Developing Digital Manuals: One State's Experience

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Nebraska Extension PSEP

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EXTENSION

Initial certification in Nebraska

- New commercial/noncommercial applicators must pass state exams
- Private applicators must pass state exam(s) to use fumigants
- Exam prep resources:
  - Hard-copy study manuals—PRIMARY RESOURCE
  - In-person training sessions (video reviews of manual material)
  - Digital manuals (study manual + video review)

Why digital manuals?

- Convenience/flexibility for prospective applicators
- Accommodate multiple learning styles
- Offer cost savings

$= \$145$

$= \$110$

EXTENSION

Digital manual options

- Nebraska PSEP went with 3D Issue (before either of us joined the program)
- A number of program options out there
- 3D Issue, Paperturn, FlippingBook, Flipsnack, Issuu, Publuu, Flipbuilder, etc.
- Simple PDF also an option
- Consider:
  - Program subscription costs
  - Quality of customer support
  - Security

3D Issue ®

- Web-hosted digital publications with page turning animations
- Annual subscription cost: ~$800
  - Two 'seats'
  - University discount
- Offer other newer versions - they will try to sell you on them
  - For security, we have stuck with a slightly earlier version
- Company based in Ireland
  - Time difference can make it difficult to connect with customer support

Example 3D Issue FlipBook

- https://cloud.3dissue.com/40620/41175/179694/IPM/index.html
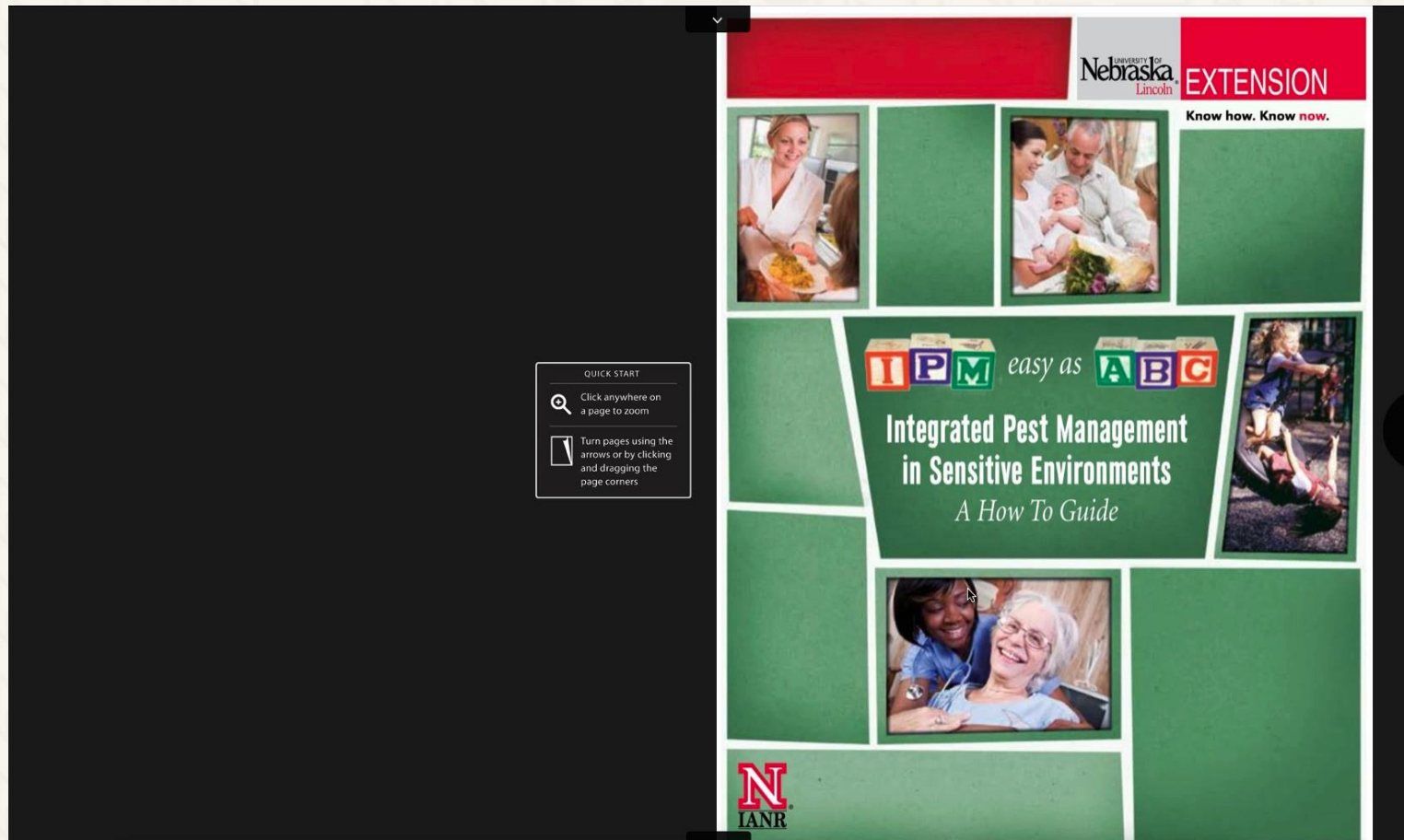
What does it take to build a digital manual?

