



Ringier: **The integrated** **newsroom of the** **“Blick” Group**

 **Ringier**

Blick **Sonntags**
Blick **Blick**
am Abend **Blick**.^{ch}

Ringier implements a new kind of integrated newsroom

Many reorganisation projects in recent years have shown that changes in a traditional newspaper newsroom are a necessity and not an exception.

Today it is generally accepted that there is no one-size-fits-all recipe for how a newsroom should be structured and how it should work.

In addition to the traditional projects that focused on integrating digital and print in 2009 and 2010, growing numbers of more extensive projects have started and are in part already completed: the integration of multiple titles or media brands in one newsroom.

Die Welt group in Berlin was one of the first, a few years back, to implement a multi-title newsroom integration. In the German speaking region there is now another, fascinating example of establishing



Dietmar Schantin

an integrated multi-title newsroom: the Ringier group in Switzerland with its “Blick”, “Blick am Abend”, “Sonntagsblick” and “blick.ch” titles.

Ringier AG, founded in 1833, is one of Europe’s largest publishing houses and publishes internationally more than 120 magazines and newspaper titles, produces more than 20 TV programmes, and operates some 80 websites and mobile platforms. In addition, Ringier owns 11 printing plants in Europe.

Ringier’s “Blick” titles have long been major players in the popular press market in Switzerland. In 2008, the ambitious project was initiated with the objective of running the three newspapers and the online portal with a common, integrated newsroom.

One of the most important challenges for these kind of newsroom strategies was, and still is, the question of how the synergies in a joint newsroom can be utilised, while at the same time retaining the iden-

tity of the individual titles. Although all the newspapers include the word “Blick” in their titles, there are major differences in target audiences, topics, journalistic styles as well as content orientation.

This WAN-IFRA Newsplex special report describes the Ringier project in detail, including background and underlying considerations, the challenges for modern journalism, staff, architecture and technology. It also describes the launch of a new newsroom in the heart of Zurich with a “bridge”, a “decision place” and a “newsroom visualiser” – all features that are central to a new way of working.

I hope you will find this report both enjoyable and informative.

Dietmar Schantin

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Publishing team

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“Blick” delivers tabloid journalism to Switzerland for over 50 years

The group uses its print and digital platforms as the basis for an innovative newsroom design

In October 2009, “Blick” celebrated its 50-year anniversary. Switzerland’s tabloid newspaper made a splash on October 14 when it switched back to a broadsheet format after publishing in tabloid form for around four years. Meanwhile, project work on the “Blick” Group’s integrated newsroom was well under way. At the start of March 2010, Switzerland’s largest editorial office was launched, housing more than 200 employees.

It’s no longer possible to imagine the Swiss media landscape without “Blick”. Founded in 1959, Switzerland’s only tabloid newspaper caused a sensation across the country. It seemed the Swiss had been waiting for this style of journalism imported from Germany and Great Britain.

“Blick” won the hearts of readers with its clear, plain language. It wasn’t afraid to touch raw nerves and ‘tell it like it is’. And the comprehensive sports section made “Blick” a popular paper with the common man, who no longer felt he was being taken seriously by the traditional media. “Blick” fitted perfectly into the gap.

At the dawn of the new millennium, “Blick” was faced with its toughest competition yet, in the form of free newspapers. The Swiss market was over-run by “20 Minuten” and “Metropol”, both foreign imports. Young readers were particularly taken with the tabloid-format newspapers. They soon became known as commuter papers, as the two free publications could be picked up in boxes at all train stations.



The battle to become the most popular free paper was soon over with “20 Minuten” establishing itself as the ubiquitous morning read on trains, buses and trams.

The newspapers’ websites were also registering ever

greater hit rates. The publications began to expand their portals and strengthen the editorial offices behind them. “Blick’s” online presence, “blick.ch”, led the market in this area.

“Blick’s” circulation came

under pressure. As the tabloid paper made most of its sales at newspaper kiosks, the free competition was particularly strong, either in the form of the free papers or online offerings from other newspapers.

“Blick” decided to scrap the broadsheet format. In 2004 the daily paper was brought out in the modern tabloid format, following the trend set by the free newspapers.

The Sunday paper, “SonntagsBlick”, – founded 10 years after “Blick” – had never pretended to be the seventh issue of Blick, but instead had its own presence in the market. Although clearly anchored in the tabloid segment, the Sunday paper is positioned as much warmer than the daily newspaper. “SonntagsBlick” is the successful embodiment of the family-friendly tabloid.

In 2008 Switzerland and Austria hosted the European Football Championships. Ringier used Euro 08 to reposition its free newspaper, “heute”, which had been on the market for two years, launching it as “Blick am Abend”. The daily newspaper is issued at 4.00 pm, ready for commuters to pick up on their way home.

Unlike its sister publications “Blick” and “SonntagsBlick”, and the online offering “blick.ch”, “Blick am Abend” chose not to use typical tabloid red for its corporate colour but opted instead for a shade best described as blackberry.

“Blick am Abend” was well received by readers from the outset. Today, blackberry is the colour that accompanies every commuter on their homeward train journey. □

The “bridge” becomes a centre for editorial decision-making

Integration of editorial departments and office space helps form basic principles for “Blick” Group newsroom

The preliminary project for integration

In 2008 the management of the Ringier Group decided to integrate the editorial offices of the “Blick” Group and commissioned a project team. The aim was for a single editorial office to produce all “Blick” Group publications under the same roof.

But which roof? The building housing the Ringier headquarters at Dufourstrasse in Zurich was hardly able to provide a home for a large editorial office.

For one thing, the main building, the headquarters of the Ringier Group, was a narrow building housing the publishing company, the “SonntagsBlick” editorial office and the administration offices. The fifth and sixth storeys were reserved for the group management, the administrative board and the publisher, Michael Ringier.

A further building was situated in the courtyard, although it had only three storeys and is home to the “Blick” editorial office.

The two buildings were connected by the ground floor only, joined by the staff restaurant inside. This cafeteria was in need of a facelift for a number of reasons.

“Good journalism belongs in this city.” This was the statement that Publisher Michael Ringier issued in support of his opinion that the “Blick” newsrooms couldn’t be located just anywhere on the edge of Zurich. So the group needed to think about how the good old Ringier press house – as the headquarters is called – could



Michael Ringier, Publisher

be converted and adapted to suit the needs of an integrated editorial office.

Four different worlds

Until that point, the newsrooms of the “Blick” Group had worked almost completely separately.

- “Blick” worked in the courtyard building on two floors and had its own print workflow. The editors of “blick.ch” also worked at this site and were treated as an independent department.
- “SonntagsBlick” worked with its own print workflow on the fourth floor of the main building. The small “SonntagsBlick” online editorial team was also housed there.
- “Blick am Abend” was located a few doors down at Dufourstrasse 49. The evening paper had its own workflow on a newer system in order to keep pace with the high technical requirements of its regionalisation. At the

time, “Blick am Abend” appeared in three different versions: Basel, Bern, Zurich (Lucerne and St. Gallen have since been added). The online team also worked in the same office.

- The sport section was a special case, as it already worked on an integrated system, supplying print content for “Blick”, “SonntagsBlick” and “Blick am Abend”. A dedicated sport online team also provided all online content for “blick.ch” from this location.
- The video department was known as WebCenter (now: WebTV) and was part of Ringier TV, organisationally speaking. The video journalists and producers didn’t just work for the “Blick” Group’s publications, but for all internal and many external customers. They regularly took part in the individual editorial meetings and made their agreed contributions. The highly improvised studio was located on the first basement floor of the main building.

The “bridge”

This is how things stood when the team developed the concept of the “bridge” in the preliminary project. The meaning of the term bridge is twofold. Not only does the concept connect the first and second floors of the main building and the courtyard building, but it also serves to create a centre in this new space in which all editorial decisions by “Blick”, “Blick am Abend”, “Son-

tagsBlick” and “blick.ch” are made.

