



An EskoArtwork company

Page 1 of 11

The Truth About Automation

Enfocus bvba

Enfocus, an EskoArtwork company
Kortrijksesteenweg 1095
9051 Gent, Belgium

P +32 9 269 92 11
F +32 9 269 98 54

info@enfocus.com
www.enfocus.com



A note from Enfocus Vice President, Fabian Prudhomme

Dear Reader,

We hope you find this whitepaper about our automation platform, Enfocus Switch, to be of assistance in your quest for knowledge about publishing automation.

Our primary reason for producing the whitepaper is to dispel misconceptions about the cost and complexity of undertaking automation. I am confident that you will be pleasantly surprised to learn that Automation in 2011 is a much different, more feasible enterprise than it was just a few years ago.

The fact that Enfocus develops software, such as the popular Enfocus PitStop and Enfocus Switch families, is almost incidental to the real purpose that drives us: the realities that publishers and production professionals – you – are dealing with, day after day. This is what motivates us: to find and develop technologies to help you grow and succeed.



By developing the absolute best systems and applications that we can, without having an agenda for capturing fast profit or 'hostages' to expensive solutions that are difficult to break away from; we achieve honest success and genuine loyalty.

Enfocus Switch is a prime example of what can be achieved when we follow a simple and inspirational work ethic such as this.

It is truly rewarding to do this work for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fabian Prudhomme".

Fabian Prudhomme
Vice President, Enfocus Software



Part I: Automation's relevance to the economy and people

Enfocus You First

One of the stark realities about our world's heralded return to economic solvency is that the make-up of the workplace will have changed substantially. Some economists and politicians don't pull any punches: they say the economy will come back, but the jobs will not. When pressed to elaborate, they clarify by saying that the jobs that won't come back are those that call for manual skills; i.e., manufacturing jobs more commonly known as "blue-collar".

The graphic arts-related industries have to grapple with this reality as everyone else does, but for them this change is further complicated by the "craftsman" tradition and mentality that are part and parcel of this industry.

Graphic arts professionals are uncomfortable with anything that removes the human element, and which they feel may compromise the artistic foundation of the profession.

It means that solutions developed over the last 50+ years, such as desktop publishing, CTP, and digital image editing; have been challenged aggressively by artistic purists.

Brand owners, graphic arts organization administrators -- including advertising agency executives, analysts, and academics -- were in a tough position. While they, of course, understood and supported the "art", the time and money savings made available with each new technology were increasingly appealing.

It's a tough pill to swallow, and the move to a service-based workforce has never been as center-stage as it is today; not just in the graphic arts, but also across all industries. The civilized world is coming to grips with relinquishing labor-based workforces in favor of skilled, service-based economies.

In all fairness...

Let's be fair: art is critical to the creative process, but is decreasingly necessary the further you go down the workflow. In fact, pressrooms and finishing have long been bastions of manufacturing.

Streamlining the less creative, manufacturing parts of the workflow with the help of intelligent automation technologies has no bearing on the artistic aspects of a job.

People add value where machines can not.

Yes, the shift to skilled, service-based economies will be on the backs of many; and there already are large numbers of laborers who are out of work; and who will not be able to return to the workforce without having acquired new skills.

But the truth is that, at least in the graphic arts, administrators and vendors are being genuine when they tell you that shifting operations away from human labor and toward



automation to cover the jobs “anyone” can do, and moving the human beings into positions that require the talent and “left brain” thinking that no machine can do, is a very viable option for the future.

More and more graphic arts operations are making this transition—and in some cases, suffering some personnel losses -- but in the end succeeding beyond their dreams.

These graphic arts operations are doing what they always did, but doing it faster and better, with automated quality control and processing that needs human beings to add value everywhere the machines cannot. For example, designers are doing design—what they love—instead of preparing files over and over again for proper processing through a workflow, and taking countless calls from the press room, the client, and everyone else regarding changes, version problems, setting permissions, and the inevitable expectation to do IT on their own systems.

