

Advanced Workflow Automation and Process Management



Automation Engine

Automation Engine sets a new standard for prepress workflow automation. It is a new modular workflow server with dynamic workflows that are easy to set up and operate.

Automation Engine ensures increased efficiency and throughput and saves time and money. It is, by all standards, an exceptional answer to the daily challenges of print professionals who need to increase quality, reduce errors and drive cost out of the process.



At the heart of your prepress

Automation Engine is an enterprise-ready workflow that enables unparalleled automation with rock-solid quality control. Automation Engine comes with extensive MIS integration capabilities and an excellent scalability. Using database driven job management, Automation Engine serves as the heart of any size prepress production operation.

Through Mac or PC based clients, with a transparent user interface, operators, Customer Service Representatives or administration departments can easily interact with the workflow, and with its extensive conditional automation capabilities.

Away with errors

Automation Engine takes the errors out of the process by allowing users to preset repetitive tasks and make automated decisions within the workflow. In addition, interfaces between order administrative systems (MIS or ERP) and prepress production further reduce the manual interaction.

Seamless integration

Automation Engine integrates seamlessly with any existing infrastructure, accepting a wide range of desktop publishing formats, RIPs or file servers, supporting typically all industry standards such as PDF, XML, XMP, SQL queries and JDF/JMF communication.

From an entry-level version to more elaborate setups, Automation Engine is guaranteed to deliver a fast and unmatched return on investment.

Extensive automation

Automation Engine features new workflow editing and monitoring capabilities. These come with highly visual feedback through the user interface.

Throughput and efficiency is increased by means of the conditional automation tools. These tools reduce operator intervention, hand-offs and allow for automated decisions and routing in the workflow.



The "Router" step selects the appropriate workflow path without operator involvement. The automated selection is based on job or file information or content.

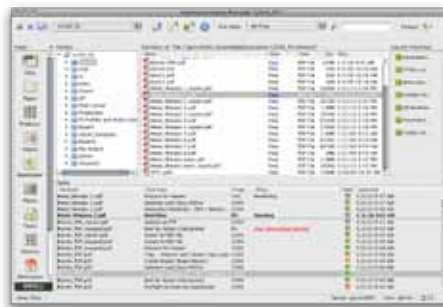
Automating repetitive tasks also centralizes prepress expertise. This workflow automates preflight, trapping, generating reports and step and repeats.



Efficient client application tools



Real time progress feedback in the workflow.



Pilot shows all information relevant for the job order.

The **Pilot** is the primary client tool, that runs on Mac and PC, and offers an easy and intuitive interface for any operator or administrator that needs complete access to the system.

Shuttle is a new client that offers an easy user interface for operators that require limited interaction with the workflow. It is available as a module for any of the interactive editing applications (ArtPro, DeskPack, PackEdge, FastImpose,...). Shuttle allows you to launch a workflow straight from the editing application. Shuttle greatly simplifies overall operation and reduces the number of required workflows.



Submit files to a workflow.



Fill in job specific parameters.



Monitor progress.

Job organization and data management

A job in Automation Engine represents a production order that organizes the data storage for the job but also the job's metadata, its link to order ID, due date, customer info, Customer Service Representative contacts...

Besides these administration attributes, a job can also contain the graphical specifications like barcode, inks, RIP options... This job information can be used in any workflow to take advantage of all the data that is already there, avoiding double entries.



