

## TX Group and a&f – a one-of-a-kind collaboration

Together with a&f systems, TX Group took on a huge project and changed all editorial processes to Mobile First. The group relied on a&f's product portfolio – and primarily WoodWing.

TX Group AG is a network of media and platforms that reaches more than 80 per cent of the Swiss population each day. It comprises the companies, TX Markets, Goldbach, 20 Minuten and Tamedia, and employs a total of around 3'700 persons at over 50 locations around the world. Together with a&f systems, the group realised a project that can be called pioneering. The winner? Both TX Group and a&f. This is our joint success story.

### Start of 2017 – an idea is born

How can digital publishing be designed in an innovative and progressive manner with the Mobile First requirement? Is it possible to digitally process contents and to automatically put them to print? How can suitable tools for the tasks of a central editorial office be created? How can the infrastructure flexibility be increased significantly? TX Group was faced with these questions at the start of 2017 when it decided to implement a new editorial

system for its editorial offices of Tamedia and 20 Minuten. The fact that the infrastructure posed an issue quickly became clear. This resulted in the decision to develop the entire system in the Amazon Cloud (AWS).

The aim was to complete the whole project over a period of three years by the end of 2020 at the latest. To achieve this, the project was divided into two major sub-projects. In a first step, the focus was on the Tamedia print issues and the partial centralisation of the newspaper titles, and therefore the central production. In a second step, the digital tasks were changed over to the new system.

WoodWing perfectly met the requirements – in combination with other tools from a&f’s product portfolio and TX Group’s own developments. The project started in the fourth quarter of 2017 with Edy Winiger as project manager for the customer and Martin Wicki and his team as project manager for a&f. The initial target was rather ambitious: The go-live of the first Tamedia newspaper titles was scheduled for the early date of 8 July 2018. At the same time, TX Group decided to completely redevelop the ageing web CMS. Like its predecessor, the group developed all of the new CMS. As a highly individualised solution, this was a balancing act. On the one hand, the existing key functions had to be retained, and on the other hand, the systems had to meet the latest technical requirements. Developing its own CMS gave TX Group great flexibility in the implementation of new requirements to enable the group to quickly respond to the continuously changing challenges in the market. Due to the symbiosis between print and digital and the easy integration of WoodWing Studio, it was decided to link WoodWing’s digital editor to the Unity web CMS, which was developed by TX Group.

#### Initial obstacles

Right at the start, the project managers were faced with major obstacles. Firstly, the tools had to be adjusted to suit the new conditions of the organisational changes caused by the centralisation of the central editorial office. This was crucial for creating highly efficient workflows. The timetable was tough and the required tools did not fully meet the cloud requirements. However, the key issue was that in the future, all journalists had to be able to work on articles with just one system, which is completely and individually tailored for the users, both online and in the print business. The entire publishing house was to use the same tools after the change and was switched to a Mobile First approach.

#### Initial success

The first success came quickly. Together with the manufacturers, a&f found suitable solutions for updating the tools to the required cloud-ready status. The second obstacle was also quickly mastered. Together with WoodWing, Dataplan and b.comp, the project team implemented the requirements for the central editorial office in record time. The existing volume of more than six million image assets was available in the selected WoodWing DAM “Asset”, right on time for the go-live.

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**“The ‘set-in-stone’ rollout deadline was extremely ambitious – especially as the project team was barely familiar with system development in the AWS cloud. All persons involved in this project were therefore overjoyed about the go-live on 8 July 2018, when the last produced page was delivered to the print shop, right on time at 11.30 pm. This has been made possible by the great collaboration in the project team, based on long-standing joint project experience with a&f.”**  
 – Edy Winiger, former Head Editorial Applications & Processes at Tamedia

#### 2018 – Start of the major rollout

On 8 July 2018, after a little more than half a year of concept and development work, the “Tages-Anzeiger” and “Der Bund” were successfully produced with the new WoodWing Studio editorial system. The web-based user interface lets users work on any device and from any location. The new joint newsroom working interface also made it possible to harmonise the platforms and standardise the workflows. The option to install systems in the AWS in a highly automated manner and with greatest demands on security (such as geo redundancy and multi-factor authentication) were some of the requirements of the cloud-based project. These initial successes got the ball rolling. In August 2018, the “SonntagsZeitung” was already changed over to the new system and the “Berner Zeitung” and all of its regional issues followed suit in the autumn of 2018.

### New challenges

Despite central production being a topic right from the start, this concept was tested to its core for the first time at “Berner Zeitung”. The articles were to be centrally controlled and distributed to the individual titles and also to the various regional issues of the “Berner Zeitung”. It goes without saying that this had to work in a highly automated manner and without manual intervention, practically with the click of a button. This change also went as planned, which left the project team confident about the change of the other titles by the start of 2019.



