Timestone
software

Neo
νέοPack+™

User Manual

Updated for Version 2.3

SOFTWARE LICENSE AGREEMENT

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- Hardlock device means the hardware device used to enable the Software to function.

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Before you Begin…

Scope and audience

This manual covers both operation and technical aspects required to use *NeoPack+*. The manual is divided into several chapters – see the **Table of Contents** at the start for a broad summary. Alternatively, consult the **Index** for specific procedures.

If you're planning to have multiple users using *NeoPack+* in a networked environment, you'll need to look at Chapter 4, **License Server**, for info on how the license system works and where to put that hardlock/dongle we sent you!

Getting more help

More help is available for *NeoPack+* from the following places:

● Related documents such as our *Color Management Guide* and the *Bitmap Compare Utility Guide*.

● Help pages from our WWW site, **http://www.timestone.com.au**

● Technical support as noted at the end of this chapter

Pre-installation requirements

You will need the following resources and information before you start installing *NeoPack+*:

● *NeoPack+* software installation CD-Rom

● *NeoPack+* User Manual

● Hardware protection device

● 'Unlock' code supplied by Timestone Software

● In addition, your computer must comply with the hardware and software specifications as outlined in Chapter 3, **Installation**.

Learning *NeoPack+*

Included on the *NeoPack+* CD-Rom are contained the following resources:

- Installation files
- *NeoPack+* User Manual – the document you are currently reading

Getting Help from Technical Support

We offer many different methods of support. However, we strongly encourage you to use e-mail as your primary support mechanism.

Telephone support

Telephone support is available by calling Timestone Software during our business hours. These hours are:

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Australian Eastern time

The telephone numbers are:

Voice: + 61 3 9570 9899

Fax support

You can fax us with questions or queries. Please address your fax queries to Technical Support. The fax number is:

Fax: + 61 3 9570 9855

E-mail and WWW support

There are support pages that include links to the newest versions of the software, as well as user documentation, and 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

Our WWW and e-mail contacts are:

WWW: http://www.timestone.com.au
E-mail: support@timestone.com.au

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System Requirements

Hardware requirements

The following hardware requirements are required as a minimum configuration to run *NeoPack+*. You should always attempt to exceed these requirements.

If you have a choice in areas that you can afford to exceed these requirements – do so in the following order:

- Memory
- CPU class (Pentium II, Pentium III)
- CPU Speed
- Hard disk speed (Ultra, Ultra Wide, RAID)
- Other

Minimum requirements

- Intel Pentium II processor at 350 Mhz
- 100 Mhz system motherboard (Bx class)
- 128 Mb RAM
- 4Mb Video card (1024 x 768 @ 24 bit – see note)
- 9Gb Hard Disk (see note)
- 10 / 100 Ethernet card
- 33.6k Modem
- High quality (Sony, Apple) 17" color monitor
- Windows NT 4.0, Service Pack 3
- Mouse *with mouse wheel* (Microsoft, Logitec)

Optional Extras

- 6 x 9cm Graphics Tablet with pressure sensitive stylus (Wacom)
- CD-R or DVD RAM drive for data backup

Notes

Video Card: It is most important to use a high quality video card. In particular, you should use video cards that support monitor calibration in some manner. Typically, manufacturers such as ATI or Video Seven have such products.

Hard disk: If you are using *NeoPack+* on a single workstation, you should realise that *very quickly* you will use 9Gb of data storage, just with the images you scan to create your products. If your requirements are low volume, you could consider a single 9Gb hard, and continually move images that are finished onto a CD-Rom or DVD-RAM disk. However, if you are producing just an average number of packages, you *will* want to use a number of drives. Fortunately, hard disk drive costs are relatively low today.

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Installation

Open the CD-Rom in Windows Explorer or My Computer, and double-click the file, **Install NeoComposite**. The installer screen appears.

The installation process may require a restart before completion. If the installer requests you to restart the PC, please do so.

- Choose **Next** to proceed.

- Note the contents of the **ReadMe** screen. It contains information that may be required for the installation. Choose **Next** to proceed.

- Choose the location for the program files to be installed to. Unless you have a particular reason for changing the default path setting, we recommend you leave it as is. Choose **Next** to proceed.

- Allow the program to create backup files for the installation. Choose **Next** to proceed.

- Choose the components to install. If this machine is to host the hardlock, install the License Server component.

- Documentation and tutorial files are installed to the same directory as the program files.
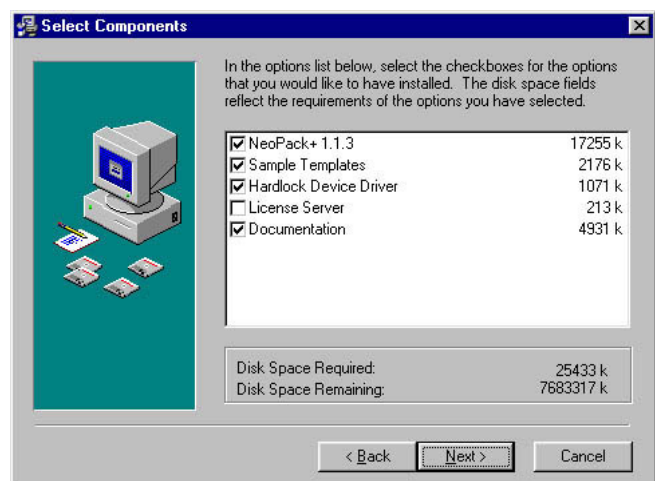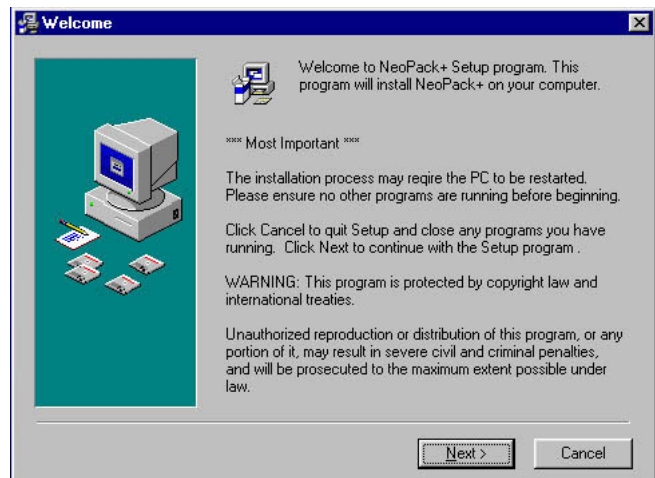
- Choose **Next** to proceed.

- Select the name of the Program Manager group to add the icons to. Choose **Next** to proceed.

- Once you're happy with all the settings, choose **Next** to proceed, or choose **Back** to change any of your settings.

- The program files are installed.

- Once all the files have been installed, the **Complete** screen is shown. Choose **Finish** to complete the installation.
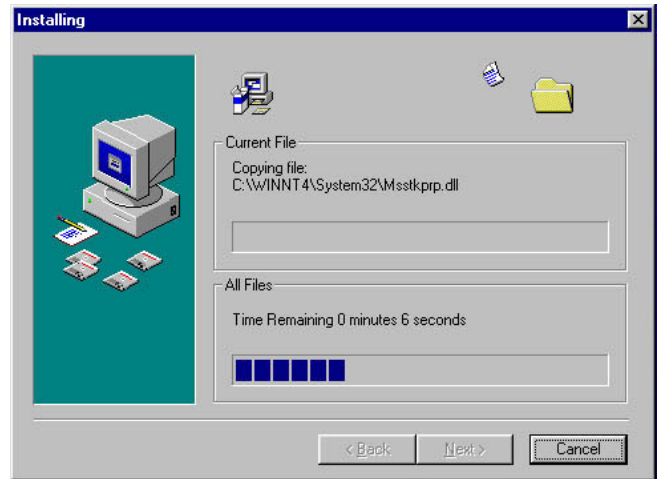
Installing the Adobe Acrobat Reader

If you want to view the application documentation, you will need to have Adobe Acrobat installed. If you don't have the software on your system, use the installer on the CD.

✍ **Note:** If you've installed 'over the top' of a demo version, you'll find that the documentation on the CD is likely to be a much larger file than the one you downloaded. Although the manual is the same, the version on the CD has images saved at a higher resolution. You won't notice any difference viewing the manual on screen, but you will certainly notice a difference if you print it.

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License Server

Timestone Software's Neo applications are protected from unauthorised use by a License Server. The License Server runs as a Windows NT service, and consists of several components:

- A hardlock or dongle that is connected to the Server PC's Parallel port
- The License Server, installed only to the server PC
- The License Manager which is installed to the Server, or can be used on a workstation connected to the network
- Several support files

Understanding the License Server

When a Neo application is licensed from Timestone Software, we issue your site with a hardlock or dongle. This hardlock contains a unique Key code that is specific to your installation. Without the hardlock, it is not possible to use the Neo application.

It is possible to purchase single or multi-user licenses for Neo applications. When the license is issued, it is 'added' to the license server. You will then be able to use the number of applications for which you have purchased licenses.

When a Neo application is started, it asks the License Server if there is a license available to use. If there is, the application will launch and 'use' a license.

If there are no licenses available for that application, an error message will be given and the program will quit. You will not be able to launch the application until a license becomes available, either by adding more licenses, or waiting until another user on your system exits his or her running Neo application.

Installing the License Server

When installing the Neo application, choose the **License Server** component. The License Server service will be installed.

✍ It is not necessary to install the License Server on any machine other than the one that will host the hardlock.

You will be required to re-start the PC. Do so.

Once the PC has been re-started, you will notice several things:

- A new control panel **License Server** has been added to the Windows Control Panel
- A new service, **Timestone License Server** has been added to the **Services** list
- A new program, **License Manager** has been added to the **Start > Timestone Software** menu.

Connect the hardlock to the License Server's parallel port.

Configuring and testing the License Server

The hardlock can be connected to any machine in the local area network. This machine doesn't have to have a Neo application installed to act as a Hardlock Server.

Hardlock and License Server installation

First, make sure the hardlock is plugged into the hardlock server's parallel port. Run the Neo application installer, and make sure that the **License Server** and **Support Files** components are chosen. It is not necessary to choose the Neo application component if you do not intend to run the Neo application on this machine. Allow the installer to re-start the PC as required.

License Server configuration

Open the Windows **Control Panel**. Locate the **License Server** icon, and double-click it. The **License Server** control panel opens.

Enter the computer name for the hardlock server, and press **Test**. The License Server will then check to confirm the presence of the hardlock on the PC. If the hardlock is correctly detected, the control panel will report **OK.** If an error is displayed, confirm the following:

- Check you have entered the computer's name correctly
- The hardlock is connected to the PC's Parallel port
- The parallel port is functioning correctly
- Both the **License Server** and **Support Files** components have been installed

If an error is still given, contact Timestone Software or your distributor for support.
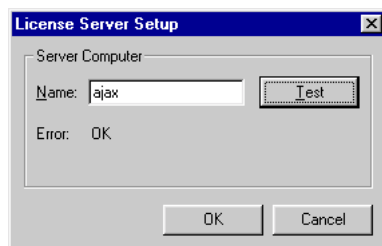
Enabling your licenses

When you purchase the Neo applications you will purchase a number of user licenses. Timestone Software will supply a number of enable codes that will add licenses to the license server. These files are supplied either as an e-mail to your system administrator, or on a CD-Rom. The enable codes are shipped to you separate from the hardlock for security reasons.

Adding the licenses to the license server

Ensure that the hardlock and server software has been installed and successfully configured.

From the **Start** menu, choose, **Timestone Software > License Manager**. The License Manager will open.

Pay particular attention to any errors displayed in the **Last Error** section. Before any configuration has been carried out, it may display **Missing/empty license code table file.** This error will disappear once valid licenses have been installed. If the error reads **Hardlock is invalid or missing**, review the installation of the hardlock and License Server.

If you need to open the **License Server setup** control panel, click the **Setup** button at the bottom of the **License Manager**. The **License Server setup** control panel will open.
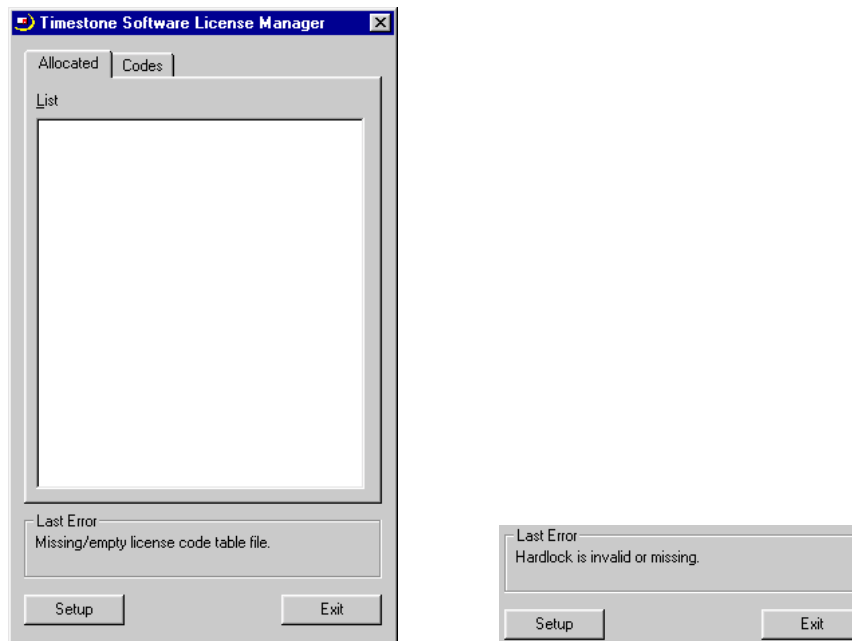
Choose the **Codes** tab. If licenses have not yet been added, this list will be empty. Any previously entered license codes will be displayed in this list.

To add new licenses, click the **Add file…** button. A **File Open** dialog is displayed. Locate the license code files that have been supplied to you, and choose it in the list, then **Open**. After a brief pause, the new license appears in the list of added licenses and is available for use.
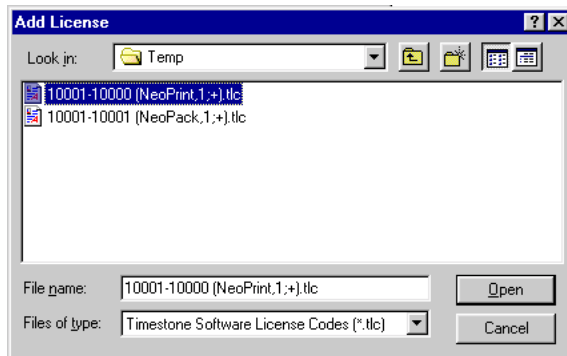
Each license in the list will note:

- The name of the licenses application
- The version number licenses
- The number of licensed users

If you have more licenses to add, do so until you are finished.
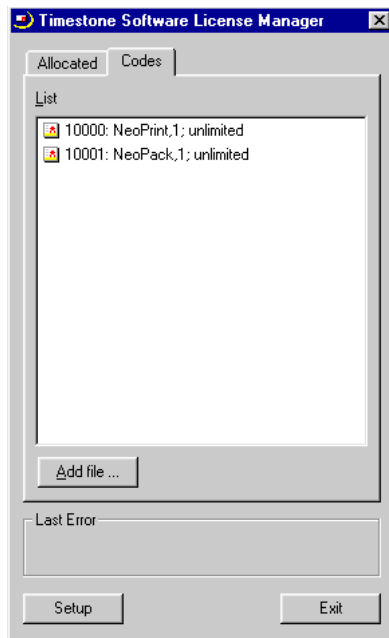
Configuring workstations to run

Once the license server is installed and licenses added, each of the workstations of the LAN need to be configured. When the Neo application was installed, the **License Server setup** control panel was also installed. On each workstation that will use a Neo application license, open the Windows Control Panel, and start the **License Server setup** control panel.

Enter the computer name of the PC that is hosting the hardlock, and press **Test**. If the computer could be found over the network, and its License Server was running correctly, **OK** will be displayed in the **Last Error** area. If an error is displayed, ensure that:

- The license server PC is switched on, and the License Server is configured and running
- It is connected to the network
- The workstation you are configuring can browse the network, and 'see' the License server PC

Close the control panel. The Neo application will now be able to launch, as long as a valid license is found on the License Server.

Backing up your license server configuration

If you want to back up your License Server configuration, there is a single file to archive. This file is found in the **License Server** sub-directory of the main installation directory. Usually, this will mean a directory path of:

C:\Program Files\Timestone Software\License Server\

Back up the file:

- TsLServer.lct

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Understanding *NeoPack+*

NeoPack+ lets you create a huge variety of products in an easy to use and powerful application. For example – simple package prints, images placed into attractive designs, service items such as magazine covers, ID cards and other popular products.

All these products are created using a template, meaning it's possible to create complex pages in a couple of clicks. Templates can contain a variety of different types of items. Place a background image, decide where the variable images are to appear, then add either fixed or variable text. Images can be arranged into packages to create simple package prints.

Images to be used within *NeoPack+* products are prepared quickly using the built-in correction tools. Choose to zoom, crop or correct color, density and image contrast.

NeoPack+'s main features

Aspect Ratios and Package combinations

NeoPack+ allows you to specify aspect ratios within the software. You can design 'odd size' prints, simply by adding it to an available set. Likewise, you can create package prints that contain any combination of print sizes you decide. The only limitation is that your output device is capable of handling the print size you have specified.

❖ **New in Version 2.0**

NeoPack+ Version 2 allows images in a pack to be set to black and white or a tint color. Individual prints are selected as black and white, or a tint color specified.

Image cropping

When creating package prints, it is important that your images are cropped correctly. *NeoPack+* offers you on-screen cropping using the mouse or graphics tablet. If you are creating package prints, each image preview can display selected aspect ratio boundaries, ensuring that the cropping you choose is suitable for all the aspect ratios that are to be printed.

You have control on the image zoom, x and y image position. These controls can be adjusted either numerically from the image toolbox, or using the mouse. Images can be cropped individually, as a group of selected images or across the entire group of images currently open.

Color and density corrections

Image color and density can be adjusted from the image toolbox. You have control over Yellow, Magenta, Cyan and Density and Contrast.

Image editing

Images can be edited directly in your favourite image editor. The interchange is quick and the changes flow through all the packages already created.

Print Package sets

You can gather print sizes together into a pack, or specify individual print sizes. You can gather collections of packages or print sizes together into a pack set, allowing single-click printing of complex print combinations. Multiple copies of the chosen print pack can also be specified.

Template designs

Choose a pre-defined template design from those available. The currently selected image is placed into the design, and then into the chosen print size or image package. If text is required, enter it directly in the text entry window, or import a text file with pre-matched information. *NeoPack+* also offers comprehensive cut mark support. You can place hard or soft cut marks to cut units from a pack on a printer, regardless whether it supports mid-image hole punching or not.

Labeled Holders

NeoPack+ templates can include referenced images that are placed into the final design. These referenced images are created in **Design mode** for either the entire file, or individual folders. This is especially useful if your template designs include a school logo – you can include a labeled holder into the template that references the logo image which you specify.

Logo graphic
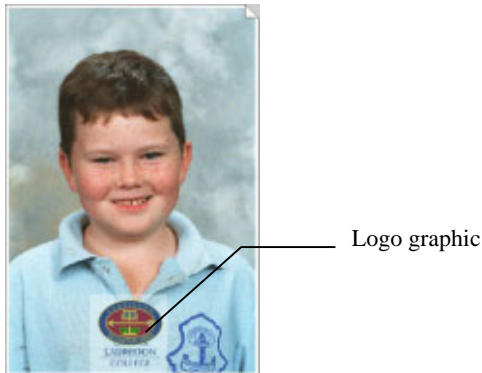
Image transparency masks

Every graphic object placed into a template can have an 8-bit transparency mask applied. This allows attractive effects such as soft-edged vignettes as well as other interesting graphic effects.

Text information

NeoPack+ templates can contain fixed or variable text information. When creating the jobs, text belonging to a particular image can be directly entered to pre-defined field. The entered text appears in the job as defined in the template, including the requested font, style and color. Text scales automatically to fill the pre-defined text area.

Importing text information

NeoPack+ doesn't require that images be matched to the text being used for each image. However, if you have an external source of images that has been matched to some text data, it is possible to import this data and so avoid having to re-enter the matched text manually.

Print Queues

Chosen print sizes are added to a printer queue. Prints and packages added to this queue can be edited or removed from the queue. Different queues can be created and chosen from a drop-down box.

Creating printer queues

Print queues can be created either manually, or importing text files.

Manually

When creating queues manually, a single or group of images as selected, then the required package chosen. The packs are added to the print queue.

Imported data
If you have the required packages recorded in a shooter file or other data source, this data can be imported, and the specified packages automatically created for that image.

Handling image and package data

Images must be imported to *NeoPack+* in order to be placed into the various products. The import process makes a small preview image that is stored within the *NeoPack+* job file. Once imported, the high resolution images are not required again until you're ready to print the jobs.

This means that it is possible to send the job files to remote workstations where the images are corrected and the jobs created. Once all the jobs have been created, they are sent back to the central location that has the high resolution images. It is now possible to print the jobs.

When images are imported into a *NeoPack+* file, those images are copied locally to the workstation. Likewise, all configuration and matching information is stored locally on that workstation, and is not generally available across a network.

This means that each *NeoPack+* workstation cannot share information dynamically within a network environment. It is possible to store *NeoPack+* image collections on an image server, but these can only be used by one workstation at a time.

Likewise, any print queues are available only on the *NeoPack+* workstation that created them.

Using *NeoPack+*'s interface

Once *NeoPack+* has been installed, choose *NeoPack+* from the **Start menu > Program Files > Timestone Software**. *NeoPack+* will start. If you are asked for an unlock code, or told that the software protection device is not present, please review Chapter 3, **Installation**.

The *NeoPack+* main window is shown. The program is shown here with an image file and print queue open.

Image pane

Pack add/view pane

Details pane   Queue pane
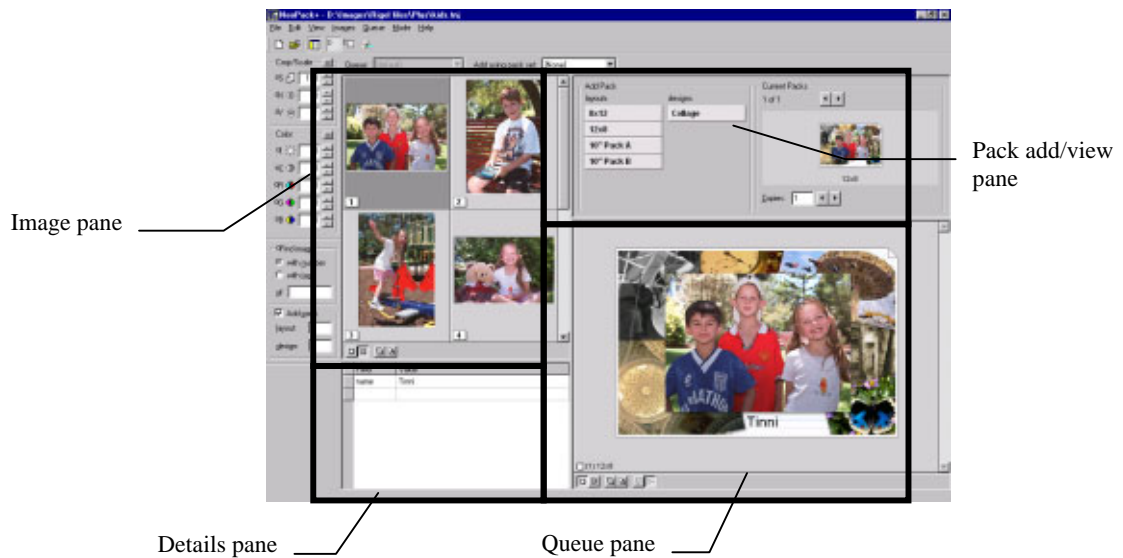
✎ *NeoPack+* requires a minimum screen resolution of 800x600 & 24 bit color. If you're running at 640x480, you won't be able to use the application correctly. You can adjust screen resolution via Windows' Control Panel's **Display** option.

Using toolbars

Each of the *NeoPack+* toolbars features tooltips, and docking.

Tooltips

If you're not sure about the function of a particular toolbar button, point the mouse at it for a second, to display a tooltip.

Toolbar docking

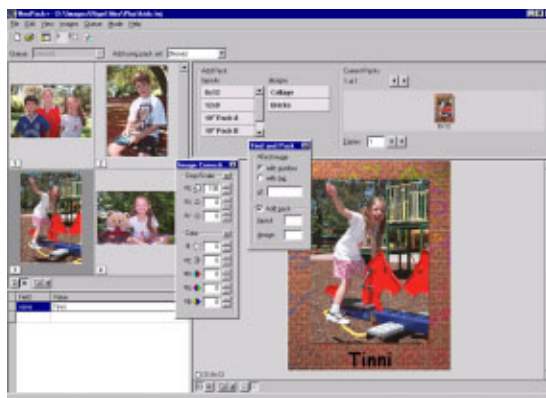You can tear away a toolbar from a 'docked' position to create a floating toolbar. This toolbar can then be placed anywhere convenient on the screen. To do this, place the mouse pointer anywhere near the edge of the toolbar, click and drag. The toolbar will tear away.

