ControlCenter Professional

Newspaper Prepress Flow Control

Quick Start Configuration Guide

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ControlCenter Professional Quick Start Guide
Version 1.1
April 2006
Part number: CCPRO QGUIDE11
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http://www.infralogic.dk

InfraLogic ApS
Vinterbuen 12
DK-2750 Ballerup
Denmark
Telephone +45 4464 6531

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1 Introduction

Overview

This guide is intended for service engineers for getting ControlCenter Professional configured for production.

The goal with this guide is to outline the recommended 'strategy' for configuring a system for production.

The assumed starting point for this guide is right after a fresh installation of ControlCenter including the database (See ControlCenter User Manual chapter 2).

The installation programs install some default configurations for input (file polling) and output (layout templates). This guide picks up from there hopefully answering the question *when what?* ControlCenter is very flexible when it comes to fit to production requirements but it can be a bit overwhelming at first to locate where to adjust the system.

Assumed system components

ControlCenter may be configured in many different distributed fashions. This guide assumes a simple system consisting of a single *InputCenter* application, a single OutputCenter application connected to one output device. Also the two applications *PlanCenter* and MonitorCenter is assumed to be installed. Productions will be planned for one press only.

To summarize from the user guide the applications have the following roles:

InputCenter

- Automated operation (no user intervention required)
- File name recognition
- Re-sampling of files for previewing applications
- Transmission of files to a remote location

OutputCenter

- Automated operation (no user intervention required)
- Output generation including page pairing based on layout templates
- Load balancing between output devices
- Tracking of job status during imaging

PlanCenter

- The 'surface' to the system for system operators

- Planning of products based on press capability
- Approval of page based on preview inspection
- Tracking of pages, page colors and plates

MonitorCenter

- System process overview (flow diagram with status)

Example products

We will assume that products are planned and scheduled for a single press only. The press handles both broadsheet plates and panorama plates. The latter format calls for page pairing which we must set up.

Products (newspapers) may be organized in many different ways. We assume the following organization in our example:

- Two different newspaper titles: *News* (broadsheet) and *TabNews* (Tabloid)
- The *TabNews* is divided in two sections *A* and *B*. News consist of one section only

There will not be unplanned products entering the system

NOTE: ControlCenter Professional cannot handle more than one edition name. For planning products printed in multiple regional editions the Enterprise version must be used

Recommended sequence of configuration

A practical strategy for get these product flying is the do the configuration in the following sequence:

1. Output device definition (in OutputCenter). In this example we assume a simple TIFF output device
2. Plate size setting using Press Configuration (in OutputCenter)
3. Plate layout configurations for both tabloid and broadsheet formats (in OutputCenter)
4. Add publication names, edition names and section names to the system. This can be done in InputCenter, PlanCenter or MonitorCenter.
5. Configure input file naming convention(s) using InputCenter

6. Adjustments to proof generation

7. Plan a product of X pages in PlanCenter

Beware that starting in the 'wrong' direction is not recommended. This is because there are dependencies between the separate configurations. For example Layout template depends on information about press plate sizes.
Likewise input file name recognition depends on publication and section names to be defined (for selecting defaults).

Please note that we will use the default location name (*Default*) throughout the system configuration example.

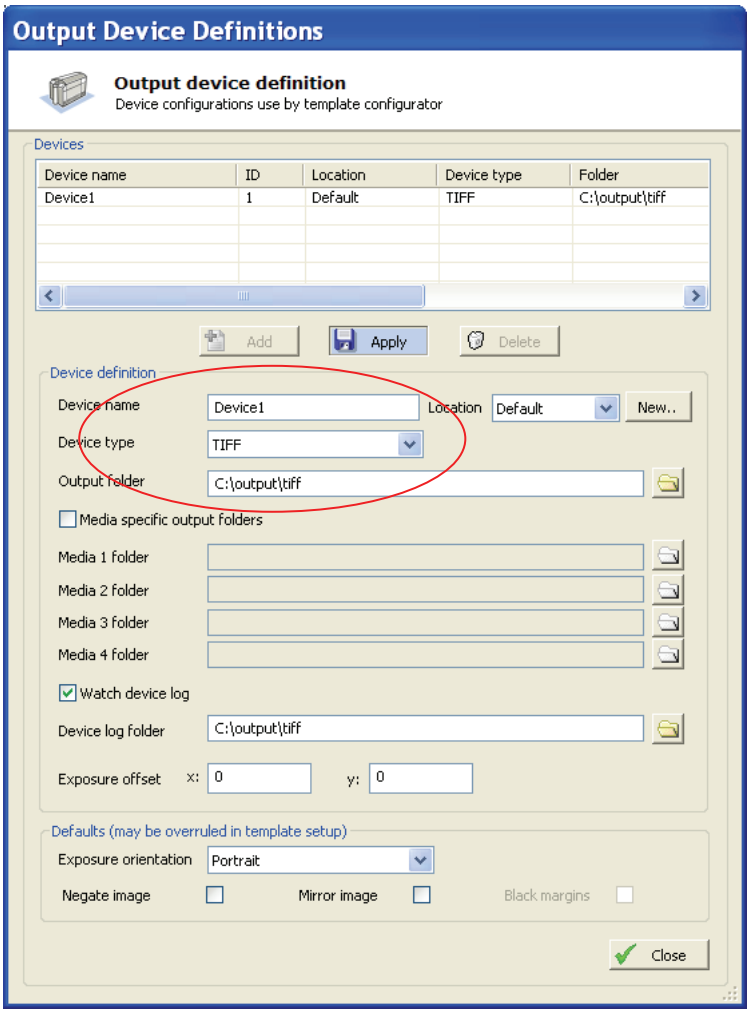
2 Configuration details

STEP 1: Device configuration

Start OutputCenter and select **Device setup** from the Configuration menu,

Highlight the default device (Device1) and press **Edit** to change device name (if required) and output folder (if required). Press **Apply** to save the changes.

Please note that we keep the Locationname *Default* throughout this example.

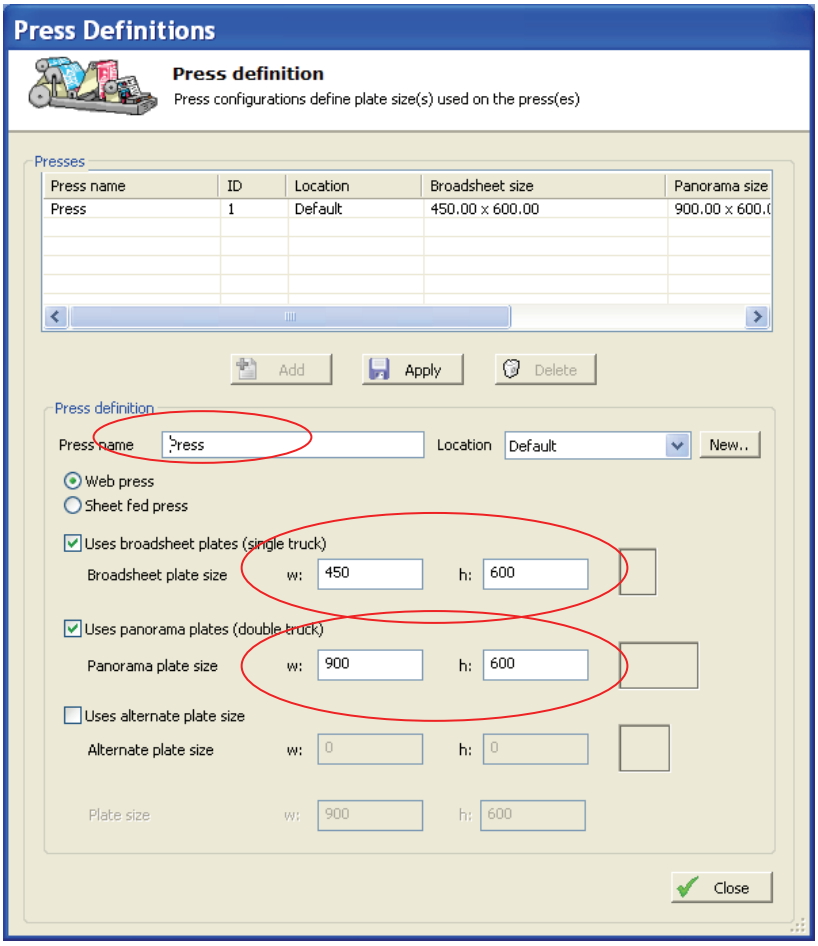


Changing the default Output Device definition

STEP 2: Press configuration

Start OutputCenter and select **Press setup** from the Configuration menu,

Highlight the default press (Press) and press **Edit** to change Press name (if required) and sizes of broadsheet plate size and panorama plate sizes. Press **Apply** to save the changes.
In this document we will assume the default plate sizes.



