Revolutionizing yearbook production
Herff Jones helps countless schools and universities celebrate their most important milestones. The company’s impressive tenure and leadership in educational products, recognition awards, and graduation-related items for the education market reflects its history of innovation through technology. Herff Jones was named to CIO magazine’s exclusive listing of 100 companies globally using technology to be innovative.

Herff Jones saw software as a service (SaaS) platforms as an excellent way to reach more customers online. The company turned to EffectiveUI in 2008 to develop its first rich Internet application (RIA) for school yearbook production. The outcome was impressive: EffectiveUI created the yearbook-publishing solution called eDesign using cutting-edge Adobe Flash Platform technology and delivered a breakthrough multi-user web-to-print system for collaboratively publishing school yearbooks online. But the story didn’t end there.
Reaching new markets with the Adobe Flash Platform

Herff Jones saw another market opportunity for the K-8 market, one where busy moms and PTA members were doing most of the yearbook work. The company wanted to provide an approachable and friendly yearbook application for anyone new to yearbooks who may not have the time or desire to learn about publishing.

Herff Jones tapped EffectiveUI again and the decision was made to leverage the existing eDesign application to produce Y Online, a new RIA for the K-8 yearbook market. "If the eDesign application didn’t exist, it would have cost four times as much to build this project from scratch," says Ken Guiberson, senior software architect at EffectiveUI. "It is a great example of how a solid design and development foundation built on the Adobe Flash Platform can help clients reach into new markets."

Designers used Adobe Creative Suite® software, including Adobe Illustrator®, Photoshop®, and Flash Professional, to create skins, compositions, and artwork for the Y Online user interface. Developers then assembled the application using Adobe Flex® Builder™ software.

"From a technical standpoint, Y Online was very similar to the eDesign application," says Guiberson. "Adobe Creative Suite software helped us make changes at the user interface layer to create a more approachable, intuitive user experience for the novice yearbook designer."

Herff Jones was especially pleased with how the project turned out. "Since Y Online became available in January 2010, approximately 70% of our K-8 yearbook customers have opted to use it versus the desktop version, and Herff Jones’ business in that market has increased by roughly 15%,” says Vicky Wolfe, Director of Marketing, yearbook division at Herff Jones.

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