Selecting a tool or operation mode.

You can choose different program functions and modes by choosing a toolbar button. The current mode of operation is indicated by which button is 'pressed in' in the main toolbar.

In the below example, several buttons appear 'pressed in', indicating that mode is currently active, or that window is currently open.

This window is currently open ——

The program is currently in 'Image preview' mode.
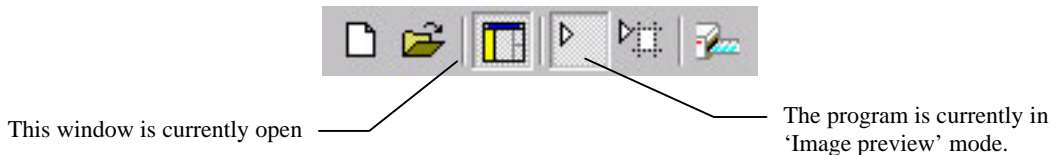
Resizing pane windows

The three main pane windows can be resized freely. You can open a pane so it takes up the whole program space, or close it completely to allow space for other operations.

Passing the mouse over the edge of the three panes will change the cursor to the pane move cursor.

Click and drag the mouse – the pane will resize as you drag.

Figure 1: Resizing a pane

✍   Each of the panes has a minimum size. If you drag the pane past its minimum size, it will completely close, and the other windows will expand to take its place.

Opening, closing and maximising panes

Panes can be opened completely to take up all the available program space, or closed completely.

Opening or closing panes

Panes can be opened or closed by choosing the pane name from the View menu. If the chosen pane is currently visible, choosing it from the View menu will close it and vice versa. If a pane is currently visible, there will be a checkmark next to its name in the View menu.

Resizing a pane using the mouse can also open or close a pane. Each pane has a minimum size – if you use the mouse to resize a pane past its minimum size, it will close. It is possible to open a closed pane by grabbing the closed pane edge, and dragging to open it.

Shortcut keys

There are many shortcut keys that allow quick selection of program options. These shortcuts are either indicated within a menu selection, or within the palette being used.

For example, if you wish to adjust the image contrast, press and hold the **Control** key, then the **C** key. The value in the **Contrast** adjustment is highlighted ready for use.

Palette shortcut indicated within the palette

Menu shortcut indicated within the menu selection

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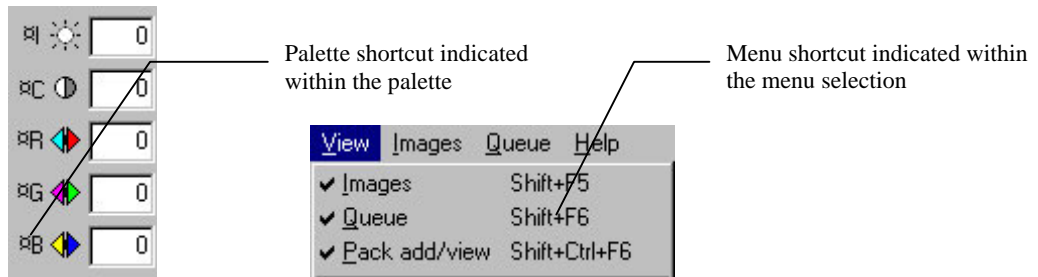
Configuring *NeoPack+*

Setting the Program defaults

There are a number of program defaults that need to be set to ensure *NeoPack+* is most useful to you. Things such as the location of various files, default fields need to be set for your lab.

Measurement units

You can choose the units of measurement by choosing **Options...** from the **File** menu. The options dialog is shown.
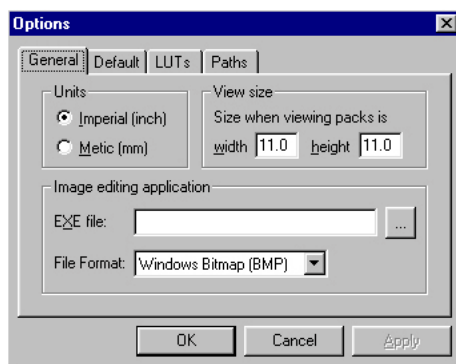
Figure 2: The Options menu

Select your preferred measurement units, then choose OK.

Set the view size

When displaying a pack preview, the display is relative to the size set here. For example, if a pack is 8 x 8", and the **View size** is set to a width and height of 20", the pack will appear quite small when previewed. Conversely, if a pack is 8 x 16", and the **View size** is set to 10 x 10, the pack will be clipped in the preview window.
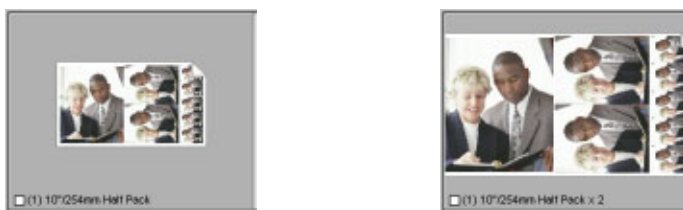
Figure 3: The same pack with the View setting set to 20x20 (left), and 12x12 (right)

Image Editor

NeoPack+ allows editing of images via an external image editor such as Adobe Photoshop. Specify the image editor to use by either entering the path and program EXE to the **EXE file** line, or click the **Browse** button. A File Open dialog will open. Locate and choose the Image editor EXE file, and click **Open**. The Image Editor is chosen.

If the image editor you have chosen supports Adobe Photoshop 3.0 .PSD files, choose this as the file format used for the interchange. Otherwise, choose BMP file format.

✐ If you use BMP as the file interchange to the Image Editor, be sure that you save your edited images as a BMP as well! *NeoPack+* will only re-load the edited file if it has the same filename and extension. If you have created layers in the Image Editor, flatten the image in order to save as a BMP file again.

✐ The image editor interchange is only available with images that have been fully imported. If you import images with preview only, the interchange is not available.

Aspect ratios

The aspect ratio of the image determines how tall and wide a print will be. There are several common aspect ratios used in the photographic world, but you may like to define some that are specific to your needs.

Determining the ideal crop

When creating package prints, it is possible for a number of different print sizes with different aspect ratios will be used in a single package. It is important that the image is cropped so that it appears well positioned for all the various aspects.

Once an aspect ratio has been defined, it can be superimposed onto an image. Several different aspect ratios can be superimposed at one time, so you can preview how an image will appear on each of the aspects. In the example below, three aspects have been defined:

- 5:7 – suitable for 5 x 7", 10 x 14" etc.
- 4:5 – suitable for 4 x 5", 8 x 10" etc.
- 1:1 – suitable for 3 x 3", 5 x 5" etc.

5:7 Aspect
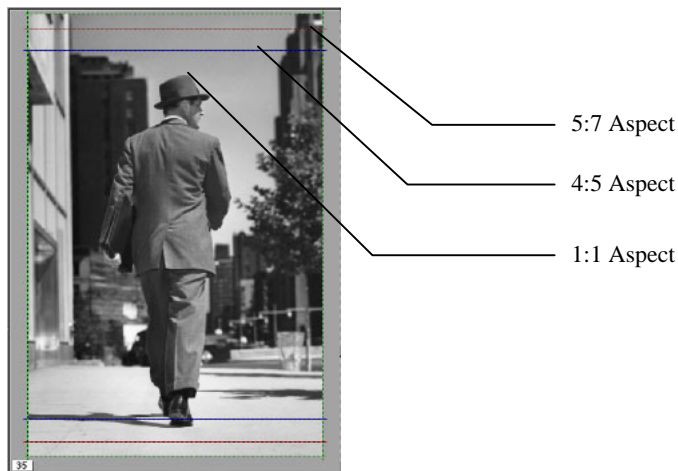
4:5 Aspect

1:1 Aspect

Figure 4: Cropping image showing 3 different aspect ratios

As discussed later, you can jog an image by zooming the image, or moving it around. Using these controls, you can position and size the image so that it is cropped optimally for all the different aspect ratios.

Aspect ratios are used only when cropping images. Print sizes are defined separately from the print aspect.

Defining Aspect Ratios

Aspect ratios can be stored as program defaults, or added to an image collection. New files will automatically contain the default aspect ratios which can then be added to. Any aspect ratios that you add to an individual file (via **Edit > Aspect ratios…**) are available only to that file.

Program default Aspect Ratios

From the **File** menu, choose **Options**. The Options dialog is displayed. Choose the **Default** tab.

Figure 5: The Options Default tab

Choose **Aspect ratios > Edit**. The Aspect ratio editor is displayed. Any Aspect ratios defined here are available each time a new *NeoPack+* file is created.

Defining Aspect Ratios

Choose **Edit > Aspect Ratios…** the Aspect Ratio definition dialog is displayed.

Preview guide on/off

Aspect preview color

Aspect ratio height

Aspect ratio width
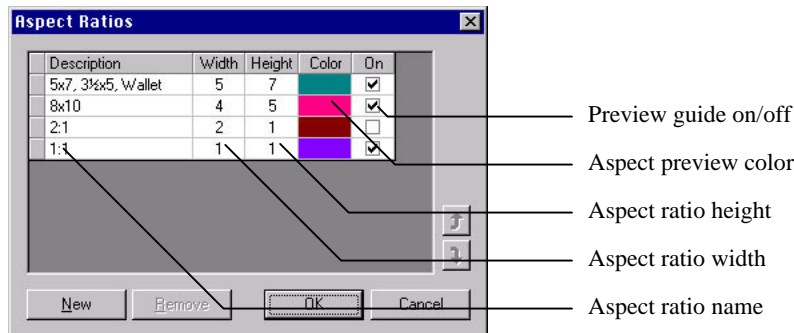
Aspect ratio name

Figure 6: The Aspect Ratio dialog

You will notice that the first time you open this dialog, there may be some aspect ratios already defined. These are the program default aspect ratios discussed in the previous point.

Create a new Aspect Ratio

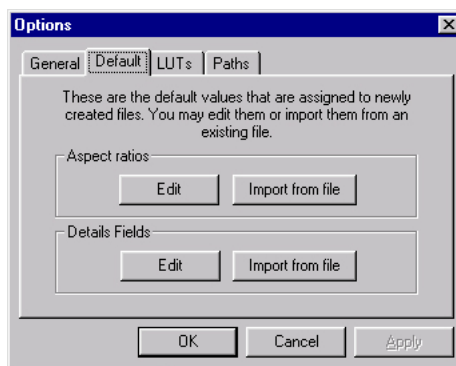- Choose **New** from the Aspect Ratio dialog. A new Aspect Ratio is added to the list.

- Click inside the **Description** field, and type the description of the Aspect you are defining.

- Click inside the **Width** field and enter the width, then **Height** to enter the height amount.

- Click the **color** swatch. The color palette appears. Choose the color you wish the aspect ratio line to appear in the image preview.

- Click the **On** checkbox to display the aspect ratio in the cropping image preview. If this is checked, a line indicating this aspect ratio will appear in the image cropping window. If this is not checked, the aspect ratio will not appear.
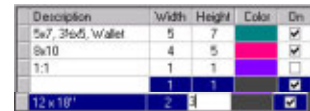
Import existing Aspect Ratios

Aspect Ratios can be imported from existing *NeoPack+* files. Choose **Import from File** from the **Default** options tab. A File Open dialog appears. Locate the file that contains the Aspect Ratios, choose it and click **Open**. The Aspect Ratios are imported as a program default.

Change the list order

The order of the Aspect Ratios list can be changed using the ordering arrows.

Displaying an Aspect Ratio

Once the default Aspect Ratios have been defined, any files created will contain these settings. To display the aspect ratio indicators, choose 'Crop Image' mode by choosing **Images** > **Select crop & scale image tool**, or clicking the 'Crop Image Tool' button on the toolbar.

Active aspect ratios are now overlayed on the images.
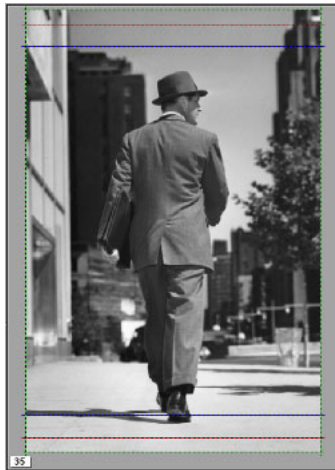
Figure 7: Image showing Aspect Ratio indicators

Using the Aspect Ratio indicators

The aspect ratio indicators show the edge of the various print sizes, allowing the best crop for the various aspect ratios being prepared to be decided. For information on zoom and crop operations, see Chapter 9, **Editing Images**.

Defining default Fields

NeoPack+ has powerful text handling features that allow information for each image to be entered. The entered text is then automatically placed into the finished design as defined in a template. The text is generated in a job by placing special '@' codes into the template design. In the main application, the text that belongs to that @ code is entered. *NeoPack+* then places the entered text into the job.

You will want to define @ codes that are relevant to the sort of work you do. For example, you might want @ codes for a name if you are doing portrait photography, or a product ID if you're producing a catalogue.

You can define default fields that every file you create will inherit. After files have been created, you can add more fields.

Adding default fields

Choose **File > Options** then choose the **Default** tab.
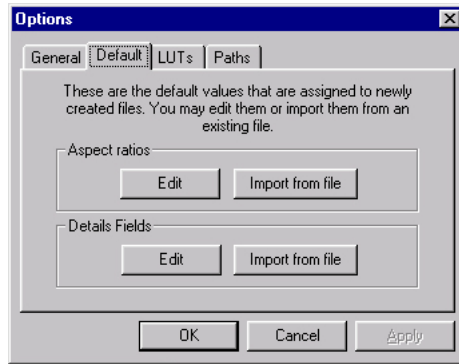
Click the **Details Fields > Edit** button. The Default Fields dialog is displayed.

Adding a new field

Click **Add**. A new line appears. Click the cursor in the **Name** entry area, and type the field name. Field names are not case sensitive. A field called **Name** is the same as **name**.

Set the field type

After adding the field, click the **Type** box. A drop-down list of available field types is displayed. Choose the field type from the list.

Fields available include:

- Text: Normal free-key text
- Integer no.: A number
- Date: A calendar date
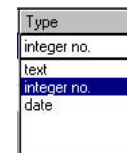
❖ **New in Version 2.0**

Version 2.0 introduces a new **Graphic** field. A graphic field indicates that the field should be replaced by a graphic image.
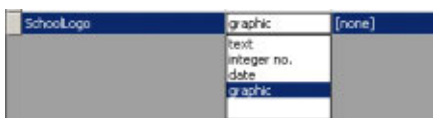
Defining the Image file location

NeoPack+ imports the images used for your production in two different ways. The whole image file can be imported to the job file, meaning that the original high resolution image files are no longer required by *NeoPack+*. Alternately, images can be imported with a reference to the high resolution image. When importing images this way, a smaller screen resolution version of the image is created for use on-screen when cropping and creating the jobs. The high resolution image is not required until the jobs are printed.

There are several ways in which *NeoPack+* locates high resolution image files when they are required. It can record the original location of the files when they are imported, or you can direct it to look for the files in specific locations on your hard disk, or over the network.

Record the original import location

If you import images using the **Remember the actual path** option, there is no need to define any default paths. See Chapter 8, **Creating *NeoPack+* Job files** for details.

Creating an Image directory

In larger labs, it is useful to set up a base image directory to store the image files. There are several ways *NeoPack+* can locate the required image files:

- Image Root directory
- Same directory as job file
- Sub-directory from job file

Image Root directory

Using an **image root directory** allows all images belonging to a job to be stored under a single directory in its own folder. For example, you might set up a single image server named **ImageServer**. This server has a drive shared as **Data**, and all images are stored in folders under the \Images folder.

UNC naming allows this exact directory be specified from any workstation within the network, without using drive letters. This avoids configuration errors. The UNC name for a shared directory is **\\Server\Share\Path**.

You may set your images up on this server as follows:

    \Images\Job1
    \Images\Job2
    \Images\Job3

Only the root folder is required. In this case, The root folder is \Images. So, the UNC name for the path would be:

\\ImageServer\Data\Images

Finally, we need to specify the final search directory to find the source images. Using the **@+** code, *NeoPack+* adds the name of the .TNJ file to the search path as the final part of the path statement. In the above case, each of the .TNJ files would be named **Job1**, **Job2** and **Job3**.

So, if the path is entered as:

   \\ImageServer\Data\Images\@+

and the file currently open is called **Job2**, *NeoPack+* will search for the original source images in:

   \\ImageServer\Data\Images\Job2\

Same directory as job file

If the path statement is entered as:

   .

NeoPack+ will search for the source images in the same directory as the .TNJ file.

Sub-directory from job file

Images can be stored in a sub-directory of the folder that contains the job file. For example, the job file is stored in a folder \Images\Job1, and the images belonging to that job in \Images\Job1\Source. If the path statement is entered as:

   \Source

NeoPack+ will search for the source images in the \Source subdirectory.

Defining the Design File location

Templates can be stored in various places within your local area. The location of the templates must be defined before *NeoPack+* will 'see' them, ready for you to use.

Adding a Design file location

Choose **File > Options** then choose the **Paths > Design Files** tab. Now, choose **New**. A new line appears in the list box. Enter the whole path for the location of the design files you want to use. You can use UNC (\\ComputerName\ShareName\…) or mapped drive letters as a valid path.

After entering a new path, *NeoPack+* must be re-started before it will recognise the new entries and so see any templates in the new location.
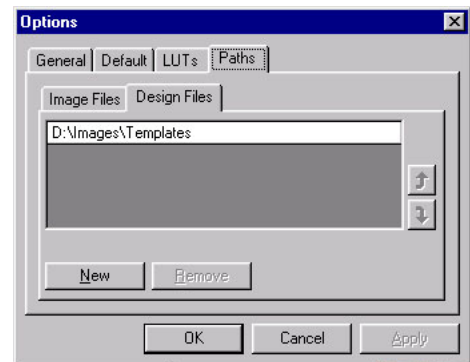
Defining pack sets

The Pack Layouts that you create can be gathered together into convenient sets. You might like to gather all the 10" sizes together in one set, and 8" into another. When using the software, you can choose the set you want to use.

Pack sets can contain any mix of the defined sizes, and can have a custom name for each size for that pack. You can also assign a quick key that allows you to select the print size by pressing the key.

If you don't create any pack sets, all the available sizes will be displayed in the program.

Define the default pack sets

Open the Pack set editor by choosing **Edit > Packs…** the pack set editor opens.

Step 1: Create and name the pack set

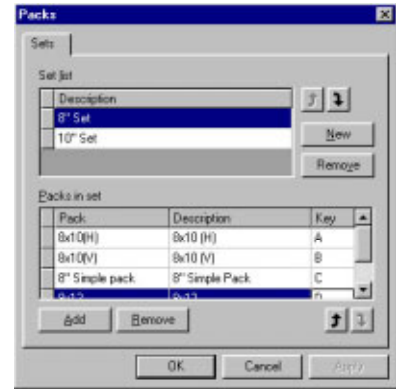Choose **New** from the **Set list** section. A new line appears in the **Set list** table. Enter some meaningful name that identifies this pack set.

Step 2: Add packs to the set

Choose **Add** from the **Packs in set** section of the dialog. A new line appears in the **Packs in set** table. Note that the **Pack** entry has a drop-down button.
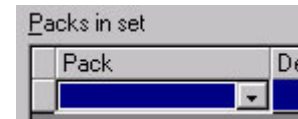
Click the drop-down arrow. A list of available packages is displayed. Choose the package you wish to add.
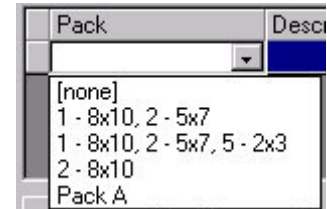
Click inside the **Description** field and name the pack. This is the name that is displayed in the program to identify this particular package. You may like to append the shortcut key after the name as a reminder to the operator!

Click inside the **Key** field and type a letter. When creating a queue, simply pressing this letter on the keyboard will choose this pack. It is also possible to choose a number of keys for this entry shortcut. For example, HS1 for High School pack 1.

✎   A Key entered here will over-ride a key you may have defined in the Pack Layout properties.
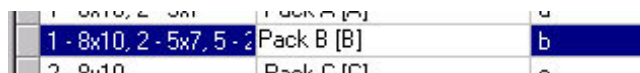
Continue adding packs to the pack set as necessary. Once finished, choose **OK**. The dialog is dismissed.

✎   Add the shortcut key to the name as a reminder to the operator. Be sure not to specify the same shortcut key for different packs!

✎   Any shortcut keys specified here over-ride those set in the Pack Layout Properties. See Chapter 7, **Creating Templates** for more information.

Monitor calibration

If you wish to use the built-in monitor calibration, ensure **Enable monitor LUT** is checked. If this option is enabled, the monitor calibration wizard must be run. See Chapter 12, **Calibration & Color Management** for more information regarding monitor calibration.

7

Creating templates

NeoPack+ uses templates to create all its jobs. There are two different types of template that can be used:

- Pack Layouts – Defines prints or packs
- Pack Item – Defines a design that is placed into a Pack Layout

A *NeoPack+* job consists of a chosen image being placed into a Pack Layout. The Pack Layout defines the print size or package ordered, and so is essential to create a job. A Pack Item is an optional item. When a Pack Item is chosen, the selected image is placed into the Pack Item design, then the combined image is placed into the Pack Layout.

Understanding Layouts and Items

It is important to understand the difference between Pack Layouts and Pack Items.

Pack Layouts

A Pack layout is a single or collection of print sizes that forms a final print. Layouts can contain simple print sizes alone, as well as background images, graphic, text and barcode objects.

To use a layout, select an image, then choose the layout. You'll see the image appear in the layout, with no further requirement to make another choice to print the job.

Pack Items

A Pack Item is a graphic or text object that can be super-imposed over an image. When designing a pack item, you place the various graphic or text objects, as well as an 'image hole'. The hole determines where the image you want to frame will appear inside the design.

To use a Pack Item, you first select the layout, then the item you wish to apply. The image is placed into the item, and into all the print sizes defined by the layout.

Pack items can be **sizeable** or **fixed size**, and must be specified as one

or the other when created. Sizeable pack items will be scaled to fit within the 'hole' on the layout. 'Fixed size' items exist to cater for things like barcodes, which cannot be sizeable – as a barcode relies on a certain number of lines per inch to be read correctly.

Image holes can be selected to use or not to use Pack Items. In addition, you can choose images to be black and white or sepia. This allows great flexibility when creating your packs, creating very complex jobs with a single mouse click.

Using the template designer

The Template Designer is integrated with *NeoPack+*. To use it, start the program, then choose **Mode, Design**.

Note that many of the options are initially dimmed and unavailable.

Create a new Template

Switch to **Design** mode by choosing **Mode, Design** or pressing F8 on your keyboard. Choose **File, New**. The **New Template Design** dialog opens.

For now, click **Pack Layout** to create a new pack layout.
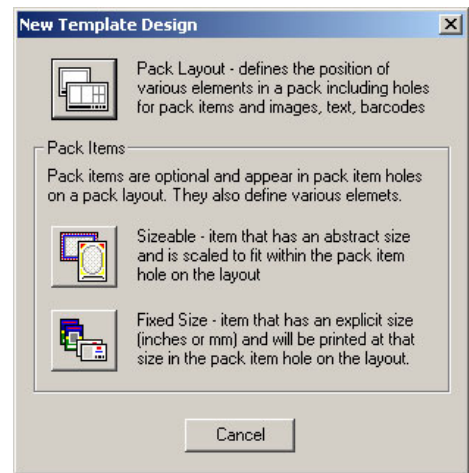
The Template Designer

The designer is divided into several main areas:

- The main toolbar
- The dimensions and units toolbar
- The design canvas area

Depending whether you are creating a layout or a design, some of the buttons in the toolbar may not be available for use.

The main toolbar

The Dimensions and units toolbar

The Design canvas area
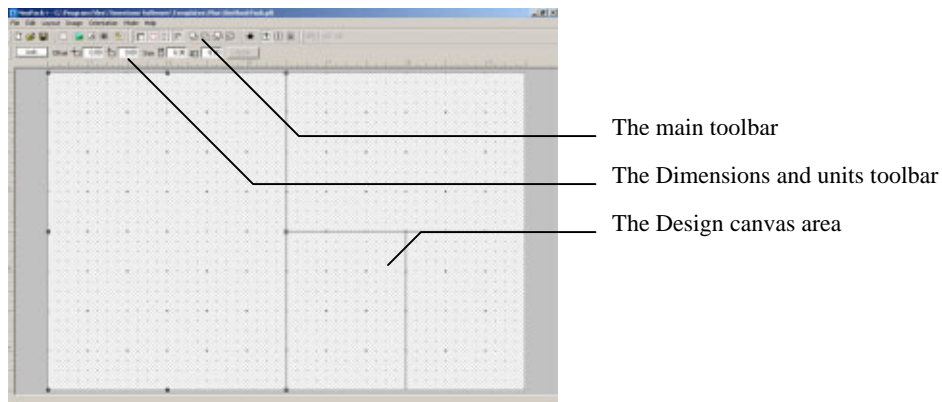
The designer toolbars

There are a number of toolbars that allow you to set various options when designing templates.