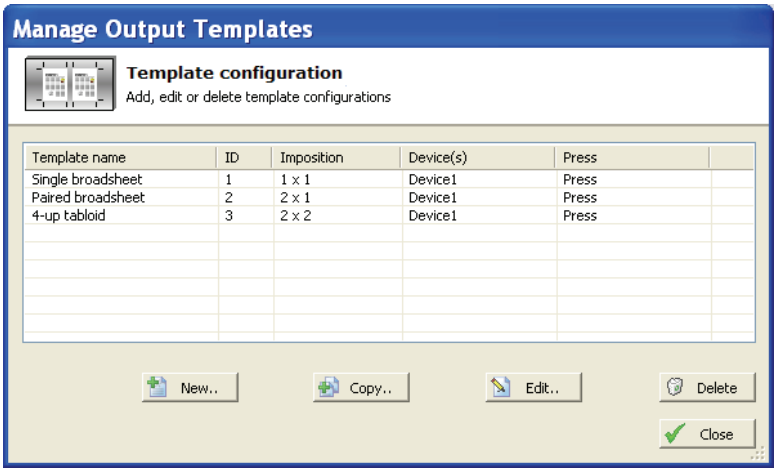
Changing the default Press definition

STEP 3: Template configuration (layouts)

Start OutputCenter and select **Template setup** from the Configuration menu,

The installer defines three different templates to work from: a Single broadsheet (on broadsheet plate), a Paired broadsheet (on panorama plate) and a 4-up tabloid (on panorama plate)

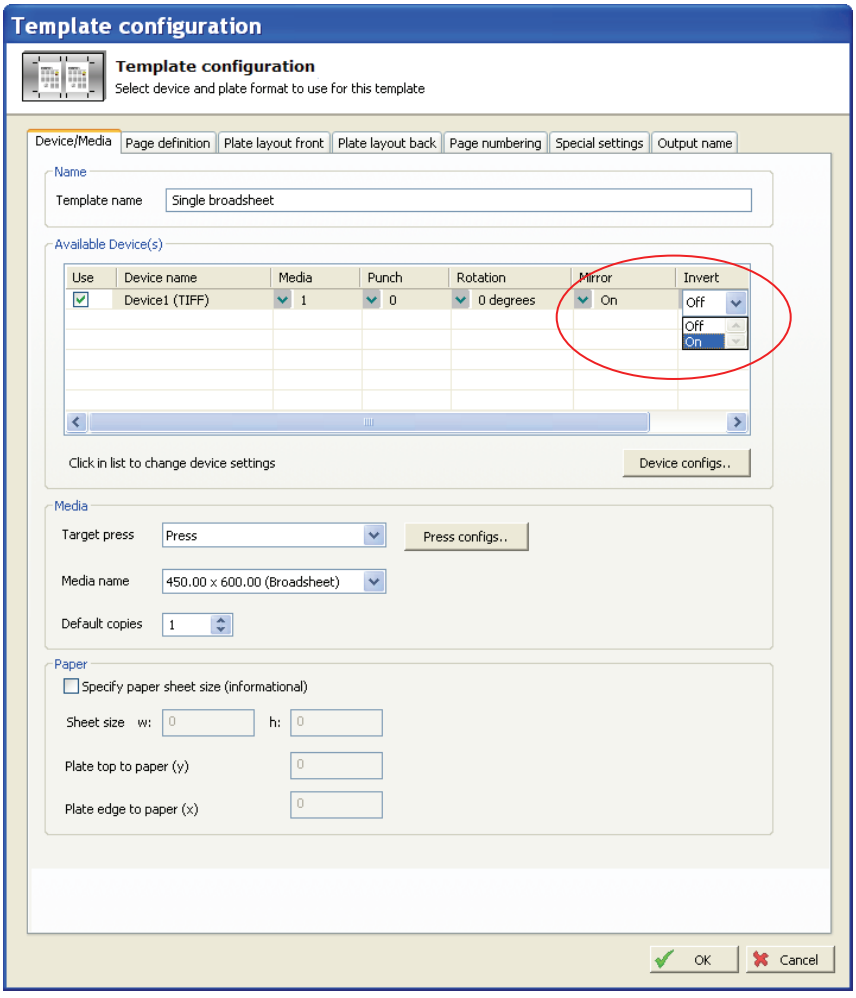
Highlight the Single broadsheet template and press **Edit** to change Template settings.



The default templates after a fresh installation

Template Step 3-1: Change device properties used for the template

We will break down the tailoring of the template in four parts. First we set the



Changing device specific settings for the template (here mirror and invert ON)

physical characteristics for the device by applying mirroring, invertion, rotation and optional media selection for the device(s) (here one). Think of these setting as the requirements dictated by the device to output the plate file correctly.
If more than one device is specifiec they will all be listed here.
In our example we set Mirroring for the device.

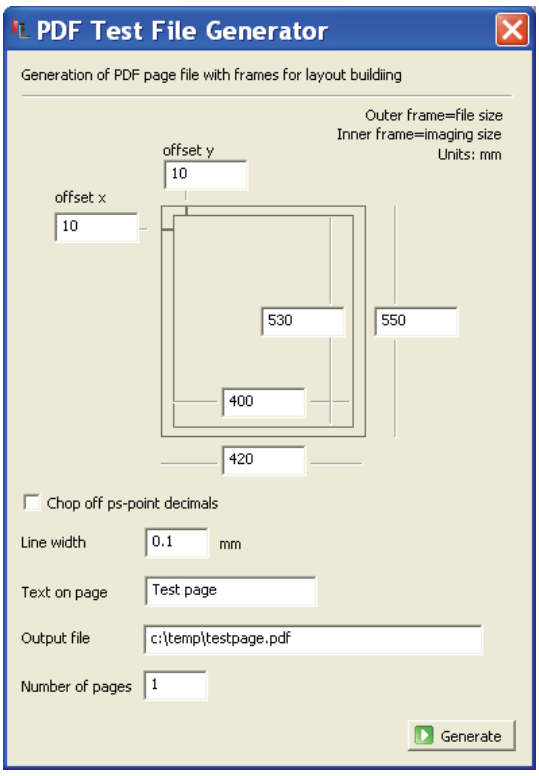
Template Step 3-2: Loading test pages

Although not required it is recommended to load a PDF or TIFF testpage when configuring layout templates.

Obtain a set of page pages from the user for the specific format (here broadsheet).

TIP: On the installation CD under Utilities a very convenient page test generator *PDFtestFileGenerator.exe* can be found. This can be used to generate pages with frames for full format page area and page imaging area.

