

The Ovidius GmbH content management system in use at Bachmann electronic Fair winds with XML

Bachmann electronic GmbH, headquartered in Feldkirch, Austria, has emerged over the last decades as an international high-tech automation company with offices in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. Bachmann is continuing its expansion strategy with new branch offices in China, India and the USA. At the same time, technical documentation requirements are constantly increasing. Instructions material and manuals have to be issued for every product and every product variant in the respective national language. In order to be able to meet the challenge head on, Bachmann relies on data management in XML (Extensible Markup Language) and the content management system Ovidius TCToolbox.

Bachmann electronic has been designing, producing and marketing automation solutions in the hardware/software sector for almost forty years. All over the world, leading firms in mechanical engineering, construction and in power and environment engineering are currently using Bachmann controllers in their systems. In the wind power sector, the automation specialists' integrated system solutions have become the industry standard and established the company itself as the market leader with a market share of approximately 40 %.

Technical editing at Bachmann electronic

The demands that the operation of modern wind power installations make on control systems are immense. Environmental conditions, temperatures, hydraulic values and rotational speeds have to be constantly monitored in order to be able to intervene in a timely manner when dealing with critical values. In addition to control tasks there are data processing, measurement and adjustment setting tasks that have to be dealt with concurrently. For this purpose, a process computer with control units is required, which among other things adjusts the position of the rotor blades to the wind supply in real-time. At the same time, communication with higher-level networks, such as the wind farm master computer, has to be ensured. The complexity of such automation solutions is mirrored by the enormous amount of technical documentation. According to the company's portfolio, there are two ranges of technical documentation: the description of hardware components, which generally involves performance parameters, input, output and maintenance, and the description of software components to the extent that these are equipped with a user interface. According to Bachmann's documentation, the software component, including libraries and programming environment, comprises some 75 percent.



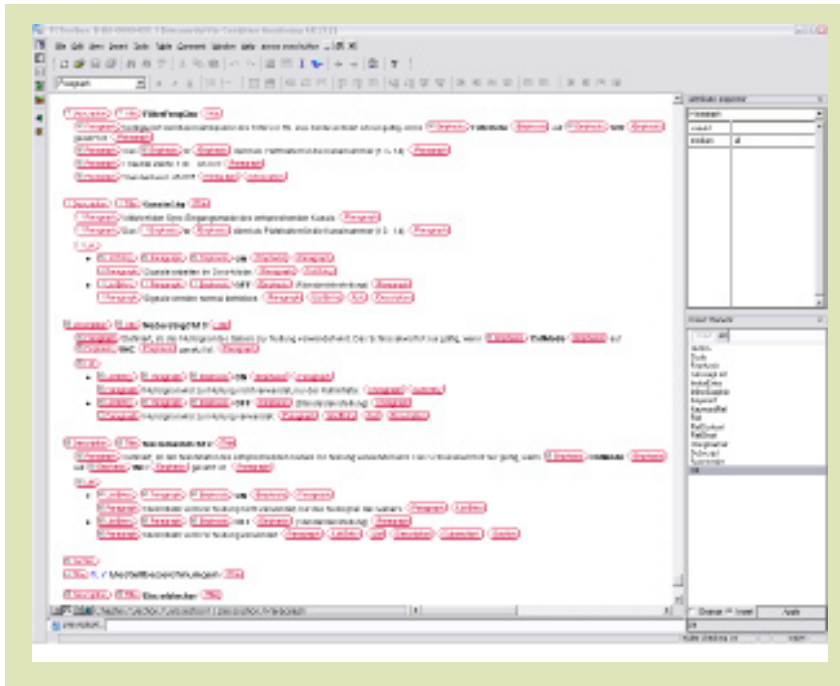
About Ovidius

Ovidius is based in Berlin, Germany, and specialises in XML and SGML software solutions for creating, managing, and publishing of technical and scientific information. We help companies with complex documentation requirements, e.g. automotive, mechanical engineering, software "manufacturers", aviation and defence, medical engineering and IT companies.

This article was first published November 2008 in the German study „Efficient Information Management with specialized Content Management Systems” by tekomp – Europe's largest professional association for technical communication.

