

**THE
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-----*Electronic Publishing*-----

**Behind the Firewall: Newsletter Content
Thrives in Enterprise Networks**
By Stanley Stillman

Firewalls may secure enterprise computer networks from the outside world. But they also obscure the new information management practices emerging behind them. Applied to newsletter content, these practices are beginning to collide and compete with newsletter publishing itself.

Content delivered in electronic form is being combined, regardless of source - newsletter with trade publication, newspaper with newswire, newsmagazine with professional journal - and in some cases even refined editorially.

In a presentation to NEPA's December 1999 conference on electronic publishing in New York, Gene Fuller, vice president of business development at Phillips Business Information, explored these issues. In this and his previous position at McGraw-Hill's Aviation Week Group, he has watched the electronic delivery of newsletter content accelerate for more than seven years.

Multiple points of entry

To meet subscriber demands, he explained, Phillips employs "multiple points of entry." As direct delivery channels, these include traditional online, internet web and e-mail and Adobe Acrobat .pdf attachments. Noteworthy is a Phillips-branded General User Interface installed behind several subscriber enterprise firewalls, embedded in their intranets. This enables Phillips to distribute its newsletter content fully intact, uncombined with other sources and unrefined editorially.

Third-party channels include such aggregator-distributors as the news filter vendors NewsEdge, SageMaker and Wavo; traditional wire and online services like Dialog, Dow Jones, IAC, Lexis-Nexis and Reuters; and upstart newcomers like Northern Light and Powerize. In addition Phillips will deploy any combination of these delivery platforms - in principle, whatever subscriber organizations specify.

Other newsletter publishers report similar initiatives. For its seven titles, Aviation Week Newsletter at McGraw-Hill employs five formats and is looking at several others as demand for them develops, according to publisher Stephen Munro. Under site license agreements that now cover almost half its revenues, he adds, enterprises are allowed to “slice, dice and mix” its content with other sources, in whatever format, provided only that copyright is observed.

Big push to put content on intranets

In its stable of delivery platforms, commNOW includes the internet-based html. format. This enables it to incorporate graphic intensive advertising, at the same time to maintain the look and feel of a print newsletter. Publisher Andrea Knotts Bona sees a “big push to put content on corporate intranets,” in effect to adopt Internet software protocols as the standard delivery format. She also notes a trend to centralize information collection in resource centers and corporate libraries and in the end to encourage site license subscription agreements.

Enabling the information management practices increasingly applied to newsletter content is an expanding array of new technologies, which include:

- ActiveKnowledge from Autonomy <www.autonomy.com>
- BullsEye from IntelliSeek <www.intelliseek.com>
- E-Portal Suite from Viador <www.viador.com>
- Inside Knowledge from SageMaker <www.sagemaker.com>
- Knowledge Retrieval from Verity <www.verity.com>
- Plumtree Server from Plumtree Software <www.plumtreesoft.com>
- Semio Taxonomy from Semio <www.semio.com>

Combining content regardless of source

Deploying these technologies in corporate intranets and what are more broadly defined as Enterprise Information Portals, subscriber enterprises are combining content regardless of source. Not that such systems can’t deliver newsletters fully intact. Not that individual recipients can’t configure their desktop computers to receive them in this fashion. But as Jim Geanakos, product manager of the SageMaker News Machine points out <www.sagemaker.com>, the utility of the filtering capabilities of these technologies is thereby lost. The productivity returns from recipients tailoring the news to their specific interests, in other words, are creating powerful incentives to combine content indiscriminately into one stream of information.

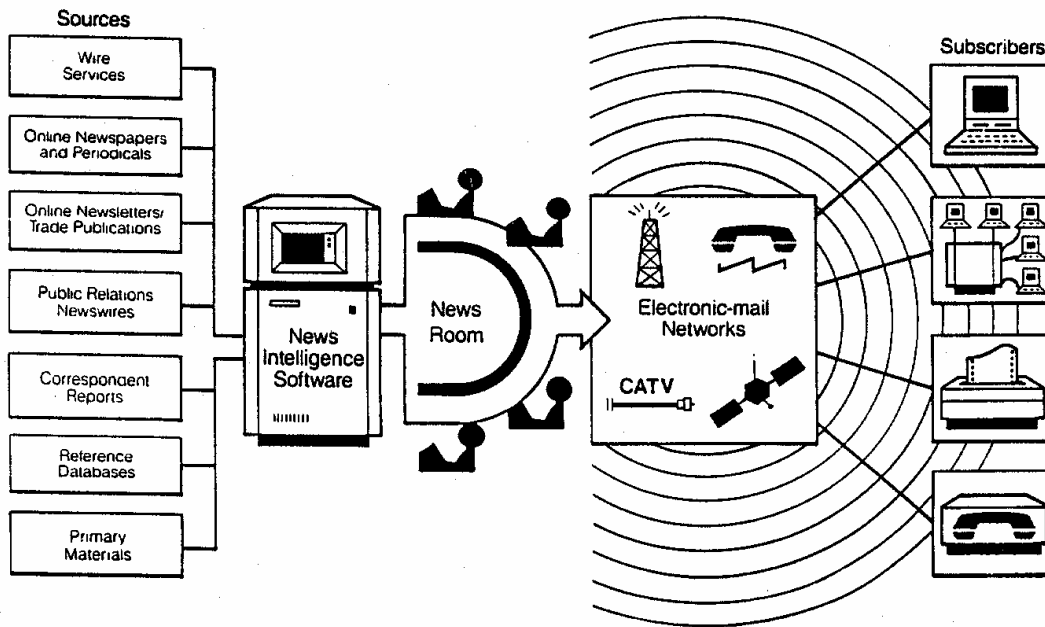
Certain enterprises not only combine but refine the content they receive, categorizing it by subject matter; summarizing it to highlight significant points; and incorporating it with internal sources of news, knowledge and comment to relate it specifically to enterprise interests.

