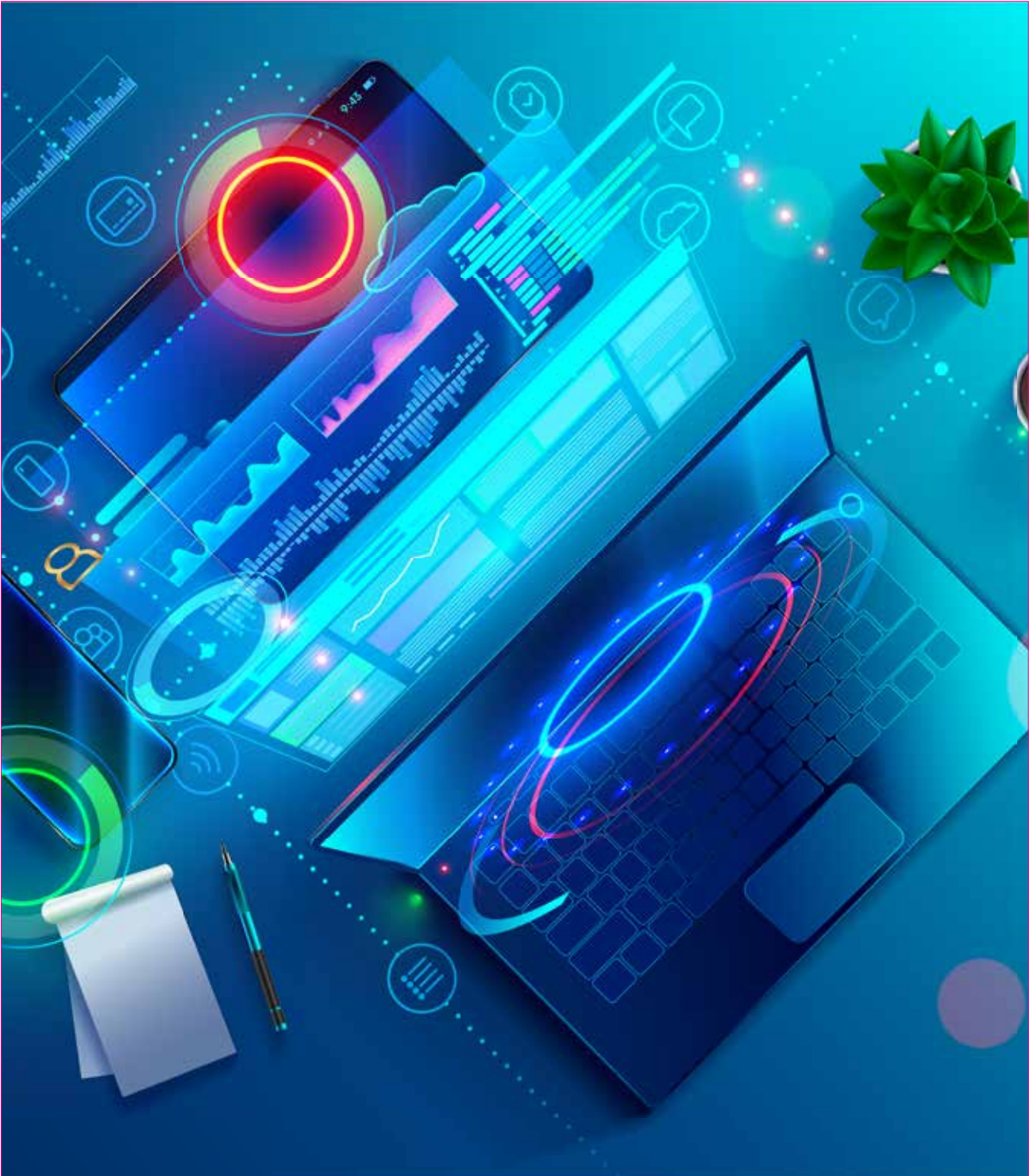


Why Digitised Annual Reports?

6 great reasons to pursue Digitised Annual Reports

Authored by:
Manoj Saha



Why Digitised Annual Reports?

6 great reasons to pursue Digitised Annual Reports



How is a digital annual report different from a print one?

As a key weapon within an arsenal of collaterals serving the investor relations function, annual reports have been undergoing a profound transformation on the Web. The boundaries of Web-based annual reports are dynamic and becoming less distinct, giving the user many viewing options and formats that are immersive, interactive and engaging. This dynamic is a result of companies increasingly serving the needs of virtual global communities.

