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## Engineer pitching automated printing

BY CHUCK MOOZAKIS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A German engineer is ready to market a printing concept that automates many of the functions of a newspaper printing facility and relies on a common and flexible transportation system upon which materials and personnel travel.

The concept, dubbed Integrated Production Automation Control was developed by Horst Walter-Hauer, a former Koenig & Bauer AG technology and sales executive who is now general manager of Wurzburg-based engineering firm IBH.

As envisioned by Hauer, IPAC brings an entirely new level of automation to newspaper operations, stitching together materials handling, prepress, press and postpress systems under control of operators who — along with materials and commodities — are ferried to where they need to go by built-in transporters.

To make the concept work, IPAC uses a vertical, rather than horizontal, approach. Tracks upon which the transporter travels wind throughout the system's various components.

"IPAC is a cost-effective design and flexible configuration for highly automated printing plants," Hauer told *News & Tech*. "The IPAC

concept also offers additional benefits due to lower investment and running costs as well as future orientation compared to the common technologies applied nowadays."

Hauer said the design could be put into operation today, using suppliers' existing press and postpress products and technologies.

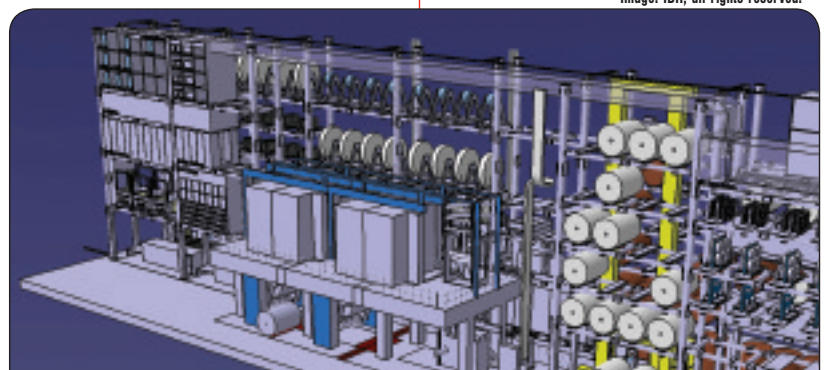
"Our idea is to integrate all the systems in a production line," he said.

The transport system, he told *WAN-Ifra* magazine in a January 2011 interview, relies on adapters that move shuttles positioned around the production lines. The shuttles are engineered to deliver whatever is needed, Hauer said, from plate cartridges to forklifts.

"Stationary robot systems might be able to become mobile and take over new tasks," he told the magazine. "Here I expect some very interesting developments."

Hauer said the concept is more likely to be adopted by a publisher constructing a green-field production site, but that portions of IPAC could be incorporated within existing plants. "We are now in the final stages of development, and we're looking for someone to employ this design," he said. ▲

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Hauer's concept for automating production calls for systems to be arrayed vertically. A track ferries personnel and materials to specific locations.