

PRODPP248 - SQA Unit Code F3L4 04

Control the use of variable data with digital printing machines



Overview

This standard covers the use of variable data with digital printing machines.

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.

This is what the standard covers

Of all the printing processes, 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 a letter, magazine cover or a piece of direct mail.

The advantages of personalised printing are well known to advertising and marketing specialists. However, serious problems can also be caused if the data is incorrectly handled; if the data ends up in the wrong place on the printed page or if the data gets mixed up so that, for example, names and addresses are incorrectly matched on a page.

Performance criteria

Prepare variable data for use in digital printing

You must be able to:

- P1 confirm that your organisation has complied with the requirements of the legislation covering data protection if it is processing personal data
- P2 confirm that the variable data file(s) supplied complies with the legislation covering data protection if it contains personal information
- P3 check that the file(s) supplied is in a format that can be used by your organisation
- P4 if necessary, select those records which are required for processing and export / import them in a suitable format into the software used by your organisation
- P5 perform any operations such as de-duping, data verification, incomplete record checks or postal sorting operations.
- P6 identify the fields required for use in printing and relate them to the primary document.
- P7 if required, create relationships between the primary and secondary (variable data) files.
- P8 if a single 'mail merged' file is to be created prior to printing, run the mail merge operation and verify that the file for output is correct.
- P9 if the variable data is to be sent to the printer so that the data is placed into the document during printing, verify that the file for print is in the format required by the printer.

Produce 'personalised' printed products using variable data

You must be able to:

- P10 if required, download the primary file to the printer's memory or disk
- P11 set the print parameters so that the primary file and variable data file are merged as required, or so that the pre-merged output file will print correctly.
- P12 run the job at the required speed, ensuring that the variable data is printed in the correct place on each page and the data sequence is maintained from page to page
- P13 take immediate action in the event that the variable data appears in the wrong place or in the wrong sequence
- P14 solve any problems that may arise during the course of the job, such as stoppages which cause one or more records to be missed or printed twice.
- P15 ensure that the printed job is correctly packed and labelled so as to identify, if necessary, the sequence of data output.
- P16 complete quality and / or other documentation as required by your organisation.
- P17 make sure that personal data is protected from misuse and is dealt with in accordance with the legislation covering data protection on completion

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of the job.

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Knowledge and understanding

Produce 'personalised' printed products using variable data

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the law as it affects printing
 - K1.1 data protection
 - K1.2 the printers imprint
- K2 ethical and employment issues relevant to printing
 - K2.1 confidentiality
- K3 health & safety
 - K3.1 your duties and responsibilities for health & safety as defined by any specific legislation covering your job role knowledge of regulations such as those covering:
 - K3.2 display screen equipment; workplace policies and procedures working practices
- K4 the safe handling of customer material
- K5 security & storage
 - K5.1 computer system security and virus protection
 - K5.2 print with time-sensitive or restricted release dates
 - K5.3 secure means of archiving digital and conventional artwork
- K6 communication
 - K6.1 with colleagues
 - K6.2 with customers
 - K6.3 with suppliers
- K7 workplace policy & practice
 - K7.1 workplace objectives, priorities, standards & procedures
 - K7.2 the working practices existing in the workplace
- K8 the operation of equipment
- K9 typography and design
 - K9.1 typefaces and fonts
 - K9.2 document checking and proofing
 - K9.3 document layout
- K10 printing
 - K10.1 the principles of digital printing
- K11 how to deal with digital files
 - K11.1 file management
 - K11.2 file conversion techniques
 - K11.3 file compression and decompression systems
 - K11.4 the transmission of digital files
- K12 the causes and treatment of common faults
 - K12.1 processing faults
 - K12.2 machine faults
- K13 administrative procedures
 - K13.1 planning
 - K13.2 scheduling

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- K13.3 recording and reporting
 - K13.4 product labelling
- K14 quality assurance & control
 - K14.1 the main features of quality assurance & quality control systems
 - techniques for controlling quality
- K15 problem solving
 - K15.1 types of problems that may need to be solved
 - K15.2 sources of information
 - K15.3 techniques for solving complex problems
 - K15.4 techniques for assessing machine faults
- K16 proofing
 - K16.1 the principal types of proof and their role in the printing process

Additional Information

Scope/range

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This standard is about handling variable data files correctly to achieve the correct result. It requires the candidate to

Understand data protection law fully so that personal data is handled lawfully.

- 1 understand the construction and common formats of databases and spreadsheets
- 2 prepare data from a supplied spreadsheet or database for use in personalised digital printing
- 3 make sure that the variable data will appear in the correct format in the correct place on digitally printed documents
- 4 run jobs on digital printing machines that include variable data, ensuring that the output is correct and any required sequence is maintained.

This standard does not require a candidate to show that they have used 'Mailsort' or 'Walksort' software, but they should understand the principles involved in case they are required to use it at a future time.

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