The corporate communications office of United Technologies, Fuller explained, produces a daily “newsletter-like” service distributed across company divisions and down several levels of management. For similar purposes, MCI Worldcom employs the SageMaker News Machine at three different locations, configured to distribute Warren Publishing’s *Communications Daily* and Phillips’ telecom service, among other sources.

“Editorial facilities management”

By the end of his NEPA presentation, Fuller was wondering if these developments don’t reflect a trend toward some form of editorial “facilities management.” As an example, he cited Ann Arbor, Michigan-based Lone Buffalo <www.lonebuffalo.com>. Founded by a former *Detroit News* journalist, Dave Farrell, it “specializes in the custom delivery of news and information to Fortune 500 companies.”

Lone Buffalo, according to its website, uses the “latest software tools to gather the news” (referred to as NewsIntelligence Software in accompanying diagram). It draws from all the major wire services, all major U.S., many foreign and a “large volume of specialty and trade” publications, including Phillips’ defense and Aviation Week Newsletters’ aerospace titles. To this content, its editors apply their “news judgment and common sense [to] eliminate the duplication and irrelevant news” that is often received with “automated news services,” to deliver just what subscribers need.



The resulting products consist of headlines, story summaries, links to the full stories and searchable story archives. For Boeing Company, this consists of “a comprehensive

morning newsclip sheet” delivered to more than 150,000 employees worldwide. Receiving similar services are such accounts as Federal Express, Ford Motor, Gateway and Visteon.

To Fuller, the consulting arms of the major accounting firms also appear to be positioning themselves to the same end. For its consulting clients and client prospects, PricewaterhouseCoopers produces a series of free, publicly available services, among them **TelecomDirect** <www.telecomdirect.pwcglobal.com>. Drawn from lite versions of commNOW, Phillips and Warren content, among other sources, its coverage is organized into three “channels:” TelecomBUZZ, TelecomMANAGEMENT and TelecomTECHNOLOGY. Each can be customized by the individual recipient to focus on stories, for example, about just the wireless segment of the industry.

At its launch in January 1998 under the name Telecom Insider, Pointcast’s “push” technology was used to force-deliver the content to subscriber desktops. A year ago, an Internet web site was adopted, supplemented six months later by weekly and just recently by daily force-delivered emails, under the promotion slogan “News You Can Use.” Elsewhere within PricewaterhouseCoopers, industry practice groups employ similar editorial techniques to produce more robust services for internal use. While not yet directly available to the firm’s clients, one day they may be, if Fuller’s speculation proves out. Not to be outdone, Arthur Anderson, Ernst & Young and KPMG are undertaking similar initiatives.

Content tailored to each account’s specific needs

Finally as another example, Fuller acknowledged that even a technology vendor like SageMaker might turn to facilities management. It already produces an Information Management System that enhances the relevance of content retrieved from reference information databases. Based on an index-thesaurus “taxonomy” of industry terms, this is tailored to each account’s specific needs and use of industry terminology. Theoretically this “relevance engine” could be included in the news filter embedded in its News Machine technology.

As print communications of all kinds migrate from paper to desktop screens, newsletter publishing has been pressed to adopt and integrate many new practices. Most visibly, frequently hand-in-glove, site license marketing and sales now drive circulation efforts; internet web and email become the distribution channels of choice; and new methods of producing content undergird the editorial process.

Representing a long-term challenge to newsletter publishers are the new information management practices emerging behind enterprise firewalls - and the application of editorial talent to implement such practices.

Newsletter publishers nicely positioned

Already employing and accustomed to managing individuals with finely honed editorial skills, newsletter publishers may find opportunities to take over such operations through facilities management agreements - and in other ways to pursue what has been the mandate of newsletter publishing from the beginning - to gather, report and evaluate what's new in the world.

Under the name AccessNews, Stanley W. Stillman has developed a system to customize content to an individual recipient's specific interests. Integrating advanced technology with traditional newsroom editing and library indexing practices, it enables newsletter publishers, among others, to take advantage of Enterprise Information Portals. He recently represented the Fax Focus service bureau to the newsletter publishing industry. Accounts included National Journal and its 5-page, 1,300-subscriber daily newsletter, Congress Daily. Stanley previously directed the marketing and sales of BioWorld Today, an online service and daily fax-delivered newsletter. He has also conducted market research and product development studies for such clients as Dialog, Federal Filings, The Financial Times, Market News Service, Media General and United Newspapers. P.O. Box 7439, 211 Banbury Rd., Richmond, VA 23221. 804-358-0163, voice and fax; sws@accessnews.net

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