Intelligent Content Syndication™
The Customer Is Always Right...Where They Need To Be
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Intelligent Content Syndication™ shares digital content across disparate locations so that users can effectively access content and collaborate, wherever they choose to be. With bi-directional syndication, organizations benefit by increasing the visibility of their content and enabling participation and discussion among their community members.

Fishing for the Right Content: The User's Burden

Relevant Content is Everywhere, But Not Always Where the User Is

When organizations maintain siloed repositories and web properties for content - product websites, blogs, support portals, community boards, knowledge bases and more - they are publishing content in the locations they expect users to visit. Actual user behavior, however, does not always conform to these expectations.

All too often, users must “porpoise” for content by diving again and again into separate content silos to collect the scattered pieces of information relevant to their search - assuming that this information can even be found.

“Different silos...lead to fragmented, unsatisfactory, and broken [customer] experiences.” ~ Forrester
The following scenarios illustrate a few of the challenges that users commonly face:

- A customer of a cloud-computing company seeks information about integrating a new product into their existing platform. They spend an hour following links from the product community and portal to the product support center and ultimately to the product knowledge base, where they find an article that only partially answers their question. Unknown to this customer, the complete solution to their problem lies buried in an article in an entirely different database under the platform services portal.

  *The experience of customers would improve dramatically if they could seamlessly access the valuable content stored across multiple repositories and web properties.*

- A partner of the cloud-computing provider visits the company’s dedicated partner portal in search of the latest information about a social app that the two companies are jointly developing. In this case, the partner finds the information they need, but only because a site moderator has laboriously curated and copied the relevant content from various internal sources into the partner portal.

  *Companies would save time and resources on tedious content management tasks if they could automate the sharing of content across select locations.*

- The same cloud-computing company maintains a dedicated community portal for each product or service in its solution suite, even though the content that applies to one product is often highly relevant to the users of other components in the suite. The super-users in any given community, for example, have much valuable expertise to share with the members of other communities. Unfortunately, the company’s siloed community structure keeps these users apart, and they rarely experience the benefits of sharing knowledge or interacting with one another.

  *Imagine the synergies that would result if users in different communities could view, share and carry on discussions around a common store of content, interacting and collaborating as if they were members of a single community.*

- A Paris-based customer of the same company is an active participant in the French-language forum hosted on the company’s global users’ site. Yet this customer also frequents the U.S.-based forum (in English) to find helpful answers to their technical questions, knowing that the larger U.S. community generates more discussions on a greater variety of topics than can be found in other geolocations.

  *What if there were a way to share valuable content sourced in one language with users in other geolocations -- syndicate, translate and surface this content on-the-fly into each user’s community in the local language -- with just one click?*
The Costs of Unsyndicated Content

In an unsyndicated environment where content lies buried in disparate, disconnected locations, both customers and the companies that serve them bear the costs.

Costs to the Customer

- Time and effort spent visiting multiple locations in search of relevant content
- Siloed community interactions and experience
- Missed opportunities to engage with super-users and subject matter experts
- Missed opportunities to optimize product investments due to lack of knowledge (customers don’t know what they don’t know)
- Missed opportunities to leverage solutions across language barriers

Costs to the Company

- Manual effort spent duplicating, editing and updating content in siloed locations
- Missed opportunities to grow customer awareness of cross-product offerings
- Limited reach and influence of community advocates and super-users
- Customers not fully utilizing the company’s offering and solutions
- Increased support costs and decreased customer satisfaction
- Not effectively serving the “global” community

“A siloed approach no longer works for today’s customers as they seek to connect and engage when they desire, not when or how the brand wants them to.”

~ KT Prasad, Zendesk
The Syndicated Solution
The Customer Is Always Right...Where They Need to Be.

To solve the common challenge of information accessibility and empower organizations to service users directly in the digital locations they choose to visit, iTalent Digital developed Intelligent Content Syndication™.

Intelligent Content Syndication (ICS) is an unprecedented solution engineered to deliver relevant content directly to the user, regardless of the format or platform initially used to publish that content. Instead of confining content to locations that users are expected to frequent (but may not visit), ICS syndicates content across a wide range of communities, portals and web properties to reach more users in the locations they choose to visit.

ICS also provides bi-directional syndication capabilities that allow users to connect and collaborate across platforms. For the first time, companies can republish valuable content across the preferred locations frequented by users, and even make this content available for dynamic discussion and collaboration between members of different communities and web properties.

