

# Preparing for your new RIPit System

Thanks for purchasing our product! We're sure it will simplify your workflow and improve the quality of your work. Installing any new piece of equipment can be a disruption. We hope this document will help smooth the way, so that you can be productive with your new RIPit system as soon as possible.

If we are scheduled to install your equipment, please resist the urge to open the packages ahead of time. That way, we retain responsibility for any missing or damaged contents. The only exception is if there are obvious signs of damage to the boxes or cartons, in which case you should contact us for instructions.

To help us install your equipment faster (and increase the amount of time we can allot to training), please make sure the following items are prepared or available before we arrive:

- **Adequate Power** – Your entire OpenRIP system can operate off a single 120V, 15A circuit with power to spare for other devices (such as other computers). Please be sure that the outlet is grounded and in good condition. Be sure that it does not share a circuit with any large or electrically noisy equipment such as heaters, compressors, refrigerators, dimmers, or other large mechanical equipment. Be sure that you have a 6-outlet power strip. A line-interactive uninterruptible power supply (UPS) is a very good investment, and will minimize the effects of noisy or unreliable power. We strongly recommend them.
- **Clear a space** – Be sure you have a desk or table large enough to hold the RIP (a small, upright computer case), a 17" monitor, keyboard, and mouse. If you ordered an Epson 1520, 3000, or 5000 series, or HP 10ps printer, it will require approximately 3 feet of additional desk or table space. (Film or offline SpeedSetters require about 3 feet of table space.) The cable from the RIP to most imagesetters is 10 feet long, and longer cables are not available. Therefore, it is not possible to locate the RIP and imagesetter in different locations. No imagesetters should be located in direct sunlight or very bright rooms.
- **Online (Direct-to-plate) SpeedSetter 300 and 400 system considerations** – Systems require just over two square yards of floor space, with enough additional space so the processor can swing out. The processor is attached to the imagesetter stand by a hinge on the right side, and swings out counterclockwise. It should be located on level, hard floor. If you have carpet, consider purchasing an antistatic chairmat (rectangular) so that the online processor can roll freely. Finally, we recommend that you plan on putting the system in a permanent location, where it will not be moved. Moving the system after it is installed may cause misalignment, which can cause a variety of problems.
- **Have all media and chemistry on hand** – RIPit sells plate material, film, and RC paper for the imagesetters we sell. We also sell RIPit Natural and RIPit Bright paper for Epson 1520, 3000, and 5000 printers, and for the HP 10ps. We cannot sell or ship photochemicals of any kind – those must be purchased from a local supplier, and if we are installing the system for you, you should have them on hand by the time we arrive. All imagesetters come with one roll of plate material (or film, if applicable) which is used for setting up and testing the system. While there is often plenty left over for training and production work, we recommend that you have additional media on hand. In the unlikely event that we use more than one roll for installation and testing, we will replace the roll.

SpeedSetter 300 and 400 imagesetters use visible-red (sometimes called HeNe) media, wound emulsion-inward on the roll. Supply cassettes can accept up to 200 feet of plate material, or 400 feet of film or RC Paper. SpeedSetters can accept pre-cassetted media, although performance is only guaranteed when it is loaded into our supply cassette. Media for the SpeedSetter 300 is 13.3" wide, and media for the SpeedSetter 400 is 15.75" wide. RIPit offers free software support with certain media purchase programs – call your salesperson for details. You can also buy media from a local supplier, if you prefer.

- **Network Issues** – You should have a fully functioning 10Base-T or 100Base-T Ethernet network installed prior to installation of the RIP. There should be at least one available network connection available for the RIP. If you are installing a new network from scratch, we recommend using Category 5 network cable, and a 100Base-T hub or switch. Hubs and switches have become inexpensive enough that it makes sense to buy one with plenty of extra capacity. For example, even if you only have two Macs and the RIP now, a 16-port hub or switch is not unreasonable; new networks often grow much more quickly than you might expect. If you have a coaxial Ethernet network, be aware that the RIP does not have a coaxial connector, so you will need to get a hub with a coaxial connector on it, or find another solution.
- **Computer Issues** – Be sure that all computers you plan to print from have a network card installed. Most Power Macintosh computers, including all G3 and later machines, have built-in Ethernet adaptors, though earlier machines may require you to purchase an adaptor. Windows machines are less likely to have come with built-in Ethernet adaptors, but good 100Base-T adaptors can be purchased for less than \$30.

Some stores have “problem computers” – Mac or Windows machines which are crash-prone, unreliable, or behave strangely. Particularly with Windows machines, it is often necessary to install additional networking protocols or other software to facilitate communication with the RIP, and “problem computers” often make it difficult to do so. We will not be able to give you complete training, and we may not even be able to completely configure your workstations to print to the RIP, if we are prevented from doing so by a misbehaving workstation. So it is in your best interest to try to resolve problems with any such machines before we arrive if you want to print from them to the RIP.

