

Intelligent Content

A Primer

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**The Content
Wrangler**
Content Strategy Series

CHAPTER 3

Why Do Content Marketers Need Intelligent Content?

Content marketers are tasked with creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.¹ To do so effectively, they must deliver the right content to the right prospect at the right time – content designed to serve the needs of existing customers or to convert prospects into new customers. In today’s multi-channel world, content must be designed to support a constantly changing landscape of devices, platforms, and channels, making content marketing production increasingly challenging — and expensive.

Just how expensive?

Research conducted in 2015 by Gleanster Research found that B2B content marketers in the US spend over two-thirds of their time — and an estimated \$5.2B annually — producing content.² Despite the large commitment in time and money, B2B content marketers say their biggest challenges include their inability to meet deadlines (92%), redundant content creation efforts (90%), coordination of content creators (81%), and challenges repurposing content (64%). Mid-to-large sized B2B firms waste twenty-five cents of every dollar spent on content marketing production because of inefficient methods.³

Gleanster found that organizations that invest in streamlining and optimizing content marketing production produce two times more content — 163% faster — than their less efficient competitors.³ And size plays a role in inefficiency. The bigger the organization, the more time and money wasted performing unnecessary and redundant tasks.

Twenty-five cents of every dollar spent on content marketing production is wasted.

¹ Content Marketing Institute, “What is Content Marketing?”[23]

² Gleanster Research, “The \$958M Marketing Problem”[36]

³ Ian Michiels, “Measuring Inefficiency in Your Content Marketing Production Processes”[52]

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However, productivity issues and meeting deadlines aren't the only challenges facing content marketers.

Ask any marketer what a great marketing campaign looks like, and you might be surprised just how uninspiring the answer is. According to the Direct Marketing Association, the average successful direct marketing campaign (snail mail) has around a 4.4% conversion rate (10 to 30 times better than email). Very successful campaigns might reach 6%.⁴

Six percent? Seriously? In what other industry would 94% failure get you an opportunity to do a case study presentation on your success? Only in marketing. That's got to change.

Marketers need to move past the spray-and-pray marketing techniques that have dominated their discipline for decades.⁵ Creating personas and aiming content at members of imaginary groups is no longer enough. Today, marketers need to do better. They need to marry information about the individuals they hope to convert with information development management techniques designed to deliver the right pieces of content to those individuals at the right time on the devices of their choosing.⁶

One final challenge facing content marketers is determining how to use content to provide an exceptional experience for two different, but related groups: prospects and existing customers.

According to research from Gartner, more than 90% of organizations don't have a formal content strategy in place to ensure the content they produce is consistent across all customer touch points.⁷ Consequently, the customer journey is riddled with inconsistent, frustrating, and confusing experiences that leave customers wondering, "What happened?"

Once a prospect buys a product or service and becomes our customer, problems begin. Content is no longer familiar, and the instructions don't look, feel, or sound anything like the marketing and sales materials. Neither does the service contract, the warranty, the customer support website, the product documentation, or the training materials. For no good reason, the content experience changes drastically – and not in a

⁴ Allison Schiff, "Direct Mail Response Rates Beat Digital"[71]

⁵ "Are You Guilty of Using a 'Spray & Pray Marketing' Approach to Attract Your Target Market?"[58]

⁶ Glenn Taylor, "B2B Content Preferences Survey: Buyers Want Short, Visual, Mobile-Optimized Content"[78]

⁷ "Gartner Says Less than 10% of Enterprises Have a True Information Strategy"[35]

good way. That's why organizations that recognize the importance of a unified customer experience have started rethinking what it means to be customer-centric.

But, most organizations aren't organized around the customer. Instead, they're organized as companies always have been – around the corporate hierarchy, each department nestled comfortably into a walled garden. Protected. Separate. Different. Silo-ed. Cut off from the people who produce content in other departments.

A company organized in silos cannot produce a unified customer experience. Silos ensure content inconsistency and make it impossible for an organization to speak with one voice. That's because marketers working in isolation from customer support have no idea why customers call the help hotline. The training department creates content without any involvement from the documentation team. And the technical support staff has no idea what the folks in sales are telling prospects.

But, when companies recognize that the content they create – regardless of who created it or for what purposes – has a direct impact on customer experience, silos come down. They start thinking strategically and discard old models. Collaboration becomes the norm. Customers notice.

What kind of content?

There's a big disconnect between the content we produce and the content that prospects and customers want and need. To provide value, we need to rethink our content and who should be involved in its production.

We need to provide appealing content to the audience we hope to attract and engage. We need content that gives prospects and existing customers a consistent experience with our brand, regardless of which department creates that content.⁸

And we must adjust to the new reality: Content that we previously viewed as post-sale (how-to videos, product documentation, and training materials) influences buying decisions.⁹ Savvy brands are breaking down silos between departments. Sales, marketing, PR, technical documentation, support, and training no longer operate in isolation from one another. Everyone who creates content works together.

