

Case Study: Edwards Brothers

Features and Functions

- Direct integration with press controllers and digital scales
- Common touch-screen user interface for operators across different press types
- Centralized, real-time reporting of WIP and scrap counts
- Data sharing with custom production scheduling application
- Automatic job ticket printing upon completion
- Custom electrical interface design

OnSite™ for Production Tracking, Machine Integration, and Job Control

CRITICAL BUSINESS ISSUES

Edwards Brothers is a leading producer of short- and medium-run books and journals with a focus on environmentally-friendly manufacturing practices. As part of an ongoing waste reduction project, a new initiative focused on eliminating print overruns, a primary source of wasted paper and ink, was being launched.

Many publications are printed as a collection of separate 'signatures', which are assembled into books. High-speed printing is difficult to track, with the operator monitoring the press, scrapping bad sheets, and manually adjusting the job run to compensate. This uncertainty, combined with planned 'safety margins', produces varying counts of each signature. After assembly, any leftover signatures are scrapped.

Edwards Brothers proposed a system to automate the monitoring process: the operator would calibrate the system during job setup by weighing a known quantity of pages, and then during the run, they would simply move scrap sheets directly into a bin on a floor scale. The system could then monitor the total pages produced as reported by the press, subtract the waste pages pulled off by the operator, and then automatically shut down the press when the correct number of pages were complete. EB wanted to use a single, multi-purpose application which could be integrated across all of EB's presses, using non-proprietary components and presenting a single common interface to the operators no matter which press they were running.



SOLUTION

Edwards Brothers selected Cimulus for the implementation, based on the company's shop-floor expertise and engineering capabilities. Cimulus created a generic press control system using OnSite, and worked with EB to launch the application into production.

BENEFITS

This project was an unqualified success, reducing wasted signatures by 75% or more for each press, and allowing EB to cut safety margins by 50% or more. The return on EB's original investment was measured in weeks in direct savings alone. In addition, OnSite offers a range of additional functionality, including centralized data storage, integrated WIP tracking, and cross-platform operation, which EB has capitalized into further benefits, such as cost reductions on the manufacturing floor and improved customer support.

Lee Mohr, IT Manager at Edwards Brothers, said "We have been very happy with the results of this project. Cimulus offered the right mix of hardware and software expertise to understand our needs, and to get the project done within our budget and schedule."