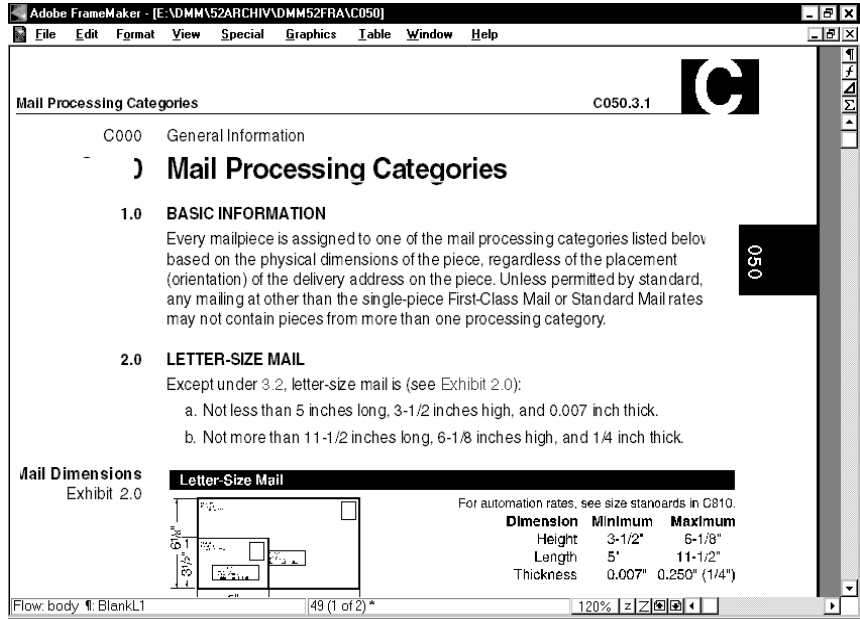


United States Postal Service

Production Time Reduced More Than 90 Percent for Mission-Critical Manuals Published to Multiple Media

Adobe® FrameMaker®
Adobe Acrobat®



Using Adobe FrameMaker software and features such as auto-numbering, cross-references, generated tables of contents, and PDFmark, the United States Postal Service has reduced production time of its mail manuals and streamlined publication to multiple media.

Key Benefits

- Searchable, CD-ROM-based manuals improve customer service for bulk mailing, which accounts for 54 percent of revenues and 70 percent of mail volume.
- Preparing the electronic publication file takes less than a day compared with the three weeks it took previously.
- FrameMaker software's intuitive user interface enables the editor to make changes, eliminating the need for a dedicated publishing specialist.
- Adobe FrameMaker and Adobe Acrobat software together enable creation of PDF files that can be used for printing hard copies or for electronic distribution.
- With Acrobat, the USPS can verify that all hyperlinks are correct, which improves product quality.

While neither rain nor snow deters the United States Postal Service (USPS), alternative delivery services, fax, and e-mail do pose a competitive challenge. To maintain an advantage, the U.S. Postal Service has intensified its focus on customer service. A key component of its strategy: an easily searchable electronic library of postal information published on CD-ROM and available on USPS local area networks using Adobe FrameMaker and Adobe Acrobat software.

A Single Solution for Electronic and Hard-Copy Publications

Bulk mailing accounts for 54 percent of revenues for the USPS, so the agency is particularly concerned with providing outstanding customer service to bulk mailers, such as First-Class mailers of 500 or more pieces, or Standard (formerly Third-Class) mailings of 200 pieces or more. The USPS provides instructions for all domestic mail in its Domestic Mail Manual (DMM). In

addition, an International Mail Manual (IMM) provides information about international mail. Both publications are about 700 to 800 pages in length, and are distributed internally and sold to customers. The manuals are updated twice a year; 100,000 copies of the DMM are printed. "The DMM and IMM are the core documents for the Postal Service," says Patrick McCabe, marketing specialist. "They answer such diverse questions as what qualifies as Standard mail, what are the minimum and maximum dimensions of a letter, and what is the price of sending a registered letter to Russia."

Previously, it required a full-time publishing specialist to produce the DMM; the software used at the time did not support hyperlinked PDF conversions. Therefore, to produce a CD-ROM version of the manuals, the USPS had to add links manually and prepare the document for electronic delivery.



