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# Spindrift



...Scandalising The Graphic Arts Industry Since April 2003

News Focus • Opinion  
Reviews • Techno-Babble  
Attitude

Volume 4, Number 8  
Dec. - Jan., 2006-7

**Business** - *noun* **1** a person's regular occupation or trade. **2** work to be done or matters to be attended to. **3** a person's concern. **4** commercial activity. **5** a commercial organization. **6** informal, a difficult or problematic matter. **7** (the business) informal, an excellent person or thing. **8** actions other than dialogue in a play.

– From the Compact Oxford English Dictionary

## Dear Reader,

This is our last issue of Spindrift for 2006 and what a year it's been!

Spindrift has gone from strength to strength with a growing readership, noisy word of mouth promotion and the addition of Nessian's lucid tones to our usual editorial hysteria. In fact it's all getting quite grown up, requiring us to be much more disciplined. But perhaps a little discipline will be healthy and character building?

We are very proud to announce that Digital Dots, publisher of Spindrift, is to provide the mighty Messe Düsseldorf with content for the drupa website. The idea is to help develop a wider understanding of digital production for those visitors to the site who know they ought to know more about print media production, but can't quite face the strain of learning about it.

As part of our commitment to drupa, Digital Dots is providing a monthly column looking at issues pertinent to all aspects of digital production and printing. This will include matters Internet and IT-related and we hope it will truly reflect industry realities worldwide. We are therefore looking for interesting stories from our subscribers, publishing partners and clients.

This has been an exciting and frantic year for all of us, but for Digital Dots none of it would have been remotely possible without your support. So a sincere and heartfelt thank you for sticking with Spindrift and for helping it to become a publication that people take seriously and that they seem to enjoy. We never thought to have come so far.

Have a dazzler of a holiday season. See you in 2007!

The Spindrift Crew,

**Cecilia, Laurel, Paul, Nessian and Todd**

## In This Issue

### *Free enterprise*

Many people in the newspaper business have looked down on free papers, but as Laurel Brunner finds out, there's definitely a place for free newspapers in today's 24-hour news culture.

*see page 12*

### *The saga continues*

In a follow-up to last month's review of Ifra, Paul Lindstrom looks at some of the editorial systems that are aimed at small to medium-sized publishers.

*see page 20*

### *Baggage handling*

A few months back we looked at some of the desktop preflighting solutions that are around, and this month Nessian Cleary's covered some of the online preflighting options.

*see page 22*

### *Full circle for operating systems*

With Microsoft's new Windows Vista starting to ship, and Leopard, the next version of Apple's OS X almost upon us, Paul Lindstrom takes a look at the relative virtues of each.

*see page 27*

## Regular Columns

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# News Focus

As a result of extensive experience with XSL-FO for printing and display XML – with more than 20 commercial implementations supporting more than 50 languages – users and vendors alike called upon the **XSL Working Group** to standardize a number of popular, but proprietary, extensions. These included support for back-of-the-book style indexed, revision bars, PDF bookmarks, conditional text ‘markers’ in tables (for example to support partial sums of financial data), access to the number of the last page of a group, and multiple flows on a page.

In addition to adding these features to XSL-FO 1.1, the XSL Working Group enhanced a number of XSL-FO 1.0 features, providing for multiple colour profile references, more complex page numbering schemes, and clarifications for internationalisation.

**Shi Tao**, the Chinese journalist imprisoned after Yahoo gave the Chinese authorities information that led to his arrest, has been awarded the 2007 Golden Pen of Freedom. The World Association of Newspapers makes this award annually to recognise press freedom, or at least the importance of it.

Mr Shi is far from free, serving a ten year sentence on charges of “leaking state secrets”. The state secrets con-

cerned were contained in an e-mail discussing media restrictions in the run-up to the fifteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. It seems the e-mail appeared on several internet portals and that Yahoo gave the Chinese state security authorities details of Mr Shi’s e-mail usage. The information allowed them to trace the message to a computer he used at the newspaper where he worked, the Dangdai Shang Bao (Contemporary Business News).

Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang defended the company’s actions thus: “To be doing business in China, or anywhere else in the world, we have to comply with local law.” Do the words ‘spineless’, ‘feeble’ or ‘supine’ come to mind?

If he’s available Mr Shi will be given The Golden Pen award next June at WAN’s World Editors Forum in Cape Town, South Africa.

**Duplo International** has added a new perforation module to its DC-645 Production Colour Finisher. The PFM-01 Perforation Module increases the range of finishing possibilities for customers using digital presses, combining the functions of slitting, trimming and creasing in a single pass. Perforation happens simultaneously with other finishing operations, so finishing of such things as mail pieces with reply forms or vouchers, stubs for books, calendars and cheques or packaging such as CD trays is much quicker.

**KBA** and **Heidelberg** have signed a letter of intent to standardise UV and hybrid printing applications. The pair want to enhance reliability, safety and predictability of consumables used and are working to develop universally applicable standards to certify and accredit UV and hybrid inks and ‘press-compliant printing aids and consumables’. They plan to do the same for proofing with UV and hybrid inks

**Xerox Corporation** is bullish about its prospects. The company’s Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Anne Mulcahy has said of the company’s progress, growth opportunities and objectives for 2007 that she expects earnings to grow to a range of \$1.12 to \$1.16 per share. For the fourth quarter 2006, expected fourth-quarter adjusted earnings are 34 to 37 cents per share.

## Spindrift

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▼ The company has also announced a \$500m expansion to its \$1.5b share repurchase program.

Throughout the third quarter 2006, Xerox's colour revenues have grown 14 percent, to represent 34 percent of the company's total revenue. Nearly half of Xerox's equipment sales now come from colour products and colour equipment sales are up 11 percent this year. According to Anne Mulcahy, "We expect more than 30 billion colour pages to be printed on Xerox systems this year alone."

These statements have already provoked a response in financial markets. Moody's Investors Service, one of the world's leading companies for analysis of credit ratings, research and risk, has raised its ratings for Xerox to reflect the company's solid business execution, stable profitability, solid free cash flow generation and reduction of secured debt. Xerox's disciplined financial philosophy with respect to maintaining strong balance sheet liquidity and modest financial leverage, is key to the upgraded rating.

**Esko Graphics** has announced that its current quarter's profit margin exceeds 9% of revenues, a four-fold improvement over last year's figures.

Net revenues were up by 11% for the quarter and Esko is seeing solid performances across all sectors of its business. The company is increasingly software driven and is building alliances with a broad range of companies including Adobe, Heidelberg, Dupont, HP and Xerox Europe.

The deal with Xerox is especially interesting since it is intended to help Xerox get into the packaging market. Esko products will be sold wherever Xerox Europe operates, and Esko will provide post-sale service and support for its Scope family of digital front ends that will provide a packaging complement to the Xerox iGen3 and DocuColor 8000/ 7000/ 500 family of digital presses, taking Xerox into the short run packaging market.

**Pragati Offset Pvt. Ltd.** is named SAPPI International Printer of the Year 2006 for catalogues. SAPPI paper manufacturers organises this event every year to recognise printing excellence worldwide. Pragati is the first printing company from the Asian, Australian and South/Central American region to win this prize, which previously was won only by printers from North America, Europe and South Africa.

Pragati beat 33 finalists selected from 7,000 international entries and won the award for its Omega Watches, Switzerland book.



*We don't generally use pictures in our news section, but there is such exuberance and joy in this photo, we simply must make an exception! Congratulations to all at Pragati!*

**Atex Group Limited (Atex)** once a great and mighty name amongst newspaper front end systems providers, and now backed by the Norwegian investment company Kistefos AS, is to buy Unisys Media.

Unisys Media is the Italian arriviste systems developer best known for its large-scale news production, wire service management and digital asset management technologies. Unisys systems are installed at some of the world's most prestigious newspaper groups and in daily use at more than 225 newspapers in 15 countries worldwide.

The acquisition is funded with over \$50m to provide purchase funds and subsequent working capital. Post acquisition the company will employ nearly 500 people expected to generate global revenues of over \$90m. Atex is also considering other acquisitions.

**Screen** has issued a revised business forecast for its fiscal year ending March 2007. The company is expecting higher net income up from Y12,500m to Y16,100m. The business result for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2006 was a net income of Y15,326m.

**Xerox** scientists have invented a way to make prints that only last for a day. The idea is that the paper could be used to reduce paper use.

▼ Xerox Research Centre of Canada and PARC (Palo Alto Research Center) have developed this experimental printing technology for printing pages with low value and temporary content. Such pages are generally thrown away pretty sharpish once they have been read. Xerox estimates that two out of every five pages printed in the office fall into this category.

Patents are pending for the technology, which Xerox calls 'erasable paper' and is based on compounds that change colour when exposed to certain wavelengths of light. After exposure they gradually fade to disappear in about 16-24 hours, so that the page can be reused multiple times. The next step is to develop a print engine for writing page images onto the special paper. PARC researchers have a prototype device that uses a light bar emitting a specific wavelength of light to write the image onto the paper surface. The written image will fade naturally but it can also be immediately erased by exposing it to heat.

What fun for forgers and fraudsters!

**Samsung** has introduced a new high end LCD monitor aimed at designers and graphic arts professionals. The SyncMaster XL20 is a 20ins LCD which according to Samsung has a colour gamut of 114% of the NTSC standard (slightly larger than that of Adobe RGB).

The Samsung XL20 is a back-lit design using LED technology for better brightness uniformity and larger colour gamut. The XL20 will often be bundled with the X-Rite Huey colorimeter for calibration and a monitor hood to protect from ambient light. The estimated price is €1500.

After much nail biting and bating of breath **Microsoft** has launched Vista. The company has announced that Windows Vista, together with Exchange server and what is called 2007 Microsoft Office System are available for corporate customers. The consumer versions, all five of them, will not be launched until January 2007. Microsoft is blaming the delay, with very unbinary vagueness, on problems with data security. Presumably corporate applications are immune to these problems whatever they are.