⁸ Scott Abel, "Lip Service is No Longer Enough: Why You Need a Unified Customer Experience Strategy"[3]

⁹ John Rugh, "Earn a Customer for Life with Post-Sale Content Marketing"[69]

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There's momentum toward the adoption of intelligent content in the content marketing field. In 2014, Content Marketing Institute (CMI) bought the Intelligent Content Conference from The Rockley Group.¹⁰ CMI did so because they understand that content marketing must mature in order to thrive. And they know that without guidance, it's likely that marketers will make the same unnecessary and avoidable mistakes that other content professionals have made before.

For these reasons, and others, content marketers need intelligent content.

¹⁰ "Content Marketing Institute Acquires Intelligent Content Conference (ICC)"[2]

About Ann Rockley



Ann Rockley is CEO of The Rockley Group, Inc. Ann has helped Healthcare, Finance, and High Tech companies create structured content strategies and adopt structured content management for more than 25 years. She was instrumental in defining the foundational concepts, strategies, and best practices that have led to the fields of intelligent content, content reuse, and structured content management. Rockley is a frequent contributor to trade and industry publications and a keynote speaker at numerous conferences in North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific.

Known as the “mother” of content strategy, she introduced the concept with her bestselling book, *Managing Enterprise Content: A Unified Content Strategy*[68]. Ann created the concept of intelligent content and is the founder of the Intelligent Content Conference. Ann has a Master of Information Science from the University of Toronto and is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

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About Charles Cooper



Charles Cooper is VP of The Rockley Group, Inc. He has been involved in creating and testing digital content for more than 20 years. He works with companies to help them understand their content and ensure that it can be intelligently created, managed, and published quickly and consistently – and still meet the needs of their customers. He consults with clients, facilitates modeling sessions, develops taxonomy and workflow strategies, and speaks at conferences worldwide.

Charles is the Rockley Group representative on the OASIS Technical Committee for Augmented Reality.

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About Scott Abel



Known as The Content Wrangler, Scott Abel is an internationally recognized global content strategist who specializes in helping organizations deliver the right content to the right audience, anywhere, anytime, on any device. He writes regularly for business and content industry publications, is frequently selected as a featured presenter at content industry events, and serves on the faculty of the University of

California, Berkeley, School of Information.

Scott is a founding member of Content Management Professionals,¹ serves on the Awareness Committee for Translators Without Borders, co-produces several annual conferences: Intelligent Content,² Information Development World,³ and Content Strategy Workshops,⁴ and is the producer of The Content Wrangler Content Strategy Series⁵ of books from XML Press. The first book in the series, *The Language of Content Strategy*[4], co-produced by Rahel Anne Bailie (with the help of 50 expert contributors), is both a book (print, eBook, audio, and web) and a content marketing case study in single-source, multi-channel publishing.

Scott's message is clear: Content is a business asset worth managing efficiently and effectively. His firm, The Content Wrangler (www.thecontentwrangler.com), exists to help content-heavy organizations adopt the tools, technologies, and techniques they need to connect content to customers.

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¹ <http://www.cmpros.org/>

² <http://www.intelligentcontentconference.com/>

³ <http://www.informationdevelopmentworld.com>

⁴ <http://www.contentstrategyworkshops.com/>

⁵ <http://xmlpress.net/content-strategy/>

Advance Praise

“Speed to market, message consistency, and the other benefits that intelligent content enables will be a true competitive differentiator for organizations. The impact reaches far beyond marketing, content marketing, or technical writing; it goes straight to operational efficiencies that impact the bottom line.”

Michelle Killebrew, Program Director, Digital Marketing Transformation,
IBM Cloud



“The practice and philosophy of intelligent content are critical to maximizing the value and cost savings that content contributes to the enterprise. But intelligent content is not the easiest concept to teach as we foster content excellence in the organization. Consequently, we are grateful for this highly informative primer, written by the best team imaginable for the task.”

Carlos Abler, Leader, Content Marketing Strategy: Global eTransformation, 3M



“Intelligent content will become a strategic business asset powering tomorrow’s successful organizations. *Intelligent Content: A Primer* gives critical insight into the essential shift from content hand crafting to content factory manufacturing for the most human of activities – how we communicate. Content Industrialization is set to revolutionize how we think about, create, edit, translate, manage, deploy, publish and share information. Intelligent Content will transform traditional processes through intentional design in order to create knowledge powerful enough to drive the world’s most successful companies.”

Diana Ballard, Global Account Director, LOGOS GROUP



“If you’ve been frustrated by a content problem in your organization, open this book now and start reading! *Intelligent Content: A Primer* tells you what happens when you treat your content like an asset– and for most organizations, creating intelligent content will make a real change in what’s possible.”

Laura Creekmore, Creek Content



“You may be new to intelligent content, but intelligent content is not new. It may feel like disruptive technology, but it is not. It is a proven, mature methodology. When I first encountered this methodology ten years ago, I immediately saw that it simply makes sense. As a writer with an engineering degree, I knew it could be applied to many types of content in many industries. This book is a primer for those ready to learn the benefits of intelligent content. Read it and learn what is possible with your marketing content.”

