



Case Study The Toronto Star

Overview:

The Toronto Star is Canada's largest daily newspaper, reaching over 2.2 million readers each week. From an archive of almost one million images, covering local, national and international events for the past 100 years, Torstar Syndication Services offers reprints and rights-managed licences for more than 60,000 Toronto Star photographs, using Third Light's IMS software.

<http://www.torstarphotos.com>



TORONTO STAR

“ The IMS application has given us all of the features on our ‘ecommerce site wish list’, and much more. In addition, from the first communication, the entire Third Light team has been unfailingly helpful, professional, receptive and responsive to our needs and requests, and a pleasure to work with.

Since the launch of our new Toronto Star Photo & Page Sales site, we have received many words of appreciation from our clients. They praise the site’s clean and attractive appearance, and its user-friendliness. We are thrilled to have an application that allows us to quickly and easily deliver the top quality services and products that our customers deserve. We would recommend Third Light, and the IMS application, without any hesitation. ”

Claire Wollen - Manager
Torstar Syndication Services, Toronto Star Newspapers Limited



Solution breakdown: Key IMS functionality

On-demand Print and Download Sales

The Toronto Star online archive is offered for two main types of buyer: members of the public can visit the site to purchase high-quality photo reprints, while business users can register to access a rights managed library for commercial re-use of valuable photo stock. IMS offers exceptional convenience by providing a single front end web application to provide both print and licensing functions - the result is a large saving in time and significant cost savings compared to running two separate systems.

Easy Access to Latest Photos

Time-indexed Smart Folders powered by IMS allow all new photos to be displayed in a "Latest Photos" gallery, saving time and providing direct access to the current and popular images found in the daily newspaper.

Integrated Search Engine

IMS automatically imports industry standard metadata, which is consistently provided by editorial and library departments at the Toronto Star. Using this information, IMS offers natural language search, advanced search and date search features that elevate the collection into a powerful database of published photos. Customers enjoy exceptional convenience, with instantaneous, relevant results and hyperlinked keywords. At any time, administrators can edit IPTC and Adobe™ XMP fields for individual pictures, or bulk-edit groups of photos to save time.

Online Storage

The IMS solution incorporates hundreds of gigabytes of secure, fast and reliable disk storage, providing ample capacity for growth. Joint planning and projections enabled Torstar to make a specific investment in the right equipment, protecting a valuable asset and ensuring long, uninterrupted uptime.

Photo Tracking and Downloads

Corporate clients, publishers, syndicates and other regular buyers can all be independently configured in the IMS database. Using separate client accounts allows flexibility over pricing preferences, and allows Torstar staff to change a customer's download privileges or quotas whenever necessary. Additionally, the information generated by customer activity leads to detailed statistical reports, graphs and audit logs. As a result, IMS can provide per-customer reports as well as overall trends in search and browsing behaviour.

Newspaper Process Integration

IMS is automatically populated with new photo stocks from the central image database at Torstar. Files are delivered to the IMS system using FTP across the corporate network. Pictures are processed and resized automatically on arrival, ready for approval. Torstar Syndication Services also distributes images to external clients, using the Third Light Outbound FTP module, highlighting IMS's capabilities as a fully-featured image hub with next generation features.

Technology and Servers

The Toronto Star IMS solution is professionally managed Linux server, hosted in the Toronto Star data centre, and connected to a fast local area network. As well as ensuring physical security of the system, this means that the image library can be accessed quickly internally, and can be backed up using in-house archives. Staff can reach the photo library directly, while members of the public reach the server using a secure firewalled connection.

Customisations, Branding and Delivery

The www.torstarphotos.com page design and templates, national tax regulations and credit card payment services were integrated by Third Light as part of the delivery. In addition to these programming services, Third Light provided project management and acceptance testing to ensure a robust solution was deployed, minimising risks. A training workshop for key staff at Torstar Syndication Services was completed on site during the installation phase in Toronto, and included a database workshop for IT staff.

Sales Order Management

Handling e-commerce transactions and order fulfilment is simple with IMS, thanks to a completely integrated sales order management process. Ordering works in harmony with the user and picture databases, and provides straightforward, click-through inspection of order items and delivery states (including giving the customer access to shipping information). With specific processes for print and rights-managed sales, IMS is able to offer flexibility over pricing, product variations, volume discounts and easily understood crop and fit boxing. IMS also handles both credit card and invoice payments, with data exports for financial managers as well as its own, built-in order reporting.

About Third Light

Third Light is a software and internet services business based in Cambridge, UK. Our core business is to develop and host specialist software for online image archival, galleries and collaboration, while minimising technical complexity. Key clients include Xstrata AG (Switzerland), Cambridge University, Nike, Inc., Cisco and many other smaller businesses. We have supplied web-based asset management tools to businesses since forming in April 2002.

Third Light's Intelligent Media Server (IMS) is a self-contained software product for corporations, marketing departments, media agencies and image libraries, that allows digital content to be managed and stored, displayed and shared using the web. IMS has been widely used in a variety of sectors around the globe, including e-commerce as well as traditional digital asset management applications. To find out more about our flexible approach to media databases, please visit our web site.

Please visit thirdlight.com for a free trial of IMS, including the e-commerce options used by Torstar, or call 01223 475674 to arrange a meeting and demonstration.