

## Softproof at daily newspaper

# German „Donaukurier“ relies on a.b.graph's PrintPilot software

*The Donaukurier Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG in Ingolstadt (Germany) now proofs dual pages on large TFT monitors, doing away with Paper "Hardproofs" altogether! Everybody involved came to the same conclusion: PrintPilot Softproof Displays are very comfortable to work with and Production Identical.*

Despite the ongoing digitalisation of their Production Workflows newspapers often don't want to give up the use of paper – Not even in production stages where a monitor would make more sense, such as Proofing.

In mid 2007 however, the German publishing house "Donaukurier" decided to switch to a monitor based Softproof System, which led to "significant cost savings compared to paper and toner" according to technical manager Uwe Lehmann.

Over time Donaukurier has gotten used to cut their own path. The Page Planning as well as the Production Workflow was developed in-house by the IT-department in close cooperation with the various departments involved.

Donaukurier also acted as the pilot customer with the adoption of the internet-based editorial system red.web, which was implemented by the Koblenzer Mittelrhein publishing house.

The Agfa Polarix CtP image setters are controlled by News-Drive software, which receives the page bitmaps from two Harlequin Rips.

The same page data (Tiff G4 format) is routed to a server based Softproof Solution - developed by a.b.graph ([www.ab-graph.com](http://www.ab-graph.com)), based in Limeshain near Frankfurt am Main. Technical Manager Lehmann: "Because we wanted an absolutely Production Identical Softproof, a PDF solution was not an option."

Peter Alsasser, Managing Director of a.b. graph GmbH, explains why PrintPilot Softproof can be integrated in existing Production Workflows: Tiff-G4-Import, Windows-PCs (plus clients for Apple Macintosh and Linux). All software is based on open-source-technology, like a MySQL database and up-to-date JDF-standard Interfaces.

Operators can use standard Web Browsers, like Firefox or Internet Explorer to run the SoftProof System. For large data volumes however, the standard client may become too slow. Therefore a.b. graph offer their own Java-based mini browser which provides superior speed over Web Browsers.

Technical Manager Lehmann: "We wanted an organisation with a fast and lean Control Mechanism, a reliable Page Content Verification and the highest degree of Colour Matching"

### Softproof in two departments

The Donaukurier is printed in eight different editions with an average volume of 40 pages. A major part of these pages are printed in colour.

"In the past our printers received four black-and-white printouts of the colour separations and had to merge them mentally when they started the press colour adjustments. This demanded a lot of experience, time and money.", says Lehmann.

Today the merging of the ripped 1-bit colour separations is done by the PrintPilot Softproof System. The printers use a 30" TFT monitor to verify the printed product. The monitor is located opposite the press control station in a separate work place with controlled lighting conditions. The printers experience many improvements using the new Softproof method. They have been provided with a tool that helps to guarantee a safer printing process. In addition the system offers a comfortable, nearly 1:1 page display and is very easy to operate.

The principle of the Donaukurier is that only usable and error-free data may arrive at the plate setters. Therefore the Softproof System is also an important tool in the Prepress Department.

The Tiff G4 files, required for SoftProof Generation, are provided by the ripping process.

Before approval of the separations for output to the plate setter, the page layout operators check all important page components and parameters on the Softproof such as:

- Completeness of the page, compared to data from the Page Planning System
- All contracted advertisements placed
- Correct placement of images
- Mistakes in headlines
- Missing column rules
- Correct colour separations

Technical Manager Lehmann also states that the integration of the Softproof System in their workflow involved negotiations with his employees. The IT-manager, as well as the Prepress Department, were involved in the preparations.

The very good relationship with their supplier a.b.graph was also an important factor. Many ideas and suggestions from the publishing house have been implemented in the solution.



Technical Manager Uwe Lehmann (left) and Page Layout operator Hans Seiler working with the PrintPilot Softproof System



The dual page softproof monitor in the press room. Press operators Carsten Kraus (left) and Martin Lukasch experience many improvements using the new softproof method.

## The PrintPilot Softproof System in detail

Job names are organised by object, product, product section, publication day, page number and colour.

In extensive productions objects are combined into groups. The separations are merged into 4 colour composite files. Embedded calibration curves for CTP are reversed, paper colours for display on the monitor are applied and stored object-related. Colour corrections are optimised regarding location and ambient lighting of the SoftProof Monitors.

