

## FileOpen for E-publishing and Subscriptions

Nowhere is the need for document rights management (DRM) more pressing than in the online sale of high-value documents. While there may be legitimate debate over the merit of DRM schemes for consumer products — music, movies, eBooks, etc. DRM for documents is an essential component of a reciprocal relationship between publishers and select recipients. For example, a Wall St. analyst who pays \$10,000 per year for a financial newsletter to gain a competitive advantage in the market will be cheated if someone else could receive the same information without paying. In some markets, publishers can consider it a *responsibility* to impose DRM.

### Unique Requirements of DRM for E-publishing

- The DRM that is imposed, however, must be properly designed and implemented to enhance, not hinder, the commercial relationship between publisher and user. Any DRM system for valuable documents should: Provide a familiar user experience by supporting standard file formats and viewers.
- Be easily integrated into the publisher's existing document creation workflow, ecommerce, and subscription management systems.
- Be as unobtrusive as possible for the end-user. The use of standard formats, viewers and communication ports is critical, as end-users will often lack the authority to install new applications or modify firewall policies in their computing environment. Any inconvenience DRM creates for the end-user is likely to result in frustration and abandonment of the product.
- The DRM vendor should not insert itself between the publisher and end-user by forcing publishers to upload their raw documents to the DRM vendor's server.

### The FileOpen Approach to DRM for E-publishing

FileOpen software was designed from the outset to enable the commercial distribution of digital documents, according to the above requirements. While many DRM vendors have approached the problem in different ways, with proprietary file formats and viewers, royalty-based business models, etc., FileOpen's original architecture based on standard formats and open protocols has most effectively matched the demands of online publishers.

A key aspect of the FileOpen approach is the independence it affords publishers and content distributors. Publishers for whom DRM is a strategic necessity typically prefer that the DRM software be implemented entirely in their own environment, on their own hardware. Such publishers also typically insist that the DRM be licensed on a flat-rate basis, independent of usage, whether measured by the number of documents delivered or of users supported.

Other publishers may prefer to use the DRM software as a hosted service, but here too it remains critical that the underlying software be designed for independent operation. There is a difference between employing a vendor to host a DRM server and using a DRM solution that is designed around a cloud-based model. In the first case the publisher retains control over the content and the user data – i.e. can move the application to another location, or take it in-house – while in the second that publisher's content and usage data is tied to the DRM provider, and extraction of that data for transfer to another solution may be limited by technical hurdles, service agreements, or both.

*Case Study: FileOpen RightsManager™ for Retail eBooks* FileOpen Systems was approached by a provider of technical information to propose a DRM solution for their online bookstore.

The publisher sought to increase the security of their current eBook fulfillment system, in which the customer was supplied with a specific URL pointing to an unencrypted PDF eBook. Although the customer's link to the eBook would expire after two weeks, there was no system in place to stop copying and forwarding of the actual eBooks. Furthermore, the unencrypted eBooks were being stored on the site of the website vendor hosting the shopping cart.

Using the FileOpen RightsManager™ system locally on a desktop computer, the publisher made a set of encrypted PDF files matching the original unencrypted set and uploaded these to a new folder on the website. A new set of SKUs were created in the shopping cart system to correspond to the encrypted PDFs, and a new cgi file was loaded to the server to handle purchases of the encrypted files.

Now when a customer buys an encrypted eBook, the link points to a folder containing the encrypted PDF, and the email contains a Username/Password pair unique to that customer generated by the RightsManager. When the customer attempts to open the encrypted PDF, the FileOpen plug-in is automatically installed either by Adobe's plug-in finder or by FileOpen's installer site. The Adobe Reader then requests the customer's login, which if accepted, displays the PDF with Offline Permission, so that no further internet access is required to use the content. The eBook is now locked to the user's computer, with one or more backup copies allowed at the discretion of the publisher. Subsequent viewings of the eBook by the end-user do not require any password entry.

By logging in to the FileOpen RightsManager dashboard, the publisher can see a record of which customers opened eBooks on which machines, and can easily manage customer service requests (transfer from one machine to another, revocation in the case of refund, etc.). The same interface enables the publisher to impose access restrictions on their eBooks such as expiration and printing restrictions.

While this implementation uses the FileOpen RightsManager solution (invisibly to the customer, for back-end processing), the publisher could at any time migrate that server to a hosting provider other than FileOpen, or take it in-house. No usage data would be lost and the only interruption in functionality would be the time required to migrate a DNS entry from one IP address to another.

*The Result:* using FileOpen RightsManager, the Ebook publisher was able to place DRM on their eBooks without major changes to their existing ecommerce system. As an added benefit, the publisher now retains complete control over unencrypted copies of eBooks within their firewall, as well as usage data about their customers.

### **A Growth Model for E-publishing**

As more and more formerly print publications go online, deploying effective DRM will be a critical factor in their online survival. FileOpen's DRM solutions give publishers the autonomy and flexibility they need to determine the right mix of security and usability for their valuable documents.

As FileOpen extends its support for mobile devices such as iPad and iPhone, as well as offering the zero-client install FileOpen Viewer for any web browser, publishers have more options than ever to grow their digital customer base, without losing revenues to piracy.