Superdesk

SOURCEFABRIC

Your Digital Newsroom

SOURCEFABRIC

Working side by side with journalists is the best way to build tools

Contents

Your digital newsroom

Create, produce, distribute, archive and curate content with ease.

Superdesk is a powerful headless content management system designed for the modern newsroom, with capacity for end-to-end news creation, production, curation, distribution and publishing. Built alongside journalists on open source code, Superdesk has a modular, API-centric design that enables news organisations to add and adapt the functionality most relevant to their business as and when they need.

Why Superdesk?

- Easily integrate existing systems with Superdesk
- Customisable content templates to fit your newsroom's needs
- Trusted by news organisations across the globe, from Norway to Australia
- Improve workflows by automating elements of production
- Create a content item once and distribute it to multiple platforms, automatically adjusting the delivery format
- Manage access to your system with fine-grained user roles

Trusted by

Impact of Superdesk

Our open-source headless CMS is delivering content to news agencies, publishers and their customers around the world.
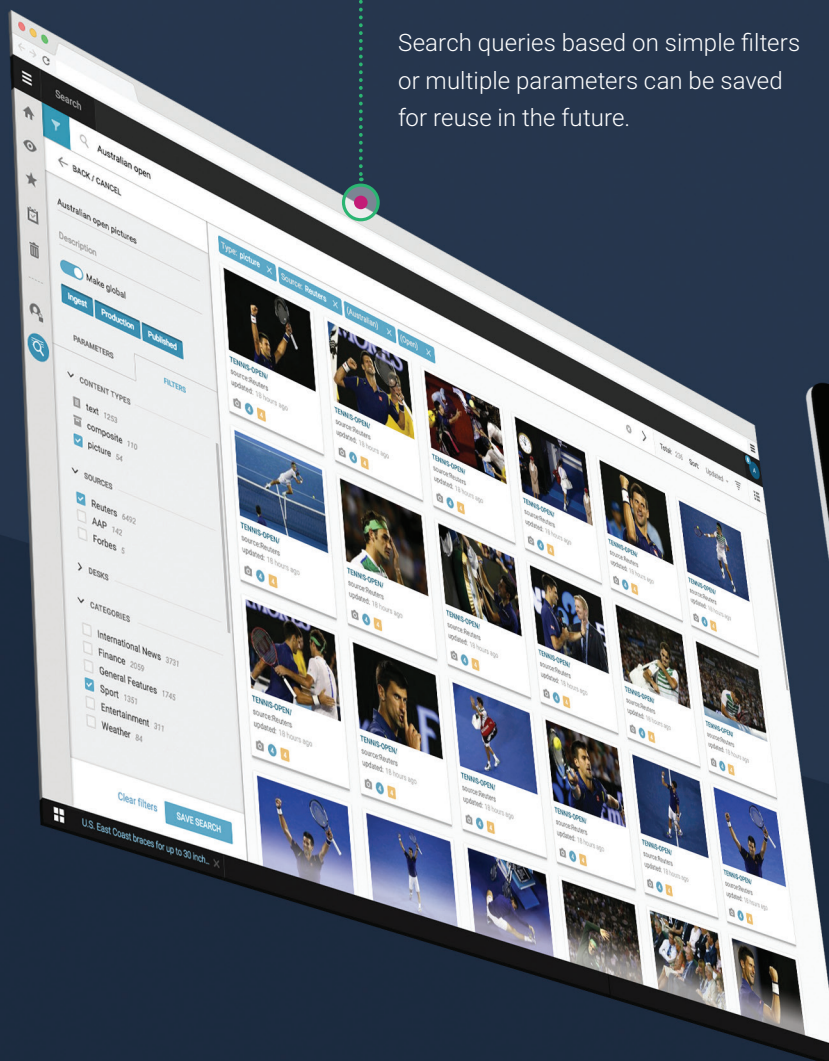
+375.000
NEWS ITEMS
per month