The File toolbar

The file toolbar gives you quick access to the normal **File** menu options.

Create a new template file _____

Open an existing template file _____

Save the currently open template file

The Place Object toolbar

The Place Object toolbar allows you to place the various objects you wish to use in the template. There are 5 objects that can be placed into a template:

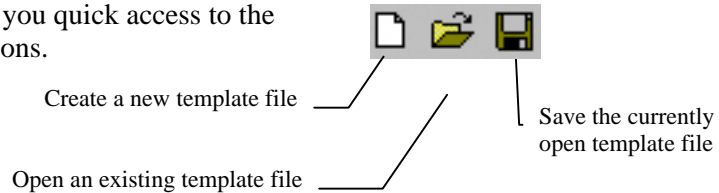|	
Image Object	Defines where the images you import in the main application will appear in the template. Images appear behind, on top of or inside other objects in a design.
Graphic Object	Defines where various graphic elements will appear in the template. Graphic objects created with this tool are static. Graphic objects can be bitmap, WMF or EMF type
Text Object	Defines where text will appear in the template. Text can be static, or contain a special variable '@' codes. Text automatically scales to fill the defined text box.
Barcode Object	Defines where a barcode will appear in a Layout. Note that the barcode object is not available when creating a sizeable pack item – the item must be a fixed size item
Labeled holder	Places a box that will be replaced by an image, e.g. a logo

To place an object, click the desired button, click inside the template canvas area and drag the mouse. The object will be placed into the template ready to be accurately sized and positioned.

Place image hole object _____

Place a graphic object _____

Place a text object _____

Place a labeled holder

Place a barcode object

The Object Layer toolbar

Objects placed into a template can be positioned in layers, making it possible to make the various objects appear behind or in front of each other.

To change the layer order of an object, select it, then choose the desired layer order button. (You can also do this without using the toolbar – see Changing the Layer Order, later in this chapter.)

Bring selected object up 1 layer ⎯⎯⎯ Send selected object to the back

Send selected object down 1 layer ⎯⎯⎯ Bring selected object to the front

The Scaling options toolbar

When placing image objects into a template, you can control how the graphic is scaled within the object box. This is useful if you need to ensure that an image is completely displayed, and is not distorted.

There are three scaling options available:

- Clip the image to fill the box maintain aspect ratio)
- Fit the whole image in the box (maintain aspect ratio)
- Fill the image in the box (distort the aspect ratio)

The options are set using the **Scaling options** toolbar.

Clip image to fill box ⎯⎯⎯ Distort image to fill box

Fit image to box

Changing the scaling option

After placing a graphic object, select it, then click the appropriate scaling button in the **Scaling options** toolbar.

Choosing	Scales the image…
Clip the image to fill the box maintain aspect ratio)	
Fit the whole image in the box (maintain aspect ratio)	
Fill the image in the box (distort the aspect ratio)	

Applying an 8 bit mask

8 bit masks are image files (jpeg, tiff, bmp etc) that you create in an image editing program that allows you to create image transparency in the finished prints. These files allow more complex transparency effects such as a soft-edged blend or a semi-transparent overlay. You can apply an 8 bit mask to any graphic object placed in a template.
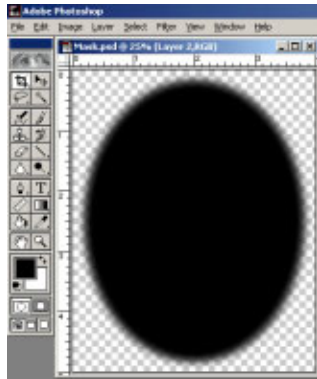
Object snap and grid settings

There are a number of useful display and snap options available to make designing templates easier. These options are available from the Display / Snap toolbar. The options include:

- Display or hide rulers
- Display or hide hole punch positions
- Display or hide the grid
- Switch object snap on or off

Switch ruler display on/off

Display hole punch position

Snap to grid
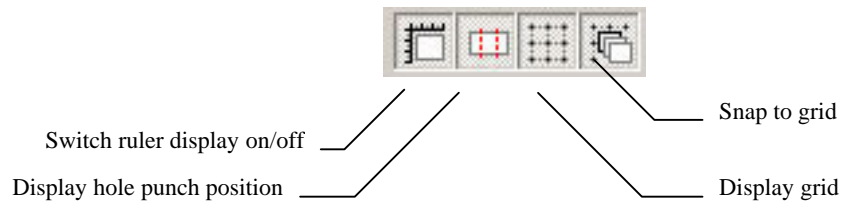
Display grid

Rulers

Clicking the **Switch ruler display** button will display or hide the ruler.

Ruler display
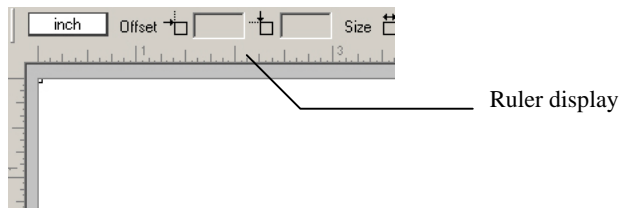
Hole punch display

Templates can contain hole punch positions. Clicking the **Display hole punch position** button toggles the punch position display.

Punch position display
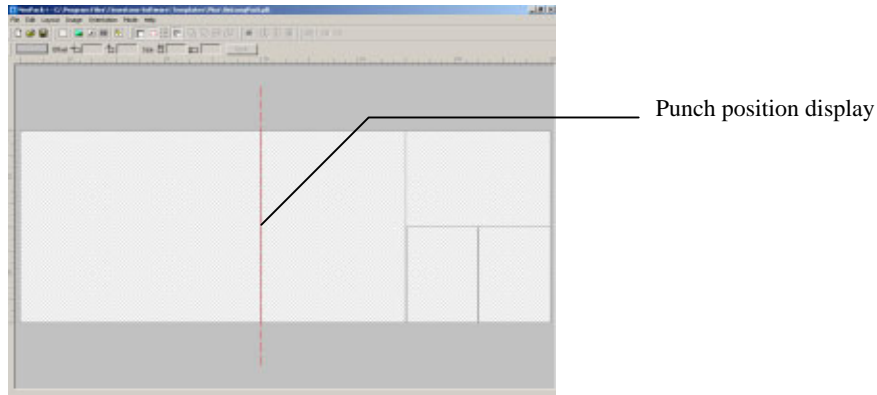
Grid display

A grid can be positioned over the template canvas making positioning objects easier. Click the **Display grid** button to toggle the grid display.
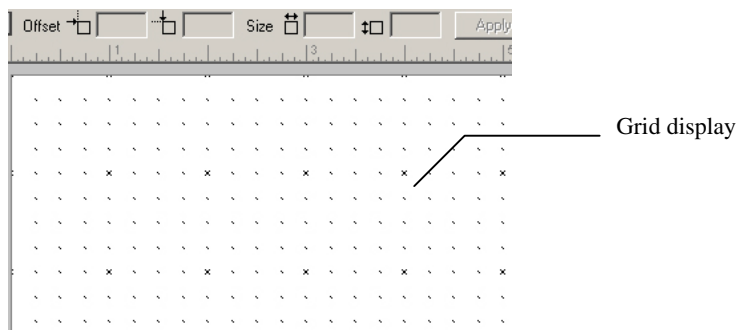
Grid display

Grid snapping

Placing objects is made much easier with grid snapping. Once enabled, objects will snap to the template grid.

Setting Design options

The grid display can be configured by choosing **File, Designer options** while in **Design** mode.

The gridline spacing and sub-divisions can be set for both a Layout and Item template. Choosing **Automatic spacing** will set an automatic setting. If you want specific settings, un-check **Automatic spacing** and enter the values you want.
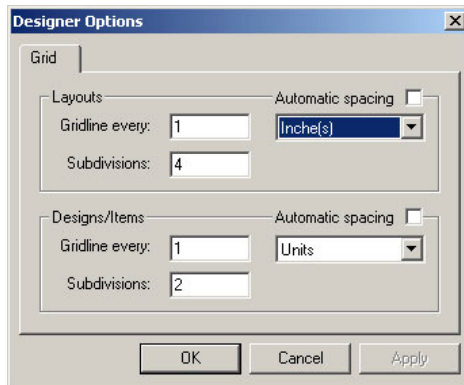
The Template Orientation toolbar

When designing graphic backgrounds for use within *NeoPack+*, you can create both Portrait and Landscape versions of the same template. This is to ensure that the templates you design are suitable for both portrait and landscape images imported.

When designing the different orientations, you must of course have background graphics that been designed for the portrait and landscape images. In the below example, a landscape image has been placed into a design created for a portrait image. Note how the image is impossible to crop correctly for this design.

Using the Template Orientation toolbar, you can create both portrait and landscape versions of the same design within a single template file. *NeoPack+* will automatically select the correct orientation for a portrait or landscape image when selected.

More detailed information about using the template orientations is given later in this chapter.

Switch to the Portrait version

Switch to the Landscape version

Create a Portrait and Landscape version template

The Object Dimensions toolbar

Objects placed into a template can be positioned and sized exactly using the Objects Dimensions toolbar. To set the size and position of an object, select it, then enter the desired values to the toolbar. Once done, click the **Apply** button to set the values.

The Offset values set the position of an object's top left corner.

Set the template measurement units   Set the object Offset   Set the object size
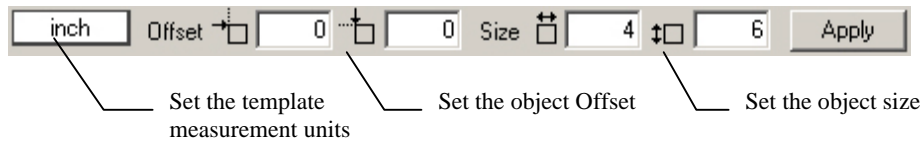
Creating Templates

When creating your templates, you must first make sure that you have all the elements that are required by the design. The template designer has no built-in graphic creation tools. Instead, it places images you have created in other design tools such as *CorelDraw* or *Adobe Photoshop*.

Create a Pack Layout template

A Pack Layout template is a single print size, or a group of print sizes that will form a package. To create a new Pack Layout Template, switch to Design mode by choosing **Mode, Design**. The Template Designer is shown. Choose **File, New**, then choose **Pack Layout** from the selection. A blank template is created.

Set the page size

The first step when designing a layout is to set the page size required for your layout. If you are creating a single print size, this is the size of that print. If you are designing a package, it is the size of the completed pack.

Set the page size by clicking on the background page. Note that the page handles become active, and the **Size** entry area becomes active. First, ensure that you have the correct units selected by clicking the units drop-down. Now, enter the page size you wish to use, then **Apply**. The page size changes.
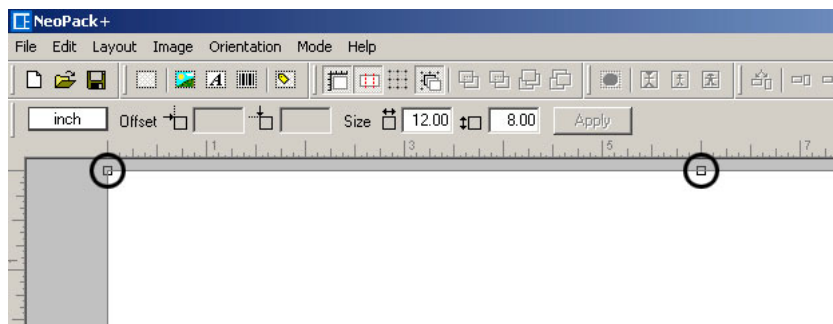
Figure 8: Selected background page with handles

Placing objects

The various objects used in a template are placed in a similar fashion:

- Choose the object to place by clicking the icon in the toolbar
- Click and drag the object area onto the template canvas
- Set the object options
- Set the object size

Using the Grid and Snapping

The template designer has several useful options to help size and position objects in a template:

- A ruler
- Grid
- Grid snap

The ruler and grid are visual aids for sizing and positioning objects in a template. Enabling **snapping** assists further by snapping the object to gridlines or other objects on the page. As you size or move an object in the template, it will snap from one gridline to another, ensuring accurate size and position.

Create a single print size layout

The images that you import appear in 'holes' that you place into a *NeoPack+* template. You can place as many holes into a template as you need. Holes can be different sizes and orientations. *NeoPack+* automatically scales and rotates the image as each individual hole requires.

To create a single image hole, click the **Place Image Hole** button. ⬚. The cursor changes to the **Place Object** cursor.

Position the mouse over the area on the page where you want the hole to appear. Click and drag a box over the page. It is not important to be accurate at this point. The **Image Properties** dialog is displayed
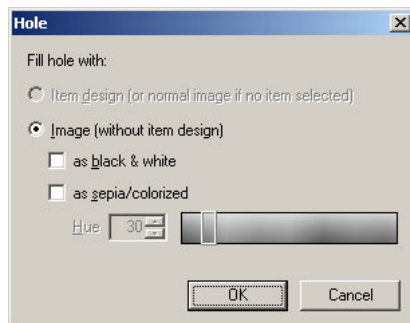
There are a number of options available when placing an image hole:

- Item design – if a pack item is selected, it will be placed into this hole

- Image – a simple image will be placed into the hole, regardless of whether an item has been selected

- As black and white – creates a black and white version of the image

- As sepia/colorized – creates a tinted version of the image

ⓘ   Item designs and image frames are discussed fully later in this manual. If you choose **Item design** as the option here, a frame will be placed over the image. If you choose **Image** only, the portrait image will be placed into the pack, regardless of whether you choose a frame.

Choose the type of image you want, then click **OK**.

Hole placed with **Image (without item design)** selected

Hole placed with **Item design** selected

Hole placed with **Image as black & white** selected

Hole placed with **Image as sepia/colorized** selected

Figure 9: An Image Object positioned in a Layout

Positioning and sizing the object

All objects can be positioned and sized using the mouse, or more accurately with the Object Dimensions entries on the toolbar. Choose the object by clicking it. Note that handles are displayed to confirm that the object is selected.

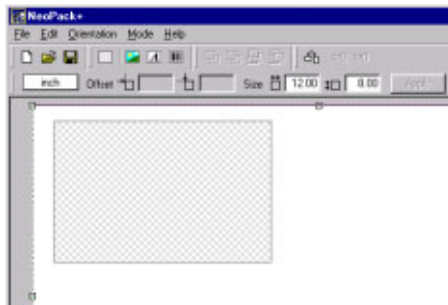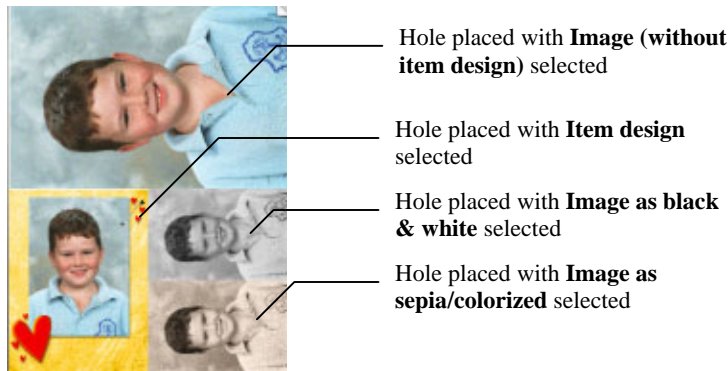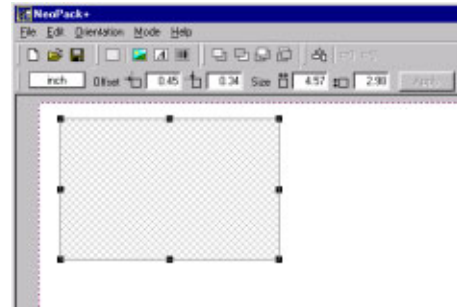**Sizing and positioning objects with the mouse**

To re-size the object with the mouse, click one of the handles and drag it in the desired direction. To move the object, click and drag inside the selected object. The object moves as you drag the mouse.

Figure 10: A selected object

Sizing and positioning objects with the toolbar

Exact size and position for an object can be specified using the Object Dimensions toolbar. Choose the object you wish to edit, then click the value you want to adjust. Pressing the **Tab** key switches to the next entry area. Once all the required changes have been made, click **Apply**.

Note that the measurement units can be changed by clicking the **Units** drop down.

Figure 11: The Object Dimensions toolbar
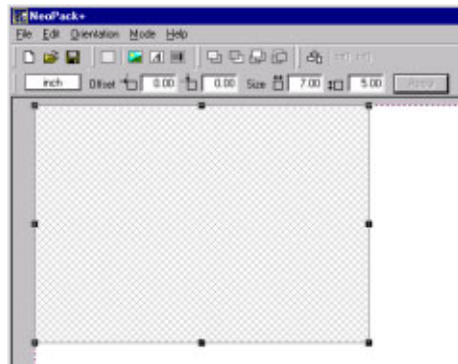
Figure 12: An Image Object after re-sizing

In the case that you want to create a layout that is a single 5x7" print in portrait orientation, set the **X** and **Y Offset** to **0, 0** and the Size to **5, 7**. The Image Hole object is placed in the top left corner, and set to 5" wide and 7" high.

Create a package print layout

By positioning more than one image hole onto the layout canvas, you can create a package print template. When this layout is selected in the main program, the image is placed into each of the image holes automatically scaled and rotated to fit the hole.

To create the Pack Layout, set the page size large enough so that all the required prints can be contained on the canvas as discussed earlier. Place the first print size as previously, Now, place another Image Hole object. Select it, and set the offset value and size so that it is correctly positioned in the layout. Continue placing Image Holes until the pack layout is complete.

Creating a Package print layout: an example

We want to create a simple package print, consisting of 1 x 10x8" print and 2 x 5x7" prints.

Step 1: Set the Page size

Create a new Layout. Click the Page background. Note that the **Size** values become available, but not the **Offset**. Set the page size to **15, 10** to allow for all the required print sizes to be placed onto the canvas.

Step 2: Place the 10x8" hole

Choose the **Image Hole** button, then click and drag the mouse over the template canvas area. A new Image Hole object is placed onto the canvas. It is not important to be accurate in the placement or sizing of the hole at this point.

Step 3: Size and position the hole

Select the image hole by clicking it. Note that the object handles appear indicating it is selected, and that the **Object Dimensions** entry boxes in the toolbar become available to edit.

The **Offset** values represent the top left corner of the object. In this example, we want the top left corner of the hole to be positioned in the absolute top left of the layout. Enter the values **0,0** for the Offset. Now enter the print size of **8, 10** then click Apply. The hole is positioned in the top left corner and sized to 8x10".
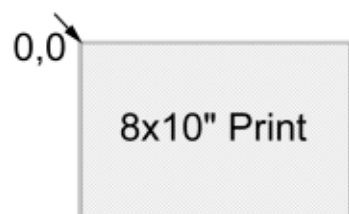
Step 4: Place the first 5x7" hole

After the 10x8" hole has been placed, click the **Image Hole** button again, click and drag another Image Hole onto the layout canvas. Again, it is not important to be accurate. After placing the second hole, select it by clicking it with the mouse.

Step 5: Size and position the hole

With this print, we want the top left corner to be positioned at the top right corner of the 10x8" print. This means that the 5x7" print origin is **8,0**. Enter these values in the **Offset** values of the toolbar. Now, enter the width and height to the **Size** entry boxes. The correct size is **7, 5**. Click **Apply**. The second hole is positioned and sized as shown.

Step 4: Place the second 5x7" hole

After the 5x7" hole has been placed, click the **Image Hole** button again, click and drag another Image Hole onto the layout canvas. Again, it is not important to be accurate. After placing the second hole, select it by clicking it with the mouse.

Step 5: Size and position the hole

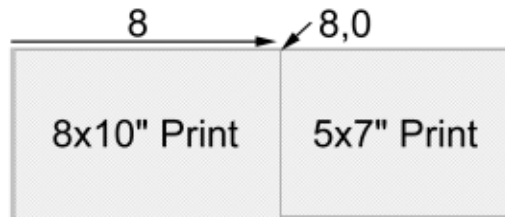With this print, we want the top left corner to be positioned at the bottom left corner of the first 5x7" print. This means that the second 5x7" print origin is **8,5**. Enter these values in the **Offset** values of the toolbar. Now, enter the width and height to the **Size** entry boxes. The correct size is **7, 5**. Click **Apply**. The second hole is positioned and sized as shown.
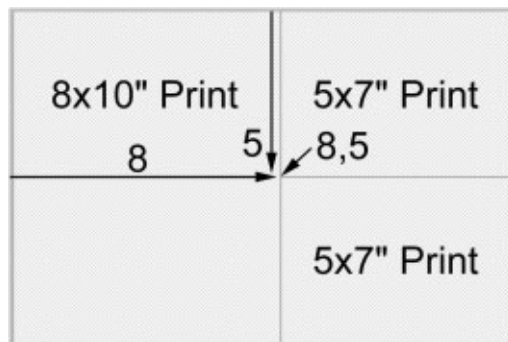
Saving the Template

After you have completed the layout, you must save it in order to use it with *NeoPack+*. There are several attributes that you can set for each template to help identify it when using the program.

Setting the Template Properties

You can specify both the name and a special quick key for each template that you design. The name you specify is the name that is displayed within the application for that template. A quick key is a special key that when pressed will automatically apply the template. For example, if you specify the Quick Key 'A' for the layout created previously,

when 'A' is pressed in the Form Packs mode, that layout will be applied to the currently selected image.

To set these attributes, choose **File, Properties**. The Template Properties are shown.

Enter the name that you wish to display within the main application for this template, and the Quick Key you want to use.

If you don't set the template file properties, the name displayed in the main program is the file name you use to save the template.

Save the Template

Once the Properties have been set, you can save the template to the hard disk. The template must be saved into the directory defined earlier as the **Template file** path. See Chapter 6, **Configuring *NeoPack+*** for more details.
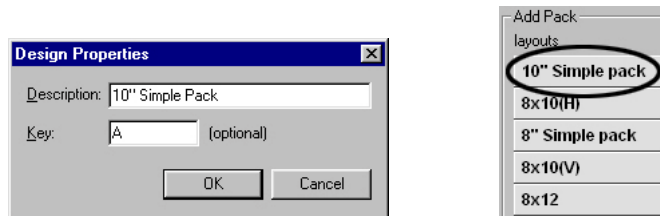
Choose **File, Save**. A **Save File** dialog is shown. Navigate to the template directory, give the file a name, then choose **Save**. The template is saved.

✎ You must quit and re-start *NeoPack+* before you can use the new template. This is because *NeoPack+* will only use the templates present in the template directory when it first starts.

Use the new template

After you have saved the template and re-started the program, open a file that has some images. You will see the new layout is now available for use. Click an image, then the layout button. The image is placed into the pack.

Using graphics and text with layout templates

NeoPack+ layouts allow graphic objects (such as a logo or background image), text objects – including fixed or variable text, and barcode objects to be placed into the design. Using these objects within a layout – as opposed to a design – allows a complex print layout of an absolute size to be designed. Choosing an image, then the complex layout results in a finished print layout, complete with the graphic, text and barcode objects.

By contrast, a Pack Item template must be placed onto a Layout before a job is formed.

If you always use common complex layouts or want to use a barcode object, you should design your Layout templates to include the various graphic objects.

Using a Barcode object

Barcode objects can only be placed into a Layout style template. This is because a barcode must have a specific size and characters per inch in order to be correctly read. Only a Layout template can offer these specific size requirements.

To place a barcode into your Layout template, click the **Barcode Object** button in the toolbar. Click and drag where you want the barcode to appear. The **Edit Barcode** dialog appears.

Specify the barcode type by choosing from the **Barcode type** drop-down list. The types available include:

- Code 39
- Extended Code 39
- Code 128
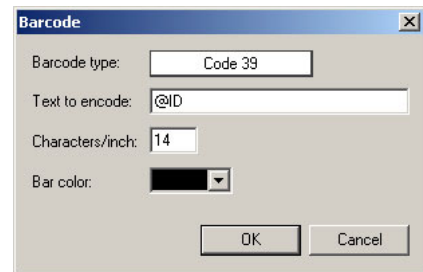
Now, enter the text to code. This is the information entered for each image that needs a barcode. You can either enter some fixed text, or use a variable '@' code. For example, you may have defined a field, 'ID' that will contain the ID information for each image. Entering the text **@ID** as the **Text to encode** will cause the ID information entered to be placed into the barcode. Enter the **Characters/inch** required by your reader.

✎ You will need to determine which settings work for particular your reader. This is particularly true for the characters per inch setting.

