Digital Dots

Spindrift

News Focus • Opinion • Reviews
Techno-Babble • Attitude

Volume 1, Number 2
22nd May, 2003

...Serving The Graphic Arts Industry Since April 2003

Curiosity: desire for knowledge

N. *curiosity, intellectual c., speculativeness, enquiring mind, thirst or itch for knowledge*

Adj. *inquisitive, curious, interested; speculating, searching, seeking, avid for knowledge, hungry for information – attentive; burning with curiosity, consumed with c., eaten up with c.; itching, hungry for; overcurious, nosy, snoopy, prying, spying, peeping, peeking; questioning, inquisitorial*

(From Roget's Thesaurus of English Words & Phrases)

Dear Reader,

Welcome back to Spindrift – the graphic arts newsletter that aims to get to the point under a banner of expertise, relevance and irreverence. Thank you for all the useful and positive feedback on Issue 1 – some of which you'll find under Boomerangs in this issue. We're hoping for continued fruitful dialogue with our readers – please let us know what you think!

Someone asked who we are writing for (except ourselves of course – we're having a great time and there's nothing we'd rather do). The short answer is: everyone in the printing and publishing industry. We want to spread knowledge about emerging technologies, about companies who are in the frontline of implementation, about suppliers who understand and support the needs of the industry and about our industry in a wider context. We promise to deliver stories, facts and comment unique to us and relevant to you. And we promise to remain true and independent (and poor, probably). Spindrift is a publication by the curious for the curious. Need we say more?

In this issue we tell another success story in the JDF implementation saga, that of J Jay's and their file delivery system. We hear how newspaper group Northcliffe struck up a rare and constructive partnership with systems supplier Tera, and Paul applies east Asian principles to colour management implementation.

A number of readers have predicted the success of Spindrift, but none so eloquently as Ruth Clark of SplashPR: "I think Spindrift will be the SARS of printing and publishing, it will spread like a virus through the industry." So be it, so long as nobody tries to quarantine us!

So – here's Issue 2, now it's over to you.

Cheers from the Spindrift crew,

Laurel, Cecilia, Paul and Todd

In This Issue

J Jay's joins JDF jive

We love JDF! Last month we told you how IKEA is implementing the stuff and in this issue we visit repro services provider J Jay's of Southend in the UK. J Jay's has set up one of the world's first JDF compliant digital file delivery systems. Plus we give the CIP4 committee some useful tips on how to promote the standard...

see page 8

Petter is absolutely right!

Paul Lindström confesses: "Petter Lundberg at Teknik i Media in Sweden once said the following: "Colour management is 1 percent colour and 99 percent management". At first I found this slightly exaggerated. Over time I have come to agree wholeheartedly with Petter." And here's how you deal with those tricky 99 percent – a four step plan for fool proof implementation of CMS in your organisation...

see page 11

Tera and Northcliffe tango

Dave Howes, MD of Tera UK: "As I talk to people about archiving systems, it has increasingly become clear that newspapers all over the world want to archive but they don't really know what they want to archive". Well newspaper group Northcliffe sort of knew and together with Tera developed an origination and content management system in the vanguard of modern editorial technology...

see page 15

Regular Columns

News Focus

Versamark for Newspapers?

An often overlooked contender for digital newsprint is Scitex Digital Printing. The company recently announced a couple of substantial orders including one to supply high-speed digital printing systems to the health branch of the French social security system, and two Dijit 6240s for Alito Colour Group.

What has yet to be announced is an order to possibly supply two Versamark presses to Associated Newspapers, publishers of the Daily Mail, Evening Standard and Mail on Sunday. It took a while but it seems Associated Newspapers may, possibly, finally be getting into digital newsprint. The publisher is allegedly working with Scitex Digital Printing to set up some sort of full colour digital newsprint operation. Based on Versamark ink jet printing presses, it will be located outside the UK but not too far away. Versamark is a colour press that prints at 300 x 600 dpi at 1000 feet per minute. Though initially not great, the quality has improved substantially over recent months and this machine could have the best mix yet of speed, format flexibility and quality we have seen for digital newsprint applications.

Scitex have been testing the newspaper market for a while, most notably with the Süddeutsche Zeitung. If it works out, Associated will be their first UK newspaper customer.

Spindrift

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Global Graphics Gets Local with Enfocus

Global Graphics, the PostScript and PDF RIP technologists have signed an OEM agreement with EnFocus, PDF preflight and workflow processing developers. The agreement will allow Global Graphics to incorporate EnFocus's Pitstop preflighting and Certified PDF technology into Jaws PDF Courier for encrypted Internet based file submission. The objective is to provide a foundation for secure file delivery for Global Graphics customers, largely technology and service providers rather than printers and publishers. Global Graphics supplies technology for a range of OEM clients including Screen, Esko-Graphics, Hewlett-Packard and Creo. This arrangement will allow such clients to use Global Graphics technology for file delivery and procurement. What a wonderful world it is.

DICOweb rolls out

A couple of weeks ago we visited Stämpfli printers in Bern, Switzerland to have a look at the first heatset application of MAN Roland's by now rather famous DIgital Change Over web offset press. We were not alone – a large section of Europe's trade press was represented and as so often happens in these instances the equipment decided to call it a day and had operators perspiring to get the print demonstration back on track. "Our dear press, she has jittery nerves", said a MAN Roland representative with a smile. Well this hiccough matters not a jot, we saw some excellent print samples. But more importantly we met a print CEO, Peter Stämpfli, with a clear vision about what this press will do for him and his customers. With 60 monthly magazines and various standard format catalogues and directories to print, Stämpfli believes he has found the optimum press in the DICOweb: "To take advantage of the DICOweb you have to think marketing", said Stämpfli. "It is not just another printing unit – it enables you to offer customers new possibilities, new product segmentation etc. It is interesting that customers are much quicker than competitors to see the press' possibilities."

The more standardised the product portfolio, the more profitable the DICOweb process (simply put a web offset press with erasable print cylinders). "It's a job eating monster, not a paper eating monster," said the enthusiastic inventor, Dr Joseph Schneidler. "The important point is the change-over, not the actual printing, this is where the profitability lies. The change-over time for a DICOweb is 12 to 16 minutes. For a Heidelberg Speedmaster DI it is said to be 8 minutes, but that, of course, is for simplex printing and it does not include plate handling, folding or cutting."

MAN Roland foresees more heatset than coldset applications of the DICOweb – i e presses to run jobs that are today printed in sheetfed offset. Schneidler

emphasised that any future applications will be decided by customers.

