

# The Importance of Documented Workflows for Newspaper and Magazine publishers



STRATEGY BRIEFING  
2008

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## 1 Introduction

*“Technology is dominated by two types of people: Those who understand what they do not manage; and those who manage what they do not understand”.*

*-- unknown*

In any large business, understanding the small detail as well as the overall picture will ensure that the business runs efficiently. Being able to get to the small detail and understand it, in how all the elements/processes fit together, makes for a more efficient business. No one person can be expected to know every element of the production process, yet it should be possible, for everyone in that organisation to be able to access that information.

The 7M method of analysis is a set of criteria used in a variety of industries not just the printing Industry. It allows any individual to target and analyse areas of a business without being overwhelmed by looking at the entire picture. Using the 7'M' analysis method it is possible to build up a picture of an organisation or a processes, to achieve an insight to part or all of an operation, to identify failures, and also identify those areas which are working well.

The 7'M' analysis method It is broken down into the following areas:

1. **Management:** Do Management adopt the values of Total Quality management and specifically to what extent is there a process view? Are there policies and goals for the different dimensions of the process?
2. **Man power:** Are personnel competent (defined as formal education, experience and motivation in relation to the requirements) in their work tasks?
3. **Method:** Is there a documented method, if relevant, for managing, controlling and improving each of the process dimensions (for example an ISO 9000 system for quality)?
4. **Measurement:** Is there a process control and information system that measures the relevant key performance indicators for the different dimensions and distributes the information to those needing it?
5. **Machine:** Is the machinery, including buildings and premises, up to the process requirements?
6. **Material:** Is the input material - defined as raw material, wear and spare parts - introducing variation and problems?
7. **Milieu:** Is the internal and external environment affecting process performance?

In the following briefing Colour Splash would like to look at **Method** and **Measurement** from the above with regard to a generic pre-press operation.

In today's fast-paced and increasingly customer-driven business environment, it's not good enough to look back at what staff have done, identify problems, and fix them for next time. Staff, need to identify problems and opportunities in what they are doing right now, so they can avoid them or capitalize on them this time around.

Looking forward, monitoring and documenting workflows will significantly reduce the time spent in resolving problems, and could possibly avoid the loss of an edition.

## 2 Overview of many newspapers' current operations

Most, if not all newspapers have main editorial offices, which include all the servers, networks PCs and staff to create and produce a newspaper. It is reasonable to assume that 95% of the pre-press operation is carried out within these offices. The other 5% being that of the plate making operation for the printing presses which can take place at remote printing sites.

In publishing newspapers and magazines the Pre-Press operation is quite a complex one, and relies on the staff knowing when, where, what, and how, things should be done and in what sequence.

Behind this operation are various teams of people who support these operations. Network teams, Server teams, Development and Implementation teams, and the Help desk staff.

Possibly there are processes and diagrams in place for the documentation of the networks, together with routing, switches and servers. However Colour Splash have found in quite a few large printing and publishing organisations, there are no overall plans as to when, where, what, and how files are manipulated in the overall pre-press workflow.

There is no documentation outlining the pathway or journey of any pre-press files. i.e Pages under construction, stories, incoming images, incoming adverts, incoming graphics and finished PDF pages ready for production and their journey to the remote print sites.

The failing here is that, these companies rely on the existing staff and the knowledge of a few key individuals to ensure that when problems arise they are solved purely by their experience and the knowledge they have gained over the years.

Although the sentiment is that of, having a 'wonderful caring workforce' with a few key individuals who are geniuses, the reality is that a large amount of quite important knowledge and information as to how the Editorial and Advertising Pre-Press operation works, is shared by one or two people. If these individuals leave or are "*knocked down by a bus*", the knowledge will be lost, leaving gaps in how to support or implement production processes in the Pre-Press areas.

### 3 Proposed areas to document

Any large publishing house would benefit from a formal approach to documenting workflows throughout the entire editorial and advertising pre-press process.

Colour Splash would propose that the following areas be looked at with regards to documentation.