We have used this tool to generate and RIP a PDF test page for this example

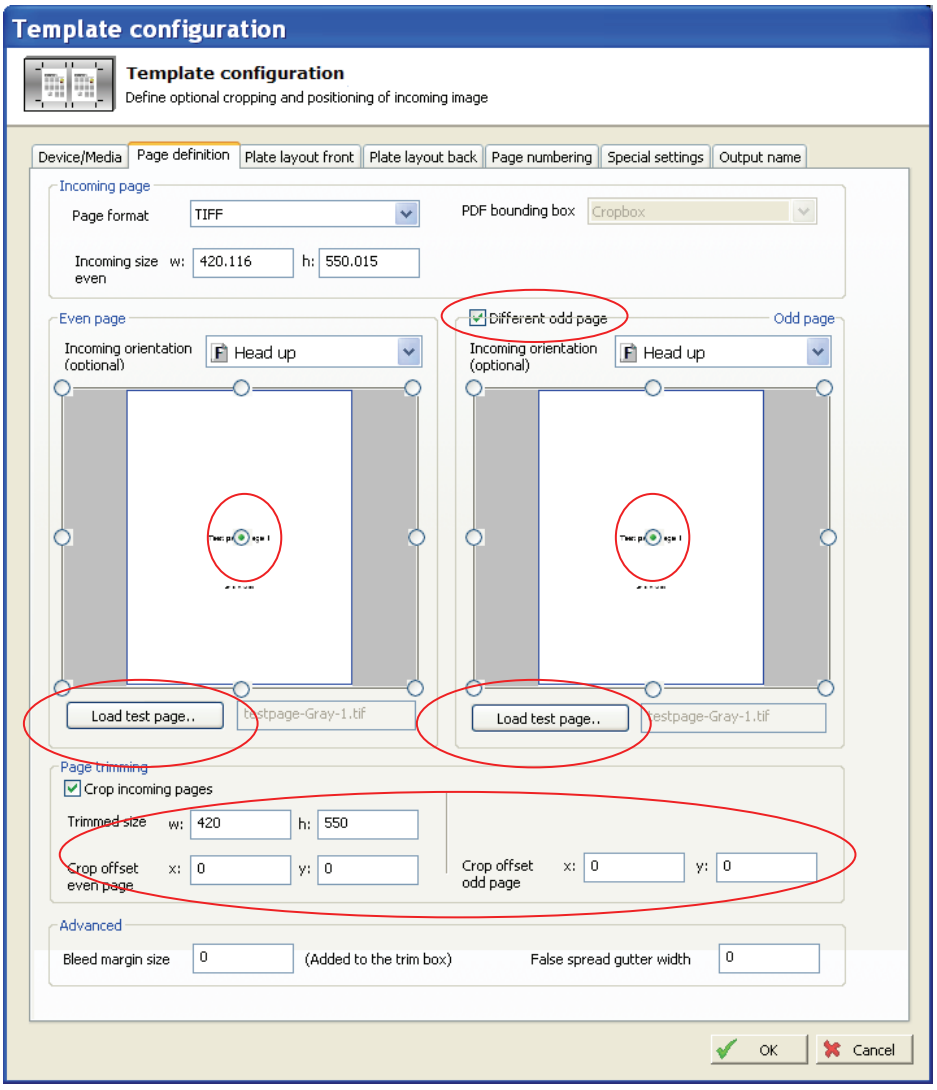


Test page generator can generate convenient frames on a page.

Be aware that often odd and even pages have different margin settings. Usually You should obtain both pages and load them (**Load test page..** buttons) in the Template Page definition dialog.

Template Step 3-3: Input page trimming

Even if input page size is well defined it is highly recommended to enable **Crop incoming page**
For the test setup set page trimming to w=420, h=550 and set offsets for odd and even to 0. Also set **False spread gutter width** to 0. The latter function is used to avoid marks in the gutter for spreads – we will not use this feature in this example.



Make sure to set the Crop incoming page option

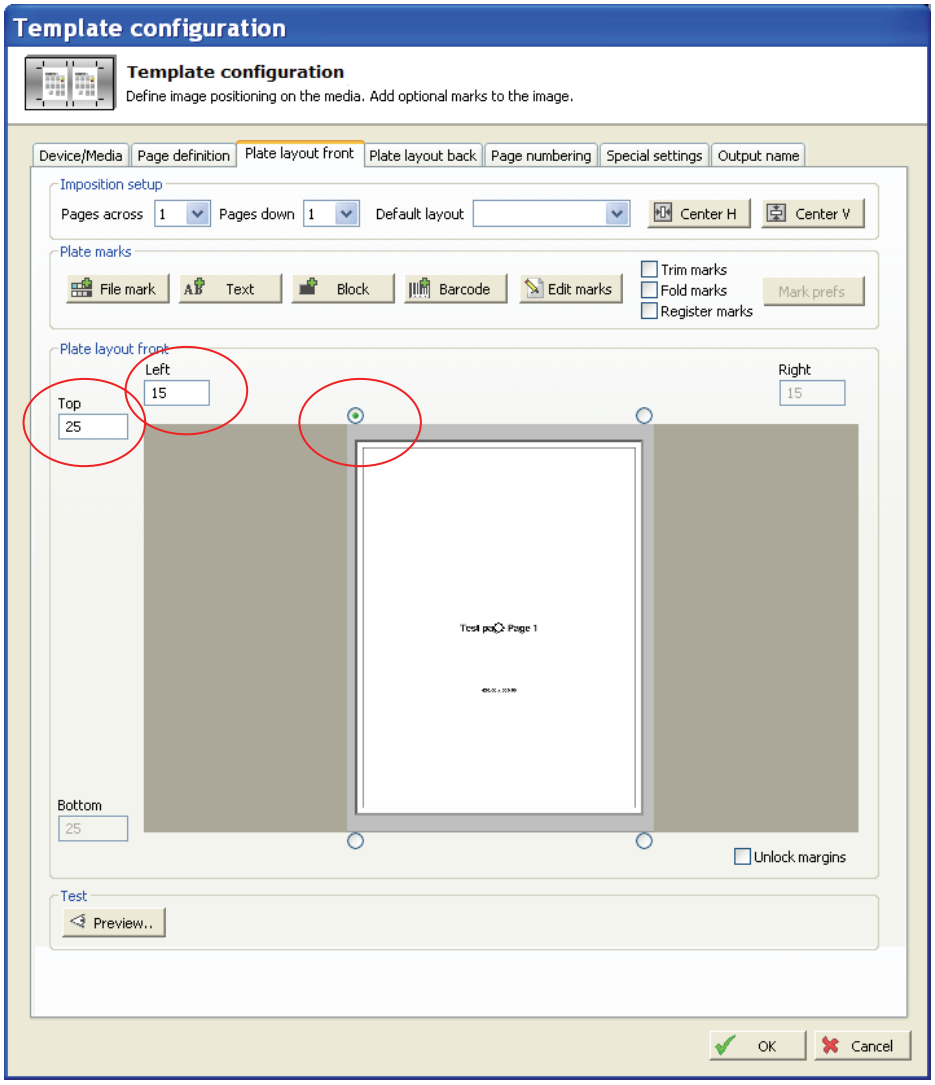
If the trimmed size is different from the incoming page size, remember to set the appropriate 'page snap' option for each of the pages. For each of the pages click the appropriate 'snap' point. Usually the recommended snap points are centre (like here) or snap to spine (mid-right snap point for even page, mid left point for odd page).

Template Step 3-4: Positioning page on plate

Having defined the correct cropped page it is very easy to adjust the page position on the plate. Start with clicks on the page if it must be rotated (e.g. upside down). Then press the buttons **Center H** and **Center V**

Further adjustments to the position must be done by altering the Top and Left margins

IMPORTANT: Depending on device you may want to change the plate reference corner. Click the relevant radio-button is the corner of the plate.



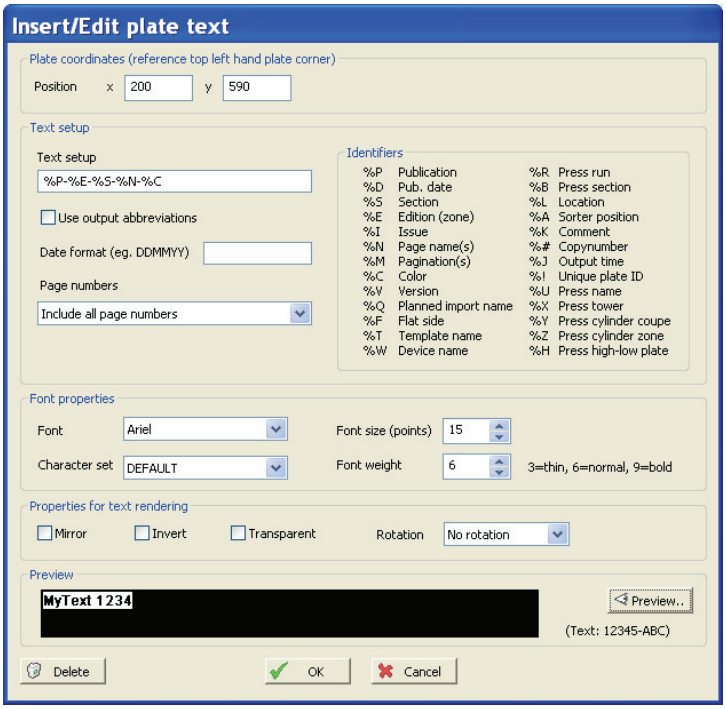
Placing the page on the plate – adjust margins to position page and click the page to rotate it

Template Step 3-5: Plate marks and texts

Usually some kind of plate marks (plate furniture) is required. Select one or more file marks, texts or barcodes

Text mark

Add a plate identification text using Text setup %P-%S-%N-%C. This will construct a text with publication name, section name, pagenumer and color.
Position the text by entering the coordinate.