According to Schneidler the US is a huge potential market for the DICOweb. MAN Roland has 20 hot prospects there, 4 to 5 "very hot". We also heard that there are talks with newspapers, in Europe and in the US, although these will probably not lead to installations in the next few years. The target is 20 press sales within the next three years. The first DICOweb installation was completed at German printer Nussbaum Medien in 2001 – a coldset application. A second heatset press is going to Mohn Media later this year.

Screen adopts JDF in Truenet

Screen Europe has launched Truenet, a JDF based business solution for automated print management. The concept's core is the JDF Production Control System. This communicates with all other modules (devices and applications) in Truenet, as well as with connected MIS systems, e-commerce systems etc. Truenet can be seamlessly integrated with Trueflow, Screen's PDF-based RIP system. Truenet will add automated and streamlined print ordering to Trueflow systems, as well as Internet based job estimating, ordering, submission, proofing and production/delivery tracking.

Screen was one of the first vendors to use a web browser as the user interface for their RIP system, and both the Taiga system and Trueflow are rock solid RIP systems. But when it comes to JDF Screen have been very quiet. With Truenet this silence is finally broken.

JDF helps Synapse connect

Creo announces that they are adding JDF functionality to Synapse Prepare, a PDF creation and preflighting tool. The module Creo Page Assigner allows a designer, publisher or printer to create page sets that describe in what order the pages need to go. The information is formatted in JDF and can then be used in the impositioning software in the prepress department. Creo Page Assigner is a free download for licensed users of Synapse Prepare at https://ecentral.creo.com/.

Synapse Prepare is a software that uses built-in preflight functions to help designers create correct PDF files. There are three models of Synapse Prepare, the basic version, a Pro version and the Synapse Creative Suite. The Pro version allows the user to create preflighting directives, and the Creative Suite includes Enfocus Pitstop Pro on top of Prepare Pro, Pagelet, PDF Seps2Comp as well as other file preparation tools.

Creo expressed their commitment to JDF early on, and has gained a lot of experience of Internet based print procurement through their involvement in Print Café. But evidence of "real" JDF enabled products from Creo has been sparse. The Page Assigner is probably the first of many JDF related solutions to come from Creo, now also including Scenicsoft in the portfolio.

Océ Can You See?

More on the digital print front from a company that takes a rather different view of investment for market growth. So very Dutch Océ has announced that the Guardian & Observer Newspapers is to start printing remote editions in Sydney, Australia. Security Mail Pty. Ltd. has installed an Océ Newspress 8000 and will print several hundreds of monochrome copies of the newspaper for expats in the Sydney area including subscribers and casual copy purchasers. Security Mail will print a special Australian version of the paper and the project goes live on the 23rd of June.

The Guardian has clearly got a plan and this development is a key part of its international strategy. The combination of remote delivery and a dedicated regional edition needs only the necessary ad infrastructure to turn this project into a potentially competitive commercial enterprise.

Since ads are the first step towards commercial reality it is fortunate that the Guardian has solid experience with Quickcut for ad delivery. Quickcut has an unassailable presence in the antipodean market and is well able to support the development of location linked ads for digital newsprint. Add colour and content management and the Guardian could have a seriously compelling model.

Quickcut Oh So OSXy

File delivery maestro Quickcut has updated its technology to run under OSX. More interestingly the company has introduced a workflow component linking technology. Q-Automate works with QuickPrint to provide a means of defining and linking rules based PDF processing. Quickcut's technology works by comparing an ad in PDF against a publisher's production file specifications. It operates across the Internet via browser and until recently Internet Explorer has been Quickcut's browser of choice. The company is also a great fan of Apple's Safari browser the Beta 2 version of which is due out soon and which offers file security at least equivalent to that of IE.

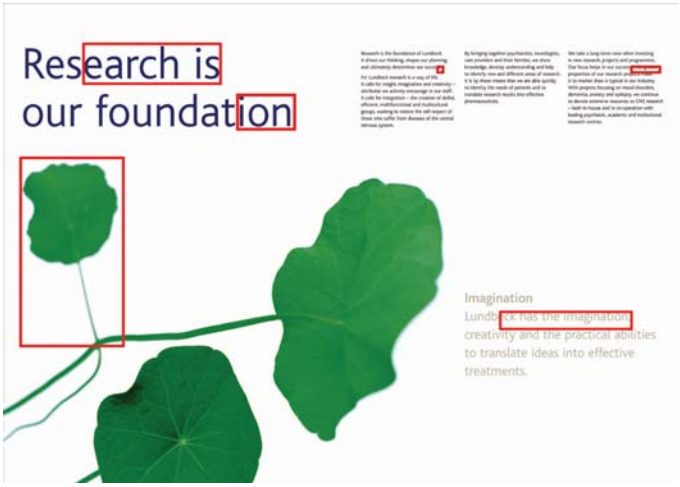
In addition Quickcut has added a look up table option so that users can reference the database independent of a page layout application, which saves time and hassle. The company is also developing a template service for those ad customers who can't be doing with the likes of XPress, InDesign et al. And yes there are plenty of those. Publishers will be able to use this web enabled technology to provide branded services to their advertisers, the technically savvy production minded and the likes of the rest of us. Taking the production onus out of display ads

could encourage all sorts of new ad models. All this and so much more.

Quickcut is also working on a bunch of other stuff such as populating a global version of EMAP's BRAD a database of over 13,000 UK advertising media, rates and associated data, PDF+ for additional checks for ad data compliance, greater application independence and the means of attaching more information to a file. There is more support for PDF preflight checks, including the nine versions codified by the Ghent workgroup and ICC profiles, and a Photoshop plugin to create a means of auditing colour management processes. Busy, busy, busy!

Improved WebProof

Danish software vendor IBW has introduced WebProof 3.2. New features include improved overview of where in a PDF file changes have occurred, extended support for WebDAV (Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning, see Acrobites) in the software, improved support for remote proofing – on screen or by decentralised printing.



New features in WebProof 3.2 include an improved overview of where in the PDF file changes have occurred.

WebProof is a database driven solution for teamwork proofing, using PDF in the process. But instead of using "yellow stickies" inside the PDF file notification is made as comments, readable via a web browser. All pages as well as all notifications are viewable by all team members. Job status and progress can be viewed and changed depending on access rights given by the administrator.

Xerox Premier Partners Top of Their League

At a recent meeting of Xerox' Premier Partners the company made a few forward looking statements regarding its performance. The company expects a return to profitability this year and Q1 could see earnings of 6–9 cent per share. Restructuring is still continuing with office, services and the graphic arts to be equal contributors in the business. Xerox expects 3% growth in mono printing and 9% in colour with digital colour growing at a rate of 32%.

