

## Role-, task-, and workflow-based: Klopotek's new GUI makes life easier for publishers

Klopotek's new user interface makes our customers' life easier. It allows publishers to modify how they work with the software. This enhanced focus on workflow support, roles, tasks, and cooperation is part of the company's overall strategy to enhance efficiency through the use of Best Practices. Wolf-Michael Mehl, Director at Klopotek, and Gregor Wolf, Klopotek's CTO, discuss the new GUI.



Wolf-Michael Mehl (l.) and Gregor Wolf (r.) speaking about the new graphical user interface.

Klopotek software has a new graphical user interface (GUI). How does this new GUI make life easier for publishers?

*Michael:* First of all, it makes the system's functions more clearly visible. As an example: you can browse all of the editions of one particular title, and if a title has four editions, the system shows you all four. There are buttons at the side of the window, including scroll-up and down buttons, which enable you to browse contents. It's simple and it's clear – everything is intuitive.

*Gregor:* The key word here is 'usability'. The new GUI also includes technical enhancements, for colors, font styles, and sizes. It uses a higher resolution and larger fonts. Improved legibility reduces the risk of making mistakes.

Standardization is another aspect of usability: why change things and make them more complicated when everyone is familiar with how they work? We took a lot of our ideas from Office® 2003 because that's what most publishers currently use. If Klopotek's icons have the same functions as those in Outlook® or other Office® programs, then this reduces the time and effort that publishers require when learning our software and when train-

ing new employees. After all, today everyone has more or less grown up with Office®.

However, the main point regarding usability and how we support publishers is that the new GUI brings clarity and intuitive deployment to precisely those functions which are of increasing importance for the industry. The functions in question are those which provide support for working in a role-, task- and workflow-based manner.

How does Klopotek's new software interface support an individual user?

*Michael:* The focus is on the organization of the workflow both of individual employees and of user groups. From a user's point of view, the new GUI supports their work and their tasks as the person who owns certain roles or who is a member of a team. We have upgraded and improved the 'reminder' function so that users can use it to simply process objects together or in sequence.

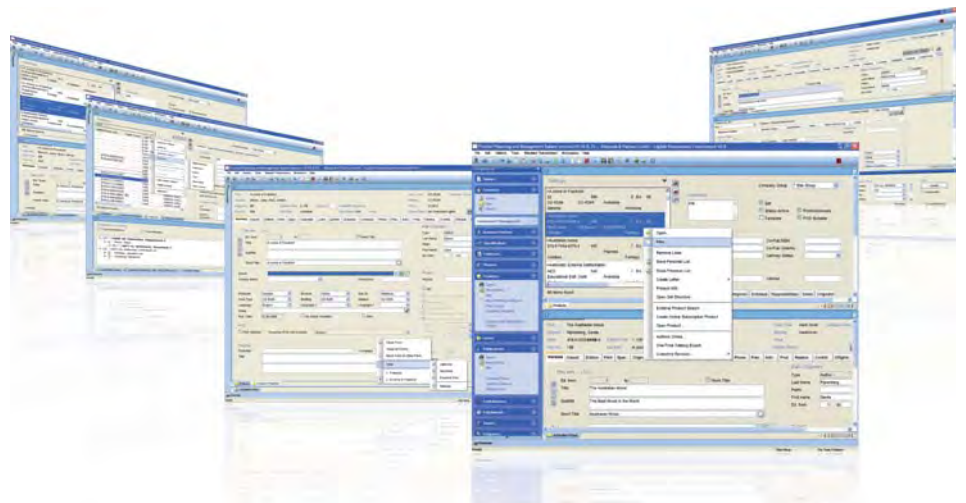
*Gregor:* The new GUI is made up of dynamic panes, in other words sections of the computer screen which you can move, adjust

in size, dock and undock – all depending on what you need. This creates more space on the screen for data processing – another point that falls under the heading of usability. An example: if my reminders contain a contract that I have to process, the reminder appears in the workspace, thereby telling me that I have a task to do. This is also ideal for teams, in particular because of the option for forwarding objects and processes that need attention. A publisher now has a powerful tool for tasks and work coordination, a 'to-do' list for organizing collaborative projects and work between employees.

What other features help organize the workflow?

*Gregor:* I'd like to mention the 'personal lists', which use Office®-like functions and enhance them by enabling users to decide for themselves what objects they want the system to present to them for processing, and in what sequence.

