



# Neptune

## Ad Production Management System

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The Neptune Workflow Management System provides complete management and tracking of workflow for all elements of any job, be it creation of digital media advertisements, print advertisements, documents, books or content designed for a variety of media. With a powerful SQL database at its heart, Neptune manages the storage of all files and tracks these files through the workflow.

Neptune has been designed around client server architecture, with the database and server functions running on the central Windows Server unit. Users access the system through simple client applications, running on either Mac or PC. Interaction between Neptune and the workstation application is seamless.

### What is Workflow Management Software?

Workflow management software has become an essential ingredient in almost every publishing organisation that manages content for its digital and print publications. The larger the publication the greater the need to be able to track the location and status of every file in use and to remove those files not currently required.

As the majority of print and web documents are made up of several elements - text, headings, photographs, logos, line art - a software solution that not only knows where each of these various components are in the system, but also knows their statuses - in progress, complete, not started - and can even deliver them to the workstation for assembly or manipulation, is a key ingredient in making a design studio, creative/production department reach new levels of productivity.

The core of the Neptune system is the workflow manager, which is a highly configurable production management and control system for publishing applications. It runs on a central server and interfaces to some or all of the workstations on a network. It may be configured to manage and control a single aspect of production such as advertisement creation or picture processing, or the complete pre-press process including page assembly. Workflow Manager operates in two areas: file management and production management.

#### *File Management:*

The system manages the physical movement of files, and can provide for:

- The automatic purging of files from the system
- The automatic delivery of relevant files to users and to applications when they are needed
- The archive and retrieval of files to and from on-line storage facilities

## Production Management:

The production management resource of the Workflow Manager centre around the system's ability to gather status information pertinent to every file in production. The status information can also be interpreted into a display format, providing the ability to view, for example, the state of readiness of an entire publication. Statistical data generated by the system can also be utilised in management reports - highlighting production bottlenecks and problem areas. The Neptune Workflow Manager uses an SQL relational database - a high performance database, essential for this type of demanding application.

## Neptune Client

For workstations on the network, a Neptune Client provides users with access to the database and allows them to find the files they need. The client, available for both OSX and Windows operating systems, is available either as a general-purpose application or can be specifically tailored to work only with certain system functions. Links with non-digital stages of the workflow can be provided by the inclusion of customisable barcoded worksheets and barcode scanners. When the work reaches a non-digital stage the operator can scan the relevant bar code and this information is registered in the Neptune database. This would then provide the production department with accurate information as to the status of job in the workflow.

The Client is a standalone Java application, so the same version works on a Mac or a PC. It is loaded separately from any makeup application and is used to deliver all the files that are used in a particular advertisement. It works with all the latest desktop applications - Adobe InDesign, Flash, QuarkXpress, PhotoShop and many more.

Different security logins control what the user is allowed to see or do. A normal graphics' designer for instance would not be allowed to delete or archive ads, this would normally only be done by a supervisor.

The facilities to search for ad or ads are extremely versatile and powerful. To simplify the task, pre-programmed searches can be set up, or the user may save favourite searches for quick access.

Ad Number	Customer Name	Publication Name	Depth	Columns	Ad Status	Colour Co.	Proof Code	Copy St.	First Insertion	Sales Person	Classcode	Lft Ad Number
180244258	BEALMONT	BEALMONT	3	1	Insert	-	-	WB	2907/2011	Christina Ward	C1850	
180209298	BEALMONT	BEALMONT	3	1	Insert Only	-	-	WB	01/07/2011	Catherine Wll	N999	
180206716	BEALMONT	BEALMONT	5	1	Insert Only	-	-	AC	18/08/2011	Catherine Wll	N999	
1801674243	BEALMONT	BEALMONT	8	1	Ready	-	-	WB	23/06/2011	Suzanne Price	01050	
180199754	BEALMONT	BEALMONT	40	1	Booked	-	-	AC	28/05/2011	Catherine Wll	BOOKTOS	1801951722
180199912	BEALMONT	BEALMONT	6	1	Insert Only	-	-	AC	28/05/2011	Catherine Wll	N999	
31028189	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	1	5	Insert Only	FR	EM	LC	25/08/2011	TA - Maxine P.	F0070	310035915
310025915	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	1	5	Insert Only	FR	EM	LC	04/08/2011	TA - Maxine P.	F0070	1801889215
180188915	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	1	5	Insert Only	FF	EM	LC	28/07/2011	Maxine Price	F0070	1801833559
180188389	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	1	5	Insert Only	FF	EM	LC	30/06/2011	Maxine Price	F0070	1801526814
180128614	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	BELVOIR PROPERTY MANAGEME.	1	5	Insert Only	FF	EM	LC	02/08/2011	Maxine Price	F0070	1801285039
31030496	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	27	4	Insert	CA	PI	25/08/2011	LE - Sally Anst.	ROP	310050796	
31028840	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	27	4	Insert	CA	PI	25/08/2011	LE - Sally Anst.	ROP	310006995	
310080786	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	27	4	Ready	CA	PI	25/08/2011	LE - Sally Anst.	ROP		
31006895	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	27	4	Ready	CA	PI	25/08/2011	LE - Sally Anst.	ROP	310007798	
180171003	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	2	2	Central Consolidation	CA	LC	01/09/2011	Sally Ansell	N999		180171004
180171100	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	2	2	Central Consolidation	CA	LC	01/09/2011	Sally Ansell	N999		1801711003
180171105	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	2	2	Central Consolidation	CA	LC	01/09/2011	Sally Ansell	N999		1801711010
180171089	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	2	2	Central Consolidation	CA	LC	14/07/2011	Sally Ansell	N999		1801710884
180171093	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	2	2	Central Consolidation	CA	LC	21/07/2011	Sally Ansell	N999		180171091
180171091	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	BENTONS ESTATE AGENTS	2	2	Central Consolidation	CA	LC	28/07/2011	Sally Ansell	N999		1801710903