Barcode mark

Add a barcode and use a static text in the Text Setup or enter e.g. %! which will produce the internal unique plate reference ID

Don't forget to set the barcode size (here 50x10 mm)

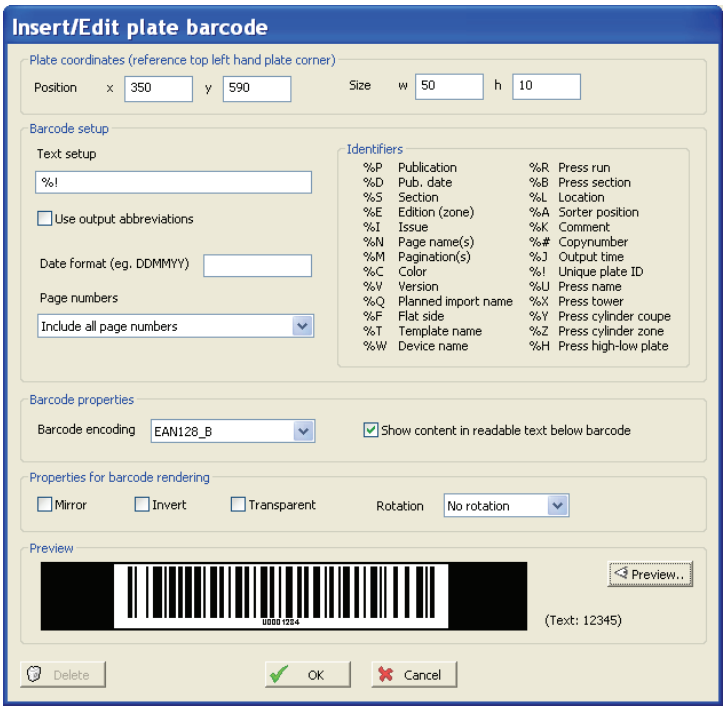
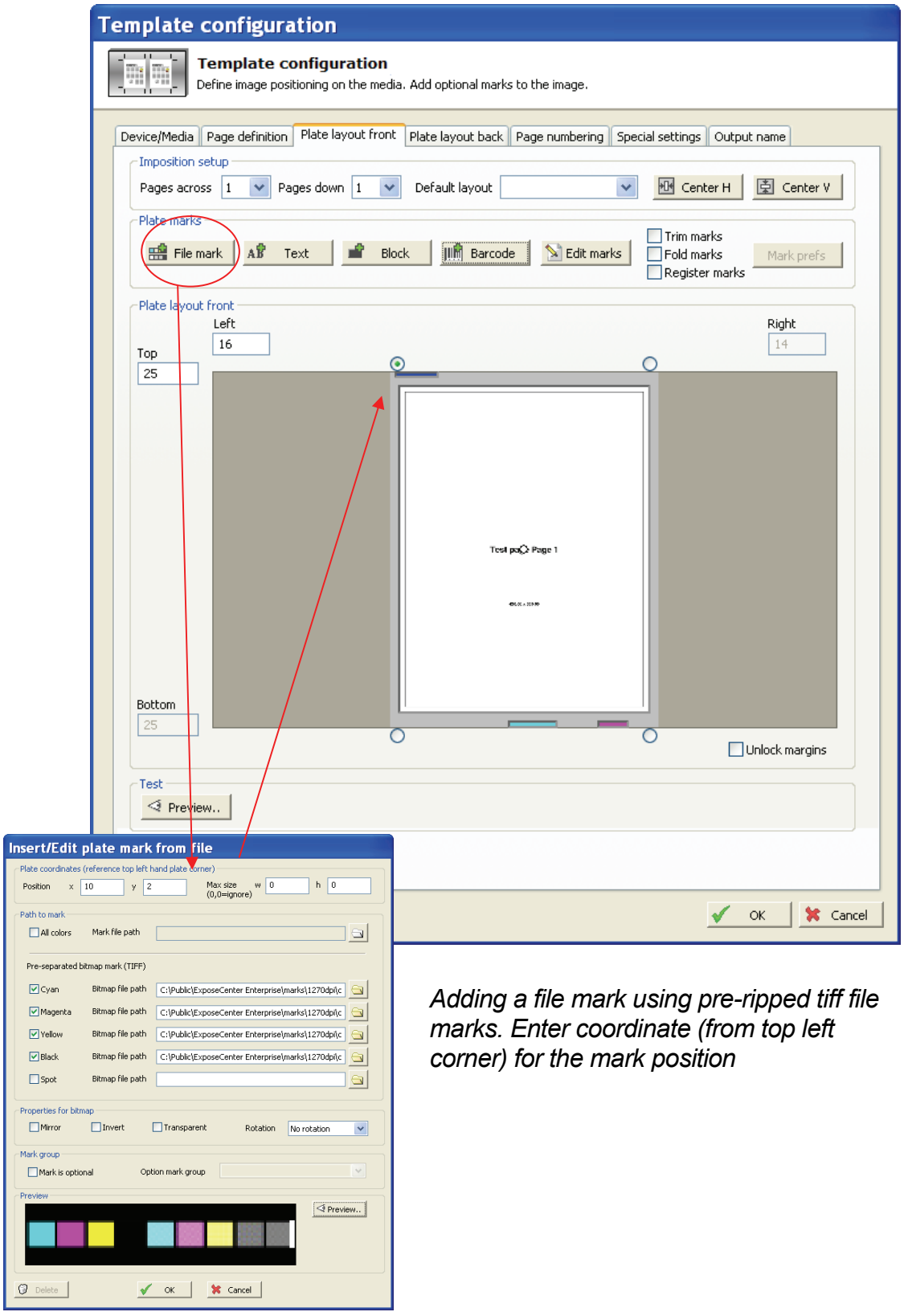


Plate file marks

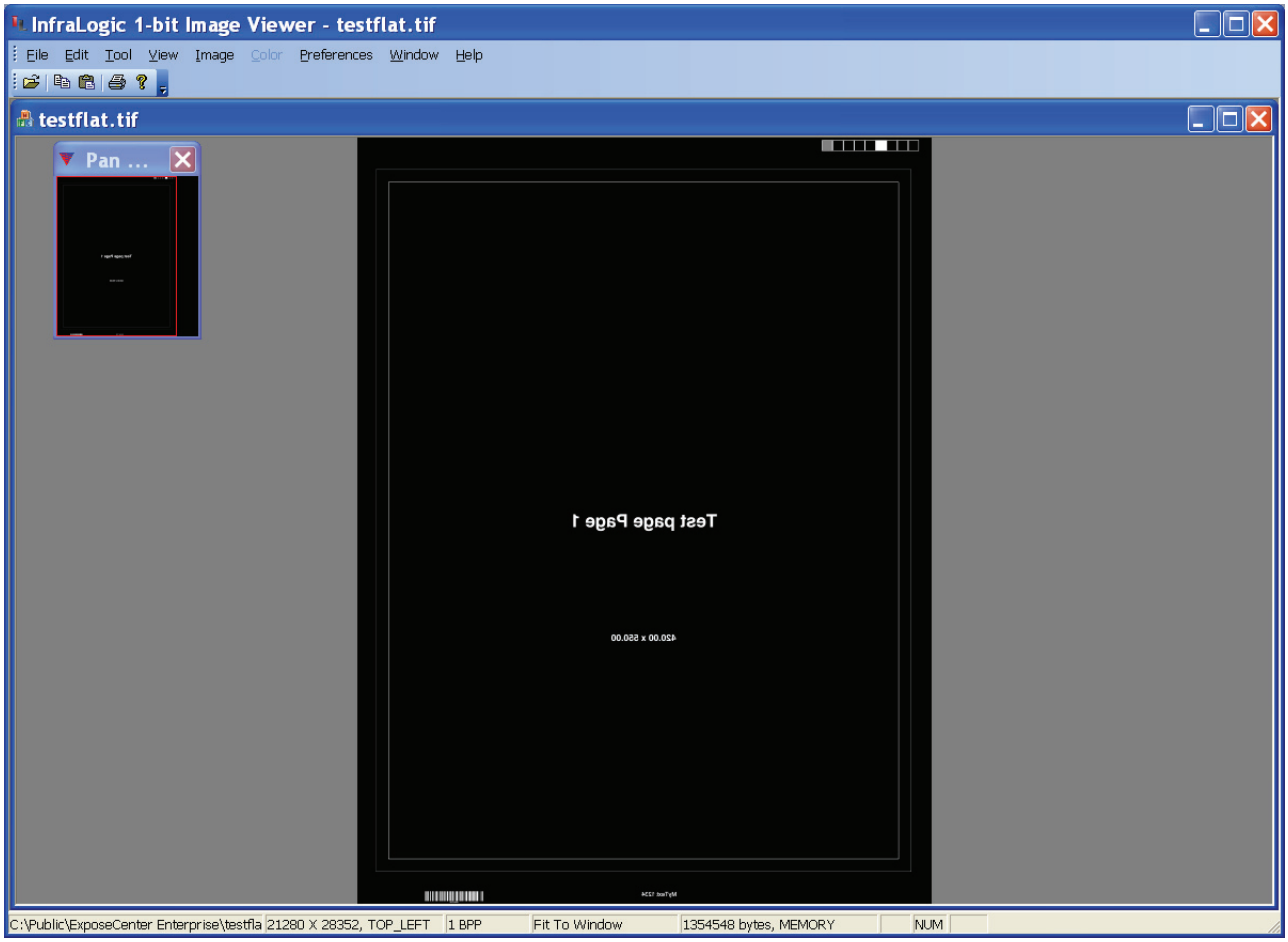
A number of often-used marks are available in the subfolder *marks* in the OutputCenter installation folder. Enter file paths for all color layers used and set the checkboxes for color planes used. Enter position with respect to the plate top left corner.



