

## IMPLEMENTATION STUDY: iUNIVERSE

Using Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> to Add Flexibility  
and Efficiency to Book Publishing

### COMPANY

iUniverse, Lincoln, NE

### PRODUCT SOLUTION COMPONENTS

Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> from Intalio, Inc.

### INDUSTRY

Publishing

### CHALLENGES

iUniverse has a number of workflow-intensive processes that define its core business. Last year, the company made a strategic decision to invest in a Business Process Management System (BPMS) to help automate processes through a shared framework and improve efficiencies across the company.

### SOLUTION

After an extensive search, the company selected Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> from Intalio, Inc.

### RESULTS

iUniverse quickly installed Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> and rolled out its first workflow process in eight weeks. The company is using Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> to perform catalog exports to its partners. Using Intalio|n<sup>3</sup>, iUniverse has been able to unify the entire catalog export process, with six partners that are now automated. The company is now focused on continued deployment of the solution focusing first on fully automated, high-value, low-risk processes and then moving into other process areas until all processes have been migrated to orchestration under the BPMS.

## Overview

iUniverse is an independent publishing company that helps individuals self-publish fiction and non-fiction books. Headquartered in Lincoln, NE with locations in New York, NY and Shanghai, China, iUniverse has about 150 employees. The company relies heavily on technology to facilitate the production process, and has an extensive workflow for moving a book through production. iUniverse was interested in finding technology that would enable it to build an infrastructure that could improve the efficiencies of the book publishing process as well as provide flexibility for changing business needs.

The company turned to Business Process Management (BPM) as a way of automating some of its processes and eliminating inefficiencies that existed. After an extensive search, iUniverse selected Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> and implemented the product. It has already used Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> to assist its catalog export and several other processes, and iUniverse has a long-term strategic view of migrating all business processes to be orchestrated under the BPMS architecture over time.

## Business Problem

The publishing industry is steeped in a tradition of creating handcrafted books that require a substantial and recognized market to justify production and printing costs. iUniverse has a different vision for the future of publishing -- a

### **ABOUT INTALIO**

Intalio is a provider of business process management systems that help Global 2,000 firms become process-managed organizations. The company's flagship product, Intalio|n<sup>3</sup>, enables companies to extend business process models into executable and manageable processes that can be deployed on existing IT assets and directed by business users. Founded in July 1999, Intalio is a privately held, venture-backed company located in San Mateo, California.

### **ABOUT IUNIVERSE**

iUniverse is an author-focused, independent publishing company that helps individuals publish, market, and sell fiction and non-fiction books. The company, founded in 1999, is the largest independent publisher in the U.S. and publishes more than 5,000 new titles per year. iUniverse's strategic partnerships with industry leading author organizations include the Authors Guild, Harlem Writers Guild, ASJA, and the Mystery Writers of America. The company's major investors include Warburg Pincus and Barnes & Noble.

vision characterized by leveraging efficient process and technology to achieve flexibility, rapid time-to-market, and cost effectiveness—opening the opportunity for anyone to become a published author. The iUniverse approach enables individual authors and traditional publishers to prove a market without the risks and costs associated with the traditional publishing model. Many of the processes involved in book publishing have become electronic, and iUniverse was established to leverage this electronic component to provide more affordable self-publishing options. To accomplish its goals, iUniverse realized it needed to build a technology infrastructure that could automate some of the processes involved in book production. The infrastructure would need to be flexible and dynamic to enable iUniverse to quickly map its changing business processes to the technology.

In 2002, iUniverse held a technology summit, where business and technical leaders determined that implementing BPM as a core systems component would enable the company to standardize on a framework that would improve efficiencies for engineering and rolling out automated business processes. The team quickly

established a matrix of weighted requirements for a BPM solution. After an extensive selection process that included evaluating over thirty products and solutions, iUniverse chose Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> and began implementing the solution.

## **Solution Details**

Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> was chosen because of its standards-based architecture and the high level of customer service iUniverse anticipated it would receive. In addition, iUniverse did not want a solution that forced it to use a specific application server, which might have increased the cost of the overall solution. iUniverse liked the fact that Intalio could work easily with Java Messaging Service (JMS), which iUniverse was already using as well as other open standards, such as SOAP, through its connector architecture. iUniverse also wanted to conduct development in-house and it was looking for a solution that its developers could comfortably assume responsibility for, eliminating the need for extensive outside services to implement the solution.

Prior to adopting Intalio, iUniverse's internal system consisted of web-based front-end systems (written primarily in ASP) and non-interactive back-end systems (written in Java) that operated on data stored in the company's DBMS (see Figure 1). In the case of the front-end systems, business logic was embedded in both the ASP pages and the DBMS (in the form of stored procedures). For the back-end systems, business logic was embedded primarily in the Java code, with some use of stored procedures, leveraging items that could be used by both front-end and back-end processes.