Mark Lewis, Author, *DITA Metrics 101*

“When marketers start crowing that a new technique will cure all ills I’m as skeptical as the next guy, but *Intelligent Content: A Primer* really does address a number of issues at once. If your marketing goals include more efficient content teams, more personalized marketing messages, and reusable content that works across devices now and to come, intelligent content should be at the top of your to-do list.”

Jenny Magic, Content Strategist, Raise Your Hand Texas



“Intelligent Content provides a brilliant exposition of concepts that go against the grain of current organizational thought surrounding content, its function, and production. Reversing the outmoded view of content as a mere end-product deliverable, the authors make a strong case for recognizing content’s potential as a technologically-enhanced and generative unit for creative action and enterprise. A timely book, Intelligent Content does an excellent job at mapping out the future of content production– its concepts, methods, and technologies– all of which will be of interest to forward-looking organizations aiming to competitively enhance, innovate, and future-proof their content operations.”

Karl Montevirgen, Founder, Kontent Hammer



“It’s no secret that business is transforming and that the ability to create powerful customer experiences is at the heart of much of this evolution. Marketing doesn’t change content’s purpose – content changes marketing’s purpose. Content is what we are. The content-driven experiences we create will define the impact we have on our consumers. If you’re looking for a business reason to get intelligent about your content, this book will help you find it. These three accomplished authors deftly make the case and teach the reader about intelligent content and its place in business.”

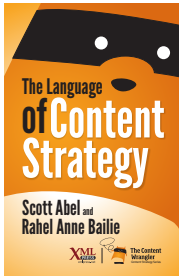
Robert Rose, Chief Strategy Officer, Content Marketing Institute



“We’re in the golden age of content marketing, which is wonderful. Intelligent content is no longer the side conversation, reserved for technical writers and content engineers. Intelligent content design is now part of the central conversation related to content marketing. Fortunately, we have Scott, Ann, and Charles to help us keep all that content organized. If you were looking for a starting point into working with intelligent content, this is the book you’ve been waiting for.”

Buddy Scalera, Author, Speaker. Senior Director of Content Strategy at The Medicines Company

The Content Wrangler Content Strategy Book Series



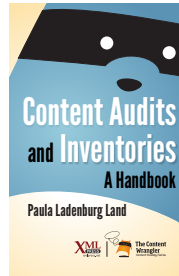
The Language of Content Strategy

Scott Abel and
Rahel Anne Bailie

Available Now

Print: \$19.95
eBook: \$16.95

The Language of Content Strategy is the gateway to a language that describes the world of content strategy. With fifty-two contributors, all known for their depth of knowledge, this set of terms forms the core of an emerging profession and, as a result, helps shape the profession.



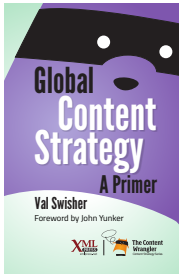
Content Audits and Inventories: A Handbook

Paula Ladenburg Land

Available Now

Print: \$24.95
eBook: \$19.95

Successful content strategy projects start with knowing the quantity, type, and quality of existing assets. Paula Land's new book, *Content Audits and Inventories: A Handbook*, shows you how to begin with an automated inventory, scope and plan an audit, evaluate content against business and user goals, and move forward with actionable insights.



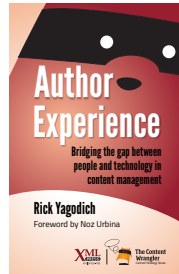
Global Content Strategy: A Primer

Val Swisher

Available Now

Print: \$19.95
eBook: \$16.95

Nearly every organization must serve its customers around the world. *Global Content Strategy: A Primer* describes how to build a global content strategy that addresses analysis, planning, development, delivery, and consumption of global content that will serve customers wherever they are.



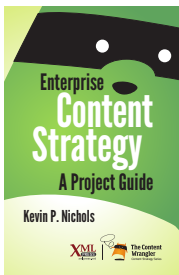
Author Experience: Bridging the gap between people and technology in content management

Rich Yagodich

Available Now

Print: \$24.95
eBook: \$19.95

Author Experience focuses on the challenges of managing the communication process effectively. It deals with this process from the point of view of those who create and manage content. This book will help you define and implement an author experience that improves quality and efficiency.



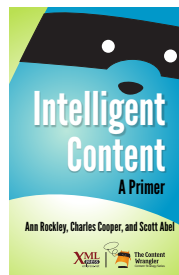
Enterprise Content Strategy: A Project Guide

Kevin P. Nichols

Available Now

Print: \$24.95
eBook: \$19.95

Kevin P. Nichols' *Enterprise Content Strategy: A Project Guide* outlines best practices for conducting and executing content strategy projects. His book is a step-by-step guide to building an enterprise content strategy for your organization.



Intelligent Content: A Primer

Ann Rockley
Charles Cooper
Scott Abel

Available Soon

Print: \$24.95
eBook: \$19.95

Intelligent Content: A Primer introduces the concepts, benefits, and building blocks of intelligent content and gives you the information you need to bring this powerful concept into your organization and begin reaping the benefits.