

JCDecaux

Automating production processes

Innovative outdoor advertising company cut catalogue production costs dramatically and increased reliability of its data collection process using Adobe® FrameMaker® and services from Antéa

A global leader and trendsetter in innovative outdoor advertising solutions, JCDecaux focuses exclusively on outdoor advertising and development activities for street furniture, billboard, and transport advertising. The company produces more than 50 maintenance catalogues per year, ranging in length from 100 to 300 pages. These catalogues are aimed at JCDecaux partners, who are responsible for maintaining the company's outdoor advertising fixtures.

The catalogue publishing process at JCDecaux had long been manual and rigid. Information was integrated in an AS400 system, illustrations were done with CorelDRAW, and teams would have to incorporate printed pages with product nomenclatures on one side and illustrations on the other to create print catalogues on demand. "The process was tedious, so we decided to structure our catalogue publishing process around Adobe FrameMaker and a CAO tool," said Catherine Daudet, head of JCDecaux's catalogues department.

The decision to choose Adobe FrameMaker as the company's standard publishing tool was based on several criteria. First, the company wanted to invest in a solution supported by a leader in the publishing software business, and it was confident a solution from Adobe would be sustainable long term. FrameMaker also enabled the company to make considerable strides in its catalogue development and production process. Previously, the JCDecaux catalogue design and production team couldn't create chapters, paginate, or produce summaries. Now, FrameMaker gives JCDecaux true flexibility and a cohesive process. The open architecture in FrameMaker also enables JCDecaux to integrate publishing workflow functions which meet its specific needs.

The catalogues produced by JCDecaux bring together text data, such as buying codes for components which make up the advertising fixtures, and graphics such as detailed drawings that illustrate the assembly and disassembly of the fixtures. The text data and illustrations are stored in a SAP database and the catalogues are produced as books using Adobe FrameMaker. "We start by developing a catalogue nomenclature based on data provided by our research office and the team responsible for defining the code of each component. From this nomenclature, we then publish a Table of Illustrated Components which is used by those maintaining our advertising fixtures to identify a damaged component, determine how to remove and replace it, or order a replacement component," adds Daudet.



JCDecaux

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In partnership with:

Antéa

www.antea.fr

Adobe FrameMaker gives JCDecaux a user-friendly solution to help streamline its catalogue development and production process—integrating publishing workflow functions to meet specific needs and increasing reliability for data collection.



Challenge

- Automate the catalogue production process using Adobe FrameMaker and data from SAP

Solution

- Working with Antéa, JCDecaux customized its publishing workflow, enabling Adobe FrameMaker to collect and integrate SAP data into catalogues—creating a more user-friendly solution.

Benefits

- Automated catalogue production process, reducing SAP data collection time from one day to a few minutes
- Reduced potential for data manipulation errors, thereby increasing reliability of the process
- Increased overall productivity, putting company in position to expand catalogues and better meet technical information needs of collaborators

Toolkit

Adobe FrameMaker 9

Reducing costs and streamlining use of human resources

When creating and publishing its catalogues in the past, information contained in the company's SAP system had to be manually collected and assembled in FrameMaker to design the publication. "Before, transferring SAP information to FrameMaker was a manual process. It was long and cumbersome, with major potential for data manipulation errors. Our collaborator would spend 70% of her time on work that had no added value," notes Daudet.

JCDecaux therefore studied the possibility of automating data transfers from SAP systems to FrameMaker with the main goal of cutting costs. "These are maintenance catalogues that are often updated, and the production and updating cost was deemed too high," said Daudet. The aim of optimizing the production process was to save money, though it was not the only goal. "We also wanted our collaborator to save time so she could work on more constructive and rewarding projects," Daudet added. The company's requirements targeted three fundamental elements:

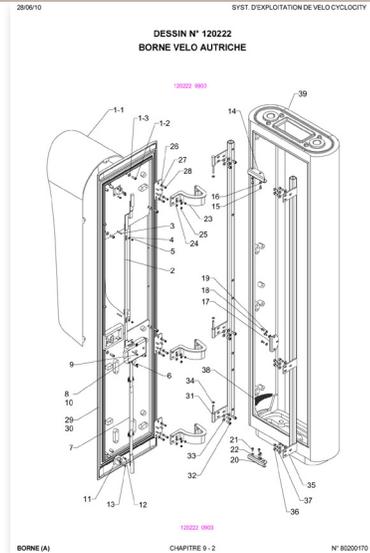
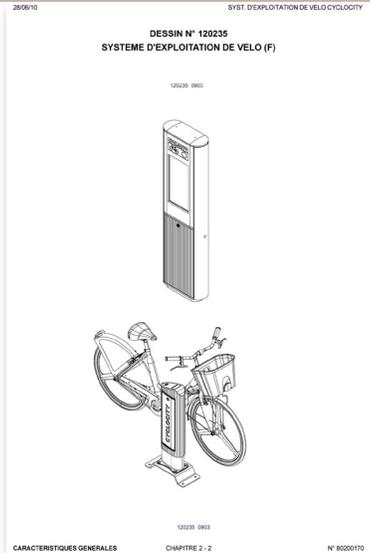
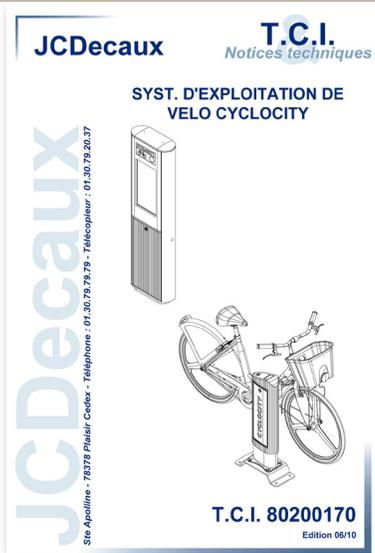
- It was important that the solution not connect directly to SAP as JCDecaux wanted to split up the two solutions for easier compatibility and maintenance.
- The solution had to enable the company to automate the generation of catalogues and easily apply new models, if necessary.
- The books generated in FrameMaker had to be modifiable for easy updates and time savings.