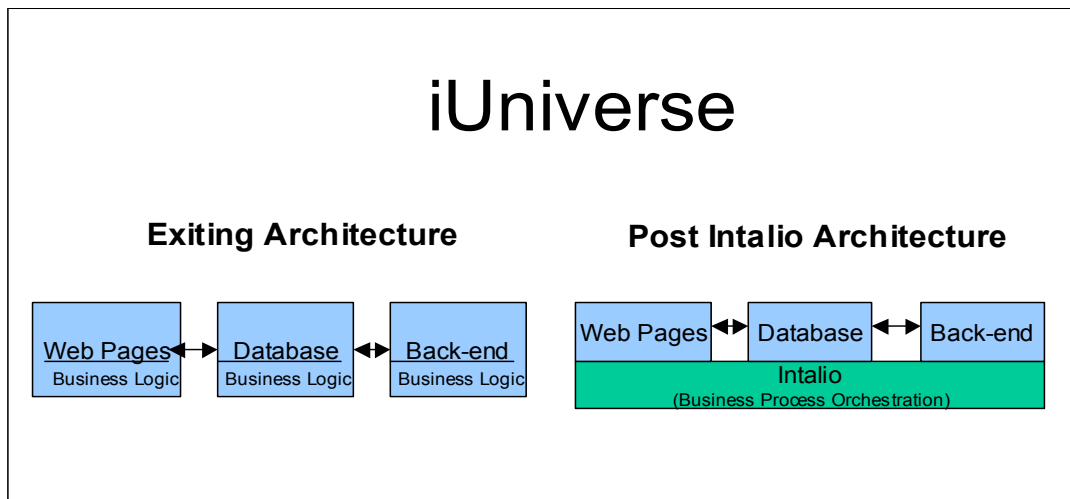


Figure 1: iUniverse's system architecture before and after Intalio/n3.

Intalio/n3 changed this by separating the business logic (flow) of the system. Using Intalio/n3, the business flow is now orchestrated by the BPMS. Code level components, both web page and back-end components, provide pure logic related to the task without an awareness of the business process and flow. Currently, iUniverse is still in transition from its traditional architecture to the new Intalio architecture.

The initial focus for deployment has been on implementing low-risk, high-return, fully-automated business processes. iUniverse's location in Asia limited on-site implementation assistance by outside services, so the company relied instead on the samples and tutorials as well as Intalio's Help Desk for assistance in implementing the system.

Installation was straightforward, and within eight weeks the company had automated its first process, a catalog export workflow. In the process, information is extracted from iUniverse's catalog system, formatted for a specific channel partner, and then sent to that channel partner. Initially

iUniverse applied this process to three of its channel partners, and once they were running, added an additional three. This process replaces custom coding that was required for each partner, which was labor intensive because it had to be re-written each time a change in the business process occurred. Overall, iUniverse has implemented 6 catalog

export processes (this is double the number of exports it was performing pre-Intalio; the first export within 45 days of adopting Intalio as its BPMS), its shipping confirmation process (feedback from print partners that orders have been printed and shipped), and a process to monitor the status of book titles to insure they are set-up within iUniverse's various channels on a timely basis.

iUniverse has two additional processes in beta testing, one that updates catalog status once iUniverse titles become available in different channels and another that provides a framework for the pre-flight process, moving manuscripts from its submissions systems into the production systems and performing basic validation of the submitted files.

## Business Benefits

- Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> provides a strategic infrastructure that will enable iUniverse to automate business-critical processes and respond more quickly to changing business needs.
- Fast implementation time enables business processes to be automated within weeks rather than months or years.
- BPMI standards and Intalio's architecture helped provide some insurance for iUniverse that its investment will be protected, even if it decided to switch platforms in the future.
- Intalio has reduced its overall development costs related to catalog extraction by 30%, and anticipates that savings will rise to as much as 75% as the library of components that can be used into business processes increases.

## Lessons Learned

Perhaps the best lesson that iUniverse can pass onto other companies in a similar situation, evaluating BPM solutions, is its methodology for selecting a solution. iUniverse launched an extensive review and evaluation process that spanned several months and involved business and technical leaders to ensure that all needs were being represented. Prior to beginning the evaluation process, iUniverse defined a matrix of weighted criteria against which products would be evaluated. Doing this before the evaluation process began insured product bias was not introduced into the process. The matrix was used to evaluate thirty different vendors and solutions to reach a short-list of products. iUniverse then made use of a hands-on approach, actually implementing a simple business process with each of the five short-list products before finally selecting Intalio|n<sup>3</sup> as its solution.

Another important lesson that iUniverse highlights is the decision to tackle a project of limited scope first. The company has determined that the first processes to be automated are those that are fairly simple and straightforward while achieving high return value on the time invested. This enables iUniverse to become comfortable with the Intalio|n<sup>3</sup>

development environment, and also ensures early success—two critical factors for continuing adoption of the product and transitioning to automated business process management.

## Upside Analysis

Adopting a business process management approach for application integration and business applications is often a big step for companies. This case study highlights the process that iUniverse went through before choosing a BPM software platform. Upside Research believes that iUniverse has developed several best practices that other companies can benefit from, including its extensive evaluation process and its decision to automate straightforward processes first. Obtaining management buy-in, via a technology summit, helped iUniverse's IT managers gain support from top corporate executives and helped to solidify on-going support for the project.

The creation of a specific matrix of feature, functions, and architectural requirements was also key to helping iUniverse identify the differences among potential solutions and select a short list of products that mapped directly to its unique requirements. Any organization currently evaluating BPM solutions should strongly consider these two steps as important components of their evaluation process.

### **ABOUT UPSIDE RESEARCH**

Upside Research is a research and consulting firm focused on helping clients put application development, Web services, business process management, integration, and enterprise infrastructure challenges in perspective. Upside Research helps organizations find practical ways to achieve their IT goals and profit from the diversity of a changing technology landscape.

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