The company estimates that for every Euro spent on print, six are spent on content and fulfillment and that content creation, management and production accounts for 10% of the average company's revenue. With this plus other data Xerox valued the worldwide print market in 2002 at $7.2 billion and expects it to be worth $27.3 billion by 2004 with substantial growth in the use of digital colour print.

Such numbers sound a little off the map but even if they are wrong by 50% the growth potential is still immense. For those of a more sceptical turn of mind we should remember that it actually doesn't matter if the market is worth only 25% of this figure. Xerox' faith and that of its extended family will encourage massive investment into market and technology developments. Add to such efforts those of other players in the market and the numbers may indeed start to become reality.

Master of Ceremonies Cees J. Hamelink of the University of Amsterdam reminded Premier Partner conference participants that according to the White Queen of Alice in Wonderland fame "if you don't remember the future, you'll always be taken by surprise". The White Queen probably wasn't talking about printing, but she has a point in that remembering what we haven't yet experienced is what imagination is all about.

Announced at Drupa 2000, the Xerox' Premier Partners programme now has 258 members in Europe and 85 in the USA. The programme is based on principals of business and knowledge sharing, and according to Valentin Govaerts (senior vice president, production and graphic arts Xerox Europe) Xerox has made "a policy decision to eliminate every issue you (i e the Premier Partners) have with XBS (Xerox Business Solutions)". We think he was talking about Xerox customers getting into sales conflicts with Xerox sales people, so this statement will be welcome news in many sectors. More importantly it is indicative of Xerox' commitment to the digital print business.

Acrobites

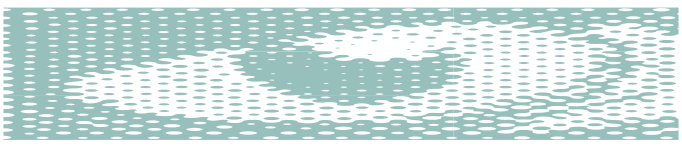
(Something to get your teeth into)

P4 Desktop
This Intel processor has recently been updated to include hyperthreading. Generally confined to server processors, hyperthreading is what makes a single processor behave as if it is two and it seriously enhances performance. The new P4 is the first CPU to break the 3GHz barrier yet it's designed for desktop computers. Its performance/power/speed etc graze the stratosphere, but one has to wonder, is all this really what people want or need at the desktop? Shouldn't servers have all this juggernaut might rather than desktop devices? This technology will be more interesting if Intel decides to develop it for the Xeon platform, the next version of which is currently under development. Code named Nocona it is due for release by the end of the year.

AdsML
If you put the words 'standard' and 'consortium' together what do you get? Ahem. Bear this in mind as you learn about AdsML. AdsML is an XML based ad delivery system under development at Associated Mediabase's direction, on behalf of a bunch of newspaper associations. Associated has commissioned consultants RivCom to design a data standard that supports all forms of digital ad delivery regardless of media type.

Dare we say it but is AdsML really necessary? Transaction support on the web is already established, JDF is there to manage task and file processing, and server based PDF processing and preflighting will soon be the de facto standard for all types of file delivery. Technology isn't the issue – lean implementation is rather more important than coming up with additional processing layers.

WebDAV
Yes, yes of course you know what this is, but do you really know? Do you really know that it stands for Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning and that it's a set of extensions to HTTP? And that without it you can't collaboratively manage and edit files on remote web servers? WebDAV is basically a network protocol capable of generating network based activities among collaborative authoring technologies. In other words so long as networked servers use the WebDAV protocol, collaborative stuff can happen without having to invest in additional collaboration enabled technologies. WebDAV is shaping the Web's infrastructure, to support true hierarchical processing without having to reinvent everything we already use.



Letter From... Valencia

Hola Spindrift Chickickitos!

Buenos dias con mi felicitas. Me llamo Consuela que me job es in production in Granada. Al Hambra Palace está si bonita.

How are you today? I am bery well tostada but muchos worried con PDF processing in OSX. Apple dice to me OSX esta muy bien but me processingidad PDF es loco. Me CMYK filos arriba RGB! Ay ay ay esto uno grande color messiones.

Y los filos es muy grandes en OSX but muy grandes no es muy bueno especialividad when el Mac OSX incluye interoperatividad que no interoperates at all! Los imagios es RGB y me Black esto muy messed up especialividad when systems permite a usarios Macs conectarse a distancia. Then yo hab to hab una siesta, so loco esta es.

Porque es Apple so keenidad on RGB? Esto Apple no comprendez nos industrios, nos need to printerios con CMYK inkidads? Apple no permite me to do me travajo. Bueno una otra siesta!

Spindrift esto muy bueno, but manana con we hab esto in Espanishidad?

Manyana me casa esta apeurta for tapas y Sangria. Hopestidos los Spindrift crew come to me officidad sobre plott la coming revolucionaria for CMYK y Mac!

Con muchos gratias!

Hasta la vista con dos cervezas por favor!

Consuela De La Imprimitito

Driftwood

(Useful stuff washin' in on our shores)

Web Services

This fairly mundane designation may not sound like the Next Big Thing on the Internet, but it may well prove to be. In the more general world of computing everyone talks about it and its implementation. Basically it's about allowing companies to link their appliances with those of their partners, customers and suppliers via the Internet, in much the same way that web pages are

linked together. The World Wide Web Consortium's definition is:

"A web service is a software system whose public interfaces and bindings are defined and described using XML. Its definition can be discovered by other software systems. These systems may then interact with the Web service in a manner prescribed by its definition, using XML based messages conveyed by Internet protocols."

What that means in less convoluted terms is that XML is the Babel fish which allows heterogeneous systems to talk to each other across platforms and servers. There are a number of other standards involved in the structure of Web services as well, but from a business point of view it basically comes down to the standardisation of functions such as messaging, service descriptions and directories of business capabilities.

Web services is still a technology in the making, but it seems certain that it will have a big impact, enabling companies to do more business electronically and at a reasonable cost.

For more information as well as examples of existing uses of Web services, visit **www.webservices.org**

Spindocs

(Where the spinner gets spun!)

Esko-Graphics recently sent along two beautifully printed pictures along with some words of wisdom to enlighten us. In the first of these head shots baby Boris is all beamy smiles, and in the second picture said Boris is transformed into Squalling Monster Boy. And this is what Esko-Graphics have by way of explanation:

"Boris I at 6:04:11 pm, Boris II at 6:04:14 pm

Sometimes, only three seconds separate intense joy from sudden sadness. These few seconds may be the artist's only chance to capture extreme shifts of emotion.

