



PrintExpress 4

PRINTEXPRESS BENEFITS

The hallmark of PrintExpress is rock-solid performance, reliability, scalability, uniquely consolidated architecture and resiliency. It provides greater workflow efficiency, fewer errors and a reduction in the time required for production. The automation offers increased throughput and gives faster turnaround, allowing extended deadlines as less time is required to process pages. Load balancing of resources e.g. RIPs, helps to overcome production bottlenecks and makes more efficient use of your resources.

Integration with planning and press control systems improves workflow efficiency and reduces production time. Digital workflow enables file processing in advance, which provides opportunities for better planning and eliminates idle time. A further benefit of installing PrintExpress is the reduced labor costs associated with automating your production workflow.

The ability to monitor live production leads to improved workflow control and better response time when problems do occur. By planning your system growth, increased levels of automation offer further benefits in quality control and increased throughput.

The tools provided by PrintExpress enable you to

PrintExpress is a fully automated; web enabled, managed and integrated digital workflow system for newspaper production. Integration with existing pre-press equipment provides a total production solution. The extremely flexible server/client architecture is based on proven technology and provides quality and reliability – essential in the fast moving media production environment. The modular format supports any size and format of workflow, from the tabloid and broadsheet production to the more complex 8-up pairing.

Automating your production brings increased throughput, greater workflow efficiency, fewer errors and reduced production time. These are all critical considerations for increasing production throughput and achieving the maximum use of your resources.

streamline your production leading to a better quality end product, which results in increased customer satisfaction and more business opportunities.

NEW FEATURES

Ink Optimization

The Ink Optimizer analyses the composite RIP data and reduces the amount of common gray component color ink used on a page by replacing it with black ink. This reduces the total ink coverage which in turn reduces the cost of color inks used to produce the page without compromising quality.

Larry Powell, Sr. Director-Production Operations, Dayton Daily News

“The Ink Optimization software provided by alfa CTP was simple to install and configure. It integrated with our existing CTP output management system seamlessly, and there was no manual intervention or maintenance required once it was deployed. The ROI for this project was realized in less than six months through ink savings.”

Web Enabled PrintExpress

Access to PrintExpress is now available via a web browser, which provides the ability to configure and monitor the workflow system remotely. New products can be set up via an Internet connection as there is no requirement for direct access to the configuration server. Operators can also monitor PrintExpress and carry out tasks such as releasing pages for production, soft proofing page content, checking for missing pages and re-directing output. In effect, PrintExpress is available, at anytime and from anywhere.

Product Status Monitor

The monitor functionality enables the operator to monitor planned production dynamically. The operator can quickly display the current status of a publication, no matter where it is in the production cycle. The operator now has the ability to monitor the whole production cycle, from receipt of pages, including version control, through to plate positioning on the press. The monitoring function can help identify late running pages and missing separations.

Plate Saver

The Plate Saver module prevents the duplication of identical plates. When only one plate/separation changes, the other color separations can be retained as there is no need to reproduce them at the same time as the changed plate. This impacts directly on the bottom line as costs are reduced through the production of less plates combined with fewer wasted plates.

CMYK Output Sorter

With the CMYK Output Sorter, plates are output from the CTP in the specific order required for press positioning. This will reduce overhead as there are fewer operator errors.

Press Planning

Press Manager is used to import press data for use in PrintExpress. Plans are received from planning systems or press control systems and are then used to automatically configure the imposer, plate annotation and monitor modules. A further facility provides the ability to specify the pages and sections that will be printed on each press. By using the Press Planning module, there is tighter integration between the press plan and the pre-press workflow.

Output and Workflow Interfaces

PrintExpress can drive many third party digital output devices including proofers, a variety of CTP and digital devices. In addition, PrintExpress workflow can integrate seamlessly with other existing workflows.

FEATURES

PrintExpress provides a managed workflow for a variety of file formats; PDF, PS and TIFF. The processing is carried out using a Client/Server architecture supporting cross platform compatibility using standard PC/SUN platforms. The system incorporates open connectivity to a wide range of devices. The modular based architecture of PrintExpress provides a flexible and scalable system. When additional functionality is required, modules can be added to upgrade the system to meet the new requirement. The introduction of digital workflow helps to streamline production, particularly when it is integrated with existing planning, pre-press equipment and press control systems. Integrating production systems speeds up the workflow process as it reduces the need for manual intervention.