**Xaar** has approved Sericol's Color+ XV inks for use in its XJ-128/40W and XJ-126/50 inkjet printheads. The Color+ XV inks use high quality pigment inks blended with specialised solvents to provide good lightfastness and adhesion to a wide range of uncoated materials.

**Extensis** has released a free update for Suitcase Fusion, its latest single-user font manager. The update improves performance for font activation and searching, and has enhanced font corruption checking. It also adds native support for Intel-based Macintosh and Power PC systems for the Font Doctor tool for locating and eliminating font problems that impact system performance.

**Quark** is introducing platform-independent licenses and packaging for Quark Xpress 7.0. This means that users can use a single version of XPress 7.0 on different computers without having to pay extra.

**Dalim's** production workflow software is now compatible with the new Intel processor-based Apple Macintosh. Macs use chips based on Intel Core technology, the next generation in processor design, and applications bearing the Universal symbol run natively on both Intel- and PowerPC- based Mac computers. For applications that aren't ready, the Rosetta utility in Mac OS X should dynamically translate PowerPC-based applications to work with an Intel-based Mac, though some applications and drivers simply won't work on a Mactel machine.

And finally a reminder of the importance of the printing and publishing industries when it comes to keeping the world on a steady axis. It seems that the **US Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** has been using an Automated Targeting System (ATS) for the past four years. ATS basically gathers information about every traveller to and from the US from airlines, shipping companies and governments, as well as whatever other records they fancy. They use this information to generate a risk-based assessment of every individual entering or leaving the country and there is apparently nothing people can do to change their assessments, even if there's been a mistake.

According to the Christian Science Monitor in the US "the use of the program on travellers was quietly disclosed earlier this month when the department put a notice detailing ATS in the Federal Register, a fine-print compendium of federal rules."

As George W. Bush said in an interview in November: "Anybody who is in a position to serve this country ought to understand the consequences of words."



# Spindocs

*(Where the spinner gets spun!)*

*Sometimes it's quite staggering how far a publisher will go to convince the world that his reality is the true one.*

*Take the inaugural editorial for PrintWeek MEA, wherein publisher Wayne Manning appears to be totally unaware of the folks in Dubai at ME Printer magazine. According to Mr Manning:*

*"We have been following the Middle East printing market closely for several years. After careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that while the outlook for the regional printing [sic] is clearly positive, it still lacks a world class industry publication."*

*Should one class knocking the competition in this way as ignorance or simple bad manners we wonder? After some self-serving puffery Mr Manning continues:*

*"We are certain that PrintWeek MEA will be an unrivalled information source for regional printing houses, publishing houses, reproduction centres, emergency printing firms [que?], design studios, signage specialists and equipment manufacturers and suppliers."*

*If the ad sales people at PrintWeek MEA believe they have no rivals, they could be in for a bit of a surprise!*

# Expandocs

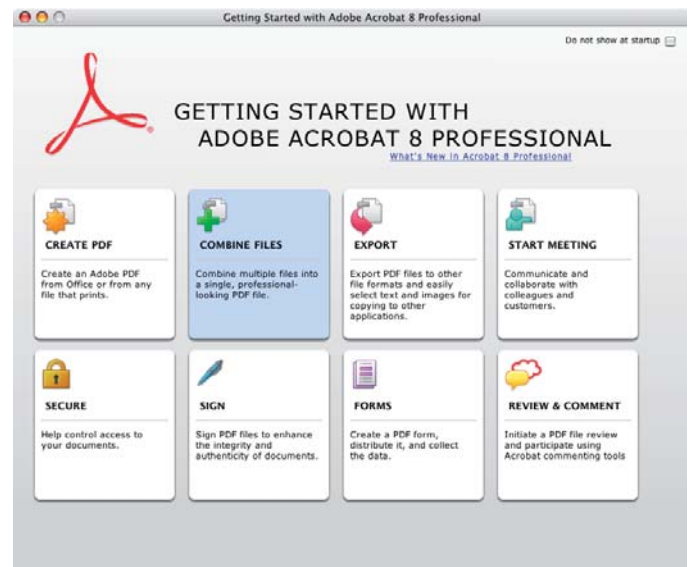
*(In this section, we aim to cast some extra light on a particular recent news story.)*

## Acrobatic juggling

Now that most programs can read and write PDFs natively, Adobe is struggling to redefine exactly what Acrobat's role is. Part of the difficulty is that the PDF format itself appeals to two very distinct markets: the corporate world of documents which prizes features such as security and form filling; and the graphic arts which values the format as a stable container for fonts, colour spaces and so on

for printing. So each new version tries to balance these disparate groups, with varying degrees of success.

The most immediate change for Acrobat 8.0 is a much tidier interface. The huge list of buttons for various features covering everything from opening and printing files to launching the preflight engine has all gone. Instead Adobe has grouped everything together into eight main tasks, which makes for a much tidier look to the program. These eight tasks - Create PDF, Combine Files, Export, Start Meeting, Secure, Sign, Forms, and Review & Comment -



*Acrobat 8 boasts a much tidier interface.*

Start Meeting, Secure, Sign, Forms and Review and Comment - also appear in a separate window when the program starts up so that users can go straight to the thing they want to do.

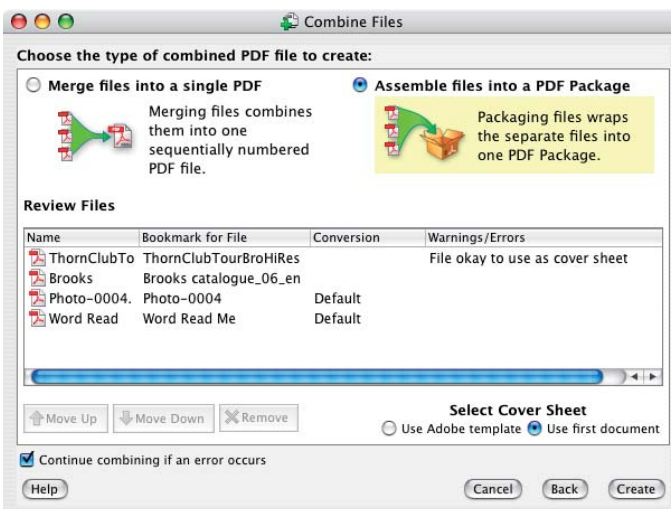
Adobe has put a separate set of icons down the left hand side which expand when clicked on for showing page thumbnails, bookmarks, signatures and a search window, with attachments and comments at the bottom. All of this makes for a much neater interface, which will undoubtedly make the program more attractive for those less familiar with it.

When you click on Create PDF you have the option to create a PDF from a single file, or from multiple files. Selecting multiple files pulls up the Combine Files menu which lets you select individual files or folders from anywhere on your hard disk or even across a network. You

can pick virtually any type of file - Acrobat supports BMP, GIF, HTML, JPEG, PostScript, EPS, TIFF and Text formats - and can open Excel, PowerPoint and most other programs to convert those formats as PDFs.

You can also choose to merge multiple files into a single PDF, or there's a new file option, to assemble those files into a PDF package. A PDF Package is a single file, but it preserves the individual documents complete with their original page numbers, a particularly useful feature in some legal applications.

You can also save PDFs as Word files complete with fonts formatting and tables. Fortunately, production specialists can still fire up Distiller from the Print Production Command to select high quality and PDF/X settings.



You can choose to combine files together into a single PDF, or to make a PDF Package, which maintains the separate identity and page numbers of multiple files within a single PDF

## Preflighting

As far as graphics professionals are concerned, the main new improvement to this version is with the preflighting. Adobe first added preflighting to version 6, but it has only ever been able to highlight problems, whereas many other preflight solutions can also automatically fix many of the common problems that cause files to fail their preflight checks. This latest version of Acrobat can now fix a wide range of potential problems, including hairlines, colour space conversions and image resolution.

## Commenting

There's a much improved commenting ability, including the option to share comments across a server, virtually in real time. The idea is that you simply add comments to a file, then upload those comments to a shared folder, and download any comments from other people whenever you are ready.

Anyone with a copy of Acrobat Professional, Standard, or even the free Acrobat Reader 8.0 can share comments, but you need the Professional version to set the process up and decide who can share comments with the document in question. You can also export comments back to a Word or AutoCAD file obviating the need to edit the original document. This will be extremely useful for a lot of content proofing, allowing multiple staff from ad agencies, art directors and printers to pass comments back and forth on a file.

One other useful feature is a new Redaction command, which overwrites sensitive information so that it is genuinely deleted and cannot be retrieved

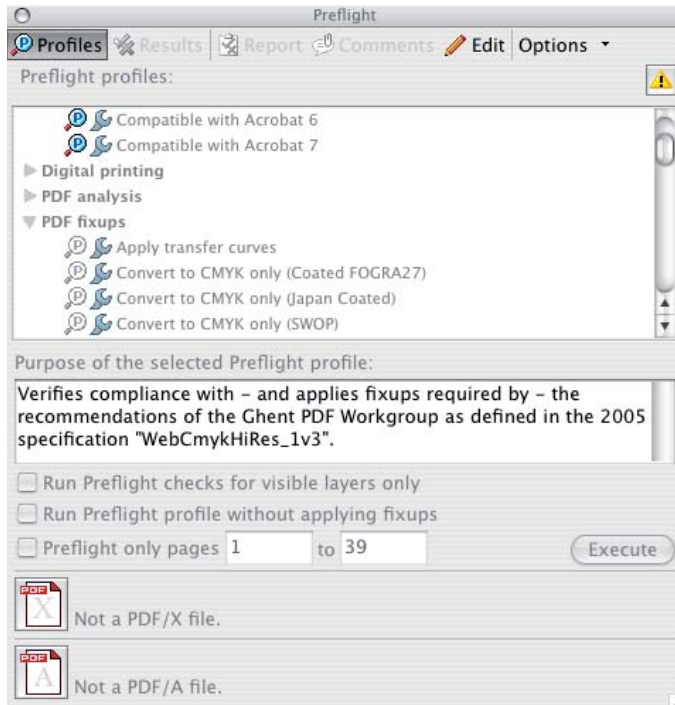
## Forms

Acrobat also includes Adobe's form filling technology, LiveCycle. Acrobat already had excellent capabilities for working with forms, but these have been enhanced with the ability to turn static forms from scanned documents or Word files into interactive form fields, and to enable those forms to be filled out by anyone with the free Reader software. There's also a new Form creation wizard which is pretty easy to use.

