

Retuning for the later phase of life

Lensing Zeitungsdruck has opted for a retrofit
of its //wifag OF 470 GTD printing machines



Regardless of what role printed products play in newspaper publishers' future business models, those responsible for technology at the printing shops still have to guarantee the availability of their production technology – whatever its age. For many companies, “retrofit” projects are thus currently the method of choice when it comes to prolonging the service life of the existing technology – especially since investments can be kept to a manageable level. Wifag Services AG (Fribourg/CH) offers such “retrofits” as a modular system for its machines all over the world – and bases it all on an analysis of the current state of technology.

//wifagservices

WIFAG Services AG

26, route de la Glâne · P.O. Box 1184

CH-1701 Fribourg/Switzerland

Phone: +41 26 426 18 88 · Fax: +41 26 426 18 77

info@wifag-services.com · www.wifag-services.com

“The measure of all things” – when it comes to reliable decisions on production technology –, “is the evaluation of the condition of the machines,” explains //wifag CEO Pascal Clémentçon. Every newspaper printing press is a highly complex system made up of mechanical and electronic components which demonstrate varying degrees of wear and have varying service lives. To evaluate the condition, all function components of the machine are tested by experts from //wifag who compare the actual values with the target values. Clémentçon: “This is ultimately the only way it is possible to predict long-term maintenance costs and whether investments are going to be necessary.” This service has been on offer from //wifag for a long time now and many customers have an “evaluation of condition” conducted every five years.

New investment, retrofit or a search for spare parts?

While the newspaper rotary presses themselves, not least the very stable Wifag machines, can be operated without any problem for decades, the cycles for the controls in them are a lot shorter. “Five to seven years,” is the length of a cycle in industry for electronic components, says Martin Santschi, Head of Projects at Wifag Services. Of course these components are available for another few years after that, but once 12 to 15 years have passed, it is often difficult to find suitable spare parts. If it has not happened before, this is when newspaper printers have to start making decisions: Can you replace the technology completely – standard procedure in previous decades – after 18 to 20 years? Should you continue and use spare parts from various sources? Or maybe prolong the service life of the machines by a good decade by giving them a general retrofit?

The //wifag retrofit solution is a modular system for the gradual renewal of the entire printing machine. Various retrofit steps can be combined to suit specific requirements. The individual steps then build on each other – in other words, once an investment has been made, it can continue to be used in the following steps, thus ensuring investment security. Once all retrofit steps have been completed, the machine has been renewed all round in mechanical, electrical and electronic terms. The essential electrical components are state of the art. As is the case in a complete exchange of the technology, lots of newly developed functions, which reduce waste paper or increase quality, are also implemented with the control retrofit.



*Hugo Haymoz (Head of Services //wifag), Rainer Pöter (Head of Maintenance), Martin Santschi (Head of Projects //wifag)
Pascal Clémentçon (CEO //wifag), Tobias Tigges (CEO Newspaper Print)*

New hardware and software necessary

Specifically, //wifag is equipping the machines with the successor solution – based on the AMKAMAC control – as an alternative to the current AS-PL12 control. This requires adjustments to the hardware and software in all printing machine modules so the latter can continue to communicate with the local bus subscribers. Further, the Pilz control terminals, which have also been discontinued, and the Ke-Top operating console also have to be replaced. For this, there are replacement solutions which are already in use and have proven themselves.

//wifag has already successfully implemented the control concept in new machines and retrofit projects all round the globe. Currently projects are under way in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia at Funke headquarters in Hagen – and also at Lensing Druck in Dortmund. The Westphalian company is a service provider for publishers, agencies and authorities. Since 1981, the printing plant in Dortmund-Dorstfeld has been producing daily newspapers and free ads papers. The publication with the widest circulation is the “Ruhr Nachrichten”, with the printing plant producing around 130,000 copies overnight. A further one million free ads papers per week mean the rotary printing presses are used to

full capacity – since 2006, they have been using two //wifag lines of type OF 470 GTD, each with a capacity of 32 pages.

Tobias Tigges, Managing Director of Lensing Zeitungsdruck, says of his two printing machines, both 13 years old: “We want to use the machines for around 25 years – like most companies – maybe a little longer.” However, because there have recently been repeated failures in the control, Lensing now wants to make its technology “fit” for the remainder of its service life as a preventive measure. And a project was set up with //wifag accordingly.

“Challenging situation”

The situation at Lensing Druck is not an easy one, or as Pascal Cléménçon puts it, “This is an extremely challenging retrofit project.” Tobias Tigges: “We depend on both our machines for our production program and cannot take one of them out of production for any length of time. We can only do without one tower in emergencies, but that means much longer production cycles with a knock-on effect on proofing and ultimately in delivery.” In a place like Dortmund, up-to-date sports news is an important criterion for the time involved in press proofing.

It is helpful that the Funke Media Group nearby is also realizing a retrofit project with //wifag in its printing house in Hagen and the printing machines in both companies are virtually identical. In Hagen, the Swiss technicians have already been able to check and further optimize their retrofit processes in the project that spanned several months. And that makes it possible to exchange the control technology in Dortmund in a short time. One of the two machines at Lensing Druck will be converted in Week 21 and the other in Week 24, from early Saturday morning to Friday morning in each case. As there is a public holiday in each of these two weeks, only four days of production are affected. Preproduction will have to be increased to compensate. Among other things, just 16 instead of 32 pages will be printed – in straight-run mode.

The Lensing electricians and fitters as well as the company's IT department are naturally fully involved in the project. They can prepare the cabling for example. //wifag specialists are then responsible for installing the control modules, for the wiring and for software programming.

Close collaboration with EAE

Both retrofit projects – at Funke and at Lensing – are taking place in close collaboration with the control console and planning system supplier EAE. As the new controls are no longer designed for Profibus and SERCOSII interfaces, the interface to EAE has to be changed. The current machine control concept with an EAE section control system is being replaced by an EAE section gateway system for communicating with a section master to be provided by //wifag. The existing EAE hardware components remain as they are and can be reused. The staff who will maintain the new systems will learn all they need to know during commissioning on site.

Tobias Tigges has a good feeling about his retrofit project in May and June 2020, happy also in the knowledge that the first two sections D and E in Hagen were put into operation exactly as planned and approved by the customer.