You can set the color used for the barcode. This is especially useful if you are printing to a CRT based printer. These printers tend to bleed if solid black is used, making the barcodes very difficult to read. Set the color by clicking the **Bar color** drop-down. Choose the color you want, or click **More colors**. The standard Windows color picker is displayed.

Set the color as desired. You may need to test the printed barcode to determine the optimum setting, for example, you may need to set the luminosity to a higher value than zero to avoid bleeding with CRT-based printers.
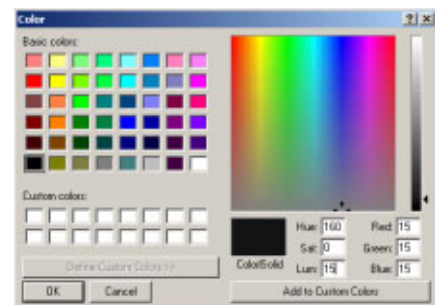
After setting all the required parameters, choose **OK**. The barcode object is placed into the Layout. In the template example at right, note the use of normal text @ codes, as well as the barcode object that uses an @ID code.
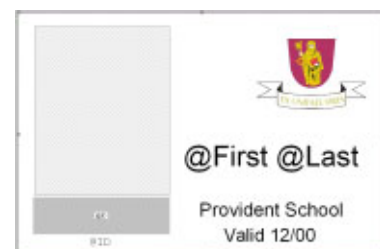
Using and defining Hole Punches

NeoPack+ offers extensive support for hole punches your printer might support. There are two broad types of printers that are supported:

- Roll to roll printers with either mid image or end/start of image punches
- Cut sheet printers without any punching system

For printers that support hole punches, you can define a number of cut mark positions within a pack. With our Windows NT Printer Drivers, the cut mark information is sent to the printer with the page being printed.

If your printer doesn't support mid-image punching but has start or end of print punches, or is a cut-sheet printer, you can use cut marks to split the packs being printed. In this case, you can define a position to split the long pack. When the pack is printed, it will be sent to the printer split into a number of separate images. The result is either a punch at the beginning or end of each unit, or each unit will be printed individually.

Punch and printer types

There are several types of digital printer available today:

- Cut-sheet feed
- Long-roll, short length feed
- Long-roll, long length feed

A cut-sheet feed printer typically has a maximum paper advance. A good example is the Sienna FotoPrint range that typically has a maximum output size of 8x12 or 12x18" depending on the model.

A long-roll, short length feed printer is a roll to roll printer with easel mask. Again, these machines have a maximum possible paper advance. A good example is the Kodak MultiPrinter that has a maximum print size of 12x18".

A long-roll, long length feed printer is a roll to roll printer that has no maximum paper advance (aside from the paper roll length). This style of printer can create very long prints, in theory as long as the installed paper roll. A good example of this printer is the Gretag Mileca.

Cut-sheet or punching printers

Cut-sheet printers typically don't have a hole punching system built-in. Instead, they cut each individual print and process it immediately.

Punching printers are roll to roll style that usually punch either the beginning or end of a print. Once the roll of paper is processed, the prints are cut by your lab's cutter into a stack of prints.

Additionally, some printers are able to punch the paper within a single print. You might be printing a series of packs that comprise 4 units per pack. This style printer can place a punch at the beginning of each unit in a pack as well as at print start / end.

Hard and soft cut marks

NeoPack+ supports 2 types of cut mark:

- Soft cut mark – the pack will be punched by the printer at the defined position
- Hard cut mark – *NeoPack+* will split the pack into separate pages at the defined position

In order to use soft cut marks, you must use a Timestone Software printer driver with a printer that supports mid-image punches.

Any printer can use Hard cut marks.

Using Hard cut marks

Hard cut marks are a very powerful tool, and can be used in a variety of ways. Firstly, if you have a short-advance printer, you can define a series of hard cuts in a long pack. This makes long packs easily printable by most of the digital printers available today.

Secondly, you can tune your production into manageable 'chunks'. Digital high-speed printers need large volumes of image data delivered in a continual stream in order to keep the printer busy. Images sent to the printer need to be delivered fast enough to keep up with it. This is much easier if the file sizes being sent to the printer are a certain 'sweet' size. Files larger than this 'sweet size' can cause the printer to pause while the large file is being sent.

For example, the Gretag Mileca 'likes' to have image files around 22Mb delivered to keep it busy. If you send it a series of image files, each 22Mb in size, it will keep up easily. If you send images that are 60Mb in size, it takes longer to send the larger file to the printer. In this case, the Mileca will have finished printing the first print before the next is available, and have to stop the paper transport. The result is a white slug between the prints, wasting paper.

You can use hard cut marks to separate long packs into chunks that are more manageable sizes. For example, you might design your packs to be a number of 10x8" units. By defining a hard cut mark at the beginning of each unit, the pack will be split into chunks that will keep the Mileca printing without stopping.

Defining Hole Punches

Hole punches are defined in a Layout template. You can define as many punch positions within a pack, but the printer must be able to use the information for the pack to be finally punched or printed correctly. This means that you must be mindful of the minimum punch distance or paper advance your printer supports.

Setting the punch position

Decide where you need the punch to be positioned within the pack being designed. Choose **Edit, Cut Marks**. The **Cut Marks** dialog is displayed.

Adding a punch

Choose **New**. A new line appears in the entry box. Choose if you want a vertical or horizontal cut position. Choose the position of the punch in the pack.

Choose the punch type

If you want a cut mark to be hard, check the **Hard** checkbox next to the punch position. Otherwise, the Cut mark type is always soft. If you choose a soft cut mark, but your printer doesn't support mid-image punches, the cut mark is ignored.

Adding additional cut marks

If you need to add additional cut marks, choose **Add**. A new line is added to the **Cut Marks** table. Make the required settings.

Once you have added all the cut marks necessary, choose **OK**.
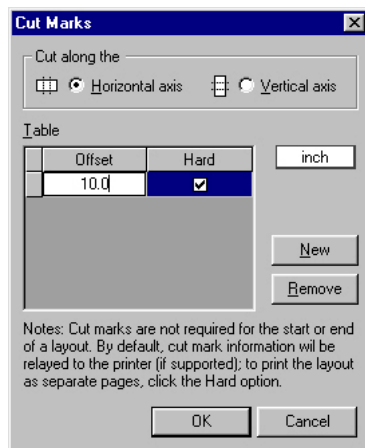
Displaying cut marks

You can display a cut mark by clicking the **Cut Mark** button in the **Display Options** toolbar. Any cut marks defined will be displayed. The different cutmarks are displayed using different dash lines.
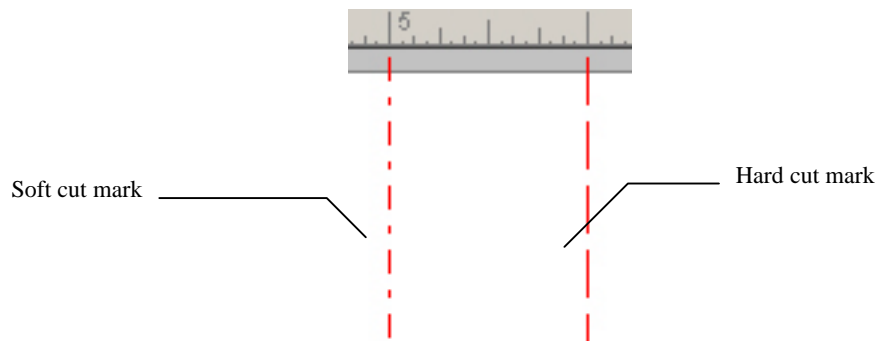
Pack Item templates

A Pack Item template is a group of graphic and text objects that must be placed into a Layout template to form a final job. A Pack Item template will be fitted into the Pack Layout chosen, meaning that it is possible that it will be cropped. For example, you might create a Pack Item template that can fit on either a 8x12" or 8x10" print. When the 8x12" Layout is selected, the entire design is placed onto the page. When an 8x10" Layout is used, the Pack Item is cropped top and bottom to fit into the shorter page.

A Pack Item Template can contain multiple Image Holes of different sizes and orientations. Images are automatically scaled and rotated to fit into the holes placed in the design.

Pack Item templates can contain various graphic elements including bitmap images from image editing applications like Adobe Photoshop, and WMF vector graphics created in applications like CorelDraw. The templates also support image transparency, meaning you can define a specific color in your design that will appear as transparent. An Image Hole placed behind a transparent area will show 'through' the transparent area, merging the two elements together.

In the example, note that the same design has been placed into an 8x10" and 8x12" page. The same design has been used. Note also that the teddy bear appears on top of the image, indicating that image transparency has been used.

Creating a Pack Item template

To create a new Pack Item Template, switch to Template Design mode by choosing **Mode, Design**. The Template Designer is shown. Choose **File, New**, then choose **Pack Item** from the selection. A blank Pack Item template is created.

Set the Pack Item size

As a Pack Item is placed into a layout to create the final print size, it doesn't have a fixed size or aspect ratio. Even so, it is useful to allocate a page size for a Pack Item to make it easier to create the design in the first place.

Set the page size by clicking on the background page. Note that the page handles become active, and the **Size** entry area becomes active. Now, enter the page size you wish to use, then **Apply**. The page size changes. Note that unlike a Layout Template, you need not specify the page units. The **Units** drop-down is fixed to **abstract** as the measurement units.
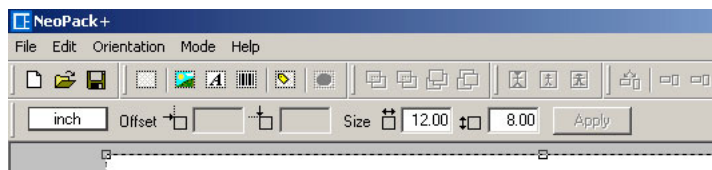
Figure 13: Selected background page with handles

Preparing and using graphic images

There are several steps involved when creating and placing graphic objects.

● Designing the graphic object in an image editor

- Placing the graphic into a *NeoPack+* template
- Define any transparent areas in the graphic

There are a number of important things you need to keep in mind when designing graphic images for use in a template.

Bitmap or Vector?

There are two quite distinct types of graphic images that can be used in a *NeoPack+* template:

- Vector graphics from applications like *CorelDraw*
- Bitmap images from applications like *Adobe Photoshop*

The two types are completely different in both the way that they are created, and also in the look of the final printed image. A vector graphic is formed by drawing a series of lines, then applying blocks of color to the objects drawn. The result is a graphic that is well suited to many logos and other design elements, but that has a cartoonish appearance when drawing real-life images.

On the other hand, a bitmap image can create realistic images for use in a template.

The big difference between a vector and bitmap graphic is that a vector is very small and quick to print, whilst a bitmap can be very large and slower to print.

In the example below, the image on the right is using a bitmap image as the background, whilst the one on the left is using vector style graphics. The file size of the bitmap graphic used for the background was 20.4Mb, whilst for the vector, it was 2Mb. Printing the bitmap background took 45 minutes, whilst the vector style took 8 minutes.

Bitmap file size

If you want to use a bitmap background, you can optimise printing time by using the smallest background image possible. If your background has a lot of very fine detail – such as a fine texture – you will need to use a larger file. If the background has many abstract objects, or if image clarity is not particularly important, use a smaller file size. In

general, you can use the following guide as a good starting point to determine your quality requirements.

These recommendations assume a maximum print size of 8x12" @ 300dpi

Background detail	Use this file size
Detail not important at all	2 – 4Mb
Detail somewhat important	4 – 6Mb
Detail important	6 – 8Mb
Detail very important	10 – 20Mb – requires testing.

Bitmap file format

NeoPack+ offers 1 bit transparency support to blend images. This means that a single color in the bitmap image can be defined as transparent in a template. For example, you might design the areas that are to be transparent to be white – R = 255 G = 255 B = 255. Any pixels in the design that have this value will become transparent.

When saving the background image, you must use a file format that does not change this value relationship. For example, JPEG format will distort the white pixels close to a darker area in the image, resulting in 'flecks' through the merged image. Use either PNG format for compressed images, or un-compressed TIFF or TARGA images for your backgrounds.

Do not use JPEG format for background images.

Transparent areas in the background

The 1 bit transparency support means that you must carefully build-in a color that will appear as transparent in your background images. First, choose a color that you will use to indicate transparency – perhaps white or R=255 G=255 B=255.

When designing the image, make sure that *only* transparent areas use this color. For example, select the areas that are not to be transparent, and use the Photoshop (or similar) Levels command to limit the maximum pixel value for these areas to say R=250 G=250 B=250. These areas will not be considered as transparent.

It is also important to carefully prepare the edges of the transparent areas in your design. Many image editors use anti-aliasing when placing selections. Anti-aliasing is a process that softens the edge of a selection, making it blend well into the image. However, this anti-aliasing means that the edges of your design can appear as a halo when used in *NeoPack+*. Likewise, a drop shadow effect that falls onto the transparent area will be seen as a halo.

When finishing off your designs, check the edge of the transparent areas, and clean up any anti-aliased or other stylised areas.

8-bit masks

NeoPack+ allows 8 bit transparency masks to be applied to graphic images placed into a template. This allows creative effects like soft-edged blends and transparent graphic objects all applied from a template. You must first have the transparency mask image file available. Use an image editor like Adobe Photoshop to create these masks.

Any graphic object placed into a *NeoPack+* template can have an 8 bit transparency mask applied. This allows attractive and complex graphic effects with all the convenience of *NeoPack+* templates.

Holes in Vector graphics

A Vector graphic can contain an area that is a hole as a native part of the design. *NeoPack+* will reflect the hole in the design, allowing you to create transparent areas in a vector graphic as well as a bitmap.

How a hole is created in a vector depends on the drawing application you are using. For example, with *CorelDraw*, draw two objects of different color, and place them one on top of the other. Choose **Arrange, Combine** to combine the two objects. One of the objects will form a hole in the other.

Consult your applications user manual for more detailed information regarding combining objects for this effect.

Placing objects in the Pack Item Template

Pack Item Templates can contain Graphic, Image Hole and Text objects within a single design. A single template can also contain both portrait and landscape versions of the same design. The correct orientation design for a portrait or landscape image is automatically selected when the template is chosen in the main application.

Objects are placed onto the template canvas by choosing the appropriate button from the **Place object** toolbar, then clicking and dragging the mouse. Objects are placed into stackable layers, allowing them to be placed in front of or behind one another.

Placing and using Image Hole objects

The images that you import appear in 'holes' that you place into a *NeoPack+* template. You can place as many holes into a template as you need. Holes can be different sizes and orientations. *NeoPack+* automatically scales and rotates the image as each individual hole requires.

To create a single image hole, click the **Place Image Hole** button . The cursor changes to the **Place Object** cursor.

Position the mouse over the area on the page where you want the hole to appear. Click and drag a box over the page. It is not important to be accurate at this point. The **Image hole properties** dialog is displayed.

Set an Item design hole

As previously mentioned, there are several different options available when placing an image hole. The control allows you to create complex packs, allowing you to create jobs that previously would require several separate units to be ordered to complete.

When an image hole is placed onto a page layout, by default it will be overlayed with an Item design if one is selected. You can explicitly set this by ensuring the option, **Item design (or normal image if no design selected)** is set.
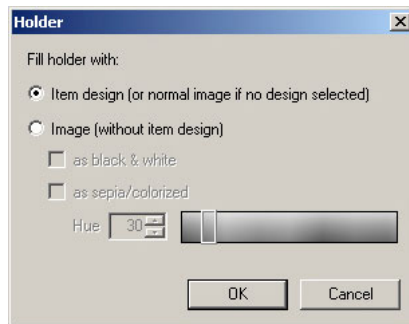
Set an image hole

An image hole is an area in a layout where an image only will appear. You can design a pack layout that has several prints, then decide which will contain a design overlay. Do this by choosing **Image (without item design)** as the selection when placing a hole you don't want the design to appear in.
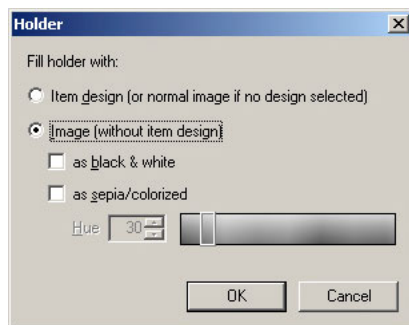
Set a colorized image

You can choose to make prints B/W or tinted by selecting **as black & white** or **as sepia/colorized**. This particular image in a layout will be as selected. If you want a particular tint color, choose **as sepia/colorized** then slide the slider to select a color.

Once you have made your selection, choose OK, and the hole is placed into the template.
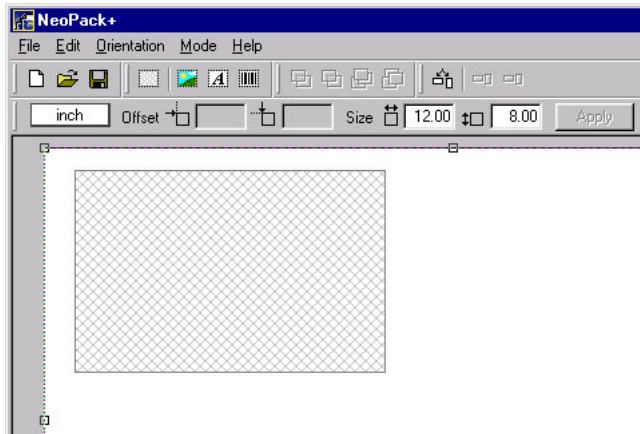
Figure 14: An Image Object positioned in a Layout

Position and size the object

All objects can be positioned and sized using the mouse, or very accurately with the Object Dimensions entries on the toolbar. Choose the object by clicking it. Note it highlights by showing handles.
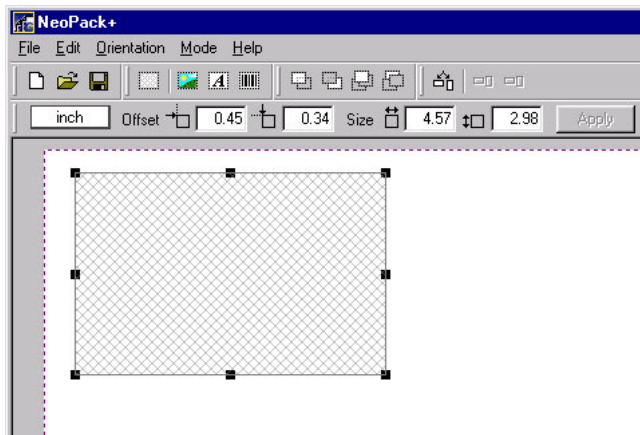

Figure 15: A selected object

Sizing and positioning objects with the mouse

To re-size the object with the mouse, click one of the handles and drag it in the desired direction. To move the object, click and drag inside the selected object. The object moves as you drag the mouse.

Sizing and positioning objects with the toolbar

Exact size and position for an object can be specified using the Object Dimensions toolbar. Choose the object you wish to edit, then click the value you want to adjust. Pressing the **Tab** key switches to the next entry area. Once all the required changes have been made, click **Apply**.

Note that the measurement units can be changed by clicking the **Units** drop down.

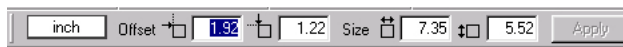| inch | Offset ⌐ | **1.92** | ⌐ | 1.22 | Size ⌐ | 7.35 | ⌐ | 5.52 | Apply |

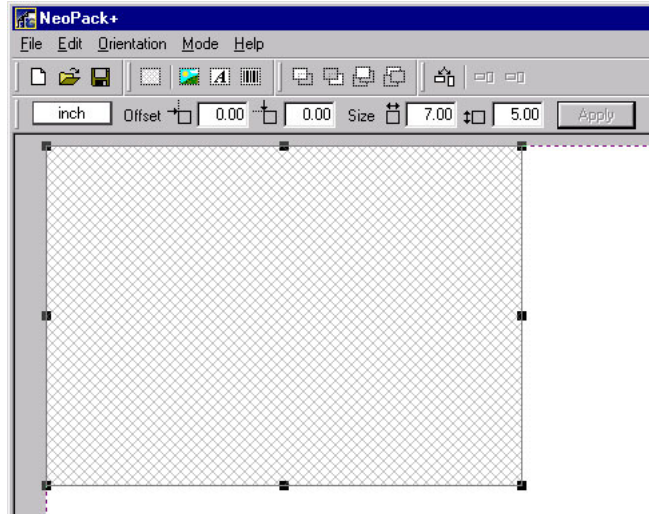Figure 16: The Object Dimensions toolbar

Figure 17: An Image Object after re-sizing

As discussed earlier in this chapter, you can place more than one image hole into a template. For more detail on constructing a multi-hole Item Pack, check earlier in this chapter.

## Placing and using graphic objects

Several graphic objects can be placed into a *NeoPack+* template. There are several steps when importing these objects.

Placing a graphic object

Create a new template – either a Layout or a Design. Set the page size to match the template you're designing. Click the **Place Graphic Object** button.   . The mouse pointer turns to the **Place Object** pointer.

Click and drag the mouse in the template. It is not important to be accurate at this point. A **File Open** dialog is displayed. Choose the file you wish to place and choose **Open**.

The file is read, and the object appears in the template. Now, the **Set Bitmap Mask** dialog appears. Click the color you wish to appear as transparent. In this case, we will click the centre white area of the Life Saver. If you don't want to set a transparent area for the graphic, press **Cancel**. The graphic will still be placed, but no transparent areas will be set.
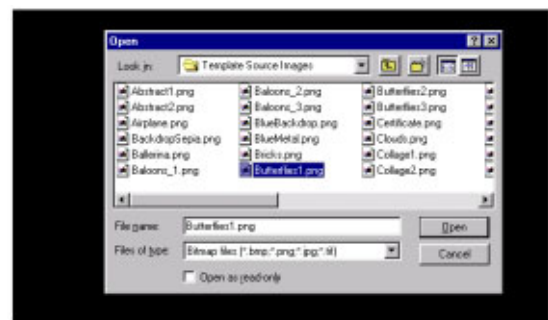
If you make a mistake, press **Reset** to reset the selected color.

Once the transparent area has been set, you will see the transparent area indicated by the grid pattern:

Figure 18: A placed graphic object

Positioning and sizing an object

Click the object. Hold the **CTRL** key down if necessary (if several objects have already been placed).

Either click and drag one of the handles, or drag the object to scale and position of the object with the mouse. If you need more accurate placement, click the object, then enter an absolute origin and size in the **Object Dimensions** toolbar, then choose **Apply**. The object is positioned and sized exactly.

Choosing objects in other layers

When several objects are placed within a template, you can cycle between objects using a keyboard modifier with the mouse. For example, if you want to select the background page that is completely covered with objects (perhaps to adjust its size), click any object on in the template. That object is highlighted. Now, hold the **CTRL** key on the keyboard. Note that the mouse pointer changes to the **Object Cycle** tool. Click the object again, and note that the object in the next layer below it is highlighted.

Figure 19: Cycling between layer objects

Changing the layer order

Objects can be positioned in front or behind each other. The order of the objects can be changed with the **Object Order** toolbar. The layer order of an object can be changed by selecting the object, then choosing a layer order tool in the toolbar.

Send object down 1 layer — Send object to the back

Send object down 1 layer — Bring object to the front
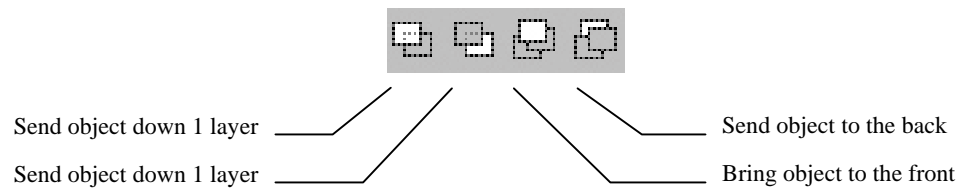
Place two Image Objects on the page, making sure that they overlap each other.
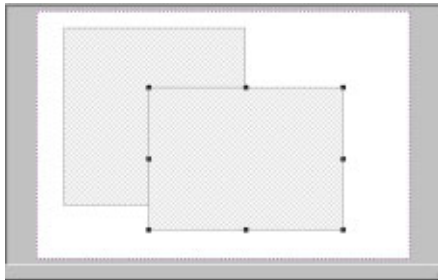

Figure 20: The selected object in the top layer

Click the **Send down 1 layer** tool. The selected object is sent down 1 layer, and will now appear behind the other in the finished print.
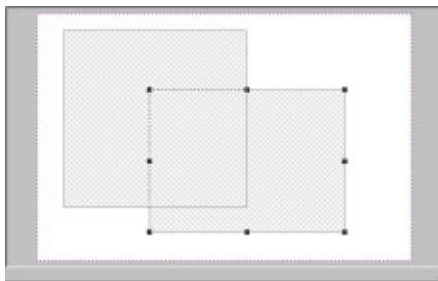

Figure 21: The selected object, 1 layer lower

Merging images: defining an image hole

The area in your design where the images you import are to appear is called a 'hole'. As mentioned before, this area is defined by coloring the areas of the graphic a specific color. In this example, the area has been defined by pixels that are R=255 G=255 and B=255. After the graphic has been placed and positioned, click the **Image Object** button. The mouse pointer changes the **Place Object** pointer. Click and drag the mouse over the template where you want the image to appear. It is not important to be accurate at this point.