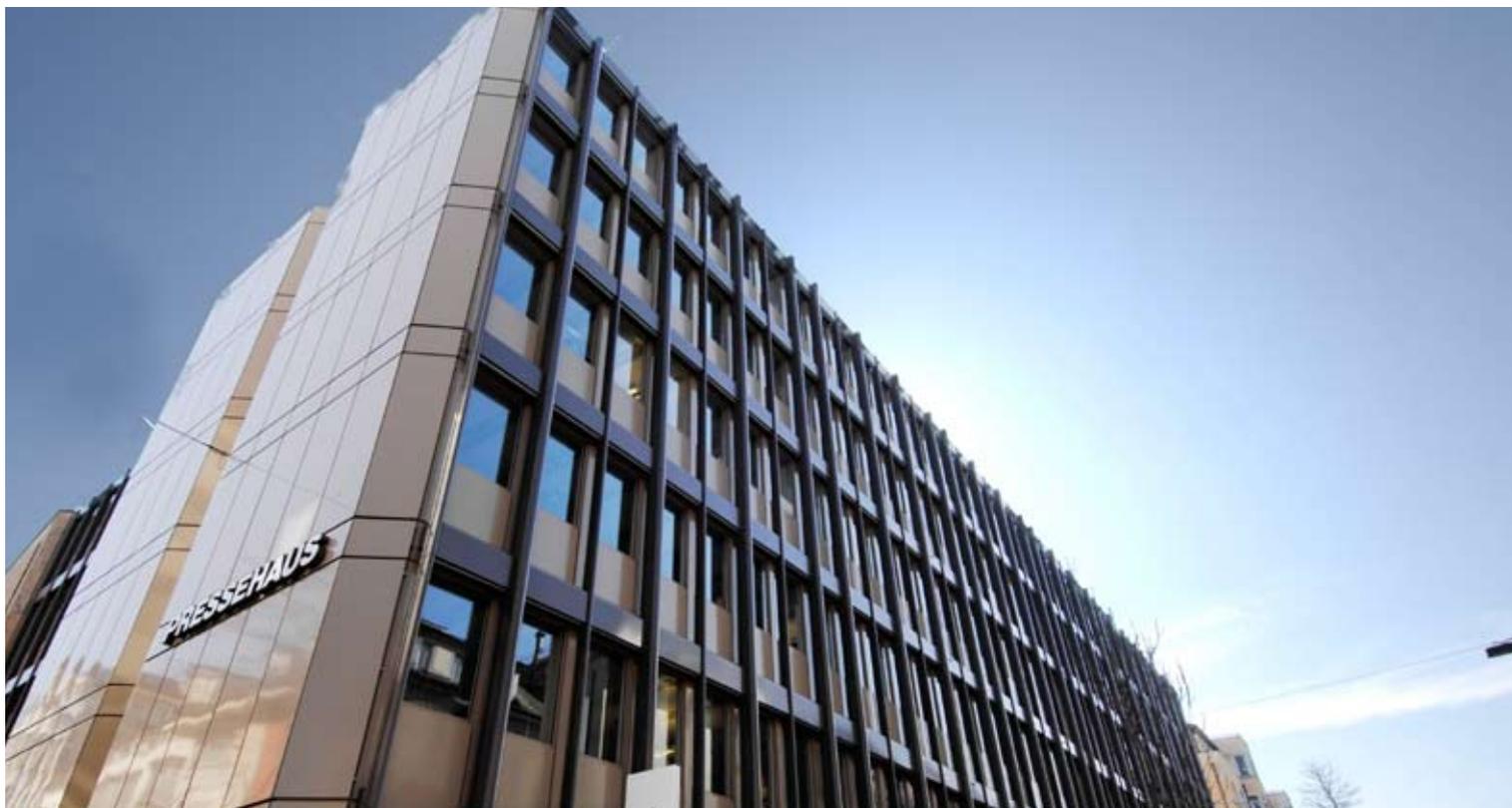
This is why all editorial workplaces have been grouped together on the first and second floors of the press house. The first floor of the main and courtyard buildings recently joined by the “bridge” is primarily home to the quieter departments. The second floor houses the decision-making centre of the newsroom. It is also home to the faster paced departments and all production workplaces, including the audio and video studio.

Various sub-projects for the press house building are to be coordinated with the newsroom project in terms of both architecture and infrastructure. Alongside the new building for the newsroom, the staff canteen was rebuilt, the whole building rendered earthquake-proof, the windows replaced and the two basement floors completely refurbished.

Learning from, but not copying others

The preliminary project group set to work. What should the new newsroom look like? What organisational precautions needed to be taken?

The team ruled out a number of options as it looked around at what other organisations with integrated newsrooms had done. The study tours to editorial offices which were already integrated were extremely useful, but it took the team a while to realise that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The first study tour, organised at that time



The Ringier building in the middle of Zurich.

by IFRA, took Project Coordinator Pascal Zemp to The Daily Telegraph in London, Österreich in Vienna and numerous newsrooms in Scandinavia. Personal contacts also gave rise to trips to Bild and Welt in Berlin.

Although the visits made a strong impression, nowhere did the team find a situation that closely enough resembled its own: a tabloid newspaper, an accompanying Sunday paper that is the online market leader, and a free newspaper.

Most striking of all was that most integrated newsrooms publish structured newspapers whose content is strongly department driven and printed on dedicated pages.

Tailored solutions

It quickly became clear that tough requirements needed to be met in the “Blick” newsroom.

The project team identified three sets of requirements that needed to be considered in the newsroom.

Firstly, tabloid newspapers are story-driven and demand

a great number of decisions daily. As there are virtually no dedicated pages in a tabloid newspaper, the whole paper needs to be reinvented on a daily basis. In other words, the publication is given a new layout every day. A major story is given a lot of space in the newspaper. A clear decision-making centre is required in order to make these decisions.

Secondly, tabloid media is traditionally very dependent on design. “Blick” and “SonntagsBlick” use only a few clear page structures. The page layout, too, is constantly being reworked. The combination of image and headline dictate the presentation. These complex requirements have a knock-on effect right through to the digital channels.

As a true reflection of the “Blick” umbrella brand, the online and mobile offerings also need to exhibit more colour, clarity and images than those of traditional newspapers. And this requires a clearly identified production pool.

Thirdly, news gathering at tabloid newspapers is signifi-

cantly more complex than in conventional, more text-based formats. Tabloid journalism is people journalism.

Things can get rowdy and a lot of heated discussions can take place before hitting on the right story. The project group called this third area, which represents the journalistic work that takes place before the paper is compiled, the content area.

New names, new places

To avoid clashes with existing structures, the project group decided to give the three sets of requirements English monikers. Which is why the first area, “decision place”, was flanked by “making place” and “content place”.

The study tours proved vital as each trip broadened the team’s horizons and added ideas to help create new structures.

On every visit, the Ringier staff met journalists who had already done a lot of thinking about newsroom layout and operation – a process that they were just starting to go through themselves.

They would bring back one or two ideas to Zurich from each trip.

Some examples? No round tables, otherwise the distance between each of the meeting participants is too great or people struggle to hear one another speak. Only half-height privacy panels between the desks. They are important for acoustic reasons but you shouldn’t be able to hide behind them. Enough network connections at the desks.

A visual tool is needed at the “decision place”, in order to display the digital channels where moving image is becoming increasingly important. Also, a studio doesn’t belong in the basement, but should be situated as closely as possible to the Editors-in-Chief.

At this point, fewer than a dozen employees knew what the new “Blick” newsroom should look like and how it would work. The next step was to start a project to get the other 300-odd employees of the “Blick” umbrella brand on board – by no means an easy feat.

Senior managers at the helm use clear structures to drive success

Dedicated sub-projects in journalism, technology, human resources and architecture contribute to progress

Marc Walder, CEO of Ringier Switzerland and Germany, labelled Project Newsroom the most important project of recent years. So it was only logical that he himself should take on the role of project manager. Positioning the project at the very top level had a massive impact on the whole organisation.

The two project coordinators, Edi Estermann and Pascal Zemp, were responsible for the day-to-day running of the project. Both are journalists by profession and each have 20 years' experience in their field.

Estermann, formerly news editor at the "Schweizer Illustrierte", and Zemp, head of production at a number of publications and manager of the preliminary project, were able to dispel doubts and answer questions upfront thanks to their journalistic backgrounds.

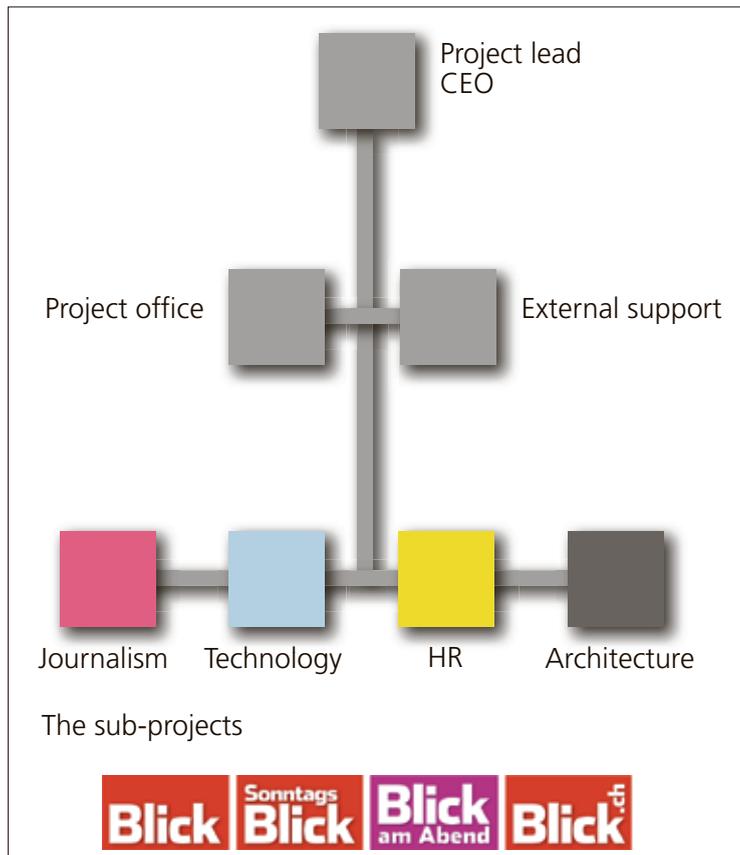
Together they formed the project office, which set to work in an actual open-plan office.

The project setup called for four sub-projects that were to take into account progress in each of the specialist areas.

Sub-project Journalism

All Editors-in-Chief and head editors of the publications concerned were involved in this sub-project, with chief responsibility falling on the Editor-in-Chief of "Sonntags-Blick", Hannes Britschgi.

The primary tasks of the journalism sub-project were to redesign the organisation and workflows and to appoint new heads of department and



department members to tackle the new challenges.

Sub-project Architecture

The man charged with completely overhauling the building itself at Ringier Switzerland was Peter Gasser. He is head of Facility Management and is therefore the overseer of the renovation work.

This renovation and new construction has completely changed the structure of the building. The "bridge" now makes it possible to better map editorial workflows, place each of the department members in the right strategic positions and set up a clear decision-making centre.

The alterations to the building's structure were so extensive that most employees had to relocate twice during the construction phase and in some cases had to work in temporary offices for almost nine months.

Sub-project Human Resources

Jutta Wurz, head of HR Switzerland, managed the human resources sub-project. Together with the Ringier Academy, the internal HR development unit headed by Nadine Oppenheim, Wurz dealt with the topics of change management, mindset training and specialist training.



