

A Tale of Two Workflow Solutions: One Simple, One Not - Yet Both Good

Insights



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July 18, 2011

Two new applications available on Apple's mobile devices highlight the breadth of options available as information providers look to integrate their content with workflow.

Important Details: Factiva, the business intelligence offering from Dow Jones, recently unveiled a new iPad application that caps off a series of investments the company has made to maintain its leadership position as the provider of premium licensed content to the enterprise. As part of its recent product refresh, the iPad application takes advantage of improvements to Factiva's user interface that include graphical presentations of content that utilize an analytic layer placed on top of the content itself. In addition, the company has continued to invest in the content layer which now

includes significant non-English sources including 100 in Arabic. In all, it now offers 19 million company profiles as well as news from 31,000 sources in 26 languages.

Other announcements include a new feature for Copyright Clearance Center's Rightslink offering which is included with a mobile version of CHEST, the journal of the American College of Chest Physicians. When a reader of an article on the iPad or iPhone version clicks on the share button at the bottom of the app, among the short list of usual options is one offering "Get Permissions". Clicking that link opens a CCC branded window tied to the Rightslink service enabling a full range of options to secure additional rights that is synchronized with an individual's account.

Implications: Integrating information product offerings into existing workflow continues to be a worthwhile goal of many publishers looking to secure their value in the enterprise. Yet doing so can be challenging as developers tend to define the effort in terms of what the ultimate solution might look like rather than where current habits reside today. For the largest information providers with deep pockets, longer investment horizons, and a multitude of existing content touch points, such an ambitious approach may work, but for the vast majority of publishers such efforts, no matter how well defined, will likely never reach critical adoption to justify ongoing support. Faced with this, the alternative often appears to be abandon the effort and simply live with the status quo.

However, these two approaches demonstrate that workflow, like many aspects of the publishing industry, is a both/and world. Factiva's approach, as a preeminent licensed content aggregator, can be one that attempts to secure its spot as an ultimate workflow tool, the go-to place for senior executives and strategy professionals looking to keep abreast of emerging market trends. The visual intuitive interface layered atop a robust full content repository means that a user immediately finds a trusted

companion when they pick up their iPad. Such capabilities come at a premium price, but for those whose time is highly valuable the additional cost is a very reasonable expense as it enables users to quickly monitor key competitors or trends, diving deeper when the need arises.

At the opposite end of the workflow spectrum is the new feature from CCC. While in practice it is little more than a well placed bridge to Rightslink, the potential impact for end user workflow is much greater. For researchers with the content they want and the occasional need to share this content formally, CCC's embedded link is perfectly placed. Occupying scarce and therefore precious real estate within the sharing functionality of an iOS app, this "Get Permissions" link sits alongside other standard workflow tasks such as emailing a link or bookmarking the content elsewhere. As such, it is a simple extension of an existing practice yet perfectly positioned to succeed. It would be surprising if this solution or something similar didn't become ubiquitous for every paid content provider targeting mobile devices such as the iPad.

By recognizing the role each of their offerings play, both Factiva and CCC have targeted the appropriate platform to engage. In doing so, each makes significant strides in becoming indispensable in the daily lives of their target users which is the ultimate driver behind this notion of embedded workflow. Publishers and information providers are advised to seek similar strategies, and to recognize that while owning the entire end user experience is ideal, most publishers will be better suited developing the perfect plug-in to reside on someone else's platform. Said another way, sometimes positioning oneself at the end is the best way to finish ahead.

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