Intrinsic investors usually invest more time to read an annual report, and especially one that follows best practices in terms of design and storytelling. After all, as a regulated document, it's the one place that you can probably seek the truth about the company – hopefully.

But today, in the age of digital information, readers expect all information to be available online and on demand, so that they can access it however and whenever they need it. They also expect content to be ergonomically organised, taking into account the fact that there is only one canvas – the screen of the device, to absorb the information through. It is necessary therefore that the content of a conventional printed annual report is carefully re-organised and broken up and layered for drilled down access, for an annual report to be easy to read and absorb. We call this making an annual report “mobile friendly”.

If you fail to deliver on this, then you are limiting yourself to people who still don't mind thumbing through documents and lose out on the audience that has chosen to live in a paperless world depending on a device. As a brand, you stand for something, and you want to show that you will be able to execute your goals well. How credible is that message if you cannot deliver it in a way that meets your audience's expectations?

In the age of digital information, readers expect all information to be available online and on demand, so that they can access it however and whenever they need it.

6 great reasons to pursue Digitised Annual Reports

- 1. Interactivity** - Electronic versions (PDFs) of paper-based annual reports can be an efficient and low-cost distribution medium for information, but they miss out on the unique advantages of the Internet, which can facilitate innovation in digital annual report presentation. The Internet can integrally accommodate interactive, non-linear, multimedia and animation elements. A company can therefore ensure maximum user-friendliness and attention from on-line visitors and be in a position to engage with them by making an interactive, visually appealing, on-line edition of the annual report. The content on the website can be enhanced through the use of multimedia such as video, audio speeches and music, animated infographics, and customisable graphs and charts. The on-line annual report becomes an experience that is simply not possible with the limitations presented by print media. The interactive nature of the Web tends to be an incentive for visitors to return to the Web site and increase its 'stickiness', building stronger ties with your stakeholders.
- 2. Global reach** - Companies are increasingly seeking investors from markets beyond their borders. Digital annual reports provide unrestricted global access and increase the disclosure audience of a firm. It is an opportunity to enhance and expand the traditional information channels. The web opens up readership to a much wider international audience (Russell 2000). Besides shareholders and other stakeholders, the 'public domain' in general can also take advantage of access to web-based corporate information. Digital annual reports maximise the exposure of the annual report and increase the potential readers.
- 3. Efficient two-way transmission of information** – Today, the web is the most effective way to communicate with potential investors and shareholders. The Internet provides a broadcast (mass communications) medium for corporates to disseminate their reports. Thanks to the web, a new degree of transparency can be invoked by openly communicating with previously unidentified information users. The web is also a medium for a two-way dialogue with stakeholders: annual reports can be designed to encourage investors to provide feedback to the company.
- 4. Hyperlinking** – Today, in the age of integrated reporting, annual reports are increasingly littered with interconnects within the content. Hyperlinks offer firms the opportunity to integrate several sections of the annual report and link financial disclosures to other pertinent information elsewhere on the Web site. For example, companies can hyperlink to on-line stock prices and various additional information sources.

5. Volume of content is no longer an issue - Computer memory is cheap, and a Web site offers almost unlimited space. Unlike print versions that use precious resources such as paper, ink and energy, more information can be added to a site to explain company performance without the physical constraints of a printed report. There are also fewer limitations on presentation flexibility than with traditional paper versions.

6. Usage analytics – Thanks to embedded cookies, companies can monitor and track the total activity of the investor relations section of web sites to identify ways to improve site efficiency and increase usage. The data collected indicate how many people have accessed the annual report as well as the usefulness of the different types of information included on the web. So even though you may “open doors” for anyone to freely enter your world, you can still monitor and observe their behaviour once they are inside your website.

Manoj Saha is the Managing Director of Dickenson World, a leading Capital Markets Communication solutions company. Dickenson World specialises in the end-to-end production of Annual Reports, from researching, conceptualising, authoring, designing and digitisation. To know more about our capabilities, and how we could help you to produce a digitised annual report, contact enquiry@dickensonworld.com.



Authored by:

Manoj Saha
Managing Director

manoj.saha@dickensonworld.com



Our Offices

London

UK & EU Bureau – Ms. Kinneri Saha
+44 748 723 4770 (M)
+91 9136694450 (L)

Delhi

NCR Bureau – Ms. Priyanka Singh
+91 956 060 0912 (M)
+91 22 6627 6509 (L)

Mumbai

India Operations – Ms. Nida Mukadam
+91 8080607472 (M)
+91 22 6627 6509 (L)

Ahmedabad

Gujarat Bureau – Ms. Krishna Patel
+91 971 294 9619 (M)
+91 22 6627 6509 (L)