Kodak Graphic Communications Canada Company
3700 Gilmore Way
Burnaby, B.C., Canada
V5G 4M1
Tel: 1.604.451.2700
Fax: 1.604.437.9891

Request support: http://graphics.kodak.com
ecentral.graphics.kodak.com

Internal: 734-00671A-EN Rev A
Release date: 09 August 2007

Technical Bulletin

Trendsetter NEWS: Avoiding Blank Plates

The Kodak® Trendsetter® NEWS™ thermal platesetter has dual stack capability, which means that it can load and image two plates at a time. When it is running in manual mode, the operator loads one or two plates in response to a prompt from the Kodak Print Console software. When it is running in automatic mode:

- If the bay is loaded with one stack of panorama plates, it automatically picks and loads one plate.
- If the bay is loaded with two stacks of broadsheet plates, it automatically picks and loads two plates.
- If the bay is loaded with two stacks of broadsheet plates and the single broadsheet picking option is enabled, it automatically picks and loads one or two plates, according to the number of images it receives from the workflow software.

When there is a steady flow of jobs from the workflow software, autoloading dual stack devices achieve optimal throughput with minimal plate wastage. During system setup, customers can decide what to do when there is only one image in the Print Console queue (for example, when there is only one plate left to image in a production run), depending on whether plate wastage or slow throughput is a greater concern:

- **Plate grouping timeout:** When Print Console receives only one image from the workflow software, it waits for the period configured in its **Plate grouping timeout** parameter to see if another image arrives that uses the same media size as the first image. If another image arrives, Print Console groups them and sends them for imaging. If another image does not arrive before the timeout expires, the platesetter loads two plates, but images only one of them. The parameter can be configured to wait a short period of time before sending the single image (wasting one plate) or to wait an extended period for another image (at the expense of quick throughput).
- **Single broadsheet picking option:** If the single broadsheet picking option is enabled, Print Console instructs the device to load and image only one plate when the **Plate grouping timeout** expires.

If either of the following conditions are true, the platesetter will produce blank plates:

- The platesetter bay is loaded with two stacks of broadsheet plates and single broadsheet picking is not enabled. If there is only one image in the queue when the **Plate Grouping Timeout** expires, the platesetter will load two plates but will image only one of them.
- The platesetter is attached to a preloader, has the Dual Bay option enabled, and is picking two broadsheet plates from the outer bay. (With the Dual Bay option, separator arms split the Trendsetter NEWS bay into an inner bay and an outer bay. The outer bay receives plates from the preloader.) The single broadsheet picking option cannot pick plates from the outer bay. If there is only one image in the queue when the **Plate Grouping Timeout** expires, the platesetter will load two plates but will image only one of them.

Blank plates are problematic because they waste plates and because some optical punch/bender equipment will stop plate processing when it cannot detect the registration marks that should be on imaged plates.

Workarounds

There are several ways to work around the blank plate problem:

- Increase the Plate Grouping Timeout
- Decrease the Time it Takes Images to Reach the Print Console Queue
- Enable the Single Broadsheet Picking Feature
- Switch to Kodak NewsManager Workflow

The workaround (or combination of workarounds) you select will depend on whether your priority is the fastest possible throughput or decreased plate wastage.

Increase the Plate Grouping Timeout

The default for the Print Console plate grouping timeout parameter is 15 seconds. First try increasing it to 60 seconds. If you require a longer period, gradually experiment with larger timeout values. This may save plates, but will increase the amount of time you have to wait for a single image to load and start imaging.

In Print Console 4.x, use this procedure to increase the timeout. The maximum allowed value is 60 seconds.

1. Go to **Tools > Preferences > Plates handling > Plate grouping timeout**.
2. Increase the number of seconds that Print Console will wait for another image and click **Apply**.

To increase the timeout to a value greater than 60 seconds in Print Console 4.x, use this procedure:

1. On the drive where Print Console is installed (in this example, **drive** C), find: **C:\Creo\PrintConsole4\data\Fireball.Preferences.xml**
2. Search for **<PlateGroupingTimeout>** and change the value to the number of seconds you want to configure for the timeout (for example, **240 seconds** for a 4-minute timeout).

In Print Console 3.x:

1. Go to **Configuration > Hot Folders > Settings For All Hot Folders > Scan for new files every _ seconds** and note the number of seconds configured there.
2. Go to **Configuration > Hot Folders > File Grouping Settings > Grouping timeout once every _ hot folder scan(s)** and enter the number of hot folder scans required to increase the timeout to the desired number of seconds for the timeout.
3. Click **Apply**.

Print Console 2.x does not have features related to dual stack capability.

Decrease the Time it Takes Images to Reach the Print Console Queue

If TIFF files must be transformed in some way (for example, if the TIFF Downloader in Kodak Prinergy® Evo™ software must rewrite a 1-bit stripped TIFF file that it receives from a third-party workflow into a 1-bit tiled TIFF file), the transformation process may consume time and workstation resources to the extent that the Print Console timeout expires before the transformed TIFF reaches the Print Console queue.

