



InfoComm International

Efficiently managing training content with a learning content management solution

Overview

The need

InfoComm wanted to enhance its training services by adding new courses and regularly updating existing materials – but manual approaches to management were time-consuming and error-prone.

The solution

InfoComm implemented an IBM learning content management solution, enabling it to automate many of its processes for creating, updating and managing content.

The benefit

Today, InfoComm has dramatically reduced the cost, complexity and time needed to manage its course materials – enabling it to add new courses and boost the value of its services.

Audiovisual technology affects the lives of nearly every person every day. It's so pervasive that most of us take it for granted, but we benefit from it every time we join a webcast or attend a conference, when we interact with a digital sign, watch a sporting event at a bar or go to a concert.

InfoComm is a nonprofit organization that supports the audiovisual industry by providing leadership that drives the transformation of human communication through the use of technology. The organization focuses on educating audiovisual professionals from the entire supply chain, from manufacturers to end users, and specializes in audiovisual training and certification.

Managing education content more efficiently

The training and education InfoComm provides typically comes in the form of online classes, webinars, traditional classroom courses and presentations, as well as guidebooks for learners. Until 2012, the organization stored its materials in separate files on a shared drive, making it difficult to update files and protect the intellectual property of the global organization.

Amanda Beckner, CTS, Senior Director of Knowledge Management at InfoComm, explains: "Consistency is important. If I update an online course, I need to apply that same change to any other materials that cover the same topic, including online course titles, classroom course materials, and virtual classroom materials. These materials are stored in a variety of file types, such as PowerPoints, graphics, and Word documents. If the content has been translated into another language, making a single update could affect up to 30 files."



Solution components

Software

- IBM® Kenexa® LCMS Premier
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Previously, the company's two training developers spent 70 percent of their time maintaining the company's training materials. InfoComm realized that a system to automate maintenance would free the training developers up to create new courses, learn new technology and invest time in value-added initiatives.

Amanda Beckner continues: "As the business grew, it was getting more difficult to find the most recent, the most current and the most up-to-date content. For the most part, information on the latest content was undocumented, and we risked losing this insight altogether if members of our training development team left the business. We knew we had to maintain our content in a more efficient way, and looked for a system to maintain and protect the body of knowledge we had."

InfoComm set out its requirements for a new learning content management solution (LCMS). The aim was to manage its existing training materials and intellectual property efficiently, without the need for additional personnel. In addition, InfoComm wanted to make it faster and simpler to create and manage new content, even across multiple languages.

"We wanted a system that could preserve the relationships between all the files that make up our training manuals, so that changes to one document would automatically flow out to all the others," recalls Amanda Beckner. "Not only would this approach save time, but it would allow us to create and manage even more content without dedicating a full-time employee just to update the material."

Boosting efficiency with an LMCS

InfoComm was already using a learning management system to create some of its online courses, but the platform was unable to deliver the advanced functionalities it targeted. To solve the challenge, the company aimed to break down its content into definitions, images and paragraphs of text so that copy could be shared, reused and updated instantly.

As InfoComm explored new ways to provide training materials to the audiovisual industry, it discovered that an LCMS met most of its needs. As a first step, InfoComm developed more than a dozen use cases for the new LCMS, including centralized data management, content analytics, comprehensive support for file types such as PowerPoint slides, translation capabilities in several languages, and others.

"When we evaluated the market for LCMS solutions, there was only one that met every single one of our use cases, and that was IBM Kenexa LCMS Premier," says Amanda Beckner. "The Kenexa solution works for us – it's very practical for all our needs."

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— Amanda Beckner, CTS, Senior Director of Knowledge Management, InfoComm

IBM Kenexa LCMS Premier provides organizations with support for a single-source content management strategy that includes personalization, prescriptive learning, video-based learning and social collaboration; consistent performance; the ability to reuse content; and an innovative development platform.

Seeing immediate results

InfoComm dedicated two weeks to developing processes, templates and a metadata library with IBM consultants, and went live shortly afterwards. With the existing content migrated to the new LCMS, InfoComm’s development team quickly embraced the solution.

Amanda Beckner comments: “My favorite quote from our training session on the new solution came from our curriculum development manager. She just looked up in the middle of it all and said, ‘This is a dream database’. That kind of reaction isn’t typical when you’re doing new software rollouts.”

Implementing an LCMS paid off almost immediately for InfoComm. Amanda Beckner estimates the solution saves the organization several thousand dollars a year in content maintenance alone. Better still, the solution enables training developers to create new courses almost immediately, because they can search and find instructional elements in the system with confidence that they are current and valid.

Adding even more value for InfoComm customers, the LCMS makes it possible for the organization to create a new revenue stream in custom courseware. LCMS Premier enabled InfoComm to customize courses for its members, taking advantage of most assets in their current form but inserting and removing portions to align with its customers’ desired messaging.

Creating new business opportunities

The foundations of InfoComm’s training are eight, three-day courses for industry professionals, including student guides that cover the materials in the classroom. These student guides include images, best practises, tricks of the trade and more. Thanks to its LCMS, InfoComm’s materials are so extensive that they have been published as a textbook by a major publishing company.

“Our publisher looked at the material we were able to create and agreed to publish it,” says Amanda Beckner. “We’re on our fourth textbook, and it has really opened the global marketplace for us. We’re very niche, but people worldwide are purchasing our books, and that is helping us get the word out about what we do.”

InfoComm performs regular check-ups with an IBM consultant to ensure it is taking full advantage of system features – one of the keys to its success.

“When you’re focused on your content and your processes, it’s healthy to have an expert outsider thoughtfully question how and why you do things,” explains Amanda Beckner. “It’s led to improvements in consistent application of metadata and templates for exported content.”

Another key to success is a trusted coach responsible for governance and data quality for the LMCS. InfoComm’s learning systems content manager ensures that all users are trained on the features of the system that support their work, and understand the big picture opportunities and threats.

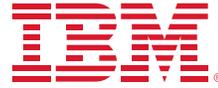
Today, more parts of InfoComm’s business are experiencing the benefits of maintaining and reusing intellectual property in the LCMS. Use of the platform pioneered in the education department has now expanded to include the entire association. Looking to the future, InfoComm plans to use the IBM solution to support a new e-learning content sharing initiative, and to launch APIs to help customers search and personalize content more easily than ever.

About InfoComm International

InfoComm International is the trade association representing the professional audiovisual and information communications industries worldwide. From offices around the world, InfoComm serves its members and the industry through education, resources and events. Established in 1939, InfoComm has more than 5,000 members, including manufacturers, systems integrators, dealers and distributors, independent consultants, programmers, rental and staging companies, end users and multimedia professionals from more than 80 countries. To learn more, visit: infocomm.org

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