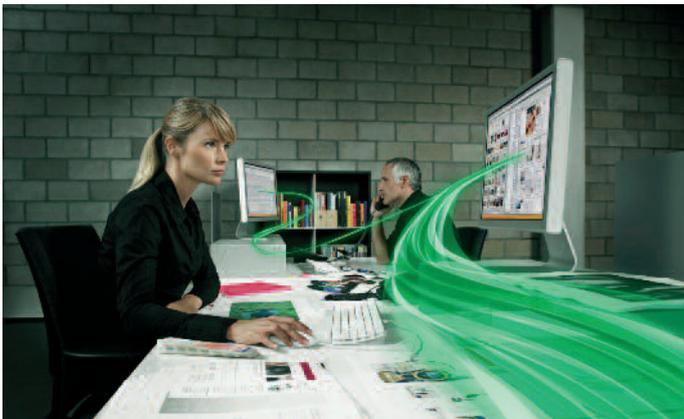




Production Centre for Digital Data

The topic on hybrid applications, runs for some time now as a red thread through the discussions in our industry. Apparently mixed production environments are not only necessary but also desirable. Question is if we really think both applications will coexist? Or do we believe that digital printing systems tend to threaten offset printing production volumes.

By Klaus-Peter Nicolay



The answer is relatively simple. The modern print production is comparable to a hybrid car that uses both a fuel engine and an electric motor. In the graphics industry this allows to create interesting (hybrid) printed matter, entirely new applications even, with the use of personalization and individualization that offset printing alone would never be able to serve.

In this way, products can be produced that would not be economical to make without the combination of the two methods.

A simple example could be a digitally printed cover that can be personalized, containing offset printed content - or vice versa. Whether the same paper is used may even be hard to see in case two different printing methods were used. The advantages of this hybrid way of printing - offset printing plus digital printing - can not be ignored. They will create new scope in various areas of both commercial printing, mailings and packaging and magazines.

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To run a pre-press department efficiently today it is essential to have a workflow system capable to process both for the 'classical' pre-press, as well as to control the digital printing. That this is not always easy, lies in the different production methods. For example, in offset printing usually sizes from 50 x 70 cm or 70 x 100 cm are required, while the majority of digital printing systems cover up the area A3+.

That means that the imposition used for different systems is completely incompatible and changes are needed in the last minute. In case offset and digital print production are used in parallel, it is necessary to integrate not only the workflow and prepress production, but also any business processes and preferably the interface to the Web portal.

These and some more customer needs, Agfa Graphics realized with its :Apogee Suite 7. With the new version of the workflow management system, the entire spectrum is covered, from design and site creation, data communication, proofing, and imposition up to the plate imaging and printing. The new version includes :Apogee Impose, an imposition module that is not based on static imposition data (templates), but works completely automatic based on the available job information. Version 7 offers users the additional option to take orders via the Internet with :Apogee Portal WebApproval. The new version also includes the Adobe PDF Print Engine 2.0, Adobe's most recent PDF RIP to natively process PDF files. Also can printers with digital solutions, organize the distribution of digital data to different printers.

This basically means that :Apogee 7 forms a production centre for processing, management and control of digital data next to its connection with the traditional prepress and CtP .

In case of digitally printed files, the incoming data is checked and processed by the color management before issuing it to various devices. This avoids downtime due to error or incompatibilities of supplied data and allows printers for a fully automated overview of the complete production environment.

A special feature is the :Apogee Digital Print link. Using JDF and JMF :Apogee can connect to most of the digital printing machines manufactured by third party. The advantage of the solution: the digital press can also be used as a proofing system. The combination of offset and digital printing pays primarily for short runs or during pre-and reprints in combination with offset printing for the long print runs.