Linking with external systems



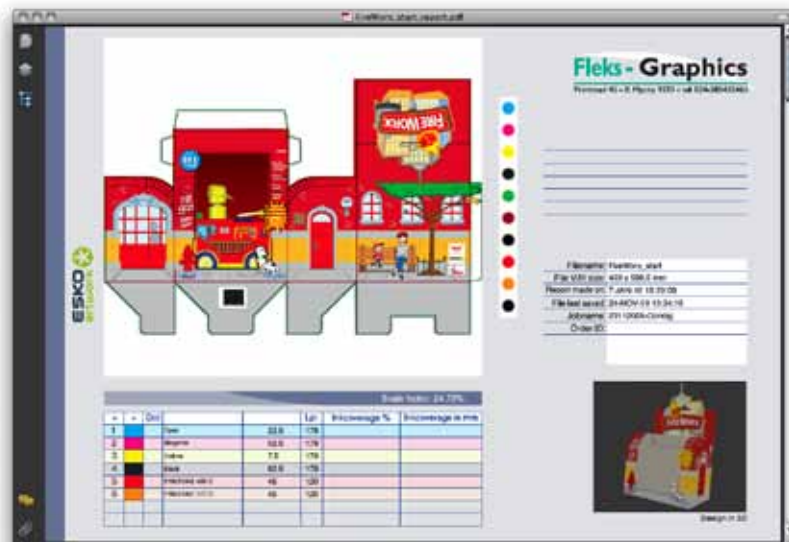
Automation Engine is able to obtain information from external systems through SQL queries, XML or XMP data... This data populates job information and workflow parameters, using values that already exist. Examples include step & repeat data, barcodes, colors to be used... All job information, including how jobs actually have been processed, is kept in an internal database, which can be archived for future use. The history of prepress actions in these archives can be used for relaunching jobs or for statistics purposes.

Order administration systems can be linked through an MIS integration project. Information and data are centralized, which reduces operator intervention. Savings are achieved by measuring and billing consumables, proofs and plates.

MIS integration also allows for automated step-and-repeat or imposition. Milestones can be communicated to the business system to report on the status of prepress jobs: "data arrived", "approved", "plates ready"...

Linking production with the order administration department will greatly reduce the administrative overhead, especially in environments where job runs are becoming shorter, but job overhead stays the same, like in digital print.

Reporting and integration with structural data



The Reporting functionality in Automation Engine allows you to generate "report cards". These report cards are based on a predefined template that customizes the report card for a specific job, using its attributes, customer information, and details that can be extracted from the database. Even metadata like ink coverage and barcode specs can be added.

3D PDF files can be generated from the structural data associated with the job. They can be merged with the graphical data giving a comprehensive view of how the actual job will look like. This 3D view can even be used in the report card, resulting in extensive job reporting.

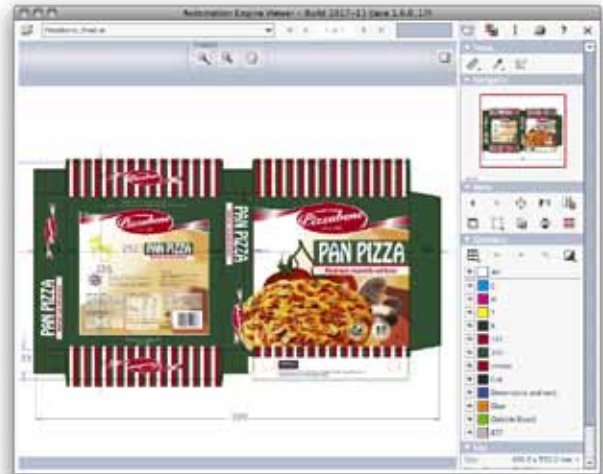
Quality assurance, straight in the workflow

Automation Engine offers extensive quality assurance tools. Operators, Customer Services Representatives or admin staff are able to detect errors early in the workflow, which increases overall quality and reduces costs.

Accessible from the Pilot, the Viewer handles all common prepress formats, images and RIP data. Extensive measuring and QA tools provide sophisticated means to check if the file is ready for print.

Check separations, trim and media sizes, even compare differences between design files and production files, or easily check if all corrections have been applied.

It is even possible to compare between the production file and RIPped data! Automated compare tools are available in the workflow to streamline comparison of larger batches of files.



Automated Imposition and Step-and-Repeat

Automation Engine features automated imposition and step-and-repeat. The advanced job management that is available for "page production" environments offers a comprehensive overview of the entire prepress department in relation to pages, proofs, sheets and plates status. This gives better control and easier job flow management.



For step-and-repeat several tasks are available to automate the process, depending on the type of repetition that is required.

Imposition or step-and-repeat data can even be acquired from an external database or MIS system to further streamline and automate the overall job processing.

Scalability

Depending on the number of clients interacting with the system, and the required productivity, Automation Engine comes in different flavors. When additional capacity is required, additional systems can be added to distribute the load, or to serve as failsafe mechanism in case of hardware failure.

The software is equally modular. This allows you to select from a group of functional modules. This way the optimal production system can be configured with the option to add extra functionality later on.