- **Proofer/Plotter Issues** – If you purchased an inkjet printer or plotter to use with the RIP, you will need a way to attach it to the RIP. The most common solution is a USB to parallel adaptor for printers equipped with a parallel port, or a standard USB cable for printers with a USB connection, such as the HP10ps and Epson SP5500. Parallel cables work, but cause a substantial drop in printing performance. RIPit does not supply any printer cables, but they are available at most computer and office supply stores. If you want to locate your printer or plotter away from the RIP, you can also use an Ethernet print server such as internal Ethernet cards or an external print server such as Hewlett Packard’s JetDirect. External print servers are generally less expensive. If you purchase an external print server, it does not necessarily need to be manufactured by the same company as the printer, it simply needs to have a parallel printer port to communicate with the printer. The print server must be Windows 2000 compatible, although it does not need to be Macintosh compatible – Macintosh connectivity is provided by the RIP.

## Organization and Workflow

In addition to the above physical issues, there are also some organization and workflow issues which you should give some thought to before we arrive. You do not need to decide all these issues before we arrive, but you should be aware of them and give them some thought. If you have not had a computer-to-plate system before, then your new RIPit system brings with it some changes to your workflow. Previously, you may have done any or all of the three following things to create plates for your presses:

- Manually layed-out and pasted-up pages, or pages printed from a laser-printer, used with a camera to create paper or poly plates.
- Film run in-house or at a service bureau.
- Toner-based plates, possibly with alignment of the page done in the source application.

The first two options involved manual work by a prepress worker, while the latter involved layout work in the application by the graphic designer. With the OpenRIP system, all these tasks are replaced with the task of operating the RIP. Depending on the staffing of your shop, you may choose as the primary RIP operator a graphic designer, a dedicated prepress employee, or the press operator. Or you may choose to share the job of running the RIP between two or more employees. If you have multiple presses, you know that certain jobs are best suited to certain presses. If the decision of which press to use for a job was made by the press department, you must now decide on a way to pass that information to the RIP operator, because the RIP can be configured to create different plate sizes and alignments for different presses. If a member or members of the press department are the RIP operator, then that makes it easy. If the RIP operator is the graphic designer, then the decision needs to be communicated to that person either on the work order or through a consultation.

Another factor with film and optically created plates is that there is some leeway for fixing things after the page has been printed or film has been run. With a direct-to-plate system, this is no longer the case. The job layout must be exactly as you want it printed, with no missing or extraneous elements. The page must be created on either the finished, trimmed page size or the press run size. (Though you have more options if you purchased the In-RIP Imposition feature.) Often, graphic designers work on a letter-sized page in the source application, even though the job will be run on a smaller sheet. When using OpenRIP, the image will be too far down the plate if the application page size is wrong. This will be covered in more detail in training, but for now simply be aware that the graphic designer will need to make changes to the way he or she works, and modify previous jobs in order to re-run them through the RIP.

In the case of toner-based plates, your graphic designer is probably already aware of issues related to page alignment on the plate. With OpenRIP, plate templating is done on the RIP rather than in the application. Any pre-existing jobs that are saved with templating may need to be modified so that the document size in the application matches the page size, not the plate size.

## Training

Training is the most critical part of your company's success with a RIPit System. If the RIP is being installed in the middle of a busy production environment, it can be difficult to make employees available for training because they have work to finish. In most installations, the majority of the installation time is allocated to training, and it is critical that employers find a way so that their employees can spend the time necessary to learn the system. It may be necessary to pay some overtime to get work finished so that employees are available for training. In a very busy environment with

impending deadlines, you should decide whether you are willing to miss deadlines in order to facilitate training. It may be worthwhile to miss a deadline in order to take advantage of training while the installer is still on the premises.

Another factor to consider is the number of employees to be trained. Ideally, you should have at least 2 employees participate in the entire training, and we recommend that a principal in the business participate in the training. That way, when your primary RIP operator wins the lottery and retires with no warning, you will still have options. On a less catastrophic note, your primary operator may get sick or go on vacation, and you need someone else who can run it. Replacing a graphic designer or press operator is easier to do than replacing an OpenRIP operator, since the skillsets of those other types of work are much more common in the general workforce.

The latest version of the OpenRIP manual is available from our website in PDF format. To download it, go to: <http://www.ripit.com/updater>

We recommend having your RIP operator read at least some of the manual before the installer arrives, particularly if you think that training time may be constrained during the days the installer is on site.

## **Pricing and Marketing**

Many printshops operate their graphics/prepress departments as a loss leader. A RIP system has the potential to make the loss in the loss leader even worse, unless you find ways to take advantage of it to generate revenue. Only you can decide whether your market will bear price increases, but your quality is certain to improve on your low-end jobs. If the market will not bear a price increase, then you might consider using the quality increase as a marketing element. In any event, it makes sense to think about how having the new direct-to-plate capability will affect your relationship with your customers, and how you can gain the maximum benefit from it.

## **Conclusion**

This is a quick overview to make you aware of how your new RIPit system will impact your business. If you have questions of a technical nature, please feel free to contact RIPit Technical Support at (916) 962-7050.