+100
million
READERS
per month

4
CONTINENTS

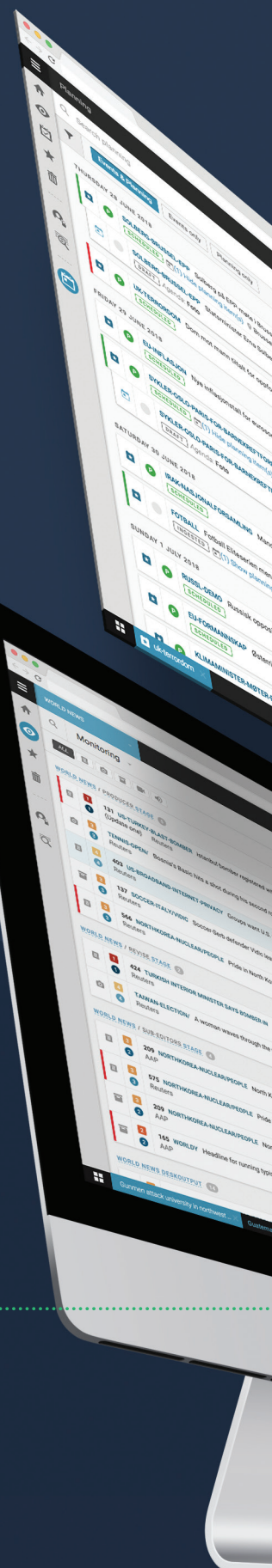# Maximum functionality, minimum clutter

Powerful Content Search

Search queries based on simple filters or multiple parameters can be saved for reuse in the future.

Newsroom Automation

Automate elements of news production to speed up your workflow, including ingesting content from external sources and routing articles for publication.

Planning Module

Organise your event coverage and editorial planning with the Superdesk Planning Component.
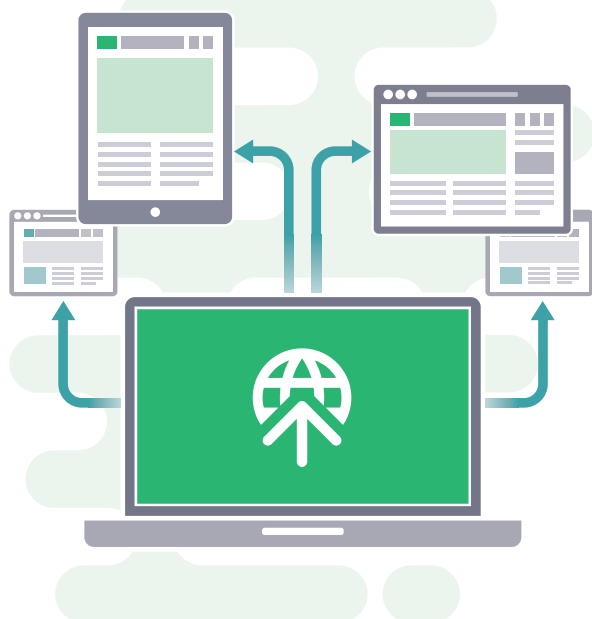
Workflow Freedom

Define your own workflow and assign specific roles and privileges to different users.

Customisable Content Templates

Adjust content profiles to suit the needs of your newsroom.

Superdesk

SOURCEFABRIC

Add–on publishing and planning extensions

Superdesk Publisher

WordPress Plugin

Distribute multimedia content across multiple outputs and manage all your assets from a single point of editorial control with Superdesk Publisher. Publisher is designed to complement Superdesk, which converses in formats as diverse as the legacy ANPA 1312 all the way to media-rich NewsML G2. Publisher can also be extended to handle content created in third-party systems, even in exotic, custom formats. But whether you author and produce content in Superdesk or not, Publisher gives you the real-time multi-tenancy overview you need to ensure that it performs optimally, everywhere.

Make publishing to your WordPress site easy with our plugin for Superdesk. This plugin will allow content to be sent from your instance of Superdesk to the WordPress instance it's installed on. Users can publish to multiple WordPress channels from Superdesk and will find a settings menu which allows customisation for how WordPress handles content from Superdesk.

Superdesk Planning Component

Integrate editorial planning with your content management for more efficient events coverage. The Superdesk Planning Component allows newsrooms to incorporate editorial calendars, resource allocation, assignment preparation and task creation into content workflows. Setting tasks for journalists in the calendar will trigger the creation of actual content items in Superdesk, saving valuable time later down the line.

