



Kaplan & Componize Helping Students Achieve Their Goals

Customer: Jean Kaplansky

Company: Kaplan

Industry: Publishing, Learning & Editing



Video Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-XYSwcVzw>

Original Article: <https://componize.com/case-studies/kaplan-componize-case-study/>

1+ million

Students served

3 document types

DITA, DocBook and
HTML5

10+ million

Topics in the
repository!

Componize's Alfresco-based CCMS enables Kaplan North America to reduce costs, streamline processes, and improve content integrity across varying content and XML document types.

Jean Kaplansky - Sr. Manager, KNA Academics & Delivery Operations
Kaplan North America

Introduction

Standardized testing is a critical component of the education system, and Kaplan has been at the forefront of the industry for many years. In this case study, we will take a closer look at Kaplan's use of CCMS and the challenges that the company faces in the test preparation industry.

Kaplan is a leading provider of test preparation content and study materials, **serving more than a million students and thousands of clients and university partners**. The company has a long-term relationship with Componize, a component content management system (CCMS) that helps Kaplan to manage and deliver its content to students.



Jean Kaplansky, a senior manager of Content Strategy and Content Operations at Kaplan, explains that the company focuses on learning management system delivery, but also aims to get printed and e-book material out as widely as possible for the benefit of its students.

Kaplan, Over a Decade with Componize

The partnership between Kaplan and Componize has been successful, as evidenced by Kaplan's ability to deliver more personalized and targeted content to students, which has helped students achieve their learning goals more efficiently and effectively.

As Kaplan has grown, adding new acquisitions, more content and content creators, Componize has been able to grow to more than meet their needs. As new technologies and trends emerge, Kaplan has been able to incorporate them into their use of Componize CCMS, which has helped the company stay ahead of the curve and maintain its competitive edge.

A trusted relationship where Kaplan managers and project leaders have built a trust based on the fact that Componize stands ready to propose solutions to product or usage issues, sure in the knowledge that Componize will not oversell services or tools that they do not need.

Challenges for Test Preparation and Publishing Industry

One of the main challenges in the test preparation industry is the ongoing conversation about the necessity of certain tests. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a lot of changes in our ability to do more in remote locations, including in the way tests are administered. This has caused a lot of conversation and churn in the industry.

Many tests that people have traditionally had to prepare for are being reviewed and questioned as to whether they are necessary. Many universities and colleges temporarily suspended their in-person learning, and switched instead to providing online content for self-study and test preparation.

Uncertainty and disruption in the industry's supply chains, with printing and distribution delays affecting the availability of test preparation materials and this shift to remote learning highlighted the need for more digital test preparation materials and online assessments.



Challenges for Kaplan

Fast paced changes in technology

Adapting to changes in testing processes and improving the delivery of content to students in increasing used online proctored settings.

Keeping up with content changes and updates

An ability to quickly and efficiently update test preparation materials to reflect any changes in the testing process and in content.

Cost of maintaining multiple systems and processes

As a result of various acquisitions, Kaplan ended up with no less than 3 different structured content management systems, each based on different XML schemas.

- [DITA XML](#)
- [DocBook](#)
- [XHTML](#)

The result was an exponential increase in operating costs:

- high **external costs** maintaining
- content management system subscriptions
- multiple writing tool licenses

Internal costs at Kaplan:

- maintaining competence in 3 different CMS
- coordination the relationship with 3 different vendors

Kaplan sought to identify a CMS platform capable of accommodating diverse projects, document types and publication pipelines. The undertaking posed a genuine challenge as the platform must effectively manage authors and contributors with distinct profiles and working methods, (experts in their fields but not necessarily trained in technical writing). This would present a potential for huge savings in time and money, as well as in process simplification!



Kaplan's Unique Approach to CCMS

One division of Kaplan was already a Componize CCMS user. After comparing their existing systems with each other as well as with other systems on the market, Kaplan decided to unify all their content in Componize.

Componize CCMS responded not only to their need for a single repository, but also the other requirements listed above, and especially an ability to manage not just XML schema, but also other business documents in non-xml format, such as spreadsheets, CAD files etc.

Kaplan migrated their content from 2 less efficient content management systems to Componize CCMS, while keeping some of the legacy content types they had. This allowed Kaplan to centralize content creation and management, ensuring consistency across the entire organization, including the new entities that Kaplan had acquired over the years. The aim, a single source of truth for all content, streamlined workflows, and leveraged technology to deliver content to multiple LMS and digital channels, improving engagement and learning outcomes.

Why Kaplan Chose Componize?

Now, while most CCMS offer the same features, there are unique features that Kaplan required in order to continue being able to create and publish great content.

Kaplan does not just have a team of trained technical writers, but also many contributors who are not skilled in using XML editors, or writing structured content.

Kaplan needed a system that could easily interact with many other tools and systems, and not just the traditional publishing platforms or output types.

Kaplan's Content Management Needs

- a possibility to push content to multiple Learning Management Systems (LMS)
- an ability to publish to multiple output formats, including to PDF, EPUB, HTML
- creation of content for online and print release

Kaplan wanted to make cost savings too. They had multiple content creation and repository systems, as well as authoring tools for each of the XML schemas or document types

... we're coming from a situation where we're basically merging three or four different companies. And those three or four different companies each had their own way of doing kind of management, and publishing and production. Once we merged those



three different companies, it became quickly obvious that that was not sustainable, in terms of we're paying a lot of money for [these] disparate content management systems and authoring tools.

The Results

- Over 3 Terabytes of content now managed in a single repository
- Massive savings by paying for only one content management system, and a reduction in the number of authoring tools needed to support the different content types. Kaplan was also able to benefit from volume discounting by signing up with a single vendor.
- Reduction in internal costs, for example, their IT department no longer had to manage multiple systems.
- Reduced friction in project management, all information in a central location means easy access to that information for reporting and managing multiple projects.
- Reduced training and retraining requirements, both for current content creators, but also when onboarding new contributors.
- Publication through multiple custom pipelines
- Publication to multiple delivery platforms: LMS, PDF, HTML, Amazon print services
- Increased collaboration with non-technical content creators around the world including for example, legal professionals, nurses and student doctors.

Kaplan has been a pioneer in the test preparation industry, and its use of Componize CCMS is a key factor in its success. The company faces ongoing challenges in the industry, but through its use of Componize, it is able to adapt to changes in the testing process and deliver accurate and up-to-date content to students. Kaplan's use of Componize is a great example of how technology can be used to improve education and help students achieve their goals.