Matching ads

## Neptune Browser Client

The Neptune Intranet Server is an option for the Workflow Manager to enable Intranet access to the management system and its database. The Server supports any build of Neptune database and provides seamless connection to the database and uploads the browser application as required. The Neptune Browser Client is a java-based application which allows users to browse to protected areas of the database to view information

and to access files.

## Neptune Functionality

### Output Flight Checking:

The system can be integrated with PostScript flight checking software, and show the appropriate status of the result.

### Thumbnail Generator:

A high quality thumbnail is automatically generated for all artwork on the system. This enables libraries to be browsed rapidly.

### Browser Client:

This management/sales tool running on the company intranet, can perform all Neptune Client functions except the creation and amendment of ads.

### Ad Booking System:

Neptune has been designed to fully integrate with most advert booking systems. Generic two-way interfaces ensure the appropriate information is received into the Neptune system to facilitate the workflow process. Information can be returned to the advert booking system as required.

### External Event Log Advent:

This option allows ads which are not created under the control of the Neptune Client to have the status changed by other applications.

### Internet Ad Approval:

This optional module allows ads to be viewed on the internet and the content approved or instructions given to the production department for any changes required.

### Data Store:

The data store holds the adverts and all the elements that are used to create them. It also holds the thumbnails.

### Archive Data:

This is used to hold archived ads on the chosen disk storage.

### Barcode Status Change:

Status changes can be made to an ad using the Barcode reader. This speeds up repetitive tasks such as copy in etc.

### Mac/PC Client:

A Client can be run on PC or Mac. Since the software is written in Java, the same revision level of software is used on both platforms and therefore any upgrades or enhancements are released at the same time.

### Acrobat Distiller:

PDF files can automatically be created at different stages of the workflow. They can be used for proofing purposes and to preview the finished ads.

### Optional Report Generator:

Reports can be generated using standard programs such as Crystal Reports.

### Artwork Input Spoolers:

There are six different input spoolers which are used when artwork enters the system. The six spoolers allow the artwork to be categorised in different ways dependant on their use.

### Camera Ready Artwork:

Completed customer artwork can be preflight checked before input to Neptune. If there is a problem with the file it will be rejected and the appropriate status is shown on Neptune.

### Completed Ad Store:

The folder structure will vary dependent on customer requirements. They can be stored as publications, by date, by classification or completed ads can be stored in just one folder.

## Neptune Internet Ad Approval

Neptune Internet Ad Approval allows customers to access their ads for proofing and approval purposes using the Internet. It can also be used to view thumbnails of completed ads held in the database. The user login controls the areas of Neptune where access is allowed.

Full Acrobat support allows users to request copies of documents in PDF format, which the Client will automatically display. Users may annotate or print the document before sending it back to the database. A limited number of statuses may be changed and notes perhaps containing instructions for the production department. An Internet user will not be allowed to directly control the insertion of an ad in a publication, and specifically will not be allowed to destroy or modify any item held on Neptune.