Superdesk Newshub
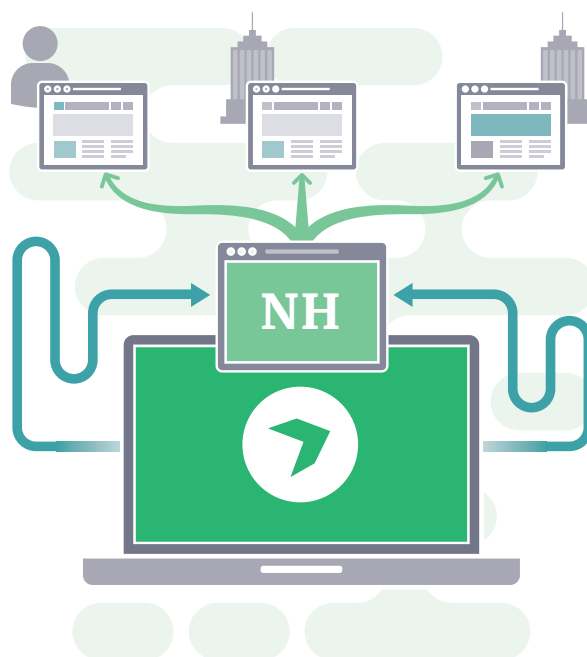
Distribute content to your subscribers on Superdesk Newshub, with powerful search capabilities for creating custom packages and a homepage for teasing new content. This plugin for Superdesk allows your customers to download articles in NewsML G2, NITF or plain text, as well as giving them the option to flag up items of interest to their colleagues. They'll also be able to set up notifications to trigger alerts for stories they are covering, so they'll never miss a beat.

Gaining a competitive edge in the news business

The Challenge

AAP, the national news agency of Australia, needed to upgrade its newsroom software. The main production platform and offshoot editorial systems were out of date and difficult to use. These technology bottlenecks were not just frustrating for journalists in the newsroom – they also stood in the way of AAP's prospects for growth and modernisation as a news business.

Operating in an environment of increasing cost pressure and growing demands for products and services related to digital journalism, AAP required a forward-looking solution to support its future evolution. This digital newsroom software would also have to be cost-effective and scalable to cope with greater volumes of data, faster delivery and new media formats.

The Solution

Enter Superdesk.

Robustly combining editorial work-flows with content management, Superdesk is a newsroom manage-ment system designed to meet the needs of progressive media organ-isations. Its modular design allows features to be continuously added in response to changing business conditions or editorial requirements.

AAP identified two additional advan-tages in Superdesk's open source code base. First, no licensing costs and commercial headaches that are typically associated with proprietary software. Second, it offered the free-dom to modify the code to integrate with existing systems, without the need for middleware.

With developers from AAP and Sourcefabric sitting alongside journal-ists in the newsroom, the Superdesk project was a chance for reporters and editors to dictate how their pub-lishing software worked, rather than the other way around.

> ❝ **With the digital arm of news media continually creating new challenges, managing a platform that allows you to enhance, add and remove functionality without a fuss is essential. You simply have to answer user and business needs if you want to keep moving forward – if you can't answer them, you're in trouble.** ❞

Brook Thomas
Chief Technology Officer,
Australian Associated Press

Results

In less than two years, Sourcefabric and AAP co-developed an implementation of Superdesk built for AAP. With the complexity of its legacy systems consolidated on a single platform (at least partially, at the point of release), AAP's managers and journalists were able to plan, produce and distribute higher volumes of content more efficiently, thanks to blazing search speeds and improved visibility across content in progress or in archive. Superdesk also positioned AAP as a news business innovator. Today the news agency is poised to thrive in the media landscape of the future, delivering more relevant products and services through a platform that moves with the times.

Development timeline

The first line of AAP-specific code of Superdesk is written. AAP dedicates five full-time developers to the project.

High-level demo of Superdesk presented to AAP management.

More UI features are added, including story history and article preview.

October 2014

March 2015

September 2015

February 2015

July 2015

Two Sourcefabric developers join the AAP newsroom to work alongside the team in Sydney.

Content monitoring feature introduced, providing editors a continual overview of newsroom production.