#### 3.1 Editorial

##### **3.1.1 Images and method of delivery, and ingestion for:**

- a. News Wire AP, Reuters, EPA, and PA.
- b. Accepted naming conventions.
- c. Accepted Standard IPTC protocols --
  - i. Any special custom IPTC fields.
- d. In house photographers' material.
- e. Stock Images for Bylines.
- f. Images for magazine work --
  - i. How are they stored identified;
  - ii. Any special process by which they are ingested into the system.
- g. Commissioned photographers' material.
- h. Images sent supplied from outside sources on spec.
- i. E-Mailed Images.
- j. CD/ DVD Images supplied by motorcycle courier, etc.
- k. TV grabs.
- l. Housekeeping routines --
  - i. Manual or Automatic, mixture?
  - ii. Server privileges on how files can be deleted.
- m. Scanned in Material --
  - i. In House (transparencies, flat copy and pre-printed material);
  - ii. Supplied from outside source (transparencies, flat copy and pre-printed material).

##### **3.1.2 Graphics and method of delivery, and ingestion for:**

- a. News Wires -- AP, Reuters, EPA, and PA.
- b. In House Graphics material.
- c. Commissioned Graphics material.
- d. Graphics sent in from Outside sources on spec.
- e. Stock Graphics for Banners and Bylines.
- f. Housekeeping routines --
  - i. Manual or Automatic.

**3.1.3 Stories and method of delivery, and ingestion for:**

- a. News Wire AP, Reuters, EPA, and PA.
- b. Stories written In House.
- c. Commissioned stories.
- d. Stories supplied from outside sources on spec.
- e. E-Mailed stories.
- f. CD/ DVD supplied stories and pictures (e.g. Press releases).
- g. Housekeeping routines --
  - i. Manual or Automatic, mixture?
- i. Scanned in Material (e.g. OCR material) --
  - i. In House;
  - ii. Supplied from an outside source.

**3.1.4 Pages under construction:**

- a. Where saved?
- b. Templates where saved?
- c. How to save a page outside the system and work outside the database.
- d. Editorial story editing, rules of edition.
- e. Any pre-flight routines prior to save.
- f. Special instructions on save.
- g. Special code letters for regional variations --
  - i. Automatic generation or manually placed.
- h. Obits made up in advance (e.g. the Queen, President etc), where are they stored?
- i. Housekeeping routines --
  - ii. Manual, Automatic, or a mixture?

**3.1.5 Pages finished awaiting transfer to print site:**

- a. Where saved?
- b. Any special parameters (e.g. ICC profiles)?
- c. Specialist Screen rulings for Magazine work?
- d. Special channels for delivery.
- e. Where are they archived after send?
- f. Housekeeping rules for published pages.
- g. Housekeeping rules for un-published pages.
- h. Housekeeping routines --
  - i. Manual, Automatic, or a mixture?

**External Editorial workflows, which directly affect a company:**

- a. VIO Editorial Input servers.
- b. VIO Editorial FTP get scripts.
- c. Send to me VIO FTP applications.
- d. E-loader — PICDAR's e-mail picture receipt software.
- e. Possible FTP directly to any of the TMG's servers.
- f. Method of transfer to remote sites for printing --
  - i. Contact details at remote sites.
- g. Protocols for delivery of pages to remote sites --
  - i. Acceptable file format types.
- h. Gateways entry points through firewalls --
- i. Internal Modems, if any.
- j. Protocols for delivery of pages to remote sites.
- k. IP addresses --
  - i. Remote servers;
  - ii. Remote gateways;
  - iii. Routers.

**3.1.6 IP Addresses for all devices, including remote devices:**

- a. Servers.
- b. Routers.
- c. Switches.
- d. Printers.

**3.1.7 Passwords and any special protocols:**

- a. VIO Editorial passwords --
  - i. VIO Manager logins.
- b. Who has access to passwords?
- c. Who can restart a failed process?
  - i. Who needs to be informed that the Editorial process will be re-started.
- d. Is the process automatic failover?
- e. Are there any monitoring processes (see Section 4, Page 11)?
- f. Router passwords.
- g. Editorial Server passwords.
- h. Switch passwords.
- i. Printer passwords.