Building a Nebraska PSEP FlipBook

1. Start with InDesign file of hard-copy manual
2. Turn this into a PDF
3. Upload PDF onto 3D Issue
4. Add features, multimedia, color photos, etc.
5. 'Build' the FlipBook

Straightforward, right? Well…there's a bit more to it…

What does it take to build a digital manual?

Some key questions:

- How will you connect the FlipBooks to your point of sale?

- How will you secure your product?

- How long should a purchaser have access to your product?

# What does it take to build a digital manual?

Also consider:

- Personnel/time commitment (content/design person, API programmer, phone support, etc.)
- Layout with digital in mind vs. editing later to accommodate digital format
- Software changes (3D Issue)
- National manuals: InDesign files, photos, fonts
- Revisions to manuals and training videos—rebuild
- Price point

The Team
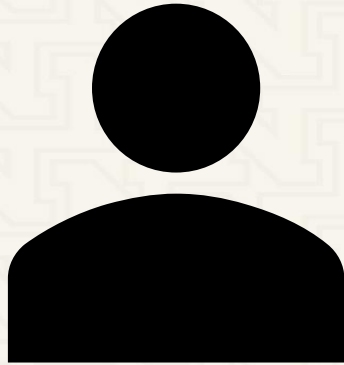
FlipBook Builder/Lead Person

- Heavy initial time commitment
- Must learn software
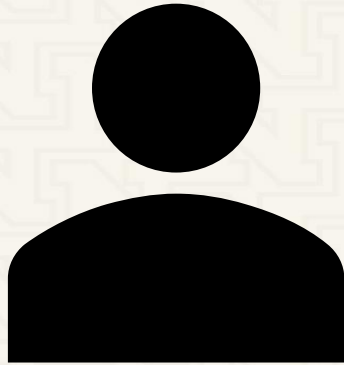- Communicates with API Programmer
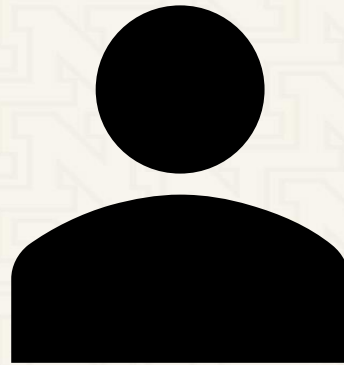
API Programmer(s)

- Heavy initial workload
- Enters work agreement
- Bridges gap between software and point of sale
- Unforeseen maintenance work – more $$
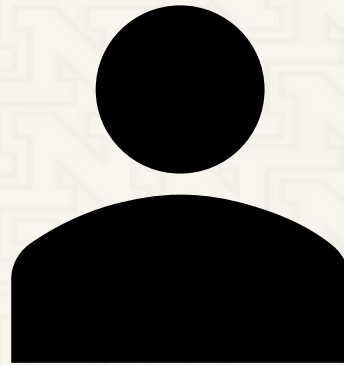
Customer Support Person

- Supports several programs
- Must be familiar with purchase process and use of product
- Reports user problems to Lead Person

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The Team

FlipBook Builder/Lead Person

40 hours/month (initially)
1-2 hours/month (ongoing)

API Programmer(s)

30 hours/month (initially)
1-2 hours/month (ongoing)

Customer Support Person

5 hours/month

Advantages of 3D Issue FlipBooks

- Online
- Multimedia capabilities
- More secure than PDF (password-protected, no download)
- Searchable content
- Analytics
- Automatic subscription expiration
- Update a product to its latest version without interruption
- Polished look
- Utilizes Google Translate

Disadvantages of 3D Issue FlipBooks

- Requires internet connection
- No 'download for later'
- API coordination required
- We can't access the proprietary files
- Manual/video revision requires rebuild
- Applicator must find exam session on their own
- Company could buy one copy, share internally all year
- Program intended for e-magazines, not necessarily training manuals

Refining the process

- With experience comes efficiency
- Heavy initial input leads to:
  - Ease of continued maintenance
  - Branding already in place
  - Minimal update time
  - Refined process shared with others

How's it going so far?

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Digital manuals sold	481	439	385	50	301	338
Market share	29.4%	24.4%	27.3%	5%	18.7%	17%
Format	PDF	PDF	PDF	PDF/FB	FB	FB

How's it going so far?

Feedback from customers

- We get quite a few help calls directly after purchase
  - May partly stem from our API structure—buyer receives multiple emails, etc.
- Some initial frustration as customers learn how to use the products
- Once a person gets used to using the product, they seem to really like it
  - Provides flexibility
  - Saves costs

Questions?

Feel free to reach out to us any time about our FlipBooks!
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Thank you!