Air Force Streamlines its Publishing Process using Intelligent Content Tools for Publishing

Ictect Case Study Series

Summary

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Government/Publishing

Customer Profile
The Air Force Departmental Publishing Office (AFDPO) is the centralized department responsible for managing and publishing all forms and publications for the Air Force.

Business Situation
In the past the AFDPO relied on a completely outsourced process for document markup, which was expensive and did not fit the Air Force's vision for developing key publishing capabilities in-house. The AFDPO needed a highly automated solution that works with the Air Force's Word-based publication process and allows analysts to focus on document structure and quality rather than technical XML aspects of the publishing process.

Solution
Ictect provided a solution that enabled the AFDPO to process the documents in-house. The solution is consisted of icTools for Publishing and the Intelligent Content Plug-In, integrated with a Microsoft SharePoint-based content management system.

Benefits
- Reduced cost for publishing
- Reduced turn-around time
- Lower expenses for training
- Strategically positioned for advanced content management features

Cost effective and strategically positioned solution to fulfill the vision of Air Force e-Publishing

The Air Force Departmental Publishing Office (AFDPO) implements Air Force Publication and Forms Management guidance and serves as the Headquarters Publication and Forms manager. Its mission is to provide publishing products and services for administrative publications and forms to Air Force customers worldwide.

The AFDPO was looking to replace an outsourced document publishing process with an in-house solution that is more cost-effective and in line with the Air Force's future vision for publishing.

Ictect provided a solution for a highly automated document markup process and integration with the content management system based on its icTools for Publishing product.

With Ictect's solution, the AFDPO was able to substantially lower the cost for processing a document and has the foundation to realize the full potential of advanced content management features.

Business Situation

The Air Force Departmental Publishing Office (AFDPO) is the central place at the United States Air Force for processing directives, instructions, manuals, and other policies and procedure documents. Here the documents are reviewed, tagged, and formatted for publishing on the Web and Print forms. Microsoft Word is the standard document format for documents the AFDPO receives from major commands (MAJCOMs), field office agencies (FOAs) and other organizational units. Analysts at the AFDPO are responsible for tagging and formatting all documents in accordance with Air Force directive AFI33-360. A final document in PDF format is published on the public website www.e-publishing.af.mil.

AFDPO is also responsible for integrating Supplements and Interim Changes to the documents. Supplements are additional, unit-specific guidance provided by Air Force units. Interim Changes are amendments to original documents. In addition to tagging and formatting, the AFDPO also needed a solution for automating integration of Supplements and Interim Changes to base documents.

Most of the documents are publicly available through the Air Force e-publishing Web site. The content quality, timeliness, and availability of the documents are critical to the Air Force. Furthermore, the Air Force is seeking to improve content management capabilities such as search and provide multi-channel distribution of content. This drives the requirement that all documents have to be marked-up with XML.

This markup and integration functions were until recently performed by an external contractor using a highly labor-intensive and consequently costly process. To reduce costs, the Air Force needed to find a more affordable solution for tagging, formatting and integrating the documents.

Old Process

The outsourced process at the Air Force involved the use of Microsoft Word for authoring and Adobe FrameMaker for publishing. Authors, located worldwide at various Major Commands (MAJCOMs), Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) and Field Operating Agency (FOAs) prepared their documents using Microsoft Word. The Air Force has long had a directive (AFI33-360) that governed the publishing process, and authors were expected to prepare documents in accordance to the directives. Documents were received by AFDPO, which reviewed the documents and, when appropriate, required a contractor to tag and format the documents.

The tagging and formatting process used Adobe FrameMaker. Content from Microsoft Word documents was first imported into FrameMaker, tags were then applied and the document was formatted using FrameMaker styles.

The Air Force also required that Supplements and Interim Changes provided by the OPRs and units to be integrated to the primary document. The integration function was also performed using FrameMaker, in a similar process. The figure below illustrates the As-Is process.