From Word to XML

Carsten Regehly, project manager for technical documentation at Bachmann, is responsible for the smooth operation of the “Technical Communications” department. “Before we decided to introduce a content management system, every piece of documentation in the file system had to be checked”, the technical editor reports. “This was not only extremely complicated, it increasingly entailed additional problems, particularly when it came to assigning



TCToolbox Screenshot Editing (XMetaL Author) with Tags-On-View.

the respective translations for the various documents.” Due to Bachmann’s international orientation, many different languages have to be covered. In addition to English, Chinese and Hindi are planned for the future as Asian markets are developed. In order to ensure future-oriented management of the ever increasing amount of data, as well as a cost-efficient and simple integration of the translation process, a switch to another system was inevitable.

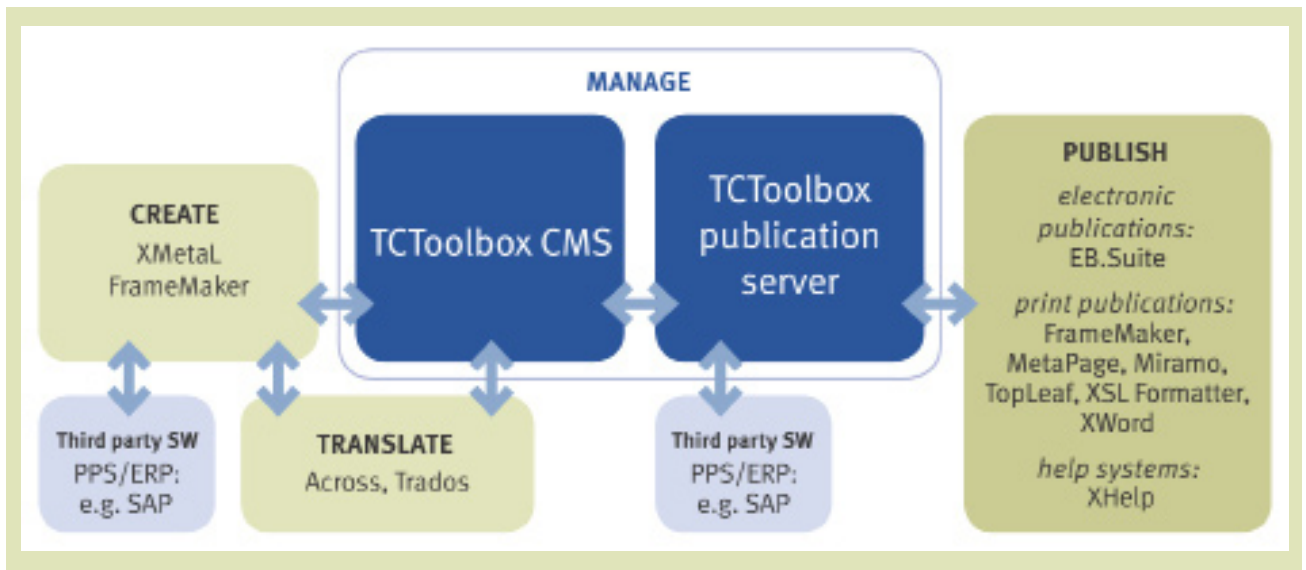
Content Management System unlocks savings potential

Bachmann counted on the data format XML for the realisation of their challenging plan. Data in XML is media neutral so that documents can be published in various output formats without any difficulty. Interacting with the editing system, XML makes it possible to organise large amounts of documentation in modules. These can be edited by several editors simultaneously and reused in various contexts. The translation process is simplified considerably at the same time: Owing to modularisation it is possible to commit to translation only those text blocks that have changed since the last translation.

In order to harness these reappliation possibilities separately, Bachmann decided to use the XML based content management system by Ovidius headquartered in Berlin, Germany. “With TCToolbox Workgroup Edition, Ovidius provides a solution that’s particularly tailored to smaller technical editing departments like ours. In addition to the cost performance ratio, the solution’s “user friendliness” convinced us more than anything”, Regehly describes the decision making process.

With TCToolbox Workgroup Edition, editing processes can be optimised and automated in a standardised manner. The integrated XML editor, XMetaL, is used to create and edit the modules. A preconfigured DTD (Document Type Definition) covers the most important requirements within the technical documentation. At the same time, TCToolbox enables the integration of third-party systems. An interface to the Across translation memory system is integrated as standard. Translation jobs can thus be fed out of TCToolbox into Across, their status queried and be imported back into TCToolbox upon completion. Inconvenient exports manually transmitted by email and the importing of translated fragments are thus a thing of the past.