You can also export data from forms that have been completed, either as comma separated text for use with a spreadsheet such as Excel, or as XML data for use in a database - a very useful feature if you want to compile the results of a survey.

Somewhat annoyingly, it's still the case that if somebody sends you a form to sign, and sets the security to prevent you editing the form, you can't actually sign it, unless they have remembered to create a blank digital signature

field. The fact that Adobe's own staff routinely forget to include the blank signature field would suggest that this is a common problem, and yet it is one that ought to be easily fixed.



Acrobat finally gains the ability to fix common problems thrown up in the preflight, including hairlines, colour space conversions and image resolution issues.

## Acrobat Connect

Adobe has introduced a new member to the Acrobat family, Acrobat Connect, due to launch in the US first with roll outs to Europe and other regions from early 2007. In reality, this is Macromedia's Breeze, with a brand new name. Connect isn't really a PDF tool, rather it's about setting up online meetings which can make use of a variety of different media, including audio and video, all powered by Flash technology, which is now included as standard with many web browsers.

Essentially Connect can be used to set up and host a virtual meeting room for up to 15 people. It's going to be a boon for online training, and should allow a lot of people to work together, from home.

There's both a Pro and a standard version of Connect. The Pro version includes content and meeting management capabilities and voice over IP.

Large corporates can host Connect sites from within their own servers, but the vast majority of people will license it as a hosted service from Adobe.

## File Formats

As with previous upgrades to Acrobat, there's also a new version of the PDF file format, now up to PDF1.7. There's also a new flavour of PDF/X, in PDF/X-4 which is based on PDF1.4 and supports native transparency in files, thus obviating the need to flatten transparencies. This is significant as from now one we'll start to see workflow vendors upgrading their RIPs with Adobe's new PDF Print Engine, announced at IpeX, and which will support native PDF files, including those with transparency.

The new version of Microsoft's Windows platform, Vista includes a brand new document and print format, XPS which some have seen as a possible alternative to the PDF format. Adobe is undoubtedly a little miffed about this, though it remains to be seen whether or not XPS can really give Acrobat and PDF a run for its money.

XPS isn't really aimed at the graphics market, and few people expect it to replace PDF as the preferred format for sending files to printers. But a very large chunk of Adobe's market for Acrobat comes from corporate and enterprise users, so much of the features in this release are aimed at those kinds of users, rather than print production.

There isn't an XPS reader for the Mac yet. Then again, Adobe has dropped the Mac version of Acrobat 8.0 Standard, which lacks a number of features that are standard to the pro version, including most of the more advanced forms capabilities.

A new version of Acrobat also signals a new edition of the Creative Suite, now up to version 2.3 with the inclusion of Acrobat 8. The premium edition of Creative Suite 2.3 also gains Dreamweaver. However, it's worth noting that Creative Suite 3 should be out in spring, and that Dreamweaver is likely to replace GoLive at that point.

## Say What?

*(Iffy Writing Award Presented in the Ether for Obfuscation, Confusion, Misinformation or All Out Pretentiousness)*

*This month's Say What? Award goes to Global Graphics for this pithy press release:*

**Global Graphics (Euronext: GLOG) the technology experts for open documents and print solutions, announced today it has signed a contract with HP for the provision of certain printing technologies, which Global Graphics considers to be a major contract. In accordance with applicable contractual provisions, specific terms of the contract shall not be disclosed.**

*How we laughed, because although brevity is the soul of wit, some actual news is generally thought to be pretty important to a news release.*

## Acrobites

*(Something to get your teeth into)*

### FARE

Film image Automatic Retouching and Enhancement is the term Canon uses to refer to its image retouching software. This software automatically removes imperfections from scanned images, to produce higher quality scans.

FARE is built into Canon's flatbed scanners to eliminate imperfections. It uses infrared light to detect imperfections on a film surface in a second pass over the film. The scanner compares the primary white light scanned data with that of the infrared light scan to create a final file that is free of imperfections.

### RTM

Released to Manufacturing in the software context means a version of a technology that can be bundled with other stuff. Take, for example, Microsoft's Vista operating system which has been made available to its partners so that they can find residual bugs. This is particularly important

in ensuring that a given piece of software technology will work properly with the full range of hardware it is likely to encounter.

## Boomerangs

*(Your feedback fed back)*

**From:** Bart Fret <bart@perfectproof.com>

**Date:** Tue, 21 Nov 2006 15:01:27 +0100

**To:** Paul Lindstrom <pl@digitaldots.org>

**Subject:** Re: Demanding proofing test

Hi Paul,

I just read your article and it indeed addresses a gap in what is currently available as tests for proofing systems (e.g. Altona Visual).

Would it be possible to communicate some more details on how the test would be done, and how we should proceed? When would the tests start?

Best regards,

Bart Fret  
Product Manager Software  
PerfectProof Europe NV

*We have had a number of emails asking for more details of the Spot Colour Proofing test so here's the lowdown:*

## Digital Dots Spot Colour Test 2006

### Background

*Proofing for standard CMYK printing is proven and well established, but there are still challenges when it comes to proofing spot colours. As designers create ever more ambitious output, proofing for demanding applications requires more than just CMYK colours in order to match what is done on press. Higher numbers of spot colours*



are used now than in the past, both solid and graduated tints, and these must be accurately proofed.

Proofing CMYK colours is well within the capabilities of current generation digital proofing systems, however relatively few seem to be capable of truly accurate spot colour proofing. And there is no dedicated test for evaluating the accuracy of spot colour proofing, so we have designed one.

The Digital Dots dedicated spot colour proofing test is based on CMYK + 6 selected out-of-gamut spot colours supplied on a reference print of the test form. The test form will include CMYK patches plus spot colours, both solid tones and tints, and the reference print produced under tightly controlled conditions.

### Procedure

Digital Dots is working with Heidelberg and Screen to create the reference print, using a Trueflow RIP with output direct to plate.

Participating companies will be supplied with a copy of the reference print, a digital version of the test form and test colour image, plus the reference ICC Profiles required. Digital Dots will provide complete instructions for doing the test. Once completed the test output along with collateral data is to be returned to Digital Dots for evaluation. Evaluation is based on how closely a proofing system's output matches the reference print based on spectrophotometric values and visual appearance. Participants will have the opportunity to comment on the evaluations or redo the test.

### Publication of Results

Once evaluations are completed, the results will be presented in a two part article to be published in Spindrift. The article will also be syndicated to DDL's publishing partners worldwide (12+ titles) and be provided to all test participants. Companies participating in this project will have the rights to use and distribute the results, including translation rights.

## Is it Who You Know or What You Know?

Somewhere between facts and wisdom lies knowledge, and it's often the basis of a company's success otherwise. It's strange then that for most companies knowledge development is not a priority. Most people want to keep on learning throughout their lives, but unfortunately many businesses, especially small ones, don't prioritise it. There is always something else going on and it is always so much more interesting or urgent. Somewhere in between the two is a happy compromise where learning happens almost incidentally.

If you're reading this and browsing the rest of the magazine or website you're on the way, because reading about new developments in the industry is an easy and convenient way of staying informed. Trawling websites and working with suppliers to stay up to date with new product developments are also simple and inexpensive ways to keep knowledge on the agenda. Visiting trade shows takes a bit more effort and expense, but the wealth of activities at industry events is worth it. At the top end of the price scale is participation in seminars and conferences, which have the added benefit of providing an intimate networking environment.

Getting to grips with training and education takes more than just chat, it takes commitment. Knowing how far or deep that commitment should go is the tricky bit so we thought it might be useful to give you some means of measuring what you already know. We've put together a series of short quizzes covering some of the key topics for digital prepress. They might help you gauge just where you are, or are not, when it comes to your knowledge of digital production.

The answers to this multiple choice quiz are at the end of it, following the scoring details. For each correct answer give yourself four points.

The oil that greases many a wheel in the supplier community is a heady blend of computer-to-plate imaging, work-

▼  
flow and the associated consumables. How clued-up are you when it comes to planning and implementing a viable CTP solution?

- (a) 2
- (b) 4
- (c) 7
- (d) 1

## CTP

1. What does CTP stand for?

- (a) Conventional to Print
- (b) Computer to Plate
- (c) Computer to Press
- (d) Calculated Top Price

2. What can a CTP device do?

- (a) Save time
- (b) Remove the need for film from the workflow
- (c) Warm your lunch
- (d) All of the above

3. How much is the cheapest metal CTP system?

- (a) Around €15,000
- (b) Around €25,000
- (c) Over €35,000
- (d) Over €50,000

4. When should a printer invest in CTP?

- (a) When his press is running full for a single shift
- (b) When customers work is intermittent
- (c) When he's buying a new stitcher
- (d) None of the above

5. What is a direct imaging press?

- (a) One that has a CTP device built in
- (b) A press with image capabilities
- (c) Data is printed straight from the RIP to the substrate
- (d) Image printing takes place before text to preserve colour accuracy

6. What is a chemistry-free plate?

- (a) One that uses chemicals
- (b) One that doesn't use chemicals
- (c) One where there are chemicals, but not many
- (d) All of the above

7. How many independent plate manufacturers produce plates in Europe?

8. What is the biggest problem for printers wanting to get into CTP?

- (a) The cost of investing
- (b) The cost of plates
- (c) The cost of training
- (d) All those lunches with suppliers

9. What is the difference between thermal and violet imaging?

- (a) They aren't spelt the same
- (b) One uses thermal energy and the other light to image a plate
- (c) The thermal fans are rude about violet imaging and vice versa
- (d) All of the above

10. Why should you invest in CTP?

- (a) Colour quality
- (b) Improved production speed
- (c) Improved press utilisation
- (d) All of the above

Now it's time to see how well or otherwise, you did. Each correct answer gets you four points for a maximum of 40.

