

VDP Roundup



[CoverStory]

Part I: Software

Printers and enterprise customers are finding more software solutions for VDP success.

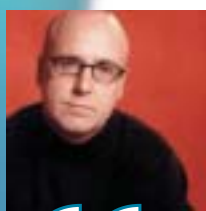
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What's Easier to Do, Harder to Sort Out?

Variable data printing (VDP) strategies are on a lot of minds and whiteboards these days. "More people are interested in it because it's getting easier to do," stated one industry pundit. The VDP market is as dynamic and diverse as the documents it helps generate. Dozens of companies offer scores of solutions, while users and services providers are busy creating applications by the thousands. This report highlights the diversity of the market and provides a snapshot of some of the many solutions available.

BY CARRO FORD WESTON

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DIDIER GOMBERT, CEO, OBJECTIF LUNE

Ease of use, quick deployment, seamless integration, open systems, single platform, Web-based capabilities, enterprise scalability, and multi-channel delivery—these are some of the terms vendors use to describe their VDP heaven. Since so many claim similar capabilities, what do they say makes their products unique?

Part of the uniqueness of PlanetPress Software from Objectif Lune comes from offloading the heavy lifting to the printer—any PostScript Level 2 printer to be exact. "When organizations need to modernize their workflows within current infrastructure, documents can be stored at printer level, receiving legacy data with no need for additional middleware and no change to system applications," explains Objectif Lune CEO Didier Gombert. "This grants users greater freedom in selecting the hardware they need, because they know the same documents will perform equally well on a number of different engines." A PlanetPress workflow module manages distribution and production of documents, locally or remotely, while providing options to create electronic versions for distribution via email and fax, and for archiving.

The Darwin VI Authoring Tool from Creo helps create full-color, variable information

postcards, coupons, newsletters, full-length proposals, and more, with each individually customized by text, image, color, chart, and layout. Working with QuarkXPress 6.0 for the Mac OS X, Darwin makes it possible to create, preview, and print full-color variable documents of unlimited length and complexity. Advanced pre-flight allows users to check for the longest combination of variable information text fields, in order to adjust the text boxes. The Spire color server and Creo Variable Print Specification file format combine to drive highly efficient processing of variable output. The Creo Variable Print Specification allows precise control of print criteria and output. The Spire color server, driving a range of digital color presses, interprets Creo's Variable Print Specification for high-speed output of even the most lengthy, complex documents.

From PReS to Proprietary

PrintSoft's flagship product, PReS Printer Resource Software, allows both simple and complex layouts with text, pictures, data-driven graphics, barcodes and variable data. "Users can create a document in any output format for printing or electronic publishing," explains Paul White, PrintSoft Director of Marketing. "PReS Designer, the design front end, lets users rapidly create complex variable data documents in real-time featuring dynamic graphics using DTP, drag-and-drop techniques. The product also has a scripting language for more complex applications. PReS drives printers in their native language at rated speed, and it does real-time IPDS output, something that some competitors do not do."

Nearly 70 percent of PrintSoft's 6,000-plus licenses are held by service bureaus, but many service bureaus have turned out their own proprietary versions of the VDP tools they need for their customers.

IXT Solutions uses its proprietary technology platform to transform standard

output generated by billing information systems into fully customized documents. The company is focused on two verticals: healthcare and retailers.

"Our integrated technology and production platform enables us to convert standard billing output into fully customized, patient-friendly documents delivered in the most effective manner. Our uniqueness is driven by our proprietary platform, which provides all services from within IXT's core architecture."

One reason VDP solutions have grown more popular is that vendors have paid attention to market trends, such as the desire for integrated systems and workflow, and processes that extend beyond the print room. "The trends we see are that organizations are looking for help beyond creating a variable document for print or electronic delivery. The customers we talk to are looking to manage the entire customer communication process," notes Group 1 Manager of Market Development, Clarence Hempfield. "Group 1's Customer Communication Management (CCM) software is unique because it is not just a VD application, but rather it is a true customer communication management solution that simplifies everything from accessing and manipulating data to document creation, distribution, vaulting of data and documents, and replenishment."