Adding a file mark using pre-ripped tiff file marks. Enter coordinate (from top left corner) for the mark position

Template Step 3-6: Checking the plate (Preview)

Press the Preview button to view the resulting hi-res file including the test page and marks. An external bitmap viewer will load and show the plate file. For our example the file is inverted and mirrored (as we requested for the device output).



Template Step 3-7: Backside of the plate

If backside of the sheet is different from front (typical 180 degree rotated) , de-select the **Identical to front side** option to unlock the back side properties.

Template Step 3-8: Output name

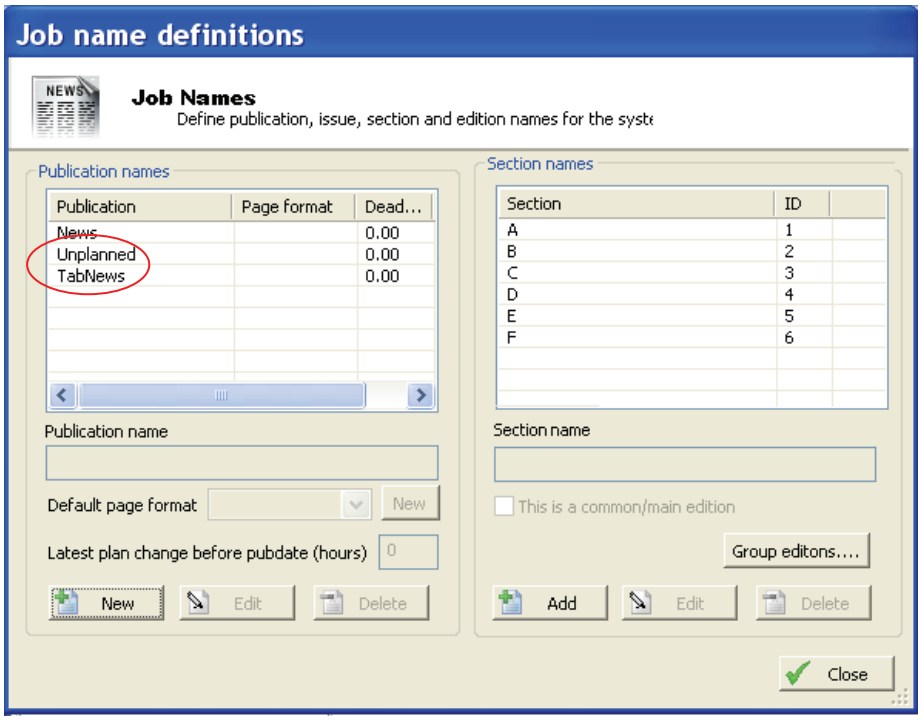
The pre-installed Single broadsheet template uses output naming scheme

%P-S%-%N-%C

If required edit the output naming scheme and click OK to save the changed template.

STEP 4: Production names

Start OutputCenter, InputCenter or PlanCenter and select **Job name settings**

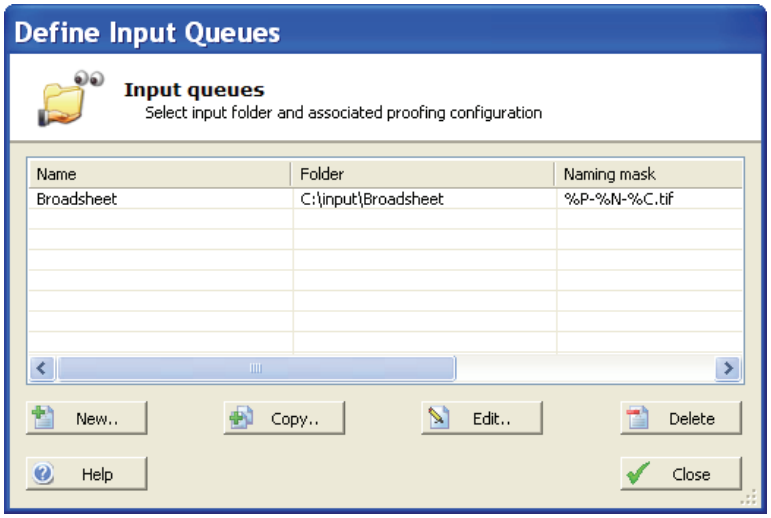


Enter a new Publication name –Tabnews using the **Add /Apply** button. Also add an edition name North and de-select the **common/main edition checkbox**. For this example we will keep other names as defaults.

Note that there must always be at least one name per category. Do not delete the last name in a list (e.g. section A).

STEP 5: Input file naming convention

Start InputCenter and select **Configure Input Queues** from the **File** menu. Edit the pre-installed hotfolder named *Broadsheet.*

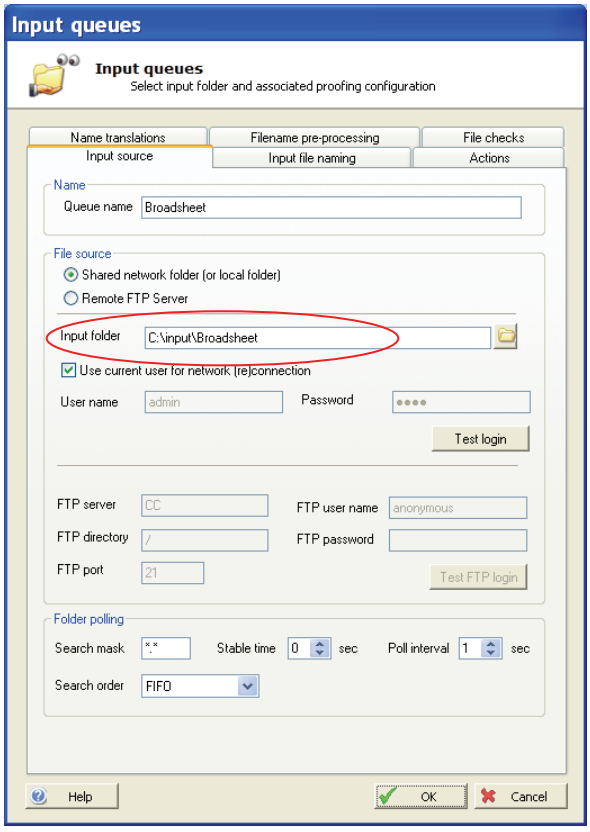


Input setup step 5-1: Folder location

Select path to folder – usually a shared network folder on a RIP producing TIFF or an Adobe Distiller or pre-flight program output folder for PDF.