Pascal Zemp, project initiator and coordinator

Sub-project Technology

The head of the Media Production Systems department, Christian Glanzmann, was placed in charge of this complex sub-project. Not only did the processes in the editorial system need to be consolidated, but a whole new architecture was required for the print workflow. Connecting to the Web CMS of blick.ch also formed part of this project.

External advisory

The project office liaised closely with Dietmar Schantin, Executive Director, Publishing, Editorial and General Management, of WAN-IFRA and Head of Newsplex.

Schantin had previously helped to redesign the editorial operation and the newsroom of The Daily Telegraph in London and knew exactly what a modern editorial department needs.

He had also made considerable contributions to the training programmes, some of which had been held at News-



The project team (from left): Peter Gasser, Jutta Wurz, Marc Walder, Nadine Oppenheim, Edi Estermann, Christian Glanzmann.

plex Academy in Darmstadt, Germany.

The goal

The goal was clear: In the integrated newsroom of the “Blick” Group, every journalist works for several channels. This multi-channel approach takes place in accordance with a story-centric workflow that focuses on the story – and no longer on an individual print article or online contribution.

The internet and the opportunities provided by new digital channels have altered the work of the journalist in recent years.

Whereas the deadline for the printed newspaper was the yardstick by which journalistic contributions were measured a few years ago, the time for going to press has taken on a completely different meaning in modern newsrooms.

Basically, there is no longer a time for going to press, as the digital channels can – and must – be served around the clock as media consumers become more demanding and expect to receive content via the channel that suits them at a time that suits them.

Yet a newsroom’s journalistic and technical production workflows are still geared towards the time of going to press. The digital channels

are almost always fed by separate journalistic teams whose members – the online journalists – have little or no experience in the print field.

On the other hand, print journalists have watched the success of online publications with a mixture of scepticism and astonishment.

“This is the most important project we have started in recent years.”

– Marc Walder, CEO Ringier Switzerland and Germany

At the same time they have seen readership for the print-publications shrinking ever more rapidly.

Of course, the journalistic offering of online and print editions differs. Each medium has its own strengths.

Put simply, the online publication has become a fast news medium, while the print publication of a daily paper has grown to resemble a magazine over recent years, with much more background information. In addition,

the now ubiquitous spread of broadband connections in Switzerland has made it possible to publish more and more video on websites.

Whatever the type of journalistic work, it all begins with research and assessing the news situation. This work was still being carried out separately by the respective online and print teams at Blick.

Another area that has seen changes is the working hours of editorial teams. As the online pages and Web TV offerings are geared towards office hours, journalists’ work today often begins early in the morning.

Working late, which has traditionally been the journalist’s lot for decades, is no longer as prevalent as it once was, although the newsroom is now manned from early in the morning until late at night.

The first employees arrive at the “Blick” newsroom at 6.00 a.m. and the last ones leave the “bridge” after midnight.

Working in an integrated newsroom is not as radically different as one might expect. What is different is having to think about and remain conscious of multimedia outputs for stories.

A modern newsroom is organised around a story-cen-

tric workflow that replaces the old print workflow.

The stories are treated in a channel-agnostic manner. This means the right aspect of a story is sent via the right channel at the right time. For example, breaking news is released via the mobile channel, then expanded online. Reactions are gathered via comments and, if necessary, via WebTV, and finally in-depth background reporting appears in the print edition.

Setting up an integrated newsroom is first and foremost a major change management project, and one which involves costs for training and new technical tools (video cameras, new computers, etc.).

Experience has shown that in most cases costs can be partly offset as synergies arise from the new system, efficiencies are created and duplications avoided.

In the beginning, however, the multimedia upskilling required for journalists will require the investment of more manpower and commitment of resources.

All cases involved changes in staff, as some employees could no longer or were unwilling to meet requirements, or whole departments became superfluous to needs.

Dedicated leadership for each title is combined with integrated generation of content

Brand management underpins the logic of organisational structure led by four specialised Editors-in-Chief

The members of the journalism sub-project had a tough job ahead of them. How should they transform their existing editorial offices to develop greater effectiveness in an integrated newsroom?

How should the job roles be defined? How should they counter the understandable scepticism of the editors?

They had to use what they had learned from the study tours and avoid mistakes they had already seen made inside their own company.

The idea was not to find omnipotent multimedia journalists who are jacks of all trades and masters of none. But there was a need for each journalist to feel comfortable working on a second channel in addition to their speciality. For most, this means that they are able to serve print and online.

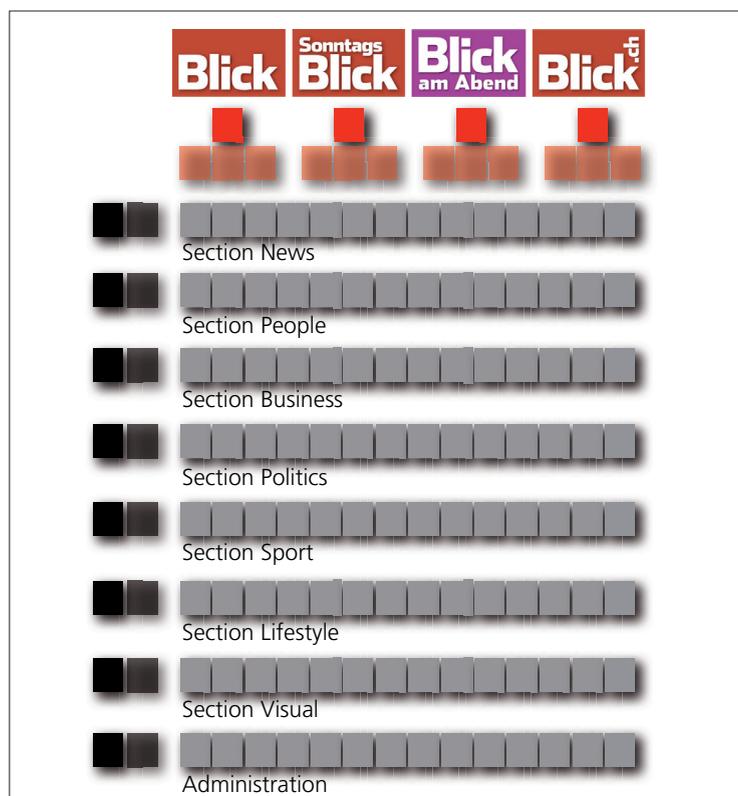
But how would the sub-project team ensure that all channels received high quality input from the various departments?

This task was delegated to the department managers. When putting together their departments, the department heads were responsible for ensuring they were able to deliver what the Editors-in-Chief wanted.

The four "Blick" titles

This horizontal and vertical responsibility was portrayed in an organigram.

Each of the four publications has its own Editor-in-Chief. The four Editors-in-Chief



have equal rights and make decisions in a committee. In the exceptional event that they can't come to an agreement, they call the newsroom's journalistic manager, CEO Marc Walder, who makes the final decision.

The four Editors-in-Chief have representatives who, like their bosses, are solely responsible for their respective publication. These people form the four management teams, which only work vertically.

The individual departments, however, work horizontally.

In the "Blick" Group newsroom, they are News, People, Politics, Economy, Sport, and

Lifestyle. Then there is the Visual Department, which encompasses the Layout, Photo and Multimedia departments. In addition there is a new position: the Newsroom Manager.

The Newsroom Manager is responsible for administration, operation of the newsroom and controlling the overall budget.

These eight heads of department hold a key position within the newsroom of the "Blick" Group.

The structure of the individual departments is similar, but not always identical: the organisation wasn't all taken from the same mold.

News

The department that mainly dictates the tone of the newsroom is News. It employs more than 40 people who, from 6.00 a.m. to midnight, are responsible for ensuring not only that breaking news is broadcast accurately and quickly via the right channel, but also that the products of the "Blick" Group set themselves apart from the competition by getting exclusive stories, and by using their own individual tone and cleverly developed features.

The News department is split into two. The reporters form one group and the members of the "News Factory" the other.

The task of the reporters is to concentrate as little as possible on reaction and to spend as much time as possible "in the field" finding stories and being in the right place at the right time.

The deskers, as the members of the News Factory are also known, dictate the pace in the newsroom. They ensure the website is refreshed and up to date at 7.00 a.m., prepare the 8.00 a.m. meeting and supply the latest content for "Blick am Abend", which closes at 1.00 p.m.

People

Tabloid journalism is people journalism. Another driving force is the People department, which has divided its members across special areas such as TV, Pop Culture and

The journalistic mission and “DNA” of the “Blick” titles

- Every morning, “Blick” needs an attention-grabbing headline for the bright yellow posters at the newspaper kiosks. The story needs to be new and original with that special “Blick” touch.
- “Blick am Abend”, which is aimed at a younger urban readership, needs to produce a story that is light and entertaining for the front page. In many cases it can be breaking news. The free evening paper is the first product of the day that is printed across the country – so it is the ideal platform for getting the news from that morning to many readers first. “Blick am Abend” is therefore in a perfect position to set the topics for the evening.
- It is completely different with “SonntagsBlick”, though. The Sunday paper faces tough competition. In addition to SoBli – as “SonntagsBlick” is affectionately known internally – “SonntagsZeitung” by Tamedia and “NZZ am Sonntag” appear nationally in German-speaking Switzerland. What’s more, the



“Neue Luzerner Zeitung” with its “Zentralschweiz am Sonntag”, the “Aargauer Zeitung” with its “Sonntag” and the “Südostschweiz” with its “Südostschweiz am Sonntag” publish independent Sunday editions that differ greatly from their daily papers.