The bonus is that re-allocating talent can simultaneously help fulfill the need for printing and production organizations to expand their services and/or form deeper business and marketing partnerships with clients.

Part II: Automation in practice

Yet, even if they can get past these obstacles, many people don't think about how they can automate workflows, because they believe they've already streamlined processes as much as is possible. For others, it's hard to imagine specific advantages, and so they aren't driven to inquire. There's still another group that has heard negative things about automation, and doesn't realize that this information could be faulty, outdated, or both.

Once they take the time to investigate and understand automation, most companies agree that it has come a long way, and that even automating a small part of what you do makes the effort worthwhile.

Enfocus believes in easy, feasible execution: Break off little pieces of the whole, and conquer the job one component at a time. Successful steps, however small, are highly motivating.

Here's a simple example, courtesy of Enfocus Director of Product Management, Elli Cloots: “Let's say my designer delivers to a printer by a certain date; then all of a sudden -- some hours or even days later -- gets an email that there was a problem. Did the printer look at the file as soon as it came in? How long until they found the problem? Were they up against the deadline already?” An automation solution like Switch, she says, would have immediately noted the problem, frequently fixed it without input, and alerted all involved parties simultaneously. “That kind of self-aware processing can be priceless with certain jobs, clients and deadlines.”

The following section deals with the most prevalent misconceptions regarding automation for graphic arts:

Myths, Misunderstandings

In part one of this paper, we talked about the psychological and emotional reasons why professionals may be reticent about automation.

In this section, we will discuss myths and misunderstandings based on real-world experience with older and ineffective automation solutions and/or integrators.

People citing their own, or other people's, negative automation experiences have spawned negative word-of-mouth, such as, "automation is too complicated," and as a result, often "takes a long time to implement."

Myth #1: It's complicated

We believe the issue of "complication" may be somewhat attributed to consultants who, despite good intentions, either have not had sufficient experience with the automation solutions to successfully assess, recommend, install and train others to do it; and/or made the decision to automate too many processes at once. Both of these situations could lead to the complaints about long implementation times.

In other words, the consultants got in over their heads. And this wasn't their fault, entirely. The automation vendors had led everyone – especially the integrators and the prospective customers – to believe that this process would be a lot easier, as well as return faster, than the actual reality. And so the vendors, integrators and consultants came in and made sweeping changes, all at once. Worlds were turned upside down, departments reorganized, and production slowed and even ceased. These kinds of "big steps" frustrate everyone in the company.

Enfocus believes in easy, feasible execution: Break off little pieces of the whole, and conquer the job one component at a time. Successful steps, however small, are highly motivating.

"Closed" systems; i.e., software developed, purposely or not, to be difficult or even impossible to modify or integrate with other applications, is another cause of complexity. There are many reasons why companies may choose to offer closed systems; including cost structures, better performance, product line protection, and more. If you purchase such a system, integration with your existing products can be difficult, expensive, and frequently impossible. Systems and applications that are more easily integrated (as well as being more flexible, typically) are said to be open.¹

¹ The concepts of open and closed -- aka proprietary and non-proprietary -- systems, are covered extensively in many publications.

World English Dictionary: open system—*n.* *computing* an operating system that is not specific to a particular supplier, but conforms to more widely compatible standards
Dictionary.com, "open system," in Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Source location: HarperCollins Publishers.



Myth #2: Cold, robotic automation sacrifices the craft and the craftspeople

The key to utilizing automation in the graphic arts is to confine it to the processes that "anyone can do". If you automate the processes that anyone can do, and make a difference (with the human touch) in the work that no robot can do, you are differentiating your operation in a meaningful, artistic way. Remember, if anyone can do it, your competitor can do it as well.

This also motivates your staff: let them do what they can be proud of -- the harder tasks that few, if any others, can do -- like high art.