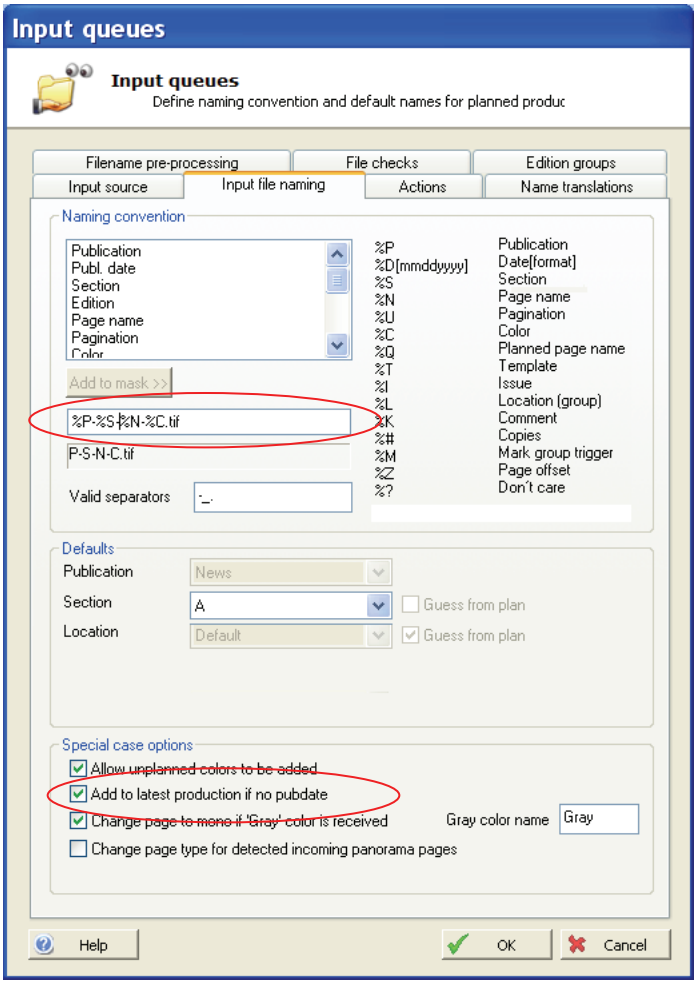
Other relevant parameters here may be the stable time and poll interval.

Stable time is the time InputCenter waits for file size and write time to stabilize before polling the file.



Input setup step 5-2: File naming

The default naming convention does not contain section information so we change



it to include the %S identifier (for section name).

The expecting name will now fit names like

News-A-17-C.tif
News-A-2-K.tif
Tabnews-B-17-C.tif

Normally each input folder will require that all files to the folder uses the same name structure. This constrain can be somewhat relaxed by using Regular Expressions (see next section)

IMPORTANT: The file naming convention entered here is the resulting name after any optional renaming using regular expressions or external file renaming scripts.

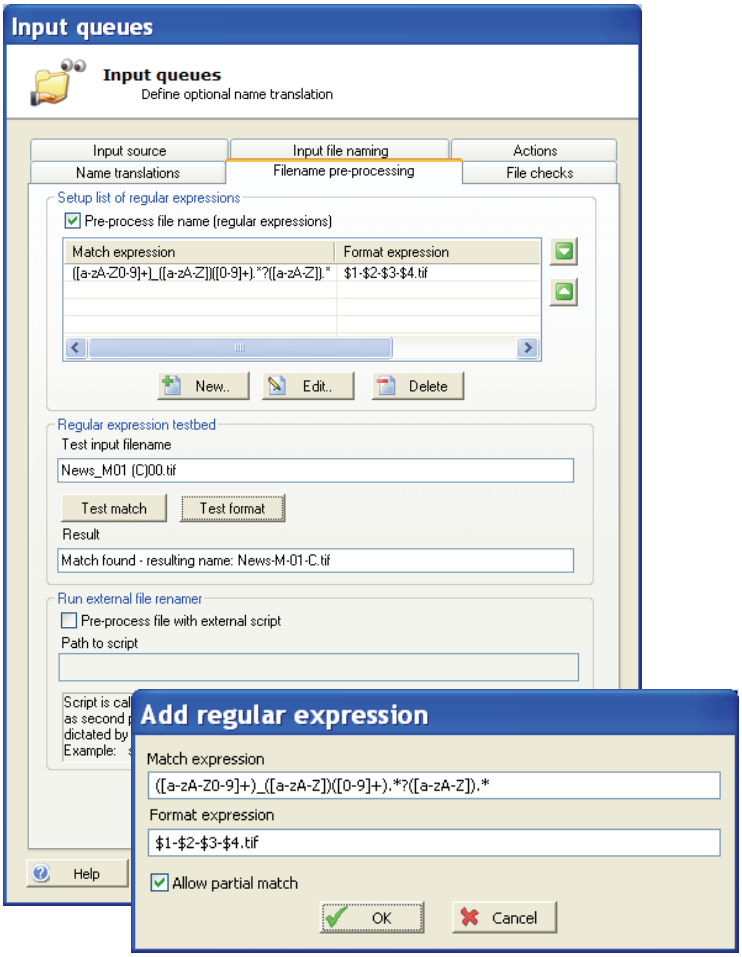
Note that more than one abbreviation may be entered for a given ID – e.g NWS and N for News. Enter multiple abbreviations separated by commas.

Input setup step 5-4: Filename pre-processing (optional)

There are circumstances where the standard file name definitions (defining e.g. color location in filenames) are not adequate for file name recognition. Not all input file names are fitting the standard naming conventions InputCenter can tolerate directly. Regular expressions or an external script may be required to rename the incoming file to a form which fits the standard file mask definitions.

Regular expressions

A number of *regular expressions and formats* can be applied on the incoming file names to rename these to fit the scheme. The regular expressions use a standard Perl syntax to define matching expressions and format expressions.
A number of expressions may be defined which will be evaluated in a ranked order until a match is defined. When a hit is found the associated format expression is applied to form the final file name (as defined in the step 5-2

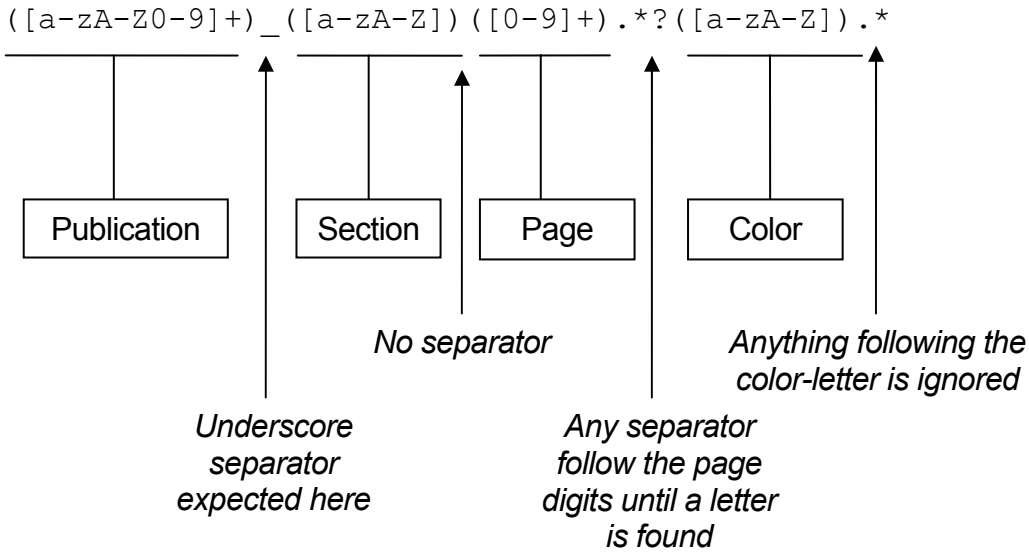


Regular expressions can be a daunting task at first. Start by reading through Appendix A in the User manual – this will give the syntax and semantics of the regular expressions.

The expressions are best illustrated by real-life examples:

Incoming name	What we want
News_A01 (C)00.tif	News-A-01-C.tif

The incoming file name will not fit our standard naming scheme so it must be renamed with a regular expression. The expression consists of relevant parts in () brackets and expected separators in various format. The match expression is used to break down the incoming file name and the format expression is used to reconstruct the name again in a standard format .



