have to decide what is best for your size staff and newspaper. Most larger papers are moving to the design desk concept, where page designers do all the layout and pagination while the copy desk maintains the function of editing copy and writing headlines.

Others find that the best solution is to have the flexibility of having the copy editors do editing and designing. Still others have technicians, usually former composing room employees, do the paginating from dummies supplied by the copy desk.

At the Post and Courier, we adopted a combination of the first two systems.

Our features pages and advance pages are done by a design desk. But the news and sports pages on deadline are handled by copy editors. Because of our size (109,500 daily), we found that a well-trained desk where all editors are capable of editing and paginating is paramount for flexibility in scheduling.

THE WORD IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT PRODUCT

With pagination, the copy/design desk has control over the pages. But there is no backup to catch errors once the page is sent to negative. That's why you need to develop a page-proofing system. You also need to hire good editors and teach them to paginate, instead of trying to teach computer geeks to spell. ◆

You may need to rethink your whole organization

In choosing the new system for Phoenix, the focus has been on ownership, participation and decisions based on 'customer' demands

BY HOWARD FINBERG

The following was adapted from a speech Finberg gave at the Seybold Conference earlier this year. PNI is installing a CCI Layout Champ system as a replacement to its 10-year-old triple-I system.

Pagination is an "old" technology. More importantly, pagination will not help a newspaper in the "new media" landscape of today. What's really important are the opportunities of a publication database system.

We can develop all the online, fax, and other new media products in the world, but unless we are lucky enough to be hiring dozens of new employees over the next ten years, we need to figure out better ways of using our existing resources of staff and equipment.

Just buying new equipment, however, isn't enough. Newspapers also need new ways of developing and installing these powerful systems.

At Phoenix Newspapers, we had an interesting challenge — we had to find a replacement for our pagination system. However, we also had other projects on our corporate plate — a new accounting system, a new circulation system and an advertising sales system.

But we also have a vision at PNI: system integration, not separation. What we wanted was to create and integrate a 21st century method of publishing in both the print and new media world, all of which would use the same staff.

More importantly, we want to share information throughout the organization and avoid the assembly line process that has developed over the years. Many newspapers are not very good at sharing information, especially during the creative and editing process. My goal was to leverage the technology so the skills of all staff members would be utilized throughout the entire process of putting out a newspaper.
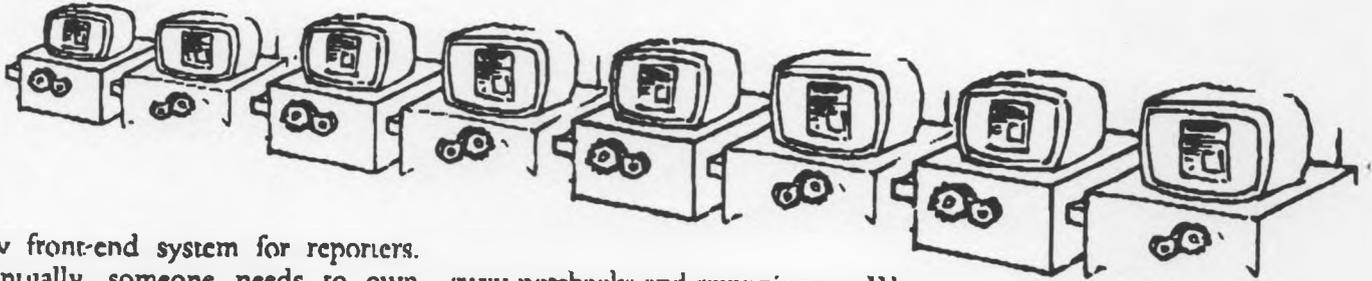
SYSTEM 'OWNERSHIP'

To reach that goal, we needed new ways of working. And we needed to change another paradigm — project ownership. The old paradigm is that systems are owned by services departments. Changing this paradigm is something we need to think about as we develop new methods of technology — regardless of whether it involves putting classifieds on the Internet, installing a voice information system or developing a

Finberg is director of information technology at Phoenix Newspapers. E-mail him at hfinberg@pni.com

PAGINATION

new front-end system for reporters. Eventually, someone needs to own these systems.

In our experience, the best ownership is a partnership between the people who are technically involved (the systems staff) and the people who are using the application (the customer or user).

The paradigm of ownership outside the technical department is a new one. Here are some of the steps PNI took to get there:

■ Get all departments involved. Invite everyone to the party. We had representatives from the library, finance and purchasing. During the process, purchasing reviewed the contract and finance assessed the implications of the project. Those departments learned a great deal about the news business while the people from editorial learned the business issues that face the company.

■ Hold several demonstrations. Invite as many vendors as you can think of and then invite the entire staff to the demonstrations. The goal was to open minds to the possibilities, not to necessarily make a decision. Get the staff involved up front; put fliers in the newsroom, tap people on the shoulder and say "Don't you want to sign up?... Don't you want to come?" You have to make them understand that they should go because their opinion is going to count. Everybody who came had an opportunity to ask questions and then to fill out a survey and voice an anonymous opinion. And those opinions counted.

■ Reward involvement. You need to make sure that the people involved get recognized. The rewards could be nothing more than an acknowledgment of their contribution, a kudo from their boss. We held a number of parties and luncheons: nothing like free food to make people feel loved. We also gave

away notebooks and souvenir pens. We had a number of milestone celebrations to say "thank you for your contribution."

