



Case study: Bringing proofreading into the 21st century.
Mapsoft enhanced solution for the publishers.

Business challenge

It is undeniable that during the last century there have been many technological breakthroughs, and millions of people worldwide now use Microsoft Windows and exchange documents using the Portable Document Format (PDF) developed by Adobe Systems, Inc. Whilst these technologies provide solutions for many business challenges, many still remain. For the publishing industry, although the majority of pre-press work has been converted to digital processes over the last decade or so, a major gap in this pre-press digital chain remains: a method of marking and communicating proof corrections electronically.

Thus there was a distinct need in the publishing industry, which has not yet been addressed: to improve the proofreading process by providing a user-friendly but comprehensive method of electronic proof mark-up.

In the UK, publishing contributes over £22,000,000,000 to the economy. But before a work can be published it is usually checked by both the author and a professional proofreader to ensure that is accurate and contains no spelling or grammatical errors. This applies to every type of publication, from fiction through to company reports. Until now the proofreading process has been slow and inefficient for all concerned, with paper copies of the proofs being shipped from author to proofreader to publisher to typesetter, often at some distance from each other, and today possibly in different continents. It is also an iterative process, with each round of correction being checked for accuracy, often generating yet another round of correction, with its attendant piles of paper.

However, electronic methods of communication are not very efficient either. The only viable solutions are server-based applications. The pre-press digital chain was simply missing a link to speed up the process and benefit everyone. Until now.

To complicate matters further, a new version of the BSI (British Standard Institution) standard on proof correction was issued last year, which most of the available server-based applications do not support.

The problem was to incorporate all the necessary symbols and conventions used by professional proofreaders into one powerful tool. At the same time the tool had to be accessible and easily available for users, such as authors, who use it very occasionally, perhaps even on a one-off basis. Because PDFs are universal in the publishing industry and because Acrobat Reader is free for anyone to acquire and use, developing a tool as an add-on to Acrobat Reader seemed an obvious solution.

The solution

Barbara Horn, a freelance editorial director, and Kenneth Cowan, a production consultant recognised this gap, and were the right people to address this need. After a meeting in May 2005 of the International Organisation of Standards' (ISO) Graphic Technology Committee, they decided to start developing an innovative product to offer electronic proofreading tools.

Cowan said: *"Once the proofreading marks had been revised for global usage, it was clear to Barbara and me that the natural next step was to think about how they could be reproduced on screen"*.

So, the next step was to contact John Hodgson, a publishing system designer.

"Kenneth asked me if proofing on screen could be done", Hodgson said: "My initial reaction was 'No way' But then I went away, thought about it, and developed a prototype".

This prototype was presented at an ISO conference on graphic technology in Sao Paolo in September 2005.

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innovation for enhanced productivity



The breakthrough was on its way, and quickly gathered momentum when Adobe accepted the project as an official plug-in to the Adobe Reader.

However, the project would have been incomplete if it had not been for Mapsoft Computer Services, a leading Adobe Solution Network (ASN) partner. In late September 2005, after the ISO conference, John Hodgson contacted Michael Peters, the Managing Director of Mapsoft, to discuss all of the details.

"I didn't have doubts at all that it could be done," Peters said. "We discussed it to decide future strategy. However the technical side has to be left to us once we had decided on the specification."

The solution was now well on its way, with Mapsoft and Paperlessproofs Ltd driving the solution forward together. And so Paperlessproofs was born. The communication between companies was perfect as:

Key Benefits

Core business benefits

- ⇒ **Cost savings** on paper proofs and delivery costs
- ⇒ **Time savings** by not using post/couriers: can knock up to two weeks off a production schedule
- ⇒ **Reduced costs** from typesetters i.e. proofs are more legible
- ⇒ **Improved accuracy:** no handwriting or ambiguous marks to decipher

Publisher's benefits

- ⇒ **Security against loss in transit** no need to copy marked proofs before sending on to next stage
- ⇒ **Collation of proofs** comparing authors proofs with proofreaders proofs and making one proof with both sets of corrections easier
- ⇒ **Easy and intuitive interface** of proofreading
- ⇒ **No commitment to expensive software:** pay only for the proofs used

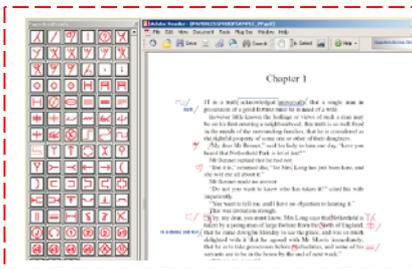
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About Mapsoft

Mapsoft is a leading software developer and technical authoring consultancy for Adobe Acrobat, PageMaker and InDesign plug-in product extensions. Founded in 1991, Mapsoft is an Adobe business partner and delivers customised plug-in products worldwide, with clients including Lloyd's of London, Hallmark Cards, Network Rail and Xerox.

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"Everything has been very straightforward with Mapsoft. All our development requests were efficiently and effectively implemented." Hodgson said.

The success of this relationship was based on a simple business formula: customers and their needs were put first. Peters said:

"We were satisfied with our results. But more importantly, so was the customer."

Finally, Mapsoft delivered a completely innovative product. Development took approximately six months. The plug-in has been very well received and early feedback from customers is very encouraging.