Bi-Directional Syndication

The bi-directional capabilities of ICS enable users not only to view content syndicated from various locations but also to expand their connections with users and experts in other communities.

Bi-directional content syndication occurs across web properties. First, content originally published in one location (called the Source) is republished to one or more destination locations (called the Targets). Users in Target locations can view the content and engage with it by adding their commentary. Second, ICS syndicates comments posted in these Target locations and republishes them back to the Source and other Target locations, creating a web of interactions. Bi-directional syndication eliminates the need for users to go in search of the “one” place where content exists.
For example:

Expert A authors a post in Source Community A. ICS republishes the post in Target Support Portal B, where it sparks the interest of User B. When User B posts a question for Expert A, ICS syndicates the question from the Support Portal B thread back to the original post in Community A. Expert A replies here directly to User B’s question, and the reply is syndicated out again to Support Portal B to reach User B.

This capability can be extended beyond just two web properties to support a many-to-many integration model.

ICS synchronizes the posts and conversation threads in each syndicated web property so that all members interact with each other in near-real time around the same content. In this way, users can collaborate on creating and sharing content synchronously, as if the content were resident in a single repository. Moreover, if the Source content is edited, ICS refreshes all the Target locations with the update so that users can view the latest content from the original post.

Syndication Workflow

With ICS, syndicated content goes through the workflow illustrated on page 8.

1. Community members create and publish content in the Source location.

2. Content is selected for syndication to one or more Target locations.

   A community moderator can select pieces of content for syndication. Or, content can be identified and syndicated automatically via artificial intelligence, using machine learning algorithms based on past patterns of syndication. Administrators can specify varying levels of automated selection versus manual intervention, according to preference.
2b. Content is translated in real time to language-specific target properties, if appropriate.

With the added capability of Syndicated Translation, ICS can collect content in one language from the Source location, translate that content into multiple other languages and surface the translated content in Target locations.

3. The selected content is published in Target locations.

Users in Target locations can recognize syndicated content by a special icon, and view information about the originating author and Source location.

4. Underlying links between the Source and Targets enable dynamic, bi-directional collaboration.

- Content edits and updates pass automatically from the Source to Target(s), in near-real time.

- Interactive discussion threads and comments pass bi-directionally and in near-real time from the Source to the Targets, from the Targets to the Source, and between Targets.

Moreover, users in Target locations can discuss and comment on the content in their respective home languages. ICS can then translate and bi-directionally syndicate these conversation threads back to the Source and other Target locations in the appropriate languages.

This capability enables subject matter experts to communicate and collaborate with any language speaker in near-real time, creating a truly global engagement experience.
Syndication Dashboard

The ICS dashboard provides an overview of all syndicated content across the Source and Target locations. Site administrators and community moderators gain valuable insights into user behavior and interests through customizable metrics such as the total number of syndicated posts, ranking of top users interacting via syndicated content, total number of syndicated page views based on content type, and more.

System Setup

The initial configuration of ICS involves the following steps, typically performed in collaboration with the iTalent Digital team.

1. Using the cloud-based ICS Admin Console, an administrator configures the necessary settings for all the Source and Target communities participating in syndication.

2. The administrator checks and validates network connectivity from ICS to each of the configured communities.

3. In the Source location, community members create content for syndication.

4. The administrator creates a hidden board in each Target community to receive and store syndicated content before the respective community moderators or AI automation modules push selected content to the public boards.

System Architecture

A flexible, open and platform-independent technology powers the ICS syndication solution. The solution is offered as a cloud-hosted SaaS subscription or an on-premises subscription service. In either case, the solution utilizes open APIs that provide the capability to syndicate content to and from a multitude of locations.

The ICS solution also incorporates machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) to drive automated syndication of content based on patterns of past usage and syndications. These capabilities offer the advantages of robust, behind-the-scenes automation coupled with limitless opportunities for customization.
Supported Use Cases

The ICS solution can be tailored to support any number of use cases, depending on the particular needs and goals of an organization. This section describes a few of the many possible use cases that ICS can address with its syndication capabilities.

Event Syndication

This use case greatly expands the accessibility of content generated from an industry conference or event session. Source content such as descriptions, presentations, videos and metadata is collected by ICS as exported CSV data or via API calls and then published to multiple Target locations in the format appropriate to each Target.

Event participants can connect and collaborate around this syndicated content, even as they view the material from different locations. Through communities linked by syndication, this use case introduces the potential for continued networking and engagement among participants long after the original event or conference has concluded.

