

Springer Takes Control of its Online Content Delivery

Scientific Publisher Uses the MarkLogic® Database to Turn SpringerLink into the Core of Its business and Improve Performance by 50%



CUSTOMER
Springer

INDUSTRY
Publishing

CHALLENGES
Architecture consolidation,
Time to market,
Complex data,
Content delivery

CUSTOMER USE CASE
Search & discovery,
Mobile delivery

BENEFITS
Faster time to market,
Agile development,
Scalability,
Sub-second response times

Company Overview

For over 160 years, Springer has led the industry in scientific and medical publishing. With a staff of 6,000 employees around the world, the company publishes more than 8,000 new book titles each year—and that's just in print. To meet the growing demand for online delivery, Springer also maintains an online catalog of more than 169,000 eBooks, and has the world's largest open access portfolio.

The company's content delivery platform, SpringerLink, is the heart of the company's business, hosting more than 8.4 million scientific documents including journals, books, series, protocols and reference works.

Challenges

Launched in 1996, SpringerLink was one of the first publicly-available online content platforms. The site was originally used as a home to some of the company's journals, but as online content became an increasingly important part of the company's business, SpringerLink became the hub for every journal the company published, and later, its entire library of books.

With a massive content library and a shift in revenues from print to electronic, Springer needed a greater level of flexibility and control over its online content distribution, which had grown to account for two-thirds of total company revenue. The Springer team required:

- **An in-house solution.** For eight years, Springer was using a third-party technology provider to power SpringerLink. As it evolved into a crucial component of the company's revenue, the Springer team members decided that they didn't want that strategic asset resting on a technology they didn't own.
- **Rapid deployment.** With the end of the outsourced technology contract fast approaching, Springer faced the daunting task of completing the project in just 11 months.
- **Fast search.** As online content exploded, readers came to expect better functionality from content providers, including sub-second search.

“Instead of being a company whose job is done when a user downloads a PDF, we wanted to be a company whose job is done when a user's job is done.”

— Brian Bishop, VP of Platform Development, Springer



“We didn’t just buy MarkLogic’s software... We also bought MarkLogic’s expertise in how to make sure that we would deliver what we needed to deliver in very tight time frames.”

— Brian Bishop, VP of Platform Development, Springer

“Our experience in working with MarkLogic was that they were very willing to come into our business, understand exactly the problems that we were facing and help us come up with a particular solution for those specific problems.”

— Brian Bishop, VP of Platform Development, Springer

The Solution

Springer chose the MarkLogic® database as its new platform because it allowed the company to deliver more rich applications to their customers, creating a user experience that went beyond simply delivering a piece of content. The Springer team had previously built and deployed some high-performing applications using MarkLogic, including a tool to track the locations of document authors, a search engine for mathematicians, a program that displays snippets of scientific language in a publishing context, and SpringerImages, a robust platform that allows users to search through millions of images stored in SpringerLink.

Why MarkLogic?

The MarkLogic database surpasses expectations, helping Springer to:

Create Revenue

SpringerLink is now the core of Springer’s business, generating 95 percent of Springer’s online revenue and driving more than two million page requests and over a million downloads a day.

Increase Performance

In fractions of a second, SpringerLink can analyze hundreds of contracts per customer, identifying which of the millions of items they can access. During high-traffic periods, the new platform loads twice as fast as before, and runs essential functions up to four times faster than its previous system.

Boost User Engagement

Since moving to MarkLogic, the time users spend on SpringerLink has increased by one-third, bounce rate has been cut in half, and the number of page views has grown significantly.

Improve SpringerImages

MarkLogic searches image captions as well as relevant text surrounding the image to ensure more robust and accurate results.

Foster an Agile Development Process

MarkLogic’s agile approach supports automated tests, continuous integration and deployment, and weekly iterations.

Simplify Architecture

MarkLogic’s built-in powerful search engine helped Springer simplify its architecture and allows users to subscribe to their own reusable queries.

Support Multi-Language Search

MarkLogic is able to change the search parameters based on the user’s language. German-speaking users and English-speaking users will see results tailored to them.

Go to Market Quickly

From three releases each year on the old platform to now weekly releases, Springer is able to take new features to market as soon as a business need is identified.

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