Changes and shifts are just as intense in the graphics world. And like any alternative artist, we too adapt swiftly and creatively to signs coming from the market.

Esko-Graphics embraces the challenge. By listening, and approaching everything with optimism and a skilful sense of innovation [their grammar and spelling, not ours]. That's why you can count on us every time. And expect more every time.

Boris I and Boris II are the first of a series of artworks where Esko-Graphics, together with the artist, gives a new interpretation to reveal how affecting art can be in a printed form.
Esko-Graphics, Expect More!"

Where to begin ... highjacking the concept of art in the name of commerce is hardly original, and we have to agree with the three seconds bit. In our case it took a couple of seconds to go from intense inquisitiveness to disbelief and hysterical giggles, so yes art is a powerful force. But someone seems to be missing the point! And quite what new interpretations Esko-Graphics are on about escapes us. It has to be said that the grammar and all out pretentiousness of this missive are pretty artistic besides the whole thing being extremely funny. Maybe that was the idea? If so, hey, bring on Boris III and IV!

Say What?

Iffy Writing Award Presented in the Ether for Obfuscation, Confusion, Misinformation or All Out Pretentiousness. Apart from Spindrift contributors, authors names withheld, because we aren't that cruel!

Taken from a trade magazine article aimed at explaining, well what....?

"One book producer has adopted 'six sigma'. This concept, drawing its name from the statistical measure of standard deviation, seeks to minimise problems by quality assurance management processes and measures in ppm so that errors will be reliably less than problematical with a very high degree of certainty. (+- 3 standard deviations or 'six sigma', the Greek symbol used for this measure). The management process has initiated many process improvements that have led to more and better trained staff, greater flexibility and better product."

Got that? According to the main website for this stuff (www.isixsigma.com)

"Six Sigma is a rigorous and disciplined methodology that uses data and statistical analysis to measure and improve a company's operational performance by identifying and eliminating 'defects' in manufacturing and service-related processes. Commonly defined as 3.4 defects per million opportunities, Six Sigma can be defined and understood at three distinct levels: metric, methodology and philosophy."

(Invented by a Motorola engineer, Six Sigma is now a Motorola trademark. Not a lot of people know that.)

Say That.

Quotable quotes this month.

"Conventional DI press technology is like robotising the horse in front of the wagon and calling it a car."

Dr Joseph Schneidler, inventor extraordinaire at MAN Roland, explaining the advantages of the DICOweb technology.

"If we have more than a day to produce a print job it's genuinely orgasmic, but normally it's just a few hours."

Managing director Roy Jackson at Cavalier Reproductions, interviewed in PrintWeek. We want a DICOpress 500 too!!

Boomerangs

(Your feedback fed back)

Dear Spindrift team,

I have read your magazine with interest and find it good.

I have some comments, which I hope that you will regard as constructive. I am basically more a "press man" than a "prepress man", and I think that the trade press (not your present newsletter) and the industry are very focused on what happens in prepress departments. What happens in the press room gets less consideration, except to talk about which kind of press is chosen and how it runs. But the process/gap/space between prepress and press gets very little attention. "Why do we always have to adjust the press"?

As you can imagine (I sell temperature controls, dampening and coating systems for presses) I am highly interested in consistent (and high) printing quality – waterless printing and printing without IPA (Isopropyl Alcohol). This is highly important in day-to-day print production, but it gets very little attention – I should guess because there is an extremely high level of ignorance about the topic in the industry (the readers).

Your article about proofing is highly interesting. But I am of the old school where the only real proofing method is a machine proof. I know that this is a very old-fashioned way of thinking, but how can anybody guarantee that what they show and get approved as an electronic proof or even a proof from a proofing machine will match what the press will actually print? This can only be done if the printers are 100% sure of what will come out of the press, and they are not! I can tell you (I sold Komori and Mitsubishi presses for 15 years) that I have been to many, many printers all over the world, and on the press room floors almost everyone complains about the difficulties of matching the proof in real production.

This leads to your article about FM screens. In my opinion it is excellent, and it raises several interesting points related to non-IPA and waterless printing – something about a consistent dot, dot increase and dot on dot, etc. Again, you write that one of the difficulties with FM screens, is that it is harder to get the press to react to press adjustments. My question is: "If prepress and proofs are made so perfectly, and if the press runs so perfectly, why does the press have to be adjusted at all"? My own answer to this is of course – back to the above – that the offset process is highly complex, and the printers do not have a proper process control for the presses, so they cannot match the proofs without adjustments. Or to put it in another way: If operators had full control over the prepress and printing processes, and the equipment "played" perfectly together, there would be no need to adjust. As the prepress process – as far as I understand – is very much under control, the only reason for deviations must originate with the printing process. Don't they?

I think that there are a lot of "open" topics between prepress and press, and I really hope you will try to explore this "world" more in your newsletter.

Regards and good luck
Henrik Christiansen,
President Cool Graphics

Next Issue – Digital Camera Test

Digital Dots has conducted an extensive test of high end digital camera backs. Included in the test are six cameras including Leaf's Valeo 11, Kodak's DCS Proback 645H, Phase One's H10, H20 and H101 and the Sinarback 54 H. A summary of the test results will be included in the next issue of Spindrift and a dedicated in depth digital camera test review of the technologies and testing procedure is in production. It will be available to subscribers this summer.

Sinar's only challenger for multi-shot mode is Imacon. The new Ixpress is due for testing once Imacon are ready with their multi-shot function. We also plan to test the high end SLRs, starting with the Sigma SD9, with the Foveon X3-sensor in the coming weeks.

These tests were conducted by professional photographers at Studio CA in Stockholm. The objective was accurate capture of four test images: a portrait image, a still life and two complex images (one BW, one colour) designed to measure a variety of characteristics including the resolution capacity of the camera system.

We will present the results of these tests in our next issue along with low res sample images. A set of CDs with the complete test results plus all associated high resolution images is available. Readers considering investment into this technology are recommended to order this CD set, cheap insurance and a snip at €150. See the Digital Dots website soon for ordering information.

J Jay's Traffic Control with JDF

Getting JDF airborne seems to be easier said than done. Despite the underlying logic of digital process control and management, widespread industry support and acknowledged value, implementations progress is negligible. JDF is a technical standard, but it's not yet the applications standard it ought to be, regardless of big name evangelising from the likes of Time Inc. and St. Ives. Fortunately some less high profile companies are taking steps towards JDF implementation and translating the lofty language of JDF into a working vernacular.

