

Ashford Colour Press explains why Domino's **K630i** ink jet press is in their good books!



Overview

Ashford Colour Press offers excellent quality, fast turnaround printing and related services for books, magazines, journals, brochures and all bound publications. They serve a variety of UK and international clients ranging from major educational and academic publishers, to small independent publishers and first time self-publishers.

In 2016, they became the first UK book printer to install in a Domino **K630i**, the high speed, compact, single-engine, duplex ink jet press, after looking for a cost effective, digital solution for their monochrome print requirements

*The more I looked at the Domino **K630i**, the more impressed I got," he says. "It was strong in every area – quality of output, running speed, ease of operation, even down to its compact small footprint."*

Allan Gray, Production Director at Ashford

Fast facts

- One of the top 5 book printers in the UK
- Over 30 years' experience serving the print and publishing industry
- Annual turnover of approximately £13 million
- A diverse range of clients including major educational and academic publishers, small independent, and first time self-publishers
- First UK book printer to install a Domino **K630i** duplex ink jet press



“Printing from job to job on different paper stock is very easy, requires no calibration which is excellent, and saves you a lot of paper waste compared to other presses.”

Jamie Hanlon, Press Manager at Ashford



For over 30 years, Gosport based Ashford Colour Press, has been providing print and publishing solutions to their global clients helping them to manage costs and optimise stock levels whilst at the same time reducing print inventories and warehouse space.

Using the latest technology in litho and digital printing, their end-to-end services include in-house book binding and print finishing, plus distribution and storage. To meet the needs of publishers in a fast changing world, Ashford invested in digital printing technologies enabling them to successfully meet their clients' needs for print-on-demand, whether they are producing novels, textbooks, training manuals or periodicals.

With 132 employees and an annual turnover of approximately £13 million, in 2016, they became the first UK book printer to invest in a Domino K630i, the high speed, compact, single-engine, duplex ink jet press, which reduces the required production floor space by at least 50% compared to twin engine devices.

Ashford originally operated as a 'traditional' book printers, with litho presses that printed black and white text, as well as their four colour work.

As run lengths became shorter, this business model became no longer viable, due to the labour and costs of material required for litho printing. So, to respond to these changing market conditions and meet their clients' evolving requirements, Ashford required a digital solution.

They initially invested in two HPT230 colour ink jet web presses to cope with the short run workload, which now in 2016 represented about 60% of their turnover. This meant publishers could benefit from cost effective print runs from 50 to 2000 copies, with unit costs comparable to rates previously only achievable through longer run litho production.

Allan Gray, Production Director, at Ashford predicts that digital will continue to increase and explains how he needed a monochrome digital solution to sit alongside his existing HP colour ink jet presses. "Around a third of our digital print volume is monochrome, so we were looking to acquire a system that would allow us to print this work more cost effectively. The more I looked at the Domino K630i, the more impressed I got," he says. "It was strong in every area – quality of output, running speed, ease of operation, even down to its compact small footprint. These benefits made the selection of the Domino K630i an easy decision. We opted for a

150m/min, 558mm print width, duplex, water based system to handle our monochrome production requirements."

Jaime Layton, Production Manager, continues "The installation and training on the K630i was very smooth - at the end of the fourth day, we were in full production. Throughout the entire install, the quality has always been, and is just very, very, very good. We generally run the press at 120m/min and that's inline with finished book blocks out the end. Within weeks, we were running six days a week and we're looking to expand this to work 24/7."

Ashford also wanted a system that was easy to operate, a point substantiated by their Press Manager, Jamie Hanlon, who comments "The Domino is very easy to use, and very user friendly on the user interface. It takes no time at all to get jobs set up. The different paper stocks we currently use range from 50gsm up to 140gsm. Printing from job to job on different paper stock is very easy, requires no calibration which is excellent, and saves you a lot of paper waste compared to other presses."

Jaime Layton summarises, "We are very happy with our decision and the partnership that we have with Domino is really good. The three main benefits of the K630i are print quality - being the highest one; minimal paper wastage which is tied in with our ISO accreditations 9001 and 14001; and the compact footprint of the machine."

Allan concludes, "The key thing is consistency of quality for mono printing and we have received lots of feedback from our customers and across the business about the quality of the black printing - the mono is really good. It's a quality that we are confident we can sell on to our customers and indeed, we already have a number of major publishers that have endorsed this quality. I am looking forward to a long and successful partnership with Domino and I have absolutely no problem recommending the K630i - I would actively push it."