After conducting an extensive technology assessment, JCDecaux selected Antéa, Adobe's partner for Technical Communication solutions, to deliver the project. "Our decision to work with this Adobe partner was based on two things: first, Antéa is an expert in the field of documentation production and FrameMaker, and could therefore act as consultants during the assessment and analysis phases. Then, due to their implementation expertise, they could provide further advice during the delivery of the project," says Daudet. "For example, their experience was instrumental in advising us about successful use cases and functionality that we had not previously considered."

Customizing FrameMaker for processing SAP data

Antéa's solution consisted of adding an Illustrated Component Sheets (ICS) Generation menu to the standard menu in FrameMaker. The ICS Generation menu automatically initializes the processing of SAP data and produces the catalogue. The ICS Generation menu selects source files as well as the placement of drawing boards, models, and storage folders of the ICS generated. It reads the files and initiates the creation of the FrameMaker book and its component files. The book updates—in particular, the page numbering and list generation—are automatic. Once the process is completed, the FrameMaker book is automatically saved and can be modified at any time.

Adobe FrameMaker enabled JCDecaux to make considerable strides in its catalogue development and production process with more flexibility and a cohesive process. The open architecture in FrameMaker enables the company to integrate publishing workflow functions which meet its specific needs.



"It used to take us a whole day to transfer our SAP data to Adobe FrameMaker in order to publish our maintenance catalogues of 100 pages. Today, it takes us less than ten minutes and the larger the catalogue, the shorter our production time."

Catherine Daudet
Head of catalogues
department,
JCDecaux

"We can also define a model to apply via a command. The ICS Generation plug-in enables us to select a book containing models to apply, to only import certain model parameters if needed, to update book components, and, in particular, the pagination and numbering, and to save the documents generated," explains Philippe Zingoni, head of Antéa's technical services.

To avoid having to connect the application directly to SAP, the selected solution had to be able to edit the ICS elements from SAP in the form of text files. "I edit a text file for my summary, a text file for all the nomenclatures that I have to use, and a directory that compiles all my drawings," explains Daudet. "Once I've isolated these two files and the directory, I can automatically publish my FrameMaker book without connecting to SAP."

A tailored solution

The development cycle was about two weeks. JCDecaux clearly expressed its needs to Antéa and provided elements to help carry out the project. The process was so smooth that when JCDecaux tested the new application for the first time, it worked perfectly.

"Antéa was attuned to our needs. When we decided to work with the Antéa team, they provided us with a spec sheet and asked about various elements, such as FrameMaker mock-ups, variable names, and a model FrameMaker book created manually," says Daudet. "They immediately understood what we expected and then came to install the application on our workstations. We didn't have to make any major modifications, and everything worked very well from day one. Our collaboration with Antéa was clear and productive. The team went beyond the needs we expressed and made suggestions that delivered richer functions."

Initially designed for FrameMaker 7.2, the ICS Generation application was revised in a second version to make it compatible with FrameMaker 9, running on Microsoft® Windows® Vista. This update enabled adding a few new options such as choosing English or French as the language of the book. "We also improved the reading of SAP information by integrating additional data in the catalogue," adds Zingoni.

"This tool enabled us to complete our standard practice circular panel and to open it up to new issues. It also delivered far more cohesiveness, which is a real comfort for our clients in terms of information access."

Catherine Daudet
Head of catalogues department,
JCDecaux

Long-term success

The company's objectives were fully met. JCDecaux drastically reduced its catalogue production time. "It used to take us a whole day to transfer our SAP data to Adobe FrameMaker in order to publish our maintenance catalogues of 100 pages. Today, it takes us less than ten minutes and the larger the catalogue, the shorter our production time," says Daudet. "It's much easier to update the catalogues, which enables us to be far more responsive."

The Adobe FrameMaker solution delivered lower costs, time savings, better responsiveness, and greater reliability. Automating the publishing of FrameMaker books helps eliminate human errors related to manipulating data sent from SAP to FrameMaker. "This tool enabled us to complete our standard practice circular panel and to open it up to new issues. It also delivered far more cohesiveness, which is a real comfort for our clients in terms of information access," says Daudet.

Moving forward, JCDecaux is interested in using a 3D tool to present its visual and technical elements, plans, drawings, and graphics. "Antéa is still there to support us when new versions of FrameMaker come out. I think our next collaboration will be updating our catalogue base to 3D, using the Adobe Technical Communication Suite and, in particular, FrameMaker," concludes Daudet.

For more information

[www.adobe.com/fr/products/
frame maker](http://www.adobe.com/fr/products/frame maker)



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