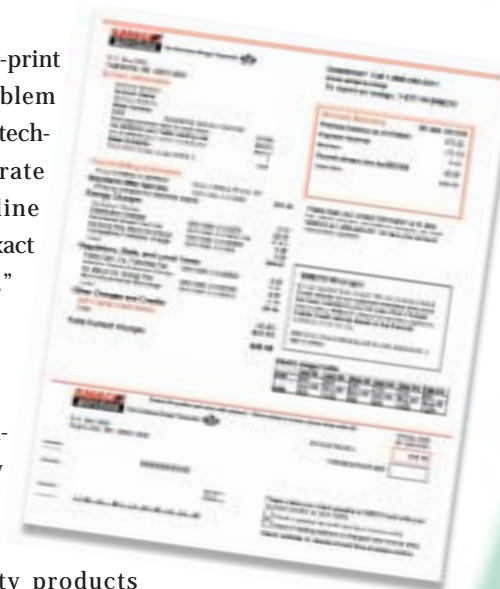
"Our early customers are adding on capacity, and applications are getting very creative," says Alice Fackre, Pageflex Product Marketing Manager. To accommodate this burst of creativity, Pageflex lets documents flex to handle variable content in a single layout. "Easy-to-use and easy-to-deploy are the hot buttons, along with integration with existing infrastructures, everything from order management to CRM and DAM systems. With Pageflex, multiple data sources can be used in a single variable data project, for instance, data coming from a Web form, input from a CRM system, and content from

a DAM system. For Web-to-print applications, one key problem solved by the use of Pageflex technology is providing accurate online previews and online editable documents with an exact match to the printed output."

One Platform, Many Possibilities

Another aspect of the vast variable market is represented by solutions like DesignMerge from Meadows Publishing Solutions. These specialty products enhance the capabilities of other tools to better play in the variable data arena. "We are the premier extension for QuarkXPress, offering capabilities unmatched at our price point and the only cross-platform VDP product for QuarkXPress," explains Jeff Cain, DesignMerge OEM and Channel Manager. "We are in the process of offering the same capabilities as a plug-in for Adobe's InDesign." Further differentiation comes from cross platform support for Mac OS9 and OSX, Windows 98/NT/2000/XP, and virtually all VDP languages. Capabilities like CopyFit, GroupPicture, rules, sequencing, bar coding, and multiple VDP language support offer added value.

"GMC has responded to the convergence of applications today by broadening the capabilities of PrintNet to handle the needs of three variable document types: promotional printing for sales and marketing, one-to-one printing such as direct mail and benefits packages, and transactional output, all from one platform," says Rene Mueller, CEO of GMC Software AG. "Comprehensive, integrated PrintNet capabilities allow our customers to go from raw data editing, to layout, composition, test printing, production printing, and final finishing." The software makes it easier to proof tough variable content applications using live data, something



Statement produced with PrintSoft Americas' PReS Printer Resource Software.



In retail, the opportunity is to convert standardized output into personalized credit statements."

LYLE BEASLEY, CEO, IXT SOLUTIONS



Creo's Darwin tools allow users to create, preview, and print variable documents of unlimited length and complexity.



LEVERAGING VDP SUCCESS ACROSS MANY VERTICALS

Finance

>>Creative Cross-Selling

Use of variable data isn't limited to marketing messages or account balances. For The Principal Financial Group, VDP involves on-the-fly, data-driven selection of images, logos, and fonts. The Principal Financial Group is the nation's largest 401(k) administrative services provider.

With retail banks now free to offer insurance products, and insurance companies able to provide mutual funds, home equity loans, and other investment options to their customers, statements were an opportunity to cross-sell newly available services. The Principal Financial Group recognized that market changes had made account statements key tools for strengthening long-term customer loyalty.

Group 1's design partner, Information Design Associates, helped The Principal Financial Group redesign their defined contribution participant statements to make them more usable and attractive. The new statement is printed on an 11 x 17 sheet and folded, creating a four-page booklet. Headings were enlarged to lead readers to important data-driven information such as account balance and a personalized rate of return for the reporting period. The Principal Financial Group added dynamic color pie charts to display asset allocation and total account balance by risk category. The new statement also enables them to co-brand the statements for commercial accounts by adding company logos on the fly.

