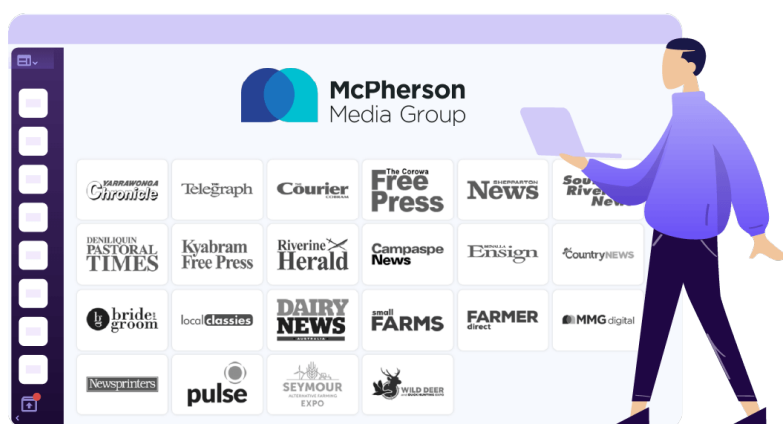# How Naviga Helped McPherson Media Group Consolidate and Optimize IT Systems From Sales to Content Creation

## The Challenge

McPherson Media Group serves an audience of more than 2.5 million people in the Australian states of Victoria and New South Wales. Locally owned and based in Shepparton, Victoria, McPherson distributes more than 505,000 publications per month, and its digital products draw more than 645,000 page views per month. With the daily Shepparton News, regional weeklies like the Yarrawonga Chronicle and Southern Riverina News, and agricultural journals Country News and Dairy News Australia, its publications connect directly with the communities they serve.

Internally, McPherson was facing two challenges:

**1.** The newsagents who distributed their print publications owned the relationships with the customers they served. In many cases, they weren't selling as many papers as they ordered.

**2.** The tech stack was too wide and fractured across many different vendors and products. They used Salesforce for sales and marketing, Atex for print production, a third party for all their web development, and other vendors to manage things like the digital library, editorial workflow, and more essential tasks.

Too many tools in McPherson's tech stack didn't work together. This affected everyone from the sales team to content and publishing. McPherson employees had to bridge technical gaps by recreating orders in different systems, manually loading content into print and digital engines, and repeating a lot of time-consuming work.

"From our perspective, we've got to reduce costs. It's about advertising, and it's about our editorial guys, because without content and sales, we don't have a business," says Glenn James, CTO of McPherson Media Group. "We need to make sure everything is as streamlined as possible, so one day I can step out and someone else can easily take over because [our systems are] already put together. So, at the end of the day, we need to optimize [our technology stack] and make sure it's as easy and efficient as possible, so the backend doesn't need to be looked after as much as it does today."

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Glenn James
CTO of McPherson Media Group

## What McPherson Media Group hoped to achieve

McPherson needed a way to bring more of its customer relationships in-house and integrate its tech stack to be more efficient and offer more modern functionality. They were working with a lot of market-leading vendors, but some of them, like Salesforce, did not bring publishing-optimized tools, so almost every tool McPherson used needed a lot of customization that took time to implement and more time to manage over the lifetime of the tools.

The result was an unwieldy tech stack of tools cobbled together from too many sources. McPherson's goal was to create a suite of integrated solutions from one vendor that would work together more efficiently and enable more seamless customer and subscriber experiences.

For example, "We want to be able to book to our ad inventory," James says. "When we don't have that half-page ad sold, we want to be able to put that out to the market and say, 'Hey, we have a special price on this ad today.' So, it's basically being able to book to our inventory, and that's what Naviga will allow us to do."

The systems they had in place made that impossible.

Another need James pointed out was to create a tech stack that would be "fully integrated, so we can go from campaign to proposal to billing [on the sales side] all in the one step without any adjustment of systems. So that means that our CRMs that are used for booking now become efficient for other things, not just putting bookings into a system."

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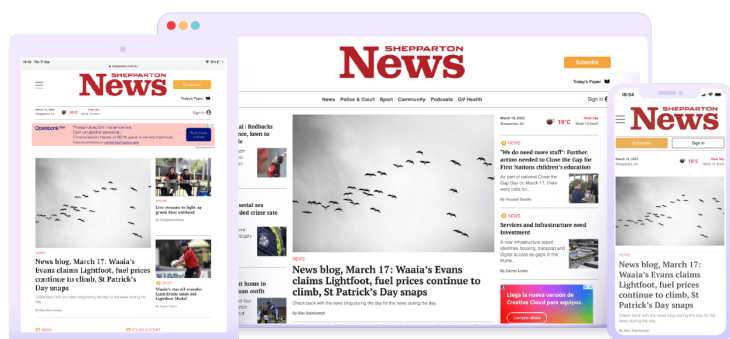
## Why they chose Naviga

When McPherson went looking for a solution, Naviga had already reached out and begun the work to understand their needs. Naviga stood out because its clients (including The Independent South Africa, who they spoke with) were very happy with it. This positive feedback made McPherson's salespeople excited to use it. According to James, they were saying, "When we get this thing installed, it'll make it so much easier for us."

Another reason for selecting Naviga was that McPherson's systems often need customization and configuration to provide readers and users with the functionality they want. Naviga's flexibility and willingness to help McPherson get those functions in their products was a big factor in the decision.

