(l–r) Himanshu Pandey, MN Pandey (seated) and Krishan Pandey of Avantika Printers

Avantika adds EFI ES-6000 with Fiery Color Profiler Suite to its arsenal

This will bolster the company's recent venture into photobooks, Himanshu Pandey of Avantika explains

Delhi-based Avantika Printers, which has been using EFI Fiery servers and software since 2007, has recently installed an EFI ES-6000 spectrophotometer with Fiery Color Profiler Suite. The integrated colour management and measurement software for printing systems, the suite includes expert-level tools. It works with spectrophotometers which allow printers to create, edit and maintain colour profiles. It can also successfully match colour to a colour reference, match output across multiple printers to achieve shopwide consistency and get stunning colour and quality from any Fiery-driven printer.

As a commercial printer, Himanshu Pandey of Avantika says, the company manufactures notebooks and diaries for corporate customers. The company also has several different new ventures for developing different products for them. In this, the EFI ES-6000 with Fiery Color Profiler Suite will be a handy tool. Also, the company has recently entered into the photobook segment, thanks to EFI Fiery. "The Fiery digital front end comes with a new Fiery Edge profile from which we can develop photobooks for the mass segment," Pandey says.

Colour management

"We are known in the industry for our colour-managed jobs," Pandey says. "When a job doesn't get printed anywhere, it comes to us with the expectation of 100%

result, and we fulfil it. We do colour management as a full operation in our workflow. We are using Fiery Color Profiler Suite for the last 18 months or so. This has become a standard in our workflow. We do regular calibration and media profiling with the help of Color Profiler Suite. We maintain different papers, different calibration sets and different profiles for customers whenever there is a critical job. We are able to print our jobs repeatedly and consistently."

For calibration purposes, Avantika is using ES-2000 and ES-6000 in its workflow. It does regular linearisation and calibration with ES-2000, but with the help of ES-6000, it has been able to maintain different papers. The maximum time in which paper can be profiled and calibrated is roughly 30-45 minutes, and it is done over the network so that the operators don't have to stand next to the calibrator. It is also able to use different modes of calibration by using ES-6000 because the Fiery Color Profiler Suite helps differentiate between M0, M1 and M2 profiles.

Avantika has been adhering to G7 calibration for the last couple of months. "We are trying to convince our customers that we are shifting towards international standard. So, we are modifying our previous profiles to work as well as the G7 profiles with the Fiery server. The current Color Profiler Suite has given us options to explore how G7 is working on the current engines and it is giving us good predictable outputs and these predictable outputs are good for the long run," Pandey says.

Pandey is a Fiery-certified expert. "I have been trained to train people and I train my staff. I'm training them for the last one year or so, after I completed my expert training. My staff is now well-trained to use basic and some of the complex features on the Fiery. They are now learning with the

Himanshu: Avantika has been using Fiery Color Profiler Suite for the last 18 years

help of the webinars. The tools have been provided by EFI on its eLearning site and we are also using the best practices for PDF which they have provided for the customer over the internet," he says.

Fiery at Avantika

The company setup comprises of three items — prepress, digital printing presses and post-press, besides a screen printing facility. In press, it has two Canon C8000 kits with EFI Fiery servers, one Ricoh with EFI Fiery server and one Oce with Prisma 6 server.

In post-press, Avantika has the entire unit for making the business cards, catalogues, commercials, booklets, calendars, diaries, books. "We do both soft and hardbound books. In soft bond, we do perfect binding with PUR. We also do section sewing. We also have in-house aqueous coating to give matt finish to digital prints because our engines produce glossy prints and some customers need prints with matt finish," Pandey says.

Avantika has been using EFI Fiery servers and software since 2007. "First we had an EX 250 as the standard by which we entered into this digital printing segment. Currently, we have three EFI Fierys," Pandey says, "EFI has further developed Fiery a lot over the years and along with it, we have also improved."

Pandey says the Fiery server has helped the company with the colour management in most complex jobs. "We can do last minute colour correction on the Fiery by using the

The EFI ES-6000 spectrophotometer is deployed in tandem with the Fiery Color Profiler Suite

The Fiery Color Profiler Suite has been in uses for the last 18 months and is a standard in Avantika's production workflow

ImageViewer tools. We are also using Fiery Impose and Compose," he says.