A score of 0-10 suggests that you are clearly living in a world where the digital revolution is of no interest to you. This is probably because you don't need to know anything about digital technology to do your job. However at some point you will need to be at least vaguely aware of digital production so you might want to consider paying a tad more attention to what's going on around you.

11-20 suggests you're sort of into digital prepress but that there are some serious gaps in your knowledge. The time to start rectifying that is now, before the industry undergoes its next major upheaval and digital production methods take an even bigger jump forward. For your custom-

▼  
ers things will be even worse, so take the plunge and keep yourself ahead of the game.

21-30 says you are well clued up on digital production, but get a bit confused sometimes. It is probably worthwhile taking some time each day to read more about technologies you're not so sure of, and get in touch with your technology suppliers to get them to present their latest development ideas. It's a great way to get an inside track.

If you've scored 31-40 we need to make these quizzes tougher or hire a new prepress specialist. You are clearly in no need of any help or guidance and have the digital world at your fingertips. Hats off to you for your dedication to learning, your commitment to your work and your superior ability to turn information into knowledge.

#### Answers

1. - *b*
2. - *d*
3. - *b*
4. - *d*
5. - *a*
6. - *d*
7. - *b*
8. - *a*
9. - *d*
10. - *d*



# Free enterprise

**Free newspapers are changing the newspaper industry, revitalising it's business models and changing peoples' ideas. Free daily newspapers are now available in over 40 countries worldwide and have an estimated combined daily circulation of around 30 million copies. The readership is obviously much, much higher.**

They've been around for years (the first came out in Zurich in 1730), but for the most part free newspapers have had a pretty low profile. It wasn't until 1995 when Metro was launched in Sweden that they started to be taken seriously. Metro was based on the idea that Stockholm commuters would appreciate a free newspaper distributed at train stations. Metro International is published in 21 countries and has a worldwide daily circulation of 18.5 million, and 37.5 million weekly.

The Metro phenomenon has not gone unnoticed and in several markets local publishers are working hard to protect their markets. Paris and London commuters are spoilt for choice with Le Figaro and Le Monde setting up free morning daily projects in Paris; and in London, News International's launch of The London Paper, comes in addition to the Metro titles. In Spain, which has more free dailies than any other country, publishers have taken rather more drastic action and are seeing impressive results both nationally and at very local levels.

ADN is one of Spain's four main free national dailies, a joint venture between several regional newspaper partners and one very large publisher. That publisher, Grupo Planeta, is the leading media company in Spain and Latin America. It has it's own chain of bookshops and publishes books, encyclopaedia and newspapers and has interests in radio, television, cinema, film and video distribution. Together with Spain's leading regional newspaper groups, Planeta has invested €27 million to set up ADN. Planeta's involvement ensures the new company has sufficient capital to compete in a fierce market and gives it that all important market clout. ADN combines large company strengths: money, organisation, gravitas, with the closeness to market and access to a broad ad base that local companies provide.

Each partner in the project has set up a dedicated business for the ADN project. Regionals are 40% shareholders in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia which have no local groups, but elsewhere the ownership is 40% Planeta and 60% locals.

Altogether ADN employs 80 people in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia plus 80 people in the regions. Mr. Joan Checa, ADN's managing director says that: "Practically all these people are journalists. The administration, ▶

**ADN combines large company strengths: money, organisation, gravitas, with the closeness to market and access to a broad ad base that local companies provide.**

the technology, is outside the organisation, outsourced. The staff people are journalists, plus around 15 others to support them.”

The group is also setting up a 60 person team to provide web versions of the newspaper for all regions, to be ready to capture ads migrating to the web. According to Mr. Checa “we expect Internet advertisement growth in the next year of 35% to around €225 million in 2006 and €330 million in 2007 on news websites in Spain.” He added: “If the market grows this is better for investing because in print you have print, paper and distribution costs. On the Internet you have only people costs”.

Since its initiation in November 2005, the venture is on track financially. The first newspaper was published in March 2006 and ADN is on track to recoup its shareholders investment. Mr. Checa says this will happen for the “locals in the fourth year [but] we at Planeta need six years to recoup our investment of €16 million and we are on target to do that.” The newspaper expects to be profitable within three years.

## The Newspaper

Fourteen daily (Monday to Friday) editions of ADN are distributed throughout Spain in 16 cities plus two provinces at metro and bus stations, with second editions in Barcelona and Madrid and a nationwide circulation of over one million copies. ADN is a liberal title committed to social development and democracy. It is a tabloid with 24 pages, except in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia where it goes up to 32 pages. The newspaper has four colour-coded sections that use the same colours as on a television remote control and trendy page designs with as much colour as possible, as the papers are printed on a variety of presses. The mix of different presses isn’t much of a problem, although in Valencia and Bilbao the press formats (39 and 41cm) are costing them money because as Mr. Checa points out: “One of the issues with these sizes is the price of the paper”. Adjusting the design for the larger size also takes time for pages sent to the Valencia and Bilbao sites.

## Editorial

The eight member companies provide all editorial and operate in their own zones with Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, having their own exclusively ADN newsrooms. In these cities Planeta is the dominant shareholder of ADN but elsewhere the regional titles dominate ownerships. Fifty percent of shared content generally appears in every edition, however editors can deviate from this to suit the demands of a local market. This gives them the flexibility to provide a national newspaper with a strong local feel, which has been an important part of ADN’s success. It combines strong national and local editorial in a single title, designed to appeal to a broad market. It also maintains the high editorial standards one would expect in a national newspaper.



Torre Agbar Home of ADN

▼ Advertising makes up no more than 35% of each edition, unlike the competing frees, which go up to 50%. Limiting advertising to 35% allows ADN to keep editorial balance and maintain pagination, as Mr. Checa puts it: “Because we are a newspaper not a container of advertisements. The difference between us and a paid newspaper is not the quality, it’s just the number of pages. Pairs have 64 pages because they sell the newspaper, but for us our papers are free, so we have the limitation of the pages.”

## Advertising

In Spain 80% of buyers of paid-for newspapers are men, but for frees the figure is only 50%. More women read free newspapers which is attractive for advertisers, so a rising number of them use free newspapers. Consequently, ADN has also seen a rise in cosmetics and perfume brand advertising.

Mr. Checa says that: “The free newspaper opens the market. The [advertising] growth in free newspapers is 20% per year and in paid newspapers there is no growth.” In 2005 only 5.2% of total ad monies were spent in free newspapers, but it was 25% more than was spent in 2004. In 2006 the ad spend in frees will be 6.5%, up 26.6%. By 2009 ADN anticipates that 10.5% of all ad spends will be in free newspapers, a 19.5% growth and all of it at the cost of paid-for titles.

ADN supports both national and local advertising, with all national ads common to all editions. For these mandatory ads, revenues are distributed according to circulation. Local groups handle their own local ads which appear in the regional title only. Local ads are sold for either the paid regional or the local editions of ADN or both. Because of Planeta’s interests in television and radio ADN has captured new press advertising, particularly in cosmetics. Mr Checa explains: “Atres Advertising takes care of advertising management. This agency, which belongs to the Planeta Group’s TV channel, is a cast-iron guarantee that advertising will be obtained, being the leader in its area in Spain in terms of number of advertisements. Its involvement guarantees advertising revenue, which gives the project greater solidity.”

ADN decides what counts as national or local and works with large advertisers using tariffs based on one million copies nationally instead of the much lower circulations of most regional titles. Currently ADN is not regionalising or localising ads and this represents an opportunity to develop ad revenues in the future.

ADN is using its rising ad revenues to make up for what has been lost as most newspapers have struggled to compete with new media. The company’s strategy has closed the Spanish newspaper market to external predators, with paid and frees competing for ad revenues at the local level. For advertisers, paid-for newspapers still reach their traditional audiences, albeit in fewer numbers and ADN is reaching new audiences, ►



ADN editors at work.

▼ readers that previously wouldn't have taken a newspaper. ADN expects to use the newspaper as the basis for new media services for advertisers in the future.

## ADN & Protec

ADN's business structure demands complex editorial and ad sharing. The technology that manages all aspects of the group's production is Protec's Milenium which provides the foundation for all common activities including editorial, advertising, business, communications and workflow management.

Protec is a Spanish software development company founded in 1979 to develop publishing systems. The company bases its systems entirely on standard technology and has over 300, predominantly Spanish language, customers in 14 countries worldwide. Protec employs 120 people with nearly half of them in development.

Milenium Cross Media is a suite of software, including editorial, advertising, archiving, communications and print workflow management. Protec also provides extensive project management and IT support and management services. ADN chose Protec because most of its local groups were already Protec customers. New systems had to be installed at greenfield sites in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia and these were up and running within three months of installation.

Voz de Galicia is another exception. This newspaper has its own home-grown Indesign and Incopy based system, and accesses shared content via Milenium's content database. Milenium translates data for use on Voz de Galicia pages and vice versa, with Milenium handling the translations back and forth. Until recently, this newspaper received pages from Milenium in PDF which they insert into an Indesign file. Some months ago, Voz de Galicia set up a license to access Milenium to view content and export pages in Quark Xpress. These exported pages are transformed into InDesign with Q2ID (Quark to Indesign). According to Ramón Pi-farré, ADN's IT Manager: "This is because of a timing problem: if they waited to receive the pages for the edition they ran the risk of the content they were sent already being in the local edition. With this system, they can view the pages before they are completed and export them according to their needs." PDF provides the basis for the workflow with Milenium automatically translating using the original files downloaded from the database on the remote server.