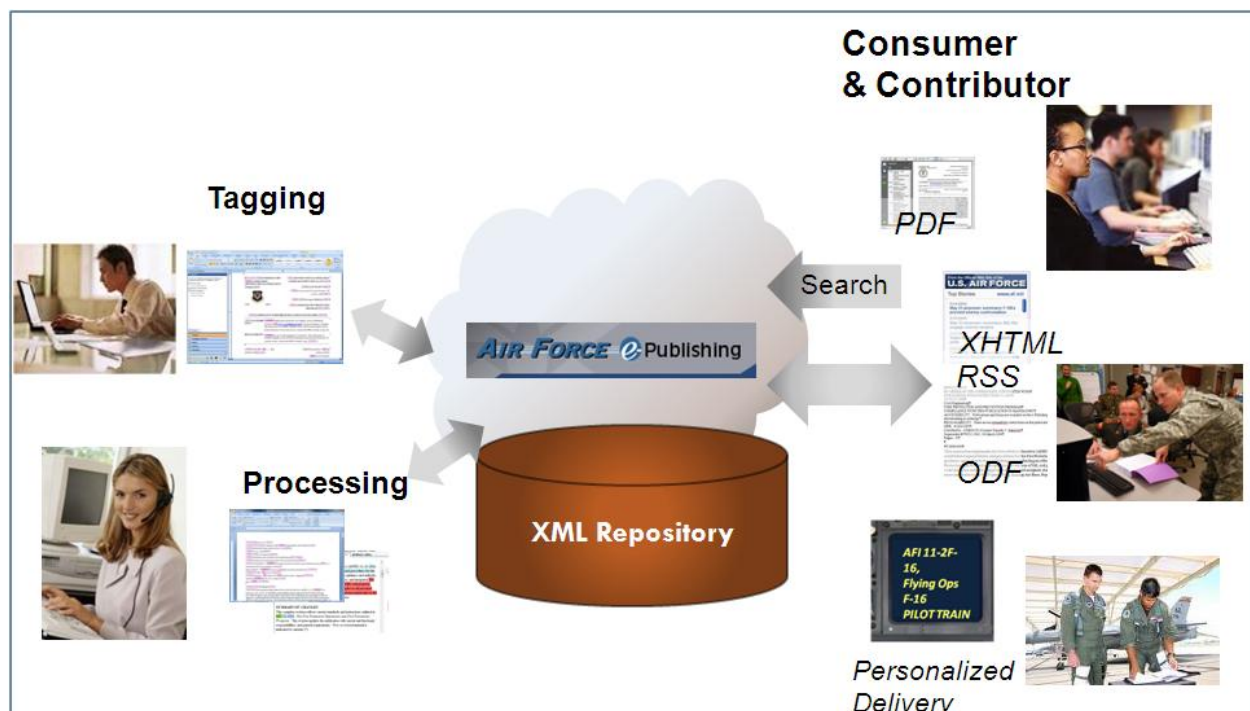the intelligent content company
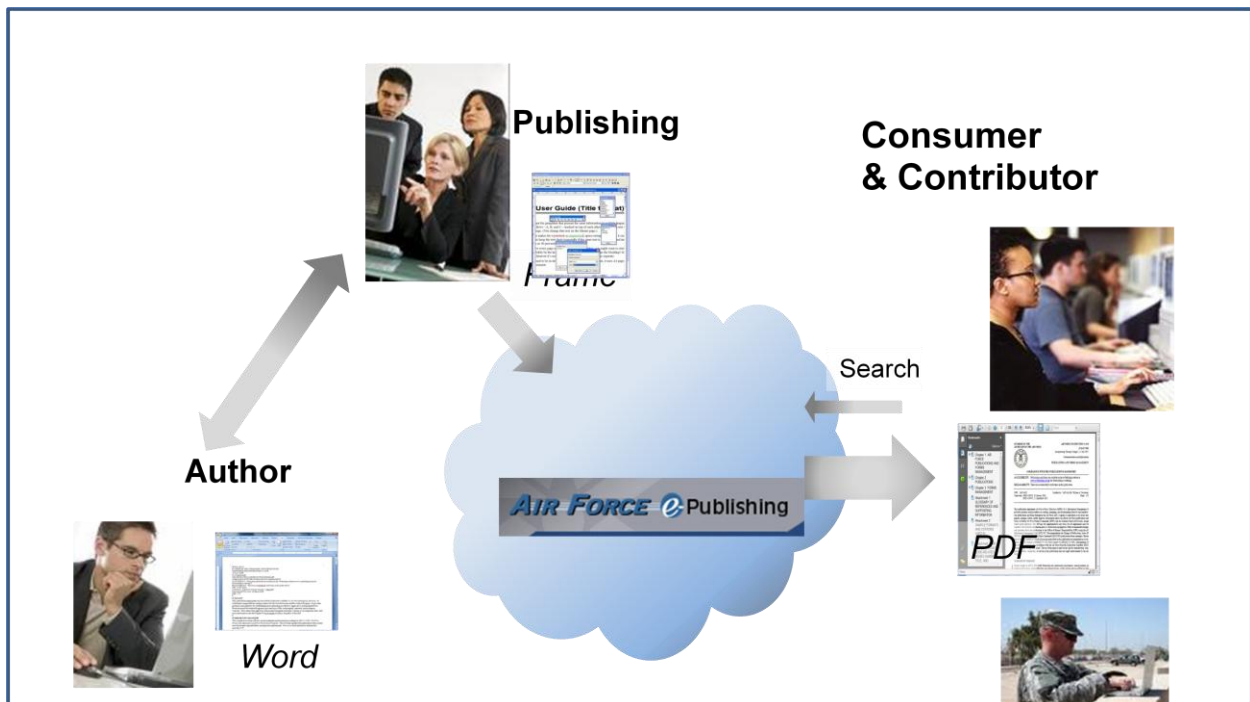
Desired Process

The Air Force envisioned a future architecture where its authors, coordinators, field publishing managers, analysts, and others can seemlessly participate in the document development process. This was critical to meeting the vision of product and service delivery to the end user, regardless of media, at the time and location needed, in peace and in war.