When the object is placed, it will be sitting over the top of the background.

Figure 22: The Image Object placed over a Graphic Object

With the Image Object selected (the handles are visible), click the **Send down 1 layer** button. The Image Object is moved down 1 layer, and is now behind the transparent area of the Graphic Object. Note in the picture below that it is possible to see the full design.

Figure 23: The Image Object placed behind the graphic object's transparent area

When this design is applied to an image, the two areas are merged.

Figure 24: The finished print

Placing additional graphic objects

As many graphic objects as you need can be placed into a template. To add a further object, repeat the above process.

✎ **Note:** If a graphic object that is placed over the top a hole has the transparent color, it will be merged is described above. Be sure that for objects that you don't want to merge, you choose **Cancel** at the **Set Bitmap Mask** dialog.


8-bit masks

NeoPack+ allows 8 bit transparency masks to be applied to graphic images placed into a template. This allows creative effects like soft-edged blends and transparent graphic objects all applied from a template. You must first have the transparency mask image file available. Use an image editor like Adobe Photoshop to create these masks.

Set an 8 bit mask for an image hole

After an image hole has been placed onto the template canvas, select it – **apply 8 bit mask** button becomes available in the toolbar. Click the button, and the **apply mask** dialog is displayed. Choose **Load** – a **File Browse** dialog appears. Locate and open the mask file. It is opened and a preview shown. Click the **Load** button. A **File, Open** dialog opens. Locate and choose the mask file. Press **Open**.
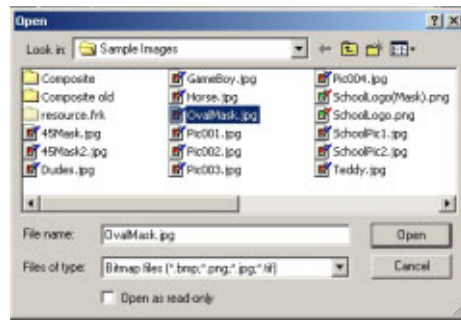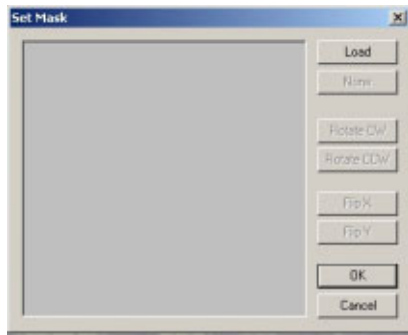
A preview of the mask is shown. You can flip or rotate the mask if required. After you're happy with the settings, choose **OK**. A preview of the masked image is shown. If you want to remove the mask file, click the **Reset** button. The mask is removed. Choose **OK**.
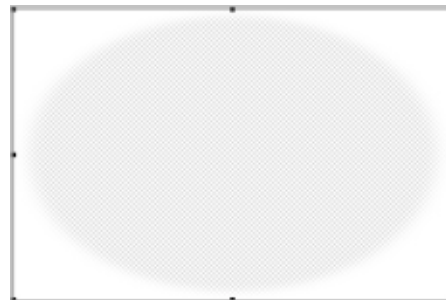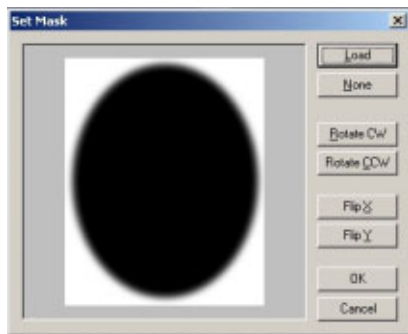
Portrait and landscape templates

The images that you use with *NeoPack+* may be in either portrait or landscape orientations. The templates that you design contain an image hole where the imported images will appear, and this hole must also be in a portrait or landscape orientation. When the imported image orientation matches the hole orientation, you will see a pleasant result. However, if you try to place a landscape image into a template designed for a portrait one, you will see the image cropped badly.

The solution to this is to design both portrait and landscape versions of the Pack Item within a single template. When you choose an image, the correct version of the template is automatically selected, ensuring the best possible result for your job.

Preparing the graphic images

In your image or vector editor, create the necessary images for both the portrait and landscape versions of the Pack Item templates. Save the various components to the hard disk.

Creating a Landscape and Portrait version

Open *NeoPack+* and switch to the Template Designer. Create a new file, and choose to create a new Pack Item. Click the **Create Portrait/Landscape** button in the toolbar. Note that the **Switch Orientation** buttons become available. Click each of the **Switch Orientation** buttons and note that the page orientation changes. Each of these different orientations can contain a complete set of images, text and @ codes for use within *NeoPack+*.

Design the orientation versions

Choose one of the orientations, and place all the required objects in the template. After all the objects have been placed, switch to the other orientation by clicking the **Switch Orientation** button. The completed template is replaced by a blank page. Add all the components required by this new template.

Once you have completed both templates, switch between the two by clicking the **Switch Orientation** button.

Save the file

Once the design is completed, assign a name for the template by choosing **File, Properties**. Save the file to your Templates directory, then quit the program and restart it. The new template will now be available to *NeoPack+*.

Using the Pack Item

Open a job file that contains, or import some images that are both in portrait and landscape orientation. Choose a portrait image, then a print layout, then the new template. Note that the portrait image will be placed into the portrait orientation Pack Item. Now, choose the landscape image and do the same. The landscape Pack Item is used.

Using text objects

Text can be added to your templates as a fixed text message or as a variable code. Variable codes use information entered for each imported image as the source for the text placed into the job. Text can be formatted and stylised with font, alignment and color style.

NeoPack+ allows text information to be associated with images you import, and to place this information into templates. This allows each template design to be customised to include things like the subject's name, personal messages etc.

Fixed and variable text

There are two types of text that can be placed in a template:

- Fixed: The text appears the same in each job
- Variable: The text changes for each image according to information entered for the image.

Variable text is defined using an '@' symbol at the beginning of the text placed into the template. When *NeoPack+* sees the '@' symbol, it looks to see if it has the necessary information for that image, and uses it if it does. If no information is available for the image, the '@' code is ignored.

Placing text objects

Create a new template – either a Layout or a Design. Choose the **Text Object** tool from the toolbar. Click and drag over the template where you want the text to appear. The text entry dialog opens. Enter the text you want to appear in the template.
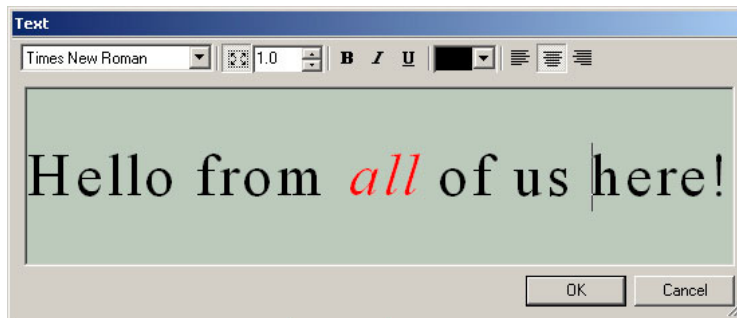

Figure 25: Text entry dialog box
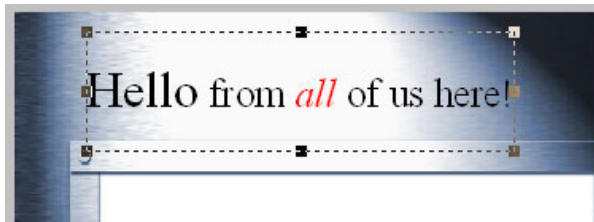
Figure 26: Text placed into a template
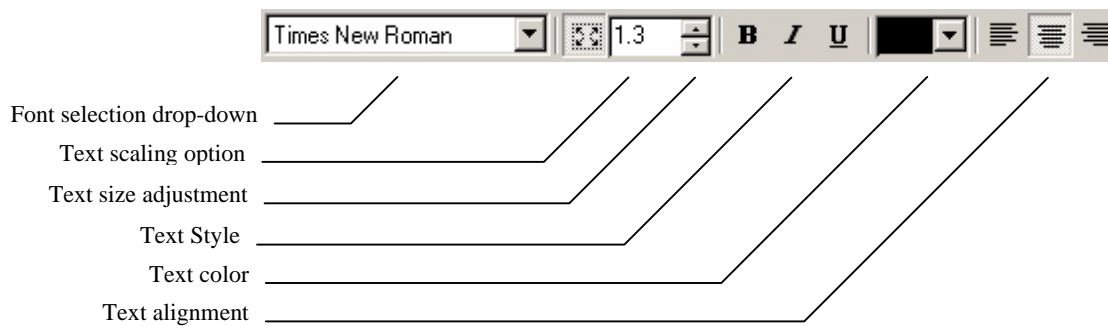
Figure 27: Text formatting toolbar

Set the font

Choose the text you wish to format, then choose the font from the drop-down dialog.

Set the style

Choose the text you wish to format, then choose the font style from the available styles.

Set the alignment

Choose the text you wish to format, then choose the alignment.

Controlling the text size

By default, text will scale to fill the box you draw on the template. This ensures that any text that appears in a text box will never be clipped because it is too big. As you enter more text, the font size will reduce automatically.
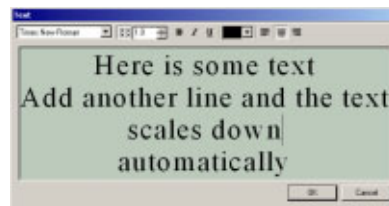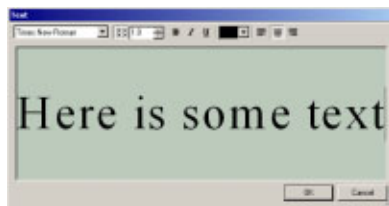
Relative font size

You can control the relative size of the text using the **Relative scaling** control. If you want some text to be bigger than the rest, select it, then click the **Up** or **Down** buttons in the **Relative size** entry box.
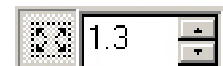
Creating variable text

NeoPack+ templates feature special '@' codes that allow you to customise every job printed. For example, you might be printing a series of photographs that has a person's name and a personal message.

The process of automatically replacing the text is controlled by placing the special @ code into your template design, then entering the matching information in the Main program for each image. It is also possible to import the text data from an external source, as long as the data has been pre-matched to each image.

For the following example, make sure that you can see the 4 main *NeoPack+* panes as shown below.

Images pane

Pack add/view pane

Details pane

Queue pane

Creating and using @ codes

An @ code is simply a text object that starts with the '@' character. You can define any @ code you like. As long as a matching Field in the Main application has some information entered, that text will be placed into the final print.
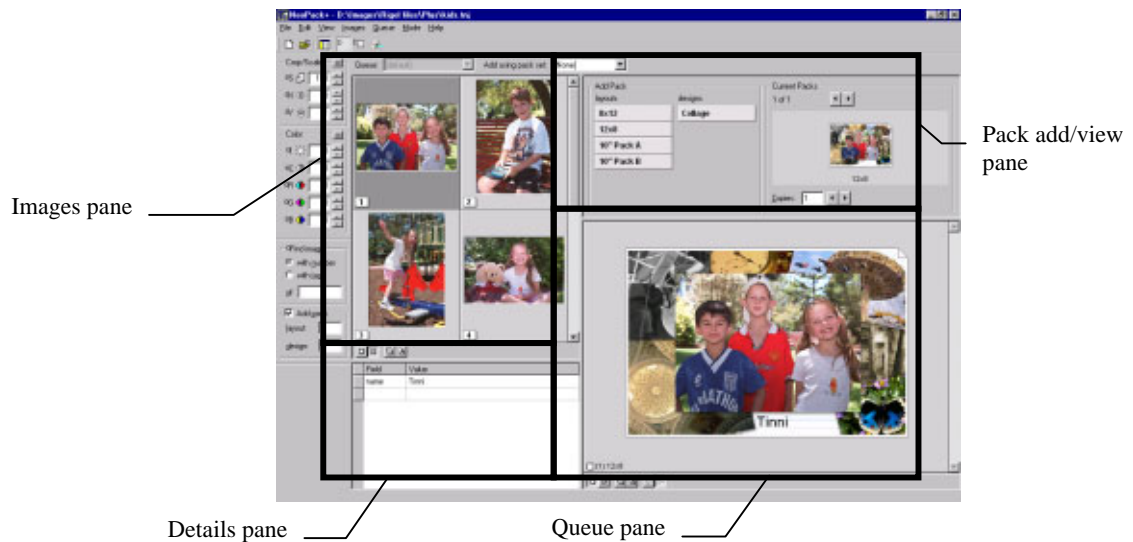
In the following example, we will create a simple page that places an image, along with their first and last name, and a personal message onto a page.

Define the Details fields

As previously discussed in Chapter 6, **Configuring *NeoPack+*,** you can define various fields to use as an @ code. You should define the fields you will commonly use as a program default so all the files you create contain these fields.

If you haven't yet defined any default fields, you can add them to the current file by choosing **Edit, Fields…** The **Data Fields** dialog is displayed. Add the fields you wish to use as described in Chapter 6. For this example, create the fields:

- First
- Last

- Message

Choose **OK.** The fields you have defined will appear in the **Fields** column of the **Details** pane.
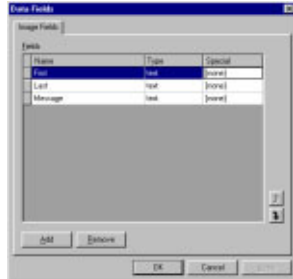
Create the template

To create the @ code, place a text object as described previously, then enter the '@' symbol followed by the Field name.

In the template, you need to place the following '@' codes:

- @First – to place the first name
- @Last – to place the last name
- @Message – to place the personal message

Create the @ code

Switch to the **Template designer** by choosing **Mode, Design**. Open or create a new template – either a Pack layout or a Pack Item.

Click the **Place Text object** button, and drag a text box onto the canvas template. The **Edit Text** dialog opens. Enter the following text:
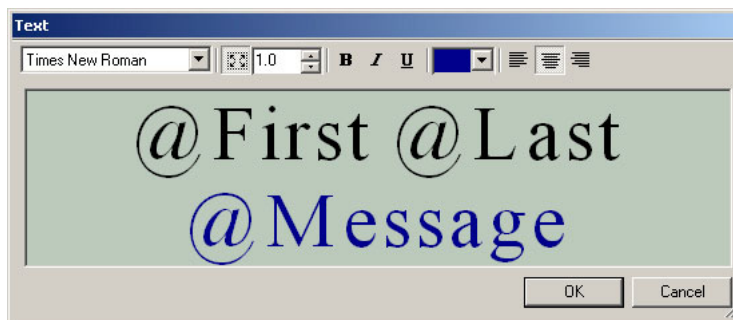
Choose **OK**. The text is placed into the template. Add an image hole in the design, and any other objects you need. Save the template and re-start *NeoPack+*.
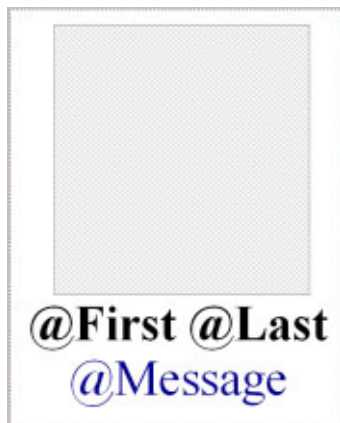
Using the @ code

Open a file that contains some imported images. Now, choose the template you have created. Choose a Layout if necessary. The image is placed into the hole in the template, but no text is yet visible – as none has been entered yet. Note in the below example that the **field values** are empty.
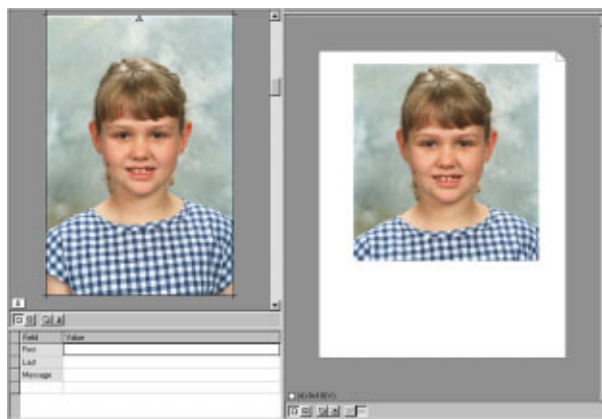
Click the image you wish to add the text to ensure it is selected. Now, click in the **First** value and enter a first name. Press Enter. The text will appear in the page preview. Continue entering some text for the **Last** and **Message** fields.
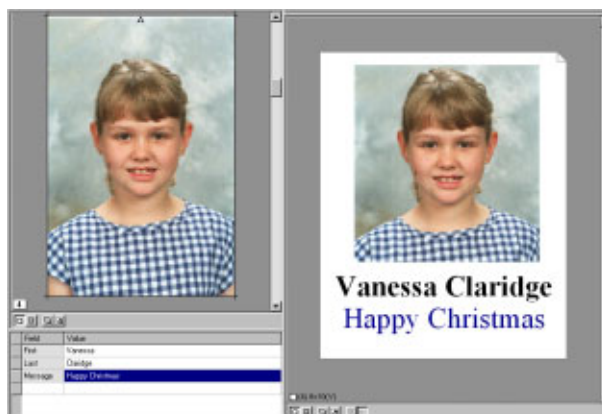
Labeled holders

When you design your templates, you can place a 'Labeled' holder to simplify your production workflow. When creating the template, you might want a logo graphic to appear in the final image. Rather than re-designing your templates to include each logo, you can place a special box with a reference to the logo file. When you are creating the work for a particular job, you import the logo to the **Details**. When the job is run, the logo is positioned in the design as specified by the template.

Creating and positioning a labeled holder

To place a labeled holder, open the template you wish to use, then choose the **Labeled holder** button in the toolbar ![icon]. Click and drag the mouse in the template where you want the object to appear. It is not necessary to be 100% accurate at this stage. The **Labeled holder** dialog is shown.
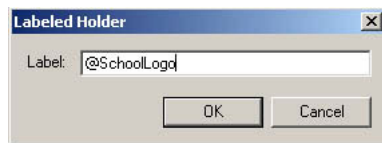
Entering the @ code

Depending on how you create the jobs, you will have defined some default fields in the **Main** mode – in this example, a field **SchoolLogo** has been created that will reference the logo file. Labeled holders need to have the same '@' code as the field in **Main**. Choose **OK** and the labeled object is placed.
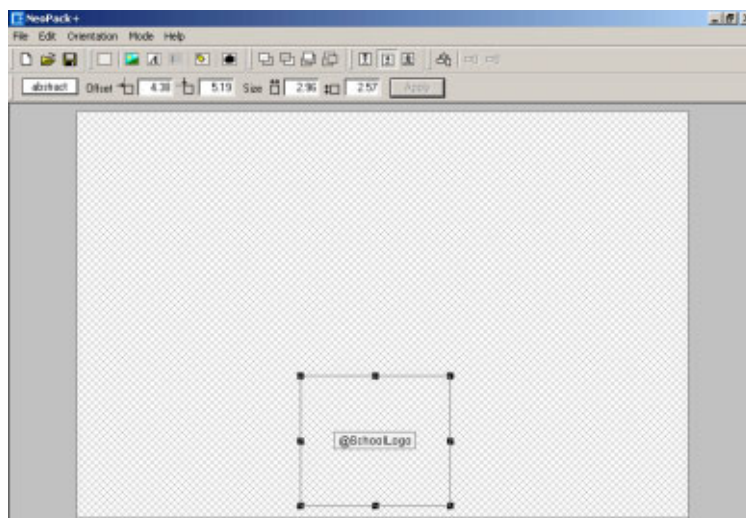
Controlling Labeled holder scaling

Images placed into a labeled holder can be scaled exactly as for a normally placed graphic. Choose the scaling you want to use by choosing the appropriate scaling from the toolbar.

Distort image to fill box

Clip image to fill box

Fit image to box
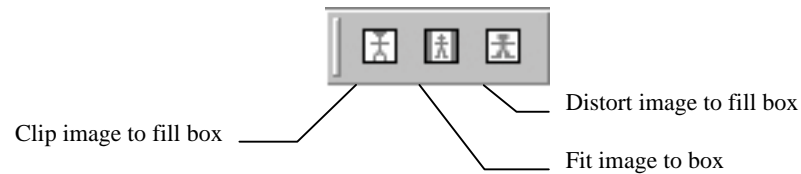
Using the labeled graphic

Once the codes have been entered to your template, and images associated to the relevant fields, the graphic objects will be placed into the final job created in **Main** mode.

In this example, we are allocating a school logo. The logo is common to every image, and we have placed a labeled object, **@SchoolLogo**. A field **SchoolLogo** has also been defined for this file. Choosing the image of images, then allocating the logo image superimposes it over the portrait image.

Allocating the Logo Image for the **SchoolLogo** field…

Field	Value
First	Adrien
Last	Dwyer
Message	
SchoolLogo	…\SchoolLogo.png

Superimposes the logo over the portrait.

8
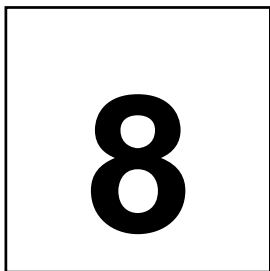
Creating Job files

Once you have created the necessary Layout and Pack Item templates, you can now form jobs with *NeoPack+*. In order to do this, you need to import images to a job file. Once imported, you can edit the images for cropping, color and density, add text if required, then create the pages ready to be printed.

It is also possible to import pre-matched text data, as well as the order information for a particular job file. This means that you can automatically add the required text information, and form the pages via the import process.

Image import options

NeoPack+ needs to import the images you wish to use to a job file. The import process creates the small on-screen preview that is used when you are preforming all tasks within *NeoPack+*. The preview image is stored using JPEG compression in the job file.

Creating a new *NeoPack+* file

Start the *NeoPack+* application, then choose **File > New**, or click the New Document button in the toolbar. The **New File** dialog is displayed. Choose the desired location, give the file a name and choose **Save**. The file is saved, and an empty job file is displayed.

Specify the preview image size

The size of the preview image can be changed from the **Options** menu. The default size of 512k is usually sufficient for most operations, but you might like to increase the size to improve the appearance of the preview. The larger the image preview, the larger the job file. It is also possible that the program may slow if the preview image is set too high. The preview size must be set for each file you create, before images have been imported.

To change the preview size, choose **File > Properties**. The file Properties dialog is displayed. Choose the **Bitmap sizes** tab, and make the desired setting in the **Stored size of bitmap used for previewing**.
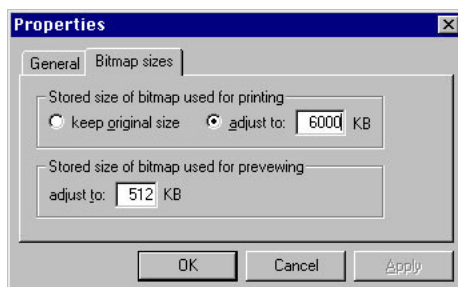
Image importing types

There are several ways images can be imported to a job file:

- Completely import the image data
- Import the image preview only

Importing the complete image data

When importing the image data completely, not only is the on-screen preview image stored in the job file, but the high resolution image is also copied and stored as well. The benefit of this is that the original image files are no longer required as the job file has all the required information to create and print jobs. However, importing images in this way results in very large job files, as well as taking longer to import the images.

Import the preview only

When importing the preview only, the original image data is sampled and a preview image stored in the job file. This allows you to create all the jobs, but you cannot print them without the original high resolution images. Importing images this way results in a much smaller job file, as well as shorter import times than importing the whole image data.

Original image file location

If you import the preview only, you need to make the original image files available to *NeoPack+* when you print or export jobs or images. There are several options available to you to do this:

- Pre-defined locations set as a program default
- Remember the original image file location

You should choose the method that suits your lab best.

Configuring pre-defined locations for the image files

The pre-defined locations are set by choosing **File > Options** and choose the **Paths** tab.
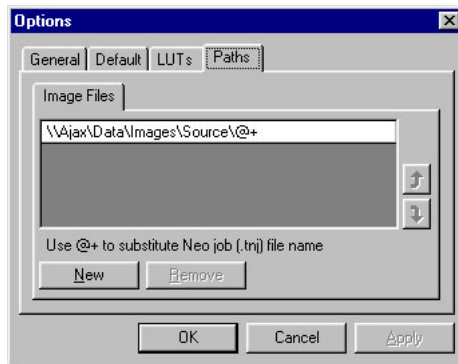
There are three types of pre-defined locations available:

- Image Root directory
- Same directory as job file
- Sub-directory from job file

Image Root directory

Using an **image root directory** allows all images belonging to a job be stored under a single directory in its own folder. For example, you might set up a single image server named **ImageServer**. This server has a drive shared as **Data**, and all images are stored in folders under the \Images folder.

