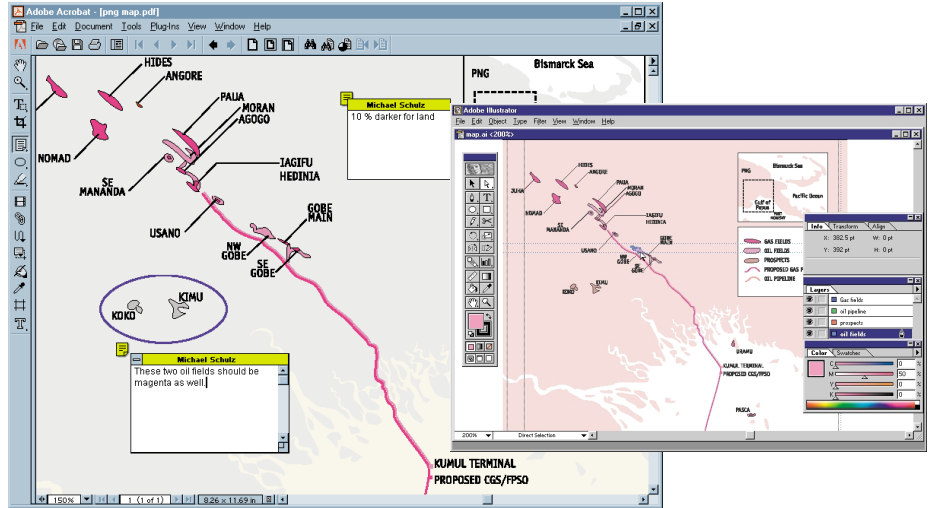


SOS Printing

Goal of Direct-to-Plate Printing Nears When Customers Submit Jobs as Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) Files

Adobe® Acrobat®



SOS Printing relies on Acrobat 4.0 to eliminate errors and streamline the print production process. For example, the software’s late-stage editing capabilities facilitate last minute changes to Adobe Illustrator® images embedded in a PDF file. Using Acrobat 4.0, SOS can simply click the image in the PDF file to automatically launch the application and make changes that are automatically captured and embedded in the existing PDF file.

Key Benefits

- Reliable PDF files reduce errors and shorten the prepress cycle for time-sensitive financial analyses.
- The Press Optimize option in Acrobat 4.0 ensures that customers choose the best settings for submitting print jobs in PDF.
- Acrobat 4.0 reduces prepress errors for SOS Printing with improved handling of TrueType fonts.
- Late-stage editing is simplified because SOS Printing can access embedded Adobe Photoshop® and Illustrator files from the PDF file.
- A magazine-publishing customer takes advantage of PDF to reduce prepress time by 70 percent.
- PDF files eliminate the need for unreliable, manual color separations and can be run straight to film.
- PDF files are small enough to be archived on SOS Printing’s Web server, for reliable on-demand printing that cuts costs.

To speed printing time—and strengthen customer loyalty in the process—Australia-based SOS Printing continually adopts technologies that enable the firm to move closer and closer to a fully digital prepress workflow. Training customers to use Adobe Acrobat software and requesting that they submit print jobs in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) is a key part of that effort. “Printing directly from the customer’s file to plate is the fastest and most economical process, for our customers and for us,” says Michael Schulz, art director for SOS Printing. “Acrobat software supports the goal of direct-to-plate printing by allowing customers to submit error-free PDF files that print correctly the first time. And when customers use Acrobat 4.0, we can simply ask them to select the Press Optimize option, which ensures the file includes all fonts, as well as the appropriate settings for print.”

With multiple locations in Australia and \$25 million in annual sales, SOS Printing is a

full-service prepress and print service bureau servicing 300 of the country’s largest companies. The company prints everything from business cards to four-color magazines to six-color books. Many SOS customers are in the financial services sector: meeting print deadlines is especially important to these companies because they are publishing financial analyses and reports, and investors tend to read only the first ones that appear in print.

Ability to Meet Deadlines

When design firms and in-house publication groups submit print jobs in native applications, usually created with Adobe PageMaker®, QuarkXPress, or Microsoft Office software, they often neglect to include fonts. “In about 90 percent of the files in native applications that we receive, something is wrong,” says Schulz. “That means we have to spend extra time and effort in prepress, which increases our costs, puts us in the awkward position of asking the customer to pay unexpected costs, and makes it difficult to meet deadlines. We



spend about 25 percent of our prepress time cleaning up mistakes, and it's nearly impossible to recoup the enormous time we lose."