JDF isn't about lowest common denominator processing but rather supporting a universal processing environment. J Jay's and its clients are in the vanguard of companies that are actually putting JDF into practise.

Who Is J Jay's?

Repro services provider J Jay's of Southend in the UK has set up one of the world's first JDF compliant digital file delivery systems. Originally a trade typesetter, over the last 25 years J Jay's has increasingly specialised in magazine origination. Having started with PostScript and Macs in the eighties, and databased file management in the nineties, J Jay's is a classic early adopter. Digital workflows are second nature to this company, so a move to JDF was inevitable.

Producing some 55 weekly and monthly titles the company employs 85 people and operates 6/24. Most of J Jay's work is display advertising and magazine page production, plus a substantial volume of classified advertising composition. The company's largest client is Reed Business Information (RBI), one of the UK's largest trade publishers and a high profile supporter of JDF. J Jay's also provides services for EMAP and other magazine publishers.

Alan Halls, J Jays co-founder and JDF project champion.

What J Jay's Did

J Jay's have combined Vio's digital delivery tools and Markzware's preflighting software to create a foundation for integrated file delivery, preflighting and production processing. J Jay's has developed an impressive application based on these technologies in order to provide RBI with a tighter workflow and shorter deadlines for the RBI ad sales teams. The JDF implementation in this system is still pretty rudimentary, but nonetheless JDF is intrinsic to RBI and J Jay's file handling process. The initial implementation of J Jay's system has seen a marked improvement in the workflow. Instead of closing ad pages several days before final page RIPping, RBI can send in ads within hours. The result is not only efficient delivery of ads to the page, but also a workflow with the means to do rather more. JDF gives J Jay's a basis from which to develop sophisticated reporting for clients such as RBI, plus links to MIS and remote ad booking systems, and the means of generating automatic production and training reports.

Ad delivery and production is a key part of J Jay's service for RBI. The company works with huge numbers of ad files with XPress for in-house pagination management. Class ad pagination software from Managing Editor handles automated makeup of large class ad sections. J Jay's uses naming conventions to manage incoming ads and their journeys to the pages, automated or otherwise. This combined with the rigours of its file delivery discipline means that much of J Jay's production is already automated, so JDF really ought to bring something more. It is expected to provide the means to share iterative data and manage both data and processing devices such as RIPs and archive systems within a common framework. For J Jay's publishing clients JDF could provide links to other systems such as ad booking or editorial. It all depends on

the implementation and on how closely process management should operate across departments. This is about publishing strategy rather than production efficiencies, which is why JDF is so very important for companies like RBI.

The Workflow

J Jay's hosts a branded website for RBI with users accessing the site via RBI defined logon. The logon controls title and ad type access and determines the applications users require to transmit compliant ads into the workflow. The website has comprehensive instructions for ad delivery along with the relevant application downloads. J Jay's has a special license agreement with Markzware to allow the company to provide Markznet clients free of charge, along with the Vio Send to Me application.

Ad PDFs are processed via an RBI drag and drop interface overlaying Markzware's Check n Send. The preflight checks follow J Jay's production rules, which vary with each title so this too is linked to logon. Once an ad gets through preflighting and is accepted into the workflow, the system generates a JDF job ticket for the customer to complete. J Jay's is looking at ways of linking ad delivery and ad booking technologies. This would allow ad sales, creators and submitters to work with common job data managed through JDF and the Job Messaging Format (JMF provides a common messaging environment within JDF to allow alien systems a means of communicating). The idea is to further develop J Jay's digital closed loop environment to incorporate other systems where data sharing might be useful. JDF is also a possible means of providing more sophisticated reporting with error reports used to inform workflow improvements.

The Result?

Since setting up its Check n Send system J Jay's has seen a substantial rise in the number of ad files delivered to its site. There are various ways of accounting for this including the fact that easier file delivery is making a positive contribution to ad volumes. Simply knowing more about the ad delivery process encourages greater confidence, and this has had an overall ameliorative effect. Increased ad volume has as much to do with improving economic conditions as it does with process efficiency, however there is no question that digital ad delivery and preflight management push back ad delivery deadlines, creating a longer ad sales window. This isn't a benefit of JDF but JDF can help to quantify activities in the workflow and substantiate obvious process changes – it is the means of capturing data interactions and thus can be used to inform process changes. Developed primarily for RBI, J Jay's hopes to extend its JDF compliant service to other clients.

Meantime for the rest of its customers J Jay's has a PDF based workflow working with RIPped and screened data files. PDF provides point to point file management and a wrapper for TIFF files with delivery via the Jumpgate network transmission protocol. This model allows J Jay's and their clients to support pretty much any data format or remote proofing requirement. Clients can use Wamnet and Vio for file delivery with files generally going out to printers through the Wamnet pipe and ads coming in from publishers through Vio. J Jay's have both to provide system resilience and flexibility.

JDF – The Definitive List

In the course of writing this article we had to ask why it is that JDF adoption isn't moving faster? The answer isn't short or simple, but maybe the primary JDF website could help matters along. According to www.cip4.org JDF has several particularly 'prominent features'. These are its:

"1. Ability to carry a print job from genesis through completion. This includes a detailed description of the creative, prepress, press, postpress and delivery processes.

2. Ability to bridge the communication gap between production and Management Information Services. This ability enables instantaneous job and device tracking as well as detailed pre- and post-calculation of jobs in the graphic arts.

3. Ability to bridge the gap between the customer's view of product and the manufacturing process by defining a process independent product view as well as a process dependent production view of a print job.

4. Ability to define and track any user defined workflow without constraints on the supported workflow models. This includes serial, parallel, overlapping and iterative processing in arbitrary combinations and over distributed locations.

5. Ability to do so (1, 2, 3 & 4) under nearly any precondition."

The benefits of JDF as a means of integrating and automating workflows are widely touted. The format is basically a lexicon of terms, an agreed set of digital descriptors that unite different components in a distributed system, so that they can function together. This isn't about lowest common denominator processing but rather supporting a universal processing environment. J Jay's and its clients are in the vanguard of companies that are actually putting JDF into practise.

– Laurel Brunner

Ho hum. Actually these statements could be pretty insipid to people doing business day to day and well versed in providing good service to customers. Any decent printer or repro house can for example 'carry a print job through from genesis through to completion', and 'bridge the communication gap'. Of course successful printers and publishers can define and track a workflow to suit production imperatives, and yes 'serial, parallel, iterative and overlapping processing in arbitrary combinations and over distributed locations' is what many publishers do every day – just ask any newspaper.