Content Syndication

In this use case, ICS uses bulk processing to syndicate large quantities of content from a Source location to one or more Target locations. Once syndicated, the content becomes available for user collaboration across different web properties, product lines and communities.

Content Syndication with Translation

This use case broadens the scope of Content Syndication by adding the component of language translation.

ICS syndicates content from a Source location to one or more Target locations. Before the content is published in the Target, it undergoes a process of localization via machine translation, community translation or professional services, depending on the organization’s preference for linguistic accuracy. Once syndicated and translated, the content becomes available in each user’s home language, for communication and collaboration across different web properties, product lines and communities.

“In 2019, the English language was used by only 25.2 percent of worldwide internet users. Ten languages are needed to reach 75% of global internet users. ~ Internet World Stats
Case Study:
The Measurable Benefits of Content Syndication

A leading Fortune 50 company uses the ICS solution to syndicate content across its community sites.

Siloed Communities in an Unsyndicated Environment

The company’s business productivity suite consists of five products that can work either as standalone apps or together as an integrated solution. Each product enjoys a dedicated community of active users.

Before ICS implementation, content related to integration between the products typically appeared in only one of the associated product communities. Since the members of other communities did not have visibility into this content, they lost many opportunities for cross-product engagement.

As a result, both customers and the company experienced reduced value. Customers did not realize the full benefits of the product suite, and the company saw less adoption of new products by existing customers. The company was falling short of its “Best Together” vision of customers engaging with the products working together as an integrated suite.

The company wanted to increase the visibility and accessibility of the valuable content generated on company, partner and customer sites by surfacing it directly to users in their subscribed communities.

One Community with Syndicated Content

The company engaged iTalent Digital to implement Intelligent Content Syndication. The deployment involved the syndication of all types of content (videos, presentations, documents and more), as well as individual discussion threads and blogs.

In prior years, administrators required a week or more to upload session recordings and supplemental content from their annual users’ conference to the dedicated event site. Thanks to the automation features of ICS, they accomplished the same task in just four hours, uploading 220 event sessions sourced from diverse platforms like YouTube, SharePoint and Dropbox, among others. Moreover, all content was then syndicated from the event site to each of the five user communities represented at the conference.

With the various community boards now linked through the platform-independent, bi-directional ICS architecture, users could engage in cross-product, cross-community collaboration. A user in any community could view and comment on the content, and also interact with users from other communities around that same content.

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With the various community boards now linked through the platform-independent, bi-directional ICS architecture, users could engage in cross-product, cross-community collaboration. A user in any community could view and comment on the content, and also interact with users from other communities around that same content.
As the volume of digital content continues to grow in more locations than ever before, users will gravitate towards the organizations that can deliver meaningful content when and where they need it, with minimal clicks and effort. Content syndication breaks down the structural and linguistic barriers between disparate locations to unlock limitless potential for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Instead of balkanized user environments, syndication enables integrated, interconnected communities. Instead of information silos, ICS delivers one dynamic and synchronous content experience. With ICS, users are always right where they need to be.

The benefits from content syndication became immediately evident through metrics based on page views, visits and unique visitors. Within the first 30 days of ICS implementation, syndicated content drove 30% of all traffic across the target boards, with individual communities seeing up to an 80% increase in page views. ICS also drove a 43% boost in unique visits. Notably, this increase in activity was sustained beyond the initial month of syndication and immediate aftereffects, with ongoing user traffic lifted by 10% across all communities.

The company was especially pleased to see that more than 70% of the content viewed on a given community board had references to products other than the one associated with that community. With the potential for cross-selling, demand for new subscriptions and revenue growth supported by content syndication, the company hopes in time to see a positive impact on its product licensing metrics.

Summary
Many Users, One Content Experience

As the volume of digital content continues to grow in more locations than ever before, users will gravitate towards the organizations that can deliver meaningful content when and where they need it, with minimal clicks and effort.

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About iTalent Digital

iTalent Digital is an innovative global woman- and minority-owned digital consulting and software engineering company headquartered in San Jose, California. We help companies achieve exceptional business outcomes through a suite of digital transformation services such as enterprise collaboration, unified search and relevancy transformation, business insights and analytics, cloud and software development, and Change as a Service (CaaS).

The team has numerous awards to its name, including 20+ Stevie® Awards, two Forrester Groundswell Awards, five Lithy Awards, two Best in Biz Awards, the Cisco Diversity Award, and many others.