

MEI Celebrates 20 Years of Publishing Software Innovation

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Jenkintown, PA (January 19, 2010) — MEI, an Adobe premier development partner and a leading provider of software solutions for the publishing industry, celebrates its 20th anniversary this month. The company, known around the world for its flagship Page Director® Ad Layout System and throughout the Americas as the exclusive distributor of the vjooon K4 Publishing System, is proud to look back on its rich history and excited to look ahead toward a bright future.

“We’re pleased to be able to say that we’ve survived multiple economic downturns, technological collapses, fluctuations in the publishing industry, wars... ahh, the good times,” said Dennis McGuire, CEO and president. “Over the past 20 years, MEI has made it through everything that came our way.”

McGuire founded MEI in 1990 with Robert Baldwin, now senior vice president of engineering. Today, the company offers and continues to develop its own software in addition to selling and supporting K4. MEI boasts a user community of more than 2,400 publications in 53 countries.

When the company began, it was based on solving a few production problems to make life easier for those on deadline. In 1989, McGuire, who had prior experience in magazines and advertising, was graphics editor at the Philadelphia Daily News. In his spare time, he was developing an automated, electronic planning system that tracked married pages and content placement while managing color configurations; these complicated tasks normally required manual input from experienced people and a lot of lead time.

Meanwhile, Baldwin was working as an executive at Imprint Newspapers, a publishing and printing firm in Hartford, CT, and the first newspaper group to have an entirely Macintosh-based workflow. Baldwin was using his own homemade software, which he called Paginator, to manage ad layout for Imprint’s titles.

The two did not know each other, but they were independently building MEI’s first product.

After learning of each other’s projects and considering the possibilities of merging them into one commercial system, Baldwin and McGuire met and decided to collaborate. They spent the latter part of 1989 writing, designing and testing, using the increasingly popular Macintosh platform to ride the new wave of desktop publishing. In January 1990, they incorporated under the name Managing Editor Inc.

MEI debuted Page Director, its new editorial, advertising and page-planning solution, at several tradeshow that year to positive reviews and much interest. The company’s first customers were in Australia and the United Kingdom, which, since MEI was originally based out of McGuire’s suburban Philadelphia home, created a strange schedule of support calls at all hours.

It wasn’t long before MEI started to grow stateside, however. The company’s major breakthrough came when The Washington Post purchased Page Director along with QuarkXPress to produce its national weekly edition. Once MEI was able to point to the well-known U.S. paper as a customer, its user base expanded quickly, both nationally and internationally.

Many MEI customers focused on Page Director’s advertising layout features. The company took this into account while developing its next product, Ad Director, which would later be renamed Page Director Ad Layout System. ALS quickly became MEI’s flagship product and is used by more publishers worldwide than any other ad-layout solution today.

Another major milestone was MEI’s development of an entirely automated production workflow system at The Daily Racing Form. Thanks to a customized version of Page Director, The Daily Racing Form was able to automatically perform a full day’s worth of manual work in just a few minutes and eventually produced more than 2,000 pages per day for more than 100

zones.

This specialized job evolved into MEI's Page Director Classified Layout System (CLS), the world's most complex and powerful classified pagination system at the time — so powerful, in fact, that MEI had to purchase special Apple hardware to demonstrate it. Employees would be forced to lug the computer in a special carrying case for demos, sometimes even buying it a companion seat on flights. (Some also demanded the computer's in-flight meals.)

“We knew the hardware would catch up with the software, but we would already be prepared for it, and that kept us at the forefront of the industry,” said senior vice president of business development Mark Leister, a longtime MEI employee and former travel companion to the specialized CLS machine. “That's exactly the kind of forward thinking that has helped MEI stay ahead of the curve for the past two decades.”

MEI received special recognition in 1999 and 2000, when it was named a laureate in the Computerworld Smithsonian Collection. The company's Roundhouse® Ad Tracking System and Page Director Ad Layout System have both been honored by the Smithsonian in its permanent collection.

MEI took another significant step forward in 2002 when it joined forces with German software company vjooon as the exclusive distributor of the K4 Publishing System in the Americas. Expanding into the world of editorial workflow represented a new direction for MEI, which had previously focused mainly on planning and ad production. Since then, MEI has managed implementation, training and support of K4 in its region, which now includes more than 150 K4 installations and more than 9,700 users.

Looking ahead, McGuire said he's eager to see continued growth at MEI.

“As we've grown over the years, we've always recognized the need to adapt to changes in the publishing industry and capitalize on them,” McGuire said. “That's still our plan for the future: to always have a willingness to adapt.”

About MEI

Managing Editor Inc. is an industry leader in the development of quality, proven software solutions for the evolving publishing industry. The Page Director Series of Advertising and Classified Layout Systems, K4 Publishing System, Integrated Production Suite (IPS) and IPS AdTrac deliver automated pagination, workflow and digital asset management solutions to newspaper and magazine publishers, as well as to other print and electronic publishing markets. MEI is an Adobe premier development partner and has twice been named a laureate of the Computerworld Smithsonian Collections. Additional information regarding MEI's products and services can be found on the company's Web site at www.maned.com.

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