# AFNOR Publishing

French publisher uses Adobe® FrameMaker® to transform documents into XML data to expand its catalog of publications

**AFNOR Publishing**
*www.afnor.org/en*

**In partnership with**
Antéa
*www.antea.fr*

**Industry**
Publishing

**Challenges**
- Standardizing the way information is exchanged with external contributors
- Leveraging XML data to streamline production and control of data
- Expanding product and service offering

**Solution**
Working with Antéa, AFNOR Publishing uses Adobe FrameMaker software to streamline the integration of digital documents into a single secure, usable document format for simplified publishing and greater control over sensitive data.

**Results**
- Improved efficiency and shortened production timelines
- Enhanced collaboration with external organizations
- Leveraged XML data for greater control of technical data
- Established a foundation to expand product and service offering

**Systems at a glance**
- Adobe FrameMaker

## Expanding publication capabilities

How do you optimize the integration of content from more than 10,000 external collaborators within your own publications? How do you facilitate the use of this content in new media channels? AFNOR Publishing relies on Adobe FrameMaker software to streamline the integration and export of its collaborators' content from Microsoft Word, enabling its catalog of publications to be available online.

AFNOR specializes in four key areas of operation: standardization, publishing, training, and certification. Its standardization mission consists of identifying needs; developing implementation strategies; and coordinating, guiding, and supporting external contributors to make sure the new standards are properly recognized by all parties. AFNOR also certifies and works with companies to help them comply with standards, in particular through NF and AFAQ certificates. In addition to these two missions—standardization and certification—AFNOR also plays an educational role by publishing both works and online databases, and by providing training.

The nature of its business means that AFNOR faces multiple challenges associated with content exchange, sharing, revision, integration, and distribution of information. In particular, the Adobe solution helps the company handle the circulation and control of information with all external contributors involved in standardizing operations, as well as facilitating access to information by pursuing a publishing strategy that uses multiple channels of communication.

"We wanted to simplify the process of integrating content contained in Microsoft Office documents with FrameMaker to improve the standardization process and facilitate the exchange of content from FrameMaker to an external organization," says Claude Trémolières, head of the information processing and logistics department at AFNOR Publishing. "Our publication department is also working on offering new products and services, and our goal is to simplify establishing an innovative publication policy by transforming our FrameMaker content into XML data."

## Increasing efficiency

Used by AFNOR since 1994, FrameMaker has become the technology basis for all of its publications—approximately 2,000 documents published in PDF per year that contain, on average, 25 pages per document. FrameMaker compatibility with existing document formats provides AFNOR with greater flexibility in aggregating all types of content useful to the standardization process.

The company's business demands very short publication cycles, requiring its production teams to be highly responsive. "We work with close to 10,000 external contributors," explains Laurent Gombert, responsible for the publishing team at AFNOR. "Most of them provide their content in Microsoft Word, which was then integrated into our FrameMaker documents by hand. The process was error prone and slow, but we couldn't require contributors to use FrameMaker."

The company's goal was to both improve efficiency and shorten the production cycle to become more responsive to customer needs. AFNOR called on Antéa to help it modify its publication system and leverage the FrameMaker API to make it easier to incorporate content from Word documents into FrameMaker. "Antéa developed several extensions for FrameMaker and developed a tool capable of automatically adapting a Word document while maintaining styles," Mr. Gombert says. "We still had to do the formatting, but styles were maintained. The content is reformatted in a FrameMaker document and edited to remove typographical and formatting errors."

### Integrating Microsoft Word content

The ability to more easily incorporate content from Word files into FrameMaker documents means greater flexibility for AFNOR's publication department. The organization can reduce preparation times, simplify its integration, and limit the risk of errors. This is the first step in a multistep strategy aimed at achieving a fully automated end-to-end solution. "We will be implementing a review process with FrameMaker 9. Today, we provide a hard copy document or PDF file, but there is no electronic review process in place. Advanced automation will help us make the revision of documents more consistent," says Mr. Gombert.

### Facilitating exchanges with external contributors and organizations

AFNOR exchanges content and information with a variety of external organizations that provide feedback in the development of new processes and standards. With automated importing of Word content, AFNOR Publishing is continuing its drive toward simplifying the process of exporting content from FrameMaker to Word.

"On the one hand, we wanted to be able to export documents edited in FrameMaker to Word while preserving the great formatting quality. Antéa designed a solution that makes it easy to export edited documents back to Word," Mr. Gombert says. "On the other hand, we also publish collections of standards, so we designed a tool that makes it possible to generate a book using a .txt file that supports PDF. We created a template with headers and footers, into which we import all the requested PDF files."

By using Adobe software, AFNOR has improved its processes for the production of standards and the exchange, revision, and sharing of information. The company can now easily integrate Word content into its FrameMaker documents, as well as extract information from FrameMaker documents to Word. Such flexibility is key to making the company's operations more efficient and helping it meet tight deadlines in a short publication cycle.

### Deploying new publication services

AFNOR Publishing also pursues a very active publication policy, aimed at offering new products and services to its users. To expand its range of products and services, AFNOR is working to transform all the standards held in its collection into XML data. The migration of content to XML data is important because it frees data from association with specific software, enabling the company to use the information freely in the development of new products or services.

"The idea is to start with a carefully styled FrameMaker document and automatically edit the file in XML. With the help of Antéa, we designed an application capable of adapting an unstructured FrameMaker file and transforming it into a structured file," Mr. Gombert says. "In 98% of cases, the results are good. For the remaining 2%, we use the standard validation command to rework the document or even the process. Then, the structured FrameMaker file is exported to XML data, in which links are automatically added. The process works quite easily."

Though all documents published do not necessarily need to be structured, it is important AFNOR has the option to edit documents that use either structured or unstructured data, depending on its needs. In the end, the goal is not to transform unstructured FrameMaker files into structured XML documents, but rather to work directly in a structured format using documents provided by external contributors. To do so, AFNOR must be able to publish in XML using source files from either Word or Open Office.

"We need to either work directly with XML files from the outset or use a database that could be integrated with FrameMaker," Mr. Gombert says. "We are working with Antéa on developing a solution that will leverage the Adobe software to generate XML data at the same time as the PDF file, without affecting productivity or our ability to meet publication deadlines."

## An online library

AFNOR has now launched an online library with its first available publications, AFNOR BiVi, aimed at document specialists. AFNOR Publishing selected standards and articles and added a layer of user contributed information as well as an interface inspired by Facebook to facilitate exchanges between members. FrameMaker enables AFNOR to adapt its working processes and open its publications to new channels of communication, particularly the Internet.

"FrameMaker is an amazing tool that has adapted to the changing needs of document publishers, in terms of both media for compatibility with the formats used by other editors, and channels of distribution," says Mr. Gombert. "FrameMaker gives us peace of mind: it has always provided the answer to the publishing challenges we face."

## Long-term success

For more than 15 years, Adobe FrameMaker software has helped AFNOR Publishing become more efficient and productive. The sustainability of the tool, its compatibility with all commercial formats, its ease of use and, above all, its content creation and production environment form the basis on which AFNOR has founded its modernization policy for its publications.

"FrameMaker is a valuable productivity tool, with which we can leverage specific APIs to increase our efficiency. It is both an advanced CAP tool and an incredibly easy-to-use word processor," says Mr. Gombert. "We are also now looking at Adobe Technical Communication Suite and the future evolution of eBook publishing."

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