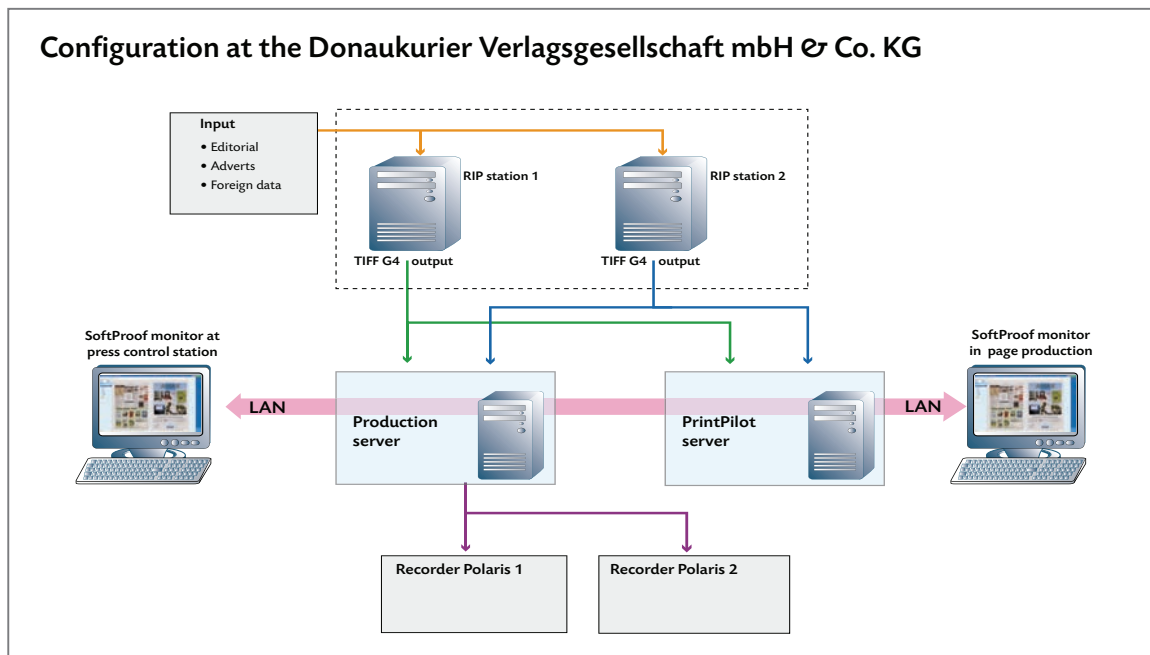
Pages are arranged pairwise and sorted by publishing date. Finished pages are made available by a web server to any authorised web browser in the intranet. Repetition of pages are numbered in ascending order.

Users can select SoftProofs by object name and publishing date and browse up and down through the page pairs.

To check an individual separation of a page pair on the Softproof Monitor the software provides a colour separation node that can be expanded by the mouse and keyboard.

## Workflow description

- All CTP ready ripped data is copied on its way from RIP output to CTP input and submitted to the PrintPilot Softproof System.
- All separated pages are re-calculated to individual Softproof pages in the specified colour and merged (recombined) into 4 colour Softproof pages.
- Matching 4 colour page pairs are displayed side by side on the Softproof Monitor exactly as they will appear in the printed newspaper. Therefore the first press output can easily be compared to the Softproof by browsing through the Softproof page tree.
- In case of page repetitions (corrections and updates) newer versions are marked in chronological order with ascending numbers, so that changes can easily be traced.
- Within the ambient lighting conditions the colours match the optimal printed product as good as possible. The SoftProof is completely identical to the printed product.
- The operator is provided with access to selection criteria in a search tree allowing him to select by object name and publishing date and to browse up and down through the publication tree.
- Pages are available for Softproof immediately after they have been ripped and will be automatically deleted after a definable time span. This depends on the lead time prepared products are present in the workflow and can be configured by the system administrator.



a.b.graph GmbH  
Kurt-Moosdorfstraße 45  
D-63649 Limeshain  
Tel: +49 (0)6047 / 950 432, Fax -433  
info@ab-graph.com  
www.ab-graph.com