

# Inkjet technology propels transition to new franking standards



Francotyp-Postalia needed a fast, efficient, cost-effective, high-quality printing solution to help its customers meet Deutsche Post's stringent FRANKIT® digital franking standards. They found it with Hewlett-Packard's TIJ 2.5 technology.



Francotyp-Postalia's **ultimail**, shown here with a scale, uses HP's thermal inkjet (TIJ) 2.5 technology to meet the stringent digital franking requirements of Deutsche Post's FRANKIT® program.

Francotyp-Postalia chose HP TII 2.5 technology for its **ultimail** digital franking machine because TII delivers “a reliable print mechanism that is easy to maintain and convenient to use.”



## New franking standards create incentives

Recently enacted digital franking standards—such as the U.S. Postal Service’s Information Based Indicia Program (IBIP) and Deutsche Post’s FRANKIT® program—are creating competitive incentives for businesses in the franking market. By complying early with the standards, franking equipment manufacturers and their customers can differentiate themselves from competitors. That is vital in the current era of European postal deregulation in which private companies are competing with traditional postal operators for customers.

But the incentive to comply with the new standards carries with it a need to innovate; franking machines need to achieve the high-resolution printing necessitated by the new franking standards. A case in point is Francotyp-Postalia, which introduced updated versions of its **mymail** and **ultimail** franking machines in April 2004 to coincide with the launch of Deutsche Post’s new FRANKIT® program, making it the first manufacturer to release FRANKIT-certified machines in Germany.

## The necessity of inkjet printing

Francotyp-Postalia, headquartered near Berlin, Germany, introduced digital printing to the world of franking in the early 1990s in the form of thermal transfer technology. But this technology proved to be too slow to handle the high-

volume franking needs of many mailrooms. Francotyp-Postalia next introduced its own piezoelectric inkjet technology with fixed printheads and a separate ink-supply reservoir. But according to Ludger Bornemann, product manager for franking machines at Francotyp-Postalia, “this proved to be a costly solution.”

This early phase of digital experimentation led Francotyp-Postalia to a creative partnership with Hewlett-Packard’s Specialty Printing Systems, which resulted in Francotyp-Postalia franking machines powered by HP’s thermal inkjet (TIJ) 2.5 technology. High print quality, along with outstanding ease of use, made HP technology the right fit. According to Bornemann, “Francotyp-Postalia has chosen HP technology because HP offered us the best solution to a basic need of ours—a reliable print mechanism that is easy to maintain and convenient to use. HP solved a problem for which we couldn’t find a suitable solution elsewhere.”

HP TIJ print cartridges combine proprietary, HP-engineered ink and a sophisticated printhead in a single, disposable unit. Users need no special training to change the print cartridges; they just pop out the old one and snap in the new. The expensive cleaning and maintenance stations necessary with fixed printheads can be eliminated—a time-saving benefit to postal operators who depend on equipment to stay up and running. “HP print cartridges are very cost effective,” says Bornemann. And since a new printhead is installed every time the ink is changed, print quality remains consistently optimal.

The high print quality produced by HP TIJ technology was essential to Francotyp-Postalia’s development of FRANKIT-compliant machines. “The new standards such as IBIP and FRANKIT definitely require digital printing,” says Bornemann. “To put it simply, FRANKIT requires that every single imprint, out of thousands a machine might make

each day, be unique.” Only digital printing can quickly and efficiently handle the multiple pieces of variable information contained in the two-dimensional FRANKIT “matrix code.” The code includes, among other things, the serial number of the machine making the franking imprint, the place of sending, the class of mail for each mail piece, the amount printed and encrypted validity information (much like the anti-counterfeit features built into paper currency). That’s a lot of precise information packed into a small imprint, so it’s necessary that franking machines print at very high resolution—300 dpi has become standard in digital franking. “HP TIJ technology, providing a resolution of up to 600 dpi, proved to be a very good answer to these needs,” says Bornemann.

Francotyp-Postalia’s collaboration with HP began before the introduction of FRANKIT standards, with the 2001 release of the TIJ-powered my**mail** franking machine, aimed at low-volume, small business applications. Francotyp-Postalia worked with HP to integrate HP TIJ technology with its own designs and was so satisfied with the results that in 2003 it put HP TIJ technology into **ultimail**, a higher-volume franking machine. By that time, says Bornemann, “it was clear that tougher rules [such as FRANKIT] were to come.” According to Bornemann, close support from HP engineers was instrumental in preparing the FRANKIT versions of Francotyp-Postalia’s my**mail** and **ultimail** for the April 2004 release.

## Benefits for FRANKIT adopters

To encourage the transition to the new standards, Deutsche Post offered a rebate of up to €1,500 for the first 10,000 FRANKIT-compliant machines adopted. The offer expires December 31, 2004. The German postal authority has an interest in reducing mail fraud, and FRANKIT’s new security features make that easier. Each piece of mail printed with the FRANKIT two-dimensional matrix code is machine readable, allowing it to be traced and enabling counterfeit postage to be detected.