Protec bases its systems on Windows NT or Unix servers, with PC or Mac clients and SQL structured data. It links everything together with standard Intranet technology and has designed its software modules to exploit their common technology foundation. For example transfer details for ad payments information is generated automatically, as is risk assessment for new customers. Business management can sit side by side with ►

**Protec is a Spanish software development company founded in 1979 to develop publishing systems. The company bases its systems entirely on standard technology and has over 300, predominantly Spanish language, customers in 14 countries worldwide. Protec employs 120 people with nearly half of them in development.**

▼ application specific tasks such as ad layout, because of Milenium's shared technology base.

All server access is log-on controlled with 50% of all content common to all editors and the balance localised. Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia share a single server located in Barcelona. This server is also available to those regionals who don't have their own, and all servers are accessed via ADN's private network, using Protec's Low Speed Optimisation (LSO) protocol. LSO manages dataflows between databases and client applications and is designed to optimise traffic on low bandwidth networks using TCP/IP. All data is stored and managed using SQL database technologies.

All of ADN's IT systems are outsourced, but the company still has a core internal support team for both IT and Protec systems. Protec provides additional technology and support on Milenium when needed but all Milenium training is done in-house by the internal support team. Journalists use PCs with access to wire services and the picture desk and so on, but the 12 designers in the group use Macs to layout pages in Indesign or Xpress. Previously all layout design was done in Xpress and then incorporated into Milenium. Now whether Quark or Indesign is used only matters for exporting or importing external files (to and from suppliers). All the layout and editing is done exclusively in Milenium. Mr. Pifarré adds: "We do receive some files from suppliers in different formats (Quark, Indesign, PDF, etc), but these are always for importing or exporting (eg listings, football league tables etc)." Archiving and backup is currently to DVDs but the group is looking to develop a new system for this.

The cluster system is managed by Protec but ADN has no off-site disaster recovery. There is a nightly back-up once the newspaper closes, and there are mirrored servers on-site. Off-site back up currently depends on telecommunications lines and off-site servers, which provide an incidental back-up of work in progress, however this is not sufficient and is under review.

## Printing

ADN is printed throughout Spain on regional newspaper presses belonging to shareholders except in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. These editions are printed by subcontractors on three, two and one different presses, respectively, because there is no local regional group in these cities. Not all of ADN's presses are full colour, but most are. Barcelona has both morning and afternoon editions, because there isn't enough capacity to print the full quota in a single run. ADN is working to have consistent colour across all Monday to Friday editions and will probably upgrade some presses in the near future.

**Milenium Cross Media is a suite of software, including editorial, advertising, archiving, communications and print workflow management. Protec also provides extensive project management and IT support and management services. ADN chose Protec because most of its local groups were already Protec customers.**



ADN has been a resounding success, a testimony both to the market's enduring interest in newspapers and to the business creativity of the company. It is successfully blocking Metro because it has been set up and managed on such a large scale. However it seems that even small newspaper companies can make the free newspaper model work. Another Spanish newspaper, also a Protec customer but not part of the ADN group, has gone the local rather than the national route.

Diario de Terrassa was founded in 1979 at the point in Spanish history when power was shifting from Franco's dictatorship to a democracy. The newspaper, a paid for daily, has seen continuous year on year growth with circulation stable and ad revenues growing because as managing director Raúl Sanz Álvarez says, "The newspaper is a local paper with 34/40 pages (twice this on Saturdays) dedicated to the local city events, news, right down to the details." Everything is originated in-house "so people feel that this is their own newspaper; as citizens of Terrassa they identify with the newspaper". Circulation is around 12,000 on Saturdays and 8,000 during the week, in a city with a population of 200,000. The readership is however much higher than 8,000, estimated at around 80,000 because Diario de Terrassa is distributed via bars and restaurants as well as kiosks, and about 25% of the circulation goes to subscribers.

Last year the publishers launched Rubí Noticias, a 24-page (colour on just eight pages because of press limitations) weekly free newspaper that is even more local than Diario de Terrassa. Rubí Noticias is specific to Rubí a small town on the outskirts of Barcelona. The free title's circulation of 10,000 uses editorial from its sister title plus its own combined with extremely localised advertising. According to Raúl: "Rubí is possible because of Protec technology because the journalists work in another city and they work in a remote way with the server here. We configure the software in a way that we build another publications within the same system." Up to 35% of both titles are ads and both are produced by employees of Diario de Terrassa. Diario de Terrassa employs 40 people, 33 in the newsroom and the balance in administration. There are an additional six people in Rubí: three journalists and three sales people. Nine production people support both titles but are employed by the printing company. The papers are printed on a Heidelberg Harris Mercury press bought in 1994, a heatset semi-commercial machine that is also used for commercial work.

The introduction of Protec technology coincided with a move to new buildings three and a half years ago, replacing older Protec technology and the transition took only three hours for the whole organisation. Journalists work on a page view and stories are automatically composed as they are keyed into XML-tagged content boxes. Tagging specifics depend on the author signature as determined at log-on. They can access a digital archive back to 1990 using powerful natural language-based search and retrieval. Results are presented as composed stories on the page, straight text or as a PDF depending on the search criteria.

## Diari de Terrassa



*Diario de Terrassa newsroom*

▼ Less than 20% of ads come in as PDF. People send in anything from ancient native files that get converted into lineart in CorelDraw to avoid problems with fonts, to basic Word files. Agencies tend to send Freehand or JPEG files and Xpress files especially for national campaigns, and even Photoshop. Many ads are manually checked when they come in, and the newspaper provides ad clients with production guidelines, including the requirement that advertisers take responsibility for their fonts being correct.

The company has everything integrated into a single workflow and like ADN uses Protec's LSO protocol to manage network traffic. In Rubí local sales and editors use the same applications, and the company plans to automate ad placement for archived ads to improve throughput.

Protec Comms preflight checks PDFs using Pitstop server with the CTP device profile. PDFs are delivered to the print site via FTP. Page pairing and output to Agfa Galileo platesetters takes place at the print plant, with automated imposition using file names and hot folders. Protec Milenium is used for all editorial, advertising, communications and production management, apart from final RIP and output to plate.



*Another view of the Diario de Terrassa newsroom.*

This newspaper has no website and no competition since, as Mr Sanz Álvarez says: "There was but it didn't survive" and is planning instead two new small publications along the same lines as the Rubí Noticias, investing in print rather than the web because for Raúl "in the future we will have a website. [Now] a website is more a cost than an investment because in our market it's not enough. This is not the moment for us right now".

Diario de Terrassa has seen no drop in classifieds because of the web. Mr Sanz Álvarez adds: "in fact this year we have seen an increase. Maybe this city, because it is growing a lot with a lot of immigrations. The population of the city has grown a lot in the last five years and is expected to continue to grow. There is a lot of employment ads, new businesses being set up and this could be the reason why, but I am not sure."

ADN and Diario de Terrassa couldn't be more different in their business models, but they share some important characteristics. Both are making a success of free newspapers, without cannibalising their paid-for markets, and both concentrate on delivering editorial excellence for their markets

▼  
in free titles. This is an important part of their sales message to advertisers because readers value the newspaper even though they haven't paid for it.

This is a key point for everyone in the media industry. It suggests that newspapers have a future delivering editorial services and a broad readership for advertisers. That people don't want to pay a cover price anymore isn't the point. The point is, that media fragmentation and diversity are changing the way in which people interact with information and with media. More importantly fragmentation is changing media value perceptions. Always-on content access and digital delivery have devalued content and information access, such that people don't see any reason to pay for it any more.

And indeed why should we, because it's there for the asking? What we will pay for is convenience and ease of use, reliability, predictability and editorial process. People won't stop reading newspapers just yet, but they will stop paying for them. This is why the free strategies of ADN and Diario de Terrassa will succeed, and why the tide of free newspapers is unstoppable. It all comes down to having a clever enough business model to support them.

– **Laurel Brunner**



# The Saga Continues

**An important trend in evidence at IFRA Expo that deserves some mention is the growing number of editorial systems for small to medium size publishing houses. Obviously a large newspaper or magazine publisher needs a sturdy editorial system with a range of additions and extras to handle media asset management, ad booking, editorial and production planning, page pairing, remote proofing, automated back-up et cetera - the list can go on for quite a while. But smaller publishers probably find it difficult to justify the cost of a such ambitious systems dripping with so many clever features. That doesn't mean they can do without them, but they just use them on a smaller scale.**

Several of the better known publishing system vendors are trying to bring scaled down versions of their technologies to market, configuring them for slightly different target groups. This could be smaller publishers or even for magazine production.

Quark was one of the first vendors to realise and accept that its editorial system probably isn't the first choice for very large publishing houses, and may be better suited to mid- to small size publishers. According to Sverrir Jonsson, director for Quark Enterprise Publishing group, Quark recognises the needs for publishers struggling to reduce IT costs without compromising editorial system performance: "Much of the cost cutting of late has been about reducing the number of IT staff. That's why we refresh QPS (Quark Publishing System) in a gradual way, not to disrupt the organisations too much, not to demand too much of IT support or training in this process. The new clients are more stable and the QPS's Quark Dispatch server is now Java based."

This sounds like welcome news. A perhaps even more radical change is Quark's open and scriptable way of adding features to the core QPS, on top of the proprietary XTension architecture. This can now also be done through Web Services technology, which according to Sverrir is well known to any Java programmer. Sverrir gave an example of a 3rd party add-on module for ad booking (including ad planning and ad tracking) that was completed in only a week.

During early 2007 Quark will launch new clients for Quark Xpress 7.0 and Copy Desk 7.0, which will work with the Java-based Quark Dispatch Server, but be written in native Cocoa for Mac OS X, and .NET for PC/Windows.

