

Professional Publishing Report



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iPublish Central Sparks E-Book Revolution with Self-Serve E-Commerce

Electronic publishing company Impelsys recently introduced iPublish Central, a self-service e-commerce product that allows traditional publishers to market and sell their catalogs online at low cost through features such as widgets.

The self-serve aspect of iPublish Central enables publishers to load content, market it, and create Web sites for themselves regardless of previous experience or training with online marketing.

“Anyone who can use a computer can do all of this,” said Sameer Shariff, CEO of Impelsys. “Self-serve doesn’t require a degree. Simple button pushing launches an entire marketing campaign.”

Widgets and view-inside features allow searching and browsing inside books, and ideally function as agents of viral marketing.

Widgets, which are icons that can be placed on a Web site, allow publishers to showcase their brand and products globally by expanding publishers’ markets. According to Shariff, the widget feature allows customers and authors to take their products to places where “customers share ideas with friends” such as social networking sites like Facebook.com and Shelfari.com. The result is increased search engine optimization due to ever escalating links strewn across cyberspace.

“Consumers become spokespersons for the publishers’ products as their friends read the notes, comments or reviews they make,” said Shariff.

The view-inside feature allows publishers to provide content samples of books in the form of preview pages. The feature is similar to tools offered through Amazon and Google’s Book Search. According to Shariff, the view-

inside feature has been proven to increase and help drive sales—both traditional print sales and otherwise—for sites like Amazon.

According to Shariff the cost to deliver content online akin to what iPublish Central offers can typically cost \$25,000 or more depending on the type and scope of the content. The basic version of iPublish Central is free. Publishers who opt for the plus version pay \$5 per month, per book. Sixty-five percent of commission sales go to the publishers, while 35% goes to Impelsys.

Millions of dollars were invested developing the iPublish Central technology, which was launched about a month ago at the Frankfurt Book Fair. iPublish Central currently has more than 75 registered users. On average two publishers from around the world sign up daily, even though the official marketing campaign has yet to begin.