15.000 Articles edited

4.000 Unique stories produced each week

11 million Readers reached

22.000 Photographs distributed

AAP went into full production mode with Superdesk in October 2016, covering all of its bureaus in Australia and around the world. With Superdesk, AAP produces more than 4,000 unique stories each week, edits another 15,000 articles, distributes 22,000 photographs and reaches over 11 million readers.

First public release of Superdesk, including workflows, desks, content views, ingest sources and user management.

All desks go live. Superdesk powers the entire AAP newsroom.

April 2016

October 2016

November 2015

July 2016

Prototype development of next content editor begins.

Finance becomes the first desk to go live at AAP.
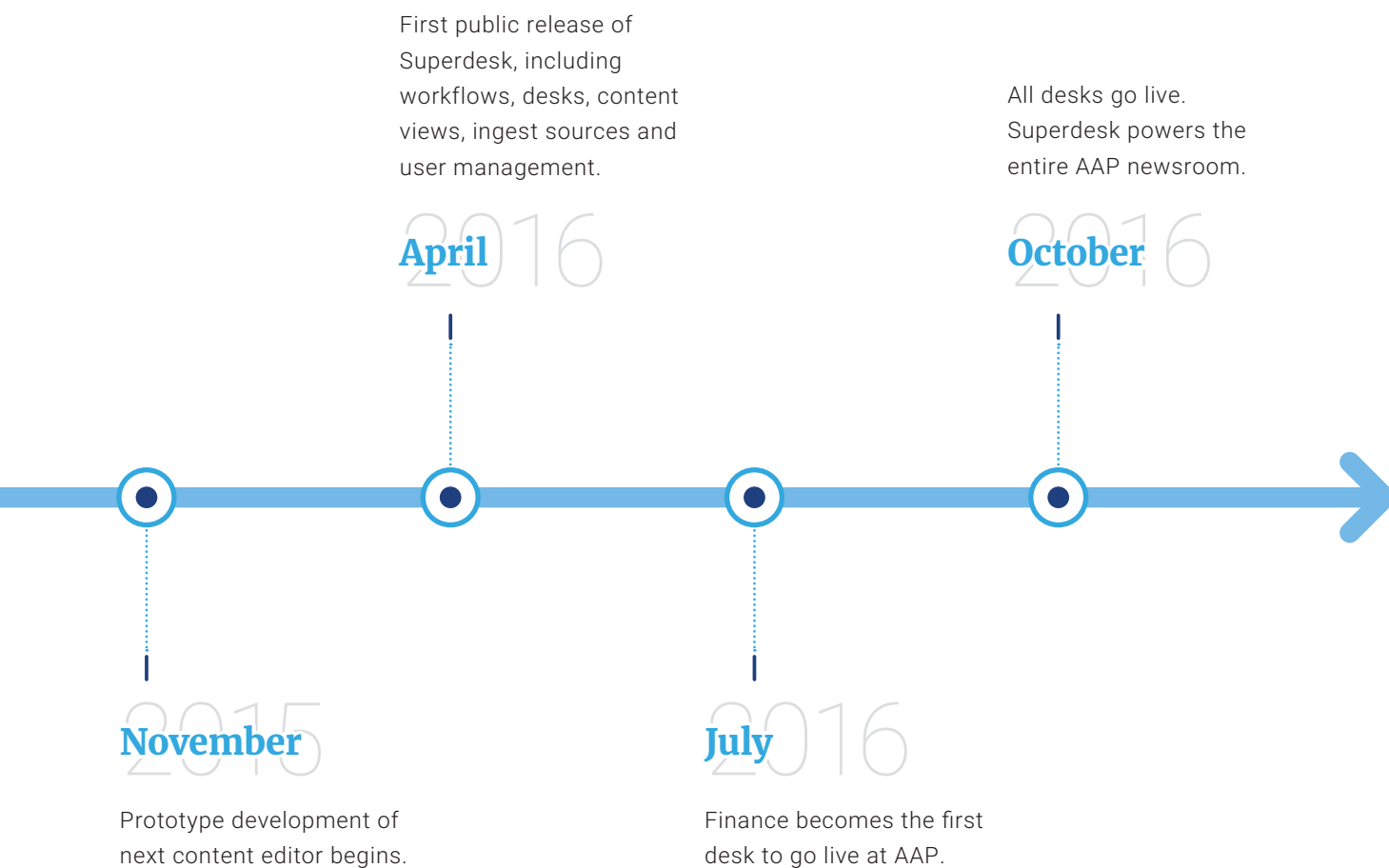
About AAP