JDF is so much more important! JDF has the capacity to do something beyond what is already possible. Recycled blah about bridging gaps and workflow definition so misses the point! JDF adds way more! It makes tangible what's often intangible in traditional workflows, it makes process knowledge portable and accessible to alien systems and devices.

So at the risk of hurting the CIP4 committee's feelings, we suggest a different set of JDF's most prominent features. They are its:

1. Ability to make known and quantifiable events that enhance and leverage good business practise (and vice versa!).

2. Ability to unify proprietary technologies and devices within a common processing space (think virtual!).

3. Ability to create a new information commodity, a raw material for improved business management.

4. Ability to identify and/or highlight potential new service and business opportunities for media companies.

5. Naturally all of the above can happen in any environment – that's the point of JDF!

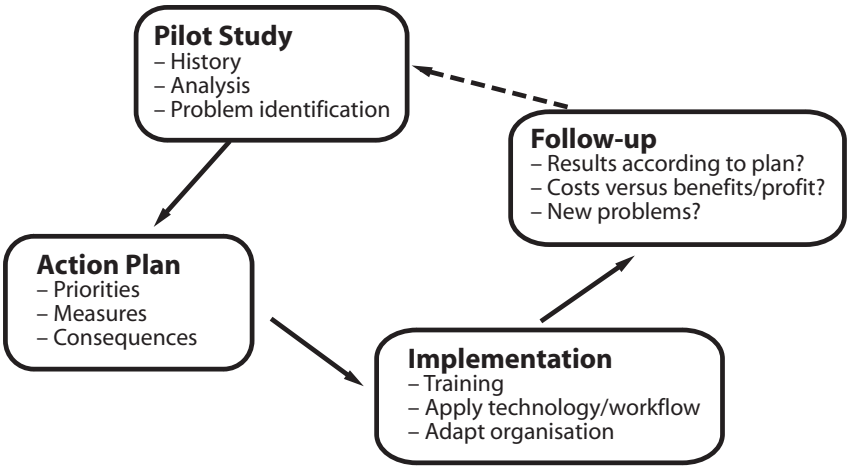
Colour Management is 99% Management

Colour management is in many respects highly complex and technical. To be truly successful, it has to be a management initiative but for many people the pragmatic complexities are as daunting as the technology. We have some suggestions for how to start implementing a colour management strategy.

Much has been said and written about colour management systems over the last decade, some of it helpful, some of it not, and some of what's been written has just added to the general confusion. Anyone that works hands-on with colour images can testify that colour management really is tricky. It simply isn't easy to fully understand and manage the human eye's perceptual response to colours.

So instead of boring you with yet another theoretical article on colours and rendering intents, let's address a more basic aspect of colour management – the responsibility on the management side. A colleague of mine, Petter Lundberg at Teknik i Media in Sweden once said the following when lecturing at Malmö University: "Colour management is 1 percent colour and 99 percent management". At first I found this thoughtful but slightly exaggerated. Over time I have come to agree wholeheartedly with Petter.

One way of approaching colour management is to treat it as a process of continuous improvement. We can study a methodology often applied to production projects, both inside and outside our own industry. The Kaizen methodology originated in Japan and there are many interpretations of how to implement it. Kaizen is about process orientated management and is based on the belief that every aspect of a process in life and in work deserves to be constantly improved. In process management Kaizen is basically a cycle of four major steps taken in order to achieve a fully successful implementation of any new technology or change in a workflow.



A normal procedure for successful implementation of new technology or workflow methods. (From Segerstedt "Logistics", Liber Sweden 1999)

The four steps in the process are Pilot Study, Action Plan, Implementation and Follow-up. This is how the different steps might relate to a colour management project.

Don't Skip The Pilot Study

It's well worth the effort to conduct a Pilot Study when starting a project to implement modern colour management based on ICC methods. Every printer and prepress company of course has some kind of colour management in place, otherwise they would have been out of business long ago. The problem is that like many management processes, a company's colour management is often poorly documented. Depending on whom you ask in the organisation, answers to colour related questions can vary quite substantially. If your company is ISO certified, documenting correct machine and process operation should be fairly well established. However it's still essential that all personnel involved know where to find and use this documentation and that they fully support the described procedures.

Ask yourself questions such as, why do we work the way we do today? What's the history behind existing workflows? Who has been responsible for the present routines? Why have they evolved in this way? Answers such as: "We've always done it this way" aren't good enough here, so take the opportunity to look at procedures and methods with fresh eyes. Then move on to analyse the present situation: list existing problems and their consequences. Be honest in this analysis – trying to hide or marginalise problems won't be of any use to you.

It can be useful to split problem areas into two groups: hard data and soft data. Hard data covers such things as an organisation's existing structure and capital equipment (budget, write down schedules and so on). Soft data is less tangible and includes such things as the different perspectives of individuals. This is a normal phenomenon in any organisation, and has to be addressed as part of the Pilot Study. Again, don't try and hide those differences, but instead clarify them and bring them to the surface.

Now complete the analysis by listing and grouping the problems, aims and goals. Don't start listing suggestions of possible solutions yet – that's part of the next stage in the process analysis. The listing and grouping analysis is best performed with a small group made up of people from all departments involved in quality control and production. This generally means that there will be representatives from management, marketing, prepress, press and possibly postpress departments. It's definitely not a good idea to only use people from the prepress department, because this severely limits the group perspective.

Make a Clever Action Plan

Having defined and described a problem, the solution is then often close at hand. When preparing an Action Plan you judge, analyse and evaluate possible solutions. You will probably have to prioritise with respect to time and costs, and you should list and describe the likely consequences following certain choices. You will very likely need to invest in new hardware and software, and inevitably there will be changes in the workflow.

It's not a bad idea to bring in a consultant at this stage or even earlier. What's bad though is to let this consultant act as the project

Petter Lundberg is business development manager at Teknik i Media, and has been instrumental in developing a common ICC profile for the entire Swedish newspaper industry in cooperation with the national newspaper organisation Tidningsutgivarna.

administrator, because this responsibility ought to rest on the shoulders of someone within your organisation. It's extremely important that the know-how coming out of a project of this kind should grow inside the company, gathered by the personnel involved. The benefits of using an external consultant are obvious though – he or she is an objective outsider who can see flaws and "blind spots" in the action plan, and bring into the process previous experience of similar projects.