But FRANKIT features benefit postal customers as much as Deutsche Post. Reduced fraud makes the mail stream safer and more reliable. FRANKIT also makes it easier for postal customers to manage their businesses efficiently and accurately. Mail processed with a FRANKIT imprint speeds smoothly through mail-sorting equipment, eliminating levels of sorting and cutting delivery times. In addition, the ability to print high-resolution, customizable advertisements and announcements next to the postmark—another advantage of HP’s TIJ technology—gives postal customers an effective and economical way to communicate with their own customers.

And when it comes to managing postal processes and expenses, FRANKIT adopters have a distinct advantage over those using traditional, analog postage meters. The information embedded in each FRANKIT matrix code allows postal customers to track and analyze useful data, such as expenses, number of items franked, customer numbers and special services selected. This means users can have precise knowledge of how their postal resources are being used. In addition, FRANKIT-compliant machines can be loaded with postage via modem quickly and easily. By contrast, traditional analog franking machines had to be hand carried to a retail postal outlet for recharging, a time-consuming and inefficient undertaking for business owners.

The benefits for postal customers who adopt FRANKIT-compliant machines points the way toward the future of the postal industry—better results, with greater efficiency and cost effectiveness.

## Francotyp-Postalia at work

Francotyp-Postalia’s franking machines are helping businesses enter the future of postal franking. One such business is Deutsche Post In Haus Service (DPIHS), an independent subsidiary of Deutsche Post that sells mailroom outsourcing solutions to organizations across Germany. DPIHS runs more than 150 mailrooms in Germany and employs more than 1,100 people. Key to DPIHS’s business is its ability to create more efficient processes to speedily handle its clients’ mail, and Francotyp-Postalia’s franking machines have been important to that ability.

According to Joachim Mohr, head of outsourcing projects for DPIHS, Francotyp-Postalia is DPIHS’s “preferred provider” of franking equipment. Features available on the FRANKIT version of Francotyp-Postalia’s **ultimail** are useful when managing mailrooms that serve several departments or even several businesses. For instance, **ultimail** allows DPIHS to establish cost centers within a company’s postal expenditures and track expenses by department. Also valuable is the ability to quickly switch between customized advertisements in the postmark, depending on which client’s mail is being processed. Of DPIHS, Mohr says, “we’re a good partner for businesses because we don’t produce any franking machines we’re trying to sell. Instead, we find the best machinery for our customers’ needs.”

DPIHS has chosen Francotyp-Postalia to serve major clients, such as Siemens, for whom it runs almost twenty mailrooms. In one such location, Siemens in Dortmund,

more than 1,300 items are processed every day. "The less time you have, the faster the equipment must be," says Mohr, and that's one reason **ultimail** has been a success at Dortmund. According to the rhythm of the German post, mail is collected for processing until the early afternoon and then processed and franked in the late afternoon before pickup by Deutsche Post. The speed allowed by HP's TIJ printing technology ensures that DPIHS can accomplish this task easily, with all the advanced security and tracking benefits of the FRANKIT standards.

## Digital printing leads franking into the future

In the digital age, printing technology is central to the smooth operation of postal operations. Machine-readable, two-dimensional bar codes are the lynchpin holding together a web of efficiencies and innovations, including fraud protection, advanced sorting technologies, expense and data management, and even customized messages to mail recipients. All of these

benefits make the mail work better. The collaboration between HP Specialty Printing Systems and Francotyp-Postalia to create speedy, FRANKIT-compliant machines is a sign of where the postal industry is headed—toward a more efficient, more effective and more secure future.

## SPS partners

Francotyp-Postalia has been a leader in the mailing industry for more than 80 years. Founded in 1923, Francotyp-Postalia provides mail processing products and services, including a full range of franking machines. Francotyp-Postalia has subsidiaries in Germany, USA, Canada, Netherlands, Great Britain, Belgium, Austria and Italy. Visit the company online at [www.francotyp.com](http://www.francotyp.com).

### Challenge

- Comply with new digital franking standards, such as Deutsche Post's FRANKIT® program.
- Meet high-volume franking demands reliably and affordably.
- Achieve unique and complex two-dimensional matrix codes.

### Solution

- Updated franking machines, such as Francotyp-Postalia's **mymail** and **ultimail**, use HP thermal inkjet (TIJ) 2.5 technology to get results.
- Low maintenance, snap-in/snap-out print cartridges deliver a new printhead with every ink replacement.
- HP TIJ technology delivers digital printing at a crisp 600 dpi for each unique imprint.

### Results

- Francotyp-Postalia's **mymail** and **ultimail** enable early compliance with digital franking standards.
- Convenience, ease of use and high reliability maximize machine performance.
- High-quality printing of variable data helps reduce mail fraud and improves processing efficiency while leaving ample room for customized marketing messages in each imprint.

For more information about HP Specialty Printing Systems and our partners in mail postage printing, please visit us at <http://www.hp.com/oeminkjet/>

© 2004 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.