DATAPORT MANAGES 180 MILLION PAGES WITH VARIOSTREAM 4000

Company Name: Dataport
Industry: Public sector IT and document services
Founded: 2004
Locations: Altenholz, Deutschland
Services: Comprehensive IT and document services for the administrations of six federal states
Length of relationship with Canon: 14 years

Objective

Optimise productivity and document security by replacing outdated systems with more technically advanced monochrome toner solutions

Challenges

- Update technology while continuing to offer customers the same price per printed page
- Ensure the reliability needed to operate for 24 hours a day, 6 days per week
- Enable direct PDF printing

Approach

Dataport invested in a flexible mono toner solution that delivers the reliability its time-critical transactional print operation demands

Benefits

- Up-to-date technology that strikes the right balance between costs and benefits for the corporation's needs
- Increased efficiency through direct PDF printing
- Reliable technology and service that ensure minimum downtime

Canon

180 million pages each year

Millions of personalised documents

Established in 2004 from the merger of three existing providers of data and communications services, German IT service provider Dataport supports the administrations of six federal states in northern Germany – Hamburg, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Lower Saxony. A publicly-owned corporation, Dataport employs 2800 people across its headquarters in Altenholz near Kiel and six additional branches, achieving turnover of €544 million in 2017.

At the core of Dataport's broad service offering is a BSI- and TÜV-certified Twin Data Center, with full fail-over systems guaranteeing maximum security for the states' sensitive data. Complementing its data services, Dataport operates two printing and fulfilment centres at its Altenholz and Lüneburg locations, printing mass personalised transactional documents for the administrations it serves.

Annually the two centres print around 180 million pages for items including tax assessments, court orders, penalty notices, election notices, payroll documents and so on. To achieve this, Dataport runs three shifts per day, six days a week. Data for the printed documents is sent directly from Dataport's Data Center or from the remote state administration offices, for processing by Canon's PRISMAproduction server, which sends jobs to either sheet-fed or continuous feed printing systems before perforating, cutting, stacking, stapling, folding and insertion into envelopes using various high performance in- and near-line solutions. For these time-sensitive transactional applications, production uptime and data security are paramount.

Future-proof technology investment

In 2014, it became clear that Dataport needed to replace its outdated PageStream 350 monochrome technology to future-proof the two print centres, enabling the organisation to continue reliably delivering its print services, while complying with latest EU regulations and improving end-to-end production efficiency.

As a publicly-owned entity, all investment decisions must go through a rigorous tender process, as prescribed by the EU, with a number of evaluation criteria being carefully considered. The result was Dataport's decision to opt for the dry toner-based VarioStream 4000 continuous feed monochrome printing system from Canon. The only solution of its kind in the market, the printer is designed specifically for heavy production environments, delivering quality and productivity matched with ease of operation and workflow integration.

Five duplex VarioStream 4000 printers were subsequently installed across the two Dataport printing sites, integrated with finishing technologies from Canon partners Tecnau and Hunkeler.

The duplex printing functionality of the VarioStream 4000 was a key feature because of the sheer number of duplex jobs run by the centres, as was the embedded Adobe PDF Print Engine, which promised to resolve the historical production delays caused by slow PDF conversion with the legacy RIP technology.

Straightforward integration and data integrity

Accurate synchronisation of content on the front and back pages of documents was also critical for Dataport. Canon's response was to place a third-party web inspection system on each production line, which scans a barcode on both pages to ensure pages are matched.

"The deciders for us in any investment are technology and price, with technology having a much higher weighting – about 70 per cent. It was crucial that the solution we selected would have a minimum speed of 1000 pages per minute, as well as the option to stagger print speeds and the flexibility to upgrade performance over time."

**Hanno Overath,
Head of Output Management
and Printing Technology**

On the topic of document integrity, Hanno Overath also cites the VarioStream 4000's SRA controller as one of the primary benefits of the investment, explaining: "Data in the public sector is sensitive, so document security and data integrity is completely crucial for us. Data is our most valuable asset."

Workflow integration was simplified by the fact that Dataport's print centres were already running the PRISMAproduction and Cosmos document management workflow solutions, and Hanno Overath is more than satisfied with the way the workflow solutions run: "The user interface is very good and overall the systems are easy to handle, which is why we've continued to use them with the new output engines."

Reliability is critical

The critical nature of many of the documents produced by Dataport meant that a dependable system was paramount.

> ## We're functional decision makers, and the most important thing is reliability

"For this reason we also had minimum requirements regarding service. For example, we need a technician on-site within four hours, but that alone was not enough; we wanted to be sure how soon they would be on-site with the necessary spare parts." adds Hanno Overath

The performance features and cost-effectiveness of the VarioStream 4000 were the decisive factors, but for Hanno Overath, the long relationship between Dataport and Canon is an additional benefit. He says: "We've worked with Canon since Dataport was founded in 2004 and have used Canon continuous feed equipment and workflow solutions for many years.

Hanno Overath is confident that the VarioStream 4000 was the right choice for Dataport: "The staggered installation across the two printing sites in Altenholz and Lüneberg went very smoothly, ensuring that we were able to sustain production. The printers are very reliable, our operators are very pleased with the technology. Where Canon's support is concerned there is a service technician on site whenever we need them and when we need additional help, Canon is quick to respond and meet our requests. We would definitely recommend both Canon and the VarioStream 4000."

"It has been a good experience; the solutions have always run reliably, and our Canon account manager has a deep understanding of the specific needs of a public sector organisation."

**Hanno Overath,
Head of Output Management
and Printing Technology**

Looking to the future, Hanno Overath sees the long-term promise of colour inkjet, but with Canon's continued innovation in monochrome toner systems, these remain the most cost-effective solution for Dataport's public sector customer base today. He concludes: "The VarioStream 4000 strikes the right balance between costs and benefits for what our business will need for the foreseeable future."

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