Australian Associated Press (AAP) is the national news agency of Australia. Founded in 1935, it employs more than 600 people and provides a comprehensive domestic and international news service to the Australian media, business sectors and beyond - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
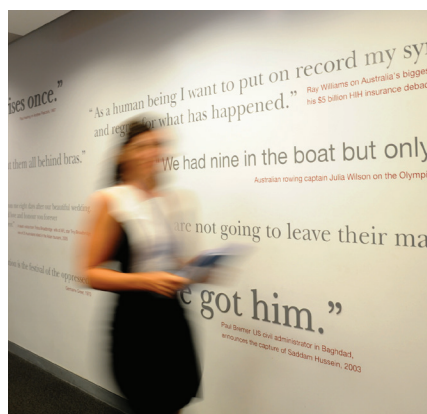
Joining a community of news industry innovators

The Challenge

It's a dilemma faced by many corporate newsrooms: buy prepackaged newsroom software or develop a CMS in-house? Neither was a good option for NTB, the national news agency of Norway. As a small news agency, NTB did not have the leverage to dictate terms to a commercial software provider. At the same time, it also did not want to sink time and money into commissioning an in-house system that might be obsolete by the time it was delivered. NTB was looking for a third way. The goal was to find purpose-built newsroom software that would multiply the effect of existing resources and effort rather than consume them.

The Solution

Superdesk had many of the features NTB was looking for, including workflow management and tools for collaboration. But Sourcefabric's agile development process and the open source code base also represented a chance for NTB to become a development partner, and join the Superdesk community of news innovators.

The process began with a technical team from Sourcefabric spending several days at NTB's Oslo newsroom, having formal conversations as well as observing journalists in the newsroom. Once they identified the main features of NTB's Superdesk implementation, they started creating them.

At every stage of the project, input from NTB was key. Concepts developed into functions were modified or refined in response to editors' feedback. In some cases, features were removed or a working item was revised completely over the course of the project. The roadmap was always oriented toward NTB's needs. After 11 months of these two-week agile development sprints, NTB began rolling out Superdesk. The first desks went live in December 2016. The rest of the editorial production system was migrated to Superdesk by early 2017.
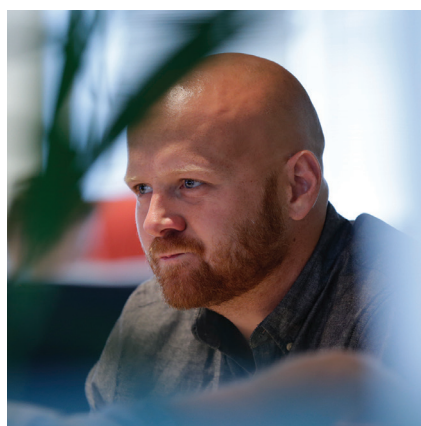
> **It wasn't just Superdesk's functionality that won us over, but also the benefits that come from being a part of a community of news agencies participating in an open source project. We can all share in ideas and new features that will help us become more competitive.**

Helen Vogt
Head of Innovations,
NTB

Results

Even as the efficiency and productivity gains enabled by Superdesk were still emerging, NTB had already benefited from joining a community of open source collaboration. The discussions about user experience, editorial work-flows, and even future products that took place between NTB and Source-fabric throughout the development process resulted in numerous new features and improvements. These not only work for NTB but also benefit the rest of the Superdesk user community. "We look forward to continuing this relationship of collaboration – with Sourcefabric and with the other news-rooms who are using Superdesk," said Helen Vogt, NTB's head of innovations.

Development timeline

October
2015

Initial NTB Superdesk workshop and project discussion held in Prague.

December
2015

Project scoping, with a technical team from Sourcefabric on site in NTB's newsroom in Oslo.

January
2016

Agreement for an Agile development project is signed. The implementation phase begins.

December
2016

Superdesk goes into production at NTB. The first desks to switch over are Science and a new Norwegian language service.