■ Develop a detailed specifics list. This was our handbook of what we wanted in the system. Sometimes companies will do a request for proposal (RFP), but those are "system-driven." This list was user-driven. And our list was updated after every demonstration, as useful ideas were "stolen" after different vendors showed their systems.

■ Create new forms of communication. Rather than use the one-to-many method of e-mail or messaging, we created discussion databases (using Lotus Notes) to track issues and concerns. Once a message is posted, everyone is free to contribute ideas and suggestions. Everyone could contribute or learn from previous discussions, regardless of when they joined the project or their specialty.

■ Organize the project. It was probably the most significant part of what we did to change the process. While I might be the project administrator, the real work is done though the project team leaders, one from the newsroom and one from information services. These team leaders are the front-line people making the day-to-day decisions. They made decisions together and they back each other up with the information. The other team members were called "project consultants." These people within our organization did specific pieces of the project. They worked with the project leaders, who made sure whatever resources were needed got to the right people. When there were disputes, concerns or issues, I stepped in to help.

This created a team with shared goals that allowed individuals to be suc-

cessful with their own part of the project. And it allowed the team to be collectively successful.

Equally important, this model avoids knowledge concentration. I wanted more knowledge about the system spread throughout the organization. This was going to be particularly important because the publication database system is complex and sophisticated.

'MEASURED' COMMUNICATION

There was one other aspect of this paradigm shift. This is something I call "measured" communication. This method distributes accurate information, but also tries to avoid the temptation of "panic" that sets in during any change in process.

Everybody on the team understood that panic during a system installation is like yelling "fire" in a crowded theater — it has dire consequences. However, measured communication did not mean we didn't point out faults, or have heated discussions (within the team and with our vendor). It means making sure what the entire organization hears is consistent, accurate and measured for the long-term. Panic over a short-term problem doesn't raise confidence levels, it only focuses on problems that usually get fixed.

One successful method involved creating a newsletter that had lots of information, some technical, that was distributed to the entire PNI staff. We also used e-mail and an "open house" to further communication.

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PAGINATION

CHANGING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

If you think about how we really do work, it has nothing to do with the organizational chart that has a CEO at the top. The CEO doesn't do "work," and that person needs to be at the bottom of the workflow triangle. People at the top are the workers. At PNI, we are looking at workflow as a people process. That means how people interact, how they communicate (and how they want to communicate.)

To reach our goals we are working on the development of tools that allow the creative function to be a matter of human skills, not the type of computer technology that sits on your desk.

This becomes another way of getting to the goal where information and decisions are shared throughout the whole organization. Workflow becomes circular. It's a concept I call an "information circle." This concept looks at information throughout the process and how different types of information have different values to customers, internal and external. One way of looking at information circles involves three areas:

■ Highlight information. This is the front page of the paper. Keep everyone informed about important changes.

■ In-depth information. This might be a collection of information that goes deep into a topic — make sure the people involved in the project have access to all the information they need.

■ Background information. Our libraries of information would be in this circle. This is where discussion databases play an important role.

All of these methods are aimed at creating new forms of communication and better opportunities for success throughout the company. Technology is a tool to be used for an end result. By itself, technology does nothing. Used effectively, it is a means to improve an organization. ◆

There are benefits you don't even see yet

Equipment increases opportunities for collaboration, something most newsrooms don't do well

BY DAVE FRYXELL AND JEFF RUSH

So you're gonna paginate? Notes from folks who've been there:

YOU'LL GET THROUGH IT

Pagination equipment is just a tool, an advanced version of pen and paper, the typewriter, or whatever system you are using now. With a little training and a little effort, you'll soon be making good use of your new tool.

You'll also find that pagination affects the way you work and the ways in which copy and pages move through your newsroom. While these changes can seem as jarring as the new technology itself, they can also be liberating. For instance, pagination can make it easier for various parts of your newsroom to collaborate creatively. Pagination can enable teams to work together more smoothly. It can help your newsroom move away from the assembly-line approach to newspapering and toward a more reader-oriented way of working.

BENEFITS BEYOND THE BOTTOM LINE

Pagination offers you greater control over the final product that readers see,

Fryxell is executive producer for Microsoft's CityScape project in the Twin Cities. Until recently, he was senior editor/business of the St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press.

Rush is news editor of the St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press. Until recently, he was news editor of the Wichita (Kan.) Eagle.

and new ways to structure your work.

Pages can come together earlier in the newsroom rather than later in composing. Reporters, editors, photographers and artists who want to can look at how their work plays on a page, look at that element's content, design, weight and position relative to other elements on the page, and fine-tune accordingly. Everyone involved in a story or a package can contribute as the page comes together, rather than merely handing off their work (and responsibility) to the next person on the assembly line.

Editors can see how much a story needs to be trimmed and go about it intelligently by hunting for widows and trims throughout rather than hacking from the bottom because there isn't time to rewrap type in composing. Reporters can even help trim their own copy — and see on the screen if it fits.

Display type such as headlines, cutlines and pullouts can be looked at as a unit rather than as individual elements and can be tweaked.

Photos can be quickly sized and cropped and moved around the page.

Artists can look at how color in an illustration or graphic works with other colors on the page.

Designers can move elements and make pages look the

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