Sunday has become a hard-fought market for top stories in recent years. In terms of journalism, Sunday in Switzerland is not the last but the first day of the week. Sunday is when big stories are launched and topics are laid out.

Sunday papers don’t just take up Saturday’s stories and topics, but are more of a weekly magazine in newsprint. Sunday is probably still

the most analogue day in Switzerland. Sunday is the domain of the printed newspaper and not digital media.

- “blick.ch” on the other hand – the leading news portal in Switzerland – needs to be fast. The website is the digital flagship of the “Blick” newsroom. Consistently managed in line with the one-brand strategy – there are not separate websites for “Blick”, “Blick am Abend” or “SonntagsBlick” – the website’s offering is all about being right up-to-date. At the top of the homepage is a block of four teasers for the top stories. The channels are News, Sport, People, Entertainment, Life, Auto, Love, Community and – a new addition – Apps. The logos of the print brands appear very small on the right. If you click on them, you’ll see a selection of articles which have already appeared in print. They are, however, incorporated into the overall offering of “blick.ch”. The logos merely act as meta tags and group the articles together.

Folk Music. Situated close to the WebTV studio, the People journalists make good use of the opportunities offered by moving images. Live performances in the studio are popular among Swiss music makers.

Politics

Politics is a small department represented in the newsroom by deskers. The other members are located in the Bern office.

As in most countries, the majority of political stories take place in the capital city in Switzerland, while most national editorial offices are stationed in the media and economic capital of Zurich.

Business

Economic topics generally dominate on Sundays, which is why the Economy department needs to put on more manpower towards the end of the week to put out relevant

news in “SonntagsBlick”. The duty rota takes care of this.

Sport

However it’s quite a different matter when it comes to sport. The Sport department has been operating as an integrated unit for more than 40 years and has always served all channels in the “Blick” Group. Little has changed in this section. The

“The character of each title within the ‘Blick’ Group is achieved through the right distribution of responsibility in the matrix.”

– Ralph Grosse-Bley, Editor-in-Chief “Blick”

journalists are split according to types of sport, with the main focal points being football, ice hockey, Formula 1, tennis and cycling.

There is one more speciality: although they actually belong to the Visual department, specialised layout editors, picture editors and photographers work for the Sport department.

Lifestyle

The Lifestyle department is also known internally as the “Service department”. The journalists take care of the classic lifestyle reporting on all channels (fashion, living, etc.), with special importance placed on looking after the “Blick” girls.

Since the relaunch in October 2009, “Blick” and “blick.ch” have been showing images of a different Swiss woman from an erotic photo-shoot every day. The tasks of the Lifestyle department in-

clude selecting, organising and holding the shoots.

Along with the usual topics, Travel, Digital and Motoring also fall under the remit of the Lifestyle department.

As the topics and features are relatively easy to plan on all channels, the department usually works a few days ahead, keeping production smooth.

Visual

The Visual department has been confronted with a completely new structure.

Whereas before each publication had its own production department with image editing, layout and graphics, their forces have now been combined.

Under the supervision of the visual director, layout editors, image editors, photographers and the multimedia department now work for all

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Success factors: new workflows

Workflows are tidied up, slimmed down, modernised and

Defining the new workflows in the integrated newsroom proved to be the greatest challenge. Not only did the analogue and digital workflows need to be synchronised, but the publications' well established and traditionally anchored individual workflows needed to be adapted as well.

Four titles, four ways of working

Before the integrated newsroom came into being, "Blick", "SonntagsBlick", "Blick am Abend" and "blick.ch" developed their own procedures. Some of these procedures differed so widely that employees with the same job description actually carried out completely different tasks.

"Blick" favoured the workflow that is prevalent among

tabloids: the first part of the paper was laid down and put into production in the morning, while the latest pages took shape in the afternoon under collaboration (at the bench) and in long, creative meetings. The headlines were developed at the same time. The Editors-in-Chief clearly saw themselves as experienced journalists and wrote the headlines, leads and captions themselves.

The job of "SonntagsBlick" was to produce a more magazine-like type of publication. The week began on Tuesday as everyone had been at work on the previous Saturday. The big days were Friday and Saturday. Friday was when the first pages were completed. On Saturday though, there could still be a lot of changes. The structure

of the paper wasn't finished until the evening. The final pages went to the printshop just before midnight.

"SonntagsBlick" had a classic production department which took care of the headlines, leads and captions. Individual journalists also had little to do with fine-tuning the stories.

Both papers were produced in an InDesign workflow on the same instance of the editorial system. Yet it wasn't possible for a "Blick" employee to view "SonntagsBlick" content via the user administration system. The only exception was the Sport department. The Sport editors were able to access both publications.

"Blick am Abend" was housed in another building not far from the press house.

The regional newspaper – the free paper appears in five cities with different content – is processed in three different print shops. The workflow, which is based on a more recent version of the editorial system than "Blick" and "SonntagsBlick", is complicated, as up to 200 different pages need to be imaged by 1.00 p.m. every day.

"blick.ch" works directly in the Web CMS without exchanging content with it. Everything is double checked and a Site Manager is responsible for releasing the stories and adjusting the weighting on the homepage. The Site Manager's job is a service that is generally carried out by the Editor-in-Chief or his representative. The online editorial office was also split into departments which managed their sub-homepages themselves.

Every section has a purpose-built structure

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publications and channels. A sophisticated duty rota ensures the right people are always in the newsroom at the right time. This bundling has the advantage that much of the image research only needs to be carried out once.

Publication-specific art directors who report to the visual director are responsible for the optical identity.

Multimedia

The multimedia department is responsible for producing graphics, interactive Flash elements and new developments such as panorama photography.

Their work regularly begins as two-dimensional analogue print graphics that are then

expanded and animated on the web. Special dossiers – such as a 3D model of the federal parliament building or the giant Airbus A380 aeroplane – still attract a good deal of traffic to the website even weeks after they are first published.

Administration

Operating a newsroom with more than 200 employees is a business in itself and is the task of the Newsroom Administration department. The department was newly formed and is home to all administrative employees.

The newsroom management also takes care of the technical infrastructure, organises the post and does everything to ensure that the operation runs smoothly.

The Newsroom Manager has another task, too. As the clear controlling lines get lost in the matrix structure of the organigram, it is up to the Newsroom Manager to carry out editorial controlling and report directly to the higher level management of the publishing house or the Finance department.

WebTV

The organisation of moving images is a particularly special feature. As Ringier operates its own TV department in Zurich, those in charge decided to leave the WebTV department of Ringier TV there, too. So the video journalists don't work directly in the departments and are located in their own unit.

However, Ringier also built

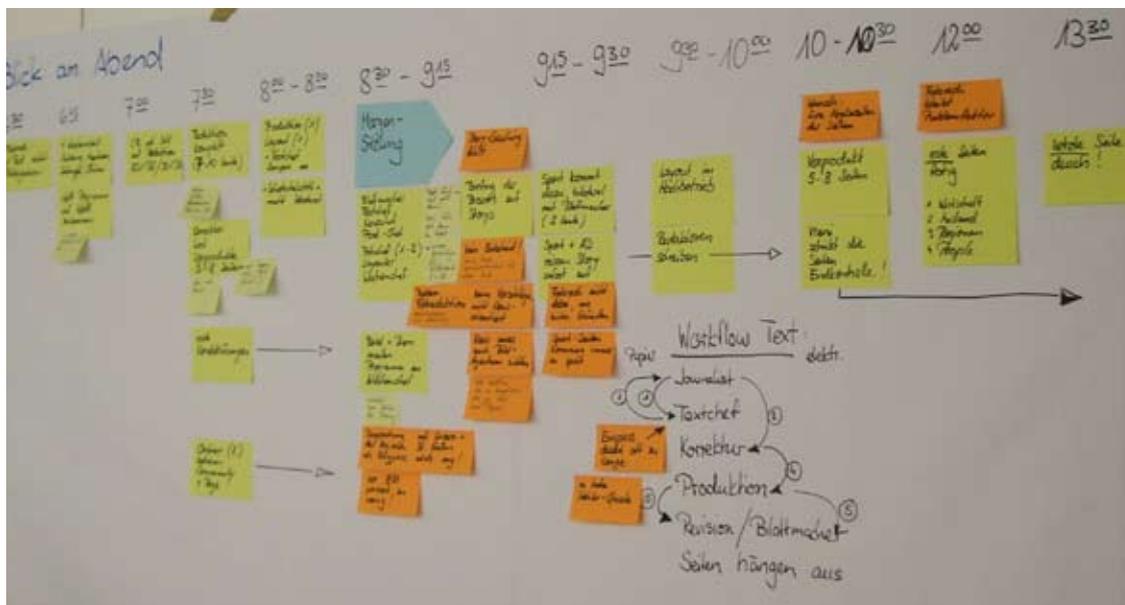
a large modern WebTV studio when it remodelled the press house. It is located on the second, faster paced floor of the newsroom and is only a few meters away from the "bridge".

The WebTV department doesn't work exclusively for the "Blick" Group newsroom. Instead, as a skill centre for moving images, it bundles its activities for the whole of Ringier and external customers as well.

However, up to six members of the WebTV team work for the newsroom each day on a job-by-job basis. They are headed by a producer. The WebTV people are also responsible for moving image content on "blick.ch" and the mobile channels between 6.00 a.m. and 11.00 p.m. □

and decision making structures

integrated across all media and platforms



Analysis of existing workflows and deadlines was followed by a reorganisation.

Planning and categorisation of stories

For the design of the new workflows, in a first step the processes and outputs of the different titles were in detail analysed. Together with the sections heads and other key people, the workflows were documented, and strengths and weaknesses of the existing organisation were evaluated.

