



CASE STUDY

Detroit Diesel Corporation, a Daimler Company

Vasont® Content Management System Provides a Return on Investment in Less than One Year

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THE CHALLENGE

Detroit Diesel Corporation (DDC), a subsidiary of Daimler that designs, manufactures, and services heavy-duty diesel and alternative fuel engines, offers a complete line of engines from 22 to 10,000 horsepower for the marine, military, construction, industrial, generator-set, mining, trucking, and automotive markets.

Having numerous departments and servicing its customers through a worldwide network of more than 1,900 authorized distributor and dealer locations, content became a critical component impacting DDC's business initiatives. Recognizing that it needed to take control of its dispersed content, DDC created a department to manage all service information more than 10 years ago. This department is now part of an organization named Documentation and Publication Development.

The Documentation and Publication Development (D&P) department manages the vast amount of information existing within four other DDC departments—Engineering, Application Engineering, Parts Technical Group, and National Service Group—and serves as their in-house support group. Comprised of eight writers, five cataloging analysts, one cataloging supervisor and one departmental manager, the D&P department manages approximately 200,000 pages of content and more than 36,000 graphic image files. The D&P department is responsible for maintaining the engine service manuals and supporting documentation, including application and installation manuals, troubleshooting guides, and special publications. These documents are written in SGML and are published in print, Web, CD-ROM, and PDF formats.

With limited manpower to create and manage service information, DDC was struggling with a content management system that did not meet their needs. To accomplish their goals, DDC continually built custom workarounds for the failing content management system; this process quickly became very expensive due to both custom programming costs and the cost of system downtime. Eventually, the company that developed the content management software was sold, and the new company did not support the software.

DDC was also forced to work with an outdated version of editing software since their old content management system could not integrate with the software's new releases. With two pieces of outdated software incurring more and more costs, DDC realized that it had to revamp its content management system to better handle its massive amount of content.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating several content management systems, DDC's D&P department quickly selected the Vasont Content Management System (CMS), a component-based system for multi-channel publishing. The Vasont CMS handles multilingual content from creation to publishing in all media formats—print, mobile, Web, and others—unlike other systems that handle only Web format.

The Challenge:

Replace an outdated content management system to better handle massive amounts of content with limited manpower and to provide integration with editing software.

The Solution:

The Vasont CMS provides accurate reuse for frequent multichannel publishing of a large amount of content.

“Because we are continually revising our service manuals, application manuals, and supporting documentation and then publishing to multiple media channels, we found that the Vasont CMS’s multichannel publishing capabilities really met our needs,” said Kevin Holland, Detroit Diesel Corporation’s Manager of Documentation and Publication Development.

The implementation of the Vasont CMS was quick and easy for DDC. Once the collections of content were built, it only took DDC two days to install the software and load their content into the repository.

DDC is leveraging the Vasont CMS to publish its service manuals and application manuals in print versions, Web applications (extranet and Internet), CD-ROMs, and emerging new medias in three languages: English, Spanish, and French. Because the system is Web-enabled, users work from remote locations as well as the home office.

“A key strength of the Vasont CMS is that it allows us to produce more documents with less staff resources,” Holland said. “We can republish updated or new content on demand and be confident in the accuracy of our technical data.”

THE BENEFITS

DDC has already found the Vasont CMS to be a valuable resource because of its return on investment (ROI) and its ability to quickly improve the Company’s workflow efficiencies. In less than a year of implementing the Vasont CMS, DDC has seen a savings of more than \$174,400 in outside expenses alone with a payback of 11 months.

The Benefits:
The Vasont CMS provides content integrity and security, repurposing capabilities, and measurable overhead cost savings.

“The Vasont CMS saves us money in two ways: First, it gives us the ability to better manage our limited manpower resources and technical data,” Holland said. “Second, it eliminates expensive customizations and workarounds, which was a major problem with our old system.”

By implementing the Vasont CMS to manage their technical documentation, DDC realized an improvement in their overall productivity of an estimated 60-70% in less than three months. These results are attributed to the Vasont CMS’s ease of use and having less system downtime. Additionally, these productivity gains reduced their cycle time to produce new documentation by 25%. In addition to a speedy ROI, the Vasont CMS has provided DDC with the following benefits:

- ▼ *Publishing content on demand.* The Vasont CMS enables DDC to publish content in multiple media formats, including print, CD-ROM, and the Web.
- ▼ *Increase in content integrity.* The Vasont CMS stores content only once, ensuring that the content reuse will always be accurate and complete. As data is added or updated in the system, the Vasont CMS automatically identifies if this content component is new or has already been used somewhere else, even across different types of documents. “Because the Vasont CMS stores our content once, it eliminates duplicate data and gives us the ability to accurately maintain the data integrity when we make changes to the content,” said Anthony Dell’Eva, Technical Writer and Database Administrator for DDC.

- ▼ *Better communication between internal staff.* The Vasont CMS allowed DDC to better communicate their standards and writing techniques between the various service groups, which has contributed to more accurate documentation.
- ▼ *Remote user access.* Because the Vasont CMS is Web-enabled, multiple users can access, update, and edit content from any location. “Remote access was a major reason for procuring Vasont,” Dell’Eva said. “We have the potential to have remote access with our corporate headquarters, Daimler, and with the Documentation and Publication Development department’s contract vendors.”
- ▼ *Security of content.* The Vasont CMS allows DDC’s system administrator to ensure that only authorized users throughout the organization can manipulate the content.
- ▼ *Graphics management.* With over 36,000 graphical entities needed to support DDC’s required deliverables, the Vasont CMS manages these graphics as well as the text components. Graphics are stored once and reused many times across multiple products. “Graphics have been a logistical nightmare,” Holland said. “The Vasont CMS solved this problem for us by allowing us to store and manage the graphics in a more efficient and organized way.”
- ▼ *Multi-language management.* The Vasont CMS’s full Unicode support (UTF-8 and UTF-16) enables DDC to securely manage their documentation in multiple languages for distribution internationally. Additionally, they are able to easily track the multiple versions of their multilingual content and ensure it is valid.
- ▼ *Technical support.* Vasont Systems’ technical team provides assistance and support to ensure that DDC is maximizing the system’s potential and customizing it to fit the Company’s needs. “Vasont Systems’ technical support team is also a valuable asset,” Dell’Eva said. “Having knowledgeable people who are trained and well versed with our business philosophy has enabled the transition from our legacy system and implementation of the Vasont CMS to be seamless and cost-effective.”

As a result of the Vasont CMS’s fast payback and other benefits, DDC has increased their volume of content in the Vasont CMS by 40% since its implementation. In addition, DDC’s D&P department is recommending the Vasont CMS for other DDC departments.

“The Vasont CMS is a corporate asset with measurable manpower and overhead cost savings,” said Dell’Eva. “As the database administrator, I have realized the satisfaction of being able to provide Detroit Diesel’s Documentation and Publication Development authors with a secure, dependable, state-of-the-art content management system that provides multi-channel publishing capabilities and easy integration with composition and authoring tools.”

Vasont Systems provides component content management software and XML data services to Fortune 1,000 companies and global organizations from a variety of industries, including manufacturing, technology, publishing, financial, and healthcare. Since 1992, Vasont Systems has helped companies organize their critical business assets, manage productivity, and disseminate information in many languages to multiple media channels while reducing their costs by an average of 63% and shortening overall cycle times by 75% on average. The Company has been named multiple times to the EContent 100 list of “best and brightest digital content companies.” Vasont Systems is a member of the [TransPerfect](#) family of companies. For more information, visit www.vasont.com.