

# postal

## technology international

POST-EXPO SHOW ISSUE

## No gas

WHAT ZERO-EMISSION FUEL  
WILL BE POWERING DELIVERY  
FLEETS IN THE FUTURE?

## More with less

HOW TO SPEND LESS AND OPERATE  
MORE EFFICIENTLY

### BRIGHT FUTURE

The German postal industry  
is making plans to ensure a  
prosperous future

### OLDIES BUT GOODIES

Postal equipment that is retired  
in one country can continue its  
working life in another

### EXPO PREVIEW

What to see at this year's  
Post-Expo and Courier and  
Parcel Logistics Expo



POST-EXPO2009  
EXHIBITOR

# THE NEXT STEP: DIGITAL POST

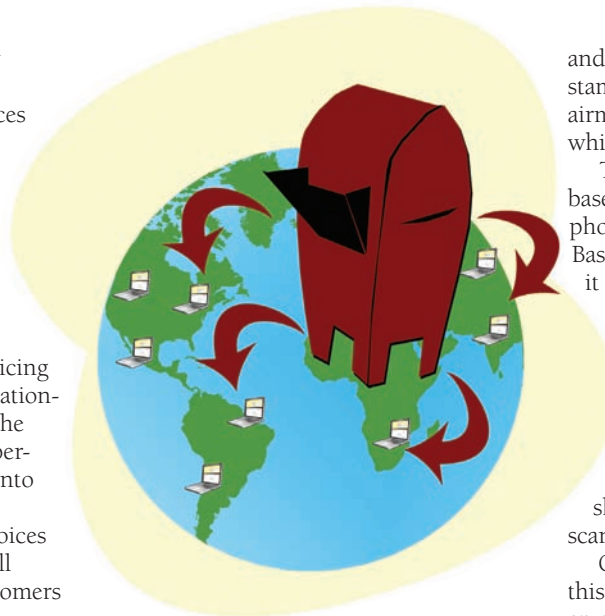
The digital post office is the answer to the urgent needs of our modern and dynamic society, where individuals and corporations work efficiently in a remote mode

Today's world – characterised by globalisation, liberalisation, deregulation and technological advances – challenges posts' monopolistic position as the sole providers of postal services. Their only opportunity to withstand increased competition is to raise the bar for performance and efficiency standards of mail sorting and the quality and variety of services offered.

With the advantage of directly servicing the most consumers of any communication-related industry on earth, posts have the opportunity to convert expensive, paper-related, immobile postal mail service into an advanced and more robust form of hybrid service, offering consumers choices about paper and other media. This will enable the postal industry and its customers to benefit from opportunities that technological progress is creating in the communications market (the internet, for example) and the trend towards convergence of e-commerce and communications (home shopping, hybrid mail).

There are already a few successful services based on this convergence that are aimed at bridging the gap between traditional mail and electronic communications. One such service is a digital mailroom, which uses automated solutions to capture business-critical information from paper (incoming mail, faxes, and others) and electronic sources (email, web form data), classify that information according to its format or content according to the business rules of the organisation, and route it to the appropriate destination.

Recent advances in optical character recognition (OCR), intelligent text recognition and forms processing have enabled the implementation of fully digital mailrooms. But the digital mailroom of today is only one step from the next level of service – the digital post office. This is the most innovative service, promising great



benefits to customers and posts. The same technology that supports digital mailrooms provides the ability to digitise consumer mail, which may combine traditional, incoming mail sorting, document processing and remotely accessible postal mail into a single automation solution. This service is an answer to the urgent needs of our modern and dynamic society, where individuals and corporations work efficiently in a remote mode.

**Remotely accessible** The exterior of a mailpiece can be scanned while it is still in a post office or a national network of sorting and scanning locations. Its digitised image can then be presented to a service subscriber via a web interface while the physical mail remains stored at a postal location until the recipient makes a decision about its further processing. Breakthrough intelligent recognition technology is used to analyse the image and enables the location and reading of areas of interest on mailpieces (including the recipient's name and address, sender's name

and address, barcodes, labels, logos, stamps, various indicia, meter marks, airmail stickers and other data), all of which was impossible in the recent past.

This service lets subscribers receive text-based information via computer or mobile phone for easy access and fast downloads. Based on data captured from the mailpiece it may be processed according to the customer's requirements. Thus irrelevant envelopes can be trashed and recycled; unsolicited offers, which may contain confidential information subject to identity theft, can be shredded; and important mail may be redirected to another recipient, shipped to a customer, or its contents scanned and made available for download.

One of the most important advantages of this service is the reduction in time before an action can be taken on a given piece of mail. For example the time it takes to process incoming payments can be greatly reduced. Mailpieces that contain bills can be determined based on information captured from an envelope, enabling them to be opened, scanned, automatically recognised, presented to the customer to approve via a web form, and paid either via ECN or by generating a paper cheque against a customer's bank account.

These new solutions are in an early stage of adoption and can either partially replace or complement traditional approaches. The benefits are numerous: speed and convenience of delivery, elimination of paper, security, cost effectiveness and improved customer satisfaction.

## FIND OUT MORE

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