

“Platform” for automation functions

The //wifag automation solutions “Platform” and “Platform plus” are at the heart of //wifag’s new “Competitive Printing Solutions”. The “Platform” can now look back on almost a decade of practical experience. The automation “Platform” was used in a customer’s project for the first time in 2003. Since then, all machines throughout the entire range of products from //wifag have been equipped with this solution.

What does the automation “Platform” include?

The names “Platform” and “Platform plus” stand for standardized, modular frameworks that combine a number of automation tasks.

These include, for example, a universal control cabinet concept for all machine components, such as autopasters, printing units and folders. Innovative cooling concepts allow closed control cabinets with no exchange of air with the surroundings; this results in less maintenance and keeps the electrical and electronic components installed in the control cabinets clean and free from dust for many years. Standardized electrical engineering that uses identical components throughout the machine leads to simple, easy-to-understand solutions and minimizes the diversity of components in the spare parts package.

Uniform hardware engineering also permits the production of standardized modules in software development which – once tested – can be used repeatedly. This is an important aspect for the high reliability and technical availability of a printing machine.

Continuous development

The “Platform” has been continuously further developed since its first use in a customer’s project. Not only has the scope of its functions been constantly expanded, but even more importantly new technologies have found their way into the solution – for example real-time Ethernet, powerful and safe VPN-based remote maintenance concepts as well as modern touch-based controls. //wifag was one of the first companies in the world to use SERCOS III in a machine on a daily basis.

A further important milestone was the integration of the //wifag control systems for colour register and cutting position in the automation “Platform”. This is why //wifag is able to offer customers a one-stop, universal solution. Complicated and often expensive interfaces are not needed.

Facts and figures

A glance at the installed printing machines equipped with “Platform” provides some impressive figures. Since 2003, for example, more than 300 autopasters, 2,350 printing couples and over 90 folders have been delivered to customers around the world and put into operation. These statistics are supplemented by over 70 installed //wifag cut-off controls as well as 190 printing towers, in which the colour register is monitored by a //wifag colour register control system.

These figures prove that the majority of all shaftless printing machines ever made by //wifag are equipped with the //wifag automation solution.

Current developments

The further development of the “Platform” has been in full swing for almost 10 years now. At the beginning of the year a new, single-width autopaster – the //wifag Autopaster A1 – was developed, manufactured and delivered that is based completely on the //wifag automation “Platform”. Since then, 18 units have been delivered, the majority of which are already being used in daily production.

A further decisive development took place on the control console and planning level. //wifag delivers the latest machines with its own control console technology. The control consoles have been developed with the aid of the latest technologies and offer optimal ergonomics and operator convenience. Intelligent visualizations of the production processes paired with intuitive, touch-based controls make it easier for the printer to monitor newspaper production. Optionally, the control consoles can also be equipped with a //wifag softproof monitor.

The //wifag press manager provides a comprehensive and easy-to-use tool for production planning and machine configuration. Additional functions such as reporting and production statistics can be supplied as necessary.

In the field of closed-loop systems, the mark-based ink density control was the latest development to be added to our product portfolio. The 3D-controller function, consisting of cut-off, colour register and ink density controllers, is a standard feature in the new S-Line press ranges. However, use of these controllers is not restricted to //wifag printing machines – they can be installed on almost any printing machine.

The “Platform” is also used within the wifag//polytype group. The latest Virtu Quantum large format digital printer from the Virtu Business Unit is based on this “Platform”. What is remarkable here is the link to digital printing that has been realized for the first time with this machine. The forthcoming DigiCube digital single-pass print solution is also equipped with the same “Platform”. The //wifag automation “Platform” is a safe investment with respect to new technologies since it is ready and open for later technology upgrades.

Complete one-stop solution, also for third-party printing machines

The entire product portfolio from //wifag automation is used in the new S-Line and to retrofit existing //wifag printing machines as well as machines from other manufacturers. One excellent example of this is the recently placed order for the complete conversion of a KBA Express and its equipment with //wifag automation solutions in Lahti (Finland).

Illustrations and captions for this press release:

wifag_autopaster_AP1.jpg

Fig. 1: Available since the beginning of 2012 and already 18 sold: the //wifag Autopaster AP1 autopaster

wifag_Control_Console.jpg

Fig. 2: The new //wifag Control Console (WCC) is an in-house development of the Swiss printing press manufacturer.

Polytype Virtu_Quantum.jpg

Fig. 3: Also based on the //wifag automation "Platform": the Virtu Quantum large format digital printer from the wifag//polytype Virtu Business Unit.

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