Another area that cannot be automated is customer service; i.e., real, personalized customer service – the kind that is increasingly in demand today, because it is everything but automated. This is where long-term relationships are being built and solidified.

Myth #3: Automation is expensive

Most production automation solutions are big, complex, proprietary, and pricey.

Fortunately, there is an alternative. Enfocous, the company heralded for defining PDF quality control; once again pioneers a solution category based on its customers', instead of its own, profit requirements. That category is simple, open, affordable automation; representing a world of difference from the expensive and complicated products that make up the rest of the market. The name of the scalable, easy-to-use solution family that makes this possible is Enfocous Switch.

Keeping automation modular and manageable is both a usability, as well as a pricing, edict at Enfocous. Enfocous Switch automates as much, or as little, as an operation is ready for, with corresponding pricing starting at \$1500.

Another big benefit of a modular, scalable automation solution such as Switch is investment protection. Because the closed, proprietary systems are designed to work by controlling most -- if not all -- workflow processes, they often replace your existing software unnecessarily. Enfocous Switch, for example, allows you to use the applications you already have; in a sense giving them a "second life" as automation modules.

The American Heritage® Science Dictionary: closed system—A physical system that does not interact with other systems. A closed system obeys the conservation laws in its physical description. Also called *isolated system*.

Copyright © 2002. Published by Houghton Mifflin. All rights reserved.



As of this writing, these stand-alone applications integrate with Enfocus Switch. (Note that they are divided according to the operation they perform.) Applications are continuously being added; so keep up with the latest list [here](#).

If you are using a particular color management application today, for example, Enfocus is not going to push you to start using one of the color management programs that integrate with Switch, and throw away your previous investment in not only the actual cost of the software; but perhaps more significantly, the expertise you or your personnel have developed, specific to that application, over time. The Switch open system gives you the flexibility to use your familiar solutions, according to your needs.

Without the high price tag, you get a completely scalable option that doesn't compel you to bite off more than you can chew.

Where to start?

There are numerous markets, applications, and production processes that have proven to be great candidates for automation.

Markets include: printing, publishing, design, photography and much more; applications include advertising, large format printing, photography, copying, newspapers, web2print; and processes include PDF creation, preflight, file transfer, color management, image optimization, proofing and imposition. All are ripe for automation, in most circumstances.

The Switch solution matrix

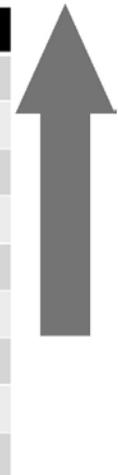
Horizontal dimension

Market Group
Ad agency
Large format
Publisher
Printer
Photographer
Copy Shop
News paper



Vertical dimension

Solution Oriented
Color Management
Image Optimization
Conversion to PDF
Preflight & PDF manipulation
Imposition
Proofing
DAM
Web2Print
Editorial Systems



Automation of these solutions, within all of these markets, has been proven a time- and cost-savings enterprise. Enfocus Switch reference accounts are available upon request.