## 3.2 Advertising

### 3.2.1 *Adverts and method of delivery, and ingestion for:*

- a. VIO.
- b. QuickCut.
- c. A.N Other.
- d. Adverts for magazine work --
  - i. How are they stored identified;
  - ii. Any special process by which they are ingested into the system;
  - iii. Any special route.
- e. In House adverts --
  - i. Where are they stored;
  - ii. In house make up;
  - iii. Any special temporary place for creation process.
- f. E-Mailed Adverts.
- g. CD/ DVD Adverts supplied by motorcycle courier, etc.
- h. Housekeeping routines --
  - i. Manual or Automatic, mixture?
  - ii. Server privileges on how files can be deleted.
- i. Scanned in Adverts Material --
  - i. In House (transparencies, flat copy and pre-printed material);
  - ii. Supplied from an outside source (transparencies, flat copy and pre-printed material).

### 3.2.2 *Advertising pages under construction:*

- a. Adverts, where saved?
- b. Templates, where saved?
- c. How to save a page outside the system and work outside the database.
- d. Advert, rules of edition.
  - i. Timings on, last possible time, an advert can be received for an individual page;
  - ii. Timings on last possible time an advert can be received for a product.
- e. Any pre-flight routines prior to save.
- f. Special instructions on save.
- g. Special code letters for regional variations --
  - i. A/B Splits;
  - ii. Automatic generation or manually placed.
- h. Housekeeping routines --
  - i. Manual, Automatic or a mixture.



**3.2.3 Pages finished awaiting transfer to print site:**

- a. Full pages when adverts are complete and are resident on the page to be sent automatically?
- b. Where saved?
- c. Any special parameters ICC profiles?
- d. Specialist Screen rulings for Magazine work?
- e. Special channels for delivery.
- f. Where are they archived after send?
- g. Housekeeping rules for full page published Advert pages.
- h. Housekeeping rules for un-published Advert pages.
- i. Housekeeping routines
- j. Manual, Automatic, or a mixture?

**3.2.4 External Advertising workflows, which directly affect a company:**

- a. VIO Advert Input servers
- b. VIO Advert FTP get scripts
- c. Send to me VIO FTP applications
- d. Possible FTP directly to any of the TMG's Advertising servers
- e. Method of transfer to remote sites for printing
  - i. Contact details at remote sites
- f. Protocols for delivery of pages to remote sites
  - i. Acceptable file format types
- g. Gateways entry points through firewalls.
- h. Internal Modems If any
- i. Protocols for delivery of pages to remote sites
- j. IP addresses
  - i. of remote servers
  - ii. of remote gateways
  - iii. of routers

**3.2.5 IP Addresses for all devices, including remote devices:**

- a. Advertising Servers
- b. Routers
- c. Switches
- d. Advertising Printers

**3.2.6 Passwords and any special protocols:**

- a. VIO/Wam!Net Advertising passwords.
- b. VIO/Wam!Net Manager logins
- c. Who has access to passwords?
- d. Who can restart a failed process?
- e. Who needs to be informed that the Advertising process will be re-started
- f. Is the process automatic failover?
- g. Are there any monitoring processes? (see Section 4, Page 11)?
- h. Router passwords
- i. Advertising Server passwords
- j. Switch passwords
- k. Printer passwords

#### 4 Automatic Monitoring of Edition critical systems

There are a variety of automatic monitoring systems in many industries, where time critical processes are monitored and kept alive and operational.

Big as well as small newspapers may have products, which check to see if their networks and gateways are alive. But it's in the detail where time critical processes can make a difference.

*E.G. The News desk may be awaiting an exclusive News picture for page 1, but the FTP process, which gets and brings back the image file from the remote Receipt server has fallen over, and the back up process had fallen over a couple of days earlier. Without automatic monitoring the News desk could reasonably miss the opportunity to put this picture on the front page.*

Automatic monitoring could reduce problems in so many areas; it could also alert the support teams to perhaps a problem, which left unchecked, could result in a major failure.

The build up of image, advert and story files because a process has failed can add significant delays to production times.