Even though some testing of hardware and software will probably take place at this stage, it's worth noting that the actual work on calibration of monitors, scanners and output devices actually hasn't started yet. This is part of the next step.

Plan The Implementation Carefully

Once you know what to do and how you want to do it you must start the training and communications process. In order to implement modern colour management successfully, it's essential that all personnel involved have a good understanding of the tools at hand and of the workflow. In today's decentralised workflows the customer also has to be informed or educated in some way.

Ask yourself questions such as, Why do we work the way we do today? Answers such as: "We've always done it this way" aren't good enough – take the opportunity to look at procedures and methods with fresh eyes.

It's probably a good idea to produce a leaflet or small brochure describing the purpose and possible benefits of a colour managed workflow, alongside your company's planned implementation. This can be used as marketing material for your existing customers and prospective clients, and also provides an easily understood introduction for your employees. Your web site is a good place for this material as well. You can also place on the web site the ICC profiles you use so customers can download them. Documents with detailed explanations on how to install and use your ICC profiles, how to calibrate a monitor and so on, also fit in well here. If you are really ambitious you might also invite your customers to short seminars on colour management, PDF workflows, preflighting and other useful topics. This has proved to be a very good way of building stronger links to your company for both new and old customers, and of helping to reinforce your brand name and reputation.

When implementing a modern colour management workflow, you naturally check out and, where appropriate, use existing international standards. This is true for both the prepress part of the process, and the print process. Colour management is much more than just building some ICC profiles here and there. For instance, looking at the printing process we need to take into account the paper used, that the water in the dampening system has the correct PH-value, conductivity, hardness and the correct percentage of alcohol, if used. Moreover the rubber blankets should not be brand new when printing the test form. Instead they should be slightly used but absolutely not worn out. Correct underpacking of the blanket, humidity and temperature control in the pressroom are other factors to consider. All this and more must be taken into account in order to guarantee that the printing is performed to a high standard with optimum contrast and density settings. If any variable is out of control, or if the dot gain is unbalanced, there is no point in even trying to create a set of ICC profiles for that print process. Again, it may be a good idea to involve a skilled consultant to help sort out these matters. Make sure that the in-house personnel involved really understand the problems and solutions, so they can maintain the quality control themselves after the consultant has gone.

Implementing a new workflow or adjusting an old one alters the existing organisation to a smaller or greater extent. Very few people welcome change, and to really make this adjustment in the organisation happen it's key that the people involved understand why the change is necessary and support the process. This may sound obvious but unless we use enough time and resources to train the staff, they won't be able to fully implement and use the technology at hand.

Follow-Up

When introducing new technology or altering the workflow, it's of course very important to follow up and to see if the objectives for the change were achieved. Did we really solve the problems listed in the start-up analysis? Is the implementation fully completed according to the Action Plan? Were the costs involved justified? Have we run into new problems?

In fact the follow-up is about starting a new cycle of analysis and problem solving. But instead of performing quick fixes, we need to take a few steps back to try and get an overall view. Where should we focus our continued efforts in order to make the implementation projects really successful? Maybe the answers do not lie entirely in technological issues, but more in matters regarding continued training, information and education.

Quality control is absolutely a continuous process, which is why the Kaizen philosophy fits so well. However colour management is only part of a company's quality control process. To be successful in this work is not just a question of technology. Most of all colour management has to do with using good practises and continuously building up knowledge. Even more simply put – it's about using common sense.

– Paul Lindström

Tera and Northcliffe in Co-developing Mode

In the last few years the UK division of Tera Digital Publishing has gained some more than useful orders including the recently announced deals with Cumbrian Newspapers and the Derby Evening Telegraph. However much of Tera UK's success has come from working very closely with large groups such as Trinity Mirror and Northcliffe. Tera and Northcliffe particularly have a very special relationship, one that is proving fruitful for both parties.

Northcliffe's relationship with Tera began in 1996 with an initial request from Northcliffe for Tera to develop a year 2000 compliant PC based editorial system. At the time Northcliffe had approximately eleven different editorial systems running throughout the group, and there was no universal IT infrastructure or wide area network. All newspapers within the group operated largely autonomously, running editorial systems from a variety of different suppliers. At the time Northcliffe titles were produced with technology from Miles 33, Atex, Quark for QPS, ND Comtek and PCS, as well as a handful of home grown editorial systems. Most sites used Quark Xpress for page make-up.

To fill its year 2000 compliance brief Tera developed a basic word capture technology, one requiring low investment and giving Northcliffe the short term security it required. The first Tera installation of this technology was at two Aberdeen regional titles, the Aberdeen Press and Journal and the Aberdeen Evening Express. Crucially for Tera Aberdeen also agreed to trial the company's pagination engine in the hope of developing a unified system that could perhaps be offered to Northcliffe as well as other newspapers.

Fortunately for Tera this trial coincided with Quark's 4.0 upgrade for XPress. With several hundred users the cost of this upgrade was substantial but it was compounded with the need to upgrade many of Northcliffe's Macintoshes. Overall the investment requirement to move Northcliffe titles to XPress 4.0 was insupportable, so it made good sense for Northcliffe to try out Tera's pagination running on production PCs in Aberdeen. The two Aberdeen titles are dramatically different. The Press and Journal is a very traditional, text intensive broadsheet whereas the Evening Express is a visually energetic tabloid. These titles were of course a good test bed for Northcliffe, providing a means of seeing if Tera's GoodNews system would be able to produce an extreme range of newspaper designs.

Fortunately Tera passed the test. At about the same time the Leicester Mercury was in the throes of re-equipping its newsroom and was able to observe the Aberdeen tests. Based on the GoodNews system's performance, the Leicester Mercury chose to install the entire Tera system in one go and shortly thereafter the Hull Daily Mail also went with Tera. Today Tera's GoodNews system is installed at 18 of Northcliffe's 21 production sites.

Co-developing Archiving System

Growing confidence in Tera's technology and the company's abilities to implement and support it, encouraged Northcliffe to start working more closely with Tera. The group's requirement was for an extended relationship that would allow the two to co-operatively develop an

archiving system to replace aging Phraséa technology. According to Northcliffe's assistant group IT director David Butler this system was: "quite a cumbersome system, but we had made a decision to go with Phraséa originally because there wasn't much around at the time".

The development of an archiving system was something that Northcliffe drove, but this in turn pushed Tera's continued development of its editorial systems. This was very sensible because despite the common view that the two should be kept separate, archiving and editorial data management are natural cohabitors. They should ideally be developed from a common foundation, a single database. Dave Howes, Tera UK's Managing Director sums it up: "With Northcliffe we merged the shell to work on common data – the archive is just data in a different place".