Recommendation: If you are using a third-party workflow that is currently sending 1-bit stripped TIFF files to Evo hot folders, configure the workflow software to output tiled TIFF files.

Enable the Single Broadsheet Picking Feature

If you are picking broadsheet plates from two stacks in the Trendsetter bay, enable the Single Broadsheet Picking feature (available in Print Console 3.20 and later and all Print Console 4.x versions for Trendsetter NEWS) . This will not solve the problem if you are picking broadsheet plates from two stacks in the preloader.

The hardware for single broadsheet picking is installed on all GMCE Trendsetter NEWS devices. MCE Trendsetter NEWS devices require a hardware change to the picker.

Switch to Kodak NewsManager Workflow

The Kodak NewsManager™ workflow system includes two production management features that help to reduce the number of unexpected blank plates that may occur in a fully automated Trendsetter NEWS system.

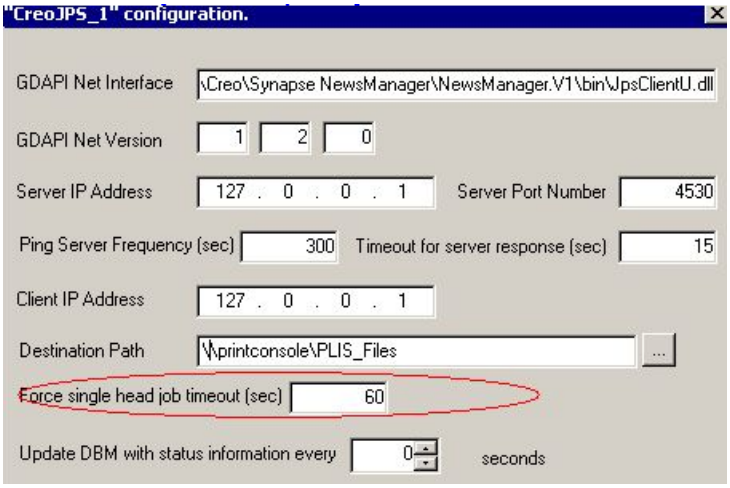
Override the Plate-pairing Feature

The NewsManager workflow is designed to send pairs of TIFF images to Print Console, but an operator can manually override this behavior—for example, when there is only one plate left to image in the entire production run.

Adjust the Force single head job timeout (sec) parameter

When only one TIFF file is sent to Print Console (such as when an operator manually overrides the plate-pairing feature), NewsManager waits for a second image to complete the pair. The length of time that NewsManager waits is configured in **Force single head job timeout (sec)**. If this timeout expires, the platesetter outputs an imaged plate and a blank plate. To reduce the number of blank plates, increase the timeout. To increase throughput, reduce the wait time.

1. On the NewsManager workstation, open the NewsManager Workstation Configuration software.
2. On the **Device Configurator** tab, select a TrendsetterNews instance and click **Configure**.
3. In the **Force single head job timeout (sec)** box, type the number of seconds you want NewsManager to wait for the second image.



4. Click **OK**.
5. Repeat steps 2 to 4 until all TrendsetterNews instances have been configured.
6. Click **OK** to save the settings and close the Workstation Configuration software.
7. Repeat steps 1 to 6 until all NewsManager workstations have been configured.

About Kodak Graphic Communications Group (GCG)

The leading provider of graphic communications solutions worldwide, Kodak's Graphic Communications Group (GCG) offers image capture systems; professional color, copydot, and high-speed document scanning systems; inkjet printing and proofing systems; workflow and color management software; thermal imaging devices for film, plates, and proofs; high-quality proofing media, printing plates, and recording film; on-demand color and black-and-white printing systems; data storage products; and professional services. With corporate headquarters located in Rochester, N.Y., Kodak (NYSE: EK) has the largest global sales force and is committed to a digitally oriented growth strategy.

© Kodak, 2007. All rights reserved. Kodak, Creo, Trendsetter, Magnus, NEWS, Prinergy, Evo, and NewsManager are trademarks of Kodak. Adobe, Acrobat, Adobe Illustrator, Distiller, Photoshop, PostScript, and PageMaker are trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated. Apple, AppleShare, AppleTalk, iMac, ImageWriter, LaserWriter, Mac OS, Power Macintosh, and TrueType are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. Macintosh is a trademark of Apple Computer, Inc., registered in the U.S.A. and other countries. PANTONE, Hexachrome, PANTONE Hexachrome, and PANTONE MATCHING SYSTEM are the property of Pantone, Inc. PEARL, PEARLsetter, PEARLhdp, PEARLdry, and PEARLgold are registered trademarks of Presstek, Inc. XEROX is a trademark of XEROX CORPORATION.

Technical data subject to change without notice.