The Principal Financial Group was using COBOL programs with embedded DJDE commands to produce pension and 401k statements. These programs couldn't support the new design incorporating more powerful variable content, which included full-color dynamic graphics. A single DOC1 application using just one set of rules composes 1.5 million statements in Postscript for printing on nine Xerox 2060s and an equal number of PDF statements for archival and reprint purposes.

Graphic Arts

>>Making Customers More Competitive

The PLM Group is one of Canada's fastest growing full-service commercial printers. Advertising agencies, plus end users in retail, financial, and automotive industries, rely on PLM to make variable data-based campaigns attractive, effective, and on time.

As a direct marketing partner for customers, variable messaging capabilities are extremely important to PLM's strategy. "Timely, relevant communication is becoming more and more critical to the success of businesses today," says Rob Seccareccia, VP of Digital Services for PLM Group. "Solutions that enable first-to-market positioning and cost reductions are the most valuable."

PLM uses a combination of PrintNet T Triple Suite document design and composition software from GMC Software, and a suite of PrintNet Web modules.

"With our document design, composition, and Web tools, PLM gains opportunities to streamline workflow, improve turnaround of print-on-demand applications, and save costs," Seccareccia notes. He anticipates increasing efficiencies of operation as much as 25 percent. "We have more power and flexibility to tailor content, messages, and images to the exact requirements of our clients. We also can tap into an extensive range of data sources."

Web-based capabilities help PLM achieve significant time and cost savings by eliminating courier services to deliver hard copy proofs. "We can show clients a more convenient Web proof," Seccareccia notes. In addition, each document works exactly the same way in the Web-viewed variable data proof as it will in actual production. As a result, costly errors in production runs are greatly reduced.

Insurance

>>Growth Equals Re-engineering

Americo Life, Inc. provides over \$44 billion of life insurance protection to more than 850,000 policyholders, with new ones coming on every day.

New premium revenues increased 28 percent in 2002, and 83 percent in 2003. To support the rapid growth, the company needed to re-engineer its processes to more efficiently produce personalized, compliant policy packages and enable more rapid roll out of new products.

xPression from Document Sciences helps the insurer leverage all forms of content and data within Americo's enterprise IT systems to produce policy-related documents. xPression streamlines policy creation and delivery by enabling a single platform for high-volume print policy production, as well as real-time delivery of policy-related documents that can be published, archived, and delivered through electronic channels.

By automating Americo's policyholder communications and setting up a centralized rules repository, the number of manual steps needed to issue and underwrite policies were reduced by 80 percent, increasing workflow productivity and efficiency. Through the impact of this reengineering effort, Americo projected first year savings alone of approximately \$450,000.

By issuing policies faster, more than 8,000 Americo agents nationwide get paid sooner, which ultimately translates into increased customer service and greater net premiums.

Retail

>>Customer-Centric Marketing

Faced with an erosion of their existing credit card base, fewer annual transactions per active accounts, and a reduction in overall portfolio balance, Dayton, Ohio-based retail giant Elder-Beerman decided to take strategic actions to improve their credit card program. Their approach was to marry intensified new account acquisitions with a customer loyalty program that coupled specialized incentives with enhanced, marketing-driven customer statements.

A successful customer loyalty program hinged on the company's ability to segment customers into distinct groups and intelligently market to them based on their specific buying habits. Elder-Beerman's existing credit system was extremely robust, but lacked flexibility. While they were using the statement to communicate with their existing customers, all customers receiving the same promotional message and inserts.

What they were really looking for was the ability to create personalized customer statements. They discovered that the necessary custom programming required to get these results from their existing billing program was cost prohibitive. With IXT Solutions, they found a choice they could afford.

IXT automatically converts Elder-Beerman's standard billing files into statements and letters designed specifically for each customer, with no custom programming required. The one-to-one segmentation of personalized messages and coupons transformed a monthly financial statement into an extraordinary marketing tool.