Tera's Content Management System can of course archive any data regardless of whether it is paginated. This is the approach that Northcliffe is taking even though there is a very real risk of creating the digital equivalent of a bottomless landfill. Northcliffe and Tera recognised this, so the big question to answer was what, when and how to archive data. If everything should always be archived, should there not be some sort of selection process before data is sent to the archive? There was also a quality control issue to consider: quality is one of the reasons many newspapers prefer to archive from paginated pages. However in this context what happens to useful or interesting content that didn't make the page?

These questions and many more lead to lengthy discussions within Northcliffe as to how archiving should be managed. These discussions lead not only to a solution, but their conclusions are indicative of how the newspaper systems business has changed. In the past such discussions would have focused on the respective merits or this or that operating system, the suitability of the user interface, the flexibility of the search and retrieval features and so on. But such conversations really do belong to another time.

Today digital technology is proven in all aspects of newspaper production. It is limitless, capable of producing, storing and managing any digitally described object, and able to regurgitate it plus a host of related elements in a matter of nanoseconds. The point isn't the technology. The point is system design. The point is knowing how best to configure technology so that it meet business needs, supports users effectively, and provides tools that enhance peoples' performance and so the business' competitiveness. Dave Howes has found that: "As I talk to people about archiving systems, it has increasingly become clear that newspapers all over the world want to archive but they don't really know what they want to archive". Dave Butler agrees that newspapers must face: "the need to think about the implications of managing that data". Knowing what one wants to do is now the dominant question, because the technology is available to put into effect a system that does what is required.

The point isn't the technology. The point is system design. The point is knowing how best to configure technology so that it meet business needs, supports users effectively, and provides tools that enhance peoples' performance and so the business' competitiveness.

A System to Suit Journalists, Photographers and Editors

Northcliffe and Tera concluded that the archiving system should facilitate efficient process management, and suit how journalists, photographers and editors work. Therefore Northcliffe's content archiving process begins at the point of content creation, within the editorial system. A highly flexible approach is needed in order to make sure that content is filed where it will be accessible and relevant.

Northcliffe's editorial system requires journalists to specify each article's characteristics at the point of its creation.

Following comprehensive reviews of all content categorisation for the group, Northcliffe has developed a system of rules and classifications for all stories. The system uses the same set of imposed rules for all titles, but these can be adapted to meet the different needs of the various newspapers within the group. The Northcliffe rules were derived by a steering group which worked closely with all newspapers in order to develop them and according to Dave Butler "One of the things we found when Tera first started being implemented was the [effectiveness] of functionality decisions made by the steering committee for the group". Journalists categorise their stories using a three tiered hierarchy of categories, and there are some 800 categories with associated rules.

Tera has developed something that is neither an editorial or an archiving system. GN3 now called the Tera Content Management System is an origination and content management system and as such it is in the vanguard of modern editorial technology. The approach is compatible with larger trends in the newspaper business, where many titles are owned by a few massive groups and operate group wide IT strategies. Dave Butler concludes that: "We have standardised our approach to systems and, therefore, made obtaining data from a group perspective a lot simpler".

Centralised Web Production

One of the outcomes of the Tera/Northcliffe archiving project has been the development of centralised web production. Together they set up a proof of concept at the Hull Daily Mail at about the time when the group was redesigning its web sites. The goal was to extract costs, have closer integration with all platforms and provide greater automation for web content production. Since that proof of concept in 2001 every daily and weekly Northcliffe title, some 70 publications, feeds content to a single platform. Dave Butler describes the system: "copies of those stories are transmitted across the WAN with an embargoed date and time for the publication, and then automatically reformatted to web format and transmitted to our outsourced hosting facility at Associated Newspapers in Derry Street. The content system over there manages the content according to which portal it is going to, so you have Leicester Mercury stories going to thisisleicester.co.uk and so on."

Northcliffe Electronic Publishing in Derby oversees the process and the automatic population of stories to the relevant portals and these people are accessible to all editors within the group. They have access to the central content database so changes can be made. The Derby Team can also create their own stories too for the web sites. Because all stories are categorised, agency stories are automatically identified and excluded from the web routing process.

The web system combines rule implemented automation and exception management in order to determine what goes where. "There's about 8000 stories that come through every day for the group" according to David Butler and most of these are automatically placed. He continues: "What it's successfully doing is separating the content from the medium. It can be for the web, for the paper, for SMS – it doesn't really matter". The system is XML aware so although all newspaper stories are defined for print output, their formatting and composition data has been mapped to single styles in XML so that they can be accurately

presented on the web. This also takes the onus of creating XML based stories from the individual newspapers.

The same system is being implemented for syndicated stories, and the next phase for Northcliffe and Tera is to develop the content archive as a groupwide editorial resource. The idea is to develop the content management system so that it performs the function of an internal wire service. Northcliffe newspapers will be able to trawl the group content database in order to find additional stories that may relate to a story in their region. Dave Butler said that: "we are building up a central web based archive containing all published stories, pictures and text, to give journalists access across the group to give richness to local stories. For the articles that are published we'll give access to the public to those stories." Dave Howes sees no problem with this because "every Northcliffe newspaper installed in this country is using XML". Tera can sell this technology along with proof that it works as a unified system elsewhere.

Fruitful partnership

The relationship has been good for both sides. According to Dave Howes "Tera UK represents about 25 per cent of Tera Digital Publishing's business worldwide. We've had reasonable success in Italy, South Africa and the Far East and we've got around eighteen installations in Brazil." He continues: "Both Trinity Mirror and Northcliffe have long term investment plans and have not been phased by the recession and have carried on. Unfortunately other parts of the world have not."

Tera's UK success is based on cooperative development that could seem pretty much like any traditional newspaper-supplier relationship. But Tera and Northcliffe's relationship is indicative of the subtle change the newspaper technology business. In the past the dedication with which suppliers wooed their customers was rewarded with the dedication with which newspapers signed their support and development bills. Huge sums were involved because the developers provided security, reliability and a no-compromise production guarantee. Twenty years ago this was all necessary, but today it is not. Today we are seeing a rising number of smaller companies specialising in local markets. The difference is that companies like Tera and many of its competitors can use standard IT technologies, often deploying them on very large scales. Bespoke development for specific newspaper tasks can be based on a unified corporate infrastructure. This is where digital standards and open technologies have brought us. It may not suit the traditionalists in the newspaper business but for newspaper publishers and content consumers it is a good place to be.

– Laurel Brunner