Colour Splash would recommend in part, the introduction of an automatic monitoring system which could be increased year on year, to cover those areas of the business which form part of any newspapers' main operations.

Most of the companies, which provide systems to monitor critical processes and events, provide business process management and business integration software. This software integrates, manages, and monitors enterprise applications and enables reliable and high-performance information delivery.

Their software products include applications for coordinating business process and activities, securely exchanging information with trading partners, creating and maintaining XML documents, and managing distributed systems.

Colour Splash, have identified the main providers in automatic monitoring systems and software, and they are listed as follows.

TIBCO Software Inc  
WebMethods  
IBM  
Microsoft  
Oracle Corporation  
29West  
Sonic Software

## **5 Applications/interactions to create a documented Pre-Press workflow**

The two main providers of software applications, which are ideal for producing documented workflows, are Visio and Smart Draw. Each application has the ability to produce working diagrams, which can be interrogated, and drilled down into, to provide extra information such as IP addresses and LAN connection types. It is also possible to visually represent what type of server is used with the graphical representation being that of current server types. (Many different graphics for all types of systems) The applications are very clear, in layout and can be stored on a centralised server for all to see and interrogate. They can pictorially show a broad overview of an entire operation.

### **5.1 Visio (PC only)**

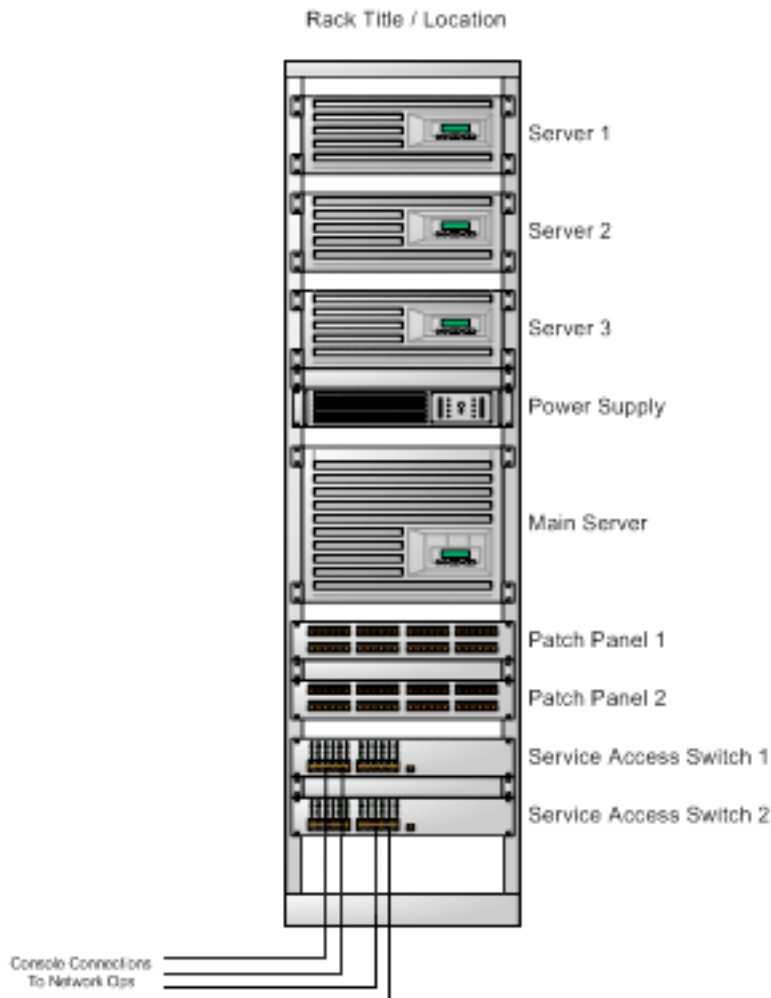
Microsoft Office Visio 2007 drawing and diagramming software makes it easy for IT and business professionals to visualize, explore, and communicate complex information. Go from complicated text and tables that are hard to understand, to Visio diagrams that communicate information at a glance. Instead of static pictures, create data-connected Visio diagrams that display data, are easy to refresh, and dramatically increase your productivity. Use the wide variety of diagrams in Office Visio 2007 to understand, act on, and share information about organizational systems, resources, and processes throughout your enterprise.

