



Actifio virtualizes big data.

Innovative data management company publishes documentation using Adobe Technical Communication Suite to stay on pace with rapid customer growth.

actifio

"People at Actifio are empowered to make things happen fast. Adobe FrameMaker enables us to add value to the company by rapidly vetting new content, and by providing more ways to reduce costs and improve operations."

John Sgammato, Documentation Architect, Actifio



SOLUTION

Adobe Technical Communication Suite

RESULTS



PUBLISHING SPEED

Production of technical manuals is now completed in days versus the months previously required; select customers can receive new procedures the same day



INTEGRATION

Scripting enables import of content from FrameMaker directly into Salesforce knowledge base



CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Customer support staff serves a rapidly growing customer base and closes more help tickets faster—now in minutes versus days



CONSISTENCY

Use of templates, variables, and list generation helps ensure content is consistent across document sets

Actifio

Established in 2009

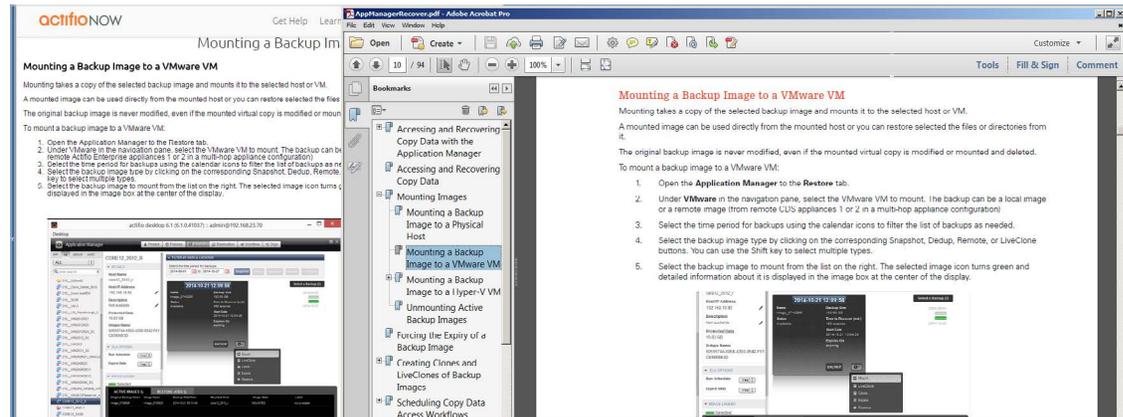
Employees: 400

Boston, Massachusetts

www.actifio.com

CHALLENGES

- Stay ahead of company's rapid growth rate
- Accelerate technical publishing cycle
- Improve customer service



Hosting data to the cloud

Actifio provides enterprise customers with a data virtualization platform that decouples data from infrastructure to improve resilience, agility, and access. By virtualizing data in favor of siloed data management applications, Actifio's customers can extract data, protect it, and use it to gain business continuity and to derive critical insights more efficiently—anywhere, anytime.

Using a single, continuously updated copy of enterprise data and creating virtual copies for recovery, backup, and analytics, Actifio has partnered with IBM, SunGard, and other global companies in more than 35 countries. Customer implementations feature a platform where a single golden copy of a company's data is virtualized and hosted in the cloud, easing the burden on distant cold storage infrastructures.

Publishing technical documentation, Help systems, and training modules to keep pace with Actifio's rapid customer acquisition rate, and where the number of employees has grown fourfold in two years, is daunting, according to Actifio's Documentation Architect, John Sgammato. Sgammato oversees a team of five technical writers who use components of Adobe Technical Communication Suite—including Adobe FrameMaker, Adobe RoboHelp, Adobe Captivate, and Adobe Acrobat—to rapidly deliver documentation and online Help systems for hundreds of procedures to an audience of network and storage system administrators.

Actifio is adding products and customers faster than it is adding technical writers. "Adobe FrameMaker is the only tool that enables our small publishing team to keep up with the steep growth trajectory at Actifio because of how fast we can work and how readily we can onboard high-level writers," says Sgammato.