Scoop is a vendor serving both large publishing houses and smaller ones with a system based on Adobe Indesign Server. Scoop uses this technology with its new web-based clients. According to Ulf Wilkinson, MD at Scoop, the web clients can either complement conventional clients, or be ▶



*Sverrir Jonsson, Director of Enterprise Publishing at Quark, presented Quark's plans for the continued development of Quark Publishing System. Third party integrators will find it easier to integrate through Web Services, an addition to the existing XTension technology.*

▼  
the primary tool working with the SQL Server-based editorial system. Scoop offers a special version of the system called Magazine, adapted for magazine production.

Another such developer is Softcare which recently launched K2, a smaller version of its K4 editorial system. For only €499 a small workgroup of five users can get started with deadline planning and editorial work. If and when their needs get more complex, it's possible to upgrade and add modules in steps. Eventually the Software customer ends up with a fully fledged K4 system, starting from a very low cost entry point.

A fairly new entry among the editorial systems is Censhare from Coware, which integrates editorial planning and media asset management with third party products such as Quark Xpress, Adobe Indesign and a range of ad booking solutions. Most of these systems' functionality is made available to users through a web interface, an approach that has become pretty much standard these days.

Even if IFRA Expo of course is primarily a newspaper show, it's obvious that magazine publishers have also got good reasons to attend. They can learn much from the big editorial systems that is useful in less deadline-driven environments, such as for production of weeklies or monthlies. Many of the features that help both journalists, editors, designers and production managers to make extremely tight schedules in newspaper production, are needed in efficient magazine production as well.

– **Paul Lindström**



*Rupert Firmstone at Censhare UK is pleased with the response on the introduction of the Censhare editorial system in the UK. This web-based solution integrates with both Indesign and Xpress as well as many other 3rd party solutions.*

# Baggage handling

**Earlier this year we looked at desktop preflighting programs. However, it's clear that preflighting is increasingly becoming something that is done in transit or that involves multiple operators, so for this issue we're looking at online preflighting solutions.**

The relentless pace of technological change in prepress has mostly been about introducing greater automation to speed up the production process. This has been behind the drive to adopt CtP and JDF, and is the major factor in web-to-print solutions, where files can be submitted and automatically passed through the production workflow ready for output to a platesetter or digital printer.

But this kind of automation relies on the files being checked and any errors being weeded out before the file gets into the production workflow. Sadly, experience has taught most printers not to rely on their clients to preflight the files. Instead, the ideal solution is to preflight the file online, according to the printer's specifications and before it gets into the production workflow.

Fortunately there are quite a number of these solutions to choose from. The newspaper sector is well catered for, with solutions such as ADFast from the UK Newspaper Society, and Adstream, used by many newspapers around the world, which has now acquired Quickcut. The Quickcut software offers newspapers a single place to put all their validation and publishing requirements, so that advertisers can deliver files according to the requirements of any newspaper around the world that's signed up to the system.

There's a growing number of systems now appearing that are aimed at general and commercial printers. As a general rule they break down into two types: those which carry out the preflight on the end users computer, and then transmit the file; and those which send the file to the printer's server where it is preflighted. David Dilling, European sales director for Markzware, says that regardless of which of these models is used, online preflighting can be defined as being "where the end user cannot interfere with the job after it's been approved."

Strangely very few preflight developers have yet implemented JDF, and most report very little customer demand for it. Still, it seems likely that as JDF becomes more prevalent in the industry, more people will ask for it. Most preflight systems allow printers to set up several queues for different uses, for example, separating out those files intended for digital or offset output, and JDF data would be an obvious way of determining file routing. This is especially useful in hybrid workflows with output to

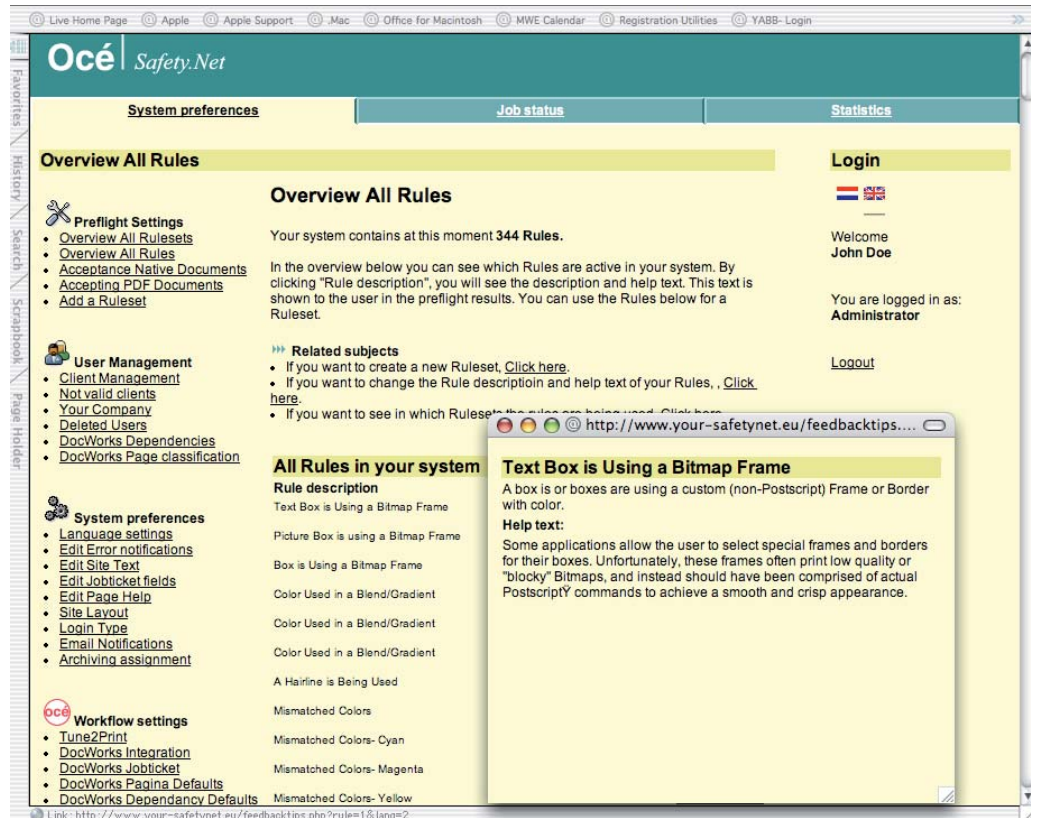
**Sadly, experience has taught most printers not to rely on their clients to preflight the files. Instead, the ideal solution is to preflight the file online, according to the printer's specifications and before it gets into the production workflow.**

conventional and digital presses, or in distribute and print models using numerous print engines.

One of the few companies that has implemented JDF for preflighting is German developer Onevision. Onevision's flagship product is Asura, a server-level automatic preflight system. Two years ago Onevision introduced Asura Enterprise, a web server which provides a secure way for Asura users to receive files over the web, and for those files to go directly into the Asura system. It includes Asura Direct, a simple program which Asura Enterprise users can distribute free of charge to their customers, and which will direct files from the content creator's computer, back to the Asura Enterprise system. It takes less than a minute to install and create a print queue. When a file is dropped into the Asura Direct print queue, a PostScript or EPS file (depending on how the Enterprise user has configured it) is created on the end user's computer, complete with embedded fonts.

It then uses the default browser to log onto the printer's copy of Asura Enterprise. The end user fills out some simple job ticket information, and the file is transmitted via HTTP using SSL encryption back to the printer's Asura Enterprise, which feeds it into the main Asura server. It's also possible for end users to skip Asura Direct and manually upload files to Asura Enterprise – it'll accept PDF, PostScript, EPS and TIFF.

Markzware has an online version of its Flightcheck program. One of the great advantages of Flightcheck is that it can preflight a wide variety of file formats, including native Quark Xpress and Indesign files. Dilling says it can be integrated into a prepress workflow, delivering files via FTP direct into a workflow, without the need for any formal integration. End users can download a desktop application from a printer's website, complete with the printer's own criteria for how to check the file. When the job is dropped onto the desktop icon, it's preflighted according to those criteria. If the file passes, Flightcheck collects the job, complete with all its fonts, images and so on, compresses it and delivers it to an FTP server. It then returns a report to the sender, and for those files that fail a preflight it will list those things that need to be fixed.