Visio is the de-facto industry standard for documenting workflows.

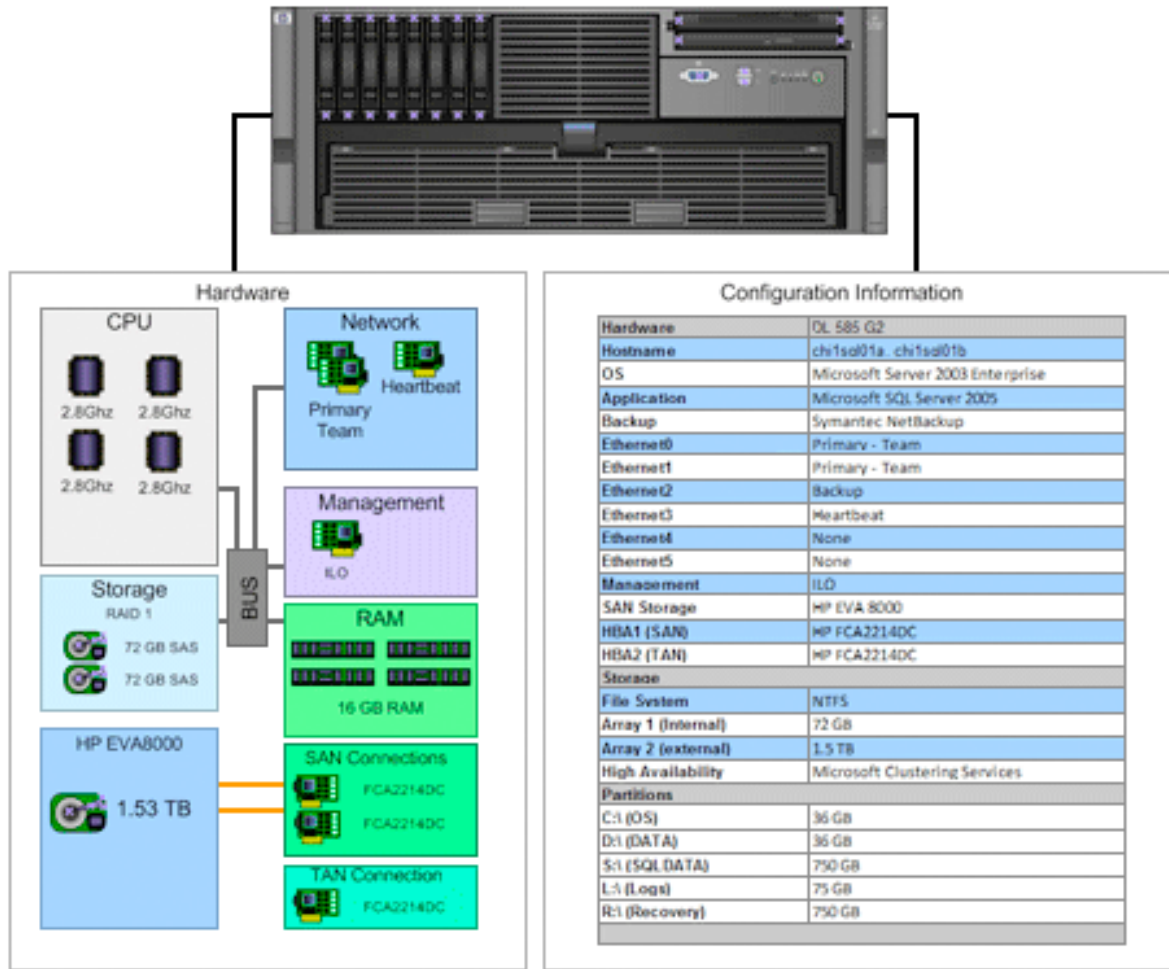
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-gb/visio/default.aspx>

### 5.1.1 Visio examples

## Rack Technical Overview Guideline



A typical view of a server rack Visio Diagram, which can be interrogated and drilled down into, to reveal a variety, saved of information. On the following page, a typical view of a server and the type of information that can be revealed in a Visio diagram.