Before Bachmann could put the editing system into operation, the old data had to be converted. “For this job we tasked Ovidius to write a converter in order not to have to convert the data manually from Word to XML”, Regehly recalls. “After that, this converter was operational so quickly that we were able to complete the data conversion in no time.” The subsequent installation of TCToolbox proceeded just as quickly. “The entire conversion – from the initial contact in October of 2006 to the actual use of the software – took a few months”, says Regehly regarding the collaboration with Ovidius GmbH.



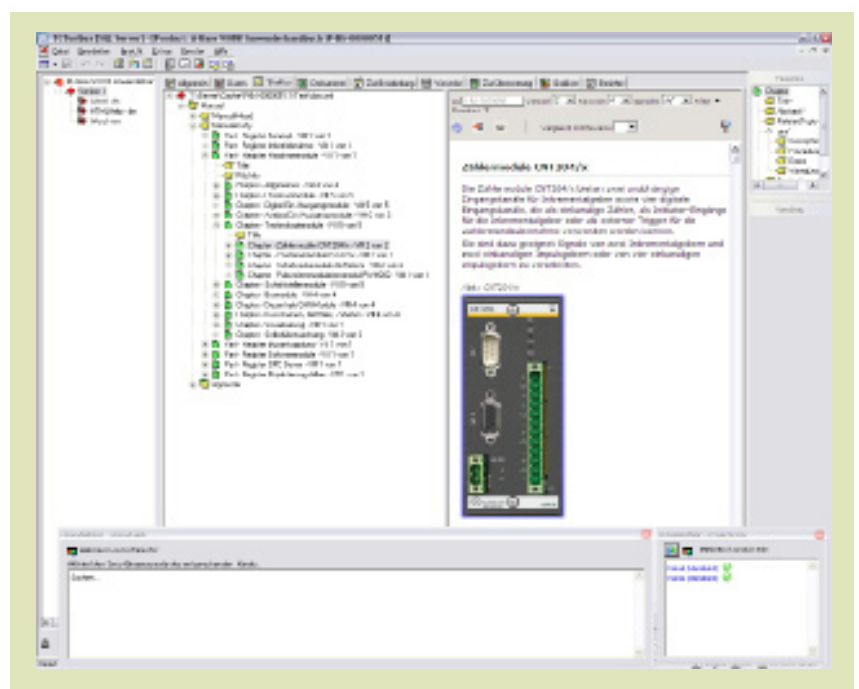
Overview Ovidius TCToolbox and additional components

Flexible publications


TCToolbox has been making the day-to-day work of the technical editors easier since the beginning of last year. “The time saving is really huge. Publishing the old way, it took us a week per language. With the editing system we turn out two languages a day”, according to Regehly. Moreover, pieces of translated text do not have to be retypeset. Thanks to the use of XML, the layout is not altered during the translation process.

In addition to texts, large graphics form a part of Bachmann’s documentation; they are in the gigabyte range in various resolutions and formats. Using TCToolbox, which also manages graphics, the editing department always keeps the overview of which graphics are integrated in which product descriptions . As graphics are treated as independent objects, exactly like text blocks, they can be used in the same way as text fragments (XML).

A further innovation that has gained a foothold at Bachmann involving TC-Toolbox is the electronic preparation of product descriptions and operating instructions. Target formats for electronic deployment are PDF, HTML and HTML-Help. The Ovidius XML specialists were also able to implement a special request for the technical editors: A visually pleasing print version can be generated from the online help format HTML Help by linking directly to a PDF document. This increases the print quality many times over. Moreover, a watermark also permits a check as to whether a document is a current version.



TCToolbox Screenshot with definition of publications (left), structur view (middle) and preview of an XML fragment (right).



Regehly and his team want to devote themselves in future to the optimisation of the editing process as well: “We’re presently involved in extending the content management system in such a way that it’s possible to generate review documents that colour-code the revisions vis-à-vis the previous version. Thus our developers profit from the improved readability and quicker location of the revised passages in the text.” No matter what: The basis for efficient and cost effective technical documentation has been laid, thanks to the data management in an XML based content management system



Ovidius Berlin
Alte Jakobstr. 79-80
10179 Berlin
Germany

Contact
Phone: +49 (30) 4081895-0
Fax: +49 (30) 4081895-99
Web: www.ovidius.com