UNC naming allows this exact directory be specified from any workstation within the network, without using drive letters. This avoids configuration errors. The UNC name for a shared directory is **\\Server\Share\Path**.

You may set your images up on this server as follows:

    \Images\Job1
    \Images\Job2
    \Images\Job3

Only the root folder is required. In this case, The root folder is \Images. So, the UNC name for the path would be:

   \\ImageServer\Data\Images

Finally, we need to specify the final search directory to find the source images. Using the **@+** code, *NeoPack+* adds the name of the .TNJ file to the search path as the final part of the path statement. In the above case, each of the .TNJ files would be named **Job1**, **Job2** and **Job3**.

So, if the path is entered as:

   \\ImageServer\Data\Images\@+

and the file currently open is called **Job2**, *NeoPack+* will search for the original source images in:

   \\ImageServer\Data\Images\Job2

Same directory as job file

If the path statement is entered as:

> **.**

NeoPack+ will search for the source images in the same directory as the .TNJ file.

Sub-directory from job file

Images can be stored in a sub-directory of the folder that contains the job file. For example, the job file is stored in a folder \Images\Job1, and the images belonging to that job in \Images\Job1\Source. If the path statement is entered as:

> \Source

NeoPack+ will search for the source images in the \Source subdirectory.

Missing image files

If the original image files are not available when printing or exporting the images, an error is shown. You'll need to either fix the problem and choose **Retry**, or **Abort** to cancel the current operation.
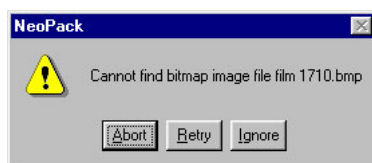
Image numbering – indexed or sequential

Many labs using large numbers of images have various systems of tracking the images. This can mean that the image files that are imported can have a unique name or number embedded in their filenames. These uniquely named files are called *indexed* images. Images that are not indexed are imported in a sequential order.

Sequential images

When importing sequential images, it is only important to retain the same image order as was on the original film. In this case, the image files should be named in shoot order (i.e. 0001 – 9999). When *NeoPack+* imports them, the order is retained.

Indexed images

Many labs use cameras or film editors that can allocate unique numbers to each individual negative or image. This number can then be used to record various data within other management systems in the lab. For example, the Lucht 'Shooter File' records pack order, color corrections and other essential information that is used to create the required prints.

When importing images to *NeoPack+* from such a system, it is possible to retain the essential index number and so create the packs in the same manner as would be normal in this workflow.

Sequential vs.Indexed images

The following screen shots show an indexed and sequentially numbered file. Note the difference in image numbers.

An indexed image set

A sequentially numbered image set

Image Tags

When images are imported, regardless of whether a file is indexed or sequentially numbered, the original filename is imported along with the image data. This information can be viewed once images have been imported by choosing **Image > Show tags**. With this option enabled, the original filename is displayed next to the image number.

The Image Number   The Image Tag
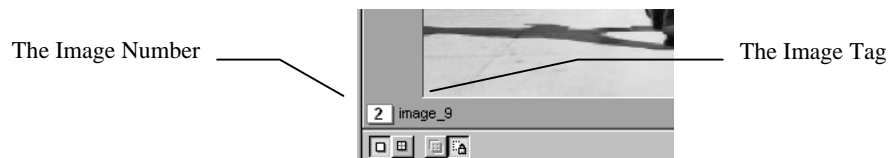
Image numbering

Once you know what numbering system you use, and *before* any images are imported to the new *NeoPack+* file, choose **File > Properties**. The file properties dialog is displayed. Choose if the images to be imported are sequential or indexed.

It is possible to change the file properties from sequential to indexed and vice versa. However, if an indexed file is changed to a sequential one, all the unique index numbers are lost, and so cannot be switched back successfully.

Image numbering options

Specify the image file size

When importing the complete image data to a job file, it is possible to adjust the size of the image as it is imported. This is useful if the image files are larger than they need to be. This option only has an effect you import the complete image data – if you import the preview image only, the option is ignored.

Once the new file has been created, but *before* importing any images, choose **File > Properties…** Then, choose the **Bitmap sizes** tab from the properties dialog. Enter the desired file size in the **Adjust to** entry box.
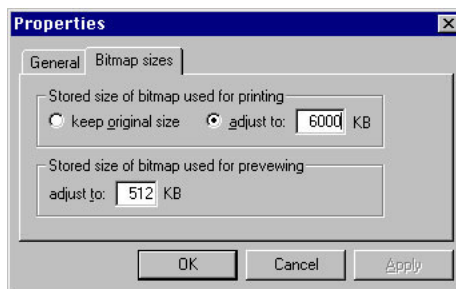
Bitmap import options

Import the images

Once the various file options have been set, you can import images to the job file. With the job file open, choose **Images > Images from disk**. The **Images From Disk** dialog is shown.
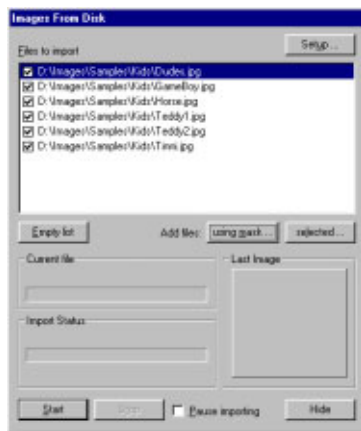
Configuring the import

There are a number of options that are available to you when importing images.

- Choose the files to be imported
- Specific a range of files to import
- Rotate and flip images as they are imported
- Apply a LUT correction
- Apply image sharpening

Set the import options

From the **Images from disk…** dialog, click the **Setup** button. The **Setup** dialog opens. Click **Setup**. The **Images From Disk Setup** dialog opens. The dialog is divided into 4 main areas that control the various options available to you.

Set the import type

Decide whether you want to import the preview only, or the whole image data. If you want to import the preview only, make sure the **Import preview only** checkbox is checked. Now, choose from the two options to specify how *NeoPack+* will locate the original image files when printing or exporting images.

- **Remember the actual path of each image**: *NeoPack+* remembers the original location of the high resolution images

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● **Discard the path…**: *NeoPack+* uses the image search path specified as a program option to locate the high resolution images

For more information regarding these options, refer earlier in this chapter.

☑ Import preview only, when printing or exporting access original file
- ⦿ Remember the actual path of each image
- ○ Discard the path and search for images when required
  (set the search path(s) for images in File, Options, Paths, Images)
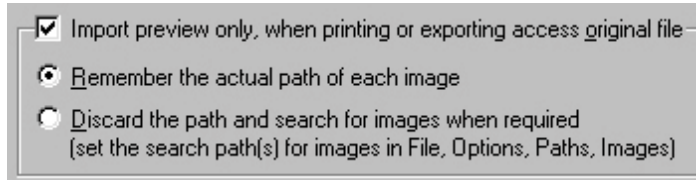
Set the image rotation / flip

If the images you are importing need to be rotated or flipped, choose the rotation here.

✎ If you import images by preview only, choosing an option here will cause longer print times as the image will be rotated or flipped at print time. To ensure the shortest possible print times, ensure the images are in the correct orientation before they are imported.

After import
Rotate: ⦿ 0° ○ 90° ○ 180° ○ 270°
Mirror: ☐ Vertical ☐ Horizontal

Set the image LUT

Images can be corrected using the built-in LUT editor. For information on using the LUT editor, see later in this chapter. Choose the LUT you want to use from those defined in the drop-down list. For information in making a LUT, please see Chapter 13, **Calibration**.

Apply LUT
Gamma 1.3 ▼
[none]
Gamma 1.3
Gamma 1.8
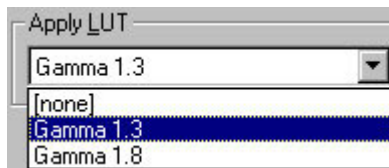
Set the image sharpening

Images can be sharpened as they are imported. The algorithm used is an un-sharp mask algorithm, allowing good quality sharpening.

☑ Sharpen
Kernel [3] Strength [100]
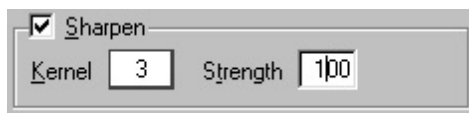
The setting range is:

Kernel: 3, 5 or 7
Strength: 10 – 600

Generally, the larger the kernel size, the stronger the sharpening effect. Likewise, the higher the strength, the stronger the sharpness. The higher the kernel value, the longer it will take to apply the sharpening effect.

There is no 'correct' sharpness value – the values you will use depend on how sharp the original images are. You should try importing a sample image with different sharpening settings to find the correct value for you. Be aware that increasing the sharpness of an image too much can result in harsh and unpleasant images.

✎   Whenever you apply a correction such as image sharpening, you will increase the time taken to print an image. If your scanner or scanning software supports image sharpening, you should try to use these controls rather than applying a sharpening amount within *NeoPack+*.

Once all the settings have been made, choose **OK**. The dialog is dismissed.

Choose the files to import

There are two ways to choose the images to import to a *NeoPack+* job file:

- Import images using a mask
- Import selected images

Import images using a mask

If you have a range of images to import, *NeoPack+* can choose the images to import, as well as identifying any important information embedded in the filename using the **Import From Disk Masked** dialog.

From the main **Images from Disk** dialog, click **Using mask…** The **Import From Disk Masked** dialog opens.

Choose the image directory

Enter the path to the image files you want to import. You can click the **Browse** button to open a **Browse** dialog.

Specify the file range to import

NeoPack+ can use a mask to select the files to import, as well as identify important information embedded in a filename.

For example, a set of files file might be named:

Image 1	Image001exp.tif
Image 2	Image002exp.tif
Image 3	Image003exp.tif
…	Imagexxxexp.tif

These filenames consist of a prefix, the unique number, then a suffix:

- prefix: img
- number: 001 – xxx, 3 digits long
- postfix: exp
- extension: tif

The important information can be imported along with the image data by specifying the location of the data within the filename. In this case, you would enter:

- 'Image' as the **pre** entry
- 3 as the **no-width** entry
- 'exp' as the **post** entry
- 'tif' as the **ext** entry

With these settings made, any files that don't conform to this filename mask will be ignored. If the pre, no-width and post fields are left blank, any eligible bitmap files found in the specified directory will be imported.

Specify a file range limit

You can choose to import a range of images from the valid range. For example, if you want to import image 20 to 40 out of 100 valid image files, you would enter 20 and 40 in the **Limit from image no… to image no** boxes. Image files 20 through 40 will be imported.

Once you have made all the settings, choose **OK**. The **Images From Disk Masked** dialog is dismissed. Note that in the main **Images From Disk** dialog, you will now see a list of the files that will be imported according to the entries made.
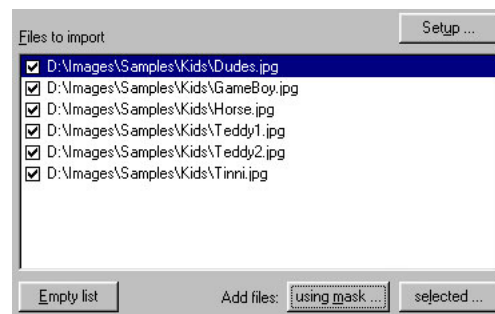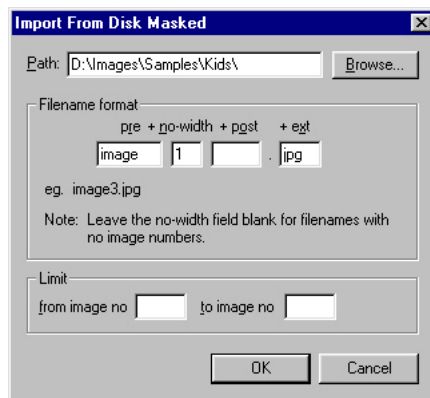
Import selected images

If you want to import a number of selected image files, you can choose the files to import using the **selected…** dialog. Click **Selected**. The **Import From Disk** dialog opens. Choose the files you want to import. You can use the standard Windows modifier keys to select the various file ranges. These modifiers are:

- **<Shift> click** first then last file in a range – selects a block of files.
- **<CTRL> click** each file you wish to import – selects the files to import individually

Choose the range of files to and choose **OK.**

Specify the image import order

Open the Import Options panel by choosing **Image > Import options panel…** Note the status of the **Incoming images** section of the **Import Options**. If the file currently open is indexed, the options will be unavailable. If the file currently open is sequential, the options will be available.
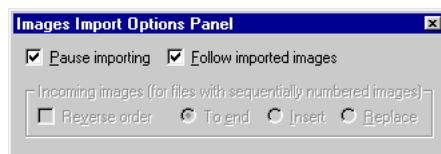
Unavailable Image options for an indexed file
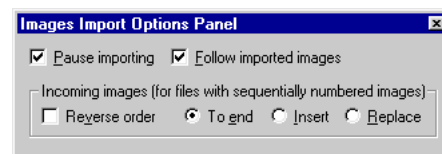
Image options available for a sequential file

Bitmaps imported to a sequential file are numbered internally with a sequential number. The images are imported in order according to the parameters set in the **Import options panel** dialog.

Once images are imported to a sequential file, they will have numbers allocated from 1 to however many images are in the file (1, 2, 3, 4…)

There are various import options that available:

- Reverse order: Imports images in reverse numeric order (999 first, to 001)
- To end: Appends all new images to the end of existing images. If **Reverse order** is selected, images are appended before the first image if it exists.
- Insert: Inserts imported files from the currently selected image (only available if images have already been imported).
- Replace: Imported files overwrite existing images from the one currently selected (only available if images have already been imported).

✎ If **Insert** is selected as the import option, images are inserted from the point of the image currently selected. If you select a new image during the import, the insertion position is retained. If you want to specify a new insertion point for imported

images, pause the import by choosing **Pause import**, the new insertion point, then click **Insert** once again in the **Import options panel**. The new insertion point is set.

Start the import

Once all the various settings have been made, choose **Start**. The images are imported. Choosing **Stop** during the import process will stop the import after the current file. The import options dialog can be hidden by choosing **Hide**. The images will continue to be imported until the last eligible file has been processed, or the import process is paused or cancelled.

Pausing the import

If you wish to pause the images as they are imported, check **Pause import**. The image import is paused until the checkbox is unchecked.
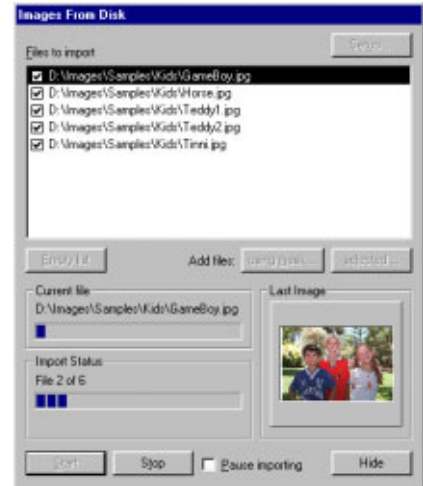
The Import options panel

NeoPack+ allows you to edit images as they are imported. The **Import options** panel serves as a convenient control panel for the import as it happens. The **Import options** panel can be closed without cancelling the import.
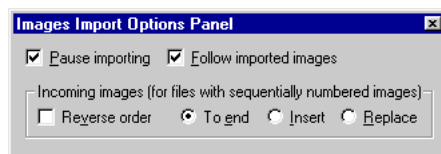
Pausing the import

If you wish to pause the images as they are imported, check **Pause import**. The image import is paused until the checkbox is unchecked.

Follow inserted images

If **Follow inserted images** is checked, the latest image imported will be displayed and automatically selected in the image preview area. With this checkbox unchecked, the image is not automatically selected.

Incoming images

As previously discussed, the order and position of imported images are controlled with these controls. The settings are un-available unless **Pause importing** is checked.

Distinguishing imported and linked images

You can tell if an image has been imported as 'Preview only' or 'Entire Image' by inspecting the image tag. Choose **Images** and ensure that **Show Tags** is enabled. Linked files will show the original file extension, whole imported files will not.
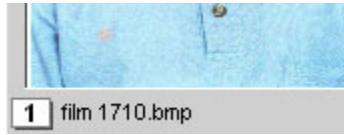

| 1 | film 1710.bmp |

| 3 | film 1710 |

Figure 28 A 'Preview only' file   An 'entire imported' file

Other import sources

NeoPack+ also allows images to be imported from several other image sources. The import panel can be hidden after starting the import by choosing **Hide**. Any eligible images will continue to be imported until importing is paused or the source unchecked.

Setting up the import

Choose **Setup** from the **Images From Hot Source** dialog. The setup dialog is displayed. Images can be rotated and flipped as with importing images from the specified source. These settings are discussed earlier in this manual.
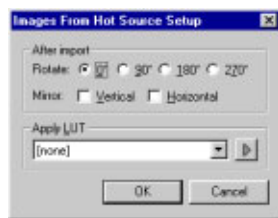
Specify a LUT

NeoPack+ allows image corrections to be applied as images are imported. For example, if you know that a particular source of images needs to be brightened, the correction can be applied as it is imported.

Choose the LUT that you need from the **Apply LUT** drop-down. For information in making a LUT, please see Chapter 12, **Calibration and Color Management**.
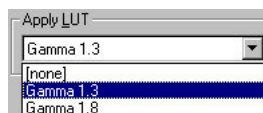
Importing from the Windows clipboard

If your have an application or scanner that can place the images into the Windows clipboard, *NeoPack+* can import these images directly.

Choose **Image > Import from hot source…** The Import from hot source dialog opens. Make sure **Clipboard** is checked, and **Pause importing** is unchecked. Any images that appear in the Windows clipboard will be inserted to the currently open file. The images are inserted according to the options set in the **Options panel** as previously discussed.

Importing from Kinetic bitmap devices

Some other imaging applications use this method as an image interchange. If your device is compatible, images will be inserted automatically according to the settings made in the **Options panel**. If you're not sure if your device is compatible, check with Timestone Software.

Importing to indexed files

If the file currently open contains indexed images, *NeoPack+* will only import images if the matching index number is supplied by the source.
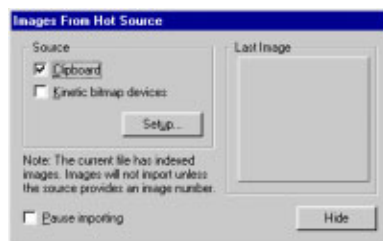
Factors affecting the time required to import images

NeoPack+ performs quite a few operations on each image as it is imported. This means each image can take a number of seconds to import. The time taken to import each image depends on several factors:

- Speed of the PC
- Amount of memory installed in the PC
- Size of the images being imported
- Operations requested in the import options (rotation, flipping)

To minimise the time taken to import the images, try to ensure that you don't have to rotate or flip the images.

Editing images whilst importing images

It is possible to edit (zoom, crop and color correct) images whilst images are being imported. During the import operation, the editing operation is not as responsive as it would normally be, and we recommend that you use the keyboard to perform the edits.

The image import can still be controlled, even though you may have hidden the main image import dialog by choosing the **Hide** button. Open the Import options panel by choosing **Images > Import options panel…**. This small panel can be positioned on the screen so the image import can paused or restarted.

Managing images in an image set

Once images have been imported to *NeoPack+*, it is possible to add, delete or 'switch off' images within a file set. 'Blank' images can also be added to allow padding mis-matched images.

Adding images

Images can be added to a file, or can over-write existing images within a file. Images are added by using the **Images > Import from Disk** dialog. The options available vary according to whether a file is indexed or sequentially numbered

Add new files to the end of an existing file – sequential files only

Choose **Images > Import options panel…** The **Images Options Panel** opens. Choose **To end** as the **Incoming images** selection. Specify the files to be imported as previously discussed. Images will be appended to the end of the file.
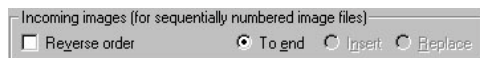
Insert or replace files within a file – sequential files only

To add images somewhere in the middle of an existing file, first choose the image where the new images are to be inserted or replaced, then choose **Images > Import options panel…** The **Images Options Panel** is shown. Note that the options **Insert** and **Replace** are available.

Images that are imported with **Insert** selected will be added from the selected image. Images imported with the **Replace** option selected will overwrite existing images from the selected image.

Adding files to an indexed file

Any images added to an indexed file will automatically either be added, inserted or replace existing images, according to the sequence number of the image being imported. If images with the same image number as existing images are imported, the new files will overwrite the existing. If the index number doesn't exist in the file, they will be inserted to the file.

The **Incoming images** options are unavailable when using an indexed file.

Switching images 'Off'

Images can be 'On' or 'Off'. If an image is 'Off', packs won't be created from it, even though it might be included within a range of images that has a pack chosen. This is useful for slates or blinks.

Images that are 'Off' can still be cropped and edited.

Deleting images

Images can be deleted by selecting the range to be deleted, then choosing **Image > Remove Selected**. A confirmation of the deletion is requested, then the images are removed.
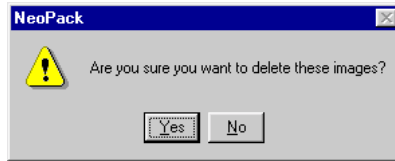
Closing and compacting files

Close a file by choosing **File > Close**, or by clicking the File Close button in the toolbar. The current file is closed.

Images are stored in *NeoPack+*'s database type file. As images are deleted in the program, they are not physically removed from the file, although they are no longer available. One result of this is that the file size will remain the same, even if all the images are deleted from the file.

The deleted image space is 'freed up' by choosing **File > Close & Compact**. This process takes a little time to perform, and also requires some hard disk space (at least as much as the new file's size). Once done, the file will only contain the essential image data, and be as small as possible.

It is recommended that you compact the file after deleting many images, or before being archived.

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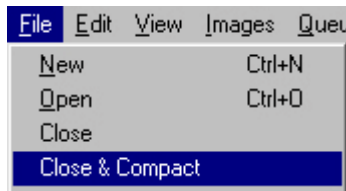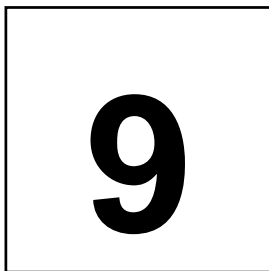
Editing images

Once images have been imported to *NeoPack+*, they can be changed in various ways:

- Zoom
- Jog (x-y movement)
- Color and density corrections
- Image contrast corrections
- Image editing via an external image editor

There are many shortcuts available to achieve the various corrections, as are there many different ways to change the size and number of images being displayed.

Changing the display

By default, *NeoPack+* displays all three main window panes:

- Images
- Packs
- Queue

The size and display status of these panes is discussed in a previous chapter.

Further to these controls, it is possible to change the number and size of the images as they are displayed in the workspace.

Image pane controls

At the bottom left of both the image and queue panes are image display controls.

Image set controls

| Single image | | Lock display |
| Multiple images | | Number of images |
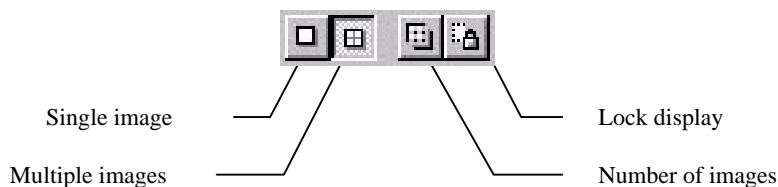
Choosing **Single Image** changes the image display to a single image.

Choosing **Multiple Images** changes the image display to the image table.

Figure 29: The image pane in image table and single image modes

Changing the number of images displayed

Clicking the Number of images button pops up a sizeable grid. Moving the mouse increases or decreases the number of images displayed in the image table.

Locking the image table display

Clicking **Lock display** locks the size of images in the image table. Without this option enabled, resizing the image table pane causes the images contained to scale up or down to maintain the number of images chosen.

This means that if you choose to always display 2x2 images in the display, with the image table un-locked, sizing the pane will maintain the number of images displayed, but they will change size to accommodate the new pane size.
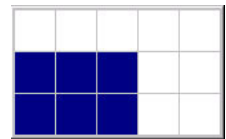
If the image table is locked, the image preview size is maintained, regardless of the pane size. This means that the 2x2 display may change to a 3x3 display if the pane size is increased.
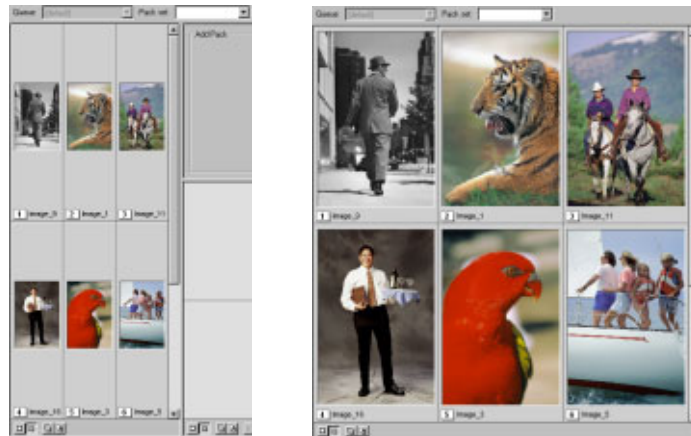
Figure 30: The image table – small pane, unlocked, resized to a large pane.