The most important aspect for defining the workflows was requirements planning. That's why the stories were categorised.

The system included A, B, C, D and E stories, where A refers to a "major story with front-page potential that will appear in print and online," B to a "major story for print and/or online", C to a "minor story for print and/or online", D to "standards such as columns or news columns", and E to "external content", such as the weather pages.

The number of classified stories was defined with the Editors-in-Chief. These stories were then categorised

“The potential for optimisation lies in the workflows and in how we tell our stories across titles and channels in an efficient way.”

- Ralph Grosse-Bley, Editor-in-Chief “Blick”

by department and then distributed along a timeline.

The final product was a theoretical yet realistic timeline, which specified for instance, that “blick.ch” needs two B stories from the People department at 7.30 on Tuesday morning, “Blick am Abend” needs an A story and three C stories at 11.00 a.m., and at midday the next B stories need to be ready for the website, and so on.

This requirements planning was also the tool used to staff the departments with the right number of people, define skills and draw up workflow planning. This workflow planning is of vital importance. It defined which stories appear on which pages at which time and the Visual department then set itself up on the basis of this information.

This strict planning, which may at first glance seem restrictive, lends the newsroom's output even more creativity by ensuring that the standardised pages are ready to go on time. And that means that there's more room

for the really important A and B stories.

Integrated systems and fewer steps in the workflow

On the technical side, the workflows were redefined with a customised installation. In line with the story-centric workflow credo, the employee opens a new article without having to know which channel he needs to publish the story on. At the start then, there is a neutral “publication” which only receives the style templates and characteristics once the channel has been selected.

The statuses in the editorial system have generally been synchronised and radically simplified. An article now only goes through five statuses before publication, regardless of the printed product in which it appears.

Integration of print and online CMS is final goal

But what happens if it's an online-only article? An export interface has been added to the editorial system which makes it possible to communicate directly with the Web CMS. The article just needs to be released and then it is online. If a journalist knows that he or she is writing for the online channel, however, he selects the correct editing mask directly in the Web CMS.

As there is no longer any organisational difference between online and print journalists, all newsroom employees had to attend a training course to get them up to scratch in either the print system or the online system. This means that everyone is able to operate both systems.

The aim, both long and short term, is to merge the two systems into one. □

From the “bridge”, Editors-in-print and digital “Blick” brands

The newsroom’s “decision place” has become the central hub for the integrated editorial department

“I want a window seat!” was heard a lot while the project office was planning the newsroom layout. But of course there was much more to it than satisfying personal preferences. And balancing the departments, mapping the workflows and clearing the obstacles thrown up by the building’s structure was a tough job.

On the one hand, the progress of construction had to be taken into account, while on the other hand, it had to be ensured that the workflows were fully defined on time so that they could be reflected in the physical layout. Only two things were clear from the start: the position of the WebTV studio and the location of the “bridge”.

It quickly became apparent to everyone involved that the WebTV studio needed to be situated as closely as possible to the decision making centre. The best solution would have been to connect the two centres. The experi-

ences of past years, when the sparsely equipped studio was tucked away on the first basement floor next to the fire extinguishers for a server room, had shown that moving image needed to take on a more prominent position in order to be successful.

What’s more, the old studio gave a poor impression of the company. It was difficult to invite celebrities to a video interview or even organise a talk if you had to go down to the cellar first.

The “bridge”

It was clear that the “bridge” should become the centre of the newsroom. But the precise layout of the desks, the discussion about functional workstations and where the individual Editors-in-Chief should sit naturally proved to be a difficult task. Then there was the added problem that the newsroom didn’t fit on one, albeit extended, storey.

The solution as seen today

seems simple, but an awful lot of work went into it, not least persuasion. The slower-paced departments were put on the lower floor of the newsroom, which is in no way intended as a disparagement. This is where the members of the Economy, Politics, and Lifestyle departments and the semi-integrated journalists of the “SonntagsBlick” magazine now sit.

Only one thing mars the otherwise neat solution: one single department had to be split. The WebTV video journalists are situated on the lower floor, where they edit the videos using Final Cut and upload the finished pieces to the internet. The WebTV team employees who take care of studio operation are based on the second, faster-paced floor right next to the WebTV studio.

It’s full steam ahead from 6.00 a.m. until way past midnight on the second floor, which is home to the News, People, Sport and Visual

departments. The Administration department has also taken up residence near the “bridge”.

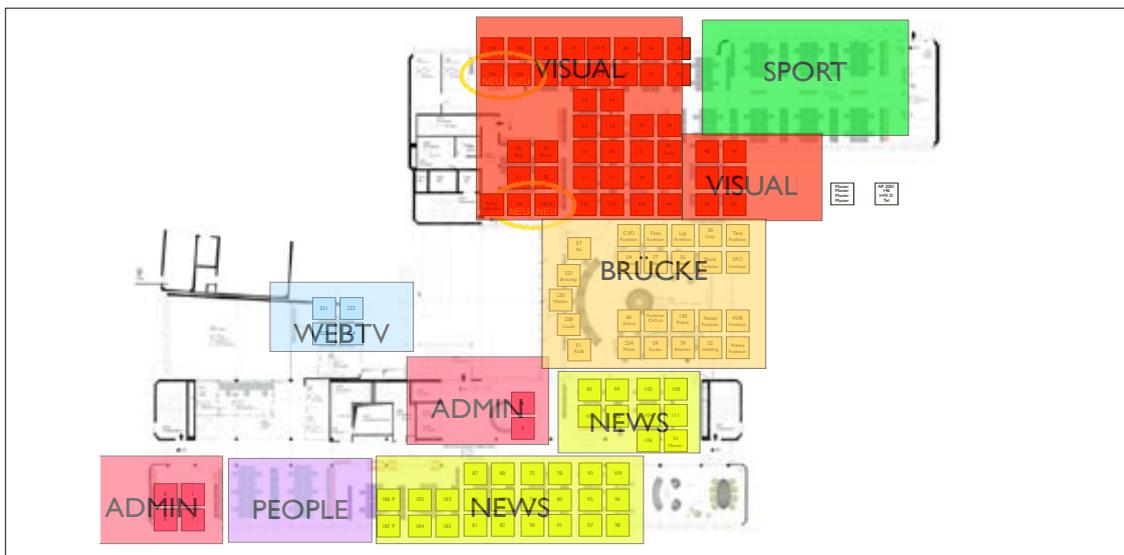


News and People are the most difficult departments to plan for in the newsroom in terms of journalism, which is why they sit next to each other.

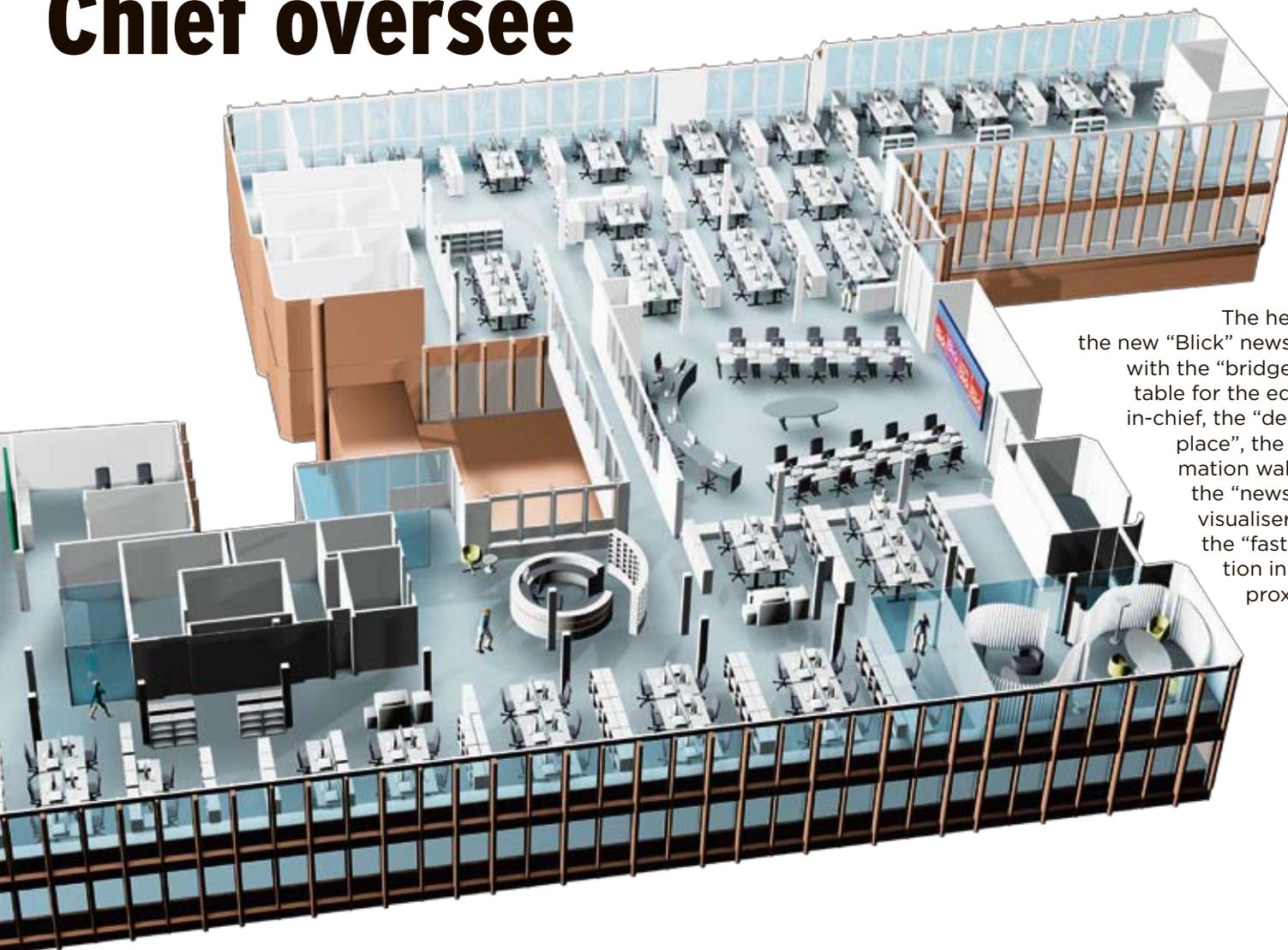
The news flows in a kind of S-shape to the command centre where, on the “bridge”, the four Editors-in-Chief have their positions at a specially designed curved desk.