Typical view of server information found within the Visio Application.

## 5.2 Smart Draw (PC Only)

However, you may want to consider Smart Draw as the preferred documentation product is considerably cheaper, it is also able to read any Visio diagrams currently in use.

### What Is SmartDraw?

SmartDraw is the alternative to Microsoft's Visio graphics software package. Using SmartDraw anyone can create presentation-quality business graphics in minutes.

Traditional graphics software, like Adobe Illustrator® or Visio®, presents you with a blank screen and a set of general-purpose tools, which you use to compose your illustration. Traditional graphics software are not very intuitive: It is up to you to know how your graphic is meant to be formatted and up to you do the work of formatting it manually.

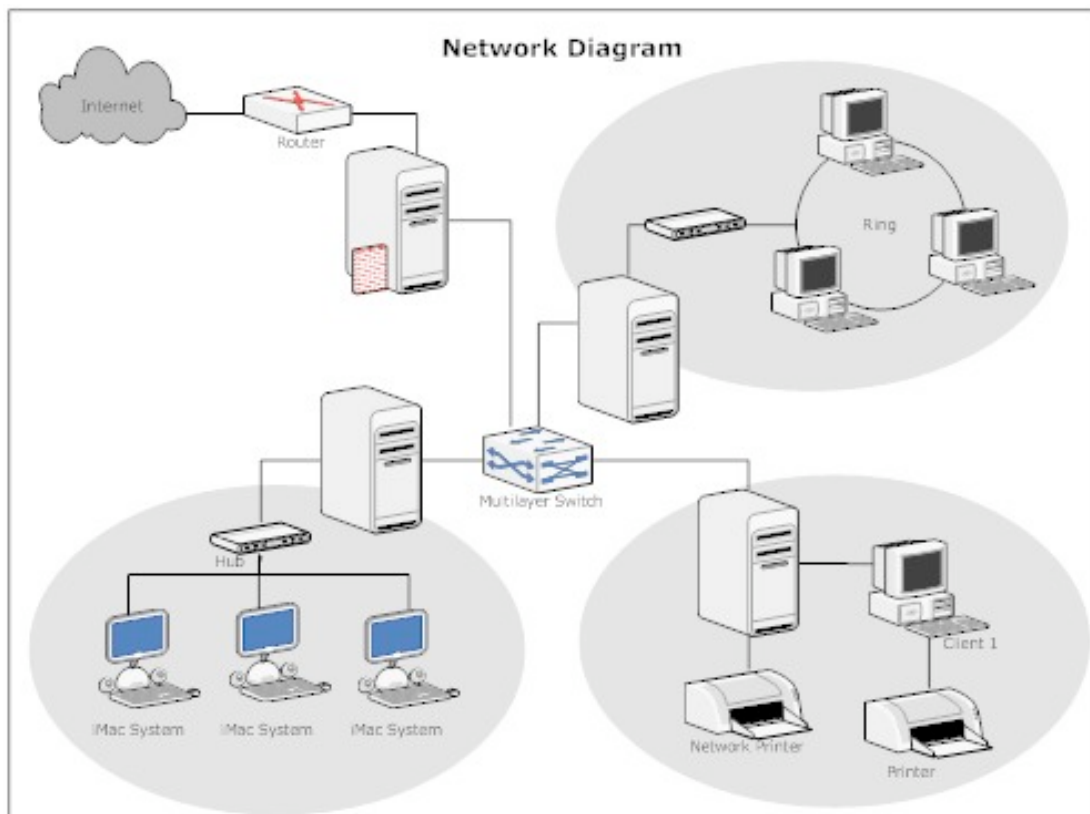
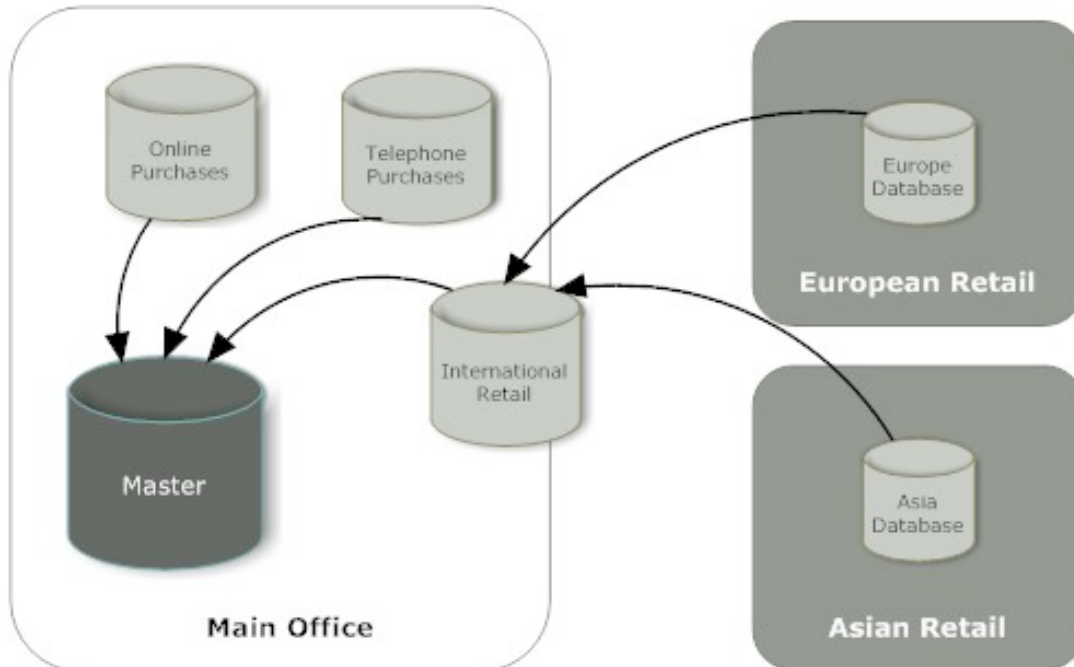
SmartDraw includes templates (called SmartTemplates) for more than 100 different types of business graphics, from flowcharts to floor plans and sales charts to SWOT diagrams. It also offers the Encyclopedia of Business Graphics™ that lists every type of business graphic with a definition, an explanation of how it is used.

