

# Case Study: USA TODAY



## RightsLink® helps USA TODAY add more green to its bottom line with increased royalty revenue

The nation's top-selling newspaper, USA TODAY is the trusted source of news and information for over 5.2 million readers. Published by Gannett Co., Inc. via satellite at 35 locations in the USA and at four sites abroad, USA TODAY is available worldwide. The USA TODAY brand also includes: USATODAY.com, an award-winning news and information website; USA TODAY Mobile; USA TODAY Sports Weekly, a magazine for enthusiasts of football and baseball; and USA TODAY LIVE, the television arm of the USA TODAY brand that brings the spirit and quality of the newspaper to television.

Just as USA TODAY's circulation has increased steadily since its debut in 1982, so have the number of requests from individuals seeking article reprints and permission to republish content. With staff from three different USA TODAY departments spending approximately 40 hours per month handling countless reprint and permission orders, Christy Hartsell, USA TODAY'S Director of Brand Licensing, set out to find a solution that would both centralize and automate the publisher's reprints and permissions efforts. Hartsell envisioned a one stop, self-serve area on USATODAY.com with a highly intuitive user interface where users could quickly and easily order reprints and permissions.

After evaluating offerings from several vendors, Hartsell determined that RightsLink not only offered the best user interface for the publisher's customers but that the service would enable USA TODAY to dramatically reduce its current administrative burden by handling the entire process, including all of the associated back-office tasks such as billing and fulfillment. She was also quick to realize that RightsLink would allow her organization to generate even more revenue from its content by enabling customers to use it in a variety of ways and at a granular level.

Developed by Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), a global rights broker for millions of the world's most sought after

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**Christy Hartsell**

USA TODAY'S

DIRECTOR OF BRAND LICENSING

books, journals and other content, RightsLink is an easy-to-implement point-of-content licensing solution. With RightsLink, publishers get a proven solution that adds real value to their on-line publishing strategy, while content users get instant, self-service access to reprint and permission services, any time, worldwide.

Highly customizable, RightsLink was readily tailored by CCC's technical team to meet USA TODAY's specific requirements. In order to have the 'Reprints & Permissions' link appear on content designated by USA TODAY, Javascript passes key metadata from USATODAY.com's Content Management System (CMS) to the RightsLink application. The CMS holds the business rules which determine whether the link is added or suppressed, depending on whether the content is written by USA TODAY staff or third-party content providers. In the future, USA TODAY hopes to expand its use of RightsLink to content from external sources, thereby enabling its partners to increase their royalty revenues as well.

According to Hartsell, deploying RightsLink was a smooth process. "The implementation was a piece of cake," stated Hartsell. "CCC has a team that is extremely organized. It was by far the best and easiest implementation I've ever experienced."

## Reprint & Permission orders made simple — how it works

Using RightsLink to order hard copy and digital reprints or license permission to republish USA TODAY content is as easy as:

1. Locating the USA TODAY article online at:  
<http://www.usatoday.com> or  
<http://archives.usatoday.com>, for articles older than two weeks
2. Clicking the Reprints & Permissions link adjacent to the article to open RightsLink
3. Creating a RightsLink account (a two-step process) if the user hasn't already
4. Selecting the republish or reprint preference from a drop-down menu, e.g. 'order standard reprints,' 'republish on a website,' or 'distribute in an email'
5. And accepting the terms and conditions (one click)

Since going live with RightsLink, staff time devoted to reprint and permission requests has decreased by 85%, going from about 40 hours a month to approximately six hours. Now, with RightsLink, the Circulation & Education group is only called on to handle high-touch orders. Marketing staff that were once charged with reprint requests are totally freed to work on other projects. And rather than handling every permission request in its entirety, the USA TODAY library staff now simply reviews the transactions that go through RightsLink to ensure that permissions are not being granted for any uses that are not allowed.

In addition to exceeding Hartsell's goals around streamlining the reprint and permission processes for internal staff, RightsLink has made the entire process decidedly quick

and easy for content users, thereby increasing customer satisfaction. "With RightsLink, we've empowered the customer so they don't have to wait for a response, a price quote or a license," explained Hartsell. "They can go in and get what they need and the whole process is straightforward and fast."

Well known for its use of color, USA TODAY has added more green to its bottom line since implementing RightsLink. For the past two years, gross revenues associated with reprints and permissions have seen double-digit growth and royalties have increased steadily. Additionally, the overall flexibility and completeness of the RightsLink solution have further convinced Hartsell that her organization made the right choice.

"CCC thought of everything — I haven't been wanting for anything because all of the bells and whistles are there," said Hartsell. "Even if a customer doesn't have a computer we can accommodate their needs and the order still goes through RightsLink. As a result, all of the orders are centralized so we're tracking revenue through the same channel. We can even go into the system and see what orders are in the queue when we need to estimate revenue at the end of the month. CCC has truly played a critical role in our on-line content licensing strategy and we're absolutely thrilled to have them as our partner moving forward."

## About Copyright Clearance Center

Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), the rights licensing experts, is a global rights broker for millions of the world's most sought after books, journals and other content. Founded in 1978 as a not-for-profit organization, today CCC provides smart solutions that simplify the licensing of content that lets businesses and academic institutions quickly get permission to use copyright-protected materials, while compensating publishers and content creators for the use of their works. For more information, visit [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com).

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