“Our previous system sufficed when we had months to produce technical content, but now we sometimes have only minutes to provide the kind of sophisticated support that our customers have come to expect.”

John Sgammato, Documentation Architect, Actifio

Off DITA into the knowledge base

Prior to working with Adobe FrameMaker and Technical Communication Suite, Actifio used a DITA system and was writing code in Oxygen. The company found that DITA required significant overhead, was too constraining for the agility that the team sought, and it was hard to find DITA authors. Tapping into the extensive FrameMaker community was a much more effective way for Sgammato to source highly efficient veteran writers who can onboard easily.

“Our previous system sufficed when we had months to produce technical content, but now we sometimes have only minutes to provide the kind of sophisticated support that our customers have come to expect,” says Sgammato, who migrated the writing operation in the technical publishing process to an unstructured FrameMaker implementation to gain speed, keep cost of ownership low, and to help ensure consistency across document sets.

The biggest win for Actifio is the ability to integrate technical documents authored in FrameMaker into the company’s Salesforce knowledge base, which is the primary tool used by the company’s support team. Routinely, the support team closes over 50% of its cases using the knowledge base, but in one month, a support team member closed 80% of his cases because the knowledge base content is so relevant and easily retrievable.

Previously, it would take an average of half a day to close a case. Now it takes minutes. Such improvement is due in large part to the simplicity in FrameMaker to restructure chapters and link cross-references. In two years, the Actifio support staff grew from serving 100 customers to over 500 customers. “Using the knowledge base, our customer support team can do more with less than ever before, resulting in reduced headcount requirements while also providing better service to more customers,” says Sgammato.

From an end user viewpoint, Actifio customers benefit from product documentation that helps them solve problems fast. Some customers are at dark sites with no online access and need PDF files delivered—while others want a web-based solution. “We can do both at the same time. Adobe Technical Communication Suite enables PDF generation without disruption to generating online solutions,” says Sgammato.

Innovative, integrated workflow

The top three features in FrameMaker that are most valuable to the technical writing team are ease of cross-referencing, the ability to link to and publish via RoboHelp, and the robustness of ExtendScript. The way Sgammato works is to add custom markers to content in FrameMaker. He then publishes unstructured content from FrameMaker to XHTML via Mif2go and runs scripts written in ExtendScript to produce ZIP files that get imported into the Salesforce knowledge base. The custom markers become content filters in the knowledge base.

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Technical Communication Suite. Components used include:
 - Adobe FrameMaker
 - Adobe RoboHelp
 - Adobe Captivate
 - Adobe Acrobat

The team also makes extensive use of templates, the indexing and glossary generating capabilities in FrameMaker, and uses variables to handle repetitious data such as product names and document names within a set. Documents are centrally managed and archived through a file system that can be accessed from anywhere.

PDF documents are published directly into Actifio's flagship data virtualization product as well as into a new cloud-based data storage offering. Another product in the pipeline will include an online support system created with RoboHelp by publishing linked content authored in FrameMaker.

Documentation of value to firm

Product documentation and the knowledge base are regarded as important customer-facing features of Actifio's marketing strategy and a key means of reducing support costs. Additionally, the company's sales team uses a variety of technical documents throughout the sales cycle. Often, writers rapidly create technical briefs for a new feature deployed at a single customer site and later absorb it into that customer's document set when the feature is finalized.

Moving ahead, the team is exploring use of Adobe Captivate to enrich procedures with animations instead of static screen captures. Having seen what the writing team has done with Adobe Technical Communication Suite, the training team at Actifio is eager to adopt it—estimating that they could cut course development time in half using Adobe Captivate.

"People at Actifio are empowered to make things happen fast. Adobe FrameMaker enables us to add value to the company by rapidly vetting new content, and by providing more ways to reduce costs and improve operations," says Sgammato.

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/technicalcommunicationsuite.html



Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
www.adobe.com

Adobe, the Adobe logo, Acrobat, Captivate, FrameMaker, and RoboHelp are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.