PrintExpress includes the high performance, PS3, CPSI RIP. The PrintExpress RIP features load balancing across multiple RIPs, which ensures the most efficient use of resources. Multiple RIPs overcome potential production bottlenecks and also ensure that downtime is reduced as there are

always alternative resources available.



By using advanced production tools, PrintExpress provides faster processing for layouts, imposition and proofing. PrintExpress' software optimizes the processing speed and quality of secure transmission between locations.

FEATURES (continued)

From the beginning, when plans are created/imported, the automation facilities are impressive. Importing imposition schemes from press data automates their set up in PrintExpress. This capability includes setting up editions, pages, colors and plate positions for each press. PrintExpress can also be configured to handle editions, sections, dinks and fly sheets. Once processing begins there are numerous options for ensuring the system meets the operator's needs; from thumbnail status views of production, to auto routing of errored jobs so that corrective action can be quickly taken.

In addition, priorities can be changed, "on the fly" so that the right plates are output on time to meet production deadlines or quickly carry out plate remakes. By setting up job approval options, plate output is controlled by authorized users. Soft proofing locally or remotely provides the ability to check content and then approve/reject as required. Digital workflow also enables late arriving pages to be handled without the need for manual intervention.

The integration with press control systems enables PrintExpress to import imposition data for annotation on the plate. The ink pre-setting module generates ink data or CIP3 files for transfer to the PCS. There is also a facility to address the problem of fan out. By adding compensation values, color plate registration can be vastly improved, leading to better print quality.

During processing there are numerous ways of monitoring production data, either locally from the status screens or from any location via a web browser. Jobs can also be tracked against a production schedule, which enables post production analysis from production status and log data. The results of this analysis can be formalized into standard reports.

In conjunction with PrintExpress' impressive software capabilities, each system can have fault tolerance built in to ensure system failover and automated archive. This will enable continuous production with no downtime as hardware/software problems will be minimized as alternative

processing modules are always available. These redundancy solutions when combined with the many alternative upgrade paths for PrintExpress provide a long term solution for your workflow.

CONSOLIDATION

There has been a tremendous change in newspaper technology and the entire information technology community in the past decade as companies migrate into the concept of consolidating resources running locally under VM Ware or Cloud based systems. Prior to this, distributed computing was the darling of the IT world. Workflows were developed to run on individual workstations and servers. In this distributed environment, passing work from computer-to-computer to complete a single task was acceptable.

Then came PrintExpress.

The obvious advantages of consolidation are less hardware, less maintenance, centralized system management and fewer points of failure. Suffice it to say, distributed systems do not handle system backup and redundancy kindly or elegantly. Nor do they configure well in either on or off site server farm scenarios.

The bottom line is simple; more computers mean higher administration costs and more problems. In our new and more dangerous world, protecting, backing up and providing disaster alternatives for systems is another major strength of consolidated computing.

PrintExpress is designed from the ground up to consolidate system resources to meet the exact needs of the individual customer. It forms a client/server output management system using standard platforms and standard TCP/IP communication protocols. Each software module provides a specific function and forms an interlocking building block from which the whole system is built. The function of each module is described in this brochure.

CONSOLIDATION (continued)

The final system can be as large or as small as needed simply by providing the needed PrintExpress modules at as many locations as needed. Systems can easily be expanded or modified in function based on individual needs thanks to this modular approach.

PrintExpress provides the most comprehensive, flexible, modern workflow tools available. According to one customer, "We call it a 'toolbox.' We configure it do whatever we want." PrintExpress systems vary from basic bitmap management configurations to Cloud based systems being capable of page-a-second throughput supporting multiple sites all based on configuration.

alfa CTP's PrintExpress Consolidated Production Management systems remain the unparalleled leader in performance and reliability. Consolidated PrintExpress systems continue to keep its users in the forefront of system functionality, flexibility and the workflow management tools required to provide the continual, fault-tolerant, non-stop workflow necessary for daily newspaper production.

alfa CTP Systems prides itself on the level of support it provides to its customers, via email, telephone and by remote access. We provide extensive training courses either at our offices or on customer sites.

