



New York Times upgrades Press with Q.I. Press Controls' automation

Oosterhout, September 2020 - Nearly eight years after it first began investigating closed-loop colour control, The New York Times (NYT) has embarked on major press upgrades to deploy the technology. The publisher inked a deal with Netherlands-based Q.I. Press Controls (QIPC) in May to supply 64 IDS-3D cameras to improve colour and registration control across seven Goss Colorliner presses at its College Point production plant. The plant houses seven press folders and includes the Colorliner 85 the publisher installed in 2008. That press has 12 colour towers and two folders, which NYT runs as two presses.

NYT's Vice President of Production Nick D'Andrea indicates: "The install is scheduled to begin at the end of September. The first press is slated to be available by the end of October, with one being brought up every four to six weeks after that."

NYT first began looking into the benefits of closed-loop at Drupa in 2012. At that time, damp control — something NYT wanted to implement — wasn't prevalent in the technology, Nick D'Andrea recalled. When the publisher resumed its search, it challenged several suppliers to find the right solution for its unique needs. Having supplied an IRS system to NYT in 2006, QIPC was a logical choice to throw its hat in the ring.



Left to right: Bruce Barna, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, The Siebold Co.; Erwin van Rossem, Director of Global Sales and Marketing for QIPC-EAE; Nick D'Andrea, Vice President of Production for NYT; Ronald Reedijk, Former Managing Director of QIPC-EAE Americas (retired); Todd Socia, Senior Vice President of Print Products and Services for NYT; Michael Connors, Managing Director of Production for NYT; and Richard Palmer, Senior Vice President, The Siebold Co.

"After extensive analysis and investigation, we decided that QIPC's single-camera option was the best fit for us," said Todd Socia, Senior Vice President of Print Products and Services for NYT.

"Doing it all on one camera was simpler from an installation and maintenance standpoint, and we felt it would ultimately offer us a lower total cost of ownership."

In addition to closed-loop control, the project includes Damp control and Enhanced Print Default Detection. The latter was also key for NYT, and QIPC's tools for print defect detection and keeping press cameras clean stood out. "We have a big pressroom with lots of cameras, so keeping the optics clean was important to us," Todd Socia said.

QIPC worked closely with NYT to develop its enhanced print defect detection tool, which the publisher will be the first to deploy. "If you look at closed-loop systems, you don't need to measure the colour bar," said Erwin van Rossem, Director of Global Sales and Marketing for QIPC. "With closed-loop colour in place, NYT doesn't need to sample as many papers, so their print default detection system has to be as good as possible."

The project also calls for ink pre-setting and updates to NYT's existing intelligent quality management tool.

Innovation key

Nick D'Andrea and Todd Socia cite QIPC's willingness to innovate and evolve with NYT as an integral part of the vendor winning the contract. "We narrowed the decision based on the needs we talked about with QIPC," Nick D'Andrea said. "They've been innovative, they've solutioned everything we've asked for and they've committed to evolve with us."

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QIPC has provided countless closed-loop systems to newspapers, although NYT is among its first major U.S. installations. U.S. newspapers have been slower to adopt the technology than their European counterparts. "Seventy percent of our business comes from closed-loop colour control systems for newspapers, but the majority of those are in Europe," Erwin van Rossem said.

Ramping up speed

Increased automation has been a focus for NYT for many years. In addition to its iconic flagship daily, NYT prints USA Today and Newsday on its six Goss Colorliner presses. Nick D'Andrea said he is excited about the competitive edge these upgrades will provide, including waste reduction, improved quality and improved speed.

"When you look at these systems, you see how many moves you have to make manually, and how quickly you have to make them — you couldn't have enough people or consoles to do this as fast as these systems do," he said. "We will benefit from the speed of the corrections, the tolerance it maintains, and the defect detection capabilities."

QIPC said the project will be an important example of the benefits that can be realised with automation for the 27 outside markets in which NYT is printed.

Rollout

Because of the size of the pressroom, a press-by-press rollout made the most sense, according to Todd Socia. "The plan is to install and then go through testing and acceptance before moving on to the next press," he added. "The first one will take a little longer, but we expect to pick up speed as we go."

QIPC staff will remain onsite through acceptance. While NYT crews are already familiar with QIPC's registration system, the vendor will work with staff to train superusers around the plant. "We'll do this as each press is installed," Nick D'Andrea said. "From what we've seen and heard, we really need to train them to become more hands-off and let this technology do its job."

NYT has already performed some print tests with the new technology and the results were impressive, according to both publisher and vendor. Among those test runs, NYT took its opportunity to share its print following the United States' win over the Netherlands in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup soccer tournament.



The New York Times has printed some test editions with the QIPC technology, including this front page following the U.S. victory in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup soccer tournament.

"This is an iconic paper and QIPC is proud to have gotten this contract," Erwin van Rossem said. "They challenged us to the max and as a result, I think NYT will be the best printer in the New York area in terms of quality and consistency." The publisher anticipates the project will be complete by the end of Q1 in 2021. "I'm excited about the quality, and operational efficiencies this project will afford us," Todd Socia said.

About Q.I. Press Controls:

Q.I. Press Controls develops and delivers innovative, high quality optical measure and control systems. We are globally active in the newspaper and magazine printing industry. Our total solutions are supported by a worldwide service network. These reliable systems are proven in the market of existing and new printing presses and offer our customers structural better results.

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