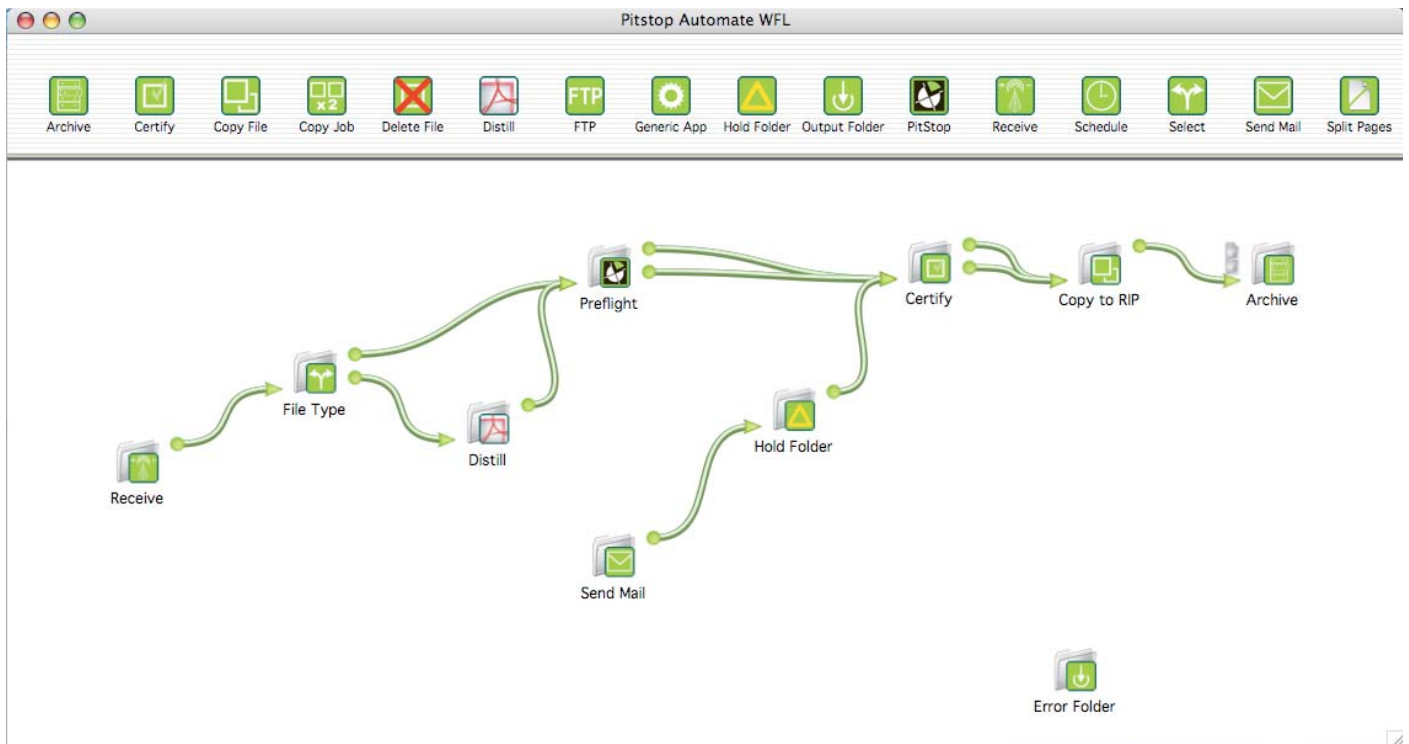


Markzware has worked with Océ to develop a solution for Docworks, called Safety.Net based on its Flightcheck Online technology.

At the printer's site, the back end server can be run off Linux and Mac OS as well as Windows. There's a kit of prebuilt templates, complete with basic preflight rule sets to help printers add it to their websites for customers to download.

Flightcheck does use XML, but not JDF, though Dilling says it is JDF-friendly: "We are not JDF-compliant but all of our formats are XML and we work in several JDF workflows. I think JDF and preflight go hand in hand." Markzware is working with a number of partners, including Océ which is building online preflighting technology into its Docworks workflow management solution for digital print rooms. At the moment this allows any MIS to link into the system and the next stage is to make it JDF compliant.

Enfocus' Pitstop Professional has been one of the leading desktop preflight solutions, but Enfocus also has two server-level versions, Pitstop



Server and Pitstop Automate. Both use Enfocus' certified PDF technology so that incoming Certified PDFs can be passed on without the need to check providing they have not been altered since their creation and last preflight.

*Pitstop Automate is a halfway house between Enfocus Pitstop Server and Artwork Systems Odystar workflow.*

Pitstop Server relies on the same Preflight Profiles and Action lists as the desktop version to test files, although, rather strangely, anyone with Pitstop Server will also need Pitstop Professional to set up and edit Action lists. It uses hot folders so it's easily integrated within virtually all existing workflows. You can have multiple hot folders, but it is reliant on feeding the file into the right hot folder, which requires some level of manual intervention as the system is currently unable to read JDF information.



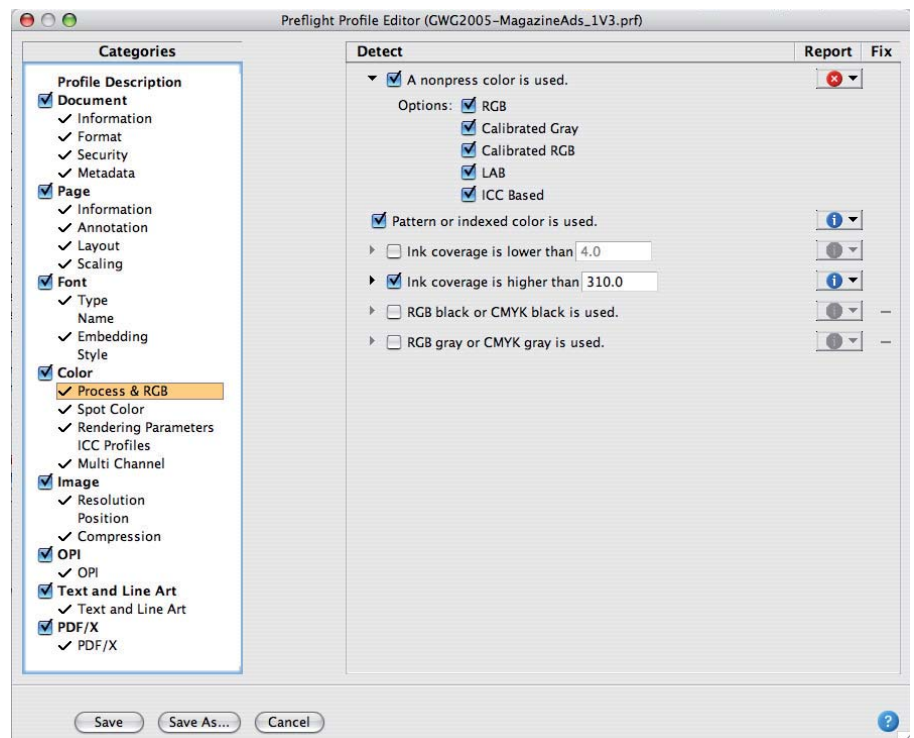
Version 4 is due for release in the first quarter of next year. This will handle the new Pitstop 7.0 and Acrobat 8.0 features, including the new PDF 1.7 file format.

Despite the family name, Pitstop Automate is a completely different system from Pitstop Server, although it does use the same preflighting technology. Automate uses technology from Odystar, the PDF workflow developed by Enfocus' parent company Artwork Systems. As such it can be seen as being a halfway house between Odystar and Pitstop Server. It is twice as expensive as Pitstop Server but goes further in that it will work with most common file types, including native files. It can also process them differently throughout the workflow depending on the type of file. It uses a number of components called gateways, for different processes, such as preflighting, or sending files via FTP. Job preferences are written down in a form of JDF, but the system is not able to read JDF data on incoming files.

Product specialist Bert Van Roigen says that if full JDF functionality was added to Pitstop Automate there would be little to distinguish it from Odystar. "We are trying to reach that part of the market that is not looking for a complete workflow solution, and which already has some functionality such as a RIP, imposition, colour conversion and so on. It's for people who want to automate what they have rather than buying a new solution."

Not surprisingly, Odystar also includes the Pitstop preflighting engine. A number of other workflows have also incorporated online preflighting. Kodak, for example, has developed an online preflighting module for its Prinergy workflow, called Prinergy automated preflight. Product manager Lawrence Geere says that unlike Kodak's desktop product, Prepare, the Prinergy module has been developed entirely by Kodak and does not include any Enfocus technology. This has also limited its ability to do some automatic correction of problems, as Enfocus owns some of the patents for this technology. Despite this it will fix all the obvious problems, such as correcting colour spaces, thickening up hairlines and substituting fonts.

Geere estimates that about 20 per cent of Prinergy users have taken this option, adding. "I think customers are getting more sophisticated with regards to preflighting and it's certainly a lot more useful to have that built into the workflow rather than as a standalone product."



*Kodak now has an online preflight option for its Prinergy workflow, developed entirely in-house and separate from its Prepare program which uses Enfocus Pitstop technology.*

▼ Screen has also introduced an online preflighting module with its Riteportal SE which allows a printer to make available a virtual print driver for clients to download. This includes Adobe's Distiller to convert files to PDF and also uses the Enfocus Pitstop technology for preflighting, before encrypting and sending the file to the originating printer. Bui Burke, sales manager for Screen UK, explains: "When you click on submit it will log on to the server at the printer's site with an FTP link. There is a JDF form for the customer to fill in so the file can carry with it all of the customer's requirements, paper stock, number of sheets, etc, so effectively it's the customers' own information that is going with the job into the system and then on its way to the design output."

The system has a degree of e-commerce in that it will also allow customers to reorder stationery, brochures and so on. It is built with JDF and although it's primarily designed for Screen's own Trueflow, it will work just as well with workflows from other vendors.

So, as we can see, there are a number of good online preflight systems around, and several excellent examples of vendors partnering together to implement fully rounded solutions. However, most vendors accept that it is also wise to re-check a file once it has been through the workflow to be sure that no fresh errors have been introduced into it, before final output.

– **Nessan Cleary**



# Full circle for operating systems

How many people care very much about what operating system their computer uses? We assume there might be some who feel quite strongly about this, but most computer users probably care little, as long as they can do their work, without too many hiccups to be blamed on the operating system. In case anyone has missed it, two new and important versions of popular operating systems are about to be released: Windows Vista and Mac OS X 10.5, or Leopard. There is also increased activity around Linux as well, with Microsoft declaring that it will support and even sell the Novell version of Linux.

So what's with the fuss about operating systems? There are some important changes to the wider computing landscape which is why these new introductions are so important. But first some thoughts on what might be important in a good operating system. Providing a base for a large number of attractive software applications? Probably. Being easy to use? Certainly. Being affordable, even cheap? Perhaps. Having a "cool" user interface, with nice graphics and animations? Obviously this has an appeal, and it's definitely part of both of the new operating systems from Apple and Microsoft.

Arguably the most important thing for an OS is that it be stable and safe. At the moment it is too early to say anything in that respect about either Windows Vista or Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. The consumer version (there are five) of Windows Vista hasn't been released as of this writing, and Mac OS X Leopard isn't due until late spring 2007. Nonetheless, based on the latest release candidate of Windows Vista, it seems to be stable, with many features that offer better security against malicious hackers.

Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard ought to be stable because it is the sixth version of the Mac OS X (including 10.0 Cheetah), and the second generation Mac OS built for the Intel processors. I have worked on both Mac and PC in parallel during most of my time in the graphic arts industry, so I think I am totally unbiased when I sit down in front of the computer. Over the years there have been strong points for both platforms, sometimes in favour of the Mac, sometimes in favour of the PC. Today they both use the Intel processors, so features like raw power and stability should be easier than ever to compare like for like. And to go by the looks of Windows Vista, Microsoft has yet again moved closer to the look and feel of the Mac OS.

