

Automated print output: Technical documentation at Festo

FESTO

Festo SE & Co. KG is a group of companies in the industry of control and automation technology, headquartered in Esslingen, Germany.

Festo is a global leader in automation technology with a strong reputation for innovation in 176 countries. More than 250 branches, in addition to independent sales and production companies, and approximately 20,100 employees represent the company worldwide. In 2020, Festo achieved group-wide sales of €2.84 billion, investing roughly 8% annually in its research and development.

The Swabian family-owned company is also a frontrunner in industrial training and continuous education practices. With its Corporate Educational Responsibility (CER) program, Festo offers employees access to a high-tech educational environment that encourages life-long learning.

Opportunity

With approximately 600 different Festo series to account for, the growing complexity of the company's technical documentation required a well planned course of action. This complexity needed to be mapped in a Product Information Management system (PIM) and automatically output as a PDF or print product. Technical documentation had to be created for the market launch of each product, therefore, production was particularly time-sensitive.

Solution

The aggregation, standardization, maintenance, and distribution of data determined the requirements for the PIM system. Festo chose to proceed with Informatica MDM - Product 360. This automated, error-free, more efficient and time-saving method worked directly with the priint:suite via Adobe® InDesign®.

Advantages

- ✓ **Central Data Management**
The PIM system becomes the central hub in the company for all product-related information.
- ✓ **Increased Efficiency**
An increased publication output can be achieved while reducing production time.
- ✓ **Internationalization**
Successful output of country-specific technical documentation, taking into account specific country requirements in approximately 15 languages, in addition to the Asian market.
- ✓ **Automated Creation**
Reliable processes and consistent product data form the basis for the automated creation of publications for a wide range of channels.

Solution

A wide range of different publications was created through a centrally controlled and automated creation process. The primary focus was on technical documentation.

Segmenting the Complexity

In order to achieve a higher degree of automation and significant time savings in publication production, Parsionate supported Festo in replacing the conventional manual production process. Data maintenance was carried out exclusively in the PIM system. Output and publication planning was achieved using the priint:suite.

The technical documentation that Festo produced for each series was characterized by an enormously high level of complexity and differed in both layout issues and data structure. In regard to the data structure and maintenance, complex issues and dependencies of the data had to be mapped in the PIM system. For print output, the data was prepared and output was achieved according to the specifications previously established. The layout specifications were predefined by the Festo CI and were reflected in the templates.

In order for the first partial results to become quickly visible, Parsionate and Festo divided the publication into logically manageable elements and implement them individually. As a result, the overall complexity was distributed to a very manageable level. The first element of automation was a “type code”, which was used by Festo customers to form an order code and was certainly a matter of significant importance.

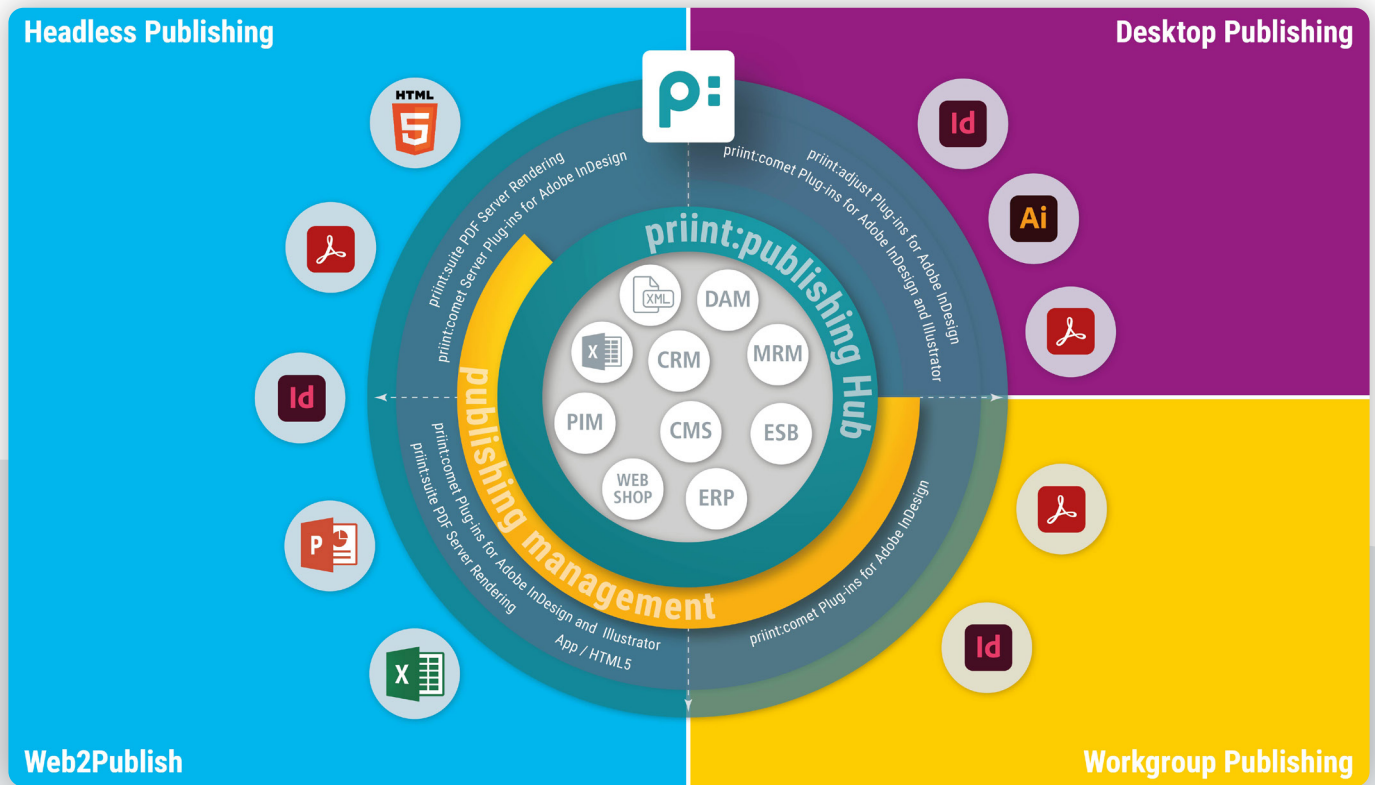
Standardization and Centralization

In the past, individual elements of the technical documentation were often enriched with individual content and edited manually. Today, they are discharged together with the complete data in more standardized elements.

Throughout the process, designated product managers and editors jointly planned which information or elements were necessary to describe the corresponding series. Once the solution had been created, users had a modular system at their disposal giving them complete flexibility in compiling the necessary sub-elements for the technical documentation and output them automatically.

With the clearly defined workflows and standardized processes, the highest possible degree of automation was achieved, errors were eliminated and the speed of publication was drastically increased. The greatest impact in the project was achieved through the internationalization of publications. Despite the large number of foreign languages, the output of publications could be increased. This allows for the possibility to serve country subsidiaries in their national language at low cost.

Typenschlüssel			
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