In support of this future vision, the Air Force decided to implement an Air Force Information Management and Publishing Tool (AFIMPT) using the Microsoft Share Point Server. In addition, the Air Force required an easy to use system for:

- Tagging
- Formatting
- Integration of Supplements and Interim Changes
- Publishing

The envisioned process for the Air Force is illustrated in the figure below.

Solution

The AFDPO accomplished these goals by choosing a tagging, formatting and integration solution provided by Ictect, Inc. The solution is based on icTools for Publishing and the Intelligent Content Plug-In. Initially it was designed as a standalone solution for the AFDPO. However, with the Air Force moving to a new Microsoft Sharepoint based content management system; if Tools for Publishing was enhanced with the capability to exchange documents with the content management system using service-oriented approach.

icTools allows the AFDPO to leverage their internal staff for the majority of the documents that need to be processed. The analysts, already familiar with Word 2007, now work on a single Word processing platform to turn a draft document into finished publication. The key relevant capabilities provided through icTools are tagging, validation, formatting, and integration. While tagging is the core strength of
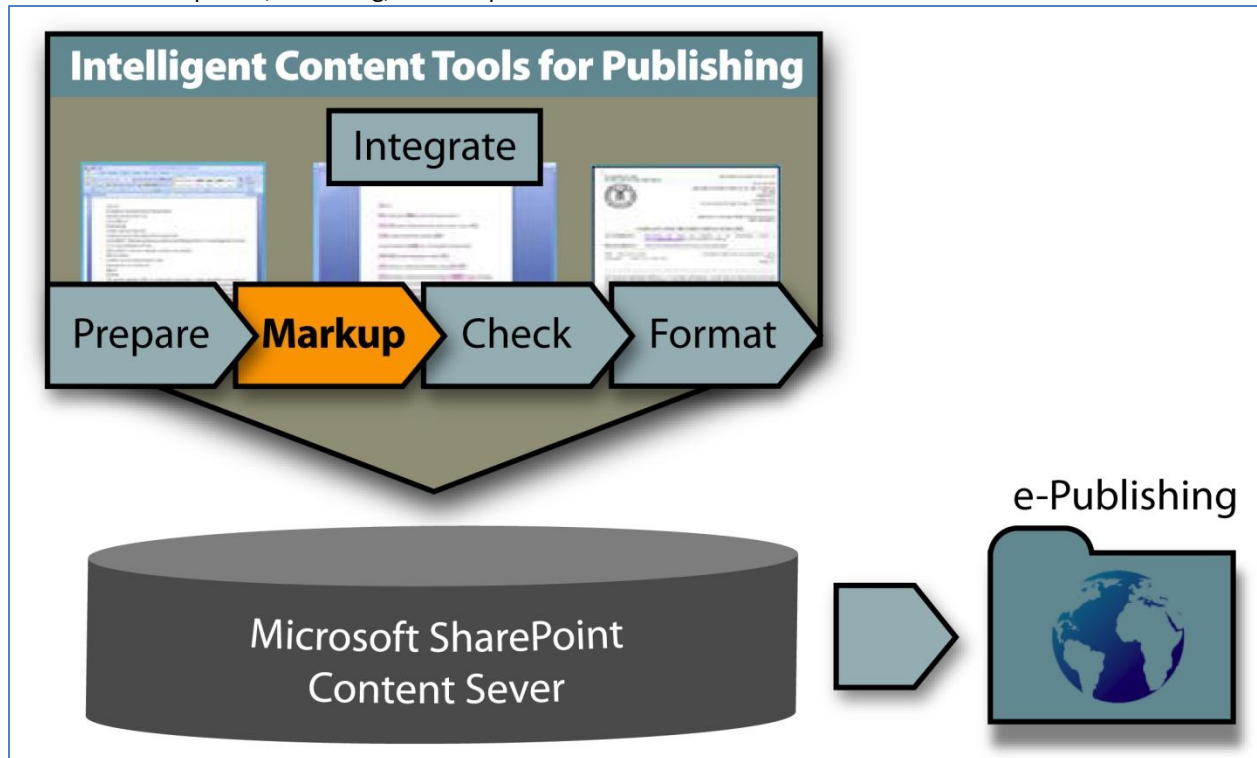
the intelligent content company

icTools, its ability to check a document for inconsistencies with the Air Force publication guidelines is a critical part.

Ictect, Inc. supports the AFDPO as resource for solution development, training, and provides continued support for the processing of documents with special processing requirements.

Benefits

By bringing the tagging solution in-house, the AFDPO was able to substantially lower the cost for processing a document. The fact, that all documents are now processed within Word, helped to keep expenses for software licenses and training low. With markup applied to all documents, the AFDPO is now in a position to take full advantage of other advanced content management features, such as enhanced search and dynamic dissemination of content in multiple formats.

For More Information

For more information about Ictect products and services, call 262-898-7568 or visit the Web site at: **www.ictect.com**

Ictect, Inc.
2320 Renaissance Blvd. #226
Sturtevant, WI 53177
http://www.ictect.com
Ph: 262-898-7568

the intelligent content company