

CASE STUDY

American Legal Publishing Generates New Revenue Providing Timely Access to Municipal Codes



Industry

Legal Publishing

Challenge

Deliver easily-searchable, updated libraries of municipal codes

Results

- Enabled easy code updates to keep up with rapid legislative changes, giving American Legal Publishing a competitive edge
- Delivered customizable, searchable access to codes segmented by audience, opening up new markets
- Created a new revenue service based on delivering timely legislative updates

Products

- Rocket® Folio
- Rocket® NXT

Application

- Publishing

Company

American Legal Publishing specializes in creating and publishing codified ordinances for local governments ranging from large cities with cutting-edge legislation to small towns with fewer than 1,000 citizens. American Legal Publishing has supplemented, published, and distributed the ordinance codes of more than 2,000 municipalities and organizations of all sizes.

Challenge

State, county, city, and municipal codes are complex and frequently updated. Builders, developers, and inspectors need to be able to quickly search thousands of police, fire, zoning, and administrative codes. To make these codes widely available for its clients on an on-demand basis, American Legal Publishing required a way to create and deploy cost-effective, easy-to-use reference libraries. The ideal solution would have to assemble and deploy publications for a large variety of clients while segmenting the information into customized views for each user. In addition to being secure, the right solution would also have to allow for customization of formats, fonts, styles, and other functionality.

Solution

After evaluating multiple solutions, American Legal Publishing selected Rocket® Folio and Rocket® NXT to deliver an integrated process for assembling, storing, and delivering content to provide customizable and searchable access to municipal codes. Rocket Folio enables users to simultaneously edit and annotate content for publication. The Rocket NXT server publishes the content so it is accessible by any standard web browser. By implementing NXT, American Legal Publishing made its clients' Folio Infobases publicly available online from any device, anywhere, at any time—while keeping the content secure.



Results

Delivering searchable, accessible, updated digital information has been a key factor in American Legal Publishing's success. "Rocket Folio has helped us become one of the national competitors in legal publishing, and one of the top local code publishers in the country," explained Todd Myers, the company's Vice President of Major Client Services.

Sophisticated NXT search capabilities enabled users to search for keywords, phrases, and section numbers in hundreds of online Infobases. At no cost, users could simultaneously search the codes of multiple cities, or look for specific new legislation across all states. Citizens could access their municipalities' latest laws while officials who were writing new legislation could refer to existing code from other municipalities as a model.

Folio made it easy to make changes or add to content directly within a client's Infobase, dramatically simplifying code updates. Folio supports source files in a variety of formats, so no conversion was required to insert and index native documents such as PDF files of meeting minutes. With this feature, American Legal Publishing created a searchable document archive to keep everyone informed of the latest developments. "The on-demand benefit is huge," said Myers. When the American Legal team deployed updated files to the online server, users could immediately access the new data. This feature enabled the company to offer a supplemental revenue service to independently track, update, and host legislation, making it available on the date that it became effective.

Clients could also dictate the look, feel, and functionality of their Infobases to suit specific organizational needs. For example, when codifying ordinances for Cary, North Carolina, American Legal Publishing took advantage of NXT support for indexing graphics, which uses external metadata to supplement textual information with images and tables. In San Francisco, the organization created an Infobase for each primary volume of municipal code, including inter-Infobase links to other primary volumes.

"NXT allows us to focus our expertise on our core competency in local code publishing, rather than on web hosting and software development," Myers noted. As more users began to access content online and on mobile devices, the company's competitors that used internally hosted proprietary solutions were forced to expend significant resources on developing a mobile platform for their sites. Thanks to NXT mobile templates, mobile deployment was much easier for American Legal Publishing. "Adding mobile access from smartphones and tablets keeps us competitive in the marketplace," concluded Myers.

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