'Transactions' are another important example. The transactions are a kind of meta-level for objects, you can use them during the



Dynamic panes, improved usability, more space on the screen for data processing, and optimized for flexible team organization

preparatory stages as a work plan for all employees or teams – for organizing the objects in the system and documenting how they are processed. This isn't entirely new, but the new GUI has a lot of improvements.

You also mentioned role-based work processes. Why are they based on roles, and not on people or company departments? Can you give some examples?

*Michael:* In today's world publishers need to be more flexible. As a result of increasing digitization, new products are being introduced at increasing speed. A publisher's business processes have to adapt: they can no longer be modeled on static hierarchies and organizational structures. Some departments are outsourced, others are integrated. Optimum use must be made of resources, and employees are assigned tasks according to their skills and availability. Klopotek's software and the new GUI's greater range of features can support these constantly changing requirements: the new GUI provides better options for customizing your workstation and makes everything more straightforward. It is easier to understand and use. After all, training is also a cost factor, so the more intuitive, the less expensive it is to train staff.

*Gregor:* The topic of roles focuses on flexible team organization within a publishing house. The administrator can decide what teams get to use what components and input masks. In addition, the user interface can be customized for certain groups or roles. This goes for appearance as well, for example the color scheme can be altered. An example of a function that enables adaptation is the 'tab sorter' – you can use this to select the

sequence of the input masks on your screen based on what is best for you. You can place the ones you use frequently at the start, and this can be done for individual users or for particular groups of users who all use the system in a similar way or for similar processes.

*Michael:* The 'components', that is objects which can be processed, such as products, addresses etc., are displayed on the left of the screen. Each of these components provides functions which enable data to be processed. You can put the functions for components which you frequently use into your list of favorites.

*Gregor:* You can also describe these favorite functions as elements in 'my components', adapted to your personal requirements or to the requirements of a team. Components can be sorted by each user using the 'component manager', and we'll be delivering other customization features for this area in the future.

*Michael:* And that's not all: the system remembers all of the objects you handle, retaining the correct sequence. For example, you have product A, address A, product B, address B, etc. If you start processing data after a pause, you can simply use the 'history' function to see what addresses you have looked at for what products. It's similar to Word's 'recently used files' function.

How does Klopotek support publishers who want to meet the growing challenges presented by e-business?

*Gregor:* The new GUI is part of our technology strategy for migrating the Klopotek

solution to a native .NET application. Creating the new GUI is one stage of this project: we have now designed our user interface according to the Windows UX styleguide – the 'Windows User Experience Interaction Guidelines'. The route to .NET leads to WPF, the 'Windows Presentation Foundation' of Microsoft's .NET framework. Adapting Klopotek's software to suit Office® 2003 was also part of this. In order to capitalize on users' experience, a software application has to lag a little behind Office®. And once enough publishers are using Office® 2007, we will adapt our GUI to match that too. However, our strategy encompasses more than just technology: processes are also important. The market demands that publishers optimize their workflows and adopt Best Practices, that they think more in roles than in positions and departments, and that tasks are accomplished collectively. With this in mind, we have modified the Klopotek software so that it supports processes in a way that is increasingly workflow-, role- and task-based, and to make sure it provides a publisher with a collaborative work environment.

*Michael:* We are very pleased that the new GUI represents a significant step towards achieving this goal. We were in contact with a lot of our customers during development so we could get their feedback, and we did demonstrations, displayed several prototypes with different variations – and now we're looking forward to seeing what all of our customers think of the new interface. If you'd like a demonstration, simply contact us at [info@klopotek.com](mailto:info@klopotek.com). The more feedback we get, the faster we can make enhancements and the better the new GUI will be.

## "The updated interface makes it easy for users to access the powerful functionality contained within the Klopotek solution"

We quote the following by kind permission of Edwin Fager, 'Book Publishing Software News', September 2009 issue:



In August Gregor Wolf, Chief Technology Officer, provided us with an advance screening of Klopotek's new user interface.

*The new user interface is designed to reduce training time and improve user productivity. Each screen is better organized and less crowded. The menu system is similar to that found in Outlook and MS Dynamics. Adjustable panels allow the user to customize the look of their workspace and to view multiple screens at the same time. Adminis-*

*trators can hide tabs and menus based on the user's role. Users can set up their own menus for frequently accessed screens.*

*More importantly, we found that the updated interface makes it easy for users to access the powerful functionality contained within the Klopotek solution.*