With IXT's personalized credit statements, Elder-Beerman now delivers effective, targeted messages directly on each credit statement each month. "Our customers have responded positively, with significant increases in both card usage and credit sales growth," said Steven Lipton, Elder-Beerman SVP/Controller.

Retail

>>Variable Data Delivers for Pizza Promotion

Variable data technology puts customization in the hands of local franchises for a successful campaign that is delivering tasty results for Pizza Hut. This is one of many examples of variable data innovation to be found in the PODi searchable online database of best practices in digital printing.

Pizza Hut's research indicated higher numbers of working mothers were experiencing the strain of work and household responsibilities. By 4:00 PM, many of these moms were still not sure what to serve for dinner, and the drive home was a good opportunity to influence their decision.

The resulting SunVisor Value marketing piece folds to accommodate the sun visor in a family vehicle. Attached to each piece are a number of coupons that reference the specific Pizza Hut restaurant in the customer's area. Each store location can customize and order specific print runs with their location information, predetermined offers, and quantities. Currently 130 locations are ordering 500,000 customized pieces on a quarterly basis.

Originally, the concept was tested in the Atlanta market, and results demonstrated that participation rates, total bill, and the return on investment for the SunVisor product were significantly higher than for traditional take-away promotion products.

Currently, over 130 restaurants are participating in the program. With a greater than 700 percent ROI and weekly sales \$5,000 higher per site than other campaigns, Pizza Hut and their franchises are very excited about the effectiveness of this campaign.

SunVisor Value achieved a redemption rate of 18 percent versus the eight to nine percent for traditional box top promotions. The redemption rate, when combined with an average guest check of \$14.62, results in per restaurant sales of at least \$5,000 greater than with other promotions. These results provided an ROI of 707 percent, nearly 300 percent greater than the next best product tested.

