Adobe

The newsletter
for Adobe
FrameMaker
users

FRAME

Fidelity invests with FrameMaker

Adobe FrameMaker's ability to manage long and complex documents has made it invaluable in the engineering and pharmaceutical sectors. Now it is proving its worth in financial services — in tandem with the *Miramo* database publishing package.

Britain's boom-bust economic cycle of the nineteen-eighties is maybe now a thing of the past, but deregulation of the UK financial markets – the 'Big Bang' of 1986 – led to a boom in private investment which has continued unabated.

Deregulation opened up equity investment to a wider public, but it also meant the burden of administration fell more heavily on brokers and independent financial advisors (IFAs) selling the newly created financial products. Since the mid-eighties a body of legislation has evolved which governs the selling process, resulting in document-intensive administration procedures for the financial services sector.

Adobe FrameMaker established its reputation in industries such as aerospace, automotive manufacture and the pharmaceutical sector, where long and complex documents to support research procedures, testing and maintenance have to be managed. More recently, FrameMaker is developing a role in helping financial services companies deal with the paper trails they must keep to comply with the new legislation.

A good example of this is the way in which financial services firm Fidelity Investments uses Adobe FrameMaker, along with the **Miramo** database publishing package, to provide the IFAs who sell its products with the documentation they are now required by law to show their clients.

IFAs have to provide their clients with transparent details of the financial products they are selling, including the aims of the investment, the risks involved, definitions of the financial products on offer, 'what-if?' tables showing the likely performance of the investments, the cost of the financial products to the client, and the commission which the IFA will earn from selling a product.

A single report of this kind to a client on a simple investment in a private equity plan, for example, can easily run into five pages. The more complex the investment and the more financial products are involved, the greater the volume of documentation

required. A single IFA may require several hundred of these documents a month.

The latest Act governing IFAs' reports to clients came into force in May 1997 and concerns disclosure of commission. This is to ensure that clients are clear why an IFA may favour one financial product over another: is it because it offers a better return on investment or greater security for the client, or because it offers the IFA a better margin?

Before the legislation came into effect, IFAs sent clients a variety of documents, a mixture of brochures and

Adobe
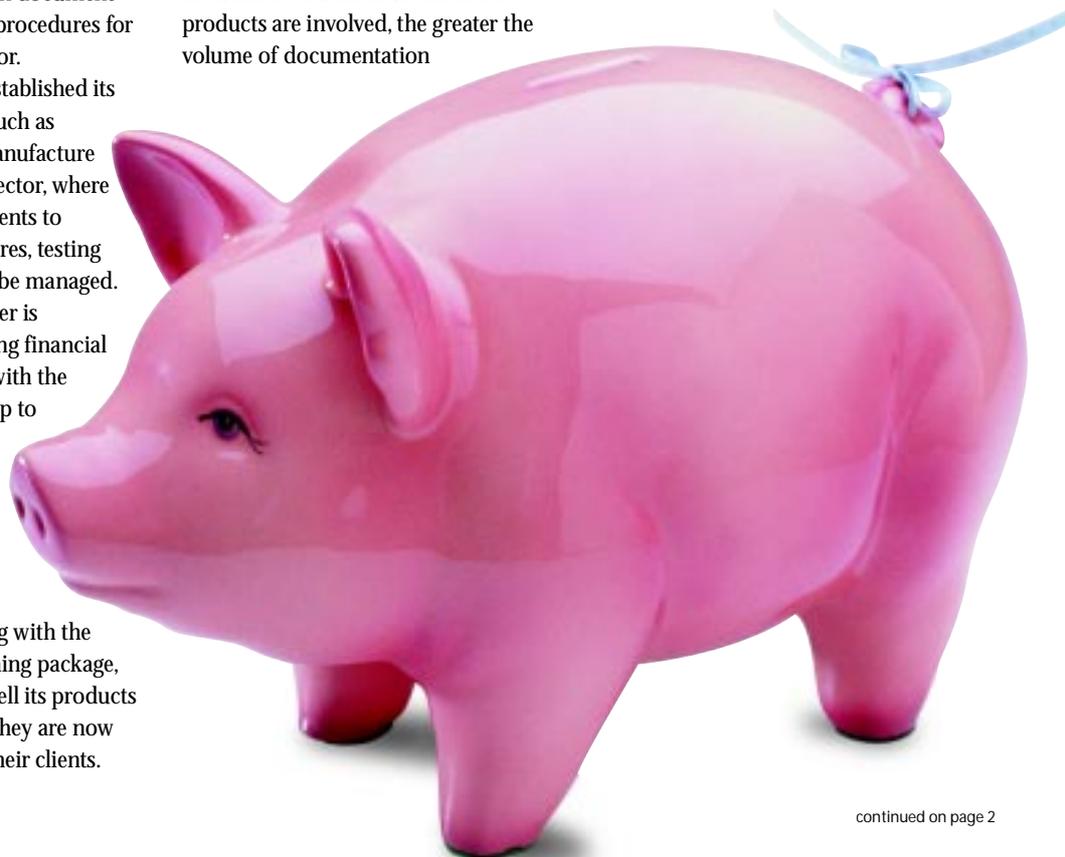
Independent financial advisers can use the Fidelity Web page to generate PDF documents that comply fully with government legislation on the sale of financial products and with Fidelity's corporate style.