January
2017

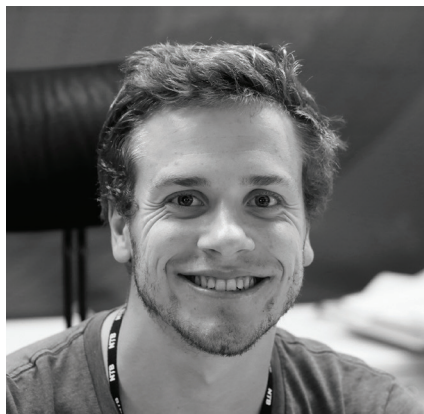Rollout of Superdesk begins for the rest of the NTB newsroom.

About NTB

NTB (Norsk Telegrambyrå), the Norwegian News Agency, is the country's leading news and picture agency, serving the Norwegian media industry since 1867. NTB delivers a wide variety of content services – in text, data, pictures, graphics, video and live streaming.

With a staff of 80 journalists, NTB produces 200-300 stories per day while continuously adding to an image database of 80 million-plus photos and videos via its NTB scanpix division.

80 Journalists on staff

300 Stories produced per day

80 million +
Photos and videos in database

Why Belga chose Superdesk to power their digital newsroom

belga

In September 2018, our team was delighted to welcome Belgian news agency Belga into the fold after they opted for Superdesk to replace their old editorial system.

Choosing the right newsroom software is one of the most important decisions a news agency has to make. It affects everything about the way a newsroom runs, from workflow to the final product, and even small weaknesses can cause huge headaches. Tom Wuytack, Belga's CIO, touched on the issue of replacing both legacy systems as well as legacy thinking when explaining Belga's need for a new editorial system, and why they landed on Superdesk as the right one to power their complex operations.

When Wuytack encountered Superdesk for the first time, Belga wasn't actively looking for a new editorial system. Their old one was, in his own words

"actually pretty well-functioning and stable". The problem was that it relied on old technology, and as a result had a number of bottlenecks that were causing problems in the newsroom:

"These bottlenecks were, amongst other things, a missing link between agenda settings and production. We had a pretty high dependency on IT staff. We were able to create rich text and production items but not rich embedded text items. We managed to have workarounds for issues like this but these workarounds take some time, so it wasn't always efficient."

Like all news agencies, Belga has to keep a close eye on costs, and these lengthy workarounds were taking up valuable time. On the editorial side of things too, notes Wuytack, there was "a silent but diplomatic push from them to innovate as well".

"We have this continuous pressure on journalistic efforts and journalistic means, mainly with the amount of journalists: fewer for more tasks. There was a need, or a diplomatic request to come up with something new."

There were several reasons why Superdesk appealed to Belga, but a key one was that it offered a holistic solution to a number of different issues.

"For me it represents an entire ecosystem. I look at the one [ecosystem] at Belga, with ten components, which all have their added value, but they have been gradually added over time, not always optimally connected, so they have different pitfalls and bottlenecks. Having an entire ecosystem based on just a single technology and a straight workflow is really an added value."

"What is really appealing to me, is that Superdesk started from a white paper, really from a news agency logic."

Tom Wuytack
Chief Information Officer,
Belga

Belga was also interested in Superdesk's open-source code base, which meant no vendor lock-in and the chance to benefit from collaboration with other news agencies on an equal basis. "If you're a small agency", says Wuytack, "normally you have way less of a say than the big ones ahead of you". With Superdesk, this isn't the case. Open source also means that Belga gets to benefit from all its future evolutions: a big advantage for a smaller news agency. Superdesk being designed with news agencies initially in mind was another appealing part of the software:

"What is really appealing to me, is that Superdesk started from a white paper, really from a news agency logic."

For Belga, however, the most vital factor was Superdesk's flexibility, with the system allowing users to create desks on the fly - a gift to newsrooms dealing with breaking news stories:

"[in the event of a breaking news story] Superdesk would allow us to quickly create a specific desk … allocate people to it, go through all the relevant sources and feed them to that desk. That will help us enormously, rather than journalists having to look everywhere for information about the story".

Supporting the indepen–dence and sustainability of nonprofit news

kobinet
NACHRICHTEN

Kobinet-Nachrichten was founded in 2002 as a digital German-language news service to raise awareness about life with disabilities. The majority of the volunteer organisation consists of journalists or contributing editors, while three other members take care of administrative and technical matters.