The expression above has four parts in brackets. The regular expression will be renamed using a format expression like this $1-$2-$3-$4.tif, where $1 will be substituted with what was found in the first bracket (publication), $2 with the content of the second bracket (section) etc.

Other examples of renaming expressions can be found in Appendix A in the User Manual.

STEP 6: Adjustments to proof generation

By default a jpeg soft-proof is generated at 72 dpi using a high -quality bi-cubic re-sampling method. In case quality demands are higher or lower adjust the resolution, re-sampling method or color processing in InputCenter using the **Configure proof generation** option in the **File** menu.

STEP 7: Planning new products

The final step in this guide will go through the creation of a few simple plans. Plans will hold information about:

- Expected pages per section (here we do not divide in sections)
- Layout template to use for a given plan (e.g. Single broadsheet or paired broadsheet)
- Colors expected per page
- Priority of the product, approval mode etc.

Products can be printed in many different ways depending on product size, product organization and press capabilities. Make sure to read the section in the user manual describing the planning part related to the press terms (press sections versus physical sections)

In this example we limit the planning to cover simple press configurations only.

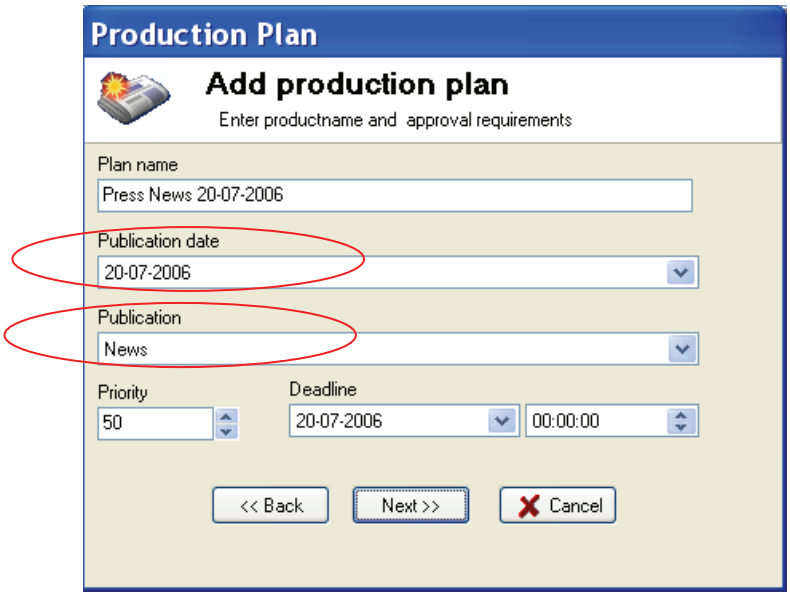
Start *PlanCenter* and click the **Planning** tab to start

Planning step 7-1 Product overall name and mode

The planning of new products to done using a so-called Wizard. Click the **Create** button in the toolbar.

Dialog 1:

Select publication name, publication date and edit the default product name if required. By default production names are assigned the name *publication-publication date*



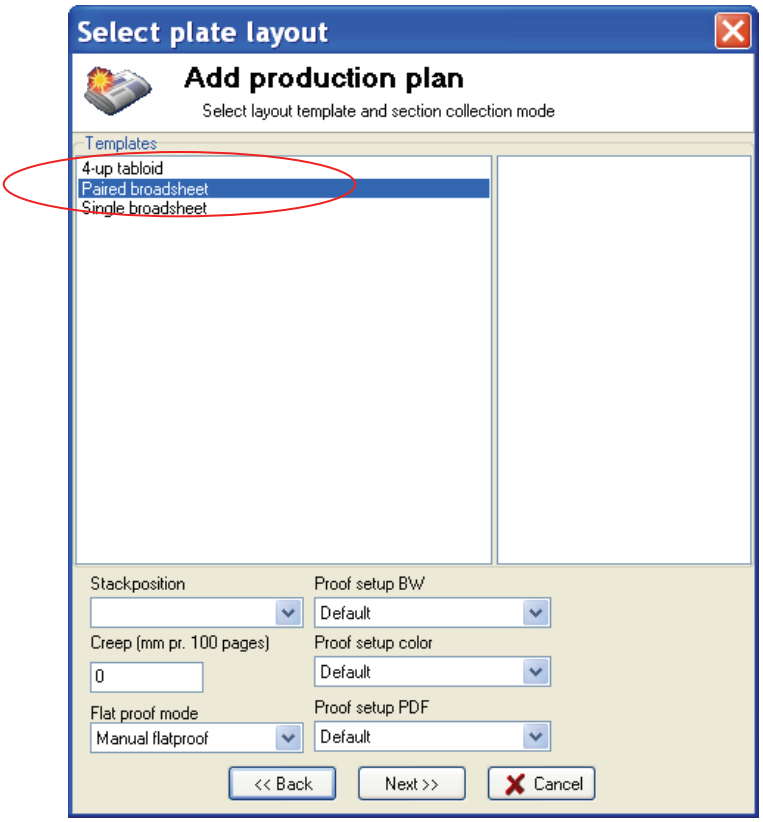
Plan wizard step 1 – Selection of product identifiers and production approval method

Select starting priority for the product (may be changed later)

Dialog 2: Layout template

Select a layout template for the product. The template list will show currently defined layouts for the particular press.

A clean install will have 2 or 3 templates to choose from. Select **Paired broadsheet** and press the **Next** button.



Plan wizard step 2 – Selection of layout template on chosen press.

Dialog 3: Sections in product

Select default colors used per page. Default colors can be changed later.

Select section name **A** and enter **12** in the *N. pages* (number of pages) field. Press the **Add** button. The 12 page section is now in the list of sections to produce.

To keep things simple in our first example we only select one section printed as one 'book' (press section). We will not use offsets, split runs or other special modes.

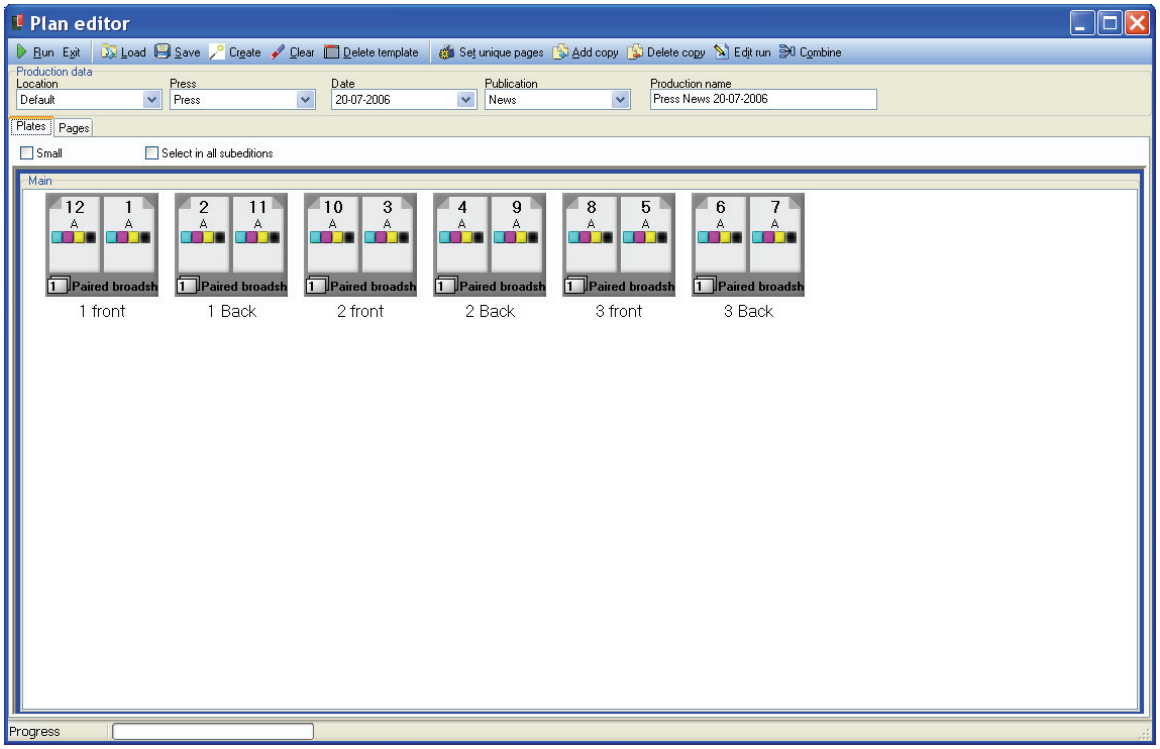
Press the **Next** button

Dialog 4: Apply production

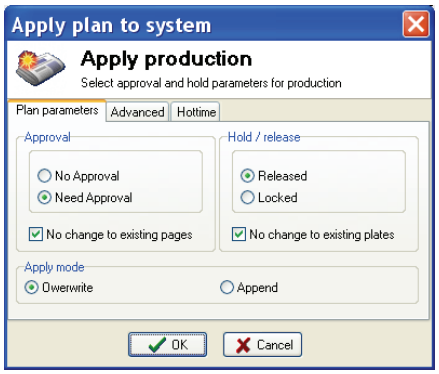
The 12 page product now appears in the Plan editor view. Press **Run** to activate the plan. The *Apply Production* dialog will appear

Select Approve mode – No approval selected will not require operators to approve pages prior to output

Select production lock mode: *Released* will not require operator to actively release the production. *Locked* will hold back pages until actively released for production.



