team immediately used the systems approach into action to solve the problem (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). Once the opportunity for business had been defined and the overall solution identified, other project details needed to be discussed. At that point, the feasibility of custom publishing was in question. Mattura adds that in 1987, the company had a single fax machine- a sign of the technological times. Therefore, the Primis team wondered if the company had the technology to accomplish its goal. Also, it needed to know what would be entailed systematically and the thought processes that might be necessary to correctly prepare the material. Questions revolving around storage, printing and shipping also emerged (McGraw-Hill MIS Video, 2005).

Some questions McGraw-Hill might have asked as part of determining feasibility of the Primis idea were how difficult it may be for sales representatives to push custom publishing, what percentage of college professors might be interested in adopting custom published textbooks or what accommodations could be included to attract greater student interest. What content could be included to aid student comprehension is another question the Primis team could have posed. Initially, the systems approach

did not seem to work all that well because it left the team wondering if it should go on or simply halt the project.

In the preliminary stages, the team could have asked questions as to how the new system would be fully implemented. Had this been done early on, the Primis system may not have been a success. Success in any field necessitates a certain amount of risk. That is why I think I would have implemented the system armed with the information the team had at the time, even though many more questions and challenges were apparent. McGraw-Hill had not been aware of the challenges it would have to face when it pledged to fund a custom textbook publishing project.

Even though the goal was to establish a system which was capable of supporting mass customization of textbook content, the technology to accomplish custom printing was very limited at that time. Further, major publishers had never attempted this type project, therefore, McGraw-Hill was acting in the role of publishing trailblazer. In spite of this knowledge, the Primis team felt strongly that any work on the project to combat barriers would justify any funds expended in the end.

After completion of the initial feasibility study, the team started the process of developing and evaluating alternate systems solutions by taking a close look at and comparing the current publishing process to the one that was proposed. Then they went on to identify a solution that would best meet McGraw-Hill's needs (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). As the Primis team began contending with the details of the new system, uneasiness concerning the initial stages of the project was beginning to wane. The process

necessary to custom publish textbooks began to take on a more defined form.

For instance, the design of the content database was derived and the requirements for printing and for documents that were formatted were determined. Mattura declares that the team would have to make sure that content was stored in a medium that was reliable and that could be printed. In essence, it had to be capable of being read by a digital press or copy machine. So the company settled on Xerox and IBM to meet its needs. When the process engineering activities and requirements were completed, the team went on to develop, evaluate and select the best system configurations.

It gave special attention to ways to integrate the new Primis system with existing back-end systems when it came to print, managing inventory, managing ISBN's, fulfilling orders and royalties (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). Ginny Moffat, Vice-President of Coureo Content Delivery, contends that Primis needed to interface with several back-end systems, which was the prime challenge for implementation of the new system. Having Primis interface with front-end systems was easier because it involved putting things on the web and having individuals select items.

However, it would be more difficult to have the system automatically interface with back-end systems. The main systems it had to interface with were the royalties system, the ISBN system, the metadata system and the sales rep database (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). To achieve competitive advantage, cost, quality, speed and service all served as driving

forces in the development of the Primis system for McGraw-Hill. The Primis system's design was aligned with the business customer in mind because it made it relatively easy for college professors to pick and choose the content based on individual preference, available on demand. The turnaround time for orders is swift and the cost is less than the cost of the traditional text. To deal with the knowledge that technology was likely to change in both the short and long run, the team chose vendors who were using what was becoming the standard in the industry- Postscript by Adobe (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). Competitors in the world of college textbook publishing were on edge when McGraw-Hill introduced the Primis system. At the time, a prolific amount of information was released to market the system, including full page ads that were placed in the New York Times.

However, competitors were not aware that the Primis system was experiencing huge technical issues and that large sums of capital had been committed to insure the project's success. The company was claiming that there was a 48-hour turnaround from the time a textbook was ordered to the time it was to be completed. During that time, the company was taking the product and making it modular, removing any references to previous chapters. The challenge was to make these changes right away and to make the product available quickly.