## Neptune Administrators Tool

The Neptune Administrators Tool is a very powerful utility and obviates the need for special customer scripts. It carries out the following functions:

- Customising the system at installation
- Adding and editing system statuses
- Set-up and control of archiving
- Administrating users and groups
- Setting up group searches
- Controlling security
- Customising the client

## Typical Newspaper Workflow

- Neptune takes a feed from an advert booking system. This feed contains the details of the ad including size, customer details, classification, and insertion dates
- Once the booking is received an entry is created in the database for the ad. The normal initial status of the ad will be 'booked'
- Artwork of various kinds can be input for use by the ad. There is a customisable area for standing artwork; this will normally consist of logos and customer artwork
- The ad can be created using any standard program such as QuarkXpress, Freehand or InDesign etc. Each stage of the production process is tracked and all the time spent working on the ad is recorded in the database
- When the ad is complete the status is set to 'Ready' and the ad is saved to a customised folder structure
- Optionally Acrobat PDF files can be created automatically
- A comprehensive archiving facility is available to save the completed adverts

## System Benefits

- Works with any application used to create ads
- Ensures that the correct sized ad is created
- Gives an up-to-the minute status of every ad on the system
- Prevents the wrong version of an ad appearing in a publication
- Simplifies archiving and restoration of ads
- Lifts of expired ads are simple to reinstate
- The client can be customised and optimised on site
- Powerful search facilities
- Option to link to the Internet for viewing and approving ads

## Addendum: Neptune Release 5 System Enhancements

- Supported by the latest run time environments on the PC and Mac platforms
- Faster operation, keyboard short cuts -including cursor up/down and page up/down etc. A later release will enable the screen contents to be printed
- If a user resizes the display columns the width of the columns is saved in the user's login database, so the next time the program is loaded the column widths will be set to the latest user settings
- The client allows multiple ads to be selected and have the status changed at one time
- Advert statuses can be sorted in alphabetical sequence
- The library tab has a user sizeable thumbnail preview
- The thumbnail library shows a larger preview
- Neptune can now email PDFs and/or messages when an advert reaches a given status in the workflow. The emailing option can also be used to send a message without an attachment. This could possibly be used by the production department to inform a salesperson that an ad is ready for approval by the customer
- Fast edit button, allows the user to do a quick change of status only
- The Ad Approval client now logs all events in the adverts audit trail
- PDF workflow removes EPS files when advert status is ready
- The on-line adverts cache holds onto PDF files waiting for a corresponding booking to arrive from the advert booking system
- Lift history, ability to track a series of lifts from the original booking
- Ad Approval browser auto publish facility
- Ad Approval edit advert facility

The screenshot shows the Neptune Client DEMO MODE interface. At the top, there are search filters for Ad Status, Customer Name, Creation Date, and Classcode. Below the filters is a table of search results with columns: Ad Number, Customer Name, Publication No., Depth, Columns, Ad Status, Colour Co., Proof, Copy Status, First Insertion, Sales Person, Classcode, LR, and Lifetime. The table contains several rows of data, including ads for MALLCOLM GOLD LETTERING, MARK WEBSTER & CO LTD, and MARLBOROUGH ENTERPRISES L.

Ad Number	Customer Name	Publication No.	Depth	Columns	Ad Status	Colour Co.	Proof	Copy Status	First Insertion	Sales Person	Classcode	LR	Lifetime
1901039323	MALLCOLM GOLD LETTERING	39	1	1	Booked	-	-	AC	25/05/2011	Amy Jackson	RRPOP	160	HOT LET...
1901187189	MELWAY LETTERING	39	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/07/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
310299797	MALLCOLM GOLD LETTERING	1	1	1	Booked	-	-	AC	01/09/2011	H.J. Amy Inc.	RRPOP	310	HOT LET...
1901449026	MALLCOLM GOLD LETTERING	1	1	1	Booked	-	-	AC	09/07/2011	Amy Jackson	RRPOP	160	HOT LET...
1900529780	MARK EVANS & CO.	389	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/01/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	DFNT
1900529780	MARK WEBSTER & CO LTD	146	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/01/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	DFNT
1900529780	MARTIN & CO.	21	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/01/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	DFNT
1900752107	MARK EVANS & CO.	213	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/02/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
1901194581	MPI J WOODNELL LTD	11	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/04/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
1901194803	MPI FTORR HUSSEY THOMES & CO	24	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/04/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
1901194821	M O ESTATE AGENTS & LETTING SE	37	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	21/04/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
1901348317	MARK EVANS & CO.	1	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	NS	1/05/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
1901060133	MARK EVANS & CO.	1	1	1	Booked	FF	EM	AC	19/06/2011	Maureen Price	RRPOP	160	FFNT
1901082304	MARLBOROUGH ENTERPRISES L.	1	1	1	Booked	-	-	AC	04/07/2011	Mark Richards	RRPOP	160	HOT LET...
310184797	MALLCOLM GOLD LETTERING	1	1	1	Booked	-	-	AC	18/06/2011	H.J. Amy Inc.	RRPOP	310	HOT LET...
1901449176	MARTIN & CO.	11	1	1	Booked	-	-	AC	1/09/2011	Amy Jackson	RRPOP	310	HOT LET...

Search criteria

[www.ipasystems.co.uk](http://www.ipasystems.co.uk)

