

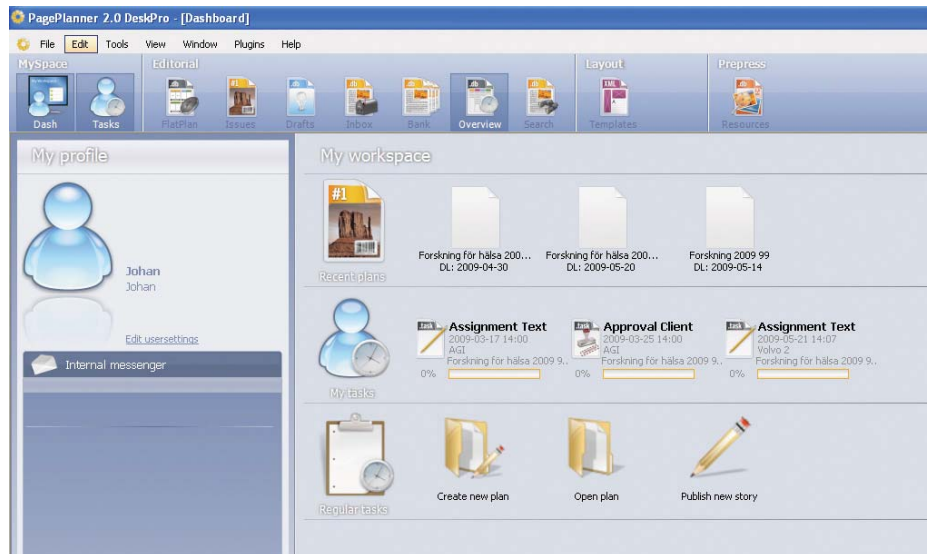
Efficient magazine production

Most people would probably associate the term 'editorial system' with big newspapers usually meaning quite costly, specialised systems. For a somewhat smaller magazine a full-blown editorial system might be overkill, and still not entirely fit for purpose. What is needed is a system that helps with editorial planning and the day-to-day production.



"Our aspiration when implementing an editorial system like PagePlanner is to collect all information about the production in one place, to ensure quality and avoid misunderstandings and mistakes", says Maria Westman, Design Manager at Appelberg Publishing Group, Sweden. (Photo Sanna Skerdén)

The Norwegian company PagePlanner Solutions PagePlanner magazine production system fills the gap between large editorial systems and



Every user is assigned their own Workspace in PagePlanner, where tasks are listed. Workspaces can also be shared and accessed over the Internet.

manual magazine production. The founder of PagePlanner Solutions, Arild Elverum, got his ideas for a modern editorial system dedicated for magazine production while working for one of the largest magazine publishers in Scandinavia, Aller Press.

One thing that was very obvious to Elverum and is a cornerstone of the system, is that it has to be centred on a database. For PagePlanner this means using the MS SQL database and .net technology, in combination with support for common standards like XML, XMP, IPTC and Exif. Layout and editorial work is done in Adobe InDesign and InCopy, with support for text editing in MS Word if requested.

The PagePlanner Solutions

There are three main activities at the core of the Page Planner system: Tasks, Images and Layout. In effect this means that PagePlanner functions as an asset management system, with functionality to help with cross media

publishing as well as paper-based publishing.

A typical workflow will consist of several elements including the Planning, Text (the name of the author assigned for each article), Layout (made internally), Layout (made externally by freelancers), Images (archived and new, and who they have been ordered from), Prepress (image conversion and PDF creation) and Completed (including Back Up and archiving activities).

The system assigns the users different roles, and connects the different publications to the user. All resources and information is then shared in real time across the editorial staff, using a visual interface, for example page flat plans. The planning of pages and their separate articles and ads is simply done by dragging and dropping the elements into the right place.

Each magazine will probably create its own set of article types, connected to InDesign style sheets for automated layout. Images can be tagged with

▶ their status, and ads can be monitored and placed by the ad department. A virtual workspace is created for each publication and issue, which can be accessed over the Internet by workgroup members working remotely. An overview of the status is presented for all the elements so it's easy to see if work is started, almost ready or completed/approved. The beauty of having a database at the core of such a system lies in the powerful search functions.