The Challenge

Kobinet-Nachrichten successfully ran their publishing operations from 2013 to 2019 on Newscoop, Sourcefabric's first open-source content management system (CMS). But with the sunsetting of Newscoop, Kobinet-Nachrichten found itself in need of a new digital newsroom solution. According to IT director Hubertus Thomasius, they considered a variety of solutions on the market, but they came back to Sourcefabric in the end, with Superdesk as the open-source

headless CMS they liked best. "It was flexible and had all the features we were looking for," said Thomasius.

The Solution

Not many small news organisations have strong IT skills in house. However, Kobinet-Nachrichten found the right combination of talent and interest among some of its key members and had Superdesk up and running in just two months.

Currently, the organisation aims to publish at least one new article daily, but averages more, about seven new articles a day, along with a monthly column. Their setup is relatively simple. With a single desk encompassing their full editorial operations, each staff editor also has publishing privileges. Articles by external contributors have to be reviewed before being published.

Rules regarding content are also kept to a minimum: articles must be original news stories accompanied by a photo. (As a result, Kobinet now has over 10,000 images in their archive.) And every piece of content should support Kobinet-Nachrichten's mission of shining a light on news concerning the disabled community in all of its complexity: sharing the hopes, the frustrations, and everything in between.

The Results

Today Kobinet-Nachrichten produces the same amount of content as it did on Newscoop, but with fewer editors than before. That means the team is able to work more efficiently with Superdesk, especially when it comes to managing images.

On the front end, they are publishing to their website through WordPress,

> ## "Without Superdesk and the other open–source solutions from Sourcefabric, a news organisation like ours would not be able to fulfill its mission and still remain independent."

Ottmar Miles–Paul
Kobinet–Nachrichten,
news editor and member of the board

with an interface to Superdesk that was coded in-house.

They are also distributing more content via other platforms, through Facebook and Twitter in particular as well as through a weekly email newsletter.

With their technical requirements covered by Superdesk, the other main need for Kobinet-Nachrichten as a volunteer organisation is to have more contributors. Because they are always seeking to do more around issues that affect the disabled community, expanding their coverage and making it broader more comprehensive, they are looking for young German-speaking journalists with a passion for inclusivity and diversity.

7 Articles produced each day (on average)

10 Editors

10.000 Images in the database

36 thousand +
Articles in the database

Company bio

Europe's largest developer of open source tools for news media

"Our diverse portfolio of clients and partners benefit each other."

Sourcefabric's head office is in Prague, Czech Republic, and was founded in 2010 with the purpose of developing state-of-the-art tools for journalism. Since then, we've worked with media organisations worldwide, empowering journalism through software development and services.

Our team consists of around 50 people, with offices in Prague, Toronto and Belgrade. Sourcefabric clients include international news organisations, radio stations, self-publishing and print-on-demand service providers as well as NGOs and news agencies. We deploy advanced news technologies in newsrooms across the globe and

have run media development projects in challenging political and economic environments.

Our formula is simple. We want the best, not only for individual clients, but for the industry as a whole, from Basel to Bamako, Sydney to São Paulo.
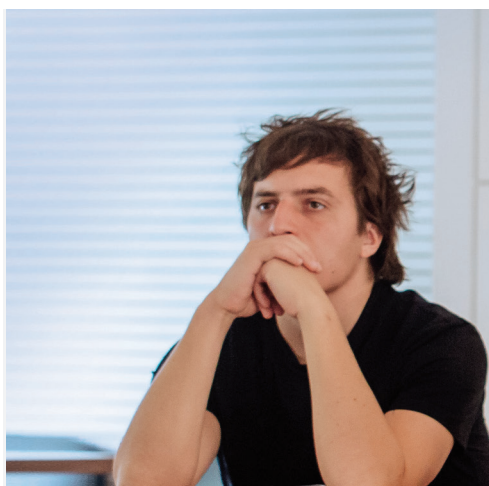
29 languages

23 nationalities

14 countries

Prague

Sourcefabric z.ú.
Salvátorská 10
110 00 Praha 1
Czech Republic

Phone:
+420 222 362 540