

Dynamic Learning educational platform (Hodder Education)

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This development allowed Hodder Education to re-use their investment in the textbooks and to then build powerful interactive content around a framework already well known to students and teachers.

The business challenge

The aim was to increase Hodder Education's share of the schools digital market place and to make sales without cannibalising the sales of the accompanying textbooks. The digital versions of the products are offered to Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities (LAs) as enhancements to the textbooks that they are produced in conjunction with. This therefore meant that the digital product needed to work as both a standalone item and in conjunction with the textbooks but without replacing the need for them. It was also important that Dynamic Learning was not viewed as a competitor product to Virtual Learning Environments (also known as Learning Management Systems) which are being widely adopted by educational institutions due to requirements to do so from central government.

The solution we provided

Dynamic Learning was a strategic shift in the way in which digital products were viewed within the Hodder Education business. Rather than being an accompanying product which

sat alongside the textbook Dynamic Learning products were developed to run in parallel with the textbooks and offer features and functionality which could not be achieved on paper. To provide support to the editorial teams within Hodder Education we made available a dedicated project manager operating for the majority of their time within the Hodder Education business.

To encourage Dynamic Learning to become a key part of the way in which digital resources were used in secondary schools and colleges the solution we developed was based around a central piece of software called the 'Dynamic Learning Engine', which was installed to the Institution's network. These Institutions could then buy 'titles' containing the content which would be read through this central Engine. The key benefits to this were;

- › Students and teachers only ever had to launch one application, no matter how many Dynamic Learning titles were installed.
- › It was possible to search for resources and content across the full range of titles that were installed.



Today there are more than 50 Dynamic Learning titles available and we have worked closely with Hodder Education's management and editorial teams to make the process of developing them as straightforward as possible.

› Upgrades, enhancements and corrections to the software which were made only had to be made to the central Engine rather than to multiple pieces of software that may have been installed and could be done through a quick download from the Dynamic Learning website.

› It was possible to apply new features and functions to all of the titles, which an Institution may have purchased, by upgrading in one place.

To work as complementary products with the textbooks and to allow them to work as standalone products in their own right we developed a unique process for taking the print files (in Quark or InDesign) and converting them to Flash based pages. This allowed Hodder Education to re-use their investment in the textbooks and to then build powerful interactive content around a framework already well known to students and teachers.

As part of the conversion process of the printed materials into the titles we needed to ensure that the ability to search the pages of content was retained so that individual words

and phrases could be found and shown on the screen. Accompanying this was a resource search which allowed users to look for documents, videos, audio, animations, spreadsheets, images and several other file types and to filter them by file type, subject and title. This combined search feature is one of the key selling points of the software and even allows users to search for their own resources which they may have added into the software.

To avoid the perception that the software was competing with Virtual Learning Environments (Learning Management Systems) functionality was developed that allowed the content to be exported in standards compliant SCORM packs, which could in turn be imported into Virtual Learning Environments. This functionality proved to be a key sales benefit when customers were looking at competing products.

To ensure synergy with the textbooks and to allow teachers and students to easily move between the books and the digital assets we transferred the pages of the book across into the digital product. We were one of the first companies to develop a process for creating



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digital versions of the textbooks by taking them from the files used for printing and bringing them across into searchable, scalable pages within a networkable solution. The products are packed with resources for teaching and the many tools within the software make it easy for teachers to create lessons and homework for students with all of the content being compatible with the School's learning management system or virtual learning environment, making the content doubly valuable.

Today there are more than 50 Dynamic Learning titles available and we have worked closely with Hodder Education's management and editorial teams to make the process of developing them as straightforward as possible. From the initial author briefing all the way through to the creation of the final product our project managers work with the client's teams.

The return on investment

The result was software that was short listed for a **BETT award** and that has helped Hodder Education to engage teachers, raised the bar for their competitors and provided them with

a return on their investment. The first products were launched in September 2007 and the product line has continued to develop since and Dynamic Learning is now in more than 2000 schools with a profit on the project being made since July 2008.

“Working with MMT Digital has been a fantastic experience. Moving into the fast-paced digital publishing world has its challenges but the team at MMT Digital have provided workable solutions for our e-learning products that have enabled us to recoup our investment and move into profit within a timescale unprecedented in this industry. As we continue to develop our digital offering to the secondary and further education markets, we look forward to continuing our successful partnership with MMT Digital.”

Janice Tolan, Sales and Marketing Director Hodder Education

“Once again Hodder Education are back with another entry in their ever expanding Dynamic Learning range of software! Having dealt with Medicine through Time and Germany 1918-1945 it was logical that Crime and Punishment through Time would be next to receive the Dynamic Learning treatment. For those who have already seen Dynamic Learning in use then go no further; you know what you're going to get! (But as always it just keeps getting better...I really do pity the people who have to come up with something to improve on this piece of software!)”

Paul Hargreaves, Teacher of History & English