VDP SOFTWARE PROVIDERS

MANUFACTURER	PRODUCTS	CAPABILITIES
Creo www.creo.com	Darwin Desktop	Makes authoring process simple and intuitive, with no need for scripting or programming. Final output can be printed on any PostScript printer while minimizing the spooled file size.
	Darwin Pro	Enhanced feature set for more complex job includes support for Darwin Driven Graphics, which extends the range of complex variable documents beyond variable text, colors images and pages to data-rich diagrams, charts and bars.
Document Sciences Corp. www.docscience.com	xPression	Delivers any personalized business content across the enterprise in real-time, in high volume, through multiple output channels simultaneously such as print, Web, and email. It places open component-based architecture (XML/J2EE) at the core of its solution.
Exstream Software www.exstream.com	Dialogue	Complete software suite is for creating, personalizing, and delivering fully personalized customer communication. It combines personalized document creation, campaign management and tracking, and multi-channel delivery. It has more than 50 fully integrated modules, a rapid Web application development environment, and browser-based design interface.
GMC Software AG www.gmc.net	PrintNet T Triple Suite	Product for business transaction, promotional, one-to-one communications. PrintNet OMPProduct for enterprise output management
	PrintNet 3	Product for variable document generation, optimized for direct mailing applications
Group 1 Software www.g1.com	Customer Communication Management Software (CCM)	CCM simplifies processes-from gathering and manipulating data to document creation, distribution, vaulting, and replenishment-while keeping information accessible and secure. It produces, delivers, and manages on-demand messages and documents through e-channels or more traditional high-volume print and mail applications.
IXT Solutions www.ixt.com	IXT Transform	Transform converts existing patient billing files into fully personalized patient-friendly communications without custom programming or costly time delays. IXT Archive Archive offers secure and immediate access to original customer data, all transformed data, and resulting documents produced by IXT. Is the foundation for the IXT View portal to view processed documents online. IXT Deliver Deliver physically prints, folds, inserts, pre-sorts, and delivers each piece of mail to the U.S. Postal Service on a next-day basis.
Meadows Publishing Solutions www.meadowsp.com	DesignMerge/Graphic Arts	CopyFit Automatically shrinks or expands text to fit text box: ensures no lost copy from text overflow. GroupPicture: embeds a variable QuarkXPress doc within an QuarkXPress doc. Sequencing sorts data in the merge to achieve maximum paper utilization and manages order of final printed pieces for bulk mailing rates. Multiple VDP Languages: Use the most efficient language for application. Supports Optimized PostScript (standard) or opt for VIPP, PPML, VPS, JLYT, or Barco/Zeikon Book Ticket. Cross Platform: Mac OS9 & OSX, Windows 98/NT/2000/XP
Objectif Lune www.objectiflune.com	PlanetPress Suite	Suite enables design and printing of transactional and variable content documents in high volumes or on-demand. Electronic delivery options-via email or fax-and integrated archiving, all using current or legacy processing and print hardware infrastructure. PlanetPress Watch Automated workflow tool captures and routes documents.
	PlanetPress Image	Automatically generates PDF, TIFF, or JPG files for email and archive.
	PlanetPress Search	Locates and retrieve indexed PDF files created with PlanetPress Image.
	PlanetPress Fax	Transmits documents through a fax board or server.
	PrintShop Mail	Easy-to-use, entry-level tool for variable document design and printing.
Pageflex, a division of Bitstream, Inc. www.pageflex.com	Pageflex Persona	Allows sophisticated variable data design in a desktop application.
	Pageflex Storefront	Complete solution for an e-commerce Web-site drives customized and personalized document ordering.
	Pageflex .EDIT	Enterprise solution provides unique online editing capability for document customization.
	Pageflex Mpower	Enterprise solution offers database-driven and Web-form driven sophisticated personalization.
PrintSoft Americas, Inc. www.printsoftamericas.com	PReS Printer Resource Software	Supports simple and complex document layouts that include text, pictures, data driven graphics, barcodes, and variable data. Has user interfaces for Microsoft Word environments and template Wizards for designing layouts.
	PReS Designer	WYSIWYG design tool.
Saepio Technologies, Inc. www.saepio.com	Agile Media Technology	Agile Media Technology draws on central application servers (from a customer or Saepio), channel databases, and image repositories to enable local market assembly, customization, and retrieval of advertising, sales, and marketing materials.
	FreeFlow Variable Information Suite	The software turns variable data and images into high-value variable documents at at production speeds. It also enhances VDP performance through the use of cached object elements, dynamic text flow, data-driven graphics, data formatting, conditional processing, and workflow improvements. The suite uses open system standards to achieve optimal throughput and efficiency across a wide variety of PostScript printers including mono-chrome, highlight color, and full color systems.
Xerox Corporation www.xerox.com	easy-vi Customized Fulfillment Solution featuring iWay by Press-sense	Xerox easy-vi featuring iWay is an entry level solution, enabling Web-based end-to-end information and workflow management, facilitating productive variable information and short run documents for both the printer and document requestor. The solution includes installation, server, customer training, software, samples, and support for an in-house implementation, and addresses both printers and print buyers. On the customer side, easy-vi is a template-based ordering system that supplies various innovative means for placing orders as well as for approving and tracking jobs and monitoring delivery schedules. On the printer-side, easy-vi is a full production management tool, as well as an information management system.
	uDirect	Developed specifically for the Adobe InDesign CS, uDirect enables creative professionals to produce personalized, visually-rich VDP documents that meet sophisticated design and one-to-one marketing requirements, right within the native InDesign environment. It is the first stand-alone desktop solution for Mac or PC that is completely integrated into InDesign as a plug-in and is fully compatible with XMPie's award winning PersonalEffect system. It provides the individual designer with a self-contained software package with high-end variable design capabilities at an attractive price. Allows unlimited number of variable elements and dynamic design objects, automatic definition of business rules, live linking to a local data source, real-time previews, and Multiple output formats.
XMPie www.xmpie.com	uDirect	Developed specifically for the Adobe InDesign CS, uDirect enables creative professionals to produce personalized, visually-rich VDP documents that meet sophisticated design and one-to-one marketing requirements, right within the native InDesign environment. It is the first stand-alone desktop solution for Mac or PC that is completely integrated into InDesign as a plug-in and is fully compatible with XMPie's award winning PersonalEffect system. It provides the individual designer with a self-contained software package with high-end variable design capabilities at an attractive price. Allows unlimited number of variable elements and dynamic design objects, automatic definition of business rules, live linking to a local data source, real-time previews, and Multiple output formats.

not every solution can do, and GMC was an early provider of a PrintNet version for Mac environments. PrintNet offers a complete line-up of online capabilities, including proofing and job submission.

