

# Quark pivots to content automation with emphasis on modular, 'smart' content

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Quark wants to reduce the amount of time knowledge workers spend recreating and reviewing content that is not inherently repurposable. The prospect of surfacing and making better use of existing knowledge assets is something that productivity vendors, including Microsoft and Google, cite as a roadmap aspiration. They may be able to learn from Quark, whose interesting approach brings structure to unstructured content without relying on machine learning to do the heavy lifting. The company rejects the idea of content as a static file, advocating instead for modular, 'smart' content, the components of which can be reviewed, stored and repurposed individually.

## The 451 Take

The notion of a document is beginning – albeit slowly – to shift industry-wide. While traditional content services treat the document container, rather than the information inside, as the asset, Quark helps isolate, identify and manage content componentry according to each portion's inherent risk or value profile. Most other vendors expect machine learning to make automated analysis and document segmentation achievable, but this is far from a practical reality.

Quark's pivot from digital publishing to content automation was one of necessity as the rise of Adobe's

Experience Cloud took a considerable toll on its digital publishing customer base. With its push in content automation, the company will face cultural challenges in incentivizing the taxonomy overhaul efforts and changes in user habits that accompany deploying its Smart Content framework, but interest is rising in becoming systemically more efficient in leveraging digital assets and so there already exists some appetite for change. Quark's new corporate ownership, which has already demonstrated a willingness to front the costs of expansion and development, will be key to making the necessary investments to stay ahead of the market.

## Context

Founded in 1981, Quark was for many years an established frontrunner in publishing technology. The company maintains its existing product set, which includes QuarkXPress for page layout and graphic design, while Quark Publishing Platform, Quark Author, Quark XML Author and App Studio support its focus on the automation of content creation and management in large enterprises, where it has identified more opportunity for differentiation. Its adoption of the term 'content automation' relates to the automation of processes across content creation, management, publishing and delivery. In August, Quark was acquired by Parallax Capital Partners to spur the transition with capital support for growth measures and acquisitions.

The company concentrates its go-to-market initiatives on highly regulated verticals such as financial services, government and manufacturing. Primary content automation use cases include standard operating procedures, pitchbooks and fund marketing, product information, investment research reporting, asset management, and regulatory compliance. Quark counts hundreds of thousands of desktop publishing users and over 200 enterprise content automation customers. Revenue specific to content automation increased 30% over the past year and is projected to grow another 40% in 2018.

## Technology

Quark's core Publishing Platform includes componentry for web publishing, metadata and integration management, access permissioning, and versioning and authoring tools – which gives the company an uncommonly broad range of offerings across the content management, content creation and publishing markets. Quark XML Author, a Microsoft Word plug-in, and Quark Author, an equivalent web-based environment, provide authoring components for line-of-business workers, complemented by the vendor's design portfolio (QuarkXPress and App Studio). Quark also supports basic content workflow, review,

approval and task assignment natively, and integrates with BPM and workflow automation providers such as Pega as well as other homegrown systems.

The company's Smart Content framework compartmentalizes the individual components within a piece of content to be managed, stored and approved separately. Existing content components can then be configured for use in new formats rather than recreated from scratch, therefore reducing manual overhead involved in content generation. A piece of product documentation, for example, could be configured with existing segments – e.g., graphics, technical description, data and marketing blurb – that are all stored in isolation and easily united within a specific deliverable. This is particularly useful for organizations that deal with a high volume of similar documents, that need to deliver the same content in multiple formats, or that are subject to regulation and compliance mandates. Quark will soon release new capabilities to make content schema and template design more intuitive for non-technical users.

Considering its heritage, the firm's messaging is unsurprisingly customer experience-centric and highlights frequency of publishing rates enabled by reusability of content components. But managing content at the component level carries compliance implications that are also resonating in regulated industries for internal workflow scenarios. The ability to push updates to all documents containing amended components, for instance, reduces inconsistencies, incompliance risks, and labor costs involved with manual updates. Similarly, component-level approval can improve efficiency of review and approval for documents that are frequently repurposed (e.g., legal or regulatory documents). Component-level content tracking and permissioning enables granular visibility into where specific components have been used throughout a corporate repository.

## **Strategy**

In December, Quark purchased Docurated, which offers a sales-enablement platform. The product will power content consumption and delivery analytics within customer channels, which in turn will yield intelligence about content effectiveness and topical gaps in collateral. The company also intends to use Docurated's advanced analytics capabilities as the basis for a broader intelligence strategy, and more immediately plans to repurpose Docurated's advanced analytics capabilities in federated search and identifying content duplications within its core repository. Other core development initiatives include implementation tools (for scalability and speed of deployment) and productizing of specific use cases (e.g., standard operating procedures).

## Competition

Quark's positioning within an established competitive segment varies considering its overlap with enterprise content management, digital asset management, web content management and sales-enablement providers. Increasingly, Quark vies with enterprise content management and storage vendors like OpenText (Content Suite and Documentum), Hyland, Alfresco and Box, and is occasionally deployed as a replacement in organizations looking to streamline content management and content delivery. Although it does offer lightweight content management capabilities, Quark has no plans to develop more specialized storage services such as records management and retention. As such, interoperability with these providers is prioritized.

As far as digital publishing goes, Adobe's dominance has been one of the most powerful forces in prompting Quark's focus shift. Players like Sitecore, CoreMedia, Contentful, Hippo, Oracle and OpenText also compete to some extent. XML authoring tools like Altova, Liquid Studio, Xerlin and Adobe FrameMaker continue to overlap with Quark's authoring and design tooling.

## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

Quark's component-driven approach to content marks the beginning of a broader industry initiative to move beyond the content object and rethink the way content is created, assembled and managed for maximizing efficiency and security.

### Weaknesses

The company is still very much affiliated with the digital publishing software upon which it built its brand 30 years ago, which has since fallen out of the limelight. It needs to publicize its pivot and the broad spectrum of use cases it now accommodates in content management and compliance.

### Opportunities

We think smart forms and structured data collection is an area of opportunity for Quark to help bring structured data into unstructured content sources.

### Threats

The vendor has adopted the term content automation, but as advanced analytics proliferate we anticipate this will soon become an industry buzzword with multiple meanings.

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M&A ACTIVITY BY SECTOR  
M&A ACTIVITY BY ACQUIRER  
FIGURES SHOWN INDICATE NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS

COMPANY MENTIONS (PRIMARY)

Quark

COMPANY MENTIONS (OTHER)

Adobe Alfresco Altova Box Contentful CoreMedia Docurated Google Hippo Hyland Software Limelight Microsoft OpenText

Oracle Parallax Capital Partners Pegasystems Sitecore

CHANNELS

Customer Experience & Commerce Development, DevOps & IT Ops Workforce Productivity & Compliance

SECTORS

All / Information management / Content management

All / Application software / Desktop publishing