



Contact: Peter Resele

Phone: Office +49 (8105) 779390

email: peter.resele@comyan.com



Image System for Times of India

About the Times of India

Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. is the largest media group in India, owned by the Sahu Jain family, also known as The Times Group. It is best known as the publisher of the English daily The Times of India. With a circulation of about 2.6 million daily copies, Times of India is the largest English-language broadsheet newspaper in the world. The company also publishes The Economic Times (a leading financial broadsheet), Mumbai Mirror, the Navbharat Times (a Hindi daily broadsheet), Sandhya Times, and the Maharashtra Times (a Marathi daily broadsheet). The combined circulation is about 4.3 million copies per day. Furthermore it publishes general interest magazines like Femina and Filmfare.

The Times Group has very recently added TIMES NOW a 24-hour English news channel to its chain of news organisations, together with Reuters. It owns Radio Mirchi, a popular FM Radio brand in India, and Indiatimes, a popular Indian portal.

Bennett Coleman owns 11 publishing centers and 15 printing centers all over India, and employs about 7000 people.

System Specifications

- Two servers (cluster), Pentium Xeon dual processor 2.8 GHz in Kandivli, Mumbai
- 1.5 TB iSCSI storage array
- separate DRS server in Delhi
- Comyan Image System
- Comyan Agency Text System

Facts and Figures

- 850 users
- 3.500 images and graphics received per day
- 850 images and graphics produced per day

Situation

When the technical group of Times of India approached Comyan, they envisaged having a central infrastructure for storing all the images and digital assets of the company. Before the implementation of the project, this was not available. Instead, every center was doing their own archiving, resulting in many duplicates and inconsistent archiving policies. Furthermore, agency feeds had to be replicated across the country.

With 11 centers all over the sub-continent and an initial number of 700 users this was not an easy task. The data network recently had been upgraded, allowing very good http connections. This enabled all users within the BCCL network simply using their browsers to access central server infrastructure in Kandivili, Mumbai.

Comyan's Solution

During the initial meeting with Comyan, the scope of the solution quickly became clear. To further ensure viability, it was decided to make a test installation for a period of three months. During the trial, all the goals set for the project were verified and finally, a very positive report was issued. The project group recalls: "The editors were really enthusiastic about the search speed and the ease of use of the system".

A high-performance two-server cluster was sufficient for supporting 700 initial users and at the same time offering a very high availability. As a further safety net, a third server was installed in Delhi acting as a DRS system.

As soon as the images and graphics feeds from the news agencies and staff were connected, the system was up

and running and could be accessed from any point in TOI's network.

It is very important that there is no distinction between received images for daily production and archived images and graphics - all assets can be searched within the system and are found in the same result list. Archiving an image simply means a click & a status change. This is possible due to the very high performance of the search engine, so that the separation of production and archiving system is no longer necessary.

The Comyan Media System already offered the enterprise-grade functionality to administer the record of 180 different publications, while granting individual rights to the respective user groups in the centers.

Wide-area Image Workflow

Comyan quickly adapted the Image Workflow to TOI's pre-press requirements, enabling all editors to order pictures that are then transmitted and processed in the responsible pre-press department. Immediately after the editor orders a picture, the layout editor is able to place the cropped and watermarked picture on the page. After the pre-press department has finished processing, the image is automatically updated in the layout.

The roll-out was greatly eased by the fact that no local software installation at the centers was necessary. The existing web-browsers on the user's computer is sufficient once they got the access rights. Training was fast and efficient since the system is very intuitive to use and follows the paradigms that users already known from the Internet.

Client-specific developments

In two areas, minor custom developments were necessary to accommodate specific requirements of BCCL. For the archival workflow, a facility was added that automatically routes the images suggested for archiving to the responsible archiving department. Additionally, a number of user reports for management were implemented on the basis of a commercial reporting framework, integrated within the web application.

Installation and Rollout

The installation of the trial system, including the initial training of the administrators and IT staff, was done in as little as a week. After that, a 3-months trial was carried out with editorial staff in Mumbai.

A very comprehensive internal report was issued that strongly recommended the system.

After the buying decision was finally taken, the system was installed in Mumbai during a period of two weeks.

The rollout all over India was completed only three months later - and since then, 850 users are very successfully using the system for the daily production of Times of India, Economic Times and other publications.

Project Status

In 2006, Times of India ordered the Comyan Agency Text module for 1300 users - making all text agencies available for everybody in the same fast and user-friendly system. After implementation of customizations in spring 2007, the module will again be rolled out to the users.