MODULES

ASSEMBLER

- Reposition files and add plate furniture and annotation, (not including page pairing)

BITMAP COLOR PROOF

- Output high resolution bitmap files on a network proofer. (ROOM)

BITMAP SOFT PROOF

- Apply ICC profiles to check color accuracy before plate production
- Integration with output of hard copy proofs
- Add approval capability to view content before output – less waste, better production quality and fewer mistakes

MODULES (continued)

BITMAP and PDF SPOOLER

- File routing to other processes
- File routing on job names
- Configurable queue display, customized to suit individual installations
- Tree display – ability to drill down for further information
- Simple process to start/stop queues, change priority, move queue, search and filter
- Thumbnail display of processing files
- Soft proofing of separations, pages, sheets
- Zoom facility
- File approval/rejection, Ability to add a message to the job file
- Priority changes on the fly
- Load balancing across resources

DESKTOP STATUS

- Display all status information within a single screen
- Use tabs to switch between each status screen
- Monitor multiple RIPs, CTP units etc. from a single location

FAILOVER & VIRTUAL HOSTING

- The PrintExpress Cluster option allows PrintExpress servers to be virtual hosts
- Allows continuous production in the event of server hardware failure

FAN OUT

- Correct registration errors and maintain color print quality
- Press position determines compensation factor
- Punch bender marks can be excluded from the compensation



INK OPTIMIZER

- Integral option within PrintExpress RIP
- Reduced file sizes to remote print sites
- Removes a portion of the gray color component in the colored ink separations and moves it to the black separation

MODULES (continued)

(INK OPTIMIZER continued)

- Expensive CMY Ink is replaced by inexpensive Black ink
- Color ink savings of 20% to 30%
- Faster ink drying produces less ink offset
- Reduced press makeready waste

INPUTS

- Input PostScript and PDF files using standard input protocols – Drop Folders, TCP/IP, AppleTalk
- Input 1 Bit TIFF files using drop folders

IMPOSER

- 1/2/4/8-up imposition for PDF or Bitmap files
- Color coded graphical display highlights imposition errors or missing pages
- Automatic imposition saves time and increases workflow efficiency
- add page furniture such as templates, barcodes for press/bending, crop marks, color bars, registration marks
- Accommodates fly sheets, dinks and spreads
- Reposition bitmaps imported from other systems

INK PRE-SETTING

- Generates ink coverage data including CIP3 for a variety of press control systems
- In house expertise to customize output for press control systems

OUTPUT

- Automatic output to a variety of CTP devices
- Automatically re-allocate if device fails
- Re-output plates affected by late changes, automatically
- Route by plate size automatically
- Maximize throughput to CTP

PLANNER

- Integration with current planning systems means a better return on investment
- Ability to import from ABB, DTI and EAE, (others available)
- Plans contain imposition, merging and routing information



MODULES (continued)

- Reduce the time required for set up by re-using existing editions
- Track progress of files through production

PRINTEXPRESS RIP

- High performance, Adobe PS3 CPSI RIPs
- Display status information
- Multiple instances of RIPs on a single platform
- Ability to load level files across multiple RIPs

TIFF EXPORT

- Generate 1 Bit TIFF files in various compression formats for use with output devices and proofing devices

PDF CREATE/EXPORT

- Can be used in the PDF Spooler to convert PostScript files into PDF format
- PDF files are generally smaller and are ideal for archiving/disaster recovery
- Smaller files also reduce transmission time to remote sites

PRESS MANAGER

- Provides press information for use in PrintExpress
- Towers, web and cylinder information used in plate annotation and imposition schemes
- Ability to specify the pages and sections that will be printed on each press

WEB PROOFING

- Check publications remotely
- Job approval/rejection
- Variety of views – thumbnails, individual separations, composite view
- Zoom facility for detailed examination of image
- Ability to add a message to the job file

HARDWARE SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM SPECIFICATION FOR SUN PLATFORM

Ultra Sparc processor platform
Solaris OS, version 10
Helios Ethershare is required to support AppleTalk input
DVD drive

MINIMUM SYSTEM SPECIFICATION FOR PC PLATFORM

Windows 2008, Windows 2003 Server, or later (32 or 64-bit)
Server versions of the above OS are required to support AppleTalk input (PAP input)
AMD Opteron (preferred) or Intel Xeon
TCP/IP Protocol
1GB RAM
4 MB or higher graphics card and monitor to support 1280 x 1024 resolution at 32768 colors for the dialogs to display correctly on screen
DVD drive

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

PrintExpress GUIs will work on Sun Solaris, Window XP, Vista and Windows 7, as well as OX X 10.4+



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