



David Gerrard at P&I Printing: "Pent Net has been very helpful".

Easing the burden of proof

When a file is ready to be viewed by the customer, the prepress operator loads it onto the Proof Manager system (at P&I this runs on a server installed by Pent Net) and an email is automatically generated and sent to the client informing them that their file is ready for viewing.

The client can then log in to view their jobs via a secure browser-based portal, click on the job marked for their attention and view it as a low-res image. To make changes, they simply click and type directly onto the image, adding comments and corrections where necessary without having to mess about with notes or digital post-its.

When the client has finished making their changes, they submit the file back to P&I and it is displayed there as either having had changes made to it or, in the end, approved for final output. An email is also automatically forwarded to P&I to inform them that an alteration has been requested or the customer has approved.

For every single job, it's possible for both client and prepress operator to see exactly where it is, what changes have been made and the exact moment when the file was passed between the two parties (although, in effect, the file doesn't move anywhere; it's all managed automatically on the server via low-res images with the actual work file remaining untouched).

When a job is completed, the history of its approval process is automatically archived and can be called up at any time by both client and printer to see what happened and when. The data can also be analysed via graphs and timelines to highlight production bottlenecks and see where jobs are being held up.

"The system manages the proofing a lot better than using emails with PDFs," agreed David Gerrard. "We don't have to send out multiple emails to customers and then ring around to find out where they are. It's all there on the screen."

Apart from speeding up the approval time, the system also creates a transparent workflow environment in which everybody can see — and hopefully agree on — what is happening at any particular moment.

The Proof Manager system allows for multiple levels of access and interaction to be customised for each client. Therefore, for any particular job, there will be users who can view and makes changes as well as others who are simply notified that the job is ready for viewing and are able to log in and see it but not make any changes.

"Pent Net has been very helpful and has been able to tweak the system to suit our customer needs," said Gerrard. "Customers like it because they can access it worldwide — that's one of its advantages — plus it has to be secure. That's very important.

"Being able to archive the history of each job is important too. Some customers, for instance, like to print this out and use it if they're being audited by the Therapeutic Goods Administration."

In the end, the security and certainty provided by Proof Manager is good news for the consumer as well as making life much easier for the printer. §

Life has become much simpler and safer at a Sydney pharmaceutical printer thanks to a secure online proofing system.

Pharmaceutical packaging is one of the most exacting forms of printing. Every stage of the production process must be rigorously checked and double checked to ensure that the right information is being printed and presented to the consumer. Absolute accuracy is required at all times because any slip-up can have dire consequences for both the consumer and the manufacturer.

P&I Printing in Milperra, Sydney, is a specialist in this type of pharmaceutical and healthcare packaging, operating a dedicated production facility that handles all types of packaging items including labels, leaflets and cartons.

Ensuring that all these different elements come up to scratch is a demanding task, particularly at the proofing stage where customers must sign off on what they expect to be printed. It's an area where there is no room for error or misunderstanding.

In order to better manage this process, P&I has turned to the Proof Manager system supplied by local developer, Pent Net.

Prior to installing Proof Manager, P&I had been managing its soft proofs with the usual PDF and email combination — a difficult process to control when there are multiple recipients spread around the globe. Then a customer mentioned using the Proof Manager system and, after further investigation, the company implemented it about 15 months ago.

"Proof Manager is right for our style of work. We went for it straightaway," said David Gerrard, prepress manager at P&I Printing. "What attracted us to it was the speed of getting proofs to the customer and the traceability. That's very important in pharmaceutical packaging."

Simplicity is key

The key to Proof Manager is its simplicity and the fact that, as its name suggests, it takes care of all the time-consuming tasks of sending out, following up and cataloguing of changes to soft proofs.