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Sinapse Graphic International - Simulators & Software for the Graphic Arts

## From Old School to High Tech: Sinapse Newspaper Simulator Eases the Transition at NAC

When the Newspaper Agency Corporation decided to invest in a new TKS CT 5000 press for its Salt Lake City plant, there was a lot on the line. In a joint operating agreement, the plant produces both *The Deseret Morning News* and the *Salt Lake City Tribune*. Currently, it operates a variety of older Goss presses, so this represented a big jump in technology. Management wanted to take this opportunity to address general knowledge issues and standard operating procedure among press operators to maximize its investment.

As part of the purchase, NAC requested that a Sinapse Graphic (SGI) Newspaper Simulator be bundled with the press. Press simulators are terrific training tools that simulate the running of a press much the same way that a flight simulator simulates flying a plane. TKS worked with Sinapse Graphic to develop a version of the simulator that reflects the configuration of the new press, namely the four-by-one design and integration into the TKS console.



*Mike Herrera (right) and NAC trainee with Sinapse Simulator and TKS Console.*

The press goes live in March, 2006. In the meantime, NAC's goal is to begin training far in advance. This was extremely important to NAC, since the new press is far more advanced than its operators are used to. They are not used to the level of automation and have never worked from a computerized console. The press speeds are also much higher than in the past — 70,000 iph, compared to less than 50,000 iph for the older presses.

“Today's technology is so advanced,” says Michael Herrera, maintenance and training instructor for NAC. “When you take into consideration the different menus and functions, the level of sophistication is much greater than we had before. Being able to put our operators through simulator training will bring them up to speed before the press is even running.”

### **REALISTIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Herrera particularly likes that the training console, where the operators practice the exercises, is the actual console that comes with the press. This allows trainees to practice the simulation exercises just as they would if they were running the press. “The integration of the simulator software with the press console is a drastic change from previous versions,” says Herrera. “It's exactly what our operators need, and it provides the level of realism that really makes a difference.”

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Adding to the realism is the way the simulator handles the changes made during the exercises. The simulator presents the operator with a press problem, such as linting or scumming, and they must figure out what is causing it. Once they make adjustments, the changes are reflected immediately. The Newspaper Simulator has an overhead projector that beams the results onto the tabletop next to the monitor, creating the illusion of viewing an actual press sheet.

“It puts the image of the newspaper on the console where you would lay your newspaper if you were running a live press,” says Herrera. “It’s like looking at a real piece of paper in front of you.”

The simulation adds other elements of realism, such as the ability to check ink levels with a simulated densitometer and check registration by viewing the dots. “You can call up a glass, put your pointer on any part of the page, click on it, and see the registration. Then, you can look at the colors and adjust them laterally or circumferentially.”

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### **STEPS TO TRAINING**

Training started in November, 2005, and to date, NAC has put all of its press operators and press journeymen, as well as its maintenance journeymen, through the training — a total of 60 people, including upper management.

The first step was to familiarize the press operators with working from a console, including the basics of working the buttons and operations of the press. Next, they began working with the instructor’s modules. These ranged from basic exercises, such as ink and water balance, to more advanced functions.

Sinapse Graphic supplies a library of 100+ “NAA Training Program” exercises, but the simulator also allows the trainers to create their own. “It’s not too hard, once you understand the system,” Herrera says.

Press operators work on the simulator two at a time, for an hour at a time, during press downtime. The range of problems is vast, and even after three months, operators still have not yet completed all of them. Training includes ink and water balance, registration, margins, and angle bars, as well as folder problems, such as pins, jaws, jaw cylinder and folding cylinder, and trolleys.

### **CONFIDENCE IN SUCCESS**

Although the press is not yet up and running, Herrera has a high level of confidence of success. “Based on what I’ve seen, I think the training has been very strong and will translate very well to the new TKS press,” he says. “Our operators understand the new features and will be able to come up to speed more quickly.”

Even once the press has gone live, Herrera plans to continue using it for ongoing training. “We will run our new trainees through the simulator, and if experienced operators have trouble with certain functions, we can give them additional support,” he concludes. “That is the purpose of the simulator — having a continual, readily available source of learning.”

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