Experience with VDP jobs

In the Fiery Command WorkStation's current version 6.4, there have been some new features, which, Pandey says, has helped the company a lot. "The Fiery has also helped us RIP more jobs in a shorter timeframe. We can say we have improved our productivity by 30 to 40 % in the current workflow. We also have been using Fiery VDP tools, especially the new Fiery FreeForm Create tool. This has been useful for us to maintain our customers for a longer period of time because the output which is being generated from the FreeForm Create is only for the Fiery server. So a customer can generate personalised files and send to us to print them on our Fiery server," he adds.

The company is also using VDP for different jobs. "Take the example of a calendar in which there is a variable of several images in that same file. We now can use Fiery FreeFrom Create to create such calendars. You can upload variable images, and text on the fly, and it also supports barcodes. We can create a master file kind of VDP, in which we can RIP the masters once and push the data on to the Fiery to produce several calendars. We have produced 600-700 calendars in one go in one season for a particular client," he explains.

Going ahead with Fiery

Previously, Avantika was using Fiery EX250 on its Xerox DC 250. It also bought one mono engine Xerox 4112, but that was without a Fiery server. The problem the company faced was that when we were sending the command to the machine, if there were any delays or any misconnection between the computer system and the file or the machine, it had to send the entire file again.

Now, Pandey says, because of the Fiery server, it can do last minute changes. "We can send simplex files and if required change them to duplex using the Fiery server. We can convert from colour to grayscale on the file itself without changing the file again and again. The current setup of Fiery has features such as Fiery ImageViewer, in which we can preview what the output will be. We can change the colours, we can increase or decrease the saturation on the Fiery server itself; we can have a preview while changing. The Fiery server also helps us load balance between multiple engines. We have two separate Canon C8000 production engines driven by Fiery, and we have the option of sending a file to print in one machine, but if we are running short of time, we also have the option while the job is running to change the printing to both machines. For this, we can transfer the file from one engine to another in a jiffy using Fiery Command WorkStation," he explains.

Large, complex and high volume jobs

"We are using features like Fiery Compose in which we are printing one or two books in which we send the files from the customer directly to the Fiery server. Then use Fiery Compose to do section sewing. We can also do different kinds of binding styles on to it and then create a PDF file from that and print. We can also export files from the Fiery server as a soft proof or as a backup file to be used later," he says.

Another feature of the Fiery server is HyperRIP, in which the larger file is divided into small chunks that can be processed in parallel. If a job comes in last minute and has high priority, the Fiery server has the option to promote one job over the one currently running on the machine.

Himanshu Pandey

Tete-a-tete with Himanshu Pandey of Avantika Printers

When did you start with EFI Fiery and on which digital systems?
Our first interaction with Fiery was with Fiery EXP 250 that came along with Xerox DC 250 printer in 2008.

How has it improved operational and employee productivity in your shopfloor?
The plethora of options available on Fiery DFE to change or modify the print settings for a job at the last point before shooting a print has reduced the turnaround time for a job that ultimately results in boosting employee productivity. Operators are using various shortcuts such as Fiery Presets to apply same settings for jobs that require similar options to print to decrease turnaround time.

EFI provides video tutorial and other educational/ information tools. Any specific tool which has helped you?
The tutorial for using ImageViewer function and modify the options on it to colour correct the job as per need and to save that setting as a option to be applied on future jobs of similar kind has helped operators to use the digital press efficiently.

With the Fiery server, how many jobs can you complete in a day?
Approximately 40 to 50-odd jobs in a day.

And in a week? Which is a busy workload day?
We do around 300-odd jobs in a week, where Mondays and Fridays are busy days.

Describe the type of jobs you do?
Corporate brochures, flyers, school and university books, journals, variable data-rich business cards, coffee table books, photobooks, proofing jobs for offset presses, etc.

You see the Fiery performance advantage when you place a heavy file for RIPping. For example, an advanced version of Fiery can RIP a heavy file in 10 minutes. What sort of jobs do you use these features for?
The Fiery feature which we are talking here is HyperRIP. This feature helps in breaking down complex jobs in smaller parts and processing them simultaneously instead of sequentially. Jobs in which we use this feature include variable data jobs such as calendars and jobs which has several pages of images.

