

Overview

This standard covers the use of variable data with digital printing machines or with digital printing units that are integrated within a hybrid machine. A hybrid printing machine will usually consist of flexographic units, digital printing units and possibly screen printing units.

It applies to you if you work in a digital printing environment and are responsible for preparing and using variable data to produce 'personalised' printed products.

Digital printing is unique because of its ability to process and print variable data at high speed, combining it with artwork in a single 'pass' to produce a personalised product such as labels, letters, magazine covers or direct mail.

The advantages of personalised printing are well known to advertising and marketing specialists. Data must be handled correctly so that it ends up in the right place on the printed product and is correctly matched with other data, for example, names and addresses. The operator must understand data protection law fully so that personal data is handled lawfully.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Prepare variable data for use in digital printing

1. confirm that your organisation has complied with the requirements of the legislation covering data protection when processing personal data
2. confirm that variable data files supplied comply with the legislation covering data protection when they contain personal information
3. check that files are supplied in a format that can be used by your organisation
4. export or import in a suitable format, the records that are required for processing, into the software used by your organisation
5. carry out de-duping, data verification, incomplete record checks or postal sorting operations to meet job requirements
6. identify the fields required for use in printing and relate them to primary documents, creating relationships between primary files and variable data files when required
7. run mail merge operations and verify that files for output are correct when a single 'mail merged' file is to be created prior to printing
8. verify that any variable data files for print are in the format required by printers

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Produce 'personalised' printed products using variable data

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9. download primary files to the printer at the right time for jobs to start
10. set print parameters so that primary files and variable data files are merged as required, or so that the pre-merged output files will print correctly
11. run jobs at the required speed, ensuring that variable data is printed in the correct place and that data sequence is maintained
12. take immediate action in the event that variable data appears in the wrong place or in the wrong sequence in accordance with organisational procedures
13. deal with any stoppages so that they don't cause any records to be missed or printed twice in accordance with organisational procedures

14. pack and label completed jobs so that the sequence of data output can be identified
15. complete quality and any other documentation required by your organisation
16. check that personal data is protected from misuse on completion of the job and is dealt with in accordance with the legislation covering data protection

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the law as it affects printing: data protection, the printers imprint
2. ethical and employment issues relevant to printing: confidentiality
3. your duties and responsibilities for health and safety as defined by any specific legislation covering your job role
4. the relevant health and safety regulations including those covering display screen equipment
5. methods for the safe handling of customer material
6. computer system security and virus protection
7. the print with time-sensitive or restricted release dates
8. how to securely archive digital and conventional artwork
9. how to communicate with colleagues, customers and suppliers
10. workplace objectives, priorities, standards and procedures
11. the working practices existing in the workplace
12. the operation of equipment
13. typefaces and fonts
14. how to check and proof documents
15. document layout
16. the principles of digital printing
17. file management procedures
18. file conversion techniques
19. file compression and decompression systems
20. how to transmit digital files
21. the principles, benefits and uses of personalised printing
22. the content of primary and secondary files and how to create relationships between them
23. how to manage variable data and run mail merge operations
24. procedures for dealing with incomplete or mismatched variable data
25. processing faults
26. machine faults
27. administrative procedures: planning and scheduling, recording and reporting
28. product labelling
29. the main features of quality assurance and quality control systems
30. techniques for controlling quality

Set up and control variable data in digital printing

31. types of problems that may need to be solved
32. sources of relevant information
33. techniques for solving complex problems
34. techniques for assessing machine faults
35. the principal types of proof and their role in the printing process

Set up and control variable data in digital printing

Developed by	Improve
Version Number	3
Date Approved	26 Feb 2021
Indicative Review Date	31 Jan 2024
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	NSAFD
Original URN	PRODPP248
Relevant Occupations	Printers, Printing Machine Minders and Assistants, Printing Trades
Suite	Pre Press
Keywords	digital, print, pre press, variable, data, machines