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## Microsoft Windows Vista – more help at hand

The installation of Windows Vista was smooth and the computer has been running nicely with no crashes throughout our testing. On first impressions it's got a very good looking user interface, with the Windows Vista Ultimate version installed, and the new Aero look with animations and 3D effects switched on. Secondly, it is apparent that Microsoft has gone to great lengths to make the built-in interactive help very thorough and rich. Whenever you get into a situation where you are not sure how to proceed such as for example setting up network preferences or activating a printer, there is help at hand. And most of the time it's very relevant and really useful.

And then I started to explore the new sidebar, with small helpful utilities called Gadgets. And yes, for those familiar with Mac OS X those Gadgets look and work just as the Widgets in Mac OS X do. It's probably quite easy to develop cross platform Gadgets/Widgets, since most of them are written as Java scripts. More on Java later. PC-users will welcome Windows Vista because of its improved user interface. More significantly, according to IT-support people we've spoken to, they will switch over quite quickly because Vista, has a whole range of features to improve security issues. At least in theory.

## The Mac OS 10.5 Leopard – those “wow”-moments

Although I can only judge from the previews provided by Apple, it's clear that Apple has once again shown impressive creativity in regard to user friendliness. What especially charms me is a new automated back-up function called Time Machine, which, for me is the most impressive thing that comes with Mac OS 10.5 Leopard

Time Machine is a back-up function, which I admit sounds a little dull. But why is this function so impressive? Because it's so great, cool and easy to use Apple is likely to tempt thousands, perhaps millions, of users to improve their back-up habits hugely. According to Apple's own research only 26% of Mac users perform any type of back-up regularly. Scary. Mac OS X 10.5 hopefully will change that for the better.



The user interface in Windows Vista (to the right) has improved significantly. A new set of handy tools called Gadgets can be accessed through activating the Sidebar. This is very similar to the Dashboard function (to the left) of Mac OS X, where the tools are called Widgets.

▼  
 In essence the Time Machine keeps track of versions and never really deletes anything. It just moves older stuff out of sight, as well as hiding what is deleted and keeping it somewhere safe. If you regret what you deleted or edited, you just ask the Time Machine to take you back in time to the version you know you had before, at some point. Yes, it will use hard disk space, but this comes reasonably cheap today. And yes, to be really safe you need to connect to a separate or external storage now and then, but this will be prompted by Time Machine. Time Machine is so much fun that it just might help turn backing up from being a dull necessity of digital life, into a routine that we don't find a tedious bore.

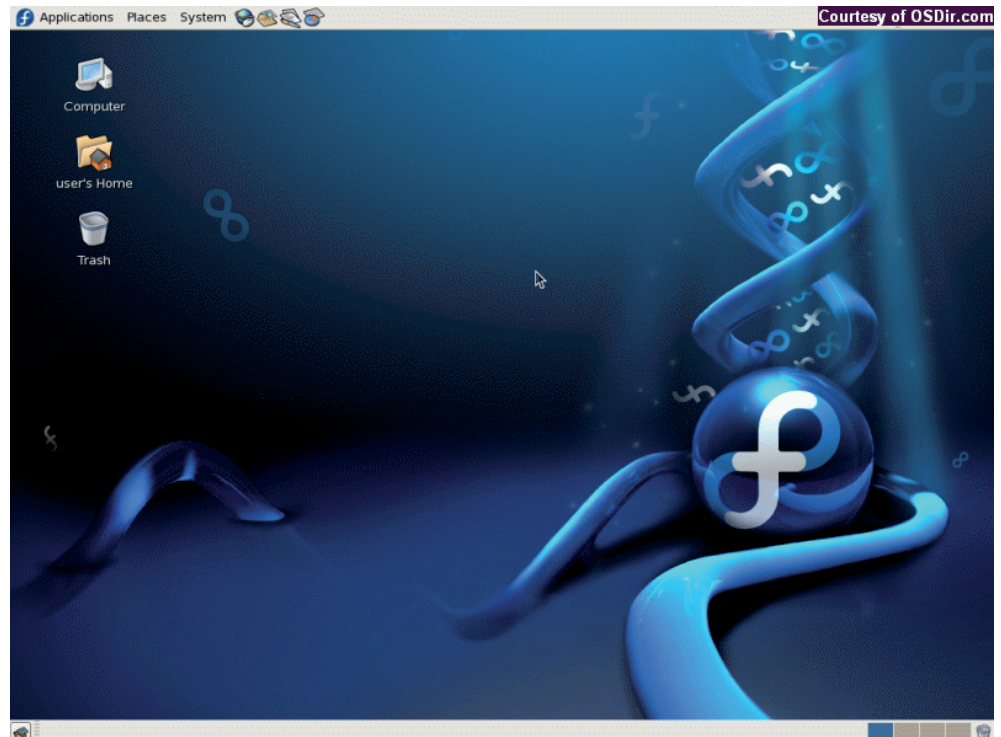
There are of course a range of other very useful technical improvements as well in Leopard, for example full support of 64-bit processing straight up to application level – a typical UNIX feature. This is coupled with a backward compatibility with 32-bit applications so Mac users can look forward to what looks like a smooth and pleasant transition to Mac OS 10.5 Leopard.

## Linux – the almost free operating system

In 2003 Novell bought one of the commercial Linux packages, SUSE Linux. Recently Novell launched version 10 of what is now called Novell SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop. Somewhat surprisingly Microsoft in November this year announced that it will both sell and support the Novell version of Linux. Leaving aside the turmoil this has caused in the Linux open source community, the question is, can we expect Linux to ever become popular on common users desktops?

I think not. Linux is UNIX, and UNIX is for computer professionals (and computer enthusiasts with plenty of time to search for and try out device drivers for Linux). But for web servers, and special application servers, Linux is and will continue to be very popular. And for good reasons too – it's stable, and it's cheap with a healthy development community.

Graphics arts systems companies who use Linux as their preferred operating system in commercial products include Dalim, Helios and Xinet, just to mention a few. What they have in common is that the end user doesn't need to touch Linux particularly, at least not knowingly. In many



*The Fedora Core 6 GUI (above). Fedora is the only completely free, fully featured distribution of Linux. It even has a fantastic installer (below) which makes it as easy to install as Windows or Mac OS. Ironically the Fedora project is supported and maintained by many commercial distributors of Linux, including Red Hat, who spearheaded the project. Info at <http://fedora-project.org/>*



cases users work through a Java client, on Mac and/or PC, and that's it. The operating system is "invisible". This brings us to Java, present in so many client-server applications.

## Cross-OS functionality – Java

I've taken some courses in both Basic and C++, but I'm not a programmer. I haven't actually done hands on Java programming and the first time Java was brought to my attention was when Simon Phipps of IBM stated that IBM would build all their applications on XML and Java from there on, at an XML conference in Granada, Spain, in 1999. I thought he was exaggerating a little, but now seven years later, it seems like the prediction was spot on. Walking the show floor at the IFRA newspaper exhibition earlier this autumn, Java and XML were part of almost every vendor's system solutions.

The Microsoft .NET technology is very similar to Java, and is probably to a great extent a result of NIH-syndrome (Not Invented Here). Since Sun is behind Java, Microsoft of course can't use it "as is" and since the Java technology is so flexible and useful, Microsoft needs something similar. So, alas, .NET. A Java-programmer can very easily adapt to .NET, at least so I'm told, and this means that client modules to server-based applications can be built in Java (or .NET). I don't know about cross platform compatibility of .NET, but Java is supported in both Mac OS X and all Unix and Linux OS-versions.

The user of a Java client probably thinks very little about what operating system he or she is using, or what programming language the application is written in. What matters is ease of use, and if the job at hand can be done efficiently with the tools and functionality offered by the client software. Typically these types of clients work via internet connections, with the web server hosting all the data needed.

Does this mean we are back to a "dumb terminal", "central server" scenario? No. Users want to be able to work locally when and if the server or the internet connection is down, but when the server is up again, or the internet connection is re-established, we want to synchronise our work with the other team members. And this is done at the server, over the network (and often via the internet).

## Hardware matters

The operating system is a computer's nervous system, vital for the computer to work at all. But performance is very much dependant on hardware components, the amount of RAM, type and number of processors, capacity of the graphics card et cetera. For this article we tested a Mac Pro, fitted with dual 3.0GHz Intel Xeon processors and 4GB of RAM, along with a Dual Core 2 equipped PC. It's clear that the Mac Pro with two processors is fast, actually almost ten times faster than a similar PC or Mac with just one processor. And still in some applications, like 3D ▶

**The user of a Java client probably thinks very little about what operating system he or she is using, or what programming language the application is written in. What matters is ease of use, and if the job at hand can be done efficiently with the tools and functionality offered by the client software.**



rendering, the performance on screen would not be satisfactory without a powerful enough graphics card. So a computer user still needs to understand how to balance the components in the computer, to achieve an optimal performance.

All of the operating systems mentioned here support multiple processors. For simple office work, multiple processors are overkill, but as soon as we want to render video, music or images, or manage production colour it's another matter. Fortunately multiple processor computers are no longer something just for advanced research centres. Today they are available at reasonable prices for 'normal' users.

So which operating system is best? Well as always, it depends. If you are a programmer, setting up web- or application servers, UNIX or Linux are obvious considerations. The everlasting Mac and/or PC (Windows) fight I pass on: use what you are comfortable with, feels stable and you think looks good. Those responsible for IT-support can and should calculate overall support needed for a certain operating system, and use those numbers when deciding. From an ordinary user's point of view both Windows Vista and Mac OS look and feel good so to some extent the choice is a matter of taste, as with many other things in life.

– **Paul Lindström**



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