What's the impact of choosing a Fiery server on the ROI of your print engine investment?
We try to recover our print engine's ROI in a three-year time frame. Using Fiery servers and software gives us a head start ahead of competition, as we are able to produce critical jobs better than them in

Trained by Himanshu, the Avantika team uses the videos/tutorials available from EFI to further enhance the subject knowledge

a shorter time frame, which gives us opportunity to maximise our productivity.

Is your colour management software integrated with the Fiery server?

Yes. We are using Fiery Color Profiler Suite that is integrated at server level. The repeatability of colour by making profiles or daily calibration using CPS has helped us a lot. We are using ES-6000 spectrophotometer along with Color Profiler Suite to manage our colour critical jobs. We have also beta tested EFI's new Fiery Edge color profiling technology and it has helped us open a new vertical for business for printing of photobooks which we are doing very less previously.

Have you used software's like EFI DirectSmile (now named MarketDirect Cross Media)?

Yes. We are using it for calendars and birthday greeting cards.

Is your staff trained and certified by EFI to use Fiery?

I am the one who is a Fiery expert in my organisation. My entire digital team is trained by me and they are using the videos/tutorials available from Learning@EFI (resources.efi.com/fiery) and (learning.efi.com) to further enhance the subject knowledge.

How easy or difficult is it to manage the workflow that consists of digital printing machines from different manufacturers?

It's easy as all the digital engines we have in our shop floor is using Fiery as DFE, so we manage them all using a single Command WorkStation window.

How is the job submission process? Is it automated?

It's automated. For the last three years we have not used drivers for sending print jobs to our Fiery servers. We either use the drag and drop method or hot folders.

Does Fiery help boost productivity during imposition?

Yes. For repeat jobs that require similar imposition methods our operators have created presets and are using them frequently. For other type of jobs, they can create a custom imposition in the Fiery DFE itself.

What are the essential devices (D65 light and updated calibrator) for your operator?

Both are necessary for our operators. Calibrator help them to achieve consistent print outputs with achievable colours over time and D65 lights help them to visually approve or disapprove what is printed from digital machines as per the samples provided by customers.

Which standards do you follow? Fogra or Adobe RGB?

We are using Fogra currently in our workflow and we are also evaluating G7 for future use.

Out of ten, how do you rate the EFI Fiery server?

10 out of 10, no point in degrading below this level.

Will you insist on an EFI Fiery server for your next digital press? Yes / No? And why?

Yes, the journey we started with Fiery DFE EXP250 till Fiery B4100 has made us learnt many points for digital printing, the ease of using, the robust performance the support which we receive from the EFI made us the loyal user who will not switch easily for any other DFE vendor.

Fiery gives you the facility to see the preview and make changes. Has this feature helped you?

The feature, ImageViewer, is a part of Fiery Graphic Arts Package Premium Edition (GAPPE), and we use this feature to apply colour curves to the job which require last minute changes to colour without sending it back to the pre-press. We can also save the applied curve for applying it on other jobs or applying to different pages in a same job which require similar correction. The feature also helps to manage gray levels in the job by using response curves. This feature also allows you to zoom on a job till pixel level to check trappings and sending all the edits you have done in a file as a soft proof pdf to the client. Maximum of these options in this tools are used on a daily basis.

Have you used the Fiery server for any VDP type jobs? Describe a typical job.

Yes, we use fiery for VDP jobs. We either use PDF/VT or FreeForm method for VDP Jobs. A typical job can be a business cards where the master elements would be company's logo, tag lines or any other elements similar in all cards, and variable elements would be name, photograph, QR code, address panel comprising of telephone no, email, address, etc. These cards are imposed in a sheet using Fiery Impose. We are producing approximately 3000-4000 business cards daily.

How critical is colour to your customers?

We are known in the industry to produce consistent colours throughout the jobs. Our customers are colour-critical. We usually make profiles for general customers for regular jobs but also modify those profiles which contain data to print Pantone colours too for producing the brand colours of corporate clients.

One tip for the EFI team?

You all are doing great job giving customers the options which they require to print a good quality print to sustain and grow.

Team Avantika