"One thing I've really liked in our dealings with Naviga is every time you work with a big provider, normally they don't move. It's a SaaS model, it is what it is, and you get what you get. If you do need to configure and change it, it costs you a fortune," says James. But that wasn't the case with Naviga.

"The experience I've had with Naviga," James continued, "is that, if it makes sense and they think it's a good feature, then they'll put that change on their roadmap [of product upgrades]. And that normally wouldn't happen with less hands-on providers."

Once they did their diligence and looked at other vendors, James says, "it all started to piece together that [Naviga] was the right system for us."

## Outcome

With Naviga, McPherson has been able to unify its systems under one vendor, reduce IT costs by bundling tools and creating operational efficiencies, and improve continuity by simplifying its technology management needs.

Where McPherson had been working with more than a half-dozen systems, they've now unified most of their workflows onto the Naviga platform. They use Naviga Circulation, Naviga Ad, Naviga Content Creation Tools, Naviga Plan, Naviga Web, Naviga Print Production Workbench, and are planning to bring in several apps through Naviga Mobile. "Instead of taking three hours to layout a paper," says James, now "it might be only an hour."

Overall, McPherson Media Group realized benefits in:

- Improved editorial workflows
- Easy flow of everything on the sales side
- The writers and ad reps can focus on their work and not the tools

While many of their print-only subscribers are still handled by newsagents, whenever one of them signs up for a digital product, they move into Naviga's integrated print and digital audience database. With the Naviga tools, McPherson is gradually pulling its subscribers back into the fold so they can learn about them and market to them on a one-to-one level.

## NAVIGA SYSTEMS USED BY MCPHERSON MEDIA GROUP

▶ Naviga Circulation

▶ Naviga Advertising

▶ Naviga Content Creation Tools

▶ Naviga Plan

▶ Naviga Web

▶ Naviga Print Production Workbench

▶ Naviga Mobile
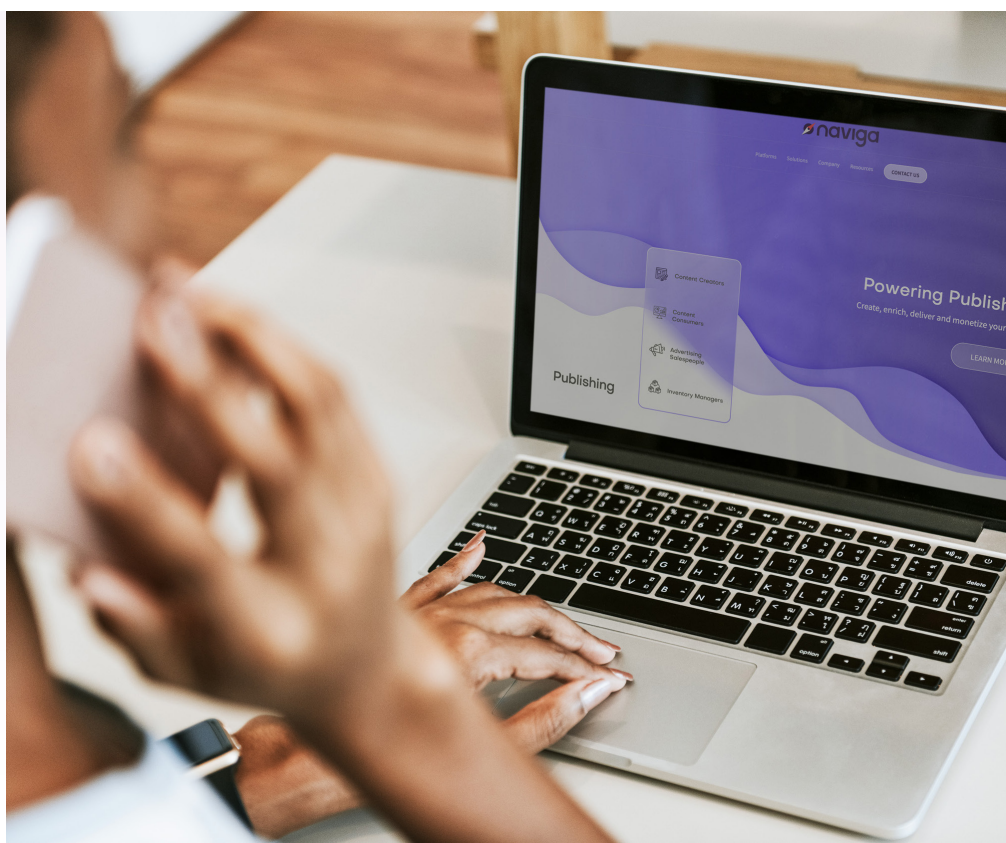
**How Naviga Helped McPherson Media Group Consolidate
and Optimize IT Systems From Sales to Content Creation**

"It's a lot better than what we had, and the future looks good," says James. "There's a roadmap to get where we need to be, and everything in the system, once it's set up correctly, will deliver us to where we need to be."

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Glenn James
CTO of McPherson Media Group

## About McPherson

McPherson Media Group is an independent publishing group comprising:

• Print and digital publishing for 12 newspapers across the Goulburn Valley and Southern Riverina.
• Magazine and custom content production, serving business, health, and agricultural sectors.
• Event management including the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo and Wild Deer and Duck Hunting Expo.
• Commercial printing capabilities serving local and national publishers.
• Expert media strategy, planning, and buying services.

McPherson Media Group is proud of its record of story-telling in the communities it has served for over 140 years. Quality journalism and the publication of local news has always been – and remains – its core purpose.