To their left and right are two benches, each seating 10 employees. This is where the deputies, the Visual director and the head of the News department work. The other desks are designed as functional workstations.

Why functional workstations? It’s simple. The 25 desks on the “bridge” are



Chief oversee



The heart of the new “Blick” newsroom with the “bridge”, the table for the editors-in-chief, the “decision place”, the information wall with the “newsroom visualiser” and the “fast” section in close proximity.

intended for the people who are most important to the products being published in the “Blick” Group newsroom at that particular time.

The aim is not to have to look for anyone and to ensure that everyone needed at that particular time is within shouting distance.

However, it is important that every employee in the newsroom has their own desk. The functional workstations are additional desks at which

tasks can quickly be formed for breaking news so that the right employees are on hand to operate the digital channels without delay. □





Decision-making is made easier with set of simple rules to follow

Charter helps cement cooperation in the newsroom

Discussions in the Journalism sub-project often revolved around one and the same topic – how could the publications continue to differentiate themselves? And how could they avoid churning out something that was essentially all the same?

Also, there was a long-standing internal rivalry, particularly between “Blick” and “SonntagsBlick”. Which meant that the publications needed to foster a new culture of trust. This was a particularly contentious issue when it came to handling exclusive stories and selecting interviewees.

It soon became clear that a lot of day-to-day issues could be clearly regulated, as the assessment, the profiles of the publications and the basic rules of journalism logically dictated the selection of the channel and method of distribution. For the 10 per cent or so of cases that needed discussing, however, the committee drew up the newsroom rules.

These 12 rules describe precisely what needs to be done in the event of conflict and

how the newsroom bosses are to make their decisions.

Important: These newsroom rules aren't displayed anywhere in the newsroom,

nor have laminated copies been distributed for reference. In fact they were of importance during the discussion on how the journalists saw their

position in the newsroom. It's fair to say that the newsroom employees have now internalised these rules and abide by them in their daily work. □

The 12 rules for the new newsroom

1. The stories of the day are handled by all media. All brands are continuously involved in the planning and realisation.
2. Multimedia presentation methods such as moving image, live ticker, original sound recordings, etc. must be taken into account every time a story is planned.
3. Control over a story always lies with the brand that suggested or commissioned it.
4. The committee of the Editors-in-Chief decides which content runs on which brands.
5. No single editor has the authority to make decisions in this matter.
6. The expiry date of a current story plays an important role in the choice of channel.
7. For breaking news and exclusive stories with a foreseeable expiry date the rule is: online first!
8. With all other scoops, the rule is pay channels before free channels.
9. If the Editors-in-Chief cannot reach an agreement, the newsroom's journalistic manager decides.
10. Each publication retains its journalistic independence. Of course, all brands can decide to pool their strengths in individual cases (campaign power).
11. The editor that brings in a top story is mentioned in the byline. Follow-up articles on other channels always mention the original brand.
12. If an external informer reveals his story exclusively to a specific brand, this will be respected when published.

Meet the “newsroom visualiser”

Central information wall tracks print and digital progress

Analogue content is printed on paper every day. That's why piles of newspapers are such a common sight in editorial offices the world over. Digital content, though, usually only appears on the screens of those who produce it. Such content deserves better recognition, however.

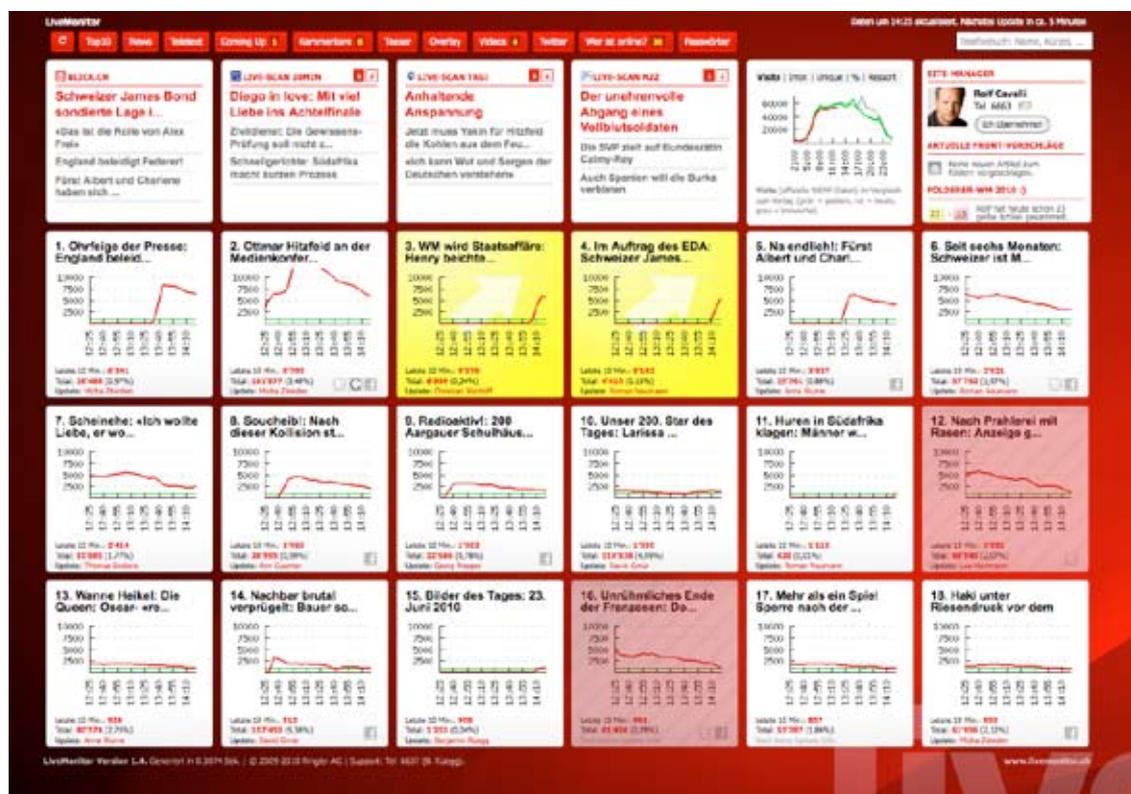
Since most analogue content has also begun to be produced digitally, several employees can often be seen crowded around a monitor giving instructions, selecting images and dictating headlines.

Common information platform

In order to achieve the greatest possible level of collaboration, the project team looked to evaluating a “newsroom visualiser”. Projectors were already in use in the “Blick” and “SonntagsBlick” editorial teams for displaying production progress, page planning, and the finished pages. In addition to these capabilities, the new system should be able to easily display and update different websites. Live layouts were also requested as a requirement. What's more, they didn't want image selection to take place on paper any more, but for it to be visible to everyone involved on a screen.

Scientifically based system decision

Projector? Large monitors? Rear projection? There are many possibilities for projecting a large image onto a screen. But in the case of the “Blick” newsroom there was only one solution. It was developed by IT Manager Christoph Spürgin, who even accompanied the evaluation with a scientific dissertation. What he came up with was that although projectors are



cheaper to buy, they quickly become more costly to run than an LCD display system.

Hi-Tech for the 12 m² video wall

In the end, the decision was made to install a double HD display screen on the “bridge” that is controlled by a special PC housed in a rack. The bosses chose 46-inch professional screens as monitors. They have a minimal border and can therefore be placed together with almost no gap in between. The result is a wall consisting of 18 such monitors, three high and six wide. It has a visible surface of 12 m², giving a “newsroom visualiser” 6.2 metres wide and 1.8 metres high.

Two image computers control the display and a TV picture can also be viewed on nine of these monitors.

Generally the company's own website and those of the competition are shown on the

wall. Then there is the Live Monitor, an in-house tool that documents accesses to the site and gives a lot of information on unique clients, upcoming stories and breaking news.

The wall can be controlled using a touch screen remote control on the meeting table in the centre of the space. More than 20 different presets are available.

At the touch of a button, employees can activate the pre-programmed settings, which range from Foreign Overview, Domestic, Elections and Ballots, Layout, Meeting 8.00 a.m., etc.

During meetings, two laptops on the meeting desk are used to select images, work on topic planning or display the production overview.

And the psychological effect of such an imposing wall must not be underestimated. Now that the information has been centralised, this wall also symbolises the logical centre of the newsroom, the “bridge”. □

“Compared to other publishing houses, our journalists have a very high awareness of new media.”

– Christian Glanzmann, Head of Media Production Systems

The future arrives for “Blick”

After 18 months of planning and project work, the new newsroom finally starts “broadcasting”



The newsroom visualiser and central information space in the “Blick” newsroom.

On Sunday, 7 March 2010, the first employees came to the newsroom at 8.00 a.m. to take up their new workplaces. The previous and coming hours would reveal whether the project management had thought of everything, whether the new PCs were running and how well the new system worked.

The following article on the events of the all-important weekend was later published in the employee magazine, Domo:

The moment of truth

The opening of the newsroom was a success – in spite of a snowstorm and thanks to a logistical tour de force.