### 2019 – One success after another

In the first quarter of 2019, the “Zürcher Regionalzeitungen” (ZRZ) and the “Basler Zeitung” were changed over to WoodWing Studio. This further milestone meant that all of Tamedia’s chargeable newspapers in the German region of Switzerland, 13 titles at that time, were being produced with WoodWing’s editorial system. As during all previous training events and roll-outs, a&f systems was present on site and supported the production of both “BaZ” and “ZRZ”. Special care was taken with each and every title to ensure that the rollout went smoothly. The concept of providing support with training, configuration tasks and production once more proved to be successful.

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At the same time, the change-over was also expedited in Romandy with the two daily newspapers “24heures” and “Tribune de Genève”. “24heures” is the biggest daily newspaper with the most issues in Romandy and the change-over was therefore comprehensive. In addition, language barriers had to be overcome. Thanks to a&f’s multilingual team, however, the productions in Lausanne and Geneva were also successfully supported.

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The first major step – changing the print media to WoodWing Studio – was thus completed successfully and on time in mid-2019.

### 2020 – Completion of a mega project

Right at the start of the project, a concept was already planned for the best possible technological method for implementing neutral publication requirements in the future. The workflows were therefore gradually changed over during the development phase, so that they aligned with a Mobile First approach. At the same time, Tamedia implemented a separate internal organisational project where the editorial offices were prepared for writing Mobile First articles. The entire process went smoothly: the decision of TX Group to completely redevelop the technology of the front ends of all online publications and redesign the latter as well as the development of the group’s own web CSM, which can be seamlessly integrated in the WoodWing environment. Thanks to this planning, the entire value added chain was displayed in the end.



It was great to witness how the standardised storytelling environment met with a wholly positive response from the writers. All of the editorial staff – from the print and digital units prior to the project – loved the simplicity and user friendliness of the new tools. Thanks to the system’s modular design, TX Group is also well prepared for future challenges. It is possible to respond quickly to new requirements in the market, from expanding and adjusting the system to replacing individual components without affecting the overall system structure.

However, one of the biggest challenges was moving the workplaces to home offices at the start of 2020 due to the pandemic. The technical side of this change went easily and smoothly thanks to the new system. But even a&f’s highly experienced project team had their doubts in the beginning if it would be possible under these circumstances to implement the majority of the digital integration for more than 500 users, as this required training and production support via screen in the home office. But the team rolled up their sleeves and performed the supposedly impossible without a hitch. TX Group finally managed to go live at “Berner Zeitung” with the entirely new digital workflow in February 2020. Further major digital rollouts were completed before Easter until the entire TX Group had changed all of its digital tasks to the new tools in the second major step.



Franz Bürgi, Group CIO  
Technology Services/IT

The TX project team then changed over the majority of the remaining titles – such as the 20 Minuten-Gruppe – without assistance. They only contacted a&f for specific questions and concerns at this point.

**“In the end, it was amazing to see how the work on the concept at the start of the project actually met each and every requirement that occurred during the practical application.”**

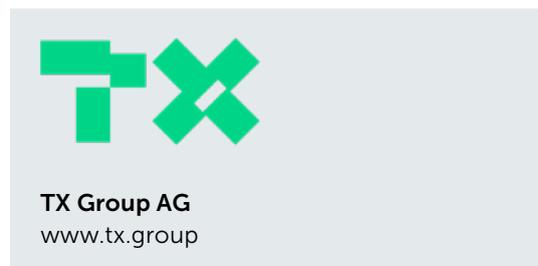
– Patrick Stalder, Head of Project & Application Management, TX Group

TX Group especially benefited from the experience of Martin Wicki, the project manager, over the three years it took to complete the project. He supported TX Group all of the time, including during the overall coordination and individual sub-projects. Both parties are proud that the tough timetable was met with such accuracy. The concept phase at the start of the project turned out to be a total success in the end.

The joint project of TX Group and a&f gave both parties unique experiences. Hard work, comprehensive planning, strong nerves, a few tears here and there and countless success stories. Over the term of this project, a one-of-a-kind partnership blossomed between all those involved and this is continuing, even after the project completion on 30 March 2021. To conclude, a roundup by Franz Bürgi, main project manager:

**“WE have consolidated all of the tools for creating our web and print contents in our TX Editorial Cloud (TEC) in recent years. In addition to the Unity web CMS solution, which we developed ourselves, Assets and Studio by WoodWing are a fundamental part of the overall solution. a&f provided us with reliable and competent support, from designing the TEC concept and implementation to the numerous rollouts of our web and print products. The collaboration with a&f is more than just a partnership, it is a collaboration in a great team.”**

– Franz Bürgi, Group CIO Technology Services/IT



Want to find out more about the project or WoodWing?

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