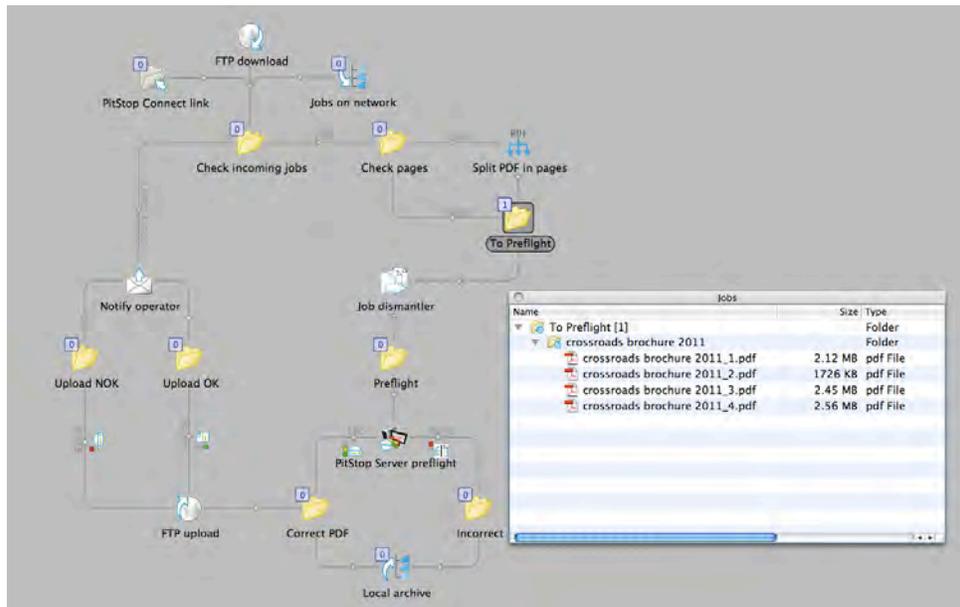
The biggest challenge in implementing automation for the first time is to identify workflow processes that meet two criteria:

1. Automating the process will not compromise the creative value of the job (the human touch), and;
2. Reducing the time it takes to complete this process will quantifiably increase efficiency and/or reduce cost.

Whether you do it yourself or bring in a vendor or consultant to do it for you, a hand-drawn map of your current workflow is the best place to start. Cloots says that people typically spot redundancies and waste fairly quickly when they see their workflow detailed on paper. She explains that by just "walking" through the production workflow on paper once, you can immediately identify automation opportunities and steps in the process that can be made more efficient.

With or without the assistance of an Enfocus product specialist, or their reseller, users can then start "moving" their workflow to the computer. Rather than move people from the hand-drawn frame of reference to a workstation and more restrictive, yet commonplace, data-driven application interfaces; Enfocus maintains the easy, hand-drawn interface with a simple visual interface that has garnered acclaim the world-over.

Say Cloots, "Switch is renowned for its ease of use and simplicity. Anyone—really, anyone—can draw the workflow they desire, allow Switch to test it in a rapid simulation phase... and simply press 'go'."



This time-saving automation flow checks incoming jobs, separates them according to file type, splits PDFs into pages, and then directs all files depending on existence of errors and preflight success.

What else does Switch Do?

Production efficiency is about using the information you have, which is what Switch does. "You already have a lot of data stored. By having the file name and having access to the ftp server, Switch can use that information and immediately act upon it, allowing you to work more efficiently."

Cloots goes on to say that the operator doesn't even have to help Switch get the relevant information out of the file – Switch automatically uses the job ticket inside the PDF to compare (to stakeholders' desired parameters) and see if the file is up to snuff. Switch can even tell if a file is named incorrectly, because it knows where it's coming from, and if necessary, will name it accordingly.



See it for yourself

If you've come this far, now is the perfect time to view this 5-minute video, which provides a simple overview of the Enfocus Switch solution:

Automation with Enfocus Switch: http://youtu.be/GTWA_jjgnak

What did you think?

This video is thought by many to be self-explanatory, but you are not alone if you didn't "get it". That's what we're here for, so please click on <http://www.enfocus.com/FindReseller.php> to find your reseller consultant, and he or she will make an appointment to answer your questions and show Switch to you in a brief phone/internet session, at your convenience.

Thank You.

For more information about automation and Enfocus Switch, see the following resources:

Movies:

Enfocus, the Company: <http://youtu.be/p0SnArNQHIQ>

Automating FTP Receipt: <http://youtu.be/BgkGAsMH95M>

Enfocus Switch 10 New Features: <http://youtu.be/Qd59uJRxq2U>

Websites:

www.enfocus.com

<http://www.crossroads-world.com/>

Crossroads is your meeting point for all things related to Enfocus Switch.

Whether you are a vendor, integrator or user of an Enfocus Switch automation solution, Crossroads puts instant resources, that you won't find elsewhere on the web, at your fingertips.