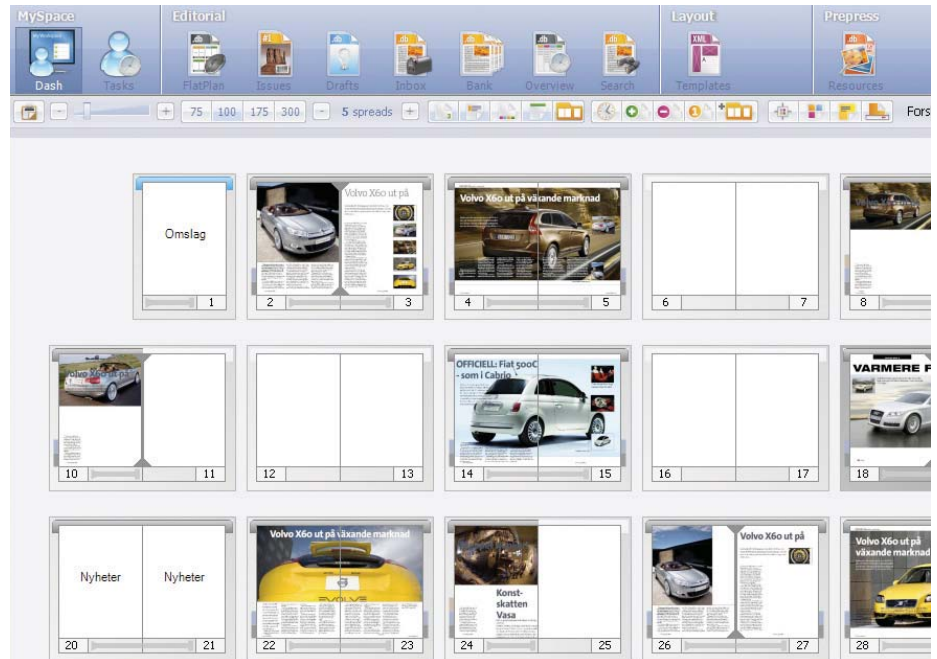
Once the planning of a magazine is done, the actual page layout can be fully automated or just roughly done with final polishing by the designers. But PagePlanner Solutions believes their system provides a possible time saving of typically around 25-30%, compared to conventional manual layout.

Some of the time savings can also be made in the image preparation stage, if an automated repro element is added to the system. One of the solutions PagePlanner can integrate is the ColorFactory solution from FotoWare. This means that all images are colour managed into the correct resolution and colour space automatically, as well as electronically sharpened for the output media.

Another point of automation is the PDF creation, which is done from within the system, thanks to the integration with InDesign Server. Once the publication workflow is set up, PDFs will be generated automatically and sent off to the printer when the pages are approved, according to what is requested for the combination of paper type and print technology used.

If two or more printing technologies are used for different sections, they can each be given their own deadline in the planning stage. This can also be used for inserts, so that the bindery has all of the components in time for final delivery.

to check what other systems were on the market,” explains Maria, adding: “While time and cost savings might be part of the benefit of using an editorial system of this kind, our aspiration is to collect all information about the production in one place, to ensure



There are several views to choose from when checking the status of publications in progress. Here the Flatplan view where pages and ads can be moved around (for users with the right to do so), and actual status is easily checked.

The integration with Adobe Creative Suite is done both through direct programming, and through the use of plug-ins. PagePlanner can also be integrated with third party solutions like MediaBooking, MediaBank, Escenic and FotoWare.

But what do users make of the system? Maria Westman, Design Manager at Appelberg Publishing Group, Sweden, pointed out that their main objective was to enhance teamwork and quality. Appelberg produce about 30 customer magazines, and are about to implement PagePlanner for all the titles. “We started in 2008 by trying out a demo version, while continuing

quality and avoid misunderstandings and mistakes”.

Another publishing house that uses PagePlanner is Egmont, head quartered in Copenhagen but with media production in 30 countries. One of the publications within the Egmont group that uses PagePlanner is the Norwegian publishing house Hjemmet Mortensen.

We spoke to Gunnar Bleness, Editor in chief and vice president, about his experience with PagePlanner. He comments: “We have used the system for several years now, and are at the moment implementing the new

▶ version, 2.0. In this step we also add Adobe InCopy to the software suite, as well as adding more titles than before in the workflow. Our finding is that using an editorial system like this enhances quality, makes the journalist more engaged in the planning of new articles, as well as improving the overall efficiency of the production”.

and objectives, before deciding on what systems to test and finally buy.

- **Paul Lindström**



“We have used PagePlanner for several years now, and are at the moment implementing the latest version. We find that the journalist can be more engaged in the publishing workflow, which in the long run means improved quality. Production efficiency also improves with this type of editorial system”, says Gunnar Bleness, Editor in Chief at Hjemmet Mortensen, Norway.

So there would seem to be both time and quality gains that are possible with editorial systems like PagePlanner. But while at first glance the needs seem to be very similar for magazine production and newspaper production, when looking closer into the workflow, there are significant differences. As usual it’s important to have a clear view of your own needs