leaflets explaining the financial products proposed and paperwork generated by the IFA detailing the transaction.

To help the IFAs comply with the legislation and present clients with a more attractive set of personalised documents, Fidelity wanted a Web-based application which enabled IFAs to pull down the information on financial products, conduct the necessary calculations for projected performance and commission, and assemble them in a single set of paperwork for each client.

An HTML-based system to do this was investigated, but eventually rejected because it lacked the fiexibility and formatting control necessary to match the style and standard of presentation that Fidelity wanted IFAs to be presenting to their clients on its behalf.

So Fidelity turned to Datazone, a software developer whose FrameMaker-based **Miramo** database publishing tool is used extensively for producing catalogs, price lists, directories and timetables as well as financial documents such as complex invoices, statements and asset management reports.

Miramo can take input from databases as text, images, forms and tables. It then applies predetermined document definitions stored in an additional database or FrameMaker document and uses the FrameMaker formatting engine to generate documents in PDF format.

Miramo can produce the lengthy catalogues and indexes normally associated with batch-processed database publishing. But it is also fast enough to output pseudo-real-time reports in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) based on ad hoc queries, as is the case at Fidelity.

When an IFA selling Fidelity products wants to create a client report,

he goes to Fidelity's web site and enters the client and product data. Calculations of cost, commission and projected performance are run while **Miramo** transparently selects the appropriate sections from Fidelity's document database. Its FrameMaker engine assembles the calculations and product information into an individualised compound document in PDF, which is returned to the IFA's screen – within seconds of the data being submitted.

The advantages for Fidelity of this system are obvious: it maintains the firm's professional image through the well-presented documentation which IFAs send out to their clients; and it no longer has to send out stocks of leaflets to IFAs. The documentation is flexible because it is held electronically, so new base rates and fund performance statistics can be incorporated into the calculations instantly.

At Fidelity, **Miramo** runs on a Sun Unix server and draws on databases held on other Sun machines, but it will also run on Windows NT and supports viewing on Windows, Macintosh and Unix workstations in Acrobat, FrameViewer or HTML formats.

The FrameMaker-based **Miramo** engine is used in other financial services applications, most notably for producing complex invoices for the Society for Worldwide Interbank Fund Transfer (S.W.I.F.T.), a global electronic settling system which handles transactions worth about $2 trillion a day.

At S.W.I.F.T.'s headquarters in Brussels, **Miramo** takes input from a SAP/R3 database and can output some 60,000 pages on a peak day – proof, if ever it were needed, that financial services has as high a documentation requirement as any other industry. And proof that FrameMaker is up to the job. ■