Streamlined CD-ROM Production

The USPS sought a publishing solution that would enable it to produce files for hard copy and electronic publications in a single step. The solution: Adobe FrameMaker and Adobe Acrobat software. "FrameMaker and Acrobat address all of our requirements: ease of use, support for electronic as well as hard-copy publishing, and convenient information access by our end-user customers," says McCabe.

The USPS hired Matrix Press, Inc., of Richmond, Virginia, to design the FrameMaker templates, develop a prototype, and convert the DMM to a finished FrameMaker document. Matrix Press made extensive use of native FrameMaker features such as auto-numbering, variables, cross-references, generated tables of contents, and PDFmark. PDFmark allows derivative Portable Document Format (PDF) document information and behavior to be established as part of the FrameMaker document. Now, an editor updates the DMM with FrameMaker, and then uses Acrobat to create PDF files that are ready to be published in Postal Explorer. Postal Explorer is distributed internally via USPS LANs, and is also available to customers and smaller post offices on CD-ROM.

"The beauty of creating PDF files is that customers can use free Acrobat Reader software, included on the CD-ROM, to quickly search for whatever information they need," says McCabe. "The key benefit of Acrobat is speed and accuracy in CD-ROM production. We can verify that all links are correct, improving product quality, and we can print both text and graphics directly from the PDF file." The promotional letter for the Postal Explorer CD-ROM reads, "Postal Explorer is more than a reference guide....It's almost like having a full shelf of these publications—only better. Better

because by entering in a word or phrase, you can instantly find all references to it either in a single publication *or* across all the publications."

In addition to the DMM and IMM, Postal Explorer includes domestic and international rate calculators, postal zone charts, Java™-based postage statements, several additional publications in PDF, and a multimedia tutorial. Customers can also click links to go directly to the USPS Web site (www.usps.gov) for late-breaking information on a variety of topics.

To promote Postal Explorer, the U.S. Postal Service distributed 30,000 promotional copies to major customers. In addition, it has more than 15,000 copies on internal LANs. In January 1998, the agency began selling the CD-ROM at an introductory price of \$20, compared with \$30 for two issues of the printed DMM. Postal Explorer can be ordered by calling 800-654-1905.

Better Customer Service; Faster Production Times

Though customer service—not cost savings—was the primary goal of the program, the FrameMaker and Acrobat solution also slashed production costs. Producing the electronic version of the DMM now takes less than a day, where it previously took three weeks to add links to the manual. The agency no longer needs a publishing specialist to produce the documentation. "The USPS can use what basically looks like a word processor to make revisions to a complex document," says Charles Richardson, president of Matrix Press, Inc.

Postmaster General Marvin Runyon referred to the Postal Explorer CD-ROM in a September 1997 speech to major mailers: "Ever since I joined this organization, I have wanted you to be able to hold all of our

mailing guidelines in the palm of your hand. We have made it happen....We call it Postal Explorer....It is easy to use and has a powerful search engine. Now, when it comes to using and interpreting our mailing guidelines, we will all be on the same page."

Joint Effort Between Marketing and Information Systems

Postal Explorer represents a joint effort between the USPS marketing and information systems groups, having furthered both their goals. "We've made a commitment to become a customer-driven organization," says John H. Ward, marketing systems vice president. "Postal Explorer is an integral step in our efforts to deliver on that promise."

"Postal Explorer is more than a reference guide," adds Richard Weirich, vice president of Information Systems. "It gives customers handy computer access to information and tools to help them design mail to suit their needs."

"We can't put a price on making information access faster and more convenient," says McCabe. "Every customer and every piece of mail is important. If a customer has a question about one piece of mail or preparing a million-piece mailing, Postal Explorer provides accurate, complete answers—fast. FrameMaker and Acrobat in combination enable us to deliver convenient access to information when needed. With Postal Explorer, customers now have access to the same easy-to-use information that postal employees have."

United States Postal Service Systems At-A-Glance

Software:

Adobe Acrobat
Adobe FrameMaker

Hardware:

Pentium® Pro PCs running Windows® 95

Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704 USA

Adobe Systems Pty. Ltd.
Level 5, 18-20 Orion Road,
Lane Cove, NSW 2066, Australia

Adobe Systems Europe Limited
Adobe House, Mid New Cultins
Edinburgh EH11 4DU
Scotland, United Kingdom

Adobe Systems Co., Ltd.
Yebisu Garden Place Tower
4-20-3 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150-6017 Japan

World Wide Web
www.adobe.com

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