Once the web arose, the issue of migrating the Primis system into one that was web-based arose. The team's decision to create a digital file format for storage of Primis content was significant. The technological choices the Primis team made were wise because Postscript was later capable of being transformed to PDF (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). To implement the <https://assignbuster.com/mcgraw-hill-primis-custom-publishing-essay/>

Primis system took 18 months. During that time, software was written and acquired. Hardware like system units storage and printers were installed.

Components were tested and content was loaded into the database. Training was also developed for the workers in sales, and the teams which had been established for technical support got to work. McGraw-Hill was ready to formerly introduce Primis to the rest of the world (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). I believe prototyping may have helped the Primis team because it would have given it the opportunity to discover the many challenges it would encounter in advance of spending large sums of capital to see the project along.

End users should have played a great part in the development of the system since they are the ones who will be interacting with it. McGraw-Hill used teams of employees at every level throughout the company to have a hand in creating and developing the system, thereby increasing the chances of success for the system. The relationship of Primis to back-end systems was crucial because it was through this relationship that royalties got paid, and ISBN's were identifiable, and inventories and databases were accessed.

If I were the project manager for Primis, I would have used a prototype in order to get a real idea of what barriers might arise while trying to launch such a new type of project. System maintenance involves monitoring, evaluating and modifying an operational system in order to remain relevant technologically and competitively. Once the Internet came on the scene in the 1990's McGraw-Hill realized it needed a web presence. Moffat asserts that the company knew it had to have some kind of digital custom delivery.

It gathered a high-level team of company officials within the company's higher education group, such as the heads of editorial, marketing, sales and even workers in production to make sure college professors knew that Primis was what they needed. They searched to find if there were any other alternatives when it came to online delivery and online web interface. Outside vendors were considered and other projects that were taking place at McGraw-Hill were mentioned. The vision for what the team wanted college professors to be able to do or not, was discussed.

Even though much time was spent to achieve support at every level of the company, the success of the Primis project was on the line. Now with the web-based front end order entry interface, a tremendous demand for custom products is occurring. Further, the Primis system is yet evolving. The addition of eBooks is now a reality (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). Were I a professor considering adoption of a custom textbook for my students, I would choose the color eBook because today, with the state of technology changing so often, students quickly lose interest in things they do not find very exciting.

With the proliferation of gadgets available, color eBooks may grab their attention and hold it for longer periods of times because the content may be similar to the content and graphics viewed on computers, iPads and other electronic devices they already use. If I were managing the content in the Primis database, the criteria I would use to determine what gets added include the most current information available and information that is well-researched. Since many print textbooks are revised every few years, content

in the Primis database would only be affected to the extent that the college professors stipulate.

Ebrary, in the business of offering software and services in the area of online copyrighted content delivery announced that McGraw-Hill Custom Publishing chose the ebrarian software solution as a core technology to use with its customized Primis online e-book courseware students access through the Internet. Moffat asserts that the partnership with ebrary makes it possible for students to gain access to online materials in the course from computers that are situated at any location. They will also be able to do so at any time and not be concerned about excessive download times (PR Newswire, 2001).

McGraw-Hill Education has managed to bring custom publishing to a whole new level with its new Create program which provides for professors, unprecedented control over the customization of content used on college campuses. With this innovative system, professors can make their own e-books or printed textbooks by choosing content that is available from a large online collection of resources, as well as get digital proofs in less than one hour (PR Newswire, 2013). Accordingly, McGraw-Hill Education, a global company which provides information services, took the lead with the creation of Primis Custom Publishing in 1989.

An editor with a keen vision saw a need among college professors in the delivery of adequate coursework content and came up with the idea of publishing custom texts. After exhausting a timely process that involved employees at all levels within the company, the Primis team was able to successfully bring to the world, a new way of publishing. As a result, many

college professors can now choose precise content they need to teach their courses. They no longer have to rely on texts that only partially meet their needs (McGraw-Hill MIS Video Clip, 2005). References

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