Late morning on 6 March the sky over Zurich turned the

kind of grey that was barely distinguishable from black. Not long after, everything was white. Winter was back with a vengeance.

On this Saturday morning, more than 200 PCs stood in a purpose-built room at Dufourstrasse 49. For start-up in the newsroom, all PCs were wiped clean and installed with new software. This operation, which had been planned way in advance, took place in waves – each journalist or layout editor in the newsroom had been assigned a computer and it had to be back in the right place at the right time – but with the right software.

Through storm and snow

It takes around four hours to configure such a PC. The

winter storm took just 40 minutes to bring the city of Zurich to a standstill.

Most of the trams had stopped running and private traffic had ground to a halt due to the snow and ice.

Now the first wave of new PCs was ready to be delivered but there was no question of wheeling the computers down the street to Dufourstrasse 23 on trolleys. Instead, IT boss Marcel Maréchaux speedily organised snow-proof vehicles to carry out the delicate transport.

18 hours left to do 18 days' work

In the newsroom, Georges Nikli's team had put the consoles in the right places and set up the caddies overnight.

When the first wave of PCs arrived, everything was where it should be. However, there was nothing to indicate yet that in 18 hours Switzerland's largest editorial office would start work there. More like in 18 days.

But on Sunday morning at 8.00 a.m. the first journalists were called on to publish content on the “blick.ch” website and deliver the first “Blick” to the printing presses in Adligenswil LU on time.

It was a logistical tour de force. The Sport department had 12 hours to complete the sports section of “Sonntags-Blick” on the old system.

And eight hours later the first employees would be back to view the material for “Blick” on Monday. Eight hours to dismantle and re-



The WebTV studio is also used for photo shoots (here with Xenia Tchoumitcheva) but the “bridge” is the heart of the newsroom.

install everything. Eight hours during which nothing could go wrong.

And evidently nothing did go wrong. Ilja Kaenzig, the Sport boss of the “Blick” Group, expressed his thanks via email a few days later. He was still astounded at how smoothly everything had gone.

Both IT and Facility Management performed excellent work. And aside from the fact that he had to search for his new desk initially, he noticed nothing of the switchover.

“Everything went brilliantly”

On Sunday evening at 11.01 p.m. the project management sent an SMS to Ringier Switzerland CEO Marc Walder.

It read: “The first ‘Blick’ from the newsroom and on the new system is now all on the printing press in Adligenswil. Everything went brilliantly.” “Blick” Editor-in-Chief Ralph Grosse-Bley was also happy.

But if you think the champagne corks then began to pop, you’re wrong. There was just time for a quick beer to toast the success before everyone went home to bed.

For the acid test was scheduled to take place the next morning.

At 6.00 a.m. on Monday morning, the journalists who weren’t working the Sunday shift were due in. In other words: most of them.

The reception of the newsroom on the second floor looked more like a hotel

reception at 6 o’clock on Monday morning. The employees were shown to their places.

A small army of helpers looked after the new arrivals.

“It was not easy, but we have done it.”

– Ralph Grosse-Bley, Editor-in-Chief “Blick”

The biggest problem proved to be that many people didn’t know where the toilets were now. That and the coffee machines.

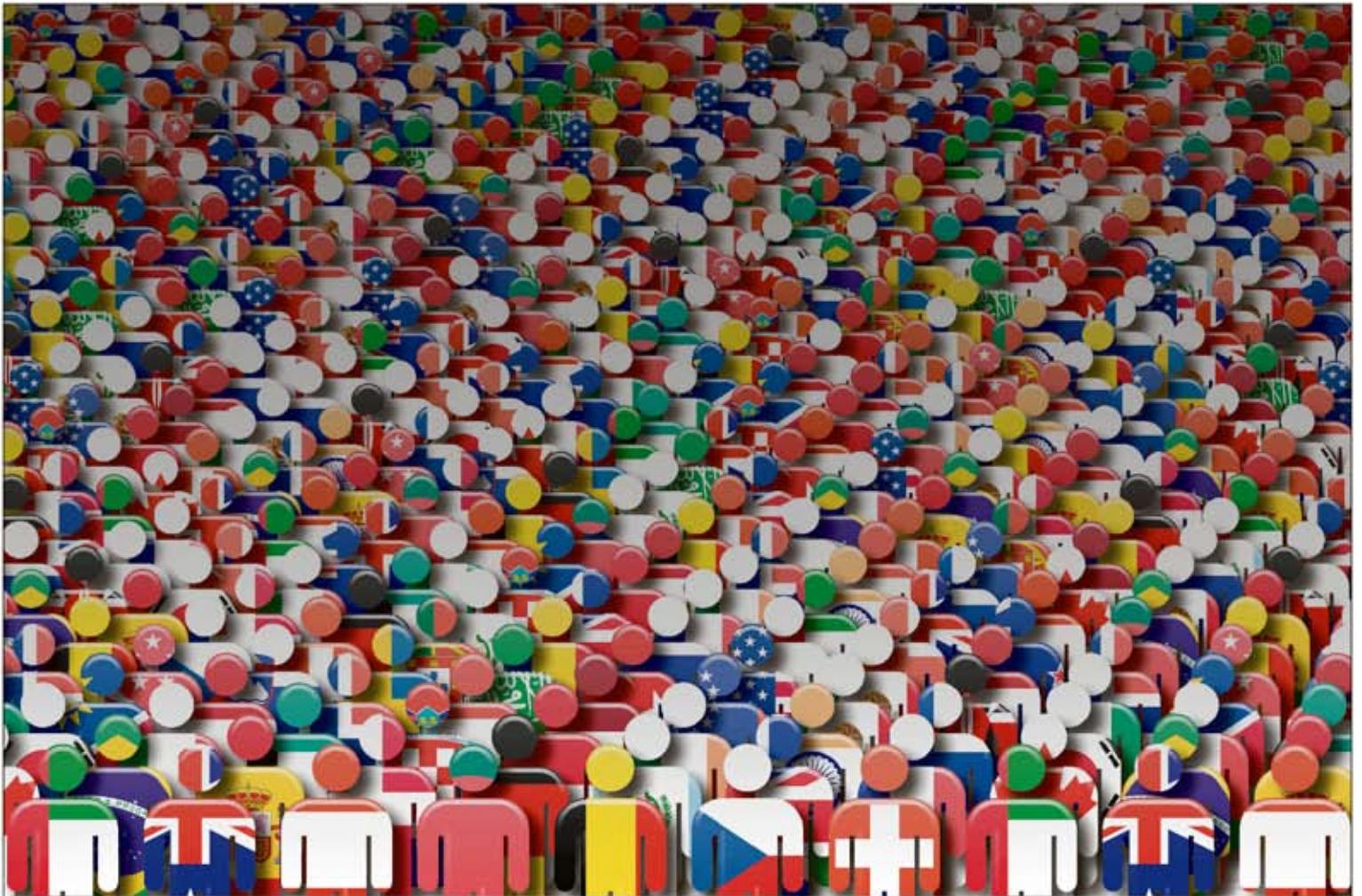
At 8.00 a.m. Editors-in-Chief Rolf Cavalli and Peter

Röthlisberger opened the first major meeting. Bang on time once again, the first “Blick am Abend” was ready at 1.30 p.m. The weight that fell off everyone’s shoulders right then must have been audible for miles around, as the production of “Blick am Abend” is no simple matter due to its regionalisation.

Technically, not just one, but five newspapers have to be printed for Zurich, Bern, Basel, St. Gallen and Lucerne.

When the preparatory work for the first “SonntagsBlick” got under way on Tuesday morning, Editor-in-Chief Hannes Britschgi saw in many faces a look that people usually only wear after a long hike. The newsroom team was tired but happy.





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More than 2000 media professionals from
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Academy programme over the past 5 years.

“The newsroom begins in your mind” becomes company motto

Preparing staff for the future with targeted skill development was an important milestone in the project

In the HR sub-project, the Head of Personnel herself took on the change management process. The greatest challenge was to describe the changes not only to the members of the management team but also to the employees.

Many of the managers were themselves involved in the processes and were therefore able to help out. The employees on the other hand just kept hearing “newsroom, newsroom” without being able to visualise what it meant. Even worse, what they imagined the newsroom would be like was completely incorrect.

Following the motto “The newsroom begins in your mind”, very early in the project planning phase a two-day course titled “Journalism in the Newsroom” was created. The course was mandatory and was held 23 times.

The aim of the two days was clear. On the evening of the second day, all employees should know why the management decided to convert the conventional editorial offices to an integrated newsroom. And it was a complete success.

Because the groups were formed alphabetically, not all of the participants knew one another, although they knew they would soon be working together. The course was run by two members of the project office and external coaches.

What was conveyed during the course? The core issues were dealt with in three modules. Module one was intended to make the employees aware of the situation in the media in general. What's going on in our sector? How



“The human factor in these kind of projects is much more important than many believe.”

– Jutta Wurz,
Head of Personnel

has user behaviour changed? What does the digital revolution mean? What impact does sinking advertising revenue have on editorial work?

The focus of the second module was aimed at looking inside the editorial offices. Who was already using an

integrated newsroom? How do the structures work there? How are the others organised? And what have they learned?

The third model conveyed the importance of branding today. As the “Blick” Group runs a one-brand strategy, it was very important to explain to the employees that the readers/users – or better still the customers – see the products of the “Blick” newsroom differently to the people who produce them. How does the advertising market see the products of the “Blick” Group? Which product is aimed at an urban readership and which at a more rural one?

These presentations were broken up with digital interludes. Ringier specialist Peter Wolf explained techni-

cal trends and how to use the computer to save time, and, long before the Apple iPad was announced, prepared journalists to use eReading devices.

