

Consumables drive technology decision for State Journal-Register

Paper transitions back to CTP after early adoption.

By Tara McMeekin
Editor

The State Journal-Register in Springfield, Ill., in March converted to computer-to-plate — again.

The paper (daily, 49,839; Sunday, 58,272) was among the early adopters of computer-to-plate, making its initial conversion in 1996 with platesetters from now-defunct Symbolic Science. But The Journal-Register soon discovered that being the first wasn't necessarily best, and because of consumables costs, switched back to conventional film imaging.

"Mainly because of cost, we went back to conventional plates and film," said Daryl Ponder, prepress coordinator for the paper.

In converting back to film, The Journal-Register chose filmsetters from ECRM Imaging Systems, Western Lithotech plate processors and plates from Konica Minolta Graphic Imaging.

When CTP began to become more widely adopted and film began becoming more expensive and harder to support, the daily made the move back to CTP.

Back to the future

"Film has gone up and CTP price has stabilized, so we went back to CTP," Ponder said.

In its conversion back to CTP, The Journal-Register stayed with ECRM, installing two Newsmatic platesetters, and Konica for consumables, choosing the vendor's Replica HSV violet plates. The Journal-Register also purchased Inca 70 plate processors from Heights.

"We went with the Incas because we



Photo: The State Journal-Register

The State Journal-Register's prepress area. The daily originally converted to CTP in 1996, and made the switch again in March of this year, this time choosing ECRM platesetters and consumables from Konica Minolta.



KONICA MINOLTA

are still on a 50-inch web, but these will allow us to go down all the way to 44," Ponder said. "These can go down to a 10.75-inch plate."

The paper also installed a two-into-one optical bender from Nela.

Ponder said the consumables savings of switching back to CTP, and specifically, Konica's plates, have been immediately apparent.

Good chemistry

"The chemistry for the violet plates has held up remarkably well," he said. "The recommend changing chemistry once a month and we've been doing it every two months with no problems whatsoever."

The Journal-Register looked at both thermal and violet technologies before re-converting to CTP and Ponder said cost of ownership was the deciding factor.

"We looked at electricity usage and what it would cost to produce a plate," he said. "In our numbers it was more economical to go with violet and we still were able to achieve the quality we wanted."

The Journal-Register uses its own workflow app, which was written by a member of its IT staff.

In addition to its own daily, The Journal-Register produces the Lincoln (Ill.) Courier, a sister paper. The GateHouse Media Inc.-owned Journal-Register also prints the Springfield Shopper weekly and various other monthly publications.

"This is paying off for us economically — the budget's gotten better," Ponder said. "I even attended drupa and looked at all of the latest CTP stuff and even when I came back from there I was still happy with the decisions we made." —PT