

Lateral thinking at Scottish council

South Lanarkshire Council completely rethought its print department a couple of years ago by offering modern digital print services to local private and public clients. Now it's extended this with a photo book service for schools.

Growing demand for school year books has expanded so quickly that the printing department of South Lanarkshire Council has installed its own photo-book making equipment to offer a service directly to schools in its area. These comprise a Fastbind FotoMount F46e electrically operated large format 'lay flat' photo book maker and a Casematic hard cover maker from Ashgate Automation (*see pages 30 & 31 for a detailed description of these systems*). The printing is handled by the council's Canon imagePress C7000vp digital colour production press, which it installed in 2008.

'We don't know of another council that has made this type of investment, which we believe makes very good commercial sense as well as helping our education department,' said Angie Moakler, design and production manager. 'There are 123 schools within South

Lanarkshire to which we can now offer this service, primarily through their Parent Teachers Associations. Everybody wins because our rates are very competitive, enabling the PTAs to buy and sell the photobooks cost effectively. This makes them more affordable for parents to buy while generating income for the schools, which is important in the current financial climate.

Ms Moakler first saw the Fastbind equipment being demonstrated on the Ashgate stand at Canon's open days in Old Trafford last summer. 'We had been planning to introduce a photobook service but at that time we hadn't identified any equipment,' she said. 'As we were tapping into a new market, we had to look carefully at the capital outlay, which made the cost of the Fotomount and the Casematic appealing. Quality was equally important. The FotoMount produces 'lay-flat' pages, allowing images and text to run seam-

lessly across double page spreads for a very professional finish. The equipment is easy to set up and efficient to use. Although it is manually operated, our runs are quite short from less than ten to about 100-plus.'

The Fastbind FotoMount F46e produces lay-flat, photobooks with full-bleed images if needed. Photographic or digitally printed sheets are printed as spreads on the Canon 7000vp, creased and then folded ready for the FotoMount.

This then builds the page block by inserting a self-adhesive card sheet (200 or 850 micron) between each folded spread. The system's patented Mountinglift device controls the accuracy of the page block while it is being assembled. Page blocks can be produced up to 8 cm thickness and in sizes from CD to a very large 18 x 18 inches (45 x 45 cm). The page block is trimmed ready for the hardcase cover, which is produced separately on the Casematic, to be attached using a self-adhesive end sheet.

The cover papers, which wrap around the grey boards, are digitally printed onto self-adhesive sheets, either on a wide format Canon inkjet printer or on the C7000vp, depending on their size.

The Fastbind equipment is also being used for other applications by the council. 'We produce our own training films in-house, which are available online. However there is also a requirement for a small number of DVDs and we now make the DVD cases using the Casematic cover maker. We also make customised folders and binders,' said Ms Moakler. 'Finishing a job in a hard cover gives it impact and makes a big difference when handing out photocopied or digitally printed material,' she added. 'That's why we use it for presentations, civic awards etc; the applications are numerous and enquiries about the service are coming in all the time.' ■

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South Lanarkshire's printing team: Colin McKeown, Hugh Curran and Angie Moakler.