Figure 31: The same image table as above, resized with locked display enabled

Selecting images

It is fast and convenient to select and navigate through images in the image table. First, choose an image by clicking on it with the mouse.

Action	Keyboard	Mouse
Select first image	Press the `Home` key	
Select last image	Press the `End` key	
Show next screen of images	Press the `Page Down` key	Use scroll wheel
Show next screen of images	Press the `Page Down` key	Use scroll wheel
Move to the image at left	Press the `Left` arrow key	
Move to the image at right	Press the `Right` arrow key	
Move to the image above	Press the `Up` arrow key	
Move to the image below	Press the `Down` arrow key	

Zoom and jogging images

Images can be moved and re-sized to create the best cropping for various aspect ratio prints. When in cropping mode, *NeoPack+* displays any enabled aspect ratios. Images should be cropped so that each of the different aspect ratios will appear pleasingly cropped.

There are many different ways to zoom and crop images. Zoom and crop values ultimately are displayed in the **Image Corrections** palette. If the **Image Corrections** palette isn't currently open, choose **View > Image Corrections**. Choose the image crop editing mode by choosing **Images > Select crop & scale image tool**.

Note that all images displayed in the image table now show the enabled aspect ratios.

Cropping images

Choose an image. The image can be moved by:

Action	Keyboard	Mouse	Image Correction palette
Move an image left	Hold the **Control** key and press the ➔ key	Click and drag the mouse	Click inside the 'X' value box, or Press <Control><X>. Decrease the value or press the ↓ key
Move an image right	Hold the **Control** key and press the ← key	Click and drag the mouse	Click inside the 'X' value box, or Press <Control><X>. Increase the value or press the ↑ key
Move an image up	Hold the **Control** key and press the ↑ key	Click and drag the mouse	Click inside the 'Y' value box, or Press <Control><Y>. Decrease the value or press the ↓ key
Move an image down	Hold the **Control** key and press the ↓ key	Click and drag the mouse	Click inside the 'X' value box, or Press <Control><Y>. Increase the value or press the ↑ key

Zooming images

Choose an image. The image can be zoomed by:

Action	Keyboard	Mouse	Image Correction palette
Make the image larger	Hold the `Control` key and press the `Page Down` key	Hold the `Control` key and turn the scroll wheel or Hold the `Shift` key down and move the mouse up	Click inside the 'S' value box, or Press <Control> <S>. Decrease the value or press the ↓ key
Make the image smaller	Hold the `Control` key and press the `Page Up` key	Hold the `Control` key and turn the scroll wheel or Hold the `Shift` key down and move the mouse down	Click inside the 'S' value box, or Press <Control> <S>. Increase the value or press the ↑ key

Moving images outside the image area

It is possible to move the images outside the image area. This might cause white borders in the finished packages. If you move an image too far, you will see indicators. The indicators show where the image has been incorrectly moved.

Out of image area indicators
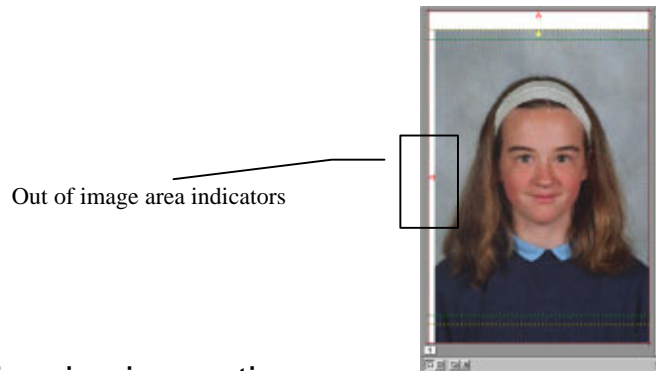
Zooming and jogging in practice

Adjusting the size and position of images for the various print sizes to be printed is a most important task. If many images are to be adjusted, it is important to perform the task as quickly and accurately as possible.

In practice, some operators will prefer to use the keyboard to make these adjustments, whilst others will prefer to use the mouse and keyboard.

Using the mouse and keyboard.

- Select the image to be corrected
- Hold the **Control** key down and use the scroll wheel to zoom the image.
- Release the **Control** key, click and drag the mouse to adjust the image position.
- Click the next image and repeat the operation.
- When you need to see the next screen of images, turn the scroll wheel.

✎ Note that the control panels associated with scrolling mice often allow the scroll wheel to move a certain number of lines per 'click'. You should set it to suit your needs. If the scroll wheel is set to '1 line', the image table is moved 1 row per 'click'. If it is set to 3 lines, the image table is moved by 3 rows per 'click'.

Using the keyboard

- Select the first image by pressing the **Home** key.
- Choose the image to be adjusted with the **Arrow** keys.
- Hold the **Control** key down and use the **Arrow** keys to move the image.
- Hold the **Control** key down and use the **Page Up** or **Page Down** keys to zoom the image.
- Use the **Arrow** keys to choose the next image to be edited.

- Use the **Page Up** or **Page Down** keys to see the next or previous page of images.

Adjusting the image color, density and contrast

Image color, density and contrast can be changed using the image density controls. The corrections can be applied across a group of images, or individually.

✎ Adjusting color, density and contrast should be carried out in your scanning software. Image adjustment should be kept to a minimum within *NeoPack+* to ensure the best possible quality result.

Action	Keyboard	Image Correction palette
Increase brightness	Type <**Control**><**I**> and press the ↑ key. The 'I' value increases	Click inside the 'I' value box, or Press <**Control**><**I**>. Increase the value.
Decrease brightness	Type <**Control**><**I**> and press the ↓ key. The 'I' value Decreases	Click inside the 'I' value box, or Press <**Control**><**I**>. Decrease the value.
Increase contrast	Type <**Control**><**C**> and press the ↑ key. The 'C' value increases	Click inside the 'C' value box, or Press <**Control**><**C**>. Increase the value.
Decrease density	Type <**Control**><**C**> and press the ↓ key. The 'C value Decreases	Click inside the 'C' value box, or Press <**Control**><**C**>. Decrease the value.
More red	Type <**Control**><**R**> and press the ↑ key. The 'R' value increases	Click inside the 'R' value box, or Press <**Control**><**R**>. Increase the value.
More cyan	Type <**Control**><**R**> and press the ↓ key. The 'R' value Decreases	Click inside the 'R' value box, or Press <**Control**><**R**>. Decrease the value.
More green	Type <**Control**><**G**> and press the ↑ key. The '**G**' value increases	Click inside the '**G**' value box, or Press <**Control**><**G**>. Increase the value.
More magenta	Type <**Control**><**G**> and press the ↓ key. The '**G**' value Decreases	Click inside the '**G**' value box, or Press <**Control**><**G**>. Decrease the value.
More blue	Type <**Control**><**B**> and press the ↑ key. The 'B' value increases	Click inside the 'B' value box, or Press <**Control**><**B**>. Increase the value.
More yellow	Type <**Control**><**B**> and press the ↓ key. The 'B' value Decreases	Click inside the 'B' value box, or Press <**Control**><**B**>. Decrease the value.

Retouching the image

Often there can be small image defects such as scratches, specks or other processing marks in the images after they have been scanned. *NeoPack+* allows the correction of these defects via an interchange with an external image editor such as Adobe Photoshop.

Any changes made to the image in Photoshop are applied to the image within *NeoPack+*. Photoshop is an extremely competent and functional image editor. Please consult your Adobe training material for information regarding Photoshop.

✎ Editing images with an external image editor is only available when images have been imported rather than referenced.

Choosing the image editor and file format

Any modern image editor can be used to edit the images. When editing an image, *NeoPack+* saves the file to the hard disk as either an *Adobe Photoshop* Version 2.5 file, or a generic Windows BMP file. Once the file has been edited, the changes are saved, and the image editor closed. *NeoPack+* detects the image editor has quit, and reloads the new file.

If your image editor supports PSD files, it is recommended you use this file format. If you use **layers** within *Photoshop*, you must flatten the image before saving the changes, or you will not be able to save the file in BMP format.

✎　**Note**: If the edited image is saved as a different file format, or with a new name, *NeoPack+* will not know to reload the new file.


Retouching an image

● Choose the image you wish to edit, then choose **Edit image…** from the **Image** menu, or press **Control-E**.

● The image is loaded into the image editor

● Make the required changes then save the file and quit the image editor

● The edited image is re-loaded to *NeoPack+*.

Configuring Adobe Photoshop

NeoPack+ reads *Photoshop 2.5* files. These files don't contain any layer information that was introduced with *Photoshop 3.0*. If layers are introduced to the image during editing, it is important to either flatten the image, or enable Photoshop 2.5 compatibility within Photoshop.

Images that contain layer information are opened in *NeoPack+* with an error message as the image. If you see this error, choose **Saving files…** from the **Preferences** menu in Photoshop, and select the check box for 2.5 compatibility.

If you don't have 2.5 compatibility switched on, you will see a message similar to this when the image is re-imported after editing:
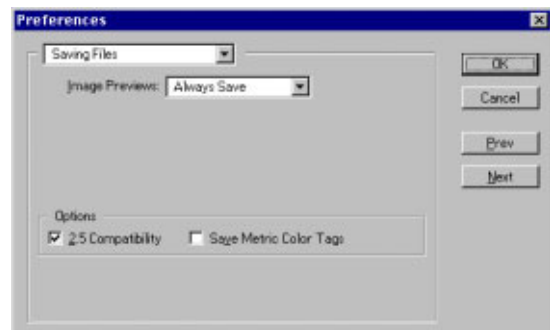
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Forming *NeoPack+* jobs

Once the templates have been created, the various program options set and images imported, you start to create *NeoPack+* jobs. Jobs are created by selecting an image, the required layout then optionally any desired text and a Pack Item template. *NeoPack+* automatically places the image into the layout and Pack Item along with any required text or barcodes.

The jobs once formed, can be gathered together in print queues for convenience. You might use several different paper widths to create the printed jobs. *NeoPack+* allows you to define several different printer queues that allow these different workflows to be separated.

The text information used for each image in a *NeoPack+* job can be manually entered for each image. If you have this information available in a text file, and the information has been pre-matched to the imported images, you can import the text data, avoiding the extra key-work.

Similarly, if you have the order information for each image, you can automatically generate the printer queue.

Creating a new print queue

Using multiple printer queues is an optional process. If your production does not need to different paper widths, you need not create additional queues.

Creating a print queue

Open the job file you wish to add the print queue to. Choose **Edit > Queue…** The **Queue list…** dialog opens.

Choose **New**. A new line appears in the Queue list. Enter a description that has some meaning for the queue. Click the **Default Pack Set**. A dropdown box with all the available pack sets (those that are the default for this document, or have been created) appear. The default pack chosen here is the pack that will be displayed each time this queue is opened.
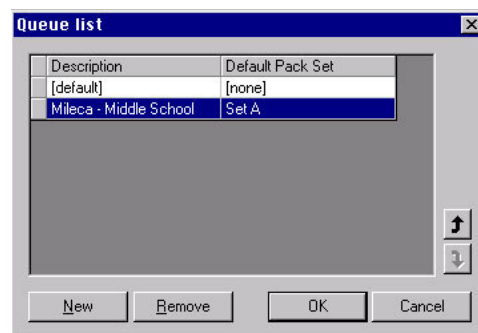
The order packs are displayed in the *NeoPack+* main program can be changed by changing the order in this list. If you wish a pack to appear in a different place, highlight it, then use the arrow keys to promote or demote it in the list.

Choose **Ok**. The pack editor is dismissed. The queues are now available via the **Queue** drop-down in the main application. Switch between queues by clicking the drop-down and choosing a different queue. Any pages created in the previous queue are replaced with those in the newly selected one.

Creating the jobs

Creating pages for a *NeoPack+* job involves entering any variable text that might be required, choosing the pack layout, then optionally the Pack Item required. These steps can be done manually by entering the required information with the keyboard, or by importing text files that contain the information.

The text and order information can be imported from text files, allowing for the job creation process to be automated. You can also use a barcode reader to generate the jobs if the order information is recorded on barcoded order bags.

When creating a job, the formed pages are added to the current print queue. If you order more than one job per image, the jobs for that image are grouped together within the queue. If you change the crop, zoom or color corrections for a particular image, the new changes automatically flow through to the jobs without any further operator action being required.

Entering text data

If your templates use text data, you will need to enter that data either manually for each image, or by importing the data from a text file.

Entering the data manually

Open the file you want to add text data to, then choose the first image that needs the data. Ensure that the Details pane is visible. You will see the defined fields for this file in the details pane. If you don't see any fields, see Chapter 6, **Configuring *NeoPack+*** for more information regarding defining fields.

Click the first image than needs text. Note that the fields in the Details pane become active. Click in the **Value** entry box for the filed, then enter the required text. Continue on until all the fields have been filled in, then continue on with other images.
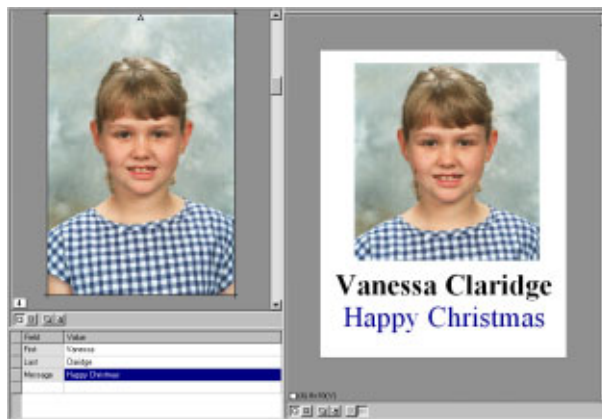
Entering temporary fields

If you have a temporary field that you wish to use quickly, and don't want to define it in the **Edit > Fields** dialog, you can enter it for each image manually.

For example, you might want to use a template that uses a field that you don't commonly use – perhaps the name of a pet. *NeoPack+* allows you to choose the image, then directly enter the temporary field name and a value. As long as the field name is correct for the template you want to use, the text will be replaced.

Allocating multiple Details

You can allocate multiple details for a number of images. This is useful if the images share details such as a group name etc.

Select all the images that share similar details, then click the **Details** field you wish to enter, then type the value or choose the graphic image.
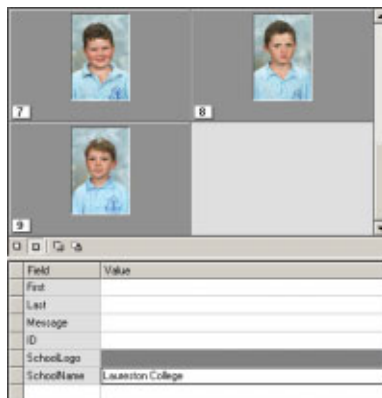
Importing text data

If you have the required text data from an external source, it can be imported to *NeoPack+*, avoiding re-keying the data. The text data can be contained in a delimited or fixed length file. The data can be matched to the images either by using the image number, or the original filename and each record.

The text file should be either fixed length, or delimited, with a carriage return for each end of line. For example:

```
Vanessa,Claridge,Happy Christmas,26/01/89,img001.tif
Phyllis,Wills,Holidays are great!,7/5/89,img002.tif
Andrea,Stratton,Wish you were here,10/2/89,img003.tif
```

This file is comma delimited and contains 5 fields:

- First name – field 1
- Last name – field 2
- A personal message – field 3
- Date of birth – field 4
- The image number to match – field 5

Select the file to import

To import this data, open the file you wish to import it to, then choose **Details > Import text file…** The **Text file to import details** dialog opens. Navigate through to the directory that contains the text file, then click it once.

Configure the import

In the **Text file to import details** dialog, click **Setup**. The **Setup image details text file import** dialog opens. The dialog is divided into several sections:

- Type – specifies the file format you're importing
- Field map – allows you to specify the field positions
- Match on – choose to match on image number or image tag
- Imported/existing image details – control how existing data will be merged with new data
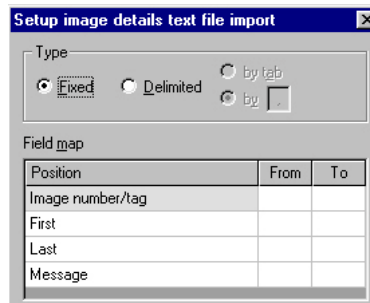
Choose the type

There are several common formats that text data that you will commonly use. These formats allow you to define where a field begins and ends within each record of the text file. These formats are commonly:

- Fixed length – each field has a specified length
- Delimited – the end of each field is specified by a unique character

Choose the format of the file you are importing.

Fixed length

If you are importing a fixed length file, specify the position of each field in the file

Delimited

If you are importing a delimited file, specify the delimiter by choosing either **by tab** or enter the delimiter in the variable box.

Specify the field map

The **Field map** panel allows you to specify the various fields contained within the records of the text file. Enter the field positions for your file. For example:

```
Vanessa,Claridge,Happy Christmas,26/01/89,img001.tif
Phyllis,Wills,Holidays are great!,7/5/89,img002.tif
Andrea,Stratton,Wish you were here,10/2/89,img003.tif
```

…is an example of a comma delimited text file. The field positions are:

- First name – field 1
- Last name – field 2
- A personal message – field 3
- Date of birth – field 4
- The image number to match – field 5

The correctly completed panel would be:

Specify the field to match

When importing the text data, *NeoPack+* needs to know which image to match the data to. There are two choices:

- Match to the image number
- Match to the original image tag

Matching to the image number

When images are imported to *NeoPack+*, they are allocated an image number as they are imported. For example, the first image imported is allocated image number 1, the second, image number 2 and so on. The matching image number should be contained in each record of the text file.

Matching to the image tag

When images are imported no *NeoPack+*, the original filename is retained as the *image tag*. For example, if an imported file is named 'film 172.jpg', it will be allocated the image tag, 'film 172.jpg'. You can see the image tags each imported image has by choosing **Images > show tags**. The image tag is displayed next to the image number.


Each record in the text file should contain the corresponding image tag.

Merging and updating existing data

If you have already imported data but wish to update the contents, you can choose from a number of options when doing the update import. The options are:

- Leave existing details – existing details will not be changed by the update
- Always replace existing details – existing details are always replaced with the updated data, even if the updated record has blank fields
- Replace existing details only if blank – existing details will be left un-touched unless a field in the record is blank. In this case the existing blank field will be updated with any new data
- Update existing details – the field will be updated with the new data unless the new data is a blank field. In this case, the existing data will be left untouched.
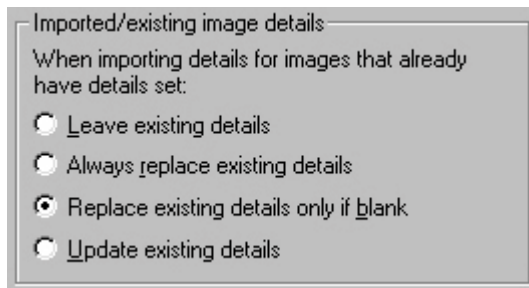
Importing the data

Once all the settings have been made in the **Setup image details text file import** dialog, choose **OK**. Now, ensure that the text file is selected and choose **Open**. The text is imported and allocated to the various images.

Tagged graphic objects

NeoPack+ templates can include referenced images that are placed into the final design. These referenced images are created in **Design mode** for either the entire file, or individual folders. This is especially useful if your template designs include a school logo – you can include a tagged object in the template that references the logo image you place here.

Creating a Tagged object field

To include tagged graphics into a template, you must first create a special 'Graphic' field to contain the images. It is best to set these fields as a program default. Choose **File > Options**, then choose the **Default** tab, and click **Data fields > Edit**. The **Data Fields** dialog is displayed.

Choose the tab you wish to use – either **Folder** or **File**. See the earlier discussion about the difference between these fields. We will use the example of a School's logo for this example.

Creating a File graphic field

Choose the **File** tab, then click **Add**. A new line is inserted to the list of fields. Type the name of the graphic field. In this example, type **SchoolLogo**. Now, click the **Type** drop-down and choose **Graphic** from the list. Choose **OK**. The graphic field is now available.
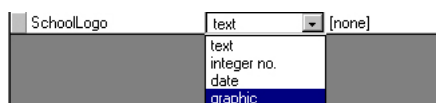
Adding a graphic to a graphic field

Once the graphic field has been set as a program default, choose **File > New** to create a new file with this field, or add it to the file by entering **Details mode**, then choosing **Edit > Fields…** and adding the graphic as before. You will see the new field in the list of available fields when **All** is chosen.

Field	Value
SchoolPic1	...\SchoolPic1.jpg
SchoolPic2	...\SchoolPic2.jpg
SchoolLogo	
SchoolName	Laureston College
Year	2000

Double-click inside the **Value** for **SchoolLogo**. The **Open Graphic** dialog is displayed. Navigate through and find the graphic file you wish to import.

Import the graphic

Graphics for tagged objects are imported in a similar way as normal images. When the graphic is imported, a smaller screen resolution image is generated for use on-screen. As with normal portrait images, there are several options you can set to allow *NeoPack+* to find the high resolution images for printing.

- Remember the actual path of the file – remembers the original location
- Discard the path – use the file searching options discussed in the **Images** chapter.

Load the graphic image

Choose the import option you wish to use, then choose **Select file…** A **File >** Open dialog appears. Choose the image file and the reference options, then click **Open**. The graphic is displayed.
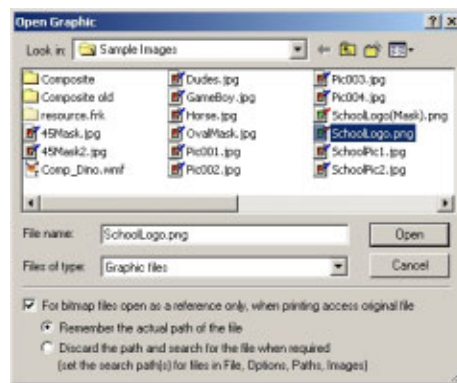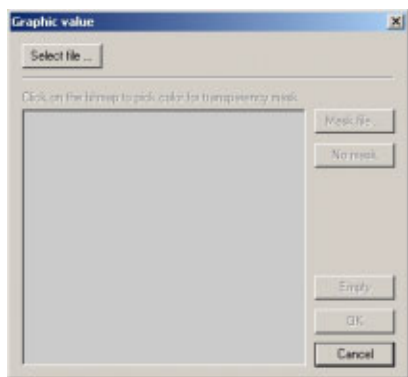
Choosing the transparent area

You can specify two types of mask that allow transparent areas in the logo.

Simple transparency mask

If the logo has areas you would like to be transparent as a single color, click it in the preview. Note the hashed area indicating transparency. To clear the set transparency, click **No mask.**


✎   Make sure you design your logo graphics carefully. Any area that is the same color as you click will appear as transparent in your design. Pay careful attention to the

edges of the logo as grey edges around the logo can appear as a light halo in the finished page. Don't save the logo file in JPEG format, as you might also see a halo due to the image compression. Use a lossless compression method like PNG or similar.

Using a transparency mask

More complex 8-bit masks allow more complex effects like soft edged blends etc. To set the 8 bit mask, click **Mask file…** the **Set Mask** dialog opens. Choose **Load**, then find the transparency mask file and click **Open**. The mask is loaded and displayed. If you need to adjust the orientation of the mask, choose from the rotate or flip options in the **Set Mask** dialog.
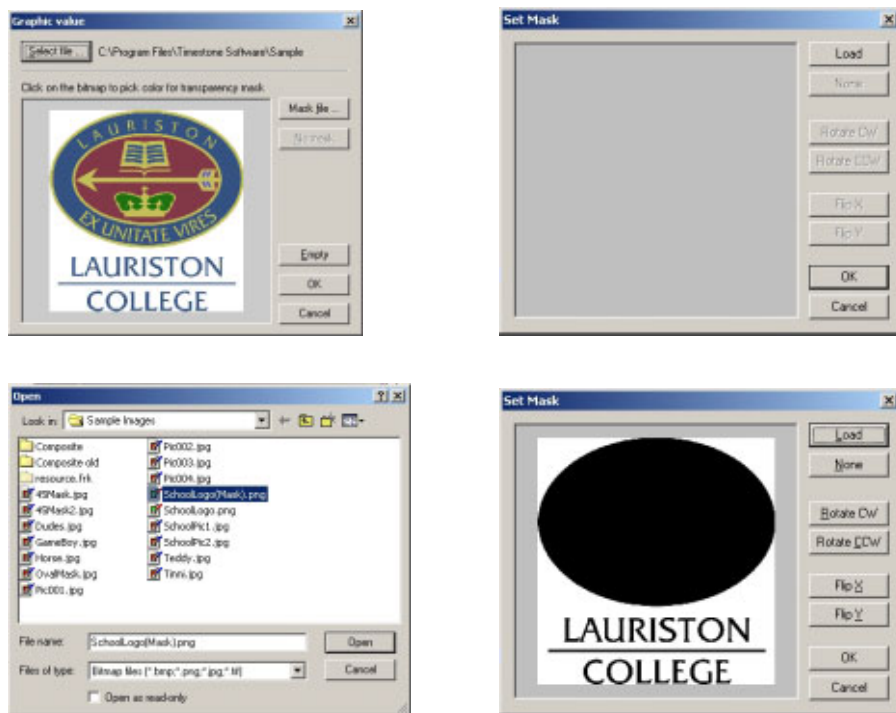
Once you are happy with the settings, choose **OK**. The dialog is dismissed, and the graphic object now is named in the field value in **Details mode** tree view.