SOS relies on Acrobat 4.0 software to eliminate errors of omission. For example, when one customer, a magazine publisher, submitted native application files, SOS Printing needed five days to create color proofs even when using its digital proofer. Now that the customer creates PDF files using the Press Optimize option in Acrobat 4.0, the process takes just one and one-half days: a 70 percent improvement. The Press Optimize option ensures that customers' PDF files contain all required information—embedded fonts, CMYK settings, and halftones—and print at the optimum resolution, eliminating the prepress delays and costs that accrue when SOS Printing has to request missing fonts or adjust settings. "The Press Optimize option creates a quality of PDF that can be reliably color separated by the tools we use today," says Schulz. When customers produce a PDF file, SOS Printing can color-separate it and run it straight to film. Some customers don't even expect to see a proof because they know from experience that the printed product will look just like the proof they viewed on-screen or from a printer.

Enhanced Workflow with Acrobat 4.0

The late-stage editing capabilities of Acrobat 4.0 streamline the prepress workflow at SOS even further. Before, when a customer's print job required last-minute changes in Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Illustrator files embedded in the PDF files, SOS Printing would have to open the native application to make the change, and then re-create the PDF file. "With Acrobat 4.0, we can simply click the image in the PDF file to automatically launch the application," says Schulz. "The changes we make are automatically captured and embedded in the existing PDF file. This can shave hours off the prepress process and help us meet our clients' tight deadlines."

The enhanced annotation options in Acrobat 4.0 software will also streamline online publishing for SOS Printing's customers. In the past, to comment on the PDF files of their online proofs, customers could only use sticky notes. Now they can comment more conveniently—and SOS can view the edits more quickly—with annotation features in Acrobat 4.0 such as the Underline Text, Highlight Text, Strikethrough Text, and the Pencil tool.

"We promote PDF to our customers because it creates error-free files that save us time and money. It speeds publishing turnaround time, reduces color-separation headaches, and increases satisfaction all-around by eliminating surprise error-correction costs. Acrobat 4.0 streamlines prepress even more, both with its Press Optimize option and by enabling us to more quickly perform late-stage editing."

—Michael Schulz,
Art Director,
SOS Printing

Archiving Manuals

Many customers of SOS Printing submit PDF files not only for printing, but also for archiving their artwork manuals, training materials, and market reports on SOS Printing's Web server, where they are available for on-demand printing. On-demand printing allows individual books to be printed so the unit cost per book varies only marginally from a short-run edition to a long-run edition, and avoids a company's risk of being caught with out-of-date manuals.

According to Bob Gardner, managing director of SOS Printing, "The small size of PDF files

and their reliability makes PDF files great for archiving. If we archived word processing documents, for example, we wouldn't have a reliable digital master because something unexpected could happen during printing."

Archiving PDF files for on-demand printing cuts costs for SOS Printing's customers, who no longer have to courier disks for on-demand printing. It also cuts costs for SOS Printing because the company spends less time proofing and can turn around print jobs more quickly—usually in one day instead of the two or three days required when customers submit native application files.

Increased Customer Satisfaction

"We promote PDF to our customers because it creates error-free files that save us time and money," says Schulz. "It speeds publishing turnaround time, reduces color-separation headaches, and increases satisfaction all-around by eliminating surprise error-correction costs. Acrobat 4.0 streamlines prepress even more, both with its Press Optimize option and by enabling us to more quickly perform late-stage editing."

SOS Printing Systems At-A-Glance

Software:

Adobe Acrobat
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe PageMaker
Adobe PageMill®
Adobe Photoshop

Prepress Tools:

Colour Central OPI Server
ScenicSoft Preps
Presswise
Quite Imposing (Acrobat Exchange® plug-in)
Scitex Remake

Hardware:

PCs running Windows® 95 and Windows NT®
Servers running Windows NT
Apple Macintosh computers
Scitex Brisque Impose
Scitex Brisque Proof
Dolev 800 Imagesetter
Iris Realist Digital Proofer
Scitex Spontane color laser printer
Xerox 40/40 color laser printer
Xerox Docutech printers
Xerox 6135 Production Publisher
Heidelberg two- to five-color presses

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