CASE STUDY

Custom Rule Handler (CRH)
For
Managing Editor Inc.

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About the Client

Managing Editor Inc. (MEI) provides innovative software solutions to a rapidly evolving publishing market. The company delivers a variety of automated pagination and workflow solutions to newspaper and magazine publishers, including other print and electronic publishing markets. MEI is a portfolio company of Adobe Systems Inc.

Overview & Solutions

Custom Rule Handler (CRH) is a Plug-In for Adobe InDesign, and part of ALS Direct. ALS Direct connects Page Director ALS with SoftCare's K4 Publishing System. When ALS Direct is installed, ALS users can link their ad layouts to K4 layouts, enabling them to see previews of editorial pages as they dummy pages in ALS. Designers and editors can view ad layout in progress, which reduces time and labor normally associated with communicating updates across the organization. Once ALS layouts are linked to properly configured InDesign templates, page folios are automatically generated in InDesign.

ALS Direct consists of two products: ALS Direct PlugIn for ALS, and Custom Rule Handler (CRH) Plug-In for Adobe InDesign. Both ALS Direct and CRH communicate bi-directionally with K4.

SoftCare K4 (Integrated Publishing Solution) is a powerful and flexible editorial and graphic design system for magazines and newspapers, book and corporate publishers, and other creative agencies. It enhances the functionality of Adobe InDesign and Adobe InCopy, allows for transparent editorial workflow, and provides a convenient method of monitoring production progress.

The Custom Rule Handler InDesign Plug-In is added to K4 user configurations. K4 users receive the ALS ad placement and folio information from the K4 database. In addition, when K4 users move ads in their layouts, the placement changes are saved to K4, so ALS users can see the changes.

CRH receives ad placements from ALS. When looking at a layout with placed ads or changed ad placements, K4 prompts object rules dialog. Each ad placement, added page, and folio from ALS will create a K4 object rule. Ad rules display the name of the ad, and other rules describe changes needed. Once object rules are applied, CRH will place the ad placement, added page, and folio in the InDesign layout.

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Since resolving object rules, ads appear in a new layer of the InDesign doc, called "Pending". Here, all ad placements may be reviewed to ensure fit. The Pending palette is used to mark ad placements as reviewed, which moves them from the "Pending" layer to the "Ad" layer. The "Pending" and "Ad" layers are locked by default.

Architecture

InDesign is a small host application with features implemented through client plug-ins. InDesign defines an architecture that determines how a plug-in interacts with the host. It also provides the building blocks from which each plug-in is made.

> *Object Models*: set of rules or conventions that describes how objects are created and handled within a system. The C++ language implements an object model, describing it as a contiguous block of memory (most basic level) and defining how that object is instantiated, behaves during its lifetime, and can be destroyed.
>
> Object models can be used to map how large, complex systems behave. The Microsoft® COM (Component Object Model) defines objects with functionality accessible through interfaces, making it possible to have distributed components.
>
> *Model-View-Controller (MVC)*: formalizes relationships among input, output, and data processing.

InDesign Plug-ins uses COM Object Model, MVC architecture, and various design patterns including, Observer, Façade, Chain of Responsibility, and Command etc.

Technology and Environment

- Adobe InDesign CS3 SDK, K4 SDK
- C++
- Development Environment
  - Visual Studio .Net 2005
  - XCode 2.4.1
- Operating System
  - Windows: Windows XP or later
  - Macintosh (Power PC/MacIntel): Mac OS X 10.4.9 or later

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