Allocate graphic objects in the same manner for Folders. The graphic object is now available for use in a NeoComposite template.

Field	Value
SchoolPic1	…\SchoolPic1.jpg
SchoolPic2	…\SchoolPic2.jpg
SchoolLogo	…\SchoolLogo.png
SchoolName	Laureston College
Year	2000

Allocating multiple Details

You can allocate multiple details for a number of images. This is useful if the images share details such as a group name etc.

Select all the images that share similar details, then click the **Details** field you wish to enter, then type the value or choose the graphic image.
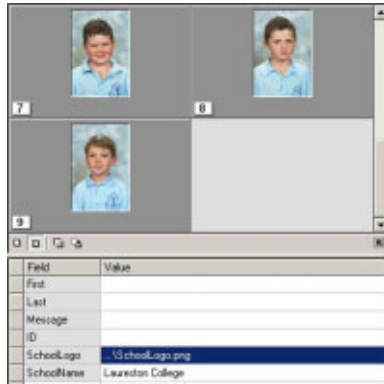
Forming the pages

Forming the jobs is done by choosing an image, then at least a layout template. If required, you can then choose a Pack Item template and matching text to complete the job. The template selection can be done in a number of ways:

- Manual selection using the mouse or keyboard
- Input using a barcode reader and barcoded order bags
- Importing a text file with the order information

Manually forming the jobs

Templates can be applied to the imported images by choosing the image or images, then the Layout and Pack Item template required. The templates can be selected by clicking the on-screen buttons displayed in the **Pack add/view** pane. When you design the templates, you can also allocate a shortcut key as a file property (see earlier in this manual for details).

Allocating templates to images

You can allocate templates to either a single or several images at a time. To do this, ensure that the correct queue is selected from the **Queue** drop-down, then select the images you want to use. You can select multiple images using the mouse and the standard Windows selection modifier keys:

- **<Shift> click** the first then last image in a range – this selects a block of images.
- **<Ctrl> click** each image you wish to select – this selects images to import individually

Once the images you need have been selected, click the **Pack Layout** button in the **Pack** pane or press the shortcut key. Note that the selected images are placed into the Pack Layout and added to the current queue. If a Pack Item is required for the selected images, click its button in the **Design** panel or press the shortcut key. Note the Pack Item selected is applied to the jobs.

Removing a Design

A Design template can be removed from an image by selecting the image or image range, then pressing the **Remove Design** button in the **Design** pane. The design is removed from the selected images.
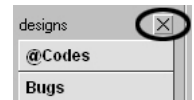
Adding more packages

If more than one package per image is required, hold the **Shift** key down, and add more packs.

- If more of the same pack is ordered, the number ordered will increase in the pack button, package preview and print queue preview

- If different packs of the same image are ordered, the extra packs will be added to the pack preview, and a new entry created in the printer queue.


Using a barcode reader

You can form the jobs with a barcode reader if you have this information coded somewhere. For example, you might have the image number and order information printed on the order bags you receive from the end user.

✍ It is most important when forming jobs with the barcode reader that the various shortcut keys allocated are unique for each template – Layout and Pack Item – being used by the application. If two templates share the same shortcut key, no template will be selected when pressing this key, or being read by the barcode reader.

✍ If a shortcut key is allocated to a pack in the **Pack** Set editor, this key will be used instead of the shortcut key defined as the Template Property shortcut key.
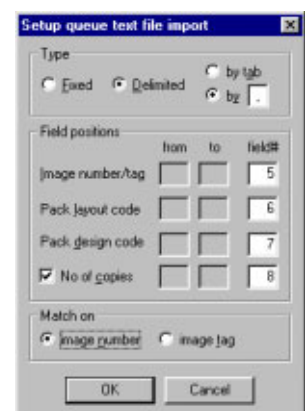
The jobs are formed using the **Find** panel in the main application. The order information required is:

- Either the image number or image tag
- The matching Pack Layout required
- The matching Pack Item if required

To create the pages, choose which image number to match on, then click the cursor in the **Find image > of** entry box. Read the barcode that contains the image number. The selected image is displayed in the image list. Note the cursor is advanced to the **layout** entry box.

Next, read the barcode that contains the ordered layout. The layout is selected and added to the queue.

Finally, read the barcode that contains the design if any. The design is applied to the page. If no design is required, read a barcode that has … (three period – full stop characters) characters coded. These characters are the **No Design** shortcut key.

Importing a text file

If you have the order information recorded in a text file, you can import the data to form the jobs automatically. As with barcode entry, the order is generated by using the shortcut keys allocated to the various templates and pack sets. It is most important that these shortcut keys are correctly defined in order for the data import to function correctly.

Selecting the text file

Open the file you wish to use then choose **Queue > Import text file…** The **Text file to import queue** dialog opens. Navigate to the folder that contains the text file, and click it once.

Configure the import

In the **Text file to import queue** dialog, click **Setup**. The **Setup queue text file import** dialog opens. The dialog is divided into several sections:

- Type – specifies the file format you're importing
- Field positions – allows you to specify the field positions
- Match on – choose to match on image number or image tag
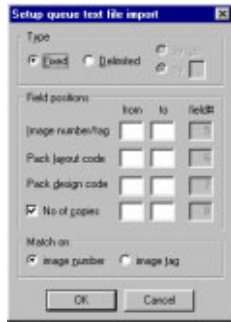
Choose the type

There are several common formats that text data that you will commonly use. These formats allow you to define where a field begins and ends within each record of the text file. These formats are commonly:

- Fixed length – each field has a specified length
- Delimited – the end of each field is specified by a unique character

Choose the format of the file you are importing.

Fixed length

If you are importing a fixed length file, specify the position of each field in the file

---

Delimited

If you are importing a delimited file, specify the delimiter by choosing either **by tab** or enter the delimiter in the variable box.
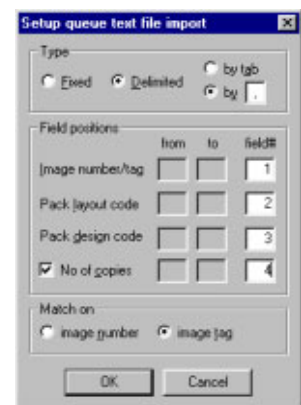
Specify the field map

The **Field map** panel allows you to specify the various fields contained within the records of the text file. Enter the field positions for your file. For example:

```
img001.tif,A,Q,2
img002.tif,A,Q,1
img003.tif,A,W,3
```

Is an example of a comma delimited text file. The field positions are:

- Image filename– field 1
- Layout template– field 2
- Design template – field 3
- Required quantity– field 4

The correctly completed panel is shown at right.

Specify the field to match

When importing the text data, *NeoPack+* needs to know which image to match the data to. There are two choices:

- Match to the image number
- Match to the original image tag

Matching to the image number

When images are imported to *NeoPack+*, they are allocated an image number as they are imported. For example, the first image imported is allocated image number 1, the second, image number 2 and so on. The matching image number should be contained in each record of the text file.

Matching to the image tag

When images are imported no *NeoPack+*, the original filename is retained as the *image tag*. For example, if an imported file is named 'film 172.jpg', it will be allocated the image tag, 'film 172.jpg'. You can see the image tags each imported image has by choosing **Images > show tags**. The image tag is displayed next to the image number.

Each record in the text file should contain the corresponding image tag.

Forming the jobs

After the fields have been specified, choose **OK**. Now, ensure that the text file has been selected, then choose **Open**. The queue is formed from the data.

Queue control and status information

As packages are created, they are allocated a printer status. The status of a particular package is indicated at the lower left of the pack preview.

Action	Set by	Indicated by
Create or re-print a package	Add the pack or choose **Queue > Reprint selected packs**	☐
Print a pack or pack range	Choose the **File > Print** command	◪
Hold a pack or pack range	Choose **Queue > Hold selected packs**	⊠
Release a held pack or pack range	Choose **Queue > Release selected packs**	⊠ → ☐

Sorting the printer queue

Packs displayed in the printer queue can be sorted either by image, or by printer status. To sort by:

● Image; choose **Queue > Sort by image**

● Printer Status; choose **Queue > Sort by printer status**
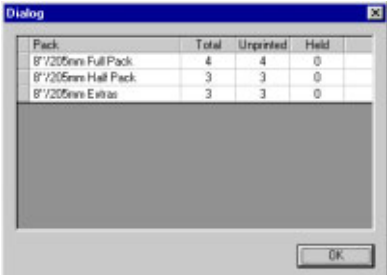
Removing packs from a queue

Once packs have been added to a queue, they can be deleted from the queue by selecting them, then choosing **Queue > Remove selected**.

A range of packs can be selected by either:

● Holding the **Shift** key down, and clicking the first and last pack in the desired range or

● Holding the **Control** key down and clicking individual packs.

Queue Statistics

Various statistics are available for a printer queue. To view these statistics, choose **Queue > Statistics**. The Statistics for that particular queue are displayed.
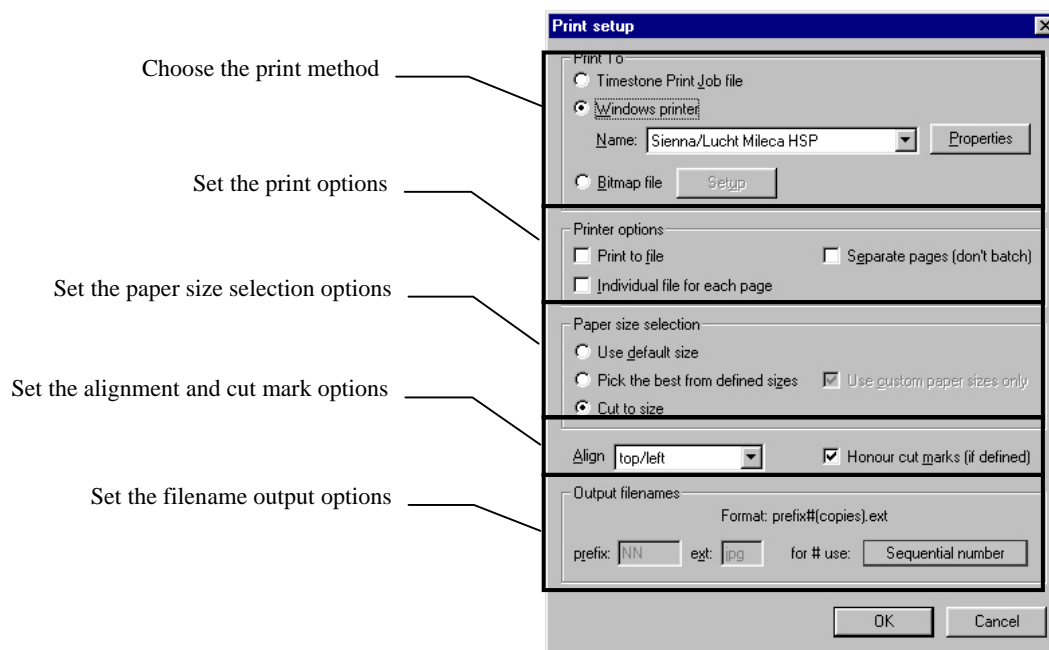
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Printing

NeoPack+ offers a wide variety of printing options. You can choose to print to a standard Windows NT printer driver, output bitmap files or 'print' to a Timestone Print Job file. Timestone Software has produced a number of Windows NT printer drivers for some of the more popular digital photographic printers, and *NeoPack+* can take advantage of the special features built into these drivers

If a printer driver isn't available for your printer, you can output bitmap image files to submit to the printer using your normal printing software.

Selecting the printer

Before printing a job, you should choose the method of printing. All the print options are set in the **Printer Setup** dialog. Open this dialog by opening a job file you want to print, then choosing **File > Print setup**. The **Print Setup** dialog opens.

Choose the print method ——————

Set the print options ——————

Set the paper size selection options ——————

Set the alignment and cut mark options ——————

Set the filename output options ——————

Print setup

Print To
○ Timestone Print Job file
◉ Windows printer
   Name: Sienna/Lucht Mileca HSP   ▾   [Properties]
○ Bitmap file   [Setup]

Printer options
☐ Print to file   ☐ Separate pages (don't batch)
☐ Individual file for each page

Paper size selection
○ Use default size
○ Pick the best from defined sizes   ☑ Use custom paper sizes only
◉ Cut to size

Align [top/left ▾]   ☑ Honour cut marks (if defined)

Output filenames
          Format: prefix#(copies).ext

prefix: [NN]   ext: [jpg]   for # use: [Sequential number]

[OK]   [Cancel]

Choose the Print method

There are three main options that can be used when printing from *NeoPack+*:

- Printing to a standard Windows printer
- Printing to a 'bitmap' file
- Printing to a Timestone Print Job file

Choose the method you want to print to.

Print to a Timestone Print Job file

There are few options to set when printing to a Timestone Print Job file aside from the output path. Choosing this option will dim all other options except the **Align** option. See later for information about the **Align** option.

Once chosen, choose **OK**. The **Printer setup** dialog is dismissed. To print the job to a Timestone Print Job file, choose **File > Print**. Choose the range to print (see later). Because the result of this print operation is a file, you must choose an output path. Either enter the output path, or click **Browse**. A **File Browse** dialog opens. Choose the folder you want to use, then choose OK.

Choose **OK** to print the Print Job file.
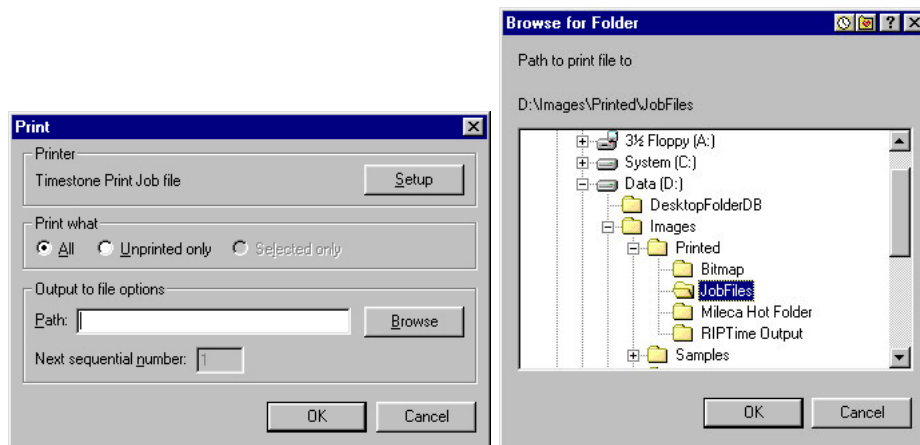
Print to a Standard Windows NT printer driver

You can use a standard Windows NT printer driver to print from *NeoPack+*. There are a number of special features built into *NeoPack+* that automate paper size selection and a number of other options.

To choose a Windows NT printer, choose **Windows printer** as the **Print to** option, then choose the printer you wish to use by clicking the **Printer** drop-down and selecting it from the list. Set any printer specific options by choosing **Properties**. For information on the options to set, consult your printer's driver documentation.
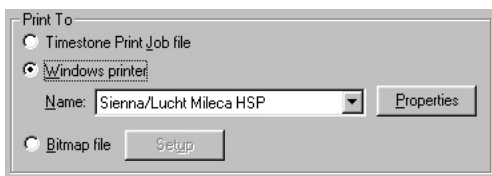
Print to a bitmap file

NeoPack+ can output bitmap files directly by choosing **Bitmap file** as the **Print to** option. Once selected, the **Setup** button becomes active. Click it to set the various options.

✍ When printing to bitmap files, any hard cut marks set in a template will be honoured, and a number of files will be created for the split pack.

Set the output resolution and format

Choose the output resolution by clicking the **DPI** drop-down. You can choose from a variety of output file types by clicking the **Format** drop-down and selecting the desired format.

Set color correction

Choose an output LUT from those available by clicking the **Apply LUT** drop-down and choosing from the list. For more information on creating LUT's, see Chapter 12, **Calibration & Color Management**.

Set the sharpness

You can apply a sharpness correction by checking the **Sharpen** checkbox. Choose the Kernel size and strength.

✍ Generally, you should leave the Kernel at 3. You will have to test the sharpness strength for your system.
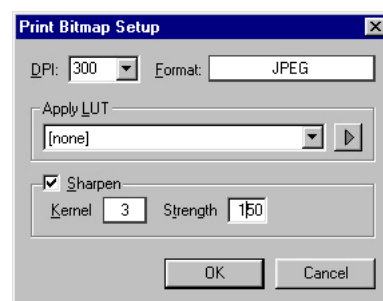
Set the filename option

There are a number of file naming options when printing to bitmap files. Once you choose **Bitmap file** as the **Print to**, the **Output filenames** panel becomes active.

Files printed are named:

   [Prefix][Number][Copies].[ext]

- [Prefix] – each printed file will begin with the text entered
- [Number] – the main filename given to each printed file
- [Copies] – the number of copies requested in the print dialog
- [ext] – the filename extension
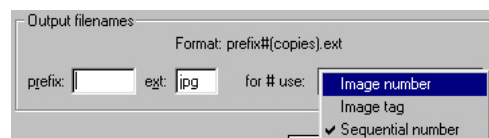
You can specify the main name used for the filename by clicking **for # use** and selecting from the choices available. The choices are:

Option	Description
Image No.	*NeoPack+* uses the image number – either the sequential or indexed number to name the file. If multiple packages are created, a sequential number is appended for each pack with the same image number.
Original image tag	*NeoPack+* uses the special image tag, if used when importing the images, to name the files. If multiple packages are created, a sequential number is appended for each pack with the same image number.
Sequential no.	*NeoPack+* creates its own sequential number to name the files. Different packs from the same image are gathered together sequentially, but will be named different one to the other.

Once all the options have been set, choose **OK**.

Set the output path

To print the job to Bitmap files, choose **File > Print**. Choose the range to print (see later). Because the result of this print operation is a file, you must choose an output path. Either enter the output path, or click **Browse**. A **File Browse** dialog opens. Choose the folder you want to use, then choose OK..

Choose **OK** to print the bitmap files.

✎ If **Sequential number** has been selected as the **for # use** option, you will be able to enter the first sequential number to use. Enter the starting number in the **Next sequential number** entry box.
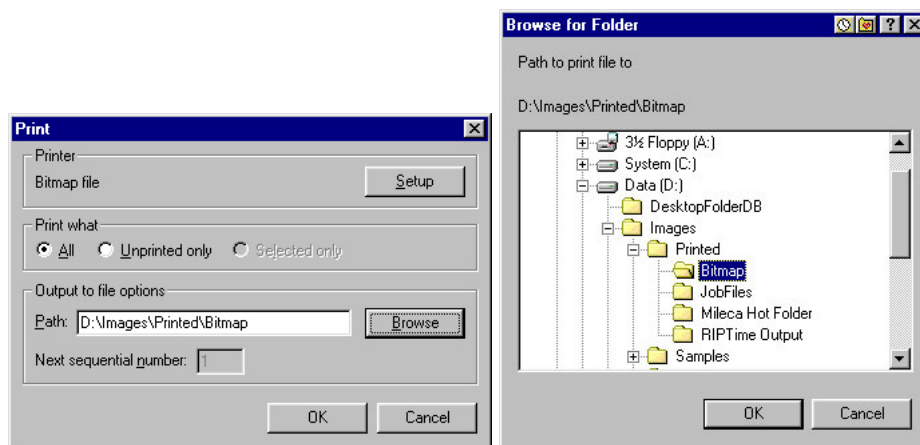
Printing to a standard Windows printer driver

There are a number of options that can help automate your printing when using *NeoPack+*. The main options are:

● Printer Properties – configure printer specific options

- Printer output options – choose whether to output to a file, or to the printer
- Paper size selection – paper size automation functions
- Alignment and cut marks – how the printed image is aligned and if cut marks are on or off

### *Set the printer properties*

After selecting the printer to use, you can configure the various printer properties by choosing **Properties** from the **Print setup** dialog. The options displayed here are dependent on your printer's driver software, and you should consult the driver software documentation for further information when setting these options.

Set the output options

There are a number of options to choose from when printing to a Windows NT printer.

- Print to file – creates a Windows .PRN file for later use
- Individual file for each page – for use only when using Zenographics SuperPrint bitmap driver
- Separate pages (don't batch) – when printing a multi-page document, printing won't start until the whole job has been prepared. By choosing **Separate pages** each page is sent individually to the printer. This means each page will begin printing as soon as it is ready. When printing this way, it is possible for jobs to be mixed together if a number of people are printing to the printer at one time.
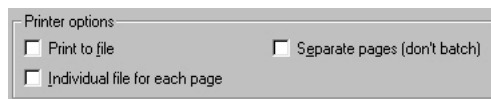
Automatic paper size selection

NeoPack+ can automatically choose the most appropriate page size for an image being printed. Within a particular print job, there may be a number of different page sizes required by the printer queue. Pack A might require a page size of 8 x 20.5", whilst Pack B might need 8 x 11.5". Printing these packages on a single page size is wasteful of paper. *NeoPack+* can automatically choose from the available paper sizes from most Windows printer drivers, or automatically generate the exact paper size when using a Timestone Software Windows printer driver.

Timestone Software printer drivers automatically control the photographic printer to create the exact paper size required.

Use default size

When selected, the paper size chosen in the Printer Properties dialog will be used.

Pick the best from defined sizes

Choose **File > Print setup…** The **Print setup** dialog is shown. Enable best paper size selection by choosing **Pick best paper size** from the **Printer options** section. With this option enabled, *NeoPack+* will check all the available paper sizes, and chooses the closest match for the page currently being printed. This check is performed for each job, meaning that a queue can contain different size prints – the best paper size will be selected for each page being printed.

Use custom paper sizes only

Most print sizes *NeoPack+* is required to create are not standard (A4, Letter) sizes. Printer drivers that allow custom paper sizes to be created allow you to design sizes that are exactly correct for *NeoPack+* prints. In this case, it is not desirable to allow *NeoPack+* to automatically choose a standard paper size, as it may not be exactly correct.

Choose **Use custom paper sizes only**. *NeoPack+* will only consider custom paper sizes when automatically choosing the one to be used.

Cut to size

When using a Timestone Software printer driver, choosing **Cut to size** will automatically create and use exactly the correct paper size required by the job. You don't need to define the paper size, as *NeoPack+* works together with our printer driver to do this for you.
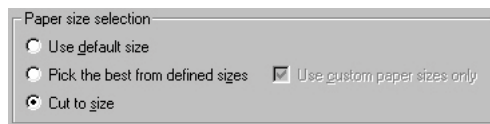
Alignment and Cut marks

You can choose to print the *NeoPack+* jobs onto a paper size larger than the job image. In this case, you can choose how the image will be aligned on the oversize page. You can also enable or disable cut mark support.

Align

You can control how the image is positioned on a page using the **Align** setting. This is only useful if the page being used is larger than the image being printed. Click the **Align** drop-down, and choose the image placement.

Honour cut marks

If the templates you are using have cut marks defined, you can choose to use or ignore these by checking or un-checking **Honour cut marks**. Checking this box causes the cut marks to be used, un-checking causes them to be ignored.

Print the pages

Once all the various options have been set, choose **File > Print**. The print dialog opens. The images to be printed can be chosen using the **Print what** section.

Choosing	Prints…
All	Prints all the created packages
Un-printed only	Prints any packages that haven't yet been printed
Selected only	Prints the range of prints currently selected in the printer queue

If printing to a file or a bitmap printer driver, specify the output path for the file. The next sequence number can be specified if desired by entering a number in the **Next sequential number** box.

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Calibration & Color Management

✎ **Note:** Timestone Software's *Neo* family of products use the ICC color management system that Microsoft has built into **Windows 2000**. If you are using **Windows 2000**, you should use the ICM-2 color management system <u>in preference to</u> taking the steps described in previous versions of this manual.

ICC color management involves creating 'color profiles' for every display or output device on your system, and is considerably more sophisticated than the previous method.

However, the 'calibration' method of color management, and the creation of LUTs (Look-Up Tables) to achieve consistent color correction is still valid if you have not yet upgraded to **Windows 2000**, and both methods are now described in our separate **Color Management Guide**, which should be available on the same CD-ROM that this manual was on – or you can download it from our website at: http://www.timestone.com.au

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