But the course participants weren't just there to passively soak up information. By listing the breaking news (+++ Three members of parliament resign in one day +++ Swiss show star is pregnant – exclusive story +++ TV show “Wetten, dass ...” is coming to Lucerne +++), the future newsroom employees had to show how they would work under the new conditions. The discussions proved to be quite illuminating.

And at the end of the two days, everyone had grasped that the newsroom wasn't a bad thing, just something new. □

An interview with Marc Walder

CEO of Ringier Switzerland and Germany gives his view

Mr. Walder, what was the main motivation for Ringier in introducing an integrated newsroom for the “Blick” Group?

For us, there were three decisive reasons: firstly, people’s changed media consumption behaviour, the rapid move towards the use of digital content.

This trend is reinforced by the second reason, the new technological possibilities on offer today: radio took 38 years to gain 50 million users, TV 13 years, the Internet just four years, the iPod three, Facebook two years – and iPhone apps a mere nine months.

Where two years ago there were 1,100 apps in the iTunes Store, today there are over 240,000. This is quite simply a massive development, a massive trend!

Finally, our third reason was the steep general decline in advertising revenue in printed media of up to 30 per cent and in readership revenue of 10 per cent.

The integrated newsroom now allows us to keep pace with today’s consumption behaviour and integrate the new media in our decision-making at an early stage as well as making our production processes faster, leaner and thereby more efficient.

In what ways has media usage primarily changed?

People don’t care about editorial deadlines any more. They want to be informed and entertained and expect a brand such as “Blick” to cater for them around the clock via all channels.

The newsroom is the measure we have taken to keep up with the breakneck pace of today’s media. It is our way of guiding the “Blick” Group to a secure future in both a journalistic and an economic respect.



“The newsroom is designed to never end. It changes almost daily.”

– Marc Walder, CEO

Not only have you merged print and online media, you also have four titles, each occupying a different position in the marketplace. A brave undertaking...

Yes, that’s true. And it only worked because it was our conviction right from the very beginning that the four titles should retain their identity, their journalistic

independence, their “DNA”. News and stories are coordinated centrally – but it must not result in faceless uniformity. The titles are free to and are encouraged to weight or assess a story differently.

And how have you ensured that this is achieved from an organisational point of view?

Each Editor-in-Chief is directly responsible for three members of staff – usually one or two deputy editors and a “Blattmacher” – who together with him ensure that the various departments supply their titles with appropriate stories for their respective target audiences.

Every day, the question of which story to publish when and using which channel is decided continuously by the committee of Editors-in-Chief. And not only at the three fixed coordination and planning meetings. Therefore it was important that their workplaces were directly alongside one another. Our Editors-in-Chief no longer have individual offices, but instead sit at the “bridge”, the place where our key decisions are made.

You are featured in the organigram as the Journalistic Head of the newsroom. How is your role defined? And are you in the newsroom every day?

Due to the preservation of the titles’ identities, we made a conscious decision not to appoint a “Super-Editor-in-Chief”. Our Editors-in-Chief can easily cope with their daily challenges without my input by following the rules for the newsroom. However, I have the general overview to ensure that all interests, that is those of the editorial offices as well as those of the publishing house, are equally taken into consideration. I

only get involved with certain matters and am only in the newsroom sporadically.

You called on the support of WAN-IFRA for the project. In what areas was this support particularly valuable?

Initially in the pre-project phase, which took around one year. Here we had to determine what type of newsroom was viable for us. But then of course their detailed assistance was also called upon during the project set-up phase, activity planning and strategy formulation, and in the design of the solution implemented today. As such, we were able to call on the extensive know-how of WAN-IFRA Newsplex. We also carried out several of the study tours to already implemented newsroom projects which were organised by WAN-IFRA. The help from WAN-IFRA was essential for us.

Looking back, what were the biggest hurdles in this project?

Firstly: the fundamental decision of which level of integration our newsroom was to have. Secondly: working out a suitable model of organisation. Thirdly: the entire change of culture and attitudes throughout the publishing house. Fourthly: the tailor-made staff training programme. Fifthly: the right communication for it all. Sixthly: "Day X", the disbandment of the editorial offices together with the transfer to the pooled departments. This was a major feat in both an organisational and a logistical respect.

With hindsight, what would you do differently and why?

The direct involvement of the cadre in the project organisation had both pros and cons. On the one hand the cooperation of the experts was a valuable asset and ensured that decisions taken had broad support – but on the other hand, the democratic approach slowed down the process considerably.



Matthias Döpfner (left), Chairman of the Board of Axel Springer AG, with Marc Walder in the new newsroom of "Blick" Group

"People want to be informed and entertained, and expect from a brand like 'Blick' to be served on all channels around the clock."

– Marc Walder, CEO

As a result, the inclusion of the staff in the process was also delayed, which led to a long, too long, phase of uncertainty. In principle, such a project must always be carried out on a top-down basis.

It is above all internal communication that assumes a vital role during a project like this. How did you organise it?

Our employees – and also our neighbours – were kept up-to-date on the work via a special newsroom blog by the project management. Larger

milestones were constantly featured on the intranet and interviews with Editors-in-Chief published.

In the late summer of 2009 we then started providing courses for staff, a very important form of project communication.

And from autumn 2009 we carried out regular general meetings for the employees, at which the project management described the work done, announced the next steps and, most importantly, answered questions.

The general rule for such a massive change project is: communication, communication, communication.

Was there much opposition on the part of the employees?

Not as much as we had expected. Of course, during the aforementioned phase of uncertainty when the flow of information dried up, rumours started to spread amongst the employees.

Scepticism and fear of the project were widespread at this time.

Our employee representation body, the staff committee, was able to play an active role in quashing these rumours by

providing information where it was needed.

However, the decisive factor for each individual employee was the intensive two-day staff training.

This project phase assumed a key role. On the one hand the future newsroom journalists found out how their work would change – and on the other the project management gathered valuable input from the employees.

What are the greatest changes the new structure brings for the individual journalists?

The biggest change has happened in people's heads. For every story they write, our journalists consider which aspects can sensibly be published at what time and through what channel. Cross-media journalism. Today, a newsroom journalist works for at least two channels, usually print and online. And he does not just work for one of the "Blick" titles, but rather theoretically for all four.

This is organised differently depending on the department. This situation is replicated in the production departments. Here too, layout artists and producers do not work for just one product, but for all four.

We have provided them with one of Switzerland's most state-of-the-art editorial offices. All of the approximately 220 journalists are currently getting to grips with the steep learning curve. Every day.

The newsroom has now been in operation since 7 March 2010. How happy are you with the start of operations there?

It started operation without a hitch. There wasn't a single delayed print start and no system crashes. Aside from the purely logistical factors, the reorganisation of people has worked right from the beginning. After all, it is the employees who really get a newsroom up and running.

Continued on page 23



World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers

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Continued from page 21

And where is there still a need for action?

Today, five months after the start of operations, there are still differences in training levels and expertise between the journalists. As a result, some employees can be deployed in more areas than others, which leads to uneven workloads. An imbalance we can resolve with specific special training tailor-made to the employee's needs. More people must be able to do more.

The newsroom is no playground for amateurs. There is no final, fixed design for the newsroom. It changes almost every day, most recently through the introduction of the new apps for the "Blick" Group.

Today the printed newspaper is the top income source for publishing houses. What do you think the future of print media will look like?

The printed newspaper of the future is embedded in a range of different media. This means that the age of a sole printed version has long since passed, with the brand instead making the leap – having adapted to people's changed media consumption behaviour – to the Internet, to mobile phones as an application on smartphones and to WebTV. One brand, a variety of channels. In our experience, the printed title can considerably increase its coverage of the marketplace because the brand is more easily available.

In the overall context, the printed newspaper is increasingly adopting the role of the analytical, evaluating, assessing channel. People look for orientation in the information jungle and a competent editorial team who can filter out unnecessary information.

Although this will mean that the printed title will no longer be the top source of income, future business models envisage a mix of several income sources. Media houses such as

Ringier diversify their business and experiment bravely with revenue models which function independently of income from advertising and sales. The coverage, customer relationships and brand strengths are used to sell both digital and print products.

New content devices such as the iPad are rapidly spreading on the market. What is Ringier's strategy?

Because the consumer believes in these technologies, we do too. Anything else would be ignorant. And because Apple is still at the leading edge in both hardware and software, we are focussing intensively on applications for the iPhone and iPad.

Nearly all of our larger products already have an application or have one in development. During the World Cup, the "Blick" Group's football app for the iPhone was a big success. The new "Blick" app is one of the best in its field at the moment – and we have just launched an iPad ap-

plication for the "Schweizer Illustrierte" magazine. We have declared an offensive when it comes to digital media.

How can money be made in the digital arena in future?

We have decided not to issue the contents of our applications for free. At least, not all of them. We believe this is a brave but appropriate step, especially as all of our applications offer a great deal of innovation and added value.

We will have to come to terms with the fact that money is no longer earned centrally in the media industry, but rather from a variety of sources and in smaller amounts. Media brands such as "Blick" have to become platforms that offer content and inspire, bond and connect a community.

The successful brands will be those that manage to translate the interconnectedness of their communities into hard cash.

□

Newsroom attracts visitors from far and wide



Krokus rocker Chris von Rohr at a "Blick" newspaper critique in the newsroom.

Leaders from "Le Figaro" visit the newsroom (l. to r.): Pierre Conte, Etienne Mougewotte, "Blick" Editor-in-Chief Ralph Grosse-Bley and Francis Morel.



"Blick" Editor-in-Chief Grosse-Bley and his deputy, Clement Studer, with Federal Councillor Evelyne Widmer-Schlumpf.



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