Dialogue Software from Exstream gives the ability to create any kind of document on any scale, a capability not all VDP solutions have at high volumes, says Exstream Vice President of Marketing Kelley Sloane. Exstream's enterprise personalization gives customers one solution on a single platform to create all their communications. She adds that their technology helps cut the time companies spend creating or modifying applications by 70 to 80 percent. "The product is so robust, users don't have to build on extra programs for different functionality. It's all there. Benefits are reduced costs and shorter time to market. Our enterprise personalization solutions allow companies to get to market up to 60 percent faster, reduce development and delivery costs by as much as 80 percent, and improve customer retention through more relevant and timely information."

The drive to standards-based workflow is a major factor not just for VDP, but the entire digital document universe. "To make the transition to standards-based technology, organizations want to easily convert existing applications to the new open environment without the extended pain of trying to evolve their technology. They don't have time for that," says Scott Samuels, Director of Corporate Marketing for Document Sciences Corporation. "Document Sciences has automated conversion solutions that enable customers to make this transition rapidly and efficiently. Document Sciences delivers real-time, interactive content processing to help organizations realize productivity benefits, cut costs, and increase competitiveness. Content processing within our award-winning xPression architecture automates the design, creation and multi-channel delivery

of highly customized documents in real time or high-volume batch print."

Marking Milestones

2004 was an active year for players in the variable data market. Some of their highlights include acquisitions, product launches and enhanced capabilities. Document Sciences introduced Version 2.0 of xPression in November with a brand-new, standards-based composition engine, Unicode capability, and support for two new platforms: Linux and JBOSS. Meadows Publishing Solutions expanded support to include Mac OSX, Windows XP and more VDP languages. Creo made its solution available in two configurations previously available as one package: Darwin Desktop for routine variable applications and Darwin Pro for more complex work. Pageflex Storefront was announced at Drupa in May, 2004. Later at GRAPH EXPO, Pageflex released new features for outputting personalized HTML emails and personalized Web microsities, in conjunction with personalized print communications. It has also been a busy time for Group 1 Software. The DOC1 Series 5 was launched in April, 2004, winning an Xplor Brazil Excellence Award in the process. In July, 2004, Group 1 Software was acquired by Pitney Bowes, and the Group 1 CCM solution was launched at Xplor in 2004.

Objectif Lune released major upgrades to the PlanetPress Suite in 2004. The complete product line was localized in five different languages and modified to handle double-byte character sets and fonts, making it a more global solution. Objectif Lune got more global in other ways, adding offices in Germany and Australia, and acquiring Netherlands-based Atlas Software and its PrintShop Mail offering.

Document Sciences headquarters in Carlsbad, CA.



[Cover Story]



Pageflex lets documents flex to handle variable content in a single layout. "Easy-to-use and easy-to-deploy are the hot buttons, along with integration with existing infrastructures, everything from order management to CRM and DAM systems. With Pageflex, multiple data sources can be used in a single variable data project, for instance, data coming from a Web form, input from a CRM system, and content from a DAM system. For Web-to-print applications, one key problem solved by the use of Pageflex technology is providing accurate online previews and online editable documents with an exact match to the printed output."—Alice Fackre, Pageflex Product Marketing Manager

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Product Debuts Expand VDP Choices

In October, 2004, Exstream Software debuted Dialogue Anywhere, to be available in January, 2005. Exstream partnered with Macromedia to build these Internet applications around a rich user interface. "This fully integrated browser-based design tool allows anywhere, anytime marketing, such as creating a variety of marketing messages or campaigns to be included at run time," explains Sloane. "Marketing or operations people in remote sites can control content and target it on demand, such as going on the Internet to create rules for last-minute changes to a 401(k) statement."