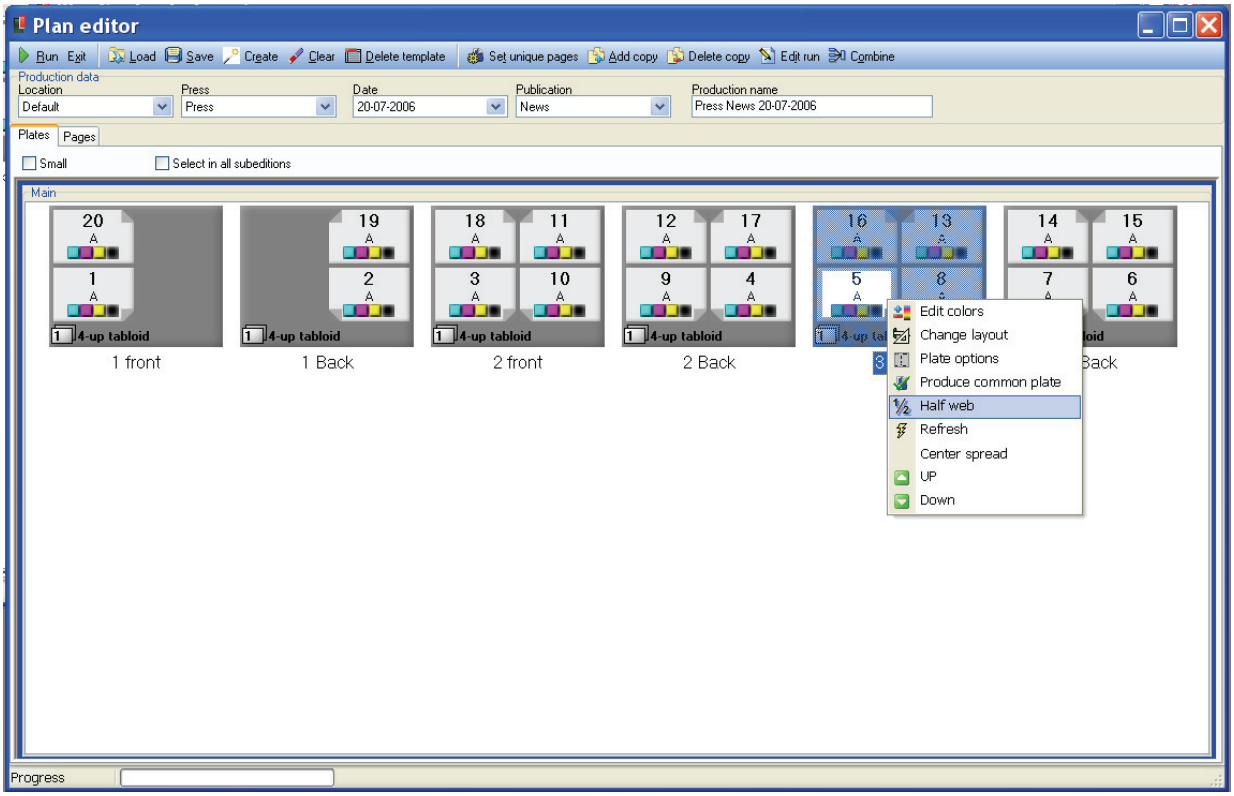
Result of our first plan. Press Run to commit the plan



Last stage - Set production parameters for approval and release

Another product – 4up with half-web

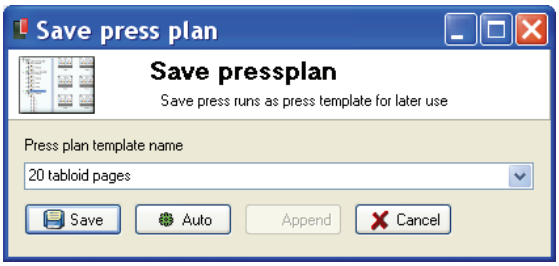
Try making another plan (for another publication name or date) and select the **4-up tabloid** template instead. Edit the number of pages in the section dialog to **20**. This plan has a *half-web* sheet – by default this is placed first in the sheet sequence. Right-click on the plate with the page 6 and select **Half-web** from the pop-up menu. The half-web is now moved to this position instead. Press apply to activate the plan.



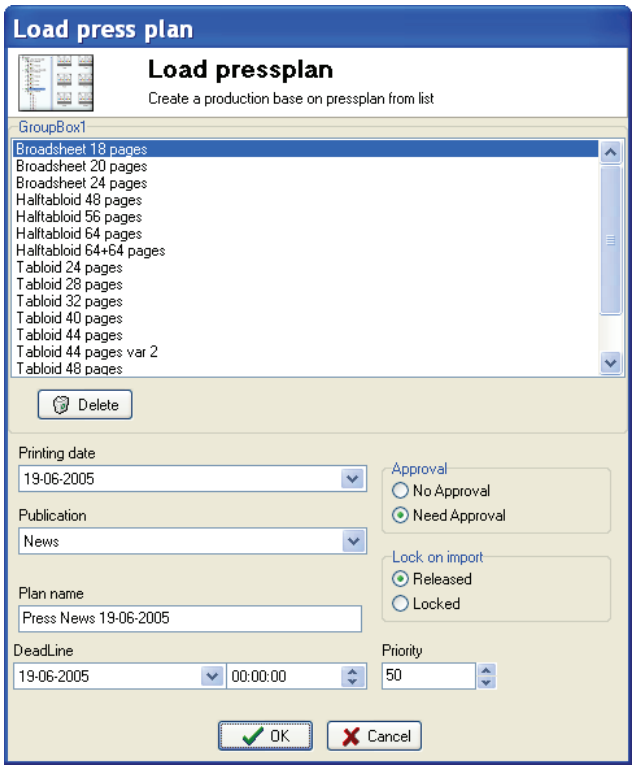
*Result of our second plan. Move the halfweb to the last position using right-click menu and Click **Run** to use the plan*

STEP 8: Saving and re-using plans

Often press impositions are re-used for other publication dates or publication names. A press imposition can be saved pressing the **Save press plan** in the Plan editor (after the wizard). Enter a name for the saved plan.



To re-use the plan click on the **Load press** plan button in the toolbar. A dialog will appear where a new publication date and publication name can be entered. Also, new production modes for page approval and initial hold/release state can be set.



Load of stored plan template. The save/load plan feature enables build-up of a library of often used plans for easy re-use.

LAST STEP : Test

To test our production we need test pages. Remember that the assumed naming convention is Publication-Pagenumber-Color.tif

RIP a few full color sets using the publication name News (used in the planning example). Dropt the files to the c:\input\Broadsheet folder which is the input folder of InputCenter.

Common problems – no input:

If InputCenter puts the file in the Error list and reports *Unknown page* check the file name against the planned production. Look in PlanCenter if the plan is activated as expected.

Common problems – no output:

If OutputCenter does not output the plate, check the following:

1) Are all devices turned off. Double-click the checkmark next to the Device(s) to enable for output.

2) Are the production filter in OutputCenter set to another selection than *All*

3) If paired are all pages for the plate input?

4) Are all pages for the plate approved?

5) Is the production released