Feature	SmartDraw 2008	Visio® 2007
Pre-designed templates	1900	150
Drag & Drop Drawing	√	√
Automated Command-Driven drawing	√	x
Automatic Flowcharting	√	x
Automatic Swim lanes	√	x
Automatic Org Chart formatting	√	x
Automatic Project Charts	√	√
Automatic Mind Maps	√	x
Automatic Decision Trees	√	x
Automatic Cause and Effect Diagrams	√	x
Automatic Genograms	√	x
Automatic Charts and Graphs	√	x
Live Maps (with live data from Google Maps)	√	x
Integrated Photo capability	√	x
New Microsoft Office® 2007 "ribbon" Interface	√	x
One-Click transfer to MS Office® 2007 & PDF	√	x
Automatically grow the drawing area	√	x
Programming Language	√	√

<http://www.smartdraw.com/exp/vis/product/>

### 5.2.1 Smart Draw examples

## Database Diagram





## 6 Conclusion:

Could your newspaper afford to lose an edition of any of its' newspaper products? Can your magazine afford to lose a full-page advertisement, Page 1 image or story, or possibly a video clip for your organisations media/web operation?

The answer to all of the above is **No!**

At this time many organisations rely on staff to resolve quickly any issues that may arise. Human intervention can resolve most issues within a very short period of time, but if the person responsible for the VIO monitoring and passwords are off sick what would happen then?

Colour Splash recommend that all pre-press operations are documented so that in the event of a major disaster anyone in the organisation, could in effect resolve a problem by referring to the documented workflows.

The workflows must be simple and well documented so that anyone could follow them. To implement something as powerful and useful as this, it must be taken on board by all members of support teams and staff.

The implementation of a system, which includes documentation, monitoring software, and server applications, will become a way of life, and is a change that will benefit any newspaper/publishing organisation in the future.