PrintSoft Americas offered a sneak preview of their new Hybrid Mail System at Xplor, with shipments in the first quarter 2005. Hybrid Mail provides automation for all printed communications. "In the corporate enterprise, the PrintSoft Hybrid Mail system consolidates personalized communications where they can be efficiently and cost-effectively processed," says White. "Instead of manually printing, addressing, stamping, and posting a desktop communication, Hybrid Mail automatically routes communications from the desktop to a more efficient production environment geared to mass one-to-one communication processing." The solution has been in use at the Australia Post for a year.

Xerox Corporation's FreeFlow Variable Information Suite of software turns variable data and images into high-value variable documents at production speeds. It also enhances variable data printing performance through the use of cached object elements, dynamic text flow, data-driven graphics, data formatting, conditional processing, and workflow improvements. The suite uses open system standards to achieve optimal throughput and efficiency across a wide variety of PostScript printers—including monochrome, highlight color, and full color systems.

The company's easy-vi Customized Fulfillment Solution featuring iWay by Press-sense is

an entry level solution, enabling Web-based end-to-end information and workflow management, facilitating productive variable information and short run documents for both the printer and document requestor. The solution includes installation, server, customer training, software, samples, and support for an in-house implementation, and addresses both printers and print buyers. On the customer side, easy-vi is a template-based ordering system that supplies various innovative means for placing orders as well as for approving and tracking jobs and monitoring delivery schedules. On the printer-side, easy-vi is a full production management tool, as well as an information management system. Benefits include increased service to customers, with the ability to order and price documents 24/7. There's a decrease in time to prepare documents for pre-flight, and because the process is automated, it isn't as prone to repeated call backs for more information or corrected files.

Users range from commercial printers utilizing easy-vi to maintain a productive customer relationship with variable information (VI) and short run print jobs, to print providers who provide short run and VI jobs as their main focus.

Up and Running—At What Cost?

Costs to deploy VDP solutions cover a lot of territory, with quite a range from low end to high. In almost all cases, there is no set pricing. Each quote depends on the customer's situation. For less than \$4,000, one can have DesignMerge with Optimized PostScript, for Mac or Windows. For around \$2,000, one can acquire Persona, a desktop application from PrintSoft.

Objectif Lune's PlanetPress is licensed on a per printer basis. The price is a function of the printer's speed as part of a defined category and the number of printers within that category. Depending on the number of printers and modules required, average

start up pricing is \$5,000. The price goes up with the speed of the printer and is driven down with by volume. One design tool is included for each represented speed category and volume discounts start with a quantity of two. The other modules of the PlanetPress Suite (PlanetPress Watch, PlanetPress Image, PlanetPress Fax, PlanetPress Search, and PlanetPress iWatch) are licensed per server or host.

GMC Software offers licensing plans for its PrintNet products. New users can get started for under \$30,000, but a \$75,000 investment is typical. With PrintSoft's modular PReS software, a typical installation is less than \$50,000. Pageflex Storefront with all options, including e-commerce, form-filling customization, free edit customization, and data-merge personalization, costs \$65,000. Mpower and .EDIT enterprise solutions are priced based on configuration, with typical costs ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000. Moving deeper into the high end, pricing for Document Sciences xPpression varies depending on the customer's enterprise IT environment, applications and desired configurations. An entry level version starts at approximately \$150,000.

Exstream Software uses a value-based pricing model for small companies to large enterprises, depending on output requirements, document application needs, number of users, and enterprise integration. At the low end, a one-time perpetual license can be purchased for around \$40,000 to \$60,000, or \$1600/month as a subscription. Solutions at the highest end for the most complex organization and requirements could range over one million dollars. The average for a large enterprise is \$200,000 to \$300,000.

The ability to implement and use VDP solutions may be getting easier, but given the breadth of today's solutions and their many variables and differentiators, the decision of which one to use may just be getting harder. **DPS**

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