

New Editorial System for National Newspapers

National newspapers; Daily Express, Sunday Express, Daily Star and Daily Star on Sunday undertook the huge challenge of replacing their existing 15 year old QPS editorial system with Woodwing's Smart Connection Enterprise. With any new system installation, the training and roll-out is a huge task and Headline Training & Consultancy Ltd were delighted to be invited to join the Express Project Team to provide the training and support for over 700 users.

The daily newspapers; owned by Northern & Shell Network, have an average daily sale approaching two million copies and the two Sunday titles sell around one and a half million copies. Many regional editions are produced, including highly localised versions for Scotland & Ireland as well as a weekly digest for the expatriate market in Europe. It was important that the training and roll-out of the new system caused minimum disruption to the very busy editorial department.

The Challenge

The existing systems being replaced included, QPS running on QuarkXPress 3.32, Microsoft Word 97, Outlook 97, Freehand, Photoshop and Quickwire. Users were using both PC and Mac platforms with old operating systems.

The new editorial system would be running entirely on Macs OS10, with Microsoft Entourage replacing Outlook for email. Adobe CS3 suite would replace QuarkXpress, Freehand and Photoshop, with Smart Connection Enterprise (SCE) and Content Station being introduced to provide story and page management.

Our challenge was to train and support all users across three sites; London, Preston and Glasgow. The training needed to be designed and tailored to each editorial role, covering the basics of OS10 right through to the new workflows being introduced as well as the software functionality. User guides and quick reference sheets would also need to be produced for each role. This itself was a challenge as some of the Woodwing software was still in development, so frequent updates and amendments needed to be incorporated.

As well as the above challenges, staff redundancies were occurring across the titles, so our professional team remained understanding,

compassionate and supportive providing the users with the confidence and motivation to continue to do their jobs well.

"Despite the difficult conditions in which training took place at Express Newspapers, all the Headline trainers proved to be Intelligent, Diplomatic and Patient. This is even before the actual training is taken into consideration which was well organised and flexible. I really can't thank them enough"

Andy Taylor, Assistant Managing Editor
Express Newspapers

The Approach

Headline initially provided two trainers to work closely with the Express Project Team to understand fully the basket structure and copy workflow. Eight separate training courses tailored for each editorial role were designed. These included a four day intense InDesign course aimed at the Marketing team and ArtDesk, a two day BackBench course in InDesign and InCopy, a one day reporters course in InCopy, a one day subbing course for subs editors in InCopy, a one day imaging course for picture desk and imaging team, a half day course for production and a half day course for all staff on the new Mac OS 10 software, as well as providing on-going training for the IT Helpdesk.

Training plans were written for each course, and a train the trainer course was held to bring additional Headline trainers up to speed quickly and efficiently.

User guides and handouts such as keyboard shortcut were created for all staff to refer to at their desks, as well as uploaded to the Intranet for instant referral.

The Go Live

The training and roll-out of the system was phased section by section within each title. On completion of the training the section would go live the following week. During this time, as well as continuing with the training, we provided floor walking support for those users who had gone live covering all shifts to ensure there was always user support.

